Roommates & Soulmates

by Writesalott

Summary

All human University AU with interwoven plot lines told in 9 POVs!
Jace's roommate dislikes him. Alec's admirer left unseen. Magnus's friends try to cheer him up. Clary's gaze drifts to the new face in class. Tessa is torn between loving two men. Clace, Malec, Herongraystairs, Heline(Background), Sizzy(After ch42), and Jaia after that.
Betas on fanfic: BlueAussie 1-46 and Allieanna ch 47-?
Every chapter title has the name of the character whose point of view that chapter is.
The room was plain and square. The twin beds in either corner were unwelcoming with their bare mattresses. There was a window, but the grey carpet rather detracted from any welcome the sunlight created.

With a groan he threw his duffel bag onto the lower bunk and hoped with all his might the girls were at least as hot in university as they had been in high school. Or if they weren't as hot he hoped they would at least be easier.

He started unpacking. His mother had always wanted him to fold his clothes but had never actually succeeded in making him do it. He found sheets for the bed in one of the empty drawers, and deciding he would take the left bed, started laying the fitted sheet over the bare mattress. His mother had also tried to teach him the importance of something called a hospital bed corner, but he firmly believed as long as the sheets were on the bed it didn't matter what kind of corner it had.

Despite her constant nagging he was going to miss his mother, especially her cooking. He suspected university food would not be as good as homemade.

He heard the door creak and turned to see a guy standing awkwardly in the doorway, apparently not sure if the open door meant he was supposed to knock or not. The guy had black hair and was of a similar age and height to him, though slightly taller.

"You must be my roommate," he said going over to greet the man. "I'm Jace Herondale."

"Alec Lightwood," the man said.

"Lightwood," Jace said thoughtfully. "Did we go to the same high school? Cause that sounds familiar." Now that he thought about it Alec looked familiar too.

"Yeah we did," Alec said. "You hit on my sister a lot."

"Long legs and dark silky hair!" Jace exclaimed, remembering the way he had thought of Alec's sister back in high school. Jace always recalled women like this, by description rather than by name.

"Izzy," Alec corrected him

"I like my name better," Jace said. "More descriptive." But Alec didn't seem happy about this so Jace added. "Either way she never gave me the time of day."

"That's because she isn't stupid," Alec yelled. "Arg! I can't believe I am stuck with you are a roommate!"

"Now wait a minute!" Jace said. "I am not all bad. I mean just look at me." He grinned and gestured to himself.

Alec did not look impressed. He walked over to the unclaimed bed and threw his bag on it. Alec then started to unpack keeping his back to Jace.

"So," Jace said after a moment of awkward silence. "I never really got to know you in high school."
Alec didn't say anything. "I figure we can just start now." Alec was focused on unpacking and didn't turn around. "I am here on a wrestling scholarship, but your family is loaded right?" Still no acknowledgement from his audience. "You know I heard rumors back in high school about you." Alec stiffened. "They say you bat for the other team." Alec spun around and glared at him as if expecting to be attacked.

"So what if I do?" Alec asked.

"Finally a reaction!" Jace said. Alec turned back around but Jace could see he was fuming. "Geez relax would you. This is probably a good thing. Most straight guys I know like to try and steal my dates or they get jealous of my many dates. It's annoying." Jace didn't count his ultimate wingman in this. Sebastian never stole his dates.

Alec snorted.

"I mean it!" Jace said. "I don't care if you're gay. I do care that you hate me on sight though. I mean we are going to be forced to live together. You can't hate me forever."

"Yes I can," Alec said. "I heard rumors about you in high school too you know."

"Don't you mean my reputation with the ladies?" Jace smirked.

"Your reputation for never dating the same girl twice," Alec said. "No. Dating is the wrong word since you never date them so much as sleep with them, never remember their name and then never talk to them again."

"What can I say?" Jace replied. "Once you have gone through all the bases there really isn't much left to do with a girl, you know?"

"No," Alec said pointedly. "I don't know."

"Oh right," Jace laughed. He decided then to give up on the idea of being friends with his roommate. Alec obviously hated him and wasn't about to change his mind. It was time to blow this popsicle stand and go find his ultimate wingman; time to see if university life could live up to its reputation.

Jace found Sebastian sitting outside, smoking like always. There was only one smoking pit on campus so Jace had known where to look.

"Hey," Jace called as he jogged over. "Meet your new roommate yet?"

"Yep," Sebastian said. "So far all I know about him is that he really likes heavy metal bands. Every inch of the wall on his side is covered with them!"

"Well my roommate went to our high school," Jace said. He was making sure to stand up wind of Sebastian's cigarette smoke like he usually did. "Do you remember Alec?"

"The fag?" Sebastian said. "Didn't his sister shoot you down like a million times?"

"Yeah she did," Jace said. He ignored Sebastian's derogatory term for Alec. It was just Sebastian being Sebastian, and Jace didn't think anything of it. "But I didn't really try very hard. She was too much in the game herself."

"I heard that about her," Sebastian said. "So do you want to go to that sort-of-a-party they are having in the Quad?"
"If you want," Jace said. "I mean it sounded kinda lame is all."

"Do you wanna hit a bar?"

"Bit early for that," Jace said.

"It's happy hour somewhere," Sebastian argued. Jace agreed and Sebastian grinned at him then put out his cigarette.

When they entered the bar Jace did his usual perusal for any particularly attractive women. He disregarded any of them who were obviously with another man. That tended to lead to more trouble than it was worth. That scratched the two brunettes and the strawberry blonde off his list of possibilities. There was, however, a lovely dirty blonde with a low neckline which revealed lots of cleavage at the bar and a dark haired asian beauty in a tight green dress sitting alone by the fire.

"I call the blonde," Sebastian said and Jace knew his friend had done the same assessment he had. Jace and Sebastian were the exact same shade of blonde themselves. They were also the same height and their faces similar enough that even Jace's mother mixed them up sometimes. The feature that could best distinguish them was their eyes. Sebastian had green eyes while Jace's were golden.

"What do you wanna do tonight?" Jace asked.

"Oh I don't feel creative," Sebastian said. "Just the usual?" Jace nodded and headed toward the bar.

"Is this seat taken?" Jace asked. The dirty blonde haired women turned to him. She had make up around her eyes, a oval face and deep pink lips.

"If you are going to give me some stupid pick up line," the women said. "Like 'did it hurt when you felt from heaven' or something I am not interested."

"Now why would I do a thing like that," Jace said smoothly as he took the seat beside her.

"You look the type," the women said.

"I resent that," Jace said smiling at her. He knew what his smile did to women and he could see how it was already affecting her. Slowly as he continued to speak, her body language changed. Her legs uncrossed, her hand came up to play with her hair and her voice softened.

Pretending he had received a text Jace looked down at his phone.

"Do you have to go?" the women asked, obviously opposed to the idea.

"Actually," Jace said. "I was wondering if you wanted to meet my friend? He was too shy to come over here and talk to you himself."

"Oh," the women said, even more enthralled than before, now that she thought there was a more sensitive shy guy interested in her.

"I'll get him over here," Jace said as he pulled out his phone again and texted Sebastian. "He's been hiding watching us."

"What does he look like?" the women asked.

"A lot like me," Jace said. "Oh here he comes now." Sebastian came up to stand just slightly behind Jace.
"Wow," the women said. "You weren't kidding. Are you twins?"

"Just best friends," he heard Sebastian say as Jace quietly slipped away to check his phone. He had a text from Sebastian.

'Chair by the fire. All yours mate.'

Jace grinned as he put his phone away and sauntered over to the middle of the bar where his date for the evening sat staring at the fire. She had short black hair and porcelain skin. Her short green dress showed off her long legs. The neckline of her dress was more conservative than the dirty blonde's had been but her chest was much smaller so it suited her.

"Ah," the stunning asian women said as he approached. "You do look alike."

"Guilty," Jace said sitting down next to her.

"Why didn't you just come and talk to me yourself?" She was playing with her hair and looking up at him with wide eyes.

"Well you are just so beautiful," Jace said. "I would have been tongue tied." Half of this was true. Jace did find her very attractive but he never got tongue tied around women. As they always did, his words had the desired effect. She giggled and uncrossed her legs. Jace had long ago learned this less defensive body language was a good sign. He leaned in closer to her and waited to see if she would lean in as well. When she did, he kissed her. He liked to think he was very good at kissing. He had a great deal of practice and knew he could make a woman melt with just his tongue. She was no exception. He congratulated himself when he earned a moan from her.

"Tongue tied indeed," the women whispered as they broke apart. She was looking at him now with more desire than before. He suspected she knew most of this was an act but she suddenly didn't seem to care.

"Do you wanna get out of here?" Jace asked gently.

"An angel's face," the woman whispered. "But a sinful heart."

Jace held out his hand and she took it. He led her out of the bar.

"Where are we going?" the women asked. Jace turned her in his arms and kissed her long and deep until he heard her moan again.

"Where do you want to go?" Jace breathed against her neck. He felt her knees start to give out a little and got the answer he wanted in the whispered words she spoke next. Together they went back to his dorm room.

Once they were inside the room and the door was closed, Jace kissed her again but this time he got his hands under her dress, hiking it up to her hips. He knew the more turned on she got the more fun he would have so he slowly ran his hands over the soft skin of her stomach and hips bones, slowly moving up to undo her bra.

She seemed to suddenly notice how many clothes he still had on and rectified the situation quickly. The second his shirt fell to the ground her hands were running over the powerful muscles of his arms. While she was doing that, Jace rid himself of his now very uncomfortable pants and underwear. She stopped and looked down at his arousal before switching her focus. When her hands gripped his hard penis he lost patience with foreplay.
Throwing her down on the bed, he quickly grabbed a condom from his bed side drawer and opened it. She watched him put it on so there was no need to speak about what protection he planned on using. He went over to the bed and ran his hands up her legs to hook his fingers into her panties, pulling them down and off.

Slowly moving his hands back up he gently ran the tips of his fingers over her most sensitive areas. Once she was moaning and groaning the way he wanted he shimmied her dress up to her shoulders so he could place his hands on her breasts. Without removing his hands, Jace positioned himself and thrust in. She gasped and her legs went wider still as her hands came up to press down on his back, as if asking for him to go deeper.

Inside her was warm and sticky. He loved it when it was like this, when the woman wanted it as much as he did. He moved faster and faster and soon he could feel her muscles contract around him. He couldn't stop the gasp that escaped him as she squeezed him again. This was not going to last much longer if she kept doing that.

Trying to get her to finish with him, Jace brought his hand down to where they were joined and intensified the experience for her. He could easily hold up his own weight with one arm and his reputation was at stake here.

Jace felt rather smug when her body arched under him and her toes curled. He thrust once, twice more as he watched the look of pleasure on her face. When he came she was still riding her high. They slumped together down onto the bed, breathing hard.

Jace had a strange sensation on the back of his neck almost as if someone was watching him. He turned to look and met the eyes of his new roommate standing awkwardly by the open door. Alec was holding the sock Jace had placed on the doorknob with a rather shocked expression.

If this guy didn't understand what a sock on the door meant, Jace was not looking forward to having him for a roommate.

Chapter End Notes

Chapter Two Sneak Peak:

"Oh hey Alec," Aline said when Alec came over to sit next to her. "I thought you left?"

"Yeah," Alec said. "That didn't really work out."

"Well you didn't miss much," Aline said. "I wouldn't call his a party so much as a mellow before-class get together."

"Fair enough," Alec said. "Did you at least finally catch that girl's eye?"

"You mean the fairy-like beauty with the perfect blue-green eyes?" Aline said wistfully.

"I wasn't really playing that close attention," Alec said. "But sure, her."

"No," Aline said. "Someone told me her name though."

"And what is it?"
"Helen," she said sighing. "Isn't that just the sexiest name ever?" Alec was pretty sure she was swooning.

"I shall take your word for it," Alec said.

So I don’t usually write many author’s notes but I thought I might start. What do you guys want to read about in author’s notes? Do you like getting a sneak preview of the next chapter or is that just teasing and you would like me to stop? I am not sure how long this story is going to be yet but based off how long my previous TMI fanfics are I am guessing very long.

Getting feedback from readers is the main reason why I write so I really want to know what you guys think and where you want things to go and what you like and what you don’t like! I want to know if you want author’s notes or if you think they detract from the reading experience. I want to work with you as this story continues so please contact me. I answer all comments!!!

I have never had an update schedule. Usually I update as often as I write but I tend to write very fast so not to worry. My last fanfic was updated almost daily but that was hard to maintain. I will probably update this one between 2-5 times a week.
Alec's Stalker

Chapter Summary

Beta read by Holly0114

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Alec stared wide eyed at the scene before him. After all, he had never seen a naked woman before, and why would he? The small dating experience he had was with men. He'd known who he was for so long he hadn't bothered pretending.

However, Alec couldn't help but stare at Jace. The guy was annoyingly gorgeous even if he was a total jerk.

"Do you mind!" Jace yelled.

"It's a shared dorm!" Alec exclaimed.

"Hello! Sock On The door!" Jace said. Alec looked down at the sock. When he entered the room he had wondered why the sock had been there… now he wasn't wondering.

"You can do it too," Jace continued. "If you want to bring a guy back here. Just put a sock on the door and I won't open it. But you have to do the same for me. Understand." Jace glared at Alec as he said the last word.

Jace didn't seem to care that he was naked but Alec noticed the women relaxed when she heard Jace say Alec brought guys over.

Alec didn't answer but walked out of the room and closed the door. He put the sock back on the handle and made a mental note to never enter that room again if there was any garment of clothing anywhere near it.

Alec entered the dorm to reading for a few hours before bed but that wasn't an option anymore. Not only was his book in his dorm with the naked people but also he needed something more than the written word to get that image out of his head.

Alec was suddenly not looking forward to a year from now when his sister joined him here. Izzy was by no means innocent but that didn't mean he wanted her meeting men like Jace either. Though she had shot him down in high school more than once, so Alec liked to think she had the good sense to choose better company.

Alec somehow found himself back at the sort-of-a-party in the Quad he had escaped from just moments ago. The grey boombox in the corner was still blasting music and people were still dancing on the impromptu dance floor. All the couches and chairs had been moved to the edges of the room earlier. Despite the loud pop music and laughter Alec decided to sulk in the corner until he could be sure his dorm was safe. Just as he chose a likely spoke behind a pile of stacked chairs Alec noticed Aline hadn't left yet.
"Oh hey Alec," Aline said when Alec came over to sit next to her. "I thought you left?"

"Yeah," Alec said. "That didn't really work out."

"Well you didn't miss much," Aline said. "I wouldn't call his a party so much as a mellow before-class get together." Sure there was music and dancing but Alec could see her point. It was a very chill party and at least a dozen people had left while he'd been gone.

"Fair enough," Alec said. "Did you at least finally catch that girl's eye?"

"You mean the fairy-like beauty with the perfect blue-green eyes?" Aline said wistfully.

"I wasn't really playing that close attention," Alec said. "But sure, her."

"No," Aline said. "Someone told me her name though."

"And what is it?"

"Helen," she said sighing. "Isn't that just the sexiest name ever?" Alec was pretty sure she was swooning.

"I shall take your word for it," Alec said.

"See anyone you like?" Aline asked him.

"Haven't really looked," Alec confessed.

"Well look then!" Aline said. "Before everyone leaves."

Surrendering Alec turned his attention outward. There were a lot of hot guys here but they were all obviously straight. Either that or they really liked having their tongues down girls' throats for some other reason.

"Nah," Alec said.

"You're no fun," Aline said. She got up and held out her hand to him. "Come dance with me."

"How about no," Alec said. "You are my cousin after all."

"Yeah but you have too much penis for my liking and I have not enough for yours," she laughed. "Come distract me from my lack of a Helen." Alec couldn't help but laugh with her as he got up to dance.

Alec started to relax. The music had a good beat as once they were on the dance floor Alec decided to relax; he swayed his hips with the music and tried to clear his head. It seemed to work. Soon Alec was laughing and not thinking about Jace or his sock on the door.

When a slow song come up Alec attempted to sit back down again rather than dance romantically with his cousin but Aline had other ideas; feeling kind Alec obliged her. It's not like he could go back to his room or anything.

It felt rather strange to be dancing with her like this. Aline placed Alec's hand on her waist and his other hand on her shoulder. She was leading but he didn't mind. He was a horrible dancer anyway.

At least there was one person at this school he could spend time with comfortably. Alec missed the comfort of having his sister and little brother around.
"Thanks Aline," Alec said as the song ended. They sat down and Alec placed his hand on hers where it rested on the table. There was only one couple left on the dance floor and most everyone else was leaving. "I think I needed that."

"Anytime cuz," she said. "But if you ever see Helen you have to put in a good word for me, understood?"

"Understood," Alec said grinning. He was looking at Aline but for a second he thought he saw a figure standing off to the side of the dance floor. Alec was fairly sure it was a man and he had the strangest feeling that the man was watching him.

"Who is that?" Alec whispered getting in close to Aline so no one would over hear.

"No idea," Aline said, turning only briefly to look. "I also don't know anybody at this party, remember? Except Helen of course!"

"You didn't even talk to Helen," Alec said, rolling his eyes and totally forgetting about the man. It was probably all in his head. "I told you to but you didn't."

"I will," Aline said. "Eventually. I just need the right moment."

"How about you say hello and make your moment."

"Why did you come back anyway," Aline said obviously sick of the topic of her lack of a date with Helen. "You don't even like parties."

"My new roommate was having sex with some woman when I walked in," Alec said. "Kinda awkward."

"No kidding," Aline grinned at him.

"Arg," Alec said. "Do you think I can switch rooms? Maybe we could be roommates?"

"They don't let opposite genders room together," Aline said. "Which in our case is kinda hilarious."

"Yeah I hear ya," Alec said. "Who did you get stuck with anyway?"

"Oh just some girl," Aline said.

"Cute girl?" Alec asked.

"I guess," Alice said tentatively. "I mean she really isn't my type. Too busty."

"If you say so," Alec sighed. He was very tired now and wanted to go to bed. Even the one couple who had been dancing this whole time had left now. The Quad was now empty save for himself and Aline so he knew he had no choice. "I better go to bed. Classes start tomorrow."

"Yeah me too," Aline said. She got up and gave him a hug before she headed off to her dorm. Alec let out a long breath. Why of all people did he have to get Jace as a roommate? What had he done in another life to deserve such a thing?

Alec walked down the hall slowly, trying to make the walk take as long as possible, but eventually he arrived at this dorm room. To his great relief the sock on the door was gone. When Alec entered he found Jace asleep and snoring.

Oh great, Alec thought, he snores too.
Alec put his ear bud headphones in and tried to fall asleep to the sound of soft music while ignoring the loud raspy breathing on the other side of the room.

Tomorrow he was going to request a room change.

By some miracle Alec did eventually fall asleep but when he awoke he didn't feel very rested. He checked his phone and realized it was still too early to be worried about being late for class.

Alec rolled over and saw Jace still there but thankfully he wasn't snoring at the moment. Jace's blankets had moved around quite a lot while Jace slept and Alec became aware that Jace slept naked. It had always annoyed Alec how hot Jace was. Alec really didn't like Jace. In fact he almost hated the guy. Alec couldn't understand how anyone could be like Jace. How could you detach the physical from the emotional? And even if you could why would you want to?

Jace started snoring again and Alec decided he had time to request that room change today before class. He'd woken up early enough on account of the snoring so solving the problem during that time seemed fitting.

"But he snores," Alec complained to the women behind the front desk. "I have lived with him all of one day and already he has brought a girl back to the dorm."

"I'm sorry," the women said. "But there aren't any other dorms available."

"Please," Alec said. "What if I find someone willing to switch?"

"Maybe," the women allowed. "But it would have to be a guy you swapped with. That's the men's dorm." Alec sighed. Aline had been right but it was so stupid. Alec was more likely to have sex with Jace than Aline! Why couldn't he dorm with her?

Alec headed to class in a foul mood. He thankfully shared this class with Aline and was therefore able to rant with her about the stupid dorm system. She indulged him a while then switched the topic.

"I have been asking about Helen," Aline said. "She isn't a freshman like us but her brother Mark is. And I got the feeling she has a lot more siblings still too young for university. Maybe she is out of my league what with the being older and totally gorgeous and all. Seriously she is like magical fairy hot."

"Just go ask her out already," Alec sighed. It was great to see Aline so open about her sexuality. Though she had told Alec about her preference for girls when they were young it had only been his coming out to his parents that had given her the courage to come out to hers.

"Did you find anything out about the guy that was staring at you?" Aline countered. Alec stared at her, totally nonplussed. "The guy at the party yesterday? You asked me who he was, remember?"

"Nope," Alec said. "I totally forgot. It was probably just my imagination. You can't change the topic that easily."

"What if Helen's straight?" Aline whined.

"Do you have any reason to believe she is straight?" Alec asked.

"I saw her checking out a guy," Aline sighed. "That much feminine beauty will just be wasted on a man!"

"Are you sure she was checking him out?" Alec said. "Because that is kind of a give away."
"I'm not totally sure," Aline explained. "But it kinda looked like she was."

"If you like her this much you should just go talk to her," Alec said. "I bet you could find her in the Quad sometime. She's in your dorm building right?"

"Yeah," Aline said. "But if I don't say anything I can keep the fantasy alive."

Alec sighed but was saved from having to answer his smitten cousin when class started. Alec was, of course, sitting next to Aline since she was the only person he knew in the whole school. Although that wasn't technically true since he knew Jace. Alec looked around but couldn't see Jace's stupid blonde head anywhere. Alec knew he was a freshman and should therefore be in this class; the only explanation for his absence was that Jace was skipping. Class was rather boring and Alec almost couldn't blame Jace but still not a great way to start the year; skipping the first class of your mandatory freshman year intro class.

Alec turned his head to check the clock rather than pull his phone out. Still half the class to go. He sighed but as his gaze shifted from the clock he thought he saw a familiar shadow in the back of the class. Before Alec could give the man a good stare or try and see his face properly the teacher asked him a question and Alec quickly turned to face forward again.

"What?" Alec asked. "Sorry."

"Is there something very important going on behind you?" the teacher asked.

"No," Alec said. "Sorry."

Alec answered the question then continued to face forward rather than look behind him again. He had the strangest feeling that the stranger had been looking at him despite never seeing the man's face.

"I think it was the same guy," Alec said to Aline as they left class. "Though I still haven't seen his face."

"Still think you are imagining it?" Aline asked.

"Are you going to ask out Helen?" Alec countered.


Chapter End Notes

So I have no self-control and decided to upload another chapter!

Okay author's notes... hmm... what to say? Do you want to see more of Aline and Helen in this story? Oh and I am really curious how many of you readers are here because you liked my other Mortal Instruments stories and how many of you are here because you just found this story on its own. Please leave a comment and tell me! I am super curious! And again I answer all comments!

Chapter Three Sneak Peak:
"Why did I let you get another cat!" Tessa whined.

"Because I came up with a second mind-blowingly awesome history pun and just had to use it!" Magnus beamed down at his two kitties who were now both rubbing up against his legs.

"So I can blame your major for the furry thing that keeps kneading my head at night?" Tessa said.

"My little angels would never do such a thing!" Magnus exclaimed.

"Oh and nap on my freshly cleaned clothes until they are made of cat hair?" Tessa added. "And meow at all hours of the night for food when their dish is full!"

"He probably wanted water," Magnus defended his cat. "It isn't Chairman or Catsby's fault they don't speak English." Tessa laughed, finished the last bit of her lunch then stood up.

"I have class," she said. "See you later crazy cat lady."

"Crazy cat dude!" Magnus called after her.
Magnus's Disappointment

Chapter Summary

Beta read by Holly0114 (Also thanks to Holly for helping me work on my description skills. Some of the description was actually written by her, not all but some.)

I was going to upload this tomorrow but... Holly edited it really fast so I thought why not! I will probably have the next chapter for you sometime this week end.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Magnus watched the blue eyed boy dance from the shadows. He had such easy playful movements and Magnus found himself spell bound. He was not happy to see that this boy was dancing with a girl and he was even less happy when a slow song came on and they danced closely together. Magnus still had some hope they were just friends until they stopped to sit down and the boy held the girl's hand. Such a shame.

Magnus left the sad excuse for a party and headed home. The tree-lined streets were unusually quiet, leaving Magnus with only his lonely thoughts. Magnus trudged along the sidewalk wallowing in his own pity as the streetlights cast taunting shadows across the dark pavement. Usually he didn't bother with the first party of the school year since it was always lame and he still wasn't sure what had possessed him to come to this one.

It was nice not to have to live in dorms anymore, one of the benefits to completing freshman year. His apartment was right across the street from the university which made it oh so convenient.

When Magnus walked in he was greeted by his cat. That was another thing Magnus loved about living off campus; you could have pets. After stroking the silky fur of the cat until he ran off Magnus went into the modest living space. The floors were that plastic hardwood that you knew was fake but still looked like hardwood and the walls were painted a faded light blue. The tv was the focal point of the living room with a sofa and two chairs positioned across from it. In one of these chairs sat his roommate, Tessa, reading a book. This was in no way a surprise and a sight Magnus was very accustomed to seeing whenever he got home. Tessa had chosen literature as her major for a good reason. She was definitely a book worm, though a rather old fashioned one. Magnus usually found her reading old classics like Tail of Two Cities rather than modern hits like Harry Potter.

"How was the party?" Tessa asked looking up from her book.

"Lame," Magnus said, sitting down on the sofa next to her. "Shouldn't have bothered."

"Meet anyone you fancy?"

"He was dancing with a girl."

"Sorry," Tessa said. "If it's any consolation Will is still being super confusing."

"How so?" Magnus asked as he sat down next to her. Will was sort of Tessa's guy. They had been dating only a few weeks but Tessa was getting very mixed signals from him.
"One minute I think he really likes me and the next he won't talk to me," Tessa said. "Oh and now his best friend Jem has asked me out so there's that."

"Run!" Magnus said, laughing. "Run and hide. You are in dangerous waters, my friend."

"See," Tessa said. "You are already cheering up."

"You always know just what to say," Magnus smiled at her. Tessa had started out as just an excellent roommate but had become an excellent friend along the way.

Magnus whiled away the rest of the evening on his laptop but he found his mind wondering back to those captivating blue eyes and the way their owner's body moved across the dance floor. But it wasn't just the boy's eyes that had been remarkable. His dark black hair suited him well and there was something kind about his face when he smiled. Magnus stared off into the distance, his mind recalling the gentle smile on the boy's face when he remembered the boy had only smiled because of his girlfriend.

"Why are all the best ones straight?" Magnus asked the universe at large. Tessa looked up from her book and smiled at him.

"For women like me," she said.

"You are greedy aren't you?" Magnus said. "You have Will and Jem and now you want this guy too?" Tessa just smiled but Magnus knew if she wasn't already worried about him she would have teased him more. This reminded him why Tessa was worried, which made him miserable. Not wanting to have an uncomfortable discussion that would only make him more aware of recent events, Magnus decided to call it a night.

"I'm going to bed," Magnus said, with a sigh. He already knew he was doomed in the relationship department anyway. There was no point remembering the beautiful eyes and smile of a guy who was obviously in a relationship with a girl. He just got out of one waste-of-time relationship and wasn't looking for another one.

The next morning Magnus dressed in his usual flamboyant attire. Today Magnus picked out a purple shirt with embellished cuffs and black skinny jeans. He could have added glitter but he wasn't feeling particularly glittery today. Magnus had cereal for breakfast and was just leaving for his first class when he remembered it was Clary's first day on university. Clary and Magnus had been neighbours growing up and she was his oldest friend, even if she was a few years younger than him.

'Just checking up on you,' Magnus texted. 'How's your first day going?' There was no instant reply so Magnus continued to the door.

"I am headed to class as well," Tessa said. "I shall accompany you."

"Are you reading Pride and Prejudice again?" Magnus asked. "Most people don't say 'accompany you'."

"I am reading Sense and Sensibility actually and it is not my fault the English language has gone downhill since Jane Austen's time," Tessa said. "Lol just can't be a word."

"English Lit snob," Magnus teased.

"History dork," Tessa countered. Magnus laughed. He was grateful Tessa wasn't walking on eggshells around him this morning. They had a pleasant walk to campus then split up to head to their respective classes.
Magnus was on the way to his History class when he walked past a large, imposing building. Positioned at the center of campus, it was by far the most architecturally striking building the university had. Built in the style of Greek revival it housed the engineering department as well as the biggest lecture hall on campus. All the freshman would be gathered there at this time, which meant the boy with the blue eyes might be there. Without thinking Magnus snuck into the building and continued through to the lecture hall. He stood in the back, his eyes searching the crowd.

He found the boy more easily than he thought possible with only the back of the attendees visible. Magnus recognized the girl sitting beside him. She was the same girl the stunning boy had danced with last night. Despite this Magnus allowed himself to stare. When the boy turned around Magnus sunk deeper into the shadows rather than be seen. What the hell was he doing? The boy was looking right at him! Magnus took another step back to be sure he stayed out of sight. When the teacher asked the boy a question the boy didn't turn away. Magnus wondered if the boy had heard the teacher at all. The teacher repeated the question then finally lost patience.

"Is there something very important going on behind you?" the teacher asked.

"No," the boy said, his head snapping back to face forward. "Sorry."

Of course not, Magnus thought sourly, since the guy was straight! Why the hell had he come in here? Hadn't he learned his lesson? Magnus shook his head and quickly ducked out of that class to head to his own. Sighing at his own stupidity Magnus checked his phone.

'You don't need to check up on me,' Clary texted. 'Everything's fine. I am in that big freshmen orientation class right now.' Magnus realized Clary had been in that room and he hadn't even noticed her, which was impressive since she had the brightest red hair he had ever seen.

'Biscuit,' Magnus typed back smiling. Magnus had called her that since she had been a little banshee of a toddler that had knocked over all her mother's freshly baked biscuits. 'You shouldn't be texting in class.'

'Isn't that the whole point of going to university?' Biscuit replied. 'That I can now text in class without being in trouble cause I am a grown up. ^_^'

'Grown up's don't use ^_^,' Magnus replied beaming at his phone.

'Not true!' Clary replied. 'Mom uses them all the time.'

'Yes but Jocelyn uses them wrong,' Magnus texted.

'Not since she married Luke,' Clary corrected. 'Luke seems to have taught her much.'

'Is Luke the Yoda of emoji's now?' Magnus replied.

'That is great!' Clary texted. 'I am calling Luke that from now on!'

'Biscuit! You should be paying attention to class,' Magnus texted. 'Listen to the teacher. I shall not answer after this last message. But you and Simon should come over for dinner tonight. I am making my famous call to the Chinese place.'

'Lol,' Clary replied. Magnus put his phone away, smiling, and headed to his history lecture.

After a rather fascinating lecture about Genghis Khan Magnus went home for lunch and found Tessa already there. Neither of them ever bothered with the school cafeteria since their apartment was so close. They had a smallish kitchen. The sink was too close to the fridge in Magnus's opinion and the
counter space was minimal but with just the two of them living here, and Magnus never cooking, it served their needs well enough. Especially since Magnus never cooked and Tessa preferred reading to cooking even if she was good at it when she wanted to be.

"You invited Clary and Simon over but you didn't get groceries," Tessa sighed as she opened the fridge and pantry, in turn taking inventory.

"We are gonna order Chinese," Magnus explained. He was currently eating leftover Chinese from yesterday.

"You eat that too much," Tessa said. "You need to date someone who can cook!"

"Do Will or Jem cook?" Magnus asked.

"Not to my knowledge," Tessa said then after another moment of frustrated searching added. "That's it! I give up. But we are going grocery shopping tomorrow," Tessa started making toast as she continued in a calmer voice. "I don't know them well yet. I so far have the impression Jem doesn't have any family but rather thinks of Will as his family so I am rather wary of getting between such close friends."

"You were dating Will first," Magnus reminded her. "Maybe stick with him and don't agree to go out with Jem."

"But Will is confusing me," Tessa said. "And Jem is so kind."

"Then pick Jem and ditch Will."

"What if that breaks up their friendship?" Tessa asked.

"I don't know what to tell you," Magnus said.

"You are no help."

"I know," Magnus said as she sat down across from him at their round wooden table with her poor excuse for a lunch.

"Really we need to buy groceries!" she exclaimed. "This is ridiculous." A loud meow came from across the room. "See even Chairman agrees with me!"

"Ah but has The Great Catsby said anything?" Magnus asked.

"Why did I let you get another cat!" Tessa whined.

"Because I came up with a second mind-blowingly awesome history pun and just had to use it!" Magnus beamed down at his two kitties who were now both rubbing up against his legs.

"So I can blame your major for the furry things that keep kneading my head at night?" Tessa said.

"My little angels would never do such a thing!" Magnus exclaimed.

"Oh and napping on my freshly cleaned clothes until they are made of cat hair?" Tessa added. "And meowing at all hours of the night for food when their dish it full!"

"He probably wanted water," Magnus defended his cat. "It isn't Chairman or Catsby's fault they don't speak English." Tessa laughed, finished the last bit of her lunch then stood up.
"I have class," she said. "See you later crazy cat lady."

"Crazy cat dude!" Magnus called after her.

He didn't have any other classes today and it was too early in the year for homework so Magnus contented himself with Netflix. Magnus could have gone out, maybe met up with Raphael. He could have called his old friend Ragnor. He could have text Catarina to see if she wanted to skype-call from her fancy medical school. But all Magnus wanted at the moment was to stay home and watch a cheesy movie. He seriously considered eating a tub of ice cream while he was at it.

Magnus sat on the couch, wrapped himself in a blanket and settled in while the opening credits played. Chairmen Meow curled up in his lap and Magnus petted the cat absently as he watched. The Great Catsby came to sleep beside him and Magnus was very grateful for their warm presence as he started comparing the actor's eyes to those penetrating blue ones that had grabbed his attention earlier. The actor's blue eyes weren't half so lovely as the boy's eyes Magnus had spied on in class today. Magnus, though slightly annoyed that his fixation with a pair of deep blue eyes, didn't actually abandon the movie until he started comparing the lead female actress' blonde hair to Camille's. How he had gone this long without thinking about her was a mystery to him.

Magnus had just found out Camille, his former girlfriend, had been cheating on him all summer with some guy named Ralf. He hated that she and Ralf still went to this school. To the best of Magnus's knowledge they were currently together somewhere happy as can be, which irritated and depressed him. How dare they be happy when he was miserable! It was one thing to cheat on someone when it was just sex, it was another to cheat on someone when it was more than that. Though both sucked, a lot. And in this case Camille had done both. If she had wanted Ralf in the first place why had she dated Magnus anyway?

Magnus sighed as he shut down the movie. It was almost time for dinner and he was suddenly hoping Clary would arrive early and provide a distraction. To this end Magnus texted her to say he would love if she could come over sooner. To keep himself from staring at his phone until Biscuit replied Magnus started making tea. He was just sitting down on the sofa drinking it when Clary replied they were already on their way.

This is what best friends were for, Magnus thought as he called the Chinese place and ordered everyone's usual. He knew Tessa would be back for dinner so he ordered for her as well. Magnus looked down at his mug. It had the logo of his favourite youtube channel on it, which of course was a history channel. Clary had given it to Magnus for his birthday last year. Turning back to his phone Magnus resumed the Epic Rap Battles of History video he was watching. He loved to fact check these videos whenever they were about historical figures he knew. Sometimes he researched the ones he didn't know.

"Magnus," Clary called as she entered his apartment with Simon. Clary had a key to this apartment and he would never have expected her to knock.

"Over here," Magnus called. He closed the YouTube app on his phone and stood up.

"Made your famous call yet?" Clary teased.

"Yes," Magnus said. "I am far more prepared than last time."

"Last time we ate dinner at nine o'clock," Simon reminded him.

"I know, I know," Magnus said. "I can't magic food out of thin air you know. Even take-out takes time."
"Wouldn't that be great though," Simon said. "Food out of thin air?"

"It would solve world hunger," Clary piped in as she took her usual seat on Magnus's sofa. If Clary had been a bit older when Magnus had come to university he would have asked her to be his roommate. But alas she was his adorable little Biscuit and had been still in high school at the time. Besides he would never have met Tessa if Clary could have been his roommate back then.

Sometimes he liked to refer to Clary as his little sister just to confuse people. They looked at her flaming red hair and pale skin then compared that to Magnus's black hair, asian features and caramel skin. The look on people's face was always priceless as they tried to make the connection.

"I just want to solve my hunger," Simon complained. Clary rolled her eyes at him and Magnus couldn't help but be jealous. He was happy Clary was happy but until recently he had been happy like that too, or at least he thought he had. She cheated on you all summer, Magnus reminded himself forcefully.

"Where is Tessa?" Clary asked, as Simon sat beside her.

"Class," Magnus replied, he checked his phone then added. "But it just ended."

"What do you want to bet Tessa walks in here with her nose in a book?" Simon asked.

"Why bet when the answer is so obvious?" Magnus said seriously.

Indeed when Tessa arrived a short while later she did have a book open and held up in front of her face. Magnus always marveled at her ability to never walk into walls when she did this.

Simon and Clary didn't get up from the sofa. Magnus was sitting in the leather armchair on a slight angle to the television. This left the matching armchair on the other side of the sofa available, which Tessa sat in all the while still with her nose in her book.

"How did you know where to sit?" Simon asked.

"I have this room memorized," Tessa said. "I live here remember?"

"I know you walked here reading," Simon said. "Do you also have all of campus and back memorized?"

"It's Tessa's magical power," Magnus teased his friend. "To be able to read and walk without crashing into anything."

"My teacher just gave us this book," Tessa defended herself. "It's brilliant."

They continued to tease Tessa and she continued to ignore them, trying and read until dinner arrived. Simon was the first to jump up, letting go of Clary's hand and dashing to the door. They sat in the living room to eat since Magnus didn't have a formal dining table.

"I did see some other art programs I liked," Clary continued the conversation they were having before the food arrived. "But this one had everything I wanted as well as great company." Clary smiled at Magnus. Magnus was so glad she had come to his school, especially after everything with Camille.

"You know I would have gone to any school you went to," Simon said.

"And I told you that is stupid," Clary reminded him. "You would have resented me if I dragged you
across the country!"

"Never!" Simon said beaming at her. Clary sighed. Magnus knew Simon's total lack of independence from her was a source of concern for Clary.

"What is your major?" Magnus asked Simon.

"Undeclared," Simon announced.

"How decisive of you," Magnus said sarcastically.

"I don't have to declare until third year," Simon said. "Plenty of time to figure things out."

"You say that now," Magnus said. "But third year will creep up on you."

"Magnus is right," Tessa said. "You should figure out what you want to do."

"Art, Lit, History," Simon said pointing to them all in turn as he named their majors. He then pointed to himself as he added. "Rockstar. The Immortal Instruments are going all the way!"

"Study music then," Magnus suggested.

"Rockstars don't actually sing," Simon explained. "Besides, I'm a bassist."

"Why is your band called The Immortal Instruments?" Tessa asked.

"We play instruments so skillfully," Simon said with enthusiasm. "That our music shall make us immortal. Like the Beatles!"

"If you say so," Tessa said but she was smiling at him.

"Eric, Kirk and Matt liked the name," Simon whined. From what Clary had told him, Magnus was fairly sure those were the other members of Simon's band.

There was a knock at the door; all eyes turned to Magnus and Tessa to see if they were expecting someone. Magnus knew he hadn't invited anyone who wasn't already here and saw a similar conclusion on Tessa's face. Nevertheless he had a feeling he knew exactly who it was.

Magnus got up to answer the door.

Chapter End Notes

So... this story is starting to get ALL the points of view! Is that going to bother anyone? What do you think about that? My last story had 4 main points of view and 2 guest points of view ones. So far I have 5 chapters of this story planned out and 5 points of view... not sure how that happened but there you go. Please tell me if it gets confusing! I updated the summary since I am now including more than just Clace and Malec in this story though they will still be the main ones.

Chapter 4 Sneak Peak:

The women gave her that look again and Clary wasn't sure what to make of it. Clary wished she could remember the woman's name. She was fairly sure it wasn't a bad look
and since the lines of communication were now open…

"What, I mean why," Clary stopped to think then rephrased. "When you look at me I can't figure out that expression on your face."

"Oh sorry," she said and to Clary's surprised she blushed slightly. "I misjudged you earlier. You are actually kinda hot."

"What?" Clary asked shaking her head as if to clear her ears. She must of heard wrong.

"Sorry," she said. "Maybe I should explain. I like girls."

"So…" Clary tried again. "All those looks… you were… checking me out?"
Clary's Glaze

Chapter Summary

Beta read by Holly 0114

Oh and I wanted to tell you that the person who's point of view the chapter is will have their name in the chapter title. Hopefully this clears up any confusion.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

A tall beautiful women stood on Magnus's doorway with a graceful stance and long blonde hair like spun silver.

"What do you want Camille?" Magnus asked her. Clary could hear the anger in her friend's voice but also the pain. Clary hated Camille for what she had done to Magnus.

"I came to return this," Camille's smooth, silky voice replied.

"I came to return this," Camille's smooth, silky voice replied.

"Thanks," Magnus said sarcastically. "But I'd rather have the last year of my life back." Despite his words Clary saw Magnus hold out his hand and take what it was she offered. Then Magnus slammed the door in her face.

"I'm proud of you!" Clary exclaimed as Magnus returned to sit with them. Despite the show of strength Magnus looked very drained. "I would have done more than slam the door on her though." Clary waited but Magnus didn't speak. "I might have kicked her. If you want I could track her down and kick her for you." Magnus laughed humorlessly then seconds later tears started to fall from his eyes. Clary was up out of her chair and hugging her friend before anyone else could blink.

"I wish I didn't care!" Magnus cried. "She cheated on me for months! Why can't I not care?"

"You are a caring person," Tessa said softly. "That isn't a bad thing."

"Yes it is," Magnus said. "It means I am always the one getting hurt." He pulled away from Clary and sat up with a sudden look of determination. "That's it! I am done dating."

"What about the boy you liked at the party?" Tessa asked.

"You mean the one with a girlfriend," Magnus said, waving his hand as if to dismiss the idea. "Oh yeah holding out hope for that one!" He scoffed. "Besides it would end the same why they all do, which is badly." Clary hated to see her friend just give up like this. She reached out to him but didn't know what she could do to help.

"Magnus," Clary said kindly. "You just need something to take your mind off that cheating bitch."

"I can't keep doing this," Magnus sighed.

Now Clary really didn't know what to say so she pulled Magnus into a hug and let him cry on her shoulder. Tessa joined in the hug but Magnus didn't stop crying. He clung to them both until the tears
eventually subsided.

Clary watched Magnus for the rest of the evening. He never let go of the necklace Camille had returned to him. Clary wanted to snatch the offending object from Magnus hands as if that could remove the horrid women from his heart as well.

Magnus didn't join in the conversation, but Clary tried to keep one going anyway with only minimal success. She had just decided to stay the night on her best friend's couch to make sure Magnus was okay when Tessa pulled her aside.

"Clary," Tessa said softly when they stood together down the hall and out of earshot. "I know what you are thinking."

"How-"

"I know you want to help," Tessa said. "But I will be here and I don't think he means what he said. Why don't you come back over tomorrow?"

"I don't know," Clary said. "I have never seen him like this before."

"You weren't here the day he found out about Camille and Ralf," Tessa reminded her and though Clary knew Tessa hadn't meant it like that, to Clary it felt like a slap in the face. Clary had been at home with her parents preparing for university while Magnus had his heart torn apart, again. She still felt bad for being so far away while her friend was hurting.

"You know I would have been here if I could," Clary said.

"I know," Tessa said. "I didn't mean to imply otherwise, I just meant you don't have to camp out on our couch to be there for your friend."

"Alright," Clary surrendered. "But you have to promise to text me if he spirals down into misery."

"I promise," Tessa said.

"Stop talking about me!" Magnus called from across the room.

"Who says we were talking about you?" Tessa called back easily. This was one of the things Clary liked about Tessa, though she valued truth above all else, she knew how to be evasive when necessary. Clary was really glad Magnus had a friend like Tessa.

The evening slowly died down. Simon and Clary were soon saying their goodbyes. Clary hugged Magnus twice before leaving with Simon to walk back to campus. It was dark outside now but the street lamps lit up the sidewalk and reflected off the cement. It must have rained, Clary thought as she stared down at the way the light glistened off the water trapped in the small pores of the cement.

"Do you think Magnus is going to be okay?" Simon asked as they walked.

"I hope so," Clary said worried. "I am glad Tessa is there."

Simon changed the topic to classes and Clary half listened while they finished walking. Clary had been friends with Simon throughout high school, though she hadn't known Simon for as long as she'd known Magnus. It had been just a few months ago when Simon had admitted he liked her and that had started their relationship. Although Clary hadn't really felt the same at the beginning, over time things changed. She knew Simon loved her and she desperately wanted to return his affections. Simon was an excellent boyfriend and he deserved to be happy and Clary was determined to make
him happy.

When they reached Simon's dorm building he said goodbye with a quick kiss before agreeing to meet her tomorrow so they could walk class together.

"I was going to go see Magnus before class," Clary said. "How about I just meet you in class?"

"Depriving me of your company are you?" Simon teased. She laughed and kissed him again before they headed off in different directions.

Clary had just met her roommate yesterday but wasn't quite sure what to make of her. Clary's dorm mate kept to herself but sometimes Clary got a weird feeling when the woman looked at her.

When Clary opened the dorm room she found her sitting on her bed with her laptop open in her lap. Clary said hi then turned to her side of the room without expecting an answer.

"My brother says I should make friends," the woman said suddenly looking up from her laptop. "He says we can't just spend the whole year only talking to each other."

"He is probably right," Clary said, taken aback. "Though I can't talk 'cause the only people at this school I know are my boyfriend and my best friend."

"Oh," she said. "Are those two different people or is your boyfriend also your best friend?" Clary laughed at the idea of Magnus being her boyfriend.

"No," Clary said. "They are definitely two different people."

"Well my people and your people should hang out sometimes. Then we can officially say we each know more than two people are this school."

"I'd like that," Clary said.

"Great!"

The woman gave her that look again and Clary wasn't sure what to make of it. Clary wished she could remember the woman's name. She was fairly sure it wasn't a bad look and since the lines of communication were now open…

"What, I mean why," Clary stopped to think then rephrased. "When you look at me I can't figure out the expression on your face and I just want to make sure I haven't offended you or… something."

"Oh sorry," she said and to Clary's surprise she blushed slightly. "I misjudged you earlier. You are actually kinda hot."

"What?" Clary asked shaking her head as if to clear her ears. She must have heard wrong.

"Sorry," she said. "Maybe I should explain. I like girls." With a wicked grin on her face she added. "Well I like girls too."

"So…" Clary tried again. "All those looks… you were… checking me out?"

"Yeah I was," she said. "Sorry. You're attractive. It's hard not to notice."

"Well," Clary said. "That makes sense." The woman smiled with a slightly awkward laugh. Clary had never been looked at like that by anyone other than Simon. She wasn't surprised she hadn't recognized it.
"Again sorry," she said. "I didn't mean to make you uncomfortable."

"It's okay," Clary said. "That explanation just didn't occur to me."

"I'll stop, promise," she said, with her hands in the air as if in surrender. She looked a little worried or maybe guilty which made Clary feel bad.

"No really it's okay," Clary said. "It's not like I am worried you are going to jump me or anything... I mean my best friend is also bi so..." Clary took a deep breath. "Let's try this again shall we? Hi, I'm Clary."

"Hi, I'm Helen."

"It's nice to meet you, Helen," Clary said.

"Right back at you," Helen smiled and Clary made a mental note to not forget her name again. This was a promising start to a friendship Clary desperately needed. After all, success at university required a network of study buddies. Clary made a mental note to never walk around her dorm in her underwear as she got ready for bed. Helen was rather beautiful, even Clary knew that. She had light blonde, almost pale gold hair that fell in ringlets down to her shoulders. She was very slim but not in a way that gave off an impression of weakness.

The next morning Clary checked in on Magnus who seemed either better or at least hiding his pain more effectively. Clary guessed the latter but she was now late for class. Promising herself to return again after class, Clary quickly headed back to campus. Her heart pounding from the exercise Clary ducked into class just as the teacher started talking. Simon had saved her a seat.

Once she was settled in her seat and her heart rate had returned to normal, Clary found herself yawning. She didn't like mandatory classes. She preferred the ones where she got to paint or learn something she was interested in and Introduction to Humanities fit neither criteria. To try and dispel her boredom Clary texted Magnus but he didn't answer. Hopefully he was in class and not sulking at home. With nothing to amuse herself with, Clary turned to look around the room. She recognized no one. She hadn't dragged Simon across the country but she had dragged him far enough away that all the kids she had gone to highschool with weren't here. At least she had a potential friend in Helen.

Clary sighed and was just about to turn back to face the teacher when two blonde boys caught her attention. Neither were looking at her when she spotted them but the one closest to her turned as if he could sense her gaze on him. He looked back at her. She stared into his golden eyes for only a moment before Simon touched her on the shoulder. Simon asked what was wrong in a whisper since the teacher was still giving his lecture. Clary just smiled at him reassuringly and turned her body back to face forward.

By the time class ended Clary had quite forgotten the whole incident, but it seemed Simon hadn't. He asked her about why she was distracted as soon as they exited class. She said it was nothing but she couldn't help still looking through the crowd for those gold eyes.

"If it was nothing you wouldn't be searching," Simon reminded her. "What are you looking for?"

Clary let out the breath she was holding. What was she doing?

"It's nothing," Clary said forcing herself to stop searching. "I just couldn't focus in class." She intertwined her arm with his and they walked together down the wide halls to the cafeteria for lunch.

Simon and Clary were sitting on cold metal chairs and almost finished eating their fries and burgers when the blonde boy she had made eye contact with in class came over to them. The other blonde
stood a few steps back as the boy approached their table.

"Hello," the boy said with a great deal more confidence then Clary thought could possibly be put into one word.

"Uh hi?" Clary said uncertainly.

"You were looking at me in class," the boy said.

"I was looking at the clock," Clary answered. She knew it was a pathetic lie but lying had never been a great skill of hers.

"Unless my eyes can tell the time," the boy said suavely. "You were looking at me." Those golden eyes seemed to pierce right into her soul as he gazed at her. Clary couldn't deny this guy was stunning. The muscles on his arms in particular caught her eye. She pulled her eyes back to look at his face and decided his hair would be her excuse.

"You and your friend have very blonde hair," Clary said. "It's rather blinding."

"Like the sun," the boy sneered. Clary could tell Simon was getting uncomfortable and suddenly felt very guilty for checking out a random guy with her boyfriend right beside her.

"Please go away," Clary said.

"Not until you tell me why you were staring?"

"Like I said, very blonde. It caught my eye but now that I know how annoying the person attached to that hair is I am over it."

"Too bad," the boy said as he turned. "Your loss." He smiled again and it nearly took her breath away. No one should be allowed to be that attractive. The golden boy went to join what could only be his twin and Clary watched as the two boys swaggered out of the cafeteria.

"Rude," Clary said.

"So blondes huh?" Simon teased and though he seemed fine Clary knew him well enough to hear the anxiety in his voice. "Are you telling me I need to dye my hair?" Clary hit him playfully on the shoulder.

"Don't be stupid," Clary said. "Those two look exactly alike it would make anyone do a double take." This was true which made an excellent thing to tell Simon but Clary couldn't help but think about how different those two boys were. Their eyes were their most visually distinguishable feature. However, the boy with the green eyes had a look on his face that made his beautiful features seem sour and though the boy with golden eyes still had an arrogant look on his face, it was softer somehow.

"I am going to Magnus's," Clary told Simon as they threw away the wrappers from their lunch and placed their plastic trays in the pile.

"I'll come too," Simon said. Clary had expected Simon to go hang out with his band friends. She didn't want to voice her worries that he was only coming because the hot blonde had made him jealous. So Clary watched Simon be bored out of his mind while Clary sat with Magnus and tried to convince him not to give up on loving anyone again. Her silly friend remained unconvinced.

"I have to get to class," Clary said looking Magnus right in the eye. "But I shall be back after and
"You aren't my teacher," Magnus complained. "You can't give me homework."

"I am your best friend," Clary countered. "I can give you anything I want!" She grinned at him then kissed his forehead and dashed out of the apartment holding Simon's hand. Clary said goodbye to Simon as they reached her painting class. He smiled, kissed her cheek and left. Clary, hoping that was a sign he was over this blonde thing, went to sit at the back of the class. She was pleasantly surprised to see Helen in this class and quickly changed to sit beside her dorm mate.

"Hi!" Clary said with maybe a bit too much enthusiasm.

"Uh hi," Helen said smiling at her. "What's got you so excited?"

"Never mind," Clary said. She didn't want to admit seeing someone she knew is what had made her so excited. "I didn't know you were an art major."

"I'm not," Helen said. "But I like painting so I chose this as an elective."

Clary and Helen's conversation was cut short when the teacher started talking. She assigned a warm up activity of painting something unusual you noticed recently from memory. Clary put some yellow, orange and brown paint on her palette and started to mix skin tones.

"That's amazing!" Helen whispered as she leaned over to see what Clary was painting.

"Not really," Clary said. She turned to see what Helen was painting. "Wow, but I thought we were painting something we saw today?"

"I saw a fairy today," Helen said. "I was just on TV."

"The ears are so pointed," Clary said. "And I love the wings! They almost look see through."

"Thanks," Helen said. "Though I have to ask. Where did you see golden eyes today?"

"Oh a guy in my Intro to Humanities class this morning," Clary said.

"Nice!" Helen said. "Bet he was hot."

"Yeah he was," Clary said. "Though he seems jerkish."

"Doesn't mean we can't enjoy the view," Helen said.

"I have a feeling this guy is like looking at the sun," Clary said. "If you look too long you will burn your eyes." Clary felt very gratified when Helen laughed at her joke. The teacher addressed the class again and the two girls returned to their paintings. Clary enjoyed the easy silence that comes from two friends working side by side.

The rest of the week passed by quickly with regular visits to Magnus, classes, getting to know Helen and spending time with Simon. When Saturday morning rolled around Clary could be found on Magnus's couch watching his favourite movie, Dream for an Insomniac. It's basically about a woman who can't sleep until she spends the night with her true love. Clary didn't know why Magnus insisted on watching these kinds of movies when he had given up dating but she indulged her friend all the same. After his miserable week Magnus earned the right to pick whatever movie he wanted. And Clary knew deep down Magnus was a hopeless romantic. There was no way Magnus Bane would ever give up on love.
Chapter End Notes

So I had an idea of what to write here then it vanished from my head. Sigh. *Hits head on desk* Oh right! Okay so I just wanted to let you know that these sneak peaks are sometimes not exactly what is in the next chapter due to editing. Chapter 5 is currently only half written so if I cut a part of it out as a sneak peak and then I edit it later there are changes. Though in the case of the last sneak peak I purposely cut some stuff out to avoid major spoilers. ^_^

And lastly I was having one of those 'the world is marvelous' moments the other day and wanted to share it with you.

Isn't it rather spectacular that I can be sitting here on a laptop in western Canada and uploading something I have written that is then viewed by people all other the world. People who have and will never meet me are reading something I wrote. That still totally blows me way! And the most amazing part is that the people who read it can tell me what they thing of it. Real time feedback is such a wonder. There was a time when even if you wrote a book and that book was read by millions you couldn't communicate with those millions. (I doubt Jane Austen got emails from her fans.) You couldn't know what they thought of your work. The only feedback you could get is if they bought the book or not.

Despite the fact I have grown up all my life with modern communication technology, it still is a marvel and a constant source of joy in my life.

I would really appreciate it if you left me a comment! I answer ALL comments and if you answer back I answer again and if you answer again I reply again and so on. I check this site at least once a day and often far more than that.

Sneak Peak of Chapter 5:

The problem was that Tessa couldn't figure out who she liked more. Jem was in his last year of classical music school and Will worked as a firemen. The two of them were so different and yet they were inseparable. They were brother's in all but blood for they looked nothing alike. Jem had brown hair with light streaks in it and his eyes were like Magnus's, the way they curved. Jem had told her once when she asked that his mother had been asian. Will on the other hand had pale skin and dark black hair. Where Jem's eyes were brown Will's were violet blue.

"Tessa!"

She turned and it was as if the universe had been listening to her thoughts. There with a smile on his face stood Will Herondale. Tessa breathed a sigh of relief that Jem was not with him.

"Hey Will," Tessa said as he approached her table.

"What are the chances of meeting you here?" Will said as he sat across from her.
Tessa's Revelation

Chapter Summary

Beta read by Holly0114

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Tessa sat at the glass topped table by the window and looked down at the words on the page in front of her. She always preferred to read in natural light. Sunlight somehow improved the entire book reading experience. This was one of her favourite places in town to read, with its organic assortment of chairs and couches and the piano in the corner. Anyone was welcome to play it and Tessa enjoyed reading here even more when someone sat to create beauty with its fine black and white keys. There was something about live music that really completed the ambiance.

She always came here when she needed some alone time or she needed to think. Today she needed to think. Will and Jem were starting to become quite a challenge in her life. Will was a little confusing but she still cared for him. And who couldn't help but care for Jem with his kind eyes and loving heart? They were best friends, however, and Tessa wasn't sure how long she could keep seeing them both before they found out about each other or initiated the exclusive talk with her. Neither option sounded particularly appealing.

She feared losing them both but she also feared them losing each other. She had listened to each of them talk of the other with great affection and knew their bond was too valuable to be worth breaking for her. Will was estranged from his family and Jem's family died years ago leaving him alone in the world save for Will. The way each of them talked of the other made Tessa even more sure that dating her wasn't worth ruining their friendship. If she was really a selfless person she would stop seeing them both but Tessa couldn't do that. She couldn't even figure out who she liked more.

Jem was in his last year of classical music school and Will worked as a fireman. The two of them were so different and yet they were inseparable. They were brothers in all the real ways that matter, but they looked nothing alike. Jem had brown hair with light streaks in it and his eyes were like Magnus's, the way they angled up giving him an exotic appearance. Jem had told her once when she asked that his mother had been Asian. Will on the other hand had pale skin and dark black hair. Where Jem's eyes were brown Will's were violet blue.

"Tessa!"

She turned and it was as if the universe had been listening to her thoughts. There, with a smile on his face stood Will Herondale. Tessa breathed a sigh of relief that Jem was not with him.

"Hey Will," Tessa said as he approached her table.

"What are the chances of meeting you here?" Will said as he sat across from her.

"Quite high," Tess said smiling back at him. "I come here often. The real question is what someone like you is doing in a silly little half-cafe half-bookshop like this?" She smiled. Whenever she was
with Jem or Will she couldn't help but smile.

"You can't tell anyone," Will said reaching out to take her hand. Tessa let him and felt the warmth of his skin on hers as he spoke. "I am a huge bookworm."

"Why keep that a secret?" Tessa laughed at him.

"The guys at work do not think it is an appropriate hobby," Will laughed.

"Well then I think you need better work friends," Tessa stated.

"Maybe I do," Will agreed. He was smiling at her in such a way as to melt her heart. Only this morning she had been leaning toward choosing Jem but knowing they shared a love of books was making things confusing again.

But she couldn't keep stringing them along like this! She had to pick. Why was it so hard to choose?

"What is your favourite book?" Tessa asked, unable to stop herself from asking Will a question on this new exciting topic.

"What kind of question is that!" Will exclaimed.

"A very important question," Tessa said with a grin.

"I could never pick a favourite," Will said. "That is just wrong on so many levels."

"Correct answer," Tessa beamed at him. The conversation flowed easily as they talked of Alice in Wonderland, Pride and Prejudice, The Three Musketeers, Charles Dicken's The Moonstone, Jane Eyre, Lady Audley's Secret and many more. Tessa found herself pleasantly surprised by Will's excellent memory. He could quote passages word for word that she could only vaguely recall the meaning of. She did catch him off guard once, however.

"I can't believe you haven't read The Wide, Wide World," Tessa said. "I have to confess it isn't entertaining in an obvious way by today's standards, but in the 19th century it was hot stuff." Will laughed gently, but not as if he was laughing at her.

"I've never seen someone get so excited over books before," Will said smiling at her and Tessa realized he had been laughing at her enthusiasm, but again she couldn't find any insult in the gentle way he teased her. "You'd think they were diamonds."

"Books make better friends than diamonds," Tessa replied, blushing only slightly at the look Will was giving her.

"Is that why you love stories?" Will asked. He seemed rather intent on the question as if it mattered more than he let on.

"I love stories for so many reasons I couldn't count them all even if I had three lifetimes," Tessa said passionately. "Sometimes, when I have to do something I don't want to do, I pretend I'm a character from a book. It's easier to know what they would do." Will didn't reply. He seemed to be thinking over her answer.

"What about you?" Tessa asked, the look on his face was making her curious about his answer. "Why do you love stories?"

"They are always honest," Will confessed after a moment. "They make me feel less alone."
"Don't feel alone," Tessa said unable to stop herself from reaching her hand up to stroke Will's face. He closed his eyes and Tessa saw a peaceful expression on his face she hadn't seen before. Usually Will was sarcastic and guarded. Never before had she seen him like this, so open and vulnerable. The conversation topic was bringing out a whole new side of him.

"You seem different," she said without thinking and instantly wished she hadn't spoken. Will stiffened as if remembering something unpleasant. The open expression on his face vanished and it was as if he sunk back into himself. This was the Will she had known for the past few weeks, distant without provocation at a moment's notice.

"Why do you change like that?" Tessa asked. Will didn't speak. He looked down at his hands. Tessa tried to encourage him, tenderly stroking the side of his face.

"You are too kind. I know I seem...," Will whispered after a long silence, still looking anywhere but at her. All Tessa's attention was fixed on Will now. She studied his reluctant blue eyes and pained expression. She watched as he ran his hands through his black hair nervously. "I seem like I am okay but I... the people in my life they..."

Tessa waited for him to finish his sentence, but he remained silent. Her mind was trying to find the end of his sentence. The people in Will's life did what? No matter how she tried, Tessa couldn't think of one thing the people in Will's life could do that would make his face look like that.

"Tessa!"

She jumped when she heard her name yelled out. Tessa's hand went up to her throat in surprise. She suddenly remembered she was in a busy coffee shop. She wasn't alone with Will, no matter how focused on him she had been. Tessa caught her breath and turned to wave Magnus over, but Magnus was standing frozen staring at Will. After having his eyes locked on Will just long enough as to almost be creepy, Magnus slowly walked toward them.

"It's you," Magnus said in a whisper.

"Me who?" Will asked, his vulnerable expression completely gone now. Tessa mourned its loss almost as if it was Will himself that had left.

"You were at the party in the Quad on moving day at school."

"Will doesn't go to our school," Tessa said quickly. She had no clue what Magnus was going on about.

"But I saw him there," Magnus said to her.

"Unless you saw me standing next to Tessa," Will said addressing Magnus, even though the comment was clearly intended for Tessa. "You didn't see me. I have never set foot on that campus without her."

Magnus shook his head, looking slightly stunned.

"Sorry," Magnus said. "I guess if you were that guy you'd be with that black haired half-asian girl anyway." Tessa caught a touch of annoyance in Magnus's tone before it shifted to pleasant again. "Well, it's nice to meet you, Will, and there is a freshman at my school who looks just like you."

"I will take that as a compliment," Will said. "Seeing as I am too old to be a freshman."

"I thought you swore off dating?" Tessa teased Magnus rather than worry about the change in Will.
"Why would you care if Will was the guy from that party?"

"Just because I'm not going to date him," Magnus said. "Doesn't mean I don't want to meet him."

"You my friend," Tessa said. "Make no sense."

"Well are you still going to a movie with your senseless friend?" Magnus asked. "Or should I just leave you two alone?" He smiled and Tessa knew her generous friend would graciously excuse himself if that was what she so desired. If Will's expression hadn't been so dark she might have done just that.

"Will," Tessa said turning to him. "Sorry. I would love to continue our discussion but I do have a prior commitment."

"Of course," Will said. "See you later."

"Yes later," Tessa said. "Oh before you go, I have been meaning to ask if you have read A Tale of Two Cities?"

"Once," Will said. "But I didn't much care for it."

"I see," Tessa said, disappointed. Will excused himself quickly and left the cafe. Tessa stared after him. She couldn't quite identify her emotions at the moment though she knew hope, confusion, yearning and hurt were among them. She sat back down in her seat still gazing at the door.

"So," Magnus said cutting the silence after a few moments. "That is the infamous Will Herondale huh? I can't wait to meet Jem."

"Hush," Tessa scolded. "This isn't funny."

"I don't know. It's a little funny" Magnus smirked. "I could imagine worse problems then picking between two attractive men."

"I knew this whole 'I will never date again' thing was all lies," Tessa turned to face her friend and found him sitting across from her.

"I can appreciate the fragrance without indulging in the sweets, thank you" Magnus replied.

"So this mystery guy from the party, who you only want to smell, looks like Will?" Tessa asked.

"Well when you put it like that!" Magnus cried. "It just sounds gross."

"You were the one who brought up fragrance."

"It was a metaphor," Magnus said. "You would think a literary type like you could appreciate a good metaphor! But, to answer your question, yes the guy from the party looked just like Will. Same eye colour, same hair, same pale skin, even their face has a similar shape."

"Well isn't that strange," Tessa said. "Do you think they are related?"

"No idea," Magnus said then added with sarcasm. "But please let's go to a movie where the blonde who looks like Camille and the stunning black haired beauty I can't have run off together happily into the sunset. Roll credits."

"Maybe we should pick a different movie," Tessa said. They had planned to go see the current romantic movie playing, but Tessa hadn't bothered to check what actors were in it. Magnus it seemed
"No it's fine," Magnus said sarcastically. "I'll just cry through the whole movie and everyone at the theatre will hate us. We will probably get kicked out and wander the streets like zombies."

"Speaking of zombies," Tessa said hopefully. "Any decent action movies free of gorgeous blonde women and dashing blue eyes boys playing?"

"I don't know," Magnus said sagging in his chair. Tessa watched as her friend gave up entirely and flopped his head down onto the table.

"Oh Magnus," Tessa said reaching out to her friend. "Why do you torture yourself so?"

"I miss her," Magnus whined. "I miss the stupid cheating wh-"

"Now now," Tessa said. "None of that language in public please." Magnus sighed and laid his head on his arms again.

"I think you need some Clary time," Tessa told him.

"I am sure Clary is very busy," Magnus mumbled into his arm. "Hell, I should be busy. We are already a month into the school year and I have two papers to write."

"Fine then," Tessa said. "We will do homework. Now get up!"

"I don't want to," Magnus whined.

"I know you don't," Tessa said. "But you aren't going to fail your semester just because of her." Magnus groaned but got up and followed Tessa out of the coffee shop.

Later when they finished their homework Tessa inflicted a movie on Magnus where the blonde screamed a lot then got eaten by a giant monster, which seemed to cheer him up if only slightly. Tessa considered their evening a success regardless.

Chapter End Notes

OMG I AM SO SORRY! I haven't uploaded in freaking forever. I didn't write all week which felt SO very weird let me tell you. I had to work more than usual but mostly I got lazy. ^_^ I have now finished binge watching the show on netflix I have been binge watching for weeks so I probably will be writing more. lol. I also started writing a fanfic for the show I have been binge watching so... there's that...

Also there are two book quotes in this chapter! Both are from the Infernal Devices and are in the dialogue between Will and Tessa. Can you guess what they are? I will post the answer in the author's note on the next chapter.

This is the first time I have written Tessa POV. What did you think? Am I taking on too many different characters and you are totally confused? The title of the chapters will let you know which POV each chapter is. I hope that is helping with the confusion.

Sneak Peak for chapter 6:
Alec shook his head at his crazy cousin then returned his attention to his laptop. He was once again pulled away from homework when voices from down the hall reached his ears. They were raised voices and he couldn't quite hear the specifics but he could gather it was a couple fighting. Alec tried to ignore the voices but as they got closer that became harder.

When he finally looked up he saw the pair. The man was tall and lean with black hair and caramel skin. He was rather beautiful Alec thought even with his face so full of hurt and pain. The woman walking beside him was tall as well and very blonde. She was also attractive in an obvious sort of way but Alec's eyes were fixed on the man. He was the one on the point of tears not her. He was holding something in his hand and seemed to be motioning to it as he spoke.
Alec's Encounter

Chapter Summary

Beta read by Holly0114 on ff

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Thanks to Alec being a morning person and his total lack of a sex life, he was awake rather early for a Saturday morning. Jace, who had put a sock on the door again last night, was snoring very loudly on the other side of the room.

Alec stared at the blank page on his laptop screen that he had to magically convert into a three page essay. As a particularly loud snore forced Alec to lose his train of thought for the third time, Alec officially gave up. He stood and started packing up his laptop and books. Alec got out his phone to text his cousin as he got out into the hall.

'Can't work with Jace snoring,' Alec texted. 'Do you want to meet in the library?'

Alec put his phone away and continued to the library. He found a quiet place alone in the corner and sat down to work. When half an hour went by and there was no reply Alec figured she was still blissfully asleep. Jealous of her quiet dorm and the ability to actually sleep in it, Alec got back to his essay.

Essays were not his favourite thing in the world but the silence of the library was glorious. Alec stayed until he was too hungry to keep working. Then he decided to move the homework marathon to the cafeteria.

Alec ordered the usual for lunch, while he thought about how he shouldn't come here so often, then found a place to sit. Giving up on homework for the moment Alec put his headphones in and started watching videos on his laptop while he ate. He had almost finished eating when he heard a familiar voice call his name. Alec groaned. Why did Jace insist on trying to be his friend?

"Hey," Jace said as he sat down. Alec pointedly ignored him. Jace didn't leave, however, and after a moment he asked. "Why do you always do that?"

"Do what?"

"Ignore me?"

"I haven't slept for weeks," Alec said grinding his teeth. "You snore!"

"I do not!"

"Oh believe me you do!"

"It can't just be because I snore."

"That is my current complaint," Alec said. "Due to lack of sleep but I also get sick of meeting
random women in the morning."

"Hey, I told them not to sleep over," Jace said. "Is it my fault they couldn't stay awake after I rocked their world?"

"You are a jerk."

"You don't even know me," Jace countered.

"I know enough," Alec said as he started packing up. When Alec turned back to Jace he was surprised to see hurt on Jace's face. "Why do you even care what I think?" Alec asked suddenly curious.

"I don't know," Jace said. He turned from Alec to look off into the distance and out of curiosity Alec followed his gaze. The object of Jace's fixation was a girl with very red hair who sat with her back to Jace talking to her friend.

"Admiring your latest conquest?" Alec asked. Jace turned away from the red haired girl and again Alec found himself surprised. Jace had a slight pink in his cheeks as if he were blushing. Alec shook his head; sure it was just a trick of the light.

"I have class," Alec lied and quickly left. Alec only walked a short way before settling in his favourite seating area on campus. It was tucked away slightly off to one side, which made it the perfect place to study or have a conversation with the illusion of privacy. The arrangement consisted of two couches that were positioned facing each other with a coffee table between them, and a third chair arranged perpendicularly. The couches were overstuffed and upholstered in dark blue. The chair faced the short edge of the coffee table and was similar in colour. All three faced the hallway. Alec set to work on his essay. He hadn't been at it for more than a few minutes when Aline finally texted him back.

'Sorry! I was sleeping then I was ignoring my phone in favour of Netflix. Sorry! Are you still in the library?'

'No,' Alec texted. 'I am in that little seating area around the corner from the cafeteria.'

Aline arrived before Alec had barely written a paragraph more. She looked like she had simply thrown on the clothes closest to her then headed out the door.

"You shouldn't have rushed," Alec said. "I am quite capable of sitting alone you know."

"I know but I am hungry," she said. "Be right back." And she dashed off to the cafeteria.

Alec shook his head at his crazy cousin then returned his attention to his laptop and his incomplete essay. He was once again pulled away from his homework when the voices from down the hall reached his ears. They were raised voices and he couldn't quite hear the specifics, but he could gather it was a couple fighting. Alec tried to ignore the voices but as they got closer that became harder. When he finally looked up he saw the owners of the voices. The man was tall and lean with black hair and caramel skin. He was rather beautiful, Alec thought, even though his face held an expression so full of hurt and pain. The woman walking beside him was tall as well and very blonde. She was also attractive in an obvious sort of way with a slim figure and long shapely legs. But Alec's eyes were fixed on the man. He was the one on the brink of tears, not her. He was holding something in his hand and seemed to be motioning to it as he spoke.

The arguing couple was now very close and Alec foolishly tried to duck his head so he couldn't be
seen, but Aline chose that moment to make her reappearance, lunch in hand.

"I got you fries," Aline said as she handed them over.

"Thanks," Alec muttered sitting up to accept the fries. Aline gave him a strange look then seemed to notice the couple standing close by and turned. Alec's focus shifted back as well. Alec was stunned by the expression on the man's face. The beautiful exotic looking man was staring at him with wide eyes. He looked to Aline as if to confirm something then stared back at Alec. Finally the man shook his head as if to clear it and the strange expression was gone. Alec couldn't figure out what it meant.

"Sorry," the blonde woman said to Aline and Alec before she turned to the man and added. "Goodbye Magnus." The woman abruptly walked away, the sounds of her high heeled shoes hitting the floor echoed off the walls.

The man, who Alec presumed was named Magnus, collapsed onto the floor beside Alec's chair.

"Are you alright?" Alec asked him.

"Probably not," Magnus said. Alec held out his fries and though Magnus didn't smile he took one.

"I know we just met and all," Alec said. "But I kinda had a front row seat. Do you want to talk about it?"

"She cheated on me," Magnus said. "For months with my friend's brother and to top it all off they both still go to this stupid school so I am forced to see them in all their happy glory." Magnus ended his statement on a bitter note and Alec couldn't blame him.

"I'm sorry," Alec said.

"Oh and what's worse is that I still love her," Magnus sighed as he ate another one of Alec's fries. "Is that pathetic or what?"

"I don't think it's pathetic," Aline said.

"Oh but it is," Magnus said. He held up the object Alec had noticed him holding earlier. It was a necklace, an antique from the look of it, that had a pendant set with a large red stone. Alec guessed it was a ruby as it shone with a fiery intensity, reflecting the fluorescent lights and casting a rich glow. The pendant hung on a simple, thin gold chain that added a delicate quality and offset the size of the pendant.

"I gave this to her on our one year anniversary," Magnus said then added bitterly. "Little did I know she was already sleeping with Ralf at the time."

Alec wanted to hug the man he had met only moments ago, but something stopped him. It might have been Alec's awareness of how attracted to Magnus he was or it might have been the fact that Magnus was talking about his ex-girlfriend. To Alec's relief Aline, unhindered by an attraction to Magnus, jumped to her feet and wrapped her arms around him.

"You are not pathetic," she whispered. Alec watched as Magnus hugged her in return and suddenly wished he had been the one to hug Magnus instead.

"There you are!"

Alec turned and saw the red haired girl, Jace had been admiring earlier, running down the hall toward them. She had a slight frame, but the look of concern on her face was what caught Alec's
"Magnus," the red haired girl said. "I heard your fight. Are you okay?"

"I am making new friends," Magnus said. He turned as if to introduce us to the new red haired girl but stopped. "I don't know their names yet though."

"I'm Aline. And you are?"

"Clary," the redhead said, introducing herself. Alec then gestured to himself, introducing himself in return. "Alec."

"Nice to meet you," Clary said then rounded on her friend. "Magnus I told you not to talk to her!"

Alec could sense a long standing friendship between them. There was something in their mannerisms and movements that spoke of great trust and affection. Magnus flinched under Clary's gaze but didn't speak. "Why did you talk to her!?"

"I didn't intend to talk to her," Magnus defended himself. "I just ran into her because this stupid school is too bloody small!"

"Why are you still holding the necklace?" Clary said.

"Fine!" Magnus yelled. "Fine you want me to stop carrying this thing around." Magnus turned and forcefully pressed the necklace into Alec's arms. Alec took it too stunned to speak. "He can have it! Happy now!?"

"No I'm not happy!" Clary yelled. All the anger left her voice and she added sadly. "I will be happy when you are,"

"Don't hold your breath," Magnus said. "You are late for class. Don't skip on my account."

"But-" Clary started.

"No buts!" Magnus interrupted. Clary opened her mouth to protest again but Magnus answered as if he knew what she was going to say. "I will be fine. I am going to hang out with my new friends."

Magnus put an arm around Alec's shoulder without actually looking at Alec. Instead he was staring at Clary with determination. "Just go."

Clary gazed at Alec then back to Magnus and seeming to give up, she hugged Magnus quickly with one arm then dashed off. The second Clary was out of sight Magnus let go of Alec and slumped into the chair.

"Sorry," Magnus said sheepishly. "She is relentless."

"It's okay," Alec said but he was still standing, too stunned to sit and too aware of how close to Magnus he had been a moment ago.

"That is one determined friend," Aline agreed as she sat down and pulled Alec down with her. Alec let himself be guided since it seemed a better course of action then standing shell shocked like an idiot.

"That she is," Magnus said. "I wish she would just let me by miserable in peace."

"Oh here," Alec said holding out the necklace.

"You keep it," Magnus said. "Anything is better than me carrying it around like the pathetic mess
"I can't keep this." Alec said.

"Why not?" Magnus asked.

"It looks expensive," Alec said dubiously.

"Well it didn't cost me anything," Magnus said. "Keep it, give it away or throw it out. I don't care." Magnus sighed. "Well actually I care too much and that is the problem, but you get the idea."

Alec didn't know what to say. He could give it to Izzy maybe, but it seemed a strange way to get a gift for his sister.

"Can I see?" Aline asked. Alec handed it over without hesitation. Magnus watched as Aline studied his necklace, but Alec was focused on Magnus rather than his cousin. It was a few moments before he could admit to himself what exactly he was watching for. Alec looked away when he realized he was looking for signs that Magnus was looking at him. What was Alec thinking? Magnus had just confessed to still being in love with his girlfriend. Girlfriend, as in a girl, not boy. Alec mentally hit himself over the head. This new acquaintance was the farthest thing from being potentially romantic as it could possibly be. Alec shook his head to clear it before speaking.

"If you change your mind about the necklace," Alec said. "I'll return it."

"Thanks but I won't," Magnus said. "Clary would be so mad." He laughed, but Alec couldn't find any humor in it.

"Well maybe don't tell the redhead," Alec said smiling. He ripped a piece of paper out of his binder and quickly scribbled his number on it. "Here text me if you change your mind and I will return your necklace."

"Thanks," Magnus said as he pocketed Alec's phone number.

Something about this man intrigued Alec. They would never be anything more than friends, but that didn't mean they had to be strangers. Magnus seemed sad and Alec wanted to cheer him up. Plus, it would be nice to have a friend on campus besides Aline. Especially since a friendship with the snoring jerk was clearly out of the question. Yes, a friendship with Magnus would be welcome.

"Or if you just want to bitch about your ex," Alec said smiling. "You could text me for that too." He paused then added. "I'm here if you want to talk."

"Thank you Alec," Magnus said. "It seems I have indeed made a friend here today." Magnus smiled at Alec and it lit up his eyes. Magnus had the most beautiful eyes. They were green but the longer Alec gazed at them the more gold he could find speckled amongst the emerald irises.

Chapter End Notes

Hi! So the long awaited Malec meeting! What did you think? hehe.

This whole including a sneak peek thing worked WAY better when I was writing two chapters ahead. ^_^ But once again I am giving you a sneak peek of a chapter that is
barely started. lol. Oh well! It was either that or you have to wait for me to finish two chapters before you get an update. And since I lacked off so much last week I figured I should update again today even if the sneak peak sucks. :)

The two direct book quotes from the previous chapter were:

"I've never seen someone get so excited over books before. You'd think they were diamonds." said by Will.

"Sometimes, when I have to do something I don't want to do, I pretend I'm a character from a book. It's easier to know what they would do." said by Tessa

But most of their whole conversation is a reference to the Infernal Devices since all the books they talked about were the books Will and Tessa discussed in Cassandra Clare's trilogy. Also Will saying books are always honest and make him feel less lonely is what Will thought of books in the Infernal Devices.

So did you figure out where the two quotes were? Or just wait for the answer? ^_^

Sneak Peek for chapter 7:

"Come on buddy!" Sebastian said snapping his fingers in front of Jace's face. "Snap out of it!"

"Sorry," Jace said as he turned away from the girl but he was still very aware of her. Jace listened to Sebastian or rather pretended to listen while he watched the girl out of the corner of his eye.

She got up a few moments later and seemed to be headed out of the cafeteria when raised voices interrupted Sebastian's monologue. Two people were fighting in the hallway. Jace thought nothing of it but the girl looked frantic. She moved quickly toward the voices.
“Why do you even care what I think?” Alec asked.

“I don’t know,” Jace said. It was the honest truth. He had no clue why he wanted Alec to talk to him. Many things these days didn’t make sense to him. Jace couldn’t help but turn in the direction of the girl. He hadn’t skipped a single Introduction to Humanities class since he had seen her there. He now spent those classes watching the back of her head and he still wasn’t sure why.

“Admiring your latest conquest?” Alec asked. Jace felt his face grow hot and it startled him. There was another woman sitting with the girl and he hadn’t even bothered to check her out! Why was this red haired girl having such an effect on him? She wasn’t anything special. Jace turned away from her.

“I have class,” Alec said and quickly left. Jace watched him go but soon his eyes were on the girl again. Her long red hair swayed slightly with the movement of her shoulders. Jace knew she was talking to her friend because she liked to talk with her hands. He watched the subtle changes in her figure as she continued her conversation. The girl shifted in her chair slightly and Jace found he couldn’t look away. Her hair shifted from laying over the back of the chair to being pulled forward and pressed between the girl and the chair as she briefly leaned forward. Now she was leaning over to get something from her bag and Jace caught a glimpse of her face. The pale skin of her face was speckled with freckles, but they were endearing on her rather than childish. Jace was only now noticing her clothes, which surprised him. Usually a woman’s neckline was the first thing that drew his eye, but in this case what the girl was wearing explained his lack of attention. The girl had on a baggy sweater with the school logo on it. She was also wearing baggy jeans that didn’t do anything to highlight her figure.

“Stop it!”

Jace jumped. He had been so caught up in his thoughts he hadn’t noticed Sebastian’s arrival. Once the initial rush of his surprise dissipated Jace sunk back into his sulky mood.

“Hey,” Jace said gloomily.

“None of that!” Sebastian said as he sat down. Jace just shrugged and turned to gaze at her again. The girl had her bag up on the table now and seemed to be packing things into it. Jace noticed that her bag very much matched her clothes. It had a patchwork design and seemed to be capable of housing all her textbooks and laptop easily. Jace could tell this girl cared more for practicality than style.

“She isn’t for you,” Sebastian said. “She breaks all our rules.”
“I know,” Jace said but his eyes were still fixed on her. He was sure the girl was packing up to leave now and Jace found himself wondering if she was headed to class like Alec.

“She’s got a guy,” Sebastian said. “Plus virgins are clingy.”

“We don’t know she’s a--”

“Oh please!” Sebastian interrupted. “She would just end up following you around like a puppy and then that boyfriend of hers would be pissed and it’s not worth the hassle.”

Jace rather liked the idea of her following him around. The thought of her bright green eyes gazing up at him brought a smile to Jace’s face. Then that stupid boyfriend of hers shattered his image. Jace did not like that brown haired kid! He sat beside the girl in class everyday, but Jace was sure he could beat the kid up if given half the chance. Jace was surprised how much the idea excited him.

“Come on buddy!” Sebastian said waving his hand in front of Jace’s face. “Snap out of it!”

“Sorry,” Jace said. He turned away from the girl but he was still aware of her. He was still watching her out of the corner of his eye. Jace pretended to listen to Sebastian while he listened for the slightest indication she was leaving the cafeteria. After a moment or two Jace heard her chair being scraped across the floor as she got up from her table. As Jace caught a glimpse of her red hair leaving the cafeteria raised voices interrupted Sebastian’s monologue. Two people were fighting rather loudly in the hallway. Jace thought nothing of it until the girl reacted. She must have recognized the couple arguing. Her body language shifted to frantic as she moved quickly toward the voices. Her friend called after her but the girl didn’t turn back. The girl’s friend had called out her name. Clary. The girl’s name was Clary. The word rang in Jace’s head as if it were pinging off the inside of his skull.

“I’m going to go get a coffee,” Jace said absently as he got up from the table. He didn’t even bother to check if Sebastian had heard him before he followed Clary. Jace stood out of view down the hall from where Clary was, standing beside a tall asian man. The look on Clary’s face was one of deep concern and Jace guessed this man was the friend she had run to help. Jace noted that Clary was a deeply caring person who ran to her friends’ aid without a moment’s hesitation.

When Jace saw Alec among the people down the hall he did a double take. Alec was supposed to be in class after all. This meant Alec would rather lie to Jace then sit with him. Jace wasn’t sure why this bothered him so much.

With a heavy heart Jace turned back into the cafeteria and stood in line to get a coffee. He decided this was a better idea than trying to explain to his best friend what the hell was wrong with him.

When Jace returned to the table he was surprised to recognize the woman standing beside Sebastian. Of course, Jace didn’t remember her name but she was the blonde woman from the bar their first night at school. She seemed to be yelling at Sebastian. As Jace approached he caught fragments of her words though her tears and yelling.

“Thought you were different... never called me back... said you would.”

“And you!” the woman cried as she rounded on Jace. “You are just as bad as him!” With that she turned and stormed off. Jace sighed as he sat down in the chair across from Sebastian.

“You okay?” Jace asked.

“Course I am,” he said with a smile. “Where’s my coffee?” Jace held out the go cup to his friend.

“Aren’t you having any?”
“Nah,” Jace said. “ Changed my mind.” In actuality Jace hadn’t been listening earlier. He now assumed Sebastian asked for one before Jace had left the table to chase Clary.

“Okay thanks,” Sebastian said as started drinking Jace’s coffee. Jace sat down at the table but again he found he couldn’t focus on what his friend was saying. Sebastian had been Jace’s constant companion for as long as Jace could remember. Jace had many fond memories of himself and Sebastian as kids playing out in the yard together. He remembered sleepovers and birthday parties; all his earliest memories were of Sebastian. In fact, Sebastian was the only real friend Jace had ever known. Maybe that was why Jace wanted Alec to like him. If Jace couldn’t make friends with the person who was forced to live with him what hope was there that Jace would ever be able to make other any friends at all? Sebastian was great and all but Jace wanted more.

“Do you wanna hit a bar?” Sebastian’s direct question snapped Jace back into the present. This same question had led to Jace coming home with the brunette last night, which was one of the things Alec disliked about him. The bar was the usual place Jace and Sebastian hung out but somehow Jace didn’t really feel like it today.

“Nah,” Jace said.

“The gym them?”

“Sure.”

Sebastian grinned at him and Jace tried to smile back. Sebastian made to leave the same way Clary had, but Jace turned toward the other door hoping this would mean he didn’t run into either Clary or Alec.

“Why are you going that way?” Sebastian asked giving Jace a dubious look. “This way is closer.”

Jace tried to think of a different reason, but his mind was blank; or rather his mind was filled with nothing but Clary’s brilliant red hair and Alec’s angry expression.

Sebastian rolled his eyes at Jace but followed where Jace led. Jace breathed a sigh of relief once they were in the hall on the other side of the cafeteria. The halls of this school were brick and Jace could almost feel the cold coming off the walls. The bricks were red and as Jace stared at them his thoughts naturally shifted to red lips, red roses then red hair, her red hair. Jace shook his head to try and clear it, but Clary persisted.

“Maybe you should go out with that girl,” Sebastian said, eyeing Jace’s strange expression. “Boyfriend and all. Banging her might get her out of your head, my friend.”

“You think?” Jace asked. He was insanely attracted to her and he knew if given half the chance he would take her.

“Yes,” Sebastian said. “Just charm her one day when the boyfriend isn’t around.” Sebastian laughed. “What’s the worst that can happen?”

Oh just about a million things, Jace thought but he wasn’t about to say it.

When they entered the gym Jace tried to relax. He took a deep breath and moved forward toward his favourite weight lifting machine. Jace pushed all his anxiety and confusion into lifting the heavy loads. Exercise always cleared his mind. He pumped the bar up then down then up again, breathing in time with his movements and trying to focus on nothing else. Slowly his mind cleared and Jace felt
his anxiety fade somewhat. Jace switched to using the rowing machine for a while to give Sebastian a turn with the weights. Jace ran on the treadmill next for a while then cooled down with a walk.

“I’m gonna hit the showers,” Jace said finally as he turned off the treadmill. Sebastian said he wasn’t quite done yet so Jace left on his own.

After his shower Jace walked into his dorm room without noticing anything but his bed. Jace fell face first onto the mattress without even getting undressed. Sure he was physically tired from the exercise, but Jace’s mind was drained. Clearing it of all the confused new thoughts had taken more mental energy then Jace realized.

Jace sank into the bed and focused on relaxing, letting his exhausted brain wander where it wanted. The bed was soft and the cool comforter felt nice against Jace’s hot skin. Jace could feel the chill of the wall that lead to outside and pulled a blanket up to block the draft. Why had they made this school out of brick anyway? Did they want their students to freeze? Jace pulled the blankets up over himself more but he didn’t open his eyes. The overhead light filtered through his closed eyelids and created a reddish tint. Jace didn’t want to get up to turn the light off so he place his arm over his eyes. The red was gone. Red. Scarlet. Crimson. Ruby. Auburn red… hair. Her face suddenly flooded his mind and he could picture her glorious hair and thin freckled face perfectly, as if she stood before him. Clary was smiling with a joy that lit up her emerald green eyes. She moved closer to him and he reached out his hand to her, stroking the side of her face. Her eyes closed when he touched her. Jace could feel that she trusted him. He reached down to take her hand in his. He brought their joined hands together and kissed the back of her hand gently. She giggled, still smiling at him.

“Well at least you aren’t snoring.” The loud annoyed voice burst Jace’s daydream and he sat bolt upright in bed, his heart racing.

Alec was home and in the process of dumping his laptop bag by his desk. Jace was suddenly very angry! He wanted to accuse Alec of lying to get away from him earlier, but no words formed. Jace felt like he was in shock. Fantasizing about a woman was by no means a new thing for him, but usually in his fantasies he got laid. Usually in his fantasies the girls weren’t wearing a stitch of clothing! Usually in his fantasies the girl didn’t have a name and he certainly didn’t hold their hand.

“Geez!” Alec said. “I thought you were out cold like usual. My voice doesn’t usually wake you.”

“I wasn’t sleeping,” Jace said blankly.

“Clearly,” Alec said absently. Jace watched as Alec collected his toothbrush and pajamas and left the dorm again.

Jace collapsed back into bed. He decided he didn’t care if his teeth were neglected tonight. Jace undressed, lay down and went to sleep. Today had been a very strange day and he wanted it to be over with.

Chapter End Notes

Sneak Peak chapter 8

“So why were you staring at me in the first place?” Alec asked. The question seemed innocent enough but Magnus thought for a split second he saw something else in Alec’s gaze. Magnus had to remind himself he was only seeing what he wanted to see, then he
had to remind himself he shouldn’t want to see it at all since he wasn’t interested.

“Just scoping the party,” Magnus said, casually. “But as I said. It was lame. You two were the most interesting people there.”
Magnus couldn’t help but smile at the beautiful blue eyed man holding his necklace. He had given it to Alec in a moment of frustration, but now he was rather happy with the arrangement. It had even meant getting Alec’s number...not that anything would come of it, but it was nice to have the contact information all the same. At least now he wouldn’t mistake other blue eyed, black haired guys for Alexander. Aline asked to see the necklace and Alec handed it over.

"It seems I have indeed made a friend here today," Magnus said in response to Alec’s offer for Magnus to text him anytime, even if Magnus just wanted to talk about Camille.

“Yes you have,” Alec said, smiling.

“This is beautiful, Magnus!” Aline exclaimed.

“Well I doubt Alec will want to wear it,” Magnus said laughing. “That leaves you.” Aline smiled and quickly put the necklace around her neck, flipping her hair so the chain rested against her skin.

“I wonder if Helen will like it?” Aline wondered out loud as she gazed down at the pendant resting on her skin.

“Helen?” Magnus asked. “A friend of yours?”

“Maybe but I have to meet her first,” Aline said laughing. “For such a small school it sure is tricky to run into specific people sometimes.”

“I know what you mean,” Magnus said. “I saw you and Alec at the orientation party before classes started, but I couldn’t find you again after that.”

“Were you the one staring at me?” Alec inquired smiling. Magnus’s expression must have given him away because Alec continued. “That explains so much. Maybe I’m not crazy.”

“Sorry,” Magnus said. “I didn’t realize you had noticed me.”

“Why didn’t you just come say hi?”

Magnus didn’t want to admit the truth. Not only was Alec taken, but Alec couldn’t be interested in Magnus so what was the point in admitting something that would ruin a potential new friendship? Besides, Magnus was done dating anyway. Despite what his friends thought he was sick of getting his heart broken. No matter how wonderful the beginning could be, the end always shattered him.
and he couldn’t take it anymore.

“The party was kinda lame,” Magnus said. “So I went home.” This was the truth, it just wasn’t the whole truth.

“So why were you staring at me in the first place?” Alec asked. The question seemed innocent enough, but Magnus thought for a split second he saw something else in Alec’s gaze. Magnus had to remind himself he was only seeing what he wanted to see and then he had to remind himself he shouldn’t want to see it at all since he wasn’t interested.

“Just scoping the party,” Magnus said, casually. “But as I said. It was lame. You two were the most interesting people there.”

“Thanks… I guess,” Alec said laughing.

“It’s good to be interesting Alec,” Aline said grinning at him. “Don’t sound so confused.” Alec laughed, but he also rolled his eyes slightly at his girlfriend.

Mangus could tell Aline and Alec cared about each other from the way they looked at each other. He thought they must be very serious since there was a trust and affection surrounding them that almost felt like family. Magnus wondered how long they had been dating but he didn’t want to ask.

Magnus reminded himself that this was good. Alec was safe, there was no chance this friendship could turn into anything more. Alec was gorgeous, but who said eye candy wasn’t a good quality in a friend anyway.

“I’m a history major,” Magnus said trying to start up a casual conversation. “What are you guys studying?”

“Well this idiot,” Aline said pointing to Alec. “Has no clue but I’m doing psychology.”

“Ah, I have heard that is a very interesting field of study,” Magnus replied.

“It can be,” Aline said. “But it’s still school so it can also be boring.” She laughed slightly and Magnus smiled.

“Good point,” he said. “History has its moments of boring as well, but most of the time it’s fascinating.”

“What’s your favourite thing about studying history?” Aline asked.

“I love it when you learn something and realize things really aren’t quite so different now as they were then,” Magnus said then he added with a laugh. “And of course puns. History puns are the best. My cats are proof of that.”

“How so?” Aline inquired.

“I named them The Great Catsby and Chairman Meow.” Magnus explained. “Though I will grant you The Great Catsby is a pun off the novel The Great Gatsby and though it was written in 1925 that really wasn’t long ago as far as history is concerned. Chairman Mao was a communist revolutionary for the Republic of China around 1949.”
“Into history huh?” Aline said smiling. “Never would have guessed.”

“Sorry,” Magnus said. “But you asked.”

“I did,” Aline said holding her hands in the air in mock surrender. “If I ever want history facts I’ll let you know.”

“Jokes too!” Magnus said. Aline nodded in understanding.

“I thought we couldn’t have pets on campus?” Alec asked finally adding to the conversation.

“That’s one of the many perks of living off campus,” Magnus said.

“What year are you in?” Alec asked.


“Only a little,” Alec said. “But I have a feeling it’s going to get a lot worse before the winter break.”

“You just wait till second year,” Magnus said. “Then you will think this is a picnic.”

“Oh great,” Aline said sarcastically. “Why do they make us pay so much to work so hard again?”

“Something about having a successful future or some such nonsense,” Magnus laughed. This light conversation was such a welcome relief to the hurt and misery he had been sulking in for weeks. He couldn’t be around Clary without seeing the pity in her eyes and he hated it. Tessa was no better. They’d known him while he was happy with Camille and they knew how broken he really was now. These wonderful new people had no idea what he had been like before today. It was such a weight off his shoulders. It felt like finally setting down a heavy load after carrying it for miles. The relief was glorious.

“You sound like my dad,” Alec complained, then she continued in what Magnus could only guess was a poor imitation of his father. “Go to college then I’ll groom you to take over the family business.”

“Ah,” Magnus said. “I have heard of this concept.”

“I bet your parents aren’t trying to run your life though,” Alec said.

“That would be rather tricky,” Magnus said, laughing. “As I have never met them.”

“Who raised you?” Alec asked, looking rather surprised.

“My mother’s half-sister,” Magnus said. “Not sure if that makes her only half my aunt, but I always called her my aunt.”

“Doesn’t your aunt know what happened to her sister?” Alec asked.

“Nope,” Magnus said. “It’s what they call a cold case.”

“What about your dad?” Aline asked.

“Oh him I do know something about,” Magnus said, with a smile. “I know he didn’t want a kid.”

“How can you smile about that?” Alec asked.
“Because my aunt’s awesome,” Magnus said. “Who needs a dad who doesn’t want you? She’s all the parent I could ask for.” Magus paused then added. “She’s Dutch but my mother was half Dutch and half Indonesian.”

“You must look nothing alike,” Aline observed.

“We don’t,” Magnus laughed. “The looks we got when I was a kid and called her auntie were priceless.”

“Did you explain she’s just your half-aunt?” Alec asked smiling.

“Where is the fun in that?” Magnus said. “We preferred to watch the chaos. Though calling Clary my little sister creates even more confusion. People look at me—” Magnus gestured to his coloured skin and dark black hair. “—then at her and shake their head, continuing to look between us for some hint of similarity or any indication we were teasing.” Magnus wiped a tear from his eye. He hadn’t laughed this hard in what felt like forever.

“Clary loves you,” Alec stated. Magnus was surprised to hear no trace of a question in Alec’s words. Alec was quite observant.

“She’s been my best friend for as long as I can remember,” Magnus said. “But right now I am really sick of being treated like glass. Both she and Tessa seem to think I need to be tip toed around since...” Magnus trailed off, not wanting to take the thought further and think of the moment Camille had broken his heart.

“Well I promise to never sugar coat anything for you,” Aline said cheerfully.

“Thanks,” Magnus said. “For everything. I think I really needed this.”

“What are friends for?” Alec said smiling.

“For letting me go on and on about my life it seems,” Magnus said.

“You have a very interesting life,” Alec replied.

“I shall take that as a good thing,” Magnus smiled then he noticed the clock on the wall. Magnus’s eyes widened as he said urgently, “My class started five minutes ago.”

“You better run,” Aline suggested. Magnus jumped to his feet grabbed his bag and dashed down the hall. Magnus had a smile on his face as he snuck into the class and sat at the back. The lecture was on European history, which was one of Magnus’s favourite classes, but he just couldn’t focus at the moment, not ever on the middle ages.

The intense relief from his conversation with new friends was still making Magnus feel giddy. He took notes as the teacher lectured but his mind was otherwise occupied. Magnus ran over the conversation in his head and realized he hadn’t asked Alec more about his parents. Magnus hadn’t inquired about them at all. This was very unlike him but Magnus told himself he would make it up to Alec and Aline later. Maybe they could have a homework study session.

Magnus was snapped back to attention when the teacher switched from his boring lecture voice to the tone he used when he was assigning homework. Magnus copied the essay topic off the board with a sigh. He would definitely need a homework session now. Everyone got up to leave but Magnus stayed in his seat. He pulled out his phone and quickly texted Alec while his fellow students bolted for the door.
‘Thanks again Alec,’ Magnus typed. ‘And sorry for the ex-girlfriend drama.’

Magnus didn’t get a text back right away and he didn’t have any more classes today so he decided to head home. The walk home was lovely and for the first time in what felt like forever Magnus could appreciate the sun on his skin. So what if he still loved Camille! So what if he was a pathetic mess who wanted her back while she was happy with someone else! Life went on. Magnus had dear old friends he loved and new friends he was excited to get to know. He had classes to attend and homework to do. He had two perfect cats and a loving aunt. Even without Camille and without dating, Magnus’s life was still rich.

As Magnus approached his apartment he heard the soft tunes of a delicate instrument. It made Magnus think of a concert hall. Magnus opened the door and the lovely music grew in volume. Magnus couldn’t help but be moved by the beautiful sound, especially considering his current good mood. It made Magnus think of joy surrounded by sorrow.

A tall slender man Magnus had never seen before was playing a violin while standing in the center of Magnus’s living room. The man had dark brown hair with streaks of grey. Though his eyes were closed while he played, the curve of them suggested he had a similar asian heritage as Magnus. There was an elegance about him but also a frailty. Magnus couldn’t explain it, but the man seemed by no means weak despite his delicate appearance. What Magnus was most impressed by was the casual way the man was playing his violin, like it was as natural as breathing. His skilled hands flowed seamlessly over the strings while he expertly worked the bow, coaxing the most touching melody that was currently filling the room.

As Magnus continued to watch, the man moved the bow smoothly over the strings of his violin and drew Magnus’s focus to Tessa. His roommate was looking at the man with the same look on her face Magnus had witnessed in the cafe when she’d been talking with Will. It was the look of new love. Magnus knew the joy that expression could bring, but he couldn’t help but picture the pain that followed the pleasure of meeting someone new.

But Tessa hadn’t met one person, she’d met two. Magnus was instantly worried this would backfire on his friend. If they learned of each other surely Tessa would lose them both.

“Oh Magnus!” Tessa said when the slender man stopped playing. “Wasn’t that beautiful!”

“Very,” Magnus said. Tessa seemed to have quite forgotten Magnus had never met this man though Magnus knew who it was all the same. “Jem, I presume?” Magnus expended his hand.

“Yes I am,” Jem said shaking Magnus’s hand. “Most people call me James before I correct them.”

“Tessa told me you go by Jem,” Magnus explained.

“What else has Tessa told you about me?”

“Well I now know her boast of your musical skills wasn’t a lie,” Magnus said.

“I am sure it was an exaggeration,” Jem said.

“Actually,” Magnus said taking a seat on his couch as Jem also sat down. “Quite the contrary. She was humble on your behalf.”

“Ah but that is one of the wonderful things about her,” Jem said. “Is it not?” Jem was gazing at Tessa with all the love and affection he had seen in his friend’s expression moments ago. Magnus suddenly
found himself on team Jem. Will’s expression had not been so honest when he looked at Tessa.

“I am glad you think so highly of her,” Magnus said.

“Please stop talking about me like I’m not here,” Tessa scolded.

“I shall leave you two alone then.” Magnus said laughing. Tessa gave me a look that was both grateful and regretful at the same time so Magnus headed into his bedroom and closed the door. He knew Tessa well enough to know her only regret was being rude to Magnus. Tessa wanted to be alone with Jem.

Magnus should have started his homework but he ended up on YouTube watching endless videos. The vibration of his cell phone receiving a text finally snapped Magnus out of his YouTube stupor.

‘No problem,’ Alec’s text read. ‘Happy to help and no worries.’

‘Do you want to hang out again?’ Magnus texted back. ‘Maybe do homework or something. You can bring Aline if you like.’

‘Sure,’ Alec replied. ‘Friends are great homework motivation.’

‘My thinking exactly.’

Chapter End Notes

Sneak Peek chapter 9:

“He needs some comforting,” Sebastian said winking at the african woman then he turned to the strawberry blonde. “Come on darling. I think there is a bathroom stall with our name on it.” The woman giggled and followed him and Jace suddenly wondered why.

“My friend lied,” Jace said as soon as Sebastian was out of sight. “I am not hung up on my ex.”

“Oh but you are hung up on someone,” the woman said knowingly. “I can tell.”

“Oh great,” Jace whined as he turned back to face the bar and ordered another drink. “So I am that obvious then?”

“Kinda yeah,” she said.
Jace's Difference

Chapter Summary

Beta read by Holly0114, description help as well.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes.

Jace tried in vain to keep Clary out of his head for the next few weeks. It didn't take him long to decide a one night stand with her was a bad plan. He doubted very much that could get her out of his head. If he knew what it felt like to touch her face it would only make the fantasies worse, let alone to know what it was like to be inside her. No, that was not an option if he wanted to get over this silly crush.

What Jace needed was something else to focus on, or rather someone else. He decided making Alec hate him less would be an adequate distraction. Sebastian didn't approve of this plan however.

"You are only stuck with Alec as a roommate for the rest of this year," Sebastian reminded him. "Just wait it out. I mean we are halfway through the first semester anyway. As second years we can get a place together, off campus."

"Yeah, but this is going to distract me from Clary," Jace explained.

"Not using her name would help too you know," Sebastian said before he took a shot. They were sitting together at a bar. Jace was nursing his drink, but that had been Sebastian's third one.

"I can't make myself forget her name," Jace explained.

"You haven't tried."

Jace didn't want to try, but he wasn't about to admit that to Sebastian. Jace had spent the last few days getting into the habit of switching his thoughts to sports or classes when his mind wondered to Clary. This had been his new plan when all else failed to remove her from his thoughts.

"See," Sebastian said correctly interpreting his friend's silence. "Have you even had a woman since you started obsessing over this red head?"

There had been that brunette the night before Alec lied to him. Jace still hadn't said a thing to Alec about that because he knew he was overreacting. It had been a little white lie after all and one probably meant to spare Jace's feelings, which Jace should be able to see as Alec being nice, but somehow he could only focus on Alec's preference for lying above spending time with Jace. Back in high school Jace hadn't know Alec well, but he did remember Alec's reputation for being a horrible liar.

"A few," Jace said, shrugging. "But Alec doesn't like it when I bring women to our dorm room."

"So?" Sebastian scoffed. Jace gave him a look. "No seriously why do you care?" Jace thought about that for a second… why did he care? He had initially thought it was just a desire to make new friends in general, but if that was the case surely Jace would have given up on Alec by now and tried to
befriend someone else. He wanted Alec specifically to be his friend, not just some random student and he had no idea why.

"I don't know," Jace whined.

"You got it bad buddy," Sebastian consoled, wrapping an arm around Jace's shoulder. "But I have the cure." Before Jace could protest Sebastian was already off his bar stool and walking away. Jace sighed. He was fairly sure what Sebastian had in mind since it was Sebastian's cure for everything. Jace finished his drink in one swallow, sure he was going to need it. The bartender refilled it and Jace finished that one too. Moments later Sebastian returned with a woman on each arm.

"This is the friend I was telling you about," Sebastian said to the woman on his left.

"Hello there," the dark skinned african woman said. Jace knew this one was for him since Sebastian never slept with women of colour. This tended to limit Sebastian's options so he always selected someone from the group he didn't want as Jace's companion. That was one of the reasons Jace's interest in Clary surprised him. Jace stopped that thought in its tracks and started mentally listing his unfinished homework assignments.

The woman on Sebastian's other side was strawberry blonde. The red tint to her hair made Jace instantly think of Clary and her pale skin also reminded him of Clary's complete with freckles. Jace shook his head to clear it and starting picturing his favourite exercise equipment. He had barely spoken to this girl, what the hell was wrong with him!

"Are you alright?" the african woman asked. Jace made himself focus on her. She was sexy, with full lips and short braided black hair. Her shirt was yellow and orange with graphic accents of black forming a pattern. The bright colours contrasted beautifully with her skin. It was a halter top so her arms were bare and the neckline low. She was much more his type than the silly red head, exotic and hot.

"My friend has a bad case of not being over his ex," Sebastian explained. "She cheated on him you know."

"That's horrible," the strawberry blonde said in a voice that reminded Jace of a Barbie. Jace didn't understand why Sebastian was so attracted to woman like this. There was no intelligence in her eyes, no fire. Where was the fun in that?

"He needs some comforting," Sebastian said winking at the african woman then he turned to the strawberry blonde. "Come on darling. I think there is a bathroom stall with our name on it." The woman giggled and followed him.

"My friend lied," Jace said as soon as Sebastian was out of sight. "I am not hung up on my ex."

"Oh but you are hung up on someone," the woman said knowingly. "I can tell."

"Oh great," Jace complained as he turned back to face the bar and ordered another drink. "I am that obvious then?"

"Kinda, yeah," she said.

"What's your name?" Jace asked.

"Trinity," she said.

"I'm Jace. Nice to meet you, Trinity," Jace said. "Please ignore everything my friend said."
"Oh I never believed a single word of his," Trinity smiled. "I have been watching you from across the room for the last half hour. Then your friend came up to me and offered to introduce me, though he went about doing it by lying."

"Oh," Jace said. He didn't know what to say to this. She had scoped him out. This was not a situation he was accustomed to. The role reversal was quite strange.

"You are gorgeous, you know that right?" Trinity asked.

"So?" Jace replied.

"I just can't understand why you are sulking," Trinity explained. "Surely you could get any girl you wanted without much effort."

"She has a boyfriend," Jace explained. Though realistically this wasn't Jace's biggest problem with Clary it was the simplest.

"Ah I see. Well in that case…" Trinity placed her hand on his thigh and Jace just barely stopped himself from jumping at the unexpected touch.

"Really?" Jace asked, exasperated. "After all that, knowing I am sulking over someone else and everything else, you are still hitting on me?"

"Nothing is sexier than a love stuck handsome man who can't get his girl," Trinity whispered into his ear. Jace was rather stunned by this statement.

"I don't know anything about woman," Jace whispered. It was a sudden realization, but Jace knew it to be true. Despite how close he had been with so many women he had never really known them. He was always out looking for someone who he wanted, thinking he had to charm her into returning that desire, but here Trinity was wanting him despite his total lack of wooing her first.

"With a friend like that I don't doubt it," Trinity said. "You are nothing like him though."

"You don't know me," Jace said. "Why would you say that?"

"You asked me for my name," Trinity said ticking off points on her fingers. "You haven't belittled my intelligence or made a racist comment about my skin colour. I've heard your friend do both at least twice tonight. You care about someone you can't have and it's making you miserable while I doubt your so-called friend cares about anything apart from himself."

Jace could understand what she said, but he didn't share her beliefs. Before Cla… Jace stopped himself before her whole name entered his thoughts. Jace hadn't bothered to learn a woman's name previously. It wouldn't have occurred to him. Sure Jace wasn't as outwardly rude as Sebastian, but that didn't really mean much.

"When we were kids," Jace said absently. "People used to mistake us for twins."

"I am not surprised," Trinity said. Jace laid his head down on the bar. He was a little drunk, a lot miserable and he was starting to enjoy Trinity's company. "You have known him for a long time huh."

"All my life," Jace said.

"Then you need new friends," Trinity concluded.
"I suck at making new friends," Jace whined. "My roommate hates me."

"Do you know why?"

"I may have hit on his sister a lot in high school."

"Did you ever sleep with his sister?"

"No," Jace said.

"Then it's something else," Trinity said.

"I snore," Jace said. "And I keep bringing woman over to our dorm. He doesn't seem to like this."

"Ah," Trinity said. "I bet that is more what it's about. Is your friend single? Maybe he is jealous cause he can't meet woman like you can. You could set him up with someone."

"He's single but setting him up with a woman wouldn't get me any roommate points," Jace laughed. "He's gay."

"Do you know any decent men then?" Trinity laughed.

"Nope," Jace said.

"That's it for my wise advice I'm afraid," Trinity said. "But my offer is still open if you want to come back to my place."

"Why do you want me?" Jace asked. He was genuinely curious. Jace had never felt less desirable than he did in his moment and yet...

"Didn't I already explain this to you," she laughed then leaned in and kissed him. Jace was used to being the one to initiate a first kiss. There was something relaxing about being pursued rather than being the aggressor.

Jace stood up and wrapped his arms around her. She was warm and friendly and he didn't want to be sad anymore. Her hands found their way under his shirt as their kiss deepened. She seemed to be fixated on his arms. She ran her fingers over his biceps repeatedly.

"How far away is your place?" Jace whispered into her ear. She leaned back with a grin on her face. For a moment Jace thought she was going to kiss him again but then she grabbed his hand and led him out of the bar.

Jace followed her down the brightly lit street and around the corner onto a well-maintained street lined with trees and nicely manicured lawns. Jace hadn't been aware of such a neighbourhood so close to campus. She stopped in front of a brick tudor apartment building and punched in a code. When they were in the elevator she pressed the button for the third floor. The elevator opened into a neat but plain hallway; she turned the corner and unlocked the first door on Jace's right. He followed her in.

Trinity had a beautiful apartment. The hardwood floors gleamed under the subtle, recessed lights. An overstuffed couch upholstered in a rich, blue microsuede was the main focus of her living room. The couch pointed to a television and Jace noticed a large painting of a simple white pitcher holding a bunch of sunflowers hanging on the wall. It added a level of cheeriness to the room. It was a lovely place to live and Jace idly wondered what she did for a living and why she would be hanging out at a college bar. His preoccupied thoughts were forgotten when she started removing his clothes. For
once in his life Jace let her lead. She wasn't shy and quickly communicated with him what she wanted and where she wanted it. It was a relief to not be in charge and Jace enjoyed the ride.

Afterward, they lay naked together in her bed, which they had only just managed to make it to. The living room had seen much of their foreplay, but beds were always more comfortable and Jace loved her bed. The mattress was perfect, not too soft and not too firm. It had soft crisp sheets and a heavy comforter with a red and gold pattern. Jace's eyes were closed as he enjoyed the feeling of Trinity stroking his face. For one perfect moment during Jace's high he had completely forgotten about Clary and he was trying to hang on to that as his pulse returned to normal.

"You should go to a sleep clinic," Trinity remarked casually after a few minutes.

"Huh?" Jace asked opening his eyes.

"For your roommate," Trinity said, as she moved her hand from his face to stroke his hair. "So you don't snore anymore. Maybe that will make him hate you less."

"We just had sex," Jace said staring up at her perplexed. "And you are petting me."

"Your point?" Trinity said raising her eyebrow.

"You are giving me advice," Jace said slowly. "About my roommate." He paused then just said it. "Don't you want to talk about feelings and where is this going and all that crap?"

"Your hair is very soft," Trinity said. "I promise this," she stroked his hair pointedly to emphasis what she was referring to, "is purely me being selfish."

"Well," Jace said closing his eyes and relaxing back into her soft sheets. "You being selfish feels wonderful."

"What's her name," Trinity asked again, pulling Jace out of the blissful bubble of his empty mind.

"Clary," Jace whispered. It was late and Jace was tired. Trinity was still stroking his hair and before Jace knew it he fell asleep in Trinity's arms. He dreamed of red hair, freckles and frumpy shoulder bags.

Chapter End Notes

So I finally was good and waited until morning to upload. Every time I have uploaded late at night while half awake I have forgotten sometime important like a shout out or a sneak peek. Sigh. So what do you think of Trinity? She kinda just showed up when I wrote this but do you want to see more of her? I find I rather like her. I think she is the first original character in this story... I don't usually write original characters for fanfics so I would love to hear what you think!

And you might have noticed I changed my summary to say I update twice a week. Sigh. I noticed that I was only updating twice a week so I changed it rather then have people expect chapters more often. I had great intentions to upload this story more often like I did with my last story "Innocence Corrupts" which I updated daily for two months but alas I can't seem to do that with this story. :( It probably has something to do with the interwoven plot lines and trying to add more description since I find description very
time consuming to write. Maybe this is a good thing since people have told me I update too fast.

Sneak Peek Chapter 10:

Magnus heard that of so familiar laughter from across the room. He couldn't stop himself from turning to look. Ralf was making her laugh and not just laugh but laugh the same way Magnus used to make her laugh. His homework forgotten Magnus wallowed, gazing at her radiant smile he let himself miss her. He usually tried so hard not to but for the moment he was feeling too sorry for himself to put in the effort.

"Magnus." Alec's voice. Magnus turned away from Camille slowly, reluctantly as if moving through molasses. "She isn't worth it Magnus."

"I know," Magnus whispered. "I can't help it."

"Do you want to get out of here?" Alec asked.

"More than anything!" Magnus sighed.
"What do history teachers make when they want to get together?"

"I have no idea," Alec replied with only a slight eye roll.

"Dates!" Magnus grinned, unable to stop himself despite Alec's annoyed expression. "Oh and what do history teachers talk about on these dates?"

"I don't think I want to know," Alec said but he was smiling so Magnus decided his history jokes were a forgivable sin and continued.

"The good old days," Magnus laughed.

"You really weren't kidding huh?" Alec said shaking his head. They were sitting together at a table in the cafeteria with their textbooks and papers spread out before them. Alec had very foolishly referenced Magnus' previous conversation about his history skills. Alec had reminded Magnus of the comment he'd made during their first meeting with Aline when she'd joked that should she ever find a need for history facts or jokes in the future she should simply ask Magnus. Magnus was giving Alec a taste of his gifted mastery of history humor to prove just how talented he truly was.

"How do you to play the War of 1812?" Magnus asked.

"I believe you!" Alec implored him. "You can stop."

"By burning down a White House," Magnus smirked.

"Back to homework," Alec said firmly.

"Spoil sport," Magnus pouted. "If you don't like jokes how about pick-up lines." Magnus continued before Alec could say no and ruin his fun. "You must be related to Nikola Tesla because you're electrifying."

"You are relentless," Alec sighed. "You know that right?"

"So I've been told," Magnus said, smiling. "Though usually by Tessa. She likes to quote Charles Dickens to me… and sure technically speaking that's a historical drama but-"

"But you've decided it makes you even so that you can continue tormenting her with your history jokes," Alec said.

"Perceptive," Magnus confirmed. "Aren't you Alexander?"

"Alec," the blue eyed man corrected him.
"But Alexander is such a beautiful name," Magnus complained. "Why don't you like it?"

Alec shrugged. "My parents are the only ones who call me Alexander and usually only when they are mad."

"What could angelic Alexander ever possibly do to anger his parents?" Magnus teased.

"Believe me," Alec laughed. "I had my moments." Before Magnus could inquire as to what those moments might be Camille and Ralf walked into the cafeteria. Magnus froze. Just seeing her was enough to cripple his good spirits. It made him so mad he wanted to hit something, but it also reminded him of how happy he had been when she was on his arm rather than across the room on someone else's. The combination of misery, anger and loss hit Magnus all at once. The force of them overwhelmed him and he laid his head down on the table.

"Just ignore her," Alec said. Magnus felt Alec's hand on his shoulder and was thankful for the comfort, but didn't lift his head. Instead Magnus tried to hide his face more completely in his arms.

"I said ignore her," Alec repeated. "We have a great deal of homework to do remember?" Magnus could hear the smile in Alec's voice. Usually Magnus would call Clary at a time like this, but he was surprised to find Alec's presence to be just as reassuring as hers, if not more so. Magnus took a moment to compose himself before lifting his head.

Alec was smiling at him and Magnus tried to focus on his friend rather than on the emotional heartbreak across the room.

"You have an essay to write about the civil war remember?" Alec said obviously trying to distract Magnus. "And I have homework too." But despite Alec's efforts Magnus couldn't focus on homework. His eyes darted across the room to stare at her, or maybe he was glaring.

Magnus heard Alec sigh deeply as if resigned. "What did one flag say to the other."

"Nothing," Magnus said. "It waved." He turned to Alec and he couldn't help but smile. Alec was determined to cheer him up and Magnus was going to try and let him.

"There, see," Alec said. "That's the smile I was looking for."

"Thanks," Magnus replied. "But that joke is better if you say which flags were involved."

"You're the expert," Alec said. "I was just working with what I had."

"You just wanted to distract me," Magnus accused.

"I don't know what you are talking about," Alec said innocently. Magnus muttered under his breath, but he was grinning. Alec was such a good friend. Though Magnus seemed to be cursed in the love department he did have many wonderful friends and he was grateful for that. They each returned to their respective assignments. This wasn't the first homework session they'd had together, but it was the first one where Aline hadn't joined them. Magnus always made a point to invite her. Inviting only half a couple was rude after all.

"Arg," Alec complained after a few moments. "These questions are so stupid."

"Well if I recall correctly," Magnus mused. "That class is called the Foundations for University Success. What did you expect?"

"I need to pick a major, don't I?" Alec whined.
"It's advisable," Magnus laughed. Focusing on Alec's problems was so much better than dwelling on his own. "Unless you want to get stuck in classes like that."

Now it was Alec with his head resting in the crook of his arm on the table. Magnus rolled his eyes at his indecisive friend. What was so hard about picking a major anyway?

"You know," Magnus said. "I could help you pick a major, if you like. We could do up a pros and cons list."

"Thanks," Alec mumbled into his arms. Magnus was smiling watching Alec when he heard that oh so familiar laughter from across the room. He couldn't stop himself from turning to look. Ralf was making her laugh and not just laugh but laugh the same way Magnus used to make her laugh. His homework forgotten Magnus wallowed, gazing at her radiant smile he let himself miss her. He usually tried so hard not to, but for the moment he was feeling too sorry for himself to put in the effort.

"Magnus," Alec said warily. Magnus turned away from Camille slowly, reluctantly as if moving through molasses. "She isn't worth it Magnus." Alec's tone had a warning in it, but also kindness. Magnus took a deep breath.

"I know," Magnus whispered. "I just... can't help it."

"Do you want to get out of here?" Alec asked.

"Yes please," Magnus sighed. Magnus stood and began to pack up his books. The two of them headed out of the cafeteria and Alec seemed on his way to the same seating area where they had met, but Magnus had a better idea.

"You don't have any more classes today right?" Magnus asked. Alec nodded. "Do you want to come over to my place to do homework?" Magnus didn't want to be in this school any more. He didn't want to be anywhere near Camille and Ralf.

"Sure," Alec said.

"Great!" Magnus exclaimed. "It's just across the street from campus."

"You have a roommate right?" Alec asked as they packed up their books and walked toward the exit. It was thoroughly fall now so they both stopped to put on their jackets before leaving the school.

"Tessa," Magnus replied. "She's nice. You'll like her." Alec didn't reply, but Magnus liked walking with Alec even in silence. Alec had a comforting presence.

"Do you think Aline would like to join us?" Magnus asked as they passed the dorms. "She lives on campus like you right?"

"Why do you always invite her?" Alec asked.

"It feels rude not to."

"Why?" Alec asked. "Just cause you met her at the same time you met me?"

"No," Magnus said. He wasn't sure why Alec was acting like he didn't want his girlfriend here. For some reason the words 'Aline's your girlfriend' just didn't want to escape Magnus's lips.

"I know you gave her your necklace," Alec said. "But my cousin doesn't really like jewelry. She
"Your cousin?" Magnus asked. He'd almost stopped walking out of shock, but caught himself just in time.

"Yeah," Alec said. "What did you think she was?"

"Never mind," Magnus laughed trying to hide his surprise. "Clearly I was very wrong."

Alec looked down at the ground as they walked in silence for a few more minutes then suddenly Alec's head snapped up to look at him. Magnus stared; Alec's face was suddenly so changed. He was grinning and on the verge of laughter.

"You thought she was my girlfriend didn't you?" Alec said obvious relief in his voice.

"Well yeah," Magnus said rather ashamed of himself now. To Magnus's surprise Alec stopped walking. He turned to face Magnus and again Magnus saw something he couldn't quite identify in Alec's beautiful blue eyes.

"I don't date girls," Alec explained, he was grinning from ear to ear with hope in his eyes and Magnus balked. Alec was gay. Alec was single and Alec was looking at him with expectations.

Magnus took a step back to remove himself from the electricity he suddenly felt between them. He took a deep steadying breath then forced his face to relax.

"Clearly my gaydar needs some major repairs," Magnus laughed. "Sorry I should have just asked earlier instead of assuming." Magnus couldn't see Alec's face; he was looking away. Magnus wasn't totally sure he had seen what he thought he had. He hoped he'd imagined it. Hurting Alec was the last thing Magnus wanted to do. Magnus started walking again, hoping this would release the tension. Alec followed but Magnus still couldn't see Alec's face.

"We're almost there," Magnus said after they walked in silence past the campus and across the street. Alec didn't turn to face Magnus until they were almost at Magnus's house. By then Magnus was very worried, but to his great relief when Alec looked at him he was smiling.

"Great," Alec said. "My hands are freezing." Magnus let out the breath he hadn't realized he'd been holding.

"Why didn't you bring gloves?" Magnus scolded.

"I live on campus," Alec said. "I never have to go far remember?"

"Well I promise to make you some hot cocoa when we get to my place," Magnus said. "It should warm up your hands."

"Great, thanks."

They turned the corner and found themselves at Magnus's front door. When they entered the apartment the first thing Magnus did was dump his school stuff on the table and go put the kettle on.

"Please, make yourself at home," Magnus called to Alec from the kitchen. When Magnus entered the living room moments later with two cups of hot cocoa Alec had indeed made himself at home. Alec was sitting on the couch with Tessa and they were engrossed in conversation.

"Oh Magnus!" Tessa said in a tone suggesting he was to blame for something.
"What?" Magnus objected, her tone suddenly making him not sorry for not having any hot beverage for her.

"Sworn off dating huh," Tessa mocked.

"This is my friend Alec," Magnus said. "Get your head out of the gutter."

Tessa was about to reply but Alec cut her off. "What do you mean sworn off dating?"

"Oh, when Camille returned the necklace," Tessa said. "Magnus made one of his silly declarations, which we all knew he'd never keep."

Alec seemed about to say something but suddenly Chairman Meow jumped into his lap. Alec looked slightly startled, but petted the cat almost automatically.

"Chairman likes you," Magnus said smiling. "He doesn't like anyone."

"Not true," Tessa said. "He liked Jem."

"Yes how is Jem?" Magnus teased his friend. "Have you told him about Will yet?"

"That is none of your business," Tessa reminded him.

"Ha!" Magnus laughed since Tessa had just been trying to meddle in his non-existent love life.

"I am so sorry Alec," Tessa said. "My friend has no manners."

"How long have you been friends?" Alec asked.

"Since last year," Tessa said. "When we started our second year and needed a roommate. Though Magnus took a while to warm up to me."

Magnus laughed. It was more like Tessa took a while to get her nose out of a book long enough to talk to him, but he decided to let her believe what she wanted.

"It seems you two won the roommate lottery," Alec laughed. "I definitely lost."

"How so?" Tessa asked.

"Oh it's a guy I went to highschool with," Alec said. "Real jerk."

"At least you only have to room with him this year," Tessa comforted.

"True," Alec said then added thoughtfully. "Though now that I think about it he has stopped snoring lately. I have been getting way more sleep."

"Maybe he's trying to be less of a jerk?" Tessa ventured.

"Maybe he just doesn't snore anymore," Alec shrugged. "I mean sometimes that happens right?"

"No clue," Tessa said smiling. "I'm an English major. You'll want a nursing major or something to answer that question."

"You just insist on seeing the good in everyone, Tessa," Magnus told her. "Even in Jace Herondale."

"Jace what?" Tessa asked. Magnus had listened to Alec complain about Jace for long enough now to know his full name. He hadn't thought twice about using it for emphasis but now that he'd said it out
"That's Will's last name too," Magnus said as he realized.

"They must be related," Tessa said. "Therefore Jace can't be all bad."

"You see what I mean?" Magnus told Alec. "She's relentless." But he smiled at her. Seeing the good in everyone wasn't a bad thing, in fact Magnus wished he was more like her some days.

Chapter End Notes

And of course as soon as I decide I only need to update twice a week I go on a writing binge. Sigh. Oh well! Are you really going to complain about more chapters? Hopefully now that I've gotten so much writing done I can finally get something else done... like dishes. lol. Or laundry! Sigh... why aren't there more hours in the day anyway? Even if I have the whole day at home to do nothing but write and clean it seems to me the day ends all too quickly... and the cleaning doesn't get done... but on the plus side new chapter!

Though I have chapter 12 finished, chapter 13 almost half done and chapter 14 just slightly started... chapter 11 is still rather short. ^_^ So this sneak peek is as usually subject to change.

Sneak Peek chapter 11

"Why must you always be the better person Alec?" Magnus whined. "Can't we just watch tv, drink our hot chocolate and relax."

"After homework," Alec stated firmly. Tessa watched as Alec managed to motivate Magnus into productivity. Her friends eyes were lit up when he was with Alec. It was quite remarkable. Tessa didn't want to see Magnus sad like he had been after Camille ever again and she hoped Alec would be the one to fix Magnus rather than the one who broke him anew.

"Shall I leave you boys to it then?" Tessa said smiling at them.

"Don't you have homework?" Magnus asked.

"Finished it," Tessa grinned. "And I have a date." With that she turned and left before Magnus could tease her further about her two timing ways.
Tessa's Love

Chapter Summary

Beta read by the lovely Holly0114. Also medical research done by Holly0114. She's so helpful! :D

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Magnus was smiling while he teased her so Tessa decided to let it slide. She was very curious about Alec however. When she met Alec it had seemed to her that Alec was more than a friend but once she saw them together it was like the dynamic shifted. Tessa was worried her friend couldn't see Alec's interest, but she wasn't sure if telling him would make it better or worse.

"I'll ask Will the next time I see him if there is a Jace in his family," Tessa said.

"We have homework to do," Alec reminded Magnus.

"Why must you always be the better person Alec?" Magnus whined. "Can't we just watch tv, drink our hot chocolate and relax."

"After homework," Alec stated firmly. Tessa watched as Alec managed to motivate Magnus into productivity. Her friend's eyes were lit up when he was with Alec. It was quite remarkable. Tessa didn't want to see Magnus sad like he had been after Camille ever again and she hoped Alec would be the one to fix Magnus rather than the one who broke him anew.

"Shall I leave you boys to it then?" Tessa said smiling at them.

"Don't you have homework too?" Magnus asked.

"Finished it," Tessa grinned. "And I have a date." With that she turned and left before Magnus could tease her further about her two timing ways.

Tessa had started meeting Will for coffee at the cafe where they'd accidentally bumped into each other on a regular basis now, but she still hadn't braved the topic of his strange mood swings. Mostly they talked about books. She was scared if she ventured away from their usual conversations about literature he would shut down. Tessa could always tell when Will's shields were up and when they were not. She much preferred it when they were down.

Today, however, she was meeting Jem. They usually met at Jem's place or hers. Sometimes they went out to a music store or to dinner, but Tessa had the strangest feeling that Jem shouldn't exert himself too much. She didn't want to tell him this in case he found it insulting, but she always went along with any plans that involved Jem staying home.

Tessa got off the bus and walked down the street. While she watched her suede boots crumble the grass under her feet she thought about the two men she was in love with. Tessa had no idea how it happened, but it was painfully obvious; she knew now without a doubt that was indeed that case. She loved them both for different reasons but she loved them both equally. Will loved steak but Jem was a vegetarian. Will turned everything into sarcasm and Jem's kind eyes could see through any
deflection. They were opposites in every way, but they had both stolen her heart and she was helpless to choose between them. However, she was also scared to lose them both. She had yet to tell either of them of the depth of her devotion, for she felt it cruel to do so when she could not bring herself to make a decision.

Tessa stood now at Jem's front door. It was a plain white door and spoke nothing of the beautiful soul who dwelled beyond its boundary. She rang the bell and Jem appeared quickly with a huge smile on his face. She couldn't help but smile in return as she was welcomed inside.

"Would you like something to drink?" Jem asked.

"I'm fine thank you," Tessa smiled. "You said there was something you wanted to show me?"

"Indeed," Jem replied. Once she was comfortably seated in the leather armchair Jem quickly dashed from the room. Jem's house was beautiful with its hardwood floors and marble counter tops and Tessa often wondered how Jem afforded it since she had yet to hear him talk of work. Will lived alone on a fireman's salary and his accommodations fit his circumstances.

Jem returned with his violin. Tessa noticed a slight bruise on the side of Jem's throat. It was very subtle but now that she saw him in the well light center of the room Tessa noticed the mark matched perfectly to where the violin rested when Jem played it.

"I wrote this for you," Jem said.

Before Tessa could speak Jem began to play. Like before, Tessa noted the effortless way Jem held his violin, as if it was an extension of his hand. As the sounds of his bow against the strings filled the room Tessa's heart soared. This was different than any music Jem had ever played for her. There was more happiness to this song, more joy in its melody and for once it wasn't interwoven with sorrow. Tessa listened as the music filled her soul. She thought she could listen to this every day for as long as she lived.

"Oh Jem!" Tessa gasped as the final note echoed through the room.

"I love you Tessa," Jem said softly. "I didn't tell you this because I want something from you. I just thought you should know."

"Oh dear Jem," Tessa said getting up off her chair to be closer to him.

"You don't have to say it back," Jem said. "In fact it would be better if you didn't." Tessa stopped just as she was about to wrap her arms around him and assure him of her returned affection. "There is something else I need to tell you."

They both sat down and suddenly Tessa's heart was pounding. All she could think was that Jem knew of her dating Will, but this was a strange reaction if that were the case. Her mind, however, could conjure up no other conclusion and she sat and waited in terror of losing them both.

"There's no easy way to tell you this Tessa," Jem said. "And I know I should have told you before now. All I can do is ask for your forgiveness." Tessa's terror was quickly replaced with confusion as she listened. "I'm sick Tessa. Hemochromatosis is the technical name but what it means is that I have too much iron in my blood and the only treatment is regular blood infusions. But even with treatment, I'm always tired, weak and in pain." Tessa's hand went to her throat in shock even as she wanted to reach out and comfort him but she didn't know how. "When I'm with you some days it seems as if I am cured but it's an illusion. A beautiful fantasy created by love, but Tessa there's no cure. And it will only get worse with time."
“Does Will know?” Tessa asked.

“Of course Will knows,” Jem sighed.

“How long…”

“Have I been sick?” Tessa nodded. “Since I was born. But the symptoms didn’t show up right away.”

“Oh Jem,” Tessa whispered as tears ran down her face.

“I am not whole, Tessa” Jem said. “I could never give you the life you deserve.”

“But I love you Jem,” Tessa said.

“My condition is genetic,” Jem said sadly. “We couldn’t have children Tessa. They might be like me.”

“They might not be,” Tessa said.

“Why risk it?” Jem countered. “Why bring children into the world with high risks of suffering?”

“What if I don’t care if I ever have children?” Tessa asked.

“You may not care now,” Jem said. “But you might someday and… I know Will could give you that.”

Tessa was speechless. She could do nothing but stare. Not only did this mean Jem knew she was also dating his best friend, but Jem was saying he would release any claim he might have for her sake and for Will’s. How could one person be this selfless?

“Will isn’t like you,” Tessa said. “He confuses me. One minute he’s there and the next it’s like he’s gone.”

Jem laughed lightly. “Will has issues, but believe me when I say that he loves you Tessa and he can give you everything that I can’t.”

“Does Will know about us?”

“I doubt it,” Jem smiled. “He thinks he can fool me it seems, but he’s wrong. He fools so few people with his ruse of disinterest.” Jem sighed.

“Do you know why he does it?” Tessa asked.

“I do,” Jem said. “But you should ask him yourself. He will tell you I’m sure.”

“Jem,” Tessa said. “I don’t want to lose you.”

“And you won’t,” Jem smiled. “I will always love you.”

“And I you,” Tessa said reaching out her hand to hold his. They were still seated on the sofa, but to Tessa it felt like the world had shifted under her feet.

“But you also love Will,” Jem said. “I know you do.”

“Why can’t I love both of you?” Tessa asked.
"I don't know," Jem laughed. "Appropriate societal conventions?"

"To hell with society," Tessa whispered moving closer to him on the couch. "You two are no ordinary friends. Sometimes it feels like you are one person. Like you share a soul and I love that soul. I love you both the same no matter what either of you or society thinks." Jem's hand stroked her face and she closed her eyes trying to savour the feeling.

"Thank you, my Tessa," Jem said sweetly.

Their moment was broken by the doorbell. Tessa opened her eyes and saw a very determined expression on Jem's face. The look in his eyes made her realize who was at the door. Jem rose quickly to get to the door and she heard Will's voice greet him. Tessa couldn't sit anymore. She stood as her heart raced.

"So I'm here," Will voice carried down the hall. "What's so urgent."

She couldn't hear Jem's reply but heard footsteps as they both moved down the hallway. This, having them together in her presence, is what she had avoided for months. But there was no escaping it now and no longer any point in delaying the inevitable since Jem already knew.

"Tess?" Will said taken aback as he caught sight of her. He turned to Jem with questions in his eyes.

"There's nothing you could do that would cause me to cease loving either of you," Jem said. Tessa watched as Will's eyes went wide in understanding. She wondered if maybe Jem had mentioned he'd been seeing someone, but never mentioned the name or maybe Will had just finally put two and two together. "If I am not meant to be the keeper of your heart Tessa, then there is no other I would rather have that honour." Jem had started his speech with his eyes locked on Tessa but ended it looking at Will.

"You love her," Will said to Jem with certainty. Tessa was surprised his tone lacked any kind of question.

"As you love her," Jem replied, with equal certainty. They were facing each other now, too wrapped up in their conversation to notice her. Tessa could appreciate the irony.

"I won't take her from you," Will said. "You're happiness is worth more to me than my own."

"Don't be stupid," Jem said and Tessa was surprised to hear frustration in Jem's voice. Jem so rarely yelled. "You can give her more than I can. She deserves someone whole who isn't in pain. Someone who wouldn't be a burden to her."

"You are not a burden," Will yelled. "And I will not be the cause of your misery."

Will looked at Tessa then. His expression was so open, so completely free of any pretense, like it never had been before. In that moment Tessa could see the truth in his blue eyes. Will loved her and this was costing him much.

Tessa suddenly hated the world. Why could she have only one of them? Why did the world believe you could only love one person with your whole heart? Tessa didn't know what to do to make Will stay. The look in his eyes was like nothing she had ever seen before. She knew Will would not be persuaded from his decision. As she watched him leave it was like she was watching half her heart leave with him. Tessa sank to her knees as the tears came. She heard the door slam and knew Will was gone.

Jem was there though. His arms came around her as she sobbed. She needed him, but as she was
crying over the loss of another man the guilt of her tears only made them last longer.

"I'm so sorry Tessa," Jem said softly, trying to soothe her by rubbing her back in a circular motion. "I had no idea he would react like that. I just wanted you to be happy. Both of you."

Tessa lifted her head from Jem's tear stained shirt. It was made of a soft fabric and only now did Tessa fully appreciate how lovely the soft material had felt on her face while she sobbed. She forced herself to look at Jem: kind, selfless Jem.

"I know," Tessa said. "But you forget how much we both love you Jem. You are essential to Will's and my happiness and there's nothing you can do that could ever change that."

Chapter End Notes

So... yeah... writing binge still going strong! Chapter 12 is totally finished and the next two are started... I wonder how long this is going to last. lol

Anyway... while this writer binge lasts I shall be updating like a spaz but once its over back to twice a week I think. ^_^ As long as you don't mind me uploading chapters super fast that is. If you'd rather wait I can save up chapters during writing binges rather than update faster... its up to you really... Do you want a more regular schedule not matter how far ahead I am or do you want chapters as fast as I write them?

Also can you find the semi-direct quote in here from The Infernal Devices Clockwork Princess? Its not totally exact as I had to adapt it to fit but its pretty close!

Sneak Peek chapter 12:

Alec smile to himself as he checked his phone. The message there, as it usually did, made Alec want to groan and hit his head on the wall while at the same time made him want to jump for joy.

"Magnus wants to hang out," Alec said to Jace as he put his phone away. "And though I know it will suck I still want to see him." Alec sighed. "I'm hopeless."

"Maybe you should say no," Jace said.

"But I don't want to upset him," Alec whined.
Alec's Heartache

Chapter Summary

Beta read by Holly0114 on ff

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Alec ran forward and was encircled by Magnus's embrace. One of Magnus's hands held Alec while the other touched his face. Alec reached up for Magnus. Their lips met and Alec pulled Magnus in closer. All he wanted was Magnus closer. Their shirts melted away and Alec traced the smooth planes of Magnus's chest before he kissed Magnus's lips again. A symphony of sensations ran through Alec, lighting up his every nerve. Their hands roamed over each other greedily as the kiss deepened. The world around them faded as only Magnus mattered at this moment. His warm touch was Alec's whole world.

Alec opened his eyes and the warm feeling of his dream vanished instantly as the image of the ceiling materialized in front of him. Of all the dreams he'd had lately he hated these the most. The sex dreams were great but they didn't leave Alec feeling quite so miserable in the morning. Horny maybe, but not sad. The romantic dreams were the worst.

Alec thought again about that moment when he had realized Magnus believed Aline was his girlfriend. The whole stupid situation was so impossible that Alec had known for a moment that it was only this misunderstanding that kept them apart, but then Magnus had laughed it off. Magnus had taken a step back and tried to backtrack like it was no big deal. The hope in Alec had been crushed and since then everything had gotten worse. The dreams were every night now and Alec missed Magnus when he wasn't there but he also missed Magnus even when he was there. Sure he didn't know what it felt like to kiss the man, but he had a very active imagination that was doing all it could to change that reality. When Alec was with Magnus all Alec wanted to do was touch him. How could this chemistry only be one sided? Could Magnus really not sense it? Sure Magnus had dated and loved a woman but would Alec be able to feel electricity like this if Magnus was only interested in women?

Alec didn't want to get out of bed. He didn't want to face the day. He wanted to sink back into the bliss of his dream where Magnus wanted him. At least Magnus's insistence that Aline join them made more sense now. Alec had intentionally not invited Aline to their most recent study session just to have time alone with Magnus. Not that that had helped at all.

"Arg!" Alec said flipping himself over and burying his face in his pillow.

"What's wrong?"

Alec looked up. Jace was sitting up in bed, with a shirt on no less, looking at Alec with what Alec could only interpret as a look of concern. Alec blinked at him. This was very strange.

"Nothing," Alec said.

"I know that feeling," Jace confessed and Alec found himself unable to look away. The expression
on Jace's face was so altered, his curiosity was peaked. "Who's playing hard to get?"

"What do you mean?" Alec asked. Jace hadn't brought a girl back here for weeks. Alec hadn't been awoken by snoring for weeks either but Alec wasn't sure why. He couldn't help but be suspicious.

"There's this girl," Jace said. "I can't get her out of my head."

"Really?" Alec asked shocked. This whole concept seemed alien. Jace hung up on someone really? Had hell frozen over?

"Yeah," Jace said. "Please don't laugh."

"I wasn't going to laugh," Alec said kindly. As stuck in the friend zone as Alec was right now he wasn't about to mock someone else's romantic plight.

"This hasn't happened to me before," Jace said. "It sucks."

"Tell me about it!" Alec agreed. Jace smiled at him and Alec found himself again stunned by the change in Jace. It must be this girl's doing he thought.

"You must really like this girl," Alec said. "You're so different."

"Good different?" Jace asked.

"Yeah," Alec replied.

"So I told you my sad story," Jace said after a moment. "Your turn."

"Friend zone," Alec explained. "And to top it off I am still not totally sure if he's straight or just mostly straight."

"Tough luck," Jace said not without empathy. "That sucks."

"Yeah," Alec agreed. Alec felt a connection with Jace in their shared misery. It was strange that of all people it was Jace who seemed to understand his current problem best.

"Maybe we can be each other's sponsors," Jace said with a slight laugh. "I have been trying, and I'll admit failing, to stop myself from thinking about her."

"I haven't even tried," Alec whined. "He's all broken up about his ex and he seems better when I'm there so I show up and take the hit."

"At least you talk to him," Jace said. "Clary and I have barely exchanged words but I can see her from where I sit in class."

"Is that why you stopped skipping?" Alec laughed. "I was wondering."

"Yeah," Jace mumbled. This whole conversation was going on while they were still across the dorm from each other since they were both still in bed. Alec decided this was silly and got up.

"I'm hungry," he said. "Let's go raid the cafeteria." Jace laughed but also got out of bed; he was even wearing pajamas. Alec was very impressed with this Clary's magical powers over his roommate. Alec went to brush his teeth while Jace changed and vice versa. Soon they were grabbing jackets and headed to the school.

"Why couldn't the dorms be part of the same building?" Jace noted as they walked.
"No clue," Alec said. "Would be convenient though."

"Winter is going to suck," Jace complained.

"At least we don't live off campus," Alec said thinking of Magnus. "That's a longer walk."

"Yeah but if we did we could drive here," Jace reminded him. "In warm cars."

"True," Alec laughed. "But we'd have to pay for parking."

"Arg!" Jace groaned. "Like this school doesn't make enough money off us as it is." Alec had meant it as a casual comment about the inconvenience of paying for parking, but then he remembered that Jace was here on a scholarship. He decided not to mention what his parents did for a living or how much money they had donated to this school. Jace had, after all just started being less jerkish and Alec didn't want to ruin that.

Alec felt his phone go off in his pocket but decided to wait until they were inside to check it. It was so not worth taking his hands out of his pockets to check his phone in this weather. As they approached the door they sped up, eager to be warm again. Alec made a mental note to buy gloves as the door closed behind them.

"Yep," Jace said. "Time to drag out the winter coat I think." Alec noticed then Jace was only wearing a leather jacket and like himself no gloves. Well weren't they organized? Alec smiled to himself as he checked his phone. The message there, as it usually did, made Alec want to groan and hit his head on the wall while at the same time made him want to jump for joy.

"Magnus wants to hang out," Alec said to Jace as he put his phone away. "And though I know it will suck I still want to see him." Alec sighed. "I'm hopeless."

"Maybe you should say no," Jace said.

"But I don't want to upset him," Alec whined.

"And upsetting yourself is better?" Jace asked.

"Have you told Clary how you feel?" Alec threw at him.

"If I do will you let yourself off the hook with this guy?" Jace replied.

Alec thought about it. His friendship with Magnus was doomed because Alec would always want more. Any potential for romance was doomed because Magnus would never want more. What was the point? Alec had been torturing himself for weeks now spending so much time with someone he liked who clearly didn't like him back. Maybe Jace was right.

"Deal," Alec said sadly.

"Oh crap!" Jace said suddenly frantic. "Now I have to talk to Clary!"

"Yes you do," Alec said with a smile. It was so nice, after all those hours spent with Magnus, to be hanging out with someone Alec never in a million years wanted to have sex with. Okay Aline was also in that category but he had been seeing less of her since he started spending so much time with Magnus. Though that was mostly due to his 'forgetting' to invite her to their study sessions. If Aline ever managed to meet Helen she would totally understand.

"Man I didn't really think this deal through," Jace whined as they entered the cafeteria. Alec's phone
went off again and sure enough it was Magnus. Alec hadn't replied yet and as usual Magnus had sent another text. Taking a deep breath Alec started to type.

'Sorry busy,' Alec texted. 'Can't hang out today.' He sent the message then queued up for breakfast with Jace trying very hard not to feel horribly guilty, but failing. When Alec had a plate of french toast in hand and Jace was carrying a tray of pancakes they went to look for a table.

"So it's your turn," Alec sat as they sat down and started eating. "Text Clary."

"I don't have her number," Jace sighed.

"Wow, you really haven't talked much with his girl have you?" Alec said.

"Nope," Jace said. "I just end up staring at her whenever she's nearby and thinking about her when she isn't." He sighed. Alec tried to imagine for a moment how confusing it would be to suddenly have feelings you had never known before. His thoughts drifted to how Jace was back in high school and his inseparable friend back then.

"What does your friend think of this?" Alec asked. "You and Clary I mean. You guys were always together back in high school. What's his name Se-something? Seth maybe?"

"Sebastian," Jace corrected. "He isn't thrilled. He thinks I just need to get over it." Jace rolled his eyes. "Like it's so easy."

"Is that why you stopped bringing women over?" Alec asked.

"I made a new friend," Jace said smiling. "I have been going over to her place."

"I noticed the lack of snoring lately" Alec said. "Am I that unobservant that it's because of you not being home?"

"Maybe sometimes," Jace said. "But I also went to a sleep clinic."

"Why?" Alec asked. This seemed a strange thing for Jace to do.

"I felt bad for keeping you awake," Jace confessed a little sheepishly. "And I actually think I'm sleeping better now."

Alec didn't know what to say. Jace had done this without being asked. It seemed there was more to Jace than Alec thought.

"Well thanks," Alec said. Jace didn't say anything but gave Alec a slight smile then returned his attention to his breakfast. They ate in silence for a while. As Alec finished his last bite of french toast with maple syrup he thought about how strange today was turning out to be. Instead of spending the day with Magnus and getting his hopes up every time Magnus reached across the table that Magnus might hold his hand, Alec was eating breakfast with Jace. Someone who until today Alec had never thought to have a civil conversation with, let alone commiserate with over their shared heartache.

"I told you I was on the wrestling team right?" Jace asked as he too finished eating.

"That's that it was!" Alec said. "Wrestling. I remembered you were here for sports but I forgot which one."

"The season starts up soon," Jace said. "So on top of homework now I shall have endless practice. I hope our coach isn't like the one I had in high school."
"Oh?" Alec inquired. He had never done sports in high school unless you count archery, but that hadn't been at the school, but rather on his parents personal range.

"Yeah," Jace said. "He was rude all the time."

"Is Sebastian here on a sports scholarship too?" Alec asked.

"Nope," Jace said. "I don't think he cares much about school actually. His parents are paying for it and he hasn't even picked a major."

Alec was suddenly comparing himself to Sebastian and he didn't like it one bit, but before Alec could sink too deep into the horrid comparison or indeed say anything Jace's eyes went suddenly wide. His gaze was fixed on a point behind Alec and he spun round just in time to see Magnus and Clary enter the cafeteria. Magnus was staring at Alec with a hurt expression on his face and Alec somehow knew instantly he had made the right call. It was doomed. They were so very doomed. Magnus needed Alec like a nicotine patch while he got over his ex and Alec wanted Magnus like a bucket of strawberries covered in chocolate. Alec turned back around to face Jace, deciding to stick to his guns and focus on Jace rather than Magnus.

"Here is your chance," Alec said. "Talk to her." Jace shook his head.

"No chickening out," Alec said firmly as he grabbed Jace by the arm pulling him to his feet. Jace stood but he didn't look happy about it. With a nudge in the right direction Jace walked slowly toward Clary, but she was looking through Jace to Alec in the exact same way Magnus was. It was as if Magnus had told Clary everything and they were sharing their surprise at Alec's lack of being busy. Alec really needed to get better at lying! Or at least think to hide his bad lies better by faking busy when he was supposed to be unavailable.

Alec tried to focus on Jace but Jace was now too far away for Alec to hear him talking to Clary. Alec had intended to watch them for signs of how their conversation was going, but Magnus appeared before him, blocking his view of Clary and Jace.

"You don't look very busy," Magnus said.

"I'm having breakfast with Jace," Alec replied.

"But you hate Jace."

"I think maybe I have been too hard on him," Alec admitted. "Besides, we found common ground this morning."

"Can we hang out later then?" Magnus asked. "Maybe tonight? I could order food and we could try and console each other on the length of our respective essays."

Oh that was tempting, Alec thought but only for a moment. Then he remembered the pain of sitting near Magnus on his couch while being unable to reach out and take his hand, unable to pull the taller man close to him and kiss those inviting lips. Even now Alec could feel the pull, he could feel himself being drawn closer to Magnus. Taking a deep breath Alec stood up. Texts were not going to cut it.

"I can't be your friend Magnus," Alec said calmly. Magnus stared at him obviously hurt and stunned. Alec should have turned away and left it like that, but he didn't want to. Alec didn't care that they were in a crowded cafeteria. He didn't care that Magnus couldn't want him back, in this moment all Alec wanted was to kiss Magnus breathless while the cafeteria watched enviously. No one had ever invoked such powerful feelings in Alec before and he hated having to push them away.
When Alec did finally have the strength to turn away Magnus grabbed his arm. The physical contact sent shocks through Alec's body reminding him once again why just being Magnus's friend was impossible.

"I need you Alec," Magnus begged. "Since Camille... it's been you who has kept me in one piece."

"Don't you think I know that!" Alec yelled pulling his arm out of Magnus's grasp. "Why do you think I've tried as long as I have huh? I can see the light in your eyes go out every time you see her."

"Then why?" Magnus pleaded. "Am I such a horrible friend?" The pain in Magnus's voice almost broke Alec's resolve.

"I can't be your friend," Alec repeated in a whisper but this time he couldn't pull away from Magnus, couldn't turn and leave. Alec leaned in closer, his breathing quickening, he watched Magnus's face. All he saw there was hurt and confusion. How could Magnus not see? How could Magnus not know how badly Alec wanted to kiss him right now. Alec wanted to run his hands through Magnus's dark hair. He wanted to move his hands up under Magnus's shirt and pull Magnus closer. Alec wanted to stand on his tiptoes and kiss the man before him until those confused beautiful green eyes lost all their pain and smiled back at him.

His imagination getting away from him Alec leaned in further still until he could feel Magnus's breath on his face. Alec yearned to move that millimeter more and kiss Magnus, to bring his hands up to hold Magnus, to pull Magnus close against him, but Alec didn't do any of those things. Alec forced himself to lean back. His pulse pounded in his veins and for a moment Alec thought he could see understanding on Magnus's face.

With one last glance at Magnus Alec turned and walked away.

Chapter End Notes

This is more like it! Daily chapters. ^_^ Man I have missed this... hope it lasts.

So a thought occurred to me at work today and for the first time I wrote notes about what to say in author's notes while at work! I scribble down notes for chapters at work all the time but for author's notes, that's a new one!

Here goes: Fanfic is written like a tv show in that you have some stuff planned ahead but not too far ahead and you get feedback as you upload/air each chapter/episode. Books are published all at once and have a clear beginning middle and end. I think that is why I am doing so many plot lines and POVs in this story. Think of it like a show jumping from scene to scene to let you see what all the different characters are doing.

Okay now that that's out of my system I need your help! This story is now 12 chapters adding up to over 30,000 words... but it still has no title. lol. Anyone got any ideas? I am rather horrible at naming thing. The name of my last story was a fluke promise! I am still surprised how well that title fits. Please leave a suggestion for a title in the comments and I'll either pick one and credit you or get inspiration from you and credit you for that. Either way you will get credit if I pick your idea! :D :D I bet you guys have some awesome ideas!

Also hehe! I'm mean to Magnus and I guess Alec too. Those two just can't get their shit
Sneak Peek Chapter 13

"I'm going home," Magnus sighed. "Tessa's upset about losing Will. At least at home I can be of some use to her."

With that Magnus walked toward the nearest exit. Clary noticed he didn't even bother to zip up his jacket and she worried he'd catch cold. Clary may not know much about Alec. She may have only met him in passing during one of his many homework met ups with Magnus but she suddenly hated him. Couldn't he see how fragile Magnus was right now? Couldn't Alec just give Magnus time rather than break away like that! Sure it was almost exams and therefore Magnus and Alec had been friends for months but that wasn't long when you thought about the kind of pain Magnus was working through.
"Magnus?" Clary whispered. "Isn't that Alec?" The two of them had just entered the cafeteria and sure enough there sat the man Magnus had been complaining to her about all morning. Clary was trying not to be hurt that Magnus was only hanging out with her today to complain that his other friend was too busy to spend time with him. She knew Magnus needed someone to be around people who had no memories of him with Camille and she was trying to be okay with that. It would be worth it if it helped Magnus get over that horrid woman.

"That's Jace he's with," Clary observed. "I thought you said those two didn't get along."

"They don't," Magnus replied. Clary watched as Alec got up and encouraged Jace to do the same. She was rather confused by this whole thing. What could those two possibly have in common?

Magnus vanished from her side, but she caught a glimpse of him talking to Alec just before Jace appeared suddenly before her.

"Hi," Jace said "I just wanted to tell you something."

"Alright," Clary said. She hoped he'd hurry up so she could follow Magnus.

"I've been- I mean- I… for a while now," Jace stopped then after a deep breath he continued. "We have that class together. Intro into Humanities or something."

"I know," Clary said. She had first noticed Jace in that class, which had upset Simon. She still couldn't explain even to herself why she had been so fixated.

"Ever since we talked," Jace said slowly. "I kind of haven't stopped thinking about you."

"Really?" Clary said skeptically.

"Yeah," Jace said. He wasn't looking at her but rather at the ground. Clary knew Jace's reputation. She'd overheard women he'd slept with talking about him in the girls bathroom on more than one occasion since arriving at this school. Jace was a player, pure and simple. There was no way this wasn't a line, even if there was a certain vulnerability to the way Jace had delivered the words.

"I bet you dream about me too huh?"

"I do," Jace confessed. He looked slightly confused and Clary had to admire his dedication to the game. A part of her was flattered he'd picked her as his girl of the day. Clary knew she wasn't any
great beauty, but even if she had been her choice in clothing did nothing to flatter her. Baggy t-shirts, comfy sweaters and loose jeans didn't exactly scream sexy.

"I think I've seen this play before," she said with a slight laugh. "On TV of course." She smiled; she was flattered sure, but she had bigger problems right now. Clary looked past Jace to watch Magnus. She was worried Alec had done something to ruin the new happiness her friend had managed to grab hold of recently. Clary made to follow Magnus, but they were already done talking. Alec moved quickly to stand beside Jace, but Magnus stood perfectly still by the table where Alec had been sitting a moment ago. His face was blank as if in shock.

"Jace you okay?" she heard Alec say but Clary didn't bother to listen to Jace's reply; she didn't turn to look. Clary walked over to Magnus and put a hand on his shoulder, hoping to bring him comfort.

"What happened?" Clary asked in a whisper. Magnus didn't reply, but continued to look dazed. Clary thought she saw Jace and Alec leave the cafeteria out of the corner of her eye. She didn't bother to confirm it as her main focus at the moment rested solely on Magnus.

"I think," Magnus said miserably as he sank into a cold metal cafeteria chair. "I think he…" Magnus seemed unable to finish the sentence or perhaps unsure how.

"What did he say?" Clary asked instead trying to help him express his thoughts.

"That he can't be my friend anymore," Magnus said.

"What? Why?" Clary exclaimed.

"I think, it seemed like…" Magnus paused then finished in a whisper, "He wanted to kiss me just now." Magnus's voice suddenly rose as he covered his face with his hands and almost yelled. "I'm an idiot! Oh god what a mess!"

Clary couldn't understand why Magnus was upset. She was delighted.

"Go after him," Clary said beaming at Magnus. "Go kiss him!" Magnus didn't reply. He laid his head down on the table and sulked.

"Don't stick to your 'I'm done dating' thing please," Clary begged. "I want you to be happy and Alec obviously cares about you."

"I know how wonderful the beginning is," Magnus spoke into the crook of his arm. "Camille, Etta, Axel, Imasu… they all cared about me too. And each time the start was like magic. That soaring feeling in your stomach that makes you want to give your heart away, to take the leap together. It makes you sure that as long as you have each other you can do anything. But that doesn't last Clary."

"If you don't give it a chance how can you know how it'll end?"

"Because they all end in pain," Magnus sighed. "Note to self: stop befriending people who could possibly be attracted to me."

"That should be tricky for you," Clary laughed. She was trying to cheer him up but it was having no effect what so ever. So much for laughter being contagious. "You're left only with straight guys in that scenario."

"That's what I thought Alec was," Magnus whined.

"Clearly he's not," Clary said. "And unless you want to lose him forever, which I know you don't,
"There's nothing to fix," Magnus said. "Because there was nothing built."

"Don't say that!" Clary snapped at him. "Alec said he couldn't be your friend right? He must like you an awful lot if he couldn't-"

"Couldn't what?" Magnus retorted. "Be in my presence? Talk to me? I wasn't asking much!"

Clary didn't know what to say. It seemed there was nothing she could say that would make this better.

"I'm going home," Magnus sighed. "Tessa's upset about losing Will. At least at home I can be of some use to her."

With that Magnus walked toward the nearest exit. Clary noticed he didn't even bother to zip up his jacket and she worried he'd catch cold. Clary may not know much about Alec. She may have only met him in passing during one of his many homework meet ups with Magnus, but she suddenly hated him. Couldn't he see how fragile Magnus was right now? Couldn't Alec just give Magnus time rather than breaking away like that!

Clary wanted to give Alec a piece of her mind but she had no idea where Alec and Jace had run off to. Fuming in the middle of the cafeteria was not helping. Magnus was very stubborn and Clary knew there was nothing she could say to convince him when his mind was made up, which it clearly was. She took a deep breath. Magnus needed some space; she would check on him later, but for now she decided to contact her sane and non-traumatized friend.

'Magnus is miserable thanks to his Alec person,' Clary texted Helen. 'I need to rant. Are you busy?'

'Not so much busy,' Helen texted. 'More like procrastinating doing homework.'

'Great I can help with that.'

'Actually not doing homework is a specialty of mine,' Helen replied. 'Don't need help.'

'Lol,' Clary replied and for once she had actually laughed out loud when reading the message. 'I'm headed home. Meet you there.'

'I'll put the kettle on,' Helen answered. 'I'm already home.'

Clary tidied away her tray then wrapping herself up in her thick winter coat she headed back to the dorms. Living with Helen over the last few months had been a wonderful change from her life back home. Her brother wasn't around to annoy her, her father wasn't there to nag her and her mother didn't have so many opportunities to complain about Clary's domestic skills. Living away from home for the first time had been everything she dreamed it would be.

Of course, Clary missed her family. Luke was technically her stepfather but she'd known him as dad all her life and often forgot to refer to him as a step parent. Her older brother, Jonathan, had known their father more so he often called Luke by his name rather than dad. This sometimes confused
people into thinking they were only half siblings but those people didn't really matter. Anyone who really knew her family, like Magnus and his aunt, Aleida understood why Clary called Luke dad while Jonathan called him Luke. Jonathan and Clary's biological father had died before Clary was born, but Jonathan and her mother, Jocelyn, remembered him. It was a long time ago now; Jocelyn and Luke were very happy together and the pain of her father's death had long since healed.

Her favourite thing about living with Helen was the great girl talk. Clary's oldest friend was Magnus, who despite his glittery ways was no woman. Simon had been her friend before they started dating and indeed all of Clary's other friends were guys as well. She had no sisters. Living with Helen meant talking about hair and nails while gossiping about boys! Sure Helen was also up for gossiping about girls, but it was still fabulous. With so many guy friends Clary was much more used to talking about how hot women were anyway.

Clary reached her dorm and quickly went inside to get out of the cold.

"Hey," Helen said.

"It's so cold," Clary whined.

"It's November," Helen reminded her. "End of November actually."

"Don't remind me," Clary groaned. "I don't want to think about exams yet."

"I hear ya," Helen agreed. She got up from her desk and went over to their part of a shared kitchen. There was a microwave, a fridge, an electric kettle and a small cupboard full of granola bars. They also had some mugs and bowls for cereal.

"Thanks," Clary said as she accepted the warm cup of tea Helen handed her. Helen picked up her own tea and the two of them sat and drank in silence for a moment. Clary could feel the warmth from the hot liquid spreading through her fingers, returning some of the feeling that had been numbed by the cold. The sprawling building that housed their dorms had a common area but there was no indoor path back to the main school. For this reason Clary liked their small incomplete kitchen especially in winter. Breakfast in your warm dorm before a 10am class was far preferable to a cold morning walk. "I wish Magnus would just let himself be happy."

"So who's this Alec anyway?" Helen asked. "You said it was his fault."

"He's been friends with Magnus for the last... I want to say two months?" Clary said dubiously. "Maybe it's only been a month but either way it's been a while, but now it seems Alec wants to be more than friends and Magnus doesn't."

"That sucks for Alec," Helen said. "But why is Magnus upset?"

"Being friends with Alec was helping him be less miserable since Camille cheated on him," Clary explained.

"Doesn't that imply Magnus likes Alec too?" Helen asked.

"Maybe," Clary sighed. "But he isn't admitting it."

"So, anything happen to you today that isn't about Magnus Bane?" Helen asked with a grin.

"I talk about him allot huh?" Clary asked.

"Kinda," Helen said but she was smiling. "I don't think I've ever had a friend like that before. I mean
I could talk about my siblings all day but you don't choose family like you do friends."

"Magnus is more like family honestly," Clary said. "I've known him since I was in diapers." She couldn't remember this far back, of course, but it was always a dramatic way to phrase it.

"Wow," Helen laughed. Clary finished her tea, collected the mugs and went to the common bathroom down the hall to wash them. Her mind wondered as she went and she returned with an answer to Helen's question.

"A non-Magnus thing about today," Clary said as she re-entered the dorm. "Jace hit on me… I think."

"What? Really?" Helen asked.

"Yep," Clary said. "I didn't think I was his type."

"You so aren't!" Helen laughed. "Did you tell Simon?"

"Tell him what?" Clary said. "That Jace spoke to me before I walked away? Nothing to tell." She shrugged as she finished putting away the washed mugs.

"He's sooo hot," Helen whined. "If he wasn't such a whore I'd totally-"

"Wouldn't get anywhere with him cause he'd be less whorish," Clary cut her friend off. Helen laughed, sitting down on her bed. Clary sat beside her.

"Yeah I suppose you're right," Helen said. "But I can still admire the view."

"Oh for sure!" Clary said grinning. "If only we had a Jace Herondale calendar. He could be washing a different car shirtless every month." Clary playfully pretended to decide where the calendar would look best, surveying the room like a photographer framing a work of art. "It could go right there."

"Shirtless," Helen said shaking her head. "My dear small minded friend. He shall wash the cars totally naked." Helen grinned from ear to ear, finishing off the last word with a click of her tongue. Clary couldn't help but blush slightly. She supposed objectifying Jace like this was only fair considering his behavior toward women and besides it was fun.

"Wouldn't it be awkward?" Clary said. "I mean if someone besides us saw it on our wall."

"There would be strategically placed soap suds and other items," Helen explained, wiggling her eyebrows. "So we can use our imagination." Helen had a far off look in her eyes and Clary was fairly sure this calendar was being perfectly pictured in Helen's mind's eye. Clary couldn't help but laugh at her friend's enthusiasm.

"How long has it been?" Clary asked still chuckling.

"Too long," Helen whined.

"If I had any stable or single friends I'd set you up," Clary said.

"So basically," Helen summarized. "If Simon and you weren't dating you'd set me up with Simon. If Magnus wasn't a mess with him and if Tessa wasn't straight, her."

"Yeah," Clary said. "I am so glad we are friends. It seems I am sadly lacking in that department." Magnus had far more friends than Clary, but among them it was only Tessa she could really count as a her friend.
Helen and Clary shared a laugh at her total lack of a social life then finally got down to doing some homework. It was dreadfully dull, but when they were finally finished Clary went to check on Magnus. He was much the same and Clary made very little progress in cheering him up.

Chapter End Notes

Also NO ONE even has a single idea to help me name this story? *Cries* I suck at naming things guys. Maybe it will stay "University Human AU Clace-Malec" forever even though that is a super lame working title. Sigh.

Also come on COMMENT people! You are making me sad. I want to hear what you think! I am uploading this near midnight even though I have to get up for work at 7am tomorrow because I love checking for new comments all day while I am at work. I could just make you wait till I got home tomorrow but it makes my day at work so much better when I get to read comments in between tasks. Please guys! You would make my day!

By the way this sneak peek is based off of a barely started chapter so... ^_^

Sneak Peek Chapter 14

"She didn't believe me," Jace whispered as if to himself. He had said this in his head but it felt good to say it out loud. Like releasing a bird from a cage.

"I believe you," Alec said. "But can you blame her? I mean you do have a reputation."

Alec had a point, Jace thought. Hadn't he said far more compelling things before to get women into bed without meaning a single word of it? How could Clary think him genuine with so much evidence to the contrary.
"I think I've seen this play before," Clary said with a slight laugh. "On TV of course." She smiled but it was a fake smile. Then she seemed to look through Jace as if he was no longer there.

Of all the possible outcomes, Clary shrugging off his confession as a pick-up line had not occurred to Jace. He had never felt like this about anyone before. He'd been prepared for rejection of any other kind - she did have a boyfriend after all - but he'd assumed she would have at least believed he spoke the truth. To Jace, it seemed like what he'd said to Clary was so huge, so different from anything he had ever said to a girl before. He'd been nervous just standing near her! Speaking to her had been strange and terrifying. Now, Jace felt dejected and small in a way he had never experienced. Clary moved away from him, but Jace didn't have the energy to go after her. Even if he did he couldn't think of anything to say that she might believe.

When Alec appeared beside him, Jace could see Magnus was still standing stunned by their table. So, Alec had done it; they had both lived up to their side of the deal, but Jace felt worse now than before. Judging from the look on Alec's face, he felt worse as well.

"Jace, you okay?" Alec asked.

"Not really," Jace said. "You okay?"

"Not really," Alec echoed.

"Well, aren't we a pair," Jace sighed. "Man, I need a drink."

"I wouldn't say no," Alec said, hesitantly. "Except that it's 10am." Alec put a consoling hand on Jace's shoulder, and Jace was amazed how comforting the small gesture was. "How about ice cream instead?" With a sigh, Jace agreed and let Alec lead him out of the cafeteria.

The look on Clary's face was haunting him. The humorless smile that hadn't reached her eyes had been her only reaction to his words. That image seemed to be permanently etched in his mind's eye. Jace walked beside Alec and a little behind, following rather than paying attention to his surroundings.

"She didn't believe me," Jace whispered. He'd said this in his head already, but saying it out loud made it more real somehow, like releasing a bird from a cage. There was no taking the words back.

"I believe you," Alec said. "But can you blame her? I mean, you do have a reputation."

Alec had a point, Jace thought. Hadn't he said far more compelling things before to get women into bed without meaning a single word of it? How could Clary think him genuine with so much evidence to the contrary?
"I want her to believe me," Jace said firmly. "Even if she never returns my…" He faltered, Jace hadn't said this out loud before.

"Feelings?" Alec offered. "Affection? Interest?"

"Yeah," Jace mumbled. "How can I make her believe me?"

"Well for a start," Alec said. "You could stop sleeping around."

"I can do that," Jace said. It surprised him how easy an idea this was to accept. "What else?"

"You could show her the truth," Alec suggested. "With actions instead of words."

"How?"

"Do something selfless," Alec suggested. "Take an interest in the things she cares about." Jace nodded. It seemed straightforward enough.

"Thanks, Alec," Jace said. "I couldn't have done this without you."

"I know the feeling," Alec replied. Jace was amazed at how comfortable he was talking to Alec like this. Alec didn't judge him for caring. In fact, Jace suspected his caring was the reason Alec had warmed up to him in the first place.

They walked in silence until they reached their dorm room. Alec went over to his side of the room and returned with a bucket of rocky road ice cream and two spoons.

"Here," Alec said. "I think we've earned it."

"Thanks," Jace said. "Though I'd still rather have a whiskey."

"Tough." Alec's curt reply made Jace smile.

"Do you always keep ice cream in your mini fridge?" Jace asked after they had both had a few spoonfuls of the rich creamy comfort food.

"Maybe," Alec said. "Or maybe I just started eating my feelings recently."

"Magnus," Jace said.

"Uh huh," Alec confirmed, with a nod of his head.

"So, got any ideas how specifically I should show Clary I care?" Jace asked, trying to make conversation.

"Got any specific ideas how I could make Magnus like me back?" Alec asked.

"Nope," Jace said. "I would suggest jealous, but if he doesn't like you at least a little that won't work."

"Great," Alec said sarcastically. "I feel much better. Thanks."

"Anytime," Jace laughed.

"Magnus is Clary's best friend," Alec said. "So I learned a little about her while taking up residence in the friend zone."
"Any helpful hints you want to share with the group?"

"Clary's an art major," Alec said. "She's a very loyal friend, and she and I share a decided lack of fashion." He laughed, but without much humour Jace noticed.

"Have you thought of that?" Jace asked. "Maybe if you dressed great, Magnus would notice you."

"Said everyone on the hook ever," Alec replied.

"Fair point," Jace nodded.

"I just can't get my hopes up anymore," Alec said resigned. "It sucks too much." They ate in silence for a while, but Jace didn't like the mood in the room. Alec was sulking and Jace couldn't blame him.

"If we don't stop eating this ice cream," Jace said trying to lighten the mood. "I am going to have to add years to my workout tomorrow." When Alec laughed this time it felt much more genuine, and Jace was glad.

"I jog sometimes," Alec said. "But working out isn't my thing."

"For a guy who doesn't work out you're in pretty good shape," Jace commented.

"Thanks," Alec said. "But it probably has something to do with carrying all those textbooks around." He laughed. "Why the hell do they need to be that thick anyway?"

"Couldn't afford an editor?" Jace suggested. Alec laughed just as Jace's phone went off.

'Where are you?' Sebastian's text read. 'Meet me at the bar.'

Jace was surprised by how little he wanted to see Sebastian at this very moment. It felt like he was in a bubble here with Alec, and he was worried if the bubble burst Alec could go back to hating him. Jace took a deep breath before texting back.

'I've got a lot of homework,' Jace replied. 'I think I'm going to stay home tonight.'

'You're abandoning me?' Sebastian texted back very quickly. 'On a Saturday night!'

'Sorry,' Jace replied, and he was sorry, but not sorry enough to go out to the bar tonight.

"Something wrong?" Alec asked when Jace put his phone away.

"No, nothing," Jace said, but he was sure his face gave him away.

"If you say so," Alec replied, a little skeptically.

"If you must know, Sebastian wants me to go the bar with him," Jace said. "But I said no."

"He's mad?"

"If he knew I was done with my essay he would be," Jace smiled.

"You told him you had too much homework huh," Alec translated.

"Yep," Jace said. "I can't be going to bars with him if I want Clary to believe me. I'll explain it to him later. He'll understand."

"I don't know," Alec said. "How well do you know him? Cause in high school he didn't seem like
"I've known him forever," Jace said. "Since like kindergarten or something."

"Wow," Alec said. "I don't think I've even known my cousin that long."

"How come?"

"Her family moved away before my sister, Izzy was born," Alec said. "They didn't move back till I was older. I think I met her when we were both about eleven… don't quote me on that, but it was before high school for sure."

"I'm an only child," Jace said. "And I don't think I have any cousins. My family is basically just my mom."

"I can't imagine that," Alec laughed. "I have an annoyingly huge family."

"I can't imagine that," Jace echoed with a smile.

When neither of them could eat any more ice cream they watched a movie together. Jace was worried Alec would want to watch a chick flick, but he was pleasantly surprised by Alec's selection of an action movie. Sure, Jace usually preferred guns to bows and arrows, but it turned out to be a good movie nonetheless.

In the late afternoon, Alec asked Jace if his cousin could join them since she was, in her words, 'bored to tears.' Jace agreed and soon she stood at their door. When he saw her, Jace had the strangest feeling of déjà vu, but he couldn't place her face.

"Hi," Jace said politely, deciding not to make a fool of himself if indeed his strange déjà vu feeling was all in his head.

"So you're, Jace," Aline said with the air of an epiphany. "Wow, it is a small world." She laughed, but Jace just stared, confused. "You don't remember me but that's okay. I didn't know your name so I can't talk."

"Huh?" Jace said shaking his head, as if that would help jog his memory.

"It was back in high school," Aline said. "Maybe grade 11 or something. We made out."

"Oh," Jace said. He had made out, and more, with lot of girls in school, and he wasn't very good with names. This did, however, explain his déjà vu.

"Yep," Aline said. "You were my last experiment." Jace's sudden clarity was gone as he tried to interpret this new remark.

"I was your what?"

"Well, you're hot," Aline explained, with the air of someone saying the sky was blue. "So I figured if I wasn't turned on making out with you, no guy would do it for me."

"Oh," Jace said in a small voice. This was new territory. It seemed the universe was out to flip his world completely upside down in just one day.

"So I brought Catan!" Aline said enthusiastically. She was indeed holding a red rectangular box with the words, 'Settlers of Catan,' in large gold lettering. Alec seemed keen on the idea, and Jace had no better ideas so he soon found himself being taught how to play the rather complicated game.
"I'm building a road," Aline said as she placed the token on the board.

"But, you just cut me off!" Alec complained. Jace could tell these two had played this game many times before, though he was still rather lost. "Aline! You just ruined all my plans."

Aline stuck her tongue out at her cousin. Jace enjoyed watching the two of them interact. Theirs was a relationship he didn't have, and never would have. He found himself almost jealous.

"Can I build a settlement?" Jace asked. He held all four resource cards - lumber, wool, grain and brick - that the reference card told him he needed to build a settlement, but he was sure he was missing something.

"You don't have space for it," Alec explained.

"Why can't I put it here?" Jace asked pointing to one of his roads on the board.

"You need a minimum of two roads between settlements," Aline explained. "Why don't you use your wood and clay to build a road, then the next time you can build your settlement."

"Lumber and brick," Alec corrected her.

"When I learned this game I learned different names," Aline said in that tone indicating she was explaining something she had explained dozens of times already. "I will call them what I like."

"Just as long as you don't giggle every time you say wood," Alec complained. Aline giggled, and Alec groaned as he placed his hand over his face.

"What do you even know about wood anyway?" Alec whined from behind his hands. Jace could tell Alec's face was turning red. "Why do you have to giggle like that?"

"It's true," Aline said. "You should be the only one giggling Alec, since everyone else here isn't such a fan of wood."

Alec blushed furiously as he glared at his cousin. Jace couldn't help but think this was the strangest situation he had ever found himself in. His next thought was of the words Sebastian usually used for people like Alec and Aline. Jace hadn't thought much of it before now. Sebastian had always been like that, so it hadn't really registered with him. It was like walking past the same mess on the floor so many times you just saw it as part of the floor, Jace had become numb to Sebastian's vulgar words. Jace suddenly felt uncomfortable thinking about all the things Sebastian had said. Jace didn't usually join in, but he'd never seen it as a problem either.

"It's my turn," Alec said snatching the dice from his giggling cousin and rolling a seven. "Ha! I am so stealing from you." Alec picked up the small grey token they had told him represented the thief, and moved it to one of Aline's places on the board. "And I am blocking your best ore spot."

"Rock," Aline corrected, but Alec just rolled his eyes. She fanned out her cards and Alec took one at random. "And what you just stole was a wheat card."

Alec ignored Aline and proceeded to buy what was called city, by paying three ore and two grain and replacing the small wooden settlement token with a bigger city one.

"Ha!" Alec told her. "See, now I'm winning."

Jace was very behind on victory points he knew, but by the end of Aline's next turn she was tied with Alec again at nine points each. To win Catan you needed ten victory points. Jace was barely
even paying attention to his own game play in favour of watching them. By luck, Alec won, but if his turn had been after hers, Aline would have won on her next turn. Jace tried to tell them that was as good as tied but they said a rematch was in order. Jace decided they took this game way too seriously.

"We should do this again," Aline said as she was getting ready to leave.

"Definitely," Alec said, then he turned to Jace and added, "But maybe next time you can pick the game."

"The only games I know are drinking games," Jace said.

"That could be fun," Aline said. "Though I am going to veto day drinking, deal?"

"Deal," Jace laughed. As she left, Jace thought about how today had been both the worse and best day he'd had in a long time.

When Jace woke the next morning, for a moment he thought it had all been a dream - talking to Clary, bonding with Alec - but then he got out of bed and saw Alec sitting at this desk.

"Morning," Alec said cheerily. "How did you sleep?"

And just like that, Jace knew it had all really happened.

Chapter End Notes

Do any of you know or have ever played Catan? Sorry if you were confused. Jace was too. lol. Hopefully it was still understandable enough to be an enjoyable read. I just needed something for them to do so Jace could interact with both Aline and Alec and I LOVE Catan. lol. Aline is basically me in this chapter as far as getting way to invested in Catan and using the wrong names for the resource cards is also me. I learned them wrong then when I started playing with a friend she looked up the real names and I was like nope still gonna use the old ones. ^_^ If you are confused about the game you could google it or ask me. I'm more than happy to answer questions!

How are you enjoying the Jace and Alec bonding? Their friendship seems to have become a plot line in and of itself. With means this story has SO many interwoven plot lines! Hehe! It takes alot of planning but its super fun fitting them all together. The Malec, Clace, Wessa, Jessa, Heline hasn't really happened yet and now Jace/Alec friendship and we haven't even gotten to Sizzy yet! hehe

I have been told my times of day are a little confusing. Sorry! Do you guys really need to know what time of day these things happen or is just implied fine. If the time of day matters for the story I usually add it. Like in this chapter when drink at 10am wasn't acceptable to Alec.

And yes I keep doing random time jumps then doing three or four chapters that take place on the same day. Sorry if that's confusing! I try and use dialogue to anchor a scene by repeated the same line of dialogue (one at the end of a chapter and one at the beginning) to show you that its the same scene just a different point of view. But mostly I am having time pass as fast or slow as I need for plot. I have quite a long story planned
for this so I don't want time to pass too slowly. In my last story time crept along very slowly for like 40 chapters until it suddenly sped for the last 10 so I wanted to be more consistent with this story. Besides Izzy won't be at the University until the following year and I can't wait to add her! :)

Sneak Peek Chapter 15

"He thinks he likes me now," Magnus said. "But what does that mean really? It doesn't guarantee it will last. It doesn't promise happiness."

"If I ever get my hands on that woman," Tessa said angry. "I am going to ring her neck." Magnus knew she was talking about Camille and he wished she wouldn't. No matter how hurt Magnus was or how mad he couldn't hate her.

"Please don't," Magnus said softly.

"You forget," Tessa said sternly. "The first time I met Alec I thought you were already dating. The way he talked about you!"
"I'm going home," Magnus sighed. "Tessa's upset about losing Will. At least at home I can be of some use to her."

Magnus didn't look back at his friend; he didn't even button up his jacket. He just walked slowly, but surely away. The cafeteria had a very open concept, with at least three exits. The main one being a large opening about the size of three doorways that was located near the row of benches. These were the only benches, everywhere else there were just hard metal chairs and tables. This way being his closest escape, Magnus moved quickly through the room and past the empty benches. Usually Magnus liked this school. The brick walls were cold, but also somehow made you feel safe. Magnus knew all the shortcuts through the hardly used hallways, as well as the best quiet corners to study. The buildings that Magnus had some degree of affection for before today now simply held empty benches, the perfect metaphor for his life.

Today had started great. Clary texted asking if he wanted to meet for breakfast and he had planned on doing homework with Alec later. It was a rather standard Saturday really, but that was all ruined now. It wasn't even noon and Magnus just wanted today to be over.

Not even for Alec could Magnus do it all again. Alexander was beautiful, kind, generous and funny. Alec had been the one to put more of him back together these last two months than even Clary. But, Magnus knew where this road always ended. He had a block; a failsafe in his heart that stopped him from getting pulled in again, keeping him from getting emotionally involved. If you didn't build something, then there was nothing to destroy. This block was of his own making and Magnus knew if he really wanted to, it was within his power to remove it, but the idea terrified him. Being crushed again under the heel of someone you loved was no small pain.

Magnus's thoughts had carried him out of the school and toward his apartment. The ground was hard and the grass covered in a layer of frost. Magnus was cold, but still he didn't do up his jacket. It seemed such a pointless thing, and was only causing him to shiver, but at least Magnus had control over it. Magnus watched the hard frozen ground as he headed home, taking note of the way the ice crystals had formed over the earth. Magnus's mind was oddly blank as he put one foot in front of the other. It felt almost like a mercy to be so numb.

His apathetic mood persisted as Magnus entered his apartment. Tessa was seated in the big armchair at an angle to the TV, but the screen was dark. Tessa didn't like to show how much losing Will hurt her, but Magnus knew her well. He knew there was less joy in her smile, less spring in her step. Usually Tessa would be reading while sitting in her favourite chair, but not today. Magnus guessed it was only himself and Jem who noticed a difference in her at all since Tessa put so much energy into keeping up appearances. Magnus knew she was doing it for Jem's benefit, even though it only worried Jem.
"Have you talked to Will?" Magnus asked as she greeted him with a half-hearted smile.

"He's still avoiding me. Jem feels horrible," Tessa said sadly. "Which, makes me feel bad since I miss the man I was cheating on Jem with! But, Jem of course doesn't see it the same way. He just wants me to be happy, stupid, selfless idiot!" Tessa's voice slowly rose with anger.

"Sounds like an endless cycle of pain," Magnus said miserably.

"And you sound like a ray of sunshine," Tessa remarked, sarcasm etched in every syllable. Then she really looked at him, and Magnus tried to keep his emotions off his face without success. "What's wrong?"

"It's nothing," Magnus said, but Tessa gave him a look and Magnus knew he wouldn't be able to get away with keeping his problems to himself. "Alec doesn't want to be my friend anymore."

"Oh I'm sorry," Tessa said. "Bit extreme though. What friendship ends like that?"

"I think he likes me," Magnus said trying to just explain without letting his misery at the new information show through.

"That's great" Tessa said, but quickly added. "But wait... why do you look like someone killed your puppy?" So much for keeping his emotions off his face and Magnus had never owned a dog in his life.

"I don't want to date Alec," Magnus almost yelled. "I don't want to date anyone."

"When you first saw him," Tessa started but Magnus cut her off.

"Sure he's hot," Magnus said. "But once I met him, I enjoyed his company too much to risk..."

"What, dating him?" Tessa asked incredulous. "That's ridiculous, Magnus."

Magnus stood up, suddenly angry. Why did no one understand? Every time he'd let someone in, every time he'd opened his heart to someone that someone had left him bleeding and broken. Magnus's first love, Etta, had been beautiful and loving. They met in high school when she transferred into his class and Magnus had been enamored with her right away. Her grace and casual caresses lit up his life, but no sooner did Magnus fall head over heels for her then she broke up with him. She started dating a boy from another school soon after and to this day Magnus still wasn't sure if she'd been seeing him while they were still together.

Magnus had picked up the pieces of his heart the best he could and thankfully met Axel not long after. Magnus hadn't known before Axel that he also enjoyed the company of men. Axel had looked a bit like Alec, with the same black hair and blue eyes, though Magnus preferred the richness of Alec's eyes. Magnus had tried this time to make sure he was loved in return before he jumped heart first into a new romance. For a while everything was wonderful. After their high school graduation Magnus and Axel were going to take a year off and travel together, but at the last minute, Axel backed out. He chose his future career plans and a fancy college over Magnus; he left without even a goodbye. Magnus had canceled his travel plans, too miserable to want to go on the trip alone. He'd worked the year to save for school instead. Sure he had less debt, but it hadn't been worth it.

With his heart already twice scarred, Imasu entered Magnus's life. He was a musician, and a great one at that. Imasu brought joy into Magnus's life again after his previous heartbreak and Magnus had been sure this time he'd found the one person who he could be with for life. But, Imasu's family hadn't approved of Magnus for their oh so gifted son. They convinced Imasu that Magnus wasn't right for him. They made Imasu choose his music over Magnus. This time, Magnus had at least
gotten a goodbye, but he would have preferred avoiding that too. Imasu’s goodbye had been him telling Magnus cruelly that Magnus wasn't the marrying kind.

Magnus had thrown himself into working until he left for university. With no hope of happiness, he started classes. It hadn't taken long for Camille to smile at him and melt away just enough of his pain to make him believe in love again. Little had Magnus known that Ralf had also caught her eye.

Magnus's miserable thoughts crippled his anger. He sank back down into the couch, his face in his hands. Why did no one understand?

"You are too young to give up on love," Tessa told him gently. "Are you just going to be alone for the rest of your life?"

"I don't know," Magnus whimpered.

"If Alec likes you and you like Alec, then you should be with him," Tessa said. "You are creating problems that aren't really there."

"He thinks he sorta likes me now," Magnus said. "But what does that mean really? It doesn't guarantee it will last. It doesn't promise happiness." After all the rest of them had liked him too - had even loved him - but they'd still fractured his heart into a million pieces.

"If I ever get my hands on that woman," Tessa said angry. "I am going to ring her neck." Magnus knew she was talking about Camille, and he wished she wouldn't. No matter how hurt Magnus was or how mad, he couldn't hate her. Besides, she was just the most recent to wound him. If not for his previous scars, Magnus suspected Camille's betrayal alone wouldn't have made him completely lose faith in love.

"Please don't," Magnus said softly.

"You forget," Tessa said sternly. "The first time I met Alec, I thought you were already dating. The way he talked about Camille, and he wished she wouldn't. No matter how hurt Magnus was or how mad, he couldn't hate her. Besides, she was just the most recent to wound him. If not for his previous scars, Magnus suspected Camille's betrayal alone wouldn't have made him completely lose faith in love.

"Please don't remind me of how big a fool I was not to see it," Magnus whined. But even if he had noticed sooner what could he have done? Stopped Alec's crush in its tracks? Unlikely.

"Then can I remind you how big a fool you are now?" Tessa asked.

"No," Magnus said. "I came here to try and comfort you."

"Well, I am in better shape than you," Tessa said. "Despite the fact that one of the men I love isn't returning my calls or texts."

"One of," Magnus said shaking his head. He had never loved two people at the same time and in quite the same way Tessa loved Will and Jem; he had no idea what that was like. Since he could be of no use to Tessa he decided he would rather be alone. Magnus excused himself and went to collapse face first on his bed. There is nothing like your own bed to make you feel like the world is just a little less horrible. Magnus wrapped himself in his blankets, hugging his pillow. He was going to miss Alec's carefree laugh and the way Alec could pull his mind back from Camille whenever grief threatened him. Those eyes as well. Magnus had more than once lost himself in those clear blue pools.

Why was the world so obsessed with romantic relationships anyway? There was way more to life. How Magnus wished Alec had actually been straight. Then this whole mess would have been avoided and he'd still have his friend.
Chairman Meow jumped up onto his bed. Magnus stroked the cat absently. Cats always come to see you when you are upset. They snuggle up close when you're cold and purr until the world isn't so cruel. Why couldn't romantic entanglements be more like cats? Magnus stayed perfectly still and Chairman got comfortable, kneading Magnus's leg. Soon the small warm creature was nestled against his side. Eventually the Great Catsby joined them on the bed, and Magnus started to feel better surrounded by his kitties.

Magnus didn't get his homework done, but rather waited until tomorrow to worry about it. He decided he got one day to sulk before he had to get up and function again. His cats were the most comforting presence he could imagine. Magnus binge watched Netflix, ignored the world outside his bedroom and generally wasted a whole Saturday.

When Magnus woke the next day, he was done feeling sorry for himself. He got up and picked out his most self-esteem boosting outfit. Selecting his red suede shoes, Magnus paired them with his favourite black suit jacket that had iridescent pinstripes woven in. Black pants and a casual shirt to match his shoes completed the look. Magnus felt better already, but rather than face his problems, Magnus decided to try and solve Tessa's.

"Can you give me Will's phone number?" Magnus asked as he left his bedroom and saw Tessa in the kitchen.

"I guess," Tessa said, not looking up from her cooking. "But I don't see how that will help. He's dodging my calls."

"I was thinking," Magnus said. "Maybe he won't dodge my calls." Tessa looked up skeptically at him and finally noticed his outfit.

"Going somewhere?" Tessa asked eyebrows raise and Magnus could just tell she hoped he'd made a date plan with Alec.

"Can't a guy just want to look nice to make himself feel better?" Magnus asked rhetorically.

"I still say going out with Alec would be a better solution than clothes," Tessa mumbled.

"That's because you don't care about fashion," Magnus said, then he added before she could reply. "Will's phone number?" She sighed but moved away from the counter to get her phone.

"I still don't think he will answer you," Tessa said as Magnus received Tessa's text containing Will's number. He added it to his contacts before quickly texting Will.

'Hey Will. How are you?' Magnus texted.

Magnus thanked Tessa then went to his desk and sat down in his fabulous outfit to do some homework while Tessa continued to nag him that such an outfit was wasted on staying home. It was several hours later when Will replied.

'Who is this?' Will texted back. Magnus answered, explaining who he was, but he never received a reply. So much for that idea.

Unfortunately, Magnus's homework was finished quickly and thus he was out of distractions. His masochistic mind wandered to thoughts of Alexander. If Alec didn't care enough to be Magnus's friend, then Magnus was even more sure risking his heart again was out of the question. After all, if Alec had stayed Magnus's friend, maybe eventually he would have grown to feel safe enough to trust Alec enough that he could consider… but Alec hadn't given him the option. Alec had just severed all ties.
It wasn't until a week later that Magnus suddenly realized he'd never given Alec even the slightly indication that he liked Alec, or was indeed even interested in men at all. For all Alec knew, Magnus was straight, though that almost kiss had probably told Alec differently. Either way, how could Magnus blame Alec for pulling away to protect himself just as Magnus was doing.

Maybe he should text Alec, explain that he might feel the same way, but he wasn't really looking for a relationship right now. Or was that cruel? Was it better that Alec thought Magnus didn't return his feelings?

Magnus stared at his phone, still trying to decide whether he should text Alec or not, when the doorbell rang. Magnus's first thought was that it had to be Alec. His second thought was why would Alec come to this door, especially since Magnus hadn't texted him. This third thought was that it probably wasn't Alec and why had Magnus jumped to that conclusion? It could have been any number of Magnus's or Tessa's friends. Jem, in particular had been over often during the last week.

Finally, Magnus realized that he'd been standing theorizing for long enough and that the person on the other side of the door may think no one was home and leave. Snapping out of his thoughts Magnus went to get the door.

Chapter End Notes

So who's at the door? Any guesses? hehe

This author's note comes to you in three parts:

Part one: The name of this story!
Thanks so much to those who left suggestions! They were great! I have two potential names for this story that I like and I want you guys to tell me which one you like more please if you don't mind. :) Then I'll change the story name to that and we can dispense with the lame working title.

Title option 1) "Roommates & Soulmates" suggested by LeftyGirl on Archive your own (ao3)

Title option 2)" University of Tangled Romances" which is a mixed of two suggestions. The 'University of' part was suggested again by LeftyGirl on ao3 and Tangled Romances was suggested by White Moon Howler on fanfic.net.

Part two: The rating of this story!
So as you may have noticed this story is rated Mature for the single sex scene in the first chapter... I had thought there would be more but the plot hasn't called for them and the one time it did (Jace and Trinity) the sex part of the scene wasn't important and I didn't feel like writing it so I glossed over most of it. Do you guys think I should keep the rating in case the mood strikes me in later chapters and I eventually write a lemon or should I re-write the first chapter, re-upload it and chapter the rating to T? My last story "Innocence Corrupts" was my first attempt at writing lemons. I have kinda been there and done that now and am perfectly happy to turn this into a 'Teens and up' rated story if that's what people want. If I change it there will never be a lemon in this story but if I don't there might be... eventually. I keep getting more ideas for future plots so this story might get rather long... and with long stories there is always the possibility of future smut. lol
Part Three: The timeline of this story!
I have been told by a few people that the flow of time in this story is a little confusing.
Up until now I have been lazy and never made a timeline. I sorta knew how long things
were taking in my head but didn't write it down and keep track properly to make sure it
made sense. I have plotted out the timeline now and it all works but it might not be super
clear in the chapters I have already published. I could go back and add maybe the
month/day in bold at the top of the chapters to clear things up. Would that help? Or I
could do what I did for my last story and just upload the timeline at the very end as a
separate chapter. Not sure how long this story will be though so you might be waiting a
while for the timeline.

In conclusion your review should say what you think the story's name should be, what
you want the rating to be and if I need to add more of a timeline to previous chapters! :D
I promise I really do appreciate your feedback. I want to write a story you enjoy and the
best way to do that is by knowing what my audience wants. :) I have already added a
jealous plot line in because of a commenter on Archive your own. See I listen! In fact
the only reason I upload on ao3 at all is because of a reviewer here on fanfic asked me
to once.

Sneak peek chapter 16:

Wouldn't you love it if I added one of these! But that would totally give away the
cliffhanger since you would know who's POV is next! Just gonna have to wait my
friends.
Jace's Growth

Chapter Summary

Beta read by Holly0114

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Jace stood on Magnus's doormat, not totally sure why he was here. He'd changed his mind many times over the last week, but had finally decided to do this for Alec. The door didn't open right away and Jace had just decided to ring the bell again, when Magnus appeared looking rather surprised to see him.

"Hi," Jace said lamely. Magnus blinked twice as if he didn't believe what he was seeing. After a few moments, Magnus seemed to accept that it was indeed Jace standing at the door, but Magnus still didn't seem to have anything to say.

"Sorry to just show up like this, but I was hoping to talk to you," Jace said. "Do you have a minute?"

"For you?" Magnus said. "No."

"It's about Alec."

There was something in Magnus's expression Jace couldn't identify, but Magnus let Jace in with a look that held the slightest hint of concern. Magnus's apartment was so much better than the dorms. For starters, it had more than one room. From where he stood, Jace could see the living room, furnished with chairs and a couch that pointed at the television, and a sliver of a kitchen around the corner.

"You wanted to talk, so talk," Magnus said, abruptly. Jace got the feeling Magnus didn't want him to stay long. "Has something happened to Alec?"

"No nothing like that," Jace said as he realized why Magnus had looked concerned. "I just wanted to ask you something." Magnus didn't answer, so Jace continued. "Do you care about Alec?"

"What kind of question is that?" Magnus spat at him.

"An important one," Jace said.

"Of course I care," Magnus said. "Why do you think we were friends?"

"But, do you care about him as more than a friend?" Jace asked.

"And this is your business because?" Magnus replied.

"Alec is my friend. I just want to know," Jace said. He was sick of watching Alec hurting. Over the past week, Jace had started spending more and more time with his roommate, and even after just a week of friendship, Jace could tell Alec wasn't happy. He missed Magnus, and Jace wanted to know if there was any hope, or if Alec had to move on.
"Please go away," Magnus said with a sigh. Jace just couldn't understand why Magnus, if he wanted to be with Alec, would sabotage himself like this. Jace knew he was no expert when it came to relationships, but he couldn't have Clary, whereas Magnus and Alec had nothing standing in their way if indeed their interest was mutual. Jace had to conclude Magnus was only sad about losing his friend and, just as Alec thought, didn't return his feelings. Jace turned and left the apartment. He heard the door close loudly behind him.

On his way back to campus, Jace saw Christmas lights on every house. There was even a giant Santa's sleigh complete with reindeer on someone's roof. Christmas meant winter break, which Jace was all for, but it also meant exams, which he was considerably less keen on. In the new year the wrestling season started, but Jace's coach insisted they start training now. This meant that with exams to study for and coaches to please, Jace was very busy. His scholarship depended on his attending practices and getting at least decent grades. Furthermore, since even Sebastian viewed Jace keeping his scholarship as important, this helped his friend from being annoyed at Jace's absence this past week. They usually spent all their time together, but Jace had hung out with Alec most of the week instead. He did feel bad for ditching Sebastian, but they'd spent their whole lives together. Why couldn't Jace branch out now and meet new people in University? It didn't make Sebastian any less of his friend if Jace wanted a have friendships with other people, at least that was how Jace justified his behaviour in his mind. Besides, Alec helped Jace be the kind of man Clary could take seriously, while Sebastian only confirmed his bad reputation. And even if Clary never did believe him, Jace liked the person he was with Alec.

Speaking of new people, Jace thought as he passed by the turn that would take him toward Trinity's place. The last interaction he'd had with Trinity was a text on the day Clary rejected him.

'No more booty calls,' Jace had texted. 'She didn't believe me when I talked to her so I need to show her.'

'It's been fun,' Trinity had replied. 'But go get the girl. I'm rooting for you.'

Jace had smiled at her response. He wondered since meeting her why Sebastian always wanted to hit on a new girl every night. Especially girls who were interested in more than just sex, but never got it. Jace had always tried to make sure the woman he slept with knew he wasn't boyfriend material, but his relationship with Trinity had been better still. They'd both wanted the same thing and no one had gotten hurt. Why couldn't Sebastian try something similar?

As Jace reached the campus he turned toward the main school and the gym rather than the dorms. Practice was starting soon and he shouldn't be late even if the season was still weeks away. As he slowly made his way around the school, Jace let himself think about Clary, about her smile and the way the light shone off her hair. She was often in his thoughts and Jace was done fighting it. If he was never going to know her for real, than he could at least let himself think of her.

Jace greeted his team as he entered the gym. They all replied with similar greetings, then the coach blew his whistle and it was time to get to work. The next few hours consisted of repeating the same defensive and offensive moves to take out his teammates, while only landing flat on his ass a few times. When the coach finally called it a night, Jace was slightly sore and ready to go home. Maybe this is why the coach wanted them to start practices early. Jace figured the coach thought they'd all gone soft, and maybe that was the case. Though Jace knew from experience it wouldn't take long for his muscles to adjust.

Jace said goodnight to his team and left the gym. It was getting late. The sun had set and Jace walked through the dark grounds toward the dorms. He sometimes wished wrestling practice was earlier in the day, but that usually conflicted with classes. The weekend practices were morning or afternoon
whereas the weekday practices were in the evening. Jace liked the afternoon practices, but he hated having to get out of bed early for the morning ones.

As Jace entered the common area he was surprised to see that it was empty, except for Clary's boyfriend laying on a couch with a blanket and pillow as if he intended to sleep there. Jace tried to remember the guy's name, but it eluded him.

"Hey," Jace said as he went over. "You okay?"

"You're that guy," the brown haired kid said sitting up. "The blonde Clary was staring at in class."

"Guilty," Jace said with a smile. "Though I think she might have just been spacing out in my direction."

"I'm not so sure," the guy grumbled. Jace tried not to be happy about this, but it was impossible. If Clary had been staring at him for any other reason… well he couldn't blame her boyfriend for being grumpy.

"So why does it look like you are planning on sleeping in the lounge?" Jace asked.

"Stupid roommate," the guy complained. "He has about three guys in that room right now. They are all drinking and being loud."

"Is he at least nineteen?" Jace asked. "Cause if not you could get them in some serious trouble."

"I have no clue how old my roommate is," the guy said. "And I don't want to piss him off. He's a big guy." Jace got the sense Clary's boyfriend had not been popular in high school. "I'm only at this stupid school for Clary, but I hardly see her. It's not fair."

"She must be really busy with classes," Jace said.

"That and she's worried about Magnus," the guy said. "Like, all the time." Jace got the impression from the guy's face that he wished Clary would worry about him like that. There was a hint of jealousy there.

"They're just friends," Jace said.

"I know."

"Besides," Jace said. "I know how she feels. I'm worried about Alec. He's miserable too."

"Those two are idiots," the guy said, and Jace couldn't help laughing. Okay maybe this guy wasn't all bad, but Jace could still dislike him right? Jace was jealous as hell of this stupid dork, but then Alec's words went through Jace's mind.

Be selfless. Take an interest in the things she cares about.

And Jace realized he wasn't allowed to hate this guy. If this silly nerd guy mattered to Clary then he mattered to Jace.

"I'm Jace by the way."

"Simon," the guys replied. "Nice to meet you."

"Likewise," Jace said. "Do you want some help with the roommate situation?"
"How can you help?"

"Well, I am very intimidating," Jace laughed.

"No kidding," Simon said. "I have to confess I am surprised you are talking to me right now."

"Why?"

"When I met you," Simon said. "I got the feeling you were well... I just never figured you for someone who would make small talk with the awkward nerd kid." It was then Jace noticed Simon's very nerdy appearance, with his glasses and Star Wars t-shirt.

"High school's over," Jace said with a shrug. Though he had to admit, if Simon didn't have a connection to Clary, Jace probably would have just walked past him.

"I know," Simon said. "But Clary and I went straight from high school to university."

"Which room is yours?" Jace asked. Simon told Jace almost automatically, and then seemed to regret it as Jace walked quickly down the hall with Simon trailing behind him.

Upon opening Simon's dorm room, Jace saw four guys sitting on one bed all sharing a rather large bottle of what Jace guessed was cheap vodka. The whole room smelled of some kind of body spray or maybe it just stank of body odour. Jace couldn't tell, but either way he was about to walk right in and kick them out when Simon grabbed his arm.

"Please don't!" Simon whispered. Jace turned, and the pleading look on Simon's face stayed Jace's hand.

"Fine," Jace said. "But you are crashing at my place tonight. Tomorrow I'm turning them in."

Simon didn't seem to have anything to say to this, but he followed Jace down the hall and back to the lounge where Jace collected the cushions from the couches. Handing one to Simon, Jace carried the other two back down the hall and up a flight of stairs to his and Alec's dorm room.

"Alec," Jace called as he entered his dorm. "Do you mind if Simon stays with us tonight? His roommate is being a jerk."

"Sure," Alec said not looking away from his laptop. "Sheldon can stay."

"Simon," Jace corrected. Alec finally pulled his eyes away from his computer to look at them.

"Oh sorry," Alec said. Then he turned back to his laptop quickly adding, "I gotta finish this for tomorrow. Sorry, no time for socializing."

"Sorry about him," Jace said. "He's behind on homework it seems. I hope the floor is okay?" Jace placed the cushions in a row on the floor between his and Alec's beds.

"Floor is great," Simon said as he added the third cushion. Once Jace threw a blanket over the three cushions it almost looked like a real bed.

Alec stuck to his laptop while Simon awkwardly got comfortable on his floor bed. Jace wanted so badly to talk to Simon about Clary, but knew he shouldn't. If Simon knew how often Jace thought about kissing his girlfriend, Simon may not want to stick around and he was sure his feelings for Clary would shine through no matter how he tried to hide them.

When the lights went out and Alec finally turned off his laptop, Jace lay there and thought of Simon's
belief that Clary had been looking at him for a reason. When a girl stared at him, Jace always made a point to talk to her - I mean why not right? - and Clary wasn't the first girl to ever stare at him like that, but she was the first one he stared back at for more than a moment. She was the first one to capture his whole attention from the moment he spoke to her and hold it thereafter.

Jace’s hand rested on her narrow hip. His gaze moved up her slim figure until he was gazing into her green eyes. She smiled at him and he felt her hand on his cheek. Clary's beautiful freckled face looked back at him with a gentleness, but also a fire. It was one of the things Jace liked about her, the fierceness he found in her. Somehow he knew, not just from her obvious affection for her friends, but also from her protective body language, that she would do anything for those she loved. She was a fighter, but he suspected she didn't know how rare that made her. No matter if she was wearing baggy boys clothes or not, Jace could see the beauty that lay beneath. He leaned in to kiss her and it was as if the world around them ceased to matter.

Jace woke up to the sound of his alarm and cursed it silently for cutting his dream sort before he kissed her. It's not like he got to kiss her when he was awake! So, why did his stupid alarm have to deny him the pleasure while asleep? That was just mean!

Jace turned off his alarm, sat up and saw that Simon and Alec were already awake. Why was he always surrounded by morning people? What was so freaking wonderful about the morning anyway?

"I have to go grab my books then head to class, but I really appreciate the place to crash," Simon said.

"No problem," Jace said as he fell back into bed. He heard the door open then close and knew Simon had left.

"Way to make nice with the boyfriend," Alec said laughing. "That is Clary's boyfriend right?"

"Yep," Jace said, only slightly miserably. With a sigh Jace got out of bed.

"So," Jace said. "I think you need to go on a date." Alec stopped packing up his backpack and turned to stare at Jace.

"Huh?" Alec asked.

"To help you get over Magnus," Jace explained. "I've watched you do nothing but mope for the last week and I know you spent the last two months wishing he'd wake up and smell the sexual tension, so it's time to date someone else."

"I don't really date much," Alec said.

"All the more reason to start," Jace said.

"It doesn't seem fair to ask a guy on a date while I'm hung up on someone else," Alec argued.

"Geez! It's just a date!" Jace exclaimed. "It's not like you are proposing or something."

"I don't know," Alec said, but Jace could tell he was wearing down.

"If you don't ask someone out, I will set you up," Jace said with a grin. "And I promise you, I have horrible taste in guys."

"Alright, fine!" Alec said as he flung his backpack over his shoulder. "I have class you schemer. See
"I want to know the name of your date by the time you get home tonight!" Jace called after Alec with a smile on his face. Alec waved a hand dismissively at Jace as he left.

Jace also had class, though it wasn't his class with Clary and he was considering skipping it today. After all, he still had to make good on his promise to Simon. Besides, Sebastian was in that class with him. He could get the notes later.

Jace got dressed, left his dorm and headed toward the main school. Once he had explained in detail to the consular what Simon's roommates had done, Jace was sure Simon would be roommate free in no time since it turned out Simon's roommate was only eighteen. And as such, so not allowed to be drinking at all, let alone on campus.

As Jace headed to his next class, he quickly texted Alec.

'Asked anyone on a date yet?' Jace texted.

'No!' Alec replied quickly. 'Butt out.'

Jace laughed, but put his phone away. He'd gone to see Magnus for this very reason. If Alec couldn't have Magnus, Alec needed to move on and Jace was determined to help Alec do just that. Jace would nag him again later if Alec didn't have a date when he arrived home tonight. Jace knew Alec needed the assist if he was ever going to get back in the game, though he suspected Alec had never really been in the game at all.

Chapter End Notes

So the votes for story titles stand at 5 votes for "Roommates & Soulmate" AND 7 votes for "University of Tangled Romances"

That is too close guys! Please if you haven't voted yet throw in your two cents. Its way to close to being a tie!

I have decided to keep it rated M since that was the universal consensus. The timeline being vague didn't seem to bother anyone but I might still add the month in bold to chapters... we shall see if I feel motivated sometime to do that... yeah... probably not. lol. I am keeping track of it now though so it should get less vague.

So... I went a little crazy last night and started a new Malec AU... WTF! OMG! I am already trying to update two stories in a timely manner! Why brain why! it seems I have a serious fanfic writing addiction and when this or my other Delena story ends I shall start uploading a new Malec one. :) Sigh.

Sneak Peek Chapter 17:

"Huh?" Alec asked confused.

"What you did to Magnus!" Clary exclaimed.

"What I did?!!" Alec said standing up and suddenly glaring at her.
"Yes," Clary said. "He's miserable and it's your fault! Can't you just be his friend."

"No I can't!" Alec said and he didn't really feel like yelling to the whole cafeteria all the naughty details about why he couldn't be just Magnus's friend. Simply being near Magnus did things to Alec he had no words for.
Alec's Determination

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Alec was seriously dreading Jace setting him up on a date. He had a feeling this would end in major embarrassment, but Alec knew his friend had a point. Magnus wasn't interested in him so what else was there to do? Alec spent the day scopeing out his classmates, deciding he would rather get himself a date than be set up by Jace. He didn't necessarily want to go on a date, but he definitely didn't want to go on a blind date. The problem was that Alec didn't really know what one did on dates, let alone how to go about getting a date. Sure there had been a few guys in high school, but that had been long ago and the high school setting had somehow made it easier.

Now, dating seemed like an impossibility since Alec's mind was always on Magnus. He missed Magnus all the time. Twice this week he had almost texted Magnus saying they could still be friends, just to see the man again but Jace had stopped him by reminding Alec just how crazy being near Magnus made him.

Alec went to class and tried to listen to the professor, but his mind kept going back to Magnus. He totally zoned out at least twice before the class was over, but did manage to write down what would be on the exams and hand in his paper.

'Asked anyone on a date yet?' Jace's text read as Alec left class.

'No!' Alec replied quickly. 'Butt out.'

Alec couldn't help but roll his eyes. Jace was very determined, but Alec couldn't be too annoyed since he knew Jace was only trying to help. And man did Alec need help! He had Magnus Bane on the brain.

After checking out guys all morning, Alec suddenly realized what they all had in common. He'd been fixated only on the guys who looked something like Magnus. Maybe their hair was the same shade of black or their skin the same caramel colour. Alec couldn't help wondering if Magnus's skin tasted as good as it looked. He shook his head violently, trying to dispel the thought. Selecting a guy who looked anything like Magnus was so not helpful.

Alec tried again at lunch. Sitting in the cafeteria he spotted a caucasian guy with light brown hair and almost went over to talk to him, until he realized this guy was wearing make-up around his eyes that looked exactly like how Magnus applied his eye make-up. Alec felt so pathetic.

A shock of red hair caught Alec's attention as Clary and - Alec thought maybe his name was - Sherwin entered the cafeteria. Alec really should have been paying more attention last night when Jace introduced the guy, but being able to hand in his paper on time this morning had been more important.

Jace was looking out for Alec these days and seeing the redhead gave him a sudden idea. Leaving his half eaten lunch behind, Alec quickly moved to stand beside Clary's table.

"It's Clary right?" Alec asked.

"Yeah," Clary said. "And you're Alec." He nodded. During the last two months of seeing Magnus regularly, Alec had run into Clary a few times, but they hadn't spoken much.
"Oh hey, Alec!" He was sure this guy wasn't called Sherwin but anyway the guy with brown hair who'd slept on Alec's floor last night addressed him with a casual smile.

"Hey," Alec replied then turned back to Clary. "I was wondering if I could talk to you for a second?"

"I guess," Clary said. Alec sat down across from them at the table. He would have preferred to talk to Clary alone, but he sensed that wasn't really an option.

"I just wanted to let you know that Jace is actually an okay guy," Alec said.

"Simon said you guys let him crash at your place last night," Clary replied and Alec mentally kicked himself in the head. Of course, the guy's name was Simon.

"Exactly," Alec said, trying not to show surprise at Simon's name. He wanted to say more on this topic like how much Jace had changed for her, but that probably wasn't a good idea in front of Clary's boyfriend.

"What I don't get," Clary said, coolly. "Is why you care what I think about Jace. Shouldn't you be more concerned about what I think about you?"

"Huh?" Alec asked confused.

"What you did to Magnus!" Clary exclaimed.

"What I did?!" Alec said standing up and suddenly glaring at her.

"Yes," Clary said. "He's miserable and it's your fault! Can't you just be his friend?"

"No I can't!" Alec said and he didn't really feel like yelling to the whole cafeteria all the naughty details about why he couldn't just be Magnus's friend. Simply being near Magnus did things to Alec he had no words for.

Alec left the table, fuming. Screw them, Alec thought. He was suddenly liking Jace's plan a lot more. He wanted a date; he wanted Magnus to see him moving on. Even if Magnus didn't return his feelings, Alec wanted to shove it in his face. He wanted to prove he wouldn't be on that gorgeous, friend-zoning man's hook forever.

Alec knew Magnus would be joining Clary and Simon for lunch soon since it was Friday. In fact, Alec was surprised Magnus wasn't already sitting with them. Since refusing Magnus's friendship, Alec had managed to avoid Magnus around the school; it helped a lot that he knew when all Magnus's classes were. On any other day, knowing Magnus was about to enter the cafeteria would have made Alec leave first, but today it meant Alec was sticking around.

Alec went back to his table and ate the rest of his lunch while he watched for Magnus to enter. The longer he waited the more he wondered why Magnus wasn't here yet. He thought maybe Camille had upset him. Alec felt an instinct to find Magnus, hold him and ease his pain. Alec knew this was stupid since he had no idea what delayed Magnus in the first place, and besides Magnus wouldn't want Alec to hold him the way Alec wanted to. In the past, Alec had settled for making Magnus laugh when he was upset, but the stronger his feeling for Magnus became the harder it was to settle for laughter when he so desperately craved Magnus' touch.

Alec finished eating and was disposing of his tray when Magnus finally entered the cafeteria. Alec caught Magnus's eye for just a second before walking very purposely over to the table near the main exit. There sat a tall, blonde, pale guy who wasn't wearing a single drop of makeup. He was sitting
with a few women but Alec didn't really take note of them. He was focused on what he'd decided to do.

"Hi," he said awkwardly. "I'm Alec."

"Ethan," the guy said. Alec didn't know what to say next. He was so fixated on doing this first part, saying 'hi,' he'd forgotten about what words came next. Thankfully Ethan spoke before Alec looked too foolish just standing there, silently. "I've seen you in class with that asian girl."

"My cousin," Alec said.

"Oh," Ethan replied looking intrigued. Really did everyone think Aline was his girlfriend? They weren't that touchy feely for god's sake! Did it take nothing, but hanging out with a girl semi-regularly to make rumours fly! Because that was just ridiculous.

"I just noticed you across the room and thought I'd come say hi," Alec said lamely.

"Don't you mean you sat and waited until your ex showed up before coming over here to try and make him jealous?"

"You are smarter than you look Ethan," Alec said. "Except that Magnus isn't my ex." Alec paused then added. "He might be straight."

"Oh, fell for the straight guy huh?" Ethan said grinning. "Who hasn't done that at least once right?"

"I don't recommend it," Alec agreed. When Ethan laughed, Alec congratulated himself on his word selection.

"You're funny," Ethan said. He then looked Alec up and down until Alec felt like a piece of meat being judged for its fat content. "Hot too… hmmm… okay then, why not?" Alec just stared at him, totally clueless. "Coffee, tomorrow morning around nine at the campus cafe?" Alec nodded, still unsure how he had managed to get a date without asking.

"See you then," Ethan smiled and turned to talk to his friends who, now that Alec was paying attention, he saw were all wearing volleyball uniforms. Alec looked back at Ethan and saw he was also on the volleyball team. Alec had a date with a jock; Alec was screwed. Oh well, that was a problem for tomorrow.

Alec couldn't resist turning to see Magnus's reaction, but Magnus wasn't looking at him. Alec sighed and reminded himself that the reason they weren't together was because Magnus didn't care, so what had he expected? Alec must have imaged the electricity between them when he'd almost kissed Magnus here in this cafeteria just a week ago. Magnus wouldn't be jealous, he couldn't be.

Alec left the cafeteria quickly and headed back to his dorm. Once home, he collapsed on his bed, face first. Alec felt more for Magnus than he had for anyone else before, which was really annoying, what with Magnus totally not feeling the same way. Ethan wasn't unattractive by any stretch of the imagination, but for some reason beyond Alec's understanding, it was still Magnus who made his stomach do back flips. What was he doing? How would dating Ethan help in any way? So far the prospect of a date just made him feel horribly guilty. He lost track of how long he'd been laying there until Jace arrived.

"I take it this means I don't need to nag you?" Jace's voice spoke as Alec heard their dorm room close. Alec knew when Jace's class let out, and therefore, how long he'd been wallowing.

"Nope," Alec said. "I have a date tomorrow morning."
"Oh coffee date," Jace said. "Aren't you romantic?" Alec sat up, not sure what Jace meant. Jace seemed to read the question off his face.

"My dates usually start in a bar at night and end in a bed," Jace explained. "I've never done coffee before."

"Well maybe that's your problem," Alec said.

"Maybe," Jace laughed. "That, or maybe it's the fact that Clary has a boyfriend."

"Or that," Alec conceded. His second class of the day was soon and he couldn't afford to lay in bed all afternoon. He thought of telling Jace that he'd talked to Clary, but decided against it. It wasn't like he'd done any good anyway.

"I have to go to class," Alec said miserably as he got up and grabbed his bag. "See you later."

"Skip," Jace suggested. "It's just exam review anyway."

"I can't do that," Alec said.

"I know," Jace smiled and Alec returned the smile before leaving the dorm and going back up to the school.

Alec spent his last class of the week fretting about his coffee date and trying not to think about Magnus. He found he was glad exams were nearly upon them since that meant Christmas and going home. Alec missed his sister dearly and the rest of his family too. His little brother Max was still so young and Alec didn't want Max to forget he had a big brother. Izzy on the other hand was just a year younger than him. This summer she would graduate high school and then join him at university in September, that is, unless she changed her mind. Alec didn't think that she would, however, since Izzy wasn't one to change her mind easily. Alec hoped being at home with his family over Christmas would help get his mind off Magnus.

Even though exams started next week and his whole class was review, Alec might as well have skipped it since he didn't pay attention to a word that was said. Alec did copy down the chapters that would be on the test, which at least meant he got something out of dragging himself to class.

The next morning Alec got up and tried to dress for a date, which turned out to be a hopeless venture. Alec hadn't had a date in so long he wasn't even sure what one wore to dates. He settled for jeans and a shirt without holes.

Alec arrived early to the café, ordered himself a drink and sat down watching the clock, tapping his foot anxiously. At exactly nine am Ethan arrived. Alec had to be impressed with his sense of time. Ethan smiled and seeing that Alec already had a drink, went right over to order one before sitting across from Alec. There was silence for a while. Ethan's drink order was called and when he returned, Alec finally got up the nerve to say something.

"I don't really date much," Alec said all in one breath.

"I gathered that, but it still surprises me," Ethan said.

"Really?"

"Well even if you don't ask out a lot of guys," Ethan said. "I'm surprised guys don't ask you out."

"What… I mean… why would they… I'm nothing special… I…" Alec stammered.
"You're hot," Ethan said shrugging.

"Thanks," Alec mumbled into his coffee. He took a few large gulps as a break from needing to speak. He had nothing to say and this bothered him. Why did he suck so much at finding the right words!

"And I think what people usually do on dates is get to know each other."

"I think you're right," Alec replied looking up from his hands. He could do this.

"I'll start shall I? I have a way too straight for words older brother," Ethan said. "And a little sister who is very little. She's still a baby. My dad remarried."

"I have a younger sister and brother," Alec said. This was good; this was conversation.

"I'm here on a volleyball scholarship," Ethan said.

"I'm just here," Alec said, deciding not to tell Ethan his parents had donated the money for half the west wing of the university. "Undeclared major."

"Indecisive huh," Ethan said. "Should I be worried?" Alec was fairly sure he was being flirted with, but he was at a loss as to what to do about it. If Ethan were Magnus, Alec would know exactly what to do. With Magnus, Alec's body just knew how to react. With Magnus, Alec was pulled in as if against his will.

Alec tried to school his thoughts back to the present as he shook his head violently.

"Maybe," Alec said.

"Wow you really don't date do you?" Ethan laughed.

"I really don't," Alec said laughing as well. The laughter was great and it seemed to cut the tension in the air. Alec's heart sped up. He'd thought he'd seen Magnus standing, staring at him, but it had just been for a second. When Alec blinked Magnus was gone. Had that really been Magnus though? Or was Alec just seeing someone sorta like Magnus and turning that someone into Magnus in his head like a pathetic freak?

"Sorry," Alec said shaking his head. He was just seeing what he wanted to see. Magnus didn't care who Alec dated after all. "Thought I saw someone."

"How long how you been into the straight guy?" Ethan asked.

"About two months," Alec confessed. "Sorry for being such a lousy date. I'm still not sure why you asked me."

"Didn't I already explain that you're super gorgeous?" Ethan explained.

"I guess," Alec mumbled. He felt a hand under his chin and looked up at Ethan's kind face.

"You just need a distraction," Ethan said and suddenly he was leaning across the table toward Alec, his eyes closing. Ethan was going to kiss him, Alec was sure of it. A million thoughts raced through Alec's mind in a second but they all had one thing in common; Alec freaked out and stood up.

"Sorry," Alec said. "I… this was a bad idea. Sorry to waste your time." Alec made to turn and leave but he felt a gentle grip on his shoulder and looked back.
"It wasn't a waste of my time," Ethan said. "Just remember that." Ethan released Alec's arm and he fled the cafe.

Alec wanted Magnus to kiss him. Alec wanted Magnus to hold him. Hell, Alec just wanted Magnus period and trying to date anyone else while this was the case was useless. Any touch would make him wonder what Magnus's touch felt like. Any kiss would inspire Alec to imagine the feel of Magnus's lips.

Alec focused on his exams until they were over, then he got on a plane and went home for Christmas.

Chapter End Notes

Ahh! Now its 6 votes for R&S and 7 votes for UoTR! Sigh! This story is just destined to remain title-less forever.

My boyfriend said he likes R&S so if I include his vote that makes them perfectly TIED at 7-7! My beta reader's vote has been included in the tally and she voted for R&S. I originally liked UoTR more but R&S kinda grow on me too. I kept changing my mind so my brilliant solution was to ask you guys. Which as it turns wasn't so brilliant after all. lol.

Okay so what to do about this...hmmm... the best solution is to get more votes but I have a feeling that won't happen so... new plan! I shall flip a coin three times! Heads is R&S and Tails is UoTR. Ready here goes: Tails, Heads, Heads. (and before you say I just wrote what I wanted know that I did flip a coin! Promise! I suck at decisions like this.)

Okay so unless a bunch more people vote between now and the next chapter going online (That should be soon by the way since I have finished writing it. It just needs to be edited a few more times.) it looks like fate has decided this story is called Roommates & Soulmates. Though really you could still call it University of Tangled Romances or just Tangled Romances for short. Man I do like that title! Why can't I have both! *cries* Stupid voting fail grumble. This story is after all very Tangled with its interwoven plots! hehe I've never done interwoven plots before and they are super fun! Maybe I can combine both names... like "Tangled Roommates & Soulmates" no don't like that. And all other combinations in my head are sounding lame. If you can combine those two and make it sound good please tell me how!

Sigh. Okay I should stop whining about names like a dork and just publish this chapter right? ... That's that I thought. Also hitting save now!

Sneak Peak Chapter 18:

'If you do not answer me William,' Magnus tried texting him one last time. 'I am going to track you down then show up at your door at 2am and bang on your it until you open up!'

Okay maybe that was a bit extreme but Magnus was trying to help his friend; he was annoyed that Alec was asking out blondes and he was annoyed that he was annoyed about. Will was just being stupid. A small voice in the back of Magnus's head tried to speak up and say Magnus was being just as stupid but he shut it down mid sentence.
Tessa deserved to at least talk to Will one more time. The situations were totally different.

Have you noticed my earlier sneak peeks were so much longer? hehe *laughing emoji*
The first thing Magnus noticed when he met up with Clary and Simon for lunch was Alexander. It was almost as if Alec was waiting for Magnus to arrive, since no sooner had Magnus spotted Alec, than Alec had gotten up and walked straight over to some blonde guy from the volleyball team.

Magnus's gaze was glued to Alec as he talked with the blonde. Magnus could just tell from their body language this was no platonic conversation and he couldn't explain to himself why it bothered him. For some reason, Magnus suddenly disliked the blonde guy in the volleyball uniform, and when he said disliked he meant hated. He hated the blonde guy looking Alec up and down like a shallow window shopper scoping for sales. There was a lot more to Alec than his good looks! Alec angled his foot the way he always did when he was about to turn around. Quickly facing forward, Magnus bent his head down to make sure Alec hadn't known he'd been looking.

"Magnus," Clary said sadly. "What are you doing?"

Magnus suddenly remember he was sitting with Clary and Simon rather than in a world that consisted only of himself, Alec and the blonde who needed to die painfully.

"Nothing," Magnus said too quickly. "Just checking the lineup for food."

"Lair," Clary replied. "If you miss him so much just date him. He won't be your friend. Practically screamed that at us moments ago."

"He did what?" Magnus asked, shocked.

"He came over to say Jace wasn't horrible and then stormed off," Clary said. Simon put a hand on her arm.

"That isn't exactly what he said Clary," Simon spoke gently to her. "You got mad at him."

"I don't like him," Clary said stubbornly.

"Please don't say that's my fault," Magnus whined. How had things gotten so messed up?

"He made you miserable," Clary argued. Magnus didn't reply but he couldn't help thinking that Alec hadn't made him miserable. In fact, Alec had been the only one to make him really smile again after Camille. Magnus missed him, but he didn't want another lecture from Clary so he tried to avoid the topic for the rest of lunch.

In class a few hours later Magnus was doodling on his notebook when he suddenly noticed he was drawing that blonde guy with an arrow in his head. Shaking his head as if that could rewire his brain, Magnus quickly ripped out the offending piece of paper and crumpled it up. What was wrong with him?

Taking a deep breath Magnus checked his phone. No messages. He had been continuing his attempts to contact Will this last week, but the guy had either thrown his phone away or was very determined not to talk to anyone. Magnus had once or twice gone back to the cafe where he'd first met Will but it seemed Will was avoiding even that.
'If you do not answer me William,' Magnus tried texting him one last time. 'I am going to track you down, show up at your door at 2am and bang on it until you open up!'

Okay, maybe that was a bit extreme, but Magnus was trying to help his friend; he was annoyed that Alec was asking out blondes and he was annoyed that he was annoyed about. Will was just being stupid. A small voice in the back of Magnus's head tried to speak up and say Magnus was being just as stupid, but he shut it down mid-sentence. Tessa deserved to at least talk to Will one more time. The situations were totally different.

'Fine!' Will texted back a few moments later. Magnus was thrilled. It seemed threats did work.

'You need to talk to Tessa,' Magnus texted.

'No.'

'Yes,' Magnus replied.

'No,' Will texted.

Magnus sighed. 'Yes,' Magnus texted. 'And don't say no again! I know you love her and she needs to talk to you. You can't leave things between you like that.'

'She loves Jem,' Will replied. 'They have each other.'

'You've been avoiding Jem's phone calls too haven't you?'

'Yes.'

'If you just picked up your goddamn phone you'd know your best friend is worried about you! For some stupid reason Tessa and Jem love you and you cutting them out isn't helping anyone!' Magnus texted furiously. 'You are stupid! The two people who love you most in the world want to talk to you. Talk to them or I will do worse than bang on your door in the middle of the night.'

Magnus put his phone away, deciding the threat was better left to Will's imagination. Exams started next week and Magnus had many dates and presidents to memorize before then. He would not think about Alec dating blondes or Will being stupid. He was going to study.

The very next morning he decided to take his textbooks to the cafe on campus and get a latte while reading up on Russian politics. However, when Magnus walked in, he stopped dead in his tracks. Alec was sitting with that blonde and he was laughing. Magnus balked; turning in a flash, he ran out of there like hell was chasing him. He went up the stairs and collapsed, panting on the stairwell. After a moment to compose himself, Magnus went to find a seat in the library where he could lay out his books and try his best not to think about Alexander.

Magnus focused on history with all his might. Who had been prime minister when? What had each one accomplished in their term? He forced the facts to run through his head over and over again until the image of Alexander laughing on his date faded into the background.

Magnus wasn't totally sure what happened over the next week unless it had happened decades ago. Magnus had never studied so diligently before. He lived and breathed his exams until the last one was over. In his mind the solution was simple, get through the week, go home for Christmas and everything would be fine.

Magnus was packed and on a bus home only hours after his last exam. Aleida would have the house done up with Christmas decorations by now and Magnus thought nothing but that sight could make
him smile. He tried to keep his mind blank on the trip home. Clary and Tessa texted him but Magnus's replies weren't enough to keep them answering for long. He did learn that Will still hadn't talked to Tessa, which annoyed him. Magnus made a note to punish Will for that after the holidays, make good on his threat. He suspected Tessa and Clary were worried about him and his strange behaviour recently, but right now he didn't care. His roommate and best friends were wonderful, but he just wanted a hug from his auntie.

When Magnus got off the train, Aleida was there to greet him and he ran into her arms without further thought.

"Magnus!" Aleida exclaimed as they broke apart. "What's wrong?"

"I just needed a hug," Magnus said, shrugging. He refused to give her a better answer as they walked to her car and drove home. Magnus watched her as the car passed by all the familiar sights of his childhood. His aunt had pale skin, but her dark brown, almost black, hair was similar enough to his. He'd always liked this fact; no matter how different they looked there were some physical characteristics about them that matched.

He was home and everything was going to be fine.

When they entered the house, Magnus saw the same beautifully decorated living room he'd seen every year for as long as he could remember. A warm, well-lit Christmas tree covered in homemade decorations, some of which Magnus could remember making. Stockings hung over the fireplace and there were twinkling lights around all the frames art on the walls. The usual year round art on the walls had been switched for Christmas prints. Magnus looked sadly at his favorite print of a rustic santa with his sleigh full of gifts, but Magnus didn't find the same joy in the festive image he usually did. Instead, the dark blue velvet of the wrapping paper only reminded Magnus of Alec's eyes. It was the sight he'd believed would snap him out of his numb pain but instead of smiling Magnus burst into tears.

"Sweetheart!" Aleida said stunned. She hadn't called him that for years.

"When did everything get so messed up?" Magnus whispered.

"Is this about Camille?" Aleida asked. Magnus laughed but without humour. In a way it was about Camille. It was about everyone who had every broken his heart. Magnus hadn't let himself feel anything since seeing Alec laughing on his date, but now that exams were over and the relief he'd been expecting had turned to ash in his mouth, Magnus felt it all: jealousy, envy, regret.

Aleida made them hot tea and he confessed to her everything that had happened since he'd learned of Camille's cheating while they sat together on the sofa surrounded by her decorations. She listened carefully, but without interrupting. When Magnus was done she set her tea aside and pulled him in for a rib crushing hug.

"You can't give up," she whispered into his ear. "I know it hurts, but please don't give up."

"I'm so scared," Magnus whispered. It was the first time he'd said this out loud. Somehow it seemed to lighten his burden while simultaneously making everything worse.

"I know," she whispered. "But it seems to me that sparing yourself heartbreak is in fact breaking your heart." Magnus stared at her, unblinking. He was sitting here crying because he was trying to save himself pain? How ironic was that! She was right, of course.

"Oh god," Magnus whispered as he realized what he'd done. "I've been so cruel to Alec. How could
he ever forgive me? Why would he even want to?"

"You won't know unless you tell him the truth," Aleida replied kindly.

"He's dating that blonde now," Magnus said unable to keep the dislike out of his voice.

"One date does not make them married," Aleida said smiling. "Just tell him and see what happens. Either he's over you and can be friends again or he still likes you."

"Or he hates me for being such a jerk," Magnus added. "And never wants to talk to me again."

"But you aren't talking now," his aunt reminded him. "So what have you got to lose?" Again, Magnus had to admit she had a point. "Besides, from what you've told me, I seriously doubt he hates you, sweetheart."

"Thanks," Magnus said. Taking a deep breath, he rested his head on her shoulder. They stayed like that, his aunt stroking his face in a motherly way, for several long moments. Magnus began to feel better as the only parent he had ever known held him close. How she managed to make everything okay again Magnus didn't know. It must be a parent thing, he thought as she made him sit up and face the spirit of Christmas.

Magnus spent most of his holidays trying to think of something to say to Alec when they were both back at school. It wasn't until Christmas morning that Magnus started panicking, fearing that Alec might not be willing to let Magnus explain. In a moment of fright, Magnus got out his phone and texted Alec.

'When we get back to school after the holidays,' Magnus texted. 'Would it be alright if we talked?'

Once Magnus had hit send he'd tried to keep the worry at bay. There was nothing more he could do now. He pushed the text out of his mind as the smell of his aunt's cinnamon apple pancakes wafted through the room. Magnus followed his nose and sat down to eat with Aleida.

"What did you do?" she accused him.

"Why do you think I did something?" Magnus replied while they ate.

"You have that look," Aleida told him. "Like the time you wouldn't tell me you smashing the screen on my phone."

"Oh please!" Magnus said. "What was I, like five?"

"You were seven actually," Aleida corrected. "And it's the same look, so what did you do?"

"I texted him," Magnus admitted sheepishly.

"This is not a conversation to have over text," Aleida told him sternly.

"I know!" Magnus said. "I just told him I wanted to talk. I'm worried he won't talk to me so, maybe telling him over text will… I don't know… help?"

"Well how did he respond?"

"He hasn't answered."

"When did you send it?"
"Two minutes ago," Magnus said and she laughed lightly at him.

"Give Alec more than a minute to check his phone," Aleida said. "It's Christmas after all. He's probably busy."

"I know," Magnus said shaking his head a little.

"Why don't you tell me about him?" his aunt suggested.

"Alec has the most beautiful eyes," Magnus said without hesitation. "He's gorgeous, but he doesn't really believe it when people point it out to him. He's loyal and kind. He loves his siblings dearly. He is also funnier than he thinks he is, though he could have a better appreciation for history puns."

"Oh god!" Aleida said. "You didn't inflict your puns on him did you?"

"I might have," Magnus said grinning.

"And he didn't run for the hills?" Aleida was shaking her head. "Impressive."

"He even tried to make a pun himself!" Magnus exclaimed. "Though it did need some polishing."

"I can't wait to meet him," Aleida said, and the image suddenly popped into his head, of Alec coming here to have Christmas with him. Alec meeting his aunt. It made Magnus smile. Magnus's phone went off and he jumped up instantly.

Alec had replied with one word, 'okay.'

Chapter End Notes

Of course as soon as I say the next chapter will be uploaded quickly I get totally wrapped up in writing my other Malec story (the yet to be published one) and forget to edit this chapter. Oh well. At least you only waited a few days right? Not sure what else to say here except Magnus has finally come to his sense! Took long enough right? ;) Its not like I have dragged his out for 50,000 words without a single kiss or anything. lol Yes I totally have! hehe!

And yes I did finally change the name. Technically it won by one vote but really it was fate (aka the coin toss). Sigh. At least this story has a name now! And with this name I could continue the story after University while with the other one that wouldn't be possible though I have no idea if I plan to continue this story after university yet so... yeah...

Sneak Peek:

It was Christmas morning and Jem had slept over last night, and the night before. Jem had basically been here every night since Magnus had left for his aunt's; Tessa didn't like being all alone. She had been raised by her aunt Harriet ever since her parents died and usually returned home for the holidays but this year she hadn't felt up to the long trip and, anyway, someone had to stay behind to feed the cats, right? Though she knew this was just an excuse. In the previous years they had always managed to find a cat sitter. Jem was here and Tessa craved his company in Will's absence more than her aunt's. Jem knew and shared her pain, shared the loss of Will. Short of forcing their company on
someone who obviously didn't want to see them, neither Jem nor Tessa had any ideas how to bring Will back into their lives.

"Should we open presents?" Jem asked her. She had just opened her mouth to agree when there was a knock on the door. Without thinking Tessa got up and answered it. And there she stood face to face with the person she'd longed for but hadn't seen for a month.

Wouldn't you have preferred it if the next chapter was Alec POV? Hehe But you guys like Tessa right? :)
Tessa had two meowing cats rubbing at her legs. This always happened when Magnus left. The silly creatures were so needy. Though she had to admit, she was rather fond of them. She bent down to fill their food dish and instantly the cats attention switched from her to their breakfast. She smiled as she returned to Jem who was sitting on the couch.

"I do like cats," Jem said as she was encircled by his arms. "I can't say I like the names Magnus chose though." Tessa chuckled.

"Magnus does have a problem with puns," she agreed.

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"Should we open presents?" Jem asked her. She had just opened her mouth to agree when there was a knock on the door. Without thinking Tessa got up and answered it. And there she stood face to face with the person she'd longed, for but hadn't seen in a month.

"Will?" Tessa whispered.

"Magnus threatened me," Will said quickly. "I just thought I'd check in, but if I'm interrupting I can leave."

"No." Jem's voice carried from across the room as he quickly got up to join Tessa at the door. "Please come in Will."

Tessa made a mental note to thank Magnus profusely upon his return as she offered to get Will a drink.

"I'm fine," Will replied, refusing any refreshment. "How are you two?"

"Worried about you!" Jem said.

"Missing you," Tessa added while Jem nodded.

"I'm trying to do the right thing," Will argued. "Why are you both acting like this?"

"How is ignoring me the right thing!?" Jem yelled. Jem so rarely raised his voice both Tessa and Will stared at him for a moment.

"We fell in love with the same woman!" Will yelled back at Jem with equal volume. Tessa couldn't help but gasp. Will had never said he loved her before and to hear it like this, uttered as the reason
Will wasn't talking to his best friend, was quite shocking.

"You say that like it's an explanation," Jem argued. "But it's an excuse. I offered to step aside, no hard feelings, but you-"

"I know how happy she makes you Jem," Will said firmly then added sadly, all his anger gone. "And I can't be the thing that takes happiness away from anyone else."

"How many times do I have to tell you that what happened to Ella wasn't your fault!" Jem roared back, but with affection this time rather than anger.

"You weren't there," Will said. "You don't know." Will turned to leave muttering as he went, "Should have just taken Magnus's punishment."

Tessa reacted quickly. She reached out and grabbed hold of Will's arm. He turned to stare at her with wide eyes. The unguarded look on his face made her blush but she ignored it, determined.

"Don't I get a say in all this?" Tessa asked.

"Oh course you do," Will said. "But you love Jem."

"I love you too," Tessa spoke directly to Will as Jem had heard this before. "They say you cannot love two people equally at once and perhaps for others that is so. But you and Jem—you are not like two ordinary people, two people who might have been jealous of each other, or who would have imagined my love for one of them diminished by my love of the other. It's as if you are one soul in two bodies. I could not love Jem so much if I did not love you as well. And I could not love you as I do if I did not also love Jem. Please don't leave, Will. Please don't rip me in half again."

Will crumbled under her words and fell into her arms. She held him, but opened her arms to Jem as well. The three of them clung to each other for a long moment while Tessa felt the half of her heart that was Will's knit back into place.

When Will pulled away he stared at them. Tessa smiled and Jem put a hand on Will's shoulder.

"How can this work?" Will asked. "I hear your words Tessa, but that doesn't meant the world works that way."

"When each of you learned I loved the other," Tessa began. "Neither of you reacted as the world says you should. Both of you tried to give me up for the sake of the other. Don't you see, the world doesn't apply to us." She took each of their hands within hers and gently guided the two men she loved to sit on the couch on either side of her. "We three should be together."

"But what will people think?" Will argued.

"Why should we care?" Tessa replied.

"Because," Will said. "It can't be that simple. We can't just all three of us be together. Sure you can all sit here and talk or even have a group hug easily enough, but mar- dating two people is different."

Jem gave Will a funny look that Tessa couldn't figure out and she wondered if Jem picked up something in Will's words or tone that she'd missed.

"Can't we just try it Tessa's way?" Jem pleaded. "Rather than you never speaking to us again."

"Fine," Will said then moving quickly pulled Tessa into his arms. Will's hands were on her back and
his hot mouth was on hers. She lost herself in the kiss so completely that when it ended she was stunned.

Will turned to Jem. "Now tell me that didn't eat at you even a little? Go ahead and tell me you didn't have to fight the urge to pull me off her?"

"I-" Jem started then stopped. "I am only human."

"See!" Will said throwing his arms in the air. "Told you this can't work. We are men Tessa, not angels!"

Tessa was still a little dazed from Will's kiss, but she had followed the conversation enough to realize she was going to lose one of them again unless she found a way to convince them. She turned to Jem.

"Kiss me," she whispered. Shooting a look at Will, Jem turned to her and slowly took her face in his hands. His lips weren't so hot but they were far more gentle. This kiss also ended much sooner than Tessa would have liked. Jem took his hands away from her and turned to Will.

"Was that necessary," Will growled. "I already proved this wouldn't work."

"I think it will work," Tessa said still determined.

"Easy for you to say," Will replied coldly. "You don't have to watch Jem and I make out."

Tessa couldn't help but laugh at the image his statement conjured in her mind. Soon both men were laughing with her. Something passed through them as they all laughed together, the air cleared somehow.

"Alright," Will said after the laughter died down. "We can try if that's what you want Tess."

"That is what I want," Tessa said firmly. "But there is something else I want Will."

"Oh?" Will inquired. "And what is that?"

"To know who Ella was and what happened to her?" Tessa asked kindly. "I want to know why you think so little of yourself."

"Jem never told you?" Will whispered. She shook her head. Jem and Will exchanged a look full of respect before Will turned to her.

"Tess," he said and she could tell his words caused him pain. "Ella was my older sister. She died when I was twelve."

"I'm so sorry Will," Tessa said squeezing his hand, trying to offer comfort. Though this was a horrible thing to happen to anyone let alone a child it didn't explain Will's behaviour so she waited for him to continue.

"She was murdered right in front of me," Will said. He spoke to the ground rather than to her, but he had Tessa's full attention either way. "Murdered trying to save me. It was my fault! I shouldn't have run off. My parents were devastated. My little sister was scared to leave the house. The killer was never caught and the thought ate away at my dad until he lost his job. It wasn't much later that mom stopped getting out of bed. I was just making it all so much worse and so I... I left."

"And met me," Jem added when Will fell silent. "And I have been telling you ever since to just go
home. Nothing that happened was your fault, Will."

"It was!" Will insisted. "I'm toxic to everyone, especially everyone I love." He turned from Jem to Tessa. "I tried not to love you Tess but I failed. I'm so s-"

"Don't you dare apologize for that!" Tessa yelled suddenly furious. This explained all his strange behaviour when they had first met, the way he could be distant and yet not at the same time. "If you insist on believing you are cursed like this than it is a curse of your own making!"

"Tessa!" Jem exclaimed shocked. Will just stared at her with wide blue eyes.

"Your happiness is worth something William," Tessa said and it was the use of his full name more than anything that seemed to stop Will in his tracks. "The sooner you realize that the better."

She sat back down and faced him, holding his face with her outstretched hand. It was so good to be near him again, to touch him again.

"You risk your life every day to pull trapped and scared people out of burning buildings," Tessa whispered. "You are by definition a good person. Not a toxic one."

"That doesn't… I mean that's just work and…"

"Listen to her Will," Jem said leaning forward to offer comfort alongside her. Will looked frantically back and forth between their determined expressions before breaking down crying in Tessa's arms.

His sobs ended quickly and he pulled away, wiping his face. He didn't speak, but neither of them expected him to.

"Now, Will, won't you stay with us today and join us tonight for Christmas dinner?" Tessa smiled at him. "There shall be turkey and I believe Jem wants to open presents." She smiled hugely, and Jem, taking the hint, quickly got up to collect the gifts. Soon they had opened the few there were.

None of them were excellent cooks and it was a small miracle along with much assistance from the internet that they managed to get the turkey in the oven without ending in a major disaster. They worked well together, Tessa thought as she laughed and smiled with the men she loved while trying to prepare something edible. She realized while stuffing the turkey that she hadn't been this happy since before Will had left them.

"Oh Will!" Tessa said suddenly over dinner. "I almost forgot. Is there anyone named Jace in your family?"

"Maybe," Will said tentatively. "Why do you ask?"

"Magnus's friend has a roommate named Jace Herondale," Tessa said. "I didn't think it was a common name."

"You're right Tess, it isn't," Will said. "I think he might be my Uncle Stephan's kid." Tessa knew Will's father's name was Edmund, but only because Jem had told her. Will had never talked about his family with her before today.

"Why doesn't Jace know you then?"

"He was raised only by his mom," Will explained. "I think my uncle abandoned them when Jace was a baby. Celine wanted nothing to do with the Herondales after Stephan eloped with his high school sweetheart." He paused obviously trying to remember the details. "Amatis I think her name
was, but anyway since she stopped speaking to anyone named Herondale the day Stephan left her, all I know is what dad used to say before..." He trailed off.

"Before you stopped talking to your family," Jem added pointedly.

"Well yeah," Will said. "And none of them have blocked me on Facebook yet, though I wouldn't have blamed them if they had."

"You need to go home," Tessa told him.

"You really need to at least call them," Jem agreed with her.

"I wonder why Celine gave Jace his father's last name though?" Will mused rather than respond to their pleading words. "That surprises me. I always figured Jace would have been a Montclaire."

"Fine, ignore us," Jem sighed. "Let's just enjoy what remains of the holiday shall we?"

Will grinned that devilish grin of his and offered to bring out dessert. After dinner they watched 'A Christmas Carol' cuddled up on the couch together, with Tessa in the middle. Everything seemed to be going fine until the hour grew too late.

"I should go home," Will said as he yawned.

"Please stay," Tessa begged.

"I don't know how this works," Will admitted. Tessa knew he still wasn't convinced this strange idea of hers would work. Tessa walked into her bedroom and lay down in the center of her bed suddenly very glad she had a queen-sized bed. She gestured for each of them to lie beside her. Jem complied first, but Will hesitated. After Tessa offered a smile of encouragement, Will eventually laid down with them.

Tessa had never slept so well before as she did that night.

Chapter End Notes

So remember that thing I said I wasn't going to do... I did it. I uploaded the first chapter of my new Malec AU. Its called "Elusive Love."

Here is the Summary: "Magnus Bane is an internationally famous pop star, renowned for his love songs but knows little of love in his own life. Desperate to get away after a dramatic moment with the press Magnus takes off, ending up in small surfing town on the west coast. Who else should he happened to meet there but a certain beautiful blue eyed man!"

So yeah.. that's online now... and I am uploading three stories at once... so that happened... This new story isn't going to be as long as R&S (which at this rate is going to go on for freaking ever. lol.) but it won't be short either. Please go check it out and leave me a review! I had to write a lot of description which was alot of work because I am a dialogue person by nature so I'd love to hear what you think! There is only the one main couple in this new story though I may include other couples as secondary plots as the story progresses.
"Izzy," Robert cautioned. "If Alec doesn't want to talk about it-" But he was cut off.

"Then Alec can just deal," Izzy huffed. "He dates so rarely and never gives me the chance to tease him!"

"Izzy," Maryse sighed but his sister grinned wickedly and continued.

"I think Magnus is going to confess he liked you all along and has just been being stupid up until now," Izzy said. "I bet you guys are going to be too cute to stand in no time."

Alec groaned again. This was the kind of thinking that would crush him if he let himself hope. Wasn't two months of living in the friend zone enough? Why was Izzy doing this to him?

"Please don't Izzy," Alec whispered. "You haven't even met him."

"But I know you," Izzy said beaming at him. "And no guy could resist you for long."

"Magnus doesn't seem to have had a problem with that," Alec growled. "Can we please talk about something else!"

"You are no fun," Izzy sniffed then she turned her other brother who was sitting beside her. "Max when you grow up I shall expect better."

I thought I'd be nice and give you a nice long preview. ^_^ First glimpse of Izzy!
Alec's Anxiety

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

'When we get back to school after the holidays,' Magnus texted. 'Would it be alright if we talked?'

Alec stared down at his phone. Why would Magnus text that he wanted to talk? It made no sense, but even if all Magnus wanted to do was talk about the weather Alec knew he'd agree. If he didn't, the possibilities would eat at him. 'We need to talk' can mean so many different things and Alec would lose many nights sleep wondering what Magnus would have said if he ignored this text.

'Okay,' Alec texted back.

"It's Christmas!" Izzy whined. "No phones!"

"Sorry," Alec said quickly putting his phone away and pulling his focus back to his family. His mother, Maryse, was in the kitchen making their rather late breakfast, since Christmas was the one day his parents actually allowed themselves to sleep in. They had just finished opening presents and Alec's, six year old brother, Max, could be seen sitting in the corner running his new toy car up and down the side of the sofa making 'vroom vroom' noises. Izzy was jumping up and down in excitement as she tried to decide which of her new designer clothes to try on first. Alec's father, Robert, was sitting in his favourite chair overseeing the chaos with a smile on his face.

Alec sat down with on the couch across from his dad and smiled as he looked at the Christmas tree that lit up the room. They'd decorated it just yesterday. It had twinkling lights wrapped around it and Christmas ornaments that glittered in the light that filtered through the window. The glitter reminded Alec of the eye shadow Magnus sometimes used, which just made Alec's mind fall back into his Magnus-induced spiral of frustration, that had only been made worse by that open-ended text.

Alec desperately wanted to message Magnus back and ask what the heck he wanted to talk about so badly he would bother to ask on Christmas day! But, Alec sensed somehow that this wasn't something to talk about over text. Nevertheless, the suspense was killing him. What if Magnus asked or pleaded to be Alec's friend again? Could Alec say no once more, or would he give in when Magnus's beautiful eyes looked at him? Saying no last time hadn't been easy. What if Magnus was in trouble and needed help? What if Magnus just wanted to tell Alec off for yelling at Clary? Alec tried not to let himself imagine the only thing he wanted to hear Magnus say. Getting his hopes up was the one thing that could really hurt him, even more that he currently was. No, his emotions he could control, Magnus he couldn't. Alec sighed deeply as he gazed at his wonderful family home, beautifully decorated for the holidays. Why couldn't he just be in the moment?

"What's the matter son?" Robert asked putting down his book to turn to Alec.

"Oh, just that life sucks sometimes," Alec replied sitting down next to his dad.

"Not sharing I see?" Robert observed. "I know you are all grown up now, but that doesn't mean I don't want to know if something's bothering you."

"Yeah, yeah, I know," Alec muttered. "It's just...". The day he had told his parents he was gay they hadn't even known what the word meant. It had been weird for a while after that, with them treating him differently, but as time went by they must have realized he was still the same person, because the weirdness melted away. However, Alec had never talked to his parents about his love life before
since he had so little to say on the matter it had hardly been an issue until now.

"You can talk to me about anything, Alexander," Robert said gently.

"I kinda like this guy," Alec said awkwardly.

"And this guy doesn't like you?" Robert replied as if he could read Alec's emotions off his face. Alec relaxed. He felt comfortable talking to his dad about this; it was just a little odd.

"Yep," Alec said. "He just wants to be friends."

"Ouch!" Robert said laughing lightly.

"Oh, great!" Alec said sarcastically. "My father laughs at my pain."

"I'm sorry," Robert said still grinning. "But that's a classic line."

"Now, Magnus has texted me that he wants to talk," Alec continued, emphasizing talk with air quotes. "And I have no idea about what!"

"Ah, that is a bit confusing," Robert said consolingly.

"Breakfast is ready!" Maryse called from the kitchen. Alec got up and made to move into the kitchen, but he felt his father's hand on his shoulder and turned.

"You won't know until you talk to his guy," Robert said. "So, don't stress out about it. There's nothing you can do now. If you want to talk after, call home."

Alec smiled at his father. He felt better just having confided in someone. Max ran past them straight for the table, with his new toy truck in hand, almost hitting Alec in the leg in his haste.

"Yum Yum! Vroom Vroom!" Max cried as he scrambled up into the chair and sat ready and waiting.

"Someone's hungry," Robert laughed.

"Did you see me daddy!" Max asked distracted by his father's voice. "Did you see my new truck?"

"I bought you that truck, remember?" Robert chuckled as he and everyone else joined Max at the table. Alec's mouth watered just looking at the amazing meal in front of him. They usually had a cook, but his mother never let anyone else in her kitchen on Christmas. There was bacon, sausage and a mountain of pancakes next to a huge bowl of scrambled eggs. Alec always preferred his mother's eggs to anyone else's. He'd asked her once and she said the secret to making them so fluffy was baking powder, a whisk and some love. He hadn't learned that love wasn't an actual ingredient in cooking until he'd gotten a little older. As a kid, he used to look for love listed as an ingredient in recipes until Aline explained to him what his mother had meant. Everyone served themselves and no one was willing to give up eating long enough to carry on meaningful conversation for several long moments.

"Mommy makes the best food ever!" Max cried as he make a huge mess devouring his breakfast.

"This is delicious, mom," Izzy agreed.

After a few more moments of satisfied silence Izzy spoke again.

"Oh, and Alec," her teasing tone worried Alec. "I overheard you talking to dad." Alec groaned. Just what he needed. His mettlesome little sister getting involved in his love life. When Izzy had found
out Alec was gay the first sentence out of her mouth was to suggest a few guys she knew and start planning blind dates for him.

"Izzy," Robert cautioned. "If Alec doesn't want to talk about it-" But he was cut off.

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"Please don't Izzy," Alec whispered. "You haven't even met him."

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"Magnus doesn't seem to have had a problem with that," Alec growled. "Can we please talk about something else!"

"You are no fun," Izzy sniffed then she turned to her other brother sitting beside her. "Max, when you grow up I shall expect better."

"I do better big sister!" Max said reaching his arms up to her. "I fun!" She hugged him and thankfully the topic was changed. Max was always excited to show off new things he learned, whether it was words or how high he could jump and he never disagreed with Izzy, who Alec suspected was his favourite sibling.

After breakfast, Max helped Izzy select outfits from her many new clothes while Alec watched. He didn't feel as in the moment as he was trying to be but he had a wonderful Christmas all the same.

When the clock struck midnight on New Year's, Alec tried not to think of kissing Magnus but failed miserably. He was getting his hopes up despite his intentions not too. Izzy wasn't helping either as she continued to tease him at every opportunity.

When it was time to go back to school, Alec hugged his parents and sister - despite her being so very annoying - then picked Max up and spun him around a few times, wondering how much bigger Max would be when Alec saw him next. After putting Max down and hugging him one last time, Alec turned to face his family.

"If you don't text me after your talk with Magnus," Izzy threatened. "I will spam text you until summer break!"

"Don't be a stranger," Maryse said forcing another hug on him. "Call if you want to talk."

"What your mother said," Robert added as Alec grabbed the handle on his luggage and boarded the plane, with one last wave over his shoulder.

The distraction of finding his seat and getting his luggage stowed away wasn't nearly enough. In less than five minutes Alec was worrying about what Magnus wanted to talk about. What distractions the holidays offered him were gone and Alec had nothing but time on his hands while he waited for this plane to take him back to Magnus.
Alec was more nervous than he thought he had the right to be. The guy he had dirty dreams about, who he'd never even kiss in real life let alone dated, wanted to talk to him. A guy, he might add, that didn't like him back at all and wasn't about to change his mind. Alec took a deep breath as he reclined his chair back. He was going to sleep. Yes, sleep was the best plan. No thinking, no worrying, just blissful unconsciousness. The lights dimmed, other passages started asking for pillows and Alec closed his eyes. He'd already asked for a pillow and was rather comfortable as far as being on a plane was concerned. As Alec tried to calm his mind for sleep, the endless possibilities of what Mangus wanted to say ran themselves unendingly through his head.

"Oh, Alec I like guys, it's just that I don't like you."

"Alec, it's not that I don't like you, I just don't like you right now."

"We should be friends again. You are over this silly crush now aren't you?"

"I was just hoping you would cat sit for me on spring break. I'm going to the beach to meet up with my new girlfriend."

"Clary doesn't like you so I have decided I don't either."

"Camille is being mean and I need a hug, but don't get too close cause I don't like boys like that."

Alec shook his head violently and sat up. Sleep was clearly not going to happen. Alec tried and failed to distract himself on the trip home. He thought of a million other things Magnus could want to say, each more painful than the last.

When the plane mercifully landed, a driver was there to meet him at the airport. When Alec was dropped off at the school, he went straight to his dorm and collapsed onto his bed, face first. He wasn't sure how long he laid there before his phone went off.

'Alec?' Magnus's text read. 'Are you back yet?'

Alec seriously considered changing schools before he answered.

'Yes.'

'Can we talk?' was Magnus's instant reply.

'Come to my dorm.' Alec texted. He didn't have the energy to get up or go somewhere else. If Magnus wanted to talk he could come here.

In no time at all there was a knock at his door. Alec took a deep breath, got up and went to answer it, too drained and tired to care if his hair was a mess from the plane. When he opened the door, Magnus stood before him. He seemed different than before, more vulnerable somehow.

"How was your Christmas?" Magnus asked.

"Good," Alec replied automatically. "It was nice to see my brother and sister."

"I bet," Magnus said awkwardly. He wasn't usually awkward and Alec was at a loss for what exactly was happening.

"I just arrived," Alec said, trying to explain his disheveled appearance and rumpled clothes.

