

A Dark Transformation ***A City of Lost Souls Extra***

It was a very small bar on a narrow sloping street in a walled town full of shadows. Jonathan Morgenstern had been sitting at the bar for at least a quarter of an hour, finishing a leisurely drink, before he got to his feet and slipped down the long, rickety flight of wooden stairs to the club. The sound of the music seemed to be trying to push its way up through the steps as he made his way downward: he could feel the wood vibrating under his feet.

The place was filled with writhing bodies and obscuring smoke. It was the kind of place demons prowled. That made it the kind of place that demon hunters frequented.

And an ideal location for someone who was hunting a demon hunter.

Colored smoke drifted through the air, smelling vaguely acidic. There were long mirrors all along the walls of the club. He could see himself as he moved across the room. A slender figure in black, with his father's hair, white as snow. It was humid down here in the club, airless and hot, and his T-shirt was stuck to his back with sweat. A silver ring glittered on his right hand as he scanned the room for his prey.

There he was, at the bar, as if he was trying to blend in with the mundanes.

A boy. Maybe seventeen.

A Shadowhunter.

Sebastian Verlac.

Jonathan ordinarily had little interest in anyone his own age — if there was anything duller than adults, it was other adolescent — but Sebastian Verlac was different. Jonathan had chosen him carefully and specifically, the way one might choose an expensive and custom-tailored suit.

Jonathan strolled over to him, taking his time and taking the boy's measure. He had seen photographs, of course, but people always looked different in person. Sebastian was tall, the same height as Jonathan himself, and had the same slender build. His clothes looked like they would fit Jonathan perfectly. His hair was dark — Jonathan would have to dye his own, which was annoying, but not impossible. His eyes were black too, and his features, though irregular, came together pleasingly: he had a friendly charisma that was attractive. He looked like it was easy for him to trust, easy to smile.

He looked like a fool.

Jonathan came up to the bar and leaned against it. He turned his head, allowing the other boy to recognize that he could see him. "Bonjour."

"Hello," Sebastian replied, in English, the language of Idris, though his was tinged faintly with a French accent. His eyes were narrow. He looked very startled to be seen at all, and as if he was wondering what Jonathan might be: fellow Shadowhunter, or a warlock with a sign that didn't show?

Something wicked this way comes, Jonathan thought. And you don't even know it.

"I'll show you mine if you show me yours," he suggested, and smiled. He could see himself smiling in the grimy mirror over the bar. He knew the way it lit up his face, made him almost irresistible. His father had trained him for years to smile like that, like a human being.

Sebastian's hand tightened on the edge of the bar. "I don't..."

Jonathan smiled wider and turned his right hand over to show the Voyance rune on the back of it. The breath went out of Sebastian in relief and he beamed with the delighted recognition, as if any Shadowhunter was a comrade or a potential friend.

"Are you on your way to Idris, too?" Jonathan asked. He kept his tone professional, as if he was in regular touch with the Clave. Another dedicated Shadowhunter protecting the innocent. Can't get enough of that!

"I am," Sebastian replied. "Representing the Paris Institute. I'm Sebastian Verlac, by the way."

"Ah, a Verlac. A fine old family." Jonathan accepted his hand and shook it firmly. "Andrew Blackthorn," he said easily. "The Los Angeles Institute, originally, but I've been studying in Rome. I thought I'd come overland to Alicante. See the sights."

He'd researched the Blackthorns, a large family, and knew they and the Verlacs had not been in the same city for ten years. He was certain he would have no problem answering to an assumed name: he never did. He had never felt particularly attached to his real name, perhaps because he had always known that it was not his name alone.

The other Jonathan had been raised in a house not far from his, visited by his father. Daddy's little angel.

"Haven't see another Shadowhunter in ages," Sebastian continued. He had been talking, but Jonathan had forgotten to pay attention to him. "Funny to run into you here. My lucky day." "Must be," Jonathan murmured. "Though not entirely chance, of course. I assume you've heard the reports of a Eluthied demon lurking about this place?"

Sebastian smiled and took a last swallow from his glass, setting it down on the bar. "After we kill the thing, we should have a celebratory drink."

