A Sky Full of Stars

by FelicisQuill2

Summary

“Clarke?” he pivots his body toward hers, dragging his left knee up onto the bed, so he can face her directly.

“Mmmhmm?”

“I want a kid. I want to have a kid with you.”

Her chin dips down the smallest degree as she nods.

"No," he shakes his head, gripping her knee more tightly than she expected him to. "Let's do it now."

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Or, how Bellarke, the 100 and Sky Crew survive the apocalypse together underground.
nothing prepared me

“At times I’d like to break you
And drive you to your knees.

At times I’d like to break through
And hold you endlessly.

At times I understand you,
And I know how hard you’ve tried.

I’ve watched while love commands you,
And I’ve watched love pass you by.

At times I think we’re drifters
Still searching for a friend
A brother or a sister,
But then the passion flares again.”

~Dan Hill, “Sometimes When We Touch”

“Do you and your friends want to take the rover back, Clarke?” Jaha asks.

Clarke spins on her heel, leaves crackling under her boots.

“No, thanks,” she smiles at him softly. “I think I want to watch the stars come out on the walk home.”

“While we still can,” Octavia mutters grimly on her left, looking up at the sky dubiously from where they stand at the edge of the woods.

The walk from Polis to Arkadia is long and exhausting, but they plan to be back by the time the last of the sunlight dies away.
“All right, I’ll drive it back with Kane. Eyes sharp, everyone!” Jaha calls out in a voice that echoes. “We’ve got a lot of preparation to do over the next few days to get ready for the bunker!”

With that, he swings himself up into the driver’s seat, while Kane slams his own door with a resounding thud.

“Are you coming with us, Abby?” Kane calls to her through the open window.

She steps forward, curling her fingers around the passenger side window, and gives him a half-smile.

“I’ll stay with the kids,” she replies, rummaging in her large knapsack. “But I’m going to leave all the Grounder blood samples I collected today with you in the rover, just in case. I know you’ll protect them,” she stares at him pointedly.

He nods, then gently brings her hand up to his lips, kissing it, before waving to them all.

“Be safe!”

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“There’s nothing left to do but go home and pack,” Bellamy says to no one in particular and everyone in general as the group watches the rover shrink into a black insect on the horizon line. “Let’s move out!”

She pulls her eyes away from Bellamy’s light gait a few steps in front of them to answer.

“The list was just for 100 people, Monty. We can save almost everyone now.”

“Seventy-five percent is not almost everyone,” Monty retorts sharply.
“It’s better than sealing off the Ark – it’s closer to saving everyone,” Bellamy snaps, glancing over his shoulder.

“What about the nightblood?” Bellamy quietly questions Abby, who suddenly has assumed a place at his side at the front of the group.

“We’ll make as much as we can and distribute it to every person we can reach. Whether they’re in the bunker or not, they all deserve a shot against the radiation,” she replies, tapping his bicep calmingly. “I’m headed back to Becca’s Island in the morning. We still have a week. There’s time.”

He adjusts the gun strapped across his back and nods, eyes scanning the trees in search of any Grounders who might feel the need to retaliate after Sky Crew’s win in the arena. She can see the tightness in his jaw.

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When Jasper catches up to Monty and Clarke an hour later, it comes as a surprise to neither of them when they hear the swish of liquid in a flask. He pulls the silver container from his jacket pocket with a flourish and dangles it under Clarke’s nose.

“Come on, Griffin. We’ve got a week left above ground. At least, you do. Live a little!” he teases.

Monty rolls his eyes in angry exasperation.

“You can’t still be serious with that crap about not coming into the bunker!”

“Five years stuck under the dirt is not a way to live, man,” Jasper swings his arm around his best friend’s shoulders with ease. “I just wanted to watch Octavia battle, and she was good,” he catches her eye with the sound of her name and winks at her. “You’re still sexy as hell, Octavia!”

“Good to know,” she calls back breezily, shaking her head, as Ilian throws him an odd look.
“And she’s still out of your reach,” Monty can’t help but throw in the jab.

“It’s cool,” Jasper returns. “I’ve got this,” he motions to the flask, “to keep me warm at night. So what’s it gonna be, Clarke?”

She casts her eyes toward Bellamy, who now walks alone about twenty yards ahead of them.

“I want to have fun,” she says out of nowhere, decidedly. “I can be fun, can’t I?”

Jasper’s eyes light up in amusement.

“I don’t know, Clarke. Hey! Bellamy!” he shouts out to the older boy. “Can Clarke be fun?”

Embarrassed to hear his response to the question, Clarke grabs the flask from Jasper’s fingers to distract herself and pours its entirety into her mouth instead, grimacing at the strong flavor.

“Woah...” Monty offers.

Bellamy stops for a second, turning back to stare at the strange sight of Clarke Griffin drinking. He runs a hand across his forehead, pushing his damp bangs out of his eyes.

“Sure, I mean, maybe,” he shrugs slightly and smirks the smallest fraction.

When she catches his eye, he raises his eyebrows at her like an unfamiliar challenge. Monty and Jasper exchange a glance as Clarke pushes the flask back hard at Jasper’s chest.

“And what exactly is that supposed to mean?” she stomps quickly forward toward him. “Just because I haven’t been home to party until dawn doesn’t mean I don’t have just as much right to –”

But her words are cut off by Bellamy’s arm colliding with her stomach.

“What is it?” her eyes turn sharply serious as they search his.
A shadow crosses over his face.

“Old grounder trap,” he points down at it lost amongst the tan, dried-out leaves and bramble. “It would have sent you soaring 20 feet into the air dangling by your ankle.”

“Oh. Thanks,” she puffs out.

“Anytime,” he responds, reaching for her hand to steer her around it.

He fully intends to let go when she’s safely on the other side. But when he loosens his grip, she interlaces their fingers momentarily, putting a mild pressure on his and glancing up into his eyes before letting go herself.

It’s slightly awkward for a few moments as he clears his throat.

But she comes to his rescue with the curve of her pink lip and the simple question, “Do you think we’ll make it back home by sunset?”

They fall into an easy conversation about nothing in particular, and he notices she’s walking closer to him than usual. But it’s only when she nearly stumbles into a large, decaying tree trunk that he remembers she downed Jasper’s flask, and his palm lands heavily on her left shoulder to guide her steps.

It’s a loose touch that’s able to be drawn back at a moment’s notice, but she leans into his side, wrapping an arm around his waist.

His heart begins hammering a staccato beat against his ribs. He knows she can hear it, although she says nothing. It’s too hard to relax to enjoy the curve of her body pressing against his. He feels his mouth go dry as a swooping sensation glides through his stomach. Finally, many steps later, Arkadia is rising before them in the haze of twilight, and his arm is miraculously still slung securely across the shoulders of Clarke Griffin.

“Home at last! Party in the garage!” Jasper’s joyful whoop sails to their ears.
She hears Bellamy snort above her head and digs her fingertips into his warm side a little.

“Come on,” she motions her head toward the back of the Ark. “We can finally get that drink.”
i knew we'd tell it well

“I’ve waited a hundred years
But I’d wait a million more for you.
Nothing prepared me for
What the privilege of being yours would do.

If I had only felt the warmth within your touch
If I had only seen how you smile when you blush
Or how you curl your lip when you concentrate enough
Well I would have known
What I was living for all along
What I’ve been living for . . .

. . . Though we’re tethered to the story we must tell,
When I saw you, well, I knew we’d tell it well.
With a whisper, we will tame the vicious seas
Like a feather bringing kingdoms to their knees.”

~Sleeping At Last, “Turning Page”

“What’s it going to be, Clarke?” Jasper asks from his perch behind the bar.

“I’m not sure,” she replies tentatively, pushing her hair over her shoulder. “What’s the most popular drink?”

“Lately? The Jobi tea you had earlier.”

Clarke makes a face.
Jasper snorts.

“Not your favorite, huh?”

She feels Bellamy shift into the bar stool beside her and sucks in a breath. She hopes her voice sounds level and normal.

“Did any whisky survive?” she looks hopefully at Jasper, eyes glowing a little.

He nods in amusement.

“Yeah, actually, it did. Good choice.”

“Could you make me a whisky sour?” her tone jumps up a few octaves on the last word.

“Whatever the hell you want,” he smiles back, winking at Bellamy.

As he clanks bottles around under the counter, his eyes focus on Harper, who’s manipulating the stereo with Miller’s help.

“Crank it up, Harpsichord!” he shouts.

You can see all of Harper’s pearly white teeth when she grins back at him, bobbing along to the music.

Clarke’s eyes flash around the massive, dark space as flickering blue lights accompany the swell of a punk rock song she doesn’t recognize.

“This is . . . impressive.”
Genuine appreciation floods her voice as she watches people begin to flock to the dance floor. She smooths the somewhat low-cut olive green grounder dress she’s still wearing from the battle down over her thighs, suddenly feeling a little self-conscious.

“Yeah,” Bellamy tilts his chin at her, lips pursed as he evaluates her. “It really is.”

Warmth shoots into her cheeks, and she glances away from his brown eyes. She lands on Emori, who is propped up against the rover’s back wall, sitting somewhat precariously on its bumper. She’s pulling Murphy closer to her – with her legs anchored at the sides of his hips – as she chuckles happily.

Jasper fortunately picks that exact moment to plunk an orange concoction before her, and grateful for the distraction, she wraps her fingers around the cool glass.

“So what’ll it be, Blake?” Jasper asks loudly over the music.

“Moonshine’s fine,” his words slip out more raspy than usual. Or maybe it’s a combination of the alcohol in her veins and the constant thump of the bass beat.

“People got here fast,” Clarke tries her hand at conversation, gesturing toward the line that’s forming at the bar.

“Jasper’s reputation precedes him,” Bellamy replies, sliding his hands along his thighs.

Clarke’s eyes follow his hands against her will. But then a familiar dark ponytail swings by her, and her fingers fly past the two people pressing in on them for a spot at the bar and latch around Octavia’s wrist.

Surprised, she turns and notices Clarke and Bellamy sitting together.

“Now there’s something I thought I’d never see,” she says cheekily, wedging herself past the people and between their stools, so she can be heard.

“You did good today, Octavia,” Clarke says sincerely, ignoring the remark. “For our people. For
Octavia nods with a faint smile. Clear disbelief registers on Bellamy’s face when she squeezes his knee briefly.

“I couldn’t have if my big brother didn’t vouch for me.”

The siblings share a long look, and Clarke feels the steel cage loosen around her heart.

“Always,” Bellamy says, eyes never leaving his sister’s face. “You can hold your own, O. But Echo’s never coming near you again,” he finishes grimly.

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Roan had placed Echo in charge of running the clan battles for spots in the bunker. And she’d adamantly refused to let Octavia fight for Sky Crew unless Bellamy personally gave his consent. She’d searched for him in the stands, face streaked with white war paint, dragging him down by the arm into the dry dirt to whisper fiercely to him in hushed tones while Clarke watched.

The exchange hadn’t lasted long, maybe two or three minutes. But Clarke can still feel the sun beating down on her back, feel the urge propelling her to go stand by his side. She’d even gotten up at one point when Echo touched his forearm briefly, brought her lips close to his ear, all the while staring past him straight at Clarke. Her stomach had tangled into ferocious knots. But Bellamy raised up his hand to her, holding her at bay, and she respected his wishes.

Kane, Jaha, Abby, and Clarke all heard him very clearly from their seats when he finally replied to Echo.

“My sister will fight and represent Sky Crew,” he glared at her. “She will fight honorably, and we are proud to claim her as our champion.”

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“I know,” Octavia responds softly. “I know you’ve got my back.”
She smiles at them once more before slipping away. Clarke’s eyes track her as she moves toward Ilian, who’s standing uncomfortably against a wall about twenty feet away.

“She’s coming around,” she tells Bellamy as Jasper drops the moonshine before him.

“Like you said she would,” he returns, clinking his glass against hers before taking a long drink.

Moments later, Kane taps Bellamy on the shoulder out of nowhere.

“Can I have a minute?” he asks him, nodding to Clarke and glancing down at the drink she grips firmly.

A minute later, Raven falls into his seat with a pointed “Out of my way, please” to a blonde guy trying to claim the spot, pointing at her brace exaggeratedly.

Clarke smiles at Raven’s pushiness and begins sipping on her drink. The sugar hits her tongue, and she almost groans at how good it tastes.

“Want one?” she chirps to Raven.

“Nah, I’ve already had two cups of moonshine,” she says as she swivels to face Clarke. “Can’t you tell?”

“Nope, you hold your liquor well.”

“Unlike some people,” Raven chuckles.

“Hey!” Clarke protests, but she continues to guzzle from her glass. “Anyway,” she says, putting it down on the counter with a satisfying clink, “Enough about me. Are you sure we’ll have enough nightblood ready to go?”
“Yeah, your mom’s going back to the island tomorrow to finish up the lab tests. She says working with the grounder blood will help her and Jackson synthesize their DNA to the nightblood structure, whatever the hell that means,” Raven swings her ponytail as she talks more animatedly than usual. “Then they’ll bring it to Polis to start distributing it to everyone.”

Clarke nods along as Jasper appears at random and drops a black straw into her drink.

“Damn! We have bar supplies!” Raven looks at him in wonder.

“Nothing but the best for my delinquents,” Jasper replies.

“Hmph,” Raven grunts as a “Hey, you!” from a burly guy down at the other end of the bar pulls Jasper’s attention away.

“I, on the other hand,” she turns back to Clarke, “have been assigned to help his highness with the electrical situation in the bunker. And if he tells me one more time that I need to . . .”

Raven keeps talking, unaware she’s lost her audience. A flash of golden hair distracts Clarke as she turns on her stool, sucking up her drink through her straw until the sound of slurping at air fills her ears.

Raising herself up out of her seat, she scans the crowd until she locates the blonde again.

It’s Bree.

And she’s making a beeline for Bellamy.

“. . . So I told him that Ice Nation might have done it that way for the last 100 years, but I’ll be damned if—Clarke! What the hell? Are you even listening?” Raven’s loud, insistent voice cuts into her consciousness.

“I’m sorry, I saw . . . a girl from the original 100 I hadn’t seen in a while. Bree I think her name was?” Clarke hopes the alcohol makes her sound casual and just slightly curious.
Raven cranes her head over the energetic crowd of partiers, using her impressive upper body strength to levitate herself several inches into the air with her elbows on the bar top. Both girls watch as Bree throws her arms around Bellamy’s neck gracefully, pressing herself against his chest. She draws back to kiss him, but he catches her at her waist and holds her at arm’s length. They talk for a moment before he slides a hand to her upper arm, smiles briefly at her, and begins walking away.

Back toward the bar.

Toward where she can feel Clarke’s shock radiating off her body in waves.

“Ohhh . . . yeah. Bree. Ummm,” Raven glances hesitantly at Clarke, who might as well have just been speared by a Grounder. “I don’t know a lot about . . .

Clarke’s eyes get so big when she turns to her friend that Raven puts a bracing hand on her knee.

“I do,” Jasper pops up behind them out of thin air. His elbows are on the counter with his chin propped up in his hands, which are wrapped around the sides of his face as he watches them wide-eyed and fake innocent.

Raven jumps.

“What the fuck, Jasper!” she chides him. “Trying to give me a heart attack?”

“Sorry,” he laughs.

But Clarke’s already laser-focused on him, so his gaze rolls to her.

“Talk,” she demands.

“Bree has . . . a thing, shall we say? . . . for Bellamy. I mean, it might be mutual? I don’t really know. They hung out at my last party,” he shrugs.
“Hung out or hooked up?” Raven demands, slapping her palm on the counter.

“Wow. Didn’t know you cared, Reyes,” he flashes his eyebrows at her, seconds away from laughter.

“I don’t. Answer me.”

“Hooked up,” he pushes the words out like he just tasted a lemon, holding up his palms and backing away slowly. “Don’t shoot the messenger, guys.”

Raven watches Clarke’s face flicker through a half dozen expressions before settling on narrowed eyes and pursed lips. Bellamy picks that exact moment to return to them.

“What did I miss?” he asks warily, hand on the back of Clarke’s seat.

“Well, that’s my cue to get the hell out of here,” she jokes. “See you, Bellamy! Hey! Jasper!” she shouts toward him.

“Yeah? What?”

“Dance with me? I’ll do my best not to stomp on your foot?”

He grins at her.

“Sure.”

He magically drops a fresh whisky sour in front of Clarke before emerging from behind the counter.

“What was that about?” Clarke immediately shoots out the question at Bellamy. She tries not to
notice his arm muscles flex as he hoists himself easily into the high seat next to her, taking a long
gulp of his moonshine.

“Kane and Jaha are going to Polis tomorrow for a meeting with Roan. They want us to help lead the
exodus out of Arkadia in two days.”

“So why didn’t he talk to me, too?” she scowls.

“Probably because you’re on your third drink,” he smirks at her.

“Like you’re any better,” she bites back.

“I’m only on my first,” he motions to his glass.

He’s watching her so intensely, it causes her head to fall, as she hides her eyes from him for a few
seconds.

Finally she looks back up.

“And what did Bree want?” she says it far too quietly for the noisy room.

“I can’t hear you, Princess,” he leans in, and she feels his warm breath against her neck.

“Bree,” she says the word quickly, sharply. “What did she want?”

“Oh,” he drums his fingers on the counter for a moment, tipping his glass to his lips and downing the
rest of it as he surveys her. “Me.”

She gulps hard and nods, tucking her chin to her shoulder.
A few seconds pass, and then Miller is standing before them, looking hesitant.

“Am I interrupting something?” he tries.

Bellamy keeps his eyes on Clarke.

“No, you’re good,” she smiles too brightly at Miller.

“Ok . . . ” he rubs his hands together. “Just wanted to make sure you were set with drinks. Can I get you anything else? Might as well make good use of our supply now, am I right?”

“I’ll take another moonshine, thanks man,” Bellamy glances at his friend.

“Great, you got it!” Miller throws one more concerned look at Clarke before moving quickly toward the array of bottles on a low shelf farther down the bar.

Clarke knows a rose color must be enveloping her face, but there’s nothing she can do about it. Drops of cool sweat bead under her hairline along the back of her neck, and she licks her lips nervously.

Bellamy seems to track the movement.

“Please don’t hold back on my account,” she smiles thin-lipped at Bellamy. It’s feels like a rockslide inside her chest. “You should go. And, you know, have fun.”

He doesn’t move, just wrinkles his nose playfully, so his freckles dance.

“Nah, I’m good here. With you,” he smiles easily at her, lightly tapping the bare skin just above her knee. It's like he scorched her.

Miller slides his drink across the black, slick surface. But somehow it doesn’t break the spell because
Bellamy’s whole body remains oriented toward hers.

She feels her mouth fall open slightly and snaps it shut. The line between her eyebrows appears as the edges of her mouth quiver uncertainly.

“Thanks, Miller,” he grins at his friend appreciatively before taking a long swig from his second drink.

Miller catches his tongue between his teeth as if about to say something. But another brief survey of the scene before him has him backing away carefully just as Jasper did minutes before.

*So we back in the club, got that body rockin’ from side to side. Side, side to side.*

The music hits her nervous system like a jolt of electricity.

“I like this one!” her face glows like a child, and she grabs his hand before she realizes it. “Dance with me?” she tilts her head, drawing all her blonde, wavy hair to one side of her neck.

“I don’t really dance. Sorry, Princess,” he smiles warmly at her.

“But for me you will,” she doesn’t miss a beat, blue eyes challenging him.

He laughs outright, hanging his head and running his hand through his wild curls before meeting her gaze again.

“Yeah. Ok,” he shrugs, and after draining the rest of his glass, slides down from his seat.

Beaming, she lands elegantly on her feet beside him, and taking his hand, half-pulls and half-drags him through the sea of humanity out onto the dance floor.

Harper and Monty appear on their right, and Harper throws her arms around Clarke, enveloping her in a fierce hug.
“I’m so happy you’re here this time!” she shouts over *So dance, dance, like it’s the last, last night of your life.*

“Me too!” Clarke admits, throwing her arms in the air, giggling, and whirling around like she was born for this.

Monty throws Bellamy a look of mutual male bafflement.

“Oh, almost forgot!” Harper yells, pulling a tiny, clear glass jar out of her pants pocket. It’s full of some type of glittery, silver liquid. She twists the lid off, dipping her finger into the stuff before gliding it along Clarke’s bare arms, creating swirling patterns.

On a whim, Harper, laughing, streaks a bit of it onto the side of Bellamy’s cheek.

“Very macho, I’m sure,” he jokes to Monty, who grins.

“Don’t worry, I’ll get it off for you,” Clarke braces her hands against his biceps and, standing up on her tiptoes, presses her lips to the sparkling spot on his cheek for several seconds, as if suctioning the glitter from his skin.

Bellamy’s hand ghosts against her hip as the warm softness of her lips tickles his skin. Harper raises her eyebrows so far up they practically crawl into her braided hairline. She steps cleanly away from them, letting Monty’s arms capture her as he expertly navigates them away through the crowd.

When Clarke draws back, Bellamy’s much darker-than-usual eyes are looking straight into hers, and she’s looking back just as transfixed. Shaking his head slightly, he lets his hand slide away from her hip.

“No, please,” she practically whimpers. “I want your hands on me.”
I'm screaming! The Despacito video released by The 100 Writers and featuring Richard and Bob proves all my dance party assumptions about their moves in this chapter. I can die happy now. Murphamy is amazing. What would it take to get a dance party featuring all the mains?

“Cause you're a sky, cause you're a sky full of stars
I'm gonna give you my heart

Cause you're a sky, cause you're a sky full of stars

'Cause you light up the path

I don't care, go on and tear me apart
I don't care if you do, ooh

Cause in a sky, cause in a sky full of stars

I think I saw you

Cause you're a sky, cause you're a sky full of stars

I wanna die in your arms

Cause you get lighter the more it gets dark

I'm gonna give you my heart.”

~Coldplay, “Sky Full of Stars”

So dance, dance like it’s the last, last night of your life.

The shiny pop music thrums through Bellamy’s chest. It sends sparks and vibrations along his arms to the tips of his fingers. They seem to tingle slightly as they slide to his side.
He blinks rapidly a few times, taking in Clarke’s earnest, upturned face. He’s sure he heard her wrong.

Her eyes instantly distract him, as always. They’re just so damn beautiful. Outlined in dark kohl, they appear bluer than the sky with gray powder spreading across her eyelids and her dramatic, well-defined eyelashes fluttering as she watches him, worrying her lip.

Immobilized, all he can do is stand there as warm, swaying bodies rock against him.

“Can you repeat that for me, Princess?” he finally leans down and cups his hand around her ear to shout-whisper the words.

When he pulls back, her pupils are blown out, and she’s looking at him in a way she never has before.

Carefully, she reaches up and braces the side of her left hand against his cheek, allowing her thumb to brush away the lingering remnants of Harper’s glitter. She lets her hand slide down his neck and plants it square in the center of his chest, stepping in closer.

“I think you heard me the first time,” her voice is throaty with desire. For him.

“Clarke . . . ” her name catches in his throat.

“Bellamy,” she sings back to him, eyes widening.

His eyes dart around the space quickly, taking in Harper up on a nearby table, swerving her hips as she motions insistently at Monty – who’s fervently shaking his head - to join her. His smile deepens into a grin when he catches Bryan and Miller in some sort of dance-off with each other. Miller, apparently having abandoned his post at the bar, is pulling off a fancy move where he glides backward across the glossy floor on the balls of his feet.

Bellamy catches Clarke’s hand on his chest, and wrapping it around his own, points toward Miller.

“I can’t do anything like that. I don’t want you to have high expectations,” he smirks down at her.
She turns to follow the direction of their joined hands.

“Oh,” she laughs, “I’m sure you’ve got a few *moves of your own,*” she traces her fingers up his bronze forearm lightly.

No, he is no longer imagining anything.

This is not a dance between friends.

Clarke Griffin wants him.

“The thought alone plasters a stupid smile across his face.

“Mmm,” he cocks his head to the side appraisingly. “Maybe.”

Without warning, he spins her out away from his body, her bubbling laughter like a dose of serotonin straight to his system, then quickly pulls her back into the length of his tall frame, so his chest is pressed into her back.

He slides a hand around her waist, drawing her firmly against him before he can think too much about it. She lets him hold a portion of her weight as she rests her head against his sternum.

*I’m a hustler, baby, but that you knew. And tonight it’s just me and you.*

Her insistent fingers interlock around his, and she begins pressing her thumbs in small circles across the tops of his hands.

“Sure this is what you want?” he asks one last time against the ivory column of her neck. Blonde hair tickles his nose, and it smells like wildflowers.

He feels her shiver against him.
She gracefully pivots in his arms, curling her arms around his neck and arching an eyebrow at him.

“Very, very, very sure,” her eyes flicker with thinly-veiled lust. “You?”

As he looks into her perfectly carved face, cheeks rosy with color and blonde hair streaming free except for two simple braids she’s pulled back on either side of her head, she seems alive again to him. Free. Wild. Soft but fierce somehow. Like the young woman intent on exploring the unknown woods around the campsite she built with her friends when their spaceship fell from the stars.

His fingertips graze against the short hem of her dress and settle on the hot back of her thigh, squeezing slightly as he pulls her against his quickly hardening erection.

“Very, very, very sure, too,”

The gasp leaves her mouth parted slightly, and never one to miss an opportunity, Bellamy seals his lips over hers, perhaps with more force than strictly necessary.

Yeah, baby, tonight, the DJ got us fallin’ in love again

She kisses him back just as fiercely, desperate almost, winding her hands into his absolutely magnificent hair. But then she draws back and kisses his dimples, making him smile, and presses feather-light kisses to the corners of his mouth, then into the fullness of his lips before letting her teeth graze his bottom lip. He tastes delicious when he slips his tongue into her mouth and seeks out her own. Not that she’s surprised. She’s been physically attracted to everything about Bellamy Blake since she first glanced across their dropship camp and saw him shirtless, wiping sweat away from his forehead as he cut down wood. The wood that helped build the wall which protected them, protected her, from the Grounders for so long.

The kiss lingers and stretches as they pull back every few moments and meet each other’s eyes, warm brown on electric blue, as if needing the personal reassurance that yes, this is really happening. Clarke continues to play with the angles their lips meet. She enjoys sucking his upper lip into her mouth, but, before long, he grows restless and, growling low, squeezes the soft curve of her waist and grabs her ass securely in a way that makes her moan against his mouth and allows him to deepen the kiss once more.

I hit the floor cause that’s my plans, plans, plans
When he finally releases her to come up for air, she’s glowing, yellow hair catching the flashing lights perfectly. She beams at him like he personally invented the sunlight. It takes him a few dazed moments to realize she can dance as she rocks her hips to the beat, flipping her long hair over her shoulder as her arms float charmingly through the air.

She allows Miller to spin her around several times and manages to lock hands with Harper – back on solid ground to Monty’s extreme relief - sashaying almost down to the floor with their crazily seductive moves.

*Give me some space for both my hands, hands, hands, hands*

“Get it, Clarke!” Murphy yells out as a small, empty space starts to form around her as the delinquents take notice of exactly who has so much talent.

Emori nods her assent to him, and Murphy – who knew the Cockroach Prince could be suave? - holds out his hands to Clarke politely. When she nods back and takes them, they begin spiritedly swirling around before independently showing off next to each other.

*I wanna celebrate and live my life, saying Ay-Oh, gotta let go*

Bellamy crosses his arms over his chest with an expression caught between amusement, jealousy, and desire. The moonshine’s hitting his bloodstream for sure – he can tell by the way his focus has narrowed almost totally to the way Clarke smoothes her dress out over her hips.

By the time Jasper settles into his Walk Like An Egyptian antics across from her, Bellamy’s seen enough. He doesn’t particularly care for the way drunk Jasper’s glances just happen to fall down the front of Clarke’s dress.

Suddenly, the smash of glass on concrete pivots his attention to the bar, where Niylah is cleaning up a younger girl’s dropped drink. But her eyes never leave Clarke’s figure as she wipes her rag along the bar.

Letting out a sigh of exasperation, he’s about to motion to her to just leave with him. But - their connection being what it is - he doesn’t have to say anything at all. Clarke bites her lip and flashes her eyebrows at him, eyes alight, as she leaves Jasper gyrating behind her and slips back against Bellamy’s side, wrapping her arms around his waist.
“Miss me?” she simpers, pressing a kiss to his jawbone.

“Show off,” he scoffs, but he still wraps an arm around her shoulders and peppers a kiss into her hair.

“You’re just jealous,” she teases, gliding her hand across the hardened abs she can feel under his tight, black T-shirt.

“What if I was?” his smoldering gaze locks on her face. "Would you care?"

There’s something about his tone that feels too real to her and no longer playful.

“Bellamy . . .”

“Not of them,” he jerks his chin toward their friends. “Of . . . the others.”

She can see the vulnerability lurking behind the stoic expression.

“What others?” her eyes narrow, and she pulls at the edge of his T-shirt, motioning for him to follow her toward a quieter corner at the edge of the party.

He evades her eyes when they arrive there, hunching his shoulders.

“Never mind, it was a stupid thing to say. I’m sorry,” he swats his hand through the air.

“No!” she hits into his arm. It's not hard, but it drives her point home. “Tell me! I want to know.”

He scratches the back of his neck evasively and points toward the bar. Toward Niylah, who catches his eye briefly and looks away immediately.

Clarke follows his gesture and smacks her lips together.
“Ah,” she says, turning back to him. “Listen, I like Niylah. She’s a sweet person. And she's done a lot to help us, you know that. And she helped me . . . heal . . . after Polis. But she's not-”

“Right, yeah,” Bellamy interrupts her abruptly, rubbing at his eyebrow uncomfortably, face darkening. “That’s great. Sorry I said anything. I think . . . I think I’m just exhausted. I’m going to go to bed, Princess,” but the nickname has an edge now – and it’s not one of endearment.

He tries to move around her, but Bree’s sudden appearance flattens him against the wall in surprise. She walks by their half-concealed location next to a stack of crates carrying two cups of moonshine in her hands. Nevertheless, as if she had a radar attuned to her head, she spies Bellamy easily.

“Coming to my room later?” she calls out to him pointedly, smiling sweetly and leaning forward slightly to give him a view of the tops of her breasts. “I promise I’ll make it worth your while.”

“Not tonight, Bree,” he bites back, not even trying for politeness.

“Fine. Spend your last days with the Princess,” she huffs. "It's not like she won’t break your heart again,” she shoots an ugly look at Clarke before walking away, taking extra care to swing her hips out as she goes.

Clarke feels like she got punched in the gut.

Her face falls for a moment, and then the anger leaves her body in a hazy wave, replaced by confusion and pain as Bree's words click into place.

“Break your heart?” she says softly, turning back to him and running her hands up his biceps, grasping onto them. “Tell me I didn’t, Bellamy.”

He says nothing, looking down at his heavily scuffed boots, but not before he spots the tears welling up behind her sparkling eyes.

“Tell me I didn’t, Bellamy,” she urges again, shaking him lightly. “Please.”
He expels hot hair that sails past her neck.

“When you left,” he says simply. “When you didn’t come back. When you came back but wouldn’t stay.”
Chapter Summary

I've waited a hundred years (i'd wait a million more for you)

I added a little bit to this chapter from what it was initially, mainly because I thought Bellamy needed to explain his anger better.

“We were victims of the night,
The chemical, physical, kryptonite
Helpless to the bass and the fading light.
Oh, we were bound to get together,
Bound to get together.

She took my arm,
I don’t know how it happened.
We took the floor and she said,

"Oh, don't you dare look back.
Just keep your eyes on me."
I said, "You're holding back."
She said, "Ooh-ooh-ooh,
Shut up and dance with me."

~Walk the Moon, “Shut Up and Dance”

“No, no, no, no, no,” Clarke mumbles it over and over like an oath as she shakes her head. She walks to a portion of the wall hidden from the party by several stacks of tall crates. Leaning against
it, she runs her hands through her hair repeatedly until successfully bringing all its natural oils to the surface.

She feels his presence behind her. His energy is always palpable no matter where they find themselves.

“You’re the most important person to me,” she finally turns, capturing his face in her hands, urging him to look at her. “Don’t you know that?”

A queasy feeling roils around deep in her gut at the expression on his face. Maybe it’s the whisky.

Maybe it’s guilt.

Or regret.

Or fear.

Or a mixture of them all blended together like one of Jasper’s mystery cocktails.

His eyes seem worlds away. He’s retreating to some realm she can’t access and locking the steel gate behind him as he goes.

“I don’t know what I believe anymore,” he shrugs, resigned, shaking her off. "But I'm not your damn consolation prize."

The sharp words cut into her skin. They draw blood.

"My consolation prize? How could you even say that?" she spits back at him, eyes narrowing.
"I see your pattern. You get hurt by someone. You hook up with someone else. I'm not here to be your someone else, Clarke," he takes a step back from her like she's infected.

"How . . . how dare you?" she throws out loudly, pushing up her palms in front of her body like they'll shield her from his harshness. Liquid tears coat her eyes, and her cheeks tinge pink as they appear more pinched. "I lost my father, Wells, Finn . . . Lexa. I was willing to let my mother hang herself!" she's close to shouting now. "You think it's been easy, Bellamy? How dare you tell me who I can spend my time with and what I can do! What the hell do you know about it?"

She positions her body a few inches from his, staring straight up into his angular face. But he doesn't back up. If anything, he looms larger over her, draws closer, like he did that day long ago in the woods as they searched for Jasper.