"Sorry," Magnus said quickly. "I didn't mean to intrude. I mean, if you want to get settled…"
"No, it's alright," Alec said. He didn't want be left to wonder what the heck Magnus wanted to talk about. Better to just get it over with. Magnus, it seemed, didn't have this same opinion as he remained silent for several moments before speaking again.

"How was your date?" Magnus asked.

"My what?" Alec replied confused.

"I saw you with that blonde in the cafe," Magnus confessed.

"Oh, that went far too horribly to be called a date," Alec said with a slight laugh. This whole situation was making him nervous. Magnus smiled at his answer; Alec just couldn't figure this guy out. Was he trying to be confusing on purpose! What the heck was he smiling for?

"So you aren't still seeing him then?" Magnus asked next.

"Oh yeah, I'm sure he wants to talk to the crazy guy who ran out of the cafe after about five minutes," Alec said with heavy sarcasm. "Great date I was." Magnus didn't reply and Alec just couldn't take the small talk anymore.

"Is this all you wanted to talk about Magnus?" he asked, resisting the urge to add that if this was the case he could have saved Alec a whole lot of stress by just not texting beforehand!

"No, it isn't," Magnus said. "I just don't know how to start."

"Why are you here Magnus?" Alec asked.

"Saving myself misery is only causing me misery," Magnus whispered.

"What does that mean?"

"It means," Magnus said biting his lower lip and looking down at the ground. "I miss you."

"I miss you too, Magnus," Alec said a little exasperated. He was way too tired for this. "But if you don't miss me the same way I miss you..."

"I might," Magnus started still looking at the floor. "I mean… I-I just…"

Alec suddenly couldn't breathe. Was he hearing what he thought he was hearing? There was a small voice inside his head trying to warn him that this would lead somewhere painful, but he couldn't listen to it. He couldn't shatter this moment. He was scared something would snap and Magnus would take it back. His hopes once fleeting were now soaring high above his head and out of his control.

"Do you really mean that?" Alec whispered.

"The first time I saw you… I liked you," Magnus confessed in a whisper, looking directly at Alec now. "Your eyes are like clear pools of still water, so very blue. I was very disappointed when I thought you were there with Aline. You are beautiful, Alexander."

Alec wasn't sure if he would ever again be able to string a line of words together into a sentence. Was this real? Despite Alec's confusion Magnus's words had his pulse quickening and his cheeks flushed.

"Why?" Alec whispered, unable to form a more detailed question with any coherency.
"I'm scared," Magnus said. He seemed to understand Alec meant 'why didn't you tell me sooner' despite Alec's vague question. "Every relationship I've ever had ended badly. I don't know if I can give someone the power to break me again."

"You think I'm going to break you?" Alec asked in a whisper.

"Maybe not on purpose," Magnus replied softly.

"Magnus," Alec said slowly taking a step closer, his mind suddenly clear again. "When I am around you I... I feel like my life has been taken off a dimmer switch. Everything is brighter, sharper, louder. My heart pounds in my chest and I just want... to be near you, to hold you... to kiss you..." Alec broke off when he realized he'd been leaning in almost close enough to actually kiss Magnus.

"I didn't realize I was so exciting?" Magnus whispered. Alec felt Magnus's breath on his face and couldn't help but lean in further still.

"You're more than that," Alec's mouth was millimeters away from Magnus's lips now, but Magnus wasn't backing away. "You make me believe in magic." Alec could feel his pulse racing. If this was an elaborate dream, then Alec was in no hurry to wake up.

"Alexander," Magnus whispered before he moved a fraction closer, connecting their lips. A whooshing feeling rushed through Alec as he threw himself into the kiss. His imagination hadn't done Magnus justice. His lips were soft and warm as they moved with Alec's. Magnus's arms went around him and Alec could have jumped for joy if that hadn't required stopping the kiss that was making his body sing. Alec was finally holding Magnus. Finally kissing Magnus! His hands were greedily moving over Magnus's body when Magnus's lips released Alec's. Before Alec could be upset their kiss was over Magnus was kissing his neck instead. Alec moaned involuntarily and moved his head to the side as Magnus's lips sucked at the soft skin of his throat.

"Magnus," Alec gasped. Magnus straightened up to look in Alec's eyes.

"Yes?" Magnus said smiling. Alec just stared, he looked so happy. It was this, more than anything, that made Alec realize how true Magnus's words had been. Alec felt like he was high; all the exhaustion of his sleepless flight now replaced with adrenaline.

"You look so happy," Alec observed.

"As I said," Magnus replied. "I missed you."

Alec's body wanted to move, his heart pounding in his chest. Jumping, Alec wrapped his legs around Magnus's waist. With his arms around Magnus's neck he kissed Magnus with everything he had. Magnus's response was to hold Alec tight to him and return his kiss with enthusiasm.

When Magnus set Alec down, he swayed slightly, his sleepless night catching up with him. Alec grabbed Magnus by the hand and pulled him over to his twin bed.

"Trying to get me into bed already, Alexander?" Magnus said, but Alec knew he was teasing.

"I'm tired, okay," Alec laughed.

"Might be for the best," Magnus said with a grin. "Your bed is rather small, though you seemed very awake a moment ago." He paused then added with a chuckle, "Not that I'm complaining."

"I didn't sleep on the flight," Alec mumbled.
"Why not?" Magnus asked, innocently like he totally wasn't the cause.

"Just my silly head," Alec said still unable to keep a smile off his face despite how tired he was. Alec wrapped his arms around Magnus and kissed him again before lying on the bed and asking Magnus to join him. As they lay in each other's arms, a new feeling in Alec's chest glowed happily.

Chapter End Notes

So I know no one likes Tessa so I got very little reviews on that chapter but you guys like Malec right? Lots of reviews pretty please! I have been planning this for ages and we are finally here! Short author's note today because I am uploading this before work rather than make you wait another ten hours. See I can be nice. :)

Sneak Peek chapter 21:

"Jace likes Clary?" Magnus asked. This was news to him. Magnus knew very little about Jace except the snoring and womanizing complains Alec had shared while they were friends.

"Jace freaking loves Clary," Alec corrected. "He is like a whole different person since he met her."

"That's so weird," Magnus laughed. "When I think about Jace all I can think of is you complaining about him."

"Yeah," Alec said. "We are kinda friends now. I know it's a bit strange but it turns out he's actually an okay guy."
Magnus's Embrace

Chapter Notes
See the end of the chapter for notes

Magnus was lying in Alec’s bed, his limbs tangled up with Alexander's, as their lips continued to dance together. Magnus wasn't sure how long they had remained snuggled up together on the small bed, but at some point Alec had pulled the covers over them. The fact they barely fit on the twin bed, at the moment, didn't seem to matter.

The floodgates were open now and there was no going back. He let someone in again and though he was still terrified of the whole prospect, Alec's kind words had lessened Magnus's fears somewhat. After all, Alec had been a kind friend, surely that meant he would be a kind boyfriend.

The word stopped Magnus's train of thought in its tracks.

"Alec," Magnus whispered breaking their kiss and pulling his hands out of Alec's soft hair to gaze into those blue eyes.

"Yeah," Alec said grinning. Alec's hands hadn't moved, they still rested on Magnus's back and neck. It was wonderfully warm snuggled up so close to someone in bed, with blankets over them. Their shoes lay discarded by the bed, but no other clothes had been tossed aside.

"What should I call you now?" Magnus asked. It was the most casual way of clarifying what they were to each other that he could think of.

"My name is Alec," he said, sleepily. Either Magnus's attempt had been far too subtle, or Alec was too tired to read between the lines.

"I know," Magnus chuckled. How could Alexander be so adorable? "But if we aren't going to be friends, then…" There was something holding him back from saying the word itself.

"Are you trying to initiate 'the talk'?" Alec asked grinning. "You string me along for months then after a half hour of kissing you want to get serious?"

"Sorry," Magnus mumbled, turning in Alec's arms to face away. He had moved slightly, as if to get out of the bed when Alec protested.

"Did I say you could leave?" Alec whined. "Come back." Magnus settled back down, but gave Alec a confused look.

"I was just teasing," Alec said as he snuggled in close again.

"Oh," Magnus said, though he was still half expecting Alec to be mad at him.

"It seems my boyfriend doesn't like to be teased," Alec said and Magnus couldn't resist kissing Alec fiercely. Alec responded with just as much enthusiasm and soon they were both breathing hard and so intertwined that Magnus was having a difficult time identifying which leg was his.

"Are you sure?" Magnus asked. "I know I was horrible to you and…"

Alec put a finger over Magnus's lips to stop him from speaking.

"You were worth the wait," Alec whispered into Magnus's ear.
"I was worried you wouldn't forgive me," Magnus whispered against the soft sheets. "That you wouldn't be willing to see me."

"Is that why you texted me?" Alec asked. Magnus nodded still not looking at Alec. He felt a hand under his chin as Alec raised his head to look into Alec's eyes. Magnus stared at those blue pools so alight with happiness. Alec had the most beautiful eyes Magnus had ever seen.

"You silly," Alec scoffed. "I was the one who couldn't be your friend remember? I was the one who left dramatically and hurt you."

"But I should have told you," Magnus said. "When I learned who Aline was, you looked at me with all that hope and I should have said something then at least… maybe explained… but I just couldn't face it… so I…"

"Laughed it off as a misunderstanding of no importance?" Alec supplied.

"Yeah," Magnus muttered.

"What finally changed your mind?" Alec asked. It was easier to talk about this with Alec's arms around him, while they were lying closely in bed together. There was a security to it. Alec's physical presence next to Magnus was wonderful. It was like the scars on his heart were old and long since healed. Magnus let himself relax into his boyfriend's arms before answering.

"I reacted badly when I saw you with the stupid blond," Magnus admitted. "I realized part way through class I was doodling different versions of his death on my notebook." Alec burst out laughing; Magnus felt the vibrations from Alec's chest reverberate through his own.

"You were jealous," Alec said as if speaking an impossibility. "That's so funny! Since I spent the whole time wishing you actually were jealous."

"Your wish is my command," Magnus purred as he kissed Alec sweetly. Alec's enthusiasm took the kiss further and it was several minutes before they came up for air.

"Why did you ask the blond out then?" Magnus asked after a moment. "I thought you were trying to move on since you thought I didn't feel the same."

"Jace was on my case to get a date," Alec replied. "And I'd just tried to talk to Clary, which didn't go well because she hates me. I was frustrated and decided I wanted you to see me move on even though I thought you wouldn't care."

"Sorry," Magnus said quickly. "And I'm sorry about Clary! She can be way too overprotective. You'd think I was her little brother or something."

"You're older than her," Alec reminded him.

"Yeah I know," Magnus chuckled. "No one has told her that though. She is such a hot head sometimes."

"Maybe that's why Jace likes her," Alec said absently. "You know, I could never figure out what all the fuss was about."

"Jace likes Clary?" Magnus asked. This was news to him. Magnus knew very little about Jace except the snoring and womanizing complaints Alec had shared while they were friends.

"Jace freaking loves Clary," Alec corrected. "He's like a whole different person since he met her."
"That's so weird," Magnus laughed. "When I think about Jace, all I can think of is you complaining about him."

"Yeah," Alec said. "We're kinda friends now. I know it's a bit strange, but it turns out he's actually an okay guy."

"Doesn't he snore?"

"Not anymore," Alec said. "He went to a clinic. I sleep great now."

"Wow," Magnus replied. "He really has changed... and you said this is all because of Clary?"

"Yep," Alec said.

"I can promise you that she has no idea," Magnus said.

"Oh I know," Alec said. "Jace told me what happened when he tried to tell her how he felt."

"And what happened?" Magnus asked more curious than he thought he'd be.

"Clary didn't tell you?"

"I suspect Clary didn't even register it as worth mentioning," Magnus said. "Silly clueless girl."

"Well, Jace said how he felt and Clary, thinking it was a line, brushed him off and proceeded to comfort you," Alec said. "Since I had just callously ended our friendship."

"Ah, so everything went down at once then," Magnus said. The reminder of that day made him pull Alec in just a little closer, suddenly craving more contact.

"So how is Clary?" Alec asked, responding to Magnus's tightened grip with affection. Alec's subtle reaction felt almost automatic and Magnus couldn't help but smile. "Do you think now that you're smiling she'll forgive me for upsetting you?"

"If she doesn't, I'll make her," Magnus grinned as he kissed Alec quickly on the lips. Alec, it seemed, was not satisfied with just a peck and pulled Magnus in for a proper kiss.

"You will huh," Alec said huskily as they broke apart.

"Yes," Magnus said. "It seems I'm quite good at it actually. I managed to get Will to talk to Tessa and Jem with nothing but a threatening text message." Magnus knew this because Tessa had texted him just hours after Will's arrival at their apartment to thank him for his interference.

"Why wasn't Will talking to her?" Alec asked. "I thought she was dating him?"

"She was, or rather is," Magnus said. "And Jem too. It's a little complicated."

"Sounds like it," Alec said. "Well, I liked her. When I met her she thought we were dating." He grinned goofily.

"At the time you weren't so giddy about it," Magnus reminded him.

"At the time I couldn't do this," Alec said and pulling Magnus in, kissed him again. He had to admit, Alec had a point. His lips were a little swollen, but Magnus didn't care.

"Hmm..." Magnus purred as Alec began to kiss his neck.
"Or this?" Alec whispered as he pulled up Magnus's shirt and started to kiss his chest.

"Alec," Magnus gasped as Alec's finger teased the soft skin at his waistline.

"Yeah," Alec whispered. He had a look of pure joy on his face. Magnus loved the feeling of knowing that it was him that made Alec look like this. Being with Magnus was the reason why Alec was grinning like a fool.

"The bed is rather too small for this," Magnus said grinning. Alec chuckled, nervously.

"I don't really know what I'm doing," Alec confessed.

"I beg to differ," Magnus replied, pulling Alec in close and running his fingers across the bare skin of Alec's arms.

"That's just cause it's you," Alec mumbled.

"Oh?" Magnus whispered curious what Alec meant.

"I've never been so attracted to someone before," Alec said, blushing deeply. "With you I just go on instinct."

"Well, your instincts are very good," Magnus said.

"Really?" Alec asked. He seemed genuinely happy for the obvious compliment.

"Yes," Magnus whispered as he settled down more comfortably into his boyfriend's arms. Boyfriend. That was going to take some getting used to.

"So," Alec said conversationally. "Clary is dating Simon right?" Magnus nodded. "But how much does she really like him?"

"I don't know," Magnus said. The day Clary had told him she'd decided to go out with Simon he'd asked he why and she'd said something vague about how he liked her. He hadn't thought it would last a week, let alone her entire senior year of high school, but Clary was nothing if not loyal.

"And you don't like Simon?" Alec asked tentatively reading between the lines.

"Simon's alright," Magnus said. "He's known Clary for ages and loved her basically as long as he's known her."

"But..." Alec encouraged him.

"But I don't think she loves him," Magnus said. "I mean she cares about him and I guess she loves him, but not the same way he loves her. She won't listen to me though."

"You don't like her with Simon?" Alec asked.

"I don't like her settling for Simon," Magnus corrected. "It would be all well and good if I thought she really loved him."

"Can I tell Jace this?" Alec asked. Magnus stiffened in Alec's arms, realizing he had just told Alec something private between himself and Clary.

"Sorry, Alec, but I don't think you can," Magnus said. "I forgot. When I'm around you I forget about a lot of things." He chuckled softly. "Didn't I tell you my life story when we first met?"
"Is that not normal?" Alec smiled. "I thought you were just chatty."

"I don't usually tell people I just met all about myself, no," Magnus said.

"Does that make me special?" Alec asked shyly.

"Yes, I rather think it does," Magnus smiled, then pulled Alec close to kiss him again. Magnus's mind went blank as he kissed Alec, feeling nothing but the moment and the man in bed with him. There was nothing weighing on his mind anymore and Magnus was perfectly happy to just lie here, kissing Alec.

The sound of Alec's phone vibrating threatened to pull Magnus out of his bliss. It faded and Magnus was once again lost in kissing his boyfriend when Alec's phone buzzed again.

"Alec," Magnus whispered as Alec's phone went off about four times in a single minute.

"Yeah," Alec mumbled kissing Magnus's jawline rather than give up contact to talk.

"Your phone is being needy," Magnus said smiling. Magnus thought about making a very possessive comment about how he wasn't willing to share Alec with his phone, but decided against it. Alec pulled away and looked at Magnus for a second, then turned in time to see his phone vibrate again. Reaching over, Alec picked it up and read his missed messages. He groaned.

"My sister," Alec complained. "Is spamming me."

"Whatever for?"

"Details," Alec said with air quotes.

"About?" Magnus asked.

"How us talking went," Alec said.

"How does she know I wanted to talk?" Magnus asked thinking it rather odd. To his surprise, Alec blushed.

"I've been kinda stressed out about what you wanted to talk about since I got your text," Alec confessed. "I may have told my family about it."

"Why were you stressed out?" Magnus asked, concerned. This had not been his intention.

"I wouldn't let myself hope that you had suddenly changed your mind," Alec said. "So every other possible thing you might want to say ran through my head."

"Alexander," Magnus whispered stroking his boyfriend's face gently. "I- I don't know what to say. I'm sorry."

"It's okay," Alec said cheerfully. "You're here now." He was smiling. Whatever pain Magnus had caused him seemed to be wiped away with the knowledge that Magnus wanted Alec the way Alec wanted Magnus. Magnus took comfort in this and decided to never again be the source of Alec's pain. Magnus smiled back at Alec with as much emotion as he could muster before he spoke.

"So you talked to your family and now your sister is spamming you for information?" Magnus summarized.

"Yeah," Alec said. "She is so nosy."
"May I?" Magnus asked holding out his hand to take the phone. Alec handed it over and Magnus read the most recently text.

'Alec if you don't tell me what is going on I shall call you next and keep calling until your phone either dies or you pick up.'

"Oh wow," Magnus laughed. "She is determined, isn't she?"

A rather wonderful idea occurred to Magnus and quickly, before Alec could stop him, Magnus hit the dial button under Izzy's name.

"Oh no, Magnus!" Alec exclaimed as Magnus brought the phone to his ear. "What are you doing?"

"Alec!" an excited female voice spoke the second the line connected.

"Not quite," Magnus said grinning. "But Alec is here if you want to talk to him."

"This must be Magnus!" Izzy squealed. "I knew it!"

"Hi," Magnus said. He turned to Alec who had his face covered with his arm though Magnus could make out a light blush colouring his skin. "It's nice to meet you."

"I knew you liked him too," Izzy squealed.

"I do," Magnus smiled. "But you haven't even met me. How could you come to such a conclusion when Alec didn't?"

"Oh, Alec has always been clueless," Izzy said. "And anyone with eyes couldn't resist my brother for long."

Magnus couldn't help but laugh; she made an excellent argument.

"Oh I believe we shall get on splendidly," Magnus told Izzy.

"Magnus get off the phone!" Alec complained. Magnus sat up trying to stay out of Alec's reach as he continued to talk to his boyfriend's sister.

"Oh I heard him," Izzy giggled in Magnus's hear. "Did you steal his phone?"

"I asked nicely," Magnus said grinning. Alec wasn't trying very hard to get his phone back, which made Magnus think he wasn't that upset. "And you were threatening to call him until his phone died."

"Reading his texts too I see," Izzy said slyly.

"Yep," Magnus said with a grin.

"Magnus," Alec whined. "This is weird."

"Oh how so?" Magnus inquired. "Can't a man talk to his boyfriend's sister?"

The echoing squeal in Magnus's ear told him Izzy had heard what he said. Magnus couldn't deny this had been his intention.

"Your sister wanted to talk to you," Magnus said grinning from ear to ear as he handed the phone over. Alec rolled his eyes as he took the phone and muttered something under his breath, but he
again didn't seem very upset. Magnus knew Alec was close with his family and had no secrets with them or he wouldn't have been so forward.

"Hey, Iz," Alec said, getting up out of bed and walking back and forth in the small room while on the phone. Magnus settled comfortably in Alec's bed as he watched Alec pace.

"Yes, Izzy this is very new," Alec said patiently to his sister. "I didn't not tell you or anything. We just talked about this literally minutes ago."

Magnus couldn't hear Izzy's reply and soon Alec was making excuses and saying goodbye to his sister.

"Yes I love you too," Alec said. "Bye, Iz!"

Alec hung up the phone and turned to glare at Magnus, who just chuckled.

"Come over here," Magnus said holding his arms out and with a sigh Alec returned and was encircled by Magnus's embrace.

"Izzy is very excited," Alec said, but he was grinning. "And I know you did that on purpose."

"Guilty," Magnus said.

"I bet she's telling my whole family as we speak," Alec sighed.

"Is that a bad thing?" Magnus asked.

Alec laughed. "No." He turned in Magnus's arms to smile and Magnus couldn't resist reaching out to stroke Alec's cheek.


"My Magnus," Alec whispered back as he kissed Magnus sweetly. Alec settled into his arms then and his breathing began to slow. Magnus gazed lovingly at his boyfriend as he fell asleep.

Chapter End Notes

Hehe happy does of Malec! Please please review! Cause honestly reviews are the most important part of this for me. If I got 20 views and 20 reviews I would be just as happy as if I got 200 views and 20 reviews. I think I was going to say more here but now I can't remember. sigh. oh well.

Check out chapter two of my new Malec story "Elusive Love" I updated that today as well. Cheers!

Sneak Peek
Jace opened the door to his dorm room and was about to turn to collapse on his bed when he did a double take. There were two people in Alec’s bed.

“Shhh!” Magnus whispered. “Alec’s sleeping.”
“What the heck?” Jace said shaking his head and rubbing his eyes as if that would dispel the illusion.

“Shhh!” Magnus said again more urgently.
Jace's Jealousy

Jace looked out the window as the telephone poles flew by. It had been so nice to be at home again with his mother's wonderful cooking, but Jace was surprised how glad he was to be going back to school. It had been too long since he'd seen Clary, though he knew this was a foolish way to think since seeing or not seeing the girl you wanted who also happened to have a boyfriend hardly mattered. Jace had missed Alec as well. It was strange, but Jace was actually worried about Alec since he hadn't texted once over the holidays.

"Jace?" Sebastian's voice tried to bring Jace's mind back to the present. "Jaaace."

"Yeah," Jace said absently.

"Stop thinking about that damn girl!" Sebastian said. "Please! This is starting to get ridiculous." Jace sighed. He was being ridiculous and he knew it. Clary barely knew he existed, let alone the effect she'd had on him.

"I can't help it," Jace whined.

"You know, the holidays are the most time I've spent with you lately," Sebastian complained.

"I know," Jace said. "Sorry, I've been busy."

"Yeah, with that girl," Sebastian grumbled. "Which at least makes a little sense, but the queer, really?"

"Alec's my friend," Jace said. "Please don't call him that," Sebastian stared at him, obviously shocked, and Jace realized this was the first time he had objected to any vulgar word Sebastian used.

"I just mean," Jace backtracked quickly from the look on his friends face. "I know you don't mean to be rude, but some people don't like being called that."

"Huh," Sebastian scoffed but he gave Jace a strange looked that Jace couldn't place. Sebastian didn't say anything else, so Jace turned to look out the window again. The thin layer of snow the covered everything in sight looked like sugar icing, the kind that would rest atop a freshly frosted cake. Jace zoned out as he made note of the cars that went by. There was a bright yellow car that caught Jace's attention because of the particular way it stood out against the white and green of the passing trees. Of course, once Jace spotted a red car, his mind jumped to Clary's red hair. He groaned and laid his head on the side of his seat, closing his eyes.

Alec's plan had been to have Jace show Clary he'd changed, to show her he cared, but even helping out that stupid boyfriend of hers hadn't placed him on Clary's radar. In fact, Jace suspected Clary noticed Alec more just for friend-dumping Magnus.

Jace's thoughts of Clary kept his mind going round in circles until the bus stopped at the school. Jace grabbed his rucksack and left the bus, with Sebastian right behind him.

"Classes don't start till Monday," Sebastian said with a grin. "You wanna hit the bar?"

"I really don't," Jace replied, hoping Sebastian would leave it at that, but Sebastian whirled to face
him, annoyed.

"At this rate I will have to find a new wingman," Sebastian accused him. "You always turn me down."

"Why is that all you ever want to do?" Jace asked, his voice rising. They were barely standing on the campus ground, having stopped on the sprawling front lawn of the university.

"Cause that's what we do," Sebastian said as if stating a foregone conclusion, like that the sky was blue.

"Well it's not what I do anymore, okay," Jace said with a sigh, all his anger spent. He hated fighting with Sebastian.

"No, not okay,' Sebastian said. "Who the hell are you and what have you done with my best friend?"

And with that he turned and headed toward the dorms at a brisk pace, without even a backward glance.

Jace now felt even worse than he had on the bus. Trudging through the thin layer of snow, Jace headed to his dorm. Thanks to Clary, he couldn't go back to his old life, and thanks to his old life he wasn't appealing to Clary… oh that and the boyfriend. Minor detail. Jace laughed to himself at how foolish his one way affection was. Even if she was single he wouldn't have a hope in hell.

What did that leave him with? Wrestling? Classes? Abstinence? Friends? Sebastian had been Jace's only friend for as long as he could remember. Then there was Alec. Jace was pretty sure he had a friend in Alec, despite their friendship being so new, but Jace had known Sebastian all his life. You don't give up on a friend like that without a fight. Sebastian probably just needed to cool off.

Jace opened the door to his dorm room and was about to turn to collapse on his bed when he did a double take. There were two people in Alec's bed.

"Shhh!" Magnus whispered. "Alec's sleeping."

"What the heck?" Jace said shaking his head and rubbing his eyes as if that would dispel the illusion.

"Shhh!" Magnus said again more urgently.

Jace didn't reply, but merely stared at the impossible sight before him. He thought Magnus didn't like Alec, at least not romantically. Jace and Alec had bonded in the first place over their mutually destructive, one-way romantic interest problems and yet here Alec was sleeping with his head in Magnus's lap!

"Magnus?" Alec mumbled, stirring.

"See," Magnus said glaring at Jace. "You woke him up."

"Oh, uh hi, Jace," Alec said going slightly pink in the face. Then he turned to Magnus with affection in his eyes. "How long was I asleep?"

"Just long enough to help with that jet lag I think," Magnus said. Alec tried to sit up but almost fell out of the bed. Jace exercised extreme self-control by not laughing. Though the shock at seeing them all snuggled up like a couple was helping him keep his laughter in check quite effectively.

"This bed is too small," Alec complained.
"You know," Magnus said slyly. "My bed is bigger."

Alec blushed even more; Jace really didn't want to be here anymore, but this was his dorm!

Then a thought occurred to him; this was what it was like to be on the other side of such an intimate moment. Jace remembered just four months ago when Alec had walked in on him and that woman with short black hair. At the time he'd thought Alec had overreacted, but right now he was starting to realize Alec had actually been rather civil given the circumstances.

Alec mumbled something and Magnus smiled at him with a surreal expression; suddenly Jace was so jealous of them he couldn't think straight! Magnus stoked Alec's cheek and Jace thought, how dare they be happy!

"No pressure darling," Magnus winked at Alec. "Just a fact. How you manage to sleep on a twin I don't know."

"For one person a twin bed is a normal sized bed," Alec argued. Jace was started to think they had forgotten he was there.

"Hello!" Jace yelled and they both stopped making googly eyes at each other and turned to face him.

"Sorry, Jace!" Alec said but he was grinning. "Though in all fairness I did owe you." He laughed and the sound was too full of happiness for Jace's liking.

"Sock on the door next time," Jace said trying to be a little less of a hypocrite.

"Oh please," Magnus scoffed. "Cuddling fully clothed does not require a warning."

Jace growled as he turned to his side of the room and set down his rucksack.

"Maybe you should go," Alec said. "But I'll see you later."

"You better," Magnus replied kindly. "Or I shall hunt you down." Jace heard kissing noises and resolutely stared at the opposite wall. When the smooching noises finally ended he heard the door open and close, then decided it was safe to turn around.

"So," Jace said trying not to sound bitter. "You clearly had an interesting holiday."

"Yeah," Alec said blushing again. Jace had never seen Alec blush so deeply before. He was positively tickled pink.

"Turns out Magnus wants me the way I want him," Alec said. "Isn't it grand!" Alec was all but spinning in circles for joy and Jace suddenly felt like he was very far away.

"Then why wait two months to tell you?" Jace grumbled.

"He was scared," Alec said. "People keep breaking his heart, but I shall not!" He laughed and the sound reminded Jace of a bird freed from a cage, which made him, if anything, more sour.

"Fantastic," Jace said with as much sarcasm as he could muster.

"What's wrong?" Alec asked. "Did something happen over the holidays?"

"I-" Jace didn't want to tell Alec he couldn't be happy for him. He didn't want to admit to his jealousy. "Just missed Clary is all."
"You know," Alec said with a glint in his eye Jace had to attribute to requited love. "I think you should just go for it!"

"What are you talking about?" Jace sighed.

"Clary, of course," Alec said. "Show her how you feel and sweep her off her feet!" Alec made a grand sweeping gesture with his arm then fell gradually onto his bed like sleeping freaking beauty. Jace was just about to be even more annoyed when a hopeful thought occurred to him.

"I just caught you snuggling with Clary's best friend," Jace said. "Is there something you know that I don't?"

"Nope," Alec said. "I just think you will regret it if you don't try. She's all you talk about you know." That, Jace was well aware of. That was the reason Sebastian was mad at him.

"Thanks for the reminder," Jace growled.

"Whoa, what's with the hostility?" Alec asked.

"Nothing," Jace said. "Go explore Magnus's bed. I am sure you would rather be there than here with me."

"You know what," Alec shot back. "Maybe I will. See you later Jace." And Alec left. Just like that, Alec walked out of the room and closed the door behind him. Jace could imagine only too well Alec running down the hall to catch up with Magnus, the two of them embracing before Alec told Magnus all about his bitter, single, jerk of a roommate who had yelled at him.

Jace felt beyond pathetic. No wonder he had no friends. He couldn't even be happy that his friend was happy. Jace got out his phone and texted Sebastian.

'You still want to go to the bar tonight?' Jace texted.

'Yes!' was the quick reply.

A few hours later, Jace met up with Sebastian and together they headed to the bar. Jace still wasn't in the mood for this, but it would make Sebastian happy at least. Jace had already failed one of his friends today, he really didn't want to fail them both.

"What changed your mind?" Sebastian asked as they reached their destination.

"I've been a bad wingman lately," Jace replied rather than give a true answer.

"All is forgiven," Sebastian said with a grin. They took a seat at the bar together and Sebastian started checking out the room. "Oh! How about the redhead in the corner?"

Jace looked and sure enough there was a woman with red hair in corner sipping a long island iced tea. Though, if he was honest, he couldn't really call her hair red. It had too much brown in it to be truly red. Clary's hair was bright, fire red.

"No," Jace said firmly. He tried to look around for someone Sebastian would like enough to allow him to simply sit and sulk while Sebastian was off enjoying himself. "What about the blonde on the other side of the bar?"

"Tonight we are focusing on you," Sebastian said. "Cause buddy, you need it. You look miserable."

"I am," Jace said. "But trust me, sex with a stranger is not going to help."
"That's just because it's been a while," Sebastian replied, totally not listening to Jace.

"No, really," Jace tried again. "I came out tonight for you, not me."

Sebastian's shoulders slumped and he turned to face Jace.

"Is this still only about the redhead with the boyfriend?" Sebastian asked.

"No," Jace confessed. "It's also… Alec."

"Really!" Sebastian whined. "I thought we covered this already."

"He's happy," Jace explained. "And I realized something. We started being friends because we were both miserable." Jace paused trying to get himself to admit what he had yet to say out loud. "What if all we had in common was our mutually failed love life?"

"That was definitely all you had in common," Sebastian said. "Unless you suddenly want to suck my cock?"

"Eww!" Jace said hitting his friend lightly across the shoulder.

"That's more like it," Sebastian laughed. "Now, will you please help me pick out your date for the evening?"

Jace played along with Sebastian's plans, letting Sebastian pair him up with a rather lovely brunette with red highlights while he went off with the blonde Jace has suggested earlier, for the singular reason that her clothes just screamed 'daddy issues.'

"So," the brunette said. "I live around the corner." There was nothing remotely interesting about this girl. With Trinity, Jace had seen more intelligence in her eyes than lust, but this girl was looking at Jace like a slab of meat and nothing more.

"I'm not in the mood tonight," Jace said.

"Oh, come on," the girl continued. "You're friend said-"

"My friend lied," Jace said. The girl seemed to have no regards for personal space and moved very close to him, running her finger over his bicep.

"Aren't you at least a little tempted," she whispered. Jace was amazed how uninterested in her he was. There was nothing but lust in her eyes. Jace remembered the looks on Alec and Magnus's faces when he'd caught them… cuddling. They hadn't even been doing anything! Not that Jace had the slightest clue how that worked, nor did he want to know, but the affection in their gaze had been new to him. He'd never seen two people look at each other like that. His mother had never introduced him to a boyfriend who elicited that look in her eyes and Sebastian had certainly never looked at a woman like that. The only thing he could compare it to was how he looked at Clary.

And suddenly, Jace missed Clary more than ever before. He wanted her to look at him the way Magnus looked at Alec.

Jace pulled away from the horny brunette, paid for his drink and left. Sebastian would think he left with the girl and that was fine by him.
Sorry for the slow update guys! I had a major re-thinking of plot layout and chapter order! You were all right when you mentioned my lack of Clace! I was favouring Malec cause I usually write Malec. This is the first Clace or Tessa plot I have ever done but my 3rd major Malec story. I also have Malec one-shots and my new Malec story 'Elusive Love' that I am currently updating.... so yeah.... obviously I have a bias. Sorry!!!!

Thanks for reminding me to stay true to this story and keep the plots equal. After all this whole story was inspired by me thinking 'hmmmm how could I really mess with Clace... oh I know Jace is a player and Clary's with Simon.' No really that was basically the whole idea that started this story. Then I just kept writing and before I knew it... other plots showed up. :)

Oh and I am SO GLAD I kept this story M rated now. What the hell was I thinking? lol. Definitely needs to be rated M. I did alot of future chapter planning this week so that's why I uploaded so few chapters. I may have a rather intense scene planned but I will put a warning at the top of the chapter if and when it shows up. My beta and my other writers friends have mixed feeling about this scene I have planned so we shall see how it plays out. Either way M rated... good.

Sneak Peek Chapter 23

"Magnus hasn't texted me," Clary told Simon. They had just gotten on the plane and Clary was reminded, when turning off her phone, of her lack of messages.

"I'm sure he's fine," Simon replied.

"He didn't seem fine during exams," Clary said. "He seemed numb."

"Maybe the holidays helped bring feeling back into his limbs?" Simon suggested.

"I hope so," Clary said with a sigh as she laid her head on her boyfriend's shoulder. Simon's hand found hers and he held it while they listened to the pre-flight instructions. It was a short flight but it was so much better than taking the bus.
Clary's Surprise

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes.

Clary sat in her living room with Simon beside her and a Christmas tree on her other side. She had her head resting on Simon’s shoulder while she listened to her parents and brother in the kitchen.

“But, mom!” Jonathan was complaining. “I don’t like university. I want to do something else with my life.”

“You are so close to graduating dear!” Jocelyn replied. “Why not just finish?”

“Your mother is right,” Luke chimed in.

“You can’t make me stay in school,” Jonathan said. Her brother looked nothing like her, with fair hair and strong features. Jocelyn said he resembled their father, which the few pictures of him Clary had seen seemed to confirm.

“We are just trying to help you make the right decision,” Jocelyn’s voice carried through to the living room.

With a sigh, Clary got up and followed the sounds of her family fighting until she stood in the center of it all.

“Stop,” she said very firmly, her hands held out, palms out toward her brother and parents respectively.

“Back me up, Care!” Jon said. He had started calling her Care when she was little and somehow Clary had never managed to shake the baby name even as a teenager.


“Thanks, Care!” Jon said beaming at her. Clary gave very meaningful looks to both her parents before grinning at her brother.
“Anytime,” Clary replied as she dragged her brother away from her parents and back into the living room. “Though next time save your ‘I’m leaving school to find myself’ announcement until after the turkey.”

Jon laughed and her semi-perfect family Christmas picked up right where it had left off, though her parents were still a little stiff. Since Hanukkah was before Simon always spent Christmas with her family.

Clary spent as much time over the holidays with Jon as she could since she wouldn’t see him again till the summer and then only if he was at home. Since they talked a lot about his plans to backpack through Europe with his girlfriend, she doubted she’d see much of him even then. Clary couldn’t help but think the trip would be good for him. She was sure he’d finish his degree eventually. He just needed a break.

Aside from spending time with her brother, Clary couldn’t say her holidays were terribly eventful. She kissed Simon at midnight on New Year’s, or rather, the Lewis family Christmas and before long they were headed back to school.

“Magnus hasn’t texted me,” Clary told Simon. They had just gotten on the plane and Clary was reminded, when turning off her phone, of her lack of messages.

“I’m sure he’s fine,” Simon replied.

“He didn’t seem fine during exams,” Clary said. “He seemed numb.”

“Maybe the holidays helped bring feeling back into his limbs?” Simon suggested.

“I hope so,” Clary said with a sigh as she laid her head on her boyfriend’s shoulder. Simon’s hand found hers and he held it while they listened to the pre-flight instructions. It was a short flight, but it was so much better than taking the bus.

She listened to Simon talk quickly about his band and his sister while the plane moved through the air. Clary tried to reply but her head was literally in the clouds as she gazed out the window. The view from above was stunning. She wanted nothing more than to paint it. Clary turned her phone back on and switched it to airplane mode so she could take pictures to paint later. As they approached their destination and the ground got closer, Clary took more pictures where the cars looked like wind-up toys and the buildings like dollhouses.
When they landed, Clary wasn’t expecting anyone to meet them at the baggage line. They had planned to take the shuttle into town then the bus back to school. Consequently, Clary was very surprised to get off the plane and be greeted by a grinning Magnus. Though thrilled to see her friend so happy, Clary was at a loss as to why until she saw Alec standing beside Magnus with an equally joyful expression.

“What did I miss?” Clary asked beaming at them both.

“Oh, does this mean you don’t hate me anymore?” Alec asked.

“I hated that Magnus was upset and blamed you,” Clary said. “I never hated you.”

“Ha!” Alec scoffed but the remark didn’t lessen the glee on his face. Clary had to admit she hadn’t liked Alec while Magnus was miserable because of his behaviour, but she hadn’t known Alec well enough to hate him either.

“What are you doing here?” Clary asked.

“Well, Alec and I sorted a few things out,” Magnus began. “Then, to my delight, Alec didn’t need to hang out with Jace and came to find me!”

“Then you told me Clary’s plane was landing soon,” Alec finished Magnus’s story for him. “And I said we should meet her at the airport.”

“What is it that you sorted out?” Clary asked. Alec blushed a slight pink, but reached out and grabbed Magnus’s hand.

“I’ve given up my ‘I’m done dating’ thing,” Magnus said beaming at her. “And my boyfriend is rather happy about it.”

“That’s great!” Clary said pulling Magnus into a one armed hug. She only had one arm free since Simon wasn’t willing to let go of her hand, which was funny since Alec apparently wasn’t willing to release Magnus’s hand either. Unable to hug properly, they made do.

“It is,” Magnus smiled. “Oh Clary!” he said looking over her shoulder at the baggage moving down the line. “I think I spy your suitcase.”

Clary turned to discover that Magnus was right. She collected her luggage and then spotted Simon’s.

“Did you guys take the shuttle here?” Clary asked as they were all leaving the airport. Magnus didn’t answer but grinned in a mischievous way. Sure enough, Magnus led her not to the shuttle pick-up spot, but to a vehicle she had never seen before.
“Whose car did you steal?” Clary asked dubious.

“I’m shocked!” Magnus said in fake horror. “How could you think such so low of me?”

“I know you,” Clary replied shaking her head at the blue pickup truck in front of her. It was generously sized with shiny chrome accents and an extended cab that held a second set of doors that would seat the group comfortably. Clary eyed the plush interior. This was so much better than the shuttle and she was already imagining sinking into the upholstery after the long flight when Magnus’ voice cut through her thoughts.

“Who wants to drive?” Magnus asked holding up the keys.

“Now I’m sure you stole this,” Clary accused him. “You don’t want to be culpable.”

“Oh please!” Magnus scoffed. “I drove it here.”

“Why not drive it back then?” Clary shot back.

“Well,” Magnus said with a grin. He leaned closer to Alec who blushed brilliantly but leaned in as well. “It’s so much harder to snuggle in the driver’s seat.”

Clary just stared at them. She blinked a few times trying to make sure this was indeed, Magnus Bane, her best friend, standing before her completely smitten. He had been miserable for so long she almost forgot how annoying he was when he was happy. With a sigh, Clary made to grab the keys but Simon beat her to it.

“Mine!” Simon said. “This truck looks awesome!”

So Simon got in the front seat, Magnus and Alec snuggled up in the back like they promised and Clary sat in the passenger’s side. During the drive Clary made a careful study of her best friend, using the rear view mirror. Alec has his head on Magnus’s shoulder, their hands intertwined on Magnus’s lap. Clary was astonished when she found herself thinking she had never seen Magnus this happy with anyone before. There was a peaceful glow about the two of them that had Clary mesmerized.

“So how new is this?” Clary asked, gesturing as best she could from the front seat to Magnus and Alec. Magnus had to dislodge Alec’s shoulder to dig into his pocket in order to check his phone, presumably for the time then looked up at Clary. Alec grumbled as he expressed his dislike of no longer being so close to Magnus.
“About five hours,” he said with a grin. Alec took the opportunity to get close to Magnus again. Magnus pulled Alec against his chest automatically before putting his phone in his other pocket.

“That explains the extreme couple-ness,” Clary chuckled.

“Yeah, Magnus,” Simon called from the front. “Once you guys are old and boring like Clary and I, you won’t be so annoying to hang out with.” He made fake gagging noises as if choking on something. Clary rolled her eyes at Simon’s teasing.

“Humph!” Magnus said. “Just because you guys are stale doesn’t mean we will ever be.” Alec was blushing again, but he didn’t seem to disagree with his boyfriend either. Clary couldn’t help laughing at the whole situation.

“What’s so funny?” Magnus scoffed.

“It’s like you’re a whole new person,” Clary answered. “I was getting so used to sad, mopey Magnus, I forgot what sickly-sweet, happy Magnus is like.” This time Magnus chuckled right along with her while Alec blushed crimson.

When they reached town, Magnus directed Simon to his place while Clary continued to wonder whose car she was in since Magnus still hadn’t told her. When Simon pulled into the driveway, everyone got out.

When Clary entered Magnus’s apartment she saw a man with Tessa she’d never seen before; a man who actually looked quite a bit like Alec. He had the same hair and eyes, but was slightly shorter than Alec. There was something different in the way he stood and some other small details in this face, but overall the resemblance was uncanny.

“I don’t think you’ve met Will,” Magnus said to Clary.

“Oh, Will,” Clary said smiling at him. “I’ve heard a lot about you.”

“And I you,” Will answered. Will was sitting on the couch with his arm around Tessa; she was leaning into him as if completely comfortable and content to be in his arms. “What did you think of my truck?”
“Oh it was your truck!” Clary exclaimed, relieved.

“Yep. She’s my baby, my Ford F150 king cab,” Will said beaming.

“I don’t know much about cars,” Simon said appearing as Clary heard the front door close. “But I loved your truck. It handles like a dream.”

“Thanks,” Will said. It had been a long while since Clary had seen Magnus’s apartment so full. Magnus and Alec were snuggled up together in the big chair opposite the tv. Tessa and Will hadn’t moved since everyone had barged in and were still nestled together in the center of the couch. Clary sat on the other end of the couch while Simon took the only other empty chair.

“At this rate,” Simon laughed. “You are going to need more furniture Magnus.”

“I have to admit,” Will said after a moment. “I understand why you thought I was him.” Will gestured to Alec. “The resemblance is striking!”

“You’re shorter,” Alec mumbled his head still tucked under Magnus’s shoulder. Will chuckled but didn’t reply.

“Oh, that reminds me,” Tessa said sitting up a little straighter. “Alec! Jace is related to Will.”

“Jace’s dad is my uncle,” Will stated simply. “Oh, and would you ask Jace something for me?” Alec nodded, looking confused. “Ask him why his mom let him keep the Herondale name.”

“What do you mean?” Alec asked, also sitting up a little to engage in the conversation. Clary noted Magnus’s pout at this and couldn’t help but smile. It was so good to see her friend happy again!

“Well, his father abandoned them when Jace was just a baby,” Will explained. “So I always figured he’d get his mother’s maiden named, Montclaire.”

“Oh, Jace never mentioned,” Alec said. “Sure, I’ll ask.”

“It isn’t morbid,” Tessa told him, stroking his face. “He’s your family after all.”

“Family isn’t my thing,” Will reminded her. “You know that.” Tessa sighed and Clary sensed an argument on the tip of Tessa’s tongue, but she didn’t speak up in front of so many people.

“So where is Jem?” Magnus asked.

“It’s my day!” Will said with a grin. “Jem gets her tomorrow.”

“Sometimes I feel like a toy being passed around,” Tessa sighed.

“This was your silly idea,” Will reminded her.

“I know,” Tessa smiled.

“I couldn’t do it!” Magnus said, invading their conversation. “I couldn’t even handle seeing Alec on a date with that stupid blonde without freaking out. I don’t share.”

“Ethan,” Alec corrected. “And it was barely a date.”

“I’m a very jealous man,” Magnus grinned as he leaned in and kissed Alec. Clary averted her eyes, trying to give them the privacy they obviously didn’t value.

“Enough of that!” Will complained. “Geez! Get a room!”

“This is my apartment,” Magnus reminded Will.

“Yes and you’re making out with my doppelganger,” Will said. “It’s weird.”

“Why do you guys look so much alike?” Simon asked. Alec detaching himself from Magnus who had managed to capture his lips again, to turn and listen to Will’s reply. Clary was in agreement with Will at this point; those two needed alone time.
“We did the family tree check already when you guys came to get my truck,” Will explained. “No matches so we’re not related. Just one of life’s little quirks I guess.”

“Mysteries of the universe,” Magnus added, his starry gaze fixed on Alec. Clary was suddenly worried. If she had never seen Magnus this happy before, then she was sure it would be even worse if Alec broke Magnus’s heart like the others had done. She would be forced to see her friend more miserable than ever before. She wanted to pull Alec aside and talk to him, but couldn’t seem to find an opportunity right now. Magnus’ love-struck gaze soon shifted to another session of making out. Alec was obviously embarrassed, but he didn’t object either. Clary’s worries were slightly relieved by this. Alec must care if he would rather be embarrassed by Magnus’s public displays of affection than refuse him something as simple as a kiss. Clary still looked away though, trying to afford them some degree of privacy. They were so tangled up that the one person chair seemed to be all the space they needed.

“Room!” Will said pointing to Magnus’s bedroom door. “You. Now!” Magnus chuckled, but got up off the chair and pulled Alec by the hand. Alec followed looking down at the floor, his cheeks red.

“Oh good god!” Will exclaimed as the door closed behind them. “We aren’t that bad, are we?”

“No,” Tessa chuckled at him.

“Magnus said they just got together a few hours ago,” Clary tried to defend her friend.

“That I believe,” Will said shaking his head.

“Is there room for me on the couch?” Simon asked as he got up. “Unless you think both of us can fit in that chair?” He grinned at her and Clary forced a smile back.

Simon sat beside her and Clary let him hold her although after seeing Magnus and Alec’s obvious chemistry she couldn’t help but wonder why she and Simon were so different. She’d been with Simon for almost a year and a half now and yet the couple that was only five hours old seemed somehow more complete. Clary just couldn’t quite put her finger on why, but she couldn’t shake the feeling that something was missing.
What should I say this time? Well its midnight and I have to get up for work in like seven hours but I decided to update anyway like a crazy person. Didn't write much this weekend cause brain failed but hope to write more during the week. Anyway please review and tell me what you think! Reviews keep me writing! If this brain fail lasted I am gonna be sad. I usually write chapters faster than this one. sigh.

Also the next chapter is currently not much longer than the sneak peak below. As I said didn't write much this weekend.

Sneak Peek Chapter 23

"I know you didn't go home with lusty last night," Sebastian whispered into his ear. Jace jumped; he known Sebastian was there of course but thought his ditching the other night had gone unnoticed. He turned giving his friend a confused look.

"I ran into her on my way out of the bar," Sebastian explained. "I thought maybe you found someone else but no here you are starting at that stupid redhead again!"

"Her name is Clary," Jace ground out through his teeth. Sebastian didn't reply as the teacher turned around and gave them a look but Jace knew he was in for an earful when class ended.
Jace once again found himself sitting in class watching the back of Clary's head. Like usual, Simon was sitting beside her. Jace wasn't listening to the teacher. He'd just barely passed the last class he'd had with Clary and he was sure this one would be no different. He couldn't think with her there.

"I know you didn't go home with lusty," Sebastian whispered into his ear. Jace jumped; he had known Sebastian was there, of course having arrived to class with him, but Jace thought his ditching the other night had gone unnoticed. He turned giving his friend a confused and hopefully innocent look.

"I ran into her on my way out of the bar," Sebastian explained. "I thought maybe you found someone else, but no, here you are staring at that stupid redhead again!"

"Her name is Clary," Jace ground out through his teeth. Sebastian didn't reply since the teacher turned around and gave them a reproachful look, but Jace knew he was in for an earful when class ended.

And sure enough, the second the teacher dismissed them, Sebastian started talking again.

"This is bordering on insane, my crazy friend," Sebastian was saying as they left the classroom together. Jace didn't reply. "She doesn't want you. She has a boyfriend. She isn't even close to hot enough to be worth half of your wallowing!"

Jace could have given Sebastian a very detailed description of how very attractive Clary was, but he sensed that wouldn't help the situation.

"Sure at first it was kinda funny," Sebastian complained. "I was even willing to laugh at you after a few weeks, but the joke is so old now, Jace! I hoped Christmas would knock some sense into you." Jace sighed, but had nothing to add as they entered the cafeteria and started eating lunch.

"But no, we returned from your mother's wonderful Christmas dinner to find you still staring at the same god damn girl!" Sebastian's monologue was becoming background noise to Jace's lack of enthusiasm about his lunch. Jace couldn't help but feel small while Sebastian schooled him. "And worse, you keep ditching me and not even to do something else. You just sit and wallow. It's not good for you Jace."

"I know," Jace said.

"You can't keep fighting with yourself like this," Sebastian exclaimed. "Either take her or drop her." Jace sensed that with this last declaration, Sebastian was finished with his speech.

"You done?" Jace asked.

"For now," Sebastian replied.

"I have wrestling practice in a while, but do you want to hit the gym first?" Jace asked. He decided to not talk to Sebastian about Clary anymore. He knew nothing could change the fact that Jace wanted Clary - he didn't even see other woman anymore - and Sebastian didn't want to hear that. But Jace also knew he had failed to get her to notice him. He wished he could move on, but even the
Sebastian agreed and they spent an enjoyable hour at the gym before Jace went to practice. All the exercise had Jace's mind calm and relaxed when he arrived back at his dorm room.

But once Jace arrived, the anxiety returned. Inwardly he prayed Magnus wasn't there as he opened the door. He didn't want to be faced with a happy couple at the moment, but the room was empty.

Collapsing on his bed with a sigh, Jace let his fears and insecurities consume him. Sebastian's lecturing and Alec's absence were the final straw on top of his ridiculous Clary obsession to make Jace never want to get out of bed again. Alec was either done with him or too busy to hang out.

Clary still didn't know he existed, let alone cared, and Sebastian didn't understand him. It was a strange feeling, to have the person you thought you were closest to in the world suddenly be the one on the outside. Jace had never felt so alone before. He did the reading for his class tomorrow, curled up in bed and wasted some time on the internet before falling asleep early, hoping Alec would be home tomorrow.

Jace awoke abruptly to an extremely loud sudden blaring noise. Confused, Jace checked his phone; it was two o'clock in the morning. Unfortunately, this was not the first time this happened in the dorms though it had been a while since last time. One more semester, Jace thought. Then he was getting a place off campus, far away from randomly occurring fire alarms. Jace almost contemplated simply staying in bed and ignoring the alarm. To hell with the consequences! After all, there probably wasn't an actual fire since every alarm so far had been a false one. Jace groaned and tried to cover his ears with his pillow.

"Jace!" Alec's voice cut through Jace's denial. He looked up and was surprised to see Alec.

"But you slept at Magnus's," Jace stated loudly over the blaring noise. "How are you here?"

"I got home around ten," Alec yelled. "But you were fast asleep already." They gave up conversation at that point rather than yell over the siren. Grabbing his back leather jacket, Jace headed outside with Alec right behind him, passing bright flashing lights as they moved through the halls. Jace exited the building and moved away with the other half-awake dorm residents as they spanned out over the lawn. It wasn't really that cold out, but it wasn't exactly warm either and most people had brought jackets. One student was even wearing a scarf and mittens. Jace couldn't see Sebastian anywhere and guessed he was at the bar despite the late hour.

"At least the noise isn't so bad here," Alec sighed as they found a random piece of lawn to stand on.

"Yeah I guess," Jace sulked.

"Are you okay?" Alec asked.

"Whatever," Jace mumbled, like Alec really cared.

"I'll take that as a no," Alec replied. "What's wrong?"


"How is my friend being upset not my problem?" Alec asked. Jace stared at Alec for a moment. The casual nature of the remark had thrown him off.

"Are we still friends?" Jace asked softly.

"Odd question," Alec mused, giving Jace a strange look. "Did I miss a de-friending memo?"
"I mean…" Jace started, but he didn't know how to phrase his worries now. Eventually he settled for mumbling, "You and Magnus." Alec laughed.

"My relationship status has nothing to do with who my friends are," Alec chuckled. "What got you so worried?"

"Sebastian," Jace mumbled.

"Ah," Alec said knowingly. "I have to say I am not surprised."

"Why would you say that?"

"I think he's jealous you're making more friends," Alec said. "Though I am sorry I've been less available lately."

"It's okay," Jace mumbled. "I have to confess, if I'd suddenly started dating Clary I would have ignored you too." He smiled and it felt good.

"Speaking of Clary!" Alec said grinning at him and pointing to a spot behind Jace. "Look!" Jace spun round and a shock of red hair caught his attention instantly. "Go talk to her!"

"Ah, no," Jace said.

"Why not?" Alec argued.

"She'll just reject me again and I don't think I can take that today."

"Jace," Alec said kindly with a hand on Jace's shoulder. "Simon isn't with her. You aren't going to get another chance like this. Go. Talk. To. Her."

Jace couldn't help but smile. Alec was the same, despite this new found happiness. Alec was still his friend. Jace nodded then turned, walking toward Clary. As he walked he tried to think of something to say, but his mind was strangely blank. She was standing alone near an aspen tree staring off at the soccer field in the distance. Jace suspected she was thinking of how to capture the image on canvas later. She was so beautiful standing there in the moonlight in her pajamas. Clary wasn't wearing a jacket. She had her arms wrapped around her, but she was shivering.

"Clary," he called softly as he approached her.

"Oh hi Jace," Clary said turning around to greet him with a casual smile. Her pajamas were thin and silky and in no way warm. Now, standing closer, he see she was even colder than he'd originally thought.

"Here," Jace said quickly shrugging off his jacket and putting it around her shoulders. This action, though small, felt momentous. He realized he'd never touched her before and even the slightest contact sent electricity through him. Oh god, how he wanted to take her in his arms.

"Thanks," Clary mumbled as Jace took a half a step back, not wanted to crowd her.

"Of course," Jace said quickly.

"Whoever pulled that alarm this time," Clary grumbled. "Should spend the night sleeping outside." Jace laughed lightly. She was somehow cuter when she was mad. "A just punishment don't ya think?"

"Where's Simon?" Jace asked unable to fend off the feeling of hope that his absence meant
"He wasn't in the dorms tonight," Clary said. "He crashed at his friends place after band practice."

"I see," Jace said, disappointed despite the knowledge that he had no real reason to be hopeful in the first place.

"By the way, thanks for helping him with that roommate situation," Clary said with a smile. She wasn't shivering like before and Jace loved the feeling of knowing his presence and small gesture meant she wasn't cold any longer. "I tried for ages to get Simon to stand up for himself, but he didn't want to be a bother." She sighed.

"Would you believe me if I said I did it for you?" Jace said with as much real emotion as he could muster. This was why he'd tried to change after all. Showing Clary, making her believe him at the very least even if she never wanted him in a romantic capacity. She was rarely alone and Jace had never before had the opportunity to talk to her alone. Although they weren't that alone since Alec could still see them from where he stood closer to the dorm building. There were also other students milling about waiting for the all clear to go back inside to the warmth of their beds.

Jace's focus was on Clary as she turned to look him directly in the eye. Her expression showed surprise, but no disbelieve this time. And suddenly everything that had happened over the last months had been worth it. All the fights with Sebastian and all the stress and anxiety was nothing if Clary believed him. She still hadn't spoken so Jace plunged forward, blessing the fire alarm and Alec's encouragement for this chance.

"When I talked to you last November," Jace said. "I meant every word, though I understand why you thought I didn't."

"I don't know what to say," Clary finally spoke.

"Say you believe me," Jace said, taking a step closer to her. For the first time she was looking at him, not through him, and Jace couldn't believe the soaring feelings it created within him. "Say you believe that I care about you."

"I believe you," Clary whispered. She wasn't backing away and Jace couldn't help but be drawn toward her.

"Thank you," Jace replied. He was so close to her now, his heart pounding. He reached out to her, ready to stop at the slightest sign from her, but rather than pull away she moved just that fraction closer. Jace's hand found hers, his other hand on her hip as he leaned in.

"Oh great!" a familiar voice cut through the moment and they separated very quickly. Jace couldn't quite believe what had just almost happened. He'd been a breath away from kissing Clary.

"That isn't getting over the wench," Sebastian's voice rang out. Jace turned and quickly noted how drunk Sebastian was. Sebastian had his hand out pointing rather rudely at Clary, but he was swaying rather than walking as he moved closer. He looked about to fall over.

"You're drunk," Jace told him. "We should be allowed back inside soon. Sit down, please before you hurt yourself."

"Hurt myself!" Sebastian scoffed. "No, Jace you are doing that for me. Abandoning me for the wench and the fag."

"Please don't call them that!" Jace yelled back, angry. He hated it when Sebastian got this drunk.
"At least the queer has abandoned you now," Sebastian continued. Jace couldn't help but look toward Clary and Alec. Clary was still standing near him, but Alec was moving quickly toward the three of them from across the lawn.

"You want to say that to my face!" Alec spoke directly to Sebastian.

"Sure," Sebastian said smiling. "Faggot!"

"Stop it, Sebastian!" Jace roared. He was sure the whole courtyard could hear them now, but Jace was so mad he didn't care.

"Oh, are you defending Nancy Boy?" Sebastian sneered. "Oh, Jace, what has happened to you?"

"I was just about to ask you the same thing!" Jace screamed.

"Whatever!" Sebastian said. With a wave of his hand he turned and started to move away drunkenly. Jace watched, seething, as Sebastian's staggering form disappeared around the corner of the dorm building.

"I'm so sorry," Jace sighed as he turned to Clary and Alec. "He's horrible when he's drunk."

"Actually," Alec said calmly. "I think he's horrible all the time."

"You're not mad?" Jace asked looking up from the ground to gaze hopefully at Alec.

"At you, no," Alec said. "At Sebastian, yes. But I never liked him in the first place. He's been calling me names since the eighth grade."

Jace turned to Clary, nervous. "Clary?" he asked.

"Thanks for the jacket," Clary whispered. "And your friend is a jerk." Jace laughed lightly with relief as he could find no anger in her voice.

"Keep the jacket," Jace grinned. "As an apology for putting up with drunk Sebastian." She smiled, but then vanished into the crowd, Jace's jacket wrapped around her. A fire truck had arrived at some point during the row and the campus security was on the scene now. A member of public safely came out and gave the all clear. Jace and Alec hung back waiting for the crowd to thin before heading back into the dorm building.

"What are you going to do about Sebastian?" Alec asked. He was standing next to Jace while they watched the firefighters, security staff and students all moving in various directions around the building. Jace often did this during fire alarms. The crowd was always so determined to get back inside as fast as possible, it was far more pleasant to just wait the extra minute or two for the crowd to thin then to have bodies pressing in against him on all sides.

"What do you mean?" Jace asked.

"Don't tell me, you are going to let him get away with that!" Alec exclaimed, turning to face Jace.

"This isn't the first time Sebastian's done something stupid when he's drunk," Jace shrugged.

"He has a hold over you," Alec observed. "And I don't like it." The crowd was quickly dispersing so they started to walk toward the dorms.

"I've known him forever," Jace said, walking side by side with Alec. "You don't just give up on a friend like that."
"I suppose," Alec replied, but there was an anger in this tone that told Jace Alec wasn't happy with Jace's answer. They were in the halls now headed in the direction of their beds and sleep.

"He's the first friend I ever had," Jace tried to defend Sebastian. "The only one I ever had until you. He just needs some space to cool off. I've been ignoring him lately."

"I've been ignoring you lately too, don't forget," Alec said as they reached their door. "But notice how that didn't cause you to scream demeaning insults at anyone in front of half the school." Alec opened it and they both went inside.

"I'm sorry," Jace said. Alec closed the door behind him and turned to Jace.

"It's not you who should be sorry," Alec replied. "It's him, but I don't think he's capable."

"He might come around," Jace said hopefully. "In time."

"I don't think you can change him," Alec said firmly.

"If I give up on him, that really won't change him," Jace argued.

"I won't say my friendship with you is contingent on you giving up on him," Alec said, obviously exhausted. "But I will say that I don't ever want to see Sebastian again."

"Fair enough," Jace said relieved not to be getting an ultimatum. He didn't want to have to choose between Alec and Sebastian. They each collapsed into their beds, the adrenaline of being suddenly awakened was spent and their already fatigued minds and their bodies fell quickly into sleep.

Jace dreamed of Clary, in more detail than ever before. His dreams were full of lingering glances and the drum roll before the kiss.

Chapter End Notes

Sneak Peek of chapter 25:

"Did you have fun at Eric's last night?" Clary asked.

"Yeah we got a song recorded," Simon said. "How was your night?"

"Fire alarm," Clary sighed. "Be happy you weren't in dorms last night."

"Wow how'd it go off this time?" Simon asked.

"Probably burnt popcorn again," Clary grumbled. "Or someone smoking in the bathroom."

"The intelligence of our generation never ceases to depress me," Simon sighed.

And yes I know my sneak peek sucked but the best part of the next chapter isn't written yet. Had a strange week...
Clary didn't understand why she'd moved closer to him. It had just been like the first time she'd seen him in class. She hadn't been able to explain to herself why she'd stared at him. Only this was worse. She had almost kissed Jace! Almost cheated on Simon! What was her problem? Okay, he was hot, but every girl on campus knew that and Clary wasn't so shallow to be swayed by a pretty face… was she? She had just been flattered; yes, that must be it. His interest was, after all, extremely flattering. To catch the eye of the hottest guy in school never did bad things for a girl's self-esteem.

Yes that was it. Last night had been nothing, just a fluke of the moment. A small voice in the back of her mind said the black leather jacket that was currently wrapped around her told a rather different story, but she ignored that voice as she entered the cafeteria.

"Clary!" Simon said cheerfully waving to her. She was meeting him for lunch.

"Cool jacket," Simon remarked as she sat down. "I didn't think leather was your style." Clary shrugged not sure how to explain the jacket. She really should have thought this through better.

"Women's fashion confuses me," Simon said shaking his head. "You would think that was a guy's jacket."

"What can I say," Clary said trying to smile causally. After all what could she say?

"True," Simon replied. "I guess we both don't know that much about fashion." Clary breathed a little easier and blessed her boyfriend's total lack of noticing what she wore.

"Did you have fun at Eric's last night?" Clary asked.

"Yeah we got a song recorded," Simon said. "How was your night?"

"Fire alarm," Clary sighed. "Be happy you weren't in the dorms last night."

"Wow, how'd it go off this time?" Simon asked.

"Probably burnt popcorn again," Clary grumbled. "Or someone smoking in the bathroom."

"The intelligence of our generation never ceases to depress me," Simon sighed.

"I hear ya," Clary agreed. They finished eating and Simon headed to his afternoon class. Clary didn't have class until tonight so she decided to go back to the dorms.

The dorm room was already rather messy considering classes had just started back up again. Laundry littered the floor living space and Clary's charcoal, acrylic paints and colored pencils still covered her small desk from her last art project. It was definitely time to tidy everything up, but neither Clary nor Helen were the hugest fans of cleaning. In fact her roommate was currently adding to the mess. She sat on the floor in the center of the room, surrounded on all sides by textbooks and notes with a pencil in her mouth.

"Hey," Helen said not looking up from her work.

"What complicated puzzle has you chewing your pencil?" Clary asked smiling.
"What?" Helen said looking up and pulling the pencil out of her mouth. "Oh, wow." Putting down the ruined pencil Helen stood up and stretched. "Man, I wish the teachers would lay off the complicated homework until later into the year!"

Despite Clary's mantra about Jace she really wanted to talk to someone about it. Magnus wasn't the best idea since she knew all too well what his opinion was and, of course, she couldn't talk to Simon.

"Helen," Clary started as casually as she could. "You remember the fire alarm last night?" Helen was no longer looking at her complicated homework, but focused on Clary for the first time since Clary had entered the room and she quickly noticed the obvious change.

"New jacket?" Helen asked. "I didn't think you owned anything in black leather."

"It's Jace's jacket," Clary said softly. This had Helen's full attention. She crossed her arms and cleared her throat in such a way as to demand more information.

"He came and talked to me when we were all outside," Clary said.

"And this led to you wearing this jacket because..." Helen asked. "Oh does Simon know?"

"Jace gave me his jacket 'cause I was cold," Clary said. "And yes, Simon has seen it, but he thinks it's my jacket."

"Damn girl!" Helen said, impressed. She sat down on the bed and Clary sat beside her.

"Do you remember, last November, when I told you Jace hit on me?" Clary asked. Helen nodded. "Well, last night he said he hadn't meant it the way I interpreted it. Before, what he'd said then was that he couldn't stop thinking about me and yesterday he told me he cared about me. Jace said he helped Simon for me."

"Oh wow!" Helen squealed. "Sounds to me like you have him wrapped around your pinky finger." She paused then added. "You have to hit that!"

"I'm with Simon!" Clary argued. "I can't, as you say, hit that."

"Oh please," Helen scoffed. "How good is Simon in bed, I mean really?"

"I-" Clary started but she had no idea what to say. She could feel herself going red in the face.

"Oh my god!" Helen gasped. "You guys haven't had sex!" Clary squirmed, but didn't speak, still unsure how to respond. "Didn't you tell me you guys have been together for over a year?"

"Yeah," Clary mumbled. "Year and a half."

"I am speechless," Helen said shaking her head. Clary didn't reply. She was suddenly feeling very uncomfortable. Simon had never pressured her for sex and she had never initiated it. Was that so wrong? Either way, at the moment it was far too embarrassing.

"Have you guys at least gotten close?" Helen asked.

"Yeah," Clary replied quickly, jumping on the chance to save face a little before changing the topic. "So enough about me! How's your love life going?"

Helen gave her a look, but thankfully let the topic shift. Clary started to relax as she listened to Helen talk about her Christmas vacation with her huge family. All her little brothers and sisters were still in elementary school mostly since they were from her father's second marriage. They were technically
her half siblings but she never spoke of them as such. Her brother, Mark, was her only full sibling and he was at the university, though being in third year he lived off campus.

"That's the same year Magnus is in," Clary chimed in after probably a quarter hour of silent listening. She was happy to quietly observe Helen's story, especially if that kept the subject of the conversation away from things she would rather not discuss. Clary was glad to move the focus off of herself and her complicated love life, but she also genuinely liked talking to Helen. She hadn't gotten a chance to talk to Helen like this much since classes started and it was nice.

Clary tried to get back to her life as usual as January moved along, but found herself often searching for the blonde in the room. She wore Jace's jacket every day, convincing herself it was just because the jacket fit so very well. She had been wearing his jacket for only a week when she finally spotted the right blonde head in the halls.

Moving without thought, Clary soon found herself standing behind him.

"Jace," she said. He stopped dead then turned slowly to face her, his golden eyes wide.

"Clary," Jace whispered.

"Hi," Clary said, but she had no idea why she'd come over, let alone what she intended to say.

"You're wearing my jacket," Jace observed.

"Yeah," Clary said. "It's super comfy." Super comfy! What a stupid thing to say! "I mean, it's warmer than my jacket, but if you need it back…"

"No, you keep it," Jace said beaming at her. Clary's heart fluttered as he smiled at her. She stared up into his eyes and suddenly knew why she'd almost kissed him. This was different than anything she'd ever felt before. Her body wanted him. She wanted to run her hands over his arms and down his abs, over his hip bones… and… Clary shook her head, forcing her thoughts to change direction.

"Sorry," Clary said. "I gotta go." She quickly turned, half running from the strange feelings he invoked in her.

"Bye," Jace called gently after her.

Clary got through the rest of the day by keeping herself too busy to think. She got more homework done than usual and analyzed the plot of a plotless tv show. She closed her eyes that night to sleep and hoped when she awoke that things would be back to normal.

Jace's naked chest glistened in the midday sun. He was standing in the tall grass holding a scythe used for harvesting crops before modern farming had made them obsolete. The muscles of his arms rippled as he moved the heavy blade back and forth cutting the wheat cleanly. The sun beating down on his skin gave it a gentle glow. Clary moved forward, pushing him gently so he fell back softly onto the grass. With Jace lying on his back she straddled him, licking the skin of his chest, tasting salt. His strong arms held her waist as her fingers traced lines on his chest. The firm muscles of his abdomen proved to be not enough for Clary's insistent hands and soon her fingers were tracing his well-defined hip bones. She felt his hands move under the cloth of her shirt and over her bare skin and let out a slow breath. She felt Jace's arousal become defined and hard under her. With her legs spread over his hips, she could feel every change in him. As she wished the clothes separating them to be gone, they vanished. Clary gasped as skin touched skin. She moved slowly, encouraging him inside. She cried out as she was filled.

Clary sat bolt upright in bed. Panting, she reached for her phone. It was five o'clock in the morning.
Collapsing back into bed, Clary waited for her pulse to slow. She felt strangely deprived. The dream had left her with a rather unsatisfied feeling. Clary turned to look across the room. Helen was still fast asleep. The dorm was dark. Feeling sheltered by the darkness, Clary moved her hand down to the wetness between her legs, exploring what felt good and what didn't. She gasped when a pleasant feeling shot up her legs.

Clary had often kissed Simon, often snuggled up with Simon on the couch. She loved him and these were both good memories and yet she didn't want him like this. He had never made her feel anything close to how Jace made her feel, even in a dream.

Clary lay in bed trying to answer her own questions. She may have dozed a little, but by seven o'clock she gave up on more sleep and got ready for classes.

In class, a few hours later, Clary was halfway through painting a wheat field, just adding the scythe, when she froze, staring transfixed by the painting.

"Very good," Clary's teacher came up behind her. Clary jumped.

"I don't like it," Clary said quickly. "Can I start over?"

"This is a timed assignment," the teacher reminded her. "Just one class to see what you can do. I wouldn't recommend starting over especially since you have captured such a unique scene with such raw emotion."

Clary mumbled something under her breath but finished the painting. She didn't paint Jace, however, but added a generic figure with dark brown hair and brown eyes to hold the scythe. Her teacher remarked she had not remained faithful to the original emotion of the piece but Clary didn't care. The last thing she needed was a steamy painting of Jace to explain to Simon.

Later in the cafeteria, Clary saw Jace, but he was sitting with Sebastian, which was just enough to keep her from talking to Jace. She didn't like Jace's friend in the least. Though they looked so alike, Clary couldn't mistake one for the other. From the way they held themselves to the smell of stale cigarette smoke that always clung to Sebastian, the two men were in every way different to her. Despite the fact they shared so many physical similarities.

The following day when she saw Jace alone she couldn't help but go over and talk to him. He seemed again surprised to see her, but he smiled in such a way as to make her believe he was happy to see her.

"Hi," Clary said to him. "I saw you yesterday but you were with Sebastian." She wasn't sure why she was telling him this. Why was she explaining why she hadn't talked to him yesterday?

"Sorry about Sebastian during the fire drill," Jace said quickly. "He's an idiot when he's drunk."

Clary didn't know what to say to that and found herself wanting to get closer to him, to be held by him. Her dream came back to her and the only way to stop herself from falling into his arms was to leave. Clary dashed off, without a goodbye.

Within a few weeks, Clary noticed a pattern. Whenever she saw him alone she went to talk to him. She never had anything of substance to say and always left quickly. She wore his jacket, every day. Though she could see the pattern, she couldn't break it and it in no way helped that her first dream of him hadn't been her last.

It was finally the weekend and Clary had plans to go over to Magnus's. Since Alec and Magnus had become a couple they'd started a game night tradition that included Alec's cousin Aline. The two of
them had taught Magnus a game called Settlers of Catan and though Magnus's texts had been hard to understand, Clary could tell Magnus was enjoying the game.

Clary thought this would be a perfect opportunity to make sure Alec didn't intend to break Magnus's heart.

"Do you want to come?" Clary asked Helen as she was about to leave. "I'm sure it's the more the merrier."

"I really have to get this essay done," Helen sighed. "But if you guys are still playing in an hour let me know."

"Is your essay due in an hour?" Clary asked smiling.

"It was due yesterday," Helen admitted sheepishly. "I wrote the due date down wrong."

"Oh, alright then," Clary sighed. "You are off the hook but come join us if you want okay?"

"Alright."

Clary smiled at her friend then turned and left the dorms. Clary hadn't seen much of Magnus since he'd started dating Alec and she wished she'd been able to talk to Alec before now. It was almost February after all, which meant Alec and Magnus had been going out for a month.

Clary spun around. Jace was standing nearby, leaning against the wall of the building. Clary was always moving toward him when she realized what the blonde man was doing. Jace didn't smoke. Quickly turning around Clary moved away from Sebastian as fast as she could. She felt better once she was across the street. By the time she rang Magnus's doorbell she had quite forgotten about it. The door was answered by Tessa.

"Hey Clary," Tessa said smiling. "Long time no see."

"Yeah sorry," Clary said. "Life's been busy."

"Don't I know it," Tessa laughed. She turned and Clary noticed Jem sitting in the living room watching her with loving eyes. When Tessa sat beside him Jem kissed her sweetly on the cheek. Clary turned and saw Magnus and Alec kissing as well, though lightly. They were both standing over the table setting up the board.

"Look at all the couplings." Clary turned and saw a lovely dark haired woman with a slight Asian aspect to her features standing smiling at her. "Doesn't it just make you feel SO very single?"

"I'm not single," Clary said automatically.

"Lucky you," the girl replied, though not unkindly.

"You must be the cousin I've heard so much about," Clary said smiling. "Aline right?"

"And with that red hair you must be Clary," Aline answered.

"The board is ready!" Magnus called and Clary turned to see her best friend standing proudly over the Catan board he had just set up. "Not a single resource of the same type is touching."

"You know that isn't a requirement right?" Alec told his boyfriend sweetly. "It's just Aline's silly system. Lots of the board layouts in the rules don't care about that."
"Oh but it's fun, sweet pea!" Magnus giggled. Alec blushed and gave Magnus an annoyed look.

"Don't call me sweet pea," Alec grumbled.

"Pumpkin?" Magnus tried. Alec shook his head. "My darling, Alexander, why do you hate my adorable nicknames so?" Magnus made a dramatic fainting gesture that made Alec roll his eyes.

"If you guys were any cuter I might throw up," Aline groaned.

Despite her elation at Magnus's happiness Clary couldn't help but see again the difference between Alec and Magnus and her and Simon. Alec's hair was standing up at a funny angle in the back and if Clary wasn't mistaken the edge of an impressive hickey was just visible near the collar of Alec's shirt. They had clearly been making out before she arrived. There was even a physical difference to the way Jem and Tessa sat together than the way she sat on a couch with Simon. It wasn't as obvious as with Alec and Magnus but it was there.

Chapter End Notes

Are my Clace readers at least a little happier now? I told you the Clace was gonna happen eventually and I know its been a LONG wait. And my Malec readers see there is a little Malec at the end there for you and the sneak peek was selected just for you! I know its been alot of Clace lately. Sigh can't keep everyone happy it seems! ^_^ Just wait till I add Sizzy into this story! Lol! ALL THE SHIPS! o_O

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Sneak Peek Chapter 26

Alec, as usual, forgot all else as his mouth moved with Magnus's. They stood just a foot in front of Magnus's closed front door wrapped in each other until they heard laughter. Magnus released him and turned to his giggling roommate.

"I can't hear Sherlock over your lip smacking," Tessa giggled.

"We are so not that loud," Magnus shot back at her. Tessa turned to Jem and took his face in her hands before kissing him. Jem's hands went up to hold her but their touching kiss in no way drowned out the voices coming from the tv. They separated and Tessa gave Magnus a smug look.

"Whatever," Magnus grumbled. He turned back to Alec, wrapping an arm around Alec's waist he pulled Alec with him away from his smug roommate. "Where were we?" Magnus purred as he now had Alec all to himself in the kitchen. Alec grinned and threw his arms around Magnus before their lips met again.
Alec's Outburst

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes.

Alec sat on his bed, following Jace's pacing with his eyes. Jace was in a state of constant movement, all the while looking down at the ground.

"Hey," Alec said in way of greeting. Jace stopped pacing and turned abruptly to face Alec.

"Jacketclarytalkingwhyifshe," Jace said all in one breath.

"Didn't quite catch that buddy," Alec replied.

"She's wearing my jacket," Jace said more coherently.

"Who?" Alec asked.

"Clary!" Jace yelled throwing his hands in the air.

"Why?" Alec inquired.

"She said it was comfy," Jace answered. Alec had never seen Jace look so confused before.

"Then what happened?"

"She ran away," Jace said. He suddenly stopped pacing and turned to face Alec. "What the hell does that mean?"

"No clue," Alec said, though he had a pretty good idea: stupid promise to stupid boyfriend.

"Argh!" Jace exclaimed as he collapsed on his bed. Alec brought out the ice cream and spent the remainder of his evening watching whatever show Jace selected on Netflix. Alec had no interest in the show, however, and ended up texting Magnus the whole time.

'Please can I tell him!' Alec texted his boyfriend.

'Clary would be mad at me,' Magnus replied.

'How mad?' Alec texted back as his laptop showed some kind of explosion. What show had Jace picked anyway?

'Not sure,' Magnus said. 'I have never betrayed her secrets before.'

'Jace is a wreck,' Alec said. 'Please can we chance it!'

'Can't we let those two figure out their own problems,' Magnus texted back. Alec sighed.

"How can you sigh at such an epic scene?" Jace asked incredulous. Alec lifted his head to see the stereotypical 'protagonist walking away from the explosion in slow motion' scene. Alec just laughed lightly and passed Jace the ice cream to change the topic.

The next day Jace seemed to be a bit better and Alec dared to hope Clary wouldn't continue this strange behaviour. His hope was in vain, however, since the day after, when Alec returned to his
dorm room, he was met once again with a pacing Jace.

"What happened this time," Alec said with a sigh. He sat down on his bed, resigned to spending the hours required to ease the anxiety on Jace's face.

"She said hello," Jace started. "Which was weird enough, but then she explained why she hadn't talked to me yesterday and I didn't know what to make of that. But worst of all, she moved a fraction closer to me and I SO wanted to kiss her, but then she ran away again." The hurt and confusion on Jace's face tore at Alec's heart.

"I don't know what's going on?" Jace whined.

"I'll go get the ice cream," Alec muttered as he got up and headed to his mini fridge.

"Thanks," Jace grumbled. "This sucks."

"Maybe she is confused," Alec told Jace as they both dug into the frozen dessert. "You should just ask her outright what she wants."

"Oh no!" Jace replied quickly. "She is finally talking to me. I don't want to ruin that!" Alec sighed.

"But her talking to you is making you miserable," Alec argued.

"But I get to see her," Jace said with a smile. Alec was so frustrated! Why couldn't he just tell Jace Clary didn't love Simon? If Clary liked Jace as Alec suspected, but didn't love Simon, what the hell was the problem! How mad at Magnus would Clary really be? And would Clary being mad at Magnus mean Magnus got mad at Alec? And why was life so damn complicated!

"She is going to be at game night," Alec said, suddenly hoping that forcing them to spend more than five seconds together would help improve their communication. "Do you want to come?"

Jace shook his head. "Too weird."

Alec tried to convince Jace to join him for the next half hour, but in the end he failed. After a little more sympathy ice cream with Jace, Alec left for game night. His boyfriend's apartment was quickly becoming Alec's second place of residence and with his dorm room now always containing a hurt and confused Jace Alec often used Magnus's place as an escape. He wasn't trying to avoid Jace per se, but there was only so much ice cream one guy could eat. Due to his frequent visits, Alec had become well acquainted with Tessa, Jem and Will. Though he still found their arrangement a little strange he tried not to judge.

When Alec arrived, he walked in without knocking. This was now established normal behavior as Alec was here so often. Alec looked around and quickly spotted Jem and Tessa sitting on the couch, watching something on the tv together that looked like it was set in the eighteen hundreds.

"Alec!" Magnus called as he came over and pulled Alec into his arms. Alec wrapped his arms around his boyfriend as Magnus kissed him. Alec, as usual, forgot everything else as his mouth moved with Magnus's. They stood just a foot in front of Magnus's closed front door wrapped in each other's arms until they heard laughter. Magnus released him and turned to his giggling roommate.

"What?" Magnus asked Tessa.

"I can't hear Sherlock over your lip smacking," Tessa giggled.

"We are so not that loud," Magnus shot back at her. Tessa turned to Jem and took his face in her
hands before she kissed him. Jem's hands went up to hold her, but their touching kiss in no way drowned out the voices coming from the TV. They separated and Tessa gave Magnus a smug look.

"Whatever," Magnus grumbled. He turned back to Alec, wrapping an arm around Alec's waist he pulled Alec with him away from his smug roommate. "Where were we?" Magnus purred as he now had Alec all to himself in the kitchen. Alec grinned and threw his arms around Magnus again as their lips met.

By the time the doorbell interrupted their kiss, Alec's lips were swollen and he had a hickey on his lower shoulder, near his collarbone. Alec loved the possessive way Magnus marked him but he drew the line at hickeys everyone else could see. Magnus knew he could kiss Alec anywhere he liked, so long as the marks weren't visible afterward. Magnus pulled away and took in Alec's rumpled appearance post-make out session. Alec knew his hair was a mess, but so was Magnus's, which made him smile.

"Coming!" Magnus called as he dashed off to the door. Alec slowly made his way into the living room as he heard Magnus open the door. Alec followed quickly behind just in time to see his cousin staring at his boyfriend's hair. She had a dubious look on her face until she saw Alec; then she burst out laughing.

"Aline!" Alec groaned, but he knew what she was laughing about. Magnus and Alec both looked disheveled and Alec's guilty blush was definitely not helping the situation.

"Sorry to interrupt the make out session," Aline spoke through her giggles.

"Well, you should be," Magnus said, somehow adding a humph with just his tone.

"No I shouldn't," Aline disagreed. "Because we are here to play Catan." She held up the game in her arms. "Not make out."

"Oh I'm setting up the board!" Magnus called changing topics quickly as he snatched the game from Aline and dashed off. Aline stared after Magnus while Alec rolled his eyes.

"Make yourself at home," Alec told his cousin before going into the bathroom to get his hair to lay flat again. When he was satisfied his hair no longer resembled a bird's nest, Alec brought the comb to Magnus.

"Here," he said handing it over. Magnus kissed him once lightly on the lips then took the comb and fixed his hair. Somehow, despite the fact they had each used the same comb and Alec had had a mirror, Magnus's hair looked far better than Alec's. This didn't surprise Alec in the least since Magnus' appearance always seemed effortless and perfect. Aline had claimed a chair and was watching Sherlock with Tessa and Jem while Alec stood beside his boyfriend as Magnus continued to plan the game board, kissing him lightly on the cheek every so often.

"Can you get that!" Magnus called to Tessa as the doorbell rang again. Alec didn't leave Magnus's side to see who had arrived, though he guessed it was Clary as all the other guests were already here. He did, however, notice Aline get up to greet Clary.

"The board is ready!" Magnus called finally. "Not a single resource of the same type is touching."

"You know that isn't a requirement right?" Alec told his boyfriend sweetly. "It's just Aline's silly system. Lots of the board layouts in the rules don't care about that."

"Oh, but it's fun sweet pea!" Magnus giggled. Alec blushed and gave Magnus an annoyed look.
"Don't call me sweet pea," Alec grumbled. It hadn't taken Magnus more than a few days to start trying out nicknames on Alec and so far he had shot down every single one of them.

"Pumpkin?" Magnus joked. Alec shook his head. "My darling, Alexander, why do you hate my adorable nicknames so?" Magnus made a dramatic fainting gesture that made Alec roll his eyes. This was not the first time Magnus had asked him this. Alec wished Magnus would either find a nickname Alec didn't hate on principle or just give up already!

"If you guys were any cuter I might throw up," Aline groaned. Magnus laughed and twirled around like a fool. Alec couldn't help but be in awe of his good luck as he gazed at Magnus. Despite the nicknames, Magnus was rather perfect and more importantly Magnus was his. Alec loved the feeling of knowing that Magnus's annoying cheerfulness was because of him.

They all sat down to start the game, all but Tessa and Jem who continued to watch their TV marathon since Catan was only a four person game unless you had the expansion packs.

"Sorry," Aline said to Jem and Tessa with a guilty expression.

"Please don't apologise," Tessa said kindly. "If anything I should thank you for the excellent excuse to stay here on the couch with Jem." She kissed Jem lightly before settling down with him on the couch again. "Besides, we still have Sherlock to watch."

"That is not Sherlock," Aline glancing at the television. She wasn't sitting at the table yet like Alec, Magnus and Clary. "Sherlock has Benedict Cumberbatch."

"I don't like the modern day aspects of that Sherlock," Tessa explained. "Sherlock was a man meant to be above such things as cell phones."

"I think they adapted it to modern day really well," Aline argued.

"Ladies," Magnus said as Tessa was about to open her mouth to disagree. "Can we save the debate for after the game?" Aline sighed, but she was smiling as she quickly found her place at the table.

"Happy to see the enthusiasm," Aline grinned at Magnus.

"I didn't set up the board so perfectly just so you could ignore the game," Magnus told her. Alec couldn't help but laugh. Aline and Magnus had even gotten along when Magnus thought she was his girlfriend so it was no surprise Magnus and his cousin were fast friends. The first time they'd had a game night it had been Aline's idea. She had failed to get Jace to understand the brilliance of the game so she had moved on to her next target: Magnus, who had been a much more willing student.

When they were about half way through the game, Clary received a text. After reading it she looked up at them and asked if her friend could join the game.

"Sure," Magnus replied. "The more the merrier. Though she will have to be on someone's team."

"She just finished her essay," Clary explained. "And might just want to watch." Everyone agreed and Clary texted her friend with the address. The game continued, with Aline and Magnus in the lead, until the doorbell rang. Clary got up to answer it at once. Alec knew Clary wasn't a guest here, having been Magnus's closest friend his entire life, so he wasn't surprised when she answered the door.

"And with that!" Aline said flipping over her last development card. "I now have the largest army. Two victory points to me!" She was grinning at Magnus who looked rather annoyed to be back in second place, then suddenly Aline froze, her gaze fixed at a point behind Alec. Alec turned and
noticed the woman standing beside Clary. Even Alec, who knew little about appreciating feminine beauty, could tell the woman standing beside Clary was gorgeous. She was petite and her skin was very pale. She had hair the colour of white-gold that rung in ringlets to just below her shoulders.

"Everyone, this is my roommate Helen," Clary introduced her friend. "Helen, this is everyone."

"Hi," Helen said. "Hope you don't mind me crashing your game."

"Not at all," Magnus said. "Any friend of Clary's is a friend of mine. Do you want to team up with her?" Helen agreed and Clary pulled up a chair for her. Aline still hadn't spoken, in fact her mouth was slightly open as she stared at Helen.

"Aline," Alec said quickly grabbing her arm to pull her out of her daze. "Come help me with something."

"What?" Aline asked preoccupied, but she let herself be led out of the room.

"That's Helen from the party back in September isn't it?" Alec asked her the moment they were alone. Aline nodded. "And you are still hung up on her even now?" His cousin nodded again. "Okay then, I am going to help you." Aline looked at him confused and slightly nervous, but Alec didn't elaborate. He guided her back into the dining room. It seemed Alec could do nothing to help Clary and Jace sort their shit out, but he was determined to help Aline with her lack of a Helen if at all possible.

"Sorry about that," Alec said as he sat back down. "It's nice to meet you, Helen."

"Thanks," Helen replied.

"I think I've seen you before," Alec said pretending to be deep in thought. "Did you go to that orientation party at the beginning of the year?"

"Yeah I did," Helen said. "But it was a bit of a disappointment."

"Agreed," Magnus chimed in. "Biscuit, it's your turn."

While Clary rolled the dice Alec spoke. "Have you and Clary been friends long?"

"When you live together, sometimes becoming friends is inevitable," Helen said with a slight laugh. "Don't I know it," Alec smiled back.

"Alec's roommates with Jace," Clary explained to Helen.

"Ah yes, Jace," Helen said, wisely. "Calendar material." Clary and Helen giggled at some inside joke Alec was sure he didn't want to know about.

"Have you met Tessa and Jem?" Alec asked. Helen replied that Clary had introduced her to them as they passed the living room into the dining area. Alec was at a loss for how to phrase the question he really wanted to ask without making it sound rude or offending Helen.

"So, Helen," Magnus began. "Sadly, you are in couple country here and I must ask, are there any important guys in your life? We could triple date." He laughed casually, but Alec could have kissed him! His boyfriend had the easiest way with words.

"Sadly no," Helen said. "No special girls either."
Beside him Aline sat up a little straighter.

"So how does this game work?" Helen asked switching her attention to the table. Magnus and Clary started explaining the rules to her while Alec turned to his cousin.

"Go," he mouthed. Aline shook her head.

"Out of my league," Aline half whispered back at him.

"Nonsense," Alec whispered back, but his cousin was still shaking her head.

"Helen," Alec said suddenly at full volume turning to face the new comer. "My cousin Aline saw you at that party in September and would like to have coffee sometime."

Aline hit Alec very hard on the shoulder, blushed scarlet, then stared wide eyed at Helen who was smiling.

"That is quite a compliment," Helen said her attention now fixed on Aline. "Remembering me for so long." Aline mumbled something not even Alec could decipher.

"I have coffee in my kitchen," Magnus chuckled. Helen stood up and walked around the table; Aline's eyes followed her as she went.

"Join me," Helen smiled, holding out her hand to Aline. Aline took the offered hand and let herself be led off.

"I guess I should show them how the coffee pot works," Magnus mused. "Though I doubt they would care."

Alec was feeling rather triumphant. Without his interference he knew Aline would have just let the opportunity go by. The look on his cousin's face had made it so very worth it.

Chairman Meow made his appearance suddenly by jumping on the table. The Great Catsby was in Magnus's lap a moment later. Both felines were meowing and purring, while Magnus tried to keep them off the board pieces.

"This is a sign," Magnus said, dramatically. "It can mean only one thing. Their food dish is empty." He chuckled, ruining his own serious joke as he picked up the cat that was about to scatter the board pieces and excused himself. Chairman Meow purred in Magnus's arms as The Great Catsby followed quickly behind on the ground, eager for dinner.

"Had your cousin really been looking of Helen since September?" Clary asked Alec when it was suddenly just the two of them at the table.

"Yep," Alec said.

"That's crazy," Clary smiled. "Listen, Alec, can I talk to you about something?"

"Sure," Alec replied, curious. What in the world could Clary want to talk to him about?

"You and Magnus," Clary began. "Well, Magnus, as you know has been hurt many times and I don't want him to get hurt again."

And suddenly, Alec's curiosity was gone.

"Are you inferring what I think you are!" Alec almost laughed. "Because questioning someone's
intentions is rich coming from you."

"What do you mean by that!" Clary argued.

"Do you even have the faintest idea what you are doing to Jace?" Alec asked. Clary didn't reply so he plunged on. He had wanted to say this for so long! He had promised not to tell Jace, but he had made no such promise in regards to Clary. "Every time you talk to him I have to listen to Jace analyze everything you said as he tries to figure out what the hell you meant by it! So maybe I should ask you what your intentions are with him?"

"I-" Clary started. "I just like saying 'hi' to him okay. What's the big deal?"

"The big deal!" Alec shot back. "The big deal is that you wear his jacket every day. You almost kiss him, then run back to your boyfriend. He thinks of nothing but you. So stop focusing on someone else's non-existent problems and figure out what the hell you want! Stop and think what your indecision is doing to Jace."

"My indecision?" Clary scoffed.

"I know you don't love Simon," Alec told her bluntly. "So either you are cruel, or you like Jace and won't admit it."

"Magnus is wrong," Clary replied. "I do love Simon."

"Alright, fine," Alec changed tactics. "Let's say you love Simon, but you're not hot for Simon are you? You aren't attracted to him like you are to Jace."

"Just because you are dating my best friend doesn't mean you know me!" Clary yelled angrily, standing up. They had caught the attention of Tessa and Jem now.

"But I know Jace," Alec told her trying not to yell. "I went to highschool with Jace, and trust me, I could never have been friends with a version of him who didn't love you."

Clary gasped, tears welling up in her eyes as she grabbed her purse and fled the room. Alec suddenly felt like the worse person ever, but what else should he have done? After all, she had intended to give him a lecture about not breaking Magnus's heart when she was breaking Jace's heart every day.

Worried this whole thing would backfire horribly, Alec got out his phone.

'Jace!' Alec texted. 'I may have yelled at Clary. Maybe you should talk to her.'

'What the hell did you do!' was Jace's instant reply.

'She tried to lecture me about not hurting Magnus,' Alec defended himself. 'I may have told her she's been hurting you lately."

'You didn't!' Jace answered.

'I did,' Alec replied. 'Sorry! Just go find her and talk to her okay.'

Jace didn't reply, and Alec hoped that meant he was looking for Clary.

Alec looked up from his phone to find the whole room staring at him. Jem and Tessa were ignoring the TV while Helen and Aline stood in the doorway between the kitchen and the dining room. Alec noticed they were holding hands, which lifted his spirits. At least he'd been a good friend to someone today.
"Little fuzzy diva," Magnus muttered as he reappeared, this time without any cats at his heels. "You'd think they were starving to death or something." He looked up and suddenly sensed the tension in the air. "What did I miss?"

Chapter End Notes

Hi guys! So do you think Alec was too mean or justified in what he said to Clary? Also OMG FINALLY HELINE! That has been like 70,000 in the making! o_O I had planned for them to show up sooner... but it just never worked! I mean why would Clary's roommate and Alec's cousin have a reason to be in the same room together that didn't feel totally forced!? Game night was my solution... hope you liked it! I don't plan to give either Aline or Helen POV but that doesn't mean they won't be around! There is a new POV being added soon though! Any guesses who it is going to be?

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So about the sneak peek... this next chapter is the 'intense' scene I mentioned before. *is nervous*

Sneak Peek Chapter 27

"Jace," she called out but when he turned those weren't the golden eyes she'd wanted to see. Green hateful eyes started back at her.

"Wrong," Sebastian's voice cut through the night air. He turned to face her, moving closer. She could tell he was drunk, from his slurred speech and manner of walking.

"Well if it isn't Jace's little obsession," Sebastian sneered. "The redhead wench."

Clary avoided eye contact with him as she tried to move past him but suddenly Sebastian's arm was there to stop her.

"You're nothing particularly remarkable," Sebastian said his voice full of cruelty. "And yet Jace can't seem to be rid of you." Sebastian moved closer and Clary backed up until her back hit a wall. Turning she realized her back was up against the dorm building.
Clary ran. She ran from Alec’s hurtful words. She ran from the feelings she didn't understand. She ran from the very idea she had so much control over Jace. She ran from everything she didn't want to face.

She had been running a while when she realized she had no idea where she was going. She stopped and got her bearings before heading off more purposely in the direction of the school campus. Clary pulled her jacket in close around her for comfort just as she remembered whose jacket it was. Suddenly the tears she had previously fought back threatened to make an appearance. It was dark, the only light guiding her came from the street lamps. Clary had tried not to think about all the things Alec said and what they meant, but she couldn't stop herself. All she had done was go up and talk to Jace a few times. That was it! Why was Alec so annoyed at her? And she hadn't even gotten the chance to really tell him everything she'd wanted to. He was, after all, dating her best friend who was finally happy because of Alec.

But the thing Alec had said that Clary just couldn't understand was that Jace loved her. How could Jace love her! They had spent so little time together and had so little knowledge of each other. Maybe that was why Clary kept finding reasons to talk to Jace.

As if the world could read her thoughts Clary spotted Jace. As she reached the dorm building she saw that familiar head of blonde hair bright against the darkness of the night. Jace wasn't facing her, but he was lit up by the light coming from a window of the dorm building and there was no mistaking that hair, but as Clary moved a step closer Jace turned a corner and disappeared around the back of the dorms. Clary wanted so badly to talk to him, even if only to tell him she hadn't meant to hurt him, so she followed him. When she turned the corner she called out to him.

"Jace." But when he turned around she didn't see the golden eyes she longed for. Green hateful eyes stared back at her.

"Wrong," Sebastian's voice cut through the night air. She could tell he was drunk, from his slurred speech and unbalanced manner of walking. Despite his level of intoxication, he still managed to move closer to her.

"Well if it isn't Jace's little obsession," Sebastian sneered. "The redhead wench."

Clary avoided eye contact with Sebastian as she tried to turn back the way she had come, but suddenly Sebastian's arm was there to stop her. She jumped. For being so drunk he had moved surprisingly fast.

"There's nothing particularly remarkable about you," Sebastian said, his voice full of cruelty. "And yet Jace can't seem to be rid of you." Sebastian moved closer and Clary backed up until her back hit something solid. Turning, she realized her back was up against the dorm building.

"And you're wearing his jacket," Sebastian said, his words slurring slightly. "You little slut." Clary did not like his voice, his words or tone, but it was his body language that worried her most.

Sebastian had each of his hands pressed against the side of the building on either side of her head, effectively trapping her in place. His body was too close. She could smell the alcohol and cigarette smoke on his breath.
"I wonder," Sebastian mused as he looked her up and down in a way that made Clary feel helpless. She thought of ducking under his arms and running for it, but sensed somehow she wouldn't be fast enough. His arm only had to move a fraction to stop her. She had a feeling this wasn't some stupid drunken screaming match like that day with the fire alarm. Sebastian wouldn't be content to call her rude names and leave her alone. She wasn't in a field full of other people this time and he was going to hit her, Clary was sure. Rather than sit back and let him beat her black and blue, Clary tried to think of a way to fight him off. She didn't have any items in her purse that would be heavy enough to do damage. She didn't have a whistle or pepper spray. She could scream, but pinned as she was against the wall there were few options available to her. She pushed with all her might against his chest, but he didn't budge.

"Oh, a fighter huh?" Sebastian mocked her.

"Back off!" Clary cried in frustration at her failed attempts to get him to move away.

"Oh how many times I told Jace to have his way with you," Sebastian said breathing on her. The scent of alcohol and cigarettes once again filling her nose. "But he didn't listen to me," Sebastian continued. "Maybe when you are my leftovers, Jace will finally be free of you." He pressed his body hard against hers, pinning her more firmly against the wall, leaving not a millimeter of space between them. "Worth a shot, don't ya think?"

And it was then, when Clary felt his arousal against her leg, that she realized what he was planning on doing. She had never been so scared in all her life. Being hit was one thing, but this was something else entirely.

Sebastian's body held her against the wall as his hands started to tear at her. He was ripping Jace's jacket off her. Clary used every opportunity to lash out at him. In trying to remove her jacket Sebastian released her a little and she kicked him while her hands clawed at him his face, digging her nails into his skin. She drew blood but it hardly phased him. Jace's jacket lay on the ground now and Clary felt like she had been stripped of her armor, but she wasn't about to give up. She kicked out with her legs again and this time she felt her foot contact with his shin, but as drunk as he was, Clary doubted he could feel much pain. It was then she started to scream for help. Or had she already been screaming? At this point Clary's mind swam with such a mixture of panic and desperation she wasn't sure. His hands were everywhere, tearing at the buttons on her shirt. Clary's nails mauled every inch of his skin she could reach, but his hands didn't relent in their attacks. Her eyes closed, she continued to scream and lash out even if it was all in vain.

Then suddenly, Sebastian was gone, lifted off her in an instant. Clary kept her eyes shut tight, her breathing erratic. Her hands flew to her belt as she felt for the clasp of her jeans. The button was undone, the zipper half down but Sebastian had gotten no farther. Her blouse she knew was in pieces but Clary didn't care at the moment. She opened her eyes. Sebastian was on the ground in a heap a meter away and Jace stood a foot from her, breathing hard. It was as if Jace had flung Sebastian off her in one forceful motion. Though Sebastian lay on the ground with angry red lines left by her nails on his hands and face and his dark jeans hanging around his knees, he was still smirking. Jace on the other hand was standing protectively between Clary and Sebastian. Clary could only see the side of his face but Jace looked livid.

"Would you like to join us?" Sebastian sneered as he stumbled getting up. "Surely you want her more than I do. How rude of me to start before you arrived."

Jace didn't speak but he didn't take his eyes off Sebastian either. The look of rage on his face was like nothing else. Through Jace's furious expression, Clary also saw understanding. It was as if Jace was suddenly seeing who Sebastian really was. But when Jace turned to her, his face changed
completely. There was a softness to his expression that made Clary suddenly feel like she could breathe, like everything was going to be okay. Jace looked at her and she wasn't scared anymore.

"Are you alright?" Jace asked her.

"Yes," Clary replied.

Jace turned back to Sebastian, the rage returning to his eyes.

"I have always forgiven you," Jace said with sadness, his voice full of disdain and disappointment. "No matter what you did or who you hurt, I was always by your side." Suddenly all the hurt in Jace's voice vanished, replaced with pure rage as he added. "But I cannot forgive this! I will never forgive his."

"Whatever," Sebastian said with a shrug as finally got his pants back on properly and tried to get up. "Fine I didn't want her anyway." He didn't do a very good job of standing up and fell down again wincing.

"Bitch did a number on my leg," Sebastian complained as he finally stood up. "See ya." He made to turn around, but Jace's voice stopped him cold.

"I mean it," Jace's voice was like nothing she had heard before. Not only did Jace look so enraged it was like he had fire in his veins, but Clary could also hear the pain at being betrayed by his closest friend in his voice. "We are through."

For the first time, Clary saw fear on Sebastian's face, but it was only there for a moment as Sebastian quickly composed his expression.

"We'll talk about this tomorrow," Sebastian said as he walked off, swaying from side to side as he vanished into the darkness.

And then she was in Jace's arms. Clary couldn't resist the comfort and pressed herself tighter against Jace, her breathing becoming easier every second he held her.

"Are you sure you're alright?" Jace asked, anxiety clearly apparent in his voice. Clary didn't reply, but breathed in the smell of Jace. She knew now why she had worn his jacket: she loved to have Jace's scent wrapped around her. His arms held her tight to his chest and she let herself embrace the moment. Her pulse slowly returned to normal in the safety of Jace's arms.

"I'm okay," Clary finally answered him.

"Alec texted me that he'd upset you and I have been looking for you for the last half hour," Jace confessed. "But then I heard you scream and…"

"You saved me," Clary told him smiling.

"What do you want me to do Clary," Jace asked gently.

"About?" Clary asked.

"Sebastian," Jace replied. "Do you want to go to the police?"

Clary wasn't sure what she wanted to do, aside from forget the whole thing. Technically, the worst he'd done was pin her against the wall, but if Jace hadn't stepped in…

"Do you think he will do that to someone else?" Clary asked. "Someone who wouldn't have you to
"I don't know," Jace replied. "I realized tonight I don't know Sebastian at all."

"Let's worry about that tomorrow," Clary decided.

Jace stood up, with Clary in his arms. She rested her head on Jace's shoulder, eyes closed, as he carried her inside. Jace laid her down on her bed, but she didn't open her eyes. Clary kicked off her shoes before Jace pulled the covers up over her, tucking her in. Clary heard his footsteps walking away and her eyes snapped open.

"Stay," Clary pleaded. She didn't want to be alone and there was no one she felt safer with.

"You sure?" Jace said, turning to face her. "After-" he broke off unable to put into words what had almost happened. "I wouldn't blame you if you never wanted to talk to me again." The grief and shame Jace managed to pack into that one sentence touched Clary's heart.

"You are nothing like him," Clary told Jace firmly. "And I don't want you to leave."

"Alright," Jace whispered. He moved her desk chair over and placed it at the head of her bed. Jace turned the lights out and then sat down. Clary closed her eyes and focused on Jace's even breathing beside her. Falling asleep, knowing Jace was watching over her, made Clary feel surrounded in the safety and comfort of a warm cocoon.

Wow this chapter was short but it felt like it needed to end there. Also please don't hate me! I have never written a scene like this before and though I have been planning it for quite a few chapters now... I am kinda not sure how you guys will react...

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Sneak peek of chapter 28:

"Words Alexander!" Magnus barked. He didn't mean to be harsh at Alec but the atmosphere of the room had him on edge. There seemed to be a tension in the air.

"Clary tried to lecture me about not hurting you and I kinda flipped it on her and remind her that she is hurting Jace," Alec said very fast. "I'm sorry. I think I upset her. I didn't mean to be so rude I just snapped." Alec paused a moment from breath then continued. Magnus had never heard Alec talk so fast before. "But I texted Jace to go find her and make sure she's okay."

"Has Jace replied?" Magnus inquired.
"Little fuzzy diva," Magnus muttered to himself as he returned to the dining area after feeding the cats. "You'd think they were starving to death or something." Magnus looked up and was about to ask whose turn it was when he noticed Alec frozen in his chair, his phone in hand, anxiety written in every aspect of his face. Tessa and Jem were staring at him. Aline and Helen stood in the doorway also staring at Alec. Clary was nowhere to be seen.

"What did I miss?" Magnus asked. The atmosphere in the room was so totally changed from the one Magnus had left, just a few minutes ago. There was a little guilt etched in the lines of Alec's face and Clary was gone, but he couldn't even guess at how those two things were linked. "I wasn't gone long! And where is Clary?"

"I'm sorry," Alec spoke to his knees, rather than look at Magnus.

"What happened?" Magnus asked, concerned. It was one thing to be a little guilty. Magnus knew Alec could feel guilty for even the slightest offense, but it was another to use such a pleading tone.

"I-' Alec started, but he seemed lost for words. "She was going to- but-"

"Words, Alexander!" Magnus barked. He didn't mean to be so harsh, but the atmosphere of the room had him on edge. There was tension in the air. Magnus had never before seen Alexander so scared and it was unnerving him.

"Clary tried to lecture me about not hurting you and I kinda flipped out on her and reminded her that she's hurting Jace," Alec said very fast. "I'm sorry. I think I upset her. I didn't mean to be so rude, I just snapped." Alec paused a moment for breath. Magnus had never heard Alec talk so fast before. "But I texted Jace to go find her and make sure she's okay."

"Has Jace replied?" Magnus inquired, calmly.

"Yes a few times," Alec said. "He is looking for her I'm sure." Magnus knew his boyfriend's face well and could read it easily; there was nothing but regret and fear there. Alec had upset Clary in the heat of the moment when Clary was doing her usual over-protective thing. Though he loved his friend for how much she cared, he couldn't help but worry about her meddling. In this case, his concern was more about her not wanting to confront her own problems.

"But he hasn't found Clary yet?" Magnus asked, reading between the lines.

"I just texted him," Alec spoke in a small voice. Alec was looking at him with those piercing blue eyes, as if trying to read Magnus's thoughts. He knew that, unlike Alexander who was an open book with lots of full colour pictures, Magnus could keep his thoughts off his face if he so chose. However, the fear in Alec's expression was too much. They hadn't been going out long, but they'd been friends longer and Magnus knew Alexander well enough to know Alec hadn't meant to upset his best friend. And, Magnus thought, if the roles had been reversed Magnus might have done the same thing.

"I'm sorry!" Alec repeated, ignoring everyone in the room, having eyes only for Magnus. "Magnus I-" Alec was up off his chair and moving toward Magnus now, a scared pleading look in his eyes. "Please…"
With a sigh Magnus moved forward quickly and took his boyfriend into his arms. Magnus felt the muscles in Alec's body relax as he melted into Magnus's arms. He felt the tension drain out of Alec and Magnus kissed the top of Alec's head.

"Maybe someone should go look for Clary," Tessa suggested from where she and Jem still sat on the couch, with her body turned to face the dining area.

"Jace is," Alec answered but Magnus wasn't sure if this was enough. Sure, everything Alec had told him suggested Jace was highly motivated to find her, but Magnus didn't know Jace and he didn't like the idea of Clary alone and upset.

"Clary will be okay if Jace is there." He turned to face Helen surprised, not only by who had spoken, but by the unwavering confidence of the speaker.

"What do you know?" Magnus asked Helen with narrowed eyes. She was Clary's roommate after all. Was Clary neglecting to tell Magnus things she'd confided in Helen?

"Clary has been wearing his jacket every day," Helen said with a smile and slight shake of her head. "But he isn't her boyfriend so... obviously they have some stuff to work out."

"Thank you!" Alec said, beaming at her, clearly relieved someone agreed with him. Alec's arm was around Magnus's waist but they were both facing Helen.

"Just ask Jace to text when he finds her," Helen told Alec, who immediately got out his phone and started typing.

"Okay but," Magnus said with a hand in the air. "If we don't hear anything soon someone else is going to check on her." Everyone nodded in agreement and Magnus felt the tension in the room slowly fade as Tessa and Jem returned to their show and Helen and Aline vanished back into the kitchen.

"So I take it that means we are done with Catan!" Magnus called into the kitchen but received no reply.

"I think so," Alec said. "Aline wouldn't even leave the kitchen for Catan right now."

"I have to say, it's rather cute," Magnus told Alec softly. "I know how much Aline loves Catan after all." Alec nodded against Magnus's chest, his arms wound tightly around his boyfriend as if he was never letting Magnus go.

"You were really worried weren't you?" Magnus whispered softly as he leaned his head down to kiss Alec's forehead.

"I seriously upset your best friend," Alec mumbled. "I basically yelled at her. Of course, I was worried."

Wanting a little privacy, Magnus led Alec away from the dining room, toward his bedroom. He closed the door behind him and, pulling Alec with him, laid down on his double bed. Alec shouldn't have yelled at Clary, but Magnus shouldn't have spilled Clary's secrets. Clary shouldn't have run off and made everyone worry about her, but the school wasn't far from here after all and Jace was looking for her. Magnus decided he could relax.

"I should never have told you Clary didn't love Simon," Magnus whispered, holding Alec close. "It put you in a very awkward position." Alec mumbled something about it all being fine. "It's just that around you I tend to forget such things."
"I like that," Alec whispered, his eyes closed, he snuggled in closer to Magnus.

"What do you mean?"

"I like that you forget not to tell me stuff," Alec mumbled. "It makes me feel closer to you. Makes me feel like you trust me."

"I do," Magnus sighed, closing his eyes and snuggling up closer to his boyfriend in return. "It kinda scares me but I do trust you."

"Why would that scare you?" Alec asked in a whisper.

"Oh just my baggage," Magnus replied casually. He really didn't want to get into his many failed relationships right now and mercifully, Alec didn't press the point. Alec just held him. Magnus wasn't sure how long they laid there, waiting for Alec's phone to go off. When it finally did, Alec moved so fast to answer Magnus was still blinking in surprise as Alec read the texts to him.

"Jace found Clary," Alec said, relieved. "And she's okay." He paused, a confused tone to his voice as he continued. "She is sleeping, but Jace won't tell me how he knows that."

"Glad she's okay," Magnus said. "But those two confuse me."

"Me too," Alec sighed before he started texting Jace back.

"I'm worried about Simon," Magnus said when Alec had put his phone away. "No matter how this plays out he is going to get his heart broken."

"I barely know Simon," Alec replied. "Are you friends with him?"

"A little," Magnus answer. "I mean, he's been dating Clary of over a year and he was friends with her for ages before that, so I know him. He's a good guy."

"But if Clary doesn't love him after over a year," Alec said. "Wouldn't that mean he gets his heart broken with or without Jace in the picture."

"I really shouldn't have told you that," Magnus repeated with a sigh. "It's just my observation. Clary has never told me that. In fact she insists she loves Simon."

Alec sighed, lying down on his back in bed. Magnus curled up against his boyfriend's side, resting his head on Alec's shoulder. Alec's arms wound around Magnus like they always did.

"Can I stay here tonight?" Alec asked softly. Magnus sat up enough to kiss Alec lightly on the cheek before replying.

"I always sleep better with you here," Magnus whispered.

"I know the feeling," Alec whispered back. Alec, kissed Magnus sweetly, then got up and went to share the news that Clary was alright with everyone else. Magnus didn't leave his bed. But instead he toed off his socks, stripped down to his boxers and climbed into bed. It was still too early to go to sleep, but tonight Magnus didn't care. When Alec returned he smiled widely at Magnus before following Magnus's lead and stripping down to his boxers and shirt as well before climbing into bed next to Magnus.

"You're feet are freezing!" Magnus said with a grin. Alec snuggled in close and Magnus wrapped himself around Alec to warm him up.
They didn't talk much as they lay there. Alec slept over here at least once or twice a week now, but tonight there was something else in the air. Magnus didn't have the energy to worry about it though. That was tomorrow's problem. Magnus heard Tessa playing host and saying good night to Helen and Aline. He was glad she was there to do that for him since he didn't want to face the cold air outside the covers and away from the warmth of Alec's embrace.

Magnus woke up, opened his eyes and saw Alec staring at him. He grumbled at the fully awake expression on his boyfriend's face. Why was Alec such a morning person anyway? He'd probably been awake and staring at Magnus for ages.

"Morning sleepy head," Alec whispered, leaning down to kiss Magnus lightly. Waking up next to Alexander was becoming Magnus's favourite way to wake up. Feeling slightly more awake, Magnus tugged Alec down and deepened their kiss, his tongue sliding between Alec's luscious lips to further explore his mouth. Alec's slight gasp only spurred Magnus on. He wrapped his arms around Alec, pulling Alec towards him until Alec was on top of him. Magnus's hands were on Alec's waist, at the hem of his shirt, as their kiss continued. Magnus moved his hands up under Alec's shirt and then pulled the shirt up over Alec's head with a grin. This finally broke their kiss and they both took in much needed oxygen.

"Morning Alexander," Magnus purred as he traced the planes of Alec's beautiful chest. Magnus saw Alec shiver before Alec leaned down and attached his lips to Magnus's neck. Alec had a rule about hickeys. He required that they never be visible once the moment was over and their clothes back on. Magnus had no such rule. He gasped as Alec sucked on the soft skin of Magnus's neck. Magnus wrapped his arms around Alec until he could join his hands and pressed Alec down into him. They both gasped as their hardening arousals, only covered by boxers, were pressed together. Magnus wrapped his legs around Alec's preventing Alec from holding himself up off Magnus again. With a wicked grin Magnus rolled them over, and started kissing down Alec's chest. Alec's back arched slightly as Magnus moved past the hem of his boxers and fixed his lips on the inside of Alec's leg, where he proceeded to leave a rather stunning hickey. Alec used his free hands to try and rid Magnus of his shirt. Magnus, however, did not oblige until he was done with Alec's thigh.

As Magnus's shirt hit the ground, Alec's hands found the elastic of Magnus's boxers and sought to relieve Magnus of those as well. Magnus returned the favour.

"Magnus," Alec gasped as Magnus pressed their now naked arousals together. Magnus ground his hips against Alec's, creating friction as their hard shafts rubbed against each other. After that, neither of them had any more patience for foreplay. Alec's hands gripped Magnus's rocking hips to increase the friction. With mouth and hand they finished each other quickly and collapsed back into bed.

"And to think," Alec grinned, as he lay naked and panting beside Magnus. "You just wanted to be friends." Magnus hit Alec with a pillow and they both started laughing.

Chapter End Notes

Wow sorry guys! I have never gone so long without updating this story... but... that doesn't mean I wasn't writing! I got some lovely PM messages from a reader of one of my other stories and started binge writing that rather than work on my other two. I updated 'Elusive Love' twice this last week and the next chapter is being edited by my lovely beta Hewt as I type this author's note. So that should be online soon! Maybe if you want faster chapters for R&S you should PM me and encourage me...hehe just a
Anyway so this chapter is kinda short and the first lemon of the whole story or sorta a lemon... (my beta Holly0114 doesn't seem to feel it counts as a real lemon) well apart from the first chapter but that was AGES ago and not between a main ship.

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Sneak Peek chapter 29:

He returned to gazing at the beautiful sleeping girl before him. When had she become the center of his world? Was there an exact moment somewhere between then and now when this had happened? Jace remember the first time he'd noticed her or rather she'd noticed him. That first time she had entered his thoughts without his realizing it. All the time he'd wasted denying even to himself, what he really wanted. He'd wasted so much energy trying to get over her, trying to snap out of the crazy notion he didn't understand. Looking back now he knew Sebastian had played a key role in his denial. How had Jace never seen through Sebastian before now? Why had it taken such a horrible thing to make him realize who Sebastian was? Jace was ashamed of himself. Ashamed of what he had let Sebastian get away with over the years. Ashamed of how long he'd been loyal to such a person. Clary rolled over in her sleep and Jace tried to bring his thoughts back to her. He would deal with Sebastian later.

He focused on the slight noise of Clary's even breathing, letting his mind calm with the rhythm.
Jace's Grief

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

She'd asked him to stay. Jace still couldn't believe it. A man who only knew her because of Jace and who happened to look almost exactly like Jace had tried to force himself on her! But despite this, Clary wanted him to stay with her. Jace couldn't quite explain how he was feeling right now. The world was brighter, the air sweeter. Clary wanted him to stay. Jace watched her sleep and though the view wasn't eventful, Jace wasn't sure when he had ever enjoyed a view more. Her brilliant red hair was spread out on the pillow; she had tossed it back out of her way before falling asleep. The covers Jace had laid over her were tucked up under her chin. Her beautiful eyes were closed and her face was somehow more elegant in sleep.

Jace remembered what it was like to hold her, to have her cling to him as he carried her to bed. It was a warm glowing feeling in his chest. Clary was what mattered right now and if she wanted him here, here is where he would stay. Jace's phone vibrated and he picked it up automatically. He had three missed texts from Alec asking if he'd found Clary yet, explaining that Magnus was worried.

'Is Clary okay?' read Alec's most recent text. 'Did you find her?'

'Clary's okay,' Jace replied. 'She is sleeping.'

'And you know this how?' Alec asked. Jace wasn't sure if Clary wanted him to tell anyone. It felt wrong somehow to explain that had happened to Alec without asking Clary first.

'I just do,' Jace replied. 'Everything's fine.' Thanks for telling me to look for her.' Jace had to add the thank you as the thought of what would have happened if Alec hadn't asked him to look for Cair still twisted his insides. It also made him want to punch something, preferably Sebastian.

'Please tell her I'm sorry!' Alec texted.

'Sure,' Jace texted back, before turning the volume off on his phone and setting it aside.

He returned to gazing at the beautiful sleeping girl before him. When had she become the center of his world? Was there an exact moment somewhere between then and now when this had happened? Jace remembered the first time he'd noticed her, or rather she'd noticed him. He recalled the first time she had entered his thoughts without him realizing it. He shook his head thinking of all the time he'd wasted denying even to himself what he really wanted. He'd wasted so much energy trying to get over her, trying to rid himself of the strange feelings he didn't understand. Looking back now he knew Sebastian had played a key role in his denial. How had Jace never seen through Sebastian before now? Why had it taken such a horrible thing to make him realize who Sebastian really was? Jace was ashamed of himself, ashamed of what he had let Sebastian get away with over the years, and ashamed of how long he'd been loyal to such a person. Clary rolled over in her sleep and Jace tried to bring his thoughts back to her. He would deal with Sebastian later.

He focused on the slight noise of Clary's even breathing, letting his mind calm with the rhythm.

"I want to check on Clary," a voice whispered. "Then we can go."

"Alright," the other voice whispered back. "But don't wake her up!"

Jace's eyes were closed but he was starting to become more aware of his body, sitting in a chair with
his head lolling to the side. He must have fallen asleep watching over Clary. Jace opened his eyes and saw two women staring at him. He recognized them both: one was Alec's cousin, the other was someone Jace had often seen with Clary but he couldn't remember the woman's name.

"Jace," Aline whispered. "What the hell are you doing here?"

"Clary," Jace said by way of answer. He wasn't feeling particularly rested, having fallen asleep in a rigid desk chair.

"Yes, I can see that," Aline replied as if talking to a child. "But why are you here?"

"Clary asked me to stay," Jace said his mind slowly clearing from the haze of sleep.

"I was just going to check on her," the other woman with Aline said. Had Alec mentioned her and Jace just couldn't remember or was this someone Jace didn't actually know? "But if she is upset I can stay. Go home Jace."

But Jace shook his head. "Can't go home yet," Jace said. "Clary asked me to stay."

"Surely she didn't mean all night," Aline whispered. But Jace just shrugged. Aline's friend rolled her eyes but seemed to accept his refusal.

"Clary's fine," Aline replied to her friend. It was only then that Jace noticed the two girls were holding hands. Maybe they were more than friends. It didn't matter much to Jace either way so he thought no more of it. "Let's just go." With one last look at Clary's sleeping form, she nodded and they left.

Jace settled back down into his chair. He didn't check the time, but swung his head to the side again and drifted off to sleep once more. Jace's dreams were vague and full of angels and demons. He fought the demons to protect the angel, but she was always just out of his grasp. Just when all the demons were clear of her, a surprise attack would keep him from his angel.

"Jace."

The whispered voice was Clary's and it pulled Jace out of his dream quickly. He opened his eyes. She was sitting up in bed gazing at him. "Did you stay here all night?" she asked.

"You asked me to stay," Jace replied groggily. She didn't answer with words but when she smiled at him, the joy lighting up her eyes, he had his answer. She was glad he'd stayed. Jace fought back the urge to move over to the bed and take her in his arms.

"How are you this morning?" Jace asked.

"I'm okay," she said. "I'm glad you're here." She was still smiling at him and Jace thought he could have flown to the moon on that smile. "But you must be sore from sleeping in the chair!" Jace shrugged, the small movement making him very aware of how knotted the muscles of his neck were.

"What do you want to do, Clary?" Jace asked again. She seemed confused, but when Jace reminded her what he meant the beaming smile on her face vanished, replaced by a more serious expression.

"He was your friend," Clary replied slowly. "And you stopped him before there was much to report." She took a deep breath then finished with, "I don't think we should go to the police."

"It doesn't matter that he was my friend," Jace said quickly. "Don't let that be a factor in your decision."
"No police," Clary said more firmly. Jace wanted to argue to tell her Sebastian had to be punished, but he yielded to her kind gaze.

"If that's what you want," he said. Jace didn't like her choice; he was afraid Sebastian's continued presence would lead to Sebastian trying to hurt Clary again. Jace ground his teeth together, but said nothing.

"What I want," Clary whispered so softly Jace almost thought he'd imagined it. Clary leaned over the side of the bed, rummaging through her bag. She sat up again with her cell phone in hand.

"People must be worried," she said. "I left last night without explaining."

"I texted Alec," Jace assured her. "Everyone knows you're safe."

"Thanks," Clary replied.

"And Alec wanted me to tell you he's sorry," Jace said. Clary squirmed uncomfortably, but didn't speak. "I think he really means it," Jace adding, trying to comfort her.

"I'm sure he does," Clary said easily. Alec's apology didn't seem to be worrying her. She continued to look uncomfortable until she finally bit her lip and spoke.

"I didn't mean to hurt you," Clary said suddenly, turning to face him, her eyes shining.

"What do you mean?" Jace asked, confused. He was still sitting in the uncomfortable desk chair.

"Alec said," Clary started. "I mean, me coming up to talk to you and wearing your jacket… I didn't mean to…"

Jace wanted to punch Alec, just a little, as he gave up fighting and stood up to wrap his arms around Clary. He kissed the top of her head then whispered, "You have never hurt me, Clary."

"But-" Clary said. Jace pulled away, holding her face in his hands, he held her gaze.

"Forget what Alec said," Jace whispered. Unable to resist, he kissed her forehead before taking a step back.

"I should go," he said. "And you should text Simon."

"Simon?" Clary asked as if she'd forgotten who that was. Then her eyes went wide and she flushed. Jace couldn't help but hope his presence affected her, but there was time to think of that later. Jace had other things to deal with today. Leaving Clary sitting up in bed with her phone in her hand, Jace walked purposefully out of her dorm room. The halls of the university were plain with beige walls and that carpet you see in commercial buildings, the kind with many stuck down squares rather than one rolled out carpet. He supposed this was for practical reason rather than aesthetic ones. The carpet had not been done up to look like a bunch of squares as a design choice, but rather so one square could be replaced easily if, or rather when, the students ruined the rug. Analyzing the carpet choices of the school was not Jace's usual past time, but he was looking down as he walked, trying to think about anything other than what he was about to do.

Knowing Sebastian's tendency to sleep past noon, Jace was headed to his dorm. Reaching the plain door, Jace didn't knock, but instead burst into the room. Sebastian was in bed as Jace had known he would be. Jace had been here barely once before, since Sebastian was so rarely here. He took note of
the heavy metal posters covering the wall on the opposite side of the room as Sebastian. Jace remembered, as if it had been someone else, the day they'd first arrived at this school. Sebastian had mentioned his roommate's love of heavy metal bands as his only distinguishing feature. Said roommate was thankfully not in attendance that morning and Jace didn't bother to wonder why. He was just grateful for the privacy as he slammed the door loudly behind him.

"Jace," Sebastian said groggily, awoken by the sudden loud noise.

Jace stood as calmly as he could muster, while he waited for Sebastian to get up. To Jace, it seemed to take an eternity.

"See, I knew we'd talk today," Sebastian said, smug as he sat up. "You never 'mean it' after all." He stretched and finally stood up. Jace took in the long red marks on his arms with pleasure. Clary was fiery, though if Jace had been the one attacking Sebastian, he would have been in significantly worse shape. Though it did seem Sebastian was at least walking as if his leg pained him. "So, what's up?" Sebastian finished his monologue, now standing casually in front of Jace as if nothing had changed.

"You are going to leave this school," Jace said in a cold firm voice. "You are going to pack up and dropout, or transfer somewhere else. I don't care how you leave, just that you leave."

"Yeah, okay sure," Sebastian scoffed, rolling his eyes as if Jace was joking. "And I'm also going to show up to class in a tutu." He laughed at his own joke.

"You are going to leave," Jace said again calmly. "You are never to contact anyone in my family ever again. And if I ever see your face again I will introduce it to a cement brick." The effect of such a statement in such a tranquil tone seemed to give Sebastian pause.

"You can't make me leave," Sebastian said knowingly as he made to move past Jace, but Jace's arms went out to stop him. Jace grabbed Sebastian by the throat and pressed him hard against the nearest wall. Sebastian made a gagging sound and Jace loosened his grip slightly.

"After everything we've been through," Sebastian said, angrily. "After all those years of being each other's whole world, you are rejecting me for a girl!"

Jace wanted to say that it had taken a girl, like Clary, to show Jace who Sebastian really was, but he didn't say a word. Sebastian ducked out of Jace's grip and moved across the room out of his reach.

"You can't make me leave," Sebastian repeated.

"Yes, I can," Jace replied. He had remained as cool and composed as he could all this time, knowing it was his best weapon. "I know all your secrets, Sebastian. I know every time you've taken advantage of a drunk underage girl. I shouldn't have let you get away with that then, but I am going to start making up for it now. If you don't leave today, I will be reporting every horrible thing you've ever done to the police, recent transgressions included." Clary may not want Jace to go to the police, but Sebastian didn't know that.

"You are a piece of work Herondale," Sebastian growled. "I would almost be proud if it wasn't directed at me."

Jace didn't speak but stood his ground.

"I should have nipped your little crush in the bud earlier," Sebastian chastised himself. "It ruined you."

The muscles in Jace's jaw clenched, but he said nothing. He knew his reply was exactly what
Sebastian wanted: more ammo.

"Enjoy your new life with the wench who won't have you, and the queer who will," Sebastian smirked. "Call me when you figure out you are lost without me and want your real best friend back."

Jace turned and left the room, feeling like he had made his point. He was worried if he remained any longer he would make good on his promise and actually introduce Sebastian's face to a cement brick, or anything else heavy that happened to be on hand. The last thing Jace needed was an assault charge against him, though he doubted Sebastian would file one. Sebastian had never liked the police much. But then again, Jace thought as he walked quickly down the hall, his heart racing, he really hadn't known Sebastian at all.

When he'd gotten far enough away, he leaned back against a wall, slowly slid down it and collapsed in a heap on the floor. Jace couldn't hold back his tears anymore. He knew it was stupid. He knew Sebastian didn't deserve his grief, but Jace couldn't help who he cared about. He sobbed until the piece of his heart that belonged to his best friend cried itself out and broke off.

Jace stood up, dried his eyes and started walking. He just had to keep moving. No one had seen him cry and it was going to stay that way. He couldn't just start sobbing in the hallways! When Jace arrived at his dorm, Alec wasn't there and he was glad. He didn't want Alec to see his puffy eyes and ask questions. Jace didn't regret his actions, he knew Clary was safer without Sebastian here, but he needed some time alone right now.

Jace tried to distract himself with homework, but quickly found he didn't possess that level of concentration at the moment. Rather than go to the gym, Jace started doing push-ups on the floor. The physical activity cleared his head and made him feel better. He knew he had to call his mother and soon, before Sebastian had a chance to contact her. After another half hour of simple exercises, Jace was pretty sure his voice was steady enough and wouldn't give him away, so he called her.

"What a lovely surprise," Celine said as she answered the phone.

"Hey mom," Jace answered.

"What's wrong dear?" So much for his voice not giving him away.

"I don't really want to talk about it," Jace said, quickly trying to add some cheer, or at least neutrality to his voice. His attempts to not sound upset had clearly failed. "But I need to ask you for a favour."

"What is it?"

"Mom," Jace said. "If Sebastian calls, don't pick up the phone."

"I don't understand, sweetheart," Celine replied, obviously confused. "What happened?" His mom never knew the extent of Sebastian's less than savoury acts over the years. She just knew that he'd been by her son's side since they'd both been in diapers. This was going to be tricky.

"Just don't answer him, okay mom?" Jace said. "Don't talk to him at all. Don't let him into the house."

"Did you guys have a fight?" she asked. "Because if so, sweetheart, I'm sure you two will make up. You always do."

"Not this time, mom," Jace answered. He was dangerously close to tears again and needed to end this conversation quickly. "Sebastian crossed a line. There are some things that just can't be forgiven and this is one of them."
"Oh my," she said, stunned. "What happened?"

"Sebastian isn't who I thought he was, mom," Jace continued. "He tried to hurt someone I care about, but it isn't my story to tell. Sorry I can't explain more than that. Just trust me okay?"

"Okay," she said. "Are you alright?"

"I will be," Jace answered. "Thanks, mom."

"I love you," Celine said and Jace could hear the smile in her voice.

"I love you too ma," Jace answered. They said good-bye and he hung up the phone as he let the exhaustion of the last 24 hours wash over him.

Chapter End Notes

At this rate I am going to be finished my other Malec story before this one even gets to Sizzy... sigh... but at least then I will be only updating two stories at once rather than three. I feel like this will be an improvement... though I did start writing another stories that I have yet to published just the other day so... not really holding out hope for that. lol. I have very firmly decided to NOT upload this new story until one of my other ones finishes! Let's see if I can keep to that this time.

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AND OMG WE ARE 10 REVIEWS SHORT OF 200! The most reviews I have EVER gotten on a story was 228 and the majority of those were the same people just reviewing every chapter. I would SO LOVE it if this story surpassed that for number of reviews! Do you think we can make that happen? Pretty please with sugar on top!

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Sneak Peek Chapter 30

"Oh right well," Clary said. "He said I didn't hurt him and not to listen to you." Jace had technically told her that this morning but no matter.

"Yep that sounds like Jace," Alec sighed, then muttered under his breath, "Masochistic little bastard."

"Alexander!" Magnus scolded his boyfriend.

"What?" Alec complained. "I never promised to keep Jace's secrets. People should just stop telling me things."
Clary's Apprehension

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes.

Jace kissed the top of her head then whispered, "You have never hurt me Clary."

"But-" Clary said. She had denied Alec's words at the time, but the more she thought about them the more sense they seemed to make. She had hurt Jace, which was wrong; all Jace had ever done was help her.

"Forget what Alec said," Jace whispered as he kissed her forehead. Clary felt a tingling sensation spread over her skin from where his lips touched her. She shivered.

"I should go," he said. "And you should text Simon."

"Simon?" Clary asked, confused... then reality hit. Her boyfriend Simon, whose existence had totally slipped her mind. She flushed, embarrassed that she had momentarily forgotten about everything except Jace's touch.

Clary watched Jace leave and continued to stare at the door long after he was gone. She gripped her phone firmly in her hand, eyes still locked on the door, thinking that she really should text Simon… but she didn't want to talk to her boyfriend. She missed her friend, Simon, the version of Simon before he'd told her he loved her. That Simon is who she wanted to talk to, but he didn't exist anymore. It had been two years and still Clary hadn't learned to love him the way her loved her. She'd tried, but the love she had for Simon just wasn't romantic. She knew she should tell him, but the look she feared she'd see on his face at such news haunted her. She loved him too much to break his heart.

Clary finally removed her eyes from the door and focused on her phone. She wanted to be around friends right now. Clary made a decision and sent a few quick texts which were quickly answered. She got up, got dressed and headed out. She tried to enjoy the walk, but she still went the long way around to avoid the place where she'd met Sebastian last night. Clary was okay and she'd meant what she said to Jace, but she just didn't want to walk past that spot. Clary was fairly sure she wouldn't be okay if Jace had arrived too much later, but she was trying very hard not to dwell on any of the ‘what ifs’ currently running through her brain. What ifs didn't matter. What mattered is that she was fine and Sebastian was out of Jace's life.

Her self-pep talk managed to get her through the short walk and Clary arrived at the door and went in without knocking.

"Biscuit," Magnus called from the couch as the door closed. Clary saw Alec snuggled up next to him. Though she was glad to see Magnus happy, a little part of her wished her friend had been at least slightly upset with her boyfriend for yelling at her. Though neither Magnus nor Alec knew what had happened to her when she'd left here last night.

"Hey guys," Clary said as she dumped her bag on the floor by the door. Magnus got up off the couch and came over to hug her. Clary accepted the hug, needing it more than Magnus knew.

"My silly boyfriend is very sorry for being such an ass," Magnus told her, pulling out of the hug, but keeping his hands on her shoulders, supportively.

"He really is!" Alec called from the couch. Clary turned her face to Alec. He was sunk deep in the
couch as if ashamed and nervous. He certainly looked sorry. Compared to last night, Alec's little outburst didn't seem quite as worthy of holding a grudge over. He'd just been protecting his friend as was she. Maybe they weren't so different after all and besides, Alec hadn't been wrong. She had been worrying about Magnus to avoid thinking about her own issues. She had no intention of telling either of them the events of last night, but she couldn't help but wonder what difference them knowing would make? She suspected it would just make them feeling guilty and horrified, which only affirmed Clary's decision to not tell them. Magnus was her friend and she would spare him this information as it would only make him miserable.

"You are forgiven," Clary told him.

"Thank you," Magnus mouthed, smiling at her. He hugged her one more time before they broke apart.

"But!" Clary said, grinning wickedly at her friend before he could return to the couch. "We should discuss what intimate details and protected bestfriend knowledge, including the assumptions you make off that knowledge, should be shared with boyfriends." She tilted her head and eyed him suspiciously. Magnus had the decency to look ashamed of himself, but he couldn't keep the grin off his face, which rather ruined it.

"What did Jace say when he found you last night?" Alec asked nervously, getting up off the sofa to join their conversation.

"Oh, right well," Clary said, fumbling for words. Of course, Alec would want to know this. She tried to remember the answer to what Alec had asked, separating that from the other events of last night. "He said I didn't hurt him and not to listen to you."

"Yep that sounds like Jace," Alec sighed, then muttered under his breath, "Maso- chistic little bastard."

"Alexander!" Magnus scolded his boyfriend.

"What?" Alec complained. "I never promised to keep Jace's secrets. People should just stop telling me things."

Clary watched as Magnus pulled Alec against his side; laughing affectionately as he kissed Alec's cheek. There was something different in the way Magnus interacted with Alec than he had with any of his previous relationships. It was as if Magnus withheld none of himself with Alec, almost as if he couldn't.

"So, who's hungry?" Alec asked. Magnus and Clary both indicated that they were. "How about some 'Sorry for being such an ass' pancakes?"

"My favourite," Clary laughed. Alec quickly ran off to the kitchen to get started. Clary was yet to call Alec a friend, but since Alec was friends with Jace and dating Magnus, she was sure they would get there eventually, despite their rocky start.

"I tried to be mad at him for you," Magnus admitted sheepishly as Alec left.

"I know," Clary smiled turning to him. Then Clary whispered, "You seem happier with him." She was surprised to see Magnus blush. Though Alec had blushed every time Clary had seen him, it was a rare occurrence in Magnus.

"Really?" Magnus asked.

"Yeah," Clary replied. "You're different around Alec. I know I tried to interfere before, but the way
he responded makes me think better of him somehow. I implied he'd break your heart and he instantly retaliated. He fought back against the idea of you being hurt."

Clary pulled Magnus in for another hug, half wanting one herself and half wanting to whisper in Magnus's hear, "I'm glad you found someone worth your generous heart."

"I want that for you too," Magnus whispered back. "Please be selfish for once and go after what you want."

Clary didn't know what to say to this and was thankfully saved from having to come up with something when Alec called them into the kitchen to set the table.

"Oh, where is Tessa?" Clary asked as Magnus handed her plates. She had been so caught up in seeing Magnus and Alec she had totally forgotten about the other resident of the apartment.

"She left this morning," Magnus answered, taking down glasses from the top shelf. Having someone to reach the high shelves was one of the wonderful things about having a tall best friend. Alec was just an inch or so shorter than Magnus, which in Clary's opinion was perfect since Alec was just the right height to rest his head on Magnus's shoulder. Clary's mind wondered then, trying to imagine what it would feel like to rest her head on Jace's shoulder.

"Where to?" Clary asked shaking her head to try and bring her thoughts back to the present. The pancakes cooking under Alec's care smelled amazing. She hadn't realized how hungry she was.

"They were meeting up with Will, I think," Magnus said.

"Oh, I forgot to ask!" Clary said suddenly. "What happened with Helen after I left?" She stopped laying out cutlery as she turned to face Magnus. "I invited her than bolted and she didn't come home last night."

"Oh she's fine," Alec said, grinning. "Trust me."

"Have you heard from her?"

"One text," Alec answered laughing. "One very happy text from Aline."

"So she and Aline are getting along?" Clary asked, resuming her task of placing the syrups on the table.

"Oh yeah," Alec laughed. "She basically texted OMG can't believe she likes me back. Thanks for making me speak up. Don't expect to hear from me this weekend. Bye." Clary couldn't help but laugh. "If Helen wasn't at her home last night they might have been in Aline's dorm."

"I think you're probably right," Clary replied as she moved closer to the stove, and took a deep breath in through her nose. "That smells so good."

"Well apology pancakes better smell good," Alec said. "Or they wouldn't be much of an apology, would they?"

Clary laughed and they all sat down to eat. Being in the company of such happy people was helping Clary to feel more like herself again. The energy in the room was warm and welcoming. They ate the apology pancakes together and then washed the dishes side by side, though Magnus kept throwing bubbles at Alec, which slowed the whole process down considerably. Then the boys had to get some homework done and rather than leave, Clary decided to work on some of her own. She used Magnus's computer to print off her assignment. By mid-afternoon she could think of no more
excuses to stick around and sensed the boys wanted some alone time, so she said good bye.

As she walked back to campus Clary knew she had to go see Simon - after all, they usually hung out on the weekends - but the more time she spent with Jace, the more she realized there was no spark between her and Simon. She could feel the electricity in the air when Jace was near her. There was nothing she could do to stop the feeling, just like there had been nothing she could do to force the feeling with Simon in the first place. Clary knew waiting to tell him would still lead to breaking his heart, just as telling him now would. There was, however, something extremely appealing about putting off the inevitable.

When Clary opened the door to her dorm she saw Helen and Aline tangled up on Helen's bed, kissing slowly as if the hug was the part that mattered most. Tangled was the best way Clary could think to describe them.

"Oh Clary!" Helen said quickly pulling away and turning to see her roommate. "I thought you'd be with Simon."

"Yeah," Clary said trying to think fast. "I came to get my stuff first." This was true though she had also been planning to stay in her dorm for a while longer, putting off going to see Simon.

"Oh," Helen said then after a moment she added. "I think you've met Aline before?"

"Indeed," Clary said. "Hey."

"Hi," Aline said shyly. Clary noticed she was almost trying to hide her face in Helen's shoulder.

"Don't mind me," Clary said grinning. She wanted to leave them be, but she also wanted to be in her dorm. However, the grin on her friend's face made the decision for her. "Go back to what you were doing. Just going to grab…" Clary walked over to her desk and collected her laptop and books. She'd decided to go finish what little homework she had left in the library so as to give them the room.

"Have fun," Clary told the girls with a slight giggle as she closed the door behind them.

Twenty minutes later, Clary could be found sitting in one of the good chairs in the library with her laptop open on her lap and her textbook and notes laid out on the chair beside her. When she no longer had homework to distract her, Clary's mind wondered. The image of Helen and Aline filled her mind's eye and she thought to herself how they had just met yesterday and yet the look in their eyes had been something Clary had never experienced with Simon. She had known before what she had to do, but that image, more than anything else, had cemented her decision. Stringing Simon along wasn't better than breaking his heart. Of course, having made up her mind didn't make the reality of what she had to do any easier to face.

Clary gave it another hour before she returned to her dorm. The library and her laptop could easily entertain her for that long. When she got to her dorm she found it empty. She quickly texted Helen saying she didn't mind Aline being there, just to make sure they didn't leave because of her. Then Clary idled away the rest of the evening watching tv, browsing the internet and generally trying not to think about tomorrow. When she finally went to bed, her dreams were of Jace, watching over her again.

Clary awoke on Sunday morning in her empty dorm room and felt the loss of Jace's presence. The dream, combined with everything else made her room feel far emptier. She'd woken up before without Helen there and hadn't felt like this. She knew she couldn't avoid Simon forever, no matter how she tried. With a sigh, Clary checked her phone and noticed a few missed texts from Jace.
'Oh, wow sorry I totally crashed, but are you okay?' Jace texted at eight o'clock that morning.

'Okay, you might still be sleeping,' Jace texted at eight thirty that morning.

'I'm getting worried,' Jace texted at quarter to ten. 'I'm coming over. I hope you're just sleeping.'

That text had been sent less than ten minutes ago. Clary couldn't believe she had slept in so badly. It was like her body knew today wouldn't be pleasant and had tried to avoid it. There was a knock on her door just as Clary was halfway through typing a reply. She stopped texting, got up and walked, what seemed like miles, to her door. She opened the door and there stood Jace with circles under his eyes. He was dressed very casually in sweatpants and a t-shirt and he did look worried.

"I'm sorry I worried you," Clary said. "I just woke up. You arrived before I could answer your texts."

"Oh," Jace said. "Okay. Sorry… ummm…. Glad you're fine." He turned to walk back down the hall.

"Wait," Clary said, reaching her arm out. "Stay." She'd felt so alone when she'd woken up and now that she'd seen Jace, she wanted him here.

Jace turned, obviously stunned at her request. "You surprise me every time you say that," Jace whispered. "Clary, I know your heart belongs to another but I-" He stopped talking. She was standing on one side of the open doorway while Jace stood on the other. And now, Jace was leaning in, his foot taking a step forward. She looked up at him and thought about how her heart didn't belong to another. She could tell him right now, but telling Jace before she told Simon was wrong. Simon deserved better. Despite her firm belief, she hadn't moved backward. Hadn't moved away or given any sign she wanted to. It was as if she wasn't able to. It was all she could do to talk and break the silent pull.

"Do you want to come in?" Clary asked rather than move that inch closer and connect their lips. "We could hang out."

"And what, do homework?" Jace asked with a shake of his head.

"I finished mine," Clary said. "But we could play cards or something. Why not?" She didn't want to be alone right now; she didn't want him to leave, but this was all she could offer at the moment.

"Because from what I hear, being friendzoned sucked," Jace said with a laugh. Clary suspected that though this seemed to be a joke, Jace meant every word. He didn't want to be her friend. She took a few steps back, keeping her eyes locked on Jace as she did so, trying to encourage him to move and Jace did. He walked slowly into her dorm.

And there they stood, staring into each other's eyes as if the rest of the world didn't exist. Clary wanted to kiss him and she was sure he wanted to kiss her, but all they did was stand there, framed in the open doorway, looking at each other.

She wasn't sure how long they stayed like that, but at some point Clary heard someone approach and turned to see her boyfriend standing in the doorway looking daggers at Jace.
Sorry posted this chapter twice by accident. Fixed now. Hopefully that's why no one commented. *crying emoji*

First of all OMG sorry its been SO long! I have been updating my other TMI AU like crazy and ignoring this one. No really!! I think I updated 'Elusive Love' at least 5 times since I last update this story! The other one just kept flowing out of my head and this one was stuck on the side for a while... again sorry.

And hehe what did you think of the cliffhanger? I made you wait over TWO weeks for a chapter then I leave you hanging. *Insert evil laugh here.* ^_^ But no really love you guys! Please comment!

___________________

Sneak Peek Chapter 31

"Then I have a better idea," Magnus said gleefully. Alec turned eyeing him wearily. But Magnus just circled around to hold Alec in his arms. Alec couldn't help but lean back into his boyfriend, with a soft sigh. Then suddenly he was covered in bubbles.

"Magnus!" Alec exclaimed taking a step back from the skin. Magnus it seemed had only hugged Alec to get closer to the sink full of soap suds. Alec collected some ammo and retaliated. Now Magnus was covered in bubbles too and Clary was giggling at them.
"Well apology pancakes better smell good," Alec said. "Or they wouldn't be much of an apology, would they?" Clary laughed and Alec couldn't help but smile. Everything was fine. Clary wasn't mad at Magnus and therefore Magnus wasn't mad at Alec and he was glad his outburst hadn't ruined anything.

As Alec made breakfast, he watched Clary and Magnus hover around, chatting with each other and occasionally asking when food would be ready. One of Alec's favourite things about preparing food was the way it brought people together. When Alec said people should set the table, Clary and Magnus got to work at once, obviously hungry and eager for breakfast. When Alec brought out the steaming pile of pancakes, he watched both of them lick their lips in anticipation. Alec sat down with them as everyone piled syrup and fruit onto their pancakes.

"This smells amazing," Clary said as she was cutting into her first bite. She added after she swallowed, "It tastes amazing too."

"Thanks," Alec said as he dug into his own breakfast. Alec had opted for whipped cream and strawberries on his pancakes. Clary had peaches on hers and Magnus's pancake had a little of everything.

"Alexander's pancakes are the best," Magnus agreed.

"Stop it," Alec said, blushing. "It's a standard recipe."

"Your execution of the recipe is far superior," Magnus replied grinning.

"Flattery won't get you any more pancakes," Alec replied shaking his head, but he knew this wasn't the actual truth. In fact, Alec was already planning to make them again soon when Tessa was here. Conversation topics remained light and the atmosphere lovely as they ate. Once everyone had exclaimed how full they were and pushed their plate away, Alec stood up to collect the dishes. Clary and Magnus both stood with him and insisted on helping.

"It's not really a three-person job," Alec joked. "But if you want you could bring your dishes." They both did so, following Alec into the kitchen. Alec set to filling the sink with hot soapy water while Clary and Magnus stacked the dishes neatly by the sink.

"Thanks guys," Alec said. "I can finish."

"Nonsense," Magnus said. "You cooked."

"I don't mind," Alec replied, but he got nowhere, since Clary and Magnus decided to start drying the dishes that he washed. The problem was, that there weren't quite enough dishes to keep them both busy.

"As I said, not a three-person job," Alec told them as he placed a clean plate in the drying rack and watched them both fight over who got to dry it.

"Then I have a better idea," Magnus said gleefully. Alec turned, eyeing his boyfriend warily. But Magnus just circled around to hold Alec from behind. Alec couldn't help but lean back into Magnus,
with a soft sigh, his hands resting in the sink so he didn't get water everywhere. Together they moved forward and Alec thought nothing of it until suddenly he was covered in bubbles.

"Magnus!" Alec exclaimed taking a step back from the sink. Magnus, it seemed, had only hugged Alec to get access to the sink full of soap suds. Alec collected some ammo and retaliated. Now Magnus was covered in bubbles too and Clary was giggling at them.

"You want to join us?" Magnus threatened, armed with bubbles in each hand. Clary couldn't stop her laughter, but she motioned with her hands and shook her head no.

Magnus turned back to Alec with a far more serious expression on his face than the moment actually warranted. "What do you think?" Alec only laughed and threw more bubbles at his boyfriend.

"Stop!" Magnus chuckled. "I surrender."

"I want that in writing," Alec stated.

"Oh yeah," Magnus said grinning wickedly as he inched closer to the sink. Alec made to stop him, but Magnus was too fast for him and Alec received a face full of soap suds for his trouble. His heart lighter than air, Alec forgot about the dishes and pulled Magnus in for a sudsy kiss. His boyfriend's arms wrapped around him and Alec wound his fingers into Magnus's bubbly locks.

"You two are adorable, you know that right?" Clary said still giggling at them.

They broke apart, still grinning. "We are, aren't we?" Magnus replied gleefully.

"Yes," Alec answered his boyfriend's rhetorical question. "Now, can we get back to cleaning?"

"Spoil sport," Magnus mumbled, but they did get back to cleaning after that. Their fun had created more of a mess; there was water on the floor and bubbles covered virtually every surface. Getting dishrags out of the bottom drawer, Alec gave one to Magnus who reluctantly started mopping up a puddle. When Clary managed to contain her giggles, she grabbed a towel and helped out as well.

Once the extra mess was gone, the rest of the dishes were finished quickly, since they had actually washed most of them before the bubble fight. When Alec put away the very last clean dish and the counters were sparkling, he stood back a moment and admired his work. This he knew was just another form of procrastination.

"I think we're done," Alec said. He was totally out of excuses now, but that wasn't going to stop him. "Maybe I could clean the bathroom," Alec added by way of finding a new reason to put off what he didn't want to do.

"What are you trying to avoid Alexander?" Magnus asked knowingly. There was a dish towel thrown over his shoulder and Magnus's hair still had bubbles in it. Somehow the whole scene felt rather domestic to Alec and sexy, though Alec suspected Magnus could look sexy doing just about anything.

"Writing my paper," Alec whined. "I got stuck with the worst topic ever!"

"A topic so bad you'd rather clean a bathroom?" Clary asked, surprised. She didn't have any bubbles in her hair and had opted for holding her dish cloth rather than throwing it over her shoulder.

"Yep," Alec said with a sigh.

Magnus suddenly collected all three dishcloths and dramatically flung them behind him as he announced, "Homework time!" Alec watched the arch of the towels and was just about to run and
catch them when Magnus grabbed Alec by the hand and forcefully guided him to the dining room
table. Alec had been staying over at Magnus's so often lately, that he tended to leave his laptop here
over the weekends, which meant that Magnus dragging Alec to the table was actually Magnus
dragging Alec to his laptop.

"Sit and work," Magnus said, firmly. "I'll go get my history notes and sit beside you until you're
finished." Alec couldn't help but smile at Magnus's method of motivating him. Magnus seemed very
pleased with himself, but a small part of Alec's mind was worrying where exactly those dish towels
had fallen. Considering this was Magnus's apartment, not Alec's, you'd think the apartment's owner
would be the one fretting that the dish towels may have landed on the stove.

"May I join you?" Clary asked. "I have also been guilty of procrastination."

"Nothing like having people working beside you to motivate you!" Magnus agreed. "Of course, you
may join us." Magnus snapped his fingers in that way he does when he wants the whole room to be
focused on him. "You can use my computer!"

"Thanks," Clary said, smiling. Magnus and Clary disappeared into Magnus's room where Alec knew
Magnus had his printer setup. Alec took this opportunity to sneak back into the kitchen. Towels on a
stove screamed fire hazard to him and he wasn't going to be able to focus knowing that potential
danger lurked in the other room. Also, it was just messy! Once Alec folded the towels and hang them
on the oven door, he felt much better. Alec returned to his laptop. When Clary and Magnus
reappeared, Alec had gotten as far as to have a blank document sitting open on his computer screen.

"Unless you can type with your eyes," Magnus said smiling at him as he sat down at the table. Clary
was working at the table as well.

"Haha," Alec groaned as he momentarily gave up and laid his head on the table. This was not a fun
topic and rather than make it easier to focus, his boyfriend's presence was even more of a distraction.
Alec was always very aware of Magnus, but now that Magnus was his and Alec knew he didn't
have to hold back like before, Alec was even more aware of Magnus. They were all seated at the
table, and Alec started exploring under the table with his foot, without lifting his head. When his foot
made contact with Magnus's leg his boyfriend returned the small attention and Alec smiled into his
arms.

"Your essay topic can't be that bad," Clary suggested, looking up from her work.

Magnus's eyes lit up and Alec knew exactly what he was going to say. "On a scale of one to
invading Russia in winter, how bad is the essay topic?" Magnus said unable to keep a straight face.
Yep, that had been the look Magnus also got before making a history joke or pun.

"History dork," Alec muttered. He secretly loved Magnus's stupid history puns, but he was so not
going to tell his boyfriend that.

"I have lots more where that came from," Magnus said.

"Magnus," Clary whined. "Believe me, we know."

"April showers bring May flowers and Mayflowers bring smallpox," Magnus said cheerily in a sing
song voice. Clary brought her hand up to cover her face in the perfect facepalm. Alec had to admire
her facepalm technique.

"If I had known this would happen when you asked me what you should major in," Clary said with
a sigh. "I would have told you to go into nursing."
"That wouldn't have helped though," Alec said laughing. "He would just be making medical jokes."

Magnus grinned at them, got out his phone, and before either of them could do more than roll their eyes he was reading off the screen, "What did the nurse say when she found a rectal thermometer in her pocket?"

"I don't want to know," Clary said, flatly.

"Some asshole has my pen," Magnus sniggered. Alec couldn't help laughing, but not because of the joke. It's true, his heart was not in his homework, but that was before his heart was with Magnus Bane. Alec was sure he'd already been half in love with Magnus before their first kiss and now after being Magnus's boyfriend for almost a month, Alec could feel a strong feeling in his chest, a warmth that was growing stronger with every moment he spent with Magnus.

"Magnus," Clary groaned. "That was not a request for you to google."

"On the contrary, I think it was," Magnus insisted. Alec couldn't help but stare at Magnus: his boyfriend. Alec felt the corner of his mouth curve up in a smile as he remembered how long it had taken for them to get here and how glad Alec was to be here. And, in that moment Alec realized he loved Magnus. He was in love with Magnus, and not just for his strengths, but also for his flaws and silly notions.

"Alec, what is with that dopey look on your face?" Magnus asked. Alec laughed and leaned forward to kiss his boyfriend gently on the lips before turning back to his essay. The annoying topic was suddenly far less irritating and easy to accomplish. After all, if your worst problem in life is a boring essay topic, you really don't have any problems.

The three of them worked in silence for a while, just enjoying each other's presence. Alec was feeling oddly peaceful. He loved Magnus. Just the thought made him smile. Twice Alec found himself describing Magnus in his essay and had to scold himself for getting distracted. Listing stunning green eyes and caramel skin next to boring politicians was not likely to make any sense to his professor.

"I'm done!" Clary announced. It was mid-afternoon now, which meant they'd been doing homework for at least a few hours. This, Alec decided, was enough.

"I'm done too," Alec said pushing his chair away from the table.

"You're finished your whole essay?" Magnus asked, eyeing him suspiciously.

"Nope," Alec said. "But my brain is fried."

"Aw," Magnus cooed as he stood up. Alec felt his boyfriend's hands on his shoulders. Magnus pressed against the muscles there and a contented noise left Alec's throat. "You need to relax, sweetie pie."

"Don't call me sweetie pie," Alec said, but with no conviction. In fact, he'd said it so quietly he wasn't even sure Magnus heard him. Usually Alec would put more effort into making his dislike of nicknames known, but the shoulder massage was mellowing him out too much for him to really care at the moment.

"Maybe I should head home," Clary said. Alec had his eyes closed, but her voice sounded a bit like she was smiling at them.

"You don't have to," Magnus's voice spoke from behind Alec. Even with his eyes closed, Alec could
picture the room around him. He'd pushed his chair about a foot away from the table where his laptop, notes and textbooks were sitting. Magnus stood behind Alec, pressed close to the back of Alec's chair, with his hands massaging Alec's shoulders. Clary was sitting in the chair across from Alec, but as he heard a chair scrape along the ground he was sure she'd stood up.

"See you guys later," Clary's voice was mixed with the sounds of papers rustling. Alec suspected Clary was packing up her stuff. "Thanks for the homework motivation."

"Anytime," Magnus said from behind Alec. Then the massage stopped as Alec heard Magnus walk around his chair toward Clary. Alec knew he should open his eyes, but it was just so much better to sit here feeling the ghost of Magnus's touch in the now relaxed muscles of his shoulders. Alec listened to the muffled voices of Magnus biding Clary goodbye. Then, he heard the door open and close. Magnus's footsteps moved back toward the table, then stopped. Alec finally opened his eyes.

"Something's off," Magnus said with a look of concern on his face. "I'm not totally sure what, but Clary seems different. It was almost like she needed us to cheer her up. Did you notice anything like that?"

"No," Alec replied. "But this is approximately only the third time I've seen her so…"

"Right, of course," Magnus said with a slight shake of his head. "I'm sure if something was wrong she'd tell me."

"Maybe she's just conflicted about the whole Simon and Jace thing?" Alec suggested.

"Maybe…" Magnus said.

"Can I take your mind off Clary?" Alec asked softly, getting up from the chair and walking the few steps forward to take his boyfriend in his arms. Magnus kissed him back and then Alec rested his head on Magnus's shoulder. He thought about telling Magnus what he'd just realized, but after all, they'd only been dating a month. Despite the additional two months they'd spent as friends, Alec decided to keep this to himself for at least a little while longer.

"What did you have in mind?" Magnus asked silkily.

"That depends," Alec whispered. "When did Tessa say she'd be home?" He wound his hands in Magnus's hair and pressed a soft kiss against his boyfriend's neck.

"Later," Magnus breathed. Alec felt cold hands under his shirt and decided to return the favour, though once Alec had his hands under Magnus's shirt he proceeded to pull the shirt right off. Alec kissed Magnus's perfect chest and soon felt Magnus's greedy hands attempting to remove the last layer of clothing that separated their chests. As Alec's shirt fell to the ground, they somehow managed to make their way to the couch.

Chapter End Notes

As you can probably tell this chapter is basically the scene from the last chapter that I just summed up in a few sentences but from Alec's POV rather than Clary's. I used that first line of dialogue about pancakes to show where in that scene this scene picked up from. We didn't really need these details from Clary's POV for this part and I had stuff I needed to have happen to her before and after her hanging out with Malec most of the
day but for Alec this was an important moment so we also get it from his pov. Why do I love points of view so much huh? I don't know I just can't help but show you what EVERYONE is thinking. lol. Its a sickness... a point of view sickness! Which I hope doesn't confuse people!

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Sneak Peek chapter 32:

Despite the safety of rotating days, Tessa always preferred it when the three of them were together. It felt like the two pieces of her heart were finally present when both Jem and Will were near.

"Get off my woman," Will accused Jem but he did it in his usual sarcastic voice and in such a way that Tessa wasn't worried.

"Boys," Tessa cautioned despite the smiled on every face.

"It is true," Jem replied. "I did have her this morning. It is only fair." Jem took a step back and motioned for Will to take Tessa's arm.

Hehe I know you all wanted a Clary chapter next but it would appear that I am evil. hehe. Remember how I put a Tessa chapter between the two major 'Malec finally get together' chapters? Plus I did mention Tessa went out that morning in the last Clary chapter... so I have to show it all in order right? hehe I can't show you what happened to Clary and Simon and Jace that evening until after you see what happened to Tessa that morning. :D
Loving and dating two men at once, who knew about each other and were okay with it, was the strangest thing she had ever done. Jem and Will seemed comfortable rotating days with her. In fact, the three of them were so rarely together that Tessa sometime worried they were both just trying not to think about the days the other spent with her rather than embracing the strange nature of their relationship. Every now and then, Tessa feared one of them would get jealous for real and her brilliant solution would crumble into pieces, costing her one or both of the men she loved. But despite the safety of rotating days, Tessa always preferred it when the three of them were able to spend time together. It felt like the two pieces of her heart were finally present when both Jem and Will were near. At this point, Tessa couldn't imagine losing either of them. The very idea twisted something inside her.

As she walked arm in arm with Jem down the street, Tessa thought about how lucky she was to love two people so completely. No matter if it all ended tomorrow or if it lasted forever, she was lucky to have right now. She rested her head on Jem's shoulder as they turned around a corner. Tessa sighed contentedly as she squeezed Jem's arm.

"I love you," Tessa whispered to him. He repeated the endearment back to her instantly and nothing more was said until they saw Will. William was wearing a thick, warm looking grey jacket with blue detail that brought out his eyes. Since Will had reentered their lives and told Tessa about his family, things had been as close to perfect as Tessa could imagine. Will no longer shut down, but was his joyful self always. She had not seen the distant look in his eyes since that day, and both she and Jem were so glad of it.

"Get off my woman," Will accused Jem but he did it in his usual sarcastic voice and in such a way that Tessa wasn't worried.

"Boys," Tessa cautioned, despite the smile on every face. There was a certain energy that existed when the three of them were together, and it always made Tessa smile.

"It is true," Jem replied. "I did have her this morning. It's only fair." Jem took a step back and motioned for Will to take Tessa's arm, which he did. She walked, now arm in arm, with Will as they went back the way Will had come. This was her life now, Will walking her halfway and Jem walking her the other half. It rather summed up their relationship nicely, she thought.

Tessa could hear the snow crunch under her feet. She could look out over the once green lawns of the houses they passed and see the sun set the snow to glittering as it reflected the light of the day. Winter was beautiful, even knowing that when this all melted it would be a mess. They were headed to Will's house. Tessa usually preferred the comfort of home rather than the atmosphere of restaurants or bars. Her one exception to this rule was the bookshop that held the small cafe she and Will visited together. Since neither Jem or Will had any great objections to this, more often than not they met up at one of their three homes. Jem, having the grandest home, was usually their first stop, but Tessa liked to have her boys at her place sometimes too. Today was the first time, however, that the three of them were going to spend the day at Will's. Tessa had stayed over at Will's before, but then it had just been her and Will, not all three of them.

They reached Will's small house and it looked the same as the other times she'd seen it. The phrase that sprang to mind was bachelor pad. You could tell the place lacked a woman's touch as there was
nothing on the white walls and not a single decorative item in the room. The large tv in the corner sat facing the couch directly. Tessa knew which door down the hall on the left led to Will's room. On the right was the kitchen and dining room. She'd seen the basement only once, but knew there was a second bathroom down there as well as a large entertainment area with a pool table and mini fridge full of beer.

"Make yourselves at home," Will said as he flung his jacket toward the coat rack that stood in the entryway beside a mat for their boots. Tessa watched the coat land on the floor, just missing the puddle of melted snow.

"Really, Will," Tessa scolded. "It would take a full-time maid to clean up after you." Will shrugged.

"It's true," Jem laughed. Will just scoffed at his friend, then turned from them toward the kitchen. Tessa kissed Jem sweetly, then made to follow Will. Will's kitchen was much like the rest of his house, plain and undecorated. The countertops were a lovely light brown and the floor was laminate made to look like tile.

"Tess," Will said giving her a look as she approached. "This is my kitchen."

"I know," she grinned. Tessa knew Will didn't like people helping him in the kitchen, but she always liked to anyway.

"You just can't help yourself, can you?" Will replied, shaking his head. Tessa just grinned at him. Will, obviously trying to ignore her, started preparing breakfast, though at this point it was closer to lunch. Tessa watched Will pull eggs and milk from the fridge, measure ingredients and mix batter.

"He's still not letting you help?" Jem asked as he entered the kitchen.

"Nope," Tessa said. "He won't even let me be on the other side of the counter."

"Is that so," Jem said with a glint in his eye. Will suddenly froze, then turned toward Jem who was sprinting around the counter. Will put down what he had been mixing and tried to stop Jem, but it was too late. Jem now stood staring at a wall Tessa couldn't see from where she sat. Will muttered something under his breath as he returned to his task of making waffles. The awed look on Jem's face made Tessa circle around the counter to see what Jem was seeing.

On the wall was a painting, the only painting in the house and it was of a mallard duck, with a green head, brown chest, orange feet and a white underside. The duck had a little baby duckling waddling behind it and there was a pond in the background.

"Oh Will," Jem gasped.

"Yeah yeah, whatever," Will said waving his hand dismissively. "Let's not make a big deal."

"Actually, let's!" Jem exclaimed. He went over to Will, turned his friend around and held his gaze. "When did you put this on the wall?"

"A few weeks ago," Will said causally. Tessa still wasn't sure what the significance of a duck painting was, except that it was the only painting on any wall in the whole house.

"It's a beautiful painting," Tessa said feeling oddly out of the loop. Both men turned to her as if suddenly remembering she was there. How she could sometimes be the third wheel in this relationship she didn't know.

"Sorry, Tessa," Jem said with a little shake of his head. He turned back to Will. "Should I tell her?"
Will shook his head only slightly then moved past Jem to face Tessa.

"Ella, my sister, she loved ducks," Will explained. "And the last good memory I had of her was us down at the duck pond."

"I see," Tessa said. "Then why hasn't this painting be on your wall all along."

"Ducks remind me of what happen to her and of the part I played in her death," Will said. "They always have."

"When I first met Will, he had an irrational hatred for ducks," Jem explained. "It took many years for him to tell me why."

"What changed?" Tessa asked innocently.

"Everything," Will said softly, then he kissed her. It wasn't a deep kiss but a gentle romantic one.

"Does this mean you have finally given up on your pointless guilt?" Jem asked. Will smiled, his face brightening; his eyes twinkled and Tessa knew the answer was yes, though she also knew Will would never say it aloud. His actions always spoke louder than his words.

"Aren't you guys hungry?" Will asked as he let go of Tessa's shoulders and walked back to his neglected waffle batter. Jem and Tessa exchanged a look. Words were not needed to convey their mutual happiness at the obvious change that was occurring in Will, unchaining his soul.

Will finished making waffles while the three of them engaged in conversation. Tessa brought up music and Will listened while he cooked, then as they were setting the table, the topic shifted to books. Will joined in animatedly discussing the book Tessa had lent him recently. Tessa could not imagine a better way to spend the afternoon… well that wasn't totally true, she could think of one thing.

"I'm full," Tessa said. "Those waffles were delicious, Will. Why don't you cook more often?"

"I only cook in my kitchen," Will replied, pushing his chair away from the table.

"Well then, we shall have to be in your kitchen more often," Jem suggested.

"I agree," Tessa said, getting ready to stand up as well. "I love your cooking!"

"Is that all you love, Tess," Will asked. He'd walked around the table and now stood beside her, leaning towards her.

"No," she whispered. "But you know that."

"Do I now," Will replied silkily, his breath brushing against her skin. Then Will was kissing her neck and she automatically turned her head to give him better access. She heard the distinctive sound of a chair leg scraping the floor, then Jem's presence behind her. Tessa turned in Will's arms, his lips still caressing her neck, to face Jem.

Jem's gentle hands cupped her face as he kissed her. Tessa reached out with one hand to hold Jem's cheek and with the other she reached behind her to touch Will. They had never tried this. She'd been with them both separately before now, but never together. Was this really going to be the perfect afternoon or was their afternoon together not leading to where she thought it was. Will's kisses on her neck stopped and she turned to kiss his lips instead, while Jem's arms wound around her from behind. Tessa's hands were now busy with Will's shirt. When she felt two sets of hands trying to get
her out of her complicated attire, she couldn't help but smile. This was indeed going where she thought it was. She loved them. She wanted them. She wanted all barriers between them and her to be gone and they seemed to agree with her.

"Why do women's clothes have to be so complicated?" Will grumbled as he released her lips to better see what he was doing. She laughed, and yanked on his shirt, forcing Will to stop trying to undress her until his own shirt was up and over his head. Jem's gentle hands were still at her back working the clasp of her bra, or rather trying to find the clasp of her bra. Little did Jem know that it fastened at the front. Tessa smiled at the knowledge as she lifted her arms up to allow Will to remove her blouse.

"Two shirts!" Will grumbled as he saw the tank top Tessa was wearing underneath. Tessa ignored him and focused her attention on Will's belt while Will focused his attention on removing her second shirt. Neither item of clothing remained on them for long.

"I give up!" Jem said. Her tank top had long since been cast onto the floor. "This bra is glued on."

Having successfully undone Will's jeans at this point, Tessa turned around and showed Jem where the clasp on her bra was, grinning while she did so. Jem shook his head at her, but she was beaming at him. Tessa held her arms up and out of the way, inviting Jem to return to his task. Just as Jem's hands reached the clasp, Tessa felt Will's strong arms come around her and try and beat Jem to the punch. Suddenly Tessa felt the tightness of her bra relax as one or both of them undid the clasp. It hung loose on her, just the straps keeping it there. Tessa shrugged out of it and it fell to the floor.

"We are in the dining room," Tessa reminded both boys who at the moment were both staring at her bare chest, like they hadn't seen it before, which they totally had.

"So, what?" Will said as he pulled her closer to him from behind, pressing the bare skin of her back against his chest and using one of his hands to cover her loose breast. Tessa moaned as his finger teased her nipple, hardening it.

"I live alone," whispered Will. Tessa was too caught up in the moment to care that there was a perfectly good bed just down the hall. She reached out and pulled Jem towards her, attacking his jeans next. The bare skin of Will's chest was pressed against her back while Jem's front was up against hers. Jem's hand now held the breast Will had ignored, but not for long. Jem moved down her and moments later, Tessa gasped as Jem's hands found their way under her skirt and up her thigh, a tingling sensation traveling down her legs at the contact. As Jem pulled her panties down, Will's hands unzipped her skirt and shimmied the fabric down her legs. She now stood naked with a mostly naked man on either side of her and she could feel the blood rushing through her veins, her pulse pounding in her loins. She knew how sticky and ready she was for them.

As Will pulled her closer she could feel the bare skin of his hips contact hers and knew Will had finished removing his clothes on his own. His hard shaft pressed against her lower back and made her ache to feel it inside her, but Jem in front of her was still only partially relieved of his pants. Jem didn't seem too worried about this. Jem's hands were still busy teasing her, totally unconcerned that his obvious arousal was still caged. As her breath caught in her throat from his skilled movements, Tessa set to work returning the favour. She quickly unfastened what was still fastened and pushed Jem's pants down to his ankles.

"Oh," Tessa gasped as Will's strong hands moved suddenly down the sides of her hips. She was so close now, her body humming. Will's strong arms lifted her just slightly off the ground, instinct told her to spread her legs and when she came down she felt his hard shaft slide in, easily. She moaned as he moved inside her.
Tessa reached forward to pull Jem closer just as Will's hips started to thrust into her. With her hands, she moved up and down Jem's shaft, in time with Will behind her. Will's arms were busy holding her against him, but his lips were kissing her shoulders. Tessa's hands were busy with Jem but she now busied her lips with his as well. Kissing Jem while Will thrust into her felt so incredible, Tessa couldn't help but feel her toes curl. She stopped stimulating Jem as Will's body stiffened and released inside her. He put her down, panting, as he slid out of her. She turned in his arms and kissed him gently on the lips.

"I love you," she whispered into Will's ear before turning to Jem. Her eyes shone and Jem quickly had her in his arms, kissing her shoulder, then her neck and finally her lips.

Tessa stood on her tip toes, but she couldn't line them up without Jem holding her up. Unfazed, she guided Jem to sit down on a dining room chair before she straddled him. The slightly awed look on Jem's face as she engulfed him, made Tessa smile. She swayed her hips forward and backward while tightening and relaxing her muscles around him. Jem gasped, wrapping his arms around her and pulling her head down to kiss his lips. She felt him move his hips with hers, creating those wonderful feelings down her legs. As she reached her climax she knew her body had tensed and speed up Jem's finish. When his body tensed then relaxed, she knew he had finished inside her as well. She collapsed on him, panting, her head on his shoulder and his arms still around her. Tessa was thoroughly blissed out. She'd had them both and neither of them had had to settle for just her hand. That somehow felt right to her.

"Okay, I have to confess," Will's voice broke through the bliss of her moment. "A little jealous over here."

"Then join us silly," Tessa said unable to worry about anything at this moment.

"I would," Will said. "But that chair is a bit small." Tessa just laughed.

"That isn't fair," Jem countered. "You were first. You aren't allowed to be jealous."

"You had Tessa's hands though," Will argued. "And you are still holding her while I am standing here."

Ignoring their squabbles, she made to stand up but Jem's arms were like iron bars holding her there. She was about to protest when she was suddenly scooped up into Jem's arms.

"Don't over exert yourself!" Will chastised his friend at the same time Tessa said something similar, but Jem was ignoring them both. He looked like he was walking on air, his face alight with happiness.

"Put me down," Tessa said and Jem complied. She kissed him lightly on the lips to make sure he knew she wasn't mad, then kissed Will in the same manner, or at least that had been her intention but William wrapped his arms around her, deepened the kiss and even dipped her.

"Show off," Jem grumbled. Suddenly Jem's breathing changed; it was more laboured, strained.

"Are you alright?" Tessa asked him.

"Yeah," Jem said breathlessly. "Fine."

"But you'd say that if you were dying," Will reminded him, both annoyance and concern in his voice. "Are you having trouble breathing?"

"No," Jem gasped. Tessa didn't believe him for a second and she suspected Will didn't either. Then,
suddenly, Jem pressed his hand to his chest and collapsed.

Chapter End Notes

So as my beta pointed out, first real lemon since chapter one and it's Tessa. lol. I am honestly not sure where this came from but yeah... that happened. Some days I really just don't want to write lemon and other days it just flow out of my head and onto the page easily. Don't ask why cause I have no answer BUT I blame the Sense8 Xmas special and its epic orgy scene.

Speaking of Sense8 if any of you watch the Netflix original show, Sense8, please check out my friends new sense8 story about Karla and Wolfgang. I am her beta and its great. Her username is: Cococla43. She just sent me chapter two today so the next one is coming soon. If you don't watch Sense8 on Netflix then I HIGHLY recommend it! Its such a freaking AWESOME show! OMG! I can't wait for season 2 which goes live on May 5th 2017! :D :D :D

Also who is excited for Shadowhunters season 2! I KNOW I AM! Not long now! I wonder how long they will drag out the siblings plot in the show... hmmm... and I hope we get lots of Malec scenes but no break up!

Sneak Peek Chapter 33

"You will always be my friend," Clary said. "And I love you."

"Brotherly love wasn't really what I was going for," Simon almost laughed.

"I tried," Clary said tears still falling down her face.

"I know," Simon said.

And sorry for the long hiatus guys! I was writing my other Malec story like crazy and then Xmas happened and my family took over my life. But now its writing time! Work is usually dead in January and my family has all returned to their respective homes. More time for writing for me! yays!

The next chapter is basically finished so that should go up in the next few days. The sneak peek is short cause I am not gonna spoil nothing! ^_^ hehe! :)

Happy 2017 everyone! I have now officially been in the Shadowhunter fandom for a whole year! o_O
Simon Lewis wasn't a fool. He knew Clary was avoiding him. After all, he hadn't seen her since the morning she'd shown him her new jacket. Simon was also not a fool in that he knew the jacket Clary insisted on wearing was not a woman's jacket. He'd played dumb though, since it was just another sign of what he already knew. Despite how long they'd been together and how hard he'd tried, Clary still did not love him the way he loved her and Simon now knew in his heart that she never would. It had been a drawn out realization, sneaking up on him slowly day by day, week by week. She always smiled at him when they met but it didn't reach her eyes. She never rejected his kiss, but there was a feeling of obligation in her caresses. She would rest her head on his shoulder and accept the arm he placed around her, but there was always something missing.

Simon thought back to the day he'd told her how he felt about her. It had been the end of their eleventh year of high school and Simon, who'd known he loved her almost since the day he'd met her, had finally gotten up the courage to tell her. He'd never forget the look on her face. There had been wonder there, surprise and Clary had obviously been flattered, but nowhere on her face had there been romantic affection. He'd told himself that deeper feelings would develop. He told himself it was new and that he couldn't expect her to return his feelings overnight. But those excuses had only worked for so long. The truth of the matter was that she loved him as a friend then and she loved him as a friend now, even after calling him her boyfriend for over a year and a half. Simon had held out hope the whole time that Clary might learn to love him, or at the very least learn to care romantically about him. He'd wished for it countless times and even consulted a fortune eight ball once or twice, but of course, that couldn't change anything. Every time he saw the way Magnus and Alec looked at each other it cemented Simon's decision. You couldn't live on fantasy forever. Even as her boyfriend, he had been friend-zoned and he'd die an old and lonely man if he stayed in the friend zone forever.

He had no idea where or how to begin trying to get over Clary, but breaking up with her was a good start. Simon wasn't sure if he'd ever truly get over Clary, but he knew it would be impossible if she still called him her boyfriend. Not that them dating seemed to mean he got to spend time with her or anything. January was almost over and Simon had seen her approximately half a dozen times since classes had started up again. The simple fact that he could count the times told him there had been far too few of them.

As Simon approached Clary's dorm room a million words ran through his head. What would he say? Was there any way he could phrase this that wouldn't hurt her? He knew he wouldn't want to see her afterward, but he also knew she would still want to be his friend and not in the shallow 'let's just be friends' way that most exes used when they parted company. No, Clary would want to be his real friend. It was as a friend that Clary loved him and Simon was trying to think of something to say. Even the clichés weren't helpful since, 'it's not you it's me' really didn't apply. If she'd just learned to love him! But it seems no matter how much you love someone, that love being returned is not a guarantee.

Simon turned down the hall, toward Clary's dorm and then looked through the open doorway and suddenly all thoughts and concern of Clary being upset vanished from his mind.

Jace and Clary stood a foot apart with their eyes locked on each other. The affection on both their faces was enough to make Simon want to punch Jace in the gut and throw him down some stairs.
Who cares if that guy had helped him! Jace needed to die painfully by a thousand spider bites, because Clary was looking at Jace the way Simon had wished, for so long, that Clary would look at him. They were just gazing at each other, not even touching, but somehow their intense eye contact felt more intimate to Simon than any moment he'd ever shared with Clary over the last year and a half.

Simon could think of nothing to say, so he cleared his throat loudly. Both of them froze, then slowly turned to see him. Jace's expression showed no change except that the light went out of his eyes. Simon couldn't help but be a little happy about this.

"Simon," she whispered, her gorgeous green eyes wide as she gazed at him.

"Yeah," Simon replied. He didn't know what to say. Despite his only having walked in on them staring at each other, the atmosphere of the room was so uncomfortable he might as well have walked in on them making out.

"I'm gonna go," Jace said after a moment of awkward silence. He glanced once more at Clary, then left the room, closing the door behind him.

"Simon," Clary said uncertainly. "I- that wasn't what it looked like."

"What did it look like?" Simon asked sadly. He knew what she was going to say, but he wanted her to say it.

"Like," Clary started but she seemed lost for words.

Simon took pity on her, knowing she was never going to be able to find the words. "I know you didn't cheat on me, Clary," he said in a hollow voice. Clary was nothing if not loyal and he had faith, but he could tell Clary wanted Jace. Even if she hadn't acted on that desire, the knowledge stung.

"Oh," Clary replied. She took a deep breath then she walked the few steps to her bed and sat down. Simon decided she probably had the right idea and sat across from her.

"I know you care about me," Simon said matter of factly after a moment. This was why he'd come, but that didn't make it easy to say. "And I know you think you love me."

"I do," Clary interrupted, but Simon cut her off. It was true she had started saying it back to him, a few months into their relationship, but only when he told her first. She always accepted his kisses, but she never initiated those either.

"Okay," Simon said. "So, you love me, but not once have you looked at me the way I just saw you gazing at Jace." Simon took a deep breath then added. "You look at me the way you look at your brother."

"I-" Clary started, but again she seemed to have been rendered speechless.

"When I finally got up the courage to tell you that I loved you," Simon said in a small voice. "And you smiled at me and took my hand. I am not exaggerating when I say it was the best day of my life."

"Simon I-" but he held up his hand to stop her.

"But it's been a year and a half since then Clary," Simon continued. "A year and a half of hoping that one day you would look at me the way you just looked at Jace."
"I'm sorry," Clary said tears filling her eyes. He'd known this would happen and it was why he'd avoided doing it for so long. That, and the small hope he'd clung to, and probably still was clinging to despite everything. The hope that Clary would one day return his feelings.

"It's not your fault," Simon said.

"I don't want to lose you," Clary sobbed. "I want you in my life."

"I know, but it doesn't work like that," Simon replied trying to put on a smile.

"Why not?" Clary sobbed.

How could he explain to her the pain of being near her, how much it hurt loving her while knowing she'd never return his devotion. How could he tell her that the very reason she wanted him around was the very reason he couldn't be here? He knew she'd only agreed to go out with him in the first place so as not to break his heart. Simon suspected it must have been easier for her to pretend before Jace entered the picture. Simon still wasn't sure exactly when Jace had happened, but he was trying not to think about it. The answer would either make him miserable, or angry, neither of which would change anything. Because, whether Jace was there or not, ultimately didn't matter. Either way, Simon had lost Clary. And in reality, he hadn't lost her to Jace, he had lost Clary because Clary didn't want him, which was worse, since there was no one to blame except the woman he loved.

"Just because," Simon replied. Telling her would only hurt her and Simon cared her too much for her to want that.

"You will always be my friend," Clary said. "And I love you."

"Brotherly love wasn't really what I was going for," Simon almost laughed. It was easier to joke like this then really feel the impact of the moment.

"I tried," Clary said tears still falling down her face.

"I know," Simon said. He lifted his hand up to wipe a tear from Clary's cheek. Even when she was crying, she was beautiful. Not to mention smart and kind, and all around perfect. There was no getting over Clary Fairchild, and Simon knew it.

"I guess there are worse ways this could have ended," Simon said, his voice devoid of humor. He stood up, turned and left the dorm room.

Simon had only come to this University to be with Clary. His mother had told him not to, his sister had told him not to and even Clary had told him not to, but that hadn't stopped him. They had, of course, all been right. Now Simon was single and stuck for at least one more semester in a school he hadn't chosen. He barely knew any of Clary's friends, with the exception of his band members, or at least the few band members who had joined him at this university. This was going to be a horrible semester, but then again, they were only a month into the second term so Simon could always simply cut his losses and go home. Or, he could stick it out and finish his first year. He was feeling rather apathetic about both options at the moment and decided it was a problem for another day.

The walk back to his dorm room felt like the longest walk of his life. Despite the fact he knew he'd done the right thing and, in many ways the only really reasonable choice, Simon was miserable. The walls of the school were somehow more grey than usual, the sky cloudier and the future bleaker. He knew it was all in his head, but that didn't make it feel less real. He wasn't sure how long Clary would wait before running into Jace's arms and the thought twisted him inside. He didn't want to see
her with Jace and it wasn't just because of Jace's reputation. Simon was sure Clary could have picked superman to replace him and it still wouldn't have mattered, because Clary hadn't picked Simon. Seeing Clary with anyone else was going to be hard, it didn't really matter who.

But no matter how it ended, Simon wouldn't regret their relationship, even if it had ruined their friendship. He loved her so much from the beginning he couldn't remember a time when he'd felt like just her friend. If he hadn't tried to win her love in return, he would have regretted it for the rest of his life. At least this way he knew he'd given it a real shot.

When Simon entered his empty dorm room, he remembered why it was empty. Jace had helped Simon get rid of his horrible roommate. Simon sighed. Stupid blonde. Why did he have to try and make nice with Simon, huh? It would have been so much easier if Simon could have just hated him on principal and called it a day. Not that Jace's entering the picture would have mattered if Simon had ever truly held Clary's heart.

Simon put on the most depressing playlist he could find, laid on his bed and stared at the ceiling. He gave himself permission to wallow. He got today. For the rest of the day he was allowed to be broken. He knew he had to get up and live again and at some point he had to decide if he was going to stay at this school or not. But that was for tomorrow.

Chapter End Notes

Hey guys did I surprise you?

I had planned for Simon to break up with Clary from day one of writing this story but you guys kept commenting about how Clary needed to dump Simon and I was like hehe just wait and see that will NEVER happen. lol. I also selected the sneak peek for this chapter with more care than usual so as not to give away the point of view. Anyway I hope I surprised you and PLEASE PLEASE review and tell me what you think. First Simon POV chapter! :D :D :D I am so excited! And I have basically finished my other Malec AU now so I should be updating this story more regularly again... I hope.

Wow remember when my author's notes on this story were almost as long as my chapters? ^.~ Now they are so short again. :)

Sneak Peek Chapter 34

Jace walked away from Clary, with a heavy heart. He wanted to cry but he also wanted to be Simon for the sole reason that Simon had Clary. Jace had never before envied someone so much in his life. Simon and Clary were currently alone in Clary's dorm room. The image was stuck in his mind on repeat. Why was it Jace could never shake the hope that one day she'd be his? This hope had literally turned his life upside down. He knew now he'd always had hope, even when he'd told himself to get over her. Even when he'd decided he just wanted her to believe him and that was all, he'd always had hope. He knew that now.

But his hope was useless. How many months had it been now? It felt like a lifetime, of wanting her and not having her. Jace didn't want to be alone but he was so very alone. Sebastian was gone. Alec was undoubtedly still with Magnus. Clary was with Simon. There was no one for Jace.
Jace walked away from Clary with a heavy heart. He wanted to cry, but he also wanted to be Simon for the sole reason that Simon had Clary. Jace had never before envied someone so much in his life. Simon and Clary were currently alone in Clary's dorm room and that image was stuck in his mind on repeat. Why was it Jace could never shake the hope that one day she might be his? Hope. Unfounded hope had literally turned his life upside down. He knew now that he'd always had hope, even when he'd told himself to get over her. Even when he'd decided he just wanted her to believe that he could be better and wanted her for the person she was, not a conquest; he'd always had hope. He knew that now.

But his hope was useless. It had been September, during the first week of school, that Clary had first looked at him in class. By October, Sebastian had noticed Jace's fixation and called him out on it. Toward the end of November, he'd tried to tell Clary how he felt, but she hadn't believed him. Now it was January, and Jace was starting to feel like he was doomed to always want her, yet never have her. He didn't want to be alone, but Sebastian was gone; Alec was undoubtedly still with Magnus and Clary was with Simon. There was no one for Jace.

Jace allowed himself to wallow as he continued his slow walk back to his, likely empty, dorm room. It had been a long and painful five months of university and Jace was feeling the full weight it at the moment. He was also having a hard time believing so much could happen in such a short space of time. Everything from his lifestyle to his values had been turned on its head. So, what did he have to show for his emotional anguish anyway? Minus one best friend and minus one Clary. Jace didn't have a word to define Clary with and he wasn't sure he ever would. She was both nothing and everything to him. He had no claim on her, no way to define her that felt right and yet, she was all he had. But that wasn't right, Jace thought, as a pair of beautiful dark skinned lips flitted across his mind. Trinity had been a friend to him after all. She was the one who suggested a sleep clinic for his snoring. Jace didn't want to be alone and maybe he didn't have to be. Quickly pulling out his phone, Jace typed.

'Hey,' Jace texted. 'You busy tonight?'

'Didn't get the girl I take it?" came Trinity's quick reply.

'No,' Jace texted back.

'I am just headed home,' she said. 'Meet at your place?'

'Sure,' Jace replied. She sent him her eta just as Jace reached his dorm. He was in no way surprised to find it devoid of Alec's presence. In fact, his assumption that Alec wouldn't be home was why he'd agreed to meet Trinity here. Alec was basically living at Magnus's these days and Jace found himself jealous of Alec - though he was still more jealous of Simon - because Alec was now with the person he'd pined for.

Had Jace pined for Clary? He wondered as he sat down at his desk and tried to distract himself with his computer. Maybe this was for the best. He didn't know the first thing about being in a relationship, so even if he was able to call Clary his, he would likely lose her to his own foolishness. Though Jace had hoped that with Clary things would be different. He'd always thought that even in a relationship he wouldn't be able to stop looking at other women, but since Clary had caught his eye,
all other women had seemed dull in comparison. Yes, with Clary, Jace thought for once he could be loyal. An overwhelming sense of loss took hold of him. Why was he doing this to himself? Why was he thinking about this? Jace closed his computer since it had failed one hundred and ten percent to do its job as a distraction.

Jace heard a knock on the door and was glad. It was being alone that was making him crazy. He opened the door and there was Trinity. Her dark hair in braids and a smile on her face.

"Hey," she said as she walked in. Jace tried to return the greeting, but he broke down mid-way, sobbing like the pathetic person he was.

"Oh, Jace," Trinity said, surprise and concern in her voice. She took a step closer to him and wrapped her arms around him. Jace had needed the hug, but he got a grip on himself quickly and pulled away.

"Sorry," Jace mumbled. He would have been fine if he hadn't spent the last quarter of an hour going over everything in his head. This was his own fault.

"I am going to go out on a limb here and guess you didn't text me for a booty call," Trinity said.

"Umm," Jace mumbled. He hadn't thought about that when he'd text her. All he knew was that he didn't want to be alone. Honestly, in this moment he wasn't feeling particularly sexy.

"Well it's a good thing I was only sort of in the mood," she smiled at him and moved over to sit on his bed. She patted the spot beside him and said with a sigh, "You said you didn't get the girl, so what happened? Let's hear it."

"I've been lying to myself for months," Jace gushed. Once he started talking he realized he actually really wanted to talk. "Pretending like I never hoped to one day be with her, but I was a fool."

"I am going to let you in on a little secret," Trinity whispered. "It's impossible not to hope."

"I knew it was never going to work from the beginning!" Jace exclaimed. "She's a good, responsible girl with a boyfriend no less, and I'm a mess. There wasn't ever any hope. Even if everything else wasn't in the way, I don't deserve her."

"The human heart doesn't work like that," Trinity explained.

"Yeah," Jace whined. "Enlighten me. How does the human heart work?"

"When you love someone," Trinity explained. "You want to find the best in them. You look for and cling to hope."

There was a sorrow to Trinity's words that made Jace believe she knew exactly what he was going through at the moment, or at least more than Alec did. Jace could have talked to Alec. He knew Alec would have listened, but Alec wouldn't have been able to empathize, as he was happy with Magnus.

"I know what you mean," Jace said but for once he wasn't thinking about Clary. He was thinking about Sebastian. Jace had been so blind to his faults for so long, refusing to believe what was right in front of him for fear of what he would lose doing so. Now there was nothing to fear as Sebastian was lost to him for good.

"Every time I caught my husband cheating and he said it was the last time, I had hope he was telling the truth," Trinity explained. "I loved him and I wanted to believe him. I wanted to have hope even though there was none to be had. It is impossible not to hope."
"You never told me you were married," Jace said, stunned.

"There's a lot you don't know about me," Trinity said.

"Are you still married?" Jace asked, curious.

"No," she replied. "Eventually I did give up hope."

"How did you do that?" Jace asked.

"The hard, messy and emotional way," Trinity said, sadly. "Why do you think I was scoping out eye candy at a college bar the night we met?"

"Oh," Jace said softly.

"But you and Clary never dated," Trinity said. "You won't have a horrible messy divorce to go through."

"Maybe," Jace said he couldn't help thinking about his breaking off from Sebastian. The most constant part of his life has been removed for Clary, even if after what Sebastian tried to do, Jace was glad of it, he still felt the loss.

"Jace, there is no point to your pain," Trinity tried to comfort him. "Either she will return your feelings and choose you over the other guy or she won't. It's as simple as that."

"She won't choose me," Jace replied. "So, all I have is my pain."

"And your racist friend," Trinity chuckled. "If I recall correctly."

"No," Jace said. "He's gone." Jace tried not to look as broken up as he felt, but he knew he'd failed when Trinity placed a hand under his chin and planted a soft kiss on his lips.

"He is worth your pain even less," Trinity told him. And in that moment Jace wanted to forget about his heart ache. He wanted to lose himself in her, even if it meant only a moment's respite. Jace brought his hands up to her neck and kissed her again, this time deepening the kiss, he slid his tongue into her mouth. She moaned softly and pulled him close.

A soft clicking noise and a sharp intake of breath made Jace turn to see what had made the sound. What he saw made him freeze in shock. Clary stood in the doorway having clearly just opened it. She was staring at him, her eyes wide. They remained like that, staring at each other wide eyed. Jace didn't know for how long, it could have been minutes or decades for all he knew. Then suddenly Clary bolted, her bright red hair disappeared down the hall as she ran.

Jace sat still immobile, staring at the place she'd been. He suddenly wasn't sure where he was or what he'd been doing before. He was trying to decipher the look on her face. The expression he'd just witnessed in her beautiful green eyes didn't make any sense to him.

"That was her, wasn't it?" Trinity asked kindly. Jace only nodded. "Then what are you doing just sitting here?"

"I-" Jace said. Why had Clary just shown up? Why wasn't she with Simon and what had that look on her face meant! Jace couldn't name the emotion he'd seen there though a dozen sprang to his mind, none of them fit.

"Go. After. Her!" Trinity ordered, pushing on Jace's back repeatedly to encourage him to move.
"Nothing's changed," Jace spoke hollowly.

"Like hell nothing has!" Trinity yelled at him. "Did you see that look on her face!"

"You know what that meant?" Jace asked eagerly turning to her.

"Yes," Trinity exclaimed. "That was the look on my face when I caught my husband in bed with another woman."

And suddenly something clicked in Jace's head and he was up and running. He darted through his door and caught a flash of red disappearing around the corner. Following her red hair, Jace turned the corner and saw Clary just ahead.

"Clary!" Jace called out. She stopped in her tracks and then slowly turned around. There were tears running down her face, but somehow, they only made her look more beautiful.

"Don't follow me," Clary yelled at him.

"Why did you come to my dorm?" Jace asked calmly, ignoring her words. Hope was burning inside him, brighter than ever before.

"That doesn't matter now," Clary sniffed as she turned away.

"Clary," Jace said softly, reaching out to wipe a tear from her cheek. "Of course, it matters."

"What do you want?" Clary whimpered.

"What I've always wanted," Jace whispered with all the affection of his hopeful heart. "Since the moment I first saw you."

"Yeah right," Clary asked incredulously. "You were kissing some random girl!"

"Trinity?" Jace said, slightly puzzled. "She's just a friend."

"You usually kiss your friends with tongue?" Clary asked, taking a step back. Jace let her move away, but his hands instantly missed her touch.

"Well yeah," Jace said, with a slight chuckle. He couldn't help but be happy with hope alive in him, though in retrospect maybe laughing was a bad idea.

"You are the most horrible-" Clary yelled at him, but she seemed to be unsure how to end the insult and instead just growled in frustration.

"Oh, like you can talk!" Jace replied. "Where is your boyfriend anyway?"
"Simon broke up with me," Clary yelled back.

"What?!" Jace asked, shocked to the point of forgetting to breathe for a second. "When?" Jace gasped.

"A few hours ago," Clary replied. "I was going to wait to tell you, but I wanted to see you... and then I saw you with your tongue down that girl's throat!"

"Clary!" Jace said desperately, scared he'd ruined everything. "Please, let me explain."

"You have one minute," Clary replied harshly with her arms crossed over her chest. Jace couldn't help but notice how cute she was when she was angry.

"I have spent my life courting women that meant nothing to me," Jace spoke as quickly and honestly as he could. "I recall most of their faces, but their names were meaningless to me. That is until I met you. Your name flitted around in my head like a caged butterfly and though I have yet to so much as kiss you, you have captured my heart. A heart, I might add, that I didn't know I had." She was looking up at him now, with wonder and Jace plunged on. "Clary for a long time now, all I have wanted is you."

"Really?" Clary asked so quietly Jace almost missed her words. Jace smiled and nodded. He could see understanding in her beautiful green eyes, but his gaze moved down to stare at her lips.

"Can I kiss you Clary?" Jace asked gently. There was nothing else in the world he wanted more at the moment, but not if she didn't want him too.

"Okay," Clary whispered.

Jace's heart was pounding, like it never had before when he'd been about to kiss someone, Jace moved those few inches toward her. He placed a hand on her waist and gently pulled her close. He placed his other hand at her neck then pressed his lips to hers. Every nerve in his body felt alive as they kissed. He felt Clary press her body firmly against him as her hands went up under his shirt. Jace had not expected her enthusiasm but he reveled in it. Clary returned his kiss with a need that equaled his own.

Chapter End Notes

My beta's exact words were 'its about flipping time!' then she told me I wasn't allow to leave the chapter hanging. She wanted closure hehe. To bad so sad! I love cliffhangers. :D Did you enjoy getting more back story for Trinity? I feel like it added more to the scene where we first met her. I think she is still the only original character in this story... not sure how that happened but there you go!. :D

So how happy are my Clace readers? I know it was a longer wait than Malec but... was it worth it? Eek! I am SO excited for the reviews on this chapter! Oh and yes I will eventually get back to what happened with Jem. Sorry so many plots so little time. :D I have lots more planned guys. Don't think that just cause Clace and Malec are all coupley that this story is anywhere close to over!

Though my other Malec AU 'Elusive Love' is ending. The epilogue is being edited as I type this author's note. My writing too many stories at once problem hasn't gone away
however as I have somehow started two more! I haven't updated anything and don't plan too until my vampire diaries fanfic is finished. I think one other story besides Roommates and Soulmates is enough. From the very beginning I planned for R&S to be the longest story I’d ever written so it isn't ending any time soon people. I have some time off work coming up so updates should be a little faster now. Sorry for the slowness these last few weeks guys. I basically wrote the entirety of Elusive Love during those weeks and my hours at work went up so... yeah... sorry. I wrote slowly. Hopefully back on track now though!

Sneak peek chapter 35

When they finally broke apart Clary saw the dark skinned woman she'd caught Jace kissing standing a few feet away from them down the hall, toward Jace's dorm.

"Finally got the girl huh?" the dark skinned woman said smiling at them. Jace turned in her arms to reply but all he did was confirm her words. "I'll leave you two alone then." And the woman left. If Clary's wasn't mistaken she seemed genuinely happy that Jace was kissing Clary and not her.

"What kind of friends are you?" Clary asked.

"I'm not sure," Jace replied. "Though I am starting to worry she might be my therapist." He laughed and Clary wasn't sure if he was joking or not.
Clary wasn't sure where she was or how she'd gotten here, her entire world was currently consumed by Jace's kiss. Her blood was pounding in her veins like it never had before. Every fibre of her being wanted him.

The next thing Clary knew, she was pushing Jace up against the wall, wrapping one of her legs around his waist. The swooping feeling in her stomach was her sole guiding light as Clary threw herself into the kiss. His lips were warm and wonderful. Clary tried to deepen the kiss, and Jace gasped as her tongue slide over his lower lip. It wasn't until her hands moved to remove his shirt that he gently stopped her.

"Clary," Jace whispered against the skin of her neck. "We are in a hallway."

"What?" Clary said shaking her head. She took a step back to look at Jace. His hair was a mess, his shirt crumpled, but his eyes were alight and he was smiling.

"I do love the enthusiasm though," Jace grinned.

"I-" Clary said slightly stunned by her own reaction. Jace sobered and closing the small space between them, took her hand in his. Clary looked up at him dumbfounded.

"Clary," Jace spoke softly, looking at her with pleading eyes, his hand under her chin. "I don't want to assume anything so I must ask, do you want to be with me?"

Was he asking what she thought he was asking? Clary knew she'd just totally gone over board and everything, but sex already! She was suddenly so nervous she didn't know how to think straight; her mind was frozen in shock, but her body didn't seemed to be having that problem. Her heart was still pounding and she felt almost light headed from their kiss. It was like Jace was a magnet and now that she wasn't betraying Simon, Jace's pull was that much more difficult to resist. She wanted to kiss him again, but after what he'd said and how she was feeling, Clary knew that wasn't the right course of action.

"It's okay if you don't," Jace said sadly when she didn't reply. Clary's brain felt like an old glitchy record player, the same note repeating over and over again. She registered the change in his posture though. The light had gone out of his eyes.

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"I just-" Clary started, but she didn't have an answer. Her brain felt blank and useless. She suddenly wanted nothing more than to sit on the floor, put her head between her legs and breathe until the world stopped spinning.

"I know it was just one kiss," Jace said. "But Clary I want to do that every day. Please say something." Clary was more confused now than she'd been before. How had they gone from sex to daily kissing?

"What exactly are you asking?" Clary managed to say.

"I don't know," Jace laughed nervously. "I've never done this before. Never had a girlfriend before."

And suddenly Clary realized what the fool was trying to say. A smile broke out over her face as she
flung her arms around his neck and kissed him again. This time though, she made sure not to take it quite so far. Jace's strong hands were at her waist as her fingers interlaced behind his head.

"Hmmm," the contented sound came from deep in Jace's throat as they stood in the very public, though thankfully deserted, hallway, wrapped up in each other.

When they finally broke apart, Clary saw the dark-skinned woman she'd caught Jace kissing earlier, standing a few meters away from them down the hall in the direction of Jace's dorm. She had clearly followed Jace to see what was going on.

"Finally got the girl huh?" the dark-skinned woman said, smiling at them. Jace turned in Clary's arms to reply, but all he did was confirm her words. "I'll leave you two alone then." And the woman left. If Clary wasn't mistaken, she seemed genuinely happy that Jace was kissing Clary and not her.

"What kind of friends are you?" Clary asked.

"I'm not sure," Jace replied. "Though I am starting to worry she might actually be my therapist." He laughed and Clary wasn't sure if he was joking or not.

Jace turned back to Clary with glee and added, "So was that a yes?"

"To what?" Clary asked. She was still gazing at the spot that the dark-skinned woman had vanished from, trying to decipher the look that had been on her face and what had just happened.

Jace sighed. "Dating me."

"Oh, right!" Clary said turning her gaze back to Jace. It had at least been clear on the woman's face that she wasn't romantically interested in Jace; Clary tried to put the woman out of her mind.

"Because, Clary," Jace whispered. "Though I have no idea how to be a boyfriend, with you I want to try."

"Okay," Clary replied.

"Really?" Jace exclaimed, his eyes lighting up with excitement.

"Yes," Clary giggled and then suddenly found herself flying through the air. Jace held her around the waist with both hands and was whirling her around. When he set her down, Clary found herself in the grips of a hug so tight breathing was soon going to become a problem. Luckily, Jace let go before she suffocated. He still held her hand though and together they walked down the hall.

They entered Jace's dorm room together and as soon as the door closed Jace turned to face her and gently kissed her lips. Clary moaned. She'd never kissed someone she'd been so attracted to before. It was like every nerve in her body was on fire. The feeling was intoxicating; Clary plunged into it head first. She absently observed that kissing Jace seemed to turn her brain off as her hands went to the hard muscles of Jace's chest. The next thing she knew, Jace's hands were under her shirt, his fingers gently gliding over her skin. It wasn't until his hands went to the clasp of her bra that she froze.

"Sorry," Jace said, removing his hands at once and taking a step back. "Habit. Sorry." And Clary suddenly remembered just how many women Jace had 'dated' before her. Her mind started to work again. No matter how sincere Jace seemed, taking it slow was a good idea and she had to get a grip.

"It's okay," Clary replied with a slight shake of her head.
"No, it's not," Jace said. Clary looked up at those warm golden eyes and reached up to gently touch his face. He seemed to relax at her touch and his arms came around her again. Clary leaned against his chest and closed her eyes.

"It's a miracle you are here with me," Jace whispered. "I shouldn't do stuff like that."

"Wasn't I the one who lost control in the hallway?" Clary whispered back. Her face was still against his chest, so she felt the vibration of his laugh.

"Can I ask you something?" Jace whispered after a moment. They were alone in the dorm so Clary wasn't sure why he was whispering.

"Sure," Clary replied, but rather than say what he wanted, Jace guided them both over to the bed to sit down. Clary suspected Jace was trying to put off saying whatever it was that was on his mind. That, paired with his whispered voice was starting to make her worry.

"When did you change your mind?" Jace mumbled after a minute. "I mean, you were indifferent to me and then you weren't."

"I was never indifferent to you," Clary said. "You drew my eye the day I met you."

"I remember," Jace said smiling. "But when I tried to tell you how I felt the first time you brushed me off."

"Never in a million years would I have believed a guy like you would want a girl like me," Clary told him sincerely. "I was actually very surprised you'd even bothered to make a move on me. The idea that you actually meant what you said did not occur to me."

"You said Simon broke up with you," Jace paused, awkward then added. "But did he tell you why? Because I didn't want to make you unhappy, Clary. If I caused your break-up, I didn't mean to."

Clary laughed. He had a funny way of showing it. "Why did you keep trying to tell me how you felt then?" she asked.

"I just wanted you to believe me," Jace replied. "I wanted you to know. It was a strong impulse, but in retrospect it doesn't make much sense."

"It makes perfect sense," Clary laughed. Jace's words said one thing and his actions said another. No matter what Jace thought, he'd definitely wanted to break her and Simon up. "You really haven't liked anyone before, have you?"

"Is it that obvious?" Jace asked. Clary nodded, thinking about the strange mirror imagine of each other they were. She had dated someone she was emotionally invested in, but not attracted to. Jace had only 'dated' people he was attracted to and never had an emotional attachment before. They were from different worlds and yet somehow not. She was his first crush and he was her first real spark of physical chemistry.

"You don't have to worry," Clary said. "Because you didn't break us up. Remember the day you gave me that jacket?" Jace nodded. "If we hadn't been interrupted, I am sure I would have kissed you." She sighed. "Alec's right. I never loved Simon, not romantically."

"What?" Jace exclaimed! His eyes were wide with shock.

"We were in high school," Clary defined herself. "And my friend said he loved me. What was I supposed to do? I was scared I'd lose him as a friend if I broke his heart."
"Yeah, yeah I get all that," Jace said dismissively. "But Alec knew!"

Clary laughed at his overreaction then grumbled, "Magnus blabbed. Best friend indeed."

"And Alec never told me!" Jace grumbled back. "Some friend he is."

"I think Magnus made him promise not to," Clary told Jace, but it didn't seem to make Jace any happier.

"I shall be having words with my roommate," Jace said seriously. "Just as soon as he gets home."

"Which as far as I can tell is never," Clary giggled.

"Don't remind me," Jace sighed. "He is basically living at Magnus's." While Clary was laughing, she felt her phone go off in her pocket. Absently retrieving it Clary checked her text.

'I left my sheet music at your place,' Simon's message read. 'I just want to make sure I won't run into Jace when I go to get it.'

Clary sighed, a guilty feeling settling in her stomach. She'd gone to Jace too fast. Sure, she hadn't run straight from the remains of Simon's broken heart to Jace's arms, but the journey had taken hours, not weeks.

'I am not at the dorm,' Clary replied. 'Go ahead and get your stuff. :)'

'Oh great,' Simon texted back. 'So, you two are making out at Jace's dorm instead. Fantastic.' Clary could almost hear the sarcastic way Simon would had said this, but how was she supposed to reply to that? She could lie, but what was the point? He would find out eventually; the school wasn't that big after all and neither were the dorm buildings. Mostly, Clary wondered when her kind friend had turned into a sarcastic cynic. Probably when you failed to love him and almost cheated on him, Clary reminded herself.

"Everything okay?" Jace asked and Clary just knew her guilt was showing on her face.

"Oh, I'm just going to hell," Clary replied casually. "That's all."

"Angels don't go to hell," Jace said in such a serious voice that Clary almost laughed at him.

"I am not an angel," she said rolling her eyes.

"You are to me," Jace replied and kissed her softly. Jace's lips left hers a moment later and started kissing down her neck and collarbone. Clary tilted her head to expose her neck, almost unable to believe how wonderful Jace's lips felt against her sensitive skin. She would make sure not to go too far for now, but if kissing Jace felt this good, Clary could only imagine what sex with Jace might feel like.

Chapter End Notes

Sorry for the long hiatus! I have been trying to finish other stories since three is too many. Elusive Love is complete now. Please go check it out if you are a Malec fan. I've been told its got all the Malec feels. I am two chapters away from finishing my Vampire Diaries Human Delena story. I should be updating this more regularly now that I am not
trying to update three stories at once. ^_^

The next chapter is a Tessa POV chapter but since it's barely started and therefore not finished enough for a sneak peek, I thought I'd share with you a Sneak Peek of my new story! Chapter one of this is still with my beta. It's a Malec story set in the canon universe after City of Heavenly Fire but before Magnus and Alec visit the Shadowhunter Academy. My beta is almost done editing it and the first chapter should be going online soon. :D

Sneak Peek of New story: Forgotten

Alec looked Magnus in the eyes and said as sincerely as he could, "Please, Magnus, please tell me you know who I am." Alec could hear the pleading edge to his own voice.

"Well you're a Shadowhunter," Magnus said jerking out of Alec's touch. "And a Herondale probably." Alec suddenly saw in Magnus's eyes the years of mistreatment from shadowhunters and marveled for a moment at how Magnus had fallen in love with him in the first place.

"Lightwood," Alec answered automatically.

"With those eyes?" Magnus laughed. "If you say so."
Hemochromatosis was a word she'd come to know very well, having spent hours pouring over medical websites learning everything she could about it. So, when Jem fell to the ground, Tessa's mind raced with all the possible implications. Unable to stop herself from jumping to the worst possible conclusion, Tessa's first thought was heart failure. Will's first thought was far more useful.

"Jem!" Will yelled as he moved forward to catch his friend.

"I'm fine," Jem said trying to throw Will off, even though Will was the only reason he hadn't hit the ground hard.

"Fine people don't collapse," Will reminded him, supporting Jem with one hand, though Jem was still trying to make him stop.

"Just felt dizzy for a moment, but it's passed," Jem said, finally succeeding in making Will let him go. Will didn't go far, however.

"I will not believe that until someone in a white jacket and the word doctor in their name says it," Will replied.

"I'm not going to the hospital," Jem said firmly.

"Yes, you are!" Will argued back. This was the first time Tessa had seen any real indication of Jem's illness. Sure, sometimes his skin wasn't quite the right colour and some days he had less energy than others, but the rest of the time he was just Jem. And yes, she'd googled the hell out of his illness, but never before had she seen the importance of her efforts.

"You are going to see a doctor," Tessa whispered. Neither of the men heard her over the continued sounds of their argument. She repeated the phrase a second time more loudly, but her voice still didn't carry far enough. Finally, Tessa yelled the words with as much force as she could muster and both men turned to her, slightly stunned.

Will looked at her, a determination about his eyes. Tessa knew the same expression was on her own face. Jem looked back and forth between them both and somehow knew he'd already lost the argument. With a sigh, he agreed.

"But, we are driving," Jem added. "No stupid ambulance."

"Fine," Will replied. It took a moment for them to find and put on the clothes they'd scattered around the room. Once dressed, the three of them got into Will's truck. They didn't talk much on the way and a few minutes later they pulled into the hospital parking lot. Jem tried to go in alone, but was once again outnumbered.

"You don't need to come with me," Jem whined. "I won't just ditch and head home."

"Why don't you want us there?" Tessa asked. She was concerned at Jem's reluctance. Jem turned to her, but only for a second. Tessa couldn't quite read the expression on his face before his gaze shifted to Will.
"It's nothing to be ashamed of," Will told his friend.

"Of course not!" Tessa seconded Will's sentiment. "Jem we love you. You don't have to pret-"

"I know," Jem exclaimed, cutting her off. He spoke directly to Tessa as he said, "But that doesn't mean I want you to see me as a sick person any more than you already do. It's too late for Will. He's seen it all before, but I don't want you to see me that way." Guilt flooded Tessa as she realized how this evening had already changed the way she thought about Jem. She was not about to tell him that though. Closing the space between them, Tessa made him look her in the eyes before speaking.

"You are Jem," Tessa whispered to him. "You play the violin like an angel and show kindness to everyone you meet. You are not defined by an illness. Promise." Jem seemed to relax a little, but he still looked uncomfortable so Tessa added, "If it means you go see a doctor, I'll wait in the hall."

Jem smile nervously at her, but his only form of reply was walking toward the hospital's main entrance. Once inside, Will went to the front desk and returned with forms and a clipboard. Tessa sat patiently, listening to the sounds of the people around them while Jem filled out the paperwork. They returned the forms to the front desk receptionist and then were instructed to sit and wait. After a quarter of an hour Jem told them to head home but they refused. Tessa pulled up an ebook on her phone and said she'd read. When a half hour had passed, Jem was all for going home himself since he felt fine, but Will and Tessa wouldn't hear of it. They'd been there for over an hour before a nurse called Jem's name.

"James Carstairs," the nurse's voice called out loudly to the room. Jem got up, with a sigh, and followed the nurse in her blue scrubs down the hall, leaving Will and Tessa alone in the waiting room.

"It's only me he doesn't want in there with him. Why are you waiting here too?" Tessa asked.

"It isn't just you," Will replied. "He hates it when people are in the room with him, even me." Will sighed. "I have to go in sometimes, but for something like this, it doesn't hurt to do it his way."

"That actually makes me feel better," Tessa replied.

"It's hard," Will said after a moment. "I can't imagine what it's like to live with a chronic illness."

"Me neither," Tessa replied in a whisper, then after a moment she added, "You think everything's okay?" Will had so much more experience with Jem's illness than she did but asking him this with Jem in the room hadn't felt right.

"Probably," Will said. "But better safe than sorry with him. He'd say he was fine if he was dying. It's so annoying!" Will grumbled. "When he was first diagnosed, he'd been feeling poorly for months but didn't say a word to anyone. His iron level was so dangerously high they took almost a liter of blood. He's had regular blood transfusions since then. He does know how to manage the symptoms, but he's a terrible patient."

"Yeah I noticed," Tessa laughed lightly. She couldn't stifle her yawn and leaned over to lay her head on Will's shoulder. Jem was going to be fine, she told herself as she closed her eyes. Tessa woke up, unaware she'd fallen asleep, to the sound of Will's voice.


"Hmm," Tessa replied groggy. "What?"

"We can go home now?" Will told her. Tessa sat up and looked around. Jem was standing in front of
her, smiling. Tessa turned to Will again and realized she'd been drooling on his shoulder.

"Oh!" Tessa said pulling away from Will and inspecting the damage to his shirt. "Sorry." Tessa tried to clean Will's shirt with her sleeve but Will just laughed in a very 'I don't care about my shirt that much' kinda way and helped Tessa up. She felt like she was still half asleep, but that didn't mean she had forgotten why they were in a hospital.

"What did the doctors say?" Tessa asked Jem.


"I'm sorry, what?" Tessa asked.

"Polycythemia," Jem said again. "It means I have too many red blood cells. Apparently with my recent…exertion, I got dehydrated. My heart had to work harder to pump the blood to the rest of my body, so I got a little dizzy."

"So everything's fine?" Tessa asked slowly. Being only half awake wasn't helping her concentration. She was a Lit major not a nursing student and Jem seemed to have the vocabulary of a doctor. Tessa was sure that was one of the side effects of spending a great deal of time around doctors.

"Yes," Jem confirmed with a smile. "Some blood work, a little IV fluids and I'm good as new. Now let's go home." Tessa easily agreed and the three of them got in Will's truck, drove back to Will's house, discarded any uncomfortable clothing and fell asleep at once.

Tessa woke up with Will's arms around her. She turned to look at Jem, who'd slept on her other side, but he wasn't there. Gently untangling herself from Will, she got up and went to find Jem. As she left the bedroom, a wonderful smell filled her nostrils. Following her nose to the kitchen, she saw Jem, cooking.

"Smells good," Tessa said smiling. She greeted Jem with a kiss on the cheek.

"I just hope it tastes okay," Jem laughed as he turned back to the stove.

"I am sure it will," Tessa replied. Moments later, Will joined them, his hair disheveled from sleep and his eyes half open.

"Food?" Will asked, with the air of one who was only half conscious.

"Still not a morning person huh Will?" Jem laughed.

"Nope," Will replied. "Firefighters keep weird hours."

"Students keep odd hours too," Jem replied. "Just less dangerous ones."

"I wear protective gear," Will said waving a hand dismissively. "It isn't that dangerous."

"As if!" Jem exclaimed. "I've seen your scars."

"Jem has a point," Tessa agreed. She'd often seen the scars across Will's body and knew the feel of his callused hands.

"You're graduating in a few months," Will changed the topic. "Not much student time left."

"Argh don't remind me," Jem sighed.
"You make no sense Jem," Tessa teased. "I still have another year after this one. I wish I was as close as you to graduation." Tessa and Magnus were in their third year at the university, having started at the same time. Jem went to a specialty school that only taught music. He was taking courses online rather than live abroad. Tessa had never asked, but had always suspected that Jem was only here because Will, and now Tessa, were here.

"Do you know what you want to do with your degree Tessa?" Jem asked.

"Literature degree," Tessa replied. "Literature job. I want to work in publishing."

"Ah, I see," Jem said. "That's my problem. I don't want school to end because I don't want to figure out what to do with a degree in classical music."

"You could teach?" Will suggested.

"Need another degree for that," Jem replied.

"Perform," Tessa said. "I am sure people would pay to hear you play Jem." But Jem just shrugged.

"How about we just have breakfast," Jem said as he served up scrambled eggs. Will and Tessa knew when to let a subject drop and the three of them shifted to less important conversation topics while they ate. Unfortunately, no weekend lasts forever and Tessa's Sunday with Jem and Will was soon over, just like the Saturday before. It had been a wonderful day spent with those she loved most and Tessa was sad to leave. Jem headed home with her as Will had to go to work, so she said goodbye to them separately. A quick kiss was her farewell to Will who didn't want to be late, but when Jem dropped her off at her place on his way home they had a moment alone together.

"I'm sorry I was being so weird about the hospital," Jem said nervously. Tessa was sitting in the passenger seat of Jem's car. She turned to face him before she spoke.

"I get it Jem," Tessa said smiling at him. "Don't worry about it."

"You sure?" Jem asked.

Tessa nodded. "I can only imagine what it's like to live with what you live with," she said. "If something makes you uncomfortable than it makes you uncomfortable. You don't have to be sorry for how you feel."

Jem smiled back at her and leaned forward to kiss her sweetly before whispering, "Thanks, Tessa."

With another quick kiss, Tessa got out of the car and headed into her apartment. She wasn't surprised to see Alec's jacket hung up on the wall, his shoes by the door. At this point she was starting to wonder if they should be charging him rent. Tessa put down her bag and hung up her coat next to his as she called to her friends. They greeted her and she went to join them. Magnus and Alec were sitting close together on the couch, probably having just finished a movie. Tessa sat in the chair opposite.

"Guess what?" Magnus asked.

"What?" Tessa replied, since that was clearly what Magnus wanted to hear.

"Simon dumped Clary and she went straight to Jace," Magnus said excitedly.
"Wow," Tessa gasped.

"I know right!" Magnus said waving his phone in the air. "She just texted me!"

"Did this all happen like right now?" Tessa asked.

"I think it happened yesterday," Alec laughed. "Because Jace was in a huff last night about how I should have told him Clary didn't love Simon."

"Why did Clary wait so long to text me then?" Magnus whined. "Best friend indeed."

Tessa laughed. "Oh, so you do sleep at your own place sometimes then, huh Alec?"

"It's been known to happen," Alec chuckled.

"Oh, like you haven't been at Will or Jem's house just as often," Magnus called her out.

"I supposed," Tessa replied. "Though sometimes they come here. Magnus, have you even once gone to Alec's place?"

"Just the once," Alec laughed. "The day we started going out actually."

"Your dorm is tiny," Magnus replied. "And your bed too." Alec laughed again, his shoulders shaking slightly with mirth. She stayed and talked to them for a few minutes more than had to excuse herself to go start the homework she had neglected while she'd been enjoying her weekend with Will and Jem.

Monday morning dawned; Tessa went to her classes, but found her mind often wondering, from classics like Shakespeare to the men she loved. How had she gotten so lucky as to be able to have them both? Thoughts of Will and Jem kept her going during classes and homework during the weekdays and every weekend she saw at least one of them. Will was harder to make plans with since his work schedule was so strangely structured. He often worked twenty-four hours in a row then got multiple days off, sometimes working days, sometimes nights, and then there were the days when he was on call, when you never knew if he would get to stay home or be called into work. Tessa had no idea how he did it.

Though she spent time with them separately whenever possible, Tessa still liked it best when it was the three of them. She didn't get them both again until Valentine's day. It seemed they'd planned a surprise for her. The weather wasn't exactly warm, but with January over the weather was improving. Tessa loved spring time; it was so full of hope and promise.

Around four o'clock on February the 14th Tessa received a text from Jem with instructions to go to the park. Her classes were over for the day and she headed out. When Tessa arrived, she found Will waiting for her. She linked arms with him and together they walked deeper into the park.

"Where are you taking me?" Tessa asked in a teasing tone.

" Wouldn't you like to know," Will replied. So, she followed without complaint until they had walked right through the park in a straight line, reaching the other side.

"What was the point of that?" Tessa asked. Will didn't reply, but instead lead her toward a limo parked along the road. She figured he'd just walked her through the park to throw her off. Little schemer. Will opened the door and motioned for her to get in. She did so and found Jem sitting in the back of the limo.
"You sneaky boys," Tessa laughed as Will slid onto the long bench seat on the other side of her, that was the limo's interior. When the door closed, the car started moving and Tessa knew better than to ask where they were going.

When the limo stopped, Jem helped her out of the car and linked arms with her. Will came around the limo and took her other arm. Looking around, Tessa saw that they were outside a fancy hotel. As they entered, Will gave his name at the door and was handed a keycard. They went up in the elevator together, stopping on the third floor. Jem and Will stopped at a door, a short distance down the hall, and Will used the key card, with a slight click.

Once the door was open, Tessa gasped. The room was elaborately decorated for Valentine's day. Dinner for three was set at a small table on the left with a red tablecloth and crisp white napkins perfectly folded. The lights were low and Tessa could see candles flickering all around the room. The king-sized bed had white linens too, but was also covered with red rose petals. A bottle of champagne was on ice and the whole room smelled fantastic, like jasmine and lavender mixed with the smokey smell of the candle flames.

"Wow," Tessa gasped as she walked farther into the room.

"That's the reaction I was hoping for," Will said and even without turning around she could hear the smirk in his voice.

"You didn't have to," Tessa breathed. "This is too much."

"Oh but this is just from me," Will told her. "Jem got you something else."

"What?" Tessa said whirling around. Sure enough, Jem was now holding a small velvet box. Jem stepped forward and placed the box in her hands. Tessa almost didn't want to open it.

"I-" Tessa stammered. "I didn't get you guys anything."

"What do you think this room is for?" Will smirked, jerking his head toward the bed. Jem rolled his eyes and Tessa laughed nervously, not that she wasn't totally on board with Will's plan but the lengths they'd gone to for her had Tessa stunned.

"Just open it," Jem whispered. There was such happiness in Jem's eyes that she couldn't deny him. Tessa opened the box and saw the most beautiful jade pendant necklace. It had some sort of Chinese marking on it and the pendant hung on a thin silver chain.

"It was my mother's," Jem explained.

"It's beautiful," Tessa gasped. "But I can't accept this Jem. It's too much."

"There is no one I'd rather have wear it," Jem replied in a tone that brooked no argument. Jem moved forward, gently lifted the necklace from its case and placed it around Tessa's neck. The jade stone pendant was cold as it touched her skin and Tessa placed a hand to her throat. It was such a huge gift. She kissed Jem sweetly on the lips, unsure how to express her awe.

"Thank you," Tessa whispered then Will mentioned something about food the getting cold and they all headed over to the table and dug in. The food was delicious, but light enough that after they weren't tired from over eating.

"I planned it that way," Will grinned. "So I can do this." Getting up from the table Will scooped Tessa into his arms and planted a passionate kiss on her lips. Tessa felt her heart flutter. Jem moved around the table and soon she was within arms reach of both of the men she loved and caught up in
the passion of that love. Clothes were discarded as they lost themselves in each other.

If asked in this moment if there was a downside to a great sex life Tessa would have said there wasn’t one. However, if you asked her later that week she would have replied that the down side to great group sex was bladder infections.

Chapter End Notes

OMG Finally a time gap. Do you realize it's been January for like 15 chapters now! My timeline looks so lame. :(  

I am doing a research project. If you are a writer, would you mind filling out my short survey? The link is: angela446.typeform.com/to/LuMf3J  

Thanks I'd really appreciate it! :D  

Sneak Peek Ch 37  
"Even without the Valentine's day thing," Jace continued. "It's amazing. I get to hold her hand now. And go see her whenever I want. Oh and talk to her everyday."

"Yes its called being in a relationship," Alec laughed. They were walking together down the hall, heading to the cafeteria for lunch, where they were meeting Magnus and Clary.

"I don't care what it's call," Jace replied, clearly too happy to care that Alec was laughing at him. "It's awesome."

"You're hilarious," Alec chuckled with a shake of his head. "From relentless player to clingy boyfriend. Clary must be magic."
It was Valentine's day and Alec still didn't know what he was going to give Magnus. However, at the moment he had other worries.

"Never before have I been so disappointed in a class's performance," the professor's voice echoed through the classroom. Alec was sitting at the back, but that didn't stop him from sinking lower in his chair. "I told you all this would require you to keep up with it. You are first year students, but that's no excuse. Even first years should be able to follow such a simple instruction." The Professor slammed the stack of papers, that consisted of their poorly done assignments, on his desk.

"Do you think I'm stupid?" he asked. "Do you think I can't tell the difference between a month's work and a night's cramming? Do you think this is my first day teaching?" He paused to move from one side of his desk to the other. "I have to say I am very disappointed in each and every one of you, and I expect each and every one of you to redo the assignment. To be handed in again next week." He started moving among the students, handing back assignments.

Alec was feeling about as important as gum on someone's shoe as he sunk lower into his chair. He kept going over and over the assignment in his head, wondering where he'd gone wrong. He couldn't stop his brain from going over every detail and trying to remember exactly how it didn't match the instructions.

"That guy is intense," Jace sniggered from the seat beside Alec.

"How can you be so calm?" Alec muttered. Jace just grinned like a fool. Ever since Jace had started actually dating Clary, Alec had noticed a huge change in him. Mostly this change consisted of Jace always grinning like a fool.

"It's Valentine's day!" Jace whispered. "And I'm seeing Clary later."

"So basically, what you're saying is girls are more important than school?"

"No," Jace corrected him. "Clary is more important than school."

"Oh yes," Alec replied sarcastically. "Because heaven forbid we call her a girl."

"Shut up," Jace said grinning. Alec turned away from Jace as the Professor walked by them. Alec took back his assignment but he had his eyes shut tight to avoid seeing his own failure.

"Oh yeah," Jace said, happily. "That could totally have been worse." Well if Jace had done badly, surely Alec hadn't done worse? He opened his eyes.

"Huh?" Alec said stunned, staring at his homework. What the hell was the professor's problem. Had he just been trying to give Alec an ulcer?

"Sorry Lightwood," the professor said before moving past them. "Nothing I said applied to you." Alec just blinked down at his 100% score in awe.

"Great," Jace smiled. "You can help me fix mine." The class was dismissed while Alec was still staring dumbfounded at his paper.
"Why did you lecture the whole class then?" Alec asked.

"Well it was that or ask you to leave the room," the professor replied. "And I didn't want to single you out like that." The professor moved on to hand out assignments to the rest of the students, but Alec was still at a loss. Did the professor know his parents? Or had he actually been the only student in the entire class who didn't need to redo their homework? The professor finished handing back the homework and the class was dismissed.

"You coming?" Jace asked. He was already packed up, books in hand and was waiting for Alec to join him.

"Yeah, one sec," Alec replied as he walked past their row of seats toward the teacher's desk.

"Geez!" Jace called after him as Alec left. "A perfect score isn't good enough for you huh?" Alec ignored him.

"Excuse me," Alec said as he approached.

"Yes?" the professor replied then he turned and saw who'd addressed him. "Oh, Mr. Lightwood. Of all the people I thought would approach me after that, I didn't think it would be you."

"I just wanted to ask," Alec said. "I mean why-"

"You did the assignment correctly," the professor replied, simply.

"So, it's nothing to do with my parents then?" Alec asked. He really hated the idea of getting a free pass.

"Nothing whatsoever," the professor said. "Don't get me wrong. When I saw your name on my class list at the start of the semester, I knew right away who you were, but I don't grade students based on that."

"Thanks," Alec said smiling as he turned and headed back to Jace, who was standing in the doorway to the hall, looking rather impatient.

"What was that about?" Jace asked.

"Nothing," Alec answered. "Just had a question."

"On your perfect score?" Jace scoffed. "Oh please."

"I'm allowed to ask questions," Alec defended himself.

"Yeah, sure Hermione," Jace teased.

"Her-who?" Alec asked.

"Please tell me you've read Harry Potter?" Jace whined.

"I've heard of it," Alec replied.

"Sometimes I think you live in your own little world," Jace laughed.

"Speaking of worlds," Alec said. "I seem to be far more central to yours lately. Where is that extremely rude friend of yours anyway?"
"Sebastian changed schools," Jace replied, suddenly stoic.

"Not that I'm complaining," Alec said tentatively. "As it's been quite refreshing not to be yelled at by a drunk, but may I ask what happened? Why did he leave?"

"He just left," Jace replied. Alec sensed that Jace didn't want to say more on this matter and let it drop, but he didn't forget the pained expression on his friend's face. It seemed Jace had finally given up on Sebastian. Alec had to admit that he was surprised.

"So, you're meeting Clary later?" Alec changed the topic and Jace jumped at the chance to talk about his girlfriend.

"Yep," Jace said. "I'm so excited."

"Your first Valentine's day with a girlfriend," Alec said. "I'm not surprised you're excited."

"Even if it wasn't Valentine's day," Jace continued. "It's still amazing. I get to hold her hand now. And go see her whenever I want. Oh, and talk to her every day."

"Yes, it's called being in a relationship," Alec laughed. They were walking together down the hall now, heading to the cafeteria for lunch where they were meeting Magnus and Clary.

"I don't care what it's called," Jace replied, clearly too happy to care that Alec was laughing at him. "It's awesome."

"You're hilarious," Alec chuckled with a shake of his head. "From relentless player to clinging boyfriend. Clary must be magic."

"Am I clingy?" Jace asked, the gleeful tone of his voice switching to worry.

"I'd have to say yes," Alec replied. "Definitely clingy, but that is only a problem if it bothers Clary."

"Maybe I should ask her!" Jace exclaimed. "What do you think?" Alec had to resist the urge to pity pat him.

"Why are you looking at me like I'm a puppy or something?" Jace asked pausing in the hall.

"Because you are!" Alec laughed. "Adorable, that is. It's like watching a child learn how to walk. Having a girlfriend is so foreign to you."

"Oh, shut up!" Jace said waving his hand dismissively as they started walking again.

When they entered the cafeteria, Jace saw Clary sitting at a table with Magnus and all other thoughts and priorities apparently left his mind as Jace half jogged toward his girlfriend, effectively leaving Alec in his dust. Jace was already sitting beside Clary when Alec got to the table. Alec suspected Jace had decided that the thirty seconds it would have taken him to walk at a normal human pace was just thirty seconds too long away from Clary. Definitely clingy.

"Were we this gushy when we first got together?" Alec whined as he sat beside Magnus. Jace and Clary were already making out.

"I suspect so, yes," Magnus sighed. "And what do you mean were? It's only been a month and a half, Alexander. Surely we haven't lost our fire yet."

"I didn't mean that," Alec told his boyfriend. "I meant that we don't, well" - he gestured to Jace with his tongue down Clary's throat - "do that in public."
"True," Magnus chuckled.

"Sorry," Clary mumbled as she broke apart from Jace and turned to face them, red in the face. They went to order food and when they all returned to the table, somehow the topic shifted back to what happened in class today.

"Everyone in the class is redoing the assignment, but I have a week to do it," Jace was telling Clary. "Lot's of time."

"You shouldn't leave things to the last minute," Clary scolded him.

"But it's Valentine's day," Jace reminded her. "Our first."

"How are you the same person I knew in high school," Alec sighed with a shake of his head. Everyone at the table ignored him.

"Oh, alright, but you are working on it tomorrow!" Clary said, smiling. "You can't flunk out just to spend time with me."

"Well my roommate is the only guy in the class who doesn't have to redo it," Jace said, almost like he was bragging. "So, I think I know a guy who can help me." He winked at Alec who rolled his eyes.

"Really?" Magnus asked.

"Well unless you don't have time," Jace amended, looking at Alec.

"No, I meant a perfect score Alec," Magnus said smiling.

"Yeah. He gave us a very long lecture about being disappointed first. Had me all psyched out," Alec whined. "If he'd just handed them back first I wouldn't have been so worried."

"And everyone else in the class had to redo it?" Magnus asked.

"Yep," Jace said, laughing. "Little teacher's pet Hermione-ed the homework."

"It's called listening to instruction," Alec told Jace. "It doesn't take a genius to follow instructions you know. Though I guess at first I thought it could have been because of my par-" He stopped mid-sentence.

"Your par?" Jace asked, still laughing.

"My parrot," Alec said thinking fast.

"You have a parrot?" Magnus asked, skeptically.

"I wrote him a funny joke about a parrot," Alec said hastily. "On the homework that is."

"Oh what joke?" Clary asked.

"I can't remember," Alec lied. Clary and Jace seemed to take it in stride, but Magnus had a strange expression on his face. Alec had a funny feeling Magnus wasn't going to let this go. He changed the topic and Magnus didn't object. Alec hoped that was the end of it. They finished lunch and headed to their afternoon classes. Alec's last class ended around three-thirty and Alec went straight to Magnus's, arriving just in time to see Tessa leave. They waved to each other as they passed.
"Happy Valentine's day," Alec greeted his boyfriend with a kiss, as he entered the apartment. Magnus wrapped his arms around Alec and a soft contented noise escaped Alec's throat.

"And you think we aren't gushy," Magnus scoffed as he kissed Alec again on the cheek.

"I didn't mean it the way you heard it," Alec whined. "Now come back here. I wasn't done kissing you." Magnus smiled and pulled Alec close before putting his hands under Alec's shirt. He loved the feel of Magnus's hands against his skin. Alec quickly deepened the kiss and moved his own hands to move over Magnus's back. The kiss deepened and soon their shirts were on the floor, Alec's bare chest against Magnus's felt wonderful.

"Hmmm…" Alec moaned into the kiss. Oh, how he loved this man. Resisting the urge to confess the love overwhelming his heart, Alec leaned his head to the side so Magnus could kiss his neck.

"Want another hickey, do you?" Magnus chuckled as his lips moved down Alec's shoulder.

"A hidden one," Alec whispered, smiling. He felt the slight pain of Magnus's hickey just under his collarbone. The kisses and caresses grow more heated until Alec was about ready to drag his boyfriend off to the bedroom. Then Magnus pulled away, grinning.

"Tease," Alec muttered.

"I got you a present," Magnus said with a twinkle in his eye. He looked so happy Alec couldn't be annoyed. Magnus ran off toward his bedroom and returned a moment later with a small box. He placed the box in Alec's outstretched hands.

"What's this?" Alec asked.

"Open it," Magnus said, excited. Alec gently lifted the lid of the box and saw a small silver key resting on red velvet. "Since you're here so much anyway," Magnus added. "I thought you should have that."

"Is this the key to your apartment?" Alec asked.

"Yes," Magnus replied. "Do you like it?"

"It's perfect," Alec said smiling at Magnus. Placing his present down, Alec threw himself at his boyfriend and kissed him again.

"Sorry," Alec said when they broke apart. "I didn't get you anything. I thought about it all week, but-" All Alec had come up with was telling Magnus he loved him for the first time on Valentine's day. It was such a romantic notion, but the problem was that if Magnus didn't say it back, it might be a problem and in the end Alec wasn't willing to risk it.

"It's the thought that counts," Magnus whispered as he kissed Alec's cheek. Alec turned to kiss Magnus's mouth and within moments all else but each other was forgotten. Chests pressed together, lips locked, they slowly moved toward the doorway to Magnus's bedroom. Alec smiled into their kiss as he guided them to the bed.

"Not such a tease, now am I?" Magnus smirked as he flung Alec's pants across the room. Alec laughed. Rather than reply, he saved his mouth for rather more enjoyable activities.

"I think we missed our dinner reservations," Magnus chuckled a while later. They were lying naked together under a sheet on Magnus's bed.
"We could order in?" Alec suggested. "I, for one, don't want to leave this bed."

"Ah, but someone would have to get up to get the door," Magnus reminded him.

"True," Alec said grinning. "Let's starve."

"As much fun as that sounds," Magnus laughed as he sat up to look for his phone. "I think I'd prefer Chinese." Alec listened to Magnus order their dinner over the phone while he laid back to admire his beautiful, still very naked, boyfriend.

"Thank you," Magnus said as he hung up the phone and turned to Alec. "Dinner will be about an hour." Alec grinned and half sat up to pull Magnus down with him.

"What shall we do while we wait?" Alec smirked. Magnus smiled and pulled Alec down to kiss him. Alec's hands ran through his boyfriend's hair while Magnus's hands moved down Alec's sides. Both already spent, the kissing soon turned to cuddling. Magnus's fingers slowly running through Alec's hair.

Alec closed his eyes. "That feels nice," he said.

"Parrot," Magnus replied.

"Huh?" Alec asked, opening his eyes.

"You have never once made a parrot joke Alec," Magnus said. "I am sure that isn't what you were actually going to say."

"Oh that," Alec sighed. He had so hoped Magnus would forget about his slip up at lunch.

"So, are you going to tell me then?" Magnus asked.

"One of life's little mysteries," Alec said, trying to sound nonchalant.

"Yeah, no," Magnus replied smiling. Then he added as sweetly as he could, "Please Alec. It's Valentine's Day. Satisfying my curiosity could be your present to me."

"Trust me it's not much of a present," Alec muttered but Magnus insisted, even pouting a little and looking up at Alec with those big beautiful eyes. Alec couldn't say no to those eyes. "I was worried the teacher only gave me a good grade because of my parents."

"Ah," Magnus said. "Par as in parents."

"Yeah," Alec mumbled, crossing his fingers that Magnus wouldn't ask for more.

"So who are your parents?" Magnus inquired. "Come to think about I know nothing about them, while you know all about me."

"I don't like to tell people about them," Alec confessed. "It's just easier."

"Are they bad parents?" Magnus asked.

"No," Alec said. "It's not that. They're great. It's just that I don't like it when people look at me differently." He paused and put a hand on Magnus's cheek lovingly. "I especially don't want you to look at me differently."

"Just tell me, Alexander," Magnus said. He sounded a little worried now and Alec wondered if
Magnus was imagining it worse than it was.

"My parents, Maryse and Robert Lightwood, are the CEOs of Idris Industries," Alec said cautiously.

"Idris Industries?" Magnus asked. Alec wasn't surprised Magnus didn't know the name, since it was more a holding company than a brand. Alec started listing the franchises and chain stores owned by Idris Industries. He watched as Magnus's eyes went wide, his mouth slightly open.

"But, Alec," Magnus gasped. "Those are some of the most prosperous stores in the country?"

"I know," Alec sighed.

"So, you're rich," Magnus stated, clearly shocked.

"My parents are," Alec corrected. "This isn't a big deal. I promise."

"I still don't understand why you thought it would affect your homework," Magnus said, but he was clearly overwhelmed and Alec was worried.

"I don't really know how much, but I know my parents have donated a lot of money to this school," Alec explained.

"I see," Magnus replied, calmly. Too calmly.

"Please don't freak out," Alec replied quickly.

"I'm not freaking out," Magnus said, but his words and his tone did not match up. He was clearly freaking out.

"Magnus," Alec whispered placing a hand on his boyfriend's shoulder. "Nothing's changed."

"Except that you are now out of my league," Magnus laughed, but there was a strange edge to his laughter that made Alec think Magnus actually meant what he was saying more than he seemed to.

Alec pulled his hands away in frustration. "Stop please!" Alec exclaimed. "We went this long without it being a problem. Love has nothing to do with money."

Magnus stared up at Alec with wide eyes. "Love?" he whispered.

"Cat's out of the bag huh?" Alec half laughed, trying to hide his fear. "Wow, I am on a roll today."

"Alexander," Magnus said urgently. "I-"

"It's okay," Alec said gently placing a finger over Magnus's perfect slightly swollen lips. "I know it's too soon. You don't have to say it back."

Chapter End Notes

*hides from Malec shippers* hehe but at least they got some plot again right? :D

If you haven't already PLEASE go check out my new Malec story "Forgotten" ^_^ The second chapter is going up very soon. Just waiting for my beta to return it. And sorry for the slow updates on this story guys. I have been focusing on other things but I was
binge writing R&S just the other night so you should get updates a little faster... I hope. This chapter was finished ages ago but my beta got busy. :(  

Sneak Peek Chapter 38:

"Clary," Jace started. "Am I clingy?" Every since he'd talked to Alec about it this morning he'd wanted to ask her this, just to make sure.

"A little," she laughed. "But I kinda like it."

"Great!" Jace exclaimed. Jace gathering up their trays and walked over to the trash, Clary following him.

"I'm worried about Simon," Clary said after a moment.

"Okay I liked it better when you were worrying about Magnus," Jace whined.

"Sorry," Clary said. "It's just that he's my friend too and he's hurting."

"He's also your ex," Jace added. "And I know I have no legs to stand on here but could you not bring him up on Valentine's day."
"I wrote him a funny joke about a parrot," Alec said. "On the homework that is." It was only when Clary asked what joke that Jace bothered to listen. Alec couldn't remember the joke, but Jace wasn't too concerned. Alec was, after all, a bit of a teacher's pet and though Jace would never be one himself, he knew it never hurt to have a teacher's pet as a friend.

"So, Clary," Alec said changing the topic. "How were your morning classes?" Jace listened as his girlfriend replied, talking about her art history class. Magnus chimed in on the history part. It was a pleasant way to pass a lunch hour.

"Off to Econ I go," Alec sighed a quarter of an hour later, as he collected his tray and left the cafeteria.

"Parrot," Magnus said as he watched Alec's retreating back. "Alec doesn't make parrot jokes."

"What are you going on about?" Jace asked.

"Never mind," Magnus sighed. "I'll see you guys later."

"Bye Magnus," Clary said as Magnus too made his way to his afternoon classes.

"Do you think something's wrong?" Clary asked. "Magnus seemed distracted."

"I'm sure he's fine," Jace replied.

"Sorry," Clary sighed. "I really do have a meddling in my other people's lives problem, don't I?"

"Maybe," Jace smiled at her. "But you're awfully cute when you're worried about your friends." He kissed her forehead then added, "Actually you're just cute all the time."

"You're sweet," Clary replied smiling at him.

"Clary," Jace started. "Am I clingy?" Ever since he'd talked to Alec about it this morning he'd wanted to ask her this, just to make sure.

"A little," she laughed. "But I kinda like it."

"Great!" Jace exclaimed. He gathered up their trays and walked over to the trash, Clary following him.

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"Sorry," Clary said. "It's just that he's my friend too and he's hurting."

"He's also your ex," Jace added. "And I know I have no legs to stand on here, but could you not bring him up on Valentine's day."

"Fair enough," Clary said. "But you have probably slept with half the girls at this school."
"Low blow," Jace whined. "Can we talk about something else?" He turned to her and was glad to see her smiling. She leaned up on her toes to kiss him. Jace put his arms around her and savored the kiss.

"Happy Valentine's day," Clary whispered when they broke apart. "Sorry, it's just that I can't help thinking about it sometimes." It was moments like this Jace wished his past self hadn't been so stupid.

"I can't change the past," Jace whispered. Clary didn't reply and Jace got a weird feeling. Was she actually upset? He couldn't quite tell, though by the time he'd walked her to her next class, she seemed to be back to normal.

"See you tonight," Clary smiled.

"My place," Jace said. "Alec will be at Magnus' like always." He rolled his eyes and Clary laughed.

Jace didn't have class this afternoon, but rather wrestling practice. Their coach was very insistent on more and more practices now that they were within sight of actual matches. Jace didn't mind. It was nice to have the physical exercise. He didn't like going to the gym by himself and Sebastian wasn't around to go with him anymore. Jace managed to keep his mind on task for almost the whole practice, his thoughts only drifting to Clary once or twice.

After, when he was back at his dorm Jace showered and waited for Clary. He had no idea what boyfriends were supposed to do for their girlfriends on Valentine's day. Every Valentine's day previous to this one, Jace had spent with Sebastian at a bar praying on vulnerable women without a date. Jace might not be able to change the past but these days he sure as hell wished he could.

"Jace?" Clary's soft voice echoed through the quiet room as she entered.

"I'm here," Jace replied getting up from his desk to hug her.

"I-" Clary started. "I mean, do you have anything planned for tonight?"

"I thought we could snuggle up and watch a movie," Jace suggested. "I ordered dinner."

"Sounds great," Clary said, but she seemed nervous and Jace hadn't a clue why.

"You want to pick the movie?" Jace asked. Clary nodded and turned away from him to consult the app Netflix on Jace's laptop.

"You might not hate this," Clary said nervously after looking through the choices for a few minutes.

"Sounds perfect," Jace laughed without even checking which movie she'd picked. "I'm sure you'd hate any movie I choose." Jace put the laptop on the end of his bed and set up the pillows as a headboard.

"Sorry," Jace said. "We don't really have a couch. You know I totally get why Alec's never here." He laughed. "Magnus has a wide screen tv and a couch."

"This is fine," Clary replied as she clicked on the button that said 'The Fault in Our Stars.' The movie started and Jace put his arm around her, just happy to be near her. He was even starting to enjoy the movie when Clary suddenly turned around in his arms. She kissed him and Jace forgot about the movie. His hands moved to her waist as she pressed closer to him, her right leg moving to his other side so she was straddling him.

Jace was now working very hard to check his impulsive urges. Clary's legs on either side of his hips,
her hands moving over his chest, her lips mingling with his, all together meant his blood supply no longer traveled in the direction of his brain. They were just making out, which they'd done before and Jace tried not to read too much into it. But then Clary started moving her hips forward and back over his lap, Jace moaned. Maybe he hadn't been reading too much into it.

"Clary?" Jace asked, but she didn't answer. Instead, her hands went to the buttons of his shirt. Gently, Jace held her hands still, and pulled back out of the kiss.

"Clary," Jace whispered. "What are you doing?"

"I thought it was obvious," Clary said.

"Is this why you've been so nervous tonight?" Jace asked.

"I-" Clary started. "I think I want- I mean it's you and-"

"Slow down," Jace said, gently.

"We could have sex," Clary said shyly.

"We could," Jace replied, calmly. "But Clary, have I once asked this of you? If sex was the reason I was interested, I wouldn't be with you."

"Oh great," Clary exclaimed, leaning slightly away from him, somewhere between angry and upset. "So, you don't want to have sex with me?"

"No, that isn't what I meant," Jace said, frustrated by his failure to communicate his thoughts. "I meant sex isn't the reason why I want you."

"So, you don't want me like that," Clary accused. "Is that what you're saying?"

"How can you ask me that?" Jace replied. The irony of her statement was lost on her, as she had no idea how uncomfortable Jace's pants were at the moment.

"I know I don't have any experience in this area," Clary said quickly. "But I could learn. I know- I mean you're you and a movie means-"

"A movie," Jace replied. "I did want to watch a movie."

"I just don't know what to do," Clary said, really upset now. "I've never felt like this before."

"And you think I have?" Jace replied softly. "Clary, these last two weeks with you is the longest relationship I've ever had. I have no idea what I'm doing here. I had to google activity ideas for tonight."

"No, not like that," Clary explained. "I mean I've never felt like this before." She moved closer to him, pressing her hips into his. "I've never wanted anyone like I want you, Jace." A deep moan escaped from Jace's throat. He pulled her close, resuming their passionate kiss until Clary's hands went for the buttons of his shirt again. He let her remove the shirt and run her hands over his chest. It felt amazing, but did nothing to lessen his desire for her.

"Clary," Jace whispered into their kiss. "You are beautiful and I want you more than I've ever wanted anyone but, running the risk of sounding like a cheesy movie, with you I want it to be special."

"It's Valentine's day," Clary told him.
"I know," Jace replied. "But we've only been going out for two weeks and I don't want to rush you."

"Are you sure this isn't about you not wanting me that way?" Clary asked. Jace laughed and gently taking her hand, he moved her hand down to feel just how much she'd turned him on.

"You can't fake that Clary," Jace said. The effect of her hand against him, even through his jeans, was making him dizzy with desire. This girl had no idea how irresistible she really was.

"Then, why not now?" Clary asked. "I'm sick of being a 20-something virgin Jace. It's embarrassing."

"It's funny," Jace said smiling at her, lifting his arms to tuck a strand of red hair behind her ear. "I don't understand why people give virginity such meaning. Trust me, it doesn't really matter."

"Seems to me like it does," Clary replied.

"It doesn't define you Clary," Jace said. "Being a virgin isn't a defining feature of a person. You are more than that and I think we should wait." Jace congratulated himself on saying exactly what he didn't want. If it had been anyone but Clary though!

"I'm sorry," Clary said. "I shouldn't define you by your experience either."

"It's okay," Jace said. "That defines me more than your virginity defines you." Just these two weeks with Clary had taught Jace that sex without affection was less meaningful than a kiss with love.

"Alright," Clary said. She hesitated then added, "But can I?" Her hands were held out and Jace knew what she was asking. He smiled at her to show her it was okay and her hands moved down to his pounding loins. Clary quickly got his pants undone. Jace sighed as his erection was freed from the confines of his jeans. Jace laid his head back as he felt her hands explore him. It was so different than anything he'd ever experienced. There was a curiosity about the way she touched him. It wasn't sex, but that didn't mean Jace didn't enjoy it.

"Thanks," Clary said when she took her hands away. Jace pulled her in and kissed her.

"Your turn," Clary replied. She leaned back and pulled off her top in one fluid movement. Then she undid her bra and leaned forward to kiss him again. Her bare chest pressed against his and Jace almost gave up his resolve. He wanted to be inside her. He wanted to kiss every inch of her skin. He wanted her so much and in every way.

The movie forgotten, Jace's hands moved over the skin of her chest, giving special attention to her nipples.

"Jace," Clary gasped, leaning back. Jace pressed his face into her chest, kissing the skin between her breasts. If he didn't stop, like right now, he wasn't going to but she was still straddling him, on top of him. How could he get away? Why was he even thinking about trying to!

"Clary," Jace said urgently. "We have to stop."

"I don't want to," Clary said as she kissed his neck. Jace could feel his heart pounding.

"We don't have any protection," Jace whispered but Clary reached into her back pocket and pulled out a condom. Wow, she was serious.

"You can't take this back Clary," Jace whispered. "After everything you've been through, are you sure?"
"I had a sex dream about you once," Clary told him.

"Really?" Jace asked. Clary nodded. "That's funny, because my dreams about you were always romantic." With a grin, Clary turned around, closed the laptop and placed it on the floor before returning to Jace's lap. Clary's hands went to work pulling Jace's jeans off, soon they were around his knees.

"I'm sure," Clary whispered and Jace finally surrendered. Who was he kidding? He had never stood a chance of resisting her in the first place, but at least he'd tried. Now he was determined to make this good for her. His hands moved over her still bare breasts, then over her stomach and to her jeans. Once they were undone, Clary helped pull them down and off.

Once she was naked before him, Jace found himself temporarily stunned by the sight. Her red hair was definitely natural. She was so beautiful and she was his. Jace had never felt possessive over anyone like this before.

"What are you smirking about?" Clary asked.

"You're mine, aren't you?" Jace asked her.

"Only if you're mine," Clary replied.

"I've been yours since you laid eyes on me," Jace whispered softly as he leaned forward, laying her on her back.

"What shall you do with me now that I'm yours?" Clary asked.

"Savour you," Jace replied. He leaned down to kiss her neck, while his hands traveled down her body. Holding up his weight on one arm, Jace moved down to kiss her breasts while his hand moved lower still. Clary gasped and her legs spread apart slightly as his hand reached its destination. She was so wet, Jace couldn't help but grin. He gently moved his fingers around and over her most sensitive area. His own desire was throbbing, but he didn't care as he watched the pleasure on her face. Jace ran his hand down her thigh and then back up over her stomach before he returned to her sweet point. This time slipping a finger inside her.

"Jace!" Clary exclaimed, as her back arched. The sight of her naked on her back in his bed was too much for Jace. He was so done with foreplay. Reaching for the condom she'd put on the bedside table, Jace slipped it on with an ease that came with years of practice.

"Are you sure, Clary?" Jace asked as he leaned over her. He looked into those perfect green eyes to make sure she really meant what she'd said, but he needn't have bothered. Clary smiled widely at him and then wrapped her legs around his waist, roughly shoving them together. Jace gasped as his erection made contact with her wetness, though without entering her.

"I'm sure," Clary giggled. Laughing during sex was new and wonderful to Jace. There was so much joy in her laughter. They were almost lined up now and it took only a small adjustment on his part to slide easily inside her.

"Oh," Clary gasped gently.

"You okay?" Jace asked. He'd actually never been with a virgin before and was suddenly worried he'd hurt her.

"That felt," Clary started, but she seemed unable to find words. Instead she pulled him down and seized his lips in a passionate kiss. Taking this as a sign she was fine, Jace started to move inside her.
"What should I do now?" Clary asked, innocently.

"What do you want to do?" Jace asked her. She smiled and Jace felt her muscles squeeze him. Finishing instantly, Jace collapsed beside her.

"Sorry," Jace mumbled.

"Why are you apologizing?" Clary giggled as she rolled over to face him on the bed.

"I couldn't hold on," Jace explained. He'd been so close even before he felt her warmth engulf him. Everything about Clary was so sexy.

"Is that a bad thing?" Clary asked. Jace smiled, stroking her face lovingly.

"Did you finish?" Jace asked her. "Because if not I can fix that."

"I have no idea," Clary laughed. "But I enjoyed that."

"Good," Jace said smiling. He kissed her sweetly, then made a silent promise to himself that the next time he'd take more time with her.

"Now I'm cold," Clary laughed as she got up to look for her clothes. Jace got out of bed as well, mostly to throw out the condom rather than because he was cold. Jace watching Clary get dressed, enjoying the view of her from every angle.

"Do you want to finish the movie?" Clary asked when she was dressed. Then she noticed his lack of dress and added, "Aren't you going to put clothes on?"

"I suppose," Jace smirked but he moved towards her and kissed her before going to find his pants.

They cuddled up on the bed again, putting the movie back on. Clary's head was resting on his shoulder. Jace wasn't watching the movie. He was enjoying the glowing feeling in his chest that was cuddling after sex, which he'd never done before. Trinity was the only woman he'd slept with more than once and they'd never come close to cuddling. Jace stroked Clary's hair, marveling at her presence in his life.

"That was so sad," Clary whined when the movie ended.

"Hey, you picked the movie," Jace reminded her.

"I'd heard good things," Clary said. "And it was great, but I wanted a happy ending."

"Do you want to sleep here tonight?" Jace asked. "I know this bed is small but…"

"I'd love to," Clary replied. Jace's face broke out in a truly joyful smile. Throughout the movie, he'd been thinking how peaceful he was and how he didn't want her to leave.

He listened to her talk about the movie he'd ignored for a while and then they talked of school and class. She nagged him again to work on his homework tomorrow, then they fell asleep in each other's arms. Despite the fact Jace couldn't roll over in the bed, he couldn't ever remember sleeping so well before. He woke up to the sound of Clary's voice.

"I have class," Clary whispered. Jace felt a kiss on his forehead then she spoke again. "I'll see you later."

"Don't go," Jace said reaching out for her.
"I'm already late," Clary laughed, but she let him pull her in and kiss her before she left. Jace must have fallen asleep again, because he woke up the second time to the sound of Alec's voice.

"It's after eleven," Alec said. "Get up."

Jace just groaned. He didn't have class till one o'clock today. What was Alec's problem?

"Wow you are so not a morning person," Alec sighed. "How was your Valentine's day?"

"Perfect," Jace said smiling. He sat up in bed, just the thought of his perfect Valentine's making him want to be awake.

"You're wearing a shirt," Alec remarked.

"Clary slept over," Jace grinned.

"Girlfriend slept in your bed and that means more clothes?" Alec laughed.

"Okay, yes I realize that doesn't make sense," Jace replied. "But it's too distracting being shirtless near her. I would never had slept."

"Oh," Alec said grinning. "And were you two distracted last night?" Jace knew exactly what Alec mean and decided it was none of Alec's business.

"How was your Valentine's day," Jace asked instead.

"Oh, don't ask," Alec whined as he laid down on his bed and covered his eyes with his hands. "I messed up."

"How so?" Jace asked.

"Well first I let him convince me it was a good idea to tell him my parents own half the country," Alec whined. "Then like an idiot I went and told Magnus I loved him."

"Wow," Jace said.

"Then I told him he didn't have to say it back," Alec continued.

"I didn't know your parents were rich," Jace replied. "Though it does explain you not working and not having a scholarship and all." After a pause in which Alec covered his face with a pillow, Jace added, "How did Magnus take it?"

"He said he was out of my league," Alec said miserably.

"Oh, that sucks," Jace sympathized.

