

*New York Times* Bestselling Series

THE MORTAL INSTRUMENTS

Book Four

# City of Fallen Angels

CASSANDRA CLARE



City of Bones

City of Ashes

City of Glass

THE INFERNAL DEVICES

Clockwork Angel

MARGARET K. McELDERRY BOOKS

An imprint of Simon & Schuster Children's Publishing Division 1230 Avenue of the Americas, New York, New York 10020

**[www.SimonandSchuster.com](http://www.SimonandSchuster.com)**

This book is a work of fiction. Any references to historical events, real people, or real locales are used fictitiously. Other names, characters, places, and incidents are products of the author's imagination, and any resemblance to actual events or locales or persons, living or dead, is entirely coincidental.

Copyright © 2011 by Cassandra Claire LLC

All rights reserved, including the right of reproduction in whole or in part in any form.

MARGARET K. McELDERRY BOOKS is a trademark of Simon & Schuster, Inc.

The Simon & Schuster Speakers Bureau can bring authors to your live event.

For more information or to book an event, contact the Simon & Schuster Speakers Bureau at 1-866-248-3049 or visit our website at **[www.simonspeakers.com](http://www.simonspeakers.com)**.

# Book design by Mike Rosamilia

The text for this book is set in Dol y.

Manufactured in the United States of America

2 4 6 8 10 9 7 5 3 1

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

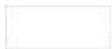
Clare, Cassandra.

City of fallen angels / Cassandra Clare.—1st ed.

p. cm.—(The mortal instruments; bk. 4)

Summary: As mysterious murders threaten the new peace between Shadowhunters and Downworlders, only Simon, the Daylighter vampire, can help bring both groups together.

ISBN 978-1-4424-0354-3 (hardcover)



ISBN 978-1-4424-0356-7 (eBook)

[1. Supernatural—Fiction. 2. Vampires—Fiction. 3. Demonology—Fiction. 4. Magic—Fiction.

5. New York (N.Y.)—Fiction.] I. Title.

PZ7.C5265Cj 2011

[Fic]—dc22

2010041132

For Josh

Sommes-nous les deux livres

d'un même ouvrage?

**Contents**

**Part One: Exterminating Angels**

**Chapter 1: The Master**

**Chapter 2: Fal ing**

# **Chapter 3: Sevenfold**

**Chapter 4: The Art of Eight Limbs**

**Chapter 5: Hel Cal s Hel**

**Chapter 6: Wake The Dead**

**Chapter 7: Praetor Lupus**

**Chapter 8: Walk in Darkness**

**Chapter 9: From Fire Unto Fire**

**Part Two: For Every Life**

**Chapter 10: Riverside Drive**

**Chapter 11: Our Kind**

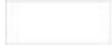
**Chapter 12: Sanctuary**

**Chapter 13: Girl Found Dead**

**Chapter 14: What Dreams May Come**

**Chapter 15: Beati Bel icosi**

# **Chapter 16: New York City Angels**



**Chapter 17: And Cain Rose Up**

**Chapter 18: Scars of Fire**

# Chapter 19: Hel is Satisfied

# Acknowledgments

# Part One

## Exterminating Angels

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

—Jeremy Taylor, “A Funeral Sermon”

### 1THE MASTER

**“Just coffee, please.”**

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

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

With a shrug the waitress took his laminated menu and went to put his order in. Simon sat back against the hard plastic diner chair and looked around. Veselka, a diner on the corner of Ninth Street and Second Avenue, was one of his favorite places on the Lower East Side—an old neighborhood eatery papered with black-and-white murals, where they let you sit all day as long as you ordered coffee at half-hour intervals. They also served what had once been his favorite vegetarian pierogi and borscht, but those days were behind him now.

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

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

Except this one was. The bell on the diner’s front door rang as the door opened, and

Isabelle Lightwood came in.

She smiled when she saw Simon, and came toward him, shrugging off her coat and draping it over the back of the chair before she sat down. Under the coat she was wearing one of what Clary called her “typical Isabelle outfits”: a tight short velvet dress, fishnet stockings, and boots. There was a knife stuck into the top of her left boot that Simon knew only he could see; still, everyone in the diner was watching as she sat down, flinging her hair back.

Whatever she was wearing, Isabelle drew attention like a fireworks display.

Beautiful Isabelle Lightwood. When Simon had met her, he’d assumed she’d have no time for a guy like him. He’d turned out to be mostly right. Isabelle liked boys her parents disapproved of, and in her universe that meant Downworlders—faeries, werewolves, and vamps. That they’d been dating regularly for the past month or two amazed him, even if their relationship was limited mostly to infrequent meetings like this one. And even if he couldn’t help but wonder if he’d never been changed into a vampire, if his whole life hadn’t been altered in that moment, would they be dating at all?

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

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

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

Simon wasn’t really sure how it had happened. Maia liked to come to his house and use his Xbox—they didn’t have one at the abandoned police station where the werewolf pack lived—and it wasn’t until the third or fourth time she’d come over that she’d leaned over and kissed him good-bye before she’d left. He’d been pleased, and then had called up Clary to ask her if he needed to tell Isabelle. “Figure out what’s going on with you and Isabelle,” she said. “Then tell her.”

This had turned out to be bad advice. It had been a month, and he still wasn’t sure what was going on with him and Isabelle, so he hadn’t said anything. And the more time that passed, the more awkward the idea of saying something grew. So far he’d made it

work. Isabelle and Maia weren't really friends, and rarely saw each other.