"What would I know about it?" he asks, disbelief coloring his voice. "I lost my mother, Clarke. I hid my sister underneath the fucking floor, so your mother wouldn't vote to kill my family! I nearly killed Jaha to get a seat on the dropship. I built a camp with you to keep us safe. I watched our friends get speared like they were pieces of meat. I survived grounder attacks and Murphy's plague only to get hanged by the sick bastard! I watched you kill Finn whom you swore to save because it was the right political move! You sent me into Mount Weather - " her face, softening as he speaks, looks ready to interrupt him, but he presses on over her noises, "Which I agreed to do. I wanted to do it to save our friends! But I was tortured in there, Clarke. Hung upside down with the blood drained out of my body. But I helped you commit genocide anyway. And then you left. And you wouldn't come home. And my girlfriend - my girlfriend who loved me - was stabbed and blown up, and ... and ... it's you, Clarke. Since we got here, it all ties back to you," he shudders, trying to suppress the foul, haunted memories from overwhelming him as he backs away.

When he sees her face contort with pain, he wished he hadn't said it all. Or hadn't said it that way, at least. But it's too late now.

"Clarke," he tries.

But she holds him at bay, sliding down the wall and curling her arms around her knees tucked to her chest. He sighs, and sinks down the wall beside her, resting a hand on top of her knee.

She jerks it angrily away from him, shaking him off.

"I'm sorry. But you have to know it's been hard for me, too," he whispers hoarsely, eyeing her hair warily as it blocks her face from view like a curtain.
"Don't you think I know that!" she finally lifts her tear-stained face. It's blotchy with red spots. "I know you're in Hell because I'm in Hell, too!"

He hits his head back against the wall, closing his eyes and sighing deeply. A minute passes before before he speaks again.

“You remember when we went to the decoy bunker with Jaha?”

“Yeah . . .” she says cautiously, unsure where this is going.

“He told me every horrible thing I’d done on the ground didn’t really matter because my intentions had been good,” he scoffs derisively. “I told him if there was a Hell, I guess I’d see him there.” He bites down hard on his lower lip. It looks painful. Clarke watches the pale brown-pink skin turn white. “You know what I think now? I agree with you. This is our Hell. And there’s no way out. Jasper’s right. It’s a big cosmic joke. But you’re part of my personal Hell too, Clarke,” he looks down at her where she’s watching him carefully, guarded. "Always right there where I can see you, but just out of reach. I can't do it anymore."

“Bellamy...”

The syllables of his name fall out of her mouth, stretched out and torturous. His words blow up her heart like confetti. She wrings her hands before yanking them through her hair, tangling it into an impossible knot at the base of her neck, then drawing her fingers around her throat. Lifting her face toward the black ceiling, she takes in the full array of crisscrossing blue and red wires.

When he can see her eyes again, they’re overflowing with tears. She starts to tremble, then shake. Before he knows it, she’s jumped to her feet and quickly growing hysterical as she stomps back and forth, gesturing boldly.

“I never meant to hurt you when I left! You have to believe me! I didn’t think about you – or anyone else. I just had to go. I’m sorry. My God, I’m so sorry!”

Her tears cause a well of emotion to rise in his throat, almost against his will. He stands and takes a step toward her, but trying to calm her is a bit like approaching a caged animal.
“Clarke, it’s ok. Come on. You can’t . . .” he flings up his hands in defeat, “I don’t know how to make this thing better between us, and you’re—”

“It’s not ok!” she propels the words toward him, pushing herself back into the corner of their small alcove. “Maybe I shouldn’t have left! But . . . don’t you get it? I thought I couldn’t come back once I had! I thought I was helping our people. But,” she swats at her hair. "I wasn't here to help you heal, and I . . . I needed you too.”

“I would’ve come after you if I’d thought it would change things,” he says softly. “Would it have?”

The sheer desperation in his voice is enough to crack her wide open.

She just shakes her head at him sadly, “I don’t know. I guess not at first.” It’s so feeble and awful. But it’s true. “And then after we fought that day, I – I thought you hated me, and I—”

The muscles in his shoulders start to collapse inward as he grasps his chin with his right fist. He just lets her cry, afraid to touch her when her shared reflections are ripping away the sensation in his legs.

“Clarke. Clarke! I’m sorry,” he grazes two fingers along her forearm hesitantly at last. “I’m sorry I opened my mouth and fucked everything up. Don’t even listen to me,” he chokes out.

Her eyes snap up to meet his.

“Of course I’m going to listen to you, Bellamy! Of course I’m going to take you seriously! I’m in love with you!”

He steps back from her, shaking his head. His features look like a thunderstorm wrecked them, eyes strangely shiny and unfathomable.

A thick silence envelops them and lingers for many moments.

“No . . . no. You never loved me, not like . . .” The old Commander’s name curls up at the back of his mouth and chokes him. He can’t bring himself to say it. “You’re not in love with me,” he finishes darkly instead.
It’s clearly not the reply she was expecting. Anger licks at her stomach, and she launches herself off the wall toward him.

“What the hell are you talking about?” she demands. “You’re my person! You’ve always been my person. I cared about her, but I was never in love with her! Because I was – in – love – with – you – the – whole – goddamn – time,” she pounds her fist heavily into his chest with each word, feeling the thud of the blows echo up her arms despite the music. She’s not sure where it’s all coming from, but the words leave her with a shocked realization of their truth.

Fresh tears leak down her cheeks. Her mouth falls open as a sudden, sick fear grips her stomach. Her eyes and tone alike are steeled when she addresses him again.

“You don’t love me, do you? I’m still just the Princess, right? The partner you got stuck with. What - is fucking me on your bucket list before the world burns?”

Her tone is maybe crueler than she intended.

Bellamy squints his eyes shut hard, pressing his lips together so tightly they just about vanish. She sees the muscle jump in his jaw.

When he opens them, he swiftly crowds her right into the wall, pinning both her overactive hands to her sides.

“Get off me, Bellamy! Get off me right now!” she hisses, half-angry, half-pleading as she struggles against him.

He holds her wrists tighter.

“Are you out of your damn mind? Of course I love you, Clarke!” he towers over her whispering fiercely, face close to hers and streaked with an angry sadness that has her second-guessing everything. “If I didn’t love you, losing you wouldn’t have broken me,” he hisses gruffly into her hair.

She stills in shocked silence. After a few tension-filled moments where he can feel her pulse race
under his fingers, he releases her hands, no longer afraid she’ll lunge at him.

“Really? You do?” She wipes a few stray tears from her face hastily, and he watches a flash of hope emerge in her eyes.

It’s a whisper. But he heard it because he’s standing so close to her he can see the way the birthmark above her lip rises up off her skin like its own little hill.

“But why?” she asks incredulously, searching his face. “How could you when you hated me?”

“I could never hate you, Princess. Believe me, I’ve tried. No success so far.”

She emits a small hiccup and glares at him.

“You’re still such an ass sometimes.”

“Maybe,” he allows himself a half-smile. “But I have the advantage of being the ass you’re in love with.”

He presses a dry, chaste kiss to her lips and tastes salt. Her dark tears spread out like a stain across his shirt when she rests her wet eyes against his chest.

He wraps his arms around her waist, pulling her firmly against him.

“You really love me?” she can’t help but ask again.

“But I have the advantage of being the ass you’re in love with.”

“Clarke, I’m crazy about you!” he replies, tucking her head the soft spot of his shoulder. “Whenever we’ve been apart, I just wanted to see you again and know you were ok.” He takes a moment to
breath in the flowery scent of her, and it calms him. “You understand me, Clarke. And,” he hesitantly slips a hand back to her waist, feeling the soft, buttery pull of the dress fabric under his fingers, “I think I understand you, too.”

It’s a question, and she knows how to answer it.

“You do,” she sighs into his neck before finding his lips with her own. She lightly strokes the side of his face while she kisses him, softly, easily, like breathing. It seems to go on for hours, but it’s not long enough for her. She wants to taste him, devour him. She presses her hips lightly into him for friction. Her hands are still tangled in his curls when he moves away, trying to regain his breath.

Clarke gives him exactly four seconds before moving toward him once more. But he stills her with a hand on each of her elbows.

“Wait,” he huffs out firmly. His eyes seem connected to hers with some invisible cord neither of them can break. “I want you to know I’m not good at sharing,” he begins, letting his hand land low on her hip. “So if you’re going to be with me, you’re with me. Even if we don’t have much time left.”

She steps back toward the wall, propping the sole of her worn leather boot behind her to brace herself as she rocks slowly against it. He can see the bottom edges of her top teeth as her lips curl into the hint of a smile. Her dress hitches up from the motion, revealing more of her creamy thigh.

“Good, that’s good,” she says slowly. “Because I want to be yours for as long as we’ve got on this planet,” she holds his gaze easily. Then suddenly, she steps off the wall and right back into his personal space.

She cocks her head to the side and slips a heated hand right under his shirt, skirting her nails breezily across his stomach. She pouts her lips at him, sassy, pupils fully blown once more. “So you can tell all our friends about us. You can go announce it to the coalition. Hell, you can fucking take me in public, and I won’t say a thing about it. Because I want all of you, too.”

It feels like every drop of blood in his body is rapidly flowing to the same place.

He’s totally bemused watching this Clarke he never imagined could be real.
“Sound good?”

He clears his throat loudly, and she smirks.

“Yeah. Sounds good.”

It’s all he can manage back.

“Great,” she beams at him momentarily. “Now put your hands back on me, please.”

Her back hits the wall, an “oohh” falling from her mouth as he grips both of her wrists above her head. His knee is edging insistently against her center, causing sparks to thrill through her every time the rough fabric of his pants makes contact with her dampening panties.

He kisses her neck, sucking at the most sensitive point before laving the area with his tongue to calm her thrashing.

“If I let your hands go, will you be good?”

She can hear the laughter in his voice but only moans in response.

He lets her hands fall limply to her sides, and she immediately snakes them around his neck, pulling him toward her, so she can open her mouth under his.

His trails his hand up her thigh and under her dress discretely, feeling the damp patch building where his knee has been hard at work. He flicks at her hardening clit through the material a few times, causing her hips to buck against his touch.

“Mmm, sensitive?” he breathes against her ear.

She digs her nails across his back in retaliation, trying to grind down against his fingers, but he pulls them away.
“You are such a tease,” she hisses against his jaw.

He chuckles, squeezing her thigh possessively before hitching it around his hip. Bracing her against the smooth gray curving wall of the Ark, he steps fully between her legs and draws her other leg up, so it encircles him as well.

His curls feel silky against her fingers, but then all thoughts are wiped from her mind when his large hand envelopes her breast. He squeezes it carefully at first, kissing the moan out of her mouth, before flicking his thumb across her nipple several times.

She reaches down between their bodies and begins toying with the metal belt buckle there in retaliation. But she can’t release it with only one hand, so she reaches lower to feel his erection through his black cargo pants.

“Clarke,” he growls, self-control rapidly decaying.

“What?” she huffs back.

“Want to go somewhere?”

“Yeah. That’d be good. Where?”

“I know a place.”
the privilege of being yours

“I was dead in the water, nobody wanted me
I was old news, I went cold as cold can be
But I kept throwing on coal tryin’ to make that fire burn
Sometimes you gotta get scars to get what you deserve.
I kept moving on, and now I'm moving up
Damn, I'm feeling blessed with all this love.”

I think I finally found my hallelujah,
I've been waiting for this moment all my life.
Now all my dreams are coming true,
I've been waiting for this moment.

And it's good to be alive right about now.”

Andy Grammer, “Good to be Alive”

Clarke dances her way through the crowd of tangled, sweaty bodies. Bellamy’s hand wraps easily around the upper swell of her hip as she rolls her shoulders to the beat. He can’t see the grin lighting up her face, but Jasper can from his spot near the bar.

“Well, well, well. What do we have here? The Princess and the Rebel King together at last? It hardly seems possible!” Jasper smirks at them.

Clarke just tosses her hair over her shoulder, turns and stands on her tiptoes to crush a kiss into Bellamy’s cheek as he wraps his arm around her waist.

“Better late than never, right?” she quirks her eyebrows up at him as if daring him to say something snarky.
“Totally agree,” Jasper nods approvingly. “I ship it. And better yet, I’ll get to take Helios out on my trip to the woods tomorrow because of it.”

“I don’t follow . . .” Clarke starts.

“Ah, Octavia and I had a side bet going on. I thought you two would get your shit together and hook up before the bunker became home sweet home. She thought it’d take the cramped space and five years of claustrophobic Hell to bring on true love.”

Bellamy rolls his eyes.

“You’ve been betting on us?” Clarke snaps, pursing her lips. “For how long?”

“It’s all in good fun! Besides, what do you care? We might not live to see next week!”

She can feel more than hear Bellamy’s deep sigh ripple through his body beside her. Pivoting toward him, she lays a soft, restraining hand on his chest.

“How long, Jasper?” she says in her best demanding leader voice, widening her eyes dramatically.

Jasper scratches his head, pinching his lips together in an approximation of deep thought.

“Shit, I don’t know. Maybe since you got Jaha to pardon him? It’s been so long now, and what we were going to give up if we lost changed so many times, I honestly don’t really remember. She saw you all here together before and reminded me about it.”

Clarke scoffs, muttering something like “so ridiculous . . . can’t believe . . . supposed to be friends” under her breath as the music dies down to give way to a new song.

“Why are you being so quiet? You think this is funny?” she looks up into Bellamy’s face sternly.

He half-shrugs and attempts a wink at her that looks more like he’s got something caught in his eye. “If they want to live vicariously through us, who am I to stop them? I’m getting the best end of the
“You. Are. Such. A Guy,” she says between gritted teeth, taking a step away from him. But she can’t completely suppress the small smile bubbling up across her mouth.

Jasper breaks the awkward tension by reaching for a brown tray on the bar and holding it out to them. It’s full of tiny white cups, all containing a rainbow assortment of some sort of jiggling goo.

“What is that?” Bellamy wrinkles his nose.

“Jello shots, compliments of Murphy, who looked up the recipe. Full of Monty’s best moonshine,” he replies. “Here, take some for the road.”

Clarke glances at Bellamy skeptically, but seemingly unfazed by the dozen things that could be wrong with the wiggling blobs, he grabs a cup for each of them and claps Jasper on the shoulder.

“Damn it!” Octavia’s voice trills out behind them loudly. They turn to stare at her. She’s wearing a short, tight black skirt Clarke has never seen before and a leather vest over a long-sleeved plain dark blue top. When did she have time to change? she wonders.

“You win, don’t you?” Octavia gestures to Jasper first and then more rigorously toward Bellamy and Clarke.

“Afraid I do, gorgeous,” the words roll off his tongue pleasantly. “Looks like Mom and Dad are finally together. Gross, right?” He winks at her, a much better effort than Bellamy’s attempt.

Octavia turns an appraising eye over her brother and Clarke. “Only took you eight months,” she taunts them lightly before stamping her heeled boot into the floor in sudden frustration. “The stupid bet!”

“That’s right,” Jasper offers in his best sing-song voice. “I get Helios tomorrow.”

“If you do anything that hurts my horse, so help me Jasper . . .”
“Just a morning ride into the woods and back. Nothing’s going to happen. Plus, you promised me ages ago. Haven’t I suffered enough?” he gives her his best puppy dog eyes.

*Baby, this is what you came for. Lightning strikes every time she moves.*

“He blinks hard at her for a few seconds, clearing his throat with too much rigor before managing to say, “Ummm, what about your friend the pyro?”

Clarke’s openly grinning when Bellamy chances a glance her way. Clearly, she’s enjoying Jasper’s discomfort.

“He’ll deal with it,” Octavia returns simply, raising an artistically arched eyebrow at him. “I’ve known you longer. So what’s it gonna be? Yes or no?”

*And everybody’s watching her. But she’s looking at you, oh oh oh oh.*

Jasper shakes his head faintly then digs his hands into his pockets, squaring his shoulders and giving Octavia a once-over in what he must assume is a casual way.

“Let’s do it,” he says confidently. “The party hasn’t really started until I get down with our champion, right?”

Bellamy snorts, and Octavia glares at him.

“We’ll be going now,” he says, grabbing Clarke’s hand and pulling her toward a doorway leading into the heart of the Ark. “Have fun, kids,” he smirks.

“Be careful, Bellamy!” Jasper bellows after their retreating backs as they melt away into the crowd, causing several people to swerve around and stare. “Those implants aren’t going to last forever . . .”
Not even turning around, Bellamy throws his middle finger into the air as Clarke laughs against him.

But as they reach the exit, he glances back at Jasper.

“Good thing we only have until next week then, isn’t it?” he shouts before spinning around to follow Clarke into the much cooler and quieter hallway.
anything goes

“Tell me, did you fall for a shooting star –
One without a permanent scar?
And did you miss me while you were looking for yourself out there?

Now that she's back from that soul vacation
Tracing her way through the constellation, yeah.
She checks out Mozart while she does tae-bo
Reminds me that there's room to grow, hey, hey, hey.”

~Train, “Drops of Jupiter”

Clarke’s waiting in the middle of the hallway for him, holding out her hand. It glows a little under the florescent light. He takes it, smiling at the way she doesn’t hesitate to twine their fingers together as they begin to walk.

“That was special,” she tries as the party’s rumbling fades away, succumbing to the noise of their boots in the quiet space.

Her ears are ringing slightly, and the corridor seems way too bright after the darkness of the garage.

“Mmmm,” Bellamy grunts beside her.

He’s crushing the delicate paper of the jello cups in his left hand. But when he moves to toss the purple wiggling mass down his throat, Clarke cries out “Wait!” and holds out her arm, stepping in front of him. It’s so fiercely unexpected he stops moving abruptly, nearly crashing into her.

“What is it?” he demands, staring at her. “You think Murphy poisoned them or something?”

She chuckles, closing her eyes for a moment before allowing them to flutter open again.
“No . . . no. It’s just, I’ve got a better idea for those,” she says hesitantly, not quite meeting his eyes when she looks up at him from under her eyelashes. “Want to go back to my room?”

His eyes darken immediately to resemble midnight. He steps closer to her, splaying a hand over the small of her back.

“Not yet,” he says huskily, “I said I knew a place, and I do.”

For a moment, she’s mesmerized by his plump, inviting lips as his words float down to her. She wraps her hands around the sides of his waist and presses up into them. But Bellamy simply scatters three light pecks across her mouth before kissing the tip of her nose.

She groans against him, sinking her teeth into the muscle of his neck before slipping back to the ground.

“You love the chase, Princess. Don’t lie,” he barks out a laugh.

But she gasps anyway when his fingers slide against her collarbone and dip over the tops of her breasts quickly like the brush of moth’s wings. It gives her immediate goose bumps.

“Whatever you say. Let’s go!” she steps aside and gives a dramatic, sweeping motion with her arms. “Lead the way.”

She doesn’t stay upset for long, striding close enough to his side that their shoulders and arms brush up against each other from time to time. Whenever it happens, a shock of electricity sparks in her chest.

“When I was little, I thought the Ark was a maze,” she gestures out at the circular, silver hall stretching before them. He stares into the distance where it winds off to the left. “A circular maze that must be hiding a big secret, like treasure or dragons or a castle or –”
“Princess read one too many fairy tales?” he smirks at her, and she purses her lips back at him, making a face.

“We weren’t all little nerds poring over Greek mythology every night you know,” she shoots back, and his rich, melodic laugh echoes off the walls.

“Says the girl who was top of her class! Nice try, Clarke.”

She glances up at him quizzically. “How did you know?”

“Pike,” he replies evenly.

“Oh,” the sound hasn’t even died on her lips before the weight of his arm wraps across her shoulders.

They pass together through the Ark’s labyrinthine walkways, mysteriously quiet, until they reach the archway to a stairwell. Well, what’s left of it anyway. The fire destroyed part of the passageway, which connected the main hallway to the adjacent metal steps.

The gap is about four feet wide, and Bellamy leaps across it easily, landing on the bottom step. He turns, motioning for her to follow.

She arches an eyebrow at him. “Really?”

“Just jump, Clarke. I’ll catch you. Get a running start if you’re scared.”

“Are the stairs safe?” she questions.

“Yeah, I came up here a few days ago.”

“You must be the only one,” she retorts wryly.
“It’ll be worth it tonight,” he argues back.

Walking to the edge of the floor, she gazes down at the brown dirt a good thirty feet below them. A few loose pebbles skid across the ledge as she steps back. “You say that like breaking my neck is such a happy thing.”

He sighs heavily.

“I can’t show you this if you won’t trust me,” he returns. “You’ll be fine. Jump.”

Shaking her head, she backs all the way up, back flat against the wall. With a deep breath, she speeds across the floor in a few steps and flings herself toward the platform Bellamy stands on.

His hands lock immediately around her forearms, pulling her into him.

“See? Not hard at all,” he kisses her forehead as she pants lightly against his shirt, gripping the cool cotton between her fingers.

“Easy for you to say. You’ve got longer legs. And pants,” she mutters.

But she allows him to guide her up the long, curving stairwell until she finds herself in a sort of glass cylinder offering a full view of the glorious night sky.


A few wispy gray clouds float by out in the distance, but otherwise it’s a clear night. There seem to be hundreds of stars glowing and twinkling in every direction as she spins around, gazing with wide eyes.

He leans against the wall, propping up the jello cups on a ledge before turning to watch her. Her gaze misses nothing, tracking over the few major constellations she can name before reaching the crescent moon and seeing a far larger, orange star near it.
She turns to him, incredulous.

“Is that? Mars?” she asks, awestruck. “It’s so big!”

“Yeah, it is,” he comes up behind her, wrapping his arms around her waist and settling his chin on her shoulder. “It’s the closest it’ll be to Earth all year tonight.”

She reaches up with her left hand to ruffle her fingers through his curls.

“Bellamy?”

“Hmmm?”

“Can you wish on this type of shooting star?”

“I think so. If you do it right,” he breathes.

Spinning her around in his arms, he traces her jawline with his fingertip.

“You’re so beautiful, Clarke,” he whispers before her eyes close, and Bellamy’s scent and taste envelope her.

With a jolting noise, the flat palm of her hand smacks into the thick glass barrier separating their bodies from the outside world.

“Bellamy!” she huffs as he begins drawing hot, open-mouthed kisses along the top hollow between her breasts. “Can’t other people see in?” He knows the crease in her brow is there without looking. “You’re not . . . ” a blush shoots from her neck into her cheeks like a rapidly growing vine as she hisses out the words, “some sort of exhibitionist, are you?”

He chokes as he swallows, drawing back, lips swollen and eyes jovial. He wants to laugh, but concern is etched so clearly across her face, and he doesn’t want to risk it.
“No, Princess. I want you all to myself,” he rasps out. “I just forgot.”

His fist slams into a black button two feet to the left of her head. A siren buzzes once, and then Clarke gasps, staring down at the glass floor where dark planks click into place in a never-ending line before they crawl up the walls, too, and block the view of camp. After a minute, all that’s left is a strip of glass above their heads where the stars blaze merrily.

“The entire sky bridge has a retractable titanium shield around it, remember?” He watches her curiously. “In case an asteroid hit or something. It was hardly ever fully exposed unless there was a viewing party.”

Clarke’s grip relaxes on his bicep, and she leans back into the wall, pulling him along with her.

His tongue teasingly slides across her lower lip until she opens her mouth under his. He hikes her dress up around her waist and slides a large hand along the curve of her ass. She keens against his cheek as his knee resumes its prior position, pressing insistently at her core.

“Bellamy . . . you should know . . . I don’t have one,” she manages to get out.

He stills his lips and hands.

“Don’t have what?” he pulls back, pupils blown.

“An implant.”

Confusion streaks across his face.

“They weren’t going to waste the resources on a girl in solitary I guess,” she says simply, worrying her lip.

He nods slowly. She watches him swallow hard.
“We can work around it,” he says quietly after a pause.

Her eyebrows jump up.

“What if I don’t want to work around it?”

His laugh sounds nervous.

“What are you talking about Clarke?”

She catches the hand still cradling the side of her face in her own as he steps back a little.

“I’m talking about wanting to be with you in every way possible.”

His lip curls up, revealing a flash of his teeth as his eyes narrow slightly.

“Yeah, but, come on. You can’t be serious! We’re going to be underground for the next five years. That’s not a way to bring a—”

“Interesting,” she rocks against the wall’s barrier rhythmically, playfully popping her hips outward as her eyes sparkle.

“What’s interesting?” he sucks in air through his teeth.

“It’s not what could happen that has you worried. It’s where it could happen.”

“I – I – never said we should—”

“But you didn’t say we shouldn’t, either,” she smirks at him.
He knows he’s caught in the tangled web of verbal gymnastics.

“Well, no, I mean, if it’s with you, I guess . . .” his hair starts to stand on end from how many times he runs his hand through it.

“Bellamy, we’re going to be locked underground for five years,” she widens her eyes, willing him to get the point. “That’s a long time to abstain. Or, I don’t know, pull out I guess,” her flush blazes across her cheeks.

“Besides, everyone else’s implants will fail by then, too,” she finishes in a smaller voice.

“Right . . .” he says carefully, glancing down into her questioning eyes. “Right.”
rudderless

"I'd die for you,' that's easy to say
We have a list of people that we would take
A bullet for them, a bullet for you
A bullet for everybody in this room . . .

. . . Metaphorically, I'm the man
But literally, I don't know what I'd do
"I'd live for you," and that's hard to do
Even harder to say when you know it's not true . . .

. . . All these questions they're for real
Like "Who would you live for?"
"Who would you die for?"
And "Would you ever kill?"
Oh, oh, I'm falling, so I'm taking my time on my ride . . .

~Twenty One Pilots, “Ride”

He’s slumped against the cold wall, long legs sprawled out in front of him, blinking less frequently than a normal person should.

“Bellamy?” Clarke tries carefully, resting a palm on top of his thigh from her perch beside him. “You ok?”

“Yeah,” he mutters slowly. “Yeah.”

He won’t look at her. She catches a plump vein bulging under his skin near his temple when she pushes her fingers tenderly through the tips of his curls.
“I’m sorry,” she whispers, keenly aware of the bright light’s buzzing hum in the silence. “I just thought you should know.”

“Not your fault,” his voice cuts like rocks across glass.

Clarke rubs her cheeks hard, curling her knees sideways closer to her body. The huff of air she expels makes her shoulders go slack.

“Ok . . .” she begins. “Listen, I’m not trying to trap you in any way. I know you have needs,” she grits her teeth and throws him a sidelong glance. He’s still mostly immobile, staring off at the blank wall before them. “We can still do other things . . . or . . . we could just go back to the way things were. Or, I don’t know, you could . . . ” he turns slightly toward her. It’s an almost imperceptible shift.

“I wouldn’t hold it against you if you wanted to hook up with someone else sometimes,” he has to strain to hear her.

“Clarke,” Bellamy’s sudden ironclad grip around her wrist is so tight she winces. “Look at me. God! Look at me!” he shakes her wrist insistently until her nervous face comes into view from behind the curtain of her hair.

“I would never do that to you,” he watches her very carefully as she leans her head into the wall as if it’s too heavy for her neck to hold. Her eyelids flutter as the tears build behind them.

“You’re it for me. This is it.”

No one has ever held her gaze for such a long time in her life. She feels her stomach flip as he drops her wrist and pulls her hand into his lap, cupping it between both of his own.

“We can’t go back,” he says, resigned. “I don’t want to.”

“I don’t either,” she smiles a little at him. “It’s just . . . the universe hates us,” she sighs into his shoulder as she rests her forehead against it.
He laughs outright.

“Any universe that allows me to have you – even if it’s only for a little while - is all right with me,” he drops a hard kiss to the top of her head.

“Famous last words before the apocalypse,” she jokes weakly.

They sit like that in their secret, slate gray enclave for several minutes just staring up at the stars. Neither of them know what to say to drain the prickling dread from their stomachs. Maybe there are no words, and fate really does have a strange sense of ironic humor.

The tiny, white cups propped up on the ledge catch Clarke’s roaming gaze at last, and she sneaks a peak at Bellamy’s chiseled face from under her lashes.

“So what do you want to do?” she asks softly, stroking the padded insides of his hands.

“It’s stupid. You’ll think it’s crazy,” he says with a half-snort.

Still a little tipsy from the whisky, she slides her boots across the ground and pulls herself up to her feet.

“No stupider than the rest of your plans I’ve agreed to. Tell me,” she requests with an arched eyebrow, holding out her hand to him.

He allows her to help haul him up, and when he stands at his full height, there’s a glimmer in his eye.

“We only have a few days left,” his deep voice rumbles in the stillness. “Can we go back to the dropship? Just for tonight?” he finishes in a small slur of words.

The question in his eyes is clear.
An image of the tall, burnished, metal rocket that brought them to the ground shaking and sputtering as it flew springs into her mind.

“Back to where it began?” Clarke folds her arms around his waist loosely and looks up at him.

He nods.

“Yeah. Yeah, I’d like that,” she rises up on her tiptoes to kiss him once. It’s soft but languid. He tastes like sugar, and a little like regret.

But a moment later, he’s pulling her back toward the stairway, and there’s no time left for musing.

***

*Metaphorically, I’m the man. But literally, I don’t know what I’d do.*

The crash of the party music hits them in tidal waves as they approach the garage once more.

“Just give me a second. I’ll be right back,” Bellamy says loudly over the noise.

“Where are you going?”

“My room. I’ve got to get my backpack.”

Her mouth twitches as she tries to suppress a smirk.

“Don’t look at me like that! It’s got all my survival gear already packed. So if we get caught in another black rain storm, I want to make sure—”

“Just GO!” she rolls her eyes and playfully shoves him in the direction of his living quarters. “I’ll stock up on the libations!”
“Clarke, we don’t need—”

“End of the world, Bellamy! End of the world!” she sings out before pivoting on her heel, throwing her shoulders back, and dancing her way into the crowd.

“You’re sounding more and more like Jasper,” he mutters as he walks away, but he’s smiling.

The next time he sees her, she’s shaking a clear container full of the purple Jello at him.

“I promised I had a use for this,” she winks at him mischievously before unzipping his stuffed backpack and shoving it inside.

***

About an hour later, the dropship is glinting in the moonlight before them like a forgotten fortress from Medieval times. Impressive vines snake their way up its sides, and the thick underbrush is already beginning to reclaim the area they worked so hard to clear.

“Nature’s a bitch,” is all Bellamy says while he uses an axe he magically whipped out of his backpack to cut away at a stubborn vine tucked snuggly around the door latch.

The door gives way, and Clarke steps forward to push aside the old, faded orange tarp hanging in the entryway. Bellamy cranks the wheel to shut the door behind them, and the dull, creaking sound makes her flinch.

“Sorry,” he murmurs, his hand landing on her hip as they step into the lower level. He drops his backpack to the ground with a thud. “But we don’t want anyone wandering in.”

“It seems like a lifetime ago that I was telling you not to open that door,” she says with a hint of humor in her voice. She turns to watch him in the hazy, silver light spilling in from the few windows. She’ll never tire of the steep lines of his cheekbones and the rich warmth of his brown eyes when they meet her own.
Bellamy doesn’t respond immediately, glancing around the space instead as if playing through a movie reel in his head. She knows it can’t be the most pleasant one – the space is flooded with the silent ghosts of their past. *Beating Lincoln until the blood oozed from the wounds he ripped into his sides. Caring for the sick from Murphy’s plague as makeshift hammocks and blankets stole every square inch of room, and hacking coughs ricocheted off her eardrums. Drawing up plans to build the bomb that blew up the bridge, and building up battle plans with miniature game pieces when Finn’s dreams of peace proved fruitless.*

But, as she pushes the hair out of her eyes, she knows deep down in her bones that it’s the place where they began, too. *Stop! The air could be toxic. Right now I don’t feel like being with anyone I actually like. Trust him? No. But I do believe in second chances. I want you to say that you’re with us.*

She can practically see the faint silhouettes of herself and Bellamy locked in hushed conversation, or yelling in fierce arguments, or delicately flirting with casual touches almost everywhere she glances.

She draws up beside him and hugs his arm, curling her body into his side.

“No,” he says quietly. It seems easier to say the truth in this hushed stillness, this museum caught somewhere between their best dreams of life on Earth and most painful realities of what survival came to mean. “I just wish I’d known you on the Ark. We could’ve had more time.”

Her expression softens when his eyes find hers, and he kisses her so gently that it feels like goodbye. Tears surge at the back of her eyes and sting her nose and throat, but she swallows them, chasing his lips hungrily when he tries to draw back.

“We do have time! We'll have years in the bunker. And . . . and we still have tonight,” she whispers frantically into the darkness.
He presses his lips together in a hard line before shaking his head slightly.

“I couldn’t do that to you, Clarke. Not on top of everything else. I won’t do that to you,” his stern resoluteness is the last straw.

“No! You don’t get to decide by yourself!” she brushes away a few stray tears angrily. He blinks once, and she’s lunged forward, sealing her lips against his, and biting at his lower one in an attempt to deepen the kiss. Her hands work feverishly, slipping under the collar of his jacket as she shoves it from his shoulders. She manages to make it crumple to the ground when it happens.

The firm push is not altogether unexpected, but it still sends her reeling backwards toward a table, which she grips the edge of to steady herself.

“Clarke, I said no,” his voice is dark and resolute.

“Why not?” she yells hotly, launching forward again to slam her hands into his chest. “You said we could work around it before, so let’s try! I want to be with you, Bellamy! Why won’t you give that to me?”

Bellamy breathes heavily through his nose, clenching and unclenching his fists as the veins in his forearms pop. She’s focused on his hot exhalations against her cheek when he grabs her by the waist, dropping her gently on top of the table. Her legs swing out to hook around his calves and trap him next to her. He doesn’t resist, just links their fingers together.