"I can't lose him Jace," Alec said throwing the pillow aside and sitting up to look at Jace, a desperation in his eyes. Jace understood exactly what Alec meant. Now that he had Clary, losing her was incomprehensible.

"This sucks," Alec groaned. "Our Valentines was all awkward after that and I don't know how to fix it."

"Well do you think Magnus is acting weird because you said the L word early or because your parents are richer than god?"
"No idea," Alec sighed. "Either, both maybe." He laid back down on the bed, rather dramatically Jace thought.

"So, you're rich and you love your boyfriend," Jace told him. "I really don't see a problem here." Alec laughed humorlessly then offered to help Jace with his homework to take his mind off it. Jace was thrilled as finished homework meant more time with Clary later.

Chapter End Notes

Only took me close to 40 chapters for a Clace lemon. LOL! I really do know how to drag a thing out don't I? ^_^

The reason I put a one night stand lemon in chapter one was so you can see the contrast between that and when Jace finally experiences sex in a loving relationship. I feel like Jace has really grown as a person over the course of this story! What do you think? I wanted Clary to be innocent while still enthusiastic.

I have the next few chapters well on the way to being done, but what I have learned this week is that it doesn't matter how fast you write, you can only update as fast as your betas can edit.

SNEAK PEEK Chapter 39

He knew that voice. He'd do anything for that voice but he knew he shouldn't turn to see her. He knew which blonde she'd be sitting next to. Nevertheless Simon turned and sure enough there was Clary.

"Come sit with us!" Clary called to him. Simon looked down at his lunch, seriously considering skipped a meal just to avoid a conversation with Clary and her boyfriend. He stood frozen holding his tray, torn between going to her and running for the hills. But with a sigh he started walking toward her. Could one be whipped and yet not in a relationship?

"Hey," Simon mumbled. "You don't have to do this Clary."

"Do what silly?" Clary asked. Jace was sitting beside her while Magnus and his boyfriend sat across from her. Simon couldn't quite remember the boyfriend's name though. "I want to eat lunch with my friend, who I haven't seen in a really long time." The word friend hurt but not as badly as he'd expected. Simon looked at Jace and found there the normal reaction to Clary's crazy. Jace didn't look happy that Clary wanted her ex to join them.
Simon's Observations

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes.

Simon used to love Valentine's day, but that wasn't the case anymore. Now, he was very single and very bitter about it; this stupid holiday was just another reminder that he'd failed to get the woman he loved to return his feelings. To add insult to injury, Clary had started going out with someone else only hours after they'd broken up. The fact that the guy she'd picked over him was hotter than a Greek god had in no way improved Simon's sulky mood. He was therefore surprised that seeing Jace and Clary making out in the cafeteria actually made him feel worse. How was that even possible?

The weeks since Simon broke up with Clary had consisted mostly of trying to avoid looking at couples, (especially Jace and Clary) hanging out with the few friends he had here that weren't Clary's friends first, (otherwise known as Eric), doing homework and finally going to class. Eric was the only member of his band from back home that had decided to come to this school. Eric hadn't done it for some girl though, because Eric wasn't stupid. He'd actually been interested in a program here.

Simon stared at his phone, wondering who it was that he wanted to talk to. His sister had a boyfriend and was busy with her life at the college closer to home. And calling his mother on Valentine's day was so not going to happen. Simon was pathetic, but he wasn't that pathetic. Eric was out with his girlfriend and Simon suspected even all his friends back home were busy as well. Besides, he hadn't talked to them much since high school grad.

There was no one to call. Simon set his phone aside and pulled his laptop over. He'd been using homework as a distraction and therefore had none left to do. So, Simon decided the time was right for a depressing movie. Kids dying of cancer sounded about right. Simon started the movie titled 'The Fault in Our Stars' and sat back to watch it. However, he couldn't force himself to get more than halfway through it. It was simply too romantic; it hit too close to home. Simon ended up going to bed early, just to get Valentine's day over with. This horrible mood did, however, help him make a decision. After exams, he was going home. He should never have followed Clary here in the first place. His stupid naive hope had gotten him into this mess, but it was time rational thought got him out of it. It had taken a broken heart, but Simon had learned a valuable lesson.

The next morning, Simon tried to put Valentine's day behind him and focus on getting through his classes. This seemed to work, although his life became very monotonous. School work and the mundane aspects of daily life meant that February faded into March. Exams were at the end of April and though time seemed to be slowing down rather and speeding up, Simon could see the light at the end of the tunnel, that was leaving the school in which Clary regularly made out with Jace in the cafeteria.

"Simon!"

He knew that voice. He'd do anything for that voice, but he knew he shouldn't turn to see her. After all, he knew which blonde she'd be sitting next to. Nevertheless, Simon turned and sure enough, there was Clary.

"Come sit with us!" Clary called to him. Simon looked down at the lunch tray he was holding. He was seriously considering skipping lunch when Clary called to him again. He stood frozen holding his tray, torn between going to her and running for the hills. But, with a sigh he started walking toward her. Could one be whipped and yet not in a relationship?
"Hey," Simon mumbled. "You don't have to do this Clary."

"Do what silly?" Clary asked. Jace was sitting beside her while Magnus and his boyfriend sat across from her. Simon couldn't quite remember the boyfriend's name though. "I want to eat lunch with my friend, who I haven't seen in a really long time." The word friend hurt, but not as badly as he'd expected. Simon looked at Jace and found there the normal reaction to Clary's crazy. Jace didn't look happy that Clary wanted her ex to join them.

"This isn't really appropriate," Simon told her. "It's okay. I'll just eat on my own."

"You don't have to," Clary said. "You are welcome here."

"I don't think Jace wants me here," Simon said. Clary turned on her boyfriend and elbowed him in the ribs.

"Ouch!" Jace whined.

"Jace is fine with it," Clary told Simon. He couldn't help but laugh. He'd missed her crazy antics.

"Alright," Simon said, giving in. Somehow, he always gave into Clary. For a moment, he wondered if he always would, then everyone moved over and Simon found himself sitting next to Clary, with Jace on her other side.

Simon had clearly interrupted a conversation, which now continued where it had left off.

"Have you finished the homework yet?" Clary was nagging Jace.

"If I say yes will you agree to come over tonight?" Jace asked.

"That depends if it's the truth or not," Clary replied, then she turned to Magnus's boyfriend as if for confirmation.

"He did the homework," the black-haired man replied.

"See!" Jace exclaimed. "You believe Alec, right?" Simon pretended like he hadn't just learned Alec's name as he started eating his lunch.

"This idiot has been far too motivated to do his homework since you started not coming over if it wasn't done," Alec laughed.

"You know if I hadn't," Clary replied. "He'd be flunking half his classes, right?"

"Oh don't I know it!" Alec laughed.

"Hey now," Jace muttered. "Not half. I do want to stay in school you know. My scholarship goes poof if I flunk out."

"You should thank your girlfriend then," Alec chuckled, still laughing at Jace. "For your continued enrollment in this school." Simon thought he rather liked Alec. Jace grumbled but didn't argue further.

"Alec," Magnus spoke for the first time since Simon had sat down. "Are you done with your tray?"

"Yeah," Alec said, but just as Magnus reached for it Alec scooped up both his and Magnus's lunch trays and carried them off saying, "I got it."
As Simon was looking from Magnus to Alec, he noticed something different about them. From their body language to their tone of voice, something had changed. It was almost like Magnus was treating Alec with revelry. Simon couldn't understand it, but he also couldn't describe it any other way. There was something unspoken going on between those two, Simon was sure of it. Though just as soon as he'd had the thought, Simon reminded himself that it was none of his business. Magnus had become Simon's friend during the course of his and Clary's relationship, but now that they were split up Simon wasn't really sure where he stood with Magnus.

"Magnus," Clary whispered once Alec was out of earshot. "Seriously!" Magnus mumbled something, but didn't look up from his hands.

"You are worrying Alec," Jace told him. "Would you guys just talk already! This is getting ridiculous!"

"Yeah like you two are so perfect," Magnus scoffed. Alec appeared at that moment putting an end to Jace and Clary's harassment of Magnus.

"What did I miss?" Alec asked as he sat back down.

"Well we should really ask Simon something," Clary smiled. "I fear we have been ignoring our guest."

"I'm fine," Simon said quickly. He was actually enjoying just observing while he ate. It was at least a bit more distracting than being in his own thoughts. That is, as long as Clary and Jace didn't start making out or anything.

"How's Eric?" Clary asked him.

"Fine," Simon replied. He didn't know what to say. After all nothing was really happening in his life.

"Have you gotten anyone else to join your band yet?" Clary asked. She seemed determined to include Simon in the conversation after ignoring him before.

"Nope," Simon replied. "But we aren't really looking."

"I think you should look," Clary said brightly. Simon had never seen Clary happier. A part of him hated Jace, for obvious reasons, but Simon was also strangely grateful for the stupid blonde. At least Clary was happy even if Simon couldn't be the one to make her so.

"Nah," Simon said. "We don't do much with the band anymore. I am probably gonna change schools after this year."

"Oh," Clary said, softly. Her shoulders slumped and she looked so genuinely sad Simon actually felt bad.

"Well the rest of the band is back home," Simon explained. "And you know I only came to this school for you anyway."

"Yeah," Clary said sadly. "But if it means anything I'd like you to stay here."

"You don't fight fair," Simon muttered under his breath.

"You're my friend," Clary said smiling at him.

"Kick a guy when he'd down," Simon muttered again. He had no idea if anyone could hear him but
it felt good to say what he wanted either way.

"On that note I have class," Alec said standing up. He turned to say goodbye to Magnus. Simon couldn't tear his eyes away as he watched the awkward way in which Magnus didn't quite pull away from Alec's goodbye kiss. They were all silent as Alec walked out of the cafeteria.

"Arg!" Magnus said dramatically as his head hit the table.

"Talk. To. Him." Jace said as if speaking to a retarded person. Magnus must have been frustrated because he flipped Jace the finger. Simon had never seen him do such a thing before.

"Magnus!" Clary exclaimed.

"I am not taking relationship advice from Mr. One-Night-Stand," Magnus replied as he too got up from the table and left.

"I'm sorry," Clary said and Simon wasn't sure if she was talking to him or Jace. "I don't know what's wrong with him."

"This is what happens when you try to ignore a problem," Jace said. "Though I still don't see it as a problem. I mean they are just being ridiculous."

Simon couldn't stop his curiosity at the new gossip. "Did something happen?" Simon asked.

"Alec said the L word early," Jace said. "And accidently let it slip that his parents are loaded."

"That's it?" Simon said slightly disappointed by the quality of the gossip.

"As I said, ridiculous," Jace sighed.

"Well if Magnus hasn't said he loves Alec in return it might not be so ridiculous," Simon replied. Clary avoided Simon's gaze after that and Simon knew her well enough to know she was feeling guilty. A part of him was rather pleased about it, though he also wished she wasn't upset. Really, his thoughts made no sense right now.

"Thanks for eating lunch with us," Clary said softly as she made to stand up a few moments later. Simon just nodded since 'thanks for inviting me' didn't feel truthful and 'you're welcome' was no good either.

"Woah," Clary said, holding both her arms out to steady her. Next her hand was at her temple, her eyes closed. She seemed almost dizzy.

"Are you alright?" Jace and Simon asked together.

"Yeah," Clary said. "Just thought the room was spinning for a second." She shook her head a little and stood up straight. "But I'm fine now."

"You sure?" Jace asked again.

"Yes," Clary sighed. The next few minutes consisted of Jace fussing over Clary to make sure she was fine. Simon had rather mixed feelings about this. It seemed Clary was being well cared for by her new not-Simon boyfriend, but Simon so didn't want to have to see that.

"I've got class," Simon interrupted after a minute. Clary said goodbye and thanked him again before Simon hurried from the cafeteria.
Simon spent the rest of his day trying to keep the image of Jace fussing over Clary out of his head. Class was only a mild distraction. Why didn't any of these professors have anything interesting to say anyway? So annoying. Simon tried to get in touch with Eric as he desperately needed someone to hang out with, but no surprise Eric was busy.

The next day Simon was sitting in his dorm room trying to get some homework done when he decided he couldn't bear to see the inside of this tiny room for another minute. When had his life become nothing but class, homework and this room? Gathering up his textbooks Simon went into the main living space to finish his paper. He'd been working for at least a half hour when someone approached him.

"Hey." It was Jace's voice. Simon looked up. "I haven't seen you around here much lately."

"Been hiding out," Simon confessed. It was true. Avoiding Jace and Clary was one reason Simon had stopped taking homework into the common areas.

"Sorry I was so grumbly at lunch yesterday," Jace said.

"It's okay," Simon said. He turned back to continue his homework thinking Jace would leave it at that.

"I was just thinking about you as Clary's ex," Jace explained.

"Well that's what I am," Simon reminded him without looking up.

"But that's not all you are," Jace replied. "Clary says you don't have a lot of friends at this school. Maybe we could be friends."

"You want to be friends with your girlfriend's ex?" Simon said skeptically. "What happened to being annoyed Clary wanted me to join you guys for lunch?"

"I reacted automatically," Jace said. "But Clary and I talked about it and I realized I am in no position to take the moral high ground here. Clary has one ex and I have... well a lot more." Simon processed that, but didn't reply so Jace continued. "I did also try to steal her away from you even if I wasn't quite aware of it at the time. I am a great liar," Jace laughed. "Especially when it comes to lying to myself it seems."

"Are you lying to Clary?" Simon asked. The thought had only just occurred to him. Clary had seemed so happy but if Jace was lying...

"Never," Jace said so decisively Simon was taken aback. His short-lived worry that Jace was deceiving her was gone in an instant. "Before I met her, I'd never even had a crush on someone before. I don't know what love feels like, but I have to believe it feels a little like this."

"So that's why you're being nice to me," Simon said. "For Clary's sake."

"Everything I do is for Clary's sake," Jace replied. "So, you're right, but also you seem like a cool guy."

"Sorry," Simon said. "But we can't be friends."

"Why not?" Jace replied.

"Because the very thing making you happy is why I'm not," Simon explained.
"You broke up with her," Jace reminded him.

"I know," Simon said. Explaining to Jace exactly why he'd broken up with Clary didn't really sound like fun at the moment. It felt like pouring salt in the wound.

"If it makes you feel any better," Jace added. "When you were dating Clary… I'd never been so jealous of anyone before in my life."

"That does actually make me feel better," Simon replied. "Thanks."

"You sure we can't be friends?" Jace inquired. "It would make Clary happy I'm sure."

"And that there is why we can't be friends," Simon sighed. Jace still looked confused and since Jace had been honest with Simon he felt obliged to return the favour. "I'm in love with your girlfriend. Not a great basis for a friendship."

"She is easy to love," Jace replied.

"Yeah, she is," Simon said, surprised by Jace's reaction.

"If you change your mind," Jace added with a smile. "You know where to find me."

Simon stared after Jace's retreating back as he thought maybe he'd been too quick to write off this school. Then he remembered how all his friends were Clary's friends already! Befriending Clary's boyfriend was definitely not the way to fix that. With a sigh, Simon got back to his homework.

Chapter End Notes

Wow its nice to be updating this story more regularly again. :D This whole updating two stories at once thing is SO much more manageable than writing to update three!

If you haven't checking out my new Malec Story "Forgotten" PLEASE PLEASE DO! Its set in the canon after CoHF Epilogue. The third chapter is going up very soon!

What else should I say here... I seem to have slipped back into old habits of barely writing author's notes...

Oh well.. too lazy to add more. Hope you enjoyed the chapter guys! And I hope EVER more you are kind enough to leave a review! ^_^

Sneak Peek Chapter 40

"Go away!" Clary called to him.

"Never," Jace replied. Clary couldn't help but smile at her boyfriend's response. Though she was still glad, when she heard the doorknob turn, that she'd locked the door. "Please let me in Clary."

"I don't want to get you sick," Clary called through the door before she started gagging again, trying to empty her already totally empty stomach.

"I don't care if I get sick," Jace replied but Clary had more than one reason she didn't
want Jace here.
Clary didn't want Simon to totally vanish from her life. She valued his friendship too much to ever want to say goodbye forever. Unfortunately the only idea she had was for Simon be make more friends her school. The easiest place to start was for Simon to become friends with some of Clary’s friends, but her attempts to pull Simon into her circle of friends hadn't gone so well.

"Don't glare at Simon next time," Clary had told Jace after their awkward lunch with her ex-boyfriend. "Please. I am sure it's bad enough for him as it is!"

"Yeah and I'm pretty sure you trying to include him only made it worse," Jace had replied.

"Jace, I have one ex," Clary exclaimed. "ONE! And he was my friend first. Please, can you put some effort into not glaring at him?"

Jace had sighed and looked at her in that way he did that always made her smile. "Alright, Clary," Jace had whispered. "If it matters so much to you." Jace had kissed her softly after that and the subject was changed.

Clary sighed and pushed back from her desk. She wasn't quite feeling like herself. She'd been feeling a little off when they'd had lunch with Simon at the cafeteria the other day and today she'd woken up feeling dizzy. She'd had to lay back down in bed for ten minutes before summoning the will to go to class. Between Malec drama, class, homework, Jace and the need to sleep, she didn't have time to get sick. The first time Clary had teasingly called Magnus and Alec, Malec, she'd only done it to annoy Magnus, but somehow the name had stuck. Clary now thought it a rather great nickname for those crazy boys. She was, however, concerned what the boys would start calling her if she didn't stop teasing them.

Clary heard the door open and turned to see Helen enter the dorm.

"Hey," Helen greeted her with a smile. The fact that Clary had started dating Jace was old news, but when they'd first gotten together, Helen and Clary had stayed up all night talking about their love lives more than once. Sometimes they even added doing their nails or face masks for the full girl's slumber party feel. It was so great to have a female friend. Aside from Jace, Helen was the only one Clary was comfortable talking to about her sex life.

"Where's Aline?" Clary asked. "I hardly ever see you two apart these days." She smiled. Clary had long ago decided that her roommate and Alec's cousin were adorable.

"My girlfriend's in class," Helen said grinning.

"You love saying that don't you," Clary laughed. They'd been officially dating for a while now, but Helen still seemed to enjoy using the word.

"Yeah," Helen laughed. "I forgot how much I hate being single."

"It's so overrated," Clary replied, but her head was feeling fuzzy and she was sure she swayed for a moment.

"You alright?" Helen asked.
"Not sure," Clary mumbled. "Been feeling kinda off."

"Maybe you should lay down," Helen suggested, but Clary shook her head.

"I only have one more class to get through, then it's the weekend," Clary said firmly. "I can totally do this."

"I don't know," Helen replied. "You look kinda green."

"I am not sick," Clary stated with as much conviction as she could muster as if saying the words would make them true.

"If you're not sick, you're pregnant," Helen laughed.

"We use condoms," Clary argued.

"Which was only 97% effective," Helen replied. "I like my form of birth control." She laughed then added, "Being gay is 100% effective."

"You're bi," Clary reminded her friend.

"But I'm dating a girl," Helen said. "So, I stand by my birth control method thank you." Clary groaned. She felt like crap.

"I gotta get to class," Clary said sulkily.

"I still say you should sleep instead," Helen repeated. Clary got up, swayed on the spot then sat down in her desk chair again.

"Maybe you're right," Clary mumbled as she swayed her way from her chair to her bed and collapsed. She must have fallen asleep, because the next thing Clary remembered was waking up to the sound of her phone going off.

'I'm ordering Chinese,' Magnus's text read. 'You wanna come over for dinner?'

Clary sat up. The nap had actually helped a little and she'd already skipped class and lunch today. Maybe some time with her best friend would do her some good. Clary was hungry, but she suspected Magnus's offer of dinner was really an excuse to be able to talk to her some more. Ever since Valentine's day, Magnus had been on edge over Alec, but Clary had heard it all a half dozen times already. The problem was that Magnus didn't seem to actually want advice so much as he just wanted to rant.

Clary took her time getting organized and slowly made her way to Magnus's. Winter was finally saying it's goodbyes now that they were halfway through March. Given the circumstances, Clary decided it was worth getting out her warm jacket and gloves to walk the short distance to Magnus's place. She had to pass the cafeteria to leave the building and the smell of food as she passed made her feel slightly sick. She was fighting the slight dizziness as she walked down the sidewalk. Clary was determined not to be sick! Mind over matter. She just had to keep walking. She wasn't sick. Magnus's apartment came into view and Clary relaxed. She was almost there.

When she entered the warm welcoming room, Magnus hugged her and took her coat.

"How was class, Biscuit?" Magnus asked.

"Slept through the last one," Clary replied.
"You okay?" Magnus asked.

"My brain just isn't working today. That's all." Clary went to sit on the couch, since it helped with the dizziness. She could tell Magnus was bursting to ask the same questions he'd asked a hundred times.

"Go ahead," Clary sighed.

"But if you're not feeling well," Magnus mumbled.

"It's not like I don't have your unique brand of crazy memorized already," Clary sighed. "Honestly, if you don't talk to Alec soon I could do it for you!"

"You wouldn't dare!" Magnus glared at her.

"Wouldn't I?" Clary countered, but Magnus had already moved on.

"Do you think that's what he meant Clary?" Magnus asked not for the first time. "Saying love isn't about money doesn't necessarily mean he loves me, does it?"

"Didn't Alec follow that up with, you don't have to say it back," Clary reminded him. "Which implies he said it first." She was sure she'd said this before, but she couldn't remember when. Also, had the world always been foggy? Or was that just her eyes closing?

"I guess," Magnus said. "But why didn't he want me to say it back?"

"Well it is kinda soon," Clary said. "Maybe he just doesn't want to pressure you. Would you have said it back?"

"I don't know," Magnus exclaimed. "And rich, Clary! Like richer than I can comprehend. I don't know- I mean-"

"Magnus," Clary tried to console him, but she was suddenly sure the earth was spinning under her. "Why is this upsetting you so much!" She was too dizzy and nauseous to cater to her friend at the moment despite what she'd said a moment ago. It was time for some tough love.

"I don't know," Magnus whined.

"Well figured it out," Clary replied firmly. "Alec is turning Jace into his own personal shrink and we are racking up some serious couch time too. All you two idiots need to do is actually talk to each other!"

"Wow," Magnus replied slightly stunned. "What's gotten into you?" Clary couldn't fight the nausea anymore. Getting up as quickly as she could, Clary ran to the bathroom, just in time.

"You alright, Biscuit?" Magnus's voice came through the door. Clary was about to reply but the contents of her stomach made an appearance, interrupting her. At least she hadn't had lunch.

"I think I'm sick," Clary whined, unable to deny the obvious anymore. She was suddenly glad she was here and not in the communal dorm bathrooms. She didn't need half her floor hearing her throwing up. Clary stood up and turned to see Magnus. He moved to put his hand on her forehead but she pulled back. "I don't want to get you sick!"

"Biscuit," Magnus sighed. "Someone has to take care of you."

"It's probably just a flu," Clary replied. "I am sure I can puke all on my own, thanks." Magnus gave
her a disapproving look. "Don't look at me like that. Do you want to get sick?"

"I almost never get sick," Magnus grinned. A wave of nausea came over her and Clary covered her mouth with her hand and bolted back into the bathroom.

"I'm just gonna hide in here for a while," Clary called to Magnus as she closed the bathroom door with her foot. "Don't call Jace!"

Despite her request, less than twenty minutes later, there was a knock at her door and Jace's voice spoke her name.

"Clary," Jace said. "Magnus texted me. You okay?" Well technically Magnus hadn't called Jace, but he'd totally known what she'd meant, the little sneak!

"Go away!" Clary called to him.

"Never," Jace replied. Clary couldn't help but smile at her boyfriend's response. Despite Jace's compassion, she was still glad that she'd locked the door when she heard Jace attempt to turn the knob. "Please let me in Clary."

"I don't want to get you sick," Clary called through the door before she started gagging again, trying to empty her already totally empty stomach.

"I don't care if I get sick," Jace replied, but Clary had more than one reason she didn't want Jace here. Right now, she felt like the least sexy person alive. She didn't want Jace around when her mouth tasted like puke and her skin was all clammy. Clary couldn't imagine Jace ever calling her beautiful again if he saw such a thing!

"I do," Clary replied. "It's fine."

"I will break down the door," Jace said and Clary could hear the smirk in his voice.

"You'd break Magnus's door!" Clary called. "Rude!"

"Magnus would understand," Jace said.

"Doubtful," Clary replied.

"Let me in Clary," Jace begged. "Please." His soft 'please' crippled her will. Clary got up and unlocked the door, then quickly returned to leaning over the toilet. A moment later she felt Jace's cool fingers on her neck as he held her hair back.

"You're burning up," Jace told her as he pressed his cold hand to her forehead.

"Hmmmm," Clary said. "That feels nice." Then she remembered how awful she must look and she automatically pulled away a little.

"What's wrong?" Jace asked softly.

"I'm gross," Clary grumbled.

"You're beautiful," Jace told her, his fingers gently tucking a strand of her hair behind her ear.

"Puky," Clary corrected him.

"Fine," Jace chuckled. "You're puky beautiful." He was beaming at her the same way he always did
and suddenly Clary didn't feel so ugly.

"My mom always takes care of me when I'm sick," Jace told her softly. "Please let me take care of you."

"Alright," Clary sighed. He placed a cool hand against her cheek and Clary leaned into it. The world was still spinning, but somehow now her world was spinning around Jace. Clary laid her head against his chest, allowing herself to be comforted.

Jace started taking care of her and he was surprisingly good at it. She didn't want to be tucked into bed though, so Jace put a pillow and blanket down on the bathroom floor and let her stay there while he brought her things. Soon she had a pillow under her head and a blanket over her. When she also had saltine crackers and a glass of water beside her, Jace sat with her there on the floor.

"Thank you," Clary whispered. She was starting to get sleepy, having thrown up all she had twice over.

"Sleep, my Clary," Jace told her. "You sure you don't want to lay on the couch?"

"Nah," Clary replied. "Floor good." She didn't want to be too far from the toilet in case she had to throw up again and more importantly she didn't want to move. Jace had tucked her in quite comfortably despite this being the floor and getting up at the moment just seemed like the worst thing ever.

Clary must have fallen asleep there on the floor, though she couldn't claim she'd slept well. Her hazy mind went in and out of focus and her dreams were just distorted images. When she opened her eyes, Jace was still there. He had his phone out, but turned to look at her when she stirred.

"How are you feeling?" Jace asked.

"Better-ish, I think," Clary said sitting up, rubbing her shoulders with one hand. She was so stiff. "How long was I sleeping?"

"A few hours," Jace said. "Do you want to move to the couch now?" Clary nodded. She didn't feel as nauseous anymore and she was sore from the hard bathroom floor. Jace pressed his cold hand to her forehead again. "You still have a fever."

Then Jace leaned forward as if to kiss her but Clary pulled back. "You crazy?" Clary snapped.

"Can't I kiss you when you're sick?" he asked. Clary shook her head vigorously. "Why not?"

"My mouth tastes like death," Clary said. "And you will definitely get sick if you kiss me."

Jace leaned in anyway and lightly touched his lips to hers. "Worth it," he whispered. If she hadn't been so feverish, Clary would have blushed. Instead, she made to get off the floor, though not with much energy. Jace moved closer and put his hands on her shoulders. He started massaging the muscles there and Clary lost all will to move.

"Is that better?" Jace asked as he pulled his hands away a few moments later.

"Yeah," Clary moaned. "Thanks."

"You seemed stiff," Jace said before giving her a hand up off the floor and slowly guiding her to the couch, where she collapsed. Jace put a blanket over her and a pillow under her head and then he sat in the chair opposite.
"Tell me a story?" Clary requested, as she closed her eyes.

"What story do you want to hear?" Jace replied.

"I don't mind," Clary said. She just wanted to fall asleep to the sound of Jace's voice.

"There once was a boy who thought his life had meaning," Jace began. "He had a lifestyle and a friend he thought he loved that fit into that lifestyle. Then one day he met a girl, a very special girl, who flipped his life upside down. The boy tried to fight against what he didn't understand, but in the end he was powerless to resist her…"

Jace's words faded into Clary's dreams. The soothing tones of her boyfriend's voice flowing around in her mind like a gently breeze connecting everything. The details of her dream got rather mixed up, but when Clary woke she was smiling. She could feel someone stroking her hair.

"Jace," Clary whispered.

"I'm here," he said. She knew he was the one stroking her hair.

"How you feeling?" he asked.

"Thank you," Clary whispered. "It's easier to sleep when you're here, but you shouldn't stay up all night. Go home to sleep. It must be late."

"It's early actually," Jace smiled. Surprised Clary opened her eyes. There was a slight line of bright sunlight trying to get past Magnus's thick curtains.

"Oh," Clary gasped sitting up on the couch. "Wait did you stay here all night?"

"Magnus let me crash," Jace smiled.

"You didn't have to," Clary said, flustered. "I'm sure you had other things to do."

"Nothing that couldn't wait," Jace smiled at her. "You hungry?"

"Maybe?" Clary said. "But I don't want to risk it."

"Water?" Jace asked and Clary nodded. Jace returned a moment later and as Clary drank the water she realized just how disgusting her mouth tasted.

"I want my tooth brush," Clary whined. "Aftermath of sick isn't sexy at all."

"Does that mean you're feeling better?" Jace asked and Clary realized she hadn't answered this the first time he'd asked.

"Better-ish," Clary said.

"You're looking better, Biscuit," Magnus's voice spoke from behind her.

"Thanks for letting Jace stay over," Clary said, smiling as she turned to speak to her friend.

"No problem," Magnus replied. Then he added with a laugh, "It was quite amusing watching Jace play nursmaid."

"Nurseman," Jace corrected.
"Well, I appreciated it," Clary said. "It's way more comfortable here than in the dorms."

"Ah yes community bathrooms," Magnus chuckled. "Oh how I don't miss those!"

"Yeah, I'm really glad you texted me to come over," Clary said. "Even if all I did was be grumpy and throw up."

"You said nothing that wasn't true," Magnus sighed. "And you are, of course, welcome to stay as long as you like."

"Where is Tessa?" Clary asked.

"At Will's," Magnus replied. "Or Jem's. Either way. She said she'd be back this afternoon though."

Chapter End Notes

Hehe I'm such a troll. Though from your comments I take it everyone is glad Clary just has a flu. ^_^ I like to keep you on your toes!

Hmmm... what else to day... man I still suck at author's notes! sigh. I hope this story isn't getting boring now that all the couples are together. From the start I planned R&S to be the longest of all my stories, hence why I decided to include SO many plot lines! My story Innocence Corrupts has the most chapters at 56 and my story Malec POV of TMI has the most words at around 170,000. So this story must surpass both! I want it to be a long story but I don't want it to get boring. I don't want this story to have natural pauses or lulls in the plot where you could stop reading and feel like you haven't missed anything. Like between one story line I throw in the resolution to a cliffhanger for another or I give you a Tessa chapter to brake up the ciffhanger and cliffhanger resolution for the Malec/Clace plot etc.

I am not sure if anyone here has read "Love and Basketball" by SiriuslyFour'sGirl but that story was part of my inspiration for this story with a few big differences. One being that she broke her's into story arches while I am trying to make it without lulls in plot. Another is that her story is Malec only. And, of course, she is WAY more popular than me on fanfic and has WAY more reviews and follows than this story but... you can't have everything in life right? Also her story is still going at like 515,000 words which is insane! Even Holly0114’s story Mad World that I beta read for her (She beta reads this one for me) is crazy long! Like 240,000 words! I don't know how you guys do it! In order to try get close to trying that long a story I started with like 5 plot lines!

(Sorry if you don't reconzied those stories. They are all on Fanfic.net)

Anyway... did I get off topic? I'm not totally sure. What was my topic. lol. Oh right I'm bad at author's notes but I hope at least you enjoyed the chapter! Oh and if you never notice a lull in plot please do point it out to me. #NeverDull

Sneak Peek Chapter 41

"Clary said I had to come over," Alec added. "She said you were sulking."

"Traitor," Magnus muttered turning to his best friend. Clary just stuck her tongue out at
him. Magnus was annoyed until she covered her hand with her mouth and ran to the bathroom. Could he really be mad at a sick person?

"I really don't want to talk about it," Magnus sighed. He reached up with his arms and took Alec's hand. "Come sit with me."

Alec seemed torn for a moment but then he let himself to draw into Magnus's embrace. Alec laid his head on Magnus's shoulder and for a moment Magnus didn't let his worries bother him.
Nurseman Jace continued to bring Clary snacks and hot beverages while the two of them curled up on the couch to watch a movie. Clary must not have been too invested in the movie, however, as she let Jace choose something with lots of explosions and little plot.

Magnus puttered around the house trying not to be jealous of the easy way they interacted. He missed that… with Alexander. Magnus knew it was all due to his own insecurities that he had lost that easy interaction, but he couldn't help it. So many things already separated them. Alec's pale complexion against Magnus's caramel skin. Alec's inexperience against all of Magnus's old heartbreaks. Alec's being a freshman while Magnus would graduate next year. Now to learn they were held apart by this as well. And it wasn't just the money, it was what the money meant. Magnus couldn't help but wonder how Alec had grown up. Magnus had worked two jobs for a year after high school and then worked every summer since to be able to pay for school and rent. His Aunt didn't have that kind of money and Magnus didn't have the faintest clue what living with wealth was like. How did the 1% live? It felt like there was this big piece of Alec that Magnus couldn't understand. There was so much about Alexander that Magnus didn't know. Through friendship and now dating, Magnus had never learned anything about Alec's family. And Alec hadn't even wanted to tell Magnus. It had been an accident. Would Alec have ever told Magnus if he'd had a choice?

Magnus sighed. With so many heartbreaks behind him, he was starting to wonder if maybe he just wasn't capable of making a relationship work, regardless of who he was with. Could Magnus really hope that he and Alec had a chance in the long term with so little in common? Would this all end in heartbreak like it had before? He'd tried to fight opening up to someone again, but he'd lost and run right into Alec's arms.

Which lead his troubled mind right back to the other thing Alec had said. Magnus still wasn't sure what to make of it. Had Alec really meant he loved Magnus? The way Alec had said it, had been going round and round in Magnus's mind. And did Alec even know enough to know if he was in love? Alec didn't have any exes, at least any real ones. He'd only come out of the closet toward the end of high school and straight to college after that. What if Alec only thought he cared deeply for Magnus, but was actually just seeing through rose tinted glasses? When the glass shattered, and Alec saw Magnus clearly, would Alec still think he was in love? And would that be enough to keep Alec from leaving him? If this all ended in heartbreak tomorrow, was the joy at the beginning worth the heartbreak after?

Magnus shook his head vigorously. He knew he needed to stop thinking like this, but no matter how he tried, his mind kept coming back to it. He knew the solution was to talk to Alexander, but the idea scared the hell out of him. Thinking something would end and seeing it end were two very different things. Alec was so far out of his league… how could Magnus believe he could hold the love of someone like that? Someone who could so obviously do better?

Giving up on his homework, Magnus flopped into a chair next to the love seat currently occupied by Clace. It was a rather strange word Magnus had to admit, but when Clary had started calling him and Alec 'Malec,' he'd needed a come back.

"That looks like sulking," Clary accused him.

"I know," Magnus replied without looking away from the TV. There was a rather impressive
explosion going on and Magnus was trying to focus on that and nothing else… with little, well, actually no success. The same thoughts circled around in his head, making all his worries worse.

Magnus didn't notice Clary get out her phone and begin to type.

It turned out the impressive explosion was in fact a helicopter blowing up. Moving away from the destruction in slow motion, was a well-muscled guy on motorbike. Magnus decided he hated Jace's taste in movies. He knew Jace was not watching for the hot guys so Magnus had to presume he liked the plot, or lack of plot. The only value Magnus found in this particular scene was the eye candy.

When the key turned in the lock of his front door a little less than an hour later, Magnus assumed it was Tessa. He didn't remove his eyes from the mindless television, currently attempting to distract himself from his depressing thoughts.

He was therefore surprised when Alec suddenly stood before him.

"Hi," Magnus's ridiculously rich boyfriend who may or may not love him, said. Magnus mentally kicked himself for such a thought while Alec smiled at him warmly.

"Clary said I had to come over," Alec added. "She said you were sulking."

"Traitor," Magnus muttered turning to his best friend. Clary just stuck her tongue out at him. Magnus was annoyed until a moment later when she covered her mouth with her hand and ran to the bathroom. Could he really be mad at a sick person?

"I really don't want to talk about it right now," Magnus sighed. He reached up with his arms and took Alec's hand. "Come, sit with me."

Alec seemed torn for a moment, but then he let himself be drawn into Magnus's embrace. Alec laid his head on Magnus's shoulder; Magnus circular thoughts were quieter with Alec beside him.

"That was epic," Jace exclaimed as the credits rolled about a half hour later. "Did you see the bit at the end!"

"We were all sitting right here next to you," Alec mocked his friend. "With our eyes open, so unless someone here is blind and does a really good job pretending not to be..."

"Ha ha," Jace scoffed. "Whatever. It was a good movie."

"If you say so," Alec said, but as he stood up he swayed a bit and had to pause to seemingly collect himself.

"You alright?" Magnus asked.

"Yes," Alec said firmly. He shook his head and walked towards the kitchen. "Anyone want something to drink," he called.

"No thanks," Clary called back. "But Alec, how long have you been dizzy like that."

"I'm fine!" Alec replied as Magnus heard him put the kettle on to boil.

"Because that was me yesterday," Clary yelled toward the kitchen.

"I don't have time to get sick," Alec said as he reappeared with a cup of tea.

"Me neither," Clary laughed then coughed. "But here I am."
"Is this bug going around the school?" Jace asked.

"Seems so," Magnus replied.

"I refuse to get sick," Alec said as he sat down next to Magnus who turned to watch Alec closely. Alexander didn't seem very steady. Magnus wondered why he hadn't noticed before since he was sure Alec's 'I'm fine' meant quite the opposite.

"You might have to make time," Magnus told him softly before putting a hand over Alec's forehead. "You're warm."


"I think this calls for another movie," Jace said as he quickly selected another likely horrible movie and pushed play. How had Magnus ended up seeing so much of this blonde guy he wasn't sure… oh that's right it was all Clary's fault.

They ended up watching movies all morning and ordering lunch. No one's homework got done and there were no deep meaningful conversations about the future, but Magnus had a feeling they had all needed this. He surely had. The last few weeks had had been non-stop. It was nice to just do nothing for a change. Tessa arrived home around three o'clock and joined in on the movie marathon.

"There really is nothing better to do while you're sick then binge watch TV," Tessa told him when she sat down. Everyone seemed to be in agreement.

It wasn't until dinner time that Clary started to really feel like herself again. Magnus suspected it was one of those twenty-four hour flus. And right on cue, once Clary was getting better, Alec got worse.

One whiff of dinner and Alec was up and running to the bathroom. Magnus was seriously considering hiring someone to clean that bathroom professionally if this kept up, whether he could afford it or not. Then Magnus remembered that Alec could probably pay to have his whole bathroom gutted and redone more easily than Magnus could afford to have it cleaned!

"I think I have Clary's flu," Alec whined as he emerged a few minutes later. "And I kinda think I hate you for giving it to me." He added to the little redhead.

"Fair enough," Clary laughed. "I think Maia gave it to me so I totally get that."

"Maia?" Jace asked.

"She's in the dorms," Clary answered. "Same floor but a couple rooms over."

"How did you get a flu from someone you likely never interact with," Jace asked.

"She interrupted one of mine and Helen's girl's nights," Clary said. "She came in to borrow something… I can't remember what but anyway, we asked her to join us. She was dizzy so she went home early. She's nice, just a little bold and oddly judgey."

"What do you mean?" Jace asked.

"Well she hates you," Clary said to Jace. "She seems to be under the impression all attractive people are jerks, or I guess attractive guys."

"Ah," Jace said. "That does explain why I've never met her in a bar."

"She used to work at a bar," Clary chimed in, then she leaned forward eyes bright and added, "Oh
"wait! I have a brilliant idea."

"What?" Jace asked.

"We should set Simon up on a date with Maia!" Clary exclaimed. Magnus sighed. Clary wasn't ready to accept losing Simon, but she was going to have to get ready because classes ended this April and Simon wasn't likely to return next year. It wasn't unreasonable that Simon wanted a break from Clary's platonic attention, but Clary didn't seem to get that.

"I don't think Simon wants to be set up by his ex-girlfriend," Jace reminded her.

"Then someone else has to tell him it was their idea," Clary said. "How about you?"

"Simon said no to being friends with me, remember?" Jace pointed out. "Besides, being set up by his exe's new guy probably isn't better than being set up by his ex."

"Okay maybe I can find a way to talk to Eric," Clary continued to plotted. "Then get him to set up the blind date without telling Simon who's idea it was."

"That might work," Jace said. "Do you have his number?"

Magnus wasn't really listening to them anymore; he was watching Alec. His boyfriend was sitting across from Magnus on the chair looking rather green. Magnus knew he should go comfort Alec the way Jace had comforted Clary. He should also give Clary a lecture about not meddling with Simon's love life. He did neither, however. It seemed even rich people go sick. Magnus shook his head. Why couldn't he let it go? He needed to face his problems rather than avoiding them out of fear. At that moment, Alec got up and ran back to the bathroom. Determined, Magnus followed.

"Do you need anything?" Magnus asked through the closed bathroom door.

"A better immune system," Alec whined.

"I have saltine crackers," Magnus said cheerily.

"Not helpful," Alec replied before Magnus heard the unpleasant sound of his boyfriend throwing up again. With a sigh, he turned back to face his guests, only to be surprised by their sudden change in position.

"Where are you going?" Magnus asked them. Clary and Jace were standing up and headed toward their coats.

"I have a blind date to organize and you should take care of Alec," Clary told Magnus. "And talk to him too."

"You don't have to go," Magnus said.

"Thanks for everything," Clary smiled. She leaned in to give him a quick hug then added, "But yeah, we do."

With a sigh, Magnus waved goodbye to Clace, only to turn and see Tessa leaving as well.

"Where are you going?" Magnus asked.

"Jem's," Tessa replied.

"Weren't you just there?" Magnus argued.
"I was at Will's this morning," Tessa said.

"You're crazy," Magnus laughed. "You know that right."

"Yep," Tessa replied cheerfully as she put on her jacket. The door closed behind his roommate and friends; Magnus sat on the couch in his now completely empty living room as he waited for Alec to get out of the bathroom. His mind was still very unhelpfully running around in circles while he did so. When Alec finally emerged, still slightly green, he collapsed on the couch.

"Do you have a fever?" Magnus asked standing up to put his hand to Alec's forehead.

"Oh, probably," Alec whined.

"You are warm," Magnus said as his cool hand touched Alec's hot forehead. "Do you want to try and sleep?"

"I want to know what's going on in your head," Alec whined. "I feel like crap, my head hurts and I don't care how pathetic I am right now. It's been weeks of you acting weird and me trying not to worry, but Magnus I'm worried."

"You need sleep," Magnus said like the coward he was. He reached for the blanket behind Alec to cover him with it.

"At least tell which stupid thing I said is bothering you?" Alec pleaded. Magnus didn't reply because he didn't know what to say. The first one? The second? Maybe neither of them was the problem and Magnus was just going insane? Or maybe both? He'd been over this stuff so many times in his head now Magnus wasn't so sure himself. He tucked the blanket around Alec more securely, then made to move away.

"Stay," Alec requested, reaching his arms out toward Magnus. Alec looked so miserable, so worried; Magnus was powerless to refuse him. He sat on the floor near Alec's head and felt Alec's hand against his neck. It was like Alec wanted the physical assurance that Magnus was there to fall asleep.

"There's no pressure Magnus," Alec whispered after a moment's silence. Magnus was fairly sure Alec had his eyes closed at this point. "Just talk to me."

Magnus thought of a thousand things to say but finally settled on, "What was it like growing up with money?" He was sitting facing away from Alec which seemed to be making talking about this easier. Also, Alec's desperate pleas had struck a chord with him.

"So, this isn't about the other thing?" Alec asked.

"I don't know," Magnus confessed. "It's just, we are so different, even before…" He paused then continued. "My Aunt raised me on her own. We didn't have money. I got my first real job the week I turned sixteen, but I had been working even before that to help out. I can't imagine what your life must have been like."

"Less working," Alec summed up his life groggily. Magnus wasn't sure why it was easier to talk to Alec like this, facing the wall with Alec half asleep behind him.

"I've never figured out his whole relationship thing," Magnus whispered. "Every time it falls apart and I'm left bleeding. This... everything, it just- it scares me."

"I don't want us to fall apart, Magnus," Alec whispered, stroking Magnus's cheek gently. "I love you." Alec spoke with such confidence despite his delirious state, but Magnus's heart just couldn't
"Yeah?" Magnus asked.

"I might not have any experience in this area, but I know how happy your smile makes me," Alec whispered as if he knew exactly what Magnus needed to hear. "You can make my skin tingle with the slightest touch. A day without kissing you is, in my opinion, a day wasted." Magnus didn't speak. He simply stared straight ahead at his living room wall, taking in his boyfriend's words in awe while tears pooled in his eyes.

"You had hold of my heart long before we so much as kissed," Alec whispered. "Money isn't so important really." Magnus wanted to add 'that's because you have it,' but he remained silent. Alec's breathing was evening out now and Magnus suspected his boyfriend was falling asleep. When Alec's grip slackened, Magnus got up, gently tucked Alec's hand under the blanket and sat opposite his boyfriend's sleeping form.

Getting an answer to his questions did seem to help, but Magnus was by no means out of questions and now he had a new one. Did he love Alec? Magnus had built up so many walls around his heart so many times, he wasn't sure. Alec's words had been so genuine that Magnus could do nothing but believe them. Alexander loved him. It was almost unreal. Magnus had no idea what he'd done to deserve Alec's love, but had Alec broken down Magnus's walls enough for Magnus to return that love or were Magnus's true feelings still hiding within those walls?

There was a knock on Magnus's door. He looked up, confused. Had Clary forgotten something? Or was Tessa back? Had there been a random people arriving at his apartment today memo that he'd missed?

When Magnus opened the door, there was a woman standing there but she wasn't Tessa or Clary. Magnus had never seen her before in his life but he knew instantly who she was. This woman had the same shape to her face and same colour hair as Alexander. Though her eyes were more brown than blue.

"You must be Magnus," she said. It was then Magnus noticed her clothes. Unlike Alec who managed to look like he couldn't afford to replace sweaters with holes, Izzy looked rich. She was wearing nothing that didn't look like it came straight off a runway. He skinny jeans hugged the curves of her long legs and her silk blouse gently fell from her shoulders underneath the cashmere coat and mohair scarf she wore. Her hair hung in soft, perfect waves that highlighted her high cheekbones and impeccably outlined eyes. Magnus was a bit in awe with the perfection that was her eyeliner, creating the perfect smoky eye. There was no question, the woman was flawless and her entire outfit probably cost one semester's worth of tuition.

"And you must be Isabelle," Magnus said with a smile. He was trying, and failing, not to calculate the cost of her outfit as he wondered if he'd missed a conversation where Alec had told him that she was coming to visit?

"How did you know?" she asked.


"What the heck is he doing asleep in the middle of the afternoon!" Izzy asked annoyed.

"He's got the flu," Magnus explained.

"Hmm," Izzy deliberated. "I guess he's off the hook then."
"What are you doing here?" Magnus asked. A few things were coming back to him now. Alec's little sister was in high school and couldn't just leave whenever she wanted, even if she was graduating this June.

Izzy looked over Magnus's shoulder then suddenly grabbed the front of Magnus's shirt and pulled him outside. Too stunned to think, Magnus found himself standing on his own front steps, his front door closed behind him, and his boyfriend's sister looking intensely at him.

"I'm here to talk to you," Izzy told him seriously.

Chapter End Notes

Cliffhanger. ^_^ Because I'm mean like that.

I get a WHOLE bunch of reviews when people thought Clary was pregnant but then I reveal she isn't and I get SO few. :( Come on guys!

Also, what do you guys think of Magnus's fretting? Did I explain it enough for you to understand his concerns? Or are you guys like my beta and think Magnus is just being an ass. Her words exactly.

AND OMG IT'S IZZY! hehe FINALLY am I right!

Sneak Peek Chapter 41

She knocked but rather than actually waiting for an answer Izzy just opened the door and entered, eager to surprise her brother. She surprised the occupants of the room alright, but her brother wasn't one of them. The couple who's make out session she'd interrupted jumped and turned to face her. Izzy's recognized the blonde as Jace from High School. She knew Alec and Jace shared a dorm but she still hadn't been quite prepared to meet him like this, sucking face with some redhead.

"Where's my brother?" Izzy asked.

"Wow Izzy!" Jace said. "Blast from the past."

"Ha!" Izzy scoffed. "What past."
Isabelle Lightwood was so done with High School. Sure, it was only March and she was stuck there until June, plus she had to wait all summer, but Izzy couldn't wait for University to start. Consequently, it made perfect sense that she'd told her parents she wanted to spend spring break getting to know the campus. Too bad that was a lie.

The truth was that she wanted to spend her spring break with her brother. Not only did she missed him terribly, but she was worried about him. There had been a strange, poorly concealed panic in Alec's voice the last few times she'd called him. With a few well-placed questions, Izzy had determined that Alec was having boyfriend problems. Though, as far as Izzy could tell, this Magnus person was just stupid. Alec was rich, hot and in love with him. Alec was a catch. She was therefore, here to snap some sense into her brother's boyfriend.

The cab dropped Izzy off at the campus. She'd seen enough photos of the place to know which building was the dorms. Yet another reason why a tour was unnecessary, but her parents didn't need to know that. She could try and find Magnus on her own, but she thought she should probably check in with Alec before she ran off to interrogate his boyfriend. Izzy knew which dorm room was Alec's, since they were all numbered and she'd long ago managed to squeeze Alec's dorm number out of him.

She knocked, but rather than actually waiting for an answer, Izzy just opened the door and entered, eager to surprise her brother. She surprised the occupants of the room alright, but her brother wasn't one of them. The couple who's make out session she'd interrupted jumped and turned to face her. Izzy recognized the blonde as Jace from High School. She knew Alec and Jace shared a dorm, but she still hadn't been quite prepared to meet him like this, sucking face with some redhead.

"Where's my brother?" Izzy asked.

"Wow, Izzy!" Jace said. "Blast from the past."

"Ha!" Izzy scoffed. "What past."

"True," Jace laughed. Their past consisted only of her repeated rejection of him.

"So, Alec?" Izzy asked again. She hadn't quite believed her brother when he'd said Jace had changed and interrupting him making out with someone had done nothing to help Jace's case. Izzy never had understood why women went out with Jace in the first place? Did they have no self-esteem? She wondered what Jace had told this particular redhead to get her into his arms.

"Alec isn't here," Jace said. "He's at Magnus's." Jace then gave Izzy directions.

"Thanks," Izzy said as she turned to leave, closing the door behind her. It seemed Magnus lived just across the street from campus, which Izzy found awfully convenient since she didn't have to wait for another cab. Putting the address into her phone for safe keeping, Izzy started the short walk. It was a rather nice day. Sure, it wasn't quite warm enough to be summer but at least spring was in full swing. Izzy's heels made a pleasant clip clop noise as she walked along the clear, dry sidewalk.

When she reached the correct apartment building, Izzy went up the stairs and within moments stood in front of the room number Jace had given her. Izzy knocked, and this time she waited for someone
to answer. There was something different about barging into a dorm room than an actual apartment, the door being locked for one.

When the door opened there stood a tall man with Asian features and caramel skin. He had black spiked hair with blue tips. His outfit, though stylish, was lacking in quality. He likely hadn't spent more than twenty dollars on a single item of clothing. Izzy was suddenly even more annoyed at this man, since she knew instantly who he was. Alec had described Magnus to her more than once and if Magnus wasn't wealthy, surely Alec having money would be a good thing.

"You must be Magnus," she said.

"And you must be Isabelle," Magnus replied smiling at her. He looked slightly stunned by her arrival, though not unwelcoming.

"How did you know?" she asked.


"What the heck is he doing asleep in the middle of the afternoon!" Izzy asked annoyed.

"He's got the flu," Magnus explained.

"Hmm," Izzy deliberated, switching her focus. "I guess he's off the hook then."

"What are you doing here?" Magnus asked. Izzy looked over Magnus's shoulder and saw the back of her brother's head laying on the couch. Alec didn't need to overhear this. She grabbed Magnus by the scruff of his shirt and pulled him outside before closing the door behind them.

"I'm here to talk to you," Izzy told him seriously.

"Why?" Magnus asked dumbfounded, while trying to straighten his shirt.

"I want to know what your problem is?" Izzy asked.

"Excuse me?" Magnus said coolly.

"Alec's miserable," Izzy yelled at him.

"Miserable is a bit of an exaggeration," Magnus countered. He was clearly on the defensive now and Izzy internally sighed. Subtlety had never been her strong suit.

"I may not know you well," Izzy said. "But I know Alec, and if you hurt him I will hunt you down."

"Woah!" Magnus said with his hands up. "When did this escalate to physical violence. We just met!"

"We met on the phone," Izzy corrected him. "Besides I've listened to Alec talk about you enough." She paused for only a second before adding, "I once told Alec you'd soon be a couple too cute to stand. I know you guys were once before and I know it's your fault you aren't now."

"Too cute to stand?" Magnus asked skeptically.

"Where is the happy?" Izzy asked. "I talked to you moments after you and Alec got together. I remember the joy in your voice. Where did it go?"

"I-" Magnus started. "I don't know."
"Well you better figure it out!" Izzy demanded. "Because Alec is a catch and he could do better."

"You don't have to remind me of that!" Magnus yelled and Izzy suddenly realized she'd hit the target.

"I see," Izzy said thoughtfully. "There is your problem."

"You have been here all of thirty seconds and now you think you know what my problem is," Magnus yelled angrily. "By all means, enlighten me."

"This has nothing to do with Alec loving you or his family fortune," Izzy diagnosed. "This is all about your insecurities."

"You have some nerve," Magnus said coldly. "Showing up unannounced, pulling me by the front of my shirt out of my house then proceeding to lecture me about things you don't understand."

"And you are just a big scaredy cat who's afraid of a serious relationship," Izzy replied. "And I don't want you to break Alec's heart figuring that out."

"You don't know anything about my life," Magnus yelled at her. "Go away!"

"No," Izzy replied stubbornly. She had her back to the door so Magnus couldn't sneak back into the apartment. Izzy was just starting to wonder what could break their impasse when suddenly someone else arrived on the scene. But it wasn't her brother waking up from their yelling and opening the door behind her, it a brown haired woman coming up the stairs to join them.

"Tessa?" Magnus asked. "Are you alright?"

"I feel like crap," Tessa grumbled.

"Ah so that's why you're home early," Magnus said. "Alec's inside asleep. He has the flu."

"Oh fabulous," Tessa complained as she swayed slightly, clearly unsteady on her feet. "So, I probably have his flu. Stupid spring."

"My roommate," Magnus explained to Izzy. "Tessa this is Alec's sister."

"Hi," Tessa said absently. Then her hand went to cover her mouth and both Magnus and Izzy moved aside to let her pass.

"Call if you need something," Magnus yelled after her.

"Oh, so you will help your roommate out," Izzy said. "But not your boyfriend."

"Oh shut up," Magnus replied as he pushed his way past Izzy and into the apartment. Izzy was having none of that. She followed him.

"I don't recall inviting you inside," Magnus said. "In fact, I recall doing the exact opposite." Izzy just stuck her tongue out at him. She was nothing if not determined to spare her brother heartbreak and the best way to do that was to be in the apartment. Izzy walked straight to the couch where she'd seen Alec earlier. He was still there. Izzy leaned down and gently nudged her brother awake.

"Hi big brother," Izzy whispered. "Wake up."

"Izzy," Alec mumbled, his eyes half closed. "You can't be here."
"Why not?" Izzy smiled at him. He was clearly still half asleep.

"You have school..." Alec started then took a few long seconds to add. "Somewhere else."

"It's spring break," Izzy told him giggling. "So, I came to see you." Alec blinked a few times then sat up and looked her up and down. He seemed to be waking up.

"Izzy?" Alec asked more coherently. She nodded and he stood up, pulling her into a hug.

"It's so great to see you!" Alec exclaimed but then Alec swayed and nearly fell backwards onto the couch.

"Whoa," Izzy said as she helped Alec lay back down. "Don't get up, really."

"This is all Clary's fault," Alec whined.

"I am blaming you!" Tessa yelled from behind the closed bathroom door.

"Plenty of blame to go around," Magnus said. Alec turned to face Magnus and Izzy also shifted her gaze to Alec's boyfriend, who was standing a distance behind them with a grumpy look on his face.

"Why are you so far away?" Alec asked.

"Oh, your sister hates me," Magnus said cheerfully.

"Why would you say that?" Alec asked. He looked a little hurt and Izzy wanted to roll her eyes at her overly sensitive brother.

"I might have yelled at him," Izzy admitted.

"You did what?" Alec asked.

"Oh, come on," Izzy defended herself. "He needed a good lecture."

"Do refrain in the future from telling your sister about our problems," Magnus said coolly.

"What the hell, Iz?" Alec yelled with rather a lot of energy for a man who looked so ill. Izzy didn't reply. She just held her head high and turned to face away. Alec switched tactics. He turned to Magnus.

"Magnus," Alec said gently. "Just ignore her okay?"

"You must complain about me a lot," Magnus said. "For your family to think so little of me."

"I-" Alec started, but he seemed at a loss for words.

"He didn't used to complain," Izzy chimed in. "It used to be all lame gushing until you started being weird about Alec having money."

"Why you little-" But Magnus's insult was cut off by his phone. As Magnus read the text with wide eyes Izzy got a sinking feeling. Izzy didn't like the look on Magnus's face. She knew Alec wouldn't pry though, so she took it upon herself. In one fluid motion Izzy had Magnus's phone out of his hands and quickly read the screen.

'Magnus,' someone named Camille had texted him. 'Ralf dumped me. I need you. Please.'
"Who's Camille?" Izzy asked. Magnus didn't answer but snatched his phone back with a vengeance. Izzy turned to Alec and was about to repeat her question, but the look on her brother's face stopped her cold.

"What's going on Magnus?" Alec asked, fear obvious in his voice.

"I-" Magnus started. "I... er... have to go." And with that Magnus got up, grabbed his jacket, put his shoes on and was out the door in a matter of seconds.

"This is his apartment?" Izzy scoffed. "And he's just leaving us here?"

"What did that text say?" Alec asked in a terrified whisper.

"That some guy named Ralf dumped her," Izzy explained. "What's going on?"

But Alec just pulled his knees up to wrap his arms around himself, tears spilling from his eyes as he answered her. "Camille is Magnus's ex-girlfriend."

"Oh," Izzy said softly.

"I don't understand," Alec sobbed. "He was opening up and talking to me just hours ago." Izzy suddenly felt horrible. Maybe she hadn't helped. Maybe it was her fault. Maybe Magnus had left to get away from her.

"I'm sorry," Izzy said.

"Why did you have to butt in, huh?" Alec yelled. "I love him, Iz!"

"And would someone who loved you back have just run off to help his ex like that?" Izzy countered.

"I don't know okay," Alec said angrily. "But you definitely didn't help!"

"I think he's just scared of a serious relationship," Izzy said.

"That isn't it, Iz," Alec replied.

"How do you know?" Izzy asked. "Because it sure seems that way to me. You could do better you know."

"I don't want better," Alec yelled at her. "I want him." And with that Alec got up and started unsteadily for the front door, but Izzy jumped up to stop him.

"You're sick, Alec," Izzy reminded her brother. "Don't go running after that idiot right now."

"Don't call him an idiot," Alec snapped, but he was unsteady on his feet and clearly saw the logic to her argument.

"He's an idiot if he lets you be the one that got away," Izzy said stubbornly. Alec was spared having to defend his boyfriend's horrible behaviour by the reappearance of Magnus's roommate. Tessa exited the bathroom with a sour look on her face.

"I don't have time to get sick," Tessa whined. "Why did you have to share your flu with me Alec."

"Sorry," Alec mumbled. Izzy was studying Tessa. She didn't look as pale as Alec nor was her skin clammy like she had a fever.
"Have you checked your temperature?" Izzy asked Tessa.

"No," Tessa said.

"I didn't get a fever right away," Alec explained. "Neither did Clary. It seems to be a twenty-four-hour thing."

"Well, then I have just a few hours left," Tessa sighed. "I thought I had food poisoning yesterday."

"I don't think you have Alec's flu," Izzy told Tessa. "When mom was pregnant with Max she threw up a lot."

"I'm on the pill," Tessa explained. "And before you ask, I haven't missed a day."

"Alright," Izzy said skeptically.

"That would be rather awkward," Alec said absently. "What with you dating Jem and Will."

"Wait!" Izzy said. "You're dating two guys at once?" Tessa just looked annoyed by the question, which Izzy took as a yes. "And if you were pregnant you wouldn't know whose it was?"

"I'm not pregnant," Tessa said annoyed, then she turned to Alec. "I know she's your sister, but I don't know her. Could you maybe keep my life out of your conversation."

"Sorry," Alec mumbled again. "Magnus ran off to see Camille. I am not thinking straight."

"He did what?" Tessa yelled. "Oh, I am going to kill him."

"Get in line," Izzy agreed.

"Stop it!" Alec yelled. "Both of you."

"That fool," Tessa scoffed. "I am going after him!"

Chapter End Notes

Hehe... so... what do you guys have to say? I am super curious!

Because ALL the things happened! hehe. Trying to keep it interesting here people! First Izzy POV chapter. Malec crisis. Tessa?

Sneak Peek Chapter 43:

The prospect of walking the last few blocks to Camille's apartment made Tessa want to curl up in a ball and never move again. Switching tactics, Tessa got out her phone and dialed Magnus's number. No answer. She dialed again. Went to voicemail.

'I am not sure if you are ignoring your phone or just forgot to bring it,' Tessa texted Magnus instead. 'But if you are reading this remember that Camille never cared about you! She cheated on you. Don't do this Magnus. Go back to Alec.'

Tessa sank into a bench outside a cafe as she caught her breath. That was all she could do at the moment.
"He did what?" Tessa yelled. "Oh I am going to kill him."

"Get in line," Izzy agreed.

"Stop it!" Alec yelled. "Both of you."

"That fool," Tessa said. "I am going after him!" She didn't wait for Alec to disagree with her. Quickly collecting her purse and jacket, Tessa ran out the front door after Magnus. Camille's place wasn't that far. She went to the same university, so it made sense that the evil woman would want to live nearby.

Tessa had never liked Camille and had only put up with her for Magnus's sake. But, Tessa liked Alec. She'd never seen Magnus so happy with anyone before. Overprotective Clary was finally too busy with her own love life to meddle in Magnus's, which meant it was up to Tessa to stop Magnus from ruining his own chance at happiness. Sure, Magnus had never actually said where he was going, but she had a bad feeling. Magnus had always had a weak spot when it came to Camille, even if he didn't realize it. She had an inexplicable power over Magnus that had always made Tessa's skin crawl. In fact, that crazy woman seemed to have a similar power over a lot of people.

Tessa stopped running. She was exhausted, but she'd barely made it three blocks.

"It's just the flu," Tessa told herself as she started moving again, but she stopped not long after. She was suddenly so tired she thought she could nap right here on the street. Entertaining the thought for a moment, Tessa considered maybe it wouldn't hurt to double check. She had been nauseous for a few days now and there was a drug store nearby.

But she had to find Magnus!

The prospect of walking the last few blocks to Camille's apartment, however, made Tessa want to curl up in a ball and never move again. Switching tactics, Tessa got out her phone and dialed Magnus's number. No answer. She dialed again and her call went straight to voicemail.

'I am not sure if you are ignoring your phone or just forgot to bring your phone,' Tessa texted Magnus instead. 'But if you are reading this, remember that Camille never cared about you! She cheated on you. Don't do this Magnus. Go back to Alec.'

Tessa sank into a bench outside a cafe as she caught her breath. She thought sending Magnus that message was all she could do, but after throwing up in the trash can, Tessa felt considerably better and decided to continue her search just a little longer. She got up and headed toward Camille's again, walking rather than running this time. Walking seemed to be a bit easier and Tessa covered the last few blocks easily.

To Tessa's great surprise, as she approached Camille's building, she saw Magnus run past her in the opposite direction. Tessa called after him, but he barely turned, too intent on where he was going to stop. Her curiosity piqued beyond compare, Tessa knocked on Camille's front door. Magnus's blonde ex answered.

"Magnus?" Camille asked hopefully.
"Nope," Tessa replied. "Magnus just ran out of here like the devil was on his heels. What the hell happened?"

"I have no idea," Camille sobbed.

"Don't give me that," Tessa scoffed, though she had to give the woman credit. Those were some truly believable fake tears. "What did you tell him to make him come over here anyway?"

"Ralf dumped me," Camille replied, still sobbing.

"People don't dump you Camille," Tessa said, flatly. "You dump them. Now, the truth." Her dishonest tears dried and she suddenly looked furious. With her hand on her hip Camille glared at Tessa.

"I never did like you," Camille said coldly.

"I know the feeling," Tessa smiled back icily. "What's your angle, Camille?"

"Ralf has been looking at other women," Camille huffed. "I thought maybe he'd smarten up if he saw me with Magnus."

"You want to make him jealous," Tessa laughed. Such a stupid thing to mess with Magnus over. Camille truly thought other people's emotions were just her playthings, but as Tessa studied the other woman's face, she gasped in surprise and suddenly exclaimed, "Oh my god, you love him don't you?"

"Why are you even here?" Camille complained. "Go away."

"You may never have truly cared for Magnus," Tessa said. "But you care about Ralf." With that Camille slammed the door in Tessa's face, but she didn't mind. This certainly explained a lot.

Tessa swayed slightly as the world spun. Dizzy and nauseous, she decided Magnus could handle the rest on his own. After all, Magnus had been headed to his place which surely meant he was going back to Alec. Either way, it was out of her hands. She might have been a little rash coming out here to chase after him. Sure, she knew Magnus had a blind spot with Camille, but she did have some faith in her friend's sanity.

Keeping that hopeful thought in mind, Tessa walked around the block to the drug store. She took a home pregnancy test off the shelf, paid for it and then used the public bathroom.

As she waited for the test results, Tessa told herself this was just a precaution. After all, she hadn't missed a single birth control pill. Not one. So, when the little pink plus sign appeared, she was stunned. Trying to convince herself it was a false positive, Tessa bought a second test and did it again. The results were the same. Still disbelieving, Tessa got out her cell phone and looked up the chances of a false positive pregnancy test. To her great dismay, false negatives were common while false positives were less so.

How the hell had this happened then? Determined to find out, Tessa googled 'how can you get pregnant on the birth control pill.' She scrolled through several sites before she found the answer: antibiotics. This site recommended using a second form of protection while taking any antibiotic with the birth control pill. But the pharmacist hadn't even come close to mentioning that to her when she went to pick up the antibiotics for that stupid bladder infection! And it was the same pharmacist that sold her the birth control for crying out loud!

Tessa took a few deep breaths, alone in her bathroom stall to calm herself. Being mad at pharmacists
wasn't the answer. Though she decided, it was definitely their fault she was pregnant. Pregnant. It wasn't sticking in her head. It didn't feel real. She started doing some math in her head. When had she been on the antibiotics? Who had she been with during those weeks? Tessa slowly realized it could be either Jem's or Will's. What the hell was she supposed to tell them?

Tessa left the bathroom stall and washed her hands while her mind spun. She'd never really given a thought to kids before this moment. She was still finishing university. She was still enjoying being in love. She hadn't thought about what came next once! Could she handle this? Did she even want a baby? No, she needed to tell them before she thought about that. She knew Jem didn't want kids. He'd said as much that day she'd learned of his illness and Will's very existence screamed bachelor. Tessa couldn't picture Will with a child in his arms. When she tried, the imagine in her head was all foggy and fictional. And if it was Jem's baby, what if the baby wasn't healthy? She knew it was unlikely and she'd have to carry the gene too, but Tessa couldn't help but worry. Having a child was one thing. Having a sick child was another thing entirely. It couldn't be both Jem and Will's child, though Tessa wished it could. She was worried who ever wasn't the father would feel like an outsider. Worried she'd lose whoever that was. The idea of never finding out who the father was occurred to her, but that wouldn't work. Jem and Will looked nothing alike. The second the child was born they'd know. Born... Pregnant... Oh god!

Tessa splashed cold water on her face as she stared at her pale reflection. She was scared out of her mind. Tessa placed a hand over her stomach and imagined what she'd look like when she ballooned out like a whale. And from what she knew, having a baby hurt, like really, really bad.

Deciding it was time to face the music, Tessa took out her phone and dialed.

"Hey," Tessa said when he picked up.

"What a lovely surprise," Will said.

"Do you think we could meet up today?" Tessa asked. "Jem too. Either at your place or his?"

"Sure," Will said. "What's this about?"

"I'll tell you when I see you," Tessa said.

"Is everything alright?" Will asked, concerned.

"Umm," Tessa said. "That will really depend."

"Are you at home now?" Will asked.

"No," Tessa replied.

"Where are you?" Will asked. "I can pick you up and we can head over to Jem's together."

"Alright," Tessa replied. "I'll let Jem know." She quickly gave Will the location of the drug store where she was, then called Jem.

"Tessa?" Jem said surprised, but clearly pleased to hear from her.

"Will and I are headed over," Tessa said.

"Lovely," Jem said. "To what do I owe the visit?"

"I'll tell you when I see you," Tessa replied and bid Jem goodbye. She was too nervous to stay on
the phone. She wasn't yet sure what her reaction to all this was apart from fear, and the thought of
telling Jem and Will then waiting for their response was making her so anxious. How could they
react well! Tessa had never talked about kids or the future with Will, and the only conversation about
it she'd had with Jem had been him telling her he didn't want kids. This was a disaster!

Maybe she'd gone about this all wrong. Maybe she shouldn't mention anything to them until she
confirmed the pregnancy with a doctor. But, it was too late for that. They both knew she wanted to
talk to them and she was far too obviously stressed out to make something else up at the moment.
Will arrived a few minutes later, saving Tessa from having to think any more about this. Tessa got
into the passenger seat of his blue truck, grateful to have a distraction from her thoughts.

"Well, you look fine at least," Will said, concerned as Tessa put on her seat belt. "Still not going to
tell me what's going on?"

"I need to tell you both together," Tessa said firmly. She knew it wasn't fair to do anything else.

"You aren't breaking up with us, are you?" Will asked. Tessa couldn't help but laugh nervously. In
her current condition, that would qualify as the stupidest thing she could possible do.

"Laughter was not the reaction I was expecting," Will said. He still sounded concerned.

"Sorry," Tessa replied. "I'm just nervous."

"Because you've never dumped two guys at once before?" Will asked.

"Definitely not because of that," Tessa replied and this seemed to cheer Will up, at least a little. Tessa
knew him well enough to know he was still worrying though. She could see it in the way he held his
shoulders. She wondered what expression would be on his face once she told him. Then she added
to herself that they could always break up with her after she dropped this bomb on them. There had
been no plan to conceive a child, and for all the boys knew, she'd lied about being on birth control.

They drove in silence to Jem's house. Tessa running over and over in her mind just how she was
going to tell them. No matter how she phrased the information, it always sounded ridiculous to her.
She guessed that Will could sense her anxiety, but he didn't say anything.

Jem greeted them each with a hug as they entered his house. Tessa also got a kiss on the cheek. But,
after that both men looked to Tessa, clearly more interested in what she had to say than in leaving the
entryway. They were standing there, both of them waiting for her to speak, but Tessa didn't know
how to start.

"We are both here," Will said kindly. "What did you want to say Tess?" Will moved closer to her
and gently touched her arm, concern in his face. Jem was standing beside him, facing her.

"I don't really know how to say this," Tessa confessed.

"Just say it," Jem answered. "You know you can tell us anything."

"I'm pregnant," Tessa said very quickly, all her rehearsed phrases going out the window. "And I
don't know who the father is." She closed her eyes as if not seeing their reactions would somehow
help.

"This was your news!" Will exclaimed. "Yeesh woman, you had me worried."

"I'm sorry," she said, eyes still closed. "I know you, neither of you, want this. How could I ask
you… how could..."
"Ask me?" Will's voice sounded shocked, almost offended. Tessa opened her eyes tentatively and felt her whole body relax upon seeing the affection in Will's eyes.

"You're not mad?" Tessa asked.

"I am curious how one gets pregnant on birth control," Will smiled. "But did you really think I'd be mad?"

"I don't know," Tessa sobbed. "This whole thing is crazy. I haven't finished school. We haven't talked about this at all, not even the possibility. It could be yours or Jem's and… I-"

"And nothing," Will sighed. He moved closer to her, a hand on both her shoulders. Tessa couldn't resist the comfort of his arms, and leaned against him. "Either you carry the child of the two people I love most in this world or you carry my child. It matters not which."

"Really?" Tessa asked through her tears. She was, by this point, staining Will's shirt.

"How can you doubt me so?" Will sighed. Tessa mumbled something about Will's bachelor pad.

"Don't you understand," Will told her. "I was a bachelor for so long, not because it was what I wanted, but because it was what I thought I deserved. You and Jem have taught me that I wasn't the sole destroyer of my family. I have faith now that a family of my own is possible, but I have no interest in one that doesn't include you." Will stroked her face from temple to jawline gently before he added, "My Tess." Tessa kissed him softly on the lips, tasting the salt from her own tears then turned to face Jem, tense. Jem had specifically told her he didn't want children. Jem hadn't said a word since she announced she was pregnant. The anxiety in her stomach felt like it was constricting her heart. Even if Will was with her, that didn't mean she wanted to lose Jem.

When Tessa turned to see him, she was surprised to find Jem smiling. Jem walked the two steps forward to where they stood, and taking Will's hands from hers, he placed it on Tessa's currently flat stomach.

"I know whose child you carry Tessa," Jem said. "And it isn't mine."

"You can't know that," Will replied, his hands gently leaving Tessa's stomach as he turned to his friend.

"Yes I can," Jem spoke with great certainty. "Because I had a vasectomy." Tessa's mouth fell open.

"You did what?" Will asked outraged.

"That is why I told you so early in our relationship that I was never going to have children," Jem told Tessa, ignoring Will. "Because I can't."

"Wait a minute," Will said. "When did you get a vasectomy?"

"As soon as the medical system let me," Jem said. "So when I was eighteen."

"All these years and you never told me!" Will said annoyed. Jem shrugged, but Will remained furious. Her boys argued in heated tones for a moment while Tessa let's Jem's words sink in. Tessa was pregnant with Will's child, for sure. There was no uncertainty at all. Tessa put her hand over her stomach and just stayed like that for a moment. Will's baby. She was carrying William Herondale's child.

"It's not like you tell me everything either," Jem accused Will.
"I wouldn't keep something like that to myself," Will scoffed.

"It's not like it really affected you," Jem replied. Will gave him a dubious look before Jem added, "Before Tessa that is."

,"Will said.

"Oh please," Jem laughed. "You have sisters."

"A sister," Will corrected him.

"Well I think you should get married," Jem said, quickly changing the topic back to the one at hand.

"The law really hasn't gotten around to letting the three of us do that," Tessa laughed nervously.

"I mean just you two," Jem said. "It's your child. You're a family." Will and Tessa turned to Jem, united in their disapproval of Jem's plan.

"No," Tessa said. "You are part of this family, Jem."

"I agree with Tessa," Will added. "We won't cut you out."

"A child doesn't need two fathers," Jem said.

"They say it takes a village," Tessa said smiling at Jem. "How could having more people who love them be anything but wonderful for a child?" It seemed Tessa's question of whether or not to have the baby had been answered. Will's reaction had wiped the thought from her mind.

A sudden noise broke the silence. Tessa recognized the bing as her phone alert. She checked the clock on the wall and had to laugh at the irony.

"What's so funny?" Will asked her.

"My phone is reminding me to take my pill," Tessa told them. It wasn't really funny, but it felt so good to laugh.

"Maybe don't bother," Jem laughed with her. "So, that's a no then?"

"A no for us getting married and leaving you in the dust?" Will replied. "Yes definitely."

"I need to sit down," Tessa sighed as she moved into the living room and sank into an armchair. She was dizzy, but that wasn't the only reason her head was spinning.

"Have you gone to see a doctor yet Tessa?" Jem asked her. Both the boys were now crowded around her armchair with concern etched into every aspect of their face.

"Nope," Tessa said. "Just found out about a half hour before you guys did." This spurred both men into action. Jem insisted on booking her an appointment for tomorrow. Tessa had a feeling he would have booked her today if the doctor's office was open on Sundays. Will started fussing over her and went to get her some water a moment later. It was all rather surreal, watching them both moving about to aid her. Maybe this wasn't the disaster she'd thought it was. Maybe, just maybe, this strange relationship dynamic could work out.

Chapter End Notes
So did I surprise anyone? Yes the flu plotline was a misdirect for when throwing meant pregnant rather than sick. ^_^ I just love to mess with you guys. This chapter has been written for AGES! At least the part where Tessa tells her boys she's pregnant I basically wrote right after I uploaded the last Tessa chapter. :D Been waiting patiently to the plot to catch up. lol Once I knew where this chapter would end up being I had to merge it with the Malec plotline.

And woot!! THANKS SO MUCH for those people who wrote me epicly long essay comments! THOSE ARE THE BEST! Please please do that more!

I recently realized I hadn't told you guys the other thing that inspired this story. The interwoven plots were inspired by the structure of television shows. You know how in those prime time dramas all the characters have separate lives and yet seem to always end up getting tangled up in each others lives? I wanted to show lots of points of view and perspectives on different events like a tv show would and then I wanted to mix everything up!

Sneak Peek Chapter 44:

Chairman Meow and the Great Catsby chose this moment to jump up onto Alec's lap.

"I'll miss you guys too," Alec told the cats. They were both purring and seemed to know he needed the company. Cats really were the best pets Alec thought as he stroked their soft fur. Alec knew his nostalgia was just masking the pain of losing Magnus himself. Alec also knew he should be mad at Magnus for everything that had happened and he was but not enough to matter. Mostly Alec was just defeated. It was out of his control. Either Magnus would come back and break up with him or not. Alec wasn't sure how long he sat there with the cats in his lap.
Alec watched Tessa run out the door, but he couldn't get his hopes up. He remembered only too well those first few weeks after he'd met Magnus. Those weeks when Magnus had been hung up on Camille. Magnus hadn't said where he was going and Alec tried to hope Magnus hadn't gone to see her, but it was a weak hope. After all, Magnus had yet to give Alec even the slightest indication he loved Alec in return. Magnus had been acting weird for weeks and was now likely off somewhere with Camille at this very moment. Magnus was probably going to break up with Alec when he returned. No matter what Izzy said, he knew he could go searching for Magnus, flu or no flu, but what was the point? If Magnus didn't want to be with him there was nothing Alec could do about it.

"I hope Tessa punches him," Izzy said firmly.

"Go away," Alec grumbled. He'd been so happy to see his sister just moments ago, but now he felt rather the opposite. He couldn't help but think Magnus might still be here if she hadn't interfered. He knew if he and Magnus hadn't been on such thin ice, her interference wouldn't have mattered, but he still didn't want that reminder just now.

"But, I came to visit you," Izzy whined.

"And you're here for a week, right?" Alec continued. "Well, I'll see you tomorrow."

"Alec," Izzy said. "I was trying to help."

"And I didn't need your help, Iz," Alec complained, leaning back on the couch and pinching the bridge of his nose with two fingers. He had a headache, but he couldn't tell if it was flu induced or sister induced.

"At least let me look after you while you're sick," Izzy said.

"I can look after myself," Alec replied. After all, he felt fine so long as he stayed on the couch. He wasn't as nauseous as he'd been before. It had been standing that had thrown him off balance.

"But-

"No buts," Alec replied. "I want to be alone." And Izzy gave in. Alec supposed she must have finally developed some sense of when he was serious. After all, she was starting to back off a little, granted it was too late now, but Alec couldn't fix the damage that had already been done. Alec felt bad as she stood up, looking more guilty than Alec had ever seen her look before.

"Sorry," Izzy mumbled as she got up and left, closing Magnus's front door as she did so.

Alec took a deep breath. Alone in his soon-to-be ex-boyfriend's apartment. He'd grown quite fond of this apartment since he'd met Magnus. Sure, he'd spent more time here once they started dating, but he'd liked it even before then. There was something homey about the way Magnus and Tessa had laid it out. The furniture angled toward the tv in such a way as to still encourage conversation. The warm blanket that covered his legs was rather lovely as well, with bright colourful geometric patterns. Alec was going to miss this place. Chairman Meow and the Great Catsby chose this moment to jump up onto Alec's lap.
"I'll miss you guys too," Alec told the cats. They were both purring and seemed to know he needed the company. Cats really were the best pets, Alec thought as he stroked their soft fur. Alec knew his nostalgia was just masking the pain of losing Magnus. Alec also knew he should be mad at Magnus for everything that had happened, and he was, but not enough to matter. Mostly, Alec was just defeated. It was out of his control. Either Magnus would come back and break up with him or not. Alec wasn't sure how long he sat there with the cats in his lap. It was probably at least a half hour. His mind went over and over everything as he stroked the cats absentely. He was so lost in his thoughts the sound of the door opening made him jump, startling both cats in his lap. When Alec had caught his breath, he turned to see who had walked in.

Magnus stood there. He was smiling, but Alec couldn't read the meaning behind the smile. Was he happy he'd finally be back with Camille after he dumped Alec? Was he just happy to be out of the rain? Was it raining? Wait, that didn't matter.

"Hi," Magnus said. He was standing in the still open doorway. A small part of Alec's mind tried to look past Magnus and check if it was raining. Of course, this was an apartment so all there was behind Magnus was a hallway. Alec could have looked out a window, but let's be honest, the rain was just a distraction, a way of avoiding a conversation that would cause him pain. Magnus moved forward, closing the door behind him, and walked into the living room. He soon stood in front of Alec, who turned back to face him.

"Hey," Alec replied. The blank TV screen was behind Magnus as the two men faced each other.

"I shouldn't have run off like that," Magnus said. "I'm sorry."

"Izzy shouldn't have yelled at you," Alec admitted. "But I shouldn't have told her enough to prompt her to either. It's just that you and I weren't talking and I needed so badly to talk to someone."

"I am so sorry for everything I put you through," Magnus said. "I should have talked to your sooner instead of keeping it all inside."

"Thanks," Alec sighed. He couldn't tell if Magnus was just trying to get all the apologies out of the way before breaking his heart, or if Magnus actually had more to say.

"If you're going to break up with me," Alec said, resigned to finding out one way or the other. Distractions weren't really helping anyway. "Please just do it quickly." He turned away from Magnus, unable to look him in the eye.

"Alexander, I-" Magnus started. Alec was still sitting on the couch with both cats in his lap. He was studying the colouring of Chairmen's fur to keep his head down and stop him from looking at Magnus.

"I got her text and it felt like a way out," Magnus said. "With your sister and everything, I freaked, but Alexander I-"

"You're done with me?" Alec said. He needed to say what he was afraid of. He needed to be blunt. It had been too long since they'd spoken frankly to each other. "You want her?" Alec was trying very hard not to picture Magnus kissing her, but he was failing. The image twisted his insides. He still wasn't looking at Magnus, but rather at the cats in his lap. Chairmen's head rested on Catsby's shoulder and they were purring.

"No," Magnus exclaimed passionately.

Alec wasn't looking at the cats anymore, or rather he wasn't seeing them. His head down, Alec froze.
Then Magnus's hand touched Alec's chin, gently encouraging him to look up. Alec gazed into Magnus's eyes just as Magnus pulled Alec into his arms, dislodging two unhappy cats.

"I love you," Magnus whispered into Alec's ear. Alec could not form a thought before Magnus pulled out of the hug to kiss Alec. It was like their first kiss, heated and desperate. It had been weeks since they'd kissed like this and Alec melted instantly, his hands weaving through Magnus's hair. The combination of hearing his love returned and feeling Magnus's lips on his were enough to completely relax the anxiety that had been constricting Alec's chest.

"I think I was looking for a reason we wouldn't work," Magnus explained when they broke apart. "I don't think I realized how much a relationship that could actually have a future scared me."

"What about the money thing?" Alec asked, though he was inwardly grinning and Magnus's use of the word future. For when Alec thought about Magnus, all he could see was the future.

"I think what I really can't stand is money coming between us," Magnus said. "It feels like another thing separating us. Like a part of you I can't reach. But if we talked about it… I think that would help. I want to know what that it was like for you. I want to hear about your family… if they don't all hate me, that is. And, maybe we could talk about what it's like to go without." Magnus paused before looking hopefully at Alec and adding, "That is, if you still want me after everything… I wouldn't blame you… I haven't been kind to you recently…"

"I forgive you," Alec smiled, touching Magnus's face sweetly. It was easy to forgive him now that he understood why, but more than that, forgiving Magnus was the only thing he could do. Alec had never loved another person so completely before.

"And I love you," Alec said smiling. It felt so good to finally say it out loud, in this way. Not by accident, not because he'd messed up, but because he knew the other person would say it back.

"I love you too," Magnus said. Alec smiled and kissed his boyfriend softly, his heart singing in his chest at those words. Alec pulled Magnus down on the couch with him and kissed his boyfriend again, a little more enthusiastically this time. Their passionate kiss slowly shifted to a more lazy, warm, romantic kiss as they settled down together on the couch. Alec still wasn't feeling totally himself, otherwise he thought with a smile, they'd have probably made it to Magnus's bedroom by now. Given how Alec was feeling, the warm comforting arms of his boyfriend was all he wanted.

"How did seeing Camille bring you to this conclusion?" Alec asked after they'd been silent for a while. It was a new silence though, one without something ominous hanging over them. Alec was lying with his back against Magnus's chest and they were on the couch, curled up under the brightly coloured blanket.

"She reminded me of you and me," Magnus replied, and Alec heard something there in Magnus's voice to back up his words, an honest affection in his tone. Alec almost turned to read his boyfriend's face, but he was so very comfortable. "When we were friends and you were always by my side."

"When I arrived," Magnus continued. "And she was sobbing, but for the first time I recognized her tears for what they were. It was so surreal. I couldn't remember why I used to love her. Then I thought of you and…"

"You came back," Alec added, smiling.

"I came back," Magnus confirmed.

"When you went to see Camille," Alec started. "It's not that I don't trust you, it's just that I need to
ask..." He didn't want to accuse Magnus of anything, but at the same time he really needed to know if he was ever going to get the image of Magnus kissing Camille out of his head.

"I have been cheated on," Magnus said softly, seeming to understand Alec's unfinished question. "I know what that feels like. I wouldn't wish it on my worst enemy."

"So, the image in my head of you kissing her is entirely fictional?" Alec teased feeling so much better.

"Entirely," Magnus replied as he leaned forward and kissed Alec's temple.

"Thank you," Alec whispered. He wasn't thanking Magnus for not kissing Camille, but rather for not judging him for needing to ask.

"So, you had rich people questions for me," Alec said cheerfully.

"Do you eat at one of those super long tables where you can't talk to the person at the other end?" Magnus asked. Alec couldn't contain his laughter.

"No," Alec chuckled. "We have a cook, but our table only seats eight."

"A cook?" Magnus asked. Alec nodded. "You employ a person full time to make all your meals?"

"Well, my parents do," Alec said. "Though mom does her own cooking at Christmas."

"That's crazy," Magnus said, but Alec just shrugged.

"It seemed normal to me," Alec said.

"I grew up shopping with coupons and learning how to find something to eat when we hadn't bought groceries for two weeks," Magnus said.

"Now that's crazy," Alec replied. "How would there be anything to eat after two weeks without groceries?"

"The first week, we used all the fresh vegetables and perishables," Magnus said. "But once they were gone, we move on to canned, frozen and nonperishable foods until payday."

"That's hard to imagine," Alec said.

"A personal family chef is hard to imagine," Magnus laughed. "My aunt is very good at creating a meal out of bare cupboards, or almost bare anyway."

"Did you ever go out to eat?" Alec asked.


"We went to restaurants," Alec said. "More than we ordered in."

"Well why would you order in when you have a cook at your beck and call," Magnus laughed.

"Fair enough," Alec conceded.

"So, next question, why does someone who can definitely afford new clothes wear sweaters with holes in them?" Magnus asked.
"I hate shopping," Alec laughed.

"That's it?" Magnus asked. "Because your sister looks like she would be more than happy to shop for you."

"Izzy would make me try everything on!" Alec whined. "Not going to happen." Magnus laughed and Alec reveled in the sound. "Besides she'd also dress me in something extremely uncomfortable I'm sure."

"You're probably right," Magnus agreed, then he added. "Where is Izzy anyway? She was here when I left."

"I kinda told her to go," Alec said sheepishly. "I'll see her tomorrow."

"I see," Magnus said and his arms tightened around Alec. The gesture was somewhere between apologetic and comforting.

"I know she can be a little intense," Alec continued. "I wish I'd never talked to her about us."

"What's done is done," Magnus said simply and Alec knew he was right, but he also knew that a bad first impression wasn't the end. If Alec and Jace could be friends, he was sure Magnus and Izzy could too.

"Do you think we could start over with Iz?" Alec asked. "Like, maybe we could go mini golfing while she's here or something? She could get to know you properly rather than through my biased whining."

"I'd like that," Magnus said.

"Oh, and you left your phone here by the way," Alec said, as he remembered. "It kept going off." Alec pointed to the dining room table where Magnus's small silver phone rested.

"I'm too comfy to move," Magnus said resting his cheek against Alec's head gently.

"You won't get any argument from me," Alec smiled, leaning back into Magnus, closing his eyes.

"Does your wifi ever go out?" Magnus asked after a moment of comfortable silence.

"We had a hard time getting wifi throughout the whole house," Alec explained. "So, we have two different wifi networks from two different providers. If one went out you just had to go to the other side of the house to use the other one."

"How big is your house?" Magnus asked, a little awed.

"Big enough that I didn't have to share a bathroom with Izzy," Alec replied. In reality there were three wings to the house, but he sensed that was a topic for another day.

"My aunt and I shared one," Magnus said. "Which is why she never let me get a cat."

"What does that have to do with a cat?" Alec asked.

"She didn't want cat litter in her bathroom," Magnus explained. "And there was nowhere else in the apartment to put it."

"Is that why you have two cats now?" Alec chuckled. "Because you can?"
"Yeah," Magnus said. "I rented this place because of the little room near the back since it's perfect for cat litter!"

"That's a very specific reason to rent a place," Alec grinned. "We never had cats or dogs when I was a kid, but my sister has a horse."

"Now that is an expensive pet!" Magnus exclaimed.

"The agreement was that she'd take care of it if they bought it, but somehow Izzy managed to get them to hire a stable worker to do that work," Alec said. "I'm not really sure how."

"I don't mean to be rude," Magnus said. "But your sister seems like a bit of a brat."

"I know," Alec sighed. "She's the only girl in the family. Even among my cousins, I think it went to her head."

"I think someone let it go to her head," Magnus said. "But, I will try to like her for your sake. Promise."

"Thanks," Alec replied. "She just takes some getting used to."

"I find it rather amazing," Magnus whispered against Alec's temple. "That you come from a family that has such an indulgent background, but you're still so humble, so honest." Magnus paused before continuing. "Usually rich people stick out. Usually I can spot them. Like with Isabelle. When she walks into a room, you can tell she believes all eyes should turn to her, but you are somehow different. It's quite remarkable to me."

"Is that why you love me?" Alec asked as he snuggled into Magnus's arms, so happy to be there.

"One of many reasons," Magnus replied with a kiss. Just then, both cats decided that it was time to reclaim their spot in Alec's lap. Chairman purred as he settled on Alec's leg while Catsby wanted to be more of a nuisance before finally deciding to sleep near Alec's feet. With two cats purring and Magnus's arms around him, Alec felt no need to get up. They stayed right where they were while they talked about their lives, trying to understand the other's world.

Chapter End Notes

I surprised by beta! She thought for sure I was gonna break Malec up. hehe.

Also... I started a new story! ^_^ It's called Royal Dilemma and its a Malec Fantasy AU. The story summary is: Alec is the heir to the throne and that comes with responsibilities, but what do you do when your duty and your moral compass clash? The throne needs an heir, but the only person Alec has eyes for is not only a man but also cursed with a demon's mark.

Chapter one just went up yesterday! Please check it out and leave a review. I so want to know what you think. I've never written an AU Fantasy before. *is excited*

Sneak Peek Ch 45

Simon listened for the door. Everytime he heard the chime he turned to see who had entered the restaurant. With every old man, young family and couple who entered
Simon became more worried he was going to be stood up. He checked the time. Okay so she wasn't technically late and maybe his arriving a half hour early hadn't been a good idea. The door chime went and Simon turned expectantly only to see a woman clearly three times his age enter the restaurant alone. That couldn't be Maia right? Simon turned away, hoping with all his might she didn't walk over here. Hadn't Eric said Maia was a student at his school? Then Simon remember how University wasn't like high school, people weren't all the same age. Simon had all but convinced himself this was just his luck when someone sat down in the seat across from him and it wasn't the women who just entered.
Simon's Awkward

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Simon was sure this was a bad idea, so why had he agreed to it? Oh, that's right, loneliness.

Eric had never tried to set him up on a date before though, and to be fair, Simon had only ever had eyes for Clary, so why would he have tried. Either way, the reality of the situation was that Simon was currently sitting across from an empty chair soon to be occupied by a girl he'd never met. All he knew about this Maia person, was that she was pretty, passionate and sarcastic. Simon was sure Eric had left something out, a catch of some kind like that she had stalked her ex or secretly doesn't shower, but, he really had nothing better to do on a Friday night anyway so he figured why not.

Simon listened for the door. Every time he heard the chime he turned to see who had entered the restaurant. With every old man, young family and couple who entered, Simon became more worried he was going to be stood up. He checked the clock for a countless time. Okay, so she wasn't technically late and maybe his arriving a half hour early hadn't been a good idea. The door chime went off and Simon turned expectantly, only to see a woman clearly three times his age enter the restaurant alone. That couldn't be Maia, right? Simon turned away, hoping with all his might she didn't walk over to his table. Hadn't Eric said Maia was a student at his school? Then Simon remembered how University wasn't like high school, people weren't all the same age. Simon had convinced himself this was just his luck, when someone sat down in the seat across from him and it wasn't the woman he'd just seen enter.

This had to be Maia, Simon thought and she was more than pretty, with light-brown skin, curly brown hair and amber eyes. She was wearing casual clothing, which Simon liked. Getting dressed up made him nervous, but what was worse was when she was dressed up and he wasn't. Maia had on a t-shirt with a logo he didn't recognize and her blue jeans hugged her curves.

"I didn't see you come in," Simon said. It was true. She hadn't entered through the main doors that he'd been watching.

"There's a back door," Maia explained.

"Why use that when there's a front door?" Simon continued. Why was he talking about this? Was he stupid! Who cared how she entered the building?

"I came from the other direction," Maia added easily. Well, at least she wasn't laughing at him, Simon thought, though he was about ready to start laughing at himself.

"Oh," Simon said lamely.

"You seem tense?" Maia commented.

"Oh, that's because I am," Simon replied, with a nervous laugh.

"Does eating in public make you tense?" Maia sniggered. Oh yeah, she was definitely laughing at him now.

"Never really been on a date before," Simon confessed.

"Really?" Maia asked. She looked a little shocked and Simon realized what his statement sounded
"Fell in love with my best friend when I was a kid," Simon mumbled. "She never loved me back. We just broke up."

"Ah," Maia said. "I know what that's like."

"You do?" Simon asked.

"Well, he wasn't my best friend," Maia corrected. "But I just broke up with someone too." Simon was starting to feel a little bit better. He could feel the tension in his shoulders fade a little.

"One thing in common at least," Simon smiled. "Do you know what you want to eat?" He gestured to the menus in front of them. Maia picked hers up and disappeared behind it. Simon followed suit and quickly decided what he wanted. The waiter arrived moments later to take their drink orders, but they ordered dinner while they were at it.

"I am so glad you aren't indecisive about food," Maia said as the waiter left. "There is nothing worse than watching someone take a half hour to decide what they want."

"That's a half hour longer to wait to eat it," Simon laughed.

"Exactly!" Maia said with enthusiasm. But, Simon couldn't think of anything to say in return and silence fell. The longer neither of them spoke, the harder it was for Simon to find something to say.

"This is strange," Maia broke the silence, to which Simon was grateful. "Blind dates are strange."

"I take it you didn't meet your ex on a blind date?" Simon said, just glad to finally be talking again.

"Nah," Maia said. "Jordan lived on my street when I was a kid."

"But I bet you know way more about how to function on a date than I do," Simon added.

"Once I turned nineteen I started going to clubs," Maia said. "You don't really meet people there with all the loud music, but it can still be fun."

"Never been to a club," Simon said. He was going to add that he'd never even drank alcohol, but decided that with this girl, that wasn't going to win him any points.

"Honestly, I only really went to that first one to show my ex I was over him," Maia said. "He didn't take it well."

"Oh?" Simon inquired.

"Nope," Maia said. "He tried to convince me I was still his, he was kinda rough about it."

"That's horrible," Simon said, but Maia just dismissed his pity with a wave of her hand.

"He wasn't always so possessive," Maia said. "He was really sweet at the beginning."

"What changed?" Simon asked.

"I don't know," Maia replied. "But it's your turn. I've given up enough of my dirty laundry."

"I'm not that interesting," Simon replied.
"Well, what happened with your ex?" Maia asked.

"Oh, she fell for someone else," Simon said. "While she was dating me."

"Ouch," Maia sympathized.

"Yeah," Simon said. "But she didn't act on it until about two hours after I broke up with her."

"That sucks," Maia said with feeling.

"About sums it up, yeah," Simon sighed. He felt like talking about their exes wasn't a great topic for a first date, but he couldn't think of a better one and Maia didn't seem to mind. Their drinks arrived. Maia reached forward to take a sip from her soda. Simon did likewise as he tried to think of what to say next.

"I'm glad I listened to that redhead," Maia smiled. "Even if the idea of a blind date made me skeptical."

"Redhead?" Simon whispered. Did Eric have any friends with red hair? Oh god, had this been Clary's idea? Would Eric have gone along with something like this? Simon wasn't sure, though he knew Clary could be very persuasive when she wanted to be.

"Yeah," Maia said. "She and a guy named Eric set us up."

"I think that redhead is my ex," Simon groaned, his head falling into his hands.

"Oh, wow," Maia mouthed then she laughed. "Well, aren't we a pair. A pair with problem exes."

"Does your ex constantly try to make you feel guilty for not wanting to be friends anymore?" Simon whined.

"Nope," Maia said. "He just texts me nonstop and refuses to delete my number from his phone."

"Okay, maybe that's worse," Simon conceded.

"Definitely worse," Maia said. "She had a lot of nice things to say about you." Maia smiled at him.

"Clary," Simon said. "Her name is Clary."

"Well then, Clary seemed nice," Maia said. "I think I know her dad."


"Yeah," Maia said. "I used to work at his bookstore."

"Small world," Simon smiled, with a shake of his head. "Wait, wouldn't that mean you moved here for school too?"

"Yep," Maia said. "I want to work in management. This school had the best program."

"Yet another person with their life in order," Simon sighed.

"Still don't know what you want to do with your life, huh?" Maia asked.

"Not a clue," Simon said. "And clearly moving across the country with my high school sweetheart didn't work out."

"Ah yes, I could have told you that was a bad plan," Maia replied.

"I know," Simon sighed. "Everyone told me and I didn't listen." Maia giggled at him. "Anyway, enough about exes and crazy friends. Tell me something about you?"

"I like music," Maia said. "Vinyl records are my favourite, but they are hard to find."

"Eric and I were part of a band back home," Simon explained. "But we all kind of broke up after high school with half of us coming here and half staying behind."

"That's too bad," Maia said. "What's the name of your band?"

"The Immortal Instruments," Simon said. "It's made up of Eric, myself and our friends Matt and Kirk."

"Matt and Kirk being the ones who didn't come here for school, right?" Maia surmised.

"Right," Simon confirmed.

"You know, you could always get new band members here," Maia told him. "You could hold auditions or something."

"Maybe," Simon said. He didn't really want to tell her that he'd be leaving after exams. Their food arrived, saving him from having to talk more on the subject and for a while, they ate in silence. It was a comfortable silence, but was later filled with casual conversation about their meal. When they both pushed their plates away, Maia flagged down a waiter to order ice cream for dessert.

"Do you want to share one?" she asked and Simon agreed.

"Are you staying in the University dorms?" Simon asked when the waiter left.

"Yep," Maia said. "It's strange living with a roommate."

"I don't actually have one anymore," Simon replied as he remembered he had Jace to thank for that.

"How did you manage that!" Maia asked laughing.

"My old roommate was drinking underage," Simon said. "With other underage friends. When he was gone, they didn't have anyone to take his place."

"Lucky," Maia grumbled. "My roommate is this little Asian girl named Lily."

"That doesn't sound so bad," Simon said. "My old roommate used to blast music so loud you couldn't hear yourself think."

"She isn't bad per se," Maia continued. "She's just kinda… I don't know. Stand off-ish. She has this blue streak in her hair and goes on and on about her boss like he's a god or something."

"Her boss?" Simon asked.

"Don't ask," Maia grumbled. "I am not even sure if she loves him or just looks up to him."

"Where does she work?" Simon inquired conversationally.

"Some retail store," Maia said. "Her boss's name is Raphael… I think."
"You can't choose your roommates," Simon remarked.

"Would be nice if you could though," Maia replied as the waiter reappeared with dessert. They both grabbed a spoon and the frozen treat vanished in moments. When the check came, Simon was about it pay when Maia said they should split it. He agreed, though he wasn't sure if this would somehow turn their date into a less date-like get together.

When everything was settled, Maia stood up and waited for Simon to join her. He followed Maia out the front door and onto the street.

"You are walking me home," Maia said, firmly, but she was smiling.

"We both live in dorms," Simon reminded her.

"Okay so we can walk each other home," Maia replied. Simon was starting to get nervous. Would Maia expect a kiss when they got to her dorm room? He'd only ever kissed Clary before.

They'd met at a restaurant not far from the university, so Simon didn't have long to freak out. However, he did manage to keenly observe every rock on the ground like they were the most interesting and exquisite things he had ever seen as they walked, as well as his shockingly dirty shoelaces. They entered the dorm building and walked up the stairs while Simon continued to stare at the floor, observing the rather plain floor tiles.

"This is me," Maia said, stopping in front of a dorm room.

"I'm a floor up," Simon said, turning to face her. He had no idea what to do. He felt rather like a fish out of water.

"Enough is enough," Maia said with a sigh, then moved forward to kiss him. It was a quick kiss, and a slightly awkward one. When they pulled apart, Simon couldn't quite read the expression on her face.

"Listen, Simon," Maia said. "I don't have a lot of friends at this school yet and it's rare I meet someone I can so easily talk to."

Simon knew just as well as she did, what their kiss had revealed. They had no chemistry. Simon had dated a woman who wasn't attracted him for over a year; he knew what no chemistry felt like and he wasn't willing to do that again. He could tell what she really wanted to say and decided to beat her to it. "Do you want to just be friends?"

"Yeah, that would be great," Maia said, clearly relieved Simon didn't take it as an insult. Maybe it was too early for him to start dating.

"Great," Simon said. They exchanged phone numbers and agreed to be each other's shoulder to lean on when their crazy exes were annoying. There was also a possible exchange of music libraries discussed.

As Simon walked away, he had to confess he was a little disappointed, but it could have been worse. At least, he had made a new friend, and a rather cool one at that.

Feeling lazy, Simon decided to take the elevator. Sure, it was only one flight of steps, but it wasn't like it was hurting anything, right? Simon had expected the elevator to be empty, but to his surprise the doors opened to reveal a rather striking woman.

She had pale skin and bright red lip gloss. Her hair and eyes were dark brown and her clothes looked
like they had just walked off a runway. She was in a red, skin tight dress, with two inch heels and a small, clearly decorative, black jacket that ended just under her bust line. Oh, dear. Was Simon staring?

He turned away as he pressed the button for the floor above, suddenly wishing he'd taken the stairs. The woman was looking him up and down like some sort of window shop display. Simon couldn't help but feel objectified.

There was a sudden thud. The lights went out and the elevator stopped dead.

Chapter End Notes

Hehe cliffhanger. Man, I seem to love those! What do you guys think of Maia in this story? The last time I added Maia to a fanfic she was extremely out of character so I am going for more canon Maia here.

Also... I wanted to share with you today my failure. So I have been trying to complete an original story for a while now with no success. And I think I have finally put my finger on the problem! With fanfic, the canon is like a framework or a guide, but with originals, your options are limitless. My ideas shift around, far too unstructured to form a complete story arch. It's strange to me that it's a lack of restrictions that is holding me back. How does that make any sense I ask you? I mean you'd think it would be the other way around right? But no.

Updates might be slow for the next week or so... life's been crazy, but then I might get some time off so updates could be faster. This is why I don't have an update schedule. I'd be too impatience to update faster when I can and to disappointment when I miss a deadline. My update schedule is just as fast as I write them. :)

Sneak Peek Chapter 46

"I'm bored," she whined as her phone died. She really needed to remember to charge the stupid thing at night.

"There isn't much to do," the boy said. She turned her attention to him.

"What's your name?" she asked.

"Simon," he replied.
Izzy's Boredom

Izzy never attempted to take the stairs in her heels. It was only one flight of stairs to reach her brother's dorm, but that didn't matter. One step was simply too many where heels were concerned. And it wasn't just about discomfort. These were nice heels and she didn't want to break them.

Just before the elevator closed, a boy entered. She looked him up and down, quickly decided he was kinda cute, though awkward and not really her type. He didn't scream rich or famous or I have a cool car. He kinda reminded her of those nerdy guys in the chess club at her high school.

Then the elevator stopped dead and they were in pitch black darkness. Izzy reached into her pocket and pulled out her phone. The brightness blinded her for a moment, but once her eyes adapted she could just see the inside of the elevator by the dim light of her phone's flashlight.

"What happened?" Izzy asked.

"No idea," the boy replied.

"Well this sucks," Izzy whined.

"It's probably just a glitch or something," the boy said. With a great sigh, Izzy got out her phone and began playing her favourite game to pass the time. Izzy heard him fumble, probably for his phone, in the dark. Then the bright light of his cell phone was added to the room.

"Wait," the boy said. "Who should I call for help?"

"No idea," Izzy dismissed his question. "But more importantly, I'm bored," she whined as her phone died. She really needed to remember to charge the stupid thing at night.

Maybe just for something to do, or maybe because her feet were sore, Izzy slipped off her shoes and moved backward. She continued moving until she felt the wall, at which point she slid down the hard surface to the floor. "They should put chairs in here," she said as she sat down on the ground.

Izzy turned her attention to him. "What's your name?" she asked.

"Simon," he replied.

"Do you wanna make out?" she asked casually. With no phone and an indeterminate amount of time with nothing to do but sit in the dark, Izzy was trying to think outside the box.

"Huh?" Simon replied, clearly stunned by the concept. She could just see him by the light of his cell phone. This guy was definitely one of those geeky types she observed. And he apparently remembered to charge his phone.

"I'm bored," Izzy said again. "That is, unless you have a girlfriend?"

"No girlfriend," Simon said.

"Boyfriend?" Izzy asked. Simon laughed nervously, which Izzy interpreted as confirmation of his being straight. "Great!" Izzy said as she got up off the ground to move closer to him.
"Do you go to this school?" Simon asked, clearly avoiding her first question. "I've never seen you around before."

"I'm going to start class this September," Izzy replied.

"I am leaving at the end of this year," Simon said. Izzy had to admit there was something rather inviting about this prospect. Alone in the dark with a strange man who wouldn't be here when she returned to the school. Suddenly, she wasn't so bored.

"Is that right," Izzy said, silkily, moving still closer to him.

"Huh, yeah," Simon replied shakily, clearly confused by her tone. Leaving her shoes on the floor, Izzy now stood in her bare feet just inches away from Simon, running her fingers slowly up his arm.

"So, what do ya say?" Izzy purred, as she leaned in. She could hear Simon's laboured breathing as his phone's light faded. In total darkness, Izzy leaned in, closer and closer, but still didn't meet his lips. Their noses touched and Izzy breathed against his skin as she teased him.

"Do you wanna kiss me?" Izzy whispered, with a smile. This boy was somehow intriguing, or maybe it was just the situation. Either way, Izzy was quite enjoying herself. When Simon's head titled to the side and she felt him move just a fraction closer, Izzy seized his lips with hers. Her hands holding him on either side of his face, Izzy finally kissed him. Simon's lips didn't part on their own and it was instantly evident to her that Simon knew nothing about kissing. Izzy took the lead, pulling him in as she assaulted his lips. Simon had yet to move more than his mouth since she'd kissed him. He'd just stood perfectly still, possibly in shock, but then he unfroze as his arms finally went up to hold her, his fingers tangling in her hair. She wrapped her leg around his hip as she deepened their kiss. Izzy could feel him melt under her touch, her hands going up under Simon's shirt, she continued to move her lips with his.

"Still eager to escape?" Izzy whispered into his ear, kissing Simon's neck as her hands went down to tease the band of skin between Simon's shirt and belt. Simon shivered. Izzy found herself thrilled by his reactions. Slowly moving her hand down to hold his, Izzy brought both their hands up to her chest, before moving in to kiss him again.

Simon seemed shy about touching her breasts, even through her shirt and bra, but Izzy kept his hand there as her other hand gently trailed her fingertips along the sensitive skin above Simon's belt again, occasionally dipping her fingers under it. She enjoyed Simon's gasp of surprise. She wanted that same feeling, so Izzy, pulling away for just a second, removed her shirt and placed Simon's hands on her chest again. She was wearing a rather thin bra with little padding, but still, she wanted to feel his hands against her bare skin. She thought she'd have to show him, but then Simon's hands were doing exactly what she wanted. The thin lace moved down easily and Izzy felt his fingers against her skin.

She really had her engine going now and she could feel his arousal against her leg. If this elevator didn't light up soon, she was going to end up naked on her back. No sooner had Izzy decided to guide Simon's hands south then their moment was shattered.

The lights came back on and the elevator roared to life. With a sigh, Izzy pulled back and straightened her bra.

"Too bad," she said, with a smile. "I was having fun." Simon didn't speak as she put her shirt back on. "Maybe if you stick around next year we could do that again," she added with a wink as the elevator stopped. Izzy blew him a kiss and walked out, grinning, and in need of a cold shower. She was feeling a little smug as she walked down the hall. That had been fun.
Her high slowly died as she remembered where she was going. Izzy had been invited to hang out with her brother and his insecure boyfriend. She wasn't so sure about this whole bonding with Magnus thing, but for Alec's sake she was willing to try. She reached Alec's dorm room, and rather than knocking, decided to just walk in.

"Sorry I'm late," Izzy announced her arrival. "Elevator problems."

"Why didn't you text me?" Alec asked. He was sitting at his desk, but turned to see her as she entered.

"Phone's dead," Izzy replied with a shrug.

"Take the stairs next time," Alec sighed, clearly annoyed.

"Someone woke up on the wrong side of the bed," Izzy scoffed. "Where is that boyfriend of yours I'm supposed to be bonding with?"

"We are meeting Magnus at his place," Alec said. "I wanted to talk to you first."

"Fabulous," Izzy replied, her voice dripping with sarcasm.

"I know you, Izzy," Alec said firmly. "And I know you suck at changing your opinion about anything. You always stick to your first impression and never move forward."

"Tell me something I don't know," Izzy replied. Much to Izzy's annoyance, Alec seemed to take her seriously.

"I am only going to tell you this once," Alec said with authority. "Stop it."

"Well what do you know!" Izzy laughed. "I'm cured just like that."

"I mean it, Iz," Alec growled. "Magnus is going to be in my life, end of story. Your only choice is to get along with him."

"Oh Alec," Izzy sighed at her silly brother. "How simple the world must look to you." After all, she could think of far more choices.

"God, you're impossible," Alec sighed, covering his face with his hand.

"And don't you forget it," Izzy giggled as she spun on the spot, almost as if she were wearing a dress rather than designer jeans.

Suddenly Izzy's spinning was halted by Alec's arms on her shoulders and she was facing her brother. Alec had the most intense expression on his face. There was a fire in his eyes she'd never seen there before.

"Don't make me choose between you," Alec whispered. "Because you won't like the answer." Izzy had a moment to be shocked before Alec's eyes softened, his shoulders sagged and he added in a small voice, "I love you so much, Iz. Can you please just try, for me?"

"Okay," Izzy whispered. She was stunned by Alec's force of will, but she also loved her brother to the ends of the earth, even if she had a funny way of showing it. Alec had never been so firm before, so unwilling to bend. It was a new quality in him, and this more than anything made Izzy realize that Magnus really was likely to be a permanent addition to Alec's life.

With a smile, Alec turned away to collect his cell phone, keys and wallet before they headed out.
"See, the problem with your system is how it wears out your jeans," Izzy told Alec as he put his wallet in his back pocket. "Also, you sit on your credit cards."

"It works for me," Alec replied.

"But I know so many things that would work better," Izzy whined. "Please, please come shopping with me."

"Ah, no," Alec replied quickly. Izzy pouted, but to no effect. Sadly, this had never worked on her brother, who seemed to be the only one immune to her charms. It was alright though, as long as her father never learned Alec's secret. If Robert became immune to her charms, Izzy would suffer greatly.

"One day I'll get you to come shopping with me," Izzy grinned.

"Don't hold your breath," Alec replied, but Izzy was glad to see him smiling again.

They left the dorm building, taking the stairs this time, and were soon walking down the sidewalk toward Magnus's apartment.

When they reached the door, Izzy was about to knock when Alec walked right in. Oh sure, Izzy thought, it's okay when he does it.

"We're here," Alec called out and Magnus appeared from a room off to the left.

"Alexander," Magnus smiled and Izzy had to admit it was obvious they'd cleared the air. The two men were looking at each other again as if there was no one else in the room. Izzy resisted the urge to wave her hand in front of her problem's face.

Next came the 'let's decide what we should do' section of the 'being forced to bond with her brother's boyfriend' outing. Well, it had been Izzy's stupid idea to come here for spring break after all. She had no one to blame but herself. They finally settled on just going out to dinner, but Izzy got so fed up on deciding where to eat she gave in and ended up at some cheap diner.

"A meal here is like twelve dollars," Izzy stated staring at the menu.

"Your point?" Magnus asked. Izzy rolled her eyes. She'd suggested lots of fantastic places to get dinner, which had all be shot down on the grounds that they were expensive. She'd offered to pay, but somehow that had made things worse.

"Whatever," Izzy said waving her hand. "I'll eat the swill, it's fine."

"How are you two even related?" Magnus laughed.

"Clearly Alec's adopted," Izzy said without missing a beat.

"How's your hunt for that sugar daddy going?" Alec asked her. "Or are you just going to mooch off dad for the rest of your life?" Izzy had gotten this remark from her brother before and like always brushed it off.

"I have a plan thank you very much," Izzy scoffed. "And nowhere in this plan am I required to eat dinner for less than fifty dollars a plate."

"How about we don't talk about money again for the rest of the evening," Alec suggested. "There must be something you two both like."
"I think the most important thing we have in common is you, Alec," Magnus said kindly.

Izzy got through the rest of her dinner; she even survived the cheap food and though she and Magnus ended up both liking makeup and clothes, it was hard to talk to him about it without talking about money. He owned two dollar nail polish while Izzy's makeup had its own closet. Izzy wore designer jeans and Magnus shopped in second hand bins.

By the end of the night, Izzy had come to the conclusion that indeed she and Magnus only had her brother in common.

Chapter End Notes

I realized the other day that since I started Roommates and Soulmates I have actually completed THREE other stories! o_O Like wtf. How did that happen?

Also I started beta reading for MyaZab! Please check out her new Malec story! Its awesome and it's called 'The Outcast.' You won't regret it.

If you haven't already checked out my new Malec AU please please do! It's called Royal Dilemma and I just uploaded the 4th chapter of it a few hours before this one.

In other news... you have have noticed the change in beta in the story summary... Unfortunately Holly0114 is SO crazy busy with all her adulting that she doesn't have time to edit for me anymore. It's a sad day but she has edited the first 46 chapters for me and that's alot! I am very grateful so a big thank you to Holly0114. She is so much better at commas than me! And description. She is also good at that. If you haven't read her Malec AU then you should! It's awesome. The title is Mad World. It's long but worth it.

The new Beta for this story is Allienna. She edited my Malec story called "Forgotten" but as that story is complete now and it was one of my shorter ones I thought I'd ask her to edit again. :) So it all works out in the end. Honestly with how long this story is I am kinda not surprised I have had to change betas part way through. I am just so lucky to know so many great people who offer to edit for me! Trust me you don't want to read unedited chapters! They are so full of typos. My older stuff didn't have betas and man I can't re-read them without cringing!

Sneak Peek Chapter 47

"But you're dating Clary now," Simon replied, obviously awkward.

"And that doesn't mean I can't make a new friend," Jace said. When he'd originally asked Simon to be friends Jace had been thinking of Clary, but since then he'd realized he actually wanted to be Simon's friend. He didn't have the best track record with friendships and he thought someone like Simon would be good for him. They were so different; they could probably learn a lot from each other.

"Is talking about Clary too weird?" Simon asked tentatively.
Jace's Homework

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Jace's new favourite sight was his girlfriend wearing his clothes. Not only did Clary almost live in the jacket he'd given her before they'd started dating, but recently she'd also taken to wearing his shirts as well. Jace wasn't really sure why, but it always made him smile.

Since Malec had made up, Jace hadn't seen much of his roommate, and yes it was all Clary's fault Jace was calling them that. These days it felt more like he lived with Clary than with Alec. She slept over most nights and Jace loved waking up to those perfect green eyes.

At the moment though, Jace was no where near his beautiful girlfriend. Clary was in class which left Jace sitting in the common lounge trying to do homework. Between wrestling practice and wanting to spend every waking second with his girlfriend, Jace was beyond behind on homework. He and Clary had plans tonight, but Jace needed to get through the rest of the day and this essay, neither of which he wanted to do before he got to see her again.

"Jace," said an urgent familiar voice. Jace looked up and saw Simon standing in front of him.

"Oh hey," Jace replied, honestly, but pleasantly surprised to see Simon.

"Do you remember when you said you wanted to be friends?" Simon asked. Jace nodded. "Is that offer still on the table? Because something happened, and I am freaking out with no one to freak out to."

"Then by all means," Jace said gesturing to the chair beside him. "Do tell." Simon smiled and sat down, looking only mildly uncomfortable.

"Remember how the elevator broke down on Friday?" Simon started. Jace nodded, though he mostly remembered other students complaining about it. "Well I was in the elevator at the time, and I wasn't alone."

"Oh?" Jace inquired, curious.

"I don't know her name, but we made out," Simon said sheepishly. "Alot."

"Nice," Jace replied, holding his hand up for a high five.

"Okay yeah but-" Simon stopped. He'd been slightly uncomfortable since he'd sat down, but now he seemed oddly more so.

"I meant it when I said I want to be your friend Simon," Jace said softly, but he did let his hand fall. Simon it seemed was in no mood for high fives.

"But you're dating Clary now," Simon replied, obviously awkward.

"And that doesn't mean I can't make a new friend," Jace said. When he'd originally asked Simon to be friends, Jace had been thinking of Clary, but since then he'd realized he actually wanted to be Simon's friend. He didn't have the best track record with friendships, and he thought someone like Simon would be good for him. They were so different; they could probably learn a lot from each other.
"Is talking about Clary too weird?" Simon asked tentatively.

"No," Jace replied, determined to make Simon comfortable.

"Clary probably told you that we- that we never-" Simon started, and Jace decided to spare Simon from having to say it. Jace nodded to show he understood, and Simon moved on, his voice intense as he continued. "So I just got farther with a stranger in an elevator then I ever got with my girlfriend of over a year and I- well I have no clue what the fuck happened!"

"Wow," Jace laughed. "You swearing is something else."

"Sorry," Simon mumbled.

"No worries," Jace smiled then added, "So what do you know about this girl?"

"She's sexy as hell," Simon began. "Easily bored and-" Simon paused, tilting his head to the side before adding, "Possibly insane."

"Sounds like the makings of a good night," Jace laughed. "But what does she look like."

"Umm," Simon said. "I saw her for a moment when I walked in, then glimpsed her as she left, but I was kinda in shock the second time, and not paying attention the first time." He paused, then said, "Brown hair."

Jace just stared at Simon, mouth slightly open. "How can you not know what she looks like?"

"It was pitch black," Simon defended himself.

"But when the lights came on?" Jace encouraged.

"I was staring at her bra," Simon mumbled, blushing.

"Wow," Jace laughed.

"It's not funny!" Simon whined.

"Sorry," Jace said trying to control his laughter. "But this sounds familiar. Just with me as the insane elevator girl."

"Have you pinned girls to the sides of elevators and kissed them senseless before?" Simon asked innocently.

"If I say yes will you report me to Clary?" Jace replied.

"Maybe," Simon smiled.

"That part of my life is over," Jace said. "And frankly, I'm glad of it."

"So what should I do?" Simon begged.

"Do you know anything at all about her?" Jace asked.

"She's going to be at this school next year," Simon said. "And well she came on really strong."

"So you don't remember what she looks like," Jace summed up. "But would you recognize her if you saw her?"
"I think so," Simon replied.

"So maybe you will run into her next year," Jace shrugged.

"I'm not returning next year," Simon said.

"And you're sure about that?" Jace asked. He knew this had always been likely, but for Clary's sake he'd hoped for a different outcome.

"At the moment," Simon replied. "Yes."

"Well I hope you change your mind," Jace said. He thought he knew what Simon would be thinking so he added, "And I'm not just saying that because of Clary."

"Thanks," Simon mumbled. "But what should I do?"

"About the crazy girl?" Jace asked. Simon nodded. "Remember the story. It's a great one."

"That's it?" Simon asked.

"No phone number," Jace said, ticking things off on his fingers. "No name, and you don't know what she looks like. In my books that means no way to contact the other person."

"I guess you're right," Simon sighed as he slumped down into his chair.

"In fact," Jace added, seeing the strange look on Simon's face. "Maybe this is a good thing. Have you considered that what she did was actually very rude?" Simon turned to Jace.

"I hadn't thought about it like that," Simon replied.

"Take it from the guy who used to own the game," Jace said. "She is clearly a player."

"Urg," Simon exclaimed as he laid his head back and cover his eyes with his hands. "I hate girls."

"Alec would highly recommend giving them up all together," Jace laughed.

"Might be less dramatic," Simon agreed also laughing. Then he sat up and turning to Jace he said, "Thanks."

"Anytime," Jace said kindly with a smile, then added with a whine, "Anything to put off this essay."

"Good luck with that," Simon replied as he turned to leave.

"I don't suppose you want to stay and help me with it?" Jace asked.

"Not so much," Simon laughed. "It sucked enough writing mine."

"Urg!" Jace said letting his head fall on his desk.

"About sums it up," Simon agreed. He turned to leave then seemed to remember something and turned back. "Oh and Jace, could you please tell Clary to stop trying to set me up."

"Caught on huh?" Jace said smiling.

"Maia told me," Simon replied.

"How was your date with Maia?" Jace asked. "If you don't mind me asking that is."
"Greatly overshadowed by elevator girl," Simon replied. "We decided to be friends."

"Alright, I won't let Clary set you up again," Jace smiled. "But I agree with her that you should get back out there."

"I was never out there," Simon said. "But thanks I guess." He waved then turned away. Jace watched Simon leave, mostly because it was another thirty seconds that he didn't have to work on his homework. Then Jace was staring at the wall, his mind blank. This was also not doing his essay.

Shaking his head to wake himself up, Jace turned back down to his homework. He'd never had to work so hard in high school. They'd only cared about his sports scores, and he'd coasted through most of his classes. University it seemed was different.

With an image of Clary in his mind to motivate him, Jace once again started his essay. Without Clary, he wasn't sure how he'd have gotten through these last few weeks of classes. Even the end of last semester hadn't been this much work.

An hour later Jace pushed his essay away and rubbed his eyes. He wasn't totally done yet, but it just needed editing now. Pulling out his phone Jace checked it and found a message from his girlfriend.

'How that essay coming?' Clary texted.

'Basically done,' Jace replied. 'Do you want to edit it with me?'

'Omw' Clary's text read. Jace set his phone aside and laid his head down on the desk. His stupid mind-numbing homework had made him so sleepy.

Someone was tapping Jace on the shoulder. He sat up and smiled instantly. Clary was standing over him, wearing his jacket.

"Hi," Jace said grinning at her.

"Hello yourself," Clary laughed. "Essay that boring huh?"

"Yes," Jace said defiantly as he pulled her in close, wrapping his arms around her where she sat on his lap. Clary laughed and leaned forward to kiss him.

"Hmmm," Jace said, his eyes closed. He'd missed her. Sure it had only been about ten hours since he'd last seen her, but all the same.

Clary made to turn away to face the desk, but Jace reeled her in and kissed her again before she got the chance. One of his hands going up to hold the side of her face, while the other held her waist. Clary's hands rested against his chest as he wrapped both arms around her to pull her closer. Clary giggled into their kiss.

"We are in the lounge," she said.

"I recall a certain hallway," Jace grinned. Clary hit him playfully across the shoulder. "Ouch!"

"Oh please like that hurt you," Clary laughed. It hadn't hurt at all, but Jace was determined to play it up. He held his hand over the spot and tried his best to look devastated, but the look on Clary's face was so unamused he couldn't hold back his laughter. Clary just smirked at him.

"Essay," Clary reminded Jace seriously.

"Spoil sport," Jace sulked, but he allowed her to turn toward the desk.
At least she didn't leave his lap while she edited his essay, though she did tease him relentlessly about his lack of commas. Jace listened a bit, but mostly he just held her while she focused on the laptop screen.

"Don't fall asleep on me!" Clary laughed and Jace jumped.

"I wasn't," Jace lied as his head shot up. Clary scoffed. Did this girl have a sixth sense? "Alright fine I was. Essays are boring."

"You aren't even looking at it," Clary reminded him. "I am."

"Yeah, but I remember how boring it was to write," Jace tried a different angle.

"You are such a jock sometimes," Clary sighed.

"Guilty," Jace said grinning as he gently turned her to face him. Clary gave him an annoyed look that soon softened as they gazed at each other. He then leaned forward to kiss her.

"It's a good thing this isn't high school anymore," Clary said when they broke apart. "Otherwise the quarterback would be dating the social outcast."

"Like I would have let that stop me," Jace told her easily.

"Easy to say," Clary replied. "Harder to prove."

"I am going to have to work on that self-esteem of yours," Jace replied thoughtfully.

"And I am going to have to work on your punctuation!" Clary laughed.

"I don't like commas," Jace said stubbornly.

"I can see that," Clary laughed. "Alright I'm done."

"Perfect," Jace said as he stood up with Clary in his arms.

"Jace!" Clary exclaimed, her limbs flailing a little in the air. "What are you doing?"

"You're right," Jace said, calmly. "I need my laptop too." He put her down on the couch, gathered up his things into his bag, swung it over his shoulder and scooped his girlfriend back into his arms. "There."

"You are insane," she giggled. Jace smiled at her, kissed her briefly, then began walking down the hall to his dorm room. When they reached it Clary opened the door and to their great surprise Jace's roommate was actually in attendance.

"Alec!" Jace said surprised as he put Clary down. "Is Malec fighting again?" He sniggered.

"Oh no, not you too!" Alec moaned. "I shall never forgive you for that nickname Clary."

"I think Magnus named us Clace first so Malec is fair game," Clary defended herself. Alec did not look amused.

"You gonna be home all night?" Jace asked. He didn't want it to sound like he didn't want Alec here, though at the moment he didn't want Alec here.

"Yeah," Alec sighed. "Magnus has to study and so do I. Why is there so much more work during
these last few weeks of term huh? I mean couldn't they spread it out a little. The first few weeks are a cakewalk, but the last few are insane." Alec wasn't looking at them anymore. He was facing his desk, resigned. "Oh and Izzy and Magnus aren't getting along because of my stupid ranting. She's gone back home now at least, but I hate to think what it will be like next year when she's here for school." Alec sighed as he got out his textbooks. "I wish I could go back in time and hit my ranting self over the head with something heavy, you know."

"I think Helen is at Aline's tonight," Clary whispered in Jace's ear. Jace grinned.

"Good luck," Jace said suddenly and cheerfully to his tired looking roommate. "Happy studying." He dumped his bag on the floor, grabbed his girlfriend by the hand, then he and Clary quickly left together. Jace just heard Alec whine about being abandoned as they disappeared around the corner. Jace felt bad for about ten seconds before Clary turned to smile at him, and together they ran laughing down the hall.

Chapter End Notes

It's been a good long while since we had a Clace or Jace POV chapter and it was definitely time for one. Though I did work in Simon's perspective of his elevator moment in the Jace chapter. ^_^ I love it when I can interweave things like that!

Also yes all the comma stuff is me making fun of myself because every editor I've ever had has teased me about my lack of commas... Also first chapter edited by Allieanna rather than Holly0114. Both of whom have mentioned my lack of commas to me. lol.

And I'm sorry for the very slow updates! Life outside of fanfic writing has changed alot. It's so counter-intuitive that going from working for someone else to working from home actually means you have less free time for writing... also I may have binge watched ALL of Glee in a matter of weeks, become totally obsessed with Klaine and started a Klaine fanfic similar to my Malec POV of TMI story... so... yeah that happened. I am going to be uploading the Klaine story at some point though probably not till I'm basically finished it.

Updates will be fast again eventually. We are working on one big project and when its done I am gotta take time off and just write all day everyday! OMG I CAN'T WAIT! #Heaven

Sneak Peek Chapter 48...

It was then that the door flew open. Clary’s first reaction was to pull at the blankets, and make sure she was covered. Jace had no such response. His bottom half was just barely covered, the curve of his hip visible. It was only then that Clary looked up to see who had interrupted them.

“Ah,” Helen said clearly trying not to laugh. Clary noticed her eyes move over Jace’s chest and across his hips where they met the blanket. “Don’t mind me.” Clary buried her bright red face in Jace’s shoulder as she heard her roommate move about the room, clearly looking for something. Clary heard Helen’s little ‘ah ha’ as she found whatever it was, but she could also hear her roommate sniggering. Then soft footfalls before the door closed again.
When they reached Clary's dorm room, she'd been right. Helen wasn't home.

"See we have the whole place to ourselves," Clary said smiling. Jace wasted no time, taking the opportunity to hold her head in both of his hands, he kissed her. Clary returned the kiss with enthusiasm, knotting her hands in her boyfriend's hair.

"No grumpy Alec here either," Jace whispered. Clary giggled. There was something about the way Jace looked at her that made her feel like the most beautiful woman in the world. Sometimes she'd blush just from him looking at her. "I've missed you."

"You saw me the day before yesterday," Clary scolded, though she loved that he could miss her so easily.

"Too long," Jace sniggered as their make out session made it to the bed. Clary worked quickly, getting at the fastenings of Jace's pants, trying not the break their kiss. Jace's hands in turn, were unclasping her bra, and it didn't take long for all their clothes to become scattered around the bed. The cold air made her shiver, and Jace threw the blankets over them. Clary grinned as his lips returned to hers.

It was then that the door flew open. Clary's first reaction was to pull at the blankets, and make sure she was covered. Jace had no such response. His bottom half was just barely covered, the curve of his hip visible. It was only then that Clary looked up to see who had interrupted them.

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"No sock on the door," Jace laughed once Helen was gone.

"Huh?" Clary had no idea what socks had to do with any of this.

"Nevermind," Jace laughed as he pulled Clary in closer and kissed her again. Clary quickly forgot about socks, and well about everything, as she returned the kiss. Helen wasn't here anymore, and she wasn't going to let the interruption ruin the mood, or rather Jace wasn't.

"Hmmm," she hummed. "You turn my brain off when you do that."

"That so," Jace laughed.

"Ah uh," Clary mumbled. Then Jace turned so his weight was on his elbows, leaning over her, kissing her jawline and her neck. Clary bent her head to invite him to continue, enjoying the feel of his lips on her skin. Being with Jace was like being worshiped, and Clary could never get enough.

Sometimes she worried that one day Jace would wake up, and whatever crazy rose tinted glasses that made him want her would be gone. At the moment though, she couldn't worry about much of anything, as his hands slowly moved down her skin leaving behind a tingling sensation. All she did
was lay there, trying to process every wonderful thing he was doing to her. His mouth moved down, kissing her hips, then her inner thigh. Clary's breathing was becoming very erratic as Jace's hands joined his mouth. Her heart pounding, Clary could feel all the blood in her body rushing downward. She'd thought that was just for guys, but boy had she been wrong.

Clary had googled 'what does an orgasam feel like after her first time with Jace, but it hadn't helped much. The moment when Jace's fingers went inside her, her toes curled, and she suddenly knew exactly what an orgasam felt like.

"Jace," she gasped.

"At your service," Jace grinned. Clary sat up, seizing his lips in a desperate kiss, muttering 'condom' to him as she did so. There were perks to having a sexually experienced boyfriend - Clary thought to herself - as Jace managed to get the thing on without breaking their kiss. She knew he'd succeeded when his hands held her waist again, moving slowly up to cradle her breasts. His fingers teased her nipples as she wrapped her legs tightly around him, feeling his erection touch her just shy of where she wanted it.

Clary was pretty sure she whimpered because Jace grinned into their kiss, and changed the angle of his hips until Clary felt him slide inside. Then he started moving, one of Jace's hands near her hip supporting his weight, while the other held her breast. Clary rocked her hips with his, and came again just as Jace spilled inside the condom.

Jace collapsed on the bed next to her, and Clary moved closer to snuggled up to him. Jace began to gently stroke her hair and Clary closed her eyes. They stayed like that for a moment until Jace had to get up to dispose of the mess.

"Why does summer have to be so long," Clary sighed, when Jace returned to hold her.

"What do you mean?" Jace asked, as he pulled the covers up over them again.

"The years almost over," Clary replied. "Exams are just weeks away. Mom will want me home."

"And I usually work over the summers," Jace sighed. He sounded equally upset about the idea as she did.

"I thought you have a scholarship?" Clary replied. She hadn't heard Jace talk about work before.

"I do," Jace said. "Which pays tuition and dorms fees, but apart from that, all the money I'll have for next year I have to make over the summer."

"Oh," Clary sulked. "Well maybe my parents won't mind if I do something else this summer."

"You could come home with me?" Jace offered. "I know my mom is dying to meet you."

"Won't-" Clary started, but broke off. "Won't he be there?"

"Sebastian will never get near you," Jace told her firmly. "Ever again. I promise. But you don't have to. Maybe I could try and find work with you?"

"There aren't a lot of summer jobs in my tiny home town," Clary said. "And if you already have a job lined up."

"I have a standing summer job back home, yeah," Jace said. "One of mom's old boyfriends let's me work in his shop over the summer, since grade nine I think."
"I'll call mom and we'll figure it out," Clary smiled. "But let's talk about something else for now."
She snuggled in closer, and Jace tighten his arms around her.

"Oh, I almost forgot," Jace said sharply. "You aren't allow to set Simon up on any more dates."

"What! He figured it out?" Clary whined.

"Yeah," Jace replied, laughing lightly. "It seems Maia told him. And he had a rather eventful
encounter with a woman in an elevator. Though Clary-" Jace paused his voice suddenly somber.
"Simon told me he is for sure not coming back here next year."

"I can't say I'm surprised," Clary sighed. "But thanks for telling me."

They settled in and watched a movie after that, all the while, Clary tried to think about how happy
she was with Jace rather than how sad she was that her friend was leaving. Maybe it had been a
mistake to date Simon in the first place. Maybe she'd been a fool to think those feelings would
develop eventually. Either way, there was nothing she could do about it now.

Clary's conversation with her mother the next day went better than she'd expected. Jocelyn seemed to
have no issues with Clary going to stay with Jace.

"You are a grown woman now, Clary," Jocelyn said when Clary expressed her surprise. "It's not my
job anymore to tell you what not to do. All I can do now is hope I taught you enough when it was."

"Thanks I guess," Clary replied. "I do really want you to meet him."
Her mother said she wanted to
meet Jace too and they talked of other things for a while.

The days went by quickly as term papers and studying became every student's priority. With the
relief of their last class of the year finally behind her, Clary felt like celebrating. Sure, they still have
exams to get through, but no more lectures for four whole months!

Clary was starting to regret telling Jace to surprise her when she found herself walking into a bar.

"Jace I am not dressed for this," Clary whined as she looked down at her baggy jeans and logo t-
shirt.

"You look perfect," Jace told her like he always did, but Clary just rolled her eyes. Jace of course,
was the one who actually looked perfect. He was wearing a tight thin white shirt, but unlike her's, it
didn't have a nerdy logo on it. In fact, Jace's shirt was so tight, she could clearly see the well defined
muscles underneath it. His jeans were similar, form fitting and hugged him in all the right places.
Clary could have been two sizes bigger in her clothes and she doubted anyone would notice. Jace
looked like a runway model while she looked like a loser.

Clary allowed herself to be guided over to a booth where they sat across from Jace. They had come
for dinner mostly, as Jace said there was great food here, but now Clary was wondering if she
wanted a drink. Not that alcohol could make her any better looking, but still.

They were looking at the menu when a woman approached the table. Her hair was done up in a tight
elegant knot at the back of her head, and she had on the tightest black dress Clary had ever seen.
Clary thought she was the waitress, but she realized differently when the woman's eyes fell on Jace.

"Hey handsome," the woman said, silkily. Her body language just screamed 'hot for Clary's
boyfriend' and Clary hated it. "Ditch the frumpy one and come over to our table."
The woman
gestured, and Clary turned to see another three girls, all in very tight, very revealing dresses, and all
staring at Jace. All far sexier than her.
"Her name's Clary," Jace said casually as he looked the woman up and down.

"Ditch Clary then," the woman replied unperturbed. Clary watched Jace's eyes slowly move over the curves of the woman's dress, before he turned back to the menu.

"No," Jace said simply. He ignored her after that, and a moment later she left.

"Does that happen a lot?" Clary asked.

"I think it's because I'm here with you," Jace replied. "It's a trick in the pickup industry actually."

"A trick?" Clary asked, trying to contain her desire to beat that woman over the head with something heavy.

"Yeah," Jace added with a shrug. "Something about wanting another woman's man. Prays on some primal instincts I think. If she wants him he must be worth it or some such thing."

"Still she was so very obvious," Clary grumbled. She wanted to add that Jace had very obviously checked her out, but didn't have the nerve.

"Some women are like that," Jace shrugged. "So have you decided what you want to eat?"

"Oh, what no," Clary said suddenly, remembering the menu in front of her. The actual waitress came to take their order a few minutes later, and Clary endured another moment of jealous rage as she watched this woman check Jace out as well. The waitress was in a very short black skirt with nothing but lace covering her shoulders.

"I don't like bars," Clary grumbled, when the slutty waitress left.

"We can go somewhere else," Jace said. "Sorry I never knew where to take you."

"It's okay," Clary sighed. "We've ordered now so let's just stay. But I am so picking the place next time."

"Deal," Jace laughed, reaching across the table to hold her hand. He gazed at her then, and Clary's anger was soothed somewhat by the affection in his eyes.

Jace was hit on twice more before they finished eating. Clary was almost relieved when Jace excused himself to run to the bathroom. That was until Clary suddenly found herself sitting across from a stranger. It was as if this woman had been waiting to get Clary alone. She slide into his side of the booth the moment Jace left.

"I don't care how many women he choses to ignore tonight. He isn't going to call you tomorrow," the woman said. She was very pretty, with long brown hair and a elegant light blue blouse. "Trust me on that. Just get out now."

"I'm sorry, but who the hell are you?" Clary asked annoyed.

"Someone who knows that guy you just had dinner with," she replied. "Once a player, always a player. Just thought I'd warn you because you seem like the innocent type."

And just like that, the woman left. Clary wasn't really sure what to think about this whole evening. It was like every part of it had been there just to play on her insecurities about Jace. She supposed this was the downside to having a boyfriend with experience.

"You ready to go?" Jace asked as he appeared beside her, hand held out to take hers.
“Yeah,” Clary replied dazed as she took his hand. They walked back to campus arm in arm. Clary let Jace talk, without really hearing him. She so desperately wanted to talk to Simon. She wanted to talk to her best friend about being insecure that her boyfriend would lose interest in her.

As it was, she did text Simon when she got back to her dorm. Jace had wanted to sleep beside her tonight, but she’d told him they both needed to focus on getting through their exams for a while. Though Jace had seemed to understand her rational reason, Clary wasn’t sure she understood her own irrational reason.

Clary hadn’t texted any of that to Simon. All she told him was that she’d miss him if he left, and that he was still her best friend. There was nothing more she could do.

She did almost talk to Helen about it, but then she remember the way Helen's eyes had run over Jace's bare chest when she’d caught them together. Maybe it was Magnus she needed to talk to, Clary thought as she got out her phone and texted him instead.

Chapter End Notes

You know how in most shows and stuff they skip the whole summer break between seasons and start it back in september… yeah I never understood that. I mean okay the sets are of the school but how hard is it to make an extra set? Summer vacation isn't just a skip button people! A lot of shit can happen in four months people. Summer vacation is a pattern interrupt. It can test the strength of a couple.

Oh and I may have binge wrote about 20,000 words of a Klaine Glee fanfic since we last spoke… did I say may. I meant definitely. Definitely did that…. In fact the story is practically finished. I just have the second last chapter left to write. Hence why I managed to get an update for this story done. Klaine took over my brain complete and I couldn't focus on Malec or Clace or TMI until Klaine was finished. Now I just need to wait for my poor over-worked beta to edit all the crazy that I wrote so freaking fast. That, and I have decided to limit myself to uploading a chapter a day. This I have learned is the magic number. When I've uploaded two chapters in a day in the past, I have noticed the view count doesn't go up anymore than one chapter a day. But if you only update every other day then the view count lowers on the day you don't update…

Wow, you know you update like a spaz when you can work that out! Lol

Anyway… now it seems I have started and (mostly) completed FOUR other stories since I started Roommates and Soulmates… Those being, Elusive Love, Forgotten, Human Delena and now Elevator to Home.

Oh, and I guess I also started Royal Dilemma while writing R&S, but that isn’t anywhere close to finished. That's FIVE stories started since I uploaded chapter one of Roommates and Soulmates…. damn!

#AddictedToWriting

Sneak Peek Chapter 49

Right he should be studying for his history exam. Magnus made a frustrated cry to no one, as he was alone in his apartment at the moment, and laid his head down on his
desk, in exasperation. Couldn't these stupid things just be over already? Using more willpower than he cared to admit, Magnus lifted his head from the desk and checked the time. Alec had said he'd be an hour… about 56 minutes ago, but Magnus wasn't counting.

Since their first conversation about money Alec had been very open, talking about his life, answering all Magnus nosy questions and finally Magnus didn't feel so cut off. Understanding where Alec came from seemed to be the answer to their problems. Alec may have no idea what it's like to have to only have enough money to either buy milk or go to the movies, but Magnus had no idea what it was like in Alec's world. Alexander Lightwood, heir to his father's business empire. It was a lot of wrap his head around. Though technically heir was the wrong word. This wasn't the middle ages after all, though from the way Alec talked it seemed Alec's father did expect Alec to come work for him one day.

59 minutes… but again Magnus wasn't counting.
Magnus's Counting

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes.

Magnus looked down at his phone and sighed. He couldn't say he was surprised. Jace wasn't exactly ugly. In fact, next to Alexander, he was the hottest guy around, but rather than text Magnus about it, Clary should really be telling Jace about her insecurities.

Unsure how to answer, Magnus put his phone down and tried to focus on his history textbook. Exams. His least favourite time of year and they were back again. Last exam season was a blur of misery and denial. Magnus hardly even remember what study methods he'd used.

At the moment, Magnus's brain so did not want to study. It turned out misery was a much better friend to his education than happiness. Magnus loved Alec. He really loved Alexander, and this was quite the revelation to him. Magnus smiled just thinking about it. With Alec, the love felt different though he couldn't explain - even to himself - in what way it was different. Magnus had known so many heartbreaks, that he sometimes wondered maybe the difference between Alec and the others, was only knowing love without the memory of heartbreak mixed in. He tried not to think like this though.

Right, he should be studying for his history exam. Magnus made a frustrated cry to no one as he was alone in his apartment at the moment, and laid his head down on his desk in exasperation. Couldn't these stupid things just be over already? Using more willpower than he cared to admit, Magnus lifted his head from the desk and checked the time. Alec had said he'd be an hour… about 56 minutes ago, but Magnus wasn't counting.

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Apart from his boyfriend and his studies, Magnus was a little worried about his roommate. Tessa seemed a little off lately, and Magnus wasn't sure why. When he'd asked, she simply replied that she was fine. When Magnus had texted Will to ask him if he knew what was going on with Tessa, Will had just confirmed that she was fine. Magnus wasn't convinced though, and decided to keep an eye on her. He would have texted Jem, but he didn't have Jem's number.

59 minutes… but again Magnus wasn't counting.

He heard a soft meow as The Great Catsby jumped into his lap. Magnus stroked the cat absently, wondering how long it would be until Chairmen Meow got jealous and came seeking attention.

It turned out, not very long as when Alec walked into the apartment four minutes later, Magnus had two cats 'helping' him study, one sleeping on his textbook while the over was rubbing his face.

"Entertaining I see?" Alec said smiling as he came to stand beside Magnus.
"Against my will," Magnus laughed as he picked up the cat currently in his face and placed him down on the ground so he could properly greet his boyfriend. Alec leaned down to kiss him sweetly before sitting in the chair beside Magnus and pulling his laptop out of his bag.

Magnus had just managed to actually absorb some history facts when his phone went off again. Automatically checking it, he groaned.

"What is it?" Alec asked.

"It's Clary," Magnus sighed. "Women are hitting on Jace in bars, and she's upset Simon isn't returning next year, and generally seemed to have no one else to ask for advice. I don't know what to tell her."

"Well I can't help with the Simon thing," Alec replied. "But I know Jace pretty well. What did Clary say?"

"Here," Magnus sighed, handing his phone to Alec. "See for yourself." There was silence for a moment while Alec read.

"She has nothing to worry about," Alec said a moment later. "Jace hasn't so much as looked at another woman since he met her. Just tell Clary to chill."

"But she says he has," Magnus whined.

"There is a difference between noticing someone is hot and actually caring," Alec replied. "Hell I noticed Jace was hot back in high school. You don't see me hitting on him."

"From the tone of her texts, I don't think Clary would agree with you," Magnus argued.

"Then tell her to ask Jace directly," Alec sighed. "He can be kinda dense sometimes. He probably has no clue she's upset." This made sense, so Magnus spent a moment texting Alec's advice to Clary.

"Heck, if she doesn't want to, I'll lecture him," Alec laughed. "She is worrying for nothing."

"There sent," Magnus said placing his phone back down next to his textbook, then adding in a whiny voice. "Oh but now I have no excuse to put off studying."

"I've got one," Alec said, turning away from his books to look at Magnus. "We haven't talked about what we are going to do this summer."

"I have to work," Magnus whined. He always worked over the summers.

"Oh," Alec said. "I was kinda hoping you'd come meet my parents."

"I'd love to Alexander, but if I don't make some money this summer, I won't be coming back in September."

"Well how much do you need to make?" Alec asked. "Maybe I can help."

Magnus wasn't really sure how to respond to this. He knew Alec was just trying to be nice, but a part of him was deeply offended. Did Alec want to pay Magnus to stay with him in his big fancy mansion during summer break? Magnus felt cheap just considering it.

"Oh wait! I didn't mean!" Alec said suddenly, his hands going to his hair like he always did when he was stressed out. "I just- never mind." Blushing deeply Alec turned away and buried himself in his notes, though Magnus had a feeling his boyfriend wasn't actually seeing them.
With a deep sigh, Magnus turned to Alec, placing a hand under Alec's chin. "It's okay," Magnus whispered. "I know you didn't mean it the way it came out."

"I just want to spend my summer with you," Alec mumbled, his cheeks still red.

"I know," Magnus replied softly. "Let's just focus on surviving our exams first." Alec nodded and they actually got down to studying after that.

By the time exams ended, they still hadn't spoken about what they were going to do. Magnus had to admit, he was avoiding the topic. Magnus focused instead on his resume. He applied for as many summer jobs as he could find. He got a few interviews, the one at the museum went particularly well. Museums loved hiring history major's as tour guides; Magnus just wished the job was full time. As it was, if he got the museum job, he'd have to get another one as well.

Magnus had often thought about working during the school year as well, but that would mean taking less classes, and graduating later. Magnus preferred to spend a solid four months working his butt off, then get the rest of the year to focus on his school work, rather than trying to do both at once.

He was trying very hard not to think about Alec leaving for the holidays, because it sucked. It would have been so easy to accept Alec's almost offer of funds, and just go enjoy his vacation with Alec's parents, but Magnus couldn't do that. It felt wrong and gross. Magnus didn't want to feel indebted to his boyfriend when it came to money.

He remember his days in the dorms well enough to know that Alec had to be moved out by Friday at the latest, and it was Wednesday. Magnus wondered if Alec had booked his flights yet, while he worried that their relationship was still too new to survive long distance. He mentioned none of this to Alec, however, as they spent much of their last days on campus together.

"I have to be out of the dorms by Friday," Alec said, speaking the very words Magnus had been thinking for days, and broaching the very topic Magnus had been trying to avoid. "And I've been thinking... I don't have to go home for the summer."

"But you have nowhere to live," Magnus argued despite the fact that his heart had fluttered at Alec's words.

"I was wondering," Alec began. "I mean, I'm there a lot anyway and- only for the summer- Though there could be other places- I mean-.

"What are you trying to say Alec," Magnus asked, turning to smile at his stuttering boyfriend.

"Could I stay with you?" Alec asked. "It would only have to be for the summer, so it could be kinda like a test run. Jace wants to get a place off campus together next year."

"Are you sure?" Magnus asked. "I'll be working all the time. You might be bored all alone."

"I'm sure I want to spend my summer with you," Alec replied. "If you can't come home with me, then I want to stay with you. If that's okay?"

"Of course you can stay with me," Magnus laughed as he pulled Alec in for a hug. Alec's arms held him tight, as his boyfriend buried his face into Magnus's shoulder.

"Besides," Magnus said when they broke apart. "Tessa is hardly home these days."

"Yeah I noticed," Alec said taking Magnus's hand as they continued walking around the school, both of them feeling as if a weight had been lifted off their shoulders. "What's that about?"
"No idea," Magnus laughed. "But I don't think it's bad somehow." As they passed the dorms, Alec tugged on Magnus's hand and asked if Magnus would help him pack. Magnus gladly agreed, and soon found himself boxing up the little things Alec had in his dorm.

"Dorm living isn't really living," Magnus commented as he looked at the tiny pile of boxes. "Seriously this is it?"

"Yep," Alec said. "It's such a small space, I really only brought essentials."

"Have you told your parents you aren't going home for the summer?" Magnus asked, realizing he hadn't thought of this before.

"Not yet," Alec said. "I wanted to ask you first."

"Maybe you should call them," Magnus suggested.

"Sure, though I know they won't mind," Alec smiled. "There's no rush. Let's get these back to your place first." He indicated towards the boxes, and together they carried Alec's things across campus, and down the street into Magnus's apartment.

Alec already had a few items of clothing in Magnus's dresser and a toothbrush in the bathroom, so moving in the rest of his things didn't take long. Alec's laptop was permanently set up in the dining room, while more clothes and toiletries were added to the existing ones.

"So are you going to call your parents now?" Magnus asked Alec as they finished unpacking his clothes.

"I can do that later," Alec said while turning away from the dresser to face Magnus. "When you are busy, right now I have you all to myself."

"Do you now?" Magnus chuckled, taking a step closer to Alec. "Whatever gave you that idea?"

"Well I happen to know my boyfriend's roommate is currently out," Alec replied cheekily as he moved closer still.

"Ah but your boyfriend has a new roommate," Magnus grinned at Alec, playing along. "And he might arrive at any moment."

"No time to waste then," Alec whispered as he took Magnus in his arms and kissed him. Magnus felt Alec's hands under his shirt as the kiss deepened and Magnus melted into it, his own hands wrapped around Alec in turn.

"I love you," Alec whispered in Magnus's ear before kissing Magnus's neck.

"Alexander," Magnus moans as he tilted his head back.

"Say it," Alec whispered against his skin. Magnus was breath hard now as Alec pulled his shirt up over his head. The two of them fell onto Magnus's bed together, Alec pulling his own shirt off in the process.

"I love you too," Magnus gasped as Alec began kissing his chest. "So much." Hands pulled at belts as the rest of the clothes were cast aside. Alec's lips and hands trailed over his skin, and Magnus reveled in every moment of it. Never had Magnus experienced love quite like this before, though that meant he'd never experienced losing a love like this before which scared Magnus. But Alec loved him. Loved him enough to stay here for the summer. Magnus wasn't going to lose his love this time.
He wasn't going to lose Alexander.

Chapter End Notes

Bare with me as I have a moment...

The world is stupid. Why can't I just stay home all day and write from sun up till sun down? Huh? Someone answer me that... stupid life and world always gets in my way, wanting to me earn money and be useful and shit. Why does wanting to do nothing but write make me lazy in the eyes of the people around me? Why does tuning out the world and ignoring everything in favour of writing make people feel I'm wasting my time... sigh.

Anyway... moving on: sorry for the short chapter (usually my chapters are at least 200 more words than this one) but I couldn't think what to add to it and even my beta said it didn't feel like it needed more.

And yay! Next chapter is finally chapter 50! I only need 6 more chapters then this will be my story with the most chapters out of all of them! I still need another 20,000 words to beat my story with the highest word count, but yay progress! I am not sure why I am so determined for Roommates and Soulmate to be my most everything story stats wise, but there you go.

Sneak Peek Chapter 50. :)

"It's so good to have you home!" his mother cried as she pulled him in for another hug.
"The house is so empty with you kids gone."

"Mom," Simon sighed rolling his eyes.

"And I'm so glad you aren't leaving me again!" Elaine exclaimed.

The next day his mother bribed him with a delicious breakfast of crepes, bacon and fresh strawberries to get him to look into new school options. It turned out one year of university with an undeclared major wasn't a lot as far as transferring went.

"I won't say I told you so," Elaine said. "But I told you so."

"Really not helpful mom," Simon sighed. She was referring to his decision to follow Clary to school. His mother having been one of the ones to warn him endlessly that it was a bad idea before he'd done it.
When he walked into his mother's house and saw the familiar wallpaper and old family photos, Simon knew he was home. It was good to be back, despite the depressing texts from Clary.

What was he supposed to do with her 'I miss you' and 'you're still my best friend,' texts anyway? Should he reply with 'yeah I miss you too, but not the way you miss me', or better yet, he could say 'I've been in love with you from the beginning so you were never my best friend since I've never had platonic feelings for you!' Okay that was a bit harsh and spoke of bitterness, but Simon couldn't help it. He had decided to just not reply at all. Read, rage, ignore. It was as solution right? Okay maybe not, but Simon was home and he was going to try not think about it.

"Everything is how you left it," his mother, Elaine said, as they walked down the hall. "Though your sister's room has been emptied since she came to pack up her stuff." Elaine's voice softened with sadness as she finished her sentence. Simon had been worried about his mother since his sister Becky had officially moved out for good. At least with him home, she wouldn't be alone anymore.

"Yeah, Becky told me," Simon said. He was in fairly regular contact with his older sister, though she now lived far away in her third year of art school.

"It's so good to have you home!" his mother cried as she pulled him in for another hug. This had been happening basically on the half hour since she had first wrapped her arms around him at the airport. "The house is so empty with you kids gone."

"Mom," Simon sighed, rolling his eyes as he accepted her latest hug.

"And I'm so glad you aren't leaving me again!" Elaine exclaimed. "Do you want to look at local school brochures this afternoon?"

"Sure," Simon agreed. She finally let him go and he followed her into the kitchen where his mother started making them lunch, as if on automatic.

"I never much liked Clary," Elaine scoffed as she spread mustard on brown bread. "I always thought you could do better."

"I really don't want to talk about Clary," Simon whined.

"Didn't I always say she'd break your heart," Elaine continued against his wishes. Simon was sitting at the breakfast bar, but at his mother's words he let his head hit the counter in exasperation. It made a loud thunk, and Simon instantly regretted it as his forehead throbbed.

"You are going to hurt yourself doing that," Elaine warned, turning at the noise. "Oh you should get in touch with Kirk and Matt about your band," Elaine continued her one sided conversation. "Maybe before we look at new colleges. You need to get settled in." Simon patiently listened to his mother's happy ramblings while they eat lunch and for about an hour afterwards, then he politely excused himself. It had been a while since he'd spent so much alone time with mom, and he was definitely not used to it. Though he admitted some of her advice had been excellent. Simon texted both Kirk and Matt that afternoon, though he didn't get a reply. While he waited, Simon went for a walk around his old neighbourhood getting reacquainted with his home town, and trying not to think about all the places he'd visited with Clary. For example that bench was definitely not where they'd had their first
taco together, and over there by that fountain was not the place he'd first told her he loved her.

Simon arrived home sulky, but thankfully his mother was too busy talking to notice. The next day
she bribed him with a delicious breakfast of crepes, bacon, and fresh strawberries to get him to look
into new school options. It turned out, one year of university with an undeclared major wasn't a lot as
far as transferring went.

"I won't say I told you so," Elaine said. "But I told you so."

"Really… not helpful mom," Simon sighed. She was referring to his decision to follow Clary to
school. His mother, having been one of the ones to warn him endlessly, that it was a bad idea before
he'd done it.

"Fine yes," Elaine replied. "But still. A year with purpose would have been so much better, but
nevermind. We shall just start from scratch." Simon groaned. Had his mother always been this
annoying, or was it just that he'd gotten used to not living with her while at school? Nevertheless, he
endured school hunting with her until they'd picked out a few contenders.

Kirk and Matt texted him back within the next couple days. Matt was able to get together and hang
out sooner than Kirk, though when Simon asked him about getting the band back together, he wasn't
keen on the idea.

"I've just kinda moved on, sorry man," Matt said. "It would be cool if you could get it going again
though."

"Yeah," Simon sighed.

"I'm just so busy with work right now, and my girlfriend," Matt continued.

"A little piece of advice," Simon said only slightly bitterly. "Don't structure your life around a girl. It
doesn't end well." Matt just laughed, clearly not taking the warning seriously. Oh well, Simon
thought. He'd learn eventually one way or the other.

It took almost a week for Kirk to finally have time to hang out with Simon. They met up at an old
arcade game store where Simon, Kirk, Matt, and Eric had spent almost all their high school
weekends. The store had a section in the back that was for playing games, rather than buying them.
You just needed enough quarters to keep the game going, the lights were dim, and many old style
games lined the walls, all displaying 8bit graphics.

"That would be awesome!" Kirk said when Simon mentioned the band. "Let me know where you're
playing. I will totally come." Kirk wasn't facing Simon, but rather had his eyes fixed forward on the
game he was playing.

"No, I mean you should join again," Simon explained. Kirk's avatar died dramatically as he lost the
level he was playing. Then he turned to Simon.

"Yeah, I don't really sing anymore," Kirk said. "My online digital graphics classes are so interesting,
and I tend to spend all my time wrapped up in those."

Simon pretended like it was all fine. He smiled and told his friend he was happy that Kirk had found
his passion, but this totally sucked!

Later that night, when Simon was by himself in his room, and feeling lonelier than he'd ever felt at
home before, he got out his phone. He scrolled through his contacts absently until he reached
someone he actually wanted to talk to.
'Hey,' Simon texted. 'How's your summer going so far?'

Then he set his phone down and stared up at his ceiling. He was lying on his childhood bed, gazing up as if there was more to see than white stucco which, of course, there wasn't. Simon got bored of his ceiling quickly and turned to the internet for comfort, opening up Netflix and selecting some period drama with good sword fighting scenes. Right when the heros were taking on an army with nothing but their sheer force of will, Simon's phone went off.

'Good, how about yours?' the text read.

He had to think for a moment. 'Weird,' he texted back. 'Living with mom again is weird.'

'Lol. Yes, moms are like that,' came the reply. 'Or so I hear.'

'Is your mom not?' Simon asked, curious.

'My parents think my brother can do no wrong and I should look to his example in all things,' her text read.

'That must suck,' Simon texted back. 'Sorry, I didn't know.'

'No worries,' she typed. 'How could you know.'

'Fair point,' Simon texted.

'Daniel is just a brat,' Maia's text read.

'Sounds like it,' Simon replied. 'My sister is more the motherly type.'

'Lucky,' Maia replied.

It was nice talking to Maia, like talking to a real friend. It hadn't felt the same hanging out with Kirk and Matt like it had before. They had both changed so much since high school, and Simon just wasn't sure what to say anymore. He and Eric had kept in touch at the University over the last year, so Simon hadn't noticed that negative change in their relationship in the same way. Simon wondered maybe if he hadn't left with Clary, would his old high school friends still be his friends, or was this just the nature order of the universe? Maybe High School friendships just weren't meant to last, kinda like High School sweethearts, he added sadly.

Did Simon have more friends, more purpose, more of a life at Clary's school than he did at home? It was a strange concept to consider. Certainly he was friends with Maia. Though he also suspected Jace had potential in that area, though the idea still felt wrong, as Jace was the one dating Clary now. He did have Eric back at school. And though he usually didn't want to see Clary, maybe they could salvage a friendship of some kind with time and distance. Then Simon found himself remembering the touch of a stranger's lips in the dark. There was that mystery elevator girl as well.

Simon covered his face with his pillow, blocking out the light and ceiling alike. He wished the pillow could block out his thoughts too, but no such luck. He had strange dreams that night, about broken friendships and confusing lights. Simon awoke curled around his pillow, and decided he needed a morning in bed to think.

"Mom," Simon said as casually as he could when he came down for breakfast a few hours later. "How mad would you be if I went back to the same school?"

"Why?" she asked, forgetting about the fruit she was preparing and looking up at him.
"Because I kinda think I want to go back," Simon said sheepishly. After all the fuss he'd made about leaving, he was feeling a little guilty changing his mind now.

"Why?" Elaine asked again.

"I realized I made friends there," Simon answered. "Friends who feel more real to me than the ones I left behind almost a year ago. And it's not like it's a bad university. The courses aren't that different from the ones we were looking at together."

"Well, I'll miss you," Elaine said, calmly. "But as long as it's for you and not for a girl." She spoke the last word with such a sharp defiance, Simon had to think before answering. The girl in the elevator. No, this wasn't for her. Even if he'd like to see her again, it wasn't why he'd changed his mind. Friends, future, and freedom. These were what mattered, and Simon had realized these were things he couldn't obtain here under his mother's roof in his home town.

"It's not, I promise," Simon said, firmly. "I don't belong here anymore mom. I'm sorry." His mother didn't speak for a moment, then she let out a deep sigh as if she'd been holding it in since his arrival.

"I know," she said sadly. Simon walked over to her and hugged her. She wrapped her arms around him so tight, like she had when he'd been little.

"I am going to need to join a book club," his mother laughed as she let him go.

"That's a great idea," Simon exclaimed, glad she recognized she couldn't keep relying on visits from her children as her only social events.

Time passed as the new reality settled in. Simon and his mother were now talking about classes and dorms rather than selecting a school. One day Simon had a sudden idea, and texted Maia to ask her if she would like to join his band.

'Sorry,' Maia's text reply read. 'I don't have any musical skills, so unless you need an off-key singer, or someone to hit something and make a bang noise, I'm not your girl.'

'I'm sure you're not that bad,' Simon consoled her. He was proven very very wrong a moment later when Maia called him to sing off-key to him, just to make her point.

So it was still gonna be just him and Eric, but it had been just him and Eric all year anyway. The Immortal Instruments were epic even with only two members, though Simon was seriously considering holding auditions when he got back.

"You should pick a major," Elaine told Simon while they were hunched over a tablet at the kitchen table looking at courses.

"I don't have to declare till third year," Simon repeated.

"That doesn't mean you should wait till third year," his mother argued. "And are you sure you want to live in dorms again?"

"I don't mind," Simon replied. "And it is the cheapest option."

"Splitting rent with someone off campus might be more comfortable," Elaine reminded him.

"I don't want to rent with a stranger," Simon explained. "I might as well dorm with a stranger if I'm gonna do that. I don't have any friends looking for places to live right now." He shrugged. "Dorms aren't bad, really. Besides I got lucky last year, and wasn't even stuck with a roommate. I haven't
paid my dues yet." His mother laughed as she tried to explain that wasn't how it worked, but Simon stuck to his dorm plan.

Simon wasn't sure if he should tell Clary or not. Maybe it was best to keep it to himself for now. It was a big campus. He might not run into her for a while, and he didn't want to deal with her strange confusing joy at his returning to the school until he had to.

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Chapter End Notes

Sneak Peek Chapter 51

He was rather excited about it though he was also possibly having an out of body experience. Was Clary really there next to him making him glow with pride? Surely it was someone else more worthy of her standing here holding her hand.

Jace walked up to Celine's house, Clary's hand held in his acting as Jace's anchor as he ran the doorbell. Why was he so nervous? He knew his mother would love Clary just as much as he did. He knew it, so why did Jace feel like a coiled spring of anxious energy?
For the first time in Jace's life, he was bringing a girl home to meet his mother. He was rather excited about it, though he was also possibly having an out of body experience. Was Clary really there next to him making him glow with pride? Surely it was someone else more worthy of her standing here holding her hand.

Jace walked up to Celine's house, Clary's hand held in his acting as his anchor Jace ran the doorbell. Why was he so nervous? He knew his mother would love Clary just as much as he did. He knew it, so why did Jace feel like a coiled spring of anxious energy?

"Jace!" his mother exclaimed as the door swung open. Jace suddenly found himself pulled into his mother's arms. "And this must be Clary!" Jace didn't get a chance to warn his girlfriend, before she too was pulled into the group hug.

Thankfully Celine soon realized they were all standing in a open doorway, and pulled out of the hug to let them in. The house was as Jace remembered it, with a dark carpet, yellowing wallpaper, and that old wooden cabinet in the corner with the peeling finish. If his mother had moved any of the wall hangings around, Jace couldn't recall what had been there before.

"It's so great to have you here!" Celine said smiling and clapping her hands together in that way she always did when she knew there was work to do. "Are you hungry? I have a casserole in the oven, or we could go out? Whatever you like."

"I could go out anytime," Jace replied. "I've missed your cooking."

"Not as much as I've missed you!" Celine cried, pulling him into a hug again.

"Mom, stop," Jace whined, very aware that now his girlfriend had watched as he was being hugged to the extreme by his mother twice in the space of about two minutes.

"Oh hush," Celine said as she finally let him go. "I haven't seen you since Christmas. Cut your poor mother some slack." Clary giggled while Jace rolled his eyes. He was at least glad Clary didn't seem at all phased by his mother's overly affectionate welcome.

"When I arrived home for Christmas," Clary added. "My mom did much the same thing."

"Yes I'd she they would. I was surprised when Jace told me to expect you," Celine said. "Surely your parents wanted you home for the summer."

"They did," Clary replied. "But I managed to convince them."

"Clary is very persuasive," Jace said grinning as he remember their first time together, and Clary's determination to ruin his perfect intentions. Celine smiled at them both, and Jace knew he'd been nervous for nothing, though really he'd already known. It was just nice not to have the knot in his stomach anymore.

"Jace has never brought a girl home to meet me before," Celine gushed. "I am so glad your parents let you come."
"I am an adult you know," Clary smiled. "They technically couldn't stop me." She winked, and Jace couldn't help but laugh a little. His girlfriend was so sassy sometimes.

"Oh pfft," Celine dismissed this argument. "Being a parent doesn't stop just because your kid turns eighteen. It's just that the government won't get upset if you kick them out after that." Jace's humor died long before his mother finished speaking. He wanted to hide his face in his hands, but Clary's easy laughter told him it wasn't as bad as he thought.

"I like your mom," Clary whispered as Celine went to check on dinner. "She's funny."

"Best mom ever," Jace agreed, smiling as he wrapped an arm around his girlfriend's waist. Celine returned then and announced Dinner wasn't quite ready.

"Would you like a tour of the house?" she asked. Clary agreed, and Jace followed them both down the familiar halls.

"And that's Jace's room," Celine said pointing to the room with his name spelt out in block letters on the door. "I should probably take those down, I just can't bring myself to do it. Oh, and you'll like the view from the patio." Jace followed Clary and Celine back down the hall and out through the door off the kitchen. He watched the look on Clary's face, rather than the view of the mountains covered in snow that he'd seen almost daily his own life.

"Do you remember the swing we used to have set up for you down there?" his mother asked, pointing to the back yard clearly visible from where they stood on the patio.

"Heh," Jace started. He could recall swinging as a child, but the exact swing in question was beyond his recollection. His mother laughed cheerfully before replying.

"It seems my efforts to enrich his childhood went unappreciated," she sighed, though Jace could tell she was joking.

"I bet you haven't even noticed that I painted the kitchen since Christmas?" Celine accused him. Jace wanted to confess that he had never once noticed it when she did things like that, so why did she think it was all gonna change now.

"I didn't want to interrupt you just to point it out," Jace improvised. "It's a beautiful colour, much better than the old one."

"Nice save," his mother laughed. "You shall have to keep an eye on this one Clary. He's a smooth talker." Jace missed the anxious look in Clary's eyes, though it was only there for a second.

"Ha ha," Jace said rolling his eyes "very funny." Then he racked his brain for what colour the kitchen had been before. Yellow? Pastel something? Urg, what did it matter, and why did his mother have to keep changing it? Maybe he could find a spot where the old colour could still be found, like under a light switch cover?

"Oh that's the oven!" Celine cried as they all heard a ding. She turned and headed back into the house, both Jace and Clary following her. Jace helped set the table, and then his mother placed the hot glass casserole dish down on and told them to dig in.

It was wonderful sitting there watching as the only two woman Jace had ever loved bonded before his eyes. Jace had never felt like this before. There was a warmth in his chest that he couldn't explain, that he didn't have the words to express.

"I should call my mom," Clary said after they finished eating. "I texted her when we landed, but I'm
"Excellent idea," Celine agreed. "Mother's do love a phone call every now and then." Clary excused herself, and the second she was out of earshot Celine turned to Jace with a very serious expression on her face.

"Don't let this one go," Celine said. "She's a keeper."

"I know, mom," Jace smiled, that same warm feeling in his chest again. "I know."

"Good," his mother replied clearly pleased. "I'm so proud of you."

"Why?" Jace asked, unsure what the context of the statement was.

"For finally sticking with one woman, and a smart one too," she smiled. "I didn't want you to be alone forever."

"Thanks mom," Jace smiled. Celine had told him this before, but never for something that meant so much to him. Jace knew he'd remember this for years to come, then his mother spoke again, and ruined the moment.

"Now I wanted to talk to you about Sebastian you never said what happened and-"

"Drop it mom," Jace sighed. "It's not my story to tell."

"But he's here,' Celine added. "In town. Maybe if you just go see him."

"No," Jace snapped.

"I don't understand," Celine sighed. "You were inseparable your whole lives, and now you just don't care all of a sudden?" Jace was starting to get mad, though not at his mother. He could also feel the beginning of tears in his eyes.

"Something happened that, as I said, isn't my secret to share," Jace whispered. Despite his promise to never allow Sebastian near Clary ever again, somehow they were in the same town. Oh, how Jace had hoped Sebastian hadn't come back here. Maybe bringing Clary home with him was a mistake. But if he hadn't, he wouldn't have seen her for four months!

"If you bring Sebastian up with Clary in the room we are leaving," Jace threatened as firmly as he could. "I mean it, mom. We will spend the summer with her parents, job or no job." Jace knew while he was working Clary would be spending alone time with his mother, and he didn't want her to feel uncomfortable or unsafe.

Celine was obviously shocked, but didn't say a word, and they sat in silence until Clary returned. Once Clary was back in the room again, the tension faded and they slipped back into pleasant conversation. Before bed they watched a movie. When Clary expressed a desire for sleep, Celine offered up Jace's old room.

"I am under no illusions as to what adult college students get up to," Celine said as she clearly indicated they could share the room. "Just don't give me any details."

"Deal," Jace laughed. He kissed her on the cheek then stood up, Clary's hand in his and went down the hall to bed.

"Your mom is lovely," Clary told him once they were alone. "For some reason I was expecting a less
warm welcome."

"Why?" Jace asked.

"Well you know," Clary started but she didn't seem to know, or at least she had no idea how to express it.

"You can tell me anything Clary," Jace whispered to her.

"You know most- I mean they- have issues with their parents which is why they end up as-" Clary mumbled.

"As?" Jace inquired, pulling her into his arms.

"Players?" Clary said sheepishly. Jace had to laugh a little at the way she said it. Then he leaned in and kissed her briefly. He wanted to distract her from having to answer the question. Jace knew exactly how he'd ended up the way he had, and he didn't think Sebastian was a topic they needed at the moment.

Clary wrapped her arms around his neck and deepened the kiss like he knew she would. He loved that he had this effect on her. Turning off her brain as she'd once said to him. They kissed lazily until they both fell asleep in each other's arms, surrounded by the nicknacks and trophies of Jace's childhood.

Over the next few days a pattern emerged. Jace got up and went to work, kissing Clary goodbye before he left. On his lunch break, Jace either called his girlfriend or texted her, learning about what his mother and Clary had gotten up to that morning. When work ended, Jace went home and pulled the woman he loved into his arms before enjoying a quiet evening of conversation or light television. Aside from his having to go to work, it was the perfect way to spend the summer.

"I heard you were back," came a voice that made Jace's blood ran cold. "Didn't quite believe it though." Jace was at work, which meant he was on his back under a car and covered in engine grease.

Slowly Jace pushed out from under the car and stood up to face the one person in the world he didn't want to see or hear from ever again.

"Your mom isn't saying much," Sebastian remarked. "So I wanted to know if you have finally come back to your senses." Jace didn't speak. His hand curled into a fist, without conscious thought he had to resist the urge to punch his old best friend out right there.

"Pity," Sebastian smirked. "There's a new bar just opened and I need a wingman, but it seems he's permanently broken for some redhead wench. Such a shame."

"If you so much as look at her I'll-" Jace started.

"Oh is she here with you!" Sebastian said enthusiastically. "This is rather marvelous." Jace now wanted to punch himself in the head. He shouldn't have said anything. "Maybe I'll swing by and say hi." Sebastian laughed, then turned and with an absent wave of his hand, he left.

Jace wanted to skip the second half of his shift and run home. He wanted to call both his mother and Clary to warn them. Jace's heart was racing, every muscle in his body wanted him to move, to act! Jace wanted to run after Sebastian and beat on his face until it no longer resembled his own. The only thing that stopped him was Clary. His being in jail for assault, even well justified assault, wouldn't help Clary.
Taking a deep breath, Jace ran to the staff room, pulled out his phone, and quickly texted his mother.

'If Sebastian shows up you are NOT to let him in,' Jace messaged Celine. 'Don't let him near Clary no matter what!'

Breathing hard Jace waited for a reply, but didn't receive one. Should he ditch work and go home? Would that help? Maybe it had been an empty threat, and surely Sebastian wouldn't try anything in front of his mother? But Jace didn't know if just seeing Sebastian again would do to Clary emotionally.

"Hey, Jace you alright?" Jace jumped as his co-worker Larry put a concerned hand on his shoulder.

"Fine," Jace said sharply.

"You look like you've seen a ghost," Larry observed.

"I have," Jace whispered. Then he made a snap decision. Turning to Larry he said, "I have to run home for a bit. Can you cover for me?"

"Sure," Larry replied, and Jace bolted. He was already running down the street because he'd formed another thought. His mind could only think of Clary scared with Sebastian standing over her. Jace's walk to work usually took over half the time his sprint home did, and he soon found himself bursting through his mother's front door.

"Clary?" Jace called.

"Jace?" Clary called back with nothing but confused surprise in her voice. Jace breathed a sigh of relief, and then felt instantly foolish for panicking like he had.

"What are you doing home so early?" Clary asked, as she walked towards him. "You mother is teaching me to knit."

"That's great," Jace gasped. He was very out of breath from running the whole way home.

"Are you okay?" Clary asked. Jace looked into those green eyes he loved, and knew the safest option was honestly. So he told her that Sebastian had visited him, and threatened to visit her as well.

"I just wanted to make sure you were okay," Jace finished his story. Clary looked a little pale and she didn't speak.

"Please tell me if you want to go back home," Jace said. "I would totally understand."

Something flickered in Clary's eyes for a moment that Jace couldn't identify, then she snapped out of whatever trance she'd been in.

"You should get back to work," Clary said leaning up to kiss him. "And I have knitting to learn. I'll see you tonight."

"Yeah," Jace smiled at her. "As long as you're okay." Clary nodded with a determination that helped settle Jace's anxiety.

"Now go," Clary repeated, kissing him once more before shooing him out the door.

Jace didn't bolt quite as fast to work, but he still ran. When he arrived, Jace got right back under the car he'd been working on, and tried not to think about anything other than engines and spark plugs. Everything was fine.
And it was for about a week. Then one day Jace arrived home from work to find his mother and his girlfriend sitting on the couch crying, their arms wrapped around each other.

Chapter End Notes

So my beta reader’s reaction to this cliffhanger was: Really! You better send me the next chapter soon! You can't leave me hanging like that!

*insert evil laugh here* And you guys thought Sebastian was gone. hehe

Anyway... I'm back! Were you worried I died? It sure feels like I haven't updated this in ages. Or maybe that's just me. Either way I had an epic binge writing session yesterday and wrote close to 6,000 words in one day like a spaz who was just so glad to be over her writer's block of almost a week! Urg! So annoying! That is like the longest I have ever gone without writing in a year! Totally lame. I blame life.

Most of the next four chapters are written. Some are only half there while others are done and just need editing. Because of the nature of this story and its many plot lines I tend to plot between 2-7 chapters in advance to make sure everything fits.

I got an interesting review about points of view and how using dialogue to anchor a scene and often repeating dialogue in this story, instead of making it less confusing, is just repetitive and boring. It was an interesting perspective and I wanted to know if any of you share this opinion? I mean technically if you found it repetitive you could just skim over it. I guess I have always been someone who craves every little detail about what is going on so I tend to overlap before I cut especially with so many points of view. I have done what she suggested in other stories and merely summarised the other characters feelings rather than show the events again.

Also she wanted more Clace. lol Sorry guys but I am a Malec shipper first, then Sizzy then Clace. This is actually the ONLY fanfic I have and will ever write that includes a Clace plot line. In fact when the two fanfics I am currently writing are complete I am not going to be writing fanfic anymore.

I am working on a half dozen original story stories and two novels as well as writing posts for my blog.

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Sneak Peek Chapter 52

"Sit," Tessa ordered both her boys one day. She'd asked them both to come meet her at Jem's to straighten this whole thing out. They both sat looking up at her.

"You," she pointed at Jem. "Stop saying we should get married. We aren't without you. And you--" she pointed at Will. "Stop well... just stop. Both of you stop being so freaking selfless you are killing me here! I want you both to honestly tell me what your best case scenario is and then I will pick! Got it!"

They both nodded then each proceeded to tell her they just wanted her to be happy and she almost hit them.
Tessa placed a hand over her still flat stomach, marvelling in her new reality. Three months Pregnant. It had been a month and a half since she'd found out, but some days she still had to remind herself. Tessa hadn't told her roommate or friends yet, though she knew she had to soon. The boys were always fussing over her which meant that Tessa had been to the doctors at least twice recently. She was starting to know the front desk receptionist by name. The baby was always fine as she continued to explain to Will and Jem. They'd told her she was due in November.

Since Tessa had first absently voiced her idea out loud to take a year off school, both Jem and Will had been very enthusiastic about the idea. It was actually one of the few things they both agreed on since Jem was still very adamant that Will and Tessa should get married, while Will and Tessa were determined not to cut Jem out. Tessa wasn't sure about leaving school though. When she tried to talk about money, and how she wasn't sure she could live off her education fund without it being toward her education, both of them dismissed this and said they would help.

"We can support you Tessa," Jem said. "I know I don't work, but look at my house." He chuckled. Tessa had learned quite a while ago that Jem came from old money. When his parents had died leaving no other heirs, Jem had inherited it all.

"I mean, you aren't going to stay in that tiny apartment with a baby right?" Will asked her. Tessa hadn't realize this until now. There was no room for a baby at her and Magnus's apartment was there?

"Oh right," Tessa said softly.

"You should move in with Jem," Will continued. "His place is bigger." This seemed sensible until she spoke to Jem, who told her once again that she should marry Will and move in with him.

After a few weeks of this, Tessa was fed up. She wanted them both to stop being so freaking nice! She couldn't suggest anything to Jem without him feeling like it was Will's job, and she couldn't suggest anything to Will without his worrying about Jem. She knew she was cranky from the hormones, but did neither of these men have a selfish bone in their whole body? People like that didn't exist in the actual world, so how the hell had she managed to find two of them?

"Sit," Tessa ordered both her boys. They were in Jem's luxurious living room. She'd asked them both that morning to come meet her here to straighten this whole thing out. So here they sat, both gazing up at her from the sofa.

"You," she pointed at Jem. "Stop saying we should get married. We aren't without you. End of story. And you-" she pointed at Will. "Stop well... just stop." Tessa made a grand gesture with her hands as if trying to demonstrate the general state of the situation. "Both of you stop being so freaking selfless, you are killing me here! I want you both to honestly tell me what your best case scenario is, and then I will pick! Got it!"

They both nodded, then each proceeded to tell her they just wanted her to be happy, and she almost hit them.

"Oh fuck this!" Tessa grumbled. All this yelling was making her warm, and all her hormones were
begging her to do something about it. Tessa began stripping off her clothes in the middle of Jem's living room.

"I am so horny I can't see straight," Tessa gasped as the last of her clothes landed on the floor, and she moved quickly to straddle Will on the couch while leaning over to kiss Jem at the same time.

She could feel Will's arousal through his jeans, and it made her heart pound. This she had to admit, was the best part of her hormones being a hot mess lately. She found herself so easily turned on these days. Her hands worked to undo Will's pants as she continued to kiss Jem. She moaned as Will's hands went to her tender breasts. Pregnancy was also messing with those, making them more sensitive, and bigger. Sensing Will was going to finish removing his own clothes himself, Tessa's hands moved to the buttons of Jem's shirt.

Jem's hands joined Will's, trailing over her skin. Waves of ecstasy were threatening to overwhelm her, and Tessa knew she'd finish if someone just touched her where she really needed it. As it turned out, Will was the faster stripper. Naked and hard, he was still sitting on the couch. Tessa turned to face him with Jem behind her, but this time when she straddled him, he entered her and she sighed with relief, laying back to place her head in Jem's lap. Jem leaned down to kiss her lips as his hands moved lower, lingering on her stiff nipples before moving down past her navel. Will was moving inside her now, while she possessively squeezed him. Then Jem's hands joined in the fun.

"Oh god," Tessa gasped before she felt the waves of pleasure run through her. The tension in her slacked, and she lay still panting. Will had stopped moving as well, and she knew he'd come.

Once she'd caught her breath, Tessa switched positions. Jem it seemed, hadn't bothered to get all his clothes off. Smiling she quickly remedied the situation to reveal that he was just as horney as the rest of them.

"Tessa," Jem whispered as she maneuvered herself until he slide easily inside her. She was so wet at this point it would have been impossible for her to sit across him like this, legs spread, without him going in. She enjoyed the expressions on Jem's face as she squeezed him and ground her hips against his, back and forth. With every movement, she felt herself quiver on the brink again. When Jem's mouth formed a perfect 'O' and all his muscles tensed up, Tessa cried out. She leaned back into Will's arms, somehow sensing that he'd gotten up to kneel behind her.

Catching her breath Tessa grinned. She was totally naked. Sitting on the couch, Jem still inside her but slack, Will's strong arms supporting her from behind, his child in her womb, and totally blissed out. She tilted her head back and stole a kiss from Will. Her strange problems seemed like nothing but idle thoughts as she came down from her high. Tessa had had so little experience with sex before she'd met Will and Jem. There was something about these men that she could never get enough of. Something more than the way she totally and unconditionally loved them both.

Tessa leaned all the way forward to rest her head on Jem's shoulder as his mouth caressed the skin of her breast. She hear a soft contented noise escape her. Will had his arms around her, his hands moving over her skin, sending shivers down her spine. She began to moved again, just because it felt so good, rocking her hips back and forth against Jem even though he was done.

"I love you," Tessa spoke softly as she put an arm around each of them. "So much."

"Are you sure it isn't just the multiple orgams you love," Will chuckled. She could feel his breath against the bare skin of her back as he spoke.

"Those are wonderful too," Tessa sighed, melting into Will's embrace behind her. Tessa wasn't holding up her own weight anymore. She felt like a bowl of jello. Every muscle in her body was
happy to merely exist. Tessa felt like the luckiest woman alive.

"I have an idea," Jem whispered as he kissed Tessa's shoulder. She could feel his smile against her skin. "Why don't the three of us live together, here."

"I like this plan," Tessa giggled, feeling almost drunk with euphoria. She could feel Will's fingers gently running through her hair. Tessa closed her eyes, enjoying the sensation.

"Works for me," Will whispered, though loud enough so Jem could hear him. Then his hands were hovering over her stomach. Tessa pulled Jem's hand over to rest there too then placed her own on top. Their baby would have three parents.

"Now we just need to think of a name," Jem said.

"I already picked one," Will argued. "If it's a boy anyway."

"You can't name your kid James," Jem disagreed.

"Watch me," Will laughed.

"My names James!" Jem grumbled. "That's just weird."

"But we call you Jem," Will continued relentlessly. "So it won't be confusing."

"I'm not even the father," Jem reminded him. "That makes no sense."

"It's better than William Jr," Will countered. "I never did understand why parents named their kids the same name as them, and then try and make it okay by tacting Jr onto it."

"That's exactly what you're doing!" Jem whined. "I hope it's a girl. I don't think you'd hate your own daughter enough to call her James."

"I could call her Jamie," Will disagreed. Jem groaned, rolling his eyes, but Tessa just laughed, holding the stitch in her side. Here they were naked in the living room, both still with a hand on her belly, and this was where their minds were at.

"Are you alright?" both men instantly asked, once Tessa's hand went to her stomach. This wasn't exactly new. In the presence of either of them, if Tessa gave even the slightest indication of distress, they were faster than she could blink. In fact, Tessa was sure if she hadn't asked the doctor about having sex while pregnant, they both would have tried to say no, just in case it was dangerous for the baby. Thank goodness her boys had believed the doctor, because with her hormones the way they were at the moment, abstinence would not have been an option.

"I'm perfect," Tessa replied, standing up and kissing both of them. "Just kinda sticky." She grinned, reaching out to grab both their hands before dragging them off to the bathroom.

"Clean is a good idea," Jem said. "Why don't you go first Tessa."

"Oh no," Tessa told him, clearly indicating they were to join her. Both men gave her dubious looks so she giggled and added, "Just kinda sticky." She grinned, reaching out to grab both their hands before dragging them off to the bathroom.

"Wow," Jem laughed. "You are unstoppable."

"It's the hormones," Tessa replied. "I'm always hungry, constantly peeing even when I don't have to, and my moods shift from horny to miserable to happy and back in about ten seconds flat."
"I am going to need a power bar," Will whined, but that didn't stop him from followed her into the bathroom. Whenever the three of them showered, Tessa was always in the middle as neither Will or Jem were too interested in soaping up each other.

"That tickles," Tessa giggled, before turning to kiss Jem who laughed. The three of them were in Jem's wonderfully huge shower, water pouring over them from two showerheads. Tessa worked shampoo into Jem's hair while Will's fingers massaged her scalp. Then they all turned around and repeated the process. They were rising off when Tessa felt Will behind her, and grinned.

"Power bar," she said rolling her eyes before turning around to hold Will's blossoming erection in her hands. He gasped just as she pressed her lips to his. As Tessa felt Will harden in her grasp, her loins ache for him.

Releasing Will for the moment Tessa grabbed hold of the shower curtain rod, suddenly very glad Jem had the bolted to the wall kind. Resting an arm on Jem's shoulder, and putting her weight on the rod Tessa jumped, wrapping her legs around Will's waist.

"You are insane," Will laughed, as he caught her. "You know that right?"

"Hormones," Tessa whispered as she attacked him with kisses and ground her hips into him. A beautifully sensual sound arose from Will's throat as she continued to move. His strong arms supporting her weight, Tessa maneuvered herself until she got what she wanted. Tilting her head back she sighed as he slide inside her. She didn't mess around once she was there, but moved and squeezed until everything felt amazing.

Panting, she rested her head on Will's shoulder for a moment before sliding back down to stand on her feet. Leaning up to kiss Will, his arms going around her protectively. Tessa had a feeling her gymnastics just now had scared the hell out of him, but she had no regrets. Then as they broke apart, Tessa realized that was the first time she and Will had had sex in front of Jem without including him. She turned around worried, but she needed have been.

"I am tired just watching you," Jem laughed. "So I'm clean, but you two need another shower. A cold one." He chuckled at his own obvious joke and still grinning, Jem got out leaving Will and Tessa to wash themselves down again.

By the time Tessa and Will were once again clean, they got out, dried off, and went to find Jem who was in the kitchen in his bath robe making coffee.

"So I'm thinking we should get a king sized bed," Jem said as he handed Will coffee. There were general nods and murmurs of agreement, and Jem said he'd go bed shopping tomorrow. On the rare occasions when all three of them stayed, Jem's queen sized bed was alright, but not quite roomy enough. Will and Tessa just had double beds at their place, so if the three of them planned to be sleeping in the same bed, they always did so at Jem's house. If this was going to be a permanent set up, the king sized bed was instantly agreed upon.

As they worked out the other practical aspects of living together Tessa learned that Will and Jem had lived together before in their first few years of college. This along with the fact that both of them were used to Tessa sleeping over at their respective places, meant the domestic details were easily sorted. Will said he had no emotional attachment to his apartment, and Jem insisted there was plenty of space here to store anything Will didn't want to throw out, but wouldn't need. Will slowly started moving boxes into Jem's basement, and their new bed arrived a few weeks later.

"My love," Will whispered in her ear, his arms wrapping around her from behind. They were standing in Jem's kitchen listening to Jem telling the movers what to do with their king sized bed.
"You are starting to show." Slowly Will placed his hands over her slightly curved stomach, and she leaned back into him.

"When are you going to tell Magnus that you're moving out?" Will asked, keeping his hands over her belly as he spoke.

"Soon," Tessa said. "Promise. I just want to enjoy living with my friend for a little longer."

"Isn't Magnus working over the summer?" Will asked. "I thought you said you rarely see him outside of the school months." She was caught. Tessa tried not to move or show any indication of her discomfort, but of course Will saw through her instantly.

"It's something else, isn't it?" Will stated rather than asked. "Tell me." His lips touched her neck, and she tilted her head automatically inviting him to continue.

"Everything has just happening so fast," Tessa whispered. "Can't I just enjoy my crazy pregnancy hormones, and be in my apartment for a little while before my whole life turns upside down?"

"I suppose," Will replied calmly. "As long as that's all that's upsetting you." She could sense the anxiety in his voice, and turned to look in his eyes. "You aren't for example getting cold feet about moving in, about us?"

"No," Tessa said firmly, gently touching Will's face. "No." She didn't know how else to express herself. She wanted to be here with them. She knew this baby was coming no matter where she lived, and it did make sense to be here. Tessa knew this was where she was meant to be, it's just the reality of getting what you want can sometimes be just as scary as never having it.

"Good," he whispered, leaning down to kiss her. When he pulled away, Tessa sensed a seriousness in Will before he spoke. "Because my Tess, I don't think I'd survive losing you, or Jem for that matter. I love you, so much. No matter if I ever make up with my relatives or not, you and Jem are my family."

With a contented sigh, Tessa rested her head on Will's chest and whispered, "I know the feeling."

"What's this!" Jem's voice accused them. "Having a romantic moment without me?" Will and Tessa both reach out their arms to Jem, and he accepted being dragged into the group hug.

"Our Tessa is showing," Will informed Jem. "Won't be long now until we meet James."

"You are not naming him James!" Jem whined. Will ignored him like always. Tessa was starting to hope she was having a girl, as that would mean Will and Jem wouldn't have to continue this argument over a sleeping infant, though if Tessa knew Will at all, he probably would want to name a girl Jamie. Tessa hadn't really thought about names yet.

As time passed, and Tessa began to put on weight, her libido pittered out a little. Just being too close to Will or Jem didn't get her as worked up as it had a month ago, and suddenly pickles and ice cream sounded like the best thing ever!

Oh great, now Tessa wanted pickles and ice cream, but it was almost two o'clock in the morning, and she was wedged in. Tessa was laying on her side in the bed, Will asleep with his back to her, Tessa's arm around his waist while Jem spooned around her from behind, his arm draped over her side. She looked down smiling at Jem's fingers resting on her swollen belly, Will's back gently resting against it as well. She interwove her fingers with Jem's, smiling to herself. It was like they were all connected.
"You're awake," Jem whispered.

"Sorry did I wake you up?" Tessa asked, as Jem moved a little closer to hold her.

"Maybe," Jem said, but Tessa knew he was smiling from the tone of his voice. "But I'm glad." She felt his lips gently kiss her neck before Jem rested his head back on the pillow and snuggled in close.

"I love you," he whispered. "Both of you." His hand gently caressed her stomach for a moment. "Mine or not, as long as you want me, I'm here." Tessa knew this already, but it was as if Jem needed to say it, and it was nice to hear.

She placed her hand over his on her belly, and whispered to him firmly. "This baby is yours. It's ours. Yours, Will's and mine." She turned slowly so as not to wake Will. Then she was in Jem's arms, kissing him briefly before speaking. "And I will always want you."

A loud snore suddenly ruined their moment as Will rolled over and laid his long arms across them both. Tessa was suddenly sandwiched between them, a soulmate on either side as her baby fluttered inside her.

Chapter End Notes

Woot another chapter so soon! It's like I am actually writing again! YAY! And yes I know all the smut... the next chapter has smut too... it seems my head is in the gutter. lol. Hope no one complains. ^_^ My beta sure didn't. ;)

Please if you aren't already reading it check out the other story I am currently updating. It's a Malec fantasy AU and it makes me sad when I update and get no reviews and so few views on it. :( It's called Royal Dilemma, please just try it. Thanks!

Sneak Peek Chapter 53

"Good morning," Magnus's voice was like music to Alec's ears. It was one of Magnus's extremely rare days off. Working two jobs seemed to mean you got one day off a month and Alec couldn't even imagine how much that sucked, having never worked a day in his life.

"It is," Alec smiled turning to kiss his boyfriend. "Since you are here."

"I'm sorry," Magnus sighed, sitting up in bed. "I know you never see me. I shouldn't have let you stay." Alec wanted to argue that Magnus should have just let Alec help, but he kept his mouth shut.
Alec's Waiting

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes.

Magnus was at work which was the perpetual state of Alec's universe these days. Three weeks in, and Alec didn't regret his decision to stay here for the summer, though he was starting to wonder if he would come to before the four months were up.

Magnus had two jobs. He worked part time at the museum giving tours. Alec had been to three of them now, and knew far more about the history exhibits at his local museum than he'd ever thought he would. Magnus was also working manual labour, moving boxes from here to there.

It was so frustrating for Alec to think how little Magnus was being paid for his time. When you had a trust fund that amounted to seven figures, and a boyfriend you loved more than anything in the world working endlessly for minimum wage, it starts to border on ridiculous, at least in Alec's opinion.

Alec spent this time buying groceries, he then wouldn't let Magnus reimburse him for, cooking and waiting for his boyfriend to get off work. He was always so happy to see Magnus when he got home, and on the days Magnus worked at the museum he had the energy to really spend quality time together, but on the days Magnus worked his manual labour job, he basically came home and passed out. Alec would curl up beside Magnus in bed, lying awake for hours. The cats usually come to sleep beside them in the hopes that Alec would pet them before he fell asleep. When he awoke, the bed was usually empty as Magnus was already at work again.

Alec wanted to just hand Magnus some money and get his boyfriend back, but he knew this would lead to something bad. He knew just offering would offend Magnus, and could even lead to a major fight. Alec didn't want to risk it. He loved Magnus enough to put up with the boredom. A part of him wanted to call Izzy or his parents and complain about how much it sucked waiting around all day for Magnus to get home, but he didn't dare. Alec had learned his lesson. Still it got lonely. Jace was back home with Clary. Tessa was almost never home, and she wasn't much company when she was. So Alec fell back on the last friend he had left, who also happened to be his cousin.

"Over here!" Alec's voice called across the cafe. He'd just spotted Aline walking in, and wanted to make sure she saw him sitting in the corner of the cafe.

"Thanks," Aline said smiling. She accepted the drink he'd ordered for her, taking a sip.

"Sorry I've been such a horrible friend lately," Alec started. "I feel like I haven't seen you all year."

"Nah it's okay," Aline replied with a smile. "You know what they say about falling in love right?" Alec shook his head. "That it costs at least one friend."

"Nope never heard that one," Alec replied. "And I don't think I like it. It's so depressing." Aline laughed, taking another drink from her latte. Alec, remembering his, following suit.

"Kinda true though," Aline squirmed. "I mean since I met Helen, I haven't really been keeping up with you either."

"Let's promise never to forget to talk again," Alec declared.

"Deal," Aline laughed.
"Speaking of, how are things with Helen?" Alec asked.

"Amazing!" Aline squealed. "She's like some kind of angelic fairy queen goddess." Alec chuckled.

"Is that all?" he asked, still grinning.

"She's sexy as hell, hilarious," Aline gushed. "And for some insane reason, interested in me!"

"Why wouldn't she be," Alec smiled. "You're awesome." It was so wonderful to see his cousin happily in love. He remembered only too well how worried Aline had been to come out to her parents all those years ago, and how lonely she'd been after.

"Helen has this huge family," Aline continued. "Her dad had her and her brother from his first wife, then remarried and had a whole bunch more kids. Some of them are so young. She invited me to go visit them later in the summer once we find a place- oh wait I haven't old you yet! Helen and I are going to get an apartment together. I'm so excited to live with her, oh and not living in dorms. Excited for that too."

"Wow isn't that a bit soon?" Alec asked.

"When you know, you know," Aline shrugged. "You know?"

"Yeah," Alec sighed. He knew, but he kinda felt like Magnus didn't. Alec stayed and hung out with his cousin for another hour then Helen showed up. It seemed the couple had apartment hunting plans. Alec smiled and waved them goodbye, missing Magnus even more after seeing the looks of love in their eyes as the two woman gazed at each other.

Alec tried to get together with his cousin and her girlfriend as often as he could as the weeks went by. When Tessa was around and Alec was cooking she was always happy to eat with him. Alec found he quite liked having someone appreciating his cooking. And unless Alec was imagining it, she was putting on a little weight.

The day he arrived back at the apartment to Jem and Will fussing over her like she was made of porcelain, Alec put two and two together.

"You're pregnant aren't you?" Alec declared rather than asked.

"I thought we weren't telling people yet?" Will accused her.

"We aren't," Tessa snapped. "Alec is just bored and observant."

"Bored yes," Alec replied. Magnus was, as usual, at work. "Observant no, or at least not usually. You have been eating more though, and at weird times."

"She has," Jem laughed. "I woke up one night and caught her eating cold leftover ribs from the night before. And there was the night I had to bring her ice cream and pickles at 2am. Will was laughing along with Jem. Alec couldn't help but wonder who's kid it was, and why both Jem and Will were acting like it was theirs. Unless he really knew nothing about female anatomy, that wasn't possible. Oh well, Alec thought as he left them to it, not my circus, not my monkeys. He wasn't supposed to know yet anyway. And Tessa did indeed come and talk to him later that day to ask him to let her tell Magnus herself. Alec easily agreed. After all, he so rarely saw his boyfriend these days, he wasn't going to waste precious time on someone else's drama.

"Good morning," Magnus's voice was like music to Alec's ears. It was one of Magnus's extremely rare days off. Working two jobs seemed to mean you got one day off a month, and Alec couldn't
even imagine how much that sucked, having never worked a day in his life.

"It is," Alec smiled turning to kiss his boyfriend. "Since you are here."

"I'm sorry," Magnus sighed, sitting up in bed. "I know you never see me. I shouldn't have let you stay." Alec wanted to argue that Magnus should have just let Alec help, but he kept his mouth shut.

"I might end up going home for a while," Alec confessed. "Maybe later in the summer, but I'm glad I am here now."

"I really can't blame you," Magnus sighed, pulling Alec close and kissing him softly. "I am the worse company."

"No, You are just absent company," Alec corrected him. "But when you're here you are the best company in the whole world." Magnus rolled his eyes slightly, but pulled Alec in a little closer.

"I hadn't really realized how much time employment took up," Alec mused. "Until I counted the clock during your shifts. It's crazy. Like two thirds of your life just for money?"

"Well when you aren't trying to make a year's worth of income in four months, and thus only working one job with sensible hours, it's more like one third."

"Still that's ridiculous!" Alec said stubbornly.

"Surely your parents work long hours?" Magnus inquired.

"Yeah but they are also home," Alec said. "They go in for meetings, do business trips, but it doesn't take up half their life."

"Must be nice," Magnus replied, and Alec could sense a hint of jealousy which made him mad, as Alec had offered this very deal, and Magnus had turned him down. But Alec didn't want to start a fight. He knew he had to get used to this if he wanted Magnus in his life, and there was nothing Alec wanted more than Magnus in his life.

"We have all of today though right?" Alec asked.

"Well I should probably clean the house," Magnus sighed. "Or some other domestic chore I've neglected. Oh I haven't done the cat litter in ages!"

"Ew," Alec laughed. "But forget all that. I can do that when you're at work." Or Alec thought, I can hire a one time maid service! "I want to spend today with you."

"I'd like that," Magnus smiled. "But I feel bad leaving you with all the housework."

"Well I am the one in the house most often," Alec argued. "So technically it's fair."

"I'm sorry," Magnus said again. "I don't like to think of you alone in this apartment all day."

"Nah it's fine," Alec smiled. "I hang out with Aline, get caught up on my netflix shows. You missed season two of sense8 by the way. It went up on Netflix a few days ago. I couldn't wait for you. It was too good."

"I can imagine," Magnus chuckled, and Alec congratulated himself for getting Magnus out of his guilty headspace.

"So now that I have you all to myself," Alec whispered, as he slowly trailed his hand down
Magnus's side. "What shall we do?" Magnus groaned a little and pulled Alec in for a kiss as Alec's hands continued their exploration of his growing bulge.

Magnus was already breathing erratically as Alec felt his boyfriend's hands on him in turn. They just slept in boxers, which proved no obstacle to eager fingers. Alec had missed Magnus like this and wanted to savour him, despite how hard he was. Both naked, Alec sat up to straddle his boyfriend, before leaning down and slowly trailing kisses from Magnus's collarbone to his navel.

"Alexander," Magnus whispered. "You are a pleasure to wake up to." Alec chuckled against the beautifully toned skin of Magnus's chest. The one perk of his labour job was how very stunning Magnus's arms were now. Before Magnus, Alec had never met a man he'd wanted so badly. Snuggling up to a tired Magnus at night was wonderful, but having a wanten Magnus beneath his hands was better.

"The pleasure is all mine," Alec whispered back, before reaching for the night stand. He covered his hands in the lube then rubbed his hands on each of them until everything was slippery. Alec enjoyed Magnus's soft gasps, and the way his back arched just a little. Alec leaned down kissing Magnus passionately, his tongue parting Magnus's lips so he could deepen the kiss. Then Alec started moving, rocking his hips and grinding their arousals together with the aid of the lube. The friction was amazing, and Alec was sure he'd be able to enjoy it for a while. Until Magnus sat up, wrapping his arms around Alec, grabbing his ass and pressing a finger to Alec's entrance.

"Magnus," Alec cried out as he made a mess of both their chests. Titling his head down, Alec could see Magnus's huge grin. Then Alec was on his back, Magnus above him nestled between Alec's legs as he kissed Alec possessively.

"I love you," Alec gasped out as Magnus released his lips. "God I love you so much."

"I love you too," Magnus replied, nibbling at Alec's ear lobe. "And right now I want you."

"I'm yours," Alec whimpered those words, true in every way. His heart was and would also belong to this man. To Magnus. Then Alec felt Magnus's fingers again, and his back arched as if of his own volition.

"To what degree?" Magnus smirked, his lubricated fingers indicating what he meant.

"Yes," Alec gasped as he lifted his legs to rest them on Magnus's shoulders. Magnus stretched him out, one finger, then two. Three. All the while, leaning forward and kissing Alec slowly. Magnus did this for so long, Alec felt his blood going south again.

Alec's hands were down at his sides, clenching the sheets. His legs on Magnus's shoulders, and Magnus's otherwise not occupied hand near Alec's head, holding the other man's weight. Magnus must have noticed Alec's growing arousal, because he felt the fingers inside him slowly trail up until they were working his erection, hardening it.

Alec was starting to feel wound up again. He was panting as he heard Magnus reach for something. Alec inhaled quickly in one great gasp as he felt Magnus, wrapped in a condom, press up against his entrance. This was something they rarely did, due to the discomfort the next day, but Alec didn't care. He could spend the whole day tomorrow laying on his stomach on the couch for all it mattered to him.

Slowly Magnus entered, his hand holding tight to Alec's hip. Alec gasped, and Magnus leaned back using the hand that had been supporting his weight, to move up and down Alec's length as Magnus moved in and out of Alec in the same rhyme. Alec felt like he was about to be undone every time
Magnus thrust deep inside him, hitting that bundle of nerves at the same time Magnus's fingers teased his head. With one last thrust, Alec felt Magnus's finish, all his muscles tensing up for a moment. Alec was on the brink for just a second longer before Magnus's hands finished him off.

Collapsing down on the bed together, a happy sticky mess, Alec wound himself into Magnus's arms. For this moment everything was perfect. Magnus was here. They were in love, and high on each other.

The need to shower and eat, eventually drove them from bed. Once they were cleaned up and eating leftovers from yesterday, Magnus asked what Alec wanted to do for the rest of the day.

Grinning, Alec pretended to check his watch. "Give me another hour then I'd like to relive watching up with Magnus Bane, naked."

Magnus playfully hit Alec with a dish towel. "You are sore, admit it."

"I admit to nothing," Alec replied, though he knew the way he was walking gave him away. He, however, had no regrets.

"You are so stubborn," Magnus laughed, pulling Alec in to kiss him.

In the end, they spent much of the day in the apartment just enjoying each other's company, though they did go out to get lunch and lattes around two. Having been in bed till almost eleven, breakfast had been a rather late event.

It was a perfect day, but it was only a day. The next morning Alec woke once again to the cold, empty space beside him. He spent the day cleaning house, as sitting down wasn't that comfortable. He'd thought about hiring someone, but Alec was so bored he actually needed the distraction.

Eventually Tessa did tell Magnus about her pregnancy and that she was moving out before the baby came. Magnus was happy for her, but was clearly sad to lose her as a roommate. There was much hugging, and in Tessa's case, crying. Alec just caught the word hormones among the muffled sounds of her tears as she hugged Magnus.

"I'm so happy for you Tessa," Magnus told her when they broke apart.

It wasn't until later, after Tessa had left and Alec and him were sitting together on the couch, that Magnus seemed to realize what this meant for him.

"I can't afford this place without her," Magnus groaned suddenly. Alec wanted to suggest that he move in and pay for everything. He wanted to tell Magnus to quit that back breaking labour job and enjoy his life, but Alec remained silent. Technically he'd already agreed to room with Jace again in September, but that wasn't why he didn't voice his suggestion.

"A problem for another day," Alec said smiling as he turned sense8 back on.

"At least some guy named Whispers isn't trying to lobotomize me," Magnus sighed. "Oh how I love watching tv shows about characters with more problems than me." Alec laughed and rested his head on his boyfriend's shoulder as the show played again.

Alec was getting used to this slight, but constant anxious feeling that had come to rest in his chest. He knew it to be fear, the fear of losing Magnus, but Alec was trying not to pay it any heed. Magnus loved him. Magnus's arm was currently wrapped around him. Alec fell asleep in Magnus's embrace every night so why was he afraid?
I have been writing this story and my other story SO freakin fast these last few days I can't even! 5 updates across two stories in two days... damn... and that doesn't even include this update! This chapter was all ready to go yesterday and yes I mean already saved on fanfic with the sneak peek copied in and the author's note finished. I made myself wait because like wtf is this writing non-sense anyway?

I had writer's block for almost a week and it sucked so much that I seem to have bounced back with a vengeance. lol. If you haven't already please check out my Malec fantasy AU 'Royal Dilemma.' It's my first story with external conflict only. The world doesn't want Malec but they are secure in each other for once. Nice change right? Alec will have to change the world to be with Magnus but that's what makes for good romance. ^_^ Romeo and Juliet style minus the suicide.

Sneak Peek Chapter 54

Celine and Clary spent most of their days together. Celine was a school teacher and thus had her summers free to spend the way she wished. Clary was glad to have company while Jace was at work. Celine was a lot like Jace in many ways. They were both blonde and there was something of her in the shape of Jace's eyes, but also Celine had the same open heart as Jace. The difference is that Celine hadn't spent so long trying to hide it. Clary didn't think anyone else could see Jace's good side the way she could, except Celine.

"He was the cutest baby in the whole world," Celine gushed one day when they were looking at Jace's baby albums. "Those little blonde curls and bright eyes captured the heart of every person who laid eyes on them. I used to bring him to school with me and he'd wouldn't even cry when he was passed around. Also loved the attention I think."

Clary turned the page of the album and saw two blonde babies. Her stomach twisted as she understood who that was.

"They were about two in this," Celine said. "First photo I have of Sebastian and Jace together." She had been happy but then sighed, downcast at the thought. "I don't know what happened. I thought he'd be friends for life."
Clary's Fear

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Clary had tried not to think about the woman warning her against Jace, and all the other woman hitting on Jace since they'd arrived at his mother's house. Every time Jace arrived home from work, and took her in his arms like she was the single most important thing in his world, it became easier and easier to not think about it.

"I have never seen my son happier," Celine told Clary, grinning widely one morning as Jace kissed Clary before leaving for work.

"Yeah?" Clary replied.

"Yes," Celine confirmed. This more than anything, helped Clary to relax. After all, who knew Jace better than his own mother? And despite everything else, Jace hadn't flirted back with those girls at the bar, right?

Celine and Clary spent most of their days together. Celine was a school teacher, and thus had her summers free to spend the way she wished. Clary was glad to have company while Jace was at work, and Celine was a lot like Jace in many ways. They were both blonde, and there was something of her in the shape of Jace's eyes, but also Celine had the same open heart as Jace. The difference is that Celine hadn't spent so long trying to hide it. Clary didn't think anyone else could see Jace's good side the way she could, except Celine.

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Clary turned the page of the album, and saw two blonde babies. Her stomach twisted as she understood who that was.

"They were about two in this. First photo I have of Sebastian and Jace together," Celine said, happily. Then she sighed, downcast at the thought. "I don't know what happened. I thought they'd be friends for life."

Clary almost voiced the fact it was all her fault, but she didn't say a word. Not only did she want to stay on good terms with Jace's mother, but Clary also wasn't sure she wanted to be asked why it was her fault. The photos were making Clary all too aware of how long Jace and Sebastian had known each other. Of course, she'd known it had been a while, but seeing photos of them in diapers together was quite something else. In one instance, she had ruined their friendship, and though she was glad of it, she was also feeling guilty.

Jace arrived home, and they enjoyed more of Celine's home cooking while Jace talked about the crazy customer's he'd dealt with that day. Celine didn't bring up Sebastian in front of Jace, and Clary wondered if he'd warned her not to. They ate dessert while watching tv, then Clary fell asleep in Jace's arms.

Though she missed home and her brother, Clary had to admit it wasn't a bad way to spend the holidays, or at least half of them. Her mother had insisted on at least seeing her daughter at little over
the four months. Really why was post-secondary summer vacation so much longer than high school?

One afternoon, Clary held knitting needles carefully in her hands as she watched Celine's instruction. She was an excellent teacher, though that was to be expected as she was an actual teacher. Before long, Clary had a half a scarf on the other end of her knitting needle, however her tension of the yarn wasn't as good as Celine.

"You just need practice," Celine smiled. "That's a great start!"

"Thanks," Clary replied.

"Clary?" Jace's voice called through the house.

"Jace?" Clary called back, confused. He wasn't due to return home for hours. Putting down her needle Clary got up and went to the door. Celine remained seating on her comfortable couch with her knitting, likely assuming the couple wanted alone time.

"What are you doing home so early?" Clary asked, as she approached. "Your mother is teaching me to knit."

"That's great," Jace gasped. He looked like he'd just run a mile without stopping. Jace was panting, his hands on his knees, trying to catch his breath.

"Are you okay?" Clary asked, looking up at him with concern.

"Sebastian visited me at work today," Jace said. "And I might have been so mad, I accidentally let it slip that you were in town too. He threatened to come swing by and see you. I just wanted to make sure you were okay." The second Jace said Sebastian's name, Clary felt all the blood drain from her face.

"Please tell me if you want to go back home," Jace said. "I would totally understand."

Clary could do that. She could run, and leave Jace here to be pulled by in by his old friend, likely ending up in a bar being hit on by hotter woman than her. She could leave, and never face her fears, letting them control her forever. The mixture of jealousy and courage within Clary, fueled her resolve.

"You should get back to work," Clary said, kissing him briefly. "And I have knitting to learn. I'll see you tonight."

"Yeah," Jace smiled at her. "As long as you're okay." Clary nodded, trying to show him how strong her resolve was.

"Now go," Clary repeated. She kissed him again quickly, before literally shoveling him until he was out the front door. Clary stood in the open doorway as she watched her boyfriend run back to work. He shouldn't ditch employment for her. She was safe with Celine.

They got back to their knitting, and Clary had quite put the whole thing from her mind until Celine got up to search for a pattern on her phone.

"Did something happen with you and Sebastian?" Celine asked as she looked down at her phone. Clary froze. "Why did Jace come to check on you during his shift today?"

"What makes you ask?" Clary managed to say shakily.
"This," Celine replied turning her phone so Clary could read the text there.

'If Sebastian shows up you are NOT to let him in,' Jace's message to Celine read. 'Don't let him near Clary, no matter what!'

And Clary realized how worried Jace had been that Sebastian would try something today. Clary told half truths, and shrugged the whole thing off as unimportant while she tried to turn the topic back to knitting. She wasn't ready to talk about this with anyone, least of all, the woman who'd half raised Sebastian like a step-son. Clary could tell Celine knew she was hiding something, but didn't push the matter.

The next day they went out sightseeing, not that there were a lot of sights to see, but Clary still enjoyed the walk in the park, and visiting the art gallery. She tried not to think about how many women in his town teenaged Jace had been with, and focused on the clear blue sky and beautiful art.

After another week, Clary had to admit she was a little home sick. During Jace's days off, they spent the whole day together, but those five days in between were getting rather dull. She started calling her mother more, and was thinking of moving up her timeline, maybe going home early when there was a knock on the door. Jace wasn't due home for hours. Clary heard Celine answer it, and then her least favourite sound in the world.

"Hey Celine," Sebastian's voice echoed through the house. "Been a while. How are you?"

"Sebastian," Celine said stunned. Clary stood frozen in the hallway just out of sight. Her breathing getting more and more erratic, as her mind was suddenly reliving the events of that night she'd tried to forget. Sebastian's hands pulling at her clothes, his breath on her face.

"I don't think Jace would be happy knowing you are here," Celine said, but Clary could tell from her voice that Celine didn't want this to be true.

"Yeah I know," Sebastian sighed. Clary heard footsteps, and knew he'd walked into the house uninvited. "We've had a bit of a falling out, but I am optimistic that he will come round."

"You think so?" Celine asked. The hope in her voice made Clary want to throw up. They were moving into the house, and any second they'd catch sight of her, but Clary couldn't move.

Footsteps… left… right… closer…

"I know so," Sebastian replied confidently. "Ultimate Wingman is forever, and will not be ruined by some girl."

"I still don't understand," Celine stated.

"Ah so Jace didn't tell you," Sebastian whispered. Clary wasn't sure if Celine heard it or not. Clary also had a feeling Celine had no idea that the 'girl' Sebastian was speaking of stood just two feet away, standing pale as a ghost frozen in the hallway.

That is until they turned the corner and saw her.

"Speak of the devil," Sebastian sneered.

"Clary dear are you alright?" Celine asked, moving quickly to Clary's side. Clary couldn't speak. Her mind was stuck in that moment last January, stuck remembering what would have happened if Jace hadn't shown up.
"She's just excited to see me," Sebastian said. "Aren't you Clary." And somehow, just by his using her name, Clary's terror shifted to rage. She was suddenly so angry. How dare he come here to scare her! How dare he be the horrible manipulating foul mouth beast that he was. Clary pushed Celine away, and took a step closer to Sebastian.


"Get out," Clary's voice quivered, but out of rage rather than fear. "Leave now."

"So dramatic," Sebastian quibed. "Did you and Jace both go to the same overreaction school?"

Clary had never hit anyone in her life. She'd never so much as pushed her brother over on the trampoline when he was being an idiot, but her hands were balled into fists, and Clary pulled her arm back, before she punched Sebastian squarely in the nose.

"Get out!" Clary yelled again. Celine stood a little back, staring in total shock at the scene before her, and Clary realized what that had looked like. Celine probably thought Clary was insane, but she didn't care. Her hand was throbbing, but she didn't regret that punch.

"You foul bitch," Sebastian snapped, and Clary pictured the jaws of a crocodile. "I'll teach you."

And then Sebastian was on her, hitting her across the face. Clary just had time to wonder absently, if he had more in mind than a beating, when suddenly he was gone. Clary blinked up at her surrounding, trying to understand. Someone had placed something between them.

"You will leave my house immediately, and never return," Celine's voice was cold and unwavering. It invoked no debate or question.

Sebastian turned from Clary to Celine, and a look of horror spread across his face. Clary knew in that moment Celine's opinion of him did actually matter to Sebastian. It seemed he'd forgotten about her presence once Clary had punched him. Celine was holding a baseball bat out in front of her, as a barrier between Clary and Sebastian.

"I don't know who you are," Celine said. "But you aren't the sweet boy I once knew. Maybe you never were."

For the first time since she'd met him, Sebastian looked truly lost, as if it were his own mother rejecting him. He staggered backward, like his legs weren't working, then ran from the house like the devil was at his heels.

Clary didn't move for a long time, as her breathing slowed. She heard the baseball bat fall to the ground, and then Celine was crying, her hands over her face as she slid down the wall. When Clary did finally move, it was to comfort Celine. She got the older woman to stand, guiding her to the couch, where they stayed until Jace walked in the front door.

He rushed to their side, wrapping his arms around them both as he asked what happened. Somehow it was all communicated. Clary told Celine what had happened back in January, and Celine explained to Jace what had gone down today. Jace apologized again and again for asking her to come here, for being foolish enough to think he could protect her. He'd just wanted Clary to meet his mother, and he hadn't meant for any of this to happen. Clary tried to assure Jace she wasn't mad at him, but she had so little energy with which to try, and Jace seemed determined to blame himself.

Before the day ended, Clary's flights were booked. She left the following morning, and upon getting off the plane Clary flung herself into her mother's arms. Luke wrapped his arms around the both of them, and Clary finally told her parents everything.
She spent the last months of the summer holidays at home. She texted Jace, and they called sometimes, but Clary needed space at the moment. She needed her parents, and her childhood bedroom. She needed to feel safe.

As August ended, Clary started to think about school again. She knew Jace and Alec were getting a place together off campus for their second year. Clary texted Helen to see if she wanted to do the same, but it seemed Aline and Helen had already got a place together.

'I am so happy for you,' Clary replied to her friends text, ignoring her disappointment. 'But I will miss living with you.'

'We will still hang out for sure,' Helen texted back. 'Maybe go on double dates with Jace and Aline!'

'Sounds like a plan,' Clary answered.

Clary thought of going back into the dorms, but she'd been so looking forward to leaving those silly things. The fire alarms at 3am alone were a good enough reason to live off campus. Wasn't the whole point of second year that you were spared dorm life?

Clary considers asking if she can live with Alec and Jace, but after everything that happened this summer, she wasn't sure what Jace would think of that. She wasn't sure what she thought of it. Either way, it was too soon for them to be living together.

So Clary texted Magnus. Maybe she could just crash on his couch since there it was only a two bedroom apartment.

'Actually,' Magnus texted her back. 'Tessa is moving out. I need a new roommate. You up for the task, Biscuit?'

It was like a gift from the gods. Clary replied she'd like nothing better than to live with Magnus, and the matter was settled.

Chapter End Notes

My beta said that was a hard chapter to get through... sorry not sorry for the feelings of rage. She wanted Celine to hit Sebastian with the bat. lol. And yes I solved Magnus's problem in a Clary chapter because #InterwovenPlotline

The next chapter marks exactly a year for the characters since this story started. It is a mirror chapter for the first chapter of this story. If you go back and read the first few paragraphs of chapter one this sneak peek will seem rather familiar.

Sneak Peek Chapter 55

The room was plain and square, the twin beds in either corner, unwelcoming. There was a window, but the grey carpet rather detracted from any welcome the sunlight created.

With a grin she threw his bedazzled bag onto one of the beds and reminded herself she hadn't come for the decorations. University meant parties, no parents and freedom so long as she kept her grades up.

Humming to herself as she worked, Izzy started unpacking. No parents around to tell
her she was making the bed wrong this time! Though Izzy was going to miss her in house chef, as well as teasing her little brother Max and sweet talking her way into anything she wanted from her father with just a smile. But Izzy was sure the University lifestyle would be worth it.

Also please review guys. I am starting to get very down about this lack of reviews lately. It seems like in general people review less and it makes me sad and feeling like I should just end this story quick and be done with it.
TIMELINE 1

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

TIMELINE 1

This story has become hella complicated so I have build a timeline to keep track of it. Usually I post timelines at the end of my stories, but as this story has no end in sight and my timeline is getting VERY long I thought I'd cut it up into pieces. I am going to be posting a timeline for this story before every September chapter. The very first chapter is September so I thought this would be a good way to organize it. Every Timeline marks a year for the characters.

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As of Chapter 1:

Magnus and Tessa: 3rd year students

Alec, Jace, Clary, Simon, Aline, Helen: 1st year students

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Chapter 001: September, Jace moving day

Chapter 002: September, Alec moving day/next day

Chapter 003: September, Magnus moving day/next day

Chapter 004: September, Clary next day/day after

Chapter 005: Early October, Tessa

Chapter 006: Early October, Alec Saturday Morning

Chapter 007: Early October, Jace Saturday

Chapter 008: Early October, Magnus Saturday Morning

Chapter 009: November, Jace a few weeks later

Chapter 010: November, Magnus after classes weekday

Chapter 011: November, Tessa same day

Chapter 012: End of November, Alec Saturday

Chapter 013: End of November, Clary Saturday

Chapter 014: End of November, Jace Saturday/Sunday

Chapter 015: End of Nov/Dec, Magnus Sat/Sun/later

Chapter 016: Early December, Jace week later Thurs/Fri
Chapter 017: Early December, Alec Friday/Saturday
Chapter 018: Early Dec/Jan, Magnus Fri-New Years
Chapter 019: December 25th, Tessa
Chapter 020: December/January, Alec Xmas/New Years
Chapter 021: January, Magnus
Chapter 022: Dec/Jan Jace Xmas/New Years
Chapter 023: Dec/Jan Clary xmas/New Years
Chapter 024: January Jace, classes starting
Chapter 025: End of January, Clary
Chapter 026: End of January, Alec - Game night
Chapter 027: End of January, Clary - After Game Night
Chapter 028: End of January, Magnus - Game night conti
Chapter 029: End of January, Jace - Conti from ch27
Chapter 030: End of January, Clary - Next morning (Sat?)
Chapter 031: End of January, Alec - Saturday
Chapter 032: End of January, Tessa - Saturday
Chapter 033: End of January, Simon - Saturday
Chapter 034: End of January, Jace - Saturday night
Chapter 035: End of January, Clary - Saturday Night
Chapter 036: End of Jan/Feb 14, Tessa - Sat/Timelapse
Chapter 037: February 14, Alec - Valentine's Day
Chapter 038: February 14, Jace - Valentine's Day
Chapter 039: Feb/March, Simon - Valentine's Day/March
Chapter 040: Mid March, Clary - Sick (Wake up Sat)
Chapter 041: Mid March, Magnus - Sick-Iz Arrives
Chapter 042: Mid March, Izzy - Sunday
Chapter 043: Mid March, Tessa - Sunday/Pregnant
Chapter 044: Mid March, Alec - Late Sunday
Chapter 045: Mid March, Simon - Date with Maia (Fri)
Chapter 046: Mid March, Izzy - Trapped in Elevator (Fri)
Chapter 047: Mid March, Jace - A few days later. (Sun?)
Chapter 048: April, Clary - Exam's approaching.
Chapter 049: End of April, Magnus - Exam week.
Chapter 050: May, Simon, - Summer Vacation
Chapter 051: May, Jace, - Summer Vacation
Chapter 052: May, Tessa, - Summer Vacation
Chapter 053: June, Alec, - Summer Vacation
Chapter 054: August, Clary - Summer Vacation ends

As of September Chapter 55:
Magnus: 4th year student
Tessa: Dropped out due to pregnancy
Maia, Alec, Jace, Clary, Simon, Aline, Helen: 2nd year students
Izzy and Jordan: 1st years

Chapter End Notes

Sorry the formatting sucks. I don't like using the html method for italics and such here on ao3. These timelines are formatted better on wattpad and fanfic if you want to have a look.
The room was plain and square, the twin beds in either corner, unwelcoming. There was a window, but the grey carpet rather detracted from any welcome the sunlight created.

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She heard the door creak, and turned to see a girl walk in. She had light brown skin, curling hair, and definitely didn't know what makeup or fashion were. She was pretty though despite not really knowing how to show herself at her best.

"You must be my roommate," the girl said moving forward to greet Izzy. "I'm Maia."

"Isabelle," Izzy said. "But you can call me Izzy."

"Izzy then," Maia smiled, and Izzy wondered if it was possible to be compatible with a roommate who didn't use mascara. "It's my second year, but I think you're a freshman right?"

"Yep," Izzy replied. "As a rookie, I need to ask. Are the guys hot in University?"

Maia laughed. "Sorry you are asking the wrong girl. The last date I had ended in a friend-kiss."

"Lame," Izzy laughed. "When I was up here over spring break, I totally made out with a guy in a broken elevator."

"Okay that's hot," Maia grinned at her, and Izzy decided that maybe, Maia wasn't a total write off, despite the cheap jeans and blemished face.

"I know right," Izzy giggled. She was rather fond of that story. It just sounded so spontaneous and fun. Izzy was sure she wouldn't get tired of telling it for a long time.

"Are you going to the Orientation party in the Quad?" Maia asked.

"Nah," Izzy said. "It sounds lame. I know better ways of meeting people."

"Like what?" Maia asked.

"Like dancing," Izzy grinned. "And drinks."

"I haven't been to a club in ages!" Maia exclaimed, and just like that, Izzy knew this was a woman she could become friends with. Sure, Maia needed some pointers, but from the enthusiasm in her voice, Izzy suspected Maia had been looking for a new club-going friend, even if she didn't know it.

"Let's go then," Izzy suggested.
"Oh but I have nothing to wear," Maia whined.

"I can fix that," Izzy smirked as she quickly pulled her favourite club dress from her bag, and stripped down to her underwear to put it on. It was made of a slinky skin tight fabric that hugged to her skin. Izzy just loved the feel of tight fitting clothing. She couldn't stand wearing bagging t-shirts. The dress was a perfect black with a deep V-neck, and laced together down the side.

"You aren't shy are you?" Maia laughed. Izzy didn't reply but simply finished straightening her dress. Then she turned to Maia.

"Your turn," she said. "Take me to your wardrobe." Maia chuckled, but got her suitcase from by the door, and opened it on her bed to show Izzy what she had to work with. Yep, Izzy thought as she looked through Maia's bag, this girl definitely needed a fashion-godmother, but Isabelle Lightwood was up for the job.

"No," Izzy said as she put an item of clothing in the reject pile. "Definitely no. Yikes! Oh wait, here's something." She held up an almost acceptable club top. "And I guess we can stick with your jeans but girl, tomorrow we are going shopping." Maia laughed, but took the shirt and put it on before they left.

When they entered the bar, Izzy did her usual perusal for any particularly attractive guys. She usually disregarded any of them who were obviously here with a girlfriend, though on occasion that still worked out for her. Tonight though, she didn't want to get into a cat-fight. So Izzy scratched the suave guy in the corner, and the two guys in cowboy hats off her list of possibilities. That still left the guy with short styled black hair in a tailored suit sitting alone at the bar, and a darker skinned beauty with the muscle shirt and cargo shorts by the fire.

"Do you have a preference?" Izzy giggled to Maia as they sat down. "Personally I like the suit."

"Works for me," Maia replied. "I prefer guys in casual clothes." They ordered some drinks, then sat together for the appropriate amount of time before eyeing up their chosen targets. Izzy had learned long ago that if you sit alone at the bar, and glance every so often at your target, they usually came to you.

"Is this seat taken?" It was Mr. Suit, and Izzy had to repress a wicked grin.

"No," Izzy smiled at him as he sat down. Maia it seemed hadn't managed to lasso her guy to her, but had rather gone to him. Amature hour. Izzy would have to teach that girl some tricks for next time.

"Are you going to give me some stupid pick up line," Izzy said in her most uninterested voice. "Like 'did it hurt when you fell from heaven' or something."

"Now why would I do a thing like that," Mr. Suit said smoothly, turning in the bar stool to face her.

"Oh this old thing," the guy said indicating his fancy suit. "It's just the first thing I grabbed on my way out the door."

"Oh really?" Izzy raised an eyebrow at him. "You have cashmere ties just lying around huh?"

"Good eye," he replied smartly. "Some don't know the difference between cashmere and cotton."

"Ah but I do," Izzy smiled, tilting her head to gentler angle and uncrossing her legs. Izzy always preferred well dressed men. There was something about a guy who took pride in his appearance that
always turned her on. This guy would have been gorgeous even without the great sense of style, and Izzy was already fantasizing about getting him out of that stunning suit.

Izzy watched smugly as his eyes roamed over her body. She knew what her curves did to men, and she relished in it. Izzy intentionally starting playing with her loose dark brown almost black hair as she continued.

"I shouldn't be surprised a woman as beautiful as you has an eye for quality fabric," he replied leaning closer. He was watching her for signs of distress she was sure.

"And a man as well dressed as you I imagine appreciates that in a woman," Izzy purred.

"I can," Mr. Suit replied. He was moving closer now, and Izzy was being very careful how she held herself. She wasn't giving him any signs of distress, but she wasn't playing hard to get either. Mr. Suit kissed her gently, a brief brush of lips, then pulled away.

"Among other things," he whispered. Izzy's heart was racing. "You are too good for a place like this. Let's get out of here." Izzy loved the thrill of the ride, and didn't want to give in just yet.

"Oh, I can't abandon my friend," Izzy said feigning dismay at such a suggestion.

"I see," Mr. Suit said, clearly not too let down by her reaction. Izzy pointed to Maia who was at least talking to her mark, though Izzy knew she'd totally won. This man was putty in her hand.

"Your friend seems well taken care of," Mr Suit said as he turned back to her.

"Oh but she's shy," Izzy pouted. "She'd be upset if I left now."

"You torment me so," Mr. Suit said.

"Stay right there," Izzy said as she hopped off her bar stool. "I'll be right back." She walked slowly over to Maia who was in what sounded like casual conversation with Mr. Cargo Pants. Izzy wanted to roll her eyes; Maia was so far from the game, she didn't even know she was playing it.

"Oh hi Izzy," Maia smiled. "This is Neil."

"Hey," Neil said, with a wave of his hand. Izzy was suddenly trying to resist the urge to facepalm; she'd gotten his name why?

"I'm gonna take off," Izzy told Maia. "See ya later." She grinned at her roommate, but when she turned around, her face was calm again.

"It seems she's alright," Izzy told Mr. Suit as she reached her bar stool, but didn't sit down. She was playing with her hair again. Mr. Suit stood up, and placed a hand on her cheek.

"Where did you have in mind?" Izzy asked. She knew her mask was fading. She couldn't hide the look in her eyes anymore.

"An angel's face," Mr. Suit whispered. "With a sinful heart." He held out his hand, and Izzy took it, feeling the chemistry zing through her as their skin touched. He tried to lead them to her car, but Izzy had another idea.

"Where do you want to go?" Mr. Suit breathed against her neck. All her blood was pounding in her veins, making her very aware of her body as she whispered in his ear. Together they went back to her dorm room.
Once they were inside the room, Izzy placed a sock on the door before closing it. When she turned to face once more, he kissed her, and this time it was hot and steamy. Izzy started attacking the buttons on his shirt until she could feel the rolling muscles over his chest. He got his hands under her dress, hiking it up to her hips, and Izzy grinned. He slowly ran his hands over the soft skin of her stomach and hips bones, as she worked her dress up to her shoulders and up over her head. Izzy standing there in just her underwear, felt like he had far too many clothes on. She quickly undid his belt and restored the balance.

Her hands were running over the powerful muscles of his arms, while he unclasped her bra and it fell to the floor. Izzy watched as Mr. Suit rid himself of his probably very uncomfortable pants and underwear. She grinned. There was something sexy about a man so turned on he couldn't bare to be housed a moment longer. She stared unabashed at his naked arousal for a moment, before grabbing it with her hand. She enjoyed the soft moan, and slight jolt this created in him.

Slightly desperate now, Izzy reached into her bedside dresser and handed Mr. Suit a condom. Her fun was always ruined when the guys refused to use them. She had an IUD, but pregnancy wasn't the only thing to worry about. Thankfully he took the hint, and quickly opened and put on the condom.

He hooked a finger into her panties and pull them down before leaning back down over her. She wrapped her legs around his waist, pulling him in for a heated kiss as she felt his hardness press so near her entrance. When Mr. Suit placed his hands on her breast again, teasing her nipples, Izzy couldn't take it anymore. With skilled hands she gripped him, positioning the hard shaft before rocking her hips up, and feeling him slide effortlessly inside her.

Izzy just layed there blitz out for a moment, listening to Mr. Suit pant beside her, while the sweat cooled on her skin. Just as she was getting up to shower the door of her dorm opened to reveal Maia.

"Oh OH!" Maia exclaimed, covering her face with her hands, clearly not understanding what a sock on the door meant, which was ridiculous. Maia was a second year after all. How could she not know such a basic university standard.

"Sock on door," Izzy sighed, speaking slowly as if to a child. "Means I am getting lucky, don't come in."

"Noted," Maia replied as she backed out of the room. Mr. Suit was laughing. Izzy agreed that it was rather funny, then promptly threw his clothes at him, thanked him for a great night, and kicked him out of her dorm room so she could go shower.
If you aren't having a deja vu moment then you haven't been paying attention. lol jk. This chapter mirrors chapter one and was hinted at in chapter one when Jace described Izzy as "too much in the game herself." Actually to write this I copied chapter one then edited it until it was this. Chapter 55 is the start of the second year of these characters university life and the second part of this story.. how many parts there end up being is yet to be determined. We shall see. I have some plot ideas that only really work after some characters have graduated, but keeping the story interesting until then will be tricky.

Sorry for the slow update, but I have been writing my other fanfic 'Royal Dilemma' like a spaz and like always this story has been lift in the dust. You guys are probably used to that by now though since I have a chronic problem with doing this. I have after all started 5 other fanfics while writing this one and completed 4 of them. Royal Dilemma is almost at 40,000 words now when it was barely started before... so yeah...

Also who would like to see Maia pov? Anyone? Or would that be confusing? Are you all barely keeping up with the SEVEN povs I already have?

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Sneak Peek Chapter 56

Maia stayed a while after the movie ended, just sitting and talking with him. She was so easy to talk too and the only real new friend he'd made on his own here. Thought technically he'd only met her because of Clary setting him up, but still. Simon waved goodbye to his friend, as both of them had class tomorrow, and got ready for bed. Before he fell asleep he wondered when or if his roommate would show up. The next on the other side of the room was still unmade with an empty dresser beside it.

There was still no sign of a roommate the next morning when Simon left for class. However when Simon returned after lunch he suddenly found a man unpacking his things on the empty side of the room.

As you have guessed the next chapter is Simon pov but the chapter after has yet to be determined. What point of view would you like to see next? My first thought was Magnus as its been the longest since we had his point of view, but what do you guys think?
Simon found himself exactly where he hadn't expected to be: the University dorms. It was strange to feel like he had no reason to be here while also knowing that this was where he was supposed to be.

This was the start of a new chapter in his life, discovering who he was without Clary. Simon couldn't exactly remember when he'd fallen in love with Clary. All he knew was that it had been somewhere between the day he'd met her and puberty. Either way, it felt like his whole life up to this point had been defined by her, and that needed to change. Simon needed to find new ways to define himself. He'd always thought in terms of Clary, her playmate, school partner, buddy, defender, listener, comforter, friend, pillow, and boyfriend, but Simon was more than just Clary's something. He just needed to figure out what he was. For the moment, all he had was university student, bassist, friend, brother, and son. He'd have to work on adding to that list.

After Simon unpacked, he texted Maia and asked if she wanted to hang out. She replied that her crazy new roommate had dragged her out, and she was currently chatting up some guy in a bar named Neil. Simon had to admit she was surprised Maia had let herself get dragged away like that. This new roommate of hers must be quite persuasive.

Simon really wasn't sure what to do with himself this evening. He supposed he could ask if Jace wanted to hang out, but that friendship was still a little strange what with Simon being in love with his girlfriend and all. He did text Eric and make plans for later in the week, but that didn't help him tonight. Simon thought it rather pathetic that he had more of a social life here than back home.

Giving up, Simon turned on his laptop and started up his laptop. After watching two episodes of the Netflix original series Sense8, Simon got a text from Maia.

'Date turned out to be creepy so I went home to find my roommate naked with some guy. Is that offer to hang out still good?'

Simon texted back it was definitely still good and asked if she wanted to meet somewhere, or just hang out in his dorm room. Maia replied that she would suggest the orientation party in the Quad, except for the fact that it was basically over now. Simon suggested watching sci-fi on his laptop, and pretty soon there was a knock at his door. Maia smiled as she entered, or maybe it was more of a grimace. She moved quickly across the room, laid down on his bed, and covered her eyes with her arm.

"Rough day?" Simon asked her.

"I think my roommate wants to be my sponsor," Maia groaned. "I mean she's fun and all, but so high maintenance."

"High maintenance friends are the worst," Simon laughed.

"I mean boyfriends sure," Maia continued. "But friends shouldn't be so much work."

"Speaking of which, would you like to watch Galaxy Quest?"

"Hell yeah," Maia laughed, sitting up and focusing on the laptop screen. Simon hit play and they settled in for a good dose of comedic science fiction.
It was nice just sitting there with Maia, enjoying something they'd both seen before. Sometimes you
don't have the energy to watch new shows, and yes, Simon knew exactly how lazy that sounded, but
he didn't care. Tonight he just wanted to laugh at jokes he'd heard before and watch bad CGI and
corny comedic timing in the company of a friend. Tomorrow school started, and the summer
holidays were officially over. When the movie ended, Maia was still laughing.

"This one gets me every time," Maia said.

"How many times have you seen it?" Simon asked her.

"Oh like a billion," Maia replied. "But the self destruct button timer gets me every time."

"That is a beautiful parody of a sci-fi trope," Simon agreed.

"It can only stop at one second till boom," Maia chuckled. "Even if you click it minutes before
hand!" She paused, grinning. "Priceless."

"Personally I loved the giant rock monster," Simon commented.

"It's just all amazing," Maia agreed, clearly unwilling to pick favourites. Maia was so easy to talk to,
and the only real new friend he'd made on his own here. Though he supposed he'd only met her
because of Clary setting him up, but Simon chose to forget that little detail.

"I don't like that clock," Maia commented a second later. "It means we can't watch another movie."

"Well we could," Simon disagreed. "But only if you want to fall asleep in class tomorrow."

"Urg," was Maia's detailed reply. She got up looking rather grumpy about it.

"I am sure we can find time for more dorky movies soon," Simon laughed at her unhappy
expression.

"First days of classes are so boring," Maia complained, and Simon knew it was really about this, and
not her grand need for more sci-fi. "They are just basically about the prof introducing himself and
handing out lots of paper like he's never heard of email."

"They do waste a lot of trees here," Simon agreed.

"So many trees!" Maia exclaimed. Then with a sign and a wave, she turned to say. "See ya later."

"Bye," Simon waved back. As the door closed behind her, Simon did the responsible thing and went
to bed.

Before he fell asleep he wondered when or if his roommate would show up. The bed on the other
side of the room was still unmade with an empty dresser beside it. Simon remember only too well the
disaster of his last roommate experience. Then he'd had no roommate for the rest of last year, and
now Simon found himself quite apprehensive about meeting the person he'd be stuck living with for
the next eight months.

There was still no sign of his roommate the next morning when Simon left for class. However when
Simon returned after lunch, he suddenly found a man unpacking his things on the empty side of the
room. He was tall, with brown skin and dark hair. It was longer than Simon usually saw on guys, but
seemed to suit him well. The guy was wearing a t-shirt with a metal band logo on it.

"Hi," Simon greeted his new dormmate. "I'm Simon."
"Jordan," the guy replied. "It's been a crazy morning. I only got into town this morning and had to rush right to class. I feel like a nomad, not even slightly unpacked yet."

"It's just one day," Simon told him kindly. "I am sure you will be all organized in no time."

"Organized," Jordan laughed. "Not so much. I have to warn you now, I don't really like cleaning."

"Who does?" Simon laughed.

"No, I mean I don't clean," Jordan said. "Drove my last dorm mate crazy so I figured I should warn you now."

"How about this," Simon replied calmly. "You can keep that side of the room however you like, as long as this side can't smell it?"

"Deal!" Jordan chuckled. "I can already tell that you are so much cooler than my last roommate."

"Same here," Simon replied. He was sitting on his bed watching Jordan unpack and put things away. The guy wasn't kidding when he said he was messy. Simon was pretty sure Jordan was just throwing his clothes into the closet in a pile and stuffing things in drawers without caring which went where. "My last roommate drank, smoked, and partied till 5am. At least he did before he got reported."

"Oh not such a nice guy huh," Jordan remarked. "I didn't peg you for the guy who tattle tails."

"And you'd be right," Simon sighed, leaning back a little to gaze at the ceiling. "A friend of mine told on him for me… at least I think he's my friend."


"Okay that is definitely a good story," Jordan exclaimed as he finished his ridiculous unpacking and settled down, sitting on the bed across from Simon. "You want the short version or the long one?"

"Short," Jordan replied.

"Fell in love with my best friend as a kid, but she never loved me back, though that didn't stop her from dating me and falling for another guy while we were together," Simon summarized the worst part of his life for a total stranger. "I even followed her to this school, got halfway through my first year, lost her, then realized I had no life back home anyway, and here I am again." Simon leaned all the way back, and just laid on his bed staring at the ceiling.

"Wow," Jordan whispered.

"Yep," Simon sighed. "I know, I am pathetic."

"No, that's not what I meant," Jordan replied. There was a serious tone to his voice that Simon hadn't heard before. "I know exactly how you feel."

"Really?" Simon asked surprised, sitting up to stare at Jordan.

"I didn't have class this morning," Jordan confessed. "I was looking for my ex. She's, huh, going to this school, and I want her back so I came here to try and find a way for her not to hate me.
"Why would she hate you?" Simon asked.

"Because I am clingy, and messy, and a horrible boyfriend," Jordan groaned, his head in his hands.

"Maybe changing schools to be with her isn't the answer," Simon consoled him, moving across the room to sit beside him. "Not that I don't want you for a roommate, but as someone who followed a girl to university, I can tell you that it doesn't work."

"You said this girl of yours never loved you," Jordan replied, looking up from his hands his eyes glossy. Simon nodded. "This is different. She did love me once. I know she did. I just totally ruined it!"

"By ruined you mean?" Simon inquired.

"I was scared I'd lose her, crazy jealous all the time," Jordan explained. "Yet like the stubborn fool I am, I couldn't stop myself from holding my ground when we fought. Silly things you know like, ah, cleaning. One day she said she was sick of it and left. I tried to reach out to her, chase after her and tell her how much I loved her, but then I saw her kissing some guy at a club, and I kinda lost it."

"It?"

"My cool," Jordan replied. "Not like I had any of it to start with, but yeah."

"Maybe instead of spending your mornings skipping classes for some light stalking, you should try and move on," Simon suggested. "Date someone else. It's what I have to do."

"I am not ready to do that," Jordan explained.

"Well how long ago did you break up?" Simon asked.

"Just before Christmas last year," Jordan explained. "She left to come here after we broke up. She enrolled for the January semester."

"And I thought I had it bad," Simon sighed, patting his new friend on the shoulder in what he hoped was a consoling way. "My friend Eric and I are in a band called the Immortal Instruments. Judging by the logo of your shirt, you'd probably like hanging out with us."

"I sing," Jordan muttered, as if it didn't matter.

"Great," Simon exclaimed. "We need one."

"When are you holding auditions?" Jordan asked.

"Right now," Simon stated, trying to cheer him up. Jordan rolled his eyes but he did sing a few bars, and Simon declared him part of the team. Jordan rolled his eyes and said he wasn't good enough, but Simon wasn't taking no for an answer.

Chapter End Notes

Wow this story has been SO neglected. Though I am not going to say sorry for not
updating because on a whim I recently read ALL the author's notes for this entire story, and me saying sorry for slow updates is about half of them. Yeesh! Who wants to read about that. *scolds past self*

Let's just state for the record, that I am always sorry for slow updates and move on!

Royal Dilemma is almost over. Just about three more chapters to go. It's going to end at 20 chapters I think. Then I shall only be updating one fic! Woot! And it will mean that I have started and completed FIVE fanfics since I started this one. LIKE WTF!

… also I had an idea for a Clace story…. *sigh*

But rather than write this Clace story, I am going to use the idea to write a novel with original characters. A love story is a love story right? And sadly I can't make a living off writing fanfic.

Sneak Peek Chapter 57

It was Magnus fourth, and if he didn't mess it up, last year of university. He'd lived with Tessa for three years and it was going to be very strange living without her, even if he was excited to live with Clary.

"Where should I put this?" Clary asked holding up a painting of hers from last year. They were unpacking. Magnus's living room was full of boxes and bags of clothes.

"That one I quite like," Magnus told her. "Why don't you put it on the wall behind the tv?" Clary moved across the room and stuck her painting to the wall with tacts, while Magnus opened another box.

"Have you heard from Jace?" Magnus asked.

"No," Clary sighed. "But I saw him today, just around the school."

"Why didn't you say hello?" Magnus asked confused.

"I-" Clary stared. "It was kinda weird so maybe I'll see him later in classes or something."
Magnus's Last Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Magnus started every school year with the thought 'Thank god summer vacation is finally over.' He knew this wasn't the usual way students approached September, but summer to Magnus meant working two jobs, so the start of the school year was always a welcome relief. Classes didn't give out too much homework for at least a few weeks which meant he got to relax. He usually kept a part time position at the museum doing tour guides during the school year, but his shifts were so rare. Besides, he quite enjoyed them since it was about history.

Though he was glad to be back in school, Magnus had to admit, this last summer had been his favourite by far. Having Alec to come home to had made all the difference, just having someone happy to see him. Though the many friends Magnus had lived with over the years were also happy to see him at the end of a long day, it was different with Alec. Not only because he came home to kisses, but because everything was different with Alec. Even if Alec had gotten understandably bored, and spent the last month of the summer holidays with his family, Magnus had still been so glad to have him there. He would miss living with his boyfriend, but Alec and Jace were getting a small apartment nearby. Magnus was sure it was a bit too early for them to live together anyway, and he had hopes that Alec would still be over here often, or maybe Magnus could even visit Alec for a change.

The lack of Alec was somewhat reduced by Clary moving in. Magnus was so excited to be living with his best friend, though he was also sad to see Tessa leave. This year seemed to be the year of change, and Magnus was trying to be okay with that. Given the circumstances, he understood why Tessa needed to leave. If she'd decided to raise the baby here, Magnus wasn't sure what he would have done. He had never really been good with kids, and infants were breakable!

The last day Tessa came to collect her stuff, she brought Jem with her. Tessa was showing quite significantly now, her pregnant belly obvious at six months. Tessa was very cranky, and Magnus was sure she yelled at Jem at least a dozen times while the two of them were packing. Jem didn't seem too bothered by this however. He just smiled through her irritation and anger, and tried to stop her from exerting herself.

"I'm pregnant," Tessa had snapped at Jem, seizing the box out of his hands. "Not crippled."

"And I'm right here so just let me carry it," Jem counted.

"No!" Tessa yelled, holding the box away from him and storming off. She stopped halfway to the door and swore loudly. "I have to pee," she remarked putting the box down, and turned toward the bathroom muttering something about how this was all his fault.

"It's Will's actually!" Jem had yelled back at her, grinning from ear to ear before he collected the box she'd left behind, and took it to the car before Tessa returned to try and carry it again.

Magnus wasn't quite sure what to make of this exchange, but he wasn't going to pry. His friend was clearly well loved, and though hormonal, very happy. Magnus didn't care about the rest.

It was Magnus's fourth, and if he didn't mess it up, last year of university. He'd lived with Tessa for three years, and it was going to be very strange living without her, even if he was looking forward to living with Clary.
"Where should I put this?" Clary asked holding up a painting of hers from last year. They were unpacking. Magnus's living room was full of boxes and bags of clothes.

"That one I quite like," Magnus told her. "Why don't you put it on the wall behind the tv?" Clary moved across the room and stuck her painting to the wall with tacks while Magnus opened another box.

"So have you heard from Alec since he's been back?" Clary asked while she put her books on the empty shelf that Tessa had left.

"He texted me," Magnus answered. "We are going to meet up later. Have you talked to Jace?"

"No," Clary sighed. "But I saw him today, just around the school."

"Why didn't you say hello?" Magnus asked confused.

"I-" Clary stared. "It was kinda weird so... maybe I'll see him later in classes or something."

"This isn't like you, Biscuit," Magus stated. "Did something happen over the summer? Did Jace do something?"

"When you call me Biscuit in that serious tone, it does rather ruin the effect," Clary smiled at him, but Magnus raised his eyebrow at her. "And no Jace didn't do anything."

"So why didn't you go talk to him then?" Magnus asked.

Clary shuffled her feet, looking down as she spoke. "Not sure what to say," Clary mumbled.

"I know you," Magnus observed. "What are you not telling me?"

"Jace's friend," Clary started. "Remember the blonde one?" Magnus nodded. "He never liked me, or maybe he liked me too much. I don't know. But he tried to hurt me again over the summer."

"Again!" Magnus gasped.

"Oh," Clary said softly putted a hand over her mouth.

"Last year," Clary mumbled. "He tried- but it's fine- Jace stopped him. It's just that the look on Jace's face when we told him." Clary paused as if searching for the right words. "I just don't know why Jace is with me?"

More energetically she added, "And all summer, sure his mom was great and all, but every woman I met there seemed to be Jace's ex. And even last year! Every woman hits on him. It makes me so mad and so scared at the same time, Magnus. I mean look at me!" Clary gestured to the baggy t-shirt and comfortable jeans she was wearing. "What do I have that could keep a guy like that?"

"He's stuck around this long hasn't he?" Magnus smiled. He wanted to help her, but he didn't know enough about Jace to really know how valid her concerns were. He thought Alec might know.

"Yeah but why?" Clary cried. "Why did he pick me?"

"I can't tell you that," Magnus whispered, trying to comfort her.

"I just feel so-" she broke off then exclaimed, "Frumpy! All the time. Like a old lady or something."

"You aren't an old lady," Magnus smiled at her. "But if you'd like, I could give you a makeover?"
Make you feel super pretty."

"It's not just that," Clary said. She hesitated for a moment then added. "With all those other girls he has to choose from, I worry that he thinks I'm boring… you know in bed."

"Too much information!" Magnus exclaimed with his fingers in his ears, as if that could stop him from hearing that his little Biscuit was having sex. Magnus had often thought of Clary as a little sister in a lot of ways.

"Oh come on!" Clary grumbled at him. "Like you and Alec didn't enjoy the perks of living together over the summer. Cut it out."

"Alright alright," Magnus sighed, taking his fingers out of his ears and trying to calm his over-protective mind. "If you are worried you are boring - and remember you didn't get this advice from me because I don't give you advice about this - you could try talking about... fantasies."

"That's a good idea," Clary exclaimed, grinning. "Like naughty nurse or something"

"Just talk to him," Magnus sighed. "And not to me, ever again please."

Laughing, Clary pushed her half unpacked box aside. "I say we leave this all till later and slack off." Magnus couldn't say no to the smile on her face.

He made popcorn while Clary choice something on Netflix, and in no time they were curled up on the couch, their eyes fixed on the screen.

"I think it was the crazy lady with the cane," Clary said thoughtfully as the crime drama came close to revealing the killer.

"Nah, too obvious," Magnus argued. "It's the shy awkward kid who's barely said a word for the whole episode."

"Na uh, it's the old lady," Clary disagreed.

"I bet you a latte it's the shy kid," Magnus replied.

"Deal." They shook on it and the next day after class, Magnus cashed in his debt at the little coffee stand on the campus.

"It should have been the old creepy lady," Clary said firmly, as she handed him his free latte.

"Thank you," Magnus beamed, smugly.

"So when are you meeting Alec?" Clary asked, sipping her drink. The weather was crisp, the fall wind outside was making the trees dance. Magnus could see leaves of all colours scattering the ground outside the window.

"We are meeting here actually," Magnus answered.

"Great," Clary grinned. "Cause I have things to buy." Her voice was higher than usual, and had a bit of a mischievous note to it.

"What things?" Magnus narrowed his eyes at her.

"Things you made me promise not to talk to you about," Clary giggled as she skipped away. "Have fun with Alec."
While he waited for his boyfriend's arrival, Magnus tried very hard not to think about what in the world Clarissa was talking about. He was quite exhausted from the effort by the time Alec entered the cafe.

"Oh thank god," Magnus sighed as he hugged Alec. "Please distract me."

"From what?" Alec laughed, taking the seat opposite Magnus.

"From whatever Clary is planning to ambush Jace with," Magnus groaned.

"She isn't breaking up with him is she?" Alec asked.

"From the sounds of it, she's buying skimpy sexy things I'd rather not picture my adorable biscuit within a mile of," Magnus shivered.

"You know you're crazy right," Alec chuckled at him. "She's a grown up."

"Yes, but I remember her when she was little," Magnus pouted.

"Clary is the same age as me," Alec reminded him.

"No," Magnus said stubbornly. "Biscuit is an adorable little girl with pigtails, and you're sexy." Alec was laughing at him in earnest now, and Magnus couldn't blame him. "Okay yes I know she's a grown up, but that doesn't mean I don't get to play the concerned older brother not brother person."

"Jace will sure be happy," Alec smiled, reaching out to take Magnus's hand. "Buying skimpy things doesn't sound like a break up to me."

"Let's let them work that out," Magnus sighed, trying to think of Alec only and not Clary in a sex shop. "How was the end of your summer?"

"Good," Alec smiled. "Went out on the lake, water skiing with Max. Got dragged to meet relatives I've never heard of and treat them like close family. Same old summer really. Though Dad did help me with apartment hunting, which turned out to be really useful because Jace was no help at all."

"Sounds way more interesting than waiting around for your workaholic boyfriend," Magnus smiled at him. "I am glad you had a good summer, but I am also so grateful you stayed with me first."

Magnus squeezed his boyfriend's hand in his. "Thank you Alec. For being something wonderful to come home to." Alec's eyes softened as he reached forward slightly, his other hand moving up to always hold Magnus's.

"I didn't realize it meant so much to you," Alec whispered, holding one of Magnus's hands in both of his and looking affectionately at him. "If I had, I would have stayed."

"Now, it's good that you spent some time with your family too," Magnus replied. He'd noticed that sometimes when Alexander didn't know what to say, he'd choose to act instead. It felt like this was one of those times, when Alec leaned a little further across the table and kissed Magnus quickly on the lips in the corner of the coffee shop.

"I missed you," Magnus whispered as Alec pulled away.

"I know the feeling," Alec replied easily. "It was a strangely long summer for me." He paused then raised an eyebrow at Magnus before adding. "Jace is a grumpy lump on my couch at home. If Clary is out… your place is wide open right?"
Magnus laughed, but quickly got the hint, standing up and taking his boyfriend's hand. Together they walked the short distance to what had been their place, and was now just Magnus's apartment with a roommate.

As they walked, they talked more of what they'd done that summer, and how their classes for this year were laid out. Alec shared more about apartment hunting with Jace, and Magnus talked about unpacking with Clary, and how strange it was not living with Tessa. Upon arriving home, conversation was quickly forgotten in favour of kissing. As their embrace became more passionate, Magnus thought about how lucky he was to have Alexander in his life. He'd given up on love once before, and Magnus was sure somehow that this would be the last time he tried it. Whether they were together or apart, Alexander would be his last great love.

Chapter End Notes

As a treat for all you patient people who waited over two weeks for an update I give you another update just days since my last one. You are welcome. And this one is a little more fun than Simon's sulking.

Oh and with the addition of this chapter Roommates and Soulmates is officially my story with the most chapters! Innocence Corrupts being a close second with 56 chapters. The plan is to make this my most everything story: views, review, favs, follows, and words.

