Hard Choices

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Summary

Even before arriving at the house where Clary and Alec had gone to meet the Warlock that was supposed to be bringing back their mother, Jace could tell that something was very wrong.

Notes

EDIT: please stop replying to the "mean" comments to defend me. It's my friends being dicks, not actual mean comments. It's getting annoying having to reply to your defense comments individually, so this is an announcement! Thank you, but you don't have to defend me!
Omg L_ecureuil made fan art for chapter 19 and it's AMAZING!!! (minor spoilers for fic up to that point)
EDIT: L-ecureuil made another one!!!! ahhhhhh <3 I love this fan art toooo!
EDIT: Omg ComputerGecko made EVEN MORE ART!

Soooo y'all are gonna HATE MEEEEEE for this one. It's my fault, my brain was like "OH GOD WHAT IF!" and I told my friend and she and I got into this long 'and then what if' until eventually we had a story that needed to be told so I was like "Oh damn it, I'm gonna write this, aren't I?" and... yeah. I'm writing this.

I didn't intend for this to be long or chaptered, but I got done with what ended up being Chapter 1 and was like, "Oh shit, this is gonna be LONG!" and people loved my last chaptered fic, so I figured I'd make them all regret asking me for another, haha.

See the end of the work for more notes.
Chapter 1

Even before arriving at the house where Clary and Alec had gone to meet the Warlock that was supposed to be bringing back their mother, Jace could tell that something was very wrong. “Run, Izzy, run,” he shouted as they pounded down the sidewalk and up the stairs, taking them two at a time. Alec was terrified beyond imagination. Jace could feel it. He had no idea what was going on, but he had never felt something through their bond so distinctly as the utter terror Alec was feeling. He heard Clary shouting as soon as they got inside and his heart pounded when he realized she was calling Alec’s name.

Isabelle, spurred on by Jace’s insistence and Clary frantically calling for Alec, sped up, sprinting up the stairs in heels. “CLARY?!” she shouted, only to run straight into her as Clary came barreling around the landing.

“Clary, where’s Alec?” Jace asked, shaking with fear that was only partially his own. “Clary, hurry, he isn’t okay—“

“I don’t know!” she cried. “I’ve been looking for him, he’s not in any of the rooms, I don’t know what—“

“There’s a lower level,” Isabelle cried, and Jace remembered the windows to a basement on their way in. She sprinted past him and Clary, and he turned and went after her. “Who is this maniac?” she cried as she started opening doors, looking for stairs going down.

Clary ran ahead and looked down the hall while Jace kicked open doors on the other side. “She’s breeding Warlocks! There are babies and a pregnant mother upstairs, but she got away with a little kid!”

“Stairs!” Isabelle cried, and Jace pounded past her through the open doorway, sailing down to the landing without even bothering with the stairs. He rushed down and rounded the corner in a dark, stone basement just in time to see a demon scurrying towards some sort of chute to the left. “Duck!” Izzy shouted and Jace dropped to the floor just as a knife sailed over his head and embedded itself into the demon, which let out an unearthly screech and then crumbled into dust.

“Oh my God, Alec!” Clary cried, sounded frantic and horrified, and Jace was so sure when he turned that Alec was going to be dead, he just knew it, as scared as Alec had been on the run there. Isabelle let out a wail and he felt every part of his soul burning with rage at the thought that after all they had been through, he was about to see his parabatai dead.

When he got to the dark corner where Isabelle was sobbing violently and ripping her jacket off, he saw Alec, who was conscious but staring into the distance with empty eyes, and actually stumbled to a stop, swaying in horror as he realized immediately why Isabelle was so upset when Alec was clearly alive.

Alec’s clothes had been ripped to shreds, half a sleeve and collar of a shirt hanging on, the frayed ankle of his jeans still tucked into his boot, and his body was covered in nasty cuts and scrapes that were bleeding sluggishly. He was leaned into the corner, his body slumped against the wall and upright only because of that. As he stared into the distance with a shell-shocked horror etched into his features, he shook violently, though his limbs were otherwise immobile.

The most horrible and telling thing of all, however, was the blood running down the pale skin of his thighs.
Jace and Isabelle made quick work of healing runes on Alec’s skin and Isabelle’s jacket was replaced by a blanket Clary had ran upstairs to find. Jace knew they needed to take him to the Institute under orders, but he also knew that Alec would never want to be seen like this by anyone who might have to answer to him as their leader.

“What do we do?” Clary asked through tears, sniffing as she held Alec’s limp hand in both of hers. “Izzy,” she breathed, looking at where Isabelle was silently crying as she held Alec’s upper body in her lap, stroking his hair gently.

Jace cleared his throat, squeezing the hand he held in his own, his and Alec’s palms clasped together as he willed him to draw strength from their bond. “He- He’s totally catatonic. As big as he is, I can’t-” His voice broke and he bit back the panicked gasp wanting to come free. “I can’t carry him far.” He shook his head. “We have to call for help, and we have to report the mother and babies-“

“Magnus’s house is closer,” Isabelle said weakly. She took a shaking breath and looked up. “Alec might hate us for letting anybody see him like this, but Magnus can h- heal him, and he’s closer. And he can portal us.”

Jace knew Alec really wouldn’t be happy they included his not-quite-a-boyfriend in this, since he cared so much what Magnus thought of him, but Jace had seen them, he knew Magnus would never think badly of Alec, not for this. “Clary?” he asked, and she nodded, digging her phone out of the bag she had collected from upstairs. She stood up to make the call and Jace looked back at Alec, who was still staring into space. “Alec, please don’t leave me again,” he blurted out, unable to help it as he leaned his head against Alec’s chest. He felt Isabelle touch his back and he let out a weak sob for just a moment. “I’m so sorry, I’m sorry I wasn’t here, I’m sorry, just please, Alec. Please.” He sat up again and pulled Alec’s hand to his chin, watching closely for any sign of movement as he continued to will Alec to use the strength of their bond to get better.

Magnus couldn’t portal somewhere he hadn’t been, so when he came out down the street from the address he’d been given, he hurried towards the big house looming in front of him. Clary couldn’t even explain what happened to Alec, just that he had been attacked by a demon and it wasn’t good. He had no idea what could’ve happened, but going by the fact they called him since he was nearest meant it was serious. Magnus’s heart pounded as he opened the door and saw Clary pacing at the bottom of the grand staircase. “Biscuit?”

Clary turned to him and let out a sob, rushing over to throw herself against his chest. Magnus quickly encircled her in his arms, shushing her, but before he could ask a question, he heard the cry of a baby upstairs. He looked up in alarm and Clary pulled back, sniffing. “Don’t worry about that, it’s just a few babies and a pregnant woman. We- we should call the Institute but we needed you to get here first for Alec and- and the more I think about it, maybe you should handle it.” He frowned in confusion and she sniffled. “They’re Warlocks. The- the Warlock here was breeding Warlocks,” she said, and Magnus felt his heart grow cold as horror flooded his system.

“What?” he gasped and Clary let out a sob and shook her head, grabbing Magnus’s hand.

“Come on, Alec,” she said, and he let her tug him to the end of the hallway to a dark, stone staircase behind a door. When they got to the bottom, a horrible feeling rose inside of him and he saw the hatch against the wall and the bars on the windows in the room otherwise only full of hanging chains and he felt like he was going to be sick.
“What the f-“

“Magnus!” Isabelle gasped, and he turned towards the far corner only to have his gut twist painfully when he saw Isabelle and Jace both crying as they knelt over a body sprawled across their laps. He rushed over, begging his instincts to be wrong, but he barely managed not to let out a sob when he saw Alec.

He stumbled some, grabbing Jace’s shoulder as he lowered himself to his knees. “Alec,” he choked out in horror. He was catatonic, clearly, going by the way he just stared ahead even though he was alive. He looked at the healing cuts on his face and at the blanket they wrapped him in, and his stomach churned as he saw the tattered clothes shredded all over the floor. “Oh my God,” he gasped, looking at them. “Did the demon-“

Jace just nodded hollowly, answering Magnus’s question without him having to say it out loud. “I’m pretty sure. There’s-“ He winced, eyes crushed shut. “There’s a lot of blood on his thighs, and- and his clothes were ripped off, and knowing what Clary said she was doing to women here, I guess she wanted to escape without him stopping her, so she locked him down here and the- the demon did what it’s used to doing.”

Magnus trembled with disgust and horror and most of all rage. “Who is she?”

“Iris Rouse,” Clary said breathlessly.

Magnus nodded weakly. “Can you get him up for me?” he asked Jace, who nodded. Magnus stood and turned to the stone wall to conjure up a portal while Jace and Isabelle got Alec up. By the time Magnus had the portal open, Jace stepped forward with Alec held in his arms and he wordlessly walked through first.

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Magnus gave Alec something to make him really fall asleep while he worked to heal him of his injuries. He had called on Catarina to go see about the babies and the mother and, he trusted her to take care of them while he tended to Alec. He had sent a very reluctant Isabelle to go to the Institute and send his report that he had heard rumors about Iris Rouse breeding Warlocks to ask them to seek her out.

After he finished with Alec, he left him healing while Jace sat beside him, looking utterly broken just as he had the night Alec was dying. Magnus felt similarly. He walked out and saw Clary just staring out the window blankly. Magnus snapped his fingers to conjure up some tea and two cups and put them on the table. “Come sit down, Biscuit,” he said gently and she turned away and walked over to sit down gingerly on the couch. She lifted the tea to her lips and then stopped, going pale. “Clary?” he asked.

She put the tea down and pushed it away. “She- she told me she wanted a Warlock baby with angel blood and that she had come up with a potion to make it work. She was going to put me down there with that demon,” she whispered. “S-she said she would erase my memory of it so I didn’t have to remember what happened to m-me.”

Magnus put his tea down as well, sitting up straight. That was incredibly concerning news. He had never heard of another Warlock keeping a demon to breed more Warlocks. It was terrifying and abhorrent to even think about. “That is some powerful magic,” he said slowly. “The ability to overcome angelic runes to- to have a Shadowhunter carry a demon baby-“ He stopped, the blood draining from his face. “Clary.” He turned to look at her, his lips trembling. “Alec didn’t drink any tea, did he?”
Clary’s eyes widened and her mouth went slack. “I- I don’t know. I wasn’t with him-“

Magnus scrambled to his feet, staggering over things between him and where he had plugged his phone up to charge. He dialed a number frantically and was thankful it was answered promptly. “Magnus, I’ve only just got the woman and the children to the safe haven, give me time-“

“Catarina, please portal to my loft immediately, I have a horrible, horrible feeling Iris Rouse has discovered something far more dangerous than we could’ve imagined, and I pray to every deity I’ve ever heard of that I’m wrong,” he choked out, a trembling hand fussing with his hair as he hung up.

“Magnus,” Clary said, and he heard her get to her feet. “You don’t think-“

He closed his eyes. “If she had the power to have a Shadowhunter bearing runes be impregnated, who knows if ‘female Shadowhunter’ is a necessity after all.”

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Waking up, Alec was confused at first about where he was. He last remembered the pain and terror as the demon he had been locked into the basement with, without so much as his stele, attacked him. He felt warm, now. Comfortable. He didn’t feel any pain. He hoped so badly that when he opened his eyes he wasn’t going to be tied up in some room in that Warlock’s house. He was so scared of it that he carefully moved his hands first, fearful that he might be bound. But nothing was around his wrists except for warm, slender fingers. He opened his eyes at the realization that someone was touching him only to see a woman with blue skin sitting beside him. He realized she was taking his pulse and for a split second he was terrified that there was a whole operation, but then his vision cleared and he saw that he was in Magnus’s bedroom.

Alec slowly turned his head, looking at the bright pink sheets and the dark room beyond the bed. He turned back to look at the woman and relaxed, realizing he recognized her from the database. She smiled gently, though her eyes were full of sympathy. He fought back the bile rising in his throat when he remembered what exactly that demon attack had been. “You seem very calm,” she said softly and he found her voice surprisingly soothing. “My name is Catarina. Do you know where you are?” she asked expectantly, and he nodded mutely. She smiled. “I thought you must to be behaving so well for me.” She finished taking his pulse and put his hand back down on the bed gently.

“How did I get here?” he asked, voice hoarse from screaming during the attack and not drinking anything since.

“Well, Mr. Lightwood,” she began, patting the covers flat over him. “I don’t know the full details, but what I’ve gleaned is that your brother and sister knew you were with Ms. Fray so they were coming there anyways when your parabatai sensed something was wrong. They found you and you were hurt pretty seriously, so they called Magnus since he was a lot closer than the Institute and would be able to open a portal.”

Alec swallowed and wheezed a little at the dryness. She quickly leaned over to the bedside table and came back with a glass of water. He lifted his head and let her help him drink it. It soothed his throat as he relaxed back against the pillows. “Did- did you heal me?” he asked, looking down at his body, though the covers were pulled over him. He was wearing clothes, that much he could tell. He had on a soft tee-shirt and some cotton pants, so he must’ve been healed for some time now.

“Your healing runes healed you and Magnus helped them along long before they called me,” she answered softly. “Alec, I need to ask you some difficult questions,” she said so gently he couldn’t even really find it in himself to be afraid. He wondered for a moment if she was using a spell on him to make him feel so calm, but he was more grateful than anything if that were the case. “Did you
drink anything that Iris Rouse gave you?” she asked.

Alec frowned some as he remembered the cup of tea he’d been given while he waited. The pregnant woman had given him a cup before taking some in to Clary and the Warlock. “Yeah, I had some tea.” He paled. “Was- was there something in the tea?” he asked weakly.

She just pressed her lips together. “She told Clary there was, but I haven’t found anything untoward in your system or hers, though if it really was very powerful magic I may not be able to sense it.” She carefully touched his hand, watching him closely to see how he would react. He allowed it, and she squeezed his fingers gently. “Alec- can I call you Alec?” she asked quickly and he nodded. “Alec, what do you remember about the demon attack?”

He flinched, turning his gaze away from her. “I’m pretty sure whoever found me knows that,” he said weakly, fighting back tears at the memory.

Catarina stroked his wrist gently with two fingers. “I’m so sorry, but I need details. I have to know what kind of demon it was and what the demon did. I realize that’s such a big ask-“

“It was a Dahak demon,” Alec choked out. “Humanoid, sort of. Black, sharp limbs. Too big to fight without any weapons.”

In all of her soothing grace, Catarina nodded and gently squeezed his fingers. “What’s the last thing you remember?”

Alec avoided her gaze and swallowed hard, keeping his face stoic as he took a weak breath and a tear slipped down his cheek. “Being under it while it ra-“ He took a ragged breath and clenched his jaw. “While it attacked.” Catarina caught his attention by the soft shudder in her breath and the way her hand clenched around his. He glanced over at her, unable to stop himself, and saw how shaken she appeared now that her calm mask had slipped. He swallowed hard. “That’s what she was doing to people, isn’t it?” he asked quietly. “To the women those babies came from. That demon was down there to- to provide her with Warlocks.”

Catarina regained her composure and nodded. “There were three babies. And the pregnant woman was carrying another. That Iris woman was throwing mundane women to the demon to be raped and then erasing their memories so they had no idea what they had suffered.” She seemed angry, Alec realized. She was very calm, but her eyes were livid. “That’s why the demon attacked you. It was used to her throwing someone down there for it to impregnate. That’s why it didn’t kill you, it was trained to attack the victim and leave them alive so they could carry the baby.”

Alec shuddered, bile once against threatening his throat. “The mother, she- she said she thought they were her babies. She didn’t- she didn’t even know. She seemed aware of something, but not sure about anything.”

“You saw it with Ms. Fray,” Catarina said. “Memory wiping leaves confused gaps that eventually break open.”

Alec nodded weakly, and a thought came to him. “What about the little girl?” he asked, and Caterina frowned. “That Warlock, she had a little girl. There were babies, but there was a girl that was about five. Did they find her?”

“I don’t have the details,” Catarina replied. “But she’s probably safe wherever she is.” She looked at him closely, tilting her head. “Why do you ask?”

Alec frowned at her, because it was such a stupid question. “She’s a little kid and I wondered if Jace
and Izzy took her somewhere safe from that woman that was hurting people.”

Catarina hummed curiously. “She’s a Warlock. I’m sure that woman wouldn’t hurt a Warlock child.”

Alec relaxed some and nodded. “True,” he admitted. He looked at her again. “What about the Mundane and the babies?”

“All are safe and well,” Catarina answered smoothly. She gave him a slightly suspicious look. “If the Clave hears about this, I’ll know you told them,” she said sternly and he nodded in understanding, willing her to continue. “I took them to a safe haven for Warlocks. Magnus, Ragnor, and I, we set up a refuge after the Uprising two decades ago. Nobody knows about it but those Warlocks we trust. I’m only telling you because you seem genuinely concerned,” she said pointedly.

Alec knew better than to ask anything else, so he just nodded. “I am concerned. They’re just children,” he said firmly. “And that Mundane went through something horrible, she shouldn’t be alone and helpless after that.”

Catarina nodded in agreement and then sighed. “Alec, there’s one more thing I should tell you,” she said gravely and Alec’s heart leapt into his throat. “There’s no way to tell yet, but- but it’s possible that something- something could happen.”

Alec bit his lip. “Are- are you about to tell me Demon Pox is a real thing?” he asked, and she chuckled in sharp surprise.

“Well it is,” she said apologetically. “But I’m afraid this might be something more immediate,” she said gently. “The woman told Ms. Fray that she had found a way to make it so that a runed Shadowhunter could carry a Warlock child.” Alec realized that woman had been planning on doing to Clary what she did to him.

“Clary isn’t-“

“No,” Catarina said gently. “But there’s no guarantee that her potion only extends to female Shadowhunters,” she said softly.

Alec frowned in confusion, not quite sure what she was trying to say, and then suddenly it hit him and his stomach clenched. “You- you think I- I could-“

“I have no idea yet,” Catarina said apologetically. “I’m so sorry, Alec, but at this point, it’s too soon to tell. It’s only been a few hours. Even with my skills, I couldn’t sense anything even with such strong magic at play.”

Alec fell back into the pillows, nausea churning in his gut at the thought. “W-when?”

“Sooner than a normal pregnancy,” Catarina replied. “Demonic pregnancies are always rough. If it happened, you’ll know in about two weeks at the most. You’ll start getting pretty sick.”

Alec closed his eyes and whimpered. “By the Angel,” he choked out and Catarina reached out to tuck the covers up over his chest as tears started falling and he let out a whimpered sob as he began to cry.

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Catarina left Alec and he went back to sleep. When he woke up the next time, it was to the sound of the door opening. He lifted his head and saw Magnus peeking in. Magnus saw him and cringed guiltily. “Sorry for waking you up,” he said, though he didn’t refrain from coming in. He walked
over to Alec’s side but didn’t reach out for him. “How-“ He stopped and his jaw clenched as he
looked away. “I’m such an idiot,” he said bitterly. “I was about to ask you how you feel.”

you guys?”

Magnus’s expression darkened. “I was the one who considered it first,” he admitted. “Clary knows
because she was telling me about that bitch’s plans when I made the connection.” He glanced up.
“Izzy and Jace don’t know. Nobody else does. Izzy was gone and Jace was with you when I had the
thought and Clary won’t tell.” He smiled sadly. “You can tell them or don’t tell them. It’s up to you.”

Alec nodded mutely. He sighed and shifted, stretching some as he rolled up into a sitting position.
“Catarina told me there’s no way to know if-“ He choked on the word and coughed. Magnus quickly
grabbed the glass of water and held it out. Alec took it and drank some to soothe his coughing.
“Well, it might take a while to be sure I’m not- that it wouldn’t work on a man.”

Magnus nodded silently, swallowing. “Alec, I’m so sorry,” he whispered tightly. “I know there’s
nothing I could have done to help, so it’s stupid, but I just feel so bad something like this happened.
You’ve dealt with so much lately-“

“No,” Alec said gruffly, shaking his head. He looked at the glass in his hands. “It’s- it’s better me
than Clary,” he said firmly. “There’s no way of telling if that stuff in the tea might’ve worked on me,
but it almost definitely would work on her.” He nodded and sniffed. “So, yeah. It could’ve been
worse.”

Magnus’s surprise was almost palpable. Alec looked up at him and saw tears in Magnus’s eyes. “Oh,
Alexander,” he whispered, clenching his fists at his side, but he didn’t say anything else after that.

Alec smiled weakly and Magnus managed a strained smile back at him. “Is it okay if I rest here a
little while more? I- I feel better, nothing hurts, but I just- I don’t want to face anybody yet. Izzy and
Jace-“ He stopped and winced. “I have to go home before too long, but right now-“

“Right now you should rest,” Magnus affirmed. He didn’t touch Alec as he reached behind him and
fluffed the pillows. Alec was grateful for that. He didn’t feel like anybody touching him, not even
someone he trusted like Magnus. “In a little while, I’ll get Jace and Izzy to bring you some food
before you have to go, but you’re welcome to stay as long as you need go.”

Alec laid back against the pillows and put the glass on the table again. “Thank you, Magnus,” he
said, and Magnus gave him a watery smile.

“You never have to thank me, Alexander.” Alec watched him leave and rolled onto his side, biting
back the urge to cry as he tried not to think about anything that had happened in the past few days.
Chapter 2

Chapter Notes

Loved so many comments! A few of them were a little disturbing and the ones saying "I don't plan to read this fic" are kind of 'wtf' cause why bother clicking on it then? But anyways, WAY more than I expected!!!

Alec went home that night. He didn’t tell Izzy and Jace about what Catarina said, and Clary didn’t tell anybody anything either. He lied about where he had been all afternoon rather than telling Victor Aldertree any fucking thing after all he had put them through. He was really sick of having that man think he was better than them when everybody at the Institute, all the people Alec cared about, were under his thumb and watched like hawks.

After a few days, Alec went to visit Magnus and see if he wanted to go do something, and Magnus seemed worried but agreed. They didn’t really go on a date, so Alec wasn’t really sure it counted as one, but Magnus, it turned out, was great fun at the museum because he kept making up what Alec knew were fake stories about different artifacts that he couldn’t have possibly been alive during the time of.

Magnus seemed to be trying to be his friend, nothing more, which kind of stung, but Alec couldn’t blame him. He couldn’t imagine Magnus would want to date someone that had just gone through a traumatic experience. Alec realized that he came with a lot of baggage now, and he could accept that.

Catarina told Alec he would know one way or another within two weeks.

It only took half that time.

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The first day that Alec felt sick, he was terrified of what it might mean, but he also thought that it could easily be related to trying a new recipe Izzy tried the night before. Jace didn’t seem sick, but Jace could eat almost anything, so that didn’t mean anything.

After that first day, though, Alec found himself running to the bathroom every hour or so, regardless of whether or not he ate anything. It was then that he knew that he couldn’t ignore the signs. As he lay in bed shivering with a fever and dizzy from how he couldn’t keep anything down, he knew that ignoring the problem wouldn’t make it go away.

He didn’t want to scare anybody, so he found the number Catarina had given him in his phone and he sat on his bed, leaning across his bent legs with his phone hanging between his shins. He closed his eyes and swallowed against his sore throat from all the vomiting and hit 'call' before lifting the phone to his ear.

“This is Catarina,” a familiar, pleasant voice said and Alec exhaled softly.

“This is Alec Lightwood,” he said, clearing his throat.

“Hello, Alec,” she said kindly. “Can I help you?”
He raised a shaking hand to his hair, tugging at the strands. “I’m sick,” he all but whispered. “I’ve had a fever and chills and I can’t- I can’t stop throwing up.”

She didn’t say anything for a moment and he worried the call had dropped, but before he could pull the phone away and look she spoke slowly and gently. “I’m going to text you my address, Alec. I would like you to come over tonight and let me take a look at you. I’m at work until six, but I’ll portal home so I’m there as soon as possible.”

Alec whimpered. “Work? I’ve never known a Warlock that had a job,” he said unthinkingly before grimacing. “I’m sorry, I just-“

“No, it’s alright,” she said with a small laugh. “Most Warlocks do sell their services, and in a way I do as well. I’m a nurse,” she explained and Alec suddenly understood why she was so calming at his bedside when he woke up and spoke to her. Her good bedside manner was actually bedside manner. “I’ve always felt my calling was to heal people in any way I can, and what better way to heal as many people as possible than to work at a hospital where my magical cures can pass as medical miracles?”

Alec smiled at the thought. “That’s really cool,” he admitted. “Um, I’ll be there when you get home,” he said, clearing his throat again. “Thank you.”

“I’ll see you tonight,” she said before hanging up.

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Alec sat on the stoop outside the building he found at the address Catarina texted him. It was an average apartment building. Nothing fancy. The doors were classic glass doors with the metal wires in the glass. The door behind him buzzed occasionally as someone came in and out. He had his hands in his jacket pockets, hunched in on himself, when a pair of white sneakers came to a stop beside him. “Hello, Alec.” He looked up and saw Catarina was glamoured as a pretty black woman still very recognizable by her wide-set, almond shaped eyes.

He stood up, grimacing as his stomach lurched. “Hi,” he said, stepping out of the way as she walked up to the door. “Thank you for meeting me so soon,” he said, and she just shook her head as she opened the door and held it behind her for him to follow.

“It’s not a problem at all. Any friend of Magnus’s is a friend of mine, and you’re known to be a good man, especially for a Shadowhunter,” she said bluntly but not unkindly. “I recognize the need to help others in you that I have,” she said openly, giving him a warm smile. “I would help you even if Magnus hadn’t asked me to.”

He followed her into the elevator and waited patiently, willing his stomach to settle the whole ride to her floor. When they got out, her apartment was just across the hall. She pulled her keys back out of the pocket of her pink scrubs and unlocked both locks on her door before stepping back to let him in first.

Alec was so used to Warlocks living in extravagance that he was surprised to see a small but comfortable looking apartment. Everything was cozy instead of dramatic. Her couch looked worn and soft, there were lace curtains over the window, and there was a bright purple clock shaped like a cat hanging beside the kitchen entrance. “You can have a seat while I go get some things from my room,” she said, nodding to the couch.

He went and sat, discovering the couch was just as comfortable as it looked, and he took off his jacket, settling it on the couch beside him as he relaxed, letting his tired body rest for a moment.
Being so sick was exhausting. Alec could barely remember ever feeling so downright tired. He closed his eyes and breathed slowly as his stomach churned again. He wasn’t at a risk of throwing up all over Catarina’s flower-patterned rug just yet, but he knew it wouldn’t be more than an hour before he vomited again.

When she came back with a bowl full of items and bid him take off his shirt and pants, he looked at her reluctantly before she chuckled. “Trust me, I’m a nurse, I see men in their underwear all day long.” He lay down across the couch and closed his eyes, fighting the panic as she began to mix something together in the bowl, chanting softly, and then rubbed something on his chest. He startled at the feeling, but he could also feel her power skittering through his body. It wasn’t painful but it was noticeable. It definitely wasn’t a pleasant feeling.

Even though he already knew, deep down, exactly what him being so sick meant, it didn’t make it any easier to hear her give a resigned sigh and let her power fade from his body. He opened his eyes and looked up at her and saw the sorrow in her eyes. He just swallowed and nodded slowly. “Yeah, I figured,” he whispered hoarsely.

“I’m so sorry,” she said quietly and he saw her shudder slightly. “I really hoped it wasn’t, but there’s no doubt. You’re pregnant.”

Alec sat up and reached for his shirt, pulling it on to keep from feeling so exposed. He reached for his jeans but suddenly he didn’t feel like standing up to put them on so he let them fall from his grip. Catarina grabbed the throw off the back of the couch and gently laid it across his lap so he would feel more covered up. He balled his hands up on his thighs and let out a sharp exhale as he let his head hang. Bitter tears burned his eyes and he gritted his teeth as a strangled noise of pain broke free. He didn’t want this to be real. He didn’t want to accept that this wasn’t a nightmare. He didn’t want this feeling.

He let out a sob and pitifully gasped for air through his tears. Catarina didn’t try to touch him, she didn’t try to give him empty platitudes, and she didn’t try and comfort him at all. She just sat beside him while he cried and didn’t judge him. He started to retch and looked up with panic as a hand flew to his mouth and she quickly snapped her fingers so that a pail landed in his lap. He grabbed it and ducked into it as he heaved, vomiting very little more than water and bile, since he couldn’t eat. He continued to sob between heaves until finally the nausea passed. He hung his head in rage and shame and fear and so much pain.

After he was sure the wave had passed, she silently gestured to a door beside her bedroom door and it swung open to reveal a bathroom. Alec was grateful Catarina didn’t try to fuss over him and realized he didn’t want to be patronized. He stood and went into the bathroom. He emptied the pail in the toilet and then put it in the bathtub to fill with water and rinse before dumping that as well. He left the bucket on the floor and walked over to the sink, gargling cold, clean water to clear the taste from his throat. He cupped his hands and drank water to soothe his throat and stood up, looking at himself in the reflection of the medicine cabinet.

He looked half-dead. His skin was so pale, he had sweat around his temples, and his eyes were bloodshot. He took a breath and left the bathroom to see Catarina was waiting with tea now. Alec sat down and she nodded to the cup. “Ginger tea will help your nausea.”

Alec sat down and drank the tea in slow sips without speaking. It wasn’t until his tea was mostly drunk and he was starting to feel less ill that he spoke. “What do I do, Catarina?”

Catarina gave him an attentive look and lowered her cup. “Well, I assume you’ll want to terminate, which I can do, but I’ll need things that only Magnus can get,” she said apologetically. “And he’ll know what I need them for, because he isn’t an unintelligent man. I’m sorry, but you’ll have to tell
Alec looked up in surprise. “That’s possible?” he asked and she nodded. “I didn’t think the demon attacks would result in something you can fix,” he mused. He went cold as he realized what he was talking about. He looked at Catarina with pained eyes. “Are you- okay with that?” he asked her uncomfortably. “I mean, are you okay doing it since you’re a Warlock?”

Catarina looked surprised at his question. “Of course,” she said quickly. “It’s your choice and your body. If anything, it being a Warlock makes it easier.”

“Even though you’re a Warlock?” he asked skeptically.

She grimaced. “Alec, it’s a hard truth all Warlocks have to accept that we only exist because something horrible happened to our mothers,” she said without hesitation or sugar-coating. “Being the product of the same thing that happened to you doesn’t mean anything except I know painfully intimately that my mother suffered just as you are now.”

Alec had never thought of that. He had never really thought about the fact that all Warlocks lived with the knowledge that they existed because their mom was raped. Whether it be the way the demon hurt him or by pretending to be a man the woman loved, it was still the most horrible violation that brought their entire species into being. “How are there still so many?” he asked without thinking, only to pale.

Catarina didn’t seem offended though. “There’s enough stigma in the world about abortion that a lot of the ones who are attacked still can’t or won’t choose it. And a lot of them don’t know their baby isn’t their husbands or lover’s baby until it’s born and sometimes not for years after,” she said simply. “And then there are those who just make the choice not to terminate,” she added. “And sadly, most of them regret that choice when their baby is born because it isn’t human like the expected.”

It was so depressing, Alec realized. Every Warlock lived with the knowledge that they were something that happened to their mothers, not something wanted by their mothers. Mundanes almost never realized it was a demon that hurt them, not a man, so they had no warning that on top of an unwanted consequence of something horrible that happened to them, their baby wasn’t going to be human. Alec thought about that little girl he had seen with the gills and tried to imagine how cruel it was that she was just an innocent child and yet she was still the result of a horrible act of violence done upon her mother.

Alec thought about the prejudices he had been taught growing up about how Warlocks were slaves to their powers who were barely better than demons when now, he had only met one terrible Warlock in all his life and several who were really good people. Catarina and Magnus were both just good people and it hurt to think that they had to have suffered so much prejudice because of the manner of their conception, not the qualities they brought to the world.

Alec was so lost in his thoughts he almost missed when Catarina got up and walked to the refrigerator. She got something off the top of it and came back with a small pouch with vials sticking out the top. “Here,” she said, sitting down again. “These will keep you well in the time being. As early as it is, there’s no rush,” she reminded him softly. “There are several weeks before taking care of this become more difficult. You can tell Magnus at your own speed and as soon as you have, I’ll call and ask for the supplies I need,” Catarina explained. “Of, if you don’t want to talk about it at all, I can just ask him for the supplies myself and let him infer what he will.”

“No, I’ll- I’d rather be the one to say something,” Alec said with a reluctant sigh.

He took the pouch and she pulled a vial out, showing it to him. “Drink one of these before you go to
bed every night and your symptoms will hopefully go away entirely, but they’ll at least be severely lessened.” Catarina put it back and zipped the pouch shut, handing it to him again. “There’s enough here for three weeks. If you need more time to deal with things, I can make more.”

He nodded weakly. “About- about how long before I have to- to-“

Catarina put a hand on Alec’s and squeezed it. “In about six weeks or seven weeks, it will take more painful and difficult methods to terminate. But that should be enough time,” she soothed. “You can’t ignore it forever, as much as I know you would like to. You’re strong, Alec. You’ll be ready to talk to Magnus about it within six weeks, I’m sure.”

After Alec had put his pants back on and got ready to leave, he tucked the pouch into his jacket pocket and turned back to Catarina. “Thank you,” he said seriously. “Whatever payment, I will-“

“No, Alec,” Catarina said firmly. “I don’t want money or favors. Not for this. Not for providing care for someone who needs it.”

Alec couldn’t help but give a small smile as he nodded and let her shut the door behind him. He had a lot to think about, but it was comforting to know that people as good as Catarina still existed in a world where something so terrible could happen to him.
Chapter 3

Chapter Notes

I don't have a posting schedule for these, so I don't know when to tell you guys to expect them. I finished this one yesterday, but didn't post it straight away because I had already posted one yesterday. I guess the only rule currently is 'no more than 1 per day' and I'm pretty sure sooner or later I won't be doing one a day. Currently, though, that seems to be my schedule.

This fic is gonna be reasonably long, so expect the chapters to get longer as we go as well.

The potion that Catarina gave him made Alec’s life far more bearable. He wasn’t sick and tired all day. He hadn’t told anybody who didn’t already know what happened and he didn’t plan on changing that, so he had to perform as he normally did. The potion didn’t make him completely feel one hundred percent, but it made it so that he didn’t feel too bad. He felt just nauseous enough by the time he was due for another dose that he couldn’t forget that he was pregnant.

Not that he could’ve forgotten that fact.

Most nights, Alec woke up from nightmares. Even if it wasn’t memories of the demon attacking him, it was nightmares about other things. The worst ones were nightmares of the demon attacking his sister instead of him. One night his nightmares were full of having to watch Jace being tortured by demons that made it so bad he had to get up and go train rather than even try to go back to sleep. It drove him crazy that even though he was trying to get past everything that happened, he had to have nightmares about things that were even worse.

Alec was punching the padded dummy when a voice startled him. “Can’t sleep?” He turned and saw Jace walking towards him in sweatpants and a baggy long-sleeve shirt he thought looked suspiciously large on Jace, meaning it was probably actually his. The sleeves hung over Jace’s hands so only his fingertips showed, and Alec knew damn well Jace didn’t buy clothes too big.

“How have you been stealing my laundry?” Alec asked and Jace shrugged with a smirk.

“Why wash my own clothes when I can steal yours out of the dryer?” he said as he walked over to Alec. He looked at him with an earnest pout. “Are you okay?”

Alec sighed, wiping at the sweat on his face with the back of his wrist. “Just can’t sleep.” Jace gave him a concerned look and Alec suddenly felt the overwhelming urge to hug him. “Um, this might sound kind of weird,” he said, pushing his hair out of his face. Jace looked at him with total and complete patience and Alec didn’t bother asking. He just closed the gap between them and hugged Jace, laying his head on Jace’s shoulder. Jace made a soft sound of surprise but didn’t hesitate, wrapping his arms around Alec in a tight hug.

“You okay, Buddy?” Jace asked softly, and Alec shook his head, his hair rasping against Jace’s shirt. Jace sighed and rubbed his back in slow strokes, holding him tightly. “You know it’s okay to not be okay, right?”
Alec shuddered. “I’m not okay, Jace. I- you have no idea how not okay I am.”

“C’mon,” Jace said softly. “Let’s get you to bed. Even if you can’t sleep, laying down will be better for you than training at three in the morning,” he said and Alec didn’t fight it when Jace tugged him along and led the way back to his room.

Jace decided to make it a sleepover, and Alec didn’t feel like arguing. He just laughed when he and Jace tried to both fit in his bed. “Dude, this was so much easier when we were kids,” Jace said, rolling around to lay on his side, facing Alec.

Alec snorted, shaking his head. “I was literally half the size I am now when we were kids,” he pointed out and Jace nodded, sighing dramatically as he propped himself on one elbow, looking down at Alec.

“And I was taller,” he said, making Alec smirk. “Who would’ve ever saw that coming?” He frowned. “Although your mom is tall so maybe I should have.”

Alec frowned. “My mom?” he asked and Jace just looked away instead of answering. It hurt to realize Jace was starting to think about himself as no longer part of their family. He saw the way things were going for Jace recently and he wasn’t that shocked, but it still hurt.

Instead of continue on that, Jace looked around them. “Why did we ever stop having sleepovers?” Jace wondered aloud and Alec grimaced.

“Because I went through puberty and would’ve died having a boy in my bed,” Alec said bluntly, making Jace smirk.

“Aw, I know I was a foxy little thing, but really-“

“I thought I was in love with you, Jace, I would’ve probably rather died than deal with that,” Alec reminded him and Jace’s smirk fell into a warmer smile.

He looked at Alec closely. “I’m glad you figured out you aren’t. It sucked seeing you struggling like that, Alec,” he admitted quietly.

Alec sighed, shaking his head. “I never would’ve guessed you knew. I was so shocked when you said you did, and I was horrified, and we were already fighting-“

Jace snorted. “That sucked,” he said bluntly. “I hated fighting with you, and I’m so glad we got over that crap, because I love you more than anybody else in the entire world,” he stressed, looking right at Alec. “You’re my other half, Alec, and I would rather die than be on opposite sides from you.”

“I hated when you were gone,” Alec said with a nod. “I hated the Clave for branding you a Circle member, and I was so angry. I was kind of a dick,” he admitted softly. “I was mean to Izzy, and I treated Magnus like crap.” Alec sighed, tugging the covers up to his chin as he pressed his face into the pillow, taking a ragged breath as he fought back emotion. “I really wish I had found time to go out with him. I’ll never meet anybody like Magnus again,” he whispered.

Jace frowned down at him. “What? Why are you acting like you don’t still have a shot? Dude, Magnus is totally into you.”

“Pretty sure nobody wants to date someone who recently experienced something traumatic enough he can’t even sleep through the night,” Alec murmured and Jace glared.

“Hey, if he doesn’t want to date you because of what happened to you, he’s a jerk anyways. I’ll kick
his ass,” he bristled and Alec felt a surge of emotion at how protective Jace was being. “He seems to really care about you, so if he doesn’t want to go out with you anymore because of something that happened to you, I’ll beat the crap out of him.”

Alec sniffled, bottom lip trembling. “It’s not his fault. I come with a lot of baggage, Jace—”

“So?” Jace argued, getting more animated. “You’re amazing, he should be grateful you even like him, not getting twitchy when you need him the most! By the Angel, he better not stop liking you just because of ‘baggage’, or I will seriously have words—”

Alec let out a soft sob, catching Jace’s attention just before he whispered, “I’m pregnant, Jace.”

Jace didn’t so much as breathe and Alec rubbed his face against the pillow to wipe the tears away. He whimpered as he curled further into a ball and fought to regain composure. His knees touched Jace’s and he seemed to snap out of his shock with a strangled rasp of, “What?”

Alec looked up at him and saw shock and horror in Jace’s eyes. Alec whimpered but kept from dissolving into tears as he nodded. “That Warlock gave me the same tea she gave Clary, and Magnus and Clary realized and that’s why Catarina Loss was there to examine me. She didn’t find anything out that day, but she told me I would know and I— I did,” he finished weakly. “I got really sick.”

“That’s why you were sick?!?” Jace asked in horror.

Alec nodded. “I— I went to see her. She confirmed it. Gave me something to stop feeling so sick.” He closed his eyes. “I have to tell Magnus because only he can get what she needs to- to take care of it.” He sniffled. “Who would want to date someone that got pregnant from demon rape? I’m gonna have so many issues—“ He choked off and pulled the covers over his face, hiding as tears broke free.

“It’s okay, Alec, you’re okay,” Jace said, pulling Alec into his arms to hug him. Alec let out a sob and curled up against Jace’s chest as he cried. Jace shushed him and held him close, and Alec just cried. “It’s going to be okay,” he repeated over and over until Alec stopped crying.

They didn’t talk anymore, but Alec felt extremely grateful that he had Jace to confide in. It was a weight off his shoulders to not be carrying such a terrible secret alone anymore.

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When Alec woke up, he felt better mentally than he had in days. He felt calmer and less alone. Some of that had to do with the fact that Jace was aggressively spooning him, clinging to Alec’s back like a backpack with elbows and knees. Alec tried to wiggle free and Jace just clung tighter, letting out a big snuffling snore. “Nnnnn, five more minutes,” he muttered and then snored noisily right in Alec’s ear.

