

GHOSTS OF THE SHADOW MARKET #8

# THROUGH BLOOD, THROUGH FIRE

CASSANDRA CLARE  
ROBIN WASSERMAN

A companion to the New York Times bestselling THE MORTAL INSTRUMENTS series

*Edelweiss*

GHOSTS OF THE SHADOW MARKET

BOOK 8

THROUGH

BLOOD,

THROUGH

FIRE

by

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and

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Shadow Market Enterprises, Inc.  
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# Through Blood, Through Fire

Once upon a time, in a land not so far away, there was a child who should not have been born. A child of disgraced warriors—his blood the blood of the angels, his birthright forfeit while he slept, unknowing, in his mother's womb. A child sentenced to death for the sins of his ancestors, a child spirited away from the Law that condemned and the family that couldn't yet know how much they might someday need him and his progeny.

Once upon a time, a child was lost—or, at least, such is the story as told by those foolish enough to lose him. No one is ever lost to himself.

The child was simply hiding. As his child, and his child's child, learned to hide, and on through the generations, evading those who hunted them—some seeking forgiveness, some seeking annihilation—until, inevitably, that which had been hidden was revealed. The lost child was found.

And that was the end.

Later, when Jem Carstairs tried to remember how the end began, he would remember the tickle of Tessa's hair on his face, as he bent close, breathed deep the scent of her, which that day carried a hint of lavender. They were in Provence—so, of course, everything smelled like lavender. But Tessa was alive with it; breathing her in was like breathing in a sunlit meadow, a sea of purpling blossoms, springtime itself. That was what Jem would remember, later. The desire that time stop, freeze the two of them inside this perfect moment; he would remember thinking, with wonder, that this was how it felt to be perfectly satisfied.

When Tessa Gray returned to that moment, the moment before, she remembered the taste of honey, which Jem had drizzled onto a sliver of baguette then popped into her mouth. The honey, fresh from the hive behind the estate, was almost painfully sweet. Her fingers were sticky with it, and when she pressed them to Jem's soft cheek, they didn't want to let go. She couldn't blame them.



Memory has a tendency to fog the mundane. What Jem and Tessa were actually doing: bickering about whether the cheese they'd acquired that morning was goat or cow, and which of them was responsible for eating so much of it that a second trip to the fromagerie was required. It was a lazy, loving bickering, as befit their sun-dappled afternoon. They'd come to this retreat in the French countryside to strategize about the lost Herondale—who, they had recently discovered, was also heir to the Seelie and Unseelie courts, and so in more danger than anyone had ever imagined. This estate, the use of which had been offered by Magnus Bane, was a safe, quiet place to plan where to go from here. The lost Herondale had made it very clear to Jem that she didn't want to be found, but Jem worried this was because she didn't know the depths of danger she was in. They needed to find her. Warn her. Now more than ever.

The urgency was real, but so was their inability to *do* anything about it—which left many hours to fill, gazing out at the sunlit hillside—and at each other.

Tessa had nearly decided to give in and admit that Jem was right about the provenance (goat), if wrong about who'd eaten the most (Tessa), when a tiny light sparked between them, like a tiny falling star. Except it didn't fall; it froze in midair, getting brighter and brighter, blindingly bright, and forming itself into a familiar shape. Tessa sucked in a sharp breath. "Is that . . .?"

"A heron," Jem confirmed.

Years before, Jem had enchanted a silver pendant in the shape of a heron and pressed it into the palm of a young woman with Herondale blood. A young woman in danger, who steadfastly refused his help.

*With this pendant, you can always find me*, he had promised, in the silent voice with which he had once spoken. Jem had been Brother Zachariah then, still bearing the robes and duties of the Silent Brotherhood, but this mission—and this promise—had nothing to do with the Brotherhood. Jem was still bound by it: would always be bound by it. *I trust you will summon me for help, if and when you need. Please trust that I will always answer.*

The woman he'd given that pendant to was a Herondale, the last heir of the Lost Herondale, and the silver heron meant that, after all these years, she needed him. As Jem and Tessa watched, the bird traced letters of fire upon the air.

*I turned away from you once, but please help me now. I thought I could do this on my own, but the Riders are closing in. If you will not come for me, come for my boy. I thought I could buy his life with my suffering. I thought if I left him, he would be safe. He is not. Please come. I beg you. Save me. Save my child.*

*Rosemary Herondale.*

The light winked out. Jem and Tessa were already in motion. In the century and a half they'd known each other, much had changed, but this truth endured: when a Herondale called, they would answer.

LA traffic wasn't as bad as everyone said. It was exponentially worse. Six lanes, all of them nearly at a standstill. As Tessa inched forward, shifting lanes every time a space opened up, Jem felt like he was going to crawl out of his skin. They'd Portaled from France to Los Angeles, emerging halfway across the city from the source of the distress call. Magnus had reached out to his network of West Coast acolytes and secured them transport to get the rest of the way. The turquoise convertible didn't exactly scream *incognito*, but it was enough to carry them the handful of miles from Echo Park to Rosemary Herondale's house in the Hollywood Hills. The ride should only have taken a few minutes. It felt like it had been a year.

*I turned away from you once, but please help me now.*

The words echoed in Jem's mind. He'd spent decades searching for the lost Herondale—finding her, finally, only to lose her again. But after she'd refused his offer of protection, he'd made her a promise. He would come when she called. He would save her, when she needed saving.

*I thought I could do this on my own.*

James Carstairs would always come to the aid of a Herondale. He would never stop repaying the debts of love.

She had summoned him, using the necklace, and he would do everything in his power to honor his promise, but—

*Please come, I beg you. Save me.*

There was more than just one life at stake now.

*Save my child.*

What if they were too late?

Tessa put her hand on Jem's. "This isn't your fault," she said.

Of course she knew what he was thinking. She always did.

"I had her, and I let her walk away." Jem couldn't stop picturing it, that morning on the bridge in Paris, when he'd begged Rosemary Herondale to accept his protection. He had asked a Herondale to trust him and been judged unworthy.

"You didn't *let* her do anything," Tessa pointed out. "She made her own choice."

“The Herondale way,” Jem said wryly.

“You let her know you would always be there if she needed you, and now that she does—”

“I’m twiddling my thumbs five miles away, useless.”

“Enough.” Tessa abruptly swerved onto the shoulder of the road and sped past the clogged lanes, then careened onto the first exit ramp they came to. Instead of slowing down, she picked up speed as they hit the surface streets, weaving wildly from lane to lane to sidewalk. Soon, finally, they found their way into the hills, the road narrowing to a single lane of hairpin turns bounded by a vertiginous drop. Tessa didn’t slow down.

“I know you have superhuman reflexes, but—”

“Trust me,” she said.

“Infinitely.”

He couldn’t tell Tessa the other reason he felt guilty—it wasn’t simply that he’d let Rosemary slip through his fingers all those years ago. It was what he’d done for her since, which suddenly seemed like next to nothing. Ever since he’d sloughed off his life as Brother Zachariah and fought his way back to James Carstairs—and back to Tessa Gray, the other half of his soul, his heart, his self—he’d given himself permission to be happy. They’d visited Shadow Markets all over the world, keeping watch for Rosemary, always searching for ways they might be able to assist her from a distance. They’d even visited the Market here in LA several times, but they had found no trace of her there. What if, despite his best intentions, Jem had missed something, some opportunity to find and help Rosemary before it was too late? What if, lost in his own happiness with Tessa, he’d enabled her suffering?

The car screeched to a stop in front of a small, Spanish-style bungalow. The yard was a riot of color: monkeyflowers, hummingbird sage, desert mallow, jacaranda blossoms. A gauntlet of sunflowers watched over the path to the door, nodding in the breeze, as if to welcome them.

“It’s like a house from a storybook,” Tessa marveled, and Jem agreed. The sky was an impossible blue, dotted with cotton-candy clouds, and the mountains on the horizon made it feel like they were in an Alpine village, rather than the middle of a sprawling metropolis. “It’s so peaceful,” she added. “Like nothing bad could ever happen here—”

She was interrupted by a piercing scream.

They erupted into motion. Jem shouldered the front door open, readying his sword to face whatever lay beyond. Tessa followed close behind, her hands

sparkling with angry light. Inside, they found a nightmare: Rosemary lying still in a pool of blood. Looming over her, a massive faerie, his body covered in thick bronze armor, a longsword raised overhead. Its point aimed straight at Rosemary's heart.

In many ways, Jem Carstairs was no longer a Shadowhunter. But in the most important ways, he would always be a Shadowhunter.

