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For Josh

Sommes-nous les deux livres
d'un même ouvrage?



Part One
Exterminating Angels



There are sicknesses that walk in darkness;
and there are exterminating angels, that fly wrapt up in the
curtains of immateriality and an uncommunicating nature;
whom we cannot see, but we feel their force,
and sink under their sword.
—Jeremy Taylor, "A Funeral Sermon"

1

The Master

"Just coffee, please."

The waitress raised her penciled eyebrows. "You don't want anything to eat?" she asked. Her accent was thick, her attitude disappointed.

Simon Lewis couldn't blame her; she'd probably been hoping for a better tip than the one she was going to get on a single cup of coffee. But it wasn't his fault vampires didn't eat. Sometimes, in restaurants, he ordered food anyway, just to preserve the appearance of normalcy, but late Tuesday night, when Veselka was almost empty of other customers, it didn't seem worth the bother. "Just the coffee."

With a shrug the waitress took his laminated menu and went to put his order in. Simon sat back against the hard plastic diner chair and looked around. Veselka, a diner on the corner of Ninth Street and Second Avenue, was one of his favorite places on the Lower East Side—an old neighborhood eatery papered with black-and-white murals, where they let you sit all day as long as

you ordered coffee at half-hour intervals. They also served what had once been his favorite vegetarian pierogi and borscht, but those days were behind him now.

It was mid-October, and they'd just put their Halloween decorations up—a wobbly sign that said TRICK-OR-BORSCHT! and a fake cardboard cutout vampire nicknamed Count Blintzula. Once upon a time Simon and Clary had found the cheesy holiday decorations hilarious, but the Count, with his fake fangs and black cape, didn't strike Simon as quite so funny anymore.

Simon glanced toward the window. It was a brisk night, and the wind was blowing leaves across Second Avenue like handfuls of thrown confetti. There was a girl walking down the street, a girl in a tight belted trench coat, with long black hair that flew in the wind. People turned to watch her as she walked past. Simon had looked at girls like that before in the past, idly wondering where they were going, who they were meeting. Not guys like him, he knew that much.

Except this one was. The bell on the diner's front door rang as the door opened, and Isabelle Lightwood came in. She smiled when she saw Simon, and came toward him, shrugging off her coat and draping it over the back of the chair before she sat down. Under the coat she was wearing one of what Clary called her "typical Isabelle outfits": a tight short velvet dress, fishnet stockings, and boots. There was a knife stuck into the top of her left boot that Simon knew only he could see; still, everyone in the diner was watching as she sat down, flinging her hair back. Whatever she was wearing, Isabelle drew attention like a fireworks display.

Beautiful Isabelle Lightwood. When Simon had met her, he'd assumed she'd have no time for a guy like him. He'd turned out

to be mostly right. Isabelle liked boys her parents disapproved of, and in her universe that meant Downworlders—faeries, werewolves, and vamps. That they'd been dating regularly for the past month or two amazed him, even if their relationship was limited mostly to infrequent meetings like this one. And even if he couldn't help but wonder if he'd never been changed into a vampire, if his whole life hadn't been altered in that moment, would they be dating at all?

She tucked a lock of hair behind her ear, her smile brilliant. "You look nice."

Simon cast a glance at himself in the reflective surface of the diner window. Isabelle's influence was clear in the changes in his appearance since they'd been dating. She'd forced him to ditch his hoodies in favor of leather jackets, and his sneakers in favor of designer boots. Which, incidentally, cost three hundred dollars a pair. He was still wearing his characteristic word shirts—this one said EXISTENTIALISTS DO IT POINTLESSLY—but his jeans no longer had holes in the knees and torn pockets. He'd also grown his hair long so that it fell in his eyes now, covering his forehead, but that was more necessity than Isabelle.

Clary made fun of him about his new look; but, then, Clary found everything about Simon's love life borderline hilarious. She couldn't believe he was dating Isabelle in any serious way. Of course, she also couldn't believe he was also dating Maia Roberts, a friend of theirs who happened to be a werewolf, in an equally serious way. And she really couldn't believe that Simon hadn't yet told either of them about the other.

Simon wasn't really sure how it had happened. Maia liked to come to his house and use his Xbox—they didn't have one at the

abandoned police station where the werewolf pack lived—and it wasn't until the third or fourth time she'd come over that she'd leaned over and kissed him good-bye before she'd left. He'd been pleased, and then had called up Clary to ask her if he needed to tell Isabelle. "Figure out what's going on with you and Isabelle," she said. "Then tell her."

This had turned out to be bad advice. It had been a month, and he still wasn't sure what was going on with him and Isabelle, so he hadn't said anything. And the more time that passed, the more awkward the idea of saying something grew. So far he'd made it work. Isabelle and Maia weren't really friends, and rarely saw each other. Unfortunately for him, that was about to change. Clary's mother and her longtime friend, Luke, were getting married in a few weeks, and both Isabelle and Maia were invited to the wedding, a prospect Simon found more terrifying than the idea of being chased through the streets of New York by an angry mob of vampire hunters.