“Because I don’t want to have to work around it, either,” he says more calmly. “And even if we did, it’s still a risk. And I’m not going to let you suffer like my mother, raising a kid below the ground.”
Believe me, I know. I know. But, as JR would say, I see what you see. And there is always a plan.

“Please don’t stand so close to me
I’m afraid of what you’ll see right now
I give you everything I am
All my broken heart beats
Until I know you’ll understand.

And I will make sure to keep my distance
Say, “I love you,” when you’re not listening
And how long can we keep this up, up, up?

And I keep waiting
For you to take me
You keep waiting
To save what we have.”

~Christina Perri, “Distance”

“Bell, baby, no,” she whispers, horrified at the pain streaking his face.

Hand trembling inside his, she presses their linked fingers into her stomach, stroking down the side of his skin with her thumb.
“The Ark was . . . brutal,” she admits, moving his other hand to curl snugly against her inner thigh as she reaches up to cradle his face. “But life is different down here, Bellamy. We’re building something better, something sustainable.”

He turns away from her slightly, but she waits him out patiently until his neck swerves back toward her, and he sighs into her touch.

“The bunker is just temporary, just for a few years. I know we’ll be confined again, but at least we’ll know there’s an end in sight. And we’ll be with people we love. No secrets, no hiding, hmmm?” she earnestly peers into the dark depths of his eyes and strokes his cheek.

He swallows hard but says nothing. His eyes glisten, and it makes her stomach clench. Fear trailed Bellamy like a cloak on the Ark from the time he was six, she knows. She’ll never be able to properly imagine the anguish he felt sliding a loose floorboard over the head of a tiny Octavia during weekly inspections. Can’t fathom how every knock on his family’s door would cause the color to drain from his mother’s face. She knows Aurora Blake wanted her son to have a respectable position with the Ark’s Guard.

One evening many weeks ago, she shared a room with him on Luna’s oil rig because Octavia flat-out refused to bunk with either of them and chose Jasper instead. She remembers how every bone in her body ached on the simple twin bed when she tucked the warm blankets around herself, dressed in a loose nightshirt. He’d cautiously stepped into the room a minute later. She can still recall how he hesitated in the doorway, shuffling his feet.

“You’re fine, Bellamy,” her voice was muffled by the pillows sprawled around her head like a fort. “It’s your room, too. Come in and get some sleep.”

A small smile coasted across his lips, and the door clicked behind him. A gust smelling of pine needles and soap flooded her brain as he moved the air. She did her best not to watch the muscles in his arms flex when he pulled down the covers and arranged his pillows the way he liked, punching one of them a few times to create a hollow for his head.

“Interesting technique,” she’d teased.

“But even as his deep breathing settled into a soothing pattern, her eyes remained open, watching
gentle waves rock by their porthole. She was finally drifting off into unconsciousness when his voice rose up from the darkness.

“Clarke?”

“Yes?” she’d asked curiously.

“I wanted Octavia to be happy with him,” he whispered.

At this, her eyes popped open fully, and she propped her chin in her hand, raising herself up on an elbow to peer at him across the black room.

“I know, Bellamy. I know.”

“I didn’t ever want her to have to do what our mom did to give us a better life.”

“What do you mean?” Clarke could hear her voice hesitate. She wasn’t fully sure she wanted to know what Aurora Blake had done to provide for her family.

But he’d told her anyway, needing to get it off his chest after so many years keeping it locked away. He’d only said a few sentences before she’d padded across the room to him, sitting lightly on the edge of his bed and rubbing his shoulder a few times until he sat up. His head eventually found its way into her lap, and she stroked the nape of his neck, scratching her nails across his scalp delicately. A few salty, wet tears fell on the fabric just above her knees.

“Bellamy . . .” her voice breaks on the beautiful syllables of his name. “I-I want to build a life with you when this is all over. I know we’re not exactly ready now, but someday, maybe . . . ?”

For a split second, she feels the whole expanse of his palm cover her stomach as if something is pulsing through his veins, but then it’s gone. He pulls away from her abruptly, leaving her cold. The line of his jaw is hard as he looks at her carefully, and his freckles glow luminously against his skin.

She blinks back her own tears.
“I want that, too. One day,” his voice is gruff.

A heavy sigh falls from her that she didn’t realize she was holding in. Her smile blinds him like a thousand suns the moment she pulls his face down to her own to kiss him soundly.

“We have hope,” she tells him sincerely when she breaks away from his lips, panting.

Never breaking their gaze, she scoots to the edge of the table, digging each of her knees into his side and grabbing a fistful of his shirt, dragging him back to her. He grips the edge of the table and leans over her body possessively, causing her back to arch as she smiles a little against his mouth.

His hand runs up her leg and slips under her dress, pressing his calloused fingers against her thigh in a way that sends delicious shivers down her spine. His fingers dance along the edge of her panties just as her legs lock around his hips. He picks her up, and spinning them both around, walks the length of the dropship before dropping her down on a forgotten pallet covered with a lone blanket. Within seconds, he climbs eagerly over her body. Her breathy laugh morphs into a moan when he finds the pulse point of her neck and begins sucking there, dragging down the zipper at the back of her dress while he works.

The soft, leather-like fabric slips away from her shoulders, exposing her worn gray bra underneath it. A pale pink flush rises across her chest as she feels his gaze drop to her large breasts partially spilling out over the cups. No matter your class on the Ark, good bras were always hard to come by at the Exchange.

“You’re gorgeous, Princess,” he breathes against her ear, tickling her cheek with the hint of stubble starting to grow along his jaw.

She smiles, pleased, but tugs insistently at the bottom of his shirt until he obliges and pulls it over his head, tossing it onto the ground nearby. She curves her fingers around his hard bicep as he kisses the tops of each breast reverently, making her chuckle.

“Every guy has a preference,” she smirks into his shoulder.
“I thought I did a pretty good job hiding mine,” he draws back to look at her.

“You did, you did,” she reassures him with a smile before he recaptures her lips with his own.

This kiss is deeper, dirtier as their tongues tangle, and Clarke finds herself running her hands along the planes of his chest, enjoying the sound of his breath hitching when she grazes his nipples in the process.

His weight shifts on top of her when he slides his large hands around the edge of her ass and down her bent leg, tickling the back of her knee. She attempts to spread her legs wider to allow him better access, but pushes against the stretched fabric of her dress instead. With a groan of frustration, she pushes the material away from her body and down her torso, Bellamy helping to pull it over her legs. She toes off her boots, allowing them to clatter to the floor as she wiggles her toes in freedom.

Bellamy presses a kiss to her smooth calf glinting in the half-light, then another on the inside of her knee. When a third hits her inner thigh, she tugs at his hair sharply until his eyes meet hers.

“I want those lips up here please,” she says sweetly.

He chuckles, “There are always rules with you, aren’t there?”

But when he falls back into the cradle of her thighs, she feels his hardness against her stomach. She could swear her entire core contracts at the sensation.

After several minutes of heavy petting where Bellamy’s talented fingers cause a growing wet spot to emerge across her panties as her nails drag along his back, she’s had enough. She pries his left hand off her breast where he’s been kneading it luxuriously and pushes against his side until he takes the hint and flips over.

She sits astride his thigh, moaning a little at the friction rocking against it gives her sensitive clit. His pupils are blown as he watches her breasts sway with the motion, and it doesn’t take her long to reach for his belt buckle.

But then she feels him stiffen beneath her.
“Clarke, no, not yet,” he warns.

“Why not?” she pants. “You said we could work around it. You can pull out for now.”

She runs her hand over his dick through his pants, causing him to hiss and knock it away.

“I said no. I’m not risking knocking you up the same night I kissed you for the first time. That’s crazy,” he barks back. “We already talked about this.”

She stills and narrows her eyes at him, hoping the strange, hurt feeling suddenly coursing through her bloodstream can’t be seen on her face.

“Right,” she says snidely, rising up off him as if burned. “You save potential impregnations for the girls you really care about like Bree.”

He looks like she’s slapped him, but she can’t take it back now.

His eyebrows crinkle up like a caterpillar across the middle of his brow, and he’s on his feet towering over her in moments. Redness seeps into his face to match her own.

“What is wrong with you?” he says loudly, gripping her upper arm, but she yanks it away roughly. “Why would you want to risk getting pregnant when we’re about to go underground?”

Her body is buzzing with a radioactive sort of energy unlike anything she’s ever felt while she watches the anger flash in his eyes.

“Why do you always have to take something beautiful and make it ugly?” she actually stomps her foot in frustration, hands landing on her hips. “You’re always waiting for a horrible thing to happen, always hovering over everyone, trying to protect us all from things we’ve got to live through and—”

“Yeah, well, maybe you wouldn’t be alive right now if I wasn’t there to protect you! Did you ever think of that?” he yells back.
She just stands there, gaping.

“No, you probably didn’t,” his voice levels into a controlled rage as he takes a step toward her. “While you were camped out with Lexa in Polis or flirting with Niylah, where do you think I was? Huh?”

He looms over her imposingly, but she doesn’t back down.

“I’ll tell you where I was! I was dealing with Jasper’s fucking depression and trying to help everyone whose hips had been drilled into by the Mountain Men. I was in enemy territory trying to get the hydrogenerator back and freed slaves while fucking Ice Nation tried to kill our friends. I was making travel plans to carry the damn hydrazine to Becca’s Island and risk all our lives again with His Majesty,” he snarls, gazing down into her wide blue eyes. “Where were you?”

“You unimaginable asshole!” she spits out between gritted teeth. “Like you didn’t bang Raven and Bree and every other goddamn girl you could when we landed! Like you didn’t look for some way to make sure the horror of this planet didn’t eat you alive! And then you found a good person, Bellamy! You had a loving girlfriend, while I was covered in mud in the woods trying to avoid the kill order on my head!” she practically screams the last part, voice shrill unlike anything he’s ever heard. “A kill order for a crime we committed together!”

“Don’t you dare go there with me,” his tone drops several octaves and scares her a little as he locks his fingers around her upper arm tighter this time. “I didn’t leave. And you didn’t have to leave. I tried to move on when you left. And I went looking for you as soon as there was word you were alive.”

“Yeah, yeah, you did,” something glints like relentless steel in her eyes. But the words tumble out of her mouth before she can think of their repercussions. “But you probably should have stayed home with your girlfriend. Then she’d be alive instead of me, and you could be planning a future you actually wanted with her.”
good girls want bad boys

Chapter Summary

Yeah, this is just going to all kinds of new places . . . I promise I'll eventually get back to the Bellarke we all know and love. But, yeah, for now, the angst of the hiatus is taking its toll in my story. ;)

“We were caught up and lost in all of our vices
In your pose as the dust settled around us

And the walls kept tumbling down
In the city that we love
Great clouds roll over the hills
Bringing darkness from above

But if you close your eyes,
Does it almost feel like
Nothing changed at all?
And if you close your eyes,
Does it almost feel like
You've been here before?
How am I gonna be an optimist about this?”

~Bastille, “Pompeii”

The thud of his fist slamming into the metallic wall shouldn’t make her jump, but it does.

“Bellamy, I’m sorry!” she says it almost as soon as the horrible words leave her mouth. “I shouldn’t have said that. I know she was real for you. I know she was good to you!”

But the damage is done. She sees it the moment he turns his wild eyes back to look at her, mouth partly open in his shock. His lip curls up in the same version of disgust he wore when he was forced to beat Lincoln so many months ago.

“You’re sorry?” his laugh is a little crazed. “You’re always sorry, aren’t you? You want to do whatever the hell you want and then be able to come back home and say you’re sorry. You’re not here to watch what happens, but then there you are with your snide, goddamn opinions about how everything must have been! Because you need to be right, don’t you? You need to be in control?”
She just stands there sputtering at him, brain working overtime. She usually did have opinions about how things affecting the people closest to her must have gone. Hadn't she spent months seething with hatred for Wells, thinking he was responsible for her father's death? But what did she really know of Gina or life in Arkadia after Mount Weather?

It takes a few seconds before she registers the cold caressing her half-naked form. She runs her hands briskly up and down her arms, shivering slightly.

“No, that’s not it!” she insists. “I know you had the right to live your own life, make your own choices.”

His expression softens for only a second before the steel glint returns to his eyes, and he’s plowing his fingers hard through his hair in frustration.

“He just did it again,” his tone drives a bolt of arousal through her stomach as he raises his eyebrows pointedly at her, raking his eyes across her breasts, stomach, and thighs. “I said no, and you kept pushing anyway. Because you want what you want when you want it. Like a princess.”

The word hisses out of his mouth while he takes a few steps closer to her, heavy boots thudding forcefully as he moves.

She feels her mouth pucker in anger and throws out her arm hastily, fingers scratching and grabbing for anything they can find on the nearby table. They wrap around an old, sharp bit of wire Jasper used to use to stoke the logs of their blazing bonfires. Wielding it in front of her like a weapon she doesn’t really intend to use, she sticks it out toward him.

“Don’t you come near me if you’re gonna be like that!” she yells at him, but he keeps walking slowly forward.

“Like what, Clarke? Honest? Right?” He’s totally nonchalant and breezy now, as if they were discussing who was on Guard patrol. But she watches the muscle along his jaw clench and shudder.

“You’re not right,” she spits out at him with all the heat she can muster.
But he’s upon her at last, and something about the intense way his eyes are boring into her own makes her slacken her grip on the wire.

With one easy sweep of his hand against hers, it clatters to the floor.

“Is this who you want, Clarke? Someone who won’t cater to your every demand?” his breath is hot on her face. “You want the delinquent from Factory Station? You want the criminal who shot the Chancellor?”

She stares straight back at him but doesn’t move a muscle. She barely blinks.

He reaches out and trails his fingertips down the length of her smooth arm, letting out a quiet huff of satisfaction at her sharp intake of breath.

“Because he was the only one you were a little scared of, right? You listened to him.” His words sing out in a startling lilt unlike anything she’s ever heard from him before.

“I always listened to you, even in the beginning,” she says firmly, knocking his hand away. “And I’m not scared of you, Bellamy.”

He smiles at her but manages to bare his teeth at the same time.

“Maybe that’s the problem. Maybe you should be,” he shoots out a hand around her narrow waist, crushing her against him as his lips claim hers hungrily.

There’s more teeth involved than before as he bites her lower lip, forcing his tongue into her mouth and grabbing a handful of her ass, so her clit is pushed right into the hardness of his dick.

Before there’s a moment to process the scratchy fabric of his pants slicing into her flimsy underwear in such a nerve-wracking way, he spins her by her hips. Keeping his chest flush against her back, he forces her a few steps forward until her palms hit the wall in an attempt to brace herself.

“Yes, maybe that’s the problem,” he taunts against the skin of her neck as he yanks her underwear down her thighs and taps her leg quickly several times before she steps out of them.
She knows she should be angry, furious even, but somehow yes this is exactly what she wanted. So she just groans loudly and reaches back with her hand to pull on the bit of his hair she can grasp. His rough fingers dig into her hips as he tugs her flush against him, snaking a hand around her stomach and straight down past the tangle of her blonde curls until he can feel her wet folds.

“Mmmm,” she whimpers against the wall as his index finger thrums along her clit, flicking it from side to side. It causes her to thrust her hips back, desperate for a way to make his long fingers slide into her, but he holds her solidly in place.

“That’s what I thought,” he breathes the words against the freckled skin of her shoulder, biting down lightly and unhooking her bra in a swift motion.

He’s greedy about her breasts, allowing the generous mound of her left one to fill the expanse of his hand before he begins kneading it roughly.

“Bell – Bellamy!” she huffs when he starts pinching her rosy nipple, soft at first and then with more force. All the while his right hand continues its ministrations against the bundle of nerve endings setting her core on fire.

When her legs slacken with weakness, she finally allows her weight to fall back on his chest, slick with sweat. She winds her left arm around his neck, turning slightly to kiss him. Although she’s too near the edge for it to be anything more than a sloppy, brief meeting of mouths.

“Come,” he commands her. “Come on my fingers right now.”

And somehow, as his other hand skates across the soft curve of her belly and up to her opposite breast, she does.

The rhythmic clenching of her walls is intense enough to cause shimmering spots of light to erupt in her vision as she calls out his name. She hushes her gasp by biting down on her own fist.
“That’s a good princess,” his deep voice and snarky tone move something primal in her, even as she slumps against him, allowing him to suck a mark into the side of her neck.

But when she tries to turn around to face him, his sticky hands rest on her shoulders, stilling her.

“I’m not done with you yet, Clarke,” he murmurs.

Then she hears the distinct sound of his belt buckle coming undone, followed by a snap and the sharp hiss of a zipper.
“Tonight
I'mma let you
Be the captain
Tonight
I'mma let you
Do your thing, yeah
Tonight
I'mma let you
Be a rider
Giddy up
Giddy up
Giddy up, babe
Tonight
I'mma let it
Be fire
Tonight
I'mma let you
Take me higher
Tonight
Baby we can
Get it on
Yeah, we can get it on
Yeah.”
~Rihanna, “Rude Boy”

“Bellamy, wait!” she shakes out of his grip and spins around. His face is strangely unreadable. She
can make out some of the anger still throbbing in his tight jaw, but his eyes swim in an odd mixture of lust and pain, too.

He’s only inches away, and for once, the proximity completely overwhelms her. He’s so much larger than her, and it’s never bothered her in the slightest before. It’s always felt comforting and safe to have him looming around nearby. But the main thing she’s keenly aware of now is how easily he could hurt her if he wanted to.

“I don’t take my orders from you,” his sarcastic words crash against her bloodstream, setting her nerve endings alight.

“You made your point. That’s enough, don’t you think?” she snaps, a bit more irritated by his caveman behavior than she was when his glorious fingers were deep inside her. “Five minutes ago you didn’t even want to ever touch me, and now you’re ready to fuck me against a wall?” she questions, voice rising.

He smirks at her in that special way he has, looking down and away and snorting out air.

“Bellamy, what is this really about . . . ?” She presses her small hands into his toned stomach, urging him to look at her. But when she tries to reach for his hand, he quickly pulls it out of her reach.

Instead, he braces one of his legs behind her own, fencing her body in, so his own is at an angle toward hers, and she can’t go anywhere. He gently slips two fingers back into her entrance, causing her sharp intake of breath. He wiggles them around for a moment, staring straight into her bemused face, and catching her shudder as the tip of his nail brushes against her sensitive clit when he withdraws.

She watches transfixed as he waves his slick fingers before her eyes, pulling them apart delicately, so she can see the clear, sticky fluid forming a web between them.

“Could have fooled me that it was too much,” he goads her. “Looks like it was just right.”

He smears a little on the edge of her lip, poking the pink flesh softly, and she opens her mouth to him, sucking her own juices off his finger. He smiles, brushing along her stomach with the back of his knuckles.
She clenches and unclenches her fists at her sides, unable to do so with full strength so soon after her orgasm, but eager to clutch something. Her eyes drop to his unfastened belt and half-opened pants as her face erupts in a fierce blush. His erection strains against the dark fabric in plain sight.

Her mouth makes a ‘pop’ noise as he slips his finger out.

“Always full of surprises,” he smirks at her before leaning in to invade her mouth with his tongue once more.

“I don’t want to have hate sex with you!” she manages to fling the sentence at him like a torpedo when he comes up for air.

His laugh is short and dry.

“It’s not hate sex if we don’t hate each other, Clarke,” he says drily.

“You don’t know I don’t hate you,” she mutters under her breath.

He runs a finger along her jawbone and underneath her chin, tilting it up, so she can see his eyes. “I know you love me,” he squeezes the curve of her waist reassuringly.

“Well then what would you call it?” a dose of bitterness still stings her tone.

He shrugs, lip twitching upward as he widens his eyes.

“I’d call it you giving me a blow job.”

His hand flattens next to her head against the wall, and as he moves in closer to her, she presses herself hard against the sturdy titanium surface.

“You are such an arrogant moron,” she grumbles, but makes no attempt to push him away from her. Her pupils are blown, and his eyes capture every flick of her tongue across her lips.
“I can be,” he replies agreeably. “But that doesn’t change the fact you’re considering it.”

With a small shrug of her own, she suddenly grips the edge of his belt buckle and tugs it firmly, so it escapes the loops in his pants with a whoosh. He grins at her, kicking off his boots fairly seamlessly.

Her small, pale hands curl around the edge of his waistband, pulling it down around his thighs. He helps her eagerly, yanking his pants the rest of the way off. With her hands on his shoulders, she shoves him lightly against the wall and makes sure to trail her hand along the tent in his midnight blue boxers before sliding them down his muscular legs.

His eyes meet hers in a moment of brief hesitation, but she just steps between his legs on her tiptoes, making sure the tip of his dick brushes against her wet core before kissing him chastely.

He groans outright when she falls to her knees before him, quickly tangling his fingers in her golden hair as she strokes him several times before taking him in her mouth. He’s moderately long but certainly thick – it came as a surprise to her when she first saw him though she tried to conceal it.

It takes her a few moments to perfect her technique. But when her hand skims along the underside of his shaft and stumbles upon a delicate area, it requires all the self-control Bellamy has to not thrust deep into her throat then and there. She licks around the tip of him, then swirls her tongue over the areas that seem to make him shudder most while pressing her fingertips along the vee of his hipbones for leverage.

“Clarke – God – yes – there,” he splutters when he’s able to form coherent sounds.

After a couple minutes, she manages to take more and more of him, hot and throbbing, into her mouth without cutting off her air supply as her throat relaxes. His grunts trigger tiny spasms of pleasure in her core like mini fireworks exploding. But then his fingers tug insistently at her hair as he pounds his fist into the wall.

“Stop – Clarke – it’s enough,” he gasps, and she pulls back, surprised.

“The point is for you to come too, baby,” she says, partly confused.

“I will. Inside you,” he growls, tugging her to her feet swiftly.
“But you said before—”

“Fuck what I said. Unless you don’t want to,” he has enough presence of mind to track her face carefully for signs of distress.

“I want to,” she says immediately.

Then she’s giggling – a bright, melodic sound that flows straight through him – as he hoists her up right under her ass, forcing her arms to lock around his neck for balance as he presses her back into the wall.

His dick slides against her stomach before she rolls up her hips, digging her knees into his sides and allowing herself to sink down onto him slowly. She loves the feel of him filling her so completely and gasps out in pleasure at his thickness as every vein rubs against her in a delicious way.

He’s still for several moments, waiting for her electric blue eyes to flutter back open. When they do, she bucks her hips against him once, then twice. And then there’s nothing he can do for it. With one arm braced against the wall and the other spanning her back he drives into her over and over again as her nails dig deeply into his back, leaving marks.

“Harder, faster,” she pants into his ear when he’s afraid he’s pushed the boundary too far, and all he can say is “Fuck, princess.”

“That’s right, fuck me,” she smart mouths to him, eliciting another growl.

He holds her tightly to him, still inside her, and manages to make it the few steps to the pallet on the floor, laying her down gently and resuming his quick, sharp thrusts. The sound of their smacking skin and groans fill the first floor of the dropship. She clutches at the hair along the nape of his neck as he mouths at her neck with his lips, sucking hard enough to leave possessive marks.

“Clarke – Clarke - I’m - so close,” he cries out, and she knows it’s true. Feels him twitching inside her as her own body charges toward a precipice. “Are you sure?” he demands roughly, holding himself up mostly on his forearms as her legs twist around his hips, keeping him as close to her as possible.
She reaches up and strokes the side of his face, brushing her thumb across his freckles and allowing his warm brown eyes to ground her.

“Let go,” she commands him.

The mildest touch of his fingertips against her clit has her spasming as she anticipates what’s to come.

His hips rock jerkily against her own twice more before she feels the rush of fluid fill her, and he collapses on top of her, panting.

“Aaahh,” she cries out in protest a minute later when he pulls out of her, holding onto his biceps and drawing him closer instead.

“I’m too heavy,” he mumbles against her hair.

“No,” she insists. “Stay with me.”

He rests his head against her chest, while she gently strokes his back until his breathing becomes slow and steady again.

“We shouldn’t have,” he says into her skin after a few quiet minutes. “We’re crazy.”

“Shhh,” she pushes the sweaty curls off his face and kisses his temple. “I’m yours, no one else’s, ok?” she whispers to him in the darkness. “And everything’s going to work out.”
history is like gravity

“I'll be kind, if you'll be faithful
You be sweet and I'll be grateful
Cover me with kisses dear
Lighten up the atmosphere
Keep me warm inside our bed
I got dreams of you all through my head
Fortune teller said I'd be free
And that's the day you came to me
Came to me.

Come to me my sweetest friend
Can you feel my heart again?
I'll take you back where you belong
And this will be our favorite song.
Come to me with secrets bare
I'll love you more so don't be scared.
When we're old and near the end,
We'll go home and start again.

I caught you burnin' photographs
Like that could save you from your past
History is like gravity
You and me, we've both got sins
I don't care about where you've been
Don't be sad and don't explain
This is where we start again.”
The birdsong hits her ears unexpectedly – sharp, high-pitched, and loud. The stupid creature sounds absolutely, insistently maniacal. She groans, desperate for a few more minutes’ rest. *I have to talk to Jaha and Kane about moving supplies to the bunker* she thinks, crinkling her nose. Her neck definitely feels a little tight; she must have slept on it wrong.

But as she pulls her hand up to rub her sleepy eyes, it comes in contact with something warm and squishy.

*What the hell?*

Her eyes fly open.

A strong, tan forearm is snaked firmly around her waist, and someone’s exhales are shifting the pale hair cascading over her shoulder, making it float. She glances down at her body, carefully lifting the thin brown blanket covering her. Of course she’s naked. Of course.

And she’s in the – She glances around the shadowy room. There is no denying that silver ladder leading up to a very familiar circular trapdoor – *dropship?*

She freezes.

*What the hell?*

“Mmmmm,” a man’s groan erupts in her ear as warm lips press into her shoulder blade.

And then the pictures of last night begin seeping into her mind – his broad chest, his honey taste, his hands *on* her, *in* her – and a smile curls up her mouth quite on its own. The very memory of it already has wetness pooling between her thighs. She clenches them together tightly.

*God, I’m so far gone.*
“Morning, Princess,” comes Bellamy’s deep grumble.

She lets out a breath she didn’t know she was holding and snuggles against his chest, pushing her hips into him delicately.

“Morning,” she calls back sweetly, innocently.

She still chuckles a little when she feels his hardening length pressing against the curve of her ass though.

“So you say,” she teases, rocking herself into him a bit more insistently than before.

His hand clamps down on her hip, stilling it as he tosses a leg over both of hers. The roughness of his hair chafes against her leg, but she enjoys the sensation.

“Don’t, Princess,” he says warningly, sliding over her, pressing her shoulders into the pallet in the process, then pinning her wrists to her sides.

“Why not?” she whines, struggling against him by popping up her hips and wiggling her eyebrows. “I want to say a proper good morning.”

He smirks, shaking his hair out of his dark eyes.

“Not like that,” he rebuffs her cheerfully enough, leaning down to begin sucking a new mark into her neck.

“Jesus, Bellamy, everyone’s going to see it,” she complains, but there’s no real anger behind her words.
“Good,” he pulls back, releasing her wrists. “Then they’ll know you’re mine.”

His eyes darken, and her traitorous core clenches again.

“Always,” she breathes, “Until the world ends.”

She gives him a half-smirk for her bad joke, reaching up to trail a line down his jawbone, across his neck, and smoothly over his chest.

She swears his pupils devour the remaining brown of his eyes when she reaches her small hand lower still, locking around him.

“Come here,” she wraps her other hand behind his neck, pulling him down to her mouth.

He lays down on his side, drawing feather-light patterns across her breasts, slipping closer and closer to her nipples without ever arriving. As she pumps him in her hand, she whispers sweet things against his lips, about how she loves him, about how she always has, about how she wants as many tomorrows as this beautiful and terrifying planet will surrender them. His eyes grow heavy and half-lidded as she brings him closer and closer to his release.

When she stops suddenly and jumps up off the pallet, he moans out her name in such a heart wrenching way, she feels the rip in her chest.

“Shhh,” she whispers. “I’ll be right back.”

He hears the steady unzipping of his backpack, and she arrives back by his side in moments with the container of mystery Jello. She grins at him, scooping some up with her hand and rubbing it against his chest in swirling designs.

“Fuck, Clarke, are you trying to kill me?” he pants out when her tongue flicks over his nipple, lower across his belly button, down farther still to his jutting hip bone. She cleans his skin with her insistent licking, velvety rough. It’s a task she completes as thoroughly as everything else she does. She slides more of the sticky, purple substance across her fingers, dangling it above his lips and letting him lick it into his mouth before covering it with her own.
When she moves to straddle his dick, she’s throbbing with a fierce need she’s kept quiet until now. Her eyes lock on his, and she’s upset, though not surprised, when he’s shaking his head at her.

“Why not, baby?” What is it?” her tone is soft and soothing as she runs her fingers through his curls and swipes her thumb along the final, lingering scar on his cheek.

He’s quiet and still for several long moments before moving to sit up and tapping her waist until she kneels on the floor beside him.

“I’m not going to be the monster who destroys you, Clarke. Nobody’s had a kid down here yet, and there’s a good reason. It’s way too dangerous. It was too dangerous in space.”

Surprised by this little speech, she crouches closer to him. He won’t look at her. He’s staring, face resolute, at the dropship door where strips of golden light force their way through the cracks in the seam.

“Bellamy! Look at me!” she grabs his face in her hands and angles it upward toward her. She wants to sit in his lap and wrap her limbs around him, but there’s no way to not make that sexual, so she doesn’t move closer.

His eyes are full of pain when he does.

“You’re not a monster, do you hear me? And one day, you’re going to be an amazing, amazing dad. You’re a complete natural,” she smiles warmly at him.

But he makes a noise of rebuttal, and she presses her growing nails into his bicep.

“Listen to me!” she snaps. “I love you, but you’re being a stubborn ass and not making any sense. So let me lay your fears to rest: The reason no one’s had kids yet is because of the implants and because we’ve been at war since we landed! We have the medical supplies to handle pregnancies and deliveries – I’ve talked with my mom and Jackson about it before.”

“Too dangerous,” he mutters again, unexpectedly slipping his arm around her and pulling her into his side on the pallet. Moved by the loving gesture, she rests her head near his collarbone, listening to his heartbeat, while he kisses her temple.
Several minutes go by quietly with them sitting like that. Sunlight creeps into the dropship through the windows, bathing their first Earth home in a friendly warmth.

“There was a lot of blood,” he says finally.

“What do you mean?” she asks quietly.

“When Octavia was born, there was a lot of blood. I was six, Clarke. I was terrified. There wasn’t anybody from medical with us to help. We were all alone. I had to help stop the bleeding. I had to stop her from crying; no one could know,” his hoarse voice trails off.

Tears string the backs of her eyes, and she clutches his torso tighter, drawing him nearer.

“My mom . . . she was so pale and shaky. I didn’t know if she was going to live. I’m sorry – I know it’s crazy. I know things will be different down here, when it’s all over. I just . . . I-I,”

“It’s ok. It’s ok. It’s ok,” she presses his head against her chest, rocking him gently like he was still six years old. She pulls the worn blanket around their bodies, tangling her legs in his as they lay back down. “I didn’t know,” she says, throat thick with moisture. “I should’ve know. I should’ve figured it out. But I, I didn’t.” She folds her lips together in a tight line, widening her sparkling eyes at him as he looks up at her. “I can’ t imagine what that was like for you. I’m so sorry, baby. We can wait. I can wait. We won’t do anything you don’t want to do. I understand.”

He nods at her before closing his eyes.

She cards her fingers through his beautiful hair, relishing the heavy, familiar weight of him wrapped around her.

“Whenever you’re ready,” she vows.
let them eat cake

“The dawn is breaking

A light shining through

You're barely waking

And I'm tangled up in you

But I'm open, you're closed

Where I follow, you'll go

I worry I won’t see your face

Light up again

Even the best fall down sometimes

Even the wrong words seem to rhyme

Out of the doubt that fills my mind

Out of the doubt that fills your mind

I somehow find

You and I collide.”

~Howie Day, “Collide”

The sun’s warm rays peek out over the hills as they approach the gate surrounding Arkadia. They kick up clouds of dust, and Clarke has to squint her eyes against the brightness to make out the figure rushing toward them.

“It’s my mom!” she tells Bellamy.

He barely has a second to place a reassuring hand on her shoulder before she’s running in Abby’s direction.
“Mom! What is it? Is everything all right?” he hears her call out as he jogs to keep up with her pace.

Abby’s racing across the hard-packed ground at top speed, her hair flying out behind her. When she reaches Clarke, she throws her arms around her daughter’s neck, pulling her close.

He lands at Clarke’s side a moment later. She participates in the embrace for several moments, but then her hands slide away from her mother’s waist, and she takes backward, searching Abby’s wide brown eyes.

Abby gasps for breath, settling her hands on her knees as she bends over.

Bellamy scans the horizon before them, but nothing seems amiss. There’s a rover parked a hundred yards beyond the gate. Their people traipse back and forth between the shiny blue-silver buildings stacking boxes of every imaginable size and material, bundles of clothes, what appear to be brightly covered vegetables still trailing their vines from the garden, and an assortment of other goods in an ever-growing heap near the Ark’s front door. They’re packing for the bunker, so the plans to evacuate tomorrow are on track. He feels Clarke lace her fingers around his own as she meets his gaze and squeezes them tightly.

“Mom?” she tries again hesitating slightly. She places a tentative hard on Abby’s forearm. “What’s wrong?”

