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CASSANDRA CLARE
SARAH REES BRENNAN

TALES FROM THE
SHADOWHUNTER ACADEMY

Nothing
but Shadows

MADE IN
BROOKLYN

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Nothing but Shadows

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I knew nothing but shadows, and I thought them to be real.

—Oscar Wilde

Shadowhunter Academy, 2008

The afternoon sunlight was streaming warm through the arrow-slit windows of their classroom, painting the gray stone walls yellow. The elites and the dregs alike were sleepy from a long morning of training with Scarsbury, and Catarina Loss was giving them a history lesson. History applied to both the elites and the dregs, so they could all learn of the glory of the Shadowhunters and aspire to be a part of that glory. In this class, Simon thought, none of them seemed that different from each other—not that they were all united in aspiring to glory, but they were all equally glazed with boredom.

Until Marisol answered a question correctly, and Jon Cartwright kicked the back of her chair.

“Awesome,” Simon hissed behind his book. “That’s really cool behavior. Congratulations, Jon. Every time a mundie answers a question wrong, you say it’s because they can’t rise to the level of Shadowhunters. And every time one of us answers a question right, you punish them. I have to admire your consistency.”

George Lovelace leaned back in his chair and grinned, feeding Simon his next line. “I don’t see how that’s consistent, Si.”

“Well, he’s consistently a jackass,” Simon explained.

“I can think of a few other words for him,” George remarked. “But some of them cannot be used around ladies, and some of them are Gaelic and cannot be understood by you mad foreigners.”

Jon looked upset. Possibly he was upset that their chairs were too far away to kick.

“I just think she shouldn’t speak out of turn,” he said.

“It’s true that if you mundies listened to us *Shadowhunters*,” said Julie, “you might learn something.”

“If you Shadowhunters ever listened,” said Sunil, a mundie boy who lived down the (slimy) hallway from George and Simon, “you might learn a few things yourself.”

Voices were rising. Catarina was beginning to look very annoyed. Simon gestured to Marisol and Jon to be quiet, but they both ignored him. Simon felt the same way as when he and Clary had set fire in his kitchen by trying to toast grapes and create raisins when they were six: amazed and appalled that things had gone wrong so fast.

Then he realized that was a new memory. He grinned at the thought of Clary with exploded grape juice on her red hair, and let the classroom situation escalate.

“I’ll teach you some lessons down in the training grounds,” Jon snapped. “I could challenge you to a duel. Watch your mouth.”

“That’s not a bad idea,” remarked Marisol.

“Oh, hey now,” said Beatriz. “Duels with fourteen-year-olds *are* a bad idea.”

Everyone looked with scorn upon Beatriz, the voice of reason.

Marisol sniffed. “Not a duel. A challenge. If the elites beat us in a challenge, then they get to speak out first in class for a week. If we beat them, then they hold their tongues.”

“I’ll do it, and you’ll be sorry you ever suggested it, mundie. What’s the challenge?” Jon asked. “Staff, sword, bow, dagger work, a horse race, a boxing match? I’m ready!”

Marisol smiled sweetly. “Baseball.”

Cue mass puzzlement and panicked looks among the Shadowhunters.

“I’m not ready,” George whispered. “I’m not American and I don’t play baseball. Is it like cricket? Si? Or more like hurling?”

“You have a sport called hurling in Scotland?” Simon whispered back. “What do you hurl? Potatoes? Small children? Weird.”

"I'll explain later," said George.

"I'll explain baseball," said Marisol with a glint in her eye.

Simon had the feeling Marisol was going to be a terrifying, tiny expert on baseball, the same way she was at fencing. He also had the feeling the elite stream was in for a surprise.

"And I will explain how a demonic plague almost wiped out the Shadowhunters," said Catarina loudly from the front of the class. "Or I would, if my students would stop bickering and listen for one minute!"

Everybody went very quiet, and listened meekly about the plague. It was only when the lesson ended that everyone started talking about the baseball game again. Simon had at least played before, so he was hurrying to put away his books and go outside when Catarina said: "Daylighter. Wait."

"Really, 'Simon' would be fine," Simon told her.

"The elite kids are trying to replicate the school they have heard about from their parents," Catarina said. "Mundie students are meant to be seen and not heard, to soak up the privilege of being among the Shadowhunters and prepare for their Ascension or death in a spirit of humility. Except you really have been stirring up trouble among them."

Simon blinked. "Are you telling me not to be so hard on the Shadowhunters, because it's just the way they were raised?"

"Be as hard on the smug little idiots as you like," said Catarina. "It's good for them. I'm just telling you so you realize what an effect you're having—and what an effect you could have. You're in an almost unique position, Daylighter. I only know of one other student who dropped from the elites to the dregs—not counting Lovelace, who would have been in the dregs from the beginning if the Nephilim didn't make smug assumptions. But then, smug assumptions are their favorite thing."

That had the effect Catarina must have known it would. Simon stopped trying to fit his copy of *The Shadowhunter's Codex* into his bag and sat down. The rest of the class would take some time to prepare before they actually had the baseball game. Simon could spare a little while.

"Was he a mundane too?"

"No, he was a Shadowhunter," Catarina said. "He went to the Academy more than a century ago. His name was James Herondale."

"A Herondale? Another Herondale?" Simon asked. "Herondales without cease. Do you ever get the feeling you are being chased around by Herondales?"

"Not really," Catarina said. "Not that I'd mind. Magnus says they tend to be a good-looking lot. Of course, Magnus also says they tend to be strange in the head. James Herondale was a bit of a special case."

"Let me guess," Simon said. "He was blond, smug, and adored by the populace."

Catarina's ivory eyebrows rose. "No, I recall Ragnor mentioning he had dark hair and spectacles. There was another boy at school, Matthew Fairchild, who did answer to that description. They did not get along particularly well."

"Really?" said Simon, and reconsidered. "Well then, Team James Herondale. I bet that Matthew guy was a jackass."

"Oh, I don't know," said Catarina. "I always thought he was a charmer, myself. Most people did. Everybody liked Matthew."

This Matthew guy *must* have been a charmer, Simon thought. Catarina rarely spoke about other Shadowhunters with anything like approval, but here she was smiling fondly over a boy from a hundred years ago.

"Everybody except James Herondale?" Simon asked. "The Shadowhunter who got thrown out of the Shadowhunter course. Did Matthew Fairchild have anything to do with that?"

Catarina stepped out from behind her teacher's desk and went to the arrow-slit window. The rays of

the dying sun struck through her hair in brilliant white lines, almost giving her a halo. But not quite. “James Herondale was the son of angels and demons,” she said softly. “He was always fated to walk a difficult and painful path, to drink bitter water with sweet, to tread where there were thorns as well as flowers. Nobody could save him from that. People did try.”

Shadowhunter Academy, 1899

James Herondale told himself that he was feeling sick only because of the jolting of the carriage. He was really very excited to be going to school.

Father had borrowed Uncle Gabriel’s new carriage so he could take James from Alicante to the Academy, just the two of them.

Father had not asked if he could borrow Uncle Gabriel’s carriage.

“Don’t look so serious, Jamie,” Father said, murmuring a Welsh word to the horses that made them trot faster. “Gabriel would want us to have the carriage. It’s all between family.”