"So," Isabelle said, snapping him out of his reverie. "Why here and not Taki's? They'd serve you blood there."

Simon winced at her volume. Isabelle was nothing if not unsubtle. Fortunately, no one seemed to be listening in, not even the waitress who returned, banged down a cup of coffee in front of Simon, eyed Izzy, and left without taking her order.

"I like it here," he said. "Clary and I used to come here back when she was taking classes at Tisch. They have great borscht and blintzes—they're like sweet cheese dumplings—plus it's open all night."

Isabelle, however, was ignoring him. She was staring past his shoulder. "What is *that*?"

Simon followed her glance. "That's Count Blintzula."

"Count *Blintzula?*"

Simon shrugged. "It's a Halloween decoration. Count Blintzula is for kids. It's like Count Chocula, or the Count on *Sesame Street*." He grinned at her blank look. "You know. He teaches kids how to count."

Isabelle was shaking her head. "There's a TV show where children are taught how to count by a *vampire?*"

"It would make sense if you'd seen it," Simon muttered.

"There is some mythological basis for such a construction," Isabelle said, lapsing into lecturey Shadowhunter mode. "Some legends do assert that vampires are obsessed with counting, and that if you spill grains of rice in front of them, they'll have to stop what they're doing and count each one. There's no truth in it, of course, any more than that business about garlic. And vampires have no business teaching children. Vampires are terrifying."

"Thank you," Simon said. "It's a joke, Isabelle. He's the Count. He likes counting. You know. 'What did the Count eat today, children? *One* chocolate chip cookie, *two* chocolate chip cookies, *three* chocolate chip cookies…'"

There was a rush of cold air as the door of the restaurant opened, letting in another customer. Isabelle shivered and reached for her black silk scarf. "It's not realistic."

"What would you prefer? 'What did the Count eat today, children? *One* helpless villager, *two* helpless villagers, *three* helpless villagers…'"

"Shh." Isabelle finished knotting her scarf around her throat and leaned forward, putting her hand on Simon's wrist. Her big dark eyes were alive suddenly, the way they only ever came alive

when she was either hunting demons or thinking about hunting demons. "Look over there."

Simon followed her gaze. There were two men standing over by the glass-fronted case that held bakery items: thickly frosted cakes, plates of rugelach, and cream-filled Danishes. Neither of the men looked as if they were interested in food, though. Both were short and painfully gaunt, so much so that their cheekbones jutted from their colorless faces like knives. Both had thin gray hair and pale gray eyes, and wore belted slate-colored coats that reached the floor.

"Now," Isabelle said, "what do you suppose they are?"

Simon squinted at them. They both stared back at him, their lashless eyes like empty holes. "They kind of look like evil lawn gnomes."

"They're human subjugates," Isabelle hissed. "They belong to a vampire."

"'Belong' as in...?"

She made an impatient noise. "By the Angel, you don't know anything about your kind, do you? Do you even really know how vampires are made?"

"Well, when a mommy vampire and a daddy vampire love each other very much..."

Isabelle made a face at him. "Fine, you know that vampires *don't* need to have sex to reproduce, but I bet you don't really know how it works."

"I do too," said Simon. "I'm a vampire because I drank some of Raphael's blood before I died. Drinking blood plus death equals vampire."

"Not exactly," said Isabelle. "You're a vampire because you

drank some of Raphael's blood, and then you were bitten by other vampires, and *then* you died. You need to be bitten at some point during the process."

"Why?"

"Vampire saliva has ... properties. Transformative properties."

"Yech," said Simon.

"Don't 'yech' me. You're the one with the magical spit. Vampires keep humans around and feed on them when they're short on blood—like walking snack machines." Izzy spoke with distaste. "You'd think they'd be weak from blood loss all the time, but vampire saliva actually has healing properties. It increases their red blood cell count, makes them stronger and healthier, and makes them live longer. That's why it's not against the Law for a vampire to feed on a human. It doesn't really hurt them. Of course every once in a while the vampire will decide it wants more than a snack, it wants a subjugate—and then it will start feeding its bitten human small amounts of vampire blood, just to keep it docile, to keep it connected to its master. Subjugates worship their masters, and love serving them. All they want is to be near them. Like you were when you went back to the Dumont. You were drawn back to the vampire whose blood you had consumed."

"Raphael," Simon said, his voice bleak. "I don't feel a burning urge to be with him these days, let me tell you."

"No, it goes away when you become a full vampire. It's only the subjugates who worship their sires and can't disobey them. Don't you see? When you went back to the Dumont, Raphael's clan drained you, and you died, and then you became a vampire. But if they hadn't drained you, if they'd given you more vampire blood

instead, you would eventually have become a subjugate."

"That's all very interesting," Simon said. "But it doesn't explain why they're staring at us."

Isabelle glanced back at them. "They're staring at *you*. Maybe their master died and they're looking for another vampire to own them. You could have pets." She grinned.

"Or," Simon said, "maybe they're here for the hash browns."

"Human subjugates don't eat food. They live on a mix of vampire blood and animal blood. It keeps them in a state of suspended animation. They're not immortal, but they age very slowly."

