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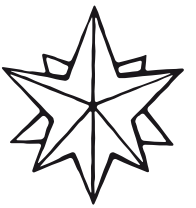

City of Ashes

CASSANDRA
CLARE

WALKER
BOOKS

For my father,
who is not evil.
Well, maybe a little bit

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I know your streets, sweet city,
I know the demons and angels that flock
and roost in your boughs like birds.
I know you, river, as if you flowed through my heart.
I am your warrior daughter.
There are letters made of your body
as a fountain is made of water.
There are languages
of which you are the blueprint
and as we speak them
the city rises...
—Elka Cloke, "This Bitter Language"

PROLOGUE: SMOKE AND DIAMONDS

THE FORMIDABLE GLASS-AND-STEEL STRUCTURE ROSE FROM its position on Front Street like a glittering needle threading the sky. There were fifty-seven floors to the Metropole, Manhattan's most expensive new downtown condominium tower. The topmost floor, the fifty-seventh, contained the most luxurious apartment of all: the Metropole penthouse, a masterpiece of sleek black-and-white design. Too new to have gathered dust yet, its bare marble floors reflected back the stars visible through the enormous floor-to-ceiling windows. The window glass was perfectly translucent, providing such a complete illusion that there was nothing between the viewer and the view that it had been known to induce vertigo even in those unafraid of heights.

Far below ran the silver ribbon of the East River, braceleted by shining bridges, flecked by boats as small as flyspecks, splitting the shining banks of light that were Manhattan and Brooklyn on either side. On a clear night the illuminated Statue of Liberty was just visible to the south—but there was fog tonight, and Liberty Island was hidden behind a white bank of mist.

However spectacular the view, the man standing in front of the window didn't look particularly impressed by it. There was a frown on his narrow, ascetic face as he turned away from the glass and strode across the floor, the heels of his boots echoing against the marble. "Aren't you ready *yet*?" he demanded, raking a hand through his salt-white hair. "We've been here nearly an hour."

The boy kneeling on the floor looked up at him, nervous and petulant. "It's the marble. It's more solid than I thought. It's making it hard to draw the pentagram."

"So skip the pentagram." Up close it was easier to see that despite his white hair, the man wasn't old. His hard face was severe but unlined, his eyes clear and steady.

The boy swallowed hard and the membranous black wings protruding from his narrow shoulder blades (he had cut slits in the back of his denim jacket to accommodate them) flapped nervously. "The pentagram is a necessary part of any demon-raising ritual. You know that, sir. Without it…"

"We're not protected. I know that, young Elias. But get on with it. I've known warlocks who could raise a demon, chat him up, and dispatch him back to hell in the time it's taken you to draw half a five-pointed star."

The boy said nothing, only attacked the marble again, this time with renewed urgency. Sweat dripped from his forehead and he pushed his hair back with a hand whose fingers were connected with delicate weblike membranes. "Done," he said at last, sitting back on his heels with a gasp. "It's done."

"Good." The man sounded pleased. "Let's get started."

"My money—"

"I told you. You'll get your money *after* I talk to Agramon, not before."

Elias got to his feet and shrugged his jacket off. Despite the holes he'd cut in it, it still compressed his wings uncomfortably; freed, they stretched and expanded themselves, wafting

a breeze through the unventilated room. His wings were the color of an oil slick: black threaded with a rainbow of dizzying colors. The man looked away from him, as if the wings displeased him, but Elias didn't seem to notice. He began circling the pentagram he'd drawn, circling it counterclockwise and chanting in a demon language that sounded like the crackle of flames.

With a sound like air being sucked from a tire, the outline of the pentagram suddenly burst into flames. The dozen huge windows cast back a dozen burning reflected five-pointed stars.