“Uncle Gabriel mentioned last night that he had recently had the carriage painted. Many times. And he has threatened to summon the constabulary and have you arrested,” said James. “Many times.”

“Gabriel will stop fussing about it in a few years.” Father winked one blue eye at James. “Because we will all be driving automobiles by then.”

“Mother says you can never drive an automobile,” said James. “She made me and Lucie promise that if you ever did, we would not climb into it.”

“Your mother was just joking.”

James shook his head. “She made us swear on the Angel.”

He grinned up at his father. Father shook his head at Jamie, the wind catching at his black hair. Mother said Father and Jamie had the same hair, but Jamie knew his own hair was always untidy. He had heard people call his father’s hair *unruly*, which meant being untidy with charisma.

The first day of school was not a good day for James to be thinking about how very different he was from his father.

During their drive from Alicante, several people stopped them on the road, calling out the usual exclamation: “Oh, Mr. Herondale!”

Shadowhunter ladies of many ages said that to his father: three words that were both sigh and summons. Other fathers were called “Mister” without the “Oh” prefix.

With such a remarkable father, people tended to look for a son who would be perhaps a lesser star than Will Herondale’s blazing sun, but still someone shining. They were always subtly but unmistakably disappointed to find James, who was not very remarkable at all.

James remembered one incident that made the difference between him and his father starkly apparent. It was always the tiniest moments that came back to James in the middle of the night and mortified him the very most, like it was always the almost invisible cuts that kept stinging.

A mundane lady had wandered up to them at Hatchards bookshop in London. Hatchards was the nicest bookshop in the city, James thought, with its dark wood and glass front, which made the whole shop look solemn and special, and its secret nooks and hidey-holes inside where one could curl up with a book and be quite quiet. James’s family often went to Hatchards all together, but when James and his father went alone ladies quite often found a reason to wander over to them and strike up conversation.

Father told the lady that he spent his days hunting evil and rare first editions. Father could always find something to say to people, could always make them laugh. It seemed a strange, wondrous power to James, as impossible to achieve as it would be for him to shape-shift like a werewolf.

James did not worry about the ladies approaching Father. Father never once looked at any woman

the way he looked at Mother, with joy and thanksgiving, as if she was a living wish, granted past a hope.

James did not know many people, but he was good at being quiet and noticing. He knew that what lay between his parents was something rare and precious.

He worried only because the ladies approaching Father were strangers James would have to talk to.

The lady in the bookshop had leaned down and asked: "And what do you like to do, little man?"

"I like—books," James had said. While standing in the bookshop, with a parcel of books under his arm. The lady had given him a pitying look. "I read—erm—rather a lot," James went on, dreading the master of the obvious. King of the obvious. Emperor of the obvious.

The lady was so unimpressed that she wandered off without another word.

James never knew what to say to people. He never knew how to make them laugh. He had lived thirteen years of his life, mainly at the Institute in London, with his parents and his little sister, Lucie, and a great many books. He had never had a friend who was a boy.

Now he was going to Shadowhunter Academy, to learn to be as great a warrior as his father, and the warrior bit was not half as worrying as the fact he was going to have to talk to people.

There were going to be a lot of people.

There was going to be a lot of talking.

James wondered why the wheels did not fall right off Uncle Gabriel's carriage. He wondered why the world was so cruel.

"I know that you are nervous about going to school," Father said at length. "Your mother and I were not sure about sending you."

James bit his lip. "Did you think I would be a disaster?"

"What?" Father said. "Of course not! Your mother was simply worried about sending away the only other person in the house who has any sense."

James smiled.

"We've been very happy, having our little family all together," Father said. "I never thought I could be so happy. But perhaps we have kept you too isolated in London. It would be nice for you to find some friends your own age. Who knows, you might meet your future *parabatai* at the Academy."

Father could say what he liked about it being his and Mother's fault for keeping them isolated. James knew it was not true. Lucie had gone to France with Mother and met Cordelia Carstairs, and in two weeks they had become what Lucie described as bosom companions. They sent each other letters every week, reams and reams of paper crossed out and containing sketches. Lucie was as isolated as James was. James had gone on visits too, and never made a bosom companion. The only person who liked him was a girl, and nobody could know about Grace. Perhaps even Grace would not like him, she knew any other people.

It was not his parents' fault that he had no friends. It was some flaw within James himself.

"Perhaps," Father went on casually, "you and Alastair Carstairs will take a liking to each other."

"He's older than me!" James protested. "He won't have any time for a new boy."

Father smiled a wry little smile. "Who knows? That is the wonderful thing about making changes and meeting strangers, Jamie. You never know when, and you never know who, but someday a stranger will burst through the door of your life and transform it utterly. The world will be turned upside down, and you will be happier for it."

Father had been so happy when Lucie befriended Cordelia Carstairs. Father's *parabatai* had once been called James Carstairs, though his official name now that he belonged to the Silent Brothers—the order of blind, runed monks that aided the Shadowhunters in the darkness—was Brother Zachariah. Father had told James a thousand times about meeting Uncle Jem, how for years Uncle Jem had been the only one who believed in him, who saw his true self. Until Mother came.

“I have spoken to you often of your mother and your uncle Jem and all they did for me. They made me a new person. They saved my soul,” Father said, serious as he rarely was. “You do not know what it is, to be saved and transformed. But you will. As your parents, we must give you opportunities to be challenged and changed. That was why we agreed to send you to school. Even though we will miss you terribly.”

“Terribly?” James asked, shyly.

“Your mother says she will be brave and keep a stiff upper lip,” said Father. “Americans are heartless. I will cry into my pillow every night.”

James laughed. He knew he did not laugh often, and Father looked particularly pleased whenever he could make James do it. James was, at thirteen, a little old for such displays, but since it would be months and months until he saw Father again and he was a little frightened to be going to school, he nestled up against Father and took his hand. Father held the reins in one hand and put his own arm around James’s linked hands into the deep pocket of his driving coat. James rested with his cheek against Father’s shoulder, not minding the jolting of the carriage as they went down the country roads of Idria.

He did want a *parabatai*. He wanted one badly.

A *parabatai* was a friend who had chosen you to be their best friend, who had made their friendship permanent. They were that sure about how much they liked you, that sure they would never want to take it back. Finding a *parabatai* seemed to James the key to everything, the essential first step to a life where he could be as happy as his father was, be as brilliant a Shadowhunter as his father was, find a love as great as the love his father had found.

Not that James had any particular girl in mind, James told himself, and crushed all thoughts of Grace, the secret girl; Grace, who needed to be rescued.

He wanted a *parabatai*, and that made the Academy a thousand times more terrifying.

James was safe for this little time, resting against his father, but all too soon they reached the valley where the school rested.

The Academy was magnificent, a gray building that shone among the gathered trees like a pearl. It reminded James of the Gothic buildings from books like *The Mysteries of Udolpho* and *The Castle of Otranto*. Set in the gray face of the building was a huge stained-glass window shining with a dozen brilliant colors, showing an angel wielding a blade.

The angel was looking down on a courtyard teeming with students, all talking and laughing, all there to become the best Shadowhunters they could possibly be. If James could not find a friend here, he knew, he would not be able to find a friend in all the world.

