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THE PORTAL

THE COLD SNAP OF THE PREVIOUS WEEK WAS OVER; THE SUN was shining brightly as Clary hurried across Luke's dusty front yard, the hood of her jacket up to keep her hair from blowing across her face. The weather might have warmed up, but the wind off the East River could still be brutal. It carried with it a faint chemical smell, mixed with the Brooklyn smell of asphalt, gasoline, and burned sugar from the abandoned factory down the street.

Simon was waiting for her on the front porch, sprawled in a broken-sprunged armchair. He had his DS balanced on his blue-jeaned knees and was poking away at it industriously with the stylus. "Score," he said as she came up the steps. "I'm kicking butt at Mario Kart."

Clary pushed her hood back, shaking hair out of her eyes, and rummaged in her pocket for her keys. "Where have you been? I've been calling you all morning."

Simon got to his feet, shoving the blinking rectangle into his messenger bag. "I was at Eric's. Band practice."

Clary stopped jiggling the key in the lock—it always stuck—long enough to frown at him. "*Band* practice? You mean you're still—"

“In the band? Why wouldn’t I be?” He reached around her. “Here, let me do it.”

Clary stood still while Simon expertly twisted the key with just the right amount of pressure, making the stubborn old lock spring open. His hand brushed hers; his skin was cool, the temperature of the air outside. She shivered a little. They’d only called off their attempt at a romantic relationship last week, and she still felt confused whenever she saw him.

“Thanks.” She took the key back without looking at him.

It was hot in the living room. Clary hung her jacket up on the peg inside the front hall and headed to the spare bedroom, Simon trailing in her wake. She frowned. Her suitcase was open like a clamshell on the bed, her clothes and sketchbooks strewn everywhere.

“I thought you were just going to be in Idris a couple of days,” Simon said, taking in the mess with a look of faint dismay.

“I am, but I can’t figure out what to pack. I hardly own any dresses or skirts, but what if I can’t wear pants there?”

“Why wouldn’t you be able to wear pants there? It’s another country, not another century.”

“But the Shadowhunters are so old-fashioned, and Isabelle always wears dresses—” Clary broke off and sighed. “It’s nothing. I’m just projecting all my anxiety about my mom onto my wardrobe. Let’s talk about something else. How was practice? Still no band name?”

“It was fine.” Simon hopped onto the desk, legs dangling over the side. “We’re considering a new motto. Something ironic, like ‘We’ve seen a million faces and rocked about eighty percent of them.’”

“Have you told Eric and the rest of them that—”

“That I’m a vampire? No. It isn’t the sort of thing you just drop into casual conversation.”

“Maybe not, but they’re your *friends*. They should know. And

besides, they'll just think it makes you more of a rock god, like that vampire Lester."

"Lestat," Simon said. "That would be the vampire Lestat. And he's fictional. Anyway, I don't see you running to tell all your friends that you're a Shadowhunter."

"What friends? You're my friend." She threw herself down onto the bed and looked up at Simon. "And I told you, didn't I?"

"Because you had no choice." Simon put his head to the side, studying her; the bedside light reflected off his eyes, turning them silver. "I'll miss you while you're gone."

"I'll miss you, too," Clary said, although her skin was prickling all over with a nervous anticipation that made it hard to concentrate. *I'm going to Idris! her mind sang. I'll see the Shadowhunter home country, the City of Glass. I'll save my mother.*

And I'll be with Jace.

Simon's eyes flashed as if he could hear her thoughts, but his voice was soft. "Tell me again—why do *you* have to go to Idris? Why can't Madeleine and Luke take care of this without you?"

"My mom got the spell that put her in this state from a warlock—Ragnor Fell. Madeleine says we need to track him down if we want to know how to reverse the spell. But he doesn't know Madeleine. He knew my mom, and Madeleine thinks he'll trust me because I look so much like her. And Luke can't come with me. He could come to Idris, but apparently he can't get into Alicante without permission from the Clave, and they won't give it. And don't say anything about it to him, *please*—he's really not happy about not going with me. If he hadn't known Madeleine before, I don't think he'd let me go at all."

"But the Lightwoods will be there too. And Jace. They'll be helping you. I mean, Jace did say he'd help you, didn't he? He doesn't mind you coming along?"

