

# PROLOGUE

## The Outcast Dead

The fog was thick, muffling sound and sight. Where it parted, Will Herondale could see the street rising ahead of him, slick and wet and black with rain, and he could hear the voices of the dead.

Not all Shadowhunters could hear ghosts, unless the ghosts chose to be heard, but Will was one of those who could. As he approached the old cemetery, their voices rose in a ragged chorus—wails and pleading, cries and snarls. This was not a peaceful burial ground, but Will knew that; it was not his first visit to the Cross Bones Graveyard near London Bridge. He did his best to block out the noises, hunching his shoulders so that his collar covered his ears, head down, a fine mist of rain dampening his black hair.

The entrance to the cemetery was halfway down the block: a pair of wrought iron gates set into a high stone wall, though any mundane passing by would have observed nothing but a plot of overgrown land, part of an unnamed builder's yard. As Will

neared the gates, something else no mundane would have seen materialized out of the fog: a great bronze knocker in the shape of a hand, the fingers bony and skeletal. With a grimace Will reached out one of his own gloved hands and lifted the knocker, letting it fall once, twice, three times, the hollow clank resounding through the night.

Beyond the gates, mist rose like steam from the ground, obscuring the gleam of bone against the rough ground. Slowly the mist began to coalesce, taking on an eerie blue glow. Will put his hands to the bars of the gate; the cold of the metal seeped through his gloves, into his bones, and he shivered. It was a more than ordinary cold. When ghosts rose, they drew energy from their surroundings, depriving the air around them of heat. The hairs on the back of Will's neck prickled and stood up as the blue mist formed slowly into the shape of an old woman in a ragged dress and white apron, her head bent.

"Hallo, Mol," said Will. "You're looking particularly fine this evening, if I do say so."

The ghost raised her head. Old Molly was a strong spirit, one of the stronger Will had ever encountered. Even as moonlight speared through a gap in the clouds, she hardly looked transparent. Her body was solid, her hair twisted in a thick yellow-gray coil over one shoulder, her rough, red hands braced on her hips. Only her eyes were hollow, twin blue flames flickering in their depths.

"William 'erondale," she said. "Back again so soon?"

She moved toward the gate with that gliding motion peculiar to ghosts. Her feet were bare and filthy, despite the fact that they never touched the ground.

Will leaned against the gate. “You know I missed your pretty face.”

She grinned, her eyes flickering, and he caught a glimpse of the skull beneath the half-transparent skin. Overhead the clouds had closed in on one another again, blocking out the moon. Idly, Will wondered what Old Molly had done to get herself buried here, far from consecrated ground. Most of the wailing voices of the dead belonged to prostitutes, suicides, and stillbirths—those outcast dead who could not be buried in a churchyard. Although Molly had managed to make the situation quite profitable for herself, so perhaps she didn’t mind.

She chortled. “What d’you want, then, young Shadow-hunter? Malphas venom? I ’ave the talon of a Morax demon, polished very fine, the poison at the tip entirely invisible—”

“No,” Will said. “That’s not what I need. I need Foraii demon powders, ground fine.”

Molly turned her head to the side and spat a tendril of blue fire. “Now, what’s a fine young man like you want with stuff like that?”

Will just sighed inwardly; Molly’s protests were part of the bargaining process. Magnus had already sent Will to Old Mol several times now, once for black stinking candles that stuck to his skin like tar, once for the bones of an unborn child, and once for a bag of faeries’ eyes, which had dripped blood on his shirt. Foraii demon powder sounded pleasant by comparison.

“You think I’m a fool,” Molly went on. “This is a trap, innit? You Nephilim catch me selling that sort of stuff, an’ it’s the stick for Old Mol, it is.”

“You’re *already* dead.” Will did his best not to sound irritable. “I don’t know what you think the Clave could do to you now.”

“Pah.” Her hollow eyes flamed. “The prisons of the Silent Brothers, beneath the earth, can ’old either the living or the dead; you know that, Shadowhunter.”

Will held up his hands. “No tricks, old one. Surely you must have heard the rumors running about in Downworld. The Clave has other things on its mind than tracking down ghosts who traffic in demon powders and faerie blood.” He leaned forward. “I’ll give you a good price.” He drew a cambric bag from his pocket and dangled it in the air. It clinked like coins rattling together. “They all fit your description, Mol.”