* * *

Uncle Gabriel was already in the courtyard. His face had turned an alarming shade of puce. He was shouting something about thieving Herondales.

Father turned to the dean, a lady who was unquestionably fifty years old, and smiled. She blushed.

“Dean Ashdown, would you be so very kind as to give me a tour of the Academy? I was raised at the London Institute with just one other pupil.” Father’s voice softened, as it always did when he spoke of Uncle Jem. “I never had the privilege of attending myself.”

“Oh, Mr. Herondale!” said Dean Ashdown. “Very well.”

“Thank you,” said Father. “Come on, Jamie.”

“Oh no,” said James. “I’ll—I’ll stay here.”

He felt uneasy as soon as Father was out of his sight, sailing off with the dean on his arm and a wicked smile at Uncle Gabriel, but James knew he had to be brave, and this was the perfect opportunity. Among the crowd of students in the courtyard, James had seen two boys he knew.

One was tall for almost-thirteen, with an untidy shock of light brown hair. He had his face turned

away, but James knew the boy had startling lavender eyes. He had heard girls at parties saying those eyes were wasted on a boy, especially a boy as strange as Christopher Lightwood.

James knew his cousin Christopher better than any other boy at the Academy. Aunt Cecily and Uncle Gabriel had spent a lot of time in Idris over the past few years, but before that both families had been together often: they had all gone down to Wales together for a few holidays, before Grandma and Grandpa died. Christopher was slightly odd and extremely vague, but he was always nice to James.

The boy standing beside Christopher was small and thin as a lath, his head barely coming up to Christopher's shoulder.

Thomas Lightwood was Christopher's cousin, not James's, but James called Thomas's mother Aunt Sophie because she was Mother's very best friend. James liked Aunt Sophie, who was so pretty and always kind. She and her family had been living in Idris for the past few years as well, with Aunt Cecily and Uncle Gabriel—Aunt Sophie's husband was Uncle Gabriel's brother. Aunt Sophie came to London on visits by herself, though. James had seen Mother and Aunt Sophie walk out of the practice rooms giggling together as if they were girls as little as his sister, Lucie. Aunt Sophie had once called Thomas her shy boy. That had made James think he and Thomas might have a lot in common.

At the big family gatherings when they were all together, James had sneaked a few glances at Thomas, and found him always hanging quiet and uneasy on the fringes of a bigger group, usually looking to one of the older boys. He'd wanted to go over to Thomas and strike up a conversation, but he had not been sure what to say.

Two shy people would probably be good friends, but there was the small problem of how to reach that point. James had no idea.

Now was James's chance, though. The Lightwood cousins were his best hope for friends at the Academy. All he had to do was go over and speak to them.

James pushed his way through the crowd, apologizing when other people elbowed him.

"Hullo, boys," said a voice behind James, and someone pushed past James as if he could not see him.

James saw Thomas and Christopher both turn, like flowers toward the sun. They smiled with identical radiant welcome, and James stared at the back of a shining blond head.

There was one other boy James's age at the Academy who he knew a little: Matthew Fairchild, whose parents James called Aunt Charlotte and Uncle Henry because Aunt Charlotte had practically raised Father, when she was the head of the London Institute and before she became Consul, the most important person a Shadowhunter could be.

Matthew had not come to London the few times Aunt Charlotte and his brother, Charles, had visited. Uncle Henry had been wounded in battle years before any of them were born, and he did not leave Idris often, but James was not sure why Matthew did not come visit. Perhaps he enjoyed himself too much in Idris.

One thing James was certain of was that Matthew Fairchild was *not* shy.

James had not seen Matthew in a couple of years, but he remembered him very clearly. At every family gathering where James hung on the edges of crowds or went off to read on the stairs, Matthew was the life and soul of the party. He would talk with grown-ups as if he were a grown-up. He would dance with old ladies. He would charm parents and grandparents, and stop babies from crying. Everybody loved Matthew.

James did not remember Matthew dressing like a maniac before today. Matthew was wearing knee-length breeches when everyone else was wearing the trousers of the sane, and a mulberry-colored velvet jacket. Even his shining golden hair was brushed in a way that struck James as more complicated than the way other boys brushed their hair.

"Isn't this a bore?" Matthew asked Christopher and Thomas, the two boys James wanted for friends.

“Everybody here looks like a dolt. I am already in frightful agony, contemplating my wasted youth. Don’t speak to me, or I shall break down and sob uncontrollably.”

“There, there,” said Christopher, patting Matthew’s shoulder. “What are you upset about again?”

“Your face, Lightwood,” said Matthew, and elbowed him.

Christopher and Thomas both laughed, drawing in close to him. They were all so obviously already friends, and Matthew was so clearly the leader. James’s plan for friends was in ruins.

“Er,” said James, the sound like a tragic social hiccup. “Hello.”

Christopher gazed at him with amiable blankness, and James’s heart, which had already been around his knees, sank to his socks.

Then Thomas said, “Hello!” and smiled.

James smiled back, grateful for an instant, and then Matthew Fairchild turned around to see who Thomas was addressing. He was taller than James, his fair hair outlined by the sun as he looked down on him. Matthew gave the impression that he was looking down from a much greater height than he actually was.

“Jamie Herondale, right?” Matthew drawled.

James bristled. “I prefer James.”

“I’d prefer to be in a school devoted to art, beauty, and culture rather than in a ghastly stone shack in the middle of nowhere filled with louts who aspire to nothing more than whacking demons with great big swords,” said Matthew. “Yet here we are.”

“And I would prefer to have intelligent students,” said a voice behind them. “Yet here I am teaching at a school for the Nephilim.”

They turned and then started, as one. The man behind them had snowy-white hair, which he looked too young to have, and horns poking out among the white locks. The most notable thing about him, however, the thing James noted right away, was that he had green skin the color of grapes.

James knew this must be a warlock. In fact, he knew who it must be: the former High Warlock of London, Ragnor Fell, who lived part-time in the countryside outside Alicante, and who had agreed the year that he would teach in the Academy as a diversion from his magical studies.

James knew warlocks were good people, the allies of the Shadowhunters. Father often talked about his friend Magnus Bane, who had been kind to him when he was young.

Father had never mentioned whether Magnus Bane was green. James had never thought to inquire. Now he was rather urgently wondering.

“Which one of you is Christopher Lightwood?” Ragnor Fell asked in a stern voice. His gaze swept them all, and landed on the most guilty-looking person in the group. “Is it you?”

“Thank the Angel, no,” Thomas exclaimed, and went red under his summer tan. “No offense, Christopher.”

“Oh, none taken,” said Christopher airily. He blinked up at Ragnor, as if the tall, scary green man had entirely escaped his notice up until this moment. “Hello, sir.”

“Are you Christopher Lightwood?” Ragnor asked, somewhat menacingly.

Christopher’s wandering attention became focused on a tree. “Hm? I think so.”

Ragnor glared down at Christopher’s flyaway brown hair. James was beginning to be afraid he would erupt like a green volcano.

“Are you not certain, Mr. Lightwood? Did you perhaps have an unfortunate encounter when you were an infant?”

“Hm?” said Christopher.