“Sure, he’ll help me,” Clary said. “And of course he doesn’t mind. He’s fine with it.”

But that, she knew, was a lie.

Clary had gone straight to the Institute after she’d talked to Madeleine at the hospital. Jace had been the first one she’d told her mother’s secret to, before even Luke. And he’d stood there and stared at her, getting paler and paler as she spoke, as if she weren’t so much telling him how she could save her mother as draining the blood out of him with cruel slowness.

“You’re not going,” he said as soon as she’d finished. “If I have to tie you up and sit on you until this insane whim of yours passes, you are not going to Idris.”

Clary felt as if he’d slapped her. She had thought he’d be *pleased*. She’d run all the way from the hospital to the Institute to tell him, and here he was standing in the entryway glaring at her with a look of grim death. “But you’re going.”

“Yes, we’re going. We *have* to go. The Clave’s called every active Clave member who can be spared back to Idris for a massive Council meeting. They’re going to vote on what to do about Valentine, and since we’re the last people who’ve seen him—”

Clary brushed this aside. “So if you’re going, why can’t I go with you?”

The straightforwardness of the question seemed to make him even angrier. “Because it isn’t safe for you there.”

“Oh, and it’s so safe here? I’ve nearly been killed a dozen times in the past month, and every time it’s been right here in New York.”

“That’s because Valentine’s been concentrating on the two Mortal Instruments that were here.” Jace spoke through gritted teeth. “He’s going to shift his focus to Idris now, we all know it—”

“We’re hardly as certain of anything as all that,” said Maryse

Lightwood. She had been standing in the shadow of the corridor doorway, unseen by either of them; she moved forward now, into the harsh entryway lights. They illuminated the lines of exhaustion that seemed to draw her face down. Her husband, Robert Lightwood, had been injured by demon poison during the battle last week and had needed constant nursing since; Clary could only imagine how tired she must be. “And the Clave wants to meet Clarissa. You know that, Jace.”

“The Clave can screw itself.”

“Jace,” Maryse said, sounding genuinely parental for a change. “Language.”

“The Clave wants a lot of things,” Jace amended. “It shouldn’t necessarily get them all.”

Maryse shot him a look, as if she knew exactly what he was talking about and didn’t appreciate it. “The Clave is often right, Jace. It’s not unreasonable for them to want to talk to Clary, after what she’s been through. What she could tell them—”

“I’ll tell them whatever they want to know,” Jace said.

Maryse sighed and turned her blue eyes on Clary. “So you want to go to Idris, I take it?”

“Just for a few days. I won’t be any trouble,” Clary said, gazing entreatingly past Jace’s white-hot glare at Maryse. “I swear.”

“The question isn’t whether you’ll be any trouble; the question is whether you’ll be willing to meet with the Clave while you’re there. They want to talk to you. If you say no, I doubt we can get the authorization to bring you with us.”

“No—” Jace began.

“I’ll meet with the Clave,” Clary interrupted, though the thought sent a ripple of cold down her spine. The only emissary of the Clave she’d known so far was the Inquisitor, who hadn’t exactly been pleasant to be around.

Maryse rubbed at her temples with her fingertips. “Then

it's settled." She didn't sound settled, though; she sounded as tense and fragile as an overtightened violin string. "Jace, show Clary out and then come see me in the library. I need to talk to you."

She disappeared back into the shadows without even a word of farewell. Clary stared after her, feeling as if she'd just been drenched with ice water. Alec and Isabelle seemed genuinely fond of their mother, and she was sure Maryse wasn't a bad person, really, but she wasn't exactly *warm*.

Jace's mouth was a hard line. "Now look what you've done."

"I need to go to Idris, even if you can't understand why," Clary said. "I need to do this for my mother."

"Maryse trusts the Clave too much," said Jace. "She has to believe they're perfect, and I can't tell her they aren't, because—" He stopped abruptly.

"Because that's something Valentine would say."

She expected an explosion, but "No one is perfect" was all he said. He reached out and stabbed at the elevator button with his index finger. "Not even the Clave."

Clary crossed her arms over her chest. "Is that really why you don't want me to come? Because it isn't safe?"