He launched himself forward, a whirl of deadly motion, swordstick a silver blur as he hacked at the faerie with the full, righteous force of Shadowhunter rage. His blows glanced off the creature's body without leaving a single mark. Tessa raised her hands and dispatched a blinding white wave of energy at the faerie—he absorbed it without flinching, then, almost carelessly, grabbed Tessa in one massive hand and flung her across the room. She slammed into the wall with a thud that caused Jem physical pain. Jem threw himself in the faerie's path, kicked, spun, swung the sword down sharp and sure in what should have been a mortal blow. Any ordinary faerie—any ordinary Downworlder—would have been felled. This one only laughed, shoved Jem to the floor and pinned him there beneath a massive foot. Leaving Jem helpless to do anything but watch as the longsword found its mark and stabbed Rosemary through the chest.

The faerie stepped back, freeing Jem to rush to her side—too late. He tore off his shirt, pressed it desperately to Rosemary's gushing wound, determined to keep her life from draining away. Too late.

"I have no quarrel with you, Shadowhunter," the faerie said, then gave a sharp whistle. An enormous bronze steed crashed through the bungalow's front windows in a hail of glass. The faerie hoisted himself onto the horse. "I suggest you refrain from quarrel with me." The horse reared and leapt into the air.

And just like that, horse and rider were gone.

Rosemary's face was deathly pale, her eyes closed. She was still breathing, if barely. Jem put pressure on the wound, willing her to hold on. Tessa knelt beside him.

He let out a sharp breath, his heart clenching. "Are you hurt?"

"I'm fine. But Rosemary . . ." Tessa gripped Rosemary's hands and closed her eyes in concentration. Seconds passed as she summoned the will to heal. He could see the effort written on her face, the torment. Finally, Tessa turned to Jem, a hollow look in her eyes. He knew what she would say before she said it.

"It's a mortal wound," she murmured. "There's nothing to be done."

Tessa had volunteered as a nurse during one of the mundane world wars—she knew a mortal wound when she saw one. And Jem, during his decades in the

Silent Brotherhood, had seen too many Shadowhunters beyond help. Far too many, in the Dark War. He too could recognize death, in all its guises.

Rosemary's eyes flickered open. Her lips parted, as if she was trying to speak, but she managed only a rasping breath.

There was still one Herondale they could save. "Your child," Jem said. "Where is he?"

Rosemary shook her head, the effort of motion causing her obvious pain.

"Please," she whispered. There was so much blood. Everywhere, blood, her life streaming away. "Please, protect my son."

"Just tell us where to find him," Jem said. "And on my life, I will protect him, I swear—" He stopped, realizing there was no one to receive his promise. The shuddering breath had given way to stillness.

She was gone.

"We'll find him," Tessa promised Jem. "We'll find him before anyone can hurt him. *We will.*"

Jem hadn't moved from Rosemary's body. He held her cool hand in his own, as if he couldn't bring himself to let go. She knew what he was feeling, and it hurt. This was the joy and punishment of loving someone the way she loved Jem—she felt with him. His guilt, his regret, his powerlessness and fury: as they consumed him, they consumed her too.

Of course, it wasn't just Jem's guilt, Jem's fury. She had plenty of her own. Every Herondale was a part of Will, and so a part of her. That was what it meant to be family. And she had knelt by the cold body of too many Herondales. She could not stomach another meaningless death.

They would find Rosemary's son. They *would* protect him. They would ensure this death was not in vain. Whatever it took.

"It's not just that she's dead," Jem said quietly. His head was lowered, his hair a curtain over his face. But she'd memorized his face, his every expression. She'd spent so many hours, since his return, gazing at him, unable to believe he was really here, restored to life—restored to her. "It's that she died alone."

"She wasn't alone. She's not alone." This was not the first time she and Jem had helped a Herondale into eternity. Once, she had sat on one side of Will, Jem on the other, both of them longing to hold on to him, both summoning the strength to let him go. He had been Brother Zachariah, then, or that was what the world had seen: runed face, sealed eyes, cold skin, closed heart. She had only,

ever, seen her Jem. It still seemed a miracle that he could open his eyes and see her back.

“Wasn’t she?” Very gently, Jem unclasped Rosemary’s necklace. He dangled the long silver chain, letting the heron charm spin slowly, gleaming in the afternoon light. “I thought this would be enough—a way to reach out, if she needed me. But I *knew* she was in danger from the Fey. I shouldn’t have underestimated that!”

“I recognized that faerie, Jem,” Tessa said. “The bronze braid, the designs on his armor—all those etchings of the sea—that was Fal of Mannan.” She’d studied the Riders of Mannan during her time in the Spiral Labyrinth, part of her efforts to better understand the Faerie world. They were very old—ancient, even, from an age of monsters and gods—and they served at the pleasure of the Unseelie King. These were no ordinary faeries. They were more powerful; they were made of wild magic. Perhaps most terrifyingly, they could lie. “Seraph blades are useless against the Riders of Mannan, Jem. They’re born assassins—a walking death sentence. Once he found her, no power on Earth could have stopped him.”

“So then what hope is there for the boy?”

“There’s always hope.” She risked putting her arms around him, then, and very softly extricated Rosemary’s hand from his grip. “We find the boy first. Then we make sure the Fey never do.”

“Not until we’re ready for them, at least,” Jem said, a note of steel entering his voice.

There were those who believed that because Jem was so kind, so capable of gentleness and generosity, because Jem loved so selflessly, that Jem was weak. There were those who suspected he was not capable of violence or vengeance, who assumed they could hurt Jem and the ones he loved with impunity, because he did not have it in him to strike back.

Those who believed this were wrong.

Those who acted on it would be sorry.

Tessa squeezed the heron charm tightly, its beak pricking sharply against the soft meat of her palm. She could feel Rosemary’s essence simmering in the silver, and reached for it with her mind, opening herself to the traces of the woman left behind. It was second nature to her now, Changing into someone else. Usually she needed only to close her eyes and let it wash over her.

This was different. Something felt—not wrong, exactly, but *sticky*. Like she had to yank herself out of her own form and forcibly shove it into another. The transformation felt difficult, almost painful, as it had in her earliest days in London, her bones and muscles and flesh tearing and distorting themselves into alien form, body rebelling against mind, while mind fought its own battle, defending its territory against the colonizing force of an *other*. Tessa forced herself to stay calm, focused. Reminded herself that it was always more difficult to embody the dead. She felt herself shrinking, fading, firm limbs narrowing to Rosemary’s delicate, bony frame, and as she did so, the horror flooded in, those final moments. The flash of the longsword. The hot breath of the faerie Rider. The unthinkable pain and pain and pain of the blade thrust once, twice, and, finally, fatally. The terror, the despair, and beneath it, the fierce, loving rage on behalf of the boy who must, somewhere out there, survive, he must, he must, he

---

“Tessa!”

Then Jem was there, steady, his arms on her shoulders, his gaze firm and kind, his love a tether to keep her from floating away. Jem, always, bringing her home to herself.

“Tessa, you were screaming.”

She breathed. She focused. She was Rosemary and she was Tessa, she was the Change itself, the possibility of transformation, the inevitability of flux, and then, mercifully, she was clear.

“I’m okay. It’s okay.” Even now, after more than a century of Changing, it was strange to hear herself speak with another woman’s voice, to look down and see another woman’s body as her own.

“Do you know where he is? The boy?”

*My boy.* Tessa could hear the wonder in Rosemary’s voice, could feel the other woman’s ongoing surprise that it was possible to love like this. *They won’t have him. I won’t allow it.*

There was fear, but mostly rage, and Tessa realized that *they* were not the Fey. *They* were the Shadowhunters. This was one secret she would keep for herself. Jem didn’t need to know that Rosemary had died as she’d lived: convinced they were the enemy.

“Let me go deeper,” Tessa said. “She’s spent years burying what she knows about him, but it’s there, I can feel it.”

Rosemary’s being was in battle with itself. She’d been entirely consumed with her son, with the fierce need to protect him, but had also spent these years

trying with all her might to forget him, to force all thought of him from her consciousness, for his own safety. “She knew the greatest danger in his life was *her*,” Tessa said, horrified by the sacrifice this woman had made. “She knew the only way to keep him alive was to let him go.”

Tessa let herself sink into the memory—she let go of *Tessa* and gave herself wholly over to *Rosemary*. Focused on the boy, on the strongest memories of him and what had become of him, and let them possess her.

She remembered.