Ragnor’s voice rose. “Was the encounter between your infant head and a floor?”

That was when Matthew Fairchild said, “Sir,” and smiled.

James had forgotten about The Smile, even though it was often broken out to great effect at family

parties. The Smile won Matthew extra time before bed, extra Christmas pudding, extra anything he wanted. Adults were helpless to resist The Smile.

Matthew gave his all to this particular smile. Butter melted. Birds sang. People slipped about dazed amid the butter and birdsong.

“Sir, you will have to forgive Christopher. He’s a trifle absentminded, but he is definitely Christopher. It would be very difficult to mistake Christopher for anyone else. I vouch for him, and I can’t deny it.”

The Smile worked on Ragnor, as it worked on all adults. He unbent a tiny bit. “Are you Matthew Fairchild?”

Matthew’s smile became more playful. “I could deny it if I liked. I could deny anything if I liked. But my name certainly is Matthew. It has been Matthew for years.”

“What?” Ragnor Fell looked as if he had fallen into a pit of lunatics and could not get out.

James cleared his throat. “He’s quoting Oscar Wilde, sir.”

Matthew glanced over at him, his dark eyes suddenly wide. “Are you a devotee of Oscar Wilde?”

“He’s a good writer,” James said coldly. “There are a lot of good writers. I read rather a lot,” he added, making it clear that he was certain Matthew did not.

“Gentlemen,” Ragnor Fell put in, his voice a dagger. “If you could tear yourselves away from your fascinating literary conversation for a moment and listen to one of the instructors in the establishment where you have supposedly come to learn? I have a letter here about Christopher Lightwood and the unfortunate incident that caused the Clave such concern.”

“Yes, that was a very unfortunate accident,” said Matthew, nodding earnestly as if he was sure of Ragnor’s sympathy.

“And that was not the word I used, Mr. Fairchild, as I am sure you are aware. The letter says that you have volunteered to take full responsibility for Mr. Lightwood, and that you solemnly promise to keep any and all potential explosives out of his reach for the duration of his time at the Academy.”

James looked from the warlock to Matthew to Christopher, who was regarding a tree with dreamlike benevolence. In desperation, he looked to Thomas.

Explosives? he mouthed.

“Don’t ask,” said Thomas. “Please.”

Thomas was older than James and Christopher, but much smaller. Aunt Sophie had kept him at home an extra year because he was sickly. He did not look sickly now, but he was still rather undersized. His tan, combined with his brown hair and brown eyes and his short stature, made him look like a small, worried horse chestnut. James found himself wanting to pat Thomas on the head.

Matthew patted Thomas on the head.

“Mr. Fell,” he said. “Thomas. Christopher. Jamie.”

“James,” James corrected.

“Do not worry,” Matthew said with immense confidence. “I mean, certainly, worry that we are trapped in an arid warrior culture with no appreciation for the truly important things in life. But do not worry about things exploding, because I will not permit anything to explode.”

“That was all you needed to say,” Ragnor Fell told him. “And you could have said it in far fewer words.”

He walked off, in a swirl of green skin and bad temper.

“He was green!” Thomas whispered.

“Really,” said Matthew, very dry.

“Oh, really?” asked Christopher brightly. “I didn’t notice.”

Thomas gazed sadly at Christopher. Matthew ignored him superbly. “I rather liked the unique hue of our teacher. It reminded me of the green carnations that Oscar Wilde’s followers wear to imitate

him. He had one of the actors in, um, a play of his wear a green carnation onstage.”

“It was *Lady Windermere’s Fan*,” James said.

Matthew was clearly showing off, trying to sound superior and special, and James had no time for it.

Matthew turned The Smile on him. James was unsurprised to find he was immune to its dead effects.

“Yes,” he said. “Of course. Jamie, I can see that as a fellow admirer of Oscar Wilde—”

“Uh,” said a voice to James’s left. “You new boys have barely been here five minutes, and all you can find to talk about is some *mundane* who got sent to prison for indecency?”

“So you know Oscar Wilde too, Alastair?” Matthew asked.

James looked up at the taller, older boy. He had light hair but dark brows, strongly marked, like very judgmental black brushstrokes.

So this was Alastair Carstairs, the brother of Lucie’s best friend, whom Father hoped James would make friends with. James had pictured someone more friendly, more like Cordelia herself.

Perhaps Alastair would be more friendly if he did not associate James with snotty Matthew.

“I know of many mundane criminals,” Alastair Carstairs said in chilly tones. “I read the mundane newspapers to find hints of demonic activity. I certainly don’t bother reading plays.”

The two boys he was with nodded in good Shadowhunter solidarity.

Matthew laughed in their faces. “Naturally. What use do sad, unimaginative little people have for plays?” he asked. “Or paintings, or dancing, or anything that makes life interesting. I am so glad to be at this dank little school where they will try to squeeze down my mind until it is almost as narrow as yours.”

He patted Alastair Carstairs on the arm. James was amazed that he was not immediately struck in the face.

Thomas was staring at Alastair with as much panic as James felt.

“Run along now,” Matthew suggested. “Do. Jamie and I were talking.”

Alastair laughed, his laugh sounding angrier than a sharp word would have. “I was only trying to give you young ones a little guidance about the way we do things in the Academy. If you’re too stupid to take heed, that is not my fault. At least you have a tongue in your head, unlike this one.”

He turned and glared daggers at James. James was so surprised and dismayed at this turn of events—he hadn’t done *anything!*—that he simply stood and stared with his mouth open.

“Yes, you, the one with the peculiar eyes,” Alastair snapped. “What are you gawping at?”

“I—” said James. “I—”

He did have peculiar eyes, he knew. He did not truly need eyeglasses, except for reading, but he wore them all the time in order to conceal his eyes. He could feel himself blushing, and Alastair’s voice became as sharp as his laugh.

“What’s your name?”

“H-Herondale,” James stammered out.

“By the Angel, his eyes *are* awful,” said the boy to Alastair’s right.

Alastair laughed again, this time with more satisfaction. “Yellow. Just like a goat’s.”

“I don’t—”

“Don’t strain yourself, Goatface Herondale,” Alastair said. “Don’t try to speak. You and your friends could perhaps cease obsessing about mundanes and try to think about little matters like saving lives and upholding the Law while you’re here, all right?”

He strolled on, his friends laughing with him. James heard the word spreading through the tight-knit crowd with laughter following it, like the ripples from a stone thrown into a pond.

Goatface. Goatface. Goatface.

Matthew laughed. "Well. What an—"

~~"Thanks so much for dragging me into that," James snapped. He turned on his heel and walked away from the two friends he had hoped for at the Academy, and heard his new name whispered as he went.~~

* * *

James did what he had promised himself he absolutely would not do. He dragged his heavy bag through the courtyard, through the hall, and up several sets of stairs until he found a staircase that seemed private. Then he sat down and opened a book. He told himself that he was only going to read a few pages before he went down again. The Count of Monte Cristo was just descending on his enemies in a balloon.

James emerged hours later, to the sinking realization that the sky had gone dark gray and the sound from the courtyard had faded away. His mother and Lucie were still in London, far away, and now he was sure his father was gone too.

