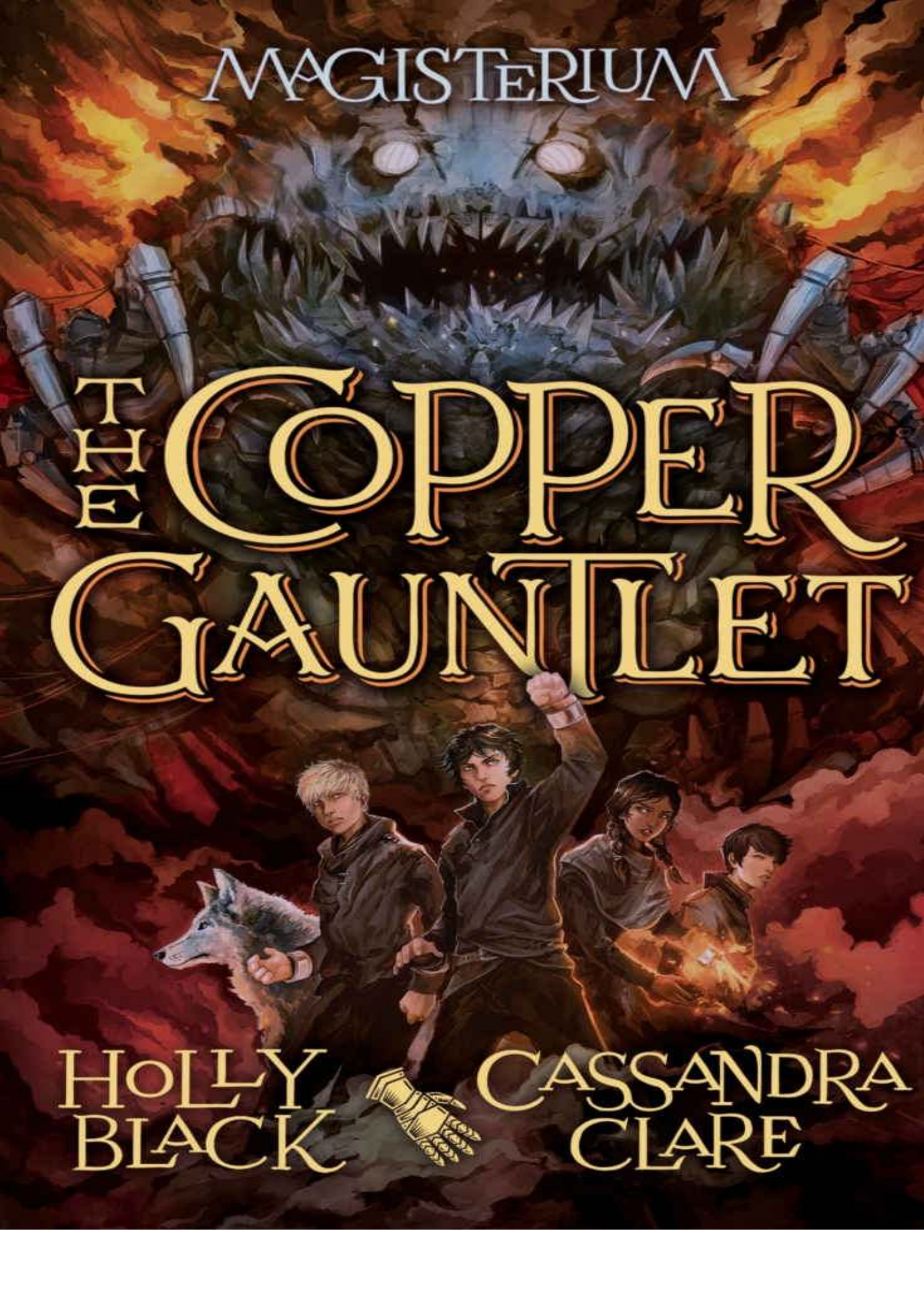


MAGISTERIUM

THE COPPER
GAUNTLET

HOLLY
BLACK

CASSANDRA
CLARE



MAGISTERIUM

BOOK TWO

THE COPPER
GAUNTLET

HOLLY BLACK *and*
CASSANDRA CLARE

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS BY
SCOTT FISCHER



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FOR URSULA ANNABEL LINK GRANT,
HALF FIVE-YEAR-OLD, HALF FIRE

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CHAPTER ONE

CALL REMOVED A small circle of oily pepperoni from his slice of pizza and slid his hand under the table. Immediately, he felt a wash of Havoc's wet tongue as the Chaos-ridden wolf inhaled the food.

"Don't feed that thing," his father said gruffly. "It's going to bite your hand clean off one of these days."

Call petted Havoc's head, ignoring his dad. Lately, Alastair wasn't happy with Call. He didn't want to hear about his time at the Magisterium. He hated that Call had been picked as an apprentice by Rufus, Alastair's former master. And he'd been ready to tear out his hair ever since Call had come home with a Chaos-ridden wolf.

For Call's whole life, it had been just him and his father, and his father's stories about how evil his former school was — the same school that Call now attended, despite Call's hardest efforts to not get admitted. Call expected his father to be angry when he had gotten back from his first year of the Magisterium, but he hadn't anticipated how it would *feel* to have his father so angry. They used to get along so effortlessly. Now everything felt ... strained.

Call hoped this was just because of the Magisterium. Because the other option was that Alastair knew Call was secretly evil.

The whole being-secretly-evil thing distressed Call, too. A lot. He'd started making a list in his

head — any evidence of him being an Evil Overlord went into one column and any evidence against him went into another. He'd taken to referring to the list before making any and all decisions. Would an Evil Overlord drink the last cup of coffee in the pot? Which book would an Evil Overlord take out from the library? Was dressing in all black a definite Evil Overlord move, or a legitimate choice on laundry day? The worst part was that he was pretty sure his father was playing the same game, totaling and retotaling Call's Evil Overlord Points whenever he looked in Call's direction.

But Alastair could merely suspect. He couldn't be sure. There were some things only Call knew.

Call couldn't stop thinking about what Master Joseph had told him: that he, Callum Hunt, possessed the soul of the Enemy of Death. That he *was* the Enemy of Death, destined for evil. Even in the cozy yellow-painted kitchen where he and his dad had eaten thousands of meals together, the words rang in Call's ears.

The soul of Callum Hunt is dead. Forced from your body, that soul shriveled up and died. Constantine Madden's soul has taken root and grown, newborn and intact. Since then, his followers have labored to make it seem like he wasn't gone from the world, so that you would be safe.

