

## hold up the sky

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# hold up the sky

by [kaeg](#)

## Summary

Magnus has shattered every window for the next three blocks, and the buildings themselves are shaking. He's clenching and relaxing his hands to get rid of the sparks still flying from them, magic red and fiery and burning the sleeves of his coat.

'Dear son, you've grown,' a voice murmurs from behind him, fond. He freezes where he stands. 'You're wiser with your years. I can tell.'

(aka: alec gets the weekend off. things don't go smoothly.)

## Notes

(let's start counting how many fics i can write instead of editing all 46 pages of shadows in moonlight part 2--i'm currently on page 35. i gotta edit it once more afterwards. then get it beta'd. i can't do it folks)

things to note:

- i technically wrote this back in december, so if there are any continuity problems i apologise!!
- i briefly say underhill went on patrol and ik he's head of security but if alec can go chasing after demons instead of working at a desk underhill can do the same thing, dammit
- is anyone else excited for asmodeus cos holy shit, jack's gonna KILL IT

enjoy!!

See the end of the work for more [notes](#)

Alec takes the weekend off. Izzy's been nagging at him for days to take some time for himself, because god knows he needs it—he has barely seen Magnus over the last week and that's the worse kind of torture there is. He's two steps out of his office before Izzy's pressing his phone into his palm, a hand on her hip.

'Ask Magnus if he can portal you home,' she says, and Alec doesn't think she'll let him say no. When he hesitates, she dials the number herself. 'Come *on*, Alec. You can't live on coffee and stamina runes.'

'I can try,' he mutters, and Izzy slaps him on the arm just before Magnus picks up. Only seconds later there's a burst of air from behind him, magic sparking into nothing, and then there are lips against his cheek and a warm hand pulling him away. He barely has time to wave goodbye to Izzy before he's stumbling through the loft, a hand on Magnus' chest.

Alec kicks off his boots before slumping to the couch. It's still light outside and Magnus waves a hand, pulling the blinds and changing them both into more suitable attire. Alec drops down onto the couch and Magnus drops down on top of him, head against his neck, legs tangled. They fall asleep quickly.

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Alec hears it the moment he blinks awake, a numbness in his arms and a soreness in his neck. Magnus' hair—soft and loose and sleep-worn—tickles his throat, and Alec is prepared to settle down and sleep some more from that feeling alone.

But there's a beeping noise...somewhere. He wants it to be unimportant. He has no work to do, and nobody is supposed to call—

It's a phone. *His* phone, all the way across the room, shoved roughly into his jacket pocket. His scarf—a gift from Magnus, a little *just because* that Alec will always be grateful for—hangs on the coat rack near the door, just above his bow and quill.

Alec slips out from under Magnus, pulling Magnus's hand away from where it's gripping his shirt. He attempts to wipe the sleep from his eyes and Magnus whines at the sudden change in position.

Alec makes his way, half-lucid, over to his jacket, pulling the phone from his pocket. *Izzy*, the screen flashes. He knows straight away that it isn't some social call.

He lifts the phone to his ear and wanders into the kitchen, a hand to the wall. 'Hey, Iz—'

'Wraith demons,' she begins, seemingly out of breath, late-night traffic speeding behind her voice. Wind disrupts the signal but she continues nonetheless, and Alec puts it on speaker to hear better. 'We don't know where they come from, but they all just *appeared*. We haven't seen this since Jonathan.'

She pauses for breath, or maybe for effect. Her voice is quieter when she continues. ‘Clary and Underhill just got back from patrol, so they’re down for the count.’

Alec knows what she’s asking.

‘Do you need me to go?’ He asks.

She sighs, and it’s just as good as confirmation. ‘Sorry, Alec.’

‘Don’t be sorry, it’s my job,’ he says, even though it’s not. He should be confined to his desk. He doesn’t know if he’d prefer it. ‘Where d’you need me?’

‘I’ll text you the address.’

‘I’ll be there in twenty,’ Alec sighs. He hears some shuffling from the next room, the lightest sleepy sigh. He hopes Magnus hasn’t woken up.

Isabelle makes a small noise. ‘Is Magnus not around?’

‘Oh, Magnus is *definitely* around,’ Magnus exclaims then, voice weak. He makes his way into the kitchen until he stands at Alec’s side and entwines their free hands. ‘Your brother’s just awfully humble and refuses to ask for a portal. He’ll be there in five.’

‘Thank you, Magnus,’ Isabelle says, playful.