Something was moving inside the pentagram, something formless and black. Elias was chanting more quickly now, raising his webbed hands, tracing delicate outlines on the air with his fingers. Where they passed, blue fire crackled. The man couldn't speak Chthonian, the warlock language, with any fluency, but he recognized enough of the words to understand Elias's repeated chant: *Agramon, I summon thee. Out of the spaces between the worlds, I summon thee.*

The man slid a hand into his pocket. Something hard and cold and metallic met the touch of his fingers. He smiled.

Elias had stopped walking. He was standing in front of the pentagram now, his voice rising and falling in a steady chant, blue fire crackling around him like lightning. Suddenly a plume of black smoke rose inside the pentagram; it spiraled upward, spreading and solidifying. Two eyes hung in the shadow like jewels caught in a spider's web.

"Who has called me here across the worlds?" Agramon demanded in a voice like shattering glass. *"Who summons me?"*

Elias had stopped chanting. He was standing still in front of the pentagram—still except for his wings, which beat the air slowly. The air stank of corrosion and burning.

"Agramon," the warlock said. "I am the warlock Elias. I am the one who has summoned you."

For a moment there was silence. Then the demon laughed, if smoke can be said to laugh. The laugh itself was caustic as acid. *"Foolish warlock,"* Agramon wheezed. *"Foolish boy."*

"You are the foolish one, if you think you can threaten me," Elias said, but his voice trembled like his wings. "You will be a prisoner of that pentagram, Agramon, until I release you."

"Will I?" The smoke surged forward, forming and re-forming itself. A tendril took the shape of a human hand and stroked the edge of the burning pentagram that contained it. Then, with a surge, the smoke seethed past the edge of the star, poured over the border like a wave breaching a levee. The flames guttered and died as Elias, screaming, stumbled backward. He was chanting now, in rapid Chthonian, spells of containment and banishment. Nothing happened; the black smoke-mass came on inexorably, and now it was starting to have something of a shape—a malformed, enormous, hideous shape, its glowing eyes altering, rounding to the size of saucers, spilling a dreadful light.

The man watched with impassive interest as Elias screamed again and turned to run. He never reached the door. Agramon surged forward, his dark mass crashing down over the warlock like a surge of boiling black tar. Elias struggled feebly for a moment under the onslaught—and then was still.

The black shape withdrew, leaving the warlock lying contorted on the marble floor.

"I do hope," said the man, who had taken the cold metal object out of his pocket and was toying with it idly, "that you haven't done anything to him that will render him useless to me. I need his blood, you see."

Agramon turned, a black pillar with deadly diamond eyes. They took in the man in the expensive suit, his narrow, unconcerned face, the black Marks covering his skin, and the glowing object in his hand. *"You paid the warlock child to summon me? And you did not tell him what I could do?"*

"You guess correctly," said the man.

Agramon spoke with grudging admiration. *"That was clever."*

The man took a step toward the demon. "I *am* very clever. And I'm also your master now. I hold the Mortal Cup. You must obey me, or face the consequences."

The demon was silent a moment. Then it slid to the ground in a mockery of obeisance—the closest a creature with no real body could come to kneeling. *"I am at your service, my Lord…?"*

The sentence ended politely, on a question.

The man smiled. "You may call me Valentine."

I

A SEASON IN HELL

I believe I am in Hell, therefore I am.

—Arthur Rimbaud

1

VALENTINE'S ARROW

"ARE YOU STILL MAD?"

Alec, leaning against the wall of the elevator, glared across the small space at Jace. "I'm not mad."

"Oh, yes you are." Jace gestured accusingly at his stepbrother, then yelped as pain shot up his arm. Every part of him hurt from the thumping he'd taken that afternoon when he'd dropped three floors through rotted wood onto a pile of scrap metal. Even his fingers were bruised. Alec, who'd only recently put away the crutches he'd had to use after his fight with Abbadon, didn't look much better than Jace felt. His clothes were covered in mud and his hair hung down in lank, sweaty strips. There was a long cut down the side of his cheek.

