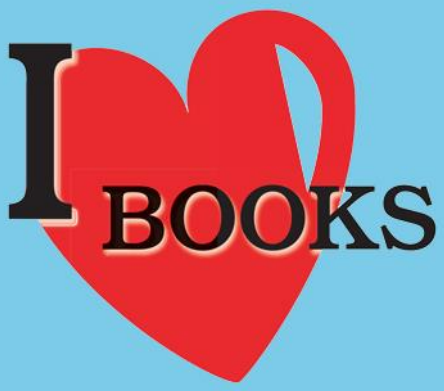


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Opening extract from

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Cassandra Clare

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Highborn Kinsmen

"And where were the papers of the Cold Peace signed?"

It was a distractingly bright day. Sunlight poured in through the high windows, illuminating the board in front of which Diana paced, tapping the palm of her left hand with a stele.

Emma looked sideways at Jules, but he had his head bent over some papers. They hadn't really spoken so far today, aside from being polite to each other at breakfast. She had woken up with her stomach feeling hollow and her hands hurting from clenching the bedclothes.

Also Church had abandoned her sometime during the night. Stupid cat.

"In Idris," said Livvy. "At the Hall of Accords. The Seelie Queen had gone into seclusion by then, so the papers were

signed by the Regent. The Unseelie King didn't attend, so technically the Unseelie faeries aren't part of the Cold Peace."

"Correct." Diana flashed a smile. "What does that mean for the Unseelie faeries?"

"They aren't protected under the Accords," said Ty. "It's forbidden to help them, and they're forbidden from contacting Shadowhunters."

"Shadowhunters aren't allowed to help any faeries at all without the permission of the Clave," Jules added. He looked calm—he looked exhausted, actually. There were dark circles under his eyes.

Emma and Julian didn't fight. They *never* fought. She wondered if he was as baffled as she was. She kept hearing what he'd said over and over: that he wouldn't have wanted a *parabatai*. Part of her never wanted to talk about it again, but another part of her wanted clarification. Was it any *parabatai* he didn't want, or her specifically?

"And what is the Clave, Tavvy?" It was a question too elementary for any of the rest of them, but Tavvy looked pleased to be able to answer something.

"The government of the Shadowhunters," he said. "Active Shadowhunters are all in the Clave. The ones who make decisions are the Council. There are three Downworlders on the Council, each one representing a different Downworlder race. Warlocks, werewolves, and vampires. There hasn't been a faerie representative since the Dark War."

"Very good," said Diana, and Tavvy beamed. "Can anyone tell me what other changes have been wrought by the Council since the end of the war?"

"Well, the Shadowhunter Academy was reopened," said

Emma. This was familiar territory for her—she had been invited by the Consul to be one of the first students. She'd chosen to stay with the Blackthorns instead. Partly so she could be *parabatai* with Julian. "A lot of Shadowhunters are trained there now, and of course they bring in many Ascendant hopefuls—mundanes who want to become Nephilim."

"The Praetor Lupus was restored by Maia Roberts and Bartholomew Velasquez," said Livvy, flipping through her *Codex.*

"They're not Clave," said Ty. "They're Downworlders. And the Praetor Lupus is a Downworlder organization."

Livvy stuck her tongue out at him.

"The Scholomance," said Julian. His curls fell against his cheek as he lifted his head, dark and glossy. "The Scholomance trains the most elite Shadowhunters. Those who have graduated with the highest honors from the Academy. Some of them become Centurions, entrusted with special missions. Some become heads of Institutes."

"Was Uncle Arthur a Centurion?" asked Tavvy, eyes wide.

"No," said Diana. "Arthur became Institute head before the Scholomance was reopened."

Cristina, who had the seat closest to the window, raised her hand to interrupt. "There's someone coming up the path to the house," she said. "Several someones, in fact."

Emma glanced over at Jules again. It was rare that anyone paid an unscheduled visit to the Institute. There were only a few people who might—even most of the members of the Conclave would have made an appointment with Arthur. Then again, maybe someone did have an appointment with Arthur. Though by the look on Julian's face, if they did, it was one he didn't know about.

Cristina, who had risen to her feet, drew her breath in. *"Hadas,"* she said, the word emerging on a staccato beat of astonishment. "Faeries."

Everyone bolted to the one long window that ran across the main wall of the room. The window itself looked out onto the front of the Institute and the winding path that led from the doors down to the highway that divided them from the beach and the sea. The sky was high and blue and cloudless. The sunlight sparked off the silver bridles of three horses, each with a silent rider seated on its bare back.

The first horse was black, and the rider who sat on him wore black armor that looked like burned leaves. The second horse was black as well, and the rider who sat on him wore a robe the color of ivory. The third horse was brown, and its rider was wrapped head to toe in a hooded robe the color of bark. Emma couldn't tell if it was a man or a woman, a child or an adult.

"So first let pass the horses black and then let pass the brown," Jules murmured. His shoulder bumped against Emma's. She bit her lip.

"One black, one brown, one white—it's an official delegation. From the Courts." Julian looked across the room at Diana. "I didn't know Arthur had a meeting with a delegation from Faerie. Do you think he told the Clave?"