He was trapped in this Academy full of strangers. He did not even know where he was supposed to sleep tonight.

He wandered around trying to find the bedrooms. He did not discover any, but he did find himself enjoying exploring such a big new place on his own. The Academy was a splendid building, the stone walls shining as if they had been polished. The chandeliers seemed made of jewels, and as James wandered in search of the dining hall, he found many beautiful tapestries depicting Shadowhunters through the ages. He stood looking at an intricate, colorful weaving of Jonathan Shadowhunter fighting during the Crusades, until it occurred to him that dinner must be soon and he did not want to draw any further attention to himself.

The sound of hundreds of strange voices alerted James to where the dining room must be. He fought the impulse to run away, steeled himself, and walked through the doors instead. To his relief, people were still assembling, the older students milling around and chatting to each other with the ease of long familiarity. The new students were hovering, much like James himself.

All except Matthew Fairchild, who was surveying the shining mahogany tables with disdain.

"We have to select a very small table," he told Thomas and Christopher, his satellites. "I am here under protest. I will not break bread with the kind of violent ruffians and raving imbeciles who would attend the Academy willingly."

"You know," James said loudly, "Alastair Carstairs was right."

"That seems very unlikely to me," Matthew responded, then turned. "Oh, it's you. Why are you still carrying your bag?"

"I don't have to answer to you," said James, which he was aware was a bizarre thing to say. Thomas blinked at him in distress, as if he had trusted James not to say bizarre things.

"All right," Matthew said agreeably. "Alastair Carstairs was right about what?"

"People are attending the Academy because they hope to become better Shadowhunters, and save lives. That is a noble and worthy goal. You do not have to sneer at everybody you meet."

"But how else am I going to amuse myself in this place?" Matthew protested. "You can sit with us if you want."

There was an amused glint in his brown eyes. James was certain from the way Matthew was looking at him that he was being made fun of, though he could not quite work out how.

"No thanks," James said shortly.

He looked around at the tables, and saw that the first-year Shadowhunters were now settled around the tables in careful, friendly patterns. There were other boys and even a few girls, though, who James could tell were mundanes. It was not so much clothing or build as the way they held themselves: as

they were afraid they might be attacked. Shadowhunters, in contrast, were always ready to attack.

~~There was one boy in shabby clothes sitting by himself. James crossed the dining room to sit at his table.~~

“Can I sit here?” he asked, desperate enough to be blunt.

“Yes!” said the other boy. “Oh yes, please. The name’s Smith. Michael Smith. Mike.”

James reached across the table and shook Mike Smith’s hand. “James Herondale.”

Mike’s eyes widened, clearly recognizing it as a Shadowhunter name. “My mother grew up in the mundane world,” James told him quickly. “In America. New York City.”

“Your mother was a mundane?” said a girl, coming over and sitting at his table. “Esme Philpott,” she added, shaking hands briskly. “I shan’t keep it when I Ascend. I’m thinking of changing the Esme too.”

James did not know what to say. He did not wish to insult a lady’s name by agreeing with her or insult a lady by arguing with her. He was not prepared to be approached by a strange girl. Very few girls were sent to the Academy: of course girls could be just as fine warriors as boys, but not everybody thought that way, and many Shadowhunter families wanted to keep their girls close. Some people thought the Academy had far too many rules, and some far too few. Thomas’s sisters, who were very proper, had not come to the Academy. Family legend reported that his cousin Ann Lightwood, who was the least proper person imaginable, had said if they sent her to the Academy, she would run away and become a mundane bullfighter.

“Mmm,” said James, a silver-tongued devil with the ladies.

“Did your mother Ascend with no trouble?” Mike asked eagerly.

James bit his lip. He was accustomed to everyone knowing the history of his mother: the child of a stolen Shadowhunter and a demon. Any child of a Shadowhunter was a Shadowhunter. Mother belonged to the Shadowhunter world as much as any of the Nephilim. Only, her skin could not bear Marks, and there had never before been anyone like her in the world. James did not quite know how to explain to people who did not know already. He was afraid he would explain wrong, and the explanation would reflect badly on Mother.

“I know a lot of people who Ascended with no trouble,” James said at last. “My aunt Sophie—Sophie Lightwood now—she was a mundane. Father says there never was anyone so brave, before or after Ascension.”

“What a relief!” said Esme. “Tell me, I think I’ve heard of Sophie Lightwood—”

“What a fearful comedown,” said one of the boys James had seen with Alastair Carstairs earlier. “Goatface Herondale is actually reduced to sitting with the *dregs*.”

Alastair and his other friend laughed. They went to sit at a table with other, older Shadowhunters, and James was certain he heard the word “Goatface” whispered more than once. He felt he was boiling from the inside out with shame.

As for Matthew Fairchild, James looked over at him only once or twice. After James had left him standing in the middle of the dining hall, Matthew had tossed his stupid blond head and chosen a very large table to sit at. He clearly had not meant a word about being so select. He sat with Thomas and Christopher on either side of him like a prince holding court, calling out jokes and summoning people to his side, and soon his table was crowded. He charmed several of the Shadowhunter students away from their tables. Even some of the older students came over to listen to one of Matthew’s apparently terribly amusing stories. Even Alastair Carstairs came over for a few minutes. Obviously he and Matthew were great friends now.

James caught Mike Smith looking over at Matthew’s table longingly, his face that of an outsider barred from all the fun, doomed to always be at the less exciting table with the less interesting people.

James had wanted friends, but he had not wanted to be the kind of friend who people settled for.

because they could not get any better. Except he was, as he had always secretly feared, tedious and poor company. He did not know why books had not taught him how to talk so other people wanted to listen.

* * *

James eventually approached the teachers for help finding his bedroom. He found Dean Ashdown and Ragnor Fell in deep conversation.

“I am so terribly sorry,” said Dean Ashdown. “This is the first time we have ever had a warlock teacher—and we are delighted to have you! We should have thoroughly cleaned out the Academy and made sure there were no remnants of a less peaceful time.”

“Thank you, Dean Ashdown,” Ragnor said. “The removal of the mounted warlock’s head from my bedroom will be sufficient.”

“I am so terribly sorry!” said Dean Ashdown again. She lowered her voice. “Were you acquainted with the—er, deceased gentleman?”

Ragnor eyed her with disfavor. Though that might just be the way Mr. Fell looked. “If you were to happen upon the grotesquely severed head of one of the Nephilim, would you have to be acquainted with him to feel you might perhaps not fancy sleeping in the room where his desecrated corpse remained?”

James coughed in the middle of the dean’s third frantic apology. “I do apologize,” he said. “Could someone direct me to my room? I—got lost and missed all that.”

“Oh, young Mr. Herondale.” The dean looked quite happy to be interrupted. “Of course, let me show you the way. Your father entrusted me with a message for you that I can relay as we go.”

She left Ragnor Fell scowling after them. James hoped he had not made another enemy.

“Your father said—what a charming language Welsh is, isn’t it? So romantic!—*Pob lwc, carai*. What does it mean?”

James blushed, because he was much too old for his father to be calling him by pet names. “It just means—it means good luck.”

He could not help smiling as he trailed the dean down the halls. He was sure nobody else’s father had charmed the dean into giving a student a secret message. He felt warm, and watched over.