Abby bites her lip, shaking her head and smiling slightly.

“Nothing,” she rasps as though her throat is coated in grit. “I thought you ran away again.”

It’s like being sucker-punched in the gut.

She feels Bellamy’s sure thumb stroking the back of her hand soothingly. The motion catches Abby’s attention, and she glances down at their interlocked hands. When she wraps her hands around Clarke’s cheeks, her smile could light up the night sky.

“We . . . we . . . just needed to . . . get away?” Clarke finishes lamely, completely at a loss. She’s not embarrassed to be caught coming back to camp at dawn with Bellamy. Heaven knows her mother has seen her do far more scandalous things, but still. Something about it makes her back prickle with guilt.
“Uh-huh,” Abby quirks up her eyebrows. “I hope you’re taking advantage of the sunshine and breeze in any event. Breathe it all in extra hard for me today,” she tells them.

She catches the quizzical look on Bellamy’s face.

“I’m headed back to Becca’s Lab to finish the nightblood tests with Jackson,” she says, voice returning to normal. “So I’ll be indoors most of the time. But you two,” her appraising look passes over Bellamy’s face, and he feels the heat rise into his cheeks. “Do what you can to help Marcus and Thelonius with the Exodus. Be careful. Stay safe. With any luck, I’ll meet you in Polis in three days. Understood?” she finishes a tad sharp, gaze boring into Clarke’s.

Her daughter nods dutifully.

“Good. We will meet again,” she says reassuringly, and kisses Clarke’s forehead.

As for you,” she turns her body toward Bellamy, reaching up to wrap her arms around his neck. Taken by surprise, he stumbles back a step before hugging her in return. “I know you’ll keep my girl safe,” she whispers against his ear, kissing his cheek before she pulls back swiftly.

Tears prick at the back of his eyes, but he manages to hold them down and nod his chin instead.

“I promise,” he returns, and her warm eyes glow at him before she turns back to camp, and they follow her inside.

****

“Stop scrunching up your nose. You’re ruining my picture!” Clarke tries to sound serious, but she can’t help chuckling when Bellamy wiggles it even more dramatically, resembling a mouse on a quest for cheese.

“Can’t I just lay here and enjoy the great outdoors? I’m gorgeous from every angle anyway,” his rich voice teases her.

They stole a blanket – and one last hour – to sit in the meadow just a quarter mile from Arkadia
before aiding with the moving efforts. Clarke sighs and looks around them, drinking in the swaying grasses and rippling surface of the nearby pond where the wind dances across it. Wild pink tulips and bluebells unfold all around them, and the air smells like nectar. It’s paradise compared to what the next five years of their lives will resemble.

He’s resting on his tan forearms, corded with visible muscle, tipping his face back with his eyes closed against the sun’s beams. White clouds drift lazily across the sky like cotton balls. When a particularly large one passes across the sun, it casts her half-finished drawing in deep shadow. No matter how many times she tries, she can’t quite get the constellation pattern of his freckles exactly right.

“Yeah, yeah, you’re sooo attractive,” she rolls her eyes, pushing the toe of her boot gently into his calf. “You and that smattering of impossible-to-draw freckles.”

“I can think of a few features I like better,” she whispers huskily against the hard line of his jaw, splaying her hands against his chest before kissing down his neck. “But they’re definitely in my top five.”

She erupts in a delicious, unending stream of giggles when he unexpectedly flips her back into the soft blanket, climbing over her and kissing her soundly. His hands ghost up her sides, stroking her creamy skin softly. She spreads her bent knees wider, so he can fully rest between them, relishing the feel of him against her core, even through all their layers of clothes.

*****

The very last of the clear moonshine splashes around in the brown leather flask as it passes between the outstretched fingers of her closest friends. Although the air is brisker as night settles in around them, she feels cozy sitting beside Bellamy, whose body emanates heat like a furnace.

She watches Murphy card his fingers loosely through the dark ends of Emori’s hair as Monty
attempts to toss tiny peas into Jasper’s open mouth for their collective amusement.

“Dude! That was my eye! What is up with your aim? You’re slipping!” Jasper mocks, hands thrown up in pure challenge.

“Me? It’s you! You never move your head the right way!” Monty returns.

“You tell ‘em, baby!” Harper giggles from Clarke’s right while Jasper shoots her a glare.

“Interesting pastimes you Sky People have,” Ilian comments to Miller.

“Oh, if you think this is bad,” Raven leans across Miller before he can even open his mouth, “They’ve got this whole hand clap, snap, dance routine that takes about ten minutes to get through, and I’m sure we’ll all be treated to it very soon.”

“Don’t hate on the secret handshake, Raven!” Monty huffs.

“Yeah, she just wishes she were as badass as you two,” Murphy throws out, and Raven offers him a rare smile.

Bellamy catches Clarke’s attention with an exaggerated eye roll, and she almost laughs, but saves herself at the last moment.

“Secret handshake . . . ?” Ilian turns to Octavia instead.

She whips her jet black hair over her shoulder and sighs.

“Don’t ask me. They were stoners on the Ark. They do a lot of weird shit.”

Jasper purses his lips at her and narrows his eyes, but she just grins and blows him a kiss.
Ilian just shrugs, biting into the chicken skewered on a stick he grips in his left hand. As Miller tosses the flask to Bellamy and the group begins splitting into different conversations, Clarke shifts toward Harper, lowering her voice.

“I’d thought . . . maybe? After all this time?” she wiggles her eyebrows toward Jasper then Octavia suggestively.

“Clarke Griffin!” Harper leans back dramatically, dropping a palm on her chest and widening her eyes. “I never thought I’d live to see the day you cared about delinquent gossip.”

Clarke splutters.

“I-I don’t. I just, I care about them. And they’ve been through so much. I want them to be happy,” she murmurs.

The steady thrum of alcohol sliding through her veins is making her feel drowsy and strangely content with the world, as fucked up as their situation is currently.

“I know, we all do,” Harper pats her arm reassuringly before leaning in and dropping her voice still further. “I know she’s trying to help him cope. But I’m not sure that ship will ever sail,” she confesses. “She’s drawn to Ilian from everything I’ve seen,” she gives Clarke a sad smile.

“Yeah, yeah I’m sure you’re right,” Clarke replies. She tries to smile in return, but her thoughts flicker back to Maya’s earnest gaze back in the Mountain, the cold steel of that lever in her grasp. She takes a long drag from the flask Bellamy shifts into her lap, snuggling into his side as he wraps his fingers around the curve of her waist underneath her thin jacket. He drops a kiss to the top of her head.

A few minutes later, Clarke squeezes his knee and stands up, trying to suppress a yawn.

“I’m heading to bed, guys. Exodus trip starts bright and early at the gate. 8 a.m. sharp. That means everyone,” she stares pointedly at Jasper.

“Yes, mom,” he trills back, raising his chicken skewer to her in salute.
She takes a couple steps away from the bonfire when she realizes Bellamy’s not behind her. She turns to catch his gaze lingering somewhere in the vicinity of her ass, scoffs, and holds out her hand to him.

“Let’s go. While we’re young,” she beckons.

He glances up at her surprised.

“I’m – you want me to come – with you?” his voice jumps a few octaves. It forces a snort from Miller’s nose, which he quickly tries to quell while staring into the jumping flames.

Octavia’s eyes flicker between her brother and Clarke, a smile playing at her lips. Murphy stretches his legs in front of him, taking his sweet time to cross one ankle over the other as he says loud enough for all of them to hear, “Changing the game, Princess.”

“Damn,” Raven offers, scratching the back of her neck as Bellamy stands up.

“Ow owww!” Jasper hoots out behind them, “Go get some!”

Clarke ignores them all, keeping her eyes on him, heart thumping madly. But Bellamy pivots, throwing Jasper the finger just in time to see Harper shoving into the side of Jasper’s arm hard.

“Do you see what your girlfriend just did to me! That was assault,” he yells at Monty, half-serious, half-amused.

“Shut up, idiot,” Monty replies easily, smiling as he watches Bellamy and Clarke step into the shadows together.
You all know I love to hear from you, but this is a special request. If there's something you'd really like to see in the show - like certain character interactions, a ship, an issue you feel like hasn't been properly resolved, let me know in the comments! If I continue the story into the bunker stage, everyone will be in one place. And that means anything is possible from a narrative perspective. :) 

“It's tearin' up my heart when I'm with you
But when we are apart, I feel it too
And no matter what I do, I feel the pain
with or without you.

Baby don't misunderstand
What I'm trying to tell you
In the corner of my mind

Baby, it feels like we are running out of time.”

~”Tearin’ Up My Heart,” ‘N Sync

“Well, here we are,” Clarke announces a little hesitantly, throwing out her arm in a broad, sweeping gesture to take in the entirety of her small bedroom.

It reminds Bellamy of being inside the hollow of a tree with its ceiling sloped on both sides, enclosing them in a sort of bubble. The chair at her desk – which is covered in papers – looks like someone pushed it back in haste, and the purple-gray covers across her bed are slightly rumpled.

She glances up at him, biting her lip, but he’s distracted by the assortment of drawings tacked up on the back wall. He walks closer to them, stretching out his fingers toward the black ink one whose lines curl together into some sort of deep water squid.
“When did you have the time to draw all these?” he asks, awe-struck.

Clarke makes an unintelligible sound as she leans against the doorframe.

“I don’t really know – stolen moments I guess. Late at night. Early in the morning. When I was anxious . . . I did a few of them when I was waiting for you to come back from your last hunting mission.”

She meets his eyes and smiles tightly from across the room, but it only lasts for a second.

“Roan always makes it interesting, doesn’t he?” he says drily.

“So, uh—” she spins her dad’s watchband around on her slender wrist.

“Yeah?” he licks his lip, and she’s totally immersed in watching him do it.

But then he clears his throat expectantly.

“Do you like it?” Clarke asks.

His eyes sweep around the space once more. She left a lamp on at the desk. It casts a rosy glow across her little corner of the Ark.

“Yeah I like it,” he smiles easily. “I’ve never been here before,” he takes a step closer to the desk. “But I’m a little concerned with all the paperwork you seem to be hoarding—”

His hand falls heavily on the back of the chair as he grips it tightly.

Alarmed, Clarke follows his gaze.

Right to the picture of Lexa.
"You’re so talented," he says tightly, nodding to her with constrained politeness.

She crosses the gap between them in two long strides, reaching across his body to gently remove the picture from where it’s taped along the bottom of her desk shelf. He can sense the tightness in her shoulders as she slides open a drawer and slips it inside.

“No, leave it up, Clarke. I’m sure she’d want to watch.”

"Stop it. You don't have to look at it. It's fine. Don't do this right now."

He watches her her hands tremble on the edge of the smooth wood.

“I’m not the one doing anything. Stop blaming me!” he shoots back, shoving the chair into place underneath the desk with a clang.

She pushes her long, blonde hair behind her ears and swallows hard before turning his way again.

“I forgot it was there,” she says softly, reaching for his arm, but he steps around her. “I’m not trying to upset you on purpose.”

“Stop apologizing,” he snaps.

"Well then what is it that you want?"

He sighs intensely, locking his fingers into his hair.

“I don't know. It's your room. I can't tell you what to hang in it," he says finally. "But . . . just tell me if this is how it’s going to be for the next five years? You keeping the Flame in that skull box looking at it when you think no one's watching—” a streak of confusion flits across her face. “I know you took it back from Gaia after the conclave, Clarke.”
“Yeah, I did, but—”

His deep grumble drowns her out.

“Am I supposed to be good with that? Because even for the pathetic kind of guy I am, I don't think I can.”

He’s clenching his teeth, but she can still see the twitch that crosses his cheekbone involuntarily. A few salty teardrops trickle down her cheek.

“It’s . . . over,” her voice is weak.

“No, it clearly isn’t,” he retorts, gesturing toward the drawer. "And that's ok. I mean, if you want to wait . . . we can wait. Or just . . . not," he lets a hand fall lamely to his hip.

“It is!” she wrings her hands and looks at him pleadingly. “I gave the Flame to my mom when we came home.”

The words lands on him all at once.

“What? Why? Roan and Gaia never would have let you!”

She walks toward him and is relieved when he holds his ground.

“They all know the Flame isn’t a symbol of a sacred religion now. They know Becca made it and that she made the nightblood. They know it’s a scientific tool.”

“But still,” his eyes narrow, and he places two fingers gently beneath her chin to shift her gaze from somewhere near his collarbone to straight into his eyes. His tone is sure. “They wouldn’t let it go without a fight. There’s too much history wrapped in it. What don’t I know, Clarke?”

She wraps all her glossy hair into one hand, winding it tightly until it twists and curves on one side of her neck. It's a stupid way to distract herself - she hasn't really played with her hair in years - and it's
causing Bellamy to tap his boot against the floor as he waits.

“Raven needs it. ALIE’s code’s still in her brain from the improper shutdown with the EMP. It’s eroding her neurons. My mother is going to give her the Flame as soon as she’s back from the Island, and we’re safe in the bunker. It’s the only way to stop her seizures and make her better. The flame was built to keep ALIE in check.”

She swipes hastily at a few renegade tears coasting down her face and watches the steady rise and fall of his chest. He clenches his eyes closed as if he simply can’t take one more sliver of bad news.

“You’re sure?” his tone is dull.

“Yeah, yeah I’m sure.”

The moment her palm settles on the side of his face, he swipes his head to the right, away from her touch.

“I already told you, Bellamy,” she whispers, nerves fraying and sizzling at the end of her fingertips when she drops her hand. “I cared about her. I-I loved her. But it’s nothing like how I feel about you. I couldn’t have done any of this without you,” he watches her lip tremble. “I know you’re my partner. I don’t have any doubt about that.”

“So you’re giving it up? Just like that?”

“Of course! Raven’s my best friend.”

He rubs a hand over his chin repeatedly. They’re dangling at the edge of the Ark’s moonwalk landing – one false move, and they’ll slip over the edge into the vast sea of space, completely untethered.

“But she’s not the only reason,” she pushes on. “It’s time to let go and move on. I don’t need it as a constant reminder anymore.”

There’s a long pause.
"I need you, Bellamy."

He huffs, but he’s calmer, she can tell. The crackling energy radiating off his lean figure a few moments ago seems to be ebbing away.

"I need you, too," he admits quietly, drawing her to him for a brief hug.

“I thought I was your best friend,” the corner of his lip quirks up as he whispers it into her hair.

“You’re a lot more than that,” she squeezes his hand. “I’d do anything for you.”

She gasps aloud at the words that tumble out before she’s really thought about or processed them. Her eyes flash up to his in shock, and his stare is so intense she feels cemented to the spot. It’s a terrifying confession, a terrifying truth.

But.

It’s real.

His mouth finds hers by instinct. He applies a steady pressure until his tongue wears away an opening at the seam of her lips and toys with her own. His hands span warmly across the small of her back as she steps nearer still, needing to hear the thump of his heart behind his rib cage. When a droplet of liquid hits her jaw that doesn’t belong to her, she stills and draws back, delicately wiping the pad of her thumbs along his lash line.

“We’re going to be happy, Bellamy,” she vows fiercely. “Very, very, happy.”

He sighs at the feel of her hands wrapped around his face and peers down at her.

“Talk is cheap, Princess.”
Her head tilts to the side as she captures her tongue between her teeth.

“Well, we've got time to make good on a promise.”

He grins at her, all dancing freckles and sparkling teeth. But, then—

“Did you really mean what you said yesterday?” the speed with which he’s transitioned to seriousness leaves her dizzy.

“Which part?” she jokes, fluttering her eyelashes at him.

“I—” he clears his throat loudly. It almost sounds like it hurts him. “I want to know if we can do something more permanent, something other people will be able to see, too.”

Her mind reels across the possibilities. A commitment ceremony? Gold bands like those her parents wore on the Ark?

“You want to get married?” she barely breathes.

Her throat is so, so dry.

Now that she’s said it first, the idea starts to burrow into his imagination. He really likes the picture of her in a pretty white dress, holding wildflowers, walking down an aisle toward him. Maybe somewhere near the ocean. Their friends and family would be gathered around looking on as they vowed their commitment to each other until their safe passage to the next shore.

He nods very slowly, grasping her hands tightly in his own.

“But when we’re above ground again. When we’re free and can do it outside. That’s what you’d want, right?”

“Yes,” she flips a stray curl out of his steadying eyes. “That’s exactly how I’d want it.”
His Adam’s Apple bobbles for a moment.

“But in the meantime, I mean, would you still want . . . to try to . . . it’s so insane because we’ll be locked up again, but, you seemed . . . like yesterday you thought it was a good—”

“Hey, hey,” she runs her hands along his forearms. “You’re rambling, baby. Just tell me, it’s ok. Whatever it is, it’s ok.”

He’s silent for several long moments. He glances back at the wall of sketches and blinks rapidly as his eyes settle on one in particular. Breaking gently free from Clarke’s grasp, he walks slowly toward it, as if in a daze. Unpinning it from the wall, he sits down at the edge of her bed, lost in the image.

Too Late to Run, October 2147 it says in Clarke’s careful, swirling script at the edge of the yellowing page. It’s a picture of a grand oak tree with a gnarled trunk and intense assortment of tangling branches full of plump leaves and hidden birds. But, and as he holds the picture at arm’s length against the light, he can see the embracing couple hidden in the bramble again, just as he had from a distance a minute before.

“It’s . . . us,” he says quietly as Clarke comes to sit beside him, her thigh brushing up alongside his own.

“It is,” she sings back to him. "It was always us, Bellamy."

“But the date in the corner. You drew it—”

“After we got back from the bunker, you’re right,” she raises her eyebrows once in acknowledgement, offering him a half-smile.

“Were you still high on the Jobi nuts?” he jokes weakly, eyes tracking across her face earnestly.

She laughs outright.
“No. I was high on being saved by this one guy I suddenly trusted in our camp.”

He smoothes the page out across his lap, carefully eliminating a few of the crinkles while she watches before setting it on her bedside table.

“Clarke?” he pivots his body toward hers, dragging his left knee up onto the bed, so he can face her directly.

“Mmmhmm?”

“I want a kid. I want to have a kid with you.”

Her chin dips down the smallest degree as she nods.

"Sure, like you said, when this is all over, we can have everything.”

"No,” he shakes his head, gripping her knee more tightly than she expected him to. "Let's do it now.”
410 killed me. 411 better put me back together. Here's something while you wait. :)  

“*Butterflies,* they fill my guts when I look in your eyes.

*A heart that's young is filled with sweet surprise*

*Only the innocent can sympathize.*

*I don't care about the funny way you wear your hair*

*Someday you'll let me put my comb up there*

*Till then you're beautiful, and I just stare.*

*Sing another lonely line with me*

*Sing it in a lazy melody.*

*Walter Martin, “Sing to Me”* 

Clarke emits a small, breathless laugh.

“Now? But you said I was crazy yesterday for even suggesting it,” she slides her hand over his carefully. “What changed?”

Bellamy flips his hand over so their palms touch and brings her hand to his lips, leaving fluttering kisses across the pale skin.

“Oh,” the sound is so soft, like velvet, slipping out of her mouth. “Yeah, we always have been.”
The crinkled drawing of them hidden in her blossoming tree sways a little as a gust of air from the vent over her bed blows along it.

Clarke smiles, shifting fully onto the bed and then throwing a leg over Bellamy’s hip to sit firmly in his lap. He smells like the woods they walked through this morning. She leans against his dark shirt and allows her nose to press right into his collarbone.

“Are you sniffing me, Princess?” he chuckles.

The rumbling of his laughter vibrates into her cheek.

“So what if I am? I have to make sure we’re genetically compatible, you know,” she draws back and wiggles her eyebrows at him cutely.

“What?”

“If we don’t like the smell of each other, our babies won’t be as healthy as they could be,” she suddenly sounds earnest and serious, nodding along at her own words. “It’s science.”

A bemused expression ripples across his chiseled cheekbones.

“How,” he says, running both his hands up her sides with maddening slowness. He feels her shudder against him and grins. “I don’t think we’ll have too much of a problem.” He nips at the juncture where her neck meets her shoulder. Her eyes close and she throws back her head when his lips venture lower toward the swells of her breasts, and he licks at the tender flesh between them. “You’ve always smelled fantastic to me, even when our sanitation methods were questionable at the dropship,” he whispers teasingly into her ear.

“Bellamy!” She smacks his arm playfully just before he surges up to scout out her welcoming lips.

The aftershocks of his laughter leave his lips open, and she takes full advantage of it, licking into his mouth and trailing her tongue along his upper palate where she already knows it tickles him. His kiss is almost bruising in its eagerness. The weight of his hand coasts lower around her hip and down her thigh, leaving a trail of goosebumps in its wake.
The edge of the stupid Grounder dress digs into her skin as her leg muscles strain against it, desperate to be closer to his touch. She wishes she’d changed when they came home. But she’d gotten lost in packing up her scattered belongings. In fact, she was tossing jumbled Council papers from the drawers across her desktop when Raven had rapped hard at her doorframe, pulling her away for dinner despite her protests with a tart “You can’t boss us all around tomorrow if you’re starving, Griffin!” and a kindly meant (she’s sure) shove.

“Want me to take it off for you?” he hums against her neck, palming her breast as she writhes in his lap.

His erection is growing. She can feel it tent up in the hot hollow of her thighs. Thrusting her hips forward, she rocks her clit against the tip of it.

“Want me to take these,” she tugs hard at the fabric bunching up around the tops of his legs. “Off for you?” she returns throatily.

“Fuck yes,” Bellamy grunts, pinching her nipple through her clothes and pulling a tiny, unexpected squeak from her as she presses into his hand. “You like that, don’t you?” he taunts her, eyes glinting with dark mischief.

“Mmm,” is her only reply as she tugs his shirt up over his messy curls, dropping it unceremoniously on the floor.

Gripping the sides of her waist, he picks her up easily and rolls her onto her back, climbing between her legs.

“Tell me, Clarke,” he bites the delicate skin beneath her ear before crushing his lips against hers. His insistent hand inches her dress up until it pools around her waist. The rough material of his cargo pants stings against her clit, but she only opens her legs farther when he begins languidly rutting against her. “Tell me what you like.”

“You talk too much.”

He grabs the wrist she’s been sliding along his defined abs and draws it up over her head. She whines in protest, but he just captures the other snaking toward his hair and pins it with the first. His eyes bore into hers.
“Tell me. I want to hear you say it.”

Her eyes meet his in the challenge, but she stays silent, wiggling her hips, still desperate for the friction his dick provided her moments before.

“Bell,” she huffs.

Leaving one hand locked around her narrow wrists, he uses the other to unzip his pants and jerk them down a few inches. His erection is almost at the elastic band of his boxers, and he rubs it roughly against her wet panties.

“Say it, Princess,” he demands, nudging against her hood repeatedly, sparking something deep within her.

“Yes, yes,” she admits loudly. “I like when you take control. Happy? Please,” she begs him, trying and failing to lift her head toward his where it hovers above her.

“Please what, Clarke?”

“Please tear off my clothes and fuck me into the headboard,” she bites back.

He knows it’s a challenge.

But he thinks he’s up for it.

He releases her wrists, and leaning back on his knees, pulls her up against him for a moment to unzip the garment separating them.

She sighs at the crackle of the zipper, and he aids her in peeling the sticky material from her body. But she hisses when he gets up to remove his pants and kick off his boots, leaving them in a jumbled heap near her door, already missing his body’s weight against hers. Yet he remains at the foot of her bed, watching her through lidded eyes and crossing his arms across his sculpted chest. The very thought of his chest makes her mouth water as his muscles ripple beneath his honey warm skin.
He tilts his head to the side, surveying her, before—

“Take your bra off, Clarke. I want to see your tits when you get yourself off for me.”

Her breath hitches, a deep blush sweeping across her chest like a swirling sandstorm. With trembling fingers she un hooks her gray bra and meets his feral stare as it sweeps over the generous mounds.

“So damn gorgeous,” he mutters, and then she smiles a little when he looks directly at her in his centering way, relaxing back into the pillows and hooking her thumbs around the edge of her panties before sliding them slowly down her smooth legs.

She gives him a bit of a show, twirling the dainty cotton around the edge of her pointer finger like a lasso before flinging it across the room at him. He catches it neatly, and her blush crawls right up her neck into her face as he brings the material to his nose.

“No problems here, Princess. I think we’ll be just fine.”

She sucks in air through her teeth as her walls clench tightly at his words. She can actually feel the moisture seeping out of her and squeezes her thighs shut automatically at the sensation.

“Oh, no, I don’t think so,” Bellamy protests. “I want you to open up those pretty legs for me. I want to watch you make yourself feel good.”

His words, the deep rumble of his voice, thrill through her limbs and into her core. She gathers her courage and opens herself, pink and exposed, to him as she begins the gentle, circular motions that she knows will drive her crazy before long.

He takes a step closer to her and pulls down his own boxers, stroking himself to the rhythm she’s created. Her pupils widen as she watches him flick his thumb across the slit of his dick, sees a bit of precum moistening the tip.

“Slide your fingers inside yourself,” Bellamy coaxes her several surreal moments later. “Go on, you can handle two,” he urges.
He’s right. They slip inside her, stretching her walls and she moans as he works himself harder in his hand.

“Good, baby, that’s good. You look so amazing. You’re doing so good,” he offers her encouragingly. “Now start playing with your clit with your thumb.”

She’s only a few seconds into the action when his beautiful body slides against hers once more, and she shudders at the contact. He pushes her hand away, pushing two of his own, thicker fingers into her deeply as she gasps against his mouth at the invasion. But when she finally slides her hand against the heated skin of his back, she can’t help but chuckle lightly against his neck.

“What the hell could be funny?” he demands, slipping his fingers out of her, leaving her keening, and pulling back his tongue from where it was laving at her nipple, turning it into a pebbled peak.

“You back is covered in soot. From the dropship pallet I guess,” she chokes out breathlessly. “You were talking about our lack of sanitation there, and well . . . “ she brings her hand up to his eyes for inspection, and it’s mostly black.

“Uh-huh,” he grumbles. “Some things never change.”

But Clarke’s beaming at him like the July sun.

“Want one last shower above ground?”

“Depends,” Bellamy falls onto his side, his erection heavy against her thigh while his fingertips dust across her sweaty back as she lands on her own side several inches away. When he drags his hand off her, it’s equally sooty.

“On what?” she demands playfully.

“On if the water will . . . dampen my virility. The Rebel King has to keep up his reputation,” he traces his fingers across the damp blonde curls below her stomach, slipping one finger lower to land on her swollen clit, which throbs slightly. “And I can only do that effectively by knocking you up.”
She rolls her eyes before glancing into his laughing ones.

“You’re such a monumental ass,” she moans, as he climbs back on top of her and sucks her nipple into his mouth once more while she tangles her fingers in his hair.

“But you still love me,” he replies when he comes up for air.

“I still do,” she agrees.

“And you still really want this? Not just the sex . . . I mean . . . a kid. With me?” the tremble in his voice just beneath the bravado cracks her chest open.

She captures his face in her hands and kisses him sweetly.

“Still guilty,” she promises. “I want it all with you, Blake.”

“Brave Princess,” he smirks at her, and she smiles back.

“I love you, too,” he returns. And saying it here on her purple bed sheets of her Princess Ark room, on the last night before they leave to ride out the apocalypse after everything they’ve been through, somehow, it seems fitting.

“Then let’s take a shower. If you’re good, I’ll let you push me against a wall again.”
Chapter Summary

411 might just be our episode, people. Fingers crossed, and all eyes on Bellarke. Until then...

“The day I first met you
You told me you'd never fall in love
But now that I get you
I know fear is what it really was.

Now here we are,
So close yet so far.
Haven't I passed the test?
When will you realize,
Baby, I'm not like the rest?

Don't wanna break your heart
Wanna give your heart a break
I know you're scared it's wrong
Like you might make a mistake.
There's just one life to live
And there's no time to wait,
So let me give your heart a break.”

~Demi Lovato, “Give Your Heart A Break”

The cool water cascades across Clarke’s skin, leaving well-defined droplets behind as she slides her hands over her face. She allows herself to look up into the flow of sharp white water, a little in awe. The liquid pools at the base of her spine where it falls from the tips of her hair, made darker by the glowing
moisture.

In this moment, there’s only calmness and cleansing. She hears the grate of the shower curtain’s rings against the metallic bar, but it’s like a hazy intrusion far at the outskirts of her perception.

“Ah!” she gasps in surprise, slapping her palm against the sky blue tile wall as Bellamy’s hand lands heavily on her hip.

He doesn’t say anything, just reaches around her body for the thick, oval bar of tan soap on the shelf in front of her. In a moment, his other arm comes up around her side with a forest green washcloth. Placing the soap in the center of it, he steps closer to her back and begins rubbing the soap against the fabric as she stares, transfixed.

His erection skimming her lower back is impossible to ignore, but she’s still fascinated by his beautiful, strong fingers as they scrub against the soap.

Delicately, he drops the soap back into its slot and begins running the bubbling froth against her left shoulder, causing her right one to cave in toward her neck as she hisses out a sigh. He works methodically, soaping up her dusty back, her neck, the curve of her hips, the long sweep of her legs. When his hand splays across her stomach and his lips nudge at the pulse of her neck, she turns to take in the water droplets clinging to the pink patchwork of his lips and dark fringe of his eyelashes.

Feeling the steady throb of her pulse shift suddenly to the apex of her thighs, she spins fully, grasping at his arms. But Bellamy simply drops an easy kiss to her lips and continues running the cloth across her collarbone and down her arms, tugging a little at her fingers wrapped in his own through the material. He glides the coarse material into the hollow between her breasts and then directly on top of one, grasping at it with his hot hand.

“Bell—” Clarke moans out as the sharpness of the worn fibers scrape across her nipple.

He removes his hand and brushes a light kiss across the reddening flesh instead, licking it with his tongue. One of her hands traces across the valleys and ridges of his abs as he proceeds to her other breast, covering it in a lather that smells something like vanilla. She lets his skilled fingers sweep away the thin layer of dust woven into the soft skin of her stomach, and he bends at his knees to draw the washcloth down her ivory thighs and calves until he reaches her toes.

“Lift up your foot,” he urges, kneeling down with a hand braced against her thigh.
His dark eyes meet hers with a depth that causes her breath to catch in her throat. She wraps her fingers against the sturdy sinews of his shoulder and draws her foot up, allowing him to cleanse it, then the other, carefully. When he’s done, Bellamy chases the green fabric up her right leg as he stands, cupping at her sex as her wide eyes stare into his face.

Her jaw dances as the abrasive cloth flits across her clit and swirls around her entrance. The warmth of his skin juts right up against the threadbare fabric. Involuntarily, her thighs clamp down around his fingers, trapping them there. He offers a half-smile, prodding at her shoulder gently until her ass pushes into the cold tile when she steps backward.

“Wait . . . wait,” Clarke gasps, “It’s my turn.”

Her cheeks tinge with pink as she takes the washcloth from his outstretched fingers and runs it under the steady stream of warming water in this tiny bathroom built during her time in Polis. It’s only half a hallway length away from her quarters, but she hasn’t been able to enjoy it the way she would like. And now, well, now this is it. They’re out of time.

Clarke reaches for the slippery soap, grinding her fingers down into its slick surface through the cloth as Bellamy ghosts his fingertips over the curve of her waist and flutters them around her bellybutton in circles.

“Sit down at the edge,” she nods toward the single wooden bench someone drilled into the tile at the end of the shower.

After kissing the wet strands of blonde hair sticking to her forehead, he does.

She scoots in behind him, draping her legs on either side of his hips as she soaps up his back and lets the water spray wash away the rainbow-flecked bubbles that paint his freckled skin.

“You’ve always been so beautiful,” she murmurs into his shoulder, allowing her mouth to fly over the rough scars there, which rise up like stubborn hills over the vast plain of his back. Bellamy makes a guttural noise in his throat in response, dropping his head in relaxation.

She glides the cloth down his sturdy forearms, tucking her head under his raised arm to sweep over his chest and stomach. Even though they’re in the shower with the last of the fresh water cleansing them, she can still make out the faint musk that is so quintessentially Bellamy and smiles. The soapy
cotton leaves silver-white suds on top of his bronze thighs as she sucks at the wet skin resting over
the bone of his shoulder, carding her free hand through his sleek, black hair.

“God, Clarke,” he groans as she takes him into her hand stroking him delicately, just wanting to
 tease.

“Ready?” she drops the question against his ear.

He jumps up in response, tugging at her with both hands wrapped around her ribcage in reply as her
laughter echoes off the tiles of their private oasis.

“No going back if we do this,” he warns.

She rolls her eyes at him playfully.

“What are you talking about? We did this last night.”

“She’s wet and tingling in a way that has nothing to do with standing in a shower as the heavy head
of his dick slides across the bottom edge of her stomach.

“But we’re going to be doing it all the time now,” he smirks at her.

“Nice to find a man who knows what he wants,” she jokes. “Now catch me.” And he grabs her other
leg just as she launches off of it.

Her kiss is hungry and exploratory all at once, ankles locked firmly around Bellamy’s back as his
calloused hands skim her sides before one cups her jaw.

The coldness of the wall stings her senses, and her core clenches down as if flames surged within her
as he thrusts deeply into her, once, unexpectedly, filling her completely.
“Fuck, Bellamy,” she hisses into his neck.

He plunders her mouth the same way he rocks his hips into her, over and over, with no shame. She arches against him, claws at his back, yells his name when his thick fingers seek out her clit tucked away under its hood and coax it back out.