Alec ends the call. Magnus pulls at his own shirt to right it and flicks a hand to re-do his hair. He goes to drag Alec back into the living room toward where their boots lie, a smirk turning up his lips.

Alec pulls him back, and Magnus spins back around with finesse. Their eyes meet and Alec shakes his head. ‘You’re not going.’

‘I most certainly am,’ Magnus says, confident.

‘This isn’t your job,’ Alec tells him. ‘It won’t be anything exciting.’

‘I’d rather not have to set any broken bones during breakfast, dear,’ Magnus says, quiet, and — *oh*. That’s what he’s worried about. Alec hates knowing that his patrols worry Magnus; that him going out on missions makes Magnus wonder if he’ll come back with everything intact.

But Magnus smiles, then, and there’s power behind it; he knows he’ll win this debate, because they have it almost every week and only the little details ever change. ‘And if it’s as boring as you believe, then I could have it done in seconds.’

And yeah, Magnus has a point. It won’t take long. These kind of missions never do.

It’ll be easy.

‘We get it done and then we come home,’ Alec says, and Magnus nods when Alec leans forward to kiss him, a gentle promise. Magnus’s other hand goes up to Alec’s shoulder, and Alec grips his waist. After a moment, they pull away.

‘I wouldn’t have it any other way,’ Magnus smiles, and gives him one last kiss for good luck. He pats at Alec’s shoulder before pulling away and disappearing toward their bedroom. ‘Go grab your coat—it’s freezing tonight.’

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Alec is still bleeding from his wounds, claw marks on his stomach and around his ribs, when Magnus carries him through the portal.

It’s infuriating, how Magnus can feel the magic swirling in his veins but can’t seem to summon it. He can feel the sparks crackling behind his fingertips but nothing can bring them to life.

He’s a little weak too; dizzy, unsteady on his feet. Every once in awhile his vision tunnels and all that keeps him from staggering to a halt is the weight of a body in his arms, the determination he has to heal Alec.

There had been *so many* to kill, and fighting like that was probably a bad idea. Trying to heal Alec on dark cobblestone pavement with adrenaline still pumping in his veins definitely didn’t help. But the last straw, perhaps, was summoning a portal for himself and Isabelle to step through.

He can hear Isabelle on the phone behind him as he stumbles into the bedroom, but he can’t exactly get himself to focus on the words. Laying Alec down on the comforter, he hears the click of a door, the whir of a portal. He pulls up a chair next to the bed and snaps his fingers twice, impatient. Just as blue magic finally starts flowing through his fingertips, he’s hoisted from his seat.

It makes him dizzy; he trips over his feet as he tries to stand. The same pair of hands grip at his shoulders and tip him down into an armchair in the corner of the room.

Once his vision clears, he droops in the armchair with a sigh. When he looks up he meets Luke’s eyes, concerned where he’s crouching on the floor.

‘You need to rest,’ Luke says, gentle and persuasive.

Magnus tries to stand up again, anyway. He doesn’t make it very far—partly because of Luke’s forceful hands, but mostly because of his lacking balance.

Isabelle strolls through the door as he settles down. She’s talking again, but it’s not to either of them.

Catarina follows close behind her, a small bag over her shoulder, concern worrying her brow. Her eyes dart to Alec on the bed, then to Magnus where he sits. She rolls them with aggravation.

‘Ridiculous,’ she mutters, just loud enough for Magnus to hear as she settles in the wooden chair and pulls out some vials. ‘You self-sacrificing, overworking—’

But she doesn’t finish and sighs as she begins to work, magic pouring over each of Alec’s wounds as he’s slowly stitched back together.

‘Are you injured?’ Cat asks. Her eyes don’t leave Alec but everyone knows who she’s talking to.

Magnus shakes his head, coughing into his hand. It makes his head throb; he squeezes his eyes shut at the sensation.

‘No, I’m alright,’ he says, and after a pause— ‘Let me help you. He needs my strength.’

‘You’re useless to him right now,’ Cat sighs, and Magnus finds himself pouting. ‘You need rest, just as Alec does.’

‘I’ll rest once he’s stable,’ Magnus mutters, even though Alec’s bleeding has stopped.

Cat mutters something under her breath before glancing up at Isabelle. ‘What happened tonight?’

‘Wraith demons,’ she says, and then begins to speak in a quiet voice that Magnus can’t hear. Cat’s eyes dart over to him once, quick and barely noticeable.