A flicker of surprise crossed his face. "What do you mean? Why else wouldn't I want you to come?"

She swallowed. "Because—" *Because you told me you don't have feelings for me anymore; and you see, that's very awkward, because I still have them for you. And I bet you know it.*

"Because I don't want my little sister following me everywhere?" There was a sharp note in his voice, half mockery, half something else.

The elevator arrived with a clatter. Pushing the gate aside, Clary stepped into it and turned to face Jace. "I'm not going because you'll be there. I'm going because I want to help my mother. *Our* mother. I have to help her. Don't you get it?"

If I don't do this, she might never wake up. You could at least pretend you care a little bit."

Jace put his hands on her shoulders, his fingertips brushing the bare skin at the edge of her collar, sending pointless, helpless shivers through her nerves. There were shadows below his eyes, Clary noticed without wanting to, and dark hollows under his cheekbones. The black sweater he was wearing only made his bruise-marked skin stand out more, and the dark lashes, too; he was a study in contrasts, something to be painted in shades of black, white, and gray, with splashes of gold here and there, like his eyes, for an accent color—

"Let me do it." His voice was soft, urgent. "I can help her for you. Tell me where to go, who to ask. I'll get what you need."

"Madeleine told the warlock I'd be the one coming. He'll be expecting Jocelyn's daughter, not Jocelyn's son."

Jace's hands tightened on her shoulders. "So tell her there was a change of plans. I'll be going, not you. *Not you.*"

"Jace—"

"I'll do whatever," he said. "Whatever you want, if you promise to stay here."

"I can't."

He let go of her, as if she'd pushed him away. "*Why not?*"

"Because," she said, "she's my mother, Jace."

"And mine." His voice was cold. "In fact, why didn't Madeleine approach both of us about this? Why just you?"

"You know why."

"Because," he said, and this time he sounded even colder, "to her you're Jocelyn's daughter. But I'll always be Valentine's son."

He slammed the gate shut between them. For a moment she stared at him through it—the mesh of the gate divided up his face into a series of diamond shapes, outlined in metal. A single golden eye stared at her through one diamond, furious anger flickering in its depths.

“Jace—” she began.

But with a jerk and a clatter, the elevator was already moving, carrying her down into the dark silence of the cathedral.

“Earth to Clary.” Simon waved his hands at her. “You awake?”

“Yeah, sorry.” She sat up, shaking her head to clear it of cobwebs. That had been the last time she’d seen Jace. He hadn’t picked up the phone when she’d called him afterward, so she’d made all her plans to travel to Idris with the Lightwoods using Alec as reluctant and embarrassed point person. Poor Alec, stuck between Jace and his mother, always trying to do the right thing. “Did you say something?”

“Just that I think Luke is back,” Simon said, and jumped off the desk just as the bedroom door opened. “And he is.”

“Hey, Simon.” Luke sounded calm, maybe a little tired—he was wearing a battered denim jacket, a flannel shirt, and old cords tucked into boots that looked like they’d seen their best days ten years ago. His glasses were pushed up into his brown hair, which seemed flecked with more gray now than Clary remembered. There was a square package under his arm, tied with a length of green ribbon. He held it out to Clary. “I got you something for your trip.”

“You didn’t have to do that!” Clary protested. “You’ve done so much. . . .” She thought of the clothes he’d bought her after everything she owned had been destroyed. He’d given her a new phone, new art supplies, without ever having to be asked. Almost everything she owned now was a gift from Luke. *And you don’t even approve of the fact that I’m going.* That last thought hung unspoken between them.

“I know. But I saw it, and I thought of you.” He handed over the box.

The object inside was swathed in layers of tissue paper. Clary tore through it, her hand seizing on something soft as kitten’s

fur. She gave a little gasp. It was a bottle-green velvet coat, old-fashioned, with a gold silk lining, brass buttons, and a wide hood. She drew it onto her lap, smoothing her hands lovingly down the soft material. “It looks like something Isabelle would wear,” she exclaimed. “Like a Shadowhunter traveling cloak.”

“Exactly. Now you’ll be dressed more like one of them,” Luke said. “When you’re in Idris.”