"Sadly," Simon said, eyeing them, "they don't seem to keep their looks."

Isabelle sat up straight. "And they're on their way over here. I guess we'll find out what they want."

The human subjugates moved as if they were on wheels. They didn't appear to be taking steps so much as gliding forward soundlessly. It took them only seconds to cross the restaurant; by the time they neared Simon's table, Isabelle had whipped the sharp stiletto-like dagger out of the top of her boot. It lay across the table, gleaming in the diner's fluorescent lights. It was a dark, heavy silver, with crosses burned into both sides of the hilt. Most vampire-repelling weapons seemed to sport crosses, on the assumption, Simon thought, that most vampires were Christian. Who knew that following a minority religion could be so advantageous?

"That's close enough," Isabelle said, as the two subjugates paused beside the table, her fingers inches from the dagger. "State your business, you two."

"Shadowhunter." The creature on the left spoke in a hissing

whisper. "We did not know of you in this situation."

Isabelle raised a delicate eyebrow. "And what situation would that be?"

The second subjugate pointed a long gray finger at Simon. The nail on the end of it was yellowed and sharp. "We have dealings with the Daylighter."

"No, you don't," Simon said. "I have no idea who you are. Never seen you before."

"I am Mr. Walker," said the first creature. "Beside me is Mr. Archer. We serve the most powerful vampire in New York City. The head of the greatest Manhattan clan."

"Raphael Santiago," said Isabelle. "In that case you must know that Simon isn't a part of any clan. He's a free agent."

Mr. Walker smiled a thin smile. "My master was hoping that was a situation that could be altered."

Simon met Isabelle's eyes across the table. She shrugged. "Didn't Raphael tell you he wanted you to stay *away* from the clan?"

"Maybe he's changed his mind," Simon suggested. "You know how he is. Moody. Fickle."

"I wouldn't know. I haven't really seen him since that time I threatened to kill him with a candelabra. He took it well, though. Didn't flinch."

"Fantastic," Simon said. The two subjugates were staring at him. Their eyes were a pale whitish gray color, like dirty snow. "If Raphael wants me in the clan, it's because he wants something from me. You might as well tell me what it is."

"We are not privy to our master's plans," said Mr. Archer in a haughty tone.

"No dice, then," said Simon. "I won't go."

"If you do not wish to come with us, we are authorized to use force to bring you."

The dagger seemed to leap into Isabelle's hand; or at least, she barely seemed to move, and yet she was holding it. She twirled it lightly. "I wouldn't do that if I were you."

Mr. Archer bared his teeth at her. "Since when have the Angel's children become the bodyguards for rogue Downworlders? I would have thought you above this sort of business, Isabelle Lightwood."

"I'm not his bodyguard," said Isabelle. "I'm his *girlfriend*. Which gives me the right to kick your ass if you bother him. That's how it works."

Girlfriend? Simon was startled enough to look at her in surprise, but she was staring down the two subjugates, her dark eyes flashing. On the one hand he didn't think Isabelle had ever referred to herself as his girlfriend before. On the other hand it was symptomatic of how strange his life had become that *that* was the thing that had startled him most tonight, rather than the fact that he had just been summoned to a meeting by the most powerful vampire in New York.

"My master," said Mr. Walker, in what he probably thought was a soothing tone, "has a proposition to put to the Daylighter—"

"His name is Simon. Simon Lewis."

"To put to Mr. Lewis. I can promise you that Mr. Lewis will find it most advantageous if he is willing to accompany us and hear my master out. I swear on my master's honor that no harm will come to you, Daylighter, and that should you wish to refuse my master's offer, you will have the free choice to do so."

My master, my master. Mr. Walker spoke the words with a mixture of adoration and awe. Simon shuddered a little inwardly. How horrible to be so bound to someone else, and to have no real will of your own.

Isabelle was shaking her head; she mouthed "no" at Simon. She was probably right, he thought. Isabelle was an excellent Shadowhunter. She'd been hunting demons and lawbreaking Downworlders—rogue vampires, black-magic-practicing warlocks, werewolves who'd run wild and eaten someone—since she was twelve years old, and was probably better at what she did than any other Shadowhunter her age, with the exception of her brother Jace. And there had been Sebastian, Simon thought, who had been better than them both. But he was dead.

"All right," he said. "I'll go."

Isabelle's eyes rounded. "Simon!"

Both subjugates rubbed their hands together, like villains in a comic book. The gesture itself wasn't what was creepy, really; it was that they did it exactly at the same time and in the same way, as if they were puppets whose strings were being yanked in unison.

"Excellent," said Mr. Archer.

Isabelle banged the knife down on the table with a clatter and leaned forward, her shining dark hair brushing the tabletop. "Simon," she said in an urgent whisper. "Don't be stupid. There's no reason for you to go with them. And Raphael's a jerk."

"Raphael's a master vampire," said Simon. "His blood made me a vampire. He's my—whatever they call it."

"Sire, maker, begetter—there are a million names for what he did," Isabelle said distractedly. "And maybe his blood made

you a vampire. But it didn't make you a *Daylighter*." Her eyes met his across the table. *Jace made you a Daylighter.* But she would never say it out loud; there were only a few of them who knew the truth, the whole story behind what Jace was, and what Simon was because of it. "You don't have to do what he says."