It isn’t hard to come around him after that, and she lets out a full-body tremble, clutching at him for dear life as he continues thrusting into her.

Nothing has ever felt so good as she slides her hands against his wet back and kisses every part of him she can reach.

“I love you, Princess,” he mumbles right before she feels him spill deep within her. Her limbs relax at last, everything going limp and heavy. But she manages to kiss him one last time, long and deep, before he slips out of her, lifting her up and settling her down on the bench before twisting the showerhead off to halt the flood of water.

When he turns back to her, he looks a little sheepish, just the corner of his mouth curves up. She returns his half-smile and holds out her hand. When he moves forward toward her, she grabs the two towels hanging on the rack right beyond the flimsy plastic curtain, handing one to him and wrapping the other around herself. He hitches his around his hips and sits down, slipping an arm around her shoulders, while she curls her knees up under her and leans her heavy head against his chest.

“Tomorrow. Everything changes tomorrow,” she says softly.

“We’ll get through it,” he promises quietly.

She leans over and takes his left hand in hers, dropping it along the slick, bare skin of her belly.

“We’ll create something good from it,” she vows, and closes her eyes, listening to the steadying sound of his breaths.
Chapter Summary

I don’t stand for Bellarke space separations. But if it happens in 413, Braven and Becho babies are not on the table, guys. They won’t do that to us. I believe in that Notebook, “If I’m a bird, you’re a bird,” “I wrote to you every day for a year,” “It wasn’t over, it still isn’t over” kind of soul mate love. Bellarke is real, everyone. Believe in Bellarke. Their love will withstand time, space, and the apocalypse.

That said, if you’re freaking out about the finale and want to talk about it with someone, let me know in the comments. Happy to ease fears where I can. :)

“After the war we said we'd fight together

I guess we thought that's just what humans do

Letting darkness grow

As if we need its palette, and we need its color

But now I've seen it through

And now I know the truth

That anything could happen

Anything could happen

Anything could happen

Anything could happen

Anything could happen

Anything could happen

Anything could.”

~Ellie Goulding, “Anything Could Happen”

Clarke keeps a tight grip on Bellamy’s hand as she steps carefully onto the metallic stairwell that disappears into the gloom of the bunker below.
Prainfaya hits in four days. It’s the thought that consumes her mind completely as she follows the flood of Sky Crew people pushing its way inside. The air beyond the bunker’s hatch is thick, yellow-hued, and quickly becoming deadly, even for them. Jaha was right: it was imperative to move into the bunker today. Already, raised boils and angry red rashes received during the walk from Arkadia peek out over collars and along wrists. Clarke squeezes her eyes shut for a moment, anticipating the long line of people who’ll be waiting to see her, her mother, and Jackson as soon as they’ve settled in. There won’t be enough pills to treat them all; the nightblood injections have to work.

Clarke hitches up her large, canvas travel bag more securely onto her shoulder. It contains everything she thought worth saving. It’s not much, but it’s amazing to consider that a few of her personal belongings – like art supplies and books – survived all the way from the Griffin’s original apartment in the stars. What fell from the air will not die in the fire.

Her heavy boots tramp their way up the slate gray ramp winding toward the main lobby. She jolts as the screams reach her ears slowly, and it takes a few moments before she spots the tear-streaked face of a tiny boy as the hurried crowd parts around him.

“Dad! Dad!” he screams out, though it’s barely heard over the commotion.

“Ethan!” Clarke yells back, rushing toward him and pulling Bellamy along in her wake.

“Are you ok? Where’s your dad?” she crouches down in front of the trembling figure, stroking his arm soothingly.

“Bell?” Ethan turns his dimpled chin up at the tall man in his guard uniform. Bellamy must seem incredibly intimidating from Ethan’s vantage point. But the boy’s smiling.

“Hey, little man! Did you get separated from your dad?” Bellamy swings Ethan up easily into his arms and looks around across the crowd. “Don’t worry, we’ll find him.”

“I don’t know if he got in,” Ethan confesses.

“Oh, he did. He did, sweetheart,” Clarke rubs his back gently. “All of our people are going to be safe here. Octavia made sure of that.”

She meets Bellamy’s eyes briefly before allowing her own to scan the incoming horde for Hardy.
“Ethan! Ethan!” Hardy’s angular face pushes past a patchwork bag being carried by an older woman up ahead of them. “Thank God!” he exclaims as he reaches for his son hoisted up in Bellamy’s arms.

“I think this one belongs to you,” Bellamy smiles, passing Ethan to him.

“Thank you so much for finding him,” he nods to Bellamy and Clarke appreciatively before hurrying toward the lobby where room assignments are being made.

Clarke smirks at Bellamy.

“Kids in the apocalypse, who would’ve believed it? Definitely not me!”

“Easy Princess, easy,” he returns, threading their fingers together as they make their way toward Kane’s booming voice.

***

Seven bunk beds line the barren walls of the room Bellamy steps into, which is lit by what appear to be circadian lights. Murphy and Emori have claimed the bunk nearest the door where they whisper quietly as Murphy unwinds the cloth wrap from her sleek black hair. Octavia’s leather jacket draped over the blue blankets of another bed is a telltale sign she’s in this dorm, too. But if that didn’t give it away, Ilian flipping through a book of drawings on the lower bed certainly does.

Jasper’s already got his legs stretched out on one of the top bunks, ear buds securely in place, nodding along to some punk rock band or other. Bellamy hears the booming bass faintly even from ten feet away. Below Jasper, Raven is unsnapping her leg brace, massaging the sore muscles underneath it.

“Damn, you took the nicest bunk, Jasper!” Monty cries out as he drops his things on the one next to his best friend and helps Harper with her bag.

“They’re all identical, man,” Jasper pulls out one ear bud, amused.

“Maybe,” Harper snaps, reaching out a hand to shove his shoulder playfully. “But yours is the one closest to that awesome fake window where pictures of nature are going to flash by to stop us from going crazy.”
“Hey! The depressed guy needs his waterfalls and frolicking polar bears, all right?” Jasper shoots back before resuming his jam session.

“Yeah, yeah. Second Dawn covered all their bases,” Miller huffs from behind Clarke, who quickly steps out of his way. “Let’s just be glad we’re alive at all.”

“Which one?” he gestures at Bryan, who points toward the bunk next to the one Monty just claimed.

“I guess we can take the one across from them?” Bellamy shrugs at Clarke.

“Sure,” she sighs agreeably, walking across the room and dropping her bag on the top bunk.

“Hey Griffin, so you like to be on top, huh?” Murphy yells out from the other side of the space, his smile dancing widely across his face, lighting up his features.

She feels her ears flaming, but after everything her friends have seen over the last two nights, it’s not like her and Bellamy’s relationship is a big secret.

But Bellamy’s jaw clenches. He steps out in front of her into the wide walkway separating one row of bunks from the other, staring Murphy down.

“Hey Murphy! So you’d like to be dead?” he taunts.

A bemused expression crosses Murphy’s face.

“Nah, that’s kind of why I’m here actually,” he returns sarcastically.

But his smile falters a little when Bellamy continues to watch him unblinkingly.

“Sorry, man, just a joke to lighten the mood,” he holds his palms out in a pacifying gesture.
“Watch yourself, Murphy,” is all Bellamy says before beginning to unpack his bag and shoving clothes into the silver dresser beside their bunk.

“Where’s Luna?” Raven calls out to the room in general.

The question shatters the tense vibe lingering in the air.

“Her fight is over,” Roan replies, striding into the dorm with Echo on his heels. “Praimfaya awaits her.”

Bellamy instantly stiffens.

“Don’t tell me the Grounder King is sharing this room with us for the next five years,” he hisses under his breath to Clarke, who’s sitting on his bed and rubbing his knee aimlessly as he stands before her.

“I didn’t make the room assignments,” she breathes back, opening her eyes wide in warning.

“What?” Raven’s eyes snap up to Roan’s, and she clicks her brace back into place to shuffle over to him. She stands just a foot away, angling her face up to his. “She had a space with Sky Crew. We made sure of it, right Clarke?” Her chestnut ponytail, interwoven with braids, swishes as she looks toward her friend.

Clarke jumps up, nearly knocking her head on the bedrail, and hurries over to Raven.

“That’s right. Octavia won the conclave. You know the terms, Roan! All of Sky Crew will be saved, along with a portion of the other clans’ people, chosen by their leaders. Luna belongs to Sky Crew now that her people are dead. Where the hell is she?” Clarke demands. “What did you do?”

Echo steps out from behind Roan, hand traveling to her sheathed sword in a menacing gesture as her lip curls upward, but Roan stills her motion with his hand.
“I’m well aware of the terms of the conclave, Wanheda,” he bites back. “But I watched Luna walk out into the woods rather than come into the bunker. It appears she doesn’t believe humanity is worth saving after all.”

“Insane, you’re all insane,” Murphy mutters it under his breath.

Clarke stands motionless for a moment, absorbing the information.

“No, no. I have to go after her!” she exclaims, already making for the door.

Now Roan growls, throwing his sword up in front of the entrance.

“You will not. I am still King and Commander of the Coalition, Flame or no Flame. Luna is of my people. She’s made her choice, and you will honor it. You will be here when your mother returns tomorrow, and you will help distribute nightblood to everyone in this bunker. Do you understand me?”

The hard flecks of blue shine like ice in his eyes, and Clarke gulps but maintains eye contact. The heat of Bellamy’s body shimmers and vibrates beside her before she can even take full note of it.

“Put the damn sword away,” he barks, crossing his arms over his chest.

“Always there to defend the mighty Wanheda,” Echo sneers.

“If you’ve got a problem with that, a quick chat with my sister will make sure you’ve got a front-row seat to the end of the world,” Bellamy threatens.

“You don’t have the power,” Echo leans in toward him, voice throaty.

“You wanna bet your life on it? You can ask her yourself. She’s going to be your roommate, after all” Bellamy gestures toward Octavia’s leather jacket.

“Enough!” Clarke shouts, effectively breaking up the argument. “If we’re going to survive this and
live here, we can’t keep threatening each other’s lives!”

“She says that now,” Emori rolls her eyes. Miller looks away uncomfortably while Monty sighs. They’ve all heard about the nightblood experiments on Becca’s Island.

“No weapons in the dorm. Those should be in the armory with the others,” Clarke demands pointedly. “There’s no special treatment here. We are one people now.”

Roan and Echo make no motion to move, but then Bryan is standing beside Bellamy, barring their way into the room, Miller and Ilian standing up to join them.

“You heard her,” Bellamy’s deep voice reverberates around the cavernous space.

“Fine,” Roan returns through gritted teeth. “But when that night blood arrives, Azgeda gets the first round of injections.”

Clarke’s about to reply, when Murphy’s yell jolts her.

“EMORI!” his voice is desperate, stricken.

She turns just in time to see Emori coughing up crimson blood. It stains the front of her light shirt, dribbling down her chin.

“Get out!” Miller demands of Echo and Roan, and the two turn to leave at last. Bellamy sees the look of disgust Echo throws over her shoulder, hears the soft, “Freikdreina,” that passes her lips.

“It’s the radiation, isn’t it?” Murphy asks desperately as Clarke falls to her knees beside the sick girl.

“It’s going to be ok, it’s going to be ok,” she repeats soothingly, taking the headscarf Murphy passes her to wipe the blood away. “Just breathe, breathe, easy.”
“How can she be sick?” Murphy demands, turning up to Bellamy with wide eyes.

Bellamy shakes his head slightly, unsure.

“She was exposed on the walk here, just like we all were,” Clarke answers much more calmly than he feels. “Her immunity isn’t the same as ours, but it’ll be all right. My mom will be here with the nightblood tomorrow, and she’ll be the first to get an injection. I promise,” she looks into Murphy’s face sincerely.

Murphy sits down beside Emori, wrapping an arm around her shoulders and pressing her head into the crook of his shoulder. “It’ll be all right, baby. I’ll make sure it’s all right. You’re going to get the medicine you need,” he paints her hairline with sweet promises Clarke hopes they can keep.

***

She’s curled up into a small ball in one of the striped armchairs in the office’s lounge when he finds her.

“Clarke?” Bellamy tries warily, closing the door softly behind him. She doesn’t even look up. “It’s time to go get some dinner from the mess hall. At this point, all that’s probably left is stale radishes from Ilian’s famous farm, but, we’ve survived protein packets on the Ark, right?” he smiles at her.

She makes no motion to remove her hand from where it shields her face. His shoulders slump. Bellamy sits down on the carpet at the foot of the chair, cross-legged and a little awkward as he runs his fingertips along her arm.

“Princess, come on. You’ve got to eat. Your mother would never forgive me if I let you starve. What is it?”

When Clarke finally removes her hand, he leans back in surprise. Her eyes are puffy and red-rimmed, and her nose looks a little swollen. But it’s the two pale pink blisters alongside her ear that make his heart stutter.

“Oh my God, Clarke! You’re sick!”
His strong arms catch her as she half-dives, half-collapses into him. He pulls her down toward his lap, where he rocks her like a baby. She cries openly now, salty tears staining his shirt.

“No matter what I do, someone always dies . . . Luna, now Emori . . . ” she chokes out through a stuffy nose. “I can’t save anyone.”

“I am not losing you, do you here me, Princess?” Bellamy’s vice-like grip on her tightens, one hand securely holding her thigh while the other smooths her blonde hair down. “You’re going to be fine. You’re already a nightblood. This will pass. You’ll take the anti-radiation pill, and there’s a spray for the boils. It’ll work. Emori will get the nightblood, and she’ll be fine, too,”

“What if it doesn’t pass?” her hot breath against his sternum keep him rooted as he feels himself growing light-headed. “What if I’m already pregnant, and I’m sick? Bell-ah-mee!” her voice shatters, “I can’t take the pills! It could hurt the baby, and there’s only a few left anyway. They’re not wasting them on me!” she wails into his neck, tugging at his shirt with her insistent, shaking fingers.

“No. No!” he says firmly, catching her up in his arms and carrying her bridal style toward the door. “You can’t be pregnant that fast anyway. We’re going to Jackson right now. He’ll know what to do. You’re going to be fine.”
This is me sticking my fingers in my ears and saying “Nah-nah-nah-nah-nah I can’t hear you!” to 413. Loved the episode, hated the ending. Bellarke deserves to be together, as do the delinquents.

“I’ve been reading books of old
The legends and the myths
Achilles and his gold
Hercules and his gifts
Spiderman’s control and Batman with his fists
And clearly I don’t see myself upon that list.

But she said, Where you wanna go?
How much you wanna risk?
I’m not looking for somebody
With some superhuman gifts,
Some superhero
Some fairytale bliss
Just something I can turn to
Somebody I can kiss.
I want something just like this.”

~”Something Just Like This,” The Chainsmokers & Coldplay

The freezing spray stings Clarke as it hits the side of her face, and she gasps. Her hand tightens in Bellamy’s.

“Easy there. Are you ok?” Jackson asks worriedly from the left side of the examining table. His
hands linger in midair gripped around the edge of the steel gun-like device he just used on Clarke.

Bellamy watches the white foam flicker into an orange haze as it slowly dissolves into Clarke’s skin.

“Yeah, yeah I’m fine. It was just more . . . abrasive than I expected.”

She smiles at Jackson weakly.

“Good. Well, from the research I was able to do at Becca’s lab, this chemical compound should work on those exposed to radiation who already have nightblood in their veins. The nightblood will help your immune system fight off the effects of exposure naturally. But I’d like you to . . . “ he steps over to the counter, opening a drawer and pulling out a small, white pill, “take one of these just to be sure.”

Clarke shakes her head vigorously, her right hand slipping down to the tiny swell of her stomach unconsciously.

“I’m not taking any medication, Jackson. You need to use it for the others,” she says emphatically.

“Clarke, don’t you think –” Bellamy tries, voice strangled.

“Bell, no. No. Absolutely not.”

A wave of heat passes through his body, and he feels his heart rate kick up.

“Clarke,” he says, rougher this time. “You’re being unreasonable. You’re not going to hurt—”

Her foot swings out swiftly, kicking him hard in his shin.

“Damn it, Princess!” he growls, squeezing her fingers tightly in his own while reaching down to rub aggressively at the spot where a bruise will surely form soon.
“Clarke, Bellamy’s right. You really do need to take the pill as a safeguard. The nightblood is going to help you heal, no doubt, but as a precaution, I have to insist,” Jackson widens his eyes, looking down at her.

“I’m not taking any pills, Jackson,” she reiterates between gritted teeth.

Jackson glances confusedly between Clarke – who won’t quite meet his eyes but instead pushes her blonde hair out of her face looking determinedly at the wall – and Bellamy, who drops her hand and wraps a large hand around the top of her thigh possessively. She won’t meet his eyes, either, but that doesn’t stop his from boring into the side of her face. One of her pale hands remains over her stomach, stroking it absentmindedly.

It takes a moment. But then—

“Clarke?” Jackson gasps loudly. “Are you pregnant?”

“Keep your voice down!” Clarke hisses, snapping her head up so quickly she feels her neck crack in protest. A delicate blush creeps up her neck as she slings a murderous glance at Bellamy from under her eyelashes. “I don’t know – I could be . . . “

“She’s not,” Bellamy says flatly, looking calmly into the face of the medic. “We only got together three days ago.”

The confusion is still etched across Jackson’s features.

“Have you two . . . um, well,” he takes a deep breath and pulls himself up to his full height. “Had you two been sexually active before three days ago?”

“No,” Clarke murmurs softly to her knees.

“But what about your implant, Clarke? If you got the standard one on your seventeenth birthday, it
should last until you’re twenty-two,” he continues. “We haven’t had any pregnancies yet on the ground, no implant failures.”

“I never got one. I was in the middle of my trial on my seventeenth birthday, then Jaha sent me to solitary. They didn’t want to waste the resources on me,” she replies.

Bellamy doesn’t think he’s ever heard her voice sound so small. He lightens his grip on her thigh to one that’s feather-light. His fingers skate up her leg and try to catch her own dangling near the crinkling paper that drapes across the table, but she pulls away from him.

“Right,” Jackson nods politely. “I’m sorry, Clarke. I didn’t know.”

“It’s ok,” she finally looks up at him after a few moments of uneasy silence. “But, the pill could hurt a developing baby, right?”

Jackson clears his throat and allows the contraption in his hand to land with a thud on the counter.

“Yes, I mean it could. But Bellamy’s right. The odds of you being pregnant after just three days are so small that I really do think the pill is the right—”

“No,” Clarke snaps at once.

And it’s final. She propels herself off the examining table gracefully enough, landing on both feet and striding out of the room, offering them not even a backward glance.

Bellamy exhales a large puff of breath as his shoulders slump.

“She’s so stubborn!” he erupts unexpectedly.

“Listen, Bellamy . . . “ Jackson claps a hand on his shoulder. “I respect you and Clarke more than you know. And I’m glad you’re together.”

“But?” Bellamy snorts.
“But we’re going to be trapped down here for five years. There’s only space for 1,200 people. You know that. I guess,” his eyes sweep the room, “we do have the medical supplies to get a few women through pregnancy if it happened. And I’m not saying it won’t or it shouldn’t. But we asked every grounder clan to pick only a handful of survivors. People had to say goodbye to their loved ones for good. So odds are they’ll get very protective of what resources we do have. They probably won’t want to see Sky Crew taking even more if and when the implants begin failing. You need to be prepared for the blowback from them . . . from Abby . . . if anything happens,” he trails off.

Bellamy’s jaw clenches tightly.

“Is this a safe sex lecture?” he deadpans. “Because I already told Clarke all of this.”

Jackson snorts, the hint of a smile tugging at his lips.

“You know it’s not. I’m just saying make sure you’re using the head with the brain attached to it, ok?”

“Yeah, sure, ok,” Bellamy returns before walking toward the door. When he reaches it, he turns back toward Jackson who’s still watching him carefully. “But remember this isn’t the Ark. Nobody is going to die for bringing new life into the world. It’s the apocalypse, and we’ll need to repopulate. You never know who any of those extra babies may grow up to be – sometimes they’re the only one capable of saving our asses from Praimfaya.”

He tries to make his voice sound less nasty than he feels. Jackson’s a good guy, after all. He’s not Jaha following through with the provisions of the Exodus Charter and floating his mother.

“I hear you, Bellamy. I do. I’m on your side. I’m just telling you to be careful,” Jackson replies.

And with a nod, Bellamy sets off down the corridor in search of Clarke.

But he never finds her. And she doesn’t come to their dorm to sleep that night.

***
Bellamy, Clarke and Kane watch Abby’s face crumple like a falling circus tent when she sees the staggering line of patients already waiting for her outside the door of the bunker’s med bay later that day. Murphy stands impatiently at the front of the crowd, arm slung around Emori’s waist, supporting her. Her skin glows with a sheen of sweat, and her eyes have an unfocused glaze to them.

It’s been minutes since Abby left the office Jaha silently claimed for himself, her fists clenched, mouth set. Bellamy doesn’t need to ask her what’s wrong. He was there to hear it for himself.

“Thelonius, you need to let me distribute the nightblood to the grounders outside the bunker. Maybe some of them can survive the death wave if they’ve got it in their systems.”

“We can’t take that risk, Abby. I won’t allow it.”

“What do you mean you won’t allow it? Marcus is Chancellor.”

“That may be, but the guard will follow my command to restrain you if you put the lives of everyone in this bunker at risk.”

“What the hell are you talking about? I’m trying to save more lives! This isn’t the Ark, Thelonius! We can do more good than harm here.”

“If you open that bunker door, how do you ensure the people we couldn’t let in don’t come charging in to kill us all? It’s not worth the risk, Abby, and you know it. Sneaking you back in here through the other entrance was difficult enough.”

“I won’t let innocent people die when I can save them!”

“And I won’t risk the lives of all our people who are finally safe! They’ve unpacked, Abby! They’re expecting to live through this, and I’m going to make sure they do!”

It’s late that evening – near midnight – when Bellamy dares to ask Clarke the question as he brushes his teeth in the too-bright bathroom.
“You think Jaha’s right, don’t you?” he questions but keeps his eyes on the water swirling down the porcelain sink.

“We can’t fight back against a riot. We’ll lose. People are scared out there, terrified,” she replies after a few seconds of brushing out her glossy hair.

“But we could help more people survive in the long run. It’s good for the human race, Clarke.”

“I know that. But it doesn’t change the fact that we still can’t do it.”

He sighs, well-muscled forearms gripping the side of the sink as he watches her only nightgown cling to the damp curves of her body as she moves toward the exit. Her wet hair smells like vanilla as the scent reaches his nose. Even when he wants to argue against her perspective, he wants her.

It’s a problem how much he wants her.

***

It takes every minute of the next day, but Abby, Jackson and Clarke – along with a few grounder healers from the various clans - set up a system to inject everyone in the bunker with nightblood. They hope it will not only cure those who are presenting with radiation symptoms, but also provide stronger immunity to the twelve clans when they can finally set foot on the Earth’s surface again.

Clarke’s fingers are stiff and aching long before the last patient bids them goodnight. The foam spray she’s used on countless blisters and boils leaves a pungent smell in the air that tickles her nose and causes her eyes to water.

“It’s the only way I could live with myself for what I’ve done abandoning those people outside with no protection,” Abby grips her daughter’s shoulders at the end of the exhausting day.

They stand together in a quiet nook of the med-bay, and Clarke takes in the wrinkles pressing in at the corner of Abby’s warm brown eyes. She sees the dark shadows painting her mother’s face, absorbs every bit of the tiredness and carefully forced-down despair.
“You’re still one of the good guys, mom. You always do everything you can,” Clarke pulls her mother into the crook of her shoulder and strokes her back softly for several minutes like she’s a small child. She feels a few hot tears seep into the blue fabric of her blouse, but she only tightens her grip.

When she creeps into her dorm at last, it’s almost pitch black. But the faint circadian lights rimming the floor help her eyes adjust after several seconds. And catching sight of Emori’s legs curled around Murphy’s, their fingers clasped together, makes her smile a little.

Bellamy shifts in his bunk when he hears her approach.

“Clarke? How did it go?” he whispers softly into the stillness.

“Fine. We got to everyone.”

“No.”

The ice in her voice makes him wince.

“Clarke, I already said I was sorry about the pill.”

She ignores him, climbing the four rungs along the side of their bunk bed and hoisting herself onto the mattress with a low groan. From across the room, Miller offers up a grunt in his sleep. Glancing over to her right, Clarke realizes Octavia’s sleeping form is missing. Roan appears to be absent, too. They must still be meeting with the heads of all the clans, updating them on the nightblood injections. Clarke rolls over onto her side, curving her knees toward her chest and trying to get comfortable under the blankets as soft snores play in a symphony around her.

“Clarke, please,” Bellamy whispers below her. “Talk to me.”

“I can’t believe you were willing to risk it,” she hisses finally.
“You and Octavia are the most important people in my life. I’m not letting anything happen to you.”

“This isn’t going to work if you can’t expand that list.”

“I don’t have to expand it yet.”

“But one day you will. Can you do that?”

She holds her breath waiting for the answer.

“You know I can. When it’s real.”

The air leaves her in a rasp.

“But for now, you’re my priority. And I’m not apologizing for that.”

She hears him pummel his pillow a few times with his fist, making an indent for his head. It causes her to smile a little at the memory from Luna’s rig. But she’s still hurt and more than mildly confused, not to mention overwhelmed by these outrageous circumstances.

“I love you, Clarke. Even when you’re stubborn. Sleep well.”

“Good night,” she manages tersely and closes her eyes against the pain of the day.

***

Raven warns them when the death wave is twenty minutes away. They gather together as one people in the atrium, staring up warily at the ceiling. Despite all the nervous buildup and speculation, it comes in a hard and fast swooshing sound, like incredible thunder. The walls shake a bit, but it passes quickly.
When Bellamy reaches for Clarke’s hand, she doesn’t pull away.

Afterward, people gather in clusters along the gray hallways, like small flocks of birds, crying and wailing about those left outside. About their lives, which will never be the same again. About entire villages destroyed. About a future with no windows and no sunlight.

Suddenly, it’s real.

***

When Abby almost collapses walking down a flight of stairs the next day, Kane insists she and Raven shut down ALIE’s code immediately. There is no longer time to waste, although they ironically now have nothing but time.

Jackson and Clarke first feed Raven the Flame together in med-bay. It causes her body to go rigid, and her eyes to roll back before they snap open again.

Jackson carefully slices the knife along the delicate skin at the back of Raven’s neck, reopening the old wound.

“I’m sorry. Stay still,” he murmurs when she moans despite the painkillers he gave her.

The graphite-colored metal bug creeps out of the bloody gash as Clarke rushes forward with a surgical needle and thread and gauze.

“That robotic bitch,” is all Raven can get out.

“Let’s just hope it worked,” Clarke says.

When it’s Abby’s turn in the seat, she grips Clarke’s hands tightly in one of her own.

“You’re one of the good guys, too,” she smiles up at her daughter before Jackson slips the Flame past her lips.
Raven is right, unsurprisingly, about the appropriate technique. The Flame counteracts the code, erases it, then fully deletes its programming from Raven and Abby’s beautiful neurological networks.

Three days pass with no new hallucinations or seizures. They count their blessings where they can find them.

***

Clarke enters the dorm at the end of the third day swaying on the spot. Jackson insisted she catalog their entire supply of medicine in alphabetical order, so she’d be aware of exactly what they had when patients visited. She feels a bit cross-eyed.

The first thing she notices is her bunk is mysteriously vacant.

“Well, that could take a while,” Clarke replies. “I guess I’ll just go . . . walk toward the main office then,” she finishes lamely.

“Sure, see you later,” Harper calls, picking her book back up.
The edge of Bellamy’s dark leather jacket flashing past catches her eye from the silver hallway before she ever reaches the atrium.

“What are you doing in here?” she calls out softly, wrapping her knuckles against the doorframe.

The words are barely out of her mouth before she’s stepping into the room as if in a trance. The space is a large square – maybe forty feet by forty feet. Its walls are dark and full of painted stars, their centers glowing with real lights. But it’s the floor that makes Clarke gasp. In the center is a giant orange-yellow orb resembling the sun, with each of the eight planets – and even their rings and moons – spaced around it as if in orbit. Her hand glides gracefully across the glassy blue of Neptune in awe.

But it isn’t long before the pull of Bellamy’s presence tugs at her with invisible strings. He’s standing before a large gold plaque on the far wall. She walks up to him, standing close enough to brush the side of his arm with her shoulder. He slips an arm loosely around her waist just as she asks, “What is this place? I’ve never seen it before.”

“Kane read about it in some of the old, digital documents we were looking through with Octavia earlier. It was locked up, but the files told us where to find the key,” he gestures toward the plaque. “Read it.”

In memory of those brave souls who left this Earth
in search of a new life in space. May you continue
to have the courage to ensure humanity’s survival and
rebirth against all odds. We hope to see you one day
above ground and start anew the grand experiment
of civilization building. Until then, Godspeed. May we
meet again. ~Bill Cadogan, Second Dawn

“They knew about us,” Clarke breathes. “Even though we didn’t know about them.”

She feels dizzy again.

“They knew about our ancestors,” Bellamy corrects her gently. “The people on the ground who
survived the last war and were wealthy or important enough to win a spot on the Ark before the bombs, when overpopulation set in and resources began dwindling.”

“The ones from the twelve most powerful countries,” Clarke leans into his side. “Like the Unity Day story.”

“You got it, Princess.”

“Bellamy,” she huffs out heavily, turning around to gaze out at the sea of space surrounding them. “What do you think happened to Cadogan’s followers?”

“The ones not charred in that bunker we found with Jaha cursing Cadogan with their last breath, you mean?” he smiles down at her wryly.

She nudges him in the ribs as he chuckles.

“I guess they didn’t make it here in time. The bombs went off unexpectedly, right? Maybe the Ark was supposed to warn them. Or maybe some of them took off into space at the last minute and survived, or found another bunker somewhere else.”

“You really believe that?” Clarke asks.

“After everything I’ve seen on Earth, anything is possible.”

They stand in silence for a long minute, Bellamy absently stroking the curve of Clarke’s hip.

“I’m glad we survived,” she admits into the darkness, raising up on her tiptoes to press a kiss into the stubble above his jawline.

“Me too, Princess.”

His grip around her waist tightens slightly as he takes in the psychedelic glimmer of Mercury.
“Do you think we have the same courage?” she asks.

“What do you mean?” he asks, confused. “I think we’ve been pretty fucking courageous, all things considered.”

“To ensure humanity’s survival and rebirth against all odds,” Clarke answers cheekily, quoting the plaque.

She reaches down and squeezes his hand, then begins flicking at his forearm with her fingertips in a way that sends sparks shooting through his stomach. He knows what she’s asking and knows how he’ll respond despite the risks.

He growls low and suddenly pulls her hard into his chest, laying a hand against the small of her back to keep her there.

“I love you,” she whispers when he draws back for a moment.

He stares into her eyes, which shine bluer in the light of the planets that pass by.

“I know you do. And I already said I was on board, Princess,” she feels his chest rumble where it rubs against the exposed skin below her collarbone. “You don’t have to do much to convince me.”

He reaches one hand lower to squeeze her ass, and she jolts closer into him, feeling him hardening against her stomach.

“Fine,” she returns, kissing him once more, soundly. She runs her hands in patterns across his chest and down his forearms, stoking him into a higher state of arousal. “Go lock the door.”
“You want to do it here? Like what – lying on top of Venus?” the disbelief is evident in his voice.

“Well, we can’t do it in the dorm,” she replies before capturing his earlobe between her teeth. “And I’m running out of patience. It’s been days, Bellamy.”

“My Princess and her overeager sex drive,” Bellamy croons against her flowing hair, pulling back just before she can swat at him.

But he does as she asks and shuts the door, locking it with a firm click. When he strides purposefully back to her, she feels her mouth go dry as she watches his powerful shoulders. Within seconds, he looms over her, and before she can properly see the darkness of his eyes or the smirk tugging at his lips, his hands grip her hips and hoist her into the air against his chest, forcing her to clutch at him with her knees and ankles. He takes a number of steps to his left and deposits her on the cold hardness of Saturn’s rings. It brings them eye level with each other.

She swings her legs out a few times, drumming her fingers against the edge of the ring while he stands back, watching her carefully.

“Come here, please,” she extends her hand out to him sweetly.

“Since you asked so nicely,” he teases.

But then his rough hands are pushing her knees apart and standing between them and he’s kissing her with enough intensity to cause her spine to bend back. When his lips latch onto the pulse of her neck, biting down, she’s surprised to find she likes the blurred line of pleasure-pain as the glittering stars twinkle before her eyes.

Her calves pull him against her body, and her small hands slide under his shirt and along the muscles of his abdomen. When she begins tugging at the edge of the fabric insistently, he yanks it over his head and takes the opportunity to kick off his pants, too.

“Your turn, Princess,” he says when he steps back toward her, stroking a hand up her side and stopping just under her breast, so she can barely feel the pressure of his knuckles against her flesh. “I want you naked and writhing against me.”

Clarke feels a tingling sensation erupt through her stomach and down her legs as a gush of heat
pulses through her core at the words.

He expertly unbuttons her top, popping each open with a deliberate slowness she swears is intended to drive her insane. But at last her creamy skin is exposed to him, and she shrugs off her top. Bellamy immediately latches on to her nipple through the frayed lace fabric of her bra, and she tangles her hands back in his thick curls.

Another spasm hits her core when he switches his attention to the other breast, kneading the first firmly with one hand while sucking on the pebbling nipple of the other.

“Just take it off, Bellamy,” she urges, wiggling her shoulders to make the straps fall down.