She shook her head, clearly puzzled. "I don't know. He never mentioned it to me."

Julian's body was taut like a bowstring; Emma could feel the tension coming off of him. A delegation from Faerie was a rare, serious thing. Permission from the Clave had to be granted before a meeting could be held. Even by the head of an Institute. "Diana, I have to go," he said.

Frowning, Diana tapped her stele against one hand, then nodded. "Fine. Go ahead."

"I'll come with you." Emma slid down from the window seat.

Julian, already headed to the door, paused and turned. His eyes were unreadable. What was he thinking? "No," he said quietly. "It's all right. I'll take care of it."

He walked out of the room. For a moment Emma didn't move.

Normally if Julian told her he didn't need her with him, or that he had to do something alone, she wouldn't have given it a second thought. Sometimes events necessitated splitting up.

But the night before had solidified her feeling of unease: She didn't know what was going on with Jules. She didn't know if he didn't want her with him, or did but was angry with her or angry with himself, or both.

She only knew that the Fair Folk were dangerous, and there was no way Julian was facing them alone.

"I'm going," she said, and headed toward the door. She stopped to take down Cortana, which was hanging beside it.

"Emma," said Diana, her voice tight with meaning. "Be careful."

The last time faeries had been in the Institute, they had helped Sebastian Morgenstern wrench the soul from the body of Julian's father. They had taken Mark. They had ended the life of the Blackthorns' tutor.

Emma had carried Tavvy and Dru to safety. She had helped save the lives of Julian's younger brothers and sisters. They had barely escaped alive.

But Emma hadn't had years of training then. She hadn't killed a single demon herself, not when she was twelve. She hadn't spent years training to fight and kill and defend.

There was no way she was hanging back now. She went out the door and let it slam shut behind her.

Faeries.

Julian raced down the corridor and into his bedroom, his mind whirling.

Faeries at the doors of the Institute. Three steeds: two black, one brown. A contingent from a Faerie Court, though Seelie or Unseelie, Julian couldn't have said. They seemed to have been flying no banner.

They would want to talk. If there was anything faeries were good at, it was talking circles around humans. Even Shadowhunters. They could pierce the truth of a lie, and see the lie at the heart of a truth.

He grabbed up the jacket he'd been wearing the day before. There it was, in the inside pocket. The vial Malcolm had given him. He hadn't expected to need it so soon. He had hoped—

Well, never mind what he had hoped. He thought of Emma, briefly, and the chaos of broken hopes she represented. But now wasn't the time to think about that; clutching the vial, Julian broke into a run again. He reached the end of the hallway and yanked open the door to the attic. He pounded up the steps and burst into his uncle's study.

Uncle Arthur was seated at his desk, wearing a slightly ragged T-shirt, jeans, and loafers. His gray-brown hair hung nearly to his shoulders. He was comparing two massive books to each other, muttering and marking down notes as he went.

"Uncle Arthur." Julian approached the desk. "Uncle Arthur!"

Uncle Arthur made a shooing gesture at him. "I'm in the

middle of something important. Something very important, Tiberius."

"I'm Julian." Julian spoke automatically. He moved up behind his uncle and slammed both books shut. Arthur looked up at him in surprise, his faded blue eyes widening. "There's a delegation here. From Faerie. Did you know they were coming?"

"Yes, very tiresome." Uncle Arthur sighed and gestured vaguely toward the skylights. "Message after message, when they must know how busy I am."

Julian prayed silently for patience. "The messages, where are the messages?"

"They were written on leaves," Arthur said. "They crumbled. Words are so fickle, Julian. Did you know that when Keats died, he had *Here lies one whose name was writ in water* inscribed on his grave? All our names will be forgotten someday."

"Yes," Julian said.

"My monograph is nearly complete. Yet they insisted."

"Insisted on what, exactly?"

"Why, a meeting, of course."

Julian took a deep breath. "Do you know what the meeting is *about*, Uncle Arthur?"

"I'm sure they mentioned it in their correspondence . . . ," Uncle Arthur said vaguely. "But I don't recall it." He looked up at Julian. "Perhaps the ghosts took it."

Julian tensed. Arthur had different kinds of days: quiet ones, where he sat silently without responding to questions, and dark days, where he was sunk into a bitter gloom. Mentioning the dead meant not a dark day or a quiet day but the worst kind, a chaotic day, a day when Arthur would do nothing Julian expected—when he might lash out in anger or crumple into

tears. The kind of day that brought the bitter taste of panic to the back of Julian's throat.

Julian put his hand over Arthur's. His uncle's hand was slender and bony; it felt like the hand of a much older man. "I wish you didn't have to go to the meeting. But they'll be suspicious if you don't."

Arthur drew his glasses off his face and rubbed the bridge of his nose. "My monograph . . ."

"I know," Julian said. "It's important. But this is also important. Not just for the Cold Peace but for us. For Helen. For Mark."

"Do you remember Mark?" Arthur said. His eyes were brighter without the glasses. "It was so long ago."

"Not that very long ago, Uncle," said Julian. "I remember him perfectly."