*“I don’t understand,” her husband is saying, but the desperation in his eyes, the grip of his hands on hers as if he knows what will happen when he lets go? That says different. That says he does understand, that this has to be the end, that their son’s safety is more important than anything. More important, even, than the two of them, which Rosemary used to think was everything.*

*Things were different, before she was a mother.*

*Christopher is three. He looks like and unlike his mother, like and unlike his father. He is their love come to life, their two hearts intertwined and given shape and breath and cherubic cheeks and golden hair and a nose to kiss and a forehead to stroke and a perfect, perfect body that has never known pain or horror and never should. Must never.*

*“It’s about him, now. That’s all that matters.”*

*“But we’re already so careful . . .”*

*For one year, they have forced themselves to live apart. In one small apartment, seedy blocks from the Vegas strip: her son and her husband—who now calls himself *Elvis*, but who has been *Barton* and *Gilbert* and *Preston* and *Jack* and *Jonathan*, who has changed not just his name but his face, over and over again, all for her. In an even smaller, much lonelier apartment in a sad stretch of desert behind the airport: *Rosemary*, feeling their absence with every breath. She haunts their shadows, watches *Christopher* on the playground, at the zoo, in the pool, never letting him see her. Her son will grow up unable to recognize his mother’s face.*

*She allows herself monthly encounters with her husband—an hour of stolen kisses and all the details of a childhood passing without her—but that was selfish. She sees that now. Bad enough that the *Shadowhunters* were able to get as close as they did. Now the *Fey* have sniffed her out. She’s set up charms around the apartment, a warning system—she knew their emissaries had been there; her position was compromised. And she knows what will happen if they find her. If they find him.*



*“You have to go deeper underground,” she tells her husband. “You have to change your identities again, but this time, I can’t know what they are. If they find me . . . you can’t let me lead them to you.”*

*And he is shaking his head, he is saying no, he can’t do this, he can’t raise Christopher alone, he can’t let her go knowing he can never have her back, he can’t risk her facing danger without him, he can’t, he won’t, he must.*

*“I have the heron,” she reminds him. “I have a way to summon help if I need it.”*

*“But not my help,” he says. He hates the necklace, he always has, even before it was tainted with the Shadowhunter’s enchantment. He tried to sell it once, without telling her, because he knows her heritage only brings her pain; she forgave him. She always forgives him. “What if you need me?”*

*She knows he hates it, the idea that she would call on a stranger over him. He doesn’t understand: this is because a stranger’s life means nothing to her. She would let the world burn if it meant keeping Jack and Christopher safe.*

*“What I need is for you to keep him alive.”*

*The world believes Jack—for that is how she first loved him and how she always thinks of him—is a crook. Untrustworthy, venal, without capacity for trust or love. Rosemary knows better. Most people are spendthrift with their care, spreading it around without discretion. Jonathan loves only two things in this world: his wife and his son.*

*She wishes, sometimes, that he would include himself on that list. She would worry less for him, if she thought he allowed any worry for himself.*

*“Okay, but what if we win?” he says.*

*“What do you mean?”*

*“Let’s say you defeat the evil faeries, and you convince the Shadowhunters you’re of no use to them. What if everyone just stops looking for you, and for Christopher, and it’s finally safe to be together. How will you find us?”*

*She laughs, even in her despair. He has always been able to make her laugh. This time, though, he doesn’t see the joke. “That’s never going to happen,” she says gently. “You can’t even risk hoping for that to happen.”*

*“Then let’s go to the Clave, all of us. Let’s throw ourselves on their mercy, ask for their protection. You know they’d give it to you.”*

*This cuts her laughter off abruptly. The Shadowhunters are without mercy. Who knows that better than she? She squeezes his hands, tight enough to hurt. She is very strong. “Never,” she says. “Never forget that the Shadowhunters are as grave a threat to Christopher as anyone else. Never forget what they were*

*willing to do to my ancestor—to one of their own. They will not get their hands on him. Promise me.”*

*“I swear. But only if you promise too.”*

*There is no other way. He won't do what she asks, won't disappear forever unless she leaves one thin thread between them. One hope.*

*“The place you first told me who you really were,” he says. “The first place you trusted me with yourself. If you need help, you go there. Help will find you. I will find you.”*

*“It's too dangerous—”*

*“You don't need to know where we are. You don't need to find us. I'll never go looking for you, I promise. And Christopher will be safe. But you, Rosemary—” His voice catches on her name, as if he knows how rarely he will allow himself to voice it again. “If you need me. I will find you.”*

*They don't say goodbye. Between them, there can be no such thing as goodbye. Only a kiss that should last forever. Only a closed door, a silence, a void. Rosemary sinks to the ground, hugs her knees, prays to a god she does not believe in that she will have enough strength never to let herself be found.*

*“I know how to find him,” Tessa said, already pulling herself out of the Change. It was, again, harder than it should have been. An unfamiliar friction holding the Rosemary shape in place.*

*Except it wasn't entirely unfamiliar, was it? Something tickled the back of her mind, a memory just out of grasp. Tessa reached, almost had it—but it skittered away, gone.*

It felt wrong to be in Los Angeles without checking in on Emma Carstairs. But Jem reminded himself that involving her in this could bring danger to her door, and the girl had faced enough. She reminded him of himself sometimes—both of them orphans, both of them taken in by an Institute, adopted into someone else's family but harboring, always, the secret pain of losing their own. They had both found salvation in a *parabatai*, and Jem could only hope that Emma had found in Julian what he'd always found in Will: not just a partner, but a refuge. A home. No one, not even a *parabatai*, could replace what had been lost. Even now, there was a hole in Jem's heart, a raw wound where his parents had been ripped away. This was a limb that could not be replaced, only compensated for. As it had been when he lost Will. As it would be if he ever lost Tessa.

Loss was an inevitability of love, pain the inescapable price of joy. Everyone

had to learn this someday—maybe this was what it meant to grow up. He wished, for Emma, that her childhood could have lasted just a little longer. And he wished that he could have been there for her when it ended. But this was always the cold calculus when it came to Emma Carstairs: balancing his desire to be part of her life with the consequences. When he was a Silent Brother, he would have been taunting her with something she couldn't have—her only remaining family, who could, nevertheless, not be her family. Now, as Jem Carstairs, he would have happily taken her into his care, but he was no longer a Shadowhunter—and choosing him would mean Emma would have to give up her entire world. The Law was hard—it was also, so often, lonely.

He kept telling himself: soon. Soon, when he and Tessa had gotten their bearings again. Soon, when he had helped Tessa find the lost Herondale, that piece of Will lost to Will's world. Soon, when the danger had passed.

He worried, sometimes, that these were all flimsy excuses. He'd been alive, one way or another, for almost two hundred years. He should know by now that danger never passed. It only paused, and then only if you were lucky.

“You sure this is the place?” Jem asked Tessa. She'd Changed into Rosemary again, and he could barely look at her. Sometimes Jem missed the cool distance the Silent Brotherhood had forced on him, the way no emotion, however powerful, could penetrate his stony heart. Life was easier without feeling. It wasn't life, he knew. But it was easier.

“Unfortunately, this is definitely the place.”

Every city had a Shadow Market, and in a way, they were all the same market, branches of a single tree—but that didn't stop each market from taking on the character of its environs. From what Jem could tell, Los Angeles's environs were: tanned, health conscious, and obsessed with automobiles. The Shadow Market was located on a tony corner of Pasadena, and everything there was shiny, including its occupants: vampires with bleach-white fangs, body-building faeries whose bulging muscles sheened with gold-spangled sweat, witches with neon hair and self-writing screenplays for sale, ifrits hawking glittering “star maps” that, on closer examination, had nothing to do with astronomy but were in fact self-updating maps of Los Angeles with a tiny photograph of Magnus Bane marking each location the infamous warlock had caused some infamous chaos. (Tessa bought three of them.)

They threaded through the crowds as quickly as they could. Jem was relieved to no longer bear the robes of the Silent Brotherhood, the ineradicable mark of his creed. There was a taste of the frontier to the Shadow Market, a sense that the

rules only applied here as far as anyone was willing to enforce them. Faeries cavorted openly with their fellow Downworlders; warlocks did business with mundanes that should never be done; Shadowhunters were, for obvious reasons, unwelcome.

Their destination lay just beyond the buoyant chaos. In the liminal space between the Shadow Market and the shadows, there stood a ramshackle structure with no sign and no windows. There was nothing to suggest it was anything but a ruin, certainly nothing to mark it as a seedy Downworlder bar, home away from home for down-on-their-luck Downworlders for whom even the Shadow Market wasn't quite shadowy enough. The last thing Jem wanted to do was let Tessa set foot inside, especially wearing the face of someone the Unseelie Court intended to assassinate—but since he'd met her, no one had *let* Tessa do anything.

According to Tessa, Rosemary and her husband had a deal. If Rosemary ever needed him, she would come to this place, somehow make it known that she needed him, and he would appear. It was that middle part of the plan that seemed a little too vague for comfort, but there was no way out but through, Tessa had said cheerfully, then kissed him. Even in someone else's body, even with someone else's lips, her kiss was all Tessa.

They went inside. Tessa went first, Jem following a few minutes later. It seemed prudent to appear they were not together. The bar wasn't much of one. It was just as ramshackle inside as it was out. The large werewolf bouncer at the door sniffed him once, warily, grunted something that sounded very much like *behave*, then waved him inside. The crumbling walls were blackened by scorch marks, the floor spattered with beer and, by the smell of it, ichor. Jem surreptitiously clocked the other denizens for potential threat: one bikini'd faerie slow-dancing with herself, despite the silence, teetering drunkenly on her sky-high heels. One werewolf wrapped in a tattered silk cape, slumped facedown on the table, his scent suggesting he'd been there for days. Jem watched just long enough to make sure he was still breathing, then took a seat at the bar. The bartender, a wizened, balding vampire who looked like he'd been hiding from the sun since long before he turned, looked Jem up and down, then slid him a drink. The glass was spotted, its contents a filmy pale green. Whatever floated in the center looked like it might once have been alive. Jem decided it was probably safer to stay thirsty.