Alec laughed to himself as he grabbed Jace’s wrists and tried to pry them away from him. “Jace, come on, let me get up.”

“Waarrmm,” Jace moaned, and Alec rolled his eyes.

“Dude, we established already, I don’t think of you in that way anymore, so I’d really like it if you stopped cuddling me,” Alec said louder and Jace made a dramatic sound and finally released him. Alec sat up and Jace fell onto his belly with a flump.

“Lec, c’m back,” he whined. Alec looked back and saw Jace pouting with one eye open. “You’re so warm. I lied, you don’t need a boyfriend, cause then he gets all that warmth, and that’s not fair to everybody else in the world, Magnus-Smagnus, let him keep being a jerk,” he grumbled sleepily as
Alec gave him a sad smile. “It’s okay,” he said, sighing as he turned forward and rubbed at his face before stretching his arms over his head. “I just-” He ducked his head with a frown. “I hate the timing of this. I think- I think if we had already been dating, maybe it wouldn’t- wouldn’t be such a thing?” he mused unsurely. “I mean if he was my boyfriend, maybe he wouldn’t be backing off just because I’ve got all this trauma to work through. He’d be invested.”

“Alec, he is invested. Don’t get me wrong,” he said suddenly. “I’ll beat the shit out of him if he is really turning away from you just cause of you getting hurt by something, not even something you did,” he reminded him. “But maybe he’s got his reasons. You should talk to him.” He smirked. “I mean c’mon, you made out with him at your wedding because he showed up to stop it all ‘speak now’ and shit. The guy has to have feelings, not just have a thing for really tall guys.”

Alec blushed some and bit back a surge of hope. “Maybe.”

“Definitely worth trying to find out,” Jace said simply. “Something about him just grates at me, but he’s a good guy.”

Alec nodded. “He is that,” he said, thinking about how Catarina told him about Magnus’s safe haven for Warlocks he had built to protect his people. He smiled to himself at the thought of all the little Warlocks that had somewhere safe to grow up with people who loved them when he knew most Warlocks were abandoned as children, left to fend for themselves. He had never asked Magnus about his childhood, but he had a feeling the world hadn’t been kind to Magnus for most of history. Magnus seemed like a person who had suffered a lot, and he knew how dark and downright abusive his relationship with Camille had been, and yet Alec had never met someone who wore his heart so openly on his sleeve as Magnus. He hid it from most people behind a mask, but Alec could see right through it and tell that all the pain, all the cruelty of the world, it had made him into someone so determined to protect others and show kindness to those in need.

Alec thought about Catarina, who worked at a hospital and lived in a modest home just because she cared more about helping people than her own living. “Alec?” Jace asked, and he realized he’d drifted away. Jace raised an eyebrow. “Something on your mind?”

“Catarina,” he admitted and Jace raised an eyebrow. “Oh? That’s new. Pretty seriously thought you’re only into dudes-“

“Jace!” Alec groaned, shaking his head. “No,” he said firmly. He smiled. “She’s such a good person. We were taught all our lives that Warlocks are slaves to their demon side, that they can’t control it, and she is a nurse at a hospital,” he said in wonder. “She’s more powerful than Magnus, or so he seems to think, and yet she doesn’t do anything he does. All she does is heal people,” he whispered in awe. “She could be the High Warlock, not him, but she just wants to heal people and do all the good she can in the world. We’re soldiers,” he said, looking at Jace. “We’re trained to fight and, yeah, we do our best to not hurt people, but we follow orders. We’ve both killed Downworlders that probably were just following orders, like us,” he said and Jace ducked his head, clearly thinking about his time with Valentine. For a moment Alec felt terrible for saying that, but he continued on, hoping to distract Jace. “Catarina just helps people. I mean, Magnus does, too,” he added. “He goes out of his way to try and help every one of us, but in her life, Catarina just goes around healing people when she could be selling her services like Magnus does for a lot of money.”

Jace nodded sadly. “I know one thing for sure, and that’s how freaking confusing life’s gotten
recently,” he said plainly. “I don’t trust the Clave anymore,” he confessed. “I don’t.” He shook his head. “Even before they tried to kill me when I was a hostage, back when you were still trying to follow the orders I know you didn’t believe in,” he said and Alec grimaced at the memory. “We’ve been lied to about Downworlders. About a lot of things. And Aldertree—"

“He’s dirty,” Alec said coldly. “I don’t know how, and I can’t prove anything, but he’s a fanatic. He and the ones who appointed him, they’re so hell-bent on doing whatever is necessary to stop Valentine, even if it means giving shoot to kill orders on people that they knew had to at least have a fair trial,” he said. “And something happened to make Magnus seek out Camille and turn her over to the Clave,” he said knowingly. “I don’t know what, but Aldertree had to threaten Downworlders Magnus knows to get him to do something like that. And refusing to let Magnus treat me when I could’ve died if they hadn’t portalled me to his house…” Alec shuddered. “It’s like he doesn’t value life. It’s like Aldertree genuinely believes the ends justify the means.”

Jace nodded grimly. “Shit’s going sideways, Alec, and being Valentine’s son has me scared shitless,” he admitted. “I know Maryse didn’t try and protect me,” he said in a small voice that broke Alec’s heart. “I know she was going to just let them kill me. She’s the only mom I’ve ever known and she just—just wrote me off.”

“Fuck her,” Alec said harshly, shocking Jace, who looked at him with wide eyes. Alec glowered. “Me and Izzy, we won’t ever write you off. You’re our brother, no matter what she says,” he said firmly. “Neither of them came back from Idris even though I was dying, Jace. I’m their ‘golden child’ they expect to be the representation of them, but Mom and Dad wouldn’t even come back when I was on the verge of death because the Clave needed them,” he stressed. “It’s not normal. It’s stupid that we’re supposed to blindly follow the Clave when the Clave is wrong.”

Jace nodded sadly. “Like how Downworlders are all the same and can’t control their instincts,” he said bitterly. “Catarina Loss sounds like she’d be a great mom,” Jace said suddenly and Alec raised an eyebrow at him. “Maybe she’ll adopt me,” Jace joked and Alec snorted, rolling his eyes.

“You try that,” he said with a shake of his head as he finally stood up off the bed. Jace watched him as he walked and Alec hesitated. “Um, Jace?”

“Yeah?” Jace asked.

Alec nodded slowly. “Thank you. For listening. I feel a lot better not keeping it a secret anymore.”

Jace rolled his eyes. “Dude, Alec, you can always trust me. No matter what happens, I’ve always got your back,” he promised.

Alec smiled and nodded once more. “Thank you.”
Alec wasn’t sure how he was supposed to make an opportunity to meet with Magnus just to let him know he was pregnant and Catarina would need his help getting some supplies. They had hung out a few times, just casual and friendly, since his attack, but he finally felt, after talking to Jace, that he was ready to tell Magnus. However, it took several days of trying to think of the appropriate excuse to meet up casually in private where he could tell Magnus.

Luckily, Magnus invited him and Izzy over to watch some awards show with him and Izzy couldn’t come because she was on patrol. It was the perfect opportunity. Alec sat with Magnus, totally unable to follow what was going on no matter what Magnus explained, but Magnus seemed content to have a friend there, even if it wasn’t the friend who would talk about dresses on the red carpet with him, and Alec missed seeing Magnus, so it was all okay either way.

It was only after the awards show ended that Alec found an opening. Magnus came back from the bathroom and Alec cleared his throat. “Magnus,” he said, deciding not to beat around the bush. “I-I need to talk to you.”

Magnus looked concerned as he sat back down on the couch, but he turned to face Alec, crossing his legs under him. “Of course, Alexander,” he said warmly and Alec swallowed hard. It was painful when Magnus looked at him the way he used to. Alec knew by now that Magnus wasn’t even thinking about him that way anymore. He was very clear in his feelings by no longer flirting or teasing Alec. He treated him like a friend only now, and it hurt to think about what he missed having. Alec ignored the hurt and instead, he clenched his eyes shut and just said it.

“I’m pregnant.”

Magnus gave no reaction, and when Alec opened his eyes he saw shock, horror, and pain in Magnus’s eyes. “Oh- Oh Alec,” he croaked and Alec bit his lip. He nodded slowly.

“Catarina said you would have to find out one way or another,” Alec soldiered on. “I wanted to be the one to tell you, not for you to infer it from her asking you for things only you can get.”

Magnus nodded sympathetically, throat bobbing as he swallowed. “I’m glad you told me,” Magnus whispered in a pained voice. “I would’ve worried myself sick if I figured it out from Cat needing the things to terminate, because I would want to see for myself that you’re okay, but I wouldn’t want to intrude. That would really suck,” he said, shaking his head. “Alec, I’m so sorry,” he gasped and Alec was shocked when saw a tear slip free from his eyelashes.

“Don’t cry,” Alec said plaintively, looking at him with wide eyes. “I’m barely holding it together as it is, and if you cry, I’m going to lose it, too,” he warned, trying for humor but falling short due to the gravity of the situation.
Magnus sniffled and let out a weakly whimpered laugh. “Can I hug you instead?” he asked, and Alec nodded rapidly.

“Please,” he managed, and Magnus dragged him into a hug. Alec sniffled against Magnus’s sleeve as Magnus crushed him in a tight hug, clinging to him. Alec closed his eyes and held on, biting his lip against the desire to say something, anything, about how much he enjoyed Magnus holding him. He felt so much differently hugging Magnus than anybody else.

“Alec, I’m so sorry,” Magnus sighed brokenly against Alec’s hair.

Eventually, Magnus got up and went to the drink cart. He said he needed a strong one and Alec smiled at Magnus being Magnus. When he returned, he had a drink for Alec as well. He frowned when Magnus handed him the glass, looking at it. “I can’t drink this,” he said without thinking, and Magnus stilled. He looked at him curiously but didn’t speak. Alec blinked and nodded slowly. “Oh, right.” Magnus was right to be confused. Alec didn’t know what made him think to say that. The whole point of telling Magnus he was pregnant was so that Catarina could terminate it. It was a little pointless to avoid alcohol.

Only, when Alec raised the glass and took a sip, he suddenly grimaced and held the sip in his mouth. He just didn’t want to swallow it. He gave in and spit it back into the glass, frowning at the glass he held out in front of him. Magnus eyed him curiously the whole time. “Alec? Is there something else that you want?” he asked, and Alec suddenly felt a surge of anxiety.

He hadn’t actually ever thought about what he wanted. When Alec found out he was pregnant from Catarina, for sure, she immediately started telling him how they would handle the abortion. He had been so overwhelmed he didn’t think twice about it. He still had never even thought about the pregnancy in any terms other than something to be fixed. It was the foregone conclusion that he would fix what had been done to him and go on with his life. He hadn’t spent a single moment even thinking about it in any other terms. Yet, when he saw the alcoholic drink, for the first time ever, Alec thought about how alcohol caused birth defects in normal babies so why not Warlock babies, too.

Alec had never thought about it as a pregnancy, really. He had used the words and thought the words, but he had thought about it as a wound inflicted upon him that needed to be treated. Because in every way that mattered before now, that was what it was: consequences of a violent attack. There had never been any reason to think about any other realities of his situation. He didn’t see pregnant women in public and think, ‘like me’. He didn’t even think of the pregnant mother that had been taken to the Warlock safe haven like him when it had literally been the same thing.

Alec hadn’t ever actually thought about himself was pregnant, and now suddenly he found himself thinking about it that way as he tasted the lingering alcohol on his lips and his instincts told him ‘No!’ He tried it again, raising the glass, but the moment he imagined drinking alcohol while pregnant, his stomach churned at the idea and he was forced to give up. He put the glass down on the coffee table and dropped his head into his hands, because he was pregnant. He felt an overwhelming sense of ‘oh shit’, because that had been the first time ever that he actually thought of it as a Warlock baby, not just a demonic pregnancy. It was the same thing, he knew, but he hadn’t thought about it.

“Alec? Are you alright?” Magnus asked, looking concerned, and suddenly Alec stood up and grabbed his jacket off the back of the chair. “Alec?”

Alec looked back at him. “I- I need to take a walk and clear my head, I’m sorry,” he said, and Magnus gave him a look of sympathy laced with concern.
“Of course,” he said softly. “Are you alright to get home on your own?”

Alec smiled faintly at Magnus’s concern and nodded. “I’m fine,” he promised, putting on his jacket as he headed to the door. “Goodnight, Magnus,” he called, and Magnus echoed it back as he headed to the door and left without another thought.

Alec knew where he needed to go and he didn’t want to waste a second.

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Catarina was almost asleep when her phone rang. She blearily sat up, feeling over on the table for her phone, frowning when she picked it up and saw Alec Lightwood’s name on the screen. She sat up, reaching over to turn on the lamp as she answered the call. “Alec? Is something wrong?” she asked him.

“Um, I’m sorry if I woke you up,” he said quietly. “I- I really need to ask you something. And I’m outside the building now.”

She slid out of bed. “What building?”

“Your apartment building,” he said, and she chuckled and shook her head as she went to throw on her robe.

“Come on up. You didn’t have to call if you’re already here. Knocking would’ve woke me up just as well. If you’re glamoured you can come in without looking suspicious when you use runes to open the door,” she said and he just cleared his throat.

“I just- I didn’t want to come if I wasn’t welcome,” he said softly and Catarina felt guilty for joking.

She walked out of her room and turned on the lights, going to start a pot of coffee with the phone tucked between her shoulder and ear. “Alec, you’re always welcome if you’re in need,” she reassured him. “Now come on up, I’m making coffee,” she said before hanging up.

When Alec knocked at her door, she opened it with a snap of her fingers. He walked in and she brought over a mug of coffee for him as she brought her own, only to frown when she saw how startled he looked. “Alec?” she asked, setting the cup down. She snapped her fingers and a tray of cream and sugar appeared beside it for him. He slowly sat down, fidgeting nervously, and she tilted her head. “Are you alright, Mr. Lightwood?”

“Can I carry this baby?” he blurted out loudly, startling her into nearly spilling her coffee. He flushed and rubbed his hands over his jeans. “I- I mean-” He growled in frustration and grabbed the cup of coffee and the spoon from the sugar bowl and, to her surprise, dumped several scoops before raising it to his lips to take a long drink.

Catarina watched him patiently and saw he was really, really anxious. “Alec, calm down and breathe, okay? You’re safe here. I promise.”

Alec took a deep breath and sat back heavily in the chair, the mug resting against his lap in both hands. “Sorry,” he mumbled and she smiled patiently.

“That’s alright. I’m just worried about you working yourself up,” she said and he nodded taking a few more deep, slow breaths. “Now, can you explain your question in more detail, please?” she asked curiously.

He glanced up at her and then back to the coffee, licking his lips to clear them of droplets of coffee.
“Can I physically carry this baby?” he asked slowly. “Could- could my body actually stand that? I’m not a woman, and even with powerful magic, that’s not normal.”

Catarina tilted her head in confusion. “Alec, I told you, you’ve still got a few weeks before you have to worry about anything like that. Right now it’s just a clump of cells, so it’s not even affecting your body other than hormone changes.”

Alec nodded. “I know, but- but I mean after that. All the way?” he asked weakly.

Suddenly, Catarina sensed what he meant, even though he wasn’t saying it, and she sat up straighter, looking at him closely as she tried to hold back the shock she felt. She watched him drink more coffee and she measured how to ask what she thought he was trying to say without making it seem too presumptuous. “Alec,” she said in a measured tone. “Why do you want to know? There’s nothing to prevent termination. Magnus can have the things I need in days and it will take just a few hours before you’re back to normal with no side-effects. So I want to know why you’re asking.”

Alec bit his lip and looked up at her with wide hazel eyes. “I- I was talking to Magnus tonight,” he said, and she waited patiently for him to tell her however he needed to. Whatever story he had to tell was no problem. Patients often gave context when they wanted to say something uncomfortable. “And I told him,” he confessed. “I told him I’m pregnant and he guessed correctly that I wanted him to know so he didn’t find out from you when you needed the things for the abortion, and some stuff happened, but he said something that- that really made me think.” He looked up at her suddenly, seeming more sure of what he was about to say. “He asked what I wanted, and he was talking about a drink, but I- I realized.” He shook his head quickly. “I never even stopped to think about what I want,” he said, and Catarina knew that her suspicions were about to be confirmed.

Alec looked startled but pretty sure of his words as he continued. “You just said ‘it’s okay, I can terminate it’, and this whole time I just went with that, and I thought about it in terms of how to tell Magnus so he doesn’t find out from you when you get the stuff to terminate the pregnancy, and I kept thinking about it in those terms, I never thought ‘oh crap, I’m PREGNANT’,” he stressed, cheeks growing pink as he grew more animated. “And I- I don’t know if I want to do it anymore,” he said, shaking his head. “I’ve been walking around and thinking for hours and I just- it’s a Warlock baby, not just some ‘demon pregnancy’, and it’s there, inside of me, and it’s a baby-”

“Alec,” Catarina said gently. “It’s just some cells right now,” she reminded him. “You don’t have to go through with carrying a baby just because it’s a ‘baby’ not just a ‘pregnancy’,” she stressed. “You absolutely have a choice in this and nobody will ever blame you for making that choice.”

Alec calmed down some and nodded, but took a breath. “I know. I know I can make a choice, and everybody that knows thinks that, and I get that, I don’t know why I’m not just okay with it,” he said, and then looked at her. “But I’m not,” he said, shaking his head. “I don’t want-” He bit his lip. “It’s my choice, and I don’t think I want that choice to be to terminate.”

Catarina looked at him curiously. “Well,” she said, deciding not to push him. “Physically, you’ll be fine. The whole point of the potion was to last. You’re capable of carrying the pregnancy through,” she confirmed. She was very surprised when he looked relieved by that news. He actually seemed to have been worried that his body couldn’t handle pregnancy and he would have to end the pregnancy. “Alec,” Catarina said softly and he met her eyes. “Are you sure? Because what you’re talking about is having a baby,” she stressed. “I promise you, though I’m sure you’re thinking ‘oh, Catarina mentioned a safe haven’, you’re still having a baby that will grow up without parents,” she said. “I’m not trying to persuade you to change your mind,” she said firmly, because she wasn’t. She knew it was his choice to make and she wouldn’t try and stop him. “But if you think it’s unkind to ‘kill a baby’ or something like that, remember that it has no consciousness, it’s not a baby yet.”
Alec didn’t seem shocked or startled by her words, he just nodded with a surprisingly calm and serious expression. “I know that. I just-“ He paused, and she watched him closely, fascinated by the Nephilim in front of her more and more with each passing second. Alec looked down at his cup. “I- I didn’t think about what I wanted before. I just thought about what the plan was. I thought about just going with the plan in place instead of really thinking about what I want.” Catarina saw a strange expression on his face, as if he was struggling with a hard truth and wasn’t sure how to handle it. “I love children,” he said gently and she felt a jolt of even more shock at what those three words implied. He continued and she let him. “I love babies, and children, and I- I never thought I could ever have any. I’m gay,” he reminded her, as though she could’ve forgotten the drama about Alec Lightwood coming out. “And I didn’t think about this as an opportunity for that, and I know most people probably wouldn’t, because- because something horrible happened to me,” he said, voice cracking a bit.

Catarina smiled sadly. “You don’t have to continue if you don’t want to, Alec,” she said gently. “You don’t have to explain yourself to me. You seem to have made your choice. It’s your decision. Yours,” she stressed firmly. “You don’t have to explain what you want as long as it’s what you want.”

“I want to have this baby,” Alec said quietly. He smiled a sad little smile that hurt Catarina some, because she knew what it took for someone with the eyes of a soldier to break like that. “I’m never going to stop remembering what happened to me, and this baby won’t make that any less terrible, and it isn’t some balancing the scales of horrible thing. But if I break it down into the simplest form, nothing changes that I want a baby and there’s one inside of me,” he said with a quiet finality that Catarina understood to mean that Alec had made his choice and was done.

It was nothing she would have ever expected, but looking at Alec Lightwood in that moment, she understood that he was obviously someone who had his reasons and had made up his mind about it. It wasn’t her business to challenge that. She nodded. “I’ll work on getting you more medicine since your symptoms will continue the whole pregnancy,” she said and he cringed at the thought. “You’ll be running out soon and we don’t want that.”

He smiled gratefully. “Thank you,” he said and she nodded and then reached out to take his coffee cup out of his hands before he could drink more, making him frown.

She chuckled. “You have to limit your caffeine intake to two-hundred milligrams per day and you probably had more than just this one cup of coffee today already,” she said, and Alec’s eyes widened.

“Coffee is bad for pregnancy?” he asked, looking worried.

Catarina held up a hand. “Relax, it’s just precautionary. It isn’t a proven link. It’s just recommended to limit it. So watch the soda, tea, coffee, and chocolate,” she said with a smile. “Better to start now.”

Alec nodded seriously. “Thank you. For listening. And understanding.”

Catarina shook her head. “You don’t have to thank anybody for respecting your decision. Nobody else is you,” she said firmly and Alec looked relieved. She still didn’t understand, and she was pretty sure nobody else would either, but she had seen enough people in the hospital have family and friends persuade them to make medical decisions they didn’t really want to make. Alec would have a hard road ahead of him, Catarina knew, but it was his choice and she would do everything she could to help him.

He would need it.
Alec felt oddly determined when he got out of bed the morning after his late-night visit to Catarina’s. Now that he knew he wasn’t going to end the pregnancy, his mind was focused on what he needed to do now. Obviously, he had a while before anybody else would know he was pregnant, but he had to make plans. He felt good about his decision. It wasn’t a choice he had made lightly. Alec had spent hours wandering around New York thinking about whether he should really do it. In the end, the pros outweighed the cons, and he wanted his baby.

It was also the first time Alec allowed himself to think about it as his baby. Alec had to pause while showering and just stand there for a moment, taking slow, steady breaths as he thought about the fact this was happening. It wasn’t just a prospective idea, it was real. He wasn’t just going to have a baby someday, he was actively carrying a baby inside of him now. Alec felt lighter than he had in weeks as he put a hand on his middle knowing that behind his flat stomach there was a baby.

It didn’t stop the nightmares, Alec realized painfully. Wanting the baby didn’t stop him having nightmares about his attack. It was no less painful and traumatizing to have something he wanted now because of it. It was really troubling to separate his rapist from his baby, but he had to do that. He wanted the baby no matter what had caused it. It didn’t make it any less terrible, and it didn’t make the cause of the baby any less wrong. Having something he wanted didn’t make up for what he suffered. He didn’t want to think about his baby in terms of some ‘spot of light’ in the darkness or some bullshit like that.

His baby was his baby, and everything else was terrible shit that nobody ever deserved. Alec wished so badly that his baby wasn’t associated with that. He didn’t want to think things like ‘well the baby is innocent’ because while it might be true to him, he didn’t feel like he had to carry the baby. He had never felt like ‘well it’s not its fault’ as a motivator for keeping the baby. If he hadn’t wanted a baby, and hadn’t felt like this was a good time in his life to have it, he would’ve let Catarina terminate the pregnancy. And part of him knew that he was lying to himself thinking this was a good time to have a baby, but honestly, he would have a child that depended on him even if he lost his job protecting people from Demons. His life would still have purpose without the Clave because he would be a parent.

Also, he knew that if he waited, he might never have another chance at having a baby. Even including adoption, he might never get a chance at being a father because he wasn’t going to get married and the Clave wouldn’t let a single man adopt. He was older than his parents were when he was born, a lot of guys his age were married already in their culture, and he felt ready to have a child. Max was growing up and Alec found himself more and more wistful when thinking about his desire for a child to take care of and teach and play with.

Alec just really loved children. He always had. Most people didn’t even know that about him, but he did. He loved them and now he had made up his mind, he was having his baby and starting his life as a father.
He didn’t know how to address the choice he had made, so he decided to give himself a day. After all, it wasn’t like he didn’t have plenty of time, now. Catarina told him that, as tall as he was, and as large as he was, chances were that he wouldn’t look visibly pregnant until near the very end. At the most he would look like he gained a little weight, but he wouldn’t look round until the very end.

Alec felt a lot better for having made up his mind and that positive mood continued all day. It wasn’t until he was sent on a patrol with Isabelle, since Jace still wasn’t allowed on patrol and Clary was allowed time to grieve, that he found himself realizing how much of a difference it would be in his life to be pregnant.

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“This is a bullshit lead,” Izzy said as they rounded the corner. “There’s nothing on the sensor,” she said, looking at it in her hand.

“I know,” Alec said, shrugging. “But, we’ve got to keep looking.” He and Izzy hadn’t talked much lately. They had interacted, of course, but they hadn’t been alone. It felt good to just be out hunting, doing something normal, with his baby sister.

“So...” she said in that teasing voice that immediately warned him he wouldn’t like what she asked. He ignored her though he could feel her big brown eyes on him. “You were still out when I went to bed last night. When you were hanging out with Magnus.” He made the mistake of glancing at her and her smile got blinding. “No!” she said, grabbing his arm. “You go, big brother!”

“No, no, stop,” he said, holding up a hand as he rolled his eyes. He gave her a look. “Magnus and I aren’t even...” He waved his hand, trying to find the right way to say it. “Nothing’s going on there,” he sighed. He felt a stab of hurt as he added, “Timing just didn’t work, and now he’s really cooled off.”

Isabelle huffed. “What? Why not?” she demanded, and Alec turned to look at her silently, giving her a pointed look. Isabelle’s eyes narrowed. “Does he not want to date you anymore because you got hurt?” she asked, voice full of outrage. “That jerk!” she cried. “Oh my God, I’ll punch him in the throat—”

“Izzy,” Alec interrupted, giving her a stern look. “Why are you and Jace so determined to kick Magnus’s ass just because he doesn’t want to date me?”

“Because you’re our brother and he’s a dick,” she said bluntly, making him laugh suddenly.

Alec slung his arm around Isabelle’s neck, pulling her into his side. She curled an arm around his middle, laying her head against his chest. “Look, Iz, think about from his perspective.” He smiled sadly. “We met at a bad time because every time we tried to see what could happen, some terrible, life-altering crap came up.” He took a shaky breath. “And then I got attacked,” he reminded her in a strained voice. “I can’t blame him for just deciding we aren’t gonna have a chance so it’s best to just stop trying.”

“But you didn’t see him,” she said pointedly. “When you were dying, Alec, Magnus was messed up,” she stressed. “He seriously cares about you.”

“And I care about him, too,” Alec groaned. “But Izzy, that doesn’t mean we’ve got that much of a shot at making a relationship work right now.”

Isabelle sighed, poking him in the ribs. “Boys are hardheaded and dumb,” she said dramatically and Alec couldn’t help but smile at her words. He tugged her into a half-hug and kissed the top of her
Alec loved his sister even when she nagged him. He understood her annoyance. She wanted him to be happy, and she had known longer than anybody that he was gay, so to have him finally meet a man he cared about so much already and then give up on it, he knew she had to be upset about him not finding happiness after all. He was more than a little upset about all of it, if he was honest with himself. Alec had really thought after Magnus showed up at his wedding and he found the strength to take his life into his own hands, that, as naïve as it seemed looking back, he might get his ‘happily ever after’ like in all the books he read. He knew he wasn’t in love with Magnus, but he had been so ready to fall in love with him, and instead, Alec was now looking at most likely never getting that chance with anybody since he had made the decision to have his baby instead.

Alec was drawn out of his thoughts by Isabelle speaking up again. “So wait, if you weren’t getting busy with a hot guy, why were you out so late?” she asked, and Alec’s blood ran cold when he realized he didn’t have any excuse to tell her.

“I-”

“Shit, Alec!” Isabelle shouted and then took off running. Alec followed her gaze and saw the demon they had been tracking shape-shifting and running down the alley when it spotted them.

Alec had never been more grateful for a demon to show up than he was at that moment, but twenty minutes later, he was singing another tune. Though he and Isabelle managed to kill the demon, it managed to sting Alec and it was a fast-spreading venom. Isabelle was frantic, but Alec tried to stay level-headed while he was still conscious.

“Isabelle, calm down. How bad is it?” Isabelle was looking at his lower back, where the demons’ stinger got him, and he couldn’t see it himself.

“It’s getting black fast,” she said in a fearful tone. “We’ve got to get you to Magnus, he’s-“

“Not at home tonight,” Alec said, remembering him talking about going to some party tonight. “If he answers his phone and portals, he still would have to wait for us to get there,” he said, looking around for the nearest street sign. He stumbled towards the corner, squinting to get the sign to come into focus, only to let out a triumphant cry when he saw it. “Oh thank the Angel!”

“Thank the Angel?” Isabelle demanded, grabbing him as he swayed. “You’re hurt.“

“Phone, phone,” he said, fumbling for his pocket. He couldn’t see the screen well anymore so he thrust it at Isabelle. “Catarina Loss,” he panted as the pain grew. “Call her, tell her we’re six blocks away. Tell her I’ve been stung by a Scorpios demon and we’re on the way. If I pass out before we get there, she can still get to us. Come on,” he said, tugging her along, since he needed to lean on her, some as he took off for the corner. He would only have to go up two streets and over four, so he hoped they would make it before he fainted.

If not, he knew Catarina could find them easily enough.

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Alec was barely conscious when they made it to Catarina Loss’s building. She was waiting on the stoop and he nearly fell when she rushed towards them and ducked under the arm Isabelle wasn’t under. “Come on, we’ve got to get him inside,” she said, and Isabelle could tell that he was mostly out of it at that point.

A few minutes later, he was dumped unceremoniously onto his stomach on Catarina’s couch. “It was
a Scorpions demon, right?” Catarina asked, and Isabelle nodded, moving to drag her brother’s shirt up. Catarina winced at the sight of the stab wound from the large stinger and the black lines spreading around. “He’s lucky it didn’t get his spine,” she said, running to her kitchen.

Isabelle had so many questions but she didn’t care to interrupt Catarina saving her brother’s life to get answers. She sat back, following instructions Catarina asked of her, and otherwise allowed Catarina to take care of her brother in her own time. “I called Magnus,” Catarina said as she held her hand over Alec’s skin, purple energy sparking from her blue hands. “He’ll probably expect a call from Alec after he’s better,” she said and Isabelle felt a jolt of annoyance at how hardheaded those two were being.

Isabelle looked at how pale he was, thinking about how Alec looked when he was dying. “Is he really alright?”

Catarina nodded calmly, which impressed Isabelle. “He’s doing just fine. I’m just getting the rest of the venom out of his system. The only reason he passed out so fast is because of medication he’s already on. It made the venom spread faster.”

Isabelle frowned. “Medication-“ she started to ask, but Alec moaned and immediately her eyes went to his face.

Alec grumbled and moved his arms under his chest. He pushed himself up, but Catarina put a hand on his back. “Alec,” she said, and he blinked blearily, turning his head to look at her. She gave him a calm smile. “You’re safe. I’m just finishing getting the venom out of your system.”

Isabelle saw Alec’s confused frown persist for a moment before his eyes widened suddenly. “S it bad for the baby?” he slurred, falling back onto his elbows though he kept his head turned back at Catarina so that Isabelle was looking at the back of his head from their angle.

Catarina raised an eyebrow and glanced at Isabelle, but she nodded all the same. “It’s not a danger to it,” she said and Isabelle was very confused.

“Baby?” she asked, and Catarina looked away and Isabelle felt a growing sense of apprehension. “What is he talking about?”

Alec suddenly jerked his head around to look at her and it was clear that his fogginess was abating because he suddenly looked panicked as he stared at Isabelle. “Izzy-“

“Hush,” Catarina said softly. “Don’t worry about it.” she soothed. “Not right now.” She looked at Isabelle. “You and your brother can talk later. I need to finish,” she said, leaving no room for discussion. Isabelle just nodded and sat back, letting her continue her work.

Isabelle was curious as hell, but she didn’t care about answers as much as she did about Alec.

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Alec knew that he couldn’t avoid talking to Izzy forever, but it sure was tempting to try. He avoided talking as they went home, he didn’t say anything when they wrote their report about the demon they killed, and he claimed to be exhausted to get out of talking before going to bed.

The next morning, however, he woke up to find Isabelle sitting beside him, still in her pajamas, watching him sleep. “Ah!” he shouted in surprise, nearly falling out of bed he was so startled. He sat up, glaring. “Izzy!” he complained and she gave him a stern look.

“I wasn’t letting you get out of talking to me,” she said, legs curled under her. She waited for him to
sit up and then gestured for him to continue, as if he had said anything to begin with.

Alec wasn’t sure he was ready to talk to her, but he knew she wouldn’t let him get out of it. He sat up against the pillows and leaned back. “Okay, so this is going to be really hard to hear,” he said, and she waited expectantly. “The Warlock that- that Clary and I were with, she had a potion. Very powerful magic,” he added. “It was in the tea. The idea was she was going to make Clary carry a Warlock baby by throwing her down with the demon that attacked me.” He looked up at her, willing her to understand without him having to fully explain further than to say, “I drank the tea, too.”

Alec’s sister was no idiot. Her eyes widened and her hand flew to her mouth. “But how?! You’re a man!”

“And it was really powerful magic that could make a rune-carrying Shadowhunter get pregnant with a Warlock baby,” he said softly.

Isabelle spluttered, clearly panicking and trying to think. “So you’re- it’s-“ She put her hands in her hair and shoved it out of her face. “What about an abortion?” she asked quickly. “Surely that woman tonight, Catarina, or Magnus-“

“I don’t want it,” he said simply. She looked so confused and he sighed, knowing he had to tell her in more detail. "I don't want an abortion. I want the baby."

"Alec-"

"We were planning on terminating," Alec explained, "But I thought about it, really thought about it, and I want this baby."

Isabelle stared and opened and closed her mouth. "But Alec, what does that mean? What do you plan to do with a baby? A Warlock baby at that!" She shook her head. "The Clave won't like this. This is a new species, so there's no precedent for what happens next."

"I'll figure it out," Alec said with a worried shrug. "I don't know, but I've got time. Its only been about six weeks. I'm not so sure about the Clave anyways, so maybe I've got more options than I think."

Isabelle looked at him with narrowed eyes. "I don't understand. What are you talking about?"

Alec picked at the covers, looking down. "Jace and I have been talking. Just alone, so we don't think anybody knows," he reassured. "We don't really trust the Clave anymore." He looked down. "Something's got to change. Izzy, Mom and Dad put their loyalty to the Clave over me when I was dying. Mom wrote Jace off and trusted the Clave over her own adopted son," he stressed. "Aldertree had to do something to make Magnus give in to him," he added. "Things aren't what they seem and I know something has to come to a head sooner or later." He shook his head. "It's going to come down to what's right and what the Clave wants, and Jace and I are prepared to do the right thing against the Clave."

Isabelle frowned. "I thought things seemed better lately." Alec gave her a disbelieving look and she waved a hand. "I mean Jace is back, so they clearly believe Valentine is the enemy now."

"Yeah, they do," Alec agreed. "But I think the only reason they don't like Valentine is because he won't fall in line," he said in a fearful tone. "They clearly don't actually care about protecting Downworlders. That's why the Warlocks are all hiding. Caterina is only so nice to me because of Magnus," he said softly. "She would be wary of Shadowhunters if Magnus didn't trust us. And that has to mean something, right?" he asked her. I know I went along with the Meliorn thing, but I was
wrong to do that."

Isabelle looked at him worriedly. "So you and Jace plan to defy them?"

"If we have to," Alec said simply.

"And you think that means it's a good idea to have a Warlock baby?" she asked incredulously. "If they're dirty, you will be a target. You are putting yourself at such a risk, Alec," she said with fear in her eyes. "Isn't this even more of a reason to not have a baby?"

Alec shrugged. "It's a risk, but if we have to go into hiding I can trust Magnus and his people to help protect my kid." He looked her in the eyes, willing her to understand. "I want this baby, Isabelle. I made my choice and I will do whatever I have to to protect my baby just like I would you and Jace."

She gave him a long look, but after a moment she nodded. "Okay, big brother. I've always got your back, no matter what."

Alec smiled gratefully. "I love you. Thanks for understanding," he said and she rolled her eyes and leaned across to hug him, flopping on top of him.

"I love you too, Stupid."
Chapter 6

There were very few things Alec liked more than coffee with tons of sugar in it. It was depressing to have to order decaf and lower the amount of sugar that went into it because he had been reading up on pregnancy, and though his was magical and demonic, it didn’t change that too much caffeine and too much sugar were bad for pregnant people and it could be bad for him.

Alec knew he was being a little dramatic as he pouted while looking down at his coffee cup on his walk back to the Institute, but his day had been annoying so far. Izzy woke him up early, when he could have gotten another hour of sleep, Jace was being all moody about Clary again, which Alec still found really gross to think about, and Aldertree chewed him out for not reporting that he got injured and then healed by an anonymous Warlock, since Alec and Izzy refused to name Catarina’s name in the matter.

His afternoon off was a blessing only dampened by not being able to get the coffee he really wanted and feeling generally cranky. He had a feeling it was pregnancy doing that to him, but he also figured it could be the new rules and regulations at the Institute that got added to every day. There was a fifty-fifty chance he felt cranky because of people, not because of his baby, so he kind of felt inclined to blame Aldertree just for the hell of it.

Because he already wasn’t in a great mood, and because his coffee wasn’t how he really wanted it so it didn’t really help improve his mood, when someone called Alec’s name during his blessed free afternoon, he felt a stab of annoyance. He turned to see who was running up the sidewalk towards him and sighed when he saw it was Magnus.

It wasn’t Magnus’s fault Alec was annoyed by him today. Magnus had been worried about him after Catarina told him what happened last night, so he had called and texted Alec seven times so far today. Alec texted him once that he was too busy to talk, because he had been, but Magnus kept leaving him voicemails to check on him. Now, it appeared, he had turned to finding Alec to talk to him in person. “Hello, Alexander,” Magnus greeted as he stopped beside him. “So glad I caught you!”

Alec had to admit, as annoyed as he was Magnus couldn’t accept his ‘I’m fine’ and leave him alone, it was still nice to see him. Magnus looked about as casual as Alec had ever seen him, wearing a pair of jeans and a tee-shirt, without any jewelry or makeup – though his hair was still perfectly styled – and a pair of sneakers. “I never thought I would see you in a pair of ratty sneakers,” Alec said with a small smile as he looked at the scuffed, stained grey sneakers he was wearing.

“I’ve been running around like crazy all morning,” Magnus said as he fell into step with Alec. “And I do mean ‘running’ since I can’t portal everywhere without losing strength. Everybody wants something this weekend,” he said, hooking his arm through Alec’s without hesitation. He looked at Alec almost as if he expected Alec would say no, but Alec didn’t mind. “So, what are you up to today?” Magnus asked, giving him a concerned look. “You said you were okay after that attack, but you’re really okay, right?”

Alec nodded. “Yeah, Catarina patched me up.” He sipped his coffee and grimaced some at the reminder that, though it was better than nothing, it wasn’t the coffee he wanted. “Victor Aldertree is a pain in the ass,” he said apropos of nothing. “He jumped down my throat for letting a random Warlock heal me rather than coming all the way home and hoping I don’t die on the way.”

Magnus huffed. “Yeah, well, that man probably wouldn’t be bothered if you did die, and that worries the hell out of me,” he said bluntly. Alec gave him a surprised and confused look and
Magnus gave a bitter smile. “Sorry. I just really hate that guy.”

Alec snorted. “You and me both after he tried to kill my brother and let me die,” he added and Magnus smirked, tugging Alec closer by his elbow. “So, where are you going now?”

“Home,” Magnus said with a heavy sigh. “I’m exhausted. I need a nap.”

Alec smiled. “Me, too,” he said dramatically. “Izzy woke me up early by sitting on the bed and staring at me until I woke up,” he said and Magnus shuddered comically.

“Sometimes Raphael does that to fuck with me, although he stands in the corner so it’s creepier since I don’t realize why I feel like I’m being watched at first,” he said and Alec laughed at the thought.

Alec thought for a moment and looked at Magnus curiously. “I didn’t know you knew Raphael like that. I mean, I thought you knew him, just didn’t realize you were friends.”

Magnus gave a strange, fond smile and nodded slowly. “Oh, yes. We’ve been friends as long as he’s been a vampire.”

“Oh,” Alec said, and suddenly he couldn’t help but ask the question that popped into his head. “Wait, did you two…” He trailed off, waving his coffee cup until Magnus’s frown of confusion turned into a wide eyed gape.

“Oh, no!” he cried, then cackled. “Oh my God, you thought me and Raphael?” He put a hand to his chest and leaned into Alec hard enough he would’ve swayed to the side if he wasn’t so well balanced. “Oh no, Alexander. I still think of Raphael like that young boy that I nursed to health once upon a time.” He shook his head. “No, he’s like family to me.”

Alec nodded. “Is he still trying to kill Simon?” he asked. “I mean, that would get Simon out of my hair for good,” he added hopefully, though he gave a small smirk to show he didn’t really want Simon dead.

Magnus laughed and shook his head. “No, it’s all okay now that Camille will be punished and they’re both off the hook.”