"I am not," Alec said, through his teeth. "Just because you said dragon demons were extinct—"

"I said mostly extinct."

Alec jabbed a finger toward him. "Mostly extinct," he said, his voice trembling with rage, "is NOT EXTINCT ENOUGH."

"I see," said Jace. "I'll just have them change the entry in

the demonology textbook from 'almost extinct' to 'not extinct enough for Alec. He prefers his monsters really, really extinct.' Will *that* make you happy?"

"Boys, boys," said Isabelle, who'd been examining her face in the elevator's mirrored wall. "Don't fight." She turned away from the glass with a sunny smile. "All right, so it was a little more action than we were expecting, but I thought it was fun."

Alec looked at her and shook his head. "How do you manage *never* to get mud on you?"

Isabelle shrugged philosophically. "I'm pure at heart. It repels the dirt."

Jace snorted so loudly that she turned on him with a frown. He wiggled his mud-caked fingers at her. His nails were black crescents. "Filthy inside and out."

Isabelle was about to reply when the elevator ground to a halt with the sound of screeching brakes. "Time to get this thing fixed," she said, yanking the door open. Jace followed her out into the entryway, already looking forward to shucking his armor and weapons and stepping into a hot shower. He'd convinced his stepsiblings to come hunting with him despite the fact that neither of them was entirely comfortable going out on their own now that Hodge wasn't there to give them instructions. But Jace had wanted the oblivion of fighting, the harsh diversion of killing, and the distraction of injuries. And knowing he wanted it, they'd gone along with it, crawling through filthy deserted subway tunnels until they'd found the Dragonidae demon and killed it. The three of them working together in perfect unison, the way they always had. Like family.

He unzipped his jacket and slung it over one of the pegs hanging on the wall. Alec was sitting on the low wooden bench next to him, kicking off his muck-covered boots. He was humming tunelessly under his breath, letting Jace know

he wasn't *that* annoyed. Isabelle was pulling the pins out of her long dark hair, allowing it to shower down around her. "Now I'm hungry," she said. "I wish Mom were here to cook us something."

"Better that she isn't," said Jace, unbuckling his weapons belt. "She'd already be shrieking about the rugs."

"You're right about that," said a cool voice, and Jace swung around, his hands still at his belt, and saw Maryse Lightwood, her arms folded, standing in the doorway. She wore a stiff black traveling suit and her hair, black as Isabelle's, was drawn back into a thick rope that hung halfway down her back. Her eyes, a glacial blue, swept over the three of them like a tracking searchlight.

"Mom!" Isabelle, recovering her composure, ran to her mother for a hug. Alec got to his feet and joined them, trying to hide the fact that he was still limping.

Jace stood where he was. There had been something in Maryse's eyes as her gaze had passed over him that froze him in place. Surely what he had said wasn't *that* bad. They joked about her obsession with the antique rugs all the time—

"Where's Dad?" Isabelle asked, stepping back from her mother. "And Max?"

There was an almost imperceptible pause. Then Maryse said, "Max is in his room. And your father, unfortunately, is still in Alicante. There was some business there that required his attention."

Alec, generally more sensitive to moods than his sister, seemed to hesitate. "Is something wrong?"

"I could ask *you* that." His mother's tone was dry. "Are you limping?"

"I…"

Alec was a terrible liar. Isabelle picked up for him, smoothly: "We had a run-in with a Dragonidae demon in the subway tunnels. But it was nothing."

"And I suppose that Greater Demon you fought last week, that was nothing too?"

Even Isabelle was silenced by that. She looked to Jace, who wished she hadn't.

"That wasn't planned for." Jace was having a hard time concentrating. Maryse hadn't greeted him yet, hadn't said so much as hello, and she was still looking at him with eyes like blue daggers. There was a hollow feeling in the pit of his stomach that was beginning to spread. She'd never looked at him like this before, no matter what he'd done. "It was a mistake—"

"Jace!" Max, the youngest Lightwood, squeezed his way around Maryse and darted into the room, evading his mother's reaching hand. "You're back! You're all back." He turned in a circle, grinning at Alec and Isabelle in triumph. "I *thought* I heard the elevator."