"Call?" his father asked, staring at him oddly.

Don't look at me, Call wanted to say. And at the same time he wanted to ask, What do you see when you look?

He and Alastair were splitting Call's favorite pizza, pepperoni and pineapple, and ordinarily they would have been chatting about Call's latest escapade in town or whatever fix-it project Alastair was currently working on in his garage, but Alastair wasn't talking now and Call couldn't think of anything to say. He missed his best friends, Aaron and Tamara, but he couldn't talk about them in front of his father because they were part of the world of magic that Alastair hated.

Call slid off his chair. "Can I go out in the backyard with Havoc?"

Alastair frowned down at the wolf, a once-adorable pup that had now grown into a rangy teenage monster, taking up a lot of the real estate underneath the table. The wolf looked up at Call's dad with Chaos-ridden eyes, tongue lolling from his mouth. He whined gently.

"Very well," said Alastair with a long-suffering sigh. "But don't be long. And keep away from people. Our best bet of keeping the neighbors from making a fuss is to control the circumstances under which Havoc is seen."

Havoc jumped up, toenails clacking over the linoleum as he made for the door. Call grinned. He knew that having the rare devotion of a Chaos-ridden beast counted for a lot of Evil Overlord Points, but he couldn't regret keeping him.

Of course, that was probably a problem with being an Evil Overlord. You didn't regret the right things.

Call tried not to think about it as he stepped outside. It was a warm summer afternoon. The backyard was full of thick green overgrown grass; Alastair wasn't very meticulous about keeping it trimmed, being the sort of person who was more interested in keeping the neighbors away than sharing lawn-mowing tips. Call amused himself by throwing a stick to Havoc and having him retrieve it, tail wagging, eyes sparkling. He would have run alongside Havoc if he could have, but his damaged leg kept him from moving too fast. Havoc seemed to understand this, and rarely scampered too far out of

reach.

After Havoc had done some fetching, they crossed the street together toward a stretch of park and Havoc ran off toward some bushes. Call checked his pockets for plastic bags. Evil Overlords definitely didn't clean up after their own dogs, so each walk counted as a mark in the good column.

"Call?"

Call spun around, surprised. He was even more surprised when he saw who was speaking to him. Kylie Myles's blond hair was pulled back by two unicorn clips and she was holding on to a pink leash. On the other end of it was what appeared to be a small white wig, but might have been a dog.

"You — uh," Call said. "You know my name?"

"I feel like I haven't seen you around lately," Kylie replied, apparently deciding to ignore his confusion. She pitched her voice low. "Did you transfer? To the ballet school?"

Call was seized by hesitation. Kylie had been with him at the Iron Trial, the entrance exam for the Magisterium, but he had passed and she had failed. She'd been removed to another room by the mages and he hadn't seen her since. She clearly remembered Call, since she was looking at him with a puzzled expression, but he wasn't sure exactly what she thought had happened to him. Her memories had certainly been altered before she'd been released back into the general population.

For a wild moment, he imagined telling her everything. Telling her how they'd been trying out for a *magic* school and not a *ballet* school, and how Master Rufus had picked him, even though he'd scored way worse than she had. Would she believe him if he told her about what the school was like and what it felt like to be able to shape fire in his hands or fly up into the air? He thought about telling her that Aaron was his best friend and also a Makar, which was *a very big deal* because it meant he was one of the few living magicians who could work magic with the element of chaos.

"School's okay," he mumbled, shrugging, not sure what else to say.

"I'm surprised you got in," she said, glancing at his leg and then falling into an awkward silence.

He felt a familiar rush of anger and remembered exactly what it had felt like to go to his old school and have no one believe he could be good at any physical stuff. For as long as Call could remember, his left leg had been shorter and weaker than the other. Walking on it caused him pain, and none of the innumerable surgeries he'd endured had helped much. His father had always said he'd been born this way, but Master Joseph had told him something different.

"It's all about the upper body strength," Call said loftily, not sure what that really meant.

She nodded, though, wide-eyed. "What's it like? Ballet school?"

"Harsh," he said. "Everyone dances until they collapse. We eat only raw-egg smoothies and wheat protein. Every Friday we have a dance-off and whoever is left standing gets a chocolate bar. Also we have to watch dance movies constantly."

She was about to say something in return, but she was interrupted by Havoc pushing out of the bushes. He was carrying a stick between his teeth, and his eyes were wide and coruscating — shades of orange, yellow, and hellfire red. As Kylie stared, her own eyes popping, Call realized how huge Havoc must look to her, how very obviously not a dog or any kind of normal pet he was.

Kylie screamed. Before Call could say another word, she bolted out of the yard and tore down the street, her white mop of a dog barely keeping pace with her.

So much for making nice with the neighbors.

By the time Call got home, he'd decided that between lying to Kylie and scaring her off, he had to take away all the good points he'd gotten for picking up after Havoc.

The Evil Overlord column was winning the day.

"Is everything all right?" his father asked, seeing the look on Call's face as he closed the door.

"Yeah, fine," Call said dejectedly.

"Good." Alastair cleared his throat. "I thought we might go out this evening," he said. "To the cinema."

Call was startled. They hadn't done much since he'd come back for the summer. Alastair, day after day, seeming sunken in gloom, had been wearing a path from the TV room to the garage, where he fixed up old cars and made them shine like new, then sold them to collectors. Sometimes Call grabbed his skateboard and skated halfheartedly around the town, but nothing seemed like much fun compared to the Magisterium.

He'd even started missing the lichen.

"What movie do you want to see?" Call asked, figuring that Evil Overlords didn't consider the movie choices of others. That had to count for something.

"There's a new one. With spaceships," his dad said, surprising Call with his choice. "And perhaps we could drop that monster of yours at the pound on the way. Trade it in for a nice poodle. Or even a pit bull. Anything not rabid."

Havoc looked up at Alastair balefully, his eerie eyes swirling with color. Call thought of Kylie's wig dog.

"He's not rabid," Call said, rubbing Havoc's neck ruff. The wolf slid down and rolled on his back, tongue lolling, so Call could scratch his belly. "Can he come? He could wait for us in the car with the windows down."

Frowning, Alastair shook his head. "Absolutely not. Tie it up out in the garage."

"He's not an *it*. And I bet he'd like popcorn," Call said. "And gummi worms."

