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Opening extract from

Clockwork Princess

Written by

Cassandra Clare

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1

A Dreadful Row

Marry on Monday for health,
Tuesday for wealth,
Wednesday the best day of all,
Thursday for crosses,
Friday for losses, and
Saturday for no luck at all.
—Folk rhyme

"December is a fortuitous time for a marriage," said the seamstress, speaking around her mouthful of pins with the ease of years of practice. "As they say, 'When December snows fall fast, marry, and true love will last.'" She placed a final pin in the gown and took a step back. "There. What do you think? It is modeled after one of Worth's own designs."

Tessa looked at her reflection in the pier glass in her

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bedroom. The dress was a deep gold silk, as was the custom for Shadowhunters, who believed white to be the color of mourning, and would not marry in it, despite Queen Victoria herself having set the fashion for doing just that. Duchesse lace edged the tightly fitted bodice and dripped from the sleeves.

"It's lovely!" Charlotte clapped her hands together and leaned forward. Her brown eyes shone with delight. "Tessa, the color looks so fine on you."

Tessa turned and twisted in front of the mirror. The gold put some much-needed color into her cheeks. The hourglass corset shaped and curved her everywhere it was supposed to, and the clockwork angel around her throat comforted her with its ticking. Below it dangled the jade pendant that Jem had given her. She had lengthened the chain so she could wear them both at once, not being willing to part with either. "You don't think, perhaps, that the lace is a trifle too much adornment?"

"Not at all!" Charlotte sat back, one hand resting protectively, unconsciously, over her belly. She had always been too slim—skinny, in truth—to really need a corset, and now that she was going to have a child, she had taken to wearing tea gowns, in which she looked like a little bird. "It is your wedding day, Tessa. If there is ever an excuse for excessive adornment, it is that. Just imagine it."

Tessa had spent many nights doing just that. She was not yet sure where she and Jem would be married, for the Council was still deliberating their situation. But when she imagined the wedding, it was always in a church, with her being marched down the aisle, perhaps on Henry's arm, looking

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neither to the left or right but straight ahead at her betrothed, as a proper bride should. Jem would be wearing gear—not the sort one fought in, but specially designed, in the manner of a military uniform, for the occasion: black with bands of gold at the wrists, and gold runes picked out along the collar and placket.

He would look so young. They were *both* so young. Tessa knew it was unusual to marry at seventeen and eighteen, but they were racing a clock.

The clock of Jem's life, before it wound down.

She put her hand to her throat, and felt the familiar vibration of her clockwork angel, its wings scratching her palm. The seamstress looked up at her anxiously. She was mundane, not Nephilim, but had the Sight, as all who served the Shadowhunters did. "Would you like the lace removed, miss?"

Before Tessa could answer, there was a knock at the door, and a familiar voice. "It's Jem. Tessa, are you there?"

Charlotte sat bolt upright. "Oh! He mustn't see you in your dress!"

Tessa stood dumbfounded. "Whyever not?"

"It's a Shadowhunter custom—bad luck!" Charlotte rose to her feet. "Quickly! Hide behind the wardrobe!"

"The wardrobe? But—" Tessa broke off with a yelp as Charlotte seized her about the waist and frog-marched her behind the wardrobe like a policeman with a particularly resistant criminal. Released, Tessa dusted off her dress and made a face at Charlotte, and they both peeked around the side of the furniture as the seamstress, after a bewildered look, opened the door.

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Jem's silvery head appeared in the gap. He looked a bit disheveled, his jacket askew. He glanced around in puzzlement before his gaze lighted on Charlotte and Tessa, half-concealed behind the wardrobe. "Thank goodness," he said. "I'd no idea where any of you had gone. Gabriel Lightwood's downstairs, and he's making the most dreadful row."

"Write to them, Will," said Cecily Herondale. "Please. Just one letter."

Will tossed his sweat-soaked dark hair back and glared at her. "Get your feet into position," was all he said. He pointed, with the tip of his dagger. "There, and there."

Cecily sighed, and moved her feet. She had known she was out of position; she'd been doing in intentionally, to needle Will. It was easy to needle her brother. That much she remembered about him from when he was twelve years old. Even then daring him to do something, like climb the steeply pitched roof of their manor house, had resulted in the same thing: an angry blue flame in his eyes, a set jaw, and sometimes Will with a broken leg or arm at the end of it.

