

**all we had burned on the pyre**

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# all we had burned on the pyre

by [icanthelpbut\\_love\\_you](#)

## Summary

*Reaching for another arrow, he turns to face the final demon. It's in that moment that the sea of fighting in front of him parts slightly and he catches a glimpse into the locus of eerie calm he noticed before. Lightning – shockingly blue against Edom's fiery red backdrop – crackles through the air, incinerating whatever enemy is foolish enough to encroach on the clear ground.*

*Alec's breath catches in his throat.*

In the midst of fighting for their lives against the forces of Edom, Alec finds Magnus. It doesn't exactly go as planned. But then again, when has anything about them been something Alec can plan?

## Notes

I wrote this before 3x20 came out (which I haven't seen yet) so idk how canon-compliant it is after that. But essentially, this fic is literally just everything I would die to see in the finale.

Title is from 'Things We Lost in the Fire' by Bastille.

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

“Alec! On your left!”

The sound of Izzy shouting from somewhere behind him is all the warning Alec gets before there's wings blotting out the glaring sun, a dark blur barrelling through the sky towards his unprotected side. It's enough, that split second the difference between Alec being sliced in half and managing to duck out of the way, the Edomei demon's clawed wings slashing at the air where he stood just moments ago. He sways back and draws his bow, shooting through the side of its head at point-blank range.

Whatever passes for a brain in there must be intrinsically tied to its lifeforce, more so than its heart (if it even has one) or any other part of its body, because that's the only way they have found so far to stop the Edomei without making them splinter off into half a dozen smaller demons. It crashes to the ground and skids to a stop at his feet, a sick offering. Alec grimaces as he wrenches the arrow back out and flicks it to clear as much of the ichor he can without actually touching it, stepping back slightly as it eats away at the rocky ground next to his foot. He has a sinking feeling that he's going to need all the arrows he can get.

He's still adjusting to not having Jace next to him, guarding his weaker side. But with his unique ability to potentially bring Clary back from the brink they'd both unequivocally agreed that it made sense for him to run point on finding her.

Jace hadn't asked Alec to go with him, and for that Alec is beyond grateful. Neither of them is under any illusions about where Alec's priorities lie in this battle.

That doesn't mean that he's not still catching himself intermittently sliding his gaze sideways, automatically watching out for his parabatai even though he *knows* he's not there.

The sky burns sinister red, lit by the dying sun in a twisted parody of the dusk in their home realm. Right now though, there's only glimpses visible through the swarms of demons filling the skies, like blood seeping through many razor-thin cuts.

A lull in the fighting catches his eye just up ahead, an approximation of a circle where there's a far lower density of demons whirling in the sky and both the shadowhunters and demons on the ground are keeping their distance. The eye of the storm, perhaps. It's hard to tell without a high vantage point but it's weird enough that Alec starts to fight his way towards it.

Another demon dives for him and he faces it boldly while he nocks another arrow. Waits, calculating angles and quickly coming to the conclusion that there's no way he can pierce its head from this direction, before releasing. The arrow finds its mark. The creature lets out a bloodcurdling shriek as the arrow puncture its neck, only to be cut off abruptly as it seems to shatter into obsidian shards. Shards that quickly find their feet and skitter towards him.

Alec's ready though, taking out three before they even see him coming. Another two he dispatches with a single arrow, piercing through the bodies of both and pinning them to the cracked earth where they give a last valiant squirm before stilling.

Reaching for another arrow, he turns to face the final demon. It's in that moment that the sea of fighting in front of him parts slightly and he catches a glimpse into the locus of eerie calm he noticed before. Lightning – shockingly blue against Edom's fiery red backdrop – crackles through the air, incinerating whatever enemy is foolish enough to encroach on the clear ground.

Alec's breath catches in his throat.

One of the fighters a few feet in front of Alec (it's impossible to tell who's side they're on at this point) goes down and suddenly there's nothing blocking his line of sight. And there's Magnus, at the epicentre of the chaos, a look of furious concentration on his face. Blue fire wraps both his hands and sparks of static leap around him, painting him with glowing light.

By the angel, he's *beautiful*, even in the bitter all-consuming heat of battle. The pure power radiating off him is almost enough to bring Alec to his knees and for a second he forgets himself, aching with a uniquely painful mix of longing and relief.

