

TALES FROM THE
SHADOWHUNTER ACADEMY

Also by Cassandra Clare

THE MORTAL INSTRUMENTS

City of Bones

City of Ashes

City of Glass

City of Fallen Angels

City of Lost Souls

City of Heavenly Fire

THE INFERNAL DEVICES

Clockwork Angel

Clockwork Prince

Clockwork Princess

THE DARK ARTIFICES

Lady Midnight

The Shadowhunter's Codex

With Joshua Lewis

The Bane Chronicles

With Sarah Rees Brennan
and Maureen Johnson

Tales from the
Shadowhunter
Academy

CASSANDRA CLARE

SARAH REES BRENNAN

MAUREEN JOHNSON

ROBIN WASSERMAN

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For all those looking for or looking to be a hero
like Simon: Here's to you, saving entire worlds
(and maybe the galaxy)

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Welcome to Shadowhunter Academy

By Cassandra Clare and Sarah Rees Brennan



*Simon looked at her for a long moment.
She was so overwhelmingly beautiful and impressive,
he found it too much to handle.*

—Welcome to Shadowhunter Academy





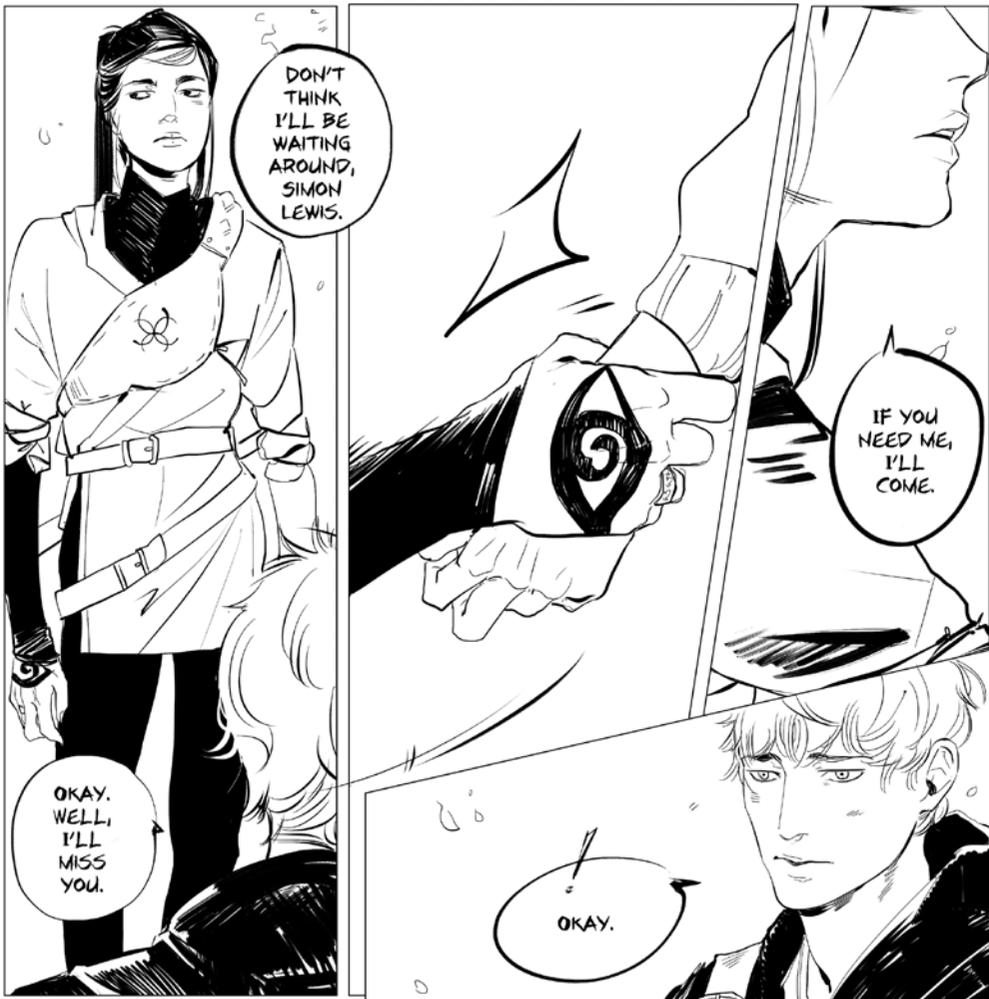
I'M GOING
TO COME
BACK.



NO
DOUBT.

YOU
ALWAYS
DO SEEM
TO TURN
UP.

WHEN I DO,
I'M GOING TO
BE AWESOME.



DON'T
THINK
I'LL BE
WAITING
AROUND,
SIMON
LEWIS.

OKAY.
WELL,
I'LL
MISS
YOU.

IF YOU
NEED ME,
I'LL
COME.

OKAY.



The problem was that Simon did not know how to pack like a badass.

For a camping trip, sure; to stay at Eric's or overnight at a weekend gig, fine; or to go on a vacation in the sun with his mom and Rebecca, no problem. Simon could throw together a jumble of suntan lotion and shorts, or appropriate band T-shirts and clean underwear, at a moment's notice. Simon was prepared for normal life.

Which was why he was so completely unprepared to pack for going to an elite training ground where demon-fighting half-angel beings known as Shadowhunters would try to shape him into a member of their own warrior race.

In books and movies, people were either whisked away to

a magical land in the clothes they were standing up in, or they glossed over the packing part entirely. Simon now felt he had been robbed of critical information by the media. Should he be putting the kitchen knives in his bag? Should he bring the toaster and rig it up as a weapon?

Simon did neither of those things. Instead, he went with the safe option: clean underwear and hilarious T-shirts. Shadowhunters had to love hilarious T-shirts, right? Everyone loved hilarious T-shirts.

“I don’t know how they feel about T-shirts with dirty jokes on them in military academy, sport,” said his mom.

Simon turned, too quickly, his heart lurching up into his throat. His mom was standing in the doorway, arms folded. Her always-worried face was crumpled slightly with extra worry, but mostly she was looking at him with love. As she always had.

Except that in a whole other set of memories Simon barely had access to, he’d become a vampire and she’d thrown him out of their house. That was one of the reasons Simon was going to the Shadowhunter Academy, why he’d lied to his mom through his teeth that he desperately wanted to go. He’d had Magnus Bane—a warlock with cat eyes; Simon actually knew a warlock with actual cat eyes—fake papers to convince her that he had a scholarship to this fictitious military academy.

He’d done it all so he would not have to look at his mom every day and remember how she had looked at him when she was afraid of him, when she hated him. When she betrayed him.

“I think I’ve judged my T-shirts pretty well,” Simon told her. “I’m a pretty judicious guy. Nothing too sassy for the military. Just good, solid class-clown material. Trust me.”

“I trust you, or I wouldn’t be letting you go,” said his mom. She walked over to him and planted a kiss on his cheek, and looked surprised and hurt when he flinched, but she did not comment, not on his last day. She put her arms around him instead. “I love you. Remember that.”

Simon knew he was being unfair: His mother had thrown him out thinking he was not really Simon anymore but an unholy monster wearing her son’s face. Yet he still felt she should have recognized him and loved him in spite of everything. He could not forget what she had done.

Even though she had forgotten it, even though as far as she or almost anybody else in the world was concerned, it had never happened.

So he had to go.

Simon tried to relax in her embrace. “I’ve got a lot on my plate,” he said, curling his hand around his mom’s arm. “But I’ll try to remember that.”

She pulled back. “So long as you do. You sure you’re okay getting a lift with your friends?”

She meant Simon’s Shadowhunting friends (who he pretended were the military academy buds who had inspired him to join up too). Simon’s Shadowhunting friends were the other reason he was going.

“I’m sure,” said Simon. “Bye, Mom. I love you.”

He meant it. He’d never stopped loving her, in this life or any other.

I love you unconditionally, his mom had said, once or twice, when he was younger. That’s how parents love. I love you no matter what.

People said things like that, without thinking of potential

nightmare scenarios or horrific conditions, the whole world changing and love slipping away. None of them ever dreamed love would be tested, and fail.

Rebecca had sent him a card that said: *GOOD LUCK, SOLDIER BOY!* Simon remembered, even when he'd been locked out of his home, door barred to him in every way it could be, his sister's arm around him and her soft voice in his ear. She had loved him, even then. So there was that. It was something, but it wasn't enough.

He could not stay here, caught between two worlds and two sets of memories. He had to escape. He had to go and become a hero, the way he had been once. Then all of this would make sense, all of this would mean something. Surely it would not hurt anymore.

Simon paused before he shouldered his bag and departed for the Academy. He put his sister's card in his pocket. He left home for a strange new life and carried her love with him, as he had once before.

Simon was meeting up with his friends, even though none of them were going to the Academy. He'd agreed he would come to the Institute and say good-bye before he left.

There was a time when he could have seen through glammers on his own, but Magnus had to help him do it now. Simon looked up at the strange, imposing bulk of the Institute, remembering uneasily that he had passed this place before and seen an abandoned building. That was another life, though. He remembered some kind of Bible passage about how children saw through smudged glass, but growing up meant you could view things clearly. He could see the Institute quite plainly: an

impressive structure rising high above him. The sort of building designed to make humans feel like ants. Simon pushed open the filigreed gate, walked down the narrow path that snaked around the Institute, and crossed through to the grounds.

The walls that surrounded the Institute enclosed a garden that struggled to thrive given its proximity to a New York avenue. There were impressive stone paths and benches and even a statue of an angel that gave Simon nervous fits, since he was a *Doctor Who* fan. The angel wasn't weeping, exactly, but it looked too depressed for Simon's liking.

Sitting on the stone bench in the middle of the garden were Magnus Bane and Alec Lightwood, a Shadowhunter who was tall and dark and fairly strong and silent, at least around Simon. Magnus was chatty, though, had the aforementioned cat eyes and magic powers, and was currently wearing a clinging T-shirt in a zebra-stripe pattern with pink accents. Magnus and Alec had been dating for some time; Simon guessed Magnus could talk for both of them.

Behind Magnus and Alec, leaning against a stone wall, were Isabelle and Clary. Isabelle was leaning against the garden wall, looking over it and into the distance. She looked as if she were in the middle of posing for an unbelievably glamorous photo shoot. Then again, she always did. It was her talent. Clary, however, was staring stubbornly up into Isabelle's face and talking to her. Simon thought Clary would get her way and get Isabelle to pay attention to her eventually. That was *her* talent.

Looking at either of them caused a pang in his chest. Looking at both of them started a dull, steady ache.

So instead Simon looked for his friend Jace, who was kneeling by himself in the overgrown grass and sharpening a short

blade against a stone. Simon assumed Jace had his reasons for this; or possibly he just knew he looked cool doing it. Possibly he and Isabelle could do a joint photo shoot for *Badass Monthly*.