“Whatever the hell you want,” he bites at her lower lip before licking more kindly at the abused flesh while snapping her bra open.

He palms both breasts in his hands, squeezing them together and running his thumbs in circles landing closer and closer to her hyper-alert nipples without ever arriving. Her knees dig into his sides in frustration.

But he just laughs.

It’s a small feat how he manages to lay her back along the rings of Saturn and pop up her hips enough so her pants slide off, but he does it.

“Get to the edge of the ring, Princess. And spread your legs for me.”

His hands dig into her hips to make her move faster, and she kisses him fiercely in retaliation. The wet spot against her panties grows determinedly as his thumb flicks repeatedly against her clit and pushes straight against it.

Her entire core vibrates as she grips his shoulders, letting her head fall back, awash in sensation.

She’s lifted unexpectedly upward, and he sits down in her place. The bottoms of his feet easily reach the floor where hers dangled helplessly. Bellamy straddles Clarke against his knee, his hard thigh
brushing up against her clit in a zinging sensation. When his hands leave her waist, she slides down his leg slowly, yelping at the contact.

He chuckles softly, catching her before she falls too far.

“Here we go,” he grabs her hips and digs his thumbs into the hollow of her pelvic bone. He rocks them forward with his hands, back against his thigh. Forward and back. Forward and back.

“There, you’ve got it, Princess. Ride me. I want you to ride me until you come.”

Her nails bite into his shoulder, and she groans in pleasure. Bellamy leans back and watches her breasts heave and glisten, growing a rosy color, while she rocks against him wantonly, chasing her orgasm.

As her lips fall open, he knows she’s close. But then her eyes close.

“Keep your eyes open, Clarke,” he demands, reaching back for her hips and pressing her harder against him. “I want to watch you unravel.”

“Ohh,” the noise leaves her lips without her consent. “Ahhhh.”

“Good, baby, that’s good. Faster. Push yourself into me,” he urges, cupping one of her breasts at last while his other hand guides her fierce rocking movements.

“After you come,” he begins taunting her, fingertips dancing down from her jiggling breasts across her soft stomach to the edge of her panties. “I’m going to back you up against the Earth and fuck you until you can’t walk straight. That's what you want, right, Princess?”

His thick fingers find her clit and rub it quickly for several seconds, and that’s all it takes.

She shutters slightly, gripping down on nothing but his thigh through the fabric of her underwear as her climax spreads warmly through her like a fizzing drink, starting at the base of her spine and rumbling outward like a tidal wave.
“Bell... Bellamy,” she pants, collapsing at last against his chest as he strokes her back.

“You still want me?” he questions, dropping one of her hands against the bulge of his boxers.

“Yeah,” she manages, eyes glazed.

So he helps her down from Saturn’s rings until her feet hit the cool ground. Her hand instantly wraps around his bicep, and he walks beside her toward the glowing green-blue orb of Earth.

“Hands against the Earth, and push your ass out toward me,” he urges, sliding his own boxers off and allowing his erection to spring free at last. He pulls at the lace of her panties until they pool at her ankles, and she kicks them off impatiently.

Bellamy runs a thumb over the head of his dick, unsurprised by the generous amount of fluid already there. He pumps himself a few times, letting the moisture cover more of his length. When he steps right behind her and nudges her legs apart, he feels her shudder.

“You’re so wet,” he offers after slipping two fingers into her and skating across her g-spot.

“Jesus... Bellamy...” she gasps brokenly. Aftershocks pulse through her body whenever the rough pad of his index finger presses against her nerve endings.

“What do you want?”

“You. Inside me. Making me take it.”

“Clarke, you’re too much,” he grunts.

And he pushes inside her without preamble, fingers lightly teasing her clit. She groans at the invasion but accepts as much of him into her body as possible. Even lubricated, even with her backing against him in what has to be the sexiest thing he’s ever seen, it’s a tight fit.
Unable to help himself, Bellamy draws Clarke tight against him with a hand across her stomach. His hips rock against her repeatedly, slowly at first, then building into a crescendo that leaves her clawing at the glass representing South America with absolutely no purchase on it.

He plays with her breasts, squeezing and cupping them, while kissing along the curve of her neck and shoulder. In a more upright position, she’s able to rest against him. Looking over her shoulder, he thumbs at her clit for a few seconds before he feels her walls tightening around him blissfully.

“This is it, Clarke. Let go,” he chants against her ear.

And just as she relaxes into the wave coming to swallow her alive, he feels the hot spurts of his come coating her insides.

“Bellamy! Fuck!” she cries out, nails scratching across Africa.

“Yes, Princess. Fuck me through it,” he grips her hips, pushing her away slightly and then pulling her back deeper onto him several times more.

When he slips out of her at last, she spins weakly and collapses into his arms, still shaking from the intensity of it all.

“Too much?” he asks worriedly, kissing the crown of her head.

“No, you were perfect,” she murmurs into his breastbone, kissing it for effect.

He chuckles.

“Good,” he squeezes the skin right below her belly button lightly. “Now let’s get to bed before you kill me.”
free fall

Chapter Summary

Life in the bunker begins taking some eventful turns . . .

Chapter Notes

Welcome to the hiatus in earnest, guys! I'm so thankful for all of you sweet readers who have left so many encouraging comments and kudos in my inbox. :) I wanted to give you another update because so many ideas have been swirling around in my head about this story, and I know it's difficult when you are waiting for a new chapter that seems like it's taking forever to arrive. Please do tell me what you think and/or if you have preferences for where the story should go next. Always love hearing from you guys and flailing about The 100 and Bellarke! ;)

“There was a time

I met a girl of a different kind.

We ruled the world,

I thought I’d never lose her out of sight.

We were so young,

I think of her now and then.

I still hear the songs

Reminding me of a friend.

Upon a hill across a blue lake,

That’s where I had my first heartbreak.

I still remember how it all changed.

My father said,

Don’t you worry, don’t you worry, child.

See heaven’s got a plan for you.
Time passes, as it always does. Before they know it, they’ve been underground and tucked away from the Earth's scorched surface for two and a half months.

Bellamy crawls into bed past midnight one night, inadvertently rousing a bleary Clarke from an uneasy slumber as the mattress dips down with his weight. Gently prying her fingers from the tangled sheets, he wraps her arm lightly across his waist, drawing her into his side instead.

"I miss the moon," she mumbles into the heat of his neck.

His skin smells like slightly salted pine, distinct but welcoming. She burrows further into him.

"Go back to sleep," he whispers back.

"Nooo," she whines like a little kid. "Haven't seen you all day. Wanna talk."

Her small hands dip under the edge of his navy shirt and rest on his stomach. But he tries not to let his mind drift there.

"Where have you been?" she asks.

Across the dark room, Monty rolls over, muttering in his sleep.

"Don't make me shoot . . . Please, just listen . . . we can go back . . . you don't have to. . ."

Bellamy's eyes track across his friend's twitching body and don't waver until he sees Monty relax back into sleep.
"I had to draw up lesson plans for world history classes after dinner with Kane. He's not letting that one go," he snorts lowly. "Says I'll be a good teacher. He wants to get some sort of school for the kids up and running in the next month."

Clarke smiles against his shoulder.

"You will be a good teacher. You're too much of a nerd not to be."

He squeezes the skin of her hip as she mutes her chuckle by biting down on the fabric of his shirt.

"Only for classical mythology, Princess. It's not like I'm an expert on the French Revolution."

"No time like the present to learn. Not like we've got much else to do," she counters.

"Yeah, yeah. Kane says it's way too early to start planning our future settlement for when we get out of here. We'll be lucky if we find one or two patches of green with some wild mushrooms growing on them within a hundred miles of here in five years."

"Ever the optimist," Clarke teases, letting her nails slink across the bit of dark, coarse hair creeping up above the elastic waistband of his plaid pajama pants. "You know we're lucky the night blood was enough to save the people in this bunker."

He snatches her fingers up in his own, bringing them to his lips and kissing them.

"Mmm," he agrees lazily. "What about the moon?"

"Oh," she sighs after a moment. "I don't know. I just miss its . . . surface, I guess? The way it shined up over the hills. It always seemed so friendly and . . . peaceful."

"Lucky for you, it'll be one of the few things left to look at when we get out of here."

"As long as you're still around, I don't care if it falls out of the sky," she mumbles before closing her eyes.
"But think about the ocean tides," Bellamy tries to sound aghast. But his voice is farther away as the pull of sleep lulls her into its secure hold.

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"I already told you - the grounders are demanding to learn how to run the bunker's technology!" comes Octavia's passionate cry as her bright blue eyes flash dangerously at Jaha.

She leans her weight across the sturdy wood desk he sits behind. Her figure is less broad without her full-length grounder coat, but she's no less imposing in leather pants, knee-high boots, and a dark purple top. Her chocolate-colored hair is half pulled back in a few braids, but her eye makeup is much less intense than Bellamy remembers it from a few weeks ago.

"And I told you that is completely unnecessary when we have very well-trained members of our own people who will keep this bunker functioning satisfactorily for five years," Jaha's booming, yet calm, voice floods the office space.

He's sitting in a high-backed chair, fingers templed before him on the desk. He turns his attention toward Bellamy.

"Son, tell your sister that . . ."

"He doesn't take orders from you, and neither do I! If you have something to say to me, tell me yourself," Octavia spits out, baring her teeth.

"Enough, Octavia," Indra's gaze jumps from Jaha as she lays a restraining hand on the fuming teenage girl. "A leader knows when to concede the battle to win the larger war."

"But this isn't a battle you should have to concede," Kane says from the circular table near the wall. "Thelonious, there's no reason why the grounders can't learn more about growing vegetables in the hydroponic farm or how the C02 scrubbers work. We want everyone to learn as many skills as they can, so they can be as useful as possible when we start rebuilding on the ground."

"Fine! Fine, if that's the way you see it," Jaha begins. "If we're all WonKru as you say," he tips his head respectfully toward Indra, "then all seventeen of Sky Crew's children should not only learn the old Ark lessons while we're here. They should also be taught the grounder legends and battle techniques, too. They should learn about the Conclaves and to worship at the altar of the holy religion that fell from the sky in the form of Becca Praimheda. We should make sure they know that
blood must have blood, shouldn't we?" he raises his eyebrow at them all.

Bellamy rubs a palm across his tired face, groaning, but not loudly enough for anyone to hear. This debate has been going in circles for the last thirty minutes.

"You know it's not the same!" Octavia snaps, taking a step forward, but Indra pushes her away and walks forward herself.

"How? How is it not the same? It's a cultural exchange of knowledge!" Jaha throws up his arms.

"Jaha..." Kane calls out warningly.

"It's not the same because my people - your people now - want to learn the skills that will peacefully sustain them in the life to come once Praimfaya passes," Indra says coldly. "We can teach all the children grounder history, as you say, but we've agreed to not teach the young ones about Conclaves and the religion of the Flame any longer. We will teach them to be diligent, watchful, and able to defend themselves, but the time for blood must have blood has passed, and you know--"

"Oh, yes, I know it has passed," Jaha provides drily. "It's so far behind us that you were willing to fight to the death with Roan's clan before living here peacefully with them until we gassed you all and dragged you inside . . . "

Indra opens her mouth to retort, and on it goes.

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Bellamy manages to slip out of the office just as Kane launches into a proposal about an appropriate school curriculum and rotation duty for all the major technological functions of the bunker that he's sure will be appealing to everyone.

He makes it down several winding corridors toward the mess hall still deep in thought, barely paying attention to where he's going. But then the flash of Clarke's golden hair hanging freely catches his eye as he turns a corner. He's quickly jolted from his musings when her arms encircle his waist, and she barrels into him.

"Clarke . . . shit, I'm sorry! I wasn't looking. What's going--"
"Shhh," she grins up at him, and it takes him by surprise for a moment. He feels a warmth fluttering in his chest as she grabs his hand and motions with her head toward a closed, olive green door several yards away.

He shuts the door securely behind them and finds himself staring up at shelves upon shelves of canned and boxed food.

"So this is the illusive pantry?" he nods his head appreciatively.

"We couldn't tell the men about it, or there wouldn't be enough food left to last us five years," she smirks.

"But where did it all come from?" his fingertips graze the side of a cheerful blue box boasting some sort of cheesy macaroni inside. "And how did it survive the first nuclear apocalypse?"

"You really didn't pay a lot of attention in Earth History, did you?" Clarke bites her lip to conceal her smile.

She pulls him closer to her as she leans back against the wall.

"I guess not, Princess. I got a lot of studying to do before I can teach anybody anything. Enlighten me."

He splays his free hand next to her head against the wall, caging her into a corner as he offers her a cheeky grin.

Clarke feels her heartbeat start to kick up and a blush climb into her cheekbones.

"Food preservation enhanced significantly in factories at the turn of the 22nd century," she begins, slightly breathless. "If you think about the protein paste we had on the Ark, it'll give you some idea. But Cadogan stockpiled this place to be able to feed everyone inside for a few years. Say what you want, but he was nothing if not prepared."

"And it all lasted a hundred years?"
"Judging from those graham crackers they gave us with dinner last night, I'd say so," Clarke's eyes twinkle at him.

"Unbelievable," he murmurs, before leaning down to capture her lips with his own.

They spend several heated moments pressed up against the wall, her fingers clawing at the leather jacket wrapped around his biceps and his own skirting up her torso toward the underside of her breast as he trails kisses along her jawline.

But finally, she shoves him playfully away, so she can breathe.

"Bellamy! Wait - I have news."

Half-dazed, his dark eyes, like ink wells, refocus on hers as he pulls back a bit.

"Mmmhmm?" his arm's still draped loosely around her hip, and he takes advantage of it, sliding it down to squeeze her ass.

A tiny groan escapes her lips, and his mouth curves upward.

"I'm serious," she stares up into his too-attractive face.

"So am I," his right hand slips cleanly down her stomach and cups her confidently between her thighs, his fingers pushing the coarse fabric of her jeans into her core.

She gasps and lets her head loll against the wall as he crowds against her once more. The wave of heat pulsing through her body overwhelms her. It spreads from her clit, shooting through her stomach and down into her legs, before pulsing into her chest. When he touches her waist, she feels the distinct callouses of his fingers rubbing her through the thin fabric of her white V-cut blouse.

"Do you want me, Princess?" he whispers gruffly in her ear before nibbling on her fleshy earlobe.
"I always want you," comes her breathless reply a moment later.

“Good, because you look sexy as hell today,” he runs a hand through her loose waves and trails a finger across her blushing cheek before letting it dip into the hollow between her breasts.

"Wait a second . . ." she huffs, sucking some air into her lungs and pressing her palm forward into his breastbone until she can feel the steady thump of his heart. "I have something to tell you that might make you rethink this."

He takes a step back, blinking at her.

"I don't think that's possible," he tries for the half-joke.

Clarke takes another deep breath, squaring her shoulders though it feels like a flock of seagulls is scampering between her ribs.

"I'm late, Bellamy. Two months late."

"You're . . ."

"Late, yes," she says with a pinch more confidence, holding his gaze. "I haven't had my period since we came down here."

For several long moments, he's absolutely still. Her fingers itch to reach out to him, but she keeps them clenched at her side, waiting for his reaction.

"But . . . but . . . but," he stutters at last when she doesn't think she can bear it any longer. "It could be your body going into shock, you know? That's a possibility, right? There's no natural sunlight or wind down here. I mean, we're just getting the farm up and running for fresh fruit, and you never sleep well when you're on medical rotation, and --"

"Bell," she lays a soothing hand along his cheek, which he instantly leans into. "Do you want it to be my body adjusting to the bunker?"
Her eyes hold him so well and deeply he could drown in them. He could spend his whole life gazing into the hidden worlds they promise, and it would feel like mere seconds had passed.

"Clarke, I-I don't know," he watches the crinkle between her eyebrows spring up, the one he was desperately trying to avoid. "No, I guess not. God, this is just . . . so . . . surreal," he plunges his fingers into his unruly curls as if trying to get them stuck there. "But if it is your body reacting strangely to the bunker, I want to go talk to Jackson right now, and see what we can do to help--"

"I already went to Jackson," Clarke's simple statement stops him cold.

"You did?" he gulps.

"Yeah, I wanted a pregnancy test."

"And he gave you one?"

"He did."

Clarke turns to look at the row of canned corn and lima beans closest to them. They're covered with a thin layer of dust, but their cartoon characters still wave and smile cheerfully from pastoral landscapes.

The silence lengthens.

"And what did it say?" Bellamy's voice is suddenly lower and more gruff.

Clarke reaches out for his hands, and he lets them slip into hers, intertwining their fingers with enough strength, he's concerned it's too tight. But she just squeezes back even harder.

"It was positive, Bellamy. We're going to have a baby."
suddenly

Chapter Summary

Bellamy processes some big news. Meanwhile, Raven and Roan get into a heated argument about running the bunker. And one shocking evening changes everything.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

"I'm so tired but I can't sleep

Standin' on the edge of something much too deep

It's funny how we feel so much but we cannot say a word

We are screaming inside, but we can't be heard.

But I will remember you

Will you remember me?

Don't let your life pass you by

Weep not for the memories

I'm so afraid to love you, but more afraid to lose

Clinging to a past that doesn't let me choose

Once there was a darkness, deep and endless night

You gave me everything you had, oh you gave me light."

~Sarah McLachlan, “I Will Remember You”

Clarke holds her breath as Bellamy blinks a few times but finds she can't look away from him. She starts rubbing soothing half-moons into the base of his thumbs, hoping her cool skin puts him at ease.

"A baby? We're going to have one?" he chokes out in a broken, awestruck voice.
"Yeah . . . yeah we are," she whispers, daring to smile slightly at him. "Are you happy?"

His large, sturdy hands sail up to cup her face sweetly.

A hush settles around them.

"Clarke," she hears the tears he's fighting back. "I don't think I've ever been this happy."

Then she's squealing and crying freely and soaring up into the air as he twirls her around, his own laughter booming off the thick walls.

When he finally drops her lightly to her feet, his hands latch onto the inward curve of her waist to steady her as she runs a palm along her forehead.

"Sorry! Too much? I got carried away," he admits bashfully.

"Just a little dizzy," she beams at him before standing on tiptoe to press her lips into the familiar curve of his.

His kiss is languid but also possessive, fingers trailing down every ridge of her spine before locking securely against the small of her back. He draws her closer until the tips of her breasts brush against the stiff fabric of his jacket, causing her to hiss quietly.

"What? What is it?" Bellamy's worried eyes track across her upturned face.

"Nothing, I think I'm just a little sensitive."

His still-confused face makes her snort.

"My breasts have felt more tender the last week or so," she explains. "Don't worry, it's normal. Jackson gave me a supply of prenatal vitamins to start taking, too."
Bellamy's eyebrows crawl toward each other as he draws back a step. But then he does something unexpected. He glides the flat of his palm up her stomach and tucks it into the heated hollow beneath her left breast, so the tips of his fingers barely skim the bottom of the rounded flesh. Clarke bites her lip hard, pupils swimming out to encompass the sparkling blue of her eyes.

"I've got you, Princess," he leans in to whisper it against her ear, and she groans loudly when his splayed fingers gently take the weight of her breast into his hand like it's magic. He runs his thumb against the exposed skin bare from her low-cut blouse and uses his other fingers to squeeze her delicately. His left hand carefully slips upward and starts fondling her right breast, applying a firm and steady pressure. It hurts in the best possible way, and her eyes flutter shut. "They are a little bit bigger," he huffs.

It's as if an invisible, thin cord binds her breasts to her clit, which springs to life with such ferocity she can feel her blood pulse between her legs. His fingers languidly coast across her nipples, barely tweaking them to life.

"Bellamy!" she gasps, nipping at the edge of his chiseled jaw, wishing she could bite right into the dimple in the center of his chin.

His chuckle is slightly dark when he slips his tongue back into her mouth and crowds her against the wall.

She kisses him back feverishly, hands scrambling for purchase along his shoulders before settling in to grip his muscled biceps. He rocks his hips against her in a steady rhythm as soon as she widens her stance, opening her legs for him. He completely surrounds her - arms blocking her in like the best kind of prison - while she gulps in the musky, woods scent that manages to stick to his skin even now.

Slowly, his hands leave her tender breasts and travel lower to her stomach. He draws up her top and kneels before her, gazing up at her reverently.

"Bellamy," she says softly, stroking his scalp with mild fingers.

"How far along are you?" he asks before pressing a kiss right below her belly button. She squirms a little, laughing.
Jackson thinks I'm only about five weeks. The stress of everything we've been going through probably stopped my period for one month. But then when I didn't get it again the next . . . " she trails off.

He nods.

"Do you want to tell anyone yet? Have you told Abby?" his voice sounds like a hopeful little boy's, and it makes her heart melt too easily.

She runs a finger across his lips, then down his straight nose and across his cheekbones.

"You're the first one I told," she admits, and she knows he considers it an honor when his eyes well up again.

"Really?"

"Of course! You're going to be the father of my child. Our child. Who else would I tell first?" she shakes her head, rolling her eyes a little while swiping her thumb under his lash line to absorb the moisture building there.

No matter what else they go through together, no matter how long they live, she'll never get over Bellamy believing *himself* to be the lucky one in all this.

"Can we wait until we hit the three-month mark? Just to be sure?" she asks, suddenly more serious.

"Sure, whatever you want," Bellamy stands up, and she immediately curls her arms around his waist while he rests his chin on her head. Each, at least for a few moments longer, resting completely in a joyful peace.

***

There's no mistaking the raised voices coming from the control room as Bellamy and Clarke walk by, hands clasped together.
"That's the most ridiculous plan I've ever heard! Can't you listen to someone else for once in your life, you Neanderthal?" Raven is yelling. "I happen to be an expert!"

"Of what? Building tin can bombs to scare horses off bridges?" Roan thunders back.

"I'll take this one?" Bellamy asks her with an amused expression.

"Yeah, sounds like a job for dad," Clarke grins back up at him, bright as daylight. "I need to get back to med bay anyway. Mom and I are going to start training our three new recruits."

Bellamy nods.

"See you at dinner then?"

"As long as there's no cheese. The smell of it lately . . . " she wrinkles her nose.

"I'll make sure to knock any offending dish right off the table," he makes a swishing motion through the air as if fighting with a sword.

"Such. A. Nerd," she scoffs as she turns to walk away.

"But you love me!" he calls to her retreating back.

"Always," she returns easily.

"And Clarke?"

She stops and pivots to face him again, hand on her hip.
"Yeah?"

"You're going to bed earlier from now on. You need your rest."

"So overprotective," she huffs, but there's no trace of a frown on her face.

"That's what I'm here for."

"My hero."

***

Raven is just a foot away from Roan, sticking her finger straight into his chest, when Bellamy walks into the room. Her ponytail slices through the air as she gesticulates wildly.

All along the walls, a rainbow assortment of wires crawl toward the ceiling and connect to circuit breakers controlling different parts of the bunker.

"Listen, your highness! I'm only saying this one more time. We need extra power going to med bay and the hydroponic farm at all times. The added light makes the produce grow faster, and that's how we're going to keep everyone healthy down here for the next five years! And if some kind of accident happens at night, do you really expect Abby to perform surgery just using the circadian lights? Are you out of your damn mind?"

Roan simply smirks at her. "So dramatic, little bird."

Raven actually growls in frustration, throwing up her hands and turning toward the table where Bellamy spots way too many sharp, silver tools for his liking.

He clears his throat loudly.

"Thank God! Bellamy!" Raven cries out. "I never thought I'd say this, but . . . an actual voice of reason."
"Anyone care to tell me what the hell's going on?" he crosses his arms over his chest.

Roan leans casually against the table, the strain making his arm muscles bulge significantly. His eyes narrow, but he keeps a pleasant enough smile on his face.

"I was just telling your, ahem, mechanic, that it's crucial we keep a certain amount of power allotted to the security system at all times, including all the cameras monitoring the area outside the bunker. We'll never know for sure if nightbloods survived the wave, or anyone else. If there are survivors, they'll come to the bunker. Too many people know it exists. We have to be prepared for anything. They could try to blow it open or smoke us out."

"Smoke us out? Do you even hear yourself? Do you know how absolutely any technology works at all? We're safe down here!" Raven tries again, face pink with exertion. "Bellamy, tell him we need to reroute the extra power to things like medical and food, which will actually keep us alive for the next five years. Monty agreed with me, but his opinion wasn't good enough for His Highness."

Roan takes a step forward, heavy hand resting on the hilt of his sword.

"You better keep your hands where I can see them, or I'll make sure the electrical system fries you instead," Raven threatens.

"The crow keeps cawing. But she's forgetting Trikru wanted to slaughter my people with guns the second they came down the steps. I'm not taking a chance that another enemy won't gather at night right outside without our knowledge!" he snarls.

Bellamy sighs. It's going to be a long half-decade.

***

A week later, the dream of crashing through the stars toward a blood orange Earth in a rickety rocket jolts him awake. A cold sweat envelops his brow as he stretches his fingers out for Clarke.

They come up empty.
"Baby?" he whispers, eyes snapping open.

She's not beside him. He shuffles out of bed, barely avoiding smacking his head on the bar that holds up her mattress above him. But her bed is empty, too.

He takes a few steps forward on his bare feet then stops when he feels something squishy between his toes. Crouching down to be eye-level with the circadian lights, he takes in the small- and medium-sized drops of crimson liquid pebbled up against the tile floor.

"Shit," Bellamy mutters. It's like a boulder is pressing against his chest, squeezing every last bit of breath from him as he rushes out of the room and takes off in the direction the spattered blood leaves for him on the floor like a trail.

When he crashes into the nearby bathroom, he thinks he's hyperventilating. He might be having a panic attack.

"Clarke!" he yells into the spooky, hazy-gray silence.

It takes him a moment before his eyes adjust, and the sound of soft sobs reaches his eardrums. Then he spots her pale feet beneath the stall door.

"Clarke!..." the sobs hitch in her surprise. "I'm sorry. I'm so, so, sorry."

It's all she will say, over and over again.

"Clarke, it's all right. Princess, please. Let me in. Just let me in, and we'll figure it out. I love you, come on. Open the door."

"I can't. I can't. Bellamy, just, just go away."
His pulse is racing, and he knows his breathing is coming way too fast. But he forces his voice to remain steady.

"Clarke, open the door. Right now. Or I'm going to break it off its hinges."

It reaches almost from the ceiling to the floor, with too narrow a gap for him to crawl under. But he knows he can break it open if he has to.

Finally, though.

Finally he hears the lock scrape open.

Her hair is as tangled as a bird's nest, and there's blood on the floor. It stains her pajama bottoms. Her face is pinched and swollen. She holds out her trembling hands before her face, suppressing a silent scream.

"Oh my God," he gasps, falling to his knees as she rocks back and forth on top of the toilet.

"Baby, it's ok. It's ok. We're going to go see your mom, ok? It's all going to be fine."

He wants to touch her, to calm her somehow. He wants to rest a hand on her knee or catch her hand, but he's terrified of what she'll do.

"I didn't take the radiation pills, Bell," she muttering like a crazed person. "I didn't take them. And it didn't matter. I'm Wanheda. I'm Wanheda. Wanheda."

Knowing there's no time to spare, he opens up his arms and, to his surprise, she collapses against his chest. He curves his arm behind her back to brace her and slips the other underneath her knees, hoisting her into his arms as he takes off toward Abby's dorm, Clarke's hands limp around his neck as she sobs against his heart.

"Abby!" he yells as he nears the door he prays belongs to her. He's only walked past it once and has
never actually gone inside. "Abby!" it feels like his throat's been sliced open.

"Bellamy?" a bleary eyed Kane scrubs his hand across his face then into his wavy brown locks as he opens the door. "That you, son?"

His sleep shirt is all crinkled, but Bellamy's eyes hastily pass over him as he sees Abby's lean frame stir in the darkness as she sits up in bed.

"Jesus! Clarke! What's wrong with her?" Kane gasps.

A lamp snaps on over his shoulder, and Abby's voice warbles, "Marcus? What is it?"

"Abby! It's Clarke! She's bleeding. Please," Bellamy manages to cry out before the shaking overcomes his body, and Kane insistently takes a protesting Clarke from his arms.

Abby is at their side in a moment, her discerning gaze sweeping across her daughter with a mixture of worry and fear.

"What happened?" she demands of Bellamy, stroking Clarke's hair back from her sticky forehead. "Did she fall? Did she cut herself? Tell me!"

"Abby . . . " Bellamy tries his best to look into her face. "She's pregnant," he whispers, broken. "Please. She's bleeding."

Chapter End Notes

I'm really sorry. I know - I'm breaking my own heart here, too. But the story's definitely not over yet. So bear with me! And if you feel passionately enough, feel free to share your thoughts in the comments below. It's the only real way I know how this is all landing... thanks!
stone cold sober

Chapter Summary

What happened to Clarke sends ripple effects outward, affecting many in the bunker.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

“I met you in the dark
You lit me up
I was enough
We danced the night away
We drank too much
I held your hair back when
You were throwing up--

Then you smiled over your shoulder
For a minute I was stone cold sober
I pulled you closer to my chest
And you asked me to stay over
I said, I already told you
I think that you should get some rest.

I knew I loved you then
But you'd never know
'Cause I played it cool when I was scared of letting go."

~James Arthur, “Say You Won’t Let Go”
Murphy finds her curled up in one of the lounge's window seats, staring blankly at the image of the Egyptian Pyramids before her. It's life-like enough for a digital screen, with swirls of sand billowing up across the landscape and a few camels trekking through the drifts.

"They're strong enough to survive Praimfaya," she whispers quietly without turning to look at him. "I thought they would be one of the only wonders of the world left to show . . . my baby . . . when it was born. But that's gone now, too."

Her voice is uncharacteristically bitter, he thinks.

"Clarke . . . " he tries, awkwardly stuffing his fists into his jean pockets and shuffling a few steps closer to her.

"Don't know how we'd even get to Africa - a boat? Or fly the rocket? I don't know, it was so stupid," she twists her limp blonde locks tightly around her wrist.

"Would you come take a walk with me?" Murphy tries again. "Please? We don't have to talk if you don't want to."

She glances up at him then, eyes slightly unfocused and skin less luminous than he remembers it.

"What?" she shakes her head a little as if trying to knock away a fly.

"Take a walk with me, come on," he holds out his hand.

He helps her up, and they drift slowly through the quiet halls of the bunker. Murphy talks about small things, nothing in particular. How he's developing a bit of a green thumb and enjoys growing carrots in the garden. How one day Emori would love to see the ocean. At some point, she leans weakly against his shoulder, and he starts, trying to conceal his surprise. She doesn't seem to notice, and he feels two teardrops hit his shirt sleeve. So he drapes an arm loosely around her shoulders while she holds the belt loop at his waist for support. Her footsteps speed up as they approach an open door, but he doesn't piece together why until a shaggy head of dark curls pops into view, alerted by the sound of their shoes on the tile.
"Clarke?" Bellamy stands in the doorframe, leaning his weight against it. It comes out part plea, part awestruck sigh as if she's a goddess from Ancient Greece who's materialized in puffs of glitter before him.

Bellamy looks like shit, Murphy notes, face drawn tight with dark circles under his eyes. *Poor bastard,* he thinks. Behind him, a group of cadets engages in hand-to-hand combat.

Clarke doesn't make eye contact but urges Murphy insistently along with a prod to his back.

"So you'll talk to Murphy and not me? Is that it? What the hell did I do to deserve that?" he sounds near tears but still mad.

"Bellamy, please don't," Clarke utters in clenched syllables like there's grit between her teeth, keeping her eyes on the staircase before them.

Murphy shoots him what he hopes comes across as an apologetic look over his shoulder. He definitely needs to avoid Bellamy Blake's right hook.

They walk up and down the basement halls around the boiler room for a little while. When Murphy opens up a random janitor closet's door at some point, Clarke stops, a few wrinkles spreading out across her forehead. He bends down and pulls out a bright red rubber ball and a toy car complete with a remote control.

It pulls the tiniest smile from Clarke's lips.

"You're full of surprises, aren't you?"

"Hey, you never know what's going to come out of the closet," he grins back.

He lets her race the car around - she crashes it into the walls a lot - as he bounces the ball steadily as he strolls, seeing how high he can get it to go without losing control.
Many silent minutes pass before she breaks their quiet companionship.

"I'm so sorry about what happened in Becca's lab with Emori and the nightblood," her voice is like a croak. "Being threatened with losing what you love most in the world - I never should've considered doing that to you. I was so wrong, Murphy."

He gazes at her, stunned, eyes wide for a moment before he runs a hand through his slicked-back hair and releases the air he's been holding in his lungs. He watches his scuffed-up brown shoes for a second before squeezing her shoulder lightly.

"It was a fucked up situation, Clarke. But thanks for saying that. And for not going through with it."

She nods once, and they walk on.

***

Bellamy drops his tray down across from Miller in the mess hall with a thud.

"Everything ok?" Miller demands pointedly.

Fuming, Bellamy slides into his seat and begins stabbing at the already wilting lettuce leaves in front of him, glancing up from time to time to watch something over Miller's right shoulder.

With a deep sigh, Miller rolls his eyes then turns to look himself.

"They're just having lunch in a public place, man. Where everyone can see them, just like we are," Miller tries to keep his voice perfectly calm. "I know it's not ideal, but it's good that she's talking to people. I'm not trying to hurt you, but you've got to see it's better than that first week when she barely left Abby's room."
Bellamy grunts and spears a piece of tomato hard enough for it to squirt juice directly into Miller's eye.

"Ugh!" he blinks rapidly, dabbing at it with a napkin.