"And I thought I told you to stay in your room," said Maryse.

"I don't remember that," said Max, with a seriousness that made even Alec smile. Max was small for his age—he looked about seven—but he had a self-contained gravity that, combined with his oversize glasses, gave him the air of someone older. Alec reached over and ruffled his brother's hair, but Max was still looking at Jace, his eyes shining. Jace felt the cold fist clenched in his stomach relax ever so slightly. Max had always hero-worshiped him in a way that he didn't worship his own older brother, probably because Jace was far more tolerant of Max's presence. "I heard you fought a Greater Demon," he said. "Was it awesome?"

"It was … different," Jace hedged. "How was Alicante?"

"It was *awesome*. We saw the coolest stuff. There's this huge armory in Alicante and they took me to some of the places where they make the weapons. They showed me a new way to make seraph blades too, so they last longer, and I'm going to try to get Hodge to show me—"

Jace couldn't help it; his eyes flicked instantly to Maryse, his expression incredulous. So Max didn't know about Hodge? Hadn't she *told* him?

Maryse saw his look and her lips thinned into a knifelike line. "That's enough, Max." She took her youngest son by the arm.

He craned his head to look up at her in surprise. "But I'm talking to Jace—"

"I can see that." She pushed him gently toward Isabelle. "Isabelle, Alec, take your brother to his room. Jace,"—there was a tightness in her voice when she spoke his name, as if invisible acid were drying up the syllables in her mouth—"get yourself cleaned up and meet me in the library as soon as you can."

"I don't get it," said Alec, looking from his mother to Jace, and back again. "What's going on?"

Jace could feel cold sweat start up along his spine. "Is this about my father?"

Maryse jerked twice, as if the words "my father" had been two separate slaps. "The *library*," she said, through clenched teeth. "We'll discuss the matter there."

Alec said, "What happened while you were gone wasn't Jace's fault. We were all in on it. And Hodge said—"

"We'll discuss Hodge later as well." Maryse's eyes were on Max, her tone warning.

"But, Mother," Isabelle protested. "If you're going to punish Jace, you should punish us as well. It would only be fair. We all did exactly the same things."

"No," said Maryse, after a pause so long that Jace thought perhaps she wasn't going to say anything at all. "You didn't."

"Rule number one of anime," Simon said. He sat propped up against a pile of pillows at the foot of his bed, a bag of potato chips in one hand and the TV remote in the other. He was

wearing a black T-shirt that said I BLOGGED YOUR MOM and a pair of jeans with a hole ripped in one knee. "Never screw with a blind monk."

"I know," Clary said, taking a potato chip and dunking it into the can of dip balanced on the TV tray between them. "For some reason they're always way better fighters than monks who can see." She peered at the screen. "Are those guys dancing?"

"That's not dancing. They're trying to kill each other. This is the guy who's the mortal enemy of the other guy, remember? He killed his dad. Why would they be dancing?"

Clary crunched at her chip and stared meditatively at the screen, where animated swirls of pink-and-yellow clouds rippled between the figures of two winged men, who floated around each other, each clutching a glowing spear. Every once in a while one of them would speak, but since it was all in Japanese with Chinese subtitles, it didn't clarify much. "The guy with the hat," she said. "He was the evil guy?"

"No, the hat guy was the dad. He was the magical emperor, and that was his hat of power. The evil guy was the one with the mechanical hand that talks."

The telephone rang. Simon set the bag of chips down and made as if to get up and answer it. Clary put her hand on his wrist. "Don't. Just leave it."

"But it might be Luke. He could be calling from the hospital."

"It's not Luke," Clary said, sounding more sure than she felt. "He'd call my cell, not your house."