"It does seem like yesterday." Arthur shuddered. "I remember the Fair Folk warriors. They came into the London Institute with their armor covered in blood. So much blood, as if they had been in the Achaean lines when Zeus rained down blood." His hand, holding his glasses, shook. "I cannot see them."

"You have to," Julian said. He thought of everything unspoken: that he himself had been a child during the Dark War, that he had seen faeries slaughter children, heard the screams of the Wild Hunt. But he said none of it. "Uncle, you must."

"If I had my medication . . . ," Arthur said faintly. "But I ran out while you were gone."

"I have it." From his pocket, Julian produced the vial. "You should have asked Malcolm for more."

"I didn't remember." Arthur slid his glasses back onto his nose, watching as Julian tipped the contents of the vial into the

glass of water on the desk. "How to find him . . . who to trust."

"You can trust me," Julian said, almost choking on the words, and held the glass out to his uncle. "Here. You know how the Fair Folk are. They feed on human unease and take advantage of it. This will help keep you calm, even if they try their tricks."

"Yes." Arthur looked at the glass, half with hunger and half fear. The contents of it would affect him for an hour, maybe less. Afterward he would have a blinding, crippling headache that might keep him in bed for days. It was why Julian hardly ever gave it to him: the aftereffect was rarely worth it, but it would be worth it now. It had to be.

Uncle Arthur hesitated. Slowly he lifted the glass to his mouth, tipped the water in. Slowly he swallowed.

The effect was instant. Suddenly everything about Arthur seemed to sharpen, to become crisp, clear, precise, like a sketch that had been refined into a careful drawing. He rose to his feet and reached for the jacket that hung on a peg by his desk. "Hurry downstairs, Jules," he said. "They'll be in the Sanctuary. Tell them I'm coming." His voice was calm. Normal.

If there was any such thing as normal.

"Go on, then," Arthur said. "I'll have to change my clothes. I'll be down as quickly as I can. Stall them."

Julian bit his lip, and absently tasted blood. Copper and salt. He glanced down at his watch and started off toward the Sanctuary.

Every Institute had a Sanctuary.

It had always been that way. The Institute was a mixture of city hall and residence, a place where Shadowhunters and

Downworlders alike came to meet with the Institute's head. The head was the local representative of the Clave. In all of Southern California, there was no more important Shadowhunter than the head of the Los Angeles Institute. And the safest place to meet him was the Sanctuary, where vampires did not need to fear hallowed ground, and all Downworlders were protected by oaths.

The Sanctuary had two sets of doors. One led outside, and could be entered by anyone, who would find themselves inside the massive stone-bound room. The other set of doors connected the inside of the Institute to the Sanctuary. It could be used only by Shadowhunters. Like the front doors of the Institute, the inner doors of the Sanctuary yielded only to those with Shadowhunter blood.

Emma had paused on the landing of the stairs to look out the window for the Fair Folk delegation. She had seen their horses, riderless, tied up near the stairs. If the Fair Folk delegation had experience with Shadowhunters, and they likely did, then they were already inside the Sanctuary, waiting.

The inner doors to the Sanctuary were at the end of a corridor that led off the Institute's main entryway. They were made of copper metal that had long gone green with verdigris; runes of protection and welcome wound their way around the framework of the doors like vines.

Emma could hear voices from the other side of the doors: unfamiliar voices, one clear like water, one sharp like a twig snapping underfoot. She tightened her hold on Cortana and pushed through the doors.

The Sanctuary itself was built in the shape of a crescent moon, facing the mountains—the shadowy canyons, the

silver-green brush scattered across the landscape. The mountains blocked the sun, but the room was bright, thanks to a pendant chandelier hanging from the ceiling. Light bounced off the cut glass and illuminated the checkerboard floor: alternating squares of darker and lighter wood. If you climbed to the chandelier and looked down, they revealed themselves as the shape of the Angelic Power rune.

Not that Emma would admit she'd done that.

In the center of the room were the faeries. There were only two of them, the one in white robes and the one in black armor. Nowhere could she see the brown rider. Neither of their faces was visible. She could see the fingertips of long, pale hands extending beyond their sleeves, but couldn't tell if they were male or female.

Emma could sense a wild, unwieldy power rolling off them, the breathy edge of otherworldliness. A feeling like the cool damp of wet earth brushed her skin, carrying the scent of roots and leaves and jacaranda blossoms.

The faerie in black laughed and drew his hood down. Emma started. Hair the color of dark green leaves, pale skin, yellow owl's eyes. His hands were rough and barklike, and each nail was a thorn.

It was the faerie she had seen at the Sepulchre the previous night.

"We meet again, fair one," he said, and his mouth, which was like a slit in the bark of a tree, grinned. "I am Iarlath of the Seelie Court. My companion in white is Kieran of the Hunt. Kieran, lower your hood."

The faerie lifted two slender hands, each of them tipped by nearly translucent, square nails. He took hold of the edges of

his hood and thrust it back with an imperious, almost rebellious gesture.