An eager look came over her dead face, and she solidified enough to take the bag from him. She plunged one hand into it and brought her palm out full of rings—gold wedding rings, each tied in a lovers’ knot at the top. Old Mol, like many ghosts, was always looking for that talisman, that lost piece of her past that would finally allow her to die, the anchor that kept her trapped in the world. In her case it was her wedding ring. It was common belief, Magnus had told Will, that the ring was long gone, buried under the silty bed of the Thames, but in the meantime she’d take any bag of found rings in the hope one would turn out to be hers.

She dropped the rings back into the bag, which vanished somewhere on her undead person, and handed him a folded sachet of powder in return. He slipped it into his jacket pocket just as the ghost began to shimmer and fade. “Hold up, there, Mol. That isn’t all I have come for tonight.”

The spirit flickered while greed warred with impatience and the effort of remaining visible. Finally she grunted. “Very well. What else d’you want?”

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Will hesitated. This was not something Magnus had sent him for; it was something he wanted to know for himself. “Love potions—”

Old Mol screeched with laughter. “*Love potions?* For Will ’erondale? ’Tain’t my way to turn down payment, but any man who looks like you ’as got no need of love potions, and that’s a fact.”

“No,” Will said, a little desperation in his voice. “I was looking for the opposite, really—something that might put an end to being in love.”

“An ’atred potion?” Mol still sounded amused.

“I was hoping for something more akin to indifference? Tolerance?”

She made a snorting noise, astonishingly human for a ghost. “I ’ardly like to tell you this, Nephilim, but if you want a girl to ’ate you, there’s easy enough ways of making it ’appen. You don’t need *my* help with the poor thing.”

And with that she vanished, spinning away into the mists among the graves. Will, looking after her, sighed. “Not for her,” he said under his breath, though there was no one to hear him, “for *me*...” And he leaned his head against the cold iron gate.



# I

## THE COUNCIL CHAMBER

*Above, the fair hall-ceiling stately set  
Many an arch high up did lift,  
And angels rising and descending met  
With interchange of gift.*  
—Alfred, Lord Tennyson, “The Palace of Art”

“Oh, yes. It really does look just as I imagined,” Tessa said, and turned to smile at the boy who stood beside her. He had just helped her over a puddle, and his hand still rested politely on her arm, just above the crook of her elbow.

James Carstairs smiled back at her, elegant in his dark suit, his silver-fair hair whipped by the wind. His other hand rested on a jade-topped cane, and if any of the great crowd of people milling around them thought that it was odd that someone so young should need a walking stick, or found anything unusual about his coloring or the cast of his features, they didn’t pause to stare.

“I shall count that as a blessing,” said Jem. “I was beginning

to worry, you know, that everything you encountered in London was going to be a disappointment.”

*A disappointment.* Tessa’s brother, Nate, had once promised her everything in London—a new beginning, a wonderful place to live, a city of soaring buildings and gorgeous parks. What Tessa had found instead was horror and betrayal, and danger beyond anything she could have imagined. And yet...

“Not everything has been.” She smiled up at Jem.

“I am glad to hear it.” His tone was serious, not teasing. She looked away from him up at the grand edifice that rose before them. Westminster Abbey, with its great Gothic spires nearly touching the sky. The sun had done its best to struggle out from behind the haze-tipped clouds, and the Abbey was bathed in weak sunlight.

“This is really where it is?” she asked as Jem drew her forward, toward the Abbey entrance. “It seems so—”

“Mundane?”

“I had meant to say crowded.” The Abbey was open to tourists today, and groups of them swarmed busily in and out of the enormous doors, most clutching Baedeker guidebooks in their hands. A group of American tourists—middle-aged women in unfashionable clothes, murmuring in accents that made Tessa briefly homesick—passed them as they went up the stairs, hurrying after a lecturer who was offering a guided tour of the Abbey. Jem and Tessa melted in effortlessly behind them.

The inside of the Abbey smelled of cold stone and metal. Tessa looked up and around, marveling at the size of the place. It made the Institute look like a village church.

“Notice the triple division of the nave,” a guide droned, going



on to explain that smaller chapels lined the eastern and western aisles of the Abbey. There was a hush over the place even though no services were going on. As Tessa let Jem lead her toward the eastern side of the church, she realized she was stepping over stones carved with dates and names. She had known that famous kings, queens, soldiers, and poets were buried in Westminster Abbey, but she hadn't quite expected she'd be standing on top of them.

She and Jem slowed finally at the south-eastern corner of the church. Watery daylight poured through the rose window overhead. "I know we are in a hurry to get to the Council meeting," said Jem, "but I wanted you to see this." He gestured around them. "Poets' Corner."