Simon looked at her a long moment before sinking back down on the rug beside her. "If you say so." She could hear the doubt in his voice, but also the unspoken assurance, *I just want you to be happy*. She wasn't sure "happy" was anything she was likely to be right now, not with her mother in the hospital hooked up to tubes and bleeping machines, and Luke like a zombie, slumped in the hard plastic chair next to her bed. Not with worrying about Jace all the time and picking up the phone a dozen times

to call the Institute before setting it back down, the number still undialed. If Jace wanted to talk to her, *he* could call.

Maybe it had been a mistake to take him to see Jocelyn. She'd been so sure that if her mother could just hear the voice of her son, her firstborn, she'd wake up. But she hadn't. Jace had stood stiff and awkward by the bed, his face like a painted angel's, with blank indifferent eyes. Clary had finally lost her patience and shouted at him, and he'd shouted back before storming off. Luke had watched him go with a clinical sort of interest on his exhausted face. "That's the first time I've seen you act like sister and brother," he'd remarked.

Clary had said nothing in response. There was no point telling him how badly she wanted Jace *not* to be her brother. You couldn't rip out your own DNA, no matter how much you wished you could. No matter how much it would make you *happy*.

But even if she couldn't quite manage happy, she thought, at least here in Simon's house, in his bedroom, she felt comfortable and at home. She'd known him long enough to remember when he had a bed shaped like a fire truck and LEGOs piled in a corner of the room. Now the bed was a futon with a brightly striped quilt that had been a present from his sister, and the walls were plastered with posters of bands like Rock Solid Panda and Stepping Razor. There was a drum set wedged into the corner of the room where the LEGOs had been, and a computer in the other corner, the screen still frozen on an image from World of Warcraft. It was almost as familiar as being in her own bedroom at home—which no longer existed, so at least this was the next best thing.

"More chibis," said Simon gloomily. All the characters on-screen had turned into inch-high baby versions of themselves and were chasing each other around waving pots and pans. "I'm changing the channel," Simon announced, seizing the remote. "I'm tired of this anime. I can't tell what the plot

is and no one ever has sex."

"Of course they don't," Clary said, taking another chip. "Anime is wholesome family entertainment."

"If you're in the mood for less wholesome entertainment, we could try the porn channels," Simon observed. "Would you rather watch *The Witches of Breastwick* or *As I Lay Dianne*?"

"Give me that!" Clary grabbed for the remote, but Simon, chortling, had already switched the TV to another channel.

His laughter broke off abruptly. Clary looked up in surprise and saw him staring blankly at the TV. An old black-and-white movie was playing—*Dracula*. She'd seen it before, with her mother. Bela Lugosi, thin and white-faced, was on-screen, wrapped in the familiar high-collared cloak, his lips curled back from his pointed teeth. "I never drink … wine," he intoned in his thick Hungarian accent.

"I love how the spiderwebs are made out of rubber," Clary said, trying to sound light. "You can totally tell."

But Simon was already on his feet, dropping the remote onto the bed. "I'll be right back," he muttered. His face was the color of winter sky just before it rained. Clary watched him go, biting her lip hard—it was the first time since her mother had gone to the hospital that she'd realized maybe Simon wasn't too *happy* either.

Toweling off his hair, Jace regarded his reflection in the mirror with a quizzical scowl. A healing rune had taken care of the worst of his bruises, but it hadn't helped the shadows under his eyes or the tight lines at the corners of his mouth. His head ached and he felt slightly dizzy. He knew he should have eaten something that morning, but he'd woken up nauseated and panting from nightmares, not wanting to pause to eat, just wanting the release of physical activity, to burn out his dreams in bruises and sweat.

Tossing the towel aside, he thought longingly of the sweet

black tea Hodge used to brew from the night-blooming flowers in the greenhouse. The tea had taken away hunger pangs and brought a swift surge of energy. Since Hodge's disappearance, Jace had tried boiling the plants' leaves in water to see if he could produce the same effect, but the only result was a bitter, ashy-tasting liquid that made him gag and spit.