Everyone was assembled. Just for him.

Simon would have felt both honored and loved, except mostly he felt weird, because he had only a few broken fragments of memory that said he knew these people at all, and a whole lifetime of memories that said they were armed, overly intense strangers. The kind you might avoid on public transportation.

The adults of the Institute and the Clave, Isabelle and Alec's mother and father and the other people, were the ones who had suggested that if Simon wanted to become a Shadowhunter, he should go to the Academy. It was opening its doors for the first time in decades to welcome trainees who could restore the Shadowhunters' ranks that the recent war had decimated.

Clary hadn't liked the idea. Isabelle had said absolutely nothing on the subject, but Simon knew she hadn't liked it either. Jace had argued that he was perfectly capable of training Simon in New York, had even offered to do it all himself and catch Simon up with Clary's training. Simon had thought that was touching, and he and Jace must be closer than he actually remembered them being, but the awful truth was that he didn't want to stay in New York.

He didn't want to stay around *them*. He didn't think he could bear the constant expression on their faces—on Isabelle's and Clary's most of all—of disappointed expectation. Every time they saw him, they recognized him and knew him and expected things of him. And every time he came up blank. It was like watching someone digging where they knew they'd buried something

precious, digging and digging and realizing that whatever it was—was gone. But they kept digging just the same, because the idea of losing it was so terrible and because maybe.

Maybe.

He was that lost treasure. He was that maybe. And he hated it. That was the secret he was trying to keep from them, the one he was always fearing he would betray.

He just had to get through this one last good-bye, and then he would be away from them until he was better, until he was closer to the person they all actually wanted to see. Then they would not be disappointed in him, and he would not be strange to them. He would belong.

Simon did not try to alert the whole group to his presence at once. Instead he sidled up to Jace.

“Hey,” he said.

“Oh,” Jace said carelessly, as if he hadn’t been waiting out here for the express purpose of seeing Simon off. He looked up, golden gaze casual, then looked away. “You.”

Being too cool for school was Jace’s thing. Simon supposed he must have understood and been fond of it, once.

“Hey, I figured I wasn’t going to get the chance to ask this again. You and me,” Simon said. “We’re pretty tight, aren’t we?”

Jace looked at him for a moment, face very still, and then bounded to his feet and said: “Absolutely. We’re like this.” He crossed two of his fingers together. “Actually, we’re more like this.” He tried to cross them again. “We had a little bit of initial tension, as you may later recall, but that was all cleared up when you came to me and confessed that you were struggling with your feelings of intense jealousy over my—these were your words—stunning good looks and irresistible charm.”

“Did I,” said Simon.

Jace clapped him on the shoulder. “Yeah, buddy. I remember it clearly.”

“Okay, whatever. The thing is . . . Alec’s always really quiet around me,” Simon said. “Is he just shy, or did I tick him off and I don’t remember it? I wouldn’t like to go away without trying to make things right.”

Jace’s expression took on that peculiar stillness again. “I’m glad you asked me that,” he said finally. “There is something more going on. The girls didn’t want me to tell you, but the truth is—”

“Jace, stop monopolizing Simon,” said Clary.

She spoke firmly, as she always did, and Jace turned and answered to it, as he always did, responding to her call as he did to no one else’s. Clary came walking toward both of them, and Simon felt that pang in his chest again as her red head drew near. She was so small.

During one of their ill-fated training sessions, in which Simon had been relegated to an observer after a sprained wrist, Simon had seen Jace throw Clary into a wall. She’d come right back at him.

Despite that, Simon kept feeling as if she needed to be protected. Feeling this way was a particular kind of horror, having the emotions without the memories. Simon felt like he was insane to have all these feelings about strangers, without having them properly backed up by familiarity and experiences he could actually recall. At the same time, he knew he wasn’t feeling or expressing enough. He knew he wasn’t giving them what they wanted.

Clary didn’t need to be protected, but somewhere within Simon was the ghost of a boy who had always wanted to be

the one to protect her, and he was only hurting her by staying around unable to be that guy.

Memories came, sometimes in an overwhelming and terrifying rush, but mostly in tiny shards, jigsaw pieces Simon could hardly make sense of. One piece was a flash of walking to school with Clary, her hand so little and his barely bigger. He'd felt big then, though, big and proud and responsible for her. He had been determined not to let her down.

"Hey, Simon," she said now. Her eyes were bright with tears, and Simon knew they were all his fault.

He took Clary's hand, small but calloused from both weapons and art. He wished he could find a way back to believing, even though he knew better, that she was his to protect.

"Hey, Clary. You take care of yourself," he said. "I know you can." He paused. "And take care of Jace, that poor, helpless blond."

Jace made an obscene gesture, which actually did feel familiar to Simon, so he knew that was their thing. Jace hastily lowered his hand when Catarina Loss walked around the side of the Institute.

She was a warlock like Magnus, and a friend of his, but instead of having cat eyes she was blue all over. Simon got the feeling she did not like him very much. Maybe warlocks only liked other warlocks. Though Magnus did seem to like Alec quite a lot.

"Hello there," said Catarina. "Ready to go?"

Simon had been dying to go for weeks, but now that the time had come he felt panic clawing at his throat. "Almost," he said. "Just a second."

He nodded to Alec and Magnus, who both nodded to him. Simon felt he had to clear up whatever was weird between

himself and Alec before he ventured much more.

“Bye, guys, thanks for everything.”

“Believe me, even partially releasing you from a fascist spell was my pleasure,” said Magnus, lifting a hand. He wore many rings, which glittered in the spring sunshine. Simon thought he must dazzle his enemies with his magical prowess, but also his glitter.

Alec just nodded.

Simon leaned down and hugged Clary, even though it made his chest hurt more. The way she felt and smelled was both strange and familiar, conflicting messages running through his brain and his body. He tried not to hug her too hard, even though she was kind of hugging him too hard. In fact, she was pretty much crushing his rib cage. He didn't mind, though.

When he let go of Clary, he turned and hugged Jace. Clary watched, tears running down her face.

“Oof,” said Jace, sounding extremely startled, but he patted Simon quickly on the back.

Simon supposed they usually fist-bumped or something. He did not know the warrior way of being bros: Eric was a big hugger. He decided it would probably be good for Jace, and ruffled his hair a little for emphasis before stepping away.

Then Simon gathered up his courage, turned, and walked over to Isabelle.

Isabelle was the last person he had to say good-bye to; she would be the hardest. She wasn't like Clary, openly tearful, or like any of the others, sorry to see him go but basically all right. She seemed more indifferent than anyone, so indifferent Simon knew it was not real.

“I'm going to come back,” said Simon.

“No doubt,” Isabelle said, staring off into the distance beyond his shoulder. “You always do seem to turn up.”

“When I do, I’m going to be awesome.”

Simon made the promise, not sure if he could keep it. He felt as if he had to say something. He knew it was what she wanted, for him to return to her the way he had been, better than he was now.

Isabelle shrugged. “Don’t think I’ll be waiting around, Simon Lewis.”

Just like her pretense of indifference, that sounded like a promise of the complete opposite. Simon looked at her for a long moment. She was so overwhelmingly beautiful and impressive, he found it too much to handle. He could barely believe any of his new memories, but the idea that Isabelle Lightwood had been his girlfriend seemed more unbelievable than the fact that vampires were real and Simon had been one. He didn’t have the faintest idea how he had made her feel that way about him once, and so he didn’t have the faintest idea how to make her feel that way about him again. It was like asking him to fly. He’d asked her to dance once, to have coffee with him twice in the months since she and Magnus had come to him and given back as much of his memory as they could, but not enough. Each time Isabelle had watched him carefully, expectantly, waiting for some miracle he knew he could not perform. It meant he was tongue-tied around her all the time, so sure he was going to say the wrong thing and shatter everything that he could scarcely say anything.

“Okay,” he said. “Well, I’ll miss you.”

Isabelle’s hand shot out, grasping his arm. She still wasn’t looking at him.

“If you need me, I’ll come,” she said, and released him as

abruptly as she had grabbed him.

“Okay,” Simon said again, and retreated to Catarina Loss’s side as she made the Portal to go through to Idris, the country of the Shadowhunters. This parting was so painful and awkward and welcome that he could not quite appreciate how awesome it was to have magic done right in front of him.

He waved good-bye to all these people he barely knew and somehow loved anyway, and he hoped they could not tell how relieved he was to be going.

Simon had remembered snatches about Idris, towers and a prison and stern faces and blood in the streets, but all of it was from the city of Alicante.

This time, he found himself outside the city. He was standing in the lush countryside, on one side a valley and on the other meadows. There was nothing to be seen for miles but different shades of green. There were the jade-green stretches of meadows upon meadows right down to the crystalline dazzle on the horizon that was the City of Glass, its towers blazing in the sunlight. On the other side, there were the emerald depths of a forest, dark green abundance cloaked in shadows. The tops of the trees ruffled in the wind like viridescent feathers.

Catarina looked around, then took one step, so she was standing right on the lip of the valley. Simon followed her, and in that one step the shadows of the forest lifted, as if shadows could become a veil.

Suddenly there were what Simon recognized as training grounds, stretches of clear ground cut into the earth with fences around them, markings indicating where Shadowhunters would run or throw etched so deep in the earth Simon could

see them from where he stood. At the center of the grounds and in the very heart of the forest, the jewel to which all the rest was background setting, was a tall gray building with towers and spires. Simon was suddenly searching for architectural words like “buttress” to describe how stone could carry the shape of a swallow’s wings and support a roof. The Academy had a stained-glass window set in its very center. In the window, darkened with age and years, an angel wielding a sword could still be seen, celestial and fierce.

“Welcome to Shadowhunter Academy,” said Catarina Loss, her voice gentle.

They began their descent together. At one point Simon’s sneakers slid in the soft, crumbling earth of the steep slope, and Catarina had to grab hold of his jacket to steady him.

“I hope you brought some hiking boots, city boy.”

“I did not bring hiking boots even slightly,” said Simon. He’d known he was packing wrong. His instincts had not led him astray. Nor had they been at all helpful.

Catarina, probably disappointed by Simon’s demonstrable lack of intelligence, was silent as they walked under the shadow of the boughs, in the green dusk created by the trees, until the trees became sparse and the sunlight flooded back into the space around them and Shadowhunter Academy loomed in the distance before them. As they drew closer, Simon began to notice certain small flaws with the Academy that he had not observed when he was awestruck and far away. One of the tall, skinny towers was leaning at an alarming angle. There were large bird nests in the arches, and cobwebs hanging as long and thick as curtains fluttered in a few of the windows. One of the panes in the stained-glass window was gone, leaving a black

space where the angel's eye should have been so that he looked like an angel turned to piracy.