Emma suppressed a gasp. He was beautiful. Not like Julian was beautiful, or Cristina—in softened human ways—but like the hard, glittering cutting edge of Cortana. Dark blue hair, the color of cobalt paint, framed a sculpted face. His eyes were two-colored: the left black and the right silver. He wore the battered white armor that proclaimed him a prince of Faerie, but his eyes—his eyes said that he was part of the Wild Hunt.

"Is this because of the other night?" Emma said, looking from Iarlath to Kieran. "At the Sepulchre?"

"In part," said Iarlath. His voice sounded like boughs creaking in the wind. Like the dark depths of fairy-tale forests, where only monsters lived. Emma wondered that she hadn't heard it at the bar.

"Is this the girl?" Kieran's voice was very different: It sounded like waves sliding up the shore. Like warm water under pale light. It was seductive, with an edge of brittle cold. He looked at Emma as if she were a science experiment. "She's pretty," he said. "I didn't think she'd be pretty. You didn't mention it."

Iarlath shrugged. "You've always been partial to blondes," he said.

"Okay, seriously?" Emma snapped her fingers. "I am *right here.* And I was not aware I was being invited to a game of 'Who's the Hottest?'"

"I wasn't aware you were invited at all," said Kieran.

"Rude," said Emma. "This is my house. And what are you doing here, anyway? Did you show up to tell me that he"—she pointed at Iarlath—"isn't responsible for the murder at the

Sepulchre? Because that seems like going way out of your way just to say you didn't do it."

"Of course I didn't do it," Iarlath snapped. "Don't be ridiculous."

Under any other circumstances, Emma would have dismissed the comment. Faeries, though, couldn't lie. Not full-blooded faeries, anyway. Half faeries, like Mark and Helen, could tell untruths, but Iarlath didn't look half.

Emma crossed her arms over her chest. "Repeat after me: 'I did not murder the victim you speak of, Emma Carstairs,'" she said. "So I know it's true."

Iarlath's yellow eyes fixed on Emma with dislike. "I did not murder the victim you speak of, Emma Carstairs."

"Then why are you here?" Emma demanded. "Oh, is this one of those missed connections things? We met the other night, you felt a spark? Sorry, but I don't date trees."

"I am not a tree." Iarlath looked angry, his bark peeling slightly.

"Emma," said a warning voice from the doorway.

To Emma's enormous surprise, it was Arthur Blackthorn. He stood at the entrance to the Sanctuary, wearing a somber dark suit, his hair neatly combed back. The sight gave Emma a jolt; it was a long time since she remembered him wearing anything but a ragged robe over old, coffee-stained pajamas.

Standing beside him was Julian, his brown hair rumpled. Shock passed across his face when he saw Emma. She searched his face for signs of anger, but saw none—he looked like someone who'd run a marathon, actually, and was holding himself back from crumpling with exhaustion and relief.

"My apologies for the behavior of my ward," said Arthur,

striding into the room. "Though it is not forbidden to squabble in the Sanctuary, it is against the spirit of the place." He sank down in the massive stone chair. "I am Arthur Blackthorn. This is my nephew Julian Blackthorn." Julian, who had come to stand beside Arthur's seat, inclined his head as Kieran and Iarlath introduced themselves. "Now, pray tell us why you are here."

The faerie convoy exchanged glances. "What," said Kieran, "no words about the Cold Peace or about how this visit breaks your Law?"

"My uncle does not administrate the Cold Peace," said Julian. "And it is not what we wish to discuss. You know the rules as well as we do; if you've chosen to break them, it must be for an important reason. If you don't wish to share the information, my uncle will have to ask you to leave."

Kieran's eyes narrowed. "Very well," he said. "We have come to ask a favor."

"A *favor*?" Emma said in amazement. The wording of the Cold Peace was clear: Shadowhunters were not to give aid to either the Seelie or the Unseelie Court.

"Perhaps you are confused," Arthur said coldly. "You might have heard of my niece and nephew; you might think that because our relatives Mark and Helen have faerie blood you will find a kinder hearing here than you would at some other Institute. But my niece was sent away because of the Cold Peace, and my nephew was stolen from us."

Kieran's lip curled up at the corner. "Your niece's exile was a Shadowhunter decree, not a faerie one," he said. "As for your nephew—"

Arthur took a shaking breath. His hands were gripping the armrests of his chair. "The hand of the Consul was forced by

the betrayal of the Queen of the Seelie Court. Unseelie warriors fought beside hers. No faerie hand is free of blood. We are not well disposed toward faeries here."

"The Cold Peace wasn't what took Mark away from us," said Julian, his cheeks burning with color. "That was you. The Wild Hunt. We can see by your eyes that you ride with Gwyn, don't deny it."

"Oh," said Kieran with a slight smirk on his lips, "I would not deny that."

Emma wondered if anyone else heard Julian's intake of breath. "So you know my brother."

The smirk never left Kieran's face. "Of course I do."

Julian looked as if he were holding himself back by main force. "*What do you know about Mark?*"

"What is this pretense of surprise?" demanded Iarlath. "It is foolishness. We mentioned Mark of the Hunt in the letter we sent."

Emma saw the look on Julian's face, a flicker of shock. She stepped forward quickly, not wanting him to be the one to have to ask. "What letter?" she demanded.