Barefoot, he padded into the bedroom and threw on jeans and a clean shirt. He pushed back his wet blond hair, frowning. It was too long at the moment, falling into his eyes—something Maryse would be sure to chide him about. She always did. He might not be the Lightwoods' biological son, but they'd treated him like it since they'd adopted him at age ten, after the death of his own father. The *supposed* death, Jace reminded himself, that hollow feeling in his guts resurfacing again. He'd felt like a jack-o'-lantern for the past few days, as if his guts had been yanked out with a fork and dumped in a heap while a grinning smile stayed plastered on his face. He often wondered if anything he'd believed about his life, or himself, had ever been true. He'd thought he was an orphan—he wasn't. He'd thought he was an only child—he had a sister.

Clary. The pain came again, stronger. He pushed it down. His eyes fell on the bit of broken mirror that lay atop his dresser, still reflecting green boughs and a diamond of blue sky. It was nearly twilight now in Idris: The sky was dark as cobalt. Choking on hollowness, Jace yanked his boots on and headed downstairs to the library.

He wondered as he clattered down the stone steps just what it was that Maryse wanted to say to him alone. She'd looked like she'd wanted to haul off and smack him. He couldn't remember the last time she'd laid a hand on him. The Lightwoods weren't given to corporal punishment—quite a change from being brought up by Valentine, who'd concocted all sorts of painful castigations to encourage obedience. Jace's Shadowhunter skin always healed, covering all but the worst of

the evidence. In the days and weeks after his father died Jace could remember searching his body for scars, for some mark that would be a token, a remembrance to tie him physically to his father's memory.

He reached the library and knocked once before pushing the door open. Maryse was there, sitting in Hodge's old chair by the fire. Light streamed down through the high windows and Jace could see the touches of gray in her hair. She was holding a glass of red wine; there was a cut-glass decanter on the table beside her.

"Maryse," he said.

She jumped a little, spilling some of the wine. "Jace. I didn't hear you come in."

He didn't move. "Do you remember that song you used to sing to Isabelle and Alec—when they were little and afraid of the dark—to get them to fall asleep?"

Maryse appeared taken aback. "What are you talking about?"

"I used to hear you through the walls," he said. "Alec's bedroom was next to mine then."

She said nothing.

"It was in French," Jace said. "The song."

"I don't know why you'd remember something like that." She looked at him as if he'd accused her of something.

"You never sang to me."

There was a barely perceptible pause. Then, "Oh, you," she said. "You were never afraid of the dark."

"What kind of ten-year-old is never afraid of the dark?"

Her eyebrows went up. "Sit down, Jonathan," she said. "Now."

He went, just slowly enough to annoy her, across the room, and threw himself into one of the wing-back chairs beside the desk. "I'd rather you didn't call me Jonathan."

"Why not? It's your name." She looked at him consideringly. "How long have you known?"

"Known what?"

"Don't be stupid. You know exactly what I'm asking you." She turned her glass in her fingers. "How long have you known that Valentine is your father?"

Jace considered and discarded several responses. Usually he could get his way with Maryse by making her laugh. He was one of the only people in the world who *could* make her laugh. "About as long as you have."

Maryse shook her head slowly. "I don't believe that."

Jace sat up straight. His hands were in fists where they rested on the chair arms. He could see a slight tremor in his fingers, wondered if he'd ever had it before. He didn't think so. His hands had always been as steady as his heartbeat. "You don't *believe* me?"

He heard the incredulity in his own voice and winced inwardly. Of course she didn't believe him. That had been obvious from the moment she had arrived home.

"It doesn't make sense, Jace. How could you not know who your own father is?"

"He told me he was Michael Wayland. We lived in the Wayland country house—"

"A nice touch," said Maryse, "that. And your name? What's your real name?"

"You know my real name."