Simon did not feel good about any of these observations.

There were people walking in front of the Academy, under the gaze of the pirate angel. There was a tall woman with a mane of strawberry-blond hair, and behind her two girls who Simon figured were Academy students. They both looked about his age.

A twig snapped under Simon's clumsy foot and all three of the strolling women looked around. The strawberry blonde leaped into action, running full tilt toward them and falling on Catarina as if she was a long-lost blue sister. She seized Catarina by the shoulders and Catarina looked extremely discomposed.

"Ms. Loss, thank the Angel you're here," she exclaimed. "Everything is chaos, absolute chaos!"

"I don't believe I've had the . . . pleasure," Catarina observed, with a significant pause.

The woman collected herself and released Catarina, nodding so her bright hair flew around her shoulders. "I'm Vivianne Penhallow. The, ah, dean of the academy. Delighted to make your acquaintance."

She might speak formally, but she was awfully young to be spearheading the effort to reopen the Academy and prepare all the new, desperately needed trainees for the Shadowhunter forces. Then again, Simon supposed that was what happened when you were second-cousins-in-law with the Consul. Simon was still trying to work out how Shadowhunter government and also Shadowhunter family trees worked. They all seemed to be related to each other and it was very disturbing.

"What seems to be the problem, Dean Penhallow?"

"Well, not to put too fine a point on it, the weeks allotted to

renovating the Academy seem to have been, ah . . . ‘wildly insufficient’ are the words that perhaps best describe the situation,” said Dean Penhallow, her words rushing out. “And some of the teachers have already—er—left abruptly. I do not believe they intend to return. In fact some of them informed me of this in very strong language. Also, the Academy is a trifle chilly and, to be perfectly honest, more than a trifle structurally unsound. Moreover, in the interest of thoroughness I must tell you there is a problem with the food supplies.”

Catarina raised an ivory eyebrow. “What’s the problem with the food supplies?”

“There aren’t any food supplies.”

“That is a problem.”

The dean’s shoulders sagged and her chest deflated somewhat, as if holding all that in had been confining her in an invisible corset of distress. “These girls with me are two of the older students and of good Shadowhunter families—Julie Beauvale and Beatriz Velez Mendoza. They arrived yesterday and have really been proving themselves invaluable. And this must be young Simon,” she said, favoring him with a smile.

Simon was briefly startled and not sure why, until he dimly recalled that very few adult Shadowhunters had ever shown any signs of pleasure at having a vampire in their midst. Of course, she had no reason to hate him on sight now. She’d also seemed eager to meet Catarina, Simon thought; maybe she was all right. Or maybe she was just eager to have Catarina help her.

“Right,” said Catarina. “Well, what a surprise that the building left vacant after an upheaval almost two decades ago isn’t running entirely smoothly after a few weeks. You’d best show me some of the worst trouble spots. I can shore them up so we

don't have all the fuss of a baby Shadowhunter breaking their little neck."

Everyone stared at Catarina.

"The inestimable tragedy, I meant," Catarina amended, and smiled brightly. "Can one of the girls be spared to show Simon to his room?"

She seemed eager to get rid of Simon. She really did not like him. Simon could not think what he could possibly have done to her.

The dean stared at Catarina for a moment longer, and then snapped out of it. "Oh yes, yes, of course. Julie, would you please see to it? Put him in the tower room."

Julie's eyebrows shot up. "Really?"

"Yes, really. The first room as you enter the east wing," the dean said, her voice strained, and turned back to Catarina. "Ms. Loss, I am once again most thankful you have arrived. Can you truly fix some of these irregularities?"

"There is a saying: *It takes a Downworlder to clear up a Shadowhunter mess,*" Catarina observed.

"I . . . hadn't heard that saying," said Dean Penhallow.

"How odd," said Catarina, her voice fading as they walked away. "Downworlders say it often. Very often."

Simon was left abandoned and staring at the remaining girl, Julie Beauvale. He'd liked the look of the other girl better. Julie was very pretty, but her face and nose and mouth were all oddly narrow, giving the impression that her entire head was pursed with disapproval.

"Simon, was it?" she asked, and her prepursed mouth seemed to purse further. "Follow me."

She turned, her movements sharp as a drill sergeant's, and

Simon followed her slowly across the threshold of the Academy into an echoing hall with a vaulted ceiling. He tilted his head and tried to make out if the greenish cast of the ceiling was bad lighting from the stained-glass window or actual moss.

“Please keep up,” said Julie’s voice, floating from one of the six dark, small doorways cut into the stone wall. Its owner had already vanished, and Simon plunged into the darkness after her.

The darkness turned out to be only a dim stone stairway, which led up into a dim stone corridor. There was still hardly any light, because the windows were tiny slits in the stone. Simon remembered reading about windows like that, made so nobody could fire in at you but so you could fire arrows out.

Julie led him down one passage, down another, up a short flight of stairs, down still another passage, made her way through a small circular room, which was nice for a change but which led to yet another passage. All the dark, close stone and the funny smell, combined with all the corridors, were making Simon think the words “passage tomb.” He was trying not to think of the words, but there they were.

“So you’re a demon hunter,” said Simon, shifting his bag on his shoulders and hurrying after Julie. “What’s that like?”

“Shadowhunter, and that’s what you’re here to find out,” the girl told him, and then stopped at one of many doors, stained oak with black iron fittings, the handle carved to look like an angel’s wing. She clasped the handle, and Simon saw that it must have been turned so often over the centuries that the details of the angel’s wing had been worn almost smooth.

Inside was a small stone room, containing two narrow beds—a suitcase open on one—with carved wooden bedposts,

a diamond-paned window blurred with dust, and a large wardrobe tilted to one side as if missing a leg.

There was also already a boy in there, standing on a stool. He revolved slowly on the stool to face them, regarding them from on high as if he were a statue on a plinth.

He did not look unlike a statue, if someone had dressed a statue up in jeans and a colorful red-and-yellow rugby shirt. The lines of his face were clean and statue-reminiscent, and he was broad-shouldered and athletic-looking, as most Shadowhunters were. Simon suspected the Angel did not choose the asthmatic or anyone who had ever gotten hit in the face by a volleyball in gym. The boy had a golden summer tan, dark brown eyes, and curly light-brown hair tumbling over his brow. The boy smiled at the sight of them, a dimple creasing one cheek.

Simon did not consider himself much of a judge of male beauty. But he heard a small sound behind him and glanced over his shoulder.

The small sound had been a sigh bursting in an irrepressible gust from Julie, who also, as Simon watched, performed a simultaneous sigh and slow, involuntary wriggle. Simon thought the siggle was probably an indication that this guy was something out of the ordinary when it came to looks.

Simon rolled his eyes. Apparently, all Shadowhunter dudes were underwear models, including his new roommate. His life was a joke.

Julie seemed occupied regarding the dude on the stool. Simon had several questions, like “who is that?” and “why is he on a stool?” but he didn’t want to be a bother.

“I’m really glad you guys are here. Now . . . don’t panic,” the guy on the stool whispered.

Julie backed up a step.

“What’s wrong with you?” Simon demanded. “Saying ‘don’t panic’ is guaranteed to make everyone panic! Be specific about the problem.”

“Okay, I get what you’re saying and you make a fair point,” continued the new boy. He had an accent, his voice light yet rumbling over certain syllables. Simon was fairly sure he was Scottish. “It’s just that I think there’s a demon possum in the wardrobe.”

“By the Angel!” said Julie.

Simon said: “That’s ridiculous.”

There was a sound from within the wardrobe. A dragging, grunting, hissing sound that raised the hairs on the back of Simon’s neck.

Quick as a flash and with Shadowhunter grace, Julie leaped onto the bed that did not have an open suitcase on it. Simon supposed that was his bed. The fact that he’d been here only two minutes and already had a girl hurling herself onto his bed would have been thrilling, except that of course she was fleeing infernal rodents.

“Do something, Simon!”

“Yes, Simon—are you Simon? Hi, Simon—please do something about the demonic possum,” said the guy on the stool.

“I’m sure it’s not a demonic possum.”

The sound of scuffling within the wardrobe was very loud, and Simon did not feel entirely sure. It did sound like there was something enormous lurking in there.

“I was born in the City of Glass,” said Julie. “I am a Shadowhunter and I can handle the demonic. But I was also raised in a nice house that was not infested with filthy wildlife!”

“Well, I’m from Brooklyn,” said Simon, “and not to

bad-mouth my beloved city or call it a verminous garbage heap with good music or anything, but I know rodents. Also, I believe I was a rodent, but that was only for a little while—I don't remember it clearly and I don't want to discuss it. I think I can handle a possum . . . which again, I'm sure is not demonic."

"I saw it and you guys didn't!" exclaimed the guy on the stool. "I'm telling you, it was suspiciously large! *Fiendishly* large."

There was another rustle, and some menacing snuffling. Simon sidled over to the open suitcase on the other bed. There were a lot more rugby shirts in there, but on top of them was something else.

"Is that a weapon?" Julie asked.

"Uh, no," said Simon. "It's a tennis racket."

The Shadowhunters needed more extracurricular activities.

He suspected the racket was going to be a truly terrible weapon, but it was what he had. He edged back toward the wardrobe, and threw the door open. There, in the splintered, gnawed-on recesses of the wardrobe, was a possum. Its red eyes shone and its small mouth opened, hissing at Simon.

"How disgusting," said Julie. "Kill it, Simon!"

"Simon, you're our only hope!" said the boy on the stool.

The possum made a movement, as if to dart forward. Simon brought the racket down with a thwack against the stone. The possum hissed again and moved in a different direction. Simon had the wild idea that it was feinting, just before it actually ran between his legs. Simon let out a sound that was too close to a squawk, stumbled back, and hit wildly in several directions, striking flagstones every time. The other two screamed. Simon spun to try to locate the possum, seeing a flash of fur out of the corner of his eye and spinning again. The boy on the

stool—either looking for reassurance or in a misguided effort to be helpful—grabbed at Simon’s shoulders and tried to turn him, using a handful of his shirt for leverage.

“There!” he yelled in Simon’s ear, and Simon whirled of his own accord, was turned against his will, and walked backward into the stool.

He felt the stool tip and tilt against his legs, and the boy on it snatched at Simon’s shoulders again. Simon, already dizzy, lurched and then saw the possum’s furry little body creeping over his own sneaker and made a fatal mistake. He hit his own foot with the racket. Very hard.

Simon, the stool, the boy on the stool, and the racket all went tumbling onto the stone floor.

The possum streaked out of the doorway. Simon thought it cast him a red-eyed look of triumph as it went.

Simon was in no condition to give chase, since he was in a jumble of chair legs and human legs, and had knocked his head against the bedpost.

He was trying to sit up, rubbing his head and feeling a little dizzy, when Julie jumped off the bed. The bedpost swayed with the force of her movement, and knocked against the back of Simon’s head once more.