Until Dean Ashdown opened the door of his new room, bid him a cheerful good-bye, and left him to his horrible fate.

It was a very nice room, airy, with walnut bedposts and white linen canopies. There was a carved wardrobe and even a bookcase.

There was also a distressing amount of Matthew Fairchild.

He was standing in front of a table that had about fifteen hairbrushes on it, several mysterious bottles, and a strange hoard of combs.

“Hullo, Jamie,” he said. “Isn’t it splendid that we are sharing a room? I am certain we will get along swimmingly.”

“James,” James said. “What are all those hairbrushes for?”

Matthew looked at him pityingly. “You don’t think all this”—he indicated his head with a sweeping gesture—“happens on its own?”

“I only use one hairbrush.”

“Yes,” Matthew observed. “I can tell.”

James dragged his trunk over to the foot of his bed, took out *The Count of Monte Cristo*, and made his way back to the door.

“Jamie?” Matthew asked.

“James!” James snapped.

Matthew laughed. "All right, all right. James, where are you going?"

"Somewhere else," said James, and slammed the door behind him.

He could not believe the bad luck that had randomly assigned him to share a room with Matthew. He found another staircase and read in it until he judged that it was late enough that Matthew would certainly be asleep, and he crept back, lit a candle, and resumed reading in bed.

James might have read a little too long into the night. When he woke up, Matthew was clearly long gone—on top of everything else, he was an early riser—and James was late for his first day of class.

"What else can you expect from Goatface Herondale," said a boy James had never seen before in his life, and several more people sniggered. James grimly took his seat next to Mike Smith.

* * *

The classes in which the elites were separated from the dregs were the worst. James had nobody to speak with then.

Or perhaps the first class of every day was the worst, because James always stayed up late into the night reading to forget his troubles, and was late every day. No matter what time he rose, Matthew was always gone. James assumed Matthew did this to mock him, since he could not imagine Matthew doing anything useful early in the morning.

Or perhaps the training courses were the worst, because Matthew was at his most annoying during the training courses.

"I must regretfully decline to participate," he told their teacher once. "Consider me on strike like the coal miners. Except far more stylish."

The next day, he said: "I abstain on the grounds that beauty is sacred, and there is nothing beautiful about these exercises."

The day after that, he merely said: "I object on aesthetic principles."

He kept saying ridiculous things, until a couple of weeks in, when he said: "I won't do it, because Shadowhunters are idiots and I do not want to be at this idiot school. Why does an accident of birth mean you have to either get ripped away from your family, or you have to spend a short, horrible life brawling with demons?"

"Do you want to be expelled, Mr. Fairchild?" thundered one teacher.

"Do what you feel you must," said Matthew, folding his hands and smiling like a cherub.

Matthew did not get expelled. Nobody seemed quite sure what to do with him. His teachers began calling in sick out of despair.

He did only half the work and insulted everyone in the Academy on a daily basis, and he remained absurdly popular. Thomas and Christopher could not be pried away from him. He wandered the halls surrounded by adoring throngs who wanted to hear another amusing anecdote. His and James's room was always completely crowded.

James spent a good deal of time in the stairwells. He spent even more time being called Goatface Herondale.

"You know," Thomas said shyly once, when James had not managed to escape his own room far enough, "you could pal around with us a little more."

"I could?" James asked, and tried not to sound too hopeful. "I'd . . . like to see more of you and Christopher."

"And Matthew," Thomas said.

James shook his head silently.

"Matthew's one of my best friends," Thomas said, almost pleadingly. "If you spent some time with him, I am sure you would come to like him."

James looked over at Matthew, who was sitting on his bed telling a story to eight people who were

sitting on the floor and gazing up at him worshipfully. He met Matthew's eyes, trained in his and Thomas's direction, and looked away.

"I feel I have to decline any more of Matthew's company."

"It makes you stand out, you know," Thomas said. "Spending your time with the mundanes. I think it's why the—the nickname for you has stuck. People are afraid of anybody who is different: It makes them worry everyone else is different too, and just pretending to be all the same."

James stared at him. "Are you saying I should avoid the mundanes? Because they are not as good as we are?"

"No, that's not—" Thomas began, but James was too angry to let him finish.

"The mundanes can be heroes too," James said. "You should know that better than I. Your mother was a mundane! My father told me about all she did before she Ascended. Everyone here knows people who were mundanes. Why should we isolate people who are brave enough to try to become like us—who want to help people? Why should we treat them as if they're less than us, until they prove their worthiness or die? I won't do it."

Aunt Sophie was just as good as any Shadowhunter, and she had been brave long before she Ascended. Aunt Sophie was Thomas's mother. They should know this better than James did.

"I didn't mean it that way," said Thomas. "I didn't think of it that way."

It was as if people didn't think at all, living in Idris.

"Maybe your fathers don't tell you stories like mine does," James said.

"Maybe not everyone listens to stories like you do," Matthew said from across the room. "Not everyone learns."

James glanced at him. It was an unexpectedly nice thing for Matthew, of all people, to say.

"I know a story," Matthew went on. "Who wants to hear it?"

"Me!" said the chorus from the floor.

"Me!"

"Me!"

"Not me," said James, and left the room.

It was another reminder that Matthew had what James would have given anything for, that Matthew had friends and belonged here at the Academy, and Matthew did not care at all.

Eventually there were so many teachers calling in with an acute overdose of Matthew Fairchild that Ragnor Fell was left to supervise the training courses. James wondered why he was the only one who could see this was absurd, and Matthew was ruining classes for everyone. Ragnor could do magic, and was not at all interested in war.

Ragnor let Esme braid ribbons in her horse's mane so it would look like a noble steed. He agreed to let Christopher build a battering ram to knock down trees, because it would be good practice in case they ever had to lay siege to a castle. He watched Mike Smith hit himself over the head with his own longbow.

"Concussions are nothing to be worried about," said Ragnor placidly. "Unless there is severe bleeding of the brain, in which case he may die. Mr. Fairchild, why are you not participating?"

"I think that violence is repulsive," Matthew said firmly. "I am here against my will and I refuse to participate."

"Would you like me to magically strip you and put you in gear?" Mr. Fell asked. "In front of everybody?"

"That would be a thrill for everybody, I'm sure," said Matthew. Ragnor Fell wiggled his fingers and green sparks spat from his fingertips. James was pleased to see Matthew actually take a step back.

"Might be too thrilling for a Wednesday," Matthew said. "I'll go put on my gear then, shall I?"

"Do," said Ragnor.

He had set up a deck chair and was reading a book. James envied him very much.

~~He also admired his teacher very much. Here was someone who could control Matthew, at last. After all Matthew's lofty talk about abstaining for the sake of art and beauty, James was looking forward to seeing Matthew make an absolute fool of himself on the practice grounds.~~

"Anyone volunteer to catch Matthew up on what you have all been learning?" Ragnor asked. "As I have not the faintest idea what that might be."

Just then Christopher's team of students actually hit a tree with their battering ram. The crash and the chaos meant there was not the rush of volunteers to spend time with Matthew that there would otherwise have been.

"I'd be happy to teach Matthew a lesson," said James.