"Jonathan. I knew that was Valentine's son's name. I knew Michael had a son named Jonathan too. It's a common enough Shadowhunter name—I never thought it was strange they shared it, and as for Michael's boy's middle name, I never inquired. But now I can't help wondering. What was Michael Wayland's son's real middle name? How long had Valentine been planning what he was going to do? How long did he know he was going to murder Jonathan Wayland—?" She broke off, her eyes fixed on Jace. "You never looked like Michael, you know," she said. "But sometimes children don't

look like their parents. I didn't think about it before. But now I can see Valentine in you. The way you're looking at me. That defiance. You don't care what I say, do you?"

But he did care. All he was good at was making sure she couldn't see it. "Would it make a difference if I did?"

She set the glass down on the table beside her. It was empty. "And you answer questions with questions to throw me off, just like Valentine always did. Maybe I should have known."

"Maybe nothing. I'm still exactly the same person I've been for the past seven years. Nothing's changed about me. If I didn't remind you of Valentine before, I don't see why I would now."

Her glance moved over him and away as if she couldn't bear to look directly at him. "Surely when we talked about Michael, you must have known we couldn't possibly have meant your father. The things we said about him could never have applied to Valentine."

"You said he was a good man." Anger twisted inside him. "A brave Shadowhunter. A loving father. I thought that seemed accurate enough."

"What about photographs? You must have seen photographs of Michael Wayland and realized he wasn't the man you called your father." She bit her lip. "Help me out here, Jace."

"All the photographs were destroyed in the Uprising. That's what *you* told me. Now I wonder if it wasn't because Valentine had them all burned so nobody would know who was in the Circle. I never had a photograph of my father," Jace said, and wondered if he sounded as bitter as he felt.

Maryse put a hand to her temple and massaged it as if her head were aching. "I can't believe this," she said, as if to herself. "It's insane."

"So don't believe it. Believe *me*," Jace said, and felt the tremor in his hands increase.

She dropped her hand. "Don't you think I *want* to?" she

demanded, and for a moment he heard the echo in her voice of the Maryse who'd come into his bedroom at night when he was ten years old and staring dry-eyed at the ceiling, thinking of his father—and she'd sat by the bed with him until he'd fallen asleep just before dawn.

"I didn't know," Jace said again. "And when he asked me to come with him back to Idris, I said no. I'm still here. Doesn't that count for anything?"

She turned to look back at the decanter, as if considering another drink, then seemed to discard the idea. "I wish it did," she said. "But there are so many reasons your father might want you to remain at the Institute. Where Valentine is concerned, I can't afford to trust anyone his influence has touched."

"His influence touched you," Jace said, and instantly regretted it at the look that flashed across her face.

"And *I* repudiated him," said Maryse. "Have you? *Could* you?" Her blue eyes were the same color as Alec's, but Alec had never looked at him like this. "Tell me you hate him, Jace. Tell me you hate that man and everything he stands for."

A moment passed, and another, and Jace, looking down, saw that his hands were so tightly fisted that the knuckles stood out white and hard like the bones in a fish's spine. "I can't say that."

Maryse sucked in her breath. *"Why not?"*

"Why can't you say that you trust me? I've lived with you almost half my life. Surely you must know me better than that?"

"You sound so honest, Jonathan. You always have, even when you were a little boy trying to pin the blame for something you'd done wrong on Isabelle or Alec. I've only ever met one person who could sound as persuasive as you."

Jace tasted copper in his mouth. "You mean my father."

"There were only ever two kinds of people in the world for Valentine," she said. "Those who were for the Circle and those

who were against it. The latter were enemies, and the former were weapons in his arsenal. I saw him try to turn each of his friends, even his own wife, into a weapon for the Cause—and you want me to believe he wouldn't have done the same with his own son?" She shook her head. "I knew him better than that." For the first time, Maryse looked at him with more sadness than anger. "You are an arrow shot directly into the heart of the Clave, Jace. You are Valentine's arrow. Whether you know it or not."