“Well, I’ll leave you guys before the creature returns to his nest!” Julie announced. “Er . . . I mean, I’ll leave you guys . . . to it.” She paused in the doorway, staring in the direction the possum had gone. “Bye now,” she added, and bolted in the opposite direction.

“Ow,” Simon said, giving up on sitting up straight and leaning back on his hands. He grimaced. “Very ow. Well . . . that was . . .”

He gestured to the stool, the open doorway, the disgusting wardrobe, and his supine self.

“That was . . . ,” he continued, and found himself shaking his head and laughing. “Just *such* an impressive display from three future awesome demon hunters.”

The boy no longer on the stool looked startled, no doubt because he thought his new roommate was deranged and giggled over possums. Simon could not help it. He could not stop laughing.

Any of the Shadowhunters he knew back in New York would have dealt with the situation without blinking an eye. He was sure Isabelle would have cut off the possum’s head with a sword. But now he was surrounded by people who panicked and screamed and stood on stools, flailing disasters of human beings who could not cope with a single rodent, and Simon was one of them. They were all just normal kids.

It was such a relief, Simon felt dizzy with it. Or maybe that was because he’d hit his head.

He kept laughing, and when he looked over at his roommate again, the other boy met his eyes.

“What a shame our teachers didn’t see that awesome performance,” Simon’s new roommate said seriously. Then he burst out laughing too, hand against his mouth, laugh lines fanning out from the corners of his eyes, as if he laughed all the time and his face had just grown used to it. “We are gonna slay.”

After the slight burst of possum-related hysterics, Simon and his new roommate got up off the floor and got to unpacking and introducing themselves.

“Sorry about all that. I’m not great with scuttling little things. I’m hoping to fight demons a bit higher off the ground.

I'm George Lovelace, by the way," said the boy, sitting on the bed beside his open suitcase.

Simon stared at his own bag, full of its many hilarious T-shirts, and then suspiciously at the wardrobe. He didn't know if he trusted the possum wardrobe with his T-shirts.

"So you're a Shadowhunter, then?"

He'd worked out how Shadowhunter names were constructed by now, and he'd already figured George for a Shadowhunter at first sight. Only that had been before Simon thought George might be cool. Now he was disappointed. He knew what Shadowhunters thought of mundanes. It would have been nice to have someone new to all this to go through school with.

It would be nice to have a cool roommate again, Simon thought. Like Jordan. He could not remember Jordan, his roommate when he was a vampire, all that well, but what he remembered was good.

"Well, I'm a Lovelace," said George. "My family quit Shadowhunting due to laziness in the 1700s, then went and settled outside Glasgow to become the best sheep thieves in the land. The only other branch of the Lovelaces gave up Shadowhunting in the 1800s—I think they had a daughter who came back, but she died, so we were all that was left. Shadowhunters used to come knocking to past generations, and my brave ancestors were all like, 'Nope, think we'll stick with the sheep,' until finally the Clave stopped coming around because they were tired of our layabout ways. What can I tell you? The Lovelaces are quitters."

George shrugged and made a *what can you do?* gesture with his tennis racket. The strings were broken. It was still their only

weapon in case the possum returned.

Simon checked his phone. Idris had no reception, big surprise, and he tossed it in the suitcase among his T-shirts. “That’s a noble legacy.”

“Can you believe, I didn’t know anything about it until a few weeks ago? The Shadowhunters came to find us again, telling us they needed new, uh, demon hunters in the fight against evil because a bunch of them had died in a war. Can I just say, the Shadowhunters, man, they really know how to win over hearts and minds.”

“They should make flyers,” Simon suggested, and George grinned. “Just a bunch of them looking very cool and wearing black. The flyer could say ‘READY TO BE A BADASS?’ Put me in touch with the Shadowhunter marketing department, I have more gems where that came from.”

“I have some bad news to break to you about most Shadowhunters and their abilities with a photocopier,” George told him. “Anyway, it turned out my parents had known the whole time and just not informed me. Because why would I be interested in a little thing like that? They said my grandma was insane when she talked about dancing with the faeries! I made myself very clear on the subject of keeping intensely cool secrets from me before I left. Dad said, in fairness, that Gran is completely out of her tree. It’s just that faeries are also real. Probably not her four-inch-tall faerie lover called Bluebell, though.”

“I’d bet against it,” said Simon, thinking over all he remembered about faeries. “But I wouldn’t bet a lot.”

“So, you’re from New York?” said George. “Pretty glam.”

Simon shrugged: He didn’t know what to say, when he had

been casually comfortable with New York his whole life, and then found that the city and his own soul had turned traitor. When he had been so painfully eager to leave.

“How did you find out about all this? Do you have the Sight?”

“No,” Simon said slowly. “No, I’m just ordinary, but my best friend found out she was a Shadowhunter, and the daughter of this really bad guy. And the sister of this other really bad guy. She has the worst luck with relatives. I got mixed up in it, and to tell you the truth, I don’t really remember everything, because—”

Simon paused and tried to think of some way to explain demon-related amnesia that would not convince George that Simon had the same problems as George’s grandma. Then he saw George was looking at him, his brown eyes wide.

“You’re Simon,” he breathed. “Simon *Lewis*.”

“Right,” Simon said. “Hey. Is my name on the door, or—is there some sort of register I’m meant to be signing—”

“The vampire,” said George. “Mary Morgenstern’s best friend!”

“Uh, Clary,” said Simon. “Uh, yeah. I like to think of myself as the ex-undead.”

The way George was looking at him, as if he was seriously impressed rather than disappointed or expectant, was a little embarrassing. Simon had to admit, it was also a little nice. It was so different from the way anyone else had looked at him, in his old life or his new one.

“You don’t understand. I arrived in this freezing hellhole full of slime and rodents, and the whole Academy was buzzing with people talking about these heroes who are my age and actually went to a hell dimension. It gave real perspective to the

fact that the toilets don't work here."

"The toilets don't work? But what do we—how do we—"

George coughed. "We commune with nature, if you know what I'm saying."

George and Simon looked out of their casement window to the forest below, leaves gently swaying in the wind beyond the diamond-shaped panes of glass. George and Simon looked, darkly, sadly, back at each other.

"Seriously, you and your hero group is all anybody talks about," George said, returning to a more cheerful subject. "Well, that and the fact we have pigeons living in the ovens. You saved the world, didn't you? And you don't remember it. That's got to be weird."

"It is weird, George, thanks for mentioning that."

George laughed, tossed his broken racket on the floor, and kept looking at Simon as if he was someone amazing. "Wow. Simon Lewis. I guess I have someone at Spinechilling Academy to thank for getting the cool roommate."

George led Simon down to dinner, for which Simon was deeply grateful. The dining hall looked a lot like all the other square stone rooms in the Academy, except on one end it had a massive carved mantelpiece, displaying crossed swords and a motto so worn that Simon could not read it.

There were several round tables, with wooden chairs of varying sizes assembled around them. Simon was starting to genuinely believe they had furnished the Academy from an old person's garage sale. The tables were crowded with kids. Most of them were at least two years younger than Simon. Quite a few were younger than that. Simon had not realized he was

on the elderly side for a trainee demon hunter, and it made him nervous. He was deeply relieved when he saw some mildly familiar faces his own age.

Julie of the pursed face, Beatriz, and another boy saw them and waved them over. Simon assumed the wave was for George, but when he sat down Julie actually leaned into him.

“I can’t believe you didn’t say you were *Simon Lewis*,” she said. “I thought you were just a mundane.”

Simon leaned slightly away. “I am just a mundane.”

Julie laughed. “You know what I mean.”

“She means we all owe you a debt, Simon,” said Beatriz Mendoza, smiling at him. She had a great smile. “We don’t forget that. It’s a pleasure to meet you, and it’s a pleasure to have you here. We might even be able to get sensible conversation out of a boy for once. No chance of that with Jon here.”

The boy, who had biceps the size of Simon’s head, reached across the table and offered a hand. Despite his extreme arm intimidation, Simon shook it.

“I’m Jonathan Cartwright. Pleasure.”

“Jonathan,” Simon repeated.

“It’s a very common name for Shadowhunters,” said Jon. “After Jonathan Shadowhun—”

“Er, no, I know, I have my copy of the *Codex*,” said Simon. Clary had given him hers, actually, and he’d had fun reading the scribbling of practically everybody in the Institute on the pages. He’d felt he was getting to know them, safely away from them where they could not see him fail and expose his gaps of knowledge. “It’s just . . . I know some people called Jonathan. Not that any of them call themselves Jonathan. Called themselves Jonathan.”

He did not remember much about Clary's brother, but he knew his name. He did not particularly want to remember more.

"Oh, right, Jonathan Herondale," said Jon. "Of course you know him. I'm actually pretty good friends with him myself. Taught him a trick or two that probably helped you all out in the demon realms, am I right?"

"Do you mean—Jace?" Simon asked dubiously.

"Yeah, obviously," said Jon. "He's probably mentioned me."

"Not that I recall . . .," said Simon. "But I do have demon amnesia. So there's that."

Jon nodded and shrugged. "Right. Bummer. He's probably mentioned me and you forgot, on account of the demon amnesia. Not to brag, but we're pretty close, me and Jace."

"I wish I was close to Jace Herondale," Julie sighed. "He is so gorgeous."

"He is foxier than a fox fur in a fox hole on fox hunting day," Beatriz agreed dreamily.

"Who's this?" asked Jon, squinting at George, who was leaning back in his chair and looking rather amused.

"Speaking of people being foxy, do you mean? I'm George Lovelace," said George. "I say my surname without shame, because I am secure in my masculinity like that."

"Oh, a Lovelace," said Jon, his brow clearing. "Yeah, you can sit with us."

"I've got to say, my surname has never actually been a selling point before, though," George remarked. "Shadowhunters, go figure."

"Well, you know," said Julie. "You're going to want to hang out with people in your own stream."

"Come again?" Simon asked.

“There are two different streams in the Academy,” Beatriz explained. “The stream for mundanes, where they inform the students more fully about the world and give them badly needed basic training, and the stream for real Shadowhunter kids, where we’re taught from a more advanced curriculum.”

Julie’s lip curled. “What Beatriz’s saying is, there’s the elite and there’s the dregs.”

Simon stared at them, with a sinking feeling. “So . . . I’m going to be in the dregs course.”

“No, Simon, no!” Jon exclaimed, looking shocked. “Of course you won’t be.”

“But I’m a mundane,” Simon said again.

“You’re not a regular mundane, Simon,” Julie told him. “You’re an exceptional mundane. That means exceptions are going to be made.”

“If anyone tried to put you in with the mundanes, I’d have words with them,” Jon continued loftily. “Any friend of Jace Herondale’s is, naturally, a friend of mine.”