Three stools away, Tessa hunched over a glass of her own. Jem pretended not to notice.

The faerie sidled between them, her forked tail caressing the rim of Jem's glass. "What's a guy like you, et cetera?"

"Excuse me?"

"You know, all tall, dark, and handsome and"—she shot a glance at the guy in the corner, now snoring with such force that his table rattled beneath him with each exhale—"upright. You don't look like the kind of guy who would hang out around here."

"You know what they say about books and covers," Jem said.

"So you're not as lonely as you look, then?"

Jem realized Tessa, pretending not to listen, was suppressing a smile—and only then understood that the faerie was flirting with him.

"I could help you with that, you know," she said.

"I came here to be alone, actually," Jem said, politely as he could. The faerie's tail slipped from his glass to his hand, tracing up and down his fingers. Jem pulled away. "And, uh, I'm married."

"Pity." She leaned in, too close, her lips brushing his ear. "See you around, Nephilim." She strutted out of the bar, freeing Jem to concentrate fully on the conversation Tessa was having with the bartender.

"Do I know you?" the bartender asked. Jem stiffened.

"I don't know," Tessa said, "do you?"

"You look familiar around the edges. A little like a girl who used to come in here all the time, with her boyfriend. Bad news, that guy, but she wouldn't hear it. Head over heels, like only a kid can be."

Out of the corner of his eye, Jem caught Tessa's slight smile. "Oh, I don't know that I'd put an age limit on *head over heels*."

The bartender gave her an appraising look. "If you say so. Not this girl, though. She grew up to be the flaky kind. Ran off on him and their kid, I heard."

"Terrible," Tessa said dryly. "And Mr. Bad News?"

"Maybe not such bad news. Loyal enough that he's still coming back here after all these years. The kind of guy a certain type can lean on when they need help, if you get me."

"And how would a certain type go about finding him?" Tessa asked. Jem could tell she was trying very hard to keep the eagerness out of her voice.

The bartender cleared his throat, began halfheartedly wiping down the bar. "The right kind of woman, I'm told, would know exactly how to find him," he said, without looking at her. "Because he's exactly the same bird he used to be, just a little less of a crook." He put special emphasis on the words, and Jem

could tell by Tessa's expression that they meant something to her. His heart leapt.

Tessa jumped to her feet and tossed a few dollars on the bar. "Thank you."

"Anything for the girl as pretty as a rose. Good luck to—" The dagger seemed to materialize in the center of his forehead. He was dead before he hit the ground. Jem and Tessa whirled around to find Fal of Mannan and his bronze horse thundering through the doorway, bearing down on them with inhuman speed, Fal's longsword falling, Jem's body reacting before his mind had time to process, every second of a lifetime of Shadowhunter training poured into a storm of slashing kicking leaping fighting—all this in under a second, all this ineffectual, because the blade was already falling, was dropping Tessa to the floor in a limp pile of blood and flesh, and Fal of Mannan, impervious, had already taken flight by the time Jem dropped to his knees beside her pale form.

"I suggest you stay dead this time," the faerie advised, and was gone.

She was so pale.

Her features were melting back into her own. The Change always released when she lost consciousness, but something was wrong this time, almost as unsettling as the wound. Her features had nearly returned to Tessa's when, like a taut rubber band suddenly released, they snapped back to Rosemary's. And back again, and again, as if her body couldn't decide whom it wanted to be. Jem pressed the wound, tried to hold in the blood, didn't care whom she looked like, just wanted her body to choose life over death. *The faerie in the bikini*. The thought cut through his haze of panic. Maybe she'd been planted there to spy for the Riders, knowing this place had special meaning for Rosemary and her family; maybe she'd simply recognized "Rosemary" as a woman with a target on her back, a woman who was supposed to be dead, and done her faerie duty. It didn't matter how it had happened. What mattered was that Jem had overlooked her as a threat, which made this his fault, and if Tessa didn't—

But he stopped the thought before it could continue. The wound would have killed a mundane. Maybe even a Shadowhunter. But Tessa's body had shaped itself to Rosemary's form at the time of the attack, the form of a woman who was not just Shadowhunter but heir to the faerie throne—who knew what magic the body might be working on itself in its struggle to survive. Maybe that was why the Change wouldn't let her go—maybe that was her body's way of staving off death until she could heal. Tessa moaned. Jem scooped Tessa into his arms, begging her to hold on.

He had learned much about healing in the Silent Brotherhood, and he did

what he could. He thought about how she'd sat by what they all thought was his deathbed, his supply of *yin fen* finally exhausted, the demonic poison overtaking his system, and remembered telling her that she had to let him go. He remembered, too, sitting with the dying Will, giving him permission to leave. He didn't know whether it was strength or selfishness now, but he refused to do the same for Tessa. Not yet: they had waited so long for a life together. They had only just begun.

"Stay," he begged her. "Fight." She was so cold. So light in his arms. Like something essential had already fled. "Whatever it takes, you stay here. I need you, Tessa. I have always needed you."

She wasn't dead. A full day had passed, and she wasn't dead. But she wasn't awake either, and she hadn't stopped Changing, from Tessa to Rosemary and back again. Sometimes she lasted minutes, once even an hour, in a single form. Sometimes the Change whipped back and forth so quickly that she seemed to have no form at all. Her skin was slick with sweat. At first it was cold to the touch. Then, as fever tore through her, it burned. She had been given medicines—to staunch the blood loss, to give her strength, endurance—remedies that Jem, no longer a Silent Brother, couldn't treat her with himself. The moment Jem had gotten her to safety, he'd summoned help.

Or rather, because he and Tessa weren't part of the Clave and had no claim over the Silent Brotherhood, no power with which to summon, he'd *asked* for help. Begged for it. Now Brother Enoch was here, mixing tonics, enacting the complicated, secret rituals that Jem had once been able to do himself. Never before had he regretted leaving the Silent Brotherhood, returning to the land of mortals and mortal peril, but to save Tessa he would have happily pledged the rest of his eternity to those parchment robes, that heart of stone. Instead he could only stand beside Enoch, helpless. Useless. Sometimes, Brother Enoch even made him leave the room.

He understood; he had done the same himself, many a time, secreting himself with the patient, never giving much thought to the torture their loved one might feel on the other side of the wall. In his first life, Jem himself had been the patient, Tessa and Charlotte and Will hovering anxiously around his bed, reading to him, murmuring in comforting voices as he swam between darkness and waking, waiting for him to get stronger, and for the day he would not.

Exiled to the hallway of the small apartment that Magnus—via his ever-

expanding and ever-ambiguous network of “friends”—had secured for them, Jem sagged against the wall. *I’m sorry, Will, he thought. I never knew.*

To watch the person you loved most fight for every breath. To watch them slipping away, powerless to hold on. To see the face you loved contort with pain, the body you would die to protect trembling, shuddering, broken. It wasn’t that Jem had never endured this before. But always before, there had been an intercessor between him and the raw horror of absence. When he was growing up as a Shadowhunter, Jem had always, in the back of his mind, been conscious of the fact that he would die young. He had known he would die long before Will or Tessa, most likely, and even when Tessa or Will flung themselves at danger—as they did so often—there was a part of Jem that had understood he would not be forced to stay very long in a world without them. There had been moments too, in the Silent Brotherhood, when he had stood by Will or Tessa’s side, uncertain if they would live or die—but the pain of that had always been mitigated by the same icy distance that mitigated everything else. Now, though, there was nothing in his way, nothing to distract his gaze from the terrifying truth of it. Tessa could die, and he would live on without her, and there was nothing to be done but wait and see. To endure this took all the strength Jem had.

Will had never flinched from Jem’s suffering—over and over again, he had endured. He had sat by Jem’s bed, held Jem’s hand, saw Jem through the darkest of hours. *You were the strongest man I knew, Jem said silently to his lost friend, and I never even knew the half of it.*

The door creaked open, and Brother Enoch emerged. Jem still marveled at how alien the Silent Brothers seemed to him now that he was no longer among them. It had taken him some time to get used to the silence in his mind, the chorus of voices that had accompanied his every moment for decades suddenly gone. But now he couldn’t imagine it. It felt like trying to remember a dream.

“How is she?”

*The wound is no longer a mortal threat. Her shapeshifting abilities seem to have prevented it from having the expected effect.*

Jem nearly collapsed with relief. “Can I see her? Is she awake?”

The Silent Brother’s runed face was immobile, his eyes and mouth sewn shut, and yet Jem could still sense his concern.

“What is it?” he said. “What aren’t you telling me?”