"It was written on a leaf," Arthur said. "A leaf that crumbled." He was sweating; he took the handkerchief from his breast pocket and mopped at his forehead. "There were words on it about killings. About Mark. I didn't believe it was real. I was—"

Julian stepped forward, half-blocking his uncle from view. "Killings?"

Kieran looked at Julian, and his bicolored eyes darkened. Emma felt the uncomfortable sensation that Kieran thought he knew something about her *parabatai*, something she didn't

know herself. "You know of the murders," he said. "Emma Carstairs found one of the bodies the other night. We know you are aware there have been others."

"Why do you care?" said Julian. "Faeries do not normally involve themselves in the bloodshed of the human world."

"We do if the blood being shed is faerie blood," said Kieran. He looked around at their surprised faces. "Whoever is the killer, they have been murdering and mutilating faeries, too. That is why Iarlath was at the Sepulchre the other night. That is why Emma Carstairs encountered him. You were chasing the same killer."

Iarlath reached into his cloak and drew out a handful of glittering mica. He tossed it into the air, where the particles hung and separated, coalescing into three-dimensional images. Images of bodies, faerie bodies—some very human-looking; some nixies, with their gills and green hair; some pixies, with their all-blue eyes and petite frames. All were dead. All had skin carved with the twining markings that had adorned the body Emma and Cristina had found the night before.

Emma found herself unconsciously leaning forward, trying to get a better view of the illusion. "What are these? Magic photographs?"

"Memories, preserved with magic," said Iarlath.

"Illusions," said Julian. "Illusions can lie."

Iarlath turned his hand to the side, and the images changed. Emma was suddenly looking at the dead man she'd found in the alley the other night. It was an exact image, down to the twisted look of horror on his face.

"You saw him," said Emma. "You came across him before I did. I wondered."

Iarlath closed his hand, and the glittering pieces of mica fell to the floor like drops of rain, the illusion vanishing. "I did. He was already dead. I could not have helped him. I left him for you to find."

Emma said nothing. It was quite evident from the picture that Iarlath was telling the truth.

And faeries didn't lie.

"Shadowhunters have been killed too, we know," Kieran said.

"Shadowhunters are often killed," said Uncle Arthur. "There is no safe place."

"Not so," said Kieran. "There is protection where there are protectors."

"My parents," Emma said, ignoring Julian, who was shaking his head at her, as if to say, *Don't tell them, don't share, don't give them anything.* She knew he was likely right—it was in the nature of faeries to take your secrets and turn them against you. But if there was the chance, the smallest chance that they knew something . . . "Their bodies were found with those same markings on them, five years ago. Within a day they'd crumbled to ashes."

Kieran glanced at her with shimmering eyes. Neither looked quite human: The black eye was too dark, the silver too metallic. "We know about your parents," he said. "We know of their deaths. We know of the demon language with which their bodies were inscribed."

"Mutilated," Emma said, her breath catching, and felt Julian's eyes on her, a reminder that he was there, a silent support. "Disfigured. Not *inscribed.*"

Kieran's expression didn't change. "We understand as well that you have tried for years to translate or understand the

markings on the bodies, with no success. We can help you change that."

"What are you saying, exactly?" Julian demanded. He eyes were guarded; his whole posture was. The tension in his body kept Emma from bursting out with questions.

"The scholars of the Unseelie Court have studied the markings," said Iarlath. "It looks like a language from an ancient time of Faerie. One long before your human memory. Before there were Nephilim."

"Back when faeries were more closely tied to their demonic ancestry," said Arthur hoarsely.

Kieran's lip curled as if Arthur had said something distasteful. "Our scholars began to translate it," he said. He drew a sheet of thin, parchment-like paper from his cloak. Emma recognized on it the markings that she was so familiar with. The ones that her parents' dead bodies had borne. Below the markings were more words, written in a spidery script.

Emma's heart started to pound.

"They translated the first line," he said. "It does appear to perhaps be part of a spell. There our knowledge fails us—the Fair Folk do not deal in spells; that is warlock territory—"

"You translated the first line?" Emma burst out. "What is it?"

"We will tell you," said Iarlath, "and give you the work our scholars have done so far, if you will agree to our terms."

Julian looked at them with narrowed eyes. "Why would you translate only the first line?" he said. "Why not the whole thing?"

"Scarce had the scholars worked out the meaning of that first line, when the Unseelie King forbade them to continue," said Kieran. "The magic of this spell is dark, demonic in origin. He did not want it awakened in Faerie."

"You could have continued the work yourself," said Emma.

"All faeries are forbidden by the King to touch these words," snapped Iarlath. "But that does not mean our involvement ends. We believe this text, these markings, may help lead you to the killer, once they are understood."

"And you want us to translate the rest of the markings?" Julian said. "Using the line you've worked out as a key, I take it."

"More than that," said Iarlath. "The translation is but the first step. It will lead you to the murderer. Once you have found that person, you will turn them over to the Unseelie King that they might stand trial for the murder of the fey, and receive justice."