Now before you say that R&S is the highest word count story I have ... no it is not. See on ao3 the author's notes are in a separate place so they don't count towards the total word count. This makes it more accurate especially for a story like this with LOTS of author's notes. My Malec POV story has very few author's notes. Since this means the ao3 word count is more accurate I use that one. So on ao3 this story is currently sitting at 147,000 words while Malec POV is at 164,000 words. I just need about more 17,000 words to tie! Let's see each chapter is about 2000-3000 words so that's... about six more chapters! yay! Though Malec POV also currently has R&S beat in favourites and views as well... soo... still a ways to go yet. Roommates and Soulmates is my most followed story at least and now has the most chapters of any of my stories. #progress

Sneak Peek Chapter 58

When he spotted Clary in the halls, Jace had frozen for a second, unsure what to say to her. Should he do the right thing and make this easy on her or should he beg her to stay? Before he could do more than stare, Clary turned and walked away. Jace's heart sank.

He went home to the apartment he hadn't selected and collapsed on his bed. What would his life be without Clary? He wished now that he'd just given up on working over the summer and gone to visit her family instead. What did it matter if he was totally broke all year? If he hadn't taken Clary home with him she wouldn't have had to face Sebastian again. Heck, it would have been better even if they'd spent the summer apart. At least maybe then she'd be happy to see him when he got back.

Listening to Alec talk about the problems of his summer was Jace's only respite from his own pain.
All Jace could think about as he walked the halls was the expression on Clary's face, the last time he'd seen her in his mother's living room. An anxious feeling had settled in his chest. He was scared Clary was going to break up with him. She probably blamed him for what happened over the summer, and Jace couldn't help but feel she'd be right if she did.

This thought turned round and round in his head, to the point where Jace had hardly been paying attention when he and Alec went to look at apartments. He smiled and nodded when Alec liked a place, but unless there was something very obviously wrong with it, Jace tuned the whole thing out. In the end, Alec must of gotten tired of his head in the clouds approach to apartment hunting, because Alec picked out the place on his own and just handed Jace a key. This suited Jace fine.

Once Alec and Jace were settled and classes started, Jace spotted Clary in the halls and froze. He had no idea what to say to her. Should he do the right thing and make this easy on her, or should he beg her to stay? Should he get down on his knees and confess that he wasn't sure how to live without her, or put aside his own selfishness? Clary saw him then, and Jace still hadn't moved, both too scared to talk to her, and too scared not to. Unable not to, Jace took a step toward her. This seemed to wake Clary from her daze. She quickly turned and walked away. Jace's heart sank.

He went home to the apartment he hadn't selected and collapsed on his bed. If that wasn't a sign, he didn't know what was. Jace was somehow sure now that Clary was done with him. Maybe she was just trying to find a way to break it to him gently. Jace had no idea what his life would be like without Clary. He supposed he'd still have Alec and school, but the whole concept felt foreign to him. Since arriving at this University, Clary had consumed his every thought. Maybe before he knew what joy it was to kiss her, hold her, call her his, maybe then Jace could have given her up, but now he was lost. He wished that he'd hadn't worked over the summer, and gone to visit her family instead. What did it matter if he was totally broke all year? If he hadn't taken Clary home with him, she wouldn't have had to face Sebastian again. It would have been better even if they'd spent the summer apart. At least maybe then she'd be happy to see him when he got back.

Jace wasn't sure what happened in his class that day. When he arrived home though he made an effort to listen to his roommates problems, which were a much better distraction from his pain and Econ 201.

"After spending half the summer waiting for Magnus to get off work," Alec explained. "I went home to my nosy parents who wanted to know what was wrong, and kept trying to make me talk. It seems I am an open book with lots of pictures. It just sucks watching someone you love work so hard for so little when you can help. All I want to do is make his life easier. Why is that so bad?" Alec paused then turned to face Jace. They were sitting in their living room together, unpacked boxes behind the couch, and bubble wrap in the corner. "What if you'd spent your whole summer watching Clary wrestle with problems that you could easily fix, but she wouldn't let you fix them?"

"Sure, that would suck," Jace agreed. "But I can kinda see Magnus's point on this."

"Really?" Alec asked surprised. "Then please do explain it to me."

"This couch we are sitting on," Jace began gesturing to the sofa in question. "You bought it on your own. I didn't help and yet, I am going to use it. And the fridge. You bought groceries that you are
probably expecting me to eat, though I didn't pay for them."

"I still don't see how this is a bad thing?" Alec counted.

"It isn't," Jace sighed. "It's just that it can make the person getting it all feel guilty for getting so much without giving anything in return." Though Jace did believe this, since learning Alec was rich, Jace had been trying not feel bad about how much more Alec contributed to the household. He had to imagine it was worth, if one were dating Alec.

"Magnus gives me far more than I give him," Alec disagreed. "It's just money."

"To you it's just money because you have it," Jace argued. Alec sighed and covered his face with his hands.

"Why does it have to be so freaking complicated," Alec groaned.

"Because it can create a sense of debt or obligation in other people," Jace explained.

"In that case you can't eat my cereal," Alec stated seriously. Jace couldn't help it; he burst out laughing.

"Deal," Jace laughed. It felt so good to laugh for a change. The second half of his summer had been so lonely.

"Alright enough about my first world problem," Alec added. "So how was your summer?" And to Jace's surprise he actually told Alec everything. He wasn't sure if it was just because he had to tell someone, or if he needed to tell his best friend, but suddenly words poured from his lips. He told his roommate everything from the reason he'd really cut Sebastian out of his life, to the events of the summer.

"Oh god, I need to shut up about my lame problems," Alec exclaimed when Jace was done. "Wow that's… wow. I didn't have a clue. Poor Clary. If you hadn't gotten there in time… I mean I knew Sebastian was horrible, but I didn't realize he was capable of such a thing."

"She didn't want people to know," Jace added. "Otherwise I would have told you sooner."

"Yeah I get it," Alec replied kindly. "Are you okay?"

"No," Jace whispered. "No Alec, I am so scared. I haven't seen her since she got on that plane to her parents."

"Haven't you guys been texting or talking on the phone since then?" Alec asked.

"A little," Jace replied. "But she's been so distant, and earlier when she saw me, she turned to walk the other way. The worst part is that honestly, I can't even blame her. She shouldn't have been in that situation again, and it's my fault that she was."

"Actually it's Sebastian's fault," Alec corrected.

"If she hadn't come home with me," Jace explained. "He wouldn't have been able to get to her again."

"You can't blame yourself," Alec informed him.

"Yes I can," Jace replied. "And so should Clary."

"No she shouldn't," Alec stated firmly. "You just wanted her to meet your mom. How were you supposed to know where Sebastian was if you haven't heard from him since last January."

"We look so similar," Jace added.

"If Clary had a problem with that, she never would have went out with you in the first place," Alec reminded him. "I am sure it isn't as bad as you think."

"Or maybe pretty soon I am going to be the a single pathetic miserable mess on your new couch," Jace sighed. Alec clearly didn't know what to say, and Jace had to admit he wouldn't have either in Alec's shoes. No one's words but Clary's could cheer him up at this point. Jace watched Alec check his phone, likely trying to give himself thinking time. Then Alec's eyes went wide.

"I am really sorry," Alec said quickly as he stood and went in search of his coat. "I didn't realize how long we'd been talking. I am supposed to be meeting Magnus for coffee, and if I don't leave now I'd be late. I'd cancel, but it's the first time I've seen him in like a month and-"

"No, it's fine go," Jace sighed. "Go be happy. At least someone should be."

"We will finish this later," Alec said firmly. "I am sure it isn't as bad as you think it is."

"And I'm sure you're wrong," Jace called as his friend vanished out their front door.

Alone in his apartment, Jace stared at the wall. Should he call Clary and just pretend like he hadn't notice her avoid him this morning, act normal and just hope? Or should he put off the inevitable pain of losing her by not seeing her, because that totally made sense? With a great sigh, Jace opted for putting off making this decision and turned on the television. About an hour of lame cable tv later, he was forced to face reality when Clary called him.

"Hey Jace," Clary said over the phone.

"Hi," Jace replied. She sounded happy, and Jace found his hopes soaring. Maybe Alec had been right?

"So," Clary continued. "I happen to know for a fact that Alec isn't at home."

"And you know this how?" Jace asked, trying to focus on details that didn't matter rather than her dumping him. Her voice didn't give the impression she was mad or upset, but he was still vary.

"I just left Alec with Magnus at the cafe," Clary explained. "They were making lovey dovey eyes at each other." She giggled, and Jace had to resist the urge to make a noise of disgust though he knew it was only because he was so anxious. "Anyway my point is that this means we have your place to ourselves. Can I come over?"

"Oh," Jace replied surprise. "Yeah of course."

"Great see you in a bit then," Clary replied. Jace wasn't sure what to do with himself when the phone line went dead. He knew she wouldn't be long since the apartment was so close to the dorms. Then he remembered she'd be coming from Magnus's apartment not the dorms, so it might be a little longer. Jace settled for literally just sitting on the couch staring at the blank television screen, and waiting for her while trying to keep his mind blank. When the doorbell rang, Jace was already up and at the door before the sound had completely faded.

There stood Clary in a long fall coat and boots. Jace just stared at her. She usually wears sneakers or flip flops. He hadn't known Clary owned black knee high boots. The coat as well wasn't familiar to
him. Where was her hoodie and jeans? That patchwork bag she used as a purse. Who the heck was this woman, and what had she done with his girlfriend?

"Umm hi?" Jace said tilting his head slightly at her.

"You like?" Clary asked, taking a step inside the house and closing the door. Then Clary spun around a little to emphasis her outfit. Jace watched her coat twirl around her, and caught just a glimpse of her leg as it whirled.

"I thought you stayed with your parents over the holidays," Jace began. "How did that lead to knee high boots?"

"I didn't get these over the summer," Clary told him as she moved forward, kissing him. Once again Jace was surprised, but this time in a much more pleasant way. He'd missed the feel of her. Forgetting all about her silly outfit, Jace put his arms around her. It felt so good to hold her again, kiss her again. He held her close as if that could dislodge his anxiety. He wanted to lose himself in her kiss, to forget everything that had gone wrong over the summer, forget the look on her and Celine's faces when Jace had arrived home that day.

"What's wrong?" Clary asked. Jace had pulled away. He couldn't forget. He couldn't just kiss her and pretend everything was fine.

"When you saw me before," Jace stared. "Why did you turn and walk away? If you blame me for what happened with Sebastian please tell me Clary. I know it's my fault, but-" Clary put a finger over his lips. She was smiling at him with the strangest expression on her face. Jace couldn't quite figure it out.

"It's not your fault," Clary said. Those words from her lips were as sweet as honey. Jace felt a great weight lifted from his shoulders. "I had to go home for a while, but I am glad I got to know your mom. She's great. Next holiday, we will go visit my parents. Don't worry about everything else that happened okay?"

"You sure?" Jace couldn't help, but ask.

"Totally sure," she replied. "Now I have a surprise for you."

"A surprise?" Jace asked. Smiling. He felt so much lighter and frankly it amazed him. If her surprise was a huge spider or hell, even homework he'd have been thrilled.

"A present really," Clary corrected.

"You didn't have to get me anything," Jace answered quickly, worried he'd missed an anniversary or something.

"Yes I did," Clary countered with a grin. Jace had no idea what she thinking. Clary took a step back so she was in full view of him. Then she slowly brought her hands to the tie of her coat. As the coat fell to the floor Jace froze, his mouth open, and his eyes wide. She was wearing nothing, but a sheer white lace dress, so short it looked closer to a long shirt than a real dress. Under this, was what Jace could only described as string. Think black bans for fabric started at her navel and went up between her breasts, and around the back of her neck, only to wrap around again and criss cross over her chest. Jace had always been able to see the beautiful woman underneath the comfy hoodies and jeans, since the moment he'd first laid eyes on her, but this sight quite took his breath away. Jace wasn't sure he had words for it. His eyes couldn't focus on her face as he took in her outfit, his heart already racing.
"Would you like to unwrap your present?" Clary asked, still grinning. Jace had no idea why Clary was doing this, but he sure as hell wasn't about to complain. Moving forward quickly, he scooped her into his arms and kissed her, placing his hands on her flushed skin. He felt her soft touch against his skin, where her hands were under his shirt. What had he been worrying about again? Jace whispered her name, and heard his back in return. Her boots were sexy as hell, though once they fell tangled up together onto the couch, the boots were downgraded to just annoying. Pulling away, Clary got them off while Jace busied himself in catching up with her. Clary had after all, arrived to the apartment half naked while Jace was still fully clothed, and rather wishing he wasn't. Jace got his jeans undone, and just had time to breath a sigh of relief because Clary was kissing him. Jace ran his hands over the sheer lace of her outfit. The fabric was so thin it almost felt like her skin. It was an amazing feeling.

When Clary pulled away from their kiss to sit on Jace, he looked up at her, wanting to check that she was okay. He smiled as he realized she was just as annoyed as him by the amount of clothes Jace was still wearing. Jace helped her remove his jeans and shirt while she ground her hips into his. Jace was quickly far too distract to be able to remove a single button on his shirt. She removed it instead as Jace gasped. Leaving his pants and shirt on the couch, Jace pulled his girlfriend into his arms and carried her to his room.

Throwing her on his mattress, Jace climbed onto the bed with her, holding himself over her so his weight didn't crush her. With his free hand, Jace found the hem of her lace and moved up under it, slowly running his fingers over the thick straps which were the only clothes she had on. Pushing the lace up to her neckline, Jace brought his mouth down to kiss her skin. There was so little covering her breasts, just crossed strips of fabric, and somehow having not all revealed was even sexier. Jace slowly moved each strap aside to expose her nipple before taking it into his mouth. She gasped, speaking his name again gently before he felt her hands dive under his boxers. She had her hand wrapped around his very hard length for just a moment before she decided to switch tactics. Clary used two hands to shimmy his boxers down to his knees where Jace kicked them off. He now hover naked over Clary who was in nothing but lace and straps.

He wasn't sure how he'd gotten so lucky. Why had this woman chosen him? Chosen to forgive him for everything? Jace had never cared for anyone as much as he loved this little fiery redhead who currently had her hand wrapped around him again. He wanted to show her how much he loved her, so rather than give in to her when she tried to wrap her legs around his waist, Jace leaned down again and continued kissing her skin as he trailed his fingers along the side of her hip. He was breathing hard as Jace's fingers moved around her thighs to the wetness between her legs. Her temptress outfit clearly had not included underwear. Jace got two fingers inside her, gently caressing the tissues on the outside while he stimulated her within. Her hands were gripping the sheets tightly as she called out his name and moaned.

Jace kiss the sensitive skin of her inner thigh, all the way up to her lips before reaching over to the nightstand. With practiced fingers, Jace slide a condom over himself. He continued to kiss her, and this time when she wrapped her legs around his waist, Jace obliged. As he filled her, she moaned softly into their kiss. She was still breathing hard as she began rocking her hips with his. Her muscles squeezed him as he thrust inside her, and they came together. Panting, they collapsed onto the bed. Jace had known for a long time that Clary had a hold on his heart, but perhaps only then did he realize how strong a hold it was.

Chapter End Notes
Royal Dilemma is complete so R&S is now my ONLY incomplete story and I have no new ones up my sleeves. I am very excited to just leisurely update a single story as I haven't had just a single story to worry about for like ten months!

I'm just gonna take a second and bask in the wtf moment I am having here. I wrote Malec POV of TMI and didn't want to stop so I started Innocence Corrupts. By the time I got close to the end of IC I had about 4 chapters of Roommates and Soulmates written though still under a working title. Then since I uploaded chapter 5 of Roommates and Soulmates I have been writing at least one other story alongside it. I know this because in the author's notes for chapter 5 of R&S I mention starting a new story which was my Vampire Diaries story 'Human Delena.' Shortly after that I couldn't resist uploading 'Elusive Love.' I started writing 'Forgotten' at about the same time, but managed to resist uploading it until EL was over. I finished Human Delena just in time to start updating Royal Dilemma than I was struck with the need for Klaine from Glee and wrote almost all of 'Elevator to Home' in a matter of weeks while ignoring Royal Dilemma and R&S. And now finally RD is complete and R&S is the only one left. And I can't even say this story was my only story for those first 4 chapters because technically speaking I was still writing Innocence Corrupts while writing those. For the first time in this story's life it is an only child.

Roommates and Soulmates was the third mortal instruments fanfic I wrote and the last. *Bask in moment* Wow my doc manager is going to be so much easier to organize!

Okay moments over. Here is your sneak peek...

Sneak Peek Chapter 59

"You either have to talk to her or give up," Simon stated after a moment's silence.

"I can't give up," Jordan replied quickly.

"Okay, then speak to her," Simon reasoned, but Jordan just shook his head.

"I can't take the rejection right now," he argued. "I need to come up with a way for her not to reject me before I talk to her."

"Oh is that all?" Simon sighed. Jordan covered his face in a pillow and Simon suppressed a smile. It wasn't always like this. Most day's Jordan was actually functional. When they weren't practicing band with Eric, they often watched movies together; Simon was working on turning his roommate into a Trekie though with only minimal success. Jordan didn't seem to understand the brilliance that was Captain Picard. He had better luck getting Jordan to watch Sense8 on Netflix though he suspected that was mostly for all the sex scenes rather than the amazing storyline, characterization, plot points, and cinematography. However Simon refused to give up. If anyone could turn someone else into a nerd it was Simon Lewis.

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I have been considering maybe trying for an actual schedule now that I only have one story to update. Do you prefer getting chapters as I write them (meaning sometimes quickly and sometimes slowly) or would you prefer to get a chapter let's say once a week on a certain day instead? At this point I am thinking every Monday or every Wednesday. Just depends if people want to start their week with reading or have it halfway through. :) If you have a preference please let me know.
Red and orange leaves littered every inch of the ground as Simon walked home from class. It was early October and Simon was getting used to school again, the routine of going to classes, doing homework, seeing his friends, and practicing his music. Eric had easily agreed to have Jordan join their band once he'd heard the guy sing. The only challenge now was getting Jordan to sing something other than depressing love songs. Simon had to admit that even he wasn't that hung up on his ex, though Simon suspected it helped quite a bit knowing his ex had never really loved him romantically.

Twice now Simon had seen Clary in the halls, and though he'd smiled back at her when she did, he was glad she wasn't being as weirdly friendly as usual. It seemed that the last time she'd meddled in his life, had actually been the last time like he'd wanted. Simon did hope to be friends with her again someday, but not now. Now he had a very needy roommate to take care of, or rather clean up after. Simon was by no means a neat freak, but he had to admit, even he wasn't fond of his roommate's mess, and couldn't blame Jordan's ex for disliking it either. Simon supposed it was different dating a messy person than just rooming with one, but if this didn't get better soon, he was going to have to do something about it, even if that something was cleaning while his roommate was asleep or out.

Entering the dorm room, Simon turned away from the disaster on his left and headed right to the clean side of the room. With a sigh, Simon got out his homework. He was in his second year now and had to start thinking about what he wanted to major in, which was a daunting prospect to say the least. Simon was worried that if he picked a major he was interested in rather than one with a specific career in mind, that he'd end up as the most educated employee at a fast food joint. But if he picked one based on a job in mind, and then hated the job, he'd be stuck just the same. He still had a year to figure it out, but somehow a year didn't feel like it would be very long. All the same, Simon didn't want to be stuck in genetic classes forever. He was halfway through his major non specific essay when Jordan arrived home.

"How was class?" Simon asked his roommate half out of interest, and half out of a desire to turn away from his homework.

"No idea," Jordan sighed, before collapsing on top of the pile of clothes that covered his bed.

"Please don't tell me you skipped class to stalk your ex," Simon sighed, pressing his fingers to the bridge of his nose. This guy needed a twelve step problem, not that Simon was complaining, since every moment with Jordan made him feel less and less pathetic about being hung up on Clary. At least Simon wasn't pining. He'd accepted his miserable fate.

"No," Jordan admitted. "I just spaced out at the wall and thought about her the whole time."

"Try actually taking notes," Simon advised. "You don't have to listen, just copy and paste with your hands. That way you can at least study for tests." Jordan laughed, though it quickly turned into a groan.

"You either have to talk to her or give up," Simon stated after a moment's silence.

"I can't give up," Jordan replied quickly.
Okay, then speak to her," Simon reasoned, but Jordan just shook his head.

"I can't take the rejection right now," he argued. "I need to come up with a way for her not to reject me before I talk to her."

"Oh is that all?" Simon sighed. Jordan covered his face in a pillow, and Simon suppressed a smile. It wasn't always like this. Most day's Jordan was actually functional. When they weren't practicing band with Eric, they often watched movies together; Simon was working on turning his roommate into a Trekie, though with only minimal success. Jordan didn't seem to understand the brilliance that was Captain Picard. He had better luck getting Jordan to watch Sense8 on Netflix, though he suspected that was mostly for all the sex scenes rather than the amazing storyline, characterization, plot points, and cinematography. However, Simon refused to give up. If anyone could turn someone else into a nerd, it was Simon Lewis.

Simon had felt sure about his decision to return to school when he was at home, but once he actually set foot on campus, he'd second guessed himself to the point where he'd almost turned right back around and went to become a lump on his mother's couch. Simon laughed at the thought. Thankfully this thinking only lasted a few minutes. Today he was happy with his decision to return to school. Despite his disgust at Jordan leaving dirty cereal bowls everywhere, he did count his roommate among his friends. Simon was enjoying his classes even with the looming threat of selecting a major hovering over him. It was true he hadn't hung out with Maia much since school started, but he knew it was only because they were busy. Maia had declared her major as Business Management and was dealing with a new course load. Through texting, Simon had learned Maia's roommate had already taken Maia shopping twice.

'No one woman needs that many clothes,' Maia had texted him while bored during shopping trip number two. 'And she says she didn't even bring half her wardrobe to school. This girl is crazy. lol.'

'Well my roommate spends half his time pining for his ex,' Simon had replied.

'At least that might involve ice cream,' Maia had texted back which made Simon laugh. The more Simon got to know Maia, the more he liked her as a person. It was funny, but somehow being friends with Maia was making him realized how Clary had looked at him all these years. Despite meeting her for a blind date, Simon couldn't imagine actually dating Maia. He valued her as a friend, but more didn't feel right somehow. Speaking of valuing friends, Simon was making a point to spend more time with Eric outside of band practice. If his summer of disillusionment had taught him anything, it was how important it was to keep up with old friends.

"Sounds like your roommates needs to get back out there worse than you do," Eric said when Simon met up with him for a study date in the library later in the week.

"Yeah," Simon replied with a laugh. "He makes me feel far less pathetic."

"You aren't pathetic Simon," Eric argued. "Honestly if I'd just broken up with the only girl I'd ever loved who had never loved me back, I'd be in way worse shape than you."

"Thanks," Simon smiled. "That is actually wonderful to hear."

"Anytime man," Eric replied, then turned back to his books and groaned. "I am regretting this decision already. Why did I take Statistics?"

"Because you secretly want to be Data from Next Gen?" Simon offered.

"Because I am secretly stupid," Eric replied. Simon laughed lightly and they both got back to
studying until they were hungry and decided it was lunch time.

As Eric and Simon walked into the cafeteria, Simon spotted Jace and Clary eating in the corner. Clary was smiling, and Simon had to admit he was actually doing alright. The summer away had helped for sure, and Simon could be happy that at least Clary was happy. Though if that blonde fool ever hurt her, Simon would find some way to punish him. He knew he couldn't take Jace in a fight, and at the moment had absolutely no idea how he'd punish Jace if the need arose, but that didn't matter. Simon would find a way if needed.

Despite his lack of patheticness today, Simon still sat in the opposite corner of the cafeteria as his ex girlfriend. He forcefully put Clary from his mind as he and Eric talked about their next band practice. Last year they had renting space to practice for a few hours at a time, but that was rather expensive. This year, since Eric was living off campus, they had started practicing there.

"Maybe if we put a good song in front of him, Jordan would just sing it," Eric suggested.

"I am sure he could even make the most cheerful song in the world depressing," Simon laughed.

"Oh speaking of depressing," Eric remarked. "I have a date tomorrow."

"And this is depressing how?" Simon asked.

"Because I am going to mess it up," Eric explained. "I always do."

"If you want advice, you are asking the wrong guy," Simon replied. "Seriously if there is a class for losing women, I'd be teaching that one."

"That isn't fair," Eric replied. "You lost one woman. If anyone is going to be teaching that class it's me."

"You had what like two bad first dates in the last few months?" Simon began.

"Tomorrow makes three," Eric replied. Simon leaned forward and playfully hit his friend in the head.

"No negative thinking," Simon told him. "That is probably why they don't go well."

"Yep, I'm gonna die alone," Eric replied in a strangely perky voice. Before Simon could tell his friend off for his happy tone, they were interrupted by a slightly familiar female voice.

"I was wondering if I'd ever run into you," she said from behind Simon. Judging by the open mouthed expression on Eric's face, this woman was stunning. Simon turned and his mouth fell open. Not only was this woman sex on legs, she was also his elevator girl. Simon hadn't gotten a good enough look at her in the dark elevator to really describe her to others after the fact, but here and now, there was no mistaking who stood before him.

"I'm glad," Elevator girl continued. "I did jilt you in that elevator after all." She grinned at him raising her eyebrows, and Simon realized with sudden clarity that if the lights hadn't come on, she might
have gone way further in that elevator than he'd realized.

She pulled a pen from her purse, and a moment later she was holding his arm. Simon barely had time to register that she was touching him before she pulled away. Simon slowly looked down; she'd written a series of numbers on his palm.

"Give me a call if you want another go," she winked at him, blew him a kiss, then walked away.

Simon stared after her dumbfounded. Had that just happened? And why had he been such an idiot as to again forget to ask her name? Heck, even if he'd said a single word, that would have been useful. He just hadn't expected to see her again, not even after coming back to this school.

Simon turned back to Eric who was looking at him like some kind of god. Then Simon remembered he'd never told Eric about the elevator incident.

"What the hell was that man!?!" Eric asked, his eyes wide with shock.

"Umm," Simon began. "I was trapped in an elevator with her once. She got bored and made out with me, then the lights came back on."

"Why the hell would you keep something like that to yourself?" Eric exclaimed. Simon had told Jace about it just a few days later, but honestly, the whole experience had felt a bit like a dream.

"I don't know," Simon replied. "It sounds kinda like something out of a corny tv show or something. I might have half believed I imaged the whole thing."

"Well, you definitely didn't imagine that," Eric said, firmly. "I am your witness."

"Urg," Simon groaned as he let his head fall and hit the table. What the hell was he supposed to do with her number? Should be call this woman up and let her have her way with him, or keep his pathetic virginity in tact and watch the next girl he liked leave him for a player like Jace?

"You make no sense," Eric stated. Simon had to admit his friend had a point.

"What did Izzy want to talk to you about?" For the second time in less then ten minutes their table had a visitor Though this time, Simon knew who it was before he lifted his head from the table to see Jace looking down at him.

"So her name is Izzy," Simon said, casually. He was still feeling rather too stunned about the whole encounter to register more than that.

"What are you talking about?" Jace asked, confused.

"That was the girl I made out with in that broken elevator last year," Simon explained.

"What?" Jace asked, clearly shocked by his news, his eyes wide, and his voice sharp.

"Last March," Simon tried again, in a monotone voice. "I talked to you about the crazy player girl who made out with me in the broken elevator. Did you forget?"

"No, I mean what… that was Izzy!" Jace exclaimed. Simon just nodded, totally non-plussed. Jace sat down at their table, clearly needing a minute to process this information.

"Don't tell me," Simon groaned. "She's your ex."

Jace laughed, awkwardly then said. "No, she's Alec's little sister."
"Alec's your roommate right?" Simon asked. He vaguely remembered meeting Alec last year when he'd slept on the floor in Jace's dorm.

"Yep," Jace said. "Oh man, this is weird." Simon just shrugged. He was sure it was weirder that his ex girlfriend's new boyfriend wanting to be friends with him, but decided not to mention this.

"Be careful Simon," Jace warned. "That woman is a heart breaker."

"I think I know a thing or two about heartbreak," Simon replied coolly. "And that is rather rich coming from you."

"I-" Jace stated. "Okay, I deserved that one. Just be careful okay. I know her because I used to be her."

"Yeah yeah whatever," Simon sighed. This was just the strangest conversation ever and he really didn't want to be talking about this with Jace.

"Hey Simon?" Jace began, and just his tone had Simon on edge. "Can I ask you something about Clary?"

"Depends what it is?" Simon said wearily.

"She's been acting kind of different lately," Jace explained.

"How so?" Simon asked though he was sure he'd regret it.

"She doesn't want to go out and do things, and she keeps surprising me with lingerie," Jace continued while Simon wished the ground would rise up and swallow him whole. "It's not like I'm complaining, but it's odd. She usually just wears hoodies and stuff right."

"Dude!" Eric exclaimed suddenly. "That's his ex."

"Oh right sorry," Jace said quickly, though not quickly enough since Simon was sure he'd never get the image of 'lingerie' in relation to Clary out of his head. "It's just that I wanted to talk to someone who's known her longer than me and… yeah okay, again sorry. I'll get out of your hair."

After a few more mumbled apologizes, Jace got up and walked back to the table where Clary was waiting for him. Simon watched his ex girlfriend greet Jace with a light kiss and did everything in his power to not picture her in a little maid's outfit.

"God, that guy is weird," Eric said with a shake of his head.

"Agreed," Simon replied. "Though the weird part is that if we were just friends it wouldn't be weird."

"I guess, but you aren't," Eric said. "You are... well I'm not sure there is a word to define the relationship you have. If you and Clary had been married, you could call Jace a home wrecker."

Simon smiled at the silly tone his friend used, which made the words he was saying all the more amusing. After all, it was funny. For a while now, Simon had really come to believe that Jace actually considered Simon to be one of his friends. It was such a strange notion, and yet Simon found himself oddly moved. Sure, Jace was wildly inappropriate, and sure he was with Clary, but Simon felt sure somehow that if he ever got over Clary, his friendship with Jace would become almost effortless.

"Okay, so aside from the weird guy," Eric began. "What are you going to do about this elevator"
Izzy. That was her name. Simon had to admit he liked knowing her name. It made him feel less like a sleeze bag, though by the sounds of it, their moment in that elevator had meant far more to him than it had to her.

Simon looked down at the thin blank pen lines on his palm. Slowly without really thinking, Simon got out his phone and added Izzy to his contact. Losing her number would only limit his options after all. He would make this decision later.

Chapter End Notes

If you didn't notice the change to the summary, I have decided to start updating this story every Wednesday. If for some reason I get too far ahead I might upload a bonus chapter, but that would be in addition to every Wednesday.

Please comment! Honestly they make my day.

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Sneak Peek chapter 60 (To be published July 12)

"Are you skipping for me, Alexander?" Magnus mused as he wrapped his arms around his boyfriend from behind. Alec was standing in front of the stove, but Clary could still see them from where she sat at the dining room table.

"Class was cancelled," Alec explained, then adding in a teasing voice. "Just because I love you doesn't mean I'd skip class for you."

"Is that so," Magnus teased back. "Well then maybe I should find someone else to love." The tone of their voice was so loving as to make their words comical. "Someone who would skip class for me." Alec laughed, then turned in his boyfriend's arms and planted a possessive kiss on Magnus's mouth. Sometimes when Clary watched Magnus and Alec together, she wondered what it would be like to love someone who didn't have such a promiscuous past as Jace. Sure, Magnus had more experience dating than Alec, but it wasn't like he'd gotten lucky with a different girl every weekend for years. When Clary heard them say they loved each other, she couldn't help but wonder if Jace loved her.
Clary was watching the faces of every female within four meters of her boyfriend, because half of them were checking him out. There was a group of girls who looked to be on a sports team of some kind in the corner who all had their eyes on Jace, unless of course, they were looking at Simon, but somehow Clary doubted it. She didn't have that kind of luck. Clary watched as a few of them whispered, pointing in Jace's direction, acting like they were trying to decide who should get up to talk to him first.

Clary had to resist the urge to get up and attached herself to Jace's arm like a parasite. Being super possessive wasn't attractive. Instead, Clary took a few deep breaths and reminded herself that at least today Jace wasn't looking at the girls checking him out because he was talking to Simon. She was thankful Jace returned to her before any of the girls actually went over and talked to him. Clary greeted Jace with a quick kiss as he sat at their table across from her.

"Did you find out what Izzy was up to?" Clary asked.

"Yeah," Jace replied with a strange look on his face that Clary couldn't quite place. "She's interested in Simon."

"That's great!" Clary exclaimed. She wanted nothing more than to see her oldest friend happy with someone else, not just for him, but for herself as well. Seeing Simon happy would ease her guilt.

"Not so much," Jace disagreed. "You know how I was before I met you?" Clary nodded, thinking to herself about every time Jace had been hit on or checked out by a woman, or even a few guys. She could imagine only too easily him flirting back and taking them home. "Well Izzy is kinda like that. I tried to warn Simon that she will probably stomp all over his heart in high heels, but Simon very wisely reminded me that I was being a hypocrite." Jace smiled at her, but all Clary could think about was his being a hypocrite. What did that mean?

"Are you done with lunch?" Jace asked. "I thought we could go bowling or something?" Bowling might be a safe bet, though Clary suspected even there, she'd encounter at least one person Jace had slept with. The only thing that calmed her down was thinking about her halloween costume. Clary had felt so close to Jace when she'd arrived at his house in nothing but a coat and lingerie at the start of the school year. She'd felt somehow more secure when she'd seen him take in her skimpy outfit. She wanted to feel like that again.

"Or we could just go to your place," Clary suggested. Jace gave her a strange look, and the anxiety in Clary's stomach tightened.

"Are you sure?" Jace asked.

"I'm sure," Clary said firmly.

"Because you know I'm happy to go out in public with you right?" Jace continued, looking a little confused. Clary laughed lightly and kissed him on the cheek before she once again assured him she wanted to go to his place. Clary had a little something stashed away in her purse and was eager to show it to Jace, even if it wasn't as amazing as her halloween costume. Her boyfriend gave in, and walking hand in hand, they headed back to Jace's place. Soon after they arrived, Clary went into the
bathroom and put the silky lace on under her clothes. Then Clary suggested they watch a movie so she could snuggle in close beside him on the couch. About halfway through the movie, she started trailing her hand along Jace's chest, then down into his lap.

"Clary even through my jeans that is very distracting," Jace muttered, but he was grinning.

"Maybe that's the point," Clary replied grinning.

"What is with you recently?" Jace asked. Clary's heart sank. A million things ran through her mind. Was Jace bored of her? Did he want the other girls instead? Jace leaned forward and kissed her gently before adding. "You are just always in the mood lately."

"I'm on the pill now," Clary explained. She was indeed taking birth control every day, which was making seducing her boyfriend all the easier. "So why not right?"

"I suppose," Jace smiled at her. Seizing her chance, Clary maneuvered her fingers until they were in under the waistband of his jeans. She loved the gasp of surprise that escaped him as she held in her hand the evidence that he was attracted to her. Clary loved it when it was like this. She loved feeling like it was her that made him this way. Only her, though she knew that to be irrational and wrong. But in moments like this, it felt that way, which was what mattered. Clary straddled his lap, kissing him as she felt his hands at her waist. Even through his jeans she could feel him press against her inner thigh. Even before she'd developed feelings for Jace, Clary had been attracted to him. It eased her anxiety when she felt like he wanted her too.

As they struggled to remove each other's clothes, Jace discovered the pink silk slip she was wearing. It was skin tight, crotchless, and strategically see through in other places. The sleeves were short, and the fabric so thin she could feel his warm touch through the sheer material. Jace's shirt lay on the floor, his pants around his ankle. Clary was down to just her lingerie when his fingers found their way under the lace through the opening in the back. She had him there on the couch, straddling him first, before he flipped them over with a smile on his face. She felt his fingers trace over her skin as she whispered his name. Why couldn't she feel like this all the time? Why was it that Jace only felt like he was hers when he was inside her? Clary cried out as they finished together, still on the couch.

"Oh Clary," Jace smiled at her as he stroked the side of her face. Clary had seen that look on his face before, but she had no idea what it meant. It lasted only a few moments. Then as they were getting dressed Jace laughed, talking about how Alec probably hadn't intended this use for their shared couch.

After that, Clary settled for putting her head in Jace's lap while they finished the movie. When Alec returned home he did indeed have something to say about the couch, though only because Jace made a joke about it. As Clary had always suspected, she and Alec were getting along better every day. Though she supposed they really didn't have much of a choice, as they were each dating the other's roommate and best friend.

Clary had an evening class tonight, which meant she had to say goodbye and leave before dinner. As she sat through three hours of lecture on the great artists of the renaissance, Clary tried and failed to stop her mind from wondering. She had never been so excited for Halloween before. It wasn't for a few weeks yet, but she already had her outfit all picked out, though she'd gone through quite a few before deciding. She could have been a scantily clad cat, or a naughty nurse, or even a playboy bunny. However in the end Clary had chosen to dress as a beer wench because of a movie she and Jace had watched together. Jace had commented on the outfit saying sometimes it was sexy to see less skin on a girl if the clothes were done right. So Clary now had in her possession a brown leather corset and a cream coloured peasant style top with capped sleeves. Her skirt was hunter green colour with brown detailing around the edges. She had a pair of brown leather knee high boots to finish off
the look as they matched the detailing on her skirt. Clary was counting the days till Halloween, excited to see the look on Jace's face when he saw her.

Her life at the moment consisted mostly of class, homework, Jace and Magnus. Living with her best friend meant that it was far easier to find time to hang out with him. They were far more often than not to be found in their pjs watching rom-coms on the couch. Clary loved being out of dorms, but it was living with Magnus she loved most. There was something different about living with someone than just spending all your time with them. It was subtle, but it made all the difference in the world.

Alec often slept over at Clary and Magnus's place, though since Alec usually had class early in the morning, he didn't often stick around past eight am. Clary therefore, was surprised to see Alec cooking in her kitchen on Halloween morning close to nine o'clock, and so it seemed was Magnus.

"Are you skipping for me, Alexander?" Magnus mused as he wrapped his arms around his boyfriend from behind. Alec was standing in front of the stove, but Clary could still see them from where she sat at the dining room table.

"Class was cancelled," Alec explained, then added in a teasing voice. "Just because I love you doesn't mean I'd skip class for you."

"Is that so," Magnus teased back. "Well then maybe I should find someone else to love." The tone of their voice was so affectionate as to make their words comical. "Someone who would skip class for me." Alec laughed, then turned in his boyfriend's arms and planted a possessive kiss on Magnus's mouth. Sometimes when Clary watched Magnus and Alec together, she wondered what it would be like to love someone who didn't have such a promiscuous past as Jace. Sure, Magnus had more experience dating than Alec, but it wasn't like he'd gotten lucky with a different girl every weekend for years. Also when Clary heard them say they loved each other, she couldn't help but wonder if Jace loved her.

She turned back to her homework as she listened to them continued to be super adorable. Even if all her insecurities and worries were valid, it wasn't like thinking about those worries and insecurities all day would help anything. Oh how she wished she could think of something else. Her thoughts were still being uncooperative when the happy love birds joined her at the table then, bringing Alec's homemade breakfast with them.

"Speaking of break ups, I'm really glad you didn't dump Jace," Alec commented as he placed a plate of french toast beside her. "And not just for his sake but for mine. I dread to think of the miserable mess I'd be living with if you'd dumped him."

"Umm," Clary began not sure how to respond since the comment made absolutely no sense to her. Alec had been facing away as he'd spoke, but now he turned to her and studied her expression. Clary felt like an open book under his intent gaze.

"You never even came close to dumping him did you?" Alec stated more than asked. Clary shook her head.

"Jace thought I was going to dump him?" Clary asked dumbfounded. It was just occurring to her how serious Jace had been when he'd asked her if she blamed him for her running into Sebastian again over the summer.

"Yep," Alec replied. Magnus was sitting on Alec's other side, happily eating his french toast and no doubt listening into their conversation.

"I had no idea," Clary whispered. "Why the hell would I dump him? If anyone was going to do the
dumping, it would surely be the other way around." To Clary's great surprise, Alec started laughing so hard he couldn't breath. Clinging to Magnus for support with one hand, and holding the knot in his stomach with the other, Alec tried and failed to catch his breath. He was very soon in danger of falling head first into his breakfast.

"If someone held Jace over a cliff and said they'd only let him live if he dumped you, I am 100% certain Jace would die," Alec managed to say through his laughter. "Hell, if someone told him you were his sister I doubt it would mean much to him."

"Gross," Clary said pulling a face at the thought of dating her brother. "Alec, I have a brother and that made my head go to a disturbing place. Please don't ever say that again." All this did was make Alec laugh even more. He was barely breathing at this point and would have probably been on the floor if Magnus wasn't supporting him.

"Really Alexander," Magnus sighed, shaking his head at his boyfriend who was clinging to his shoulder, so as not to fall off his chair. Then he turned to Clary and added, "Why do you think Jace would want to break up with you Clary?"

"Jace gets hit on a lot," Clary explained. "And when I say a lot, I mean like all the time. It doesn't matter where we are. We went to a nice family restaurant once, and I was so sure it would be fine, but then the waitress made some snarky comment about how the last time she'd seen him, they'd been in handcuffs."

"Wow, that's an image," Magnus replied, with wide eyes.

"Yeah I know," Clary grumbled. "It won't leave my head. That and all the rest, like the girls who were giggling in the library and batting their eyelashes at him just a few days ago. Sometimes they are bold, and literally hit on him while I am standing right there!"

"I get why that would suck," Alec began. He seemed to have sobered up some now, though still looked highly amused. "But Jace loves you Clary. I bet he doesn't even notice those other woman at all."

"I know he sees them," Clary said. "He looks them up and down sometimes like he's checking them out. And he's never told me that Alec."

"Told you what?"

"That he loves me," Clary replied, awkwardly. It was a hard thing to admit out loud.

"Wow really?" Alec looked so surprised, Clary had to admit she felt a little better. Alec was Jace's friend and roommate after all. Surely, he'd know if she was way off base here.

"I don't know if you've realized this," Alec explained with a grin. "But Jace is dense. Sure, he's my friend and all, but he's also a total idiot most of the time. Just ask him point blank if you want him to say it. I bet Jace thinks he's already told you."

"He can't be that dense," Clary disagreed.

"Oh, believe me he can," Alec laughed.

"I will have to agree with Alec on this one," Magnus added.

"When we started dating," Alec began gesturing to him and Magnus. "Jace was worried I'd stop being his friend because we were no longer both miserable. Trust me, he's dense."
Clary thought of asking why Jace had been miserable, but decided against it when the topic shifted with the arrival of the cats. The Great Catsby and Chairmen Meow choose that moment to jump up onto the table and demand attention.

Clary thought about their conversation for the rest of the day, but no matter how sure Alec was, she just couldn't believe it completely. Also the idea of asking Jace point blank if he loved her or not was too terrifying to comprehend. Instead that night, Clary put on the Halloween costume her mother would have sent her into a nunnery for wearing, and seduced her boyfriend.

Chapter End Notes

The problem with draw out interwoven plots is that sometimes you have ideas for chapters so far ahead you haven't even got notes for them yet! This sucks only because you have to somehow find the motivation to write all those chapters to get to the point first. #StrangeWriterProblems lol

Also… one chapter a week is fucky slow as shit! Pardon my french but what does one do with time if one isn't writing 2000 words a day? Before now I never wrote ahead more than was needed for a sneak peek so the fact that the next chapter is not only finished, but also edited and it's been finished and edited for over a week is just insane! Plus I have pieces of the followed 3 chapters started too.

Though I do confess writing ahead is a little liberating. I mean now I can put more time into each chapter, and like my life. Which this last year I seem to have totally forgotten all about. Lol Free time used to automatically equal writing time, but now there is a whole world of possibilities available to me ranging from television and baking to friends and get this: leave the house! OMG what a concept!

Slowly down is also probably a good idea since my hands have finally started rebelling against the constant typing. (I've published an average of 43,000 words a month for the last 15 months... yes I did the math and I see carpel tunnel in my future...) When typing is your job, your hobby and 80% of your social life this kinda thing is bound to happen. I have started doing strength exercises with my hands so they don't get sore. Also had to change the tilt on my keyboard. #TypingTooMuch

Sneak Peek of totally finished and edited chapter that I am being super mean and keeping from you for a whole nother week... aka Chapter 61

"That has to be the most laid back Halloween I've had in years," Magnus commented while they were making breakfast.

"We handed out candy," Alec replied.

"Yes, but without getting drunk," Magnus chuckled. "And we were in bed before midnight."

"We weren't asleep at midnight though," Alec reminded his boyfriend with a smirk.


"Did you want to go out?" Alec asked. "I wouldn't have minded." Magnus hadn't
mentioned anything about wanting to do something more for Halloween, however, now Alec was worried he'd missed some kind of subtle hint.

"That isn't what I meant Alexander," Magnus spoke softly, his tone relaxing Alec again, and when Magnus turned to face Alec, he was smiling. Magnus kissed him gently then looked Alec in the eyes as he spoke. "I liked our quiet night in. I was just commenting."
Alec's Pretend

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

After his conversation with Clary, Alec was concerned that his friend was too dense to function, but he didn't get a chance to talk to Jace for the rest of the day. Clary wanted her place to herself that night, so for a change Magnus came over to Alec's apartment. It was a simple quiet night in, but Alec loved it all the same because he spent the evening in his boyfriend's arms.

Alec had recently come to feel like it was rather silly that Clary was living with Magnus while Jace lived with him. They so often switched apartments, he was starting to wonder if they shouldn't have started the year off living as couples instead. Though Alec knew that if he suggested it, he and Magnus would have to talk about money again, and he didn't want to do that. The summer was over, and in theory, they could go a whole year without having that argument again. So instead, Alec stayed over at Magnus's as often as he could, and though it was nice to have Magnus here for a change, Alec still prefered his boyfriend's apartment to his own. He suspected part of the reason for this is because of how attached Alec had become to his boyfriend's cats. Chairmen Meow in particular loved to jump up on Alec's lap when he was on the couch. Alec couldn't count how many times he'd woken up to the adorable cat sleeping on either his chest or by his head. Sometimes The Great Catsby slept by his legs, but not nearly as often. The oldest of Magnus's two cats hadn't warmed up to Alec as much as Chairmen.

"I miss the fluffs," Magnus complained as they woke up that morning in Alec's bed, and therefore without any purring cats.

"Me too," Alec agreed, kissing his boyfriend good morning. Magnus pulled him closer and deepened the kiss before they both got out of bed and headed to the kitchen.

"That has to be the most laid back Halloween I've had in years," Magnus commented while they were making breakfast.

"We handed out candy," Alec defended their possibly boring Halloween.

"Yes, but without getting drunk," Magnus chuckled. "And we were in bed before midnight."

"We weren't asleep at midnight though," Alec reminded his boyfriend with a smirk.


"Did you want to go out?" Alec asked. "I wouldn't have minded." Magnus hadn't mentioned anything about wanting to do something more for Halloween, however, now Alec was worried he'd missed some kind of subtle hint.

"That isn't what I meant Alexander," Magnus spoke softly, his tone relaxing Alec again. When Magnus turned to face Alec, he was smiling. Magnus kissed him gently then looked Alec in the eyes as he spoke, "I liked our quiet night in. I was just commenting."

"Good," Alec smiled, leaning forward and kissing his boyfriend before they sat down to breakfast. "Because I'd hate to think I kept you from where you wanted to be."

"What if where I want to be is wherever you are?" Magnus replied with a grin. When Magnus said things like this, Alec felt so happy, but he tried not to overthink it. There was a potential teasing
nature to Magnus's words.

"Then I think we did quite well for ourselves in terms of Halloween plans," Alec smiled back, kissing Magnus lightly before standing up and clearing their plates away.

"Must you always do the tidying up," Magnus grumbled. "It makes me feel so useless."

"You snooze, you lose," Alec laughed as he stacked the dirty dishes by the sink.

"Or in this case I snooze, I win," Magnus replied standing up to join Alec in the kitchen.

"I'm a spoiled rich kid who's never worked a day in his life remember," Alec reminded his boyfriend with a laugh. "Stacking dishes won't kill me."

"True," Magnus replied. It was moments like this that made Alec think Jace might have a point about the money thing. If not helping with the dishes put that slight look of guilt on his boyfriend's face, then Alec had to assume accepting money from Alec would make him feel worse. Alec wished there was a way to just make it okay. In this moment he wished for something that made it socially acceptable to share his wealth with his partner. The answer that came to him was surprisingly simple, while also not being something he'd do just because of money. Even if Alec knew Magnus was his forever, it didn't mean Magnus was thinking the same thing.

"I am worried about Clary," Magnus commented a while later when they were both, trying and failing, to get some homework done.

"She and Jace just need to have an actual conversation," Alec tried to comfort Magnus. "I am sure everything will be fine."

"Yes, but knowing those two, they will die of old age before that happens," Magnus sighed.

"How about this," Alec began. "When Jace gets home today I will lecture him for you."


"When are your plans with Tessa?" Alec asked. Magnus checked his phone to check the time, then sighed.

"Two hours," he answered.

"What do you say we ditch homework and watch Sense8?" Alec suggested.

"Deal!" Magnus said with a grin as he snapped his textbook closed and bolted for the couch. Magnus had Netflix open before Alec even sat down.

"Even if the show wasn't brilliant," Magnus began. "I'd watch it just because the title is a pun."

"It is?" Alec asked.

"There is eight of them," Magnus continued. "And they are called sensates. All eight of them share senses. Sense8."

"Wow," Alec whispered feeling like a fool. "How did I miss that?"

"Because darling, you don't think of life in terms of puns," Magnus replied knowingly as they settled down on the couch together.
"I think you pun enough for the two of us," Alec observed.

"You could always get a brain transplant, and changed your mind," Magnus said grinning. Alec recognized this tone of voice, and groaned inwardly knowing he was in for many more puns before he got to watch any television. "I'm reading this book about anti-gravity. It's impossible to put down. Don't spell part backwards. It's a trap. Oh oh!" Magnus jumped up a little, clearly excited about what he had next. "What's the worst thing about throwing a party in space?"

"I don't know," Alec spoke in monotone.

"You have to plan it. Get it, because planet," Magnus giggled then added before Alec could interrupt. "I am on a seafood diet. Every time I see food, I eat it." Alec tried to contain his groan and/or laugh as his boyfriend's puns continued. "I'd tell you a chemistry joke, but I know I wouldn't get a reaction. How can you spot the blind guy at the nudist colony? It's not hard."

"And that's when I killed him your honour," Alec said as if speaking to a judge.

"Attempted murder is no joke," Magnus replied in a somewhat serious voice, but Alec knew better. "It's just a couple crows." Magnus was grinning like a fool as she added, "Because a group of crows is called a murder."

Alec decided there was only one way to stop the flow of puns. He threw himself at his boyfriend and seized Magnus's lips with his own. Magnus seemed quite happy with this solution as his hands came up to hold Alec's waist. It was a deep kiss but also a lazy, happy one. Alec supported his weight with his arms on either side of Magnus's face as their lips danced. Releasing his boyfriend's lips, Alec trailed his kisses down his lover's neck, and Magnus's hands found their way under Alec's shirt. But then Alec remembered something Jace had said and pulled back.

"What's wrong?" Magnus asked sitting up as well.

"Nothing," Alec replied. "I just remembered what Jace said he and Clary did on this couch-" But before Alec could finish, Magnus stuck his fingers in his ears and started saying 'la la la' before doing to sit somewhere else. Laughing, Alec joined Magnus in the chair opposite and they watched Sense8 until Magnus had to leave.

Tessa was in her third trimester, and Alec knew Magnus was eager to see how she was settling into her new place. When their show ended and Magnus left, Alec got back to his neglected homework with a heavy heart. He tried to keep his thoughts on Statistics, but they often drifted to thoughts of Magnus. Even though Alec pretended to find Magnus's puns annoying, they were such a fundamental part of Magnus that Alec couldn't help but love them. Puns from anyone else wouldn't be nearly so easy to tolerate. Hours into his homework, and Alec was still having trouble keeping himself on task. He was saved from having to keep trying by the arrival of his roommate.

"Hey," Jace said as he walked in and dumped his school bag.

"You need to talk to Clary," Alec ordered mercilessly.

"Why hello to you too," his roommate replied.

"I am serious Jace," Alec continued.

"I just came from Clary's," Jace argued, clearly confused. "So I've been talking to her basically all day."

"Okay but you need to talk to her," Alec repeated, emphasising the word talk.
"You lost me," Jace stared, nonplussed. "What's the difference?"

"Let me spell it out for you," Alec said slowly so Jace couldn't misunderstand. "You need to talk to Clary about serious relationship stuff. You need to tell her you love her."

"Pfft, she knows that already," Jace dismissed him. " Heck, you figured that out last year before I did."

"But I am not dating you," Alec sighed, covering his face with his hand and muttering 'thank god' under his breath. Even if Jace were gay, Alec would not go near that mess if his life depended on it. "Just because I can see it from the outside, doesn't mean she knows it."

"I'll tell her then," Jace replied easily. "Why is this such a big deal?" How Jace could be this dense, Alec had no idea. Sure, the guy had never been in a relationship before Clary, but come on! Alec had to suppress the urge to hit his friend over the head with his hated textbook. The idea was extra appealing when he realized it would finally give the stupid book a purpose aside from being decorative. Why did they make students buy textbooks when they weren't needed Alec had no idea.

"Remember when you were super scared Clary would dump you?" Alec asked, trying to approach this from an angle Jace might understand. After Jace nodded, Alec continued. "Well that was never going to happen. She believes you are more likely to dump her."

"That's crazy," Jace dismissed.

"And," Alec continued. "Please please tell me you don't actually check out other women in front of her!"

"What am I supposed to do just pretend they aren't there?" Jace asked. He demonstrated his point by tilting his head all the way back then all the way to each side, in an exaggerated way, like he was avoiding looking right in front of him.

"Yes," Alec exclaimed, throwing his arms in the air. "That is exactly what you are supposed to do." Jace seemed to actually think about this.

"How does that work?" Jace asked. "Do I just close my eyes? Clary gets checked out too you know."

"How does it make you feel when other guys check her out?" Alec asked, once again trying to get through to Jace.

"She's hot," Jace replied simply with a shrug. "Of course she's getting checked out."

"You are a shit boyfriend," Alec sighed, his hand over his face in exasperation.

"What?" Jace asked, far more confused than Alec felt was strictly necessary. "But you said I was a clingy boyfriend?"

"You're that too," Alec replied. After another deep breath he added in a stern voice. "Listen to me very very carefully." Alec stared his friend down, trying to make sure the words sunk in. "You. Need. To. Talk. To. Clary."

"But she never wants to talk," Jace explained. "Actually, lately all she wants to do is have sex. She's been buying lingerie."

"And that didn't clue you in that there is a problem," Alec sighed, all the volume out of his voice.
now. Jace at least looked a little more thoughtful than he had before, and Alec decided he was done. If his friend was this dense he'd have to rely on Clary initiating the conversation, because Jace was clearly useless. Alec decided he would butt out from now on, and escaped to his room where he threw himself into his still unfinished homework, for once glad to have the task as an escape from Clace drama. Though his homework might be less tedious if he knew what he was actually going to major in. Alec still hadn't declared one, and he knew he needed to do so soon, but he just had no idea what he wanted to study.

Once Alec had properly distanced himself from his frustration, he texted Magnus to explain that he'd given Jace the lecture, and was claiming to be Switzerland from here on out.

'Sounds to me like those two can sort it out,' Magnus's texted. Alec had neglected to explain to his boyfriend exactly what Jace had said about Clary just wanting sex lately. He knew Magnus thought of Clary like a little sister and really didn't want to hear that.

'I hope so,' Alec replied and he meant it. Clary was growing on him, and Alec knew how much she cared for Magnus which endured her to him. The only real reason he'd disliked her to start was because she'd been giving Jace such mixed signals. Now that they were an actual couple, it was their job to sort out their problems, even if Alec wished they could hurry up already.

Chapter End Notes

I know more people read this than comment so here is my plan: Lot's of comments = bonus chapters

Kudo's are great but what I want most is to hear what you think. It's the best way I can grow and learn as a writer. Honestly feedback is like writer gold. I want constructive criticism. I want to know what I suck at so I can get better at it.

So I've decided if I get more significantly comments than usual on this chapter I will update again before Wednesday. Not bonus filler, but actually the next planned out chapter.

It feel like I used to get more comments and on a chapter than I do now and I really miss them. And I know most creative works don't get direct feedback from readers or viewer, but on ff writing a review is so easy. Its not like you have to track down some famous persons twitter or send fan mail. It's literally just typing a sentence, hitting send and like magic you have a direct line with the writer. If you don't want to leave a public review PM me. :) I promise I am nice. ^_^

Honestly I just really want to know what you who currently reading this thinks about the chapter. What made sense to you? What felt forced? What do you want to see more of? What do you want to see less of? What part made you laugh? What part confused you? What did you think in general? What writing skill do I lack? Is my description hard to imagine? Is my dialogue boring? Do I have plot holes? Have I missed up the continuity from previous chapters? It doesn't have to be long, but please say something.

Even if you don't comment I will still update again Wednesday, but if you want another chapter between now and then... its up to you. And remember I don't include my friends reviews so don't start counting reviews to see if you need to leave one, just leave one.
He went to sleep that night with the strangest feeling in his stomach. Something was off, and it had been off for a while, but to such a degree Jace hadn't realized a thing until now. He woke feeling unrested and headed to class, hoping it'd be over quickly so he could talk to Clary, but no such luck. His morning class felt so very drawn out, and Jace was sure he didn't take in a word. Alec's lecture played in his head, as Jace tried to decipher the difference between talking to Clary, and talking to Clary.

All throughout wrestling practice Jace was distracted. His sparring partner got the better of him more than once, and Jace found himself flat on the ground so many times before practice ended that he was sure he'd have a bruise. Dragging his sore sorry self home, Jace collapsed on Alec's couch. He supposed it was his couch too, though like most of the furniture in their place, he'd played no role in purchases it. Sometimes Jace felt like he was staying at Alec's apartment rather than living with Alec. It felt a little strange, but couldn't bring himself to care too much. It was just the way Alec was, or maybe he just hadn't been helpful during the move; Jace wasn't totally sure.

He must of fallen asleep because the next thing Jace knew, he was awoken by the door bell. His semi conscious brain slowly remembered why he'd been so worried all day and who would be at the door. Jace got up dragging his sore muscles, and had the door open before the bell went off again.

"Listen Clary," Jace began.
"And that didn't clue you in that there is a problem," Alec's words played in his head. Jace was rather worried he'd messed up, worse even than when he'd talked to Simon about lingerie. He realized now that maybe he should have tried to talk to his roommate all along. Sure, Alec didn't know Clary much, but he was dating Clary's best friend, which Jace hadn't realized the significance of until now. Jace could have asked Magnus, but he hardly knew the guy, and quite frankly from everything Alec had told him, asking Simon was ironically a better idea than getting advice from Magnus about his sex life with Clary.

He'd known she'd been acting a little differently lately, but she wasn't distant so he hadn't been worried like before. Also all the sex was very distracting. Alec had thrown his arms up, presumably out of exasperation at Jace, which Jace felt was a little unfair. Jace could have followed him to his room and tried to continue the conversation, but he sensed that would be a bad idea. He also suspected 'talk to Clary' was really all the advice Alec had to give. So Jace texted his girlfriend.

'Hey, Clary,' Jace typed. 'Is everything okay?'

'Yeah,' Clary texted back quickly. 'Why do you ask?'

'Well Alec said we needed to talk,' Jace replied.

'Did he now?'

'Yeah,' Jace replied. 'He was rather confusing actually.'

'What else did Alec say?' Clary asked. Jace wasn't sure what he was supposed to say over text and what he wasn't. He felt sure that she knew how he felt about her, but then again, if Alec was right maybe she didn't, and telling her over text would be a bad plan, right?

'Nothing I guess,' Jace replied.

'He and Magnus gossip like old women,' Clary texted, and Jace could just imagine the annoyed affectionate tone she'd adopt saying this.

'Yeah they do,' Jace texted back. 'We still on for hanging out tomorrow after class?'

'Yep,' Clary texted back. 'Your place.'

'Or the library?' Jace suggested. It had been a while now since Clary had wanted to be seen in public with him, and Jace just couldn't figure out why. He was starting to worry she was ashamed to be seen with him, though he had to admit, his previous lifestyle kind of warranted that, he didn't like the idea of her being ashamed of him. Then he suddenly realized that the two new behaviours could be connected? Could her not wanting to see him in public, and her new interest in lingerie be linked? Maybe, but Jace couldn't figure out how.

'Your place,' Clary texted back.

'We always just go to my place,' Jace replied trying to steer the conversation to a different conclusion. 'Aren't you bored of just staying in?'
'Nope,' Clary replied. With a sigh, Jace stared down at his phone. If only he could read her mind. Her behaviour was such a mystery to him.

'How about we go out to eat?' Jace suggested. 'Sushi?'

'We could order Sushi from home,' Clary counted. He was tempted to just ask her if she was ashamed to be out with him in public, but Jace couldn't get up the nerve.

'If that's really what you want,' Jace replied, giving in like he always did.

'Yep,' came Clary's reply followed by a happy face. Jace put his phone down and stared at the pile of papers on the table. He'd been doing homework last night right? Well at least it would distract him.

A few hours later Jace had his homework done, but was in no way distracted. He went to sleep that night with the strangest feeling in his stomach. Something was off, and it had been off for a while, but to such a degree Jace hadn't realized a thing until now. He woke feeling unrested and headed to class, hoping it'd be over quickly so he could talk to Clary, but no such luck. His morning class felt so very drawn out, and Jace was sure he didn't take in a word. Alec's lecture played in his head, as Jace tried to decipher the difference between talking to Clary, and talking to Clary.

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He must of fallen asleep because the next thing Jace knew, he was awoken by the door bell. His semi conscious brain slowly remembered why he'd been so worried all day and who would be at the door. Jace got up dragging his sore muscles, and had the door open before the bell went off again.

"Hey," Clary said with a smile.

"Sorry were you waiting long?" Jace asked rubbing his eyes. "I fell asleep."

"Nope, just got here," Clary replied as she walked in. Jace nodded as he closed the door, still trying to wake up. There was always a sort of relief when he saw Clary after being apart from her. He couldn't really explain it, but even so, Jace was enjoying the slight unclenching of his shoulder muscles he hadn't realized he'd been carrying.

"Listen Clary," Jace began. He had no idea how to do this, and Alec's lecture was making him nervous.

"What's wrong?" Clary asked. For a moment Jace took in her appearance as he if he was scooping her in a bar. Usually she was just Clary, and he enjoyed her presence without really observing her like he probably should. Doing this helped him notice things. Her breathing was shallow, and her gaze locked. If Jace didn't know any better, he'd have said she was a little scared, but that didn't make any sense.

"Are you okay?" Jace asked.

"Fine," Clary replied, but her voice was too high. Then she moved forward and kissed him. Jace accepted the kiss happily, melting into her touch like he always did. He held her close, feeling the warmth of her body even through her coat. He felt her cool hands against the skin of his back, and he
could tell where she was trying to take their kiss, but for once in his life, Jace wasn't in the mood. He pulled away, his hands held out to keep her a few inches away, preventing her from continuing to kiss him.

"Can we just watch a movie tonight?" Jace asked. He didn't want her to feel rejected, and was keenly aware that this was the first time he'd done so. He placed a hand gently on her face, trying to be loving so she wouldn't be hurt.

"I don't want to watch a movie," Clary replied, but there it was again, that look on her face that Jace just couldn't figure out.

"What are you thinking?" he asked. "What's wrong?" He'd seen this look before. If only he could see through her skull and discover what wheels were turning in that beautiful brain of hers.

"Nothing," she answered too quickly like always. Jace wasn't going to let it slide anymore. He gently held her face in his both hands, making her look at him.

"Please talk to me," Jace begged. "I know I am a shit boyfriend, but I don't want to be. I should have noticed sooner that something was wrong. And I'm sorry."

"Everything fine," Clary responded in a slightly higher voice than normal.

"No, it isn't," Jace stated firmly. "Tell me."

"Am I enough?" she asked in so low a whisper Jace barely heard her.

"What?" Jace whispered back stunned, and almost sure he'd heard wrong. She was everything, and it wasn't like he'd been subtle about this.

"Do you want all those other girls?" she continued, still in that same soft voice that he could barely make out.

"What other girls?" Jace replied, confused and more worried than ever at what Clary had been thinking this whole time.

"Every freaking woman who catches sight of you!" Clary suddenly yelled, taking a step back. As quickly as it came, her anger vanished and she was in tears, her face in her hands. Jace didn't know what to do. All he wanted was to take her pain away, but he hadn't a clue how.

"When we were staying with your mom," Clary sobbed, words pouring from her now. "I saw women around your home town, and I couldn't help but wonder how many of them you'd slept with. Some of them even gave me this look like they didn't understand why you were with me. And worse, some very obviously checked you out while I was standing there." She had sunk to her knees now on the floor, Jace moving down to the ground with her. "It got worse when school started. It doesn't matter where we go… they are there... and I-

"I love you Clary," Jace cut her off firmly. "You. Not them. Don't be sad." It was the only thing he could think to say, and based on what Alec had told him, he needed to say it. Jace was so bad at communicating how he really felt, this whole conversation was new territory for him. He still wasn't sure if he'd said the right thing, but Clary at least stopped crying. She looked up at him with shock written on her face, and in that moment, Jace realized just how shit of a boyfriend he really was.

"You do?" she all but gasped, looking up at him from where she sat on the floor, her legs pulled up against her chest.
"Of course," Jace replied easily. "Alec called me out on that this time last year." She still hadn't said a word, so Jace thought he'd keep going till she did. "Since almost the first moment I saw you, you've held all my interest, Clary. Captured my thoughts. Soon I thought of nothing, wanted nothing, but you. All the while, never once thinking you could want me too. Sometimes I still wake up amazed that this isn't all a dream. That you are really mine." He wiped a tear from her cheek with his thumb, smiling as he continued. "I don't care what other people think when they look at us. They don't matter. You matter, so please please don't be sad. I hate it when you are sad."

"Then why do you look at them?" Clary asked, looking slightly stunned. "You check them out."

"That doesn't mean I want them," Jace replied easily. "It just means that I noticed they are physically attractive. It means nothing Clary."

"It doesn't feel like nothing," Clary mumbled, though Jace had to admit she looked a little less upset. Jace sighed. He was doing this all wrong and he knew it. "Do you remember our first kiss?"

"Yeah I found you with your tongue down some other woman's throat, but somehow you got me to kiss you anyway."

"Trinity's just a friend," Jace sighed. "But that wasn't what I meant. Do you remember what I said to you before the kiss?"

"I-" Clary started then stopped. "Something about you spending your life courting woman." Jace hung his head, astounded at how selective her memory was right now. Placing a hand on each of her shoulders, Jace looked into her eyes before speaking.

"I have been emotionally invested in exactly one woman my whole life," he stated firmly. "I am yours in every sense of the word, and I will always be yours so long as you want me to be." They stared each other down for what felt like an eternity before Clary broke the silence.

"I love you too," Clary whispered, looking slightly embarrassed. Jace exhaled in relief, not only at hearing her say such beautiful words, but also at the peaceful expression on her face. He'd finally gotten through to her. Leaning forward, Jace kissed the love of his life with all the emotion he could bring to bare.

"Just when I think I have you figured out, you confuse me to no end," Jace grinned at her. "I thought you'd be upset about me failing you over the summer. I thought you'd hate me for being the reason you were near him again, but you didn't. Then foolish me was too busy marveling in that fact to notice anything else. The concept that you didn't know how much I care never even crossed my mind. I was sure it was obvious."

"That's what Alec said," Clary replied, but she was smiling. "Wasn't obvious to me."

"In the future, if you are confused about some stupid thing I'm doing without realizing it, just ask me okay?" Jace said with a sigh. "Honestly I don't mind."

"Okay," Clary whispered. She pulled him in for a hug, and Jace buried his face in her beautiful red hair. As they pulled out of the hug, Clary stood up and finally took off her coat. It wasn't until the coat fell to the ground that Jace realized why she hadn't taken it off.

"Be a shame to waste this though right?" Clary grinned at him, clearly indicating the edible lingerie she was wearing.

"Oh no!" Jace said. He'd spotted one of his shirts on the couch and throw it at her. "We are definitely
snuggling on the couch and watching a movie." Clary laughed as she put on the shirt, which somehow made her even sexier, the way his shirt skimmed the tops of her bare hips. Unable to resist, Jace moved close, pulling her into his arms and kissed her. Clary grinned into the kiss as Jace's hands found their way under his shirt.

"Stop being so sexy when I'm tired," Jace groaned. He enjoyed her smile at his words, then turned to collapse on the couch. He really was tired, and sore. Clary vanished into the bathroom, presumably to change. When she returned Jace was scrolling through Netflix.

"What's this show?" Jace asked as Clary sat down. He was happy to see her back in her usual jeans and a hoodie.

"Sense8," Clary replied. "Alec and Magnus watch it all the time."

"Is it any good?" Jace inquired.

"If Magnus is to be believed," Clary responded. "It's the best new show of the decade, though he does tend to exaggerate."

"Wanna try it?" Jace asked. Clary easily agreed and settled into his arms for a much needed evening of snuggling.

Chapter End Notes

I am feeling just about as warm and happy as Jace right now. *Hmm* 16 reviews in the first day on fanfic though a few of you commented here who don't normally which is great! And so much more detailed than usual! Man, I love all you guys. I spent like a solid hour Wednesday morning replying to reviews and being way too excited to function. My boyfriend thought the cat was having a fit. LOL

Sneak Peek Chapter 63:

"Izzy this is Clary," Magnus did the introductions. "Clary this is Izzy."

"Hi," the redhead said. "You're Alec's sister right?"

"That I am," Izzy replied.

"I guess you'd know me as Alec's roommate's girlfriend," the redhead replied.

"Or Alec's boyfriend's best friend," Magnus added.

"I think you said your name was Clary," Izzy laughed and Clary joined in. "I'll call you that."

"Works for me."

In the silence that followed, Izzy felt her phone go off. Eagerly anticipating a reply from one of her classmates she unlocked her phone however the message turned out to be from an unknown sender.
'So I'm not really sure why I'm messaging you,' the unknown message read.

'I told you who you are,' Izzy texted back quickly. 'I might be able to help with that. ;)' 

Now the questions becomes... even if I don't promise a specific bonus chapter if you continue to review more. Will you understand that I ALWAYS want reviews and will definitely write faster and update faster the more of them I get? Honestly updating once a week is easy (almost too easy. I am thinking of going back to my update as fast as I write thing because man I don't have the patience for this) and I'd keep doing it for just a few reviews but this story won't be as long or go up as fast without them. Just a fact of how my motivation works. ^_^
Izzy's Woes

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Izzy had expected Simon to text her right away. In her experience, shy nerdy boys were the type to call basically the second they got a girl's number, especially a girl like her. Though she had to admit that technically she had little experience with shy or nerdy guys. They weren't generally her type, but somehow Simon was. She wasn't really sure why, but something about him appealed to her. So when November began without a call from Elevator boy, Izzy found herself surprised. Almost two weeks and the guy hadn't so much as texted her. She was trying not to take it personally. Plenty of other fish in the sea and all that, so she just hit up bars like usual, and tried not to think about it.

It didn't take long for Izzy to realize that the guy from her first night in town was a rarity around these parts. Izzy was a little picky when it came to men. She liked sharp dressers. Guys who took a little pride in their appearances rather than just hanging out in baggy tees. A few muscles never hurt, nor a chiseled jawline, but in general she liked classy guys best. She liked to be really attracted to the guy, as she always had a better time that way. Izzy often found herself disappointed when she went to the bar just down the street from campus. Sometimes she'd go out and just flirt with a bunch of semi attractive guys, then go home alone. It was still an okay evening all the same, though Izzy really was finding less fish in the sea here than back home.

Also her classes were turning out to be not as interesting as Izzy had hoped. They were very intro-like, and she was having trouble staying awake during her three hour lectures. This was probably why she was thinking so much about what her major should be, in the hope it would make her classes more interesting. The problem was that there were so many majors to choose from, she didn't yet have a clue which she wanted to devote the next four years of her life to. Marketing looked kinda interesting, though she wasn't taking that intro course till next semester. She was enjoying her psychology course quite a lot more than Econ 101, and Izzy's mandatory Introduction to Humanities first year class was total crap as far as she was concerned. Since her lucky roommate had already taken the course last year, Izzy was stuck complaining about it alone. With the lack of game in this town, Izzy was spending an increasing amount of time with Maia these days, who seemed to have quite the opposite problem.

"Remember that ex I told you about?" Maia asked when she returned to the dorms after class on Friday.

"Yeah," Izzy replied, turning in her chair to speak to Maia.

"Well I saw him today," Maia said. "In the school!"

"But you said he lives in your hometown?" Izzy replied.

"Yeah he does," Maia exclaimed. "I have no clue why he's here, and now I am worried he is gonna see me and then come over and talk to me, and it's gonna be awkward and sucky and, yeah."

"You know you could always just say no to the talking," Izzy reminded her friend with a shrug. "Walk away."

"Yeah, but he's so clingy," Maia whined. "I can't picture that working."

"This is why I try not to get involved with clingy guys," Izzy stated. She was very glad Maia didn't
know anything about her being annoyed that Simon hadn't called. He was making her feel needy, which annoyed her to no end. Though she had technically jilted him in that elevator, at this point, it felt more like she had only teased herself.

"Too late," Maia groaned as she laid back on her bed and covered her face with her hands. "Already got involved, before he was clingy."

"If he's around the school I bet he has classes, which means he's been here since September," Izzy added. "That's two and a half months and he hasn't talked to you. Maybe he's just here for school and it had nothing to do with you." Maia sat up and gave Izzy a very skeptical look.

"I am not that lucky," Maia stated, blankly.

"Fine," Izzy sighed, then added hopefully. "So what do you want to do about it?"

"Stay home and watch tv in my sweats," Maia answered.

"Lame!" Izzy groaned. That was not what she'd had in mind. This lack of a wingman was killing her game. She'd had a group of friends back home who usually went to clubs with her. So far, here it was just Maia, and she was not very reliable. She could go to the club by herself, but it just wasn't the same.

"Sorry," Maia muttered. "I am not really up for going out tonight."

"Fine," Izzy sighed turning her head to the side dramatically. "I shall just have to entertain myself then."

As Maia settled in for a evening at home, Izzy left the dorm rooms in search of a more entertaining way to spend her Friday night. Since she'd started at this school, Izzy hadn't seen as much of her brother as she'd expected, though she knew this mostly to be because Alec spent so much of his time with his boyfriend. She knew Alec would love it if she and Magnus got along better, but first impressions were hard to change. It had really twisted her insides when she'd heard the distress in her brother's voice while he and Magnus had been fighting, or whatever it was they'd been doing with all that failure to communicate. Alec was happy again, which meant Izzy had been glad to be wrong in that particular case, but she couldn't help remembering the tone in Alec's voice when he'd called about their problems, the anxiety there.

Though she supposed that she really had nothing better to do tonight, so maybe it was time to fix that. Alec could usually be found at his boyfriend's apartment, and so Izzy decided to pay them a surprise visit. Though on her way, she also got out her phone and texted a few of the girls she sorta knew from class, in a vain hope they'd be interested in doing something tonight. But by the time she reached Magnus's front door not a single one of them had answered her. Just as she had predicted, it was Alec who answered the door.

"Hey Iz," Alec greeted her. "What brings you to Magnus's?"

"I knew it was where you would be," Izzy replied, walking in without an invitation.

"I am not here that much," Alec disagreed. "This isn't my apartment, Iz."

"It's mine," Magnus's voice added. Looking over her brother, Izzy could see Magnus sitting on the couch. "And you don't like me, remember."

"I never said that," Izzy replied coolly, moving around Alec to address Magnus. "Beside if I never came here, I'd never see my brother. Really Magnus, you should start charging him rent." Magnus
laughed, a short sharp sound void of humour.

"He already has a renter thank you." The voice was female and unfamiliar. Izzy turned to see a petite redhead sitting at the dining room table. Izzy had never met this redhead before, or maybe she had. Was this the girl she'd once see making out with Jace?

"Izzy this is Clary," Magnus did the introductions. "Clary this is Izzy."

"Hi," the redhead said. "You're Alec's sister right?"

"That I am," Izzy replied.

"I guess you'd know me as Alec's roommate's girlfriend," the redhead replied.

"Or Alec's boyfriend's best friend," Magnus added.

"I think you said your name was Clary," Izzy laughed and Clary joined in. "I'll call you that."

"Works for me," Clary replied before turning back to whatever she was doing, which Izzy suspected was homework.

"So what's up Iz?" Alec asked as he turned and walked with her back into the living room where Magnus was.

"Noth-ing," Izzy said drawing out the word. Alec gave her a very dubious look. "Okay, fine I'm bored. You happy."

"Wonderful to know you value my company so highly," Alec said sarcastically as she sat down on the couch next to Magnus. Izzy observed them very close as Magnus's arm went around Alec. It was such a casual gesture, easily accepted. Either they were both very good actors, or they really had worked it all out. Izzy had known this of course, but seeing it, somehow surprised her.

"Pfft," Izzy dismissed her brother's sarcasm as she sat opposite them. "I just hate to be bored."

"Don't I know it," Alec laughed. "From the time you picked a fight with boys half your age on the swings, to when you were caught sneaking out, your only defense was 'But I was bored.'"

"And don't forget," Izzy grinned. "But it was fun."

"Ah yes, that was one of your favourites too," Alec replied.

"Still is," Izzy chirped. "So what are you all doing tonight?" Alec shrugged, mumbling something about a television show they were watching. Izzy sighed, covering her face with her hand.

"What is it with couples?" Izzy asked. "Are you all just content to exist or something? I mean I understand every now and then staying in, but you people stay home like every night, hibernating or something."

"You make us sound like a different species," Alec laughed.

"You so are!" Izzy replied. She turned to Clary and added, "You seem way cooler than these coupled ones. Why don't we go to a club together."

"Sorry also a hibernating couple," Clary replied.

"Yeah, but with Jace," Izzy dismissed her argument. "Since there's no way a guy like that sticks to
one woman, you should be free to shop around too."

"Izzy," Alec grumbled turning to her, clearly annoyed. "How many times do I have to tell you that Jace is totally different now, or do you really think I'd be friends with the same jerk we both knew back in high school?"

"Yeah yeah, but I'll believe it when I see it," Izzy replied, disbelieving, then added with a slight whine. "Man, I thought University would be more fun than this. No one wants to go out or do anything interesting. I am suddenly counting the days till Christmas."

"Me too!" Clary added enthusiastically. She had her chair turned away from the table now, seemingly giving up on the papers and textbooks scattered across it. "Since we spent the summer with his mom, Jace said he'd do Christmas with my family. It's gonna be great."

"Great as a way of describing bringing Jace home to meet your mom is rather a strange thought," Izzy admitted. "For Christmas, I think I'll ski like usual. What do you think Alec? Or maybe mom and dad have a Cruise planned like two years ago?"

"It was three years ago," Alec corrected. "And I haven't really thought about Christmas yet Iz."

"Why not?" Izzy asked. It was then that she saw it. That nervous expression on her brother's face as he turned to Magnus. It made her a little wary. Was there something not right there again?

"I just haven't," Alec replied. "Come on Iz, it's barely November."

"What do you want to do for Christmas Alexander?" Magnus asked softly, turning to face her brother. The way Alec and Magnus were looking at each other now, it almost seemed to Izzy like she and Clary weren't in the room. She was sure the couple had completely forgotten they weren't alone.

"That's easy," Alec whispered, his eyes locked with Magnus. "I want to spend Christmas with you." There was silence for a moment before Alec spoke again. "I'd love for you to come home with me for Christmas, meet my parents, my little brother."

"What if they don't like me?" Magnus asked.

"They will," Alec replied smiling. Then Magnus turned to Izzy and back to Alec, clearly reminding Alec how his meeting Izzy went. "Izzy doesn't count," was Alec's pre-school level come back.

In the silence that followed, Izzy felt her phone go off. Eagerly anticipating a reply from one of her classmates, she unlocked her phone, however the message turned out to be from an unknown sender.

'So I'm not really sure why I'm messaging you,' the unknown message read.

'If you told me who you are,' Izzy texted back quickly. 'I might be able to help with that. ;)'

'Oh sorry this is Simon,' he texted back. Izzy grinned down at her phone, glad to not be rejected.

'What took you so long?' she replied.

'Good question,' Simon texted.

'Are you going to answer my good question?'

'Nope,' Simon replied.
'And why not?' she asked, typing and looking down at her phone, totally ignoring what was going on around her.

'Too embarrassing.'

'Where are you?' Izzy inquired. She would let him keep his reasons. It wasn't her business anyway. What was her business was finishing where they'd left off in that elevator, and boy did she need it tonight.

"Who are you texting?" her brother asked. Izzy looked up to see the room suddenly focused on her.

"I think I've figured out what I'm doing tonight," Izzy replied while adding in her head or rather who I'm doing. "All this lovey dovey oowy goowy eyes, was making me sick anyway. Bye." She waved at them as she turned to leave, feeling her phone go off as she closed the door behind her.

'My dorm room,' Simon's reply displayed on her phone.

'Building and room number please,' Izzy texted back as she started walking to school. Simon took so long to reply, that she was just stepping onto the edge of campus when he finally sent her his location. Reaching the dorms, Izzy decided to make a short deture.

"You're back early," Maia said as Izzy walked in.

"Just need to change," Izzy replied. Maia was indeed in her pjs, sitting at her laptop watching some cheesy movie, just as she'd promised.

Izzy consulted her wardrobe and quickly selected a tasteful black satin strapless dress. She loved its elegant sweetheart neckline, and the way it hugged her curves. She decided on her nude coloured short kitten heels so she wouldn't seem too tall. In situations like this, when Izzy knew for sure she'd get lucky, there was one other thing she brought with her. Slipping it into her purse, Izzy made a brief stop at the bathroom before heading to Simon's dorm.

As Simon greeted her at the door, Izzy realized what his appeal was. Simon was staring at her as if slightly in shock. She knew her outfit was killer, but Izzy also held herself well in a small heel, showing off her assets to their highest potential. The way Simon was looking at her made Izzy feel like the sexiest woman alive. There were certain benefits to hot nerdy guys it seemed.

Chapter End Notes

I GIVE UP!

I tried doing the schedule thing. I really did, but I suck at it. Updating so freaking slowly is dumb and I don't wanna. I have like three chapters finished that are just sitting there staring at me, mocking me with their completed word count-ness. :( The idea was that I'd work more on my original stuff because I was writing this less... but as it turns out that doesn't work. I seem to be able to obsessively write just one thing at a time so maybe its best to binge write this till I'm done (though that might take a long while...) then focus on other things.

... that lasted what... like a month? sigh. I am such a spaz. Oh well. I hope people will at least be happier with faster updates. *shakes head at self*
"Well if you are interested in a good time then I can show you a few things." She moved closer, slowly. "Starting with flirting," Izzy continued taking another step forward while swaying her hips. "Then touching." Now she was running her fingertips down his arms. "Kissing." She brought her fingers to his lips gently putting pressure on them and Simon felt a shiver move down his spine. He'd been attracted to Clary, but this was different. There was no affections here, no decade of emotional longing. His breathing was erratic and he could feel that his body wanted her, even if his heart was unaffected. The next thing Simon knew his hands were on her hips, pulling her in as he whispered his consent in her ear. She grinned clearly glad he hadn't sent her away.

"But before we do this," Izzy explained suddenly taking a step back and holding out her hand, placing one finger on his chest. "You have to promise me something."

"What?" Simon asked, nervous and slightly stunned. His mind blank while also going through a million ridiculous demands at the same time.
The way the black fabric hugged her skin drew his eye like a moth to the flame. Even the way she was standing was sexy, with such confidence and poise. Her short tight dress left little to the imagination. Simon's eyes roamed over her bare legs, up the curve of her hip, and focused on her chest for just long enough, that Simon realized he was staring. With a slight shake of his head, Simon looked up at her face to find Izzy grinning at him. Well, at least he hadn't insulted her with his gawking.

"Like my dress?" Izzy smirked. Simon just nodded. He was so out of his depth here. Why had he texted her? Why hadn't he just left well enough alone? Sure, he'd caught Clary and Jace being all lovey dovey, saying the silly word more times than strictly necessary, but that didn't mean Simon should be doing this.

"You do know why I gave you my number right?" Izzy asked. Simon nodded. He was almost completely certain this was only a booty call, which was probably why he'd avoiding texting her for so long. Should he tell her that he's a virgin, or maybe not? He barely knew her. Was he sure he wanted to do this?

"You've never done this before have you?" Izzy asked, and Simon froze. Was there a big 'VIRGIN' sign on his forehead? Was it a physical mark for all to see?

"You seem nervous," Izzy explained, when Simon didn't speak. "Sex with strangers isn't everyone's thing. I'd rather not leave, but I will if you want me to." And Simon realized she just thought he'd never had a one night stand before. Though this relaxed him, he found that he didn't like not being honest.

"I-" Simon began. "I've never done any of this before, not just the stranger part."

"Ah," Izzy spoke, inhaling sharply as if everything suddenly made sense. Had he been that obvious? "Well then it starts with intent." She slowly moved closer. "Then flirting," Izzy continued, taking another step forward while swaying her hips. "Touching." Now she was running her fingertips down his arms. "Kissing." She brought her fingers to his lips, gently putting pressure on them, and Simon felt a shiver move down his spine. He'd been attracted to Clary, but this was different. There was no affection here, no decade of emotional longing. His breathing was erratic, and he could feel that his body wanted her, even if his heart was unaffected. The next thing Simon knew, his hands were on her hips pulling her in as he whispered his consent in her ear. She grinned, clearly glad he hadn't sent her away.

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"That you won't become some sappy puppy who follows me around everywhere," Izzy explained. "You have to promise not to fall in love with me."

"I'm in love with someone else," Simon explained. "And she's gone."
"Works for me," Izzy grinned, and then she was right up close to him again. He felt her hands under his shirt. Then she was pulling it over his head. Simon wanted to stop her. Feeling insecure about his appearance, he wanted to do this with his shirt on to cover his stomach, but it was far too late now. His shirt lay on the ground across the room where she'd throw it. So instead, Simon reached for the light switch and turned it off, plunging his dorm room into darkness.

"This is no fun," Izzy pouted. "Now, I can't see the way your eyes pop when you look at me."
Simon didn't respond since she chose that moment to press her lips to his bare chest, sending shivers over his skin. Then he felt her whole body press closer to him, and finally her lips on his mouth. Simon's hands went around her, holding her close as he tried to not fail at kissing.

"My dress, shy boy," Izzy whispered against the sensitive skin of his neck. "It's your turn." With sudden understanding, Simon started fumbling with the zipper on the back of her dress. It was stuck almost instantly. She was still kissing him, but Simon totally lost track of what the rest of his body was doing as he focused on his hands and the zipper. It was caught on a strip of fabric and wouldn't come free. He hadn't managed to get it loose when Izzy quickly pulled away and magically unzipped it herself. Were women actually magic? Or had there been some trick to that zipper he hadn't know anything about? It was her dress after all, her zipper. Why was he thinking about that zipper when he could now feel that Izzy wasn't wearing a bra. Or maybe the dress had one built in, either way, the zipper wasn't important.

With a slight shake of his head, Simon tried to never think of that zipper ever again! This became easier when Izzy's loose dress started to slide down, exposing her chest. Then her dress was around her ankles and Izzy placed his hands on her breasts, as if worried he wouldn't touch them without permission. He may have been bolder in that elevator, though in that case, he hadn't known exactly where it was going. He wasn't sure if it had been the surprise, or just the public location, but in that elevator, going 'all the way' hadn't even occurred to him.

Just like last time, her breasts fit so perfectly into his hand, round and soft. Simon found himself breathing hard, feeling rather high, while at the same time, he felt like putty in her hands. His pants were getting tight, and he was glad he could feel Izzy's hands at his waist, working to undo his jeans. It was a relief when she got them undone, though also nerve-racking. He and Clary had done stuff, but they'd never done anything quite so instinctive as this. All his memories of physical intimacy with Clary had always felt a little forced, at least anything past a peck on the lips.

Simon's arms held her, his hands against her bare skin as Izzy walked out of her dress, moving him with her. Simon felt the base of his bed hit the back of his legs. They just stood there a moment kissing while Simon learned whole new uses for his tongue. Next, Izzy's hands pressed gently into his chest, encouraging him to fall backward on the mattress.

As he lay on his back in bed, Simon realized that at some point he must have stepped out of his pants too. A fact he only registered because his legs were being held together by the clothing. Even in the dark he could see Izzy fairly clearly above him. A few strands of her dark hair had come loose and where framing her face. Simon's gaze shifted down, and he took in her smooth skin and perfect breasts. Her body was so toned, so well defined, that he wished again that he was wearing a shirt. She was beautiful, but not the same way Clary was. Izzy was a force of nature, a tornado you couldn't hope to tame.

"Lesson one," Izzy whispered grinning. "Touch don't stare."

Despite the fact that this was the third time he'd touched them, Simon was nervous as he tried to follow her advice, and reached up to cup her breasts again. Going with instincts he didn't know he had, Simon used his finger to move rhythmically over the darker skin of her nipple. Right away she
began breathing harder. Deciding this was a good thing, Simon kept doing it. Despite her heaving chest, Izzy still managed to yank on his underwear until it was pulled down enough to expose his hard arousal. Then she leaned forward to kiss him, each of her hands on either side of his face. Even Izzy's kisses felt nothing like Clary's had. Izzy's mouth moved with purpose, opening and closing as her tongue explored. Was it normal to be comparing them when he'd only ever kissed two women before? Simon sure hoped so.

Bring his thought back to the moment as Izzy's hands were roaming over him, teasing the one place that wanted her attention most. They were still kissing, though not just lips. Simon felt Izzy suck on the skin near his collarbone briefly before moving that teasing tongue down his side. Simon tried to hold his stomach in as she moved, hoping she wasn't thinking about his squishy middle, and lack of any kind of actual muscle. Slowly he moved his hands down her the way she was with him, watching her reactions. He got only gasps and moans, both of which sounded like good things so he kept it up. He could feel the bare skin of her hip, and realized she'd long ago rid herself of her own underwear, and he became highly aware that there was nothing but air between them now.

Slowly Izzy started grinding her hips against his erection, and he felt how slippery she was. Izzy was pressing his shaft hard into his stomach, sliding herself up and down him. She was creating friction between them, and it felt amazing. Simon was breathing more like her now, tension building in his body. His hands were still on her, one of them at her breast, while the other gripped her hip. She was sitting upright on him, both her hands being used to help her movement. Then his hands were trailing up both her sides slowly, trying to do more of what made her body shiver. He reached her breasts again, teasing her nipples like he had before. When she cried out he thought he'd done something wrong, but she was smiling.

"I must have been really pent up," Izzy whispered as she leaned down to kiss him gently. "Already got mine." Simon had no idea what she meant, but he had a sneaky suspicion it meant that they were done. This suspicion was totally and completely proven false in the next few seconds when Izzy shimmed her hips up to above his arousal, and then slid back down over it. Simon gasped as he felt himself suddenly encircled by her. She was warm, wet and sticky, which alone was a new and unreal feeling, but then she began to move, back and forth grinding on him like before, but so much better.

"Wait don't we need-" Simon began, the little of his brain that was functional speaking up.

"I've wearing a female condom," Izzy explained. Simon only vaguely remembered what that was from high school sex ed, and couldn't really think past his initial thought until he was swept up in the moment again. She was rocking her hips while he was inside, and it sent waves of pleasure over him. She squeezed her muscles around him tight, then released, and he couldn't hold out. When his orgasm hit, it was fast and hard, his body freezing up as he gripped the bed sheets.

Rather than lay down beside him, she moved off him and stood up. Simon felt rather dizzy, but not just from the lack of blood to his brain, but also the from the 'did that just happen' moment he was having.

"Must go wash up," Izzy chirped as she picked her dress up off the floor. "That was fun though."

"Yeah," Simon mumbled. He hadn't moved an inch since they'd finished. He just lay there slightly stunned, watching as she slid her dress back on, collected her things, and walked out his front door.

For what felt like an eternity, Simon lay naked on his bed staring at the ceiling, thinking. He realized that on some level, he'd thought he hadn't been enough for Clary because he'd known nothing about sex. Maybe he'd texted Izzy because he didn't want to lose the next girl he loved to some player with abs. Simon had been so sure that when this finally happened to him, he'd feel different afterward.
Like losing his 'V' card would somehow change who he was. He'd thought of virginity as something that defined him. Simon Lewis: Nerd, brother, son, musician, friend, virgin.

But as Simon lay there, he realized just how stupid a notion that truly was. Sex didn't affect personality, intelligence, or anything like that. Simon hadn't even used sex as a way to be emotionally closer to another person, which meant it had literally changed nothing. Well okay it had changed one thing; Simon really needed to shower.

Chapter End Notes

I managed to not update yesterday! #SelfControl... sorta.

Also its recently come to my attention how many people read this that skip the sex scenes. Sorry! I didn't realize anyone not interested in smut would be reading something rated M. I often try and work the sex into the plot and scene as seamlessly as I can (again since I had no idea non M rated readers would read this.) I don't really want to change the structure and flow that now since I've been doing it this way for like 64 chapters but exactly how annoying is it to skip the sex without a warning?

Sneak Peek Chapter 65

"Why are you crying?" Magnus asked her gently. He knew this woman well enough to know she only hid when she was crying real tears. He'd also seen enough of her fake tears to know the difference. Actually now that he thought about it, this might be the only time he'd ever seen her really crying.

"I'm not," Camille disagreed quickly.

"I see," Magnus replied calmly. "Well, my mistake. The water running down your face must be from the rain." They were, of course, indoors, and his sarcasm was very obvious.

"Are you going to tell me what's wrong?" Magnus asked gently. They were in a little nook off the main hallway. Two couches lined the walls, outlets for students to plug in laptops were near every surface, and a coffee table was in the center.

"Do you really want to know?" Camille inquired. "Because the last time we saw each other, you ran from me like I am some kind of snake or something."

"Yeah, sorry," Magnus replied easily, sitting on the couch opposite her. "Little bit of boyfriend drama. All settled now though. How is Ralf? Did your jealousy plan work?"

"No," Camille sniffed. "He just finally picked one of the other girls is all that happened."
November was nearly over, and Christmas was almost upon them. For Magnus, this meant many things, one of which was his one year anniversary with Alec. It wasn't the anniversary itself that he was nervous about, so much as the prospect of going home with Alec for Christmas. A week or so ago, when Izzy had dropped by for a sudden visit, Alec had asked Magnus to come meet his parents over the holiday. The problem was that Magnus hadn't seen his aunt since last Christmas. Sure, he talked to her on the phone from time to time, but it wasn't the same. Would it be too much to ask Alec for them to both visit Magnus's family and his? Plus the idea of meeting all of Alec's family at once, and staying with them for an extended period of time was a little intimidating. Though Magnus wasn't really sure how to talk to Alec about these things, he was sure about Alexander. It was something they had to talk about, and he might not be comfortable bringing it up, but he knew they were okay. It was a wonderful feeling to be secure in your love for another person. Magnus had known relationships security before Alexander, or at least he thought he had. With Alec, there was no little voice in the back of his mind trying to convince him that it would all fall apart.

Lost in his thoughts, Magnus walked out of class. It was getting close to exam time again, and the professors were starting to assign more homework. Magnus was having a hard time believing that in just a few short months, he'd be graduating with a Bachelor's in History. How had the last four years gone by so fast, and how could the same four years also feel like half his life? Next semester was going to be a stressful mess of applying for jobs, and trying to like grow up or something. Magnus wasn't so sure he was on board with this whole graduating thing. But short of purposely flunking out, there wasn't much he could do about it.

It was then that Magnus saw a rather familiar head of blonde hair. She was sitting alone in the corner almost hidden from view. As Magnus walked towards her, he thought idly about how just a year ago he wouldn't have been doing this. Back then, he would have been moving as quickly as possible in the opposite direction at the sight of this particular person, but today it brought a smile to his face. He wasn't bitter, for he had no reason to be. The past was the past, and Alec was his future.

"Oh Magnus," Camille gasped, jumping slightly in surprise and turned to him, her makeup running down her face.

"Why are you crying?" Magnus asked her gently. He knew this woman well enough to know she only hid when she was crying real tears. He'd also seen enough of her fake tears to know the difference. Actually now that he thought about it, this might be the only time he'd ever seen her really crying.

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"I see," Magnus replied calmly. "Well, my mistake. The water running down your face must be from the rain." They were of course, indoors, and his sarcasm was very obvious.

"Okay fine, I'm crying," Camille muttered. "Happy?"

"Yes, though it has nothing to do with you crying," Magnus replied. He'd long ago gotten over this woman, and his love for Alec was so different as to make him think he had never loved her the way he thought he had.
"Are you going to tell me what's wrong?" Magnus asked gently. They were in a little nook off the main hallway. Two couches lined the walls, outlets for students to plug in laptops were near every surface, and a coffee table was in the center.

"Do you really want to know?" Camille inquired. "Because the last time we saw each other, you ran from me like I am some kind of snake or something."

"Yeah, sorry," Magnus replied easily, sitting on the couch opposite her. "Little bit of boyfriend drama. All settled now though. How is Ralf? Did your jealousy plan work?"

"No," Camille sniffed. "He just finally picked one of the other girls is all that happened."

"Tessa's right isn't she," Magnus whispered with a smile. "You actually love Ralf." It was a strange concept to him, since Magnus hadn't ever felt like Camille had loved him during their relationship, at least not in retrospect.

"I'm pathetic," Camille whined, and Magnus had to admit crying wasn't her most attractive look, with red eyes and running mascara. Some people looked beautiful when they cried; Camille was just not one of those people, at least not when it came to real tears.

"No, you aren't," Magnus told her. "That's just what love means. It isn't easy. It requires trust and vulnerability. It requires giving another person power over you, over your happiness."

"What if I don't know how to do that?" Camille sobbed.

"If you love him, which it seems to me that you do, then I am pretty sure it's too late," Magnus corrected her. "He already makes you vulnerable. You have already trusted him with your heart, even if you didn't mean to. Why did you guys break up anyway?"

"I don't know," Camille whined. "Everything was fine and then… it wasn't. I don't know why he pulled away from me."

"If I know you at all," Magnus began. "Then I can hazard a guess." Camille turned to him, her eyes hopeful. "Did you ever once tell him how much you care about him?"

"I-" Camille started. "I- I'm not sure."

"You are an easy woman to love Camille," Magnus spoke truthfully yet casually, speaking almost academically. "Maybe a little too easy. When we were together, I remember counting the heads that turned in your direction when you walked into the room. I am sure Ralf has noticed the same. If you've never told him how you feel, I am not surprised he assumed the worse and pulled away, protecting himself. If I'd have been smarter, I'd have done the same thing."

"Oh," Camille said softly. There was silence for a moment then she spoke again. "When did you get so wise Magnus?"

"I'm not sure," Magnus chuckled. "Though Alexander is definitely to blame."

"I am sorry I cheated on you Magnus," Camille mumbled, clearly embarrassed to be saying these words. "I shouldn't have done that."

"You didn't want to hurt me," Magnus replied, tonelessly. After all, he'd rationally known this all along. It was only now, that he had the emotional distance he could say it so effortlessly. "Ironically it would have been kinder to just dump me." He laughed. This wasn't forgiveness, but Magnus had let go of the pain. He hadn't done it for her, but rather for himself. Holding onto betrayal weighed...
you down, caused you more hurt than the betrayal itself.

"Yeah," she mumbled again, looking away from him. "Anyway thanks for the advice."

"Sure," Magnus replied, standing up to leave. "Let me know how it turns out. I don't wish you unhappiness Camille."

"Thanks, I guess," Camille replied with a slight laugh.

"Tell him how you feel and see what happens," Magnus said again. "If all else fails, move on."

"I don't think I can," Camille said softly. "This is so different than all the ones that came before."

"I know what you mean," Magnus replied, smiling as he thought of his Alexander.

"You're lucky you know," Camille told him. "Alec's quite a catch. If he hadn't been only batting for your team, I'd have snatched him up myself."

"Why?" Magnus asked. "He doesn't seem like your type at all."

"He's rich," Camille shrugged. "Though, I suppose I can't say that anymore since I'm sitting here crying over some average income level guy." She sighed then stood up, wiping tears from her eyes. Then with a smile and casual farewell, Camille turned and left, leaving Magnus feeling rather uncomfortable.

Didn't like to keep his family's money to himself, so why did Camille know about it? Maybe Alec wasn't nearly as good at hiding it as he liked to believe. Though he supposed if anyone would invest time in researching the net worth of her fellow classmates, it would be Camille Belcourt. Even so, Magnus couldn't help but wonder if anyone else aside from Camille was thinking this way. Were there people who looked at him and Alec, and thought Magnus was dating Alec only for his money? It was not a pleasant thought, but Magnus tried to push it from his mind as he continued his walk to the cafeteria where he was meeting his boyfriend for lunch.

Upon entering the cafeteria, Magnus instantly saw Alec sitting at a table to his left near the microwaves. They were there for students to heat up lunches, but were also often used by staff. Looking past the line up for food, Magnus saw Alec and smiled. Then he saw Izzy sitting next to his boyfriend and groaned inwardly. With a deep sigh, Magnus headed towards them, not sure what to expect. Setting his books down on the table, Magnus sat beside Alec and tried to tune into their conversation.

"Hey Magnus," Izzy said interrupting herself. "Now as I was saying, my classes are lame and I need a major."

"I haven't even declared yet, and I'm in second year," Alec argued.

"Yes, well you are indecisive," Izzy argued. "While I am proactive."

"Or just easily bored," Alec mumbled almost under his breath.

"Or that," Izzy agreed without even looking annoyed. "So I was looking into nursing." Magnus couldn't help but laugh. He'd had a friend who'd been through the nursing program here, though he hadn't spoken to her in a while. Caterina Loss had the bedside manner of a saint, and could nurse even the grumpiest old man into being calm trusting model patients. If bedside manners could kill, Magnus was sure Izzy would be the first serial killer nurse.
"And this is funny because?" Izzy inquired coolly.

"Nurses have to be nurturing," Magnus told her. "I think Alec would probably make a better nurse than you."

"What about Marketing then?" Izzy asked.

"You can't pick a major before you even take the intro class for it," Alec sighed. "What if you hate it?"

"Then I'll change majors?" Izzy shrugged. Alec sighed deeply, then let his head hit the table with a thud.

"Ouch, Alexander that sounded like it hurt," Magnus observed, slightly worried for his boyfriend's skull.

"It eases the pain of sister annoyance," Alec sighed as he sat up again. "Why I was so worried this school would be a bad influence on you, I'll never know."

"You have an older brother complex," Izzy told him with a giggle.

"I promise she just showed up," Alec said, turning to Mangus. "I didn't plan for her to crash our lunch."

"Speaking of crashing," Izzy added. "How did that conversation about Christmas end?"

"And you care because?" Alec asked. "Didn't you run off to escape us boring couples?"

"Met up with Elevator boy actually," Izzy grinned. "He was much better than I thought he'd be. I was pleasantly surprised."

"I don't want to know any of this," Alec said sticking his fingers in his ears the same way Magnus did when Clary's sex life came up. "Too much information, Iz!"

"Prude," Izzy snapped at her brother as she pulled his hands back down. "So are you going to answer the question?" Alec just glared at her, but when she glared back he turned away, looking down at the floor.

"He can't," Magnus told Izzy, knowing exactly why Alec was avoiding the question.

"Why not?" Izzy asked. Magnus knew this wouldn't help him win points with Alec's sister, but he wasn't about to lie.

"I haven't given him an answer yet," Magnus explained.

"Why?" Izzy asked, her eyes narrowing. Magnus could imagine only too well the things she was thinking, and it made him nervous.

"Back off, Iz," Alec snapped. "You've never been in a relationship before, so you don't get to tell us how to handle ours. Sometimes people need to think about things."

"Fine," Izzy said standing up. "We still on for hanging out on the weekend big brother?"

"Of course," Alec sighed, but he looked tired. With a smile and a wave, Izzy walked away and Alec rested his forehead on Magnus's shoulders. Magnus pulled Alec closer, placing a soft kiss in his boyfriend's hair.
"She is so exhausting sometimes," Alec complained as he settled his head more comfortably against his boyfriend's shoulder. Magnus wrapped his arms around Alec.

"I can see that," Magnus replied. He knew they needed to talk about the Christmas thing, but asking Alec for something at the moment felt wrong.

"You will never guess who I ran into on my way over here," Magnus began.

Chapter End Notes

Cliffhanger! hehe

Yay! Backlog gone! I no longer have totally finished and edited chapters just waiting to be uploaded. Thank goodness! That is just so wrong. Lol. It's so nice to get back to normal. I totally suck at schedules. And though the next chapter is almost finished it isn't like already been beta read and is just sitting there so... close enough to normal for me. And yes it's Tuesday so clearly my self control sucks as I know lots of people are still behind on reading but... I wanted to hear what you guys think about Magnus's talk with Camille!

Sneak Peek Chapter 66

Alec had class then he'd made plans with a friend or rather his cousin. Though he supposed she could be better described as his friend since being someone's family didn't automatically guarantee that they were your friend too. Alec was making a better effort to keep in touch with Aline since they'd reconnected over the summer. He'd been texting her more and if those texts were to be believed Aline had converted her girlfriend into a Catan player and organized a game night at their new place tonight. She didn't have an expansion for the game so it could only be played with four players. Helen wanted to invite her brother so Aline had only invited Alec. Magnus hadn't minded being excluded in this case since he had a major essay due on Monday. When Alec arrived he learned that Helen had indeed become quite the Catan player thanks to her girlfriend. He met Helen's brother Mark and all in all it was a lovely afternoon.

November turned into December as class work got more and more stressful. Alec spent far more time than he wanted pouring over textbooks. Exams were once again upon them. Thoughts of Magnus were nothing close to the real thing and soon Alec was meeting up with his boyfriend for cramming sessions. It was during one of these afternoons that Magnus got a phone call from Will. Alec listened to Magnus's side of the conversation and quickly realized what had happened.
"You will never guess who I ran into on my way over here," Magnus began. Alec sat up. The change in his boyfriend's voice made him look up.

"Who?" Alec asked.

"Camille," Magnus replied. "I found her crying alone in the corner. Tessa is right, she really does love Ralf."

"I see," Alec replied. He wasn't sure how he felt about this yet. He knew Magnus loved him, and he knew there was nothing between Magnus and Camille anymore, but sometimes Alec still wanted to hit that woman over the head with something heavy for what she'd done to Magnus. Had it really been a year ago? Yes, because it had been November last year that Alec had finally found the courage to tell the love of his life that they couldn't be just friends, and then bonded with Jace over the resulting heartache. A year. It was a crazy thought. Somehow it felt like time was passing, faster now than before. This time last year, Alec had literally been having dreams about Magnus in his arms, then he'd woken up miserable and alone in his dorm room. Christmas would mark their one year anniversary, or rather January would, but very early January. To Alec it felt like he'd known Magnus much longer than that, while at the same time, Alec could remember their first kiss like it had been yesterday.

Alec wanted to bring Magnus home with him for the holidays so badly, that some part of him just wanted to pick Magnus up and carry him there, but Alec knew he couldn't do that. Not only because it wasn't physically possible, but also because it wasn't respectful or kind. Technically it was kidnapping and besides, if Magnus spent the whole holiday annoyed to be there, it wasn't like they'd have a good time anyway.

Alec was having a similar problem when he tried to think of things they could do for their anniversary. It was their one year and Alec wanted to plan something big for it, but he wasn't sure how far he should go planning it. If he planned something big, Magnus would want to pay for half of it? Because that was the last thing Alec wanted. If he went too small, it felt like he was making light of it, which was wrong. His last year with Magnus in no way felt insignificant, and Alec wanted to really celebrate it.

"Alexander say something," Magnus whispered, and Alec realize just how long he'd been silent.

"Sorry," Alec said, pulling his thoughts back to the here and now. "I was just thinking."

"About Camille?" Magnus asked, but Alec shook his head.

"About Christmas," Alec counted. It was time to just ask, to finally talk about what was hard to bring up. "What is it exactly that you don't like about visiting my family for Christmas?" Magnus didn't speak so Alec plunged on. "I know I should be patient and everything, but I've already told you my parents want to meet you. Izzy is just Izzy, and trust me she doesn't hate you or anything. She has always been a bit of a drama queen. And even if you don't want to buy plane tickets, I am calling them an anniversary gift so you can't be upset about that. What else is holding you back? Please tell me so I can solve that too."
"Think you can solve anything huh?" Magnus replied smiling.

"For you yes," Alec replied. There was silence for a few minutes, but Alec sensed that he shouldn't break it. Instead Alec waited, watching his boyfriend's face and trying to be patient.

"I haven't seen my aunt in so long," Magnus finally spoke.

"Then bring her too!" Alec exclaimed with a smile on his face. "I'll tell mom to have another guest room setup. What else you got?"

"It's really that easy?" Magnus asked. He looked so surprised, it made Alec smile.

"Well, that depends," Alec grinned at him. "Do you have two dozen relatives you'd like to invite, or just the one?"

"Aleida is really my only family," Magnus explained. "Her and Clary." And me, Alec wanted to add, but he wasn't sure if Magnus thought the same.

"Well, I'd love to meet your aunt too," Alec said.

"How about we split the plane tickets?" Magnus suggested, but Alec was shaking his head before Magnus even finished speaking.

"It's an anniversary gift," Alec stated firmly. "I have credit with the airline as well. It's no big deal. Call it your Christmas present too if you like."

"Okay," Magnus said softly, giving in. "I mean it is Christmas after all." Alec froze for a second, taking in the wonderful words. His heart singing, he kissed Magnus in the middle of the cafeteria, pulling him close. It was a brief kiss, but Alec tried to put all he had into it.

"This is going to be the best Christmas ever!" Alec exclaimed, grinning from ear to ear as they broke apart.

"Be careful Alexander," Magnus smiled back. "That happiness is infectious."

"And so it should be," Alec replied. "Who doesn't want to be happy?" Magnus laughed and they both got up to get in line for food. Alec reached out and took his boyfriend's hand as they walked, but he had to let go when they were both carrying food trays. As they returned to their table, Magnus was huffing about how Alec should let him buy his own lunch. Alec had managed to get in line ahead of Magnus and paid for both their meals, so that when Magnus got to the cashier there was no bill to pay.

"If anyone is saying I'm dating you for your money, it's stuff like that's why," Magnus sighed as they sat down to eat.

"They can say whatever they want," Alec replied coolly. "If all you let me get away with is stuff like this, that's what I'm gonna do."

"You are crazy you know that right?" Magnus said with a shake of his head.

"Crazy for you," Alec replied, touching Magnus gently on the nose. Magnus laughed, which made Alec smile and the rest of their lunch passed in casual conversation and loving glances.

But all good things must come to an end, including lunch with his boyfriend. Alec had class, then he'd made plans with a friend, or rather his cousin. Though he supposed she could be better
described as his friend, since being someone's family didn't automatically guarantee that they were
your friend too. Alec was making a better effort to keep in touch with Aline since they'd reconnected
over the summer. He'd been texting her more, and if those texts were to be believed, Aline had
converted her girlfriend into a Catan player and organized a game night at their new place tonight.
She didn't have an expansion for the game, so it could only be played with four players. Helen
wanted to invite her brother, so Aline had only invited Alec. Magnus hadn't minded being excluded
in this case, since he had a major essay due on Monday.

When Alec arrived, he learned that Helen had indeed become quite the Catan player, thanks to her
girlfriend. He met Helen's brother Mark, and all in all, it was a lovely afternoon. Though Alec had a
suspicion that after his conversation with Magnus earlier, nothing could spoil his mood today.

Alec noticed Helen and Aline had a very domestic feel to their conversations. Talking about who
took the garbage out, and who's leftovers had gone moldy in the fridge. Alec had never been in a
serious relationship before he'd started dating Magnus, and though their summer hadn't really felt like
living together - since Magnus had been working so much - Alec had to admit he was curious what it
would be like living with his boyfriend rather than a roommate. Watching Aline and Helen made him
wonder if maybe it wasn't as great as he thought it would be. It seemed a little like all they talked
about was household practical stuff. Plus Alec was a little worried that it would bring up the money
issue again. If Magnus whined when Alec bought him lunch, he couldn't imagine Magnus putting up
with Alec hiring a maid and paying the rent. He was tempted to ask Aline what it was like living
with a romantic partner, but decided it was a problem for another day. Instead Alec focused on a
Christmas with Magnus. He was so excited he called his parents to tell them and booked the plane
tickets later that day.

As November turned into December class work got more and more stressful; exams were once again
upon them. The thought of having Magnus with him for Christmas got Alec through his exams with
a smile on his face. After all that time cramming Alec was glad to finally be hanging out with
Magnus again without any textbooks involved. It was during one of these lazy afternoons before
they left for the holidays that Magnus got a phone call from Will. Alec listened to Magnus's side of
the conversation and quickly realized what had happened.

Just a few hours later, Alec found himself walking into the hospital with Magnus. Tessa had had her
baby during the night and was now accepting visitors.

"Are you sure I should be here?" Alec asked Magnus. "I mean she's your friend, and I'm not sure she
knows you let me tag along."

"I am not a baby person," Magnus explained. "You are here for me okay? I am always worried I will
drop them."

"I think they are a little stronger than you give them credit for," Alec said, but Magnus didn't reply as
they'd just reached Tessa's room. When they walked in, Alec saw Tessa laying on the bed, her rich
brown hair stuck to her forehead with sweat, and a huge smile on her face. Jem and Will each stood
on either side of her, and all three of them were looking down at the tiny bundle in her arms wrapped
in a pink blanket.

"You can't name your daughter Jamie," Jem was saying as Alec moved into earshot. They were
clearly interrupting some kind of argument.

"Gemma? That's a girls name right?" Will replied grinning. "And she's our daughter."

"Can we please avoid the letter J?" Jem suggested.
"She is lucky," Tessa laughed looking up from her daughter to the two men beside her. "So lucky. Only a few hours old, and already she has so many people who love her."

"Lucky Lucie," Jem's said with a smile, laughing lighting with her.

"Lucie works for me," Will replied, seriously confusing the other two.

"Huh?" Jem asked.

"For her name," Will explained.

"Lucie," Tessa said as if trying it out, looking down at the baby again. "Yeah, I like Lucie."

"Lucie Herondale," Jem stated.

"Let's not get started on last names," Tessa whined. "It's bad enough I had to lie to the nurse for her to allow you both in here. I am way too tired for this." Both the men by her bed side laughed, and Magnus finally made his presence known with an slightly awkward hi.

"Hmm… sorry to interrupt," Magnus said as all of them turned to see who was here.

"Oh Magnus you came!" Tessa said with a smile.

"You text I come," Magnus replied. "What else are friends for?" Alec followed Magnus as they both moved closer.

"Do you want to hold her?" Tessa asked, but Magnus shook his head.

"Alec would love to," Magnus replied.

"You've been voluntold," Will laughed. It amazed Alec how trusting Tessa was. It wasn't like Alec knew her well, but it seemed his connected to Magnus was enough to ilicet this level of trust in her.

"Shouldn't her dads? Is that right," Alec said. Tessa nodded. "Shouldn't they get a chance first."

"Oh don't worry, they both had a turn before you got here. I have to feed her soon, but you can hold her for a bit if you'd like."

Taking a deep breath, Alec nodded. His little brother was over ten years younger than Alec, so he was used to being around kids, but newborns were another matter. Alec held his arms out, and then felt the gentle pressure as Tessa placed her daughter into his embrace. She was so little, so light.

"Watch her head," Tessa reminded him, though she didn't sound worried. "There that's it." Alec gazed down at the small pink face, all he could see since the rest of her was wrapped in the blanket. It was wrapped so tight Alec wondered how the little girl could possibly be comfortable, though it was obvious she was. Lucie had small blemishes on her skin that almost looked like white spots, mostly concentrated around her nose. Her eyes were closed, and she looked so peaceful. Until she started crying. At that point, Alec quickly returned the child to her mother's arms.

"She's hungry," Tessa sighed, taking Lucie back. "I feel like a human food factory."

"She's perfect though," Will added.

"Yes, perfectly painful," Tessa sighed as she draped a blanket over herself and settled Lucie on the pillow in her lap. "Neither of you are ever touching me again by the way. Worse pain of my life." At this, both Will and Jem laughed as if they didn't believe her for a second. Tessa rolled her eyes. Alec
felt like he was missing the joke.

"We should probably be going," Magnus said with a smile. "She is beautiful, Tessa. Congratulations."

"She is isn't she," Tessa smiled as she fed her daughter. "Thanks Magnus."

Chapter End Notes

Yes I cheated and did Tessa's birth in a different pov... mostly because I have never given birth to a child and have no clue what that's like but also it isn't exactly exciting. I mean a normal healthy baby being born is basically the same as another. I mean I didn't want to write a long drawn out labour and painful delivery and I am sure you didn't want to read it. So.. yeah I cheated. ^_^ hehe. Wouldn't be the first time I switched a pov for a major plot point. Like how Magnus found out Tessa was moving out in Alec pov, etc.

I am glad people seem happy that I suck at schedules. Personally I am much happier. It was liberating for all of a week and then it was so annoying! I was like... is it Wednesday yet? Why do I have 3 chapters finished sitting here already beta read? My beta literally edited two chapters at once and then I had to wait AGES to upload them. So annoying. I much prefer update as fast as I write.

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Sneak Peek Chapter 67

"What do your parents know about me?" Jace asked. "I mean what have you told them?"

"No much," Clary replied.

"Do they know what I was like before?" Jace inquired.

"A little," Clary answered. "I mean I wasn't going to lie to them but it's not like I gave them details." Jace took a long nervous gulp of the champagne he'd paired with dinner. Clary giggle at him.

"It isn't funny," Jace whined. "I've never done the met the parents thing before."

"I've never done the meet the parents thing before either," Clary replied. "Well apart from when I met your mom."

"Didn't you bring Simon home?" Jace asked.

"Hey but mom and dad met Simon when we were both in footy pajamas," Clary sniggered. Jace decided not to mention that he'd know Sebastian just as long. It was a strange thought though, that those two people had even one thing in common.
"So how long do I leave the rice on for?" Jace asked.

"Twenty minutes," Celine voice replied through his cell phone.

"Okay, and as long as the chicken isn't pink it's okay, and I haven't totally failed?" Jace continued. He was standing in front of the stove, his head tilted to keep his phone near his ear, while he used to hands to try and combat the simmering pots and pans before him.

"I am sure Clary will love it," Celine told him. "Just relax. You sound like you are steaming at the ears."

"Shit, that's the vegetables!" Jace called as the pot boiled over. Putting the phone down, Jace quickly went to the aid of his dinner making attempt. He was calling it an attempt since he'd has his mother on the phone for half of it.

Exams were over now and Christmas was almost upon them. In fact, Jace and Clary were due to get on a plane and go home to her parents tomorrow morning. Jace couldn't believe how nervous he was, which might have something to do with why his dinner experiment had turned out so horribly. Okay, maybe it wasn't that bad. Sure, the chicken was a little dry, and the rice at the bottom of the pan had stuck, but it was edible, and that was what mattered.

"Okay veggies have been saved," Jace returned to his phone now that the crisis has been solved.

"Good now hang up on your mother and have a wonderful dinner with your charming girlfriend," Celine ordered.

"Thanks mom," Jace laughed before doing as he was told. Jace had just finished setting the table when he heard the door open.

"What's all this?" Clary asked as she walked in. It had been a long time since she'd knocked when entering his apartment.

"Dinner?" Jace said tentatively. His mother's cooking always smelled better than this.

"You don't sound too sure about that," Clary replied with a chuckle as she dropped her school bag and moved closer.

"If it's gross we are ordering take out," Jace stated, firmly.

"I am sure it will be great." Clary giggled leaning up to greet him with a kiss. Jace welcomed the kiss, holding the back of her neck gently.

"I love you," Jace whispered in her ear as they broke apart. Since realizing the level to which he sucked at being a boyfriend, Jace had been trying to make up for it. His first plan had been to google 'how to be a good boyfriend' but the results hadn't been too helpful. Next, Jace had asked his mother and Alec for advice. His mother's advice had been the only useful one however, as Alec's great wisdom was; just don't offer to buy your partner's summer vacation.
"I know," Clary replied with a smile. "You don't have to tell me every time I see you."

"Yes, I do," Jace disagreed as he turned back to try and plate their merely edible dinner.

"You aren't as bad at this as you think you are," Clary said as she sat down at the place he'd prepared for her.

"Recently," Jace corrected.

"At all," Clary continued. Jace mumbled something about how he didn't agree as he placed a plate of rice, steamed vegetables and dry lemon chicken in front of her. "I mean it Jace. I shouldn't have let my own insecurities cloud my judgement."

"But I shouldn't have created a situation where you could feel insecure," Jace argued not letting himself off the hook. "I should have noticed."

"I should have told you," Clary countered.

"Eat your chicken," Jace mumbled as he sat down across from her at the table. Looking down at his lap rather than getting started eating his dinner, Jace suddenly felt her hand under his chin.

"Let's just agree that we are both fools and call it a day," Clary whispered, making him look at her with the gentle pressure of her fingers on his face. "I love you too." Jace closed his eyes, holding those words close to his heart for one perfect moment.

"Now I expect you to be your normal self with my parents," Clary told him. "None of this feeling guilty crap okay?"

"Yes, ma'am," Jace replied grinning. They both started eating, but now, Jace was still feeling nervous just for different reasons.

"What do your parents know about me?" Jace asked. "I mean, what have you told them?"

"Not much," Clary replied.

"Do they know what I was like before?" Jace inquired, hoping she'd know he meant his old player ways.

"A little," Clary answered. "I mean, I wasn't going to lie to them, but it's not like I gave them details." Jace took a long nervous gulp of the champagne he'd paired with dinner; Clary giggled at him.

"It isn't funny," Jace whined. "I've never done the whole 'meet the parents' thing before."

"I've never done the meet the parents thing before either," Clary replied. "Well apart from when I met your mom."

"Didn't you bring Simon home?" Jace asked.

"Yeah, but mom and dad met Simon when we were both in footy pajamas," Clary sniggered. Jace decided not to mention that he'd know Sebastian just as long. It was a strange thought though, that those two people had even one thing in common. Then Jace realized his comparison made no sense since it was just as significant as both their names beginning with the letter S.

After dinner they watched a movie, then packed their bags and all too soon, Jace found himself on a plane headed to meet his girlfriend's family for Christmas. He had a feeling that if Celine hadn't met
Clary over the summer, she would have tried to guilt Jace into coming home for Christmas, with lots of 'I miss you's' and similar only child guilting tactics. But as it was, Celine had been very enthusiastic about the idea when Jace had brought it up a few weeks ago. Jace had never spent a Christmas away from his mother before, but then again, he'd never spent a Christmas out of Sebastian's company either. This Christmas was a first for him in oh so many ways.

Clary's firm grip on his hand steadied Jace's anxiety as they got off the plane. Together they walked out with everyone else until they came into view of three people all staring at Clary affectionately. One was clearly Clary's mother as she had the same bright red hair. The man standing next to her was tall, with brown hair and eyes. From what Clary had told him, Jace figured this was Luke. The other boy with them, Jace knew to be Clary's older brother. He had green eyes like her, but otherwise they looked nothing alike. Jon had dirty blonde hair and a goofy grin. Jace knew from Clary that Jon dropping out of school had been quite the dramafest in her family last Christmas, but somehow he felt like his life presences would make this Christmas even more awkward and dramatic than the last, or maybe he was just being paranoid.

"Welcome home," Clary's mother said, her arms held wide to hug her daughter. Jace, of course, knew her name, but it felt strange to use it without an actual introduction, then again, maybe he was overthinking this as well. When Luke joined the pile up, Jace found himself standing feet away staring at Clary's family trying to suffocate her.

"Get off guys geez," Clary mumbled as she forced her way free. Then she took a step back and included Jace before saying, "I'd like you all to meet Jace." Until this moment, not a single one of these people had spared him a glance, but now, all eyes were on him. Jace gulped, wishing Clary would just let her hand fall, and everyone went back to ignoring him.

"I've heard alot about you," Luke said holding out his hand. Jace shook it, then Jocelyn's, nodding his head as he did so, too nervous to speak. Jon was looking him up and down, and Jace really had no clue why until he spoke.

"You look like you play a sport," Jon observed. "Soccer? Or maybe football."

"Wrestling," Jace said the first words he spoke since the plane landed.

"Cool," Jon continued. "I played soccer in University. Being on the wrestling team looked brutal. I could always spot at least one of them with bruises."

"Yeah, it not exactly a non-contact sport," Jace laughed. He was getting more comfortable, talking about things he understood, things in his comfort zone. "But when you get a scholarship, you don't complain."

"For sure," Jon replied. Then the groups started moving toward the baggage claim, and they some how split into two conversations, Clary talking with her parents, and Jon and Jace tagging along behind. The conversation remained casual as they watched the suitcases go by, remaining on topics like University and sports. While they talked, it was all eyes on deck watching for their luggage. Jace noticed only a few truly worthy of attention, while the rest were nondescript shades of brown, navy, or beige, and easily forgotten.

"Who ever covered their luggage in bright pink duck tape is secretly a genius," Jon was saying as Jace grabbed the last of their luggage off the sliding conveyor belt. "You couldn't lose that in a crowd if you tired."

"True," Jocelyn replied. "Maybe we should decorate your suitcase, Clary."
"Sure, mom," Clary said. "Could be fun, though not hot pink okay?" Jocelyn laughed, but didn't reply. Jon was pulling his sister's suitcase while Jace had his own in tow, and together they all walked out the automatic doors toward the the car. Jace took note of the very practical van Jocelyn drove as they all piled in, Luke and Jocelyn in the front, Clary and Jon in the middle row and Jace at the back.

During the drive home, Jace sat quietly in the back and listen to the family catch up with Clary. They practically interrogated her about how her life was going. How did she like her classes? How'd she like living with Magnus? Had she heard from Simon? What was she thinking in terms of specific majors? The only topic they didn't ask her about was in relation to Jace, and he couldn't tell if that was just them being polite since he was technically in the car listening, or if they were actively avoiding it for some other reason. Again Jace wondered if he was reading more into this than there actually was, but he couldn't help it.

The car stopped in the driveway of a lovely little house with a simple garden and white shutters. The siding was a sorta greeny blue, and though it looked well cared for, it was clearly an older home. By the time they were all walking into Clary's house, the topic had turned to Jon's recent trip to France.

"Cassie and I took that underwater train to England for a weekend," Jon was saying to his sister. Jace was quite sure Luke and Jocelyn had already heard this story, and Jon was retelling it purely for Clary's benefit. "And it was unreal. Just knowing how much water was above you."

"I bet!" Clary exclaimed, clearly enjoying the story. During the last hour, Jace had managed to deduce that Cassie was Jon's girlfriend who he'd spent the last year backpacking through Europe with after dropping out of University.

The topic remained on Jon's adventures in Europe for some time, mostly because Clary kept asking Jon questions. Everyone was gathered in the living room now drinking tea or coffee. At some point, someone must of ordered pizza for dinner because there was a knock at the door and Luke returned moments later with two large flat boxes. Jace was included in the conversation, but he was still surprised that the topic never fell on him. He wasn't sure if this was comforting or worrisome. Then suddenly the conversation shifted.

"Hope you're being good to my little sister," Jon said addressing Jace who just blinked, too startled into silence. "Cause if you aren't..." He left the threat hang there while Jace stood frozen.

"Cut it out freak," Clary laughed at her brother, hitting him playfully in the shoulder. Jace had no idea what it was like to have a sibling - Sebastian being the closest he'd ever come - but somehow when Clary called her brother a freak, there was something endearing about it.

"What, I can't check up on my sister's new squeeze?" Jon counted. "Make sure he isn't bad news."

"Your sister is a grown up!" Clary grumbled as she threw a pillow at him, ruining the effect of her words rather perfectly. "She doesn't need you to stick your nose in her business."


"Besides, isn't that a parent's job," Jocelyn argued with her son.

"Big brother's count," Jon disagreed, but before Jace could do more than shrink a little farther into the couch, the topic was changed again. Jace felt even more confused.

The sun set, and the pizza boxes were empty by the time the evening ended. Jon wanted to call Cassie before he went to bed, and then there were four. When Luke and Clary left to throw out the
pizza boxes and tidy away glasses, Jace found himself alone with Clary's mother. Though he'd kinda been expecting Luke to be the one to corner him, he had a feeling the moment he'd been anticipating since their arrival was finally upon him.

"I know Clary is an adult despite the pillow fights, and it technically isn't any of my business, but I have to ask," Jocelyn said calmly. "What are your intentions with my daughter?"

"What do you mean?" Jace asked. It seemed a rather odd question. Surely, it was obvious that Jace intended to date her. After all, he was dating her, and he'd come here for Christmas to meet her family. Jace knew what it was to have what he now understood to be 'bad intentions' with a girl - though he'd never called them such before - and he knew such intentions never involved meeting her parents.

"Do you love her?" Jocelyn asked.

"More than anything," Jace replied easily, still not sure what this question had to do with the previous one. "Clary taught me what love is." Jocelyn studied him for a moment, moving just a fraction closer to get a better look. Jace couldn't remember the last time he'd been so uncomfortable. Then Jocelyn leaned back, smiling.

"Alright then," she said standing up. "Well, I'm off to bed. Good night, Jace."

"Night," Jace said holding his hand up in a half hearted wave, still all kinds of confused. A few moments later, Clary returned alone and grabbed his hand dragging him down the hall. Jace was surprised when he realized she was taking him to her room. Even more so when she said he was to sleep here. Somehow he'd expected meeting the family to be far more judgey than it had actually turned out to be.

"And your parents are just going to let me sleep in your room?" Jace asked as they were getting ready for bed.

"Yeah course," Clary replied easily.

"I mean I could sleep on the couch," Jace said.

"That couch is lumpy and horrible," Clary countered. "And I have a double bed so this makes more sense." Jace must of still looked dubious, because Clary added. "Mom knows we are serious and at school together unsupervised. It's not like they are blind. When Cass sleeps over, she stays in Jon's room." Clary shrugged. This somehow did not make Jace feel less awkward.

They washed up, and then Jace found himself lying in his girlfriend's childhood bed with her beside him. Clary was sleeping in a nighty, but even so with her parents one bedroom over, Jace had never been less likely to make a move before in his life. Instead they snuggled, falling asleep beside each other.

Chapter End Notes

So for once I have really have alot to say here... I mean I think I have guest reviews to answer since usually I have those already written long before I update and there is nothing there. Its so nice to literally update a chapter the moments its finished again. :D Though the next chapter is also done and I am going to wait a little while to update that
Sneak Peek Chapter 68:

"What's the matter Angel," Will cooed. "What could possibly be so bad in your world to be worth making such a noise as that, hmm?" He rocked her back and forth as he continued. "Really, you have it made little one. People waiting on you all day, coming to your aid the moment you swauk."

"My daughter does not swauk," Tessa grumbled. "Here, give her to me. She's probably hungry. I swear this kid has a built in clock. Every two hours on the dot."

"Not fair," Will whined handing her over. "I just got home and you'd had her all day."

"Grow some boobs then you can feed her, and I'll get to sleep for more than two hours in a row," Tessa said, grumpy as she scooped her daughter back out of Will's arms.

"Come on, I doubt you'd like me with boobs," Will replied rather too matter of factly for the topic at hand. "I'd probably never get lucky again."
Tessa's Exhaustion

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Tired. It was a word Tessa had known all her life, but until the birth of her daughter, she hadn't comprehended the full meaning of the word. This kind of tired was different, one in which you couldn't fully form thoughts, or remember simple things like how to get past the lock screen on your phone.

Tessa woke to the sound of a baby crying, and dragged her sore exhausted body into a sitting position. Thankfully Lucie's bassinet was right beside her bed. Tessa picked up her daughter, got her settled in for lunch, and laid back down. She managed to doze a little while Lucie nursed, though she felt not at all rested by the time she woke up. Lucie was still laying beside her though, now asleep rather than nursing. Some part of Tessa's semi-conscious mind knew Jem was somewhere in the house, and Will was working a night shift, but the rest of her world was hazy. She did know that Will often worked strange hours. He always contributed this to the fact that fires didn't take holidays.

Picking her sleeping daughter up, Tessa put Lucie back in her basset before laying down again and dozing off. Tessa woke a while later to light words spoken near her ear. She opened to eyes to see Jem standing before her. He was carrying Lucie who seemed to be awake again. Tessa blinked at him a few times before she registered what he was saying.

"Are you hungry?" Jem asked. Tessa searched around in her body for her stomach, looking for the answer to Jem's question.

"Yes," she said slowly. Jem smiled at her, kissed her cheek, then walked away carrying Lucie. Tessa was too sleepy to question how exactly food was coming, and decided to go back to sleep. What felt like five minutes later, she woke up again. For a brief moment she panicked since she couldn't see Lucie in Jem's arms, but then she noticed the baby rocker beside the basset was moving back and forth, as if keeping an infant asleep. Tessa relaxed again, knowing full well her panic moment had nothing to do with her trust of Jem, and everything to do with her irritative emotional state. It amazed her how tuned into her baby her brain had become. That, partnered with the lack of proper sleep, meant she had become prone to panic over small things.

"I made breakfast," Jem whispered gently. "All you have to do is come eat it. Then I am sure Lucie would like lunch as well."

"It's like a food chain," Tessa mumbled as she got up. "You feed me, I feed her."

"Now we just need to convince Will to feed me, and we'd have a complete line," Jem chuckled as he picked up the rocking baby carrier and left the bedroom. Tessa followed, lead by her nose and the delicious smell of waffles. She vaguely noted Jem placing Lucie and her rocking apparatus down, before sitting at the table and starting on her breakfast. Since she'd started breast feeding, she'd learned that she could eat a lot more than she could before. She'd sometimes had similar moments when pregnant, though it had been paired with nausea, which kinda ruined the effect.

"That was great, thanks Jem," Tessa said with a sign. The food had greatly improved her general awareness. As soon as she finished the last bite, Tessa picked up her now slightly fussy daughter, and continued the food chain line. Lucie was full and sleeping again when her father arrived home.

"I am so tired," Will said collapsing on the couch, and covered his face with his hands. Tessa
couldn't help but snort, even if Will did look a little worn down.

"Try waking up every two hours to be a human bottle," Tessa said. "Then we can talk tired."

"I hate night shifts without fires," Will whined not even rising to the bait. "At least if we have stuff to do, it's easy to stay awake."

"Personally, I like it when you don't fight fires," Tessa said. "It means I don't have to worry about getting a phone call at the end of your shift instead of you."

"I agree with Tessa," Jem chimed in. And right on cue, Lucie started crying. Will was up in a flash, and scooped his daughter into his arms.

"What's the matter Angel," Will cooed. "What could possibly be so bad in your world to be worth making such a noise as that, hmm?" He rocked her back and forth as he continued. "Really, you have it made little one. People waiting on you all day, coming to your aid the moment you swauk."

"My daughter does not swauk," Tessa grumbled. "Here, give her to me. She's probably hungry. I swear this kid has a built in clock. Every two hours on the dot."

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"Come on, I doubt you'd like me with boobs," Will replied rather too matter of factly for the topic at hand. "I'd probably never get lucky again."

"What part of Lucie hurt like hell, and you are never touching me again did you not understand?" Tessa asked as she pulled down her shirt and attached Lucie to her breast, not bothering to cover up since both the men in the room had seen it plenty of times before.

"Oh please!" Will said. "You were totally kidding. I can't imagine you being celibate."

"You can't imagine pushing a watermelon out of your vagina either can you?" Tessa told him. Will's face at these words was so priceless that Jem burst out laughing.

"Oh, what are you laughing at," Will teased Jem. "You can't get her pregnant. I bet that's a total turn on for her right now." This shut Jem up as his expression turned more thoughtful as if this had totally not occurred to him.

"Sleep is a turn on," Tessa said frankly as she returned to bed, with a nursing infant in her arms. "Thanks for breakfast Jem."

"Anytime," Jem called after her.

Tessa closed the door behind her, blocking out the light and sound. Her arms, tired from holding the baby to her chest, Tessa laid down. Lucie's weight was now held by the mattress, and the relief was instant, then closed her eyes. For a moment it was wonderful, then it was as if the ground shifted under her. Rationally she knew the world wasn't spinning, but for a moment there, it was like she could sense the fluid nature of the globe, or maybe she was just dizzy from lack of sleep.

Tessa woke to the bright light from the open door. Lucie was waking up as well, although this time, Tessa could smell that is wasn't because she was hungry. Once her eyes adjusted to the light, Tessa saw Will smiling down at her, all hints of teasing gone from his eyes. Then Lucie began to cry in
earnest. In the amount of time it took Tessa to summon the willpower to sit up, Will and pressed a gentle hand to her shoulder, encouraging her to lay down.

"Don't worry, Tess," Will smiled at her. "Go to sleep. I've got her."

"She's stinky," Tessa mumbled, as a way of reminding Will that his taking her now would mean changing her diaper.

"I got her," Will repeated. Tessa's eyes closed, as she felt Will's strong arms pull Lucie within their protective grasp. Tessa was just awake enough to feel Will's gentle kiss on her forehead, and noticed the light disappear with the soft sound of the door closing.

When Tessa woke up, she felt unusually well rested. The feelings of exhaustion she'd all but gotten used to had gone. The soreness around her eyes, and the fog in her mind had cleared. Sitting up, she noticed that she was steadier on her feet as well. Worried, Tessa checked the time, but as she had no idea when she'd fallen asleep, the time meant little to her. Standing up, Tessa left her room in search of her daughter who was probably very hungry by now. She was squinted in the bright lights of the living room, Tessa managed to make out the shapes of her boys. Jem was sitting on the couch with Lucie in one arm, and a book in the other. Will was in the kitchen at the stove, but Tessa couldn't see what he was doing.

"How long was I sleeping?" Tessa asked.

"Nearly ten hours," Jem informed her.

"What!" Tessa exclaimed instantly frantic. "Why didn't you wake me?"

"You needed to sleep," Jem told her.

"Not that much," Tessa disagreed, but then Tessa stopped freaking out for a while as she gazed at her perfectly happy sleeping daughter. "Why isn't she crying?"

"We already fed her," Will said moving out of the kitchen and into the living room. "Formula."

"But I was trying not to use formula," Tessa whined.

"And you were losing sanity points by the hour," Will reminded her. "Eating formula meals while you sleep won't hurt her, Tess." She must've given him a dubious look because he continued. "I did research. You want to see?"

"Yes," Tessa said definitely, though she knew they were right. Her head felt so much clearer, and the world wasn't spinning anymore.

"It's on my laptop," Will replied. "And I talked to a doctor."

"Yeah okay, I believe you," Tessa sighed, going to sit on the couch next to Jem. It was strange, she hadn't been away from Lucie for so many hours. Tessa reached out her hand to gently stroke her daughter's soft head.

"I rather like feeding her," Jem said. "It makes me feel closer to her." And just like that, Tessa was sold on formula. It melted her heart to see the absolute look of adoration on Jem's face when he looked down at his daughter.

"Hey, I fed her first," Will chimed in, ruining the moment.
"And don't you agree," Jem continued not raising to the bait. "That it creates a unique bond?"

"I doubt she will think so when she's older," Will added. "I can picture the rebellious teenage years already. Any kid of mine won't be easy to raise."

"Ha," Jem laughed. "Understatement of the year."

"No man is ever going to be good enough for her," Will added.

"Or woman," Tessa added, thinking of Magnus and Alec. "Let's not pre-judge."

"I think our little trio will be the last to judge anyone," Will laughed. "We are a little hard to define aren't we?"

"Wouldn't have it any other way," Tessa said, smiling. Lucie looked so peaceful in Jem's arms, but still, Tessa felt the need to be the one holding Lucie. Tessa missed having her baby close. It was a new and strange feeling, being so tied to another being, but Tessa just couldn't be away for too long. She reached out her arms to indicate what she wanted, and Jem gladly obliged. Tessa sat back, with her perfectly happy baby sleeping in her arms. It wasn't until she heard the music play, that she realized Jem had left the room and returned. Looking up she saw Jem with his violin in hand, playing something Tessa hadn't heard before. Then slowly, Tessa realized she did know this song. It was called 'Baby Mine', and if Tessa wasn't quite mistaken, it was from an old Disney movie called Dumbo. Though she couldn't remember the lyrics, the melody was beautiful. The song moved slowly, a gentle feeling to it, as if rocking a child.

"She is going to like you more than me," Will sighed as the song ended. "You are 'cool Jem' who can play music. All I do is sit at a fire hall and wait for disasters."

"She is going to take you to school on career day," Jem told Will with a smile. "And brag about her daddy the hero."

Will's smile said it all, but rather than admit how much his best friends words meant to him' Will said, "My job is rather cool isn't it."

"Oh yeah real cool in a crisis you are," Tessa snorted. "Who almost called 911 at the first contractions?"

"Hey!" Will barked. "That isn't fair. I was a little nervous." Tessa just rolled her eyes. "Thank god for Jem, or I'd have ended up having her here in the living room with you passed out in the hall," Tessa grumbled. Will looked sulky and started muttering under his breath, but Jem was laughing.

"Don't be too hard on him Tessa," Jem said once his laughter had died down. "I mean, it is Christmas. Harass him again in the New Year."

"Christmas?" Tessa said. It had been a while since she'd registered the day of the week, let alone the calendar.

"Don't look so shocked," Will laughed. "Or did you not notice the decorations?"

Chapter End Notes
Wow… so few reviews… Seems like few people have things to say when the chapters are happy. That means you guys want more angst, right?

Also who watched that Malec tastic episode of the show last night? OMG! Those flashbacks were epic.

And finally one more thing to say... I keep getting requests to 'please update soon' and though those kinds of reviews are awesome and I know you guys are excited to read more I can't help but laugh at them a little... because I always update soon. #HasNoLife And though I say this... I also want reviews more than oxygen or food so... yeah...

Sneak Peek Chapter 69

"So what you're say," Aleida spoke slowy as if unsure she'd understood correctly. "Is that your boyfriend, who I haven't even met yet, wants to fly me half way across the country to spend Christmas with his family."

"Um," Magnus said. "Yeah."

"Why?"

"Because he wants to spend Christmas with me," Magnus said tentatively. "And I want to spend Christmas with you."

"And he can just do that?" Aleida said over the phone. "Just up and invite strangers to his parents house."

"Seem so," Magnus replied.

"What has your heart gotten you into this time, Mags," Aledia sighed, but Magnus could tell she was smiling.

"Either an awkward dinner or a wonder vacation," Magnus replied. "We shall have to wait to find out." Aledia's laughter has filled his ear after that. Then she'd asked for flight details and the matter had been resolved.

PS - you can thank LightBehindTheShadows on fanfic for that sneak peek. I originally had no intention of writing Magnus telling his aunt about the holiday before you reviewed that you wanted to read it.
Flying first class had been outside of Magnus's comfort zone. Being picked up in a limo complete with a driver who greeted Magnus as sir had shocking, but none of this compared to arriving at their destination. Alec’s house wasn’t a house at all; the structure was far too large and elaborate. The word mansion or manor came to mind, as Magnus took in the elegant fountain surrounded by a road that was clearly only meant to drop people off since there was no where to park. The water was of course frozen; it was December, but that didn't stop it from being beautiful. Through the expertly shoved snow Magnus could tell that the road itself was made of bricks rather than pavement, and the whole place felt to Magnus like it was a picture of out one of Tessa’s Jane Austen novels. Once you got past the grounds, there was the building itself. The front entrance was centered on the circular road and stood out from the rest. On either side the mansion, continued old beautiful brick walls with sophisticated windows with flower boxes under them that Magnus could only imagine looked like eden during the summer months. Magnus knew gardens like these had to have gardeners, and he very much suspected it was someone's full time job to keep these grounds looking as lovely as they were.

Magnus took a surreal moment to bask in the fact that falling for a guy he'd met at a party somehow had brought him here to this place. Magnus had to suppress a laugh as he thought what his aunt would say when she arrived tomorrow. He could remember oh so well his phone call with her explaining their new holiday plans.

"So what you're saying," Aleida spoke slowy as if unsure she'd understood correctly. "Is that your boyfriend, who I haven't even met yet, wants to fly me half way across the country to spend Christmas with his family."

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"Either an awkward dinner, or a wonderful vacation," Magnus replied. "We shall have to wait to find out." Aedia's laughter had filled his ear after that. Then she'd asked for flight details, and the matter had been resolved.

Now Magnus could imagine, only too well, the look on his aunt's face when she lays eyes the mansion her crazy nephew has dragged her to, with its tall stoic columns all covered so perfectly in snow that it looked like icing on a cake. The elaborate wreath on the door completely the look, but it still seemed like it had come straight out of a magazine.
"Magnus?" Alec said, waving his hand in front of his boyfriend's face. "Earth to Magnus. Come in Magnus."

"You live in a Museum," Magnus stated seriously. He'd indeed been to- and worked in- Museums smaller than Alec's house.

"Museums don't have pools," Alec laughed. "Or tennis courts though that's covered in ice at the moment. It looks better in summer, but come on." And he grabbed Magnus by the hand and lead him up the stone steps toward the door.

As the door opened- Magnus took in the entrance hall. The circular pattern was again repeated with an elegant centerpiece in the middle of the room, defining it. Two grand staircases went up on either side leading to the same landing. They had dark wooden railings, but everything else in the room was bright, mostly white, with shades of gold. It seems so silly to Magnus to have two sets of stairs going to the same place. It was almost as ridiculous as a set of stairs going nowhere. Light entered the room through windows on either side, windows that went up two stories. In fact, the whole room was clearly two stores high. On top of all this, the place was beautifully decorated for Christmas. Magnus had always loved Alexia's holiday decorations for their homely feel. This place was quite the opposite. The decorations here were perfect, too perfect. Symmetrical rows of holly ran along the railing. Again, Magnus felt like it must be someone's full time job to keep the place elegantly festive.

"If you take this long staring when we enter every room, it will be New Years before we reach my parents," Alec sniggered at him. Magnus turned his eyes away from the room and looked at Alec. He didn't know what to say. If he'd felt out of his league before, it was nothing to how he was feeling now. But Alec just smiled, clearly unaware how out of the ordinary his life was. Then he kissed Magnus quickly before choosing the stairs on the left and heading up to the landing, pulling his boyfriend by the hand.

Magnus tried not to stop and look as he followed Alec, but still he saw enough to know that he and Alec were literally from different worlds. The only thing keeping Magnus from hyperventilating as they passed grand rooms and statues that probably cost more to clean than Magnus had ever made in his life, was his solid grip on his boyfriend's hand. When his back was turned something came charging at Alec from an adjacent hallway. After a moment's panic, Magnus realized it was Izzy. She'd attacked her brother with a hug fierce enough to knock him off his feet.

"Get off Iz," Alec grumbled. "Geez. It's not like you haven't seen me all year."

"Don't you just love Christmas!" Izzy squealed.

"How long have you been here?" Alec asked.

"Oh I left the second my exams ended," Izzy explained. Magnus knew he'd been the reason Alec had been delayed arriving home, due to fourth years like Magnus usually having their exams spread out over two weeks rather than one.

"Where are mom and dad?" Alec asked.

"Where else," Izzy replied. "Office." She paused for only a second before adding. "See you for dinner. I wanna go hit the pool."

"Bye," Alec said, waving to her retreating back.

"If you could harness her energy," Magnus said grinning. "You could power a small city." He was happy to hear Alec laugh at his joke. His boyfriend took his hand again, and together they continued
through the house, presumably to the 'office.'

Moving past more marble busts of probably important people, Magnus found himself entering a large room with a desk as its most prominent feature. He assumed this was the office Izzy had referred to. Sitting at a grand solid oak desk was a man with the same color hair as Alec. When he turned, Magnus saw that his eyes were dark though not blue like Alec's. Despite that he could be none other than Alec's father.

"Welcome home," Robert said smiling, arms outstretched. Alec moved closer and hugged his father before turning to face Magnus.

"This is Magnus," Alec introduced him. Magnus just waved awkwardly.

"Sorry we didn't meet you," Robert continued. "Time rather got away from me. I could have sworn it wasn't even noon yet. Then I hear you down the hall, and somehow the clock has passed two."

"It's fine," Alec replied. "Izzy tackled me in greeting. This is much better." Robert's laugh was deep and honest; Magnus couldn't help but take note of the traits Alec had inherited, the shape of his face reflected in pieces on Alec's expression.

"Where's mom?" Alec asked, turning to look at another desk on the other side of the room.

"Ah yes, you are right," Robert said. "She isn't at her desk. Maybe she's with Max and the tutor." Magnus knew Max was Alec's seven year old brother, but the fact he had a personal tutor for his education was news to Magnus. This whole experiences was making Magnus realized a little about why Alec had offered to buy Magnus's summer vacation last year. Money was just never something Alec had never once had to think about in his life, not even a little.

"We will go check," Alec said, waving goodbye to his dad before turning them both in the direction of the door. Craning his neck around, Magnus saw Robert sit down and get right back to work.

Alec didn't talk as he guided Magnus through the house, past elaborate wallpaper and elegant crown molding. When Alec finally turned into a room, Magnus saw a woman with dark hair leaning over a desk. The child sitting at the desk could only be Max. Magnus knew Alec's mother to be named Maryse, for the same reason he'd know Alec's father's name: Alec had told him. Maryse turned to face them, and once again, he saw the same reflection of features he'd noticed in Robert's face. It was rather remarkable to see. Magnus was so used to family looking nothing like him, the way Aleida, and Clary looked nothing like him. To have a family that all resembled each other was a new to him.

"Hey mom," Alec began. "This is Magnus."

"Ah the famous Magnus," Maryse said taking a step forward to shake his hand. "I've heard alot about you."

"Good things I hope," Magnus mumbled a little. He'd done the meet the parents thing before, but never like this. He'd met Etta's parents in high school, simply because it was high school. It had been similar with Axel, meeting his parents, simply because Axel still lived with them. Meeting Imasu's parents had ended their relationship, since Imasu's family had encouraged him to leave Magnus. Then Camille's situation was similar to his own, in that she hadn't been raised by her parents, so Magnus hadn't met them. Though Magnus had met her close friend Archer.

"Good things for sure," Maryse replied with a smile.

"Now," Magnus corrected.
"Yes, okay I am a horrible whiny boyfriend who shouldn't complain to his family," Alec sighed. "How many times do I have to say sorry for this?" Magnus was surprised to see Maryse laugh.

"Oh one more time will probably due," Maryse said, with a slight laugh. Then she turned to Magnus. "Don't worry, when I first started dating their father, I had nothing but complaints for months." She laughed again, and somehow Magnus felt infinitely better.

"ALEC!" Suddenly another sibling shaped bullet flew at Alec, banging into his legs with a thud.

"What did I say about finishing your work before Alec got home?" Maryse told her youngest son, but Max clearly wasn't intimidated, since all he did was grin at her wickedly.

"I can't wait till I get to be at Universtiy too," Max said looking up at Alec from where he was perched on his brother's foot, arms wrapped around Alec's leg.

"It will be a while," Alec laughed. "A solid decade at least."

"Na uh," Max disagreed. "I'm gonna be all grown up tomorrow! Santa said so."

"Well there are some things even Santa can't do," Maryse told Max. Then she turned to check the time on the wall. "Unfortunately I really must be going. See you at dinner?"

"'Course," Alec said. She leaned down to tickle Max quickly, smiled, and left the room.

"Pool!" Max started chanting. "Pool!"

"Alright Max," Alec laughed. "But you have to get off me."

This seemed to be a reasonable agreement in Max's eyes since he instantly jumped off Alec and starting running down the hall.

"Did you get the only non-energizer bunny gene in the family, Alexander?" Magnus asked.

"Maybe," Alec laughed as they followed Max.

A few minutes later, Magnus found himself in a large indoor pool area. There was also a hot tub in the corner, and possibly a sauna, though Magnus hadn't looked that closely. He did notice Izzy already in the pool. She waved to them as they approached.

"Maybe we should have gotten the bathing suits out of our luggage before we arrived?" Magnus suggested. Max had already disappeared into a room off to the left, that Magnus assumed was a changing room.

"They are already in our room," Alec explained. "This is why I suggested you pack the suits in an outside pocket." Warily, Magnus followed Alec through the same door Max had gone through. And sure enough, there laid out neatly for them, were their swimming clothes.

"I am not sure if this is a good thing," Magnus said. "Or a creepy thing." Alec just shrugged like this was a normal thing. The fact that some invisible staff member of the house had taken his luggage, and brought the one part of it he needed here, just so he didn't have to go back down the hall again felt insane.

"When in Rome." Magnus sighed before going to collected the swimming trunks.

They all changed behind elegant barriers of artistically fogged glass, and then joined Izzy in the pool. Magnus couldn't help but feel like he was in a hotel, rather than a personal home. It was all too clean,
not proper, and too well staffed to feel like a home.

"Come Alec!" Max cried, pulling on his brother's arms. "Come see my jump." Alec turned to Magnus who nodded, then let himself be dragged off toward the deep end of the pool where the diving board was. Magnus decided to start small and headed to the hot tub. Slowly sinking into it, he tried to focus on breathing. This was Alec's world, and he needed to understand it, even if it was totally overwhelming and absolutely crazy.

"Wow, I can't believe how home sick I've been," Izzy said appeared suddenly beside the hot tub.

"I can imagine," Magnus replied, knowing full well she probably just missed the pool and in house cook more than anything.

"So," Izzy said. "How did meeting mom and dad go?"

"Fine," Magnus replied. He wasn't totally sure why she was talking to him. Maybe she just really wanted to be in the hot tub, but somehow Magnus doubted it. After all, he'd only been in the hot water mere moments before she'd joined him.

"Alec's never brought a guy home before," Izzy continued. "I bet mom and dad were on their best behaviour. But just wait till next Christmas, then you will actually get to know them. You are still going to be around next Christmas aren't you? All this-" she gestured to show she meant the general grandness of the room, "-hasn't made you want to run for the hills?"

Magnus couldn't quite figure out what she was playing at. Sure, this was kinda how they'd met - her questioning his intentions with Alec - but still it felt strange.

"Do you want me to dump your brother?" Magnus asked. "Is that what this is about?"

"No," Izzy replied, seriously. "I- well I think Alec is stuck. Stuck on you. I am worried what might happen to him if he lost you."

It was strange talking to Izzy of all people about this. Though Magnus had to admit, the one way in which this woman had been consistent since he'd met her, was her crazy protective nature toward her older brother. Magnus had always thought that was more of an older sibling's thing, but being an only child, he didn't really know. And he couldn't imagining growing up in a house like this, would create normal sibling relationships.

"I can't promise I'll never die," Magnus said after a moment. "No one can promise that, but I love your brother more than I think I've ever loved anyone. I would be just as broken losing him, as you seem to believe he would be losing me."

"Good," Izzy said sharply. It was strange to get this kind of treatment from a sister rather than parent, and even stranger to get it from Izzy in a less yelling way. In fact, today in general had been the strangest day of Magnus's life.

Chapter End Notes

What did you think of Alec's house? (I suck at description but I tired with the help of google images) Does Izzy make more sense now? Who is totally in tune with Magnus's wtf moment?
Also yes I have no self control and I am updating way too soon but YOLO.

Sneak Peek Chapter 70

"Good morning sleepy," Clary smiled. And she saw him smile though his eyes were still covered by his hand. Clary felt Jace's other hand wrap around her, squeezing gently in a hug. Then his hands moved away from his face and both arms encircled her before he kissed her gently. Feeling his usual morning situation press up against her leg, Clary moved her hands down to encourage it, but to her surprise Jace froze.

"You okay?" Clary asked.

"I just-" Jace started. Then he blushed. It was quite something to see actually since she rarely knew him to blush for anything.

"Your parents," Jace whispered and Clary couldn't help it. She laughed. Then she rolled on top of her boyfriend and kiss him. She could feel Jace melting a little, his arms around her and though she started gently grinding her hips into his again Jace stopped her. He sat up, kissing her gently before speaking.

"Parents," Jace said firmly. Clary couldn't help but shake her head at him.
Waking up on Christmas morning, Clary reached over and felt Jace laying beside her. She rolled over to face him. The sun was shining in through the windows lighting up his face. Jace wasn’t snoring, but his eyes were closed, and he was breathing so evenly she knew he was still asleep. Gently sweeping the rebellious lock of golden hair back that had fallen in his eyes, Clary smiled. Since they’d managed to talk about her insecurities, Jace had been making a point to be overly careful. Every now and then she’d caught him literally looking down at his hands rather than at their waitress, even if he was speaking to her. This always made her smile, though she knew she should tell him he was taking it too far, and she would eventually. Clary knew she’d never get tired of hearing him say ‘I love you’ to her every chance he got. However, at this point, she was sure Magnus and Alec were sick of over hearing it. Since she’d had to put up with all Malec’s cushy adorableness before, she decided it was fair.

It was a wonderful feeling just laying in bed next to Jace. No matter where she was, or what was happening around her, Clary couldn’t help feeling safe when Jace was near.

“Urg bright,” Jace mumbled as his hands went up to cover his eyes.

“Good morning sleepy,” Clary smiled. He smile though his eyes were still covered by his hand. Clary felt Jace’s other hand wrap around her, squeezing her gently in a hug. Then his hand moved away from his face, and both his arms encircled her before he kissed her gently.

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“Parents,” Jace said firmly. Clary couldn’t help, but shake her head at him. “In the house.”

“Did someone intimidate you yesterday?” Clary asked.

“No,” Jace said too quickly.

“Who?” Clary asked. “I will have words with them.”

“It’s fine,” Jace mumbled, before kissing her again. Clary made a mental note to interrogate her family later, since it seemed it was their fault she wasn’t getting a morning orgasm. She teased him a little more, then got up out of bed. Jace didn’t look like he was about to get out of bed anytime soon.

“I am just gonna stay here for a few minutes okay?” Jace said, still obviously uncomfortable.
“I could fix that for you, you know,” Clary laughed at her silly boyfriend. He hadn’t had so many reservations when they’d spent the summer at his mother’s house, though in his defense, he’d been tired from working long hours.

Jace shook his head. “Suit yourself,” Clary replied, as she turned to leave. “Mom is probably making breakfast.”

“Aren’t you changing first?” Jace asked, indicating her nighty.

“No…” Clary said slowly. “It’s Christmas morning. Like the one day a year you are supposed to wear your pajamas to breakfast.” He still looked a little weary so with a sigh, Clary went to sit on the bed next to him.

“Relax,” Clary told him firmly. “We are adults. This is Canada. Dad doesn’t have a gun. He won’t shoot you in the barn for deflowering me. Mom and dad like you, promise. Even Jon.”

“I love you,” Jace told her, but she was glad to see the tight muscles in his shoulders slacken. He wasn’t still nervous for no reason, but at least he wasn’t as tense.

“Love you too,” Clary replied easily, kissing him again before turning and leaving the room. “See you downstairs.”

When Clary reached the bottom of the stairs she heard her name. Her mom and dad were in the kitchen talking. She was about to move those few steps closer so they’d see her, but then she heard Jace’s name too and stopped to listen, rather than announce herself.

“Yes I know,” Jocelyn was saying. “But despite all that, I really think he’s serious.”

“It’s just hard to believe a person can change that much,” Luke replied.

“Talk to him yourself if you aren’t sure,” Jocelyn said. “But I saw it in his eyes. Jace really loves her. I don’t think he’d hurt her.”

Clary smiled as she realized what happened. Jace had talked to her mother yesterday, but the conversation that had freaked Jace out had actually made her mother an advocate for her relationship. The whole thing made Clary want to jump for joy.

“Morning,” Clary said as she skipped forward announcing her presence. “What’s for breakfast?”

“German apple pancakes,” Jocelyn said. “They are in the oven now.”

“Yum!” Clary said grinning. She sat down at the table to wait patiently. Sure, presents were great and all, but it wasn’t Christmas without her mother’s oven baked pancakes covered in applesauce.

“And where is that blonde trouble maker of yours?” Jocelyn asked, but she was smiling.

“In bed,” Clary giggled. “It seems someone made him nervous yesterday.”

“I did no such thing,” her mother defended. “Just a simple question.”

“Follow up by intense study I’m sure,” Clary laughed.

“Do you want pancakes or not?” Jocelyn grumbled, but Clary knew her mother wasn’t upset, just teasing.

“I always want pancakes,” Clary added. She watched her mother tidy and cook for a while, then the
timer went off, and the room was filled with the rich smell of freshly baked pancakes. Jocelyn placed them on the stove, then went to get plate down from the cupboard.

“The boys will miss all the food if they don’t come downstairs,” Luke observed as his wife finished cutting and serving breakfast.

“You snooze, you lose,” Clary said, reaching forward and collected her portion.

“You’d think after all that time running around Europe, Jon would have a little more appreciation for my home cooking,” Jocelyn sighed. She and Luke were also sitting down to eat now, two portions left unclaimed.

“Jon wasn’t meant for the picket fence life,” Clary told her mother. “He is too much of an adventurer.”

“Don’t I know it,” Jocelyn grumbled. “I just hope he doesn’t end up being a cop like Valentine. I don’t think I could survive attending that funeral.” She turned to her husband. “And you are gonna stay a bookstore owner ya hear. I am not being married to a cop again.”

“Yes ma’am,” Luke replied, like usual. This happened a lot at Christmas, and Clary knew exactly why. It had been during the holidays that Jocelyn had learned of her husband dying in the line of duty, the same day she’d learned they were going to have a second child. Which meant Clary’s father hadn’t even know she’d existed, or rather was going to exist before he died.

“The party can start. I have arrived.”

They all turned to see Jon coming down the stairs in the most ridiculous pajamas ever. They were the very definition of ugly Christmas sweater, with a goofy reindeer on his shoulder, and light that actually lit up. Clary burst out laughing the moment she saw him.


“Excuse you,” Jon replied. “I am a grown up.”

“Not in that sweater you ain’t,” Luke said over the girls continued laughter.

“I will have you know, this is holiday appropriate attire,” Jon said coolly.

“Doesn’t mean we aren’t going to tease you about it,” Luke added. It was at this moment that Clary heard the slight creak of the stairs, before turning to see her nervous boyfriend standing there fully dressed.

“Come eat,” Clary called to him. “Before it’s all gone cold.” Jace came over and sat beside her, collected his breakfast and started eating along with the rest.

“This is really good,” Jace enthused.

“Thanks,” Jocelyn said. “Family recipe.”

“My mom cooks a lot, but I’ve never seen her put a pancake in the oven before,” Jace said.

Clary couldn’t remember the last time she’d had such a wonderful Christmas. Jace started to relax as the day wore on, helped along by all the delicious food. Clary cracked a joke about the fastest way to a man’s heart is through his stomach. It was so rare that her whole family spent an entire day in each other’s company, that even though all they did was talk, eat, and open gifts, it was bliss.
They stayed up late, the five of them, sitting around a fireplace that was actually a plasma tv. Clary was laying with her head in Jace’s lap. Her parents sat together on the opposite end of the couch, and Jon had called the biggest arm chair. Cassie had other commitments with her family, but Jon said she’d pop in tomorrow for boxing day also known as December 26th.

The fire didn’t created any heat, but it sounded wonderful. Clary couldn’t remember being more comfortable in her life than in this moment, with the cracking noises in the background, and her head against Jace’s chest. She could hear his even breathing, his heart beat. It wasn’t until her dad started snoring that everyone decided it was time for bed. Clary dragged her feet up the stairs, feeling beautifully happy despite her tiredness. She and Jace collapsed together onto the bed and quickly fell asleep, his arm around her.

Clary woke once again to her blonde angel, though this time he was awake before her. He’d been sitting up in bed looking down at her.

“Watching me sleep huh?” she grumbled.

“Hey you started it,” Jace laughed. Clary smiled in returned, reaching forward to kiss him. When they broke apart, Jace whispered, “I love you.”

“I love you too,” Clary replied. “But you really don’t have to keep doing this.”

“Doing what?”

“Over compensating,” Clary explained. “And I know I was weirdly jealous before, but you can look at waitresses when they take your order.” She smiled at him, trying to communicate she wasn’t mad or upset at all.

Jace sighed, leaning back down on the bed. Clary turned, resting her chin on his chest so she could see his face.

“I really suck at this boyfriend thing huh?” Jace asked.

“No, you don’t,” Clary told him softly. “You just need practice.” He smiled, kissing her again.

Today they both got dressed before going downstairs. Jocelyn’s breakfast today was as amazing as yesterday, but Clary loved it just the same. Her mom’s cooking no matter how elaborate, was far superior to the school cafeteria food.

Just as they were finished eating, Jon kidnapped Jace to play a little one on one in the back yard, leaving Clary and Luke to clean up. Jocelyn had gone to pick up Cassie from the airport.

“Don’t you feel like they all just didn’t want to clean?” Clary laughed as she dried the dishes while Luke washed.

“Maybe,” Luke said. “Listen Clary, since this has been our only moment alone together, I wanted to-”

“I overheard you with mom,” Clary interrupted him, grinning. “And trust me, people can change.”

“Really?” Luke inquired. “I mean that much. They don’t say ‘once a player, always a player’ for nothing.”

“That’s a stereotype, dad,” Clary sighed. “People are more complex than that.”

“It’s hard to explain,” Clary began. “Since I first saw him I was drawn to him. I am aware of his presence, you know... like if he’s in the room, I can always say where. I miss him when he isn’t around, and the way he looks at me...” She didn’t know how to explain in words the feeling she got when Jace really focused on her. Even when she’d been insecure about how he felt, his gaze could always get her heart racing. “Jace doesn’t have what you’d call boyfriend skills, but he’s really trying, and even getting better. But he needs cooking lessons.” She laughed, thinking of the way his rice had somehow formed a puke at the bottom of the pan.

“As long as you’re happy,” Luke said gently.

“I am,” Clary replied.

Chapter End Notes

This chapter might be one of my shortest ever... why is writing filler more work than writing plot? sigh.

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Sneak Peek Chapter 71

"It's annoying isn't it," Izzy said. "All gooey and romantic all the time."

"I thought you didn't like Magnus?" Alec asked turned to his sister.

"He might be growing on me," Izzy said cooly. "Now that he isn't making you miserable."

Alec playfully swatted his sister on the back of her head before he said, "Magnus has never made me miserable you goof."

"But before-" Izzy started.

"Fall in love," Alec interrupted her. "Then we will talk."

"What does that mean?" Izzy asked.

"It means you have no clue what you are talking about," Alec answered.
Alec’s siblings, and parents were all sitting around the table with his boyfriend. It was their first dinner since arriving and it felt amazing to have everyone Alec loved - his whole family - in one place. Magnus had felt like family to Alec for a while now, but it was this moment that really made Alec start to visualize Magnus that way.

"It's so great to be home," Izzy sighed. "University hasn't been quite what I expected."

"If you say it's boring I will stab you with this fork," Alec said, trying to be serious enough to make the joke work, but instead of making a witty come back Izzy got out her phone and started typing.

"What are you doing?" Alec asked cautiously, surprised Izzy hadn't teased him back.

"Oh just looking up synonyms for boring," Izzy said, grinning. There was a roar of laughter that had likely come from their dad, but Alec was too busy pouncing on his sister to laugh along. Holding both her wrists with one hand, Alec tickled her without mercy with his free hand. She was wriggling, trying to get free, but her wrists were thin and he could easily keep both her hands secure.

"Not fair!" Izzy managed to say through her laughter, still squirming. Then suddenly her legs joined in and Alec found himself backing away to avoid bruises.

"It isn't Christmas without a little bit of sibling squabbles," Maryse chuckled.

Then dessert arrived, effectively putting an end to conversation as everyone dug in. Alec couldn't help but feel strange eating ice cream without having a cat rubbing at his legs waiting to lick the dish clean when he was done. Both Chairman Meow and The Great Catsby were quite fond of all things dairy, though Magnus didn't let them have as much as Alec thought the adorable little fuzzballs deserved. Magnus liked to sigh and tell Alec he spoiled them.

"Chairman would love this," Alec said indicated his empty bowl with ice cream residue on it.

"Indeed, he would Alexander," Magnus smiled.

"Who's Chairman?" Max asked. He was sitting two chair over next to Izzy. Alec had his sister on his left, and his boyfriend on his right while his parents sat across from them.

"One of Magnus's cats," Alec explained. "His full name is Chairman Meow."

"What a strange name to give a cat," Robert observed. They were all finished eating now, empty dessert plates in front of them. Alec could pictured both the cats jumping up on the table to get at the few licks of melted ice cream.

"It's a reference to Chairman Mao," Magnus explained. "The founding father of the People's Republic of China."

"Magnus is a history fan," Alec said, then added laughing. "And puns. Huge fan of puns."

"Well then as you've named both your cats with puns," Maryse said, the edge of a challenge in her voice. "That must mean he has a cat pun for us."
"What's a cat's favourite button?" Magnus asked after a moment's thought. "The paws button." His words were followed by groans and laughter in equal measure, but Maryse's laugh was the loudest.

"We are learning all sorts of things about you," she said, as the laughter died down. "But how much do you know about Alec?"

"Oh mom please no," Alec whined, hoping she wasn't about to bring out the embarrassing baby stories.

"Alec's afraid of spiders," Izzy exclaimed suddenly.

"Oh thanks," Alec groaned. He'd managed to go almost a year without Magnus finding out this little fact, and just like that, his sister had ruined it.

"Really?" Magnus asked, turning to face him. Well, at least Magnus was smiling.

"Kinda," Alec admitted. "It's just so creepy the way they can jump at you, you know."

"Actually I don't know," Magnus laughed. "I've met my fair share of spiders. They never really bothered me."

"Great," Izzy declared. "So you can be Alec's personal spider rescue squad."

"That's an image," Magnus said, grinning.

"Let's see," Izzy said wickedly. "Umm… Alec slept with his baby blanket till he was twelve!"

"Liar!" Alec snapped back at her. "Besides, you were thirteen!" She stuck her tongue at him and called him a liar in return which Alec knew to be true even if he wasn't about to admit it.

All Alec was thinking about was how pissed he was at his sister, but to his surprise, Magnus's began to laugh. Alec turned to see his boyfriend's smile lighting up his amazing eyes. For a moment, Alec just stopped to gaze at the person he loved, memorizing the way this particular smile looked. It was an expression of affection, as if Alec and Izzy's trying to one up each other was endearing rather than annoying. Magnus was an only child after all, so fighting with siblings was probably a rather strange concept to him. Then Magnus's laughed died down as his eyes locked with Alec's. It was the expression that Alec loved most; when Magnus said 'I love you' with just his eyes. Reaching out, Alec look his boyfriend's hand in his.

"Aren't you too adorable," Maryse's voice broke through Alec's bubble. He turned to see her smiling at them. Alec could feel the blush under his skin, but he paid it no attention.

"Annoying isn't it," Izzy stated. "All gooey and romantic all the time."

"I thought you didn't like Magnus?" Alec asked, turning to his sister.

"He might be growing on me," Izzy said cooly. "Now that he isn't making you miserable."

Alec playfully swatted his sister on the back of her head before he said, "Magnus has never made me miserable you goof."

"But before-" Izzy started.

"Fall in love," Alec interrupted her. "Then we'll talk."

"What does that mean?" Izzy asked.
"It means you have no clue what you are talking about," Alec answered.

"Oh please, I have eyes," Izzy said. "I can tell the difference between a happy brother and a sad brother." Alec couldn't help but think she'd never seen 'sad brother' since before Alec had met Magnus, he hadn't really had the same potential for sadness. Having your happiness dependent on another person also known as falling in love, changed everything.

"And is this what you want?" Alec asked her. "One day."

"I don't follow," Izzy replied.

"Do you want to love someone someday?" Alec said. "Do you want to stick with a guy long enough to bring them home for the holidays?"

Izzy just shrugged. "I doubt Simon wants such a thing, and I didn't ever get Mr. Suit's name. Honestly, I thought university would have a bigger sea of fish. Turns out, it's the same pond as high school."

"Wait, did you say Simon?" Magnus asked her. Izzy nodded. "Which Simon?"

"No clue," Izzy replied. "A Simon."

"My best friend's ex is named Simon," Magnus explained. "How small is our university, do ya think?" Again Izzy shrugged, and Magnus added. "What did he look like?"

"Brown hair," Izzy said ticking off things on her fingers. "Glasses, definitely nerdy, but in a cute way. Says he is still in love with someone else who is 'gone' though I don't know how." She paused gazing off into the distance as if trying to remember. "Yep, that's about it I think."

"I am almost certain you just described Simon Lewis," Magnus said, clearly stunned by the idea. "What have you done to the poor boy?"

"Nothing," Izzy sighed. "Showed him a good, safe, consensual time is all."

"I so wish I hadn't heard that," Robert sighed. Alec knew that his parents knew about Izzy's system of 'use them and leave them' when it came to guys. He also knew his parents didn't know how to stop her, so they settled for not hearing about it. She was safe which was the most important part, though Alec worried sometimes for his sister's heart. How could you fall in love when the act of love meant nothing to you?

It wasn't long until everyone started yawning and people started to turn in for the night. Alec lead Magnus upstairs, neither of them speaking until they reached his room. Closing the door of his bedroom behind him, Alec realized it was the first time they'd really been alone together since arriving. Alec took the opportunity to pull Magnus close and kiss him deeply, wrapping his arms around the man he loved.

"I am so glad you came," Alec said beaming at him. Alec wasn't sure what expression was on Magnus's face, but it worried him so he asked if something was wrong.

"It's just a little overwhelming," Magnus said with a slightly exaggerated exhale of breath. "The way you live, how you grew up. This house. It's just-'"

"Don't think about it like that," Alec said stroking his boyfriend's face with the back of his hand. "Pretend like you won a vacation in a lottery, and just enjoy yourself." Magnus chuckled lightly, but he did lean in for a kiss. Alec closed his eyes soaking in the joy that was Magnus's touch.
"Oh how I love you," Alec whispered.

"As I love you," Magnus replied softly. Alec's favourite words in the whole world. Magnus's hands were at the base of his neck as his boyfriend deepened their kiss, pulling him close. Alec's hands started working at his boyfriend's shirt as they moved closer to the bed.

They left a trail of clothes in their wake as they collapsed together onto the bed. As they danced the familiar dance of lovers, Alec couldn't help but remember their first time together. It had been rather soon after they'd gotten together, sooner than Alec had thought he'd be ready for, and yet he'd been more than ready. Just a few weeks of Magnus calling him boyfriend, and Alec had been dying to jump his bones despite the fact that before Magnus, Alec's experience had added up to one lousy date, and two awkward kisses. It hadn't mattered though, because when he and Magnus were together it was easy, effortless. Perfect.

Coming down from their highs, Alec moved a few inches closer to lay his head on Magnus's shoulder. His boyfriend's arms wrapped around him, and Alec sighed contentedly.

"Good night," Magnus whispered kissing the top of Alec's head. "My crazy, rich, impossible person." Alec laughed, tilting his head up to kiss his boyfriend's lips before using the switch by the bed to turn off the lights.

The next morning, after a quick breakfast, they went to the airport to pick up Aleida. The whole way, Magnus was fretting about how she'd react to seeing Alec's house.

"Relax," Alec sighed putting a hand on either side of his boyfriend's shoulders. "It's just a house."

"It's a mansion, Alec," Magnus corrected him.

"To live in," Alec said. "Hence house." Magnus didn't seem to agree, but they made it to the airport nonetheless. Alec had no idea what this woman looked like, however, he knew they'd found her when he saw her look at Magnus. Despite the fact that she was his aunt, Alec saw a mother's love in her eyes.

"It's so good to see you!" Aleida cried as she pulled Magnus in for a hug. It was a strange concept to Alec for family to look so different. Most people who saw him with any of his siblings knew they were related right away, but Magnus's family was so different. Aleida was Dutch, with light hair and skin, not a trace of Asian roots in her features. The closest thing Magnus had to a sibling was Clary, who he often treated like a little sister, and she looked about as much like Magnus as Alec looked like her.

"This is Alexander," Magnus introduced them, turning away from Aleida to gesture to Alec.

"Nice to meet you," Alec said smiling.

"I hear it's you I have to thank for the first class ticket?" Aleida inquired.

"I hear it's you I have to thank for getting Magnus here," Alec smirked. "Since he'd never have agreed without you joining us."

"I wouldn't exactly call that even," Aleida said.

"I would," Alec replied simply. "Car's waiting."

"There's a car?" Aleida asked, turning to her nephew.
"Don't even get me started," Magnus sighed, with a shake of his head. Thanks to the first class ticket, it was a short wait for her suitcase. Alec continued his argument that her ticket had really been a very selfish investment, since it saved them time waiting around, though he didn't think either of them were convinced. When they returned to the car, Alec watched the awed look on her face, similar to the one he'd seen on Magnus's yesterday. And Alec suspected this look was just because they had a driver. How big would her eyes go when she saw the house?

He couldn't help but wonder about the circumstances in which Aleida, and Magnus had been poor. Had taking Magnus in been why his aunt hadn't been able to maintain a standard of living like before, or had she always been down on her luck. Alec had such a hard time imagining what it must be like for them.

"Oh Mags," Aleida sighed as they got out of the car, and she stared stunned at Alec's home. "What have you gotten me into this time?"

"Please don't call me Mags," Magnus whined. "I am not five anymore you know."

"I should hope not!" Aleida laughed. "Five year olds don't date rich boys." Magnus very obviously rolled his eyes which his aunt, either chose to ignore or didn't notice.

"You boys better give me a tour," Aleida added in a more serious tone as she tried to carry her own luggage just like Magnus had.

"It will be taken to your room," Alec explained, gesturing to her luggage. "No need to carry it."

"That's just silly," Aleida objected. "I can carry my own suitcase."

"I know, but you don't have to," Alec explained. After processing this for a moment, Aleida gave up the grip she had on her suitcase and followed them up the stairs into the house.

Chapter End Notes

For the next few hours, the three of them explored the many rooms in which Alec had spent his childhood. Since Magnus had already learned quite a bit in his short time here, Alec tried to take a step back and let Magnus show his aunt around. He wasn't sure why this made him so happy until he realized that it made him feel like this was Magnus's home too.

Next chapter is a NEW point of view! :D I think it's kinda obvious whose POV I am adding but, who wants to guess anyway? Oh and since the sneak peek would give away the pov… no sneak peek for you. *Is mean* I will add one in later once the chapters been up for a bit since the title gives away the pov as well.

Also about my use of the word Mags.' I know its used alot in fanfics as a romantic name for Alec to call Magnus, but to me Mags seems like a childish name, and I could never in a million years picture Alec called Magnus Mags. It just makes me cringe. I do however like the idea of it being a childhood nickname for Magnus from a parent figure like his aunt so I added it in that way.
Maia didn't like the holidays. To her, they were just another reminder of how amazing her stupid older brother was in the eyes of her parents. It had taken Maia many years of internal strength, to quell at least some of her insecurities created by her parents very clear and cruel bais. If she'd had a choice, Maia would have stayed at school for the holidays, but her parents wouldn't hear of it. They were paying for her school, so she had to come when they called. It confused Maia to no end why her parents wanted her home. All they did was look at Daniel, so why did it matter if she was in the room? At home she was invisible, like a ghost. This meant her Christmas had been long, stressful, and exhausting. She returned to school as early as her parents would let her, saying she wanted to get a jump start on her school work. For a moment, she thought her parents were actually glad to see her trying so hard at school, but then they turned it all back around to Daniel. How her parents could make her leaving early about her older brother she had no idea, but they'd managed it.

Maia often wondered why they'd had a second child. If her older brother was so freakin perfect, why try for another. She'd never asked them though; she quite believed she was scared to hear the answer. But she had come up with many theories over the years; ranging from failed birth control, to them wanting another boy.

Maia couldn't wait till graduation. The moment she was no longer financially tied to these people, she was never going to see them ever again. She'd find a job good enough so she could pay her own way. Independence was the light at the end of the long tunnel that was her life so far. This might be why she always thought of the past as something to escape, and the future as being bright and full of potential. This attitude was also probably one of the reasons why she didn't like that her ex was wondering the halls of her school. Why did Jordan have to be here of all places? Her school was her sanctuary, and he was crashing it.

Her first day back at school was like a breath of fresh air. To be free of her parents once again was glorious. It wasn't true independence, but at least she had four Daniel free months to look forward to before summer. Last year she had endured the entire summer back home with her parents, and she was determined not to do that again. If possible, she'd take summer classes or get a summer job so she'd have at least some time away from them. But that was a problem for later.

Maia arrived home to an empty dorm room, but it made her smile. No Daniel, no parents. Just all this space to herself. It was paradise. She was sure Izzy wouldn't be home till she absolutely had to be, and Maia couldn't blame her. From what Maia had heard about Izzy's family home, it was more like a five star hotel than an actual house. Why wouldn't Izzy want to stay as long as possible?

Dumping her bag on the floor, Maia laid down on her bed and stared up at the ceiling. She couldn't help but wonder if Simon was back home yet. She knew he'd had a fairly low-key Christmas with just his sister and mother, and therefore might be back already. Though Simon actually liked his family, so maybe he would stay a while longer with his than she had. Either way, Maia wouldn't know until she asked. Pulling her phone from her pocket, Maia sent him a simple text. Despite the relief of her solitude, she found she wanted some decent company after all.

As she waited for a reply, Maia continued to stare at the ceiling, trying to form patterns from the paint lines, and badly painted over damage from students over the years. If she drew a line right down the center of one shape, it almost looked like a fork. She wasn't sure why she was doing this; her thoughts were around and around, nowhere good.
Why was Jordan at this school? WHY? She'd purposely picked a different school than Daniel to avoid him, but she'd also picked one far enough away so she wouldn't have to see Jordan again. She so wanted to believe that it was a coincidence, that he'd just happened to be here too. But Maia knew she wasn't that lucky. Her unhelpful mind pulled memories to the front that she had never intended to think of again.

They were by a lake. Maia sat on the grass looking out over the water. Jordan stood above her, facing away. Then slowly he turned to look at her, and it was like the world stopped turning. The way he looked at her made her feel seen, like she was the center of the universe. This was one of her favourite memories of Jordan; their relationship had fallen apart only days later.

They were in class, grade ten if Maia wasn't much mistaken. Jordan sat to her left, and the teacher was going on and on about something neither of them were playing attention to. When the teacher turned her back, Maia had felt a gentle tap on her shoulder and turned. It had been the first time Jordan had approached her. Though he'd said nothing, she could remember the texture of the rough paper he'd placed in her hand. Maia had opened it, and read the words 'you're cute' in messy boyish writing. The paper looked so worn that she'd been sure he'd been carrying it around with him for days, trying to find a moment to give it to her.

Then as she knew it would, Maia's mind showed her the fight. She couldn't remember now what had started it, but she could remember the feeling of it. They'd been so young, only weeks from finishing high school. Maia could recall the exact moment when her heart had broken, and she'd vowed to never let him near her again. He was her past, and she was determined not to go backwards. That had been two years of her life she wouldn't get back, and that was all it was to her now.

Maia sat up, trying to pull her thoughts back to the here and now. Checking her phone, she was relieved to see that Simon had replied.

'Sure,' he texted. 'Your place or mine.'

'Don't phrase it like that,' Maia replied, smiling at how Simon had chosen to word his response. 'It makes this sound like a sleazy hook up.'

'Yes, come forth into my love cave, for lack of chemistry is my main turn on,' Simon texted, and Maia laughed out loud. She had missed her friend. He was so much easier to spend time with than her crazy family.

'Get your ass over here, dork,' Maia texted back grinning.

Simon simply replied with, 'Yes ma'am.'

Less than twenty minutes later, Maia was laughing and eating popcorn with Simon sitting beside her, and feeling much better. They were watching a slightly ridiculous, yet a very entertaining old scifi movie they'd found hidden in the depths of Netflix.

"You know what," Simon said as the movie ended. "Give me another month and I bet I could get Jordan to watch this, even if Star Trek was beyond him."

"Jordan?" Maia asked confused. Had she ever told Simon the name of her ex?

"Yeah, my roommate," Simon explained. "I've told you about him before, right?"

"Not by name," Maia said. "That's so weird."

"Why?" Simon asked.
"My ex is named Jordan," Maia explained. "I told you that on our failure of a date, remember?"

"Right," Simon said slowly. "Yeah, I didn't make that connection. Quite honestly, I think I forgot." But then his eyes went very wide. "I don't supposed your ex was a really tidy guy?"

"Not at all," Maia replied.

"Was he super laid back, and gave you lots of space?" Simon tried next.

"Nope," Maia said. "Clingy as all hell."

"Well shit," Simon exclaimed, and Maia knew what that look meant. Oh yeah, this was just great. Not only was her ex at the school and following her around, he was also living with her friend. On top of all this, they'd somehow managed to be totally clueless of the fact for four months.

"I kinda added Jordan to my band," Simon said sheepishly after a few moments of silence. "He's a great singer. That is when he isn't making everyone miserable by singing the saddest song he can find."

Maia groaned, covering her face with her hands. "That's him alright," she mumbled through her fingers.

"Sorry," Simon said. "I had no idea. He never mentioned you by name." He paused then added, "We are kinda friends."

"Just perfect," Maia said, her voice dripping with sarcasm. "Fan-freaking-tastic."

"Is this going to mean you don't want to be friends?" Simon asked. The sadness in his voice made her sigh. She knew Simon hadn't done this on purpose, since he didn't have a cruel bone in his body, but still this sucked.

"No," Maia said. "It's fine. We went four months without knowing, surely we can go the rest of the school year without meeting."

"I doubt it," Simon added. "I think he's been building up the courage to talk to you."

"What's there to talk about?" Maia whined. "We're broken up. The end. Kaput."

"He still loves you, Maia," Simon spoke softly. "I know he does. In fact, that was part of why we hit it off right away. Me and my pointless feelings for Clary, and him and his ex. We kinda related."

Maia didn't know what to say to this, and a moment later, Simon added, "I have to ask, though I promise I won't tell him what you say if you don't want me to, but do you still love him, Maia?"

"I don't know," Maia said quickly, gesturing wildly with her arms. She hadn't been prepared for this. "It's the past. I try not to think about the past."

"But if you do think about it," Simon pressed. "What would you think."

"I don't know, okay," Maia exclaimed, standing up and facing him. She so didn't need this right now.


"Good," Maia added sitting back down. "I know you didn't choose to live with him, just like I didn't chose to live with Izzy. There is just four months left till we get out of the dorms. And believe me, I am getting out of the dorms this time for sure. It will be fine."
"Did you just say Izzy?" Simon asked.

"Yeah, that's my roommate," Maia replied. "Remember I texted you about how she keeps taking me shopping for clothes and out to bars." And then Simon started laughing, a deep highly amused laugh that Maia didn't understand at all.

"What's so funny?"

"I am living with your ex," Simon managed to say through his laughter. "And you are living with my elevator girl."

"Your what now?"

"After our date," Simon said when he could finally speak. "I got trapped in an elevator, and made out with a total stranger. Then she reappeared when I got back to the school, and basically booty called me."

"Simon are you trying to say you had sex with my roommate?" Maia asked.

"Yep," Simon replied still laughing.

"Izzy will have sex with anything that moves," Maia spoke curtly. "Don't pretend like this is as big of a deal as you being besties with Jordan!"

"Makes us a little even though," Simon said still snickering. "Don't ya think?"

"Maybe," Maia said, now more worried for her friend than annoyed at him. "Izzy doesn't care much about the guys she fools around with. You don't seem the type to do that sort of thing. And well-"

"You think I'll get hurt," Simon said, clearly understanding what she meant, despite her inability to say it.

"Yeah," Maia agreed.

"But I've been hurt, Maia" Simon explained. "And I think I needed someone like her to- I don't know, pull me away from Clary. Every day it gets a little better, but it's hard, and Izzy was- for lack of a better word- was a gentleman."

"Good," Maia said firmly. "At least she wasn't mean about it."

"Don't worry," Simon said smiling at her. "I will be careful. Besides Izzy's only condition was no falling for her." He laughed, and Maia had a feeling this was going to get worse before it got better. Then again, she had the same feeling about herself and Jordan, so who was she to talk. Maybe Simon was right and he'd needed to blow off a little steam. Goodness knows Maia had been there on more than one occasion.

"If she ever hurts you though," Maia said. "Tell me. I know where she sleeps." Maia grinned, trying to do her best evil smirk.

"What are you gonna do?" Simon laughed. "Give her a mustache with a sharpie?"

"Or cover her hair in honey," Maia suggested.

"Oh that would be hilarious," Simon laughed. "I can only imagine the look on her face."

"It's going to be a very strange semester isn't it," Maia whined. "I miss last semester already."
What do you think of the new point of view?

And yes this is a permanent addition to the pov rotation just like Simon and Izzy were. I was surprised that not a single review guessed Maia. It seems I wasn't as obvious as I thought. I had added 'Jaia' to the summery which I thought gave it away.

Side note: I got a job... so ... like yeah that happened. I start Monday. I should still be able to update fairly normally though maybe not as insane fast as before. (There is nothing like unemployment to keep one writing all day every day. lol.) Maybe more like normal fast or twice a week or so rather than 3-4 times a week. We shall see. You never know maybe I will write just as fast with the job as without? I went on a crazy writing binge yesterday because I was house sitting for someone and had no interruptions all day. This means the next chapter is finished and beta-ed already though I have to fix one thing. And the chapter after that is only a few hundred words short of done.

Sneak Peek Chapter 73

Jace woke up over nine hours later feeling much better. He got dressed, sorta, had breakfast, and then went to class. Today Clary had class over his lunch break, and Alec was busy, so Jace ate alone in the cafeteria. He went to another class that was as boring as the last one had been, then finally went home again. A standard day in the life of a University student. Jace knew he needed to declare a major. He'd been trying to decide on one for a while. He liked his marketing classes most, and was leaning toward that, though he found many of the other ones interesting as well. It all depended on what he wanted to do with the rest of his life. The problem was that when Jace thought about the rest of his life, all he thought about was Clary, which didn't at all help him with career options. He'd called his mother a few times to bounce ideas off her, but was still torn about what to major in.

Jace texted his girlfriend intending to spend time with her rather than inside his own head, but to his surprise, Clary was busy. She texted back that she'd tell him all about it tomorrow over lunch. Before the school year had started, Jace and Clary had sat down and compared their schedules. They'd both had Wednesday and Friday evenings clear, as well as Thursday and Tuesday around lunch time. Jace had marked his calender by these days, and with today being Wednesday evening, he had no clue what Clary was talking about. She couldn't possibly have class, so what was going on?
Jace's Wednesday

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Jace had survived Christmas rather more intact than he'd expected. Clary's family had been wonderfully welcoming, which might ironically have been why Jace was so nervous the whole time. Where were the threats? Where were the ultimatums? Jace hadn't been prepared for 'happy family' acceptance. Seriously, how lucky was he supposed to get? Not only was Clary his girlfriend, but her family liked him? Really, with his past?

Shooting hoops with Jon had been what had finally calmed Jace's nerves. It was the causal way Jon had interacted with him that had done it, though Jace suspected it had always just been the physical activity itself. Jace always felt less anxious after a workout, though not so much when there was a coach screaming at you the whole time. That had quite the opposite effect. Jace was good at wrestling. He was strong, and had been doing it long enough to know exactly how to get ahead, but he'd decided ages ago that once school was done, and he didn't have to wrestle to keep his scholarship, Jace was so done with this sport. He enjoyed the physical exercise, but it was rather ruined by all the pressure to win. He was sick of spending hours in the gym with a bunch of sweaty guys being hollered at by their coach.

"Jace!" his coach called as practice ended. With a sigh, Jace turned away from the door and back to his coach.

"Hey," Jace replied.

"Good job today," coach said.

"Thanks," Jace replied wondering why he was still here. Surely, the coach hadn't held him back just to praise him; that really wasn't his style. Coach Rivera much preferred the 'telling the team how much they suck' method of instruction.

"I am willing to bet it hasn't escaped your notice that Mason isn't keeping up with everyone else," the coach said. Indeed, it hadn't escaped Jace's notice, but he hardly cared. He didn't say anything however, and Coach Rivera continued. "We are only as strong as our weakness link. Since you are the strongest member of the team, I was wondering if you'd mind helping him."

"Helping him how?" Jace asked, trying to hold back another sigh. His scholarship wasn't dependent on if they won or lost the end of year tournament. This sounded like a one sided favour to him. Jace couldn't benefit from helping Mason, and yet he was expected to put in all that work for something. He didn't know Mason, or really anyone else on the team very well. They all knew him only because he won the most matches.

"Some one on one practice maybe," Coach Rivera said. "Unless you have any better ideas. I just know if we put the effort in, we can do better than last time." Last year Jace had won almost all his individual matches, but the team overall had been third nonetheless. Jace understood why Coach Rivera was invested in improving their weakest members, but he also knew he didn't care. He'd been happy with third place.

"Can I think about it?" Jace asked. He really didn't want the extra work, though he felt guilty for not caring about the team as much as he knew he should. All he could think about was how much time he'd lose training Mason, time he would rather spend with Clary.
"Sure," the coach smiled at him. "Let me know at our next practice, alright?"

"Okay," Jace replied, then he turned and left the gym.

His day was finally over. There was something draining about coming back to classes after the holidays, and trying to get back into a routine. After only one day back at school, and Jace was ready to collapse on his bed and sleep till morning. Entering his apartment, Jace intended to do just that, but his roommate had other ideas. Jace hadn't seen Alec since before the holidays, Alec having arriving back while Jace had been out.

"You will never guess what I learned over the holidays," Alec said by way of greeting the second he saw Jace.

"Perfect," Jace sighed. "No need to try then." And he continued walking straight for his bedroom. He was too tired to make a joke about Alec's lack of a hello.

"Izzy hooked up with Simon," Alec exclaimed, clearly too impatient to bother making Jace guess.

"Huh?" Jace asked, forcing into a semi-functional state by the surprising news. "How is that possible?"

"Not sure how it happened," Alec continued. "But Izzy confirmed it." Something clicked into place in Jace’s head, and suddenly he remembered who the ‘elevator girl’ had been.

"Crap," Jace whined. "Right so Simon and Izzy had a thing last year. Unless he’s suddenly Mr. Super-Stud, and there is more than one strange woman making passes at him."

"You knew something about this?" Alec asked.

"Yeah," Jace said. "When Izzy was here for spring break, now that I think about it, Simon got stuck in an elevator with a girl and they made out, but he didn’t get her name at the time, but it was Izzy."

"That is just so weird," Alec said shaking his head. "I know Izzy is a little… well you know, but with Simon? I thought Izzy liked well… not Simon’s."

"It seems university has ruined her palette," Jace sighed.

"Or fixed it?" Alec counted, looking oddly hopeful. "I mean Simon is a more wholesome guy than she usually goes for."

"Maybe," Jace shrugged. "Can I sleep now?"

"Fine," Alec sighed. "But I am determined to think the best of them. If you can change, surely Izzy can too."

"I don't know," Jace said cautiously. "I think your anniversary is making you see hearts where no hearts exist."

"One whole year!" Alec said, suddenly giddy about his relationship, rather than gossiping about his sister's. It was quite a remarkable and instant transformation actually. "As of tomorrow. And this means you and Clary's anniversary is coming up too right? Didn't you guys finally figure yourselves out only a few weeks after us?"

"Yeah," Jace said, for a moment not quite so tired as he remembered. "Wow, I can't believe it's been that long."
"Well, time is irrelephant," Alec sniggered.

"Really Alec?" Jace sighed. "A pun. You have been spending way too much time with Magnus." Alec just laughed.

"No such thing," he said merrily.

"Let me sleep," Jace whined, and Alec finally moved away allowing Jace to crash fully clothed onto his bed and pass out.

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Jace knew that Alec and Magnus's big anniversary was this weekend, so his friend's mind was elsewhere at the moment. Was there anyone else Jace could hang out with? He could text Simon he supposed, but he still wasn't sure if Simon would like that. Usually Simon came to him when he wanted to, and Jace gave him space the rest of the time. But if Simon was getting busy with Izzy, did that mean he was finally over Clary? Did that mean he'd be more open to being friends?

"Urg!" Jace cried as he fell face first onto his bed. Strangely, this made him feel a bit better, as if the act had expelled some of his frustration. It was too early in the year for real homework, so Jace settled for some crappy tv, then went to bed early again.

The next day consisted of more undefined classes, skipping breakfast, and finally meeting up with Clary for lunch. Jace smiled when he saw her sitting at their usual table waiting for him. She had a salad with a side of bread in front of her. Jace had ordered a burger with fries, and was carrying it when he reached the table. Placing the plate down, he leaned down and gave her a soft kiss before sitting in the chair opposite.

"So," Jace began. "You were going to tell me why you ditched me last night?"

"Ditch?" she asked skeptically.

"Oh alright fine," Jace sighed. "I won't be so needy. Why did you have plans that weren't class or me?"

"From needy to controlling," Clary laughed affectionately.

"I-" Jace started, but hung his head. He still sucked at this.

"It's a good thing I love you," Clary laughed. "Or I'd find this annoying." Jace mumbled under his
breath, but said nothing.

"So anyway, I was talking to dad over the holidays," Clary began. "And I think he had a point, so I signed up for a self defense class. It's Wednesday nights so that's where I was."

"That's great," Jace replied, trying and failing not to be upset that this meant he wouldn't get to see her on Wednesday nights anymore. He knew boyfriends were suppose to be supportive about this kind of thing, rather than super clingy.

"I think this will be good for me," Clary continued. "Help me feel more confident after everything." Jace couldn't disagree with her on that. She deserved to be confident and strong, even if it was making him feel weak and useless. What if she got so strong and independent that she didn't need him anymore? He shook his head, trying to dispel the loathsome thought.

"If it's important to you," Jace said. "Then I'm glad you are doing it."

"Thanks," Clary replied smiling at him.

"So onto better topics," Jace said clapping his hands together. "What do you want to do for our anniversary?"

"Aren't those supposed to be a surprise?" Clary asked.

"I don't know," Jace answered. "But either way, I am sure if I try for surprise I will mess it up, so I thought I'd ask instead."

"You're cute," Clary laughed, reaching across the table to gently touch his cheek.

"I know," Jace replied easily. "Now answer the question."

"We could go out to eat somewhere fancy," Clary suggested. "That might be fun."

"Alright," Jace said, nodding as he tried to think of ways he could accomplish this. "I can work with that."

"Or we could stay in, watch a movie, and order take out," Clary added.

"Okay, now you are just confusing me," Jace sighed. Clary laughed, but Jace kept a straight face as he added, 'Which would you prefer?"

"Hmm," Clary began, thoughtfully. In fact, it was almost too thoughtfully. She had her hand under her chin in that theatrical way the smart guy on the tv show always does when he was about to discover who killed whom and why.

"Clary," Jace said warningly. "Are you teasing me?" His girlfriend chuckled as she reached across the table to steal his fries.

"Why didn't you order fries?" Jace asked.

"Because yours taste better," Clary explained.

"They are the same fries!" Jace exclaimed, again confused by her logic.

"But they are your fries," Clary said. "Which makes them taste better." Jace pushed his plate of fries towards her and covered his face with his hands. Why had he fallen in love? Why? It had brought nothing but confusion. His stupid, meddling heart should just learn to butt out. How could he love
someone so much, if they made no sense what so ever? In fact, love itself made no sense. How exactly had Jace become love's bitch? He knew it was all Clary's fault, but the whole process was quite the mystery to him.

"You have that funny look on your face," Clary observed. "What are you thinking about?"

"Oh just that you will be the death of me woman," Jace sighed.

"Pfft," Clary dismissed his remark. "Dramatic much?"

"Confusing much," Jace counted, and to his surprise, Clary grinned.

"It is just so much fun to mess with you," Clary giggled.

"It's a good thing I love you," Jace grumbled, echoing her words back at her. "Or I'd find this annoying."

"Nice," Clary praised him for the copy cat trick. "Okay, but in all seriousness, a fancy restaurant if it's in the budget, otherwise me, you, a movie, and takeout."

"Okay," Jace said taking a deep breath. "I can do that."

"Then why do you look like you are headed for the gallows?" Clary asked.

"A year," Jace whispered. "I mean a year. A whole year. 365 days of us."

"That is what a first year anniversary usually means," Clary giggled.

"It's just kinda surreal, you know."

"Yeah," Clary replied.

They finished eating, and then Jace walked her to her next class before heading to his own. After another boring hour of being lectured at, Jace made his way to wrestling practice. As Jace walked into the gym, he prepared for an evening of flipping people over, and landing flat on his ass in equal measure. This was very much the usual, though Jace only fell flat because he had to let the others learn. Since no one on the team could beat him, Jace really wasn't challenged in these practices. He wished so badly he could skip them, but they were part of his scholarship requirements. When practice finally ended, Jace breathed a sigh of relieve. He quickly went for the exit, but Coach Rivera told him to stay behind before he could reach it.

"Have you thought anymore about training Mason?" the coach asked.

"Oh yeah right," Jace said, suddenly remembering he was supposed to have mulled this over, rather than totally forget about it, which is what had happened. "Umm…"

What was he supposed to say? Jace wasn't willing to give up time with Clary to train Mason, and he had classes. Homework would start piling up soon enough, and he just didn't have time for this. Then Jace had sudden idea.

"Sure, I can do that," he told his coach. "But only on Wednesday nights."

Chapter End Notes
Am I overwhelming you guys with too many updates too fast?

Due to my view count per chapter (on fanfic.net since we don't have those kinds of stats here) I am starting to worry that updating so fast is actually making people not want to read this. I almost updated this chapter yesterday, but I noticed not to because even though I have 295 follows, only 196 people had viewed my last chapter.

People often say 'please update soon' but I don't think they mean it quite like it seems. I think people are used to stories not being updated on fanfic and say that to everyone out of habit.

I sucked at only updating once a week, but I could try to slow down. Honestly, I don't keep track of how often I update. I just update whenever I finish a chapter and my beta sends it back to me. And since I write between 200-6000 words a day... and each chapter averages around 2200 words sometimes I write 2-3 chapters in a day like I did on Tuesday. Then I have to be patience and wait a day between updates. Sigh. Also my beta is fast. ^_^

... I did the math again... not sure if I want to scare myself or if I was just curious. Either way the word count doesn't lie:

I've written and published over 720,000 words on this site since March 2016. Maybe my friend is right... and I do need a hobby. lol. Well hopefully my new job will help me with balance. I suck at balance.

_________________________

Sneak Peek Chapter 74

Magnus's mind was pulled back to the present when his teacher asked him a question. Of course, having been spacing out for the last ten minutes Magnus had no idea what the question was, let alone the answer.

"Umm..." he began, knowing he looked just about as clueless as he was.

"The Mongols, Bane," his profession sighed. "And please if you aren't going to listen don't show up to class." Magnus nodded sheepishly, seriously considering skipping this guys next class. The notes were online and he knew which days the quizzes were so what did it matter anyway? All Magnus could think about was the fact that Alec had a surprise planned for their anniversary and that surprise started in an hour. Magnus wanted to celebrate their year together, but he was weary of exactly what Alec had planned. Since he'd finally broken the wall with their holiday trip Magnus suspected Alec would keep with that theme and plan something over the top. He knew Alec meant well, but if it was too extravagant Magnus was sure to feel uncomfortable.

Class finally ended and Magnus went home, fretting about how the rest of his night would play out. He was also thinking about his wardrobe. As he walked, Magnus went through his clothing options in his mind. Could he wear the smart deep green dress shirt with plain black pants or was that too underdressed. What was Alec going to show up wearing? Walking through his front door, Magnus dropped his school stuff on the floor without a second thought and went straight for his closet. He had no idea what he was in for tonight so how was he supposed to know what to wear? Deciding this was beyond silly, Magnus got out his phone and hit two on his speed dial.
"Alexander," Magnus spoke as soon as the line picked up. "You have to tell me where we are going."

"Ah let me think… no," Alec replied clearly amused.

"But I don't know what to wear," Magnus grumbled.
As school started again, Magnus’s mind was ever mulling over the time he’d spent at his boyfriend’s mansion over the holidays. Showing his aunt around the place had been like showing her a museum. It had reminded Magnus of when he worked as a tour guide over the summer. This last Christmas had been by far the best Christmas Magnus could remember having in a very long time, though he knew that was more because he’d been with Alec and Aleida, than because of the fancy accommodations. It had after all been his first Christmas with Alexander, and it just wasn’t Christmas without his aunt. He’d missed Clary, but he knew Biscuit had had a great holiday season back home with her parents and Jace. But there was one conversation in particular that Magnus just couldn’t get out of his head. It had been toward the end of the holidays when things were winding down, and he’d found himself alone with Aleida.

"So what do you think?" Magnus had asked her. "Glad you came?"

"Very much so," Aleida replied. "Because I got to see you with Alec."

"Oh?" Magnus inquired. "And why was that so important?"

"He is different than the others Magnus," Aleida had explained. "I've seen you get your heart broken so many times. I remember you crying in my arms just last Christmas because you were scared to try and love again, scared to open yourself up to heartbreak again." She'd paused, thoughtfully before continuing. "I have been watching Alec very closely since I arrived, and watching you as well. I see the way he looks at you, Mags. Rich or poor that man loves you."

"I know," Magnus smiled, leaning back.

"I understand why his world is strange to you," Aleida continued. "I have to confess, I wouldn't know how to live in a house like this. I barely know how to visit it, but I don't think that should matter."

"It shouldn't," Magnus said. "But somehow it does. I know that if I let him do everything, let him pay for everything, and buy my time like its nothing, then it will becoming nothing. I will be a dead weight. People will say I am with him for his money, and I will be dependent on him for the rest of my life."

"It's a scary thought isn't it," Aleida laughed lightly, though without much humour. "To be decorative."

"What was it you always said when I was slacking off," Magnus had said. "Make yourself useful instead of merely ornamental."

"Do I say that?" she'd chuckled in mock surprise.

"Yes," Magnus had chuckled. "All the time."

"Well considering your current lot in life, maybe that is bad advice," Aleida had said.

"You never give bad advice, Auntie," Magnus had replied.
"Oh I don't know about that," she laughed. "I am only human you know."

"Definitely not," Magnus had replied smiling. "Super-human at the very least."

"We really do need to crush these childish illusions of yours, Mags," Aleida smirked.

"Stop using my baby name and maybe we can," Magnus had grumbled at her. He'd known she was teasing him about the illusions. Magnus had a very good adult to adult friendship with his aunt, apart from her using his baby name that is. He knew lots of kids never developed such relationships with their parents, either the parents were never able to see the children they raised as an actual adult, or they drift apart slowly without realizing. Magnus felt very lucky to have the relationship with her that he did.

"All I'm saying," Aleida had finished with. "Is find a happy medium. Don't accept things so large that you feel small, but don't turn everything down either."

"Ah yes balance," Magnus had sighed. "A skill I do not possess."

"And never have," Aleida had chuckled. "But I think doing things for you makes Alec happy, and not letting him do anything isn't the answer."

"See, I told you that you can't give bad advice," Magnus had replied with a smile. "I let him buy me lunch a lot."

"That's a start," Aleida had laughed. "Though a small one. Non-crazy rich people buy lunch for their friends too."

"Quit making sense," Magnus had grumbled. "It's annoying."

"Cents?" Aleida had smirked. "No, I make dollars."

"Not bad," Magnus had replied thoughtfully. "But I've heard it before."

"Mags, this was the balance," Aleida said, serious once again. "Letting Alec host Christmas, and buy our plane tickets. This was your start."

Magnus's mind was pulled back to the present when his teacher asked him a question. Of course, having been spacing out for the last ten minutes, Magnus had no idea what the question was, let alone the answer.

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this was beyond silly, Magnus got out his phone and hit two on his speed dial.

"Alexander," Magnus spoke as soon as the line picked up. "You have to tell me where we are
going."

"Ah let me think… no," Alec replied clearly amused.

"But I don't know what to wear," Magnus grumbled.

"I am walking up your street now," Alec told him.

"Shit," Magnus exclaimed, but Alec just laughed. Magnus hung up the phone and started pulling
clothes out of his closet like a madman. By the time he heard a knock at the door, Magnus had at
least three outfits picked out, depending on what Alexander arrived wearing. The fact that Magnus
was still wearing the casual attire he'd worn to class today was totally Alec's fault.

Magnus opened his front door, and felt his jaw drop. His shopping-phobic boyfriend was wearing
the most glorious tux Magnus had ever seen. He was sure someone else had dressed Alec, since no
man who was content to wear baggy sweaters on a daily basis could have picked out these clothes.
Magnus tried not to think about how much this dark, charcoal black suit, with a perfectly white crisp
undershirt, had cost as he enjoyed the view. Alec's tie was a light blue that not only brought out his
eyes brilliantly, but also contrasted boldly with the black of his tux and his hair. That whole effect
was making Magnus want to lock his front door, and get Alec out of those clothes stat.

"That's the look I was going for," Alec grinned. "Thank goodness I have a sister who knows about
shopping."

"I will forgive that woman anything if it means seeing you like this, Alexander," Magnus whispered,
moving closer and wrapping his arms around his boyfriend.

"You don't look so bad yourself," Alec whispered back, but Magnus scoffed.

"I would be dressed to impress, but someone wouldn't tell me where we were going," Magnus
reminded him. Alec leaned into kiss him, grinning with joy at his ridiculous surprise. As their lips
touched, Magnus found he didn't care about clothes anymore. He opened his mouth and pulled Alec
closer, getting his hand under Alec's stunning jacket so only the thin fabric of his shirt was between
their skin. Magnus pressed himself right up against Alec so there was no space between them.
Magnus slid his one leg wedged in between Alec's when his boyfriend pulled away.

"I should wear this suit more often," Alec gasped, disentangling himself from Magnus's grip before
adding more calmly. "But we have reservations."

"I have reservations with your outfit," Magnus argued, moving closer again. "Or rather with getting
you out of it."

"Later," Alec whispered, kissing Magnus's cheek but keep the rest of him a firm few inches away.

"I will hold you to that Alexander," Magnus replied.

"You better," Alec smiled back. If they were indeed leaving, it was time Magnus got change. He
knew just which of his outfits to go with now that he'd seen what Alec was wearing.

"Wait there," Magnus told him. Smiling, Alexander did as he was bid. Running back to his room
Magnus selected what he'd been least expecting to wear together from the pile. It was really the only expensive item of clothing he owned, and he'd worn it only once before. It was a suit, but not a standard suit. It had a purple hue to it, and an almost velvet texture. The jacket did up in the front at a diagonal, and the buttons were ornate. Magnus thought one of the reasons he'd bought it was because of how much it had reminded him of a victorian twist on a hotel valet's jacket. The history nerd in him had been quite happy about this at the time, which is probably why his frugal ways had left him purchase the suit in the first place. Now finally dressed to impress, Magnus returned to see Alec standing exactly where he'd left him.

"And I thought you were beautiful before," Alec sighed, obviously roaming over Magnus's outfit with his eyes. "Where have you been hiding this?"

"I rarely wear it," Magnus replied. "One of those silly purchases where you probably shouldn't have bought it, but can't bring yourself to return it."

"Well you look magnificent in it," Alec smiled, extending his arm. "Shall we go?"

"Where are we going?" Magnus tried again, but he wasn't surprised to receive no answer. He wound his arm with Alec's, and together they left the apartment. Magnus had to admit, he wasn't surprised to see a limo waiting for them at the curb.

Magnus didn't speak as they drove in the back of the limo. It was so private with the darkened windows that it felt like they were the only two people in the world. Alec opened some sort of panel in the wall, and suddenly they were sipping champagne.

"The limo that took us from the airport to your house definitely didn't have alcohol," Magnus commented.

"Not that you saw," Alec replied grinning.

"If I wake up on a plane to Rome, I am going to classify this as a kidnapping, Alexander," Magnus warned his boyfriend. At this point, he was half worried they were headed to the airport despite his teasing tone. When Alec didn't reply, Magnus groaned, thinking about how he hadn't packed, and there was no one who knew to feed his cats.

"Relax," Alec chuckled. "I promise. It's a in town date." And sure enough, moments later the limo stopped. Reacting quickly, Magnus made sure to open his door before the driver could do it for him.

It was dark, but the restaurant before his eyes was lit up with many ground and wall lights. The trees around the entrance, though covered in a light dusting of snow, were also adorned with little twinkling lights. Together they walked inside, and Magnus tried to take in all the glamour with just his two eyes. This being an impossible task, he settled for watching Alexander, who was telling the hostess his name.

"Follow me Mr. Lightwood," the hostess said. She was a tall thin woman, in a tight black shirt, and long, very straight hair. Magnus was sure she straightened it. They followed her past many tables, both occupied and empty, down another hall, and finally through a door.

"The server will be with you shortly," the hostess said with a smile before she closed the door behind them.

The room itself had a table set romantically for two. There was candlelight, or what seemed like candlelight. Magnus soon realized it was just lights made to flicker like candlelight. All the atmosphere with none of the smoke or fire hazard downsides. Turning to take in the rest of the room,
Magnus saw an old style loveseat in the corner with very little in the way of back support, but elegant armrests on either side. It actually looked more like a small bed than a couch, but the part about the room that was most extravagant was the privacy. They couldn't hear a single sound from the rest of the restaurant once that door closed behind the hostess.

"Do I want to know how much this room cost to have all to ourselves?" Magnus asked.

"No," Alec chuckled. Magnus decided that was wise, and went to sit down on the inviting red fabric of the love seat.

"Do you like it?" Alec asked, sitting beside him, and gesturing to the room.

"How can I not," Magnus gapped trying to overcome his automatic reluctance at extravagance.

"What is it about me spending money on us that bothers you?" Alec asked softly. It was funny, but Magnus couldn't ever remember Alec asking this so directly. Last summer he had been awkward, and more nervous about the whole thing, almost like he'd been scared. "Do you feel indebted like Jace thinks, or is it something else?"

"Is this another one of those 'I think I can fix it if I just know what the problem is' things?" Magnus asked grinning.

"Maybe," Alec smirked. Then he continued more seriously, "I just want to understand."

"It's a little about feeling indebted," Magnus tried to explain. "A little uneven, but it's also that I have this voice in the back of my head that is constantly telling me I don't really need that and it's been there as long as I can remember. When I go to buy something, it is there to stop me, unless I'm paying some sort of bill. So all this kinda goes against the grain, I guess."

"There's more though," Alec prompted, reading the hesitation on his boyfriend's face.

"Well, it felt a little demeaning when you tried to buy my time last summer," Magnus confessed, awkwardly.

"Noted," Alec grinned. "See, I'm learning."

"You are," Magnus smiled back, holding back a chuckle. He reached out and gently cupped Alec's cheek. Then he leaned in and kissed Alec sweetly.

"Our one year anniversary is a special occasion," Alec said when they broke apart. "I promise you a very low-key Valentine's."

"After this, I sense I am going to need it," Magnus laughed.

Chapter End Notes

So all the people who did answer my question said they don't mind fast updates… and since no one else bothered to string two words together and share their opinion with me the reviewers get to decide.

So yes I am updating again less than 12 hours since my last update because reviews are what matter most to me and I want to reward the people who review. If people who
don't review want chapters slower that is their problem and they should review if they care.

I just hate having finished chapters sitting unpublished on my computer. It's that simple. Tuesday's binge writing fest is officially all online now.

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Sneak Peek Chapter 75

Alec returned to bed and settled himself against his boyfriend’s bare chest. For a moment he just lay there, listening to Magnus’s heart beat.

“Do you ever wonder what it would be like to live together?” Alec asked. “To wake up next to each other every day.”

“Sometimes,” Magnus shrugged. “Though we almost do that now. Your sister did have a point about the rent.” Magnus chuckled. “Maybe you should split it with Clary since she’s rarely home anyway.” He was still laughing, the vibrations in his chest transferring to Alec’s skin. It was comforting, like a cat’s purr, but Alec knew Magnus was joking. He hadn’t thought about how them living together would work financially. Though Alec almost preferred this reaction to his mother’s strictly financial thoughts on the subject over the holidays. Alec’s mind drifted as he listened to his lover’s heart beat.

“Magnus seems lovely,” Maryse had told him, only a few days after they’d arrived at the Lightwood manor.

“He’s amazing.” Alec had replied, smiling. He could still remember the warm feeling in his chest from his mother’s acceptance of Magnus as he’d said these words.

“He’s graduating soon right?” Maryse had asked to which Alec had replied with just a nod. “Does he know where we is headed after graduation?”

___________________

Fun fact: "Make yourself useful instead of merely ornamental" is something my godmother has said to me on a regular basis for as long as I can remember. And that voice in the back of Magnus's head that tells him he doesn't need to buy that... yeah that is my voice in my head.
Alec's Contemplation

Chapter Notes
See the end of the chapter for notes

Alec hadn't wanted the night to end. To him it had been like a fairy tale, an entire evening alone in Magnus's company among twinkling lights and delicious food. After dinner, Alec had reminded Magnus that the room was sound proof, and the door had a lock on it, but Magnus had insisted they go home. This was how Alec had wound up pressed against the wall of his boyfriend's apartment, with Magnus's hands trying to find their way under his tux. At least they'd managed to get through the front door before things had gotten hot and heavy. Alec knew Clary was at Jace's tonight - since it was Friday and no one had class tomorrow - so they had the apartment to themselves. This being the case, they weren't too concerned with making out so openly in the living room.

Alec gasped as Magnus managed to get his shirt untucked and pushed up all the way to his neck. Both Alec's crisp black jackets, and Magnus's velvet one were on the floor by now, and Magnus was kissing Alec as his hands went up pushing Alec's shirt away. When Magnus came up for air, Alec took the opportunity to remove Magnus's shirt quickly before his lips were once again seized by his boyfriend's kiss. As Magnus pressed Alec up against the wall, Alec could feel how hard they both were. His own pants were not as comfortable as they had been at dinner, and he could very firmly feel Magnus's length against his leg.

"I really like the tux," Magnus whispered as Alec felt his boyfriend's hands remove the very last trace of the charcoal suit, letting it fall to the ground.

"I can tell," Alec replied grinning. Magnus moved down him, and then Alec felt Magnus's lips latch onto his inner thigh. Alec's smile turned to a moan as he enjoyed the possessive nature of his boyfriend's marks.

"A little higher," Alec begged. He wanted Magnus's mouth around him, but Magnus it seemed, had other ideas.

"I have another plan for that," Magnus replied as he returned to his full height and kissed Alec's mouth again. Alec was pretty sure he knew what Magnus meant from the gleam in his eye, so he decided it was time to move. Steering the kiss toward the bedroom, Alec managed to turn the last layers of fabric separating them into nothing but a trail of breadcrumbs. Magnus fell backwards onto the bed, pulling Alec on top of him.

Alec's hands were moving over every inch of his lover's body he could find, enjoying every slight whimper and gasp he could invoke in Magnus. They exchanged looks. Magnus softly told Alec what he wanted, gesturing to the bedside table. Leaning over to get the necessities from the table in question, Alec lubed up his fingers before preparing Magnus's entrance. Soon, Magnus's hands were gripping the bedsheets, and Alec worried he was in pain.

"You sure?" Alec asked him gently leaning down to whisper in Magnus's ear.

"Yes," Magnus replied simply. Alec leaned all the way forward and pressed his mouth firmly against his boyfriend's parted lips, kissing him deeply as he positioned himself. Lubed and gloved, Alec pushed in gently, gasping as he felt Magnus's heat surround him. Magnus flung one of his legs over Alec's shoulder, and he felt himself go deeper.

Neither of them had much patience for foreplay after that. They moved together, Alec's thrusts
rhythmically moving with Magnus's rocking hips. Magnus's hands were on Alec's back, and Alec's hands were wrapped around Magnus's arousal, moving in time with every hit to Magnus's prostate. They finished together, both panting and collapsed side by side on the bed.

Briefly getting up to throw out the condom, Alec returned to bed, and settled himself against his boyfriend's bare chest. For a moment he just lay there, listening to Magnus's heart beat.

"Do you ever wonder what it would be like to live together?" Alec asked, after a moment's silence. "To wake up next to each other every day." He'd almost asked this many times at dinner, but only now in the stillness, had he managed it.

"Sometimes," Magnus shrugged, as he stroked Alec's hair. "Though we almost do that now. Your sister did have a point about the rent." He chuckled. "Maybe you should split it with Clary since she's rarely home anyway." Magnus was still laughing, the vibrations in his chest transferring to Alec's skin. It was comforting, like a cat's purr, but Alec knew Magnus was joking. He hadn't thought about how them living together would work financially. Though Alec almost preferred this reaction to his mother's strictly financial thoughts on the subject over the holidays. Alec's mind drifted back to that conversation as he listened to his lover's heart beat.

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"He's amazing," Alec had replied, smiling. He could still remember the warm feeling in his chest from his mother's acceptance of Magnus as he'd said those words.

"Magnus is graduating soon right?" Maryse had asked to which Alec had replied with just a nod. "Does he know where he is headed after graduation?"

"Not yet," Alec explained. "But I hope he doesn't go far. I have been spending so much time at his place this last year, I want to ask him to live with me."

"Have you thought about the repercussions of that?" Maryse had warned, kindly.

"What do you mean?"

"Well, if you live together long enough, common law will take effect." Alec had looked confused, and his mother had explained further. "Though it isn't the same as marriage, if you break up from common law, depending on the circumstances, it can get messy."

"What how?" Alec had replied, confused.

"I wouldn't suggest it if not for your financial gap," Maryse had begun. "And I am sure Magnus has no intention of doing such a thing, but it is best to take precautions, Alec."

"I'm still not sure what you are getting at," Alec had replied.

"A common law break up can get just as messy as a divorce when there is a lot of money involved. Your previous partner could try and sue you for your assets. They would, of course have a better case if you were married, but even so, it can be very stressful. The law hasn't quite caught up with people who act married and aren't. I have seen some Common Law break ups get very lawyer intensive."

"We aren't going to break up," Alec had replied, simply.

"I didn't say you were," Maryse had smiled at him. "It's just a practical precaution I wanted to make
sure you were aware of. That's all." She'd smiled and suggested they rejoin the others after that, and Alec hadn't brought up the topic again for the rest of their vacation.

"What is going on in that little brain of yours?" Magnus asked as he switched from stroking Alec's hair to rubbing his scalp. Alec pulled his mind back to the present and focused on his boyfriend's touch.

"That feels good," Alec said closing his eyes at the head massage.

"Thinking deep sinister thoughts then are we?" Magnus continued, clearly grinning from the tone of his voice.

"No," Alec mumbled. "Don't stop."

"The look on your face says otherwise," Magnus teased him. "And on our anniversary too."

"I love you," Alec chuckled as he turned in his boyfriend's arms and kissed him sweetly.

"Happy one year anniversary, my love," Magnus whispered back. Alec repeated the phrase back to his boyfriend, and then they settled back down in each other's arms, neither of them speaking. It was a peaceful silence. Alec focused on the here and now, rather than over thinking crap that his mother had mentioned in passing. Unfortunately, he failed to pull his mind away, and found himself breaking the silence less than a quarter hour later.

"Are you excited about graduation?" Alec's voice pierced the moment.

"Excited, scared, overwhelmed," Magnus replied easily. "Confused, nervous. Take your pick really."

"Why all of those?" Alec asked. "I mean won't it feel nice to be finished?"

"Maybe," Magnus said. "It's just that being a student has defined me for so long. Giving it up feels like giving up part of me. I will no longer be a student. It's a strange concept to wrap my head around. Between that and actually needing to get a real permanent career job, rather than just a summer one... the whole thing just doesn't quite feel real."

"Can you picture your life at all, after Grad?" Alec asked. "Do you at least know where you want to be?"

"It's hazy," Magnus replied. "I've been a student almost all my life. Graduation kinda feels like jumping off a cliff. And I can't stay and get a Master's because I can't afford it."

"If you could stay in school though," Alec asked trying to fish and see how important this was to Magnus without outright offering him money. "Would you?"

Magnus seemed to think about this for a long time. Then finally he said, "No."

"Why not?"

"I've been a student all my life," Magnus began, and Alec was confused since this had been the same argument he'd made for doing more school. "I can't be a student forever, and I am getting kinda tired of classes and essays. I skip more classes now than I ever did in third year. It's time to move on. It's just scary. But you know what they say about being scared of the path ahead."

"No, what do they say?"
"It's a sign that you are on the right path," Magnus smiled.

"That doesn't sound right," Alec said, confused by Magnus's strange logic.

"Well it's true," Magnus replied. "And you are proof of that."

"Huh?" Alec asked.

"Giving you a chance," Magnus explained. "Letting you in. It was scary, but it was the right path."

"Oh yeah that," Alec smiled, snuggling in closer to Magnus. "I remember that. You fought me for so long. I mean, we met in October, early October too. But here we are, celebrating our anniversary in early January, because despite the fact that I liked you right away, and you liked me right away, it took us that long to get our shit together." Magnus laughed, a deep happy noise that made Alec's smile widen.

"When you put it like that," Magnus chuckled. "It does seem quite ridiculous, doesn't it?"

"Damn straight," Alec exclaimed.

Magnus laughed again as he managed to say. "Alec there is nothing straight about you."

"You thought I was for ages," Alec whined. "Confusing person."

"Indeed I am," Magnus chuckled. They settled down even more, laying flat on the bed rather than sitting up. Alec closed his eyes and focused on his boyfriend's heart again. The last thing Alec remembered before falling asleep was hearing Magnus whisper, "Goodnight my Darling Alexander," in his ear.

Alec woke quite late on Saturday, having slept in more than he usually did. Magnus was still asleep beside him, and for a moment, he just watched his boyfriend sleep. Then Alec got up and made breakfast. He was singing off-key to one of his favourite songs when Magnus joined him in the kitchen.

"That smells good," Magnus said as he entered the room. "I can't say the same for my ears though."

"Ha ha," Alec replied grinning as he pretended to swat at Magnus with a dish towel.

They ate breakfast together, and ended up spending the whole day together in the apartment, never even getting dressed. Alec decided it counted as part of their anniversary, and Magnus didn't argue with him. It was just like the dinner last night, in that Alec hadn't wanted it to end. But Sunday came, and with it, homework. Monday meant class, and life ticked by.

As January progressed, Alec became aware that Jace was trying to make anniversary plans. His roommate was rather clueless about such things, and often asked Alec for advice. Alec tried to help, but Jace didn't seem to want help so much as he wanted to panic, so Alec mostly left him to his own devices. Magnus was busy with his classes before Alec got bogged down in school work, since his classes were two years ahead. On top of all the school stuff, Magnus was now applying for jobs. If he wasn't doing homework, in class, or sleeping, Magnus seems to be working on his resume, writing cover letters, and searching job postings online.

More than once, Alec found himself staring at Magnus's face while his boyfriend went on and on about the jobs he'd applied for. Alec tried to listen - he really did - but half of it went right over his head. Magnus was talking about the future career potential of all the jobs, which had something to do with being able to get promotions and wage increases over a period of time. Alec had never had a
job in his life, so it was not something he felt he could help with or even comment on. He knew nothing. All Alec really cared about was where these jobs were. Everytime Magnus would talk about a new job he was applying for, or had applied for, Alec asked him how far away it was. Magnus's usual reply was 'in town', and Alec relaxed and tried to listen to the rest of it. But every now and then, Magnus would apply for something an hour out of town, and it made Alec nervous.

"But what if you get the job?" Alec asked on one such occasion. "And you have to move?"

"It's an hour away," Magnus replied. "I'd just commute."

"All that time going back and forth though," Alec argued.

"Yes, but I can't move," Magnus smiled at him. "You are here and besides, this apartment is rent controlled." He smiled, leaned in to kiss Alec sweetly, then turned back to his computer.

"Isn't this all a little early?" Alec asked. "I mean you don't graduate for three more months."

"Getting work right out of school is hard," Magnus explained. "It's first come, first serve. If I snooze, I lose."

"I guess," Alec sighed. "Though I'd love to do something with you this summer, like a trip or something before you get busy with work."

"Christmas was amazing," Magnus said. "Why do something else again so soon?"

"Christmas wasn't a trip," Alec said rolling his eyes. "It was just going home. No, see we could go to London or something. Spend a week on a sandy beach."

Magnus chuckled. "You live in a fantasy world, darling. It must be paradise." Alec wanted to argue that Magnus was part of his fantasy land and should play along, but as he thought the words, he realize just how childish they sounded. Alec decided instead to get back to his essay that was due in less than four hours while he hoped and prayed that Magnus wouldn't end up working far away.

Chapter End Notes

So I have to tell you guys something. This story just hit 100,000 views. o_O Woot! Thanks so much guys! Also OMG we just reached 300 follows! I know I said I'd do a bonus chapter when we reaching 300... but I am not doing updates only once a week now so I am not sure how a bonus chapter works while updating like a spaz. lol. ^_^

Side note: Not sure if anyone cares but my first day at work was awesome. Wonderful group of people. I'm excited.

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Sneak Peek Chapter 76

"I had loved you for a while before that," Jace said. "A long while though I couldn't tell you exact when I recognized the feelings for that they were."

"That I understand," Clary said. "I remember when you tried to tell me, not even I believed you."
"If you'd told me back then that I'd one day be walking arm in arm with you down the street on my way to celebrate being your boyfriend for a year, I'd have asked you what you were smoking," he laughed and Clary joined in. They kept up some casual conversation on the walk. When they arrived Jace gave his name and they were lead to their table. Jace had never made reservations before this. He rarely went to restaurants fancy enough to require such things.

They were seated by a window, looking out over the patio. The murmured conversations all around him somehow made it feel private, like a blanket of white noise over them. The table to their left was empty, but all else was occupied. Jace didn't mind so long as Clary was happy and she was smiling.

"This place is great," Clary grinned. "Look!" She pointed right above them and curious Jace titled his head back. To his surprise what he saw was his own face. The ceiling was covered in mirrors.

Full disclosure: This next chapter is only at 600 words so this sneak peek is rough. Been a while since I wasn't crazy far ahead thanks to my attempt to update once a week then my binge writing fest on Tuesday. This is more like sneak peeks used to be before that.
Jace felt like the whole ‘planning an anniversary’ concept was a task for men far more impressive than he. Rationally he knew he didn't have anything to be nervous about, but his rational brain seemed to have taken a vacation. Jace has this strange feeling that something was going to go horribly wrong. He wasn't yet sure what, but he felt sure there was something, or someone, out to ruin his night. Taking a deep breath, he knocked on the door.

"Coming," Clary's voice replied cheerfully. Well, at least she was starting the night off in a good mood, Jace thought. Now, the trick was keeping her in one until the end of the evening.

When the door opened, all other thoughts were temporarily driven from Jace's mind. He just stared, his eyes wide, and mouth slightly open. Clary had been overwhelmingly sexying in all that lingerie. She was hot in his old t-shirts, and beautiful in her frumpy sweaters, but tonight she was more than sexy, hot, and beautiful. She was elegant. The neckline of her dress plunged in a deep V, with thick straps over the shoulders. The dress itself was hung loosely with light flowing fabric, mostly black with pink around the bottom four inches. There were flower patterns in purples and greens around her waistline, and both above, and mixed into the pink hem. The green in the stems of the flowers brought out her eyes in a subtle, but stunning way. Rather than taking away from her natural beauty, the whole outfit made everything Clary inherently brighter.

"Cleans up nice doesn't she," Magnus's voice entered Jace brain, though he couldn't tell from where. "You're welcome." And Jace knew who had been the mastermind behind her outfit tonight.

"Shall we go?" Clary asked, holding out her hand to him. Jace gulped before taking it. She giggled at him and told him to relax.

"Sorry," Jace mumbled. "I don't want to mess this up."

"Silly," Clary said shaking her head. "What could you possibly do?"

"Oh, I don't know," Jace said. "I'm sure there's a way."

"You really are nervous, aren't you?" Clary giggled as they walked arm in arm away from Magnus's apartment. Jace nodded. "You don't have to be, but if you insist, how about this? You tell me the plan, and I will tell you if it's a good one."

"You picked the plan," Jace reminded her. "Restaurant."

"See perfect plan," Clary told. "Nothing to stress over."

"You are right," Jace sighed. He stopped and turned to face her. "I'm sorry I'm so tense. I'm just in awe that it's been a year. A year since you said yes and kissed me in that hallway."

"Ah yes," Clary laughed. "A year since I got carried away." She was smiling at him, and Jace felt a sudden need to explain himself fully.

"I loved you for a while before that," Jace said. "A long while, though I couldn't tell you exactly when I recognized the feelings for what they were."
"That I understand," Clary said. "I remember when you tried to tell me, not even I believed you."

"If you'd told me back then that I'd one day be walking arm in arm with you down the street on my way to celebrate being your boyfriend for a year, I'd have asked you what you were smoking," he laughed.

"It's true you've changed a lot," Clary replied. "But for the better."

"Thanks," Jace smiled at her. "I couldn't have done it without you." She squeezed his hand affectionately and they started walking again, keeping up a casual conversation as they went. It was a beautiful night. There was no wind to speak of, and the air was fairly warm for January. The snow on the ground crunched under their feet. The sun was low in the sky, with clouds covering most of it.

When they arrived at the restaurant, Jace gave his name, only slightly awkwardly. He'd never made reservations before this, as he'd rarely went to restaurants fancy enough to require such things. Once he managed to communicate who they were, the hostess lead them to their table. She was tall and blonde, in a tight black dress. Jace tried not to notice more about her than that. She seated them by a window, looking out over the patio. The murmured conversations in the restaurant somehow made it feel more private than it was, like a blanket of white noise over them. The table to their left was empty, but all the other nearby tables were occupied. Jace turned to Clary. He didn't mind the people or the noise so long as Clary was happy with the restaurant.

"This place is great," Clary grinned. "Look!" She pointed right above them, and curious Jace tilted his head back to see what she meant. To his surprise, what he saw was his own face. The ceiling was covered in mirrors.

"Why in the world would anyone put mirrors on a ceiling?" Jace asked.

"For decoration," Clary explained.

"Strange decorations if you ask me," Jace commented, but Clary just smiled at him. She'd been smiling a lot tonight, and Jace was more than glad.

The waitress who took their order was another tall thin woman in tight black clothes. Jace would have started to wonder if the restaurant had a cloning machine, if not for the fact that this one had brown hair, but wait, he wasn't supposed to notice this. Having already ordered dinner, Jace turned purposely away from the waitress to look at Clary.

"You're cute," Clary giggled at him once they were alone.

"No, I'm manly," Jace replied grinning.

"Who told you to stop looking at waitresses?" Clary asked.

"Alec," Jace mumbled.

"See adorable, just like I said," Clary grinned. "New rule: look but don't touch."

"Okay wait, so I can look?" Jace asked. He was a little more than confused with all this contradictory information.

"Well, it's a little rude to speak to someone while you are looking the other way," Clary reminded him.

"See that's what I thought," Jace exclaimed. "Then Alec said I should pretend like they aren't there."
Jace crossed his arms over his chest in frustration.

"Alec probably didn't mean it quite that literally," Clary giggled. Then she was serious as she reached out and took his hand. "When I didn't know where we stood, I'll admit, all those women looking at you made me a little crazy. You looking back made me so insecure, but Jace, it's better now. She stop worrying, okay?"

"Okay," he smiled at her.

"So how is training Mason going?" Clary asked, changing the topic.

"Fine, I guess," Jace said with a shrug. "Though he's not much better. He keeps flinching. Urg! Stupid coach giving me extra work. I would have said no if you hadn't suddenly been busy Wednesday nights."

"Where is your team spirit?" Clary asked, shaking her head.

"I don't know," Jace whined. "It just so awkward, and I have no clue why. Mason is... he's... well awkward. I don't think he cares much about improving his wrestling skills."

They were interrupted by the arrival of dinner. Conversation was put on pause as they dug in. Jace had a medium rare steak with a baked potato, while Clary had some seafood dish with pasta and cream sauce.

It was just as they were finishing dinner that Jace saw it: the something - or in this case someone - who was going to ruin his evening. His instincts had been right, but he wasn't happy about it. Maybe Clary wasn't upset if he looked at strangers, but this would surely be different. This was going to suck, and Jace wished she'd just go away. Why was she walking in a straight line towards him anyway? It was almost as if she'd spotted him, then came right for him. Jace tried, and failed, to remember her name as his heart pounded in his chest. It had only been a second since he'd turned his head, but now brought it quickly back around to face forward.

"I'm sorry," Jace managed to mumble to his girlfriend before she was within earshot. Clary only had a second to look confused.

"Hey you," the woman said to Jace as she approached them. Jace tried not to make eye contact. He was staring down at his empty plate. "Been a while." Jace grunted a little, in way of reply.

"And you are?" Clary asked her easily.

"Kaelie," she replied. "Though we didn't really get to exchanging names." She laughed before continuing in a flirting tone. "But I'd recognize that gorgeous blonde hair anywhere."

"Um yeah," Jace mumbled. "Can't really say the same."

"Why does that not surprise me," Kaelie chuckled. Then she turned to Clary and added, "You are going to have a really great time tonight, like really great, but take it from me, he won't call you in the morning."

"Is that so?" Clary replied coolly. Jace was trying very hard not to panic, and once again failed. He wished that he could read Clary's mind.

"Yeah," Kaelie replied. "Didn't mean to ruin your night or anything, but thought you should know."

To Jace's surprise, Clary was grinning as she spoke next. "Believe me when I say that you haven't
ruined anything."

"Good," Kaelie smiled. "I figure it's all fun and casual, as long as no one is hurt right? Oh, let me
know when you're done with him. I wouldn't mind another go." Kaelie winked then started to move
away, as if she'd done nothing but casually interact with an old acquaintance, but Kealie stopped and
turned as she heard Clary's laughter. The redhead was laughing hard, holding a stick in her side, and
Jace had no idea what to make of it.

"What's so funny?" Kaelie asked, confused.

"I know something you don't know," Clary giggled.

"Oh yeah, what?" Kaelie inquired.

"This isn't our first date," Clary explained still grinning. "This is our one year anniversary. He's off
the market." And just like that, Jace knew everything was fine. The tension in his chest vanished as
he took in the possessive look in his girlfriend's eyes. The look that said 'he's mine.' Clary couldn't
have been more obvious if she'd literally spoke the words.

Properly turning to Kaelie for the first time since spotting her, Jace saw the look of total shock on her
face. It was quite something to witness, her eyes wide, and her whole body still with shock. She
made some awkward farewells, then quickly escaped their company.

"That was fun," Clary chuckled. "I should probably have told her sooner, but it was just too good an
opportunity to pass up. Did you see her face?" She laughed again, a large exuberant noise that filled
the room.

"Your face was far more interesting to me," Jace replied, easily.

"See, this is what I don't get," Clary said, thoughtfully. "I mean, the version of you I know, and the
version of you I once know of, are two totally different people."

"Come again?" Jace asked.

"There is Jace I know, my boyfriend who is a little clueless at times but sweet and loving," Clary
explained. "Then there is the Jace I once know of, the player who every girl wanted to gossip over.
Helen and I even talked about a naked Jace calendar once."

Jace just stared at her, in shock over the phrase 'naked Jace calendar.'

"I knew your rep when you told me you cared about me," Clary continued. "So I didn't believe you
at first, but now it's so hard for me to picture you as the player guy."

"Please don't picture it," Jace whined. He was ashamed of his past, though he didn't like to admit it.
The happiness he had found over the last year had taught him just how empty his life had been
before.

"It's a part of who you are isn't it?" Clary asked.

"Who I was," Jace corrected her.

"So you're saying if we broke up tomorrow, you wouldn't go back to your old ways?"

"Do you have plans for us to break up tomorrow?" Jace replied, smirking.

"Way to avoid the question," Clary said, but she was smiling too.
"Honestly, I have no idea what I'd do if we broke up," Jace answered. "But either way, I think that part of me is dead." He didn't want to tell her why this was the case. Of course, it hadn't just been Sebastian who had pulled him into the player lifestyle - Jace knew he had daddy issues - but bonding with Sebastian had been such a huge part of it. Cutting his ultimate wingman out of his life forever had been a defining moment for him. From that point on, he'd knew he wouldn't be able to go back, even if he'd never ended up with Clary, his life changed forever that day.

"So you'd just sulk around on Alec's couch and never have sex again?" Clary asked.

"Huh?"

"If we broke up, I mean."

"Oh um, maybe," Jace replied. "Why are we talking about this on our anniversary?"

"No idea," Clary smiled. "I was just curious."

"Well, would you go back to Simon if we broke up?"

"No," Clary replied easily. "But Simon isn't my previous lifestyle. He is an old friend who fell in love with me."

"I guess," Jace shrugged. "But you miss him."

"I miss my friend, yes," Clary smiled. "However, you are right. This isn't a good anniversary topic."

"Well then would you like dessert?" Jace asked.

"Depends," Clary grinned at him. "Are we talking chocolate cake in the restaurant, or chocolate icing at home."

"Why would you only eat the icing?" Jace asked, nonplussed.

"Icing is better for licking," Clary replied, grinning at him and something clicked in Jace's head.

"Check please!" he called out, turning quickly to flag down a waitress.

Chapter End Notes

Who says one can't update like a spaz and be employed? lol. Though I have technically only had to shifts but whatever. I wrote most of this an evening after work. The next two chapters I wrote yesterday and today which were my days off.

Sneak Peek Chapter 77

"Now who wants to get drunk?" Tessa asked.

"Aren't you a new mom?" Izzy inquired.

"All the more reason why I need alcohol," Tessa counted.
"You won't get any argument from me," Izzy laughed. Someone spotted the bus and moments later they were all sitting on it.

Tessa sat numbly on her seat with the other girls around her. She could tell they were talking, but she didn't really pay attention until she heard them mention Valentine's day being this weekend.

"But it's January," Tessa reminded them.

"Umm," Clary said awkwardly. "No Tessa. It's February."

"Oh," Tessa said softly. She hadn't realize so much time had passed.

"Are you sure you want to go out tonight?" Clary asked.

"Yes," Tessa said firmly. "If I don't get drunk tonight I might drive off a cliff."

"Been there," Izzy laughed and suddenly they were all talking again.
Thanks to her new breast pump, the boys were feeding Lucie with both formula and bottled breast milk now while Tessa slept. However, the extra sleep had done nothing to improve her mood. Tessa had thought the cause of all her problems was sleep deprivation. She's thought once she'd slept a solid eight hours every night she'd feel better, but she'd been wrong. It would be okay though. Maybe she just needed to get out more. Yes, that was the solution.

So Tessa contacted all her girl-friends and tried to organize a girl's night out. She quickly learned that she had very few female friends - her only one being Clary - and started branching out. Magnus's boyfriend had a sister who had a roommate. That brought her total up from one to three. Much better.

Tessa was pinning on her hopes on this night out. She convinced herself that it would fix her. It would make this feeling go away. Then she would feel better, right?

Walking out of the house felt like a weight had been lifted from her chest. Tessa could breath again. She took a few deep gulps of air as she tried not to think about why being away from her baby felt better, and just enjoyed the sensation. She was meeting Clary, Izzy and Maia at the bus stop down the street. Will would have driven her, but he had to work tonight, and Jem was with the baby. Tessa had cab fare home, and she didn't mind busing to the bar. During the planning of this evening, Tessa had looked up drinking while breast feeding, and knew that all she had to do was pump tomorrow like normal then throw it out. No big deal, and she needed this.

Tessa saw that familiar head of red hair and started walking faster. As she approached, she saw the two women on either side of Clary, who must be Izzy and Maia. Though Tessa had never met either of them before, she recognized Alec's sister at once. The two siblings had the same colouring and face structure. The other girl, Maia, was darker skinned, more like Magnus but darker still, and she was dressed casual like Clary - both of them in jeans and a nice shirt while Izzy was in a dress with heels.

"Tessa!" Clary called as they approached.

"This is Izzy and Maia," Clary introduced the others to her.

"I figured," Tessa replied with a smile. "Now, who wants to get drunk?"

"Aren't you a new mom?" Izzy asked.

"All the more reason why I need alcohol," Tessa counted.

"You won't get any argument from me," Izzy laughed. Someone spotted the bus, and moments later, they were all sitting on it.

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"Oh," Tessa said softly. She hadn't realize so much time had passed.

"Are you sure you want to go out tonight?" Clary asked.

"Yes," Tessa said firmly. "If I don't get drunk tonight I might drive off a cliff."

"Been there," Izzy laughed, and suddenly they were all talking again. Tessa knew they thought she was joking, and decided not to correct them.

"Jace told me about you and Simon," Clary was saying to Izzy.

"Great night," Izzy laughed. "We may have gone back in for seconds, if you know what I mean."

"Izzy the seats know what you mean," Maia whined.

"He's a good person," Clary said. "Not a great night. He isn't like some random guy you can use. He's my friend."

"My friend too actually," Maia added.

"Really?" Izzy asked. "He didn't mention you guys."

"Not by name I'm sure," Clary said. "We are kinda- well he needed some time, but he is still my friend."

"So you never hit that?" Izzy asked.

"Ummm..." Clary mumbled. "I really don't know how to reply to that."

"Then again, the guy was crazy in love and his ex girlfriend, and she never hit that either," Izzy continued. "Her loss if you ask me."

"Simon and I are just friends," Maia added. "And that ex you are talking about is Clary here."

"Hi," Clary replied awkwardly.

"Wait what?" Izzy replied. "You're- and you too?" Maia nodded. "Well you guys are both stupid," Izzy laughed. "I kinda feel sorry for the guy now. Mr. Friend-zone. You two are worse than me."

"Hey, it was one awkward dinner," Maia argued. "It's not like we dated or anything."

"We've been friends since we were practically in diapers," Clary added. They both continued to defend their actions, but Tessa wasn't listening anymore. This felt important, but she couldn't bring herself to care enough to process their words.

Her numb state of mind persisted until they got off the bus. Tessa followed the others, who were all still talking together, as they neared the bar.

"For women who aren't dating him, you guys are strangely possessive," Izzy was saying as they walked in. Tessa didn't really know what they were talking about anymore.

"We just don't want to see him hurt," Clary replied.

"Yeah," Maia agreed.

"Since when is giving a guy an orgasm hurting him?" Izzy asked.
Tessa moved away from the other girls toward the bar. Sitting down, she ordered a shot of something, though she didn't really bother to notice what. Downing the whole thing in one go, Tessa ordered another. And another.

"You sure lady?" the bartender asked when she wanted one more.

"Yes," Tessa replied. With a shrug, the bartender placed another shot in front of her, and Tessa downed it in one go. She was starting to feel the effects of the shots. Her mind was getting mercifully hazy as the alcohol hit her bloodstream. This was good. This would help. After one more shot, Tessa stood up a little wobbly, and went to join the others on the dance floor.

The world around her became blurry, and Tessa reveled in the fog. She didn't want a world in focus. She didn't want to face reality, or acknowledge the emotions overwhelming her. Tessa didn't want to think about why she dreaded going home. The hour grew late as they danced and drank. Tessa kept up with her shots so the world stayed hazy.

Clary called it a night first. Her boyfriend arrived to collect her up just after midnight. Maia went home next. She called a cab after one. Tessa was glad Izzy stayed, because it gave her a reason to stay, but as the hour passed three, even Isabelle was ready to go home. Tessa still didn't want to leave. The bar was getting close to last call, but she thought maybe she could go somewhere else. No home. The problem was that Izzy turned out to be far too responsible a friend than Tessa had expected. She wouldn't hear of Tessa staying out on her own. Too drunk and too tired to argue, Tessa allowed herself to be put into a taxi.

As they got closer and closer to Jem's house, Tessa felt that constricting feeling in her chest again. She didn't want to go inside, but she was so tired she could barely think, barely stand. Tessa stumbled into the house, and straight to her room without speaking to anyone. She fell face first into the bed and passed out in seconds.

Tessa woke up, unhappy at her new conscious state. She didn't want to be awake. She resented the light shining in her window more than she resented her daughter. Tessa froze, feeling guilty just thinking it. She buried her face in her pillow, wish for unconsciousness again. What kind of mother was she? At this point, Tessa was thinking Lucie might be better off without her.

The night out had changed nothing. Nothing at all. Tessa's body was wrapped in chains, crushing her just like it had before, and worse of all, it felt like she would feel this way forever. She couldn't see a way out, no light at the end of the tunnel. If only she could sink deeper into this bed and never get up again. However, the bed wouldn't engulf her no matter how hard she wished for it. Silently Tessa sobbed into her pillow, just wanting the pain to end.

She'd cried herself dry by the time the door opened. It was Jem, and he was carrying Lucie.

Tessa wanted to tell him, "No, don't give her to me." But instead, she held out her hands and accepted the baby. After all, this was what she was suppose to do. She was Lucie's mother. Mother. The word didn't quite click in her mind. Tessa looked down at the small warm bundle in her arms and just stared, frozen in both body and mind.

"Are you alright?" Jem asked her. And like always, Tessa smiled and said she was fine. How could she tell the men she loved what was wrong with her, when that problem was her failing as a mother?

They both heard the front door open and close. Jem went to see who was there, but Tessa knew it must be Will. Who else just walks in like that? And it was morning-ish right? So maybe Will was home from a night shift at the fire hall or something. She could hear Jem talking to someone at the door, but Tessa focused on her breathing, on the position of her body in space, and the weight of her
daughter compared to the strength in her arms. What if that strength was gone? What if her arms just gave out, and Lucie fell to the ground. Would the pain end then? Would Tessa be able to escape?

Numb and horrified at the same time, Tessa took one step and then another, following the sounds of voices.

"Take the baby," Tessa ordered as she made one of them hold the infant. She didn't care to notice who.

Tessa's now empty arms went lip, and she turned to the wall and started banging her head against it as hard as she could. The sudden sharp pain in her forehead jolted her, but it was better this way. The pain could pierce her numbness like nothing else had been able to. Tessa hit her head against the wall again and again, enjoying the hurt. Just seconds after the first hit, she could feel hands on her trying to stop her, but Tessa fought them. She needed the pain. She needed to feel something other than misery.

"Stop!"

It was Will's voice. Probably Will's hands on her shoulders too. Tessa thought idly that Will was physically stronger than Jem, so if she'd handed him the baby, he must of given it to Jem, but if she'd handed Jem the baby, Will would have sprung into action unhindered.

"Tess STOP!" This time Will wasn't pulling punches. He had such a tight grip on her shoulders now, she could also use that pain, though it hadn't been as sharp as the wall.

"I can't do it," Tessa whispered as she was forced to stop and face the father of her child. "I can't. I'm sorry. Let me go." Tessa moved feebly away, trying to escape.

"Never," Will replied, and Tessa crumbled. Her arms went limp, and she stumbled back against the wall, sliding down to the floor where she started sobbing.

His strong arms encircled her. Will's arms. Will. William Herondale. James Carstairs. These names meant something to her, but all she could see was darkness.

Tessa woke up in a bed that wasn't hers. She could hear soft beeping coming from near her head. Opening her eyes, Tessa turned to see Will sitting beside her.

"Oh Tess," Will sighed, placing his head down on her bed near her hand. "Why didn't you tell us?"

"It could have been so much worse," Jem's voice came from her other side. Tessa turned her head to see him. Jem was holding the baby. No, her baby.

"What didn't I tell you?" Tessa asked. She wasn't totally sure of anything at the moment. Not where she was, or how she'd gotten here.

"That you were struggling," Will said. "I knew you were... well a little off, but you'd just had a baby. I didn't think… I mean if I'd known it could get this bad-"

"We wouldn't have let it get this bad," Jem finished his best friend's sentence for him.

"We love you unconditionally, Tessa," Will said firmly. "Don't you understand. That means you can talk to us about anything. Tell us anything, no matter what."

"If you kill someone, you call us up to help bury the body," Jem added. "Understand."
"I-" Tessa began. She was starting to remember, to put the pieces of her mind back together. "I failed- I was supposed to- my job-"

"Our job," Jem corrected her. "We are all supposed to, and the only thing you failed to do was tell us how bad it was."

"The moment you banged your head against that wall you," Will began, his voice soft and fearful. "I have never been so scared in my life Tess, and I run into burning buildings for a living."

"You scared us both," Jem whispered.

"I'm sorry," Tessa sobbed, her hands moving to cover her face. She could feel the bandages on her forehead.

"Shh," Will comforted her, moving forward to place his hands on either side of her face. "Don't be sorry, my love. Just get better. You didn't fail anyone, Tessa. You just got sick. The doctors tell us that 10-20 percent of new moms get postpartum depression. This isn't your fault."

"They've put you on antidepressants," Jem told her, and it was only then that Tessa realize she was in a hospital. "And Will and I will take care of Lucie for a while."

"And the pills will fix it?" Tessa asked hopefully.

"That, and you have to talk to us," Will explained. "You have to tell us how you feel."

"I feel like a bad mom," Tessa cried. She could feel the tears running down her face. "I feel like everything sucks and will never get better. Like there are chains around my chest trying to stop me from breathing. And I- I res-re" She took a deep breath then managed it. "I resent my own daughter for making me so miserable. I feel like I am letting everyone down."

Saying the words out loud was terrifying, but somehow it helped. Those words she'd failed to say for months as things slowly got worse all poured out at once had made her feel lighter. Jem and Will's support made Tessa believe there was indeed light at the end of the tunnel.

Chapter End Notes

New job is awesome and I am still writing like a spaz. :D The next chapter is done as well and will go up tomorrow. ^_^

Sneak Peek Chapter 78

"I am not going to talk to him," Maia said again. "Stop nagging me."

"I have somehow gotten caught up in the middle of this mess," Simon whined. "If you two would just talk to each other, then maybe I could butt out."

"You could just butt out now," Maia offered.

"Yes, because listening to your roommates pine for his ex all day, then going to hang out with his ex all night isn't at all confusing for me," Simon whined.

"Oh boo hoo, I'm Simon," Maia mocked him. "I'm having awesome sex, and I have so
many friends they've dated each other. Life is just so hard." Simon gave her a look and she added, "Yes, Izzy talks." Simon couldn't help but grin. "That was not meant to be a compliment."

"Tough," Simon replied. "I'm taking it as one."

"You're annoying," Maia whined.

"And yet, you keep hanging out with me," Simon reminded her.

"I don't have a lot of friends is all," Maia explained.

"Oh, is that it?" Simon laughed.

"Yes," Maia whined. "Now are we gonna watch Star Trek or not?" Laughing, Simon started up the movie.
When Izzy had shown up at his door step one night asking if he wanted to have another go at it, Simon had decided to hell with it and invited her in. A half hour later the two of them were laying together panting, and ten minutes after that, Izzy was up and on her way again with a smile and a wave. Still, Simon didn't regret it. It seemed he'd somehow managed to acquire three female friends in University, though all very different kinds: an overly-friendly ex girlfriend, a nerd friend, and a friend with benefits. Honestly, the friend with benefits might be the most straightforward friendship he had at this point, especially now that he knew his roommate and his nerd friend were exes.

"I am not going to talk to him," Maia said again. "Stop nagging me."

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"And yet, you keep hanging out with me," Simon reminded her.

"I don't have a lot of friends is all," Maia explained.

"Oh, is that it?" Simon laughed.

"Yes," Maia whined. "Now are we gonna watch Star Trek or not?" Laughing, Simon started up the movie. He couldn't say this wasn't a standard conversation. Maia didn't want to talk to Jordan, while Jordan wanted nothing but to talk to Maia. Simon couldn't get either of them to talk to each other, or even talk to him about why they wouldn't talk to each other. He felt very much like he was in the middle of squabbling toddlers, and he was sick of it.

"How did she say she wouldn't talk to me?" Jordan asked when Simon got home from hanging out with Maia.

"She just said no," Simon sighed. "That's all I got for you buddy, just one syllable: no."

"Yeah, but like was it no," Jordan continued. "Or no." He said one in a firm voice, and the other with a casual shrug.

"I don't know," Simon sighed. "And frankly I'm starting not to care. Either give up on her or corner her. Just leave me out of it, please."
"I know Maia," Jordan sighed. "Cornering her would just lead to my nose getting broken."

Simon couldn't help but laugh at this. "You really do know Maia," he chuckled.

"Oh shut up!" Jordan scoffed. "What do you know, Mr. Boy Toy." Simon decided that was also funny, and kept laughing. Honestly, being Izzy's casual lay was less hurtful than being Clary's pity boyfriend had been. Izzy was honest and upfront about what she wanted, and they had fun. What was the harm, really?

"See, that's why I like coming over here," Izzy said when Simon voiced these thoughts the next time she showed up, and demanded he take off all his clothes. "You get it."

"Seems so," Simon smiled before kissing her, his fingers finding their way under her shirt. He could feel her doing the same, and their clothes fell to the ground as they moved backward into his dorm room.

It was a dance that Simon was getting better at with Izzy's instruction. She liked to put his hands where she wanted them, just like she'd done in that elevator. Simon knew how the curve of her hip felt against his palm, the way her breasts fit in his hands. He knew her touch like he'd never known anyone else's. He enjoyed the expression on her face when she finished, the way her back arched. He was glad she kept coming back to him.

"You are getting better at this," Izzy said panting as they both lay in bed after. Thanks to the frequency of her visits, Simon was feeling less insecure about his naked body. If his squishy tummy, or less than muscular arms really bothered her, then why had she come back?

"Awesome," Simon laughed. Simon had his arm around her, and she was resting her head on his bare chest. This was a rare moment for them. Usually, Izzy jumped up and left right away.

"Oh, I was out with Tessa last week," Izzy began. "She's nice enough, but I've never seen someone so determined to get drunk. Plus, Clary and Maia were crazy defense about you, like I'm hurting you with all the sex or something." She laughed, and Simon enjoyed the vibrations against his skin. "So why didn't you tell me your friends with my roommate?"

"Never came up," Simon shrugged.

"Yeah, no kidding," Izzy laughed. "Not with either Maia or Clary huh. You poor guy. Jilted long before that elevator, huh?"

"Is there anything you can't turn into an innuendo?" Simon laughed. She didn't reply except to move her hand back down to where it had been a few minutes ago. He gasped a little, and she giggled.

"Seriously though, if I hadn't put Tessa in a cab I think she would have drunk until she passed out at the bar," Izzy continued.

"She's Magnus's friend," Simon said. "How did you end up out at a bar with her in the first place?"