Alec's momentary lapse, the brief shattering of his concentration, gives the final demon enough time to advance on him. By the time he refocuses it's far closer than it was seconds ago and he's still so unsettled – even by such a brief glimpse of Magnus after everything that's happened – that he doesn't quite manage to loose the arrow before it's on him. Searing pain consumes his senses as the demon rakes its claws across his shoulder, sending his bow spinning away as he recoils violently. Gritting his teeth against the agony, Alec scrambles to hold the demon off as it scrabbles closer, digging its grip into his arm. With immense effort he flings it to the side, a guttural groan ripped from his throat as it's claws tears through muscle in an effort to hang on, drawing his seraph blade and slashing downwards as the creature launches itself at him again.

It falls to the ground with an unceremonious thud.

Breathing hard, Alec winces as each inhale pulls at his mangled shoulder. Angelic runes have no power in demonic realms, so there's nothing he can do but bear the pain. That, at least, is something he's more than practiced in. The thin chain around his neck, up until now hidden under his shirt, has shaken free at some point during the fight. He grabs for it, hands finding the Lightwood ring where it hangs against his chest and gripping it tightly enough that corners bite into his palm. Releasing a breath, centring himself with the mixture of comfort and regret that flows through him, he tucks the chain back under his shirt. The ring settles beside his heart. Alec forges with renewed vigour towards Magnus.

As he gets closer, he realises with a jolt who Magnus is fighting, Asmodeus' magic blood red like his realm and sparking violently where it clashes with Magnus'. Pushing his way through the melee, slashing mercilessly and without conscious thought at any demons unfortunate enough to stand in his path, Alec reaches the edge of the clearing that has formed around the two just as a pulse of fire knocks Magnus off his feet and sends him crashing to the ground. He starts forward, blood rushing in his ears and fear moving him without any thought for self-preservation or the obvious fact the getting between a warlock and a Greater Demon in battle is a monumentally idiotic idea.

Before he can make it more than half the distance he sees Magnus rise. If the sparks of magic had him glowing before, now he's practically lit up from inside, tendrils of blue energy diffusing through his skin as the air around him seems to shimmer and distort. Magnus visibly steels himself, and it's like the entire radius within their circle dims as Magnus draws power towards him. The lightning condenses around him, and through it Alec can make out Magnus' deadly smirk.

Time slows to a crawl and the air crackles with electric potential. Their eyes lock. Magnus looks ethereal, otherworldly, like a *god*. Then Alec sees his expression change as he notices Alec for the first time. Magnus' eyes widen, fear blanching his face as he opens his mouth, but whatever words he was trying to say are lost as a pulse of raw energy explodes from deep within him. The first of the demons that had begun to swoop towards Magnus, foolishly seeing him go down and thinking it an opportunity, disintegrate as the wave hits them, not even ashes left to reach the ground.

There's no time to flee. There's not even time to brace himself. The wave rushes towards him and Alec has a moment to think that if this is the last thing he ever sees – Magnus, devastating and so, so beautiful as he radiates pure power – he'd be ok with that. Then his vision is overtaken by blue, exploding behind his eyes even after they fly shut, and above the roar of static in his ears he can hear someone cry out in agony. He flinches, anticipating the incomprehensible pain before it actually hits, and it feels...

It feels *warm*. Alec has no frame of reference for what being reduced to atoms by warlock magic should feel like, but he's almost certain 'gentle like a caress' probably misses the mark somewhat. 'Mind-numbingly painful' would be more what he'd expect, but the magic rushing through him, curling around his bones and racing through his blood, warms him to the core with its tender familiarity.

Then, as quickly as it came it's gone, leaving him strangely bereft with only a trace remaining in the gentle tingling of his fingertips. Asmodeus is gone too, Alec realises, gaze locking in on the space the Prince of Edom had stood moments before. The demons are retreating in droves, meaning either that Asmodeus is dead or Jace has managed to take out Jonathan. Or both. Distantly, he wonders whether Asmodeus was atomised like the demons he saw, or whether the spell only banished him. Theoretically it's possible to kill Greater Demons in their home realm, but he doesn't know enough about Princes of Hell or even the extent of Magnus' powers to say for sure if that's the case right now. Any thoughts of Asmodeus' fate vanish from his mind as he catches sight of Magnus again.