He knows exactly what Isabelle is telling her. He knows it by the shakiness of his body, the power surging somewhere inside of him that he’s currently unable to use. He knows it by the memory of too much noise and then none at all.

He hates when it happens. He hates that in the last few decades it has become so regular.

Luke eases away from him now; the hands on his shoulders disappear, and he says something quiet to Cat before stepping out into the living room.

(They all spare him these small, concerned looks as they pass. He’s grateful, of course, but it’s not like this is a first occurrence. Cat has been around a few times, when everything had gotten too much and his power couldn’t be contained. Luke has been there too, once or twice.

It’s Isabelle’s first time though. Alec wasn’t even *conscious* for it.

He can’t even decide if he’s glad Alec missed it. He can’t decide if he’s still scared that he’ll drive Alec away.)

He watches Cat work from behind drooping eyelids. He clears his throat, an awkward thing. ‘How—’

‘He’ll live,’ Cat snaps. Her bloodied hands freeze where she works. When the veil of magic momentarily stifles, she sighs and looks his way, looking sympathetic. ‘He’ll be fine. Isabelle used an iratzte on him before I got here and you exhausted yourself trying close the wounds. It helped.’

She gives him a smile when he sighs in relief, slumping down a little further in his chair. A nap begins to sound appealing.

‘He’ll have some bruising on his back—I’m only healing the things that need it. He’ll be better after a few days rest, but it’s a miracle he didn’t have a concussion.’ She starts back to work, reaching into the bag beside her feet for some wipes and disinfectant. By the lack of response from Alec when she begins to clean his wounds—by hand, Magnus notices, which leaves a strange feeling in his chest—he assumes that Cat has sufficiently put him under.

Magnus doesn’t know exactly what to say. He nods as he pushes himself up in his seat. Luke and Isabelle chat in the living room, and he hears the front door open.

‘Shadowhunters have never been careful,’ Cat whispers, ‘but I thought your man knew better.’

‘He was called in late.’

Cat huffs at that, amused. ‘And he dragged you along too, I assume.’

‘I volunteered. I wanted him home, safe.’

Cat nods toward Alec’s still figure on the bed. ‘For some reason, I don’t think that worked out.’

It goes silent, and Magnus is content with watching Cat work. After a few more minutes, she rubs her hands together and stands from the chair. She grabs her bag and steps toward the door. ‘I know you’re going to stay with him so I’ll leave you two alone.’

‘Are you and Luke staying?’ Magnus asks. He rises, slumping toward the bed.

Cat smiles, a hand on the doorknob. ‘We’ll be here until you tell us to go. The Lightwood girl’s in the guestroom, hm?’

As the door closes behind her, Magnus sits on the edge of bed. There’s blood on the covers and Alec smells of cold city air and disinfectant. With a curl of his wrist, Magnus changes the duvet. It leaves him lightheaded. He lies down and within seconds, he’s out.

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*He hears Alec scream.*

*It's not something of fright or shock, no. It's something of pain, and Magnus only discovers that he's moving when he's halfway across the courtyard. When he turns the corner, Isabelle has her whip around a demon's throat; she throws it about like it weighs nothing. His eyes linger on her for a moment.*

*But then he spots the figure slumped against a crumbling brick wall behind her, breath laboured with a hand wrapped around their torso, head ducked like they don't have the strength to keep it up.*

*And then...Magnus can't seem to move. He feels his palms burning hot and he sees the scene around him. Isabelle's fighting a wraith demon alone and Alec's bleeding onto the cobblestone pavement but he can't make himself move.*

*He needs to. He needs to help, do something. He feels some kind of terror mix in with the anger until he could collapse from it.*

*He only notices the three other wraiths swirling in the sky when they swoop down to Isabelle's height. She's backing up toward Magnus, whip in hand, but it won't be enough—*

*It feels like lightning. Everything gets a little too bright. Bright and loud and and he feels like he's burning. The light fades, a gradual thing, and he's still standing.*

*The wraith demons are ash on the floor, though, and he's shattered every window for the next three blocks and the buildings themselves are shaking. Isabelle's watching him with something shocked that he hopes isn't fear. He's clenching and unclenching his hands to get rid of the sparks still flying from them, magic red and fiery and burning the sleeves of his coat.*

*'Isabelle—' he begins, but his throat feels raw. She simply shakes her head and retreats to Alec's side.*