"She knows Clary through Magnus," Izzy began. "But it seems that's it for her gal pals, so she got Magnus to ask Alec who dragged me in. And then he asked if I could bring someone, and I volunteered Maia. It seemed Tessa really needed a night out with the girls. Which I get. Can't imagine being in a relationship with two guys at once like that. Then again, I can't imagine being in a relationship with one guy, so who am I to talk?" By the time she finished speaking, Izzy was laughing.

"It was good of you to make Tessa go home," Simon said. "I mean she isn't your friend, really more
like a friend of a friend, but you still made sure she got home safe.

"That's just what you do," Izzy replied. "I know I can be a little wild, but I'm not stupid."

"I know," Simon smiled at her. Izzy had always struck him as highly intelligent.

"If you go out with a group, and someone wants to drink till they pass out, you send them home," Izzy explained. "It's common courtesy really." She paused, then groaned and added, "I don't want to go to class on Monday. We have this quiz, and I can't bring myself to study. It's so boring."

"Then just wing it," Simon shrugged.


"I have been known to be rebellious on occasion," Simon grinned.

"Don't I know it," Izzy laughed, then she made to sit up. Simon had to stop himself from holding onto her and asking her to stay. She quickly collected her clothes, kissed his cheek, and walked out the door. As the door closed behind her, Simon thought that all in all, he'd had worse Valentine's days.

From what he could gather over the grapevine, Alec and Magnus had managed a quiet Valentine's, much to Magnus's relief, and Clary and Jace had stayed in. Simon suspected it was Izzy's presences in his life that made Clary's second Valentine's with Jace easier to think of, or maybe it was simply the time. Simon couldn't believe it had been well over a year since he'd finally found the resolve to break up with Clary.

Time has a funny way of passing without you noticing it. A lesson Simon learned when the calendar turned to March, and he realized it had been a year since he'd first kissed Isabelle in that elevator. They'd been sleeping together off and on for just under five months now, which didn't seem so long, but had the elevator really been a year ago? Where had the time gone?

With March, also came better weather, and more homework. Simon's second year of University was over this April, and he was out of time. He had to declare a major or add another year to his studies.

"Do you want to hear what I picked?" Maia asked when Simon complained about this indecisive ways.

"Yes," Simon replied.

"Management," Maia said.

"Why?" Simon asked.

"I like being in charge of stuff," Maia explained. Simon couldn't help but chuckle a little at her logic, though he could easily imagine Maia doing well in management.

Clary had long ago decided her major would be art, or rather graphic design. He could picture her working in some office somewhere with logos on the walls, and a tablet pen in her hand.

Jordan and Izzy were still in their first years at the university and weren't too worried about major's yet, or at least Jordan wasn't. Izzy seemed to be over-eager, in Simon's opinion. But he could also say the same thing about Jordan, just not about school work. Jordan was really only over-eager about one thing, and it was his ex girlfriend. This never seemed to work out for him though. Maia and Jordan continued their dance, or total failure to communicate as mid March approached, and Simon
continued to try and fail to not be involved. He was starting to think he should just lock them in a room together, and be done with it.

"Fine!" Maia yelled, throwing her arms up in frustration. "Fine! If it matters so freaking much to you, then I'll let Jordan talk to me without breaking his nose."

"Great! See, now that is progress," Simon said smiling. He was here, in Maia's dorm room, to pass on a message from Jordan. He'd like to say this was the first time he'd done this, but he'd be lying.

"I hate you," Maia grumbled.

"No, you don't," Simon laughed. They were interrupted by a knock on the door, or rather someone just opening it and coming in without knocking.

"Sounds like Maia has a date," Izzy said grinning.

"Umm… let's see, no, no, no, ah no, and hell no," Maia said.

"Say no one more time, and I'll believe you," Izzy chuckled. Then she walked straight over to Simon and planted a kiss on his mouth, almost as if she was saying hello.

"I so don't wanna see that," Maia whined. "So weird."

Izzy giggled. With one of her hands still on Simon's back, she then turned to Maia. "Do you want to join us?"


"But this is your dorm," Izzy reminded her. "I didn't actually know Simon would be here."

"Yes, but from that look in your eye, you are about to jump his bones… so," Maia turned to leave again.

Izzy sighed and moved away from him. "Actually, I have a date," she said. "I came home to change."

Simon knew Izzy was dating, or he supposed sleeping with other guys as well as him, though he hadn't really thought much about it before. After all, her one condition of their little arrangement had been that he wasn't to fall in love with her, and they weren't technically dating or a couple or anything. They were just sleeping together, so why was this not sitting right with him?

"But if it doesn't go well," Izzy continued. "I will be back."

"So, Simon is your what?" Maia asked. "Backup orgasm?"

"He's my favourite backup orgasm," Izzy replied, with a laugh. Maia made a sound of disgust, then turned and left the dorm room.

"What's her problem?" Izzy asked, facing Simon again. He didn't reply, however, as he was trying to figure out why he wanted to lock the door and not let Izzy leave.

"Anyway," Izzy continued when Simon didn't speak. "It's great you're here because I could use a guy's opinion on outfits." She went to her closet, and soon she pulling out multiple dresses for him to give her advice on how likely they'd get laid with someone else.
"That one," Simon told her without even looking at the dresses.

"Really?" Izzy asked. "You don't think the collar's too high?" Then Simon actually looked at the
dress and noticed that it was sort of like a very long skintight sweater with a turtleneck, and probably
one of the most conservative items of clothing Izzy owned. "Also I might overheat. Spring has
sprung after all."

Ignoring her words, Simon moved quickly across the room and pulled Isabelle into his arms. Holding
her close, his hands on her lower back, Simon kissed her. She accepted the kiss well enough, even
wrapping her arms around him in return, but when they broke apart she returned to the task at hand,
which was planning her date with some other guy.

"I think I like the red one better," Izzy was saying as she put the sweater dress back.

"You know you don't have to go out," Simon whispered, following the twisted feelings in his chest.
He still had a hand on her hip from their kiss, and gently used it to encourage her to turn around and
face him again.

"Tempting," Izzy grinned at him. "But no." She leaned up and kissed him briefly on the lips before
squirming out of his grip.

Simon's heart was pounding. Going against everything he wanted in this moment, Simon made up
some excuse and quickly left her dorm. Once in the hallway, he ran until he reached his dorm where
he flung himself face first into his pillow.

Everyone had warned him, and he hadn't listened. Why had he thought himself capable of having a
casual sexual relationship? Why? Was he stupid? Yes, definitely stupid. After all, he dated a woman
who wasn't attracted to him for two years, and now had somehow ended up in the exact opposite
situation, but with the exact same problem. Clary and Izzy were complete opposites in every way,
and yet he'd been friendzoned by them both. Clary had been happy to be his girlfriend in name, but
not in her heart, and Izzy was happy to repeatedly have sex with him, but not be his girlfriend. It was
like he'd experienced one complete relationship spread out over two people. But people weren't like
math. He couldn't just add his two half relationships together to make a whole one. Simon knew
what he had to do, but he didn't want to do it. Besides, it had taken him two years to get up the
resolve last time, and he hadn't even been getting laid then. How in the world was he suppose to tell
Izzy they were done, when he wanted the exact opposite?

Simon liked Izzy, and he was totally screwed.

Chapter End Notes

So about time right? Or did this feel rushed? My beta said it didn't feel too fast so I
decided to go with it. Also is anyone rooting for Jordan and Maia yet? I hope so!

_______________

Sneek Peek Chapter 79

'You're cute.'

To her tenth grade self that meant everything. It hadn't been the words that had
moved her, but rather the attention they represented. Jordan saw her and for a girl who’d spent her whole life living in the shadow of her older brother being seen was everything. Maia could remember so perfectly what she'd done after receiving the note. She’d waited just outside the classroom door for Jordan to get out.

"Hi," she'd said as he'd appeared. "I liked your note." The resulting smile on his face had lit a spark in Maia's heart, warming her from the inside. Maia remembered reaching out her hand to him. Jordan had taken it and they’d walked hand in hand back to her locker.

It's funny how some memories were crystal clear while others blurred together. She remembered walking home from school with Jordan for many months after that, talking and laughing. She didn't remember when they first kiss had been, but she could remember the event itself with perfect clarity. It had been on one of their walks. They were approaching her house and Jordan usually turned back right about now, but instead he'd stopped and faced her. Maia could remember the determined look in his eyes as he'd been leading up building up to this moment. Then he'd leaned slowly forward and gently touched his lips to hers. It had been a brief kiss, a high schooler's first kiss but she would always remember it just as she would always remember that lake.
Maia wished Simon would let go of Izzy. Sure, Maia had no issues having Izzy for a roommate, but that didn't mean she thought Izzy was good for Simon. Maia was so certain that Simon would get hurt no matter how their little 'friends with benefits' thing ended. Backup orgasm indeed! The guy deserved so much better. After all, Simon had been able to convince her to hear Jordan out, which she'd believed to be an impossible task.

The problem was that Maia didn't know how she felt about Jordan anymore. Seeing him in the halls was messing with her resolve. Her memories were betraying her as they clung to the good things, and tried to forget the bad.

Her mind went back again to that day in tenth grade. Jordan had just handed her the note, and Maia spend the rest of class with it clutched in her hand, thinking about the boy who'd given it to her. She'd never looked twice at him until that day. He'd been just another kid in her class until she'd seen the affectionate look on his face as he'd placed the worn piece of paper in her palm.

'You're cute.'

To her tenth grade self, that had meant everything. Though in some ways, it hadn't been the words that had moved her, but rather the attention they represented. Jordan saw her, and for a girl who'd spent her whole life living in the shadow of her older brother, being seen was everything. Maia could remember so perfectly waiting just outside the classroom door for Jordan to get out, holding the note in her hand.

"Hi," she'd said as he appeared. "I liked your note." The resulting smile on his face had lit a spark in Maia's heart, warming her from the inside. Maia remembered reaching out her hand to him. Then the glowing feeling when Jordan took it, and they walked down the hall holding hands.

It's funny how some memories were crystal clear while others blurred together. She remembered walking home from school with Jordan for many months after that, talking and laughing. She didn't remember when their first kiss had been, but she could remember the event itself with perfect clarity. It had been one of those walks. When they'd reached the point where Jordan usually turned back, he'd stopped and faced her. Maia could remember the determined look in Jordan's eyes as if he'd been planning this moment in his head for days. Then Jordan had leaned slowly forward and gently touched his lips to hers. It had been a brief kiss, a high schooler's first kiss, but she would always remember it just as she would always remember the expression on Jordan's face that day at the lake.

Other memories were burned into her mind as well. Less pleasant ones. Such as the horrible things they'd said to each other during their many fights. She couldn't forget how their relationship had exploded from the inside out. She and Jordan just weren't compatible. No one who truly belonged together could fight that well and that often. There was something fundamental about who they both were that created chaos. If she was the spark, he was the oil. Without him, her embers had nothing to burn to the ground.

Yep, she was going to regret agreeing to talk to Jordan, though since she couldn't really avoid him, agreeing to Simon's terms hadn't felt like such a big deal. Jordan had after all been stalking her for months, standing down the hall and watching her out of the corner of his eye, or sitting on benches across the room and stealing glances from time to time. She had to give him some credit for trying to
be subtle about it - if Maia wasn't such an observant person she probably wouldn't have even noticed him hovering - but it was disconcerting, and frankly creepy, even if he never got without three metres of her. She supposed it was nice of him to keep all the stalking to public areas, but the bottom line was that Jordan had freaking come to school here just to be near her, and he wasn't about to just go away, therefore, she would have to talk to him sooner or later. She'd just been fooling herself in thinking maybe she could get out of this without having a face to face with her ex.

At this point, Maia just wanted it over with. She wanted to talk to Jordan so they could put this whole mess behind them, but for some reason, he wasn't making the first move. She knew Simon must of told his roommate by now that she'd agreed not to break his nose, so what was the hold up?

'I thought you said Jordan was dying to talk to me?' Maia texted Simon a few days after agreeing to his terms.

'He is,' Simon replied a few moments later. 'But he is also scared silly.'

'Hey, I am not that scary,' Maia texted back.

'Whatever you wanna tell yourself,' Simon texted back with a laughing emoji. Maia rolled her eyes at him and put her phone back in her pocket. She was just leaving class, wondering what to do with the hour she had till her next one, when she spotted a familiar shock of blue hair.

"Lily!" Maia called across the hall. The little asian girl stopped and turned to Maia before waving her over.

"Hey, how are you?" Lily asked.

"I'm good," Maia replied. "How's Raphael?" Lily's unrequited crush on her totally uninterested boss was one of the few things about her previous roommate that Maia could actually remember.

"Amazing as ever," Lily replied, quickly.

"From the tone in your voice I'm guess he's also just as uninterested as ever?" Maia asked.

"Yeah," Lily sighed. "But at least he doesn't date anyone else, so maybe it's not me."

"Definitely not you," Maia assured her.

"You always know what to say," Lily said, smiling. "Why ever did you stay in dorms? I told you that we could get a place together for second year."

"Yeah, I know," Maia said, trying to be polite. "I guess I just kinda like the dorms." This was a lie, but telling Lily that Maia hadn't wanted to live with her just felt rude. Maia could have gotten a place off campus by herself, but she couldn't afford that, and no other friends had offered to bunk with her.

"You're so silly," Lily chuckled. "Dorms suck. Speaking of, how is your new roommate working out?"

"Good," Maia replied. "She's just a little too outgoing for me. Likes to go to bars and stuff."

"Could be worse," Lily said. "This morning in class, I overheard two girls complaining that one of their roommates was messer than a pig in shit, and plays the same three songs on repeat all day."

"Wow," Maia laughed. "Yeah, I prefer Izzy." They'd been walking together down the hall as they spoke, turning a corner, Lily motioned to the door on their left. Maia could see other students
gathering in the classroom.

"This is my stop," Lily said. "It was great seeing you."

"Yeah you too," Maia replied, waving. Lily turned and joined her classmates, choosing a seat near the back.

Turning to walk back the way she came, Maia decided to kill some time and went to the cafeteria to sit alone in an out of the way corner and actually get some homework done before her next class. She ended up getting more done than she'd expected, and the time moved quickly. Packing up less than a hour later, Maia headed to her next class.

Though she knew she should have been thinking about the lecture, Maia's mind wondered. She couldn't help but think about what would happen when Jordan did come to talk to her. Maia suspected that Jordan wanted them to get back together. She had suspected this all along, which was probably why she'd put off talking to him for as long as she had. Maia liked being single. She started dating Jordan in the tenth grade, and it felt like she'd spent most of her life in a relationship. Maia had only recently realized how wonderful being single could be. No needy boy always after her time, no trying to pay attention to topics she cared nothing about, no crazy long conversations about what to eat for dinner, no arguments about who should clean up after, and no interruptions when she's trying to relax and have some 'me' time. Yep, being single was awesome, and Maia wasn't ready to give it up. Hopefully Jordan wanted something else.

Class ended, and Maia was on her way back to the dorms when she saw him. He was moving towards her, and getting closer than he usually did when just watching from afar. Maia knew this was it; Jordan was finally here to talk. As he moved closer, she couldn't help noticing how good looking he was. Maia could remember only too well how overwhelmed she'd been that a guy like this had been interested in her in the first place. Jordan seemed like the kinda guy who liked skinner girls, not curvy girls like her. There weren't many people in the hallway with them now, and with Jordan walking straight for her, somehow it felt like they were alone.

"Hi," Jordan spoke literally the first word he'd said to her since arriving at this school in September. "Hello yourself," Maia replied. "What took you so long?"

"Yeah well… ummm… I-," Jordan said sheepishly. "Sorry… I'm sorry, for the ummm… stalking."

"By stalking do you mean following me to this university, or following me around campus?"

"Both," Jordan confessed.

"I kinda figured," Maia sighed, trying to keep her composure. "Alright let's hear it."

"What do you want to hear?" Jordan asked.

"Whatever it is you need to tell me so we can both move on with our lives," Maia replied, trying to keep her tone neutral.

"Oh," Jordan said, his shoulder's visible slumping. "So you only agreed to speak to me to get rid of me?" He looked so sad, his whole stature sinking a little.

And now Maia felt guilty… fantastic.

"Jordan," Maia sighed. "We tried dating. It didn't work out. I don't know what you want?"
"I thought that was obvious," Jordan replied. "I want you."

"You do know the definition of ex girlfriend, right?" Maia asked, trying to be polite. "'Cause I'm pretty sure 'no longer yours' is listed there somewhere."

"I know," Jordan sighed. "It's just, well I miss you." He shuffled his feet nervous before continuing. "Since the moment I lost you, I've missed you. Being here is better than being back home, because here, it's like you aren't so far away. I know it makes no sense. I know I'm- I mean I'm sorry for everything that went wrong, not just the stalking." He mumbled the last few lines.

"Apology accepted," Maia replied easily. It wasn't like Jordan had been a horrible boyfriend or done anything truly wrong. Their separation had been more about lots of little fights building to a breaking point, rather than one main event. He had been needy, and she'd been frustrated. He'd been messy, and she'd been annoyed. She'd wanted to move away for school, and he'd been nervous about being so far from home. She'd probably done things that had annoyed him as well, but Maia only really knew her own side of the story. She remembered how angry she'd been with him right after they'd split up - angry and heartbroken - but she wasn't mad anymore. Maia had long ago learned that holding a grudge hurt you more than the person you had the grudge against. This is one of the things her parents had accidentally taught her. Being mad at them hadn't made her feel better. Expecting more from them than they could give her had only brought Maia endless disappointment, so she'd learned to let things go, to overcome her anger, and not let it sap the life out of her. Maia never forgot, but she always forgave. She was going to make a life for herself that wasn't defined by those who brought her into this world, and she was going to do that without dragging her baggage with her. After all, you could only blame your parents for your problems for so long until those problems are just your problems. Maia didn't want to still be blaming her parents for her problems when she was middle aged.

"You have that look on your face," Jordan said smiling at her.

"What look?" Maia asked.

"That fierce look you get, like you might take over the world someday," Jordan explained. She liked the way Jordan was looking at her. It reminded her of the way he used to look at her, like she was the center of the world.

"Who knows," Maia grinned. "Maybe I will."

"I love you, Maia," Jordan whispered suddenly, taking a step closer, though he was still a few feet away. "I loved you then, and I love you now. You are the first thing I think about when I wake up in the morning, and the last thing I think of when I go to sleep at night."

"I don't know what to say," Maia mumbled. "I- it's been so long, and yet here you are. Don't you remember how it all fell apart? We don't mesh or something. Do you really want to do that again?"

"Yes," Jordan said quickly. "And again and again and again until we figure it out. Because no matter how it goes down, no matter what happened between us, I know my life is better with you in it."

Maia groaned a little, tilting her head back. Why was he so insistent? Why did he have to make this so hard? Was it possible that they remembered all of those fights differently? For surely, if Jordan had the same recollections as her, he wouldn't want to try again.

"I don't think I can give you what you want," Maia finally spoke, feeling like a horrible person as she said the words.
"I don't care how you are in my life," Jordan began, very obviously throwing his pride out the window. "I just want you in my life. Even if all we do is hang out and study or something, I want to see you."

"You mean without the stalking?" Maia couldn't help but laugh. Stalking wasn't really a laughing matter, but since Jordan had kept it to hallways and public areas, and been rather terrible at it, Maia felt like laughter fit the situation.

"Yeah," Jordan smiled back.

Maia thought about it. That might not be so bad? A few hours of studying once a week in exchange for no more stalking. Maybe she could wean Jordan off her somehow and get him to move on?

"Why don't we meet in the library this sunday," Maia suggested. "Around two?"

"Okay," Jordan said quickly. The hope in his eyes almost made Maia take it all back and give him a definite no, but something stopped her.

Chapter End Notes

So who likes Jordan now? ^_^ And no Maia has no idea what stopped her. We shall have to wait and see. :D Is it just me or are my author's notes getting shorter?

______________________

Sneak Peek Chapter 80

"You do know what 'I don't know' means, right?" Alec replied to Izzy's question about what he could major in.

"You must have at least some idea," Izzy argued.

"Not a clue," Alec replied. "At this point I am thinking I will just have to be an undeclared second year student for all eternity."

Even Izzy, as competitive as she was, knew the tortoise and the hare had it wrong in this case. Even if she tired herself out running ahead, this indecisive tortoise wasn't about to beat her to the finish line. Now that Izzy had actually taken her intro to Marketing class she'd decided that wasn't the right path for her. But a list of major's she didn't want did nothing but limit her options. She needed to make a decision.

So far Izzy had ruled out Marketing, Nursing, English, Mathematics, Accounting, Biology and History, but that still left her with far too many options to choose from. She understood why so many first years didn't declare. This was going to be a little more complicated than she'd expected.

"Why did you pick history?" Izzy asked Magnus the next time she hung out with her brother at his boyfriend's place since Alec was so rarely home.

"It fascinates me," Magnus replied. "I have always wondered what it would be like to live through time, live apart from time. To be able to watch history unfold, but alas I am only human and the closes I can get to witnessing history is studying it."
Izzy wasn't sure why she'd kissed Simon that day. It was true she'd been very surprised to see him when she'd entered her dorm room and seen him sitting there. Izzy had just walked right over to him and kissed him without really thinking about it. Then thanks to Maia's reaction, Izzy hadn't been able to resist teasing them both. Her date that night had actually turned out to be totally lame. Izzy had thought about going to see Simon when she'd bailed early on her lame date, but it seems a little tacky after teasing Simon so mercilessly before. Instead, Izzy went home. Sure, the guy had been hot, and yes he'd been game, but he was also a total jerk which ruined it for her. Getting set up by a friend of a friend just wasn't her thing. Izzy would stick to bars from now on. Well, bars and Simon.

She was feeling less sure about her disappointing classes. Just because she didn't need to declare a major for another year, didn't mean she couldn't get a head start. Izzy was so sick of intro courses, and there was something wonderful about the idea of choosing a major before her older brother, so Izzy was determined to try. Since it was March already, Izzy didn't have long to try and beat Alec to the punch, but she had a feeling that her best ally in this one sided race was Alec himself.

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"So you found your passion and decided to go with that?" Izzy concluded.

"Yes," Magnus replied. He was giving her a funny look, like he wasn't quite sure what to make of her question.

"I am trying to beat Alec to picking a major okay," Izzy told him, quietly. "Just don't tell Alec, or he will choose one just to spite me."
"Are we keeping secrets from Alexander now?" Magnus asked smiling.

"Not big ones," Izzy specified. Again Magnus was smiling at her in the strangest way. Izzy wasn't really sure what to make of it. Thankfully Alec returned from the bathroom moments later and broke the strange atmosphere. Her brother settled himself down on the couch, and Magnus put his arm around Alec automatically.

"What did I miss?" Alec asked, and though he had probably been referring to the movie playing, Magnus replied in a different way.

"Your sister seems to have giving up hating me," Magnus commented as Alec settled against his chest.

"Has she now?" Alec asked grinning.

"I never hated you," Izzy explained. "I was just looking out for my brother."

"The wrong way," Alec sighed.

"Yes well," Izzy huffed. Izzy wondered if maybe this had been what those strange looks from Magnus had been about before.

"You're crazy, you know that right?" Alec told her laughing. Izzy leaned over and playfully punched his shoulder.

"Oh did I tell you I have an interview next week?" Magnus asked, finally pausing the movie as it seemed no one was paying any attention to it.

"That's great!" Alec smiled.

"This job better not be far away," Izzy said, with narrowed eyes.

"It's downtown," Magnus replied, easily smiling. "Contrary to your first impression, I am rather invested in this silly blue eyed brother of yours." Magnus was grinning and gesturing with his head to Alec.

"Good," Izzy said curtly.

"You both like makeup," Alec stated. "And shopping." He sighed. "Please just hang out without me already."

"Aren't you worried I will steal him?" Izzy giggled.

"I am more worried that a flying pig is going to break the window," Alec said flatly. Izzy couldn't contain her laughter.

"So Magnus," Izzy chuckled. "How do you feel about a shopping spree?"

"I feel like you are going to be even more extravagant than Alec," Magnus said with a slight shake of his head.

"Yep!" Izzy grinned. "But it's okay. I'll just buy me things. Alec is your sugar daddy, not me."

"You make it sound so cheap," Magnus replied, but he was laughing. Izzy was glad he understood her not to be serious.
"Hey nothing wrong with finding an easy ride," Izzy argued.

"It goes against my personality," Magnus laughed. "I am going to drag you to the normally priced stores."


"Oh no," Izzy informed her brother. "If this isn't the perfect opportunity to replace some of those holey clothes, I don't know what is." Alec groaned loudly as if someone had asked him to clean the bathroom with only his tongue.

"On second thought," Alec grumbled. "Don't be friends." Izzy just laughed. "Then I don't have to shop."

When their laughter finally faded, someone played the movie again and they all turned to watch it. It had been a while now that Izzy had realized she'd been wrong about Magnus. It had slowly dawned on her as she'd watched them together, but over Christmas she really understood. Her brother was happy, and that was all that mattered.

She hung around Magnus's place for a while longer, then Izzy decided to leave the two lovebirds alone, but not before she made plans to drag Alec shopping later in the week. After stealing a hug from her brother, Izzy starting walking back to campus. She had no more classes today, and didn't feel like working on her homework; even if she had a fair amount piled up. She supposed she could go home, but she didn't fancy that either. Izzy's legs wandered through the school until she found herself at Simon's door. She knocked, but the guy who opened the door wasn't Simon.

"You must be Izzy," the man said. He was tall, with brown skin and dark hair. Izzy was pretty sure this was Simon's roommate, though she couldn't remember his name.

"That's me," Izzy confirmed. "Is Simon here?"

"He's out," Jordan explained. "Class, I think."

"Okay," Izzy said and turned to leave.

"You're roommates with Maia right?" the man asked.

"Who's asking?" Izzy replied.

"I'm Jordan," the guy said. "I'm not sure if Maia told you about me."

"Her stalker ex?" Izzy asked. She'd vaguely recalled Maia mentioning something about how Simon and that ex of hers were living together on campus, but she hadn't really thought much about it.

"Yeah I guess," the guy said awkwardly. "I'm Jordan."

"Well Jordan," Izzy smiled. "Would you please tell Simon I stopped by."

"Sure," Jordan replied. "Umm… has Maia said anything about me?"

"Don't think so," Izzy shrugged. "I haven't seen her much today. She left for class early."

"Oh I see," Jordan replied. "I'll let Simon know you said hi."

"Thanks," Izzy said, and with that, Izzy waved goodbye and headed back down the hall. At this point she should probably go home. Izzy had no idea why hanging out with her brother had made
her want to see Simon. After all, she was sleeping with Simon, and there was nothing sexy about her brother, so how the heck had she jumped from brother to boy toy? With a slight shake of her head, Izzy put it from her mind, and soon arrived back at her own dorm.

Walking in, Izzy fell face first into her pillow. Maybe the solution to her problem was ending today. Maybe she should just go to sleep and tackle life tomorrow. But she couldn't sleep because it wasn't even eight o'clock yet. A few moments later the door opened and Maia arrived home.

"Jordan says hi," Izzy told Maia in way of greeting.

"When did you see Jordan?" Maia asked. Izzy heard the tell tale thud of Maia's school bag dropping to the ground, her face still covered from her pillow.

"When I went to see Simon," Izzy mumbled. "But he wasn't home. What's up with you and Jordan anyway?"

"We are trying for friends," Maia said. "Because he was so insistent."

"Why would a guy insist that much just to be your friend?" Izzy asked, sitting up to look at Maia.

"Well that's just it," Maia explained. "He wants to try being all coupley again, but I just- I don't know- it's been so long since we were together, and I can't forget that big fight as easily as it seems he can."

"What were you fighting about?" Izzy asked.

"Life," Maia said simply. "Dishes, school, moving, family... you know, life. Then I broke up with him, and he didn't seem to get it, so I went to a club and kissed someone else when I knew he was looking, just to make it clear, and he flipped out."

"Flipped out?"

"Hit the guy I'd made out with," Maia explained. "Like really hit him. Jordan has always been a bit of a jealous guy, but I'd never seen him so jealous before."

"That's crazy," Izzy said. "He didn't look like a crazy person when I met him."

"They never do," Maia replied.

"Why stay friends with him then?" Izzy asked.

"He kept telling me he loved me," Maia whined. "He was so determined, so genuine. He made me feel SO guilty." She threw her head back and groaned as she spoke the last few words. "I just couldn't tell him no completely. It's hard to turn away that kind of devotion, even if you know you should."

"Then don't turn it away," Izzy replied with a shrug.

"Urg!" Maia groaned. "I put him on my hook, didn't I?"

"Yep," Izzy laughed. Then her attention was drawn by her vibrating phone. Checking it, she discovered a text from Simon.

'Hey Iz,' Simon texted. 'Jordan said you stopped by.'

'Seems like I only just missed you,' Izzy smiled, thinking about how if he'd just gotten home a half
hour sooner, Simon would have been home when she'd shown up.

'Do you want me to come back over?' Izzy asked. 'It isn't like you're all that far away. Just give me ten minutes?' Izzy was looking through her closet for a more fun outfit to wear to Simon's when her phone went off again.

'Izzy would you mind if we take the benefits part out of our friends with benefits arrangement? It just isn't for me.'

'Losing interest in orgams, huh?' Izzy texted back.

'I need to try actually dating,' Simon replied. 'It's been a blast though. Thanks.'

'Alright,' Izzy texted back. 'If that's what you want.'

'Thanks for understanding,' Simon's final text read. Izzy put her phone away, and closed her closet before landing face first in bed again, burying her face in her pillow.

It was rare that she slept with the same guy twice, and even more rare that she went back again after that. Izzy still wasn't sure why she'd done it. She thought maybe it had something to do with Simon being so innocent. She'd been able to teach him many things, and almost mold him into the lover she wanted. Yes, that was it. That's why she was disappointed.

Besides, it wasn't like Simon could have broken off their agreement for any other reason. Izzy knew what kind of person she was. She knew her limitations. She was shallow and self involved, and didn't deserve the kind of love she saw in Magnus's eyes when he looked at her brother. Maybe that was why Izzy had been so quick to act when she'd listened to Alec complain about Magnus last year. Love was special. Love wasn't something to be taken lightly, or looked down on. It was meant to be protected, and if Izzy wasn't the type of person who could be loved, she would sure as hell be the one to protect love, like the love Magnus and Alec had for each other.

Chapter End Notes

I hope this has shed some light on Izzy's character and added more depth to the last chapter with Jordan and Maia. If you have a sudden click in your head that explains Izzy up to this point then I've done my job right. If not, let me know and I'll keep at it.

Also I think my author's notes have gotten shorter because I've gotten lazy. lol. I never wrote author's notes before this story and the ones that came after it. It's also the first story I did sneak peeks for which means I've been writing this story for freakin EVER! Quick question to those who have been reading it from the start or those who have recently binge read it all: Has my writing style changed a lot since the beginning? From chapter one to now how is this story different? Is it changing for the better? Has my description, plot, characterization, humor, drama, etc improved? Have the different story lines being laced together gotten smoother?

Sneak Peek Chapter 81

"Okay let's do this again," Jace said, trying to stop himself from sighing with frustration.
Mason looked nervous, but moved closer. "Now your hand goes here," Jace pointed to the side of his neck. "And you have to flip me over. Understand?" Mason nodded, but without much conviction. More gently than he should have Mason's hand made contact with Jace's neck.

"You aren't going to knock me down with that attitude," Jace said. "Come on." Mason's grip improved, but only slightly. "Alright better, now your other hand around and knock me over." But Mason's movements were still too slow. If this was a real match Jace would have had Mason pinned a long ass time ago.

Finally letting out a sigh of frustration, Jace moved away. He took a deep breath before speaking. "Okay, let's try this another way," he said. Then after a moment of silent thought Jace gave Mason new instructions. "Pretend there is a person in front of you and explain to me how you execute the move without actually doing it."

"My hand goes up under your arm and around the back of your head," Mason said. "Then I tuck your head into your shoulders and flip you."

"See that's perfect," Jace said. "So do that."

"Easier said than done," Mason mumbled.
Mason was moving backwards and forwards, holding a defensive stance, and occasionally falling to
the ground intentionally as if avoiding an attack. It was the practice drill Jace had just assigned him,
and the guy wasn't half bad so long as he wasn't interacting with anyone, but as soon as Mason
started practicing the contact part of this contact sport, he froze up. There was no getting around the
fact that wrestling is a contact sport, and Mason wasn't getting any better. A part of Jace wanted to
suggest Mason join the soccer team or something. Though Jace supposed that could just be the part
of him that didn't want to be here.

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"See that's perfect," Jace said. "So do that."

"Easier said than done," Mason mumbled.

"I just don't understand why though," Jace replied. "I've seen you pull this off in group practice
before."

"Yeah," Mason mumbled.

"So is it just me you don't like touching?" Jace asked, trying and failing to contain his annoyance.
"Because if so, I could get one of the other guys on the team to train you, no problem."


"Hey, I'm sorry okay," Jace said, gesturing apologetically. "I just don't understand, and it doesn't
help that I kinda resent the fact that I am stuck here every Wednesday night instead of hanging out
with my girlfriend, though that isn't your fault because the silly woman went and signed up for
defense classes on Wednesdays anyway, so even if I wasn't here, I wouldn't be with her."

"Yeah," Mason said in a small voice. He was looking down at the floor now. Jace never got the
impression that Mason enjoyed their training sessions, but this was different. Mason seemed to
deflated as if Jace's words had cost him something.
"What's wrong?" Jace asked.

"It's nothing," Mason replied, but it was very obviously not nothing.

"Listen," Jace began. "We are both stuck here till seven, so either we can train - which I don't think you are too keen on - or you can tell me what's up?"

Still Mason didn't say anything, and Jace reached his breaking point. "Why did you join the team anyway?" Jace asked too loudly, frustrated at the whole situation. He'd resisted asking this question every Wednesday night for months now, and he was done. "I mean you clearly don't enjoy it and I'm sorry, but I gotta be honest, you aren't that great at it either."

"It's okay," Mason mumbled. "I know I suck."

"Then quit," Jace said.

"I-" Mason began.

"As far as I know, you don't have any good friends on the team, you aren't trying to impress a girl, and you aren't required to be on the team for a scholarship," Jace exclaimed. "I really don't think you have a great love for the sport itself, unless you are really secretive about it. I don't understand what could possibly be keeping you here?"

"You," Mason's voice was so quiet, Jace was sure he'd misheard.

"Didn't catch that?"

"You're keeping me here," Mason whispered, just slightly louder. He was looking down at the ground now, shuffling his feet as if trying to make himself seem smaller.

"Yeah, well I'm supposed to be teaching you till seven," Jace stated, confused. "So I guess I am technically keeping you here now, but I don't see how that matters in the grand scheme of things."

"No, not that," Mason whispered. Then he took a deep breath looked up and said. "I joined the team to get closer to you."

Jace had absolutely no idea what this guy was talking about. If Mason wanted to be such close friends, why the hell was Mason so afraid of touching him?

"You know what," Jace sighed. "I'm tired. You're tired. Let's call it an early night, shall me? I won't tell the coach if you won't." But when Jace turned to leave he suddenly felt Mason's hand on his arm. Turning back to Mason, Jace found himself locked in the other man's gaze, and it was then that Jace saw, something in Mason's face he hadn't noticed before. He knew the expression well, however he'd never before seen it on a man's face directed at him. Jace couldn't help his reaction. Startled, he jumped back, quickly getting out of Mason's reach, putting space between them.

It all happened so fast, Jace barely had time to compose his thoughts before Mason was moving away, running for the exit. Recovering from his shock, Jace jogged after Mason, feeling like a jerk for reacting like that. Within seconds, Jace stood in Mason's path, blocking his way out.

Mason looked scared. His eyes were darting past Jace to the exit, but Jace was determined to not make this any worse than it already was. At least, Mason wasn't actively trying to leave at the moment, but he wouldn't look at Jace either.

"I'll go," Mason whispered, slightly franticly. "I'll quit the team and never bother you again. I'm
"Sorry." His body language still screamed 'run away' as Jace tried to compose a reply.

"Relax," Jace said as calmly as he could. "You just took me off guard, that's all."

"I-" Mason began. "But I saw the look in your eyes."

"Yeah surprise," Jace stated. "Now, before I go assuming that what I saw is what I think I saw, I have to ask." Jace was sure at this point he was right, but in this situation, he felt being sure was important. "Are you gay?"

The moment stretched out, long and silent, until Mason finally nodded.

"Okay then," Jace said. "That explains a few things."

Mason seemed to be waiting for something. He was gazing very keenly at Jace's face, nervous and expectant.

"And if I add two and two together," Jace continued, rationally. "I take it that you like me?" Mason said nothing, but his blush gave him away.

Jace ran his hands through his hair, trying to process. "I need a drink," he chuckled.

"Sorry," Mason muttered again. He looked like he wanted to bolt again, but Jace took a step to the left, and cut off his path. Of course, Jace wasn't holding him, so Mason could have gotten away if he'd really wanted to, but Jace was trying to use his body language to show he wanted Mason to stay and talk.

"You don't have to be sorry," Jace said, with an exhalation of breath. "I know what it feels like to be fixated on something that you can't have. Something that is out of your control. So don't be sorry, Mason. Maybe you should have told me sooner."

"I didn't know how to tell you," Mason said very quickly. "I haven't even told my parents. And I knew it wouldn't matter because you're straight."

"Okay fair point," Jace admitted. "Straight and taken. Kinda ruins it, huh." Mason nodded vigorously. Jace tried not to think about how Clary had been technically taken when he'd been in Mason's shoes, and Jace had managed to break that up. However, Jace had the distinctive advantage of falling for someone who was capable of being attracted to him.

"You don't have to quit the team," Jace informed him. "I'll talk to the coach and get someone else to train you. If you don't want the coach to know why, I'll make something up, promise. I get why this would be awkward for you." Jace couldn't help but imagine how difficult it would have been for him to be asked to platonically touch Clary when he'd been in love with her last year, while she'd been with Simon.

"Why are you being so nice to me?" Mason asked. He seemed more shocked than Jace thought he should be.

"Why wouldn't I be?" Jace asked. He'd experienced turning down interested girls before, so it was only the guy part of this equation that was new to him. Though, Jace had rarely turned down hot girls before he'd gotta all monogamous, he'd turned down plenty that he hadn't been into.

"I thought you'd be disgusted," Mason admitted.

"Yeah, well my best friend is gay," Jace explained. "And I'm hot so… what ya gonna do."
"And your funny," Mason added, with affection. "And kind. You’re a good teacher too, even if I was a horrible student."

"You know, I had a crush on a teacher once," Jace said, smiling. "And I failed that class. Don’t be too hard on yourself."

"Sorry," Mason said.

"Please stop saying that," Jace sighed. He was trying to remember if there’d been anything that would have made him feel better when he’d been the one confessing unrequited feelings to someone else. "You don’t have to be sorry."

"Sorry," Mason said, but this time he was grinning.

"Okay, now you are just doing it to make me feel bad," Jace whined. "And don’t quit the team just because of me. I don’t need that on my conscience."

"No really it's okay, Jace," Mason replied, smiling. There was an affection to the way he spoke Jace's name, which until this moment Jace hadn’t noticed, but he realized now that it had always been there since the day he’d met Mason. "I don’t really like wrestling anyway."

"As long as it's what you want and not about me," Jace replied.

"It is promise," Mason smiled. He made to go, but Jace wanted to try one more thing.

"Listen, I know I can't be who you would like me to be, or feel what you want me to feel, but is there anything I can do? We could be friends?"

Mason laughed once without humor before speaking. "As much fun as that sounds," he said sarcastically. "I think I'll pass."

"Fair enough," Jace chuckled.

"But if you ever get bi-curious," Mason replied, grinning back. "Call me, okay?" Laughing, Jace agreed to his terms and Mason walked out of the gym. He was glad Mason had left without feeling put down or insulted, because Mason didn’t need to be. Jace felt like he’d dealt with that rather well all things considered. And he didn't have training on Wednesdays anymore. Bonus!

Jace collected his things and headed home only to discover his second surprise of the day: Alec was home.

"You're here," Jace said to his usually absent roommate.

"I live here," Alec reminded him.

"Only in name, my friend," Jace chuckled. Jace sat down next to Alec on the couch, and Alec clipped him around the ear in a teasing manner.

"Ouch," Jace grumbled, robbing the side of his head.

"Are you trying to ditch me?" Alec accused him. "Think you can find a better roommate, huh?"

"Never," Jace laughed. "You pay the maid." Then they were both laughing.

"But like seriously dude, you are never home," Jace said when the laughter died down.
"Magnus is visiting Tessa," Alec explained his presences. Jace knew a bit about what had happened to Tessa, but not much. He'd overheard Alec talking to Magnus on the phone the other day about her having postpartum depression, whatever that was. "She's a bit better now, but Will called earlier and told Magnus she could use a friend, so he went."

"It was good of Magnus to go see her," Jace replied.

"Yeah," Alec sighed, turning at gaze off into space at the wall. Jace looked over just in time to witness the dopey-eyed look on his best friend's face.

"Are you high?" Jace asked, laughing.

"Oxytocin is my gateway drug," Alec grinned.

"Don't get me wrong," Jace said. "Biology wasn't my best subject, but isn't that a hormone?"

"Yep," Alec smiled.

"Why do I remember it being about childbirth?" Jace asked, confused. Had he been asleep that day in Biology 101?

"Ew!" Alec grumbled, hitting Jace with a pillow. "It's the love hormone, genius." His laughter settled down, and Alec continued in a dreamy voice. "I can't imagine being with anyone else but Magnus. It's like my future blurs out if I don't include him in it."

"Yeah, I know what you mean," Jace replied.

"I've been wanting to, or at least thinking about it," Alec started though he wasn't making much sense. "It would help with the money, or at least it might, but still that isn't why. Then again maybe he isn't thinking like I am. He's never mentioned he is thinking of us like that so-"

"You lost me," Jace said, blinking dumbfounded at his friend.

"Nevermind," Alec said. "So how was training with Mason tonight?"

"Well, I found out why he's always so nervous and awkward in training," Jace said.

"Oh why?"

"He likes me," Jace said. "Like he likes me, likes me."

"What are you twelve?" Alec whined. "Likes me, likes me. Who says that?"

"Whatever," Jace said with a wave of his hand. "He's into me, and that's why he joined the wrestling team even though he doesn't like wrestling."

"That's awkward," Alec said. "What are you going to do about it?"

"I offered to get him a different trainer, but Mason wants to quit," Jace explained. "I offered to be his friend, but he turned me down."

"Smart man," Alec laughed.

"Yeah," Jace sighed. "And I get my Wednesday nights back… but that doesn't help me since Clary's still got her self defense class."
"Just think all that extra time for homework," Alec chuckled.

"I don't see no text book open near you either there, wise guy," Jace grumbled. Alec rolled his eyes.

"Have you picked a major yet?" Alec asked.

"Yeah," Jace replied. "Sales and Marketing, why?"

"Urg!" Alec groaned laying his head back on the couch. "At this rate, everyone will have a major before me." He paused, pulling his head forward again and asked, "Why did you pick that one?"

"Selling someone something is kinda like picking up girls in bars," Jace replied. "You are just selling a product instead of yourself. I found my sales and marketing classes the easiest so I picked that one. I figure why not put the skills I developed to good use, since I don't plan on picking up girls in bars ever again."

"You can picture yourself with Clary for the rest of your life then?" Alec asked.

"I mean I guess so," Jace replied. "I hadn't really thought about it like that."

"It's all I can think about," Alec said. "Maybe it's because Magnus is graduating next month. It just feels like real life is creeping up on me."

"I supposed I would lose Clary if she dumped me," Jace said, thinking out loud rather absently. He hadn't been listening too closely to what Alec had said. "Or if she dies."

"Just those two scenarios, huh?" Alec chuckled.

"Well yeah. Do you have another one?" Jace asked. Alec shook his head like Jace was missing the joke or something. Then he changed the topic.

"Magnus and Izzy seem to be getting along better," Alec informed him.

"That's good," Jace replied. "Have you heard anything about how Simon is getting on with her? I worry about that nerd sometimes."

"Yeah, it seems like he broke things off with her," Alec explained.

"Really?" Jace asked surprised. "I didn't see that coming."

"I think Izzy was surprised to," Alec said. "It's a pity. I was hoping he'd be good for her."

"Alec," Jace began thoughtfully. "Did you ever have a crush on me?" The resulting laughter from his question was Jace's third shock of the day. Alec doubled over, holding his stomach, unable to breathe as he slid almost off the couch onto the floor.

"I'll take that as a no," Jace said.

Chapter End Notes

Disclaimer - I know nothing about wrestling. If any of this turned out like it is meant to wrestling wise you can thank youtube and a google search. :D
I am rather proud of my update speed with the new full time job and everything so there is that. And it seems some people have picked sides in the one way competition of Izzy and Alec picking majors. I did not realize this would become a thing. o_O Also my beta laughed like crazy at the end there and I hope I made you laugh too. It seems this story has been lacking humour lately! *shocked emoji* That just won't do!

Sneak Peek Chapter 82

"Oh, how is Clary working out as the substitute?" Tessa asked.

"She's at Jace's a lot," Magnus explained. "But when she's home it's great. We watch rom-coms and eat ice cream in onesies."

"Sounds like heaven," Tessa laughed. "So long as that rom-com is Pride and Prejudice."

"You would pick a Jane Austen," Magnus chuckled.

"Why of course!" Tessa replied in mock horror in her best British accent. "Romance hasn't been quite the same since the 1800s."

"You prat," Magnus chuckled. "You weren't alive in the 1800s." Tessa was laughing with him. She had so missed adult conversation. Will worked quite a lot and Jem more often spoke in baby voices these days than adult ones or so it seemed to her. For a man who'd permanently decided he wouldn't have children at the age of eighteen he'd taken to fatherhood like a fish to water.

"Do you want kids, Magnus?" Tessa asked suddenly when their laughter died. She was starting to realize most people talked about this before all the group sex and antibiotics lead to crying infants and she wanted to know what the consensus was. Tessa had already asked a few of her old school friends and been rather fascinated by the results.
Tessa's Strength

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Tessa had stopped breast feeding entirely since starting her antidepressants, as the doctors had warned her the meds would leak into the milk, but she decided that was okay. Her baby needed her mother to be a functional human being more than she needed breast milk. Lucie was used to formula, and both Will and Jem were quite proficient at making it. These days, the boys were doing almost all the child care, with Tessa only spending time with her daughter when one of her father's was around. She liked it this way best for now. Until Tessa was totally better, this kept Lucie safe.

Tessa was taking some 'me' time, and with every passing day, she was feeling more like Tessa. She was re-reading her favourite books, baking, sleeping, and spending time with friends. She hadn't told most her friends about the post partum depression, but Magnus was a different story. Tessa had needed to tell him. Her other friends weren't big life problem friends, so much as school colleagues, or book club acquaintances. When some people ask you how you are, all you say is fine, no matter how you are feeling. This being the case for those book club and school friends, but Magnus was different. If Magnus ever asked how she was, Tessa always gave him a real answer. The most wonderful thing about Magnus however, is that he knows when she doesn't need to talk about it. He had a way of just understanding without intrusion, when she needed to talk about someone else's issues, and when she needed to unload her own.

"So, I am hoping I get the research job," Magnus finished his long reply to her question 'how's the job hunt going?' "It looks interesting, though it's a thirty minute drive away so I am going to need to get a car. Sure, the archiving job pays better and is closer, but it just seems so boring. I'd almost rather commute, but then again, there is the better pay with the potentially boring job."

"Money is important," Tessa replied. "Not that I can talk, being unemployed and all."

"You have Will and Jem," Magnus explained. "And little Lucie. Don't be too hard on yourself."

"Well you have Alec," Tessa countered. "I am sure he'd rather you take the job you're interested in."

"I'm sure Alec wouldn't mind it if I didn't work at all," Magnus laughed. "He wanted to take a vacation when I should be working."

"Why not just go on vacation then?" Tessa asked. "Sounds like a nice graduation gift."

"Student debit is my actual graduation gift," Magnus replied. "Alexander is constantly testing my willpower. It's like he wants me to take advantage of him."

"Nah," Tessa smiled. "He's just young and in love. Throw in rich, and it all makes sense." She laughed. It was great to talk about someone else's problems for a change, and to talk to an adult that wasn't Jem or Will. She loved them both, but lately it was like they were the only people she spoke to.

Magnus sighed, a deep final sound. "Well, I've fallen now and I ain't getting up," he said.

"Funny how that happens," Tessa chuckled.

"And you, my dear," Magnus began, smiling. "Have let me go on for too long about my silly little problems. How are you?"
"Happy to talk about you," Tessa replied. "Honestly though, I'm better. Will and mostly Jem have taken over baby duty for a while."

"Jem is a saint," Magnus replied.

"He really is," Tessa sighed, sinking deeper into her comfortable chair. It was just like Magnus to sense when she was finally ready to talk about her own stuff. The hour of listening to Magnus's job hunting adventures had been time well spent.

"I have been dying to know," Magnus whispered. "I mean, I know you consider them both the father, but do you actually know who it is?"

"Will," Tessa said without hesitation. They hadn't ever planned to keep this a secret, but it seems that all their friends had been too polite to ask, that is until now.

"So you did a paternity test?" Magnus asked.

"No," Tessa explained. "Jem can't have kids."

"Well, I bet that sure simplified everything," Magnus chuckled.

"It did actually," Tessa laughed. She'd been laughing so much since Magnus's arrival, and it felt amazing. Tessa was having a hard time believing that life was this good. It felt like a dream compared to before. Not so long ago there hadn't been a single glimmer of light on the horizon, and now it was like she was warm again. "The whole reveal went something like, 'so I'm pregnant and I have no clue by whom'. Then Jem chips up and says I do, 'it's Will's.'"

"Not exactly your typical 'I'm pregnant' unveiling," Magnus chuckled.

"Nothing in my life is typical," Tessa sighed. "I mean really, my two boyfriends are looking after my daughter, while I sit here gossiping with my ex-roommate about how I got the two boyfriends, and the daughter."

"You are still my roommate in spirit," Magnus told her.

"Thanks," Tessa smiled. "Oh, how is Clary working out as the substitute?"

"She's at Jace's a lot," Magnus explained. "But when she's home it's great. We watch rom-coms, and eat ice cream in onesies."

"Sounds like heaven," Tessa laughed. "So long as the rom-com is Pride and Prejudice."

"You would pick a Jane Austen," Magnus chuckled.

"Why of course!" Tessa replied in mock horror in her best British accent. "Romance hasn't been quite the same since the 1800s."

“You weren’t alive in the 1800s and as far as history goes I promise romance wasn’t more romantic back then,” Magnus began. “Women's rights weren’t a thing, and don’t even get me started on oral hygiene and infant mortality rates! That’s gotta kill the romance, right? The 1800s wasn’t all Mr. Darcy and Elizabeth Bennet, you know.” Magnus paused then added, “What are you smiling about?” Tessa, indeed was grinning. She had so missed adult conversation. Will worked quite a lot, and Jem more often spoke in baby voices these days than adult ones, or so it seemed to her. For a man who’d permanently decided he wouldn’t have children at the age of eighteen, he’d taken to fatherhood like a fish to water.
"Do you want kids, Magnus?" Tessa asked suddenly when their laughter died. She was starting to realize most people talked about this before all the group sex, and antibiotics lead to crying infants, and she wanted to know what the consensus was. Tessa had already asked a few of her old school friends, and been rather fascinated by the results.

"There have been times when I entertained the idea," Magnus said after a moment's thought. "Usually when I was in a serious relationship with a woman, but now I don't know. I guess, it will depend what Alexander wants."

"So what you're saying is that Alec's more important to you than whether or not you have kids?" Tessa countered.

"Yeah, I guess so," Magnus smiled.

"Have you talked to Alec about this?" Tessa asked.

"Not yet," Magnus replied. "But there's no rush."

"True, you guys can't get accidentally knocked up," Tessa grumbled. "Lucky bastards."

"No swearing around the baby," Jem's voice carried into the living room as Tessa heard him walking down the hall.

"Bastard isn't really swearing," Tessa defended herself. "And she is too little to understand what I am saying anyway."

"Still, best to get into those habits now," Jem informed her as he moved closer. Reaching her side, he leaned over and asked, "Is mommy up for a snuggle?"

"Only if daddy doesn't leave," Tessa replied.

"You are so much better," Jem told her. "I'm not worried."

"That makes one of us," Tessa replied as she let Jem place her daughter in her arms. It was strange having the small weight in her arms again, but in a good way. Tessa had held Lucie only a handful of times since her breakdown. She didn't trust herself.

"She's already been fed," Jem told her. "So all she needs is mommy cuddles."

"Thanks," Tessa smiled, looking up at Jem again. He was standing over her smiling at the two of them. Tessa didn't have the words to express how grateful she was to Jem. Because he wasn't working, Jem had taken up the majority of the child care since her breakdown almost a month ago. Will helped when he was home, but the forty hours a week when he worked had become Jem's time, and Tessa couldn't be more thankful.

Tessa looked from Jem down to the baby, and found herself genuinely smiling. Laughing with Magnus had been wonderful, but smiling naturally around her daughter was something else entirely. Not only was it a huge relief, but there was something else Tessa couldn't quite put into words. She'd felt like there had been something wrong with her for so long, since what kind of mother can't bond with her own child? Lucie had been a stranger to her then, but now, Tessa could see a little of Will in the structure of her face, and a little of herself in the way Lucie smiled. It was like she was getting to know Lucie or something, but then again, that made no sense because Lucie was so little. Could one actually get to know a four month old? Then again, there was quite a lot of personality in that smile.

"See Tessa," Jem's voice broke her chain of thought. "You don't need me."
"I definitely need you," Tessa argued firmly.

"Well you don't need me for at least an hour," Jem replied. Tessa looked up skeptically. That was a very specific time frame. "I have to run an errand," Jem continued. "Lucie is fed, changed, burped, and everything. She should be happy with just cuddles till Will gets home in an hour, and I probably won't even be gone the whole hour. You've totally got this, Tess."

"What's the errand?" Tessa asked, stalling for time because she wasn't sure what to say. Tessa hadn't had the baby by herself since waking up in the hospital.

"Just a test at the hospital," Jem explained. "Routine but... I can call and cancel if you want." Tessa sensed this was less about his appointment, and more about trying to get her to spend time with the baby alone.

Smiling lovingly at her, Jem placed his hand against her cheek. Tessa leaned into his touch, closing her eyes. "You are so much better," Jem whispered. "You can do this."

"You promise?" Tessa asked.

"I promise," Jem replied softly.

"You should go then," Tessa said firmly. "Your health is important, and Magnus will stay here with me, won't you Magnus?"

"Umm," Magnus began. "Sure, but I don't really know how to look after a baby."

"She does," Jem assured him. "She just thinks she needs supervision."

"I do need supervision!" Tessa exclaimed. "I almost dropped her, remember?"

"What I remember is you handing Lucie to me so she would be safe," Jem replied.

"We remember that very differently," Tessa told him.

"I am sure we do, love," Jem replied. He leaned in and kiss her lightly on the lips before turning to leave. "Call if you need anything. I'll come running." Tessa nodded, determined. She kept her eyes on Jem until he walked out the front door.

"It sounds like the depression got pretty bad," Magnus said slowly after a few moments.

"I have nothing to compare it to," Tessa said, keenly aware of her daughter in her arms, as well as the absence of both her father's. "I've done a little research on the subject since it happened to me. Postpartum is way more common than I imagined, and it affects all women differently. It's strange, but it makes me feel better - less ashamed - to think that lots of other people are having similar problems."

"Misery loves company," Magnus replied with a smile. "That just makes you human, Tessa. Nothing to be ashamed of."

"Well, being human is stupid," Tessa said firmly.

"I agree," Magnus chuckled. "We should be magical warlocks, then our lives would be easy." They both laughed lightly, then Tessa's eyes turned down to the content child resting in her arms. Lucie wasn't sleeping, but she was perfectly happy to just be where she was. Tessa knew she was lucky to have such an easy, happy, healthy baby. She'd heard stories of infants that cried and cried no matter
how you tried to soothe them. Lucie wasn't like that. Tessa was lucky, and she needed to remember that. The depression had blinded her, and she didn't want to have the wool pulled over her eyes ever again.

"I love her," Tessa said. She wasn't sure if she was talking to Magnus, or to herself, but even so, she was looking down at Lucie. "I mean I really do. It's irrational and confusing, but I'd die for her."

"She's your daughter," Magnus said. "What's irrational or confusing about loving her?"

"I don't know her," Tessa explained. "Like she's a person, but not quite yet, you know. It just- it's strange."

"I guess I can see what you mean," Magnus replied. "It's instincts, Tessa. Humans are hardwired to protect their young. It's normal."

"I can see more of who she is now than four months ago," Tessa continued. "The way she crinkles her nose, or wraps her whole hand around my finger, but she's still like this little pink thing that requires constant attention."

Magnus laughed. "That pretty well sums it up," he chuckled.

"Yeah," Tessa replied softly. Lucie started making noises, and for a second Tessa panicked. Then she took a few deep breaths, and repositioned her daughter in her arms. She could do this. She was doing this. Alone with her daughter. Well, alone with Lucie and Magnus.

"So how was shopping with Izzy?" Tessa asked him, both because she was curious, and because she needed the distraction.

"Interesting," Magnus said slowly. "Izzy is rather… how do I put this delicately… well, she has a big personality. I watched her try on clothes that could cover my cost of living for a month. Then I dragged her off to sane stores, and listened to her express concern for my skin because of the quality of the fabric."

"It's better though right, with her I mean?" Tessa asked.

"Yes much," Magnus smiled. "I think we just got off on the wrong foot. We have another shopping trip planned for next month, and this time we are going to drag Alexander, even if he's kicking and screaming the whole time." There was an evil glint in Magnus's eyes.

"I was going to suggest you hold Lucie," Tessa said smiling. "But with that evil look, she might actually be safer with me."

"I have a confession to make," Magnus said. "I've never held a baby before, and I honestly feel like I will suck at it. Which is why I brought Alec with me when you invited me to visit you in the hospital."

"You aren't as subtle as you think you are, Magnus," Tessa replied. "I kinda figured, and really, who am I to talk? Just because you have a kid, doesn't mean you know what you are doing as a parent."

"True," Magnus replied. Then added with a laugh. "What are parents really, if not just people who had sex."

"Truer words, my friend," Tessa smiled.

The hour passed quickly with Magnus there to talk to, and when Will arrived home he kissed Tessa
hello, and scooped his daughter out of her arms, much to Tessa's relief. She was proud of herself, but it was best to take these things one day at at time.

Chapter End Notes

Aren't my sneak peeks so misleading? ^_^ *Might be a little evil*

...wow I am really getting lazy with these author's note these days... I got nothing.

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Sneak Peek Chapter 83

As she walked out of class, Clary wondered what Jace was doing. It was the first Wednesday where she had plans and he didn't, since last week he'd finally learned what was up with Mason. Clary had to admit she felt sorry for the guy. Having a crush on Jace without having Jace was something she could empathize with. Though Clary had to admit if Mason hadn't been a guy she might have been less sorry and more jealous. As it was she knew Jace was as straight as an arrow so she wasn't worried.

"You must be in the defense class."

Clary looked up. It was a guy from her art history class. If she wasn't totally off his name was Brett. Honestly, Clary was just happy she'd managed to recognize him at all. She was so bad with names and faces.

"What gave me away?" Clary laughed.

"The self confidence," Brett replied.

"Oh yeah sure," Clary chuckled. "Because the sweat and sports clothes weren't enough of a hint."

"Hey, what can I say," Brett continued. "There is nothing hotter than a woman who can defend herself."

"More like tired, messy and gross," Clary counted. "Oh did you finish the essay on Van Gogh?"

"Not yet," Brett said.

"Me neither," Clary grumbled.
"Knees bent," the instructor said. "Arms forward and push your opponent away."

Clary moved as she'd been told, and Zoey, the woman she'd been partnered with, took her shove with grace. Zoey had been Clary's partner since the class began, though Clary wasn't quite sure if they'd reached the status of friends during that time. Might have something to do with all the shoving?

"Good, now opponent's move closer again," the instructor continued. "With fist raised. Defenders need to turn their bodies to the side and out of the way as the attack comes."

Again, everyone in the class moved as one. Zoey now stood frozen, fist raised and forward, while Clary stood off to one side. Clary's hand was above Zoey's arm, palm open as they waited for more instructions.

"Okay good job everyone," the instructor enthused. "Reset to start."

Clary and Zoey both relaxed and went back to facing each other, arms slack at their sides.

"Now, this time when the defender pushes you away," the instructor continued. "Opponent's you need to act fast, and put your dominant hand on their arm." The group moved as one, then froze for more orders. It was moments like this that made Clary feel a bit like she was in a military drill. "Now defenders, it's your turn to move quick. Get your opposite hand over your opponent's wrist so you can pull their arm away from yourself." Clary tried, but messed the move up a little. She knew if this had been a real attacker she'd have lost, but Zoey was happy to help, and they were in position when the next orders came. "Defenders, your other arm should be stretched out straight across your opponent's neck, but not touching it. Palm opened."

"And reset," the instructed said. As Clary and Zoey went back to their starting positions, Clary checked the clock. She was glad she'd signed up for this class. It made her feel more independent, stronger; but it was also very tiring, and she was glad it was almost over.

"Again, your opponent's are going to grab your arm after the shove," the instructor said. "But this time defenders, you are going to grab their wrist, and twist your body down to lock their elbow, rather than pull away."

After one more exercise they switched, and Clary spent fifteen minutes being the opponent for Zoey so she could learn.

"Please practice these moves between lessons," the instructor said as the class ended. "Final practice is next week, so if you want your extra credit show up for the evaluation."

Clary breathed a sigh of relief. She was sweaty and tired. It was time to go home. She smiled and waved a goodbye to Zoey before packing up her stuff and leaving.

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"More like tired, messy, and gross," Clary counted. "Oh, did you finish the essay on Van Gogh?"

"Not yet," Brett said.

"Me neither," Clary grumbled. "It's art class, so why do we have essays anyway?"

"I couldn't agree more," Brett said laughing.

He was walking along side her as she headed home, but she was fairly sure he lived in the order direction. So why hadn't he turned around yet? They passed through the big front doors, and onto the grounds, still just talking about homework.

"Don't you live the other way?" Clary observed.

"Umm yeah right," Brett said. He sounded confused, but that made no sense. Surely, he knew where he lived better than she did.

"No, I'm going to visit a friend," Brett said.

"Oh okay," Clary smiled. "I was thinking of doing the essay on Van Gogh's blue period, because it seems to me like our teacher has a bias towards depressing things."

"Yeah, I think you're right there," Brett said laughing.

As they got closer to her place, Clary asked, "Where does this friend live?"

"Not far," he said.

"Okay, because I turn here," Clary said gesturing to her left.

"Right," Brett said. "Well then, I better go this way."

"Nice chatting with you," Clary smiled as she waved goodbye. "See you in class."

"Yeah, see you," Brett said. She turned and starting walking away, but curiosity got the better of her. Pausing for just a moment, Clary looked back to see him still standing there. Facing forward again, Clary continued her walk home, stumped as to what was up with Brett. He must be really stressed out about exams, or else a little low on sleep. Either way, she felt a bit better knowing he also hadn't
finished the essay. She didn't have class tomorrow until mid afternoon, so Clary thought maybe she'd work in the little on campus coffee shop, and try and get that stupid essay done.

Clary wasn't at all surprised to find Alec at her place when she arrived home. She was starting to wonder if Jace lived alone. Clary had been half expecting Magnus to announce that Alec was moving in for a while now. The fact that it hadn't happened, told her there was more to it than just where they were sleeping. She knew Magnus was starting to get worried he wouldn't find a job after graduation, and she couldn't blame him. She was glad she had two more years before she had to worry about that. What she had to deal with now was exams, and then what to do with her four months of summer.

After a glorious shower, Clary climbed into bed and did a little of the reading she hadn't done last week before falling asleep. The next morning, she saw Magnus and Alec curled up on the couch together, Magnus stroking Alec's hair. From what Clary had learned about Alexander since he started dating her best friend, Alec wasn't much of a morning person. Magnus was almost always awake before his better half, and in the early hours, Alec could often be found half asleep in Magnus's lap.

Leaving the love birds to their own devices, Clary followed her own advice, and brought her homework to the coffee shop. Getting a coffee before sitting in her favourite chair, Clary started her essay. And yes she meant start. It was due in two days, and she hadn't even began. So was the life of a second year university student. It was going to be a long morning.

She'd been working for an hour when her energy dwindled. Clary got up and ordered herself another coffee. This time she noticed the guy making the coffee. He was tall with brown hair, and very personable when he took her order. He even remembered her name. Clary was starting to wonder if she came here too often as she collected her drink off the bar. Clary went back to her laptop, and sat down with a sigh. She needed a break. Opening a new tab, she indulged in a few YouTube videos before getting back to work. After a few videos, Clary was about to start working again when her phone went off.

'Hey,' it read. Clary looked at the sender and felt her heart swell.

'Simon!' she texted back. 'Hi! How are you?'

'I'm good,' Simon replied. 'How's my favourite redhead?'

'Trying to do boring homework,' Clary texted back. She was so excited. Simon hadn't initiated anything with her since their break up. Did this mean he was ready to be friends again?

'Do you want a study buddy?' Simon texted back.

'If it's you,' Clary texted back, probably too quickly. Simon texted back a smiley face, and Clary told him where she was.

'Be right there,' Simon texted. Clary could barely contain her excitement as watched the door. She had totally given up on her essay. It felt like she hadn't seen her best friend in a lifetime. It was like her whole body was alert, waiting and watching.

"SIMON!" Clary called, grinning from ear to ear as she saw him. Rather than wait for him to walk the few steps to her, she got up to meet him, abandoning her half finished coffee, textbooks, and laptop in her eagerness.

"Hi Clary," Simon smiled back at her.
"It's so good to see you!" Clary exclaimed. She wanted to fling herself into his arms and hug him until neither of them could breath, but she didn't want to make Simon uncomfortable. To her great surprise, Simon moved forward to hug her, and it was like a part of her had been missing until that hug. If Jace was her soulmate, then Simon was her soul's brother.

"You too," Simon said. Clary could feel the hope rising in her, and she couldn't help but ask the question.

"Does this mean we can be friends again?"

"Yeah," Simon smiled back. "Thanks for giving me some space there for a while, but I think I can do this now. After all, we were friends first, right?"

"Right," Clary beamed. She couldn't believe how happy she was at the moment. If someone had asked her to fly, she would have asked how high. It took all she had not to jump up in the air and squeal. As it was, the two of them walked back to her table and sat down. Clary closed her laptop, totally giving up on getting more of her essay finished with Simon here.

"What's this?" Simon asked lifting her coffee cup and turning it around

"What's what?" Clary asked, confused. "Did you want some coffee?"

"Have you really not noticed this?" Simon asked, turning the cup and showing her something written on the side. Clary actually looked at it this time, and noticed the series of numbers written in pen on the side of her coffee. Clary turned back to Simon who was laughing. It was so wonderful to hear him laugh again, a loud happy noise she'd deeply missed.

"You never did notice it when guys hit on you," Simon chuckled, putting her coffee cup down.

"What do you mean?" Clary asked.

"This," Simon pointed to the number on her cup. "Is some guy giving you his number, hoping you are single and will call him."

"No," Clary scoffed. "That can't be right. It must have been meant for someone else. I probably grabbed the wrong coffee."

"I promise you, you're wrong," Simon smiled.

"No you're wrong," Clary said grinning. It was so great to be talking to Simon again, she almost didn't care what the topic was.

"I am so not wrong," Simon said, then added pointing to himself. "Ex-boyfriend remember. I am the leading authority on knowing if guys are hitting on you. If you want to make Jace go crazy, show him your coffee cup."

Clary waved his remark aside, "As if Jace would care about this. He isn't the jealous kind, never has been."

"He's just a good faker," Simon grinned. "But trust me, he's perfectly capable of being jealous."

"Of what?" Clary asked. "My homework?"

"Still the definition of clueless, I see," Simon laughed. "I have to admit, it's refreshing not to be the one keeping tabs on the guys who notice you."
"Guys don't notice me," Clary replied. "You're crazy."

"Even in this outfit, yeah they do," Simon explained. "Imagine how jaw dropping you'd be if you dressed like Izzy?"

"Speaking of Izzy," Clary replied. "Jace tells me you broke things off with her?"

"How does Jace know that?" Simon asked surprised.

"Alec told him," Clary explained.

"And I'm guess Izzy told Alec," Simon said with a shake of his head. "Wow, the gossip chain in this university has really upped it's game lately. I mean, we went months without knowing Maia and Jordan were exes, and now I can't keep a secret for more than ten minutes."

"Was it a secret?" Clary asked.

"Technically no," Simon explained. "I just didn't expect it to be the stuff of gossip."

"I think people were just worried about you," Clary explained.

"No need to worry," Simon replied. "I'm fine."

"So why'd you break things off with Izzy then?"

"Casual sex isn't for me," Simon explained. "Whether or not dating is, remains to be seen." He laughed.

"Just because you've had a bit of bad luck, doesn't mean you should give up on dating," Clary tried to convince him. "Just look at Magnus! He almost missed out finding Alec because he was too busy giving up on love."

"I guess," Simon sighed. "Still seems ridiculous to me. I mean how many times can I stick out? Really?"

"Twice isn't so many times," Clary assured him. "Magnus had way more exes than that before Alec, and you said it yourself, Izzy was just casual." Clary shrugged.

"That is kinda why I broke it off," Simon replied slightly awkwardly. "I realized I wanted more."

"That's because you are totally the best," Clary smiled. Then she pointed to herself and added, "Ex-girlfriend. I am the authority on how awesome a guy you are."

"Touche," Simon chuckled. Then after a moment, he continued in a calm voice. "I feel kinda bad about how I did it though." Clary gave him one of her stern looks, and he added, "I ended our casual whatever it was over text message." He had the decency to look ashamed of himself.

"Simon!" Clary whined. "That's so tacky. Even for just a casual hook up. Wow."

"I just knew I couldn't do it face to face," Simon defended himself.

"Oh so by wanting more, you mean wanting more from Izzy specifically," Clary clarified. "Not from whoever you are dating in general."

"Yeah," Simon mumbled.
"Why didn't you just tell Izzy that you like her?"

"Because her one rule was that I wasn't to fall for her," Simon explained.

"What kind of a rule is that?" Clary exclaimed.

"I don't know," Simon replied. "A rule for a woman who doesn't want a relationship, I guess." Then he stood up and turned to her, "Do you want another coffee?"

"I'm good," Clary said. She'd had two already this morning.

When Simon returned a few moments later with a togo cup in his hand, their conversation picked up right where it left off. Time flew by as Clary reconnected with her oldest friend. She learned all about Simon's indecision about his major, and she assured him Alec was having the same problems. Simon told her about Maia, and how he'd technically struck out three times if he included their first date.

"I guess I should thank you for setting me up with her," Simon said. "Since I got a great friend out of the deal."

"You're welcome," Clary laughed.

And while she was learning about Simon's life, he was learning about hers. Clary confessed to her best friend the insecurities she'd had dating a guy with Jace's past, talking about how often girls checked him out or hit on him. And like the wonderful person he was, Simon reminded her of the number on her coffee cup, and assured her that she was a catch. Clary had the distinct impression by the time they parted ways, that if Simon had been around back then, the whole thing would have turned out very differently. With her best friend at her side, Clary was sure she could have done a better job at keeping her own insecurities in check.

Chapter End Notes

Disclaimer - I know nothing about self defense class and all the references in this came from tutorials I found on youtube.

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This chapter has been ready and waiting to be uploaded for the last 12 hours or so. (I woke up to it already edited by my wonderful beta while I was sleeping.) But I was trying to be good and not update, since I have 314 follows and only 192 people at the time had read the last chapter. Then I checked tonight and that number was only up to 206! Like come one, I gave you guys 12 extra hours! wtf! Read faster! If I can write this fast surely you guys can read faster than this? Or do you just like to ignore the chapter alerts for a while then read like 2-4 chapters at once? If so just tell me so I can stop obsessing about making myself slow down the updates.

Sigh... sorry I have no patience. I actively tried to write slow while I was updating only once a week and even then I was always like 4 chapters ahead and wow did I watch alot of television. Now here I am working full time and still I have two chapters with my beta reader and the next one half written and I'm updating right now. Ahh! That's FOUR CHAPTERS! AHHHHHhhh and my cat is being super needy as I type this and trying to 'help.' -_- Okay that was a little off topic...
Anyway... how do people write slow? HUh! How do they do it! I had time today that I could have been writing but instead I was not writing because I've written so much these last few days that I was like wow I am way to ahead, time to find other things to do. Wait what does one do with time when one isn't writing? Oh okay so let's make scones and then watch three episodes of that tv show... oh yeah and then screw the dishes I am going to update because I have no will power! sigh. After I update this I have to go wash those dishes but at least I won't have a finished chapter hanging over my head.

Okay I'll stop talking now... there how's that for an author's note?

Sneak Peek Chapter 84

It felt like that day at the lake had happened to someone else or at least in another lifetime. They'd been so young, so ignorant of the world. Maia couldn't remember how their next and last fight had started, but she remember the ending perfectly. The things they'd screamed at other, the ways they'd hurt one another. When they fought it never was just about one problem. Somehow their fights always pulled all the little issues up into the mix. Maia could remember at least a dozen things they'd fought about though she couldn't quite recall which had been the major issues and which were just dragged in for the show. Jordan was the messiest person alive, that was one of them for sure. Maia could recall going to his house once or twice and seeing the state his room was in. She knew her parent complex had played a role as well. Her mother and father always thinking of Daniel above all else had made it hard for Maia to believe all the things Jordan used to say to her, the way he used to look at her. Heck, who was she kidding, the way he still looked at her.

But if Maia wasn't mistaken it had been high school graduation that had been the last nail in their coffin. To this day Maia didn't understand why Jordan hadn't wanted to come to school with her, especially now that he'd freakin' followed her anyway. What she remembered most was crying alone in a corner of her house, unnoticed and unseen by anyone. She'd cried until she couldn't cry anymore and then she'd just sat there and tried to imagine her life without Jordan. It was her first clear memory after their break up. Then Maia had pulled from whatever strength she had left and decided it was time to get the hell out. She'd left for school with the intention of never looking back.

And now here she was standing outside the library where she knew Jordan was sitting alone at the same table he'd sat at last time.
Sitting on the soft grass, Maia turned to look out over the smooth reflective surface of the lake. There was a small tree near the water's edge. It stood out against the low shrubs and other plants in the area. The sky above was a clear light blue, with only a few stray clouds scattered across it. Beyond the lake, Maia could see a forest of evergreen trees. They were reflected in the lake, making the water look dark green in places. Their kayak was resting closer to the water, but well above the shore line so it wouldn't get lost.

She could see his silhouette. Jordan was looking away from her, out over the water; he looked strong standing there. Just days from now, their relationship was destined to crumble before her eyes; but at this point in time, everything was perfect. A light breeze cooled their skin as the sun shone down on them. Maia loved the feel of the sun on her skin. For as long as she could remember, it had brought her joy, and on this day most of all. She and Jordan had kayaked around from the other side of the lake, and just finished eating the picnic they'd brought. Then he'd stood up to get a better look at the water, while she'd stayed sitting by what remained of their lunch, gazing up at him.

Jordan was so tall. He'd taken off his shirt and had his head all the way back, as if soaking in the sun. Maia couldn't help but admire the structure of his chest, the way his muscles looked almost sculpted. She'd trailed her fingers over those muscles many times before, and she remember the feeling as she admired them. She also remembered the possessive feelings she'd had in that moment, knowing he was hers.

Then he turned and looked at her; it was as if the world had stopped turning. Never before had she been so seen, so noticed. Maia knew with absolute certainty that at that point in time, she was the center of his world. A simple smile spread across his face as he moved closer, then sat back down beside her.

"Have you ever thought about trees?" he's asked.

"How much can one think about trees?" Maia replied laughing.

"Trees with needles I mean," Jordan said.

"Evergreens?" Maia inquired.

"Yeah," Jordan smiled, moving so his face was just inches from hers.

"No, Jordan I can't say I've thought a great deal about evergreen trees," Maia chuckled, kissing him briefly since he was so close.

"Can we be like that?" Jordan asked. "Never to wither away and fall to the ground. Evergreen."

"Is this a metaphor?" Maia giggled. "Or are you planning on dying every inch of your skin green?" Jordan laughed with her briefly, then leaned in and kiss her more deeply than she'd kissed him.

"I will love you as long as the evergreen trees are green," Jordan told her firmly, looking right into her eyes.

"Love you too," Maia replied, rolling her eyes at him. They laid down after that, looking up at the
clouds together until the hour grew too late, and they had no choice but to get back into their kayak and go home.

Maia shook her head vigorously. It didn't help at all, so she banged her textbook into her forehead a few times. That was so not what she was supposed to be thinking about before meeting Jordan for a study date. It was like her stupid brain was trying to go backward.

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And now here she was, standing outside the library where she knew Jordan was sitting alone at the same table he'd sat at last time. And like last time, he had probably brought her a coffee. Jordan had so far always been early to all their study sessions, being settled at a table well before she arrived. They rarely talked about anything other than homework, and often sat in silence; but it was a new silence for them, a strangely comfortable one. Still, Maia couldn't really tell if their time together was helping them deal with their unresolved issues or not.

"Hey," Maia said as she sat down.

"Hi," Jordan replied, wordlessly passing her the coffee he'd brought. Maia had to admit, she'd been a little touched during their first study session when he'd remembered her favourite order without asking her.

Taking a sip, Maia pulled out her textbook and started reading. This Management vs. Union course was nothing if not tedious. To her it seemed that unions only got in the way if the management was good, and only sort of helped if the management was crap.

By the time either of them spoke, Maia was finished drinking her coffee, and was halfway through her homework.

"How's your homework going?" Maia asked, deciding it was time to speak.

"Intro to Information Technology," Jordan said. "So basically boring as hell. I could do this class in my sleep."

"So you don't need to study for it then," Maia said, grinning.
"I um-" Jordan started, clearly trying to find some other reason to spend the next hour with her. "Yeah, but like still, it never hurts to review, right?"

"Sure," Maia replied. Why was she smiling? Did she like that he didn't need to be here, and was clearly only here to see her?

"This Econ class is more work," Jordan said, quickly switching around his textbooks and pulling out something else to work on.

"You were always great at school, Jordan," Maia said. "I am sure you are doing great in all your classes." Jordan just shrugged. He'd been like this in high school as well, always under valuing his own intelligence. Jordan was the type of guy who could skip half his classes, do half the homework, and then ace his tests and get a B+ in any subject he was even remotely interested in. When Jordan enjoyed a class, he got A's effortlessly. Math was the only subject she'd ever seen him do badly in, and she was sure Jordan could have done better in Math if he'd applied himself.

"You could have gone to any University in the country," Maia told him. "I kinda get why you didn't want to come to this one with me."

"I did want to come here with you," Jordan said. "What was our big fight about then?" Maia asked, curious as she clearly was remembering it wrong.


"You're confusing," she stated.

"I know," Jordan said.

"But not as much as business unions seem to confuse management," Maia sighed. She sensed he wasn't ready to explain just now, and that was okay.

"How so?" Jordan asked. She couldn't imagine he was actually interested in the subject of her boring class, though he did look like he was.

"See here," Maia said, moving her textbook over so he could see. "Unions restrict what management can do. In some cases, it's a lose-lose situation, but if there isn't a union, the management can take advantage of the staff; like unfair wages, no benefits, shitty hours, etc."

"Sounds to me like unions are a good thing," Jordan replied.

"Sometimes, but if the management is good, it really hinders them," Maia explained. "Like a muzzle on a well behaved dog vs. one for a biter."

"How often is management a well behaved dog though?" Jordan asked.

"Not nearly as often as it should be," Maia sighed. "There was this lady who asked a question in class the other day. She wanted to know why every boss she'd ever had sucked. She'd never seen an employer follow a single rule of management she'd learned in class. And the prof said that the vast majority of managers have no managerial training whatsoever."

"That's crazy," Jordan replied.

"I know right!" Maia exclaimed. "I am going to be a good manager who doesn't need a muzzle."

"You are going to be a brilliant manager," Jordan told her.
"Thanks," Maia smiled. She turned back to her homework after that, and tried to actually get something done, but she'd enjoyed talking to Jordan. Maybe next Sunday she'd speak up again.

"Maia," Jordan asked softly. She looked up, and was surprised to see that look in his eyes again, just like the one he'd had at the lake.

"Yeah," Maia whispered, slightly shocked by his expression.

"This is the fourth time we've met up like this," he said. "And I was wondering… I mean… has it changed anything?"

Why had she agreed to this in the first place? Maia knew she should have taken it all back weeks ago, and rescinded the Sunday meet up invitation the moment she'd given it, but she hadn't. Maia still hadn't identified what exactly had stopped her.

"I don't know," Maia said honestly. "This has been nice though. I mean, I like sitting and doing homework with you."

"Me too," Jordan replied, smiling.

"I think we can be friends," Maia said. "Like how Simon and Clary are friends again." Simon had texted her all about how great his first meet up with Clary had gone just hours after it ended. Maia found herself hoping it could be like that for them too.

"Weren't Clary and Simon friends as little kids?" Jordan asked.

"Yeah," Maia replied.

"I don't want to be rude, but we were never friends Maia," Jordan whispered. "I sat in the back of that class for months gazing at you until I finally did something about it."

"'You're cute,'" Maia giggled at him. "I remember."

"You're beautiful," Jordan countered.

"I just don't understand what changed," Maia continued. "You act like that last fight didn't happen."

"That last fight doesn't matter," Jordan said with a shake of his head. "Because I'm here now."

"Of course it matters," Maia replied. They weren't yelling, but their voices were raised above a whisper now, so it felt a bit like yelling in a library setting. "It's why we broke up. It defines everything."

"If that fight hadn't happened," Jordan said quickly. "Do you think we would still be together?"

"That is neither here nor there," Maia replied. "We don't have a time machine."

"But if we did?" Jordan asked.

"I have no idea," Maia sighed. "And I don't want to play what if."


"You don't have to be sorry," Maia said, letting out a deep breath. "You know I don't like what if's."

"Yeah, I know," Jordan replied. They didn't need to say anything else. Jordan knew how long Maia
had played the game. What if my parents didn't prioritize my brother? What if I was valued? What if they looked at me, instead of through me? What if this? What if that? They never helped anything. The world didn't work on what if's. It was better to focus on reality.

"Wasn't it you who told me to stop thinking in terms of what if's?" Maia asked after a moment as she remembered.

"Yeah," Jordan smiled back. "I think it was."

"I like being your friend Jordan," Maia said after a moment. "But that is all I can offer."

"I understand," Jordan said. "Friends it is then."

Chapter End Notes

So... been a while huh? Lol at least by my standards for sure.

Let me tell you a little story...

Every time I send my beta a chapter I text her 'no rush' and every time she ignores me. Except this time. This chapter and the next one have been totally finished for days now and I have been enjoying a nice writing break while I binge watch an Australian drama on Netflix. lol Since the next chapter has a cliffhanger she is holding it hostage until I send her the following one... which is almost done. ^_^

-----------------------------------------------

Sneak Peek Chapter 85

"What do you think of this?" Izzy asked as she walked out of the changing room wearing a rather elegant tight black dress with silver detailing around the hem.

"Depends where you are wearing it," Magnus replied. "It's a nice third date dress." Izzy grinned at him, then her face fell. "What's wrong?"

"Nothing," Izzy replied, a smile plastered on her face again. There was something different about Izzy lately, but Magnus couldn't quite put his finger on what. He was starting to think it was his own perception of her that changed more than anything.

"Did Alec say he'd come or has he chickened out again?" Izzy asked.

"Alec had homework," Magnus laughed. "Which is code for I'd rather be hit repeatedly over the head with a text book than shop for clothes."

"His loss," Izzy said, tossing her head dramatically as she turned back into the change room. Magnus could hear the zipper of her dress as she changed into the next outfit, but he wasn't really listening. He was staring off into space at the wall. He couldn't help but wonder why Izzy had looked sad when he'd mentioned third dates and he was also wondering what Alexander was doing right now. Magnus was trying not to think about how much fun it would be cataloging French artifacts in a real museum display.

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PS: The events of the next two chapters have been planned since chapter 57.
Magnus's Life

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Magnus hadn't heard from any of the jobs he'd applied for. It was the middle of April and he was starting to worry. He'd been living half on student loans, and half on fumes since he'd decided to attend University, and he just couldn't justify continuing to live like that after graduation. If he didn't find a job, he'd have to go back home and live with his aunt. Magnus had nothing against his aunt, but moving back home meant leaving Alec, and Magnus didn't want to do that. He needed to find a job, and he needed to find one now.

"Magnus," his professor called as Magnus's favourite class ended. Students all around him were standing, packing up their books and getting the heck out of there.

"Yes, Mr. P," Magnus asked. His full name was Mr. Pereira, but so few people knew how to pronounce it, that he let the students simply call him Mr. P.

"Something has come to my attention that might interest you," Mr. P said. "I know you are graduating soon, and looking for ways to spruce up your resume."

"I sure am," Magnus replied, grinning. Maybe his luck was changing.

"There is a program at the local museum," Mr. P continued. "That takes in new grads. I believe you work for them over the summers as a tour guide?"

"Yes, that's right," Magnus said.

"So you'd be perfect for this," Mr. P continued. "The job is helping to receive the new shipment from France, and get it ready for display. The artifacts are on loan at the museum as of the beginning of next month, and have to be returned to France at the end of the year."

"That sounds awesome," Magnus exclaimed. His problems were solved! A local job in his field!

"Before you get too excited, I just want you to know that it's unpaid, but as I said, it looks great on a resume, and it is short term and there's no interview needed. They usually recruit through the history grads here."

Magnus's heart sunk. This was not helpful at all. Was it even still legal to get people to work for nothing? This was probably why they only hired over eager grads from the history department. Only history dorks would over look not getting paid in favour of being able to deal with real artifacts. No matter how he looked at it, what Mr. P was talking about was just volunteer work.

"Sorry, but I don't think I can do unpaid right now," Magnus replied, with a heavy heart. Unfortunately, he was a history dork and this sucked.

"Just think about it," Mr. P suggested.

"Sure," Magnus replied, but there was nothing to think about. He couldn't take the job. No matter how interesting it was, or how great it would look on a resume later, Magnus couldn't afford to work for nothing; that was the reality. Reality sucked.

Slowly Magnus made his way out of the classroom trying not to think about what he couldn't have. It
had always been his philosophy in life to focus on what he had rather than what he hadn't. Magnus had wonderful friends, adorable cats, a roof over his head, a wonderful aunt, and above all, Alexander, his gorgeous, loving boyfriend. It wasn't like Magnus was losing something by being unable to take the job, not really. Everything was just the same. Nothing had changed. Magnus took a deep breath, and let it go.

He was meeting up with Izzy for another strange shopping excursion. Today Magnus would probably just end up helping her browse again, but that was fine by him. He didn't really need anything, and now wasn't the time to rack up any extra credit card debt anyway.

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"How about this one?" Izzy asked as she reappeared in a grey skirt, heels, and a white blouse.

"Do you have a job interview?" Magnus asked her.

"You're right," Izzy said. "It's too professional."

"Hey, not if you're doing to an interview," Magnus argued. "It looks good, Izzy."

"How is your job hunt going, anyway?" Izzy asked as she turned back into the stall.

"Shitty," Magnus replied. "Unless I want to work for nothing."

"That depends on what your doing for nothing," Izzy replied, through the door.

"It really doesn't," Magnus sighed.

"You should go on holiday with Alec," Izzy said. "I know it would make him happy."

"Says the girl trying on a single outfit worth more than my whole wardrobe," Magnus quipped.

"Oh please," Izzy scoffed as she exited the change room in a stunning below the knee dress with a swirl skirt. "This outfit can't possibly be worth that. Don't exaggerate."

"Fine," Magnus surrendered. "I didn't do the math. It was a hyperbole."
"Money is awesome," Izzy told him through the door. "Live a little."

"Money is a pain in the ass," Magnus replied with a sigh. "Stupid necessary nuisance that makes the world go round, and I live plenty."

"We have a very different version of living, Magnus Bane," Izzy laughed as spun around to show off her dress. "What do you think?"

"It's beautiful on you, Izzy," Magnus told her.

"I know," she said, then the grin on her face vanished again.

"Are you okay?" Magnus asked her.

"I'm shopping," Izzy replied. "It's my natural habitat." And just like that, her grin returned.

"You know, sometimes you remind me of Jace," Magnus said absently. "Before Clary that is."

"Ha!" Izzy scoffed, jutting her hip out in the twirling dress she was in. "I am nothing like Jace. You should have seen him back in high school."

"Oh, I can imagine," Magnus replied. "Jace is friends with Alec, and dating my best friend. Trust me, I know quite a lot about the guy."

"Then you know he isn't like me," Izzy huffed.

"I don't know," Magnus replied. "You two both seem to have a similar approach to love, again, before he met Clary." He paused then added. "I think Alec is hoping you will find your Clary. Like your person or- well- you get what I mean."

"Not likely," Izzy replied cooly. There was something there in her tone that Magnus couldn't quite identify. He'd noticed it before now, but had never been able to figure it out. Was there something self-deprecating about the way Izzy spoke about herself, or was he imagining it? Surely, of all people, Isabelle Lightwood would be the least likely to have a low opinion of herself.

"The last guy I met up with more than once dumped me over text message," Izzy explained. "So no, I don't think there is a Prince Charming out there for me." She said Prince Charming with disdain as she turned back into the changing room.

To Magnus's surprise, Izzy was in her normal clothes when she reappeared, and they left the store together without buying anything.

"You didn't even want that third date dress?" Magnus asked. "I thought that one was rather nice."

"I'm hungry," Izzy said. "Let's get lunch."

Without asking where they were going, Magnus followed Isabelle into a restaurant. On their last shopping trip, Izzy had done something similar, and Magnus knew there was no point arguing with her. It was one of the fanciest restaurants he'd ever entered. Not that he'd entered many fancy restaurants, or had any idea what passed for fancy in Izzy's book, though he suspected that to Izzy, this one was fairly average.

"So if you aren't going to work for nothing," Izzy began after the waiter took their order. Magnus had searched for the cheapest thing on the menu, and ordered that. "What are you going to do after grad?"
Magnus sighed. He'd been trying to avoid this, but exams were nearly upon them, and it was looking like he didn't have a choice. "I will have to get a job out of my field, like my labour job that I worked at over the summer, or something in the food industry. It's either that, or move back in with my aunt to avoid rent."

"Or, let Alec be you sugar daddy," Izzy laughed.

"Ha ha," Magnus replied sarcastically, and then he changed the topic back to her. The way she'd phrase that made him feel just a little cheap, and he didn't want to talk about it. So instead, they talked about her clothes, and the shoes she'd tried on at the other store. Magnus was pretty sure Izzy would go back and get that third date dress by the time they were done talking.

"So as long as I'm spending money on me, it doesn't bother you?" Izzy said.

"I guess, yeah," Magnus replied not sure where she was getting at.

"Then why not live with Alec, and pretend all the living costs are him spending money on himself," Izzy suggested.

"Because people who live together usually share expenses," Magnus said. "And I live with Clary."

"And Alec," Izzy giggled. "How many times have I gone to your house to visit him!"

"Yeah yeah, okay," Magnus sighed. "Eat your sandwich." Izzy laughed.

"It's not a sandwich," Izzy replied as she ate it.

"Looks like one to me," Magnus replied. "Bread, stuff, bread. Standard formula really."

"But this has blue cheese," Izzy corrected.

"You could get the same thing at that food truck on 10th," Magnus explained. "For less." Izzy just shrugged.

"I bet the food truck doesn't have blue cheese," she said.

"No, it probably doesn't," Magnus sighed. Izzy was smiling again. They both finished eating lunch, talking a little of their shopping trip as they did so. Then the bill came.

"People are going to think we're on a date," Magnus said when she'd reached to pay the bill. He knew he couldn't afford to pay it, but watching her buy lunch still felt wrong. He could have bought just his own lunch if she'd agreed to split the bill.

"No silly," Izzy replied, easily. "If we were on a date you'd pay." The waiter handed her the debit machine, and she paid him with what looked to Magnus like a silver credit card.

She didn't take a copy of her receipt, and the two of them left, walking down the street. Magnus suggested they take a bus back, but Izzy hailed a cab. They'd met up at the shoe store, which Magnus had bused to, but he was pretty sure that Izzy had taken a cab both ways. The way these Lightwoods spent money astounded him.

As the cab pulled up in front of Magnus's house, Izzy paid the driver, then got out of the car as well. Magnus hadn't technically invited her, but he couldn't say he was surprised either. Isabelle was going to be a part of his life, and he was making an effort to learn her strange ways, for Alec's sake.

"Oh brother," Izzy called as she entered the house.
"Alec isn't here," came Alexander's voice from around the corner. "Please leave a message after the beep."

"Brat," Izzy chuckled as she sprinted ahead and around the corner, vanishing from Magnus's view. So Alec was here, even though Magnus had been out. Maybe Izzy had a point about Alec basically living here already.

"Did you have fun shopping?" Alec's voice could be heard, though Magnus hadn't rounded the corner into his dining room yet.

"I almost found a new pair of black heels," Izzy said. "And Magnus liked one of the dresses I tried. Then we got lunch."

"If you told me about the food, I would have joined you for that," Alec laughed.

"It was after shopping lunch," Izzy told him. "Only post-shoppers allowed." Magnus heard Alec's laughters as he rounded the corner. And there was his Alexander, gazing affectionately at his little sister. They continued to talk, but Magnus wasn't listening. He was watching Alec. Magnus knew how desperately he loved this man. He knew how different his love for Alec was compared to all the others. Magnus couldn't go back to his aunt's. He couldn't be away from Alec. No, Magnus was going to stay, even if it meant selling french fries for a living.

"Is it true Magnus?" Alec asked. Magnus snapped his attention back, totally confused by Alec's question since he hadn't been listening.

"Is what true?" Magnus replied.

"That you found a job you want," Alec said. Magnus looked to Izzy who was feigning innocence, but he knew she'd told.

"It doesn't count as a job," Magnus replied with a wave of his hand. "It isn't paid."

"So?" Alec asked. Magnus let out a slow breath. Then with a smile on his face, he moved a few steps closer and kissed Alec. Alec's arms went up to hold him as his boyfriend deepened the kiss.

"If you want the job, take it," Alec said when they broke apart.

"It isn't practical," Magnus explained, his hand still on Alec's cheek. "I'd be more in debt after the job than before."

"You have debt?" Alec asked, confused.

"All students have debt," Magnus replied. "How do you think I pay for school?"

"You worked all summer," Alec reminded him.

"Yes, to pay rent and buy food," Magnus explained. "I couldn't make enough in a summer to pay tuition."

"That's ridiculous," Alec stated.

"Yes, I know," Magnus replied. "But that's life."

"Screw life," Alec exclaimed. "Will this job make you happy?"

"No, because I would be eating nothing but egg noodles, and living in a cardboard box," Magnus
"Like we'd let you live in a cardboard box," Izzy piped in. They both turned to her as one.

"You two forgot I was here didn't you," Izzy sighed. Neither of them spoke. "Put a pin in the fight would you? I don't wanna go home yet."

"Why not?" Alec asked, turning to look at her. They were all in the dining room. Alec was sitting at the table with his laptop open, and a textbook to one side. Izzy sat down on Alec's left, and Magnus took a chair to his right.

"Maia has been kinda odd lately," Izzy replied. "She comes back from those study dates all starry eyed, but when I tell her, she denies it."

"Isn't Simon's roommate the guy Maia's studying with?" Magnus asked. "You could ask Simon what's going on?"

"Yeah no," Izzy said. "Not going near that with a ten foot pole, thank you."

"I thought you two were friends?" Alec asked her.

"We were," Izzy said. "As in past tense."

"Way to burn that bridge, Iz," Alec said.

"I didn't burn it, he did," Izzy scoffed.

"You like him?" Alec exclaimed, standing up suddenly smiling.

"You don't know what you are talking about," Izzy replied coolly. "On second thought, I think I will leave you two to your row and go home." And just like that, Izzy stood up and headed for the door.

"Oh come on Iz!" Alec called after her, but she was gone in a flash.

"She totally likes Simon!" Alec said grinning from ear to ear once the front door closed behind Izzy.

"Or she's just annoyed he dumped her before she could dump him," Magnus suggested.

"Ah no," Alec said. "That wasn't an annoyed look, that was a 'push my feelings down till I don't have any' look. She is way too good at that."

"Okay, now I feel bad for her," Magnus sighed.

Without saying a word, Alec stood up and reached out his hands to hold Magnus's. Together they moved over to the couch.

"Would this job make you happy?" Alec asked slowly, one of his hands on Magnus's cheek.

"Didn't I already explain about the cardboard box?" Magnus chuckled.

"If money didn't matter," Alec asked. "If it wasn't part of your decision, would you want to accept this job?"

"Money always matters," Magnus replied, with a sigh.

"Not when you have me, it doesn't," Alec stated firmly.
"Urg!" Magnus yelled, standing up and turning to face Alec where he sat on the couch. "Stop making this so much harder! Stop trying to make me take advantage of you!"

"Stop being so damn proud, you won't accept help!" Alec yelled back. Magnus was quite surprised. Alexander almost never exploded like this. He never stood his ground when this topic came up. Never, until now.

"It's too much!" Magnus hollered back. "You are talking about covering all my living costs, while I work at a job that's basically a glorified hobby!"

"Yes, I am," Alec stated firmly, holding his ground. "And I could help you pay off your debts too."

"That's insane Alec!" Magnus replied. "I can't ask that of you."

"You aren't asking," Alec said. "I am offering." Alec stood up as well, moving closer, he took Magnus's face in his hands before speaking again. Magnus almost shook him off, but he couldn't bring himself to do it.

"Magnus," Alec spoke softly. "It seems to me like everyone in my life benefits from what I have to offer except you, and that feels so wrong. I want to protect you, provide for you. Please let me."

"You know what people will say," Magnus replied, softly. "They will say that I am with you for your money. That I'm a gold digger, a burden, a dead weight swinging from your ankles, holding you down."

"Why do you care so much what other people think?" Alec argued. "We know the truth. That's what matters."

"That isn't all that matters, Alec," Magnus exclaimed, taking a step back, having totally and completely lost his cool by now. "What about being a kept man for the rest of my life, huh? What about not wanting to be a dependent mooch, who doesn't know how to take care of himself?! I don't want to spend my entire life dependent on my boyfriend. Can't you at least try and understand that, even a little?"

Silence. Total and complete silence. The only sound in the room was Magnus's heavy breathing. It looked as if Alec had stopped breathing all together. Magnus had finally said the words. He'd finally told Alec what he was really afraid of, and he felt relieved, almost lighter, but Alec's silence was unnerving.

Alec looked like he'd seen a ghost as he finally whispered, "Did you just say 'rest of my life.'"

Alexander was looking at Magnus now with wide eyes, and an expression of awe on his face. Magnus had no clue what the heck Alec was so surprised about, but he wasn't getting out of his argument. It was time they really hashed this out, no matter how little either of them wanted to.

Chapter End Notes

My beta said she could understand both sides of the augment and I hope you can to. Also the conclusion to this has been basically written for AGES. As I said I have been planning this since at least chapter 57. Though basically written still means 'not ready to update yet.'
The problem is that I haven't written anything in almost a week! I know its so unlike me! And probably has something to do with the fact that I have been planning this for SO long! It almost feels like I can't write more until you guys read this chapter. I am pretty sure reading the reactions to this will get me writing again. (in the mean time I am on season 4 of Offspring like an addict who didn't go to bed until 5am last night. lol. Good thing I have three days off work huh?)

Sneak peek Chapter 86

"Sorry I never seem to stay the right thing," Magnus chuckled. "I don't have your way with words. Maybe you should major in English like Tessa." Alec couldn't help but laugh as well.

"Ah no and I don't have a way with words," Alec replied easily. "I suck at them actually."

"I beg to differ," Magnus scoffed. "What about all those things you just said to me."

"That's different," Alec said.

"How?" Magnus asked.

"Naked truth is easy to articulate," Alec replied.
"Did you just say 'rest of my life,'" Alec asked, not quite believing what he’d heard with his own ears. Magnus had said 'entire life' right? Alec hadn't imagined that?

"Don't change the topic," Magnus snapped, but Alec took no notice. He could sense the stillness in his body from his shock, yet somehow Alec didn't want to move. In this moment, his world, was only his heart pounding in his chest, his breathing shallow at Magnus's words. It wasn't like Alec didn't think he and Magnus were serious, but maybe thanks to how they'd started out, Alec had always felt like he was thinking a little more long term than his boyfriend.

"Do you really think of us that way?" Alec whispered, unable not to ask.

His voice dripping with sarcasm, Magnus replied, "No, of course not, because I want more exes, and another broken heart."

"Magnus!" Alec snapped. He was somehow both touched and totally frustrated by his boyfriend's response. How could he be sarcastic at a time like this?

"You thought what, that I'd get bored of you and move on?" Magnus asked his voice no longer annoyed, but soft and gentle. "Why is this a surprise, Alexander?"

"I-," Alec began, startled by Magnus's sudden shift in mood. "I guess I thought-" What had he been thinking? At this moment, Alec wasn't sure. Smiling, Magnus moved closer. He took Alec's hands in his, and locked their gaze.

"I had given up on love when you pulled at my heart, remember," Magnus whispered. "Whether we are together or not, you will be the last person I love, Alexander."

"Don't say that," Alec replied with a shake of his head. He pulling Magnus in by their joined hands, closing the space between them. "Don't talk like we aren't going to make it." Magnus smiled, then leaned forward and kissed Alec gently.

"Now, can we get back on topic?" Magnus asked, when they broke apart, but Alec was feeling too warm and fuzzy, too overwhelmed with love to get back into their fight.

"You should take the job you want, and I'll help with your living costs," Alec stated, firmly. "Heck, maybe I should move in."

"You really do want people to take advantage of you, don't you?" Magnus grumbled, clearly annoyed. He pulled away a little.

"Not people," Alec smiled back. "Just you." It was strange to be fighting with someone, and yet be somehow more certain of their love than before. Though Alec wasn't really fighting anymore, even if Magnus still was. Alec was feeling a little too happy to be upset at the moment. An entire life with Magnus Bane. Just the thought made him smile.

"We are fighting, Alexander," Magnus snapped. "This is no time to be smiling like that."

"I love you," Alec told him. "What's mine has been yours since the moment I realized I couldn't live
without you. That is just who I am. The simple truth."
"We are not married Alexander, and life is not that simple."
"Would it be that simple if we were married?" Alec asked, pensively. He knew the phrase 'what's mine is yours' was a married one, but Alec hadn't quite realized the implications when he'd said them.
"That is neither here nor there," Magnus replied.
"What if it was," Alec continued. "Here I mean." He'd thought of this before. He'd thought and rethought it, but he'd always found some reason not to say it. Possibly he'd been too insecure to bring it up then, but Alec had found new courage in the last few moments.
"You aren't making any sense, Alexander," Magnus sighed.
"Would it make a difference if we were married?" Alec said, with more certainty.
"Seems a bit excessive," Magnus mumbled, awkwardly not looking at Alec. "Getting married just so you can pay for everything."
"Okay yes, good point," Alec said. "My timing sucks and I phrased that badly, but I promise that I'm not doing this so I can pay for everything. I know it looks like that, but I've been thinking about this for a long time."
"You never mentioned," Magnus whispered.
"If I asked, would you marry me?"
"That is hardly fair," Magnus replied calmly. "You want me to give you an answer, yet you won't commit to the question."
Without a second's hesitation, Alec got off the couch and sunk to one knee in front of Magnus, looking up into his eyes.
"Magnus Bane, marry me?" Alec finally asked the question correctly and by the look on his lover's face, this time his meaning was understood. There was silence. It stretched on past the point where Alec could bare it so he broke it. Still on his knees, Alec placing a hand at the nape of Magnus's neck, looking his boyfriend right in the eye as he spoke.
"I love you," Alec began. "I love how happy it makes you when you think of a new pun."
"You always groan at my puns," Magnus said very softly.
"Is that not the reaction you're looking for?" Alec asked gently. Magnus's eyes widened a little, but Alec kept speaking. He was determined to leave no stone unturned. If they'd really been together this long, and yet communicated this badly, it was his job to fix it. Magnus needed to know exactly how much Alec loved him.
"I admire how hard you work. I love the way you passionately pursue your dreams, no matter the odds," Alec said. "And Magnus, I don't just love you for the things you're good at, for the things you value in yourself. I love you for every stupid, annoying, thing you do. The way you roll all the way over at night, and almost push me off the bed. The way you are stubbornly independent to the point of insanity!"
"I thought you hated how stubborn I am," Magnus whispered, but Alec shook his head.

"I could never hate anything about you," Alec said. "I love all of you unconditionally." He paused for breath. "If I'd known you were thinking about us in terms of forever, I think I would have asked you to marry me before now."

Reaching forward, Alec placed his free hand on the other side of Magnus's face as he finished speaking. "You are my soulmate, and I don't ever want to live without you."

"How can you be so certain?" Magnus whispered, so softly that he almost made no noise at all. Alec had never seen his boyfriend so stunned, so totally taken aback. It was as if this turn of events hadn't at all occurred to him.

"I could ask you the same thing," Alec smiled, back. "After all, you just said moments ago that you'd never love another."

"But Alexander, I've been in love before," Magnus whispered. "I have something to compare us to - you've only been with me - and I know what a broken heart feels like. I am certain I couldn't take the risk of opening my heart again which makes you the last person I'll love. It's different somehow."

"Doesn't matter," Alec replied easily.

"I-" Magnus began, but he seemed quite without the words to express himself. "It must-"

"It doesn't matter," Alec repeated. "It doesn't doesn't matter why or how many. All that matters is that can't sleep well without you beside me. I don't feel like I've truly done something until I've told you about it. Bad days don't get better until I see you smile. Just because I've only ever loved one person with all my heart, doesn't mean I don't know what real love feels like." Alec stroked his lover's face gently before whispering.

"You are amazing, you know that," Magnus whispered. There was a single tear running down his cheek. Alec wiped it away gently with his thumb.

"Amazing enough to marry?" Alec asked hopefully.

"Yes," Magnus whispered as he crushed his lips into Alec's. It was electric when their bodies touched, as if sparks were flying from where skin met skin. They were sprawled out on the couch now, limbs all tangled up.

"Oh Alexander," Magnus whispered into their kiss. "I've had relationships before that have lasted longer than our year together."

"And this is supposed to get me in the mood how?" Alec couldn't help, but grin.

"Sorry, I never seem to stay the right thing," Magnus chuckled. "I don't have your way with words. Maybe you should major in English, like Tessa." Alec couldn't help but laugh as well. However, his focus was on his hands, and their mission of removing Magnus's shirt.

"Ah no. I'm not gonna major in English, and I don't have a way with words," Alec replied easily as he tossed the shirt aside. "I suck at them actually."

"I beg to differ," Magnus scoffed, sitting up slightly. "What about all those things you just said to me?"

"That's different," Alec said, moving to close the space between them, and gripping Magnus more
tightly with his legs.

"How so?" Magnus asked.

"Naked truth is easy to articulate," Alec replied, holding Magnus's face in both his hands.

"Longer relationships yes," Magnus said, leaning into Alec's touch as he finished what he'd been trying to say before. "But never so powerful. Everything is different with you, Alexander."

"Good to know I stand out," Alec smiled, as his hands moved down Magnus's skin. A wanton sound came from deep within Magnus's chest as they both lost patience with their conversation. Alec was laying flat on his back, his shirt gone, and Magnus above him. As they kissed, Alec worked at the buttons of Magnus's jeans. Magnus kicked them off, and soon he was pulling Alec's pants down as well. Alec wrapped his bare legs around Magnus's waist, and moaned slight as he felt their stiff arousals press together.

There was muttered 'I love you's' and gasps from them both as the dance continued. Alec kissed his fiance, reveling in both the word itself, and Magnus's touch, exploring every inch of that beautiful caramel skin. Hands gently encouraged, while lips passionately kissed. Alec was too wrapped up in the moment to be concerned about them being the living room. Sure, Clary could technically walk in at any time, or even his sister, but Alec was far too preoccupied by the actions of Magnus's hands to care. They made love on the couch, then collapsed together panting, their hearts still pounding. Alec settled into his fiance's arms on the couch, spent, and smiling. He was resting his cheek on his fiance's bare chest. Just thinking the word in relation to Magnus meant Alec couldn't keep the smile off his face. At the moment he didn't care that they hadn't solved their problem, or even finished their argument. Alec just wanted to lie here in his fiance's arms, and bask in the emotional tsunami engulfing him.

"You're glowing Alexander," Magnus chuckled.

"Great sex with my fiance has that effect," Alec replied with a grin, lifting and turning his chin to rest it on his hands so he could look at Magnus.

"Fiance," Magnus said, shaking his head slightly. "Are you sure all that just happened?" He laughed. "Or are we dreaming?"

"Does this-" Alec began kissing down Magnus's chest. "Or this-" he trailed his fingers down Magnus's sides. "Or this-" he leaned forward, and kissed Magnus on the mouth. "Feel like a dream?"

"Oh yes," Magnus whispered, his arms wrapping around Alec, and pulling him closer. "But a good one." Alec laughed before settling on his fiance's chest again. He was listening to Magnus's heart beat, and he could feel Magnus's chest rise and fall. No sooner than he noticed this, than his breathing began to sync up with Magnus's.

As Magnus began stroking his hair, Alec closed his eyes. Though it was the middle of the afternoon, Alec felt so peaceful; he could have fallen asleep. He knew he shouldn't, but his mind was foggy with happiness, and he didn't want to think anymore.

Alec woke up, not sure how long he'd been sleeping. He was still resting on Magnus, so he thought it couldn't have been sleeping for long. Sitting up and rubbing his eyes, Alec asked Magnus.

"I didn't know you were sleeping," Magnus smiled. Alec decided this meant he hadn't actually slept for long enough to matter, and settled back down. Magnus's arm wound around him, and Alec closed his eyes again. They remained like that for quite a while until Magnus cut the silence.
"I am going to take the volunteer job," Magnus's whispered voice cut through the air.

"That's great," Alec whispered back. He wanted to ask exactly what Magnus had been thinking while he'd been sleeping, but decided to just count his blessings and not pry.

"I miss you at night too," Magnus continued. "When you aren't there." He paused then added. "Alec, would you like to move in?"

"I thought you'd never ask," Alec replied, beaming. Sitting up more, so he could bring his lips closer, Alec kissed Magnus. They were lazy kisses, slow and deep, without the hint of moving to something more.

"At least if you are living here too, I wouldn't feel so bad about you covering the bills," Magnus sighed as they broke apart.

"Hey Magnus," Alec said, placing his hand on his fiance's cheek. "Rest of our lives, remember? I help you now, you help me later. We support each other."

"That's a lovely thought," Magnus replied, but Alec could tell he didn't really believe this would happen.

"If you'd told me on my first day of university," Alec began. "That within the year I'd fall in love with my soulmate, and befriend the biggest idiot at my old high school, I would have laughed and told you such a thing was impossible." Alec stroked Magnus's cheek gently before adding.

"Anything is possible."

Before Magnus could reply, they were interrupted by the sound of the front door handle turning. If not for the moments silence, they would have missed it. Alec scrambled to pull a blanket up over them both as they heard the door click open. Seconds later, they heard the sound of the door closing, a bag being dropped on the ground, and then footsteps headed their way.

Chapter End Notes

*Hides from smut lovers*

...yes I know this was smut-less. Sorry, not sorry...

Honestly, I have had most of this written for AGES! The last line of chapter 57 where Magnus is thinking how he will never love again after Alec was foreshadowing for this scene. I've had the proposal and the fight before hand written since about then in some form or another, but I hadn't quite worked out the beginning till more recent chapters as the reason for the fight unfolded and after the 'yes' I had literally nothing written at all! It was almost a block or the closet thing to writer's block I've ever had. I had this note at the end of the chapter for the longest time "Add smut here to finish chapter"... but I just never wanted to write it. No clue why. I wasn't feeling sexy I guess. *shrugs* Some days the smut almost writes itself and others I just can't add it no matter how I try.

Anyway I hope it was worth the wait. I do seem to be all together too good at dragging shit out don't I? Then again if I wasn't this story would definitely have been complete ages ago so...
Clary thought he'd walk away then so she could leave but he didn't. The classroom was empty now but for the two of them.

"I'm headed home," Clary said, after a moment, trying not to be rude.

"I'll walk with you," Brett replied. With a shrug Clary turned to leave with Brett walking beside her. Locker's were required to be emptied out for the summer so Clary decided to collect all her things from there before heading home. To her surprise Brett kept her company the whole time. They talked mostly of class and Van Gogh but also about the professor herself. The light casual conversation continued up until Clary and Brett were at the end of the school grounds.

"Isn't your house that way?" Clary asked, pointing in the opposite direction Brett was going.

"Maybe," Brett smiled. "But I was enjoying our conversation." Clary laughed. Digging into her bag she pulled out a slip of paper and scribbled some numbers on it before handing it over.

"Here text me," Clary said. "And we can keep talking about art history. Maybe even pick a study time." She waved then turned in the direction of home. "See ya."

"Bye," Brett said back also waving.

PS - You can thank my complete lack of self control for me not holding onto this cliffhanger longer. My beta told me to make you guys wait till Friday. Please review to say thank you. :)
"Who can tell me what Van Gogh's biggest contribution to art history was?"

No one in the class put up their hand, and Clary couldn't blame them. It was less than ten minutes to freedom, and everyone knew it. The professor gave up on getting an answer pretty quickly, and moved on to talk about how many people today are still inspired by Van Gogh's works, still mimicking the styles he created. Clary knew she should be listening, but she was watching the clock. This was her last art history class before exams, but not only that, it was her last class for her entire second year of university. Clary wasn't sure where the time had gone.

"I will get your papers back to you by email before exams so you can use them for reference," the prof concluded her lecture. "See you then, and don't forget to study."

Clary started packing up her books, and was just turning to leave when she noticed Brett standing beside her.

"Hey," she said casually.

"Hi," Brett replied. He seemed a little nervous, probably about their exams. It always hit students right about now. Clary had planned on going straight home after class, but she wasn't sure if that would be rude, now that Brett had tried to engage her in conversation.

"Umm," Brett began. "I was wondering if you wanted to study together, for exams and stuff?"

"Sure," Clary shrugged. "I'm gonna need all the help I can get. I much prefer practical art to memorizing art history myself."

"Me too," Brett chuckled lightly, bringing his hand up to run through his hair. Clary thought he'd walk away then, but he didn't. The classroom was empty now but for the two of them.

"I'm headed home," Clary said, after a moment, trying not to be rude.

"I'll walk with you," Brett replied. With a shrug Clary turned to leave. To her surprise, Brett kept her company as she started walking home. They talked mostly of class and Van Gogh, but also about the professor herself. The light casual conversation continued up until Clary and Brett found themselves at her turn off.

"Isn't your house that way?" Clary asked, pointing in the opposite direction Brett was facing.

"Maybe," Brett smiled. "But I was enjoying our conversation." Clary laughed. Digging into her bag, she pulled out a slip of paper and scribbled some numbers on it before handing it over.

"Here, text me," Clary said. "And we can keep talking about art history. Maybe even pick a study time." She waved, then turned in the direction of home. "See ya."

"Bye," Brett said back also waving.

Facing forward again, Clary looked down at her feet as she walked the rest of the way home. She and Jace hadn't really talked about what they were doing for the summer this year, though since they
were both living in apartments, not dorms, they had a few more options.

Clary turned the key in the lock before she realized the door was already open. Magnus must be home from his shopping trip with Izzy already, or she supposed Alec had just decided to drop by. Clary had long suspected that either Magnus had given his boyfriend a key, or Alec had somehow figured out where they kept their spare one. Clary dumped all her school stuff on the floor in a satisfying way, knowing she wouldn't need to pick it up again anytime soon. Even if she still had exams to worry about, being done class for the year was a nice feeling. Thinking she'd watch some television Clary headed into the living room. She'd picked up the remote and was facing the tv before she heard the couch talk.

"Hello there, Biscuit."

Clary jumped about a foot in the air and spun round. Both Alec and Magnus were laying on the couch with a blanket over them, but everything that wasn't covered, and said blanket was bare as the day they'd been born.

"What the hell guys!" Clary snapped. "I almost sat on you!" It was true. She'd cluelessly been about to sit down on their feet when her roommate had made his presence known.

"You kinda surprised us," Magnus admitted. "I am just glad we heard you come in so we could get the blanket."

"Thank goodness for small favours," Clary whined. Setting the remote down, Clary turned in the direction of the kitchen. "So I am going to avert my eyes. When I look back, you two and that blanket, and hopefully the couch cushions will be in your bedroom with the door shut." She turned away covering her face with her hands and resting her head on the wall. "One-" Clary heard scuffling and laughter behind her as the two lovebirds get themselves organized. "Two, three."

The door clicked shut behind them, and Clary turned around, rolling her eyes. They had indeed taken the couch cushions. Clary was hoping they'd dry clean them… not that she could talk since she and Jace had done it on Alec's couch that one time. Grabbing a spare pillow from the closet, Clary replaced the cushion and sat down to watch tv. About twenty minutes later - Clary didn't want to know what took them so long - Alec and Magnus emerged fully clothed.

"Well, it seems you two had a good afternoon," Clary chuckled at them.

"The best," Alec said grinning. There was something different in that grin, Clary thought. She muted the tv and turned to face them.

"Okay spill," Clary said. "What happened?"

"We had a big fight," Alec said, still smiling which was odd. "Then I asked Magnus to marry me."

"What?" Clary mouthed soundlessly.

"And I said yes," Magnus added, though that was pretty obvious by the situation in which she'd found them.

"Oh my god!" Clary squealed jumping up off the couch and running over to hug Magnus. She wasn't surprised when Alec joined in the hug. Did this make Alec her friend-in-law? Was that a thing? Clary couldn't help, but chuckle at the thought.

"Oh, have you told Jace yet?" Clary asked when they all broke apart.
"No," Alec said. "This literally just happened. I don't think I've even checked my phone since."

"Oh can I tell him?" Clary begged.

"Sure," Alec laughed. Clary suspected nothing could ruin that man's mood at the moment, and Magnus too was glowing with happiness.

"Wait," Clary said slowly as she realized. "Does this mean I have to move out?" Magnus and Alec looked at each other, and seemed to share some sort of speechless communication before turning to her.

"No," Magnus said. "Alec is just moving in but he'd be sharing my room. Honestly, I don't think it will be much different with his being here all the time anyway."

"Ah but you will have to give me a real key," Alec chuckled. "Unless you want me to keep using the one in the plant pot outside."

"I knew you knew where it was!" Clary exclaimed.

"Plant pot isn't very original," Alec explained. "I tried under the mat two, but it was still only the second place I looked."

"I need to phone my aunt!" Magnus said hitting his forehead with his hand.

"And Izzy will probably murder me if I don't tell her," Alec said. "Oh, and my parents too."

"This really just happened huh," Clary giggled. "Wow, don't I have great timing." Jumping up and down she added, "Oh do I get to see the ring."

"Umm," Alec said awkwardly. "It was kinda impromptu… I didn't get a ring." He looked a little ashamed of himself, but then Magnus piped up.

"Engagement rings are a social construct that started in the 1930s because of one of the most successful ad campaigns in history. The diamond companies decided people needed to buy more diamonds, and used advertising to create the engagement ring market," Magnus explained in his smart history voice. "But, diamonds have literally no resale value, aren't that rare, and the demand for them was totally manufactured by one company's business monopoly."

"And by this you mean?" Alec asked, slowly.

"You are not allowed me buy me an engagement ring Alexander," Magnus stated firmly.

"Oh come on!" Alec whined, but Magnus was grinning. Clary couldn't help but laugh at the two of them.

"Look at you two," she chuckled.

"What if the ring isn't a diamond?" Alec asked.

"Too many people think that the word marriage has a nice ring to it," Magnus said, sniggering. Alec groaned, covering his face in his hands, but Clary could see him smiling through his fingers.

"What do you call a melon that isn't allowed to get married?" Magnus's puns continued.

"I don't know," Alec replied grinning. "What do you call a melon that isn't allowed to get married."
"A cantelope," Magnus laughed. Clary groaned. She'd been Magnus's friend long enough to know Magnus wasn't done yet.

"It will be an emotional wedding. Even the cake will be in teirs," Magnus said. Barely pausing for breath, he continued. "When the television repair man got married, the reception was excellent."

"Have you been saving these all up?" Alec asked laughing.

"But when the two florist's got married, it was an arranged marriage," Mangus continued, ignoring Alec's question. "The pair of pianists had a good marriage since they were always in a chord." He sniggered at his own joke.

"This isn't going to work out," Alec said with a straight face, or at least Clary suspected he'd planned to deliver the line with a straight face, but it broke.

"Did you hear about the notebook who married a pencil?" Magnus asked. "She finally found Mr. Write." And at that, he broke down laughing too hard to keep talking.

"Shall I rescue you from this torture?" Alec asked her, still grinning as Magnus keeled over laughing.

"Please," Clary replied, chuckling. Alec put his arm around Magnus, and together the two of them went back into Magnus's room, or Clary supposed it was their room now. Getting out her phone, Clary hit Jace on her speed dial.

"Hey," Jace said as the phone picked up.

"Are you are home?" Clary asked urgently.

"Almost why?"

"I am headed there too," Clary said. "See you in a bit." Hanging up the phone, Clary bolted for the door, only picking up her purse on the way out. Moving quickly past lamp post, building, and trees, Clary headed in the direction of her boyfriend. It was a beautiful day for April, with just hints of winter still showing on the landscape. Melting snow piles were dark with dirt they'd picked up all winter, and there was new green on every plant along her path.

As Clary approached Alec and Jace's apartment, she saw the back of Jace's blonde head entering it. Smiling, she ran to catch up.

"Clary?" Jace said turning around to face her in the doorway he'd just left through. "What's going on?"

"Malec got engaged!" Clary yelled throwing herself at him. Jace's arms came around to hold her, and she breathed in his scent.

"What, when?" Jace asked. "Also you know they have like separate names right?"

"Just this afternoon," Clary replied, pulling away to see his face and obviously ignoring his second statement. "I walked in on them 'celebrating' on the couch." She chuckled.

"Well, I guess it's only fair after what we did to that couch," Jace replied, grinning and gesturing to the mentioned piece of furniture behind them.

"Alec's moving in with Magnus," Clary told him.

"Oh man," Jace whined. "But Alec is like the perfect roommate. He's never around, pays for
everything, and cooks on the rare occasions that he is home." Clary couldn't help but laugh at that. Moving forward, she seized his lips, in a fiery kiss.

"On second thought," Jace grinned. "There is one roommate that might be preferable."

"Oh really?" Clary asked dubiously.

"Yep," Jace grinned. "Because then I'd get to do this-" He leaned forward, and kissed her again. "And this-" He pulled her in closer, resting his hand gently on her hip. "And this-" Jace found the gap in her shirt, and moved his hands up to cup her bra. "And this-" Jace slid his hands under the wire of her bra, and gently teased her nipple. "Everyday," Jace whispered against the skin of her neck. Clary felt herself shiver.

"Are you suggesting what I think you're suggesting?" Clary asked, breathlessly, both from his actions, and the implication.

"If I'm suggesting you switch places with Alec, then yes, yes I am," Jace smiled, his hand still teasing her as he leaned down to kiss her. At some point, the clasp of her bra became undone as he kissed her until her legs felt like jell-o.

"I love it when you do that," Clary gasped into their kiss.

"Oh?" Jace grinned. "And here I thought it was me that you loved." She hit him playfully.

"Shut up and kiss me," Clary demanded.

"Yes ma'am," Jace replied, lifting her up off the ground a little. Taking the opportunity, Clary wrapped her legs around his hips. Jace had to remove his hand from her breast to hold up her weight, as they moved toward the couch, their lips locked together. She landed with her back against the couch, Jace on top of her so she could keep her legs around him, but her hands free. In this position she could feel him grow stiff, even through his jeans. She had herself pressed up so close against him as he excited her. Moving her hands down, Clary released the pressure, undoing his jeans.

"Don't you have packing to do?" Jace sniggered.

"It can wait," Clary replied, moving her hand down, and trailing her fingers over the sensitive skin above Jace's waistline. She enjoyed his little shiver, before exploring further, and pushing the offending clothing away.

"You're a bad influence," Jace laughed, getting his hands up under her shirt again. He got it off her easily enough, and her bra too since it wasn't done up. Clary gasped as his fingers trailed over her nipples, making them hard. Clary set her sights on getting Jace equally topless, and soon all their clothes fell away. Joining together, they brought each other to completion, and then Clary collapsed on his chest. As their breathing returned to normal, Clary began tracing her fingers over Jace's chest, following the lines of his muscles.

"That tickles," Jace giggled. She was still laying naked on top of him.

"That tickles, roomie," Clary corrected with a smile.

"Speaking of," Jace said. "You have packing to do."

Chapter End Notes
Ha! I got Clace and Malec into this chapter and Sizzy and Malec into the last one. #InterwovenPlotlineGoals. lol.

--------------------------------------------

Sneak Peek Chapter 88

"Ready for your exam tomorrow?" Jordan asked, the evening before his first exam the next morning.

"No," Simon laughed. "Are you?"

"Always," Jordan replied, grinning.

"Maia is right about you, isn't she," Simon narrowed his eyes at his friend. "You can ace anything without trying."

"Well, I do have to show up," Jordan disagreed.

"I kinda hate you right now," Simon whined. He was sitting at his desks surrounded by textbooks and wishing he'd started studying about three days ago. The whole thing was putting him in a bad mood.

"Just wing it," Jordan suggested. "Come play video games with me. Maybe we can beat the boss this time."

"I wish," Simon groaned turning back to his books and muttering under his breath. "Stupid test."

Less than a quarter of an hour later, they were interrupted by a knock at the door. Welcoming any excuse to stop reading for a few minutes Simon went to answer the door. To his great surprise it was Isabelle standing before him.

--------------------------------------

Yes yes I know. Cliffhanger in the sneak peek! How cruel! Don't worry there is a cliffhanger at the end of the chapter too. hehe. Aren't you glad that I that I am addicted to your reviews? ^_^
Simon took a deep breath of the wonderful spring air as he walked out outside. No more classes this year; it was a strange thing to wrap his head around. Simon was glad he'd come back to this university for his second year. He'd found a new friend in Jordan, kept up with old friends, and enjoyed the familiar feel of the school. His only school related problem at this point was choosing a major. Simon had thought about majoring in something musical, but how was he supposed to get a job with that after grad? It wasn't like rockstar was an actual career option with a great chance of success, right? Beside, even if it was, being good enough to play in his mom's garage, and being good enough to do it for a living were two very different things. Simon was going to keep music as his hobby. It was best this way, since he worried that if music ever became job like, he'd end up resenting it. To try and solve this problem, Simon had taken some of those 'what should I major in' online quizzes, but to no avail. The only ones that didn't give him ridiculous ideas, had told him to go into human resources, but Simon wasn't so sure about that. He technically didn't have to declare until the beginning of next year, right? So in theory, he had all summer to dither. Which was kinda of how Simon thought about his exams. He had three whole days before his first exam, and Simon fully intended to spend at least one of them slacking off, and in no way studying.

Entering the dorm building, Simon walked down the halls until he reached his room. Moving past the door, Simon collapsed on his bed, reveling in his peaceful class-free moment. Half done University… at least once the exams were over, but he couldn't fail any of his courses, even if he didn't turn up for the exam, so he wasn't going to worry. Of course, if he did not show up or study for his exams, his marks would suck, but that was beside the point.

Rolling over, Simon looked up at the ceiling. He missed Izzy, though he knew he'd done the right thing in breaking off their arrangement. He'd learnt his lesson. How did the saying go; fool me once shame on you, fool me twice shame on me. He wasn't going to fall in love with another woman who couldn't love him back. Simon knew his limits, and that was one of them. He couldn't do it again. If all Izzy could offer was friends with benefits, then Simon couldn't have any of it.

The one great thing that had come of his realizing he liked Isabelle as more than a friend, was being able to spend time with Clary again. He'd thought a lot about it after breaking things off with Izzy, and realized that thanks to her, he had more emotional distance from his failed previous relationship, and had been able to see her without pain. Counting Clary among his friends again was wonderful.

Simon heard the door open and close, but he didn't sit up to look who it was. The sound of a school bag falling to the floor made him sure it was Jordan.

"Hey," his roommate's voice double, confirmed his presence.

"Hi," Simon replied, lifting his hand to wave in the general direction that Jordan's voice had come from.

"What are your plans for summer break?" Jordan asked.

"Maybe get a job. Maybe slack off at home," Simon did his best to shrug while laying on his back in bed. "Not sure. Mom wants me home, but I'm thinking, cooling my heels in my home town for four months is gonna be boring. Why, what are your plans?"
"No clue," Jordan groaned. "I can't afford rent without a roommate, and I can't stay in dorms."

"Why don't you just go home for the summer?" Simon asked.

"Not an option," Jordan said, with a sigh. Simon heard the desk chair move, and assumed Jordan had sat down.

"Would it be nosy of me to ask why?" Simon replied, still staring at the ceiling.

"Yes," Jordan said. "But it's okay. I don't mind telling you." He paused, taking a deep breath then continued. "See, I might be at this school against my parents wishes, and by might, I mean I am."

"That's... weird," Simon said. "I mean don't parents want their kids to go to University?"

"Oh they wanted me to go to University, alright," Jordan said. "Just not this one."

"Again, I find myself endlessly curious," Simon said. "Why?"

"Well, I kinda got into Harvard," Jordan confessed.

"You what?" Simon exclaimed, sitting up abruptly to stare at his friend. "Why the hell are you here then?"

"Maia," Jordan replied simply. It was such a simple thing, and yet it held so much meaning. The expression on Jordan's face was one Simon knew well, but had managed to remove from his own expression over time. It was that look that meant you'd do anything, move any mountain for the sake of your heart.

"So let me get this straight," Simon said slowly. "You fall in love with a girl in high school, and all things are coming up roses till graduation when your parents try to send you to Harvard, but you wanted to come to this tiny little low tuition university in some nothing western Canadian town, because Maia was coming here?" Jordan nodded. "And somehow this lead to you two breaking up, and her coming here on her own, only to have you follow her a year later to stalk her through the halls?" Jordan nodded again, looking awkwardly at his feet, confirming Simon's every word.

"Well shit," Simon said, laying back down on the bed for emphasis. And he thought he'd had it bad!

"I never told Maia I got into Harvard," Jordan said, a little defensively, which Simon didn't understand at all.

"Why not?" Simon exclaimed, sitting up again and throwing his hands in the air with exasperation. At this rate, he was going to get dizzy.

"Because she would have told me to forget about her and go, with a smile on her face," Jordan explained. "I didn't want to hear her say it. It would have meant losing her."

"Yeah, well you lost her anyway," Simon sighed. "So I don't see how the smile-goodbye would have been so bad? At least you guys would have ended on good terms, right?"

"I didn't want her to have to make that choice," Jordan said. "I didn't care where I went to school, and she did so..."

"You know telling Maia now would probably mean a lot to her," Simon added. "It would give her a more solid reason for your split."

"She got over me," Jordan replied. "She doesn't love me the way I love her. I messed it all up, and I
"Why not go to Harvard then?" Simon asked.

"I didn't want to be a lawyer," Jordan said, waving his hand dismissively.

"I see," Simon replied. "And I'm guessing it's this attitude that is why you can't go home?"

Jordan nodded. "When I found out that mom and dad got between me and Maia, I blew up at them, said screw Harvard and came here. I haven't spoken to them since."

"Well you never know," Simon said. "They might have calmed down by now."

"Yeah, but they are still going to be all law school, law school, law school," Jordan groaned. "And I want to study computer science."

"Just great," Simon sighed. "The first year knows his major, and I still don't."

"Hey, I'd take your problems over mine any day," Jordan said. "Can't pick a major' beats 'never going to find love, and most likely to end up homeless.'"

"I can't help you with the love issues," Simon said. "Since I haven't yet managed to figure that one out myself, but for the rest I can."

"What do you mean?" he asked, clearly confused.

"Why don't we get an apartment together for the summer. Maybe next year even?"

"That would be great!" Jordan said, gratefully.

"Though, I will have to teach you what cleaning is," Simon said thoughtfully. "But it will be good practice for when Maia takes you back, and you need to impress her with how much you've grown up."

"Maia will never take me back," Jordan smiled. "But thanks for the enthusiasm."

"Don't be so pessimistic," Simon replied. "She agreed to the study dates, didn't she?"

"They aren't dates," Jordan said. "And even if they were, they are pity dates."

"Trust me," Simon laughed. "Maia doesn't do pity anything."

"Maybe its for the best," Jordan sighed. "My family never liked her, and if she was stuck with me, she'd have to deal with their stupidity."

"It seems to me like you've rejected your family," Simon replied. "So why would that be the case."

"You can never get rid of family all together," Jordan explained. Laughing he added, "What was it Maia used to say: 'Family, you can't live without them, and you can't murder them.'"

"Doesn't the phrase go 'you can't live with them, and you can't live without them?'" Simon laughed.

"Oh you can live without them," Jordan replied, with a smile. "It just requires murder. Hence the problem."

"I see," Simon chuckled. After that, Simon got out his laptop and started apartment hunting with
Jordan. They choose a couple places to check out later in the week, and then Simon ended up in a two hour phone conversation with his mother explaining that he wasn't coming home for the holidays. There were tears, and only one minor guilt trip before he hung up the phone. Simon wished his mother would date. He worried about her being alone so much of the time. Simon then called his sister to ask if she'd check on their mom, and to also tell her he wasn't going home. Becky said she totally understood, and hoped - if their new place had space or even a couch - that she could come visit him. Simon was thrilled by this idea. All in all, it was working out rather better than Simon had thought... now if only he could decided what he wanted to dedicate the next two years of his life to, then he'd really have things figured out.

As it was, Simon didn't have any luck in that department. The next few days were a blur of sorta studying for his exams, playing video games, generally slacking off, and occasionally applying for summer jobs. Simon hadn't really worked before, so he was going for entry level stuff with high turnover rates like fast food and retail jobs. After all, he just needed enough for rent. He knew Jordan also had no work experience, so the two of them were applying to all the same places. A small part of Simon was hoping they'd both end up working at the same place so he'd be guaranteed at least one friend on the first day, but then again, did he really want to both live and work with Jordan? Then again, it was out of his control, so Simon would cross that bridge when he came to it.

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"Hi, Simon," Izzy said, smiling at him.

"Hey," Simon replied, stunned.

"Can I come in?" she asked.

"Sure," Simon said, taking a step to the side to give her room to enter.

"Umm..." Jordan said as he noticed who it was. "I think I'm gonna go hang out in the common room for a bit."

"You don't have to leave," Simon said exasperated.

"Don't mind him," Simon said. "He's just being… well him. What's up?"

"Brother's engaged," Izzy said slowly.

"Oh that's great," Simon smiled. "Glad those crazy kids figured things out."

"Yeah," Izzy spoke softly. She took a step closer, and Simon felt his heart skip a beat. Why the hell was she here!? Simon took a step back.

"Is there something you needed?" Simon asked.

"Engagement party," Izzy said. "Saturday after exam week. You wanna come?"

"I'll be there," Simon replied. "Thanks. Should I bring a gift?"

"Nah," Izzy replied with a wave of her hand. "It's okay."

"You sure?" he asked.

"Yep," Izzy said.

"Okay," Simon replied. Was it just him, or was this a very strange conversation?

"I-" Izzy began, taking another step closer to him. Then before Simon could move another muscle, she was kissing him. Too stunned to think, Simon kissed her back for a second, pulling his hand at her waist. Then his mind seemed to turn back on, and he pulled away rather sharply.

"You can't just come here whenever you want and do that!" Simon exclaimed, taking another step back, his heart pounding. "I know I shouldn't have texted you to tell you, and I'm sorry about that, but that doesn't mean I am just going to change my mind if you kiss me."

Izzy just stared back at him for a moment, then she turned and ran down the hall.

Chapter End Notes

I have been thinking of adding another pov... *awkward emoji* What do you guys think? Do you want to see the world through Jordan's eye?

Wasn't my sneak peek misleading? hehe. I do have fun picking them out *evil grin*... it seems we are back to tiny author's notes again... maybe I'm feeling lazy today or something. Do you guys have any questions for me? I am always surprised that any of you care at all about my personal life. Ask away if you are curious. I don't mind. Or if you want to ask about the story that's cool too. I am a super chatty person which might be why I like dialogue so much but either way ask away. :)

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Sneak Peek Chapter 89

"Even more reason not to drink alone," the man replied. Izzy looked him up and down.
Rationally, she knew this was what she usually did. In fact, for lack of a better word, vulnerable state was acting like a honey trap, saving her the bother of hunting down the bees. Izzy was pretty sure the bartender was gay, but every other guy in this bar had checked her out at least once since she'd sat down. If Izzy had known about this trick before she would have had a way easier time, but Izzy had never been like this before. She'd never been pathetic and she hated it.

"See usually I'd jump your bones about now," Izzy told him. She got off the stool and teasingly hiked her leg up onto him as she spoke. "Drag you off and-" She trailed her fingers down his bare arms. The guy was wearing a muscle shirt which was in part how she'd been sure about his excellent abs. Izzy moved forward to whisper against the skin of his neck. "Have my way with you."

"But there is just one problem with this plan," Izzy whispered leaning even closer, both her hands dancing over his skin.

"What's that?" the guy whispered back, breathlessly.
Izzy's Intoxication

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Izzy was sitting in her favourite spot at the bar scoping out the room. It was a fairly average day all things considered, except for one rather important difference. Why did she want to hit on the nerd in the corner with the classes? Why wasn't she interested in the sexy black haired guy in the suit, or the blonde with the beach body? Why did she feel more like doing shots by herself than getting laid tonight? Downing her shot in one go, Izzy got up from the bar and almost at once heard her phone ringing.

"Hey Alec," she answered after reading the caller ID.

"Izzy!" Alec replied, his voice was so exotic it almost broke her ear drums.

"Inside voice," Izzy grumbled. "Are you trying to make me deaf?"

"I asked Magnus to marry me, Iz," Alec said excitedly. "And he said yes."

"That's great," Izzy said, choking back the strange feeling in her chest.

"Thanks," he said. She could tell he was grinning, even over the phone. "I want to have a party, and Magnus has agreed which is crazy. I was thinking Saturday after exams. Do you want to help?"

"Course," Izzy said, putting on a smile.

"Thanks Iz," Alec replied, giddy as all hell. "So can we meet up tomorrow then?"

"Sure," Izzy agreed.

"I'll text you. Gotta go," Alec continued. "Thanks again." And he hung up. Instead of going home, Izzy decided to have another drink.

She kept telling herself she was happy for her brother. All she'd ever wanted was for Alec to be happy, so why was his happiness making her so miserable? It was her job to be happy for him, her job to be supportive, and smile with him. Izzy wasn't supposed to be envious; she wasn't supposed to want to run and hide.

Izzy did two more shots, one after the other. The glasses hit the bar with a dull thud that was somehow satisfying. She lifted the glass again and made the same thud noise, but it wasn't the same so she ordered another shot.

"How are you getting home tonight?" the bartender asked her.

"Walking," Izzy replied as she downed her shot, and heard that satisfying thud as she placed it firmly back on the bar.

"Alright," the bartender replied. "If you'd said driving, it would be about now that I'd take away your keys."

"Fair enough," Izzy replied. She decided to slow down a little, and ordered wine next. The glass was more fragile and not nearly so satisfying, but it made a nice gentle click when she tapped it with her nail.
"Now what is a beautiful girl like you doing drinking alone in a place like this?"

Izzy turned to see the beach body blonde she'd scooped earlier sitting beside her. She usually liked a guy in a suit, but tonight she was drunk enough that she didn't care.

"Brother's engaged," Izzy explained.

"Even more reason not to drink alone," the man replied. Izzy looked him up and down. Rationally, she knew this was what she usually did. In fact her, for lack of a better word, vulnerable state was acting like a honey trap, saving her the bother of hunting down the bees. Izzy was pretty sure the bartender was gay, but every other guy in this bar had checked her out at least once since she'd sat down. If Izzy had known about this trick before, she would have had a way easier time, but Izzy had never been like this before. She'd never been pathetic, and she hated it.

"See, usually I'd jump your bones about now," Izzy told him. She got off the stool and teasingly hiked her leg up onto him as she spoke. "Drag you off and-" She trailed her fingers down his bare arms. The guy was wearing a muscle shirt, which was in part how she'd been sure about his excellent abs. Izzy moved forward to whisper against the skin of his neck. "Have my way with you."

"But there is just one problem with this plan," Izzy whispered, leaning even closer, both her hands dancing over his skin.

"What's that?" the guy whispered back, breathlessly.

"I don't feel like it," Izzy scoffed, pulling all her limbs back and turned to face her wine again.

"Damn girl," the guy said, clearly rattled.

"I know," Izzy sighed. Then with a wave of her hand, she added, "Move along."

She heard him leave, but didn't turn to look. Why was she thinking about Simon? Sure, they'd gotten very good at the sex thing, and he was altogether a pretty cool guy, but what did that have to do with her need to find the bottom of her glass? Maybe Simon would know? Maybe he could tell her why nothing made sense? Yes, this was a plan. Izzy was set on it now. Paying her tab, Izzy got off her stool with as much grace as she could muster, slightly drunk and in heels.

She walked in rather a more straight line than she'd expected from the bar, and down the street to the cross walk. She waited for the light, which didn't seem to come. Realizing she'd forgotten to push the button, Izzy pressed it about five times before crossing the street. Setting foot on campus, Izzy headed to the dorms. She would just pop in and… say what? Well, Simon should come to the party, because then she'd get to see him, so she'd start with that. Then she really needed him to tell her what the hell was wrong with her.

Izzy knocked on a door, but when it opened she didn't recognize the guy standing before her. Turning to read the number on the door, Izzy realized her mistake. Waving and murmuring sorry, she kept moving. The next door she knocked on turned out to be the right one.

"Hi, Simon," Izzy said, smiling. She was thinking very hard at the moment, using what little mental energy she had to try and not appear drunk.

"Hey," Simon replied. Did he look happy to see her or was that surprise? She couldn't tell.

"Can I come in?" she asked, again focusing on not slurring her words.

"Sure," Simon said, taking a step to the side. Izzy walked in, impressed at how steady her walk was.
Maybe she wasn't as drunk as she thought?

Izzy only noticed Jordan's presence as he moved past her and out of the dorm.

"Don't mind him," Simon said. "He's just being… well him. What's up?"

"Brother's engaged," Izzy said slowly, thinking hard about the shape of her mouth as she spoke.

"Oh that's great," Simon smiled. "Glad those crazy kids figured things out." He looked so adorable when he smiled.

Izzy mumbled something, but she wasn't sure what. She was gazing at Simon's face. Why were his lips so lovely? Why did she want him and not the hotter guy at the bar before?

"Is there something you needed?" Simon asked, taking a step away from her.

"Engagement party," Izzy said. "Saturday after exam week. You wanna come?"

"Sure, I'll be there," Simon replied. "Thanks. Should I bring a gift?"

"Nah," Izzy replied, waving his idea way.

"You sure?" he asked.

"Yep," Izzy said.

"Okay," Simon replied. She stared at his face, trying to read his mind, but her foggy brain wasn't getting very far. Instead, she was focused on the pull she felt. Izzy wanted to be in his arms. She wanted him to kiss her, hold her like before. She wanted to feel him inside her again, the possessive nature of her feelings confused her.

She must have moved closer, or maybe Simon was getting bigger? Either way, she acted on her instincts without inhibition, gently pressing her lips to his. For a moment it was wonderful. She felt Simon's hand on her hip, and her mind was melting, thinking of his hands other places. Then very suddenly, he was gone. Izzy opened her eyes to gaze at him.

"You can't just come here whenever you want and do that!" Simon exclaimed, moving away. "I know I shouldn't have texted you that I wanted to stop, and I'm sorry about that, but that doesn't mean I am just going to change my mind if you kiss me."

Izzy stared into his eyes, unblinking. There was anger there, fury and loathing. She balked, feeling as if something in her chest were being compressed. How could she get rid of this feeling? All she wanted was not to feel like this anymore. Turning away, Izzy did the only thing she could think of. Trying to ignore the tears running down her face, she ran.

Somehow she found her way back to her dorm and flung herself into bed. Maia was either too polite to ask what was wrong, or hadn't noticed that Izzy was silently crying. Izzy had mastered the art of hiding her emotions over the years, and could usually cry on command when it suited her, as well as hide the sounds when it didn't.

Izzy must of cried herself to sleep, because the next thing she knew, she was waking up fully dressed in her bed, sun streaming in the window.

"What time is it?" she asked covering her face with the pillow to block the light.

"About ten thirty," Maia answer. "How was the bar?"
"Too many shots," Izzy moaned, rolling over and trying to sleep again. She could feel the beginnings of a hangover, and was regretting not drinking any water before bed.

"Your phones been going off," Maia told her.

"Burn it," Izzy groaned.

"It's your brother," Maia continued.

"Definitely burn it," Izzy confirmed.

"I promise I wasn't snooping," Maia said. "But there is something here about meeting up later today."

Izzy groaned. Why had she agreed to play wedding with Alec? WHY? Was she stupid? Or just masochistic?

"I can't get past your lock screen," Maia said. "So if you want to cancel, you are going to have to text him yourself."

"No, it's okay," Izzy sighed reluctantly rolling out of bed. "I'm getting up."

With another groan, Izzy reached a standing position, and collected her phone from her roommate. Quickly texting Alec back to confirm, Izzy went to shower. After a light breakfast, and an hour indulging in television, Izzy left to meet up with her brother.

Upon entering the cafe, Izzy instantly saw Alec sitting alone in the corner. She ordered herself a strong coffee, and a glass of water, then waiting till they were ready before sitting down opposite Alec.

"Rough night?" Alec asked. Izzy grunted.

"I am not officially awake until I drink all of this," Izzy said, gesturing to her coffee and water. After the first sip, it seemed like the world was slowly righting itself. Izzy held her coffee close, and settled in for some seriously sappy Alec time.

"We were thinking of having it at our place," Alec began. He had a pad of paper in front of him, and was thoughtfully playing with the pen in his hand. He gazed off thoughtful for a moment, grinning as if he couldn't stop himself. Izzy drank more of her coffee. "But do you have any food ideas? Magnus was thinking potluck, but I wanted to just get it catered."

"That doesn't at all surprise me," Izzy said, shaking her head. "How big a party are we talking here, Alec?"

"Well there's us two," Alec said, ticking off people on his fingers. "Jace and Clary. Magnus is inviting Tessa and her family, which is four people. Clary will probably want to invite Simon."

"I think I invited Simon," Izzy said slowly.

"Great," Alec said. "So is that everyone?"

"There's Maia," Izzy said. "My roommate. We all went out with Tessa once. If you want more people, you could invite her."

"Good idea," Alec said, scribbling on his paper. "The more the merrier."
"In that case I suggest you cater it," Izzy added.

"Agreed," Alec grinned.

"Magnus is so going to regret letting you throw this party," Izzy laughed. "He'll be counting up the bills after."

"Oh, but I have a plan," Alec said grinning wickedly. "I am not going to show him the bills."

"Sneaky," Izzy said sarcastically. "Because everyone knows if you don't see the bill, there isn't any charge."

"That's right," Alec laughed, totally missing her sarcasm. He was so happy, Izzy was sure nothing short of the apocalypse could bring down his mood today. Izzy secretly wanted to smack him for being too cheery, but she settled for half listening to him while she drank her coffee and sipped her water. She was feeling more human by the second. Last night had been some kind of strange flook, and she wasn't going to think about it ever again. Life would get back to normal, and she'd find a way to genuinely be happy for her brother rather than faking it. Maybe she should be an actress?

"You alright Iz?" Alec asked. Then again, maybe she wasn't as good at this as she thought.

"I'm fine," Izzy smiled back.

"You sure?" Alec countered.

"Of course," Izzy replied, trying to smile better. Alec was still giving her a weary look, so she changed the topic. "It sounds to me like you have everything under control, and we have a week's worth of exams to get through before the party."

"I know," Alec said.

"I actually have an exam in the morning," Izzy lied. "And I should probably study at least a little." She laughed.

"Alright," Alec said. "Why don't we get together again after exams to finalize plans?"

"Sounds perfect," Izzy smiled. "Now if you'll excuse me, my hangover and I have some laying in the dark to do." Alec laughed. They both stood up, and Izzy took the opportunity to give her brother a hug, so he wouldn't worry so much about her before making her leave.

For the next week Izzy dedicated her time to exams, and some much needed alone time. Simon didn't contact her, but that was good. She needed to get a grip before she could see him. Everything was fine. After these exams she was going home for the summer and when she got back all would be right with the world.

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ALSO I HAVE AN ANNOUNCEMENT! I have started publishing my original stories. See notes for details.

Chapter End Notes
I have decided to say to hell with doing it the proper way! I know this way (updating chapters one at a time on a regular basis) works for me so why not do that with original stories too?

I set up a FictionPress account. For those of you who don't know what that is, it's basically just like fanfic but for original stuff. Instead of fandoms the stories are organized by gene. My username is the same (Writesalott) and the link to my FictionPress profile is listed on my Fanfic profile but you can also find it by searching writesalott on fiction press under writer just like on fanfic. It's even laid out the same way, but FictionPress is red and Fanfic is blue. I am also uploading my originals on wattpadd now too now.

If you've read my story 'Elusive Love' than you will probably like my original story 'Her Early Bird' since it's an original version of that story. I re-wrote the whole thing, changing all the characters and fixing all the plot holes and little things I didn't like. It's the same basic plot concept but not much else is the same. The whole thing flows better and is very different, with new songs and stuff. The first two chapters of that are online as of now but the whole book is mostly finished so I will be updating it often.

I have also published a very short story that is actually the saddest thing I've ever written. It's called 'Kyrstal Clear' and it's about suicide. Don't feel like you have to read that one. It's very short, like 1300 words.

Once its been edited, I am going to start uploading my original love story about college students Chloe and Blake. The story is called Clueless. It's based off a Klaine AU idea I had but I turned it into an original.

And that Clace story idea I had months ago that I said I was going to turn into an original... that will probably end up on my FictionPress site once I have more than a half chapter written.

But I will still be writing R&S so don't worry. I am just going to be doing this too. We all know I can update 3 stories in a timely manner so its all good!

PLEASE PLEASE PLEASE if you like my writing style or just want to support me go check out my original stories. I am really hoping using the same method as how I write my fanfic will help me write more original stuff. It's so wonderful to write something knowing there are people who want to read it. It makes the whole thing so much more amazing!

Sneak Peek Chapter 90

"Hey," Jace said smiling as knocking on Magnus's bedroom door. "I'm here early to help set up. That fiance of yours is talking to the caterers."

There was a long slow exhale of breath before the door opened.

"Hi Jace," Magnus said. He looked a little bit stressed out, but he was clearly trying not to be.

"You okay?" Jace asked.

"I am activating trying not to think about it," Magnus replied with a calming breath.
"About what?" Jace asked, worried about how devastated Alec would be if Magnus got cold feet.

"How much money Alec is spending on a party that isn't even a wedding," Magnus explained and Jace couldn't help but laugh.

"Smart man," Jace laughing, clapping Magnus on the shoulder smiling.

"What do you think the chances are that Alec would agree to elope?" Magnus asked hopefully.

"Slim to none," Jace chuckled.

"As I suspected," Magnus said, wistfully.

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Aren't I nice. No cliffhanger this time. ^_^
Exam week was not Jace's favourite time of the year, but he got through it with only one extra trip to the gym for stress relief. Now he was facing Malec's engagement party. Oh shit, when had he started calling them that too? It's totally Clary's fault. That was his story and he was sticking to it. His girlfriend's last exam ended just before the party was set to start, so Jace had told Alec he'd arrive early to help set up. This was how Jace came find himself at Malec's place at 4pm on a Friday.

As soon as he walked into the room, Jace did a double take. It looked so different, as to almost be unrecognizable. It was as if 'wedding' had thrown up all over the place. There were streamers and decorations on every wall. New tables had gone up, moving all the regular furniture to the side. These tables were covered in empty food trays that Jace was sure would be full of their delicious catered dinner within the hour. There was a big sign on the far wall that read 'Happy Engagement Malec.' Jace just stared at the sign for a moment. Then he decided to forever let himself off the hook for merging Magnus and Alec's names together. Really! If they were going to do it themselves anyway, he wasn't going to worry about it.

"What do you think?" It was Alec's voice. Jace turned to see his former roommate standing behind him, grinning like a kid at Christmas.

"It's a lot," Jace replied. "You don't really know how to do anything low-key do you?"

"Hey, I'm only getting married once!" Alec replied, defensively.

"But this is just an engagement party," Jace reminded him. "Not a wedding."

"I know," Alec shrugged. "I am only going to get engaged once too you know. I want to make the most of it."

"This coming from the man who hates shopping," Jace sighed with a shake of his head.

"This is different," Alec disagreed. "Because this is about Magnus."

"If I know anything about that man, I know he'd probably be happy marrying you in a car park."

"Never!" Alec said, inhaling sharply and placing a hand to his chest in shock. It was the most stereotypically gay gesture Jace had ever seen Alec make, and it made him chuckle.

"So where is this fiance of yours anyway?" Jace laughed.

"Hiding," Alec grinned. "In our bedroom." Putting great emphasis on the word our.

"You love that 'our' part don't you?" Jace smiled. "It's like you're glowing."

"Oh shut up," Alec grumbled, playfully hitting Jace on the arm.

"Ouch," Jace complained. "Maybe I should go warn your future husband?" He turned, pretending to call down the hall. "Run now while you still have feeling in both arms."

"Totally and completely shut up!" Alec said, and the next thing Jace knew, there was a pillow in his face. Pulling the offending object away, Jace just saw Alec throw the second one at him. In the slight
window between blows, Jace saw the huge grin on Alec's face.

A moment later, Alec's name was called and he darted off mumbling about the caterers needing something. Chuckling slightly, Jace went to say hi to Magnus. It was strange that Jace knew so much about the man, while he didn't know Magnus that well at all. Magnus was his girlfriend's best friend, and his best friend's fiance. Two years ago now they'd all arrived at this school knowing next to nothing about each other, and yet, it was as if every year they got closer and closer. If Jace wasn't very much mistaken, he now had a 'friend group', which was quite remarkable. Maybe they should throw parties more often.

"Hey," Jace said smiling, and he knocked on Magnus's bedroom door. "I'm here early to help set up. That fiance of yours is busy bossing around the caterers." There was a long slow exhale of breath before the door opened.

"Hi Jace," Magnus said. He looked a little bit stressed out, but he was clearly trying not to be.

"You okay?" Jace asked.

"I am activating trying not to think about it," Magnus replied with a calming breath.

"About what?" Jace asked, worried about how devastated Alec would be if Magnus got cold feet and backed out of the engagement.

"How much money Alec is spending on a party that isn't even a wedding!" Magnus explained, and Jace couldn't help but burst out laughing.

"Smart man," Jace chuckled, clapping Magnus on the shoulder as he tried to catch his breath, grinning.

"What do you think the chances are that Alec would agree to elope?" Magnus asked hopefully.

"Slim to none," Jace chuckled.

"As I suspected," Magnus said, wistfully.

Alec soon called them over, and for the next hour, Jace set up chairs, stacked plates, and tried to generally make himself helpful. He listened to Magnus talk about how being useful was better than being ornamental, and felt like he was missing the importance of the reference.

As they were finishing setting up, people started to slowly arrive. Clary was the first on the scene, having come straight here after her exam. By the time he spotted her, she was chatting very animatedly with Magnus. From the expression on her face, Jace knew she was talking about the exam she'd just finished, and sure enough when Jace went over and greeted them...

"I didn't quite get time to read over and edit the whole essay," Clary was saying. "Sometimes I really hate art history. I mean, I want to do the art, not learn about people who painted shit hundreds of years ago." Jace was nodding along without really giving input, which wasn't uncommon when Clary started talking about art since Jace knew nothing on the subject, except that his girlfriend was the best at it.

"See, I can't really empathize with you there," Magnus replied. "History is the part of art I like."

"Yes well," Clary sighed. "I need to get a paint brush into your hands one of these days."

"Good luck with that," Magnus laughed. "I paint about as well as I sing."
"You sing beautifully," Alec's voice called from a meter away. Jace hadn't realized he'd been listening into the conversation.

"You're bias!" Magnus yelled back at his fiance. They could all hear Alec laugh from across the room. A moment later, he appeared beside them to announce that dinner was ready. Everyone was just starting to line up for dinner when Izzy arrived with her roommate Maia. There was a general flurry of waves and greetings before everyone went back to helping themselves to food. Conversation slowed down as everyone got started eating. Alec had planned this evening as a casual drop in kind of event, so people could show up throughout the evening. It had seemed to the plan to accommodate so many people's different schedules.

As Jace was dishing out his dinner, Alec suddenly appeared beside him. He leaned in close pretending to get a better look at one of the sides, though clearly he just didn't want to be overheard.

"Does Izzy seem okay to you?" he asked in a whisper.

"You're asking the wrong guy," Jace replied. "I don't know her very well."

"She was a little off before, but she's seems fine now so maybe it's nothing," Alec said as if trying to convince himself. Then without waiting for a reply, Alec straightened up and got back to serving himself from the buffet.

People were all sitting down eating when the doorbell rang next. What little conversation going on was interrupted by Alec jumping up to get the door. He reappeared seconds later with Simon, and someone Jace hadn't met. He was taller than Simon, with dark skin and hair, and a lean built.

"Everyone this is Jordan," Alec said as the three of them entered the living room. "Simon invited him."

"I hope that's okay," Simon said, clearly worried he'd messed up.

"Oh yes, it's fine," Alec replied smiling. "We have more than enough food. Dig in." Simon and Jordan made their way to the buffet after that, while Alec went to sit beside his fiance.

"Oh, but I can hear them meowing," Magnus was pleading with Alec sitting two people over on Jace's right. "Can't we let them out." Once Jace knew to listen for it, he could indeed hear cats crying off in the distance.

"With so many people here, and the front door opening and closing so much, they are safer in our room," Alec reminded him fiance. "You know how great Chairmen is at getting underfoot, especially when there is cheese involved."

"But they're crying," Magnus argued. "Poor lonely little fluffs." Then Magnus was standing up, leaving his plate on the table. "I'll just be two seconds," he said as he made a dash for his bedroom. With a sigh, Alec followed.

Looking around, Jace noticed that Simon's friend was eating, but Simon wasn't. Malec had run off to comfort cats, and Clary was sitting beside Jace. Turning to check the other side of the room, Jace noticed the back of Simon's head. He was standing, facing away, and talking to someone Jace couldn't see. Turning back to the group, Jace did a head count. The new guy, and the woman Izzy had shown up with were sitting eating, which meant the only person unaccounted for was Izzy.

Too curious for his own good, Jace shifted his chair so he could see her. Both of them were smiling, but standing rather farther apart than you'd expect for casual conversation. After a moment, Izzy walked off. Well he'd gone this far. Giving in to his curiosity, Jace put down his almost empty plate,
and went to talk to Simon.

"Hey man," Jace said. "Everything okay?"

"Yeah," Simon replied. "I just had to apologize for being rude last week. It's been bugging me."

"Yeah," Jace replied firmly. "You are gonna have to elaborate on that, buddy." That answer had done nothing to relieve his interest.

"She showed up and tried- well to go back to how we were before- but I'd already said I can't anymore so-" Simon said, repeatedly interrupting himself. "Either way, doesn't matter. She said no worries so..."

"Casual sex didn't work for you huh?" Jace replied, putting two and two together, and slapping his friend on the back.

"No, not really," Simon said slowly, looking slightly uncomfortable.

"Sorry," Jace mumbled, pulling his hand back.

"Honestly, I tried, but I just don't get it," Simon sighed. Thankfully, he didn't look upset at Jace's casual touch. "I barely know Izzy, and yet being so close to her, I couldn't help but get attached. I have no clue how you two do it."

"Did it," Jace said. "Past tense for me, but believe me, it's a good thing you don't get it. Looking back on it, I was pretty miserable back then."

"Yeah, I guess," Simon sighed. Jace wasn't sure exactly what to say next, but he was inwardly glad that Simon seemed more comfortable talking with him than ever before.

"Is it just me, or is this-" he gestured to the both of them. "-more comfortable than it used to be?"
Jace asked.

"It's not just you," Simon replied. "I think realizing I could even like someone else helped alot with getting over Clary. And it's way easier to hang out with you if I'm not pinning after your girlfriend."

"Fair enough," Jace smiled. "I'm glad. You're a cool person, Simon. And I count you among my friends. I have for a long time."

"Thanks," Simon said, smiling.

"Let's food," Jace said, turning food into a verb because he could. Simon laughed as they swerved toward the food tables. Someone else was there collecting seconds as well.

"Jace, this is Jordan," Simon said, gesturing to them both. "Jordan, Jace."

"Hey," Jace replied, smiling politely. He knew Alec had mentioned the guy's name before, but Jace hadn't remembered it, so this was good.

"He and I dormed together this year," Simon explained. "And we are gonna rent a place over the summer."

"Near the school I hope," Jace replied. "I think everyone is more or less sticking around this summer. Clary and I are for sure."

"She isn't being dragged home to stay with her family?" Simon asked.
"Nah," Jace replied. "Though some of them have threatened to visit. Her brother in particular."

"Jon's a good time," Simon said smiling. "He dropped out of school if I recall correctly, but then he went backpacking across Europe." With a groan, Simon added, "If I don't pick a major soon, I might take a leaf out of his book."

"You and Alec both," Jace sighed, shaking his head.

"I heard my name!" Alec called, appearing beside them with Magnus on his right. They’d clearly just returned from their cat comforting venture.

"We were just talking about how if I don't choose a major soon, I'll have to give up on school," Simon said.

Alec made a very frustrated sound and groaned, "Don't even get me started on major selection!" Jace saw Magnus pat Alec consolingly on the shoulder.

"I took a bunch of those silly tests," Simon said. "And they told me to go into Human Resources. I mean, what even is that?"

"No idea," Alec replied. "I did some of those too, but mine said please try again later, or join the military." Jace reached out a hand, and patted his best friend on the shoulder with his condolences.

"Can I major in getting married?" Alec asked a little too seriously. Jace saw Magnus roll his eyes.

"Ah, no," Simon said very slowly.

"Figures," Alec grunted, then ran off to get the door as it seemed yet another guest had arrived.

When Jace, Simon, and Jordan returned to the living room with full plates they, encountered three - technically four if you included the infant - new faces. Tessa and her family had arrived. The first thing Jace noticed was how much Will looked like Alec. He only knew this to be Will from people describing them, but now he could see the two men in the same room, he couldn't help but notice the similarities.

"You sure you two aren't related?" Jace whispered to Alec.

"He's a Herondale," Alec whispered back. "He's related to you."

"What? How?" Jace asked.

"Your dad is his uncle," Alec explained.

"Small world," Jace replied. Jace didn't know much about his father's family except that his father had left before Jace was old enough to remember what he looked like. Celine didn't keep pictures in the house, but Jace knew he looked like his dad, simply because he didn't look like his mother. Jace wondered if maybe he should get to know Will. Maybe go out for coffee, and see if they had anything in common. What type of family was 'your dad is his uncle' anyway? Did that make Will his cousin?

Before Jace could do more than note the presence of the two other people with William, who he knew to be Tessa and Jem, Jace was momentarily distracted by Clary's bursting out into laughter beside him.

"What's so funny?" Jace asked.
"Oh nothing," Clary smiled. "Just texting a friend."

"Which friend?" Jace asked. He was having quite the nosy evening it seemed.

"Brett," Clary replied. "You know the classmate I was studying with yesterday."

"Oh I thought you meant Britt," Jace said.

"No Brett," Clary corrected. "With an e."

"Isn't that a guy's name?" Jace asked.

"Yep," Clary replied. When Jace didn't answer she looked up. "Are you jealous?" she said, grinning.

"A little," Jace answered, squirming. "So it was this Brett you were hanging out with all afternoon in the library?"

"Studying with yes," Clary replied.

"You know I offered to study with you," Jace grumbled.

"Yes, but it's way easier to study with someone who knows the material," Clary said. "And you wanted to hang out with Alec remember?"

"Yeah okay," Jace sighed. Alec was in the process of moving out, and Jace wanted to make sure they were both proactive about keeping in touch. Up till now their entire friendship has been while they were living together and Jace was a little worried time would get away from them, and his friendship with Alec would suffer.

"You're cute when you're jealous," Clary giggled at him, seeing through him instantly.

"Just tell me he's ugly," Jace said. He trusted Clary, but even so, Jace really wanted to picture the guy overweight, with horrible acne, and scrawny arms.

"Ummm," Clary said turning her head thoughtfully while Jace ground his teeth. "I didn't really notice either way. He's a nice person though. We walk home together after class sometimes."

"Are you sure he just wants to be your friend?" Jace asked. "Do friends walk you home like that?"

"Magnus and I walked home together in high school," Clary explained.

"I still want to hear that he's ugly," Jace repeated. Clary just laughed, kissed him lightly on the cheek, and went to get herself another nanaimo bar from the dessert tray.

Chapter End Notes

Just wanted to say again please check out my original stories! I am publishing them on wattpad, archive your own and FictionPress as well now so readers can choose which platform they like most. I answer comments on all three and upload at the same time on all three sites so really its all about where you prefer to read it.

Hehe, I am super excited! This is totally going to work. I am going to write originals the same way I write fanfic and I know I can write fanfic so #Goals. ^_^
Also if you like Klaine from Glee I finally started uploading that Klaine AU I promised I'd publish after I finished my last Klaine fanfic… sorry guys. It's called "Must I Imagine You There."

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Sneak Peek chapter 91

A few moments later, Tessa returned to swap out with Jem so he could go investigate the buffet. Placing her daughter on her lap, Tessa used her other hand to eat her own dinner. Before Jem returned with his meal, they were joined by Jace. Tessa recognized him by his bright blonde hair, which Clary had described for her at least a few times by now. Jace awkwardly greeted them, then went to sit down beside William. Tessa wasn't really sure what to make of it, but this didn't stop her from eavesdropping on them however.

"So Alec tells me we're cousins," Jace said bluntly. "Even if I'd have pegged you for Alec's older brother."

"I know what you mean," Will chuckled. "When Magnus first met me, he mistook me for Alec."

"I didn't know that," Jace replied. "Must of been awkward."

"It was before he even knew Alec's name, I think," Will answered. "Magnus just asked me if I went to the first years orientation party."

"Yeah, seem to recall Alec telling me once that Magnus first saw him there," Jace replied. Both of them seemed be interested in talking, but unsure of what to talk about. Tessa could sense the awkwardness in the air. She had a feeling Jace had a similar estrangement from his family as Will did.

The moment was interrupted by Lucie's sudden discontentment. She began crying in that way infants do when they are more screaming than crying. Tessa set aside her food to try and comfort her daughter, but Will was faster. He was moving over to scoop Lucie into his arms in a matter of seconds.
It had been a long time since Tessa had been around this many people. It was nice that she knew most of them. She'd come to know Alec quite well through Magnus, and indeed Clary and Simon though her ex-roommate as well. She remembered Izzy, and her roommate from their night out clubbing. So when a girl with long dark hair and pale skin greeted Alec with a hug Tessa recognized her as Izzy. The girl with a slightly darker tone to her skin who seemed to be avoiding a boy in the corner she knew to be Maia. Tessa couldn't help but wonder what the story was behind that.

Lucie began fussing, and Tessa absently rocked the infant back and forth as she continued to survey the room. Magnus and Alec darting off to comfort their cats like doting parents had made Tessa smile. She was so happy for her friend. If anyone deserved to find their soulmate, it was Magnus Bane. With the amount of times that man had had his heart broken, Magnus had more than paid his dues, and Alec was just enough of an opposite while having many of the same core values for them to really make it work. Tessa looked down at her daughter for a moment and wondered if now that they were engaged, if Magnus and Alec would talk about kids? She hadn't planned for hers - not that she was ever going to tell Lucie this - but for Magnus and Alec, they'd never have kids if they didn't plan for them. In many ways, Tessa thought this was a much better way to go about it. She was doing her best, but she knew for a fact that not all parents are cut out to be parents. Having sex was the only prerequisite after all, and any monkey could do that, but raising a happy, healthy, independent human was another task altogether.

"Are you alright, Tessa?" Jem asked.

"Oh yes," Tessa replied smiling. "Just mulling over the nature of the universe, don't mind me."

"Here let me take the baby and you can go get something to eat," Jem said reaching out to scoop Lucie out of her arms. Tessa felt a tiny pang of separation anxiety, but didn't act on it. If anything, the feeling made her relieved. Before the post-partum depression, she remembered this feeling, but during it she'd felt quite the opposite. Tessa hoped this meant it was all over. Tessa almost couldn't believe that Lucie was six months old. They'd started her on solid foods, though only mushy fruit and those crackers designed for babies that melted in the mouth on contact.

Speaking of solid food, Tessa was supposed to be getting herself some. With Lucie safe in one of her father's arms, Tessa headed toward the buffet. She was followed closely by Will who was also eyeing up dinner.

"This looks amazing!" Will said. William had a love for food that neither she nor Jem could match. If the man wrote poetry, Tessa was sure he would have written about something edible. Tessa's great love was books - and though Will shared this love - she felt like food mattered at least as much to Will. Jem was all about his violin and rarely cared what was for dinner.

A few moments later, Tessa returned to swap out with Jem so he could go investigate the buffet. Placing her daughter on her lap, Tessa used her other hand to eat her own dinner. Before Jem returned with his meal, they were joined by Jace. Tessa recognized him by his bright blonde hair, which Clary had described for her at least a few times by now. Jace awkwardly greeted them, then went to sit down beside William. Tessa wasn't really sure what to make of it, but this didn't stop her from eavesdropping on them however.
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"What could possibly be so horrible you need to make a sound like that, huh Luc?" Will asked in his usual baby voice. "You got life made, no need for crying." He was rocking her back and forth with some bouncing action, and she seemed to be calming down. "Or are you just jealous of all the delicious food you are too little to eat, hmmm?"

"I hope you don't expect an answer," Jace said, laughing lighter. "I don't think she'd quite talking yet."

"She listens though," Will replied. "Don't you sweetheart." He lifted her up and brought her nose to touch his. "Yes you do." He was grinning now, moving his head back and forth so their noses touched repeatedly. Lucie was laughing.

"Did you always know you wanted kids?" Jace asked suddenly. Will stopped, turning to face his cousin.

"In one word, no," Will replied, taking the question as seriously as Tessa believed Jace had meant it. "But then again, I never thought I'd met someone I wanted to have them with. It's a strange concept this thing we call life. It always finds a way to surprise you."

"Yeah, I know the feeling," Jace smiled. "Do you mind?" He asked reaching out his arms to indicate that he wanted to hold the baby. With a quick glance at Tessa, who smiled, Will handed Lucie to Jace.

"Hello," Jace smiled down at the baby in his arms. "Your dad's my cousin," he explained, as if speaking to an adult. "Though I am not sure what that makes us." Tessa watched as Lucie giggled at Jace, then wrapped her whole hand around Jace's one finger. "Oh she's just so cute!" Jace exclaimed.

"The very cutest baby in all the world if you ask me," Will replied, with an obvious note of pride in his voice.

Just then, Clary walked over to join them, standing behind Jace and looking over his shoulder at Lucie.

"Hello," Clary smiled waving at the baby. "Did my silly boyfriend steal you from your mother?"
Everyone laughed, except Lucie who made this half-scream half-shriek noise that almost seemed like
it was meant to be a giggle.

"From her father actually," Will replied.

"One of them," Jem added.

"Well that does sound complicated," Clary chuckled. "Maybe it's time to return the baby before there's a bidding war."

"Maybe it's time for Clary to have a turn," Jace suggested, lifting Lucie slightly to show he was willing to hand her over, but Clary took a step back.

"I am not good with babies," Clary said with a smile. "Worse than Magnus."

"Oh come on," Jace pleaded.

"Is that you, Magnus," Clary replied, turning as if she'd heard someone calling her name, though it was obvious she was faking. "Coming." And with that, Clary turned and disappeared around the corner.

Tessa had a funny feeling Clary and Jace hadn't had the kids talk yet, and from Clary's reaction and Jace's smile as he gazed down at Lucie, she was concerned it might not go well. She didn't have long to dwell on this however. The doorbell rang again, and Alec appeared as if from nowhere to greet two woman. Tessa knew Alec's cousin and friend Aline had been among those invited tonight, and she knew Aline was coming with her girlfriend, thus she suspected the new arrivals to be Helen and Aline, but her assumption wasn't confirmed until about an hour later when Tessa found herself in a conversation with the couple. Helen took to baby Lucie instantly, asking if she could hold the baby and talked about all the little brothers and sisters she had back home.

"Yeah, there's Octavia, Drusilla, Tiberius, Liva, and Julian, though I think Julian thinks he's a grown up," Helen finished her monologue. "Mark is older than me, but he and his boyfriend Keiran graduated last year."

"Does having so many younger siblings make you not want kids of your own?" Tessa asked.

"Quite the opposite actually," Helen smiled, then she turned to Aline who also smiled. This, Tessa thought, were the actions of a couple who had already had a successful kid talk.

"I am not very close with my half brother," Tessa continued. "I can't imagine having so many siblings."

"They're a handful," Helen agreed. "But more than worth it. I miss them when I'm at school."

"You won't miss them long" Aline said happily. "We are spending the summer with them, so I can meet everyone."

"And everyone wants to meet you too," Helen added. "Mom and dad especially." At these words, Aline's eyes went a little wider and her body tensed, though only for a moment. Tessa could understand that. Meeting the parents, no matter the circumstances, was always a little nerve wracking. She'd gotten off easy in this department since Jem was an orphan, and Will hadn't spoken to his in many years. Jem and Tessa's nagging for Will to contact his family was still falling on deaf ears.

"Oh relax," Helen sighed, turning to her girlfriend. "Mom and dad are going to love you just as much as I do. Now stop freaking."
"I hope not just as much," Will sniggered. There was a pause as everyone was forced to imagine the horrid image Will just put into their heads, before Jem smacked his best friend on the back of the head.

"Shut up," Jem said laughing.

"Ouch," Will complained, but he was smiling too.

"Your baby's adorable," Helen said very seriously. "But you might want to rethink this whole-" she gestured to all of Will and added, "him thing." Everyone laughed, even Will, and for the rest of the evening, Helen and Aline sat near them, though Tessa suspected this was just so that Helen could hold Lucie. Helen's monopolizing the baby was actually kinda adorable, and Tessa made sure to get her number for future babysitting prospects before they left the party.

"Congratulations again," Tessa told Magnus and Alec, giving them each another hug on their way out. It was Lucie's bedtime and she was starting to really cry. Even her father's comforting arms couldn't soothe her at this point.

"Thanks for coming," Magnus replied, loudly over Lucie's crying.

The drive home was long with such an unhappy baby in the backseat. Once they arrived, Tessa started getting Lucie ready for bed right away, but despite being so tired, she didn't want to sleep. She wasn't crying anymore, at least.

"Ah, ka" Lucie giggled, reaching her arms towards Tessa. The sounds she made were usually just noise like ah, oh, ou, ka and such. It was therefore a surprise for everyone when Lucie suddenly said, "Da-da!" Everyone froze except Lucie who was squirming in her mother's arms.

"Da-da!" Lucie insisted as if giving instructions. Without thinking, Tessa moved toward Will, but this made Lucie squirm even more. "Da-da!" she insisted, turning her body towards Jem. Slowly Tessa handed Jem the baby, and almost at once, Lucie settled down and closed her eyes, laying her head on Jem's shoulder.

There was total and complete silence for a moment. Then Jem carried the almost sleeping baby to bed, leaving Tessa and Will alone in the living room. Will didn't say a word, but Tessa didn't miss the look of deep disappointment on his face.

Chapter End Notes

Long time no see...Were you worried I died? *hehe* Oh but I have excuses!

My family has been monopolizing my evenings and what was left of my writing time I used to update 'Her Early Bird' on FictionPress. I am also updating my Klaine AU 'Must I Imagine You There' on fanfic. Which means that technically I'm back to updating three stories at once! Of course, since so much of those two are already written it doesn't feel like three stories, but updating chapters across three different sites does take time. I also had to write story summaries and do all the setup of starting a new story.

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Sneak Peek Chapter 92
"Thank you," Alec whispered after a while.

"What for?" Magnus laughed, opening his eyes and turning to the other man.

"For indulging me tonight," Alec explained.

"I've made my bed," Magnus said after a moment's thought. "Now, I have to sleep in it." He was smiling. This phrase was usually used for people who have made some mistake and now had to live with the consequences and even though Magnus felt the exact opposite about Alec he liked the phrase. It seemed to fit the way he was feeling about the whole thing. Magnus had fallen in love with who he'd fallen in love with and that was that. Loving Alexander was so different than every other person he'd ever thought he'd loved and Magnus knew this was it. With or without the engagement Magnus had meant every word he'd said to Alec during their fight. Alec was the great and last love of his life.

"Are you implying falling in love with me is like an unmade bed?" Alec smirked in a teasing tone.

"Yes and no," Magnus replied. "What I mean is that no matter what, for richer or poorer I want you. If it's for richer than I will just have to get used to it. I know there are many people who wouldn't let it bother them so much. Heck, there are probably people out that whose goal is to get someone wealthy to fall in love with them and take care of them for life."
Magnus heard the click of the front door close and turned to collapsed on the couch. The last of their guests were gone and he wanted to sleep for about a week. Leaning his head back, Magnus closed his eyes, enjoying the silence. He felt, more than saw, Alec join him on the couch, hearing the springs in the couch creak as Alec moved closer. Magnus put his arm around his fiance as Alec rested his head on Magnus's shoulder. Neither of them spoke, and Magnus focused on their breathing. In and out at the same time. Two people joined together for life. For the rest of his life, Magnus would be next to Alexander. Had it all happened so fast, or had it taken ages? Magnus wasn't sure.

"Thank you," Alec whispered after a while.

"What for?" Magnus laughed, opening his eyes and turning to the other man.

"For indulging me tonight," Alec explained.

"I've made my bed," Magnus said after a moment's thought. "Now, I have to sleep in it." He was smiling. This phrase was usually used for people who have made mistakes and are now forced to live with the consequences of that mistake, and even though Magnus felt the exact opposite about Alec, he still liked the phrase. It seemed to fit the way he was feeling. Magnus had fallen in love with who he'd fallen in love with, and that was that. There was no changing it now, no backing out. The bed was made. Loving Alexander was so different than the way he'd loved before; Magnus knew this was it. With or without the engagement, Magnus had meant every word he'd said to Alec during their fight. Alec was the greatest- and last- love of Magnus's life.

"Are you implying falling in love with me is like an unmade bed?" Alec smirked in a teasing tone.

"Yes and no," Magnus replied. "What I mean is that no matter what, for richer or poorer, I love you, want only you. If it's for richer than I will just have to get used to it. I know there are many people who wouldn't let it bother them so much. Heck, there are probably people out that whose goal in life is to get someone wealthy to fall in love with them. I believe in Sims, the aspiration is something like 'See the ghost of your wealthy spouse.'" Alec's laughter filled the room and made Magnus smile.

"Oh wow I remember that game," Alec chuckled. "I haven't played it in ages."

"Me neither," Magnus replied.

"I can't picture you as one of those people," Alec continued. "I have never once thought you were with me for my money, quite the opposite actually."

"What do you mean?" Magnus asked.

"I was worried we were too different," Alec said. "Sometimes it feels like we are worlds apart. More than once during the last year, I feared my habit of throwing money at my problems would break us up."

Magnus leaned over and kissed Alec's forehead before speaking. "Well we sure failed to communicate didn't we," Magnus whispered. "My strange discomfort didn't make me love you any less, Alexander. I just wasn't raised to think about money the way you do." Magnus pulled Alec in
"And I'm glad," Alec said with surprising sincerity.

"Oh," Magnus gasped surprised. "But I thought you wanted me to let you pay for everything?"

"Oh I do," Alec answered. "But I think I'm not totally right to. It's nice to be so sure that you're here for me and not for-" he paused, laughing lightly as he added, "'Seeing the ghost of your wealthy spouse.'" Magnus couldn't help but laugh with him. "It's harder to see on this side of it," Alec continued soberly. "But maybe I can understand why it makes you feel the way it does."

"Oh, and how does it make me feel Alexander?" Magnus asked in a soft teasing voice. He was stroking Alec's hair, knowing full well how this always puts Alec to sleep.

"Hmm," Alec sighed, closing his eyes. "Feels nice."

"Does it now?" Magnus chuckled.

"This," Alec mumbled. "Not the other thing." He was clearly tired and getting more comfortable by the minute. It made Magnus smile.

"You're welcome," Magnus whispered, finally answering Alec's first statement that had started this conversation, before kissing Alec's forehead. "I know this party made you happy."

"You make me happy," Alec corrected, his eyes were still closed, but now his breathing was slowly evening out. Magnus felt more pressure on his shoulder as Alec fell asleep, his neck muscles relaxing. Magnus just enjoyed the silence for a while, until he too started to get tired. Gently waking Alec, Magnus supported his fiance to bed where he instantly fell asleep again. Then Magnus laid down beside him and fell into a peaceful sleep.

When Magnus woke, he reached out but found the space beside him on the bed empty. Well, not totally empty, both cats were sleeping with him. Over the sound of purring, Magnus could just barely hear whispered voices from down the hall. Dislodging only one of the cats, Magnus got up and went to investigate. What he found was Alec and Aline sitting at the table deep in conversation. Blinking sleepily, Magnus sat down to join them.

"Good morning," Alec smiled turning to him.

"Did I miss the party?" Magnus asked.

"You are the party," Aline laughed and turned towards him.

"What a nice thing to say," Magnus smiled at her. It took his sleepy brain a second to register the evil grin on her face.

"The packing party!" Aline exclaimed, throwing bubble wrap at him. Magnus groaned.

The next thing he knew, Magnus had been made to dress, and ushered out the door. They arrived at Jace's shortly after, and the party started, though Magnus thought calling it a party was being very generous. Magnus remembered moving Alec from dorm life to his place for the summer had been less than an hours work, but it seemed Alec had accumulated quite a lot more stuff than last year, including furniture.

He was just starting to wonder how they were going carry all this stuff back initially once they'd walked in, when Magnus spotted Will's truck. It was parked outside the apartment complex, and
Magnus marveled for a moment how Alexander had managed to bring everyone together like this.

"That boy should major in leadership," Magnus sighed to himself as he put the box he was holding into the back of Will's truck. "He rangles people like pawns."

It was just before lunch by the time they were all driving the short distance back to Magnus's apartment. A very short distance. It felt quite silly actually, but they couldn't have carried all that stuff, so the truck was needed.

They arrived at Magnus's place to find Jace and Clary joining in the packing party. Of course, they were packing up her stuff. Alec and Aline helped too, and soon enough, they had Will's truck full once again. Magnus and Alec stayed to unpack his stuff as Clary, Jace and Will drove Clary's stuff back the way they'd come.

"I have to admit that was the most efficient move I've ever been part of," Magnus said once they were alone.

"Can I major in efficient?" Alec asked.

"Business maybe?" Magnus shrugged. Alec sighed a little then turned back to his task, picking up a box of his clothes and moving them into their room. Next they carried the dresser in and tried to make room for it.

"We need a bigger place," Alec stated as he looked at the awkward way they managed to get the dresser to fit.

"One problem at a time," Magnus sighed. "This place is so close to school so while you're still there…"

"Yeah yeah," Alec agreed, only slightly reluctantly. They unpacked Alec's kitchen stuff next, thankfully without too many duplicates. It turned out that Magnus didn't cook enough to own half the stuff Alec did.

"It's not like I cook a lot," Alec argued. "It's just compared to you, anyone's a chef." Magnus grumbled about that while they decided what to do with Alec's couch.

"Really I think Jace should have kept it," Alec argued. "Considering what they did to it."

"Jace insisted you have it since you bought it," Magnus reminded him.

"Yes but they broke it in," Alec countered.

"We can't claim not to have violated any furniture either, Alexander," Magnus reminded his fiance, and then it was Alec's turn to grumble as they turned the other couch on an angle to make room for this one.

"Oh come look at this!" Magnus called across the house as he was unpacking one of the boxes labeled trinkets.

"One minute," Alec yelled back. Grinning, Magnus picked the object up and waited. When Alec appeared, Magnus handed him the gold rimmed watch.

"You asked for a minute," Magnus sniggered. Alec just rolled his eyes.

"That was not your best work," Alec told him. "Points for effort though."
"Spoil sport," Magnus laughed. Alec took a closer look at the rold trim, sleek watch in his hand. To Magnus it looked expensive, but he'd come to realize most of what he thought of as expensive, to Alec, was just normal so he wasn't going to assume.

"It's one of my dad's old watches," Alec explained. "I forgot I had this."

"It's a really nice watch," Magnus said. "You should wear it."

"Nah," Alec replied, throwing the watch back into the box. "It's too flashy."

"The cat's out of the bag you know," Magnus explained. "Everyone at school knows who your parents are. It's not like wearing a gold rimmed watch will change that." Alec's great articulate response to this was a shrug, and a quick change of topic. Magnus smiled; he couldn't say he was surprised. Sometimes Alexander was quite the enigma.

By the time the day was out, Magnus and Alec were officially living together. It didn't really feel like anything had changed at first. Sure, they were properly living together now, but Alec had spent so much time here before, that Magnus didn't notice the difference right away. That is until one morning when he woke up to find a stranger in his bathroom. For a moment, Magnus just stared in shock until he noticed what the woman was doing. Backing out of the room, Magnus went to confront Alec.

"Alec, did you hire a maid?" Magnus asked his fiance.

"Yep," Alec replied. "Why?"

Magnus wasn't sure how to reply to this. Was he supposed to be upset that he didn't have to clean, or upset that Alec forgot to mention it. Yes, that was better.

"You didn't tell me," Magnus replied. "I just walked into the bathroom and there she was!"

"Sorry, sweetie," Alec soothed, getting up off the couch and facing Magnus. "I've never not lived with a maid. I didn't even think about it."

"Your life baffles me," Magnus sighed with a shake of his head. "And I can't shower."

"My maid is cleaning the bathroom so I can't take a shower," Alec laughed. "Sounds like a first world problem to me."

"Oh shut up," Magnus grumbled. "That was a great song." But Alec just laughed. The song in question was Weird Al's 'First World Problem', and Magnus had recently come to appreciate some of the lyrics more than he had previously.

April turned to May, and before long, Magnus found himself arriving for his very first day of volunteer work at the museum. As he inspected priceless artifacts, and poured his endless history enthusiasm into every moment at the museum, Magnus tried not to think about his lack of an income. Somehow Alec had managed to steal all the bills out from under him, even though they were in Magnus's name. Since he wasn't making money right now, Magnus was trying not to think about it, and his work at the museum was helping a great deal in this regard.

Magnus came home everyday energized and giddy from his time there. He supposed that Alec would eventually get sick of listening to him go on and on about french artifact displays, but until Alec shut him down, Magnus was going to talk his ear off about specks of dirt from thousands of years ago.

Since it was summer vacation for Alec, Magnus often arrived home to find that his fiance had
company over. More than once, Magnus found him playing Catan with his cousin, watching movies with Jace, or even sometimes hanging out with Clary. Magnus's hours at the museum weren't like last summer. He was home by six every night, and they ate dinner together while talking about their day. It was the most domestic summer of Magnus's life, and he had to admit it was rather wonderful.

By the end of May, Magnus had heard from his aunt many times, all of which, amounted to the same thing; she wanted to come visit them.

"That sounds great," Alec said when Magnus told him. "When does she want to visit, because my parents want to see us this summer too?" Magnus rubbed his neck to give himself time to think. Why did it feel like a parent parade all of a sudden?

"She didn't say," Magnus confessed. "But I suppose so long as they don't visit at the same time we should be okay."

"Well mom and dad will stay in a hotel somewhere," Alec explained. "So even if it was at the same time, it shouldn't matter much."

"Oh right," Magnus replied. He had assumed everyone would want to stay with them, when really it was only his aunt who would have ended up in their guest room. Even after all this time, he still wasn't quite used to the Lightwood way of doing things.

"I think Mom and dad might prefer if we go see them," Alec explained.

"I can't get away from the museum right now," Magnus said. "Okay, well I guess that's not true since they aren't paying me, but I'd rather not right now. We are still half way through setting up the exhibit."

"What about in July?" Alec suggested. "Your exhibit should be all set up by then, right?"

"Yes," Magnus confirmed. "And if we are traveling anyway, should we maybe visit my aunt as well, save her the trip?"

"Sure why not," Alec smiled. "I'd like to see the house you grew up in."

Magnus laughed. "That house was long ago torn down. Where she's at now, she's only lived in for maybe five years."

"I can't imagine that," Alec said. "I think my parents house was handed down from my grandfather, so my parents were probably raised there too."

"Now that is hard to imagine," Magnus laughed. "Too many memories in one place if you ask me."

Chapter End Notes

Yes, I am a fan of both Sims and Weird Al. How did you guess? hehe And the watch pun is credited to my boyfriend who used that one on me the other day and I just said "I'll have that off you."

Also this story is going to be updated a little slower than normal for a little while. Usually I update like a mad woman but there is this contest that I want to try and enter which means I need to write an original novel of at least 30,000 words before the end of
October aka in about a month. So... I will be working on that more than R&S. We will see how things go. I have to confess that with reviews being the way they've been lately (meaning very few) I find myself not super motivated to work on this story. Sorry. I guess after writing SO many Mortal Instruments fics I am getting a little sick of Malec, Clace etc. I still have quite alot more planned for R&S and yet I find myself looking forward to the day when I can mark this story as complete and move on to other projects.

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Sneak Peek Chapter 93

"I'll think about it," Simon said. He had to admit it made sense. This place was on the fourth floor of a beautiful apartment complex, with modern room layouts. He could tell the place had been renovated within the last few years, probably just before Alec got the place. Magnus's apartment was slightly smaller and had an older feel to it. The style at Magnus's was very retro with cupboard from the 60s and wooden paneling on the walls. This place had stainless steel appliances and pastel walls.

"I have to ask," Simon said. "When you guys all decided to apartment swap why didn't Alec and Magnus move in here and you guys take the cheaper place?"

"This apartment complex has a no pet rule," Clary explained. "They couldn't have brought the cats and even if they could Magnus didn't want to move them."

"Ah, makes sense," Simon replied. "Still didn't really work out for you two if you can't afford the place."

"Alec didn't tell me how much it was costing him," Jace whined. "Best friend or not he can be such a snob sometimes."

"I don't think he thinks about money the way other people do," Clary added. "He doesn't see it as something that matters I guess. It's just there and he doesn't think much about it."

"Because he has it," Jace sighed. "I gotta get a job."
Simon's Apartment

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes.

Simon was done with dorm life. It was a nice feeling; even if he could have called it quits in the dorms a year ago, he was glad he hadn't, otherwise he would never have met Jordan. The problem with not being in the dorms was that your cost of living suddenly became your problem rather than part of your tuition.

"Would you like a muffin with your coffee?" Simon asked. He was standing behind a till, and there was women in a tacky white hat and huge handbag on the other side of the counter.

"Do you have those pumpkin ones?" she asked.

"They are all right there," Simon said motioning to the pastry case. He's been working at Tim Hortons for all of a month now, and he was starting to wonder if people were too dim-witted to function. The number of times he'd pointed to a sign when people asked him questions was uncountable.

"Are these them?" the woman asked, pointing to the bran muffins. With a prayer to the customer service gods, Simon told her no, and then had to point directly to the pumpkin ones before she decided she didn't want one. After she paid for her coffee, Simon only had a moment to grumble before someone else appeared at his till.

"So how's work?" Jordan said, grinning.

"Come to gloat?" Simon asked.

"Hardly," Jordan grinned. Then to Simon's surprise, he walked around the counter and come to join them behind it.

"What are you doing!?" Simon exclaimed.

"I start at ten," Jordan stated, calmly. Simon wasn't sure to be happy or greatly annoyed. He already lived with Jordan. Did he really want to work with him too. Sure, they were friends, but that was a bit excessive. Just then, someone else arrived on the scene.

"Oh great, you've met the new guy." It was Simon's manager.

"Oh I've met him alright," Simon sighed.

"Fantastic," the manager said. "Would you mind training him today, Simon?"

"Why not," Simon replied grinning. Jordan was also smiling, which the manager took to be enthusiasm for the job.

"Great to see that kind of energy," she said. Their manager wasn't that tall, but she wasn't too short either, with blonde hair and a round face. "So I will check in on you boys later." Simon turned to the till, pretending to start training, while she turned and walked away.

"Did you just apply to every place I did?" Simon whined once their manager was out of earshot.

"There are only so many entry level student summer jobs close to the University," Jordan explained.
"I'll take that as a yes," Simon sighed as he moved to actually start showing Jordan how the buttons on the till worked.

It was a very strange shift to say the least, and when Simon finally left the place behind for the day, he was glad of it. He and Jordan had managed to find a cheap place to live near the University, but because it was cheap and near school, it was also horrible. They sort of had a kitchen, shared a bathroom, and took turns sleeping on the couch since the place only had one bedroom. With just two people both working minimum wage, there wasn't really anything else they could afford close to the school. They'd looked at places farther away, but neither of them had a car, and the bus system here was horribly inefficient. With the lost time, and accumulated bus fare, they decided closer to the school was better. Simon's solution to this was to try and spend as little time at home as possible. He would have visited Maia, but she was home for the holidays. He did text her quite a lot though. Simon visited Magnus sometimes, even if he didn't live with Clary anymore, and sometimes he went around Eric's place. When Simon wasn't working or sleeping, he could most often be found at Clary's place. It was also close to the school, but in a beautiful modern style apartment complex, and best of all, it didn't smell.

"Alec picked it out," Jace explained one day when Simon visited. "But I am starting to think we can't afford the place without him."

"I know the feeling," Simon laughed. "At least the realities about cost of living. It's my turn to sleep on the couch tonight."

"What are you talking about Simon?" Clary asked, and Simon explained his and Jordan's living conditions. "Oh that's horrible! Can't your mother help?"

"I don't want to burden her," Simon replied. "She has enough problems without trying to financially support her adult children."

"Still if she knew-" Clary began, but Simon cut her off.

"She'd insist I go home for the summer and back to dorms next year I know," Simon sighed. "But dorms raise the price of tuition, and I don't want to burden her more."

Next thing he knew, Clary was giving Jace a very strange pointed look. Simon knew the redhead very well, but even he wasn't quite sure what to make of it. Then Clary was grabbing Jace by the arm and pulling him from the room. Jace's ow was ignored as they disappeared. Simon listened hard, but he couldn't hear more than muffled whispers. When they reappeared a few moments later, Clary was grinning like a kid at Christmas. Jace looked the same, and Simon had no idea what was going on.

"Why don't you come live with us?" Clary exclaimed. "We could use another roommate to help with rent, and this place is way nicer than yours."

Simon didn't know what to say. He was touched, but also kinda weirded out. Had Jace really just agreed to this?

"I can't abandon Jordan," Simon said.

"We only have one guest room," Clary replied thoughtfully. "But we could put up a divider in the living room."

"Umm," Simon mumbled.

"If you guys are already doing that anyway, surely this would work," Clary continued. "From what
you said, it sounds like your place isn't safe health wise."

"Let the man think Clary!" Jace said, laughing. "He needs to talk to his roommate, and you need to look less excited."

"Sorry," Clary mumbled, sitting down on the couch looking only slightly embarrassed. With a slight chuckle, Jace kissed her on the forehead, but she turned just in time to get a real kiss out of him. It was a strange sight to see, but what was even stranger was that it didn't feel wrong. The whole thing just made Simon miss Isabelle.

"It would really help us though," Clary added. "Just one month here, and we realized how many bills Alec was paying without Jace's help."

"I'll think about it," Simon said. He had to admit it made sense. This place was on the fourth floor of a beautiful apartment complex. The walls were a peaceful grey-blue, and the kitchen sink wasn't making a strange ticking noise like theirs did. From the crisp new feel of the place, Simon could tell it had been renovated within the last few years, probably just before Alec and Jace signed the lease. Magnus's apartment was slightly smaller than this one; and it had an older, more dated feel to it. The style at Magnus's was very retro with cupboards from the 60's and wooden paneling on the walls, and shag carpet in the guest room. This place had stainless steel appliances, while Magnus's - if Simon recalled correctly - didn't even have a dishwasher.

"I have to ask," Simon said. "When you guys all decided to apartment swap, why didn't Alec and Magnus move in here and you guys take the cheaper place?"

"This apartment complex doesn't allow pets," Clary explained. "They couldn't have brought the cats, and even if they could have, Magnus didn't want to move the kitties. Cats don't like change."

"Ah, makes sense," Simon replied. "Still didn't really work out for you two if you can't afford the place."

"Alec didn't tell me how much it was costing him," Jace whined. "Best friend or not, he can be such a snob sometimes."

"I don't think he thinks about money the way other people do," Clary commented. "He doesn't see it as something that matters, I guess. It's just there, and he doesn't think much about it."

"Because he has it," Jace sighed. "I gotta get a job."

"Come join Jordan and I at Timmies," Simon laughed. "Then it will be really quite the party."

"Manual labour pays better," Jace explained.

"Ah yes, but I have the upper body strength of a noodle," Simon explained. "Hence customer service."

"I bet Jordan could work at the docks though?" Jace suggested.

"Probably," Simon said. "But I have a sneaky suspicion that he wants to work with me. Either he's way more lonely than I thought, or he's stalking me." Simon laughed. "Maybe I should ask Maia."

"How's it going with the 'friends with your friend's ex' thing?" Clary asked.

"Not as bad as I thought," Simon replied. "Maia and Jordan were hanging out a little at the end of the school year, studying together and such. I'm not so in the middle as before. And she's home for the
"Still must be weird though," Clary said. Simon couldn't help but laugh. He wasn't about to tell her this, but sitting here casually talking to the first love of his life and her new boyfriend was way weirder.

"Oh right, but I forgot," Clary smiled. "Simon Lewis excels at weird."

"Only way to date a Fairchild," Simon chuckled. Just then the kettle whistled, and Clary got up to make the tea.

"Can I ask you something?" Jace asked once Clary was out of earshot.

"You already have," Simon laughed. "But by all means, ask again."

"Clary has this new friend," Jace said. "His name's Brett."

"And he's got the hots for her," Simon finished Jace's sentenced, judging from the discomfort on his face.

"Well yeah," Jace mumbled.

"And Clary hasn't a clue," Simon continued.

"So this is normal?" Jace asked.

"Why do you think it took me so long to realize what was happening with you two," Simon explained.

"See that's what's worrying me," Jace sighed, covering his face with his hands.

"I can at least tell you this," Simon reassured him. "As long as Clary hasn't noticed the other guy the way she came to notice you, then you're fine. Guys being into her without her realizing it isn't exactly new."

"See that's what I find so ridiculous!" Jace grumbled, suddenly very animatedly. "She was always freaking out about girls hitting on me, and yet she couldn't tell the exact same thing happened to her. How the hell was I suppose to realize, hm! How!"

"I feel like maybe we've stumbled upon a whole other issues there buddy," Simon chuckled. It was strange to laugh like this with the man who'd stolen his girlfriend, but with some distance from the whole thing had taught Simon that Jace really hadn't stolen anything. Simon knew now that he had never really had Clary's love - romantically anyway - and that wasn't Jace's fault. If Simon hadn't been so desperately clinging to false hope, he would broken up with Clary before Jace appeared on the scene.

"Yeah sorry," Jace sighed. "I swear this woman will be the death of me."

"I know the feeling," Simon laughed.

"Thanks," Jace said only slightly awkwardly. "For the um advice… information? Whatever it was, it does actually make me feel better."

"What makes you feel better?" Clary asked as she reappeared with a mug of steaming hot tea in hand.
"When my wonderful girlfriend brings me tea," Jace said. Simon couldn't help but admire the smooth recovery. "Best girlfriend ever."

"And don't you ever forget it," Clary smiled, kissing him lightly before handing him his tea, and went back to get the others. Clary handed Simon a mug as well, then sat down with hers.

"Are you going to the graduation ceremony?" Clary asked as everyone was drinking their tea.

"No, why?" Simon replied, trying to conceal his surprise that May was almost over.

"Magnus is in the ceremony, and he asked me to come," Clary explained. "But I think he only gets four tickets."

"Ah, then I'm not surprised I am not among the four," Simon replied.

"Me, Tessa, Alec and his aunt then probably," Clary said, naming it off on her fingers. "If his aunt can fly up that is. I thought maybe if his aunt couldn't make it, he'd invite you instead, Simon."

"How could his aunt miss that?" Simon replied.

"Fair point," Clary said. "Though sometimes life does get in the way."

Simon finished drinking his tea and put it down. It was getting late, and he should probably go home. He wanted to sleep on this moving in with his ex and her new boyfriend thing. He also had to tell Jordan, even if he decided against it. If they needed a roommate, and Jordan was game, Simon could maybe crash at Magnus's till September, and go back to dorms or something. Either way, it started with what Jordan wanted to do, and if he could live with Clary.

Simon couldn't say it was a surprised when Jordan loved the idea, especially after hearing Simon describe the apartment. It was later that night as Simon was trying to sleep on a smelly, lumpy old couch, that he thought maybe living with Clary wouldn't be so weird after all.

Chapter End Notes

So... remember when I said I was gonna write slower... trust me I am... it's just that this chapter was finished during my last binge writing session and what's the point of leaving a finished chapter unpublished right?

I am curious to know how many of you have reading the original story I am currently updating called Her Early Bird. It's a re-write of the Malec fic 'Elusive Love' and now I am curious how many of your read that one... And I am waiting on one of my editors to update my Glee Klaine AU... yet back to three stories again... oh four cause I'm also trying to write that original fantasy novel before the end of next month... o_O

... yes I am crazy. Please review and help the crazy women keep the crazy going. I know this story has alot of reviews but that doesn't mean I don't treasure each and every one of them. Also I always reply back. :)

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Sneak Peek Chapter 94
"No cell phones at the table, young lady," her father reminded her.

"It just went off," Maia said. "I'm not checking it."

"You should have left it upstairs," he disagreed. "Who's texting you anyway."

"Just Simon," Maia said, but regretted it instantly.

"Oh and who is this Simon," her mother inquired.

"Just a friend," Maia replied quickly.

"I don't know," her mother continued. "We thought that Jordan was just a friend for ages."

"Sorry I meant Izzy," Maia said quickly. "Izzy is texting me. She's my dorm mate from school."

"She is much better," her father replied instantly happy with the situation. Maia wanted to roll her eyes and tell her parents that she and Izzy were doing it like bunnies just to piss them off, but again she didn't.
It was only June. She'd been enduring her parents for just a little over a month, and already Maia felt like dirt on someone's shoe. How was she supposed to survive another two and a half months?! The only thing that helped was her mantra. When that crushing feeling tried to convince her she was worthless, Mia would repeat the same phrase over and over in her mind: 'I am important, and I have nothing to prove.' Repeating it seemed to be helpful, though Maia knew the best solution would be to get out of the house more. She thought maybe getting a job would help, but her parents didn't want her to do that.

"And what will you do when you go back to school," her mother would say. "Just abandon the job? No, it's best not to create false expectations."

Maia so wanted to tell her mother that lots of students worked over the summer then quit on short notice, but she knew it was no good. Next, Maia had tried to volunteer to get away, but there wasn't much in the way of volunteer work available. It had been different here before she'd really learned how great it was to be away at school. It was like when you're lactose intolerant and you haven't eaten dairy for almost a year, then suddenly you are force fed three bowls of iced cream. Some days she thought that if it wasn't for her cell phone, she would have actually lost her mind.

"Please please distract me!" Maia texted Simon.

'I think I'm moving in with Clary and Jace,' Simon texted back.

'Oh that sounds interesting,' Maia texted back. 'Details please.'

'They can't afford their place, and Jordan and I are living in a tiny box with fleas, so we thought, why not?'

'That isn't enough details,' Maia explained. 'What part of distraction did you not understand?'

'Jordan's thrilled to be paying basically the same rent for a billion times better living conditions, even if we have more roommates.'

'That's great,' Maia typed. 'Is the problem you living with Clary then?'

'Kinda,' Simon texted back. 'If Jordan was dating someone new, and you had to move in with him and his new girlfriend, how would that make you feel?'

Maia stared down at her phone thoughtfully. She honestly wasn't sure. The biggest problem with this was that she couldn't imagine Jordan finding someone else. Jordan wanting her felt like such a core part of who he was, she'd never once considered how she'd feel if he moved on.

'Weird I guess,' Maia replied.

'Weird's a good word for it,' Simon texted back.

'So have you seen Izzy?' Maia asked, trying to keep the conversation going so she didn't have to focus on anything else. Like the fact that she was currently hiding from her mother at the top of the stairs.
'Not since Malec's engagement party.'

'Malec's?'

'Magnus and Alec,' Simon explained. 'Don't ask. I blame Clary.'

'Alright,' Maia replied, adding a laughing emoji to the end and smiling down at her phone.

"Maia!" her mother called from the bottom of the stairs. "Come down here please."

With a sigh and some mental preparation, Maia answered the summons. Hiding her phone in her pocket, Maia went downstairs to find her brother at the table with both her parents on either side him. She sat down in the available seat and prepared to not be seen.

"Your brother was just telling us about the girls fawning all over him at school," their mother began, smiling as if the pride she had in her son could actually light up the room.

"There were only a few," Daniel replied, pretending like he didn't love the attention.

"And he's doing so well in his classes," her mother continued. "Tell her darling."

"I got into advanced placement," Daniel said. Maia wanted to explain that if she was only here to listen to bragging, she'd rather be cleaning the bathroom, but she remained silent. She wanted to say that she'd been doing well in school too, even if she wasn't in advanced anything. Maia however, said nothing, as she knew it would only make things worse. She felt her phone go off in her pocket, and inwardly cursed herself for not putting it on silent.

"No cell phones at the table, young lady," her father reminded her.

"It just went off," Maia said. "I'm not checking it."

"You should have left it upstairs," he disagreed. "Who's texting you anyway."

"Just Simon," Maia said, but regretted it instantly.

"Oh and who is this Simon," her mother inquired.

"Just a friend," Maia replied quickly.

"I don't know," her mother continued. "We thought that Jordan was just a friend for ages."

"Sorry, I meant Izzy," Maia said quickly. "Izzy is texting me. She's my dorm mate from school."

"She is much better," her father replied, instantly happy with the situation. Maia wanted to roll her eyes and tell her parents that she and Izzy were doing it like bunnies just to piss them off, but again she didn't. Maia's parents were under the false assumption that she was still a virgin. Maia wasn't a party girl by any stretch of the imagination, but she was no blushing innocent either. She'd dated Jordan for years back in high school. She could remember perfectly just how badly she'd wanted him back then, and no silly expectation of her parents could have stopped her. Despite how they ended, she didn't regret it. Jordan had been kind, and Maia could forever look back on that day - or rather those days, since it was more than once - with a smile. Maia regretted her rebound guy more than anything else. Depressing sex was nothing if not depressing, but she'd been safe for all of it, and there was no way her parents could learn the truth, unless too much tongue guy showed up at her parents place one day to tell them.

By the time Maia tuned back into the conversation at the dinner table, they had moved on to Daniel's
exciting opportunities after graduation. It was at times like these that Maia wondered if it was worth it for them to pay for her school. She could take out student loans, and never speak to them again, but she knew if she could endure it just a little longer, it meant no debt later.

"Don't you agree Maia?"

"Huh?" Maia said, trying and failing to remember what they were talking about.

"When you are here, be here girl," her father said. "Don't tune us out. It's rude."

"Sorry," Maia mumbled. She tried to listen after that, even if all she wanted to do was leave. When dinner finally ended, Maia went up to her room and back on her phone.

'If it makes you feel any better, Magnus nicknamed Jace and Clary as Clace,' Simon's message from three hours ago read. 'As a sort of revenge I think.'

'Sorry for the late reply,' Maia texted. 'My parents demanded that I eat dinner.'

'Long dinner,' Simon answered a few minutes later.

'It was more like eat dinner, and listen to the Daniel is perfect monologue,' Maia corrected.

'Urg your parents suck,' Simon replied, and Maia loved him for it.

'I had to pretend you were Izzy so they wouldn't be upset I was texting a boy,' Maia explained.

'I bet they didn't like it when you were dating Jordan,' Simon replied.

'They didn't know about most of it,' Maia explained. 'At least at the start. I tried to pretend he was just a friend for ages.'

'You know, that might have something to do with why they are suspicious of your other guy friends,' Simon texted.

'Stop making sense,' Maia told him. 'Your job is to distract me remember?'

'Right,' Simon replied. 'So Jordan and I are learning the finer arts of coffee and sandwiches as part of our minimum wage employment adventure.'

'Why is Jordan doing that?' Maia asked. 'Between scholarships and his parents, I was sure he'd be set.'

'Ummm,' Simon texted. 'So he didn't tell you?'

'Tell me what?' Maia asked.

'Jordan and his parents had a bit of a falling out,' Simon explained.

'Over what?'

'Stuff,' was Simon's only answer.

'You really aren't going to tell me?'

'I am not sure I'm supposed to,' Simon texted. 'Why don't you ask Jordan?'

'Maybe I will,' Maia replied with a determined emoji.
'Why are you steaming from the ears?' Simon replied.

'It's determination,' Maia corrected him.

'No it's not,' Simon texted back with a laughing so hard you're crying emoji. 'Girl you gotta get your emoji's straight.'

'Oh whatever,' Maia texted back. She left his texting screen to open up Jordan's, when she got another message from Simon.

'Don't ask him over text Maia,' Simon said. 'Save it for when you're both back at school.'

'Why?' Maia asked.

'Trust me, okay,' Simon replied.

'Fine,' Maia texted back with what she hoped was a sighing emoji.

'Are you crying now?' Simon replied.

'I hate emojis,' Maia texted. Simon replied only with a laughing emoji again.

Leaving Simon's texting window and opening Jordan's again, Maia just sent a casual hello. She was surprised to get an answer so quickly.

'Hi back Maia,' Jordan texted. 'How's your summer going?'

'The usual,' Maia replied. 'How about yours? Simon says you're working.'

'Yep,' Jordan answered. 'At Timmies.'

'Oh, they have good coffee!' Maia texted back. She wanted to ask why Jordan needed to work, but decided to listen to Simon and wait to do it in person. Simon wouldn't have told her to if it wasn't important.

When Simon replied again, Maia found herself texting two people at once. It was a wonderful distraction, and kept her mind happily off her circumstances until she fell asleep that night. The next day, between being ordered around by her mother, and hearing about her brother's brilliance, Maia texted her old roommate. She was pretty sure they'd agreed to get a place together for the coming school year, but wanted to confirm just in case.

'Oh yeah totally!' came Izzy's replied. 'I'm sick of dorms. Aren't you?'

'I'd say I'm more sick of them than you,' Maia texted back. 'I've been living in them a whole year longer.'

'You crazy third year student you,' Izzy texted. 'Why would you ever stay in dorms a moment longer than you need to?'

'Convenience?' Maia replied. 'I didn't have anyone to room with.'

'Ah well fear not, I shall fix that,' Izzy replied with a big smiling emoji.'

'Great!' Maia typed. 'Oh and I gotta finally get a job this semester, if we're going to be paying went.'

'Yes jobs,' Izzy texted. 'I have heard of those things. They sound really boring.'
'They are,' Maia agreed. 'Useful though.'

'I was thinking, maybe I should just stay in school forever,' Izzy texted. 'Then I'd never have to get one.' Maia sent back just a laughing emoji.

'Why are you laughing?' Izzy texted back.

'Oh shit, were you serious?' Maia asked, trying not to snigger at her phone so her mother wouldn't hear her.

'...' was all Izzy's message read.

'Damn girl,' Maia texted. 'Well more power to you. Get yourself a PhD.'

'But in what though?' Izzy asked.

'Shopping,' Maia replied.

'I WISH THAT WAS A THING!' Izzy texted back in all capps.

'So how's things?' Maia asked, again trying to keep the conversation going. 'How's your brother?'

'Good,' Izzy replied. 'I think so at least. I'm at home for the summer, and he stayed back with Magnus.'

'Have they asked you to plan their wedding yet?'

'No,' Izzy replied. 'I think they are doing the long engagement thing, or at least waiting till they talk to mom and dad about it, maybe.'

'My parents would be the last people I'd tell if someone proposed to me,' Maia replied.

'Well no offense, but your parents suck,' Izzy stated. Maia could just imagine her saying these words in a toneless serious way, like she usually did.

'No offense taken,' Maia replied, then her mother demanded her attention, proving Izzy's words perfectly accurate.

Maia didn't know what it was about her parents that made her feel so small and pathetic. Well, okay she knew they were biased towards her brother, but it wasn't like they were cruel to her in an obvious way; so why did she always feel like shit around them? How could she be one person at home, and a totally different, more function person with her friends? After one particularly self-esteem crushing evening, Maia went up to her room and buried her face in her pillow, finally letting her tears fall. She didn't like to cry in front of her parents, since that always made it worse. All she wanted in this moment was someone to comfort her, but all she had to work with was her cell phone. Wrapping herself up in the blankets, Maia opened her texting app and decided who to message.

'Hey,' she typed. There wasn't an answer right away. She tried to remember that he could be working as she got more comfortable under the covers, taking off her socks.

Then her phone went off. The message just read 'hey back.'

'What are you doing?' she asked.

'Just got off work,' he texted. 'You?'
'I'm in bed,' Maia replied. Maia had a system with her parents, a system for survival. When she was talking to them, she tried to give up as little about herself as possible. They didn't know her hopes or fears, her dreams or aspirations, because she just couldn't trust them with her heart. Usually Maia shifted the conversation to Daniel somehow, and everyone forgot to inquire after her, but tonight she'd failed. She'd let her parents ask her about the things that mattered to her most, and just like always, they'd somehow made her feel like nothing.

'You okay?' he texted back.

'I will be,' Maia replied. 'Just wanted to chat.'

'I'm all for chatting,' he texted.

'How's moving in with Clary and Jace going?'

'Good so far,' he answered. 'Though, I think it's confusing Simon.'

'Which is to be expected,' Maia texted back. 'I mean, what if you were dating someone else, and Izzy and I went and moved in with you two?'

'I can't even imagine it,' Jordan replied.

'I know right!' Maia texted. 'It's crazy.'

'Definitely,' Jordan agreed. Maia wasn't sure how to respond right away so she just let the message sit there.

'You know you can talk to me about whatever is bothering you right?' Jordan's next text read.

'It's nothing new,' Maia texted. 'Just my parents.'

'Ah yes,' Jordan replied. 'There is no one who can mess you up quite like your parents can.'

'Ain't that the truth,' Maia typed back.

Chapter End Notes

I must confess that this chapters has been finished, returned from my beta and completely ready to be published for days now... I just wasn't feeling very generous. Not feeling this story like I did before... mostly because of lack of reviews on fanfic and in general. Sorry. :( It makes me sad... I don't know what to do about it though since I have invested too much in this story to be okay with just giving it a quickie ending and moving on. Not sure what made me update now... Just 'cause I guess...

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Sneak Peek Chapter 95

"It's your turn to live in my world," Magnus had said.

This was how Alec had learned how very uncomfortable busses were after about four hours. He could not remember when he'd last been this uncomfortable. His butt hurt
from the hard cold seat and there weren't any seat belts so he kept sliding down whenever the bus hit a bump on the road.

"Are we almost there?" Alec whined, but Magnus just chuckled.

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Next chapter is barely started so yes that sneak peek was crazy short...
His fiance's graduation ceremony was the highlight of Alec's week. He loved having his future aunt-in-law visiting, and he was more proud of Magnus than he thought possible, but that had been back in May; July was now upon them. Aleida had long returned home and it was their turn to visit her.

"I'll book flights," Alec said in passing a few weeks before they were supposed to leave.

"No, you will not," Magnus replied. Alec was taken aback.

"How are we supposed to get there then?" He asked.

"It's your turn to live in my world," Magnus had simply replied, which is how Alec had come to appreciate just how uncomfortable busses were after about four hours. In fact, he could not remember when he'd last been this uncomfortable. His butt hurt from the hard cold seat, and there weren't any seat belts so he kept sliding down whenever the bus hit a bump on the road.

"Are we almost there?" Alec whined, but Magnus just chuckled. Alec groaned, then Magnus began stroking his hair and Alec decided it wasn't so bad. He rested his head on his fiance's shoulder, and gazed out the window at the seemingly endless trees and telephone poles flying by. Alec couldn't imagine life getting any better than this. Sure, he was already very aware of how much he hated busses, and yes he wanted a pillow, but Magnus was here. Alec could feel the other man's cool finger tips at his temple, could hear his slow even breathing. Alec closed his eyes, and when he opened them the bus had stopped.

"Are we there now?" Alec asked. Magnus laughed with more energy this time.

"Yes Alexander," Magnus chuckled. "Yes we are."

"That wasn't so bad," Alec said. "I thought you said it was a whole day kinda trip?"

"You slept through half of it," Magnus explained.

"I fell asleep?" Alec asked, surprised.

"And snored too," Magnus giggled.

"I do not snore!" Alec said defiantly.

"True," Magnus conceded. "On a bed you don't, but now we know busses are different." He was grinning from ear to ear, and Alec just knew Magnus was enjoying this far too much.

Just then, the doors of the bus opened and people started getting out. It seemed they'd been waiting for the driver to open the luggage compartment underneath.

"Next time we fly," Alec grumbled as they went together to get their suitcase. Magnus hadn't let Alec pack as much as he wanted and insisted they share one suitcase. Sure, it made sense now that Alec had seen the size of the buses luggage hold, but still.

"Where are we going?" Alec asked as Magnus grabbed their luggage by the handle and started walking.
"To my aunt's house," Magnus replied. "Isn't that why we are here?"

"She isn't picking us up?" Alec asked.

"It's two blocks," Magnus chuckled. Alec decided to say nothing rather than admit he wanted the two block ride. With his free hand, Magnus took hold of Alec's and they started walking.

"She did pick you up when you were a kid through, right?" Alec asked.

"I took a bus to school as a kid," Magnus explained. "She had to be at work hours before I went to school."

"That's crazy," Alec sighed, shaking his head.

"Not really," Magnus replied. "Actually your life is the crazy one."

"I disagree," Alec argued.

"I suppose it's our life now," Magnus said, and Alec couldn't disagree.

"That I like," Alec smiled, squeezing his fiance's hand gently as they continued. He had to admit the walk was making his legs and ass feel better after all those hours sitting on a bus.

They walked hand in hand, Alec not really sure what to look for, and then Magnus turned and started walking up a driveway. Alec wasn't sure what to make of it. He rationally knew he had a skewed point of view on life, but the reality of that knowledge was something else entirely. As Magnus walked up to the front door, Alec stood back. The house was so small. There was an old, but well cared for car in the driveway, and a path up to a set of steps at the top of which was a single door with a screen on it. The paint was yellow and peeling in places, and the landscaping looked like minimum maintenance requirement to avoid fines. The lawn had been cut, but that was about it. Just then, the front door opened and Aleida appeared, her arms open wide.

"Welcome!" Aleida exclaimed. As they approached she put an arm around each of them. "How was the trip?"

"The usual," Magnus replied with a slight shrug. Alec wanted to whine about how uncomfortable it was, but again kept his mouth shut. He couldn't imagine taking that thing to school everyday, and didn't want to sound like a wuss.

"I've got dinner ready," Aleida said. "And something cold to drink."

"It's not that hot for July," Magnus replied. "But I never say no to homemade iced tea." She turned and went back into the house with Magnus and Alec close behind. As they entered, Alec noticed the small unlit fireplace in the corner. The floors were worn in high traffic places, but seemed to be made of some kind of laminate. It was very homey while also being very basic. Alec couldn't help but notice the similarities between here and their apartment. Magnus's place had a homey feel as well.

"Welcome!" Aleida exclaimed as she poured them something to drink. Alec took a sip and couldn't help but find it delicious. He'd never had homemade iced tea before. It wasn't as sweet as the stuff you get in the store, but it was definitely more flavourful.

"It's so great to have you two here!" Aleida exclaimed as she poured them something to drink. Alec took a sip and couldn't help but find it delicious. He'd never had homemade iced tea before. It wasn't as sweet as the stuff you get in the store, but it was definitely more flavourful.

"It's nice to bring Alec here," Magnus said. "And see you of course."

"Nice save," Aleida smiled. "Though you did just see me in May."
"This is really good," Alec said. "Thanks."

"My mother's recipe," Aleida explained. "I'm glad you like it."

They sipped their tea for a while until Alec's growling stomach gave him away. Magnus started setting the table as the oven timer went off. Aleida pulled something out of the oven, and Magnus somehow managed to carry three glasses and three plates at once. The two of them were like a well organized team, and Alec wasn't sure where to stand, so he just stood there and sipped his tea.

"Oh Mags, we've have stew so don't bother with the plates."

"My name is Magnus," he sighed, though he did put the plates back in the cupboard, and collected three bowls instead.

"You will always be Mags to me," Aleida said, blowing him a kiss as she set the dish she'd just pulled from the oven on the stove. Alec took a closer look and realized they were homemade dinner rolls. He didn't see any pots on the stove however.

"And you wonder why I moved out," Magnus chuckled, rolling his eyes. Magnus put the bowls down, then disappeared carrying glasses and cutlery. When he returned, he picked up one of the bowls, handed it to Alec and said, "Guests first." But Alec wasn't sure where the food was.

"Umm," Alec said standing awkwardly in the middle of the kitchen. He was feeling a little overwhelmed by Magnus's normal. Magnus must of noticed this before he moved forward smiling, and kissed Alec on the cheek before collected Alec's bowl from his hands and walking over to the counter by the sink. It looked like some kind of storage of some kind, but when Magnus opened it, Alec could smell the distinctive scent of beef and barley stew.

"Has he never seen a slow cooker before?" Aleida asked Magnus grinning.

"You've been to his house," Magnus reminder her. "They have wings and a chef." Alec wasn't sure if they were teasing him, or what exactly was going on, so he just stood there and waited to understand. Magnus filled three bowls, handed one to Alec and carried the other two, while Aleida carried the dinner rolls. Together they all went into the dining room to eat.

Magnus had already set the table. There was a jug of more iced tea in the center, napkins, and cutlery all set up. Alec sat down and picked up his moment Alec took a bite, he decided talking could wait, and started eating it as fast as possible. It was so delicious. The dinner roll melted in his mouth, and the soup was so flavourful, with potatoes, garlic, onions, carrots, and big chucks of beef. Alec went back for seconds.

"I always say you can tell the food is good if no one is talking," Aleida said grinning. He'd finished his second bowl and was leaning back in his chair, too full to move.

"It's really good," Alec mumbled. "Thanks."

"My pleasure," Aleida replied. "So, now that everyone's stomach is full, I want details. Have you two picked a date yet?"

"I was just thrilled he said yes," Alec mumbled. Both of them laughed a little, but Alec wasn't sure why. He'd been genuinely worried Magnus wouldn't want to marry him.

"You know you're a catch right?" Aleida told Alec with a giggle.

"Catches don't end up in the friendzone," Alec reminded her.
"That was ages ago!" Magnus laughed. "You can't still be on about that."

"Sure I can," Alec said grinning.

"How many guys in the friendzone does it take to change a lightbulb?" Magnus asked suddenly. Alec just groaned. "None. They all stand around complimenting it, and get upset when it won't screw." Alec couldn't help but be surprised when Aleida burst out laughing. He would never have said anything like that with his mother around.

"Or how about," Magnus continued, but then he froze. "Yep, out of friendzone puns."

"Thank god for small favours," Alec sighed.

"No matter how much you push the envelope, it'll still be stationery," Magnus said, and Alec laid his head down on the table.

"Not your best work," Aleida admitted. "Too well known."

"Ah yes, good point," Magnus replied. "A dog gave birth to puppies near the road and was cited for littering."

"Better," Aleida smiled.

"A Roman walks into a bar, holds up two fingers and says, 'five beers please'," Magnus grinned, and his aunt burst out laughing. It took Alec an embarrassingly long time to remember the roman numeral for five looked like the letter V.

"Why was World War One so quick?" Magnus asked, then answered before anyone else could. "Because they were Russian."

"And why was World War Two so slow?" Aleida said, as if she knew the answer.

"Because they were Stalin," Magnus roared with laughter.

"I will have to change the vows to 'till pun do us part','" Alec said, lifting his head from the table.

"Let's talk about rights and lefts. You're right so I left," Magnus said.

"And that's when he called off the wedding," Alec chuckled.

"It's like I had alter-motives," Magnus said, barely able to speak through his laughter.

"Mags, before we all die laughing, would you be so kind as to serve dessert?" Aleida asked, still chuckling.

"Of course," Magnus smiled and got up from the table, still grinning.

"Alexander," Aleida said, turning to him suddenly serious, which was an accomplishment in itself. "I can see the way you look at my Mags, and I know how much you love him, but as his only parent, it is my job to make sure you take good care of him."

"I'm gonna stop you right there," Alec chuckled a little, his smile widening. It was just so hard to be serious after all those puns. He wasn't sure how Aleida had pulled it off. "All I want is to protect, and stand by that man till the day I die. I love him, and I can't imagine life without him." Alec turned to look around the room before adding. "Being here, seeing his world has shown me a few things. He has worked to understand my perspective, and now I must learn to understand his so we can join our
lives together."

"Good," Aleida said with a smile. "Glad we straighten that out."

"No straightening Alec out!" Magnus called from the kitchen. Aleida had said that last phase rather
louder than the rest, and Alec suspected that Magnus had heard 'Glad we straighten you out', rather
than, 'that out.'

He reappeared carrying two plates of what looked like pie with whipped cream. Alec had to chuckle
at the slightly concerned look on his fiance's face.

"Don't worry your pretty little head," Alec laughed. "I assure you, I'm as gay as the day is long." Magnu
smiled at him, then looked thoughtfully past Alec.

"Where does that phrase come from anyway?" Magnus mused. "Why is a long day gay?"

"That's why god invented google," Alec chuckled.

"He did no such thing," Magnus huffed, but he put the dessert down and got out his phone
nonetheless.

"It's an expression," Alec laughed, reaching forward to get a plate of pie. Magnus was still typing
into his phone.

"Where's mine?" Aleida asked her nephew.

"Google says, the phrase 'as the day is long' means Unceasingly; very; thoroughly; to a very high
degree," Magnus said.

"Very gay," Alec laughed. "Works for me."

"I suppose I'll have to get my own," Aleida sighed with a shake of her head. Then she stood up, and
disappeared through the kitchen door.

"The great irony here," Magnus laughed as he sat down to eat. "Is how long I thought you were
straight."

"Yes because sitting near my cousin was such a huge give away," Alec chuckled, then added
sarcastically. "Great detective work."

"You danced with her too," Magnus defended himself.

"Oh, and don't forget we are talking about my gay cousin," Alec grinned, tried to contain his
laughter.

"Yes yes," Magnus sighed, waving his hand dismissively. "I know. My gaydar was on the fritz
okay?"

"For four months?" Alec asked.

"Oh shut up," Magnus chuckled. "And I believe it was three months actually."

"Listening to you two, it's like you're already married," Aleida laughed as she reappeared with her
own piece of pie. "And you are totally doing the dishes Magnus."

"What, why?" Magnus whined.
"You made me get my own pie," she chuckled. "Oh, and I cooked."

Chapter End Notes

You can thank my pun-tastic boyfriend for all the puns. The one about 'till pun do us part' and 'alter-motives' he actually said to me just last week. The rest I do confess I googled.

Also hi, did you miss me? ^_^

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Sneak Peek Chapter 96

Why were dishes so totally and completely mind-numbingly boring? Right now she was staring up at the ceiling which was somehow infinitely more interesting. There was no one else home. Her phone was in her pocket still blaring out music that had tried to increase the quality her dish washing. Clary pulled it out and started typing.

'Hey,' she typed. She got a reply right away.

'Hey yourself,' Brett texted back.

'My house is a mess,' Clary texted. 'How are you?'

'I'm good,' Brett said. 'How big a mess are we talking?'

'Tea bags are growing things,' Clary explained. 'It takes like a half a second to throw them out and yet I find them everywhere.'

'It's such an easy thing to do,' Brett replied back.

'I know right!' Clary ranted over text. 'I mean I know I'm not working and they are but this is getting out of hand.'

'Do you want help cleaning up?' Brett messaged her.
Clary looked at the state of her kitchen and wondered if she was actually unemployed. If she got paid by the hour, Clary was starting to think she could call herself the live in maid. There were dishes stacked precariously on every surface, in varying degrees of gross. Mugs with tea bags or coffee grounds still in them had been left to sit and congeal. Empty takeout containers were scattered across the table and counter. Bags of chips, boxes of crackers, and all manner of non-perishable foods hadn't been put away, and were mixed into the mess as if someone was trying to play russian roulette with food poisoning. She knew at least half of this mess was Jordan's, but she also knew the other half was Jace and Simon's fault. Alright she would admit - if only to herself - that part of this was also her. Still, Clary felt sure that the majority of it was their fault.

Clary had been excited to have Simon move in, especially since it had meant they could suddenly afford the lovely apartment. What she wanted to know now was how that had lead to her being the only woman living in a house full of guys? And that begged the question of why her singular female status somehow meant she had to do all the cleaning.

Okay she knew it was more than that. After all, Clary was the only person without a job for the summer. Jace was working at the docks where Magnus had worked last summer, and he'd been trying to get Jordan a job there too since it paid better than fast food. Jace had yet to get this worked out however, so Jordan and Simon were still at Timmies. Even taking into account all the rational reasons, the longer this went on, the more Clary fantasized about killing them all! It wasn't like she wasn't helping with rent… or rather her parents were. But once she graduated, she was totally going to pay them back.

With a sigh of defeat, Clary walked forward and began. First she put the actual food away, closing up boxes of crackers so they didn't go stale and putting them away. Then emptied the sink of dishes and scrapped leftovers. By now the trash can smelled like it was growing new life, so she took that out then came back replaced the bag. Plugging the drain Clary started running the hot water and squirting some dish soap into it, before donning her gloves and started the dreaded chore, starting with the mugs. Clary was trying to think happy thoughts while her hands worked. She put on music, but it was hard to distract herself. She reminded herself that this situation was temporary. When Jace and her got a place of their own, she was sure they could sort things out more evenly. Maybe she'd have a job by then. The water was turning green, and she had no idea why until she found the tea bag. It had stowed away in one of the cups, and was steeping (turning the water to tea) her soapy dish water. Well at least it smelt like green tea and not mold right?

The mugs were now sitting in the drying rack, so she stacked all the plates in the water, and the cutlery on top, before pulling a pot on top of it all. When no one rinsed dishes, soaking them was the only way to do it. Clary had known she'd done too many dishes when she realized she'd developed a system to make it faster. She'd wash mugs first, then soak the plates and cutlery, while washing the pots and pans. By the time she had what was left of Jace's scrambled eggs off the pan, the plates were ready to be cleaned. Since they'd soaked, everything cleaned up quickly, and Clary then only had the cutlery left in the sink. She picked them up in handfuls and used her scrubber to wipe them down before rinsing them. Setting everything to dry, Clary stared at the remaining containers and miscellaneous dishes with hatred.

"Fuck this," Clary told the hated dishes. She drained her water, took off her gloves, and went to lay
on the couch. Why were dishes so totally and completely mind numbingly boring? Right now she was staring up at the ceiling, which was somehow infinitely more interesting. There was no one else home. Her phone was in her pocket still blaring out music that had tried to increase the quality her dish washing. Clary pulled it out and started typing.

'Hey,' she typed. She got a reply right away.

'Hey yourself,' Brett texted back.

'My house is a mess,' Clary texted. 'How are you?'

'I'm good,' Brett said. 'How big a mess are we talking?'

'Tea bags are growing things,' Clary explained. 'It takes like a half a second to throw them out, and yet I find them everywhere.'

'It's such an easy thing to do,' Brett replied back.

'I know right!' Clary ranted over text. 'I mean, I know I'm not working and they are, but this is getting out of hand.'

'Do you want help cleaning up?' Brett messaged her.

'I can't ask you to do that,' Clary replied. 'It's not your mess.'

'It sounds to me like it isn't your mess either,' Brett texted.

'It's more my mess than yours,' Clary typed. She knew all this texting was just her putting off cleaning the dishes she'd left by the sink.

'I'd be happy to help if you want,' Brett texted.

'Nah it's okay,' Clary typed. 'I can do it. I am almost done now anyway, but it's nice to have someone to rant to I guess.'

'Anytime,' Brett replied.

'How's your summer going?' Clary asked him.

'Same old,' Brett replied. Clary wasn't surprised. Brett wasn't the type of guy to talk about himself. She found he often switched the conversation back to her, but at the moment, all she really had to talk about was dishes, and she didn't want to bother him about that more than she already had.

'I should probably finish cleaning,' Clary texted.

'Talk to you later then,' Brett replied. With a sigh, Clary opened her music app and changed playlists before walking mournfully back to her dishes. The mugs were dry so she put those away to make room for those last few. The cheese grater and the sieve were a pain to clean. She was just washing the stove, all her dishes drying on the rack, when the front door opened. Clary turned to see who had entered. Jace looked exhausted while Simon looked more annoyed than tired. Jordan was nursing one arm. Clary greeted them with a wave.

"How was work?" she asked the room at large. It was rare that they all came home at the same time, but then again, they'd all left for work together this morning as well, so Clary should have guessed as much.
"I had to tell someone the same thing eight times before they realized what I meant," Simon grumbled. "And she didn't even buy the sandwich."

"I burnt my arm cleaning vats," Jordan said, turning his arm to show them the red mark there.

"Ouch!" Clary sympathized. "I hope you put some ice on it."

"Twice," Jordan grumbled as he made his way to the freezer, probably for round three with the ice. Clary made a mental note to find that man some burn cream or at least check if he'd applied any at work.

"I need to learn to lift with my knees," Jace stated, a hand holding his lower back.

"I am going to go watch mindless television until I can sleep," Simon announced, before disappearing into his room. Jordan was running his arm under cold water, and Jace walked straight to the couch and collapsed onto it. With a smile, Clary walked over and sat beside him.

"Did you clean when you lived with Alec?" Clary asked absently into the silence.

"Alec had a maid," Jace explained.

"That actually explains a few things," Clary chuckled. "You hungry?"

"Always," Jace replied.

"What would you like to eat?"

"I'll eat whatever you want to eat," Jace said.

"But I asked what you wanted to eat," Clary whined. "If I knew what I wanted to eat, I wouldn't ask."

"I don't mind what we eat really," Jace shrugged.

"It's so annoying when you do that," Clary sighed. Jace just laughed lightly and leaned over to kiss her.

"I know," Jace sniggered.

"Why do you do it then?" Clary asked.

"Because I really don't know what I want to eat," Jace replied.

"Even if you could literally have anything," Clary continued. "Even if it didn't matter what groceries were in the house, or how much it cost?"

"Yep," Jace said.

"I hate you," Clary replied glaring at him.

"No you loo-ve me," Jace said grinning from ear to ear.

"Damn it," Clary grumbled, before leaning forward to kiss him. Jace's arms came up around her, pulling her on top of him, and deepening the kiss as they both fell into a horizontal position on the couch. She loved the feeling of Jace's hands at her waist, but she loved it more when they slowly moved over her curves. Clary angled her legs to straddle him, as she removed her lips from his to
kiss down his neck. His hands went under her shirt, and she gasped before he seized her lips again.

"Missed me, huh?" Clary whispered into his mouth.

"Always," Jace replied, pulling her closer.

"You know, it's only been eight hours since you saw me last," Clary giggled at him.

"That's eight hours too long," Jace replied with a grin.

"Get a room," Jordan's voice burst their bubble. Clary sat up, and turned to see Jordan holding an ice pack to his arm while walking over.

"We'd have a room if you weren't in it," Clary informed him.

"This is the living room," Jordan explained. "And it's got my tv in it."

"Why do we live with him again?" Clary turned to ask her boyfriend with a grin on her face.

"Because he's besties with your ex," Jace explained. He was still lying under her, with Clary sitting on his hips. She could already feel how this was affecting him.

"Well, when you put it like that," Clary laughed.

"Plus he has a widescreen tv," Jace added.

"Sold!" Clary laughed as she climbed off her boyfriend and sat properly on the couch. "What are we watching?"

"Tease," Jace grumbled as he pulled a pillow into his lap. Clary just giggled.

"I was thinking something with werewolves," Jordan said.

"Vampire Diaries is good," Clary suggested. "Or there's Buffy the Vampire Slayer."

"Did someone say Buffy?" It was Simon's voice. He had just left his room and was coming over to them.

"Indeed we did," Clary said. "Oh, or we could watch Supernatural. That has werewolves right?"

"Yeah but on Supernatural, all the werewolves are the bad guys," Jordan explained. "Like zombie movies, they just can't be saved and always get killed."

"Oh, who here has seen iZombie?" Simon asked. "It's zombies, but they are intelligent main characters. Very cool."

"I've heard of it," Jace admitted. He looked more comfortable now, and Clary was sure he didn't need the pillow anyway, though he hadn't moved it. She promised to make it up to him later when everyone else was sleeping.

"Sold," Simon said picking up the remote and loading Netflix. "You're all gonna love this show. The main character's name is Olivia Moore, but she goes by Liv and she's a zombie who livs more. Get it!"

"When did you become Magnus?" Clary asked chuckling.
"I shall take that as a compliment," Simon smiled, and within moments, they were all watching the first episode. And then the second…and the third. Clary was starting to get tired when she remembered she had plans that required not being tired tonight.

"Three is my limit," Clary said before Simon could just let it autoplay and trap her on the couch again. "But it really is a great show. We should all watch it together."

"Sounds like a great idea," Simon enthused. Clary stood up and held her hand out to take Jace's.

"We're going to bed," Clary explained. "Don't watch more without us."

"Don't be too loud!" Jordan called after them.

"More iZombie tomorrow night!" Simon added. As they walked away, Clary heard Simon and Jordan start debating about what they were going to watch next. She smiled. It was so wonderful to have her best friend back in her life again.

Clary held Jace's hand, leading him down the hall and into their bedroom. She shut the door, then pressed him up against it, kissing her boyfriend until his hands were back where they'd been hours ago. Her hands made their way to his belt, loosening it prematurely. She trailed her fingers across the defined muscles of his stomach, and then felt his hands on her ass. Jace lifted her up, and she wrapped her legs around his hips, their lips still linked together in a heated kiss.

"Oh my back doesn't like this," Jace chuckled.

"Bed," Clary suggested. Seconds later, she fell backward onto the bed with Jace on top of her. The next thing she knew, her shirt found it's way across the room, her hands further exploring Jace's body, tossing his shirt aside as well. He was very adept at unhooking bras, and Clary wasn't surprised when hers suddenly went slack. Jace was kissing her heated skin from her collarbone to her navel. His fingers hooked into her jeans, and they slide down before she felt his lips on her thigh. She was quickly distracted as his mouth moved up over the curve of her hips, to caress her beast. He had her niple in his mouth, his hand between her legs, tossing his shirt aside as well. He was very adept at unhooking bras, and Clary wasn't surprised when hers suddenly went slack. Jace was kissing her heated skin from her collarbone to her navel. His fingers hooked into her jeans, and they slide down before she felt his lips on her thigh. She was quickly distracted as his mouth moved up over the curve of her hips, to caress her beast. He had her niple in his mouth, his hand between her legs, when she felt herself climax.

"Now you are just teasing yourself," Clary gasped.

"I like watching how my touch effects you," Jace whispered back. That was all very well and good, but it was his turn now, and Clary was going to make sure of it. Using her hands, she pulled his firm arousal from his boxers, and pushed the unwanted fabric down. Jace seemed to be on board with her plan and helped her get them off. Then Clary wrapped her legs around him until she felt that hard shaft press against her wet throbbing loins. He filled her, and Clary let out a slow satisfied breath. She squeezed him once, enjoying the look on his face when she did so. Then he started moving in and out. Clary swayed her hips with his, and Jace was collapsing on top of her in no time. She kissed his forehead, went to the bathroom to wash up, then returned to bed and snuggled up next to him. There were whispered I love you's and then they fell asleep in each other's arms.

Chapter End Notes

Yes I wrote over three paragraphs of dishes description… and yes you are right in thinking that I have washed A LOT of dishes in my life. I actually found this whole chapter rather cathartic to write and have had it finished for longer than the previous one. Describing dishes got me out of my lazy 'I don't feel like writing' funk. I hope it
didn't bore you or make you nauseous. After my beta edited this she was like OMG SO GROSS!
Also if you hadn't guessed yes it is iZombie that I was up till 5am binge watching the other night… and yes my sleeping pattern has suffered greatly… Supergirl is also ruining my sleep lately but since I am out of season 2 episodes my writing and sleep would probably bounce back pretty quick.
Also my beta has finally published her Malec story! She's been working on it for ages guys and it's really good so you should go check it out. It's called Conditional Love and her username is Allienna on both fanfic.net and here on ao3. I have just spent the last few hours editing it for her and I ended up editing like six chapters in one go. I promise you will love it!

Sneak Peek Chapter 97
"Can I tempt you to a shopping trip?" Izzy asked him the moment she saw him.
"Ummm," Magnus replied.
"You do know that in marrying my brother you are going to be stuck with me for a sister-in-law," Izzy stated.
"I was aware," Magnus said unsure where she was going with this.
"As you know, I can be quite annoying," Izzy grinned. "You sure he's worth it? Forever is a long time."
"I am sure," Magnus replied easily. "Very acceptable compromise."
"Good," Izzy exclaimed sharply. "That was the correct answer. Any other one and I'd probably have had to bury a body." Magnus was having a hard time figuring out if she was joking.
Magnus loved every moment of Alec in his world. It had made him swell with pride every time Alec enthused about his aunt's home cooking, or took pleasure in some small part of their lifestyle. By the time they left, Magnus had a sense of understanding from Alec. They didn't speak of it, but Magnus could feel the slight change in his fiance. Magnus loved how well Alec and Aleida were getting along. When they finally had to leave, there were hugs all around, and only a few tears. Magnus was sorry to go, but also excited. It was a strange mixture of feelings that reminded him of growing up. As a child, when he was hurting, it was always Aleida that he wanted, but slowly as he and Alexander had gotten more and more serious, that had shifted. Now when he was sad or having a bad day, it was Alec that he wanted to comfort him. What could pulling away from needing your parents mean, except growing up?

Magnus was on a plane headed to Alec's parents where they were spending the second half of July.

"We just had a vacation," Magnus told Alec as they ate their complimentary snacks. "It's so strange to be on another one right after."

"That's because you work too hard," Alec replied with a smile. Magnus gave him a look, and Alec added. "Think of it not as two vacations, but as one that's half over." Magnus couldn't help but smile at Alec's words. He leaned over to kiss Alec's cheek.

"Do you want to watch a movie?" Alec asked, gesturing to the tiny tvs in front of each of them. Magnus agreed, and the rest of the flight passed quickly with his eyes on the screen, and his hand holding Alec's.

Once they landed and the seat belt sign was turned off, it seemed as if everyone wanted to be first off the plane. Magnus was sitting in the aisle seat and decided he didn't need to beat the crowd.

"Umm Magnus, we're allowed to leave now," Alec who was already standing, told him.

"I know," Magnus replied.

"So why are we still sitting here?" Alec asked.

"Because allowed to, and able to, are two different things," Magnus explained. "So unless you can walk through people..." Magnus gestured to the flow of foot traffic clogging the one small hallway down the center of the plane. Alec chuckled a little.

"Most people barge through," Alec explained, still grinning.

"Well, I'm not most people," Magnus replied.

"Can't argue with you there," Alec smiled. He lightly kissed Magnus's cheek as they waited the extra few minutes for the traffic to thin out. Leaving the plane, they walked down many long boring looking halls with tacky carpets, before reaching the baggage claim. The first thing Magnus saw when they arrived were two women, their hair the same colour as his Alexander.

"Mom!" Alec called, waving to them.
"It's so good to have you home," Maryse said, pulling her son in for a hug. Magnus was then face to face with the other women in Alec's life.

"There are some decent stores around here," Izzy said. "Can I tempt you to a shopping trip?"

"Ummm," Magnus replied. They had after all just gotten off the plane. Not even he wanted to shop.

"You do know, that in marrying my brother, you are going to be stuck with me for a sister-in-law," Izzy stated, without much expression to give away her meaning.

"I was aware," Magnus said, unsure where she was going with this.

"As you know, I can be quite annoying," Izzy grinned. "You sure he's worth it? Forever is a long time."

"I am sure," Magnus replied easily. "Very acceptable compromise."

"Good," Izzy exclaimed sharply. "That was the correct answer. Any other one, and I'd probably have had to bury a body." Magnus was having a hard time figuring out if she was joking.

"I can hear you, Iz!" Alec said, turning out of his mother's hug to face Izzy and Magnus.

"And if I hadn't wanted you to hear me, you wouldn't have been able to," Izzy replied. Alec smiled, shook his head at her, then hugged his sister as well.

They chatted casually as they walked over to where their baggage was being returned. Alec's mother was asking endless questions, from how their trip to visit Aleida had went, to the way Alec had proposed, and what they were planning to do for the wedding. Magnus was smiling the whole time. He and Alec had talked about a small wedding back with his aunt, but Magnus hadn't really been expecting Alec's parents to go along with that, considering all he knew about them.

They were in the car on the way home when the topic turned to their friends at school, mostly Jace and Clary. It wasn't until Simon's name was mentioned that Magnus noticed anything. Izzy stiffened, and stopped talking. It was strange to see, as there was very little in this world that could stop Isabelle Lightwood from talking. Magnus didn't get a chance to inquire before the topic was changed, and she went right back to normal. Maybe he'd imagined it?

The limo stopped, and their door was opened by the driver. Magnus still wasn't used to being chauffeured around, but he was trying. He just kept having to catch himself saying sorry when the door was opened for him, since it always felt like he was the one who should have opened it.

Everyone was out of the car and headed up to the house when Magnus felt a touch on his arm and turned to see Maryse. Alec and Izzy were talking well ahead of them now, close to the front doors and out of earshot.

"Before we go in," Maryse smiled at him. "I must say, I believe I owe you a thank you."

"Whatever for?" Magnus asked stunned.

"Look over there," Maryse pointed to Alec up ahead. "Do you see how blissfully happy he is?"

"I guess," Magnus shrugged, turning to look. Yes, Alec was smiling and almost skipping to the doors, but this wasn't really news. Alec had always chased Izzy a little, and laughed easily.

"You did that," Maryse explained.
"No I didn't," Magnus replied easily, sure she was wrong.

"Alec isn't anything like his siblings," Maryse continued. "He never had the same self confidence. It might be because he's gay, but somehow I doubt it. I feel like if Isabelle had wanted to date girls, she wouldn't have thought twice about it. It's just how he's always been, unsure of himself."

"What are you saying?" Magnus asked.

"I'm saying do you see how he is standing taller now?" she said, with a smile. "I might be too close to realize this, but that only started since you two started seeing each other."

Magnus didn't know what to say, and thankfully he didn't have to because just then Maryse picked up the pace in order to catch up with her children. Magnus stood back for just a moment. He'd been so taken off guard by Maryse's thank you. It was hard to believe he'd created so much change in Alec, but what more reliable source was there for such information, but a mother?

As he jogged to catch up again, they all made it through the doors together. Everything after that was a haze of grand living, laughter and greetings. Magnus hadn't forgotten the estate Alec lived on, but his memory had not done it justice.

"Have you thought of a June wedding," Maryse said, as they all settled in the living room with refreshments. "A year should be long enough to organize everything, I think." She paused to sip her tea and take another cookie from the tray. "Either on the grounds, or we could rent a venue."

"I do rather like having it on the family land though," Robert said. He'd joined them not long after they'd entered the house. "It's tradition after all."

"I know Alec said you guys haven't picked a date yet, and I was thinking maybe you could pick one to match an anniversary shared with an ancestor," Maryse asked. "I do believe Gideon and Sophie Lightwood were married in June, and Gabriel and Cecily were probably married in August, but I will have to look that one up."

"Wow," Magnus said. "I can't imagine knowing my ancestry so well."

"Yeah we are a little odd that way aren't we," Maryse smiled. "What do you know of your family, Magnus?"

"Never met my father," Magnus said. "And I don't remember my mother."

"I'm sorry," Maryse said with real concern in her voice. Magnus had never experience this type of concern from anyone other than his aunt before. It was strange, but in a good way.

Magnus shrugged, "It was a long time ago."

"Well you're stuck with my family now," Izzy said with enthusiasm.

"Don't make it sound so bad," Alec whined. "I didn't force him to say yes." Magnus laugh, and his future in-laws jumped right back into wedding planning.

"Have you picked your wedding party yet?" Maryse asked. "I believe two best men are required, or should we change a few details there?"

"Jace is mine, or will be when I ask him," Alec added. "And I think Magnus wanted to ask Clary. Is that right?" He turned to look at Magnus, who smiled and nodded. They'd talked a little about which people would be invited while they'd been at his aunt's, but never about the venture or anything.
"Then there is the matter of whom to officiate," Maryse said. "When I got married that had to be a priest, but it seems anyone can do it these days. Who would you like?"

"Ummm," Alec said turning to Magnus.

"You two have clearly given this more thought than we have," Magnus laughed.

"And there are the legal details as well," Robert added. "Name changes and such. We can get the prenup out of the way easily enough, but have you discussed surnames at all?"

"Oh yes," Maryse said. "It's not quite as simple with same sex marriage is it, no obvious choice, but we can figure it out."

"You mother's name was Trueblood before we married," Robert explained.

"Florists need to be call and booked in advance of course," Maryse said. "Which can't be done before you pick a date. Oh, and the caterer needs to be booked as well, but again, I need a date for that. What type of food would you like?"

"Small," Magnus said, laughing. "Small food."

"I am not familiar with that style?" Maryse said thoughtfully, to which Magnus had to laugh.

Then Alec's cold voice broke sharply through the easy going atmosphere. "Prenup?" Alec asked. "Name changes?"

"Oh let's focus on the fun stuff today shall we?" Maryse said. "Ignore your father. The paperwork can be done later."

"I think Magnus Lightwood has a nice ring to it," Robert smiled. Magnus took a moment to register this fact. He loved Alec, but the idea of changing his name didn't appeal to him. He understood why Alec's parents wanted it though, with their long standing family history attached to that name.

"Um..." Magnus began, not sure how to break it to his future father-in-law that he really wasn't keen on the idea of being Magnus Lightwood.

"Oh alright, fine," Robert sighed, clearly taking the hint. "But if and when there are children, I expect to have the same last name as my grandkids, understand."

"We'll let you know," Magnus laughed, relieved.

"Prenup?" Alec asked again.

"It's just standard," Maryse said with an easy smile. "I signed one when I married your father. It just means I can't steal all his money if we broke up."

"I won't make Magnus sign a prenup!" Alec yelled, suddenly rising to his feet.

"Honestly, the prenup is the least of my worries," Magnus assured him, trying to get back the easy atmosphere from before. "Catered? Exactly how many people are coming to this anyway? I know I'm not inviting enough people to require catering."

"If we broke up, I'd have bigger problems than money, I promise you," Alec told his parents, ignoring Magnus.

"You calm down!" Alec yelled.

"It's fine, love," Magnus tried to soothe him.

"If Magnus was after my money, don't you think he could have taken it a long ass time ago?" Alec continued. Magnus was feeling more embarrassed by the second. He wished Alec would just sit back down and relax.

"We know that," Maryse said. "This doesn't mean we don't trust Magnus. It's just a practical legal thing, like having a will in case you die suddenly."

"Love isn't practical," Alec said and with that, he stormed out.

"Hence the prenup," Robert sighed, resting his head in his hands as his son walked out.

"He does love the dramatics doesn't he," Maryse said, shaking her head. "Should I go after him?"

"No, I will," Magnus replied, and quickly stood up. He knew Alec just had his best interests at heart, but he didn't want this to create a rift between Alec and his parents.

Magnus walked the halls, following the sound of Alec's footsteps until he found his fiance sitting alone looking out the window. Alec was holding something in his hands, and seemed intent on ripping it to threads.

"There you are," Magnus sighed with relief as he approached.

"Here I am," Alec said simply. Upon closer inspection, Magnus could tell that Alec was tearing apart scraps of paper. From the texture of the confetti on the floor, Magnus guessed it had once been a napkin.

"It's really okay, Alec," Magnus told him, resting a hand on Alec's shoulder.

"No, it's not," Alec said, his voice soft. Then he turned to face Magnus, and spoke with so much genuine emotion it quite took Magnus's breath away. "I want to merge my life with yours, totally and completely, without thinking or allowing for the possibility that we might one day have to break our life together down the middle."

"Oh Alexander," Magnus spoke gently, walking forward to hold Alec's face in his hand. "I know how you feel, but planning for the worse doesn't bring out the worst. If anything, it can prevent it."

"I just- I love you so much," Alec whispered. "I want to protect you from everything, but I can't. Can I?"

Magnus shook his head. "The point, I believe, is that we can protect each other."

"If you asked me to give all this up," Alec continued. "To leave my world behind and run away with you, I would. You know that right?" Magnus could feel his eyes tearing up, but he didn't speak. "I'd choose you over anything, everything else," Alec whispered.

"And I believe I am just selfish enough to know exactly what you mean," Magnus whispered after a moment. "The world can burn, so long as you are by my side." Then Alec's arms were suddenly pulling Magnus into a fierce hug. Magnus returned the embrace.

"We aren't going to break up, Alexander," Magnus whispered into his ear. "Not ever." He knew Alec understood what he meant by this. The prenup wouldn't matter unless they split up, and both
Alec and Magnus knew with perfect clarity that that was never going to happen. The prenup was to make Alec's parents happy, and Magnus wanted them to support this wedding. He knew Maryse and Robert were good people who only wanted to make sure everything was okay.

And you never know what the future could hold. The way Magnus felt right now about Alec could shift and change over time, but today Magnus could do one simple thing that would potential protect the love of his life in the future. It was a small thing really, though Magnus greatly appreciated Alec’s defending his integrity.

Chapter End Notes

So I've been planning the prenup plotline for AGES. I foreshadowed it when Maryse talked to Alec last summer about common law. I am curious what people think of it. One of my friends has known about and been very against it for a long time now, but my beta thought it was reasonable. What do you think?

Also yes the end there is a reference to City of Heavenly Fire when Alec and Magnus are in Edom and Alec chooses the Magnus over the world. Yes I know it's cheesy... but isn't that why you are here? For cheesy romance crack? ^_^

Sneak Peek Chapter 98

"What's up?" Jace asked.

"Oh it's nothing really," Will sighed. "It's just… well…"

"Spit it out," Jace said. Then added with Will wouldn't talk. "Oh come on we're family."

Will laughed quickly. "Strangely enough for me family usually means rarely spoken to."

"I see," Jace said as he rocked a sleep Lucie. "Well tell me anyway."

"My daughter," Will began. "I know it's selfish and petty but I can't help but wish that she that she called me 'da-da.'"

"She doesn't?" Jace asked.


"Ouch," Jace tried to sympathize.
Since meeting him at Malec’s engagement party, Jace had been trying to keep in touch with William. There was however, one major problem they kept encountering. Between Will and Jace's work schedules, plus Will's having to watch Lucie, they never seemed to find the time. Meeting for coffee had worked once after much organization, but it had ended abruptly when Will's gotten a phone call. Something had come up, and he was needed back home to watch the baby. Trying to spend time with someone with a kid was teaching Jace quite a bit about the inconvenient nature of having children. Finally, Jace suggested they just hang out at Will's place while he was watching the baby, which finally seemed to work. The unforeseen consequence of this however, was that Jace ended up babysitting.

"They really are a twenty four hour job, aren't they?" Jace told Will once he arrived at his cousin's home. Jace still wasn't quite used to having a cousin. His whole life, family had just meant his mother, then Sebastian, and now more recently Clary. Will was new.

"That they are," Will laughed. "Thanks for agreeing to hang out here."

"Yeah no worries," Jace replied. "It seems to be the only thing that works."

"That it does," Will replied. Jace walked closer to Will, to get a better look at the baby in his arms.  

"And, she is cute," Jace shrugged.

"The cutest," Will said, pride obvious in his voice.

As he looked at the adorable bundle of cuteness, Jace couldn't help but feel that it was strange that babies were the end goal of sex. He'd always looked at sex as something else entirely, but when you got down to it, sex's only real purpose was making children. Sure, you could argue that it helped with stress or was enjoyable, but there were lots of other ways to help with stress or enjoy yourself aside from sex. While intercourse was the only way to create new life.

Jace had never once in his life considered having kids of his own. He hadn't even thought of it hypothetically before. Nevertheless, he found himself asking if he could hold the baby.

"She's all yours," Will said handing her over. "Just watch that she doesn't spit up on you. I just fed her before you arrived."

"Roger that," Jace replied smiling as he rested Lucie's head on his shoulder. Despite only meeting her three months ago, Jace could see how fast Lucie was growing. She didn't have that newborn look anymore, that look where it's as if you could fold their arms and legs neatly against their body and make an oval. At almost nine months old, Lucie looked more like a toddler now, with a big grin and bright eyes. She was still too small to be a true toddler, and she wasn't really talking yet, but she had crawling and babbling down. She was so small, and yet she seemed to consume all the attention in the room. Jace looked up to see Will, who was gazing at his daughter with the strangest look on his face. Jace couldn't get a read on that expression, and found himself beyond curious.

"What's up?" Jace asked.