Alastair checked his watch, then pointed to the garage. "Well, perhaps you can bring some back for it."

"*Him!*" With a sigh, Call led Havoc out into Alastair's workshop in the garage. It was a big space bigger than the largest room in the house, and it smelled of oil and gasoline and old wood. The chassis of a Citroën rested on blocks, tires missing and seats removed. Stacks of yellowed repair manuals were piled on antique stools, while headlights dangled down from the rafters. A coil of rope hung above an assortment of wrenches. Call used the rope to fasten a loose knot around the wolf's collar.

He knelt down in front of Havoc. "We'll be back at school soon," he whispered. "With Tamara and Aaron. And then everything will go back to normal."

The dog whined like he understood. Like he missed the Magisterium as much as Call did.

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Call had a hard time keeping his mind on the movie, despite the spaceships, aliens, and explosions. H

kept thinking about the way they watched movies at the Magisterium, with an air mage projecting the images onto a cave wall. Because the movies were controlled by the mages, anything could happen in them. He'd seen *Star Wars* with six different endings, and movies where the kids from the Magisterium were projected onto the screen, fighting monsters, flying cars, and turning into superheroes.

In comparison, this movie seemed a little flat. Call concentrated on the parts he would have done differently as he downed three Extreme! Sour Apple Slushies and two large tubs of buttered popcorn. Alastair stared at the screen with an expression of mild horror, not even turning when Call offered him some peanut clusters. As a consequence of having to eat all the snacks himself, Call was buzzing with sugar by the time they got back to Alastair's car.

"Did you like it?" Alastair asked.

"It was pretty good," Call said, not wanting Alastair to feel like he didn't appreciate his dad dragging himself to a movie he would never have gone to see on his own. "The part where the space station blew up was awesome."

There was a silence, not quite long enough to be uncomfortable, before Alastair spoke again. "You know, there's no reason for you to go back to the Magisterium. You've learned the basics. You could practice here, with me."

Call felt his heart sink. They'd had this conversation, or variations of it, a hundred times already and it never went well. "I think I should probably go back," Call said as neutrally as possible. "I already went through the First Gate, so I should finish what I started."

Alastair's expression darkened. "It's not good for children to be underground. Kept in the dark like worms. Your skin growing pale and gray. Your Vitamin D levels dropping. The vitality leeching from your body ..."

"Do I look *gray*?" Call rarely paid attention to his appearance beyond the basics — making sure his pants weren't inside out and his hair wasn't sticking up — but being *gray* sounded bad. He cast a surreptitious glance at his hand, but it still appeared to be its usual pinky-beige color.

Alastair was gripping the wheel in frustration as they turned onto their street. "What is it about that school that you like?"

"What did *you* like about it?" Call demanded. "You went there, and I know you didn't hate every minute. You met Mom there —"

"Yes," Alastair said. "I had friends there. That was what I liked about it." It was the first time Call could remember him saying he'd liked anything about mage school.

"I have friends there, too," said Call. "I don't have any here, but I do there."

"All the friends I went to school with are dead now, Call," said Alastair, and Call felt the hair rise up on the back of his neck. He thought of Aaron, Tamara, and Celia — then had to stop. It was too awful.

Not just the idea of them dying.

But the idea of them dying because of him.

Because of his secret.

The evil inside him.

Stop, Call told himself. They were back at their house now. Something about it looked wrong to Call. Off. Call stared for a minute before he realized what it was. He'd left the garage door closed, Havoc tied up inside, but now it was open, a big black square.

"Havoc!" Call grabbed at the door handle and half fell out onto the pavement, his weak leg twanging. He could hear his father calling his name, but he didn't care.

He half limped, half ran to the garage. The rope was still there, but one end of it was frayed, as though sawed through by a knife — or a sharp wolf tooth. Call tried to imagine Havoc all alone in the garage, in the dark. Barking and waiting for Call to answer. Call started to feel cold all through his chest. Havoc hadn't been tied up a lot at Alastair's, and it had probably freaked him out. Maybe he'd chewed the rope and thrown himself against the door until it opened.

"Havoc!" Call called again, louder. "Havoc, we're home! You can come back now!"

He whirled around, but the wolf didn't come out of the bushes, didn't emerge from the shadows that were starting to gather between the trees.

It was getting late.

Call's father came up behind him. He looked at the torn rope and the open door and sighed, raking a hand through his gray-black hair. "Call," he said gently. "Call, it's gone. Your wolf's gone."

"You don't know that!" Call shouted, spinning to face Alastair.

"Call —"

"You always hated Havoc!" Call snapped. "You're probably glad he's gone."

Alastair's expression hardened. "I'm not glad you're upset, Call. But yes, that wolf was never meant to be a pet. It might have killed or really hurt someone. One of your friends or, God forbid, you. I just hope it runs off into the woods and doesn't head into town to start snacking on the neighbors."

"Shut up!" Call told him, although there was something vaguely comforting about the idea that Havoc ate someone, Call might be able to find him in the commotion. Call pushed that thought firmly out of his mind, consigning it into the Evil Overlord column.

Thoughts like that didn't help anything. He had to find Havoc *before* awful stuff happened. "Havoc's never hurt anyone," he said instead.

"I'm sorry, Call," Alastair said. To Call's surprise, he sounded sincere. "I know you've wanted a pet for a long time. Maybe if I'd let you keep that mole rat ..." He sighed again. Call wondered if his dad had kept him from having a pet because Evil Overlords shouldn't have pets. Because Evil Overlords didn't love anything, especially not innocent things, like animals. Like Havoc.

Call imagined how scared Havoc had to be — he hadn't been on his own since Call had found him as a puppy.

"Please," Call begged. "Please help me look for Havoc."

Alastair nodded once, a sharp jerk of his jaw. "Get in the car. We can call for him as we take a slow drive around the block. He might not have gotten far."

"Okay," Call said. He looked back toward the garage, feeling as though he was overlooking something, as though he'd see his wolf, if he just stared hard enough.

But no matter how many times they went around the block and no matter how many times they called, Havoc didn't come out. It got darker and darker and they went home. Alastair made spaghetti

for dinner, but Call couldn't force any of it down. He got Alastair to promise to help make LOST DOG posters for Havoc the next day, even though Alastair believed a picture of Havoc would do more harm than good.

"Chaos-ridden animals aren't meant to be pets, Callum," Alastair said after clearing away Call's untouched plate. "They don't care about people. They *can't*."

Call didn't say anything to that, but he went to bed with a lump in his throat and a feeling of dread.