"Sorry," Bellamy huffs.

"Listen, I know this is a . . . really difficult time for you guys. And I want you to know I'm here for you, man. Really, whatever you need. But Clarke's got to come around in her own time. And she will, you'll see. She knows how much you love her. She's just in pain."

"She hasn't been back to the dorm in three weeks. She won't talk to me at all," he manages.

Miller shoots him a look full of sympathy.

"It's gonna get better. I really do believe that."

Bellamy bites his lip hard but nods once and resumes eating less aggressively this time.

They pass a few minutes talking about the cities they would have wanted to visit most before the first apocalypse struck - "Tokyo! Come on! All those neon skyscrapers and sushi floating by your table in little boats! Plus people walking around in kimonos. That's the shit!" Miller is saying - when the smile collapses from Bellamy's face without warning.

Roan's fast-moving hands are fanning out a deck of playing cards. After Clarke picks one out, he resuffles them rapidly before making them disappear. A second later, he's reaching dangerously close to her across the table and pulling out a card from the lock of hair behind her ear, so she giggles. She must be able to feel Bellamy's gaze on her, because she turns to meet his dark eyes for one painful moment. It's as though an electric current buzzes between them, more sizzling pain than longing heat. He watches her concrete wall soar up as she shuts down again and positions her chair so her back is more toward him.

***
The library is one of the few places Bellamy feels he can be alone anymore. There's something peaceful about sitting at a solid wood table, surrounded by rows of old books, knowing he won't be on the receiving end of someone's pitying stare. So he throws himself into learning as much about world history as possible, thumbing through musty pages about everything from the colonization of Australia to the Industrial Revolution and rise of Nazi Germany.

It's after 11 one night, and he's squinting at the small print about Aztec burial rituals that appears to be crawling across the cream-colored page like a line of marching ants, when a soft hand lands on his shoulder.

"Hello Bellamy," says the woman quietly. "I wanted to read up a bit about old farming and hunting practices before bed, and I saw you sitting here. How are you?"

Niylah's face is infused with a level of earnest attention he can't stomach as her eyebrows draw together. It reminds him too much of another face, another well-known expression of worry. He feels his stomach clench painfully, the cooked noodles from dinner threatening to regurgitate.

"Hi," he mutters. "I'm fine. There are a few tables over there if you want to read."

"Mmm," she offers, fingertips ghosting across the cuff of his sleeve absentmindedly before falling to her side. "I haven't seen Clarke in a while, is she--"

"You're probably seeing a lot more of Clarke these days than I am," he bites back before he can help himself.

He doesn't wait for her reply and doesn't bother to so much as glance at her shocked expression. Instead, he shoves his books into his satchel and jerks his chair back from the table, causing a horrible screeching noise, before moving swiftly toward the door.

***

"Hey, Jasper! Can you make me a vodka cran?" Octavia chirps out as she boosts herself up on a black barstool.

The bunker was stocked, not surprisingly, with a heavy supply of alcohol. So it didn't take long for Jasper's Bar to reopen for business.
"Anything for you, beautiful," he returns cheekily, sliding into place in front of her and busying himself pilfering the shelves for the right glass bottles. "Where's the pyro tonight?"

Octavia snorts back a laugh.

"Ilian and I are . . . taking a break. He's getting a little too clingy for my taste," she admits thoughtfully.

Jasper has to turn around to suppress the grin bubbling up on his features.

"Enjoy the clingy while it lasts," Bellamy sighs sarcastically as he drops into the stool next to her. "How're you holding up?"

Jasper slides the sparkling drink to Octavia and looks to Bellamy expectantly.

"Double shot of Monty's moonshine, please."

"You got it," Jasper winks at him and moves down the bar in search of the right supplies.

"Like hell," Bellamy admits once he's gone. "She won't even look at me, and it's been weeks. If I'd just busted open the stall door immediately and raced to the med bay, maybe . . ."

Octavia's fist tightens around her glass.

"No, Bellamy. No. This is not your fault. Do you understand me?"

He swallows hard but says nothing.
"Want me to try to talk to her for you?"

"No, that's ok," he sighs. "Miller says she'll come around when she's ready."

"Well, Miller's usually an asshole, but in this case, I think he's right," she tries for light humor.

"It's just --" Jasper returns with swirling white-gray liquid in a cup. It's smoking slightly.

"What the hell?" Bellamy stares at the fumes rising from the drink.

"Just trust me. It'll be good for you."

Shrugging his shoulders, he grabs the glass and tilts it down his throat, wincing at the burn.

"It's just what?" Octavia asks quietly.

She finds Bellamy's deep brown eyes with her far lighter ones. Tonight, their crystalline blue disturbs him.

"She's talking to everyone else," he admits before turning away toward where Jasper is cranking up a sound system.

_I thought that I'd been hurt before_  
_But no one's ever left me quite this sore_  
_Your words cut deeper than a knife . . ._

"Jesus, Jasper!" Octavia barks. "Read the room!"
"Sorry!" he calls back apologetically. "It was the first thing that came on. I'll change it!"

As the opening rift for Hotel California kicks up, Octavia leans her head against Bellamy's shoulder and wraps an arm behind his warm back.

"One day you'll have it, Bellamy. A real family. I know you're gonna make me an aunt before I ever make you an uncle."

"I wouldn't bank on it, O."

She blinks rapidly to repress the eye roll she longs to shoot at his oppressive melancholy.

"You will. And it's going to be with Clarke."

He grunts.

"Yeah?"

"Yeah."

"How are you so sure?"

"Because she's always seen how special you are."

His eyes narrow suspiciously, but he says nothing.

"Just give it time."

Chapter End Notes

Hopefully not as heartbreaking as the last chapter, but, alas, Bellarke is not doing too well here. I promise things will look up for them sooner rather than later! Brace yourself for some "Raven gets real" talks coming in the next chapter, as well as some (gasp!) Murven, Echo being into Bellamy (I know, I'm sorry, but she's totally infatuated with him in the show - I don't care what anybody tells me), and the return of our favorite OTP. :) Thanks for reading, guys! You color my world with your comments and kudos.
how far do i have to go (to get to you)

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

"Hey, brother, there’s an endless road to re-discover.

Hey, sister, know the water’s sweet but blood is thicker.

Oh, if the sky comes falling down for you,

There’s nothing in this world I wouldn’t do.

Hey, brother, do you still believe in one another?

Hey, sister, do you still believe in love, I wonder?

Oh, if the sky comes falling down for you,

There’s nothing in this world I wouldn’t do."

~Avicii, “Hey Brother”

His back hits the padded floor with a crack that makes his stomach turn.

At least it wasn't your head, he consoles himself.

"You're not thinking far enough ahead. You trust I'll do what it looks like I'm doing, that's your problem," Echo is saying somewhere high above him.

Her face clouds his vision suddenly - she resembles a painted raccoon.

"You said Lincoln used to train Sky Crew, and he taught you a great deal about warfare and the clans. I've spent my life living as an enemy spy and not being killed. Do you not think I have something to contribute as well?"
Bellamy cracks his neck and rolls her eyes at her dramatic language, but it leaves him uneasy as he shakes out his limbs. Lincoln. Another death he wasn't able to prevent.

"I think you have a big mouth," he says drily.

"You don't have to be afraid to attack me because I'm a woman," she says carefully after a moment's pause.

Moving her hands from her hips, she motions him toward her in a gesture that says nothing short of "come at me."

Bellamy scoffs.

"Trust me, that's not it."

She lunges forward and slices her blade through the air toward his own, but he's ready for her, defending himself and driving her toward the opposite drab wall.

"Then what is it?" she pants. "You afraid I'm a better warrior than you?" Her hazel eyes spark at him.

"No," Bellamy calls, slicing the sharp blade across her heavily padded jacket for effect, creating a deep rip. "You cheat, and you manipulate to get what you want. But your streak of honor and loyalty, whenever you feel it, makes you guilty. So you're dangerous. You play both ends against the middle and hope you don't get burned."

Her flying feet pause, and she nearly stumbles off the edge of the blue padding and into the old cement blocks stacked in the corner.

"And you think such tactics are not useful for surviving in the new world?" she pinches her mouth together and waits.
Bellamy sighs and draws himself up to his full height.

"Oh, they're useful. I just don't know if someone like that should be training my people."

A flicker of hurt crosses her face, but it's concealed quickly enough.

"And this Lincoln? He was so pure of purpose?" she demands, licking across her bottom lip.

He takes one step closer to her. It's near enough to see the way small beads of sweat stick her light brown hair to her forehead while the puffs of hair she expel cause the flyaway strands to float.

"He wanted unity, peace," Bellamy sees his friend's face flash into his mind. How could it only be four months ago that they were training with Harper, Miller, and Monroe in sunlit Arkadia, trading harmless insults and inside jokes?

"He trained under Indra?" Echo's words cut sharply into his reverie.

"Yeah."

"Then I'm sure he was good."

Bellamy simply stares back at her. But she seems to take his silence as confirmation.

"And he loved your sister?"

He swallows the taste of bile down.

"Yes."

His jaw clenches, and he glances away toward the room's sole fake window. It's showing a picture of a striped hot air balloon floating past Stonehenge. She puts the pieces together much too quickly.
for his liking.

"He died protecting his people, Bellamy, from what I understand. He died honorably. You don't bear that death on your shoulders. He chose it. Your sister chained you in a cave - what could you do to stop it?"

"How do you even--"

"Roan," she returns simply, as if this explains everything. "He would not allow Octavia to roam the streets of Polis after the City of Light fell without knowing everything important about her."

"Well you're still wrong!" his right arm surges forward once more, but she's ready for him, blocking the blow. "Sometimes you have to stand in front and take the bullet. You can't just run away and blame your clan or the circumstances. Sometimes it's your job to defend the defenseless," he cries harshly.

Echo fights aggressively, launching off a stacked crate and swirling in an arc through the air to land closer to him.

"This isn't about Octavia anymore, is it?"

He doesn't answer, just continues to battle with the heavy steel in his grip. But she catches the red marks high in his cheeks.

"Bellamy, you've sacrificed yourself for her over and over. She runs from you now. She's acting like a child. She doesn't... appreciate how good you are. If she did, how could she be anything but thankful?"

The words come out so fast and garbled, their meaning takes time to register in his brain. When it does, he throws down his sword and bares his teeth in disgust, marching steadily toward the spot where she stands motionless.

"What the fuck do you think gives you the right to talk to me about her?" he snarls, clenching his fist. "What do you know--"
A deep blush stains her cheeks now, but she holds her ground and meets his eyes.

"I know you will not strike me. I know you are good and honorable. I mean no disrespect, but her behavior--"

He doesn't know where it comes from. He wishes he'd never said it as soon as he does, but.

"How can she look at me when I remind her of another death we caused!" he practically screams it.

He knows deep in his soul Clarke's lost all her love for him, wants nothing more to do with him. The raw pain of it colors his words. But even so, she'll never stop being his.

Echo jerks her head back at the unexpected volume before composing herself. Her mouth forms a grim line, but her tone is kind when she speaks.

"Bellamy, it's not your fault. We cannot fight nature," she points above her head toward the ground where Praimfaya wrecked havoc. "We don't know why fate moves its hand in certain ways, but you didn't cause this."

Hesitantly, she reaches out to lay a bracing hand on his forearm. When he doesn't move, she takes a step closer. Then another smaller step. She's near enough to see the defined lines of his eyelashes, the distinct outlines of his freckles. He can feel her cool breath against his cheek, and her heart-shaped face, those arched eyebrows, come nearer still.

"BELLAMY! You and I need to talk! Now!" the sharp bark of Raven Reyes erupts from the doorway.

***

Bellamy glances toward the hallway shocked, dazed. Raven's eyes are bugging out, and he can see the vein throbbing against the side of her neck even at this distance.

"I said now!" she reiterates. "Move your ass."
She marches beside him silently all the way to engineering, not even looking at him. The only sound is the clank of her brace as she struggles to get up the few steps to her own personal headquarters. It's not until they're safely in the cavernous space full of wires and spare parts - he gets a quick flash of Monty and Jasper elbow-deep in a tub of fertilizer that must be for the hydroponic farm - that she slams the door and rounds on him.

"What the actual fuck do you think you're doing?" her voice reaches a level of hysterical he's never heard. He didn't think it could go up that high, to be honest.

Out of the corner of his eye, he sees Monty drop a small container of liquid. It smashes to the floor, purple liquid smearing everywhere.

"Damn it!" Jasper moans. "That was the best chemical mix for the plants. I've been working on it all day."

"Clean it up!" Raven yells. "I don't want it contaminating my tools. I don't know why I even let you two work in here."

"Sure," Monty tries. "You know what, we can go get some rags to clean it up in a bit. Give you guys some time to talk."

"Nice try. There are old towels in that cabinet," Raven jerks her head toward a gray-green metal behemoth in the corner. "Wipe it up now and stay here. I need witnesses."

Jasper makes a noise somewhere between a moan and a strangled cry.

"So, is that really the way you're going to help Clarke through this? Hooking up with Echo?" she says menacingly, turning back to Bellamy.

"Shit," he hears Monty mutter from his crouch on the floor.

"Stay out of it, Raven. You don't know what the hell you're talking about," he bites back.
"Oh?" her voice is breathy and falsely girlish. "I don't know what I'm talking about?" she flutters her eyelashes. "Why don't you explain what I just saw then - I guess I'm just too stupid to understand."

He remains quiet.

"Not such a badass punk now, are you?" she leans forward, jabbing him in the chest hard with her finger.

"You wouldn't understand."

She's up in his face in a moment. It feels vaguely reminiscent of the time she held a knife to his throat, and he tried to strangle her in the woods when she first crash-landed and discovered he stole her radio.

'Did you forget exactly who was responsible for Gina's death?"

"Shut your mouth, Raven."

She shoves him, but he makes no move to defend himself.

"No, I won't. Because you didn't deserve her. You spent that whole relationship pining away for Clarke who ran away into the woods and left you to deal with the fallout of Mount Weather," she sighs heavily. "But it's different now. Now you have Clarke."

"I don't have--"

"You DO have Clarke. You've always had Clarke in every way that matters!" her face softens the tiniest amount. "I get it, Bellamy. She's your person. She's your soul mate. She's your Finn, except she's going to be loyal to you, and you damn well better do the same!" she throws up her arms exaggeratedly.

Jasper's shoe squeaks noisily against the floor as he stands back up, dirty towel in hand. He holds it awkwardly for a moment before dropping it onto the table where it drips.
Raven drops her shoulders at the sight of Jasper's worried face.

"Listen, I know a horrible, shitty thing happened to you guys. But it's not an excuse, Bellamy. It's just not."

"I don't have to stand here and take this from you. I didn't cheat on you," he attempts to move around her, but she blocks his path to the door.

"You do not want to go back to the days of being the Rebel King prick, all right? Take it from me first hand that revenge sex with your would-be friend is not the way to solve your problems! Clarke needs you right now. And Echo needs to stay the fuck away from you," she slams her palm against the door for emphasis.

He snorts.

"Always so sure you know everything, aren't you, Reyes?"

Her eyes flash in dangerous anger.

"Give me all the puzzle pieces, and I'll put them together better than you," she challenges.

Right at that moment, Murphy emerges with what looks like a random soil sample from the other side of the door, pushing Raven a few stumbling steps forward.

"For what it's worth," he starts, all nonchalance, "I agree with Raven. I wouldn't touch Echo with a ten-foot pole, and the Princess--"

Bellamy lunges forward, slamming Murphy back against the door.

"Don't you ever call her that again, do you hear me! Don't you ever even talk about her again!"
He shoves at Murphy, knocking him backward into the sturdy door several times. But as Murphy attempts to fight back, something in him snaps, and suddenly, his hand's tight on Murphy's throat. Murphy's skin begins tingling clotted red, slowly streaking with blue as Bellamy chokes him.

"What the fuck, Bellamy!" Raven screams, clawing at his arms, digging her nails into his flesh and trying to pry back his hands as Monty and Jasper come running to help. "You're killing him, let go!"

"Stop it, Bellamy! Stop it!" Monty yells at the top of his lungs, while Murphy goes from wide-eyed fear to gagging for breath against the door.

"Calm the fuck down, man!" Jasper bellows, trying to make eye contact with Bellamy. "We can talk about this - you can tell us what's going on. This isn't who you are!"

With a sudden jerk, Bellamy releases Murphy with a final shake, shoving him away and staring down at his trembling fingers. Raven collapses to the floor beside the gasping Murphy, uncharacteristically soft as she cradles the back of his head and urges him to "breathe, breathe slowly, come on, you're ok, it's ok."

"Cockroach tried to make a move on Clarke. Took her down to the basement, after, after . . . it happened," Bellamy says quietly.

"Not true!" Murphy sputters when he finds his voice. "I would never. I love Emori. We just took a walk - she raced the toy car around. That's it. I swear."

"You're a liar, Murphy. A liar, a thief, a traitor, and a self-serving arrogant asshole."

Murphy struggles to his feet with Raven's help, face a thundercloud of emotion. Monty moves between the two, holding out his arms.

"Come on, guys . . ."

But Murphy shakes his head, mouth curling into a grimace.

"It's fine, Monty," he turns his attention back toward Bellamy. "Think about what you're saying,
man. I would never make a move on Clarke. I'm in love with my girlfriend. I respect Clarke. I was just trying to be her friend. I'd be your friend too if you didn't try to beat me into a wall, you sick bastard. But that's you - kill first and ask fucking questions later."

The vein in Bellamy's temple throbs as his heart rate kicks up again.

"I just wanted to get her mind off things for a little while," Murphy continues, unyielding as he begins pacing back and forth. "That's it. I swear. And she . . . "

"She what?" Bellamy spits.

"She still felt bad about what happened on Becca's Island with Emori. With the nightblood solution. She told me--"

"What did she say to you?" Bellamy sounds more desperate and less violent by the moment.

Murphy notices and shoots him a rare pitying glance.

"She should be the one to tell you, man."

"If you haven't noticed, she's not here. And she's not talking to me anyway. So start explaining," he says, voice steeling once more.

"All right, all right," Murphy puts up his hands in an appeasing manner. "She said she thought she understood loss before. You know, her dad, Wells, Finn . . . Lexa."

Bellamy feels his fists curl at his side and twitch, but Raven steps forward and stills his arm with a brush of her fingertips.

"But that, well, losing your baby felt like she was dying, too. It's, it's been more than she can take. She thinks she's cursed, you know, all that Wanheda bullshit. She doesn't think she can bring life into
the world, just destroy it."

Bellamy feels his way to a bench with Raven's aid as his knees start to buckle. He places his head in his hands as Raven rubs his back across the tight pull of his shirt.

Monty and Jasper exchange a look but try to remain as still and silent as possible.

After a few moments, Murphy sits down on Bellamy's other side, staring down at the floor.

"I'm sorry, Murphy," Bellamy offers him.

"It's all right," he says easily, maybe too easily. "I know."

***

A few hours later, Bellamy finds Clarke rolling bandages against a patient table in med bay. She's wearing a plain khaki skirt and scoop neck blue wool sweater. Her lengthening hair is held back in a side braid. She looks sweet and simple, like the girl he first met in the dropship.

He knows she heard his heavy footfalls, but she doesn't turn to acknowledge him. Her hands fly speedily over the fabric instead as she wraps it against her thin wrist.

Yet his words still her movements.

"Please, Clarke. I can't eat. I don't sleep anymore. This is ripping me up. You're my family. Don't push me away. Not now. Not like this."

She didn't realize how close he was getting to her as he spoke. But now his breath coasts hotly across her neck, and he gently covers both her hands with his own, tan on white. He strokes the delicate bones of her wrists and hesitantly slips his fingers between the gaps of her own.

When her tears come hot and heavy, streaming down her face, he doesn't notice at first. But then he feels her trembling against his chest followed by the distinct sound of a hiccup.
So he tugs her against his warm solidness and manages to move a few steps to the right to sit down on a coffee-colored leather couch. It's plush and seems to absorb some of his pain as he falls against it. He holds out his arms to her, and Clarke folds herself into his lap, knees curling toward his chest as his arms grasp around her at last. She shakes violently, hiding her face in his neck for a long while.

Until finally.

Finally, she speaks.

"I'm so sorry, Bellamy. I wanted to give this to you. I know how much it meant to you. And I failed. But you have to know - I did want it, too," her voice warbles.

"It's ok, it's ok," he whispers into her honey-scented hair, rocking her fragile frame like she is the child they lost.

"I thought you were done with us," he admits after a long while.

Her eyes widen in surprise then she's shaking her head violently. "No, no," the gasp is so low but still insistent.

When she brushes her hand against his cheek, prickly with stubble, it's like a dam breaks. And he too gives into the sadness that he's been shoving down beneath fierce hits to the punching bags during cadet training, slammed doors, and intense pre-dawn jogs around the perimeter track of the bunker that leave him drenched in sweat and cloaked in misery.

The tears glide down his face.

She swipes them away with her thumbs before cradling his head against her chest, raising her own head out of the way to make room. She strokes his thick curls with gentle fingers, pressing kisses against his temple.

"I'm sorry," she whispers it from time to time like a lullaby.
At last, when he draws back to sit up again, he tells her, "We can still have it, Princess. One day, if you want to. But I love you, no matter what."

She touches her lips to his with the softest pressure like a butterfly’s wings.

Bellamy slips his hand down from her forearm to her stomach so tentatively - he's holding his breath - but she flinches when his warm weight presses against her skin through her sweater.

In a second, he's jerked it away as if burned.

"Sorry, that was stupid. I'll give you some space. You probably want to finish the bandages," he moves to get up.

Clarke clasps her fingers around his wrist and curves his hand around her hip instead.

"I still want to be yours," she breathes.

He nods back so solemnly, so earnestly, fresh tears spring to her eyes.

"No going back now," he gives her a half-smile. "You're stuck with me."

"Then please stay," he catches the hint of a plea in her voice.

"Ok."

So he stretches back out on the couch, his well-muscled frame occupying it fully, and draws her flush against him, draped over his body, his arms wrapped around her back. Clarke sighs and breathes in the pine smell that's all Bellamy.

"Tighter," she whispers, stretching slightly to reach the bit of his neck above his collar and kissing it. "Make me forget."
Bellamy feels himself growing hard simply because it's been nearly six weeks since Clarke was touching him in any way at all.

Shit.

He shifts his body, so it curves away from hers, leaving her perched against his hip rather than splayed across his groin.

"No, don't," she rises up off her knees, pushing his shoulder back into the padded armrest before rolling her hips against his.

He sucks in air through his teeth in a low hiss at the feel of her heated core through her underwear brushing up against his dick.

"Clarke, what are you doing?" He watches her eyes carefully for signs of distress or listlessness. They seem clear enough.

"I need to feel good again. You make me feel good. You always make me feel good."

She presses against his hardening length several times, realigning her torso over him, so he can look straight down her top at her swaying, bra-clad breasts. She grasps at one of his hands and brings it up to rest against the pale mounds. But he only squeezes them once before pulling back swiftly. He latches onto her waist and draws his knees up as he pushes himself into a fully-seated position, back against the armrest. She falls into the hollow of his lap, knees straddling his hips with a soft "ugh," but she continues trying to grind against him.

"Clarke, stop!" His fingers dig into her hips to still her movements. "Please."

She won't make eye contact with him, but leans a hand into his shoulder regardless to stay upright.

"Look at me, Princess. I'm not going to hurt you," he positions two fingers under her chin to draw her eyes to his. Her black lashes are fully defined from her tears, and a dusty rose colors her cheeks. The intensity of the connection startles him, but he shakes his head slightly and presses on anyway. "You wouldn't talk to me for weeks. You ... completely shut me out. I was going crazy worrying
"I know. I couldn't face it," she says brokenly.

"It's ok," he sighs as a fresh slide of tears streak her face. "But we have to face it now."

She's sobbing openly when the side of her head hits the bone of his shoulder.

When she lifts back up, he catches her face in his hands. The callouses formed from handling weapons are abrasive against her soft skin. But she doesn't move an inch.

"Clarke, I love you, but you don't always make it easy. You can't run away from everything. I'm - I'm not strong enough to face it all alone. I need you, too."

She shakes her head at this.

"You've always been better at facing it all than me. I don't know why you want me sometimes. I just bring death."

He rubs his hands briskly up and down her arms.

"Clarke, no, this wasn't your fault," he allows his fingers to dance through her hair, smooth as a rippling creek. "We've been exposed to so much radiation. You were under so much stress. It would be too much to ask of anyone to expect it to happen right away. It wasn't you. You didn't do this. It's not your fault."

He's repeating what Kane told him as they sat together in the main office a week ago putting the finishing touches on lesson plans. He hopes she'll latch onto the words like he did, as a talisman against the grief.

"This isn't a personal punishment, Clarke. It's just an unfair world, you know that as well as anyone else in this bunker."
She gives him a watery smile, but it's better than nothing. Then she clears her throat before speaking at last.

"My world doesn't make sense without you in it, Bell. I shouldn't have done that to you, I'm sorry."

She hides her face in the crook of his neck once more, and he feels his muscles relax.

"It's ok. I'm glad you had your mom and Murphy and Raven and . . . Roan," he tries to not make the last name sound quite so bitter.

She chuckles lightly, and she feels his lips turn up against her forehead.

"He's really not so bad. I think you two could be friends if you tried."

"Mmhmm," he huffs, and she knows without seeing his face he's not convinced. His hands comfort her as they stroke her back.

"But nobody else could ever hold my heart as carefully as you do, Bellamy Blake. I'll always love you best because you're the best part of me."

And when she leans up to kiss him, it's so soft, but still so full of promise.

Chapter End Notes

Guys, I don't even know. This kind of just happened. Come flail with me in the comments. And tell me if you think Bellarke should still try to have a family? If so, baby name ideas? Should Octavia and Ilian reconcile? More Raven and Murphy? Or another character dynamic? How should our main cast spend their time in the bunker? I need fresh ideas, people!!!
shine on

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

“I made up my mind when I was a young girl

I've been given this one world

I won't worry it away

But now and again I lose sight of the good life

I get stuck in a low light

But then Love comes in.

How far do I have to go to get to you?

Many the miles

How far do I have to go to get to you?

Many the miles

But send me the miles, and I'll be happy to follow you, love.”

~”Many the miles,” Sara Bareilles

The thud of Murphy’s tray hits the metal bars heavily as he begins sliding it along the cafeteria line next to Raven.

“Hell of a day, huh?” she offers, taking a scoop of fruit salad onto her plate.

“Mmm,” Murphy agrees, reaching out for the broccoli and carrot dish.

She pushes her tray farther along away from him, but he halts her with a brief touch to her forearm.

“Yeah?” she turns back to him, lips pressed together in a question, though her eyes are wide and open.
“What you said to Bellamy today, that took some guts.”

She laughs a little.

“That’s me, helping everyone else figure out how to not treat their soul mate like shit.”

Murphy tilts his head to the side and laughs.

“Listen, I know this is way out of line for me to say, and you’ll want to stab me when I do,” he turns back to her, genuine crinkles near the corners of his eyes.

“Or shoot you in the leg?” she grins.

“Or that,” he concedes.

“But you’re going to say it anyway.”

“You deserve someone good too, Raven. Someone who’s going to treat you right, put you first.”

Raven dips her chin toward her chest for a moment.

“Once bitten, twice shy, Murphy,” she says from underneath her lashes, while reaching for the sautéed spinach.

“I don’t know what happened with Wick, but Finn, he . . .”

“And you’re stopping there,” she says gently, holding out her hand.

He purses his lips but says nothing.
She sighs, looking at his conflicted expression.

“What?” he wipes his hand self-consciously across his face. “I haven’t even eaten yet. There can’t be anything there.”

“When did you start auditioning for the Prince Charming role?” she asks, bemused.

“She?” Murphy snorts. “Nah, I’m still the cockroach. Keep up.”

“I am keeping up.”

His eyes meet hers for a long moment, and neither of them blinks. When he shakes his head to free himself from the odd spell, she’s already leaning forward and pressing a quick kiss to his cheek before walking away toward Harper and Monty’s table.

***

Monty glances up from the map of Virginia he’s been poring over as the sound of voices hits him unexpectedly. He pushes the door to engineering open slowly.

“Raven?”

She’s there, crouched down near the dusty floor hooking up some wires to a heavy-looking black box.

But she’s not alone.

“So you’re going to move this,” Ilian points to the black box, “to the control room and then determine the electrical current the plants need to grow? That’s what’s taking the sun’s place?”

Raven wipes the back of her hand against her glistening forehead. She looks a cross between amused and annoyed. He has a feeling she’s been explaining the finer points of the bunker’s operations to Ilian for a while now.
“Sort of, but not exactly. It’s not about the electricity level or current itself as much as it is about giving the plants a substitute for sunlight. You know, a solid source for photosynthesis. Electricity means light. So I don’t care so much about wattage for wattage’s sake. It’s about making sure the plants are exposed to the light they need.”

“Yeah, straight electricity would just fry the plants, like old-school executions, and then we’re screwed,” Monty quips from the door. “Or, you know, as far as you’re concerned, it’d be a fun show . . . smoke and fire and all.”

Ilian pivots toward him immediately. He has the decency to look ashamed.

“Well, I’m just going to be putting together some bookshelves this afternoon. But I’m sure Raven would be more than happy to teach you all about how technology works. It might even be good for you.”

Raven sends him a scathing look from the floor, flipping him off. But Monty just smirks, slides the goggles over his eyes, and begins sawing into the slabs of wood before him.

“Hey, Ilian!” he calls after a few minutes of Raven’s lecture on the importance of electricity in operating half of Jackson and Abby’s surgical equipment.

“How come you haven’t been in the dorm lately?”

A maroon color stains Ilian’s cheeks as he licks his lips.

“Oh . . . uh . . . I moved to a different dorm. To be with my own people, you know, Trishanakru.”
“Right,” Monty nods slowly. “Didn’t feel comfortable with so many scientists, I get it.”

“That’s not it!” Ilian says sharply.

Raven glances up from the tablet she’s been studying, eyes ricocheting between the two men.

“Monty, leave it,” she tries.

“It’s fine,” Ilian asserts, drawing himself up to his full height. “I just don’t want to be in the same place as Octavia if she doesn’t want to give our relationship a fair shot.”

Monty takes in this information with barely a blink. He just juts his chin out in acknowledgement that he heard it before he resumes sawing. But as he finishes the board he’s been working on and reaches for the next one, Raven could swear she hears him say, “Good for you,” under his breath.

***

Bellamy is exhausted. His shoulder blades ache, and his limbs feel heavy from all the cadet training. He swats the door to the lounge closed behind him and collapses onto an overlarge armchair, propping his feet up on a cushy beige ottoman.

A sound much resembling a squeak jerks his attention toward the countertop to the right of the door. It’s built into the wall, sturdy and dark and sleek, and . . . currently harboring his sister. Her red lip color is a little smeared, and her hair is mussed, billowing out around her slender face. But the bigger surprise is—Jasper.

Standing between her knees.

With his hands encircling her waist as he breaks away from their kiss.


“Get out, Bell!” Octavia snaps, digging her knees into Jasper’s hips, and pulling him closer to her by
a handful of his shirt.

But Jasper’s eyes dart to Bellamy’s set jaw and clenched fist, and he delicately breaks out of Octavia’s hold, but not before dropping a chaste kiss against her lips.

He moves cautiously to the door.

“You know what, I’ll go. It’s cool,” he says calmly.

He manages a roguish grin for Octavia - one Bellamy swears he stole from his own dropship playbook – and a “see you later, beautiful” before shutting the door tight behind him.

“God!” Octavia erupts as soon as he’s gone. “Do you always have to make everything so unbelievably awkward!” she shrieks at him.

“Yeah, it’s in the big brother job description. Now get the hell out of here, and go find something more useful to do than sucking face with a delinquent,” he says it with little real heat, rubbing the spot above his nose that promises a migraine to come.

She leaps off the table gracefully, stalking over to him.

“This isn’t the dropship, Bell! He’s not Atom! So you don’t get to string him up in a tree or harass him in any way, understood? My life, my decisions. Even if we weren’t all delinquents back then, we sure as hell all are now,” she flashes her eyebrows at him.

He winces a little. He can’t help it. The memory of Octavia’s first, albeit short-lived, Earth love twitching on the ground covered in boils from the acid fog still haunts him. When it’s very quiet, and he’s alone, his mind sometimes dances to a dark place. The first truly hard choice he had to make on Earth that he simply couldn’t. He hears Clarke humming in Atom’s ear as she mercy-stabbed him. She was ethereal in that moment, bright blonde hair slanted across her cheekbones as she kept her expression neutral. He saw the cracks in her facade though, but he saw her strength, too. Her grit. It far out-stripped his in that moment.

He must be drifting, because.
“What?” Octavia demands, lowering her voice.

“Atom was a good guy. I was too hard on him,” he manages with a half-smile, crossing his arms across his broad chest.

“Oh,” she breathes. “Yeah, he was.”

She flips her loose hair behind her shoulder, patting it down self-consciously and rubbing a hand over her mouth to wipe away the streaked bit of makeup.

“Being too hard on people is your specialty,” she quips.

“Yeah, yeah!” His arm leaps out, completely messing up her hair as he attacks it until it clings to the side of his jacket with static electricity.

“Bell!” she tries to lurch away from his hand, but there’s no place to go but back into the counter.

He swats at her with the rolled up papers he’s holding instead, until she holds up her arms in defeat.

“Ok, ok! I give!”

He’s beaming like a moron, chuckling, and he’s not even sure why. “I guess you could do worse. Seriously though, get out.”