"Oh it's nothing really," Will sighed. "It's just… well…"
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"My daughter," Will began. "I know it's selfish and petty, but I can't help but wish that she that she called me 'da-da.'"

"She doesn't?" Jace asked.


"Ouch," Jace tried to sympathize.

"Jem is home with her far more than I am since he doesn't work," Will explained. "So it make sense, it's just I-"

"You're jealous," Jace offered.

"Yeah," Will admitted. "Told you it was petty and selfish."

"I'd call it understandable actually," Jace replied.

"Thanks," Will smiled.

"Hey," Jace chuckled lightly. "If it makes you feel any better, I'm jealous that my girlfriend is friends with some dude who has a crush on her that she hasn't realized likes her."

"How obvious a crush are we talking?" Will asked.

"Dead obvious," Jace replied, as he started swaying back and forth. "If it was anyone but Clary, he might as well be wearing a neon sign."

"Yikes," Will replied.

"I was never really a possessive guy," Jace explained, still swaying to keep Lucie from fussing. "But with Clary, it's like I want to bat other men away from her with sharp sticks."

"That must be confusing for you," Will replied.

"A little," Jace smiled. "But what it really tells me is how very special Clary is. I care more that she's friendzoned some poor guy, then if any of the other women I've been with... did well, anything."

"I know what you mean," Will smiled.

"With Tessa?" Jace asked.

"No, with the mail carrier," Will chucked. "Of course with Tessa!"

"Sorry but your... situation kinda confuses me," Jace admitted. "Clary has kinda explained it a few times, but if I understand it at all, I don't know how you can stand it."

"It's what Tessa wanted," Will explained. "We tried a few other things first, but we all ended up miserable."

"I am still not totally sure what you mean by that," Jace admitted.
"Basically we are both with Tessa," Will explained. "Both her boyfriends, or partners, or whatever. Honestly, I'm not really sure what the word for us is."

"So it's not like all three of you are a couple then?" Jace asked, unable to stop himself.

"Jem and I are both, as you say, a couple with Tessa, but with each other," Will laughed, a deep mocking sound. "Definitely not."

"I'm not sure if that clears things up, or is even more confusing?" Jace confessed.

"Jem is my best friend in the world," Will explained. "He's like a brother to me, and now we share a soulmate and a daughter. It's strange, but it does work, even if it's hard sometimes. How can it not be? We are all human after all."

"Well you don't share Lucie," Jace corrected. "You said she was yours right? I mean technically."

"Yeah," Will replied. "But the three of us agreed to do this together. I know how much Jem loves Lucie, because I know how much I love her. I don't believe blood is the only thing that makes a family. Love and choice play a far more important role."

"I'll have to agree with you there," Jace said, thinking about how his father chose his other family over Jace. "Still, I get why you're upset about the da-da thing. Hopefully when she's a little older and understands more, she will call you both da-da."

Will laughed. "Hopefully by then she will be able to say whole words."

"Fair point," Jace chuckled.

"Thanks for letting me talk about this," Will said, with an appreciative grin. "I just needed to say it, to tell someone. I can't talk to Tess or Jem about this, and I know that having more adults in her life who love her can do nothing but benefit Lucie, but right now it sucks and I needed to vent, so thanks."

"No problem," Jace said. "Thanks for giving me the adorable baby to cuddle." Jace was almost bouncing her now. It was strange how comfortable he was with her in his arms. Lucie too seemed rather content there. Jace had to wonder if it was because Lucie was so used to being cared for by so many different members of her family. Leaning forward, Will tilting his head down to look his daughter in eye.

"If you call him da-da before me, I will not forgive you," Will told Lucie in the least serious voice Jace had ever heard come from the man's mouth.

"Gawugh!" Lucie screamed out her baby noises without rhyme or reason.

"That's acceptable," Will chuckled. With a wide grin, Lucie reached out her arms to her father, and Will added, "Oh give her back."

Jace chuckled as he handed her over. "Can't bare to give her up, huh?"

"Just look at that adorable little face," Will cooed. He settled Lucie against his chest almost effortlessly, as if automatically. Then Will turned to Jace and added in a normal voice, "So does this friendzone guy know Clary's spoken for?"

"Course," Jace shrugged. "Clary's been friends with him since at least the second semester of last year, plus Clary and I have been living together for a while now. If Brett didn't know she wasn't
single, he'd be denser than her." Jace burst out laughing at his own joke, and was thrilled to hear Lucie giggled with him.

"You like that Lucie?" Jace cooed at the baby who giggled. Jace looked up at Will and said. "So am I a sorta uncle Jace, or like cousin a zillion times removed." He laughed.


"I'm just gonna stick to Jace then," he laughed.

"I doubt you have anything to worry about then," Will continued their conversation where they'd left off before the adorable baby had distracted them. "With the friend zone guy, I mean. But have you thought of maybe telling Clary that it bothers you, or even just telling her that Brett likes her if she really is clueless enough to be unaware."

"I don't want to be that horribly jealous boyfriend who tries to tell his girlfriend who she can and can't be friends with," Jace explained. "It's kinda like with your thing. I know everything's fine, I just needed to vent."

"Ah well," Will said. "Then we are in perfect company, it seems."

Then Lucie made herself the center of attention, but squirming in her father's arms until he let her go. The little toddler was instantly crawling away, giggling happily.

"We've had to baby proof the whole house," Will said as he followed after her. "Every outlet, every single thing less than three feet from the ground has been moved or blocked. And trust me it was a lot of things."

"I believe you," Jace laughed as he followed his cousin in following Lucie. She finally stopped near her playpen and turned to her dad, lifting her arms towards him.

"Uppy," she said. Will leaned down and scooped her up before placing her in the play pen. Will turned on some kind of music, and made sure she had a few blankets in the pen in case she got cold. Lucie's only focus however was one specific toy that she'd clearly known would be in the pen.

For a moment, Jace couldn't help but imagine what it would feel like to be in Will's shoes. Having such a small, fragile life, totally dependent on you had to be scary. Right now it didn't look so bad, with Lucie smiling and playing happily with her little stuffed unicorn.

"She'll be happy in there for a while," Will said. "Do you want some coffee? I can offer only the home brewed kind I'm afraid."

"Coffee sounds great," Jace replied before following Will into the kitchen.

Jace watched Will put the coffee on. He pulled some cookies from the cupboard, and placed them on the table before sitting there himself.

"You look tired," Jace observed.

"That's because I am," Will laughed. "Firefighters work weird hours, and the rest of the time my kid saps my energy. I swear if we could harness whatever endless energy source that runs children, we could power the world." He laughed just as the coffee pot went ding. Before Jace could offer to get the coffees, Will was already up and serving them.

"Am I right in thinking you guys weren't planning on having Lucie?" Jace asked when Will sat
down. He was very curious to know, but felt like Will might take offence to the question.

"Technically yes," Will replied. Jace was relieved to hear no trace of objection to Jace's inquiry. "But that doesn't matter now."

"What do you mean?" Jace asked.

"Everything changed when she was born," Will explained. "I didn't know before that I was capable of this level of devotion. Everything shifts, and suddenly your world isn't about you anymore, or even your spouse. You aren't working to pay your rent or enjoy your next weekend anymore, you're working for your child. Your heart isn't split, you don't love anyone less, but rather more. Your heart grows or something. It's hard to explain when you don't have kids."

"Fair enough," Jace replied. "I can't imagine it very well. Sounds intense though."

"It is," Will chuckled. "I can't imagine my life without Lucie anymore, and I don't have any plans on telling my daughter when she grows up that it was her mother's antibiotics messing with her birth control that got her born."

"Ouch," Jace laughed. "Good call."

"Thanks," Will smiled.

They had both been sipping their coffee for about ten minutes before they heard Lucie's cries coming from the other room. William was first up, moving quickly to collect his daughter from her play pen, and placed her back where she wanted to be.

Jace had a very pleasant afternoon with his cousin and little Lucie. By the end of which, he found himself marveling how one baby could turn two grown men into idiots. Jace couldn't remember the last time he'd run around on all fours just to hear a little girl's shriek of laughter. In fact, he was sure he never had.

Before he left, Will thanked Jace for helping him look after Lucie, and Jace said he'd quite enjoyed it. They agreed to make it a routine thing before Jace left for the day.

All kinds of thoughts were running through Jace's head as he went home. He couldn't help but be fond of Lucie. This had been the longest he'd ever spent with her at one time, but still that joyful smile of hers tended to win over hearts quickly.

As Jace was approaching his apartment, his thoughts were interrupted by seeing Brett exiting it. Like usual when he saw Brett, a part of him wanted to bang the guys head against the wall and tell him to fuck off, but Jace contained the compulsion, and greeted the man politely.

"Hey," Jace said with a wave, trying not to make it obvious that he was clenching his teeth. Jace quite enjoyed the momentarily scared expression on Brett's face. Jace loved that Brett knew him, knew what he was to Clary, because it meant that every time they crossed paths, he saw the slight fear in Brett's eyes. Jace knew he looked a little intimidating, what with his wrestling muscles and everything.

"I... um- Hi," Brett said awkwardly.

"Hi," Jace replied, enjoying the sacred body language coming off Brett. He actually seemed more terrified than usual, and Jace was curious why. "So, I assume you and Clary were studying?"

"Oh yes, studying," Brett added like a man grasping at a lifeline.
"In August?" Jace finished.

"Oh um no," Brett mumbled. Jace stared Brett down, trying to scare the guy even more for his own amusement. He knew it was petty, but at least he wasn't banging Brett's head against the wall right?

"Bye," Brett whispered sharply, as he turned away and half ran in the opposite direction. Jace smiled to himself as he walked the last few meters to his building. He went up the elevator and down the hall, then through the front door. When he was entered his apartment, Clary was sitting alone on the couch staring at the wall.

"What's up Clary?" Jace asked coming to sit opposite her so he could see into her eyes.

"Brett thinks he's in love with me," Clary said numbly.

"And…?" Jace inquired.

"You knew!" Clary gasped, half standing up in shock.

"Clary," Jace sighed. "You're wonderful at many things, and I'll love you till the day I die, but sweetheart, it was crazy obvious."

Clary slumped back down on the couch looking sulky. "Why does this keep happening to me," she whined. "Simon, Brett, I make a friend and they suddenly decide they like me. Heck, even Helen told me I was hot when we were living together."

With a sigh, Jace leaned closer and pulled his girlfriend into his arms. Clary rested her head on his shoulder breathing deeply while Jace gently rubbed circles over her back. "You don't realize how amazing you are," Jace whispered to her, kissing her forehead before he continued. "If I had to guess, I'd say Brett only became your friend because he liked you. Then when he realized you weren't single, he stuck around hoping we'd break up or something."

"And you've known all this time?" Clary asked turning those beautiful green eyes to gaze right at him. Jace nodded. "And you weren't even a little jealous?"

"Oh, I'm all kinds of jealous," Jace said. "Every shade of green in the rainbow. In fact, just moments ago I was fantasizing about banging his head into heavy things."

"Then how come you didn't-" Clary began but Jace cut her off.

"I trust you Clary," he said, reaching his hand forward to cup her face, his thumb stroking her cheek. Clary leaned into his touch and closed her eyes.

"Every time you do that," Clary whispered softly. "It just as amazing as the first time." He knew she meant the way he'd touched her cheek, and it made Jace smile.

"Glad to hear it," Jace replied before leaning down to kiss her gently. It was only a soft pressure, but like every time he kissed her, Jace tried to put as much of his own heart into the kiss as he could.

"Hmm," Clary purred as their lips parted. "Love you too," she whispered.

"Like music to my ears," Jace smiled. Then he leaned forward and kissed her more deeply, moving his hands to hold her hips. He heard her soft moan as her hands went up to tangle in his hair and get under his shirt. Jace lifted her into his arms without breaking their kiss, and carried her to their room so they could close the door. Getting caught by either of his roommates in such a situation did not appeal to him.
Once the door was closed, Clary didn't waist any time. She had his shirt over his head in seconds. When she placed her hands on his bare chest, they were so cold, but it only added to the thrill. The skin of her back felt warm as his hands made their way to unclasp her bra. She was breathing hard now, their lips still locked as her hands fumbled with his belt.

"You're the only person I've ever done this with," Clary whispered against his cheek. "Only person I've ever wanted to do this with."

In that moment, Jace wished more than anything that he could say the same thing back to her, and in a way he could. She was the only one he'd ever made love to, for Jace did not consider sex with Clary to be anything like the sex he'd experienced before meeting her.

"You're the only women I've ever loved," Jace whispered back. "Only women I ever want to love."

From there they made their way to the bed, leaving their clothes before them. Jace kissed everything from her collarbone to her navel, just the way she liked it; he enjoyed every moan and gasp from her his actions created. It didn't take them long to move past foreplay, and then lay panting together on the bed, wrapped in each other.

As they lay there, staring at the uninteresting ceiling, Jace couldn't help but think about the events of today, playing with Lucie to be precise. He never wanted to love anyone but Clary ever again and unless he was much mistaken this means being with Clary for the rest of his life? If he's thinking of things as important as kids, he should be sharing them with his soulmate, shouldn't he?

"Clary," Jace's voice broke the silence. "Do you want kids?" He was looking up at the ceiling still, with Clary's head resting on his shoulder.

"You do know that we just used two forms of birth control, right?" Clary chuckled.

"I don't mean now," Jace replied, turning to look at her. "I mean like 'Marriage, kids, a picket fence.' Is that something that you want?"

"Is this a trick question?" Clary asked, grinning.

"Just answer the question," Jace sighed. "Please."

"Yes to marriage," Clary replied. "To be clear, this is not me asking for a proposal. Just like one day, sure. But no, I've never wanted kids."

"Do you think you'll ever change your mind?"

"I know I won't," Clary said. "I've always known I didn't want kids. Sorry, should I have told you this before now?"

"The thought hadn't even once occurred to me until today," Jace admitted.

"Do you want kids?" Clary asked, worry written all over her face.

"Honestly," Jace replied seriously. "I don't know." He paused, and when she didn't say anything he added, "But I had a really good time with Lucie today."

Chapter End Notes
This might be the LONGEST I've ever gone without updating this story. Wow, what was that like 20days? Crazy! But on the plus side I finished my original novel for the competition! And submitted it and everything! Woot! By the end it was 27,000 words and I went and wrote half of it in two days because I am a horrible procrastinator! But I finished it which is what matters. Let's just hope it doesn't suck.

Anyway I do owe you guys like all the chapters. Lol. I am gonna try and upload a few close together as a "I'm sorry for ignoring you for so long" thing. ^_^ The next one just needs one more look over from me then I'll sending it my beta. Shouldn't be too long. XD

Sneak Peek Chapter 99

"Have you talked to Jordan yet?"

"No," Maia said reluctantly. "And before you say anything it's only been like two days since I got back."

"You were so eager to know that you were willing to have the conversation over text before," Simon reminded her.

"Yeah yeah," Maia replied with a sigh. "I know." She paused then added. "What I don't know if why you can't just tell me."

"It isn't mine to tell," Simon replied.

"Urg!" Maia groaned. "Why did my ex and my failed first date have to become besties. Such a pain in the butt." Simon chuckled, the smile crinkling the skin around his eyes.

"Why did my exe's best guy have to become my roommate?" Simon replied. "The world is a crazy place."

"That or there is some sadistic person writing this that wants us all to suffer," Maia counted.
TIMELINE 2

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

TIMELINE 2

And once again we are at September. Hopefully this is making sense to people. Usually I post timelines at the end of my stories, but as this story has no end in sight and my timeline is getting VERY long I thought I'd cut it up into pieces. I am going to be posting a timeline for this story before every September chapter. The very first chapter is September so I thought this would be a good way to organize it. Every Timeline marks a year for the characters.

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As of Chapter 55:

Magnus: 4th year student
Tessa: Dropped out due to pregnancy
Maia, Alec, Jace, Clary, Simon, Aline, Helen: 2nd year students
Izzy and Jordan: 1st years

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Chapter 055: September, Izzy - School starts
Chapter 056: September, Simon - School starts
Chapter 057: September, Magnus - School starts
Chapter 058: September, Jace, - School starts
Chapter 059: October, Simon - Meets Izzy again
Chapter 060: October, Clary, - School. Halloween.
Chapter 061: October, Alec, - around Halloween
Chapter 062: October, Jace - around Halloween
Chapter 063: November, Izzy, - First half of scene
Chapter 064: November, Simon - Second half of scene
Chapter 065: Late November, Magnus - camille talk
Chapter 066: Late November, Alec -anniver-/baby arrives
Chapter 067: Mid December, Jace - xmas break
Chapter 068: Mid/late December, Tessa- xmas
Chapter 069: Mid/late December, Magnus, Lightwoods

Chapter 070: Mid December, Clary - xmas

Chapter 071: December, Alec - xmas at Lightwoods

Chapter 072: January, Maia - Classes start

Chapter 073: January, Jace - First day back

Chapter 074: January, Magnus - Anniversary

Chapter 075: Jan/End of Jan, Alec - flashback/jobs appling

Chapter 076: End of January, Jace - Anniversary

Chapter 077: End of February, Tessa - Depression

Chapter 078: Feb/March, Simon - Benefits again

Chapter 079: March, Maia - Finally talks to Jordan

Chapter 080: March, Izzy - bonding

Chapter 081: March, Jace - mason crush

Chapter 082: March, Tessa - improved

Chapter 083: March, Clary - coffee#

Chapter 084: April, Maia - study date

Chapter 085: April, Magnus - Museum Oppurtunity

Chapter 086: April, Alec - proposal

Chapter 087: April, Clary - learns of proposal

Chapter 088: April, Simon - talks with Jordan

Chapter 089: April, Izzy - drunk at door

Chapter 090: Late April, Jace - Engagement party

Chapter 091: Late April, Tessa - End party/da-da

Chapter 092: Late April, Magnus - living together

Chapter 093: May, Simon - working/Clace

Chapter 094: June, Maia - summer w/parents

Chapter 095: July, Alec - meet the in-laws

Chapter 093: July, Clary - living together

Chapter 097: July, Magnus - meet the in-laws (take 2)
Chapter 098: August, Jace - Will/baby chat

As of September Chapter 99

Magnus: Graded

Tessa: still dropped out

Maia, Alec, Jace, Clary, Simon, Aline, Helen: 3rd year

Izzy and Jordan: 2nd years

Chapter End Notes

Sorry the formatting sucks. I don't like using the html method for italics and such here on ao3. These timelines are formatted better on wattpad and fanfic if you want to have a look.
September had finally arrived, and with it, the blissful return of school. It was all rather Harry Potter if you thought about it. Who else - aside from the boy that lived and herself - looked forward to the start of school this much? Maybe that was why Maia had loved those books so much. She'd liked the idea of someone hated by their family, become so important and meaningful.

Maia couldn't believe how excited she was. Her first school year out of dorms, and only two more years till graduation and freedom from her parents.

The moment she arrived back on campus, Maia met up with Izzy. She'd expected 'apartment hunting' to be about looking at prospective apartments, but as it turns out, what Izzy had meant by 'apartment hunting' was showing up to sign the licence of the place she'd already picked out.

"I have certain minimum standards," Izzy explained, as she signed the papers first. "So I figured since I had to have the expensive place, I'd pay \( \frac{2}{3} \) of the rent. Deal?"

"Sounds fair," Maia agreed, taking the second key from Izzy. After all, with Izzy paying \( \frac{2}{3} \) it was the same rent as paying half the places she could afford. She was getting more for the same price. Why would she complain?

"Perfect," Izzy said. "I really didn't fancy living alone. It's just so depressing you know."

"I hear you," Maia replied. "Though, I think living alone would be preferable to my parents place."

"Oh?" Izzy inquired. "Are your family really that bad?"

"Have you read Harry Potter?" Maia asked.

"Who hasn't read Harry Potter?" Izzy chuckled.

"You'd be surprised," Maia smiled. "Anyway, my family are the Dursley's."

"Urg," Izzy sympathized.

"Right!" Maia replied, grinning. It really was so great to be back at school again.

"So we have," Izzy checked her watch. "About two hours to kill until the movers have everything done. Do you wanna see a movie?"

"Sure," Maia replied.

It was wonderful to be back here, spending time with Izzy, and generally not being with her parents. They slowly made their way to the movie theatre, talking as they went. It didn't take long for Maia to notice how little Izzy wanted to talk about herself. She mentioned having Magnus and Alec at her place over the summer, and how much fun she'd had riding her horses again, but nothing more.

"Are you okay?" Maia asked her as they got out of the rather mediocre movie.

"Of course," Izzy replied a little too quickly.
"Well, you seem kinda sad is all," Maia explained.

"That movie was a waste of two hours," Izzy said. "That's worth being sad about if you ask me."

Still, Maia wasn't convinced. Izzy had seemed off before the movie, but Izzy clearly didn't want to talk about it. She changed the topic with her next breath, speaking on the features of their new apartment. Maia knew something was wrong, but if Izzy didn't want to talk, there really wasn't anything Maia could do about it.

The movers would be done offloading now, and they made their way back to find their new home full of boxes. Izzy spent a while directing which room to put the furniture in, and then they were alone. It was a two bedroom place which was really nice, but the best part was that it also had two bathrooms. Maia would have a bathroom all to herself for the first time in her life. It really was the simple things that made all the difference.

"I'm just so sick of sharing a bathroom with like anyone!" Izzy explained when Maia inquired after the reason for their luxurious accommodations. "Sharing that bathroom with the entire floor in the dorms sucked! It was like torture."

"I hear ya," Maia chuckled. "Though I suspect more for you than for me."

"I think you're probably right there," Izzy replied as she set a decorative glass fish on a shelf. Maia didn't own a single decorative thing, or at least she hadn't packed any. Maia's belongings were more along the lines of practical clothes and books. She was leaving the decorating to Izzy, which seemed to suit her new roommate perfectly.

They spent the rest of the day setting up, and by the time Maia went to bed that night, the place almost felt like home.

About eight hours later, Maia was woken by her alarm clock. Classes started today, and Maia didn't want to be late. This semester she had a leadership class, as well as macro economics, statistics, and two management classes. Right then and there, Maia decided it was going to be a good year, because she was going to make it one.

The first day of classes are never very eventful, and after they were over, Maia met up with Simon. She hadn't seen her friend all summer, and they'd decided to splurge and actually go out to eat for a change. It was great catching up with Simon. They were seated in a booth near the window and ordered drinks before getting back to their conversation.

"Working," Simon answered when she'd asked how he'd spent his summer. "Customers are evil."

"I wish I could have stayed here and worked!" Maia exclaimed. "I've no pity for you, my friend. In fact, I'm jealous." Simon just huffed, and it was then that the waiter came to take their food orders. Maia decided on lasagna, while Simon ordered the beef dip.

"So did you finally choose a major?" Maia asked, once the waiter was gone again.

"Technically no," Simon admitted. "They kinda assigned me one based off what classes I've taken."

"So what did you get stuck with?" Maia asked.

"Communications," Simon said tentatively. Maia tried not to chuckle at the look on his face, but she failed.

"Please don't laugh," Simon groaned.
"I'm sorry," Maia said, pulling her lips into her mouth and biting down on them to stop her laughter.

"No you aren't," Simon grumbled. Then added as if to spite her. "Have you talked to Jordan yet?"

"No," Maia said reluctantly, her laughter dying. "And before you say anything, it's only been like two days since I got back."

"What happened to being so eager, you were willing to have the conversation over text," Simon reminded her.

"Yeah yeah," Maia replied with a sigh. "I know." She paused, then added. "What I don't know is why you can't just tell me."

"It isn't mine to tell," Simon replied.

"Urg!" Maia groaned. "Why did my ex and my failed first date have to become besties? Such a pain in the ass." Simon chuckled, the smile crinkling the skin around his eyes.

"Why did my ex's new guy have to become my roommate?" Simon replied. "The world is a crazy place."

"That, or there is some sadistic person writing this that wants us all to suffer," Maia counted.

"Suffer really?" Simon laughed. "I mean, things could be worse."

"How you're this optimistic, I don't know," Maia sighed.

"Oh come on," Simon replied. "My family loves me. I'm employed, in school, living the early twenties dream really. I managed to be friends with Clary again. I have friends like you and Jordan-" he paused, then added with a chuckled. "-though if you ever get back together again, I will be looking at some serious third wheel-ness."

"Nah, you won't be a third wheel," Maia replied. "I'll bring Izzy."

"Because that'll go so well," Simon said sarcastically.

"What really happened between you two anyway?" Maia asked.

"I realized that I liked her," Simon shrugged. "And before I ended up getting laid in the friendzone, I thought I'd call it a day. She told me from day one that I wasn't to fall for her."

"She seems off to me," Maia said. "Has since the first day we got back from summer break."

"Maybe something happened over the summer," Simon suggested.

"How long ago was it that you two broke up again?" Maia asked.

"We didn't break up," Simon corrected her. "You can't break up when you aren't a couple."

"Okay, then when did you stop getting naked together?" she rephrased. Simon gave her a look that very distinctly said that wasn't any better.

"Last March, I think," Simon answered when he was done glaring at her. "But it was April when she showed up drunk at my door, and tried to pick things up like nothing had happened."

"What do you mean?" Maia asked.
"Drunk booty umm, showing up at door, I guess," Simon said. "She didn't call, but otherwise same thing."

"I see," Maia replied. "Well either way, it sounds like you've been in the friendzone long enough, and it's time you changed that."

"If this conversation leads to you trying to set me up with one of your friends so help me-"

"Oh relax," Maia chuckled. She put her hand to her heart as if taking an oath and continued. "I hereby promise never to set you up with anyone. Happy?"

"Yes," Simon replied sternly, but he was grinning. Before either of them said anything else, their waiter returned with dinner, which promptly ended the conversation as they started eating.

As they ate more of their dinner, the conversation started to pick again, but this time they kept to more general topics. Simon's classes had started same as Maia, and they compared notes on which professor's were worst or best as far as teaching styles went. After that, Maia tried to encourage Simon to keep his band going, while Simon was sounding a little less than enthusiastic.

"Working is well... a lot of work," Simon explained. "This whole paid by the hour concept is very time consuming. The band's barely been doing anything all summer."

"But you're working less now that school's started right?" Maia replied.

"Yeah but now I've got school to deal with," Simon continued. "Grades, homework, classes and stuff."

"Simon Lewis, you are not allowed to give up on The Immortal Instruments," Maia told him firmly, referring to the name of his band.

"You sound like Jordan." Maia didn't reply, but instead filled her mouth with Lasagna. "You really do need to talk to him, you know," Simon added.

"Yeah, I know," Maia mumbled.

Thankfully Simon dropped the topic after that. They finished eating, and like always, the waiter brought the check straight to Simon.

"It's like restaurants are incapable of imagining that we aren't on a date," Simon sighed.

"I blame society," Maia replied with a grin.

When the waiter returned with the debit machine, Maia had to politely explain that they needed two bills. It was not the first time they'd done this, and she was sure it wouldn't be the last. As Maia and Simon walked back to Campus, they laughed and talked of how little chemistry they actually had, making fun of the wait staff for their assumption.

"To assume makes an ass out of me and u," Maia said.

"That sounds like a pun or something," Simon replied. "I hear it alot. Is there more to that sentence?"

"U, me and ass, are how you spell assume," Maia explained.

"Oh wow," Simon said, looking slightly embarrassed. "Okay, I need to go back to kindergarten. I didn't even notice that."
Maia chuckled, her heart lighter than it had been in months. Oh, yes it was good to be home again. Maia wasn't sure how long she'd considered this city and these people home, but she knew somehow that they were her Hogwarts, her escape from under the stairs of her parents dismissive expressions.

As they passed Simon's turn off, Maia bid him goodnight and waved before turning in the direction of her new apartment. To Maia's surprise, Izzy was home when she arrived. Maia greeted her easily, then went past where Izzy sat in the living room watching tv and into her bedroom. Maia killed a few relaxing hours online before going to bed.

As the days passed, and the first week of school came to an end, Maia was feeling more and more pressure to speak to Jordan. She knew he was back in classes too, and she knew they needed to talk. Last year they'd been seeing each other almost every week for the study sessions Jordan didn't need, and she wasn't sure if that was going to continue or not. Plus, there was what Simon had said over the summer. All things considered, Maia just couldn't help putting it off.

Before she'd decided what she wanted to do, Maia found herself face to face with Jordan in the last place she'd expected to see him. Maia had walked into one of her management classes to see Jordan standing at the front of the lecture hall, talking with her teacher. Too nervous and surprised to say anything, Maia just sat down, though farther back than usual.

When the class started, Maia realized that Jordan was here to give a guest lecture on dealing with computer systems in a management situation. He was a second year student! How the hell had this happened? Maia kept very still during the class, never asking a question, even when she had one. Jordan was actually very good at this, but she still didn't understand why the teacher was giving a second year twenty minutes of her third year class.

"Thank you Jordan," her prof said as the presentation ended. Maia hadn't really been paying any attention, and was sure this would cost her something later. It was just that she couldn't think at the moment. Her classmates all looked impressed, and it was only then that Maia realized they didn't know what year Jordan was in at the school. They were probably all thinking he was a teacher's assistant in fourth year or something.

When he was done, Jordan sat down and listened to the rest of the class, though he didn't take notes. Maia tried very hard to take notes now that Jordan wasn't the one presenting, but her mind didn't seem to want to focus. By the end of class, she knew she'd need to spend an entire evening pouring over the chapter they'd just covered to absorb any of the information.

She was very relieved when the class finally ended, that is until she realize why Jordan had remained behind.

"Hi."

Maia jumped a little, surprised to hear him so close. She turned and looked up from her books. Jordan was standing just a few feet away when she'd thought he'd still be on the other side of the room.

"Um, hi," Maia said, frazzled.

"I didn't know you would be in this class," Jordan said. "It made me a little nervous."

"Well no one noticed," Maia replied. "All my classmates were impressed."

"And you?" Jordan asked.

"Thanks for texting me over the summer," Maia said, trying to change the topic. "It helped keep me
"You know I'm always happy to talk to you," Jordan replied with a smile.

Maia knew she could just ask him now and get over it. She knew she should, but a part of her wanted to just leave and try and get the information out of Simon again. But Maia knew Simon would never tell. Stupid loyal idiot.

"Actually, I was hoping to run into you," Maia said and regretted her words the moment she saw the light in Jordan's eyes. "I mean, I wanted to ask you something."

"Anything," Jordan said. He wasn't crestfallen, but maybe a little less overly hopeful.

"Over the summer, there was something Simon said that made me wonder," she began. "Something about why you needed to work all summer. Jordan you just taught a third year class as a second year student. If anyone could get a scholarship it's you, and I thought for sure your parents would help out with your living costs."

"Ah," Jordan said only slightly awkwardly. "My parents and I had a bit of a falling out."

"But why?" Maia asked. "I thought you were close with them, weren't you?"

"Yeah, I guess," Jordan said, rubbing the back of his neck with his hands and looking down. This was clearly a topic he hadn't planned to discuss.

"Then why?"

"They well-" Jordan began even more awkwardly. "They kind of… well broke us up."

"Your parents broke-" Maia was floored, stunned. "But wait, your parents liked me."

"I thought so too," Jordan said. "But it seems they only liked you as my high school girlfriend. They didn't realize how serious I was about you, and thought we'd break up on our own before graduation. When we didn't, they… well did something about it."

"Wow," Maia said. "I um- I need to sit down." Luckily for Maia, she was still near the chair she'd just spent the last two hours failing to listen to a lecture in. Maia promptly sat, but didn't feel any less overwhelmed. "Why didn't you tell me?"

"I didn't find out what they'd done till long after you'd already left," Jordan explained. "And once I got here… well…" Maia was floored. If she hadn't already been sitting, her legs would have given out. By the way he was looking at her, Maia knew she could call Jordan hers again with just a word. She knew all she had to do was say yes, and she'd be back in the circle of his arms; but instead, she sat perfectly still. Maia had always known who she was, been very aware of her strengths and weakness as a person,
and she knew she wasn't with Jordan for a reason; but as she gazed into his eyes, she found herself unable to remember that reason.

"Anyway, I won't bother you anymore," Jordan said smiling. "It was nice to see you, Maia." And like that, he walked away.

Chapter End Notes

Now this is more like it! Two updates in one week. I bet you guys missed this kind of thing from me, huh? Ya don't know what you got it's gone and all that. I am going to try and write faster again but... I must confess that The Flash has been just RUINING my productivity lately... I just started season 3 and by just I mean I'm on like episode 6...

In other news I wanted to share with you guys that the original novel I wrote for that contest (and was that was delaying updates for this story for the last month or so) made it into the top ten for the competition! I am super excited!

Also OMG chapter 99! Have I really written 99 chapters for this crazy story. Holy crap! How did that happen and where the freak was I?

__________________________________

And here is the sneak peek for Chapter 100! wow... that is just as crazy as it was a second ago.


“It’s Simon right?” Brett asked. “Friend of Clary’s?”

“Ex of Clary’s technically but friend is more accurate,” Simon replied, still with a smile.

“Yet another person who knows what it’s like to kiss Clary,” Brett groaned, lowering his head into his hands. Simon knew that look well. He also knew Brett hadn’t taken in a word of his textbook.

“And yet ironically an expert on the friendzone,” Simon replied with a chuckle. He sobered before adding, “Clary told me what happened when you told her how you feel.”


“Hey I don’t judge. I’ve quite literally been there,” Simon chuckled.
October was nearly upon them, and Simon was starting to feel like he was really being assigned homework again. His life consisted of work, school, and friends; which was fine by him. Living with Clary was turning out to be rather fun. It lead to more spontaneous long chats over tea at strange hours of the night than ever before. The more surprising thing to him was that Simon really did count all three of the people he lived with as friends. Jace his friend. It was a strange concept to be sure, and it made Simon believe that any relationship could be turned around. So when he spotted Brett sitting alone in a corner of the University on his way out of the cafeteria, Simon moved towards him.


"It's Simon right?" Brett asked. "Friend of Clary's?"

"Ex of Clary's technically, but friend is more accurate," Simon replied, still with a smile.

"Yet another person who knows what it's like to kiss Clary," Brett groaned, lowering his head into his hands. Simon knew that look well. He also knew Brett hadn't taken in a word of his textbook.

"And yet ironically an expert on the friendzone," Simon replied with a chuckle. He sobered before adding, "Clary told me what happened when you told her how you feel."

"Oh great," Brett said sarcastically. "More people to witness my humiliation."

"Hey, I don't judge. I've quite literally been there," Simon chuckled.

"What do you mean?" Brett asked.

"I had that exact same moment with Clary years ago," Simon answered. "I told her how I felt, and she didn't feel the same. The only difference being that we then tried to date for almost two years."

"Sounds like your moment with Clary went a hell of a lot better than mine," Brett grumbled.

"Not really," Simon argued. "I could call her my girlfriend, but she couldn't think of me the way I thought of her. It made no difference what names we gave each other because she didn't care for me in that way. Even when we were together, I was still king of the friendzone." Simon laughed, then marveled at how easy it was to laugh about now.

"How can you laugh about something like that?" Brett asked, clearly thinking along the same lines as Simon.

"Time, distance," Simon replied. "A little perspective, and a beautiful women with long brown hair." Brett just stared at him for a moment, as if trying to figured out what exactly he meant by that.

"Anyway," Simon continued. "The point is that I can speak from personal experience when I say I know how much it sucks."

"Doesn't really make me feel better," Brett sighed.

"Oh, but I thought misery loved company," Simon grinned.
"Maybe if I had a time machine," Brett said. "I could go back and hang out with miserable Simon. This one laughs way too much."

"Remember what I said about the girl with the long brown hair?" Simon replied. Brett nodded. "I might be over Clary, but that doesn't mean I can't keep your misery company."

"Thanks," Brett smiled. Then after a moment he said with a sigh. "So, what do you think I should do now?"

"You have two options," Simon began. "Either you can just be her friend properly, without any ulterior motive, or hope that she is going to change her mind."

"And my other option?" Brett asked.

"You could let her go completely," Simon finished.

"I don't like either of those," Brett grumbled.

"Yeah I know," Simon replied. "But trust me, Clace isn't breaking up anytime soon, so there's no point hoping for it."

"Clace?" Brett asked.

"Oh, sorry Clary and Jace," Simon corrected.

"That is the stupidest word I've ever heard," Brett announced.

"I know right," Simon chuckled.

"But Clary can do better than him," Brett commented, when they both stopped laughing. He looked suddenly serious.

"She can," Simon agreed. "Though she could also do worse."

"I'd be so much better for her than Jace," Brett complained.

"Doesn't matter," Simon replied with a shake of his head. "She picked Jace. Case closed. Clary's decision is the only one that counts."

"How can you be so calm?"

"She was my best friend before," Simon stated. "It took me a while, but we got back there again. Actually, I live with her and Jace now."

"That must be strange," Brett commented.

"It is," Simon replied. "But in a good way."

"I hope I can get to where you are someday," Brett said, with a smile. "It would be nice." He paused then added, "And thanks. I think I know what I have to do now."

"Happy to help a friendzoned bro in need," Simon said trying to imitate Barney from 'How I Met Your Mother' without much luck, but as it turned out, Brett rather liked that show, and they were able to keep up a conversation on the topic for a solid fifteen minutes before Simon had to leave for his next class.
Class was… interesting? This semester he had a class that was literally about how to research, and another on interpersonal communication that seemed to be all about how to change how you react to people in order to change how they react to you. Simon wasn't totally sure what he was going to do with a communications degree, and he was trying very hard not to picture himself as a very well educated barista in a few years time. In theory it's a generic enough degree to apply most anywhere, but practice and theory weren't always the same thing.

When classes finally ended for the day, Simon headed home all the while counting up the number of essays he had to write in the next two weeks. It was a crisp fall day, with leaves on the ground and a chill in the air. Simon wasn't super excited for winter, or more accurately he wasn't excited about trudging through the snow every morning on his way to class, and the commute to work was going to suck in the snow as well. Stupid winter city, though it was pretty. He couldn't help but admire the beauty created by the cold. Opening the door to his building, Simon went up in the elevator until he reached his floor, but as Simon approached the door to his apartment he heard two people arguing.

His first thought was to back away and just wait till they were done, but then he recognized the voices. Unable to resist his curiosity, Simon moved closer to hear what they were saying.

"All I'm saying is that your parents are infinitely better than mine, and you shouldn't give up on them," Maia voice came through the door.

"That isn't the same at all," Jordan replied, his voice just as loud as Maia's.

"I don't want you to regret not speaking to them because of me," Maia continued.

"Why do you care?" Jordan snapped back.

"You're so smart Jordan," Maia yelled. It was strange to hear her almost being sweet, and yet in that tone of voice. "You shouldn't be at this school. It'll just slow you down. Make up with them and you could do anything."

"They sucked before they didn't believe in you," Jordan yelled back. "I don't want to make up with them."

"And really I'm touched, but we aren't together anymore Jordan," Maia said. "So why push them away when it costs you so much?"

"I don't need them," Jordan replied.

"No," Maia yelled. Simon was suddenly picturing a snapping turtle. "You are just clinging to false hope that we'll get back together, and it's keeping you from making things right with them. They're your parents Jordan!"

"I know that," Jordan screamed. "And trust me, you've made how you feel perfectly clear. I'm not deluded."

"Good," Maia yelled back. Jordan didn't say anything, but Simon could imagine only too well the pained expression on his roommate's face at this moment, and Simon knew how much of those words had been lies.

"I'm gonna leave then," Maia said. "Goodbye, Jordan."

Then Simon heard Maia's footsteps and scrambled to get out of the way. He just managed to hide behind the door before he saw Maia storm past, clearly too preoccupied to notice his presence. Slowly, Simon walked inside the apartment to find Jordan standing, staring at where Maia had just
"She's really never going to take me back, is she?" Jordan said very quietly, his voice weak with grief. The hope Jordan usually had, seemed to have faded from his eyes.

"I don't think so, no," Simon said as kindly as he could. He moved forward, and put a reassuring arm around his friend's shoulders. A single tear ran down Jordan's cheek, but he didn't move.

"Our old fights were like that," Jordan said after a moment. "They'd start from something small, and we'd both rise to the occasion until we were fighting about big important things, saying things that we didn't mean, or at least I didn't mean them. I can't say if she did." He paused, wiping the single tear from his face before speaking again. "Maybe we aren't meant to be, we're just too different, or maybe too much the same."

Simon pulled his friend into a hug, and felt Jordan's arms tighten around him. Simon didn't know what it was like to be in Jordan's shoes exactly, but he knew enough about heartbreak to know how much Jordan needed the hug.

"We are so not staying in tonight," Simon stated as firmly as he knew how.

"Can't I just lay on the couch and stare at the ceiling," Jordan whined. "In sweats."

"Oh, hell no!" Simon counted. "Nice jeans at the very least, and a dress shirt."

It took a solid half hour to convince Jordan to leave the house, but Simon managed it, and in the correct clothes and everything.

The closest bar was a little ways past Campus on the other side from their apartment, but still it wasn't too long a walk. Even if they'd have had to drive, Simon could have taken a bus. He planned to make sure Jordan was in no fit state to drive before he got home tonight. Neither of them spoke much on the walk. Simon sensed that Jordan didn't want to talk much at all, but he knew that it didn't mean Jordan wasn't drowning in his own thoughts. It was definitely time to turn that big brain of his off for the night.

When they walked in, Simon went straight to the bar and ordered them each two shots. Jordan drank them, but without much enthusiasm.

"To moving on," Simon tried to make a toast, but Jordan just downed the whole shot without so much as a clink.

"You know what's the worst part," Jordan complained, now five shots in and looking a little tipsy. "She's probably right."

"About?" Simon asked, hoping for clarification. He could feel the affects of the alcohol in his system, though he seemed to be in a better state than Jordan. Whether that was from a better alcohol tolerance or not was up for debate.

"Push them way," Jordan mumbled. "Parents go away. Maia right, shouldn't do that. No point without her."

"Okay buddy, maybe drink some water," Simon ordered them both water and made sure Jordan drank it. Now Simon was sure Jordan had downed at least three more shots than he had. Actively deciding to cut himself off at this point so he could watch out for Jordan, Simon switched to club soda.
About an hour of whining and sulking into his water later, Jordan was starting to make sense again. Simon was feeling pretty sober by now. Sober enough to notice the two women watched them. One had lightly tanned skin, dirty blonde hair. She was wearing a casual top and bootcut jeans, and had been watching Jordan for the last ten minutes. But it was the woman beside her that caught Simon's eye. If he didn't know better, he'd have said it was Izzy. She had the same long brown hair, same deep emotional eyes. Of course, he knew it wasn't Isabelle. Simon was sure there wasn't another woman on this earth he'd physically know so well as Izzy, and there was no mistaking this woman for Isabelle, but all the same, they looked so much alike that Simon couldn't take his eyes off her. He turned his head to keep her in view as she pulled out from her chair and came towards them, her friend following behind.

"Hello," not Izzy said as she smiled at him. "I'm Natalie."

"Simon," Simon said, still a little stunned. "And this is my friend, Jordan."

"Jordan," Natalie's friend said with a smile as she turned to look at him. "That's a nice name." Jordan didn't respond, and Simon felt the need to explain the situation.

"His ex stomped on his heart a little tonight," Simon explained. "So I told him he needed to get drunk."

"Good thinking," Natalie chuckled. He'd come here tonight for Jordan, so Simon tried to tune his brain into what was happening with Jordan.

"I'm Paige," the woman was saying to Jordan, who was looking at her now with more attention than before.

"Hi," he said, looking better than he had since his fight with Maia, but still gloomier than most.

"She really did a number on you, huh," Paige added. "How long ago did you two break up?" Simon didn't hear Jordan's reply, but he heard Paige speak again. "Even after so long and you still care. Wow that's rare. Her loss I say."

"See, rationally I know you're right," Jordan replied. "But rational thinking isn't really my thing right now." Paige chuckled, a cute easy laugh that even managed to get a smile out of Jordan.

"Do you want to go sit over here?" Natalie asked, pulling Simon's attention back to his situation, and away from Jordan's. He turned and saw that Natalie was gesturing to a few chairs farther away from the bar.

"I should probably keep an eye on my friend," Simon said holding his ground, his attention threatening to return to listening into Jordan and Paige's conversation.

"I promise you he'll be fine with her," Natalie replied, kindly.

"But I don't know her," Simon said. "Or you."

"So guarded," Natalie said thoughtfully. "Have I done something to offend you?"

"No, sorry," Simon sighed, covering his face with his hands for a moment before looking at her again. "It's just that you look almost exactly like someone else I used to know."

"I see," Natalie replied with a smile. "Your ex?"

"Sorta," Simon answered awkwardly. He moved as she'd directed, and went to sit a few chairs away
Oh, well that sounds complicated," Natalie laughed. "I do confess I had a feeling the two of you would be rather interesting when I saw you walk in."

"How do you make interesting sound like a good thing?" Simon replied.

"Because it is," Natalie said. "Just imagine, if life weren't interesting, wouldn't that be horribly dull."

Simon couldn't help but laugh. "I can't argue with you there," he smiled. This woman was lovely, though he was neglecting his friend duties. When Simon turned his head absently to check on Jordan, he felt his jaw drop. Jordan and Paige were kissing, their arms and lips locked together. Simon just blinked for a moment, stunned.

"I think I got him drunker than I realized," Simon whispered.

Natalie chuckled, and Simon found his attention once again fixed on her. "And how drunk are you?"

"Not that drunk," Simon whispered back, but Natalie was moved closer.

"I believe in going after what you want," Natalie whispered so quietly Simon almost didn't hear her. "So does Paige."

"Do you now," Simon gasped. He knew she wanted him to kiss her, but he also sensed that she wasn't going to go all the way in for it. She wanted him to move forward and initiate the kiss. Simon's mind was in a whirl. If he closed his eyes, he could so easily pretend she was Izzy, but where would that get him? Izzy hadn't been his even when he'd been kissing her; kissing someone else while thinking of her was yet another step farther away from where he wanted to be.

"I'm sorry," Simon said quickly as he pulled away. "I know the 'it's not you it's me' thing is super cliche, but in this case it's true." Collecting his jacket from the back of his chair, Simon turned back to her and added, "It was nice meeting you Natalie."

As he moved away, Simon could tell there was still alcohol in his system, but not enough to make him feel better. Jordan knew the way home, and didn't have access to a car. He could get home on his own, or he'd go home with Paige. Either way he'd be fine, and Simon just wanted to go home. He walked out onto the street. The asphalt was so black tonight, the moon low in the sky. Quickly glancing both ways when he crossed the street, Simon walked forward quickly. Then two things happened at once.

Simon's foot slipped on the thin ice covering the road. He fell and felt the sharp hard ground dig into both his palms and knees. Simon turned to look up, and saw a car coming straight for him, its wheels skidding on the black ice.

Chapter End Notes

*Insert evil laugh here* And yes my beta did yell at me after reading this and I had to offer up a bunch of spoilers to make it up to her. ^_^ Also wow chapter 100! That's so cool. Now I just need 50 more to catch up with L&B.

So… my Flash addiction is going strong… I'm on season 4 episode 5. Yes, this means I
have watched basically a whole season since last updating this story. (If I am right in
thinking I had just started season 3 when I last updated...) One more episode and I am
going to be totally catch up and reduced to binge watching Arrow. This is the same way
I got sucked into the Flash… watching it while I waited for more Supergirl. Sigh. I have
a problem. I have like NO excuses for not updating this story faster… except my new
CW addiction. More sighing. iZombie and Supernatural are also CW show which
means I've been watching NOTHING but CW shows for like ever at this point!
#NeedsALife

Looking for Artists:

Are any out there among my readers artists? The contest people have sent me a message
saying they need a better cover for my book. If you are at all interested PM me or leave
a review while logged in and I'll PM you back.

Sneak Peek Chapter 101

"I miss sleep," Jem whined as Lucie started crying. Tessa groaned and covered her head
with her pillow.

"I'm up," Will sighed and Tessa felt him move on her left as he got out of bed. Through
her closed eyelids Tessa saw the light of the door open and Will leave. She wasn't sure
if she dozed off again or not but she saw the light again when Will returned. Tessa felt
his weight return to the bed, but she also sensed someone else.

"Why isn't she crying?" Tessa asked turning and opening her eyes. Lucie was laying on
Will's chest with his fingers in her mouth.

"She's chewing on me," Will replied, his eyes half closed. Tessa didn't even want to
check the time, but she knew from the level of fatigue in her body it was some ungodly
hour of the morning.

"My hand is soaked," Will said. Tessa knew he was too tired to laugh but sensed he
might if he'd had the energy.

"That won't last long," Jem said. "I have some grapes in the freeze that might be frozen
by now."

Tessa's whole body begged her to sleep, but instead she moved, lifting herself and
moving down the bed to exit at the bottom since Will and Jem were on either side of
her. Feeling a bit like a zombie Tessa walked to the kitchen opened the freezer and
pulled out what she needed. Placing a few in a small child's bowl Tessa went back to
bed. At the moment she couldn't even care if their bed was covered in grape mush in the
morning, so long as they got to sleep in it uninterrupted.

Crawling into bed Tessa placed the grapes on Will's chest, before collapsing back down
onto her pillow. Tessa's eyes shut instantly and she was asleep in seconds, only to be
woken by her daughter once again.
Tessa's Sleep

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes.

Tessa was getting sick of doing laundry. It seemed like no matter how much laundry she did, there was still something more to wash. True, the amount of laundry in the house had gone up significantly since Lucie had been born, but the last few weeks had seen a major increase in loads of dirty baby clothes. Lucie was drooling on everything. This alone wasn't much to worry about, but when Lucie stopped sleeping through the night Tessa had put two and two together. Her daughter was teething.

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Crawling into bed, Tessa placed the bowl of grapes on Will's chest before collapsing back down onto her pillow. Tessa's eyes shut instantly, and she was asleep in seconds, only to be woken by her daughter once again.

Opening her eyes, Tessa saw Lucie laying on her tummy on her father's chest. Will's eyes were closed and his breathing was even, so Tessa suspected him to be still asleep. How he could sleep through his daughter crying literally on top of him, she hadn't a clue. Leaning over, Tessa scooped up her daughter into her arms and pulled her close. Lucie settled down on Tessa, and started pulling on her mother's nightshirt.

"Sorry sweetheart," Tessa told her. "All dried up, but you can suck on my fingers if your gums hurt."

Lucie happily substituted Tessa's fingers for nipples, and the room fell silent as Tessa felt her hand slowly cover with drool. With the secure feeling of her daughter against her skin, and the silence now blessing the room, Tessa's eyes closed, all her focus on the feeling of Lucie's gums gnawing on her fingers. She wasn't sure why it was so calming, or maybe she was just too tired to care. Either
way, Tessa woke up awhile later as the sun streamed in through the window.

Taking a deep breath, Tessa could sense her daughter still asleep on her chest. She opened her eyes, and just looked at Lucie for a moment. She was so quiet and peaceful, which had been rare this last week. The more Tessa looked, the more she saw. Lucie was a beautiful baby, with a soft patch of light brown hair, a round face, and soft skin. As she was getting older, more of her character was taking shape, more details and distinctive features could be seen now than when she'd been born. Tessa reached her hand up to gently stroke her daughter's head while she slept.

As it turned out, this was exactly what Tessa shouldn't have done since Lucie promptly woke up. Lifting the baby, Tessa sat up in bed, trying to rock her back to sleep, but Lucie was having none of it. Will was still asleep beside her, and Tessa didn't want to wake him. Moving quickly, she got out on Jem's empty side and made her way out of the room. As Tessa walked up and down the hall trying to get Lucie to settle down, she found Jem in the kitchen preparing a bottle.

"I hope her teeth come in soon," Jem said as he passed the warmed bottle of formula to Tessa. "Or Will is gonna have to go on stress leave at work."

"Fighting fires on no sleep does worry me," Tessa sighed as the room suddenly felt silent, Lucie's mouth now otherwise occupied by her bottle.

"He should really start sleeping in another room or something," Jem said. "So he doesn't fall asleep at the station."

"I know," Tessa sighed, but neither of them were going to suggest such a thing. It would only make things worse. Will already felt left out being the only one that worked. He hadn't said a word, but she and Jem knew him well enough to know he hated being away from them.

"I wonder if maybe I should move out," Jem said suddenly.

"What!" Tessa exclaimed. "No. Why? And this is your house."

"I know, I know," Jem said rubbing his face with his hands. He looked about as tired as Tessa felt. "I'm not stupid. I can see how... I don't know... I mean Will hasn't said anything, but I can tell he feels left out."

"This is still your house," Tessa said firmly. She wanted to just insert into his brain that everything was fine, and he needed to stop stressing, but she didn't have the energy to come up with decent responses.

"And Will's daughter calls me da-da," Jem said, guilt etched in his voice.

"She's too little to understand," Tessa said kindly, looking into Jem's eyes to try and comfort him, since her hands were busy holding and feeding Lucie. "One day she'll call you papa or something."

Jem laughed, but there wasn't much humor in it.

"When I was eighteen," he began. "I not only decided I was never going to have kids, I made sure of it. The fact that you and Will have allowed me to share in your domestic family I'm grateful for, but I don't want to take anything away from either of you."

"I promise you don't," Tessa said. "Honestly, I don't know how I'd have done this without you, Jem."

"Thanks," he smiled. There was more serenity in his face now, and Tessa decided that for the
moment things were fine. That is until Lucie finished eating, and Tessa pulled the bottle away.

"Look!" Tessa said pointing. "Does that look like a tooth to you?"

"I do believe it does," Jem smiled. "We should tell Will."

"No, we should pretend we didn't see it, and have him discover it," Tessa suggested.

"Oh yes, that's better," Jem agreed, as he turned toward the kitchen. "You want some breakfast? I was going to make omelettes."

"You mean eggs with stuff in them," Tessa giggled as she placed Lucie in her play pen behind the couch. During the day Lucie was usually pretty happy, as long as she had something to distract her from the pain in her gums.

"I mean omelettes the way I make them," Jem replied.

"Omelettes a'la Jem it is then," Tessa smiled. "Thank you."

As Tessa lay on the couch with her arm over her eyes, she could smell Jem's cooking in the kitchen. Her mind drifted, and it was as if the gentle sounds of cooking were her own personal lullaby. She was probably half asleep when the doorbell rang. Lucie it seemed didn't enjoy this at all.

"Wahaa!" Lucie cried. "Whaaahaa. Waaaa."

With a groan, Tessa got up, scooped her daughter up out of the play pen, and went to get the door.

"Oh, hi Jace," Tessa said with as much enthusiasm she could offer for the one who had prevented her from napping before breakfast.

"Hey," Jace said. "I was wondering if Will was home."

"He's sleeping," Tessa replied, re-adjusting her daughter on her hip.

"At ten o'clock?" Jace asked.

"Yes," Tessa said without bothering to answer the question more fully. She stepped aside and let Jace into the house, but he didn't move.

"I could come back later if this is a bad time," Jace said cautiously.

"Come in Jace," Tessa smiled. "It's as good a time as any."

"Unless of course you could magically transport us to a time when Lucie's out of diapers," Jem chuckled.

"No time machine, sorry," Jace said a little more confidently as he walked inside, closing the door behind him. Lucie was squirming again. Tessa put her down, but all the little rascal did was attach herself to Tessa's leg.

"Will says you're good with kids," Tessa said. "Would you mind entertaining her for a moment?"

"Umm… sure," Jace said, bending down to look Lucie eye to eye. "Hello little angel."

"Ha!" Tessa scoffed. "Angel's don't keep me up half the night drooling more than should be humanly possible."
Jace chuckled, but managed to coax the toddler into releasing Tessa's leg, though this only seemed to result in Lucie's clinging to Jace instead.

"Ace," Lucie giggled.

"And what am I?" Tessa objected to Lucie's nickname for her father's cousin. "Chopped liver?"

"Ma," Lucie replied, pointing at Tessa. Then she turned, now pointing to Jem she said, "Da-da."

"Only Jem gets a double syllable huh," Tessa narrowed her eyes at her daughter. "I shall have to remind you of this when you're older and asking for money."

"Please don't even go there." It was Will's voice. Everyone turned to see him standing blurrily in the bedroom doorway looking half dead from lack of sleep. "I don't want to picture her as a teenager. For the love of whatever you hold dear, don't make me picture it."

"You look awful," Tessa told him.

"Right back at you," Will whined. "And at least you don't have to work tonight."

"I think you should call in sick," Tessa replied.

"I agree," Jem backed her up.

It was then that Will noticed Jace. He blinked sleepily at his cousin before speaking. "Did we have plans today that I forgot about?" he asked.

"Umm, no," Jace began. "I was just in the neighbourhood and thought I'd stop by."

"You hungry?" Jem called from the kitchen. Tessa rather loved the layout of Jem's place, with the kitchen and living area being open enough for people to carry on a conversation, while technically still in different rooms.

"When he says omelettes, he means scrambled eggs with stuff in them," Tessa explained. "You have been warned."

"Free food, sounds good to me," Jace laughed, but when he tried to move forward, he found it rather more difficult than expected. "Umm… maybe bring it over here?" Lucie was still sitting on his foot, wrapped around his leg.

"Nonsense," Will chuckled. "If I can walk with her on my leg so can you."

Tessa couldn't help but watch for a moment as Jace put more effort into lifting his foot, toddler and all. After hobbling across the room, Jace made it to the dinner table. Jem put a frying pan of eggs with green onion and red peppers mixed into it on the table. There was a pill of buttered toast as well, and people started eating as they sat down. After a few minutes, Lucie seemed to tire of Jace's leg, and gave it up to crawl over to her parents and ask for attention.

"Yes, hello there," Will said to his daughter, who was raising her hands up to him. With a sigh and a smile, Will reached down and scooped Lucie into his lap.

"No, that isn't for you," Will said trying to keep her from grabbing at his breakfast and throwing it on the floor. Lucie was not at all happy with this result.

"Waaaaahaaahaaaa!" she cried, tears suddenly pooling in her eyes and snot running from her nose.
"This certainly is a different dynamic than the last time I was here," Jace said.

"Oh?" Tessa asked turning to him.

"Lucie was so wonderful last time," Jace explained. "But she seems like quite the unhappy handful today."

"Ah yes, the ever shifting mood of the eleven month old," Will chuckled.

"Also, you all look more tired than a hung over insomniac," Jace commented. Everyone laughed at this, but no one disagreed with him.

Jace stuck around for an hour or so, then left saying he had to get to class. Tessa was glad he'd come over, as it was nice to see a new face, but she was also glad when he left. With just family around, Tessa could act as tired as she felt and change into her really comfortable pajamas.

"Guys!" Will said suddenly, and Jem and Tessa turned to look. "Guys look, I think her teeth have come in!"

Tessa smiled as she looked at the joy on Will's face. Then she glanced at Jem. They shared a look that promised never to explain to Will that they'd noticed Lucie's teeth hours ago.

---

Chapter End Notes

There was a time when I didn't understand how other writers updated so slowly. I literally couldn't comprehend the very concept... and now here I am forcing myself to get through this chapter through sheer stubbornness.

There was a time when writing consumed my every waking thought. I thought about my stories, tried scenes in my head and plotted out possibilities all day every day: at work, in the shower, before I went to sleep, while cooking, eating, commuting, cleaning... and more. Every part of my life was just inspiration for my fanfics. Every emotion, every event, every moment's peace lead to words on the page.

Looking back at it now, I know that this is how I was able to update so fast for so long. (If my math isn't wrong those two years meant 860,000 words in total. Which is 430,000 a year; 35,800 a month, not including my unpublished stuff.) I was go, go, going for so long, writing so fast and now I feel like I'm... burning out? Maybe. I'm honestly not sure. I just know I don't care to write as fast as before. A think a huge part of it is the network of friends I made through Malec and writing have all moved on to other things. Without them the energy just isn't there like before. But the main factor of how long it took for this specific Tessa chapter to get done was simply that I didn't feel like writing for Tessa. I kept working on the following Clary one to the point where I actually have that one done the same day I finally get this stupid Tessa one finished.

Then again there is always the chance that I am just super lazy. ^_^ hehe. I am after all almost half way through season 3 of Arrow... The last time I updated I believe I was still watching The Flash... #StillNeedsALife

------------------------------------------------------
"Have you seen my nail file?" Clary called to the house at large from her current location in the bathroom. Her mind had been wondering while she searched every drawer.

"Why would I know where your nail file is?" Jace's voice reached her ears. Clary looked up to see her boyfriend standing in the bathroom doorway.

"I don't know," Clary said. "Maybe you took it."

"And why on earth would I do that?" Jace grinned.

"Oh, I don't know," Clary smiled. "To file your nails."

"A master detective if ever there was one," Jace told her, smirking.

"Does this mean you did take my nail file?" Clary asked, turning to narrow her eyes at the gorgeous blonde man before her.

"And what are you gonna do to me if I did?" Jace said, raising his eyebrow.

"Well if you don't give it back, I'm going to be late for class," Clary explained.

"Or here's a radical thought," Jace smirked. "You could go to class with a hangnail." He opened his mouth in mock horror, his eyes wide, but Clary just rolled her eyes.
Clary's Toll

Chapter Notes
See the end of the chapter for notes

Clary was starting to think she was cursed. Twice now, she'd found herself in a position where her friend had confessed romantic feelings for her. Either the universe was trying to tell her to stop being friends with guys, or she was giving off some very mixed signals. Of course, the two events had been quite different, not only in her reaction, but also in her understanding of what real love was.

When Simon had confessed to her how he felt back in high school, Clary hadn't thought twice about it. She'd simply kissed him, thinking the way she loved him was the same way he loved her. It wasn't until she'd fallen for Jace that Clary had realized how different the two forms of love really were. Jace could make her crazy, make her do things and want things she'd never have thought possible. He made her whole body hum with energy, and made her smile just by looking at her. Jace had taught her the difference between platonic love and fireworks.

When Brett told her how he felt, Clary had known with perfect clarity she didn't feel the same. Also, she and Brett hadn't been friends for as long as she and Simon, not that that made it suck any less when she lost her new friend the same way she'd almost lost her old one.

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"Well if you don't give it back, I'm going to be late for class," Clary explained.

"Or here's a radical thought," Jace smirked. "You could go to class with a hangnail." He opened his mouth in mock horror, his eyes wide, but Clary just rolled her eyes. Giving up on getting an answer to her question, Clary tried to push past Jace and out of the room.

"Oh, and who said you were allowed to leave?" Jace asked, wrapping an arm around her waist and holding her there.

"My professor," Clary giggled. "Who probably wants me to show up."

"Well in that case," Jace said. "I think you'll have to pay the toll."

"The toll?"
"Yes," Jace smirked. "The lady shall not pass... without a kiss."

"Oh, is that so," Clary smiled, before leaning in and kissing him. Jace's arms wrapped around her more securely as he half lifted her off the ground, kissing her deeply. Jace lifted her, turning them so that when the kiss ended, Clary was on the other side of the door. Leaning up, she kissed him again very quickly before turning and skipping to the door.

Clary's good mood followed her all the way to class until she entered the lecture hall. It was then that she suddenly remembered what class this was. This was the class she shared with Brett. Mentally preparing, Clary reminded herself that no matter what, she had Jace and even Simon. It would suck, but it wouldn't be the end of the world if she lost Brett as a friend.

Clary sat in her usual seat and saw Brett take the one beside her like he always did. Clary was more than a little surprised that he'd sat so close to her. Did this mean he was going to be her friend, or was he trying to prove he was better than Jace? With her mind focused on the awkward situation, Clary had a hard time paying attention to the lecturer. She took notes, and was pretty sure by the end, she had a general idea of what was going on, but she could have done better.

"Clary," Brett's voice made her turn. Class was over, and students were packing up to leave.

"Hey," Clary said, smiling. Then she promptly stopped smiling, worried it would give him the wrong idea. The classroom was emptying around them, and Clary didn't know whether she should leave now or stay and see if Brett was gonna say anything else.

"I-" Brett started. "Well I'm-" He took a deep breath, then looked her right in the eyes as he added, "I'm sorry, Clary."

Clary wasn't sure what to say so she remained silent.

"I shouldn't have expected anything from you," Brett said. "I didn't respect your choices, and I've been acting like a jerk, so I'm sorry."

"Thank you," Clary said softly, still a little stunned.

"Anyway," Brett said. "We can still be friends. I mean if, if that's what you want?"

"I'd like that," Clary smiled at him.

"Okay," Brett said, letting out a breath he probably hadn't realized he'd been holding. "I'll see you later then?"

"For sure," Clary replied. Packing up her books, Clary headed to her next class feeling considerably lighter than she had previously.

It was much easier to focus in her next class, and Clary was still in a good mood by the time she returned home that night. When Clary walked through her front door, her smiled turned into a glare as she saw the kitchen. Dishes stacked precariously near the sink, boxes of half eaten crackers mixed in with them, and the garbage piling up around the bin. Summer was over; enough was enough.

"Jordan, Simon, Jace!" Clary yelled through the house. "Kitchen now!"

"They aren't home." It was Jace's voice. Clary turned and saw him walking towards her.

"Well, when they get home we are all going to have a roommate meeting," she stated firmly.
"Oh yeah," Jace smiled, pulling her into his arms. "About what?" Clary felt all her frustration at the messy kitchen melt away as she closed her eyes and leaned into Jace.

"Have you seen the kitchen?" Clary asked.

Jace turned to face the kitchen doorway, and then back to her, looking confused. "We are literally standing in the kitchen," he said.

"And how does it look to you?" she asked. Jace shrugged. Clary prayed to whatever housekeeping gods she could think of, before taking a deep breath. "I am not washing all of those."

"Ok-ay," Jace said slowly. He had the strangest look on his face, like he was trying to read her mind and having no luck.

"I'm not kidding," Clary said. "I know I was unemployed over the summer, so I didn't mind, but we are all in school now, and it's time to pick up the slack boys." Jace continued to look dumbfounded, so Clary continued. "Dishes," she sighed. "You need to help with the dishes."

"I've done the dishes," Jace replied.

"Oh yeah, when?" Clary challenged.

"Ummm," he started looking sheepish.

"I'm making a chart," Clary said firmly. "Everyone is going to do the dishes in turns."

"Yes ma'am," Jace smiled, leaning down to kiss her.

"Good," Clary said. "Glad we sorted that out."

"Oh yes, because we are dealing with some serious relationship breaking stuff here," Jace sniggered. "Dishes. I mean it could get intense."

Clary giggled. "You never know," she said. "Wars have been fought over less."

"No one breaks up over dishes," Jace explained.

"You never know," Clary chuckled. "If they get much worse, the mess might come alive and eat us all."

"Ha ha," Jace said sarcastically. "Let me rephrase. No one should break up over something as silly as dishes. It seems like a really stupid reason to me."

"But kids isn't," Clary whispered, suddenly beyond sober as she closed her eyes and burying her face in his chest. Ever since their conversation last August, Clary had been a little on edge, worried kids were more important to Jace than he let on. Jace rarely brought it up though, and she'd learned from past experience that she needed to confront him directly about these types of things. Live and learn and all that.

She felt his finger gently under her chin encouraging her to look at him. Clary opened her eyes and gazed into those golden ones she loved so much.

"Seems a little silly to me," Jace began. "To leave the one person who made me want something, in order to get that something."

"What are you saying?" Clary asked.
"I'm saying that before you, kids were the farthest thing from my thoughts," Jace explained. "Farther even than being in a real relationship. One great afternoon playing with my cousin's daughter doesn't change that."

Some small tension in her chest Clary hadn't even realized was there relaxed, and Clary took a very deep breath in, feeling the relief of it.

"Besides, Lucie was quite the handful when I was over there yesterday," Jace added. "Kids look like a lot of work to me."

"They are," Clary laughed, her heart light. "But you like hanging out with Will right? You've been there a lot lately."

"I have," Jace smiled, stroking the side of her face and tucking a flyaway strand of hair behind her ear.

"That's good," Clary smiled. His gentle touch against her skin was very distracting. Clary couldn't help but close her eyes, just taking the moment. Jace's fingers slowly ran along her cheek, down her neck, and across her back. The tips of them slowly trailed down her body. There wasn't anything sexual about this contact, but rather emotional, almost meditative.

"It's amazing how many physical aspects of a relationship I didn't even know existed, before you," Jace whispered as his fingers found their way under her shirt to trail gently over her collarbone. "There are so many more ways to touch a person, more intimate than sex."

"Happy to teach you something," Clary grinned, opening her eyes to look up at him. "You've taught me so many things Clary Fairchild," Jace whispered. Then he was kissing her, and Clary melted into his touch, enjoyed the ease of her thoughts now that she'd talked to Jace about kids again.

She found herself in his arms, as they continued kissing, Clary's legs wrapped around his waist as he walked into their bedroom. Clary was feeling rather zen as she fell gently on her back on the bed. It wasn't until she moved, that she felt something sharp under her.

"Ouch," Clary grumbled, reaching to find what it was that she'd fallen on. Seconds later, she held the item up to Jace, her eyebrows furrowed. "Didn't take my nail file, huh?"

"It was the cat," Jace sniggered.

"We don't have a cat," Clary countered.

"It was one of Alec's cats," Jace replied.

"Oh so Chairmen Meow just walked all the way over from Malec's place to move my nail file from the bathroom to the bed?"

"Yep," Jace nodded grinning from ear to ear. "That's exactly what happened, only it was The Great Catsby."

Clary reached up to inspect her boyfriend's nails. "And the cat filed your nails while he was at it?" she remarked on Jace's well groomed hands.

"I'm telling you, that cat is diabolical," Jace said with such a straight face. Clary had to give him credit, since she was laughing too hard to make herself glare at him. Still chuckling, Clary shoved
Jace off and sat up, taking her nail file with her, with the intention of returning to it's proper place.

As she turned to leave the bathroom, Jace was there, still grinning from ear to ear. She knew she loved the boy more than made any rational sense when his kisses and caresses landed them in a steamy shower together. Getting out a while later into a foggy room, Clary put the fan on, which she definitely should have done before, rather than after their shower. Jace had again gently traced his fingers over her skin in the shower, and it had felt even better with the hot water running over them.

Wrapped in towels, they sat on the couch and avoided their homework together in the form of Netflix. The hour grew late, but neither of them wanted to get off the couch and go to bed. Clary had gotten a text from Simon many hours ago, saying he and Jordan were headed to a bar tonight, so she wasn't surprised that it was after midnight before anyone arrived home. As she heard the door open, Clary turned, expecting to see Simon and Jordan. What she actually saw nearly took her breath away. Only Jordan was back, and he wasn't alone. Even as they walked in, Jordan was lip locked with a women Clary had never seen before. She two tone dirty blonde hair, lightly tanned skin, and bootcut jeans.

"This is Paige," Jordan told them by way of introduction as the kissing couple moved past Clace on the couch. "Paige, these are my roommates, Jace and Clary."

"Nice to meet you," Paige said, pulling herself away from Jordan, just long enough to look at them before kissing Jordan again.

Clary sat stunned and staring as the pair made their way down the hall and disappeared into Jordan's bedroom. At least it was Jordan's bedroom at the moment. He and Simon tended to take turns in the actual room with a bed, camping out in the living room behind the divider wall the rest of the time.

"I thought he was in love with Maia?" Jace commented, tonelessly.

"Looks like he's moving on," Clary replied with just as little expression to her voice.

There was complete silence after that, all but the slight moans and giggles coming from Jordan's closed bedroom door. Clary couldn't help but wonder where Simon was. Had he met someone tonight too, and gone home with her instead of back here, or was Simon still at the bar and in need of a ride home? Surely Jordan wouldn't have left if Simon needed him, and it wasn't like Simon was a huge drinker or anything. Simon was organized and responsible; he'd probably brought cab money. So why did Clary had such a bad feeling?

"Jordan," Clary called down the hall as she got up to go knock on the door. "Is Simon on his way home too?"

This seemed to end whatever was happening on the other side of the door. There was silence, then Jordan pulled the door open and looked very seriously at Clary.

"Simon left the bar before me," Jordan said. "He should have beat me home. I thought he was behind the divider." Now Clary was truly worried, and by the look on Jordan's face, he was as well.

Just then, Clary's phone rang. Automatically reaching into her pocket, Clary didn't bother to check the caller ID before answering the call.

"Hello," she said numbly, while her mind tried to guess where her best friend was.

"Hello," a polite voice replied. "I'm looking for Clarissa."

"Speaking," Clary said.
"We have you here as Simon Lewis's emergency contact," the voice continued. "There's been an accident."

"What-" Clary mumbled, too frazzled to speak properly. "What happened?"

"He was hit by a car," the women said. "However the driver did manage to break at least a little before reaching him. It could have been a lot worse with all that black ice on the roads."

Clary wasn't processing her words totally. She felt numb and hollow.

"Can I see him?" Clary asked, needing confirmation that this was real.

"Yes," the women said. "Though, he hasn't woken up yet."

"I still want to see him," Clary replied stubbornly.

"Very well," the woman replied. "He's in the St Ann's Hospital, but it's late now and he isn't awake. Are you sure you don't want to wait until morning."

"Yes," Clary said firmly. "I want to see him now."

Chapter End Notes

Have I managed to drag out a cliffhanger for three whole chapters or what? hehe. Also woot look at me updating more than once in a blue moon! It's like I actually wrote on my days off. ^_^

I really do appreciate my readers interest in this and all my stories. Means alot. I try to keep it interesting for you.

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Sneak Peek Chapter 103

The lights were focused on him. They filled his vision, blocking out everything else from his view. The brightness was reflecting off something shiny and black, making things more distorted and harder to see. There was a glowing white orb high above him. It wasn't as bright as the two symmetrical lights, but it was definitely there mixed into the other chaos before him. Something fast moved around, but he couldn't figure out what exactly the quick movement meant. His own body was flailing, falling, slipping against everything. He couldn't get a grip on his surroundings. He could sense his limbs, though he knew not where they were. The dull pain in his hands and knees stung, the world coming up to greet him.

He had to get out, get away from the false reality of what he wanted. He'd gotten away, ran into the bright lights to escape, and now he was drowning in brightness, his world a haze. Then the pain in his knees and hands was nothing compared to the sudden agony in his arm. Suffering coursed through his body, consuming his every thought before the world went dark.

Darkness. Blackness. Nothing. There was nothing.
And yes I know the sneak peek wasn't much help either. ^_^ #EvilWriterIsEvil
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Darkness. Blackness. Nothing. There was nothing.

Then there was something, a slow steady noise. It came and went with a rhythm, and he kept pace with it, using the noise to pull himself back through the darkness. Other sounds were making themselves known. He could hear voices, whispered and worried voices that spoke his name.

"Simon."

He knew that voice. Knew it better than he knew his own. There was only one person who could have said his name in that voice.

"Clary," he whispered.

"Oh, thank the Angels!" Clary gasped. Simon heard her move, and then felt her sudden touch on his arm. He opened his eyes and saw the familiar red hair and concerned eyebrow crease of his best friend.

"Where am I, Clary?" Simon mumbled. Everyone except her face seemed to be fuzzy. He was fairly certain he wasn't wearing glasses.

"In the hospital," Clary told him. Simon processed the information for a second. He'd left the Izzy lookalike at the bar, then what had happened? His memory was foggy.

Confused, but feeling a need to move, Simon tried to sit up. He was stopped by the IV in his arm, as well as by Clary holding him down.

"No moving," Clary ordered, firmly placing a hand on his shoulder to stop him from moving.

"Ow," Simon said as he felt the pain in his limbs. "Okay, no moving."

"Good," Clary said sternly. Simon lay back down in bed just breathing. It was a little more work than usual, this breathing business.

Simon turned to see who else was in the room with her. He thought the blurry blonde haired guy
standing a few feet behind Clary was probably Jace, but there was someone else in the room he
couldn't make out.

"Clary," Simon said. "Where are my glasses?"

"Oh!" she exclaimed, before scrambling around in his side table, and then handed him the metal
frame with lenses. Simon put them on one handed, and instantly recognized Jace. Turning, he saw
that the other person present was Jordan. He wasn't surprised he hadn't been able to recognize Jordan
without his glasses, as Jordan was standing very farther back, almost hiding in the shadows.

"How long have I been here?" Simon asked.

"Since about 1am this morning," Clary explained. "Before that, you were in the emergency room."

"Have you been here this whole time?" Simon asked her. He felt bad for ruining her day, but it was
wonderful to see how much she still cared.

"Of course," Clary said. "As your emergency contact they let me. But Jordan and Jace were only
allowed in once the visiting hours started. There's another person here for you too, but I don't
recognize them. I think she was the one who called 911."

"Did she give a name?" Simon asked.

"Francesca?" Clary said uncertainly. "Francie maybe? Okay, I might not have been paying too close
attention. It was F- something anyway. Either way, not important. I call your mother and sister,"
Clary continued. Simon groaned, but she seemed to ignored him. "And told them what happened.
They are both probably getting on planes as we speak."

"Did you have to do that," he whined. "Now they are just gonna worry for like no reason. I'm alive
aren't I?"

"No reason my ass," Clary snapped at him. "The doctors say you have a few broken ribs, A broken
elbow, and major bruising on your whole left side. Not to mention the skin damage from the ice and
the car. You scraped your knees and palms when you fell. And your left leg is in bad shape. The
doctors said they were worried about infections."

"A car hit me?" Simon confirmed.

"Yes," Clary said.

Simon looked down at this body again, really taking in what had happened to him. His left arm was
in a sling, while his right had the IV placed. He couldn't see his the state of his skin through the sling
due on his left arm. He could also feel the pain in his ribs as he breathed. Turning his other hand
over, Simon studied his palm. It was covered in bandages and he could feel a similar situation in his
other hand. He wasn't sure if he wanted to check and see what the stage of his legs were like. He
could feel the tenderness in the muscles of his left leg enough without lifting the blanket.

Simon looked up and noticed again that Jordan was still standing well back, even though Jace had
moved forward to stand closer to Clary.

"Hey Jordan," Simon called, with a smile. "Grant a dying man his wish and stop skulking." Jordan
moved closer but he seemed so downcast, as if a dark cloud hung over him.

"You alright?" Simon asked, his light mood shifting to that of concern.
Slowly, Jordan moved forward a little more and spoke. "This is my fault," he said.

"No!" Simon snapped.

"I shouldn't have just left assuming you'd gone home," Jordan said. "I shouldn't have let us split up."

"If I recall correctly, I was the one that ditched you first," Simon disagreed.

"Yeah but-" Jordan tired.

"No buts," Simon argued. "My head hurts and the world is spinning, so you are going to let me win this, understand?" Jordan nodded stoically. "Good. Besides, wouldn't it be the fault of whoever was driving the car?"

Just then there was a knock on the doorframe, and everyone turned. Standing, looking a little out of place was a woman. She was short with black hair, pale skin, and a round face.

"Oh, hi," Clary said. "This is who I was talking about, Simon. She called 911. I'm sorry, but I have totally forgotten your name."

"Faith," she said, shyly.

"Well Faith, thank you for getting Simon help," Clary told her, but the girl had the same expression on her face that Simon had seen on Jordan's a moment ago.

"You were the one driving the car, weren't you," Simon asked and she nodded.

"I just couldn't stop," she said. "I put the break down, even pumped it, but the ice…"

"See Jordan," Simon said, turning to face his friend again. "It wasn't even the drivers fault. If you want to blame someone, blame winter." He laughed then regretted it at once. "Ow," he added lamely.

"I'm really, really sorry," Faith said. "I managed to turn away a bit, and hit something solid to stop the car, but I still hit you."

"And I'm sure if you hadn't swerved, I wouldn't be here to have this conversation," Simon replied.

"If there's anything I can do to help, please ask," Faith said. "I'll let you get back to your family, I just wanted to tell you that I'm sorry."

"Thanks," Simon said, trying to smile for her. He wasn't sure why social conventions mattered to him at the moment, but he didn't let the pain show on his face until she was gone.

"Pro-tip," Simon grunted through the pain. "Don't try and laugh with a broken rib."

"That's some good solid advice there my friend," Jace said. "I'd go over and slap you on the back as praise, but it might shatter what bones you have left." Simon laughed, groaned, then glared at Jace. To his great delight, Clary then hit Jace on the shoulder, with technique.

"Ow," Jace whined, rubbing his shoulder. "When did you get so good at that."

"Defense classes," Clary reminded him. "So far I've only used them on you. Feel lucky." Jace grumbled something under his breath as Clary turned away from him and back to Simon who was grinning.
"Hit Jace again," Simon smirked.

"You two," Clary sighed, with a shake of her head. Just then a nurse walked into the room. She had long hair, an oval face, and was wearing light blue scrubs from head to toe.

"I'm glad to see you're awake," she said.

"I think I preferred sleeping," Simon whined. "It didn't hurt so much when I was sleeping."

"If you want more pain meds you just have to press this button here," the nurse said, reaching over to point to the button on a cable by his bed. Simon squinted at the tiny writing on her nametag as she leaned over him.

"Thanks Holly," Simon told her. There was surprise on her face for only a slight second before she relaxed. Simon was sure for a moment she'd forgotten she was wearing a nametag.

Simon pushed the button, and just seconds later he felt the drugs hit his system. The world wasn't so clear or so steady, but it hurt a hell of a lot less.

"You got some good drugs here," Simon mumbled sleepily. He registered Holly's smile. He could feel how much energy being awake had cost him. Simon laid down and closed his eyes. The world could wait until later. Sleep was his friend…

He woke to a very busy room. There was a little light still coming in through the blinds, but he could tell that he'd slept for at least a few hours. There were more people here now. He recognized Alec and Magnus among them, as well as Jace, Clary and Jordan. He saw Maia in the corner farthest from Jordan. She didn't seem to fit in, and he knew she was only there for him. Maia wasn't friends with the others as far as he knew, and she was on the outs with Jordan. Simon couldn't help but notice who was missing. Had someone even told Izzy?

Realizing he'd dozed off again, it took him a while to get his bearings. It was much darker now than before, and his room was empty of people. Someone had taken his glasses off his face, and the world was all the more blurry for it, but Simon could guess it was basically the middle of the night. His arm was hurting more so he pushed his magic pain killer button, and moments later fell right back to sleep.

When he woke up next, there was light. The sun was out, and Simon didn't want to sleep anymore. He found the settings on his bed that raised himself up, almost into a sitting position without moving.

"Good morning," Holly said, smiling at him. "How do you feel?"

"Less tired," Simon replied. "Otherwise the same."

"That's to be expected," Holly replied. "It's good you got some rest though."

"Holly, would you mind passing me my glasses?"

"Sure," she replied, reaching over and then placing them on his face. Simon felt lucky to have such a wonderful nurse. She moved with confidence, while still being kind and easy to talk to.

"They should be bringing in your breakfast soon," Holly said. "Then it's visiting hours. Do you know if anyone is coming to see you today?"

"No idea," Simon replied. "But probably someone. We seem to be quite a crowd these days."
She smiled as she checked his vials and IV bags. Then - seeming to have no issues with his situation - Holly left to return later on her rounds.

When breakfast was delivered, Simon ate one handed then switched to one handed channel surfing as he tried to find something good to watch on the television. To his great sadness, the hospital didn't have Netflix, and cable tv just wasn't what it used to be. His breakfast had been cleared away when Simon's visitor arrived. Clary walked in again, this time accompanied by Maia.

Maia flung herself at Simon, resulting in his yelling loudly that his elbow was broken. Maia pulled back muttered sorry, but her eyes were so relieved.

"It's so good to see you awake," Maia said. "I was here yesterday, but you were sleeping."

"I remember seeing you for a moment between naps," Simon smiled at her. "But really, there isn't much to see. Just one slightly car smashed guy stuck in bed."

"Oh shut up," Maia grumbled. Just then her phone rang. As she checked the ID, Maia swore before answering it.

"Oh shit, I'm sorry," Maia said. "I know we were suppose to meet for lunch, it's just that I totally forgot what with Simon and everything." There was silence as whoever Maia was speaking to replied. "Yeah he's in the hospital. Didn't Alec tell you?" Silence. Then Maia pulled the phone away from her ear. "She hung up on me."

"Who did?" Clary asked.

"My overly dramatic roommate," Maia sighed. "Nevermind. I'll make it up to her later."

"It was Izzy?" Simon asked, his slow tired brain finally putting two and two together.

"Yeah," Maia said. "I forgot I was suppose to be meeting up with her right now."

"She didn't know about the car then?" Simon replied.

"Seems not," Maia shrugged. "I was sure Alec would have said something."

"Malec is deep in wedding planning mode," Clary explained. "It probably slipped Alec's mind."

Simon wasn't sure if he was unhappy or pleased that Izzy hadn't known. Maybe that explained why he hadn't seen her since arriving here? Simon knew they weren't doing the benifits part of their friendship anymore, but he had hoped they were still friends at least.

"Tell me more about Malec's wedding coma," Simon said.

"Are you sure?" Clary asked.

"Yes," Simon replied. "Anything to distract me."

"Well as you can guess, the Lightwoods want a big wedding," Clary began. "We are talking like 500 guests big, but Magnus wanted a small wedding. That big a difference alone can break other couples I'm sure, but Malec seems to have gotten it figured out. I think the end result of the weeks of debates between the grooms and their families was to have a small intimate wedding, and huge reception after."

"Reasonable compromise," Maia observed.
"Now the issues are venues, food and such, I think," Clary continued. "From what Magnus tells me, the biggest disagreement so far was the size, so now that's fixed in theory, they should have smooth sailing here on out. Though I am also sure Magnus would elope with Alec tomorrow if given half the chance." She chuckled. "Those two are like oil and water some days."

"You know what they say," Simon smiled. "Opposites attract."

For another ten minutes Simon happily listened to Clary go on about Malec wedding details, his focus only half there some of the time. It was nice to have people around, and something to think about apart from bad cable.

The sudden sound of pounding feet made everyone turn and look. When the runner reached the doorway they saw that it was Izzy, but she hardly looked like herself. Her hair had probably been in a tight bun before, but now, most of it hung loose, the rest frizzy. She looked slightly crazed with a wild look in her eyes. Everyone stared at her, but no one spoke for at least thirty seconds.

"Izzy, are you okay?" Maia asked. Isabelle was panting as if she'd run all the way here. Simon just couldn't believe his eyes. He'd never seen her so uncomposed before.

"AM I OKAY!" she yelled. "Really!"

"Well, ummm yeah," Maia replied confused. Izzy didn't say anything but moved forward towards Simon. She seemed to be taking in the machines keeping track of his heart and giving him IV fluids.

"Everything's fine," Simon told her, confused and touched by the naked concern on her face.

"What happened?" Izzy asked. "Maia just said you were in the hospital."

"A car bumped into me," Simon explained.

"But you're okay," Izzy said, relief plain as day on her face.

"Yeah," Simon whispered.

"I'll see you later," Clary said getting up out of her chair, and grabbing Maia by the arm as she made to walk out.

"Hey," Maia protested. The two women must of exchanged some unspoken girl code thing, because a second later Maia was on the same page, and both her and Clary were making their excuses and leaving.

Simon was staring at Izzy, dumbstruck by what he saw. Never before had Isabelle been so unguarded, her emotions raw and exposed in her features.

"I thought maybe," Izzy said, her breathing hitching as she spoke. "It was worse. People go to the hospital and don't come back."

"Did something like that happen to you?" Simon asked kindly, reaching out to stroke her cheek. It was a simple thing, and he knew he shouldn't after how he'd reacted to her last advance on him, but Simon couldn't help it. He'd never seen Izzy so vulnerable before.

"Yeah," Izzy mumbled.

"Do you mind if I ask who?" Simon inquired.

"This guy," Izzy began. "From a long time ago. He, we were... you know, and then he... didn't
And just like that, something clicked inside Simon's head and he felt like for a moment he understood Isabelle perfectly. She'd cared about someone once, maybe even been loyal and in love, but that person had died, leaving her the person she was now.

"I'm sorry that happened to you," Simon said softly. "But I promise, I'm okay."

"Why," she began then seemed to chicken out.

"Why what, Izzy?" Simon asked, but she looked away. "Hey," he whispered, placing a hand under her chin. "You can ask me anything, okay."

"Why did you end what we had?" Izzy asked in barely more and a whisper.

"What we had?" Simon replied confused.

"Yeah," Izzy said.

"I think we have very different ideas of what we had," Simon explained gently. "I've done the pity girlfriend before, and I wasn't keen on doing it again."

"What are you talking about?" Izzy asked.

"You said I wasn't allowed to fall in love with you," Simon reminder her. "You set the rules, and when I could no longer follow those rules, I broke it off. I wanted to keep your friendship."

"You aren't making any sense," Izzy said, shaking her head in confusion.

"Isabelle," Simon whispered, reaching a hand up to cup her face and making her look at him. "Tell me what's going on."

"I was starting to look forward to seeing you before-" Izzy admitted as if every word cost her dearly.

"Before I called it quits," Simon finished. "But Izzy, you were sleeping with other people as well as me."

"I know," Izzy sniffed. "I don't know how to do this, not since… I don't understand why or how, but when I heard we were hurt- I just reacted. Running here without a thought." She broke down crying, her head resting on his bed. "I am so confused, Simon."

Slowly, as if in shock, Simon reached out a hand to gently hold her head. He saw her hands clench into fists against the bed sheets. Had their repeated one night stand arrangement meant more to her than he'd realized? This changed everything.

"Shh, it's okay," Simon found himself comforting her. "Can I make a suggestion?" Lifting her head to look at him, Izzy nodded. "Can I define the terms?"

"What do you mean?"

"I mean, why don't we try dating," Simon suggested. "Exclusively. Only me for you, and only you for me."

"You don't want me," Izzy said with a shake of her head as if stating the obvious. "I'm a mess. I know you don't want me."
"Yes I do," Simon replied. "Don't you get it. That's why I ended things, because I want you."

"No, you don't," Izzy repeated, still shaking her head. Simon couldn't believe his eyes. Izzy had always seemed untouchable, impervious to others opinions of her. He'd never once considered that she might be helplessly trapped inside herself. He'd never once considered she might have a low opinion of herself.

"I like you Izzy," Simon stated again. "I have missed you. I think if I hadn't liked you so much, I would have had the guts to break off our sleeping arrangements in person, but I just knew that if I saw your face, felt your touch, I'd give in?"

"I think-" Izzy continued still hiccuping, and not quite looking at him. "I mean I suppose... I well... I probably... I like you too."

"It's decided then," Simon smiled at her. "Now as your exclusive boyfriend, I have a request." She lifted her head to gaze at him, her eyes wide at his words, but he wasn't taking it back. He wanted all or nothing.

"What's that?" Izzy whispered, looking a little scared.

"Kiss me," Simon whispered.

Chapter End Notes

There wasn't that worth the wait? ^_^ Been planning this for ages. It was about time this cliffhanger had a resolution don't you think. ;)

----------------------------------------

Sneak Peek Chapter 104

"Ow," Simon mumbled and Izzy leapt back.

"What?" she began. "What hurts?"

"Nothing," he smiled, the pain gone from his face. "I tried to use the arm I'm not suppose to."

Slowly, Izzy relaxed. She moved closer watching his face closely.

"Don't be so cautious," Simon whined. "Come here."

"I don't want to hurt you," Izzy replied softly.

"Then come here," Simon said firmly as he gestured for her to move around the bed to his right side. Slowly Izzy walked to the other side of the bed as Simon was moving over making space. He patted the space on his right side, inviting her to lay on the bed with him. Slowly carefully Izzy did as he asked, laying down beside him. Simon rested his head on her shoulder and was asleep in seconds.
"As your exclusive boyfriend, I have a request."

Izzy's eyes went wide in shock. Her mind frozen, stunned by his choice of words, she raised her head to look at him.

"What's that?" Izzy whispered, unable to keep her voice calm.

"Kiss me," Simon whispered. Without waiting for an answer, he moved forward, right hand outstretched. Izzy closed her eyes, unable to truly process what had just happened as she allowed Simon to kiss her. It was a gentle kiss, soft and short. Then he laid his head down on the pillows again. Izzy kept her eyes closed, reveling in the moment. She hadn't realized how much she'd missed him.

When she did open her eyes, Simon was staring at her. It was strange. The way he was looking at her now, both scared and excited her. Deciding to give in to what she wanted, Izzy leaned forward to kiss him again, deeper this time. She felt his right bandaged hand touch her face, sending a shiver down her back.

"Ow," Simon mumbled, and Izzy lept back.

"What?" she began. "What hurts?

"Nothing," he smiled, the pain gone from his face. "I tried to use the arm I'm not suppose to."

Slowly, Izzy relaxed. She moved closer, watching his face carefully.

"Don't be so cautious," Simon whined. "Come here."

"I don't want to hurt you," Izzy replied softly.

"Then come here," Simon said firmly as he gestured for her to move around the bed to his right side. Slowly, Izzy walked to the other side of the hospital bed as Simon was moving over making space. He patted the space on his right, inviting her to lay beside him. Slowly, carefully, Izzy did as he asked, laying down. Simon rested his head on her shoulder and was asleep in seconds.

It was like nothing she'd experienced before. Just laying here, Simon asleep next to her. Everything was so calm, the only sound was Simon's even breathing and the continue beating of the machines hooked up to him.

Despite the calmly environment, Izzy's mind was anything but peaceful. She kept running through the last few minutes over and over trying to make sense of them. Wasn't this really sudden? After all, he'd once dumped her in a text, and now he wanted to pick up where they'd left off just like that? Though she supposed it was different if he really meant what he'd said about being her boyfriend. But then again, why hadn't he told her before now!

How long had it been since she'd met this boy in that elevator? It had been during her spring break, so March, a year ago? No, that wasn't right. It was October now, so more like a year and a half. All that time, and it was only now that Simon wanted her. It didn't make sense… unless it did.
"Izzy," Simon mumbled.

"I'm here," she said. "Go back to sleep." She stroked his face, unable to keep a hold on her emotions despite her doubts. Simon turned to face her, his eyes pensive, studying her.

"You're different," he said.

"No, I'm not," Izzy denied quickly.

"It's that mask of yours," Simon said, before yawning. "Despite our history, you were always at arm's length, walls up."

"You my friend, are on very powerful painkillers," Izzy reminded him.

"Boyfriend," Simon corrected her.

"As I said, drugs," Izzy replied, smiling. She could keep up appearances until he was feeling better, right? It would only hurt her after all, and that was okay. She could deal with that afterwards.

Simon studied her for a long moment before speaking. "And there it is again," he said. "Shields up." He was smiling for a moment, but then stopped his eyes focused. "Urg," he groaned. "I don't have the energy for this right now. Can't you just believe me?"

"I do believe you," Izzy said smiling, trying to make him happy.

"If that were true, those walls wouldn't be back," Simon grumbled, but his eyes closed almost against his will and he rested his head on her shoulder again. She'd thought he'd fallen asleep until suddenly he spoke. "I want all you mine," he whispered. "All mine."

Despite the awkward slurred way he spoke, she couldn't stop her heart from reacting to the words themselves. If he wasn't sincere, this was torture. She decided in that moment, drug induced or not, Izzy was going to be his until the time came when he realized she wasn't enough. If this ended badly, it would broke her already shattered heart, but Izzy didn't have the strength to fight anymore. Instead, she closed her eyes and enjoyed the warm presence of her boyfriend beside her.

To her great surprise, she fell asleep. Upon waking, she was surprised she hadn't been kicked out by the nurses when she realized the lateness of the hour. Simon was still sleeping beside her. Izzy turned to stroke his face before getting up and leaving the room. She'd come back again soon, but for the moment, she needed her own bed and a shower.

Taking a cab home, Izzy walked in and quickly checked that Maia was sleeping before getting into the shower. Washing away the dirt and sweat of her rather strange day, Izzy got out and laid face down in bed. She was so tired she could hardly keep a thought in her head. The world could wait until tomorrow.

Izzy awoke to the sound of her alarm clock. Knowing she'd gotten less than five hours sleep, Izzy decided she didn't need to go to class today. Turning her alarm off, she rolled over and went back to sleep. When she finally got out of bed it was after eleven, and she decided to at least go to her afternoon class. Not bothering to dress as she usually would, likely due to exhaustion, Izzy went out in sweatpants and a sweater, yawning the whole way. She sat in the back, and tried to take notes while wondering if maybe she should have just given up on this class today as well.

Her commitments for the day either totally neglected or over with, Izzy got out her phone and called her brother.
"Oh, hi Iz," Alec's voice greeted her.

"Why didn't you tell me Simon was in the hospital?" Izzy snapped.

"I'm really sorry," Alec said. "It's been wedding madness. If it wasn't for mom and dad, I think I'd take Magnus up on his eloping idea. It just slipped my mind, besides you two aren't close anymore are you?"

Izzy hung up the phone. She didn't really want to have that conversation with Alec at the moment. Her almost relationship might be nothing but drug induced, and her brother was getting married. Izzy loved Alec, but that didn't mean he was off the hook for turning her into a crazy woman who runs to hospitals in a mad panic. Of course, Alec didn't know about him, so her brother wouldn't have known she'd react the way she had. Even so, Izzy had decided she was going to be grumpy about this for at least a few more days. Then again, she supposed Maia could have said something as well. Okay, maybe it didn't matter. Either way, it was past time for Izzy to get back to the hospital.

The whole way there she wasn't sure what she was going to say, or why she was so nervous. Simon would still be high on painkillers, so she had nothing to be nervous about.

When Izzy passed the nurses station, she noticed one nurse in particular. The woman's name tag read 'Holly' and she was walking over to Izzy.

"You must be Simon's girlfriend, Izzy right?" Holly said. Izzy nodded, as she thought it easier than trying to explain the overly complicated truth to this stranger. "He's been asking for you all morning. I think he expected you to be here when he woke up."

"I didn't think I was allowed to sleep here," Izzy explained.

"You aren't," Holly said with a smile and a wink. "But you looked so peaceful, I just couldn't make you leave. Besides, it wasn't like he wasn't getting his rest with you there." She smiled again, the slight change in her facial muscles somehow showing the kindness in her eyes. Izzy could sense genuine caring from this woman, and she had to admire that. She was tall and beautiful, with an oval face and long light brown, almost blonde hair.

"Thanks," Izzy said. "He's in the same room right?" Holly nodded and Izzy turned to head back down the hall she'd sprinted through yesterday. When she entered Simon's room he was laying in bed, looking bored with a remote in his good hand. When he saw her his eyes lit up, and she couldn't help but smile back.

"You're back," Simon said, relief in his voice.

"The nurse said you were asking for me?" Izzy replied.

"I remember falling asleep next to you," Simon said, as he turned off the tv. "But then you were gone when I woke up. For a moment I thought I'd dreamed you up, but Holly remembered you."

Izzy giggled, moving closer. "Surely you could have come up with a better dream than me," she smiled.

"That's one," Simon said firmly, as if telling her off.

"One what?" Izzy scoffed.

"One thing you've said to put yourself down," Simon replied. "It's a pattern I've noticed with you.
"Does that mean this is a three strikes you're out situation?" Izzy asked, trying to smile.

"That's two," Simon said firmly. Then he gestured to the space beside him. "Come sit with me." Izzy wasn't sure what Simon meant by this counting, nevertheless she moved closer, sitting at the end of the bed.

"There's nothing on tv," Simon sighed, leaning against her. "Hospitals are boring."

"Scary," Izzy corrected him. "Hospitals are scary."

"Is that why you left last night?" Simon asked.

"Honestly," Izzy said sheepishly. "I was super uncomfortable and really needed to shower." Simon's laughter was light with relief, and it made her feel safer.

"Ow," Simon whined. "I still shouldn't laugh." He paused, turning to face her. "But I'm glad you didn't get cold feet." Izzy didn't say anything. She wanted to enjoy the moment, so she closed her eyes and laid her head near his, enjoying the comfort of his presence without thinking about how long it would last.

"Three," Simon whispered, a moment later. Izzy stiffened, her muscles tense. Now was she out?

Simon sighed and sat up in bed, facing her. Izzy did the same, nervously. Now, she was looking right into his eyes.

"I know you Isabelle Lightwood," Simon said slowly. "I thought I did before, but since you arrived here yesterday, I've figured a few things out that helped me put all the pieces together. From your actions and the way you've responded… well I want you to tell me what's going on. Please tell me why there's a sadness behind your eyes?"

Izzy didn't quite know how to phrase what she was thinking into words, to do so made them feel stupid and frivolous, but they were huge to her. And yet, if she couldn't speak them out loud, how would she ever know if they were real.

"I'm broken," Izzy whispered after what felt like the longest moment of silence of her life. "You're hurt and high, you can't really want me. You believe you want me now, but- you won't… I mean eventually… I won't be good at this."

Simon leaned his head back, eyes closed and Izzy wondered if his injuries were hurting him. He looked almost like he was in pain.

"Does it hurt?" Izzy asked, her hands flailing trying to help. "Do you need more meds?"

"Yes and no," Simon said simply, his eyes still focused on the ceiling. "I can see that you're scared," Simon continued in a calm voice, still addressing the ceiling. "And I can almost understand why, but that doesn't mean it doesn't suck to hear you say that." Simon turned to look at her, his expression open as he spoke. "Do you remember the way you kissed me in that elevator? Well I do. I know it meant little to you, but it was quite a moment for me. And then to be with you again, more than before, and more than once. I learned a great deal. You fixed me, healed what Clary broke. It's true I was happy with our arrangement for a while. I'm not really sure when that changed, but I remember perfectly the moment I realized it had changed." He paused as if watching for her reaction, but Izzy's thoughts were frozen, trying to take in his words.

"You'd came home and been surprised I was there," Simon began again. "I remember kissing you, in a vain hope to hold you there with me, but of course you didn't. I used to think of you as a force of
As he'd spoke, Simon's every movement had echoed his sincerity. Izzy was breathless. Simon was either the best lair in the world, or he was sure there was truth to his words.

"If you still doubt me, then just go," Simon said, sorrowfully, turning away slightly. "I want all or nothing. I've been on the receiving end of only parts of a real relationship too many times now to ever do it again."

Slowly, her heart pounding like never before, Izzy got up off the bed. Leaning over Simon's right side, Izzy moved closer still. Shutting her eyes she touched her lips to his in the most tender kiss of her life. She'd forgotten what it felt like to be free of the doubt, to have the weight of it lifted off her chest. Izzy's chest rose and fell, suddenly unrestricted. It was like, for this moment, she could see herself as he saw her, could see the truth in his eyes. Maybe she wasn't as broken as she'd believed. Simon made her want to be more, to be better. She wanted to be worth the adoration in his eyes.

"I believe you," Izzy whispered as she pulled out of the kiss. "My boyfriend has never lied to me." She saw Simon's face relax, the pain in his eyes ease. He motioned once again for her to lay down beside him. Izzy easily settled into the circle of his arms - or in this case arm - as his left one was stuck in a sling.

Simon told her where the remote was, and they spent a while flipping through channels together, but Simon had been right when he'd said there was nothing on tv. They ended up on some lame cooking channel, and spent more time making fun of it than actually watching the show. When someone came in to bring Simon his dinner, Izzy had been expecting to be kicked out, but it turned out to be Holly. Izzy couldn't help but smile when the kind motherly nurse pretended she wasn't there.

Izzy did end up leaving for an hour or so to pick up something for herself for dinner and collect a few things. When she returned with a burger, fries, and a deck of cards, they passed the time playing go fish. As the sun set, Izzy fell asleep beside her boyfriend, and didn't wake until the dawn.

Chapter End Notes

I don't know how many of your were reading 'Mad World' by BlueAussie or Holly0114 but as people have asked I thought I'd explain. I consider the writer of 'Mad World' a dear friend, so I won't upload her explanation publicly. Just know that she had personal reasons for getting rid of everything, and it isn't coming back. She didn't just delete the story, she stopped all contact with people she's met on fanfic, people like me. I have been the beta for that story since before she uploaded chapter one, and I'm very sad to see it all gone. In fact, the character Holly in these last two chapters is a tribute to her that she will never read as she's stopped using fanfic all together.

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Sneak Peek Chapter 105

"I know that look."
Alec's mind was miles away but in front of him he was see the foe brick of their living room walls. He knew speaking voice almost better than his own. Slowly, as if coming out of a daze, Alec turned from the stone design to look into the eyes of the one he loved most.

"There's no look," Alec said.

"Oh yes there is," Magnus replied firmly. "And that's it. So what's wrong?"

Alec sighed, leaning over to kiss his fiance, being laying back on the couch to gaze at the ceiling.

"Nothing," Alec replied, with a sigh. "Just worried about Izzy. She sounded strange on the phone today."

"You worry too much," Magnus offered as Alec felt his fiance's gentle touch on his cheek. Closing his eyes Alec smiled.

"That isn't news," Alec whispered.

"Indeed," Magnus's voice was soft and loving. "Always thinking of others. It's one of your more annoying qualities actually."

"Pfft," Alec scoffed, lifting his head to face Magnus. "Is not."

"Is so," Magnus countered. "I'm selfish you know."

"Come again?" Alec asked with a shake of his head. "What does that have to do with me worrying?"
Alec's Tone

Chapter Notes
See the end of the chapter for notes.

Alec was worried about Izzy. Not only had she seemed different on the phone, but she'd actually hung up on him. It was very unlike her. Sure, she could be a bit of a brat at times, and yes his sister did love shopping to the point of insanity, but she usually wasn't simply dismissive. In fact, Izzy usually liked to have the last word. Alec had waited a few hours to see if she'd call back, but now with the day approaching its end, he was starting to think he would have to call her.

Alec's mind was miles away, while his eyes gazed at the brick. It was quite something, how very brick-like the laminate looked, with indentations for the grout work and a texture to the bricks Alec could see even from here. He knew that voice almost better than his own. Was Izzy foe-brick? Was she not quite as she appeared, or was Alec reading too much into their strange conversation yesterday? His sister was very passionate, Alec knew that much, though she hid it well when she wanted to. Was it just thanks to her excellent poker face that he'd never heard that pain in her voice before, or was there something wrong?

"I know that look."

Slowly, as if coming out of a daze, Alec turned from the stone design to look into the eyes of the one he loved most.

"There's no look," Alec said.

"Oh yes there is," Magnus replied firmly. "And that's it. So what's wrong?"

Alec sighed, leaning over to kiss his fiance, then laying back on the couch to gaze at the ceiling.

"Nothing," Alec replied with a sigh, and it was true. After all, he didn't actually know if anything was wrong. "Just worried about Izzy. She sounded strange on the phone today."

"You worry too much," Magnus offered as Alec felt his fiance's gentle touch on his cheek. Closing his eyes, Alec smiled.

"That isn't news," Alec whispered.

"Indeed," Magnus's voice was soft and loving. "Always thinking of others. It's one of your more annoying qualities actually."

"Pfft," Alec scoffed, lifting his head to face Magnus. "Is not."

"Is so," Magnus countered. "I'm selfish you know."

"Come again?" Alec asked with a shake of his head. "What does that have to do with me worrying?"

"I wish you'd worry a little less about everyone else, and a little more about yourself," Magnus explained.

"I have you," Alec said with a shrug. "I don't need anything else."

Smiling, Magnus leaned forward to kiss him deeply before pulling back and sighing. "See, and then you go and say things like that, and somehow all your annoying habits melt away," Magnus
chuckled. "Love is a funny thing, isn't it."

"Isn't it just," Alec smiled. He closed his eyes and letting Magnus wrap his arms around Alec, closing his eyes.

"Izzy isn't going anywhere," Magnus whispered after a moment. "It's late. Call her tomorrow."

"Okay, but only if you take that tone out of your voice," Alec replied.


"Oh yes there is," Alec argued. "That 'oh silly Alec is fretting about nothing' tone."

"There is no such tone," Magnus countered.

"You're using it now!" Alec exclaimed.

"You aren't even worrying at the moment," Magnus argued.

"Then it's the Alec is being silly tone," Alec said, almost laughing. "Either way, it's a thing."

With a smile and slight chuckle, Magnus leaned in and kissed Alec, who melted at his touch like always. Alec couldn't help but wonder if Magnus would always affect him this way, even decades from now, when they were old and withered together.

"Let's finish this squabble in the morning shall we?" Magnus asked. Alec couldn't stifle his yawn so he followed Magnus to bed. Safe and loved in Magnus's arms, Alec fell asleep easily.

Alec woke before Magnus, which didn't surprise him at all. Though Alec and Magnus often went to bed at the same time, Magnus seemed to sleep in more, almost as if Alec functioned fine on seven hours, while Magnus's body wanted at least nine. Alec quite liked it though. It was nice to have a little 'me time' in the morning before people woke up. Lately that had been his only respite, between classes, homework, exams, and his parents trying to plan their wedding, Alec's life had become far too busy for his liking.

Distraught cries were coming from beyond the door, but this also didn't surprise Alec. Getting up quickly so as not to wake Magnus, Alec followed the sounds of distress. Upon opening the door, Alec was instantly assaulted by two desperate creatures. The hungry cats greeted Alec with great love and attention, rubbing up against his legs and vocalizing their needs.

"Mew, meow, mewoow," they whined together getting underfoot as he tried to move past them, and into the kitchen.

"Boys if I can't get to the food, you can't eat it," Alec told them, very seriously, as if they could actually understand what he was saying, though of course they couldn't. All the felines knew was that when Alec woke up, breakfast was served.

Eventually reaching the kitchen, despite the two cats running interference, Alec poured food into their empty dishes. Instantly neither one wanted him anymore, and went right to their breakfast.

"Typical cat affection," Alec sighed, though he was still smiling.

Noticing Chairmen dive in and start stealing The Great Catsby's food, Alec leaned over to scoop Chairmen into his arms.

"Catsby's old," Alec told Chairmen. "You have to be nice."
"Meow," Chairmen grumbled.

"Yes, I know your life is so very hard," Alec told the unhappy cat. "You only get to eat your own breakfast." Chairmen wiggled and whined, but Alec didn't let him go.

"You're getting fat," Alec told Chairmen cruelly, though the animal took no care of the insult. "Which might explain why Catsby's getting so skinny."

"Meooow," was Chairmen's only defense.

"I see," Alec told the cat thoughtfully. "Well, let's wait and see how that argument holds out in court." Alec chuckled, glad no one was here to listen to him talk to a cat.

Alec didn't have class today as he'd structured his schedule to have Fridays free. It was one of the nice things about third year classes, many of them were once a week for three hours, instead of three times a week for one hour. Alec liked having less days where he was required to be on campus.

"Catsby's bowl isn't empty," Alec told the squirming cat in his arms. "But it seemed he's given up on breakfast so down you go." It was true, the older grey cat had walked off, leaving his bowl half full. Alec put Chairman down, and wasn't surprised when the striped tabby started scarfing down everything left in both bowls.

"At this rate, we'll have to put you on a diet," Alec told Chairman with a shake of his head. He turned to face the thin senior citizen absently walking away from his half eaten breakfast. "And Catsby on a high calorie weight gain supplement." Chairman turned his face up to look at Alec, licking his lips, clearly pleased with himself.

Well, at least the cats were fed. That was one thing done. Heading towards the kitchen, Alec got himself something to eat. He knew for a fact that no matter where Izzy was, she wouldn't be awake at this hour. His sister was definitely not the early riser he was, so he would call Izzy later. Surely everything was fine. Maybe Izzy had just been in a bad mood, or busy with something else. Slicing a tomato, Alec placed a few slices on toast, sprinkled salt on them, then picked up his coffee cup and walked back into the living room. Just because he didn't have any homework that needed to be done today didn't mean he had the day free.

Walking over to the dining table, Alec begrudgingly began his task. There had been a time when the tedious aspects of his life could all be blamed on his teachers, but thanks to recent events, he could blame his current boredom solely on his mother. Alec couldn't fathom why these save the date cards had to all be hand addressed, but as far as his wedding was concerned, his mother had become a force to be reckoned with. Addressing 500 cards by hand seemed easier than trying to contradict her, and besides, despite the repetitive nature of the task, Alec was enjoying the quiet of it.

It was well over an hour later when Alec next checked the time. Setting his cards aside, Alec went back into his bedroom and gently shook Magnus awake.


"No," Magnus mumbled, trying to roll over.

"Yes," Alec said. "Remember you told me to wake you at nine."

"Right, yes," Magnus said groggily. "I should get up." Alec smiled, knowing full well that if he left the room Magnus would fall asleep again in seconds. Alec gently shook Magnus again, but suddenly found himself stuck. Magnus had reached up to wrap his arms around Alec, pulling him down. With his eyes closed, Magnus was clearly starting to drift off again as he held Alec on the bed.
Part of Alec was actually very comfortable and content to remain where he was, but the rest of him knew there were things to be done and he couldn't just waste time in bed, even if he was only here through the will of his unconscious fiance. Giving in for a few minutes and enjoying the warm bed and company, Alec closed his eyes. Then after a few moments, he tried again to wake Magnus, and this time he had more success.

"You have plans with Clary today, my love," Alec said softly. "At ten."

"Not ten yet," Magnus mumbled.

"It's nine thirty," Alec said. "And you still need to get up, get ready, and get all the way across campus."

Magnus groaned in that way he did when he hated the idea of getting out of bed. Alec had come to know most of Magnus's non-verbal sounds and their meanings since moving in with the man, though he'd spent so much time here before they'd officially lived together there hadn't been much to learn once they shared a roof.

"I'll skip breakfast," Magnus said, trying to get comfy again, and in the process getting a firmer grip on Alec.

"You have to wake up," Alec said chuckling. Magnus wasn't always this against waking up, though it did happen from time to time, most so recently than ever before.

"No, need to sleep," Magnus said adding an extra 'shh' sound to the end of his sentence, as if to get Alec to stop talking.

"No, you need to wake up," Alec said, trying to hold back a grin. "You're going to be late. It's already ten."

"What!" Magnus snapped, sitting bolt upright. "But you said it was nine thirty."

"You fell asleep again silly," Alec lied. "I bet Clary is sitting there alone waiting for you."

Unfortunately, Alec's little plan only worked until Magnus saw the clock on the wall. He took one look at it, and laid back down.

"It's only nine thirty," Magnus corrected. "And you are evil."

"It got you out of bed though, didn't it," Alec chuckled. "Even if only for a few moments."

"Go away," Magnus grumbled. Alec chuckled, kissed his fiance's forehead, and returned to the dining room. It wasn't like he hadn't tried. If Magnus was late, it was his own fault. However, Alec had only addressed four more cards before Magnus appeared, looking grumpy.

"Rise and shine," Alec told him.

"Rise, but no shine," Magnus grumbled. "Stupid Clary. Why couldn't she want to hang out at a better time."

"She has class later," Alec said. "You're the one with a free schedulable, remember? You're the one who should be making your time work with hers."

"Stop making sense," Magnus whined as he started getting ready, beginning with a trip to the bathroom. Since they'd gotten back from visiting Alec's parents, the museum hadn't needed Magnus quite as much, and he'd been enjoying a rather part time schedule.
"I feel so unemployed right now," Magnus sighed as he reappeared dressed in black skinny jeans and a t-shirt.

"You're working two days a week at the museum," Alec reminded him.

"As I said," Magnus replied. "Unemployed. And that job doesn't pay, remember. So I don't work two days a week at the museum, I volunteer two days a week at the museum."

"There's no point getting a job right now though," Alec reminded him. "Otherwise, how will you ask for two months off for our honeymoon."

"Urg," Magnus roamed, covering his face with his hands. "I'm such a slacker."

"Then you can finish these cards for mom," Alec offered. "After you go see Clary."

"Oh crap," Magnus said jumping up and scrambling to get his coat. "Bye. Love you."

"Love you too," Alec called back, still chuckling at the crazed look in Magnus's face. Alec heard the door open and close behind him.

With a sigh, Alec pulled away from the table. Deciding to stick to his decision and make Magnus finish addressing the cards, Alec got out his phone and called his sister. It rang, once, then twice. Three times and went to voicemail. Izzy always answered her phone when she was awake. Marveling at how Izzy could still be asleep at ten o'clock. He was about to give up and move on when his phone rang. Izzy had called him back.

"What's up, brother?" Izzy asked. Alec couldn't reply for a moment. He was in shock. Her tone was so changed from yesterday. She sounds happier than he could ever remember her being, lighter.

"Umm hello?" Izzy continued. "This is my brother calling right?"

"Um, yeah," Alec managed. "Sorry."

"No, I'm Sorry," Izzy replied. "I shouldn't have hung up on you yesterday."

"Why did you then?" Alec asked.

"Was having a bad day," Izzy explained. Then added very cheerfully. "But everything's good now."

"I can tell," Alec chuckled, feeling so much better having heard the joy in her voice.

"Guess what?" Izzy said, her tone fiendishly gleeful.

"What?" Alec replied grinning, though she wouldn't know that through the phone.

"I've been awake for hours," Izzy exclaimed. "With my boyfriend."

"I've never heard you use that word for anyone before," Alec spoke softly, a little stunned.

"That's because I haven't," Izzy said. "Simon is different."

"So you're at the hospital then?" Alec inquired.

"Yes," Izzy said. "There's a super nice nurse here named Holly who let me stay the night."

"It's wonderful to hear you so happy," Alec said, smiling and making a mental note to send Simon
flowers. Alec barely knew the guy, but in this very moment, he thought Simon might be his favourite person in the world, apart from Magnus that is.

"I know right!" Izzy giggled. "Oh gotta go. Simon's awake." And once again the line went dead, but this time Alec wasn't worried as to why. In fact, Alec couldn't help but think how last night while he'd been asleep in Magnus's arms, Izzy had been safe and warm in Simon's arms. Maybe there was hope for his sister's happiness after all.

Chapter End Notes

I've been talking with SailingSeas1999 on fanfic.net recently and I have realized that all of you probably think that I have attended a university. So I thought I'd set the record straight and tell you all that I've never taken classes at a university. I did go to college for a few years, but I've never lived in dorms or listened to a university lecture. I choose a university setting for this story just for plot convenience since it was an easy way to get all the characters into one place and have them meet spontaneously. Also I think I choose uni because so many all human AU's on this site were uni and my last all human AU had been high school so... I wanted a new setting.

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Sneak Peek Chapter 106

A flurry of snow swirled around him as Magnus opened the door to the cafe. Turning his head, searching for that familiar red colour, Magnus spotted Clary sitting in the corner.

"I'm so sorry I'm late," Magnus gasped as he got close enough to her table. "I have no brilliant excuse except that sleep is amazing."

Clary chuckled, gesturing for him to sit down. Magnus did so. "I must say I've surprised," Clary said smiling. "You've never been one to waste time in bed before."

"I never had time to waste time in bed before," Magnus argued. "For as long as I can remember I've been either working two jobs, in school with one job or taking 6 courses to make up for not taking 5 while working in a previous semester."

"Sounds to me like you could use the break," Clary replied.

"You sound like Alec," Magnus chuckled.

"Great minds," Clary smiled. After that Magnus got up to order his own latte.

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TIMELINE UPDATES

As you have all probably guessed due to the length and structure of this story, I have a HUGE timeline for R&S to keep it all organized because it's getting/gotten freaking complicated. It's a whole separate document that I use to make sure I don't forget when it is for the characters while writing R&S. I have done timelines for most of my stories and usually I upload them at the end of the story. For example Innocence Corrupts had a
huge timeline and book reference section as the last chapter. The problem is that I have no idea when this story is going to end and it's SO FREAKIN long already that it feels pointless to have a timeline starting with chapter one be uploaded at chapter who knows what way down the line. So my solution to this is to upload the timeline in pieces. At the start of every September chapter there will be a timeline of the previous year. That is why when this chapter went online it seemed like I uploaded 4 of them. Just one new chapter and three timelines. Sorry for the confusion. I was going to upload the timelines before this chapter went up but I thought you guys wouldn't want a bunch of notifications for something that isn't a chapter. At least this way you get the crazy notifications and a chapter even if not 4 chapters. I hope you like the timelines!
Magnus kissed Alec goodbye and darted out the door so as not to be late, though at this point, he was going to be late no matter what he did. It had become quite the habit of his lately, being late for things. It was one of the many reasons Magnus found his current lot in life so strange. The biggest of which, was probably that this had been the first time in his life that he wasn't getting a paycheck or in school. Volunteering two days a week at the museum felt like nothing, and Magnus had fallen into a pattern of staying up too late watching Netflix, then sleeping in well past what resembled a reasonable hour the next day. His alarm did go off two days a week, but having those 5 days before hand to do basically nothing was mind numbingly boring. If it wasn't for Alexander, Magnus was sure he'd be in a straight jacket by now.

Okay, so maybe it wasn't that bad, but if you'd told him at the beginning of his third year of university that after graduation, he'd be unemployed and engaged, he would have laughed his ass off. The world has a strange way of turning your expectations on their heads. What you thought was once so important can shift and become a never again thought or antidote in your life. The people you once needed, replaced by others now more needed than those who came before.

A flurry of snow swirled around him as Magnus opened the door to the cafe. Turning his head, searching for that familiar red colour, Magnus spotted Clary sitting in the corner.

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"I never had time to waste time in bed before," Magnus argued. "For as long as I can remember, I've been either working two jobs, in school with one job, or taking 6 courses to make up for not taking 5 while working in a previous semester."

"Sounds to me like you could use the break," Clary replied.

"You sound like Alec," Magnus chuckled.

"Great minds," Clary smiled. After that, Magnus got up to order his own latte. It felt so strange spending money when he knew he wasn't making any. Somehow since Alec had moved in, he'd managed to take over their finances. Magnus had no idea what bills had been paid or when. For all he knew, Alec had stopped paying everything, and they were going to be evicted tomorrow. Magnus suspected this not to be the case, but the total lack of control was very disconcerting to him.

"I miss my paycheck," Magnus whined.

"Then get a job," Clary suggested.

"And be at the mercy of Maryse Lightwood when she learns I can't get two months off without notice?" Magnus replied. "I think not."

"In-laws that scary huh?" Clary smiled.
"Not scary," Magnus said thoughtfully. "I just couldn't bare the look of disappointment on her face when she finds out her son will have to honeymoon alone."

"Well despite all you say," Clary said firmly. "You are happy, Magnus. I can tell." She smiled and Magnus didn't speak. "How is all that wedding planning going anyway?"

"There are about 350 cards at home that I need to address," Magnus said by way of answer.

"Have you guys settled on a date yet?" Clary asked. "Last we talked, I just heard you were doing a small wedding and big reception."

"Yep, that's right," Magnus confirmed. "And we chose April 19th, exactly one year from when Alec proposed to me."

"That's cute," Clary beamed. "Much better than having it at Christmas, or based on some ancestors anniversary."

"That's what I thought," Magnus smiled. "I think Robert wanted something else, but Maryse was just so happy we finally picked a date she put all else aside and started calling caterers." He laughed, but there was a sharp edge to the sound that even Magnus could hear.

"You totally want to elope don't you?" Clary chuckled.

"Yes," Magnus whined, his head sinking into his hands on the table.

"It will be over soon," Clary assured him with the air of one speaking of something painful. Then she added with a snigger, "April apparently."

"Smart ass," Magnus grumbled, but he couldn't grumble long. With a sigh, Magnus drank his warm creamy latte and looked up at his best friend. "I literally have nothing to complain about though. Even if the wedding is a headache, it's one I'm happy to bare if the end result is being linked to Alexander for the rest of my life."

"I'm so happy for you Magnus," Clary said with so much genuine warmth in her voice. "Who's idea was it to make your wedding the anniversary of the proposal?"

"Mine," Magnus grinned. "Because it was the proposal that really changed things for us. No matter how beautiful our wedding is, I will never forget the day Alec told me he wanted to be mine forever."

"Look at you all glowy," Clary giggled.

"That's pregnant women," Magnus grumbled at her.

"Brides too," Clary reminded him.

"But I'm not a bride nor knocked up," Magnus said firmly.

"Glowing groom then," Clary giggled, refusing to give in.

"Sometimes you are very annoying, Biscuit," Magnus grumbled.

"What are best friends for," Clary replied. "If not to annoy you." She paused, then snapped to attention as if remembering something. "Oh, and speaking of best friends, I have to go see my other one."
"Cheating on me, are you?" Magnus laughed, but Clary didn't appreciate his humor and merely rolled her eyes.

"I told Simon I'd visit him today," Clary explained. "And you were late." She turned and crinkled her eyebrows at him accusingly.

"Why don't I join you," Magnus suggested. "I barely saw Simon the last time, and he wasn't wake."

Clary easily agreed and the two of them left for the bus stop. As they walked, Clary told him about her classes this semester, about how things were with Jace, and how Brett had come around to accepting just friendship. Despite the time of year, it wasn't that cold, and the light sprinkling of snow over everything made the world look like it was covered in icing sugar.

Getting off the bus, Magnus and Clary made their way down the street until they reached the hospital. It was a large building, all straight lines and boxes. Magnus had rarely been in a hospital before. In fact, the one other time he could remember being here was when he and Alec had visiting Tessa after Lucie was born.

Walking in the front doors, Clary asked at reception for Simon's room number, then the two of them turned the corner and headed down a long plain hallway until they reached the elevators.

When they exited onto the second floor, Clary turned left and Magnus followed. She stopped outside a door with the number 226 on it, and together they entered. The first thing Magnus noticed was that Simon wasn't alone. Isabelle was there beside him, her head resting on his uninjured shoulder. After that observation, he took in the rest of the room. The plain light cream walls gave a false sense of relaxation, which Magnus knew to be common in hospitals. There were generic paintings on the walls, such as flower arrangements, nondescript buildings, and landscapes. A dresser sat in the corner with get well soon balloons, and real flower arrangements on it. Magnus suspected they were from Simon's mother and sister. Faded blue curtains hung over the singular window.

"Oh, hey Clary," Simon whispered brightly. "Izzy's sleeping."

"Aren't you the one who's supposed to be resting?" Clary asked.

"I don't think she slept well last night," Simon replied. "And I can't blame her. This bed isn't meant for two." Clary moved closer, taking a seat by the bed and Magnus followed.

"Wouldn't that imply that you didn't sleep well either?" Clary inquired, still in a whisper.

"Yes, but I slept all day," Simon smiled.

"Fair enough," Clary said. She glaced at Izzy before adding. "And you're sure about this Simon? I mean, we are talking about Isabelle here."

"More than sure," Simon whispered back, but Magnus was looking at Izzy's face, and he saw the side of her mouth twitch as if she was trying not to smile.

"I think she heard you," Magnus said in his normal full volume voice.

"Iz?" Simon asked, turning to face her. Izzy gave a mighty yawn, then rubbed her eyes, but Magnus was sure it was all for show and she'd been awake since they'd walked in.

"Morning guys," Izzy said, looking around. She spotted Magnus and added, "Why didn't Alec come with you?"
"Last I saw Alec, he was trying to stick me with wedding homework," Magnus chuckled.

"He called a few hours ago," Izzy said. "Though I'm not quite sure why."

"He was fretting all night that something was wrong after you hung up on him," Magnus explained. "But as you are grinning like the cat who ate the canary, I'd say everything's fine?"


"Don't I know it," Magnus chuckled.

"Well, tell him to stop," Izzy commanded, grinning from ear to ear. Magnus just chuckled, knowing full well telling Alec not to fret was a waste of perfectly good oxygen.

"How are you feeling Simon?" Clary asked moving closer. As Clary approached, Magnus saw an instant change in Izzy. Her attention was suddenly fixed on Clary, watchful, as if she were a threat. Magnus's only explanation for this was that Clary was Simon's ex girlfriend.

"I'm okay," Simon said. "Actually, they're sending me home tomorrow."

"Home with me," Izzy stated firmly. A smile spread slowly over Simon's face as his girlfriend spoke. Magnus thought this was going to take some getting used to.

"Well it seems you aren't lacking for company," Clary smiled. "I was worried you were bored here all by yourself so I brought cards, but maybe you'd rather we leave you alone?"

It was a strange dance, Magnus thought. Izzy relaxed when she saw Clary wasn't acting like an ex-girlfriend, and Clary relaxed having seen the joy on her best friends face. Magnus couldn't help but wonder if one day these two women would be friends in their own right. Clary gave Simon a one armed hug, wished him well, and then she and Magnus left the room.

"He looks so much better," Clary sighed happily as they headed back the way they'd come.

"Are we talking about his health or his mood?" Magnus chuckled.

"Both," Clary grinned.

"It's been months now that he's been... well just a little less himself," Clary explained as they made it down stairs, and started heading towards the exit. "Now, I think maybe it was all because of Izzy."

"I would have to agree with you there," Magnus said. "What surprised me was how possessive Izzy was. I think she really cares about him, but until I saw it with my own eyes, I would never have believed it."

"I know what you mean," Clary chuckled. "Though I really can't talk considering how Jace and I started."

"True," Magnus smiled. "You Biscuit, managed to turn a player into a sap."

"And it seems Simon has the same superpower," Clary replied. "Life is a wonder, is it not?"

"Wonderfully complicated to be sure," Magnus commented.

"I arrived at this school with Simon, and now a mere two and a half years later, we have both managed to convert players into monogamists," Clary chuckled.
"I was quite the serial monogamist myself before Alexander," Magnus smiled. "Do I get to be included in your analysis?"

"Sure," Clary chuckled as they walked down the street towards the bus stop. "So, our story is that of three awkward virgins, turning three players into possessive romantics."

"Sounds like at least a trilogy to me," Magnus laughed. "Maybe even two trilogies."

"Throw in a couple prequels too," Clary chuckled, as the two of them got on the bus. Magnus never failed to enjoy spending time with Biscuit, and the bus ride passed quickly as they talked of this story they'd all star in. It was a very enjoyable fantasy fiction. By the time Clary got off the bus nearest the campus, they'd created quite the elaborate story, and Magnus would have happily continued the conversation, but Clary had another class today she didn't want to be late for.

"Oh, but being late is the best," Magnus laughed.

"See you later Magnus," Clary said with a shake of her head and a smile as she turned to get off the bus. The doors closed behind her, and Magnus waited for the next stop where he got out and walked the few blocks home.

Upon entering his house, Magnus saw Alec sitting on the couch watching tv. He chuckled to himself, remembering how his fiance had assigned him card addressing duties.

"Slacking off, I see," Magnus said as he approached. Alec turned to smile at him, but agreed firmly with a nod.

"How was coffee with Clary?" Alec asked.

"I was late," Magnus explained with a laugh.

"I guessed as much," Alec grinned, pulling Magnus down to sit beside him on the couch. Magnus happily obliged, wrapping an arm around Alec as he did so.

"Still got a latte though," Magnus continued. "And then we went to see Simon."

"Oh, and how is Simon?" Alec asked kindly.

"Wrapped around your sister," Magnus replied, a corner of his mouth turning up in a smile.

"Yeah, that's what she said on the phone," Alec said. "Well not exactly that, but she said they're dating now, like exclusive proper boyfriend/girlfriend dating, which is something I've never seen my sister do."

"She looks really happy," Magnus told him.

"She sounded happy on the phone, too," Alec agreed. There was a joy in his voice that made Magnus turn. Alexander's face was lit up, and he was grinning like a cheshire cat.

"This is all I've ever wanted for my sister," Alec explained. "For her to find someone that makes her want more."

"Speaking of more," Magnus sighed. "I believe we have hundreds of cards to address."

Chapter End Notes
The one review I got on my last chapter, makes me think that I definitely confused people with my three uploads at once thing…. Sorry. I just wanted to add in the timeline without having it all at the end since I don't know when this story will end. Usually I ask what you guys would prefer when I do stuff like this, except that I have learned over the years not to ask since I rarely get enough responses back to make a decision. I guess I could have added them to author's notes at the end of already established chapters, but I wanted them separate to act as a time marker. Again, sorry if I confused you. Just remember it could be worse, I could give up on this story all together, and never update it again! *la gasp*

And yes I am updating twice in two days. Consider this an apology for the crazy confusion with the timelines as well as proof I am actually writing again. I think I kinda missed writing this story though I do still seem to have a tv binge watching problem. I started watching Outlander... and by started I mean that I'm on season 2...

Also did you get my Mortal Instrument reference? My beta missed it so... if you didn't it wasn't just you. :)

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Sneak Peek Chapter 107

Taking yet another deep breath she lifted up her head from the desk and forced herself to look at her econ paper. Yes, okay this was working. Add one more sentence here, then another there. If she got through this she could sulk all night for all it mattered. One step at a time. Focus. Don't think about anything but the homework. Supply and demand. If the supply can meet the demand then… maybe she could do more to help Jordan with his parents. She could contact them directly, and tell them where Jordan was. Then Jordan would be forced to confront them and the relationship could be repaired or would Jordan just get pissed and make everything worse?

Urg! Maia still wasn't focused on her homework. She turned to her text book and read the definition again trying to get back in the right headspace. Supply and Demand: the amount of a commodity, product, or service available and the desire of buyers for it, considered as factors regulating its price. Yes, that was what mattered right now, not boys.

"Focus Maia!" she said to no one. If anyone in the library heard her they paid no attention.
Simon was being released from the hospital today, and Maia's mind was going round in circles, but it wasn't so much Simon's coming home that was the problem. Maia was more than glad that her friend was well enough to leave 24 hour medical supervision. No, the problem was which house he was coming home to, and who might tag along. Maia was worried that Jordan would show up at her place to visit his friend. The real difficulties of her friend and ex-boyfriend having a relationship independent of her had only recently dawned on Maia.

She knew Simon and Jordan had been out at a bar when Simon had been hurt, but not much else. The last time she'd seen Jordan, she'd yelled at him for cutting his parents out of his life just for her sake. It was beyond stupid, Jordan's ignoring his family. They weren't even together anyway, so how could it possibly still matter? If only Jordan would make up with his mom and dad, maybe Maia would stop feeling guilty. After all, it really was all her fault. She simply wasn't worth his never speaking to his parents again. Oh how had their situation gotten so messed up? Then again, it wasn't like she had any say or any claim to Jordan. Why did she care so much that he was ruining his future for her sake? That was his choice to make, was it not? And it wasn't even for her sake so much as because he was to stubborn to see that it no longer mattered. Yep, her fault.

With a sigh, Maia banged her head down on the desk. She was sitting in a corner of the library, books lined up on the shelf past her head on the left, and a collection of assorted chairs on her right. It was her favourite spot, with natural light coming in from behind the desk, while being isolated enough to avoid the distractions of the main library. But today none of this was helping. Maia had been sitting here - trying and failing - to focus on her homework for the last hour. Oh, why was her mind going round and round in circles when it was meant to be standing still? Why?

With a deep exhale, Maia reminded herself that boys didn't matter. Dating didn't matter. What mattered was school, and getting away from her parents. Maia had to focus.

Taking yet another deep breath, she lifted up her head and forced herself to look at her econ paper. Yes, okay this was working. Add one more sentence here, then another there. If she got through this, she could sulk all night for all it mattered. One step at a time. Focus. Don't think about anything but the homework. Supply and demand. If the supply can meet the demand then… maybe she could do more to help Jordan with his parents. Like, she could contact them directly, and tell them where Jordan was. Then Jordan would be forced to confront them, and the relationship could be repaired; or would Jordan just get pissed and make everything worse?

Urg! Her head hit her text book this time. Maia still wasn't focusing on her homework. Lifting her head, Maia stared at the hated book she'd just tried to use as a pillow and read the definition again. Supply and Demand: the amount of a commodity, product, or service available and the desire of buyers for it, considered as factors regulating its price. Yes, that was what mattered right now, not boys.

"Focus Maia!" she said out loud trying to collect her thoughts. If anyone in the library heard her, they paid no attention.

She continued reading the relevant pages, and it seemed to help quiet her circling mind. Maia managed to finish the last few paragraphs of her homework before finally calling it a day, packing up her stuff, and heading home.
Now that she had nothing to distract her, Maia's mind jumped right back into its whirl of disfunction. Aside from the one fight they'd had recently, and the singular conversation before it, Maia hadn't seen much of Jordan since the start of the school year. Last year they'd been meeting almost weekly for study dates… sessions. Yes, definitely study session. There had been no dates involved. It was a silly word, and it meant nothing.

Even so, Maia couldn't help but feel like Jordan didn't want to keep doing that. She couldn't quite put her finger on what exactly it was that made her think this. Maia had enjoyed texting Jordan over the summer, but since school had started, things had been different and she didn't quite know why. Since the first time she'd seen Jordan stalking her in the halls, Maia had sensed no change in him from before. That is until now. Something had changed, and if she was being perfectly honest with herself, she wasn't happy about it.

Her troubled and conflicted thoughts carried her all the way home. Maia barely took the time to notice the crisp fall air, or the beautiful way the October leaves collected over the dying grass.

Maia opened her front door, and was instantly greeted by the sound of a television. She recognized the show as one of Izzy's favourites. Still wrapped up in her thoughts and assuming her roommate was watching tv alone, Maia waved hello without looking over, then disappeared into her bedroom where she collapsed onto her bed, covering her face with her hands.

Her stupid brain would not shut up!

As she took in the darkness behind her eyelids, Maia tried to empty her mind to clear it of all noise and confusion.

"I am the master of my own thoughts," Maia said to herself, then repeated the phrase inside her mind over and over again until it finally sunk in. This was a technique she'd used before, repeating a phrase to occupy her mind, and stop it from running a muck. It was a coping mechanism she'd developed with her family. It went well with breathing exercises, thinking only of how her lungs filled with air through her nose, and then emptied through her mouth as she commanded. The combined effect was enough to calm Maia's anxious mind, a welcome relief.

Just as Maia was enjoying her minds new found stillness, her peace was rudely interrupted by voices coming from past her bedroom door. Curious despite herself, Maia got up and went to investigate. When she entered the living room, she instantly realized the inaccuracy of her earlier assumption. Izzy was in fact not watching television alone.

"I thought the hospital wasn't releasing you until tomorrow," Maia said by way of greeting.

"Hello to you too," Simon chuckled.

"Sorry," Maia sighed, sitting down in a chair opposite the two snuggled up on the couch. "My head is all over the place today."

"I have recently learned that snuggles are great for a bad head space," Izzy giggled. Maia did a double take. Izzy looked so different. It wasn't like she'd changed her beauty routine or fashion sense, but more like she was lighter. That dark storm cloud that Maia had become accustomed to seeing over her roommates head seemed to be gone. Maia had to confess, it was quite something to watch. One of Simon's arms was still in a sling, but otherwise he looked quite well. His good arm was wrapped around Izzy's shoulders, and they both looked very comfortable to be there. If she hadn't seen it with her own two eyes, Maia wasn't sure if she'd believe it. I don't need a mad Izzy cuddled up on the couch like a lovestruck teenager.
"I'm thirsty," Simon told Izzy sweetly. "Would you mind getting me something to drink?"

"Sure!" Izzy said, and just like that, she was up and headed to the kitchen. Again, if Maia hadn't just witnessed that, she'd had laughed off the very idea of Isabelle getting something for someone else.

"Oh, wow," Maia gasped, once Izzy was out of earshot in the kitchen.

"I know right," Simon sniggered. "I bet this lasts only as long as I'm in a sling, and then I'll be the one getting up for her." But Simon didn't seem upset by the idea. In fact, he was gazing after her, a dopy look on his face.

"Hey there, Mr. Rose-Tinted-Glasses," Maia said, waving her hand in front of his face. "This is Isabelle Lightwood we are talking about, you know that right."

"The one and only," Simon replied, clearly missing her point, but Maia didn't get a chance to explain it further to him as Izzy reappeared a second later.

"Here you go, sweetie," Izzy said, returning with a glass in her hand.

"Sweetie?" Simon chuckled.

"Okay yeah, maybe not," Izzy confessed. "Thought I'd try it out."

"You're cute," Simon told her, reaching out to pull her down for a kiss before taking his glass from her hands.

"And don't you ever forget it," Izzy said firmly as she returned to her place by his side.

"I think I might throw up," Maia groaned.

"Do you want to finish the episode with us?" Simon asked, ignoring her words and taking a sip of his drink. Maia agreed as she couldn't claim to be doing anything else of importance at the moment. The show was set in the late 1800s and seemed to be about business, love, property, and politics. The main character was a man named Ross Poldark, and Maia found herself quite easily pulled into it.

"I really don't like that Elizabeth character," Izzy said when the credits rolled. "She's just so fickle. One fiance dies she switches, he comes back not so dead, and she's like well… maybe I'll stick with the less risky option, rather than marry the man I supposably loved so very much just a few months ago."

"I think being a women in the 19th century would suck," Maia commented. "I can't really blame her for wanting an easy life." She paused to start listing things off on her fingers. "No birth control. No tampons, now that would suck. Not to mention wearing corsets all the time, and chamber pots." Maia shivered. "I would rather be broke in the 21st century, than rich in the 19th. At least poor people here have plumbing."

"All excellent points," Simon commented. "Though, honestly my issues would be lack of internet. I don't think I can live without my wifi."

"Oh, that too!" Maia agreed.

"I don't think it would be so bad," Izzy commented. "So long as you were rich in those days. You'd have a ladies maid to handle all the gross work."
"No hot showers," Maia reminded her.

"Good point," Izzy chuckled. "I take it back." Just then they all heard a phone go off, and all automatically reaching for their phones. Maia couldn't help smiling at how well their phones had them trained as she noticed it wasn't hers that had received the message. Looking up, she saw Simon reading off his cell.

"Clary wants to come say hi," Simon said. "That okay?"

"I suppose," Izzy sighed, though she didn't look happy about it. Simon turned to face her, making her look at him before reaching up to stroke her cheek.

"I dumped her remember," Simon added with a smile, looking right into his girlfriend's eyes. "Over a year ago."

"Yes, but only because she went and fallen for someone else," Izzy reminded him.

"If I hadn't been so stubborn, I would have dumped her years before that," Simon said. "She is just my friend, besides she's bringing Jace." Maia couldn't help but laugh at how happy Izzy looked that Jace was coming along as well.

"I suppose that's alright then," Izzy conceded.

"You really aren't going to let your girlfriend tell you who you can and can't be friends with, are you Simon?" Maia asked incredulously. Maia liked Izzy as a friend, but she couldn't help but be wary of Simon dating her. Maia was waiting for the penny to drop, waiting for Izzy to hurt Simon.

"Of course not," Simon said. "But that doesn't mean I can't be considerate."

"So if I told you to never see Clary again…" Izzy said, leaving it hanging.

"I'd tell you that isn't possible," Simon replied. "We've been friends since we were toddlers."

"Right answer," Maia replied abruptly before Izzy spoke. She wasn't sure if it was because of her parents, or even her brother, but something in Maia hated giving in, being so dependent on another person you'd give them anything no matter what. She was glad Simon was standing his ground.

"This whole relationship business is odd," Izzy commented. "I just want to grab ahold of you, and not let another woman within ten feet of you." With that, Izzy leaned over and wrapped both her arms around Simon's chest.

"Rib still mending," Simon whined.

"Oh, sorry," Izzy said sheepishly as she let him go, looking ashamed of her forgetfulness.

"It's alright," Simon told her. "And that's what people call being possessive, Iz. It's part of an exclusive relationship."

"I didn't have anything against Clary before," Izzy whined. Simon just laughed slightly then leaned over to kiss her.

"You're cute when you're jealous," he told her. "Even if you're jealousy is totally and completely misplaced."

"You're mine," Izzy said with a giggle, more gently putting an arm around her boyfriend than before. "She isn't to have you."
Simon laughed more deeply, with real humor. "You've had more of me than she ever did," he said, chuckling.

"Good," Izzy stated firmly. "Then text your friend back."

Maia watched as Simon typed on his phone for a moment, presumably telling Clary to come over. Then Izzy started the next episode. They were about half way through it when they were joined by Jace and Clary. Turning to look, Maia saw Clary with Jace slightly behind. Someone paused the episode and everyone exchanged greetings. Then Clace came and sat down with them.

"Must you call yourselves that?" Maia whined, now the only single person in a room full of couples.

"Blame her," Jace said, pointing to Clary. "She started it."

"It's just that the words Magnus and Alec merge into one so easily," Clary defended herself. "I had to use it to bug Magnus, and then... well, I was on a roll."

"Maybe bring that roll to a screeching halt," Maia offered. Everyone laughed, but no one actually took her advice.

"Do we get a name too?" Izzy asked eagerly.


"I like it," Izzy said at once. "It's mostly my name with just a little extra." Simon's bark of laughter quickly turned to the whole group breaking out into giggles.

"I think that about sums us up, doesn't it," Simon chuckled.

"Don't sell yourself short my friend," Jace added.

"Should I be a lot extra, then?" Simon remarked. "Simizzy." Even for their strange couple ship names, this word was ridiculous, and soon everyone was laughing far too hard to speak.

"Look at all of us," Maia said once she could. "All we need is for me to get back with Jordan, and we'd be in triple date territory."

"And if we add Malec," Izzy said, still chuckling. "Then it would be quadruple dating."

"Malec, Clace, Sizzy and-" Clary began. "And Jaia."

"Now Jordan's just a little extra," Izzy giggled.

"Are we leaving Tessa, Will, and Jem out of this?" Jace asked, but Maia wasn't listening anymore. She was watching Simon. Everyone in the room was laughing, except for him.

"Oh, I don't know how to ship those three together," Clary complained. "I mean Wessa and Jessa works fine, but if I understand their relationship right, I need all three names in it."

"That's true," Jace added thoughtfully.

"What's up?" Maia asked Simon, ignoring Clace's chatter.

"I'm not sure I'm supposed to tell you this," Simon said slowly. "But I'd rather you find out here from me than see for yourself."
"What's going on Simon?" Maia said wearily. She had a sinking feeling in the pit of her stomach that Simon was about to explain why her mind had been off all day.

"Jordan's... well he's," Simon started. "The night I got hit by the car he met someone at the bar, and it seems like they've hit it off. He's been texting me."

"Oh," Maia said calmly, willing herself not to show any signs of distress. "Well that's good then. Thanks for telling me." Simon smiled kindly at her, and Maia turned away. Without realizing it, she slipped on the mask she wore so often at home, the one that kept her parents in the dark and allowed her to act the part in a social setting while her mind was miles away.

So Jordan had moved on. Rationally Maia knew this would happen eventually if she kept saying no to him. She'd even been thinking this morning about it, but knowing that he might one day move on, and knowing for sure he had were two very different things. The grief of it suddenly hit her like a punch to the gut. Jordan would never be hers again. Never kiss her, never hold her, never tell her he cared, ever again. It was strange. After all, she'd all but yelled that at him more than once. This shouldn't be a surprise. This was what she wanted, right?

In a moment of clarity, Maia realized why she was so surprised. She'd never once believe he'd listen to her, never once thought her pushing him away would actually move him. In some small part of her mind, Maia must have felt sure that if she ever changed her mind, Jordan would be there waiting for her. But what did that say about her? Stringing a good man along forever was a horrible thing to do. No, this was just shock and it would pass. Maia was happy for Jordan.

Chapter End Notes

Raise your hand if you're feeling the Jaia angst. ^_^

I've come to realize that my timeline additions are confusing people. They are currently chapter 55 and 100, but I've decided that if enough of you ask me to do I'll delete them. If not I'll leave them. Up to you guys.

Sometimes, it feels to me like this story is getting kinda dull... it's like there is just less going on than before though that might all be in my head. Do please tell me if this story goes on for so long that it gets boring. I try and keep things interesting for you guys but sometimes it seems like I just have filler chapter after filler chapter with no real plot. I really value reader feedback and just remember that you have the power to greatly influence this story if you just talk to me. If it's getting boring and you tell me so I will make an extra effort to create some more interesting plots!

If I keep updating this slow the Christmas chapters might actually line up with Christmas for once! lol. Before I was updating this SO fast I never had a hope of matching up holiday chapters with actual real life holidays. This is very strange. ;D

Sneak Peek Chapter 108

With Simon deep in new relationship mode, and Alec overwhelmed with wedding planning, Jace often found himself lacking for guy friends. Jordan was around but they were more friends of friends than friends themselves and he was usually hanging out
with Paige. This might have been why Jace was so on alert for the door. He was expecting Clary home any minute. Hearing the ding, Jace jumped up and had the door open as she was walking in.

"Oh um hi," Clary said with a slight laugh, clearing being surprised by his presence right at the door. "Have you been waiting at the door for me?"

"If I have does that make me pathetic?" Jace asked before kissing her hello.

Clary chuckled then said, "Maybe a little."

"Exams are soon and I have so much work to do," Jace began. "But I don't wanna and everyone else is busy."

"Oh no you poor thing," Clary teased him. Jace was having none of this teasing nonsense so he just rolled his eyes at her and pretended like he was indifferent to his lack of company.
November dawned colder and darker than October, the sun setting sooner each day. Term papers were coming due and exams were just around the corner again. Simon was out of his sling, but attending physio theory sessions every week. His new girlfriend usually went with him to physio, but sometimes Clary tagged along. It seemed time had made Izzy warm up to Clary. Though Jace was a little bias where his girlfriend was concerned, he did understand Izzy's issue there as Jace had once had similar feelings towards Simon. However, Jace was giving himself more credit since he'd been jealous of Simon when he and Clary were actually a couple, rather than over a year later. Then again, Jace remembered the power of those new possessive feelings in his first few months with Clary, and he couldn't judge Izzy too much for feeling similarly.

Simon was spending half his time at home and half at his girlfriend's place these days, but to Jace, all this meant was that he saw less of his friend than before. The same could not be said of Jordan. It seemed Paige had many roommates where she lived, and much preferred Jordan's place to her own. This meant that Jace was becoming very familiar with the blonde haired women being around the apartment.

With Simon deep in new relationship mode, and Alec overwhelmed with wedding planning, Jace often found himself lacking for guy friends. Jordan was around, but it wasn't the same. Jace and Jordan were more friends of friends - than friends themselves - and to top it off, he was usually hanging out with Paige. This might have been why Jace was so on alert for the door. He was expecting Clary home any minute. Hearing the ding, Jace jumped up and had the door open as she was walking in.

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"If I have, does that make me pathetic?" Jace asked before kissing her hello.

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"Exams are soon, and I have so much work to do," Jace began. "But I don't wanna, and everyone else is busy."

"Oh no, you poor thing," Clary teased him. Jace was having none of this teasing nonsense so he just rolled his eyes at her and pretended to be indifferent to his lack of company.

"Have you figured out what you want to do for Christmas this year?" Jace asked.

"Our second Christmas together," Clary smiled. "Well… we spent the first one at my parents place."

"And we spent the summer with my mom," Jace added.

"Still, I wouldn't want to deprive your mother of you two Christmases in a row," Clary grinned at him.

"I think it's best we go to see your family again," Jace argued. He didn't want to say it out loud, but he was worried Sebastian was still in his hometown. He'd tried to convince his mother to move cities, but she'd fought him at every turn. Celine was nothing, if not a stubborn woman.
"It's just your mom right?" Clary asked, as she dumped her school bag on the chair.

"What do you mean?" Jace replied, following Clary as she moved down the hall and into their room.

"I mean, you have no other family to go home to?" Clary explained, opening her drawers.

"Yeah, that's right," Jace said, enjoying the view as he watched his girlfriend change. "Unless we count Will, though it seems like he doesn't visit his much either."

"Why don't I ask my parents if Celine could come join us for Christmas this year?" Clary suggested, now wearing comfy jammies. "That way you still get to see your mom, and annoy my brother." Jace agreed with this idea easily, then moved onto more pressing concerns.

"After watching you put those on," Jace said softly, moving closer to gently run his fingers over the fabric of her pajamas. "I'm feeling highly motivated to take them off."

Clary giggled. "It's late," she said, but her eyes were grinned at him. "We should probably go to sleep."

Unable to resist leaning over to kiss her, Jace placed his hand on the small of her back. A soft contented noise reached his ears from deep in her throat, and Jace took this as a sign.

"Are you sure you want to sleep?" Jace whispered.

"Yes," Clary said. "Though, it could probably wait a little while at least."

"Oh, and whatever shall we do in the meantime?" Jace teased, his breath against the skin of her neck as his hand moved down and under the edge of her shirt, gently touching the bare skin of her back.

"I can think of a few things," Clary gasped as she threw her arms around him. The kiss deepened, and before he thought more about it, Jace had unbuttoned the front of her pajama top exposing her bare chest, her bra having already been shed in preparation for sleep. He wasted no time in bringing his face close enough to kiss between her breasts. Clary whispered his name, and Jace tried to stop himself from grinning as he took her nipple into his mouth.

After that, Clary seemed rather less interested in foreplay. Jace felt her hands at his waist, undoing his jeans. Clary had his boxers around his ankles seconds later. Jace gasped, a sharp involuntary intake of breath caused by her hands grasped him, sending a jolt through him. Pulling away for only a moment to remove his own shirt, Jace pushed their skin together before seizing his girlfriend's lips in a heated kiss. Jace heard the bedroom door close, and knew Clary had kicked it without breaking their kiss.

Turning, Jace pressed her up against the back of the door, his hands roaming down as he worked on evening the playing field. Clary's pajama bottoms now around her ankles, their mouths still locked together, as Jace's hands investigated down below. Clary gasped as his fingers trailed her skin lower and lower. When they passed her navel he felt her opened her legs ever so slightly. Accepting the invitation, Jace moved his hand between, gently stimulating, stroking. He grinned, proud, as he felt how sticky she was. His experienced hand worked it's wonders for a moment as he listened to the moans and exclamations he was invoking in the woman he loved. It was a feeling Jace knew he'd never tire of, for it was the two together that made it magic. He was sure he'd finished her off at least once, when suddenly Clary jumped, wrapping both her legs around his waist. Jace's arousal was suddenly pressed up against her wet warmth, and he stumbled, his strong arms holding Clary's weight for only a moment before they fell backwards onto the bed.

Then Jace was laying on his back, and Clary was suddenly doing all the work. She'd lined them up
on her own, and only seconds after they'd landed on the bed, Jace found himself inside her. The 
muscles of his body tensed as his nerve endings registered the change. He'd barely had time to gasp 
before Clary started moving. She was contracting those wondrous muscles of hers, squeezing him 
relentlessly as her hips grinded into him, rocking back and forth. It felt like no time at all before Jace 
was overwhelmed, coming deep inside her.

She collapsed at his side, both of them panting slightly. Then Clary leaned over, kissed him briefly, 
and said she had to pee. Jace couldn't help but smile as he watched her walk totally naked across the 
room. Before opening the door, Clary put on a robe on. As she left, Jace couldn't help but wonder if one 
day they'd live alone, eliminating the need for her robe. Jace loved living with Clary, but in this 
moment, he found himself wondering what it would be like to live alone with Clary.

The point was further brought home when he heard Clary talking to whoever she'd run into on her 
way to the bathroom. Jace suspected it was Jordan and Paige rather than Simon, only because at this 
point it was just statistically more likely. Besides, it was late so whoever was here was likely here to 
stay the night.

When Clary returned a moment later, Jace hadn't moved. He was still lying naked on the bed, though 
he was getting cold. When Clary returned to lay beside him, Jace pulled a blanket up over them both.

"What's Jordan up to?" Jace asked.

"Oh, he and Paige were after a late night snack," Clary explained. "We crossed paths in the hall."

"Ah the joys of roommates," Jace sighed.

"Don't sound so gloomy," Clary laughed. "Or haven't you noticed how clean the house has been 
lately."

"Simon's never here," Jace shrugged. "Less people, less dishes?"

"Nope," Clary said, grinning. "Paige." She said this as if it was an explanation for more than just the 
number of people present in the house at any one given time.

"Paige what?" Jace asked.

"Paige has been cleaning our house," Clary explained.

"Why?" Jace scoffed. The idea seemed very strange to him. He didn't like cleaning his own house, 
let alone someone else's.

"No idea," Clary replied.

"Huh, weird," Jace commented. "Have you heard from Simon lately?"

"Texting mostly," Clary said. "But I did go with him to physio last week. He's doing great."

"That's good," Jace said without voicing his curiosity about when his friend would be able to spend 
time with him again. It was a needy feeling, and Jace didn't like it one bit. He remembered having 
similar thoughts when Malec had first gotten together, although, back then he'd been single, which 
had made quite a difference.

"I love you quite a lot, you know," Jace told the woman in his arms in the most serious voice he 
could muster.
"Is that so," Clary smiled. "Well gosh darnet, if you haven't been keeping me in the dark this whole time." They both laughed, then Clary returned his words with a whispered 'I love you too' before they both went to sleep.

Jace woke to the sound of his girlfriend's alarm clock. Since moving in with the woman Jace had developed a healthy hatred for the thing. He didn't open his eyes, but he could still sense Clary moving around in the room, getting ready to leave. Jace had class today as well, but not until much later, so he went back to sleep.

Jace was awoken the second time by his own alarm clock, a sound he'd also come to loath, though many years before ever hearing Clary's alarm. Dragging himself out of bed, Jace put on whatever he could find and headed to his advance marketing class. Marketing reminded Jace of the pickup artist industry so much he found it really quite easy to pay attention. The main difference was really the goal, sex vs. sales. Both involved social engineering, persuasion, and manipulation. What amazed Jace the most about his chosen major was that most people didn't know how much of their lives were influenced, or out right manipulated, by marketing. The example that had stuck with him best was the very concept of a diamond engagement ring. As it turned out, the use of diamonds during an engagement was a very new concept, first showing up in the early 20th century due to the most successful marketing campaign in history. Marketing had a great impact on culture, and the day to day lives of almost everyone on the planet, and yet people often think quite the opposite.

Smiling, Jace scribbled down what his teacher was actually talking about instead of general marketing concepts from a class last year. Though he was being a good student and taking notes, Jace was also texting. He'd been trying to steal a moment of Alec's time for what felt like weeks now, and today didn't feel like a good day to give up.

'Weddings can't be that much of a hassle,' Jace texted Alec.

'Get married,' Alec replied. 'Then we'll talk.'

'That settles it,' Jace texted. 'Clary and I are eloping.'

'Ha ha,' Alec added, with a laughing emoji afterwards.

'Does Clary know this?' Alec typed.

'Good point,' Jace replied. 'I should probably tell her.'

'Might be a good start,' Alec texted.

'So when are you free to hang out?'

'In May,' Alec texted.

'Not acceptable,' Jace replied

'I'm up to my eyelashes in wedding right now,' Alec typed. 'Mom keeps calling over and over.'

'As your best man, I feel like I should be included,' Jace continued trying a new angle.

'As your best friend, I have been trying to spare you the torment,' Alec replied.

'Give that up and then we can hang out,' Jace replied.

'Alright then,' Alec texted back. 'Why don't you come over here after class and help me.'
'Done,' Jace replied, putting his phone away and feeling like he'd won.

Less than an hour later however, Jace was sure he'd lost.

Before his eyes was an oray of things he didn't understand. Papers covered in lists, diagrams of circles with lines, and what looked like pictures of cakes were strewn across the table. At least four types of flower arrangements were there as well, all in vases of various sizes and shapes. Magnus sat at the table, a pencil in his mouth as he poured over the seating plans. Alec only waved at Jace as he entered, his other hand occupied holding a phone.

"Yes mother, I know," Alec was saying. "And we agreed to that but-" There was silence for a moment before Alec spoke again. "Yes, that was what I was going to say if-"

"Does she ever let him finish a sentence?" Jace asked Magnus quietly as he moved closer.

"Not really," Magnus laughed softly. "Lovely women, just a little overly enthusiastic."

"Well, I don't know mother, there is always Izzy and Max," Alec said, exasperated.

"What do you suppose she's saying?" Jace asked Magnus, taking a seat next to him all the while looking at Alec.

"From the look on Alexander's face, and what he's saying…" Magnus began. "I'd bet Maryse is trying to get her way by saying this might be her one and only chance to plan a wedding for one of her children."

"Low blow," Jace commented.

"The woman is diabolical," Magnus giggled, though very quietly. "I do know where Alec gets his stubborn side from."

"Well Izzy's dating Simon now," Alec said, annoyed. He was passing faster than before, his voice rising. "And Max is only eight mother."

"Here," Magnus said, pushing a box into Jace's arms. "Five in each bag, then tie the string."

"Huh?" Jace was totally taken off guard as he accepted the box a little nonplussed.

"If you are here, you can help," Magnus explained. Jace looked down at the box in his hands. There was a stack of lacy squares of fabric along with a container of what looked like dried leaves. The only other thing present was a collection of small pink pieces of string.

"Mo- Mother," Alec said clearly interrupting her. "Just because I couldn't make one decision doesn't mean I can't make others."

Alec's head sunk as he listened to his mother speak, though it looked more out of frustration than defeat. With a sigh, Alec covered the phone's mic with his other hand and turned to face them.

"At this point, I think she can talk to nothing for a while and she wouldn't even notice," he said.

"What's she talking about that you can't make decisions?" Jace asked.

"My major," Alec explained. "I never picked one. Mom and dad choose it for me over the summer."

"Why did you come to this school anyway?" Jace chuckled. "If you didn't know what you wanted to study."
Alec just shrugged. "Cause I could, and I'd be away from home, and on my own which is nice."

"And to meet me," Magnus added with a grin. Instantly Alec's own manor changed. The stress on his face melted away, and he moved closer to his fiance.

"And to meet you," Alec agreed, his eyes alite with love as he gazed at Magnus.

"Are you even there!" the voice was clearing yelling, though Jace could barely hear it.

"Yes, sorry mother," Alec said as he quickly held the phone to his ear again.

Jace pretended like he knew what to do with his box of strange things for a moment while Alec finished his phone call. Magnus was still looking at the seating chart like a puzzle to be solved.

"Urg," Alec groaned, when he was finally off the phone. "Maybe we should just elope."

"And face your mother's wrath," Magnus objected. "I think not!"

"Meow!" The Chairman had suddenly jumped up on the table stepping on everything in his path in search of someone who would give him the attention he clearly wanted.

"Bad kitty!" Magnus scolded the feline scooping him up and placing him back on the floor. "You've got your little paws on everything."

"You guys have two cats right?" Jace asked, turning to look for the other one.

"Yes, but Catsby hasn't been himself lately," Alec sighed. "He rarely leaves our bedroom. Spends all day sleeping. Sometime he doesn't even get up for dinner." Alec sounded worried and Jace couldn't blame him. That didn't sound good.

"It's been better though since we've been locking up Chairman when we feed Catsby," Magnus added. There was a hope in his voice that Jace couldn't hear in Alec's. "I think Catsby's eating more that way."

"True," Alec replied. "So let's put Jace to work." There was an evil glint in Alec's eyes, and Jace couldn't help but feel the need for retreat.

Not long after that, Jace found himself filling little silk bags with smelly dead leaves. He didn't understand what the hell the point was, but it was nice to spend time with Alec, and Jace decided it was worth it… at least for today. Tomorrow he might go back to putting off his homework by playing video games, and letting Alec protect him from his best man duties.

Chapter End Notes

Another chapter yay! Don't really have much to say today... just please please review! I do so love to read them. Honestly they are literally the best and I will never tire of hearing what you think of my story. It doesn't matter that this story has over a 1000 reviews because every new one keeps me writing.

Oh no ones told me they hate the timelines so I guess those are staying.
She was perfect, in every way. For starters she was beautiful. Her eyes were a smoky grey, her skin slightly tanned. She was wearing a very light pink lip gloss today. Her hair was long, cascading down her back in waves. Her roots were darker, making her hair more dirty blonde than anything. Looking past the physical, she was kind, even-tempered and affectionate. She smiled easier and he liked the way her eyes looked when she did, but what had him so in awe was how much she loved to clean.
Jordan's Perfect

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

She was beautiful, her eyes a smokey grey, and her skin slightly tanned. She was wearing a very light pink lip gloss today, her hair worn was long, cascading down her back in waves. Her roots were darker, lightening a few inches down as if she hadn't dyed her roots in a while. Though she carried herself like a woman who knew she was pretty, there was no arrogance about her. Despite her obvious beauty, it was her kindness that made her more beautiful. Even-tempered and good natured, she smiled easily. He liked the way her eyes looked when she smiled.

Jordan was currently sitting on his couch, mug in hand watching Paige clean his kitchen. It was strange how happy she looked doing it, humming to herself as she worked. He'd tried so many times to tell her she didn't have to clean their mess the first time she'd visited his apartment and spontaneously started doing the dishes. Jordan had explained over and over again that it wasn't her job, but Paige hadn't listened.

"I find it oddly relaxing," she'd replied with a shrug.

"But you shouldn't have to clean up other people's mess," Jordan continued.

"I don't know," Paige reassured him. "I find it's a great way to make a good impression."

"Can't argue with you there," Jordan chuckled. "I think my roommates would rather live with you than me."

"Oh no," Paige had smiled at him. "I'm sure they like having you around more than you realize."

"Nah, Clary wanted Simon to stay here," Jordan explained. "I just tagged alone."

"You're too hard on yourself," Paige had scolded him as Jordan had known she would. He'd come to expect things like this from her. If anyone ever said something negative about themselves, she'd disagree without a second thought.

It was easy being with Paige. She was so hard to anger, light spirited, and found joy in helping others. Jordan couldn't imagine ever fighting with her the way he'd fought with Maia, so why was he holding back?

Jordan knew he'd always had hope that one day he'd get Maia back since basically the moment they'd broken up. He'd followed her to this school with that same hope in mind. The hope had survived, despite her saying over and over that it wouldn't happen. Maybe a part of him had believed that once he'd told her what really happened during their break up everything would just magically go back to the way it had been, naive and foolish though the notion was. Low and behold, Maia had rejected him once again, even going so far as being upset that he'd broken away from the people who'd ripped them apart. Of course she had a point that these people were his parents, and with him and Maia split, there really was no purpose in the distance he'd created, but Jordan just couldn't think of his parents the same way now that he knew how little they valued his happiness.

The first time Jordan had felt the absence of that childish hope was after his last fight with Maia that had lead to his trip to the bar with Simon. Only then had Jordan finally admitted to himself that it was over. That ever present flickering flame of hope had fizzled out, leaving him cold and empty. Jordan hadn't intended to do more that night than drown his sorrows, but Paige had surprised him. Maybe
that was why Jordan had felt so guilty when he'd learned of Simon's accident. Rather than making
sure his friend got home alright, Jordan had spent the whole night with Paige. She was the first
women he'd been with since Maia - the only one apart from Maia - but that wasn't what had
endeared her to him. Paige was someone Jordan could really talk to. She listened to him in a way
Maia never had, so why was he sitting here thinking about Maia?

"You've got that look in your eyes again," Paige's voice broke past his thoughts. "What ya thinking
about?"

Jordan blinked, and realized she'd stopped washing dishes and had turned around to face him,
moving closer. She was wearing dark blue dish gloves that were still slick with soap.

"Just life," Jordan replied. "Life is a strange beast."

"I thought you were going to tell me off for cleaning again," Paige teased, leaning over to kiss him
while holding her wet gloved hands behind her back.

"Oh no, I have quite given up on that by now," Jordan chuckled.

"Good," Paige smiled at him. Jordan was getting used to the way she smiled, how the emotion
always seemed to reach her eyes. She turned and headed back into the kitchen to finish herself
imposed task.

It amazed him how different Paige and Maia were. Paige's every emotion showed on her face, while
Maia could hide a world of feelings behind a mask of pleasantries. Maia was quick to fight back like
a snapping turtle, while Paige felt more like an Otter, content to clean her fur all day long before
playing in the sea.

He and Paige had been going out less than a month, and already he'd begun looking forward to
seeing her. Did this mean it was possible to get over your first love? Or was he just splitting his heart
down the middle for the sake of not being alone? She was so wonderful, but was it fair to her to be
with her? If he could offer her nothing but wasted time, should he string her along to try and heal his
own heart? Paige and Jordan were opposites, while he and Maia had been so similar. But then again,
maybe that was the problem. If opposites attract, then sames repel.

"There, all done," Paige said walking back over without her gloves this time. Jordan could hear the
water draining from the sink as she sat down beside him. "There's a show I've been meaning to make
you watch. I think you'll love it."

"Do you want to be my girlfriend?" Jordan asked, suddenly. He wasn't sure what made him say it.
They were acting like it already, but if he didn't ask the question, Jordan was sure he'd never be able
to call her that. Until now, Jordan had told his roommates that he and Paige were seeing each other.
He'd told Simon that he'd met someone, but never once had he used the word girlfriend.

Maia and him had been all spark and no permanence. He'd tried everything he could, poured his
heart out more than once, and done his best to win her back, but it had failed, and it was time to
move on. Paige was real. She was here beside him, smiling at him the way she did.

"Aren't I already, silly?" she asked.

"I suppose," he said, with a sigh. "It's just I've only ever used that word for one person before, and
that didn't exactly end well."

"Yeah you told me," Paige said. "Maia right?" Jordan nodded. It hadn't felt right carrying a torch for
someone while being with someone else, so before they'd even left the bar that night, Jordan had told
Paige about his ex girlfriend. Or maybe that was how Jordan choose to think about it. In reality, he might have still been a little drunk and wanted some sympathy.

"Well I can't say any of my exes would be happy to see me," Paige continued. "And by exes, I literally mean two, and only if you count five weeks is high school as a relationship." She leaned closer, compassion in her eyes. "Ending something rarely ends well."

"My friend Simon managed it," Jordan replied. "He used to date Clary, and they managed to stay friends."

"There's always exceptions," Paige told him kindly. "That doesn't mean you should feel bad about it."

"You're right of course," Jordan told her, leaning over to kiss her briefly.

"If you need an answer to your very obvious question," Paige said grinning at him. "It's yes."

"Thanks," Jordan chuckled.

"You're adorable," Paige replied. "With your heart on your sleeve like that. It's why I was staring at you at the bar you know."

"That night my heart was seriously shattered," Jordan remarked. "How you saw anything you liked amazes me."

"I'm a very good judge of character," Paige replied.

Just then the door opened and they both turned to look. It was a rather open concept apartment, with the front door in full view of the living room, though Paige wouldn't have been able to see who'd just entered if she'd still been in the kitchen doing dishes.

"Hello all!" It was Clary's voice, and she looked thrilled. "And hello Paige, does this mean I don't have any dishes to wash?"

"Indeed it does," Paige laughed. "Why this household makes such a big deal out of such a small thing I don't understand."

"You have to marry her," Clary ordered Jordan. "I simply can't go back to the way it was."

Jordan groaned, covering his face with his hands and praying to whatever non-existent deity he didn't worship that Clary stopped talking. Jordan couldn't say he was surprised when his prayers went unanswered.

"Let's see," Clary said thoughtfully as she moved closer, dropping her school bag as she did so. "We all have ship names around here so….

"Might be a little early for that," Jordan tried to tell her.

Clary ignored him and continued. "Umm… Paidan, no, Jorge, no because that just sounds like george… umm… Maybe something shorter like Jore or Jige. Oh, you guys are tricky!"

"How about pain," Jordan added. "As in, you are a pain in the-" Clary just stuck her tongue out at him.

"Apart from already being a word that would make a horrible couple name, that is mostly her name with just the last letter of yours at the end," Clary told him firmly. "Hardly feels like equal
"Clace is mostly your name with the end of Jace's tacked on," Jordan reminded her. "Sizzy is mostly Izzy's name with Simon's S at the start."

"Yes, but a started letter holds more weight," Clary explained as Jordan's mind turned her out. He couldn't help imagining what Maia would do if Clary tried to merge their names together. He could almost picture Maia as a cat sharpening her claws, getting ready to pounce on the offending roommate.

"Your friends funny," Paige told him as Clary left to get started on some homework.

"Roommate," Jordan corrected.

"Nah, she's your friend," Paige disagreed. "Just roommates don't take the time to tease you. Trust me, I've had lots of only roommates."

"I blame Simon," Jordan chuckled.

After that, Jordan put on a movie, and they were about half way through it when Jace arrived home. Thankfully he didn't feel the need to tease them, and simply joined them on the couch to watch the sequel. As the hour grew later, all members of the household retired. Jordan had to admit it was nice sleeping beside Paige. She was warm and comforting; it was so much nicer than sleeping alone.

Thanks to Paige's early class schedule, Jordan did wake alone, though he had plans to meet up with his girlfriend that afternoon in the cafeteria. It still felt strange, even using the word in his head. His girlfriend who wasn't Maia. Jordan could only hope that with time, that strange feeling of his girlfriend not being Maia would fade. He felt like maybe if he hadn't held out hope for so long that they'd get back together, maybe it would already feel normal for another woman to hold the title.

It was days like today that Jordan was really glad school was easy. He couldn't really focus in class. Instead, Jordan ended up texting Simon.

'You were hung up on Maia for a long time,' Simon confronted him. 'It's only natural.'

'Does it feel weird that you have a girlfriend who isn't Clary?' Jordan texted back.

'No,' Simon typed. 'But my situation is a little different. Not only have Clary and I been broken up longer, but we never really had chemistry or that spark like you and Maia did. And I wanted more with Izzy long before I got it. Changes things.'

'I suppose,' Jordan replied, sighing as he typed.

'Time heals all my friend,' Simon texted back with a happy face emoji.

'Thanks,' Jordan replied actually smiling which surprised him.

'Aren't you in class?' Simon asked. 'And shouldn't be texting?'

'Yes, but this is my programming class,' Jordan explained. 'And I know all this shit already.'

'Why take the class then?' Simon asked.

'I need it to grad,' Jordan texted. 'It's the difference between saying you know computers and having a piece of paper to prove it.'
'Fair enough,' Simon replied. After that Jordan wasn't sure what to say, so he tried to turn his attention back towards the lecture. The problem was that second year computer science courses were super boring. As long as he had a textbook, Jordan didn't really need the teacher, except to mark his homework and exams. He knew he was lucky being able to just read a text book once and know it, but to him it was just normal. His favourite thing was when the textbooks had been turned into audio files and he could listen to them on 2x speed.

Class finally ended, and Jordan packed up before leaving to meet up with his girlfriend for lunch. Maybe using the word more would help him deal with the life altering meaning of it.

Paige had chosen the same spot as usual, so it was easy to find her once he'd arrived in the cafeteria. Jordan ordered calamari for lunch, then went to sit with her. He would have ordered her lunch too, but she already had a plate of fries with a grilled sandwich in front of her. As Paige told him about her morning, Jordan tried to listen, and for the most part succeeded, that is until he spotted Maia. She'd walked in through the doors on the other side of the large open space full of tables. The cafeteria here was very centralized and accessible from multiple points. Paige couldn't see Maia, and Jordan tried not to let the fact he'd noticed her show on his face as he nodding along to whatever Paige was saying.

Turning his eyes away, Jordan focused on Paige's face, but his mind wasn't so responsible. His thoughts idly wondering if Maia cared at all that he was with Paige. He knew he'd never learn how Maia was feeling from just her face, having first hand experience at how well that woman knows how to hide her emotions behind a mask. Then again, if she did care, why the hell hadn't she done something about it at any point during the last year and a half! The only explanation was that she didn't care.

This had to end. Jordan couldn't be thinking about Maia while he was sitting here with his girlfriend who wasn't Maia. As of right now, Jordan would put Maia out of his thoughts for real. He would be fair to Paige, and give this a real chance.

Chapter End Notes

I know I have been threatening to add Jordan POV for a while... and well it looks like I finally had enough ideas to warrant an entire chapter! I do hope I'm not confusing people with so many povs... I just love different povs. I have always felt like using just one pov is like looking through a story through a key hole. You get such a narrow view. I head is always jumping around imagining what every character is thinking so why not write it down that way right?

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Sneak Peek Chapter 110

"Hey," Izzy said with a wave. There was a startled noise and a frantic scuffling before Maia called 'hey' back. Curious Izzy walked over. Maia's eyes were red, her face blotchy. If the women had worn mascara Izzy was sure it would be running down her face. Izzy noticed a bit of white poking out from under the couch and concluded that Maia had tried to hide her tissues.

"If you need to cry, cry," Izzy said, kindly. "Don't be ashamed."
"I'm not," Maia mumbled.

"Then why hide the evidence?" Izzy asked. Maia said something under her breath that was clearly not meant to be heard.

"Sometimes life sucks and you just gotta let it out," Izzy said brightly.

"Don't sound so happy," Maia whined.

"Can't do that," Izzy replied. "Might get to have sex with my boyfriend tonight."

"Woho," Maia said in monotone with so little enthusiasm it was borderline friendship abuse.
Izzy's History

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes.

Izzy had never before cared less about school, which was saying something since she hadn't been a very good student to begin with. These days, all Izzy could think about was when she'd next see Simon again. It was making studying for her exams all the more challenging. The feelings Simon invoked in her felt strange, and Izzy was quite overwhelmed by them at times. The best way she could describe it was riding a high. That feeling you get when you are about to bungee jump for the first time, or galloping down a race track on the back of your favourite horse, the other riders eating your dust.

Even attending his physio appointments didn't bother her. When Izzy looked at Simon, she couldn't see him as weak or less just because he needed help getting his elbow to work right again. All she saw when she looked at Simon was the kind and caring man she called her own. Her Simon. Sometimes it still surprised her how much she liked the possessive nature of the word.

Today's appointment in particular Izzy was very excited about, because it had now been six weeks since Simon's accident; the doctors had said it would be 6-8 weeks before Simon could be cleared for more physical activity, and Izzy had been dying to have some physical activity with that man. Izzy had more than once offered to let him lie there and have her do all the work, but Simon had always said it was best to do what the doctors said. The problem was that Izzy had been itching to rip Simon's clothes off since their heart to heart at the hospital. Well, actually to be perfectly honest, she'd been wanting to do that since he'd called off their friends with benefits deal last March, though that could have been a 'want what you can't have' kinda situation.

Izzy arrived home a little early after class expecting to find her roommate studying like a good little student, and was surprised when she walked in and saw Maia on the couch, the tv on.

"Hey," Izzy said with a wave. There was a startled noise and a frantic scuffling before Maia called 'hey' back. Curious, Izzy walked over. Maia's eyes were red, her face blotchy. If the women had worn mascara, Izzy was sure it would be running down her face. Izzy noticed a bit of white poking out from under the couch, and concluded that Maia had tried to hide her tissues.

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"Don't sound so happy," Maia whined.

"Can't do that," Izzy replied. "Might get to have sex with my boyfriend tonight."

"Woohoo," Maia said in monotone with so little enthusiasm it was borderline friendship abuse.

"Okay what's wrong?" Izzy said. "This isn't just period hormones is it? Because I remember before I got my IUD, I had been known to cry over things such as being out of toilet paper."
"I'm not on my period," Maia sighed. "I'm just a stupid woman who wants what she can't have after she could have had it."

"You lost me," Izzy said.

"Do you know the phrase, you don't know what you've got till it's gone?"

"Yeah," Izzy said slowly. "Who doesn't know that phrase?"

"Well that phrase is my life right now," Maia explained.

Unsure of how to help, and knowing that if she waited any longer she'd be late, Izzy made a quick decision. Leaning forward, Izzy wrapped both her arms around Maia and squeezed.

"Hugs fix everything," Izzy explained.

"Who are you, and what have you done with my roommate?" Maia asked a little more seriously than Izzy thought the situation called for.

"I'm someone's girlfriend," Izzy answered. "And I'm gonna be late."

"Don't worry about me raining on your getting laid parade," Maia sighed. "I've gotta go to the library tonight to at least pretend like I care if I pass even one of my exams."

"I know the feeling," Izzy giggled. "Though I suspect for a very different reason." Maia just glared at her as if she was guilty of being happy, and sentenced to death.

"Hey, if you want to talk I'm all ears," Izzy said, her hands up in surrender. "Tomorrow. Promise."

"Thanks," Maia sighed. "But this one's on me. My fault, my problem."

"Doesn't mean chocolate can't fix it," Izzy called as she made her way out the door.

The physio therapist office was quite a ways away from the school, so Izzy usually took a cab. Simon kept saying they could bus, but Izzy was having none of that, insisting a bus would just make them late, and it was only a few times a week.

Izzy arrived at her boyfriend's apartment at about the same time as their cab. She saw Simon exit through the front door just as she walked up to the driveway. It really was convenient, them both living so close to the university. Simon's arm was still in a sling, but apart from that, he looked so much better. His bruises and cuts were all healed.

Izzy leaned up to kiss him hello before getting into the cab with him. They talked easily of school and roommates as the taxi took them to where they needed to be. This was the part of having an exclusive relationship that Izzy still wasn't used to, but she found herself quite enjoying. It was nice having someone to tell about her day, and she found she enjoyed hearing about his as well.

Simon grumbled like he always did when Izzy paid the cab. "There have to be some perks to dating a Lightwood, apart from the high-maintenance drama," Izzy giggled at him. "Just ask my future brother-in-law."

They arrived, and were seated in a lobby where Izzy picked up the same magazine she'd read last week, and once again commented on how they needed new magazines. After about fifteen minutes, they were called up for Simon's appointment.

The doctor took Simon's arm out of the sling, and manually stretched it out to see how the muscles
were moving. Then he was given a small resistance band to provide resistance as he moved the joint as he felt comfortable. Izzy had attended quite a few of these with her boyfriend already, and was quite used to the pace of them. With every passing day, and every therapy session, his arm got stronger. The doctors were saying that it should heal up to about 85% of where it had been, leaving very minimal lasting damage.

The session ended, and Simon put his sling back on so he didn't overuse the arm between appointments. Though they were at 6 weeks, no one had mentioned clearing Simon for more activities, so Izzy brought it up.

"I don't see why not," the doctor said. "So long as you're careful, and stop if something hurts. Just don't put too much weight on that arm of yours, Simon."

Izzy could barely contain her excitement as the two of them went back out to the lobby. Simon was still covered under his mother's third party medical benefits, and the rest was covered by Canadian healthcare, but Izzy did like to pay for the taxi ride. Considering everything else in her life was so close to the university, it was her only transport expense and didn't warrant buying an actual car. Maybe after graduation, if she had a commute to work or went on a road trip, she'd think about getting one. Otherwise what was the point of keeping a parked car insured and gassed up for no reason?

Izzy didn't say much on the ride home. She was enjoying the anticipation of feeling close to Simon again. She suggested they go back to her place, and Simon easily agreed. He didn't look quite as excited as she did, though Izzy did know that the physio tired him out quite a lot.

True to her word, Maia was out when Izzy and Simon arrived home. Izzy almost wished she had some candles or something. She'd never been one to set the mood before, but right now she wanted rose petals. But what she wanted more than ambiance was Simon.

With the door closing behind them, Izzy held her boyfriend's hand and gently guided him into the apartment. Knowing they had the place to themselves tonight, Izzy stopped in the living room and turned to kiss him. Simon's uninjured arm wrapped around her, and she opened her mouth slightly to deepen the kiss. Izzy's hands moved from Simon's lower back to around his front, working the fastenings of his pants. To her great surprise, Simon broke their kiss.

"What's wrong?" Izzy asked.

"I don't think we should," Simon said.

"But the doctor cleared you," Izzy protested.

"I know," Simon said gently.

"Are you too tired?" Izzy asked. "Maybe tomorrow…" But Simon shook his head. "I don't understand."

She wanted him. She felt sure in this moment she'd never wanted anyone so badly before. He didn't have exquisitely defined ab muscles or a perfectly symmetrical jawline. Simon didn't wear fancy suits or designer ties, but he was hers in a way she'd never known before, and she wanted no one else.

"Isabelle," Simon spoke her name softly, and with so much affection it all but melted her. "Up until now we've done everything backwards. I want a fresh start. I'm so grateful for you coming to my physio sessions, but I want to take you on dates, met your friends. You know, normal getting to know you stuff."
"My friends are your friends," Izzy reminded him.

"Okay good point," Simon conceded. "But the rest stands."

"Simon," Izzy began her voice steady, but her heart pounding. "I think I understand what your saying, but I don't agree. What's new and wonderful about us is all the other stuff. Not the dates or the usual way people get to know one another, but the unique way that we did. Why start at the beginning when you are already in the middle? I've done the beginning so many times, and I'm over it. It's the rest that excites me. I've loved this last month of snuggling up with you on the couch, seeing you everyday, or just looking at you from across the room knowing that you're mine."

Simon's left hand was at her face now, gently stroking along her check, and tucking a strange of her hair behind her ear. It was a wonderful feeling made even better by the way he was looking at her. Simon leaned over and kissed her with such deep feeling that for a moment, Izzy thought she'd won, but then he pulled back. Izzy opened her eyes to see her boyfriend gazing at her with a smile.

"No dates then," Simon compromised. "But let's finish the 'getting to know you stage', before we jump back to the part we know we're good at."

"If we're so good at it, let's enjoy it," Izzy tried, but she knew there was no point. Simon Lewis didn't change his mind. It was one of the things she admired about him, though at the moment it was rather annoying.

With one last deep kiss, the two lovers settled on the couch wrapped in each other's arms.

"You've never told me about the person you loved before," Simon said after a moment. "The one you mentioned at the hospital."

"Oh, him," Izzy mumbled. She was suddenly looking down at her hands. She didn't much like talking about him, but she knew she had to.

"The 'getting to know you stage', usually involves communication," Simon gently prompted her.

"Says the guy getting a Communications degree," Izzy grumbled. Simon merely raised his eyebrows at her, offering her no way out of this conversation.

"Hearts are breakable," Izzy began her story. "Even when they heal, they are never what they were before." She paused, willing herself to speak the words. "Kris went to my high school. I know it might be hard to imagine, but there was a time when I was awkward and shy. He never was though. Kris knew how to turn every eye in his direction. He felt things deeply, you know, and was more affected by others than I think most people realized." Izzy wasn't sure how she was still talking. It felt strange to say all this aloud after spending so many years avoiding the topic or even the thought altogether.

"Every girl in the school wanted a moment with him, and every guy wanted to be him," Izzy continued.

"But he wanted you?" Simon asked.

"No," Izzy shook her head. "He barely knew I existed, but that didn't stop me…" Izzy took a deep breath before forcing the words out. "Loving him."

"That must have been hard," Simon sympathized.

"The first party I ever went to was his," Izzy continued. "A birthday I think, but either way, that that
night everyone had had quite a lot to drink. I didn't realize that when Kris finally saw me, it was only because he was drunk. I was dumb and naive, and it was the worst sex of my life, not that I even knew what good sex was back then, but still I was happy. Happy to be noticed, even if for just for one night."

She paused, taking a deep breath. Simon's arm gripped her a little tighter. The pressure of it felt good, like it was holding her together.

"I never told mom, dad, or even Alec about him," Izzy continued. "I couldn't have Kris to myself, but I could at least keep him a secret. It was the closest I could get to calling him mine. I remember crying more than once when I saw him with other girls. I don't know, to this day, why I loved him so. It was a feeling set in me, like a piece of me belonged to him."

"A week later, that piece of me died when he did," Izzy finished her story. It was then that she realized she was shaking. "I've never told anyone that before. Never even said it all out loud."

Simon held her tightly. It was so wonderful to have him there, the pressure his muscles were exerting against her body made it feel like her insides were going to remain where they were, rather than spilling out across the floor.

"How old were you when…" Simon began, but he didn't need to finish the question.

"Fourteen," Izzy said.

"And how old was he?" Simon asked next.

"A few years older," Izzy explained, then concluded her story while she still had the will. "After that, I promised myself never again would I be so vulnerable. I promised I'd get what I wanted, and leave the strings behind."

She hadn't realized she'd been looking away until Simon's hand came up to hold her chin. Izzy gazed into her boyfriend's eyes, still amazed there was a person on this planet willing to take on that title.

"Thank you for telling me, Iz," Simon whispered. She gazed up into his face, so totally familiar, and yet the expression there was alien to her. She'd seen this expression on many faces before, yet never directed at her. Directed at her this look was something else entirely. Izzy could feel her stomach doing backflips as she looked up into the eyes of the man who adored her. Izzy's breathing was shallow as the realization hit her. There was no other explanation. This was the way her brother looked at Magnus, the way Magnus gazed back at Alec. This was beyond her. She'd accepted that a long time ago, and yet here he was looking at her like this. Izzy couldn't bring herself to speak her thoughts just then, but she did know with perfect certainty that she'd wait for Simon for as long as it took.

Chapter End Notes

As you might have guessed I have been watching a lot less tv lately. Hence the sudden influx of chapters. Actually for the first time ever in this fanfic I'm going to actually be uploading a xmas chapter on xmas! *insert shocked emoji here* (Usually I update this story too fast to match chapters with yearly events to those same real life yearly events. For example, we are on year 3 for these characters and I've only been writing this story for about a year and a half.) But thanks to my slacking off earlier and then my faster
writing for a while or maybe just by some fluke everything has lined up perfect!

To sum up you can expect a xmas themed chapter on Christmas Eve and Christmas Day so long as I get them written in time. ;)

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Sneak Peek Chapter 111

And now was definitely not the time to be overthinking anything other than what was right in front of him. Simon was sitting at a desk towards the left side of the gymnasium staring blankly at this exam paper with a pencil in his right hand. There was a clock ticking on the wall, marking the seconds of time he no longer had to complete this test.

With a slight shake of his head Simon got his mind to focus once again. There were questions that needed answers and he knew the answers if his stupid brain would just stop thinking about sex and start thinking about making a round pencil mark on the right dote. Read questions, think of answer, mark down dote, repeat. Over and over again and then he'd be on a plane to meet Izzy's parents for the first time. And now he was freaking out about that and not at all thinking about question forty-two. Or maybe that was because 42 was the answer to the universe and everything.

Simon had to resist the urge to bang his head down on the desk. What was his issue today? Geez, it was like his mind wouldn't sit still.
Simon's Intentions

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Simon's self control was playing havoc with his good intentions. His girlfriend wasn't alone in her desires, but Simon didn't want their relationship to be solely based on sex again, and he thought that this was the best way to ensure that. Or was he just being silly? If he asked Izzy, he knew what her answer would be.

"Silly," Izzy would say quickly with a nod. "Very silly."

If Simon talked to his other friends about it, he was sure he'd get similar results, though for very different reasons.

"If you both want to, what's the point of waiting?" Clary would say with an easy smile while she was trying to paint something. Simon could picture her with a paint brush behind her ear, not really paying him any attention.

"Just have sex with your girlfriend already, and stop beating around the bush," Jace would say, rolling his eyes. "And stop talking to me about it, geesh."

"I thought I was the crazy sentimental one around here," Jordan would tease him. "Don't go stealing my line."

It was December now, and Izzy and him had made things official in October which meant that Isabelle Lightwood had been celibate for over two months. Maybe that was why Simon wanted to wait this second time around, to prove that Izzy cared more for him than sex. It was a strange notion, and even he knew it was stupid. Jace had been just as much of a player as Izzy when he'd started dating Clary, and yet she hadn't put him through any tests. Simon couldn't help but feel like that was different, though since it hadn't been Clace's second time around after a friends with benefits arrangement. Then again, there was always the possibility that Simon was just worried he'd be horrible at it now that they were really dating. Then again, maybe he was just overthinking this...

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Simon had to resist the urge to bang his head down on the desk. What was his issue today? Geez, it was like his mind wouldn't sit still.

Time moves the same whether you want it to or not, and before long the test supervisors were calling that time was up, and everyone was to hand in their exams. Simon walked up, not sure if he'd been totally there for the whole test, but glad it was over all the same. Collecting his things from where
he'd left them by the door before the start of the exam, Simon checked his phone. He smiled as he saw how many messages were from his girlfriend.

'Are you done yet? I'm so excited!'

'Exams never feel this long when I'm taking them.'

'I should probably not be texting you but of well!'

'Okay, you have got to be almost done by now.'

'We still have to finish packing and get to the airport and you aren't allowed to suggest we take the bus.'

Simon quickly typed that he was out of the exam and on his way. He knew many people would have been annoyed by Izzy's neediness, but for some reason, Simon loved it. He wasn't sure if that was because he'd craved her exclusive interest for so long, or if it had something to do with the aloof independent nature of his one and only other girlfriend. Of course, Clary wasn't aloof with Jace like she'd been with him, but that was besides the point. It was a wonderful feeling to be wanted, and it was new to him.

Simon walked into his apartment - as always grateful he lived so close to campus. He knew Clary and Jace were going to Joyce and Lucke's this year, with Celine joining them there.

Simon knew Jordan wasn't going home for the holidays as he wasn't on great terms with his family. Rather than let him spend Christmas alone in his empty apartment, Paige had invited Jordan to Christmas with her family. Simon felt very much in the middle of Jordan and Maia these days. He liked Paige well enough, and Jordan seemed happier with her than he'd been alone, but Simon hadn't known Jordan when he'd been with Maia so he couldn't compare the two. There was a certain discomfort with being friend with exes. He knew Maia was hurting since Jordan made things official with Paige, but he also knew that Maia had hurt Jordan before, and very firmly said many times she didn't want him back, so Simon was having a hard time understanding Maia's problem, even if he had witnessed the emotions. Maia thought she hid things better than she actually did. She was rather a lot like Izzy in that way, though it was one of the only things they had in common as far as Simon was concerned.

"I'm so glad I caught you before you left," Clary called as she appeared from down the hall. "Jace and I are flying out first thing tomorrow." Simon's glasses had fogged over from walking inside after the chilly outdoor air, so he didn't see her coming. A large amount of red hair was flung in the face as his best friend threw herself at him for a hug.

"Merry Christmas to you too," Simon chuckled, unable to pull away.

"If you weren't so clueless," Jace's voice was coming from outside of Simon's range of vision. "I'd be worried."

"No you wouldn't," Clary giggled, turning around to hit her boyfriend in the shoulder.

"Ow," was Jace's only reply. Smiling, Simon moved past them both and towards his room where there was a pre-packed duffle bag. In it were some clothes, a tooth brush, his phone charger, and not much else. Simon had bought small gifts for a few people, but what do you buy people who have everything? Until he'd actually started dating Izzy, Simon hadn't thought twice about her family's fortune, but now Simon was seriously considering having a long and meaningful conversation with Magnus about it. After all, Magnus had been in a relationship with Alec for two years now. Simon
felt like this made him an expert on the Lightwoods, and trying to figure out how to circumnavigate being the broke one without feeling like a super mooch.

As he'd said goodbye to Jordan before his last exam, Simon went out the door with only another wave to Clace, then he heading for his girlfriend's place. Izzy, it seemed, had quite a few more bags to pack, and so they were catching the cab from her apartment for the sake of not dragging her suitcases to his. It was a crisp walk, snow crunching beneath his feet. There were some aspects of winter that Simon rather loved, and crunchy snow was one of them.

When he walked in the door, Izzy was there waiting for him. She looked upset. "What's wrong?" Simon asked.

"Oh Simon," Izzy said a little too dramatically. "We are already running late, and I haven't even finished packing!"

"Let's just take what you have," Simon suggested. "Better to buy a toothbrush when you get there than miss a plane."

She was smiling a little too deviously at him, grinning in such a way that Simon almost wasn’t surprised by the next thing she said.

"Just kidding," Izzy giggled. "We have an hour before we have to leave, and I'm all done packing!" She pointed to the hallway, and Simon walked over to see that she'd hidden two suitcases there.

"You sneak," Simon laughed.

"A whole hour Simon," Izzy continued in that same voice. Simon narrowed his eyes, but then she leaned closer, pressing herself against him. "What ever shall we do for an hour?"

"That won't make us late for the airport," Simon said, guessing what she was implying, though he hadn't made this decision yet. She leaned up to kiss him, and as Simon held her, his brain turned off, wondering if maybe the decision was going to be made for him by his own lack of self control.

Then suddenly Izzy was pulling him by the hand towards the couch. "An hour is plenty of time to watch another episode of Poldark!" she exclaimed as she moved to quickly set things up. "We are gonna meet Demelza in this episode and she's awesome."

"You like her, but not Elizabeth?" Simon checked, trying to keep her emotions about this show straight.

"Yes," Izzy said. "Demelza is totally the right person for Ross. I never understood why he liked Elizabeth in the first place."

"We are only on episode two," Simon reminded her.

"Yes, but I've read the books, and watched the show series from the 1970s," Izzy explained with great enthusiasm. Her fangirling was quite endearing, her passion for the show changed her demeanor.

"You're cute," Simon told her.

"I know," Izzy giggled as she opened the box and selected an episode.

"When did DVDs get so retro?" Simon chuckled as he watched his girlfriend put the small disc in the drive before returning to sit on the couch with him.
"When Netflix took over the world," Izzy giggled. They were snuggled up on the couch, Izzy’s head resting on his shoulder and a blanket over them both as they watched the episode.

Simon liked the show, but more than that, he liked Izzy's enthusiasm for it. It was great to see her so animated. When it ended, Izzy packed up the DVDs into her carry on bag before they gathered up their luggage and headed out the door.

Going through security, waiting, then getting on the plane passed easily enough. Izzy had brought a book; Simon hadn't been surprised to see the word Poldark on the cover. Simon had also brought something to read, but he didn't feel like reading. Instead he indulged his crazy mind, and let it wonder as he hadn't been able to do during his exam.

It was technically too early in their relationship to 'meet the parents', but as the timing had worked out that Christmas had been right around the corner when they finally figured their shit out, this was what was happening. Simon had to admit that when he looked back on his life so far, most of it was crazy acts of chance. If that elevator hadn't lost power, if that car hadn't run him over, or if any other number of strange random events hadn't happened, he wouldn't be here now, meeting his girlfriend's parents. Of course, Simon had done this 'meet the parent thing before', but he didn't count meeting Jocelyn and Luke, since they've known him since he was an infant. His experience with Clary didn't at all feel like it had prepared him for today.

Izzy didn't seemed too impressed with the view through the window, saying she'd seen it a thousand times, but Simon loved gazing down at the small world. From this height, all the houses, roads, and cars looked like toy models; and it made all your problems feel small.

Simon hadn't really gotten his thoughts all together even by the time the plane started to land. Izzy had said her family was meeting them at the airport, and Simon was picturing Izzy’s father looking down with a disapproving glare, or maybe her mother eyeing him up and down as if gauging his worth.

What actually happened when they landed was definitely not what Simon had expected. Izzy ran forward almost at once, and found herself wrapped in her brother's arms.

"I know I just saw you like last week, but Christmas visits count differently," Izzy said into Alec's shoulder.

"I need him alive," Magnus chuckled. "As in breathing." After that, Izzy let go of her brother who looked very grateful to be once again taking in oxygen.

"I thought your parents were coming to meet us," Simon said, still a little surprised to be greeted by Magnus and Alec.

"Robert is busy at the office until Christmas day itself," Magnus explained. "And Maryse is in full baking mode."

"Your mom bakes?" Simon asked Izzy.

"Only at Christmas!" Izzy exclaimed, before challenging her brother to a race. The two of them ran off, huge grins on their faces, leaving Magnus and Simon to walk along behind pulling the luggage.

"What have we gotten ourselves into?" Simon said, staring blankly.

"Oh it's far too late for me, my friend," Magnus chuckled. "But you could get out. Run, and I'll cover you."
Simon knew Magnus was joking, but he couldn't help entertaining the idea for a second. Simon had known Isabelle for over a year now, even if they'd only become a couple recently, and never once in that year had he seen her so carefree. Of course, Simon shouldn't assume this was because of him. He hadn't known Izzy when she was with her family at Christmas before now, and it was quite possible that she was just a huge Christmas dork, but all the same, he couldn't shake the feeling like he was at least partly responsible for the happy-go-lucky energy coming from her now.

"Nah," Simon chuckled. "I have a feeling once a Lightwood snags you, you're pretty much on their hook forever."

"Don't I know it," Magnus laughed.

When they reached the car, it turned out that Izzy had won the race with her brother, though if it went down the way Alec said it did, Izzy had cheated. Simon decided it was best to side with his girlfriend in this matter, for his own safety. With the two siblings still squabbling, the four of them got into the car as Magnus drove them onto the highway. Before getting into the car, Simon took a moment to appreciate it. He wasn't sure if it was Alec's car that Magnus was driving, or if this beautiful sleek black sports car was some kind of family vehicle. But if Simon had thought the family car a bit extravagant, he forgot all about it as they reached the house.

"I remember when I had the exact same look on my face," Magnus chuckled as Simon stared blankly forward at his girlfriend's mansion. "And Alec had us picked up by a limo too. Just be glad we volunteered to come get you today."

"I-" Simon started, but didn't know what to say as he took in the elegant fountain surrounded by a road that was clearly only meant to drop people off since there was nowhere to park. It was December, so the water was frozen, but that didn't stop it from being beautiful. The snow was so expertly shoved that Simon could tell that the road itself was made of bricks rather than pavement. Once you got past the grounds, there was the building itself. The front entrance was centered on the circular road, and stood out from the rest. On either side, there were old beautiful brick walls with sophisticated windows and flower boxes under them, currently full of snow.

"You should see it in the summer," Magnus leaned over to whisper in Simon's ear. "The gardener's name is Joe, and he's really quite a fun guy. He even laughs at my puns!"

"They have a gardener?" Simon asked.

"A full time gardener," Magnus corrected. Simon felt like a fish out of water as he walked up to the front steps.

As the doors were opened, and the two siblings walked in as if they owned the place - which of course they kinda did - Simon moved slower, taking in the circular patterns and elegant centerpiece in the middle of the room defining the entrance hall. The two grand staircases that went up on either side leading to the same landing had dark wooden railings, but everything else in the room was bright - mostly white - with shades of gold. Light entered the room through windows on either side, windows that went up two stories. In fact, the whole room was clearly two stores high. On top of all this, the place was beautifully decorated for Christmas. While back home with his mother and sister, Simon was used to a mix of nice store bought decorations, and strange things they'd made as kids that his mother wouldn't let go of. All the decorations here were the perfect store bought kind, symmetrical rows of holly ran along the railing, and wreaths on almost every door.

"Stop gaping," Izzy said, pulling on his arm. "I want you to meet mom!"

Simon looked to Magnus who smiled at him in a teasing sort of way. Taking this as a good sign,
Simon allowed his girlfriend to drag him off. Simon could barely take note of the changing Christmas decorations as Izzy guided him who knows where. When Izzy eventually came to a stop, they were in a kitchen, but it was a rather larger and grander kitchen than Simon had ever before found himself in. These were the kinda kitchens you saw on that food channel his mother made him watch sometimes. There were two ovens up at chest height in the walls with the stove top on the island across from the ovens. The appliances were all beautiful stainless steel with marble countertops. The cabinets were bright like the colour scheme for the rest of the house. What Simon noticed first however, was the woman standing at the island, flour on her apron, and a rolling pin in her hand. The woman had long dark hair, much like Isabelle's, and a round, kind face. Simon could easily guess who this was, even before Izzy confirmed it.

"Mom!" Izzy called to her. "This is Simon."

"Ah yes," Maryse said, looking up from her pastry dough to see him. "The Simon I've heard so much about."

"Yep!" Izzy chirped.

"Do you know how to bake Simon?" Maryse asked.

"Umm," Simon said, unsure what the correct answer is.

"Yes he does," Izzy said. "Or we can teach him." Then, Izzy and him went to get aprons before returning to assist Maryse. They talked idly as they rolled and shaped the dough. Simon was surprised how good Izzy was at this. He'd never seen her do anything but order take out before.

"It's never a bad thing to know how to do something," Maryse explained. "As long as you know you are worth more than that one skill."

"I know mom," Izzy sighed as if she'd heard this a million times before. She must have noticed Simon's confusion, because Izzy turned to him and added, "Mom doesn't want me to end up a homemaker."

"Only a homemaker," Maryse corrected. "You can do anything you set your mind to, sweetheart."

"Blah blah blah," Izzy continued.

"For example," Maryse grinned. "If you set your mind to spending less money, you could probably figure it out just fine." Izzy gave her mother a look, to which Maryse's only response was laughter.

Simon was surprised how comfortable the atmosphere was as they put the perfectly flaky pastry in the oven, and Maryse announced they were making meringue cookies next. It wasn't until Izzy ran off to get something they needed and he was alone with Maryse that anything changed.

"I mean no disrespect," Maryse began. "But I must inquire." And Simon thought this was it, the moment he'd been waiting for.

Rationally, he knew that Izzy's parents were aware she'd been with plenty of guys before him, but somehow Simon was waiting for that threatening parent lecture to the new boyfriend of their daughter. In fiction, this moment always seemed to be there, whether his sister made him sit through a rom-com, or he watched something with actual plot. Clary's parents had hardly bothered, but Simon had always thought that was simply because they had known him so long already.

"I know Izzy's never been one to… how shall I put this… settle down," Maryse continued. "Until you, and I just wanted to know what your side of this is. Why did you agree to a relationship with
This was not the way Simon had pictured this conversation. Something more along the lines of 'What are your intentions with my daughter', or something like that, but this almost sounded like Maryse was trying to discourage him from dating Izzy.

"Forgive me if I'm wrong, but that almost sounds like you're against Izzy… um… settling down," Simon said cautiously

"Hardly," Maryse replied. "No. The thing is that I know you two used to have a different kind of relationship, even if I can guess that it was her idea."

"Yeah," Simon said, not sure where she was going with this.

"The trouble is that Izzy has been hurt before," Maryse explained. "And I never want her to be hurt again."

"She said she didn't tell anyone about Kris," Simon blurted, stupidly.

"Ah, so that was his name," Maryse smiled. "And no, she never said a word, but a mother knows when her child has a broken heart, even if the reason is clouded."

"I see," Simon stated. He wasn't sure what to say. Technically he'd just betrayed Izzy's trust by blabbing about Kris to her mother, but it wasn't like Izzy had told him never to tell, and besides, this was Izzy's mom after all.

"So forgive me for asking, but why did you switch from being casual to being a couple?" Maryse asked again.

"I like her," Simon said awkwardly after a moment's silent thought. "A lot, and just casual wasn't enough, but she'd told me not to fall for her, so I didn't think I had another choice."

"I see," Maryse said with a smile as she returned to beating her egg whites. The noise from the blender started up again making it impossible to talk. Simon just hoped he'd given the right answer.

Chapter End Notes

Merry Christmas Eve everyone!

Woot this is the first time I've ever uploaded a themed chapter at the same time as that day in real life. It's kinda cool. ^_^

And before you all hate on me for making Izzy cook just know that the reason Mayrse wouldn't let Izzy be a domestic was because of the sexism within the traditional Shadowhunter culture. Mayrse didn't want Izzy to be put in the domestic box. At least that's what I got when I really looked into why Izzy is so bad at cooking in the books. In the context of this AU to me if felt like Izzy would help her mother at Christmas. These Lightwoods have a full time Chef all year except at Christmas so this is probably the only time Izzy would cook anyway. I'm allowed to change it up right?

-------------------------------------------------------
"So how are you this fine afternoon?" Magnus asked.

"Oh, just waiting for someone to come home," Tessa sighed.

"Have your boys abandoned you?" Magnus asked, a smile in his voice.

"Not intentionally," Tessa said. "Jem's at a routine doctor's appointment, and Will is fighting fires."

"I'm a horrible friend who has totally forgotten why Jem has routine doctor's appointments," Magnus admitted.

"Hemochromatosis," Tessa said automatically.

"Right, yes because I am totally going to remember how to say that," Magnus replied, awkwardly.

"You don't have to remember it," Tessa said. "Just know that it sucks."

"Noted," Magnus replied.

Next Chapter goes up tomorrow on Christmas Day!
Tessa's Hug

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

This time last year, Lucie was just weeks old. It amazed Tessa how fast her daughter was growing. At just over a year old, Lucie was a very confident crawler who occasionally liked to be standing with the support of her bouncy swing or one of her parents. The bottom two feet of Jem's house had now been totally and completely baby proofed as Lucie didn't like being carried the way she used to, preferring to move with her own power whenever possible.

Tessa had spent the better part of today decorating the house, though it was pretty festive already. Will had already dragged the fake tree out of the basement last week and put it up in the living room, but Tessa had added more lights and tinsel today. She'd needed the distraction. Lucie however, wasn't phased. She'd spent the morning in her play area. It was fenced in with baby gates so she could crawl around and enjoy herself all she wanted without hurting herself. Jem had been out all morning, at the hospital for his usual blood infusion appointment. It was normal for him, and he never made a fuss, but Tessa knew he was always in pain, particularly in his joints.

William had been at work since 2am this morning, putting out a flash fire on the outskirts of town. Tessa couldn't help but worry about both her boys at times like this. If not for little Lucie here with her, Tessa wasn't sure what she'd do. Then again, if not for Lucie, Tessa would probably still be living with Magnus. If not for Lucie, a great many things in her life would have been different, but Tessa wasn't going to think that way. There was no 'if not for Lucie', because Lucie was here.

Tessa checked the clock; Jem said he'd be home about now, so where was he? Her mind instantly tried to turn his routine blood infusion appointment into something dier, raising her anxiety. Giving up on her decorations, Tessa walked over to her daughter, and scooped the toddler into her arms.

"I need a hug," Tessa told Lucie, who seemed only interested in returning to her toys. Lucie's arms were stretched out reaching for them. With a sigh, Tessa put Lucie back down next to her toys, but followed after sitting down beside her daughter on the floor.

"Your daddies like to make me worry," Tessa told her.

"Da-da," Lucie exclaimed as she triumphantly destroyed the almost pile of blocks she'd made.

"Da-da's," Tessa corrected. "Two."


"That's better I suppose," Tessa smiled. Unable to just sit, Tessa got up and started pacing. When that didn't work, she turned to the kitchen and started dinner. Jem was probably running late due to traffic or waiting longer than normal for his appoint. And Will was strong and smarter than any fire. She shouldn't be worrying, but the problem was that there was nothing else to do but worry.

Thinking suddenly of a way to change that, Tessa got out her phone and dialed. As it rang, she wondered if maybe she was being a nuscuince. He probably was very busy, and didn't want to entertain an anxious, and yet bored person while she waited for one of her men to walk in the door. Nevertheless she didn't hang up.

Ring, ring, ring… it was just the same as now, waiting for someone to appear. The difference being that Magnus picked up the phone.
"Hello Tessa!" Magnus said brightly. "And Merry Christmas Eve to you."

"I hope I'm not bothering you," Tessa said into the phone as she started walking around the room while still keeping Lucie in sight.

"Not at all, darling," Magnus replied. "In fact, you're saving me."

"I find that hard to believe," Tessa laughed. "Since you're spending Christmas at your fiance's beautiful mansion."

"Maryse planning our wedding over the phone was exhausting," Magnus said, laughing. "In person is so much worse. This wedding better be freakin epic." And just like that, Tessa was laughing. She knew she'd made the right decision in calling a friend.

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"Have your boys abandoned you?" Magnus asked, a smile in his voice.

"Not intentionally," Tessa said. "Jem's at a routine doctor's appointment, and Will is fighting fires."

"I'm a horrible friend who has totally forgotten why Jem has routine doctor's appointments," Magnus admitted.

"Hemochromatosis," Tessa said automatically. It was a word she knew both backwards and forwards.

"Right, yes because I am totally going to remember how to say that," Magnus replied, awkwardly.

"You don't have to remember it," Tessa said. "Just know that it sucks."

"Noted," Magnus replied.

"Apart from needing a rescue from wedding planning," Tessa began. "How's your vacation?"

"Much like my life," Magnus explained. "I have never before felt like such a slacker! My aunt Aleida was invited here for Christmas as well, but she got invited to a friend and decided to sit this one out. Simon and Izzy are here, as well as Aline, her family, and her girlfriend. It's quite a Lightwood invasion actually."

"Sounds like you are more than surrounded by family," Tessa smiled.

"And it sounds like you could use some more," Magnus said sympathetically.

"More that are present yes," Tessa said. "I don't think more in total would be practical. We are already very not practical as it is."

"Fair enough," Magnus chuckled. "And how is little Lucie?"

"Very interested in her new toy blocks," Tessa explained. "She is over the whole 'mommy is her world' phase."

"Good thing, or bad thing?" Magnus asked.

"Good I suppose," Tessa said. "I mean she was never really clingy with me, but now she's even less
needy with Jem and Will."

"Have you considered going back to school?" Magnus asked.

"I have," Tessa said. "Maybe just part time, but I'm not sure. I mean, what will I do with my English degree once I have it anyway?"

"No idea," Magnus replied. "At the moment I'm using my History degree to correct YouTube comments on Crash Course World History videos so…"

"Wow, you need a job," Tessa laughed.

Magnus laughed very exuberant before speaking. "But my mother-in-law would skin me alive if I wasn't about to get time off for the honeymoon. Besides, I'm learning to embrace the laziness, even if it is a little disconcerting."

"We change for the ones we love," Tessa said whimsically.

"That we do," Magnus replied. There were some muffled noises from the other line, as if someone was talking to Magnus.

"Are people asking where you've run off too?" Tessa asked.

"It's just Alec," Magnus explained. "He came looking for me, but I'm hiding."

"Hi," it was Alec's voice. "I have joined in the hiding. Be warned, you are now on speaker phone."

"Well aren't you two adorable," Tessa giggled. "And who may I ask are you hiding from?"

"Mom," they both said in unison.

"In law," Magnus added as an afterthought.

"She has Sizzy to analyze now," Alec added. "I think it's okay if we hide for a little longer."

"How is Simon coping?" Tessa asked. "I do confess, when he and Clary broke up, and I moved out, I quite lost track of him."

"Oh, I think he's alright," Magnus said. "It was nice not to be the one gocking for once." He chuckled lightly before adding. "I think he's gotten on Maryse's good side."

"From the sounds of it that has quite the dire consequences," Tessa laughed. "Has she began planning their wedding as well?"

"Oh no, mom isn't that bad," Alec said. "She didn't start going wedding crazy until after we got engaged." Alec paused only a second before adding. "She's crazy, not actually insane."

"That's good to know," Tessa laughed. Again she heard more voices on the other line, but this time she could hear enough to recognize that it was a female voice.

"So this is where you two have been hiding," the voice said.

"Can you blame us?" Alec's voice asked.

"Nah," the newcomer said. "I just thought you'd want to know that dinners ready."
"Oh sweet, thanks Aline!" Alec's voice called.

"We have to go," Magnus said. "But I wish you swifty returning boyfriends."

"Thanks," Tessa chuckled.

"Oh, before we go, would you mind checking on the cats once or twice before we get home?" Magnus asked. "Jordan is feeding them while we are gone, but he's never had cats before, and you used to live with them."

"In fact, if you want to hang out at our place and keep them company, that would be even better," Alec added.

"Geez guys, they are cats, not children," Aline chuckled.

"They are lonely cats," Magnus objected.

"Sure I'll check on them for you," Tessa said, smiling.

"Thanks!" Alec and Magnus's voice replied as one.

"Oh, I can't wait till you guys have kids," Aline's voice chipped in. "It's gonna be a shit show if your this worried about cats."

"Oh hush," Magnus's voice objected.

"Yes coming!" Alec's voice yelled as if speaking to someone far away. Tessa was imagining his mother calling him to dinner from down the hall.

"Bye," Magnus said before the line hung up and she was once again alone in the room. Well alone, but for an infant. Lucie, it seemed had finally tired of her blocks, and was looking at her mother through the bars of her baby gate.

"Are you ready to give me that hug now?" Tessa asked. Lucie didn't reply, but simply reached up her arms toward her mother. Tessa picked her up, and finally got the hug she'd wanted. Everything felt so much better with her daughter's arms around her neck.

"Ma," Lucie said as she tighten her arms around Tessa's neck.

"Yes that's me," Tessa said. "I'm your ma."

Lucie's eyes closed as her head rested on Tessa's shoulder. It wasn't her bedtime yet, but recently Lucie had taken to trying to fall asleep early, then waking up in the middle of the night very grumpy. Rather than be awoken prematurely, Tessa decided to keep her daughter conscious. Lucie fussed a little, but not much compared to how Tessa knew she'd object to being woken up if she'd actually fallen asleep. To entertain Lucie, and since it was about dinner time anyway, Tessa put her toddler in the high chair at the table.

"What will it be today?" Tessa asked Lucie. "Mushy peas or more of daddy's frozen grapes?"

"Aaap," Lucie giggled.

"Grapes it is," Tessa smiled as she pulled some out of the freezer. Lucie did have her two front teeth now, but they weren't quite enough for chewing real food yet.

Lucie had gummed her way through a bowl full of grapes by the time one of her father's finally came
home. Leaving a content Lucie to finish her snack, Tessa went to the door the moment she heard the key turn in the lock.

"Oh hello, I'm late aren't I?"

"Yes you are," Tessa told him sternly then she relaxed, leaning forward to kiss him.

"There was some kind of emergency that pushed all routine appointments back," Jem explained as he came into the house. "I would have called but my phone died."

"This is why I tell you to charge it at night," Tessa said with a shake of her head.

"Will still at work?" Jem asked.

"Yes," Tessa sighed. "He better be covered in soot and sore, or else he's in trouble."

"I could never imagine doing a job like that," Jem said. "Risking your life every time you go into work."

"I don't know," Tessa said thoughtfully. "You and Will have similar drives. I think if you weren't used to being the weak one, you'd be right out there with him, putting out fires and saving people."

"Thanks Tessa," Jem smiled at her.

Together they made dinner, feeding Lucie more snacks all the while as they knew she wouldn't be able to eat what they were making. But once dinner was over, Lucie started to get overtired, crying like this was a major problem. With Jem's help, and some tender love and care, Lucie fell asleep in her crib with her music playing. The crib was still in their master bedroom, but Tessa thought that in the new year she might try getting Lucie to sleep in her own room and see how that went.

"Do you think Will's alright?" Tessa asked as the minutes ticked by. They were in the living room with the television on, but neither of them seemed too invested in watching it.

"I think that if something was wrong, we'd know," Jem said confidently.

"Like a soul bond," Tessa sighed. It was a comforting thought, even if she couldn't quite believe it.

"Yes, my love," Jem said softly as he kissed the top of her head. "Just like that."

Tessa must've fallen asleep on Jem's shoulder, because the next thing she knew, she was waking up as Jem moved. Her pillow having been disrupted Tessa pulled away and open her eyes.

"Oh sorry! I didn't mean to wake you," Jem whispered.

"What time is it?" Tessa asked.

"Late," Jem said.

"Will?" Tessa asked, but Jem shook his head.

Just then, they both jumped, having heard a sound at the door. Getting up at once, Tessa was the first to reach the door, and standing there looking more worn out than she'd ever seen him was William Herondale.

"Oh thank god," Tessa whispered.
"If I wasn't so tired," Will groaned, walking inside and heading straight for the couch. "I'd have a very witty comeback for that... something like you're welcome."

"Are you alright?" Tessa asked, slightly panicked as her hands fluttered over him trying to help.

"Fine," Will signed, collapsing gratefully on the sofa. "Just a very, very long day."

"Day!" Tessa snapped. "More like 24 hours. What kind of fire was this anyway?"

"The kind that really, really doesn't want to die," Will groaned. "And couldn't at all appreciate my desire to spend Christmas eve at home." Jem laughed, which seemed to be what Will wanted, but Tessa wasn't in a laughing mood.

"You sure you haven't been horribly burned, or suffering heat stroke?" she asked.

"Don't worry, before we get off a shift that actually involves a fire, we have to get checked out," Will said. "I'm fine. Just tired."

"Hey, do you remember the days when we'd have epic group sex in this room?" Jem chuckled, clearly just as relieved as her, but handling it far better.

"Oh wow, yeah," Will smiled. "That takes me back. Though at the moment I don't have the energy to stand, let alone do anything else."

"Why didn't you call?" Tessa asked him.

"Left my phone here this morning in my rush," Will shrugged. "Besides, it was so crazy I wouldn't have had the time."

"Well, you two are both fired," Tessa grumbled. "I was worried sick."

"Sorry," Jem mumbled. "I'll charge my phone tonight, promise."

"And maybe I'll let some walls suffer while the fire burns so I can call you," Will said with a wink. "Just so long as there aren't people in those walls."

"I'm sorry," Tessa sighed, leaning over to rest her head on Will's shoulder. "It's just hard being here all day, not knowing."

"I know," Will whispered. With what looked like a great effort, Will stood up and wandered towards his bed where he collapsed, instantly asleep. Jem and Tessa followed suit, quickly having only stayed up to make sure Will was alright.

Chapter End Notes

Merry Christmas Day! I uploaded this right before I went to sleep so you could read this on Christmas morning if you so wanted though I am sure many of you will catch up and read this later in the holidays.

For those of you reading this in summer or some other crazy binge reading time during the rest of the year I hope your last and future Christmas is a merry one as well. :)
Sneak Peek Chapter 113

Jace looked up at her, groggy from sleep, and she kissed him lightly on the lips as a hello. He smiled and pulled her down for a deeper kiss before either of them got out of bed. Jace was a little less nervous about her parents being down the hall now than he’d been last year though she couldn’t say he’d given up the notion all together.

"Why not just get dressed if you're going to change anyway?" Jace asked as she got up and changed out of the extra large t-shirt she slept in and into her jammies.

"It’s tradition to wear pajamas on Christmas," Clary explained.

"If you say so," Jace chuckled before getting dressed in his regular clothes like a horrible humbug.

Yes, I know the sneak peek is still Xmas but this Clary chapter (though not yet written) is more a New Years chapter and will go up (that is if I write it on my next days off... hehe) on New Years.
Clary's Cake

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes.

Since arriving home for the winter break, Clary had been happy to see her family welcome Jace even more warmly than they had last year. She suspected this was partly due to the fact that Jace’s presences two years in a row was reassuring to them. Of course she was also glad to see her brother and parents again after so many months away at school. Jon was back from his Europe trip, though he’d broken up with his girlfriend Cassie. Her brother hadn’t explained why they’d broken up, and Clary hadn’t asked; though she couldn't say she was too surprised. Jon was always traveling, moving around, and that was hard on a relationship. Her parents were much the same as they always were, arguing in that playful way they always did. The biggest difference between this Christmas and the last one was the presence of Celine. She'd flown in a few days ago, and she and Clary had taken to baking sugar cookies, while Jace and Jon tried to eat them before they were iced.

Before getting out of bed on Christmas morning, Clary read her texts from Simon and Magnus, both had sent her Christmas greetings. As she set her phone down, Jace woke beside her. They were in her childhood bedroom, sleeping in the same place they’d been last year. Clary kept expecting to arrive home to find that her parents had repurposed the room and turned it into a gym or something, but they had yet to do such a thing.

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"It's tradition to wear pajamas on Christmas," Clary explained.

"If you say so," Jace chuckled before getting dressed in his regular clothes like a horrible humbug.

Together they went down the stairs to find most of the family already awake. Luke and Jocelyn were in the kitchen making the Fairchild traditional Christmas morning breakfast of german apple pancakes. Or she supposed her mom was making them, and Luke was hovering. Her father often cooked, though Jocelyn wouldn't let him take over the kitchen at Christmas. Jon was on the couch looking very much like he was waiting to be fed. Celine was trying to help cook, while Jocelyn kept insisting she be a good guest and relax. The whole situation made Clary smile. When her mother announced that food was ready everyone quickly gathered around the table. German apple pancakes were baked in the oven, then covered in applesauce and whipped cream. No one spoke as they ate, proving how delicious it really was.

Next they opened gifts, a modest haul this year, as there weren’t any small children in the family anymore. Jocelyn wasn't the type of mother to spoil her children, but Clary quickly learned that Celine was. She'd gotten something for everyone, even those she hadn't met before arriving here. Before the day was out, everyone was remarking on how they should really have Celine come again next year.

One of Jon's gifts had been a new basketball, and Clary hadn't been surprised in the least when he'd insisted on trying it out straight away.
"Has my son abandoned you?" Celine chuckled, when she returned to the living room to find Clary suddenly sitting alone, Jace's arm having been wrapped around her for much of the day.

"My brother kidnapped him," Clary explained with a laugh.

"I see," Celine smiled. "Well, more for us then." And she pulled out a box of icing sugar coated sweets. Clary wasn't sure what they were, but she was sure Jace wouldn't want to miss them.

"Turkish delight," Celine explained when Clary asked. "The good stuff, not that cheap knock off kind."

"Oh, we are gonna make the boys so jealous," Clary grinned as she reached out to take one. And sure enough, when Jon and Jace returned an hour later to an empty box, the looks on their faces were priceless.

"You ate them all!" Jon whined.

"Mom and dad helped too," Clary explained.

"Don't worry," Jace told Jon elbowing him gently in the ribs. "Mom has another box. Don't you mom?"

"And if I did?" Celine asked with a slight smirk.

"Then you'd share right?" Jace pleaded a little. For a moment, Clary could perfectly picture a younger version of Jace looking up at his mother with an expression just like this, and getting anything his heart desired. Celine was so soft.

"After dinner," Celine tried.

"One now, and the rest after dinner," Jace countered and just like Clary knew she would, Celine agreed, then got up to get the second box.

"Suck up," Clary said, shaking her head.

"Being an only child is awesome!" Jace laughed, but Clary just rolled her eyes. If she wasn't so in love with this idiot, she'd have definitely dumped him by now for being... well an idiot.

After a quiet afternoon, they had turkey dinner, with homemade stuffing, cranberries, mashed potatoes, steamed carrots, and salad. Jace and Jon both had a second helping of just stuffing, to which neither of them were apologetic. Everyone lay on the couch after, in their prospective turkey commas. Jon was the first to fall asleep as his bed at the moment was the couch anyway. Then, one by one, everyone slowly went upstairs to bed.

Despite being known for its retail glory, no one left the house on Boxing Day. People used their new gifts, or just relaxed, the conversation flowing easily. Jace had long ago finished off that second box of Turkish Delight, but there were still more chocolates in the house than made any national sense, and everyone ate far more than they should have.

Classes didn't start until until the fifth of January, so Clary and Jace were staying into the new year, but Celine's last day had to be sooner as she had work commitments she couldn't get out of. Being a school teacher, she had to prep for the new semester.

"Come sit and I'll put a movie on," Clary told Celine with a smile. "We have just enough time before you leave."
"Where has my silly son gone now?" Celine commented as she sat down. "Jace likes this one."

"He went off with Jon about a half an hour ago," Clary replied.

"Those two are getting along well for sure," Celine smiled. "It's nice to see him making new friends."

"We have quite a few friends at school now, actually," Clary continued with a smile. "Magnus, Alec, Simon, Jordan, you could count Izzy and Maia too I suppose. And Jace has been hanging out with his cousin Will recently as well."


"I thought you stopped talking to the Herondale family?" Clary asked.

"I have for the most part," Celine explained. "But I know who married who, and what children they had. I believe Will has sisters, does he not?"

"Honestly, I'm not sure," Clary said. "Jace might know."

"As much as I resent Jace's father, I am glad Jace is getting to know someone from Stephen's side," Celine said.

"I have been curious for a while now," Clary said. "Why didn't you give him your maiden surname? Why call him Herondale when you wanted to get away from them?"

"That is a good question," Celine smiled. "I suppose the answer is simply that he is a Herondale. There is no escaping that fact. His father and I were married when he was born. The fact that Stephan went off with some other woman mere months later, doesn't change where Jace comes from. Or, maybe it was that I always hated my maiden name. Montclaire. It sounded like some stuck up aristocratic name to me."

"Fair enough," Clary replied easily.

Just then the back door opened, and Jon and Jace came in, looked cold and sweaty, but grinning from ear to ear.

"And it's even better in summer!" Jon exclaimed. "You gotta come back when the weather's warmer... or I could visit. You do have a basketball court on that school campus of yours, don't you?"

"Yeah, we do," Jace replied. "A full gym too."

Both men took no notice of the women on the couch as they walked in, already in the middle of a conversation they'd clearly started outside.

"I don't think I'll be surprised if I suddenly come home to find Jon sitting by my front door with a suitcase," Clary chuckled as she put the movie on. Clary sat on the couch beside Celine, while her mind got lost in the story. Clary loved losing herself in stories. It was a marvelous, escaping feeling. Stories could pull you into glorious adventures and magical places. They made you live another life, and forget the mundane problems of your own. Stories kept your mind occupied on someone else's adventure and away from decisions you weren't ready to make.

Later that day they took Celine to the airport. She teared up a little, hugging Jace - and Clary too - as her son assured her he'd come visit over the summer holidays.
"I'm going to hold you to that," Celine promised Jace when she finally let him go.

"Okay, okay," Jace grumbled. "No need to break my back over it." Clary couldn't help but chuckle.

The drive home was uneventful, which wasn't helping Clary keep her mind from wandering where she'd told herself it wouldn't wonder. Instead, she decided to count the telephone poles as they passed by. When they re-entered the city and the poles vanished, she switched to counting fence posts.

Clary spent the last few days of her vacation trying to be present in the moment. Right now was perfect, and she wanted to hold onto it for as long as she could. As far as Clary was concerned, life could stay like this forever, the warm comfort of her home and family, with the love of her life at her side. Unfortunately time wouldn't obey her, and continued to pass as the days went by.

As the clock struck midnight on New Year's eve, Clary kissed Jace in her parents living room, then whispered 'I love you' into his ear.

The next morning it was time for Clary and Jace to head to the airport. After many hugs and promises of future visits, they bored the plane and took off for home.

In security, Clary browsed the kiosks with no intention of buying anything. During boarding, she had to get all her luggage secured. During take off, she could focus on the plane itself as it flow up into the air, but once they were a cruising height, all distractions lost to her, Clary was in danger of not being distracted. As she watched through the plane window at the small miniaturized farms and houses far below her, she couldn't help but think about what she'd promised herself she wouldn't think about during the holidays. She'd told herself that the holidays were for family and food, and she wasn't going to worry about tomorrow, but she knew it had been an excuse. An excuse to put off the decision.

Clary had so wanted to talk to her mother or father about this over the holidays, but she hadn't been able to bring herself to say it out loud. Doing that somehow made it real, make it a one or the other kind of situation. As long as it was just a possibility and not reality, her mind could create space for both. She could pretend this wasn't a big deal.

But it was, and Clary didn't know what she wanted to do. Could she pass up a once in a lifetime opportunity like this? But then again, it was a whole year, her last year of university. Clary couldn't help but feel like she was trying to both have her cake and eat it too, and she was scared of losing both cakes in the process. Like the dog with a bone who wants the one reflected in the water, who then loses his first bone by opening his mouth to collect the second. Or maybe she was overthinking this? Maybe it wouldn't be as bad as that?

Clary tried to imagine telling Jace about it. She could picture him trying to encourage her, all the while secretly hating the idea. Or maybe she was giving him too much credit? Maybe Jace would outright hate the idea, and not even pretend to hide it. What if she could bring him along? But no, with his scholarship, that was impossible.

It was one or the other, and Clary had never felt more torn in her life. She knew she had to tell him, but the holidays just hadn't felt like the right time. And that was fair right? Holidays are a horrible time for such news. Yes, there was no rush, and the holidays weren't technically over until classes started. She had time. No need to say anything today.

Chapter End Notes
First of all I must say that I'm deeply sorry for the boring crap you'd have to read lately. Wow! When did this story get so dull and filler-tastic! Yeesh! I used to have PLOT! Sigh… I do apologize… here is me making it up to you! Things to happen. Stay tuned.

Side Note:
The other day I was plotting future chapters in my head while at work and I had to go online to check a few previous chapters of this story to check what I'd already established. I really hate continuity errors. Anyway what I found astounded me. OMG the typos! No, not just typos, epic fails! How the hell you read any of this and understand it is beyond me! I found one place where I meant to write 'because' and it was 'before' instead. Then there were times I literally just left whole words out. Just didn't include a verb in that sentence cause like why not! Gods it was horrible! I am official not allowed to re-read my own chapters anymore if I want to keep my sanity. I mean sure, they were older chapters so maybe I can blame my old editor for the epic fails, but not really since those were pretty obvious problems that I should totally have fixed before I sent it to a beta. Like wow… O_O This story is clearly far too long and boring and I should just throw in the towel now! Yeesh! *Hides in shame of the typos*

Also if my stats are any indication updating so often around Christmas time was a very very silly idea… My views went WAY down during the holidays. Oh well. Done now. Besides, updating faster than my readers can keep up with isn't exact new to me… or them. I didn't choose the username writesalott because I write rarely now did I?

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Sneak Peek Chapter 114

Catsby was quiet in his carrying case by Magnus's feet. Alec sat in the waiting area watching all the other sick animals with their owners. He'd never had to take an animal to the vet before and he had to admit - though only to himself - that he was scared. What if they couldn't help Catsby? Sure, he wasn't as young as he once was but he was only twelve. Alec had known cats to live into their late teens or even early twenties.

When the nurse finally called them up they were taken into a small enclosed room with two doors. They waited there only a few moments before the veterinarian joined them. She had a white lab coat on, dark brown hair and a narrow face. She listened attentively to their concerns before speaking.

"Losing weight while eating normally isn't a good sign," the vet said. "If his organs are failing there won't be much we can do, but it's a good sign that he still eats even if he doesn't want to get up to get it." She moved away for a moment turning back around to face them with a needle in her hand. "I'm just gonna take some blood to test then we will know what's going on."

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***Insert Fireworks Here***

Happy New Year!

2018… doesn't it just make you feel old ^_^

***More Fireworks***
Alec's Confetti

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes.

Ten… Nine… Eight… Seven… Six… Five… Four… Three…. Two… one…

"Happy New Year."

Alec looked deep into his fiance's eyes, a smile playing at his lips as he leaned forward to kiss Magnus with all the affection he could muster.

"Happy New Year, my darling," Magnus whispered.

"Your darling am I?" Alec smiled.

"Unless you have an objection to the name," Magnus replied easily.

Alec made a face, trying to look afronted, but he couldn't hide his smile.

"I love you," Magnus chuckled. His voice changed to one of mock seriousness as he added. "But not as much as I love confetti."

"Liar," Alec smirked.

"What gave me away?" Magnus mused.

"Well it's confetti," Alec commented. "Little tiny pieces of paper that do nothing except make a big mess after putting on a show."

"You caught me," Magnus smiled. "Mine is a temporary confetti type love, very fleeting. Bright and short."

"Is that so?" Alec replied, pulling Magnus in closer.

"Mmm hmmm," Magnus said, grinning.

"Why'd you agree to marry me then?" Alec whispered, also smiling. It was funny how little their actual words impacted the mood of their conversation.

"Did I do that?" Magnus replied, with mock surprise. Alec simply nodded. "Well, I must have been drunk. Better call the whole thing off right now!" Alec laughed, giving up on the teasing to kiss Magnus again. He wound his arms around his fiance's neck, parting his lips to deepen the kiss. He felt Magnus's hands press against the small of his back.

"Oh, get a room!" Izzy's voice snapped at them. Alec turned around to see his sister with her arms all over Simon.

"You first," Alec replied. With one swift motion, Izzy finished her champagne, then grabbed Simon by the arm and promptly left. Their parents had insisted everyone stay up together to greet the new year, but as that was now over, it seemed Izzy was taking the opportunity to spend time alone with Simon. The two of them were the first to head up to bed. Aline and Helen were next, waving goodbye to everyone as they went. It had been great to see Aline outside school. Between Alec and Aline's clashing class schedules - and respective relationships - it had been hard for them to find time...
to spend together. Before Magnus, and Jace for that matter, Aline had been Alec's closest friend. It was strange to him that he was now so comfortable spending so much time away from her, and it made him wonder if the myth was true. They say the act of falling in love will cost you at least one friend. If only there were more hours in a day, and more space in one person's life, that might not be the case.

Aside from his mother's constant wedding commentary, Alec's holiday had been splendid. And Alec couldn't even complain too much about his mother's wedding frenzy since he was so grateful she was handling the details. Alec wanted to marry Magnus more than anything in the world, but he wasn't so keen on making lots of tiny decisions about flower arrangements. And hey, if it made Maryse happy, who was he to argue? He supposed the answer to that question was 'the groom', but Alec felt more like a guest with so much of the planning out of his hands. A very important guest, he mused.

Alec couldn't believe that April was only four months away. If those months went by as fast as his winter break, Alec would be married before you could say 'I do.' It was a strange and wonderful feeling. Before he'd met Magnus, Alec hadn't been able to picture any of it, even just the idea of being in a relationship had felt foreign to him. He'd always known he was gay, but that hadn't really helped him imagine merging his life with another person forever in matrimony.

As Alec, Izzy, and Simon's classes started on the same day, the four of them returned home on the same plane. Alec tried not to watch his sister being all doe eyed with Simon, even if he was happy about it. It was strange to see. Izzy had never been like this before, and the longer it remained strong, the more Alec hoped this change in his sister would be permanent. It wasn't that how she'd lived before had been wrong; it was more that he'd always gotten this sense that she was trying to hide the fact that she was terribly unhappy. He couldn't sense that in her anymore, and he was more than glad of it.

As Alec and Magnus walked up to the front door of their apartment and went inside, they were pleasantly surprised to find Tessa sitting in their living room, a book in her hand, and a cat sleeping on her lap. Upon further inspection Alec saw that Lucie was here also. The adorable toddler was sitting on the floor surrounded by a collection of bright plastic toys of various sizes and shapes. At the moment, she seemed intent on making a square block fit into a round hole, without much success.

"Thank you for checking on our fur babies," Magnus said as he moved closer to pet the Chairmen sleeping on Tessa's lap.

"Fur babies?" Alec chuckled.

"What! They're adorable," Magnus defended himself.

"Chairmen is his usual annoying but lovable self," Tessa commented. "However, Catsby hasn't been very active. He's slept on your bed basically the whole time I've been here. I had to put his food in there for him in the hopes he'd eat it. He did managed to get up to get to his litter boxes, but not much else."

"Thanks," Magnus smiled at her.

"I think we should take him to the vet," Alec added. "He's been not quite himself now for a while."

"Good idea," Magnus said. "I'll call them first thing tomorrow. They'd be closed by now."

"I should probably get Lucie home to bed," Tessa said. "It just seems a shame to move a snuggly cat."
"I got it," Alec said as he scooped Chairmen into his arms.

"Meow!" the cat scolded Alec loudly, for disturbing his peaceful rest.

"Tessa has to leave," Alec told the cat. "Besides, didn't you miss me?"

"Meow," Chairman said begrudgingly, his head facing away.

"I'd take that as a no," Magnus chuckled as Tessa got up and Alec put the cat back down where he'd been. Chairman gave them both a look that said they were the dirt beneath his paws, then jumped away from the couch as if it too had done him a great offence.

"Where's the gratitude," Alec whined.

"From a cat?" Magnus laughed. "Good luck!"

As Tessa packed up Lucie's toys and playpen with Magnus's help, Alec went into their bedroom to check on The Great Catsby. The old cat was sitting on the edge of the bed, looking - if possible - even thinner. If Alec hadn't seen the animal's chest rise and fall, he would have panicked thinking the feline had died in his sleep.

The next morning they called in the moment the vet clinic opened, managing to get an appointment that same day. Leaving a whiny Chairman at home, Alec got Catsby into a carrying case before putting him in the taxi. Neither he nor Magnus had a car, and they hadn't planned this well enough to ask to borrow Will's for the morning.

Catsby was quiet during the drive, and remained silent as it sat by Magnus's feet, secure in his carrier. Alec was beside Magnus watching all the other sick animals with their owners waiting to be seen. He'd never had to take an animal to the vet before, and he had to admit - though only to himself - that he was scared. What if they couldn't help Catsby? Sure, he wasn't as young as he once was, but he was only twelve. Alec had known cats to live into their late teens, or even early twenties.

When the nurse finally called them up, they were taken into a small enclosed room with two doors. They waited there only a few moments before the veterinarian joined them. She had a white lab coat on, dark brown hair, and a narrow face. She listened attentively to their concerns before speaking.

"Losing weight while eating isn't a good sign," the vet said. "Neither is disinterest in food. If his organs are failing, there won't be much we can do, but it's a good sign that he still eats, even if he doesn't want to get up to get it." She moved away for a moment, turning back around to face them again with a needle in her hand. "I'm just gonna take some blood to test, then we will know what's going on."

Magnus nodded and they watched as the vet skillfully extracted the needed blood from the very grumpy cat.

"We should have the results in about a week," the vet continued. "Take Catsby home, and try and make him eat as much as you can in the meantime. As many treats as he wants." She smiled before adding, "Call if any of his symptoms change." Magnus and Alec both agreed, and together they got Catsby comfortably back into the carrier.

Leaving the small room, they went to check out at the reception desk. To Alec's surprise, Magnus didn't even flinch as Alec paid the bill. Instead, Magnus just whispered 'thank you' as they got into the cab. Alec didn't understand Magnus's need to say that. He had long ago grown to consider his fiance's cats his own, and hadn't thought twice about paying the vet fees. He tried to explain as much to Magnus on the way home, but he remained grateful all the same.
The whole drive home, Alec couldn't help feeling like there was something he'd forgotten about today. Classes started first thing tomorrow, and Alec had spent what time he'd had outside of vet visits getting his school stuff ready and buying his textbooks. There really wasn't much else to do, so why wouldn't this nagging feeling go away? It wasn't until later that night, as Alec lay awake trying not to think about the vet results, that he realized what he'd forgotten.

"Hey Magnus," Alec said elbowing the man beside him gently to see if he was awake.

"What?" Magnus mumbled.

"Happy two year anniversary," Alec said, leaning down to kiss his fiance on the cheek.

"Oh wow," Magnus said, suddenly more conscious as he rolled over to look at Alec. "I totally forgot with Catsby and everything."

"Me too," Alec smiled. "So what do you think? Should we still celebrate our first kiss after we're married?"

"It was more than just our first kiss," Magnus reminded him. "It was when we both admitted how we felt and decided to be together."

"It was when you admitted how you felt," Alec corrected. "As I recall, I'd communicated my feelings to you far sooner."

"You one-love wonder, you," Magnus smiled up at him. Alec was laying on his side, propped up on one elbow, looking down at Magnus.

Magnus's hand was resting on Alec's cheek when Alec asked. "What do you mean?"

"It's a wonder to me," Magnus replied. "That you will never experience a broken heart." He paused, his tone shifting as he replied.

"You would be the one to know that," Alec replied easily. "My heart is in your hands." Magnus just looked up at him, the most beautiful smile on his face.

"So what do you think?" Alec continued. "Anniversary in April and January, or just April?"

"With a wedding anniversary to celebrate, there's no need for the other, surely," Magnus smiled. "I mean, how many times a year should we really celebrate us being together anyway?"

"Everyday," Alec laughed.

"Just a tag narcissistic," Magnus chuckled. "Don't ya think." Alec couldn't help laughing lightly with him. "Besides, that would be exhausting to maintain."

"In that case," Alec replied, grinning from ear to ear. "If this is the last time we ever celebrate our first kiss, I think we should do something to mark it."

"And what did you have in mind?" Magnus asked.

"Oh, I don't know," Alec mused as his hand trailed south to check the gravity of the situation. He grinned when his hand reached its destination, and he saw that look of pleasant surprise on his fiance's face.

"Though I'm not at all against this idea," Magnus replied. "That's hardly a rare event."
"True," Alec smiled. "But I don't wanna get out of bed."

"Spoiled rich boy problems," Magnus sighed as he reached up to wrap his arm around Alec, pressing him closer. Alec wasn't about to argue as he moved his body to on top of Magnus's, kissing his bare chest. They both slept in nothing but sleep pants or boxers usually, leaving their chests naked. Alec loved the feeling of Magnus's warm skin against his own. There was a comfort to it, a familiar tenderness.

As their kissing intensified, Alec could feel his fiance's arousal grow through their loose pants. Maneuvering down, Alec pulled at the clothes, moving them with him until Magnus's erection sprang free from its restraints. Alec moved back up to kiss along the shaft, teasing with his tongue and teeth.

Magnus seemed to quickly get fed up with teasing and sat up to wrap his arms around Alec, locking their lips in a kiss. Alec began to grind his hips into Magnus's, rubbing their erections together, creating beautiful friction.

"Alexander," Magnus gasped, but Alec wasn't quite there yet. He felt Magnus's release, warm and sticky on his abdomen.

Alec was eager to catch up, moving quickly to bring himself to his finish, but Magnus stopped him, whispering what he wanted in Alec's ear.

"You'll be sore tomorrow," Alec reminded him, but Magnus just shrugged.

"I got nowhere to be," he said before leaning over and reaching for the side table. Magnus rolled the condom down Alec himself before handing the lube over. Magnus rested his leg on Alec's shoulders, his hands gripping the sheets. Alec began to stretch Magnus's entrance slowly.

Alec leaned forward and kissed his fiance before going in a little deeper. After checking if Magnus was sure one more time, Alec finally positioned himself and gently pushed in. Magnus gave a gasp as his muscles tensed. It took all Alec had not to finish right then. As Alec moved in and out, they both moaned and gasped, Magnus's hands gripping the bed sheets. Though Magnus didn't finish again, he was clearly enjoying the feeling as Alec thrust in one last time, climaxing inside his lover.

Both panting, they collapsed beside each other. Alec rested his head on Magnus's shoulder, gently trailing his fingers over his fiance's chest. Alec mumbled against Magnus's skin, asking if Alec had hurt him. Magnus just smiled, kissing the top of Alec's head, and whispering 'I love you' into his ear. Alec pulled a blanket up over both of them and they fell asleep wrapped in each other.

The next morning Alec had to go to class. He left Magnus asleep in bed, intending to dash out quickly, but on his way, Alec passed a hungry Chairmen, and realized he had to at least try and get Catsby to eat something before he left.

Almost twenty minutes later, Alec was gonna be late for class, but at least Catsby's food dish was half empty. He wasn't sure if it had been the morning, or still anxiety from the vet appointment yesterday, but Alec had a hard time not worrying about Catsby's test results during his class. It was good it had been a first class, otherwise he might have actually had to pay attention.

Alec's classes were over by mid afternoon, and he came home to see his fiance curled up on the couch drinking tea and watching Poldark.

"You can blame your sister for this," Magnus said as Alec sat beside him, on the verge of laughing. "She was watching it all through the holidays, and it reminds me of all those period shows Tessa and
I used to watch together."

Alec settled in for the evening, watching another three shows with Magnus before calling it a night. Magnus stayed up even later, probably finishing the season. This meant that like yesterday, Alec left their room with a sleeping Magnus in it. His classes that day were even more boring than yesterday, and Alec found himself looking forward to next week when classes actually got interesting.

Alec had expected to arrive home to Magnus on the couch again binging more 19th century dramas, but he wasn't. Alec looked around and spotted a note in Magnus's hand writing on the coffee table.

Went to Tessa's for the evening. Will be home late. Don't wait up.

Love you,

Magnus

Smiling to himself, Alec decided to choose his own television tonight, or possibly play one of the video games he'd got for Christmas. He was half way through level two of his new game when he heard a knock at the door. Assuming it to be Magnus arriving home early, Alec called out for the person to enter, and a moment later, he heard a very distinctly not Magnus's voice greet him from behind.

"Hey Alec," Clary said. Alec turned.

"Oh, I thought you were Magnus," Alec said.

"I take it that means he isn't here then?" Clary asked.

"You would take it correctly," Alec smiled. Clary smiled too, but there was an awkward way to it, as if she was smiling too widely to be real.

"Is everything alright?" Alec asked.

"Yeah," Clary said too quickly. "I mean- you know, nothing wrong per say..."

"Spit it out, Clary," Alec sighed.

"It's just well... if you had to choose between your own dreams and Magnus, what would you do?"

Clary asked very quickly as if trying to get it all out in one breath.

"Honestly, I have no idea," Alec replied simply. "I've never had a dream or aspiration grand enough to eclipse Magnus."

"I see," Clary sighed. She looked a little deflated. "Well, thanks anyway, I guess."

"Hey," Alec said standing up and moving quickly around the couch to stop her leaving. "You can't just ask that and leave. What's going on?"

"Nothing," Clary said quickly before moving out of his grip. Alec let her go rather than forcefully hold her there, but he was suddenly wondering if it was his duty as Jace's best friend to tell Jace that something was up with his girlfriend.

Chapter End Notes
I had decided to wait a few more days to update this but 'HidingBehindMyWords' on fanfic told me she'd read it right away if I uploaded today so I thought why not!

OMG the second real Malec smut scene in this entire story. La gasp! Yes yes I know, I never write these anymore. Malec smut was the first smut I ever wrote, maybe that's why I like to move on and try other things now. See all my other stories for more. ;)

I update this story here, on fanfic.net and on wattpadd in case I haven't mentioned that already. :)

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Sneak Peak Chapter 115

"I'll be ten minutes huh?" she smirked at him.

"Sorry," Jordan mumbled. "I lost track of time."

"Oh no really," she chuckled. "I hadn't guessed."

"I promise to make it up to you," Jordan replied, wrapping his arms around her to kiss her even before he took off his coat.

"And how do you intend to do that?" Paige asked smiling up at him.

"Umm," Jordan stated. "No idea. What do you want?"

"Let's see," Paige began, obviously teasing him. "How about eternal servitude." For a moment Jordan just stood there looking a little startled, then Paige laughed and added, "I'm kidding silly."

"Oh," Jordan replied, smiling.

"How about I pick the movie?" Paige smiled at him. "We will have to see a later showing is all."

"I thought you were already picking the movie?" Jordan replied.
Jace's Visitors

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Jace had lost track of the toddler. Her crawling skills were quite a bit better than he'd remembered, and she fit into all the small places he couldn't see. The living room looked a little like it had been torn apart by thieves, and yet there was no toddler to be found, and Jace was starting to panic. Maybe babysitting hadn't been the best idea ever.

"Come out Lucie," Jace pleaded. "I have to take you home in an hour!" He heard a giggle and shuffling sound, but it must of echoed, because he didn't find her in the direction of the noise.

Just then, Jace heard the door opening, and turned hoping desperately for reinforcements. To his great relief, he saw Paige standing in his doorway.

"What on earth happened here?" she asked smiling.

"Babysitting," Jace stated very seriously. Paige closed the door behind her quickly, and Jace sensed she had some experience with kids in the way she did it, as if blocking the toddler's escape.

"As someone with four younger siblings," Paige began. "I know a thing or two. I'm sure we can find her."

"You're a lifesaver," Jace sighed in relief. "I don't think she wants to go home."

Paige smiled at him. "At least that means she likes being here with you."

"I suppose," Jace replied. "But if I can't return her, I doubt her parents would agree."

"Nah," Paige chuckled. "I'm sure her parents need the break. As long as she's in one piece, they'll ask again."

"Does anything rattle you?" Jace laughed as the two of them started searching together, listening for any noises they themselves weren't making.

"Plenty of things," Paige replied. "Just not adorable children, or dirty kitchens."

Working together, they made their way searching the smallest places in the apartment for Jace's little cousin once removed. They eventually found her hiding at the bottom of the basket of clean towels in the bathroom.

"Aha!" Jace exclaimed as he moved the towels aside and scooped her up into his arms. He'd been sure he'd searched here already, and suspected Lucie had been switching hiding places on him.

"No," Lucie objected. "No."

"Not, no Lucie," Jace explained. "Yes. Yes, home to mommy now."

"No," Lucie repeated. Jace sighed, holding her securely in his arms.

"Daddy is gonna be here to pick you up soon," Jace explained.

"No," Lucie said again. It seemed to be her favourite word.
"Good luck with that," Paige chuckled.

"Oh, I almost forgot," Jace said turning to her. "You didn't come here just to help me round up a toddler."

"No," Paige said. "Jordan was suppose to meet me here, but it seems he's lost track of time. We're going to see a movie. But where's Clary? She's missing out on the adorable baby."

"Clary's in class," Jace explained. "And I doubt she feels like she's missing anything. Clary doesn't want kids."

"Oh," Paige said suddenly. "Well, I can't say I understand that. I've known I wanted kids since I was thirteen.

"That's very decisive of you," Jace replied. "May I ask why?"

"I was babysitting for friends of my parents," Paige began. "And their little son, he must of been about 5 months old then, fell asleep in my arms with all his little fingers curled around one of mine. It isn't a feeling that's easy to describe, but in that moment I just knew."

"I know you two just started dating, but have you talked to Jordan about it?" Jace asked.

"In general," Paige replied. "I'm not very subtle about loving kids. I don't think he's for or against, and I'm not crazy you know. I don't want kids right now or anything."

"Fair enough," Jace laughed.

"Besides, I've never really found someone I could picture the future with before now," Paige explained. "Jordan's special. I admire his loyalty, even if it was misplaced."

"I know what you mean," Jace smiled. "About the special part anyway."

"It sounds to me like you're giving up kids for Clary," Paige replied. "It takes a very special love to do that."

Just then the door opened, and they both turned to see Jordan walk in the front door. He was stomping his feet to get the snow off on the mat as Paige walked over to him.

"I'll be ten minutes, huh?" she smirked at him.

"Sorry," Jordan mumbled. "I lost track of time."

"Oh no, really," she chuckled. "I hadn't guessed."

"I promise to make it up to you," Jordan replied, wrapping his arms around her to kiss her lightly, even before he took off his coat.

"And how do you intend to do that?" Paige asked, smiling up at him.

"Umm," Jordan stated. "No idea. What do you want?"

"Let's see," Paige began, obviously teasing him, though Jace was sure Jordan was unaware of this face. "How about eternal servitude." For a moment, Jordan just stood there looking a little startled, then Paige laughed and added, "I'm kidding silly."

"Oh," Jordan replied, smiling.
"How about I pick the movie?" Paige smiled at him. "We will have to see a later showing though."

"I thought you were already picking the movie?" Jordan replied. Paige's answering chuckle was drowned out by Lucie's demands for attention. She was wriggling and - there wasn't another word for it - squawking in his arms.

"Let's do something about the lunch still on your face before daddy picks you up, shall we?" Jace told the grumpy toddler.

"No," Lucie objected, but Jace ignored her protests, walking over to the bathroom for a warm face cloth, toddler in hand.

When he returned with a clean, but grumpy little girl, Paige and Jordan had already left, likely to go see that movie.

Jace put Lucie in her play pen, and didn't look away even once until his doorbell rang. He had to look away to get the door, but thankfully when he turned around, Lucie was still there.

"Nervous you'd lost her?" Will asked as he walked inside.

"Maybe," Jace said cautiously. "She's either magic or I'm an idiot."

"Oh," Will said looking at the play pen itself, rather than his daughter. "I forgot to tell you she's figured out how to get out of her portable playpen, this one anyway. Sorry."

"Well at least I'm not an idiot," Jace laughed, feeling a bit better now he knew it was totally his fault.

"Thanks for watching her," Will said as he walked and lifted Lucie into his arms. Lucie was having none of it however; she had turned her head away from her father looking sulky.

"I'm not sure if her dislike of going home is a good thing or not," Will laughed. "At least she likes visiting you."

"I suppose," Jace said, as he moved forward to try and collapse the playpen. In the end, he gave up and held the baby so Will could skillfully fold the metal bars back into its carrying bag.

"Alright little rugrat," Will addressed his daughter. "Home time."

"Mm-mm," Lucie said shaking her head with great energy.

"You just love saying no don't you?" Jace laughed. Lucie responded with her favourite word, but in the end, she went home with her father, and Jace collapsed on the couch. He'd have to tidy up the giant mess babysitting had caused, but that could wait. For now, he wanted to sit and enjoy the peace and quiet of no toddlers present.

His phone disturbed his peace as it went off. With a groan, Jace leaned forward to check the message.

'Hey, do you mind if I come over?' Alec's text read.

'Since when do I mind you being here?' Jace replied easily. 'Didn't we used to live together?'

'Yeah and you snored,' Alec typed back with a laughing emoji. 'See you soon then.'

Jace chucked his phone on the couch beside him, and tried to get up the willpower to move. It took a while, but with a great effort, Jace stood up and began putting his home back together. By the time
he had all the major furniture he'd moved to look for Lucie back where it went, he heard a knock at
the door.

"Hey," Alec said as he entered. Jace waved, but didn't speak. He was tired. How toddler's had so
much energy, he had no idea.

"Come sit," Jace said, gesturing to the couch. And Alec sat, looking a little nervous which confused
Jace. "What's up?"

"It's just that- well I'm not really sure what the friend edicate is here," Alec began. "I mean I'm
friends with you and with Clary so…"

"Just spit it out," Jace simled. "I mean you came all this way."

"Something's up with Clary."

"And by that you mean?" Jace asked.

"She came over the other day," Alec explained. "A little frazzled and asked me a rather strange
question." Jace raised an eyebrow expecting more. "She asked what I would do if I had to choose
between my own dreams and Magnus, but it felt like she wanted to know for her. I don't know what
it means, but I thought you should know."

"I see," Jace said sitting up. "Thanks for telling me." Then just like that, Alec stood up. "Are you
leaving?"

"Yeah," Alec said. "Sorry. I didn't want to wait too long to tell you, so I fit it in between things."

"After you're married, will I see more, or less of you?" Jace asked, genuinely curious.

"More I hope," Alec sighed. "We'll hang out on the weekend okay?"

"Sounds good," Jace replied, and Alec walked out the front door leaving Jace not quite sure what to
think. That was a rather strange question, but it wasn't like it really explained anything. Since they
got home from the holidays, he had noticed Clary had been a little… maybe reserved, but it had been
so subtle. Jace hadn't even realized it until listening to Alec.

For the fifth time that afternoon, someone came in through Jace's front door. He turned, and this time
it was Clary. Jace couldn't help but smile when he saw her. She was carrying what looked like a
large banner.

"What's that for?" Jace asked walking towards her.

"Simon," she said. "It's his last physio appointment today. No more sling!"

She was grinning as she kissed him, jumping a little to reach. Rather than let her fly away, Jace
wrapped his arms around her and deepened the kiss.

"Does this mean we are expecting guests?" Jace asked.

"Yes," Clary said. "Izzy and Simon are coming here after his last appointment, and I think Simon
invited a few other people too." With that, Clary walked over to the mantle and started putting up her
banner. It looked homemade, like it was quickly put together. Of course, homemade and quickly put
together by Clary, the art major, was better than most, as far as Jace was concerned, and he told her
as much.
"I don't know," Clary sighed, as she took a step back from the mantle, probably checking to see if she'd put it up straight. "I wanted to buy one so it was nicer, but 'Congrats on completing your physio theory' doesn't seem to be a popular banner type."

"I'm sure Simon will love it," Jace said, coming up behind her and wrapping his arms around her. Clary leaned back into him.

"So Alec came over today," Jace said softly after a few moments of silence. "Said you asked him a rather odd question."

"Knew I should have asked Magnus," Clary grumbled. "Tattletale."

Jace turned her in his arms so he could see her face. "What's going on Clary?"

"I will tell you," Clary said firmly. "Just not now. I need to sort a few things out first."

"Isn't the whole point of being together, to sort things out together?" Jace asked.

"It's just-" she started again. "I'm still wrapping my head around-"

Gently, Jace made her look up at him before he spoke. "How bad is it?"

"It's not bad," Clary said quickly, but Jace didn't buy it. There was a break in her voice he didn't trust.

"Just tell me what's going on," Jace said firmly. "Before I start panicking."