A high-pitched whining noise roused Call out of a restless sleep. He shot upright in bed, grabbing for Miri, the knife he always kept on his nightstand. He slid his legs off the bed, wincing as his feet touched the cold floor.

"Havoc?" he whispered.

He thought he heard another whine, distant. He peered out the window but all he could see were shadowy trees and darkness.

He slipped out into the hallway. His dad's bedroom door was shut and the line between it and the floor was dark. Though he could still be awake, Call knew. Sometimes Alastair stayed up all night fixing things in his workshop downstairs.

"Havoc?" Call whispered again.

There was no answering noise, but gooseflesh spiraled up Call's arms. He could *feel* that his work was nearby, that Havoc was anxious, was scared. Call moved in the direction of the feeling, though he couldn't explain it. It led him down the hall to the top of the cellar stairs. Call swallowed hard, gripped Miri, and started to descend.

He'd always been a little creeped out by the basement, which was full of old auto parts, broken furniture, dollhouses, dolls that needed repairing, and antique tin toys that sometimes whirred to life.

A bar of yellow light peeked out from under the doorway that led through to another of Alastair's storage rooms, full of even more junk he hadn't gotten around to fixing yet. Call gathered his courage and limped across the room, pushing the door open.

It didn't budge. His father had locked it.

Call's heart sped.

There was no reason for his dad to lock away a bunch of old, half-repaired stuff. No reason at all.

"Dad?" Call called through the door, wondering if Alastair was in there for some reason.

But he heard something very different stir on the other side. Fury rose up in him, terrible and choking. He took his little knife and tried to press it into the gap on the door, tried to push back the bolt.

After a tense moment, the tip of Miri pressed the right place and the lock sprung. The door opened.

The back of the cellar was no longer the way Call remembered it. The clutter had been removed, leaving space for what looked like a very spare mage's office. A desk stood in one corner, piles of old

and new books surrounding it. There was a cot in the other. And in the center of the floor, bound by shackles and gagged with a horrible-looking leather muzzle, was Havoc.

The wolf lunged toward Call, whining, only to be snapped back by his chains. Call sank to his knees, fingers ruffling Havoc's fur as he felt for the release on the collar. He was so happy to see Havoc and so overwhelmed with rage at what his father had done that for a moment he missed the most important detail.

But as he scanned the room for where Alastair kept the key, he finally saw what he should have noticed first.

The cot against the far wall had shackles attached to it as well.

Shackles just the right size for a boy who was about to turn thirteen.



CHAPTER TWO

CALL COULDN'T STOP staring at the shackles. His heart felt like it was too small in his chest, desperately pumping away without making the blood move in his veins. The shackles were forged out of iron, inscribed with alchemical symbols, obvious mage-work, sunk deep into the wall behind them. Once they were clapped on, it would be impossible to get free....

Behind Call, Havoc made a whimpering sound. Call forced himself to look away, to concentrate on freeing his wolf. The muzzle was easy to get off, but the moment he did so, Havoc started barking wildly, as though trying to tell Call the story of how he'd wound up chained in the basement.

"Shhhhhh," Call said, grabbing Havoc's nose in panic, trying to keep him quiet. "*Don't wake up Dad.*"

Havoc whimpered as Call tried to pull himself together. The floor of the storage room was concrete, and Call reached down into it for a jolt of earth magic to break the wolf's chains. The earth magic, when it came, felt weak: Call's concentration was all over the place and he knew it. He just couldn't believe his father would pretend to be sorry about Havoc being missing and drive him around, letting him call for Havoc when he knew the whole time where he was, after he had chained

him in the basement.

Except he couldn't have chained Havoc in the basement himself. He'd been with Call the whole time. So someone else must have done it. A friend of his father's? Call's mind whirled. Alastair didn't have any friends.

His heart sped up at the thought, and the intense combination of fear and magic split Havoc's chains — the wolf was free. Call darted across the room to Alastair's desk and grabbed at the papers there. They were all covered in his dad's fine spidery handwriting: pages of notes and drawings. There was a sketch of the gates of the Magisterium, and of a pillared building Call didn't know, and of the airplane hangar where the Iron Trial had been held. But most of the drawings were of a weird mechanical thing that looked like an old-fashioned armored metal gauntlet, covered with strange symbols. It would have been cool if something about it hadn't sent a chill of creepiness up Call's spine.

The drawings sat beside a book explaining a weird, upsetting ritual. The tome was bound in cracked black leather, and the contents were horrifying. They explained how chaos magic could be harvested and used by someone other than a Makar — through the removal of a chaos creature's still-beating heart. Once in possession of the gauntlet and the heart, chaos magic could be pushed out of a Makar, destroying the Makar completely.

But if they weren't chaos mages, if they weren't Makars, they'd survive.

Looking at the shackles on the cot, Call could guess who was going to be experimented on. Alastair was going to use chaos to perform a dark form of magical surgery on Call, one that would kill him if he really was the Enemy of Death and possessed the Enemy's Makar ability.

Call had thought Alastair suspected the truth about him, but it looked like he'd moved beyond suspicion. Even if Call survived the magical surgery, he'd know this was a test he was supposed to fail. He possessed Constantine Madden's soul and his own father wanted him dead because of it.

Beside the book was a note in Alastair's spidery handwriting: *This has to work on him. It must.* "Must" was underlined several times, and next to it was written a date in September.

It was the date Call was supposed to return to the Magisterium. People in town knew he was home for the summer and probably figured he was returning to ballet school around the same time that local kids went back to public school. If Call had just disappeared in September, no one would have thought anything of it.

Call turned around to look at the shackles again. He felt sick to his stomach. September was only two weeks away.

"Call."

Call whirled around. His father was standing in the doorway, dressed — as though he'd never planned on sleeping. His glasses were pushed up on his nose. He looked totally normal, and a little sad. Call stared in disbelief as his dad reached out a hand to him.

"Call, it's not what you think —"

"Tell me you didn't lock up Havoc here," Call said in a low voice. "Tell me none of this stuff is yours."

"I'm not the one who chained him up." It was the first time Alastair had called Havoc a *him* and

not an *it*. “But my plan is necessary, Call. It’s for you, for your own good. There are terrible people in the world and they’ll do things to you; they’ll use you. I can’t have that.”

“So you’re going to do something terrible to me first?”

“It’s for your own good!”