Julie patted Simon’s hand. Simon stared at his hand as if it did not belong to him. He did not want to be put in the stream for losers, but he didn’t feel comfortable about being assured he would not be either.

But he did think he remembered Isabelle, Jace, and Alec saying some sketchy things about mundanes, now and then. Isabelle, Jace, and Alec weren’t so bad. It was just the way they were brought up: They didn’t mean what it seemed like they meant. Simon was pretty sure.

Beatriz, who Simon had liked on sight, leaned in across Julie and said: “You’ve more than earned your place.”

She smiled shyly at him. Simon could not help smiling back.

“So . . . I’m going to be in the dregs course?” George asked slowly. “I don’t know anything about Shadowhunters and Downworlders and demons.”

“Oh no,” said Jon. “You’re a Lovelace. You’ll find it will all come very easily to you: It’s in your blood.”

George bit his lip. “If you say so.”

“Most students in the Academy will be in the elite course,” Beatriz said hastily. “Our new recruits are mostly like you, George. Shadowhunters are searching all over the world for lost and scattered people with Shadowhunter blood.”

“So it’s Shadowhunter blood that gets you into the elite stream,” George clarified. “And not knowledge at all.”

“It’s perfectly fair,” Julie argued. “Look at Simon. Of course he’s in the elite stream. He has proven himself worthy.”

“Simon had to save the world, and the rest of us get in because we have the right surname?” George asked lightly. He winked at Simon. “Hard luck on you, mate.”

There was an uncomfortable silence around the table, but Simon suspected nobody felt as uncomfortable as he did.

“Sometimes those of Shadowhunter blood are put in the dregs stream, if they disgrace themselves,” Julie said shortly. “Mainly, yes, it is reserved for mundanes. That’s the way the Academy always worked in the past; it’s how it will work in the future. We take some mundanes, those with the Sight or with remarkable athletic promise, into the Academy. It’s a wonderful opportunity for them, a chance to become more than they could have ever dreamed. But they cannot keep up with real Shadowhunters. It would hardly be fair to expect them to. They can’t all be Simon.”

“Some of them simply will not have the aptitude,” Jon

remarked in a lofty tone. “Some of them won’t live through Ascension.”

Simon opened his mouth, but before he could ask any further questions he was interrupted by the sound of a lone clap.

“My dear students, my present and future Shadowhunters,” said Dean Penhallow, rising from her chair. “Welcome, welcome! To Shadowhunter Academy. It is such a joy to see you all here at the auspicious official opening of the Academy, where we will be training a whole new generation to obey the Law laid down by the Angel. It is an honor to have been chosen to come here, and a joy for us to have you.”

Simon looked around. There were about two hundred students here, he thought, uncomfortably crammed around rickety tables. He noticed again that several of them were very young, and grubby and desolate. Simon’s heart went out to them, even as he wondered exactly what the running water situation at the Academy was.

Nobody looked as if they felt honored to be here. Simon found himself wondering again about the Shadowhunters’ recruiting methods. Julie talked about them as if they were noble, searching for lost Shadowhunter families and offering mundanes amazing opportunities, but some of these kids looked about twelve. Simon had to wonder what your life must be like, if you were ready to leave it all and go fight demons at twelve.

“There have been a few unexpected losses from the staff, but I’m certain we will do splendidly with the excellent personnel we have remaining,” Dean Penhallow continued. “May I introduce Delaney Scarsbury, your training master.”

The man sitting next to her got up. He made Jon Cartwright’s biceps look like grapes held up to a grapefruit, and he actually

had an eye patch, like the angel in the stained-glass window.

Simon turned slowly and looked at George, who he hoped would feel him on this one. He mouthed: *No way.*

George, who obviously did feel him on this one, nodded and mouthed: *Pirate Shadowhunter!*

“I look forward to crushing you all into a pulp and molding that pulp into ferocious warriors,” announced Scarsbury.

George and Simon exchanged another speaking glance.

A girl at the table behind Simon began to cry. She looked about thirteen.

“And this is Catarina Loss, a very estimable warlock who will be teaching you a great deal about—history and so on!”

“Yay,” said Catarina Loss, with a desultory wave of her blue fingers, as if she’d decided to try clapping without bothering to lift both hands.

The dean soldiered on. “In past years at the Academy, because Shadowhunters come from all over the globe, every day of the week we would serve a delicious dish from a different nation. We certainly intend to keep up that tradition! But the kitchens are in a slight state of disrepair and for now we have—”

“Soup,” said Catarina flatly. “Vats and vats of murky brown soup. Enjoy, kids.”

Dean Penhallow continued her one-woman applause. “That’s right. Enjoy, everyone. And again, welcome.”

There really was nothing on offer but huge metal vats full of very questionable soup.

Simon lined up for food, and peered into the greasy depths of the dark liquid. “Are there alligators in there?”

“I won’t make you any promises,” said Catarina, inspecting her own bowl.

Simon was exhausted and still starving when he crawled into bed that night. He tried to cheer himself up thinking again about how lately a girl had been on the bed. A girl on his bed for the first time ever, Simon thought, but then memories came like a wisp of cloud over the moon, dimming all certainty. He remembered Clary sleeping in his bed, when they were so little their pajamas had trucks and ponies on them. He remembered kissing Clary, and how she had tasted like fresh lemonade. And he remembered Isabelle, her dark hair flowing over his pillow, her throat bared to him, her toenails scratching his leg, like a sexy vampire movie aside from the bit about the toenails. The other Simon had been not only a hero but a lady-killer. Well, more of a lady-killer than Simon was now.

Isabelle. Simon's mouth moved to form the shape of her name, pressing it into his pillow. He'd told himself he wasn't going to think about her, not until he was really getting somewhere in the Academy. Not until he was on his way to being better, being the person she wanted him to be.

He turned so he was flat on his back and stared up at the stone ceiling.

"Are you awake?" George whispered. "Me too. I keep worrying that the possum will come back. Where did it even come from, Simon? Where did it go?"

The trials of transforming himself into a Shadowhunter became apparent to Simon the very next day.

First, because Scarsbury was measuring them for their gear, which was a terrifying experience on its own. Second, because it involved hurtful personal comments about Simon's physique.

“You have such narrow shoulders,” Scarsbury said thoughtfully. “Like a lady.”

“I’m lithe,” Simon informed him, with dignity.

He looked bitterly over at George, who was lounging on a bench waiting for Simon to finish being measured. George’s gear was sleeveless; Julie had already come over to compliment him on how good the fit was and touch his arms.

“Tell you what,” said Scarsbury. “I have some gear here meant for a girl—”

“Fine,” said Simon. “I mean, terrible, but fine! Give it to me.”

Scarsbury shoved the folded black material into Simon’s arms. “It’s meant for a tall girl,” he said in a voice that was possibly intended to be comforting, and definitely too loud.

Everyone looked around and stared at them. Simon prevented himself from taking a sarcastic bow, and stomped off to put on his gear.

After they got gear, they were given weapons. Mundane students could not wear runes or use steles or most Shadowhunter weapons, so they were all given mundane weapons; it was meant to broaden the Shadowhunter kids’ weapons knowledge. Simon feared his own weapons knowledge was as broad as spaghetti.

Dean Penhallow brought around giant boxes of terrifying knives, which seemed very strange in an academic setting, and asked them to select a dagger that suited them.

Simon picked a dagger completely at random, then sat at his desk wagging it about.

Jon nodded to it. “Nice.”

“Yeah,” Simon said, nodding back and gesturing with it. “That’s what I thought. Nice. Very stabby.”

He stabbed the dagger into the desk, where it got stuck and

Simon had to pry it out of the wood.

Simon thought being trained could not possibly be as bad as being prepared to be trained, but as it turned out it was much worse.

The Academy days were half physical activity. It was like half the day was gym. Stabby, stabby gym.

When they were learning the basics of swordplay, Simon was paired up with the girl he'd noticed in the dining hall, the one who had cried when Scarsbury was introduced.

"She's from the dregs stream, but I understand you're not particularly experienced with swordplay," Scarsbury told him. "If she's not enough of a challenge, let me know."

Simon stared at Scarsbury instead of doing what he wanted to do, which was saying he could not believe an adult was calling someone "dregs" to their face.

He looked at the girl, her dark head bowed, her sword shining in her trembling hand.

"Hey. I'm Simon."

"I know who you are," she muttered.

Right, apparently Simon was a celebrity. If he had all his memories, maybe this would seem normal to him. Maybe he would know that he deserved it, instead of knowing he did not.

"What's your name?" he asked.

"Marisol," she told him reluctantly. She was not shaking anymore, he noted, now that Scarsbury had retreated.

"Don't worry," he said encouragingly. "I'll go easy on you."

"Hmm," said Marisol. She did not look like she was going to cry now; her eyes were narrowed.

Simon was not used to much younger kids, but they were

both mundanes. Simon had an awkward fellow feeling. “You settling in okay? Do you miss your parents?”

“I don’t have parents,” Marisol said in a small, hard voice.

Simon stood stricken. He was such an idiot. He’d thought about it, why mundane kids might come to the Academy. Mundanes would have to choose to give up their parents, their families, their former lives. Unless, of course, they already had no parents and no families. He’d thought about that, but he’d forgotten, obsessing about his own memories and how he would fit in, thinking only about himself. He had a home to go back to, even though it wasn’t perfect. He’d had a choice.

“What did the Shadowhunters tell you, when they came to recruit you?”

Marisol stared at him, her gaze clear and cold. “They told me,” she said, “that I was going to fight.”

She had been taking fencing classes since she could walk, as it turned out. She cut him off at the knees and left him literally in the dust, stumbling as a tiny, swordy whirlwind came at him across the practice grounds, and falling.

He also stabbed himself in the leg with his own sword as he fell, but that was a very minor injury.

“Went a little too easy on her,” Jon said, passing by and helping Simon up. “The dregs won’t learn if they’re not taught, you know.”

His voice was kind; his glance at Marisol was not.

“Leave her alone,” Simon muttered, but he did not say that Marisol had beaten him fairly. They all thought he was a hero.

Jon grinned at him and walked on. Marisol did not even look at him. Simon studied his leg, which stung.

It was not all stabbing. Some of it was regular stuff, like

running, but as Simon tried to run and keep up with people a lot more athletic than he had ever been, he was constantly plagued by memories of how his lungs had never burned for lack of air, how his heart had never pounded from overexertion. He had been fast, once, faster than any of these Shadowhunter trainees, cold and predatory and powerful.

And dead, he reminded himself as he fell behind the others yet again. He didn't want to be dead.

Running was still a lot better than horseback riding. The Academy introduced them to horseback riding on their first Friday there. Simon thought it was supposed to be a treat.