"Of course I don't," Simon said, lowering his voice. "But if I refuse to go, do you think Raphael is just going to drop it? He won't. They'll keep coming after me." He snuck a glance sideways at the subjugates; they looked as if they agreed, though he might have been imagining it. "They'll bug me everywhere. When I'm out, at school, at Clary's—"

"And what? Clary can't handle it?" Isabelle threw up her hands. "Fine. At least let me go with you."

"Certainly not," cut in Mr. Archer. "This is not a matter for Shadowhunters. This is the business of the Night Children."

"I will not—"

"The Law gives us the right to conduct our business in private." Mr. Walker spoke stiffly. "With our own kind."

Simon looked at them. "Give us a moment, please," he said. "I want to talk to Isabelle."

There was a moment of silence. Around them the life of the diner went on. The place was getting its late-night rush as the movie theater down the block let out, and waitresses were hurrying by, carrying steaming plates of food to customers; couples laughed and chattered at nearby tables; cooks shouted orders to each other behind the counter. No one looked at them or acknowledged that anything odd was going on. Simon was used to glamours by now, but he couldn't help the feeling sometimes, when he was with Isabelle, that he was trapped behind an

invisible glass wall, cut off from the rest of humanity and the daily round of its affairs.

"Very well," said Mr. Walker, stepping back. "But my master does not like to be kept waiting."

They retreated toward the door, apparently unaffected by the blasts of cold air whenever someone went in or out, and stood there like statues. Simon turned to Isabelle. "It's all right," he said. "They won't hurt me. They *can't* hurt me. Raphael knows all about..." He gestured uncomfortably toward his forehead. "This."

Isabelle reached across the table and pushed his hair back, her touch more clinical than gentle. She was frowning. Simon had looked at the Mark enough times himself, in the mirror, to know well what it looked like. As if someone had taken a thin paintbrush and drawn a simple design on his forehead, just above and between his eyes. The shape of it seemed to change sometimes, like the moving images found in clouds, but it was always clear and black and somehow dangerous-looking, like a warning sign scrawled in another language.

"It really ... works?" she whispered.

"Raphael thinks it works," said Simon. "And I have no reason to think it doesn't." He caught her wrist and drew it away from his face. "I'll be all right, Isabelle."

She sighed. "Every bit of my training says this isn't a good idea."

Simon squeezed her fingers. "Come on. You're curious about what Raphael wants, aren't you?"

Isabelle patted his hand and sat back. "Tell me all about it when you get back. Call me *first*."

"I will." Simon stood, zipping up his jacket. "And do me a favor, will you? Two favors, actually."

She looked at him with guarded amusement. "What?"

"Clary said she'd be training over at the Institute tonight. If you run into her, don't tell her where I went. She'll worry for no reason."

Isabelle rolled her eyes. "Okay, fine. Second favor?"

Simon leaned over and kissed her on the cheek. "Try the borscht before you leave. It's fantastic."

Mr. Walker and Mr. Archer were not the most talkative of companions. They led Simon silently through the streets of the Lower East Side, keeping several steps ahead of him with their odd gliding pace. It was getting late, but the city sidewalks were full of people—getting off a late shift, hurrying home from dinner, heads down, collars turned up against the stiff cold wind. At St. Mark's Place there were card tables set up along the curb, selling everything from cheap socks to pencil sketches of New York to smoky sandalwood incense. Leaves rattled across the pavement like dried bones. The air smelled like car exhaust mixed with sandalwood, and underneath that, the smell of human beings—skin and blood.

Simon's stomach tightened. He tried to keep enough bottles of animal blood in his room—he had a small refrigerator at the back of his closet now, where his mother wouldn't see it—to keep himself from ever getting hungry. The blood was disgusting. He'd thought he'd get used to it, even start wanting it, but though it killed his hunger pangs, there was nothing about it that he enjoyed the way he'd once enjoyed chocolate or vegetarian

burritos or coffee ice cream. It remained blood.

But being hungry was worse. Being hungry meant that he could smell things he didn't want to smell—salt on skin; the overripe, sweet smell of blood exuding from the pores of strangers. It made him feel hungry and twisted up and utterly wrong. Hunching over, he jammed his fists into the pockets of his jacket and tried to breathe through his mouth.

They turned right onto Third Avenue, and paused in front of a restaurant whose sign said CLOISTER CAFÉ. GARDEN OPEN ALL YEAR. Simon blinked up at the sign. "What are we doing here?"

"This is the meeting place our master has chosen." Mr. Walker's tone was bland.

"Huh." Simon was puzzled. "I would have thought Raphael's style was more, you know, arranging meetings on top of an unconsecrated cathedral, or down in some crypt full of bones. He never struck me as the trendy restaurant type."

Both subjugates stared at him. "Is there a problem, Daylighter?" asked Mr. Archer finally.

Simon felt obscurely scolded. "No. No problem."