"There's this fellowship," Clary said slowly. "Everyone in my art class was entered automatically, so it isn't like I planned to- I mean it was just me and one other student that qualified."

"Complete sentences Clary," Jace reminded her, his anxiety rising. What could possibly be going on? How could a 'fellowship' be creating the distress he now saw in his girlfriend's expression? Surely, a fellowship was a good thing, like his scholarship.

"There's this program," Clary explained. "You have to qualify, and I never thought I would. Anyway, the students who qualify get the opportunity to do their 4th year… well umm… abroad." Her voice had been trailing off, but now it got louder, as if she was trying to disguise the meaning of her last word. "Studying under real painters, sculptures, and designers with actual experience earning a living with their skills. My professor says it can even lead to job opportunities down the line."

"This is really important to you isn't it?" Jace said calmly, his whole body suddenly numb.

"Yeah," Clary mumbled. "But I haven't decided yet, and I don't have to until the end of January." She paused, and he didn't speak. "It's just such an amazing experience to have."

"I can understand that," Jace said calmly. "But apart for a year." The words felt toxic in his mouth. "My scholarship wouldn't let me follow you." Clary hung her head, looking deflated.

"Yeah," she said. "That's why I've been putting off saying anything. I know long distance is like cancer to a relationship, and most couples end up breaking up even if they try to stay together while apart, and I just… I don't want to lose you Jace, but I also really want to do this." She was almost crying now, her eyes glossy with unshed tears even as she looked away from him.

Jace just stood perfectly still with Clary in his arms. She was without a doubt the love of his life, and Jace knew what losing her would do to him, but he also knew what holding her back would do to
them. If he was the reason she didn't do something like this, what did that make him? Would she grow to resent him for denying her such an experience? How could she not? Jace didn't understand the drive she had. He had no dreams that eclipsed her.

"Clary," Jace said, slowly. "Will this trip make you happy?"

"Yes," Clary admitted. "But so do you."

"I don't want to be the reason why you miss out on anything in your life," Jace told her gently. "I don't think I could bare it if you came to resent me for it."

"I would never resent-" Clary began, but he cut her off.

"You'd be right to," he continued. "It would be wrong to hold you so close you couldn't fly. I've waited all my life for you Clary. What is one year compared to that?"

"Sure, we can say that now," Clary replied. "But an entire year apart isn't a small thing."

"But it won't be a whole year. I mean, we would see each other at Christmas, right?" Jace said. "So it's really only two semesters, four months, a visit, then four months."

"School semesters there are different," Clary said slowly. "They're a little longer, and I don't know if I'd be able to come home for Christmas."

"Oh," Jace said slowly.

"It's just so expensive to fly there in the first place," Clary said. "And with the 14 hour flight time, it's hard to justify for only a few days."

"Makes sense," Jace said slowly. He felt so deflated. The hope that had flared in his chest as he'd thought of getting through two four month time spans had sputtered out and died.

"That's why I've been so scared," Clary continued. "I can't expect you to wait for me for ten months. The program starts mid August and ends in May." Jace didn't speak, and she continued.

"Maybe mom and dad won't be able to help me with the costs," Clary added quickly, and Jace wondered how defeated his expression looked at the moment to add that frightened edge to her voice. "Then I won't be able to go, and the decision will be made for us."

"I don't have to decide until the end of January," Clary continued. "And I still haven't talked to mom and dad about it. Let's just try not to think about it until I do, okay?" Jace nodded, not really sure what to say.

"I love you," Clary told him with a gentle kiss on the lips.

"I love you too," Jace whispered back her.

Just then, Jace heard the front door of his apartment open and turned to see Izzy and Simon arrive. Simon was smiling from ear to ear, sling free for the first time in months. With one last nervous glance at Jace, Clary turned to greet them. Simon and Izzy weren't really guests, as Simon did technically lived there, but at the moment it felt like they were. Jace felt like he had to smile and act the part, even if he was horrible at it. Jace found himself sitting apart from the group, his mind numb rather than feel the weight of recent events.

"I take it Clary told you then," Simon's voice broke through Jace's stupor.
"I take it she told you first?" Jace replied. He heard Simon sit down beside him, but didn't look up from the ground to face him.

"Yeah," Simon confirmed.

"Fabulous," Jace groaned, dropping his head into his hands.

"It was easier for her to tell me," Simon said calmly. "She knows a friendship can survive a year on texts alone. She isn't scared of losing me. She's terrified of losing you."

"I know the feeling," Jace sighed, rubbing his face with his hands, and finally turning to face his girlfriend's best friend.

Simon was smiling. "With that attitude, I'm sure you two could survive just about anything."

"Says the guy I literally stole her from," Jace said with an awkward laugh.

"You gotta let that go buddy," Simon chuckled, slapping him on the back. "Really, you did us a favour in the long run."

"Izzy has really mellowed you out," Jace chuckled.

"Where have you run off to?" Izzy's voice interrupted them as they turned to see her there approaching, her gaze fixed on Simon.

"Speak of the devil," Jace laughed.

"How are we supposed to celebrate your sling-free existence, if you are sulking in the corner with Jace," Izzy said to her boyfriend.

"I wasn't sulking," Simon objected, but he let his girlfriend drag him up by his never injured arm, and back to the main group. Jordan and Paige had arrived home from their movie, turning Simon's sorta get together into an actual party level event. Jace did get up to have something to eat, but otherwise, he remained apart thinking.

If he was sure they'd survive the ten months, than shouldn't Clary go? He knew how much it meant to her, and she'd more than earned it, but what if his faith was misplaced? What if ten months apart shattered them into pieces that couldn't be put back together again?

Since Jace had arrived at this university, it felt like his life had revolved around Clary. His last year of university without his soulmate… it was not a fun prospect. Clary wouldn't be there for his graduation, except maybe on a phone.

In the end, it boiled down to if he could ask her to stay just for him. Somehow he just knew he couldn't. Jace couldn't help but picture a beautiful red bird in flight that is suddenly held down, its wings clipped so it can never leave his side.

A slight thud broke his concentration, and Jace turned to see Maia sitting on the chair beside him that Simon had so recently occupied.

"Friends suck," Maia grumbled.

"I take it you are in just as good a mood as I am then?" Jace sighed.

"Simon invited me to his sorta party thing, and it didn't occur to me until I got here that Jordan and Paige would be here," Maia sighed. "I was just wondering if it would be rude to leave seconds after
arriving when I saw you."

"Misery does love company," Jace replied.

"So what storm cloud rained on your parade?" Maia asked.

"Clary's been offered the chance to study abroad," Jace explained. "For ten months."

"Ouch," Maia said, not without sympathy. "That's quite the dilemma indeed. If you ask her to stay just for you, you're a selfish jerk, and if you tell her to go, you are rolling the dice, and not in your favour."

"Pretty much," Jace replied.

"Still, I'd rather be you right now than me," Maia explained, her eyes fixed on Jordan and Paige.

"I thought you didn't want Jordan back," Jace said. He was pretty fuzzy on the details of Maia's life, as she was more Simon's friend than his, but he had picked up a few things.

"It's a long, stupid story, that is totally my fault," Maia stated.

"Then please don't give me any details," Jace sighed. "My own stupid story is really all I can handle at the moment."

"So are you gonna set the bird free, or cage her?" Maia asked.

"Urg, when you put it like that, I really don't have a choice do I?"

"Personally, if I was told no, it would only make me want to do it more, and I'd probably dump the guy and go anyway," Maia observed.

"Somehow I don't find it hard to believe that your bad mood is all your fault," Jace snapped. He hadn't intended to snap, it was just that Maia had struck a nerve.

"In that case, learn from my mistakes," Maia said, more kindly than Jace's response deserved. "Trust her, and she will return to you."

And Jace knew she was right.

Chapter End Notes

Who was ready for some Clace drama? I know I was. Geesh has this story been getting really filler-y lately. Time to fix that! Oh and because I wrote like a spaz last weekend I have the next TWO chapters totally finished and edited. Who wants more? Or of course I could just let them sit on my computer and gather dust? ^_^ hehe

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Sneak Peek Chapter 116

"Hey," Alec greeted him before moving aside to let Simon enter. "You'll never guess what they are up to?"
"Watching Poldark?" Simon chuckled.

"Ding ding," Alec said sarcastically. "We have a winner." Then he added in a more cheerful tone. "Though I do much prefer this to before."

"You mean when all they did was yell at each other?" Simon replied.

"Oh no!" Magnus's yelling voice carried across the room. "He isn't really going to- I mean what about his wife?"

"Now they yell at the tv," Alec laughed, turning to join the new friends in the living room.
Simon knew he'd been an idiot the moment Maia walked into his apartment. He could sense the awkwardness in the air as Maia saw Paige with Jordan. Simon wanted to hit himself over the head. Before he could do anything however, Maia walked over to Jace, who was still sulking in the corner, and sat beside him. For the moment, it looked like this wasn't about to blow up in his face. Oh, when had his social life gotten so complicated that he had to be careful who he invited to what?

Despite the fact that this party was technically about him, it felt to Simon like it was about Izzy. She was all but jumping up and down with happiness, and talking about how she wanted to burn his sling. Simon put a stop to this idea, but her enthusiasm made him smile. Simon admired the energy Izzy attacked life with. He, himself, seemed to passively let life go by, but not her. Maybe that's why they worked so well together.

It wasn't long until Maia left. Frankly, Simon had been surprised she'd come at all. Maybe Simon should have done more to get those two back together, if only for his own convenience. Then again, Simon wasn't sure what had Maia all tied up in knots, since she'd had more than one opportunity to win Jordan back in the last year. It was all rather exhausting, and Simon decided to just be happy his own love life was finally simple. Well, simple in every way, except that he and Izzy still hadn't slept together since becoming an actual couple. Simon could sense that she wasn't going to bring it up, that she was waiting for him to make the first move. It was nice to think without so much pressure, and he was grateful to Izzy for her patience.

If he wasn't testing Izzy, then what was he waiting for?

Simon knew how much he adored her, but he wasn't yet sure if he loved her. For such a small thing, it seemed to make all the difference in the world. Was that it? After so much sex without love, was Simon waiting because he wanted to be with someone he loved, who loved him the same way in return? And if so, was that so unreasonable?

Before the party ended, Simon saw Jace go back into the group to talk to Clary, and couldn't help but be curious. There were downsides to both Clary's options, and Simon didn't like that his friend had to make that decision. Watching out of the corner of his eye, Simon saw Clary pull Jace in for a hug. They stayed like that for a while, then left the party early hand in hand. Simon made a mental note to ask Clary what happened later.

As the evening died down, Simon and Izzy went back to her place since Jordan had the second room, and two people could not sleep on the couch. Recently, Simon had come to feel like he was spending more time with Izzy and Maia, rather than Jordan, Clary, and Jace. But it was worth it. Simon liked sleeping beside Isabelle. There was a comfort in not sleeping alone. Simon remembered how it had felt on the nights Clary wanted to sleep at her own place while they'd been dating. Simon had missed the warmth and tranquility of another person's presence as he relaxed into sleep. Simon was glad that, unlike Clary, Isabelle wanted him to stay at her place every night. Once Izzy fell asleep, she had a habit of moving close to him and putting an arm over him. She rarely did this when she was awake, and it made Simon smile every time. He liked that even unconscious, she wanted to be closer to him.

The next day was a Saturday so no one had class, but Simon had a shift at Tim Horton's this morning. He'd managed to keep his summer job during the school year, though very part time, which
was good since it meant he wouldn't have to find another job next summer.

Simon woke Izzy with a gentle kiss, and she sighed contentedly. Rather than get up, Simon stayed to watch her. He knew Izzy was awake, even if she wasn't quite aware yet, lost in that state between actually conscious and half-asleep. She looked so beautiful with her dark hair spread out over the pillow, her eyes closed. Simon smiled, reaching out to stroke her hair.

After a while though, Simon had to get up to get ready for work. Kissing her forehead, Simon went to get out of bed but found his arm held hostage by his very awake girlfriend.

"Don't go," Izzy whined.

"I have work," Simon explained.

"I'll pay you to say," she said. Simon laughed lightly and got up.

"I'll see you at Alec's later," Simon said as got up to look for clothes.

"I need a kiss before you go," Izzy argued. Simon sighed as if this was a burden, but made his way, smiling, to the bed. He leaned over and kissed her lips with the intention of leaned back after. Izzy had other ideas. She wrapped her arms around him, deepened the kiss, and stole a few more before finally letting him free.

"Thief," Simon told her grinning.

"Totally worth it," Izzy said as she snuggled more comfortably into the blankets.

"Alright, now I'll see you later," Simon smiled, his work clothes in hand he managed to get out of the room before she distracted him again.

Izzy had always liked to hang out at her brother's apartment between classes or on weekends, but she'd the frequency had greatly increased since Christmas. Before he'd been officially dating Isabelle, Simon had known Magnus only through Clary, but now as Magnus was engaged to his girlfriend's brother, Simon was getting to know him better. Or at least Simon had been spending a lot of time lately watching Magnus hang out with his girlfriend.

Before arriving for his shift, Simon sent a quick text to Clary, asking her how it had gone with Jace. After three hours of serving coffee and making breakfast sandwiches, he got a break and checked his phone.

'Jace says he has faith we can make it,' Clary's text read. 'We are gonna do long distance. I'm telling my professor yes on Monday.'

'Do you want me to keep an eye out for strange blondes hitting on him?' Simon texted back. He didn't get an answer before his break ended, but after Simon's shift, he returned to his phone to see a reply.

'Nah,' Clary texted. 'I trust him. Everything's going to be fine. You'll see.'

'I'm glad you're so confident,' Simon replied as he left work to head home and change, and by home, he meant his actual apartment rather than his girlfriend's. He had some clothes at Izzy's, but not his shampoo. Then again, they were both so close to campus it hardly made a difference really. When he arrived home, Simon saw Clary and Jace sitting very close together on the couch watching tv. He smiled, but didn't do more than wave to them as he went down the hall to the bathroom.
Once he was clean and dressed in clothes that didn't smell like coffee, Simon headed out to meet up with Izzy. Even though it was a short walk, Simon still bundled up in his full winter gear, mittens and all. It was January, and the weather wasn't quite ready to give up on winter yet, even if Simon totally was. When he knocked, it was Alec who answered the door.

"Hey," Alec greeted him before moving aside to let Simon enter. "You'll never guess what they are up to?"

"Watching Poldark?" Simon chuckled.

"Ding ding," Alec said sarcastically. "We have a winner." Then he added in a more cheerful tone. "Though I do much prefer this to before."

"You mean when all they did was yell at each other?" Simon replied.

"Oh no!" Magnus's yelling voice carried across the room. "He isn't really going to- I mean what about his wife?"

"Now they yell at the tv," Alec laughed, turning to join the new friends in the living room.

"She's his first love," Izzy was explaining to Magnus. "He's having a stupid moment."

"How can you be so calm?" Magnus asked her, looking rather out of sorts himself.

"Let's see," Izzy began counting on her fingers. "Well, I've read the books, and watched the 70s tv show, which means I totally knew this was going to happen. I've been waiting for it."

"Diabolical writer!" Magnus exclaimed. "Why can't they just let those two be happy for a change?"

"That wouldn't be very good writing," Izzy objected.

"Well, I'm left handed," Magnus replied. Izzy just blinked at him for a moment.


"Sweetie, the cutlery got it!" Alec said.

"Why is it always the cutlery?" Magnus asked. "Like you never say 'the napkins got it' or 'the table'?"

Rather than answer his fiance's question, Alec leaned over the back of the couch to kiss Magnus spiderman style.

"Hmm," Magnus sighed as they broke apart. Magnus's head was leaned all the way back, looking up at Alec.

"You are now required to sit here with us, and embrace the awesome," Magnus told him. With a sigh, Alec moved around the couch and took the empty place beside Magnus.

Simon went to sit next to his girlfriend on the couch. With the four of them it was only a little crowded, but that was alright by him. Simon had watched Poldark with them over the holidays, and though he wasn't nearly as wrapped up in it as Izzy and Magnus were, he did enjoy the show. It had interesting characters and well structure plots, not to mention beautiful landscape shoots of England. It was nice just sitting after his long day at work.

The episode ended, and without hesitation, Izzy swiped the remote and played the next one. When
that episode ended, Alec decided to make tea and a conversation started up. While Alec was gone, Izzy and Magnus began talking about the episodes contents, and somehow Izzy noticed Magnus's nail polish.

"It's peeling!" she exclaimed, shocked. "When did you put it on?"

"A few days ago," Magnus shrugged. "It doesn't last very long."

"You're using the wrong brands," Izzy told him. Simon didn't catch the names of all the brands she listed, but Magnus seemed to know them. Once Magnus had responded with the types he bought, Izzy began rummaging through her bag, pulling out a small bottle of what looked to Simon like normal nail polish. The way Izzy described it, however, was anything but normal. She insisted on redoing Magnus's nails during the next episode, Simon found himself sitting on the chair so Izzy had space on the couch to lay down a towel to protect the furniture.

"Definitely weird," Alec said, returning with drinks for everyone.

"No kidding," Simon laughed lightly.

"I blame Christmas, and you," Alec replied.

"Me?" Simon asked.

"Yes," Alec said, but he didn't elaborate, instead walking away to sit in the opposite chair before Simon could ask for clarification.

"You're not allowed to use that cheap crap anymore," Izzy stated as she finished off Magnus's nails.

"Yes ma'am," Magnus replied with a chuckle.

"Alright then," Izzy said with a nod. "Glad we straighten that out."

"Please don't straighten my fiance out," Alec whined.

"Was that a pun!" Magnus exclaimed, gleefully.

"Possibly," Alec chuckled.

"You're officially a bad influence," Izzy told Magnus, smiling. "Now let's find out if that idiot can fix his marriage."

"I thought you already knew what happened?" Magnus told her, his eyebrow raised.

"Okay then let's watch this idiot fix his marriage," Izzy corrected. "Onto the next episode!" And she hit play before anyone could stop her.

Simon felt like he was in a television coma by the time it ended. Of course, it was preferable to the work coma that had made up the majority of his day.

"Oh, I almost forgot," Alec exclaimed suddenly. He turned to Magnus and said, "Catsby's meds."

"Oh right," Magnus replied, getting up at once and joining his fiance in the kitchen.

"Catsby's meds?" Izzy asked before Simon could.

"Yeah," Alec said poking his head out of the kitchen to look at his sister. "When we got Catsby's test
results back, it turns out he has a thyroid problem, so he's on medication now. One pill a day."

"How do you get a cat to eat a pill?" Izzy asked.

"Pill pockets," Magnus added, walking over carrying a little package of something with a cat on the label. "They are this soft treat thing that you put the pill in, and usually they eat the whole thing rather than eat the treat around the medicine." He turned to glare at the cat near his feet. "But sometimes they're a sneak who eats around the pill just to get another pill pocket."

"Meow, meoow," Catsby said innocently.

"And we have to feed him the pill before dinner, otherwise he won't eat it," Alec added.

"But he's been eating more at meal times," Magnus said cheerfully. "Doing much better. Thyroids are important, it seems."

"No, you think?" Alec said sarcastically. Magnus pretended to hit Alec with a tea towel before the two of them returned to caring for their elderly cat. Once the kitties were fed and pilled, they ordered pizza rather than make dinner. This left more time for binge watching Poldark, which made Izzy and Magnus very happy. Simon almost felt like he was back at the Lightwood manor over the holidays, which as far as he was concerned, was the perfect way to spend a Saturday night.

Chapter End Notes

OMG Is that Magnus and Izzy bonding I see? ^_^ hehe it's a wedding miracle! lol And look! See I didn't kill the cat. Aren't ya happy!

Anyway... I probably shouldn't be updating yet but I just hate seeing finished chapters sitting there doing nothing and I think you all know this about me since I've never been able to convince you that I will stop updating. I can count the people who review/comment on this story on one hand with fingers to spare and yet I keep writing it. sigh. It's like I enjoy writing or some such silly non-sense. Stupid addictive hobby taking over my life. Rude!

Who wants to know how stupidly addicted to writing I am, huh? Well, just now I did a recount for fun and it seems since the start of 2016 I've written and published over 916,000 words of fanfiction. That's like 458,000 words a year, 38,167 a month, equally average of writing 1,272 a day for two years.
Yes I like math... even when it freaks me out. Damn! Of course, there were days when I wrote close to 6,000 words in a day and other days when I didn't even string two words together, but you get the idea. I'd say I need a boyfriend, but... already got one of those so...

Okay, sorry for the tangent, here is your sneak peek!

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Sneak Peek Chapter 117

Since realizing what she'd lost, Maia hadn't been in the best mood ever. Okay, that was a bit of an understatement as Maia was currently sitting alone at a bar on Valentine's
"Is this seat taken?" It was a guy's voice, but not one she recognized. Maia turned to face the tall white man with blonde hair standing beside her. He looked unkempt, with uneven stubble on his chin, and a untrustworthy gleam in his eye.

"Yes," Maia told him. "By my very large, strong, boyfriend who will be back any moment."

"Nah, I don't think so," the man said. "See, I've been watching you from over there for the last few hours, and you've been sitting here alone all that time."

"He's just late," Maia tried, but she knew it was hopeless. This guy clearly didn't believe her, and why would he if he had indeed been watching her all evening? The idea made the hair on the back of Maia's neck stand on end. She turned slightly, trying not to be too obvious as she checked to see if the kind bartender was in view. He wasn't.

"Oh no, lonely girl," he whispered moving closer. "There's no one here with you, no one coming for you." He was far too close now, and Maia was getting very uncomfortable, regretting her decision to leave the house today.
Since realizing what she'd lost, Maia hadn't been in the best mood ever. Okay, that was a bit of an understatement as Maia was currently sitting alone at a bar on Valentine's Day, trying to find the bottom of her glass. It wasn't like her to wallow, and she wasn't enjoying it one bit. How had she kept her stupid emotions in check for so long, only to have them spill over and ruin her now? It was so stupid, no, beyond stupid! Idiotic! Why did she miss him now? She'd had her chance, had more than one. Dozens of chances to get him back, and yet she hadn't even tried.

When Jordan had been standing right in front of her, she hadn't given a thought to any of the good things. Like how when they'd first started dating, she'd been so worried he'd spot some pale skinny beautiful blonde, and choose that over Maia's dark curves. Since she'd met Jordan, he'd always seemed like the type to want skinny and pale in a woman, but Jordan had proved time and time again that he only had eyes for her. Sometimes when other women who saw her on his arm, they would glare at Maia, and though it should have bothered her, Maia had always felt so proud in those moments, proud to have earned his attention. His consistent and obvious preference for her had melted the iron of Maia's heart back then, only to have the iron return with a vengeance after they broke up.

Jordan had been the first person who had really noticed Maia. After a lifetime of being in her older brother's shadow, such a thing had been worth more to her than she knew how to express. She'd revelled in the feeling then, only to take it for granted later.

Maia looked down at the bottom of her glass. It was time for another drink. Signally the waiter, she ordered a second, and watched numbly as it was made.

"You wanna talk about it?" the bartender asked her.

"Not really," Maia replied, taking a sip of her third drink of the night.

"Contrary to popular belief, I don't ask everyone that," the bartender continued. "It's not actually part of the job you know." Maia chuckled, though without much heart. She looked up at the bar tender. He wasn't anything to remarkable. Apart from his kind smile, there wasn't much to distinguish him from any other bartender.

"Thanks," Maia replied trying not to be rude. The bartender was called away then to help a customer on the other side of the long bar. Maia was sitting at one far end, her back to the large tv playing some kind of sports game.

Valentine's Day, Maia thought as she stared down into the liquid in her glass. She remembered her first Valentine's with Jordan. He'd been so nervous, he hadn't had a clue what she'd want, and had planned multiple evenings in case she hated one of them. Maia smiled remembering the adorable expression on Jordan's face when she'd realized what he'd done. Maia had kissed him then, her hand gently holding the nape of his neck. It had been so long since she'd kissed him, so long since she'd kissed anyone.

Maia had to down her whole drink in one go when she realized the last person she'd kissed had been Simon. If only the bartender was cuter, or she was drinker, maybe Maia could change that.
"Is this seat taken?" It was a guy's voice, but not one she recognized. Maia turned to face the tall white man with blonde hair standing beside her. He looked unkempt, with uneven stubble on his chin, and a untrustworthy gleam in his eye.

"Yes," Maia told him. "By my very large, strong, boyfriend who will be back any moment."

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"Oh no, lonely girl," he whispered moving closer. "There's no one here with you, no one coming for you." He was far too close now, and Maia was getting very uncomfortable, regretting her decision to leave the house today.

"So sorry I'm late," came a loud male voice from behind her, also unknown, but nevertheless he was using a familiar tone. "Traffic was murder."

Maia turned to see yet another tall stranger, but she already like this one far more. The newcomer had broad shoulders, dark skin, and a very square jaw. He looked strong and gallant, like a knight in shining armour, though she would never say such a thing out loud.

"There you are, honey," Maia said with great enthusiasm at the second stranger. "I've been waiting."

"I know," he replied looking quiet respectfully guilty. Maia had to admire his acting. "I'm sorry."

"It's alright," Maia said. "Come, I saved you a seat." The handsome dark skinned man sat beside her. Maia didn't dare turn around to check if the creepy guy was gone.

"There's so much snow on the highway, it was blocked up for hours," the fine actor continued. Maia suspected the creep was still watching them.

"That's awful," Maia replied. "I'm glad you made it alright." She had to admit her acting sucked a lot more than his.

"I tried to call, but cell reception was down," he continued. Then Maia watched as he turned his head to check behind them. "Okay, it's all clear. He's gone."

"Thanks," Maia said with genuine gratitude.

"I'm Bat," he said smiling and offering her his hand to shake.

"Maia," she said accepting the handshake.

"So what guy broke your heart so badly it landed you in a bar alone on Valentine's getting hit on by creepers?" Bat asked.

"You my friend, have made an assumption," Maia told him.

"Have I now?"

"Yes, you assume I'm not the master of my own misery," Maia explained.
"Ah, then do please enlighten me," Bat smiled.

"I broke his heart," Maia corrected. "Then after trying to win me back non-stop for over a year, he did the rational thing and moved on, just in time for me to realize I'm an idiot."

"Ah yes, quite a different story than the one I had in mind for sure," Bat replied. Maia tipped her drink to him, then realized it was empty.

"So what brought you to a bar alone on Valentine's Day?" Maia asked, deciding it was only fair he answer the same question she had.

"Oh, I'm not alone," Bat replied. He turned and pointed to a group of people in a booth to their left. "My buddies Steve and Gregg came with me."

"No dates?" Maia asked. "On Valentine's Day?"

"Says the girl dating her whiskey," Bat remarked. "At least I'm here with friends."

"Urg," Maia grumbled. "All my silly friends are at home tonight, probably having fantastic sex with their soulmates."

"And you aren't at all bitter," Bat chuckled at her.

"Oh no," Maia replied, her voice dripping with sarcasm. "Not at all."

"Would you like to join us?" Bat asked. "I promise none of us are creepy."

"Even if you were, you're at least better looking than that other guy," Maia said, getting up off her stool and joining the boys without hesitation. She might have been a little intoxicated, but even the parts of her brain that were working didn't have a problem with this new plan.

"How drunk are you?" Bat asked.

"Not sure," Maia replied, thoughtfully. Bat looked at her dubiously.

"Maybe you should call it a night?" Bat suggested.

"Oh no!" Maia objected. "Not happening. First rounds on me!" Bat laughed but didn't argue, and when they reached the table, Bat introduced her to both his friends. Steve wasn't as tall as him, though he had a similar look about him with broad shoulders and dark skin. Gregg looked like he had a little white in him, lighter skin, and his facial features were structured differently. They all seemed like nice people, and Maia found herself quite comfortable.

Four rounds of shot later things were looking up.

"I find it hard to believe a girl like you couldn't even find one friend to go out with on Valentines," Gregg was saying. "You're fun, Maia."

"Thanks," Maia chuckled. "Here, have more liquor. It makes people prettier." She pushed the jug of beer towards him. All three men laughed at this, and Maia congratulated herself at her drunk humor.

"See, my one friend has a kid," Maia said, her head spinning a little. "Or maybe she's more an acquaintance, not sure. Others all in couples who wanted to do couple things today. One friend, she's grumpy." Maia giggled. "Cause she being celibate for her boyfriend."

"I thought you said all your friends were having sex with their soulmates tonight?" Bat reminded her.
"Sex, snuggling," Maia replied dismissively. "The soulmate part is the- whoa." The world had spun a little as she'd finished her sentence, so Maia decided to abandon it.

"Celibate for her boyfriend?" Steve asked dubiously. "Is her boyfriend gay?"

"Shh no," Maia snapped, then continued with less confidence and focus. "He's cautious. Strange complicated history. Checking things... or maybe he's just dumb." She hiccuped in the middle of her mostly a sentence. "Not sure." Maia took another gulp of her drink.

"I still say he's gay," Steve added.

"Then you very wrong," Maia told him in her best mature voice that probably came out like a toddler. "Is good thing."

"If you say so," Steve laughed.

"I do say so," Maia giggled. "Ssay sooo."

"Also guy friend is dating roommate," Maia continued. "Sorta friend with blonde guy who looks like my brother dating guy friend ex. All soulmate cute, annoying." Maia made a face as if she'd stepped in something nasty.

"You have some shitty luck," Gregg sympathized.

"This calls for more alcohol," Maia stated firmly. It was the only thing she was really sure of at the moment.

"I believe it's my turn," Steve said as he got up to get another round.

"See problem is," Maia began again. "My friends are his friends."

"You talking about your ex?" Bat asked. Maia nodded. She had a vague feeling that she'd become hard to understand, but her drunk brain had decided this was okay.

"Can't complain to Simon about him because Simon on his side," Maia whined.

"Yeah, that was the problem I encountered when I broke up with Jean," Gregg replied sympathetically. "Aside from these two idiots, I had no one that didn't side with her. And making new friends is so much work."

"See no cause I do that," Maia explained, as best she could. The room was getting very wobbly. "Went and made all new friends, moved to new city and the bastard followed me! Managed make same friends without me knowing till too late!"

"I'm not sure that was an actual sentence," Bat chuckled. "But if I understood you correctly that's gotta suck."

"Suck lots," Maia agreed, Steven returned with more booze. "Lot's suck. Maia suck."

"We have reached self-deprecation drunk," Gregg commented. "This is usually when I call it a night."

"Maia," Bat's voice spoke gently, and Maia had to think to turn her head and face him. "Did you drive here?"

"Bus drove," Maia said absently as she stared at his face. He'd saved her from the bad man, given
her place to sit with people. She liked Bat. He was nice, looked nice too. He wasn't hot hot like Jordan. Bat had neater hair and had less of a rocker boy look to him, but they both had a similar skin tone to her own. Both tall, both kind to her. Both pretty. Pretty boy...

Before she realized what she was doing, Maia had leaned forward to kiss Bat. She knew the alcohol was definitely killing her inhibitions, but at this moment, Maia didn't care. She wanted to be kissing Bat right now, and to her surprise, he seemed okay with the idea. She felt one of his arms hold her back, and she tangled her fingers in his hair in return.

"Ow," Bat said, laughter in his voice. Maia pulled away. He was massaging his scalp and she realized she must of pulled his hair.

"Oops," she mumbled.

"If you are still this enthusiastic when sober, we can re-evaluate in the morning," Bat chuckled at her. "But right now, it's home time." Maia whined a little, but she wasn't totally sure if she was actually making sentences, or just slurring her speech. The boys were having none of her whining, as one of them called her a cab. It took Maia a whole five seconds to realize that Bat was in the cab with her. When it stopped, they got out, and Bat made sure she got to the door then, he was gone. Maia walked into the building, her mind swimming… no spinning. When she reached her door she rang the bell without thinking. A stranger opened it, and she realized she was at the wrong apartment. Maia moved away, probably not walking straight. The next door she decided was hers turned out to actually be hers, and Maia went in, walking like a zombie to her bed before collapsing into it.

Chapter End Notes

Just thought I'd take a moment and explain sometimes. Okay so it's kinda like every 1 comment is worth 10,000 views or even more as far as meaning and motivation goes. At this point R&S has enough views (mostly on fanfic.net) to keep me updating without reviews and comments. Views are only numbers on a page. They can tell me nothing but how many times that chapters has been opened by a web browser. While reviews can tell me far more like: what parts you liked the most, what you want to see more of, what you loved to hate, what you found funny, what you disagree with, what I need to work on, what I did well and lots more. Instead of being a single +1 to my view count you could review/comment and become a person to me. Is so hard to imagine all those numbers as actual people opening and reading my story so reviews are what connect everything together. The difference between views and reviews is like the difference between Math and English as courses in school. Most people greatly prefer one over the other.

Of course, I know this story already has lots of comments which tends to discourage people from adding more.

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Sneak Peak Chapter 117

Her mother had taken to calling Izzy far more than usual to talk about her brother's wedding. Alec was getting more and more stressed out by the day. It seemed like every other comment he made lately had something to do with the wedding, or their mother.

"Do you think mom and dad would disown me if I eloped?"
"Why? Oh why, did I plan my wedding right after exams? Am I stupid?"

Izzy's reaction was usually to say yes to the first question so Alec didn't get any ideas and no to the last question so her brother wouldn't go assuming he was an idiot just because April the 19th was a mere two days after exams. Alec's usually follow up questions was in regards to failing all his exams. It was that this point that Izzy would remind her brother that Magnus was far more important than exams.
Ch118: Izzy's Heart

Chapter Notes
See the end of the chapter for notes.

It had been the first Valentine's night that Izzy hadn't had sex in a long time, but it had also been the best Valentine's she'd ever had. She and Simon had ordered dinner in, and then spent the evening curled up on the couch under one large blanket sipping hot cocoa and watching Netflix.

Izzy woke up the day after Valentine's to the brown haired man who'd made her happy laying beside her. Simon looked different without his glasses, and for a moment she enjoyed watching the peaceful expression on his face. Then it was time to get up. Izzy made her way to the kitchen, and found herself face to face with Maia. To judge by her roommate's extremely hungover appearance, Maia had had a very different Valentine's day than Izzy.

"No talking," Maia ordered, looking up from where she sat at the kitchen table.

"Fun night, was it?" Izzy giggled. Maia just grunted, as if in pain before opening the bottle of pills beside her and swallowing a few with water.

"I'm going back to bed," Maia whined, standing up clutching a water bottle close to her chest as she slowly moved in the direction of her bedroom.

Grinning to herself, Izzy started making breakfast. When Simon made an appearance a few moments later, she offered him eggs on toast with a cup of coffee.

"You might be perfect," Simon said by way of thank you as he began eating.

"You're welcome," Izzy chuckled as she set her own breakfast down and ate across from him.

Simon often spent mornings at her place, since Jordan seemed to have taken up permanent residence in the spare room at Jace and Clary's place. Izzy had told Simon many times that this was unfair, but Simon always said he didn't mind since he was rarely home anyway. Izzy had then decided to let it go, as she was quite happy to steal Simon away from his roommates.

After breakfast they had class and life went on. Her mother had taken to calling Izzy far more than usual to talk about her brother's wedding. Alec was getting more and more stressed out by the day. It seemed like every other comment he made lately had something to do with the wedding, or their mother.

"Do you think mom and dad would disown me if I eloped?"

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Izzy's reaction was usually to say yes to the first question, so Alec didn't get any ideas, and no to the last question, so her brother wouldn't go assuming he was an idiot just because April the 19th was a mere two days after exams. Alec's usual follow up questions were in regards to failing all his exams. It was at this point that Izzy would remind her brother that Magnus was far more important than exams. She knew this in a way she hadn't understood before. The first time she'd been in love everything had hurt, and she'd decided it was beyond her reach. Simon had taught her differently. Had that day in the hospital really only been four months ago, or was it more like five now? Either way, it felt like forever, and yet it had all happened between heartbeats.
Izzy's mind was brought back to the present when she heard a knock at the door. Assuming Maia had forgotten her key or something, Izzy opened the door just to be face to face with definitely not Maia.

"Um hi," the guy said. "Is Maia here?"

"Not at the moment," Izzy replied. "And you are?"

"Oh sorry!" the guy said. "Bat."

"Bat?" Izzy asked dubiously.

"Yes," he replied. Bat had dark skin like Maia's, broad shoulders and a very square jaw. He was very attractive if you liked that casual look of jeans and a t-shirt. "I know it's a weird name. Anyway can I give you something to give to Maia?"

"Sure," Izzy answered. He handed Izzy a slip of paper with a phone number on it, and the name phrase 'Bat from the bar' scribbled under it.

"Tell her, it's just in case she still likes me sober," Bat grinned at her.

Izzy grinned, imagining the kinda Valentine's day night Maia had had to lead to an attractive man at her door. Oh Maia wasn't getting out of this one. Izzy wanted details. She happily agreed to Bat's terms, and he left smiling. It was a few hours before Maia got home.

"You've been holding out on me," Izzy giggled as her roommate entered the apartment.

"I don't know what you mean," Maia said, dumping her school bag as she walked inside.

"I am referring to the tall handsome man who came to our door mere hours ago," Izzy teased.

"Urg," Maia groaned.

"First question," Izzy said jumping up. "How did he know where you live?"

"I was very drunk," Maia groaned. "He made sure I got home okay."

"Ooh!" Izzy giggled.

"Don't say ohh in that way you do," Maia scolded. "He never came inside."

"Still that was very nice of him," Izzy replied, smiling.

"Yeah," Maia replied, as if this fact had only just occurred to her. "It was, wasn't it."

"A very gentlemanly thing to do," Izzy smiled.

"He did kinda save me from a creepy guy too," Maia said.

"A gentleman and, a knight," Izzy grinned.

"Don't get ahead of yourself," Maia scoffed. "I totally had it handled."

"Oh yeah?"

"Yeah, I was gonna punch him," Maia said matter of factly. Izzy laughed.
"As if," Izzy replied. "Just because it's happens on tv doesn't mean it actually happens."

"I was totally gonna punch him!" Maia repeated.

"If you say so," Izzy smiled just to end the conversation. Maia was pretty bad ass in some ways, but that didn't mean Izzy could picture her punching a guy.

"So, are gonna call him then?" Izzy asked.

"Can't," Maia explained. "Never got his number, and I don't know where he lives, so there's nothing I can do but hope he comes back again when I'm actually home."

"So does that means you liked him sober?" Izzy said with a wink.

For what could have been a whole minute, Maia stared, as if trying to recall something. Blinking, she turning back to Izzy. "I think I almost remember him saying something about that," Maia mumbled.

"Oh wow," Izzy giggled. "You really were drunk." Then she reached into her pocket and pulled out the slip of paper Bat had given her.

"Here," she said. "He left this for you. Balls in your court my friend, but remember this. You deserve a knight."

Of course, Maia just rolled her eyes, but Izzy had a feeling that underneath the shield of disinterest Maia had needed the pep talk. Trying to act like she didn't care, Maia took the slip of paper, and a while later, Izzy caught her adding his number to her phone. Despite this, Izzy was pretty sure Maia didn't call right away since she saw nothing of Bat over the next week. She kept arriving home expecting to find the broad shouldered man in her living room, but instead there was only Maia.

"What ya doing?" Izzy asked one day when she plunked herself down next to Maia on the couch.

"Watching tv," Maia mumbled, swallowing her mouth full of chips as she did so.

"In your sweats on a Saturday night!" Izzy scoffed.

"Hey!" Maia argued. "You stay home on Saturday nights all the time now."

"With Simon!" Izzy sighed. "You haven't called Bat have you?"

"Umm," Maia mumbled.

"Give me your phone," Izzy said, making a lunge for the some device. Maia moved slower, and seconds later Izzy held the cell phone in her hand. Knowing she had only seconds, Izzy quickly opened a new text, typed in 'hi' then sent it to Bat.

"NO!" Maia snapped as she managed to get her phone back in her hands.

"What have you done?" Maia whined, sinking even further into the couch.

"You're welcome," Izzy replied.

"But now it's real," Maia continued whining. "It was all perfect before, and now you've messed everything up."

"There was nothing to mess up!" Izzy yelled. Just then Maia's cell phone went off, and both girls turned to stare at it for a split second, then both of them dived for the phone. Before Maia snatched it
from her hands, Izzy saw that Bat had replied with 'hey you.'

"See, he likes you!" Izzy said, frustration obvious in her voice. "He's hot and nice, and he likes you. What the hell is your problem?"

"Me!" Maia snapped. "I'm my problem."

"What the hell are you talking about?" Izzy said, the anger in her voice suddenly gone.

"I ruin things," Maia said. "I'm good at school, and I'm good at sitting in my sweats watching reruns of New Girl, but when it really matters, I get scared and ruin everything! I'm a ruiner, and he can do better."

"You're not a ruiner," Izzy sighed, turning on the couch to face her friend. "You're scared of being hurt again, and didn't take a leap before the chance passed you by. That isn't the same thing, and it doesn't make you a ruiner. Don't miss this opportunity. Don't make the same mistake twice. He couldn't do better than you."

Gently, Izzy reached out to Maia's phone in her hand and closed her fingers more securely around it. They both looked down at the phone, and after a long moment Maia turned it in her hands and began to type. Izzy smiled as she watched her friend take the first step towards healing from her broken heart.

Izzy slowly moved away to leave Maia alone with her phone and Bat. She was late to meet up with her boyfriend to see a movie. Greeting Simon with a kiss, then walked into the theatre hand in hand, and when they got out, Izzy checked her phone. There was a single text message.

'Thanks,' Maia had texted. 'But you're annoying.'

Izzy laughed. She couldn't resist showing Simon the message, and they ended up talking about their crazy friends the whole way home. Simon felt very in the middle, thanks to his friendship with both Maia and Jordan. Izzy was very pro-Maia in her opinions as she didn't know Jordan that well. Both Simon and Izzy could agree they wanted their friend to be happy. It was one giant mess for sure, but in time she hoped things would sort themselves out. Maia could be with Bat, and Jordan seemed happy with Paige. Maybe one day their friends would be comfortable in the same room together and make Izzy and Simon's lives easier.

"It's a slightly selfish point of view," Simon admitted. "But I totally get it. I spaced when I invited them both to my de-slinging."

"De-slinging?" Izzy giggled.

"Well, what would you call that party?" Simon asked. Izzy didn't have a better answer, and the topic flowed easily into making up more and more ridiculous names for it.

To Izzy's great relief a few days later, she arrived home to find Bat in her living room. Quickly making her escape, Izzy gave them some time alone. Maia deserved to be happy. Just because Jordan was her first love, it didn't mean she couldn't fall in love again, and Izzy wanted that for her friend.

It was amazing to her how things and even people can change. As March arrived, and with it the two year anniversary of her meeting Simon in an elevator, Izzy reflected on the person she'd been the first time she'd visited this university. Spring break Izzy had been much more broken, hiding behind her mask, but she'd have never understood the celibate monogamous romantic happy mess she was now. And yet, the two versions of her were the same in other ways. Maybe that was just the way it was? Maybe an individual was meant to be many different people during their life.
The very definition of life is change. Rocks remain the same for eons, while plants evolve, adapt, and grow. Rapid change is what separates living things from everything else in the universe.

But that was quite enough mulling over the universe for one morning, Izzy thought as she took a deep breath and stretched. Thankfully, it was Sunday, so even if she wasn't going to mull over the universe, Izzy could lay in bed for as long as she wanted. Even better, Simon didn't even have to work today. Smiling at the thought, Izzy rolled over to look at him. His eyes were closed, his breathing even, but Izzy could see the corners of his mouth twitch. He so wasn't sleeping.

"Faker," Izzy sniggered, leaning over to kiss him. Simon's arms came up around her, pulling her closer and deepening the kiss. Izzy had gotten quite used to waking up this way, and she loved it. Waking up without kisses was quickly becoming her least favourite part of any morning where she didn't wake beside her boyfriend.

"No class, no work," Izzy smiled, resting her head on his chest. "What do you want to do today?" Rather than reply, Simon stared at her, his eyes fixed. It wasn't so much that Izzy minded, more that she wasn't sure what it meant. Then she felt his hands ran down her sides, over her hips as he kissed the side of her neck. This was a little more than his usual wake up smooches.

"Not that I'm complaining," Izzy gasped. "But I thought-

"Do you love me?" Simon asked suddenly. Izzy froze for a moment, caught completely off guard. She knew the answer to his question, but for some reason her throat was stuck. He wasn't kissing her anymore, but looking at her with that same intensity.

"For so long, we were together without it," Simon continued. "And I just- I mean, I want to know before--"

"That word means too many things," Izzy said slowly. "There are so many forms of love. We use the word too liberally, though it holds such meaning. How can I say that I love shopping and mean it in the same way that I love you? It's the same word, but it's not. When my parents tell me they love me, it's different again, but there isn't just a difference between platonic and romantic love. Every love is different. Complex in it's own way. The way I remember loving Kris, isn't how I feel about you now."

"That's rather more words than I'd expected," Simon smiled down at her. They were still in bed, together under the blankets with Simon half sitting up resting his weight on his elbows, gazing at her.

"Sorry," Izzy mumbled, hiding her face in the gap between the pillows.

"Isabelle," Simon spoke in a whisper. She felt his hand gently touch her face and it sent a shiver along her skin. Though his next words affected her in ways she couldn't describe, it did not surprise her. "I love you."

"I love you too," Izzy replied sincerely. She could feel tears pooling in her eyes, not because she was sad.

Then he was kissing her again, his hand at her waist. Izzy lost herself in their kiss, her hands in his hair. They were both wearing sleeping clothes, her a nightgown and him an old t-shirt and boxers. Simon was on top of her now, his hands moved down to push her nightgown up. When Izzy asked if he was sure Simon just replied that they'd waited long enough.

"Why now?" Izzy gasped, trying to keep her head. She needed to know, but she was having a hard time remembering that she needed to know. Simon's had her nightgown up past her navel and his
hands had found her breasts, cupping them and teasing her nipples. It becoming increasingly difficult for Izzy to think.

"You're beautiful," Simon began, speaking between kisses. "You're mine..." He paused, and just from the tone of his voice Izzy knew this last part would be what really mattered to him. "And, you love me."

"Is that what you wanted," Izzy gasped as her nightgown came over her head. "My heart?"

"Yes," Simon whispered against the sensitive skin of her neck. "Since the day you looked me in the eyes, and told me not to fall in love with you."

"So it's true then," Izzy said, grinning. "Men always want what they can't have." She'd intended it to come out as a joke, but just as she was speaking, Simon trailed his fingers just above her panty line and came out more like a whimper.

Izzy was breathing hard now, her blood rushing in her veins. Reaching down, she wanted to see if he was in a similar situation, but Simon had other ideas. He was more interested in her than in himself as he continued to tease her with his kisses and caresses. Simon had begun kissing down her neck, over and around her breasts, then past her navel, his fingers hooking into her panties and sliding them down to her ankles. Slightly what was left of her clothes off her legs Izzy surrendered herself to her sense. Her legs spread apart almost involuntarily as he gently touched her thigh. She could feel a tingling sensation all over her skin, but it wasn't until his mouth and tongue went to work that Izzy found herself crying out. That explosive feeling building inside of her quickly, Izzy decided to take charge. How dare Simon still be fully clothed when she hadn't a stitch on! So rude!

Sitting up, Izzy reached out to him, or rather for his shirt, which found its way to the floor.

"Way to ruin my plan," Simon laughed.

"Says the man trying to have sex with his clothes on," Izzy scoffed. She got started on his boxers, but then Simon's hands gently wrapped around her wrists. Izzy looked up at him and the expression in his eyes told her all she needed to know. The love in his eyes melted her. Oh well, she thought as she gently fell back down on the bed, at least half his clothes were off.

Seconds later she climaxed, her back arching and her toes curling while Simon's fingers were up inside her, hitting all the right points. But she wanted more than just his fingers.

"You're turn," Izzy said firmly as she made a play for his boxers again, getting them down to his knees. Izzy smiled. All that foreplay had harded him. Reaching out with her hands, she explored him, still grinning.

"Do we need-" Simon managed to say even as she was distracting him, but she shook her head. He asked again, and she reminded him about her IUD. Izzy pulled him down on top of her, wrapping her legs around him fiercely. She could feel him now, hard against her thigh. She was so wet, there wasn't even any need to use her hands to line them up. A slight adjustment of her hips, and Izzy felt him enter her. She sighed contentedly.

"Got you," she whispered, before linking her feet together behind him, and holding him there. He couldn't move, couldn't thrust, but Izzy had other ideas. She began to sway her hips back and forth in a vertical motion. Not only did this rub her cliterous the right way, but she loved to hear the gasps it induced in Simon. Then she began tensing and relaxing her muscles around him, squeezing him with everything she had. Everytime she did it Simon's eyes went a little wide, his mouth opening slightly. Sometimes he gasped.
He was hers and she had never before had sex with such a possessive feel to it before. He belonged here, wrapped in her, and here he would stay.

"Mine," Izzy repeated as she kissed his nose.

"Your prisoner you mean," Simon replied, smiling. The smile quickly turned into a sharp gasp as she tightened her grip.

"You don't look too upset about your incarceration," Izzy giggled.

"Oh!" Simon said sharply. Then he grinned and added, "Laugh again."

"Can you feel that?" Izzy asked.

Simon nodded. "You're muscles move differently when you laugh," he told her.

"What ever shall we do to make me laugh," Izzy smiled at him.

"Oh, I don't know," Simon grinned. "I could tickle you."

"With what hands?" she asked. Both of Simon's arms were currently being used to hold the weight of his body up rather than crush her.

"With my nose," he grinned as he leaned down to run his nose over the skin of her neck and shoulders which was probably all he could reach from this angle. Still, Izzy couldn't help the laughter that sprang from her. She felt Simon's body freeze up for a moment, and knew he was done.

Simon made to move off her, but Izzy didn't loosen her grip. "Stay," she told him.

"But my arms are tired," Simon whined. Grinning, Izzy executed her solution to this. Flipping them around without unlinking, she rested her head on his chest, and felt his arms wrap around her.

"This is something we've never done before," Izzy said softly.

"Well typically, one does pull out afterward," Simon chuckled.

"Not that," Izzy said. "Snuggling after sex."

"True," Simon replied. "That doesn't really apply to a friends with benefits agreement, does it?" Izzy shook her head.

"It's nice," she whispered. One of Simon's arms left her back, and he moved a little to one side. Then a moment later, she felt a blanket come up over them.

And for a while they stayed like that. Izzy could feel him still inside her, even if he was soft and about to slide out. She had her head resting on his shoulder. As their breathing synced up, Izzy thought it was the perfect way to spend a Sunday morning.

Chapter End Notes

Sneak Peek Chapter 119

As the room filled with people, Magnus became more and more gleeful with
anticipation. In moments he'd stand in front of all these people and vow to love Alexander for the rest of his life. It was terrifying and amazing all at once, and Magnus wanted nothing more than to be here in this moment, marrying the man of his dreams.

The music shifted, and all eyes turned to the end of the hall, created by the chairs. There was a collective pause as everyone waited. As best women, and best man, Clary and Jace entered first, closely followed by Izzy and Tessa. Then came Lucie in the most adorable little dress Magnus had ever seen. In her hand, she held a basket of rose petals, though she seemed rather reluctant to start throwing them on the ground. As all the members of the wedding party came to stand on either side of Magnus, his eyes remained fixed at the end of the hall. Alexander would be walking through those doors any second now.

As the seconds ticked by, Magnus's glee faltered. Had there been some mistake with the time? Was he being held up by some major crisis? What if there'd been an accident or something? It wasn't until a stranger appeared where Alec should have been, walking down the hall to speak to him, that Magnus knew the truth. His heart broke. There hadn't been an accident or crisis. Alec just wasn't coming.
Flowers covered every surface. Live music was playing from somewhere out of sight. As he listened, Magnus remembered all the energy that had gone into choosing that band, including the long conversations with his future-in-laws. Speaking of his in-laws, they were sitting just feet from him in the audience. Maryse was crying, her eyes red, while Robert looked so proud he didn't have the words to speak. Izzy was, of course, in the wedding party along with Clary, Jace, and Tessa; so they weren't among the audience. The rest of Magnus's new family was there though, Aline and Max sitting in the crowd. Even so, many more chairs sat empty. As the room filled with people, Magnus became more and more gleeful with anticipation. In moments he'd stand in front of all these people and vow to love Alexander for the rest of his life. It was terrifying and amazing all at once, and Magnus wanted nothing more than to be here in this moment, marrying the man of his dreams.

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The grief hit him like a punch to the gut, and all at once Magnus was buried in some combination of shock and horror. Not again. Not Alexander, for with Alec it was so much worse. He'd rather experience every one of his previous heartbreaks at once then what he felt right now. For none of them were as painful as losing his soulmate. The powerful feelings of anguish engulfed and overwhelmed him, as Magnus sunk to the ground, tears streaming down his face. He couldn't breathe; he was drowning in despair. Rather than feeling like his heart had been ripped out, it was as if someone had cut Magnus completely in half, leaving just pieces behind.

The sorrow overwhelmed his reality, and Magnus woke from the dream breathing hard. The emotional impact of the dream still fresh in his memory, Magnus reached out frantically feeling for Alec beside him, but the bed was empty. Worse than that, the bed was cold.

Unable to truly move on from the grief of his dream until he saw Alexander, Magnus jumped out of bed at once, and left the room calling out his fiancé's name.

"I'm over here," Alec's voice lightened Magnus's heart. Following the sound, Magnus found Alec in the kitchen putting coffee on. Without a second thought, Magnus pulled the other man into a fierce hug, basking in Alexander's mere presence. The sheer shock of relief was enough to make him giddy.

"Good morning to you too," Alec said dubiously.
"Overly emotional dream," Magnus grumbled. "Requires hugs."

"Oh?" Alec chuckled, his arms already returning the hug.

"You know those dreams where even when you wake up, the feeling of the dream lingers for longer than the events of the dream?" Magnus asked. "I don't get them very often, but they totally suck."

"I'll have to take your word for it," Alec smiled. "Coffee?"

"Yes please," Magnus answered.

"So, are you going to tell me more about this dream?" Alec said as he poured the coffee. Magnus shook his head vigorously. "Oh come on!" Alec whined.

"It's silly," Magnus said, still shaking his head. "Just pass the coffee, and we shall forget it ever happened."

"I think not," Alec said holding his coffee up and away from Magnus.

"Hey!" Magnus objected. "I thought you poured that for me."

"I did," Alec said grinning. "After you tell me what your dream was about."

"What part of no did you not understand?" Magnus grumbled giving up on his coffee. He was taller than Alec, though not by much, even so, the only way he saw this ending involved either him or Alexander getting hot coffee poured over them.

"Please," Alec tried, setting the coffee down and looking at Magnus intently. "We're getting married, Magnus. You can tell me anything, no matter how embarrassing. You know that."

Ignoring the now within reach coffee, in favour of gazing into his fiance's deep blue eyes, Magnus finally spoke. "I dreamt… well… I dreamt that you left me at the altar," he finally said somewhat awkwardly.

Slowly a smile spread over Alec's face. "I love you," he whispered, reaching forward and pulling Magnus into a tight hug.

"I know," Magnus replied easily, returning the hug. "Told you it was silly." He was speaking into Alec's shoulder.

"I think I've had a dream like that too," Alec said, easily as if this wasn't a big deal. "Though if I recall correctly, it went more like you running off with a bridesmaid." Magnus pulled away to look Alexander in the eyes.

"Really?" Magnus asked.

"Yeah," Alec shrugged. "This wedding is stressful, and honestly if I had to start again we'd just elope and tell mom after."

"What bridesmaid did I run off with?" Magnus grinned at Alec. "Because neither Tessa nor Izzy quite float my boat." Alec laughed, a deep sound that lighten Magnus's heart.

"A generic dream bridesmaid," Alec explained. "You know how sometimes in dreams, you can't really see some peoples faces well, it was one of those."

"Well, no matter how hot the the faceless bridesmaids are," Magnus began, smirking. "I'd never run
"And I'd never leave you at the altar," Alec replied, grinning. "I mean it's only polite to do the leaving before you've paid the caterer."

Magnus hit Alec playfully in the shoulder for that comment, and collected his coffee as spitfully as he knew how. The anguish of his dream faded from his memory slowly as the day continued.

It was two weeks until April the 19th. Two weeks before his wedding, and Magnus knew all his worries and anxieties had nothing to do with Alexander, or how much Magnus loved him. It was only natural to be a little worried before such an event. Sometimes the stress of it all made Magnus almost more excited for the honeymoon. Four months in the caribbean was something Magnus couldn't even imagine, but on the other hand, four months on the beach with Alec was as welcome as water in the desert.

To help him keep his cool, sometimes Magnus tried to focus on how everyone else's life was going. He knew from Izzy that Maia had started dating some guy named Bat, though that was really all he had on the subject. Magnus didn't know Maia well except that she was close with both Simon and Izzy. Speaking of Sizzy, there was a little more spring in their step, the reason for which was confirmed one day when Magnus walked in on his fiance with his fingers in his ears as his future sister-in-law was rather descriptively describing sex with her boyfriend to her brother. The whole scene had made Magnus chuckle after promptly leaving the room.

Magnus couldn't claim to be close with Jace, but through Clary he'd come to know the man fairly well, and he could tell that Jace was nervous about Clary leaving. Despite having to be officially pro-Clary in this situation, Magnus couldn't blame the guy. That was a long time to be apart from the one you love. Magnus remembered when he'd been about to graduate and looking for work, there had been a few things he'd just outright avoided applying for because of how far away they were. He'd been scared of being in the very situation Clary and Jace found themselves in now.

"Do you think I'm being unreasonable?" Clary asked Magnus one day when they were alone in his apartment. Alec was at the library trying to study for his exams. It seemed being at home was far too distracting for him with everything going on.

"It's a once in a lifetime opportunity," Magnus assured her. "It's unreasonable not to go."

"I know that," Clary replied. "I mean is it unreasonable to expect him to wait for me? Maybe we should just break it off cleanly now, and then when I get back if you're both still single..."

"Isn't this a conversation you should be having with Jace?" Magnus asked kindly.

"Yeah, but I know what he'll say," Clary sighed. "It's just that I don't think he gets how hard it's gonna be, staying together while being so far apart. It's like I'm chaining him to me, then running off with the key or something."

"If you two had just started dating, maybe," Magnus continued. "But Biscuit, you've been together two years. You can get through this."

"I know," Clary said softly. "It's been a wonderful two years it's just.. I worry, you know."

"I know," Magnus replied, with a smile. "And I think you should tell him about your worries."

"Thanks, Magnus," Clary said, looking a little lighter than when she'd arrived.

Magnus really hoped Clace managed to work everything out in the end. Magnus couldn't imagine
being apart from Alexander for ten months, then again he was sure if they ever got in a similar situation, Alec would have just followed Magnus where he went. It was amazing the kind of freedom having money gives you. Alec could have just followed because his education wasn't dependent on a scholarship. This was not a mindset Magnus had been in when he'd avoided applying for those far away jobs before grad. Being engaged to Alec, and planning this ridiculous wedding with the Lightwoods had taught him quite a lot about the way this family approaches money.

The week before the wedding, relatives descended upon them like vultures. Maryse and Robert stayed in a hotel, but Max wouldn't hear of being apart from Alec, so they got a new house guest. When his aunt arrived only a few days later, she also stayed with them, taking the spare room while Max slept on the couch. At night, Magnus lay in bed beside Alec marvelling at how full their house had suddenly become. The cats didn't like it at all. They'd taken to spend most of their time in the master bedroom away from all the company. Only Chairmen sometimes ventured out to be social, but even he didn't stick around for long.

With a house full of family, time flew by, and before Magnus knew it, his wedding was tomorrow. He had no plans apart from getting a good night's sleep, but it seemed his friends had other ideas. Alec and Magnus found themselves suddenly kidnapped hours before dinner. Jace and Izzy dragged Alec off before Magnus's eyes, and then Tessa and Clary did the same with him. It was only when they got outside, and Magnus saw Will's truck with it's owner sitting in the driver's seat that Magnus really started to wonder where they were going. As they left the city limits, Magnus started to ask the group at large where they were going, but of course, no one would answer his questions. When they finally stopped, Magnus could describe it only as the middle of nowhere. They all got out, and Magnus saw the edge of a hill looking out of the wilderness. Thin trees stretched as far as the eye could see in every direction. The sun had starting setting, throwing pinks and oranges cross the land. It was a stunning sight to see, and Magnus hadn't know such a place existed so close to home. Together, they walked to the edge of the hill, and Magnus saw what could only be a fire pit. Next Clary, then Tessa, tried in turn to light a fire with minimal success.

"As much as I appreciate the surprise bachelor party," Magnus began. "We could really all just go home and watch a movie or something."

"I'm the worst best man ever," Clary grumbled as she fought with the kindling.

"No you aren't, biscuit," Magnus tried to assure her, smiling.

"Just because I put these things out for a living, doesn't mean I don't know how to start them," Will laughed as he moved forward to take up the task.

Smiling, Magnus took a blanket out of the back of the truck and placed it on the ground. Wrapping another one around his shoulders, Magnus laid down, propping himself up on his elbows as he looked up at the stars. The sun was almost set now and it was beautiful. The air was still, and though not warm, it wasn't really cold either. The best part about tonight was the clear sky. There wasn't a cloud to be seen, and Magnus just existed for a moment, taking in the stars starting to twinkling high up above him.

Magnus listened to Will work with the kindling, and a few moments later, he heard the crackle of a fire starting. While they waited for the fire to be hot enough to cook on, Magnus couldn't help but feel like this was the perfect way to celebrate the end of his unmarried life. He didn't need a big bittersweet send off. A night doing something a little different with his friends was perfect in his mind. There was only one thing that could make it better.

Just then, the noise of a vehicle approaching made Magnus turn. He didn't recognize the car, but the
moment the driver stepped out he thought he knew who else was there.

"Did someone order a groom," Paige said, closing the driver's door behind her. Jordan exited from the passenger side, and to Magnus's delight, Alexander left the car as well. Now it's perfect, Magnus thought. Izzy, Simon, and Jace had also arrived.

"You guys already had a groom," Jace said. "More importantly, we brought booze. No bachelor party is complete without alcohol."

"More blankets," Simon chipped in, Isabelle on his arm.

Together, they sat around the rising flames, wrapped in blankets, loved ones, or both. Magnus was sharing a blanket with Alec, and together they were looking up at the stars, the sun having fully set by now, leaving just the black nights sky.

"Jace tired to take me to a strip club," Alec chuckled, before turning to kiss Magnus hello.

"Did he now?" Magnus began. "Remind me to kill him later, alright?" Alec laughed, then went on to explain how he'd gotten the truth out of Jace and forced them to take him here. Alec had been much more keen on Clary and Tessa's bachelor party plans than Jace's, and Magnus couldn't be happier about it.

They roasted hotdogs for dinner, and for dessert they made smores, chocolate and freshly melted marshmallow all wrapped in a graham cracker sandwich. Magnus had consumed just enough alcohol to make him warm and sleeping, without giving him a hangover tomorrow. He tilted his head to one side, resting it on his fiance's shoulder. Alec had his back against a thick tree truck. Even though his eyes were close, Magnus knew Clary and Jace were cuddled up together nearby. Magnus could hear someone up and moving around, probably Jordan who'd gotten up out of Paige's arms to put more wood on the fire. Magnus was almost certain Izzy was already asleep on Simon's lap. He sensed Tessa near him, curled up in Will's arms. Magnus supposed Jem had been put on babysitting duty tonight. He couldn't imagine the kind of love required to support the type of relationship Tessa had with Jem and Will. Loving Alexander this much was more than he'd once thought he could bare, let alone loving two people that much at once. Then you throw their love of Lucie into the mix, and Magnus thought that there wasn't a family in the world with so much love under one roof.

As the food ran out and the night got colder, it was time head home. It was tradition for a couple about to be married to sleep apart the night before, but this was not a tradition that mattered very much to either Magnus or Alec; they had no interest in sleeping apart tonight. One car ride later, Magnus and Alec fell asleep side by side in their own bed with their cats curled up at their feet.

Chapter End Notes

It seems I fooled no one with that last sneak peek. (The few reviews I got were all like 'I bet that's a dream') Sigh. Maybe I'm too predictable as a writer. :(

So… weddings suck! I mean really. This is so much effing work and if I hadn't already published all the pre-wedding stuff I might have gone back and changed it so that they eloped. Sigh. How do weddings go? Why did I decide to do this? (hours of research later) I know now the reason why I've written 5 Malec proposals across 6 Malec stories and never once written a wedding… until now. *Shakes head at self*

#BeenThereDoneThat
Sneak Peek Chapter 120

Clary and Jace came down the aisle, arm in arm. Izzy couldn't help but smile at the two 'best men' looking so couplely. There was so much more creative freedom with a wedding like this. All the gender stereotypes had been thrown out the window leading to a truly stunning event. She couldn't help but note how much better the old fashioned green looked on Clary. They were of course wearing the exact same dress, but with Clary's red hair the colour popped more on her.

When Izzy heard her cue, she began walking forward in time with the music. Behind her she knew Tessa was following, keeping a close eye on the flower girl. Lucie was a little young for such a task, but she looked adorable in her little dress. Izzy knew her fathers were watching among the audience. Behind Lucie followed Max, proudly holding the rings on an elegant little pillow. Last but not least, the grooms began their walk down the aisle.
After all the crazy they'd endured, Alec and Magnus deserved this day to go off without a hitch, so of course, no such thing happened. If everyone always got what they deserved, the world would be a very different place. First came the surprise overnight snowfall that forced them all inside to the back up venue. Then Maryse spent at least an hour reminding them all that she'd been right to have a back up venue in case of bad weather. Izzy hated it when her mother was right like that. If not for the sake of her brother's big day, Izzy would never had listened to her mother's monologue.

Izzy was almost glad when the the flowers didn't arrive on time, as it gave her mother something else to talk about. Then great uncle Larry started getting drunk, and Izzy decided that those were enough problems for one wedding. Then Izzy walked in on her weird cousin Harold making out in a broom closet with a party crasher, and enough was enough. Maryse tasked Isabelle with making sure the grooms learned nothing of this while she sorted it all out, which turned out to be a very easy job as Alec and Magnus were totally clueless of everything, only having eyes for each other. There was no bad luck in seeing the groom before the wedding, and the two of them had gotten through the start of this day the same way they would take on the rest of their lives: together.

Maryse on the other hand was in hysterics. She'd kicked out the party crasher, much to Harold's displeasure. She'd 'sorted' out the flower problem, but the only arrangements available on short notice were not the ones she picked out. Izzy didn't really see what the big fuss was. Flowers were flowers, weren't they? She was just glad there weren't any flowers on her dress. It was a slightly ridiculous dress, but then again, it could have been a lot worse. There weren't any bright feathers, neon coloured puffs or glitter. Like the rest of the wedding it had a simplistic feel while actually not being simple at all.

Maryse's back up venue was a grand hall not too far from the beautiful outdoor park she'd originally planned for. There were natural wood beams on the high ceilings with accents along the walls. Grand arches ran horizontally along the wedding hall, drawing the eye down towards the altar. Sparkling crystal chandeliers hung from the ceiling lighting up the room with twinkling reflections.

Izzy didn't know half of the people here, despite the fact that almost all of them were Lightwoods. Apart from friends, the only family Magnus had invited was his Aunt Aleida. This meant there hadn't really been a point to splitting the room so each groom's family had a side; everyone was mixed together. Aline's was probably the only one of her cousin's Izzy was close with. She'd, of course, brought Helen has her date, and Helen had brought much of her family as well. When asked if they could come, Maryse's reply had been 'the more the merrier'. Izzy wasn't sure why her parents had wanted this to be such a big event. Along with the dozens of cousins Izzy had never met, Harold and family friends, her parents had invited their work colleagues and business partners.

As people filled the chairs, Izzy saw the band set up. It was quite something to see this all come together. Exactly a year ago today, her brother had proposed to the person he wanted to spend the rest of his life with, his soul's other half, and now here she was in her silly dress watching every person her parents had ever met take their seats to witness Alec and Magnus vow to be together forever.

Once everyone was seated, Maryse came down the aisle, closely followed by Aleida. As the mothers of the grooms took their seats in the front row, a hush fell over the crowd. The music began, that soft oh so familiar wedding march filling the grand room. Clary and Jace came down the aisle, arm in
arm. Izzy couldn't help but smile at the two 'best men' looking so couplely. There was so much more creative freedom with a wedding like this. All the gender stereotypes had been threw out the window, leading to a truly stunning event. She couldn't help but note how much better the faded green colour looked on Clary. Both being bridesmaids, they were wearing the exact same dress, but with Clary's red hair the colour popped more on her.

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"Dearly beloved," Robert began. "We are gathered here today in the presence of these witnesses, to join Magnus Dian Bane and Alexander Gideon Lightwood in matrimony, not to be entered into unadvisedly or lightly, but reverently, discreetly, advisedly and solemnly. Into this permanent state, these two persons presented now come to be joined. If any person can show just cause why they may not be joined together, let them speak now or forever hold their peace."

Izzy couldn't help but think of all those cheesy movies where at this point someone stood up and yelled 'I object' before stealing the bride away. Luckily, today there was no bride. The thought made her want to laugh, but Izzy kept quiet, even if a small smile refused to be suppressed.

"Marriage isn't for everyone," Robert continued. "It's messy and long, with twists and turns along the way, but when you find that right person, they make every roadblock worth the trip. I believe these two people have what it takes to make it through the hard times and enjoy the good ones with everything they have. I hope you do as well." There was a brief pause before Robert invited them to recite their personalize vows.

"Magnus," Alec began. "From the moment I met you, I knew there was something there. You took my life off a dimmer switch by walking into it. Today, I officially place my heart in your hands, even if it has been only yours since the beginning. My better half, my soulmate, I vow to be your devoted husband for as long as I live."

"Alexander," Magnus said. "When we met I was broken, left in pieces by others, and determined to remain so. I didn't believe in love anymore, but you persisted. So determined to teach me how to love again. The last and greatest love of my life. My better half, my soulmate, I vow to be your devoted husband for as long as I live."

There wasn't a dry eye in the house, or at least that was how Izzy saw it. She herself was sniffling, wishing she'd stuffed her bra with kleenex.

"Do you, Alexander Gideon Lightwood," Robert finished "Take Magnus Dian Bane, to be your husband, to have and to hold, for better or for worse, for richer, for poorer, in sickness and in health, to love and to cherish; from this day forward until death do you part."

"I do," Alec said.

"And do you Magnus Dian Bane, take Alexander Gideon Lightwood, to be your husband, to have and to hold, for better or for worse, for richer, for poorer, in sickness and in health, to love and to cherish; from this day forward until death do you part."
"I do," Magnus said, his voice breaking a little as if from emotion.

"The rings please Max," Robert addressed his youngest child. Max came forward chest out, looking very pleased with himself as he held the rings up high.

"With this ring I thee wed," Alec said as he slipped it onto Magnus's finger. "As this ring has no end, neither shall my love for you."

"With this ring I thee wed," Magnus repeated as he too put the other ring on Alec's finger. "As this ring has no end, neither shall my love for you."

"Now by the power vested in me by the province of Ontario and the internet," Robert announced smiling. "I now pronounce you married. You may now seal your vows with a kiss."

You didn't have to tell them twice. Izzy wasn't totally sure if it was Alec or Magnus who leapt into action first as they wrapped their arms around each other. The newlyweds sucked face like there wasn't another person in the room, let alone the hundreds of people present. Izzy could imagine only too well the bubble they were in right now. Despite standing up there for everyone to see, they were alone in their own minds.

There was a light happy atmosphere to the room as everyone threw flower petals at the happy couple running back down the aisle hand in hand. The wedding party went next, returning to where they'd started. Izzy knew the wedding hall was being taken apart by staff and turned into the reception, since the snow had made their outdoor gazebo reception impossible. Maryse had dinner planned for about five hundred people, and they were expecting a few more guests.

In the meantime, there were some details to take care of. Izzy was asked to witness the marriage license. As she signed the piece of paper, cameras flashed in her face. She knew there to be a person or two with a high quality video camera around here somewhere who had filmed the whole wedding. Next came the photo op. Every combination of every group had to be accounted for. Grooms with in-laws. Grooms with their families. Grooms with friends. Friends without grooms. Family without grooms. In-laws together. The every combination of people had to be photographed in front of every possible backdrop. In front of the altar. Standing on the stairs. With a photo studio background. Outside with the snow, and many more. Izzy had no idea how long they spent posing for photos, but she was sure her cheeks hurt from smiling by the end of it.

When they finally made it to the reception, the guests had been waiting a while, and the orderves were almost all eaten. Izzy sat with the wedding party at the long table near in the back covered in a crisp white cloth. Waiters came to clear away all entrees, but Izzy managed to scarf down a few bacon wrapped scallops before the last plate vanished and dinner was served.

There was only a light hum of background chatter while everyone ate their dinner. As people began to finish, the noise level picked up. Izzy had Simon sitting beside her, but still her eyes were on her brother and new brother-in-law. She loved seeing the way their eyes lit up when they looked at each other. Izzy was sure neither of them had a clue what was going on around them. It had probably been a very carefree day for the grooms, living in their little bubble world.

Once everyone was full, the cake was brought out. Izzy couldn't be surprised by its size, given how many people it was feeding, and yet the sight of it impressed her. She'd seen the pictures her mother had showed her, but they just couldn't compete with the real thing. It was a custom made cake with seven tiers of perfect white, but for the strip down one side where it looked as though someone had...
cut into the cake. Here there was an explosion of colour, greens, purples, reds and oranges ran down the side of it, bleeding slightly into the perfect white. Even with this little strip of colour, the cake had an elegant simple look to it while being very complex, keeping with the theme of the wedding.

Atop the cake were two grooms, one slightly taller than the other, and rubbing up against their legs were two cats. The first was reaching up to stretch his paws against the shorter grooms leg, while the second was looking up at the taller groom as if begging for something. Izzy knew just how custom made that cake topper was, not from the cats, but from the clothes. As well as being the correct height, the two figures were wearing the exact same suits as Magnus and Alec. Izzy couldn't say she'd be surprised if her mother had actually had the sculpture use photos to make the cake topper look exactly like the grooms.

It wasn't until she watched Magnus and Alec cut the cake and feed it to each other that she saw the colourful inside it. Each tier was a different slice of the rainbow, and matched the splash of colour on the outside.

The champagne started flowing before the last pieces of cake vanished from every plate. With the bubbly liquid, came the toasts. The first to stand up was her father, a huge smile on his face as he spoke for a whole ten minutes about how proud he was of his son, and how much he wished happiness on the newlyweds. It was all pretty standard, and Izzy had expected nothing less. When Maryse stood to talk she was almost in tears, gazing at Alec and Magnus with glossy eyes as she seconded the wishes her husband had just imparted while adding how very handsome they looked tonight, and how much she hoped they enjoyed their honeymoon.

Clary's speech was surprisingly entertaining, especially all her 'best man' jokes. Izzy had been there when Clary had been given the title. Magnus had said she could call herself the maid of honour, but alas, the crazy redhead had opted for best man #2 instead. Izzy suspected that at least one of the reasons why was so that Magnus wouldn't get labeled the 'girl' in the relationship. Then again, maybe Clary was just out to break stereotypes in general, or thought it would be funny. All her corny jokes were definitely a vote for the 'cause it's funny' theory.

"My best friend's wedding," Clary said with a smile when she finally dropped the horrible jokes. "The one I haven't dated that is." She hiccuped then, and Izzy tried not to giggle as Jace stood to try and get her to sit down. Clary sat, looking a little dazed, and Izzy couldn't help but wonder how much champagne she'd had.

"Well, it wouldn't be a wedding without at least one drunk bridesmaid, am I right?" Jace said, standing up and starting his toast. "I don't know how many of you know me, but I hadn't always been the person I am now, and Alec is a huge part of that. Becoming his friend was one of the best decisions I ever made," Jace's voice suddenly shifted to joking as he added, "Even if the guy doesn't know how to have a bachelor party. Just like, no appreciation for all the research I did, finding the best gay strip club in town." Jace shook his head dramatically, and Izzy heard her brother laugh. "It turned out to be the only gay strip club in town actually, but he decided he'd rather roast marshmallows." Jace's tone shifted as his teasing stopped and genuine emotion entered his voice. "Alec doesn't need to go to strip clubs because he's found something far more valuable in loving another person. It's something we have in common, and I've never seen Alec happier than he is with Magnus." Jace raised his glass up high and added, "To Malec."

"To Malec," everyone repeated before taking a sip of their drink.

Chapter End Notes
Funny story guys… this chapter was supposed to go up last night but I managed to slice my finger open with a bread knife which kinda got priority over updating… Even now I'm typing this author's note with one hand cause I have to keep the other one elevated and it hurts. My stupid failure to cut bread delayed this chapter… :(

Okay now what I was actually going to say: What did you guys think of the wedding? Did it live up to your expectations? Was it too cheesy? My beta noted the cheese factor, but she did say that she kinda expected that cause it's a wedding. I may have built up this wedding alot in the last like 30 something chapters… was it worth it?

---------------------------------------------

Sneak Peek Chapter 121

"It's gross isn't it," Izzy scoffed, gesturing to Malec. "How adorable they are."

"A little yeah," Jace said. "But you can't fool me Isabelle."

"I don't know what you are talking about," Izzy said turning to look away.

"You love how adorable they are," Jace told her. "Me and you are too much alike. I can read you like a book girl." Izzy stuck her tongue out at him which had everyone laughing.

"Stop reading my girlfriend," Simon chuckled.

"Oh yeah," Jace remarked, smirking. "Well no dating mine.. Oh wait you did that!"

"You're going to hold that over my head forever aren't you?" Simon sighed. No one was Jace was laughing.

"You bet I am," Jace said grinning. "It's the best inside joke ever!"

"Urg!" Simon whined. "Why am I friends with you?"

"No idea man!" Jace roared with laughter.

"I blame Clary," Simon stated.
Ch121: Clary's Reception

Chapter Notes
See the end of the chapter for notes

Clary was not drunk, but Jace sure waz pretty making his best man toast. Pretty… pretty boy. Her pretty boy. Okay, maybe she was a little tipsy.

"Good toast," Clary mumbled as Jace sat back down and she wrapped both her arms around one of his.

"Thanks," Jace chuckled.

"Is she drunk?" Simon's voice entered Clary's mind. She had a feeling Simon was sitting on the other side of Jace, with Izzy on the other side of him, but she hadn't turned to look. With her arms holding Jace's in a death grip, Clary stared at her plate. It was a light metallic silver colour with bronze detailing. There was a little cake left on it, but she wasn't looking at the cake. Clary was thinking about chains. Mean of her to chain pretty Jace to her, far far away. Mean. Mean Clary. Suddenly sulking Clary turned to rest her head on her boyfriend's shoulder. She felt Jace's lips gently kiss the top of her head and smiled. Pretty Jace. Hers now, but then far far away! Things were continuing to happen around her, but Clary didn't have the energy to deal with them. She closed her eyes, just wanted to exist for the moment.

"Yep," Jace's voice continued with a laugh. "She is most certainly intoxicated."

"That is so unlike her," Simon said.

"I know," Jace replied. Clary couldn't identify the emotion in his voice. Her fuzzy brain was having trouble deciphering the tone.

"Is she even awake?" Simon continued.

"Not sure," Jace replied.

"Oh please, of course she's awake!" It was Izzy's voice this time. "That's the oldest trick in the book. Look like your sleeping so you can listen into the conversation without people thinking you're there."

"Do you do that?" Simon asked. This time Clary could easily identity the playful nature of her best friend's tone. The best friend she had dated. She was also at her best friend's wedding, the best friend she hadn't dated. Really Clary needed new words for these boys. Unless of course, it was okay to have two best friends and distinguish them by who you have and haven't kissed?

"Maybe," Izzy replied. The tone of her voice was making it very obvious that she was grinning. Clary could picture her looking up at Simon with that cute loving expression she always used just with him. Sizzy was just so cute she wanted to pinch their cheeks. Clary was really happy for them. Especially now that she knew Simon had finally let go of his silly 'wait for no reason' notion of his. Clary was sure they were both happier for it, though sometimes she wondered if it was her fault Simon had felt the need to do that. Looking back on it, dating her best friend for fear of losing him from her life if she didn't, hadn't been the best plan ever. She should have probably said no, and hoped he got over the attachment. But then again, it had all worked out, so maybe his feelings would have separated them for a time, no matter how she had responded to them.

She was pretty sure everyone was still talking, but she wasn't really listening to them anymore. Clary
could hear other people at the wedding if she focused her spinning mind. Jordan's voice was among the guests, along with Paige's. Clary would miss her friends when she went away. She knew Maia was here as well, though Clary couldn't hear her voice at the moment. Maia was more Simon's friend than hers, and she had to admit she would probably miss Maia less than everyone else. Even if she'd miss Magnus, Simon, Jordan, and Paige and look forward to seeing them when she returned, it was Jace who she'd miss most of all. Simon had Izzy. Magnus had Alec and Jordan and Paige had each other. It was Jace she was worried about. It was Jace that made her almost want to give it all up and stay here. Her Jace all alone and yet bound to her, chained. It all came back to chains. Chain him up then throw away the keys… not nice.

"What's that?" Jace asked. Clary blinked at him. Had she said something out loud?

"What'd I say?" Clary mumbled, lifting her head from his shoulder to look at him.

"Something about chains," Jace answered.

"Oops," Clary said. "Conversation for later. Shhh." She put a finger over his lips and added. "We at wedding."

"You're so cute when you're drunk," Jace smiled at her.

"Loves you," Clary told him, looking into those golden eyes.

"And I love you," Jace said back easily. "Now drink some water." Clary grumbled, but did as she was told.

As the reception went on and she ate more cake, Clary started to sober up enough to be embarrassed. Resting her head on her arms, Clary tried to hide from the world while remaining in her seat.

"Everyone loved your speech," Jace whispered in her ear. Clary knew he was just saying that, but decided to let herself be comforted anyway. She turned to face the newlyweds and was reassured by the joy on their faces. Neither of them were concerned about her silly speech since they were far too wrapped up in each other to care.

"It's gross isn't it," Izzy scoffed, gesturing to Malec. "How adorable they are."

"A little, yeah," Jace said. "But you can't fool me Isabelle."

"I don't know what you're talking about," Izzy said turning to look away.

"You love how adorable they are," Jace told her. "Me and you are too much alike. I can read you like a book girl."

Izzy stuck her tongue out at him, which had everyone laughing.

"Stop reading my girlfriend," Simon chuckled.

"Oh yeah," Jace remarked, smirking. "Well, no dating mine.. Oh wait, you did that!"

"You're going to hold that over my head forever aren't you?" Simon sighed. No one but Jace was laughing.

"You bet I am," Jace said grinning. "It's the best inside joke ever!"

"Urg!" Simon whined. "Why am I friends with you?"
"No idea man!" Jace roared with laughter.

"I blame Clary," Simon stated. Jace just had time to agree before the music changed, signally the guests to get up and dance. The grooms went first, sharing their first dance as Mr and Mr Married.

Clary only got to sit and watch the happy couple attempt to dance for a few minutes before Jace reached out to take her hand, and together they went out onto the dance floor. The song was slow, and Clary rested her head on Jace's shoulder. It was the perfect moment, just standing there swaying in her boyfriend's arms.

"So are you going to tell me what 'chains' was all about before?" Jace whispered after a while.

"Don't listen to what drunk Clary says," she replied. "That bitch knows nothing."

"See, now I know it's important," Jace spoke softly. They were hardly dancing anymore, but rather standing gazing at each other surrounded by dancing couples. Paige and Jordan were somewhere to their left along with Simon and Izzy. The newlyweds were in the center of it all, dancing like Maryse had bought them lessons, which Clary was almost certain she had.

"Ten months is a long time," Clary whispered.

"304.17 days," Jace replied. "Or if you want to get specific 7200 hours."

"Did you memorize those?" Clary asked shocked.

"No, I'm just that good at math," Jace chuckled. "Of course I memorized them. I'm going to make a countdown calendar."

"See, this is what I'm talking about!" Clary exclaimed though quickly. "You keep saying that we're going to be fine, but we can't really know how hard it's going to be. It's a really long time, Jace!"

"Are you breaking up with me Clary?" Jace's voice was soft, but sober Clary could hear the pain behind it.

"No," she said firmly trying to relieve the pain from his voice. "I just can't help feeling like I'm chaining you to me and then leaving… It's like if you met someone else, how could I even blame you? It's unreasonable for me to ask this of you. How can I expect you to be alone, and yet taken for so long?"

"Clary are you wondering if I can go ten months without sex?" Jace replied grinning, the smile lighting up his face.

"Well, I wasn't going to put it like that," Clary mumbled.

"Sweetie that's what masterbastions for," Jace said in such a matter of fact way, Clary was completely caught off guard. She laughed in that way you do when if she'd been drinking something it would have come right back up.

"I'm not worried that I'll meet someone else," Jace spoke suddenly serious again. "I'm worried you will."

"Hey," Clary scoffed. "Who was the player before this relationship?"

"Which is exactly why I'm the one who should be worried," Jace continued.

"You aren't making any sense," Clary sighed.
"Even in the worse case scenario, anything I could possibly do or have while you're gone, would be meaningless, empty, like everything else in my life before I met you," Jace explained. "While you'll probably meet some amazing french guy who can offer you far more than I can."

"No one can do that," Clary whispered.

"You're sweet," Jace smiled. "But oh so wrong."

Clary was shocked by the honest way in which he said those words. There wasn't even a hint of a question in his voice. Jace totally believed what he was saying. But how could Jace think this? She hadn't quite formed a reply when the entire wedding party was called to take more photos with the sunset as the background. Clary smiled for the camera, but her heart wasn't in it. Was she so terrible at showing affection, that the love of her life thought he needed her more than she needed him?

When the photographer finally said they were free to leave, she overheard Magnus and Alec whispering about ditching the rest of their reception. Clary was distracted from her own problems for a moment as she watched the two mischievous husbands sneak off to their limbo. From there they were headed to the airport and a four month honeymoon.

Clary hung back as the rest of the wedding party returned to the reception. She sat outside as the sun finished setting. Jace had stayed as well. He was standing behind her, both of them facing the quickly vanishing sun.

"I'm offering you ten months of freedom," Clary picked up their conversation where they'd left off. She'd been thinking of nothing else during the photos.

"And what would happen after those ten months?" Jace replied, wrapping his arms around her, from behind.

"We'd meet up and figure out where we're at," Clary said. "If we're both single and still interested in the people we are then…"

"Yeah, that isn't going to work for me," Jace whispered in her ear. Clary could feel the warmth of his body behind her. She let out the breath she hadn't realized she'd been holding, leaning back into him, letting his words sink in. It felt so good to be close to him. She would miss this more than anything.

"See, if I'm free here, that means you'll be free there," Jace replied. "And the only way I see that ending is me miserable, and you engaged to a rich French guy with one of those fancy accents."

Turning in his arms to look her lover in the eyes, Clary tried to set him straight. "I love you," she said with as much decisiveness as she could. "And thousands of miles isn't going to change that."

"3,726," Jace corrected. "But who's counting?"

"Listen to me," Clary snapped, really frustrated now. "Why do you insist on thinking so little of yourself?"

"A topic I'm not too fond of but for you..." he smiled, but there was a sadness there, in his smile. "My father left me when I was so young I don't even remember what he looked like. My best friend for most of my life well… we both knew how that went." He paused, reaching out to take her hands in his. "Before you, that was me, my whole life. The kid who was left, whose mom tried her best. Who's friend got him into trouble every other week. Then there was you. Clary, my life started with you. It's because of you that I have everything I have today. If I lose you, I'd be losing more than if you lose me. It's just a fact. I know it's stupid to put all your eggs in one basket, but that's what I've done."
Clary didn't know how to reply to him. Yes, her father had died before she was born, but Clary had never lacked for fatherly affection because of Luke. She had two best friends, and was well on her way to her career ambitions. For a moment, Clary tried to put herself in Jace's shoes. What if all she had was him? What if her family and friends were different, more distant and less there? How would it feel to lose him then? To lose the ground under your feet rather than just the support at your side.

"So you will forgive me for doing everything in my power to hold onto you," Jace continued, his hands cupping her face. "Which includes not letting you break up with me for my own good." He smiled then, and this time it reached his eyes. "What can I say? I'm selfish that way."

For a moment they gazed at each other, either of them said a word as the sun completely vanished behind the horizon.

Chapter End Notes

So... despite my lack of updates... I have actually been writing ALOT these last few days. I got my ability to type back on Saturday night... but then spent over three days writing nothing but Shawn and Katy fluff instead of this story.
*Hides from readers while they throw things at me*
If you don't know who Shawn Hunter and Katy Hart are then clearly you haven't seen 'Boy Meets World' or it's sequel 'Girl Meets World.' Yes, I am a dork and no, I am not sorry. ^_^ Anywho that story is at like 17,000 words (and I'm not close to finished yet) but I haven't gotten the next chapter of R&S more than barely started... yeah... So pretty please excuse this pathetic sneak peek as that is basically all that I currently have written...

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Sneak Peek Chapter 122:

Jordan woke up unassisted by his alarm clock. This was one of the many things he loved about the summer break, no classes to attend. There was a strip of sunlight shining in through the curtains. The snow was all melted now and it was getting warmer by the day. May was almost over now and June was fast approaching.

Jordan heard a soft sigh to his left and looked over to see his girlfriend still asleep. He was so used to her early classes, waking beside her in the morning still felt rare to him even if it wasn't. Paige looked so beautiful when she slept, her dirty blonde hair pressed against the pillow and her face soft and feel of the days troubles. Then again he'd never seen Paige really angry before and was starting to wonder if she was capable of even being mad.
Jordan woke up unassisted by his alarm clock. This was one of the many things he loved about the summer break, no classes to attend. There was a strip of sunlight shining in through the curtains. The snow was all melted and it was getting warmer by the day. May was almost over now and June was fast approaching.

Jordan heard a soft sigh to his left, and looked over to see his girlfriend still asleep. He was so used to her early classes, that waking up beside her like this still felt rare to him, even if it hadn't been for a while now. Paige looked so beautiful when she slept, her dirty blonde hair pressed against the pillow, and her face soft and free of the day's troubles. Then again he'd never seen Paige really angry before, and was starting to wonder if she was capable of even being mad. Jordan knew this to be irrational. Surely, Paige had been mad before in her life. It was just that so little phrased her. Paige was the ever calm eye of the storm that helped everyone else in a crisis.

No classes and only his shifts at Timmies to occupy him, Jordan's life had come to revolve around his girlfriend lately. Simon spent most of his time when he wasn't working with Isabelle, and Clary and Jace were cat sitting for Malec. Oh no, now he was using the stupid ship name. Maybe it was okay, so long as he didn't say it aloud?

With all their roommates 'missing in action' it was almost like he and Paige lived here alone. The top drawer of his dresser had somehow become her drawer. It wasn't like they'd made a decision together to create the space for her. No, it was more like one day she'd left her pjs here, then a week or so later her toothbrush. At some point he'd started putting it all in one place so she could find it easier, and suddenly she had a draw of her things at his place. She spent so much time here it made perfect sense, and Jordan found he kinda liked it. It was so nice to be with someone who wasn't afraid to take steps forward. Jordan wasn't quite sure how it would work, since technically one too many people lived here already, but he was thinking of asking Paige if she wanted to live here next year. He'd been to her place a few times and knew how much she didn't get along with her roommates.

As Jordan gazed at his girlfriend's face, he saw her eyelids flutter in that way they do when you're trying to see without revealing that you're awake. He couldn't keep a grin off his face.

"Oh what ever shall I do today if my beautiful girlfriend doesn't awake from her slumber," Jordan began grinning, but trying to speak seriously. "Maybe I will lay out all her papers in the wrong order and put a red sock in with her whites."

"You wouldn't dare!" Paige said suddenly her eyes snapping open to glare at him.

"Oh you're awake," Jordan chuckled. "Fancy that." She hit him playfully on the shoulder before kissing him good morning.

Jordan smiled as he watched her get out of bed. He almost couldn't believe he'd been with Paige for seven months now. Then again, he was feeling the pressure of the combination of those seven months, and the drawer of her things in the dresser behind him. There were certain words they had not said to each other yet, and part of him was waiting for her to drop the L bomb on him. It wasn't unreasonable to know how you felt about someone you met in October when it was going on June, but Jordan still didn't have his feelings for Paige figured out. He definitely cared about her, but
something was holding him back.

"Do you have plans today?" Paige asked him.

He shrugged. "Hanging with Simon, probably," Jordan replied. "Don't work today."

"I will probably have to go home and clean up the small amount of mess my roommates seem to think I had more to do with than I actually did," Paige sighed. "I'm almost never home, and yet they find ways to blame me for the dishes in the sink." She sounded mildly annoyed about this which made Jordan chuckle.

"What confuses me," he said. "Is how that can annoy you, but cleaning up around here doesn't seem to phase you."

"That's different," she said.

"How so?"

"In one, I am choosing to help," Paige explained. "While in the other, I am being told to clean up a mess that isn't mine for people I don't particularly like."

"And yet you live with them," Jordan reminded her.

"But you'll notice I'm never home," Paige teased.

"True," Jordan chuckled. It felt like just the right moment to do the logical thing and ask her to officially live here, but something stopped him from asking. Even if they were currently absent, Jordan did have roommates after all who got a say in who lived here. He needed to check with them first.

"Ouch," Paige said as she rolled over onto something. Reaching under her shoulders, she extracted one of his cell phone cords, the plug of which had probably just stabbed her in the back. "Must you shed technology everywhere?"

"The only plug to charge my phone is on your side of the bed," Jordan explained. She just shook her head at him.

"If I didn't already know you were majoring in computer science I'd suggest it," Paige chuckled. "It's like you shed technology! I bet you anything that somewhere in this room there's a laptop on the floor."

"An old laptop," Jordan explained. "With linux on it that I was using to test code."

"I rest my case," Paige said smiling at him. But she was not one to linger long in bed, even on her days off. With another light kiss, Paige was up and going about her day. By the time Jordan got out of bed, she was finishing up her breakfast and headed out the door, waving to him on her way out.

Sending Simon a quick text to see what he was up to, Jordan decided to play video games. It was a rare moment being alone in the apartment, and he wasn't about to waste it doing something else. When the quests didn't go his way, yelling at his computer was less ridiculous if he was alone. Gamer rage didn't need an audience.

Simon answered his text a few hours later to say he was free to come over. Izzy had plans with Maia, so his day was wide open. Jordan tried not to think of Maia if he could help it. Instead, he focused on getting past the dragon defending the cave where the item he needed was hidden. He was past the
scaled beast, and well inside the cave trying to decipher the riddles by the time Simon arrived.

"I feel like I haven't seen you in weeks," Simon said, dramatically when walked in to collapsed on the couch next to Jordan.

"That's because you haven't," Jordan chuckled at him, pausing his game. "Except at work, that is."

"Oh, wow" Simon said sheepishly. "I really never come home, do I?"

"Hey, you're dating Isabelle Lightwood," Jordan reminded him. "Even I, who would never go near that with a ten foot pole, have to admit she is fine!" He dragged out the last word for emphasis. Simon just mumbled something about her appearance not being what he loved most about her.

"Fine," Jordan replied. "But it is certainly a bonus. Admit it!"

"Oh, alright yes," Simon gave in.

"Ha!" Jordan said pointing a finger at him in triumph.

"Sometime when we go places together, other guys give me the weirdest looks," Simon whispered gleefully. "The best way I can describe it, is like 'really, she's with him?' It's kinda awesome."

"I bet," Jordan chuckled. It was great to see his friend so happy, especially after everything it had taken to get him here.

"Anyway, what were we talking about?" Simon asked.

"How you're never home," Jordan reminded him.

"Right, so I was thinking, maybe I should never be home, officially?"

"Not quite sure I follow you there buddy," Jordan remarked.

"What if I moved out?" Simon said. "I know you only moved in because I dragged you, so I don't want you to feel like I'm ditching you or anything, but at the same time, it feels kinda silly paying rent somewhere that I never am… if that makes any sense?"

"Yeah that totally makes sense," Jordan replied. "And if it's what you want, I think you should move in with Izzy."

"Honestly, I was expecting a little more hesitation on your part. Afterall, I would be ditching you with what is soon to be an extremely mopy Jace once Clary leaves in August."

"Actually," Jordan began. "I was thinking of asking Paige to move in. I mean she's basically here as much as you aren't."

"That's perfect!" Simon exclaimed, clearly happy to be able to do what he wanted without upsetting anyone.

"Yeah, I know Paige hates her place so I thought I'd see, though I technically haven't asked her yet," Jordan added.

"I'm sure she'll say yes," Simon smiled. "That girl adores you." Jordan just nodded, and turned back to the paused game in front of him. Jordan loved everything about Paige. He just wasn't sure if he was in love with Paige. She hadn't forced his hand by saying it first, which he was grateful for. He didn't want to upset her, or lose her because he couldn't get his own shit sorted out. She was
absolutely perfect. What the hell was wrong with him?

"Anyway," Simon continued. "Now I just need to ask Jace."

"Not Clary?" Jordan asked.

"She's leaving," Simon explained. "And therefore forfeiting her say in who lives in the apartment."

"How is Jace coping with the long distance thing?" Jordan asked.

"He's trying not to make a big deal," Simon explained. "But I'm sure he's worried. He and Clary have been quite literally glued to the hip all summer. It's like they're trying to get in as much time together before she leaves."

"If they aren't careful, they'll be sick of each other before she does," Jordan chuckled.

"More like she'll be sick of Magnus's cats," Simon laughed. "I've been getting texts about how needy they both are for Malec's return, and Catbsy's medication has been proving quite the complex cat sitting task."

"I still can't believe they've been gone over a month, and still aren't gonna be back till August," Jordan said with a shake of his head. "I want Alec's parents."

"Who wouldn't?" Simon laughed. "Rich and kind is a rare combination."

"It was a really beautiful wedding," Jordan said. "And amazing how many people their parents invited. I knew they weren't homophobic or anything, but there's a difference between accepting your gay son and throwing a wedding for him with five hundred guests, including all your professional colleges."

"They're proud of him," Simon summed up.

"And just think," Jordan chuckled. "If things go right for you, they could be yours someday."

"Let's not get ahead of ourselves," Simon replied, firmly.

"Oh come on," Jordan laughed. "After attending her brother's huge wedding, don't tell me you haven't thought about it."

"I have a feeling Isabelle would never put up with the pre-wedding stuff long enough to get the perks," Simon said with a smile. "She'd probably elope against her parents wishes, and deny us a four month honeymoon in the mediterranean."

"Your loss," Jordan sighed. "Should have went for the brother." Simon's sharp laugh cut the air, and soon they were both laughing.

"Not even for a year in the Caribbean," Simon gasped through his laughter.

"The burden all straight men must face," Jordan signed, seriously.

"And what's that?" Simon laughed.

"Women," Jordan replied deadpan, and Simon lost it. He was doubled over holding the stitches in his sides. Jordan couldn't help but laugh as well.

When the two of them finally calmed down, Jordan asked. "So do you want to decipher a Sphinx's
riddle with me?" Simon agreed with a 'hell yeah' and they spent an enjoyable afternoon doing quests together.

Chapter End Notes

I got stuck on this chapter. I didn't work on it for over two weeks and ended up writing over eight chapters of my new Girl Meets World story instead during that time, four of which are published now. So I had planned to write here and ask if you guys were getting as bored of R&S as I am. The lack of views (compared to before. This story still gets more views than any of my other ones) and engaged readers lately had me thinking that maybe it was time to wrap things up, annex the long term plots and end it sooner. I would never just leave a story hanging forever, but I could cut short some things short, and write an ending before marking R&S as complete. Then I found myself reading Royal Dilemma to my mom of all people and somehow I managed to write the rest of this chapter in less than an hour.

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Sneak Peek Chapter 123

"Have you heard from Alec lately?" Maia asked by way of getting her roommate to stop singing.

"I got a half assed text reply this morning," Izzy sulked. "I asked for pictures and lots of details and he just sent back 'busy ;') Brat." Maia laughed out loud at Izzy's grumpy tone. "The only real replies I've gotten have been about the cats."

"Ah yes how are the little felines fairly without their daddy and papa?" Maia chuckled, recalling the cat topper of their wedding cake.

"Needy," Izzy said. "To tell from Alec's texts it sounds like those cats are giving Jace and Clary a run for their money."

"Oh come on," Maia scoffed. "How much work can two cats be anyway?"

"Catsby is on meds," Izzy reminded her. "And it seems Alec has taught them bad habits."

"Like?"

"Like sleeping on faces and kneading heads to get breakfast an hour sooner," Izzy replied.

"Another reason why I'm a dog person," Maia answered.
Ch123: Maia's Talk

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

There was one reason, and one reason only, that Maia was enjoying the blissful view through her apartment window in June. Her parents hadn't insisted she return home this summer. Instead, they'd informed her that they were going on a cruise. Maia knew the cruise included a trip to see her brother during his summer abroad, but she didn't care. It was so much better to be excluded than included when it came to her mom and dad. On some level, Maia knew they didn't mean to hurt her the way that they did. It was more likely that they were simply oblivious to the effects of their actions, unaware of their very obvious bias, and how it affected her. Even so, sometimes Maia couldn't help but wonder if maybe she wasn't as worthy of love as her brother. How could she not think that way, given the way her parents treated them both? It was usually just one thing that really kept her from truly believing it: Jordan. If she was so unworthy of affection, then why had he cared so much? In the end, she'd made a mockery of his love, but that couldn't destroy it's meaning.

To get through the summer, Maia had decided to get a job. It was her last summer before graduation, and it was well past time she waded into the realm of employment, no matter what her mother said. After hours working on resumes, and even more time spent handing them out, Maia had managed to get a job at a local grocery store. It was a little ways off campus, but too far of commute. She'd considered applying to Tim Horton's like Simon, but that would have meant working with Jordan too. Izzy, of course, didn't know what the meaning of work was, and had spent most of her summer lazing about or making out with her boyfriend. There were many annoying things about spending all your time around an obnoxiously happy couple, the worse of which was the singing.

"I love my boyfriend and my boyfriend loves me," Izzy sang as she puttered about.

"I'm Isabelle and my life's perfect," Maia mocked, her patience wearing thin.

"It is, isn't it," Izzy giggled. Maia just rolled her eyes. And Izzy started singing again. "Only three more hours. Three more hours. Simon's off work in just three more hours."

"I wish I was at work," Maia grumbled.

"Oh hush," Izzy scoffed. "Bat's been around here plenty."

"Not nearly so often," Maia replied. "And we aren't nearly so nauseating."

Izzy didn't have a reply to that, but rather decided to continue singing her happy song to herself, a little louder than before as she went about doing laundry.

"Have you heard from Alec lately?" Maia asked as a way of trying to get her roommate to stop singing.

"I got a half assed text reply this morning," Izzy sulked. "I asked for pictures and lots of details, and he just sent back 'busy winky face' Brat." Maia laughed out loud at Izzy's grumpy tone. "The only real replies I've gotten have been about the cats."

"Ah yes, how are the little felines fairing without their daddy and papa?" Maia chuckled, recalling the cat topper on their wedding cake.

"Needy," Izzy said. "To tell from Alec's texts, it sounds like those cats are giving Jace and Clary a
"Oh come on," Maia scoffed. "How much work can two cats be anyway?"

"Catsby is on meds," Izzy reminded her. "And it seems Alec has taught them bad habits."

"Like?"

"Like sleeping on faces and kneading heads to get breakfast an hour sooner," Izzy replied.

"Another reason why I'm a dog person," Maia answered.

"Personally, I just don't really like pets," Izzy explained. "More work than their worth."

"Oh yeah?" Maia inquired. "And what does Simon think of pets?"

"Well if Simon wanted a pet," Izzy gave in at once. "Then maybe, but he'd have to look after it."

"Do you want to watch this next episode with me or not?" Maia asked. Izzy pretended to think for a moment, then ditched her laundry to settle down on the couch with her roommate and watch Poldark. Maia had started it up over the summer for something to do, but she was still much further behind than everyone else. They easily killed the three hours before Simon's shift ended watching the show, and before long, Maia heard the door open.

"You know, you could like go home sometimes," Maia called to her friend as she heard him taking off his shoes.

"There's no one to kiss me hello at home," Simon explained with a smile. Maia pretended to gag while Izzy jumped up and did just that.

"Speaking of," Izzy added once she'd unlocked her lips from Simon's face, all the while keeping an arm around his waist. "We have something we'd like to tell you."

"Your sappiness is now so sickly sweet you've become diabetic," Maia suggested. Izzy ignored her.

"Simon suggested and I agreed," Izzy began. "That he should just officially move in here before school starts."

Maia turned to Simon with a sigh. "Haven't I been telling you to go home. If only you'd listened."

"If you'd prefer," Simon began, with a grin. "We could swap, because of course, I know you want to live with Paige and Jordan as they spend the year trying to console Jace."

"I hate you all," Maia glared at them.

"Oh come on," Izzy whined. "He's here all the time anyway, and it's not like I'm asking you to give up your room or anything."

"Hey, I pay rent," Maia said firmly. "Not a lot of rent I'll grant you, but rent." With a sigh she gave in. "Fine," she said. "Living with my two best friends who only have eyes for each other. What could go wrong?"

"Yay!" Izzy cheered, leaping forward to hug Maia who totally failed to avoid the embrace.

"Get off," Maia grumbled, to which Izzy's only reply was to giggle and jump up and down while
hugging Maia. She was saved by Simon, who at this time pulled his girlfriend into his arms and thankfully away from Maia.

Leaving the love birds alone, Maia escaped to her room. In a moment of weakness, she got out her phone and texted Bat.

'Sizzy's being super annoying again,' Maia texted. 'How's your day going?'

His reply came back quickly. 'I still think it's strange that you mush their names together, like them together is a different entity then them apart.'

'An obnoxiously happy entity,' Maia replied.

'Oh come on,' Bat texted. 'Aren't you at least a little happy for your friends.'

'Maybe,' Maia admitted, adding a gumply emoji for effect. She got a laughing one in return.

"What's your boyfriend saying to put that dorky grin on your face?" Izzy voice interrupted her thoughts. Maia looked up to see her roommate standing in her bedroom doorway.

'I think you are confusing me with someone else," Maia answered easily. "I don't have a boyfriend."

"You so do," Izzy scoffed. "Bartholomew."

"Bat," Maia corrected. "He'd kill you if you called him Bartholomew." Izzy raised an eyebrow at Maia as if to make her point. "He isn't my boyfriend. We're just hanging out."

"He likes you," Izzy said. "I bet he'd agree to exclusivity if you asked."

"Maybe I don't want that," Maia shrugged.

"Oh yeah?" Izzy replied. "And who's lining up to take you on, apart from him?"

"Shut up," Maia grumbled. "You are way more high maintenance than I am."

"Am not! Just ask Simon."

"Simon is too smart to disagree with you," Maia told her.

"Simon, tell Maia I'm low maintenance," Izzy turned to call to her boyfriend.

"There isn't anyone I'd rather maintain," Simon's voice called in reply.

"See!" Izzy huffed as if this had made her point.

"That isn't even what he said!" Maia exclaimed.

"Oh whatever," Izzy said with a sharp turn of her head. "Enjoy texting your non-boyfriend then."

"I will!" Maia called to Izzy's retreating back. She turned to her phone to find he'd asked after her day. Maia filled him in on her boring shift at work making chicken pot pies, then explained how she and Izzy had spent the evening watching Poldark.

Maia wasn't sure what to call her relationship with Bat, but it certainly wasn't as serious him being her boyfriend. At the moment, she was enjoying his company, more than that of her two closest friends who had recently become too freaking adorable to spend any time with. Bat had great
sympathy for her in this department, as he too knew what it felt like to be friends separately with two people who then become a couple.

"When Gregg was dating Jean," Bat explained over coffee a few weeks later. "He was like that. All gushy. It was hard to watch."

"Try living with it," Maia whined.

"I can see why you wanted to hang out today," Bat chuckled.

"You caught me," Maia said, pretending to hold her hands up in the air as if being arrested. "I am using you to maintain my sanity in the face of extreme cheesiness."

"They can't be that bad," Bat laughed.

"Oh, but they are," Maia chuckled, taking the last sip of her coffee. They made their way to the theater after that. Intending to catch an afternoon showing of the current action movie playing.

"See, that's what I like about you," Bat said. "You have yet to try and make me sit through a chick flick."

"I'm living and breathing a chick flick at home," Maia whined. "Even if you wanted to watch one, I'd veto it." That had Bat laughing as they walked inside. He always bought the tickets and food when they were out. A part of Maia wanted to object to this, but the few times she'd tried, she hadn't gotten very far.

"That isn't how this works," Bat would tell her.

"Can't we split it up?" Maia would asked. "I pay half the time, and you the other half?"

"Not even if you changed those numbers to 20/80," was always Bat's reply.

They didn't see each other every day, or sometimes every week, but even so, they texted often between meetups. A few weeks after their movie, Maia found herself visiting Bat at his place, where she meet Gregg and Steve again, who were Bat's roommates. Just like at the bar, she found his friends to be quite a lot of fun. It was a welcome break from Sizzy. The weather improved with each passing day, and before Maia knew it, July was upon them with classes looming on the September horizon.

"See, that's why I'm so done with school," Bat explained. "Looming classes are the worse."

"No, exams are way worse," Maia replied.

"Yes, those suck too," Bat agreed. They were walking side by side around the edge of campus, the sun shining in their eyes.

"All this time, and I don't even think I've asked you this," Maia realized suddenly. "Did you go to university?"

"No," Bat replied. "Started working right out of high school. The mill pays really well, so why bother with the school first, right?"

"I guess," Maia replied. "I suppose I could have done that too, look for a job rather than prolong my financial attachment to my parents."

"Nah, you said you wanted to be a manager, right?" Bat replied. "So few of them get the education,
"When did I tell you I wanted to be a manager?" Maia asked. She couldn't recall the specific date she'd said this, or even the event itself.

"What? Did you think I spent all this time talking to you, just to tune you out?" Bat chuckled. "I do listen you know. You've mentioned it at least twice."

"Oh yeah, right," Maia mumbled, embarrassed. Suddenly he stopped in his tracks and turned to face her.

"You do realize that we've known each other five months, right?" Bat added.

"Yeah," Maia mumbled.

"I just thought you know it was kinda time to figure out what this is," Bat continued awkwardly.

"Are you initiating the talk with me?" Maia asked, trying to contain her grin.

"I've never had to be on this end before!" Bat suddenly exclaimed. "The girl always brings it up first."

"Does that make you the girl in this situation?" Maia smirked.

"Are you being the guy and avoiding the question?" Bat replied.

"Maybe," Maia said slowly as she started walking again. Bat jogged a little to keep up, having stood there for a solid four seconds just staring at her once she'd began to move away.

"Oh, come on!" Bat whined. "That's just cruel."

"Feeling sorry for us girl-folk yet?" Maia inquired.

"Yes," Bat called, but then Maia felt his hand gently hold her arm, encouraging her to stay.

"I like you, Maia," Bat said earnestly. "But you are driving me crazy."

"I'm sorry," Maia admitted. "I just- I don't know if I'm ready for the talk yet. I'm still just that sad drunk girl you met at the bar."

He was looking down at her now, his eyes so intense it was like he was trying to see through her. As he moved forward, Maia closed her eyes, knowing what he intended to do. She felt his lips touch hers ever so gently, before adding more pressure, deepening the kiss.

"Alright," Bat whispered when they broke apart. "But I want you to know that I'm not seeing anyone else, nor do I intend to."

"Technically, I'm not seeing anyone else either," Maia replied, trying to do right by him.

"I'll take it," he whispered.

Chapter End Notes
I think some people misunderstood my last author's note so I wanted to clarify. After 123 chapters I do worry that the story has gotten boring for readers. Between publishing the chapter before the last one and the last one, I was having some serious 'why am I still writing this' moments, so I thought that if you guys were getting as bored of it as me then maybe it was time to wrap things up. I thought I'd test the waters in an author's note. BUT then after reading one of my old Malec stories to my mom I was able to get back in the headspace again and thus changed my author's note to past tense. As of right now, I plan to finish all the plots I have planned then start to wrap things up. The thing is I still have quite a lot planned so… There is one storyline in particular that I've had planned since almost day one that still haven't made it into the story.

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Sneak Peek Chapter 124

When one of the little felines wasn't making his legs numb from their body weight they were rubbing up against him or walking across his laptop keyboard. Then there were the time when the cats wanted literally nothing to do with them and if petted would hiss and lash out as if attached. Jace just couldn't wrap his head around why someone would want to live with such creatures.

Apart from the feline squatters, house sitting for Malec had been a great escape. Jace loved living with only Clary. When it was just the two of them, no one cared when he walked shirtless into the kitchen or Clary got out of the shower then spent the afternoon in nothing but a towel. Jace was very fond of the days Clary did this as he could usually get her out of the towel with a deep kiss and soft caress.

I hope you all get this update. Fanfic has been acting up these last year days... being very slow and sometimes saying can't access server...
Time was not his friend. Everyday that went by brought him closer and closer to the day that would change everything. Jace didn't want to think about it. Didn't want to acknowledge its existence. If only time would just stop. Then he could be here on Alec's couch with Clary forever. He was pretty sure no one else would have a problem with this either. Magnus and Alec surely wouldn't object to an extended honeymoon in the Caribbean. Simon was overly happy with Izzy at the moment. Jordan had asked Paige to move in. Now was perfect, so why did the clock have to keep ticking?

But tick it did, and his strange summer flew by. Jace had decided not to try and get back his job at the docks, but rather opted for a summer's unemployment. There'd be plenty of time to work when Clary was gone, ten months in fact. Clary had wanted to get a job, but found it rather tricky to find an employer to hire her once she explained that she'd be leaving for ten months. Clary had therefore spent her summer in equal unemployment as Jace, just for different reasons. The three months since the wedding had been both the best and worse three months of Jace's life because he'd spent every moment of it with Clary, all the while knowing their time was short. Jace knew ten months wasn't forever, but still his mind had started putting everything in two categories: before and after Clary's plane took off.

Even trusting her, and believing they'd come out of this together, didn't change the fact that they'd might not be the same people this time next year. For surely the last year of university had a large part in shaping who you were and where your life was headed.

Rather than dwell, Jace was trying to focus on right now. He'd never lived with cats before, and after cat sitting for Malec, likely never would again. It seemed to Jace as if every piece of clothing he owned was covered from top to bottom in cat fuzz. He could have sworn the little creatures had a sixth sense about when clean items of clothing were left unattended. Then if you could looked past the fuzz, there was also the neediness to consider. Jace had come to appreciate a nights sleep that didn't involve having one's butt slept on by a warm ball of fur that was a lot heavier than it looked. When one of the little felines wasn't making his legs numb from their body weight, they were rubbing up against him, or walking across his laptop keyboard pressing random buttons. And of course, there were the times when the cats wanted literally nothing to do with them, and if petted, would hiss and lash out as if attacked. Jace just couldn't wrap his head around why someone would want to live with such creatures.

Apart from the feline squatters, house sitting for Malec had been a great escape. Jace loved living with only Clary. When it was just the two of them, no one cared when he walked shirtless into the kitchen, or Clary got out of the shower then spent the afternoon in nothing but a towel. Jace was very fond of the days Clary did this, as he could usually get her out of the towel with a deep kiss and soft caress.

"Clary stop," Jace sighed as he watch her.

"I'm almost done," Clary replied as she kept doing exacting what she was doing without any signs of stopping.

"You know you don't have to do this right?" Jace reminded her.

"But-" she argued.
"But nothing," Jace sighed, moving forward to wrap her in his arms, stopping her. She sighed and he added, "This is Alec and Magnus we're talking about."

"Doesn't matter who," Clary disagreed. "It's still rude to leave a house messer than you found it."

"Our best friends aren't going to break up with us over dust," Jace chuckled. Clary turned in his arms to glare at him that way she did where her forehead pulled together just enough to narrow her eyes.

"But we aren't talking about dust," Clary explained. "We are talking about overflowing garbages."

"Those are hardly overflowing," Jace said gesturing to the garbages in question. "Maybe almost full, but definitely not overflowing."

"They were empty when we got here," Clary reminded him.

"Almost four months ago," Jace argued. "If they expected us to stay here and not use the garbage can, they are both crazier than I thought they were."

Clary glared at him some more in that way that was both far too adorable to be fair, and only slightly terrifying. "I'll get the twist ties," Jace sighed in defeat, releasing her. Once Jace had taken the garbage out, he returned just in time to try and stop Clary from using packing tape on the pillows.

"Okay, now you really are going overboard," Jace laughed, as she stuck the packing tape to the upholstery, and then pulled it off over and over to remove the cat hair. "You know those kitties are just gonna sleep on them again anyway, right?"

"I don't want them to come home to-"

"To What? Cat fuzz, cause I hate to break it to you, but I think at this point there is cat fur in their brains." He was happy to see Clary finally crack as she laughed, and playfully hit on the shoulder before agreeing that maybe the place was clean enough.

It was mid August, and Magnus and Alec's plane was due to land in just a few hours. Jace and Clary had all their things packed and waiting by the door. Grabbing the handle of his suitcase as they left, Jace said goodbye to Malec's apartment and some of the best months of his life.

Getting home didn't feel very home like as Jace put his suitcase in the bedroom of the apartment he'd first got with Alec what felt like a lifetime ago, but had actually only been about two years.

Jace had asked to borrow Will's truck to pick the honeymooners up, and so once their stuff was stowed and they'd said 'hi' to Jordan and Paige, Jace and Clary started off. Side by side, Jace held her hand as they reached the bus stop. It was a short distance. Before long, they were walking up to Will's driveway.

"I gotta get the keys," Jace said, thinking Clary was going to stay with the car. To his surprise, she followed him and was standing beside him when the door opened. Will appeared with a smile on his face.

"Still picking up those honeymooners, huh?" Will laughed as he handed the keys over. "After four months in paradise, I think I'd spring for a cab."

"I'm sure Magnus wants to see us more than he needs the ride," Clary smiled.

"Ace!" Came a loud giggly voice, and suddenly Lucie was running out from behind her father's legs towards Jace.
"Hello Lucie," Jace smiled, leaning down to accept her running hug.

"Stay," Lucie said firmly, her little face crunched up in concentration as if she could make him stay by sheer force of will.

"I have to go pick up uncle Magnus and Alec," Jace explained. He couldn't believe how much she'd grown in the last few months. Her hair looked so much like Tessa's, thick and brown. It was longer than the last time Jace had seen her.

"No," Lucie objected firmly, crossing her arms over her chest.

"How old is she now?" he heard Clary ask Will from above. Jace was the only one on a level with Lucie right now.

"Over a year and a half," Will answered. "About 20 months I think."

"I'll be back," Jace smiled at Lucie. "Promise."

"Da?" Lucie asked, turning to look up at her father. "Da-da home?"

"Da-da isn't home for a while yet," Will explained. Lucie didn't like this either. She scrunched up her face even more, and sat down on the ground looking sulky.

Laughing gently, Jace stood up and was about to bid them farewell when he saw Clary lean down to speak to the toddler.

"Cheer up," Clary smiled at Lucie. "It can't be that bad."

"All leave," Lucie grumbled. "No stay."

"Da is here," Clary reminded her. Lucie paused for a moment then looked up at Will.

"Da-da," Lucie said to Clary once again.

"You know," Clary continued. "You should really enjoy this being cute and adorable thing now while you have it. It’s much harder to get away with such obvious favoritism when you grow up."

"Da-da, ma, da," Lucie giggle so loudly it was almost a screech. Then she got up and ran back into the house.

"I'm not sure if I helped or made it all worse," Clary laughed as she stood up. "Good luck with that one, Will."

"Thanks," Will sighed. "I'll need it."

With one last promise to return his truck and a farewell, Jace and Clary turned to leave. It was rare that Jace saw Clary interact with kids, especially since Lucie was the only kid he knew. In moments like these, he just couldn't help but wonder why someone who has such potential to be a wonderful mother was so against the idea. They were well on their way before Jace could bring himself to approach the topic.

"Well yeah, I like kids well enough," Clary shrugged in response.

"Then I have to ask," Jace replied. "Why don't you want them?"

"Other people's kids can be returned to their parents," Clary replied easily. "They can't resist your
moments or opportunities. Being the fun aunt is so much better."

Jace didn’t reply, but he did feel her hand reach out to hold his. He squeezed back and they continued on their way in silence, but for the music on the radio.

Reaching the airport, Jace had expected to be waiting for Malec's plane for at least twenty minutes, but it must have landed early because they both stood there in all their vacation glory. Jace had to do a double take when he saw the tan on Alec's skin. It was slight compared to Magnus's dark skin, but the two of them matched more than they ever had before. Both had huge smiles on their faces, and Jace quickly found himself attacked in hugs.

Then everyone was talking all at once. Jace tried to focus on one person at a time, and in doing so, was able to get a fair bit of information. It seemed that Alec had spent the entire time almost getting burned to a crisp before his husband forced him to wear sunblock. Magnus had turned into the most adventurous person Alec had ever met, even agreeing to try skydiving.

"It's like I don't even know who I married," Alec laughed as he recounted the story.

They'd swam with dolphins, seen landmarks, been on cruise ships, walked along oh so many beaches, and generally had such a good time Jace wasn't totally sure why they'd come back.

"We missed our friends," Magnus had replied when Jace joked about it.

"And our cats," Alec exclaimed, then added as an afterthought. "Plus, I have class next week."

The stories carried them well through waiting for luggage - to which they had lots - and all the way home. The moment Malec’s front door opened, Jace heard the little kitties meow. The newlyweds were both so excited to see their fuzzy friends, and the feeling was definitely mutual. Without even bothering to bring all their bags into the apartment, the husbands each had a cat in their arms.

"Did you miss us?" Alec cooed to his kitty. Jace honestly couldn't tell which cat it was.

"Trust me, they did," Jace chuckled.

"Of course you did, my little angel," Magnus cooed to the cat in his arms.

Eventually the suitcases and bags did end up inside the apartment, and like Jace had known, both Magnus and Alec were far too busy just being home to notice if they hadn't left the place quite as clean as when they’d arrived.

The stories continued for the rest of the day and well into the night. Jace and Clary almost crashed on the spare bed they'd called theirs these last four months, but in the end they went home. Jace returned Will's truck the next morning.

Time. It wasn't on his side. Everyday that went by, brought him closer and closer to the day that would change everything, until inevitably that day came. Jace stood, numb to reality as he watched his girlfriend pack most everything she owned. Numb as he drove to the airport once again. Jace watched as Clary hugged Simon and Magnus each in turn, clearly fighting back tears. She even hugged Alec, Izzy, Jordan and Paige, though with less tears.

They stood now beside security, everyone else gone. Jace's hand was in hers and she was looking at him.

"I don't know how to say goodbye to you," Jace admitted.
"Good," Clary smiled at him. "Because we aren't saying goodbye."

"It feels like goodbye to me," Jace whined. He hadn't realized he'd looked down until he felt her fingers touch his chin and make him look up.

"I love you," Clary told him firmly. "I'll text you when I land. Video chat with you tomorrow."

Jace couldn't bring himself to speak. He only nodded. Then leaned forward and kissed her sweetly.

Then Jace watched Clary go through security. He stared out the window until he saw her plane take off. Then he watched the plane fly farther and farther away, becoming nothing but a speck. Even after it disappeared completely, Jace didn't move. He just stood there, staring unblinkingly into the sky. He wasn't really sure of anything in this moment. Was he standing? Sitting down? Had he even blinked in the last five minutes? Was this hunger, or had the world started spinning?

Chapter End Notes

Clary is gone!!! How do you feel about this? And no I don't plan to write any Clary point of view chapters while she's in Pairs. Also isn't Lucie adorable? I have to keep calculating her ages to keep up with my crazy timeline. lol. Even managed to include some Malec in this one. I think I'm just missing Sizzy and Jordan.

Sneak Peek Chapter 125

"Do we have a house guest?" Magnus asked.

"Good morning to you do," Alec replied, kissing him briefly before accepting his coffee. "I have a best friend to torture. What are you up to today?"

"Not much," Magnus admitted.

"Have you called the museum since you've been back?" Alec asked.

"Yeah," Magnus said. "And I could do some more volunteer work there I suppose, but-" he shrugged.

"You're still gonna be bored aren't you?" Alec chuckled.

"Probably," Magnus sighed. "But maybe one more day of totally and completely slacking off, eh?"

"Sounds good to me," Alec smiled. With a quick peck goodbye, Alec left the kitchen on his way to commence his days work.
Jace wasn't crying, but there was a grief in his eyes somehow more profound than tears. Alec could see disbelief and shock about the shape of his friend's mouth, and he wondered if Jace had ever really accepted that this day was coming. Alec tried to give his best friend some space, but after a while he couldn't take it anymore. He moved closer and put a hand on Jace's shoulder.

"It's time to go home," Alec said gently.

"I can't go home," Jace whispered. Alec knew somehow that Jace wasn't talking about never returning to his apartment. His home had just flown away.

Everyone piled back into Will's truck, and they drove together into town. Alec tried to keep up a conversation, but Jace never joined in. Instead Alec talked to his sister, or rather listened to Izzy talk about her new shoes. Simon pitched in on Izzy's side which was fine with Alec. Jordan and Paige were discussing next week's classes. Will and Magnus somehow got onto the topic of Lucie's newest word. The drive passed swiftly, but Alec was concerned by Jace's silence. Will dropped Izzy and Simon off first. Then they arrived at Jace's apartment. Jace got out first, as if automatically. Paige followed, with Jordan trailing behind.

"Keep an eye on him for me, would you?" Alec asked Jordan, leaning forward to speak to him.

"Yeah, sure thing," Jordan replied, before following his girlfriend out of the truck and into the building.

"You can just drop us at the bus station," Magnus told Will as they were the only two left in the car.

"Nah," Will replied, with a smile. "I'll get you home."

"Thanks," Magnus said. It wasn't a long road, and soon Alec was watching Will drive his blue truck away from their building. When Alec re-entered his apartment, he collapsed on the couch and covered his face with his hands. He sensed more than saw his husband join him. When Magnus put a gentle hand on Alec's shoulder, he knew he wanted to know if Alec was alright, even though Magnus didn't say anything.

"I'm just feeling sorry for Jace," Alec explained. "If you had to leave me for ten months, I don't know what I'd do."

"Oh, but I do," Magnus chuckled. "You'd get on a plane and come find me."

Alec couldn't help but laugh lightly with him. "I suppose you're right," he said, pulling his hands away from his face to turn and look at his husband.

"Oh, I know I'm right," Magnus chuckled. Leaning forward, Alec kissed him. After so many months of delight and adventure, Alec was quite happy to spend the evening in front of the TV with his husband's arm around his shoulders.

Yawning, they finally called it a night and went to sleep in their own bed. Alec had missed his bed, even if it was technically Magnus's bed, he'd come to think of it as his own long ago. He could only presume that when you merge your life with another's, these things tended to happen. Beds,
cats, lives that were separate, become one.

Alec had been sleeping. He'd been deep in a now blurry dream about planes flying over head, but no longer could he boast blissful unconsciousness. His phone was ringing.

"Make it stop," Magnus whined, covering his face with his pillow.

Ring. Ring. Ring.

With a groan, Alec reached for his phone, quietly berating his past self for not turning it to silent last night before he'd gone to bed. The moment he saw the caller ID he knew it couldn't be good.

"Do you know what time it is?" Alec spoke into the phone. He was still laying in bed, all the lights off and the room in total darkness.

"Alllic," Jace's voice spoke slowly with almost a hiccup in it.

"More of less," Alec replied.

"No less," Jace mumbled. "Is this Alllic?"

"How drunk are you?" Alec asked with a sigh.

"They asked for my keys," Jace giggled. "But I don't have keys."

"Where's Jordan?" Alec asked.


"Do you need me to come get you?" Alec asked. Jordan was so fired.

"No shhh," Jace mumbled. "Just want to talk to Alllic."

"About?" Alec whispered. He was keenly aware of Magnus beside him, who was clearly unhappy with both the light and noise from his phone.

"Life," Jace said groggily. "How life treating you? You're haaappy right?" Alec was very tempted to reply that he'd been happy until Jace's phone call, but he didn't have the heart to. His friend was having a rough day.

"Yes," Alec said instead.

"Good," Jace mumbled, as if this solved something.

"But we aren't talking about me," Alec tried to change the topic. "We are talking about you."

"Shhhhh," Jace argued. Magnus groaned loudly. He was obviously far more awake than he'd like to be at this hour.

"Love of my life, do please go away," Magnus whined, turning away from Alec to try and avoid the light. With a sigh Alec got out of bed, closing his bedroom door behind him.

"Where are you Jace?" Alec asked once he was blinking at the low light of his living room.

"Bar," Jace replied. Then added thoughtfully, "Some redheads, but no frumpy purses."
"Clary's not in this country anymore," Alec reminded his friend. "You won't be able to find her at a bar."

"I know," Jace sulked. "Wasn't looking for Clary. I was looking for nothing."

"Nothing?" Alec inquired, confused.


"You aren't making a whole lot of sense," Alec sighed. "Tell me where you are and I'll come get you."

"No," Jace disagreed. "No. Don't want to bother you."

"Too late," Alec replied. "Location now."

With a deep sigh of frustration, Alec went to get his coat. He suspected Jace would be at the bar near campus as it was the only one within walking distance.

Even if it wasn't a long walk, it was still a walk in the middle of the night. Alec had great plans to make Jace pay for this later, and amused himself on the way thinking them up. The moment Alec entered the bar he spotted Jace, the blonde guy swaying slightly at the bar.


"Do you want me to call you a cab?"


"I'm married," Alec laughed. "Not dead."

Then to his great surprise, Jace gave Alec a hug and not just a normal hug, but a full on half snuggle.

"Loves you Allie," Jace mumbled. "Best friend eeeever."

"Yep, love you platonically too bubbly," Alec said patting Jace awkwardly on the back. "Oh, and boy am I going to tease you about this till the end of time!"

"Time sucks," Jace objected, making a face to show his disgust.

"You tell it," Alec chuckled. "Now come on. It's bed for you."

"Bed," Jace said slowly as if considering it. "Wait why you here? Go home."

"Until you can string together a full sentence you have lost your vote," Alec informed his friend. "Now let's try this again. It's time for bed, now."

This time Jace mumbled fine and played along, even if he was sulking the whole time. Alec took this as a good sign and began guiding Jace out of the bar. They walked back to Alec's apartment as it was closer than Jace's. He was also sure that Jordan was not to be trusted as a best friend minder.

"Thank you," Jace mumbled as Alec tucked him into the bed which had once been Tessa and Clary's
rooms, but was now just a spare.

"You're welcome," Alec replied, smiling.

Throwing his coat on the couch, Alec gratefully returned to his own bed. He laid down next to Magnus, enjoying the warmth of his husband's arms. Magnus didn't wake up but he moved slightly closer, putting an arm around Alec who fell asleep almost at once.

Alec woke feeling unrested, and rolled over to find his bed empty. Those who hadn't been walking to and from bars in the middle of the night, had clearly gotten a better nights sleep. After spending an uncharacteristic amount of time laying in bed, Alec got up and went to find his husband. Magnus was in the kitchen making coffee.

"Do we have a house guest?" Magnus asked.

"Good morning to you do," Alec replied, kissing him briefly, before accepting his coffee. "I have a best friend to torture. What are you up to today?"

"Not much," Magnus admitted.

"Have you called the museum since you've been back?" Alec asked.

"Yeah," Magnus said. "And I could do some more volunteer work there I suppose, but-" he shrugged.

"You're still gonna be bored aren't you?" Alec chuckled.

"Probably," Magnus sighed. "But maybe one more day of totally and completely slacking off, eh?"

"Sounds good to me," Alec smiled. With a quick peck goodbye, Alec left the kitchen on his way to commence his days work.

Throwing the spare room door wide open, and yelling good morning with great energy, Alec went to the window and opened the curtains.

"Ahh," Jace cried. "Are you trying to kill me?"

"Rise and shine my drunken friend," Alec chirped.

"Is that coffee at least for me?" Jace asked, sitting up in bed and shielding his eyes from the sun.

"Oh no," Alec mocked. "This is all mine."

"I hate you," Jace grumbled.

"Oh, but I thought you looved me," Alec teased. "You love your Allic, yes you do."

"Shut up," Jace yelled, with a hint of pleading in his voice.

"Oh no," Alec sniggered, sitting down beside Jace on the bed. "You aren't getting out of this that easily."

"Urg," Jace groaned, holding his head as if it was pounding, which is probably was. "Why did I do that?"

"Because," Alec said seriously, but without mercy. "You don't want to think about how the love of
your life just flow away, and you won't see her for ten months. You'd rather feel nothing than that."

"Urg," Jace groaned, covering his face with a pillow and falling back down on the bed.

Taking pity on him, Alec walked over to the window and pulled the drapes to block the light. Then leaving the room, Alec gently closed the door behind him.

"Will the patient live?" Magnus asked as Alec returned to the kitchen.

"Results aren't in," Alec replied. "My bets 50/50."

Jace didn't get out of bed, not even for coffee. But Alec doubted Jace had managed to get back to sleep; he had a feeling that Jace wanted to hide from the world right now. Magnus started looking at job postings online, while Alec tried to tell him he could do anything he wanted without worrying about the job thing.

"I want the job thing," Magnus explained, every time Alec said this.

"Well, they say opposites attract," Alec replied as he returned to watching youtube videos on his laptop. He'd planned to watch just one, but somehow had spent over an hour with them.


For a moment Alec had thought the sound had come from his computer, but then it happened again.

"You expecting someone?" Alec called to his husband who'd just gotten out of the shower.

"No," Magnus called back, through the closed bathroom door.

Curious, Alec got up and answered the door. There was a woman on his doorstep. Alec knew her at once as he'd seen her many times before, but he couldn't remember her name.

"Hey," the woman said, walking in as if she owned the place. She wasn't particularly tall, though he would've describe her as short either. Her skin was darker than his, and her hair black and curly.

"Um hi," Alec replied, a little confused. What was his sister's roommate doing walking into his apartment like they knew each other?

"I just couldn't stand it one moment longer," she explained, throwing her arms in the air.

"Stand what?" Alec asked.

"All that lovey dovey crap!" she burst out. Then she continued in a mocking sing song voice. "Oh, I love my boyfriend, and he loves me. Urg. Makes me want to gag."

"So let me get this straight," Alec said slowly. "My sister's new relationship is so, what was it you said, 'lovey dovey' that you decided to come here and hang out with the newlyweds instead?"

"I may not have thought this through," she mused. "But basically yeah." She paused then seemed to come to her senses. "I don't believe we've been formally introduced. I'm Maia, and Sizzy is getting on my nerves. How are you?"

"Oh boy," Alec whispered under his breath.

"And, I was wondering if your husband was home," Maia continued. "Apart from Jordan, who for obvious reasons I don't want to ask, Magnus is the only one I know who might be able to make
"sense of it."

"Of what?" Alec asked.

"My computer," Maia explained.

"I fear you have gravely exaggerated my husbands computer skills," Alec replied. "But I could have a look at it if you want."

"Thanks," Maia said, reaching into her purse to pull out a laptop. "Where is he anyway?"

"Probably gelling his hair," Alec chuckled. "He might be a while."

Together they sat at his dining room table, as Maia logged into her computer and then turned it to Alec. She explained that small things had been off with it for a while.

"Like icons on the desktop have just vanished," Maia continued. "Little glitching stuff, you know."

"I can't find anything wrong with it as far as I can tell," Alec explained after a moment's investigation. "But I will admit that doesn't mean much."

Maia sighed. "Thanks anyway."

"Sorry I couldn't help," Alec replied.

"It's okay," Maia smiled. "Might be nothing anyway. Hey, do you mind if I hang out here for a little while?"

"My sister's really that annoying, huh?"

"It's gotten worse since Simon moved in," Maia groaned. Alec couldn't help but laugh.

"Stay as long as you like," Alec said once he'd stopped chuckling.

Alec was in the kitchen a few minutes later making him and Maia something to drink, when his phone rang. Alec grinned as he saw the caller ID.

"Do you know where Jace is?" Jordan's panicked voice came over the phone the moment Alec picked up. "I can't find him anywhere. He went to bed early, so when he slept in a little, I thought I'd check on him and the bed's empty! It was never slept in."

"Good morning to you too," Alec laughed.

"You don't sound worried," Jordan said slowly. "That means you know something."

"Indeed," Alec said, grinning. "I know many things."

"Cut he torture and just tell me," Jordan replied.

"Jace lied about going to bed early to sneak out and go to a bar where he proceeded to get ridiculously wasted, before drunk dialling me in the middle of the night."

"Oh," Jordan said sheepishly.

"He's in our guest room," Alec said. "And you're fired."

"Fair enough," Jordan replied with a slight laugh.
"We could watch The Vampire Diaries," Maia's voice called out from the living room. Before going to get drinks, Alec had tasked her with looking through netflix for something to do.

"Is that's Maia?" Jordan asked, his voice full of awe.

"Yeah," Alec replied. "She's getting sick of my sister it seems."

"Oh," Jordan said. "Well, I should probably go. I'm glad Jace isn't dead in a ditch."

"Me too," Alec laughed before they hung up.

"Who was that?" Maia asked, as Alec reappeared holding two mugs of warm liquid.

"Jordan," Alec said. "He was suppose to be babysitting Jace last night, but Jace gave him the slip."

"Are you and Jordan friends too?" Maia whined.

"Nah," Alec replied. "Acquaintances more like. We mostly have Jace in common. He just lives with my best friend is all."

"Good," Maia said firmly.

"So you were saying something about The Vampire Diaries?" Alec inquired, passing Maia her drink and sitting on the couch with her.

"Yeah the summery looks like lots of blood and violence which is just what I need," Maia smiled.

"So, I take it you haven't seen the show before," Alec said and Maia shook her head.

"Then we should start at the beginning," Magnus's voice interrupted them. Alec turned to see his husband standing there, dressed in black skinny jeans and a silver and purple bedazzled shirt, with his hair perfectly gelled, with and a hint of glitter in it.

"Going out?" Maia asked.

"No," Magnus replied, confused.

"So you got that fancy just to stay in and sit on the couch?"

"Don't ask," Alec laughed rolling his eyes.

"I take it this isn't new?" Maia laughed.

"Nope," Alec and Magnus said together.

"Oh great," Maia groaned. "More couples in perfect sync. Can we please just watch vampires kill people now?"

"About that, um, Maia while there is quite a bit of murder in the show," Alec explained. "It's more about love triangles and romance than anything."

"Urg!" Maia groaned, leaning her head back. "I can't catch a break."

"At least you aren't hung over," Jace's voice joined in. They turned to see the blonde man standing in the hallway, blinking at the lights as he approached.

"Oh yeah," Maia snapped. "Well at least Clary loves you."
"What's that supposed to mean?" Jace asked, now standing feet from them.

"I messed everything up," Maia whined. "So instead of being with the guy I want, I'm stringing along some poor sap who doesn't deserve this, while I watch the guy I love with someone else." She turned to face Jace. "So forgive me if I can't feel sorry for you. Oh bo who, the love of my life is gonna be gone for a little while, and when she's back, we will go back to being blissfully happy."

"Oh yeah, you want Jordan so badly!" Jace yelled. "Don't yell at me. Go get him."

"He's happy!" Maia yelled. "What kind of selfish monster would I be to take that away from him after rejecting him so many times."

"Whoa now," Magnus said standing up. "Where'd this hostility come from?"

"If you miss Clary call her," Maia ordered Jace. "You have that option." And then without warning she grabbed her bag and stormed out, slamming the door behind her.

Chapter End Notes

Look at me.. still updating... even if it feels like I haven't written this slowly in over two years. Not sure what's wrong with me but I don't like it...

The next chapter will be a timeline as we are back once again to September. Then chapter 126 will follow after that. :)

Sneak Peek Chapter 126

September. Tessa couldn't remember how long it had been since that month had meant the start of the school year for her. Well, how old was Lucie? A year and nine months or twenty one months old.

Tessa knew that between Will and Jem she could had enough childcare to attend a few classes a week and yet she hadn't applied. She was starting to wonder if she was the problem. If she really cared about finishing her degree surely she would have put more effort into it than this. A dedicated student wouldn't have just dropped out because she could, right?

Tessa rolled the sock up with it's pair, sighing deeply as she collected all the clean laundry to put away. And even if she did finish her degree, what was the point? Had she any plans to do something with it? What jobs could you get with an English Literature degree anyway? She loved learning about literature, but that didn't mean she'd like working in the field, if indeed should could get a job in like publishing or something. Or was the only thing an English Literature degree was good for was going all the way to her Master's so you could teach the pointless subject to others.

At least Tessa could be useful here. At least she could be a mother and lover. Then again the lover part had been a long time. When Lucie was younger she hadn't had the energy. Then the depression had killed any desire she had apart from misery. After that Tessa had started to notice the changes to her body. There were great white lines across her stomach and similar stretch marks around her breasts. Before Lucie they'd been small and firm, and now they felt saggy and too big. It had been a long time since Tessa
had felt beautiful.
TIMELINE 3

And once again we are at September. Usually I post timelines at the end of my stories, but as this story is stupid long and my timeline is so very very long I've been cutting it up into pieces. I post a timeline for this story before every September chapter since the very first chapter is September. Every Timeline marks a year for the characters.

As of September Chapter 99

Magnus: Graded

Tessa: still dropped out

Maia, Alec, Jace, Clary, Simon, Aline, Helen: 3rd year

Izzy and Jordan: 2nd years

Chapter 099: Sept, Maia - school starts
Chapter 100: Very late Sept, Simon - out on the town
Chapter 101: Oct, Tessa - teething baby
Chapter 102: Oct, Clary - kids then w/Simon
Chapter 103: Oct, Simon - hospital w/Iz
Chapter 104: Mid Oct, Izzy - hospital
Chapter 105: Mid Oct, Alec - morning/cats/Izzy call
Chapter 106: Mid Oct, Magnus - clary meet up/Hospital
Chapter 107: Later Oct, Maia - learns of Paige
Chapter 108: Nov, Jace - transition chapter
Chapter 109: Nov, Jordan - getting to know Paige
Chapter 110: Nov, Izzy - witness to Maia crying
Chapter 111: Dec, Simon - exams/xmas
Chapter 112: Dec 25th, Tessa - Lucie's xmas
Chapter 113: Dec 25th/New year, Clary - long/dist
Chapter 114: Jan, Alec - school starts/anniv
Chapter 115: Jan, Jace - Clary explains opportunity

Chapter 116: Feb, Simon, - transition chapter

Chapter 117: Feb 14th, Maia - Meets Bat

Chapter 118: March, Izzy - Transition/Sizzy sex

Chapter 119: April/April 18th, Magnus - pre-wedding

Chapter 120: April 19th, Izzy - Malec Wedding Ceremony

Chapter 121: April 19th, Clary - Malec Wedding Reception

Chapter 122: May/June, Jordan, - Summer/moving

Chapter 123: June/July, Maia - Summer/Bat

Chapter 124: Aug, Jace - Clary leaves/Malec returns

Chapter 125: Aug, Alec - Drunk Jace/Maia

----------------------------------------------

As of Chapter 126:

Magnus: Graded one year ago

Tessa: Dropped out after 3rd year

Maia, Alec, Jace, Simon, Aline, Helen: 4th years

Clary: Paris exchange program 4th year

Izzy, Jordan, Paige: 3rd Years
September. Tessa couldn't remember how long it had been since that month had meant something more to her than a change in the calendar. Then again, how old was Lucie... a year and nine months or so? Had it really been that long since September had meant the start of the school year?

Tessa could remember why she hadn't applied for her fourth year of university. She'd discovered she was pregnant in March which put the due date in November, right in the middle of the first semester of her last year of school. She'd thought trying to finish a semester with a newborn would have been highly impractical, and she'd been right. Tessa could only imagine how her postpartum depression would have affected her grades, even if she'd been able to stay awake in class. So it had made sense to skip that first semester. She hadn't even thought of applying for January as Lucie had been only two months old, but Tessa had no excuse as to why she hadn't started taking classes again this time last year. Sure, she'd still being recovering from the depression, but it had been so much better. And yes, Will had been hurt by Lucie's obvious favoritism, but why should that have stopped her from returning to school?

And now yet another September was here, and Tessa could be found folding baby clothes in her living room while her toddler was sleeping. Yes, toddler. Lucie was almost two after all, and had developed a few more words. She'd taken to calling Will da, while still using da-da for Jem. Tessa had become ma. She wasn't sure how she felt about only getting one syllable, but she supposed that didn't really matter.

Tessa knew that between Will and Jem, she could get enough childcare to attend a few classes a week, and yet she hadn't applied. She was starting to wonder if she was the problem. If she really cared about finishing her degree, surely she would have put more effort into it than this. A dedicated student wouldn't have just dropped out because she could, right?

Tessa stopped folding clothes as she picked up one of Lucie's tiny socks, staring at it. Sometimes it felt like a dream, this falling in love with two wonderful men and having a child with them. A very long and mostly wonderful dream. What if she woke up tomorrow and it was all gone? Who would she be then?

Tessa rolled the sock up with it's pair, sighing deeply as she collected all the clean laundry to put away. And even if she did finish her degree, what was the point? Had she any plans to do something with it? What jobs could you get with an English Literature Bachelor's degree anyway? She loved learning about literature, but that didn't mean she'd like working in the field, if she could indeed get a job in publishing or something. Or was the only thing an English Literature degree good for was a stepping stone to a Master's so you could teach the pointless subject to others.

At least Tessa could be useful here. At least she could be a mother and lover. Then again, the lover part had been a long time. When Lucie was younger she hadn't had the energy. Then the depression had killed any desire she had apart from misery. After that, Tessa had started to notice the changes to her body. There were great white lines across her stomach, and similar stretch marks around her breasts which weren't quite as firm as they'd once been. Before Lucie they'd been small and firm, and now they felt saggy and too big. It had been a long time since Tessa had felt beautiful. It wasn't like she thought she was ugly or anything, it was that she felt uncomfortable in her body in a way she couldn't remember being before.
Jem didn't seem to mind. Tessa knew - from her extensive research on the disease - that hemochromatosis had a tendency to lower one's libido, and she had a sneaky suspicion that Jem was relieved, almost as if he'd been pushing himself to keep up with her and Will all this time. Tessa sensed Will was more aware of the change in her than Jem was. They'd done some deep kissing and a little more, but always at night with the lights down. She just wasn't as comfortable naked as she'd once been. Tessa liked the lights off, as if the darkness was a blanket shielding her from exposure.

Tessa knew Will and Jem loved her, and some part of her rational mind understood that they wouldn't care how she looked, but even so Tessa couldn't shake the strange awkward feeling.

With a sigh, Tessa pushed her pointless thoughts away. Just because it was September didn't mean she needed to let her thoughts run round in pointless circles. Finishing the laundry, Tessa went to check on Lucie in her crib. Her daughter was still sleeping, eyes closed with her chest rising and falling evenly.

For a moment, Tessa just gazed at her daughter. Though her face was resting now, when Lucie smiled, Jem said it was exactly the same way Tessa smiled. Lucie's hair was getting longer every day. The thick brown locks matched her mother's perfectly, but there was something of Will in the shape of her face. She also had Will's perfect blue eyes, and with every passing day, Lucie was developing a distinct personality. Tessa couldn't help picturing who Lucie would be when she grew up. Tessa hoped Lucie wouldn't have that need for action like her father. Another firefighter in the family would in no way deduce Tessa's stress levels. She and Will both had a love of books, so maybe Lucie would take after that instead. And then there was the nature vs. nurture argument. How much of who she became would be influenced by Jem? The possibilities were endless, and Tessa was strangely excited to see what the future held. Watching a child grow up was indeed, a wonder to behold.

Adjusting the blanket over Lucie, Tessa quietly left the room, closing the room behind her. With her chores done, Tessa wasn't sure what to do with her few moments of free time. In fact, she wasn't totally sure what free time was anymore. What did one do with free time? Will was working, and Jem had left for a doctor's appointment less than an hour ago. With the laundry done, Lucie sleeping and dinner planned, Tessa really didn't have anything she needed to do. It was a strange, though not unpleasant feeling, a bit like floating aimlessly. What did one do with time?

"Oh, I don't know," Tessa berated herself. "Go to class." She put the kettle on, making herself some tea as the one sided conversation with herself continued.

By the time Jem arrived home twenty minutes later, Tessa's thoughts were spirling again, leading her down a path of self-guilt trips and confused frustration.

"I'm so glad to see you," Tessa told him, greeting Jem with a kiss and offering to make him tea.

"And I love you too," Jem chuckled. "What's on your mind, Tessa?"

"September," Tessa sighed.

"Alright," Jem said slowly hanging up his coat. "Not sure I follow."

"It's September again," Tessa continued. "And I never signed up for classes."

"Did you want to take classes again?" Jem asked. "If so, this is the first I've heard of it."

"I should finish my degree," Tessa replied.

"Ah, but that wasn't what I asked," Jem smiled.
"It's just stupid to do three years of a four year degree," Tessa told him. "Isn't it?"

"Why are you asking me?" Jem inquired.

"Well I-," Tessa began, then in trying to reply, discovered something she hadn't realized before. "I guess I want someone else's to tell me what I should do."

"I'm flattered you value my opinion so highly," Jem smiled, leaning forward to kiss her gently before continuing. "But life is too short for that. Why do you want to go back to school?"

"Cause I should," Tessa shrugged. "I mean I'm over half done and..."

"That's not a very good reason to do anything," Jem advised, calmly.

"Are you saying I shouldn't bother?"

"There you go again," Jem chuckled. "I can't make this decision for you, Tessa. You have to do what makes you happy. Would going back to school make you happy, Tessa?"

"I don't know," Tessa whispered.

"Then I wouldn't worry too much about it," Jem told her. "Until you do."

Smiling in that way only Jem could, Tessa saw the wisdom in his young eyes.

"Thanks," Tessa said gratefully as she following him into the kitchen.


"So how was your day?" Tessa asked. "Aside from arriving home only to be confronted by my drama."

"I was poked and prodded by doctors mostly," Jem replied. "Honestly, I prefer your drama."

"Well that's good at least," Tessa chuckled.

"If you don't want to go back to school right now," Jem continued, as he began making that cup of tea she'd offered him, then totally failed to make. "But you're sick of being home all the time. You could try looking for some part time work or volunteer at the library?"

"How is it that you always know what to say?" Tessa beamed at him.

"It's a gift," Jem chuckled.

"No you are," Tessa smiled at him. Jem disagreed, saying he was lucky to have both her and Will, but Tessa knew better. Most people are lucky to have one great love in their life, but she had found two. Tessa was the lucky one.

They were drinking tea a few minutes later when Lucie's disgruntled noises alerted them to her newly conscious status. Jem volunteers to go get her, telling Tessa she should relax, maybe take the time to look at available classes or job postings. With the sounds of her daughter's displeasure being soothed by her father playing in the background, Tessa went to Jem's laptop to look stuff up.

She got in a solid few hours of searching while Jem watched Lucie. It helped that Lucie was happy. Whenever Tessa turned to look, she saw that Lucie was making Jem's job easy enough that Jem even got in some quality time with a book while babysitting. They hadn't started potty training Lucie yet,
but Tessa knew it was coming, just as well as she knew it would be a lot of work. For now they had
the excuse that she was maybe just a little too young for that.

By the time Will arrived home, Tessa had found a few part time jobs she might apply for, and
thought seriously about signing up for one course come January. It was best to ease into these things,
rather than tackle them all at once. Tessa didn't want to crash and burn. She'd sit on the decision for a
few days to make sure her guilt wasn't actually the only reason she wanted to go back.

"And how was your day?" Tessa asked Will once he'd taken off his coat.

"Hot," Will replied. "If I had to describe my day in one word, the word would be hot."

"I hate fire," Tessa added. "And I hate you fighting them."

"I know," Will smiled at her. Then he moved towards her and kissed her deeply, his hand resting on
the small of her back.

She knew a slight moan had escaped her throat at his touch. Will's kisses were different than Jem's.
There was a fire in Will's caress that burned just under the surface. Jem's kisses were loving and
wonderful, but they didn't convey the same underlying desire Will's did. There it was again, that
stupid feeling again, making her want to hide. She pulled away, breaking the kiss casually and
turning to hang up the coat Will had thrown over the back of the couch.

"It's strange," Jem said absently. Tessa turned to face him. "How normal that seems to me now."

"Watching me kiss your girlfriend doesn't bother you anymore, huh?" Will chuckled.

"Our girlfriend," Jem reminded him. "Though that doesn't feel right either."

"Our Tessa," Will smiled. "Because the world doesn't have a name for us."

"There is such a thing as being too unique," Jem remarked with a laugh.

"Never," Will scoffed.

"Da-DA!" a sudden scream got their attention. All three parents turned to see Lucie standing staring
at them, holding her favourite blanket in one hand and a book in the other.

"Do you want da-da to read you a story?" Will asked, leaving down. "Or is da okay?"

"Da-da," Lucie replied.

"Typical," Will sighed, standing up again.

"Don't let me interrupt the make out session," Jem chuckled as he let Lucie take him by the hand.
"I'll read to the adorable little angel." Tessa watched Jem and Lucie walk down the hall before they
turned into Lucie's bedroom and the door closed behind them.

"Adorable little bias angel," Will muttered under his breath.

"Don't be too hard on her," Tessa smiled, moving closer to try and cheer Will up.

"I won't," Will smiled, reaching his arms out to wrap them around her.

"Good," Tessa looked up at him. She knew she was smiling, but it hardly mattered as she was lost in
his perfect blue eyes.
Then he was kissing her deeply, and though Tessa welcomed the affection, that ugly feeling reared its head again. She pulled away.

"Tessa," Will's voice was gentle. She felt his hand against her cheek. "Are you alright?"

"Fine," Tessa replied automatically.

"Are you sure?" Will asked. She leaned up to kiss his cheek before saying once again that she was fine, this time with a smile.

"Then why do I miss you?" Will asked in a whispered. "Miss being near you, holding you."

"You're holding me right now," Tessa squired awkwardly.

"You know what I mean," Will smiled at her. "I miss making love to you."

"We do that," Tessa said, again a little awkwardly.

"In the dark," Will replied. "And I wouldn't call it making love."

"What are you trying to say?" Tessa asked, her heart pounding a little nervously.

"Do you know how much I love you?" he asked softly. "Really know I mean?"

"I- " Tessa stammered. "I love you too."

Will smiled, his other hand reaching up to hold her cheek. "At first I thought it was just because of Lucie," he continued in a whisper. "You were tired and you had every right to be. Then I saw you struggling once more with something far worse. It wasn't until things settled down that I realized it was more."

"I- " Tesa tried again. "I don't know what you want me to say."

"I want you to tell me why," Will said softly. "Why are you hiding from me?" A part of her wanted to say she wasn't hiding, to deny it all, but she just couldn't, not with Will asking so earnestly.

"I'm not the same as I was," Tessa mumbled, trying to look down despite his efforts to encourage her to look at him.

"Time changes everyone," Will agreed. "That doesn't mean you hide from those you love, who love you."

"Having Lucie," Tessa managed to say. "Changed me. I'm saggy, marked, different."

Will didn't say a word. Instead he took a step back, and began pulling his shirt up over his head. Tessa didn't form thoughts as she watched, waiting to see what happened.

"Do you see this?" Will asked pointing to a mark on his shoulder that had been there as long as Tessa had known him. "I got this when a rotten ceiling beam fell on me. And this." He pointed to the small mark near his left hip, which Tessa hadn't noticed before. It looked almost like the skin had been melted and cooled. "This is from a recent rather nasty fire that managed to eat through my suit. And I have more scars than this, Tess." Dropping his hands to his sides, Will added. "Do you think of me as marked?"

"That's different," Tessa said with a shake of her head. "You got those saving lives."
"And you got yours creating a life," Will reminded her. "We are the same, my love, and you are beautiful."

Tessa’s breathing was very shallow as she gazed up into his clear blue eyes. Slowly, as if waiting to see if she’d object, Will reached for her. Ever so gently she felt his hands at her hips, then up under her shirt. Tessa closed her eyes, leaning her head back as she enjoyed the feeling.

"Beautiful," Will whispered as he kissed her neck. His hands had found their way to her breasts. Tessa couldn’t stop the gasp that escaped her as his fingers teased her nipple. She had missed him too, but she couldn’t stop the irrational feeling that Will would change his mind the moment he saw her. Trying to be brave, Tessa pulled her own shirt off. She hadn’t bothered to put on a bra today, which was the case most days she didn’t leave the house. Even after having Lucie Tessa wasn’t so well endowed that she couldn’t get away with comfortably going braless at home.

Now she stood face to face with Will, just as shirtless as him. Her eyes were fixed on his face, waiting for a reaction. But he only smiled before moving closer to kiss every one of her stretch marks.

"You will always be beautiful to me," Will whispered.

Chapter End Notes

So this chapter’s been done for a while now, but my editor has been very busy. Hopefully, it was worth the wait! ^_^

Also this was the first time I got to upload a timeline at the same time as a current chapter! Yay.

Sneak Peek Chapter 126

"Darling," The voice was gently was highly amused.

"Huh?" Alec mumbled, sitting up.

"You fell asleep," Magnus explained, with a hint of laughter in his eyes. Alec rubbed his eyes as he turned to see the credits of the Pompeii show scrolling across the screen.

"This history stuff makes a great lullaby," Alec replied. Magnus rolled his eyes.

"What am I going to do with you?" Magnus asked, with a shake of his head.

"Love me, feed me," Alec grinned. "Never leave me."

"To some marriage is a word," Magnus sighed. "To others a sentence."

"Oh oh!" Alec said, jumping up. "My turn. Umm…. Olive you."

"I've created a monster," Magnus said, fanning sadness.
Maia knew why she had been so cruel to Jace, though she wasn't so keen to admit it to herself let alone anyone else. It probably said more about her than it did about him, and she didn't like that feeling. At the time she hadn't been quite as aware of the motivations behind her actions, but now with some time and thought, Maia was pretty sure she'd figured it out. Jace reminded her of Daniel, the brother she would never be able to match. Maia had long ago accepted that her parents would never look at her the way they looked at him, but that didn't mean she should be projecting those feelings on Jace just because they were both stereotypically good looking guys who seemed to whine about having everything. Maia was also ashamed of how good it had felt to hurt Jace. It was Daniel and her parents that she wanted to yell at, not him. If only she wasn't so scared to just tell them how she really felt, maybe she wouldn't have blown up at Jace like that.

Then again, there had also been some truth in what she'd said. All Jace had to do was wait for his soulmate to come back to him, while she had to watch Jordan happy with someone else. Of course, another main difference is fault. Clary's circumstances had been beyond Jace's control, while Maia had no one else to blame but herself. How many times had she thought back to all those missed opportunities? How many times had he been right there, telling her how he felt? How many times had she let him walk away without even trying to figure out what she truly wanted? If even once she'd given him a moments hope, maybe he wouldn't have moved on when he did? But no, every time he'd be kind, every time he'd showed her he still cared, she'd turned him away. And even after that, she'd let the idea of them float around in the back of her mind as something that would always be there if she changed her mind! What the hell was wrong with her? At the time, she'd convinced herself it was because they hadn't worked out, or because she liked being single. She'd denied reality until it had come crashing up to hit her in the face. The reality was that Maia was lonely and she'd missed her chance, missed so many chances. When she'd learned of his parents interference, Maia should have run into Jordan's arms.

Maia banged her head on the table. Her thoughts were in no way helping her with her homework, but that wasn't the only thing hindering her progress. Her stupid computer was acting up again. The best way she could describe it was like a twitch. The mouse would start shaking on the screen, then suddenly vanish for a while before reappearing. Maybe it was time to take it to an actual tech guy, even if it would probably cost her an arm and a leg, because it wasn't like she could go ask Jordan for help. She knew he'd be able to fix it, but the idea of going to ask him made her stomach all twisted. Maybe she could get away with not fixing it for a while longer. After all, the glitch didn't seem to be interfering with anything major.

She was saved from her thoughts by a knock at the door. Getting up from the table, she went to get the door. To her great surprise there stood Alec.

"My sister around?" Alec asked.

"She's at class," Maia replied automatically. "Why?"

"The plan was to convince her to order food," Alec explained. "But if she isn't here..." Moved past Maia and into the apartment, Alec went straight for the kitchen.

"You're going to raid our fridge?" Maia finished his sentence as she watched him do just that. Alec didn't answer so Maia followed him, and then watched as he snooped his way through her every
"Is Magnus starving you or something?" Maia laughed.

"My mom is," Alec grumbled. Then he closed the final cupboard with a groan. "And your guys food sucks."

"What are you talking about?" Maia huffed. "I just went grocery shopping two days ago."

"I'm hungry," Alec whined. He was looking all together rather pathetic, and Maia decided to take pity on him.

"Oh alright fine," she sighed. "I'll make you something. What do you want?"

"Sushi!" Alec said.

"Yeah can't make that," Maia replied. "How about stir fry?"

"Meh," Alec grumbled. It was then that Maia decided Alec wasn't quite as bad off as he seemed.

"When did she cut you off exactly?" Maia asked.

"Yesterday!" Alec exclaimed. "It's hell."

"Oh dear..." Maia whispered.

"And Magnus is no help," Alec continued. "He keeps saying there's plenty of food in the cupboards, and the rents paid for the next two months, so what's the problem?"

"Yeah, I'm gonna agree with Magnus on this one," Maia nodded. "That doesn't sound like a problem to me."

"Not you too," Alec whined. He was doing a lot of that today in Maia's opinion.

"Yes me too," Maia replied. "It sounds to me like you are just complaining, rather than actually working on solving your problem."

"And I had to cancel the maid!" Alec exclaimed, clearly not listening to her. "Do you know what that means?"

"You might have to clean something?" Maia shrugged.

Looking like his entire world had crumbled under him, Alec left the kitchen and collapsed face first onto the sofa.

"Has anyone ever told you that you're a drama queen?" Maia asked casually.

"No," came Alec's muffled reply through the pillow.

"Well, you most definitely are," Maia stated firmly, then added in a light teasing but still serious voice, "Get up, get a job and stop whining, ya overgrown baby."

Alec sat up, looking pathetic but somehow more composed. "I suck," he said.

"Lazy yeah," Maia replied. "Not so great with change, for sure, but let's not generalize."

"I can't get a job," Alec said. "Who in their right mind would hire me?"
"I find it hard to believe you've only now realized you'd have to get a job one day," Maia laughed. "I mean you can't be a student forever."

"I hadn't really thought about it," Alec shrugged. "After all, it's another year till grad."

"And what makes you think future you will be any better at problem solving?" Maia asked.

Alec shrugged before replying. "Future me will be older."

"Oh boy," Maia sighed. "Okay, why don't you apply to one of the companies your parents own? Might help you get your leg in the door."

"I don't know," Alec sighed. "Then I'd be the boss's, boss's boss's kid."

"Then work somewhere else?" Maia suggested.

"Arug!" Alec groaned.

"There there," Maia chuckled, patting him on the back in a slightly condescending, but still mostly kind way.

Once again, Maia was interrupted by her front door. This time though it was her roommates. Izzy entered the room with Simon beside her. The two of them were in the middle of a conversation, but it ended when they saw Alec.

"He's here to steal our food," Maia added helpfully when Izzy looked confused.

"And what's so wrong with your food that you have to come here for mine?" Izzy asked, taking off her fall boots before moving farther into the apartment. Simon remained by the door, jacket on.

"Mom cut me off," Alec mumbled just loud enough for his sister to hear.

"Well, don't expect any sympathy from me," Izzy huffed. "I've been telling you for years that you eat out too much."

"Mom said she was cutting you off too!" Alec snapped back.

"Not today though," Izzy grinned at him, walking forward to pinch her brother's cheeks, which Alec didn't seem to enjoy at all. "Today you're SOL, not me."

"SOL?" Maia asked.

"Shit outta luck," Izzy explained with a laugh.

"Now Izzy," Simon began, speaking for the first time since arriving. "Don't you think you are being a little harsh."

"Oh, but harsh is so much fun," Izzy argued.

"Yes, but he's your brother," Simon continued. "It wouldn't kill you to show some sympathy."

"Urg," Izzy groaned. "How dare you try and turn me into a better person." Simon laughed and then Maia watched as Izzy went forward to hug her brother. Then she picked something up from the kitchen table and moved back to the door.

"There, done," Izzy grinned. "See you later." She slipped her boots back on and made to leave.
"Wait, where are you going?" Alec asked.

"Out to lunch," Izzy giggled.

"But you just got here?" Maia inquired, confused.

"Take me with you!" Alec pleaded, but Izzy ignored him and seconds later, Maia was alone with Alec again.

"She did that just to spit me," Alec grumbled. "Stupid sister."

"There are worse siblings, trust me," Maia said. "So how about that stir fry?"

Alec didn't respond, but rather collapsed face first on the couch again. Realizing she was hungry, Maia went to make herself a simple snack as she wasn't quite hungry enough to make a full meal for one. As she prepared her toast with peanut butter, Maia ignored the rather pathetic lump on her couch.

"Lunch is the worst meal of the day," Alec said into his pillow as Maia ate her toast. "It's like you're hungry enough for a full meal, but you don't want to invest in one, you know?"

"I really don't," Maia chuckled at him. "Move over." Maia made herself space on the couch and started scrolling through netflix on Izzy's tv as she ate.

They were halfway through an episode of some comedy show Maia hadn't picked out too carefully, and would likely never watch again, when the front door opened.

"Where is that ridiculous husband of mine?"

Maia pointed very obviously at the Alec shaped lump taking up two thirds of the couch.

"There you are!" Magnus stated firmly as he moved quickly to Alec's side. "Get up!"

"Don't wanna," Alec whined. Maia watched as Magnus grabbed Alec by the arm and tried to make him sit up, without success. Magnus sighed and then joined them on the couch.

"It really isn't that bad," Magnus tried to tell Alec. "Come home and I'll make us something."

"It's not that," Alec mumbled so quietly Maia almost didn't hear him.

"What is it then?" Magnus asked.

"It was my idea you take the volunteer job," Alec began so quietly, Maia almost felt rude for eavesdropping, even though they were in her living room. "And, I mean I've always been able to take care of you, but now-" Though Magnus was looking at Alec, Alec couldn't bring himself to, and instead spoke to the pillow in his hands. "Now I can't."

"That isn't how this works Alec," Magnus said calmly. "Life is going deal us cards that we don't like, and we are going to change and grow. The important thing is that we grow together and we face change together."

"I know, I just-" Alec began again. "I love you."

"Not really following your logic there, but I love you too," Magnus chuckled. "Now can we please go home?"
Alec looked up, his eyes dreamy as he gazed at his husband. Maia was having a hard time not tearing up herself, and was very glad the newlyweds left before anyone noticed.

"Stupid sentimental moment," Maia muttered to herself as she looked for something with blood and violence to watch instead.

But then she was smiling again. She'd give Alec a few weeks to search on his own, and if he didn't find anything, she'd try to get him a job at her grocery store. It was locally owned, and in no way related to his parents companies which Alec would probably appreciate.

Not long after Malec left, Maia found herself with yet another couple walking in her front door. The difference being that this was the one who one lived here. Maia would have been really happy living with Simon if not for the Sizzy factor. They both walked in with dovey eyed expressions, gazing at each other, or so it seemed to Maia. Then again, if she could be happy for Alec and Magnus, she supposed she should learn to be happy for Izzy and Simon too. Stupid people and their stupid happiness. Where did one find the rare priceless commodity she was dying to know.

"Alec's gone I take it?" Izzy asked.

"Yep," Maia replied. "His husband collected him."


"I thought you went out for lunch?" Maia scoffed.

"Nah, I was just teasing Alec," Izzy replied. "We had a study group thing. I came home to get my notes." And Izzy held up the item Maia had seen her take off the table, which it turned out was a notebook.

"You two are the worst," Maia laughed.

Izzy made sandwiches for herself and Simon, while Maia made herself turn off netflix in favour of homework. It was a slow and tedious process that made her want to bang her head on the wall. The computer acting up was in no way helping anything.

Maia resolved to just bite the bullet and take the stupid thing into a shop if it was still acting strange by the end of the week.

Chapter End Notes

Who is sick of Maia's whining? I know my editor is. ^_^ Also Alec isn't really any better right now... lol

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Sneak Peek Chapter 129

"Okay now breath," Simon told her. "Life as we know it isn't ending because you're computer sucks."

And like that her anger disappeared. She collapsed into a chair looking rather pathetic. Simon decided she needed a hug.

"It's a good thing your computer isn't broken," Simon told her as he got up to go over to
"Isn't it?"

"The desktop icons are vanishing," Maia groaned. "The guest login is gone too."

"Did you tell the tech guys that?"

"Yes!" Maia exclaimed, her anger coming back with a vengeance. "They just said I probably forgot that I deleted them. Idiots!"

"Alright bring it in," Simon said holding his arms out. "Yep that's right this hug is mandatory." Maia laughed slightly, but accepted the hug.
Alec was trying to pay attention, but even with the best of intentions, his mind was wondering. It was hard to keep focused on something he cared so little about. Purposely blinking, Alec tried again to listen, tried really hard to keep his mind focused on absorbing the words coming his way, but he failed. Instead, he focused on the speaker. If the words coming from his mouth were of no interest to Alec, the mouth itself was. Those lips he knew of so well, but it was the eyes that never failed to hold his attention. Whenever Alec’s husband spoke of history he got this light in his eyes. Magnus was so passionate about the subject that he could talk for hours. The problem was that Alec didn't care much for the past. After all, it was over. Sure, it was important in a 'those who don't learn history are doomed to repeat it' kinda way, but even century old wars and almost forgotten treasure didn't feel like they had any bearing on his life today. Alec did love to see his husband so animated though. It always made him happy to see his husband's face alite with excitement. Alec couldn't help but smile at Magnus's joy, just as he couldn't help but space out when the man went on and on about really old dust.

"You haven't heard a word I've said, have you?"

"Huh?" Alec said, shaking his head a little.

"As I suspected," Magnus replied, his eyes narrowing.

"I love you?" Alec grinned.

"Yeah, you better," Magnus laughed. "Did you at least catch the part about the website?"

"Umm…"

With a sigh, Magnus repeated himself. "I'm listed on the museum's website now. Under most valued volunteer. There's a picture and everything."

"That's great!" Alec exclaimed, throwing his arms around Magnus in a hug.

"Thanks," Magnus smiled, accepting the hug. "Now if only they paid me, I'd be set."

"Pfft," Alec waved his concerns aside.

"Don't pfft a paycheck," Magnus counted.

"Pfft," Alec repeated. Then he gave up on the condescending tone and smiled warmly. "I'm so proud of you. Aren't you glad you decided to work at the museum?"

"Volunteer at the museum," Magnus corrected.

"Life isn't about a paycheck," Alec sighed.

"That's because you've never had to live on one before," Magnus argued. Then with a sigh he added, "What did I marry into?"

Alec laughed, leaning forward to kiss his husband before replying. "Money?"
"Troubles more like," Magnus said with a shake of his head. "You've turned me into a total slacker!"

"I think you needed the break," Alec argued.

"Do you realize that I basically haven't had a job since we got engaged, right?" Magnus replied. "That's over a year! This isn't a break. It's unemployment."

"You've been employed at the museum since we got engaged," Alec reminded him.

"Volunteering your time isn't employment," Magnus replied, in an exasperated voice, as if he was sick of reminding Alec of this. "See there's this huge difference between them. You wanna guess what it is? Oh yes, that's right, a paycheck."

"I'm hungry," Alec said, grinning from ear to ear.

"Don't change the subject," his husband replied, narrowing his eyes, but Alec just smiled innocently and kissed Magnus on the nose before walking towards the kitchen.

"You know sometimes you are real annoying," Magnus's voice called after him.

"Too late," Alec replied as he opened the fridge. "You married me. No take backs."

"That's what I get for not reading the fine print," Magnus replied with a sigh. His voice had that tone to it where you just know he's smiling.

Closing the fridge door with a groan of laziness, Alec turned to face his husband, who had followed him into the kitchen.

"Do you wanna order something?" Alec asked. "Sushi? Or maybe Chinese?"

"As much as I love takeout," Magnus replied. "This is getting silly. We can cook you know."

"Yeah, but I got so used to not cooking on our honeymoon," Alec whined.

"Time to change that," Magnus replied firmly. "We are cooking."

Alec whined and complained, but Magnus was having none of it. In the end, they pulled some chicken out of the freezer and cooked it up with rice and vegetables. It took more work then clicking some buttons and paying the guy who showed up at the door, but Alec had to admit it was a nice change of pace. After dinner Alec wanted to watch a movie, but his husband decided it was time to seriously look for a job.

"You've been saying that ever since we got back," Alec whined. "Just come sit with me."

No response.

"Isn't the whole point of getting married, so you don't have to watch tv alone?" Alec tried again.

Magnus continued to type away at his laptop, without saying a word.

"Oh, come on," Alec pleaded. "We'll watch whatever you wanna watch."

The typing stopped.

"Even the History Channel," Alec added.
He heard a chair scrape across the floor, then footsteps before Magnus stood in front of him, looking suspicious.

"You do realize we don't have the History Channel?" Magnus reminded him. "Because we don't have cable."

"Um, yeah right, I mean like a history show on Netflix," Alec amended. "You pick." He smiled, trying to look all angelic and innocence.

"Oh, alright," Magnus gave in. "But just one. Then I have to do some adulting, you bad influence."

They settled on the couch, wrapped in a blanket as Alec watched Magnus scroll through the boring section of Netflix, looking for something to watch. By the time they were an hour into a documentary on the destruction of Pompeii, Alec was regretting his decision.

"You know we could watch something else," Magnus hinted.

"What's the catch?" Alec asked.

"You job hunting with me," Magnus explained.

"I'm still in school," Alec shrugged. "I don't need a job."

"Well, aren't you going to work after you get your degree?" Magnus asked. "Only one year left till graduation." Alec just shrugged. He hadn't really thought much about it. There was a whole year before he had to worry about that. Why worry now?

"That's future Alec's problem," he said.

"In that case, current Alec should know that there's at least another hour in this documentary," Magnus explained.

"That's okay," Alec sighed, closing his eyes and resting his head on his husband's shoulder. After a moment, Magnus pressed play and Alec listened to the gentle sound of some british guy describing mass graves, while he focused on being in the presence of the man beside him.

"Darling." The voice was gently was highly amused.

"Huh?" Alec mumbled, sitting up.

"You fell asleep," Magnus explained, with a hint of laughter in his eyes. Alec rubbed his eyes as he turned to see the credits of the Pompeii show scrolling across the screen.

"This history stuff makes a great lullaby," Alec replied. Magnus rolled his eyes.

"What am I going to do with you?" Magnus asked, with a shake of his head.

"Love me, feed me," Alec grinned. "Never leave me."

"To some, marriage is a word," Magnus sighed. "To others, a sentence."

"Oh, oh!" Alec said, jumping up. "My turn. Umm…. Olive you."

"I've created a monster," Magnus said, faining sadness.

"I've taken a viking to you," Alec giggled.
"Why did the scarecrow keep getting promoted," Magnus asked, finally playing along.

"No idea," Alec grinned.

"Because he was outstanding in his field," Magnus replied. Alec laughed before continuing.

"What did the Diamond say to the Carbon?" Alec asked, eagerly. "I've been under a lot of pressure lately."

"If you refine metal, you should also be the one who sells it," Magnus explained. "Because if you smelt it, you dealt it."

"I'm utterly in love," Alec told his husband, grinning.

The puns continued until they were both ready for bed.

Magnus wasn't there the next day at lunch to make Alec go home and cook. This meant that between his morning and afternoon classes, Alec headed to the cafeteria to refuel. Ordering his usual, Alec tapped to pay and was walking away when the cashier called him back.

"Sorry sir, but that card was declined."

"Huh, that's odd," Alec said as he turned around to read the word denied on the screen.

"Our machine has been acting up today," the women said reaching forward to take the debit machine back. "Might be that."

"Yeah, or maybe my taps broken," Alec suggested, thinking he needed to get his card replaced. The women reset the machine and he tried this time inserting the card and typing his pin number, but the machine made that awful beeping noise again to tell him it hadn't worked.

"Do you have another form of payment?" she asked.

"Ah yes," Alec said absently, still confused by his card. "Cash." He couldn't remember why he had the twenty in his wallet, but at this moment he was very grateful for it.

It was probably a mix up with the bank, or a limit of some kind Alec thought as he once again picked up his tray and walked over to a table. Alec would just have to call them.

He ate his lunch, still mulling over the card issues. Deciding he didn't have time to call the bank before his next class, Alec collected his things and went up to the third floor to Business 402, where he tried to pay attention. The problem was that here he cared not for the subject or the speaker. At least listening to Magnus had an emotional element to it, but these days none of his classes really held his attention. He supposed this is what he got for waiting to pick a major for so long his parents choose it for him. Alec wasn't doing badly in his classes, it was more that he was bored with them.

When it finally ended, Alec decided to go home before dealing with the bank's hold times. He liked having access to entertainment while stuck on the phone. This turned out to be a good idea, as it was a solid half hour before he got to talk to a human being, and in the hour following, Alec learned exactly one thing: bank customer service was useless. Everyone referred him to everyone else, and no one gave him a straight answer, but from what he could gather, this was more than just some glitch. The only thing most everyone he talked to seem to agree on is that there was money in his account, it was just money he couldn't use, move or manipulate in any way. Alec was being denied all and any access to it, and not a single person he spoke with could tell him why or how. It was as if his accounts were frozen, but no one had the power to do that... no one except...
Finally hanging up with the useless customer service, Alec dialed his phone again, trying very hard to think of another explanation as he did so.

"I've been expecting your call."

"So it was you?" Alec asked, shock and anger welling up inside him.

"Of course it was me."

"Why?" Alec demanded. "Why would you do this to me?"

"I think you know why."

"I most certainly do not!" Alec snapped.

"You can have your cards back when you don't need them."

"That makes no sense at all!" Alec complained.

"It makes perfect sense," his mother replied, calmly. "We didn't build an empire from the ground up, just to raise a bunch of 30-something trust fund junkies."

"But how do you expect me to live?" Alec demanded.

"Your tuition is paid up till graduation, and so is half your rent," Maryse explained, again all too calmly. "As for the rest, you are on your own."

"But where am I going to find the rest of the rent," Alec complained. "And food! I need food."

"Handouts won't teach you anything," Maryse continued.

"What does dad think of this?" Alec asked.

"Your father and I are of the same opinion on this, but if you don't believe me, call him and ask yourself."

"Are you cutting Izzy off too?" Alec asked, annoyed.

"Your sister isn't married," his mother said. "And she isn't so close to graduation."

"So what you're saying is that you will be doing this to her too?" Alec asked.

"What I'm saying is that it's time to grow up, Alexander."

"But I don't wanna," Alec whined.

"Listen to that husband of yours," Maryse said, with almost a chuckle in her voice. "And I'm sure you will do fine."

"Please don't do this," Alec begged. "I'll be more responsible, promise. I'll-"

"Good luck," she said sweetly before hanging up the phone. He knew that tone to his mother's voice. She wasn't changing her mind.

Alec was doomed.

His mother was being completely ridiculous. Focused on trying to find a way around this, Alec
called his dad, but to no effect. It seems the two of them really were on the same page here.

"Can you believe her!" Alec ranted to his husband after explaining everything to Magnus. "I mean seriously! Why even bother giving them back if I don't need them anymore. It makes no sense. Unless she's punishing me for something, but I can't think what." Alec groaned, throwing his head back. "Oh man, this just totally sucks, and I don't wanna!"

To his surprise, Alec heard laughter. His husband's laughter. He turned and stared in shock, as Magnus tried and totally failed to contain giggles.

"What's so funny?" Alec whined.

"Oh, just admiring your mother's parenting skills," Magnus sniggered. "Just when I think I have her all figured out. She goes and does something like this."

"Not you too," Alec whined. "Don't agree with her."

"I'm sorry Alexander," Magnus chuckled. "But your mother is right."

"I hate you," Alec glared.

"No, you love me," Magnus

"I do," Alec whined.

Just then, they were interrupted by the front door opening. Alec turned to see Jace standing there, looking sulky, their key in his hand.

"Clary's happy," Jace proclaimed as if this was the end of the world.

"I have to get a job," Alec shot back.

"Meow," Chairmen announced his presence as he ran over to Jace and started rubbing his legs.

"And, I miss your stupid cats," Jace whined.

"Happiness, employment and cats," Magnus said with a sigh. "The real problems kids face today."


"It's a good thing Clary's happy in Paris," Magnus told Jace, ignoring the insult. "And it makes sense. She's in a whole new environment, and therefore has far more distractions there than you have here."

Jace stood for a moment and seemed to process this, though without much enthusiasm. Then he sulked over to the couch and collapsed onto it. Alec, of a mind to join him, went and sat down beside Jace.

"Mom cut me off," Alec told his friend.

"Bitch," Jace replied with conviction.

"Thank you!" Alec exclaimed. "Can you believe my stupid husband is on her side?!"

"I heard that," Magnus's voice called from down the hall.
"So, what do ya say?" Jace asked, with a resigned tone. "You gonna let me distracted myself by helping you with a resume?"

"I suppose that's better than picking you up at a bar in the middle of the night," Alex sighed.

"Not my finest moment," Jace replied sheepishly. Alec's laugh was more like a bark, but he agreed to help Jace with his distractions. It took less than an hour for Alec to realize that he wasn't qualified for anything.

"I thought the point of these things was to tell the truth?" Alec stated.

"You shouldn't outright lie," Jace explained. "But sometimes it helps to embellish."

"Embellish what?" Alec asked. "I have no job experience."

"But you're hard working, punctual and reliable," Jace explained.

"Am not," Alec argued.

"A little help here," Jace pleaded with Magnus.

Chuckling softly, Magnus joined them. Alec looked over his husband's shoulder at the elegantly structured resume on the computer.

"Damn," Alec said slowly. "You work a lot."

"Not lately," Magnus laughed. "And it's always easier to get a job if you have a job."

"I'm doomed," Alec finally voiced his realization out loud.

Chapter End Notes

This chapter and the last have been done a while, but life got in the way of them being edited. Life has now gotten in the way of me writing the chapter after this so I don't know how long it will be before I update again. Probably not as fast as my usual pace, but I hope it won't be too long. It's just been a stressful week.

I was going for funny with this chapter so I hope I made you laugh at least once. :)

Sneak Peek Chapter 128

She'd denied reality until it had come crashing up to hit her in the face. Maia was lonely and she'd missed her chance, missed so many chances. When she'd learned of his parents interference Maia should have run into Jordan's arms.

Her thoughts were in no way helping her with her homework, but that wasn't the only hindering her progress. Her stupid computer was acting up again again. The best way she could describe it was a twitch. The mouse would start shaking on the screen then suddenly vanish for a while before reappearing. Maybe it was time to take it to an actual tech guy even if it would probably cost her an arm and a leg, because it wasn't like she could go ask Jordan for help. She knew he'd be able to fix it, but the idea of going to ask him made her stomach all twisted. Maybe she could get away with not fixing it for a while longer. After all, the glitch didn't seem to be interfering with
anything major.
Simon's life was more cup half full than empty these days. Somehow he'd managed to snag a women way out of his league, and a great group of friends. Plus graduation was on the horizon. The future was bright and the present was beautiful. Could life really get any better?

"How's Maia?"

Ah yes, there was that.

"She's fine," Simon replied, trying to fake a smile. It was rather an odd thing to be friends with two people who weren't talking to each other, and yet still wanted to know everything going on in each other's lives.

"Just fine?" Jordan continued. "Or like mostly fine?"

"Fine, fine," Simon added, with a slightly awkward shrug.

"I don't know why she doesn't want to be friends?" Jordan sighed. Simon didn't reply. He had a rather good idea as to why Maia didn't want to be friends, but he was also sure it wasn't his secret to tell.

"We were friends before," Jordan said. "I mean, I think we were. During those study sessions, and then back in high school before we ever dated."

"I'm not saying anything for sure," Simon began, testing the waters. "But what if she couldn't to be friends with you for the same reason I once couldn't be friends with Clary?"

"I'm not sure what you're getting at?" Jordan inquired.

Simon sighed then elaborated. "What if she likes you again?"

"Ha, like that would happen," Jordan laughed. "I'm not a complete idiot, you know. It might only take a dozen rejections after flying half way around the world, but I do eventually take a hint."

"Okay," he added cautiously. "But let's say for the sake of argument it were true. Would it change anything for you?"

"I'm with Paige," Jordan replied.

"I'll take that as a no," Simon said, resolving to keep his mouth shut and leave the fools to their own problems.

"Though I'll admit it would be nice to know," Jordan added quietly after a moment's thought. "Sometimes I find myself wondering if she ever loved me at all."

And Simon's resolve crumbled to pieces. He knew he'd end up sticking his nose where it doesn't belong, but it wasn't his fault. It was their fault for being so completely stupid!

"Where are the girls anyway?" Jordan sighed. "How long does it take to powder one's nose?"
"Depends how badly their boyfriend's messed up their makeup," Simon sniggered, remembering how he and Izzy had almost been late.

"Well if they don't hurry up I might order without them," Jordan complained. "I'm starving."

"Actually you are only very hungry," Simon corrected him. "Since I know for a fact you had breakfast and lunch today, you are in no way starving."

"That movie you made me watch," Jordan replied. "The one character talked like that…. The really literally guy with the funny ears. What was his name?"

"Spock," Simon sighed. "Good fiction is so wasted on you, my friend."

And just then the girls arrived. Paige and Izzy made their appearance from around the corner. Paige was wearing more casual attire, a nice pair of jeans and blouse, while Isabelle was in a navy blue tight knee length dress.

"You two didn't get up to any trouble while we were gone, did you?" Izzy asked Simon as she greeted him with a light kiss and sat down. Simon always loved it when Izzy showed him affection in public because it usually lead to at least one guy in the restaurant doing a double take. Tonight it was the muscular blonde on their left who was sitting at the bar. He'd been eyeing Izzy up since she'd walked in. Until this moment, it seemed he hadn't realize Simon wasn't her brother or friend zone buddy.

"No more than usual," Simon replied, grinning at his stunning girlfriend.

"Then what's with that smug look on your face, huh?" Izzy asked.

"Oh it's nothing really," Simon replied, the look in question still very much present. "Just enjoying the view." He turned his gaze to watch the now very grumpy looking blonde guy at the bar.

"That guy has been staring at my ass since we walked in," Izzy huffed. Then she turned to face him, very purposely putting her arms around Simon at the same time. Then once she was sure she had the guys attention, Izzy turned to kiss Simon very openly on the mouth. Simon's hands automatically moved up to hold her back as he forget where he was.

"There," Izzy said pulling away from him. "That should teach him a lesson about assumptions." Simon's eyes were closed, and it took him a full minute to find his way back to reality.

"So, have you fools decided what you want to eat yet?" Izzy asked the group as she turned to sit properly in her chair again.

"I'm not so sure about the fool part," Jordan said. "But I'm ordering a burger."

"You could get a burger anywhere," Paige reminded him. "Why not get something more interesting?"

"I'm not an interesting kinda guy," Jordan replied simply.

The waitress came to take their orders then. Paige ordered the Fish and Chips which prompted Jordan to tease her about her 'interesting' dinner choice.

"Oh sure, cause Fish and Chips is so exotic," Jordan smiled at his girlfriend.

"It's British," Paige defended herself. Izzy ordered lobster which didn't surprise Simon at all, and
finally he asked for Fettuccine Alfredo.

"So, how is Jace coping?" Simon asked his former roommate once the waitress had taken their menus away.

"Um," Jordan replied. "Okay I guess."

"And by that you mean?" Simon asked.

"Well he's trying to stay busy," Jordan explained.

"While at the same time fretting about how Clary hasn't video chatted with him yet," Paige added. "She's been texting him fairly regularly, but never long texts. Just short update like stuff."

"Really?" Simon asked, surprised. He'd already video chatted with Clary more than once since she'd left, and she hadn't mentioned not video chatting with Jace.

"Considering how many times Jace has brought it up," Jordan continued. "I'm gonna go with really."

"I'm chatting with Clary tonight," Simon explained. "Maybe I'll ask her why. I doubt Jace will be comfortable enough to ask."

"I think Jace would greatly appreciate that," Jordan smiled. "Though you'd never get him to admit to it."

"I'll have to tell my brother you have stepped up your Jace watch duties," Izzy giggled. "I hear there was a drunk phone call incident."

"Urg," Jordan whined. "Why'd I get suck babysitting Jace anyway?"

"Because we live with him," Paige giggled.

"Yeah and how did that happen?" Jordan whined. "I moved in with Simon, which it seems translates to living with a moeppy sap."

"Oh come on," Simon smiled. "He isn't that bad."

"You haven't lived with him since Clary left," Jordan replied. "I promise he is that bad."

"No he isn't," Paige smiled. "Don't listen to my silly boyfriend, Simon. Jace is entitled to be sad."

"Sometimes it's like we have a kid," Jordan laughed. "A very big kid who could beat us both up between blinks."

"I don't know," Paige laughed. "I think you are both big kids, or did I not catch you two playing video games together at three am last week?"

"I have no idea what you are talking about?" Jordan replied innocently.

"Ha!" Paige snorted.

As the topic changed to classes, Simon had a sudden realization. He was the only 4th year at this table, and therefore the only one set to graduate this June.

"I know you two chose your majors ages ago," Izzy was saying to Jordan and Paige. "But as I chose mine before 3rd year started, and my parents didn't choose it for me, I've still beaten Alec which is all
that matters."

"Sibling rivalry still going strong I see," Jordan laughed.

"And I definitely won't turn into a whiny blob when my parents decide it's time to teach me to make money the hard way," Izzy huffed.

"Is that so?" Simon laughed. "What about your Prada purse?"

"Already purchased," Izzy said, raising herself up a little as she spoke.

At that moment dinner arrived, and everyone was far too busy eating to talk much. No one had room for dessert so they simply asked for the check.

"All together or separate?" the waitress asked.

"Separate," Jordan replied. When she returned the waitress placed a bill in front of Simon and another in front of Jordan.

"I'll take that," Izzy grinned, snapping the bill from Simon while Jordan paid for him and Paige.

"After what's happening with Alec, aren't you worried that you'll go to pay and it just won't work?" Simon asked. He'd long ago accepted that being Isabelle's boyfriend came with a certain lack of normal gender roles. Like paying for things. Izzy liked to win the check dance.


After that there was a great deal of chairs scraping against the floor as they all stood up to collect their coat. Since this particular restaurant was a little farther away than their usual places, they'd all drive here in Paige's car. As they were driving along the highway, rather than gazing out the window, Simon turned to gaze at Isabelle. Her long ink-black hair was moving gracefully through the air coming in the window. In profile Izzy looked so strong, but Simon knew the soft heart that beat underneath.

Paige dropped Izzy and Simon off first. Simon waved goodbye as Paige's car pulled out of his driveway and disappeared down the road. Sometimes it was strange to Simon that he didn't live with Jordan anymore. It was funny how life's little changes creep up on you to the point where all at once you realize how very different your life is now compared to years ago.

"Life is a series of small events," Izzy stated as Simon voiced his musing thoughts. "They build up so slowly we can't really see the full impact of them until later."

"Sure, but there have got to be some major moments that matter more than others," Simon argued.

"You can look at it that way," Izzy disagreed. "But in reality, those major moments are shaped and predetermined by the many small ones leading up to it." She paused then added. "Kinda like how the grass is always greener on the other side of the fence. You can't see what is right in front of you."

"Any more words of wisdom, oh wise leader?" Simon asked, grinning.

"Here is never as interesting as over there," Izzy continued. "Now is never as amazing as then, and the future is always brighter than now." She paused to turn and face him. "You may think where you live is uninteresting, but to someone born on the other side of the world, your boring is their exotic and visa versa."
"You know, for someone majoring in Social work," Simon chuckled. "You sound like a philosopher."

"I may be taking a few electives just for fun," Izzy smiled at him. "Plus I've recently become addicted to educational youtube channels." She sighed.

"Can't blame you there," Simon chuckled. "I keep procrastinating studying by watching 101 Facts videos with Sam. They're so addictive."

"Urg," Izzy sighed, moving closer to rest her head on his shoulder. "Speaking of studying, I have a test tomorrow."

"And thanks to time zones, I have a video chat with Clary in about," He checked the clock on his phone. "Five minutes."

"It's so strange to think that it's first thing in the morning for her," Izzy mused. "While it's past ten here." She yawned hugely then added. "Alright, thirty minutes of studying then I'm going to sleep. Night." She kissed him on the cheek, then walked off towards their bedroom.

Alerted to the sound of his phone going off, Simon answered the video call on Whatsapp.

"Hi," Simon waved to his best friend who's image now filled his entire phone screen.

"Good morning," Clary smiled back. "Or I guess it's goodnight to you. Time Zones are weird."

"Yes they are," Simon laughed. "So how's Paris?"

"Well the people at the school are nice enough, but when I venture farther away from school not so much," Clary explained. "Like when someone bumped into me, they didn't even say sorry!"

"How un-Canadian of them," Simon replied in mock horror.

"I know right!" Clary agreed, either missing his sarcasm or choosing to ignore it.

"Anyway," she continued. "My classes are super interesting. I'm learning all kinds of amazing things. And meeting really cool people who are all very interested in how well I speak French. I mean I'm not against learning French, but at the same time I didn't realize people would be so against me speaking English."

"Clary," Simon began. "We've done this video chat thing a few times now, and I just have to ask you something."

"What is it?" she replied.

"Why aren't you video chatting with Jace?" he asked. Clary hung her head, all the joy in her face gone.

"It's just so much more depressing," Clary finally admitted. "With you I can just see you and that's fine, but with Jace if I see him I want to touch him and I can't."

"But you can't let that stop you from calling him, Clary," Simon urged her. "He's going crazy wondering why you aren't. You two can't get by on nothing but short texts for ten months!"

"It's nine and a half months now," Clary corrected him. But then she sighed as if resigned to the worse. "And I know."
"So you'll call him?" Simon asked. "Soon?" Clary took a deep breath, but she agreed. 

"Good," Simon said with energy. "Now that we've got that out of the way, you were talking about new people you've met."

"Enough about me," Clary replied. "How are things back home?"

"Well Alec's been cut off by his mother," Simon began. "And not taking it well. Maia wants Jordan back, but won't tell him because Jordan's happy with Paige. So that's a giant mess which no one is talking about, expect to me it seems. Izzy is perfect as always."

"Apart from missing my phone calls," Clary began. "How is Jace?"

"Okay I think," Simon replied. "He's been trying to stay busy, which has translated to joining every University Club he can get his hands on."

"That doesn't sound good," Clary said, looking guilty.

"Don't you worry about Jace," Simon told her. "Just call him regularly and enjoy the Paris life."

"Paris isn't perfect," Clary said after a moment. "I mean the air is kinda gross."

"Way to burst my bubble there Clary," Simon laughed. "The city of love and air pollution were not connected in my mind until right now."

"Always here to help," Clary laughed.

After that, the topics remained light and fun, focusing on their friends, school and fun facts about Paris, for almost an hour until Clary had to sign off and get to class. Simon too knew he should be in bed. Yawning as he bid his best friend good night, Simon went to check on Izzy. His girlfriend was already in bed, fast asleep. Smiling, Simon got ready for bed, then settling down next to her. Though she was definitely sleeping, Izzy moved closer to let him hold her.

Simon woke the next day a little earlier than he'd expected. He didn't have class until that afternoon and had planned to sleep in. This plan had been ruined by the loud voice coming from the living room.

"Stupid useless people!" Maia's voice carrying into his bedroom.

With a sigh, Simon checked the time. It was ten o'clock so he really had nothing to complain about. Dragging himself out of bed, Simon went to figure out what kind of useless these people were exactly.

"I am so done with this computer!" Maia cried as he entered the room.

"Good morning to you too," Simon replied.

"So I finally gave up and took it to the Geek Squad, or whatever at the electronics store and get this, over a hundred dollars later they said my computer is fine," Maia exclaimed. "Stupid useless tech guys. I bet not a single one of them knows what a URL even is! Arg!"

"Okay, now breath," Simon told her. "Life as we know it isn't ending because you're computer sucks."

And like that, her anger disappeared. She collapsed into a chair looking rather pathetic. Simon decided she needed a hug.
"It's a good thing your computer isn't broken," Simon told her as he got up and went over to her. "Isn't it?"

"The desktop icons are vanishing," Maia groaned. "The guest login is gone too. Something's wrong."

"Did you tell the tech guys that?"

"Yes!" Maia exclaimed, her anger coming back with a vengeance. "They just said I probably forgot that I deleted them. Idiots!"

"Alright bring it in," Simon said holding his arms out. "Yep that's right, this hug is mandatory." Maia laughed slightly, but accepted the hug.

"I know you don't want to hear this, but I bet Jordan could fix it," Simon said.

"I know," Maia whined. "It's just- I can't face him. Not after everything."

"Have you considered the fact that you might owe him the truth?" Simon asked.

"What do you mean?" Maia asked.

"Well I may have been out with him last night, and he may have mentioned something about wondering if you ever cared about him in the first place," Simon replied.

"May have been?" Maia scoffed, raising an eyebrow at him.

"Alright. Was out with," Simon corrected. "He's happy with Paige, and I think it would be a relief for him to learn your time together was real. I don't think it will hurt, Maia. And I know you need the closure to move forward with Bat."

"Urg," Maia groaned. "When did you get all wise and annoying?"


Chapter End Notes

Sorry for the slow updates guys! The next chapter I've started but the one after is finish so if I can just get this next one done there should be two updates coming at you quickly. :) I hope everyone had a happy Easter and as always I would love to read your thoughts on my chapter. So you think Simon is right and Maia should tell Jordan how she feels? Or do you think that will only lead to disaster? Please leave me a comment and let me know what you think! ^_^

-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

Sneak Peek Chapter 130

"And doesn't that help you to understand how Magnus felt at the start?" Jace asked.
"Why he fought you so hard about you paying for everything?"

"No," Alec replied, but Jace knew he was lying to make himself feel better.

"You can't fool me," Jace laughed.
"Urg!" Alec groaned. "Why is stupid life trying to make me see things differently!?"

"Life did nothing," Jace chuckled. "It's your parents you have to blame."

"Stupid parents," Alec grumbled.

"Oh yes how hard it must be to have two wealthy, loving and devoted parents," Jace said his voice dripping with sarcasm. "What a chore this must be for you."

"Oh shut up!" Alec snapped, throwing a pillow at his best friend.
Jace couldn't really bring himself to care that September was over. After all, what did October really have to offer him anyway? Clary still wasn't calling him, and life still sucked. Jace's only way of combating this had been to join every club this university had to offer. In doing so, Jace had met quite a few new and interesting people, which had helped distract him for a while, but it was never enough. Even if his busy schedule meant there were moments when he didn't think of Clary, every night he came home and remembered.

The book club had turned out to just feel like more homework. On top of his actual essays and reading for classes, Jace found himself told to read entire novels in the space of two weeks. The first novel they did Jace barely managed to finish, and by the time he was given a second one, Jace gave up on Book Club entirely. Clearly he wasn't a reader. Though he had stuck it out with the book club longer than the Chess Club. Jace hadn't lasted more than three meetings trying to play the ancient and boring strategy game. His self-esteem could only take losing to first year academic scholarship kids so many times. The origami club was easy, but not interesting enough to keep his mind off Clary. Jace would sit there folding paper with the rest of them, while his mind wondered. Jace couldn't bake and had no inclination to try, and he hadn't even tried to join the bake sale fundraising club.

Despite his lack of enjoyment, wrestling at least was something he was good at. Jace found himself working far harder at the sport now than he had before. Jace also found himself working out more often. Jace tried to turn his mind off as he lifted weights and used the machines.

"I'm thinking you should put in a bedroom," a voice to his left spoke. Jace assumed they weren't talked to him and ignored the sound as he kept lifting his lower legs to moves the weights in the machine up and down.

"I'm thinking the kitchen could go there," the voice continued. "Not sure how often you'll want guests, but there might be space for a dining room here."

No one was responding to the voice so Jace turned to see a women looked at him. She was wearing work out clothes and had clearly built up a sweat before she'd started using the weight machine beside him.

"And obviously what's left you can keep for your home gym," she said. Jace was sure she was talking to him now, but he had no idea why.

"What?" Jace asked her.

"Well, you live here right?" she replied.

"Ummm," Jace added.

"I'm only here a few times a week, but I walk past this hallway every day to geography class, and you are always here," she continued. "Therefore, I have concluded that you live here."

"I don't," Jace said lamely.

"A two word response!" she exclaimed, smiling. "Now we're getting somewhere."
"Uh, sorry," Jace mumbled. "You caught me off guard."

"Not used to girls at the gym, huh?" she asked.

"Not used to people talking to me," Jace replied.

"Let me get this straight," she said, stopping her work out to count on her fingers. "You look like a jerk-hunk, but you are actually the shy nerd type? Is that even possible?"

"No to both of those," Jace replied, laughing a little which felt very strange. "I've just been a bit of a mess lately, and my friends are sick of me."

"Well everyone's entitled to be a mess sometimes," she continued. "I'm sure you have a good reason for it."

"My girlfriend's in Paris," Jace explained. "And will be until June."

"Ha!" she said. "At least I was right about one thing. No one that hot is single."

"Oh whatever," Jace scoffed.

"Modest men with six-packs are hard to find," she smiled.

"Hey," Jace objected. "I'm wearing a shirt."

"Oh please!" she remarked. "All that ab work and you don't have one. As if."

"You are very observant, aren't you?" Jace said, narrowing his eyes are her.

"Is it my fault your worth observing?" she added, grinning. Jace just rolled his eyes, and decided his work out was over for the day. Standing up to wipe down his machine, Jace turned and walked away.

What was he going to do now?

He supposed he could always go home, but the idea in no way appealed to him. If he was being really honest with himself, Jace knew where he wanted to go, but it was embarrassing. Then again maybe it was important, when waiting to see the love of your life again, to find small things to look forward to. This could be one of those things. Making up his mind as he left the showers, Jace headed to Alec's. It was a short walk, but a cool one. Autumn was fast approaching, and with it colder air and fallen leaves.

Jace approached the door, but rather than knock he just walked. Once you've lived somewhere, it feels strange to knock, or maybe he just wanted to see if it would annoy Alec.

"Oh Jace," Alec said as noticed Jace. "I didn't expect to see you."

"I'm not here to see you," Jace explained. "I'm here to snuggle your adorable fuzzy annoyingly perfect cats."

Alec laughed at this. He was at the table working on his laptop, but motioned to the couch where Chairmen was sleeping.

"Hello annoying addictive animal," Jace told the cat, before he pounced, burrowing his face in the feline's fur.
"So fluffy," Jace mumbled as he got in some much needed kitty snuggles. Chairmen didn't seem too enthusiastic about the idea, but he put up with Jace's attention all the same.

"Meow."

Jace looked up to see Catsby walking over to them. Jace picked up the older cat more gently before sitting on the couch and placing Catsby on his lap. Jace scratched behind the cats ears until he was purring. No sooner was Catsby purring then Chairmen jumping up to try and get in on the action. Moments later Jace found himself pinned on the couch with two fuzzy cats sleeping in his lap.

"Uh," Jace said turning to Alec. "Do you mind if I watch tv? Since I can't get up."

"Oh, and I suppose you want me to pass you the remote as well," Alec chuckled as he got up and did just that.

"Thanks," Jace smiled when Alec gave him control of the television.

"Those cats do worm their way into your heart don't they?" Alec said grinning.

"Don't remind me," Jace said, but he was absently stroking one of them as he spoke. His other hand was browsing through netflix. After about ten minutes of this, Jace still wasn't sure what to watch, and instead asked Alec was he was going.

"I should be looking for a job," Alec explained. "But instead I'm doing my homework."

"My friend you are doing it wrong," Jace laughed.

"Doing what wrong?" Alec asked, concerned.

"Procrastination," Jace chuckled. "Doing work to avoid work is just silly."

"Oh hush," Alec objected. "At least I didn't come all the way over here to snuggle some cats."

"Says the guy who has cats," Jace objected. "Or at least married into cats. Speaking of, where's that husband of yours?"

"At work," Alec sighed.

"So he found a job?" Jace asked.

"Yeah like right away," Alec whined. "Everyone wanted to hire him."

"Don't sound too happy about it," Jace laughed at Alec's grumpy tone.

"It's just a little annoying," Alec sighed. "It's like I'm his useless extra now."

"And doesn't that help you to understand how Magnus felt at the start?" Jace asked. "Why he fought you so hard about you paying for everything?"

"No," Alec replied, but Jace knew he was lying to make himself feel better.

"You can't fool me," Jace laughed.

"Urg!" Alec groaned. "Why is stupid life trying to make me see things stupid differently!?"

"Life did nothing," Jace chuckled. "It's your parents you have to blame."
"Stupid parents," Alec grumbled.

"Oh yes how hard it must be to have two wealthy, loving and devoted parents," Jace said his voice dripping with sarcasm. "What a chore this must be for you."

"Oh shut up!" Alec snapped, throwing a pillow at his best friend.

"Job's aren't that hard Alec," Jace assured him. "What you really need is a network connection."

"I've had an interview at one of the companies my parents own," Alec sighed. "And though they didn't say it, I'm pretty sure my 'network connection' was why they didn't hire me."

"Not that kind of connection," Jace sighed. "No one wants a entry level employee with a direct line to their bosses boss. That's just nerve wrecking."

"What kind of connection are you talking about then?" Alec asked.

"Like a friend or something," Jace said.

"Do you know anyone who would hire me?" Alec asked.

"Unless you want to be a mechanic in my hometown or work a labour job at the docks, I'm not your guy," Jace replied. "Where is Magnus working?"

"Data entry job downtown," Alec replied. "But they don't hire the spouses or partners of employees, plus I'm so not qualified for that."

"You almost have a Bachelor's in Business though," Jace reminded him. "You could try entry office level stuff."

"Those all say they want at least a years experience working in an office," Alec whined. "In fact, they seem to care more about the experience than the education."

"Sorry bud," Jace shrugged. "I'm out of ideas. You wanna watch a movie?"

"I suppose," Alec sighed as he got up to sit next to Jace on the couch. Chairmen quickly abandoned Jace to sleep on Alec, but at least Jace got to keep one of the kitties.

They ended up watching an old Marvel movie, since none of the newest ones were on Netflix yet. When the movie ended, Alec turned away presumably to check his phone because a second later he was freaking out.

"Oh wow!" Alec exclaimed.

"What?" Jace asked.

"Maia," Alec explained. "She just texted that she'd try and get me an interview with her boss."

"See, that's the kind of network connection I was talking about," Jace replied. "Where does she work?"

"At a locally owned grocery store," Alec explained.

"No connection to your parents then," Jace said. "Perfect."

"Oh, I owe her dinner," Alec said.
"Save that for your first paycheck," Jace laughed. "If you get the job that is."

"Oh right," Alec sighed, leaning back against the coach, looking much less excited than he had a moment ago. "No money till paycheck. This going to take some getting used to."

"Better late than never," Jace laughed. "Welcome to what everyone else has been doing their whole lives."


"It's called middle class my friend," Jace laughed. "And it is."

Ring. Ring. Ring.

"I think that's your phone, Jace."

"No it's yours," Jace argued. "No one calls me."

Ring. Ring. Ring.

Alec held up his silence cell phone.

Ring. Ring. Ring.

Surprised and very curious, Jace reached forward for his ringing phone, dislodging the happy cat on his lap in the process. His heart stopped when he saw the caller ID. Unable to speak, Jace turned his phone to face Alec.

"Well, answer it idiot!" Alec snapped.

"Um, er, right," Jace said fumbling with the phone until he could press the green button.

"Hello," Jace said, still not sure who's voice would reply despite the called ID.

"Hey," Clary's voice was like music to his ears. "Is this a good time?"

"Of course!" Jace replied, sure he would have given this answer no matter what he'd been doing.

"How are you?" Clary asked.

"Screw me," Jace laughed. "How's Paris?"

"Beautiful," she said. "But I'd never want to live here. It's so dirty."

"Well, it is the city of love," Jace answered, trying not to think about it even as he said it.

"Get your mind out of the gutter. Not that kind of dirty," she said, laughed. "Like polluted dirty. Some parts are worse than others, but the air is nothing like I'm used to."

"Are you at least having fun?" Jace asked. Alec got up and headed back to his laptop, presumably returning to his homework or maybe procrastinating homework by looking up the company Maia worked for.

"Oh yes," Clary exclaimed. "The exchange program is amazing. I'm learning all about different art styles, and then we take trips to museums to see the original pieces that started those styles. It's unreal. And the architecture! They have this unique mix of old and new buildings like you'd never
find in Canada. I've been painting them."

"That's great," Jace smiled. "What else have you been doing?"

"Classes mostly," Clary continued. "But I've been trying to sightsee with Riley as much as I can on the weekends."

"You mentioned Riley in a text," Jace replied. "Who is she?"

"He's the only other Canadian in the program," Clary explained. "Though he's from the western provinces."

"Urg Clary," Jace groaned. "Can't you just like for once make a female friend? For the sake of my sanity?"

But Clary was giggling. "Don't worry," she laughed. "Riley won't fall for me. Promise."

"Ha!" Jace scoffed. "You don't exactly have a great track record with befriending guys who don't like you."

"Riley's gay," Clary chuckled. "And he's in a long distance relationship just like us. Riley left his boyfriend, Ben, back home."

"Oh," Jace said awkwardly. "Um. I guess that's good then."

"You're cute when you're jealous," Clary laughed.

"Hey!" Jace scoffed, the phone on his ear warm from the tight grip of his hand. "I'm allowed to be a little jealous."

"You have nothing to worry about," Clary told him.

"Doesn't mean I'm not still jealous of the guy," Jace grumbled. "Gay or not, he gets to hug you."

"I know what you mean," Clary sighed. "It's why I haven't called."

"I'll take your voice over nothing any day of the week," Jace assured her. "Just don't not call me okay?"

"Okay," Clary's voice was soft, but honest.

Chapter End Notes

Hey guys! Don't have much to say today except that I hope you enjoyed the chapter and please leave me a comment and tell me what you think. :)  
Sneak Peek Chapter 131

"That would be great. Thanks," Maia replied. His eyes hadn't left the computer once while he'd been talking, but now he turned to face her. He saw joy in her eyes, but even as he looked it vanished, being replaced with something else he couldn't identify. Then she turned away from him.
"You are quite the mystery Maia Roberts," Jordan smiled at her, ignoring the computer for the moment.

"How so?" Maia asked, once again looking at him.

"Say one thing," Jordan replied. "Do another. Act one way, then change again." He paused then, voicing what he hadn't expected to say, but had nevertheless been wondering for a while. "Sometimes it makes me wonder what it was we had in the first place?"

"Dammit," Maia grumbled. "I hate it when Simon's right."

"What?" Jordan asked, turning.

"He said you were thinking stuff like that," Maia muttered, looking down as if embarrassed. "But listen, it's not like that. Don't think like that, okay?"

"Ah making as much sense as usual, I see," Jordan smiled. He turned back to his task. Computers made far more sense than women, that was for sure.
He had to admit he’d been more than a little surprised to get the text. Maia had wanted nothing to do with him for ages now, so even a hello from her was enough to throw him off. Jordan replied quickly, and she explained that her computer was acting up and if he wouldn’t mind taking a look at it, she’d greatly appreciate it.

'No problem,' Jordan texted back. 'That's what friends are for right?'

All he got back was a thanks and times when she'd be home later that day if he wanted to look at it right away. Jordan answered texted he'd be over, and the conversation ended. He had to admit he wasn't too sure what to expect when he arrived. He knocked twice before she opened the door.

"Thanks again," Maia said awkwardly as she let him in.

"Let's see the patient," Jordan said, and Maia directed him to the laptop sitting on her dining room table. Jordan sat down and began investigating, checking the hard drive as Maia explained the problem.

"It's been getting worse," Maia explained. "It's so slow now, sometimes I don't even want to bother using it."

As Jordan was poking around the bios, he found the problem. "You have malware on here," Jordan said. "Very sneaky malware that is very well hidden. Like really well hidden. I can't even tell what it's purpose is without activating it."

"What will happen if you activate it?" Maia asked.

"Whatever the malware's final command is," Jordan explained. He turned to face her. "Is there anything on here you can't lose?"

"It's all saved to the cloud," Maia explained. "But isn't it like counter-productive to activate the thing causing the problem?"

"Not really," Jordan explained. "See, if I choose when it activates I can gain more control over it. Otherwise it will just suddenly go off when you aren't prepared."

"Huh," Maia smiled. "I guess that makes sense."

"I'll activate it in a viral machine so I can isolate it a little more," Jordan continued. "Depending on what kind of malware it is, this may or may not make a difference. You sure you don't need any files saved before I do this?"

"Can the malware effect things I have saved in the cloud?" Maia asked. "Like google docs?"

"No," Jordan replied. "But to be sure I'll clear the cookies from your internet browser, which will log you out of everything."

"Alright," Maia said taking a deep breath. "Let's just hope I haven't forgotten any of my passwords."

"Ah yes, best to back those up somewhere offline," Jordan smiled. "If not in your brain."
"Hey my brain is full of lots of more important stuff," Maia laughed.

"There is enough memory space in the brain to store more than one life times worth of experience," Jordan told her. "You aren't gonna run out of room before you run out of years."

"Oh hush," Maia chuckled. "You are ruining all my excuses." She gestured to the computer and added, "Just do the thing already."

With a slight nod, Jordan did as he was told and activated the malware. Almost at once a blinking error message appeared on the screen, shutting everything else down. Jordan couldn't even open the start menu. The message read:

'Your Personal Files Have Been Encrypted.

If you wish to restore your data you will need to pay 4 coin. Your data will be lost if you power down, reset, or in any way try to stop this code. If left unpaid for more than three days all your files will be destroyed.'

"Oh boy," Jordan gasped. "You've got a bad one."

"The whole computer's toast isn't it?" Maia whined. "Maybe I'll just smash it to bits." Jordan started trying to learn more about the code behind this as Maia kept talking. "It would be oddly satisfying, throwing the whole thing against a rock or something."

"Don't go breaking it yet," Jordan replied.

"I don't even have one coin," Maia reminded him. "Let alone 4, and isn't the exchange rate for coin to normal money like crazy high. Like one coin is thousands of dollars?"

"I think this malware is really old," Jordan explained. "Like before coin was so valuable. Because yes you are right 4 coin is over 40,000 dollars today. No one would pay that much to get their data back. The highest I've ever seen this malware go is about 5k."

"Does really old help us?" Maia asked.

"Probably not," Jordan replied. "Usually with this kind of malware there isn't anything that can be done to get the data back, but you can always wipe the hard drive, and reinstall your operating system. You will still lose all your data. but not the computer."

"That would be great. Thanks," Maia replied. His eyes hadn't left the computer once while he'd been talking, but now he turned to face her. He saw joy in her eyes, but even as he looked it vanished, being replaced with something else he couldn't identify. Then she turned away from him.

"You are quite the mystery Maia Roberts," Jordan smiled at her, ignoring the computer for the moment.

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"What?" Jordan asked, turning.
"He said you were thinking stuff like that," Maia muttered, looking down as if embarrassed. "But listen, it's not like that. Don't think like that, okay?"

"Ah making as much sense as usual, I see," Jordan smiled. He turned back to his task. Computers made far more sense than women, that was for sure.

Jordan worked in silence for a while. First looking up the exploit on his phone, then applying it to the code. It worked rather better than he'd expected, though it took quite a while. Maia didn't speak once while he typed, but somehow Jordan could sense the wheels in her head turning. More than once he thought she was going to say something, but she never did.

"There," Jordan said, pushing away from the table. "It just needs to reboot and restore. Might take a few hours though. Best to plug it in."

Wordlessly, Maia handed him the charging cable and Jordan connected the laptop to power. Then he turned to her, unsure if just goodbye was proper, or if he should shake her hand or something. There was a strange awkwardness in the air that hadn't been there when he'd first arrived.

"I guess I should be going then," Jordan said standing up, still a little confused by her silence.

"I'm such a coward," Maia whispered finally. "I've been standing here watching you work the last hour trying to come up with the courage to tell you what I owe you."

"You don't owe me anything Maia," Jordan told her kindly. "Well, unless you have me to charge for computer repairs." He chuckled, but she was in no way laughing. He's never seen her so intense before.

"I owe you everything," Maia whispered so softly, Jordan wasn't even sure he'd heard her correctly. When she spoke again, it was in a clear determined, almost practiced voice.

"I've always thought of myself as independent," Maia began. "And needing another person seemed like a weakness to me. I think this is why I've always held you at arms length, even when we were actually together." She took a deep breath, before starting again. "Then after we split… well I guess, maybe on some level I thought you'd always be there. I took your continued affection towards me for granted. It was naive and foolish to think that I could reject you so many times while still keeping the idea of us open if I ever changed my mind."

"You deserve better than to spend your life waiting for me," Maia said. "For anyone."

Jordan didn't know what to say. His mind was blank, stunned into silence.

"Over the last year I've watched my friends fall in love," Maia continued. "And be all the stronger for it. I've learned there is a bravery in giving your heart to another. A boldness in letting that power slip through your fingers into someone else grasp. In this context, I might be a coward, but you Jordan, you are the bravest man I've ever known."

She paused then spoke in a clear even voice. "And I love you for it."

Jordan was sure she was still talking, but he couldn't process anything past those few words. Maia loved him? Had loved him all this time, even if she hadn't admitted it, maybe even to herself. A strange numbing awe had him paralyzed.

"I don't expect anything," Maia was saying. "I just- I owed you an explanation. After so many lies, most of them mine, I owed you the truth. When I say I love you, it means I value your happiness. It means you come first. So yeah I miss you, but most of all, I want you to be happy and Paige makes
you happy." She turned away from him as if to go hide in her room. "Anyway, thanks for the help. I'll go now. You can let yourself out."

Jordan was instantly panicking. She was leaving? After that. No. Reaching out without thinking, Jordan touched her arm and she stopped, turning to face him.


He pulled her closer, almost as if against his will. She was mere inches from him now, looking up at him with those beautiful brown eyes he loved.

And it was like the world stood still. Without forming a single thought, Jordan reacted. His lips pressed against hers in heated need, and he felt her respond in kind. This was their spark, the ever lit flame waiting for something to burn. Jordan wasn’t totally sure what was happening anymore, but he knew his shirt was on the ground and his hands were holding tight to Maia’s bare hips. They were both moving with equal vigor, both panting slightly, arms wrapped around each other. Jordan felt her hands at his belt just as his fingers dipped down below the elastic of her comfortable stretch pants. He heard her gasp and moan as his fingers explored her sensitive skin. Maia parted her legs slightly, her head tilting back.

Maia. Maia in his arms again. It was like he was high, flying even as he fell into the dining room chair. Somehow she’d managed to undo his pants, freeing his hard erection from it’s confinement. When she straddled him, her pants around her ankles, Jordan felt himself enter her. His whole body shivered. Then his arms wrapped around her, holding her weight as he stood up. Maia’s lips were locked with his. Jordan moved forward until he reached the wall, pressing Maia’s back against it. Her legs were still wrapped around his hips, but now she was moving, grinding her hips into his. The wall holding up most of her weight, Jordan’s hands moved over her breasts, teasing her skin. Jordan was panting, his mind blank as he thrust deep inside her.

They finished together. He felt her body tense, her back arching as her muscles squeezing him into his own release. Panting she rested her head on his shoulder, and for a moment Jordan held her, content. All that existed in the world at that moment was their breathing.

Then his brain turned back on.

What had he done? What had they just done? Did this woman have such control over him that she could bring him to cheat on someone like Paige? Someone so good, so kind and trusting. It seemed she did.

Gently he set Maia down. She was naked from top to bottom, and Jordan’s eyes roamed before he remembered they shouldn’t be. Or was it too late? Hadn’t he ruined everything already… what was the point in trying to be good now?

But no. He hadn’t been thinking, and Maia was right. She’d waited too long; it was over. She’d just confessed to being too cowardly to show she loved him for their entire relationship, so why should he take her back? They’d been broken up for years. This was just a mistake. Just a rekindling of a spark that was stubbornly refusing to die against all the odds. It didn’t mean they’d ever be able to be in a healthy and functional relationship. And he had a healthy and functional relationship with Paige. This one moments stupidity wasn’t worth losing that.

Quickly picking up his pants from around his ankles, Jordan grabbed his shirt, pulled it over his head and was doing up his belt as he headed for the door.
So... I've been planning this for a while. *Hides a little behind a wall before asking tentatively...* How mad are you guys?

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Sneak Peek Chapter 132

Maia stuffed the rather large box into her purse and turned to leave. Then she stopped cold as she recognized someone she knew. Panicking, Maia turned and ducked into an aisle, hoping he hadn’t seen her.

“Oh hey Maia!”

Her hope died quickly as she heard his voice call after her. Plastering a smile on her face, Maia turned to face him.

“I thought that was you,” he said, with a genuine smile, unlike the fake mess on her face.

“You caught me,” Maia said trying to keep her voice light.

“If I didn’t know better I’d say you were hiding from me,” he replied, still teasing her.

“But you know better than that,” Maia teased back, trying to keep things normal.

“Of course, boss,” he laughed. “I know you are definitely hiding from someone. It just can’t possibly be me since I’m awesome.” Maia couldn’t help laughing.
Maia watched Jordan leave, feeling like the worst person in the world. She knew she should have stopped herself before things got out of hand. She knew she should have understood her own heart sooner. She knew it was her fault, and she knew what she needed to do next.

After a shower, Maia collected her purse and headed out. As she walked, her mind went round and round everything that had happened, like the most depressing broken record of all time. She couldn't blame this on alcohol or intoxication. She had no excuses or rationalizations to cling to. She'd finally told him the truth and he'd responded by… by what? Cheating on his girlfriend with her? Or was it kinder to say he'd responded by pulling her close? Either way, Maia had turned the kindest, sweetest person in the whole world into a cheater, and she hated herself for it.

What she couldn't hate or regret was touching him again. It had been wonderful to be held in his arms once more. The extreme feeling had made it very obvious that she'd missed him far more than she'd realized.

Oh, why had she been so stupid!? She regretted losing him more in this moment than she ever had before. If she'd only been aware of her own emotions before it was too late. If she'd dug down deep during even one of those moments when he'd worn his heart bravely on his sleeve, then maybe things would be different.

Then again, maybe she was thinking about this from the bias point of view of right now. After all, hindsight is 20/20. Who she was then could not have realized what she knew now. She could remember how she'd felt then, how cautious she'd been towards him. Then the moment he's lost to her all these feelings come flooding back. Shouldn't this just prove that it wasn't a good idea? Maybe what made their fights so intense was also what gave them such bright sparks. A self destructive combination to say the least.

By the time she reached the store, Maia was determined to pretend the whole thing never happened unless Jordan brought it up first, and from the way he'd ran off, she didn't think he would. It was best to just move forward, and not focus on her moment of weakness. She had no right to expect him to end his relationship for her and she wasn't about to ask. In order to put this behind her she had one more thing to do. Walking forward, Maia took a deep breath and then asked the lady behind the Pharmacy counter for Plan B.

"Have you ever used a morning after pill before?" she asked.

"No," Maia replied.

"Okay wait here," she said. "You will need to talk to a Pharmacist."

So Maia waited, and then she was treated to education about the drug she was purchasing. The side effects didn't sound fun at all, but she had no choice. The deed was done, and now it was time to face the music. After paying far too much for one tiny pill, Maia stuffed the rather large box into her purse and turned to leave. Then she stopped cold as she recognized someone she knew. Panicking, Maia turned and ducked into an aisle, hoping he hadn't seen her.

"Oh, hey Maia!"
Her hope died quickly as she heard his voice calling after her. Plastering a smile on her face, Maia turned to face him.

"I thought that was you," he said with a genuine smile, unlike the fake mess on her face.

"You caught me," Maia said, trying to keep her voice light.

"If I didn't know better, I'd say you were hiding from me," he replied, still teasing her.

"But you know better than that," Maia teased back, trying to be normal.

"Of course, boss," he laughed. "I know you are definitely hiding from someone. It just can't possibly be me since I'm awesome." Maia couldn't help laughing. 'Boss' was a nickname he'd started using for her the day she'd met him. Jamie was the newest hire at the grocery store where Maia worked, and even though he was over a foot taller than her and ten times stronger, she's been asked to train him. Jamie had thought this so funny he'd taken to calling her boss, even after his training ended. There was something about a strong, super tall guy calling out 'boss' and having a tiny little woman answer, that Jamie thought was hilarious. Maia had never really thought of herself as tiny until she's stood next to him.

"I haven't trained you for months now," Maia reminded him. "You really should stop calling me boss."

"Okay, Boss," Jamie laughed. Maia groaned and he added, "So are you going to tell me who you're hiding from?"

"The boogeyman," Maia said with as straight a face as she could. Jamie laughed in that big loud bear way he always did. He had a bear quality to him, but once you got to know him, you realized it was more like a teddy bear. He had thick black hair that he liked to wear long, and his skin, though not as dark as hers, wasn't pale either.

Just then they were interrupted by a cell phone. Checking hers automatically, Maia saw nothing and concluded that someone was trying to contact Jamie.

"Urg," Jamie groaned, looking down at his phone. "Teasing you will have to wait, but only till work tomorrow. See you then." And with a wave, Jamie turned and walked away. Maia breathed a sigh of relief.

Jamie was one of her favourite co-workers - she even considered him a friend separate from work - but right now she wanted to be alone. Moving quickly out of the store, Maia made her way home. It was good to be alone with her thoughts again, but at the same time, she missed the distraction Jamie had provided.

Maia tried not to think on the walk home. Not thinking turned out to be rather harder than she'd thought it would be, but still a relief from her ever spiraling thoughts. It took all of her focus not to focus on anything. Walking in her front door, Maia called out to her roommates but received no answer. Thanking her lucky stars for the privacy, Maia poured herself a glass of water before opening the box. Inside was a great deal of empty space, and one small white pill in a foil. Pushing the pill from the foil, Maia placed it in her mouth and swallowed it down with her water.

She then flattened the box, pulling it apart a little so it would better fit into the bottom of the garbage can, under everything else. Maia didn't fancy having to deal with her roommates questions if someone found the box. It was easier to just hide everything.

Once she was done, and all the evidence cleared away, Maia felt strangely empty. She sat at the
table, staring blankly forward. She knew there was one other thing she should do, one more thing left that needed to be done, but at the moment she couldn't face it. Better to just sit and stare then confess. It took a few moments for Maia to really notice that she was staring at her now perfectly functional computer. It had finished all it's updates and installs while she'd been out. Her hands on the keys, she checked that everything worked, which of course it did.

Maia wasn't sure how long she sat there, her eyes fixed on the lock screen image she'd chosen. It wasn't fair that this computer now reminded her of what she'd lost. In a way, she missed when her only problem was a malfunctioning computer.

A sharp noise of the door opening, and Izzy's voice calling out broke through her haze.

After pulling herself back, Maia called out letting Izzy know she was home. Still, Maia wasn't really listening to the voices, even if she could tell they were coming closer. Her roommates were almost standing beside her before Maia caught the details of their conversation.

"The class is literally called Social Work 301: Theory and Practice," Izzy was saying. "And I'm yet to see any practice."

"It's only October," Simon replied. "Maybe they'll do practical stuff later in the year."

"Even so, I have to say I'm not impressed with this class," Izzy continued.

"Communications is a much less specific major," Simon was saying as the two of them joined her in the dining room.

"Lucky," Izzy laughed. Then she added, "Hey Maia. How was your morning?"

"Fine," Maia smiled, keeping her emotions off her face as best she could.

"Got any classes left today?" Izzy asked. "I need a break from school so I was thinking of going out tonight. You're welcome to join us if you want to?"

"I actually have a lot of homework," Maia replied, though she'd finished her work yesterday. "I might just stay in tonight."

"You sure," Simon asked.

"Yeah," Maia replied, trying to smile like she meant it.

Maia worked to keep her mask on while her roommates were around, but even so, it seemed like she hadn't fooled Simon. Indeed, later that night she received texts from him asking if she was really okay. It was a testament to how well Simon knew her that he had texted rather than asked in person. Maia always found it easier to say such things over text rather than in person, and Simon knew this. Even so, Maia didn't admit anything to him that night.

'Are you sure you're fine?' Simon's texted for the third time. 'You seem off to me."

'Just tired,' Maia texted back. 'Have fun with Izzy.'

The evening went on, and Maia distracted herself with YouTube videos and Netflix for as long as she could, but such things did little to pull her from her thoughts. In the end Maia ended up doing homework, though nothing that was due till next month. But it was all a distraction. Nothing had changed from this morning. She knew who she needed to tell - who she owed the truth to - but the idea made her stomach squirm. Though she couldn't regret the act itself, the aftermath was a different
story. Maia hated how much pain this would cause. Still she didn't want to confess.

Simon was more than just concerned over the next few days, and he seemed to have let Izzy in on it, since now both her roommates were acting weird around her. Maia ignored them, repeating that she was fine at least once a day.

It took her nearly three days to finally hit the send button. She wasn't sure how this conversation would end, but she knew it had to be done. Now matter how little she wanted to do it, the lies had to stop somewhere. Maia was through with lies, but most of all, she was done lying to herself.

He replied a few hours later and agreed to meet up. Maia had dithered for ages trying to decide if a public place would be better, or if they should talk alone, but in the end, she chose public.

As she walked, Maia tried to figure out what she was going to say. No matter how she phrased it, she couldn't lighten the blow. Maia considered the kindness in not telling him, but her frustration with lies stopped her. There could never be any good that came from cold hard lies. Though there could be kindness in not voicing your every negative thought you have towards another person, there could never be kindness in denying someone a choice. She respected him, and he needed the information no matter what happened afterward.

"Hey, Bat," Maia said smiling up at him. She'd just entered the cafe and sure enough he was already there, standing beside a table near the window.

"Oh boy," Bat said, as he saw her face. "From your texts I knew something was up, but I'm really not going to like this am I?"

"Why don't we sit down," Maia said gently, dropping all pretense at casual.

"Yep, not going to like this," Bat sighed as he sat across from her.

"I'm sorry," Maia said trying to help, though she knew it was pointless. "I didn't realize I was being so obvious."

"Just tell it to me straight," Bat said firmly. "Are you breaking up with me?"

"No," Maia said in a small voice. "Though you might be done with me when I say what I need to say."

Bat looked - if possible - more concerned. She didn't want to, but Maia had to open her mouth and speak.

"I don't really know how to say this," Maia began. "I tried to think of a kind way to tell you on the way here, but no matter how I tried, they all sounded confusing, or stupid, or both." She paused and took a deep breath. "The truth is that there really isn't a kind way to say this."

"It wasn't planned, and you have to know that it was never my intention to cause you pain," Maia continued.

"I know you wouldn't hurt me on purpose," Bat said.

There was nothing else for it. No more ground to cover. There was nothing left but for Maia to say the words.

"I slept with my ex."
Rather than deal with his silence, Maia kept talking. "I am very sorry I hurt you, and I will understand if you don't want to see me anymore."

Then she couldn't think of anything else to say. The silence somehow made everything worse. Maia watched his face. She saw pain there for sure, but also anger. Yet, still he didn't speak. She wanted to look away, but her eyes were fixed on his face, desperate to know what wheels were turning behind those eyes.

After what felt like forever, Bat finally spoke. "I believe you are sorry."

Maia nodded a little as if to say 'thank you' though she didn't dare speak. Surely, he had more to say.

"Technically we aren't exclusive, not that I'm seeing anyone else but," he paused, taking a deep breath. "But we never promised not to."

Maia almost said something, but thought better of it and closed her mouth again.

"I won't deny that I want to punch your ex right now," Bat continued. "Punch him right in the face like multiple times, but if you can promise me that it didn't mean anything, and it won't happen again, then I think I can move past this." This time when he paused there was a softness to his eyes. "I really like you Maia."

Maia couldn't speak for a moment, her mind working frantically. This was not what she'd expect at all, and she had no answers for him. She'd planned on never talking to Jordan about this, but did that mean that their passionate moment together had meant nothing to her? Did that mean that if he showed up right now and asked to be with her that she wouldn't go?

"What I want to say and the truth are two different things," Maia finally spoke. "I wish more than anything that it meant nothing. I wish I ruled my own heart, rather than the other way around. Everything rational and sensible in me knows you are the better choice, but if he told me to jump, I'll ask how high. I hate myself, but I can't stop loving him. I'm sorry, Bat."

"I'm sorry too," Bat replied, gently touching her face. "Because I know exactly how that feels." He paused, leaning forward to kiss her sweetly before whispering. "Goodbye, Maia."

Chapter End Notes

So... guess who couldn't not write while on vacation? If you guessed me you'd be right. Which means you guys get a chapter before my vacation even ends. Aren't you lucky I am such an addict that I spend days writing on my phone. ^_^

Also there was alot less outrage in the comments/reviews after the last chapter then I expected. It seems that I didn't really surprise anyone.

Sneak Peek of Chapter 133

And so Alec started his shift sitting in what was probably a staff room, filling out forms about himself. So far so good, though he wished Maia was here. It would be nice to see a familiar face. The silence was intimidating. Alec could hear the sound of the fridge whirring as if it were a loudspeaker. Eventually another staff member came to eat their lunch and Alec was spared from the silence. Though this staff member didn't talk to him
at all, they created some background noise and drown out the fridge.

When Alec was pretty sure he'd completed all the paperwork, he got up and went to find Brentan who turned out to be easy to find.

"Good," Brentan said as he accepted the tedious paperwork that had been the last few hours of Alec's life. "And today you will be shadowing Jamie." Then he pointed in a direction behind Alec who turned.

Standing behind the deli counter was a rather tall man with dark black hair. He had a hat on with the grocery store logo on it.

"Just shadowing for today," Brentan said, pointing again. Trying to take a hint Alec turned and headed toward this Jamie person.

"Hi," Alec said awkwardly as he approached.

"New meat!" Jamie said with enthusiasm.
Alec didn't really know what to think as he walked toward the building. With absolutely nothing to go on, he was having a hard time picturing how his first day at work would go. For as long as he could remember, work meant waiting for people to get home. The idea that he was the one out doing the work was very alien to him.

Walking in it felt just like any other time he'd been here. Alec was after all familiar with how a grocery store looked. By the main doors were the fresh vegetables and fruits displays, and then the aisles started on the right. The problem was that Alec didn't really know what he was suppose to do, or where he was suppose to be.

To his great relief, someone was there to greet him. The man's tag read Brentan with the word Manager underneath it. Brentan gave Alec paperwork and set him with the task of filling them out. And so Alec started his shift sitting in what was probably a staff room, filling out forms about himself. So far so good, though he wished Maia was here. It would be nice to see a familiar face. With a sign, Alec looked up at the clock again. Had he really only been here for a half hour?

The silence in this room was intimidating. Alec could hear the sound of the fridge whirring as if it were a loudspeaker. Finishing another set up paperwork, Alec looked up at the clock again. It had only been five minutes since he'd last checked it. Eventually a staff member came to eat their lunch, and Alec was spared from the silence. Though this staff member didn't talk to him at all, she created some background noise that drowned out the humming fridge.

When Alec was pretty sure he'd completed all the paperwork, he got up and went to find Brentan which turned out to be easier than he expected in such a large building.

"Good," Brentan said as he accepted the tediously finished paperwork."Today you will be working with Jamie." Then he pointed behind Alec who turned.

Standing behind the deli counter was a rather tall man with dark black hair, a round face and tanned skin. He had a hat on with the grocery store logo on it as well as a black shirt with the same logo.

"Just shadowing for today," Brentan told Alec, pointing again. Trying to take a hint, Alec turned and headed toward this Jamie person.

"Hi," Alec said awkwardly as he approached.

"New meat!" Jamie said with enthusiasm.

"Alec," Alec corrected, trying to avoid getting an unfortunate nickname.

"New meat," Jamie repeated with a grin. Alec's face must of given him away since Jamie added, "Oh don't worry. You'll only be new meat till they hire again. And besides, you'll get your name tag in a few weeks."

"Great," Alec sighed.

"Onward," Jamie chuckled. Then he turned and pointed to a display before explaining exactly what
it was. "Pre-made salads are here, and deli meats over there. Past that is the fancy cheeses, but that case requires far less maintenance."

Alec tried to remember everything as Jamie continued the tour. He took specific note of the large rotisserie oven full of chickens.

"Don't go getting fond of that," Jamie told him. "That is every newbies worse nightmare."

"Why?" Alec asked nervously.

"Because you have to clean it," Jamie grinned. Alec gulped. Then Jamie stopped in his tracks and turned to face Alec. "Oh don't look so worried. I'm just teasing."

"Oh," Alec said cautious.

"Yeah," Jamie replied. "You won't get stuck doing that till you've had a little more training. And it isn't that bad really. Just think how bad it would be if we didn't have a rotisserie to cook the chicken."

"Surely rotisseries were invented a long time ago," Alec offered. "I mean, it's basically just a piece of meat on a stick. How hard could that be to figure out?"

Jamie laughed. "I don't know," he said. "But now I'd sure like to find out when meat on a stick was invented." He paused then added, "I bet it was the french."

"You like history?" Alec asked, thinking of Magnus.

"And engineering," Jamie elaborated. "I'm taking classes up at the university."

"I'm there too," Alec said with enthusiasm.

"Oh what program?" Jamie asked.

"I'm taking business," Alec shrugged. "Fourth year."

"I'm going for a master's," Jamie explained. "Majoring in engineering, but I'm taking as many history electives as I can."

"That's impressive," Alec smiled.

"Thanks," Jamie smiled. "Though I did just start the third year of my bachelor's, so don't congratulate me yet. Technically you're ahead of me."

"I don't think that matters so much," Alec smiled. "Not when you're doing something you are really passionate about."

And Alec found himself once again looking at the clock. Still almost 6.5 hours to go. He sighed.

"Did you not want to go into business?" Jamie asked.

"Nah," Alec shrugged. "My parents did."

"Ah well," Jamie said clearly not sure how to respond to this. "We should probably get back to work."

"Right ah," Alec sighed. "Sorry. This is a lot to take in. To be perfectly honest, it doesn't quite feel
"Wish I could say that," Jamie sighed. "I feel like I've been working here forever."

"Will you be the one training me tomorrow too?" Alec asked.

"No," Jamie answered. "That will be Maia, but you'll like her. She's really good at her job. She trained me."

"I know Maia," Alec said eagerly.

"Oh?" Jamie inquired. "How do you know Maia?"

"Good question," Alec laughed as he tried to come up with a reply. "The easiest answer is that she's my sister's roommate." He decided to leave out that without Maia, he didn't believe he'd have gotten this job, as that didn't strike him as something to instill confidence.

"And what's the complicated answer?" Jamie asked, an eyebrow raised.

"Well she's friends with my best friend's girlfriend, and my best friend's girlfriend's ex," Alec replied. "Any deeper than that and I'm gonna need a diagram."

To his surprise, Jamie laughed. "I like you kid," he said. Alec didn't know how to reply to this, since Jamie looked no older than him.

The small talk ended as Alec listened and learned about how the deli worked. The leftover rotisserie chickens were used to make chicken pot pies. The deli meat could be sliced at almost any thickness, depending on what the customer wanted. Jamie had lots to say on dealing with picky customers who wanted their meat sliced oh so perfectly.

And once again Alec looked to the clock. Still 6 hours to go. It felt so strange to Alec, being on this side of the counter. He'd been buying groceries for years, but had never once given a thought to what happened behind the counter. It was like a whole other world back here.

"I have a tradition for new hires," Jamie said as he paused near the back of the deli. "Something to get their hands dirty."

"What kind of dirty are we talking about?" Alec asked, growing nervous.

"Elbow deep in chicken bits dirty," Jamie said grinning. Alec felt his stomach turn, but he didn't say anything. Jamie handed him a pair of gloves.

"Food safe requires the gloves," Jamie said almost disappointed. "But it does ruin the ick factor."

Alec looked into the bucket Jamie indicated, and felt like even with gloves, the gross factor was high enough. The bucket was full of little bits of chicken meat floating around in… something.

"Oh relax," Jamie sighed. "This isn't near so bad as cleaning out the ovens."

With a deep breath, Alec plunged his gloved hands into the bucket of chicken bits. It had an oddly mushy texture and after a moment, Alec found he quite liked the feel of it, though likely never again eat a chicken pot pie.

Looking up, Alec glanced at the clock on the wall. Still 5 hours left. That meant he'd only been here four hours, so why had those hours from like forty?
"Alright, you've had your fun," Jamie said. "That bucket is mixed. Next we need to make them into pies."

This proved to be a simple enough task. The dough arrived pre-made, and they just had to assemble everything.

"Do you cook?" Jamie asked.

"Not really," Alec shrugged. "I've made pancakes, but not much."

"Well now you can make pies," Jamie said. Alec smiled back, then glanced up at the clock. Still 4 hours remaining.

Sweet relief came in the form of his meal break. Alec found himself back in that staff room, only this time to eat. But it was just a half hour break, and it flew by faster than he thought possible.

All too soon, Alec found himself stuffing salt packs up raw chickens butts. He couldn't help but flinch when Jamie showed him how to skewer the things onto rods, breaking their backs in the process.

Still almost 3 hours to go.

There was a sheet on the wall that specified all the allowed times for food to remain on the hot table. If the food was left out longer than allowed, bacteria could make the food unsafe to eat. Alec would have to remember those. He also learned the correct way to make a seven layered dip.

Still 2 hours to go.

Alec stood at a counter, assembling sandwiches to be sold tomorrow morning along with the seven layer dips.

He glanced up at the clock. Still over an hour to go.

As the last of the sandwiches were packed and labeled, Alec glanced once more at the clock, and wondered if it was running slow. How did he still have 50 minutes left in his shift? Hadn't he been making sandwiches for longer than that?

Alec's mind was starting to fail. It was quite a new concept to him, this being on your feet for eight hours, working steadily. He wasn't over weight by any means, but that didn't mean his leg muscles were used to all this standing. Alec's feet hurt.

Still thirty minutes to go.

Twenty five...

Twenty…

Fifteen…

"This is your first ever job, isn't it?"

Alec jumped, spinning around to face Jamie.

"What gave you that idea?" Alec asked defensively.

"The way you keep checking the time," Jamie replied. "Take it from me, the less you check the time,
"And the faster your shift will pass."

"Thanks," Alec said, determined not to check the clock once tomorrow.

"Now get out of here," Jamie laughed, clapping Alec on the shoulder.

"But I still have over ten minutes left in my shift?" Alec objected.

"You've learned all you can for today," Jamie smiled. "Just say hi to Maia for me tomorrow, will ya?"

"Sure," Alec smiled. "When will I see you again?"

"I'm off till Friday," Jamie replied. "Now get." He made a gesture as if to shoo Alec away.

With great relief, Alec collected his things and left the store, completing the very first work shift of his life.

Alec couldn't believe how much work was involved in working, he thought as he made his way home. It was so much different than waiting for others to return from an unknown place called employment.

As Alec walked into his apartment, he called out to his husband who replied. Alec followed the sound of his voice, and soon found himself in the dining room.

"Welcome home," Magnus turned to smile at him. "How was your first ever day of employment?"

"Long," Alec replied thoughtfully. "If I had to use one word to describe it, that word would be long."

Magnus chuckled. "You know, I don't think I even remember my first day working," he added.

"That's because you started too young, and you work too much," Alec said, sitting down at the table with a grateful sigh. "Speaking of, how was your day?"

"I was at the museum today," Magnus answered. He paused looking slightly concerned before adding, "That strange man was there again today."

"I remember you mentioned him last week too," Alec observed. "But it isn't like he's doing anything bad, right?"

"Right," Magnus confirmed. "He didn't say anything, or even get close to me. He just like, hung around all day. He wasn't doing anything disruptive so no one kicked him out, but I could have sworn he was looking at me the whole time. It was weird."

"Have you thought about maybe going over and talking to him?" Alec asked.

"No, I haven't," Magnus replied.

"Why not?" Alec asked.

"Because he's creepy," Magnus stated. "And no one else seems to think I'm right about the 'him looking at me' thing."

"Maybe he just has a crush on you," Alec giggled.
"Nah, he's an older guy," Magnus explained. "And I'm not getting that vibe at all. This is about something else."

"Maybe you're being poached for a job?" Alec tired.

"I don't think so somehow," Magnus mused.

"In that case, maybe he is bad news," Alec said. "The way you describe him, it sounds a bit stalkerish."

"Don't sound so worried," Magnus replied with a smile. "I'm sure it's nothing. Probably all in my head."

"You're just saying that to stop me from worrying, aren't you?" Alec narrowed his eyes at his husband.

"Guilty," Magnus smiled, leaning forward to kiss him. Alec quickly forgot what they were talking about as he embraced his husband's kiss. Just then a cat jumped up onto the table interrupting them.

"Chairman," Magnus sighed. "You've had my attention all evening. Shoo."

"Awws, don't shoo him," Alec cooed, reaching for the cat.

"Meow," Chairman said from Alec's arms. Alec scratched behind the feline's ears absently as his mind wondered.

"Have you told someone at the museum that the guy's acting weird?" Alec asked.

"Yes," Magnus sighed. "And they agree it's weird that he's there so much, but it has happened before. Usually people with no where else to go."

"But surely if he were homeless, he'd look homeless," Alec offered. "You said he was dressed like normal."

Magnus just shrugged. "A problem for another day," he said. "Right now I have a cat to battle for my husband's attention."

Alec laughed, smiling as he put down the cat.

Chapter End Notes

I'm back! And hopefully gonna start updating more than twice a month. Yeesh, I've been such a slacker lately #TooMuchTV. I've been watching Downton Abbey and Avatar: The Last Air Bender way too fast these last few weeks.

Also I FINALLY finished my Girl Meets World story about Shawn and Katy called 'Hart Hunter' :D Yay! Cause boy was I getting sick of writing that one. Plus it's always very satisfying to be able to click the button and mark a story finished! I can't even imagine how strange it will feel to finally mark R&S as complete. I mean, I've been writing this story for like what... two years now? *Goes to look up date* Yeah, so it was September 5th 2016 that I uploaded the first chapter of R&S. For a moment I thought it was exactly 2yrs ago today when I first uploaded this story, but then I noticed
it was 5/9/2016 and not 9/5/2016. Silly day and month switching-ness.

Anyway... please tell me what you think! I'm especially curious who you think Magnus's mysterious stalker is? ^_^ I've been planning this for ages!

Sneak Peek Chapter 134

"How do people do it? How do they work so hard for so little, without knowing there is an end in sight?"

"You'd be amazed what you can learn to live with," Magnus smiled, gently stroking Alec's hair. "You don't know what you can capable of until the moment life requires more of you."

"Stop being so wise," Alec grumbled. "It makes me feel dumb."

"You shouldn't feel that way," Magnus smiled. "You have a very unique perspective on money and I'm sure many wise things to say on the topic."

"I never used to think about money," Alec shrugged, leaning his head slightly to rest it on Magnus's shoulder. "It was always there, neither brilliant nor evil. It was after all only money."

"And what do you think now?" Magnus asked.

"Now I know that once it's gone, once every dollar is earned slowly by the hour, money comes to mean something entirely different."
Despite his new paying job, Magnus was still volunteering at the museum. He'd found he enjoyed it too much not to and simply couldn't bring himself to leave, especially when everyone was so happy to have him there. Four days a week doing data entry in an office, and two or three days a week at the Museum, left very little time for anything else. His recent slacker-ness aside, this was more the type of lifestyle he was accustomed to. Alec on the other hand was having a very hard time adjusting to employed life.

"I don't know how you do it," Alec whined as he got home tired and cranky. "I've watched you get up and go to work like every day for two weeks. And here I am getting two or three days off in a week, and I'm so burnt out I don't even know how to think."

"The difference here is that this is your first time ever working, while I've been working since I was about fourteen," Magnus smiled. "Plus half my week is the museum, which doesn't feel like work."

"Urg," Alec whined. "I'm pathetic."

Magnus couldn't keep a smile off his face as he answered, "Maybe a little."

"Not helping," Alec sulked. "You're supposed to tell me I'm not pathetic."

"Don't be sad darling," Magnus cooed. "You have lots of other wonderful things going for you, promise."

"Oh yeah?" Alec whined. "Like what?"

"You're kind," Magnus began, leaning forward to kiss his husband. "Generous, passionate, and so loving."

"Oh, just kiss me," Alec cried throwing his arms up in the air and throwing himself at Magnus, who caught him chuckling.

A moment later they were tangled on the couch together, though rather ungracefully.

"Get off," Alec mumbled, his voice muffled. "You're on my leg."

"Why don't you ask me to leg go of you then," Magnus sniggered as he moved aside.

Alec groaned. "Not your finest work," he said, matter of factly.

"Hey, sometimes you have to work with what you've got," Magnus shrugged.

Magnus watched as Alec's eyes turned to the tv, which was now showing a screen saver of the time. It was getting late. If they wanted to eat before bed they'd better get a move on.

"How is it that time with you flys by, while work drags on like molasses uphill in January," Alec asked.

"Just the nature of the human perception, my love," Magnus smiled, putting an arm around his husband and kissing the top of Alec's head.
"I never saw the value in time before," Alec began softly. "I mean, it was just time. Ticked by, but otherwise not really important you know, but now it's like there's no time for anything."

"I promise there are the same number of hours in a day now as there were before," Magnus smiled. Alec made a 'hmph' noise and relaxed his neck muscles so his head fell gently on Magnus's shoulder. "How do people do it? How do they work so hard for so little, without knowing there is an end in sight?"

"You'd be amazed what you can learn to live with," Magnus smiled, gently stroking Alec's hair. "You don't know what you are capable of until the moment life requires more of you."

"Stop being so wise," Alec grumbled. "It makes me feel dumb."

"You shouldn't feel that way," Magnus replied kindly. "You have a very unique perspective on money, and I'm sure many wise things to say on the topic."

"I never used to think about money," Alec shrugged. "It was always there, neither brilliant nor evil. It was only money, after all."

"And what do you think now?" Magnus asked.

"Now I know that once it's gone, once every dollar is earned slowly by the hour, money comes to mean something entirely different."

"And what would that be?"

"Based on some combination of recent events and econ class, money is a mixture of freedom, security, time, growth and exchange," Alec said with a wave of his hand.

"Welcome to the middle class," Magnus laughed.

"Boo," Alec replied.

"Then again, maybe that isn't right," Magnus mused. "I mean, you are still the very opposite of middle class in some ways, like how you have no long term money worries, only short term ones."

"Hey, paying rent after Christmas feels pretty long term to me," Alec argued, but Magnus just laughed.

"You're adorable," Magnus chuckled. Alec made a 'hmph' sound, which only added to his adorableness.

"So, what do you think about buying your husband dinner?" Alec asked, sweetly.

"Oh, but where's the fun in that?" Magnus giggled.

"The fun would be in the eating of dinner," Alec explained as if Magnus had asked a series question. "Why don't you go find something to eat in the fridge?" Magnus suggested.

"I don't want pickles and soy sauce for dinner," Alec stated.

"Surely there is more in the fridge than just pickles and soy sauce," Magnus sighed.

"Cat food?" Alec suggested.
"I think now you've learned the importance of keeping non-perishable foods in stock?" Magnus said with a raised eyebrow.

"That doesn't help now, does it," Alec whined. "Since I don't get paid for two more days!"

"Your first paycheck," Magnus grinned, strangely proud of his husband.

"Yep, and the first thing I'm doing with it is ordering sushi!" Alec exclaimed.

With yet another sigh, but also a smile Magnus spoke, "We are going to have to teach you money management next aren't we?"

"Hey, I earned that sushi!" Alec protested. "That sushi represents a lot of oven cleaning and pie making."

"And it will taste that much better since you've worked hard to get it," Magnus smiled.

"Says you," Alec replied. "I still say it will taste the same."

Laughing slightly, Magnus pulled Alec in closer to kiss him before suggesting they go to the kitchen together and figure out what to eat.

"I'm telling you, it's just soy sauce and pickles," Alec repeated as they entered the kitchen. "There isn't even any milk to make a latte."

"But there's ice cream," Magnus smiled. "You could make a Italian latte."

Before Alec could answer, Magnus opened the cupboard to do an inventory. "See, way more than pickles! We have flour, water, baking powder, frozen cheese, and canned tomato sauce."

"How the hell does that equal dinner?" Alec asked.

"Pizza!" Magnus explained happily.

"That doesn't sound like pizza to me," Alec said with a shake of his head.

"Oh hush," Magnus scoffed. "I promise you it is pizza, or at least all the makings of pizza."

"Can't you just order us dinner?" Alec whined. "You've already gotten a paycheck from your new job right?"

"I'm still on training wages," Magnus explained. "But yes, technically I could buy us dinner, or we could make pizza tonight and spend that money on groceries tomorrow that will last us way longer."


"As we've already established, you aren't actually poor," Magnus began. "Just temporarily unable to spend money. There is a difference."

"Feels like I'm poor," Alec mumbled, looking sulky.

"Oh hush," Magnus said. "And help me make pizza dough, or would you rather grate the cheese?"
With a resigned sigh, Alec reached for the tomato sauce muttering something about hoping there was pineapple somewhere, even if they had no ham. Grinning, Magnus began their nights cooking adventure. It was a testimony to how much he loved Alexander, that Magnus didn't even find his spoiled brattiness annoying anymore. Instead, it was adorable and endearing. Love was a funny thing, indeed.

The pizza actually turned out rather well, or at least Magnus thought so, Alec would have rather had sushi, but either way they went to bed with full stomachs.

To no one's surprise the next morning Alec wanted a latte, but as no magical diary faiers had come in the night, they were still out of milk.

"I solved this problem yesterday Alec," Magnus reminded him. "Ice cream."

"Do you want me to melt it and then steam it?" Alec asked clearly confused.

"No you put the espresso shot on the ice cream, and eat it with a spoon," Magnus explained.

"Huh," Alec said thoughtfully. "It sounds so wrong, but I'll try it. Anything to get rid of his caffeine headache."

"If it's really that bad, you could have just drank the espresso black," Magnus reminded him.

"Without anything to cut it!" Alec exclaimed, shocked. "I think I'd rather take the headache."

Magnus laughed as he continued getting ready to leave. He was just making sure he wasn't forgetting anything and collecting his coat when Alec asked where he was going. Magnus turned. His husband was holding a mug with a spoon in it.

"The museum," Magnus answered. Then he gestured to the mug. "The ice cream working then?"

"Oh, hell ya!" Alec cried. "I may never go back to milk." Magnus chuckled. Alec didn't work till later, and likely Magnus would already be home asleep before Alec got home from work tonight.

"Have fun," Alec waved him goodbye. "Don't let the stalker guy freak you out."

"Thanks," Magnus said slowly, unsure how to reply. With a kiss goodbye, Magnus left his apartment.

Unfortunately, he couldn't take Alec's advice. It was like the stalker man knew his schedule. Magnus's colleagues at the museum said he was only coming in now on the days' Magnus volunteered. To Magnus's great surprise, that day the man actually came over and said hello. That was it however. Magnus didn't even get a name out of him before the stranger ran off.

November dawned, and with it came the little red poppy. Magnus saw them everywhere, on every corner. They would be everywhere until after Remembrance Day, like they were every year. Sometimes when Magnus stopped to take in the moment, he was amazed by how much had changed in just a few years. How many Remembrance Days had it been since he'd met Alexander? Four including this one. Over three years, and his life was hardly recognizable. From bitter and totally given up hoping for love, to happily married was quite a leap for anyone, let alone a leap of less than half a decade. There was just something about Alexander that Magnus couldn't explain, even to himself. Whatever it was, it made Magnus believe in soulmates.

"Happy thoughts?"
Magnus turned to see the stranger standing a few feet from him. Magnus had let his mind wonder at the museum between giving tours, and it seemed while he hadn't been paying attention, the man had walked right up to him.

"That was quite the smile, so I thought," the man began, but then he backtracked. "Nevermind I shouldn't have."

"What's your name?" Magnus asked.

"John," the guy said.

"Finally," Magnus replied. "Something to call you other than stalker guy."

"Oh god, is that what I am," John replied awkwardly, rubbing the back of his neck clearly nervous.

"Well, hovering silently around my place of work doesn't really give rise to any other descriptive words," Magnus replied, calmly.


"Is there something you wanted to talk to me about?" Magnus inquired.

"Yes," John said. "Ah, and no."

"As transparent as ever, I see," Magnus laughed. There was silence after that, but John didn't move away either. Magnus wasn't sure if he should just walk away, or maybe offer John a tour of the museum. Magnus was sure by now John had seen all of it, but maybe the activity would be a good icebreaker to let John say whatever it was he'd been coming here to say.

"I'll see you later then," John said suddenly, turning and bolting for the door as if hellhounds were after him.

"So much for satisfying my curiosity," Magnus sighed as he returned to his tasks.

The rest of his day passed easily enough, and just as Magnus suspected he arrived home to an empty apartment or rather an apartment full of needy cats. After giving Catsby his medication and both felines their dinner, Magnus entertained himself for the rest of the evening with netflix before finally going to bed. He sensed, more than heard Alec come to bed hours later. Magnus rolled over and snuggled up against his husband before falling asleep again.

It was strange waking up before Alexander. Usually it's always been the other way around, but with Alec working closes at the grocery store, and Magnus working office hours, there wasn't really a way around it. Quietly, Magnus snuck off to the museum again, and to his surprise he didn't see John once all day.

When Magnus arrived home this time he found Alec and Jace in his living room. So much for some alone time with his husband, Magnus thought as he joined them.

"It seems she's too busy with finals approaching," Jace was saying as Magnus walked in. "Or so she says."

"You don't believe her?" Alec asked.

"It's not that," Jace sighed. "It's just- I don't know. I don't understand how she can be SO busy that a ten minute video chat conversation isn't possible. I mean, my exams are coming up too and you don't
"Have you told her this?" Alec asked.

"No," Jace mumbled.

"And why not?" Alec inquired.

"I don't want to seem too clingy," Jace mumbled.