Alec looked at Magnus worriedly. “Are you okay?” he asked in a lower voice. He could see the pain in Magnus’s eyes when he said Camille’s name. Alec had always sympathized with that. Izzy had thought he was crazy for not being jealous, but it was hard to explain. He knew that Magnus didn’t want to be with her, but he also understood that Magnus couldn’t help but love her in some way. Camille was evil, but she was a big part of Magnus’s life, so he felt sympathy for Magnus’s situation.

Magnus gave him a soft smile and shrugged. “It was her or innocent Downworlders. I have to protect my people.”

Alec nodded but didn’t push for more information. He understood that need to protect. He felt it all the time. Alec was a protector. He always had been. His people were his priority. His family was his priority. Now, his baby was going to be his priority, he realized. Alec didn’t value his own life or his own heart all that much, because a long time ago, he had pledged himself to protecting others. His whole existence was to protect people, and though he had been led astray a few times, that was his ultimate goal. Alec didn’t feel like it was selflessness or heroics, it was just how it was. As he looked down at Magnus, he felt the strong urge to group Magnus in with the people he was supposed to protect, and it hurt a little to think that, for all of this closeness, Magnus hadn’t made any move to try and be with him.

“Hey, Alexander,” Magnus said suddenly, smiling up at him slowly. “I have a fun idea!” he said
excitedly. “I’m done for the day, and I assume you’re done at least for the rest of the afternoon,” added. “You should come over! We can watch TV and you can let me paint your nails,” he said, batting his eyelashes at Alec. “I’ll take it off again before you leave, I promise,” he added. “Please?”

Looking at Magnus’s big, wide eyed smile, Alec realized he was a weak man. There were a thousand reasons he shouldn’t go hang out with Magnus, and yet that one little ‘please’ in Magnus’s pouty voice was enough to make his insides melt.

“Okay,” Alec said, and then raised his cup to his mouth to take another drink as he watched Magnus’s little victory wiggle as they continued to walk.

~

Magnus was playing with fire and he knew it. He looked up from where he was painting Alec’s nails a sparkly black (“Like my soul,” Alec had joked) and saw him looking towards the TV, clearly trying to make heads or tails of the talk show that was on when Magnus turned the TV on and let it run to focus on his task of painting nails instead. Magnus knew he should keep his distance. He had sworn to himself after Alec got hurt that he would leave him alone. Nobody wanted someone trying to get with them after they had just been raped.

Magnus still felt a wave of nausea at the thought of what had happened to Alec. Alec needed friends, not someone trying to sleep with him after such a terrible trauma. Magnus knew that a boyfriend couldn’t be what Alec wanted after something so horrific happened. He wouldn’t want a boyfriend, he thought. So, no matter how much Magnus wanted to hold Alec in his arms and kiss every inch of him until he felt nothing but love and affection, he knew that wasn’t what Alec wanted right now, and more than anything, Magnus just wanted to keep Alec in his life.

“How is Clary doing?” Magnus asked for lack of anything better to talk about. It wasn’t that he wasn’t actually concerned, either. He did worry about the poor girl. She had suffered something terrible. They all had.

Alec turned to him and shrugged, careful not to move the hand Magnus was painting. “Some days are better than others.” He sighed heavily, looking troubled. “It would be easier if Luke would come back. He’s the only dad she’s ever known. He probably would be doing better with her, too.” Alec leaned his head against the back of the couch, putting himself at an awkwardly hunched angle to keep his hands on the pillow across Magnus’s lap. “I still feel like it’s my fault,” he confessed and Magnus felt a surge of sympathy.

“Alec,” he started, but Alec shook his head.

“No, I know it isn’t,” he said, softly. “But her mother’s blood was still literally on my hands.” He gave a sad little shrug and Magnus looked at him with comforting eyes.

“Darling, I felt the same way,” he said, and Alec frowned. Magnus winced some as he looked back down at Alec’s hands, moving to the other one. “My mother killed herself when she realized I was a demon’s child and not my father’s son, and I felt like it was my fault for so long.” Alec stilled suddenly and Magnus looked up at him, biting back a wave of panic when he remembered that Alec also got pregnant from demonic rape. Magnus paled. “Oh Alec, I’m so sorry, I didn’t mean-“

“No,” Alec said softly, shaking his head. “I know you didn’t.”

Magnus shut his mouth and went back to finishing Alec’s nails while Alec wordlessly turned back to the TV. He didn’t try talking again for fear of putting his foot in his mouth again.
Alec didn’t let Magnus take the nail polish off his hands. He liked it. It was black so it didn’t stand out a lot, but it was pretty. Alec wasn’t really one for ‘pretty’ things, but pretty black sparkles made him think of Magnus and, though things were weird between them lately, even more so after this afternoon, Alec liked thinking about Magnus.

As a result, when he met Jace for his scheduled training, Jace saw his nails and smirked. “Trying a new look, Bro? Gonna buy some black lipstick and eyeliner now? Go full goth,” he teased.

Alec rolled his eyes. “I saw Magnus while I was getting coffee and went to hang out with him,” he explained and Jace smirked.

“So I don’t need to kick his ass?” he asked and Alec smiled reluctantly, too amused to be stern.

“What’s with you and Izzy wanting to beat him up?” he asked, twirling his fighting staff in his hand as he moved to stand across from Jace. “We’re still friends, even if he doesn’t want to date me,” he said, shrugging some. “And his nails are always pretty so I let him do mine while we hung out. That’s that.”

Jace huffed, pushing his hair out of his face. “You two have to figure this shit out, Alec. You’re not just friends with him. You like him,” he stressed. “I might even go as far as to say more than like.”

Alec glared. “Don’t make me bring up your situation,” he said, and Jace looked startled and then annoyance flickered behind his eyes.

“Alec!” he said loudly, nearly dropping his staff, but Alec swung out and smacked him in the arm with his, making him yelp and raise his staff again. “Alec!”

Alec shook his head. “Later,” he stressed. “We’ll talk about this later, for now we’ve got to train or someone will report us for slacking,” he pointed out. “Just avoid hitting me there.”

Jace looked like he wanted nothing more than to skip straight to their conversation, but he nodded and took his stance again, staff raised. “Bring it on, then.”

Alec was in the shower after training when his bathroom door opened with a bang and before he could even turn around, the shower curtain was ripped open and he saw a bunch of curls and angry brown eyes. “IZZY!” he cried in contempt, grabbing at the curtain to try and pull it shut again, only to be unable to break her grip. He awkwardly held the bottom corner over himself, flushing bright red. “I’m naked-“
“Like I’ve never seen you naked before, grow up, Alec,” she said, rolling her eyes. “What’s this about you going on a date with Magnus and not telling me?” she demanded.

Alec spluttered. “What the- I didn’t- that’s-“ Isabelle grabbed one of his hands, making him lose the grip on the curtain and panic and cover his crotch awkwardly with his free hand as she held his still-painted nails up to look at them herself. “Isabelle!”

“Clary said Jace was telling Lydia that you saw Magnus today and he painted your nails and everything, and you told me he didn’t even like you anymore,” she accused.

Alec opened his mouth to explain, but to his horror, her heard Clary’s voice. “Izzy? Are you in here? Who’s room is thi- OH MY GOD!” Alec wrenched his other hand away from Isabelle and covered his crotch more securely, but it didn’t stop Clary from staring at him with a wide-eyed, horrified look and then yelping and slapping a hand over her eyes. “Oh my God, Isabelle-“

“Clary?” he heard Jace call from outside his room and Alec wanted to just give up and drown himself under the still-running water when Jace came into the room. “I heard shouting. What about Izzy, is she okay?” He walked into the door frame and raised an eyebrow at naked Alec, who at this point had given up shock or shame and was just blushing while staring at the door with the bitchiest expression he could manage while still trying his best to preserve whatever dignity he had left so that Clary at least didn’t actually see his junk. “Uh, why are we all looking at Alec naked?” Jace asked, looking at Clary, who was almost as red as her hair behind the hand over her eyes and Isabelle, who seemed totally unbothered and unashamed.

Alec cleared his throat. “Jace. Brother. Parabatai,” he said in a tight voice. “Would you lie and say it was self-defense when I murder our sister?” he asked.

“Oh you could try,” Isabelle said flatly. “And honestly, Alec, everybody in this bathroom has seen a naked man before-“

“They hadn’t all seen me naked before, thanks Isabelle,” Alec cried in contempt.

“And you should’ve told me you went on a date with Magnus-“

“I did not go on a date with him!” Alec defended. “And get out of my damn bathroom, all of you!” he shouted at Clary and Jace. Jace smirked and grabbed Clary’s shoulders to guide her out of the room and then came back and grabbed Isabelle, picking her up around the waist, though she kicked him in the shin for the trouble, and carried her out.

“We’ll wait out here,” Jace said with a devious smirk and Alec wrenched the shower curtain shut again while thinking about how he had two brothers and didn’t really need but one.

When he finished showering and came out, dressed this time, Clary, Isabelle, and Jace were all sitting on his bed. Clary was still slightly pink and it only got worse when she looked up and saw him standing there. Isabelle saw it and sighed. “Clary, come on, you’ve seen naked guys before, right?”

Clary flushed and stuttered out, “Not ones that look like that!” Alec flushed some in utter discomfort and stood beside the bed, arms crossed. “Sorry, Alec,” Clary squeaked and he felt a little less annoyed at her.

“Well, Fray, it wasn’t really your fault,” he said, glaring at Isabelle.

Isabelle just shrugged. “Whatever, your dick isn’t that special, Alec, I’ve seen bigger-“
“Ew, why,” Alec interrupted, shaking his head as he gestured with his hand. “Why do you gotta say that, Iz? C’mon, there is no reason for any of that sentence to ever even exist,” he stressed. “Don’t talk about my- my-“

“Dick?” Isabelle said and Alec glowered.

“And don’t talk about other ones you’ve seen, you’re my baby sister, I don’t need those details,” he stressed, putting his hands on his hips as he finished in what he knew probably made him look like their mother, but at the moment he didn’t care.

Isabelle, shamelessly, rolled her eyes. “Just because you haven’t seen guys naked yet doesn’t mean the rest of us are prudes.”

“For the record,” Jace said. “I’m not a prude, I just really don’t want to talk about people’s body parts with my siblings,” he said bluntly. “And I doubt Alec wants certain people gawping at him naked or Clary wants to gawp at Alec naked.”

Clary grimaced. “I could’ve lived my whole life without catching a glimpse of Alec’s junk, thanks,” she said to Isabelle. “It’s Alec.”

“Thank God for that,” Alec said firmly. “Because I’m still gay and you’re still a girl, one I don’t like at that, so I don’t want you looking at my junk.” He looked at Isabelle. “And no, I didn’t go on a date with Magnus, I ran into him when I went for coffee and he asked me to come hang out, so I did, and we watched TV and he painted my nails for fun, then I left and came back for training.”

Isabelle gave him an annoyed look. “This is why you aren’t gonna see naked men, Alec, you could’ve totally at least made out with him when you ‘hung out’,” she complained. “You don’t have to keep doing this to yourself, Alec-“

“I’m pregnant if you don’t remember, Isabelle, and I wish you would stop harassing me about this,” Alec snapped, getting actually angry at her. “You won’t get off my back, and it’s not okay! Jace will back off when I ask him to, but you won’t let it go, even though you know I’m keeping the baby, so there’s no chance in hell Magnus or anybody else is going to date me! Do you think I like that I don’t get to have a relationship with him?!?” he demanded loudly. “I have wanted him since the first time I even saw him, but I don’t get to have him now, and you reminding me of that constantly doesn’t make me feel better about it, Izzy!”

Isabelle actually looked ashamed as she looked back up at him, and he was vindictively happy about that. He knew she didn’t mean to rub salt in the wound, but she clearly didn’t understand how much it hurt to not get to at least try with Magnus. He was able to accept that the best he could hope for was to have Magnus in his life in some way, even if it wasn’t the way he wanted most, but Isabelle reminding him of that hurt him every single time.

“So that’s what you meant earlier,” Jace said suddenly, his voice far softer and more calm. “You’re going to have the baby,” he said, and Clary spluttered.

“You are pregnant?!” she gasped, and Alec jerked around, horror rushing through him like ice water dumped over his head. She put a hand over her mouth, eyes filling with tears. “Oh, Alec-“

“No, don’t cry,” he said quickly, voice soft. “It’s okay, Clary. I’m- I’m okay. I’ve known for a while now. I decided a couple days ago I want to keep it, so I’m really okay,” he said, but she still let out a soft sob.

“It’s all my fault,” she whimpered and Alec, contrary to what he had said earlier, didn’t really hate
her, so he sighed and walked to sit on the bed beside her, reaching out to put his arm around her shoulders. “I’m so sorry, Alec-“

“You didn’t blame me for your mom,” he said weakly, and she let out another sob as he pulled her into his chest. “I don’t blame you for what happened to me,” he murmured, and she just leaned against his chest and cried. “Clary, it’s- it’s okay now. I’m really fine. It isn’t your fault, and it’s- I’m okay. I like kids, I always wanted to be a dad, and I’m just gonna have a baby without having to marry a woman now. So it’s not all bad,” he comforted.

She looked up at him, sniffling. “How are you so calm?” she asked and he smiled sadly.

“I’ve had time to get used to the idea,” he said honestly. He saw Isabelle and Jace having an eyebrow conversation, probably to the tune of ‘great you made Clary cry’ and ‘blame Alec’, but he ignored them and looked at Clary again. “Seriously, it’s not your fault and I’m okay.”

She straightened up suddenly, pulling away from him, with a look of contempt. “Magnus won’t date you because you’re pregnant?!” she demanded, looking outraged at the thought. “Oh my God, I’ll kick him in the balls!” she proclaimed and Alec snorted, shaking his head.

“Why do all of you want to beat Magnus up for not dating me?” he asked, and Clary glared.

“Because he had serious enough feelings to burst in all dramatically and save you from that marriage to Lydia, but not enough to still love you after you got attacked? Bullshit,” she said bluntly.

“Uh-huh,” Isabelle agreed, and Jace shrugged.

“They’re not wrong.”

Alec put a hand to his forehead and shook his head. “You’re all crazy,” he said, though he didn’t complain any further when they started asking him about his plans for what he would do next since he was keeping the baby. It wouldn’t be easy, and he had to admit, having them all on his side was a comfort.
Chapter 7

Chapter Notes

You guys get a crazy long chapter today, because I had to include all of this in one chapter no matter how long it was getting!

When Catarina sat down at the table outside the café Alec had named for them to meet at so she could give him more medicine for his pregnancy symptoms, she caught a glint as Alec sipped his agua fresca. She smiled when she sat down and noticed the remnants of glittery nail polish around his nailbeds. “Magnus got you to let him paint your nails, huh?” she asked and Alec looked down at his fingers and then nodded with a fond smile.

“Oh, yeah. I thought that had all chipped off by now,” he said, looking at the lingering sparkle.

She ordered a cappuccino from the waitress and then smiled at Alec. “You know, you’re his first Shadowhunter,” she mused. “Well,” she said absently. “He says he kissed one once for shock value, but he didn’t have feelings for him.”

She was surprised to see a short flash of hurt in his eyes as he looked down at his drink. “I’m not his first anything. I’m not even ‘anything’,” he muttered. “Magnus is just… my friend,” he said, and she saw the way his lips turned into the slightest pout, undoubtedly one that wouldn’t even register in someone with smaller lips than his. “He was my first kiss, though, so that’s- that’s something,” he allowed hollowly.

Catarina was confused because she knew they had been seeing each other lately. “Alec, Magnus definitely wants you,” she said gently and he rolled his eyes, looking out at the street.

“Maybe he did want me, but he’s been absolutely ‘friends only’ since I got attacked,” he muttered. “I guess I’m just too much baggage for him now. I mean, I get it,” he added, looking down at his hands. “Who wants to start dating somebody who is carrying a baby from rape? Talk about trauma and trouble,” he said and Catarina gave him a stern look.

“Magnus Bane gets very determined when he wants something, so trust me, he hasn’t given up this easily,” she promised.

Alec didn’t seem very convinced. “It is what it is. He gets to make his choices just like I made mine.” He glanced up at her. “What, are you going to threaten to beat him up?” he asked and she raised a very confused eyebrow. He chuckled and shook his head. “My siblings and Clary… never mind,” he said, smiling sadly as he sipped his drink.

Catarina wanted to say something else, but she realized that there was nothing she could say that would make Alec believe Magnus’s intentions any better than what his experience had told him so far.

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Catarina hadn’t met with Magnus for non-business reasons in a while, so she was enjoying the ‘drinks and dessert’ on his terrace he had planned for them. She finished the last bite of her
absolutely decadent chocolate cake, something Magnus always got when she was visiting, and sighed. “Mmmm, chocolate.” She remembered something from the other day when she met Alec and he bemoaned not getting to have sugary coffee while drinking agua fresca and smirked across the table at him. “That man of yours has quite the sweet tooth. You ever treat him to chocolatey desserts?” she asked, and Magnus gave her a rueful smile, raising his wine to his lips.

“Catarina, you know I’m single,” he sing-songed and she rolled her eyes.

“I swear, you two are just as bad as each other,” she accused and Magnus looked confused and affronted. “Alec, Magnus.”

Magnus recoiled some. “Cat, I’m not dating him, that would be so unfair!” Catarina cocked an eyebrow and he spluttered. “He needs time and space to heal! He underwent a terrible experience, he doesn’t need some guy trying to date him right now!”

Catarina rolled her eyes at him. “I suddenly understand his self-doubt now,” she said and Magnus raised an eyebrow dangerously.

“Oh?” he asked in a sharp tone. “And what self-doubt would that be?”

Catarina bristled. She didn’t know when she had grown protective of Alec Lightwood, but she had found something in the young man that made her feel like he was worthy of her care. “Alec’s self-esteem is through the floor. He is scared of the future, because of his parents, and half the reason his parents are so hypercritical of him now is because he cast his lot with you, and now you’ve just relegated him to friendship after making him feel things he never felt before!”

Magnus scoffed. “I’m giving him space to recover from something traumatic, how is that ‘relegating’ him to friendship? Alec doesn’t want a boyfriend right now, he wants someone he can trust. He got hurt in a way nobody deserves to be hurt, and I’m just trying to keep him close enough to care for without making it seem like I just want to climb on his dick,” he said bluntly and Catarina glared.

“Alec Lightwood is not a man who is used to or desiring of being coddled. He is a man who has spent his whole life being strong and selfless, and you convinced him to go after what he wanted and then, when things got rocky, he had to wait and wait for an opportunity and it only made him want to have something for himself even more, and now, by trying to ‘give him space’, you’re breaking that poor boy’s heart,” Catarina accused harshly. “Alec thinks he’s undesirable because he got raped, Magnus. He thinks he’s too traumatized and carries too much baggage, and it’s because you have stopped treating him like Alec Lightwood,” she stressed.

“He’s not weak for being traumatized,” Magnus defended. “Anybody would be traumatized by something like that. I’m backing off so he doesn’t feel bad about himself.”

Catarina raised her glass. “Well, you failed, because to him, you backing off means you don’t want him because he’s too damaged for you to handle,” she said bluntly.

Magnus scoffed. “Oh and how would you know-”

“Because he told me,” she said simply, startling Magnus into silence. “We were talking about you, and I called him your ‘first Shadowhunter’, and he corrected me, and in that conversation, Alec said the words, ‘who wants to start dating someone who is pregnant from rape’, she said bluntly.

“You’re not doing shit but hurting that young man, and he doesn’t deserve it.” She sipped her wine and looked back at Magnus, who was frowning and looking down at his slice of cake, clearly doing a lot of thinking very quickly.
Magnus leaned back in his seat, looking puzzled. “I just thought…” He trailed off and sighed, leaning his face against his palm.

Catarina gave him a sympathetic smile. “You stoic men and your lack of communication,” she said and he gave her a grumpy little look that she found to be adorable. “You’re so old and yet you’re still so unsure about these things.”

“Yes, well, I’m good at falling for people, I’m not good at reading them,” Magnus admitted with a hint of bitterness in his tone. “I guess I shouldn’t make assumptions about Alec based on other people. Maybe other people would want space but knowing him, he probably doesn’t react the way most people would. He’s such a strong person,” Magnus said in a soft, fond voice.

The warmth in his eyes reminded Catarina of the way Alec looked when he talked about Magnus and she couldn’t help but smile and shake her head. “If you two don’t talk, you’re gonna end up getting the business from his brother and sister,” she added with a little snicker. “Apparently, Jace Wayland, Isabelle Lightwood, and Clary Fray have all threatened to beat you up for Alec if he wants them to.”

Magnus rolled his eyes and sucked his teeth. “Oh as if they could.” He paused, lifting his glass to his lips. “Although, if they tried all at once they might could,” he mused, humming as he sipped his wine and actually seemed to be thinking about three young Shadowhunters kicking his butt.

Catarina couldn’t help but roll her eyes at her friend. If Magnus and Alec ever actually communicated, she had a good feeling for their future together, Warlock baby and all.

~

After Catarina confronted him about the way he was treating Alec, Magnus paid better attention. He and Alec didn’t see each other all that often, which was disappointing, but when they were together, he noticed new things now that he knew what to look for.

Like the way Alec seemed to spend most of their time together looking his way. Or the way that Alec gave him a different smile than he gave others. And the way that Alec watched his lips when he talked sometimes that made Magnus shiver, because he could see the desire in Alec’s eyes when he did so.

Magnus knew that desire well.

He didn’t know what to do, though. He didn’t want to just come out of nowhere and kiss him, or express some other sudden declaration of feelings. Magnus didn’t want to startle Alec with his feelings after he had tried so hard to repress them and just be a friend to him. Alec clearly didn’t want space, just like Catarina had said. Magnus had to be grateful to her for smacking some sense into him, because he would have never noticed what those clues meant when he was trying so hard to give Alec space.

A thought came to Magnus, as he and Alec were walking back to the Institute after Magnus had been called in to help undo some warding protecting a potential hideout of Valentine’s. He looked up at Alec and bit his lip as he questioned himself and then decided to go for it. “Say, Alexander,” he said airily. “Would you happen to be free tomorrow night?” he asked, and then gestured grandly. “There’s this charming little bistro opening in my neighborhood and I was just lucky enough to get a reservation for the opening. I thought you might enjoy joining me since Isabelle mentioned you like Italian.”

Alec looked at him and gave a small smile and nod. “Yeah, I love Italian,” he said, and then pulled
out his phone. “Let me see, though. I’ve got some night off this week, I know,” he said, checking his phone. Magnus watched eagerly as Alec scrolled through something and then nodded. “Yeah, actually. I’ve got tomorrow night off.”

“Great!” Magnus said brightly. “I can text you the address, or we can meet up at my place and walk together. It’s not far, and the reservation is at eight, so you could come by and have a drink before we go,” he suggested.

Alec gave him a pointed look. “I can’t drink, Magnus;” he said as if reminding him of something, and Magnus tilted his head curiously. Alec suddenly stopped walking and paled. “Oh, that’s right. We didn’t… have that conversation, actually;” he said, and Magnus frowned. Alec looked around, but there was nobody else on their side of the street near them. They started walking again and Alec cleared his throat. “You may have heard stuff that hinted at it, and Catarina not asking you for help has probably hinted as well, but I decided to keep the baby,” he said, and Magnus’s stomach jerked in surprise.

“Oh?” he asked curiously. “What does that mean?”

Alec looked uncomfortable and Magnus felt like his genius idea was slipping some, because it was getting awkward fast. “It- it means I’m keeping the baby;” he said again. “I’m pregnant with a baby, I want to have a baby, so I decided to keep this one.”

Magnus was actually pretty taken aback by how simply Alec was putting it. It really wasn’t that simple. “You’re… Alec, are you sure?” he asked and Alec’s shoulders took on a defensive set that made Magnus panic and backtrack. “No, I don’t mean it in a bad way,” he said quickly, holding his hands in front of himself. “I just-“ He took a breath and let it out in a slow breath. “I didn’t expect this,” he said softly. “You’re a Shadowhunter. And a man at that,“ he added. “How are you going to handle things when it’s obvious you’re pregnant, or at least after the baby comes?”

“I don’t know yet;” Alec admitted in a serious voice. “But I thought about it long and hard, Magnus, and I- I really want to be a dad;” he all but whispered. Magnus’s chest tightened when he recognized the longing Alec’s voice held. He knew that feeling well, being a Warlock. “I love babies, and children. I hated being gay because of my duty and my family’s expectations, but I also hated that it meant I would never get to both be happy in my marriage and a parent.” He chuckled bitterly. “I mean, I still don’t get the first one, because even if I got out of marrying a woman, the Clave won’t ever let me marry a guy.” He smiled suddenly though, glancing over at Magnus. “But I can have a baby.”

Magnus smiled at the warm look on Alexander’s beautiful face and he knew better than to ask any of the questions swirling around in his mind about how it wasn’t that simple, because Alec looked happy and Magnus didn’t want to change that. “So. Baby Lightwood,“ he mused and Alec nodded, a small grin on his lips as he looked down at his feet.

“Baby Lightwood.”

Magnus took a breath and sighed. “Well,” he said matter-of-factly. “If you can’t have a drink, I can probably still whip up a really tasty fruit-juice cocktail that’s entirely pregnant person safe,” he offered. “I can get some yummy exotic fruits you probably haven’t ever tasted and make something delicious if non-alcoholic.”

Alec smiled brightly at him and Magnus’s heart leapt at the sight of it. “That sounds fun.”

“Great!” Magnus cheered. “You can stop by my place around seven, then?” he suggested and Alec nodded.
“I’ll be there.”

Magnus was so nervous he could barely sit still. He paced around and went outside to take a breather, trying to calm himself, because he was finally going on a date with Alec after so long of wanting to.

“Magnus? I hope you weren't kidding about the fruit drinks. I'm dying for something sweet. Magnus?” Magnus turned around just as Alec ducked out the doors to check the terrace. “Oh, there you are,” he said and Magnus smiled brightly.

“Hey, sorry,” he said, walking over to greet him. “I didn’t hear you, Alexander.” He smiled as he looked at Alec, who looked very handsome in a pair of dark blue pants and a soft-looking gray sweater that had a modest yet tantalizing v-neck. Magnus could see a glimpse of chest hair and it was very distracting. “Well don’t you clean up nicely,” he said, grabbing Alec’s wrists to hold his arms out to the side, making Alec blush as he looked him over. “I’ve never seen you wearing no black at all,” he teased and Alec smiled bashfully as Magnus passed him and went to the kitchen, bidding Alec to follow him.

“Thanks,” Alec said as he followed him. “I thought it would be a good idea to not dress like I’m about to leave on a mission anytime soon.” Magnus smiled at that, because it was just what he wanted: Alec all to himself for the evening. Even if he had absolutely no plans to even think about putting the moves on Alec, he wanted to spend a whole evening devoting his undivided attention to Alec to disabuse him of the notion that Magnus wasn’t interested in him because he was ‘damaged’.

“Lucky for you,” Magnus said as he snapped his fingers and several unmarked bottles and a blender appeared on the countertop, “I wasn’t kidding about yummy fruit ‘mocktails’,” he said with a little shimmy as he picked up one of the glass bottles and sniffed it. He smiled up at him as he poured some of the juice in the bottle into the blender. “Sugar cravings, huh?” he asked, and Alec groaned and turned to jokingly bang his head on the cabinet door. “That bad?”

“I have a sweet tooth,” Alec said, confirming something Magnus had noticed before. “I like sweet things and sugary things and sugar is bad for pregnancy, so I have to eat and drink less stuff with sugar-sugar. I’m not sure if it’s restraining myself or actual pregnancy cravings, but I’m dying,” he said dramatically. “It’s horrible. Limited caffeine and limited sugar basically rules out half of my diet. I don’t generally buy my own groceries, I eat whatever is at the Institute, but I’m going to have to buy sweet fruits and stuff. I can’t have a lot of them, but the internet says natural sugars aren’t so bad.”

Magnus smiled as he grabbed one of the sweeter juices and added some of it to his mixture. “Poor thing. And no alcohol,” he said, shaking his head. “I would die.”

Alec gave a teasing grin. “That’s because you drink too much,” he accused and Magnus huffed dramatically and gave him a dirty look as he hit the button on the blender.

When Magnus had poured up their drinks, he led Alec into his living room and sat down, curling one leg under himself so he could face Alec. He watched eagerly as Alec took a sip and made a positively blissful expression, leaning back with a moan of happiness. Magnus bit his lip, feeling pleased with himself at impressing Alec. “Oh man, it’s sweet and delicious,” Alec said with a faint sigh. He looked at Magnus and Magnus beamed.

“Glad you like it,” he said cheerfully. He sipped his own and was also pretty pleased with how the drink had turned out. He couldn’t imagine what it had to be like for Alec right now. “How is being
pregnant treating you?” he asked sympathetically.

Alec scrunched up his nose. “It’s… really weird,” he said. “I feel fine. Like, I’m not sick because of the stuff Catarina gave me. I mostly feel fine all day, I just get a little queasy when I need to take my next dose, but my body just feels weird,” he explained. “I can’t tell I’m pregnant in any sort of way yet, but I just feel off. It’s probably hormone imbalances, but it’s just weird.” He sipped his drink and hummed. “I can’t tell whether my body really feels wrong, or if it’s just the changes in diet,” he added, smiling at his cup. “I went from running on sugar and caffeine to having a mostly sugar and caffeine free diet. All the food I eat is different than usual, and I actually kind of had a crappy diet before, so I’m hungry all the time and can’t tell if it’s pregnancy or just eating healthy food instead of starchy junk that’s really filling.”

Magnus grimaced. “Ew,” he said, shaking his head. “Maybe this is a good thing for you if you ate so much bad food before.” He looked at Alec dubiously. “How do you look like that if all you eat is junk food?”

Alec snorted. “I spend most of my day exercising in one way or another. It’s not like I’m going to get fat from eating poorly.”


“For now,” he said with a touch of dramatics that made Magnus smile. “As big as I am, I might be able to hide it all the way to the end, but I’m still going to get fat.” He raised a hand to mess with his hair. “I’m really sort of freaked out about it. I want this baby, so I’m going to go through with the pregnancy, but it’s freaking me out thinking there’s something alive inside of me,” he said in an uneasy voice. “I’m a dude,” he stressed as if that said it all and Magnus couldn’t hold in a giggle that made Alec glare at him. “It’s not funny.”

“Oh, no, it’s not, Alexander, I know,” he apologized, still smiling. “It’s just how you said it,” he soothed. “I’m pretty sure I’d be really freaking out, too.”

Alec mumbled and sipped his drink again. He looked down at his still absolutely flat middle and Magnus followed his gaze. “I’m just having a hard time really believing it. I know it’s in there, but it’s hard to believe it when the only thing that gives it away is how my body just feels suspiciously off, and like I said before, I can’t be sure that isn’t just my changed diet.” He rubbed a hand over his face. “Can we maybe not talk about me being pregnant?” he asked suddenly, and Magnus felt bad for bringing it up.

“Of course, Alec,” he agreed, leaving Alec in peace to sip his drink.

~

Dinner was delicious and Magnus loved seeing Alec enjoying things, so watching him happily stuff his face was a fun thing to do. Alec was an oddly dainty eater for someone who was a self-professed eater of ‘mostly crap’. He had never actually eaten a meal with Alec, so watching his weirdly impeccable table etiquette and his tiny bites that belied the expression ‘stuff his face’, though he did eat a lot of food so it was still somewhat accurate, was so interesting. Everything Alec did was adorable, Magnus realized. It felt ridiculous to look at a hardened warrior and think he was the cutest thing ever, but it would be a lie to say otherwise.

Magnus knew he was totally gone on that man already, but talking to him over dinner and watching
him somehow make consuming a large amount of food look so modest showed a new side of Alec Magnus didn’t know about, and it absolutely, for lack of a better way to think about it, made him realize he was totally screwed. Alec was strong yet gentle, unabashed yet delicate, serious yet so funny, and every part of him that Magnus uncovered the longer he knew him left Magnus a little more enamored.

Magnus couldn’t help flirting some over dinner, and he enjoyed seeing Alec blush. He didn’t say anything too forward, but he didn’t hold back anymore. He had shut away the part of him that wanted Alec for what seemed like ages, and now he knew that Alec did want him, so he didn’t hide it any longer. When their desserts came, he even held his spoon up to Alec’s lips to give him a bite. “Seriously, you have to try this,” he purred as he leaned closer across the table. Alec gave him a somewhat confused look, though he covered it well, and accepted the bite.

“Yeah, that’s pretty good,” Alec said, looking down at his own lighter choice of a small strawberry sorbet. “This isn’t bad, though,” he said, though he looked wistfully at Magnus’s chocolate mousse.

Magnus smirked. “Darling, as sweet as you are, you could use something tart for once,” he teased flirtatiously. Alec chuckled, but he sounded a little off.

He ignored the way Alec started to grow more distant the bolder he got with his flirtations, and the way Alec tried to protest to Magnus paying even though Magnus had been the one to ask him out. On the walk home, he forewent his recent habit of hooking their elbows together and instead curled his hand around the crook of Alec’s arm, subtly stroking the swell of his muscle as they walked very close together. They didn’t talk the whole way, happy enough with a pleasant silence, and Magnus used that time to sneak looks at Alec’s handsome form in such a different outfit than usual. He had looked at him all night, but it was still nice to watch his move. Alec had an oddly graceful way of moving for someone so tall and lanky. Magnus smiled as a giddy thrill of, ‘maybe I get to have this after all’ shot through his thoughts. He leaned his head against Alec’s shoulder with a soft sigh, and stroked his thumb along the bend of Alec’s elbow affectionately.

“Okay, what’s up with you?” Alec asked suddenly, shrugging Magnus off. Magnus startled some, looking at him in confusion, but Alec was avoiding his gaze. “Why are you flirting with me?” he demanded.

Magnus forced a smile. “What are you talking about, I always flirt with you-“

“Cut the crap, Magnus,” Alec said in a harder voice, stopping walking to face him. There was nobody else near them on their side of Magnus’s street so Alec didn’t seem bothered to wait until they got to Magnus’s apartment. “Are you screwing with me on purpose or did you just forget to control yourself?”

Magnus flinched at the harsh tone. “Alec,” he said in a small tone, but Alec pushed on.

“You’re being really shitty and it’s not okay,” Alec said. “I have been as cool as I can be with you changing your mind about me-“

“Changing my mind-“ Magnus tried to rebut, but Alec kept going.

“But it’s like since we left your apartment you’ve gotten more and more flirtatious and it’s not like you,” Alec finished angrily, though Magnus could see nothing but hurt in Alec’s eyes as he looked down at him. “You’re not a cruel person, and I don’t understand what you’re doing;” he said in a softer, more pained tone. “But stop.” He turned and walked away without waiting on Magnus, and Magnus stared at him for a moment before jumping into motion to catch up with him.
“Alec, wait-“

“Just stop, Magnus,” Alec muttered. “I’m just going to go home and the train is in the same direction-“

“Alec, please,” Magnus said, running in front of him to turn around and stand in his way. Alec stopped and sighed heavily, not looking at Magnus. Magnus felt wave after wave of guilt as he stepped into Alec’s space and looked up at him, careful not to touch him. “Alec, I’m so sorry, I’ve gone about this all wrong, but please,” he said weakly. “Please come up and let me explain?” he asked. “I promise you, I won’t try and stop you leaving if you really want to leave, but please let’s just talk about it. I’ve been a jerk, you’re right, but I swear I had a good reason.”

Alec snorted bitterly, looking away. “Are you trying to hurt me?” he asked bitterly and Magnus’s throat tightened some, and he shook his head quickly.

“No,” he whispered. “Never, Alexander. Please, just-“ He stopped, swallowing hard as he decided to just say it here and now, in case Alec walked away from him like this. “I backed off because you got hurt and I thought the last thing you needed was somebody trying to date you after that.” He shook his head. “I didn’t want to lose you altogether, so I was just being a good friend. I thought you would be traumatized and would pull away from me if I tried to start something romantic with you in the wake of something so terrible. Most people wouldn’t be ready for anything more so soon after, and I was wrong to just assume that,” he said in a rush as Alec rolled his eyes in disbelief. “I know that, now, I know that you aren’t ‘most people’. I didn’t realize that pushing you away was hurting you until Catarina snapped at me-“

“Oh great, so now you’ve both been just talking about me getting raped behind my back?!“ Alec asked incredulously, and he tried to shove past Magnus.

“No!” Magnus cried, putting his hands against Alec’s chest to stop himself from falling. “No, she’s never mentioned it until recently! She said something and called you my ‘man’ and I was appalled she would think I’d try to get into your pants when you needed a friend instead, but then she got pissed and blamed me for making you feel like I don’t want you anymore, and that’s so far from true, Alexander,” he said quickly, desperate for Alec to believe him. He looked up at Alec, though Alec refused to meet his eyes, and his eyes burned slightly when he swallowed around the lump in his throat. Magnus took a shaky breath and continued. “Alec, I was wrong, and it’s because I didn’t pay attention you. I didn’t realize I was hurting you, and I’m sorry for just making choices for you without even paying attention to the cues you were giving, I just honestly didn’t think you wanted me anymore-“

Alec scoffed in disbelief. “Why wouldn’t I want you anymore, Magnus?”

“Alec, you got hurt-“

“I got raped,” he said bluntly and Magnus flinched at how emotionlessly Alec said it. “You’re the only man I’ve ever felt this way about, Magnus, and instead of being there for me in spite of what happened to me, even though we finally have had time that isn’t fully life or death, you started treating me like just a friend, and I got it,” Alec said quickly. “Who wants the baggage that comes with being pregnant from rape? I understood that, and it sucks, and it hurt like crazy to want you and know you didn’t want me anymore,” he added in a voice that made Magnus’s stomach clench painfully. “But suddenly you change your mind?” He looked so doubtful of Magnus that it broke whatever piece of his heart wasn’t already broken.

“No, Alec,” Magnus said slowly and gently, though he knew there were tears in his eyes right there for Alec to see. “I never changed my mind. Not about you. Not about how I feel about you,” he all
but whispered. “I thought I was doing the right thing, but I was wrong, Alec.” He sniffled, unconsciously fisting one of the hands he still had braced on Alec’s chest in his soft sweater. “I was wrong, and I hurt you, and I’m sorry.” He whimpered and gasped for a breath as he ducked his eyes. “Alec, please.” Magnus knew he was begging, he knew he was desperate, but he felt positive that, if Alec left now, Magnus might never get another chance to convince him not to leave for good.

There was silence for a moment and Alec gave a wet sound that almost passed for a laugh. “To be so sociable, you’re pretty bad at reading people.” Magnus’s heart caught in his throat and he looked up and saw a tentative smile on Alec’s lips. His eyes still showed so much fear and vulnerability and Magnus cleared his throat.

“I have been told that recently,” he admitted, and Alec laughed more easily this time. Magnus gave him a watery smile. “Alec, I’m so sorry. It was never about not wanting you anymore. I thought it was what you would want me to do.”

Alec rolled his eyes and finally, finally, he gave a real smile. “Well don’t do that anymore,” he said, and Magnus’s heart leapt in his chest as Alec looked down into his eyes due to the few inches of height difference there was between them. “You kind of suck at guessing what I want, so maybe you should just ask me in the future.”

Magnus gave an embarrassed laugh and nodded quickly. “I’ve learned better than to think I can predict you, Alexander. You always surprise me,” he said softly, looking at his beautiful eyes now that they weren’t full of pain and sadness but rather a far more welcome amusement. “You’re welcome to keep surprising me,” he offered, and Alec grinned.

“If that’s your way of thinking you’re gonna get me to kiss you, you’re sadly mistaken,” Alec said, stepping back out of range. He gave him a teasing look. “You were sort of a dick changing tactics on me without explanation, so I’m still kind of mad.”

Magnus gave a solemn nod. “I realize now that suddenly hitting on you without any explanation was probably a bad idea,” he agreed.

Alec looked at him closely, clearly trying to really decide if he believed him, but whatever he found in Magnus’s eyes must’ve convinced him, because a moment later, Alec’s hand slide into his and Magnus beamed as Alec started walking again, gently tugging Magnus back into walking towards Magnus’s apartment. “I’ll come up to talk if you want me to,” he agreed and Magnus ducked his head, biting back a stupidly happy smile.

“There’s nothing I would enjoy more, Alexander,” Magnus replied airily, squeezing the hand holding his playfully.

Though it was only half a block more, Magnus felt like he was floating on air the entire time.
Chapter 8

Chapter Notes

Rough times in the Lightwood family in this one. Sorry for this after the last chapter's happy.

Alec managed to go almost a day before anybody realized something had changed. He kept looking at his phone and smiling because Magnus was texting him questions about all of his favorite foods and fruits because he was going to cook him dinner next time he had a night off. He was really going all out about his apologizing, but he was so cute doing it that Alec didn’t bother telling him he didn’t need to keep groveling.

“What’re you smiling about?” Isabelle asked, and Alec looked up, snatched out of his thoughts and back into the reality that he and Izzy were waiting for a Vampire to show up and give them intel about the word on Valentine’s movements in the city. She raised an eyebrow and Alec ducked his head. “Alec Lightwood, are you texting during work?”

“Alec, are you texting because you’re thinking about Magnus?”

“Alec Lightwood, are you texting during work?”

“Alec Lightwood, are you texting during work?”