Of course this brother, the nearly adult Will, was not the brother she remembered from her childhood. He had grown both more explosive and more withdrawn. He had all their mother's beauty, and all their father's stubbornness—and, she feared, their father's propensity for vices, though she had guessed that only from whispers among the occupants of the Institute.

"Raise your blade," Will said. His voice was as cool and professional as her governess's.

Cecily raised it. It had taken her some time to get used to

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the feel of gear against her skin: the loose tunic and trousers, the belt around her waist. Now she moved in it as comfortably as she had ever moved in the loosest nightgown. "I don't understand why you won't consider writing a letter. A single letter."

"I don't understand why you won't consider going home," Will said. "If you would just agree to return to Yorkshire yourself, you could stop worrying about our parents and I could arrange—"

Cecily interrupted him, having heard this speech a thousand times. "Would you consider a wager, Will?"

Cecily was both pleased and a little disappointed to see Will's eyes spark, just the way her father's always did when a gentleman's bet was suggested. Men were so easy to predict.

"What sort of a wager?" Will took a step forward. He was wearing gear; Cecily could see the Marks that twined his wrists, the *mnemosyne* rune on his throat. It had taken her some time to see the Marks as something other than disfiguring, but she was used to them now—as she had grown used to the gear, to the great echoing halls of the Institute, and to its peculiar denizens.

She pointed at the wall in front of them. An ancient target had been painted on the wall in black: a bull's-eye inside a larger circle. "If I hit the center of that three times, you have to write a letter to Dad and Mam and tell them how you are. You must tell them of the curse and why you left."

Will's face closed like a door, the way it always did when she made this request. But, "You'll never hit it three times without missing, Cecy."

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"Well, then it should be no great concern to you to make the bet, William." She used his full name purposefully. She knew it bothered him, coming from her, though when his best friend—no, his *parabatai*; she had learned since coming to the Institute that these were quite different things—Jem did it, Will seemed to take it as a term of affection. Possibly it was because he still had memories of her toddling after him on chubby legs, calling *Will, Will*, after him in breathless Welsh. She had never called him "William," only ever "Will" or his Welsh name, *Gwilym*.

His eyes narrowed, those dark blue eyes the same color as her own. When their mother had said affectionately that Will would be a breaker of hearts when he was grown, Cecily had always looked at her dubiously. Will had been all arms and legs then, skinny and disheveled and always dirty. She could see it now, though, had seen it when she had first walked into the dining room of the Institute and he had stood up in astonishment, and she had thought: *That can't be Will.*

He had turned those eyes on her, her mother's eyes, and she had seen the anger in them. He had not been pleased to see her, not at all. And where in her memories there had been a skinny boy with a wild tangle of black hair like a Gypsy's and leaves in his clothes, there was now this tall, frightening *man* instead. The words she had wanted to say had dissolved on her tongue, and she had matched him, glare for glare. And so it had been since, Will barely enduring her presence as if she were a stone in his shoe, a constant but minor annoyance.

Cecily took a deep breath, raised her chin, and pre-

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pared to throw the first knife. Will did not know, would never know, of the hours she had spent in this room, alone, practicing, learning to balance the weight of the knife in her hand, discovering that a good knife throw began from behind the body. She held both arms straight down and drew her right arm back, behind her head, before bringing it, and the weight of her body, forward. The tip of the knife was in line with the target. She released it and snapped her hand back, sucking in a gasp.

The knife stuck, point-down in the wall, exactly in the center of the target.

"One," Cecily said, giving Will a superior smile.

He looked at her stonily, yanked the knife from the wall, and handed it to her again.

Cecily threw it. The second throw, like the first, flew directly to its target and stuck there, vibrating like a mocking finger.

"Two," Cecily said in a sepulchral tone.

Will's jaw set as he took the knife again and presented it to her. She took it with a smile. Confidence was flowing through her veins like new blood. She knew she could do this. She had always been able to climb as high as Will, run as fast, hold her breath as long. . . .

She threw the knife. It struck its target, and she leaped into the air, clapping her hands, forgetting herself for a moment in the thrill of victory. Her hair came down from its pins and spilled into her face; she pushed it back and grinned at Will. "You *shall* write that letter. You agreed to the bet!"