Tessa had read of the place, of course, where the great writers of England were buried. There was the gray stone tomb of Chaucer, with its canopy, and other familiar names: "Edmund Spenser, oh, and Samuel Johnson," she gasped, "and Coleridge, and Robert Burns, and *Shakespeare*—"

"He isn't really buried here," said Jem quickly. "It's just a monument. Like Milton's."

"Oh, I know, but—" She looked at him, and felt herself flush. "I can't explain it. It's like being among friends, being among these names. Silly, I know..."

"Not silly at all."

She smiled at him. "How did you know just what I'd want to see?"

"How could I not?" he said. "When I think of you, and you are not there, I see you in my mind's eye always with a book in your hand." He looked away from her as he said it, but not before she caught the slight flush on his cheekbones. He was so pale,

he could never hide even the least blush, she thought—and was surprised by how affectionate the thought was.

She had become very fond of Jem over the past fortnight; Will had been studiously avoiding her, Charlotte and Henry were caught up in issues of Clave and Council and the running of the Institute—and even Jessamine seemed preoccupied. But Jem was always there. He seemed to take his role as her guide to London seriously. They had been to Hyde Park and Kew Gardens, the National Gallery and the British Museum, the Tower of London and Traitors' Gate. They had gone to see the cows being milked in St. James's Park, and the fruit and vegetable sellers hawking their wares in Covent Garden. They had watched the boats sailing on the sun-sparked Thames from the Embankment, and had eaten things called "doorstops," which sounded horrible but turned out to be butter, sugar, and bread. And as the days went on, Tessa felt herself unfolding slowly out of her quiet, huddled unhappiness over Nate and Will and the loss of her old life, like a flower climbing out of frozen ground. She had even found herself laughing. And she had Jem to thank for it.

"You *are* a good friend," she exclaimed. And when to her surprise he said nothing to that, she said, "At least, I hope we are good friends. You do think so too, don't you, Jem?"

He turned to look at her, but before he could reply, a sepulchral voice spoke out of the shadows,

*"Mortality, behold and fear!  
What a change of flesh is here:  
Think how many royal bones  
Sleep within these heaps of stones."*

A dark shape stepped out from between two monuments. As Tessa blinked in surprise, Jem said, in a tone of resigned amusement, "Will. Decided to grace us with your presence after all?"

"I never said I wasn't coming." Will moved forward, and the light from the rose windows fell on him, illuminating his face. Even now, Tessa never could look at him without a tightening in her chest, a painful stutter of her heart. Black hair, blue eyes, graceful cheekbones, thick dark lashes, full mouth—he would have been pretty if he had not been so tall and so muscular. She had run her hands over those arms. She knew what they felt like—iron, corded with hard muscles; his hands, when they cupped the back of her head, were slim and flexible but rough with calluses...

She tore her mind away from the memories. Memories did one no good, not when one knew the truth in the present. Will was beautiful, but he was not hers; he was not anybody's. Something in him was broken, and through that break spilled a blind cruelty, a need to hurt and to push away.

"You're late for the Council meeting," said Jem good-naturedly. He was the only one Will's puckish malice never seemed to touch.

"I had an errand," said Will. Up close Tessa could see that he looked tired. His eyes were rimmed with red, the shadows beneath them nearly purple. His clothes looked crumpled, as if he had slept in them, and his hair wanted cutting. *But that has nothing to do with you*, she told herself sternly, looking away from the soft dark waves that curled around his ears, the back of his neck. *It does not matter what you think of how he looks or how he chooses to spend his time. He has made that very clear.* "And you are

not exactly on the dot of the hour yourselves.”

“I wanted to show Tessa Poets’ Corner,” said Jem. “I thought she would like it.” He spoke so simply and plainly, no one could ever doubt him or imagine he said anything but the truth. In the face of his simple desire to please, even Will didn’t seem to be able to think of anything unpleasant to say; he merely shrugged, and moved on ahead of them at a rapid pace through the Abbey and out into the East Cloister.

There was a square garden here surrounded by cloister walls, and people were walking around the edges of it, murmuring in low voices as if they were still in the church. None of them took any notice of Tessa and her companions as they approached a set of double oak doors set into one of the walls. Will, after glancing around, took his stele from his pocket and drew the tip across the wood. The door sparked with a brief blue light and swung open. Will stepped inside, Jem and Tessa following just behind. The door was heavy, and closed with a resounding bang behind Tessa, nearly trapping her skirts; she pulled them away only just in time, and stepped backward quickly, turning around in what was a near pitch-darkness. “Jem?”