“Izzy’s smile widened. “And? That smile says it’s more than that.”

Alec bit his lip, fighting a blush he knew would win out in a moment. “Turns out last night was supposed to be a date, and he didn’t really warn me before he started hitting on me, and it turns out it wasn’t that he didn’t want to be with me, he just thought I wouldn’t want someone trying anything since what happened, but when he realized I was sad he didn’t want me anymore, he decided to go for it,” he mumbled in a rush, blushing just as he feared he would.

Isabelle beamed. “Ahhhh, Big Brother, I’m so happy for you!” she gushed, tugging him into a half-hug.

“I’m still kind of mad at him for assuming what I want instead of asking me,” Alec warned her. “I told him last night and he apologized, but I’m allowed to still be kind of bitter,” he said and she grinned.

“You really are my brother after all,” she said with a dramatic toss of her hair. “Did you refuse to go out with him until he begged for forgiveness? Is that what he’s doing?”

“I’m still kind of mad at him for assuming what I want instead of asking me,” Alec warned her. “I told him last night and he apologized, but I’m allowed to still be kind of bitter,” he said and she grinned.

“You really are my brother after all,” she said with a dramatic toss of her hair. “Did you refuse to go out with him until he begged for forgiveness? Is that what he’s doing?”

Alec scrunched up his nose. “He’s going to make me dinner as an apology and he keeps asking what I like best.” He shook his head. “Okay, focusing on the mission,” he said, and Isabelle giggled.

“We can talk about boys later,” she said brightly, earning an annoyed look from Alec.

~

Alec and Izzy didn’t get a chance to talk about boys, because the next morning, when they finally got home, covered in ichor after the intel from the vampire led them to a Circle hideout, only to find that the circle members had left demons guarding it. He and Izzy had managed to kill them all without incident, but the long night meant Alec had skipped a meal and his dose of potion and he was very ill.
“Izzy, I can’t-“ Alec swayed and she grabbed him around the middle to keep him upright.

“No, no, Alec, we’re right there. We’re almost to your room,” she said, and he swayed into the wall, gasping as the cool stone felt good on his hot face. “Alec, you’ll be alright, we just need-“ Alec moaned pitifully and then slumped forward, hanging in Izzy’s hold more than standing, and puked all over the floor. “Oh, Alec,” Izzy sighed, helping him slide down the wall – not into the puddle of vomit – and propped him there. She wasn’t strong enough to carry him, he knew, and he wasn’t strong enough to carry himself.

Isabelle looked down the hall at his room and then at Clary’s room, which was right across from them, and she made a decision. She grabbed Alec’s arm and tugged. “C’mon, Big Brother, just a little help,” she said, and Alec understood her intention and let her haul him to his knees so he could at least half-crawl across the hallway. He would be utterly embarrassed by the predicament if he didn’t feel like he was dying. Izzy knocked on the door and it opened quickly.

“Hey, Iz- Oh my God, Alec!” Clary rushed out and helped Isabelle haul him up by his underarms. “What’s wrong, does he need-“

“Get him into the shower,” Isabelle said, careful not to touch Clary’s room – I any way – covered in ichor and a little bit of Alec’s vomit. Alec felt so ill he didn’t even care that he was having to let them basically get him out of his gear and clothes without any assistance on his part. He also couldn’t bother to feel shame when he was stripped down to his boxers and hauled into Clary’s shower. The water was warm and soothing, and he let Clary prop him against the back of it – not seeming to care that her pajamas were getting wet as she stood in the shower with him – and closed his eyes, taking breaths as the warm water soothed the pounding in his skull just a little.

“Izzy, is he alright?” Clary asked, and Alec nodded weakly.

“I- I’m okay. I just- I haven’t eaten or taken my medicine,” he rasped. “This is actually almost what the pregnancy symptoms were pretty much like without the medicine.”

When he opened his eyes Clary was staring at him in horror. “Oh my God, Alec. That’s not normal.”

“No,” he said, chuckling. “It’s Warlock pregnancy and I’m a man,” he said, failing at humor.

Isabelle walked back into view, laying a towel already stained with nail polish on the floor outside the shower since water and ichor were running out since the curtain was open. She stripped out of her own gear and nodded for Clary to trade places with her. “You get dried off and go to his room. The medicine is in his bedside table. Then go grab a protein bar from the kitchen and some water,” she instructed, and Clary nodded, grabbing her bathrobe off the door as she headed out. Isabelle looked at Alec worriedly. “Alright, Alec, I need to get this ichor off of you and I can’t do that unless you can stand. Can you brace yourself?” she asked, and Alec nodded, reaching out to either side of the shower to brace himself with his arms.

“I’m- I’m okay, Izzy.” He glanced down at her and then grimaced when he saw her taking off her clothes until she, like him, was only in her underwear. “I might be traumatized from being in the shower with my baby sister later, but I’m okay,” he said and she laughed, grabbing the soap.

“It’s just nudity, Alec,” she teased. “And I’m not naked-naked,” she added, going to work scrubbing the ichor out of the hair on his bare forearms. It was sticky and slimy at the same time and if it stayed on their skin for too long, it could poison them. He was lucky his sister thought fast enough, because if he had to let a medic help him get it off and explain why he was sick, he didn’t know what would happen. He wasn’t ready to deal with that just yet. Alec tilted his head back as a particular throb went through his skull. “You okay?” she asked worriedly and he forced a laugh.
“Yeah,” he lied. “It’s just your bra is soaked through and I can see nipple and it’s really disturbing,” he said and she huffed.

“I’m literally scrubbing your boobs right now, you can deal with seeing mine,” she said as she washed the ichor off his chest, and he laughed weakly.

“I’m just glad it’s you and not Clary,” he said and Isabelle snorted. “It’s not as weird when it’s family. Mom and Dad used to put is in the bathtub together, so it’s nothing entirely new at least.” He shrugged. “And it’s not really any different than that time we went to the beach as far as shorts and that bikini you had,” he said and Isabelle grinned.

“The one guy who wouldn’t enjoy Clary naked in the shower with them,” she teased. “She’s got pretty sweet boobs,” she mused and Alec mimed gagging and then had to stop because it really made him gag. “Oh, Alec,” Isabelle said as she helped hold him as he doubled over and vomited again, not even complaining when it got on her feet. “It’s okay, Alec,” she said, and he could hear the tears in her voice as he settled on his knees and she knelt beside him, holding onto him. Alec coughed weakly, feeling so, so dizzy. “Iz, I’m okay,” he tried to say, but his voice cracked as the pain became overwhelming.

Isabelle silently sniffled her way through washing the rest of the ichor off of him. He leaned his head against her hip as she washed his hair and she let out a soft sob. “I’ve got you, Alec. It’s going to be okay,” she promised.

Alec just settled there and let her take over now, because he was fighting to stay conscious and he knew the ichor had to come off fast. He was pretty sure it was sapping his strength already, because this was far worse than the pregnancy symptoms had been at the beginning, no matter what he said to Clary.

Eventually, Clary came back and Jace was with her. “Alec? Alec?!” Alec managed to open his eyes and realized Isabelle was washing herself while propping him up with her hip and leg to keep him from falling over and drowning. Jace’s eyes widened when he saw Isabelle and he cursed. “Shit, Izzy, how long has that been on you?!” he asked, and Alec looked up at her and saw her face was very pale and her lips had no color. The ichor was hurting her because she’d been so focused on him.

“I’ll finish in time,” she said tightly, scrubbing her arms raw. “Jace, get Alec out and get him his potion and food,” she said, and Jace reached into the shower to grab Alec and haul him up. Clary helped Jace and wrapped a tower around Alec’s shoulders. Jace maneuvered him to lean against the sink. “I’ve got you, Buddy, it’s okay,” he said, looking him over to be sure Izzy got all the ichor. “Clary, help Izzy make sure it’s all off before she starts to get sick,” he said without looking at her, and Alec glanced over to see Clary start taking off her fresh clothes to get in the shower and help Izzy and he looked away respectfully. “Alright, up we get,” Jace said, hauling Alec out of the bathroom.

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“You know,” Alec slurred as Jace got him out of his wet boxers and wrapped the covers off of Clary’s bed around his shivering body. “Normally, I’d be embarrassed about everybody seeing my junk, but I feel so bad, you all get a pass.”

Jace laughed shakily as he directed Alec to sit on the bench at the foot of Clary’s bed. “C’mon, Alec,” he said, holding up the tube of potion.

Alec grabbed for it and didn’t even give himself time for his coordination to fail as he tipped it up
and swallowed it. He knew the potion would react within minutes and he exhaled in relief as he tipped his head onto Jace’s shoulder. Jace hugged him and Alec remembered the last time he felt this bad he was in the same position, with Jace holding him and stroking his neck. “At least I’m not dying this time,” Alec said exhaustedly.

Jace squeezed him tighter. “You’re still pretty sick, Alec.” He sniffled and Alec realized how bad he had scared him, too. “Is that just from missing your medicine?”

Alec shook his head slowly. “No food, no medicine, toxic ichor. All of it combined did this.”

Within five minutes, Alec’s pounding head cleared, his stomach stopped churning, and he didn’t feel nearly as shaky anymore. He was able to put on the clothes Jace brought him, though he was still pretty weak. He was still sitting on the bench when the bathroom door opened and the girls came out. Izzy was wearing Clary’s robe and Clary had on the same clothes she’d taken off to get in the shower with Izzy. Isabelle walked over to Alec and flopped down beside him. He saw how pale and tired she looked and he kissed her wet hair. “Are you okay?” he asked, and she nodded, laying her head on his shoulder.

“Yeah, the ichor was just starting to sap my strength, but it’s okay.” She looked over at Clary, who just flopped face down on her bed, not seeming to care the covers were a little damp from where they had been wrapped around Alec. “You okay?” she asked Clary, and Clary sat up on her elbow.

She smiled and nodded. “Just really worried about you two,” she said. “If Alec had died in my shower, it would be a hell of a lot of explaining to do,” she joked and Alec and Izzy both smiled at her. She winked. “By the way, Alec, I didn’t know you were so hot. Congrats on the great body.”

Alec groaned, rolling his eyes. “Don’t remind me you saw me mostly naked again.”

“Oh Alec, at this point, you may as well just show me your dick and be done with it,” Clary joked and Alec gave her a flat look that made her burst into laughter.

Isabelle turned and crawled up onto the bed, flopping down beside Clary. “Thanks,” she said, and Clary just smiled sweetly.

“What are friends for?” she asked, bumping their shoulders together.

Jace chuckled and patted Alec on the side. “Alright, you look ready for food,” he said, grabbing the water bottle and protein bar to hand to him.

“Oh crap,” Alec said, looking around. “Did my phone survive?”

Clary grimaced. “No, that’s pretty much toast,” she said and Alec groaned. “If it was just the shower water, I’d say stick it in rice and see if you could resurrect it, but the ichor made it start smoking.”

“Oh,” Alec said, and then sighed. “Damn. Magnus is gonna be really worried when he wakes up and I still haven’t replied to his texts.”

Jace perked up. “Hey, that’s right, how did things go? You two had a date, right?” he asked and Alec gave him an incredulous look.

“Well I didn’t know it was a date until he started flirting with me and I got mad at him for the mixed signals,” he said bluntly. “But it’s okay. We talked it out and yes, it was a date,” he said with a small smile.

“Woo!” Clary said, throwing her arms up. “You guys will be so cute together! I’m so happy for
you,” she said and Alec gave a sheepish grin and didn’t speak as he took a bite out of his protein bar.

After eating, they left Clary and Izzy to stay up while Jace helped Alec get to his room and get to bed. Instead of leaving, Jace just stole some of Alec’s clothes and crawled into bed with him. Alec snorted as they sat side by side, shoulders taking up the full width of the headboard that way. “If the sleepovers persist, I’m gonna have to get a bigger bed,” he joked.

“Tough shit, I’m sick of being scared for your safety,” Jace said and Alec gave him a sad smile. Jace rolled his eyes and slung his arm around Alec’s shoulders, tipping Alec into his side. “Man, that cannot happen again,” he said, and Alec sighed but nodded, leaning his head on Jace’s shoulder.

“I know,” he said softly. He looked down at his hands in his lap. “Jace, I’m scared,” he admitted, for the first time out loud. Jace rubbed his arm and Alec swallowed, his throat raw from puking earlier. “I keep ignoring it, but I’m a third of the way into pregnancy,” he stressed. “I’m not sure how I can keep hiding it, but I have to do my job. We’re in the middle of a war. You guys need me.”

Jace sighed. “We need you alive and well, Alec.”

“I don’t regret keeping the baby,” Alec confessed. “I keep thinking maybe I should change my mind. It isn’t too late. But I- I don’t want to.” He looked at Jace. “How selfish is that? This isn’t a good time to have a baby, but I want it, Jace.”

Jace gave him a stern look. “It isn’t selfish. No matter what the circumstances, you get to choose what you do.” He shook him playfully. “You want this baby, Man, then you have this baby. Yeah, timing is bad, but it isn’t like you chose to get fucking attacked,” he added. “Nobody can blame you for making your own decisions about something after you didn’t get a choice in how it happened.”

Alec took a shaky breath. “They will, though. When they find out, you know they’ll blame me for getting raped. They’ll say it’s my fault for going with Clary to a Warlock like that. People will say it’s my fault I got raped, and they’ll say it’s wrong for me to keep the baby. I’m just scared.” He shivered. “What if they make me?” he whispered.

Jace frowned as Alec met his eyes and he tilted his head. “Make you?”

“Get an abortion,” Alec said in a voice barely above a murmur. “You know the Clave, Jace. I’m carrying a new species, pretty much.” Alec swallowed hard. “What if they force me to have an abortion? What if I don’t get to decide after all?”

“Dude, that won’t happen,” Jace said and Alec gave him a pointed look.

“They tried to kill you for who your father was, you think they won’t force me to have an abortion because my baby is half-demon?” he asked and Jace’s eyes grew angry.

“Alec, they will not do that,” he said firmly. “If they try, I will die before I let them make you do something like that. You want this baby, right?” he asked, and Alec nodded, because he really did. It was still so scary and weird but he wanted it. He had thought long and hard about if he was doing the right thing, but it all came down to the fact that he wanted this baby. Sometimes he didn’t even have nightmares anymore, because they were replaced by dreams about being a dad and having a child and being happy. “They will not lay a finger on you as long as I’m breathing, Alec.”

Alec shuddered as a thought crossed his mind unbidden. That’s what I’m scared of.
The new phone Alec got didn’t get handed over from the tech team until late the night after his got trashed, and he knew it was going to be bad when he finally called Magnus, but he had no idea he would call Magnus and as soon as he said the words, ‘incredibly ill after a demon attack’, a portal was going to open in his bedroom and spit Magnus out at the foot of his bed.

“Alec Lightwood, you got attacked by a demon and didn’t let me know?!” Magnus still had his phone to his ear, though he seemed not to realize it as he started chastising Alec where he sat, legs crossed under him, on his bed. “I was worried sick, thinking you might have been hurt, and turns out I was right!”

Alec finally thought to put his phone down and he ended the call and tossed the phone onto the bed beside him as he looked up at Magnus suspiciously. “How were you able to portal into my bedroom?” he asked.

Magnus put his own phone away and stalked around the bed. “You were kept here when you were dying and I stayed in here to take care of you, and I had to portal out, so since I warded this place, I can portal in, too,” he said hands going to his hips as he looked at Alec. “Now tell me why you didn’t call me from someone else’s phone to make sure you were okay. The only reason I didn’t call your sister is because I thought if something had happened to you, she would call me.”

“Alec,” Magnus interrupted gently, giving him a warm smile, unable to fight away butterflies over how worried for him Magnus was. It was obvious how much Magnus cared. “I’m okay, and I was okay around dawn when I went to bed. I’ve only been awake a few hours, and I knew I was going to get a new phone, so I didn’t want to bother you until then.”

Magnus deflated a little, his ire leaving him as he sighed and gave Alec a worried look. “You wouldn’t be bothering me by reassuring me that you’re okay,” he said in a smaller voice that made Alec feel instantly guilty.

Sometimes Alec had trouble believing that Magnus cared about him at all, even after the events of their date the other night. Alec smiled apologetically and nodded. “I’m sorry,” he said, and Magnus looked surprised at his apology, which only made him feel worse. “I’m sorry, but I’m okay,” he said, shuffling over to pat the bed beside him.

Magnus sat down heavily, looking at him like he was searching for any signs of injury. “Are you sure? Because demon ichor can be very toxic, and –“

“It was less the demon ichor and more not having my medicine,” Alec said with a grin. “I puked all over Izzy’s boots. It was gruesome,” he said, and Magnus snorted, a smile finally twisting his lips.

“Ew,” he said, scrunching his nose adorably. He pulled his feet onto the bed and crossed his legs under him just like Alec so they were facing each other. “Did you call Catarina?” he asked, and Alec
shook his head.

“I’m fine, Magnus, really,” he said, and then tentatively reached out, resting his hand on Magnus’s knee. “I’m a little traumatized from Clary seeing me naked again and taking a shower with my sister, but I just hadn’t eaten, I missed my dose of potion, and I was covered in ichor that sapped my strength even worse than I already was,” he said. “As soon as I was clean, had the potion, and got something to eat, it took maybe ten minutes before I felt better.”

Magnus curled his hand around Alec’s, holding it tight. “Alright,” he said, interlacing their fingers. “As long as you promise me you would tell me if you weren’t okay,” he said, and Alec nodded firmly.

“I promise to keep you in the loop,” he said sweetly, tilting his head to smile at Magnus. Magnus was so cute when he was worried. Although, Alec thought to himself, Magnus was always really handsome. He was a very attractive man. “So, hey, I have a mission in about an hour, but I’m all yours until then. If you want to talk or something. I don’t have anything to do, really,” he said, looking around the room. “But you can tell me about your day?” he suggested. He mostly just didn’t want Magnus to leave yet.

Magnus seemed to agree, because he smiled brightly and nodded. “I’d love to,” he said, crawling around to lean back against the headboard beside Alec, and Alec settled in to listen to whatever Magnus had to say, their fingers still laced together between them.

Alec would take Magnus however he could have him, and if it was just listening to him talk about rearranging his closet all day, Alec would enjoy every extra moment he got with such a caring man.

While they talked, they had eventually slid further down until Alec was mostly lying back against the pillows and Magnus lay on his stomach beside him, propped on his elbows as he described the old concept and new concept of his closet. After a while, Magnus had settled on his front, arms curled beneath his head as he looked up at Alec, who was more upright then him while he talked. When Magnus’s words started to slur, Alec just smiled as Magnus drifted off to sleep. He contented himself with just sitting and watching him sleep, propping himself on one elbow to look down at him.

It got a little uncomfortable, however, when Magnus shifted onto his side and reached out for something in his sleep and, instead of whatever he was dreaming of reaching for, he curled his right hand around Alec’s thigh. Alec froze, awkwardly staring at the sparkly-nailed, bejeweled hand curled around the outside of his thigh. It wasn’t anywhere inappropriate, and it wasn’t even high up his thigh, but Alec couldn’t help but flush slowly as his (maybe?) boyfriend touched his leg. He looked around, trying to think of a way to get his thigh out from under Magnus’s hand. He tried moving his leg back, tipping over onto his back instead of lying on his side to face Magnus, only to freeze again when Magnus’s hand fell onto his other thigh, and this time higher up and kind of on the inside of it.

Alec swallowed, feeling like his face was definitely on fire, and tried to wiggle away only to squeak because Magnus clearly felt him moving and started rubbing his leg. “M-Magnus!” he squeaked, and Magnus hummed, still moving his hand in short sweeps, just twisting his wrist back and forth. “Um, Magnus, I- uh-“

“Mmmm, Darling?” he mumbled, and Alec gulped as Magnus’s hand slid slightly further up his thigh.

Alec thanked the Angel that he was too embarrassed to get turned on by a really hot guy’s hand that close to his junk, because that would be something he would never live down.
He would also never live down his door opening without so much as a knock and Jace walking in. “Hey, Alec- WHOA!” Jace held a hand up. “Alec, is this really the time?! Who even let him in here?” Jace spluttered.

Magnus jerked awake, lifting himself up, pushing on Alec’s thigh to get up. “Huh?” he asked, then looked at Jace and Alec. “Oh no, did I fall asleep?” He frowned at Alec. “Alec? What’s wrong?” Alec cleared his throat, glancing down at his leg. Magnus followed his eyes and then laughed awkwardly and snatched his hand away. “Wow, sorry to not only fall asleep but fall asleep and try to grope you.”

It was really shocking to see a slight blush gracing Magnus’s cheeks and Alec was distracted from his own embarrassment by how cute Magnus looked when he blushed. “It’s okay. I was trying to figure out how to get out from under your hand,” he admitted, then turned to Jace. “Is it time to go?” he asked, and Jace raised an eyebrow, smirking. He rolled his eyes. “We were talking and he fell asleep, Jace, don’t read anything else into it.”

Magnus hopped off the bed. “Yeah, Jack, we were just talking and I’ve had a long day, unlike lazy bones here, sleeping in all day because he was up all night,” he teased, winking at Alec. Alec rolled his eyes at Magnus’s purposeful mispronunciation of Jace’s name.

“Umhmm,” Jace said, eyeing him skeptically. “Sure you were,” he said with a wink. “How did you get in here anyways?”

Magnus winked. “I have my ways,” he said, then turned at the foot of the bed to face Alec. “Please text me to let me know you get home okay. Even if I’m asleep, I’ll just read the text in the morning,” he said, and Alec nodded.

“I’m sorry I made you worry,” he said and Magnus just grinned.

“You better be,” he said, and then he opened a portal and stepped through, disappearing instantly.

Alec smiled at the empty space until Jace snorted. “Dude, any particular reason your boyfriend can portal directly to your bedroom?” he asked, wiggling his eyebrows. “And to think everybody thinks you’re so innocent.”

“Oh my God, shut up,” Alec complained, throwing one of the pillows at Jace as he got up and went to grab his gear.

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Jace eventually stopped teasing him after a week, but he didn’t stop pestering him about Magnus being able to portal into his bedroom. Izzy overheard and took up teasing in his place. Every time Alec went to his room Izzy would make some crack about Alec getting laid.

What he didn’t tell them was that, actually, he and Magnus hadn’t kissed since that kiss at the wedding. Even though twice he had spent the night at Magnus’s house – though not sharing a bed – their relationship hadn’t actually progressed at all. It made him feel really uncomfortable, because he knew Magnus was waiting on his cue. Alec wanted to progress their relationship, he really did, but he just felt uncomfortable being the one that had to make a move.

He decided to just suck it up and go for it the next time he saw Magnus, but he didn’t count on Magnus being so startled when he opened the door and Alec grabbed his shirt that he jerked back on instinct and tripped and fell. “Oh crap!” Alec cried as he tried to catch his falling boyfriend and ended up tripping and falling with him, landing hard on his hip and elbow as he tried to miss Magnus
when he fell. He hissed in pain when his hip made hard contact with the floor and he groaned as he rolled onto his back beside Magnus, who was already scrambling, trying to get up.

“Alec?!” he asked frantically and Alec sighed and covered his face with his hands. “Alec, are you okay? What was that?” he asked, looking down at Alec where he knelt beside him.

“That was me embarrassing myself beyond imagination,” Alec mumbled into his palms.

Magnus pulled his hands away from his face and Alec stared up at him with shame and embarrassment. “Darling, talk to me,” Magnus urged and Alec sighed and pouted as he avoided Magnus’s gaze. “Alexander.”

“I was gonna kiss you,” Alec muttered, looking away from him as he sat up. “I had psyched myself up and then I was a total spaz and just tried to grab you, and I have to go kill myself now,” he bemoaned. After a short silence he chanced a glance at Magnus only to see a shy look on Magnus’s face as he tilted his head towards Alec.

“You were going to kiss me?” he asked, and Alec nodded, swallowing as he looked down at the floor. “No, hey.” Magnus tipped Alec’s chin up and smiled at him from where he knelt beside him. “Darling, you know you don’t have to do anything you don’t want-“

“But I do want,” Alec stressed. “I want to kiss you, and I know you’re waiting for me to make the first move, but I’m weird, and I know I’m weird, and I want to kiss you but we’ve been doing this for weeks and I haven’t so it’s even more awkward, and I kind of get uncomfortable thinking about how it isn’t a big deal but I haven’t done it yet, and I decided to just grab you and kiss you, and I totally understand why you jerked away, that was really weird, and sudden, and-”

“Weird?” Magnus offered, grinning at him. “You’ve said weird so many times.” Magnus looked at him with such fondness that Alec frowned some. He tilted his head in confusion and Magnus chuckled softly. “You’re the cutest thing I’ve ever seen,” Magnus whispered and then, to Alec’s pleasant surprise, he ducked in and pressed a sweet little kiss to Alec’s lips.

Alec was stunned when he pulled away and Magnus giggled at his expression. Alec blinked a few times and then smiled bashfully. “Cute, huh?”

Magnus nodded, nose scrunching as he smiled. “No, the cutest,” he stressed. He cupped Alec’s cheek with his hand. “I don’t mean this in a bad way, you’re such a strong, brave man, but you’re also just the most adorable man I’ve ever met.” His thumb brushed along Alec’s cheekbone and he leaned into Magnus’s touch.

Alec saw Magnus’s eyes flick back to his lips and he smirked some. “C’mere,” he said, reaching out to put his hand on the back of Magnus’s neck, drawing him in again. Magnus smiled in the split second before their lips met again, and this time, Alec didn’t just sit there. Alec wasn’t very practiced in kissing, but he was a fast learner and had a very vested interest in getting better at it now.

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“All I’m saying is,” Alec said, popping a grape in his mouth. “I hate the mixing patterns thing. It’s ugly,” he stressed. “Stripes and floral should never be worn together. Any girl I see wearing mixed patterns looks like a twelve year old automatically.”

Magnus laughed out loud, clapping a hand over his mouth embarrassedly. He couldn’t believe Alec was saying these things. “You are blowing my mind, Alexander!” He leaned his head against the back of the couch, smiling at Alec beside him. “I would have never guessed you were into fashion.”
Alec smirked. “I’m not worried about how I dress, really, but I grew up with Isabelle. Who do you think took her shopping when she was a teenager, and helped her practice makeup and hair stuff?” Magnus’s chest warmed as he listened to Alec talking about being an amazing big brother like it was the only possible conclusion. “Trust me, Izzy didn’t learn to do perfect winged eyeliner on her own,” he said and Magnus beamed.

“The more I learn about you, Alexander, the more amazed I am,” he sighed, shaking his head some. “Did she put makeup on you?” he asked and Alec cringed.

“Yes, and I’m not one that looks good in makeup.” His gaze crossed over Magnus’s face and Magnus winked one makeup-decorated eye at him. “See you, you’re really pretty in makeup,” he said, and Magnus smirked.

“Pretty, huh?” he asked, and Alec gave him a playful grin and nodded.

“Yeah, you’re pretty in makeup,” he said. “But I just look very goth.”

Magnus rested his hand on Alec’s forearm and stroked his wrist. “So, Mr. Fashion,” he drawled. “What about me?” Alec raised an eyebrow as he chewed another grape and Magnus waved a bejeweled hand at himself. “My outfits. Do I pass fashion muster?”

Alec scoffed. “C’mon, your outfits are always amazing. I’ve never seen you wear the same thing twice. You have such interesting things, and you can wear the hell out of a cravat,” he stressed.

Magnus felt butterflies as he leaned into Alec’s side, his knees falling over Alec’s thigh. “I love this,” he sighed. “I love learning new things about you. Just when I think I know you, you surprise me.”

Alec curled a hand around Magnus’s knee and leaned closer. “I like that you don’t find me boring,” he admitted and Magnus’s heart leapt into his throat. “I always worry you’ll get tired of me. I’m just Alec.”

Magnus reached up and touched his cheek affectionately. “‘Just Alec’ is wonderful.”
Chapter 10

There was something to be said for the feeling of fingertips on skin that usually went untouched by others, Alec mused as Magnus trailed his hands down Alec’s back. It was such a normal touch, and yet Magnus’s hands made his skin tingle and his blood pound in his ears. Alec moaned softly into Magnus’s mouth as he kissed him more deeply, his body pressing down against the hard resistance of Magnus’s body. Magnus arched into him, groaning in his throat at the feeling as he clutched at Alec’s middle.

Alec had been the one to take things further. He had skipped out on going home after a mission to go see Magnus since it wasn’t yet that late, and when he got there, Magnus was clearly getting home from being out at a party, because he opened the door looking annoyed that someone had interrupted him changing out of sweaty clothes. Alec had taken one look at Magnus glitter-and-sweat glistening chest beneath his unbuttoned shirt and it sent a jolt of lust through him like nothing else ever really had.

The whole time Magnus flitted around getting a glass of water while talking to Alec, that open shirt fluttered and exposed more enticing skin, and it was only after Magnus had put his empty glass down on the counter that Alec has grabbed him by the hips and pulled him into a kiss. He tasted like lipstick and faintly of alcohol he’d had at the club, and his skin was tacky with cooling sweat, and Alec wanted.

Magnus had clearly been on board, because they ended up where they were now, lying on Magnus’s couch, both of them shirtless and sweaty after a while. Alec had never really thought about the heat of bare skin on his bare skin, but he found himself wanting to taste Magnus’s warm skin under his lips, and he moaned at the thought. He pulled away from kissing Magnus to breathe, and Magnus looked at him through barely opened eyes with a slight confused crinkle between his eyebrows. Alec moved from his lips to his jaw, and when Magnus tilted his head in surprise, Alec took advantage of the access that gave him to Magnus’s neck.

Magnus moaned audibly when Alec pressed wet kisses to his throat. “Alexander,” he gasped and the breathless sound of his name from Magnus’s lips sent a jolt through his body. Alec rolled his hips against Magnus’s as he kissed down his throat to his collarbone and Magnus’s body jerked against his. Magnus shivered and let out a soft chuckle of surprise. “Mmmm, Darling,” he moaned, and Alec moved further down his body, trying to find more and more spots on Magnus’s body that made him shudder and gasp. He made a surprised sound on his own when Magnus grabbed his ass and squeezed. He looked up at Magnus, raising an eyebrow, and Magnus just smirked. “What? You have a nice, tight handful of a butt,” he said innocently and Alec chuckled and shook his head as he shifted further down, lips trailing down Magnus’s sternum.

“Magnus,” Alec breathed against his chest, lips tracing the curve of his pectoral muscle. Magnus hummed, curling a hand in Alec’s hair, stroking at his scalp slowly. “Um, do you wanna- I mean.” Alec hesitated, feeling blood rush to his cheeks. “Can we- uh-”

“Yes, Alexander?” Magnus asked in a very clearly teasing tone.
Alec groaned in embarrassment as he looked up at him and, sure enough, Magnus was fighting back an amused smile. “Can we take this somewhere I actually fit?” he asked, and Magnus glanced down to where Alec’s legs were awkwardly contorted around the end of the couch.

“Like the bed?” Magnus teased, but sat up, pushing Alec up with him. He kissed him sweetly and Alec exhaled in relief that Magnus wasn’t going to tease him about it. “Sure.”

Alec felt nervous but excited as he grabbed Magnus’s hand and Magnus let him lead him to his own bedroom. Alec loved watching Magnus move at all times, but without a shirt on and with very tight black jeans slung low around his hips, Magnus’s muscles rippled and shifted under his skin as he walked and it was absolutely stunning. Alec nearly ran into the door because he was too busy looking back at Magnus, and Magnus giggled at him. “Look where you’re going, dummy,” he said, tugging Alec to him as he spun them around and backed towards the bed, hands on Alec’s hips. “You can look at me better if you don’t knock yourself out.”

Magnus grinned up at Alec as he pushed himself away and fell back onto the bed. “This better?” he asked Alec, and Alec nodded, swallowing dryly as he crawled onto the bed after him.

“You’re so beautiful,” Alec breathed as he looked down at Magnus, splayed across sheets that were, today, a bright coral color. His skin was such a beautiful golden color against the sheets.

Magnus gave him a soft, loving look and reached up to touch his face. “So are you, Alexander.” He slid his hands down Alec’s chest, moaning as he traced each dip and hard line with his fingertips. “And very, very sexy,” he added. He tugged Alec down and Alec wasted no time claiming his lips, lowering his body against Magnus’s as he kissed and touched him in ways he had only ever dreamed of before tonight. Alec was nervous but absolutely ready when he asked Magnus if he could take his pants off. Magnus’s shiver as he unbuttoned his jeans made him more eager than ever to get Magnus out of his clothes. Everything happened so fast after that, that Alec could barely believe he hadn’t come in his pants on accident.

Alec hadn’t come to Magnus’s house expecting things to end up this way, but he was absolutely not complaining by the time he ended up on his back with Magnus slowly sinking down on his cock. Magnus was a vision as he settled on Alec’s lap, his body a tight, tight heat unlike anything Alec had ever known. He was trembling in a way that made Alec realize he had been waiting for this just like Alec had. Magnus whimpered when Alec rubbed at his thighs to soothe him. The sounds Magnus made as he rode Alec said all that needed to be said about how Alec made him feel. Alec couldn’t believe his luck at having his first time be with someone like Magnus. Magnus was the most perfect person Alec had ever met specifically because he wasn’t perfect. Behind his shiny exterior was a real person with flaws just like Alec. Alec had never thought much about how his first time would go, because he’d repressed every part of him that wanted to sleep with a man for so long, but he doubted his wildest fantasy could live up to the sights, sounds, and sensations of Magnus Bane straddling his lap.

And it was while enjoying the beautiful sight of Magnus’s muscles flexing with every move, the sound of him breathlessly moaning Alec’s name, and the feeling of his body around Alec, that a stray thought crossed Alec’s mind and sent pain through every single inch of him.

It wasn’t really his first time.

Alec froze and his stomach churned with the memory of his real first sexual encounter, and his throat closed against a wave of nausea. Magnus seemed to notice Alec had stopped moving and he looked down. “Darling?” he panted, slightly winded from his pace.

Looking up into those beautiful eyes full of pleasure, Alec fought to shove every bit of discomfort
and fear and pain down and he sat up to pull Magnus into a kiss. “C’mere,” he breathed and Magnus moaned as Alec grabbed his hips and urged him to move again.

“Oh, Alec,” Magnus gasped as the change of angle clearly did something right, and Alec looked at the beautiful sight of Magnus’s head tossed back in pleasure, and knew he couldn’t ruin this moment. He put his lips to Magnus’s throat and wrapped his arms around him tightly, hiding the tears that threatened to spill and ignoring the residual terror of that day even as it tried to overcome him, and instead he focused all his strength into willing himself not to lose his erection.

As Magnus kept making pleasure sounds and grabbing onto Alec’s shoulders and hair as he rode him, Alec kept his face hidden from him and focused on making this everything it was supposed to be for Magnus, even if he was fighting tooth and nail to keep himself from panicking with every memory of the stolen ‘first time’ he had experienced at the hands of a demon that flitted through his mind. Alec wanted this. He wanted Magnus, and he wanted this night, and these feelings, and he wouldn’t let something that had already did so much to hurt him take this from him, too.

Magnus finished before he did, arching and crying out in pleasure in his arms, and Alec was able to focus on him, on Magnus, on the physical pleasure he felt from Magnus’s body and the pride he felt at being the one to make someone like Magnus Bane fall apart in his arms, as well as the emotional pleasure he got when he thought about how much Magnus cared about him and how this meant something for both of them. It took a few minutes longer, and he fought for every moment his brain managed to shut out the memories, but when Alec finished, the only thoughts in his head were for Magnus, the man who loved him, though they hadn’t ever said the words, like nobody else ever had.

When they collapsed onto the pillows together, Alec clung hard to Magnus in his arms as well as the Magnus in his mind, because the claws of every shred of devastation that demon had scarred him with were tugging at those good things, and Alec didn’t want to give it up yet. He knew that if he relaxed for a moment, there would be the same flashbacks that haunted his nightmares, and the same fear that he dealt with almost every single night alone in his room as he tried to sleep.

Magnus shifted just far enough for Alec to slide out of him and he collapsed right back onto Alec’s chest, pressing warm, wet kisses to Alec’s neck and jaw as he caught his breath. Alec stroked his back with one hand and his hair with the other, keeping him close so that everything was Magnus. All he could see was beautiful golden skin and black hair, all he could hear was Magnus’s slowing breaths, all he could taste was the lingering tang of Magnus’s lipstick, all he could smell was Magnus’s hair gel, and all he could feel was Magnus in his arms and in his heart.

After a few minutes, Magnus shifted up onto his elbows and smiled down at Alec, reaching a hand up to brush Alec’s hair out of his face. “Hi,” he said in a soft tone, and Alec was a little surprised at how he sounded almost giddy. He smiled in spite of the rising fear and pain that was still threatening to take over, because Magnus was giddy about sleeping with him. Him.

“Oh, is that a thing now? ‘Babe’?”

Alec curled his arms around Magnus’s waist and nodded with a little smile. “Yep. Problem?”

Magnus giggled and tilted his head. “This was wonderful, Alexander,” he whispered, sounding almost afraid he had imagined it all.
Alec understood the feeling, even if he was fighting a war inside himself, because Magnus made him feel loved in a way he hadn’t ever felt before. Alec had never thought sex would feel like this. He knew that for a lot of people it probably didn’t, but his feelings for Magnus weren’t something ‘normal’, and he knew that with every part of him. He didn’t have to have experience in love to know that this was something different, and something real. The best part was that Magnus seemed equally surprised by his feelings, and he had been in love before. Alec couldn’t help but smile at that thought as he closed the space between their lips and gave him a tender kiss. “It was incredible.”

Magnus smiled brightly as he sat up, bracing his hands on Alec’s chest. “Well, I really need a shower now,” he said with a teasing wink. “I was already sweaty from dancing and now I’m just filthy.” He slid off of Alec’s lap and stood from the bed. “I’ll just be a minute,” he said, not bothering to grab clothes. “You can join me,” he offered with a glance back, grinning when he caught Alec watching him walk naked across the room.

The further away Magnus got, the closer to the surface the panic that he’d been fighting back for so long now got, and with a careful focus on his expression, Alec smiled at him as he shook his head. “Maybe in a minute,” he said, and Magnus wiggled his fingers at Alec before disappearing into the bathroom.

Alec sat up, taking deep, slow breaths as the panic rose and he knew he couldn’t fight back the anger and the pain that came with it any longer. He rested his elbows on his raised knees and leaned his head down between his arms, willing himself calm, but his breaths began to shudder rather than stay even, and even though he held his eyes open, he could see the lurching, jerking, terrifying figure of that demon coming towards him even as he had tried to stand and fight.

The day he was raped, Alec had no weapons, but he had used all the training he had ever gotten to try and fight back, but it was useless. Without a weapon or a stele to try drawing runes on the floor or walls to protect himself or escape, he had only been injured further by fighting. The demon only injured him when he fought, and he had fought the whole time it was on him. He couldn’t remember Jace and Izzy and Clary finding him or taking him to Magnus, but he had seen the state of his body when he woke up, and he had already been mostly healed by then. He had been covered in cuts and scrapes and bruised and he knew the only reason it hadn’t really harmed him was because of the baby.

And yet, as he looked down at his middle, where he was still mostly flat though he could tell his stomach was harder and his abs near the bottom were less defined, he still wanted his baby. Alec let out a soft sob as the guilt crashed over him again. He still didn’t know what he was guilty for. He already loved his baby, and he couldn’t imagine being guilty he decided to keep it, but when he thought about the monster that was his baby’s father, he felt sickened at the thought of loving something that was even a fraction of that demon. Perhaps that was what he was guilty for, Alec thought to himself. He was guilty that he loved the offspring of his rapist. But at the same time, he knew it wasn’t his rapist’s baby. It was his baby. This baby was Alec’s baby, and nothing else.

Alec thought of how four months had passed by now and yet that attack still managed to twist its way into every good thing in his life and taint it. He had allowed thoughts of that terrible monster to come into his mind while he was making love and it broke his heart to think that, every time he remembered his and Magnus’s first time, something that was beautiful and wonderful, he would remember the bile in his throat and the tears in his eyes because the memory of his attack had seeped into such a perfect experience like a poison that would never go away.

That was the worst part to Alec. He would never not remember it. For the rest of his life, he would remember being attacked by a demon and he would remember that he thought of that during his first time with Magnus. There was a chance that any time he and Magnus had sex, he could possibly
remember their first time, and it would inevitably turn around to memories of what that demon did to him. Sometimes, when Alec thought about the fact he would always remember being raped, he thought about how many decades his life could last and whether it was worth it.

Alec wasn’t suicidal, far from it, but there were times the thought snuck in that his life had been ruined at twenty-four years old and it was crushing to think that he could live another sixty years and every day he would still be the victim of something unspeakable.