To her surprise he smiled at her. "Oh, I will write it," he said. "I will write it, and then I will throw it into the fire." He

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held up a hand against her outburst of indignation. "I said I would write it. I never said I would *send* it."

Cecily's breath went out of her in a gasp. "How *dare* you trick me like that!"

"I told you that you were not made of Shadowhunter stuff, or you would not be so easily fooled. I am not going to write a letter, Cecy. It's against the Law, and that's the end of it."

"As if *you* care about the Law!" Cecily stamped her foot, and was immediately more annoyed than ever; she detested girls who stamped their feet.

Will's eyes narrowed. "And *you* don't care about being a Shadowhunter. How is this? I shall write a letter and give it to you if you promise to deliver it home yourself—and not to return."

Cecily recoiled. She had many memories of shouting matches with Will, of the china dolls she had owned that he had broken by dropping them out an attic window, but there was also kindness in her memories—the brother who had bandaged up a cut knee, or retied her hair ribbons when they had come loose. That kindness was absent from the Will who stood before her now. Mam used to cry for the first year or two after Will went; she had said, holding Cecily to her, that the Shadowhunters would "take all the love out of him." A cold people, she had told Cecily, a people who had forbidden her marriage to her husband. What could he want with them, her Will, her little one?

"I will *not* go," Cecily said, staring her brother down. "And if you insist that I must, I will—I will—"

The door of the attic slid open, and Jem stood silhouetted

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in the doorway. "Ah," he said, "threatening each other, I see. Has this been going on all afternoon, or did it just begin?"

"He began it," Cecily said, jerking her chin at Will, though she knew it was pointless. Jem, Will's *parabatai*, treated her with the distant sweet kindness reserved for the little sisters of one's friends, but he would always side with Will. Kindly, but firmly, he put Will above everything else in the world.

Well, nearly everything. She had been most struck by Jem when she first came to the Institute—he had an unearthly, unusual beauty, with his silvery hair and eyes and delicate features. He looked like a prince in a fairy-tale book, and she might have considered developing an attachment to him, were it not so absolutely clear that he was entirely in love with Tessa Gray. His eyes followed her where she went, and his voice changed when he spoke to her. Cecily had once heard her mother say in amusement that one of their neighbors' boys looked at a girl as if she were "the only star in the sky" and that was the way Jem looked at Tessa.

Cecily didn't resent it: Tessa was pleasant and kind to her, if a little shy, and with her face always stuck in a book, like Will. If that was the sort of girl Jem wanted, she and he never would have suited—and the longer she remained at the Institute, the more she realized how awkward it would have made things with Will. He was ferociously protective of Jem, and he would have watched her constantly in case she ever distressed or hurt him in any way. No—she was far better out of the whole thing.

"I was just thinking of bundling up Cecily and feeding her to the ducks in Hyde Park," said Will, pushing his wet hair

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back and favoring Jem with a rare smile. "I could use your assistance."

"Unfortunately, you may have to delay your plans for sororicide a bit longer. Gabriel Lightwood is downstairs, and I have two words for you. Two of your *favorite* words, at least when you put them together."

"'Utter simpleton'?" inquired Will. "'Worthless upstart'?"

Jem grinned. "'*Demon pox*,'" he said.

Sophie balanced the salver on one hand with the ease of long practice while she rapped on Gideon Lightwood's door with the other.

She heard the sound of a hurried shuffle, and the door swung open. Gideon stood before her in trousers, braces, and a white shirt rolled up to the elbows. His hands were wet, as if he had just run quick fingers through his hair, which was also damp. Her heart took a little leap inside her chest before settling. She forced herself to frown at him.

"Mr. Lightwood," she said. "I've brought the scones you rang for, and Bridget's made you up a plate of sandwiches as well."

Gideon took a step back to allow her into the room. It was like all the other rooms in the Institute: heavy dark furniture, a great four-poster bed, a wide fireplace, and high windows, which in this case looked down upon the courtyard below. Sophie could feel his gaze on her as she moved across the room to place the salver on the table before the fire. She straightened up and turned to him, her hands folded in front of her apron.

"Sophie—," he began.