*Magnus goes to follow her—*

*'Dear son, you've grown,' a voice murmurs from behind him, fond. He freezes where he stands. 'You're wiser with your years. I can tell.'*

*Magnus turns to see Asmodeus, hands clasped loosely behind his back. He tries to copy him, to act as confident in the moment as he wishes to feel, but his body isn't with the program. The smallest shards of light shoot from his palms even as his energy begins to run dry. He's shaking with adrenaline but it could easily be seen as fear.*

*Asmodeus notices this; he takes in Magnus' half-trembling form with an amused tilt of his head, taking a step forward. 'There it is. There's that fire I always knew you possessed.'*

*Magnus bristles. 'It was necessary—'*

*'Was it?' Asmodeus hums, and shrugs. 'I didn't realize freedom needed to be a necessity.'*

*Magnus ignores his leering, crossing his arms. 'What is this?'*

*'A dream, I presume,' Asmodeus says, looking around the street and up at the sky before fixing Magnus an accusatory smirk. 'Or...is it a memory?'*

*'Why are you here?'*

*'Can I not visit you? Ask how you are?' Asmodeus asks, stepping closer. He looks down at the dying sparks on the ground, the crumbling walls and blood spilled. He glances at Alec. 'Ask why you hide away your power until a Shadowhunter takes a fall?'*

*'Stay out of my business.'*

*'Oh, but I'm your father. I can do as I please.' Asmodeus does a slow circle around Magnus, then, trailing over toward where Alec is crumpled on the pavement. He sighs. 'A Lightwood? For shame, my son, has memory betrayed you?'*

*'Past battles aren't present ones,' Magnus mutters, and thinks of history; Lightwoods lined up with preferred weapons in hand, aimed and ready to fire, spaces on walls prepared for warlock marks and fangs to hang as prizes.*

*'Yet they affect us all the same.' Asmodeus' eyes drift down to the floor again, and he watches Isabelle where she tends to Alec on the pavement. She hasn't looked up yet, and Magnus steps closer.*

*Asmodeus whirls around like he'd forgotten Magnus was there. 'They can't see me, by the way. It's just you and I for now.'*

*'What do you want?'*

*'Oh, I don't know,' Asmodeus breathes, but he's smiling something sinister. 'Can we not converse?'*

*Magnus shakes his head, because he knows how these things always go. He knows actions aren't without consequence. 'Not without a cause.'*

*'So wise,' Asmodeus says, voice filled with pride. 'The world has taught you well.'*

*He steps closer. 'But I feel as though your power could be more useful elsewhere.'*

*'No.'*

*'Home, my son,' Asmodeus sighs, as easy as breathing. 'It's where you belong.'*

*'I belong wherever I see fit.'*

*'Your power is wasted on these mortals, these murderers. You could rule.'*

*'And if I don't want to?'*

*The air almost turns to ice.*

*'Then I don't understand what it is you want in the first place,' Asmodeus murmurs, and he's angry, trying and failing to conceal it. 'For someone who has seen so much, you know so little about belonging. You've lived a dozen lives yet never found a home.'*

*Magnus clenches his fists, tilting his head. 'And my home is where? With you?'*

*'The blood in your veins doesn't lie,' Asmodeus says. 'The power you wield will only stay at bay for so long here. The potential that you're wasting—'*

*'Blood isn't everything.'*

*'Oh, so that's the lie you're living,' Asmodeus snarls. He throws out a hand toward Alec and Isabelle at the wall, angry fingers curling in their direction, not doing any harm. 'What, as if that Lightwood boy isn't born from a family who murdered your kind for sport? As if you're not associating yourself with angelic beings who look down on you and shout monster?'*

*'There are real monsters out there we're fighting,' Magnus murmurs, almost growling the words, pointing toward the ground as if to prove something.*

*Asmodeus stops. He tilts his head in thought, beginning to smile.*

*'Ah...I see you've discovered Lilith,' he says, amused. 'How exciting.'*

*'She needs to be stopped.'*

*'And I suppose you and your angels plan to do that?' Asmodeus steps toward Magnus, then, still grinning. 'You plan to defeat her without showcasing who you really are?'*

*Magnus looks away. 'If they saw it, they'd understand. All of them.'*

*Asmodeus hums. 'So then why are you hiding it?'*

*Magnus can't answer that. He doesn't know how to. But he doesn't get the opportunity, because then a new voice cuts through the relative silence, and when he looks down at Isabelle she's gripping Alec's sides, shouting at him, physically shaking.*