He's standing frozen, the blue fire wrapped around his wrists now twisting up his arms. One of his sleeves is alight, tendrils of smoke coiling from his shoulder as flames lick at the fabric, but he hasn't seemed to notice. His expression is twisted in horror and grief. For a second, they just stare at each other. Alec sees his eyebrows furrow and mouth part slightly, flickers of indecipherable emotion chasing each other across his face too fast to process. And still he is motionless.

Then suddenly the distance between them is gone, though Alec has no recollection of moving, couldn't say which of them took that first step. Magnus is right in front of him, holding Alec's forearms in a crushing grip as his eyes scan with laser focus. It's the same way

he used to look when Alec traipsed back from patrol, but now he's making no effort to play it as anything other than frantic. His hands skim Alec's back, skating over his ribs and up to his chest before making their way back down his arms. Alec can't help the hiss of pain that escapes him as Magnus' gentle fingers press against his lacerated shoulder. Guilt fills Magnus' eyes and before Alec can open his mouth to assure Magnus that the injury had nothing to do with what just happened he's pressing soft strands of magic to the wound, knitting it closed until Alec's shredded shirtsleeve is the only evidence it was there in the first place.

He sags slightly. The adrenaline pumping through his veins had forced the pain down and reduced it to a dull throb forced to the back of his mind. But now it's gone the relief makes him lightheaded.

Magnus' eyes are unreadable, gold irises like polished metal and lacking the soft warmth Alec has grown accustomed to. Alec can physically feel him closing off as the post-battle high fades and it becomes clear Alec's in no immediate danger.

They're at an impasse. The silence stretches out between them, tension building in the air (though whether it's from the weight of everything unsaid or residual static clinging to Magnus Alec can't say). His hand makes an abortive movement as he has to curb the urge to reach out for Magnus, to hold him as he's done after so many near-death experiences and confirm that he's here he's fine he's alive. He has a hunch it wouldn't be welcome right now. The way Magnus' eyes coldly track the movement tells Alec he's right.

Before he can stop it, Magnus' name slips from his lips in a desperate, barely-audible plea.

Magnus freezes. For a second Alec thinks he's going to pull away completely. Then all the tension seems to drain from him at once, along with the wildness and the fury held in the tight lines of his body. Now he just looks tired. Alec's heart seems to take that as an invitation, even if his head gave no such permission, because before he can stop himself he's babbling, words tumbling over themselves and he'd be utterly embarrassed by his borderline-incoherence if he wasn't completely overtaken by the need to make sure Magnus understands, to *explain*.

"Magnus I'm so sorry - I never... I didn't want - I love you, God I never stopped, I just didn't know what to *do* -"

"Alec -"

"I could see you breaking and it's my... it was my fault - I needed to fix it -"

"Alexander!"

Magnus' voice is tinged with exasperation that Alec would call fond if he didn't know better, and it pierces through the fog of desperation.

"I know, Alexander," Magnus starts, sliding his hands down to grip Alec's imploringly, quickly elaborating before Alec can interrupt him to ask, "My father is many things - cruel

and manipulative chief among them – but he is not humble. The moment it became clear I wasn't going to help him burn the world and all of you in it he wasted no time gloating.”

Magnus must see the confusion and the tentative, carefully-suppressed hope bubbling up in Alec's wide-eyed gaze.

“Alec, I forgive you. It's *okay*.” Magnus pauses for a moment, a wry smile twitching at the corner of his lips, “Rest assured we will definitely be having words about the importance of communicating before we make any life-altering decisions in the future, but right now I just want to hold you.”

Breath leaves Alec's lungs in a rush and he collapses against Magnus, pulling him close as though if he holds tight enough he'll never have to let go. He's probably holding on far too tightly for any semblance of dignity, but Magnus is no better off with the way his hands are twisted desperately into Alec's shirt like he's afraid Alec is going to slip from his grasp. Magnus has buried his face in Alec's neck and Alec presses their cheeks together, inhaling the painfully familiar scent of sandalwood that still lingers under the overwhelming smell of ozone.

They're both trembling.

“You would have been alright,” he whispers, despite the fact Magnus had very obviously put an end to the conversation, because he has to *know*, “You would have moved on, you would have been *happy*.”