She looked up at him. “Do you want me to look like one of them?”

“Clary, you *are* one of them.” His smile was tinged with sadness. “Besides, you know how they treat outsiders. Anything you can do to fit in . . .”

Simon made an odd noise, and Clary looked guiltily at him—she’d almost forgotten he was there. He was looking studiously at his watch. “I should go.”

“But you just got here!” Clary protested. “I thought we could hang out, watch a movie or something—”

“*You* need to pack.” Simon smiled, bright as sunshine after rain. She could almost believe there was nothing bothering him. “I’ll come by later to say good-bye before you go.”

“Oh, come on,” Clary protested. “Stay—”

“I can’t.” His tone was final. “I’m meeting Maia.”

“Oh. Great,” Clary said. Maia, she told herself, was nice. She was smart. She was pretty. She was also a werewolf. A werewolf with a crush on Simon. But maybe that was as it should be. Maybe his new friend *should* be a Downworlder. After all, he was a Downworlder himself now. Technically, he shouldn’t even be spending time with Shadowhunters like Clary. “I guess you’d better go, then.”

“I guess I’d better.” Simon’s dark eyes were unreadable. This was new—she’d always been able to read Simon before. She wondered if it was a side effect of the vampirism, or something else entirely. “Good-bye,” he said, and bent as if to kiss her on the cheek, sweeping her hair back with one of his hands.

Then he paused and drew back, his expression uncertain. She frowned in surprise, but he was already gone, brushing past Luke in the doorway. She heard the front door bang in the distance.

“He’s acting so *weird*,” she exclaimed, hugging the velvet coat against herself for reassurance. “Do you think it’s the whole vampire thing?”

“Probably not.” Luke looked faintly amused. “Becoming a Downworlder doesn’t change the way you feel about things. Or people. Give him time. You *did* break up with him.”

“I did not. He broke up with me.”

“Because you weren’t in love with him. That’s an iffy proposition, and I think he’s handling it with grace. A lot of teenage boys would sulk, or lurk around under your window with a boom box.”

“No one has a boom box anymore. That was the eighties.” Clary scrambled off the bed, pulling the coat on. She buttoned it up to the neck, luxuriating in the soft feel of the velvet. “I just want Simon to go back to normal.” She glanced at herself in the mirror and was pleasantly surprised—the green made her red hair stand out and brightened the color of her eyes. She turned to Luke. “What do you think?”

He was leaning in the doorway with his hands in his pockets; a shadow passed over his face as he looked at her. “Your mother had a coat just like that when she was your age,” was all he said.

Clary clutched the cuffs of the coat, digging her fingers into the soft pile. The mention of her mother, mixed with the sadness in his expression, was making her want to cry. “We’re going to see her later today, right?” she asked. “I want to say good-bye before I go, and tell her—tell her what I’m doing. That she’s going to be okay.”

Luke nodded. “We’ll visit the hospital later today. And, Clary?”

“What?” She almost didn’t want to look at him, but to her relief, when she did, the sadness was gone from his eyes.

He smiled. “Normal isn’t all it’s cracked up to be.”

Simon glanced down at the paper in his hand and then at the cathedral, his eyes slitted against the afternoon sun. The Institute rose up against the high blue sky, a slab of granite windowed with pointed arches and surrounded by a high stone wall. Gargoyle faces leered down from its cornices, as if daring him to approach the front door. It didn’t look anything like it had the first time he had ever seen it, disguised as a run-down ruin, but then glammers didn’t work on Downworlders.

You don’t belong here. The words were harsh, sharp as acid; Simon wasn’t sure if it was the gargoyle speaking or the voice in his own mind. *This is a church, and you are damned.*

“Shut up,” he muttered halfheartedly. “Besides, I don’t care about churches. I’m Jewish.”

There was a filigreed iron gate set into the stone wall. Simon put his hand to the latch, half-expecting his skin to sear with pain, but nothing happened. Apparently the gate itself wasn’t particularly holy. He pushed it open and was halfway up the cracked stonework path to the front door when he heard voices—several of them, and familiar—nearby.