*'Oh, would you look at that,' Asmodeus murmurs, looking at the two. He smiles. 'He's bleeding out.'*

*Magnus moves to run but he...can't. He feels like he's sinking, heavy as lead. All he can do is watch as Isabelle takes her stele, goes over Alec's iratze, and lets out a cry of exasperation when things only seem to get worse.*

*Asmodeus starts laughing, low and giddy. Magnus' hands spark with light but it only shoots into the ground, orange-red and wavering.*

*'So weak, mortals are,' Asmodeus murmurs. 'You'd think they'd leave the fighting up to us.'*

*'Let me help him,' Magnus growls.*

*Asmodeus scoffs. 'Why? He's nothing to you. Give it some time and he'll be another face in passing.'*

*'Let me go.'*

*And then he hears it—*

*'Magnus—'*

*The quietest murmur, barely audible, and then Alec starts coughing, choking, curling in on himself as Isabelle grabs his shoulders. She tries reaching for Magnus and it looks like it burns her.*

*'Fine,' Asmodeus sighs, a burdened thing, and flicks his wrist. Magnus nearly falls as he tips forward and begins to move.*

*Child.'*

*He turns. Asmodeus grins at him in the moonlight, magic sparking from his fingertips. His eyes shine yellow.*

*'There's a war coming,' Asmodeus says. 'I trust that you can choose the winning side.'*

*Magnus makes it to Alec on weak legs, but Asmodeus is already gone.*

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Magnus's hands shake as he kneels down, powder looking like ashes where he pours it onto the floor. The front door opens, closes, and then Alec is in the doorway. He watches Magnus with disbelief.

Magnus can't look up. He won't let himself. One look at Alec and everything will be ruined, his plans won't matter—he'll find a way to stay here.

They don't speak. All there is is the wind outside against the windows, Magnus' nails against the glass jar, and Alec's quietened breathing. The loft has never been so silent.

'Magnus,' Alec murmurs, and it cuts through the air like static. Magnus keeps quiet. Alec tries again.

'Think about this,' he pleads. Magnus puts down the jar.

'I have,' he says, finally looking up. Alec's eyes are shining and Magnus almost asks him to leave. *Don't make me do this in front of you,* he wants to say. *I don't want you to watch.*

*'There's no other way.'*

‘We’ll find something else,’ Alec says, voice quiet and shaky. He takes a step forward and Magnus looks down. ‘At least give me the time to call in backup.’

Magnus tells him the plan—the *real* one, the one that has his magic going haywire, a constant buzzing in his palms, sweat at his temple. *Asmodeus*, he says, and Alec bristles.

‘This is insane,’ Alec snaps, as if Magnus doesn’t *know that*. But then there’s a fire blazing on the floor and Alec’s grabbing for him and when they kiss it’s full of sorrow, hands moving like they’ll never again do so. They spend too long here—Magnus can feel Edom on the other side, fire of hell and demons screaming. With every breath Alec takes, Magnus thinks *I can’t stay, I can’t stay, I can’t—*

‘What aren’t you telling me?’ Alec whispers, voice shaky as he pulls on Magnus’ lapels and searches his eyes for words. Magnus keeps reaching for him, thumbing over his cheek and combing through his hair.

‘I had a dream,’ Magnus tells him, remembering blood splattered on cobblestone, ‘and I watched you bleed to death. I won’t see that happen again. I won’t let Lilith destroy things.’

Alec feels Magnus tense beneath his hands.

‘He...spoke to me,’ Magnus continues, and he almost laughs—a choked thing, all venom. ‘Asmodeus wants me to win his war.’

‘You’re not fighting for him,’ Alec insists, shaking his head.

Magnus looks away. ‘We’ll see.’

He steps back from Alec, toward the pentagram. Alec follows him.

‘I love you,’ Magnus whispers over the sound of crackling fire, aching. Alec needs to let go. Magnus can’t make him.

‘Don’t leave,’ Alec says, hands on Magnus’ jacket.

Magnus smiles—it’s not really there. ‘I’ll be back soon.’

‘Please,’ Alec begs, but then Magnus takes Alec’s hands from his lapels and sees them drop. He steps into the fire and feels it for what it is—burning, raw and blazing, curling into his lungs and knocking him off his feet. He might be screaming but he’s not quite sure. The last thing he sees is Alec falling to his knees, and then he’s gone.

## End Notes

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