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"Mr. Lightwood," she interrupted. "Is there anything else you require?"

He looked at her half-mutinously, half-sadly. "I wish you would call me Gideon."

"I have told you, I cannot call you by your Christian name."

"I am a Shadowhunter; I do not have a Christian name. Sophie, please." He took a step toward her. "Before I took up residence in the Institute, I had thought we were well on our way to a friendship. Yet since the day I arrived, you have been cold to me."

Sophie's hand went involuntarily to her face. She remembered Master Teddy, the son of her old employer, and the horrible way he would catch her in dark corners and press her up against the wall, hands creeping under her bodice, murmuring in her ear that she had better be friendlier to him, if she knew what was good for her. The thought filled her with sickness, even now.

"Sophie." Gideon's eyes crinkled worriedly at the corners. "What is it? If there is some wrong I have done you, some slight, please tell me what it is that I may remedy it—"

"There is no wrong, no slight. You are a gentleman and I am a servant; anything more would be a familiarity. Please do not make me uncomfortable, Mr. Lightwood."

Gideon, who had half-raised his hand, let it drop to his side. He looked so woebegone that Sophie's heart softened. *I have everything to lose, and he has nothing to lose,* she reminded herself. It was what she told herself late at night, lying in her narrow bed, with the memory of a pair of storm-colored eyes hovering in her mind. "I had thought we were friends," he said.

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"I cannot be your friend."

He took a step forward. "What if I were to ask you—"

"Gideon!" It was Henry, at the open door, breathless, wearing one of his terrible green-and-orange-striped waistcoats. "Your brother's here. Downstairs—"

Gideon's eyes widened. "Gabriel's here?"

"Yes. Shouting something about your father, but he won't tell us anything more unless you're there. He swears it. Come along."

Gideon hesitated, his eyes moving from Henry to Sophie, who tried to look invisible. "I . . ."

"Come *now*, Gideon." Henry rarely spoke sharply, and when he did, the effect was startling. "He's covered in blood."

Gideon paled, and he reached for the sword that hung on a set of double pegs by his door. "I'm on my way."

Gabriel Lightwood leaned against the wall inside the Institute doors, his jacket gone, his shirt and trousers drenched in scarlet. Outside, through the open doors, Tessa could see the Lightwood carriage, with its flame blazon on the side, drawn up at the foot of the steps. Gabriel must have driven it here himself.

"Gabriel," Charlotte said soothingly, as if she were trying to gentle a wild horse. "Gabriel, tell us what happened, please."

Gabriel—tall and slender, brown hair sticky with blood—scrubbed at his face, wild-eyed. His hands were bloody too. "Where's my brother? I have to talk to my brother."

"He's coming down. I sent Henry to fetch him, and Cyril to ready the Institute's carriage. Gabriel, are you injured? Do you

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need an *iratze*?" Charlotte sounded as motherly as if this boy had never faced her down from behind Benedict Lightwood's chair, had never conspired with his father to take the Institute away from her.

"That is a great deal of blood," said Tessa, pushing forward. "Gabriel, it is not all yours, is it?"

Gabriel looked at her. It was the first time, Tessa thought, that she had seen him behave with no posturing at all. There was only stunned fear in his eyes, fear and—confusion. "No. . . . It's *theirs*—"

"Theirs? Who are *they*?" It was Gideon, hurrying down the stairs, a sword in his right hand. Along with him came Henry, and Jem, and behind him, Will and Cecily. Jem paused on the steps in startlement, and Tessa realized that he had caught sight of her in her wedding dress. His eyes widened, but the others were already pushing by, and he was carried down the steps like a leaf in a current.

"Is Father hurt?" Gideon went on, coming to a stop before his brother. "Are you?" He put his hand up and took his brother's face, his hand cupping Gabriel's chin and turning it toward him. Though Gabriel was taller, the look of a younger sibling was clear in his face—relief that his brother was there, and a flicker of resentment at his peremptory tone.

"Father . . . ," Gabriel began. "Father is a worm."

Will gave a short laugh. He was in gear as if he had just come from the practice room, and his hair curled damply against his temples. He was not looking at Tessa, but she had grown used to that. Will hardly ever looked at her unless he had to. "It's good to see you've come round to

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our view of things, Gabriel, but this is an unusual way of announcing it."