"You want us to conduct an investigation on your behalf?" Julian snapped. "We're *Shadowhunters*. We're bound by the Cold Peace, just like you. It is forbidden for us to help the Fair Folk, forbidden for us to even entertain you here. You know what we'd be risking. How dare you ask?"

There was rage in Julian's voice—rage out of proportion to the suggestion, but Emma couldn't blame him. She knew what he saw when he looked at faeries, especially faeries with the broken eyes of the Wild Hunt. He saw the cold wastes of Wrangel Island. He saw the empty bedroom in the Institute where Mark no longer was.

"It isn't just their investigation," Emma said quietly. "It's mine, too. This has something to do with my parents."

"I know," Julian said, and his anger was gone. There was an ache in his voice instead. "But not this way, Emma—"

"Why come here?" Arthur interrupted, looking pained, his face gray. "Why not to a warlock?"

Kieran's beautiful face twisted. "We cannot consult a

warlock," he said. "None of Lilith's Children will deal with us. The Cold Peace has left us shunned by other Downworlders. But you can. You can visit the High Warlock Malcolm Fade, or Magnus Bane himself, and demand an answer to your question. We are chained, but *you*—" He spoke the word with scorn. "You are free."

"This is the wrong family to have come to," said Arthur. "You are asking us to break the Law for you, as if we have some special regard for the Fair Folk. But the Blackthorns have not forgotten what you have taken from them."

"No," Emma said. "We need that paper, we need—"

"Emma." Arthur's look was sharp. "Enough."

Emma dropped her gaze, but her blood was singing through her veins, a determined melody of rebellion. If the faeries left and took the paper with them, she would find some way to track them down, to retrieve the information, to learn what she had to learn. Some way. Even if the Institute couldn't risk it, she could.

Iarlath looked at Arthur. "I do not think you wish to make such a hasty decision."

Arthur's jaw tightened. "Why do you second-guess me, neighbor?"

The Good Neighbors. An old, old term for faerie folk. It was Kieran who replied: "Because we have something that you want above all other things. And if you help us, we are willing to give it to you."

Julian paled. Emma, staring at him, was for a moment too caught up in his reaction to realize herself what they were implying. When she did, her heart gave an uneven throb inside her chest.

"What is it?" Julian whispered. "What do you have that we want?"

"Oh, come now," Kieran said. "What do you think?"

The door of the Sanctuary, the one that went to the outside of the Institute, opened, and the faerie in the brown robes came in. He moved with grace and silence, no hesitation or trepidation—without anything human about his movements at all. Entering the pattern of the angelic rune on the floor, he came to a stop. The room was completely silent as he raised his hands to his hood and—for the first time—hesitated.

His hands were human, long-fingered, tanned pale brown.

Familiar.

Emma wasn't breathing. She couldn't breathe. Julian looked as if he were in a dream. Arthur's face was blank, confused.

"Take your hood down, boy," said Iarlath. "Show your face."

The familiar hands tightened on the hood and yanked it down. Pushing, then shoving the cloak off his shoulders, as if the material of it clung unpleasantly. Emma saw the flash of a long, lithe body, of pale hair, of tanned skin, as the cloak was wrenched away and slid to the ground in a dark puddle.

A boy stood in the heart of the rune, panting. A boy who looked about seventeen, with fair hair that curled like acanthus vines, tangled with twigs and briars, hanging to his shoulders. His eyes showed the shattered doubling of the Wild Hunt: two colors—one gold, one Blackthorn blue. His feet were bare, black with dirt, his clothes ragged and torn. His skin bore a hundred scars.

A wave of dizziness passed through Emma, and a terrible mixture of horror and relief and amazement. Julian had stiffened, as if he'd been shocked with electricity. She saw the

slight tightening of his mouth, the twitch of the muscle in his cheek. He didn't open his mouth; it was Arthur who spoke, half-rising from his chair, his voice thready and uncertain:

"Mark?"

Mark's eyes widened in confusion. He opened his mouth to answer. Iarlath whirled on him. "Mark Blackthorn of the Wild Hunt," he snapped. "Do not speak until given permission to speak."

Mark's lips slammed together. He bowed his head.

"And you," said Kieran, holding up a hand as Julian started forward, "stay where you are."

"What have you done to him?" Julian's eyes flashed. *"What have you done to my brother?"*

"Mark belongs to the Wild Hunt," said Iarlath. "If we choose to release him to you, it will be at our recognizance."

Arthur had sunk back into the chair behind him. He was blinking owlishly from Mark to the faerie host and back again. The gray color was back in his face. "The dead rise and the lost return," he said. "We should fly blue banners from the tops of the towers."

Kieran narrowed his eyes. "Why does he say that?"

Julian looked from Arthur to Mark to the other two faeries. "He's in shock," he said. "His health is fragile; it has been since the war. You've shocked him."

"It's from an old Shadowhunter poem," said Emma. "I'm surprised you don't know it."

"Poems contain much truth," said Iarlath, and there was humor in his voice, but a bitter sort. Emma wondered if he was laughing at them or himself.

Julian was staring at Mark, a look on his face of unmitigated shock and longing. "Mark?" he said.

Mark did not look up.