“Alec?!” Alec lifted his head and froze when he saw Magnus standing in the bathroom doorway with a towel around his hips. “You’re crying,” Magnus blurted out, seeming too startled to care he was stating the obvious. Alec tried to wipe the tears off his face, but they were still falling. “Alec?” Magnus asked as he walked over to the bed. He sat on the side and looked at Alec, clearly very unsure of how to proceed. Magnus didn’t touch him, but he looked terrified as Alec’s shoulders shook with silent tears that he couldn’t stop. “Is it- was it because of me? Of us?” Magnus asked in a tiny voice that made Alec look up with a tiny gasp. Magnus looked miserable. “Did- did I do something? If you weren’t ready-“

“No, Magnus, it’s not your fault,” Alec rasped, unable to help himself. He reached out for Magnus’s hand and Magnus came willingly when Alec pulled him into a hug. “Please don’t think you pressured me into something,” he said in a steadier tone, pressing his lips to Magnus’s damp hair.

“You’re scaring me, Alec,” Magnus murmured, holding him close. “I thought it was okay. I thought we were okay?”

“We’re perfect,” Alec replied, sniffing wetly. “It- it was amazing. Being with you was more perfect than I ever imagined it could be.”

Magnus curled into his side, resting back against the pillows with him. “Okay,” he said softly, resting his head on Alec’s shoulder as he curled his arms around him. “Then can you tell me what’s wrong?”

Alec didn’t want to tell Magnus, but Alec also knew that telling Magnus would make him feel better. He knew that if he lied and kept it a secret it would stay there, festering, and it might taint what they had. He held Magnus close and turned to press a kiss to his forehead. “While we were having sex, I thought about how I never could have imagined a better first time if I tried,” he murmured and he felt Magnus smile against his chest. “But then the thought popped into my head that technically, my first sexual encounter was being raped.”

Magnus pulled back and looked up at him with wide brown eyes that quickly filled with tears. “Oh, Alec,” he breathed and Alec smiled sadly, curling his hand around the back of Magnus’s head, stroking his wet hair. “When you went still…?”

Alec nodded. “But I didn’t want to ruin what we were doing,” he said and Magnus’s face screwed up.

“As important as you are to me, Babe, you are not the only person in this situation,” Alec reminded him softly. “Magnus, I didn’t want to stop. You make me feel like I’m someone special and important when you look at me that way, and during sex, you looked at me like I’m the only person in the world, not just the only person in the room,” he said honestly. “It felt incredible on so many levels, and I wanted to keep going, and I was able to push it down as long as I focused on you.” He swallowed and grimaced as he watched horror growing on Magnus’s face and tears brimming in his
eyes. “But it was a hard fight and as soon as you got out of bed I felt that panic feeling getting closer and closer and I figured if I was going to have to break down, I’d do it while you weren’t here.”

Magnus let out a soft sob and pulled Alec into a hug, clinging to him. “I hate this happened to you,” he choked out. “I hate that you- you had to deal with that. I hate it so much that I made you think about it.”

“You aren’t to blame,” Alec defended, stroking Magnus’s back. “You are something good, Magnus. I won’t let my brain stop me from enjoying how you make me feel with every touch and every look,” he said vehemently. “I keep feeling guilty for something I don’t even understand, and I’m starting to think I keep feeling guilty for loving my baby even though the monster that raped me made it, and I refuse to be guilty for that, and I refuse to be scared out of enjoying our time together.” He kissed Magnus’s temple. “I would rather enjoy what I can while I can and then freak out about it afterwards than let the memory of something terrible keep me from experiencing something wonderful.”

Magnus was still crying as he held him, but Magnus was holding him right back. Alec could feel how tightly Magnus clung to him and he realized that it was Magnus’s silent way of refusing to let memories of something bad take Alec away from him, too. “If I ever find that Iris Rouse woman,” Magnus whispered in a low, rage-filled voice, “I’ll make her suffer for doing this to not just you but to so many people before you.”

Alec knew that rage well. He felt it every time he thought about all the women that came before him and experienced something so horrible. He also thought about how, unlike him, they didn’t get to choose what they wanted to do afterwards. They didn’t have the option to choose whether they wanted their babies, and worse than even that, the babies they were forced to carry and give birth to were taken away and their memories of the entire experience was erased so they didn’t even know what happened to them. “I wouldn’t try and stop you,” Alec muttered simply.

Magnus pulled back far enough to look him in the eyes and he raised his hand, wiping the tears from under Alec’s eyes. “I’m just so angry that a Warlock of all people would do something like that. I know that, just like everybody, there are good Warlocks and bad ones, but we live our whole lives knowing what it means to be a Warlock. We see so much in our lifetimes and we know so much. What happened to you is something that should never happen to anyone ever,” he said plainly. “And if she thought erasing memories meant it was okay, that just makes her even sicker.”

Alec shuddered. “I was just thinking about how I’m lucky compared to those before me because at least I got to choose to have this baby and, if things go to plan, I get to keep it.”

Magnus shuffled and glanced down at Alec’s flat stomach and Alec felt a wave of anxiety because he hadn’t even thought about how Magnus might feel about that. He didn’t talk about the baby with Magnus very much. Their time together since they started dating was relatively pregnancy-talk free after their first date. Magnus probably hadn’t even considered the fact the man he was making love to had a baby inside of him. He wasn’t sure how much more emotion he could handle tonight, and if Magnus started withdrawing because he was reminded that his boyfriend was pregnant, Alec would probably just have to go have a mental breakdown.

“What’s it like?” Magnus asked softly and Alec’s heart flipped in his chest at such an ambiguous question. When he looked at Magnus, though, Magnus was looking at his stomach with the last thing Alec ever expected to see in his eyes.

Longing.

“Magnus?” he asked slowly, and Magnus gave a sad smile, eyes still glued to Alec’s stomach even
though you couldn’t tell looking at him that he was pregnant.

“I’ve always wondered what it felt like.”

Alec raised an eyebrow. “Being pregnant?”

“No,” Magnus said, shaking his head slightly. “What does it feel like knowing you’re really going to be a parent? Knowing you get to raise a child?” His voice cracked as he asked, and suddenly it made sense to Alec.

It also broke his heart.

Alec curled his fingers in Magnus’s hair and pulled him into a hug, holding him close. He knew his answer wasn’t going to help anything, but he couldn’t lie to Magnus. “Beyond the circumstances of how and why, knowing I get to raise a child is possibly the best feeling I’ve ever known.”

Magnus nodded silently and, to Alec’s surprise, he gently reached out and touched Alec’s lower belly almost reverently. “I’m not happy any of this happened to you, Darling,” he whispered, “But I’m happy you get to experience something you clearly wanted.”

Alec smiled and nodded. “I have wanted to be a dad some day since Max was born. And the way it happened doesn’t change that this baby is wanted and loved already.” He watched the warring emotions in Magnus’s eyes and knew exactly how it felt to have so much conflict. He could pretty easily guess that Magnus was happy for Alec, sad for himself, angry that Alec got hurt for it to happen, and guilty about those emotions existing together all at once, just like Alec was all the time when he thought about his baby. Alec couldn’t help the part of him that made the last question he had for Magnus one he couldn’t ignore any longer. “Magnus, I have no idea what’s going to happen to me soon. Are you really sure you want to be with me when I’m so screwed up and my life will get very complicated very soon? I wouldn’t blame you if-“

“I’m not going anywhere, Alexander,” Magnus said softly but firmly, and Alec gave him a soft smile and nodded. Those five words were full of so much meaning and so much conviction. There were layers and nuances to the tone of Magnus’s voice, and Alec knew that there was so much more being said there than just those words. Rather than try to come up with any response that needed clarification or expressed any sort of doubt or question, Alec just curled his hand around Magnus’s and said the only word that needed to be said in response to Magnus’s.

“Okay.”
Chapter 11

Chapter Notes

Not nearly as intense, but still an important step forward!

See the end of the chapter for more notes

When Magnus portalled him home to keep anybody from catching him doing the walk of shame into
the Institute early in the morning, it was early enough that Alec persuaded him to stay a little while,
which had only ended in them – blessedly – disproving Alec’s fear about never being able to be with
Magnus without thinking about his attack. He wasn’t assured quite yet that he wouldn’t have it come
up sometimes when they had sex, but at least it wasn’t for sure going to be every single time.

Alec couldn’t help but smile fondly as Magnus giggled against his chest. “C’mon, it wasn’t that
funny,” he said and Magnus hid his face in Alec’s skin.

“Darling, the look on your face,” he snickered, touching his cheek. “You would think you’ve never
seen semen before-“

“You almost came in my eye,” Alec accused with a smile, rolling over to pin Magnus on his back.
“Stop being mean,” he whined playfully.

Magnus smirked and wrapped his legs around Alec’s hips. “The important thing is that you made me
come so soon I couldn’t warn you fast enough to stop sucking me,” he purred. Alec blushed some
but caught Magnus’s lips in a slow, lazy kiss. Alec enjoyed luxuriating in how comfortable he was
with Magnus. Last night had been intense and scary but good above the bad memories, and to be
reminded that it hadn’t been a one off, that this was something he got to have for a long time, was
wonderful.

Alec was glad they had gotten dressed again after the lesson in receiving and reciprocating blowjobs,
because the moment he returned to lying beside Magnus, his door swung open. Thankfully, the only
thing Jace saw was Magnus and Alec gazing into each other’s eyes while Alec played with the hand
Magnus had flung onto the pillow between them, tracing the lines of his palm and fingers with his
own index finger absently. Alec still startled and sat up in surprise, only to see Jace looking at the
two of them and blinking in confusion.

“Uh, Jace, remember that knocking thing?”

Suddenly Jace’s surprise cleared and a smirk crossed his face. “Another sleepover, huh?” He looked
at Magnus and then at Alec. “I thought you didn’t come home last night. What’re you two doing
here now?”

Magnus sighed dramatically. “I was returning Alexander and, since it’s so early, I decided to stay a
little longer with him.” He shook his head heavily. “I have to give him back instead of snuggle all
day.”

Jace leered suddenly and Alec felt a sinking sensation. “Yeah, cause snuggling leaves hickeys like
that,” he said, and Magnus slapped a hand to his neck, and then turned and swatted at Alec.
“You didn’t tell me I had them! I healed yours—”

“Magnus!” Alec hissed, but Magnus barreled on.

“That’s just not fair, Alec,” he said, pouting as he crawled out of bed, walking to the foot of the bed where his shoes were. “Not fair at all.”

Alec rolled his eyes and stood up, following him. “You would’ve seen it in the mirror,” he said, catching Magnus around the waist to hug him close. He lowered his voice, whispering in his ear. “I just liked the reminder of the sounds you make when I kiss your neck.”

Magnus shivered and bit his bottom lip as he looked up at him. “You’re so bad,” he said, then leaned up to kiss Alec once more before turned to open a portal. He winked over his shoulder at Jace and Alec grinned, unable to help but smile as he saw the eyebrow Jace raised in response. “Have a nice day, Darling,” Magnus said, and Alec smiled back.

“Bye, Babe, I’ll call you later,” he said, and Magnus blew a kiss before stepping through the portal.

Once Magnus was gone, Jace burst out laughing. “Oh my God, you call him ‘Babe’?” he asked, almost cackling. “Holy shit, I have to tell Izzy!” he said, and Alec watched him leave before it suddenly occurred to him that he would definitely not just tell her about the ‘Babe’ thing.

“Wait, Jace!” Alec rushed out and followed him down to Izzy’s room. He almost caught Jace but he couldn’t catch him before Jace flung open Izzy’s door, much like he had a habit of doing with his, and walked right in.

“Isabelle, the day has come! Alec finally is officially a man!” Jace proclaimed loudly before Alec could follow him in. “He was just—oh crap.”

Alec stepped into the room behind him and stopped, confused about Jace’s words, only to pale when he saw the last person he ever wanted to hear those words standing at the foot of Izzy’s bed.

Mom was back.

Alec walked beside Isabelle as they left Aldertree’s office, where their mother had just chewed them for not following their head of Institute’s orders. “Sometimes I really hate that I came out of that woman’s vagina,” Isabelle griped as the stalked down the hall.

“Ew, Izzy,” Alec complained, and she elbowed him. He understood the sentiment though. “I still can’t believe how she is acting like Jace isn’t her son,” he said angrily. It was something he had been struggling with since the day she told him Jace wasn’t his family. “You notice she didn’t even talk to him,” Alec said and Isabelle nodded bitterly.

“They adopted him and now she acts like he’s not even our brother because of some—some shit that happened to him before he was even born,” Isabelle spat. “I can’t stand them. I can’t stand that they would just—” She gritted her teeth. “How dare she treat Jace like having demon blood makes him suddenly a different person than he’s been as long as he’s been with us?”

Alec thought about his baby. He fought the urge to put a hand on his middle as he imagined what his mother would think about his baby. His baby wasn’t a Nephilim that had been experimented on. His baby was the product of a demon. He felt fear unlike any he had ever known when he thought about how he couldn’t trust his own mother anymore, because if she was willing to let her adopted son die because of what Valentine did to him, what would she let happen to his baby? He knew that if she
found out, there was a good chance at this point that she would let the Clave force him into having an abortion. It would be harder now, they couldn’t sneak something into his food to make him lose the pregnancy, but they only had to get him away from anybody who would protect him and knock him out and he would never have a chance to protect his baby from them.

“Alec?” Alec snapped out of it and turned to Isabelle, who had stopped walking. She looked at him worriedly. “Are you okay? You kinda zoned out there.”

He bit his lip and looked around before stepping closer to her. “If she’s willing to act like Jace isn’t her son because she found out he got experimented on, what do you think would happen if she found out about actually being half-demon?” he said pointedly, and Isabelle’s eyes narrowed.

“Alec, she wouldn’t-“

“Says who?” he asked quickly. “When I asked her why she wouldn’t stop them from trying to kill Jace, she said ‘he isn’t family’, Izzy. She turned on him because of what that monster did to him before he was even born,” he stressed. “What if she found out?” he asked, not daring say ‘what’ out loud. “Being half-demon and a threat to what she considers her real family might just put her on the side of those that would take the choice away and there would be nothing I can do to stop them,” he hissed. He turned and started walking again, letting her fall into step. “She might be my mother, but there’s something I can’t stand to lose that she could take from me, and I’m not sure she wouldn’t.”

Isabelle looked worried. “Do you think so?”

“I can’t risk not thinking that,” Alec said tightly. He clenched his hands into fists as they walked through the command center, because every part of him wanted to cover his stomach protectively as they walked past all these people he knew wouldn’t think twice about wanting his baby to never be born.

“Alec.” Alec stopped, suddenly fearful as he heard Aldetree’s voice, but Isabelle stopped with him, so he didn’t feel so alone. He turned around and watched as Aldertree approached, in the middle of the command center, where everyone around them could hear whatever he was going to say. Alec knew the humiliation of another ‘stop protecting the traitor’s son’ speech was going to come, and he swallowed hard. “Something your mother mentioned after you left my office made me think of something.” He looked at him, and Alec raised an eyebrow. “It’s taken a while to get to my office, but the tech team noted that you had Catarina Loss’s phone number when you got your information moved from an old phone to a new one that was issued to you.” Alec’s throat tightened fearfully and Aldetree tilted his head. “Records show Catarina Loss, a very powerful Warlock, has been in hiding since the Uprising. I have to wonder what you’re doing in contact with her.”

Victor looked at Alec knowingly. “Oh, so you are still seeing Magnus Bane. The Warlock who attacked a Shadowhunter right here, at the Institute. I had hoped since we hadn’t seen him around that you had stopped associating with someone who harmed a fellow Shadowhunter.”

“I would be dead, because of your orders, if he hadn’t,” Alec said plainly.

Victor nodded. “And I am sorry for that misunderstanding, again. But that doesn’t change his
“Of doing everything he could to save Alec’s life?” Isabelle challenged. “You, a Shadowhunter, would have let Alec die. He, a Downworlder, did everything he could to save Alec’s life. Seems to me, if you weigh the two, you’re nature reflects worse on harming Shadowhunters than his,” she said coldly. “I understand your point, but Magnus Bane is a good man, and if my brother wants to date him, he can date him, and if he wants to be friends with other Downworlders, he can do that, too.”

Alec gave her a controlled nod of thanks, and turned back to Victor. “There are now laws against association with Downworlders, Victor. I’m within the rules of the Clave to have Catarina Loss’s phone number. Peaceful interactions between Shadowhunters and Downworlders are necessary in these troubled times. Valentine is trying to subvert the Clave and destroy all Downworlders. Seems to me having allies with Warlocks is for the good of both our species.”

Victor looked annoyed but smiled all the same, coldly, and nodded. “Right you are, Alec. Excuse me,” he said, turning to walk past them and go on his way.

Isabelle looked after him then at Alec. “I don’t like this,” she said under her breath and Alec nodded tightly.

“Me, either.”

If Aldertree was asking questions about Catarina, there was no telling what he might uncover along the way.

~

The first time Alec felt his baby move, he didn’t realize what he felt. Actually, for days he could feel his baby move, but he thought he just had gas bubbling around and thought he had eaten something that didn’t agree with him. It wasn’t until he was sitting and having tea with Catarina outside of the café they met at sometimes that he rubbed his belly and she asked what was wrong that he mentioned what he was feeling.

“It’s just this weird bubbling feeling,” he said, frowning. “It’s been happening on and off for a week now. I was getting close to calling to ask you about it, but it doesn’t seem anything is wrong so I didn’t want to ask you for help if I just have gas. I don’t know what’s up.” Catarina’s face lit up and he raised an eyebrow at her, only she put her hands together in front of her mouth to hide her smile rather than answer. “What?” he asked, and she shook her head, lowering her hands.

“Alec, that’s the baby,” she said, and his eyes widened.

“What?!”

She nodded eagerly. “A lot of first time moms think the baby moving is gas at first,” she said, and Alec’s heart clenched in his chest. He looked down at where his hand was splayed on his belly and, though he couldn’t feel anything on the outside, he once again felt the fluttering sensation inside of him and realized that she was right.

“Whoa,” he said, biting his lip as his throat closed up. He looked down at his still pretty much flat stomach and put his other hand over his mouth. Alec hadn’t expected to feel so much emotion when he felt his baby moving. He had already fallen in love with the thought of being a parent, but now it wasn’t just the knowledge a baby was inside of him, it was feeling that baby moving. It wasn’t just an idea anymore. It was real. “Crap,” he said in a warbly voice, realizing he was near tears. He put his hands over his face, trying to keep his composure. They were in public, after all.
“It’s okay, Alec,” Catarina said and he looked up at her, seeing the understanding look on her face. “You can be emotional.”

Alec nodded, smiling as he reached for his tea again. “I just-“ He swallowed hard and shook his head. “This is real. It’s really real.” He put his hand back on his belly and just held it there, imagining holding his baby for the first time.

~

After he and Catarina went their separate ways, he pulled out his phone on his way to get on the train and called Jace. When Jace answered, he seemed worried. “Alec? You never call. What’s up?”

Alec couldn’t help but beam. “I didn’t want to risk someone seeing it in a text, but I need to tell you something. Are you alone? Can you talk?” he asked.

“Yeah, Buddy, what’s up?” Jace asked and Alec barely stopped himself from laughing from joy.

“Jace, I can feel it moving. I’ve been feeling it for days and didn’t know what it was, but now that Catarina explained I totally feel it now!” he gushed. “Jace, I can feel my baby.”

Jace was quiet for a moment before he suddenly spoke up. “Holy shit, you can feel your- it’s really moving now? Can you feel it from the outside?” he asked excitedly.

Alec laughed, putting a hand to his forehead. “No, not yet, but I can feel it on the inside. It’s- it’s like little flutters and it’s so amazing. It feels so much more real now. Like, I’m not really showing or anything, cause I’m so big, but now that it’s moving it’s something I absolutely know means my baby is really in there.”

“Dude, can I tell Izzy? Did you already tell her? It’s so cool,” he said excitedly and Alec almost felt like crying because Jace really was happy for him. He had always hoped his brother and sister weren’t just humoring him, they really did support him, but Jace seemed actually excited. “I’m gonna be an uncle!” Jace whisper-cheered, clearly knowing better than to say that too loud in case someone was near.

Alec sighed happily. “You can tell Izzy, I was going to call her next, but it’s totally fine. I won’t make you keep that a secret.”

“Sweet!” Jace said brightly. “Are you coming home soon? We can totally tell Clary when you get back,” he said, and Alec bit his lip.

“Um,” he said, ducking his head. “I want to go see Magnus, if he isn’t busy, and tell him about the baby.”

Jace snorted. “Uh-huh, ‘tell him about the baby’. Suuure you are,” he drawled and Alec rolled his eyes.

“Jace, I’m serious-“

“Nah, dude, I get it, you finally learned sex is fun, it’s totally understandable-“

“Oh my God, Jace,” Alec groaned. “I’m not going to have an afternoon quickie, I’m just still kind of worried about dating someone while pregnant,” he stressed. “I want to be there so I don’t overanalyze the tone of his voice or whatever and start panicking about nothing. Cause I know myself. I will,” he said honestly. “I’m way crazier since I’ve been pregnant, dude. I’m aware of my weird anxiety but I’m still weirdly anxious. He keeps saying he’s not going anywhere, but I still have
trouble believing that, and I’d rather just see him so I know he’s not about to disappear on me.”

Jace was quiet for a moment. “Whoa.” His voice was surprised but not overly so. “Okay, I get it. I just want you to know something,” Jace said firmly. “If he _does_ dump you because you’re pregnant even though he knew when he started dating you that you’re pregnant, I’ll totally kick his ass. I swear, Alec, you say the word—”

Alec laughed and cut him off. “Oh my God, you have to stop threatening to beat up my boyfriend!”

“Only if he deserves it!” Jace defended and Alec rolled his eyes.

“Whatever, you go tell Izzy, I’m gonna go see Magnus,” he said.

Jace sighed. “Alright, alright. I won’t beat up your boyfriend.” After a moment he spoke again, his voice full of fondness. “Look, I’m seriously happy for you. You’re gonna be a great dad and I will always be there for you, cause I love you, Alec, okay?”

The warmth that settled in Alec’s belly made him smile and duck his head. “Thanks, Jace. I know you’d do anything for me. I wouldn’t have chose you to be my parabatai if I didn’t love you, dude.”

“Good. Now, enough sappy shit, I’ve gotta go tell Izzy our nibling is moving!” Jace said excitedly.

Alec groaned. “Oh my God, you’ve been reading dictionaries again, haven’t you? That’s it, I’m hanging up,” he said, and he did so while Jace laughed in reply on the other end.

Chapter End Notes

Yes, "Nibling" is actually a word. It’s the gender neutral term for niece or nephew. Niblings is the plural. It’s, as you can guess, based off the word ‘sibling’. 
I really wanted this chapter to be "Alec though the eyes of those that love him most."

When Magnus opened the door, he was surprised to see Alec there. “Hi,” he said, smiling up at Alec. He leaned in to greet him with a quick kiss and then stepped back to let Alec in. “It’s a surprise to see you.”

Alec followed him as he headed back to the living room. “I hope you aren’t busy. Sorry for dropping by without any warning. I can go if you need-“

Magnus turned around and grabbed his hand, tugging him over to the couch. “Nonsense, Darling,” he said, smiling when Alec flopped down onto the couch beside him. “I was just watching TV and being lazy,” he admitted, nodding to the TV that had Food Network on it. “I was making myself hungry if you want to order some takeout,” he offered.

Alec smiled at him with such a sweet look Magnus got a wave of butterflies. “If you’re already ordering something, I could eat, but don’t think you have to feed me just because I came over.”

“How about a pizza?” he asked, and Alec nodded. Magnus went to get a takeout menu from the kitchen and order, and when he came back, he saw Alec was smiling down at his lap. “What’s got you all adorably smiley, Darling?” he asked, and he couldn’t help smiling back when Alec looked up at him with that beautiful smile. He sighed as he sat down beside him. “You’re so damn pretty,” he teased.

“The baby is moving,” Alec said quickly, smiling brightly. He bit his lip and put his hand on his stomach and Magnus’s eyes widened when he realized what he meant.

“How about a pizza?” he asked, and Alec nodded. Magnus went to get a takeout menu from the kitchen and order, and when he came back, he saw Alec was smiling down at his lap. “What’s got you all adorably smiley, Darling?” he asked, and he couldn’t help smiling back when Alec looked up at him with that beautiful smile. He sighed as he sat down beside him. “You’re so damn pretty,” he teased.

“The baby is moving,” Alec said quickly, smiling brightly. He bit his lip and put his hand on his stomach and Magnus’s eyes widened when he realized what he meant.

“Wait, the baby is moving?” Magnus asked breathlessly, and Alec nodded. “Has it moved before, or-“

Alec nodded. “I didn’t realize until today. Just before I came over, actually. I didn’t know what I was feeling and it’s been going on for about a week. Catarina explained it and it stopped for a while, but now it’s moving again.”

Magnus’s insides glowed with warmth at how happy Alec looked. “What does it feel like?” he asked, and Alec laughed suddenly.

“It actually feels like I have gas bubbling around, which is why I didn’t realize what it was, but it’s just these little flutters. It’s amazing,” he said reverently, his hand on his belly. “I can’t wait until I
can feel it on the outside. Jace seemed kind of sad he can’t feel it on the outside when I told him. It’s so cool how happy he seems to be about being an uncle soon.”

Magnus fought down a small sense of longing, imagining how it must feel to have a growing family. “How far along are you again?” he asked, trying to remember.

“Almost six months,” Alec said, looking down at his middle. “I’m so lucky I’m as tall and wide as I am. And Catarina said having a whole life of being really athletic means my muscles are really tight so it makes it so that I carry the baby more towards my spine.” He pulled his shirt up and Magnus could see that, while sitting, it was clear he didn’t look like he used to. Alec’s abs were mostly smoothed out and undefined, and he was thicker than his usually narrow waist looked, but he wasn’t at all round. He was just thicker looking with a little outward slope.

“You kinda just look like you’re gaining weight,” Magnus said, and then cringed. “Not that you’re fat-“

Alec laughed and cut him off by reaching out for his hand. “Magnus, c’mon, I’m pregnant, I know you aren’t calling me fat.” Alec gave him a sweet look and leaned over to kiss him. “It’s so cute you don’t want to offend me.”

“Of course I don’t,” Magnus said, though he smirked and tugged Alec back in for another soft kiss. “You’re still really sexy, though,” he murmured, leaning closer to Alec. He had to settle a hand on Alec’s thigh to balance.

Alec chuckled, curling his big, strong fingers gently around Magnus’s jaw. “Sexy, huh?”

“Mmmhmm,” he murmured against Alec’s lips.

Alec pulled a few inches away, looking between his eyes and his lips repeatedly. “Um, hey, how long will it take for the pizza to come?” He asked, and Magnus felt a spike of arousal at the clear implication.

Magnus bit his lip and inched his fingers higher up Alec’s leg. “About half an hour now.”

Alec looked him in the eyes with an expression that made Magnus shiver. “Think that’s enough time for you?” he asked and Magnus couldn’t fight back a moan.

“Absolutely,” he said, and Alec immediately kissed him as he grabbed Magnus’s leg and, in one really hot move, one that Magnus wouldn’t likely ever forget, he stood up, lifting Magnus with him. Magnus yelped and giggled, scrambling to wrap his legs around Alec as he latched onto Magnus’s neck and started carrying him towards the bedroom.

~

Magnus didn’t even bother to not looked like he had just been rolling around in bed with someone when he answered the door shirtless and with sex-hair to get the pizza. When he returned, Alec was shirtless as well, walking around the kitchen looking for glasses for them to use. “Over the sink,” he called, smiling at how domestic it felt to have Alec just casually walking around his house shirtless.

When Alec joined him, they sat on the floor beside the coffee table and every time they made eye contact, they both smiled ridiculously at each other. Magnus hadn’t felt butterflies like this in so long, he realized. When he looked at Alec’s black hair standing up and all adorably ruffled, he couldn’t stop thinking about how cute he looked in the morning the few times he had spent the night in Magnus’s bed. “If you don’t hurry up and eat, I’m gonna eat this whole pizza by myself,” Alec warned, and Magnus grinned as he watched the way Alec was eying the pizza he was folding in half
with the same amount of desire he’d been looked at Magnus in bed not long ago.

Magnus grabbed a slice, but kept watching Alec as he bit into the pizza and moaned, eyes fluttering shut. Alec moaned at his first bite, and licked his fingers to get the sauce off after he finished the slice. “Watch out, now,” Magnus teased. “I’m gonna get jealous over food.”

Alec looked up and blushed some as he chewed. “Shut it,” he said embarrassedly. “This is good pizza,” he defended. He looked down at his stomach and frowned. “Hey, don’t you tease me, too,” he said fondly, and Magnus’s heart warmed when he realized the baby must be moving again. Alec’s happiness made Magnus feel like he was floating. He was so beautiful even with pizza sauce on his chin and his hair standing on end, and he was talking to his baby in the most adorable tone of voice ever. Magnus couldn’t remember a time he felt more peaceful and happy over such a small, simple moment.

“I love you,” Magnus said suddenly, blushing when he realized what he had said. Alec looked up in surprise, clearly having not expected it any more than Magnus had expected to say it. Magnus didn’t look away though, and instead smiled even though his cheeks were on fire. “I mean it,” he said, and Alec blinked at him a few times before a blinding smile lit up his face.

“Really?” He opened and closed his mouth a few times before stuttering out his reply. “I- I love you, too.” He ducked his head and Magnus was pretty sure if Alec got any more adorable he might have to cry.

“You’re the cutest thing I’ve ever seen,” Magnus said, taking another bite of his pizza. “I swear, Alexander,” he said after swallowing. “If you don’t stop being so adorable, I’m going to actually melt.”

Alec snorted, rolling his eyes. “You started it. You just blurted that out and you blushed, and you’re so cute when you blush,” he added.

Magnus winked. “You aren’t complaining too much if you love me, still.”

Alec just shrugged. “Maybe I love you because you’re cute,” he said, making Magnus’s stomach squirm with joy.

Magnus didn’t know what he had ever done to deserve Alexander Lightwood, but he was thankful for whatever happy accident brought Alec into his life.

~

Jace was excited for Alec to get home, because he couldn’t wait to hear all about the baby moving. Isabelle had squealed and jumped up and down on the bed when he relayed Alec’s message about the baby moving to her. They were both so excited to have a niece or nephew. Jace had never imagined it before, because Isabelle wasn’t really that into kids and, though he hadn’t ever brought it up, he had known Alec was gay since they were kids. He thought he would be way older and Max would be the first one to have children, and though he had been so upset over Alec getting pregnant and especially from something so terrible, Alec’s excitement was infectious.

Isabelle wanted to tell Clary and they had to wait for Alec to get home first. “Oh my God, where is he?” Isabelle groaned while taking a water break from them sparring.

Jace wiggled his eyebrows. “He went to tell Magnus, so I bet I know why he isn’t here yet,” he said in a teasing tone and Isabelle snorted, nearly choking on her water.

“Ew, Jace, I didn’t need to think about that,” she said, and he just shrugged.
“He said it was so he doesn’t misinterpret whatever Magnus says and freak out about it like he would over the phone, but even if that’s the case…” Jace trailed off and Isabelle chuckled. “Alec is so gone over that Warlock.”

“He really is,” Isabelle said, shaking her hair out. “I’m so happy for him,” she confided with a softer tone. “Alec has always thought he would never get to be happy in love, and look at him,” she said with a smile. “Would you have ever thought our Alec would not just go against everything he’s been taught and date a Downworlder, but would you have thought such a stuffy guy would end up dating the fabulous High Warlock Magnus Bane?” she asked.

Jace snorted. “No fucking way,” he said bluntly. “I was so suspicious about Magnus when Alec started getting all weird about him.”

Isabelle raised an eyebrow. “Really? I was totally on board with it. I kept pushing Alec to ask him out.”

Jace shook his head. “Alec isn’t the type to just hook up with a hot guy for the hell of it. He is so reserved usually, and especially since he thought nobody but you knew he’s gay,” he pointed out. “I could tell Alec reacted to him the way he hasn’t ever reacted to any guy, and I figured that Magnus would break his heart if he ever went out with him. I didn’t realize he actually liked Alec for more than just a pretty face for a while.”

Isabelle grinned. “You and Magnus don’t get along. Trust me,” she said, going to pick up her staff again. “Magnus was so sad when Alec didn’t immediately flirt back. And you should’ve seen him even before Alec proposed to Lydia when I mentioned Mom and Dad were trying to find him a wife. He was so upset,” she said, and Jace raised an eyebrow. He had never known that.

“I didn’t really get that he had serious feelings for Alec until Alec got engaged and Magnus seemed really hurt by it,” Jace confessed. “And I’m still worried about it now. He might care for Alec, but Alec’s not just Alec Lightwood: Shadowhunter anymore.”

Isabelle grinned deviously. “And if he breaks Alec’s heart now, you and I can make sure nobody ever finds the body,” she said and Jace chuckled. He liked her ideas. “There’s one thing for sure. If you mess with one Lightwood, there’s two more that will end you,” she said confidently and Jace laughed.

“Damn straight,” he said, picking up his staff again.

Before they could start sparring again, however, there was a click of heels behind him from the doorway. Isabelle stood up straight and he turned around, his stomach clenching painfully when Maryse and Robert walked in followed by Lydia. “Isabelle,” Maryse said, and Jace gave her a nervous smile only to have it drop when she just walked right by him like he wasn’t even there. It stung. A lot. Jace looked at Robert, who avoided his gaze, and watched them both walk over to Isabelle. Lydia gave him a sympathetic look and he turned his head, looking away from all of them. “Have you seen your brother?” Robert asked Isabelle. “Your mom and I really need him to watch Max for a few days, and we can’t find him.”

Isabelle raised an eyebrow. “Why can’t Jace and I do it?” she asked, and Jace almost wished she wouldn’t include him in it. It only made it hurt more when Maryse completely ignored him.

“You have been a great help to Victor, I understand,” Maryse said, sounding proud of Isabelle for once. “We wouldn’t want to distract you from staying on the right path.”
Robert nodded. “Your brother hasn’t been as cooperative, we hear, and we thought maybe keeping him occupied with Max would be for the best. There’s a big mission coming up and you’ll probably be going on it and Alec probably won’t.”

“Jace hasn’t been allowed on a mission in months,” Isabelle said plainly. “If anybody has time for Max, it’s him.”

Jace couldn’t see their expressions, but the fact that Maryse didn’t even pause before saying, “Just tell us if you know where Alec is so we can find him,” as if Jace wasn’t standing right behind her said it all.

Isabelle gave a cold smile that made Jace feel guilty. He didn’t want her to lose the good graces she found herself in recently. They had always been hypercritical of her, Maryse especially, and he didn’t want her sacrificing being taken seriously for once just to stand up for him. “Alec is spending the day with his boyfriend,” she said, stressing the word a little bit. “But I’ll be sure to talk to him if he comes home tonight.” Jace saw Lydia smirk and try to hide it when Isabelle said, “Sometimes he comes home, but he might not be back until tomorrow morning.”

Robert cleared his throat awkwardly. “Well, let us know if you see him,” he said. “Your mom and I really need to sort this out before the upcoming mission.” Jace looked right at them when they turned and walked back past him to leave. Robert gave him an awkward smile and jerked his gaze away, but Maryse wouldn’t even meet his eyes.

With a lump in his throat, Jace watched the only mother he had ever known walking away without even acknowledging his existence when six months ago she had treated him like her favorite child, and it was only worse because Lydia looked at him again with that expression that said she knew what he felt. Jace looked away, swallowing hard, and grabbed his staff again.

“Jace,” Isabelle started, but he shook his head, jaw clenched as he turned back to her.

“Let’s go again,” he said, and then ran towards her, staff raised, and Isabelle met his blow with a block of her own.

~

Isabelle Lightwood would never let a soul ever think she didn’t love her brothers.

When Alec got back, he came straight to her room and she ran to get Jace and Clary and bring them back. When they got back to her room, Jace smirked and elbowed Alec playfully. “What happened to not getting laid?” he teased, and Isabelle snickered because Alec’s hair told the whole story, even if his blush did it for a second time.

Isabelle was excited. “Are you ready to tell Clary?” Alec asked, and Alec smiled so brightly it seemed painful.

He looked at Clary and put a hand on his stomach. “I can feel the baby moving,” he said, and Clary, as Isabelle had expected, squealed excitedly and bounced up and down.

“Oh my God, that’s so cool!” she said, and Isabelle had to agree. Isabelle had never really wanted a baby, but she knew all her life Alec would be an amazing dad someday. Alec was such a nurturing person. All her life, Alec had been the one person she could trust for anything. She and Alec had this understanding of each other that she had never really found with anybody else before.

These days she and Clary had a pretty strong connection that was different from any she had felt before, but it wasn’t the same type of bond Alec had with her.
Isabelle had watched Alec with Max as a baby and knew that he’d be the best dad ever. When she realized he was gay, she had worried about that, about what he might do in order to make sure he could have a family. She had always worried Alec would repress himself and marry a girl and she almost saw her fears realized with Lydia. Now, though, even though the circumstances had been the worst thing Isabelle had ever experienced, seeing her brother hurt so badly, she couldn’t help but be so happy for him because of his baby.

“It’s amazing,” he said, a hand still over his belly. “I can’t wait until you can feel it on the outside. Magnus really wants to feel the baby moving,” he said with a tender smile on his face like Isabelle had almost given up hope of ever seeing. Alec in love was the most amazing thing she had ever seen. She was so happy her brother could be so happy when she had feared for so long he never would be.

She hated to be the one to interrupt his happiness now. “Mom and Dad are staying here,” she said, and he frowned in obvious confusion.

“Yeah, I know,” he said, and she shook her head.

“No, they’re staying here for some upcoming mission,” she explained. “They’re gonna be here for at least a few days. They want you to watch Max for them.”

Alec frowned. “Max? Why is Max here?”

Isabelle shrugged. “No idea, but she wants you to watch him since I’m gonna be dragged in on the mission.”

Alec looked at Jace but didn’t say anything before nodding. “Yeah, okay. I’m always happy to hang out with Max.”

Isabelle knew he was telling the truth. She also knew from the way he looked at Jace that he and Jace would be having a conversation later that she knew would piss Alec off entirely. There was nobody in the world that loved Jace more than Alec, and she knew how angry it would make him to hear how poorly their parents were treating him.

“But a baby!” Clary said excitedly, and Isabelle was relieved when Alec’s face went blinding again and he looked at her.

“Yes!” he said brightly, shaking his head as he looked down at his stomach. “I’m more than halfway there and it finally feels real because I can feel my baby moving.” He bit his lip, looking down at his middle with more love in his face than Isabelle had ever seen before. “I love this baby so much,” he said softly, probably not even meaning to say it out loud.

Isabelle knew that, though she had always loved her brothers more than anything in the world, in the future, the thing that all of them would prioritize above all else was Alec’s baby. There would be so many threats and so much danger, and Isabelle was entirely convinced that she would give her life for that baby if only to keep her brother from suffering losing his child. Isabelle loved Alec and would rather die than ever let that happen.

But for now, they could all sit together in the privacy of her bedroom and gush about the baby with Alec as he held his stomach in his hands and smiled like every moment was happier than the last.
“Alec!” Alec brightened as Max came running from beside their dad and crashed into Alec’s legs, looking up at him.

“Hey, Max,” Alec said, leaning down to hug him. He scooped him up and put him on his hip, smiling as he hugged his baby brother close. To most people, Max was far too old to be carried around like a toddler, but Alec didn’t care if he was ten now. He was still Alec’s adorable baby brother. “I didn’t know you were here or I would’ve found you sooner,” he said, looking over at Maryse and Robert. “Why is he here instead of Idris?” he asked curiously.

Maryse forced a smile, probably for Max’s sake. “There are some… interesting things being said back home. His tutor had to take a few weeks off, so he’s been at home. Your father and I were called back here, so we thought it would be best to let you look after him while we’re busy.”

Alec shrugged. “Yeah, that’s cool,” he said, smiling at Max. “Wanna go do something cool?” he asked. “I can teach you how to shoot my bow,” he said and Max looked excited.

“Awesome! Can Jace come, too?” he asked excitedly and Alec nodded.

“Yeah, of course. He isn’t very busy lately, so it’s no problem at all.” Alec put Max down. “You should go find him. I think he’s in his room. He’ll be so happy to see you,” he said, and Max nodded, taking off running. Alec smiled after him and then turned back to his parents. “What mission is coming up?” he asked curiously. “Isabelle mentioned Aldertree has been talking to her about plans, but she didn’t know any details and I haven’t heard anything.

Robert shook his head. “Nothing too major. They’re just planning for a raid that’s a little more dangerous than usual. The only reason they aren’t going to include you is because of that incident a while back where you got possessed,” he said in a gentler tone. “There’s a risk of demonic possession again, and you already suffered that once,” he said and Alec’s throat tightened at the memory.

Alec nodded, swallowing hard. “I understand.”

Robert nodded. “They just need the manpower, I guess. Mom and I are still assigned to this Institute even if we don’t run it anymore, so when they need some help…” He held his hands out to the side in a ‘what can you do’ manner. “Just look after Max for us, alright? I’m sure it’ll only be a few days, but there’s a lot of tensions in Idris over this war and we don’t want Max being with someone who isn’t family in case he hears things and gets scared.”