Gideon shot Will a reproachful look before turning back to his brother. "What do you mean, Gabriel? What did Father do?"

Gabriel shook his head. "He's a worm," he said again, tonelessly.

"I know. He has brought shame on the name of Lightwood, and lied to both of us. He shamed and destroyed our mother. But we need not be like him."

Gabriel pulled away from his brother's grip, his teeth suddenly flashing in an angry scowl. "You're not listening to me," he said. "He's a worm. *A worm.* A bloody great serpent-like thing. Since Mortmain stopped sending the medicine, he's been getting worse. Changing. Those sores upon his arms, they started to cover him. His hands, his neck, h-his *face* . . ." Gabriel's green eyes sought Will. "It was the pox, wasn't it? You know all about it, don't you? Aren't you some sort of expert?"

"Well, you needn't act as if I invented it," said Will. "Just because I believed it existed. There are accounts of it—old stories in the library—"

"Demon pox?" said Cecily, her face screwed up in confusion. "Will, what is he talking about?"

Will opened his mouth, and flushed faintly across his cheekbones. Tessa hid a smile. It had been weeks since Cecily had come to the Institute, and still her presence bothered and upset Will. He did not seem to know how to behave around this younger sister, who was not the child he remembered, and whose presence he insisted was unwelcome. And yet

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Tessa had seen him follow Cecily around a room with his eyes, with the same protective love in his gaze that he sometimes bent on Jem. Certainly the existence of demon pox, and how one acquired it, was the last thing he would want to explain to Cecily. "Nothing you need know about," he muttered.

Gabriel's eyes went to Cecily, and his lips parted in surprise. Tessa could see him taking Cecily in. Will's parents must both have been very beautiful, Tessa thought, for Cecily was as pretty as Will was handsome, and with the same gleaming black hair and startling dark blue eyes. Cecily gazed boldly back at him, her expression curious; she must have been wondering who this boy was, who seemed to so dislike her brother.

"Is Father dead?" Gideon demanded, his voice rising. "Has the demon pox killed him?"

"Not killed," said Gabriel. "Changed. It has changed him. Some weeks ago he moved our household to Chiswick. He would not say why. Then a few days ago he locked himself in his study. He wouldn't come out, not even to eat. This morning I went to the study to try to rouse him. The door had been torn off its hinges. There was a . . . a *trail* of some slimy stuff leading down the hall. I followed it downstairs and into the gardens." He looked around the now silent entryway. "He has become a worm. That is what I am telling you."

"I don't suppose it would be possible," said Henry into the silence, "to, er, step on him?"

Gabriel looked at him in disgust. "I searched around the gardens. I found some of the servants. And when I say

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'I found' some of them, I mean exactly what I say. They had been torn into—into pieces." He swallowed and looked down at his bloody clothes. "I heard a sound—a high-pitched howling noise. I turned and saw it coming toward me. A great blind worm like a dragon out of a legend. Its mouth was open wide, lined with dagger teeth. I turned and ran for the stables. It slithered after me, but I leaped upon the carriage and drove it out through the gates. The creature—Father—did not follow. I think it fears to be seen by the general populace."

"Ah," said Henry. "Too big to be stepped on, then."

"I shouldn't have run," said Gabriel, looking at his brother. "I should have stood and fought the creature. Maybe it could be reasoned with. Maybe Father is in there somewhere."

"And maybe it would have bitten you in half," said Will. "What you are describing, the transformation into a demon, is the last stage of the pox."

"Will!" Charlotte threw up her hands. "Why didn't you *say* so?"

"You know, the books on demon pox are in the library," Will said with an injured tone. "I wasn't preventing anyone from reading them."

"Yes, but if Benedict was going to turn into an enormous *serpent*, you'd think you could at least have mentioned it," said Charlotte. "As a matter of general interest."

"First," said Will, "I didn't know he was going to turn into a gigantic worm. The end stage of demon pox is turning into a demon. It could have been any sort. Second, it takes weeks for the transformation process to occur. I would have thought even a certified idiot like Gabriel here

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would have taken account of it and notified someone."

"Notified who?" asked Jem, not unreasonably. He had moved closer to Tessa as the conversation had continued. As they stood side by side, the backs of their hands brushed.