“That’s a lie!” Call shouted. He let go of Havoc, who growled. His ears were flat to his head and he was glaring at Alastair through swirling, multicolored eyes. “Everything you’ve ever said was a lie. You lied about the Magisterium —”

“I didn’t lie about the Magisterium!” Alastair snapped. “It was the worst place for you! It *is* the worst place for you!”

“Because you think I’m Constantine Madden!” Call shouted. “You think I’m the Enemy of Death!”

It was as if he’d stopped a tornado midspin: There was a sudden, charged, horrible silence. Even Havoc didn’t make a sound as Alastair’s expression crumbled and his body sagged against the doorway. When he replied, he spoke very softly. It was worse, in a way, than the anger. “You *are* Constantine Madden,” he said. “Aren’t you?”

“I don’t know!” Call felt adrift, bereft. “I don’t remember being anyone but me. But if I really am him, then you’re supposed to help me know what to do about it. Instead, you’re locking up my door and ...”

Call looked over at the boy-size shackles and swallowed the rest of his words.

“When I saw the wolf, that’s when I *knew*,” said Alastair, still in the same quiet voice. “I guessed before, but I could convince myself that *you* couldn’t possibly be like *him*. But Constantine had a wolf just like Havoc, back when we were your age. The wolf used to go everywhere with him. Just like Havoc does with you.”

Call felt a cold shiver pass across his skin. “You said you were Constantine’s friend.”

“We were in the same apprentice group. Under Master Rufus.” It was more than Alastair had ever said about his time at the Magisterium before. “Rufus chose five students at my Iron Trial. Your mother. Her brother, Declan. Constantine Madden. Constantine’s brother, Jericho. And me.” It hurt him to tell Call this — Call could see. “By the end of our Silver Year, only four of us were alive, and Constantine had started wearing the mask. Five years later, everyone was gone but him and myself. After the Cold Massacre, he was rarely seen.”

The Cold Massacre was where Call’s mother had died. Where his leg had been destroyed. It was where Constantine Madden had removed the soul of the child called Callum Hunt and put his own soul into the child’s body. But that wasn’t even the worst thing Call knew about it. The worst thing was what Master Joseph had told him about his mother.

“I know what she wrote in the snow,” Call said now. “She wrote ‘*Kill the child.*’ She meant me.” His dad didn’t deny it.

“Why didn’t you kill me?”

“Call, I’d never hurt you —”

“Seriously?” Call grabbed for one of the drawings of the gauntlet. “What’s this? What were you going to use it for? Gardening?”

Alastair's expression turned grim. "Call, give that here."

"Were you going to chain me up so I wouldn't struggle when you pulled out Havoc's heart?" Call pointed at the shackles. "Or so I wouldn't struggle when you used it on me?"

"Don't be ridiculous!"

Alastair took a step forward, and that's when Havoc leaped at him, snarling. Call shouted, and Havoc tried to arrest himself midjump, twisting his body desperately. He hit Alastair side-on, knocking him backward. Alastair crashed into a small table that broke under him. Wolf and man slammed against the floor.

"Havoc!" Call called. The wolf rolled off Alastair and resumed his place at Call's side, still snarling. Alastair pushed himself up onto his knees and gradually stood, his balance unsteady.

Call lurched automatically toward his father. Alastair looked at him and there was something on his face that Call had never expected to see:

Fear.

It made Call furious.

"I'm leaving," he spat. "Havoc and I are leaving and we're never coming back. You missed your chance to kill us."

"Call," Alastair said, holding out a warning hand. "I can't let you do that."

Call wondered whether there had been something off for Alastair every time he'd ever looked at Call, some creeping horrible sense of wrongness. He'd always thought of Alastair as his dad, even after what Master Joseph had told him, but it was possible that Alastair no longer thought of Call as his son.

Call looked down at the knife in his hand. He remembered the day of the Trial and wondered whether Alastair had thrown Miri *to* him or *at* him. *Kill the child*. He remembered Alastair writing to Master Rufus to ask him to bind Call's magic. Suddenly, everything Alastair had done made a horrible kind of sense.

"Go on," Call said to Havoc, tipping his head toward the door that led to the sprawling mess of the rest of the basement. "We're getting out of here."

Havoc turned and padded away. Call began to carefully back out after his wolf.

"No! You can't go!" Alastair lunged for Call, grabbing his arm. His father wasn't a big man, but he was lean and long and wiry. Call slipped and went down hard on the concrete, landing the wrong way on his leg. Pain shot up his body, making his vision swim. Over Havoc's barking, Call heard his father saying, "You can't go back to the Magisterium. I have to fix this. I promise you I *will* fix it —"

He means he's going to kill me, Call thought. He means I'll be fixed when I'm dead.

Fury overcame him, fury at all the lies Alastair had told and was telling even now, at the cold knot of dread he'd been carrying around since Master Joseph had told him who he truly was, at the thought that everyone he cared about might hate him if they knew.

Rage poured out of him. The wall behind Alastair cracked suddenly, a fissure traveling up the side of it, and everything in the room began to move. Alastair's desk went flying into one wall. The cot exploded toward the ceiling. Alastair looked around, stunned, just as Call sent the magic toward him. Alastair flew up into the air and hit the broken wall, his head making an awful thudding sound

before his entire body slumped to the ground.

Call stood up shakily. His father was unconscious, unmoving, his eyes closed. He crept a little closer and stared. His father's chest was still rising and falling. He was still breathing.

Letting your rage get so out of control that you knocked out your father with magic definitely went in the bad column of the Evil Overlord list.

Call knew he had to get out of the house before Alastair woke up. He staggered out of the room, pushing the door closed behind him, Havoc at his heels.

In the main basement there was a wooden chest full of puzzles and old board games with missing pieces sitting to one side of an odd assemblage of broken chairs. Call shoved it in front of the storage room door. At least that would slow down Alastair, Call thought, as he made his way up the steps.

He darted into his bedroom and threw on a jacket over his pajamas, shoving his feet into sneakers. Havoc pranced around him, barking softly, as he stuffed a canvas duffel bag with some random extra clothes, then went into the kitchen and grabbed a bunch of chips and cookies. He emptied out the tin box on top of the fridge where Alastair kept the grocery money — about forty dollars in crumpled ones and fives. He shoved it into the bag, sheathed Miri, and dropped the knife on top of his other belongings before zipping everything up.

He hoisted the bag up on his shoulder. His leg was aching and he felt shaky from the fall and the recoil of the magic that was still echoing through his body. The moonlight pouring in through the windows lit up everything in the room with white edging. Call stared around, wondering if he'd ever see the kitchen again, or the house, or his father.