Unfortunately for him, that was about to change. Clary's mother and her longtime friend, Luke, were getting married in a few weeks, and both Isabelle and Maia were invited to the wedding, a prospect Simon found more terrifying than the idea of being chased through the streets of New York by an angry mob of vampire hunters.

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

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

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

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

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

"Count Blintzula?"

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

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

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

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

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

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

"What would you prefer? 'What did the Count eat today, children? One helpless vil

ager, two helpless vil agers, three helpless vil agers . . .”

“Shh.” Isabelle finished knotting her scarf around her throat and leaned forward, putting her hand on Simon’s wrist.

Her big dark eyes were alive suddenly, the way they only ever came alive when she was either hunting demons or thinking about hunting demons. “Look over there.”

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

“Now,” Isabelle said, “what do you suppose they are?”

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

“They’re human subjugates,” Isabelle hissed. “They belong to a vampire.”

“‘Belong’ as in . . . ?”

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

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

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

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

“Not exactly,” said Isabelle. “You’re a vampire because you drank some of Raphael’s blood, and then you were bitten by other vampires, and then you died. You need to be bitten at some point during the process.”

“Why?”

“Vampire saliva has . . . properties. Transformative properties.”

“Yech,” said Simon.

“Don’t ‘yech’ me. You’re the one with the magical spit. Vampires keep humans around and feed on them when they’re short on blood—like walking snack machines.” Izzy spoke with distaste. “You’d think they’d be weak from blood loss all the time, but

vampire saliva actually has healing properties. It increases their red blood cell count, makes them stronger and healthier, and makes them live longer. That's why it's not against the Law for a vampire to feed on a human. It doesn't really hurt them. Of course every once in a while the vampire will decide it wants more than a snack, it wants a subjugate—and then it will start feeding its bit on human small amounts of vampire blood, just to keep it docile, to keep it connected to its master. Subjugates worship their masters, and love serving them. All they want is to be near them. Like you were when you went back to the Dumont. You were drawn back to the vampire whose blood you had consumed.”

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

“Shadowhunter.” The creature on the left spoke in a hissing whisper. “We did not know of you in this situation.”

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

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

“No, you don’t,” Simon said. “I have no idea who you are. Never seen you before.”

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

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

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

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

“Maybe he’s changed his mind,” Simon suggested. “You know how he is. Moody. Fickle.”

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

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

“We are not privy to our master’s plans,” said Mr. Archer in a haughty tone.

“No dice, then,” said Simon. “I won’t go.”

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

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

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

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

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

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

"His name is Simon. Simon Lewis."

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

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

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

And there had been Sebastian, Simon thought, who had been better than them both. But he was dead.

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

Isabelle's eyes rounded. "Simon!"

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

"Excellent," said Mr. Archer.

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

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

whatever they call it.”

“Sire, maker, begetter—there are a million names for what he did,” Isabelle said distractedly. “And maybe his blood made you a vampire. But it didn’t make you a Daylighter.” Her eyes met his across the table. Jace made you a Daylighter. But she would never say it out loud; there were only a few of them who knew the truth, the whole story behind what Jace was, and what Simon was because of it. “You don’t have to do what he says.”

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

—”

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

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

“I will not—”

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

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

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

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

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

Isabelle reached across the table and pushed his hair back, her touch more clinical than gentle. She was frowning.

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

“It really . . . works?” she whispered.

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

She sighed. “Every bit of my training says this isn’t a good idea.”

Simon squeezed her fingers. “Come on. You’re curious about what Raphael wants, aren’t you?”

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

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

She looked at him with guarded amusement. “What?”

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

Isabelle rolled her eyes. “Okay, fine. Second favor?”

Simon leaned over and kissed her on the cheek. “Try the borscht before you leave. It’s fantastic.”

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

Simon’s stomach tightened. He tried to keep enough bottles of animal blood in his room—he had a small refrigerator at the back of his closet now, where his mother wouldn’t see it—to keep himself from ever getting hungry. The blood was disgusting.

He'd thought he'd get used to it, even start wanting it, but though it killed his hunger pangs, there was nothing about it that he enjoyed the way he'd once enjoyed chocolate or vegetarian burritos or coffee ice cream. It remained blood.

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

They turned right onto Third Avenue, and paused in front of a restaurant whose sign said CLOISTER CAFÉ.

GARDEN OPEN ALL YEAR. Simon blinked up at the sign. "What are we doing here?"

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Walker bowed deeply. "Master," he said.

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

bringing Simon to me.”

“Wait a second.” Simon looked from the woman to the two subjugates and back again. “You’re not Raphael.”

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

She held out a black-gloved hand.

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

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

And Simon remembered. I thought the head vampire was someone else, he had said to Raphael once, in Idris, it felt like forever ago.

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

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

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

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

that was like a secret caress.

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

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

Simon sat, perching uncomfortably on the edge of the hard metal chair. “I don’t really drink.”

“Of course,” she said, all sympathy. “You’re barely a fledgling, aren’t you? Don’t worry too much. Over time you will train yourself to be able to consume wine and other beverages. Some of the oldest of our kind can consume human food with few effects.”

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

“Have you.” Her green eyes glowed.

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

“As long as you don’t ever eat in front of them,” said Camille. “As long as you hide your need for blood. You have never fed on someone purely human, have you? Just bagged blood. Stale. Animal.” She wrinkled her nose.

Simon thought of Jace, and pushed the thought hastily away. Jace was not precisely human. “No, I haven’t.”