Everyone else acted as if it was a treat. Only those of the elite stream were allowed to go riding, and at mealtimes they had been mocking the dregs for missing out. It seemed to cheer Julie and Jon up, in the face of the endless terrible soup.

Simon, precariously balanced on top of a huge beast that was both rolling its eyes and apparently trying to tap-dance, did not feel this was any sort of treat. The dregs had been sent off to learn elementary facts about Shadowhunting. They had most of their classes apart from the elite, and Jon assured Simon they were boring. Simon felt he could really do with being bored, right about now.

"Si," said George in an undertone. "Quick tip. Riding works better if you keep your eyes open."

"My previous riding experience is the carousel at Central Park," Simon snapped. "Forgive me for not being Mr. Darcy!"

George was, as several of the ladies were remarking, an excellent horseman. He barely had to move for the horse to respond to him, both of them moving smoothly together, sunlight rippling off his stupid curls. He looked right, made it all look easy

and graceful, like a knight in the movies. Simon remembered reading books about magic horses that read their rider's every thought, books about horses born of the North Wind. It was all part of being a magical warrior, having a noble steed.

Simon's horse was defective, or possibly a genius that had worked out that Simon could not possibly control it. It went off for a wander in the woods, with Simon on its back alternately pleading, threatening, and offering bribes. If Simon's horse could read his every thought, then Simon's horse was a sadist.

As night drew in and the evening grew cold, the horse wandered back to its stall. Simon had no choice in the matter, but he did manage to tumble off the horse and stagger into the Academy, his fingers and knees gone entirely numb.

"Ah, there you are," said Scarsbury. "George Lovelace was beside himself. He wanted to assemble a search party for you."

Simon regretted his spiteful thoughts about George's horsemanship.

"Let me guess," said Simon. "Everyone else said, 'Nah, being left for dead builds character.'"

"I was not concerned you were going to be eaten by bears in the deep dark woods," said Scarsbury, who did not look as if he had ever been concerned about anything in his life, ever.

"Of course you weren't, that would be abs—"

"You had your dagger," added Scarsbury casually, and walked away, leaving Simon to call after him.

"My—my *bear-killing* dagger? Do you really think me killing bears with a dagger is a plausible scenario? What information do you have about bears in these woods? I think it's your responsibility as an educator to tell me if there are bears in the woods."

“See you at javelin practice bright and early, Lewis,” said Scarsbury, and marched on without looking back.

“Are there bears in the woods?” Simon repeated to himself. “It’s a simple question. Why are Shadowhunters so bad at simple questions?”

The days passed in a blur of horrible violent activity. If it wasn’t javelin practice, Simon was getting thrown around a room (George was very apologetic later, but that did not help). If it wasn’t dagger work, it was more swordplay and humiliating defeat before the blades of tiny, evil trainee Shadowhunters. If it wasn’t swordplay, it was the obstacle course, and Simon refused to speak of the obstacle course. Julie and Jon were growing noticeably cool at mealtimes, and a few comments about mundies were passed.

At last Simon staggered wearily to the next exercise in futility and sharp objects, and Scarsbury placed a bow in his hands.

“I want everyone to try to hit the targets,” said Scarsbury. “And, Lewis, I want you to try not to hit any of the other trainees.”

Simon felt the weight of the bow in his hands. It had a nice balance, he thought, easy to lift and manipulate. He nocked the arrow, and felt the tautness of the string, ready to release, primed to let it fly along the path Simon wanted.

He drew his arm back, and it was that easy: bull’s-eye. He fired once more, and then again, arrows flying to find their targets, and his arms burned and his heart pounded with something like joy. He was glad to be able to feel his muscles working and his heart thumping. He was so glad to be alive again, and able to feel every moment of this.

Simon lowered his bow to find everybody staring at him.

“Can you do that again?” asked Scarsbury.

He’d learned to shoot arrows in summer camp, but standing here holding a bow, he remembered something else. He remembered breathing, his heart beating, Shadowhunters watching him. He’d still been human then, a mundane they all despised, but he’d killed a demon. He remembered: He’d seen something had to be done, and he’d done it.

A guy not so different from who he was now.

Simon felt a smile spread across his face, hurting his cheeks. “Yeah. I think I can.”

Julie and Jon were both much more friendly over dinner than they had been for the last few days. Simon told them about killing the demon, what he remembered, and Jon offered to teach him some swordplay tricks.

“I would really love to hear more about your adventures,” said Julie. “Whatever you can remember. Especially if they involve Jace Herondale. Do you know how he got that sexy scar on his throat?”

“Ah,” said Simon. “Actually . . . yes. Actually . . . that was me.” Everybody stared at him.

“I might have bitten him. A tiny bit. It was more like a nibble, really.”

“Was he delicious?” asked Julie, after a thoughtful pause. “He *looks* like he would be delicious.”

“Um,” said Simon. “He’s not a juice box.”

Beatriz nodded earnestly. Both the girls seemed very interested in this discussion. Too interested. Their eyes were glazed.

“Did you maybe climb on top of him slowly and then lower your head to his tender, pulsing throat?” Beatriz said. “Could

you feel the heat radiating off his body and into yours?”

“Did you lick his throat before you bit him?” Julie asked.

“Oh, and did you get a chance to feel his biceps?” She shrugged.

“I’m just curious about, you know, vampire techniques.”

“I imagine Simon was both gentle and commanding during his special moment with Jace,” said Beatriz dreamily. “I mean, it was special, wasn’t it?”

“No!” said Simon. “I can’t stress that enough. I’ve bitten several Shadowhunters. I bit Isabelle Lightwood and Alec Lightwood; biting Jace was not a tender and unique moment!”

“You bit Isabelle and Alec Lightwood?!” asked Julie, who was starting to sound freaked-out. “What did the Lightwoods ever do to you?”

“Wow,” said George. “I imagined the demon realms were fearsome and terrifying, but seems like it was pretty much non-stop nom nom nom.”

“That is not how it was!” Simon said.

“Can we stop talking about this?” Jon demanded, his voice sharp. “I’m sure you all did what you had to do, but the idea of Shadowhunters being prey for a Downworlder is disgusting.”

Simon did not love the way Jon said “Downworlder,” as if the words “Downworlder” and “disgusting” were more or less the same thing. But maybe it was natural for Jon to be disturbed. Simon could remember being disturbed about it himself. Simon hadn’t wanted to make his friends into his prey either.

Today had gone pretty well. Simon didn’t want to ruin it. He decided he was in a good enough mood to let it go.

Simon felt better about the Academy until that night, when he woke from a doze to a deluge of memory.

The memories hit like that sometimes, not in sharp tiny

jabs but in an insistent and terrible cascade. He had thought of his former roommate before. He'd known he'd had a friend, a roommate, named Jordan, and that Jordan had been killed. But he hadn't recalled the *feelings* of it—the way Jordan had taken him in when his mother had barred her door, talking about Maia with Jordan, hearing Clary laugh that Jordan was cute, talking to Jordan, patient and kind and always seeing Simon as more than a job, more than a vampire. He remembered seeing Jordan and Jace snarl at each other and then play video games like idiots, and Jordan finding him sleeping in a garage, and Jordan looking at Maia with such regret.

And he remembered holding Jordan's Praetor Lupus pendant in his hands, in Idris, after Jordan was dead. Simon had held that pendant again since then, once he had regained some of his memories, feeling the weight of it and wondering what the Latin motto meant.

He had known Jordan was his roommate, and known he was one of the many casualties of the war.

He had never truly felt the weight of it, until now.

The sheer weight of memory made him feel as if stones were being piled on his chest, crushing him. Simon couldn't breathe. He erupted from his sheets, swinging his legs over the side of the bed, his feet hitting the stone floor with a shock of cold.

"Wuzz—wuzzit?" mumbled George. "Did the possum come back?"

"Jordan's dead," Simon said bleakly, and put his face in his hands.

There was a silence.

George did not ask him who Jordan had been, or why he suddenly cared. Simon would not have known how to explain

the tangle of grief and guilt in his chest: how he hated himself for forgetting Jordan, even though he could not have helped it, how this was like finding out Jordan was dead for the first time and like having a scarred-over wound reopened, both at once. There was a bitter taste in Simon's mouth, like old, old blood.

George reached out and put a hand on Simon's shoulder. He kept it there, grip firm, hand warm and steady, something to anchor Simon in the cold, dark night of memory.

"I'm sorry," he whispered. Simon was sorry too.

At dinner the next day, it was soup again. It had been soup for every meal for many days now. Simon did not remember a life before soup, and he despaired of ever achieving a life after soup. Simon wondered if the Shadowhunters had runes to protect against scurvy.

Their usual group was clustered around their usual table, chatting, when Jon said: "I wish we were being taught about demons by someone with less of an agenda, if you know what I mean."

"Uh," said Simon, who mostly sat through their classes on demons through the ages in deep relief that he was not being asked to move. "Don't we all have the same . . . demon-hunting . . . agenda?"

"You know what I mean," Jon said. "We've got to be taught about the past crimes of warlocks as well. We have to fight the Downworlders, too. It's naive to pretend they're all tame."

"The Downworlders," Simon repeated. The soup turned to ashes in his mouth, which was actually an improvement. "Like vampires?"

“No!” said Julie hastily. “Vampires are great. They have, you know, class. Compared to the other Downworlders. But if you’re talking about creatures like werewolves, Simon, you must see they’re not exactly our kind of people. If you can call them people at all.”

She said “werewolves” and Simon could not help but think of Jordan, flinching as if he’d been struck and unable to keep his mouth shut a moment longer.

Simon pushed his bowl of soup away and shoved his chair back.

“Don’t tell me about what I must, Julie,” he said coldly. “I must inform you there are werewolves worth a hundred of your and Jon’s Shadowhunter asses. I must say that I am sick to the teeth of you insulting mundanes and telling me I’m your special pet exception, as if I want to be the pet of people who bully kids younger and weaker than they are. And I must tell you, you’d better hope this Academy works out and mundanes like me Ascend, because from all I can see of you, the next generation of Shadowhunters is going to be nothing without us.”

He looked toward George, the way he looked to George to share jokes in class and over meals, to see if George agreed with him at all.

George was staring at his plate.

“Come on, man,” he muttered. “Don’t—don’t do this. They’ll make you move rooms. Just sit down, and everybody can apologize, and we can go on as we were.”

Simon took a deep breath, absorbed the disappointment, and said: “I don’t want things to go on as they were. I want things to change.”

He turned away from the table, from all of them, marched

over to where the dean and Scarsbury were sitting, and announced at the top of his voice: “Dean Penhallow, I want to be placed in the stream for mundanes.”

“What?” Scarsbury exclaimed. “The dregs?”