Havoc gave a whine, his ear cocked. Call couldn't hear anything, but that didn't mean Alastair wasn't waking up. Call shoved down his wayward thoughts, grabbed Havoc by the ruff, and crept quietly out of the house.

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The streets of the town were empty in early-morning darkness but Call stuck to the shadows anyway, in case Alastair decided to drive around looking for him. The sun would be rising soon.

About twenty minutes into his escape, his phone rang. He nearly leaped out of his skin before he managed to silence it.

The caller ID said it was coming from the house. Alastair was definitely awake and had made it out of the basement. The relief Call felt quickly turned to fresh fear. Alastair called again. And again.

Call turned off his phone and threw it away, in case his dad could trace his whereabouts through it like detectives did on TV.

He needed to decide where he was headed — and fast. Classes at the Magisterium didn't start for two weeks, but there was always someone around. He was sure Master Rufus would let him bunk down in his old room until Tamara and Aaron showed up — and would protect him from his father, if it came to that.

Then Call imagined himself with just Havoc and Master Rufus to keep him company, rattling around the echoing caverns of the school. It seemed depressing. Anyway, he wasn't sure how he could

get all the way to a remote cave system in Virginia on his own. It had been a long, dusty drive home to North Carolina in Alastair's antique Rolls-Royce at the beginning of the summer, a trip he had no idea how to retrace.

He'd texted back and forth with his friends, but he didn't know where Aaron stayed when he wasn't at school; Aaron had been cagey about his location. Tamara's family lived right outside of DC, though, and Call was sure that more buses ran to DC than to anywhere near the Magisterium.

He already missed his phone.

Tamara had sent him a present for his upcoming birthday — a leather dog collar and leash for Havoc — and it had come with her return address on it. He remembered the address because her house had a name — *the Gables* — and Alastair had laughed and said that was what really rich people did, name their houses.

Call could go there.

With more purpose than he'd felt in weeks, Call started toward the bus station. It was a little building with two benches outside and an air-conditioned box where an elderly lady sat and doled out tickets from behind the glass. An old man was already sitting on one of the benches, hat tipped over his face like he was napping.

Mosquitoes buzzed in the air as Call approached the old woman.

"Um," he said. "I need a one-way bus ticket to Arlington."

She gave him a long look, pursing coral-painted lips. "How old are you?" she asked.

"Eighteen," he told her, hoping he sounded confident. It seemed very possible that she wouldn't believe him, but sometimes old people weren't good at judging age. He tried to stand up in a way that made him seem extra tall.

"Mmm," she said finally. "Forty dollars for one adult nonrefundable ticket. You're in luck — your bus leaves in a half hour. But there's no dogs, unless that's a service animal."

"Oh, yeah," Call said, with a quick look down at Havoc. "He's totally a service dog. He was *in* the service — the navy, actually."

The woman's eyebrows went up.

"He saved a man," Call said, trying out the story as he counted the cash and pushed it through the slot. "From drowning. And sharks. Well, just the one shark, but it was a pretty big one. He's got a medal and everything."

She stared at him for a long moment, then her gaze went to the way Call was standing. "So you need a service dog for your leg, huh?" she said. "You should have just said." She slid his ticket across to him.

Embarrassed, Call grabbed the paper and turned away without answering. The purchase had taken almost all his money, leaving him with only a dollar and some change. With that, he bought himself two candy bars at the vending machine and settled down to wait for the bus. Havoc flopped near his feet.

As soon as he got to Tamara's house, he promised himself, things were going to get better. Things were going to be just fine.



CHAPTER THREE

ON THE BUS, Call dozed on and off with his face pressed against the window. Havoc had curled up at his feet, which was cozy, and also kept anyone from trying to sit next to him.

Restless dreams flitted through Call's mind as he slept. He dreamed about snow and ice and the dead bodies of mages scattered across a glacier. He dreamed he was looking in the mirror at his own face, but it wasn't his face anymore, it was Constantine Madden's. He dreamed he was bound to a wall in shackles, with Alastair about to cut out his heart.

He woke with a shout, only to find himself blinking at the bus conductor, who was leaning over him, his lined face concerned. "We're in Arlington, kid," he said. "Everyone else is already off the bus. Is there someone here to pick you up?"

Call muttered something like "Sure" and stumbled off the bus, Havoc at his heels.

There was a pay phone on the corner. Call stared at it. He had the vague idea that you could use them to call information and get people's numbers, but he had no idea how. He'd always used the Internet for that sort of thing. He was about to start toward the phone when a red-and-black taxi pulled up to the curb, depositing a bunch of rowdy kids from a fraternity onto the pavement. The driver got out, unloading their luggage from the trunk.

Call jogged over to it, ignoring the twinge in his leg. He leaned in the window. "Do you know

where the Gables is?”

The taxi driver raised an eyebrow. “Pretty fancy place, yeah. Big old house.”

Call felt his heart lift. “Can you take me there? And my dog?”

The driver frowned at Havoc. The wolf was sniffing the wheels of the taxi. “You call that thing dog?”

Call wondered if he should mention the service thing again. “Havoc’s a rare breed,” he said instead.

The man snorted. “That I believe. Sure, get in. So long as neither of you gets carsick, you’ll be better passengers than the frat kids.”

A few moments later, Call was sliding into the backseat, Havoc hopping in next to him. The cushions were torn, showing the foam padding underneath, and Call was pretty sure a spring was sticking into his back. The cab didn’t seem to have any seat belts or shock absorbers, either — they banged and rattled along the street, with Call being thrown from side to side like a pinball. Despite Call’s promises, Havoc was starting to look a bit nauseous.

Finally, they reached the top of a hill. Before them was a tall iron fence, the massive and ornate gate standing open. A neatly trimmed lawn stretched out on the other side like a sea of green. He could see uniformed people hurrying across it carrying trays. He squinted, trying to figure out what was going on. Maybe Tamara’s parents were having a party?

Then he spotted the house, on the end of a winding driveway. It was grand enough to make Call think of the manor houses on the BBC programs Alastair liked to watch. It was the kind of place that dukes and duchesses lived in. Call had known Tamara was *rich*, but he’d thought of her as having money the way some of the kids at his old school did — kids who had new phones or the good sneakers that everyone else wanted. Now he realized he had no idea what kind of rich she really was.