Or maybe not that nearby. He had nearly forgotten how much his hearing, like his sight, had sharpened since he’d been Turned. It sounded as if the voices were just over his shoulder, but as he followed a narrow path around the side of the Institute, he saw that the people were standing quite a distance away, at the far end of the grounds. The grass grew wild here, half-covering the branching paths that led among what had probably once been neatly arranged rosebushes. There was even a stone bench, webbed with green weeds; this had been a real church once, before the Shadowhunters had taken it over.

He saw Magnus first, leaning against a mossy stone wall. It

was hard to miss Magnus—he was wearing a splash-painted white T-shirt over rainbow leather trousers. He stood out like a hothouse orchid, surrounded by the black-clad Shadowhunters: Alec, looking pale and uncomfortable; Isabelle, her long black hair twisted into braids tied with silver ribbons, standing beside a little boy who had to be Max, the youngest. Nearby was their mother, looking like a taller, bonier version of her daughter, with the same long black hair. Beside her was a woman Simon didn't know. At first Simon thought she was old, since her hair was nearly white, but then she turned to speak to Maryse and he saw that she probably wasn't more than thirty-five or forty.

And then there was Jace, standing off at a little distance, as if he didn't quite belong. He was all in Shadowhunter black like the others. When Simon wore all black, he looked like he was on his way to a funeral, but Jace just looked tough and dangerous. And *blonder*. Simon felt his shoulders tighten and wondered if anything—time, or forgetfulness—would ever dilute his resentment of Jace. He didn't *want* to feel it, but there it was, a stone weighting down his unbeating heart.

Something seemed odd about the gathering—but then Jace turned toward him, as if sensing he was there, and Simon saw, even from this distance, the thin white scar on his throat, just above his collar. The resentment in his chest faded into something else. Jace dropped a small nod in his direction. “I'll be right back,” he said to Maryse, in the sort of voice Simon would never have used with his own mother. He sounded like an adult talking to another adult.

Maryse indicated her permission with a distracted wave. “I don't see why it's taking so long,” she was saying to Magnus. “Is that normal?”

“What's not normal is the discount I'm giving you.” Magnus tapped the heel of his boot against the wall. “Normally I charge twice this much.”

“It's only a *temporary* Portal. It just has to get us to Idris.

And then I expect you to close it back up again. That *is* our agreement.” She turned to the woman at her side. “And you’ll remain here to witness that he does it, Madeleine?”

Madeleine. So this was Jocelyn’s friend. There was no time to stare, though—Jace already had Simon by the arm and was dragging him around the side of the church, out of view of the others. It was even more weedy and overgrown back here, the path snaked with ropes of undergrowth. Jace pushed Simon behind a large oak tree and let go of him, darting his eyes around as if to make sure they hadn’t been followed. “It’s okay. We can talk here.”

It was quieter back here certainly, the rush of traffic from York Avenue muffled behind the bulk of the Institute.

“You’re the one who asked me here,” Simon pointed out. “I got your message stuck to my window when I woke up this morning. Don’t you ever use the phone like normal people?”

“Not if I can avoid it, vampire,” said Jace. He was studying Simon thoughtfully, as if he were reading the pages of a book. Mingled in his expression were two conflicting emotions: a faint amazement and what looked to Simon like disappointment. “So it’s still true. You can walk in the sunlight. Even midday sun doesn’t burn you.”

“Yes,” Simon said. “But you knew that—you were there.” He didn’t have to elaborate on what “there” meant; he could see in the other boy’s face that he remembered the river, the back of the truck, the sun rising over the water, Clary crying out. He remembered it just as well as Simon did.

“I thought perhaps it might have worn off,” Jace said, but he didn’t sound as if he meant it.

“If I feel the urge to burst into flames, I’ll let you know.” Simon never had much patience with Jace. “Look, did you ask me to come all the way uptown just so you could stare at me like I was something in a petri dish? Next time I’ll send you a photo.”

“And I’ll frame it and put it on my nightstand,” said Jace, but he didn’t sound as if his heart were in the sarcasm. “Look, I asked you here for a reason. Much as I hate to admit it, vampire, we have something in common.”

“Totally awesome hair?” Simon suggested, but his heart wasn’t really in it either. Something about the look on Jace’s face was making him increasingly uneasy.