The dean dropped her spoon into her soup with a noisy splash. “The mundane course, Mr. Scarsbury, if you please! Do not refer to our students in that manner. I’m glad you came to me with this, Simon,” she said after a moment of hesitation. “I understand you may be having difficulties with the course, given your mundane nature, but—”

“It’s not that I’m having difficulty,” said Simon. “It’s that I’d rather not associate with the elite Shadowhunter families. I just don’t think they’re my kind of people.”

His voice rang out against the stone ceiling. There were a lot of young kids staring at him. One was little Marisol, regarding him with a startled, thoughtful expression. Nobody said anything. They just looked.

“Okay, I’ve said all I had to say, I’m feeling bashful, and I’m gonna go now,” Simon said, and fled the room.

He almost walked right into Catarina Loss, who had been watching from the doorway.

“Sorry,” he mumbled.

“Don’t be,” Catarina said. “In fact, I’m going to come with you. I’ll help you pack.”

“What?” Simon asked, hurrying after her. “I actually have to move?”

“Yeah, they put the dregs in the underground level,” Catarina said.

“They put some kids in the dungeons, and nobody has ever pointed out that this is a disgusting system before now?”

“Is it?” asked Catarina. “Do tell me more about the Shadowhunters, and their occasional tendency to be unfair. I will find it fascinating and surprising. Their excuse is that the lower levels are easier to defend, for the kids who cannot fight as well as their fellow students.”

She strode into Simon’s room and looked around for his things.

“I actually haven’t unpacked very much,” Simon said. “I was afraid of the possum in the wardrobe.”

“The what?”

“George and I found it very mysterious too,” Simon told her earnestly, picking up his bag and stuffing in the few things he had left lying out. He wouldn’t want to forget his lady gear.

“Well,” Catarina said. “Whatever about possums. The point I want to make is . . . I may have gotten you wrong, Simon.”

Simon blinked. “Oh?”

Catarina smiled at him. It was astonishing, like a blue sunrise. “I was not looking forward to coming to teach here. Shadowhunters and Downworlders do not get along, and I try to keep myself more separated from the Nephilim even than most others of my kind. But I had a dear friend called Ragnor Fell, who used to live in Idris and taught in the Academy for decades before it was closed. He never had the greatest opinion of Shadowhunters, but he was fond of this place. I—lost him recently, and I knew this place could not operate without teachers. I wanted to do something in memory of him, even though I hated the idea of teaching a pack of arrogant Nephilim brats. But I loved my friend more than I hate Shadowhunters.”

Simon nodded. He thought of his remembrance of Jordan, thought of how it hurt to even look at Isabelle and Clary.

Without memory, they were lost. And nobody wanted someone they loved to be lost.

“So I may have been a little cranky about coming,” Catarina admitted. “I may have been a little cranky about you, because—from all I know, you didn’t think much of being a vampire. And now you’re cured, what a miracle, and the Shadowhunters are so quick to pull you into the fold. You truly get to be one of them, what you always wanted. You had the stain of being one of us wiped away.”

“I didn’t . . .,” Simon said, and swallowed. “I can’t remember it all. So it’s like defending the actions of someone else sometimes.”

“Must be frustrating.”

Simon laughed. “You have no idea. I don’t—I didn’t want to be a vampire, I don’t think. I wouldn’t want to be made one again. Being stuck at age sixteen when all my friends and my family would’ve grown up without me; having the urge to—to hurt people? I didn’t want any of that. But—look, I don’t remember much, but I remember enough. I remember I was a person back then, just as much as I am now. Becoming a Shadowhunter won’t change that, if I ever do become a Shadowhunter. I’ve forgotten enough. I will not forget that.”

He lifted his bag onto his shoulder, and gestured for Catarina to lead the way to his new room. She did, descending down stone steps Simon had figured were to the basement. He had not figured they kept kids in the basement.

It was dark on the stairs. Simon put a hand to the wall to steady himself, and then snatched it back.

“Oh, disgusting!”

“Yes, most of the subterranean surfaces are coated in black

slime,” said Catarina, in a matter-of-fact tone. “Watch yourself.”

“Thank you. Thanks for that warning.”

“You’re welcome,” said Catarina, a hint of a laugh in her voice. For the first time, it occurred to Simon that Catarina might actually be nice. “You said—if you ever do become a Shadowhunter. Are you thinking about leaving?”

“Now that I’ve touched the slime, I am,” Simon muttered. “No. I don’t know what I want, except that I don’t want to give up yet.”

He almost reconsidered when Catarina led him to his room. It was much darker than the last room, though laid out in the same way. The wooden bedposts of the two narrow beds looked decayed, and in the corners of the room the black slime had grown almost viscous, turning into tiny black slime waterfalls.

“I don’t remember hell all that well,” Simon said. “But I think I recall it was nicer than this.”

Catarina laughed, then shocked Simon by leaning in and giving him a peck on the cheek. “Good luck, Daylighter,” she told him, laughing at his expression. “And whatever you do, don’t use the bathrooms on this floor. Not on any floor, obviously, but especially on this one!”

Simon did not ask her to explain, because he was terrified. He sat down on his new bed, and then stood hastily back up at the resulting long creak and cloud of dust. Hey, at least this time he didn’t have a roommate—he was king of this claustrophobic, slimy domain. He set his mind to unpacking. The wardrobe in this room was actually clean and empty, which was a definite improvement. Simon might go live in the wardrobe with his funny T-shirts.

He was long finished unpacking by the time George

sauntered in, dragging his suitcase behind him and bearing his broken racket on his shoulder like a sword. “Hey, man.”

“Hey,” Simon said cautiously. “Er, what—what are you doing here?”

George dumped his suitcase and his racket on the slimy floor, and threw himself down on the bed. He stretched luxuriously, ignoring the ominous creak of the bed beneath him.

“The thing is, the advanced course is actually pretty hard,” George said, as Simon started to smile. “And you may have heard: Lovelaces are quitters.”

Simon was even more relieved to have George the next day, so they could sit together rather than at one of the tables of thirteen-year-old mundanes, who were all giving them the side-eye when they were not whispering brokenly about their phones.

The day brightened further when Beatriz plopped down at their new table as well.

“I’m not going to drop out of advanced training to follow you around like Curlytop here,” Beatriz announced, “but we can still be friends, right?”

She pulled George’s hair affectionately.

“Be careful,” George said in a tired, humble voice. “I did not sleep in our small, slimy room. There is, I believe, a creature living in our walls. I hear it. Scuttling. I have to admit, I may not have made the brightest decision in following Simon. It’s possible I’m not that bright. It’s possible that looks are all I have.”

“Actually . . . even though I’m not willing to follow you into boring classes and the endless disrespect of my classmates . . . I think it was a very cool thing you did, Simon,” said Beatriz.

She smiled, teeth flashing white against her brown skin, and her smile was warm and admiring—about the nicest thing Simon had seen all day.

“You’re right, our morals are sound even though our walls are infested. And we’ll still have some interesting classes, Si,” George said. “Plus, don’t worry, we still get sent on missions to fight demons and rogue Downworlders.”

Simon choked on his soup. “I was not worrying about that. Are any of our teachers at all worried that sending out people with no superpowers to fight demons might prove just a teeny bit, not to put too fine a point on it, fatal?”

“They have to face trials of courage before they must face Ascension,” said Beatriz. “Better for them to drop out because they are scared, or even because a demon ate their leg, than to have them try to Ascend without being suitable, and die in the attempt.”

“That’s a cool, cheerful, and normal thing to say,” Simon said. “Shadowhunters are great at saying normal things.”

“Well, I’m looking forward to the missions,” said George. “And tomorrow a Shadowhunter is coming in to give a guest lecture on the lesser-utilized weapons. I hope there’ll be a practical demonstration.”

“Not in a classroom,” said Beatriz. “Think of what one heavy-duty crossbow could do to the walls.”

That was all the warning Simon got before he clattered happily into class the next day, George on his heels, and found Dean Penhallow already there, talking with nervous good cheer. The classroom was very full—both the regular stream and the mundane stream were in attendance.

“—despite her tender years, a Shadowhunter of some

renown and noted expertise with less-used weapons such as the whip. May I welcome to Shadowhunter Academy our first guest lecturer: Isabelle Lightwood!”

Isabelle turned, sleek black hair flaring around her shoulders and black skirt flaring around her pale legs. She was wearing glittery plum lipstick, so dark it looked almost black. Her eyes did look black, but another small knife of memory pierced Simon, of course at the worst time possible: He remembered the colors of her eyes from close up, very dark brown, like brown velvet, so close to black as to make no difference, but with paler rings of color. . . .

He stumbled over to his desk, and folded into his chair with a thump.

When the dean left, Isabelle turned and regarded her class with absolute contempt.

“I am not actually here to instruct any of you idiots,” she told them, walking up and down the rows of desks. “If you want to use a whip, train with one, and if you lose an ear, don’t be a big whiny baby.”

Several of the boys nodded, as if hypnotized. Almost all the boys were watching Isabelle as if they were a nest of snakes intent on being charmed. Some of the girls were watching her that way too.

“I am here,” Isabelle announced, finishing her prowl of the perimeter and turning to face them all again with snapping eyes, “to determine my relationship.”

Simon goggled. She couldn’t be talking about him. Could she?

“Do you see that man?” Isabelle asked, pointing at Simon. Apparently she *was* talking about him. “That’s Simon Lewis,

and he is *my boyfriend*. So if any of you think about trying to hurt him because he's a mundie or—may the Angel have mercy on your soul—pursuing him romantically, I will come after you, I will hunt you down, and I will crush you to powder.”

“We're just bros,” said George hastily.

Beatriz edged her desk away from Simon's.

Isabelle lowered her hand. The flush of excitement was receding from her face as well, as though she had come to say what she had said, and now that she was out of adrenaline she was actually processing what had come out of her mouth.

“I am going to go now,” Isabelle announced. “Thank you for your attention. Class dismissed.”

She turned and walked out of the room.

“I have to—” Simon began, rising from his desk on legs that felt a little unsteady. “I have to go.”

“Yeah, you do,” George said.

Simon went out the door, and ran down the stone corridors of the Academy. He knew Isabelle was fast, so he ran, faster than he'd ever run on the training grounds, and he caught up to her in the hall. She stopped in the dim light of the stained-glass window as he called her name.

“Isabelle!”

She stood waiting for him. Her lips parted and gleamed, like plums under a winter frost, ready to be tasted. Simon could see himself running up to her, catching her in his arms, and kissing her mouth, knowing what it had taken for her to do that—his brave, brilliant Isabelle—and carried away in a whirl of love and joy, but he saw it as if through a pane of glass, as if looking into another dimension, one he could see but not quite touch.

Simon felt a hot pang of grief through his whole body, not

just through his chest, as if he had been struck by lightning. But he had to say it.

“I’m not your boyfriend, Isabelle,” he called out.