*The wound is healing. Her Changing has saved her, but I fear now it is the Changing that poses the greatest threat. Her body, her mind are trapped within it. She seems unable to find her way back to herself—the Change will not let her*



*go. It is as if she has lost her hold on what makes her, essentially, Tessa Gray.*

*“How do we help her?”*

*There was true silence then.*

*“No.” Jem refused to accept this. “There’s always something. You have a millennium of knowledge to draw on. There must be something.”*

*In all those years, there has never been a being like Tessa. She is a strong woman, and a powerful one. You must have faith she will find her own way home.*

*“And what if she doesn’t? She just stays like this, in limbo, forever?”*

*The Changing takes its toll, James. Every transformation requires energy, and no body can sustain this level of energy indefinitely. Not even hers.*

The voice in Jem’s head was so cool, so measured, it was easy to imagine he didn’t care at all. Jem knew better. It was simply that caring, for a Silent Brother, took a different, alien form. This much, Jem could remember: the icy distance from life. The inhuman calm with which events were processed. Words like *care, need, fear, love*: they had meaning; it was just a meaning unrecognizable to anyone who could sleep and eat and speak, who lived a life of animal passions. He remembered how grateful he was for the rare moment—almost always, a moment with Tessa—in which he felt a spark of true emotion. How he’d longed for the fires of human passion, for the privilege of *feeling* again, even fear, even sorrow.

Now he almost envied Brother Enoch the ice. This fear, this sorrow; it was too great to bear. “How long, then?”

*You should go to her now. Stay with her, until . . .*

*Until it was over, one way or another.*

*Tessa knows and does not know that this is a dream.*

*She knows that Jem is alive and so this must be a dream, this corpse in her lap wearing Jem’s face, this body decaying in her arms, skin sloughing from muscle, muscle flaying from bone, bone dissolving to dust. He belonged to her, so briefly, and now he is dust, and she is alone.*

*He is cold, he is lifeless, he is meat, her Jem, meat for maggots, and they swarm his flesh, and somehow she can hear them, chittering and gobbling, millions of mouths nibbling to nothing, and she screams his name but there is no one to hear*

*but the wriggling death worms, and she knows it to be impossible, but still, she can hear them laugh.*

*Jem is alive, his eyes bright with laughter, his violin raised to his chin, his music the music he wrote for her, the song of her soul, and the arrow that sails toward him is swift and sure and coated with poison, and when it pierces his heart, the music stops. The violin breaks. All is silence forever.*

*He flings himself between her and the Mantid demon and she is saved but he is speared in half, and by the time she can catch her breath enough to scream, he is gone.*

*The Dragonidae demon breathes a cloud of fire and the flames consume him, a blinding blue and white fire that burns him from the inside out, and she watches the flames shoot from his mouth, watches his eyes melt with the heat and run down his smoldering cheeks, and his skin crackles like bacon, until, almost mercifully, the light is too bright, all-consuming, and she turns away, only for a single moment of weakness, but when she turns back, there is only a pile of ash, everything that was Jem is gone.*

*A flash of sword, and he is gone.*

*A wailing beast swooping out of the sky, a talon raked across pale skin, and he is gone.*

*And he is gone.*

*She is alive, and she is alone, and he is gone.*

*When she can no longer bear it, when she has watched love die ten times, a hundred times, felt her own heart die with him, when there is nothing left but an ocean of blood and a fire that's burned away all but the excruciating pain of loss after loss after loss, she flees to the only place she can, the only safe harbor from horror.*

*She flees into Rosemary.*

*The night air is thick and sweet with jacaranda. The hot rush of the Santa Ana winds feels like a hair dryer aimed at her face. Her hands are scratched and bloody from the trellis thorns, but Rosemary barely notices. She drops from the trellis, excitement surging through her the moment her feet touch cement. She made it. The mansion glows pearly in the moonlight, a hulking monument to privilege and privacy. Inside, protected by their alarms and their security patrols, her parents sleep soundly, or at least as soundly as two paranoiacs ever can. But Rosemary is, for the night, free.*

*Around the block, a jet black Corvette idles by the curb, its driver in shadow. Rosemary leaps in and favors him with a deep, long kiss.*

*"Since when do you have a Corvette?"*

*"Since I found this little guy idling behind the In-N-Out, just begging for a new owner. Like a lost puppy," Jack says. "I couldn't exactly say no, could I."*

*He hits the gas. They speed away, screech of the wheels tearing through the hushed silence of Beverly Hills.*

*He's lying about how he got the car, probably. He lies about everything, her Jack Crow. He's probably even lying about his name. She doesn't care. She's sixteen, she doesn't need to care, she just needs to see the world, the real world, the Downworld, the world her parents are so obnoxiously determined to keep her away from, and he's happy to show her. He's only one year older than she, so he says, but he's already lived enough for twenty lives.*

*They met at the beach. She was cutting school—she was, always, cutting school—looking for trouble, not realizing she was looking for him. He aimed her at a strolling couple, all golden hair and glowing tans like they'd stepped out of a catalog for LA living, had her ask them for directions, distract them while he lifted the purse. Not that he told her this was his plan. He told her nothing ahead of time, other than trust me, and so she waited until they were alone, sharing a burrito bought with stolen coin, to ask why he wasn't more worried about stealing from the Fey. It had not occurred to him that she had the Sight, that she*

could see truth beneath their glamour. She said, what did you think, I was just some bored little rich girl? He did. She informed him she was a bored little rich girl: bored because she could see how much more interesting the world could be. He said, what do you think of me, that I'm just some cute bad boy you can use to piss off mommy and daddy? She said, if Mommy and Daddy knew you existed, they'd have you murdered. And no one said you were cute. One truth and one lie: he is very, very cute, swoop of dark hair over hooded brown eyes, knowing smile saved only for her, face like a stone, sharp in all the right places. It's true, if her parents knew about him, they would want him dead. Which was usually all it took. That first day, he took her to a Downworlder café in Venice. She has always had the Sight, and her mother has it too, of course. But her parents have fought so hard to keep her away from the Downworld, to stop her from knowing its delights and terrors. This is her first taste—literally, a sundae that, whatever the faeries had infused it with, tasted like summer sunlight. When she kissed him, he tasted like chocolate fudge.

Tonight he will finally, after weeks of pleading, bring her to the Shadow Market. She lives for these nights with him—not just because of him, but because of the world he's opened to her.

He's right, though—also because she knows how much it would piss off her parents.

He makes her wait with the mergirls selling seaweed bracelets while he conducts his business, so she waits and watches and wonders at the magical chaos swirling around her. She's not so awestruck that she doesn't notice the hooded figure shadowing Jack, the werewolf with the handlebar moustache perking up as he passes by, the djinn who tenses at his approach, and throws a glance to someone behind her, and she may not know the Downworld but she has been taught since childhood to recognize danger, to sense the signs of enemies lying in wait. She has been schooled only in the hypotheticals of battle, learned to gauge, fight, strategize, flee, all in the cosseted comfort of her own home, and has always wondered whether practice could ever prepare her for reality, whether her training would evaporate in the face of terror. Now she had her answer: she knew an ambush when she saw one, and there was no hesitation about what to do next.

She screams. Drops to the ground. Clutches her ankle. Screams, Jack, Jack, Jack, something bit me, I need you, and like lightning he is at her side, a tenderness on his face she never knew was possible. He scoops her into his arms, murmurs assurances, until she whispers her warning in his ear, ambush, and

they run.

*The Corvette is flanked by three werewolves. Jack shouts at her to run, save herself, as he launches himself into the fight, but she hasn't put in all those hours and years of training simply to run. It's different, fighting a real enemy—but not that different. She whirls and leaps, slips the dagger from her ankle holsters, slashes and stabs, and she can feel the burn in her cheeks, the fire in her heart as the werewolves flee in defeat and she and Jack fling themselves into the Corvette, screech away, speed wildly into the hills and around the hairpin turns of Mulholland Drive, without speaking, without looking at each other, until he swerves hard onto a lookout point and the car squeals to a stop. Then he's staring at her. Let me guess, she says, I've never looked more beautiful. She knows her cheeks are flushed, her face shining, her eyes sparkling. He says who cares how she looks. It's the way you fought! The way you think! He asks where she learned how to do what she does. She can't tell him why her parents have made certain that she knows how to defend herself, that she hasn't left the house without a weapon since she was five years old. She simply says there's a lot he doesn't know about her. He says he knows enough. He says, I think I'm in love. She whacks him, hard, tells him it's rude to say that as a joke, even to a girl like her, hard as adamas. He says, What makes you think I'm joking?*

*Her parents want to move again.*

*She refuses. Not this time, not again.*

*They want to know if it's because of him, that guy, the one you sneak out with, and she can't believe they know. They're having her followed. They are not sorry. They tell her she doesn't understand how dangerous the world is, that world, the Downworld, and she says that's because they won't let her. Sixteen years old and she's never lived anywhere longer than a year, because they never stop moving. When she was a child, she accepted their explanations, believed the nightmarish fairy tale of the monster lurking in the dark, longing to destroy them. But the monster has never shown itself, the danger has never manifested, and she has begun to wonder whether her parents are simply paranoid, whether running and hiding has become easier for them than staying still.*