Light blazed up; it was Will, holding his witchlight stone. They were in a large stone-bound room with vaulted ceilings. The floor appeared to be brick, and there was an altar at one end of the room. “We’re in the Pyx Chamber,” he said. “Used to be a treasury. Boxes of gold and silver all along the walls.”

“A Shadowhunter treasury?” Tessa was thoroughly puzzled.

“No, the British royal treasury—thus the thick walls and doors,” said Jem. “But we Shadowhunters have always had access.” He smiled at her expression. “Monarchies down through

the ages have tithed to the Nephilim, in secret, to keep their kingdoms safe from demons.”

“Not in America,” said Tessa with spirit. “We haven’t got a monarchy—”

“You’ve got a branch of government that deals with Nephilim, never fear,” said Will, crossing the floor to the altar. “It used to be the Department of War, but now there’s a branch of the Department of Justice—”

He was cut off as the altar moved sideways with a groan, revealing a dark, empty hole behind it. Tessa could see faint flickers of light in among the shadows. Will ducked into the hole, his witchlight illuminating the darkness.

When Tessa followed, she found herself in a long downward-sloping stone corridor. The stone of the walls, floors, and ceiling was all the same, giving the impression that the passage had been hewed directly through the rock, though it was smooth instead of rough. Every few feet witchlight burned in a sconce shaped like a human hand pushing through the wall, fingers gripping a torch.

The altar slid shut behind them, and they set off. As they went, the passage began to slope more steeply downward. The torches burned with a blue-green glow, illuminating carvings in the rock—the same motif, repeated over and over, of an angel rising in burning fire from a lake, carrying a sword in one hand and a cup in the other.

At last they found themselves standing before two great silver doors. Each door was carved with a design Tessa had seen before—four interlocking Cs. Jem pointed to them. “They stand for Clave and Council, Covenant and Consul,” he said, before she could ask.

“The Consul. He’s—the head of the Clave? Like a sort of king?”

“Not quite so inbred as your usual monarch,” said Will. “He’s elected, like the president or the prime minister.”

“And the Council?”

“You’ll see them soon enough.” Will pushed the doors open.

Tessa’s mouth fell open; she closed it quickly, but not before she caught an amused look from Jem, standing at her right side. The room beyond them was one of the biggest she had ever seen, a huge domed space, the ceiling of which was painted with a pattern of stars and constellations. A great chandelier in the shape of an angel holding blazing torches dangled from the highest point of the dome. The rest of the room was set up as an amphitheater, with long, curving benches. Will, Jem, and Tessa were standing at the top of a row of stairs that cut through the center of the seating area, which was three quarters full of people. Down at the bottom of the steps was a raised platform, and on that platform were several uncomfortable-looking high-backed wooden chairs.

In one of them sat Charlotte; beside her was Henry, looking wide-eyed and nervous. Charlotte sat calmly with her hands in her lap; only someone who knew her well would have seen the tension in her shoulders and the set of her mouth.

Before them, at a sort of speaker’s lectern—it was broader and longer than the usual lectern—stood a tall man with long, fair hair and a thick beard; his shoulders were broad, and he wore long black robes over his clothes like a judge, the sleeves glimmering with woven runes. Beside him, in a low chair, sat an older man, his brown hair streaked with gray, his face clean-shaven but

sunk into stern lines. His robe was dark blue, and gems glittered on his fingers when he moved his hand. Tessa recognized him: the ice-voiced, ice-eyed Inquisitor Whitelaw who questioned witnesses on behalf of the Clave.

“Mr. Herondale,” said the blond man, looking up at Will, and his mouth quirked into a smile. “How kind of you to join us. And Mr. Carstairs as well. And your companion must be—”

“Miss Gray,” Tessa said before he could finish. “Miss Theresa Gray of New York.”

A little murmur ran around the room, like the sound of a wave receding. She felt Will, next to her, tense, and Jem draw a breath as if to speak. *Interrupting the Consul*, she thought she heard someone say. So this was Consul Wayland, the chief officer of the Clave. Glancing around the room, she saw a few familiar faces—Benedict Lightwood, with his sharp, beaky features and stiff carriage; and his son, tousle-haired Gabriel Lightwood, looking stonily straight ahead. Dark-eyed Lilian Highsmith. Friendly-looking George Penhallow; and even Charlotte’s formidable aunt Callida, her hair piled on her head in thick gray waves. There were many other faces as well, ones she didn’t know. It was like looking at a picture book meant to tell you about all the peoples of the world. There were blond Viking-looking Shadowhunters, and a darker-skinned man who looked like a caliph out of her illustrated *The Thousand and One Nights*, and an Indian woman in a beautiful sari trimmed with silver runes. She sat beside another woman, who had turned her head and was looking at them. She wore an elegant silk dress, and her face was like Jem’s—the same delicately beautiful features, the same curves to her eyes and cheek-bones, though where his hair and

eyes were silver, hers were dark.