She went white. Simon was horrified by how badly his words had come out.

“I mean, I can’t be your boyfriend, Isabelle,” he said. “I’m not him—that guy who was your boyfriend. That guy you want.”

He almost said: *I wish I could be*. He had wished he could be. That was why he had come to the Academy, to learn how to be that guy they all wanted back. He’d wanted to be that way, be an awesome hero like in a game or a movie. He’d been so sure, at first, that was what he wanted.

Except wishing he could be that guy was like wishing to obliterate the guy he was now: the normal, happy guy in a band, who could still love his mother, who did not wake up in the coldest, darkest hour of the night weeping for dead friends.

And he did not know if he could be that guy she wanted, whether he wished it or not.

“You remember everything, and I—I don’t remember enough,” Simon went on. “I hurt you when I don’t mean to, and I thought I could come to the Academy and come back better, but it’s not looking good. The whole game has changed. My skill level has decreased and the difficulty level has been jacked up to impossible—”

“Simon,” Isabelle interrupted, “you’re talking like a nerd.”

She said it almost fondly, but it freaked Simon out more. “And I don’t know how to be smooth, sexy vampire Simon for you, either!”

Isabelle’s perfect mouth curved, like a dark half-moon in her pale face. “You were never that smooth, Simon.”

“Oh,” said Simon. “Oh, thank God. I know you’ve had a lot of boyfriends. I remember there was a faerie, and”—another flash of memory, this time most unwelcome—“a . . . Lord Montgomery? You dated a member of the nobility? How am I ever going to compete with that?”

Isabelle still looked fond, but it was diluted with a good deal of impatience. “You’re Lord Montgomery, Simon!”

“I don’t understand,” said Simon. “When you’re made a vampire, are you also given a title?”

Maybe that made sense. Vampires were aristocratic.

Isabelle put her fingers up to touch her brow. It was a gesture that seemed like disdainful weariness, like Isabelle was tired of all this, but Simon saw the way her eyes closed, as if she could not look at him when she spoke. “It was just a joke between you and me, Simon.”

Simon was tired of all this: of knowing pieces of her so well and others not at all, of knowing he was not what she wanted.

“No,” he said. “It was a joke between you and him.”

“You are him, Simon!”

“I’m not,” Simon told her. “I don’t—I don’t know how to be, that’s what I’ve been realizing all this time. I thought I could learn to be him, but since I got to the Academy I learned that I can’t. I can’t experience everything we did over again. I’m never going to be the guy who did all that. I’m going to do different things. I’m going to be a different guy.”

“Once you Ascend, you’ll get all your memories back!” Isabelle shouted at him.

“If I Ascend, it will be in two years. I’m not going to be the same guy in two years, even if I do get all the memories back, because there will be so many other memories. You’re not going

to be the same girl. I know you believed in me, Isabelle, I know you believed because you—you cared about him. That means more than I can tell you. But, Isabelle, Isabelle, it isn't fair of me to take advantage of your belief. It isn't fair to keep you waiting for him, when he isn't ever coming back."

Isabelle had her arms crossed, fingers curled into the dark plum velvet of her own jacket as if she was offering herself comfort. "None of this is fair. It isn't fair that part of your life was ripped from you. It's not fair that you were ripped away from me. I'm so angry, Simon."

Simon took a step toward her and took one of her hands, uncurling her fingers from her jacket. He did not take her in his arms but he stood a little distance away from her, their hands linked across the distance. Her trembling mouth sparkled, and so did her eyelashes. He did not know if this was indomitable Isabelle crying, or whether it was sparkly mascara. All he knew was that she shone, like a constellation in the shape of a girl.

"Isabelle," he said. "Isabelle."

She was so much herself, and he had scarcely any idea who he was.

"Do you know why you're here?" she demanded.

He just looked at her. There were so many things that question could mean, and so many ways to answer.

"I mean at the Academy," she said. "Do you know why you want to be a Shadowhunter?"

He hesitated. "I wanted to be that guy again," he said. "That hero that you all remember . . . and this seems like a training school for heroes."

"It's not," Isabelle said flatly. "It's a training school for Shadowhunters. And yeah, I think that's a pretty cool thing,

and yeah, I think protecting the world is pretty heroic. But there are cowardly Shadowhunters and evil Shadowhunters and hopeless Shadowhunters. If you're going to get through the Academy, you have to figure out why *you* want to be a *Shadowhunter* and what that means to *you*, Simon. Not just why you want to be special."

He winced, but it was true. "You're right. I don't know. I know that I want to be here. I know I need to be here. Believe me, if you'd seen the bathrooms, you'd know I didn't make this decision lightly."

She gave him a withering look.

"But," he said, "I don't know why. I don't know myself well enough yet. I know what I said to you, at first, and I know what you hoped. That I could turn back into who I was before. I was really wrong and I am really sorry."

"*Sorry?*" Isabelle demanded. "Do you know what a big deal it was for me to come here, to make a fool of myself in front of all these people? Do you know—of course you don't. You don't want me to believe in you? You don't want me to choose you?"

Isabelle pulled her hands away from him, turned her face away as she had in the garden of the Institute that was her home. This time Simon knew it was absolutely his fault.

She was already leaving as she said:

"Have it your way, Simon Lewis. I won't."

Simon was so depressed after Isabelle had gone—after he had driven her away—that he didn't think he'd ever move off his cot bed again. He lay there, listening to George chatter and scrub the walls. He'd removed an impressive amount of the slime.

Simon retreated to where he believed nobody would ever

find him. He went and sat in the bathroom. The stone flags were cracked in the bathrooms; there was something dark in one of the toilets. Simon hoped it was just a result of people throwing away the soup.

He had half an hour of peace in the bathroom, alone with the horrible toilets, until George poked his head around the door.

“Hey, buddy,” said George. “Do not use these bathrooms. I cannot stress that enough.”

“I’m not going to use the bathroom,” Simon said drearily. “I’m a mess, but I’m not an idiot. I just wanted to be alone and think depressing thoughts. You want to know a secret?”

George was silent for a moment. “If you want to tell me. You don’t have to. We all have secrets.”

“I chased away the most amazing girl I have ever met, because I’m too much of a loser to manage being myself. That’s my secret: I want to be a hero, but I’m not one. Everybody thinks I’m some amazing warrior who summoned angels and rescued Shadowhunters and saved the world, but it’s a joke. I can’t even remember what I did. I can’t imagine how I did it. I’m no one special, and no one’s going to be fooled for long, and I don’t even know what I’m doing here. So. You have a secret that can beat that?”

There was a low gurgle from one of the toilets. Simon did not even look toward it. He was not interested in investigating that sound.

“I’m not a Shadowhunter at all,” George said in a rush.

Sitting on a bathroom floor was not an ideal way to receive monumental revelations. Simon frowned. “You’re not a Lovelace?”

“No, I’m a Lovelace.” George’s normally lighthearted voice was stern. “But I’m not a Shadowhunter. I’m adopted. The Shadowhunters who came to recruit me didn’t even think of

that—of people with Shadowhunter blood wanting mundane children, giving them Shadowhunter names and thinking of them as their own. I was always planning to tell the truth, but I figured it would be easier when I got here—less trouble to decide to let me stay than to work out whether they wanted to bring me. And then I met the others, and I started the course, and I figured out I could keep up with them pretty easily. I saw what they thought of mundanes. I figured it wouldn't do any harm to keep the secret and stay in the elite class and be like the rest of the guys, just for a while.”

George shoved his hands in his pockets, and stared at the floor.

“But I'd met you, too, and you didn't have any special powers, and you'd already done more than all the rest of them put together. You do things now, like transfer to the mundane class when you didn't have to, and that made me man up and tell the dean I was a mundie and get transferred too. You did that. The way you are now, okay? So stop talking about what a loser you are, because I wouldn't follow a loser into a slime-covered bedroom or a slime-covered bathroom, and I've followed you into both.” George paused and said aggressively: “And I would really like to change the phrasing of that last sentence, because it sounded so bad, but I'm not sure how.”

“I'll take it in the spirit it was meant,” said Simon. “And I—I'm really glad you told me. I was hoping for a cool mundie roommate from the start.”

“Wanna know another secret?” George asked.

Simon was slightly terrified of another revelation, and worried George was a secret agent, but he nodded anyway.

“Everybody in this academy, Shadowhunters and mundanes,

people with the Sight and without it, every one of them is looking to be a hero. We are all hoping for it, and trying for it, and soon we will be bleeding for it. You're just like the rest of us, Si. Except there's one thing about you that's different: We all want to be heroes, but you know you can be one. You know in another life, in an alternate universe, however you want to think of it, you were a hero. You can be one again. Maybe not the same hero, but you have it in you to make the right choices, to make the big sacrifices. That's a lot of pressure. But it's a lot more hope than any of the rest of us have. Think about it that way, Simon Lewis, and I think you're pretty lucky."

Simon had not thought about it that way. He'd just kept thinking that a switch was going to be flipped, and he was going to be special again. But Isabelle was right: This could not just be about being special. He remembered seeing the Academy for the first time, how glamorous and impressive it had looked from a distance, and how different it had looked close up. He was starting to think the process of becoming a Shadowhunter was the same way. He was starting to believe it would all be cutting himself with a sword and having his horse run away with him, eating terrible soup and scraping slime off the walls, and figuring out slowly and awkwardly who he really wanted to be, this time around.

George leaned against the bathroom wall, which was an obviously rash and dangerous move, and grinned at him. Seeing that grin, seeing George refuse to be serious for more than a second, reminded Simon of something else about his first day at the Academy. It reminded him of hope.

"Speaking of luck, Isabelle Lightwood is a total babe. Actually, she's better than a babe: She's a hero. She came all the

way here to tell the world you were hers. You're telling me she doesn't know another hero when she sees one? You're going to figure out what you're doing here. Isabelle Lightwood believes in you, and for what it's worth, I do too."

Simon stared up at George.

"It's worth a lot," he said finally. "Thanks for saying all that."

"You're welcome. Now please get up off the floor," George implored. "It is so nasty."

Simon did get up off the floor. He left the bathroom, George ahead of him, and both of them almost plowed into Catarina Loss, who was dragging a huge covered tureen over the flagstones with a scraping sound.

"Ms. Loss . . . ," said Simon. "Can I ask you—what you're doing?"

"Dean Penhallow has decided that she is not going to order fresh food supplies until all this delicious, nutritious soup has been consumed. So I am going to bury this soup in the woods," announced Catarina Loss. "Grab the other handle."

"Huh. Okay, good plan," said Simon, grabbing the other handle of the tureen and falling in with Catarina. George followed them as they went, unsteadily balancing the soup tureen between them. As they walked through the drafty, echoing corridors of the Academy, Simon added: "I just have one quick question about the woods. And bears."