He was quite good with the staff. He had beat Mike ten times out of ten, and Esme nine times out of ten, and he had been holding back with them. It was possible he would also have to hold back with Matthew.

Except that Matthew came out wearing gear, and looking—for a change—actually like a real Shadowhunter. More like a real Shadowhunter than James did, truth be told, since James was . . . not as short as Thomas, but not tall yet, and what his mother described as wiry. Which was a kind way to say "no real evidence of muscles in view." Several girls, in fact, turned to look at Matthew in gear.

"Mr. Herondale has volunteered to teach you how to staff fight," Ragnor Fell said. "If you plan to murder each other, go farther down the field where I cannot see you and won't have to answer awkward questions."

"James," said Matthew, in the voice that everyone else liked to listen to so much and that struck James as constantly mocking. "This is so kind of you. I think I do remember a few moves with the staff from training with my mama and my brother. Please be patient with me. I may be a little rusty."

Matthew strolled down the field, the sun brilliant on green grass and his gold hair alike, and he weighed the staff in one hand. He turned to James, and James had the sudden impression of narrowed eyes: a look of real and serious intent.

Then Matthew's face and the trees both went sailing by, as Matthew's staff scythed James's legs out from under him and James went tumbling to the ground. James lay there dazed.

"You know," said Matthew thoughtfully. "I may not be so terribly rusty after all."

James scrambled to his feet, clutching at both his staff and his dignity. Matthew moved into position to fight him, the staff as light and easily balanced in his hand as if he were a conductor gesturing with his baton. He moved with easy grace, like any Shadowhunter would, but somehow as if he was playing, as if at any moment he might be dancing.

James realized, to his overwhelming disgust, that this was yet another thing Matthew was good at.

"Best of three," he suggested.

Matthew's staff was a blur between his hands, suddenly. James did not have time to shift position before a jarring blow landed on the arm that was holding his staff, then his left shoulder so he could not defend. James blocked the staff when it came toward his midsection, but that turned out to be a feint. Matthew scythed him off at the knees again and James wound up flat on his back in the grass. Again.

Matthew's face came into view. He was laughing, as usual. "Why stop at three?" he asked. "I can stand around and beat you all day."

James hooked his staff behind Matthew's ankles and tripped him up. He knew it was wrong, but at the moment he did not care.

Matthew landed on the grass with a surprised "Oof!" which James found briefly satisfying. One look there, he seemed happy enough to lie in the grass. James found himself being regarded by one brown eye amid the greenery.

“You know,” Matthew said slowly, “most people like me.”

“Well . . . congratulations!” James snapped, and scrambled to his feet.

It was the exact wrong moment to stand up.

It should have been the last moment of James’s life. Perhaps because he thought it would be the last, it seemed to stretch out, giving James time to see it all: how the battering ram had flown through the hands of Christopher’s team in the wrong direction. He saw the horrified faces of the whole team, even Christopher paying attention for once. He saw the great wooden log, sailing directly at him, and heard Matthew scream a warning much too late. He saw Ragnor Fell jump up, his deck chair flying and lift his hand.

The world transformed into sliding grayness, everything still moving slower than James wanted. Everything was sliding and insubstantial: the battering ram came at him and through him, unable to hurt him; it was like being splashed with water. James lifted a hand and saw the gray air full of stars.

It was Ragnor who had saved him, James thought as the world tipped from bright, strange grayness into black. This was warlock magic.

He did not know until later that the Academy class had all watched, expecting to see a scene of carnage and death, and instead seen a black-haired boy dissolve and change from one of their own into a shadow cast by nothing, a wicked cutout into the abyss behind the world, dark and unmistakable against the afternoon sun. What had been inevitable death, something the Shadowhunters were used to, became something strange and more terrible.

He did not know until later how right he was. It was warlock magic.

* * *

When James woke up, it was night, and Uncle Jem was there.

James reared up from his bed and threw himself into Uncle Jem’s arms. He had heard some people found the Silent Brothers frightening, with their silent speech and their stitched eyes, but to him the sight of a Silent Brother’s robe always meant Uncle Jem, always meant steadfast love.

“Uncle Jem!” he gasped out, arms around his neck, face buried in his robe, safe for a moment. “What happened? Why do I—I felt so strange, and now you’re here, and—”

And the presence of a Silent Brother in the Academy meant nothing good. Father was always inventing excuses for Uncle Jem to come to them—once he had claimed a flowerpot was possessed by a demon. But this was Idris, and a Silent Brother would be summoned to Shadowhunter children only in a time of need.

“Am I—hurt?” asked James. “Is Matthew hurt? He was with me.”

Nobody is hurt, said Uncle Jem. Thanks be to the Angel. It is only that there is now a heavy burden for you to bear, Jamie.

And the knowledge spilled out from Uncle Jem to James, silent and cold as a grave opening, and yet with Uncle Jem’s watchful care mingled with the chill. James shuddered away from the Silent Brother and clung to Uncle Jem at the same time, face wet with tears, fists clutching his robes.

This was his mother’s heritage, was what came from mingling the blood of a Shadowhunter with that of a demon, and then with a Shadowhunter again. They had all thought because James’s skin could bear Marks that James was a Shadowhunter and nothing else, that the blood of the Angel had burned away all else.

It had not. Even the blood of the Angel could not burn away a shadow. James could perform the strange warlock trick, a trick no warlock Uncle Jem knew could perform. He could transform into shadow. He could make himself something that was not flesh or blood—certainly not the blood of the Angel.

“What—what *am* I?” James gasped out, his throat raw with sobs.

You are James Herondale, said Uncle Jem. As you always were. Part your mother, part your father, part yourself. I would not change any part of you if I could.

James would. He would have burned away this part of himself, wrenched it out, done anything he could to be rid of it. He was meant to be a Shadowhunter, he had always known he was, but would a Shadowhunter fight alongside him, with this horror about him revealed?

“Am I—are they throwing me out of school?” he whispered in Uncle Jem’s ear.

No, said Uncle Jem. A feeling of sorrow and anger touched James and then was pulled back. *But James, I do think you should leave. They are afraid that you will—contaminate the purity of the children. They wish to banish you to where the mundane children live. They apparently do not care what happens to the mundane students, and care even less what happens to you. Go home, James. I will bring you home now if you wish it.*

James wanted to go home. He wanted it more than he could remember wanting anything, with a ache that made him feel as if every bone in his body were broken and could not be put back together until he was home. He was loved there, safe there. He would be instantly surrounded in affection and warmth.

Except . . .

“How would my mother feel,” James whispered, “if she knew I had been sent home because of this? She’ll think it’s because of her.”

His mother, with her grave gray eyes and her flower-tender face, as quiet as James and yet as ready with words as Father. James might be a stain upon the world, might be something that would contaminate good Shadowhunter children. He was ready to believe it. But not Mother. Mother was kind, Mother was lovely and loving, Mother was a wish come true and a blessing on the earth.

James could not bear to think how Mother would feel if she thought she had hurt him in any way. He could get through the Academy, if he could make her believe there was no real difference to him, that would spare her pain.

He wanted to go home. He did not want to face anybody at the Academy. He was a coward. But he was not enough of a coward that he would run away from his own suffering, and let his mother suffer for him.