Julian looked as if he had been pierced by elf-bolts, the sly faerie arrows that burrowed under the skin and released deadly poison. Any anger Emma had felt toward him about the night before evaporated. The look on his face was like knife blades in her heart. "Mark," he said again, and then in a half whisper, "Why? Why can't he speak to me?"

Julian's pulse hammered in his throat. Emma saw it and hated the faeries, suddenly and fiercely, for in holding Mark, they also held Julian's human, breakable heart.

"He is forbidden by Gwyn to speak until our bargain is sealed," said Kieran. He glanced at Mark, and there was something cold in his expression. Hatred? Envy? Did he despise Mark for being half-human? Did they all? How had they showed their hate all these years, when Mark was at their mercy?

Emma could sense how hard Julian was holding himself back from going to his brother. She spoke for him. "So Mark is your bargaining chip."

Rage flashed across Kieran's face, sudden and startling. "Why must you state things that are obvious? Why must all humans do it? Foolish girl—"

Julian changed; his attention snapped away from Mark, his spine straightening, his voice hardening. He sounded calm, but Emma, who knew him so well, could hear the ice blades in his voice. "Emma is my *parabatai*," he said. "If you ever speak to her like that again, there will be blood on the floor of the Sanctuary, and I do not care if they put me to death for it."

Kieran's beautiful, alien eyes gleamed. "You Nephilim are loyal to your chosen partners, I will give you that." He waved a dismissive hand. "I suppose Mark is our bargaining chip, as you put it, but do not forget that it is the fault of the Nephilim that we need one at all. There was a time when Shadowhunters would have investigated the killings of our kind because they believed in their mandate to protect more than they believed in their hate."

"There was a time when the Fair Folk would have returned to us one of our own that they had taken," said Arthur. "The pain of loss goes both ways, as does the loss of trust."

"Well, you will have to trust us," said Kieran. "You have no one else. Do you?"

There was a long silence. Julian's gaze went back to his brother, helplessly, as if he were being pulled toward him on a string. "So you want us to find out who is responsible for these killings," he said. "Stop the murders of faeries and humans. And in return you will give us Mark, if we succeed?"

"The Court is prepared to be far more generous," said Kieran. "We will give you Mark now. He will assist you in your investigation. And when the investigation is over, he may choose whether he remains with you or returns to the Hunt."

"He will choose us," Julian said coldly. "We are his family."

Kieran's eyes shone. "I would not be so sure, young Shadowhunter. Those of the Hunt are loyal to the Hunt."

"He isn't of the Hunt," Emma said. "He's a Blackthorn."

"His mother was fey," said Kieran. "And he has ridden with us, reaped the dead with us, mastered the use of elf-bolt and arrow. He is a formidable warrior in the faerie fashion, but he is not like you. He will not fight like you. He is not Nephilim."

"Yes, he is," said Julian. "Shadowhunter blood breeds true. His skin can bear Marks. You know the laws."

Kieran did not reply to that, just looked at Arthur. "Only the head of the Institute can decide this. You must let your uncle speak freely."

Emma looked to Arthur; they all did. Arthur picked nervously, fretfully at the arm of his chair. "You wish the fey boy here that he might report on us to you," he said, finally, in a quavering voice. "He will be your spy."

The fey boy. Not Mark. Emma looked over at Mark, but if a flicker of hurt passed across his stony face, it was invisible.

"If we wished to spy on you, there are easier ways," said Kieran in a tone of cold reproach. "We would not need to give up Mark—he is one of the best fighters of the Hunt. Gwyn will miss him sorely. He will not be a spy."

Julian drew away from Emma, fell on his knees by his uncle's chair. He leaned in and whispered to Arthur, and Emma strained to hear what he was saying, but could make out only a few words—"brother" and "investigation" and "murder" and "medicine" and "Clave."

Arthur held up a shaking hand, as if to silence his nephew, and turned to the faeries. "We will accept your offer," he said. "On the condition that there will be no tricks. At the end of the investigation, when the killer is caught, Mark will make his own free choice to stay or to go."

"Of course," said Iarlath. "As long as the murderer is delivered to us. We wish for the one with the blood on his hands—it will not be enough for you to say 'it was done by that one or this one' or 'vampires were responsible.' The murderer or murderers will be placed in the custody of the Courts. *We* will mete out justice."

If you were capable of justice, we would not all be here now, Emma thought, but she said nothing.

"First you swear," said Julian, his blue-green eyes bright and hard. "Say, 'I swear that when the terms of the bargain are fulfilled, Mark Blackthorn will make his own free choice whether he wishes to be part of the Hunt or return to his life as a Nephilim.'"

Kieran's mouth tightened. "I swear that when the terms of the bargain are fulfilled, Mark Blackthorn will make his own free choice whether he wishes to be part of the Hunt or return to his life as a Nephilim."

Emma looked at Mark. He was expressionless, unmoving as he had been all this time, as if they weren't discussing him but someone else. He looked as if he were seeing through the walls of the Sanctuary, seeing the distant ocean perhaps, or a place even farther away than that.

"Then I think we have an arrangement," Julian said. "Raziel help us," he muttered.