Alec knew what they meant. Max was still little, and though he was old enough to understand some things, and smarter than their parents gave him credit for, he was still a little kid. “I totally understand,” he said, and then hooked a thumb over his shoulder. “I’m gonna go with him now,” he said, and Maryse nodded.
“Just don’t let him run around and cause trouble,” she said, and then she and Robert went on towards Aldertree’s office.

~

Alec knelt down beside Max, helping him hold the bow and pull it back, since Max was way too small for it. “Okay, you know how you throw a ball and stuff?” he said, and Max nodded.

Jace stood back behind them, watching them. “Just look down the arrow and aim for the target, but think about how far away it is,” he said from where he stood. “Like throwing a ball, what happens if you throw it straight?”

“It falls down as it flies,” Max mumbled, closing one eye to look at the arrow.

“That’s right,” Alec said. “So aim a little bit high.” He felt Max push the bow up some and he held it tight for him. “You think you got it?” he asked, and Max nodded. “You ready to let go?” he asked, and Max nodded.

“Yeah,” he said, and Alec smiled.

“Okay, you count down to release,” he said, and waited.

“Okay, ready?” Max said, looking down perfectly. “One, two, three!” Alec released the arrow as Max let go with his little fingers that weren’t really doing much, and they watched the arrow fly and hit the target. It wasn’t in the center, but it was only a couple of rings off center to the left. Max threw his arms up as Alec lowered the bow. “We did it!” he said, and Alec smiled as Max jumped excitedly.

“That’s awesome,” he said, ruffling Max’s little curls. “When you get big enough to hold it on your own, you’re gonna be the best,” he praised and Max giggled excitedly.

“So awesome, dude,” Jace said, high-fiving him.

Alec heard steps behind him and turned to see Maryse coming up. “You just missed it,” Max said excitedly when he saw his mom. “Alec helped me shoot his bow!”

“That’s great,” she said, looking at Alec where he was kneeling beside Max. She tilted her head, raising an eyebrow at Alec. “Are you gaining weight?” she asked, and Alec’s blood ran cold when he realized that, on his knees, his stomach probably stuck out a little further. He looked up at Jace, who looked ready to say something, but he didn’t have to. She continued talking, so Alec relaxed. “Max, Dad said he’s cooking you some dinner. You should go eat. You and Alec can train together some more later,” she said, and Max nodded, letting Alec stand up and take the bow to hang up.

Alec hung up the bow and when he turned around, his mom was still there and absolutely ignoring Jace. “Did you need something?” he asked, walking over to stand right beside Jace so she had to look at him.

She absolutely kept her eyes on him rather than even glancing at Jace. “I need you to stay with Max for a few days. Don’t go out and leave him with your sister or anybody else,” she said, and he felt more and more frustrated at her pretending Jace didn’t exist. “Isabelle is the only one that’s even somewhat respected anymore by the Clave, so I need her to focus on her job right now—“

Alec felt a wave of anger and cut her off. “Let’s be honest, Mom, you just don’t want Max with Jace,” he said bluntly. “Stop ignoring the literal other person in the room,” he said, gesturing to Jace.
Alec shrugged with a disinterested look. “You wanted me to let the Clave kill Jace, and he’s just as much my brother as Max is, so what else should I think if you’re willing to just stand by and watch one of your children die?” he asked, voice breaking some from the anger coursing through his veins. “I have thought so many times about whether or not Max is safe in Idris with you,” he confessed, and she looked at him like she’s been slapped. “You don’t love us, Mom,” he said tightly. He shook his head. “It’s just a fact. You don’t. If you loved us you wouldn’t care if I’m gay or if Izzy disobeys orders or if Jace got himself mixed up in something he couldn’t control. You would stand by us and protect us, and you don’t. And Dad won’t stand up to your decisions even though it endangers his own children, so he must not love us that much either.”

“How could you say that, Alec?” Maryse asked, looking at him angrily. “How could you-“

“Because I love them more than you,” he said angrily. “I know that it’s true, I know I love Izzy and Jace and even Max more than you do, and you might be our mother, but they’re my brothers and sister, and I am sick of watching you hurt them.”

Alec turned to look at Jace, who was stunned into silence, and then turned and walked out. He heard a shuffling and then, a few seconds later, Jace fell into step with him, looking down at his hands the whole time. Alec glanced back when they turned the corner and saw his mother still standing where she had been.
Alec was shaking when he got to his room. Jace sat heavily on the foot of his bed and watched him pace. Alec was just so angry. “Alec, you shouldn’t have been that harsh-“

“Someone had to say it,” Alec said in a trembling voice. He put his head in his hands, tugging at his hair as he fought not to start crying. He was more emotional since he had been pregnant, but he was pretty sure this time it wasn’t all related to that. “I just can’t stand her,” Alec spat. “How can she- she just act that way?”

“She’s a Shadowhunter, Alec, one with a lot of influence. We reflect on that,” Jace said, but Alec shook his head, putting his hand on his stomach.

“I haven’t even met my baby yet, Jace, and the thought of ever treating my child like she treats us makes me sick,” he choked out, tears stinging his eyes. He walked over and collapsed onto the bed beside Jace. He looked down at his middle. “I love this baby so much,” Alec whispered. “And it isn’t just the thought of her carrying me and Izzy like I am this baby and still one day just not even caring anymore,” he added. “You’ve been her son longer than you weren’t, Jace. How?” he asked rhetorically. “How can she be like this?”

Jace smiled sadly. “Well, could be worse. I mean, my real dad experimented on me, so that’s a little worse than ignoring me like she does.”

Alec flopped back onto the bed, laying down. “Parents don’t determine who you are, but it fucking sucks when they aren’t good parents,” he said and Jace nodded, looking down at him.

“Tell me about it,” he said with a sad little smile that broke Alec’s heart. “It’s okay though,” he said, looking at Alec’s belly, which sloped outwards just a little bit as he lay on his back. “You’re gonna be an amazing dad,” he said and Alec smiled, putting a hand on his middle.

“I hope so,” he said softly and Jace gave him a playfully annoyed look.

“Dude, I know so,” he said confidently, and Alec couldn’t help but smile.

~

They all knew that Max wasn’t an unintelligent kid. Alec knew that Max saw more and understood more than most people wanted him to. It still didn’t make it break his heart any less than for Max to look up at him while they made cookies together and ask, “Alec, is something going on nobody wants to tell me about? Is it why doesn’t Mom want me to hang out with Jace anymore?” He put some chocolate chips in a cup and handed them to Alec, who was carefully quiet while he spoke.

“My teacher said the guy that led the Uprising is back and he’s doing bad stuff again. And some kids were talking about the Lightwood kids embarrassing Mom and Dad, but nobody will explain.”

Alec wasn’t sure what to tell him to start with, but as he saw how absently the conversation came up, he realized that Max wasn’t accusing him of anything. Max was just curious, and Alec understood that. He was old enough he understood things but too young for most adults to think he could. Alec watched Max dump the chocolate chips into the batter and he put his hand over Max’s on the spoon to help him stir the thick mixture. “Well,” he said carefully. “It’s really complicated,” he started. “But you know how Jace is adopted, right?” Max nodded, still looking into the bowl. “Well it turns out, everybody thought Jace’s dad was our dad’s parabatai, but he wasn’t. The guy that led the Uprising, Valentine? He’s actually Jace’s dad. He was pretending to be Dad’s parabatai when Jace was little.”

Max looked up at him in surprise. “Whoa, that’s crazy! Is Jace okay?” he asked, and Alec’s heart warmed at how worried Max looked. “It would suck to find out your dad was alive when you thought he was dead, and that he was a bad guy.”
Alec nodded. “It did suck. A lot.” He bit his lip. “He actually took Jace away for a while,” he said and Max gasped. “Jace and Izzy and I, we were trying to find a way to stop him, but he said he would hurt me and Izzy if Jace didn’t go with him, so Jace went. But then everybody didn’t believe us and thought Jace had turned bad.”

“But that’s stupid!” Max said suddenly, glaring as he turned back to mixing the batter. “Jace isn’t bad. How dumb do you have to be to think Jace would be bad?”

“A lot of people did, Max,” Alec said gently. “And something bad happened to me when I tried to track Jace. I did something dumb and used really powerful magic to try and find him, cause I was scared he would be hurt by Valentine. But Jace came back since I was hurt and they arrested him, but then they realized he isn’t bad and he really was kidnapped,” he said, trying to make it understandable for Max. “It was really a big deal because everybody was trying to arrest Jace and I just wanted to find him to keep him safe. And Mom didn’t like that,” he said, deciding not to sugarcoat it too much. “Mom thought Jace was bad, too, so she wanted me to just let them arrest him.”

Max looked up at him in confusion. “But why? Why wouldn’t mom believe him? You told them he didn’t go on his own, right?” he asked, and Alec nodded.

“Yeah, but they don’t like me very much much now either,” he said, his throat in his heart as he put the spoon down and stepped back some to look at Max straight on. Max was kneeling on a stool so he wasn’t that much shorter than Alec at the moment. “Max, I’m not blaming Mom and Dad for anything, so don’t think you should be mad at them,” he said firmly. “But everybody is a little mad at me because-“ He swallowed hard, worried about what Max would think when he said this. “I’ve been dating a Downworlder, Max. For a while now.”

Max tilted his head. “Oh really? I thought you were supposed to be marrying some girl?” he asked, and Alec chuckled at how clearly sheltered Max had been kept as well as how casually he was asking.

“I was, but I didn’t want to marry her,” he said. “I- I’m gay, Max,” he said, watching him closely. Max seemed to be waiting on him to continue and Alec frowned some. “Do you know what that means?”

“Yeah, you like boys,” Max said simply. Alec was surprised at how unaffected Max was and Max rolled his eyes at him so he must’ve shown it. “I have the internet, Alec, tons of people are gay,” he said, and Alec laughed in surprised.

“Well, then yeah,” he said, waving a hand in amusement. “I’m gay, so I didn’t want to marry a girl, and it pissed a lot of people off.”

Max frowned. “Wait, Mom and Dad were mad at you for not marrying a girl? You’re gay, of course you don’t wanna marry a girl.”


Max laughed suddenly. “Oh man, that sounds like something out of a book,” he said, then looked up at him. “But still, that’s kinda embarrassing, but why are they mad? Is it just cause he’s a Downworlder? I thought we’re supposed to be nice to Downworlders who aren’t bad? That’s why everybody hates that guy from the Uprising, isn’t it?”

Alec wasn’t sure how to try and even begin to explain all the prejudices of their species, but he had
to say something. “It’s just… It’s not that simple, Max,” he said sadly. “People still don’t like Downworlders. Yes, we’re supposed to work with the good ones, but dating them isn’t really something people are okay with. It’s not against the rules, but it’s like dating a guy,” he explained. “I can be gay and date a guy, but everybody wanted me to marry a woman from a respected family and carry on the Lightwood name and stuff. And instead I’m dating a Warlock who is a guy.”

Max looked so confused as he looked up at Alec and Alec felt the urge to hug him. “But why? You wouldn’t be happy if you married a girl if you’re gay. And if the boy you like is a Warlock, so what? He’s a good Warlock, right?”

Alec smiled and nodded. “Yeah, he’s really great. He’s really smart and he’s a strong leader. He does a lot to protect people who need help.”

“Then why don’t they like it?” he asked. “It doesn’t make sense for people to be mad you’re dating somebody that is good if you want to.”

Alec gave in to the urge to hug him, because Max looking at it with logic was the best thing he could’ve hoped for. Alec hugged Max against his chest and kissed the top of his head. “I know, Max, but people can be mean sometimes. Just because something makes sense doesn’t stop it from not being easily accepted. You’ll figure that out the older you get, but sometimes the right thing isn’t the popular thing, and it will be really hard to figure out which is which sometimes.” He looked down at him. “No matter what anybody says about Jace, he’s still our Jace, okay? And if people say bad stuff about me dating a guy that’s a Warlock, just don’t worry about it. You know me, Max. And the me you know is the only thing that matters. We’re your big brothers and we love you no matter what,” he said, and Max made a face and shrugged him off.

“Ew, Alec, stop being all gross and weird,” he said, and Alec just laughed and darted in to kiss his cheek before pulling back and letting Max whine and wipe at his face adorably while he laid the cookie tray out for them to start putting the cookie batter on there to bake.

Alec felt a flutter of movement in his belly and smiled brightly at the thought of making cookies with his baby someday the same way he was making cookies with his brother right now.
Chapter 14

Chapter Notes

THINGS ARE ABOUT TO HAPPEN!!!

Izzy smiled as the baby kicked her hand. “This is so cool,” she gushed. Jace nodded at her side, his hand on Alec’s belly as well.

“I can’t wait for the baby to come, Alec,” he said, smiling at Alec’s belly. Lying on his back so Jace and Izzy could feel the baby kick, it was far more obvious that Alec was pregnant. His stomach still wasn’t that round, but he looked fat now. He hadn’t had abs in months, but now he looked legitimately fat. He was wearing baggy clothes and his jeans still buttoned but only because they sat down below his belly. “We’re gonna have so much fun together,” Jace said to Alec’s belly with this soft, amazed smile that made Alec’s stomach churn.

Isabelle and Jace were so excited to meet his baby and all he could think about was how little they had even thought about the situation. He hadn’t been much better though. The first time Alec had felt his baby kicking fully was the first time he realized the reality of his baby.

He only hoped when the time came, he could make the right choice.

~

The first time Alec’s baby kicked where it could be felt on the outside, he was asleep.

Magnus had to wake him up, curling into his side and whispering, “Alec, Alec, wake up,” and it startled him awake.

Magnus grimaced apologetically. “Crap, sorry, I didn’t mean to scare you,” he said, and Alec blinked blearily at him.

“Alec?” he asked sleepily, and Magnus smiled and sat upright next to him. Alec looked around, frowning. “What’s wrong?”

Magnus beamed. “Nothing, I just wanted you to know something,” he said, reaching out to put his hand on Alec’s belly. “Your kid’s been kicking me all night and I didn’t realize what it was until I finally woke up.” Alec looked down at Magnus’s hand right on the spot the baby was kicking and then he jolted slightly, clearly feeling the baby kick Magnus’s hand again. “There it is,” he cooed, stroking Alec’s skin with his thumb while the baby kicked his palm.

Alec raised up on his elbows, looking down at his belly. It still wasn’t round, he just looked like he had gained some weight. It was really cute, Magnus thought as he looked down at Alec’s belly with such a warm expression as he felt the baby kicking. There was another kick and Alec smiled. Magnus’s heart warmed when he saw the love in Alec’s eyes. Magnus giggled when the baby kicked him repeatedly in little taps, and Alec’s smile grew far wider. “You’re so cute right now,” Magnus said, unable to help himself.

Alec looked up, nose scrunching some. “Why am I cute?” he asked, and Magnus raised an eyebrow. “What?” he countered and Magnus laughed.
“You’re all bright and smiley over your baby kicking me.” Alec’s eyes brightened and he grabbed Magnus’s elbow and gently tugged him until he was lying beside Alec. Magnus shifted around and laid his head on Alec’s chest, leaving his hand on Alec’s belly. Alec curled his arm around Magnus’s shoulders and laid his other hand down to lay on top of Magnus’s on his belly.

“It’s cute how excited you are,” he murmured, kissing Magnus’s hair.

Magnus made a happy sound and curled into his side, gazing up at his sleep-soft face. “It’s just so cool. I’ve never been around a pregnant person that I could be so close to. I’ve never felt a baby kicking.”

Alec smiled, looking at Magnus’s hand. “You like children, don’t you?” he asked, and Magnus sighed.

“I love them so much,” Magnus confessed. “I’ve never really had a lot of time with them, but children are like blank slates but in a good way,” he said softly. “They haven’t been poisoned by prejudice yet. They haven’t been hardened by life. They’re so full of empathy and love. We have to be taught hatred and anger, Alexander. We all have to be taught prejudices. Children are pure goodness and love and all they know about right and wrong is kindness and cruelty. If you’re nice to a child, they love you unconditionally. If you’re mean, they don’t like you. They don’t know anything else until adults teach them to be intolerant and judgmental.” He chuckled. “I could walk up to a child on the street and they would see all my makeup and piercings and cat eyes and magic and think it was all pretty and cool, and then that same child in ten years would think it’s wrong for a man to have on makeup or for people to put so many holes in their body or that my warlock mark and magic make me a freak. That’s how pure children are. And it’s beautiful,” he whispered.

Alec smiled sadly and stroked Magnus’s fingers gently. “My brother is like that,” he said softly. “Back when he was staying with us a few weeks ago, he was so confused about why people didn’t like me being with a male Warlock if that’s what made me happy. And he couldn’t understand why my mom don’t seem to like Jace anymore. He’s just such a great kid,” he said fondly. “I hope my baby grows up to be sweet and awesome like Max.”

“Little kids are just the best,” Magnus agreed. “You’ll be a great parent, the way you are with your siblings.”

Alec bit his lip. “I’m scared,” he confessed. “I’m getting noticeably fat. People are realizing I’ve gained weight and the baby will show soon,” he said, glancing down at their joined hands when the baby kicked Magnus’s hand again. “At this point, they maybe wouldn’t force me to have an abortion, but they still could,” he said tightly and Magnus’s stomach tightened. “They wanted to kill Jace because he has demon blood and that’s all I’ve thought about the whole pregnancy, Magnus. My baby is a species of its own. Even if they let me have it, I’ll be cast out for being a freak, and my baby will never be accepted.” He bit his lip. “I’ve fought this for so long, but I’ve kind of reached the point where I have to start thinking about- about leaving the Nephilim if I want to raise this child.”

Magnus looked up at him in surprise. “You’re willing to give up your life, Alec?” he asked, and Alec gave him a confused look.

“I have to. I love my baby, Magnus,” he said. “I need to start thinking about what I can do and where I can go. Izzy and Jace won’t like it, but I can’t give up my baby.”

Magnus lifted himself up and leaned in to kiss Alec. Alec seemed surprised by the move. He kissed back, sighing against Magnus’s lips. Magnus’s heart clenched and he tried his hardest to put feeling into the words he was about to say. “Darling, I promise I’m not saying you aren’t telling the truth. But you shouldn’t be so rushed with your choices. Things may change very quickly.” He
pulled away and looked down at him. “It isn’t because mothers of Warlock children are incapable or bad people that they abandon us, Alec,” he said gently. “And while I know you wouldn’t abandon your baby, you shouldn’t just give up your entire life thinking you’ll be willing to trade it for a child.” He saw the way Alec’s eyes were closing him out and he squeezed his hand. “You may think now that you want your baby and you want to raise a child and live a life with it, and maybe you do,” he said quickly, smiling apologetically. “But just- just hold off on any decisions that you can’t unmake.”

“Magnus, how could you think-“

Magnus expected this kind of reaction and he used a firm but tender tone as he spoke up. “Because I’ve seen it happen so many times, Alec.” Alec went quiet and Magnus smiled gently. “Darling, you can’t know. You may think you know, but you can’t,” he whispered, reaching up to touch his cheek affectionately. “I have known Mundanes who, through one way or another, were warned what was coming, who knew what their baby would be, and they thought they could handle it. I’ve known mothers who loved their children and still couldn’t bear holding a monster in their arms,” he added. “Not all of us have features as minor as me or Catarina. Your baby could be scaled and have a tail and look like a lizard-human hybrid. You might have a child that’s like me and was totally normal until I got older,” he added. “My mother loved me until the day she started to fear me and hate me and killed herself.” Alec looked startled and Magnus shook his head. “I hope you’re right. I hope you are able to have your child and be happy,” he whispered lovingly. “But until you are holding that child in your arms and really face that, you can’t know.”

“But I love it, Magnus,” Alec said in a small, angry tone, and Magnus nodded. “Which is why I want you to wait on making any big decisions,” Magnus encouraged. “If you have this baby and then decide you want to leave the Clave and be a parent, then that’s great,” he stressed. “You and I can move to Costa Rica and live in the jungle with your baby,” he offered playfully, trying to lighten the mood some. “But if you make those types of decisions now and then regret it, you will grow to resent the baby that you love so much,” he explained and Alec seemed to calm down and grow more pensive, which was what Magnus wanted. He wanted Alec to think about these things. “I can arrange for your baby to be taken care of and raised in a loving environment and never know a day’s suffering if you can’t make the choice to leave your life and be a parent for it,” he promised. “I want you to be sure, is all, Alec,” he said, reaching out to stroke Alec’s dark hair out of his eyes. “You’re so loving and nurturing and I’m pretty sure you’re right, you will choose to have your baby and live a happy life with your child,” he said confidently, because he did think that was the likely outcome.

But there was doubt. That tiny, niggling sense of fear that Magnus felt. Because if Alec regretted his choice, there was no going back. There was no going back for him to rejoin the life of a Shadowhunter, and there was no way to undo his child coming to realize that their father regrets raising them. So many children gradually went from being loved to being a burden and it really messed with their heads. Magnus knew that Alec would understand what he meant and not just get angry at him for saying those things, because even if they weren’t children anymore, it was exactly what Jace was to his parents. They had loved him when they thought he was Jace Wayland, and then they resented taking him now, and Alec always complained about how much it obviously hurt Jace.

Magnus just didn’t want Alec to make rushed choices when he couldn’t know what was coming. Alec looked at him and swallowed, looking a little unsettled, but nodded. “I- I understand,” he said softly. He put his hand back to his belly, looking down. “I would hate myself if I didn’t make the choice that’s best for this baby.”

“I know you would,” Magnus said earnestly. He leaned in and kissed Alec’s cheek. “I want nothing
more than to reassure you that you and the baby will be fine and happy together. But I know that there’s a chance you won’t.”

“But how am I going to hide this?” Alec asked. “I’m going to be seven months soon, and I’m already looking kinda fat. I’m pretty sure I can’t last another two months just wearing baggy clothes.”

Magnus laid his head on Alec’s chest, curling a hand around Alec’s on his belly. “I’m not sure, but I’ll see what I can do about lasting glamours maybe,” he suggested. “I don’t want to upset you, Darling,” he added and Alec sighed, but turned and kissed Magnus’s hair, making him relax a little.

“I know you don’t,” Alec mumbled. “You’re just right. Everything about this is about making a hard choice between ‘bad’ and ‘worse’. I love this baby. I love it more than I think even you can understand,” he said and Magnus felt a pang of sadness because he knew that was entirely true, even if Alec didn’t mean to hit so close to home. “But I don’t know anything about living like a Mundane. I don’t know if I could be happy that way. And I can’t know that I won’t see my baby and just see the demon that hurt me every time I look at it. I hope not. I really hope that is nowhere near what happens, but I know it could,” he said in a tight voice. “I want what’s best for my baby, Magnus.”

Magnus nodded. “I know, Alexander. And I promise, we’ll figure it out when it comes. I’m not going to leave you alone in this.” He hugged Alec close and he knew that, for better or for worse, he was in this until the end. Magnus was going to be with Alec no matter what happened and he would be there for Alec through everything.

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Alec had taken to training at night, because he couldn’t sleep well with the nightmares that were flaring up again, and it meant that he could take off his sweatshirt and nobody notice how ‘fat’ he was. He liked to keep himself in shape, working himself to a heavy sweat, and it was amusing how, apart from his baby, his muscles were still very tight in his torso. His back and his sides were still visibly rippled. If anything, it made his stomach look even more out of place.

One of the best things, however, was how, when he finally started to calm down, the baby decided to get in on the action. Every night when he punched the training dummy for a while, the baby started kicking and turning flips and getting super active alongside him, probably woken up by his actions. It was so fun to feel his baby getting active. He was starting to get to a point where it was more taxing to exercise with the extra strain on his body, so the baby deciding to use his stomach as its own personal punching bag usually signaled time to cool down.

He sat down heavily on the bench in the training room, drinking some water while he rubbed his belly. He smiled when the baby kicked his hand. Alec looked down at his belly and curled both hands over the slope of it, rubbing at the spot the baby was kicking with sheer adoration in his eyes. “You’re gonna be wild,” he murmured lovingly. “Such a hyper kid.” He sighed. “I was a hyper kid. You’re gonna be just like me, huh?” He rubbed at the spot the baby was kicking and bit his lip at the thought that struck him abruptly.

What if he wasn’t there to find out?

“I love you,” Alec said to his baby, his voice strained. “I love you so much, and I know I have to do what’s best for you, even if it isn’t what makes me happiest.” He licked his lips and swallowed around the lump in his throat. “I can’t wait to meet you and to hold you and to- to just see you out here. I want to keep you,” he confessed. “I want you to be loved and happy and healthy, and I want that to be with me, but I know there’s a chance it can’t be.” He smiled sadly, stroking the spot the baby kicked this time. “I don’t regret deciding to have you, even if I can’t be with you. I just didn’t
think about all of this. I just thought ‘I want you’, and I do want you,” he stressed. “There’s just so much more involved than I planned on. I kept saying I’d deal with it, but now it’s time to deal with it, and there’s so much at stake.” He sighed heavily, leaning back on one arm as he rubbed his belly with the other.

“If it was just choose you or the rest of the life I live, I might be able to just say that it’s obviously you. But it’s also your life,” he whispered sadly. “If I can’t give you the life you deserve, if I can’t give you the life you need… I don’t know,” he said tightly, his throat clicking. “I love you too much to be selfish,” he admitted weakly. “Magnus and Catarina will make sure you’re as happy as you could be if I can’t keep you with me always,” he promised. “And I’ll always love you. And I’ll make sure that you know that. Whatever it takes, I’m gonna do what’s best for you.”

Alec stood up, wincing at the twinge in his back from overworking himself while carrying extra weight towards his front. “Trust me,” he said to his belly. “If I didn’t love you so much, I would be way more annoyed at how rough this has been on my body, so you better be glad I’m not charging you rent,” he joked, and smiled brightly when the baby kicked as if replying to him. “Yeah, yeah, Dad’s just a wimp.”

It was scary to think that after all this time thinking he would raise his baby, maybe the best choice for his baby wasn’t to be with him. He didn’t want that. He didn’t plan on making that choice, either. But it was in his mind, constantly, reminding him that it was a choice he would have to make very soon.

As he left the training room, Alec didn’t notice the shadow down the hall behind him heading the other way.
There was something to be said about the relaxing feeling of a solid night of demon hunting. Alec and Izzy were both exhausted, Alec more than Izzy since he was eight months pregnant, but satisfied by a good night of killing demons. Alec was starting to actually show now, so he wore a heavy jacket that hung around him to cover his belly. He wasn’t round like a pregnant woman because of his size and the length of his torso, but he looked like he’d gotten properly fat so it would tip people off something was up. Thankfully, it was cold out so he could cover himself all the time and nobody questioned it.

“I want a bath,” Alec groaned, subtly rubbing his back. “I’m going to get Jace to let me use the bathtub in his room so I can lay there and pretend I fit in a bathtub,” he joked, and Izzy laughed at him.

“You should get Magnus to take you somewhere with a giant, tall man sized bath to soak in,” she teased and Alec ducked his head, hiding a blush.

Magnus had been amazing lately. He was such a doting boyfriend. He was so sweet to Alec, and he was always ready to rub Alec’s back and feet when they hurt him, and he liked to talk to the baby whenever they were together. When he spent the night, Magnus would curl up on his chest and caress his belly while the baby poked and prodded back at him and just smile. Alec knew that Magnus loved him before, but it was more and more obvious that Magnus loved his baby, too.

“Alec Lightwood.” Alec looked up as he heard Victor’s voice in such a loud, authoritative tone saying his name, and Izzy froze at his side as Aldertree and four other Shadowhunters walked towards them purposefully in formation.

“What’s going on?” Izzy demanded, stepping somewhat in front of Alec, but Victor just nodded and one of the men dragged her away when they got to them.

Alec bristled. “Hey, stop that-”

“Alec Lightwood, you’re under arrest by the authority of the Clave,” Victor said, and Alec’s blood went cold when the other two men nearest him grabbed him instead of Izzy. “You’re being charged in connection with a Warlock breeding ring regarding your and Clary Fairchild’s interactions with a Warlock named Iris Rouse.” Alec’s throat tightened fearfully as his arms were pulled behind his back and secured. “Miss Fairchild will be arrested as soon as we find her-“

“This is ridiculous!” Isabelle snarled, struggling against the man holding her. “Clary and Alec didn’t do anything!”

Victor looked at her. “Our investigation has turned up evidence that they went to her with the intention of procuring dark, illegal magic and then helped cover up her activities regarding breeding Warlocks, Miss Lightwood, and you would do well to stop resisting or you’ll be arrested for interfering with a matter of the Clave,” he said, and then looked back at Alec, who paled when he
saw the knowing look in Victor’s eyes. “Take him to be held, on premises, until the Clave decides whether or not to take him to the Silent City yet.”

Alec turned to Isabelle with a horrified expression he knew had to scare the shit out of her. He knew what would happen to him if they took him to the Silent City. He knew what would happen to his half-demon baby if they subjected him to the Soul Sword, because it was made of pure Adamas and his baby wasn’t Nephilim. “Izzy, stop fighting!” he said quickly, giving her a pointed look. He could only hope she understood his look to mean what he wanted it to.

And what he wanted it to mean was, You’re my only hope at finding help, so please don’t get arrested, too.

~

Alec was taken to the Head of Institute office and locked in there. He paced back and forth, fighting the urge to wrap both arms around his stomach protectively. This was bad. It was really bad. He knew that Aldertree knew. He didn’t know how, and he didn’t know who else knew. The ones who took him to the office didn’t seem to look at him in disgust and they acted like they didn’t think he was dangerous to them or in any danger. They seemed calm and normal. He wondered if maybe Aldertree’s arrest order was genuine and only he knew the truth.

He paced back and forth, hating how warm the fire burning in the hearth was when he couldn’t take off his jacket. His phone and stele had been taken, so he had nothing to use to get a message out. He also didn’t have anything to protect himself with if the worst should come.

When the door opened, Alec turned around and felt a small amount of relief when one of the three people who entered was Lydia. Victor, Lydia, and Raj came into the room and Victor went to his desk while Raj stood in front of the door, through which Alec had seen two guards waiting. “What’s going on, Victor?” Lydia asked, sharply, looking at Alec and then at Victor.

“What’s going on,” Victor said lightly. “Is that the Clave has determined from a Warlock they captured that she was running a Warlock breeding ring and Clary Fairchild and Alec Lightwood knew about it and failed to disclose this to the Clave.” He looked at Alec with a small smirk. “Mr. Lightwood, isn’t it a bit warm in here for that coat?”

Alec fought a wave of panic and let it be buried by his anger. “I’m fine, Aldertree.”

Lydia looked over at Alec. “Alec, is there any truth to this?” she asked, sounding and looking like she clearly doubted it. Alec didn’t say a word, because he knew if he lied it would only be worse. Lydia looked slowly more alarmed as his silence lasted and she looked back at Victor and then at Alec again. “Alec?”

“Clary was freaking out about her mother’s death,” Alec admitted, ducking his head. “And I felt- I felt responsible,” he said tightly. “She was going to a Warlock for something I know she shouldn’t have, but I didn’t want her to get hurt because of something I did when I killed her mother, so I went with her.” He looked at Lydia. “Clary didn’t go through with it, as you can tell since her mom didn’t get brought back from the dead.”

Lydia looked at Victor. “Well that is true,” she said calmly. “Clary didn’t do anything so Alec isn’t an accessory.”

“And what about the Warlock breeding ring?” Victor said to her as if she were stupid. “The real issue isn’t what they didn’t do in regards to Clary’s mother, but what they didn’t do in not reporting finding such a ring.”
Lydia looked pained as she looked back at Alec. He knew she wanted to trust him. “Alec?”

Alec looked away, hands fisted at his sides. “She escaped and we had more pressing things to worry about. Lydia, you know me,” he said to her, looking down into her eyes. “Clary and I did not help her get away and we didn’t cover up what she was doing. We just didn’t want everybody finding out Clary did something stupid while she was grieving.”

Lydia nodded. “I believe you, Alec.”

“I don’t,” Victor said bluntly. “When she was captured, Iris Rouse said she had a home full of infants bred from a demon in her cellar and Mundane women whose memories she erased after she was done with them.” He gave him a knowing smirk. “What do you have to say about that?”

Alec glared at him. “There are good reasons for that.”

“Alec?” Lydia asked in surprise, looking at him. “You knew about that—”

“Alec, what do you think the Clave would do to several babies that are half-demon?” he asked angrily, clearly startling her some. “I have connections with Downworlders who could protect all those Warlock babies and the Mundane woman that was pregnant with a Warlock at the time,” he said quickly. “Yes, I hid that from the Clave, but they’re all safe now and I couldn’t trust they would be after what the Clave has been doing in the past year.” He looked at Lydia seriously. “You know what I did was not trying to help that monster who was breeding Warlocks, Lydia.”

She looked at him with a worried expression. “Of course I believe you, Alec, but if you hid it from the Clave, you hid it from the Clave,” she said apologetically. “It makes you look guilty.”

Victor nodded. “And we’ll figure out exactly what you’re guilty of when the Clave sends representatives here or decide to send you to the Silent City.” Victor walked to the door and glanced back. “Are you sure you aren’t too warm in that jacket?” he asked with a smirk that made Alec internally recoil, though he hid it well.

Alec watched Lydia and Victor leave together and he immediately put his hands on his stomach after the door shut, leaving him alone in the office. He looked around frantically, not sure what he could possibly do to save himself and his baby from what was going to happen if the Clave decided to take him to the Silent City. He had no idea what he could possibly do. He didn’t think he could count on anybody being able to break into Aldertree’s office even if they did try to come get him. Even Magnus, who could portal into the Institute, couldn’t portal into this part of the Institute.

Alec didn’t know how much time he had, so he didn’t know what he could possibly get away with. Taking a few deep breaths and rubbing his belly where the baby was moving around, probably agitated by his stress, he decided to search the office. He started at the windows, methodically looking at the shelf below the windows. He turned around and started looking through the things on the desk when his eyes landed on the phone.

Communication to Idris wasn’t easy through Mundane means. All of the angel wards in all of the homes and especially in Alicante made cellphones unreliable at best and unusable at the worst. Fire messages were the easiest way to communicate within Idris and from the outside into Idris. Because of that, every Institute had an old-school, hard-wired phone, and it wasn’t just connected to Idris, it dialed out from the Institute as well.

Alec knew one person who might could help him if he could remember the number to call.
It could be said that Magnus loved hearing from his friends. He liked being called and texted (and he really liked when a certain somebody sent him sweet little good morning texts when they couldn’t be together) and fire messaged and visited. He just liked people. Hearing from a friend was a great way to pass the time.

Magnus didn’t enjoy getting a call just past dawn from Isabelle Lightwood in which she answered his, “Someone better be dead,” sleepy growl with a sob of her brother’s name, scaring Magnus half to death.

After Magnus finished freaking out, Isabelle actually said what was wrong. “Aldertree knows, I’m sure of it. He- he’s had it out for Alec for so long and I know he knows about the baby, Magnus. That’s why they arrested him!”

Magnus frantically dressed. “What can I do? Where is he and what can I do? Is he okay?”

“Yes, for now!” Isabelle said. “But if they take him to the Silent City while he’s got a baby with demon blood in him, he won’t be, and his baby will die! If they use the Soul Sword on him, his baby will die.”

Magnus cursed as he snapped his fingers and summoned his boots. “I’ll come talk to Aldertree, try and assess the situation—”

“No, you can’t do that,” Isabelle interrupted. “You have to go find Clary. They’re coming for her, too. I think she’s with Luke, but you can hide her. If they can’t find her, it’ll take them longer for them to do anything to Alec. They can’t ship him off to the Silent City without Clary, too.”

Magnus groaned, rolling his eyes. “Well this is great. My boyfriend is in trouble and my only job is to hide a little girl from bad people. This sounds like a shitty movie,” he complained, but grabbed his jacket and headed out into the living room to open a portal. “I’ll check the Jade Wolf first and then we’ll see what happens from there.”

“Just hurry,” Isabelle said worriedly. “The longer we can keep her moving, the longer I have to figure out what I can do to help Alec.”

Magnus opened a portal and sighed worriedly. “For Alec’s sake, I hope you’re right, my dear.”

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Leaving Max behind at a new Institute was never easy. Maryse knew that everybody’s children traveled with their tutors if the family wasn’t assigned permanently at an Institute, but Max was still so young, so it was always hard. “Maryse? Did you hear what I said about the meeting when we get back to Alicante?” Robert asked, and she glanced over at him.

“Sorry,” she said, shaking her head. “Yes, I got a fire message, too. Something about capturing a Downworlder with information the Clave needs to discuss, right?” she asked as they headed down the street towards the train.

Robert nodded. “I’m not sure what—“

Maryse’s phone started ringing and interrupted him. “Sorry,” she said, taking it from her bag. She didn’t recognize the number but the only ones who could call her phone were people who she would not want to ignore. If it was someone from the Clave, she didn’t want to miss an order they didn’t want to send by fire message. “Hello?” she asked.

“Thank the Angel I got the right number, oh God—“
Maryse stopped walking she was so startled. “Alec?” she asked, confused about Alec calling her from a strange number, or at all, really. He hadn’t spoken to her in months. Robert stopped walking as well when she said Alec’s name and he turned around from where he had stopped a few steps ahead.

“Mom,” he said in a voice that was almost tearful, and instantly Maryse’s blood ran cold.

“Alec, what’s wrong?”

Robert walked closer. “What’s going on? Is that Alec?” he asked, looking at her face worriedly. She knew she had to be pale, but she couldn’t help the fear coursing through her. If something had happened that not only got Alec to call her, but had Alec scared, when Alec was never openly afraid of anything, it had to be bad.

“I can’t explain it all, I don’t have time, but please, I’m in trouble,” Alec said in a rush. “The Clave thinks I did something I didn’t do, or at least I think they think so, but Aldertree knows something the Clave doesn’t and I can’t let them find out, but he knows and it’s a really long story, but I will die if he gets his way. I don’t have my phone, or my stele and Izzy and Jace can’t do anything to help me without getting arrested, too, and I wouldn’t ask you to go against the Clave, but I need your help-“

Maryse took a breath. “Alec, Alec, slow down. I don’t understand what’s going on. Why have you been arrested by the Clave-“

“He’s been what?” Robert asked suddenly, and she waved a hand at him.

Alec let out an honest to God whimper and Maryse realized that whatever was going on, it had to be really and truly something terrible to upset Alec so much. He had managed to stay in control through everything in his life before whatever this was. “You won’t believe me if I tell you, but please. Please come help me. Aldertree is trying to punish me for something that isn’t my fault, and I would never lie about that. I would take the consequences of my actions if I did what they claim I did, but I didn’t, and if they take me to the Silent City, Aldertree will have as well as killed me with his own hands.”

Maryse raised a hand to her forehead, trying to figure out what the hell Alec could’ve gotten himself into that had him so shaken. “Alec, you aren’t making sense. Why would Victor Aldertree have it out for you and how would he convince the Clave that you did something worth being taken to the Silent City?”


“Mom,” Alec whispered in a shaking tone. “Mom, I’m pregnant.” Maryse barely managed to not drop her phone and time seemed to slow around her. “This Warlock put something in the tea Clary and I were drinking because she was going to make Clary get pregnant with a Warlock from a Nephilim, but when we realized she was doing some dark shit, in order to escape from me, she threw me down into the basement where she was keeping the demon to- to-“ Alec stopped talking and Maryse almost spoke before she realized he was crying. “The magic was strong enough that I got pregnant even though I’m a man, and I’ve been hiding it for a long time now, because I knew the Clave would force me to have an abortion and I didn’t want that, but if Aldertree found out and he’s putting this on me because he hates me and he wants to make me suffer, and if they take me to the Silent City while I’m carrying a baby with demon blood-“ He broke off with a choked sound and Maryse put a hand over her mouth. “Mom, please help me. I don’t want to die,” he whispered. “I don’t want my baby to die and I don’t want to die. I know you can’t possibly approve, but I’m desperate, please. If anybody can help me, it’s you, and you’re my mom.” Maryse’s throat tightened and Alec sniffled. “No matter what has been said between us, you’re my mom and I need you.”
Maryse was stunned into silence. She didn’t know what to think. She wasn’t sure she could believe him even though she couldn’t imagine him making something like that up. Maryse was so shaken by the real fear in Alec’s voice that she couldn’t think straight. “Alec,” she breathed, only to hear a panicked curse. “Alec?”

“Shit, someone’s coming, but please, Mom, I’m scared. Please help me.” There was a fumbled sound, a click, and the call went dead.

“Alec?!?” Maryse took her phone away from her ear and looked at the ‘call ended’ message and sucked in a breath. She wasn’t sure what was true and what wasn’t. She didn’t know how she could possibly start to process the idea of anything Alec said. Time felt like it was moving at a crawl around her and the sounds were all muffled while her ears rung deafeningly.

She was only shaken out of her shock by Robert grabbing her arm to snap her out of it. “What’s wrong with Alec?” he demanded, looking frantic, and she finally found the words to speak.

“I- I’m- I don’t know.” Maryse looked at Robert and shook her head in confusion. “I’m not sure.”
Chapter 16

Chapter Notes

Things escalate quickly this chapter!