The interior of the restaurant was dark, with a marble-topped bar running along one wall. No servers or waitstaff approached them as they made their way through the room to a door in the back, and through the door into the garden.

Many New York restaurants had garden terraces; few were open this late into the year. This one was in a courtyard between several buildings. The walls had been painted with trompe l'oeil murals showing Italian gardens full of flowers. The trees, their leaves turned gold and russet with the fall, were strung with chains of white lights, and heat lamps scattered between the

tables gave off a reddish glow. A small fountain plashed musically in the center of the yard.

Only one table was occupied, and not by Raphael. A slim woman in a wide-brimmed hat sat at a table close to the wall. As Simon watched in puzzlement, she raised a hand and waved at him. He turned and looked behind him; there was, of course, no one there. Walker and Archer had started moving again; bemused, Simon followed them as they crossed the courtyard and stopped a few feet from where the woman sat.

Walker bowed deeply. "Master," he said.

The woman smiled. "Walker," she said. "And Archer. Very good. Thank you for bringing Simon to me."

"Wait a second." Simon looked from the woman to the two subjugates and back again. "You're not Raphael."

"Dear me, no." The woman removed her hat. An enormous quantity of silvery blond hair, brilliant in the Christmas lights, spilled down over her shoulders. Her face was smooth and white and oval, very beautiful, dominated by enormous pale green eyes. She wore long black gloves, a black silk blouse and pencil skirt, and a black scarf tied around her throat. It was impossible to tell her age—or at least what age she might have been when she'd been Turned into a vampire. "I am Camille Belcourt. Enchanted to meet you."

She held out a black-gloved hand.

"I was told I was meeting Raphael Santiago here," said Simon, not reaching to take it. "Do you work for him?"

Camille Belcourt laughed like a rippling fountain. "Most certainly not! Though once upon a time he worked for me."

And Simon remembered. *I thought the head vampire was*

someone else, he had said to Raphael once, in Idris, it felt like forever ago.

Camille has not yet returned to us, Raphael had replied. *I lead in her stead.*

"You're the head vampire," Simon said. "Of the Manhattan clan." He turned back to the subjugates. "You tricked me. You told me I was meeting Raphael."

"I said you were meeting our master," said Mr. Walker. His eyes were vast and empty, so empty that Simon wondered if they had even meant to mislead him, or if they were simply programmed like robots to say whatever their master had told them to say, and were unaware of deviations from the script. "And here she is."

"Indeed." Camille flashed a brilliant smile toward her subjugates. "Please leave us, Walker, Archer. I need to speak to Simon alone." There was something about the way she said it—both his name, and the word "alone"—that was like a secret caress.

The subjugates bowed and withdrew. As Mr. Archer turned to walk away, Simon caught sight of a mark on the side of his throat, a deep bruise, so dark it looked like paint, with two darker spots inside it. The darker spots were punctures, ringed with dry, ragged flesh. Simon felt a quiet shudder pass through him.

"Please," said Camille, and patted the seat beside her. "Sit. Would you like some wine?"

Simon sat, perching uncomfortably on the edge of the hard metal chair. "I don't really drink."

"Of course," she said, all sympathy. "You're barely a fledgling, aren't you? Don't worry too much. Over time you will train yourself to be able to consume wine and other beverages. Some

of the oldest of our kind can consume human food with few ill effects."

Few ill effects? Simon didn't like the sound of that. "Is this going to take a long time?" he inquired, gazing pointedly down at his cell phone, which told him the time was after ten thirty. "I have to get home."

Camille took a sip of her wine. "You do? And why is that?"

Because my mom is waiting up for me. Okay, there was no reason this woman needed to know that. "You interrupted my date," he said. "I was just wondering what was so important."

"You still live with your mother, don't you?" she said, setting her glass down. "Rather odd, isn't it, a powerful vampire like yourself refusing to leave home, to join with a clan?"

"So you interrupted my date to make fun of me for still living with my parents. Couldn't you have done that on a night I didn't have a date? That's most nights, in case you're curious."

"I'm not mocking you, Simon." She ran her tongue over her lower lip as if tasting the wine she had just drunk. "I want to know why you haven't become part of Raphael's clan."

Which is the same as your clan, isn't it? "I got the strong feeling he didn't want me to be part of it," Simon said. "He pretty much said he'd leave me alone if I left him alone. So I've left him alone."

"*Have* you." Her green eyes glowed.

"I never wanted to be a vampire," Simon said, half-wondering why he was telling these things to this strange woman. "I wanted a normal life. When I found out I was a Daylighter, I thought I could have one. Or at least some approximation of one. I can go to school, I can live at home, I can see my mom and sister—"

"As long as you don't ever eat in front of them," said Camille.

"As long as you hide your need for blood. You have never fed on someone purely human, have you? Just bagged blood. Stale. Animal." She wrinkled her nose.

Simon thought of Jace, and pushed the thought hastily away. Jace was not precisely *human*. "No, I haven't."

"You will. And when you do, you will not forget it." She leaned forward, and her pale hair brushed across his hand. "You cannot hide your true self forever."

"What teenager doesn't lie to their parents?" Simon said. "Anyway, I don't see why you care. In fact, I'm still not sure why I'm here."