*It's not easy for her. She's never had a real friend, because she's forbidden from telling anyone who she actually is.*

*She is alone.*

*She has one thing: him. She will not let them take that away.*

*Her mother says, You're sixteen, you have plenty of time to fill your life with love, but only if we keep you alive long enough to do so. She says she's already filled her life with love, she loves him, she's staying. Her father says, You're too young to know what love is, and she thinks about Jack, about the touch of his hand, the silent laughter in his crooked smile. She thinks about him holding an umbrella over her head to protect her from the rain, about him asking her to teach him to fight, so he can protect himself. She thinks about training him, how he loves that she's stronger, faster, better, and thinks about sitting with him, still and silent, watching the waves.*

*She is young, but she knows. She loves him.*

*Her father says they are leaving in the morning, all of them, a family. He says no more sneaking out.*

*So she runs out the door in plain sight, openly defies her parents for the first time, and they are too slow, their warnings too familiar, to stop her. She leaves, with nowhere to go—Jack is taking care of some typically vague business somewhere vaguely downtown, and so she walks the deserted streets, skirting freeways, melting into the shadows of underpasses, murders the minutes until she can be sure her parents have gone to sleep. She knows exactly how to slip into the house without waking them, but there's no need.*

*The doors are flung wide open.*

*Her mother's body is in the grass, in pieces.*

*Her father's blood is pooling across the marble entryway. He is holding on for her. He says, They found us. He says, Promise me you'll disappear, and she promises and promises and promises but there's only his corpse to hear.*

*She flees without ID or credit card, nothing that could be used to trace her, not that the enemy uses technology to trace, but these things can never be counted on, and her parents are dead.*

*Her parents are dead.*

*Her parents are dead because she slowed them down, because they knew it was time to go and she insisted they stay, she fought, she complained, she sulked, they loved her and she held it against them and now they are dead.*

*She waits at Jack's favorite bar, the one by the Shadow Market that tries its best to look like it doesn't exist. She waits for him there, because he always comes back eventually, and when he does, alarmed to see her, and to see her covered with blood, she collapses in his arms.*

*Then she tells him the truth.*

*She tells him she is a Shadowhunter, by line if not by choice. She is Fey, by spirit and blood, if not by choice. She tells him she is hunted, she is dangerous to all those who love her, she is leaving, forever. She tells him this is goodbye.*

*He doesn't understand. He wants to come with her. She tries again. Tells him the Unseelie Court wants her dead, has sent an ancient group of faerie assassins with godlike powers to murder her. To let him stay with her would mean signing his death warrant. She tells him staying with her would mean giving up his identity, his city, his whole life. He says, You're supposed to be smart, but you don't get it. You are my life. You are my identity. I will not give you up. As for everything else? He shrugs. Who needs it?*

*She laughs. She shakes with laughter. Cannot believe she's laughing. Then feels the wet on her cheek, feels him press her face to his chest, wrap his arms around her, realizes: she's not laughing, she's weeping. He promises he will always protect her. She says—out loud, for the first time in her life—I am a Herondale. I'll protect you. He says it's a deal.*

*It doesn't feel like living on the run. It feels like stones skipping across a lake. They dip into a life, wherever they feel like it—Berlin, Tokyo, Rio, Reykjavik—they establish identities, connections to the Downworld, and when Jack burns one too many bridges or Rosemary sniffs out a faerie or, that once in Paris, they discover a Shadowhunter on their trail, they slough off their identities, change their names and faces, resurface elsewhere. They consider, sometimes, going underground, living as mundanes, but this was her parents' choice, and it proved a fatal one. They will be smarter, safer, and when they build new identities for themselves, they build a network of contacts to call on if the need came. Contacts, but never allies, never friends, never anyone who would ask too many questions when they appear or disappear. No obligations, no ties, no roots. They need only each other—and then they have Christopher, and everything changes.*

*She insists on having the baby in secret. No one can know there's another link in this cursed chain. Even when she was pregnant, she realizes later, she understood at some level what she would have to do.*

*Once she has Christopher, she finally understands her parents, their lives consumed by fear. Not for themselves, but for her. She refuses to impose that on her son. She wants a better life for him, something more than barbed wire and security alarms. She wants him to have a home. She wants him to know trust, to*

*know love. She wants to save him from hiding.*

*Jack hates it. So you want to protect him from having to keep his secret by keeping it for him? You want to keep him from knowing he has a secret? And she says yes, exactly, and then he will grow up unafraid of the world.*

*Jack says growing up unafraid of the world is a good way to get destroyed by it.*

*She waits until the baby is old enough to eat solid food, old enough to survive without her, or—more to the point—that she can persuade herself he can survive without her. She doesn't know if she can survive without him, without either of them, but it's time.*

*She sends them away.*

*She is lying on the floor. She is dying. There are strangers here, but she is alone. She is hiding in the secret place in her mind where she keeps her memories of Jack and Christopher. She thinks, maybe she knew this was inevitable, why else return to LA, where it would be so easy to find her?*

*She is so tired of being alone. She is tired of missing her son and her husband, tired of forcing herself not to look for them. At least in LA, she can feel close to the past, to the family she's lost. This is the only city that's ever felt like home, because this was where she found her home in Jack's arms, and in her weakest moments, this is where she imagined a home for them, Rosemary and Jack and Christopher, a family again, a fairy-tale life in the bungalow. She planted a garden she thought Christopher might like. She filled her days imagining them with her, and now, dying, she imagines them with her still.*

*Maybe she has won. Maybe Fal will believe the line has died with her, and Christopher can be safe. This is the relief in dying. This, and knowing that if she's wrong, if she's failed, she will be saved having to watch him suffer. She will never watch him die because of who his mother is. This is her last thought, as the pain carries her into darkness. She will never have to know a world without Christopher—*

*And then she is Tessa again, and she is at Will's side, and Jem is there, and Will is slipping away, and she is trying to fathom how she will face a world without him.*



*And then Tessa is on a bridge, the Thames beneath her, a miracle beside her. Love reawakened, love returned. Jem, her own true, real, flesh and blood James Carstairs, returned to her from silence and stone, and Tessa, whose heart has remained so full through the years and years of empty days, is finally no longer alone.*

*And then she is standing by a great sea, mountains looming against a crystalline sky. The waves crash loud and sure against the beach, and Jem is beside her, his face as beautiful as the sea. She knows this moment has never been, yet here they are, together. I can't believe this is real, she says, that you're here with me.*

*Come back to me, Jem says.*

*But she is right here, with him.*

*Stay with me, Jem says. Please.*

*But where would she go?*

*He's aging, right in front of her, skin sagging, hair graying, flesh withering from the bones, and she knows, she's losing him, she will watch him die as she watches everyone die, she will have to learn all over again to survive a world without love.*

*He says, Please, Tessa, I love you.*

*He is crumbling before her eyes, and she thinks of Rosemary, enduring so many years without the ones she loved most—knowing that her family lived, but could not be with her—and she is grateful, because Jem is here. Now. That's enough, she says to Jem. We have right now. We have each other.*

*Jem says, Please, Tessa, stay with me, I love you, and she holds on to him, will keep holding, for as long as she can, unafraid of—*

*—Tessa woke to find Jem by her side, his hand warm in hers, his eyes closed, his voice low, urgent, chanting, “Stay with me, I love you, stay with me—”*

*“Where would I go?” she said weakly, and, as his gaze met hers, his face broke into the most beautiful smile she'd ever seen.*

*Everything hurt, but the pain was a welcome reminder of life. Jem's lips were impossibly soft against hers, as if afraid she would break. Tessa didn't recognize the room she was lying in, but she recognized the hooded figure who glided into the room upon Jem's frantic call. “Brother Enoch,” she said warmly. “It's been some time.”*

*He has been very worried about you, the Silent Brother said in her mind.*

Tessa's fever dreams were already fading, but she felt like she was vibrating with love—and despair. She understood the panicked relief in Jem's eyes, because she had lived inside her own terror, watched him die again and again, and even now, awake, the dreams felt too solid, too much like memory.

She felt the traces of Rosemary in her mind, those last desperate seconds of life giving way to death, almost willingly, and understood: it was easier to die protecting the people you love than to watch them die in your stead. What horrific choices mortality had to offer.

That was the devil's bargain of Jem's return, the truth she had tried to escape. He could live forever, but never truly live—never love—or she could have him back, fully alive and fully *mortal*, inevitably to lose him for good. It hadn't been her choice to make, of course. But Jem had chosen her. She could never regret this.

The Silent Brother asked Jem to step outside and leave them in privacy for a moment, and Jem, laying a final kiss on her forehead, took his leave. Tessa propped herself up in bed, her strength already returning.