It comes out as more of a question than Alec would have liked, lacking the conviction he'd intended as his voice wobbles precariously.

Magnus pulls back slightly, already shaking his head before Alec has even finished speaking.

“I could never move on from you Alexander,” he murmurs, sounding sad and a little frustrated but unshakably certain as he holds Alec's gaze, “Not as long as I live.”

There's no response for that. There's no response that could ever be enough when an immortal warlock tells you they'll love you for as long as they live. The only thing that seems to come close is to pulling Magnus back in, winding his arms around his shoulders and just holding him. God he didn't think he'd ever get to do this again

It's at that point that Alec's attention is brought to the chain around his neck where it's pressed tightly between them. How Magnus hasn't said something already is beyond Alec, because now he's noticed it, it's surprisingly sharp where it digs into his chest.

Reluctantly, he disentangles himself from Magnus, unable to stop the smile that breaks through at the plaintive noise Magnus makes as he does so.

“There was something I wanted to ask you before... all this,” he hedges, and can see from the pained expression touching Magnus face that he doesn't have to elaborate on what he means by ‘all this’. It's been a long, hard couple of days for both of them.

He fishes the chain from under his shirt, pulling the Lightwood ring from its place against his heart and enclosing it in a fist as he pulls. The chain gives way with little resistance. Sensing Magnus' bewilderment, he brings his hand back between them to where Magnus can see it and uncurls his fingers.

There's a beat, before Magnus' eyes widen comically and he looks up at Alec with shock written plainly across his face

"You don't have to say anything," Alec rushes to add, "It's a lot, I know. I don't even know if you want to actually be with me anymore." It hurts to say and he tries to conceal it (most likely unsuccessfully) with a self-deprecating laugh before taking a deep breath and forging on.

"I just need you to know that you're it for me. I'm never going to love anyone as much as I love you. There's nothing I want more than to spend the rest of my life with you, and if there's a life after this I want to spend that with you too."

Magnus is silent, opening and closing his mouth a few times but making no sound as the words catch in his throat.

"Of course I want to be with you," is what Magnus eventually manages to whisper, golden eyes more open than Alec has ever seen them, impossibly fond and sparkling with unshed tears. Then, he hauls Alec in with a hand on the back of his neck and kisses him.

Alec can feel everything click back into place with Magnus' lips on his, as though he's been going about his life for the past few days with a fundamental part of himself missing. He kisses back with a fervour that only builds when Magnus parts his lips, hand coming up to caress Alec's cheek. A gasp escapes Alec when their tongues meet, tangling together with unrestrained desperation. Magnus goes to pull back and Alec follows him, not yet willing to break the kiss. It makes Magnus stumble slightly on the uneven ground, that excess enthusiasm that Alec's never managed to curb no matter how many times they do this, and Alec catches him with a steadying arm around his waist. By now they're both grinning too much to do much more than softly press their smiles together. This time, when Magnus pulls away to catch his breath and brushes their noses together as he leans his forehead against Alec's, Alec lets him.

"Only you would manage to propose in hell, Alexander Lightwood," Magnus says wondrously and Alec has to laugh. He feels lighter than he has in months, a giddy feeling bubbling up to replace the knot of black despair that's been twisting inside him ever since Magnus gave up his magic.

"That's a yes, in case you were wondering," Magnus continues, closing his eyes for a moment like he's overwhelmed by the sheer strength of everything he's feeling. When he opens them again he looks *wrecked* and his voice cracks a little, "God of course it's a yes."

There's no reason for the words to affect Alec so strongly; everything about Magnus' response since he showed him the ring has been pointing towards them. But he hasn't really dared hope up until Magnus confirms it, and the wave of profound relief and overwhelming joy threatens to make his knees buckle.



And really, there's nothing to be done but crash his lips against Magnus' again, swallowing the pleased sound Magnus makes. So they stand there together, in the middle of the gradually-emptying battlefield under the oppressive Edom sun, and Alec loses himself in the exquisite joy of kissing Magnus. Kissing the man he loves more anything, the man he would burn down the world for if he asked.

Kissing his *fiancé*.

## End Notes

Magnus' magic would recognise Alec anywhere and you can fight me on that.

Come and yell with me on tumblr (@icanthelpbut-love-you)

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