Camille leaned forward. When she did, the neckline of her black silk blouse gaped open. If Simon had still been human, he would have blushed. "Will you let me see it?"

Simon could actually feel his eyes pop out. "See *what*?"

She smiled. "The Mark, silly boy. The Mark of the Wanderer."

Simon opened his mouth, then closed it again. *How does she know?* Very few people knew of the Mark that Clary had put on him in Idris. Raphael had indicated it was a matter for deadly secrecy, and Simon had treated it as such.

But Camille's eyes were very green and steady, and for some reason he wanted to do what she wanted him to do. It was something about the way she looked at him, something in the music of her voice. He reached up and pushed his hair aside, baring his forehead for her inspection.

Her eyes widened, her lips parting. Lightly she touched her fingers to her throat, as if checking the nonexistent pulse there. "Oh," she said. "How lucky you are, Simon. How fortunate."

"It's a curse," he said. "Not a blessing. You know that, right?"

Her eyes sparked. "'And Cain said unto the Lord, My punishment is greater than I can bear.' Is it more than you can bear, Simon?"

Simon sat back, letting his hair fall back into place. "I can bear it."

"But you don't want to." She ran a gloved finger around the rim of her wineglass, her eyes still fixed on him. "What if I could offer you a way to turn what you regard as a curse into an advantage?"

I'd say you're finally getting to the reason you brought me here, which is a start. "I'm listening."

"You recognized my name when I told it to you," Camille said. "Raphael has mentioned me before, has he not?" She had an accent, very faint, that Simon couldn't quite place.

"He said you were the head of the clan and he was just leading them while you were gone. Stepping in for you like—like a vice president or something."

"Ah." She bit gently on her lower lip. "That is, in fact, not quite true. I would like to tell you the truth, Simon. I would like to make you an offer. But first I must have your word on something."

"And what's that?"

"That everything that passes between us this night, here, remains a secret. No one can know. Not your redheaded little friend, Clary. Not either of your lady friends. None of the Lightwoods. No one."

Simon sat back. "And what if I don't want to promise?"

"Then you may leave, if you like," she said. "But then you will never know what I wished to tell you. And that will be a loss you will regret."

"I'm curious," Simon said. "But I'm not sure I'm that curious."

Her eyes held a little spark of surprise and amusement and perhaps, Simon thought, even a little respect. "Nothing I have to say to you concerns them. It will not affect their safety, or their well-being. The secrecy is for my own protection."

Simon looked at her suspiciously. Did she mean it? Vampires weren't like faeries, who couldn't lie. But he had to admit he was curious. "All right. I'll keep your secret, unless I think something you say is putting my friends in danger. Then all bets are off."

Her smile was frosty; he could tell she didn't like being disbelieved. "Very well," she said. "I suppose I have little choice when I need your help so badly." She leaned forward, one slim hand toying with the stem of her wineglass. "Until quite recently I led the Manhattan clan, happily. We had beautiful quarters in an old prewar building on the Upper West Side, not that rat hole of a hotel Santiago keeps my people in now. Santiago—Raphael, as you call him—was my second in command. My most loyal companion—or so I thought. One night I found out that he was murdering humans, driving them to that old hotel in Spanish Harlem and drinking their blood for his amusement. Leaving their bones in the Dumpster outside. Taking stupid risks, breaking Covenant Law." She took a sip of wine. "When I went to confront him, I realized he had told the rest of the clan that I was the murderer, the lawbreaker. It was all a setup. He meant to kill me, so that he might seize power. I fled, with only Walker and Archer to keep me safe."

"So all this time he's claimed he's just leading until you return?"

She made a face. "Santiago is an accomplished liar. He wishes

me to return, that's for certain—so he can murder me and take charge of the clan in earnest."

Simon wasn't sure what she wanted to hear. He wasn't used to adult women looking at him with big tear-filled eyes, or spilling out their life stories to him.

"I'm sorry," he said finally.

She shrugged, a very expressive shrug that made him wonder if perhaps her accent was French. "It is in the past," she said. "I have been hiding out in London all this time, looking for allies, biding my time. Then I heard about you." She held up her hand. "I cannot tell you how; I am sworn to secrecy. But the moment I did, I realized that you were what I had been waiting for."

"I was? I am?"

She leaned forward and touched his hand. "Raphael is afraid of you, Simon, as well he should be. You are one of his own, a vampire, but you cannot be harmed or killed; he cannot lift a finger against you without bringing down God's wrath on his head."

There was a silence. Simon could hear the soft electrical hum of the Christmas lights overhead, the water plashing in the stone fountain in the center of the courtyard, the buzz and hum of the city. When he spoke, his voice was soft. "You said it."

"What was that, Simon?"

"The word. The wrath of—" The word bit and burned in his mouth, just as it always did.

"Yes. *God*." She retracted her hand, but her eyes were warm. "There are many secrets of our kind, so many that I can tell you, show you. You will learn you are not damned."

"Ma'am—"

"Camille. You must call me Camille."

"I still don't understand what you want from me."