“Clary,” Jace said.

Simon was caught off guard. “Clary?”

“Clary,” Jace said again. “You know: short, redheaded, bad temper.”

“I don’t see how Clary is something we have in common,” Simon said, although he did. Nevertheless, this wasn’t a conversation he particularly wanted to have with Jace now, or, in fact, ever. Wasn’t there some sort of manly code that precluded discussions like this—discussions about *feelings*?

Apparently not. “We both care about her,” Jace stated, giving him a measured look. “She’s important to both of us. Right?”

“You’re asking me if I *care* about her?” “Caring” seemed like a pretty insufficient word for it. He wondered if Jace was making fun of him—which seemed unusually cruel, even for Jace. Had Jace brought him over here just to mock him because it hadn’t worked out romantically between Clary and himself? Though Simon still had hope, at least a little, that things might change, that Jace and Clary would start to feel about each other the way they were supposed to, the way siblings were *meant* to feel about each other—

He met Jace’s gaze and felt that little hope shrivel. The look on the other boy’s face wasn’t the look brothers got when they talked about their sisters. On the other hand, it was obvious Jace hadn’t brought him over here to mock him for his feelings; the misery Simon knew must be plainly written across his own features was mirrored in Jace’s eyes.

“Don’t think I like asking you these questions,” Jace snapped. “I need to know what you’d do for Clary. Would you lie for her?”

“Lie about what? What’s going on, anyway?” Simon realized what it was that had bothered him about the tableau of Shadowhunters in the garden. “Wait a second,” he said. “You’re leaving for Idris *right now*? Clary thinks you’re going tonight.”

“I know,” Jace said. “And I need you to tell the others that Clary sent you here to say she isn’t coming. Tell them she doesn’t want to go to Idris anymore.” There was an edge to his voice—something Simon barely recognized, or perhaps it was simply so strange coming from Jace that he couldn’t process it. Jace was *pleading* with him. “They’ll believe you. They know how . . . how close you two are.”

Simon shook his head. “I can’t believe you. You act like you want me to do something for Clary, but actually you just want me to do something for *you*.” He started to turn away. “No deal.”

Jace caught his arm, spinning him back around. “This *is* for Clary. I’m trying to protect her. I thought you’d be at least a little interested in helping me do that.”

Simon looked pointedly at Jace’s hand where it clamped his upper arm. “How can I protect her if you don’t tell me what I’m protecting her from?”

Jace didn’t let go. “Can’t you just trust me that this is important?”

“You don’t understand how badly she wants to go to Idris,” Simon said. “If I’m going to keep that from happening, there had better be a damn good reason.”

Jace exhaled slowly, reluctantly—and let go his grip on Simon’s arm. “What Clary did on Valentine’s ship,” he said, his voice low. “With the rune on the wall—the Rune of Opening—well, you saw what happened.”

“She destroyed the ship,” said Simon. “Saved all our lives.”

“Keep your voice down.” Jace glanced around anxiously.

“You’re not saying no one else knows about that, are you?” Simon demanded in disbelief.

“I know. You know. Luke knows and Magnus knows. No one else.”

“What do they all think happened? The ship just opportunistically came apart?”

“I told them Valentine’s Ritual of Conversion must have gone wrong.”

“You lied to the Clave?” Simon wasn’t sure whether to be impressed or dismayed.

“Yes, I lied to the Clave. Isabelle and Alec know Clary has some ability to create new runes, so I doubt I’ll be able to keep that from the Clave or the new Inquisitor. But if they knew she could do what she does—amplify ordinary runes so they have incredible destructive power—they’d want her as a fighter, a weapon. And she’s not equipped for that. She wasn’t brought up for it—” He broke off, as Simon shook his head. “What?”

“You’re Nephilim,” Simon said slowly. “Shouldn’t you want what’s best for the Clave? If that’s using Clary . . .”

“You want them to have her? To put her in the front lines, up against Valentine and whatever army he’s raising?”

“No,” said Simon. “I don’t want that. But I’m not one of you. I don’t have to ask myself who to put first, Clary or my family.”

Jace flushed a slow, dark red. “It’s not like that. If I thought it would help the Clave—but it won’t. She’ll just get hurt—”

“Even if you thought it would help the Clave,” Simon said, “you’d never let them have her.”