“Welcome, then, Miss Tessa Gray of New York,” said the Consul, sounding amused. “We appreciate your joining us here today. I understand you have already answered quite a few questions for the London Enclave. I had hoped you would be willing to answer a few more.”

Across the distance that separated them, Tessa’s eyes met Charlotte’s. *Should I?*

Charlotte dropped her a nearly imperceptible nod. *Please.*

Tessa squared her shoulders. “If that is your request, certainly.”

“Approach the Council bench, then,” said the Consul, and Tessa realized he must mean the long, narrow wooden bench that stood before the lectern. “And your gentleman friends may escort you,” he added.

Will muttered something under his breath, but so quietly even Tessa couldn’t hear it; flanked by Will on her left and Jem on her right, Tessa made her way down the steps and to the bench before the lectern. She stood behind it uncertainly. This close up, she could see that the Consul had friendly blue eyes, unlike the Inquisitor’s, which were a bleak and stormy gray, like a rainy sea.

“Inquisitor Whitelaw,” said the Consul to the gray-eyed man, “the Mortal Sword, if you please.”

The Inquisitor stood, and from his robes drew a massive blade. Tessa recognized it instantly. It was long and dull silver, its hilt carved in the shape of outspread wings. It was the sword from the *Codex*, the one that the Angel Raziel had risen from the lake carrying, and had given to Jonathan Shadowhunter, the first of them all.



“Maellartach,” she said, giving the Sword its name.

The Consul, taking the Sword, looked amused again. “You *have* been studying up,” he said. “Which of you has been teaching her? William? James?”

“Tessa picks things up on her own, sir,” Will’s drawl was bland and cheerful, at odds with the grim feeling in the room. “She’s very inquisitive.”

“All the more reason she shouldn’t be here.” Tessa didn’t have to turn; she knew the voice. Benedict Lightwood. “This is the Gard Council. We don’t bring Downworlders to this place.” His voice was tight. “The Mortal Sword cannot be used to make her tell the truth; she’s not a Shadowhunter. What use is she, or it, here?”

“Patience, Benedict.” Consul Wayland held the Sword lightly, as if it weighed nothing. His gaze on Tessa was heavier. She felt as if he were searching her face, reading the fear in her eyes. “We are not going to hurt you, little warlock,” he said. “The Accords would forbid it.”

“You should not call me warlock,” Tessa said. “I bear no warlock’s mark.” It was strange, having to say this again, but when she had been questioned before, it had always been by members of the Clave, not the Consul himself. He was a tall, broad-shouldered man, exuding a sense of power and authority. Just the sort of power and authority that Benedict Lightwood so resented Charlotte laying claim to.

“Then, what are you?” he asked.

“She doesn’t know.” The Inquisitor’s tone was dry. “Neither do the Silent Brothers.”

“She may be allowed to sit,” said the Consul. “And to give

evidence, but her testimony will be counted only as half a Shadowhunter's." He turned to the Branwells. "In the meantime, Henry, you are dismissed from questioning for the moment. Charlotte, please remain."

Tessa swallowed back her resentment and went to sit in the front row of seats, where she was joined by a drawn-looking Henry, whose gingery hair was sticking up wildly. Jessamine was there, in a dress of pale brown alpaca, looking bored and annoyed. Tessa sat down next to her, with Will and Jem on her other side. Jem was directly beside her, and as the seats were narrow, she could feel the warmth of his shoulder against hers.

At first the Council proceeded much as had other meetings of the Enclave. Charlotte was called upon to give her recollections of the night when the Enclave attacked the stronghold of the vampire de Quincey, killing him and those of his followers who'd been present, while Tessa's brother, Nate, had betrayed their trust in him and allowed the Magister, Axel Mortmain, entry into the Institute, where he had murdered two of the servants and nearly kidnapped Tessa. When Tessa was called up, she said the same things she had said before, that she did not know where Nate was, that she had not suspected him, that she had known nothing of her powers until the Dark Sisters had shown them to her, and that she had always thought her parents were human.

"Richard and Elizabeth Gray have been thoroughly investigated," said the Inquisitor. "There is no evidence to suggest either was anything but human. The boy, the brother—human as well. It could well be that, as Mortmain hinted, the girl's father is a demon, but if so, there is the question of the missing warlock mark."