"Don't you?" She shook her head, and her brilliant hair flew around her face. "I want you to join with me, Simon. Join with me against Santiago. We will walk together into his rat-infested hotel; the moment his followers see that you are with me, they will leave him and come to me. I believe they are loyal to me beneath their fear of him. Once they see us together, that fear will be gone, and they will come to our side. Man cannot contend with the divine."

"I don't know," Simon said. "In the Bible, Jacob wrestled an angel, and he won."

Camille looked at him with her eyebrows arched.

Simon shrugged. "Hebrew school."

"'And Jacob called the name of the place Peniel: for I have seen God face to face.' You see, you are not the only one who knows your scripture." Her narrow look was gone, and she was smiling. "You may not realize it, Daylighter, but as long as you bear that Mark, you are the avenging arm of heaven. No one can stand before you. Certainly not one vampire."

"Are you afraid of me?" Simon asked.

He was almost instantly sorry he had. Her green eyes darkened like thunderclouds. "Me, afraid of you?" Then she collected herself, her face smoothing, her expression lightening. "Of course not," she said. "You are an intelligent man. I am convinced you will see the wisdom of my proposal and join with me."

"And what exactly is your proposal? I mean, I understand the part where we face down Raphael, but after that? I don't really hate Raphael, or want to get rid of him just to get rid of him. He

leaves me alone. That's all I ever wanted."

She folded her hands together in front of her. She wore a silver ring with a blue stone in it on her left middle finger, over the material of her glove. "You think that is what you want, Simon. You think Raphael is doing you a favor in leaving you alone, as you put it. In reality he is exiling you. Right now you think you do not need others of your kind. You are content with the friends you have—humans and Shadowhunters. You are content to hide bottles of blood in your room and lie to your mother about what you are."

"How did you—"

She went on, ignoring him. "But what about in ten years, when you are supposed to be twenty-six? In twenty years? Thirty? Do you think no one will notice that as they age and change, you do not?"

Simon said nothing. He didn't want to admit he hadn't thought ahead that far. That he didn't want to think ahead that far.

"Raphael has taught you that other vampires are poison to you. But it does not need to be that way. Eternity is a long time to spend alone, without others of your kind. Others who understand. You befriend Shadowhunters, but you can never be of them. You will always be other and outside. With us you could belong." As she leaned forward, white light sparked off her ring, stinging Simon's eyes. "We have thousands of years of knowledge we could share with you, Simon. You could learn how to keep your secret; how to eat and drink, how to speak the name of God. Raphael has cruelly hidden this information from you, even led you to believe it doesn't exist. It does. I can help you."

"If I help you first," Simon said.

She smiled, and her teeth were white and sharp. "We will help each other."

Simon leaned back. The iron chair was hard and uncomfortable, and he suddenly felt tired. Looking down at his hands, he could see that the veins had darkened, spidering across the backs of his knuckles. He needed blood. He needed to talk to Clary. He needed time to think.

"I've shocked you," she said. "I know. It is a great deal to take in. I would be happy to give you as much time as you needed to make up your mind about this, and about me. But we don't have much time, Simon. While I remain in this city, I am in danger from Raphael and his cohorts."

"Cohorts?" Despite everything, Simon grinned slightly.

Camille seemed baffled. "Yes?"

"Well, it's just ... 'Cohorts.' It's like saying 'evildoers' or 'minions.'" She stared at him blankly. Simon sighed. "Sorry. You probably haven't seen as many bad movies as I have."

Camille frowned faintly, a very fine line appearing between her brows. "I was told you would be slightly peculiar. Perhaps it is just that I don't know many vampires of your generation. But that will be good for me, I feel, to be around someone so ... young."

"New blood," said Simon.

At that she did smile. "Are you ready, then? To accept my offer? To begin to work together?"

Simon looked up at the sky. The strings of white lights seemed to blot out the stars. "Look," he said, "I appreciate your offer. I really do." *Crap*, he thought. There had to be some way to

say this without him sounding like he was turning down a date to the prom. *I'm really, really flattered you asked, but...* Camille, like Raphael, always spoke stiffly, formally, as if she were in a fairy tale. Maybe he could try that. He said, "I require some time to make my decision. I'm sure you understand."

Very delicately, she smiled, showing only the tips of her fangs. "Five days," she said. "And no longer." She held out her gloved hand to him. Something gleamed in her palm. It was a small glass vial, the size that might hold a perfume sample, only it appeared to be full of brownish powder. "Grave dirt," she explained. "Smash this, and I will know you are summoning me. If you do not summon me within five days I will send Walker for your answer."

Simon took the vial and slipped it into his pocket. "And if the answer is no?"

"Then I will be disappointed. But we will part friends." She pushed her wineglass away. "Good-bye, Simon."

Simon stood up. The chair made a metallic squeaking sound as it dragged over the ground, too loud. He felt like he should say something else, but he had no idea what. For the moment, though, he seemed to be dismissed. He decided that he'd rather look like one of those weird modern vampires with bad manners than risk getting dragged back into the conversation. He left without saying anything else.