Jonathan nodded and tried to look as if he was very focused on searching the room for demons. They stood shoulder to shoulder, like brother warriors. It was so easy it was almost boring: all he'd had to do was show up, and here was Sebastian Verlac like a lamb pushing its throat on a blade. Who trusted other people like that? Wanted to be their friend so easily? He had never played nicely with others. Of course, he had not ever been given the opportunity; his father had kept him and the other Jonathan apart. A child with demon blood and a child with angel blood: raise both boys as yours and see who make daddy proud. The other boy had failed a test when he was younger and been sent away. Jonathan knew that much. He had passed every test their father had ever set for him. Maybe he had passed them a little too well, too flawlessly, unfazed by the isolation chamber and the animals, the whip or the hunt. Jonathan had discerned a shadow in Father's eyes now and then, one that was either grief or doubt.

Though what did he have to grieve over? Why should he doubt? Was Jonathan not the perfect warrior? Was he not everything his father had created him to be?

Human beings were so puzzling.

Jonathan had never liked the idea of the other Jonathan, of Father having another boy, one who made Father smile sometimes without a shadow in his eyes.

Jonathan had once cut one of his practice dummies off at the knees, and spent a pleasant day strangling it, disemboweling it, and slitting it from neck to navel. When his father had asked why he'd cut off part of the legs, Jonathan had told him that he wanted to see what it was like to kill a boy who was just his own size.

"I forget, you'll have to excuse me," said Sebastian, who was turning out to be annoyingly chatty. "How many are there in your family?"

"Oh, we're a big one," Jonathan replied. "Eight in total. I have four brothers and three sisters." The Blackthorns really were eight: Jonathan's research had been thorough. He couldn't imagine what that would be like — so many people, such untidiness. Jonathan had a blood sister too, although they had never met.

Father had told him about his mother running off when Jonathan was a baby. She'd been pregnant again, inexplicably weepy and miserable because she had some sort of objection to her child being improved. But she'd run away too late: Father had already seen to it that Clarissa would have angelic powers.

Only a few weeks ago, Father had met Clarissa for the first time, and on their second encounter Clarissa had proven she knew how to use her powers. She had sent Father's ship to the bottom of the ocean.

Once he and Father had taken down and transformed the Shadowhunters, laid waste to their pride and their city, Father said that Mother, the other Jonathan and Clarissa would be coming to live with them.

Jonathan despised his Mother for running away. And his only interest in the other Jonathan was to prove how superior he was: Father's real son, by blood, and with the strength of demons and chaos in that blood as well.

But he was interested in Clarissa.

Clarissa had never chosen to leave him. She had been taken away and forced to grow up in the midst of mundanes, of all disgusting things. She must have always known she was made of different stuff from everyone around her, meant for utterly different things, with power and strangeness crackling beneath her skin.

She must have felt there was no other creature like her in all the world.

She had an angel in her like the other Jonathan, not the infernal blood that ran through his own veins. He was very much his father's son made stronger, tempered by the fires of Hell. Clarissa was Father's real daughter too, and who knew what strange brew the combination of Father's blood and Heaven's power had formed to run through Clarissa's veins? She might not be very different from himself.

The thought excited him in a way he had never been excited before. Clarissa was his sister; she belonged to no one else. She was his. He knew it, because although he did not dream

often — that was a human thing — after Father had told him about his sister sinking the ship, he had dreamed of her.

Jonathan dreamed of a girl standing in the sea with hair like scarlet smoke coiling over her shoulders, winding and unwinding in the untameable wind. Everything was stormy darkness, and in the raging sea were pieces of wreckage that had once been a boat and bodies floating facedown. She looked down on them with cool green eyes and was not afraid.

Clarissa had done that — wreaked destruction like he would have. In the dream, he was proud of her. His little sister.

In the dream, they were laughing together at all the beautiful ruin around them. They were standing suspended in the sea; it couldn't hurt them, for destruction was their element.

Clarissa was trailing her moonlight-white hands in the water. When she lifted up her dripping her hands they were dark, and he realized that the seas were all blood.

Jonathan had woken from his dream still laughing.