“Most curious, everything about you, including this power of yours,” said the Consul, looking at Tessa with eyes that were steady and pale blue. “You have no idea what its limits, its constructs are? Have you been tested with an item of Mortmain’s? To see if you can access his memories or thoughts?”

“Yes, I—tried. With a button he had left behind him. It should have worked.”

“But?”

She shook her head. “I could not do it. There was no spark to it, no—no life. Nothing for me to connect with.”

“Convenient,” muttered Benedict, almost too low to be heard, but Tessa heard it, and flushed.

The Consul indicated that she might take her seat again. She caught sight of Benedict Lightwood’s face as she did so; his lips were compressed into a thin, furious line. She wondered what she could possibly have said to anger him.

“And no one has seen hide nor hair of this Mortmain since Miss Gray’s ... altercation with him in the Sanctuary,” the Consul went on as Tessa took her seat.

The Inquisitor flipped some of the papers that were stacked on the lectern. “His houses have been searched and found to be completely emptied of all his belongings. His warehouses were searched with the same result. Even our friends at Scotland Yard have investigated. The man has vanished. Quite literally, as our young friend William Herondale tells us.”

Will smiled brilliantly as if complimented, though Tessa, seeing the malice under the smile, thought of light sparking off the cutting edge of a razor.

“My suggestion,” said the Consul, “is that Charlotte and

Henry Branwell be censured, and that for the next three months their official actions, undertaken on behalf of the Clave, be required to pass through me for approval before—”

“My lord Consul.” A firm, clear voice spoke out from the crowd. Heads swiveled, staring; Tessa got the feeling that this—someone interrupting the Consul midspeech—didn’t happen very often. “If I might speak.”

The Consul’s eyebrows went up. “Benedict Lightwood,” he said. “You had your chance to speak earlier, during the testimonials.”

“I hold no arguments with the testimonials given,” said Benedict Lightwood. His beaky, sharp profile looked even sharper in the witchlight. “It is your sentence I take issue with.”

The Consul leaned forward on the lectern. He was a big man, thick-necked and deep-chested, and his large hands looked as if he could span Benedict’s throat easily with a single one. Tessa rather wished he would. From what she had seen of Benedict Lightwood, she did not like him. “And why is that?”

“I think you have let your long friendship with the Fairchild family blind you to Charlotte’s shortcomings as head of the Institute,” said Benedict, and there was an audible intake of breath in the room. “The blunders committed on the night of July the fifth did more than embarrass the Clave and lose us the Pyxis. We have damaged our relationship with London’s Downworlders by futilely attacking de Quincy.”

“There have already been a number of complaints lodged through Reparations,” rumbled the Consul. “But those will be dealt with as the Law sees fit. Reparations aren’t really your concern, Benedict—”

"And," Benedict went on, his voice rising, "worst of all, she has let a dangerous criminal with plans to harm and destroy Shadowhunters escape, and we have no idea where he might be. Nor is the responsibility for finding him being laid where it should be, on the shoulders of those who lost him!"

His voice rose. In fact, the whole room was in an uproar; Charlotte looked dismayed, Henry confused, and Will furious. The Consul, whose eyes had darkened alarmingly when Benedict had mentioned the Fairchilds—they must have been Charlotte's family, Tessa realized—remained silent as the noise died down. Then he said, "Your hostility toward the leader of your Enclave does not do you credit, Benedict."

"My apologies, Consul. I do not believe that keeping Charlotte Branwell as the head of the Institute—for we all know that Henry Branwell's involvement is nominal at most—is in the best interests of the Clave. I believe a woman cannot run an Institute; women do not think with logic and discretion but with the emotions of the heart. I have no doubt that Charlotte is a good and decent woman, but a *man* would not have been fooled by a flimsy spy like Nathaniel Gray—"

"I was fooled." Will had leaped to his feet and swung around, eyes blazing. "We all were. What insinuations are you making about myself and Jem and Henry, Mr. Lightwood?"

"You and Jem are children," said Benedict cuttingly. "And Henry never looks up from his worktable."

Will started to climb over the back of his chair; Jem tugged him back into his seat with main force, hissing under his breath. Jessamine clapped her hands together, her brown eyes bright.

"This is *finally* exciting," she exclaimed.

Tessa looked at her in disgust. "Are you hearing any of this? He's insulting Charlotte!" she whispered, but Jessamine brushed her off with a gesture.

"And who would you suggest run the Institute instead?" the Consul demanded of Benedict, his voice dripping sarcasm. "Yourself, perhaps?"