“That’ll be thirty bucks,” said the cabbie.

“Uh, can you take me up to the house?” Call asked, intent on finding Tamara. She could definitely afford to loan him the money.

“You’ve got to be kidding me,” the cabbie said, heading up the driveway. “I’m keeping the meter running.”

A few other cars were pulling in behind the taxi, gleaming black and silver BMWs, Mercedes, and Aston Martins. There was definitely a party going on — people milling around in the garden at the side of the house, separated from the long stretch of green by low boxwood hedges. Call could see twinkling lights and hear far-off music.

He slid out of the car. A broad-shouldered white man with a shaved head, wearing a black suit and shiny shoes, was consulting a list of names and waving people inside the house. The guy didn’t look anything like Tamara’s father, and for a moment Call panicked, thinking he’d come to the wrong place.

Then Call realized the guy had to be a butler — or something like that. A butler who looked at Call with such hostility as to remind him that he was only wearing pajamas under his jacket, that his hair was probably still sticking up from the bus ride, and that he was being followed by a large and unsuitable-for-garden-parties wolf.

“Can I help you?” the butler asked. He wore a name tag that said *STEBBINS* on it in elegantly scripted letters.

“Is Tamara here?” Call asked. “I have to talk to her. I’m one of her friends from school and —”

“I am very sorry,” Stebbins said in a clipped way that made it clear he wasn’t sorry at all. “But there is an event going on. I can check to see if your name is on the list, but otherwise, I’m afraid you’ll have to come back later.”

“I *can’t* come back later,” insisted Call. “Please, just tell Tamara I need her help.”

“Tamara Rajavi is a very busy young lady,” Stebbins said. “And that animal needs to be on a leash or you need to remove it from the premises.”

“Excuse me.” A tall, elegantly dressed woman with completely silver hair stepped out of a Mercedes and came up the steps behind Call. She flashed a cream-colored invitation in one black-gloved hand and Stebbins was suddenly all smiles.

“Welcome, Mrs. Tarquin,” he said, swinging the door wide. “Mr. and Mrs. Rajavi will be delighted to see you —”

Call made a break for it, darting around Stebbins. He heard the man shout after him and Havoc, but they were busy racing down the huge marble hallway, lined with gorgeous carpets, toward wide glass doors that opened onto a patio and the party.

Fancy-looking people covered a square of lawn surrounded by high hedges. There were rectangular pools and massive stone urns full of roses. Hedges were cut into the shapes of alchemical symbols. Women wore long flowered dresses and beribboned hats, while the men were in pastel suits. Call couldn’t pick out anyone he knew, but he slid past a bush in the shape of a large fire symbol and tried to get away from the house, to where the knots of people were thicker.

One of the servers, a sandy-haired kid holding a tray of glasses filled with what looked like champagne, hurried to intercept Call.

“Excuse me, sir, but I think someone is looking for you,” the waiter told him, jerking his head back toward the doorway, where Stebbins stood, pointing right at Call and speaking angrily to another server.

“I know Tamara,” Call said, looking around frantically. “If I could just talk to her —”

“I’m afraid this party is invitation-only,” said the waiter, looking as if he felt a little sorry for Call. “If you could come with me —”

Finally, Call caught sight of someone he knew.

A tall Asian boy was standing in a small group of other kids about Call’s age. He was dressed in crisp cream-colored linen suit, his dark hair perfectly styled. Jasper deWinter.

“Jasper!” Call yelled, waving his hand around frantically. “Hey, Jasper!”

Jasper looked over at him and his eyes widened. He headed toward Call. He was carrying a glass of fruit punch in which chunks of real fruit floated. Call had never been so relieved to see anyone. He started reconsidering all the bad things he’d ever thought about Jasper. Jasper was a hero.

“Mr. deWinter,” said the waiter. “Do you know this boy?”

Jasper took a sip of punch, his brown eyes traveling up and down Call, from his tangled hair to his dirty sneakers.

“Never seen him before in my life,” he said.

Call’s positive feelings about Jasper evaporated in a whoosh. “Jasper, you liar —”

“He’s probably just one of the local kids trying to get in here on a bet,” Jasper said, narrowing his eyes at Call. “You know how curious the neighbors tend to get about what goes on at the Gables.”

“Indeed,” murmured the waiter. His sympathetic look was gone, and he was glaring as if Call were a bug floating in the punch.

“Jasper,” Call said through his teeth, “when we get back to school, I’m going to murder you for this.”

“Death threats,” said Jasper. “What is this world coming to?”

The waiter made a clucking noise. Jasper grinned at Call, clearly enjoying himself.

“He does look a bit raggedy,” Jasper went on. “Maybe we should give him some popcorn shrimp and fruit punch before we send him back on his way.”

“That would be very kind of you, Mr. deWinter,” said the waiter, and Call was about to do something — explode, possibly — when he suddenly heard a voice shouting his name.

“Call, Call, *Call!*” It was Tamara, bursting through the crowd. She was wearing a flowered silk dress, though if she’d had a beribboned hat, it had fallen off. Her hair was out of its familiar braids, tumbling down her back in curls. She threw herself at Call and hugged him hard.

She smelled nice. Like honey soap.

“Tamara,” Call tried to say, but she was squeezing him so hard that it came out as “Ouuuffgh.” He patted her back awkwardly. Havoc, delighted to see Tamara, pranced in a circle.

When Tamara let Call go, the waiter was staring at them with his mouth open. Jasper stood frozen, his expression cold. “Jasper, you’re a toad,” Tamara said to him, with finality. “Bates, Call is one of my very good friends. He is *absolutely* invited to this party.”

Jasper turned on his heel and stalked away. Call was about to yell something insulting after him when Havoc started to bark. He lunged forward, too fast for Call to grab him. Call heard the other guests gasp and exclaim as they moved away from the bounding wolf. Then he heard someone shout “Havoc!” and the crowd parted enough that Call could see Havoc standing up on his hind legs, his paws against Aaron’s chest. Aaron was grinning and running his hands through Havoc’s ruff.

The hubbub among the guests increased: People were babbling in alarm, some of them practically yelling.

“Oh, no,” Tamara said, biting her lip.

“What is it?” Call had already started forward, eager to get to Aaron. Tamara caught his wrist.

“Havoc’s a Chaos-ridden wolf, Call, and he’s climbing all over their Makar. Come on!”