When the time was right, Father had said, they would be together, all of them. Jonathan had to wait.

But he was not very good at waiting.

"You have the oddest look on your face," Sebastian Verlac said, shouting above the beat of the music, bright and jagged in Jonathan's ears.

Jonathan leaned over and spoke softly and precisely into Sebastian's ear. "Behind you," he said. "Demon. Four o'clock."

Sebastian Verlac turned and the demon, in the shape of a girl with a cloud of dark hair, stepped hastily away from the boy it was talking to and began sliding away through the crowd. Jonathan and Sebastian followed it, out a side door with SORTIE DE SECOURS written across it in cracked letters of red and white.

The door led to an alley, which the demon was swiftly running down, nearly disappearing.

Jonathan jumped, launching himself at the brick wall opposite, and used the force of his rebound to arrow over the demon's head. He twisted in midair, runed blade in hand; he heard it whistle through the air. The demon froze, staring at him. Already the mask of a girl's face was beginning to slip, and Jonathan could see the features behind it: clustered eyes like a spider's and a tusked mouth open in surprise. None of it disgusted him. The ichor that ran in their veins ran in his.

Not that that inspired mercy, either. Grinning at Sebastian over the demon's shoulder, he slashed out with his blade. It cut the demon open as he'd once cut open the dummy, neck to navel. A bubbling scream rent the alley as the demon folded on itself and disappeared, leaving on a few drops of black blood splattered on the stones.

"By the Angel," Sebastian Verlac whispered.

He was staring at Jonathan over the blood and the emptiness between them, and his face was white. For a moment Jonathan was almost pleased that he had the sense to be afraid.

But no such luck. Sebastian Verlac remained a fool to the end.

"You were amazing!" Sebastian exclaimed, his voice shaken but impressed. "I've never seen anyone move that fast! Alors, you have got to teach me that move. I've never see anything like what you just did."

"I'd love to help you," Jonathan said. "But unfortunately I've got to get going soon. My father needs me, you see. He has plans. And he simply can't do without me."

Sebastian looked absurdly disappointed. "Oh come, you can't go now," he coaxed. "Hunting with you was so much fun, mon pote. We have to do this again some time."

"I'm afraid," Jonathan told him, fingering the hilt of his weapon, "that won't be possible."

Sebastian looked so surprised when he was killed. It made Jonathan laugh: the blade in hand and Sebastian's throat opening beneath it, the hot blood spilling onto his fingers.

It wouldn't do to have Sebastian's body found at an inconvenient time, ruining the whole game, so Jonathan carried the body as if he were helping a drunken friend home through the streets.

It was not very far at all to a little bridge over the river, delicate as green filigree or a dead child's moldy, fragile bones. He heaved the corpse over the side and watched it hit the rushing black waters with a splash.

The body sank without a trace, and he forgot it before it had even sunk all the way. He saw the curled fingers bobbing in the current, as if restored to life and begging for help or at least answers, and thought of his dream — his sister and a sea of blood. Water had splashed up where the body went down, some of it splattering his sleeve. Baptizing him with a new name.

He was Sebastian now.

He strolled along the bridge to the old part of the city, where there were electric bulbs masquerading as gas lanterns, more toys for tourists. He was headed toward the hotel where Sebastian Verlac had been staying. He had scoped it out before coming to the bar, and knew he could scramble up through the window and retrieve the other boy's belongings. And after that, a bottle of cheap hair dye and...

A group of girls in cocktail dresses passed him, angling their gazes, and one, silvery skirt skimming her thighs, gave him a direct look and smile.

He fell in with the party.

"Comment tu t'appelles, beau gosse?" another girl asked him, her voice slightly slurred. What's your name, handsome?

"Sebastian," he answered smoothly, with not a second's hesitation. That was who he was from now on, who his father's plans required him to be, who he needed to be to walk the path that led to victory and Clarissa. "Sebastian Verlac."

He looked to the horizon, and thought of the glass towers of Idris, thought of them enveloped in shadow, flame, and ruin. He thought of his sister waiting for him, out there in the wide world.

He smiled.

He thought he was going to enjoy being Sebastian.