On his way back through the restaurant, he passed Walker and Archer, who were standing by the big wooden bar, their shoulders hunched under their long gray coats. He felt the force of their glares on him as he walked by and wiggled his fingers at them—a gesture somewhere between a friendly wave and a

kiss-off. Archer bared his teeth—flat human teeth—and stalked past him toward the garden, Walker on his heels. Simon watched as they took their places in chairs across from Camille; she didn't look up as they seated themselves, but the white lights that had illuminated the garden went out suddenly—not one by one but all at the same time—leaving Simon staring at a disorienting square of darkness, as if someone had switched off the stars. By the time the waiters noticed and hurried outside to rectify the problem, flooding the garden with pale light once again, Camille and her human subjugates had vanished.

Simon unlocked the front door of his house—one of a long chain of identical brick-fronted row houses that lined his Brooklyn block—and pushed it open slightly, listening hard.

He had told his mother he was going out to practice with Eric and his other bandmates for a gig on Saturday. There had been a time when she simply would have believed him, and that would have been that; Elaine Lewis had always been a relaxed parent, never imposing a curfew on either Simon or his sister or insisting that they be home early on school nights. Simon was used to staying out until all hours with Clary, letting himself in with his key, and collapsing into bed at two in the morning, behavior that hadn't excited much comment from his mother.

Things were different now. He had been in Idris, the Shadowhunters' home country, for almost two weeks. He had vanished from home, with no chance to offer an excuse or explanation. The warlock Magnus Bane had stepped in and performed a memory spell on Simon's mother so that she now had no recollection that he had been missing at all. Or at least, no *conscious*

recollection. Her behavior had changed, though. She was suspicious now, hovering, always watching him, insisting he be home at certain times. The last time he had come home from a date with Maia, he had found Elaine in the foyer, sitting in a chair facing the door, her arms crossed over her chest and a look of barely tempered rage on her face.

That night, he'd been able to hear her breathing before he'd seen her. Now he could hear only the faint sound of the television coming from the living room. She must have waited up for him, probably watching a marathon of one of those hospital dramas she loved. Simon swung the door closed behind him and leaned against it, trying to gather his energy to lie.

It was hard enough not eating around his family. Thankfully his mother went to work early and got back late, and Rebecca, who went to college in New Jersey and only came home occasionally to do her laundry, wasn't around often enough to notice anything odd. His mom was usually gone in the morning by the time he got up, the breakfast and lunch she'd lovingly prepared for him left out on the kitchen counter. He'd dump it into a trash bin on his way to school. Dinner was tougher. On the nights she was there, he had to push his food around his plate, pretend he wasn't hungry or that he wanted to take his food into his bedroom so he could eat while studying. Once or twice he'd forced the food down, just to make her happy, and spent hours in the bathroom afterward, sweating and retching until it was out of his system.

He hated having to lie to her. He'd always felt a little sorry for Clary, with her fraught relationship with Jocelyn, the most overprotective parent he'd ever known. Now the shoe was on the

other foot. Since Valentine's death, Jocelyn's grip on Clary had relaxed to the point where she was practically a normal parent. Meanwhile, whenever Simon was home, he could feel the weight of his mother's gaze on him, like an accusation wherever he went.

Squaring his shoulders, he dropped his messenger bag by the door and headed into the living room to face the music. The TV was on, the news blaring. The local announcer was reporting on a human interest story—a baby found abandoned in an alley behind a hospital downtown. Simon was surprised; his mom hated the news. She found it depressing. He glanced toward the couch, and his surprise faded. His mother was asleep, her glasses on the table beside her, a half-empty glass on the floor. Simon could smell it from here—probably whiskey. He felt a pang. His mom hardly ever drank.

Simon went into his mother's bedroom and returned with a crocheted blanket. His mom was still asleep, her breathing slow and even. Elaine Lewis was a tiny, birdlike woman, with a halo of black curling hair, streaked with gray that she refused to dye. She worked during the day for an environmental nonprofit, and most of her clothes had animal motifs on them. Right now she was wearing a dress tie-dye printed with dolphins and waves, and a pin that had once been a live fish, dipped in resin. Its lacquered eye seemed to glare at Simon accusingly as he bent to tuck the blanket around her shoulders.

She moved, fitfully, turning her head away from him. "Simon," she whispered. "Simon, where are you?"

Stricken, Simon let go of the blanket and stood up. Maybe he should wake her up, let her know he was okay. But then there would be questions he didn't want to answer and that hurt look on

her face he couldn't stand. He turned and went into his bedroom.

He had thrown himself down onto the covers and grabbed for the phone on his bedside table, about to dial Clary's number, before he even thought about it. He paused for a moment, listening to the dial tone. He couldn't tell her about Camille; he'd promised to keep the vampire's offer a secret, and while Simon didn't feel he owed Camille much, if there was one thing he had learned from the past few months, it was that reneging on promises made to supernatural creatures was a bad idea. Still, he wanted to hear Clary's voice, the way he always did when he'd had a tough day. Well, there was always complaining to her about his love life; that seemed to amuse her no end. Rolling over in bed, he pulled the pillow over his head and dialed Clary's number.