Clary shut the bedroom door on the blaring TV and went to look for Simon. She found him in the kitchen, bent over the sink with the water running. His hands were braced on the draining board.

"Simon?" The kitchen was a bright, cheerful yellow, the walls decorated with framed chalk and pencil sketches Simon and Rebecca had done in grade school. Rebecca had some drawing talent, you could tell, but Simon's sketches of people all looked like parking meters with tufts of hair.

He didn't look up now, though she could tell by the tightening of his shoulder muscles that he'd heard her. She went over to the sink, laying a hand lightly on his back. She felt the sharp nubs of his spine through the thin cotton T-shirt and wondered if he'd lost weight. She couldn't tell by looking at him, but looking at Simon was like looking in a mirror—when you saw someone every day, you didn't always notice small changes in their outward appearance. "Are you okay?"

He turned the water off with a hard jerk of his wrist. "Sure. I'm fine."

She laid a finger against the side of his chin and turned his face toward her. He was sweating, the dark hair that lay across his forehead stuck to his skin, though the air coming through the half-open kitchen window was cool. "You don't look fine. Was it the movie?"

He didn't answer.

"I'm sorry. I shouldn't have laughed, it's just—"

"You don't remember?" His voice sounded hoarse.

"I…" Clary trailed off. That night, looking back, seemed a long haze of running, of blood and sweat, of shadows glimpsed in doorways, of falling through space. She remembered the white faces of the vampires, like paper cutouts against the darkness, and remembered Jace holding her, shouting hoarsely into her ear. "Not really. It's a blur."

His gaze flicked past her and then back. "Do I seem different to you?" he asked.

She raised her eyes to his. His were the color of black coffee—not really black, but a rich brown without a touch of gray or hazel. Did he seem different? There might have been an extra touch of confidence in the way he held himself since the day he'd killed Abbadon, the Greater Demon; but there was also a wariness about him, as if he were waiting or watching for something. It was something she had noticed about Jace as well. Perhaps it was only the awareness of mortality. "You're still Simon."

He half-closed his eyes as if in relief, and as his eyelashes lowered, she saw how angular his cheekbones looked. He *had* lost weight, she thought, and was about to say so when he leaned down and kissed her.

She was so surprised at the feel of his mouth on hers that she went rigid all over, grabbing for the edge of the draining board to support herself. She did not, however, push him away, and clearly taking this as a sign of encouragement, Simon slid his hand behind her head and deepened the kiss, parting her lips with his. His mouth was soft, softer than Jace's had been, and the hand that cupped her neck was warm and gentle. He tasted like salt.

She let her eyes fall shut and for a moment floated dizzily in the darkness and the heat, the feel of his fingers moving

through her hair. When the harsh ring of the telephone cut through her daze, she jumped back as if he'd pushed her away, though he hadn't moved. They stared at each other for a moment, in wild confusion, like two people finding themselves suddenly transported to a strange landscape where nothing was familiar.

Simon turned away first, reaching for the phone that hung on the wall beside the spice rack. "Hello?" He sounded normal, but his chest was rising and falling fast. He held the receiver out to Clary. "It's for you."

Clary took the phone. She could still feel the pounding of her heart in her throat, like the fluttering wings of an insect trapped under her skin. *It's Luke, calling from the hospital. Something's happened to my mother.*

She swallowed. "Luke? Is it you?"

"No. It's Isabelle."

"Isabelle?" Clary looked up and saw Simon watching her, leaning against the sink. The flush on his cheeks had faded. "Why are you—I mean, what's up?"

There was a hitch in the other girl's voice, as if she'd been crying. "Is Jace there?"

Clary actually held out the phone so she could stare at it before bringing the receiver back to her ear. "Jace? No. Why would he be here?"

Isabelle's answering breath echoed down the phone line like a gasp. "The thing is … he's *gone*."