“What makes you say that, vampire?”

“Because no one can have her but you,” said Simon.

The color left Jace’s face. “So you won’t help me,” he said in disbelief. “You won’t help *her*?”

Simon hesitated—and before he could respond, a noise split

the silence between them. A high, shrieking cry, terrible in its desperation, and worse for the abruptness with which it was cut off. Jace whirled around. "What was that?"

The single shriek was joined by other cries, and a harsh clanging that scraped Simon's eardrums. "Something's happened—the others—"

But Jace was already gone, running along the path, dodging the undergrowth. After a moment's hesitation Simon followed. He had forgotten how fast he could run now—he was hard on Jace's heels as they rounded the corner of the church and burst out into the garden.

Before them was chaos. A white mist blanketed the garden, and there was a heavy smell in the air—the sharp tang of ozone and something else under it, sweet and unpleasant. Figures darted back and forth—Simon could see them only in fragments, as they appeared and disappeared through gaps in the fog. He glimpsed Isabelle, her hair snapping around her in black ropes as she swung her whip. It made a deadly fork of golden lightning through the shadows. She was fending off the advance of something lumbering and huge—a *demon*, Simon thought—but it was full daylight; that was impossible. As he stumbled forward, he saw that the creature was humanoid in shape, but humped and twisted, somehow *wrong*. It carried a thick wooden plank in one hand and was swinging at Isabelle almost blindly.

Only a short distance away, through a gap in the stone wall, Simon could see the traffic on York Avenue rumbling placidly by. The sky beyond the Institute was clear.

"Forsaken," Jace whispered. His face was blazing as he drew one of his seraph blades from his belt. "Dozens of them." He pushed Simon to the side, almost roughly. "Stay here, do you understand? Stay here."

Simon stood frozen for a moment as Jace plunged forward into the mist. The light of the blade in his hand lit the fog

around him to silver; dark figures dashed back and forth inside it, and Simon felt as if he were gazing through a pane of frosted glass, desperately trying to make out what was happening on the other side. Isabelle had vanished; he saw Alec, his arm bleeding, as he sliced through the chest of a Forsaken warrior and watched it crumple to the ground. Another reared up behind him, but Jace was there, now with a blade in each hand; he leaped into the air and brought them up and then down with a vicious scissoring movement—and the Forsaken’s head tumbled free of its neck, black blood spurting. Simon’s stomach wrenched—the blood smelled bitter, poisonous.

He could hear the Shadowhunters calling to one another out of the mist, though the Forsaken were utterly silent. Suddenly the mist cleared, and Simon saw Magnus, standing wild-eyed by the wall of the Institute. His hands were raised, blue lightning sparking between them, and against the wall where he stood, a square black hole seemed to be opening in the stone. It wasn’t empty, or dark precisely, but shone like a mirror with whirling fire trapped within its glass. “The Portal!” he was shouting. “Go through the Portal!”

Several things happened at once. Maryse Lightwood appeared out of the mist, carrying the boy, Max, in her arms. She paused to call something over her shoulder and then plunged toward the Portal and *through* it, vanishing into the wall. Alec followed, dragging Isabelle after him, her blood-spattered whip trailing on the ground. As he pulled her toward the Portal, something surged up out of the mist behind them—a Forsaken warrior, swinging a double-bladed knife.

Simon unfroze. Darting forward, he called out Isabelle’s name—then stumbled and pitched forward, hitting the ground hard enough to knock the breath out of him, if he’d *had* any breath. He scrambled into a sitting position, turning to see what he’d tripped over.

It was a body. The body of a woman, her throat slit, her

eyes wide and blue in death. Blood stained her pale hair. Madeleine.

“Simon, *move!*” It was Jace, shouting; Simon looked and saw the other boy running toward him out of the fog, bloody seraph blades in his hands. Then he looked up. The Forsaken warrior he’d seen chasing Isabelle loomed over him, its scarred face twisted into a rictus grin. Simon twisted away as the double-bladed knife swung down toward him, but even with his improved reflexes, he wasn’t fast enough. A searing pain shot through him as everything went black.