Benedict spread his hands wide self-deprecatingly. "If you say so, Consul..."

Before he could finish speaking, three other figures had risen of their own accord; two Tessa recognized as members of the London Enclave, though she did not know their names; the third was Lilian Highsmith.

Benedict smiled. Everyone was staring at him now; beside him sat his youngest son Gabriel, who was looking up at his father with unreadable green eyes. His slim fingers gripped the back of the chair in front of him.

"Three to support my claim," Benedict said. "That's what the Law requires for me to formally challenge Charlotte Branwell for the position of head of the London Enclave."

Charlotte gave a little gasp but sat motionless in her seat, refusing to turn around. Jem still had Will by the wrist. And Jessamine continued to look as if she were watching an exciting play.

"No," said the Consul.

"You cannot prevent me from challenging—"

"Benedict, you challenged my appointment of Charlotte the moment I made it. You've always wanted the Institute. Now, when the Enclave needs to work together more than ever, you bring division and contention to the proceedings of the Council."

“Change is not always accomplished peacefully, but that does not make it disadvantageous. My challenge stands.” Benedict’s hands gripped each other.

The Consul drummed his fingers on the lectern. Beside him the Inquisitor stood, cold-eyed. Finally the Consul said, “You suggest, Benedict, that the responsibility of finding Mortmain should be laid upon the shoulders of those who you claim ‘lost him.’ You would agree, I believe, that finding Mortmain is our first priority?”

Benedict nodded curtly.

“Then, my proposal is this: Let Charlotte and Henry Branwell have charge of the investigation into Mortmain’s whereabouts. If by the end of two weeks they have not located him, or at least some strong evidence pointing to his location, then the challenge may go forward.”

Charlotte shot forward in her seat. “Find Mortmain?” she said. “Alone, just Henry and I—with no help from the rest of the Enclave?”

The Consul’s eyes when they rested on her were not unfriendly, but neither were they entirely forgiving. “You may call upon other members of the Clave if you have some specific need, and of course the Silent Brothers and Iron Sisters are at your disposal,” he said. “But as for the investigation, yes, that is for you to accomplish on your own.”

“I don’t like this,” complained Lilian Highsmith. “You’re turning the search for a madman into a game of power—”

“Do you wish to withdraw your support for Benedict, then?” asked the Consul. “His challenge would be ended and there would be no need for the Branwells to prove themselves.”

Lilian opened her mouth—and then, at a look from Benedict, closed it. She shook her head.

“We have just lost our servants,” said Charlotte in a strained voice. “Without them—”

“New servants will be provided to you, as is standard,” said the Consul. “Your late servant Thomas’s brother, Cyril, is traveling here from Brighton to join your household, and the Dublin Institute has given up its second cook for you. Both are well-trained fighters—which, I must say, Charlotte, yours should have been as well.”

“Both Thomas and Agatha *were* trained,” Henry protested.

“But you have several in your house who are not,” said Benedict. “Not only is Miss Lovelace woefully behind in her training, but your parlor girl, Sophie, and that Downworlder there—” He pointed at Tessa. “Well, since you seem bent on making her a permanent addition to your household, it would hardly hurt if she—and the maid—were trained in the basics of defense.”

Tessa looked sideways at Jem in astonishment. “He means *me?*”

Jem nodded. His expression was somber.

“I can’t—I’ll chop off my own foot!”

“If you’re going to chop off anyone’s foot, chop off Benedict’s,” Will muttered.

“You’ll be fine, Tessa. It’s nothing you can’t do—” Jem began, but the rest of his words were drowned out by Benedict.

“In fact,” Benedict said, “since the two of you will be so busy investigating Mortmain’s whereabouts, I suggest I lend you my sons—Gabriel, and Gideon, who returns from Spain tonight—as



trainers. Both are excellent fighters and could use the teaching experience.”

“Father!” Gabriel protested. He looked horrified; clearly this was not something Benedict had discussed with him in advance.

“We can train our own servants,” Charlotte snapped, but the Consul shook his head at her.

“Benedict Lightwood is offering you a generous gift. Accept it.”

Charlotte was crimson in the face. After a long moment she bent her head, acknowledging the Consul’s words. Tessa felt dizzy. She was going to be trained? Trained to fight, to throw knives and swing a sword? Of course, one of her favorite heroines had always been Capitola in *The Hidden Hand*, who could fight as well as a man—and dressed like one. But that didn’t mean she wanted to *be* her.

“Very well,” said the Consul. “This session of the Council is ended, to be reconvened here, in the same location, in a fortnight. You are all dismissed.”