Tamara tugged him forward, and indeed it was a lot easier for Call to make his way through the crowd with Tamara steering him like a tugboat. Guests were screaming and running in the other direction. Tamara and Call arrived at Aaron just as two very elegant adults, looking worried, also reached him — a handsome man in an ice-white suit and a beautiful, severe-looking woman with long dark hair studded with flowers. Her shoes had clearly been made by a metal mage: They looked as if they’d been cast of silver, and they rang like bells when she walked. Call couldn’t even imagine how much they’d cost.

“Get off!” snapped the man, shoving at Havoc, which was kind of a brave thing to do, Call thought, even though the only thing Aaron was in real danger of was being licked to death.

“Dad, Mom,” Tamara managed, out of breath. “Remember, I told you about Havoc? He’s fine. He’s safe. He’s like ... our mascot.”

Her father looked at her as though she had explained no such thing, but her interruption gave Aaron time to squat down and grab hold of Havoc’s collar. He sank his fingers into the wolf’s fur, rubbing his ears. Havoc’s tongue lolled out of his mouth with pleasure.

“It’s amazing how he responds to you, Aaron. He becomes positively tame,” Tamara’s mother said, beaming at Aaron. The rest of the party had started oohing and clapping, as though Aaron had performed some miracle, as though Havoc behaving normally was a sign that their Makar would triumph over the forces of the Chaos-ridden.

Call, standing behind Tamara, felt invisible and annoyed about it. No one cared that Havoc was *his* dog and had spent the summer being perfectly tame for *him*. No one cared that he and Havoc had gone to the park every Friday for the past two months and played Frisbee until Havoc accidentally bit the Frisbee in half or that, once, Havoc had licked a little girl’s ice-cream cone gently instead of biting off her whole hand the way he would have if Call hadn’t told him not to, which was definitely a point for him because an Evil Overlord would never have done that.

No one cared unless Aaron was involved. Perfect Aaron, in an even crisper suit than the one Jasper was wearing and a new, stupid-looking haircut that meant his hair was falling into his eyes. Call noted with some satisfaction that there were dirty paw prints near one of the fancy jacket pockets.

Call knew he shouldn’t feel the way he did. Aaron was his friend. Aaron didn’t have any family, not even a father who was trying to kill him. It was good that people liked Aaron. It meant that Havoc got to stay at the party and that someone would probably lend Call thirty dollars without much fuss.

When Aaron grinned at Call, his whole face lighting up, Call forced himself to smile back.

“Why don’t you find your friend some party clothes?” Tamara’s mother said, with an amused nod at Call. “And, Stebbins, do go pay for the taxi he came in. It’s been idling by the gate for ages now.” She smiled at Call. He wasn’t sure what to make of her. She seemed friendly and warm, but Call thought there was something about her friendliness that wasn’t quite real. “But hurry back. The glammers start soon.”

Aaron shooed Havoc toward the house. “Call can borrow some of my clothes,” he said.

“Yeah, come tell us what happened,” Tamara said, leading the way. “Not that we’re not happy to see you, but what are you doing here? Why didn’t you call to say you were coming?”

“Is it because of your dad?” Aaron asked, giving him a sympathetic look.

“Yeah,” Call said slowly. They walked through the huge glass doors and through a marble-tiled room filled with rich, jewel-colored rugs. As they climbed up a ridiculous, marvelous ironwork staircase, Call spun out a story about how Alastair had forbidden him to go back to the Magisterium. That part was true enough; Tamara and Aaron knew Alastair had always hated the idea of Call going to mage school. It was possible to embroider it until it became the reason they’d had a big fight and even the reason that Call had been afraid his father was going to lock him up in the basement and keep him there. He added that Alastair hated Havoc and was mean to him, for extra sympathy.

By the time he was done, Call had almost convinced himself it was true. It seemed like a way more believable story than the truth.

Tamara and Aaron made all the right sympathetic noises and asked dozens of questions so that Call was almost relieved when Tamara left so Call could change. She took Havoc with her. Call followed Aaron into the room where he was staying and flopped down on the giant king-size bed in the center. The walls were covered with expensive-looking antique objects that Call suspected Alastair would have killed to get his hands on: big carved metal plates, tiles painted with angular patterns, and framed scraps of bright silk and metal. There were grand windows looking down onto the lawns below. Above the bed was a chandelier dangling blue crystals in the shape of bells.

“This is some place, huh?” Aaron said, clearly still a bit dazed by it himself. He went over to the imposing wooden wardrobe in the corner and swung it open. He pulled out white pants, a jacket, and shirt, and brought them over to Call.

“What?” he said self-consciously, when Call didn’t move to take them from him.

Call realized he’d been staring. “You didn’t mention that you were staying at Tamara’s house,” he said.

Aaron shrugged. “It’s weird.”

“That doesn’t mean it has to be a secret!”

“It wasn’t a secret,” said Aaron hotly. “There was just never a time to bring it up.”

“You don’t even look like you,” Call said, taking the clothes.

“What do you mean?” Aaron sounded surprised, but Call didn’t see how he could be. Call had never seen him in any clothes as fancy as the ones he was wearing now, not even when he’d been declared the Makar in front of the whole Magisterium and the Assembly. His new shoes probably cost hundreds of dollars. He was tan and healthy. He smelled like aftershave despite not needing to shave. He’d probably spent the whole summer running around outside with Tamara and eating really balanced meals. No pizza dinners for the Makar. “Do you mean the clothes?” Aaron tugged at them self-consciously. “Tamara’s parents insisted I take them. And I felt really weird wandering around here in jeans and T-shirts when everyone else always looks so ...”

“Rich?” said Call. “Well, at least you didn’t show up in your pajamas.”

Aaron grinned. “You always know how to make an entrance,” he said. Call figured he was thinking of when they’d met at the Iron Trial and Call had exploded a pen all over himself.

Call took the new clothes and went into the bathroom to change. They were, as he had suspected they would be, too big. Aaron had a lot more muscles than he did. He settled for rolling the sleeves of his jacket up practically to his elbows and running wet fingers through his hair until it was no longer standing up in crazy spikes.

When he came back into the bedroom, Aaron was standing near the windows, looking down at the lawn. There was a big fountain in the middle of the grass and some children had gathered around it, throwing in handfuls of some kind of substance that made the water flare up in different colors.

“So you like it here?” Call asked, doing his best not to sound resentful. It wasn’t Aaron’s fault he was the Makar. None of it was Aaron’s fault.

Aaron pushed some of his blond hair out of his face. The black stone in the band on his wrist, the

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