"I hate to break it to you," Alec said, trying to hold back a grin. "But that ship sailed a LONG time ago."

"Urg," Jace groaned. "I hate this."

"Not to put salt in the wound," Magnus began moving closer. "But I've had a long day, and I want a kiss." Alec's attention was instantly caught, and he stood up to great Magnus properly.

"Hmm," Magnus sighed. "That's better."

"I miss kissing," Jace whined, looking at them bitterly.

"It's rather fantastic, isn't it," Magnus grinned, before wrapping his arms around Alec and deepening the kiss.

"Stop it," Jace whined. Then added with an evil tone. "Or I just might join you."

"Too far," Alec said, quickly backing away from Magnus. "Now I can't get that image out of my head." The look of total disgust on Alec's face made Magnus giggle.

"That doesn't sound so bad," Magnus mused, enjoying Alec's disgust more than he should.

"No way," Alec repeated, shaking his head and backing away. "Eww!"

"Okay, well as much fun as that was," Jace sighed standing up. "I was joking. That's way too much dick for me. I'm a boob man." Magnus's giggles turned into full laughter, half from Jace's word, and half from the look of relief on Alec's face.

"I'll leave the married couple to make out then, shall I," Jace said, moving towards his school bag. Magnus assumed he and Alec had come here after class. Jace stopped, and added bitterly, "Of course that still leaves me going home to hang out with yet another couple who will probably be kissing."

"How is Jordan?" Alec asked as if he were thinking of the couple Jace was speaking of rather than Jace's discontentment around kissing people.


"Maia's been a little off at work lately," Alec explained. "I was just wondering if maybe she'd had a fight with Jordan or something."

"Not that I know of," Jace replied. "Then again, I'm not the best at picking up on this kinda stuff."

"So true," Alec chuckled. "Just let me know if you do notice something. Maia's been so nice to me and I'd like help her if I can, but I really don't know how if she won't talk to me."

"Fair enough," Jace smiled as he headed towards the door. "See ya later." They heard the click as the
lock latched behind him.

Now Magnus got the welcome home he'd wanted. They decided to order dinner, something they hadn't done since the night of Alec's first paycheck. Though Alec would never admit it, Magnus liked to think that Alec had noticed that the sushi did taste better after he'd earned it. At the very least, Alec didn't seem to be taking eating out for granted anymore.

For once they went to bed at the same time, which lead to lazy kissing and light foreplay in the dark before they fell asleep in each other's arms. The next day was Magnus's last shift at the museum before four days of being bored out of his mind doing data entry. At least it wasn't physical labour; the pay was okay and the hours were good, but apart from that it wasn't anything special. Still, Magnus wasn't about to be unemployed when Alec was working. He had more pride than that.

It was getting toward the end of his shift at the museum - and Magnus was already dreading his day at the office tomorrow - when he spotted John and decided enough was enough. Dropping what he was doing, Magnus walked over to his stalker and tapped him on the shoulder.

"Hey John," Magnus said brightly.

"Oh um, it's you- I mean hi," John stammered.

"Just say it," Magnus sighed. "I know you have something you want to tell me, and all this hovering isn't going to get it done. So out with it and let's move on."

"It isn't something you just say," John replied.

"Then stop coming here," Magnus snapped. "It's creepy."

"Alright," John sighed. "Alright." He took a deep breath the spoke. "See when I saw your picture on the website I got to thinking. Bane was her sister's surname, and you look a bit like her, and me. Though more like her."

"What are you talking about?" Magnus asked, with a sigh.

"I always knew you existed, or at least I knew Dian was pregnant, but then she disappeared and I never really bothered to find out what happened," John explained. "I only put two and two together when I saw your wedding announcement, and your picture on the museum site. Thought it might be worth a trip over here."

"A trip?" Magnus asked, not believing a word this man was saying. "You've been here dozens of times that I can remember."

"Well alright, many trips then," he admitted. "I'd never met you before so I thought if I got to know you a little, then maybe..."

"You aren't making any sense," Magnus said. "What exactly are you saying?"

"I think I'm your dad," John stated.

Chapter End Notes

What to say... hmm... what to say... What do you guys think? Please please review and
tell me! I do love to hear what is going through your minds as you read my chapters. No matter how many reviews I already have, I still refresh the page for days after uploading a new chapter hoping for more!

-----------------------------------------

Sneak Peek Chapter 135

"Now are you sure about this whole vinegar in with the veggies thing?" Simon asked, cautiously.

"Yes," Izzy said firmly. "It's called pickling or how did you think pickles were made?"


"Cheeky," Izzy laughed, turning her back on him as she continued twirling around the kitchen making dinner. Simon loved her laugh. Combined with that glorious smile on her face, it was all he had to wait until she was done the prep work before he pulled her into his arms and kissed her.

"Hmm," Izzy sighed, as her arms came around him. Simon often lost track of his thoughts and his hands when kissing Isabelle. Today was no different.

"Sweetheart if you do that we are going to be eating burn tacos tonight," she gasped, as he kissed her neck while his hands traced lines over the sensitive skin under her shirt.

"What if I like burnt tacos?" Simon teased, moving down to kiss her collar bones.
Simon wasn't quite sure what was going on, but he knew something had changed. For the past few weeks he'd notice strange behaviour in his friends. At first it was just Maia who was down cast and quiet. The only reason she'd give for this was that her and Bat decided to call it quits, which Simon supposed was a good enough reasons, but even so it didn't quite feel right to him. Simon never really got the impression Maia was all that attached to Bat.

Then just as Maia was starting to seem like herself again, Simon noticed something else. Jordan started acting very odd indeed, almost overly cheerful like he had something to prove. Yet at the same time, when no one else was in the room Jordan looked tired. Simon just couldn't figure it out.

"Maybe they slept together," Izzy said with a shrug one day when Simon confessed his worries to her.

"Jordan wouldn't do that to Paige!" Simon said at once, but Izzy didn't look impressed.

"Last I checked, Jordan was human," Izzy stated. "It's a species wide failing."

Simon turned to face her. "Does that mean you think I could do that?"

"You as you are now no," Izzy replied, thoughtfully. "But there is a situation and a world in which anyone could do anything."

Simon rolled his eyes and kissed her before turning to the task at hand, which in this case was making dinner. Simon was chopping onions - and crying quite a lot about it - while Izzy had the carrots finished and was putting them in a pan.

"Now, are you sure about this whole vinegar in with the veggies thing?" Simon asked, cautiously.

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"Sweetheart, if you do that we are going to be eating burnt tacos tonight," she gasped as he kissed her neck while his hands traced lines over the sensitive skin under her shirt.

"What if I like burnt tacos?" Simon teased, moving down to kiss her collar bones.

"Then you are hornier than you are hungry," Izzy explained matter of factly.

With a sigh, Simon pulled back. "Okay I am hungry," he said. "And I love you."

"Good," Izzy grinned as she returned to continue cooking. Simon had to wait a whole minute for her
to turn back to him grinning and say. "Oh, and I love you too."

"Good to know," Simon laughed, moving forward and wrapping his arms around her from behind. "You little tease." Izzy giggled, and Simon kissed the top of her head before letting her free to finish the tacos.

They were just plating their dinner when Simon heard the door and Maia's voice call out. With a smile, Simon asked if she'd like to join them, but Maia shook her head saying something about grabbing a bite at school and went right to her room.

"Did she tell you why she and Bat broke up?" Izzy asked as they were eating moments later.

"Nope," Simon sighed. "I just don't get it."

"Your friends problems aren't your problems," Izzy reminded him.

"Yeah, but that doesn't mean I don't want to fix them," Simon replied.

"Just because you want to, doesn't mean you can," Izzy smiled at him lovingly.

"I know," Simon sighed, reaching forward to take her hand. Looking away from Maia's door, he turned to his girlfriend. "At least we solved our problems."

"Oh no, this is miserable Sizzy," she giggled. "Or couldn't you tell?"

"Sizzy?" Simon asked confused.

"Oh come on," Izzy scoffed. "You're the one with the crazy ship naming ex-girlfriend not me. Surely you remember what name Clary gave us."

Simon blinked for a moment, staring aimlessly before it came back to him. "Just your name with a little bit extra," he chuckled.

"About sums it up," Izzy giggled.

"You know, sometimes I forget that Clary's all the way on the other side of the world," Simon remarked. "It's strange."

"Have you talked to her lately?" Izzy asked before taking another bite of her taco.

"Mostly texting," Simon shrugged. "She's been too busy to video chat."

"I bet Jace hates that," Izzy replied.

"Oh probably," Simon said. "But with Jordan the way he is, my 'Jace Watch' is getting very slack indeed. Maybe it's time to enlist Alec."

"I promise Alec is already on that watch," Izzy chuckled. "For two people who once so disliked each other, they are all but brothers now."

"Doesn't that make him your brother too?" Simon smirked.

"I suppose," Izzy sighed. "If you look at it that way. How about estranged, adopted brother." Simon couldn't help but laugh from the look on her face. "Then again, that does make the times he hit on me in high school way creepier." Now she was laughing too.
"What family doesn't have it's problems?" Simon sniggered.

Despite his best friend being miles away, plus his other friends strange moods as well as everything else going on around him, Simon couldn't help but be happy. There was something about spending every day with the one person you loved most in the world that makes everything more bearable. Not that Simon had much to bare. He knew Clary was having fun, and he knew Jace would be happy once Clary got back. Maia and Jordan needed to sort out their own stuff, and Simon knew there wasn't anything he could do about it unless one of them came to him for help. To his great surprise, that is exactly what happened just a few days later.

"Ah Simon?"

He looked up from his books to see Jordan standing beside him.

"Can we talk?" Jordan asked. Then he turned to look around at all the quietly studying people and added, "Not here."

"Sure," Simon replied as he packed up his books and homework. Together the two of them left the library, turning down a hall to sit in an isolated corner.

"What's up?" Simon asked.

"Well I-" Jordan began. "I don't really know how to- I mean it's not something I'm proud of- I-"

"Whole sentences, my friend," Simon smiled.

"Right, well I guess I should just come out and say it," Jordan began, taking a deep breath. "I slept with Maia."

Simon just stared for a second, his mind blank, then he whispered, "Well what do ya know, Izzy was right."

"Izzy knows?" Jordan gasped.

"She guessed," Simon shrugged.

"Oh, well I guess we haven't been acting as casual as I thought we were," Jordan sighed.

"Izzy is just a very intuitive person," Simon offered. "At least when it comes to other people." He paused then added, "And sex."

"Have you told Paige?" Simon asked next. Jordan shook his head. "And why not?"

It was at that moment that Jordan lost it. "I didn't know, and well, now I've ruined everything and I just- I'm so lost. I don't know what I should do, or if there is anything I can do."

"Breath," Simon instructed. "Start again. What didn't you know?"

"When I met Paige, I am sad to say I thought of her like a crutch," Jordan began. "Someone to hold me up and get me through the pain. Then Maia told me how she felt, and it was like everything else disappeared. But after, I suddenly realized what I'd done to the kindest person in the world and I bolted."

"So you're feeling guilty that you love Maia and hurt Paige?" Simon offered.

"Yes but it's not as simple as that," Jordan sighed. "I realized, I mean once I messed it all up, I
suddenly understood with perfect clarity-" Simon tried not to interrupt, leaving him space to speak. "I
love her."

"Maia?"

"No, Paige," Jordan exclaimed. "And probably Maia, but it's different. I once loved Maia with my
whole being, but that feels like a very long time ago now."

"Oh boy," Simon sighed, pinching the bridge of his nose. "You are in it now."

"What should I do?" Jordan begged.

"If you love Paige, then you owe her the truth. Don't lie to those you love," Simon stated firmly. "If
she loves you, and you can promise it was all a big mistake, maybe there's a chance to save your
relationship. But if you love Maia more than Paige, break things off with Paige and come clean.
Either way you have to tell her."

"I was afraid you were going to say that," Jordan whined, dropping his head into his hands.

"Oh come on, cheer up," Simon teased. "Two beautiful women love you. There are worse problems
to have."

"You sounds like Isabelle," Jordan chuckled.

"I'll take that as a compliment," Simon smiled.

The smile faded from Jordan's face. "I don't want to hurt her," he whispered.

"I think it's a little too late for that," Simon replied, reaching forward to put a hand on his friend's
shoulder. "You have already hurt her."

"Urg, why am I so stupid!" Jordan cried. "Not once, but twice now I've been happy and found a
way to muddle it all up."

"I thought it was your parents who broke up you and Maia?" Simon inquired.

"And I let them," Jordan sighed. "If I'd said no right away and run after her at once rather than ages
later…"

"Don't you think you're being a little hard on yourself?" Simon asked.

"No I don't," Jordan snapped. "I don't deserve either of them."

"Now wait a minute," Simon chuckled. "Maia cheated on someone too. It's not like she's blameless
in this."

"She tried to leave," Jordan explained. "She said all those things then she tried to leave, and I just
moved forward and-"

Simon sighed. He had a feeling he knew how this had all gone down. "It might be my fault that she
said all those things," he whispered. "When you told me that you'd rather know than not, and it
wouldn't change how you felt about Paige, I might have suggested to Maia that she talk to you."

There was silence for a moment into which Simon said, "Sorry."

"You didn't make me sleep with her," Jordan sighed. "This isn't your fault, and I did want to hear
what she had to say. You were just being a good friend. I was the one who messed it up."

"Not that I agree with you," Simon replied. "But thanks for letting me off the hook." There was silence again, but this time Simon didn't know what to say.

"So... what now?" Jordan asked sorrowfully with a shrug, as if they had lunch plans.

"Uh, you need to tell Paige," Simon stated, confused.

"What, like right away?" Jordan said shocked. "This very minute kinda right away?"

"YES!" Simon exclaimed. "The longer the wait, the worse it will get." Jordan bit his lip, looking like he was heading for the gallows.

"I'd offer to come with you," Simon said. "But I really doubt it will help. Just come find me when it's over okay?"

A deep gulp cut the silence as Jordan swallowed nervously. Simon reminded him to breathe. Then with a wave, Jordan turned and walked away looking about as brave as a gazelle about to face down a lion.

"Yep," Simon sighed. "He's screwed."

And with that, Simon headed home to his wonderful girlfriend to convince her to help him bake a batch of cookies for when Jordan inevitably showed up at their doorstep in tears.

Chapter End Notes

You know how sometimes you get up in the morning and nothing's right, your life just sucks and all you want to do is go back to bed? Yep, I'm having one of those days today.

I don't want to adult. Let's be Dragons!

I'm trying to wrap up this story now but thanks to what I already have in motion and the slow burn structure of R&S it will be quite tricky to accomplish. I'd love to read some reviews to cheer me up but I'm starting to accept that you guys just don't review much anymore...

Sneak Peek Chapter 136

"This seat taken?" a soft female voice spoke beside him.

"I'm married," Jace said to try and get the girl to go away.

"I don't see a ring on that finger," she replied.

Seized with a sudden idea, Jace reached for the bowl of pretzels and put his finger through one of them as if it were a ring.

"You're funny," the girl giggled and sat down anyway.
Jace sighed. Maybe the bar wasn't the best idea. Usually people left him alone, but tonight didn't seem to be one of those times.
It was a strange habit, but one Jace had taken to doing every weekend. He wasn't sure why he was here, but somehow it made him feel better.

"This seat taken?" a soft female voice spoke beside him.

"I'm married," Jace said to try and get the girl to go away.

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"You're funny," the girl giggled and sat down anyway.

Jace sighed. Maybe the bar wasn't the best idea. Usually people left him alone, but tonight didn't seem to be one of those times. With a sigh, Jace turned to face the women. Her skin was fair but not as pale as Clary's. Her hair was done up in ringlets of blonde and brown, and she was wearing a bold red lipstick with smokey eye make up. All her body language screamed 'touch me.' It was moments like this when Jace realized just how empty his old lifestyle had been. There was no challenge in picking up women who came to bars. For all he knew, out in daylight these women were well respected professionals, or at least studying to be such, but here it was different. This bar was about hiding your open wounds with the temporary bandage of a strangers company.

"A penny for your thoughts," she asked.

"Oh you don't want to hear my thoughts," Jace replied.

"Maybe I do," she smiled.

"Alright, but you asked for it," Jace began. "Look around this place and you will find not a single happy person." He turned and added, "Okay, maybe those people in the corner with the birthday hats are having a good time, but in general people come here to escape something, usually that something is inside their own hearts and minds." He paused to throw back half his drink. "There is no challenge in exploiting the pain in someone else to help ease your own. The real challenge is in recognizing that pain for what it is, and moving past it of your own power. Instead of covering the problem, face it head one and then just maybe you have a shot at being happy."

"I don't think I have a come back for that," the women smiled. And she got up and left. Jace sighed. If pretzel rings didn't get rid of them, speeches sure did. Downing what was left of his drink, Jace got up and left the bar.

As he walked home, Jace checked his phone. No new messages from Clary. He thought about texting her - something simple like 'hey' - but with her so busy he felt like he was a nuisance to her, and he didn't want that.

Jace started counting on his fingers as he walked. She'd left in mid August, and it was nearing the end of November now so… that was over three months that she'd been gone. Jace sighed. That still left seven months to go. The thought was more depressing than he believed possible. He was already
forgetting what it was like to touch her. He could picture Clary's face perfectly in his mind, but the feel of her skin against his had somehow slipped through the sieve of his mind.

Thoughts of his beautiful redhead faded from his mind as Jace approached his front door. He could hear raised voices from the other side. Curious beyond his powers to simply back away, Jace moved forward.

"I can't believe you!" a woman's voice yelled with such force it could be easily heard through the door.

When Jace poked his head through the door he recognized who had spoken. It rather amazed him how little Paige sounded like herself. He'd never heard her raise her voice before, not even a little and yet here she was, screaming at the top of her voice to a rather terrified looking Jordan.

"Maybe I should go," Jace offered, trying to back away.

"No stay," Paige snapped, turning to face him. "Listen to this. After a year together! A whole year, he finally tells me he loves me right before he explains that in order to figure this out he had to sleep with another woman."


"Oh, well what else did you mean by it then," Paige snapped.

"Hey, you knew I was broken when we met," Jordan stood to his defense. "And you took me anyway."

"Clearly I didn't realize how broken," Paige yelled back. "How was I to know that a year of my life later, and you'd still be broken!"

"What can I do to make it up to you?" Jordan asked.

"Nothing!" Paige yelled. "I could have forgiven a lot of things, but not this."

"Please," Jordan tried again. "Don't say that."

"Cheating without love is forgivable," Paige began firmly. "A moment's lapse in judgement doesn't negate all the time that came before, but I can not forgive that it took you sleeping with the last woman you loved to realize that you loved me." She paused, taking a deep breath before facing him and saying. "Goodbye Jordan."

Then to Jace's surprise, she walked towards her now ex-boyfriend and took both his shoulders in her hands. "I've known I was in love with you for months now, and I would have told you so if I thought you'd have said it back when I did." Then she kissed him.

Jace was sure she'd meant it as a quick kiss, but Jordan seized the opportunity to pull her closer. Paige kindly but firmly pulled herself away, collected her purse and made for the door.

"I'll pack up later," she told Jordan. Then she turned to Jace and added, "Come with me."

"What, me why?" Jace asked confused.

"I need a drinking buddy," Paige explained, as she pull Jace along by the arm. Jace decided it was best to go with the flow, rather than face Paige's newly single wrath.

Within the hour Jace found himself right back where he started: at the bar. Though this time instead
of giving life advice to some stranger, he was sitting next to a women who wanted to be drunk more
than anything in the world, even if she wasn't having much luck.

"Love is stupid," Paige stated bitterly.

"Not sure I'm the right person to rant to about love," Jace offered.

"Oh, but you are," Paige said, ordering another drink. "Where is your soulmate, huh? Oh yeah that's
right, getting hit on by french guys with sexy accents."

"I think you've had enough to drink," Jace offered.

"Oh please," Paige snapped. "I don't even have a buzz yet." She accepted the drink the bartender
offered and began to sip this one rather than throwing it back in one go.

"I just can't believe him!" Paige ranted. "What a waist of a year! And now I have to move. Plus all
my friends are his friends, and I have to get through another year and five months of school before I
can leave this place." Her voice turned to a whine as she added, "I'm gonna run into him in the halls,
aren't I?"

"One problem at a time," Jace tried to comfort her.

"Maybe I should just change schools," Paige sighed, all her energy vanishing at once.

"Don't be silly," Jace smiled. "You still have friends here. Clary adores you."

"Clary hated washing dishes," Paige laughed. Then her laughter faded. She took a sip of her drink
and added, "You know how it is when you think you have your life figured out? It's like you can see
the whole thing laid out in front of you. It's so solid, so real that when it all falls away you aren't
really sure where you stand anymore."

"I know how that feels," Jace said.

She turned to him then, her eyes taking him in a way they hadn't before. "You know what's really

"Huh?" Jace asked stunned.

"I mean you were always hot, but without Clary you must be living at the gym because I swear your
arms didn't used to be that thick," Paige explained.

"Um," Jace mumbled. "I um- well I have more free time so…"

"Have you ever wondered what it would be like if we made a go of it," Paige asked him, far more
earnestly than he'd expected. "I mean we both wants kids one day. We work well together. I can't
speak for you, but I'm definitely attracted to you." She didn't seem that drunk, and Jace had to take
her question seriously.

"I love Clary," Jace stated softly.

"Yeah, but do you really think the two of you are going to be on the same page by the time she gets
back?" Paige asked. "Jordan and I couldn't even be on the same page while living in the same
apartment. Clary wants very different things from you."

"I know," Jace sighed. "And I won't lie. The idea scares the hell out of me, but I can't be the one
who gives up first. I have to wait for her to get back and give us a real chance before I can even think
of doing anything else."

Paige sighed. She took a big gulp of her drink before adding, "I'm sensing a pattern."

"Oh?" Jace inquired.

"My pattern," Paige continued. "I must have a thing for men in love with someone else they can't get over. Why do I think I can fix people I don't know."

"You like to see the best in people," Jace smiled at her. "And there isn't anything wrong with that."

"Except when it comes to bite me in the ass," Paige sighed.

"Don't change who you are just because once being yourself hurt you," Jace replied.

"Yeah yeah," Paige scoffed. "Don't pretend like you're all wise with all the wisdom, just because you changed your lifestyle for a girl."

"Wise with all the wisdom?" Jace chuckled.

"Hey, I'm drunk," Paige defended herself. "You try and make good comebacks when you're drunk. It's harder than it looks."

"You aren't that drunk," Jace reminded her, one eyebrow raised.

"Whatever," Paige scoffed, finishing her drink and ordering another one. "Is it my fault I hate the taste of alcohol."

Paige finished her last drink, pulling a disgusted face as she did so. "Okay, that's my limit," she stated sadly. "I better get home to pack."

"You shouldn't have to move out," Jace told her. "Jordan should."

"Oh yeah, and where is he gonna go?" Paige asked. "For that matter where am I gonna go?"

"I'm sure Alec and Magnus wouldn't mind you staying with them," Jace offered. "Just till you get back on your feet. I can ask for you."

"That's very kind," Paige sighed. "But I don't want to be a bother."

"I promise it isn't a bother," Jace smiled. "I know it's what Clary would want. She'd never leave you out in the cold."

"I didn't even tempt you, did I?" Paige sighed.

"Wouldn't you like to know," Jace chuckled, refusing to tell her that her offer had so far been the only thing that came even close to tempting him. Every other woman who'd propositioned Jace since Clary had left hadn't even made his radar, but with Paige Jace could almost picture it. It was a testimony to how much Clary had changed him that only a real chance of a future could tempt him at all. Though he wasn't about to tell anyone, Jace had to forgive himself for indulging the idea for a moment; he was after all only human.

"I hope Clary knows how lucky she is," Paige stated, soberly.

"I know how lucky, I am," Jace replied, easily.
"You aren't as broken as you think you are, Jace," Paige told him kindly. "Don't sell yourself short."

Jace just smiled, unsure how to answer. Then Paige stood up. "Time to crash at Malec's, I guess," Paige sighed. "Or maybe I should pack first?" She sighed, leaning her head back.

"I can help if you want," Jace offered. "Collect a few things at least before you head over. In my experience everything is bleaker without a toothbrush and a clean change of clothes."

"Fair point," Paige replied.

"Oh and can I tell Clary that you guys broke up?" Jace asked as they left the bar together. "Or do you want to keep it under wraps?"

"She's across the Atlantic," Paige shrugged. "Even if I did, who's she gonna tell?"

"Simon?" Jace suggested.

"Oh please," Paige scoffed. "Simon probably knew before I did."

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Chapter End Notes

So who has an opinion on the Jace/Paige scene they just read? I'm SO curious about what you guys think of this one. :

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Sneak Peek Chapter 137

"Ain't got a soapbox I can stand upon," Izzy began the song once again from the beginning. "But God gave me a stage, a guitar and a song."

An adorable smile on his face Simon sang with her, "My daddy told me, son, don't you get involved in. Politics, religions or other people's quotes."

"It's a good thing I love you," Simon chuckled as they once again finished singing the song together.

"Oh and why is that?" Izzy teased.

"How else am I to put up with you," he laughed, pulling her in closer and kissing her deeply this time. Izzy quite forgot where she was, all her attention on her boyfriend's wandering hands, before the oven timer interrupted them.

"Cookies are done," Izzy chirped as she got up very quickly, straightening her clothes as she did so. She was quite impressed to discover Simon had gotten half the clasp of her bra undone.
"We could change this whole world with a piano. Add a bass, some guitar, grab a beat and away we go. I'm just a boy with a one-man show. No university, no degree, but-"

"You know you have a university degree right?" Simon interrupted her singing by calling out to her.

"Not yet I don't," Izzy replied before she started singing along to the music again.

"Everybody's talking 'bout exponential growth. And the stock market crashing in their portfolios. While I'll be sitting here with a song that I wrote."

Izzy had been playing this song non-stop for weeks. It wasn't just that she loved the song, but also that she loved the strange slightly annoyed look on her boyfriend's face as he teased her about it.

"Love could change the world in a moment. But what do I know? The revolution's coming, it's a minute away. I saw people marching in the streets today. You know we are made up of love and hate. But both of them are balanced on a razor blade."

At this point she heard Simon begin to sing along. It wasn't the first time this had happened. She supposed at some point he just gave up trying to ignore it. Through careful observation Izzy had discovered that Simon was most likely to be coerced into singing along when he was supposed to be doing his homework.

"I'll paint the picture, let me set the scene. I know, I'm all for people following their dreams. Just remember life is more than fittin' in your jeans. It's love and understanding, positivity."

Izzy put the cookies in the oven and set the timer before joining her boyfriend in the living room. She wasn't at all surprised to see textbooks laid out on the couch, and what looked to be notes scattered over the table. This explained the singing. He smiled when he saw her, and they finished singing the song together.

"You know, the future's in the hands of you and me. So let's all get together, we can all be free. Spread love and understanding, positivity. Sing, love could change the world in a moment. But what do I know?"

"I do love it when you sing along," Izzy smiled at him, moving forward to kiss him sweetly before she sat down.

"It's funny, I know the words but not the title," Simon chuckled. "You sing it ALL the time, but what song is that?"

"What do I know?" Izzy replied as she moved his textbooks off the couch so she could sit down on it. "By Ed Sheeran."

"I thought he was just that radio guy who wrote all those sappy songs," Simon shrugged.

"He has more than just romantic songs," Izzy replied defensively. "You probably know 'Castle on the Hill.' That's about returning to the people who made up your past. And he has a song from his
mother's perspective that about his grandmother's passing. Also not romantic. Then there's 'Small Bump' which is about a miscarriage. And-

"Okay okay!" Simon surrendered and she paused for breath. "I take it back."

"Good," Izzy said firmly. "Because sometimes it seems to me like the only songs his fans know of his are 'Shape Of You,' 'Thinking Out Loud,' 'Perfect,' 'Lego House' 'Kiss Me' and 'Photograph,' maybe even 'Nancy Milligan,' but he has a lot of music, not just romantic ones"

"Didn't I already say you won," Simon chuckled, pulling Izzy closer.

"Just being thorough," Izzy mumbled.

"So if he has so many brilliant songs," Simon began, grinning. "Why play that one over and over again?"

"Because I like it," Izzy stated, firmly.

Simon rolled his eyes. "That much I had gathered."

"It's one of his less well known songs," Izzy explained. "At least off that album. 'Shape of You' and 'Castle on The Hill' really stole it's thunder. And the song is so positive while still being realistic." She shrugged. "I don't know. I just like it."

"Still do you think we could maybe listen to a different song today?" Simon pleaded. "Any other song?"

"Let's think," Izzy began, pretending to think it over. "No."

"Figures," Simon chuckled. With a giggle, Izzy wrapped her arms around him, kissing him playfully. "Ain't got a soapbox I can stand upon," Izzy began the song once again from the beginning. "But God gave me a stage, a guitar and a song."

An adorable smile on his face, Simon sang with her, "My daddy told me, son, don't you get involved in. Politics, religions or other people's quotes."

"It's a good thing I love you," Simon chuckled as they once again finished singing the song together.

"Oh, and why is that?" Izzy teased.

"How else am I to put up with you," he laughed, pulling her in closer and kissing her deeply this time. Izzy quite forgot where she was, all her attention on her boyfriend's wandering hands before the oven timer interrupted them.

"Cookies are done," Izzy chirped as she got up very quickly, straightening her clothes as she did so. She was quite impressed to discover Simon had gotten half the clasps of her bra undone.

"Those smell amazing," Simon said appearing beside her. He was breathing in deeply as if he'd followed his nose into the kitchen.

"Those are for Jordan," Izzy reminded him. "That is if you are still sure he is going to show up all broken up."

"If he didn't chicken out he will," Simon scoffed.
"But isn't there a chance she'll forgive him?" Izzy asked. "Paige is the most forgiving person I've ever met. I really can't imagine her giving up if there's a chance."

"Did you not hear the story?" Simon asked, reaching for a cookie, but Izzy snapped his hand away.

"Those are for your broken hearted friend," Izzy told him firmly.

"Who knows," Simon said pulling his hand away, but looking suspiciously like someone who hadn't given up on stealing a cookie. "Maybe they made up and he won't need the comfort food?"

"Uh huh," Izzy scoffed skeptically. "Or maybe you just wanted me to make cookies."

"Can't I be guilty of both?" Simon asked. He was grinning now, moving forward and playfully pulling her in for a kiss. Giving in, Izzy wrapped her arms around him. Happiness in love was still new to her, and she intended to enjoy every minute of it.

Just then they were interrupted by a slow melancholy knock at the door.

"Something tells me we're gonna need the cookies," Izzy said with a sigh as she disentangled herself from Simon and went to greet their visitor.

Standing on her doorstep was Jordan, no hope in his eyes and a look of grief on his face. In fact, he looked so miserable Izzy could almost picture his own personal mini rain cloud hovering over his head. If this had been Hollywood, Izzy was sure it would have been raining. Instead it was just cold, their breath forming mist as they exhaled.

"She left," Jordan said numbly. "She's gone." He wasn't wearing a jacket, and Izzy was starting to worry he'd catch a cold.

"Come in out of the cold before you freeze," Izzy said gently.

"I- I mean I knew," Jordan sniffled, numbly walking forward as she instructed. "But I wasn't quite prepared for- what happened."

Izzy turned to see if Simon had sat down beside them on the couch when she noticed that he was chewing and there were crumbs around his mouth.


"I told her," Jordan began. It was then that Izzy noticed the circles under his eyes. He looked so worn out. "You know, the strange thing is I think she could have forgiven me, at least in part. If only I'd realized I'd loved her sooner and told her as much." He paused for a shaky breath, then continued. "Makes it worse."

"I get that," Izzy tried to comfort him.

"We made cookies," Simon piped up, clearly unsure how else to cheer up his friend.

"Thanks," Jordan said. "But I'm not really hungry."

"Just have one," Simon offered. "They're really good."

"Simons would know," Izzy said coolly. "Since he's already stolen some."

"It's okay," Jordan replied weakly. "I'm not even sure I could eat anything at the moment. I feel a
little sick to my stomach."

"This isn't the end of the world," Izzy consoled him. "Everything will be okay."

"I know it's not the apocalypse," Jordan half smiled. It was the closest he'd come to looking not totally broken since arriving. "Life goes on, but it won't be the same. I messed it all up, and now I have to live with it."

"We're here for you, buddy," Simon said, moving closer to put a comforting hand on Jordan's shoulder.

There was silence for a moment until the quiet was broken by a knock on the door. From the looks on every face, it seemed like no one was expecting anyone else. However, Izzy did see a moment's hope in Jordan's eyes, like maybe he thought Paige had come back, but when Izzy opened the door it was none other than Jace who stood there.

"I'm here on a mission from Clary," Jace stated when Izzy asked him what was up. He walked forward into the room, making a beeline for the two guys on the couch. Jace stopped when he was standing right in front of Jordan.

"Just remember that this is not from me," Jace continued. "I don't wanna take sides." Both Simon and Jordan looked all kinds of confused as Jace continued. "Clary made me promise." And just like that, Jace pulled back his arm and slapped Jordan across the face.

"Sorry," Jace said at once.

"It's okay," Jordan sighed, rubbing the red mark on his cheek. "Besides, you didn't hit me very hard."

"I was going for Clary levels of force," Jace explained. "Since it was from her."

"You know I love her dearly, but sometimes that woman is mental," Simon chuckled.

Though she knew he didn't mean it the way it sounded, Izzy couldn't help the jealous twinge Simon's words created in her. In her mind, exes weren't supposed to talk about each other like that. Her best consolation was that Jace didn't show even the slightest inclination of jealousy at all. Izzy wasn't sure how those two had become such good friends - after all, hadn't Jace stolen Clary away from Simon? - but in times like these she tried to remind herself that if they didn't hold a grudge so neither should she. It was just far more difficult in practice than in principle.

"You're telling me," Jace chuckled. "I just spent an hour listening to her on the phone." He whistled for emphasis. "And boy is she mad at you." He gestured to Jordan.

"I'm mad at me," Jordan whined.

"Think about it this way," Jace tried to console him. "We guys will have the apartment all to ourselves. A real bachelor pad."

"Oh no, I hadn't even thought of that," Jordan whined. He turned to face Jace before adding. "When did she say she was moving out? Because she doesn't have to. I should be the one-"

"Sorry," Jace interrupted Jordan's dithering. "But she already has. I helped her pack up a few things before I came here."

"So you know where she's staying?" Jordan asked hopefully.
"Yes," Jace said very slowly. "But I don't think it's a good idea for you to head over there."

"I won't," Jordan said quickly. "Promise. I just want to know that she's okay."

"She's okay," Jace smiled.

"So I take it that means you aren't going to tell me where she is?" Jordan asked, hopefully.

Jace took a deep breath before reluctantly adding, "She's saying with Magnus and Alec. I think Clary texted Magnus about it because they weren't even surprised to see us when we got there."

As Izzy took in the moments silence in the room, she couldn't help but feel like everyone had chosen a side. It couldn't have been more obvious if they'd all put on red and blue jerseys. Clary was clearly on Team-Paige, while Simon - and by proximity Izzy - were on Team-Jordan. Jace was trying to remain neutral, but she wasn't sure if he truly was. How could anyone be one hundred percent neutral in a situation like this? Not even Magnus and Alec could remain neutral, seeing as they were now sheltering Paige. And where did Maia fit into this? Surely, Alec working with her would complicate everything. It was such a shame how a single relationship factoring down the middle could do so much damage to every other relationship around it, platonic and romantic alike.

"That's good," Jordan finally spoke. "Good she has friends to stay with. Thank you for telling me." Jace gave a slight nod.

Between the click in the lock and Izzy's realizing who else had a key, there was only time to gasp. Of course her classes were over by now, and so why wouldn't she come home. Unaware for at least another two seconds as she set down her school bag, Maia turned to see them all, her mouth falling open slightly.

Chapter End Notes

Sneak Peek Chapter 138

“"I miss Clary,” Jace whined, not for the first time today. “I wonder what she’s doing this very minute.”

“You could text her and ask,” Jordan suggested.

“And spend the next few hours anxiously checking my phone for a reply,” Jace replied. “No thanks.”

“You never know,” Jordan smiled. “Maybe she isn’t busy right now.”

“Let’s see,” Jace began, counting on his fingers. “It’s see Paris is 6hrs ahead of us so… it’s like what I am there?”

“In that case you have the answer to your question,” Jordan chuckled. When Jace looked confused he added, “Right this minute Clary is sleeping.”
Maia lived here! How had he forgotten this? Was he really this stupid? Oh yeah, this was a great place to hang out and sulk about the end of his relationship, right where the person he'd cheated with lived. Jordan could have kicked himself.

"I'm sorry," Jordan said into the silence. "I should go."

"No," Maia replied at once. "It's okay. You just surprised me." She was smiling at him, kindly, no anger or pain in her eyes. It was all together rather strange. Jordan had expected a lot of emotions from Maia, but kindness wasn't one of them.

"You sure?" Jordan asked, stunned. Maia nodded.

"Well, didn't this just get awkward," Jace stated matter of factly.

"I'm sorry," Simon began standing up. "I should have suggested we meet up at your place."

"Probably would have been best," Jace whispered, just loud enough for them to hear. "Bachelor pad and all."

"It's really okay," Maia repeated. "I know you guys are friends." She gestured to Simon and Jordan. "There's no reason he shouldn't be here."

"Did you hear about-" Jordan began, wondering if she knew of the break up.

Maia nodded. "Alec told me."

"I see," Jordan said slowly.

"Are you okay?" Maia asked him.

"Not sure," Jordan laughed. "But I do know that I don't deserve your kindness. Aren't you mad at me?"

"What's there to be mad about?" Maia shrugged.

"In that case, maybe we should all watch a movie," Simon chirped in with great enthusiasm.

"I don't care what we do as long as it involves sitting," Maia sighed before walking over and collapsing on the couch. "My feet still hurt from my long morning shift, and to top it off - rather than sit and lecture today - my stupid prof decided we needed to move around and learn by doing. Urg! I bet he wasn't making up deli trays at six this morning."

"How's Alec doing in the sore feet department?" Jace asked.

Maia giggled a little before answering. "He's having scalding hot baths every night to ease his muscles," she grinned. "I know it shouldn't be funny but-"

"It totally is," Jace sniggered. "Don't get me wrong, I love Alec. Best friend a guy could have, but he can be such a spoiled rich kid sometimes."
"And what does that make me?" Izzy huffed.

"You wear heels," Jace reminded her. "I am sure walking in those for an hour is worse than 8 hours in proper runners." He paused, glancing once more at the look Izzy was still giving him. "Anyway, on that note, adios Amigos." He made a speedy exit after that, saying he'd see Jordan back home later.

"Well at least he's been paying attention in Spanish class," Maia laughed.

"I really don't think one has to pay any attention in Spanish class to know the phrase 'adios Amigos'," Izzy scoffed.

"What happened to he's like a brother to my brother," Simon asked Izzy. Jordan felt sure he was missing a joke of some kind.

"Estranged adopted brother," Izzy replied curtly.

"If you say so," Simon chuckled.

"I thought we were watching a movie," Maia whined. She was still sitting on the couch looking tired.

As Izzy and Maia began to scroll through Netflix looking for one, Jordan stood a ways away, unsure if he should just go or sit around for the movie. He couldn't get a read on Maia at all. Either she actually wasn't mad, or she hated his guts and had decided to play it cool. He couldn't help being on edge not knowing which it was.

"Come join us," Maia said, again smiling at him. It seemed they've chosen a movie. Turning his head, Jordan saw that even Simon and Izzy seemed to want him to join them. With a sigh Jordan gave in, walking over to sit on Simon's other side. His mind a jumbled mess, Jordan didn't pay the images on the scream a single moments attention. When it finally ended he hadn't a clue what movie they'd even seen.

Everyone was talking about the actors and events of the film as the end credits rolled. People asked him and he gave answers, but his mind was elsewhere. What was Maia thinking? She should be mad at him... shouldn't she? Did she want to be friends? Was that it? Or was that tiny voice finally on to something?

Less than an hour later, Jordan found himself walking into his apartment with a box of cookies in hand to find Jace sitting on the couch, surrounded by notes. Jordan waved and had intended to just walk past Jace into his bedroom, and plant himself face first into bed when Jace spoke.

"No newly dumped friend of mine is allowed to wallow in their room all night," Jace stated firmly. "Come. Sit." Then he added with interest, "Are those cookies?"

Jordan handed the box over, and Jace began devouring Izzy's cookies at once while Jordan sat on the couch.

"I thought you were on team Paige?" Jordan asked.

"Hey, I'm neutral," Jace protested between great bites of cookie.

"Sure you are," Jordan laughed sarcastically, indicating where Jace had so recently slapped him.

"Hey, if Clary had been here herself to slap you, I would have stayed out of it," Jace stated firmly.
"Alright," Jordan gave in with a laugh. "Shouldn't you be doing homework?" He indicated all the notes and textbooks strewn about them.

"Screw homework!" Jace dismissed the idea as he finished the cookies and set the box down. "What happened after I left?"

"Nothing," Jordan shrugged. "Maia was weirdly okay with me being there, and I sat through a movie without taking in a second of it."

"Hmm," Jace said thoughtfully. "That makes me wonder how Maia really feels about you."

"You and me both," Jordan chuckled. "I couldn't get a read on her at all."

"But wasn't that always true?" Jace asked. "I thought she was like impossible to read normally."

"You're not wrong," Jordan replied with a sigh.

"I could ask Alec if you'd like," Jace offered. "It seems he and Maia have become good friends through work."

"That must be awkward for them with Paige staying there," Jordan offered.

"That, I wouldn't know," Jace replied. Then he sighed, looking up at the ceiling for a moment. "You guys sure did mess everything up didn't you?"

"Please don't remind me," Jordan whined.

"Still, do you think this will end with you and Maia together again?" Jace asked. "I mean it certainly looks that way."

"It isn't as simple as that," Jordan tried to explain both to Jace and to himself. "Maia and I haven't actually been a couple for years, and when we were, we weren't any good at it. I think that's why she didn't take me back when I first got here. And finally, I know how she felt all those years ago, but we tainted that by hurting Paige, and I just don't know how to get through all that baggage."

"Sucks," Jace said.

"Yeah," Jordan sighed.

"So what now?" Jace asked.

"Well you should do your homework," Jordan reminded his roommate. "And I have a date with my pillow that you are making me late for."


"Oh whatever!" Jordan scoffed. "You know what I meant."

Nevertheless, Jace continued to tease him. Jordan covered his face with a couch pillow to demonstrate his point.

"Paige bought this pillow," Jordan whined. "Urg, I'm going to bed."

"But I don't wanna study," Jace pleaded after him. "Come back and distract me."

"Good night," Jordan called out as he closed his bedroom door behind him.
As planned, Jordan buried his face in his pillow. What was life if not a space of time used up, and one less moment between now and the next thing. And he could do that. One step at a time, and the world kept turning. There was a going through the motions feel to his actions after that, but it was to be expected. Each day began, and Jordan did everything in the order he was supposed to. Wake up. Dress. Classes. Homework. Jace trying to cheer him up. Sleep. Wake. Eight hours of work while Simon tried to cheer him up. Then night class and dinner. Sleep. Repeat.

He'd only been going through the motions for few days when Jordan returned home to find Paige there. She was very obviously packing up what she hadn't already taken. The colourful throw pillow that had once been on the sofa was now sitting atop a pile of boxes.

"Sorry," Jordan said at once. "I didn't mean to barge in. I can go if you want-"

"This is your place," Paige smiled. "You have every right to be here, and I'm almost done."

It was a relief to hear her speak without anger. Since the day she'd left, Jordan had had a hard time getting that angry look on her face out of his head. She'd never been so much as slightly mad before that day, which had made the shock of her anger all the worse.

"Can I help?" Jordan asked. Paige nodded, and he spent the next half hour packing things into boxes for her as she instructed. They didn't talk about anything other than the task at hand. Though Jordan did ask her if she liked staying with Magnus, and was relieved to find she did. He carried the boxes down to her truck for her. He wasn't gone long, but when he got back, she was looking at him with the strangest expression.

"I won't pretend we are going to be great friends," Paige said softly. "But I don't want to leave it on a bad note either. We can at least be on good terms, rather than at odds."

"That would be nice," Jordan replied. "I hate fighting with you."

"Thanks for helping me pack," Paige smiled before she got in her truck and drove off.

It was as if their one quiet afternoon spent packing together had rewritten the horrible screaming match that came before. When Jordan thought of her now he’d remember the smile on her face as she drove away, and it was a far better memory to cling to. He kept it close as he returned to going through the motions of life.

Time passes rather strangely when you can see only up to the next task you are supposed to accomplish. It is a very 'in the moment' way to live, and yet living like this makes time fly by on gilded wings. Days turned to weeks, and November ended.

December brought Christmas cheer, but Jordan found he couldn't bring himself to be all that cheerful. The hall speakers were playing Christmas songs, and every student was talking about how wonderful their lives would be after exams. Still, Jordan couldn't bring himself to be that enthusiastic about the holidays. He hadn't realized how much of a constant in his life Paige had become. Going to sleep every night in an empty bed made him feel so lonely.

"I miss Clary," Jace whined, not for the first time today. "I wonder what she's doing this very minute."

"You could always text her and ask," Jordan suggested.

"And spend the next few hours anxiously checking my phone for a reply," Jace replied. "No thanks."
"You never know," Jordan smiled. "Maybe she isn't busy right now."

"Let's see," Jace began, counting on his fingers. "Paris is 6 hours ahead of us so... it's like what, 1am there?"

"In that case, you have the answer to your question," Jordan chuckled. When Jace looked confused he added, "Right this minute Clary is sleeping."

"Or she's at some wild party full of hot guys with amazing accents," Jace sighed.

"I doubt she has time for that," Jordan added. "Aren't her exams coming up just like ours."

"Yep," Jace sighed. "Which means I've heard even less from her than normal." He paused for a moment, then added sadly, "I still sometimes catch myself hoping that she's secretly coming to surprise me for Christmas."

"I thought you were going home for Christmas?" Jordan asked.

"Yeah yeah yeah," Jace dismissed reality. "Don't remind me."

"Just stay here then," Jordan shrugged.

"Mom won't hear of it," Jace chuckled. "I went to Clary's family last Christmas, and even though she went to the Fairchild's last Christmas, mom's determined to have me home this year."

"My Christmas plans are basically work," Jordan summed it up. "Everyone wants Tim Hortons at Christmas it seems, and so I am there to provide."

"Why don't you go home?"

"Had a falling out with my parents," Jordan shrugged.

"Oh right," Jace replied in a small voice. Then added with more animation, "But wasn't that about Maia? Can't you just make up with them?"

"I suppose I could try," Jordan sighed. "But I really don't want to."

"Why not?" Jace replied confused. "I mean it was about Maia, right? And as you said, you two haven't been a couple for years."

"If a parent acts against your happiness once because they think they know what's best for you better than you do," Jordan began. "They will do it again." He paused thinking. "If people aren't capable of, or willing to change, they won't change. Expecting more from those people than they are capable of giving will only lead to disappointment."

"Urg," Jace sighed. "You're more jaded than I am."

Jordan shrugged. "Sometimes life has hard lessons to teach."

"Don't I know it," Jace replied.

Though he'd never put it into words, there was one other reason why he didn't want to make up with his parents. A very small voice inside that was probably the reason why he'd screwed up so many times before. Had it been too long? Was the idea of Maia what had stopped him from letting her leave that day? Or had it been the woman herself that had given him pause? Was the little voice right, or would it forever prevent him from truly moving on?
In the end, it all came down to knowing the difference. What was the difference between being in love with an idea, and being in love with a person?

Hey guys... not really sure what to put here... life's a little in flux at the moment. Not sure when I'll update again. As I'm sure Jordan will agree break ups suck. Since I don't know how long it will be, I thought I'd give you a sneak peek of more importance than usual, rather than tease you with a out of context clip. :)

Sneak Peek Chapter 139

"So what are you going to do about John?" Alec asked.

"Aren't you supposed to be studying?" Magnus inquired, turning to raise an eyebrow at his husband.

"You can't just ignore this Magnus," Alec protested.

"I could if I hadn't told you about it," Magnus replied easily.

"He said he's your dad!" Alec exclaimed. "The least you can do is give the guy a chance."

"Said being the operative word," Magnus replied.

"Why would he lie about a thing like that?" Alec asked.

"Shouldn't you be studying for econ?" Magnus tried to change the topic.

"Shouldn't you be calling your father," Alec throw it back at him.

"I don't want to call the strange stalker man who seemed to think he might be my father with no evidence to back it up," Magnus sighed.
Magnus was used to their houseguest by now, though he wasn't quite used to how clean his house was because of her. Once Paige's truck was as clean as humanly possible, she'd moved onto the apartment. It was almost like when Alec had still had a maid, though to be perfectly honest, Paige was a little better at it than the hired help.

"Are you sure you're a guest," Magnus chuckled one afternoon. "Seems to me like you are rather too useful to be considered a guest."

"I told you, I clean when I'm upset," Paige said defensively. "And it's been an upsetting couple weeks so everything is spotless. Deal with it."

"Yes ma'am," Magnus laughed.

"If you'd like," Paige offered. "I can make a mess then clean it up so everything stays the same."

"No," Alec said. "Don't do that." He then turned to Magnus and snapped, "Don't give her ideas! If she wants to clean, let her clean."

"Thank you, Alec," Paige smiled.

"Don't listen to him," Magnus laughed. "He just misses his maid."

"You make me sound so horrible," Alec whined.

"Would I have married you if you were horrible?" Magnus inquired, turning to face his husband with a smile.

"I don't know maybe," Alec shrugged. "They say 'love is blind' after all."

"Oh, I don't think I'm blind to your faults," Magnus chuckled. "I think on some level, I always knew you were a spoiled rich boy."

Alec groaned. "I don't know what I'd rather be doing," he began. "Being teased by my husband, or studying for my exams. At the moment both seem equally depressing."

"Oh, don't say that," Magnus added, moving forward to kiss Alec sweetly to make up for being mean.

"Hmmm," Alec smiled. "That. I prefer that to both being teased and studying."

"Well tough," Magnus grinned. "No more of that till you know your stuff."

"What stuff in particular would that be," Alec grinned mischievously.

"Oh hush," Magnus scoffed. "Get your mind outta the gutter. We have company."

"I thought we already agreed that company doesn't clean this much," Alec replied.

"Well aren't you two just an old married couple," Paige said.
"We are not old," Magnus huffed. Growing old was not something Magnus had ever liked to think about. He had a great fear of bifocals and all things senior. The idea of looking into a mirror and seeing wrinkles on his own face gave him the heebie-jeebies.

"Hey, it was meant as a compliment," Paige replied, her arms up in surrender. "Colour me every shade of green while still thinking you two are adorable."

"We are aren't we," Alec beamed.

"What's really adorable is how badly you are going to fail your exams if you don't study," Magnus threw back at his husband and was rewarded with a dirty look. "I must say I don't miss exams one bit," Magnus continued with a sigh. "Worst part of university if you ask me."

"Amen to that," Paige agreed. "Though speaking of exams, I should really be at the library studying."

"You could study here?" Magnus offered selfishly. "There's lots of room at the table."

"I know," Paige began. "But I never seem to get any work done if I'm not at the school. And besides, a few other kids in my class are doing some kind of study group, which has always been my best way to absorb lots of pointless information."

"Fair enough," Alec replied. "Go forth into the world, my clean loving friend, and absorb knowledge."

Paige just rolled her eyes. Then reluctantly got up to collect her books and head out. No sooner had the door closed behind her than Magnus's whole body tensed. He knew Alec wouldn't bring up the topic while Paige was here, but the second she was gone...

"So, what are you going to do about John?" Alec asked.

"Aren't you supposed to be studying?" Magnus inquired, turning to raise an eyebrow at his husband.

"You can't just ignore this Magnus," Alec protested.

"Actually, I could if I hadn't told you about it," Magnus replied easily.

"He said he's your dad!" Alec exclaimed.

"Said being the operative word," Magnus replied.

"Why would he lie about a thing like that?" Alec asked.

"Shouldn't you be studying for econ?" Magnus tried to change the topic.

"Shouldn't you be calling your father," Alec threw it back at him.

"I don't want to call the strange stalker man - who seems to think he might be my father - with no evidence to back up his claims," Magnus sighed.

"I still don't see why he'd lie about something like that," Alec exclaimed.

"I don't know," Magnus replied. "But I'm sure there's a reason."

"Just think what you're losing if he's telling the truth," Alec tried.
"Ah, but if he's lying think how much it will suck if I believe him," Magnus countered with a snap of his fingers. "Can we please just drop this?"

"Alright," Alec sighed, giving in. "But this isn't over."

"You wouldn't be the man I married if it was," Magnus sighed. There was no doubt that he loved Alec more than he'd ever loved, or would love anyone else again, but even so the man really got on his nerves sometimes.

Even if there was some sign apart from John knowing Magnus's mother's name, that could point towards his telling the truth, Magnus couldn't get his hopes up. Dian was also Magnus's middle name after all, so it wasn't like knowing the name really counted as a point on John's side. If he had another motive in claiming to be Magnus's father, it would have been beyond easy to find such information. Magnus had gone all his life without a father - or mother for that matter - and he didn't understand why he should be expected to jump for joy the moment some stranger made a claim to the title?

"Have you talked to your aunt lately?" Alec asked with a fake casual air to his voice.

"And why might you ask me that?" Magnus replied, eyes narrowed.

"Well you know," Alec began innocently, but Magnus wasn't fooled. "If anyone might know something about your parents it would probably be the woman who raised you."

Magnus checked his watch. "Yep, you lasted a whole thirty seconds," he replied. "Not your best attempt at 'dropping it' I must say."

"Oh come on!" Alec groaned. "Aren't you curious? Even a little?"

"I'm curious how you are going to pass your exams without studying," Magnus countered.

"You're the worst," Alec groaned as he pulled his textbooks closer once again.

"But you love me," Magnus chuckled.

"Most days," Alec grumbled.

"Welcome to marriage," Magnus chirped. "And don't forget it was your idea."

Smiling to himself Magnus left the living room rather than watch his now cranky husband study for tests he clearly wasn't interested in taking. But Magnus couldn't blame him there. In some ways he did miss school, though usually Magnus was just relieved that his exams were behind him.

"You're the idiot who said yes," Alec called after him as Magnus collected his keys to head out. Chuckling to himself, Magnus walked down the street in front of his apartment. It was nice to escape the confines of the building, and he breathed deeply as he continued walking. It was also fun teasing Alec like that. His only regret was not managing to come up with a pun to go with it.

His thoughts went in circles as he walked. Magnus absently collected wild flowers as he let his thoughts wonder. Those daisies looked lovely in the sun, but the red wild flowers reminded him of Alec's adorable blush. He imagined Alec back home, pouring over textbooks while wishing he was anywhere else. Magnus was really proud of Alec since his parents cut him off. He's really faced up to life in a way Magnus hadn't expected. Apart from Alec's insistence that he give John a chance, things couldn't be better with his marriage. Magnus smiled as he sniffed the flowers in his hand. It was a lovely thought. Until Alec had proposed, Magnus had not once ever thought he'd get married. It's amazing how life takes you so many places you never thought you'd go, like old age. It was a
thought Magnus really didn't like to think about. If he looked anything like John when he got old, Magnus thought it might be better to die young. Though if you think about it like that, John did fit all the physical parameters for being Magnus's biological father. He was Indonesian. He and Magnus were about the same height with the same colour hair. But even if there was a chance it was true, did he really want to open that door?

He wasn't really aware of deciding to do it. His thoughts had gotten away from him, and suddenly Magnus had his phone in his hand and was dialing.

"To what do I owe this pleasure," his aunt said kindly as she picked up the phone.

Magnus shrugged, then remembered she couldn't see him and replied, "Just thought I'd call."

"Oh please," Aleida scoffed. "You don't just call. What's on your mind, Mags?"

"It's probably nothing," Magnus began. "But Alec won't let it go." He paused then added, "This guy approached me at work claiming to be my father. He calls himself John."

"I see," Aledia replied. "And what is it that you wanted from me?"

"Do you know who my father was?" Magnus asked. "I mean, I don't really care it's just- it would be nice to be able to know one way or the other, even if only so Alec shuts up about it."

One of the reasons Magnus had never asked much about his birth parents was because part of him had always worried it would make Aledia feel like she wasn't enough, and he never wanted her to feel that way. This was of course, something he'd never said out loud.

"I loved my sister," Aledia began. "But she wasn't- oh how do I say this nicely… all put together. She lived wildly, flying in and out of my life as if on a whim. I'm sure she was with at least one guy named John, but that hardly means anything. It's a common name, and she was quite the loose canon."

"How did she die?" Magnus asked next. "I know it's a cold case, but is there more?"

Magnus was practically pacing now, walking over the campus lawns absently as all his attention was focused on his aunt's voice.

"They never caught her killer," Aledia continued softly. "Which is why it's a cold case, but you were almost five when she died. She never even visited you once when I got custody. And no father ever came out of the woodwork either." There was pain in her voice, and she paused before continuing. "You deserve better than that, Mags. Even if this guy is who he says he is, I hardly think it matters. You should do what's best for you."

"Thanks," Magnus whispered, trying to hide the hitch in his voice.

"I just don't want you to get hurt," Aleida finished.

"I'll be careful," Magnus promised.

"On to lighter topics, I think," Aledia said brightly, clearly forcing a smile. "How's that new roommate working out?"

"Well she cleans a lot," Magnus chuckled. "So far that's the one thing I am sure of."

"What a lovely houseguest," Aledia replied. "She sounds like a keeper."
"Tell that to Jordan," Magnus laughed. "He's the one who cheated on her."

"Okay wait, so is Jordan Alec's friend?"

"Maia works with Alec," Magnus explained. "Maia is Jordan's ex from before he dated Paige."

"Okay, so that makes Paige your husband's friend's ex's ex?" Aledia summed up. "Or have I got that wrong?"

"No, I think that's right," Magnus mused. "It does sound rather odd when you say it like that. The simpler option is my husband's friend's friend, if we count Jace among Paige's friends."

"Either way she sounds lovely," Aledia replied then added with a laugh. "In fact, it sounds like your social group has grown quite a bit since I last did a headcount."

"That would appear to be the case," Magnus replied with a chuckle.

"How is Alec coping with his parents cutting him off?"

"Apart from all the complaining that his feet hurt, Alec's been doing rather well," Magnus said smiling. "Paying rent next semester shouldn't be a problem. He's cut back on his sushi consumption, which is also making him cranky. Throw studying into that, and I start going for long walks in the afternoon on my days off." He laughed.

"So, like once a month then?" Aledia mocked.

"I take more than one day off a month," Magnus scoffed.

"Volunteering at the museum does not count as a day off," his aunt reminded him.

"Yes, it does," Magnus argued. "Days off mean not paid, and I don't get paid there so ha."

"You've been working since you were fourteen," Aledia reminded him. "I'm honestly amazed you managed to be unemployed as long as you did before the wedding."

"It is nice to be on the other side of the wedding, isn't it," Magnus sighed. "That was such a hassle."

"I think it made your in-laws happy though," she reminded him. "And probably your husband too."

"Why do you think I did it," Magnus laughed. "If it had been up to me, we would have gone to city hall one afternoon and been done with it."

"You are just the worst at being spoiled, aren't you?" she chuckled. "How you ended up married to someone like Alec, we'll never know."

"Is that why you like him so much," Magnus asked. "Because he tries to spoil me?"

"Goodness knows you've earned a little being spoiled after how hard I've watched you work all your life," Aledia replied. "But no that isn't the reason."

"Oh, then what might I ask is the reason?"

"He wears his heart on his sleeve," she explained. "And that heart loves only you."

"I am lucky, aren't I?" Magnus replied.
"And don't you ever forget it," she said back. "Now, go kiss your husband and let your poor old aunt off the phone."


"Love you too Mags," Aledia echoed before the line cut off. With a sigh, Magnus walked the short distance home with a smile on his face. Never once in his life had there been a time when talking to Aledia hadn't made him feel better. Just like she wanted, when he got home, Magnus kissed his husband and counted himself lucky for all he had in life.

Chapter End Notes

Over the years since I started writing fanfic I have apologized for slow updates countless times. This time though there was really no way around it. In the last month and a half I've found out my partner has been lying to me about our finances, broken up with him, put our house on the market and moved in with my godmother. I went from part time to full time at work so with that and everything else going on there was no time or energy for writing. Things are settling down a little bit now though so hopefully it won't be so long again for the next chapter.

As it was my now ex-common law spouse who was always encouraging me to write originals instead of fanfic I have decided to give up on writing an original novel that's any good and keep writing fanfic so long as I enjoy it. To this end I have started two new TMI stories. One is Malec and one is Clace. I have only ideas for one of them and part of chapter one for the other so it will be a while till they start being updated but it means that Roommates and Soulmates won't be my late fanfic! :D

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Sneak Peek Chapter 140

"You gotta learn not to take it so person." This time Alec's smile was indeed from the heart and he turned to see Maia smirking at him. "You get all worked up over other people's drama. If you want to work in customer service you gotta stop that."

"I can't help it," Alec whined.

"I know," Maia sighed. "And even now I can't quite decide if that's extreme empathy or nosey-ness."

"Speaking of being nosey," Alec began but Maia broke him off.

"Those over there," she said sharply pointing to a stack of pans and trays beside the skin. "They need cleaning."

"Yeah yeah I'll get to them," Alec dismissed her passive aggressive instruction. "What's going on with you and Jordan?"

"For the last time NOTHING is going on between me and Jordan," Maia sighed, clearly frustrated. "What needs to be going on is between you and those dishes."

"Urg," Alec groaned. "Now I know how my maid felt."
Alec slowly moved the slicer back and forth over the blade as little slices of headcheese fell on the parchment paper. It was the name 'head cheese' that made this particular deli meat so very unappealing to him. Cheese cooked into meat was one thing but head cheese? What really were they trying to say? This cheese was made from heads and we put meat in it?

"When was that opened?"

Alec turned to see his batty customer looking with her face all scrunched up with displeasure.

"Just now for you," Alec lied.

"Oh, alright then," the old lady smiled, though Alec couldn't see it as genuine. It felt like a fake 'I don't like you' smile to Alec. Well the feeling was mutual; he didn't like her either.

Wrapping up her 200g of head cheese, Alec turned to hand it over, and hopefully never see this lady again.

"Have a nice day," Alec said with likely a similar fake smile to hers as she placed the deli meat - if you could call it that with a name like head cheese - into her chart and moved on.

"You gotta learn not to take it so personal," This time Alec's smile was indeed from the heart, and he turned to see Maia smirking at him. "You get all worked up over other people's drama. If you want to work in customer service, you gotta stop that."

"I can't help it," Alec whined.

"I know," Maia sighed. "And even now, I can't quite decide if that's extreme empathy or nosiness."

"Speaking of being nosey," Alec began, but Maia broke him off.

"Those over there," she said sharply, pointing to a stack of pans and trays beside the sink. "They need cleaning."

"Yeah, yeah, I'll get to them," Alec dismissed her passive aggressive instruction. "What's going on with you and Jordan?"

"For the last time, NOTHING is going on between me and Jordan," Maia sighed, clearly frustrated. "What needs to be going on is between you and those dishes."

"Urg," Alec groaned. "Now I know how my maid felt."

"Overworked and underappreciated," Maia chipped in as Alec made his way to the sink. Unfortunately he didn't get a chance to reply as Maia was called away by a customer just seconds later.

By the time Alec had watched Maia present the customer with a sample thickness of their sliced deli meat, and reject it for the third time he was glad he was doing dishes. Never in a million years would Alec have guessed that people cared this much about sliced meat thickness, had he not seen it with his own eyes.
"I suppose that will do," the unhappy sounding women said as Maia showed her the fourth one. "But only 125g then, please."

Alec couldn't actually see them, but he was listening intently while trying to scrape chicken guts off cooking pans.

"Have a nice day," Maia said as Alec heard the unmistakable sound of a deli meat bag changing hands.

"Urg," Maia complained.

Alec turned away from his task to address her as he spoke. "I'll take the next horrible customer if you tell me the Jordan gossip."

"There really isn't any," Maia sighed, looking like she'd kill for a chance to sit down. Alec couldn't blame her. His feet and legs still weren't used to this standing all day everyday employment thing, though it was getting better. The first few weeks he'd worked here, Alec had spent every night in a scorching hot bath so he could sleep without his legs aching.

"Oh, come on," Alec urged. "That can't be true. I heard it was super awkward when you came home to find him on your couch."

"He's friends with Simon," Maia shrugged.

"And Izzy it seems," Alec added. "And, am I wrong in thinking Jace punched him on Clary's behalf?"

"How are things with Magnus?" Maia asked, with great curiosity.

"What does that have to do with anything?"

"Well, the only reason I can come up with as to why you want to know so much about my non-existent love life is because yours is in the pits?"

Alec waved his hand dismissively. "Magnus and I are fine," he said. "Magnus is just being unnecessarily stubborn about something, rather than giving it a chance."

"Oh, and what something would that be?"

"I don't know if I'm suppose to tell you," Alec replied awkwardly. "I am usually a tell all kinda guy, but it doesn't really feel like my secret to tell. Though if I had my way, we'd be telling and embracing new opportunities."

"Is Magnus fighting change?" Maia asked.

"Basically, yeah," Alec replied.

"Well, change is hard," Maia offered. "Maybe you should go easy on him."

Then suddenly something clicked in Alec's head. "Oh, you sneaky little trickster!" Alec exclaimed. How had she done that? He'd asked her questions about Jordan, and somehow they'd gotten on the topic of John, not that Maia knew his name, but still!

"I don't know what you're talking about," Maia said all too innocently as she moved away to dress the display case.
"Oh, yes you do," Alec replied following her. "Now spill."

"Can you pass me more of the plastic lettuce?" Maia asked, referring to the stuff they used in the display.

"Oh, come on!" Alec whined. "What's the point of having girlfriends, if I can't talk to them about boys?"

"You have a sister, don't you?" Maia replied, but Alec was pretty sure she was smiling.

"Yeah, but Izzy's love life has been boring since she and Simon got together," Alec replied. "Don't get me wrong. I'm glad she's finally settled down, but the level of gossip around here took a big hit when she did."

Maia stood up to face him as if trying to size him up. "Hmm," she said. "Well, you do seem genuinely desperate," She paused again as if considering. "How about this? You clean out the oven while I'm on break, then when I get back, I'll tell you whatever you want to know?"

"Deal!" Alec replied instantly.

It wasn't until about a quarter of an hour later that Alec was beginning to regret his decision. Cleaning out the oven was a nasty job since they cooked the rotisserie chickens in there. By the time Maia returned from her break, Alec had vowed never to eat chicken again.

"The oven's less black, now pay up," Alec said as she returned. Maia walked over to inspect his work first, then turned to face him.

"Alright," she said. "So basically I came clean with Bat, who took it alot better than I thought he would, though we still broke up because I realized I'm in love with Jordan, but my timing sucks since he'd finally moved on when he fell in love with Paige."

"But, he and Paige broke up!" Alec replied eagerly. "You should just go tell him how you feel. I bet he still cares for you. I mean, he's been nothing if not persistent."

"Right now when he looks at me, I'm sure he sees only the person who ruined his happiness with another," Maia replied.

"Then, why were you so calm when you arrived home and he was on your couch?" Alec asked next. "Izzy said it was uncanny. If I were you, I'd be mad."

"What's the point of being upset?" Maia replied. "It wasn't like I was innocent in all this. I took his fixation, affection, love, whatever you want to call it, for me for granted when it was there, and missed it when it was gone. I let myself be pulled in when, though taken, he showed me that affection again. I am the master of my own misery, and I must own up to that. There isn't anyone else to be mad at."

"Wow," Alec said softly. "For someone who was so reluctant to tell me anything, you sure know how when you want to."

"Isn't this the kinda stuff friends tell each other?" Maia replied.

"I guess it is," Alec smiled. "I guess I just didn't realize you thought of us as that close of friends."

Maia took a deep sigh, then spoke as if the words were somewhat painful to get out. "Alec, you are probably one of my closest friends," she said.
Again, Alec found himself floored. "Wow," he said again, wishing he had more than that one word to describe his reaction.

"I mean, who else have I got?" Maia began, talking almost nervously, as if the silence was uncomfortable for her. "Simon, who I met on a date, and who is besties with my ex. Izzy, who is in a serious relationship with Simon. I don't even know if Clary and I got past acquaintances before she went away, and Jace reminds me far too much of my brother for me to ever be comfortable opening up to him."

"I never even thought about it like that," Alec said softly. He moved forward then and pulled Maia into a hug. "As long as we don't tell Jace, you're one of mine too."

"You know, Alec," Maia chuckled. "Friends aren't like boyfriends. You can have more than one."

Laughing, Alec pretending to think about that for a moment. "I have some friendship statuses to update."

"You should update it to oven wizard," Maia smirked. "Great job with the oven, by the way. I hate cleaning that thing."

"W- wait just one minute," Alec said slowly. "You didn't actually have a problem with telling me any of this, did you?" Maia didn't reply, but her smile said it all. "You just wanted to hold something over me so I'd end up cleaning the oven."

"And it worked brilliantly," Maia chuckled.


"What?" Maia teased. "Sick your husband on me?"

"Or maybe Jace," Alec added.

"I'm quivering in my boots," Maia said headpan.

"You are just the worst," Alec grumbled. "I'm so getting you back for this." She just grinned at him.

"Aww, that's adorable," Maia grinned. Alec was about to try and pin her down while he tickled her, when they were introduced then by a customer entering the store.

At first glance Alec thought his husband had paid him a visit at work, but as the man turned, Alec realized he was too old to be Magnus, and his face wasn't quite the same either. The two men did however have the same colour hair, and there was something similar about their bone structure as well. Alec had long ago memorized the planes of his husband's face, and it was easy enough to pick out similarities in a stranger. Curiosity pulled at him, and Alec called over to see if he could help. It was after all technically what he was suppose to say to every customer he met.

"Ah yes, I'm looking for some ham," the man said. "About 200g." But Alec couldn't help but stare. Now that they were facing each other he had a better view of the stranger's face. And there was even something familiar about his voice as well. It was quite a bit lower than Magnus's, but still somehow similar.

"We have honey, old fashioned, or smoked," Alec replied automatically, still trying to process what he was seeing.

"Honey ham would be lovely thank you," he said. But Alec didn't move to collect and slice the
"Sorry, but I have to ask," Alec began. "Are you John Anderson?"

"Yes I am, but how might you know that?" John replied.

"My husband's been talking - or rather not talking - about you a lot lately," Alec explained.

"Oh goodness me!" John exclaimed. "Alexander?"

"Yep," Alec smiled. "I didn't expect to see you here."

"Not as much as I didn't expect to see you working behind a counter," John replied. "Forgive me if I'm wrong, but aren't your parents the Lightwoods, as in the owners of Lightwood Industrys?"

"Yep, that's them," Alec chuckled. "It's a long story. They kinda told me I had to pay rent, something about learning independence." He paused, then added. "Okay, I guess it isn't really that long a story. Sorry."

John laughed, and again Alec found himself notices small details, the way his mouth wrinkled at the corners when he laughed. It reminded him of Magnus.

"It's quite alright," John chuckled. "You just threw me off. I can see why my son likes you so much." Alec smiled and he thought for a minute John might leave, but then he continued. "Actually, I'm glad I ran into you. I was wondering if you'd help me... with Magnus. He won't even agree to sit and talk with me."

"Sorry, but I've actually already been trying," Alec sighed. "He just doesn't believe you."

"What if I could prove it somehow?" John suggested. "DNA test or something."

"That might work," Alec mused. "Though, I have no idea how to go about doing something like that."

"There are services you can employ to test paternity," Maia's voiced called over from where she was working just a few meters behind Alec.

"Oh, great," Alec smiled. "I'll do some googling tonight."

"Do you work tomorrow?" John asked. "I could come by again?"

"Yeah, same time tomorrow works for me," Alec replied.

"Perfect," John smiled. "I'll see you tomorrow then."

"And here is your honey ham," Maia said as she appeared on Alec's right, and reached forward to hand it to John.

"Well, don't you run an organized shop," John smiled. "I'll see you tomorrow Alexander."

"Yeah," Alec replied. He then stood and watched as John headed towards the check out.

"I seriously doubt he'd have agreed to a DNA test if he's lying," Maia said the moment he was out of earshot. "You should tell Magnus."

"Not yet," Alec replied. "When I go to him, it will be with irrefutable proof, or not at all."
That night Alec did some research and discovered that the Canadian government had services for things like this. As there weren't any custody disputes over minors, Alec choose the private sector one. It wasn't admissible in court, but just as accurate, which was all that mattered in this case.

When the site asked him where he'd like the kit mailed, Alec suddenly realized the problem. He solved it by sending a quick text to Maia, and asking if he could use her address for the shipping. She agreed and he continued to the online payment checkout. It was a strange feeling buying it with his own money. As Alec purchased the DNA testing kit, it gave him a sense of empowerment he'd never felt before. His parents weren't going to get this on the credit card bill and ask him why he wanted DNA testing done, and Magnus wouldn't read this statement either. This was a purchase he'd made alone with money he'd made himself. It was a new feeling, and he found he rather liked it, despite his sore feet.

Chapter End Notes

I am happy to announce that I've started uploading my new Malec story! It's called 'Rock Bottom' and though it's slow to introduce Magnus and starts of sad I promise it is gonna get good. :) Please go and check it out. Chapter two is going up momentarily. Please please go have a look and leave me a review/comment. I just love hearing what you guys think of my stories! :D :D :3

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Sneak peek chapter 141
“So what are your holiday plans?” he asked.

“I've made some local friends who have been showing me and Riley around,” Clary explained. “And omg Jace… I don’t even have the words for how beautiful some of these Christmas lights are. I mean Paris is loud, over crowded and the air sucks, but man do they know how to Christmas.”

“I remember you talking about Riley,” Jace smiled. “He was also in a long distance relationship right?”

“Yeah but Ben broke up with him,” Clary sighed.

“What?” Jace asked shocked.

“Yeah,” Clary said. “It was over the phone. Riley was so upset. We all took him out after to try and distract him.”

“Did Ben give a reason?” Jace asked.
Jace couldn’t help but smile as her face appeared on his computer screen.

"Hi!" Jace cried with enthusiasm.

"Hi yourself," Clary chuckled at him.

"It's really good to see you," Jace mumbled, slightly embarrassed. It felt like forever since he'd seen those beautiful green eyes and shimmering red hair, even if they were slightly grainy due to low quality video.

"Merry Christmas," Clary said smiling at him.

"I'll do my best," Jace sighed dramatically. "But it can only be so merry without you here."

"Way to lay on the guilt!" Clary accused. Jace just shrugged, unabashed.

"So, what are your holiday plans?" he asked.

“Some local friends have been showing me and Riley around,” Clary explained. “It’s strange. For such a beautiful city, so well known for its wonders, Paris doesn’t really bother with Christmas. We went to the Champs Élysées, but apart from that December seems to be much like any other month here.”

“Yeah that does seem strange,” Jace smiled, then added thoughtfully. “I remember you talking about Riley. He was also in a long distance relationship, right?”

"Yeah, but Ben broke up with him," Clary sighed.

"What?" Jace asked shocked. "When?"

"A week ago," Clary said. "It was over the phone. Riley was so upset. We all took him out after to try and distract him."

"Did Ben give a reason?" Jace asked.

"I supposed," Clary said clearly annoyed. "Though not a good enough one if you ask me. Something about ‘wanting to see what else was out there’ with a hint of ‘long distance is hard.’ It was rather pathetic."

"How long had they been together?" Jace asked.

"Five years," Clary answered. "They were high school sweethearts."

"Oh wow, that is depressing," Jace sighed.

"Yeah, and honestly I'm sick of talking about it," Clary sighed. "I want to hear about you. How's your holiday been so far, back with your mom?"

"Still, I'm sure your mother's very happy to have you home," Clary smiled.

"I'm not so sure actually," Jace replied. "She's been oddly jumpy. If I didn't know better I'd say she was trying to be sneaky about something, but that women doesn't have a dishonest bone in her body."

"Maybe she's waiting for the right moment to tell you something?" Clary shrugged.

"Maybe," Jace said skeptically. "But somehow I doubt it. I'll let you know if I ever figure it out."

"Fair enough," Clary smiled. Then suddenly her eyes lit up and she said with great enthusiasm. "Oh, I got you a Christmas present!"

"How?" Jace asked confused. "Also don't, cause I didn't get you anything."

"Oh hush," Clary scoffed. "You'll know it when you see it. And I didn't expect you to ship me something don't worry. The shipping would cost more than the present!"

"Hmm," Jace mumbled, narrowing his eyes. "Does this mean whatever you got me isn't something that was shipped?" He paused to think a moment while she merely grinned at him before adding, "What have you plotted?"

"Nothing you won't like," Clary grinned, innocently.

"Do I get any hints?" Jace asked, but Clary only shook her head. "Meany."

"That's me!" Clary giggled.

Jaced wanted to reply 'You're my meany' but he was scared to try. It had been so long since he'd held her, kissed her. Jace wasn't feeling confident enough to make a joke of such a thing.

"Oh, did you know I've been learning French?" Clary asked proudly.

"Yes, you texted that a while back," Jace replied. "But I have yet to hear you speak it."

"Bonjour is pretty standard," Clary began. "It's hello. Then there's Au revoir for goodbye. Merci is thanks. Excusez-moi you learn pretty quick being the new person who's always in the way."

"Let me guess," Jace smiled. "That one is sorry?"

"Close. It's excuse me," Clary replied. "Here they say pardon for sorry."

"Sounds like English to me," Jace shrugged.

"That's cause we stole it from the French," Clary replied.

"English is such a bully," Jace chuckled.

"It doesn't just steal from other languages," Clary began grinning. "English follows other languages down dark alleys, beats them up, and rifles through their pockets for loose vocabulary."

Jace chuckled. "Where did you get that?" he said.

"I saw it on a t-shirt," Clary replied, still laughing a little at her own joke. "And it really holds up."
Then there was a moment when neither of them spoke; they just simply gazed at each other's imagine on the screen.

"Tu me manques. Je t'aime," Clary said in what was to Jace a good French accent, though he probably wasn't the best judge.

"What did you say?" Jace asked.

"I miss you," Clary smiled. "And I love you."

"What's French for I'd really like to kiss you?" Jace replied, beaming at her.

"Ummm…" Clary said. "Je veux t'embrasser… I think. But don't quote me. I'm guessing on that one."

"I love you too," Jace told her with all the emotion he could muster. "And I miss you everyday."

Clary's head turned, and she called to someone off screen before turning back to him. "Sorry I gotta go," Clary said. "I'll text ya tomorrow. Good night." And she blew him a kiss.

"Good morning," Jace chuckled as he said goodbye. Then the screen went blank and Jace closed his laptop. Time zones were really quite a fascinating thing when you stopped to think about it. Communicating in real time meant that he woke up to a call, and Clary went to bed after the call.

With a deep sigh Jace packed up his computer. It had been quite a relaxing holiday so far, just him and mom. It reminded him of the Christmas's before he'd met Clary, but with one major difference. Those holidays had included Sebastian. Jace found he'd thought more about his ex-friend in these last few days being back home than he had in months.

Though he'd made light of it with Clary, Jace was very confused by his mother's behavior. The problem was that whenever he asked what was wrong she always replied that it was nothing. He made a note to ask her everyday until she fessed up, but this didn't get him very far either.

"I said I'm fine," Celine smiled. "Must you keep asking?"

"What's up with you then?" Jace replied.

"I'm just very busy," she said.

"Yeah right!" Jace scoffed. "You're jumpy. Like you expect someone to appear from around a corner. What's going on?"

"Everything is fine," Celine smiled. "Now tell me more about how Clary's doing? I miss that girl."

"Yeah, I know the feeling," Jace sighed, giving up for the moment at trying to get a straight answer out of his mother. Alas, his mother's secrets were her own for far longer than Clary's surprise present remained a mystery.

The day before Christmas Eve Jace was outside fixing one of his mother's ridiculous decorations, an old blow up reindeer. The wind had knocked it over and no matter what Jace did, it seemed determined to remain on it's side. Jace was about ready to kick it until it popped, and broke his mother's heart in the process when he thought he heard something almost like muffled laughter. Jace turned to see the second last person in the world he'd expected to see.

"I had intended on running up and shouting boo, but the sight of you with that inflatable red-nosed
reindeer was just too much for me to handle." Jace blinked a few times, unsure if his eyes were lying to him. The barely contained laughter soon burst forth uninhibited. "And would you look at your face. You'd think you'd seen a ghost!"

"Jon?" Jace said, slowly walking forward to meet his girlfriend's older brother.

"The one and only," Jonathan smiled. "I take it Clary didn't tell you to expect me then?"

"She said I was getting a mystery Christmas present," Jace explained. "And that I'd know it when I saw it."

"Ah," Jon chuckled. "That would be me." Jon moved forward as well to clasp Jace on the back in a brotherly sort of a way. "Merry Christmas, buddy. I was promised pie." Jace didn't reply, but rather stood perfectly still, stunned into silence for the moment.

"Why? I mean how?" Jace began, when he'd figured out words again. "Don't you want to spend your holiday with your family?"

"Well, as you know, the sister up and ditched us for those Parisians," Jon began. "And then Luke and mom decided to go on a cruise rather than cook a turkey. Clary suggested I might have more fun bothering you than tagging alone on my parents romantic getaway."

"That sounds fair," Jace smiled. He couldn't believe how happy Jon's presence made him. Someone he knew only through Clary, someone who had a stronger connection to her than him, but would still be a friend to him. It was the next best thing to having Clary home for the holidays, and Jace revelled in it.

"So when's dinner?" Jon asked, rubbing his hands together eagerly. "May I emphasis the pie." Jace couldn't help but laugh as they walked into the house, abandoning the toppled reindeer.

"Hey mom!" Jace called out. "Guess who's joining us for Christmas?" To his great surprise, Jace heard a huge crash as if kitchen pots had cascaded across the floor. "Mom?" Jace called out worried now. "You alright?" He started half jogging to get to her faster.

"Yes yes, quite alright," Celine said with a forced smile on her face as she looked up at them both. "Ah and Jon's here just in time."

"Wait did you know he was coming?"

"You don't think that wonderful girlfriend of yours would have invited an extra guest to someone else's dinner without clearing it with the cook first?"

"So, all three of you have been conspiring against me!" Jace exclaimed.

"She's quite the evil mastermind, that Clary of ours," Jon chuckled. "Buying people bus tickets, and inviting them to other people's holidays. Whatever shall we do with such evil intentions?"

And Jace couldn't take it anymore. He burst out laughing. He laughed so hard he had to hold himself up with the kitchen counter. It was a glorious feeling to laugh like this again. Jon couldn't replace Clary, but with him here, Jace felt closer to the woman he loved than he had in months.

"I think we broke him," Jon said, waving his hand up and down in front of Jace's face. "Earth to Jace. Come in Jace. This just in, oxygen is required to live. Please breath."

This in no way stopped Jace's laughter.
When he could once again breathe, and was in control of his laughing attack, Jace got out his phone and texted his girlfriend.

'Hey Clary. I know you are probably asleep right now, but thank you so much for my present. We are gonna have a great time. I still wish you were here, but this the best gift you've ever given me. I hope you are having a wonderful Christmas in Paris. I love you and miss you always. Jace.'

As Jon settled in, Jace felt sure it was keeping this secret that had made his mother act so strangely. He pushed it from his mind, and focused on enjoying his time away from school with his family, for Jon felt like family to him. Despite the snow, the two boys tried to play basketball with very little success. It was rather hard to dribble a ball over a foot of snow. They considered trying to shovel the whole court, but then got lazy and decided to try out some of Jace's old childhood video games.

The hours passed easily, and Jace didn't notice that his mother's strange behaviour hadn't changed with Jon's arrival. He was too focused on enjoying spending time with his friend. With Alec married and Clary gone, Jace had been feeling lonely as of late. He and Jordan had bonded quite a bit living together in the last few months, but somehow it wasn't the same. Jace found himself thinking about how much easier the rest of the school year would be if Jon was with him. Maybe he and Jordan's place could be turned into a real bachelor pad, with Jon joining to make it a trio. Sure, there were only two bedrooms, but maybe they could take turns sleeping on the couch, or put a divider in one of them.

And while his mind thought of happy possibilities his mother's nervous jumps continued.

Chapter End Notes

All this slow writing has made me realize something… its alot easier to keep track of complicated plots when you are writing really fast. This slow ass writing is totally confusing me. Lol. Going almost a month without updating. I mean it's like reader abuse! lol

And for those of you who miss Clary, I am sorry but I had always planned to cut her pov for the year she's in Paris. I know nothing about Paris and couldn't write a story set there to save my life. All the details about Paris in this story I either googled or I asked MyaZab about. She's a friend of mine who used to live there.

Speaking of, Special Thanks to MyaZab on fanfic for doing the French Translations for me. :)

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Sneak Peek Chapter 142

Maia jumped. Then turned to see the only other employee who was working today.

"Hey Jamie," Maia sighed.

"Oh geez cheer up!" Jamie ordered. "You look like someone killed your puppy."

"I've never had a puppy," Maia replied.

"You should get one then," Jamie stated. "They are good company and you look like
you could use some."

"I live in a no pets apartment," Maia explained.

"Ah yes the benefits of basement suits with backyards," Jamie sighed. "You never answered my question."

With a sigh Maia said, "I volunteered for the Christmas Day shift." She turned and added, "And don't give me that look. You're working the Christmas shift too!"
Maia was getting really sick of Christmas carols. The store in which she worked had been playing them non-stop for over a month before the dreaded day arrived. That dreaded day being today, December 25th. And for some insane reason her store had decided to be open on this of all days. She wasn't complaining however, apart from the music selection that is. Maia didn't have anywhere else to be today, so why not get paid time and a half to watch an almost empty store? It didn't sound so bad really when you put it like that.

There wasn't a single manager working today, so Maia didn't even have to pretend to work while the store was dead. Besides, she'd already cleaned all the cases so she just sat down and let her mind wonder. Her Christmas was rather low-key, but she knew many of her friends were, at this very moment, enjoying fabulous family gatherings. Alec and Magnus had gone home to Alec's mansion for the holidays. Izzy had dragged Simon along with them, which meant Maia had her apartment to herself. She was pretty sure Paige was still at Malec's, likely having been given the task of cat sitting in the couples absence. Jace had gone home alone to spend the holidays with his mother. Clary was, of course, still in Paris. Who was she forgetting?

Ah, that's right... Jordan.

It was strange now to think of all the times she'd pushed him away. For here she was gazing at an empty store and wishing he was here.

"How'd you get suck with this shift?"

Maia jumped. Then turned to see the only other employee who was working today.

"Hey Jamie," Maia sighed, relaxing back into her stupor.

"Oh geez, cheer up!" Jamie ordered. "You look like someone killed your puppy."

"I've never had a puppy," Maia replied.

"You should get one then," Jamie stated. "They are good company, and you look like you could use some."

"I live in a no pets apartment," Maia explained.

"Ah yes, the benefits of basement suits with backyards," Jamie sighed. "You never answered my question."

With a sigh Maia said, "I volunteered for the Christmas Day shift." She turned and added, "And don't give me that look. You're working the Christmas shift too!"

"Yes, but I drew the short straw," Jamie sighed. "It wasn't like I wanted to be here, but I heard you volunteered to work Christmas."

"Guilty," Maia replied awkwardly.

"Are you crazy?" he asked.
Maia really thought about that for a moment. "Possibly," she said.

"Didn't you want to go home?" Jamie asked. "See your family and eat some turkey?"

"We have turkey here," Maia replied, grinning as she pointed to the deli section. Jamie raised his eyebrows at her. "Alright fine. To answer your questions honesty, no I'd rather not go home."

"May I ask why?"

Maia shrugged. "Long standing bad relationships with my parents. Also my brother's an ass."

"Fair enough," Jamie stated.

"If you weren't here," Maia continued. "Where would you be? With who?"

"Interesting question," Jamie smiled. "Alright here's my deal. If I answer, then you have to as well. And be honest." Maia agreed with a nod and he continued. "I have this friend. I've known her going on eight years now, and she'd been with the same guy all eight of those years. If I wasn't here I'd been with them."

Now it was Maia's turn to raise her eyebrows at him. "The same guy huh?" she smirked. "Let me guess. If she wasn't with this guy you'd move right in."

"Either I'm way more obvious than I think I am, or you have some kind of superhuman intuition about such things."

"Both," Maia replied. "I've had people on my hook. I'm currently on a hook, and I've seen it in all manor of other peoples in my dating life. It takes one to know one."

"Fair point," Jamie said. "Alright, you're turn. Where would you be?"

"I'd be… with Jordan," Maia said after a moment's thought.

"Mr. Current Hook guy, I presume?" Jamie inquired. Maia nodded.

"We dated in high school," Maia explained. "He followed me here and pursued me relentlessly until my endless refusals finally sank in. Then he moved on, and I finally realized what I'd lost."

"Ouch," Jamie sympathized.

"Either that, or I'd have taken my roommate up on her offer and spent Christmas at her parents place."

"That sounds like a healthy life choice," Jamie said with enthusiasm. "Why not do that?"

"It felt wrong let her buy my plane ticket," Maia explained. "Plus the whole intruding on a family thing, and being surrounded by overly happy couples the entire time."

"Ah yes, the woes of being single when all your friends aren't," Jamie sighed. "Speaking as Mr. Chronically Single I totally get it."

"I know why I'm in this boat," Maia laughed. "But you aren't half bad looking, you have a job, and are generally a wonderful person. Surely there is someone out there for you?"

"Yes but she's common-law with her high school sweetheart," Jamie explained.

"Amen," Jamie laughed.

Just then an actual customer walked in thoroughly surprising them both, but after a few minutes the middle aged man had purchased his cranberries and left. The store, once again empty, Maia continued to pass the time chatting with Jamie. They moved onto television shows after that. Izzy had been trying to get Maia to watch Poldark, and she had to admit there was a certain appeal to Adam Turner's abs that could not be denied. As she doubted this same fact could encourage Jamie to watch the show, she tried a different tactic.

"It's a historical drama," Maia explained. "I know you love history."

"That I do," Jamie replied.

"And it's so well acted. The sets are amazing. Ross Poldark is so hot with a scythe! I could go on, but I suppose I should spare you my descriptions of the guys on the show," she laughed.

"And for that I am eternally grateful," Jamie laughed.

"The female cast is lovely as well," Maia mused. "Though I do tend to pay less attention there." Jamie laughed, a great cackle that had Maia chuckling as well.

By the time they closed the store, Maia was sure she'd convinced him to at least try episode one. She'd even promised to lend him Izzy's DVDs on her next shift. After all, it was Izzy's standing policy that people could always borrow her DVDs if they had a true interest in loving the show as she did. Maia would just have to slightly exaggerate Jamie's enthusiasm if her roommate asked.

As Jamie locked up the store for the night, Maia bid him goodbye then made her way home. It was a quiet walk as very few people were out and about today. Her legs carried her while her mind wondered. Somewhere between trying to remember to put the DVDs in her purse for Jamie, and admiring a rather beautiful piece of graffiti on a passing fence, Maia's thoughts shifted to him. She supposed even if he didn't want her anymore, there was no reason why she couldn't see Jordan. He'd be at home alone today just like her, since Jace was back home for the holidays. The two were very likely the only of their social group still in town. She hadn't concisously made the decision when her legs started taking her to where she wanted to go.

Maia stood in front of his apartment complex staring at Jace and Clary's names on the ringer. It seemed no one had bothered to update it when Jordan had moved in. For some reason it made her smile. She tried to think why while she stood their unsure of whether or not to press the button. It was, after all, Christmas day. Even if he hadn't gone away, there was no guarantee that he'd be home. She could always leave. Pretend like she hadn't been here and go home... then again what would it hurt to try.

Maia ran the bell and waited. To her surprise she heard Jordan's voice only seconds later.

"Hello?" he asked.

"Umm hi?" Maia replied, unsure what to use as her excuse for being here.

There was a moments silence as he seemed to process her voice. "Maia?" he said finally.

"Guilty," she replied awkwardly. "Sorry to just show up like this. I got off work and just kinda ended up here."
"It's okay," Jordan replied. "Surprising, but okay. Would you like to come upstairs?"

"If that's alright," she replied. His response was to buzz her into the building.

Still unsure why she was here, Maia went inside and made her way up to the apartment. As she walked, she thought about how many people she'd known had at one point or another lived in this apartment. Alec had been the one to pick it out for himself and Jace during their second year of university. Then when Alec got married he'd moved in with Magnus, and Clary had moved in with Jace. Wait... had there been a time when Clary had lived with Magnus before Alec moved in? Maia couldn't remember. Even so, this same apartment had also been home to Jordan and Simon before Simon had moved in with Izzy and Maia. Paige had moved here as well while she'd been with Jordan, but with Paige being Malec's new third wheel, and Clary in Paris, it was only Jordan and Jace living here now.

Though a space so many people she'd known had once occupied, Maia herself had never before been inside this building. It wasn't anything particularly special, a simple carpet with white walls and a black railing along the stairs. Still, it was in her thoughts as she made her way to the apartment.

Reaching his door, she knocked and it swung open. Maia stepped inside without a word and he closed the door behind her. She really hadn't thought this through. What did they even have to talk about?

"Merry Christmas," Maia said smiling. "I hope I'm not imposing."

"Not at all," Jordan replied. "I couldn't get a shift today so I've just been at home."

"No Christmas plans at all?" she asked. Jordan just shrugged. "You could have gone with Jace you know."

"Mah," Jordan smiled. "Didn't fancy the long trip to see someone else's family. I worked yesterday, and I work tomorrow."

"I still wish you'd make up with your family," Maia counted. "Then you would have had someone to be with today. Somewhere to go."

"I think after what I did I deserve one miserable Christmas," Jordan smiled. "Don't you?"

"What we did, remember?" Maia corrected.

"You were more free than I at the time," Jordan explained.

"I hate to see you so put down," Maia told him. "So, she couldn't forgive you. So, you got hurt. What of it? Are you going to sulk about the past forever, or are you going to pick yourself up and look to the future?" She raised an eyebrow at him. "You know as well as I that sulking won't help anything."

And then he was smiling at her, a wide almost proud smile that sent her stomach fluttering. "I wish your parents were proud of you. I know they aren't, but Maia, you are so much stronger than people give you credit for."

"Thanks," she replied. "Although, if I'd been strong enough to resist you we wouldn't be in our current mess, would we?"

"Ditto," Jordan laughed.
It was strange how such a conversation topic could alleviate the unspoken tension in the room. This was a point they'd never before managed to attain. It felt like friendship, and Maia was glad of it.

"I have some turkey in the fridge," Jordan offered. "And a little eggnog if you want to stay?"

"I'd like that," Maia smiled. He moved to collect the items from the kitchen. When he returned with a Christmas dinner for one Maia asked where he'd gotten the home-cooked meal.

"Ah, but it just looked homemade," Jordan smiled. "Bought it at a deli."

"Not my deli you didn't," Maia replied. "I've spent enough time in that meat locker to recognize all of it."

"You caught me," Jordan laughed. "I went to a different grocery store."

"Traiter," Maia chuckled as she accepted the meal and a glass of eggnog.

It wasn't much of a Christmas, but in that moment Maia couldn't have thought of a better way she'd have wanted to spend it.

Chapter End Notes

Hehe this writer is getting lazy! *SunglassesEmojiHere* #UpdatingLikeASloth

Oh and on an unrelated note, I got an Instagram! So if you are interested in seeing pictures of me or my adorable cat you can follow me on Instagram. My username there is writesalott. ^_^ Cause I'm predictable like that. If enough people from fanfic do end up following me, I might do sneak peeks of chapters in the story or something. *shrugs* We shall see.

Sneak peek of chapter 143

They all sat down to eat. People were talking about this and that; his mother in particular wanted to tell them about what she was serving. Jace usually loved to listen when food was involved, but at the moment he was otherwise occupied, analyzing his mother's body language.

"And there's an apple fritter for dessert," Celine was saying when Jace tuned in. "I even bought ice cream." She smiled, and for a moment it felt to Jace like nothing was wrong, but then he saw her hands shaking.

"What's wrong?" Jace asked firmly.

"Noth-" Celine began, but Jace cut her off.

"And don't say nothing's wrong because I know better," Jace snapped. "I may not be the most observant guy in the universe, but I know somethings wrong. Tell me, now." He tried to say it as firmly as he could so she'd actually answer. With her avoiding questions all holiday he wasn't sure what else to do.
His little golden car swerved, barely avoiding falling to its doom. Jace punched the air, relieved he wouldn't have to see the words 'game over' across his screen one more time. There was no time for relief, however; he had a race to win. Jace tried to focus as the little car threatened to swerve off course again.

"You are gonna lose my friend," Jon stated. Jace didn't turn to see his face, but still the grin was evident in his voice.

"Not if you lose first!" Jace exclaimed right before driving his car into a ditch.

"You were saying," Jon replied coolly. Jace turned to glare at his opponent.

"Best out of ten?" he asked.

"Nah," Jon smirked. "I think it has properly been established that you suck at Mario Kart."

"It's these stupid controllers!" Jace whined. "I hit the A button, and nothing happens!"

"Don't blame the equipment for your failure," Jon replied. "It's tacky."

Thankfully, Jace was saved from more taunting from his friend by his mother calling them down for dinner. Christmas had come and gone, and Jace was starting to dread going back to school; not because of school, but because he would miss hanging out with Jon.

"Coming," Jace called back down the stairs.

"Hey Jace," Jon said, suddenly serious as they stood up.

"Yeah?" Jace replied, concerned by his friend's tone.

"Is your mom okay?"

"Why wouldn't she be?" Jace shrugged.

"Well she seems anxious, or at least jumping like she's expecting something to happen that isn't," Jon explained.

"I noticed that before," Jace observed. "I thought it was your visit that she was waiting for."

"Well, I'm here," Jon reminded him. "And I've been here since before Christmas. Tomorrow is New Years. It's not me."

"I must admit you have a point there," Jace replied. They were interrupted then by both their stomachs growling, and mutually decided without words that it would wait till after dinner. They headed down the stairs together, eager to eat, but even so, Jace's mind remained occupied. If Jon was noticing it too, then it wasn't all in his head, and he needed to find out what was making his mother so jumpy. It had concerned him a little before, but now with Jon's added observations he was really worried.
They all sat down to eat, and were talking about this and that; his mother in particular wanted to tell
them about what she was serving. Jace usually loved to listen when food was involved, but at the
moment he was otherwise occupied, analyzing his mother's body language.

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observant guy in the universe, but I know somethings wrong. Tell me, now." He tried to say it as
firmly as he could so she'd actually answer. With her avoiding questions all holiday he wasn't sure
what else to do.

"There's no problem, if that's what you are worried about," Celine replied softly.

"I'm worried about you," Jace told her.

"No need," she smiled.

"Stop it!" Jace snapped.

"Maybe we should all just sit and eat," Jon suggested, clearly uncomfortable with being in the middle
of a family argument. "I mean dessert is the best part of dinner, isn't it?"

"I couldn't agree more. Excellent idea Jon," Celine tried to change the topic, but Jace didn't sit.

"Why are your hands shaking?" Jace wanted to know. "Why have you been quick to startle all
week? What are you hiding, mother?"

"I don't want to tell you," Celine said softly after a long moment's silence. "I promise there's nothing
wrong, I just- I worry that telling you would turn it into something wrong. You're going back to
school soon. Why can't we just have a nice time until then?"

"Because we can't," Jace replied coolly. "Because my girlfriend didn't even text me on Christmas,
because my mother is keeping secrets from me, because there is enough shit in my life already
without adding worrying about you to the list."

"You won't want to hear it," Celine warned him.

"Tell me," Jace ordered.

"Do you remember when Clary came to visit?" Celine began.

"That was two and a half years ago mom," Jace sighed. Celine nodded. Then there was silence while
everyone waited for her to continue, something she was clearly not interested in doing.

"Well, I guess we told you what happened," Celine eventually spoke after a long drawn out pause.

"He went for Clary again, and you stopped him," Jace summarized. "And I haven't dared bring
Clary back here ever since."

"I've barely seen you ever since," Celine echoed.
"What are you getting at mother?" Jace asked, unwilling to let her guilt him into feeling bad about not bringing Clary anywhere near Sebastian.

"Well, there is someone else I've seen a few times, more than a few times, since those days," Celine almost whispered. "Someone who looks a lot like you."

It took a moment for those words to sink in. Jace just stared at her, unblinking. She could only mean…

"You've been seeing Sebastian?" Jace asked. "That's dangerous. Why, why would you do that?"

"He'd never hurt me," Celine replied stubbornly.

"Given past events there is no way to know what he is capable of," Jace stated. "I want you to never see him again."

"I can't do that," Celine spoke softly, but firmly.

"Sebastian has no one else," Celine pleaded. "I all but raised him, Jace!"

"I don't care," Jace replied.

"He's changed," Celine continued as if Jace hadn't spoke. "He wants to be better."

"I don't believe it," Jace scoffed.

"You weren't there," Celine said, suddenly with energy. "You don't know what's been going on. He came to me crying, and broken. What was I supposed to do?"

"You were supposed to turn him out, and lock the door behind him," Jace called back.

"I think knowing I was ashamed of him… changed him somehow. Made him see the truth about himself," Celine continued. "You were raised like brothers, twins even, please just for me… try."

"No," Jace replied stubbornly. Then something clicked in his head. "Wait, does this mean you've been- been-" He didn't know how to describe whatever she was doing. "For over two years!"

Celine simply nodded.

And Jace ran out of patience. He turned and left the room without looking back. The energy from his anger carried him all the way outside, and down the block to a small park he'd visited often as a child. There, his anger collapsed, and he fell to his knees in the snow.

His tears felt cold on his face as the winter air tried to freeze them. Jace didn't know how he was feeling in this moment. He just knew he didn't have the emotional energy to process any of them. Two and a half years she'd been keeping this to herself. Two and a half years of sheltering, and helping someone Jace had decided to hate for the rest of his life. The very idea of his mother and Sebastian being in the same room together made him want to punch someone, preferably Sebastian. It felt like his life was falling apart, like everything he'd ever counted on was a lie.

Jace wasn't sure how long he sat there. His knees were very cold by now, his pants soaked through with melted snow. His mind was blank, his heart as numb as his knees; but Jace didn't want to move, didn't want to think. Wasn't it possible for him to just stay here forever. To stay blank and numb until the world made sense again?

"I found you."
It was a familiar voice, but still Jace didn't turn his head. His eyes were closed as he focused on his breathing and the cold seeping into his body.

"You're mom's worried about you."

Still, Jace didn't reply.

"She sent me to find you."

Giving in just that fraction more, Jace let his body fall into the snow. Laying on his side, Jace could see Jon standing near him.

"You are going to freeze to death," Jon commented. "Please come back and get warm."

Jace didn't have the energy to argue. He let Jon pull him up without speaking, and began walking back. They walked in silence the whole way. His mother was in hysterics hugging him, and fretting over how cold he felt. Jace agreed to take a hot shower, if only to get her to calm down. Warm and in dry clothes, Jace went back downstairs to face the music.

Both his mother and Jon were sitting at the table, not speaking. Jace couldn't tell if Celine had told Jon more than he undoubtedly guessed from what he overheard, or they'd just sat here in silence the entire time.

"So," Jace began unsure how to defuse. "What has she told you?" He directed his question to Jon.

"Not much," Jon replied cautiously. "It seems like this guy you've known all your life tried to hurt my sister, so you cut him out forever? And now your mom is trying to help him?"

"He did more than try and hurt her," Jace said with his teeth clenched. "He tried to rape her. If I hadn't gotten there when I did-" But he stopped talking, unwilling to entertain the thought.

Jon seemed to suddenly grasp the depth of the conversation. He made a small 'oh' sound then fell silent.

"He wants to get better," Celine said in a pleading tone. "He so misses your friendship."

"Yeah, well he didn't deserve it," Jace snapped. "And he doesn't deserve your help either."

"Is there no small part of you that remembers how it was?" Celine continued in a small voice. "You two growing up together, always side by side. Learning to walk together in this very room. Riding your bikes to school together. Trying to study together, but always giving up in favour of some outdoor sport. Then you two both started bringing home girls around the same time. He was always here Jace. I was the one who helped him with his homework, bought him medicine when he was sick. His parents didn't care. We are all he's got."

"He should have thought of that before," Jace snapped, even if a part of him wanted to hope that his mother was right.

Celine turned to Jon as if looking for an alley, but Jon held up his hands in surrender and said, "Hey, she's my sister."

"Right," Celine sighed. She turned to look back at Jace. All the anxiety and fear had left her now, replaced with resigned sadness and disappointment. "Now can you see why I didn't want to tell you?"
"So there's nothing I can say that will make you stop helping him then?" Jace asked.

With a slow movement his mother shook her head. "You'd understand if you saw him. A person can change a lot in over two years, as you very well know. Clary changed you more than you realize."

Jace wanted to say something quite rude in reply, but despite everything, it was his mother looking back at him, and he just couldn't do it.

"I'm going to bed," Jace stated, before turning and heading back up the stairs.

It was comfortable under the covers, and it was nice to be warm, but at the same time it felt wrong. The cold of the snow had been a better match for his mood. Jace laid there, eyes closed trying to keep his mind blank so he could sleep… but no such luck.

His mind had lost that blank escape feeling it had had in the snow, and now he was really thinking. Round and round his thoughts went as he tried to picture his mother and Sebastian hanging out these last two years. It made him want to throw up or punch something… or both.

He couldn't help but wonder what Jon thought of all this. In one way, he was just being thrown into someone else's family drama, but in another it had been an event regarding his sister that had started the whole thing. Would Jon hold anything against Jace about the hurt done to his sister? Or was Jon going to try and stay out of it since years had passed and Clary was fine? Maybe he'd ask Jon in the morning. Then again, there was always a chance that come sun rise he'd still be lying here wide awake staring at this ceiling.

Chapter End Notes

What do you think guys? Should I change my username to 'UsedToWritealott'? Tehe

A Sebastian plot line while Clary was away has been planned for ages! In fact, some plans for this story were put into motion so long ago that they are no longer gonna fit in the story. If I'd managed to work them in like 80 chapters ago maybe, but now it would feel forced. So they have been scrapped. If you are curious feel free to PM me on fanfic and ask what they are. ;)

Also I did start another Malec fic, way more fun than Rock Bottom. It's light and should be a good time. Even though I have the first chapter done I'm not going to be updating it until another story is finished. The way I've been updating lately I really don't think I can updated three stories at once in any kind of timely manner. When I finish Rock Bottom I'll start uploading the new one because let's be real... R&S is like NEVER GONNA END! Sigh. I gotta figure out how I'm gonna end this mother f-cker. sigh.

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Sneak Peek Chapter 144

"Girls suck," Alec stated, planting himself in the chair beside his sister.

"Well then aren't you glad you don't like to date them," Simon chuckled. Alec gave him a look of such annoyance that Simon decided to change tactics.

"Alright I'll bite," he said. "Why do girls suck?"
All Simon managed to get out of Alec's mumbled reply was something along the lines of "wanting what they can't have."

"You are gonna have to explain a little better than that if you want my sympathy," Simon replied.

"I know what you're talking about," Izzy said, opening her eyes and lifted her head to face her brother. "You're talking about mom's work friend, Brenda."
Christmas at the Lightwood manor was something Simon felt sure he'd never get used to. He'd by no means grown up poor, - Simon liked to think of myself as thoroughly middle class - but a mansion with wings was something else entirely. As this was his second holiday in such luxury, Simon liked to think he was getting more accustomed to it. Even if such extravagance no longer intimidated him, Simon hoped never to be too comfortable with it. He didn't want to become so used to Izzy's lifestyle that he forgot about his own. His mother had done her best to raise both him and his sister on just her own salary. Simon was proud of how he was raised, but he wouldn't begrudge someone the circumstances of their life either. Izzy couldn't help the world in which she'd been born, and he couldn't help but love her.

The thought made him smile as he looked out onto the dance floor where his girlfriend was currently attempting to move to the music. He said 'attempting' since usually she was quite a bit more coordinated than this. Simon was at his girlfriend's New Year's party, and boy did these rich folk know how to party. There was a disco ball on the ceiling, and a live DJ up on a stage Simon hadn't remembered being in his room only yesterday. A buffet and bar were along one side of the wall, and the grand room was full of people. In fact, the sheer number of guests was slightly why Simon was sitting at the tables opposite like a wallflower. The results of which were Izzy's taking to the dance floor alone.

"Siiimon," Izzy giggling as she approached. Her cheeks were flushed from the effects of alcohol. Simon had had a glass of eggnog as well, but at this point Izzy was tipsy.

"Yes, my love?" Simon replied, smiling. She was rather adorable while slightly intoxicated, with those bright red cheeks and that grin on her face. Then again, she was always some combination of adorable, stunningly beautiful, and ridiculously sexy.

"Misses you," Izzy mumbled, nusseling in close, holding his arm and resting her head on his shoulder.

"That so?" Simon grinned. She nodded against his shoulder. "You haven't been gone long, you know?" It was true. He'd only just sat out from the dancing less than a quarter hour ago.

"Dancing no fun without my Simon," Izzy argued.

"Your wish is my command," he whispered. It was often impossible to refuse her anything, even if this place was too packed for his liking. Simon leaned down to kiss her sweetly. He'd intended it to be a short kiss before they left to rejoin the party, but Izzy had other ideas. She threw her arms around him, deepening the kiss as if forgetting that they were in a room filled to the brim with people.

Gently he coaxed her off him, while still holding her hand.

"There are people around." Simon reminded her, trying not to laugh. The impromptu public make out session had gotten him quite flustered, and embarrassed.

"People smeople," Izzy mumbled, but she did heed his warning all the same. He was just glad she wasn't drunk enough to try and seduce him here in front of everyone.
"Maybe we should sit down and get you some water," Simon suggested.

"I thought we were gonna dance?" Izzy whined.

"I think you need water," Simon said firmly. With a sigh she agreed, and he lead her to a table. Izzy sat down then closed her eyes and rested her head on his shoulder again. It was a simple gesture of trust, but it warmed his heart all the same.

They hadn't been sitting more than five minutes when Alec joined them, looking cranky.

"Girls suck," Alec stated, planting himself in the chair beside his sister.

"Well, then aren't you glad you don't like to date them," Simon chuckled. Alec gave him a look of such annoyance that Simon decided to change tactics.

"Alright, I'll bite," he said. "Why do girls suck?"

All Simon managed to get out of Alec's mumbled reply was something along the lines of "wanting what they can't have."

"You are gonna have to explain a little better than that if you want my sympathy," Simon replied.

"I know what you're talking about," Izzy said, opening her eyes and lifting her head to face her brother. "You're talking about mom's work friend, Brenda."

Alec grumbled some more, looking thoroughly put out.

"What am I missing?" Simon asked the table at large.

"I saw her," Izzy informed her brother. "Little vixen." Izzy laughed.

"She was all over him," Alec whined.

"Yeah, but a girl isn't a worry," Izzy reminded her brother. "I mean, Magnus is gay, right?"

"Magnus is bi," Alec corrected.

"Oh that sucks," Izzy stated.

"What? Why?" Alec asked, looking worried.

"Because instead of competing with only half the world, you have to compete with all of it."

"He's my husband," Alec reminded her, almost as if trying to convince himself.

"Doesn't mean other people don't have eyes," Izzy grinned at him. "Or didn't you know that your husband is hot?" She laughed.

"Oh, shut up Izzy," Alec scoffed.

"If you are so annoyed about it, go steal him back from her," Izzy shrugged.

"If he wants to give in to such attention, it isn't my job to stop him," Alec huffed.

"Isn't it though?" Simon asked. "I mean as far as I remember you two both did vow to forsake all others at this little ceremony I remember attending called a wedding."
At that Alec groaned, laid his head down on the table, and sulked. It was all Simon could do to keep from laughing at him. After all, there was no way in this world or the next, that Magnus would be welcoming such attentions, and sure enough only moments later…

"Did I lose her?" Magnus's voice made them all jump, especially Alec. Magnus sat down beside Alec, looking like he wanted to hide behind his husband for all eternity.

"Just in time," Simon laughed. "Your husband has been sulking."

"What, why?" Magnus asked turning to Alec, looking concerned.

"You were trying to lose her, huh?" Alec asking, smiling.

"Of course I was," Magnus stated obviously. "I'm a married man, and even if I weren't, she's crazy!" He mimed crazy by making a circle with his finger near his ear, before adding, "Now tell me, what were you sulking about, my love?"

A huge grin spread across Alec's face as he planted a big kiss on his husband's lips. Magnus, though clearly still confused, accepted the kiss happily.

"Idiots," Izzy muttered under her breath.

"Love does tend to have that effect," Simon replied easily as he stroked his girlfriend's hair.

"Turning people into idiots, you mean?" Izzy replied softly, her eyes closed again.

"The very same," Simon smiled.

"Does that mean I can turn you into an idiot?" Izzy asked.

"Can, have, do," Simon answered, kissing the top of her head.

"Hmmm," Izzy hummed as she snuggled in closer to him.

"Tired?" Simon asked her. She nodded into his shoulder. "Why don't we rest here, instead of going back out on the dance floor then."

"Actually, I'd rather go up to bed," Izzy stated.

"But it isn't midnight yet," Simon reminded her. "Don't you want a kiss at midnight?"

"I can have a kiss at midnight anywhere," Izzy reminded him. "Just so long as you come with me."

"Kiss in bed it is then," Simon smiled.

The married idiots were still glued together by their lips as Simon stood up, supporting Isabelle slightly as he did so. She took hold of his arm as they walked together out of the hall and towards the stairs. This house - if you could call it that - was, in Simon's opinion, far too large to function as a house. It was like navigating through some kind of museum or something. Or maybe Simon was just exaggerating, even so, walking through the elaborate spaces to their room felt to him like walking through a castle. There was an elegance to the building that felt alien for a place of residence.

They reached the door, and Simon opened it revealing a large room with a big four poster bed at its center. Thankfully, the Lightwood parents were under no illusions as to the age of their children, and had easily agreed to let Simon and Izzy room together. Since moving in with Izzy, Simon had gotten very used to her constant presence. Though they'd only become an official couple a little over a year
 ago, Simon felt like it had been a lot longer, which did make sense given the fact that they'd shared their first kiss over two years ago. In fact, this March would mark three years since he'd made out with Isabelle in that elevator.

"What are you thinking so hard about?" Izzy asked groggily as she got into bed.

"Wouldn't you like to know," Simon answered, as he too got comfortable before climbing into bed.

"Isn't that why I asked?" Izzy replied, adorably confused.

"What would you say if I said I was thinking about you?" Simon asked her.

"I like that answer," Izzy replied, grinning as she reaching forward to pull him closer.

Simon wrapped his arms around her, and they stayed like that for a while. He just held her tight and very close, keeping them both warm. Slowly as she relaxed, Izzy moved just a few inches away. Far enough that Simon had one hand free. Absently he began gently tracing his fingers over the skin of her back. Over her collar bones, down her arms, then making lines down her back over her hips. He enjoyed the soft, gentle content noises his actions pulled from her. Back and forth his fingers moved slowly, just barely touching her.

"If you keep this up I'm gonna fall asleep," Izzy mumbled.

"Would you like me to stop?" Simon asked her.

"No," Izzy replied. Simon smiled, though with her eyes closed and the room dark, no one knew except for him.

Giving up on his hand, Simon repositioned himself until his arms were holding up his weight. Leaning down, Simon placed his lips on her skin instead, repeating the same patterns as before. As he kissed her neck, he felt Izzy turn her head just enough to give him more access. Moving down, Simon kissed over her shoulders, down her side, and around over her back. He messaged her legs, before running his hands along the sides of her hips, past her shoulders and into his hair. Simon then began kissing over her shoulder blades, and down the sides of her hips. Izzy's skin was so soft, he knew he'd never get tired of touching her.

"I love you," he whispered against her skin.

Just then, Izzy began to turn over. Her eyes were open now as she pulled her already rolled up to her shoulders sleeping shirt up over her head.

"I thought you were tired?" Simon chuckled at her.

"I was," Izzy said. "Until someone buttered me up."

"Hey, I had honourable intentions," Simon replied. "I wanted you to relax."

"Pfft," Izzy scoffed. "Come here you giant loveable sap." And she reached for him locking her lips with his just as she wrapped her legs around his waist.

And just like that, Simon was suddenly breathing harder. Her wandering hands made short work of his light sleeping clothes, and within seconds they were both free of their clothes. It was moments like these that Simon felt a strange sense of wonder that such a woman was his and only his.

As she positioned her legs rather expertly, Simon felt how hot and bothered he'd managed to get her.
With a skilled movement of her hips, Simon found himself inside her. Before he'd had time to more than register this fact, she flipped them both around. Sitting on him now, she leaned down and kissed him deeply as she started rocking her hips back and forth. Simon tried to focus on doing something with his hands, even if it was just holding her hips, but in that moment he felt rather lost in his body. His mind blanked as his body reacted to her, Simon sat up. His hands laid flat against her back, she was still rocking her hips against him. Then she laid back, and her legs came up to rest straight up against his chest before her hands reached out behind her to hold the bed frame. They moved together fast and deep, and both of them were crying out the others name moments later. Panting, they collapsed together on the bed, side by side.

His skin covered with a thin sheen of sweat, Simon suddenly found himself cold. He pulled the blankets up over them both, and pulled her closer to him.

"I love you too, by the way," Izzy grinned against his skin.

"I know," Simon smiled, kissing the top of her head.

Just then they both heard a loud noise from outside and turned to look through the window. Bright explosive lights filled the sky, orange, blue, red and gold. The fireworks spread out from one point to cover every inch of the sky visible through their large window.

"Happy New Year," Izzy told him as she turned in his arms to kiss him. His hands reaching up to cup her face, Simon deepened the kiss.

"It's past midnight now," Simon reminded her. "So you didn't get your kiss at midnight."

"Midnight orgasm is an upgrade," Izzy chuckled at him.

"I'm glad you think so," Simon informed her.

"Okay, but now I'm sleepy again," Izzy mumbled as her eyes closed.

Letting go of her slightly, Simon reached over to the bedside table and clicked a button on the base of the lamp. The curtains closed slowly, obscuring the still stunning fireworks from their view. Then he returned all his attention to the beautiful woman laying next to him, holding her close as he fell asleep.

Chapter End Notes

Woot I actually wrote stuff! Yay! This is a super fluffy happy filler chapter but it's still a chapter. :D Also surprise surprise the next chapter is finished as well. ^_^

Funny side note:
There are a few lines of dialogue in this chapter that have literally been sitting in my notes for this story since like chapter... 20? We are talking pre-wedding, pre-I love you's! Pre-Sizzy even. I had to change it to adapt it to the current events, but otherwise it's word for word been sitting there waiting for me to find a way to add it for AGES! lol. I think the exact lines I wrote in my notes oh so many chapters ago was something like:
"That girl was all over him," Alec said.
"A girl isn't a worry, I mean Magnus is gay right?"
"Magnus is bi," Alec corrected.
"Oh that sucks."
"Why?" Alec asked."Because instead of competing with only half the world you have
to compete with all of it."
"He's my boyfriend," Alec reminded her.
"Doesn't mean other people don't have eyes," Izzy grinned at him.

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Anyway... Sneak Peek Chapter 145

"Alright then," Jon said a moment later, stepping back from his suitcase. "I think I'm
packed."

"Excellent," Jace smiled. "Then how about a little tv before we head to the bus? I'd say
we should play mario kart, but I already packed the games."

"Probably a good thing too," Jon laughed. "Not sure how many times I can wipe the
floor with you without it ruining our friendship."

"I'm gonna start practicing when I get home," Jace said, with determination. "And one
day I will beat you."

"Ha! As if," Jon scoffed.

"Don't crush my dreams," Jace whined, but Jon just laughed.

"What are friends for, if not for crushing your dreams," Jon said with a shrug as they
walked down the hall and into the living room.

"I think you have friendship backwards," Jace said seriously, following behind.
Jace had refused to see Sebastian, and he was barely speaking to his mother. If it wasn't for Jon, Jace really wasn't sure how he'd have gotten through the end of the holiday. Between the silence with his mother, and thinking of how she'd kept it from him these last few years, the days had dragged by like weeks. But now New Year's was over, and Jace was going home. It was strange to think that this had once been his home. He could remember as if it were yesterday that feeling when he'd first entered his dorm room. He'd been nostalgic then about missing out on his mom's cooking. The thought made him smile despite himself. When had everything changed? It felt like it had happened all at once, but rationally he knew it had taken years. Time and life slowly moved forward to shape his world from one thing to another. So much had changed that his old world felt unrecognizable to him now. Then again, it wasn't the world that had changed, but rather him. The person he'd been was dead, replaced with the person he was now. The whole thing felt rather unreal to him, and Jace decided he'd rather not think about it.

With a sigh, he checked the clock. He still had a few hours left until it was reasonable to head towards the bus terminal. Being early was always a good idea, but being insanely early was not. He already had everything packed. There was quite literally nothing left to do but stare at the clock. Refusing to do so, Jace got up and went in search of Jon. He found his friend in the spare room finishing putting his suitcase together.

"Hey," Jace greeted him. Jon looking up and replied in kind. "Not done packing yet?"

"I'm not much for doing things when I'm supposed to," Jon laughed. "Just ask my mother."

"Procrastinations not a crime," Jace laughed. "I'm not usually so organized myself."

"Can't wait to get out of here, huh?" Jon asked in a whisper, which Jace appreciated. He didn't want his mom overhearing them, not that he actually expected her to be listening at the keyhole or anything, but still.

"What gave me away?" Jace chuckled.

"That speedy packing," Jon counted.

"Right," Jace sighed, moving to sit on the bed while Jon packed.

His mind wondered as he watched clothes and other objects being placed and positioned until it all fit, a shirt set aside for a moment while a cord was put underneath it. Jace followed the movements with his eyes, trying to keep his mind blank.

He failed. Being busy was an excellent cure for troubled thoughts, but alas there was really nothing left to do right now. His masochistic mind landed on his girlfriend far sooner than he would have liked. Then again, she hardly felt like his girlfriend these days. He couldn't quite remember what it felt like to touch her, though he did recall every inch of her in a more visual way, the feeling of her touch seemed to be fading. Missing her was like this constant ache in his chest. He'd grown used to it as the months had gone by, but now he had new worries. After so long apart, and with Clary having experienced so many new and exciting things while he'd been living the same old life, would they still know each other? Would she still be his Clary, or a new person out of his reach?
"It isn't that long left till June now," Jon tired to console him.

"Huh, what?" Jace asked, snapping out of it.

"Clary," Jon explained. "Won't be long now."

"Five months and three days," Jace stated.

"Damn," Jon replied, taken aback.

"But wait, how did you know that's what I was thinking about?" Jace asked.

"You get this look on your face when you think about her," Jon explained. "It's a far off nostalgic, slightly lonely look."

"Oh great," Jace whined. "So basically you can read me like a book then?"

"Basically," Jon chuckled.

"Urg," Jace groaned. "I know I'm pathetic."

"You'll get no judgement from me," Jon explained. "I get it." He paused for a moment then added, "You know about my ex, right?" Jace shook his head. "Well, let's just say I know what feeling pathetic is like."

"I'd say we could be pathetic together," Jace continued. "But, I don't know when I'll see you again after today."

"I've been thinking about that actually," Jon replied.

"Oh?" Jace asked.

"I was wondering if you wouldn't mind if I tagged along?"

"Tagged along? Tagged along where?" Jace asked, totally confused.

"Back to school with you," Jon said, then added quickly. "I mean I can't sign up for classes this late, but when I dropped out of University, I had all these epic plans, you know. And now that I've learned the hard way that epic plans usually fall short of the epicness you imagined, I thought maybe I'd pick up where I left off, and it would be great to already know someone at the school and have a place to crash while I look for an apartment."

"You won't have to look for an apartment," Jace stated, after a moments silence.

"Really?" Jon asked. "Cause, I thought they were pretty hard to come by."

"Oh they are," Jace explained. "But you are definitely staying with me and Jordan." He stopped then added with a chuckle. "Even if I have to sleep on the couch."

"You're crazy," Jon laughed. "Why would you do that?"

"I like having you around," Jace shrugged. He was trying to play it cool, while inside Jace wanted to jump for joy. He wasn't sure why Jon becoming part of his everyday life felt so welcome to him, and Jace wasn't going to analyze it. He was just glad for the opportunity to spend more time with his friend.
"Well thanks," Jon smiled.

"No problem, buddy," Jace replied also smiling.

"So glad my sister made an honest man out of you," Jon chuckled.

"Oh hush," Jace laughed.

"Alright then," Jon said a moment later, stepping back from his suitcase. "I think I'm packed."

"Excellent," Jace smiled. "Then how about a little tv before we head to the bus? I'd say we should play mario kart, but I already packed the games."

"Probably a good thing too," Jon laughed. "Not sure how many times I can wipe the floor with you without it ruining our friendship."

"I'm gonna start practicing when I get home," Jace said with determination. "And one day I will beat you."

"Ha! As if," Jon scoffed.

"Don't crush my dreams," Jace whined, but Jon just laughed.

"What are friends for, if not for crushing your dreams," Jon said with a shrug as they walked down the hall and into the living room.

"I think you have friendship backwards," Jace said seriously, following behind.

The conversation ended as they sat down and both reached for the remote at the same time. Jace gave in as he really didn't care what they watched, and as it turned out, neither did Jon. They didn't really have enough time to watch something all the way through, and so just ended up flipping through his mother's cable tv channels. Jace often forgot cable even existed when he wasn't at his mom's house. In his world, cable tv was only for her. He knew this to not be the case, even if she was the only one he knew who still bothered paying for it. This got his mind on a bad topic as he remembered that if things with his mom were normal he'd have probably teased her about it right now. Maybe calling from the living room across the house to put her on the spot about wasting money on channels that still had commercials. He often liked to remind her that netflix didn't have ads, but as things were now, teasing her would have felt very forced. Jace wasn't sure how long it would be until this changed. He almost didn't want to think about it. After all, he only saw his mother once a year as it was. Maybe that was why she did it. What had his Psychology teacher call it? Empty nest syndrome.

"Alright, I think we should probably go," Jon said as he turned off the tv, silencing the strange chinese program he'd found.

"Yeah," Jace agreed checking the clock.

"You gonna say goodbye to your mom before we go?" Jon asked in a whisper.

For only a moment he considered sneaking out the back, but Jace knew he could never do that. Getting up he went to find her. As usual, Celine was in the kitchen.

"Hey," Jace said by way of announcing his presence.

"Hello," his mother smiled at him. He knew there was no resentment on her side, and if he so chose,
they could be fine in an instant.

"We're heading out," Jace told her.

"Oh, I baked you some cheese scones for the trip," Celine said, quickly moving to collect them. She held the tin of scones out for him to take.

"Thanks," Jace said accepting them.

"Have a safe trip," Celine continued. "And please text me when you get there."

"I will," Jace replied. He hesitated for a moment, then moved forward to hug her. She squeezed him back tighter than usual, as if she hadn't been sure he'd hug her at all. And just like that, Jace was glad he had.

With a smile he turned to rejoin Jon, and collected his suitcase before making their way to the bus. Jon didn't say a word till they were a half block away from his house.

"How did that go?" Jon asked.

"Okay," Jace replied.

"Just so you know," Jon said. "I did text Clary a little to figure out what she thought of all this. So she knows."

"Probably a good thing," Jace shrugged. "I would have told her myself if she'd called me."

"You could text her, you know," Jon explained. "She does reply to those sometimes."

"Yeah, I suppose," Jace sighed. "It's just... like I send a long text, and I get a two word answer after waiting hours for the reply. At some point the disappointment gets to be too much, you know."

"Must feel different for you," Jon offered. "I just kinda send the message and forget about it, then whenever I get an answer, I get an answer." He shrugged. "I don't stress about it or anything."

"See, I send the message," Jace explained. "Then check my phone every few minutes for hours to see if she replied. I get excited everytime my phone goes off, then am instantly disappointed when it's someone else. Then when she does eventually reply, I text back right away and the whole thing starts over again."

"Wow," Jon said slowly. "Sucks. Maybe I should give her heck for you."

"Please don't," Jace sighed. "I know she's just busy."

"Still, she should know that's how you feel about it," Jon explained. "Cause at the moment, I really don't think she has a clue."

"I'm a big boy," Jace explained. "I can deal with my own disappointment. Rationally, I know she's just busy. I guess I just wish it didn't feel like everyone else was way busier than me."

"I know exactly what you mean," Jon sighed.

"Here to being boring and alone together," Jace said as they reached the bus stop.

"Sign me up," Jon agreed as they pretended to clink invisible glasses together.
About ten minutes later, the bus arrived. Their luggage secure in the hold on the side, they both got in and picked seats together.

"I'm so glad you're here," Jace said, as the bus began to move. "A long bus ride alone is just the worst."

"Don't you bring music?" Jon asked.

"Yeah and books sometimes, but it doesn't pass the time as well as conversation."

"True," Jon said.

And indeed it was a much more pleasant ride than the one that had brought him here at the start of the holidays. By the time Jace got off the bus he was stiff from sitting for so long, and wanted to hit the gym right away. He did dump his suitcase at home first, but he didn't even see his roommate before heading out again. Jon wanted to join in, and so Jace snuck him into the gym like a student. Sure, it only saved them about ten dollars, but they felt like rebels just the same.

Sitting at the machine lifting the weights up and down, Jace was starting to actually relax. He was away from his mother and thoughts of Sebastian, and it was making all the difference. He would have been worried about his mom except for the fact that she'd been doing this over two years without a problem. It seemed as if Sebastian wasn't actually going to hurt her, and after all, it was his mother's choice to try and help him. She knew everything and she was an adult, entitled to her own decisions. Even if Jace hated them.

Now all he had to do was survive school until June. Just had to push through till the light at the end of the tunnel. Nothing else for it. He could do this. Lift and release, lift and release. The repetitive action of the exercise was already making him feel more hopeful.

"Hey Jace," Jon whispered his left. "That girl in the corner is staring at you."

Jace turned to glance, then returned to looking forward and continue his work out. "That's the 'you live here' girl," Jace explained.

"Okay, what?" Jon laughed.

"She asked me once if I lived at the gym," Jace shrugged. He thought for a moment then added, "And I think she said something about how I wasn't allowed to be hot and shy, or something. Didn't make a whole lot of sense, and I never got her name."

"Ummm buddy," Jon said consolingly. "I hate to break this to you, but I think she was hitting on you."

Jace just waved his hand dismissively. "Oh come on, that was literally months ago."

"How many months?"

"I don't know," Jace groaned. "A few."

"Oh, wow you're clueless," Jon laughed. "I can't believe my sister did this to you. Even I knew your rep in high school." He shook his head almost sadly.

"Shut up!" Jace whined.

"So you've gotten like nothing since she left then?" Jon asked softly.
"Do you really want to talk about this - and here - of all places?" Jace whined. He was almost rethinking this whole Jon coming to stay thing. Luckily, they were in a rather removed part of the gym so the few people they could see were out of earshot.

"Sorry," Jon replied. "I just mean… like that's dedication."

"Not really," Jace sighed, giving in to the topic. "I mean I miss sex, but I can't really disconnect you know."

"Nope, not sure I get it, but I'll take your word for it."

"Well, I can't explain it any better, so yeah," Jace mumbled, finishing rather awkwardly.

"So what, do you just masterbate more then?" Jon chuckled quietly.

"Pretty much," Jace replied.

"As I said, dedication," Jon stated.

"Just think for a moment what we are talking about," Jace reminded him. "We are talking about me and your baby sister's sex life, and/or lack of one."

Jon shook his head as if trying to wipe it clean. "No," he said. "Nope. We are talking about my friends sex life."

"Way to disconnect," Jace laughed.

"Let me have my denial," Jon chuckled.

"You do you, my friend," Jace sniggered.

"That's better," Jon laughed.

They did a few more reps before calling it a day and headed home, where they were faced with a new problem: two bedrooms for three guys. As it hadn't been Jordan's idea to add to their little household, Jace wasn't about to make him give up his room. Jace could sleep on the couch like he'd threatened, or they could try and come up with something else.

"You know I could always sleep on the couch," Jon offered.

"I suppose," Jace sighed. "I mean that's what we did when Simon was here. He and Jordan took turns on the couch, and in what is now Jordan's room. But when Simon moved in with Izzy, we all got kinda spoiled with our own rooms."

"Have you thought of two twin beds?" Jon asked.

Jace blinked at him for a moment. The bed he had in his room was the double he'd shared with Clary while she'd been living here. If they got new beds, what would they do with that one?

"Forget it," Jon shrugged. "It's late. How about I sleep on the couch tonight and we figure this out in the morning."

"Deal," Jace said, failing to stifle a huge yawn. "Night."

Chapter End Notes
As my beta says 'oh no not another Jace chapter. I'm so sick of him.' Lol. Sorry. Be happy to know I only included 1/3 of the original Jace goes home for the holidays plot that I'd planned. It was just too much Jace and I had no other pov to show the story through. Besides you all want Clary back. You don't want a major Jace plot without her, do you? So I thought it best to just get time moving along and get these characters to June sooner. :) 

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Sneak Peek Chapter 146

"Good morning darling," Magnus smiled, handing over the other latte.

"Caffeine," Alec said eagerly, reaching for the drink.

"Good morning to you too Magnus," Magnus mocked his husband. "Thank you so much for the latte."

"Huh," Alec turned, his eyes clearly glazed over.

"Nevermind," Magnus laughed. "How's the homework coming?"

"It's not," Alec groaned, pushing away from the desk and standing up.

"I'd offer to help," Magnus replied. "But I didn't attend the classes. You wanna know about the Russian revolution, I'm your guy. Accounting is not my thing."

Alec looked tired, as if he hadn't been blinking enough while staring at his computer screen. He could see the shadow of dark circles forming under his eyes and couldn't help wondering if Alexander was getting enough sleep.

Then suddenly Alec's face seemed to lit up and he reached forward to hold Magnus's face, planting a deep kiss on his husband's lips. An involuntary contented noise escaped his throat as Magnus wrapped his arms around his husband and throw himself into the kiss.

"Thank you for the latte," Alec smiled at him as they broke apart.

"You are more than welcome, my love," Magnus replied, moving forward for one more chaise kiss before leaving his husband to his homework.
"Do old married couples still have to go to fancy restaurants on Valentine's day?"

"Depends how old and married we are talking," she replied. "Also if they have kids."

"No kids," Magnus answered. "Been married since April."

"Oh hell yeah they do!" she exclaimed. "That's still the honeymoon phase. Best to pull out all the stops."

"Hmmm," Magnus replied. "Thanks." He held up the latte she'd just handed him. Magnus looked closer to see her name tag before adding, "Karla."


"Well, you do a fine job of both," Magnus told her with a smile.

Still smiling, Magnus left the cafe, his mind focused on his husband and a certain saint Valentine. Alexander hadn't dropped any hints that Magnus had been able to pick up on about what exactly he wanted to do on February the fourteenth. Alec wasn't usually a subtle person, so Magnus was starting to wonder if his husband wanted to do anything at all.

"You know you could always ask him," Magnus chastied himself as he got into his car.

Wasn't the whole point of being married that you didn't have to deal with all this uncertainty anymore? Then again, Magnus was pretty sure Alec had actually been jealous of that crazy lady at his parents New Year's party. Married or not, it seemed love was love either way: messy, insecure, unpredictable, uncontrollable, and beautiful.

Magnus arrived home to find Paige sitting on the couch watching their tv. After taking a deep breath in, he no longer cared to ask her what she was watching.

"Did you bake something?" Magnus asked eagerly.

"Scones," Paige answered.

"You know, sometimes I love you," Magnus told her.

"Mom always told me the best way to a man's heart is through his stomach," Paige laughed.

"Well, if this man wasn't already taken, you could consider his heart very reachable via baked goods," Magnus chuckled.

"I do hate it when mom's right," Paige replied.

"Are they ready?" Magnus asked.

"Just came out of the oven," Paige answered. "Help yourself."

"Awesome," Magnus replied, changing direction to claim a buttery pastry for his own.
So far there hadn't been a single downside to inviting Paige to take their spare room. It was simply nice to have a third income contribute to the household, but on top of all that, she baked and was generally the most pleasant human Magnus had ever had the good fortune to know. Also, they had a in-house cat sitter on hand now, which had come in very handy during the holidays.

One scone devoured with what was left of his own latte, Magnus went in search of his husband. He found Alec sitting at the table pouring over books and papers, looking extremely frustrated at something.

"Good morning darling," Magnus smiled, handing over the other latte.

"Caffeine," Alec said eagerly, reaching for the drink.

"Good morning to you too, Magnus," Magnus mocked his husband. "Thank you so much for the latte."

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"Thank you for the latte," Alec smiled at him as they broke apart.

"You are more than welcome, my love," Magnus replied, moving forward for one more chaste kiss before leaving his husband to his homework.

It was amazing really how much more time there was in a day, when one only worked for a living. Going to a class meant a great deal of work to do later in preparation for the next class, but going to a shift was just doing a task then leaving. When not at work, there was nothing but blissful relaxation for Magnus, and he didn't miss university one bit.

Walking past the small room at the end of the hall, Magnus was reminded that he had a few other things he was responsible for when not at work. With a sigh, he cleaned out the cat boxes before his shower.

Clean and wrapped in a towel, Magnus went to check on his husband again. Alexander was exactly where Magnus had left him, staring at the computer and papers before him with a frustrated look on his face. And a rather evil thought occurred to him, and with a grin, Magnus knew he'd act on it.

"How's the homework going?" Magnus asked again, walking up behind Alec and resting a hand on his husband's shoulder.

"I hate accounting," Alec stated.
"Sounds like you have lots more homework to do," Magnus whispered, moving his other hand to Alec's other shoulder.

"I do," Alec whined. But then Magnus began massaging Alec's shoulders, the whine turned into a moan.

"So, what you're saying is that I definitely shouldn't distract you from it then?" Magnus whispered, leaning forward.

"Definitely," Alec sighed.

"Good to know," Magnus mused as his hands moved down Alec's sides so his lips had access to Alec's neck.

Gently, Magnus encouraged Alec's head to lean back. His husband's eyes were closed, and Magnus took the opportunity to kiss his face. Starting with the forehead, then moving down over his closed eyelids and rosy cheeks. Finally reaching his lips, Magnus kissed Alec spider-man style. Alec's arms came up over his head to hold Magnus's face, and trace his fingers over the skin of Magnus's neck.

Turning his body, Magnus moved around the chair to plant himself firmly in his husband's lap. Alec's palms were pressed against Magnus's back as their lips danced. Magnus's hands were in Alec's hair, but they moved down over his shoulders and chest.

"This would be so much more romantic if my legs weren't about to go numb," Alec laughed into their kiss after a few moments. Magnus stood up, lifting his weight off Alec's thighs. But he didn't remain standing. Magnus got down on his knees, his face close to Alec as his hands rested under Alec's loose shirt and against the bare skin of his stomach. His fingers, tracing and teasing, Magnus acted as if he were about to free Alec from the confines of his jeans.

Then suddenly Magnus froze. He pulled his hands away, and looked up at Alec as innocently as he could.

"Urg, you are such a tease," Alec groaned. "And I totally forgot the accounting answer I was working on."

Magnus couldn't help but smirk. "Don't worry love," Magnus said. "Finish your homework, and then I'll finish you."


Laughing, Magnus placing a loving, quick kiss on his husbands lips. He had planned on moving away after that, but Alec clearly had other ideas, and was quite determined to see them through. He had Magnus's towel in both his hands, as if threatening to pull it off.

"You aren't getting away," Alec stated firmly.

"Oh no," Magnus chuckled, failing to look displeased with current events. "Whatever shall I do?"

Suddenly, Alec stood up and wrapped both his arms around Magnus, holding him so close Magnus could feel just how hot and bothered his husband was pressed against his leg.

Giving up on being a tease, Magnus obliged his spouse by going for the buttons on Alec's pants. They were still in the living room, and since they now had a housemate, Magnus decided to steer them towards the bedroom. Alec was clearly no longer paying any attention to his surroundings. Alec did however, sigh with relief as his tight jeans were no longer in the way.
Alec threw Magnus onto the bed before jumping on top of him. After all that teasing, it seemed Alec wasn't in the mood for slow. He ground their arousals together until they were both gasping, and finally collapsed together on the bed.

"We could use that towel now," Alec laughed. "Where'd you put it?"

"Me!" Magnus scoffed. "I put nothing anywhere. You were the one throwing clothes this way and that."

"Still your fault," Alec decided. He smirked, and turned to face Magnus before adding, "You tease."

"Guilty," Magnus mused as Alec got up to try and find the towel. He found it near the door as it seemed not to have made it all the way into the room. Alec wiped his chest clean before handing the towel to Magnus.

"I think I might just take another shower," Magnus laughed. He got up and went to kiss Alec. "But you, my love, have homework to do."

"Urg," Alec groaned. "Don't remind me."

"Just think," Magnus reminded him. "Only got to make it to June, then it's all over."

"If I make it till June," Alec sighed.

"You will," Magnus smiled. He blew Alec a kiss before taking the towel to cover himself up for his trip back to the bathroom.

This had been the biggest change to adapt to when Paige moved in: being clothed at all times when not in one's own bedroom or the bathroom. Magnus and Alec had been living alone married for a while now, and had gotten used to not really worrying about such things. It was a small inconvenience, though all things considered. On that thought, Magnus might have another scone.

Getting out of the shower once again, Magnus decided to get dress properly this time before heading to the kitchen. His second scone of the morning stuffed in his mouth, Magnus put the kettle on for a coffee while he decided what he was going to do with the rest of his day off.

He still hadn't figured what he was going to do for Valentine's, and he'd distracted Alec enough for one day. Magnus would wait till his husband was done studying before he tackled that problem.

Thanks to Paige, the kitchen was clean and Magnus had already cleaned out the cat boxes. It felt strange to be able to just watch tv or something. Between work, volunteering at the museum, his husband, and his friends, Magnus rarely had time to himself anymore; not that he was complaining. He was used to working a lot. After all, he'd been working most of his life. It had been the being unemployed that had really weirded him out. Making time for his loved ones was also very important to him. As a child who grew up with very little family, Magnus valued all the people in his life very highly.

Speaking of family... Magnus had been ignoring all of John's messages, despite his husband's insistence that he should give the guy a chance.

Just as he was thinking of him, Alec appeared, suddenly looking far more awake than usual. He was dressed as if leaving.

"What about your homework?" Magnus teased him.

"Just got a text from Maia," Alec said. "Gotta go." And like that, he vanished out the front door.
Though it was rather odd, Magnus thought little of it, and returned to rewatching one of his favourite animes on Netflix. It wasn't until his husband returned a little over an hour later, that Magnus took note, pausing his show. Alexander had a huge grin on his face, as if Christmas had come again.

"It came back," Alec said breathless.

"What in the world are you talking about?" Magnus sighed.

"Now, don't be mad," Alec began, and Magnus knew he wouldn't like it, whatever it was. "But before Christmas, I kinda ordered a DNA test." Magnus raised an eyebrow. Oh, he really wasn't going to like this.

"See, John came by work one time and we got talking, and he said he'd be willing to take a test if it meant proving to you who he was, and I kinda ordered one," Alec admitted.

"So what you're saying is that the results of this DNA test are back?" Magnus inquired calmly.

"Yes," Alec answered.

"And you are also saying that you stole some of my DNA to use for this test?" Magnus added, coolly.

"Technically yes," Alec said sheepishly.

With a deep sigh, Magnus stood up. It was clearly done now, and there was nothing for it. "Let me see," Magnus said holding out his hand.

Alec pulled a small envelope from his inside pocket and handed it over. To Alec's credit, it was still sealed. Which meant, Magnus could choose not to open it. He could burn it now and never know, but Magnus knew he wouldn't, not after Alec had gone to so much trouble. Albeit nosy and intrusive trouble, but Magnus knew his husbands heart was in the right place.

Tearing the corner of the envelope, Magnus removed the slip of paper and opened it. He skimmed over the intro and general legal fine print until he reached the results.

'We can confirm that there is a genetic parent-child relationship between the two samples of DNA you shared with us.'

"So, he is my dad," Magnus said in a small, but firm voice.

"I knew it!" Alec exclaimed, moving forward to read over Magnus's shoulder. Instead, Magnus handed the letter to Alec.

"Changes nothing," Magnus shrugged.

"How can you say that?" Alec exclaimed. "This changes everything!"

"Just because half my DNA came from him," Magnus remarked. "Doesn't mean we owe each other anything. He didn't raise me, he doesn't know me. He is nothing to me."

"But you could get to know each other," Alec pleaded. "This could be such a wonderful thing, Magnus!"

"You are a wonderful thing," Magnus smiled and kissed Alec briefly. "My aunt is a wonderful thing. My friends are wonderful. I have a full life. I don't need some stranger with my eyes showing up and butting in."
"He's not a stranger," Alec argued. "He's your dad."

"In my world, blood doesn't make you family," Magnus stated.

"If not blood, what then?"

"Love," Magnus replied simply.

"But how can you love before you know someone?" Alec asked. "How can you love if you don't even give the guy a chance? We could never have become family if you hadn't give me a chance, remember?"

"For someone so naive," Magnus replied. "You are very wise."

"Does that mean you'll talk to him a little, at least?" Alec asked.

"If that will make you happy," Magnus answered.

"It will," Alec beamed.

"Then happy you shall be."

Chapter End Notes

It's odd but I finally understand how some writers don't remember to answer all reviews. This getting a life business takes up a great deal of mental energy. lol. If I miss your review I do apologize.

Also Karla is a shout out to my editor who is awesome. :D

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Sneak Peek Chapter 145

"Who needs deliver!" Jace scoffed. "See told you we could do it."

"Yes, but my hand hurts," Jordan complained.

"Suck it up," Jace chuckled, clapping Jordan on the back. "In my book a sore hand is worth saving over $100 on delivery."

Jordan just sighed and went to get sheets. When he returned he handed them to Jace who acted as if he were being given an alien concept.

"What do you want me to do with those?" Jace asked.

"Sheets go on beds," Jordan explained. "Or did your mother not teach you that."

"Mom tried to teach me how to do a hospital bed corner," Jace explained, before throwing Jon's sheets randomly onto the bed. "She failed."

"Jace," Jordan said very seriously. "When was the last time you changed your sheets?"
"A while ago," Jace replied, looking away.
It had been somewhat of a surprise when Jordan entered his living room one morning to find some
guy on his couch. Jace returned just in time for classes to start, with what Jordan could only assume
was a hitchhiker. It wasn't until Jace emerged from his room looking sleepy and travel bare that
Jordan learn who exactly this hitchhiker was. It was obvious by Jace's expression that he was very
happy to have Clary's brother around, and putting two and two together, Jordan surmised that Jon
would be likely to stay with them for the foreseeable future. Though Jordan had not exactly been
enthusiastic about a surprise new random unemployed roommate at the start, suffice to say he did
warmed up to Jon eventually. In fact, the guy turned out to be pretty laid back, and actually quite
easy to live with. Jordan couldn't help but feel like they were the three musketeers, as the apartment
slowly turned into quite the stereotypical bachelor pad.

After over a month of Jon sleeping on the couch with just that old divider they'd used for the living
room when Simon had lived here, Jordan and Jace decided to take things into their own hands.
Repositioning the divider, and moving things around, quite nearly created the privacy of a separate
room. The divider however, wasn't quite enough to create third bedroom. For that one required a
bed.

"Lift!" Jace ordered.

"I am lifting," Jordan complained, his hands gripping the cold metal bar more tightly in frustration.

"He's gonna be home soon," Jace whined.

"Don't you think I know that," Jordan argued back.

"Let's turn it," Jace suggested. "Forty-five degree angle." Jorden nodded, and together they managed
to get the bed frame through the door.

"For such a light thing, it sure is an inconvenient shape," Jordan observed. Now through the door, it
was a simple matter to place the frame behind the divider.

As they went back for the rest of the bed, Jordan found himself wishing very hard that they'd just
paid someone else to do this for them. Despite the extra weight of both the boxspring and mattress,
with a little teamwork they managed to get both through the door and on the frame. Though by this
point, Jordan was annoyed enough to voice his delivery wishes out loud.

"Who needs delivery!" Jace scoffed. "See, told you we could do it."

"Yes, but my hand hurts," Jordan complained.

"Suck it up," Jace chuckled, clapping Jordan on the back. "In my book, a sore hand is worth saving
over $100 on delivery."

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he were being given and alien concept.

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"Sheets go on beds," Jordan explained. "Or did your mother not teach you that."

"Mom tried to teach me how to do a hospital bed corner," Jace explained, before throwing Jon's sheets randomly onto the bed in some pathetically lame attempt to 'make' the bed. "She failed."

"Jace," Jordan said very seriously. "When was the last time you changed your sheets?"

"A while ago," Jace replied, looking away.

"And I thought I was the messy one around here," Jordan said with a sigh and shake of the head.

"You most definitely are," Jace stated. "Just because sleeping alone makes me lazy, doesn't mean you lose your title."

"Isn't exactly a title I'd like to keep," Jordan replied, laughing slightly.

"Tough," Jace laughed. Before Jordan could think of something to say in return, they were interrupted by the front door opening and both turned to see Jon walk in.

"What going on?" Jon asked. "There's like plastic and packing material all over the hallway."

"Now who's the messy one? You were supposed to clear that up!" Jace told Jordan.

"You never said that," Jordan argued back.

"I'm pretty sure I did," Jace disagreed.

"Oh yeah, when?" Jordan asked. "Before or after you decided you'd rather spend an entire afternoon moving furniture rather than fork up the money for a truck?"

"After that," Jace answered. "Definitely after."

Jordan just raised his hands up in the air in exasperation. He felt sure somehow that even his life would get easier once Clary was back. Jace was wound very tight these days. Meanwhile, Jon had been moving closer. He stopped as his view included past the divider.

"Did you guys-," he began, then paused. "Did you guys buy me a bed?"

"We sure did!" Jace exclaimed.

For a moment Jon seemed lost for words. Only seconds passed, but as Jordan watched, he thought he could see multiple emotions flit across Jon's face.

"Oh wow, you guys," Jon said, his voice thick with emotion. "Love you guys. " And suddenly Jordan found himself pulled into a hug, Jace too.

"It's noh-ing realle," Jace tried to say while being crushed.

"I don't know," Jordan added, trying to lighten the mood. "That frame was a pain to get in here."

Jon pulled out of the hug and faced them both, his expression now one of laughter. "You do know you can take the frame apart right?" he asked.

"Umm," Jace mumbled.

"So anyway," Jordan cut in, trying not to think about how much easier it would have been to get the
bed frame in through the door in pieces. "We rearranged the divider too, but Jace wouldn't make the bed so that's on you. Otherwise happy… umm… bed day, I guess."

"Valentine's day isn't much on friendship celebration, is it?" Jon chuckled, moving to sit down on his new bed. "Not much to do today but sulk about being single huh?"

"I'd really rather not," Jordan pitched in.

"I'm with Jordan," Jace added, joining Jon sitting on the unmade mattress. "Instead of getting through today, we should celebrate something else."

"My usual go to for Valentine's day is to stay home alone in my sweats and watch horror movies," Jon shrugged.

"That doesn't sound so bad," Jordan replied, also sitting down. "Just the alone part, I guess."

"Can't three bros hang out and watch movies together in their sweats on Valentines day?" Jace asked.

"You know, he has a point," Jordan replied.

"It's a date then," Jon laughed.

"A bro date," Jace corrected.

"Oh please," Jon mocked. "Don't get all insecure now. You do know you are the only one of us with a girlfriend, right?"

"What about you and Maia?" Jace asked Jordan, clearly trying to get them off the topic of his girlfriend on the other side of the Atlantic ocean.

"We're trying to be friends," Jordan explained.

"Oh sucks, sorry man," Jace consoled him.

"No, it's okay," Jordan replied, but when everyone turned to look at him dubiously he added, "Really it's fine. If I'm being perfectly honest, I'm just glad she doesn't hate me."

"Why would you say that?" Jace asked.

"Because Paige isn't speaking to me," Jordan replied. "And after we… did what we did, it wasn't like I went to talk to Maia. I tried to keep it all hidden for ages, and acted like a total jerk to both of them."

"Not your finest hour, my friend," Jace said slapping Jordan on the back.

"Urg, don't remind me," Jordan whined.

"Sometimes people have to make mistakes," Jon said. "So they can learn from them."

"Not really sure what I learned, except that I'm a jerk," Jordan replied. "But thanks for trying."

"Hey! No sulky faces allowed on this Bro's Valentines day," Jon scolded them. "I was promised sweat pants and horror movies!"

Jace laughed, "And so you shall have my friend."
It was one of the better Valentine’s days Jordan had had while single. Eating junk food and watching movies with his friends made for a good night any day of the year, but it was especially nice to be in the company of friends while single on a day dedicated to celebrating romantic love. Still, Jordan couldn’t help but wonder what the girls were doing for Valentines. He knew Paige was at Malec’s, and Maia lived with Sizzy, so unlike him, they were both surrounded by couples. He couldn’t imagine they’d be having a very good time being the third wheel, but then again, maybe they’d gone out for the evening.

As time always does, it passed and February turned to March, bringing with it midterms and essays, but Jordan was glad of it. At least now he was too busy to fret about… well anything. He tried to maintain his friendship with Maia via text, but with everything going on he hadn’t seen her since Christmas. He did sometimes see her in the halls at school, and when she smiled, he’d smile back. Even such a small thing was nice; it made him feel less alone.

"You have that funny look on your face again."

Jordan looked up from his phone to see Jace staring at him.

"What look?" Jordan objected.

"That off in the clouds, and totally not present look," Jace explained.

"Oh," Jordan replied only slightly bashful. "I was texting Maia."

"Do you still love her?" Jace asked him suddenly.

"Sorry what?" Jordan asked, taken quite by surprise.

"Do you still love Maia?" Jace asked again.

"I-" Jordan began, but then he really thought about it. "I think some part of me will always love Maia."

"I know the feeling," Jace echoed.

"Is it like that with Clary?" Jordan asked.

"It's been so long," Jace explained. "That sometimes I can't even be sure if I love her, or the memory of her."

"Sucks man," Jordan tried to console him.

"The trick I find is staying busy," Jace said suddenly. "Any idle moment is to be thwarted at all costs." He paused to check the time, then added, "And on that note I must be off. I have a child to collect."

"Oh, come on," Jordan whined. "Why can't you babysit at Will's place?"

"What's this?" Jace laughed. "Not excited to turn the bachelor bad into a daycare?"

"Not even a little," Jordan replied, but Jace only laughed.

He was gathering his coat when suddenly he stopped and turn to ask Jordan, "Did you and Paige ever talk about kids?"

"No. Why?" Jordan answered easily.
"It's just she wanted them so much," Jace explained. "I couldn't imagine her being in a serious relationship without bringing it up."

"Maybe she did," Jordan suggested with a shrug. "But I just didn't clue into the seriousness of the conversation."

"And they say I'm the clueless one," Jace laughed before waving goodbye and heading out the door.

Less than an hour later he returned with a small toddler in tow. Jordan hadn't moved from his spot at the dining room table, where he was still attempting to get some homework done. Within moments of Lucie's arrival however, he knew homework in the living room was no longer an option.

"NO, No, NO!" Lucie cried.

"No what?" Jace asked helplessly.

"No play. Where age?"

"I don't understand what you want?" Jace sighed in frustrated.

"That," Lucie must of been pointing to something, but Jordan didn't look up to check. "That play AAGE only."

"Are you hungry?" Jace asked her.

"Where aage?" Lucie cried again.

"I don't know," Jace whined.

"AGE!" Lucie almost screamed.

"You're two years old," Jace told the toddler.

"No," Lucie replied firmly.

"Oh alright, it's like two years and four months if you wanna get real specific," he replied.

"Aige," Lucie replied. "Want to play aige!"

And suddenly something clicked in Jordan's head. "Paige," Jordan said as he looking up from his work to tell Jace. "She's saying she wants to know where Paige is."

"Oh," Jace said only slightly awkwardly. He leaned down to the little girl's height and added, "Sorry, but Paige doesn't live here anymore."

"Aige fun," Lucie stated.

"Yes, yes she was," Jace smiled at the little girl.

"Take me to Aige," Lucie decided. Jace sighed and turned to Jordan with 'help me' written all over his face.

"Hey, don't look at me man," Jordan said with his hands up in surrender. "You're the one who volunteered to babysit."

Chuckling, Jordan left his friend to his fate and went to the isolation of his bedroom to once again
attempt his homework. With so much reading, tests, assignments and essays these days, Jordan found himself sometimes counting the days left till the end of term, though he knew not as much as Jace was. Sure, exams were in April and Clary was back in June, but Jordan knew with every passing day getting closer and closer to Clary's return, Jace was counting the days worse than him.

Chapter End Notes

Sorry for so many filler chapters... but like nothing much really needs to happy for a while and I'm trying to get time to move quickly because you all want Clary back! Hopefully the filler chapters are at least enjoyable to read.

Sneak Peek Chapter 148

Alec sighed, moving closer to rest his head on Magnus's chest. He felt his husband's arms wrap around him and relaxed at once.

"Love you," Alec whispered as he snuggled in closer.

"As I do you," Magnus replied easily.

"You still game for dinner tonight?" Alec asked, unsure.

"I can't promise to go in with any expectations, but yes we can go," he replied, calmly.

"I think it will be fun," Alec smiled turning his head to look up at his husband.

"We shall have to wait and see," Magnus answered. "Speaking of which we should get ready."
Despite that fact that it was now Easter, Alec's mind was back on Valentine's day. His husband had pulled out all the stops: fancy clothes, restaurant, romancing to the bedroom. Just thinking about it made Alec smile. And he'd definitely rather think about their epic date night than focus on his textbook. What did he really need to know about collective agreements anyway? Why was there so much more homework later in the term? Graduation couldn't come fast enough.

"Urg," Alec groaned as he dropped his head down on the open textbook in front of him.

"A penny for your thoughts?"

"Is that all they're worth?" Alec asked, without lifting his head.

A light chuckle came in answer to this statement, followed shortly by the light touch of lips on his exposed neck.

"Hmmm," Alec sighed at his husband's touch.

"What is bothering you, my love?"

"School not over yet," Alec mumbled. "Can it be Valentine's day every day?"

"Graduation is just around the corner," Magnus replied. "Patience is a virtue."

"That I was born without," Alec whined.

"Well, since I can't help with the first one," Magnus said. There was something alluring in his voice. Intrigued, Alec lifting his head and was instantly kissed. "Happy Valentine's day, darling."

"It's Easter," Alec reminded him.

"Hey, I'm tired," Magnus chuckled. "Don't you have homework to do?"

"Yeah," Alec said, his shoulders slumped.

Still smiling, Magnus kissed Alec's forehead. "I'm off," he said. "Good luck with the studying."

"Thanks," Alec grumbled. "Gonna need it."

Alec did manage to get back to his homework after that, but only for about an hour. At which point he was interrupted by a text from his cousin who needed someone to complain to about the huge amounts of homework they were getting. Alec was only too happy to oblige her, even if it cut into getting said homework actually done.

By the time Magnus got home from work, Alec was totally and completely done with school work. He needed a break. Folding up his books and pushing them firmly away, Alec stood up with determination. He was stiff from sitting for so long and began pacing just to move his legs.

"How was work today?" Alec asked as his husband was closing the front door behind him.
"It's only work when you get paid," Magnus replied easily. "Saturdays I'm at the museum, remember?"

"Fine Mr. Specific," Alec sighed, rolling his eyes at his husband. "How was volunteering today then?"

"Excellent," Magnus smiled. "Much better than data entry."

"I wish you didn't have to work at a job you don't like," Alec sighed. "

"You have a very skewed point of view," Magnus smiled. "The majority of the people work for money." He shrugged. "The paycheck is the point."

"Yeah, but I still think it would be better if you liked your job more," Alec replied.

"Well I don't hate it," Magnus smiled. "I've had jobs I hated before, this one's just boring I guess. You worry too much, and about the total wrong things, darling."

"Maybe," Alec sighed, moving closer to rest his head on Magnus's chest. He felt his husband's arms wrap around him and relaxed at once.

"Loves you," Alec whispered as he snuggled in closer.

"As I do you," Magnus replied easily.

"You still game for dinner tonight?" Alec asked unsure.

"I can't promise to go in with any expectations, but yes we can go," he replied calmly.

"I think it'll be fun," Alec smiled, turning his head to look up at his husband.

"We shall have to wait and see," Magnus answered. "Speaking of which, we should get ready."

"Right," Alec smiled, before dashing off to change into some 'out of the house' attire. Magnus, it seemed, was just going to wear his work clothes to the restaurant.

When Alec returned, Magnus looked him up and down and stated matter of factly. "You look better naked."

Alec rolled his eyes. "I can't go to the restaurant naked."

"Still, if I'm going to compare your fashion sense with your birthday suit, I know which one I prefer," Magnus shrugged.

"Would you like to dress me then?" Alec asked.

"As always, I'd love to darling, but if I did we'd be late for dinner," Magnus chirped before pecking Alec on the cheek and elegantly moving from the door.

With a sigh, Alec followed, locking their front door behind him. Rather than annoy one of the few friends they had with cars, they'd decided to catch the bus, as the restaurant in question was only a block from a bus stop downtown.

It was a short walk and a quiet one. Alec couldn't help but wonder if Magnus was nervous at all. It seemed right that he should be, but for some reason Alec didn't sense any anxiety in his husband's body language. The bus was rather full when they got on, and effectively ended any chance at
conversation. Alec did take a moment to try and assure Magnus that everything would go well as they walked from the bus stop to the restaurant, but only got a kind smile in return. Maybe Magnus really wasn't nervous?

Moments later, Alec was sitting down at a dimly lit table beside Magnus and across from John, and he was nervous. It was such a strange and daunting concept to Alec to meet parents later in life. Alec had not a single first memory of any of his core family as he'd known them all longer than he could remember.

"You'd think at these prices they could afford better lights," John chuckled.

"It's all about the ambiance," Alec explained, glancing around to take in the poorly lit mahogany tables and chairs. The walls were painted a deep burgundy, and Alec realized that this restaurant might be better suited for a date, not to meet your newly acquired father-in-law. Oh well.

"Well, I have old eyes, and for me it's all about being able to read the menu," John chuckled.

"Try using your phone as a flashlight," Alec replied.

"Oh, excellent idea," John agreed and quickly pulled out his phone. Alec couldn't help but study John's face, especially now that it was better lit. He kept finding little similarities to the face of the man he loved within the lines and smiles of the person across from him. As Alec had never before met a blood relative of his husband - apart from Aleida who looked nothing like Magnus being technically only his mother's half sister and full Dutch compared to Magnus's half-Dutch half-Indonesian heritage - the whole thing felt rather remarkable to him.

"What are you boys thinking of ordering?" John asked cheerfully.

"I always prefer the soup and salad myself," Magnus replied. "Their soup of the day is quite good."

"Oh, but surely you're learning to enjoy the luxuries of life," John chuckled. "After marrying into such a family."

"Not even a little," Alec laughed with his father-in-law. "Magnus is still so frugal it's crazy. And he's working two jobs."

"I have one job," Magnus replied easily. "I just volunteer at the museum on weekends. Besides, wasn't it your parents who decided you had to learn some money skills when they cut you off?"

Alec turned sheepishly to see his husband with a raised eyebrow. "Okay yeah, make sense if you must," Alec sighed. "Ruin my teasing."

"That's what I'm here for," Magnus chuckled, turning to look at the menu again.

"You two are sweet," John told them. Alec looked up grinning. He and Magnus were way more than sweet - they were soulmates - but he liked the comment all the same.

"Thank you," Magnus replied kindly.

"I've never had that," John said. "Not even with your mom." He gestured to Magnus before continuing. "You two are very lucky."

"We know," Alec grinned.

"What happened with mom?" Magnus asked. "As far as you know. The most I ever really got out of
my aunt was 'cold case'. She made it sound like mom was murdered, and the killer was never caught or something."

"Ah well, I wouldn't want to step on anyone's toes and re-write history," John smiled. "I don't have the right."

"Hmmm," Magnus mused. Though still looking down at the menu, Alec was picturing his husband with his eyebrow raised in suspicion again, and decided it was time for a few topic.

"Had the weirdest customer at work the other day," Alec began. "They didn't like the way the paprika was sprinkled on the potato salad, and wanted us to make a whole new one that had 'less clumpy paprika'. I mean can you believe how ridiculous that sounds?"

"I can," John laughed. "There is nothing more ridiculous in life than customer service."

"Couldn't have put it better myself," Alec chuckled.

It was at that time that the waitress came and took their order. Magnus did indeed order the salad and soup, while John ordered a steak medium rare, and Alec decided on a pasta dish.

"Even employed you don't change," Magnus smiled at him as the waitress left.

"What do you mean?" Alec asked.

"One should never order pasta from a restaurant," Magnus explained. "As it costs almost nothing to make those at home easily. You are better off ordering something you can't make yourself."

"See what I'm up against," Alec chuckled, turning to face John. "So determined to be cheap."

"Cheap and practical are not the same thing," Magnus argued.

"What are you gonna do when mom gives me my credit cards back?" Alec chuckled. "And I take you out to a super fancy dinner?"

"Stay home and order Chinese," Magnus said, his expressions dead serious.

John's roar of laughter could probably be heard on the other side of the restaurant.

"If I didn't know any better, I'd say you were more your aunt's child than mine," John sniggered. "That is exactly what she'd say."

"I didn't know you knew Aleida?" Magnus inquired.

"I was with her sister long enough to get to know her a bit," John smiled. "Though that was a very long time ago, it sounds like she hasn't changed."

"How long ago?" Magnus asked.

"Oh, I think Dian and I started dating around grade twelve or just after?" John mused. "I can't quite remember now. It all blurs together when you get old. I don't recommend it."

"We can hardly decide not to get old," Alec laughed.


"So John," Magnus took charge of the conversation. "What do you do for a living?"
"Oh, a little of this and a little of that," John said. "Started a few companies in my day you know. Bit of an entrepreneur. I seize opportunities."

"That sounds interesting," Alec commented, but he heard Magnus whisper under his breath, 'that sounds unemployed.'

"Thank you, Alec," John smiled. "It really is. I meet a lot of interesting people in my line of work."

"Such as?" Magnus asked.

Alec didn't like the scepticism in his husband's voice. He didn't like what he knew Magnus was thinking. Why couldn't they just get along? Isn't that what parents and kids were supposed to do?

"I wonder what you two have in common?" Alec continued. "I mean apart from appearance."

"What do you mean apart from?" Magnus scoffed.

"Oh, come on," Alec groaned. "Even you must have noticed the resemblance." Magnus just waved his hand, dismissing the idea.

"He's so stubborn," Alec turned to tell John.

"Ah yes, his mother was like that," John smiled. "And I think his aunt is similar."

"That would make sense," Alec smiled. Then after a moment in which no one else spoke he added, "What more can you tell me about Magnus's mother?"

"She was beautiful," John began. "Too beautiful for her own good. Outshined her sister at every turn, and she knew it too. I never did quite understand what a woman like that was doing with me, but I sure was glad of it."

"Aleida told me Dian was a bit of a loose cannon?" Magnus inquired.

"Oh, that she was," John said. "I honestly was never surprised to hear almost any rumor about her. Even if she ran off to who knows where to do who knows what she always came back to me, and I took comfort in that."

"How long were you two together?" Alec asked.

"A year or so," John explained. "I'd found her pregnancy test in the garbage at her parents house, and just barely managed to talk to her about it before she disappeared. Then I spent the next few weeks hearing all kinds of rumours about her I choose to ignore." He paused, looking thoughtful. "She was a good person really."

"Do you ever miss her?" Alec asked.

"Sometimes I think of her," John explained. "But it's been so many years it's hard to miss her as a person, you know."

The waitress arrived then to deliver their meals. The food was very good and conversation halted while everyone ate. When it resumed they were on lighter topics. Alec inquired after John's next entrepreneurial project, the explanation of which ate up a great deal of the evening.

Alec insisted they order dessert, and ended up sharing a divine citrus cheesecake with Magnus while John had a chocolate brownie.
When the bill came Magnus tried to split it, but John snatched it right out of his son's hand, and said it was his pleasure to buy them dinner as the start of a long friendship.

"That was so nice of him," Alec was saying as they were walking back to the bus stop.

"I wonder why he did it," Magnus mused.

"Always so suspicious," Alec sighed. "Isn't it possible he's trying to make up for being gone all those years?"

"Possibly, yes," Magnus said. "Likely no."

"Always the pessimist," Alec sighed, reaching out to take his husband's hand in his.

"And you're forever the optimist," Magnus smiled, gently tucking a strand of hair behind Alec's ear.

"They say opposites attract," Alec mumbled. The warmish March air, his husband's presence, plus a stomach full of good food was making Alec sleepy.

"Just think," Alec continued. "In a few months it will be properly warm and school will be over."

"Were you serious about helping out with John's next project after graduation?" Magnus asked.

"Yeah," Alec shrugged. "Why not?"

"Just doesn't feel like a good idea," Magnus explained. "You should never mix money and family."

"That doesn't make any sense," Alec chuckled as they saw the bus drive up.

"Maybe not to you," Magnus whispered, kissing the top of Alec's head before they got on the bus.

It was a short ride home, and Alec spent most of it with his eyes closed and his head on Magnus's shoulder.

Arriving home, they didn't go to bed right away, but rather sat on the couch together with Alec's head in Magnus's lap as he listened to whatever his husband had decided to watch with half an ear.

It wouldn't be long now, Alec thought as he drifted off to sleep. April would mean exams, and exams meant graduation and an end to homework. Maybe he'd work with John. Maybe he'd just slack off a while, and stick it out at the deli, and maybe just maybe he'd do something else entirely. All he knew was that as long as he had Magnus, there wasn't anything in this world he couldn't face come morning.

Chapter End Notes

Sorry about the RIDICULOUSLY long wait between chapters guys!
I've been getting alot more reviews on my other story and thus been putting more time into that one.
Plus I will once again confess to getting sick of R&S. Wow this story is SO long it's just really got to end already. lol.
To that end I am going to try and update this again soon or at least WAY sooner than... what was it like three months ago that I last updated! Sooner than that for sure. I'm read
for this story to end but I want to do what I've already written justice rather than rush an ending. Just feels wrong to put this much into a story then throw in a sharp unsatisfactory ending. I plan to finish started plot lines but not add new conflict plot lines if that makes any sense. :) Hope this is okay with you guys. ^_^

So what does everyone think of John so far? I'm super curious! Please tell me what you think. :) 

Sneak Peek Chapter 149

Slowly each cramming session and subsequent exam passed. Though she knew time was flowing at the normal rate it felt all over the map as her last few weeks of university came to an end.

It was a strange feeling sitting in the library at her unusual table, knowing that this would be the last time she ever had to cam for an exam in this room. Well unless she ever came back for her master's and that was way to far off to contemplate at the moment.

It was a beautiful library, with tall ceilings and rows and rows of books beyond the counting though of course they were all counted, tagged and bar coded. It somehow ruined the poetry of the place but still the warm wood paneling and comfy chairs created a welcoming environment.

From where she sat Maia could see Jordan, with his head down writing with great concentration. Maia smiled for a moment as she looked at him. It had been weeks now that they'd been waving and smiling without speaking. A thought had been going around in her head for a while. A thought she kinda wanted to express to him, but at the same time she didn't. Maia had come to enjoy the security of their small moments and was scared an actual moment would crush it.
Exams were once again upon them, and Maia was beyond grateful that this would be the last of them. Graduation was just around the corner and freedom beyond that.

Still, for the moment, on every inch of the campus there could be found a senior with their head buried in a book. It might have been due to this that Maia was now seeing Jordan more often working in the library. It's true he was only in third year, but Maia had a funny feeling he was taking a few fourth year courses. She smiled, and sometimes waved whenever she saw him before settling down to cram for her own exams. It was a nice little moment, and Maia found she looked forward to them. Sometimes the smallest gestures had the biggest impact.

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From where Maia sat she could see Jordan with his head down writing with great concentration. Maia smiled for a moment as she looked at him. It had been weeks now that they'd been waving and smiling without speaking. The same thought that had been going around in her head for months reappeared as she observed him there. A thought she kind of wanted to express to him, but at the same time she didn't. Maia had come to enjoy the security of their small moments, and was scared an actual moment would crush it.

So instead, she choose a table, pulled out her books, and got to work. Only one exam left. Maia could see the light. She was almost through the tunnel that was her bachelor's degree.

The minutes passed slowly as she read and re-read the chapters she'd be tested on tomorrow. Her eyes blurred as she tried with all her might to focus. When Maia finally couldn't study any more she packed up her things, and headed home to find Sizzy making out on the couch. With a roll of her eyes, Maia walked past them to escape into her room.

This time tomorrow, it would all be over.

Despite going to bed early, Maia didn't sleep well that night, but this didn't surprise her. Making sure not to skip breakfast she headed to her exam and tried to pour all the information she'd forced into her head yesterday onto the exam paper in front of her.

When the teacher called out for everyone to put their pencils down, Maia breathed a sigh of relief. It was actually over now. No matter how she'd done Maia was finished University.

It was a strange feeling leaving that exam room knowing she didn't have anything else to study for. Despite this, her feet carried her to their usually destination: the library.
Somehow the room looked smaller now, though she knew this was impossible. She had no reason to be in here. She'd been looking forward to rewarding herself with a television marathon since her very first study session, and yet here she was, not in front of her tv. But why?

Then she saw why. Jordan was sitting where he usually sat with his head in a book. Now that the week was over she wouldn't get to wave to him in the library anymore. In fact, now that her school was over she wasn't even sure if she'd ever talk to him again. Once the marks were posted that was it. She'd likely never set foot on his campus again while he still had another year here.

It was then that he looked up, and like usual, waved to her. Suddenly feeling brave, Maia walked over.

"Hey," she said with a smile.


"Do you mind if I sit?" Maia asked.

"You shouldn't have to ask that," Jordan told her. "You're always welcome, you know that."

Maia laughed a little, mostly out of nerves as she sat down.

"How are you?" Jordan asked her.

"Good," Maia replied. "Just finished my last exam."

"Lucky," he smiled. "I have one more."

"Ah, but you hardly need to study for it I'm sure," Maia smiled.

"Thanks," Jordan said. "Though as usual, you give me too much credit."

"You could have gone to any school you wanted," Maia reminded him. "Don't sell yourself short."

"There are different kinds of intelligence," Jordan stated. "Books and school isn't always the most valuable kind."


"We shall have to agree to disagree on this point I'm afraid," Jordan chuckled.

It was so strange to be so close to him. Maia's hand rested on the table no more than a foot from his. And there was that thought again. Everything now the opposite of how it had been at the start. It was so strange, and yet now she could perfectly understand how he'd felt before.

"Not that I'm not glad to see you," Jordan began. "But you've never come over to talk to me before now. Everything okay?"

Maia nodded. "Just feeling nostalgic, I guess. Kinda just hit me that I'm done with University."

"Ah, makes sense," Jordan replied. There was something Maia couldn't quite put her finger on in his tone. Was it disappointment? There had once been a time when she'd thought she could read him like a book, but now she was wondering if that had actually all been arrogance on her part.

There was silence for a moment, but neither of them looked away. Maia's attention remained focused on her hand, and how easy it would be to move it just that short distance to touch his hand.
"We've come full circle," Maia said, finally expressing the thought she'd been holding onto for weeks.

"What do you mean? Jordan inquired.

"From you wanting me and being rejected... to... me wanting..." she trailed off, not quite able to bring herself to say it.

"I find that hard to believe," Jordan said softly. "I keep waiting for this kindness to fade, and for you to hate me. Like you should."

"I could never hate you Jordan," Maia smiled. "Hate myself, hate the world maybe, but not you."

He looked at her for a moment as if processing what she'd said. "I could never reject you," Jordan told her in a whisper. "Or hate you." He paused for a moment before adding, "I don't think I'm capable."

Maia's heart was beating a little faster as she threw caution to the wind and moved closer. Her hand touched his, and she felt that spark that nothing in life so far had been able to put out.

When he moved closer she knew somehow that everything would be okay. Their eyes locked for a moment, and she knew what was about to happen. She closed her eyes and felt his gentle kiss on her lips. For being without passion, it was somehow more emotional. It was a kiss that promised more.

When they pulled away, his hand was wrapped around hers, holding it firmly. Suddenly Maia felt lighter than air. She couldn't keep the grin off her face.

"You're so beautiful when you smile," Jordan whispered.

"And you are beautiful when you smile back at me," Maia told him.

Jordan had to let go of her hand to pack up his textbooks, but he grasped it again as they walked together out of the library. It was strangely wonderful how little words were needed. There was a sense in the air of starting over. Maia knew in her heart that he wanted to be here beside her, fingers intertwined. Everything would be different this time because finally they were both on the same page.

A short walk later - hand in hand the whole way - they arrived at Jordan's apartment. Once inside, Maia noticed a new face. Jordan introduced his new roommate as Jon, or Clary's brother, who'd been staying with them since after the Christmas holidays.

"Between Jace babysitting his cousin, and you bringing home girls, this place has really failed as a bachelor pad," Jon stated.

Jace's reply was to elbow Jon in the ribs. "That's Maia, you idiot," Jace added with a punch to Jon's shoulder.

"Oh man!" Jon whined. "Between this and Clary coming back in June, the three musketeers are so over!"

"It's only April," Jace reminded Jon. "And you should be happy for your friends when they are smiling."

Jon just grumbled something about it being late April, before shoving Jace onto a bed that was situated in the middle of the living room. Likely to get him back for the elbowing and shoulder
"Oh, it's like that is it?" Jace mocked, as he stood up and went after Jon.

"Let's leave them to it," Jordan whispered into Maia's ear. She smiled as she followed him past the rowdy brothers and into Jordan's bedroom.

The door clicked shut behind them. Jordan's slow moving hand held her waist as his face came to meet hers. It wasn't like they'd been before. These kisses were soft, tender. His hands gently moving down her sides as she wrapped her arms around his neck.

"Hmmmm," Jordan sighed as he buried his face in her neck. "I've missed you."

A part of her wanted to check and ask if he'd missed her more than he'd missed Paige, but she didn't say a word. Instead, Maia decided to just enjoy the moment. Her insecurities could wait.

The slow kisses and caresses eventually moved from standing by the door to laying on the bed, though there was still a lack of passion to them. Maia could sense it wasn't going to go that far. This was almost better. Just the intimacy of physical nearness. It was something she and Jordan hadn't ever been good at before, usually jumping right into passion, and skipping all the steps in the middle.

Maia wasn't sure how long they stayed like that, just holding each other without talking or taking off any clothes. Their bubble was finally burst by her phone ringing. Maia got up and found it on the floor. The time on the clock shocked her more than the caller ID.

"Do you need to answer it?" Jordan asked.

"No," Maia replied. Declining the call, Maia sent her roommate a quick text instead.

'I think Jordan and I got back together,' Maia texted Izzy. 'I don't know when I'll be home.'

Then she left her phone on the floor again, and joined him in bed where they held each other until their stomachs demanded that they get up and find some dinner.

"Ordering pizza was a great idea," Maia chuckled as she picked up a slice.

"Even if we had to get up to get the door?" Jordan laughed.

"Getting the door is significantly less time out of bed than going to a restaurant or cooking," Maia explained.

"Fair," Jordan laughed. Still eating pizza, they had their legs all tangled together, and music playing in the background.

Once all the pizza was consumed, Maia laid her head back down on Jordan's chest with a content sigh.

"Doesn't quite feel real," Jordan whispered, as he squeezed her a little tighter.

"I know what you mean," Maia whispered back before leaning her head up to kiss his neck.

"Stay here tonight?" Jordan asked. "So come morning I don't think this was all a dream."

"Sounds perfect," Maia replied, as she closed her eyes.

In Jordan's arms Maia slept peacefully, a dreamless comfortable oblivion. Even before she opened
her eyes she could feel that he was still in the bed with her. Good morning greetings were exchanged, soft kisses and cuddles before their stomachs alerted them once more of their need for food. Reluctantly getting up, Maia looked for her phone to check the time. She found it on the floor and laughed at Izzy's flood of messages.

'OMG that's amazing! How'd it happen? I want to know everything'

'Can't you pry yourself off him long enough to text me back?'

'Seems not. Well whenever you get home I want details woman!'

'OMG we need to go on a double date! Send me times, I have reservations to make.'

'Urg, how can you two still be having sex. I'm almost jealous. Simon's in an exam right now.'

Maia's laughter grew louder and louder as she read the messages.

"What's so funny?" Jordan asked her.

"Izzy has been texting me like a spaz," Maia answered. "I foolishly told her I was with you, and she wants to know everything." Maia chuckled.

"Ah yes, nosy friends," Jordan said, moving closer to stand behind her and wrap his arms around her. "Those are the best and worst kind."

"True," Maia agreed, leaning her head back into his shoulder.

Their moment of stillness was ruined by a loud voice calling down the hall. "If you two are done having sex now you might want to join us for breakfast. If either of you can still walk that is."

"I'm gonna kill Jace," Jordan grumbled, but Maia just laughed. She turned in his arms, and kissed him sweetly before heading for the door.

"Smells good," Maia told Jon as she entered the living room to find waffles on the table.

"Not as good as spending almost a whole day having sex," Jon grumbled.

"God I miss sex," Jace whined.

"Guys we didn't," Jordan began, but Maia touched his arm to stop him.

"Sex is awesome, isn't it," Maia grinned.

"I still can't believe you two were so quiet," Jace observed as they all sat down to eat. "Like so very quiet."

"What can I say," Maia shrugged. "Orgasmically silent. That's me."

"Urg," Jon and Jace groaned together as they stuffed their faces full of waffle. "I'm so jealous I might hit you."

"Oh come on," Maia scoffed. "It can't be that bad. How long as it been?"

"Clary's been gone since August," Jace stated looking utterly miserable.

"Cassie and I broke up before that," Jon whined.
"Okay Jace I get, but Jon!" Maia scoffed. "You're single. Go out and get some." Jon's only reply was to take another huge bit of waffle. "Ah yes eat your feelings. That will definitely help you get a girlfriend." Maia sniggered.

"Shut up," Jon snapped, though the anger of it was rather ruined by his mouth full of food.

"Can I please put them out of their misery?" Jordan asked Maia in a whisper, though he was clearly holding back laughter.

"Nah, they'll be okay," Maia whispered back also trying not to laugh. "It'll be a motivator for them."

Both laughing, Maia and Jordan finally sat down to eat their breakfast while avoiding angry looks from both sexually frustrated boys.

Chapter End Notes

Look at me go! Updating this story twice in less than four months. lol. It's like the good old days again. Also surprise surprise! The next chapter is finished as well. ^_^

Okay who is happy with the way Jordan and Maia worked out? And who is still mad at me on behalf of Paige?

Sneak Peek Chapter 150

He tried to distract himself. Snapping at Jordan was only so amusing, and besides he really didn't have any problem with Maia being here. Jace knew he was just lonely. With the three musketeers down to the dynamic duo, Jace was spending more and more time with Jon. When neither work nor Jon could distract him however, Jace tried volunteered to babysit Lucie a little more than usual. But really there was nothing that could distract him from his worries. Nothing but seeing Clary could answer his questions.

Time began to play tricks on him. Passing faster and slower at the same time.

It didn't quite feel real to him when one day he looked at a calender and realized that there was now just a fortnight left until her return.

Then there was only a week until Clary's plane was due to land.

Four days till he had to be at the airport.

Three days left.

Two days…

Tomorrow…

Today.
It had been weeks since Jaia's get-back-together sexcapades, and it seemed to Jace that Maia had not left the apartment since, though he knew that wasn't technically true. She did leave sometimes, usually to get more clothes, or go to work, but otherwise Jace was starting to think they should be charging her rent.

"You can't charge my girlfriend rent," Jordan said with a sigh when Jace brought this up. "She doesn't live here."

"Are you sure about that?" Jace replied, one eyebrow raised.

"Yes," Jordan said. "She's paying rent at her place, therefore she doesn't live here."

"But she sleeps here," Jace argued as he began counting off items on his fingers. "She eats here. She watches tv here. She showers here! To me that's living here."

"She does shower here doesn't she," Jordan grinned.

"Urg, I so hate you," Jace whined. He knew why Jordan was grinning. Usually if Maia did shower here, she showered with him.

"Oh whatever," Jordan scoffed. "In less than a month Clary will be back, and we can argue over who gets to use the shower for sex instead of you always complaining about me doing it."

Rather than making him feel better, Jace's head started filling up with his worries about seeing Clary again. He missed her more than he could stand, and yet the idea of seeing her again terrified him.

"What's with the face?" Jordan asked.

"It's nothing," Jace tried to be nonchalant.

"No it isn't," Jordan replied. "What's wrong?"

"Just concerned our fourth roommate isn't pulling her weight," Jace replied, trying to avoid Jordan reading him like a book.

"She doesn't live here," Jordan stated again. "And on that note, I said I'd meet up with her after her shift so I have to run."

"Go over to her place for a change maybe then!" Jace called after his friend. He heard laughter, but no direct response before the front door opened and closed.

Jace let out a sigh. He could avoid the topic with others, but lying to himself was a whole other matter. May was almost over, and Clary was home in June. Jace was both so excited he could barely breathe, and so scared he wanted to climb under his bed and never move again.

Would Clary still be Clary? Or would she have changed and grown into someone different like a butterfly from its cocoon. Had she met someone else in Paris like he'd feared she would? Did that explain her lack of communication all this time? After so many months apart would they even still be that feeling between them? That spark or whatever it was that had drawn him to her in the first
place. Was he hanging onto the memory of a love that no longer existed? A love that had changed every inch of him until he no longer recognized himself without her. Would that be her legacy instead of his joy? Was there anything left to save, or would he meet a stranger at the airport?

Round and round the unanswered questions went through his head until there was nothing else left in his head.

He tried to distract himself. Snapping at Jordan was only so amusing, and besides he really didn't have any problem with Maia being here. Jace knew he was just lonely. With the three musketeers down to the dynamic duo, Jace was spending more and more time with Jon. When neither work nor Jon could distract him however, Jace tried volunteered to babysit Lucie a little more than usual. But really there was nothing that could distract him from his worries. Nothing but seeing Clary could answer his questions.

Time began to play tricks on him. Passing faster and slower at the same time.

It didn't quite feel real to him when one day he looked at a calendar and realized that there was now just a fortnight left until her return.

Then there was only a week until Clary's plane was due to land.

Four days till he had to be at the airport.

Three days left.

Two days…

Tomorrow…

Today.

Jace woke up with a knot in his stomach. A knot so tight he decided to skip breakfast. Of course, he still had a few hours to kill before he had to leave for the airport, and breakfast would have been a nice way to kill them, if only his stomach would cooperate. Coffee turned out to be the compromise. Lot's of coffee.

Jace could feel his heart pounding as he checked the clock. How early was too early? Also it had definitely not been a good idea to have that fifth cup of coffee when he was already this jumping from nerves.

Simon and Magnus had offered to come with Jace to the airport, and though he'd originally said no, Jace was suddenly very certain he wanted their company. No scratch that. He needed their company.

Fumbling with his phone and regretting all the coffee, Jace texted them both. He was relieved to get their replies quickly. Both of them had booked the day off already, so it was no trouble. Jace was glad his friends knew him better than he knew himself as he went to change his clothes again, gave up and decided to take another shower instead.

Once out of the shower and slightly calmer from the hot water, Jace tried to pick out clothes again. After staring in his closet for what felt like hours, Jace decided on a pair of dark blue skinny jeans, a black button up with the sleeves rolled up to the elbows, and his favorite pair of black combat boots.

Jace had planned on taking a taxi to the airport, but to his delight, Will had offered to lend Jace his truck. It had been while he'd last been babysitting Lucie. Jace had mentioned his plans for picking up Clary, and Will instantly dismissed the taxi idea.
"It's really the least I can do in exchange for all the babysitting," Will had said when Jace had mumbled something about the taxi really being fine.

The truck was yet another reason for Magnus and Simon to join him. Jace really didn't feel stable enough to drive. Dying on the way to Clary was not the way he wanted this day to go.

Jace jumped as the intercom binged. Quickly moving to it, he let Simon and Magnus in. They were at his door moments later.

"Hey buddy," Simon smiled. "Ready to smooch your girl?"

Jace just stared. His mind registering for one brief second that it was Clary's ex who had just said that.

"Wow, you look horrible," Magnus stated. Jace suddenly wanted to cry.

"I tried on like eight different things," he whined.

"It's okay blondie," Magnus patronized. "The fashion police are here to help." He sniggered. "Can't have Clary dumping you on the spot for wearing the wrong shirt."

"Don't listen to him," Simon waved a hand to dismiss Magnus. "Clary won't care one bit what you're wearing."

"You think?" Jace asked, his breathing very quick now. "Cause like, I don't know… much of anything. She's so far away, or rather she was far away, and today she won't be far away, and I really don't know what that will mean in any way, and for all I know, wearing the right shirt could be really important!"

"Oh wow," Magnus stated.

"I mean we've been apart so long, and like, don't people change in that kinda time, or maybe I'm just worried cause I don't feel like I've changed, and people should change together right? Because if she left a cocoon, and returns a butterfly while I'm still a cocoon, we won't mesh anymore or something." Jace held his hands up pressing them together as if trying to displace his point.

"I think he's broken," Magnus said matter of factly, turning to face Simon. "Biscuit broke him."

Then Simon had an arm on either side of Jace's shoulders, and was looking him squarely in the eyes. "Clary loves you," Simon said firmly. "You need to focus on that." He paused while Jace tried to regain his calm from earlier.

Jace tried not to think. He set his mind to the taking in and expelling of oxygen, and absolutely nothing else until his heart rate returned to normal.

"Don't let me drink any more coffee," Jace said when he felt better.

"Deal," Simon laughed. "Now let's go pick up your girlfriend."

"I'm driving," Magnus said firmly with another look at Jace who couldn't help but laugh a little.

The drive felt slow and tedious as Jace sat facing forward and staring at Simon's head rest. He wasn't quite sure how Simon had managed to get the front seat of the truck that Jace had borrowed from his cousin. Sneaky little seat thief. He must have opened the back seat door knowing Jace's head was so up in the clouds that he'd have just gotten into the first door he saw. Then again, maybe Jace had
done that entirely on his own, and Simon wasn't to blame. Besides, did it really matter who sat in the front seat and who didn't? Either way you could still see out the window, and that was what really mattered.

Jace watched as the city turned into flat fields of farm land full of grazing cows and horses. The small fences didn't quite seem strong enough to keep such animals in. Then again those animals had no reason to explore past their borders, so why would one need stronger fences? Though it was late spring now, small spots of snow could still be seen dotting the landscape, either in places of constant shade or where the snow had been once piled high above his head.

Jace watched as a little calf ran towards it's mother, startled by the sound of Will's truck driving past. It looked like a peaceful life, this being a farm animal business. Apart from the whole being served up for dinner part that is. Roaming the fields all day, eating and taking in the sunshine. No need to worry about what the other cows were thinking or feeling about your cow self, because cows were just cows. They ran on instinct. Cows said when they were hungry, slept when they're tired, and did whatever else they felt inclined to do. They had no need for forward thinking, or working out the workings of other cow minds. They just were. It seemed a simple and yet beautiful concept to Jace at the moment. Maybe it was the whole concept of sentient self awareness that ruined everything. Maybe being able to really analyze their own failings, and believe others to be doing the same was the problem. But cows didn't do that. They didn't worry that their girlfriends had forgotten them.

"You okay back there?" Simon's voice broke through Jace's spiralling thoughts.

"Yeah," Jace replied. "Just contemplating the meaning of life through the eyes of a cow."

"Okie dokie then," Simon said, slightly awkwardly. "I think it's time for music."

"Good idea," Magnus replied. "Before Jace loses his mind." Jace saw Magnus reach for the stereo. He was glad of the music once it came on. Spiraling thoughts about Taylor Swift made him feel much less in need of a straight jacket than contemplating the metaphor of cows.

The only problem with Taylor was his tendency to compare her song lyrics to his relationship with Clary. Was she just his Wildest Dream? Had Everything Changed? Did she want to be his End Game? Could he please have a thought that didn't include a song lyric?

"Can we change the station, please," Jace asked. "Something less Swifty."

Simon's hand moved to cover the stereo, and then blissful metal music filled the car. Jace couldn't even hear the lyrics. Perfect.

"Much better," he smiled. "Thanks."

And only a few rocker songs later, they were driving up road to the airport. As Magnus was parking, Jace checked his phone clock. Less than an hour left before Clary's plane landed, if it was on time that is. Then he realized something.

"Did anyone check the flights to make sure hers was coming in on time?" Jace asked. "Cause I totally spaced."

"Um... no," Magnus confessed as he turned off the engine. He turned to Simon who shook his head.

"Let's go check the terminal then," Jace said, and with a deep breath he opened the car door. Walking up the airport door, Jace watched his feet. One in front of the other. One thing at a time. Don't think about tomorrow, or next month, or even last month. Right now he was walking into a building that would soon contain Clary. That was right now, and that was what mattered.
"Looks like her planes early," Simon said pointing up at the board. "She'll be landing in like five minutes."

"Which means she's up in the air right above us right now," Magnus added. Jace felt his heart racing, but actively tried to remain calm.

"We should meet her by the baggage claim," Simon said. "Come on. This way." He pointed to the sign overhead, and they all followed.

Once they were in the right place, Jace just stared at the door he knew Clary would come out of. He would never again have to move from this spot before he laid eyes on her. It didn't feel real yet. Jace could hear the clock on the wall behind him, and to his left ticking as the seconds passed.

An announcement came over the PA, and Jace knew Clary's plane was disembarking. People started to move into the space Jace was watching. Many many people he didn't know that he tried not to notice. Jace was only interested in one redhead in particular. It seemed to him like everyone else who'd been on the plane was getting off before her.

When he did finally spot her, Jace did a double take. That red hair he'd been looking for had changed. Clary's long past her shoulders hair was gone. It was now short, cut to just past her ears. The rest of her looked the same though. He knew that face, those stunning green eyes. That is until he noticed her clothes. Where she'd once lived in baggy sweaters and comfy pants, she now worn skin tight black leggings with an elegant top. She looked somehow older than him now, even though he knew they were the same age.

It was like meeting a stranger and greeting an old friend all at once. She hugged the others in greeting, then moved to face him, and there were butterflies dancing inside his chest.

Chapter End Notes

So how much do ya hate me? ;) My beta left my a nice angry message at the end up this chapter telling me off for such a cliffhanger. *Insert angel emoji here*

I mean at least Clary’s off the plane right? ^_^

Sneak Peek Chapter 151

"Oh look a purple and blue ribbon," Magnus said. There was a loud thud just seconds later and Clary assumed Magnus had lifted it off the conveyor.

"Besides seems to me like there are worst problems to have," Simon added from where they'd left off. "And now we are just waiting on the backpack."

"Yes you are right," Magnus replied. "Still I don't get why people are so weird about it. I'm a person outside of my married. Stupid Lightwoods and their owning half the country."

"There there," Simon sniggered. "Maybe if you work real hard you'll have poor people problems again." The laughter and silence that followed made Clary sure Magnus glared daggers at Simon.
"Oh hush you," Magnus replied. "Watch for suitcases like a good little Sherlock."

"Ha ha, very funny." Simon's voice answered tonelessly.
Clary was so sick of planes. There was nothing like flying half way around the world to make you miss the ground. She was tired, acky and now that the captain had turned the seat belt sign back on she nervous at seeing Jace again. She knew she'd been the worst girlfriend ever, not making time for his calls or video chats. She hadn't even texted him much. It had just been too hard. She knew it wasn't a good enough excuse, and her stomach twisted into a knot just thinking about it, but at the time none of him had felt easier than so little of him. Not seeing his face had seemed more bearable than seeing him, but being unable to touch him. Clary had therefore focused all her time and energy on art, painting, school and Paris. She had had a marvelous time, but now she was facing seeing him again, and there was a tight feeling in her chest she shouldn't shake.

Of course, there was another reason why she'd been such a horrible girlfriend, but Clary didn't even want to think about that right now. The captain had announced their arrival, and it was time to face the music.

Clary felt the pressure change in her ears before she felt the plane's wheels hit the ground. Slowly, the huge metal tube moved down the runway until it parked near the terminal.

Clary decided to let the other passengers get off ahead of her. It was easier to wait than push through the crowd, and it also gave her more time to compose herself. Everyone was in such a hurry as if those extra few moments they'd save by dashing out of the plane would actually cut down on their travel time. It reminded her of the way some cars overtook vehicles going the speed limit just to get stuck together at the same red light anyway. Like, what was the rush?

As the plane become more empty Clary got up and began to collect her bags from the overhead compartment. Carry-on in hand, Clary did one last check to make sure she had everything. Then she walked off the plane and directly into the air conditioned hall of the Toronto airport.

"Home sweet home," she whispered to herself.

Looking up, Clary saw the baggage claim signs and made her way in that direction. But when she passed a bathroom Clary decided to take a little detour. Standing in the mirror Clary appraised herself. She looked like she'd been sleeping with her head mashed into a pillow for hours, which of course, she had. Getting some water on her hands Clary tried to fix her hair with marginal success. There was jet lag bags under her eyes, but Clary knew there was nothing she could do about those. She did not feel beautiful at all, but rather like she needed a shower and good night's sleep.

Oh well. This would go the way it would go. Jace was either still interested, or he wasn't. They'd either survive the time apart, or they wouldn't. But either way, standing here in this bathroom would get her nowhere. She took a deep breath before leaving the safety of the washroom.

She continued to follow the signs until she came to a large room with yet unmoving baggage conveyors. Her eyes circled the room until they found his face. Those bright golden eyes stared back at her, and for a moment she drank in the sight of him. Jace looked exactly the same. Blonde hair, strong build, strong eyes. Gorgeous. Then everything around him came into view, and she realized that her two best friends were standing with him.

"Missed you!" Simon moved forward to greet her with a smile and a hug.
"Biscuit!" Magnus grinned. "Skill testing question for you. How many croissants did you eat?" Clary laughed, slightly because she'd sensed he'd meant to be funny, but she'd hardly heard him. Her eyes were locked with Jace's, and had been since the moment she'd entered the room.

The rest of the world fell away as she looked at Jace, trying to take in every inch of him. It was strange because she knew what he looked like, but it had been so long some of the details felt new to her. His lean slim muscular build she'd recalled, but those long eyelashes had slipped her mind. And had he always dressed this way? He was wearing dark blue jeans, and a black button up shirt. The whole look was very dark, almost solemn, but his smile was welcoming.

"Hello," Jace finally spoke. It was the first thing she'd heard him speak without the interference of a phone or laptop speaker in so long, the words almost didn't sound right.

"Hi," Clary replied with a nervous laugh.

And then there was silence. Jace was looking at her and she stared back at him, but no one made a peep. Then Clary heard the thud of the luggage conveyors starting to move.

"Oh geez, really?" Magnus whined. "You're gonna do this, huh?" She could almost hear his eye roll in the tone of his voice, though Clary hadn't moved her eyes off Jace's face. "Haven't seen each other in ten months, and we get silence and staring. Yep, makes total sense."

Clary ignored him, and so it seemed did Jace.

The sound of the conveyors was overshadowed by the thuds of suitcases sliding down the shoot.

Clary wasn't sure if she should speak first, and she was even more unsure of what to say. How did you tell the love of your life that you weren't sure the same person he'd said goodbye to now stood before him?

"I-" Clary started, but stopped. And silence fell again.

"Good to see you," Jace finally mumbed. She could tell now how nervous he was, and it was making her feel less and more nervous. Slowly she moved towards him, reaching out her hand. The second her finger touched his hand some invisible barrier broke. Clary was pulled swiftly and firmly into his arms. Jace's grip was strong and she could feel just how much he wanted her there, right there in his arms; she felt her whole body relax at his touch.

"I don't have words for how much I missed you, Clary," Jace whispered into her ear. Clary's stomach did a strange flipping thing like it had when they'd first started dating. The tightness in her chest had melted away. It was the strangest feeling she'd ever experienced. For somehow this moment felt both like meeting someone new, and returning home at the same time.

She wasn't sure how long they stood like that. Just holding each other in a hug that felt like it would never end. The thudding of suitcases continued, but Clary paid it no notice.

"Hey love birds," Simon's voice interrupted them. "Which suitcase if yours?"

"Oh, the black one with the purple and blue ribbon," Clary answered as she turned out of the hug to face her oldest friend, but she didn't let go of Jace's hand. "And I have another one too that's more like a big backpack with the same colour ribbon on it."

"Did a lot of shopping in Paris, huh?" Magnus asked.

"Well it was Paris," Clary chuckled.
"Fair point," Magnus replied as he moved to stand watch over the falling luggage. Simon followed him, leaving Clary and Jace semi-alone a few meters away.

Clary held Jace's hand firmly in hers, but neither of them spoke, and after a moment Simon and Magnus's voices reached their ears.

"I can't wait to see the look on Izzy's face when she realizes Clary got to shop in Paris," Simon was laughing. "I wouldn't even be surprised if she tries to get a shopping trip to Paris out of her parents for her birthday or something."

"Those Lightwoods are spoiled if you ask me," Magnus laughed. "Just wait till you marry one. Then you'll be in for all kinds of strange first world problems."

"Oh please," Simon scoffed. "There can't be a downside to marrying into money as long as you marry for love."

"Oh, but there is," Magnus replied. "Don't get me wrong. I love being married to Alec, but I am pretty sure some of the jobs I applied for only interviewed me because I'm Alec Lightwood's husband. I got asked some strange questions about my personal life in those interviews."

"Oh wow," Simon chuckled. "That I did not know. So basically what you're saying is that you ended up as a trophy husband."

"Urg," Magnus whined. "Sounds so cheap when you say it like that."

"Just telling it like it is," Simon replied.

"You just wait," Magnus's voice answered with a hint of a threat.

"I really don't think Izzy and I are there yet," Simon laughed. "So that's future Simon's problem."

"That logic," Magnus chuckled. Then his voice shifted as he added, "Oh look, a purple and blue ribbon." There was a loud thud just seconds later, and Clary assumed Magnus had lifted it off the conveyor.

"Besides, seems to me like there are worst problems to have than being a trophy husband," Simon added from where they'd left off. "And now we are just waiting on the backpack."

"Yes you are right," Magnus replied. "Still I don't get why people are so weird about it. I'm a person outside of my marriage. Stupid Lightwoods, and their owning half the country."

"There there," Simon sniggered. "Maybe if you work real hard you'll have poor people problems again." The laughter and silence that followed made Clary sure Magnus had glared daggers at Simon.

"Hush you," Magnus scoffed. "Watch for suitcases like a good little Sherlock."

"Ha ha, very funny," Simon's voice answered tonelessly. "How's getting to know dear old dad going?"

"Urg," Magnus whined. "Don't ask."

"That bad huh?"

"No, it isn't even that," Magnus replied. "He's been great. It just feels too good to be true, and I can't tell if I'm just a jaded skeptic, or if he really is just trying to be nice."
"That sucks- oh look ribbon number two," Simon interrupted himself. Clary heard movement again before the sound of an object being lifted of a moving conveyor.

Assuming the two of them were headed back towards her once more, Clary focused her attention back to what she could see instead of hear. For her eyes had been locked with Jace's golden ones the entire time her ears had been taking in Simon and Magnus's conversation.

"So who's winning the staring contest then?" Simon asked. "Because loser buys lattes."

"And by that he means loser's friend buys lattes," Magnus smirked. "Is this you volunteering then?"

"Oh shut up," Simon replied with a wave of his hand. "Shall we go?"

Clary nodded. She was eager to back home again, though she couldn't quite remember what home looked like. It felt strange actually to call that apartment home after resting her head somewhere else for so long.

"You'll notice neither of them offered to carry a bag," Magnus remarked as they began walking towards the exit.

"Ah yes, how sneaky of them," Simon replied. "I wonder if Jace would even notice if I throw the bag over his shoulder."

"Did you see his face? My money is on no," Magnus answered. Simon chuckled a little, but as far as Clary could tell neither of them actually intended to try to hand off any luggage.

The moment they left the airport, and Clary breathed in the fresh canadian air, she realized just how horrible Pairs air is.

"Wow, home smells good!" Clary said, stopping mid stride to take a few deep breaths.

"It's just air," Simon shrugged.

"Yeah, but it's such clear air," Clary replied. "Try breathing in Paris for a few months and you'll agree with me."

"Never been," Simon replied. "But I'll take your word for it."

Clary hadn't once let go of Jace's hand since that first moment they'd touched, even now as they approached what looked to her to be Will's big blue truck. It almost seemed to her like if she let go he might vanish in a wisp of smoke or something. It felt good to hold onto a piece of him, to be able to feel his presence there even if she wasn't looking at him while they walked.

"I know why you wanted us to come along now," Simon said with narrowed eyes as he and Magnus were tossing Clary's suitcases into the back of the truck. "You just wanted someone else to carry her stuff so you could get all snuggly with your fingers."

Jace didn't reply so Clary said smiling. "Such wonderful friends I have."

Simon rolled his eyes and went to get into the front seat. Magnus got into the drivers side, and Jace pulled Clary gently into the back beside him.

Tired and feeling very comfortable at Jace's side, Clary closed her eyes and rested her head on his shoulder. For the moment everything was alright. She wasn't going to worry right now. She would just be. Focusing her mind on his breathing and her own, Clary took in her new reality. She was
Figured I'd kept you guys waiting long enough. ^_^ So is this what you were expecting?

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Chapter 152 Sneak Peek

Moving past her bookworm nostalgia, Tessa picked up the next book to be shelved on the trolley. It was a rather peaceful task, shelving library books. Tessa found it relaxing to make up their index numbers and make sure each one went in its proper place. She'd been volunteering here for quite a few months now and it had become her quiet me time. At home with two partners and a child there was always someone who wanted her attention, but here in the library surrounded by books Tessa was totally and completely at peace.

It didn't mean she loved Will, Jem or Lucie any less. In fact, it probably meant she appreciated them more. Spending four afternoons a week here had been the best decision she'd made in years. Tessa had even signed up for a couple classes come September. She had dropped out after her third year so doing classes part time Tessa was pretty sure she could finish her Bachelor's in two years which was fine by her. What was the rush anyway? After all Tessa enjoyed studying English and taking more time to get it done didn't bother her, especially as she had very little idea what she was gonna do once she completed it.

Finishing the stack she had left, Tessa moved away to go fill the trolley once more. Pushing it down the endless rows of books she liked to glance at the titles and see how many she knew.
Ch152: Tessa's Balance

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes.

Reaching up she placed the hard copy of Shakespeare's Hamlet beside Macbeth. Pulling her hand back, Tessa's eyes were drawn down the row as she read the title of his other works written along the spines of the books. The Taming of the Shrew was a funny tale, though maybe not a very modern take on women. A Midsummer's Night's Dream she hadn't read in a while, though Tessa could recall it's focus on enchantments, and an angry Fairy King. Then, of course, there was the classic of Romeo and Juliet.

Moving past her bookworm nostalgia, Tessa picked up the next book to be shelved on the trolly. It was a rather peaceful task, shelving library books. Tessa found it relaxing to look up their index numbers and make sure each one went in its proper place. She'd been volunteering here for quite a few months now, and it had become her quiet 'me time'. At home with two partners and a child there was always someone who wanted her attention, but here in the library - surrounded by books - Tessa was totally and completely at peace.

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Finishing the stack she had left, Tessa moved away to go fill the trolley once more. Pushing it down the endless rows of books she liked to glance at the titles, and see how many she knew, even if it meant she had to walk slower. Libraries were her favourite place on earth. Behind every book cover was a new world woven with the written word. The very concept often felt like magic to her.

"Finished with those already?"

Tessa looked up from her musing and smiled. The speaker was her co-worker, Sophie Collins. She was a slender woman, with luminous hazel eyes, and dark flowing hair. Sophie had a gentle kind smile, and a shy disposition, likely due to the scar on her cheek. Tessa has not asked where she'd gotten it, though she suspected it had been some kind of childhood accident.

"What can I say," Tessa replied, smiling. "I love shelving books."

"And you're good at it too," Sophie replied. "I just wish we could pay you for it."

"It's okay. I enjoy it," Tessa answered as she stacked more books on her trolly. "It's my 'me time' before I go home to chaos."

"I know what you mean," Sophie chuckled. "I have two kids at home myself, and sometimes it seems like my husband is the third kid instead of a parent. So it's more like three."

"I hear ya," Tessa laughed before taking her now full trolly back the way she'd come.

All her co-workers here knew Tessa had a partner, or common law spouse, and they knew she had a child, but Tessa hadn't quite figured out how to tell them she had two common law spouses. In fact,
she hadn't even figured out if she wanted to. Instead, she just used the pronoun 'he' when referring to either Will or Jem, and let everyone else assume she was only talking about one person.

Most of her close friends knew. Tessa’s parents had died when she was young, and she hadn't kept in touch with her brother when he started ruining his life, so there really hadn't been anyone else to tell. When she was at home with Will and Jem it all felt normal to her, but out in the world, defining her beautiful three way love affair didn't seem quite so simple.

While Sophie had two kids and a husband, Tessa had two husbands and a kid.

Letting her thoughts fall away with her breath, Tessa focused once more on her task. Instead of the collected works of Shakespeare she now had a pile of cookbooks to shelve. Definitely a less interesting task, but just as peaceful.

One of the really wonderful things about coming to volunteer here had been getting to talk to Sophie about mom stuff. Tessa hadn't realized how much she'd craved female company. With Sophie she could talk about her stretch marks and the discomforts of being pregnant, the problems with screaming toddlers and overworked spouses. Tessa wanted to tell Sophie that she had an overworked spouse and a stay at home spouse, but again it just seemed easier to keep that detail to herself. Sophie's life seemed so perfectly ordinary to Tessa, and she still didn't feel sure Sophie would understand her odd arrangement.

Cookbooks all put away, Tessa did one more trolly full before her shift ended and she went to collect her things. She waved a quite goodbye to Sophie before she did. Sophie was the only full time employee at this library as most of the others were part time students or volunteers like Tessa.

It was a beautiful day outside. The sun was shining in that way it did in early June that made you feel like the whole summer would be glorious. Tessa took a deep breath in and savoured the moment. Life was good. She'd overcome so much more than she'd ever thought she'd have been able to in the last few years, and now here she was still standing.

Or rather walking in the beautiful sunshine to the bus stop. Tessa chuckled to herself.

Reaching the stop and knowing she had a few minutes Tessa pulled out one of the books she'd taken out at the library today. Tessa had always been an avid reader, and spending so much time at the library had only added to the number of books she read in a month. It was one of the reasons Tessa didn't mind taking the bus. She enjoyed reading on her way home. The bus driver was even nice enough to gently remind her when her stop was coming up if she got really lost in her book. The other reasons being of a more practical variety; Will was working and Jem was on Lucie watch.

One short pleasant bus ride later, Tessa arrived home to find her Jem sitting on the floor with Lucie standing beside him giggling. The two and a half year old seemed to be doing her father's hair. Jem had many different coloured barrettes tangled in his hair along with what might be glitter.

"Oh my," Tessa chuckled.

"It was either this or a tantrum," Jem explained.

"Wise choice," Tessa smiled at him.

Then Jem stood up, moved forward to kiss Tessa lightly on the lips and whispered, "Tag you're it." Before moving off towards the hall and probably his hair brush.

"Ma ma!" Lucie giggled toddling over as fast as her little legs would carry her.
'Hello my lucky Lucie,' Tessa smiled reaching forward to scoop her daughter into her arms. "Did da-da let you do this hair?"

"Da-da beau-ful," Lucie grinned proudly.

"Indeed he is," Tessa replied, still smiling.

"Da-da fun un un," Lucie almost screamed.

"What about da?" Tessa asked.

"Da gone most time," Lucie shrugged. Then she started to wiggle without mercy, and Tessa almost dropped her.

The moment the toddlers feet hit the ground she was off running down the hall. Tessa heard an 'oof' then Jem's voice greeting Lucie.

With a sigh, Tessa began making dinner. She was peeling carrots when Jem and Lucie made a re-appearance. Jem had gotten most of the obvious toddler mess out of his hair, and Lucie was looking sulky about it.

"No like," Lucie huffed.

"Lucie did a beautiful job, but da-da has to look different from a fairy princess," Jem was explaining as if he'd explained this a dozen times already.

"No," Lucie objected.

"I give up," Jem sighed as he slumped into a bar seat near the counter Tessa was preparing food on. "Tag your it, remember? I'll make dinner. Your turn to be queen of the castle."

Tessa smiled at him. "I love you," she said softly.

"Not as much as I love you," Jem replied easily, standing up to move around the counter and kiss her deeply this time.

The task currently at hand forgotten, Tessa focused on his kiss and being pulled into his arms. A soft contented noise came from deep in her throat, and she'd quite forgotten the world around her until they were interrupted by Lucie pulling on their clothes.

"No," Lucie said firmly.

Tessa reached down and scooped her daughter up into her arms to rest on her hip. "Lucie," Tessa said calmly. "You can't say no to mommy and daddy kissing."

"No," Lucie repeated with a shake of her head.

"What about da and ma kissing?" Tessa asked.

"No -issing," Lucie stated, shaking her head again.

"I'd like to get this in writing," Jem said. "To remind you that there is to be no '-issing' when you're a teenager."

Tessa couldn't help but chuckle. True to form she took charge of Lucie while Jem made dinner. And less than an hour later they were all sitting around the table eating. Tessa hated it when Will wasn't
home for dinner. She knew his shifts often ran late, but it always made her worry more than when he was gone during the day. She wished he'd text or something, but she knew he was probably just too busy working to text.

"You know what after dinner means," Tessa began, forcing an exaggerated smile. "Bath time!"

"No!" Lucie yelled, wiggling in her high chair.


"Out!" Lucie demanded, pushing on the straps buckling her into her high chair. "OUT!"

They let her out, and no sooner was she free than she'd dashed down the hall.

Tessa and Jem looked at each other, before lifting their fisted hands and moving them up and down three times.


With a sigh, Tessa got up and followed the toddler down the hall. After a half hour of careful parenting, Lucie was in the bath and after a half hour bath, Lucie demanded she wouldn't leave the tub.

"She doesn't want to take a bath or leave the bath," Tessa sighed. "It's like trying to reason with a paradox."

"They should put that on parenting brochures," Jem laughed.

It was at least another hour before they finally had the adorably devious toddler in her pajamas and ready for bed. Getting her to sleep though was another matter entirely.

"Story!" Lucie exclaimed.

"Who do you want to read you a story?" Tessa asked.

"Da-da," Lucie stated firmly. Tessa smiled and gracefully bowed out. There were some perks to not being Lucie's favourite guardian. At times it stung, but it also meant she could go collapse onto the couch right now.

About twenty minutes later Jem joined her. He looked tired. Neither of them said anything, but instead cuddled up on the sofa together. Jem pulled the blanket from the back of the couch down over them. Tessa was so comfortable there with him, warm and wanted. There really was no replacement for this cozy family feeling. The only thing that could have improved this moment was if Will was curled up on her other side.

Tessa must have fallen asleep, for it seemed a second later that she opened her eyes to see Will's smiling face.

"What time is it?" Tessa asked, groggy.

"Late," Will replied. "I just got home to a very sleepy house." Tessa turned to see Jem still asleep beside her.

"Why are you home so late?" Tessa asked, rubbing her eyes.

"I lent Jace my truck today," Will explained. "So I had to get a ride home with a buddy."
"Oh," Tessa replied, unable to recall why Will had lent the truck out.

Will was smiling at her now, and second later he leaned down to kiss her. Tessa moaned softly. "I've missed you," she whispered.

"I miss all of you when I'm at work," Will replied. "My Tess, my daughter, my best friend. My family."

"Don't go to work then," Tessa replied as if this was the simplest thing in the world to do.

"I love you," Will stated with great conviction. "But I am my job. Being a firefighter defines me. I'd be lost without it."

"I know," Tessa sighed. Then she reached out and pulled him down onto the couch beside her. "Stay," she ordered.

"Forever," Will whispered back.

Tessa smiled as she turned to kiss him. His arms reached out to wrap around her, and before she knew it, she was sitting on his lap. Moments later she could feel him hard against her thigh.

"Should we wake Jem?" Tessa whispered.

"After," Will whispered back as he stood up and carried her off to the bedroom.

Tessa was thrown on the bed. She knew somehow that Will didn't need her to do anything. He had that look in his eyes that he wanted to make her melt, and Tessa wanted nothing more than to let him. Slowly he peeled back her clothes, sending tingling sensations across her skin. Tessa closed her eyes and focused on his movements. His hands covered her breasts, teasing her nipples as his mouth moved down her sides and around her hip.

"Oh Will," Tessa whispered. She had her legs spread now, welcoming him. His hands were moving along the sensitive skin of her hips while his mouth teased her.

Unable to handle any more teasing, Tessa sat up and attacked his clothes. Why did he still have so many on! She loved the planes of his chest, the toned muscles of his arms. She ran her fingers over them before he seized her mouth in an open kiss. They fell backwards onto the bed, and as she wrapped her legs around him the teasing ended. She felt him now engulfed by her and moving quickly. Her climax built in her so fast it burst almost at once. Her limbs tingling, Tessa indicated that she wanted to flip them over and Will obliged. On top now, his hands on her hips, Will bounced his hips with hers and moments later they both finished. This time Tessa collapsed on top of him, panting and out of breath.

They stayed like that for what felt like a long time. Tessa rolled over and the next thing she knew, Will was snoring. Smiling to herself, Tessa got up, wrapped a robe around herself and went back into the living room.

There she found Jem, still fast asleep. Tessa leaned down to whisper to him as she gently touched his shoulder. "You fell asleep on the couch."

"And you smell like sex," Jem replied. "I take it Will is home then?" Tessa nodded.

"Hmmm," Jem sighed as he reached out to have her sit next to him. "We have a very strange little family, don't we?"
"That we do," Tessa replied. "And I wouldn't change it for the world." She leaned forward and kissed him deeply before adding, "Come to bed, my love."

"One of your loves you mean," Jem smiled. Sensing something was wrong, Tessa turned to face him.

"You know I love you both so much," Tessa said. "My love for one in no way diminishes my love for the other." He nodded but still looked sulky so she added, "What's wrong?"

"I can't keep up," Jem sighed. "I used to push myself, but then we had Lucie, and everything slowed down. I got used to the slower pace, and now I just don't think I can keep up anymore."

"What are you talking about?" Tessa asked kindly, raising her hand to touch his face.

"I'm just always tired," Jem sighed.

And Tessa knew why. Hemochromatosis. It was the disease she'd researched more than any other because it was the one Jem had. One of the symptoms was lack of energy and it got worse with time.

"No one is asking you to, as you say, 'keep up,'" Tessa told him gently. "You are part of his family Jem, whether we make love once a week, or once a year." She paused then added, "And on top of everything, you take care of Lucie more than anyone. Full time toddler care would exhaust even the healthiest adult."

"Thanks," Jem smiled.

"If you like we could look into daycare," Tessa added. "Just a couple times a week. She needs to meet other kids her own age, and it seems to me that you need a break."

"No daycare would take her without potty training," Jem reminded her.

"Right," Tessa sighed. "We gotta start that."

"Yes," Jem laughed.

"A problem for tomorrow," Tessa grinned. "Now come to bed, my love, or do I have to carry you?"

Chapter End Notes

Yay! A Tessa chapter. It's almost been as long as with a Clary chapter! Sorry! Just didn't have a scene for her and got distracted with all the Jaia. Also I will admit to rushing the clock in the story these last few chapters to get Clary home. There was like NO plot left to do without her. lol. I had done everything I'd decided to do in the Clary-free world. I cut a few things that didn't fit but that's besides the point. Those last few months for these characters till Clary's return did involve alot of time gaps, hope no one is complaining. You all seemed to want Clary back so bad I figured you wouldn't mind.

Also the next chapter is almost done and I've even updated my other in progress story, Rock Bottom! It's almost like the good old days but not quite.

Anyway please comment! As always I love to hear what you think.
"I know it doesn't exactly look like it did," Jace mumbled. "But our room is the same." Jace paused when she didn't speak and then continued. "With Jon and Jordan here this place has become a bit of a bachelor pad, is all. But we can fix it up, change whatever you like."

Her instincts were telling her Jace was nervous, but it had been so long since she'd stood in his presence it was hard to be sure.

"That makes sense," Clary finally said. "Three single guys living alone would end up with a very bachelor vibe."

"I wasn't single," Jace replied firmly. "And Jordan isn't anymore either. Did you hear he and Maia got back together."

"I hadn't heard yet no," Clary smiled. "That must have been quite something. I hope Paige is okay."

"She's at Magnus and Alec's," Jace explained.

"It's crazy how much has changed while I've been gone," Clary said.
Clary hadn't wanted to leave the comfort of Will's bright blue truck. The drive home from the airport had been all together too short, and now she was standing in the entrance way of the apartment she hadn't seen since last August.

Her memories of this place were dim, but as far as she could remember it looked nothing like it had. There wasn't a single female's touch in the whole apartment. Though she could tell they'd at least tried to clean before she'd shown up since there were no empty pop cans littering the surfaces and exactly zero dirty dishes in the sink. What there was however, was the smell of cologne and dirty socks. Clary could see dust clinging to the unused surfaces around the room, and knew the only dusting had been done by general use of the table and chairs. It didn't feel much like home to her.

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"She's at Magnus and Alec's," Jace explained.

"It's crazy how much has changed while I've been gone," Clary said. "When I left I was living with Paige, Jordan, and you. I didn't move but now my brother's here and Paige is gone."

"Also did you hear about Magnus's father showing up out of nowhere?" Jace asked.

"What!" Clary stopped to spin around. "He didn't tell me about that!"

"He probably didn't want to worry you," Jace smiled.

"Has anything happened to Simon that I don't know about?" Clary asked.

"Not as far as I know," Jace replied.

"Well that's something at least," she signed.

There was a pause in which neither of them spoke. Clary knew they were alone in the apartment right now as Jon was out looking for a job, and Jordan was at Maia's. It had been different in the truck with other people around and in a confined moving vehicle. Just cuddling then had felt nice, with no chance of something else happening. But now it was different. Now she was standing physically near Jace without no one and nothing else to distract them. Why did she want to call
Magnus right now, and find out details about his father's arrival? Why did she want to be somewhere else? Isn't this what they'd been waiting for for almost a year?

"Clary, are you okay?" Jace asked finally.

"I'm fine," Clary said automatically.

"No you aren't," he said. "Please, please tell me what's going on inside your head."

"I-" Clary began, but she hadn't a clue where to start.

"I know this isn't easy," Jace said calmly. "I know it will take work to get back to where we were, but that's work I want to do because I love you, Clary." He paused, but she didn't speak. "And I missed you so much. It's all I can do right now not to part you from all your clothes and-"

"And what?" Clary asked, gently taking a step closer.

"You know what," Jace whispered. He was visibly shaking now, and Clary could almost sense how much effort he was exuding to stand a foot away from her.

"But can we just start off where we were?" Clary asked. "Is that even possible? Aren't we strangers now?"

"If we are strangers," Jace began, moving slowly closer. "We are strangers who know every inch of each others skin."

Just the way he said it sent a shiver down her spine, and Clary surrendered. Breaking whatever invisible force held them apart she pushed forward and wrapped her arms around him. His mouth found hers faster than she could blink. Oh, how her body had missed him. She could feel it now, responding to his lightest touch. A fluttering swooping sensation flooded her stomach, and the next thing she knew, Clary had him pinned to the ground, kissing him like her life depended on it.

Soon she could feel him harden, and press up against her leg, though still through his jeans so it wasn't all that noticeable. Still, she didn't sense the same urgency in him that she could feel rising within herself.

"Get those off," she told him as she got up to quickly dart into the bathroom.

She returned, but he'd only just unbuttoned his jeans. Leaning down to kiss him, her hands moved to quickly finish what he'd started. His hands were under her shirt now, tracing over her skin without trying to remove the clothes.

"Don't want to take off my bra, huh?" Clary whispered to him.

"Don't want this to be over too fast," Jace whispered back.

"Don't worry about that," Clary told him. "Over fast means starting again."

And just like that Jace's urgency shifted. Her bra clasp released, and Jace tossed both that and her shirt away. Then his lips found her nipples as he sat up. Clary moaned. It had been so long. She wasn't willing to wait. Suddenly standing up Clary pulled off all her clothes from the waist down, taking from her pocket what she'd collected from the bathroom moments ago.

"You still keep them in the same place," Clary giggled at him as she pulled his jeans down to around his ankles and sat on his thighs. Once she had the condom on Clary moved up and lowered herself
over him. Jace let out a gasp as she lowered herself over him.

"Oh god," Jace whispered. "I had forgotten how it felt to be inside of you."

"Your turn," Clary said. "Make me forget my own name."

And then his hips bucked into hers, and Clary was the one gasping. There was no air for talking as she ground her hips into him and he thrust into her. Clary could feel a thin sheen of sweat begin to cover her skin as her orgasm built up inside her. Her toes curled as her muscles tensed and she collapsed on top of him. She sensed from his stillness that he too had finished.

"I love you," Jace whispered into her ear. "I will love you till the day I die, Clarissa Fairchild."

Some small part of her squirmed inside. She knew she didn't deserve such unconditional devotion, but still she had it.

"I love you too," Clary whispered back.

They just lay like that for a moment, until they began to get cold. Clary got up and dressed while Jace disposed of the condom before gathering up his clothes as well.

A half hour later they were curled up on the couch watching a movie with a big blanket draped over both of them. Once the movie was over, they talked for hours about her time in Paris. Clary tried to share as much of it as possible with him. She described in detail the architecture there, how it was a mix of old and new. How much she'd enjoyed painting such unique things.

"Wow, it almost sounds like you'd like to live there permanently someday," Jace said when she'd paused.

"Oh no never," Clary replied. "I am so glad I went, but the air isn't as good, and there are so many people, and everyone's in a rush and rude. It's beautiful, but it could never be home."

She talked about all the interesting people she met on campus, and how she rarely left the campus. But when she did, she noticed a lot of homeless people, and how often everyone ran instead of walked down sidewalks. The city itself had poorer areas and richer regions, though as she'd rarely left the campus except for tourist stuff she hadn't seen a lot of it.

"And I'm glad because some of the poorer areas were kinda scary," Clary added.

"Who did you do the tourist stuff with?" Jace asked.

"Classmates usually," Clary replied. "We rarely had the time with all the school work we had, but it was really great to be shown around by a local."

"You made a friend who was also visiting from Canada right?" Jace inquired.

"Riley yeah," Clary smiled. "He's home now too, though I don't think he lives here. We said we'd email to keep in touch."

"That's nice," Jace smiled back at her.

For hours and hours they talked, forgetting about whatever movie they'd attempted to watch long ago. Hunger won out, and they ordered a pizza as the sun set. When Jon got home he helped finish off the pizza and joined in, listening to Clary talk about Paris.

"Urg, you're making me so jealous!" Jon whined, after a few hours. "I'm going to bed."
Clary and Jace followed suit, locking themselves in their room as talking changed to caressing. Clary's whole body had missed him like an ache in her side. She fell asleep hours later with every muscle in her body burnt out from a post orgasm high.

Everything was going to be okay. She hadn't imagined how good it felt to be near Jace again, that feeling deep inside that had nothing to do with sex. She'd missed his presence, and more than anything this proved what she'd been able to remember all these months, but had forgotten how it felt. This was where she was suppose to be.

Clary woke up to Jace's arms wrapped so tightly around her she couldn't move. It was such a familiar, and yet new way to wake up. She took a moment to take it in before attempted to untangle herself.

"Nope," Jace's voice spoke without the slightest bit of grogginess. Clary suspected he'd been awake a while. "You aren't getting away that easily."

"But I'm hungry," Clary complained.

"Me too," Jace replied. "It's one o'clock, but that doesn't mean you get to slip away without me."

"Wow, we slept in," Clary explained, confused until she remembered the jet lag. "So why am I still so tired?"

"Well it's nine at night your time," Jace reminded her.

"Urg," Clary whined, and rolled over to bury her face in his chest. "Why is time so complicated."

"Because the earth moves around the sun, and the earth is a sphere," Jace replied, grinning.

"How long have you been just watching me sleep?" Clary asked, lifting her head to narrow her eyes at him.

"Not nearly long enough," Jace smiled at her. Clary groaned, unsure what to do with the information that he had probably be lying here totally awake and watching her sleep for hours.

"Fine," Jace laughed. "If you don't want me to watch you then I'll have to find something else to do."

Clary turned slowly, unsure what he meant, but when his fingers found her ribs she suddenly knew exactly what he meant, and was doing her best to kick him.

"No tickling!" Clary all but yelled as she tried with all her might to keep the tickles at bay.

Jace stopped, but he was grinning from ear to ear. "Awake now?" he asked. Clary made it clear she was not amused.

Already pretty tangled together, Jace leaned down and offered an apology by way of morning kisses. After only a few minutes, Clary moaned contently as he teased her skin with his hands and kissed down her neck.

"Hmmmm," Clary mumbled. "If I wasn't so hungry I'd say we should just stay in bed all day."

She could feel Jace's lips pull up into a grin as he continued to kiss her neck. "I'm not hungry," Jace whispered, and then added seconds later, "For food."

"Slow down there tiger," Clary chuckled. "Plenty of time for that after breakfast. Unless you have somewhere you need to be today."
"Nope," Jace replied. "I'm all yours. Got the day off work."

"What's left of it anyway," Clary laughed. "Can't believe I slept till after one."

"Well slacker," Jace smiled. "Why don't we drag ourselves out of his bed, and find some food?"

"Find?" Clary mocked. "Don't you mean make?"

"How does one make a bagel?" Jace replied. "You just find it in the bread drawer and eat it." He shrugged and Clary couldn't help but laugh.

It was a lazy breakfast, filled with spontaneous kisses, and laughter. Though not totally in sync with her old life yet, as the day went on Clary started to feel like she was home again.

Today was for Jace, but tomorrow Clary had to catch up with the other men in her life: Magnus and Simon.

Chapter End Notes

What did you guys think? I'm running low and chapters from my binge writing last week so there is no sneak peek for this one either. (Rock Bottom has no sneak peek either) My days off are coming up so maybe I'll get some writing done then. I will add a sneak peek here as soon as I have one.

Sneak Peek Chapter 153 (Added in weeks later)

Just then they were interrupted by a knock at the door. Magnus knew Paige had a key, which meant this could only be Clary. With one last kiss for his husband, Magnus got up to answer the door.

And there stood biscuit, with her bright red now short hair and a grin on her face.

“Magnus!” she exclaimed, rushing over to hug him.

“Well this is a nice change of pace,” Magnus teased her. “Worn Jace out already have you?” He chuckled.

“Sush,” Clary replied, hitting him playfully on the shoulder. “If you hadn’t seen Alec for ten months you would have ignored me too.”

“I have a feeling Alec would never allow such a thing,” Magnus laughed. “That crazy man would probably ditch all his responsibilities and fly to Paris on his mother’s credit card.” They both laughed as they moved away from the door and into the rest of the apartment.

“I heard my name,” Alec said with narrowed eyes as they approached.

“We were just saying how fond we both are of you,” Magnus replied innocently.

“As if!” Alec scoffed, but Magnus just smiled knowingly and turned back to face Clary.
"That doesn't sound like any fun," Alec whined.

"Life isn't always about fun," Magnus replied calmly.

"But this is our only day off together for the whole week!" Alec continued.

"Which is why now is the only time available," Magnus countered. "Especially since I believe Clary said she was coming over later."

Alec groaned, and Magnus knew he'd finally won. Magnus had been trying to get his husband to sit down and talk about their finances for what felt like eons.

"I still don't see why I need to know this stuff," Alec grumbled as he sat down at the dining room table.

"I love you, but sometimes you are such a spoiled brat," Magnus sighed.

"Hey," Alec grumbled. "I have a job now. I've cleaned out super gross chicken rotisserie ovens. Doesn't that make me less spoiled?"

"In theory, yes," Magnus replied. "Though reality would seem to disagree."

"How does me being fine with just sending you half my paycheck every two weeks make me spoiled?" Alec asked.

"What if something happened to me?" Magnus replied. "What would you do? How would you make sure the rent got paid and the electricity wasn't cut off?"

"Nothing can happen to you," Alec stated firmly, as if his statement could shape reality.

"As sweet at it is to hear that you don't believe the world would still exist without me, the reality is that if I wasn't here you would be lost," Magnus explained.

"Well duh, I knew that," Alec replied easily. "Still don't understand why your answer to this is bills."

"I didn't mean lost emotionally," Magnus sighed with a smile. "I meant financially." Despite what he was trying to achieve, Mangus always glowed a little when Alec would say things like this.

"Oh," Alec said sheepishly.

"I promise it won't take that long," Magnus offered. "And it would make me feel better."

"Well, when you put it like that," Alec smiled, before reaching forward to pull Magnus closer, kissing him on the lips.

"Anything to make you feel better," Alec grinned, planting one more kiss on his husband's cheek before turning to face the paperwork on the table.

Magnus was still grinning as he began explaining everything that Alec needed to know. "The rent is
due the first of every month. That is either cash or e-transfer. This is the email information. Usually I
text the landlord the security question answer, changing it every time. Both our phone bills come
automatically off my credit card which should be paid off in full every couple months or so with at
least minimum payments made every two weeks. The internet bill we pay directly as a payee on the
online banking. Passwords and accounts are listed here. The utility bill for this apartment is included
in our rent so you don't have to worry about it, but if we ever rent somewhere else that might be
separate. We have renters insurance, but it's paid by the year so that's been taken care of until next
January."

Magnus stopped talking for a moment and turned to look at Alec's face. His eyes were wide, his
mouth slightly open as he gazed at all the accounts, passwords and bills in front of him. He looked
confused, or perhaps surprised.

"What's with the face?" Magnus asked. "Am I going too fast? I could make a cheat sheet for you if
you like so you have something to refer to."

"I can't believe you've been doing all this and I didn't know," Alec said in awe. "It's all so
complicated and time sensitive."

"When you lived with Jace didn't you have to deal with all this stuff?" Magnus asked confused.

But Alec shook his head. "Mom paid the rent and stuff. Jace paid the internet and maybe something
else. I used my credit card for my cell phone and food. Mom paid off the card for me. Oh, and I used
the credit card to pay the maid service too."

Magnus blinked a few times before speaking. "One of these days I am going to have to thank
Maryse for cutting you off when she did," Magnus said with a shake of his head.

"Is it really that bad?" Alec asked sheepishly.

Magnus sat down and looked his husband in the eyes. "Alexander since the age of twelve I've
thought in terms of bills, money and employment. It's how the world works. Without being able to
understand these things you are vulnerable to those who do. If you'd married someone else, someone
who might have taken advantage of you, just think for a moment what that would have meant?"

Alec didn't speak and Magnus hoped he was processing what Magnus had said. The idea of Alec
being so helpless kinda scared Magnus. Someone unable to navigate the daily tasks of independent
life was vulnerable to many things.

"Those few months I was unemployed after graduation, but before the wedding were the longest I
can ever remember being unemployed while not in school in my whole life," Magnus continued after
a moment. "And that felt strange enough, but to grow up as you did actually scares me. To have so
little control over one's own life." He paused for a moment, reaching up a hand to cup his husband's
cheek. "Sometimes I forget that we come from such different worlds."

"Differences make good sparks," Alec grinned as he leaned forward and caught Magnus up in a
passionate kiss. Magnus groaned as Alec kissed his neck and pulled him closer.

"This spoiled brat loves you more than anything or anyone else in the whole world," Alec reminded
him in a whisper. Then he pulled away to look Magnus in the eye before adding, "I can't imagine the
world you grew up in, but I admire you all the more for it."

Magnus reached up to stroke Alec's cheek with the back of his hand, a small but emotional smile on
his face.
Just then they were interrupted by a knock at the door. Magnus knew Paige had a key, which meant this could only be Clary. With one last kiss for his husband, Magnus got up to answer the door.

And there stood biscuit, with her bright red - now short - hair and a grin on her face.

"Magnus!" she exclaimed, rushing over to hug him.

"Well, this is a nice change of pace," Magnus teased her. "Worn Jace out already have you?" He chuckled.

"Oh hush you," Clary replied, hitting him playfully on the shoulder. "If you hadn't seen Alec for ten months you would have ignored me too."

"I have a feeling Alec would never have allowed such a thing to happen," Magnus laughed. "That crazy man would probably ditch all his responsibilities and fly to Paris on his mother's credit card." They both laughed as they moved away from the door and into the rest of the apartment.

"I heard my name," Alec said with narrowed eyes as they approached.

"We were just saying how fond we both are of you," Magnus replied innocently.

"As if!" Alec scoffed, but Magnus just smiled knowingly and turned back to face Clary.

"So now do you know the answer to my skill testing question?" Magnus inquired of Clary.

"Umm," Clary said, clearly unsure. Magnus knew she'd forgotten, but never missed an opportunity to tease her.

"Too busy ogging your boy toy to remember what your best friend asked you," Magnus sighed, pretending to be hurt.

"Okay I'm all for teasing Clary, but that's just so inaccurate," Alec chuckled. "Jace is less a boy toy and more a sulky puppy."

Magnus paused, giving up on his original joke to turn to Alec and nod in agreement. "It is true," Magnus sighed. "Such a sulky puppy."

"Don't ever leave him again," Alec pleaded with Clary. "I don't fancy cleaning up that whiny mess."

"I didn't leave him," Clary answered. "We weren't technically broken up since he turned down my ten month break up offer."

"Wait," Alec began, standing up and walking over to them. "You offered to break up with him temporarily? Like a get out of jail free card while you were gone?"

"Yes!" Clary sighed. "And he said no. I didn't want him to be miserable the whole time I was gone."

"Such a sucker for punishment," Alec sighed.

"I wish he had taken my deal," Clary continued. "It would be less weird somehow… I think."

"What do you mean?" Magnus asked.

"Oh, I don't know," Clary replied, sinking onto the sofa with a sigh. "It's like everything's fine, but we haven't talked about if everything is fine, so is it really fine?"
"Sounds like you might be overthinking it there Biscuit," Magnus answered as he and Alec joined her on the couch.

"Maybe," Clary said. "I don't know. It's just- like there's something hanging in the air, and I can't quite put my finger on it."

"Best way is just to find a way to talk about it," Magnus told her easily. "The best path is often the hardest one."

"I know," Clary replied. Then she suddenly perked up. "But I'm not here to talk about Jace. I'm here to catch up with my friend who I haven't seen in ages!"

Magnus chuckled. "Isn't talking about stuff that's bothering you what friends are for?"

"Okay fair," Clary said. "But we've done me. So what's bothering you?"

"Apart from my husband's total lack of interest in his own finances," Magnus began. "Not much."

"Liar," Alec stated. Magnus turned on him ready to deny everything. "You are still not sure about John." Magnus slumped slightly, his shoulders falling by half an inch or so. Alec had him there. "He just wants to spend more time with you, but you always find a reason not to."

"I work five days a week," Magnus replied. "And I'm still volunteering at the museum. Plus I want to spend at least one day off a week with you. That doesn't leave a lot of time."

"Bullshit," Alec replied. "Busy or not busy you'd make the time if you wanted to see him. Like after work, or skip the museum once in a while, or take a day off work. With me done with school I'm working full time, so you could do that without a problem... I think."

Magnus couldn't help but laugh at Alec's uncertainty about if they could afford his taking a day off work. The man really needed some financial knowledge. Just then Chairman Meow jumped up on the couch to purr and settle down in Alec's lap.

"Hello fluffy," Alec greeted the cat as he purred and rubbed his head against Alec's face. "See Chairman thinks you should give him a chance."

"Chairmen thinks his food dish isn't quite as full as he'd like," Magnus translated the cat's wishes more accurately before replying. "I still don't understand why you are so determined. He isn't your dad."

"Dad-in-law is pretty close," Alec smiled, stroking the cat as if automatically.

"Not really," Magnus replied, wondering if the Great Catsby would join them. Last time Magnus has seen the old cranky feline he'd been asleep in the sun by the window.

Alec didn't speak for a moment, then finally he added in a small voice. "I just want this for you. I want you to know what it's like to have a real dad."

"And I love you all the more for it," Magnus smiled. "But we don't have a time machine. I can't go back and have a childhood in which my parents are there for me."

"I know that," Alec said sadly. "I guess I'm hoping for a better late than never kinda situation."

"I don't know," Magnus replied. "There's just something off about the whole thing. I can't put my finger on it."
"Annoying feeling isn't it," Clary offered. "Probably the best approach is to find a way to talk about it. The best path is often the hardest one."

Magnus gave her a highly unamused look. "Don't spout my own advice back at me, Biscuit," Magnus remarked coolly.

"Oh, but isn't that what friends are for," she grinned. "Speaking of friends, is Paige around?"

"She's at work I believe," Alec offered. "Though I think she's due home again soon. Unlike most everyone else I know, she has a car so her comings and goings are much more spontaneous."

"That makes sense," Clary replied. "Still I hope she comes home soon. It was strange coming home to her not living there."

"Yeah a lots happened while you've been gone," Magnus smiled.

"Jace seems like he's changed too, though I'm not totally sure," Clary continued. "Maybe my memory is just wrong."

"Oh no, he's changed all right," Alec confirmed. "Losing you changed him. Everything that went down with his mother changed him. Jace's had a hard year."

"Yeah Jon texted me about that," Clary said. "I don't really know most of the details though."

"Jace and Celine haven't spoken since the day Jace left home after the holidays," Alec explained.

"That's harsh," Clary replied. "He was always so close with his mom."

"Jace can't forgive her for taking in Sebastian," Alec said. "Which I assume is because of what Sebastian nearly did to you."

Clary didn't flinch, but just nodded slightly as if she understood. And in that moment Magnus thought that maybe Jace was holding the grudge against his former best friends actions more so than her. In Magnus's opinion, it was a mark of how much he cared for her that a slight against her was worth more to him than it was to her.

"Meow," came a loud cranky old sound from the other side of the room. They all turned to see The Great Catsby walk into the room as if he owned the place.

"His meow sounds different," Clary commented as the cat moved closer.

"He's nearly deaf," Magnus explained.

"Poor old thing," Clary cooed. Catsby seemed to like this as he jumped up onto the sofa to stand on Clary's lap. She petted the cat, before adding, "He's so skinny."

"The thyroid meds have helped him to stop losing weight," Magnus answered. "But he hadn't been able to gain any either. Poor thing is like a toothpick."

Clary turned to give a little extra attention to the senior kitty in her lap, as Magnus added, "The vet isn't sure how much longer he'll live. Even on the thyroid meds."

"But we are going to make all his time left as awesome as we can," Alec pitched in.

Chairmen took that moment to display his displeasure at being ignored in favour of Catsby as he demanded Alec's attention. "And yes we still love you too Chairmen," Alec soothed the cat.
"Meow," Chairman replied, purring.

Chapter End Notes

Sorry this is so late guys! The chapter has actually been written for about 12 days now, but my beta has a new job and is SO busy. After 12 days with no idea how much longer it would take I decided to try something else and take the burden off my very busy friend. So I edited again myself and got a different friend to give it a once over though it still feels very wrong to upload a chapter without CoffeeandLiterature editing it for me first. Almost feels like the chapter is naked.

UPDATE: I have re-uploaded this with my beta's edits. :D She is still super busy through and this will probably slow down update times. Sorry.

Sneak Peek Chapter 155

He kissed her one last time on the forehead, before darting out the door. He thought he heard something thud against the door as he closed it and surmised that Izzy had thrown a pillow at him.

Laughing to himself Simon started walking. It was a beautiful June day. The sun was shining, but even if the weather had been dreary, Simon would have been smiling. Clary's return was the icing on top of his already glorious happy cake. He was done with school and taking a little me time before looking for a better job. He had a beautiful girlfriend who he always looked forward to seeing and his best friend was finally back in town. Life was good. In fact, life had never been better.

Walking down to the bus stop Simon could feel the sun's warmth on the back of his neck while a light breeze cooled his skin. You really couldn't ask for better weather.

When he saw that shock of red hair running down the sidewalk towards him, Simon waved both hands in the air as if trying to land an airplane. When she finally crashed into him, Simon almost fell over.
"What do you guys have planned?" Izzy asked him as Simon hunted for his wallet which he could have sworn he'd put in his pants pocket.

"Nothing much," Simon shrugged, giving up the search for a moment to face her. "Just catching up. I want to hear about Paris, and I think she wants details about everything that went down with Jordan and Paige."

"Fun," Izzy said, but Simon could tell she was forcing a smile. After so long he knew his girlfriend well enough to read the little tells in her body language.

Grinning at what he saw, Simon gave up the search to move closer, and wrapped his arms around her from behind.

"You're cute when you're jealous," Simon whispered in her ear.

"As if," Izzy scoffed.

"Hmmm hmm," Simons mumbled against her cheek before turning her in his arms. Now face to face, Simon leaned down to kiss her sweetly, stroking his fingers through her silky hair.

"I had more with you in those first twenty minutes than I had with her in two years," Simon reminded his beautiful, if slightly insecure, girlfriend in hushed tones. "But please do save some of this jealousy for later. It looks good on you."

Izzy blushed and opened her mouth as if to protest, but Simon silenced her with another kiss, this time really getting into it. He knew he'd succeed at distracting her when he felt her melt into his touch.

"Hmmm," Izzy mumbled, her arms wrapped around him and his lips moved against her neck.

"I love you, Isabelle Lightwood," Simon whispered again.

Then he pulled away and added, "And I'll be back after I spent the afternoon with my oldest friend."

He kissed her one last time on the forehead before darting out the door. He thought he heard something thud against the door as he closed it, and surmised that Izzy had thrown a pillow at him.

Laughing to himself Simon started walking. It was a beautiful June day. The sun was shining, but even if the weather had been dreary, Simon would have been smiling. Clary's return was the icing on top of his already glorious happy cake. He was done with school, and taking a little 'me time' before looking for a better job. He had a beautiful girlfriend who he always looked forward to seeing, and his best friend was finally back in town. Life was good. In fact, life had never been better.

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over.

"SIMON!" Clary shouted.

"That's my name," he chuckled. "Don't wear it out."


"Hey no," Simon laughed. "Those aren't all me."

"No shit, Sherlock," Clary laughed. He gave her a look and she added, "Okay, I'm done now."

"Good," Simon huffed, pretending to be offended. "I thought we were meeting at the park?"

Clary shrugged. "I felt like running," she explained.

"Why?" Simon laughed.

"The air taste so good here!" Clary explained.

"You can't taste air silly," Simon reminded her.

"Agree to disagree," Clary commented.

Simon wanted to hear everything about Paris, and it seemed Clary wanted to tell him. It sounded somehow both magical and far too down to earth for Simon. He loved listening to her talk about the beautiful ancient architecture. One place in particular she spent quite a bit of time on was Le Marais, one of the most ancient and historical arrondissements in the city. An arrondissement was a section of the city. There were twenty of them, and in the case of this particular one, when modernisers had come to try and update it, the citizens had come together to protest that it stay the historical quarter it was.

"The streets are so narrow," Clary continued her story. "And the buildings are so old you can only imagine how many different people in different times could have walked those same halls before you."

She went to say that when the weather was good and she didn't have classes, Clary had loved to find the best view she could and sketch until her hands were black with graphite. Her favourite great views were at Montmartre and the Sacre Coeur.

The down to earth aspect that rather ruined the magic was learning how sometimes she couldn't see those views because of the clouds of pollution.

"I even read somewhere that the air pollution is so bad just visiting Paris for a weekend is the equivalent of smoking two cigarettes," Clary continued. "Though the locals like to ignore this fact."

"Yikes," Simon added. "No wonder the air here is better."

"You can't really appreciate Canadian air until you spend a year breathing in Paris," she stated matter of factly. "Running here is like freedom!"

"Didn't do a lot of running in Paris I take it?" Simon chuckled.

"Well, maybe running to keep up with people when I fell behind gazing at some amazing landmark the locals all take for granted," Clary explained.
"Just the usual stuff then," Simon smiled.

"I just didn't realize how much extra effort that took till I landed back home," she continued. "It's amazing what you can adapt to."

"But you had a good time?" Simon inquired, sensing the end of her story. "You're glad you went?"

"Yes and definitely," Clary replied. "But I'd also never want to live there."

"That's fair," Simon replied.

"And I think I've been talking long enough," Clary said, and indeed they had long ago gotten off the bus and had been walking around the park. "I want details from when I was gone."

"Ah yes, where to begin," Simon sighed.

"What happened with Paige and Jordan?" Clary asked first. "I feel so out of the loop. I have plans to see her tomorrow, and I don't want to accidentally say something that could upset her."

"Well to sum it up," Simon began. "Jordan cheated on her with Maia. Then didn't tell anyone, then finally figured out he wanted Paige because of his being with Maia. He came clean and lost them both."

"Yikes," Clary commented.

"Yeah," Simon continued. "It wasn't until very recently, like April maybe, that they actually got together for real."

"So basically a big hot mess?" Clary summed up.

"Pretty much," Simon chuckled.

"How is Paige doing knowing Jordan and Maia got back together?" Clary asked.

"You know, I'm not sure she knows," Simon replied. "I haven't seen her much since she moved in with Magnus."

"Poor Paige!" Clary defended her friend. "Loses not just her boyfriend, but like all her friends too."

Simon had the decency to look apologetic. "Sorry, but I wasn't really that close with Paige."

"She didn't even do anything wrong," Clary huffed. "And she gets pushed aside."

"I've heard she's having a great time living with Malec, okay," Simon tried to explain. "Don't go all Clary protective on me okay?"

Clary laughed. "So everyone's still calling them that then?"

"Yep, and you are still to blame," Simon added, also laughing and happy to change the subject.

"Well, I hope Magnus and Alec at least haven't given up on her just cause Jordan was horrible," Clary said. "I mean she was a part of the group for a while there."

"Without you at Jace's, and Jordan still being there, I feel certain she didn't feel welcome at her old place," Simon shrugged. "I can't really blame her, but as I said, I think living with the newlyweds is working for her."
"Well I shall have to discover such for myself then," Clary said. "As it seems you have been a bad friend."

"Hey look who's talking, Ms left the country for a year!" Simon shot back.

"Ten months," Clary corrected him. "And I was more being a bad girlfriend than a bad friend, and you know it."

"Yeah I heard Jace was a total mess while you were gone," Simon said. "I kept telling you to call him more."

"I know," Clary said guiltily. "It was just too hard." She paused then added, "See, horrible girlfriend."

"Was that really all it was though, Clary?" Simon asked. "I mean, it was hard for him to only get to talk to you too, but he still wanted that over nothing."

"It was most of the reason," Clary said sheepishly. Simon gave her a look, but instead of explaining she attempted to remove herself as the subject.

"How are things with Izzy?" Clary asked.

"Great," Simon added quickly. "But don't change the topic."

"What's wrong Clary? Something's off that you aren't telling me."

"I just-," Clary began. "I'm horrible okay?! Horrible girlfriend. Can we just leave it at that?"

Simon narrowed his eyes at her. He knew her well enough to know that look. She wasn't going to tell him no matter how he tried to make her. There was shame there mixed subtly into the lines of her face. Simon was sure anyone who hadn't known her so well wouldn't have seen it.

"Alright," Simon replied. "But this conversation isn't over."

"Great," Simon added quickly. "But don't change the topic." He stopped walking to turn and face her.

"Super hot when she's jealous," Simon explained. "I am gonna get so laid tonight."

"Gross," Clary mocked. "I didn't need to know that. Who's she jealous of anyway?"

"You," Simon laughed. Clary did a double take as if he had to be joking. Then realizing he was serious she laughed even harder than him.

"A little bit yes!" Simon burst out laughing.

When the laughter died down Simon added, "Loving Isabelle has taught me many things about how I once loved you."
"Once?" Clary mocked. "So, I can't even count on sisterly love then, huh?"

Simon playfully swatted her on the shoulder. "You know what I meant," he told her.

"Oh, but teasing you about it is so much more fun," she countered.

"It's a different kind of love," Simon explained, ignoring her teasing in favour of voicing his thoughts. "The romantic one is all tied up with chemistry and attraction."

"I know," Clary smiled. "You mistook our caring for it. I remember."

"But, you silly, went along with it," Simon laughed.

"Hey we've all done some stupid things," Clary reminded him. "Let's not place blame."

"Agreed," Simon replied with a smile.

There was silence for a moment as they walked through the newly green park, past a kids playground and towards the water fountain. The sun wasn't so high in the sky now, but it was by no means getting dark.

"Simon," Clary started.

"Yeah," he said to show he was listening.

"Do you think Izzy is the one?"

"That's quite the question," Simon replied. "What brought that on."

"Just answer it," Clary said.

"I know I love her," Simon began. "I know I look forward to seeing her when I have been at work all day. I know I am content with her in my arms. My life is fuller and brighter with her in it. I don't want to lose her."

"So that's a yes then?" Clary asked.

"I didn't say that," Simon continued. "Life isn't so absolute as 'the one' or at least I don't believe it is. And no matter how much I love her, Isabelle is her own person. If she decided tomorrow that she wanted something else for her life I could very well lose her forever. It's the risk you have to bare to accept all the joys of love. One cannot exist without the other."

"I suppose you are right," Clary sighed. "Sometimes I wish it was simpler."

"It can be," he said. "Though that option is not one I want."

"Which option is that?"

"To never risk," Simon explained. "To live life apart and be protected from lose, but never opening your heart in the first place."

"Only the two options then?" Clary asked. "Risk heartbreak, or be forever alone?"

"Pretty much, yeah," Simon agreed.

"Stop being so wise," Clary scoffed. "It's annoying."
"Would you prefer annoying Simon?" he added. "Cause annoying I can do."

"Urg." Clary groaned.

"Or how about love struck Simon?" he continued. "I could just gush about my lady love all day."

"That would also fall under the category of annoying Simon," she stated blankly. Simon chuckled.

"Maybe I should rephrase my question," Clary continued. "The one or no, do you want to spend the rest of your life with Izzy, and if you do, how can you know that?"

"I sense this question isn't about me and my girlfriend, but rather you and your boyfriend?" Simon inquired. She didn't reply, but gave him a look to encourage him to comply.

"Every moment of my future that I can imagine clearly includes her," Simon replied. "So at this point in my life, yes I'd say I want to spend the rest of my life with her."

"What do you mean this point in your life?" Clary asked.

"There might be events in my future that I can't imagine," Simon shrugged. "Events that could alter the way we both imagine our futures will go."

"But isn't that the point of forever," Clary continued. "No matter how the future changes, or what curveballs life throws at you, it's this one person you want by your side while you face them?"

"Yes, if you put it like that, I suppose so," Simon replied. "I guess to me the future can never be set in stone, and there will always be a version of events we cannot imagine capable of spinning us so off course as to change everything we believe. There are no absolutes, only probabilities."

"Geez," Clary sighed. "How is it I got suck with philosophical Simon today?" He just shrugged, grinning. "I'm gonna take that as a yes."

"If you like," Simon replied easily. Though he meant everything he said, it was starting to be fun to give less than black and white answers if only to annoy her.

"So are you going to tell me why you asked the question?" Simon inquired. Clary shook her head. "That leaves me no choice but to guess," he continued. She shot him a look that was likely meant to get him to back off, but accomplished no such thing.

"You are getting cold feet about Jace?" Simon tried for the obvious. "All that time apart, and you changed into new people, or maybe only you changed, or only him?" Simon watched her reactions to see if he was getting close.

"Or perhaps the opposite," Simon tried instead. "All that time apart made you realize how much you love him, and you are considering proposing to him."

"Hmm," Simon mused as he studied her face. "Not that either huh. Am I even slightly close?"

"I have nothing to say," Clary stated.

"Yes I can see that," Simon replied.

"The sky is so beautiful this time of day," Clary commented. "Look how the lowering sun throws pink into the clouds."

"Do you suspect Jace of cheating on you?" Simon tried next. No reaction. "Did you cheat on him?"
Again Clary didn't react.

"Please stop guessing," Clary asked in a soft voice.

"I will if you tell me what's wrong," Simon said kindly.

"Nothing that can be fixed by talking about it," Clary replied.

"Everything can be fixed by talking about it," Simon countered.

"So says the philosopher," Clary smiled.

Chapter End Notes

Who has a theory about what's going on with Clary? Any guesses? lol My beta thinks I'm dragging this out but I think it only seems that way because I've been updating SO slowly lately. Sorry not sorry. tehe. Life's been busy!

Also in the interests of ftw why not I've decided to start uploading the new Malec story I started like 5 months ago. I didn't want to upload since I was uploading so slowly but as the so slowly doesn't seem to be changing anytime soon I figured I might as well. The story is called 'Counterfeit Boyfriend' and it's just a short fun lighthearted Malec fic.

Also Side note: OMG 155 chapters, like for real! What am I doing with my life?

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Sneak Peek Chapter 156

"Should have got mango," Paige said as they walked. "This cookies and cream is not living up to the hype."

"Do you wanna walk back and get magno instead?" Clary asked.

"No I've bought this now," Paige replied. "I'm gonna eat it. Just making a mental note. Next time: Mango."

Clary laughed. "There is such a thing as giving up and going back ya know. If you aren't enjoying it probably isn't worth the four dollars."

"Though I know you are right," Paige laughed. "At this point I believe it is about the principle of the thing."

Clary chuckled again before taking another mouthful of her mango ice cream. "If you say so. Personally I'd go back and get the flavour I wanted."

"So what were we talking about because the ice cream stall rudely interrupted us?" Paige laughed.

"You were catching me up on your life while I was gone," Clary answered. "Everything that happened with Jordan and school and just life."

"I think we covered most of that already," Paige replied. They were talking now past a large tree, it's branches sheltering the gravel path. Clary enjoyed the moment of shade.
with relief and suggested they sit on the bench to finish their desserts.

Please drop by the archive and comment to let the author know if you enjoyed their work!