*Do you remember what happened?* Brother Enoch asked.

"I remember that Fal attacked, and then . . . there were so many dreams, and they were so vivid. And . . ." Tessa closed her eyes, trying to retrieve the details of the strange lives she'd lived in her head. "They weren't all mine."

*You were trapped for several days inside the Change,* Brother Enoch said.

"How could that happen?" Tessa asked in alarm. When she'd first experimented with her powers, there was always fear attached to the transformation. To let herself sink so fully into another person's body and mind was to risk losing herself. It had taken much time and will to make herself trust the Change, trust that no matter how many forms she forced herself into, she remained, indelibly, Tessa Gray. If that faith was misplaced, then how could she ever risk Changing again? "Was it something about the weapon?"

*It was not the weapon that caused this.*

*The cause is in you.*

"You sure you're up to this?" Jem asked as he and Tessa approached the LA Shadow Market.

"For the hundredth time, yes." She spun around in a very un-Tessa-like pirouette, and Jem smiled, doing his best to disguise his worry. Brother Enoch had given her a clean bill of health, but she was trying too hard to seem like

everything was well. And the harder she tried, the more Jem suspected that it was not.

He trusted Tessa, to the ends of the Earth. If there was something wrong, she would tell him when she was ready. In the meantime, though: he would worry.

“We’ve wasted enough time,” Tessa said. “Rosemary’s counting on us to find her son.”

It turned out Jem had been right that something the bartender said tipped off Tessa about how to find Christopher Herondale’s father, the man once known as Jack Crow. *He’s exactly the same bird he used to be, just a little less of a crook.*

“It’s a riddle,” Tessa had explained, once she shook off the haze of her fever dreams. “And not even a particularly good one. What’s another word for crow . . . that’s just a *little less* than a crook.”

“A *rook*,” Jem had realized quickly. It gave them, at least, a question to ask—and, given Jack Crow’s proclivity for shady Downworlders and small-time crime, the LA Shadow Market seemed the obvious place to ask it. Even in the middle of the night and miles in from the coast, the Market smelled like sunshine and ocean. It was crowded, that night, with suntanned witches selling enchanted hemp bracelets, werewolves peddling elaborate wrought-iron mounting equipment that attached weapons to luxury cars, and booth after booth of artisanal, organic juices, all of which seemed to feature some combination of ancient mystical potion and banana.

“Guaranteed to boost muscles, manhood, and personal magnetism by 200%?” Tessa read skeptically as they walked past a warlock juicer.

“Also an excellent source of vitamin C,” Jem noted, laughing.

They were both trying so hard to seem normal.

It didn’t take very long to find someone who’d heard of a petty criminal by the name of Rook.

“You looking for *Johnny Rook*?” a grizzled werewolf asked, then spit on the ground. Rook apparently had his own booth in the market, but hadn’t been seen that night. “You tell him Cassius says hello, and that if he ever tries to scam me again, I’ll happily rip his face off with my teeth.”

“We’ll do that,” Tessa said.

They got a similar answer from everyone they spoke to—“Johnny Rook,” it seemed, had torn a swath of bad will through the entire LA Downworlder community. “It’s amazing he still *has* a face to rip off,” Tessa observed, after a pretty, young witch explained in great detail the way she would go about disfiguring him if she ever got her long-awaited chance.

“He’s not very good at this hiding out thing, is he?” Jem said.

“I don’t think he wants to be very good,” Tessa said, with the faraway look she sometimes got when she was hearing someone else’s inner voice. “After all this time, all these identities, he comes back home, makes a name for himself at the Shadow Market—a name painfully close to the one Rosemary knew him by? He wanted her to come find him.”

“She came back to LA too. Maybe she wanted the same thing.”

Tessa sighed, and neither of them said the obvious, that if they’d only loved each other a little less, Rosemary might still be alive, and her son might have a better chance of staying that way.

They roamed the market—no one knew where to find Johnny Rook that night, and most seemed delighted by the prospect that he might have disappeared forever. Tessa and Jem heard about Johnny’s bad attitude, bad business practices, badly fitting trench coat, bad habit of feeding information to whoever asked for it, including—the vampire complaining about this had paused here to aim a murderous look at Jem—filthy Shadowhunters. Until finally, as the sun was rising and the last vendors were departing, they heard something they could use: an address.

Once again, the traffic was terrible. Tessa and Jem finally arrived at the right neighborhood, only to find themselves circling the shady streets for an alarmingly long period of time, unable to locate Rook’s house. Tessa eventually realized this was due to unraveling misdirection spells that surrounded their destination, the magic flickering through a few last bursts of power as it faded. *Why unraveling?* Tessa wondered with a sense of dread. At least the deterioration of the spell meant they’d be able to find Rosemary’s husband and son.

But they were not the only ones looking. They arrived, again, too late. The house was a ruin of blood and ichor, Mantid demons wreaking bloody destruction in desperate battle with—Tessa’s eyes widened—*Emma Carstairs?* There was no time to ask questions, not with the insectoid demons swarming angrily in search of warm-blooded prey. The Riders of Mannan would never have sent demons to do this job, but after what Tessa had learned about Rook, she supposed it was no surprise he had more than one enemy to worry about. Though perhaps his worries were at an end: the ruined body lying in a pool of blood was surely Johnny Rook’s. As she launched into action, slicing a razored

foreleg, spearing a bulging eyestalk—she spared a moment of sorrow for Rosemary, who had died so desperately hoping that her husband would live.

But all was not lost. Because there, miraculously alive despite the swarm of ravening Mantids, was the treasure Rosemary had sacrificed everything to protect: her son. As Emma and Jem waged fierce battle against the remaining demons, Tessa approached the boy. She thought she would have recognized him anywhere—not just from Rosemary’s memories of her child as a toddler, but from Tessa’s own memories of her children and grandchildren, her memories of Will. The determination in his blue eyes, the fierce, graceful way he held himself in the face of danger—there was no doubt, this was a Herondale.

She introduced herself. He said nothing. He was so young, and trying so hard to look brave. She honored this effort, speaking to him as a man, rather than a child needing her care. “Get up, Christopher.”

He didn’t move, his gaze straying toward—then quickly away from—the body. The boy’s jeans were coated in blood, and Tessa wondered if it belonged to his father.

“My father, he . . .” His voice trembled.

“You must grieve later,” Tessa told him. He was, by blood if not by training, a warrior. She knew his strength better than he knew it himself. “Right now you are in great danger. More of those things may come, and worse things as well.”

“Are you a Shadowhunter?”

She flinched at the disgust in his voice.

“I am not,” she said. “But—” Rosemary had tried so hard to keep this from him. Had sacrificed everything so he could live in ignorance of the darkness surrounding him. That life was over now, that lie was dead, and Tessa would be the one to deal it the final, fatal blow. “But you are.”

The boy’s eyes widened. She extended a hand. “Come now. On your feet, Christopher Herondale. We’ve been looking for you a long time.”

Jem gazed out at a picture-perfect landscape—white crests on a sun-dappled sea, the peaks of the palisades poking at a storybook blue sky, and beside him, Tessa Gray, the love of his many lifetimes—and tried to ascertain why he felt so uneasy. Christopher Herondale, or Kit, as he preferred to be called, was safely under the protection of the LA Institute. Jem and Tessa hadn’t failed Rosemary, not entirely—they’d lost her, but saved her son. Returned a lost Herondale to the Shadowhunter world, where, hopefully, he would find a new home. He and

Tessa would soon part—she'd been summoned to the Spiral Labyrinth to look into some troubling reports of illness in the warlock community, while Jem went in search of Malcolm Fade's body and the Black Volume of the Dead. He had a feeling that what Fade had begun here in Los Angeles was only the beginning of a graver danger. All of these were ample reasons to feel uneasy, but that wasn't it.

It was Tessa, who was still holding herself at some remove from him, as if there was something she couldn't bear for him to know.

"This place," Tessa said, sounding troubled. Jem put an arm around her shoulders, held her close. These felt like stolen moments together, before they turned to their respective missions. He breathed her in, trying to memorize the feel of her, already preparing for her absence. "There's something so familiar about it," Tessa said.

"But you've never been here before?" he asked.

She shook her head. "No, it's . . . it's more like something I saw in a dream."

"Was I there with you?"

Tess's smile had an unmistakable trace of sorrow. "You're always in my dreams."

"What's wrong?" Jem said. "Is it Rosemary? I can't help but feel her death is on my shoulders."

"No!" Tessa insisted. "We did everything we could for her. We're still doing everything we can—Kit is safe, for the moment, and hopefully the Riders of Mannan still have no idea he exists. Maybe the Unselie Court will consider their job done."

"Maybe," Jem said, dubiously. They both knew it was unlikely to end here, but at least they'd bought Kit some time. "I wish we could do more for him. No child should have to see his father murdered."