Until they found Clary, Alec was stuck in Aldertree’s office. They didn’t allow him to leave, so he hadn’t been able to take his potion, and it was having a pretty adverse effect on him. It wasn’t as bad as it had been earlier in his pregnancy, but he felt extreme fatigue. He was so tired and there was nowhere comfortable for him to rest. He sat in one of the chairs in the office and leaned back, but the angle made his already sore back even more pained.

Alec didn’t even mean to fall asleep, but when he was startled awake by the door opening, it was Aldertree. He had clearly changed clothes, so Alec figured it must be near noon. Alec was starving and sore all over and he was so tired. “Still wearing that jacket, I see,” Aldertree said as he walked over to his desk. Alec glared at him from his seat and Aldertree tilted his head. “You have to be burning up. Surely such a heavy coat in this warm office is a bit much.”

Alec didn’t give him the pleasure of getting a reaction out of him. He knew what Aldertree wanted, he wanted confirmation that Alec was pregnant. Alec didn’t look like a typical pregnant person, but he was obviously fat and, in his line of active work, it would be confirmation of what Aldertree clearly already knew to be true. “Your friend, Clary,” Aldertree said, walking around his desk. “She’s a busy girl, it would seem.” He tilted his head. “According to last we heard, she was going to see her Werewolf friend last night. And when she didn’t come home this morning, we heard she went to stay with her Vampire, and since Vampires sleep all day, she’s unreachable.” He picked up a jar of something, turning it back and forth. “Next, I suspect she’ll be visiting that Warlock of yours. Magnus Bane.” The way Aldertree said Magnus’s name made Alec’s blood run cold. “Now that’s one I will never understand,” he said, walking around the desk again and towards Alec. “A legendary hedonist, a man who fills his entire life with every pleasure he could want, and yet he chooses you,” Aldertree said, coming to stop in front of Alec.

Alec looked at the jar in his hands and he stood up, trying to seem casual as he headed closer to the fire, as if looking into the flames. “Magnus may be a hedonist in that he doesn’t abstain from what he wants in life, but that doesn’t mean the things he wants can’t be something that requires effort rather than an easy indulgence.” Alec hadn’t planned to speak to him, but the way Victor was painting Magnus with the same brush most people did triggered a defensive part of Alec that hated people talking shit about his boyfriend.

Victor snorted. “And what a man who is known to enjoy blind drunk, interspecies orgies wants is you?” he asked, his voice dripping with disdain. Alec’s jacket was grabbed from behind and he gasped as he was spun around and slammed into the stone fireplace. “I know you’re carrying an abomination,” Aldertree spat, confirming Alec’s fears. “What would that man want with a pregnant Shadowhunter unless it was to get his hands on the monster inside of you?”

Alec gasped and shoved him off of him. “Don’t touch me,” Alec said, backing away. Aldertree opened the jar and Alec stumbled back. “What is that? What are you doing?!” he demanded. Aldertree came towards him and Alec kicked out, sending the jar flying until it landed on the floor and spilled its powdery contents. Aldertree reached out for Alec, who tried to rush past him, only to
have his coat be a handhold for Aldertree. “Stop, let go of me!” Alec cried trying to tug free. “No!” he shouted as Aldertree grabbed him around the throat and tried to get a grip. “STOP!”

Alec was better in a fight than most, but he was tired, he was in pain, and he was pregnant. He gasped in pain at the nails scraping his neck and throat as he struggled. He broke free only to be grabbed again. He was still struggling when the door to the office swung open and Lydia stood there, looking back at Alec with wide, startled eyes as Victor choked him from behind. “WHAT ARE YOU DOING?!” she all but screamed, rushing towards Alec just as feet pounded behind her and more people approached.

Lydia grabbed Aldertree but he was in a blind rage now, his hatred for Alec clearly taking over. Alec tried to stop her but Aldertree shoved her away hard enough that she hit the edge of the desk and fell to the floor with a cry, holding her ribs. He began choking Alec again, and Alec scrambled to kick and even throw himself bodily at the man behind him. He broke free long enough to gasp painfully and started to stumble away when Aldertree caught his coat. The door swung open again just as Alec’s coat was ripped off of him and he was dragged back into Aldertree’s hands around his throat, and Alec had never been happier to see his mother.

Lydia scrambled to her feet, but before she could do anything, Maryse’s shocked face, mirrored by her husband’s behind her, turned rage-filled and she crossed the room in the blink of an eye, wrenching Alec away from Aldertree in the same move she used to pull a Seraph blade from seemingly nowhere and point it at Victor where he stumbled when Alec was tugged away from him. “Get your hands off my son!” she spat, and Alec wanted to cry as he scrambled to get to his feet, helped there by Lydia and his father. He turned around and saw Victor was on one knee, hands held up while Maryse pointed the blade at his throat.

“M-Mom,” he rasped, and he looked at his dad, who was holding him under the arm to help him stay up. “Dad.”

When he looked at his father, Robert’s gaze was on his middle, and suddenly Alec realized his coat had been ripped away from him. Fearfully, he stood under his own steam and backed away, heading towards the desk. “Alec?” Lydia asked, and when he stood tall, she looked at how thick he was and frowned. “Have you gained weight?” she asked, only to suddenly still. She looked over at Aldertree, who seemed to have given up on fighting, and then back at Alec. “Oh, God.”

Alec curled his arms around his middle, tears from being choked streaking his face as he backed into the desk. “Lydia, you can’t say anything. Victor, he- he found out and he-” he looked over at him. “Am I really under arrest by order of the Clave or was it some ruse to get me alone where you could use whatever that shit was on me?” he asked, pointing at the carpet.

Lydia sighed. “No, Alec, you are really under arrest. I got the orders, too,” she said softly. He looked at her fearfully and she looked at his middle. “Oh, Alec. What-“

“This matter can be discussed in a little while,” Maryse said, turning to look at Lydia. “But for now, Victor Aldertree attacked and was trying to murder another Shadowhunter, from the looks of things. I’m fairly certain the Clave will have more than enough to say about that,” she said in an angry but measured tone.

Lydia nodded. “I’ll send a fire message immediately and send in some guards,” she said, rushing out the door.

Alec leaned on the edge of the desk and Robert walked closer. “Alec, are you alright?” he asked, looking worried. He reached out and put a hand on Alec’s shoulder and Alec flinched involuntarily, startling him into pulling away. “Whoa, hey, it’s okay. It’s Dad,” he said and Alec didn’t feel like
bothering to tell him he wasn’t freaking out, he was just jumpy.

“Dad, I—“ He swallowed painfully as speaking hurt his abused throat, and Robert grimaced.

“Come on, we should get you to the infirmary so they can treat that,” he said, but Alec shook his head, arms crossed over his middle.

“Can’t. Very public,” he whispered since it hurt less than speaking.

Robert seemed unable to make himself glance down at Alec’s middle, but he nodded. “Between me, your mom, and Lydia, I’m sure that’s enough witnesses that you don’t need anybody else to confirm the marks,” he said, pulling out his stele. Alec allowed Robert to use a healing rune on him so that the pain could begin to fade.

“You’re both actually okay with this?” Aldertree asked incredulously. “Aren’t you the least bit bothered by him not only getting himself raped by a demon, but by him not just getting rid of it like common sense suggests?”

Alec was a little startled when Robert turned to glare across the room. “You think we’d be okay with you strangling our son?” he demanded coldly.

Maryse held the blade to Aldertree’s throat. “You tried to kill my son,” she said dangerously. “I wouldn’t say a word right now if I were you.”

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Alec’s father gave him his jacket, and though it wasn’t nearly baggy enough on Alec’s larger frame, it hid his belly well enough that Alec could leave the office. Once the guards came for Victor, Lydia took control of the Institute while they waited for word to come down from Idris on what would happen to him. Alec was still under arrest, but since Lydia was in charge now, she allowed for him to be held in his bedroom and just had Raj wait outside his room.

Maryse was livid still that Aldertree would dare try and hurt her son, and Robert was also angry, but most of all, he was really scared for Alec. He and Maryse went with Alec to his room, and though Isabelle and Jace were waiting, they weren’t allowed to stay. Raj had to tell them he was still under arrest and they couldn’t see him. He looked at Maryse and Robert and started to speak but seemed to see the rage in Maryse’s eyes and change his mind.

When they got to his room, Alec immediately went to his bedside table and Robert watched worriedly as he scrambled to pull a vile of something out of a pouch and drink it quickly before sitting heavily on his bed. “Alec?” he asked curiously and Alec looked up at him with the guiltiest look he could ever remember seeing on his face.

As a child, Alec had always been very honest. Even when he was really little, when he did something he shouldn’t have done, he might keep his silence, but he never lied and he never shied away from admitting what he had done when pressed. He faced his consequences without any guilt as a little boy, and it had stayed that way all his life. Alec was one to believe what he did was worth the consequences and not back down. Just as he had when he had kissed that Warlock at his wedding in front of everybody, he stood and faced his and Maryse’s criticism with a determination that was part of what made him such a good Shadowhunter.

Now, he looked guilty and afraid and it was absolutely unnerving for Robert. “What is that?” he asked, nodding to the empty vial.

Alec avoided his gaze and cleared his throat. “I- I have to take medicine. Because of the baby,” he all
but whispered. “Warlock pregnancies make you sick, apparently, and I- I’ve been taking this stuff.”

Robert took a breath and let it ow slowly, trying to grasp the fact that his son was pregnant. “Okay, there are a lot of questions, but I’ll start with the most pressing: What are you under arrest for?”

Alec grimaced. “After- After I got possessed and killed Clary’s mom, I-” He flinched and Robert’s heart broke to think about how crushing it must have been to Alec to know what happened while he was possessed. Robert flinched himself when, right after that, he realized that within a few days, Alec was possessed by a demon that killed someone with his body and then raped by another demon. It was so horrific to think Alec had suffered so much. Alec continued, shaking his head. “She wanted to go to a Warlock and have her do dark magic and bring her mother back to life, and I know I should’ve just stopped her, but I wasn’t okay,” he said in a tight voice. “I wasn’t okay, I wasn’t thinking clearly. I was so guilty and I just wanted to do whatever I could for her, so I went with her, and I wasn’t in the room with Clary and that Iris Rouse woman, but the woman who was there gave me tea and I drank it, and it turned out the tea was also some Clary drank, and the Warlock had managed a powerful potion that would make it possible for a runed Shadowhunter to get pregnant with a Warlock.”

Robert grimaced. “Even a male one, huh?” he asked gently and Alec nodded, biting his lips as he still looked away from Maryse or Robert’s faces. “Why are you under arrest for that? Clearly, Clary didn’t go through with it or her mother wouldn’t have stayed dead.”

Alec sucked in a breath, looking at him finally. “Because I didn’t report back that we discovered that this wasn’t just for Clary, the Warlock had been breeding Warlocks from a demon she had in her basement, and there were a few babies already and a pregnant woman, and she would wipe their memories so they didn’t remember what happened, and when I discovered what was going on, I tried to stop her and Clary tried to help, but the Warlock managed to escape, leaving behind babies and the pregnant woman.”

“Why didn’t you report it, Alec?” Maryse asked, seeming frustrated. She paced to the end of the bed, looking down at him. “What could possibly stop you from reporting that?”

Alec gave her a defiant look. “Because she threw me to the demon and when I woke up I was told the potion might have worked on me, so I knew if I told the Clave they would figure it out.” Robert watched Maryse’s frustration turn to shock and then a humbled realization. Robert knew Alec was right. They would’ve noticed as soon as Alec started showing signs what happened if he had told them that much. “Also,” he continued suddenly. “Also, we didn’t want the Clave getting their hands on all those babies or the pregnant woman, because for the past year, they’ve been doing really scary things to Downworlders,” he said brazenly, looking at Maryse. “I know Aldertree has been torturing Downworlders, and I know it’s approved by the Clave.”

Robert did not know that the Clave approved torturing Downworlders, but for Alec to say so, he must’ve had evidence. “So where are they?” Robert asked him.

Alec looked at him. “There’s a safe place for Warlocks. I don’t know where and I wouldn’t say if I did know,” he said towards Maryse. “But it has existed since the Uprising, and they were all taken there. I don’t know what happened with the Mundane after she had her baby, but the rest of them, they’re safe there.”

“Why didn’t you get rid of it?” Maryse asked Alec, and Robert glared at her. She grimaced and held up a hand before Alec could even find the words to get angry. “I know, I know, that sounded very much like Aldertree,” she said quickly. “I just mean that you have been in danger for months now, and anything could’ve happened to you. Why would you choose to put yourself through this?”
Of all the things Robert could have expected Alec to answer to that, his answer was the last thing on Robert’s mind. “Because I want my baby.” Alec’s voice was brittle, like he was trying very hard not to cry. Alec didn’t cry, at least not in Robert’s experience, so he couldn’t imagine what Alec had been through recently. He watched Alec curl his arms protectively around his stomach and Alec sniffled. “I was going to. When I first found out for sure, the plan was to terminate as soon as Magnus could get the things Catarina needed. For weeks, that was just the plan,” he said, clarifying a bit about exactly how all of this had played out by revealing that Catarina Loss was behind his care. “But- but when I told Magnus I was pregnant so that Catarina could get what she needed, I-I realized I didn’t want an abortion,” he said in a tight voice. “I wanted my baby. I want my baby,” he babbled. His chest heaved some and he shook his head. “They can’t take me to the Silent City, or use the Soul Sword on me, my baby wouldn’t survive,” he gritted out, clearly fighting back tears.

He was right, Robert realized. While carrying a baby with demon blood – and Angel that was weird to think – he couldn’t enter the Silent City or be subjected to the Soul Sword. It would kill the baby and probably kill Alec as well. Maryse looked at Alec with so much confusion in her expression. “What were you planning to do, Alec? How did you plan on having a Warlock baby?”

“By leaving,” Alec confessed, and fear shook Robert at that one. “My plan was to leave the Clave. To run away with my baby and live a life as a Mundane.”

“You would give up your life for this?” Maryse asked incredulously.

Alec tilted his head, looking at her with the coldest look Robert had ever seen in his eyes. “You gave birth to three children and you’re asking if I would give up this life for my child?”

Robert saw the uncomfortable and pained look that came over his wife and he chuckled weakly. “We did, Alec,” he said simply. Alec looked at him and frowned. “When we left the Circle, when we betrayed Valentine even though we knew he would kill us if he caught us, it was because of you.” Alec looked stunned by that news.

“When I found out I was pregnant,” Maryse said quietly, in a very un-Maryse-like tone, “I knew that we had to get out. Valentine was getting more and more insane and I knew I couldn’t risk my child’s life like that.” She shook her head. “I was too scared to leave the Circle before I got pregnant, but when we found out, we immediately started planning our way out,” she said, and Robert could remember how fast things changed once they discovered they were going to be parents. It was strange to him now, after being a father for nearly twenty-five years, to think there was once a time that his biggest fears had been for himself and Maryse.

Alec surprised him by nodding. “Exactly,” he said firmly. “I didn’t have any concrete plans yet, but very soon I was going to have to make a decision. I’m eight months pregnant,” he said, and Robert tried to imagine Alec spending the past eight months hiding that he was pregnant from those around him. “The only reason I haven’t done anything yet is because I keep putting it off. I don’t want to leave Jace and Izzy behind, but I know I have to.” He swallowed hard and grimaced. “Lately- lately I’ve had to start thinking about how maybe I would have to give my baby away after it’s born. I ignored for so long the reality of leaving the Clave and living like a Mundane, and the more I thought about it, the more I realized I don’t know if I could do that and give my baby the life it deserves.” He shook his head defiantly. “I want what’s best for my baby, and if it’s not being with me, then that’s- that’s what I’d have to do.”

There was a long silence after Alec finished and Robert couldn’t imagine how difficult Alec’s life had become. Alec’s willingness to give up his life for his baby or give up his baby said a lot about how serious Alec was about his child. Robert knew better than Alec probably realized what it was like to love an unborn child more than anything. Though Alec had shut him and Maryse out, there
wasn’t a day that Robert didn’t think about his children and worry about whether or not he had done the right things and made the right choices along the way.

It was jarring to realize that his son didn’t even trust him with the knowledge of his own grandchild’s existence.

“I don’t know what to do,” Maryse admitted hollowly. Alec and Robert both looked at her in surprise. She never admitted weaknesses or backed down, but she looked troubled now. “Alec, don’t get me wrong, there are so many things I don’t understand, about this, but whether you believe me or not, I would do anything to protect you,” she said firmly, looking him in the eyes. “But I don’t know what to do. The Clave can’t find out you’re pregnant,” she stressed. “They can’t find out, but you did what they say you did, so they’re going to interrogate you. But they can’t, or you could die.”

Robert’s heart sank and he realized something else. “And in order to press charges against Aldertree, we have to put him in a position that he would be subjected to the Soul Sword, and while we could intimidate him into lying about the baby otherwise, with the Soul Sword he couldn’t possibly keep from telling them about your pregnancy.”

Alec looked terrified. “Then what do we do?” He started rubbing his belly absently and Robert realized with a jarring sense of familiarity that the baby must be moving. He hadn’t been around a pregnant person since Maryse had Max, but he recognized what Alec was doing, he was trying to soothe his active baby. “The only option I can see is to break me out and let me run for it,” he said bluntly. “As long as this baby is inside of me, there’s no other option to save me.”

Maryse looked up suddenly, going pale. “I have an idea, Alec, but it’s- it’s not going to be easy.”

Alec swallowed audibly and Robert looked at him, only to see him nod. “If it will save my baby, I’ll do anything.”

“That’s what I was afraid you would say,” she said in a pained voice that made Robert’s blood run cold.
Waiting for confirmation was torture. Clary was asleep in Magnus’s spare room, but he couldn’t sleep. He didn’t know what Alec was going through. He wasn’t sure where he was, he didn’t know who was with him, and he didn’t know if he was alright. It was absolutely killing him to not know if Alec was going to be alright. He groaned as he rolled over and screamed in frustration into his pillow. Magnus would love to sleep, because at least then time would move faster. It was the middle of the afternoon, but he thought a nap would distract him, and it really wasn’t.

The ringing of his phone had Magnus to his feet instantly, sprinting for the dresser where he had put his phone out of his reach so he could try and nap without constantly reaching for it. “Hello?!” he asked, not even looking to see who it was before answering.

“Magnus, it’s me.” Magnus’s whole body relaxed when he heard Alec’s voice and, before he even knew it was happening, he was crying. He put a hand over his mouth to keep from making a sound and scaring Alec, but he had been so upset and so worried. Confirmation that Alec was alright was like having every one of those emotions explode at once. He leaned against the dresser and took a breath.

“Darling, are you okay?” he asked weakly.

“I’m okay for the moment,” Alec said, and Magnus waited. “Look, can you portal Catarina into my room?” he asked and Magnus waited for more. “I’m- I need both of you to come here.”

“Why are you in your room if you’re under arrest?” Magnus asked and Alec sighed.

“Because Aldertree attacked me,” he said and Magnus’s breath stopped. “He tried to kill me so Lydia arrested him and took control of the Institute. My mom and dad are here. They’re- look, it’s a long story and we have very little time, Magnus. Can you get her here or not?”

Magnus was already headed to write a fire message. “Of course, I think she’s at work, but in this type of emergency, I can get her to portal here and we can go together. I can be there in ten minutes at the most.”

“Good, because Lydia will be back soon and then we’ll know our timeframe before someone from the Clave comes,” Alec said, sounding scared. “Just- just hurry, okay?”

Magnus sucked in a breath at how scared he sounded. “Of course, Alexander.”

“I love you,” Alec said softly and Magnus’s throat tightened painfully.

“I love you too, Alec. I’ll be there as soon as I can,” he said, and then, with great pain, he hung up and finished writing the fire message to send to Catarina.
Alec was exhausted, so he was lying on his bed while his parents spoke quietly in his bathroom to not distract him. For the past hour they had been waiting for news from Lydia and he had only called Magnus about Catarina minutes ago, so he decided to lay down a little longer. He hadn’t managed to fall asleep, but lying quietly still helped the body rest, Catarina had taught him. It was for when he had nightmares so bad he was afraid to sleep that he learned that. It wasn’t as good as sleep, but lying and just letting his body rest was still somewhat energizing.

The plan his mother had suggested was so dangerous and sounded ridiculous, so his dad had argued against it, but Alec wanted to talk to Lydia about it, since she had already seen that he was pregnant and she would be able to tell them whether it would even work. Alec was terrified and didn’t want to do it, but he knew the alternative was that his baby and possibly even he could die in any of the other potentialities. He was still lying quietly when the sound of a portal opening startled him into a sitting position just in time to see Magnus and Catarina walk into the room arm in arm.

Alec hadn’t told his parents Magnus and Catarina were coming, so they came out of the bathroom ready to fight just as Magnus rushed over to the side of the bed and caught Alec in a hug before he could do more than scoot to the edge of the bed. Alec clung to Magnus, one hand Magnus’s hair as he clung to him, taking comfort from his boyfriend’s arms. Magnus clutched him so tightly that his knuckles turned white, and Alec didn’t even care that Magnus was strong enough that it hurt a little. “Fuck, I was so worried,” Magnus mumbled and Alec laughed weakly.

“Don’t get too calm yet,” he warned, pulling back to look at Catarina, who looked very uncomfortable but calm as she stood beside Magnus. Alec took note of the fact that she had the bed between her and his parents. “Catarina, I’m sorry-“

“Nonsense,” she said firmly, reaching out to touch his shoulder. “You need my help and I’m here. Just like I promised I would be.”

“Alec,” Maryse’s voice said from behind him. “How is it possible for them to portal into your room?” she asked, and Alec turned to look at his parents before he pulled himself off the bed, Magnus helping him stand more smoothly.

“When I was sick from tracking Jace,” Alec started, walking around to the foot of the bed. “Magnus had to portal me out of here, and since he’s the one that warded the Institute, he was able to do it. And he just never redid the wards since anybody has to have been here before to portal in and nobody trying to get out would know about it.”

Catarina tittered, clearly unable to help herself. “So your boyfriend can portal directly to your room?” she asked with a raised eyebrow and Magnus gave her an annoyed look.

“Is this really the time?” he asked with a roll of his eyes that made something tight in Alec’s chest loosen slightly.

Robert cringed slightly but cleared his throat. “Well, what is important is why-“ The door behind him opened and everybody tensed until Lydia was the one to walk through. She stopped, looking at everybody in the room and narrowed her eyes slightly.

“I don’t remember either of you two coming through the Institute,” she said to Magnus and Catarina, who both said nothing. She looked at Alec, who refused to say anything and she sighed heavily. “Okay, whatever, I guess it’s good that they could get here,” she said, looking at Maryse. “We have two hours, at the most, before someone else from the Clave arrives. They called a meeting about Aldertree before they sent anybody, but they will finish sooner or later. If you guys are going to do this, you have to do it now.”
That was exactly what Alec was afraid of hearing. He swallowed hard and looked at Catarina. “You and I, we talked about the birth,” he said, and she immediately focused on him. “You- you said that I can’t give birth, so you would have to glamour me to be a woman and trick a doctor and some nurses at the hospital to do a C-section,” he said, and she nodded carefully.

“Yes, I did. Why? You don’t act like you’re having contractions,” she said, looking at him carefully, as if worried he was just that good at hiding it.

Alec shook his head. “No, but we- we need to do a C-section now. Here. With nobody else but us,” he said, and her eyes widened.

“Alec, what do you mean?” she asked in a rush. “This is not a surgical theatre, and I’m a nurse, not a doctor-“

“But you mentioned that, in case of emergency, you can do it,” he urged, because she had said that. She had comforted his fears of not being able to go to a hospital by saying that if push came to shove, she could do it, it would just be risky.

Lydia nodded, her eyes wide. “I know this is really a lot to ask, but in two hours, someone will be here and Victor Aldertree is going to either tell them straight out that Alec is pregnant or be forced to tell them he is with the Soul Sword, and even if he doesn’t spill right away, they’re planning to use the Soul Sword on Alec, and with a baby with demon blood in him-“

Alec turned to Catarina. “My baby will die and I might die, too,” he stressed. “But Mom, she had an idea,” he said, glancing over at her as he shuffled. “I’m eight months pregnant, so the baby should be okay if it’s born now, and- and with healing runes and surgical injuries, not magical or demonic ones, I’ll be healed in forty-five minutes, tops, after a C-Section. My baby won’t be inside of me, so if they use the Soul Sword on me, it won’t hurt anything, and if Aldertree tells them I’m pregnant, I won’t be,” he stressed. He looked at Magnus, who looked startled. “Magnus, you can help with the pain, and she can do the surgery.”

Magnus looked ill at the thought. “Alec, Darling-“

“Look,” Maryse said, speaking up. “The choice here is a risk that something can go wrong, or an absolutely surety that he will lose his baby and probably die,” she said firmly. “I don’t like this any more than you two do,” she added. “But this is an impossible situation and this is the only thing we could think of to save Alec.”

Alec watched her staring at Catarina and was surprised when his dad turned to Magnus with a pleading look in his eyes. “If you care about our son even a fraction of the amount we do, you’ll help him. Please,” he said almost desperately.

Turning back to Catarina and Magnus, Alec licked his lips. “I don’t want my baby to die,” he said helplessly, and he could see the moment Catarina caved, because she ducked her head and exhaled. After a moment she nodded, raising her head. “Okay.” She looked at Lydia. “Do you have surgical supplies here? Scalpels, gauze, gloves-“

“I’ll bring you what you need,” Lydia said immediately, turning to leave quickly.

Magnus reached out for him and Alec stepped into his space, leaning his forehead against Magnus’s. Magnus took a shaking breath and splayed a hand on his belly. Alec swallowed and met his eyes, hands coming up to frame Magnus’s face. “Magnus, I- I need you to do something big for me,” he whispered and Magnus looked into his eyes expectantly. Alec swallowed again, the lump in his
throat growing. “I need you to take my baby with you after it’s born.” Magnus’s eyes widened and Alec pushed on. “It can’t be here when they come looking for me,” he whimpered, fighting the tears that wanted to well up. “I— I trust you to keep it safe until I can come, too, and— and Catarina can help you. I just need my baby somewhere safe, and the only person who loves my baby more than you is me.” He touched Magnus’s cheek gently. “You love it, and you take care of people you love.”


Alec closed his eyes and just held onto Magnus while they waited for everything to be ready to get started. He didn’t know when the next time he would be able to hold Magnus might be.

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Even with Magnus there to help, it wasn’t entirely painless. Alec had suffered worse pain before, but he was tired and scared so even the pain he did feel felt worse than it probably was. He couldn’t stop clenching his jaw and fighting the urge to squirm. The only thing that helped was, ironically, his mom holding his hand. Maryse wasn’t overly comforting, and she had never been overly affectionate, but Alec was starting to think that maybe he had been wrong to claim she never loved any of them, because from the moment she had arrived, she had protected him and stood up for him, like a mom should. He still couldn’t forgive her for acting like Jace wasn’t her son, too, when she had adopted him and been a mother to him most of his life, but he felt like he understood that, even if she wasn’t perfect, she would protect him from those that would hurt him like a mother should.

When the baby came out, however, Alec only had eyes for the blood and goop covered infant that Catarina handed over to Robert so that she could work on healing Alec. The baby didn’t start crying immediately and Alec almost panicked, but once his dad had done something to its nose and mouth, it immediately began to cry loudly, seeming to be incredibly distressed at being taken from the warm, comfortable place it had been before. “Dad?” Alec rasped out, and Robert came to him with the baby.

“He’s okay, Alec,” Robert comforted, and Alec’s heart stopped for a moment.

“A boy?” he whimpered, and Robert nodded with a smile. Alec held his hands up, but Catarina stopped him before he could reach up, since she was still working on healing him shut since they didn’t have time (or need, really) for stitches.

It was torture, looking at his baby right beside him but being unable to touch him or hold him yet. Alec didn’t realize he was crying until his mother did something she hadn’t done since he was a small child and start stroking his hair and shushing him. “It’s okay, Alec, just a little longer,” she murmured.

It felt like an eternity before he suddenly felt a warmth and looked down to see that Catarina had stopped and his abdomen was shut. Maryse immediately grabbed her stele and, with Catarina’s nod, she activated a healing rune and instantly Alec could feel the pain receding. Magnus saw him relax and stopped focusing so hard on stopping the pain. When he looked up, his eyes met Alec’s, and he could see the tears on Magnus’s face as he looked first at Alec and then, immediately, his eyes were drawn to the baby. “You can move now,” Catarina finally allowed as she stood up, holding her still-bloody hands out to the sides, though there was blood all over her sleeves already. “Careful movements for now, though,” she stressed. “You won’t be fully healed all the way through for a little while, if my memory of Shadowhunter runes is right.”

Immediately, Alec pushed himself up some so he was sitting again the pillows of his bed, and
Magnus was at his side instantly. Maryse, seeming to understand more than Alec would have given her credit for, moved back so that Magnus could hug him carefully. “Oh, Alec,” he choked out, and Alec hugged him back quickly, before Magnus pulled away and allowed Alec to finally do what he really wanted.

“Dad,” Alec said, reaching his arms out, and Robert finally handed over the baby. When Alec took him in his hands, the first thing that struck him was how tiny he was. He pulled him to his chest, still wrapped in a bloody towel that Robert had been gently cleaning him with, but Alec didn’t care. He looked down at his baby boy and knew instantly that nothing would ever matter as much as the tiny thing in his arms.

He was beautiful. Alec had never seen anything in his whole life nearly as beautiful as his son. It was insane, Alec thought, that hours ago, he thought the love he felt for his unborn child was unsurpassable, and yet now that he actually had him in his arms, he felt more love than even that. He was so small and his hair was dark and his skin was light, just like Alec’s. Alec wouldn’t have cared if, like Magnus had once said, his baby was scaled and had a tail, because he was the most perfect thing Alec had ever seen, even though he was all wrinkly and squished looking. Alec knew his smile must have been blinding, but he didn’t care. His baby was perfect and he was there in his arms.

“He’s so beautiful.” Alec glanced up from his baby to see the look of wonder on Magnus’s face as he looked down at the baby with more love etched into his features than Alec had ever seen directed at him. “Alec, he’s perfect,” Magnus breathed. Alec watched Magnus with a bright smile because Magnus hadn’t taken his eyes off the baby once. “Hi,” he said softly, reaching out to touch the baby’s tiny hand. “Hi, there. You know this voice, huh?”

Alec looked back at the baby as he squirmed around, still whimpering and making unhappy sounds though his squalling had quieted some. “We’ve talked to you a lot,” he said with Magnus, looking at the baby closely. “We’ve been waiting to meet you for so long,” he breathed more to himself than the baby. “I can’t believe you’re finally here,” he squeaked somewhat, unable to stop his throat from closing up on him.

Magnus looked at him and Alec glanced up seeing the movement, only to be met with a soft, careful kiss that he welcomed. He exhaled and Magnus smiled against his lips.

In all his life, Magnus had never been present for the birth of a child. He had never witnessed a parent’s first moment with their child. He had never heard the first cry of a baby. It was something entirely new and entirely unimaginably unique.

Now he had, and he felt so much love for the baby in Alec’s arms that he barely managed to keep from crying. Alec looked at his baby with so much wonder in his eyes that Magnus couldn’t decide whether he should look at the beautiful baby or his incredible boyfriend. Magnus sat beside Alec, looking down at the baby, when the little thing opened its eyes and looked up at them.

Magnus’s heart stopped because the baby’s eyes were solid black. Fear ran through him like lightening and he looked at Alec quickly, bracing himself to see disgust on Alec’s face as he looked down at his half-demon baby. He had hidden it deep down for so long, but Magnus could never shake the worry that Alec wouldn’t be able to handle the baby’s Warlock features. He trusted Alec, he loved Alec, but he also knew that it was in the nature of humans to be unnerved by the demonic, and it wasn’t something Alec could even choose that could be what made him grow to hate his child.

Magnus held his breath as Alec’s eyes widened as he looked at his baby’s face, and he heard a gasp from someone else on the other side of the bed that sounded startled. It was agony to watch Alec
without knowing what his reaction would be.

“Whoa. Cool,” Alec said after a moment, and Magnus actually drew back to look at him in surprise. Magnus raised an eyebrow as he watched Alec smile suddenly and gently touch the baby’s eyebrow. “Look at you, your eyes match your hair.”

Magnus’s mouth fell open slightly and suddenly so much warmth and affection flooded his heart, and he couldn’t help himself. He leaned in and kissed Alec suddenly, catching him off guard, but not bothering him too much, Magnus noted, because Alec kissed back. “I love you,” Magnus whispered as he pulled away. He stroked Alec’s cheek and then looked down at the baby, who was putting his little fingers in his mouth. “I love you, too,” he said, reaching down to touch the baby’s face. Alec beamed at him and kissed his cheek before looking back at his baby.

“Yeah, you’re a lucky baby, dude. A lot of people love you,” he said, touching his sweet little face.

“What’re you going to name him?” Lydia asked, looking at the baby with a polite smile, though he could tell looking around that the other Shadowhunters in the room were a little unnerved by the baby’s fully black eyes. “Have you even thought about it?” she asked with a smile. “You thought you had a little while longer-“

“Aramis Gabriel Lightwood,” Alec said without hesitation.

“Well I guess you have thought about it,” Lydia said in surprise.

Alec shook his head, still gazing lovingly at his baby. “I picked out names for babies when I was like fourteen,” he said, and Magnus’s stomach clenched, because he had never known that. Alec continued speaking without looking up to see the shock on people’s faces. “When Max was born, I loved being around a baby so much I couldn’t wait until I grew up and have children. I picked out a boy’s name and a girl’s name a long time ago. I always knew what my baby was gonna be named,” he said simply, and Magnus had always thought he knew how badly it hurt Alec to think he would never be a father, but that took it to a whole new level.

Shaking himself some, Magnus smiled and nudged Alec. “You nerd,” he teased fondly. “You read too many books as a kid.”

“I still read too many books,” Alec countered with a playful smile.

“I think I remember that one,” Maryse said suddenly. “One of the books you read when you were little-“

“It’s the Three Musketeers,” Catarina offered with an amused twinkle in her eyes. “It’s cute,” she offered and Alec bit his lip and nodded.

“Yeah,” he said softly. “And my middle name is Gideon, and it’s a family name, and my ancestor, Gabriel, was-“

“Gideon’s brother,” Magnus supplied and Alec looked at him curiously. Magnus chuckled. “Oh I actually knew Gideon and Gabriel Lightwood,” he said, and Alec raised an eyebrow. Magnus winked. “You remind me more of Gabriel’s wife,” he confided and Alec rolled his eyes.

“Anyways,” Alec said, smiling down at little Aramis. “I always thought that would be cool, giving my son a family name. But I like Aramis better, so I figured a middle name is okay.”

“It’s beautiful,” Magnus agreed. He looked down at Aramis and chuckled. “Hey, Aramis. Hi.” He grabbed his little tiny hand and shook it gently. “I’m your dad’s boyfriend, Magnus, but you already
know that probably.”

There was a knock on the door and they all looked up in alarm. Lydia put a finger to her lips and went to open it just a crack and look out, only to nod do someone and shut it again. She let out a soft breath and looked back at them with so much guilt in her eyes. “Alec, they’re here. That was Isabelle, she said they- they want to see you.”

Alec looked like he wanted to throw up as he looked down at his baby and realized he had to let Magnus and Catarina take him away. Magnus’s heart shattered when he saw the tears filling Alec’s eyes and his throat working hard as he fought to not make a sound. “Darling, it’s okay, it’s going to be okay,” he said quickly, but Alec broke and let out a soft sob, clutching his baby to his chest. “Shhhhh, Alec, it’s alright,” he said, holding him close.

“Alec.” Maryse was suddenly there, and Magnus backed up, somewhat surprised, when she reached out and started carding her fingers through Alec’s hair while he rocked and held his baby close as he cried. “I know, I know,” she soothed. “I know it’s hard, but think about this, he’s safe now.” She nodded to him. “Aramis will be safe now. Nothing can hurt him, and I swear to you, I’m going to find a way to get you out of this,” she promised him with conviction that surprised Magnus. “You’ll see him again. He’ll be safe and you will be with him again.”

Alec took a few sharp, quick breaths, and Magnus put a hand over his mouth when he realized Alec was trying his best to rein in his emotions and shut it all down. Alec closed his eyes, jaw clenching and hands shaking on Aramis, and he nodded a few times before opening them again. Magnus could see that the composure was back and Alec, his strong, brave Alexander, had control of himself and was shutting down all the pain and fear he had to be feeling. “Darling?”

Alec looked at him and cleared his throat. “Here,” he said, holding Aramis up. Magnus took him, carefully cradling him to his chest. Alec sat up fully, grimacing some as he moved towards the edge of the bed. Catarina flinched when he stood up and his lips went white with pain. “I’m okay,” he said tightly and Magnus knew he wasn’t okay. Even though he was healed enough to move around, he could only imagine the pain that still lingered. Visibly, he was still fat-looking, but his surgical incision had healed shut and left no marks. Magnus knew that, though it wasn’t like normal, human afterbirth, Alec’s muscles wouldn’t tighten back and his skin with it for several hours, even with magic and runes working in his system.

But the important thing, he knew, was that the baby wasn’t inside of him so he could prove to them he wasn’t pregnant, just ‘fat’.

“I hate to ask this, but can you—“ Lydia cut herself off and gestured to the bloody things still around the room, and Magnus quickly snapped his fingers, instantly cleaning everything of blood, including the towel that Aramis was wrapped in. “Okay.” She looked at Magnus and Catarina. “You guys need to go. I’m so sorry, but you have to go. Thank you so much for this—“

“Alec can thank us by being careful,” Catarina said sternly, looking right at Alec. “And by coming to be with his son soon, because he’ll be missing his daddy.”

Alec nodded, jaw clenching. “Just take care of my son for me,” he said, and she nodded.

Magnus stepped up to Alec and leaned in to give him a quick kiss, touching his forehead to Alec’s. “I love you, and Aramis loves you, and we’ll be waiting,” he said, and Alec nodded stoically.

“I love you, too,” he said, and then, with a look of great pain, he leaned down and kissed Aramis’s forehead. “I love you so much,” he whispered before standing up and turning his back.
Magnus understood that he couldn’t watch them leave, so he, too, turned his back on the room and opened the portal so that he and Catarina could leave.
Chapter 18

Chapter Notes

Whoa, did you guys survive that gap??!! I went to a comic convention yesterday (WAY less fun than previous years. Omg it was in a new venue and WAY smaller and way less vendors and I really hope it was only because the convention center was booked by another organization and not a mark of how things will be from now on/of how bad it has gotten and this is the last year) so hopefully you guys will be grateful I stayed up WAY too late on a Sunday night to post this!

Now I have to get up in less than 6 hours so SLEEP TIME FOR ME!

Alec took a few minutes to shower and change before Lydia took him to face the people that the Clave had sent. He was still in pain, though it was fading fast as he continued to more fully heal. His mother and father had already went to meet them, and he saw the anger in his mother’s face when they rounded the corner and he saw Inquisitor Herondale waiting. He slowed some and had to be gently nudged along by Lydia.

“Alec Lightwood,” she said and he kept his face calm. She shook her head. “I guess I better prepare to have to deal with the other Lightwood child once he’s old enough to cause trouble, too.”

Lydia stood up straighter. “Inquisitor Herondale, I think we both know Alec has been the victim today. Victor Aldertree tried to murder him. He tried to poison him and then tried to strangle him when he couldn’t get him to ingest the poison.”

She nodded. “I’m aware. And he will be held responsible for such a crime against another Shadowhunter,” she said, looking at Alec. “Doesn’t negate the troubling reports we received regarding you withholding very important information regarding a Warlock who was preying on Mundane women.”

Alec stayed silent. The official story that he had decided to stick to was that he didn’t want Clary to get in trouble for going to that Warlock in the first place and, since she had escaped and the woman and babies had been taken somewhere safe, he had kept his mouth shut. It wasn’t a lie so much as a selective truth, so he didn’t feel that, should they use the Soul Sword on him, he would be caught in it. Most importantly, Aramis was safe with Catarina and Magnus, so his most important job was done. He had protected his child. Alec would face whatever the Clave threw at him now that it couldn’t hurt Aramis. He would survive whatever they did, and he would make it back to Aramis sooner or later, so he could take whatever they threw at him.

Inquisitor Herondale looked at him and nodded slowly. “Alright, then. We’ll get to the bottom of this soon enough.” She looked at Lydia and nodded. “Bring him.”

Alec kept his head up and eyes forward as Lydia and the guards with her took him and followed Inquisitor Herondale. He glanced at his mother and father on his way past, but he didn’t say anything. He just met Maryse’s eyes and then looked ahead stoically as he was led away.
Isabelle and Jace were entirely out of the loop until Clary came back to face the Clave and told them, before anybody else found out she was there and arrested her, that Magnus had come back to his place with Alec’s baby. Jace was horrified that he not only missed Alec’s baby being born, but that he hadn’t been there for him when he needed him most. She reassured them that the baby, a boy named Aramis, apparently, was healthy and safe, and that from what Catarina Loss told her, Alec had decided to have her deliver his baby early – since it was far enough along he would survive that – instead of risk almost certainly losing him if they subjected him to the Soul Sword.