The two faeries looked at each other, and then Kieran walked over to Mark. He laid his white hands on Mark's shoulders and said something to him in a guttural language Emma didn't understand—it was nothing Diana had taught them, not the high, fluting speech of the Court fey or any other magical speech. Mark didn't move, and Kieran stepped away, looking unsurprised.

"He is yours for now," he said, looking at Arthur. "We will leave his steed for him. They have become . . . attached."

"He won't be able to use a horse," Julian said, his voice tight. "Not in Los Angeles."

Kieran's smile was full of contempt. "I think you'll find he can use this one."

"God!" It was Arthur, crying out. He lurched forward, his hands cradling his head. "It hurts—"

Julian moved to his uncle's side, reaching to grip his arm, but Arthur threw him off, rising to his feet, his breath uneven. "I must excuse myself," he said. "My headache. It is unbearable."

He looked horribly unwell, it was true. His skin was the color of dirty chalk, his collar sticking to his throat with sweat.

Both Kieran and Iarlath said nothing. Neither did Mark, who still stood swaying blindly on his feet, his eyes fixed on the ground. The fey watched Arthur with avid curiosity burning in their eyes. Emma could read their thoughts. *The head of the Los Angeles Institute. He is weak, unwell. . . .*

The inner doors rattled, and Diana came in. She looked cool and calm as always. Her dark gaze took in the scene before her; she seemed neither surprised nor worried. "Arthur," she said. "You are needed upstairs. Do go. I will escort the convoy outside to discuss the bargain."

How long was she out there eavesdropping? Emma wondered as Arthur, looking desperately grateful, limped past Diana and toward the door. Diana was as quiet as a cat when she wanted to be, and she'd clearly been listening.

"Is he dying?" Iarlath asked with some curiosity, his gaze following Arthur as he left the Sanctuary.

"We're mortal," Emma said. "We get sick, we age. We're not like you. But it's nothing that should be a surprise."

"Enough," Diana said. "I will lead you from the Sanctuary, but first—the translation." She held out a slim brown hand.

Kieran handed over the near-translucent paper with a wry look. Diana glanced down at it. "What does the first line say?" Emma said, unable to stop herself.

Diana frowned. *"Fire to water,"* she said. "What does that mean?"

Iarlath gave her a single cool look and moved to join her. "It will be the job of your people to find out."

Fire to water? Emma thought of the bodies of her parents, drowned and then crumbling like ashes. Of the body of the man in the alley, scorched and then soaked in seawater. She looked at Julian, wondering if his mind was following the same paths as hers—but no, he was looking at his brother, unmoving, as if frozen in place.

She itched to get her hands on the paper, but it was folded into Diana's jacket, and Diana was leading the two faerie men toward the Sanctuary exit. "You understand that we will be investigating this without the knowledge of the Clave," she said, as Iarlath fell into step beside her. Kieran walked behind them, scowling.

"We understand that you fear your government, yes," said Iarlath. "We fear them too, the architects of the Cold Peace."

Diana didn't rise to the bait. "If you must contact us during the investigation, you'll need to take care in doing so."

"We will come only to the Sanctuary, and you may leave messages here for us," said Kieran. "If we hear that you have spoken of our bargain to anyone outside these walls, especially one who is not Nephilim, we will be most displeased. Mark, too, is under orders of secrecy from the Hunt. You will find he will not disobey them."

Sunlight speared into the Sanctuary as Diana opened the doors to the outside. Emma felt a flash of gratitude for her tutor as Diana and the two faeries vanished. Gratitude for sparing Arthur—and for sparing Julian one more second of pretending that he was all right.

For Jules was looking at his brother—finally, *really* looking at him, with no one to see or judge his weakness. With no one to, at the last moment, take Mark away from him again.

Mark raised his head slowly. He was thin as a lath, so much narrower and more angular than Emma remembered him. He didn't seem to have aged so much as sharpened, as if the bones of chin and cheek and jaw had been refined with careful tools. He was gaunt but graceful, in the manner of the fey.

"Mark," Julian breathed out, and Emma thought of the nightmares Jules had woken up from over the years, screaming for his brother, for *Mark*, and how hopeless he had sounded, and how lost. He was pale now, but his eyes were shining as if he were looking at a miracle. And it was a sort of miracle, Emma thought: The faeries didn't give back what they had taken.

Or at least, they never gave it back unchanged.

A chill suddenly ran up Emma's veins, but she didn't make a sound. She didn't move as Julian took a step toward his brother, and then another one, and then spoke, his voice breaking. "Mark," he whispered. "Mark. It's me."

Mark looked Julian straight in the face. There was something about his two-colored eyes; both eyes had been blue when Emma had last seen him, and the bifurcation seemed to speak to something broken inside him, like a piece of pottery cracked along the glaze. He looked at Julian, taking in his height, his broad shoulders and lanky frame, his tousled brown hair, his Blackthorn eyes, and he spoke for the first time.

His voice sounded rough, scraped, as if he had been screaming.

"Father?" he said, and then, as Julian drew in a startled breath, Mark's eyes rolled back in his head and he collapsed to the floor in a dead faint.