You are not a coward at all, said Uncle Jem. I remember a time, when I was still James Carstairs when your mother learned—as she thought then—that she could not have children. She was so hurt by that. She thought herself so changed, from all she had thought she was. I told her the right man would not care, and of course your father, the best of men, the only one fit for her, did not. I did not tell her . . . I was a boy and did not know how to tell her, how her courage in bearing uncertainty of her very self touched me. She doubted herself, but I could never doubt her. I could never doubt you now. I see the same courage in you now, as I saw in her then.

James wept, scrubbing his face against Uncle Jem’s robes as if he were littler than Lucie. He knew Mother was brave, but surely courage did not feel like this; he had thought it would be something finer, not a feeling that could tear you into pieces.

If you saw humanity as I can see it, Uncle Jem said, a whisper in his mind, a lifeline. There is very little brightness and warmth in the world for me. I am very distant from you all. There are only four points of warmth and brightness, in the whole world, that burn fiercely enough for me to feel something like the person I was. Your mother, your father, Lucie, and you. You love, and tremble, and burn. Do not let any of them tell you who you are. You are the flame that cannot be put out. You are the star that cannot be lost. You are who you have always been, and that is enough and more than enough. Anyone who looks at you and sees darkness is blind.

“Blinder than a Silent Brother?” James asked, and hiccupped.

Uncle Jem had been made a Silent Brother very young, and strangely: He bore runes on his cheek

but his eyes, though shadowed, were not stitched shut. Still, James was never sure what he saw.

~~There was a laugh in James's mind, and he had not laughed, so it must have been Uncle Jem. James~~ clung to him for an instant longer and told himself he could not ask Uncle Jem to take him home after all, or to the Silent City, or anywhere so long as Uncle Jem did not leave him in this academy full of strangers who had never liked him and would hate him now.

They would have to be even blinder than a Silent Brother, Uncle Jem agreed. Because I can see you, James. I will always look to you for light.

* * *

If James had known how life would be at the Academy from then on, he would have asked Uncle Jem to take him home.

He had not expected Mike Smith to leap to his feet in stark horror when James approached his table. "Come sit with us," called Clive Cartwright, one of Alastair Carstairs's friends. "You might be a mundie, but at least you're not a *monster*."

Mike had fled gratefully. James had seen Esme flinch once when he walked by her in the hall. He did not inflict his presence on her again.

It would not have been so bad, James believed, if it had been anywhere but the Academy. These were hallowed halls: This was where children were molded to Ascend or grew up learning to serve the Angel.

And this was a school, and this was how schools worked. James had read books about schools before, had read about someone being sent to Coventry, so nobody talked to them at all. He knew how hate could run like wildfire through a group, and that was only among mundanes facing mundane strangeness.

James was stranger than any mundane could ever dream, stranger than any Shadowhunter had believed possible.

He moved out of Matthew's room, and down into the dark. He was given his own room, because even the mundanes were too scared to sleep in the same room as him. Even Dean Ashdown seemed afraid of him. Everybody was.

They acted as if they wanted to cross themselves when they saw him, but they knew he was worse than a vampire and it would do no good. They shuddered when his eyes rested on them, as if his yellow demon's eyes would burn a hole clear through their souls.

Demon's eyes. James heard it whispered again and again. He had never thought he would long to be called Goatface.

He never spoke to anyone, sat at the back of class, ate as quickly as he could, and then ran away. People did not have to look at him while they ate their meals. He crept around the Academy like a loathed and loathsome shadow.

Uncle Jem had been changed into a Silent Brother because he would have died otherwise. Uncle Jem had a place in the world, had friends and a home, and the horror was that he could not be in that place where he belonged. Sometimes after his visits James would find his mother standing at the window, looking out at the street Uncle Jem had long disappeared from, and he would find his father in the music room staring at the violin nobody but Uncle Jem was allowed to touch.

That was the tragedy of Uncle Jem's life; it was the tragedy of his parents' lives.

But how would it be if there was nowhere in the world that you belonged? If you could get nobody to love you? What if you could not be a Shadowhunter or a warlock or anything else?

Maybe then you were worse than a tragedy. Maybe you were nothing at all.

James was not sleeping very well. He kept slipping into sleep and then startling awake, worried he was slipping into that other world, a world of shadows, where he was nothing but an evil shade among

shades. He did not know how he had done it before. He was terrified it was going to happen again.

~~Maybe everyone else was hoping it would, though. Maybe they were all praying he would become shadow, and simply slip away.~~

* * *

James woke one morning and could not bear the darkness and the feeling of stone above his head pressing down all around him, for a moment longer. He staggered up the stairs and out onto the training grounds.

He was expecting it to still be night, but the sky was bleached by morning, the stars turned invisible against the near-white of the sky. The only color to be found in the sky was the dark gray of clouds curling like ghosts around the fading moon. It was raining a little, cold pinpricks against James's skin. He sat down on the stone step of the Academy's back door, lifted a palm to the sky, and watched the silvery rain dash down into the hollow of his hand.

He wished the rain would wash him away, before he had to face yet another morning.

He was watching his hand as he wished that, and he saw it happen then. He felt the change creeping over him and saw his hand grow darkly transparent. He saw the raindrops pass through the shadow of his palm as if it was not there.

He wondered what Grace would think, if she could see him now.

Then he heard the crunch of feet running, pounding against the earth, and his father's training master's voice. James's head jerk up to see if anyone was being chased, if anyone was in danger.

James saw Matthew Fairchild running as if he was being chased.

Astonishingly, he was wearing gear that he had not, as far as James knew, been threatened into. Even more astonishingly, he was participating in degrading physical exercise. He was running faster than James had seen anyone run in training—maybe faster than James had ever seen anyone run even in training—and he was running grimly, face set, in the rain.

James watched him run, frowning, until Matthew glanced up at the sky, stopped, and then began trudging back to the Academy. James thought he would be discovered for a moment, thought of jumping up and racing around to another side of the building, but Matthew did not make for the door.

Instead Matthew went and stood against the stone wall of the Academy, strange and solemn in his black gear, blond hair wild with wind and wet with rain. He tipped his face up to the sky, and he looked as unhappy as James felt.

It made no sense. Matthew had everything, had always had everything, while James now had less than nothing. It made James furious.

“What’s wrong with you?” James demanded.

Matthew’s whole body jerked with shock. He swung to face James, and stared. “What?”

“You might have noticed life is less than ideal for me at this time,” James said between his teeth. “So give up making a tragic spectacle of yourself over nothing, and—”

Matthew was not leaning against the wall any longer, and James was not sitting on the step. They were both standing up, and this was not a practice on the training grounds. James thought they were really going to fight; he thought they might really hurt each other.

“Oh, I’m terribly sorry, James Herondale,” Matthew sneered. “I forgot nobody could do a single thing like speak or breathe in this place without incurring your extremely judgmental judgment. You must be making a spectacle over nothing, if *you* say so. By the Angel, I’d trade places with you in a second.”

“You’d trade places with me?” James shouted. “That’s rubbish, that’s absolute swill, you would never. Why would you do that? Why would you even say it?”

“Maybe it’s the fact you have everything I want,” Matthew snarled. “And you don’t even seem

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