Tessa took his hand. She knew exactly what Jem was thinking about—not just all the orphans scattered through the Shadowhunter world who'd watched their parents cut down in the Dark War, but his own parents, tortured and killed before his eyes. Jem had told no one but Tessa and Will the full horror he'd endured at the hands of that demon, and telling the story even once was almost more than he could stand.

"He's in good hands," Tessa assured him. "He's got a Carstairs by his side. Emma will help him find a new family, as we did with Charlotte, Henry, and Will."

"And each other," Jem said.

“And each other.”

“It won’t be a replacement for what he’s lost, though.”

“No. But you can never replace what you’ve lost, can you?” Tessa said. “You can only find new love to fill the void left behind.”

As always, the memory of Will sat between them, his absence a presence.

“We both learned that lesson too young,” Jem said, “but I suppose everyone learns it eventually. Loss is what it means to be human.”

Tessa started to say something—then burst into tears. Jem wrapped his arms around her, holding her tight against the wracking sobs. Smoothed her hair, rubbed her back, waited for the storm to pass. Her pain was his pain, even when he didn’t understand its source. “I’m here,” he whispered. “I’m with you.”

Tessa took a deep, shuddering breath, then met his gaze.

“What is it?” he asked. “You can tell me anything.”

“It’s . . . it’s you.” She touched his face, gently. “You’re with me, now, but you won’t always be. That’s what it means to be human, like you said. Eventually I’ll lose you. Because you’re mortal, and I’m . . . me.”

“Tessa . . .” There were no words to say what he needed to say, that his love for her stretched beyond time, beyond death, that he had spent too much time these last few days imagining his own world without her, that even unfathomable loss could be survived, that they would love each other for as long as they could—so instead, he held her, tight, let her feel his arms sturdy and sure around her, physical evidence: *I am here*.

“Why now?” he asked gently. “Is it something Brother Enoch said?”

“Maybe I didn’t realize how much I’d shut myself away from humanity all those years in the Spiral Labyrinth,” she admitted. “You fought in the War, you saw so much violence, so much death, but I was hiding—”

“You were fighting,” Jem corrected her. “In your way, which was as essential as mine.”

“I was fighting. But I was also hiding. I didn’t want to be fully in the world until you could be there too. And now, I suppose, I’m waking up to being fully human again. Which is terrifying, especially now.”

“Tessa, why *now*?” he said again, alarm growing. What could Brother Enoch have told her to send her into this kind of spiraling panic?

Tessa took his palm and pressed it flat against her stomach. “The reason I had so much trouble Changing back to myself is that I’m not *only* myself right now.”

“You mean . . .?” He was almost afraid to hope.

“I’m pregnant.”

“Really?” He felt like a live wire, the idea of it, a *baby*, lighting his synapses on fire. He had never let himself hope for this, because he knew better than anyone how difficult it had been for Tessa, watching her children age as she did not. She had been a wonderful mother, she had loved being a mother, but he knew what it had cost her. He’d always assumed she would never want to endure that again.

“Really. Diapers, strollers, playdates with Magnus and Alec, assuming we can persuade Magnus to wait a few years before he starts training our child to blow things up, the whole nine yards. So . . . what do you think?”

Jem felt like his heart would burst. “I’m happy. I’m—happy doesn’t even begin to cover it. But you . . .” He examined her expression, carefully. He knew her face better than his own, could read it like one of Tessa’s beloved books, and he read, now: terror, longing, sorrow, and most of all, joy. “You’re happy too?”

“I didn’t think I could ever feel this way again,” Tessa said. “There was a time when I thought there was no more joy left to me. And now . . .” Her smile blazed like the sun. “Why do you look so surprised?”

He didn’t know how to say it without hurting her, making the pain fresh again by reminding her of her loss—but of course, she could read his face just as well as he could read hers. “Yes. I might lose them, someday. As I’ll lose you. I can’t bear the thought of it.”

“Tessa—”

“But we bear so much that seems unthinkable. The only truly unbearable burden is living without love. You taught me that.” She laced her fingers through his, squeezed tight. She was so unimaginably strong. “You and Will.”

Jem cupped her face in his hands, felt her skin warm against his palms, and felt grateful all over again for the life that had been returned to him. “We’re having a child?”

Tessa’s eyes shined. The tears had stopped, and in their wake was a look of fierce determination. Jem knew what it had cost her to lose Will, then to lose the family she’d built with him. Jem had lost a piece of himself when his *parabatai* died; Will’s absence had left behind a void that nothing could fill. There was, all these years later, still pain. But the pain was evidence of love, was a reminder of Will.

It was easier not to feel. It was safer not to love. It was possible to make oneself silent and still as stone, to wall oneself off from the world and its losses, to empty one’s heart. It was possible, but it was not human.

It was not worth losing the chance to love. He had learned this from the Silent



Brotherhood, and before that, from Tessa. And before that, of course, from Will. They had both tried so hard to hide from the pain of future loss, to stay solitary, safe from the dangers of connection. They had failed so beautifully.

“We’re having a child,” Tessa echoed him. “I hope you’re ready to give up sleep for a few years.”

“Fortunately I’ve got plenty of practice at that,” he reminded her. “Less so when it comes to diapers.”

“I hear they’re much improved since the last time I needed them,” Tessa said. “We’ll have to figure it out together. All of it.”

“You’re sure?” Jem said. “You want to take all this on yourself again?”

She smiled like Raphael’s Madonna. “The nappies, the sleepless nights, the endless crying, the love like you’ve never imagined was possible, like your heart is living on the outside of your body? The chaos and the fear and the pride and the chance to tuck someone in and read them to sleep? To do all of that with you? I couldn’t be more sure.”

He took her in his arms then, imagining the life growing inside of her and the future they would have together, a family, more love to fill the absences left by those they’d lost, more love than either of them had ever imagined still possible. The future was so precarious, shadowed by a looming danger neither of them fully understood, and Jem wondered what kind of world his child would be born into. He thought of all the blood that had been shed these last few years, the growing sense among the Shadowhunters he knew that something dark was rising, that this Cold Peace after the war might be only the eerie calm at the eye of the hurricane, those still, silent moments in which it was possible to deceive yourself into imagining the worst was over.

He and Tessa had been alive too long to deceive themselves, and he thought about what might happen to a child born at the eye of such a storm. He thought about Tessa, her will and her strength, her refusal to let loss after loss harden her against love, her refusal to hide any longer from the brutality of the mortal world, her determination to fight, to hold on.

She too had been a child born of storms, he thought, as had he, as had Will. All three had risen in love through their struggles to find happiness—and without the struggle would the happiness have been so great?

He closed his eyes and pressed a kiss to Tessa’s hair. Behind his lids he did not see darkness, but the light of a London morning and Will there, smiling at him. *A new soul made of you and Tessa, Will said. I can hardly wait to meet such a paragon.*

“Do you see him, too?” Tessa whispered.

“I see him,” Jem said, and he held her even more tightly against him, the new life they had created together between them.

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# About the Authors

Cassandra Clare was born to American parents in Teheran, Iran and spent much of her childhood traveling the world with her family. She lived in France, England and Switzerland before she was ten years old. Since her family moved around so much she found familiarity in books and went everywhere with a book under her arm. She spent her high school years in Los Angeles where she used to write stories to amuse her classmates, including an epic novel called “The Beautiful Cassandra” based on the eponymous Jane Austen short story (and from which she later took her current pen name).

After college, Cassie lived in Los Angeles and New York where she worked at various entertainment magazines and even some rather suspect tabloids. She started working on her YA novel, *City of Bones*, in 2004, inspired by the urban landscape of Manhattan, her favorite city.

In 2007, the first book in the Mortal Instruments series, *City of Bones*, introduced the world to Shadowhunters. The Mortal Instruments concluded in 2014, and includes *City of Ashes*, *City of Glass*, *City of Fallen Angels*, *City of Lost Souls*, and *City of Heavenly Fire*. She also created a prequel series, inspired by *A Tale of Two Cities* and set in Victorian London. This series, The Infernal Devices, follows bookworm Tessa Gray as she discovers the London Institute in *Clockwork Angel*, *Clockwork Prince*, and *Clockwork Princess*.

The sequel series to The Mortal Instruments, The Dark Artifices, where the Shadowhunters take on Los Angeles, began with *Lady Midnight*, continues with *Lord of Shadows* and will conclude with *Queen of Air and Darkness*.

Other books in the Shadowhunters series include *The Bane Chronicles*, *Tales from the Shadowhunter Academy*, and *The Shadowhunter’s Codex*.

Her books have more than 36 million copies in print worldwide and have been translated into more than thirty-five languages. Visit her at [CassandraClare.com](http://CassandraClare.com).

Robin Wasserman is a graduate of Harvard University and the author of several successful novels for young adults including the Seven Deadly

Sins series, *Hacking Harvard*, the Skinned trilogy, and *The Book of Blood and Shadow*, as well as *Girls on Fire*, her first novel for adults. A recent recipient of a MacDowell fellowship, she lives in Brooklyn, New York.