Of course, everyone did not depart immediately. There was a sudden clamor of voices as people began to rise from their seats and chatter eagerly with their neighbors. Charlotte sat still; Henry beside her, looked as if he wanted desperately to say something comforting but could think of nothing. His hand hovered uncertainly over his wife’s shoulder. Will was glaring across the room at Gabriel Lightwood, who looked coldly in their direction.

Slowly Charlotte rose to her feet. Henry had his hand on her back now, murmuring. Jessamine was already standing, twirling her new white lace parasol. Henry had replaced the old one that had been destroyed in battle with Mortmain’s automatons. Her

hair was done up in tight bunches over her ears like grapes. Tessa got quickly to her feet, and the group of them headed up the center aisle of the Council room. Tessa caught whispers on each side of her, bits of the same words, over and over: “Charlotte,” “Benedict,” “never find the Magister,” “two weeks,” “challenge,” “Consul,” “Mortmain,” “Enclave,” “humiliating.”

Charlotte walked with her back straight, her cheeks red, and her eyes gazing straight ahead as if she couldn’t hear the gossip. Will seemed about to lunge off toward the whisperers to administer rough justice, but Jem had a firm grip on the back of his *parabatai*’s coat. Being Jem, Tessa reflected, must be a great deal like being the owner of a thoroughbred dog that liked to bite your guests. You had to have a hand on his collar constantly. Jessamine merely looked bored again. She wasn’t terribly interested in what the Enclave thought of her, or any of them.

By the time they had reached the doors of the Council chamber, they were nearly running. Charlotte paused a moment to let the rest of their group catch up. Most of the crowd was streaming off to the left, where Tessa, Jem, and Will had come from, but Charlotte turned right, marched several paces down the hall, spun around a corner, and abruptly stopped.

“Charlotte?” Henry, catching up to her, sounded worried. “Darling—”

Without warning Charlotte drew her foot back and kicked the wall, as hard as she could. As the wall was stone, this did little damage, though Charlotte let out a low shriek.

“Oh, my,” said Jessamine, twirling her parasol.

“If I might make a suggestion,” said Will. “About twenty paces behind us, in the Council room, is Benedict. If you’d like

to go back in there and try kicking *him*, I recommend aiming upward and a bit to the left—”

“Charlotte.” The deep, gravelly voice was instantly recognizable. Charlotte spun around, her brown eyes widening.

It was the Consul. The runes picked out in silver thread on the hem and sleeves of his cloak glittered as he moved toward the little group from the Institute, his gaze on Charlotte. One hand against the wall, she didn’t move.

“Charlotte,” Consul Wayland said again, “you know what your father always said about losing your temper.”

“He did say that. He also said that he should have had a son,” Charlotte replied bitterly. “If he had—if I were a man—would you have treated me as you just did?”

Henry put his hand on his wife’s shoulder, murmuring something, but she shook it off. Her large, hurt brown eyes were on the Consul.

“And how did I just treat you?” he asked.

“As if I were a child, a little girl who needed scolding.”

“Charlotte, I am the one who named you as head of the Institute and the Enclave.” The Consul sounded exasperated. “I did it not just because I was fond of Granville Fairchild and knew he wanted his daughter to succeed him, but because I thought you would accomplish the job well.”

“You named Henry, too,” she said. “And you even told us when you did it that it was because the Enclave would accept a married couple as their leader, but not a woman alone.”

“Well, congratulations, Charlotte. I do not think any members of the London Enclave are under the impression that they are in any way being led by Henry.”

"It's true," Henry said, looking at his shoes. "They all know I'm rather useless. It's my fault all this happened, Consul—"

"It isn't," said Consul Wayland. "It is a combination of a generalized complacency on the part of the Clave, bad luck and bad timing, and some poor decisions on your part, Charlotte. Yes, I am holding you accountable for them—"

"So you agree with Benedict!" Charlotte cried.

"Benedict Lightwood is a blackguard and a hypocrite," said the Consul wearily. "Everyone knows that. But he is politically powerful, and it is better to placate him with this show than it would be to antagonize him further by ignoring him."

"A show? Is that what you call this?" Charlotte demanded bitterly. "You have set me an impossible task."

"I have set you the task of locating the Magister," said Consul Wayland. "The man who broke into the Institute, killed your servants, took your Pyxis, and plans to build an army of clockwork monsters to destroy us all—in short, a man who must be stopped. As head of the Enclave, Charlotte, stopping him is your task. If you consider it impossible, then perhaps you should ask yourself why you want the job so badly in the first place."