Jace remembered the Soul Sword. He also knew that if Alec had just had a baby removed from his body he was in no shape at all to be facing interrogation like that. It was bad enough Aldertree had tried to kill him, but with all the shit he’d faced in the past twelve hours, there was no way Alec was going to hold up under that kind of stress.

When Clary got arrested, Jace and Isabelle went with them. They weren’t allowed in the room where she was being held, but they weren’t forced to abandon their post in the hallway, waiting for Alec to be brought there as well. They kept whispering to each other, carefully away from any of the guards, until finally, Inquisitor Herondale appeared with Alec behind her. Lydia didn’t look any happier about any of this than Jace felt, and Alec looked about as rough as Jace had feared he might. “Alec,” Jace blurted out, starting towards him, only to have Isabelle grab his arm to stop him.

Lydia shook her head and Jace looked at Alec helplessly. Alec was pale, his jaw was tight, and he was clenching his lips together in a way that told Jace he was in pain. He met Jace’s eyes and Jace didn’t need words to know that Alec was telling him it would be okay, even though he had no idea if he was lying to Jace or not. “Ms. Fairchild,” Inquisitor Herondale greeted, looking at Clary with disdain in her features. “Or would you prefer Ms. Morgenstern?”

Jace flinched and Clary glared. “I prefer Fray, actually,” she said coldly and Jace felt some pride in the offended look on Inquisitor Herondale’s face.

When Clary and Alec were taken away, Clary ducked under Alec’s arm, clearly pretending to want comfort when she was really helping support him some as they walked. Alec was amazing at hiding his pain, but sometime along the way, Clary had learned to recognize when Alec was faking at being okay.

Inquisitor Herondale looked at Jace and Izzy as she followed them and tilted her head. “You two should stay nearby, in case we need your testimony in the questioning. Don’t leave the Institute,” she instructed and they both stared her down coldly as they waited for her to disappear from view.

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For a solid minute Magnus just stared down at the baby in his arms while Catarina started walking around his house. He realized very quickly that he had just been put in charge of his boyfriend’s son, who wasn’t even a whole hour old yet. It was clearly a traumatizing moment for both of them, because Aramis screamed unhappily. When Catarina came back into the room, Magnus looked at her. “Is there something we should be doing? I mean… there’s a thirty minute old baby in my arms,” he said, somewhat panicked. “Don’t we need a doctor or something?”

Catarina chuckled. “Was there a doctor there when you were born?” she asked rhetorically. “He’s small, but he clearly has no problem breathing,” she said, speaking over the very unhappy screams of the baby. She walked over to look at him. “We just need to get him some food and clothes and all that good stuff.” She leaned down to look at the baby. “As long as he can drink his bottle and as long as he can stay warm, he’ll be fine.” Catarina smiled and tickled his little chin. “He’s chubby, so that suggests he’ll be fine at regulating his temperature. Alec was going to have a huge baby if he hung on another month.”
Magnus smiled some at the chubby little cheeks on the baby. “Well Alec’s big and his mom is, too. Being a tall and broad person is probably genetic.” Aramis was really upset with him, it seemed, because when Magnus tried to tuck the towel around his little chin he screamed. “I’m starting to think he doesn’t like me,” he mused and Catarina smiled.

“He’s been taken from a warm, comfy place into a cold, loud, bright world, Magnus. Of course he isn’t happy,” she said, and then carefully took him from Magnus. “Come on, Sweetheart,” she cooed. “Let me just make sure you’re not in any pain and I don’t actually need to take you to the hospital,” she said, taking him over to the kitchen. Magnus followed curiously, only to gape when she turned on the sink and turned on the water.

“What are you doing?” he asked, and Catarina rolled her eyes.

“This baby came straight out of the womb and into a towel,” she stressed. “I’m going to give him a little bath,” she said, cooing at Aramis as he calmed down a little. “Yeah, the warm water will make it less shocking to suddenly be out here and away from Daddy.” She tested the water and then, to Magnus’s surprise, took him out of the towel and just stuck him in the sink.

Magnus walked over quickly. “That sink probably isn’t baby-sanitary!” he said quickly and Catarina rolled her eyes as she held Aramis’s head and shoulders with one hand and sat his little bottom on the bottom of the sink, letting the water run around his flailing little legs.

“Magnus, while I appreciate how concerned you are, and while yes, babies born in hospitals and hospital clean conditions are far more likely to survive than those born in a grass hut somewhere, babies have been being born without hospital-safe conditions since the beginning of time.” Catarina gently washed Aramis and made faces at him as he calmed down and started blinking rather than screaming. “Well, he’s not continuing to cry, so he’s not in pain. He seems healthy,” she said, and Magnus relaxed some in relief. “Poor little thing.”

Magnus leaned on the counter to look down into Aramis’s black eyes. Even as another Warlock, he couldn’t help but be a little unnerved by the lack of any visible iris or pupil in the baby’s eyes. He was relieved that Alec hadn’t seemed freaked out by his baby, because everybody else clearly was in that room. Magnus really worried about Aramis’s future with eyes like his. Magnus knew how much ‘humanity’ people attached to someone’s eyes from experience, and his eyes, though cat-like, still had a visible pupil so people could tell where he was looking.

After his bath, Catarina used one of Magnus’s dish cloths to make a cloth diaper for Aramis – much to Magnus’s annoyance, since they were his good dish cloths – and left him in Magnus’s care while she ran to get baby supplies. “Here you go,” she said to Aramis. “Let your papa look after you while I’m gone,” she said, and before he could ask why she thought she could just call him something like that when he and Alec had not had any sort of conversation about that, she was gone.

Sitting on the couch with Aramis in his arms, Magnus felt so out of his depth. Aramis wasn’t crying anymore, but he had his fingers in his mouth and was whimpering. “Me and you both,” Magnus said, and he couldn’t help but smile when Aramis waved his other little hand around. “You’re not used to being able to stretch, huh?” he asked, reaching up to touch his little tufts of hair carefully. “Man, that’s soft,” he said. “Your daddy doesn’t even have hair that soft, and let me tell you, your daddy has great hair.” Aramis made the cutest little sound and Magnus’s heart clenched some at how adorable it was. He touched his cheek, tracing his fat little jaw. “You are so pretty,” Magnus mused, sighing as he looked down at the baby in his arms. “You are… Man.” He chuckled. “You look like Alexander,” he decided. Magnus rocked him some. “That hair and those lips, Aramis. That’s your daddy’s hair and lips for sure.”

It wasn’t long until Catarina returned, and when she did, Magnus found himself reluctant to let her
take Aramis back so that she could dress him and then get a bottle started for him. Magnus was glad that once she had him dressed in a diaper and a little onesie, she gave Aramis right back. “Unfortunately,” she said to Aramis, who sat in Magnus’s arms while she prepared the bottle. “Your daddy didn’t start lactating, so you won’t get all the extra goodness of natural milk,” she said and Magnus suddenly grimaced at the thought of the extra difficulty in Alec’s life if he had. “But, that’s okay. Daddy isn’t here right now anyways, so you would still be drinking a bottle,” she said, testing the warmth of the milk before offering it to Magnus. “Let’s teach you how to feed your baby,” she said, directing Magnus to the couch.

Magnus raised an eyebrow. “My baby?” he asked, and she gave him a flat look.

“Oh, stop. You’ve been with Alec through all of this, and you’ve been excited about every step of the pregnancy like any doting father-to-be would be. You know full well that Alec intends to raise this baby with you. You were the one that told him if he had to leave the Clave, the three of you would run away together,” she pointed out.

Magnus didn’t say anything, because it was all true. He and Alec hadn’t talked about what he was to the baby, but he did love Aramis more than anything. Even more than Alec, he realized. He had thought about all of these things before, but he had never actually planned on becoming a father to Alec’s baby in name. Catarina calling him Aramis’s ‘papa’ had been unexpected, but not, he thought, unwelcome. He smiled down at Aramis as Catarina positioned his arms and showed him how to feed Aramis so he didn’t choke.

Magnus really hoped that Alec approved of him being Aramis’s papa, he realized, because he really loved this baby, and he didn’t suspect that would change when Alec was back.

He also hoped Alec was back soon, because papa or not, he wasn’t Aramis’s father, and Aramis needed his daddy, too.

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Clary was nervous. Not for herself, but for Alec. He didn’t look good. She could only imagine how rough the past few hours had been for him. He had just had a baby and now he was being ‘interviewed’ to decide if he needed to be actually interrogated.


Alec looked pained still. “Like I said to Lydia, I didn’t want Clary to get in trouble.”

“So you put Clary ahead of your job,” she challenged and Alec flinched.

“I- It was the day after I killed her mom,” he said in exasperation. “No, it wasn’t the right choice, but I wasn’t thinking clearly. I was guilty. I went with her instead of stopping her and when I realized we had messed up, I covered it up for her.” Clary felt a pang of guilt when she realized that his lie was only half a lie. She knew, looking back, that he had gone with her out of guilt for her mother and in hopes of protecting her. Alec and Clary still didn’t have the easiest relationship, but she knew he was someone she could trust no matter what.

Inquisitor Herondale hummed, looking at him. “Victor Aldertree has made…. Strange claims,” she started, and Clary tensed. She cleared her throat. “He claims you… are pregnant. With a Warlock.”

To his credit, Alec raised an eyebrow that seemed so genuinely, ‘are you shitting me?’ that even Clary almost believed him. “Yeah, well, he tried to murder me, so clearly he’s not entirely sane,” he
said blandly.

“Alec is obviously not pregnant,” Lydia said, similarly convincingly. “He’s a man. Even if the Warlock had managed to do what she was doing with those women, he’s a man. He’s missing the parts.”

Inquisitor Herondale looked Alec over. “Well… normally I would agree, but a lot of people are telling me, and I’m seeing for myself, that you’ve taken to wearing baggy clothes and you’re covering yourself a lot.” Clary looked down at Alec’s baggy sweatshirt and realized that, just like with a pregnant woman, he was still fat under his clothes so soon after giving birth.

Alec shuffled uncomfortably, looking away. “I’ve… gained weight,” he said awkwardly. “Understandably, I’m a little embarrassed by that.”

“Oh?” Inquisitor Herondale asked, looking if anything hopeful that he was telling the truth and she didn’t have to deal with that issue. “What would make you gain weight so fast?”

Lydia gave her a look. “Inquisitor, he’s twenty-five soon. I’m sure you remember what it was like to reach your mid-twenties and your metabolism slowed down. I sure know it hit me suddenly when I had to start watching what I ate.

She looked dubious for a moment but hummed. “I guess it is true that neither of his parents are small, thin people,” she mused. She scoffed, touching her forehead. “And it is insane to think a man would be pregnant,” she said dismissively. “Aldertree has clearly lost it,” she muttered to herself.

“Inquisitor Herondale, is it entirely necessary to take them to the Silent City?” Lydia asked. “Clary did what she did in seeking out the Warlock out of grief and Alec let her and omitted to cover for her out of guilt. They were both careless and wrong in their actions, but—”

“But nothing,” Inquisitor Herondale said suddenly. “Just because I believe him that he isn’t a pregnant man and Aldertree is definitely insane, that doesn’t change that they both neglected to report an incredibly heinous breach of the Accords. If what you say is true, and it wasn’t malevolent in nature, then the Soul Sword will prove it, but they’re definitely going to the Silent City,” she said, looking at Alec and Clary in a way that made Clary shudder. “Iris Rouse was holding Mundane women and using them as broodmares. She was carrying out unspeakable actions and these two didn’t tell anyone. Given the nature of all their other subversive behaviors, it’s only logical that we make sure they really did cover this up for guilt and grief reasons and not something far darker.”

Lydia looked at Alec then back at Inquisitor Herondale. “Inquisitor, Alec was almost murdered today. He’s been awake for almost forty-eight hours. He’s in no shape to go to the Silent City—”

“Then get him some coffee,” she said coldly, staring at Lydia like she was daring her to challenge her decision. “If everything goes well, and they’re not lying, Miss Fray and Mr. Lightwood will be free by tomorrow evening. But how long they’re down there is entirely up to their willingness to cooperate and the truths uncovered.”

Clary saw Alec’s shoulders sag and her heart sank when she realized that meant he wouldn’t be seeing his baby again anytime soon. She could only imagine how devastating it had to be to go from having his baby safe inside of him to spending potentially the entire first day (or more) of his baby’s life away from him.
Chapter 19

Chapter Notes

Hopefully this will get me back into the rhythm of one chapter per day until I'm done!
(Which will be sooooo!)
him in the middle of the bed in a shoebox (the only thing Magnus had that would make sure he
didn’t accidentally fall off the bed, even though he couldn’t move much yet) and just leave him there.
Magnus didn’t go far, he just moved to sit in the chair in the corner and look at stuff on his phone,
but it meant that he didn’t have to constantly carry him around the house with him.

It wasn’t fun to have to sleep in the chair in his room, but he didn’t dare put Aramis somewhere else
or get on the bed with him, but thankfully, Aramis woke up every few hours so Magnus was able to
get up and stretch. The lack of sleep wasn’t fun, but it was better than getting crazy stiff from
sleeping in a chair.

Catarina showed up while Magnus was eating breakfast and stole some toast before going to check
in on Aramis, who was asleep on his bed in the shoebox again. “Magnus,” she called. “Why is
Alec’s baby in a box?”

Magnus brushed crumbs off his shirt and headed that way. “So he doesn’t roll off my bed and die.”

“Oh God, Magnus,” Catarina said, laughing as she looked at the baby in a box. “He can’t roll!”

Magnus scoffed. “He’s a Warlock. How can you be sure?” he demanded. He looked into the box
and smiled when he saw that Aramis was awake. “Hey there!” he said, reaching in to pick him up.
Aramis whimpered and Magnus held him against his chest, looking down at him. “Awww, sweet
boy. So precious,” he cooed. “God, you’re tiny,” he said, chuckling as he held Aramis. “I know he
was a little early, but he’s not dangerously small is he?”

Catarina shook her head. “He’s regulating his temperature well. He can eat. He sleeps. He’s
healthy,” she decided. “He’s just small. I would say he’s probably about five pounds. Which isn’t too
small. Most healthy, full term babies are at least six pounds, but he’s fine.”

“He’s not that fussy,” Magnus mentioned as he bounced him some. “He woke up crying, but every
time he just needed a bottle or a diaper change. He didn’t cry just to cry.”

“I wouldn’t count on that to continue,” she warned. “But he might,” she said, touching his little hand.
“Aramis, are you a good boy?” she asked, and he whined some. “Awww, you miss Daddy, huh?”

Magnus’s chest tightened, because he missed Aramis’s daddy, too.

“I’m so worried about him,” Magnus admitted tightly. “I haven’t heard from Izzy or Jace or
anybody,” he confessed. He looked down at Aramis. “Aramis needs his dad, Cat. Alec talked to him
all the time. He has to be so confused by not hearing Alec’s voice.” He touched his cheek gently.
“Your daddy loves you so much. I’m sure he’s gonna be back with you soon,” he told him and
Catarina smiled sadly in a way that made Magnus feel very unsettled. “What?” he asked her and she
sighed.

“I hope Alec is back soon, but we both know-“

“Cat, don’t,” Magnus said quickly and she closed her mouth and backed away.

“Okay, Magnus. Okay.”

Later in the morning, after she had gone again, Magnus thought about what Catarina started to say
and couldn’t help but look down at Aramis, who was laying in his lap, and fear what she almost said.
“Your daddy is an amazing person,” he told Aramis, gently stroking his hair. “He’s so strong and
brave. He did what he did to save you and he would do it all over again. Alec loves you more than
life itself, and he would do anything to be back with you.” Magnus swallowed hard. “He’s going to
be back with us soon, Aramis. I know it,” he said in a tight voice. “He’s- he’s probably so sad to be
away from you. He’s going to come home and you and I can just sit on him so he can’t leave again.” Magnus leaned down and pressed a gentle kiss to Aramis’s hair. “I love you, too, though. I’ll take care of you until Daddy can come back to you. I don’t know what we’ll do then,” he confessed. “But I’m not going anywhere, either. Whatever we do, Daddy and I, we’re gonna do it together, so that the three of us, you, me, and your daddy, will make it work no matter where we end up.”

Aramis cooed and whimpered and Magnus smiled, nodding. “Me, too,” he said lovingly as he picked Aramis up and held him to his chest, trying to convey his love through touch in a way that such a little baby could understand.

~

There was something terrifying about the Silent City that Alec couldn’t shake. He had been here once before, and yet as a prisoner, it was even more horrible. It was cold and damp and he couldn’t sleep at all since he and Clary were taken there. He had been given food, but he had no appetite so he had only managed to shovel down a little bit and drink some water. Because of that, he was so weak already even before they took him in front of Inquisitor Herondale and four other members of the Clave to be witnesses to his interrogation.

Clary warned him that the Soul Sword wasn’t pleasant. She had used it to try and get her memories back not long after they met, and he knew from Jace that an actual interrogation was really unpleasant, but he wasn’t in nearly the same condition either of them had been in.

It hurt. It hurt a lot. Alec was already weak so the pain was worse. He thought getting cut open with only Warlock magic to help him was bad, but at least then he had had adrenaline. This was like having needles stabbing into his skin and pulling the truth from inside of him, even when he was honest and answered readily. “Why did you help Clary cover up what Iris Rouse was doing?” Inquisitor Herondale asked and before he could even open his mouth there was a wave of pain.

“I- I didn’t purposefully cover anything up. I just neglected to report what we found,” he said.

Another member of the Clave whispered something to Inquisitor Herondale so she nodded and turned back. “What happened to the Warlocks that Iris Rouse had bred so far?”

Alec felt another stab of pain prodding him along. “I let Catarina Loss and Magnus Bane take them somewhere safe.”

“Where?”

“I don’t know,” Alec said, wincing at the feeling of the magic digging into his soul to find the truth. Inquisitor Herondale was whispered to again and this time she spoke louder. “Do you really not know? Or do you know something and just not the precise location?”

Alec grimaced. “I know nothing except it is a place that exists for Warlocks. Like a sanctuary.”

“And what sort of place is it? Do you have any details at all about this location?” another member of the Clave asked, speaking without asking the Inquisitor. “Do you know anything about the climate or the geography?”

Alec shook his head, and honestly (not like he had any other choice) said, “I don’t know anything at all, and even if I did I wouldn’t tell you.” He swallowed against the pain. “Iris Rouse is a monster, but those babies are innocent children, and with the way Victor Aldertree set about trying to kill my parabatai – with your permission – because Valentine experimented on him, forgive me for not trusting Victor Aldertree and those who backed him up with the lives of helpless Downworlder
infants.”

“What happened with Jace Wayland was a mistake,” Inquisitor Herondale said seemingly earnestly. “We thought he joined Valentine of his own free will.”

“And we told you he didn’t,” Alec gritted out. “And even if he did, he’s an orphan who just found out he has a father. Tell me being confused like that isn’t worth at least taking him alive, not giving a kill-on-site order,” he demanded. “So even if I did know where those babies and that woman went, I wouldn’t have told anybody, because from my point of view, that was risking the lives of innocent babies.”

Inquisitor Herondale glanced aside and listened to what another one of the Clave members said and turned back to him. “While you may have protected some Downworld infants, you could have placed more Mundanes in harms way. Your job is to protect Mundanes first, and Downworlders last, and we’re struggling to understand how you could allow more women to be put in danger of being raped to cover for your friend and to protect Downworlders.”

Alec swallowed hard. “I wasn’t thinking straight. I had just killed Clary’s mother while possessed. I felt- I felt guilty for taking her mother from her, so I wanted to protect her.”

“What else were you hiding?” she demanded and he fought another wave of pain as he tried to find any way to get around confessing the truth.

Alec tried not to speak but it hurt worse, like hooks were pulling at his insides. He quickly ran through all the possible things he could say, anything at all, and finally he came up with an idea. “I didn’t- I didn’t want to admit that L-I-” He gasped in pain. “I didn’t want to admit I lost. I was beaten. She escaped and I lost the fight.” It was all true. It wasn’t the total truth, but it was true. He hadn’t lied, he answered her question, but he managed to confess the truth that she wanted.

Inquisitor Herondale gave an almost sneer. “Pride to the point of dereliction of duty is a terrible trait, Mr. Lightwood.” She looked around. “I don’t know about you all, but I think we’re done with him for now. We should start with Clary Fray so we can make our decisions,” she suggested, and Alec had never felt more relieved to be dismissed so summarily as a vain person. He hated them thinking he was vain, but he was relieved that his real truth about his baby was not revealed.

~

Clary had not enjoyed her interrogation, but she had managed to shake and speak around everything involving Alec getting hurt and being pregnant. She had no reason to lie. They had been honest about their reasons for lying apart from that, and she wasn’t there for Alec’s interrogation, but the lack of questions asked about him in her interrogation meant that he had most likely been successful in getting around that confession as well.

When they took her back to her cell, she just wanted to sleep. She had no idea how long they would be left there, but she planned to sleep for a few hours of it at least. However, she only laid there a few minutes before she heard a whimper from Alec’s cell. She frowned, listening carefully only to hear moaning. He sounded like he was in pain, and she sat up. “Alec?” she called, wondering if he was sick or something. Clary hoped that the interrogation hadn’t weakened him further. He gave a groan, louder this time, and she stood up to walk to her cell bars and listen more carefully. “Alec?”
Suddenly there was a blood chilling scream from his cell. “No! Stop!” Clary’s heart started pounding and she pressed closer to the bars, trying to see him.

“Alec?!”

“NO!” he cried and she couldn’t figure out what was happening to him.

“ALEC?!” He made a sound and she suddenly heard a thud and his screaming stopped instantly. “Alec? Alec are you alright?!” she called. “Alec, talk to me.” He didn’t speak but she heard the unmistakable sound of crying. “Alec, just tell me if you’re okay.”

After a few moments Alec gave a wet cough and cleared his throat. “I hate this place,” he said in a rough, hoarse voice. “I want to go home. I want Aramis. I want to sleep somewhere I won’t have fucking nightmares,” Alec gritted out, and suddenly Clary realized what must’ve happened.

She exhaled and leaned against the bars. “Oh, Alec.”

“I haven’t had one in over a month,” he said weakly. “God, these nightmares,” he gasped. “It feels so real. It— it hurts like the pain is real, like it’s happening again.” Clary’s stomach turned at the thought. She couldn’t imagine what it was like for Alec being here and dealing with all of this. He had to lie around confessing to being raped. It was horrific. Clary couldn’t imagine how hard he had to fight to hide something that wasn’t his fault. What happened to him wasn’t his fault, but he had to suffer as if he had done something wrong because of it. And out of everything, he had been forced to give birth early and had only had a few minutes with his baby before having to let him be taken away.

Clary didn’t know anything about babies or being a parent, but that didn’t mean she couldn’t imagine how horrific it had to be to be taken away from his child so abruptly. It had to break his heart in the worst way, and it had most likely only made his stay in that cell even worse. She had been in full health and she still hated every moment in here. He had slept a few hours in the past three days, had eaten very little, had been strangled, and had a C-section, all before even being subjected to the Soul Sword. She had a feeling that if Alec didn’t get out of here soon, he would end up in pretty bad shape.

“It’s going to be okay, Alec,” she said, trying to sound positive. “You’ll be back at Magnus’s place before you know it, and Aramis will be there,” she said, careful not to say the word ‘baby’ lest someone overhear them. A name was inconspicuous. The word ‘baby’ would not be.

Alec let out a weak sound and she closed her eyes against the pain of witnessing how someone so strong and brave had been brought so low. “If we don’t get out of here soon, I’m going to go insane,” he said in a shaky tone.

The worst part, she realized, was that she absolutely believed he was right in that prediction.
This is it! The final chapter! I'm sorry for making you wait, but I've been busy and I wanted to make sure I summed everything up in this final chapter. It is shorter than I intended it to be, but when I got to this point, I realized that this was a great place to stop and anything else would take away from the story rather than add to it.

Four days. Alec and Clary were locked up in the Silent City for four days after their interrogations before they finally came down and one of the Silent Brothers simply opened Alec’s cell and told him he was free to go while another did the same for Clary.

Alec had barely slept and barely ate the whole time he was down there, so he leaned heavily on Clary as they left. She helped him keep his head held high as they left with very little attention paid to them as they left. They were just allowed to go home. Their stuff was back at the Institute, including their phones, so they couldn’t call anyone and Alec had never wished so badly that payphones still existed, because he was so tired and just wanted to call Magnus and get him to portal him to his baby.

All Alec wanted was to see his baby. Aramis was almost a week old and Alec hadn’t been there. It was all Alec thought about for the entire time he was in his cell. His baby needed him and he wasn’t there. Aramis spent almost the entire first week of his life away from his dad and Alec worried he might be scared and miss him and miss his voice. Alec had talked to Aramis every time he was alone and Aramis was moving. He rubbed his belly and spoke to him and now whenever he woke up he didn’t have Alec’s voice there for him.

He was born early, so Alec also worried what if something went wrong? What if he was too early? What if he was sick? What if he had some problem and Catarina had to glamour him as a Mundane baby and take him to the hospital? Alec had just as many nightmares about his baby in some hospital without him there to take care of him as he did about his rape, which was half the reason he was in such bad shape now that tiny little Clary had to help him walk.

Without steles, they couldn’t glamour themselves and get on the subway unnoticed, so Clary flagged down a cab for them after it became clear that it was too far to the Institute for them to walk with Alec not fully under his own steam. When they got in, Alec gave Magnus’s address before Clary could tell the driver anything else. “Don’t worry,” he told Clary. “Magnus won’t mind paying. I just need to see my son,” he told her, and she gave him a sad smile and squeezed his hand.

“I know you do,” she said, and then tugged Alec until he scooched down in the seat and laid his head on her lap. “Just rest, okay? You’re gonna be fine,” she comforted, and Alec didn’t have the heart to tell her that his being sick wasn’t gonna be fixed with a nap that would just inevitably be interrupted by another nightmare.

As Alec’s eyes started to droop, he wondered which it would be this time, his baby in peril or flashbacks of his baby’s conception.
Clary stayed in the car to wait for Magnus to come pay the cabbie, because Alec couldn’t take even one extra minute away from his son. The surge of adrenaline that propelled him up the stairs to Magnus’s apartment was probably the last his body could muster, but he wanted his baby and he wanted him now. He leaned heavily on the door as he knocked, irregularly pounding his fist against the wood, until the door finally opened and, to his surprise, it was Catarina, not Magnus in the doorway.

“Alec!” she gasped in surprise and he gently pushed past her.

“Where’s my baby,” he pleaded, walking towards the main room of the apartment. “Cat, my baby, I want my son. Where’s Aramis?”

She followed him, but before she could answer, Magnus came quickly out of his bedroom and gasped as he saw Alec. “Alexander-“

Alec, for once, didn’t have a care in the world for Magnus, because in Magnus’s arms was his son. Alec let out a ragged breath and started towards him. “Aramis,” he choked out and Magnus quickly closed the space, offering Aramis to him.

“He’s right here. He’s safe and healthy, I promise,” he babbled as he carefully handed Aramis to Alec. Alec let out a rough sob as he pulled his baby into his arms and held him against his chest. “Oh Alec,” Magnus said, and Alec let Magnus guide him to sit on the nearest chair.

Because all Alec had eyes for was his baby. Aramis was whimpering and squirming, clearly unhappy with being passed around, and Alec couldn’t stop crying and didn’t know why. He had never cried this hard in his life, not ever, and he felt like he was being broken apart and sewn back together the right way after so long of being incomplete. Aramis was looking up at him with his solid-black eyes and waving his little hand and Alec wished it was possible to hold him even closer than he was holding him now, because it still felt like he was too far from his child after so long of having Aramis safe inside of him.

“I love you,” Alec sobbed, his giant hands cradling his tiny baby close. He stroked his face with his fingertips, careful not to apply too much pressure, and he couldn’t stop babbling it to him. “I love you, I love you, I love you,” he repeated, over and over, as he rocked back and forth, clutching his baby to his chest. “Daddy’s here, Aramis. Daddy’s here,” he squeaked, his voice breaking. He folded nearly in half from the force of his chest-rattling sobs, but never once did he handle Aramis with anything but the gentlest touch.

After a while, Alec became aware that Magnus had gone and returned with Clary, and she was talking to him and Catarina somewhere to Alec’s left, but for what felt like minutes but could have been hours, all Alec could do was look at his baby in his arms and reassure himself that this time it wasn’t a dream, that everything would be okay now.

~

After Cat and Clary had left, Magnus had spent what seemed like forever trying to get Alec to at least put Aramis down long enough to let Magnus make sure he was okay. He had been told by Clary what all had gone down, so he knew how badly Alec needed somebody to look after him for a little while. It wasn’t until Alec started to fall asleep and feared he would drop Aramis that he let Magnus take Aramis and put him down for a nap. After that, Magnus convinced Alec to get in the big bathtub that Magnus had installed in his bathroom when Alec was pregnant and needed something to soothe his aching back. It was big enough the both of them could fit in it, but Magnus wanted to be able to go to Aramis if he woke up and cried, so he contented himself to kneel beside the tub and gently wash Alec’s hair for him. Alec had cried himself out when he arrived so he was so
tired now.

Magnus watched Alec’s eyes flutter as he gently scrubbed days’ worth of dirt and grime from his hair. “I was so worried, Darling,” he confessed, cupping water in his hand to rinse Alec’s hair. Alec grunted as he tilted his head back to give Magnus an easier position. “Your mother is actually really worried, too,” he said and Alec hummed. Magnus smiled at the memory of Maryse Lightwood swallowing her pride and coming to talk to him and see if he had any way of finding out what was going on with Alec since the Clave wouldn’t tell her. “I’m sure she’ll be here before too long.”

“When she gets here, can you tell her I’ll talk to her about it later?” Alec asked him quietly and Magnus looked to see two big, hazel eyes turned on him. “I just-” He swallowed and shook his head. “I’m not ready.”

Magnus’s heart broke and he nodded. “Of course, darling.” He touched his cheek tenderly. “When you get out of here, I want you to try and eat something, even if it’s just some broth or something, and then I need you to sleep.” Alec tensed and Magnus’s heart shattered at the thought of whatever had him so scared of sleep. “I’ll be right beside you, and Aramis will be in the room with you. You can sleep and I’ll keep you both safe.”

Alec nodded reluctantly. “Okay,” he all but whispered.

Magnus could only imagine what had happened to Alec over the last several days. He had been released, so obviously he wasn’t going to be punished, but Alec was clearly shaken greatly by whatever happened to him in the Silent City.

When he got him out of the tub, Alec was clearly so close to passing out. Magnus helped him walk to the bed and only got him to pass the cradle Aramis was asleep in by promising to let him hold Aramis while Magnus got him some food. He let Alec get propped up by fluffy pillows and settled and then he went to get Aramis, who was sleeping peacefully. Magnus worried about waking him up, but he knew that Alec needed this and Aramis would be happy in his daddy’s arms anyways.

Aramis whimpered and squirmed, but when Magnus deposited him in Alec’s arms, Alec visibly relaxed and lightened. He smiled and held Aramis so snug against his chest that his very demeanor changed. “Hey my sweet boy,” Alec said, tucking the blanket around Aramis more comfortably. “I love you so much. You couldn’t possibly know,” he sighed, brushing his cheek. Magnus watched them for just a moment before he decided to go get Alec some food before he fell asleep.

~

Alec couldn’t get over how much better he felt as he finished a bowl of soup while Magnus sat beside him in bed with Aramis on the bed between his legs, making faces at him while Alec ate. Alec put the empty bowl on the side table and Magnus looked at him as he shuffled to slide down in the bed. “All done, Darling?” Magnus asked and Alec shuffled closer to lay his head against Magnus’s hip, curling his hand around Magnus’s knee so he could look down at his son where he lay between Magnus’s legs. Magnus stroked his damp hair. “I’m so glad you’re home,” Magnus murmured, and Alec relaxed into his touch.

Aramis made some whimpering noises and Magnus tutted. “You have to share Papa’s attention, you,” he cooed, tapping his nose. “Daddy needs me to take care of him, too.”

“Papa?” Alec asked, and Magnus tensed some. Alec rubbed at his knee comfortably, sensing what Magnus was worried about. “I like it,” he reassured, glancing up at Magnus. Magnus gave an embarrassed smile.
“Sorry. Cat started it, and I just went with it.”

“Magnus,” Alec said softly, closing his eyes as he relaxed against Magnus’s thigh. “You are his Papa.” Alec blinked tiredly, reaching out to hold Aramis’s little hand. “You laid in this bed and talked to him every time I stayed the night while he was inside of me. You’ve been taking care of my baby while I was away. You love him just like I do.”

Magnus was quiet for a moment but he settled his hand in Alec’s hair and exhaled heavily. “I love you so much, Alexander Lightwood, and I’m so lucky you are okay with me loving your baby, too.”

“Mmmm, love you, too,” Alec murmured tiredly. “I’m gonna use you as a pillow,” he slurred, snuggling into Magnus’s thigh. The angle wasn’t the best, but he could keep holding his baby’s hand with two fingers this way, so he didn’t mind much at all.

Epilogue

Claws tore at his skin as the demon held him down. Alec tried to fight, and scream, and escape, but it was useless. Everything was pain and every part of him screamed out in desperation, but there was no help to be had. The demon’s violent assault hurt like nothing Alec had ever felt before, and he could feel blood pouring out of every wound on his body. His screams became more and more high pitched and he was taken aback by how strange they sounded, when-

Alec jerked awake, sitting upright quickly. Magnus rolled over, reaching out for him. “’Lec? You ‘kay?” Magnus snorted some. “’S that baby?” he mumbled sleepily and Alec realized that what he’d mistaken for his own screams in the nightmare was really Aramis crying down the hall in the nursery.

“It’s okay,” Alec panted, still breathing hard as his heart pounded. “It’s Aramis. I’ve got him,” he said, sliding out of bed to go to Aramis.

It had taken a while before Alec could stand to have Aramis not in the same room as him. Not just to sleep at night, but in general. After his time in the Silent City, he couldn’t stand not having Aramis within his sight. He spent the whole first week after he was released at Magnus’s, just being with his baby after missing the first week of his life. Sometimes he would still zone out and realize Aramis wasn’t within his reach and have to go to whatever room Aramis was in, because he needed to see him and know he was safe. What was worse was when he had to go back to his life. Alec could only stay away for a week before he had to go back to living his life and doing his duties. He and Clary had been cleared of any malicious intent, so their punishment was grunt duties. They were cleaning boots and swords for weeks before they were allowed to go back on duty.

Alec had been forced to make the hardest decision of his life and yet the easiest at the same time: he had chosen to let Magnus tell the world he had adopted a warlock baby that had been abandoned and Aramis officially was Magnus’s son, not his. He still stayed with Magnus when he could, and nobody really questioned Magnus teaching his baby to call Alec ‘daddy’ since he and Alec planned to stay in a relationship for the long term and he would be Magnus’s baby’s ‘stepfather’ of sorts. It was painful to deny his son and pretend he was his boyfriend’s child, not his child, but it was the only way Alec could stay a Shadowhunter and keep his son, so it wasn’t that hard of a choice to make.

The worst part was not being able to see him every single day. It killed Alec that he sometimes went three and four days without even getting to visit his son. It was torture, especially when he still felt like everybody and everything was going to snatch his baby away from him after so much time apart
that first week. Alec would carry Aramis around with him every minute of the day if he could, but life wasn’t that kind so he had no choice but to take the least terrible of all the possibilities.

When Alec got to the nursery, he wiped the still-wet tears off his face and the sweat from his brow before he got to Aramis. He picked him up out of his crib and Aramis wriggled in his arms. “Hey, hey, c’mon, is that totally necessary?” Alec asked, putting Aramis to his shoulder as he checked his diaper and found he was wet. “It’s okay,” he cooed, carrying him over to the changing table. “I wouldn’t wanna sit around in my pee either,” he told him as he laid him down on the changing table. “Can’t be comfortable.” He started to undo Aramis’s diaper and looked up at his face as Aramis looked up at him with his black eyes, and Alec’s hand jerked away as suddenly he had a vivid flash of the demon on top of him, its black, spindly body tearing into him. Alec stumbled one step away from the changing table before he willed himself out of a flashback and moved back to Aramis. He fought the tears that burned his eyes as he made quick work of changing his diaper.

That was the worst of all of it, Alec thought as he guiltily picked his baby up and cuddled him close. He let out silent sobs, his shoulders shaking as he stroked his hair. “I’m so sorry,” he whispered to Aramis. It wasn’t the first time and he knew it wouldn’t be the last time that he looked into his baby’s eyes and had a startling and agonizing flash of being raped. Aramis’s eyes were the same as the black, shimmery body of the demon that attacked him, and Alec hated nothing more than the fact that his baby’s face was tainted by that horrible memory. “You’re beautiful,” Alec reassured Aramis. “Your eyes are beautiful because they’re yours. You do not scare me,” he all but sobbed. “I love you, and you’re perfect just how you are.”

“Alec, it’s okay,” Magnus said from the doorway and Alec snorted wetly, guilt eating at him. He didn’t look up as soft footsteps approached him and Magnus curled his arms around his middle. “Darling, I felt you tossing and turning. You were having a nightmare five minutes ago. It isn’t your fault Aramis’s eyes remind you of a solid black demon.”

“I’m just weak,” Alec said bitterly. “My son should not make me think of anything but joy. My son is the best thing to ever happen to me, and that goddamn demon shouldn’t have the ability to tarnish something so good-“

“And it won’t forever,” Magnus reassured him, kissing the side of his neck as he rested his chin on Alec’s shoulder. “You’ve had a rough time ever since the Silent City. You were doing so much better with nightmares before that.” He brushed a hand through Alec’s hair. “It’s only been a month. You’re still adjusting. And Aramis doesn’t blame you,” he said, looking down at him over Alec’s shoulder. “Do you, Sweetheart? You don’t blame Daddy for needing time. No, you love your daddy, nightmares and all, don’t you?”

Aramis couldn’t help but smile some at the way Aramis spotted Magnus and cooed at him. Magnus’s cat-eyes glowing never failed to make Aramis stare at him with wonder. The bright glow had to be the most fascinating thing ever for a baby so small. “I think Aramis loves Papa more,” Alec said, winking at Magnus. “Can’t blame him,” he said softly, meeting Magnus’s eyes. “Something we agree on.”

Magnus brushed away the stray tears from Alec’s face. “It’s okay, Alec,” he comforted him and Alec sighed, dropping his head back to rest against Magnus’s. “You are doing so well for what you’ve been through. I’m so proud of how well you’re holding it together, and a few nightmares is nothing to be guilty about. You’re the strongest person I’ve ever met, and by far the best father,” he added.

Alec smiled shyly, looking at him with a sweet look. “You must not have a big sample size for that one, Magnus.”

Magnus smiled and leaned in to peck his lips. “You amaze me,” he breathed and Alec couldn’t help
but give in to the warm feeling that Magnus always made him feel. It was like something soft and
wonderful decided to set up residence in his chest and melt so that the warmth spread through his
limbs and made him feel safe and happy and loved. Magnus and Aramis both somehow managed to
make Alec come out of the depths of his worst moments, and though they couldn’t fix him, and he
knew they didn’t have to fix him, they made it better.

Alec leaned his head against Magnus’s and looked down at Aramis, who was slowly drifting back to
sleep, and he knew that it might never be easy. Their lives would always be a struggle. His happiness
might always be an uphill battle. Every day he might have to fight to be the father he needed to be
and the partner Magnus deserved for him to be, because he never knew when it would be a good day
or a bad day. Alec had so many fears now, and so many memories, and so many things that triggered
both of those, and yet somehow he knew it would all be worth it.

Nobody’s life was easy, and while his may be harder than some, he still had managed to keep all the
most important things in his life. His parents had their flaws, but they had proven to him that when it
came down to it, they loved him and would do anything to protect him. His friends and siblings were
trustworthy and even though he and Clary still didn’t see eye to eye all the time, he knew he could
trust her with his life. Nothing in his life had ever made him worthy of Magnus’s love, and yet
Magnus did love him and he loved him enough to start a life with him that involved being a parent to
his child and giving his time and devotion to Alec and their baby.

And all the pain, all the suffering, all the struggles he had faced and would continue to face in the
future. Every nightmare, every missed opportunity, and every fear that he would never shake. All of
it. All those things. All those hard, painful struggles he would ever face.

Every shred of strife was worth having Aramis in his life. Alec had never known love until he held
his baby in his arms, and he would die a thousand times over to be the father his child deserved and
give Aramis everything he possibly could. Aramis was his heart, and his soul, and he would give
every ounce of blood, sweat, and tears in him just to watch his son smile. Alec knew that not
everybody would have made the incredibly hard choices he did, and not everybody would want
anything he had been given, but he would never regret for a moment any decision he made that put
him where he was now.

Standing his baby’s room, with Aramis in his arms and Magnus’s arms around him, leaving him in
between the two people he loved most in the world and who loved him right back.

Chapter End Notes

Thank you guys SO MUCH for coming along for the ride with me in what ended up being VASTLY longer than I EVER expected it to.

Going in, I intended this fic to be about 1/3rd the size it is, so thank you for sticking with me for so long.

End Notes
Thanks to my friend Amber for the baby name!!! I let her pick it for me and I really like it!

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