"The Clave. The postman. Us. *Anyone*," said Will, shooting an irritated look at Gabriel, who was starting to get some color back and looked furious.

"I am not a certified idiot—"

"Lack of certification hardly proves intelligence," Will muttered.

"And as I told you, Father locked himself in his study for the past week—"

"And you didn't think to take any special notice of that?" said Will.

"You don't know our father," said Gideon in the flat tone of voice he used sometimes when conversation about his family was inescapable. He turned back to his brother and put his hands on Gabriel's shoulders, speaking quietly, in measured tones none of them could hear.

Jem, beside Tessa, hooked his smallest finger through hers. It was a habitual affectionate gesture, one that Tessa had grown used to over the past months, enough that she sometimes put out her hand without thinking when he was standing by her. "Is that your wedding dress?" he asked under his breath.

Tessa was saved answering by the appearance of Bridget, carrying gear, and Gideon suddenly turning to the rest of them and saying, "Chiswick. We must go. Gabriel and I, if no one else."

"Go alone?" Tessa said, startled enough to speak out of

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turn. "But why would you not call upon others to come with you—"

"The Clave," said Will, his blue eyes keen. "He doesn't want the Clave to know about his father."

"Would you?" said Gabriel hotly. "If it were *your* family?" His lip curled. "Never mind. It's not as if you know the meaning of loyalty—"

"Gabriel." Gideon's voice was a reprimand. "Do not speak to Will in that manner."

Gabriel looked surprised, and Tessa could hardly blame him. Gideon knew of Will's curse, of the belief that had caused his hostility and his abrupt manners, as all in the Institute did, but the story was private to them, and none outside had been told of it.

"We will come with you. Of course we will come with you," said Jem, releasing Tessa's hand and stepping forward. "Gideon did us a service. We have not forgotten, have we, Charlotte?"

"Of course not," said Charlotte, turning. "Bridget, the gear—"

"I am conveniently already in gear," said Will as Henry shucked off his coat and traded it for a gear jacket and a weapons belt; Jem did the same, and suddenly the entryway was full of motion—Charlotte speaking quietly to Henry, her hand hovering just above her stomach. Tessa looked away from the private moment and saw a dark head bent with a fair one. Jem was at Will's side with his stele drawn, tracing a rune on the side of Will's throat. Cecily looked at her brother and scowled.

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"I, too, am conveniently already in gear," she announced.

Will jerked his head up, causing Jem to make a sound of annoyed protest. "Cecily, absolutely not."

"You have no right to tell me yes or no." Her eyes flashed. "I am going."

Will jerked his head toward Henry, who shrugged apologetically. "She does have the right. She has trained for nearly two months—"

"She's a little girl!"

"You were doing the same at fifteen," said Jem quietly, and Will spun back toward him. For a moment everyone seemed to hold their breath, even Gabriel. Jem's gaze held Will's, steadily, and not for the first time Tessa had the sense of unspoken words passing between them.

Will sighed and half-closed his eyes. "Tessa will be wanting to come next."

"Of course I am coming," Tessa said. "I may not be a Shadowhunter, but I too have trained. Jem is not going without me."

"You are in your *wedding dress*," Will protested.

"Well, now that you've all seen it, I can't possibly wear it to be married in," said Tessa. "Bad luck, you know."

Will groaned something in Welsh—unintelligible, but clearly the tone of a man defeated. Across the room Jem cast Tessa a slight, worried smile. The Institute door swung open then, letting a blaze of autumn sunlight into the entryway. Cyril stood on the threshold, breathless.

"The second carriage is now ready," he said. "Who'll be coming, then?"

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To: Consul Josiah Wayland
From: The Council

Dear Sir,

As you are doubtless aware, your term of service as Consul, after ten years, is coming to an end. The time has come to appoint a successor.

As for ourselves, we are giving serious consideration to the appointment of Charlotte Branwell, née Fairchild. She has done good work as the head of the London Institute, and we believe her to have your stamp of approval, as she was appointed by you after the death of her father.

As your opinion and esteem are to us of the highest value, we would appreciate any thoughts that you might have on the matter.

Yours with the highest regards,
Victor Whitelaw, Inquisitor, on behalf of the Council

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