She can still hear his laughter echo back to her from halfway down the hall. It’s comforting, hearing him really laugh. He hasn’t in such a long time. But there’s something about the exchange that leaves her feeling confused, too.

***

“My brother can ruin things better than anyone on Earth,” Octavia moans as she flops down on her bed, boots hanging off the edge.
Clarke stifles a laugh as she looks up from the Anatomy & Physiology textbook she’s reading on the top bunk next to Octavia.

“Not too many people left on Earth, so who knows? You could be right,” Clarke smirks.

“This is not the moment for post-apocalyptic humor, Griffin.”

“I’m sorry,” she composes her face and sits up. “What exactly did he do?”

Octavia kicks off her boots and beats her fist into her pillow a few times before settling into it.

“What?” she demands when she takes in Clarke’s face.

“Nothing. Absolutely nothing,” Clarke says hastily. “Come on, get to Bellamy being the worst person on the planet.”

Octavia closes her eyes and cradles her head in her laced fingers, elbows sticking out.

“He walked in on me and Jasper.”

“I’m sorry. I don’t think I heard you right,” Clarke sputters. “WHAT did you say?”

“Don’t judge me.”

“I’m not judging you!”

“I can hear you judging me with my eyes closed.”
“I swear, I’m not... Octavia, this is good news, isn’t it? I mean, Jasper’s been into you for ages, and if you like him back, well...” Clarke shrugs. “I mean, there’s not much else to do down here, right?”

Octavia scoffs.

“Oh my God! I’m sorry. I get it now. Did Bellamy threaten him or something? Because I’ll talk to him and--”

“That’s not it. He wasn’t even upset about that, not really.”

Clarke pushes some stray blonde hair behind her ear and waits patiently.

“He told me to go find something better to do than make out with a delinquent. He was joking, but then he talked about Atom. He never does that,” she says quietly.

“Mmm,” Clarke murmurs sympathetically.

“I hadn’t thought about him in so long, but when he called Jasper a delinquent, he sprang into my mind. And I got angry at myself for forgetting him. But Bellamy... Bellamy said he was a good guy.”

“Bellamy’s been through a lot since that day in the woods,” Clarke says kindly, watching Octavia’s face carefully. “You both have.”

“He couldn’t kill him, but you could,” Octavia levels a stare straight up between the bed gaps.

Clarke nods, swallowing hard.

“Atom was suffering so badly. We just didn’t want him to be in any more pain,” she explains simply. “I had some medical training. I did what needed to be done, but I wish I could have saved him.”

“I know that. It’s just...”
“Yeah?”

“It was good to hear Bellamy say something nice about him. He didn’t deserve to die. Lincoln didn’t
deserve to die. But, I guess, I mean . . . it’s getting easier to see Bellamy’s heart was in the right
place.”

“It was, it is. He loves you so much,” Clarke manages before she falls delicately back on her own
pillows, trying to conceal a few of the hot tears slipping against her neck and into her hairline.
“Believe me, he just wants you to be happy and alive. I know it isn’t fair; none of this has been fair.
But if he could bring them back for you, he would.”

Several quiet minutes pass as Octavia watches animals roam the African savanna on the digital
window, and Clarke resumes her reading. It takes a while for her to notice the green “Earth Day
2052” T-shirt sprawled out on the bottom bunk two beds over.

“So you and Jasper, huh?” she calls out.

“Shut up, Clarke.”

“I’m telling you, you’ve got it all wrong! I love the idea! You’re the original girl of his dreams. I
haven’t forgotten.”

“Please, Clarke,” she huffs, rolling her eyes. “Since when are you a romantic?”

Clarke looks thoughtful for a minute.

“In another world, I could’ve believed in soul mates,” she says almost inaudibly, pulling at the loose
threads of her blankets.

“You should believe in them in this world,” Octavia says a little more harshly than she intended. “I
did. Lincoln was mine. He’ll always be mine. You still have that, even if you don’t see it.”
Octavia, that’s not what I meant. . .

But the girl’s already standing up in front of her bedside table, eyes locked on Clarke’s as if daring her to look away first.

“No! You’ve got it wrong!” Clarke interrupts her loudly. “I was always in love with him, through everything, as far back as Finn. I just,” she grips the railing tightly. “I couldn’t let it be true. I couldn’t let him be hurt. And I sent him into the Mountain anyway.”

Octavia puts a bracing hand on her knee and stares hard into Clarke’s face, searching out the truth. When at last she seems satisfied, she continues.

“You did what you had to do then. But now, now we can make different choices,” Octavia says seriously. “When he couldn’t talk to you, he was worse off than when he and I fought over Lincoln. He cares about you so much.”

“I never meant to hurt him,” Clarke whispers. “I don’t ever want to hurt him.”

“You were in pain like I was in pain. Loss is . . . brutal,” Octavia replies. “Bell’s always felt everything deeply.”

“It runs in the family,” Clarke gives her a knowing look.

She laughs a little.

“Yeah, but there’s nobody he loves more than you.”

“I don’t know about that,” Clarke returns calmly.
Octavia bites her lower lip and looks away for a second. “It’s what I believe at least,” she murmurs to nobody in particular. “I’m only saying this because I know you’re going to be in his life for a long time. And I know you love him. You’ve just got to keep loving him even when it’s hard. We can’t forget that. We’re his family now.”

Clarke nods, wiping away the last of the moisture pooled around her lash line. “I understand. That’s what he always does for me. I’m just not sure . . . how to be with him normally again.”

“You just have to spend time with him, doing what he likes.”

“Shooting guns?” Clarke raises her eyebrows.

“Idiot!” Octavia shoves her fondly, and Clarke laughs.

“Clearly, we’re not built for this girl talk bullshit.”

“I don’t know – I thought we were doing a pretty ok job.”

Octavia’s beam lights up her face like a child’s.

“Just for the record, I was rooting for you and my brother, too.”

Chapter End Notes

As always, once I get going, this story just takes on a mind of its own! Thanks so much for sticking with it if you’ve made it this far! <3 I know it’s frustrating to read something bit by bit and wait for the next installment. It is literally one of my biggest pet peeves when people begin writing AMAZING stories on here then never finish them. 😞 But, I promise I won’t do that to you! Anyway, thank you for all the feedback and plot/character ideas. I have begun incorporating some bits and pieces into the story where I can. If you haven’t seen something you’ve requested, be on the lookout for the next chapters, because I’m tucking a few in those, too. And, as always, your ideas are welcome. I can’t promise that they’ll all be squeezed in here. But I certainly read everything and consider it! ☺
"In your eyes

The light, the heat

in your eyes

I am complete

in your eyes

I see the doorway to a thousand churches

in your eyes

the resolution of all the fruitless searches

in your eyes

I see the light and the heat

in your eyes

Oh, I want to be that complete

I want to touch the light,

the heat I see in your eyes.

Love, I don’t like to see so much pain.
So much wasted, and this moment keeps slipping away.
I get so tired of working so hard for our survival
I look to the time with you to keep me awake and alive.

There’s too many things that I haven’t done yet
Too many sunsets
I haven’t seen
You can’t waste the day wishing it’d slow down
You would’ve thought by now
I’d have learned something.”
Clarke splashes cool water against her face, while Bellamy brushes his teeth at the next sink over before bed. She returned to their dorm to sleep at night a little over a week ago, but it still feels weird somehow to do these evening rituals together.

Bellamy catches her eye in the mirror as he looks up - white foam bubbling around his mouth - and winks at her.

"I like those peaches, Princess."

The hint of a smile tugs at her mouth when she glances down at the rather loud pajama bottoms she discovered in a bin in one of the bunker's storage areas. They're baby blue shorts dappled with pictures of ripe peaches.

"They're ridiculous, but they fit. And beggars can't be choosers," she returns.

She's bent back over the sink, carefully wiping face wash suds from the area around her eyes when his hand presses into the small of her back.

"They look good to me," his voice drops an octave.

His hand glides down her ass smoothly, before jumping up and stroking small circles into the skin of her back under her plain cotton top. She stiffens a little and hears her breath hitch. His gaze, dark and intense, greets her after she towels off her face, straightens and gets up the nerve to look into it. For the first time in a long time, she feels a thrill of pleasure run up her spine.

His hand pulls her into his side, one of her legs on each side of his left one.

"Bellamy," she warns, although her hips already seek out the friction of his muscular thigh all on their own.

He leans down to whisper "I miss you, Clarke," against her ear. She can smell the mint of his toothpaste. Goosebumps break out along her arms at the words alone.
She nods, watching him closely as if in a daze. "I miss you, too."

"I don't want to rush you into anything," he murmurs against her golden hair, reaching out to let it glide between his fingers.

"You're not," she presses a few kisses against his jaw bone. "Soon, I promise. Monty's tea should be ready by next week."

"Tea?" he quirks an eyebrow at her, drawing back.

"Contraceptive tea," she blushes. "He's been working with Niylah to make the recipe the grounders use."

"Oh, ok, great," his voice is neutral.

"I just thought it would be for the best . . . for now," she takes one of his hands in hers, applying light pressure to it.

"Clarke, I want you to do whatever makes you comfortable. I just--"

He sighs and looks away down the line of sparkling sinks.

"Talk to me, Bell. You just what?"

"I thought you'd at least say something to me before you did anything like that."

"What do you think I'm doing right now?"

"Yeah," he turns back to her, gazing at her with light accusation in his eyes. "But it's like you've already made up your mind."
A flame of anger licks across her insides.

"Do you really want to go through what we just went through again any time soon?" she says it louder than she intended. "Because I want to remind you that I was the one who had to go through it!"

"God, no, of course not," he grips both of her shoulders, and for whatever reason, she lets him root her in their painful reality for a moment. He smooths a thumb across the crease forming between her eyebrows. "I'm sorry, Clarke. I wasn't thinking. If this is what you want, I support it. You know I'll always support you."

"It's not what I want forever, Bell," she reaches up to swipe a wayward curl away from his forehead, luxuriating in the silky softness of it. "Maybe just for the next few months. You know, see how we do?"

"Sure," he nods, pulling her back into his warm chest where she wraps her arms around his waist as best she can. "Anything you want," he kisses the crown of her head.

"I still want you. I want a family with you," she promises him, lips grazing over his heartbeat. "I just need a little time."

He seems to loosen and relax under her light touches along his back and breathe more fully. When she finally pulls away, she kisses him like she did in med bay, feather light. But it still causes something deep inside his stomach to coil tightly.

"Teaching starts in two days," he offers up to distract himself from his body's insistence on crowding Clarke into the nearest shower and kneeling between her legs until she thrashes on the tile bench.

"Really? That's great!" she grins warmly at him. "Do you have everything prepared?"

"Oh yeah. Kane made sure of it."

She begins brushing out her hair, and he finds himself lost in her fluid movements.
"Can I come watch you in action?"

Surprise decorates his face, and he's silent.

"Just for a few minutes!" Clarke hastily interjects. "Or not, I don't have to if it's weird or would make you uncomfortable. I mean, I'd sit at the back of the room and wouldn't talk or anything, but-"

"No, no," he slides a hand over hers on the golden brown countertop and gives her the goofy, flirtatious look he did when he asked her to come to Ice Nation for the hydrogenerator.

"I'd like that!"

***

Bellamy nervously adjusts the collar of one of the nice, cobalt blue button-down shirts Abby brought him the night before. He now officially owns two dress shirts when yesterday he'd never even laid eyes on one.

"For teaching. So you look presentable," Abby had smiled before pushing the bundle into his reluctant arms.

The twenty-five kids seated in wooden desks before him range in age from twelve to sixteen. They belong to Sky Crew along with every other clan in the bunker. All together, there had been forty-nine children under seventeen assigned to him for history lessons in two separate class sections divided by age.

"Good morning, uh, I'm Mr. Blake," he says in a voice that carries out across the large space. Twenty-five sets of eyes turn toward him, and he feels a thin sheen of sweat overtaking his back as his nerves set in in earnest.

But then he catches Clarke's warm smile from the very back row. She's mouthing "Relax, you'll be great!" and his heart rate does seem to calm down a little.
"First, I want to go around the room and have everyone introduce themselves. Your name, what clan you came from, any piece of Earth history you may have heard before, and something that's unique about you. Then, we're going all the way back to the start of human civilization to try to figure out exactly when our ancestors turned into a bunch of buffoons incapable of protecting their most precious resource - our planet."

His roguish grin wins many smiles back, and the tension slips from his shoulders as he points to the blonde boy in the front row to start speaking.

***

"So how badly did that really go? Be honest!" Bellamy knocks his hips into Clarke's as he walks her toward med bay for her next trainee session with the medical recruits.

"Bellamy!" she sighs in frustration, wrapping an arm around his waist and leaning into his side as he drapes his own around her shoulder. "I already told you twice you were brilliant. You made the cavemen come to life - I swear! I didn't know anything about the Neolithic Revolution, and the detail you went into about how you could tell what a civilization was like based on its trash, it was fascinating."

"And you wouldn't be boosting my ego just because you're hot for teacher, would you, Ms. Griffin?" he smirks, bending down to kiss her nose.

"Ugh! You continue to be an arrogant ass, do you know that?"

"Well good, I always did set high goals for myself as a kid. I'm happy to learn I'm finally achieving them . . . "

***

When Roan slides into the bench press contraption next to Bellamy at the makeshift gym the next day, he can't help but look over in surprise.

"Things good with you?" Roan grunts, straining his biceps under the heavy weight clutched against his chest.
"Living the dream, you?" Bellamy asks drily.

"Fine, fine," Roan says absently, hoisting the bar over his head with relative ease.

They work out in silence for several minutes, just the sound of their grunts filling the air before Roan begins to feel chatty again.

"Saw you having dinner with Clarke yesterday. Glad things are working out there. It's about time you two figured it out."

Bellamy turns to him, white shirt half-drenched in sweat, and narrows his eyes.

"Excuse me?"

Roan bites back a laugh.

"If anyone sands over her sharp edges, it's you."

"You want to see sharp edges?" Bellamy mutters lowly.

"What was that?" Roan tries as he hoists the weights back over his torso, wrists slightly shaking at the strain.

"Sorry, but since when do you say anything remotely complimentary to me?"

"It's not really a compliment. I'm just talking about what I see. And it's hard to lead, to make the right choices, without anyone to lean on," Roan grunts, heaving the bar into the slots built to house it.

"Listen, if this is about to turn into some 'it's lonely at the top' leadership speech, you can save it. I get enough of those from my own people," Bellamy cuts back sarcastically, putting up his weights as well.
"Did I say I was lonely?" Roan questions, whether or not he misunderstood the point of Bellamy's statement unclear. "I have Octavia now."

Bellamy turns his neck so fast, it crackles in protest.

"What the hell are you implying?"

For a moment, Roan takes in Bellamy's expression and tight fists, as if sizing him up. But then his face resumes its usual state of unreadability.

"I'm implying she won the Conclave, so she's a part of a lot of decisions around here if you hadn't noticed. I'm dealing with her rise to leadership, same as you."

"Yeah?" Bellamy grunts. "Well deal with it from a distance."

***

When Clarke crawls into bed beside Bellamy on the bottom bunk later that night, she's surprised to see they're the only ones in the room.

"I'm exhausted. The cadets drove me crazy with their questions today," he sighs, sliding a hand around her waist as she tucks herself into his side.

"And you told them to shut up and get on with the drills if they knew what was good for them?" she jokes, watching the flutter of his eyelashes from her odd angle.

"Something like that," he admits.

"You smell good," she noses at his neck.

She shifts her body a little more fully atop his, stretching up to kiss him soundly. When her tongue
plays at the seam of his lips, he opens his mouth to her, and she seeks out his own eagerly. His hands clasp onto her hips quickly, shifting her, so her core is nearer the apex of his thighs. But when her fingers go to tangle into his hair and smooth down his arm, his halt at her hips, slipping away from her body entirely.

Intuitively, she knows what he fears. She sits up astride him, rubbing her fingers carefully across his chest before leaning down to murmur, "I want you to put your hands on me, Bellamy."

His dark eyes seek her light ones, and she nods at him encouragingly. Her smile breaks into a groan when one of his hands melts against her breast, cupping it slowly, so she can feel each of his fingers pressing into her flesh. It isn't long before he's tweaking at her nipples through her thin night shirt, and she feels his erection hard against her ass. He grabs her behind her neck and drags her lips back to his before leaving a trail of wet kisses down the ivory column of her neck. She's grinding down on him, keeping her head low enough so it doesn't hit the bed over her head and enjoying the delicious friction sparking in her clit, when the door swings open.

"God damn it, get a room!" Murphy yells out, averting his gaze to the opposite wall.

"We already have one," Clarke snarks at him. "Too bad we have to share it with you!"

"What's the matter, Murphy? Afraid to find out you've been doing it wrong?" Bellamy taunts, but his voice is light and happy.

Murphy grunts something unintelligible that resembles "mom and dad," "dictators," and "all that sexual tension," before collapsing onto his bed and grabbing for Jasper's iPod.

Clarke pushes herself off Bellamy languidly, taking extra care to run her hand over his tented pajama pants and kiss him once more, as deep and dirty as she can, before diving into the pillow next to him. She pulls the blankets up around their bodies and snuggles into his side. 

"I'm not through with you, Princess," he mutters into her ear.

She gasps when his thick fingers skate up her inner thigh, nudging the long nightshirt higher and higher up until it collects at her waist. He doesn't bother to pull down her panties, just pushes them aside and dips into her folds to play with her entrance.
“You’re already wet,” he hisses low, so Murphy won’t hear.

“Bellamy,” she says, voice full of warning.

Then his pointer finger nudges twice against her clit, running her moisture across it, and she hushes herself by biting down on his shoulder.

“You’re already wet,” he hisses low, so Murphy won’t hear.

“Bellamy,” she says, voice full of warning.

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“Spread your legs, Clarke,” he demands, a deeper lust infusing his tone as the regular lights shift into night mode around them. The room is darker now, and Bellamy’s outline casts a shadow on the wall, lean and looming as he stretches above her.

She pushes the flat of her left foot into the mattress, bending at the knee to give him more access.

He pushes two fingers into her without preamble, turning on his side to shield her body from Murphy, even though they’re under the blankets.

“Ah!” she says quietly when his thumb begins a relentless, circular path on her sensitive clit.

“I’m giving you exactly a minute to orgasm,” he husks into her shoulder.

He’s found the spongy inner wall tissue hiding her bundle of nerves and presses down on it, hard. Clarke finds her hips rocketing off the bed, but he holds them down. His fingers never cease their insistent movements, widening her channel to stretch her muscles while teasing her helpless clit.

“Be a good girl and come on my fingers,” he says against her hair when he has a chance. Moments later, he feels her tightening around his hand, walls vibrating and pulsing with a fierce energy.

Her fluids flow out of her shamelessly, allowing his fingers to rut deeper into her when he pushes his tongue back into her panting mouth. From far to their right, Murphy starts to snore lightly.

She shudders, feeling her spine arch off the bed.

There you go,” Bellamy breathes as he pulls out his fingers and brings them to her lips.
She doesn’t hesitate to suck them into her mouth, eyes wide and never leaving his.

When she’s done, he curls his hand around to the fabric stretched over her ass and tugs at the waistband.

“Take these off,” he urges her, and she kicks the lacy white underwear to the bottom of the bed as carefully as possible.

“Very good, Princess,” he soothes, cupping her breast once more before bending down and tonguing it through the fabric, going as far as biting the fleshiest parts. “If I’m going to play with your pink little pussy, I need easy access.”

“Bell,” she tries to protest, pushing her knees together both for the delicious sensation it causes and to keep him unaware of how wet she is. “It’ll be sensitive,” she whines.

“None of that, Princess,” he pinches at her thigh. “I’ll be gentle. Now go on, spread your beautiful legs for me.”
“Tomorrow we can drive around this town
And let the cops chase us around.
The past is gone, but something might be found--
To take its place...hey jealousy.

And you can trust me not to think
And not to sleep around.
If you don't expect too much from me,
You might not be let down.
Cause all I really want’s to be with you
Feeling like I matter, too.
If I hadn't blown the whole thing years ago
I might be here with you.”

~Gin Blossoms, “Hey Jealousy”

Clarke gives him a keening moan, but as his fingers skim over her leg, coasting toward her inner thigh, she feels her resistance lower and opens to his touch.

"Come here, baby, sit between my legs," he lines their pillows up against the metal frame of the back of the bed and leans against them, shifting her malleable form lightly into the gap between his knees.

Her head lolls against his chest, with some strands of blonde hair streaming over his shoulder. She smells like vanilla spice in his arms, and she's still quivering with aftershocks. He reaches down to massage her calf muscle when he sees it twitch.

"Breathe, Clarke, you're ok," he whispers against her ear, rearranging the blankets loosely around them.

Clarke's eyes dart over to Murphy's rumpled form. His chest rises and falls slowly with sleep, and he emits a small snore from time to time.
Bellamy tilts his hips back, so she falls against him fully and rucks up her sleep shirt a bit more, exposing her soft, smooth thighs to his view.

"Give me your hand, baby," he twines his fingers between hers and move them to the fair curls guarding her sex. He slips their joined hands a little lower, ghosting over the tip of her clit. Clarke closes her eyes and whimpers a little when he pushes her finger against the nub.

"Damn, feel how wet you are, Princess," he dips her small hand lower still into her folds around her opening.

It's true. The silky moisture spills out of her as he rubs her pointer finger around and around her entrance before nudging it back up to tease her clit.

"Bell..." she huffs, voice taut, and he sucks a small, reddish bruise against the side of her neck, eyes raptly focused on the rise and fall of her breasts.

"I got you," he murmurs into her hair, slipping his left hand under her arm and wrapping his fingers around her breast.

His hand is hot and heavy, invasive in the way he wastes no time tweaking at her nipple, pinching it between his thumb and forefinger.

A shudder builds in the base of her spine, jerking her hips outward toward his waiting fingers. She breaks away from his hand, digging her nails into the burnished skin around his knees as he nudges insistently at her still-swollen clit.

"Your tits are amazing, Princess. So full and beautiful," he weighs them against the flat of his palms.

She wraps her hands around the base of his thighs for leverage, for anything to cling onto as a hot spasm pulses through her.
"Bell-ah-mee!" she pants when his rough fingertips sneak under her shirt and roll across her stomach.

"Yeah? What do you want? Tell me."

"God! Your fingers," she gasps. "Please."

"You got it," he nibbles along her fleshy earlobe, while dipping one finger into her center, pushing it in experimentally.

"Mmm," Clarke moans, gripping the sheets pooling around their bodies.

He can feel her walls flutter around him, resisting him, trying to push him out so soon after her orgasm.

"You're so goddamn tight, Clarke," he palms her breast at the same moment he stretches her with another finger, and she struggles to relax, to adjust.

His thumb begins working furious circles on her clit.

"You can take it, baby," his hand slides down over her stomach as if he's leaving a handprint there. She pushes back against him, feeling the bones of his sternum and ribs against her back.

Surprise courses over his face when she laces a hand over the one on her stomach, twisting around at an awkward angle to drop a loving kiss to his lips.

"One day," is all he says in response as he squeezes the tiny roll of fat above her hips.

Then he's pinching her clit before rubbing it roughly, and she's seeing stars, moons, galaxies.

Bryan and Miller's clomping footsteps cause her eyes to snap open. She clamps her hand around
Bellamy's wrist between her legs, stilling his motion as her channel continues to convulse around his fingers.

He slides out of her, and she tugs her long pajama top down just as the pair make it to their bed. Clarke forces her breathing to regain normalcy by taking slightly deeper breaths than usual, but no amount of breathing can stop her from feeling Bellamy's hardness against her back. She slouches down further and presses into him with her shoulder, knowing it will drive him crazy.

"Later," he growls against her ear.

"Now," she breathes back, suddenly shifting out of bed and tugging him along behind her.

He inadvertently knocks into Miller's shoulder in his haste to leave.

"Woah, where's the fire?" Bryan questions into the blackness of their surroundings.

Clarke just giggles, and Bellamy throws his best friend a quick "Sorry, man!" over his shoulder before Clarke yanks him toward the door, still laughing as she hurries for the yellow glow of the hallway.

The closet connected to his classroom is dusty, cramped, and stacked sky high with cartons of school supplies when she flings the door open.

"In here?" Bellamy glances at her skeptically.

"The closets lock. The classrooms don't," she shrugs, holding out her hand to him as she steps through the doorway.

Bellamy's eyes take a few seconds to adjust to the murky shadows pressing in on him from every direction as the door clicks shut behind him. Fortunately, a chink of light passes through the half-inch gap beneath the door from the classroom beyond.

"You've been so patient, Bellamy," he hears Clarke whisper.
His heart starts hammering when her palm presses against it.

"I want you to know how much I appreciate that."

"You...you s-said the tea wasn't ready," he stammers stupidly.

"It's not," Clarke's voice is full of mischief as she backs him against the far wall.

Her fingers glide against a hidden light switch on the wall, and she clicks it on. A dim, golden glow floods the small space, as she points Bellamy toward a large box to sit on.

Bemused, he sits down. But his eyes widen when Clarke drops to her knees between his legs, and he automatically widens his stance for her. Her pale hands grip the elastic edge of his plaid pajama bottoms, and he takes the hint, shucking them off.

In seconds, she's crawling into his lap, grinding her already dripping core into the bulbous head of his dick through his boxers. She sucks his moan into her mouth, latching her lips forcefully to his, eager to taste him again. His hands steady her erratic hips, making sure his dick bumps into her bundle of nerves enough times for her mouth to fall open in a perfect "Oh."

When her thin cotton nightshirt slips off her shoulder, he yanks the other side off her other shoulder.

*Riiiiipp* comes the sound of the fabric tearing.

"I want to see you," he hisses against the salty sweat of her neck as she rolls her hips into him, clasping onto his shoulders.

He pulls the nightshirt down farther, exposing the tops of her jiggling breasts and bends forward to suck her hard nipple into his mouth through the barrier.

A coiling begins again from a place locked far away below her stomach. But this isn't about her. She gently stills her hips against his hard length and slides off his lap to the floor with as much grace as
After allowing her gaze to sweep across his broad chest for a moment, she yanks at his midnight blue boxers, and he helps push them to the floor. His dick stands proudly against his abdomen, and she takes it in her hand, pumping it slowly, being sure to press her finger into the underside in a way that makes him jerk his hips into her grip.

"Patience," she whispers to him, glossing her thumb over his head where precum drips out.

"Clarke," he chokes out, raggedly.

She leans forward and takes him into her mouth, relaxing her jaw and feeling the velvety hardness slide to the back of her throat.

"Fuck," he grunts, unable to help himself from twining his fingers into her hair. "Your lips look so good wrapped around my cock, baby. And your tits are shaking, Jesus."

She sucks at him eagerly, tongue lapping at the underside of his shaft as he does everything he can not to buck his hips into her harder.

She knows he's close a couple minutes later, feels him tense up, but he's not letting himself go. She looks up into his blown pupils half-hidden under heavy eyelids and strokes up his thigh, urging him toward his release.

When he finally comes, the salty liquid hits the back of her throat in spurts, and she does her best to swallow it down. He's watching her in awe when she finally releases his dick from her mouth with a "pop."

She uses her nightshirt to wipe the corner of her mouth as his eyes track every moment.

"Take it off," he manages to tug at her threadbare pajamas brokenly.

She slips the makeshift dress over her head and allows him to manhandle her generous breasts, suck her rosy nipples into his mouth and push her clit into the abrasive fabric of his boxers stretched over
his thigh until she writhes above him one last time before shattering. He latches his lips against the other side of her neck and won’t let up until a deep purple-red bruise emerges along her snow white skin, despite her whimpering protests.

Eventually, they return to the dorm.
all shook up

"Beauty queen of only eighteen
She had some trouble with herself
He was always there to help her
She always belonged to someone else.

I drove for miles and miles and wound up at your door
I've had you so many times, but, somehow, I want more.

I don't mind spending every day
Out on your corner in the pouring rain
Look for the girl with the broken smile
Ask her if she wants to stay awhile
And she will be loved
And she will be loved."

~Maroon 5, “She Will Be Loved”

"Couldn't you all pick something less, I don't know, sappy?" Miller moans as he drops into the plush cranberry velvet theatre seat.

"No, we couldn't," Octavia snaps back, twisting around to roll her eyes at him. "I suffered through *Dawn of the Planet of the Apes* last week, so suck it," she sticks her tongue out at him.

"I thought the special effects on that one were pretty good, considering it was the 21st century," Clarke leans over and whispers to Bellamy.

"Shhh, do not rattle the monkey cages," he presses a finger to his lips and wiggles his eyebrows at her.

She stifles her laughter by scooping a few honey roasted peanuts from the red-and-white striped popcorn container on his lap and popping them into her mouth.

"*Planet of the Apes* is about humanity's fight for survival in a cruel world. It's got a profound message you should be able to relate to, O," Miller grumbles, pursuing his lips at her.

"Profound my ass," Octavia mutters.
"Chill, Miller!" Harper calls from a few seats to the left of Clarke, where her head already rests on Monty's shoulder. "It's ladies' choice tonight."

"At least if Raven had something to do with it, we'd be watching *The Matrix*," Murphy complains from the third row where his arm's slung around Emori.

It's lucky Bellamy is sitting behind Emori. A shorter person might have trouble taking in the screen over her hair wrap.

"Please, you didn't even know what was going on in that movie!" Octavia retorts. "It's still not too late to give you a taste of Praimfaya and see if a cockroach really can survive anything."

Jasper places a light hand on her knee, and she settles back into her seat with a huff. Clarke makes out Ilian's distinct profile a few seats down from Jasper if she looks carefully. He shifts forward hastily but then leans back, staring resolutely at the screen in front of him instead.

"Whatever, can we just start the damn movie!" Raven snaps from somewhere to Bellamy's right. "Some of us have things to do after this."

"Awww, you mean like get drunk with your best friends?" Jasper chirps out. "That's sweet, Ray-Ray. We love you, too."

"Idiots," Clarke hears her mutter.

"What are we watching again?" Roan asks Raven.

"I don't remember what it's called," she admits. "Octavia thought it looked sweet," the word sticks in her throat. "Some love story based on a book from eons ago, who knows?"

It's Roan's first movie night, and he's gazing skeptically at the dark screen as if he expects fairies to float out of it. Cadogan really had thought of everything, it seemed. Jaha discovered the movie theatre - complete with gold sparkling full-length curtains framing the screen and an antique popcorn maker collecting dust in the corner - a few days after they arrived. But it was Bryan who stumbled upon the stash of hundreds of old movies while he was organizing cardboard boxes four months after they moved into the bunker.

"Not true!" Octavia turns to pelt Raven with a shower of what appear to Clarke to be fluorescent blobs, which glow in the half-light. Bellamy leaps forward to grab one. "The guy on the cover was hot - that was good enough for me. I could use a distraction."

"What are they?" Clarke questions as he squishes one together between his thumb and pointer finger.

"Don't know. They look like . . . bears?" he says, trying and failing to keep the awe out of his voice.

He lifts the lime green candy to her lips, and she opens her mouth, managing to flick her tongue over his finger slightly.

He watches her expression carefully.

"Well?"

"Tart, kind of gooey. Here, see for yourself," she smiles at him, before pressing against the armrest separating them and finding his lips.
His tongue flits around hers then dances to the roof of her mouth, making her giggle and the kiss itself rather difficult.

"Start the movie!" Miller bellows from behind them, making them wrench apart. "There's only so much sap I can take from mom and dad!"

Bryan laughs.

"Fine! I'll do it. I always have to do everything, don't I?" Monty jumps up, but there's a little grin on his face.

"But you do it all so well, baby," Harper coos at him.

They're well into the movie - it's a World War II period piece set in a coastal Carolina town - before Bellamy untangles his fingers from Clarke's and drapes his arm around her shoulder instead. She lifts the armrest and snuggles into his side, enjoying the spicy woods scent of him.

Octavia was right - the lead actor is attractive, if you're into that blonde hair, blue-eyed, lanky, passionately broody thing. He's just been reunited with the love of his life who he had a summer affair with seven years before, and of course it's begun to rain heavily. Rain always makes everything so much more . . . dramatic. When Clarke feels the delicate brush of Bellamy's fingertips against the swell of her left breast, she's not sure if she wants to bat him away or press into his touch.

"Why didn't you write me?" the lead actress, Allie, demands of her old lover, Noah, as she stands on a dock near the dream house he built for her despite not knowing if he'd ever see her again after her parents separated them. When Noah says, "I wrote you every day for a year," Clarke can't help it. She gasps.

Bellamy begins to chuckle.

"Shut up!" she swats at his stomach.

"Never took you for a sappy romantic, Princess," he slips the words against the back of her ear, and she feels her body tremble.

"It's devastating," Clarke holds her ground. "She spent seven years thinking he didn't care."

And then Noah is pulling Allie into the most needy, desperate kiss and pushing her up against the wall of his house, feeling up her thigh. Then he's hitching her knees up around his waist and flinging her onto his bed, pulling off her stockings in such a languid way Clarke fights to push the moan back down her throat. Finally, he's pushing into her in a way that's clearly creating a deliciously painful stretch. Clarke clenches her thighs together and leans into Bellamy's touch on instinct. He's more openly rubbing against the side of her breast now, allowing his longer fingers to skim her quickly hardening nipple . . .

"Clarke! Is Clarke in here?" filtered light streams into the darkened theatre as the sound of Niylah's voice breaks the spell of the love scene on screen.

Clarke gently knocks Bellamy's hand away and stands up. "I'm here," she shields her eyes while looking toward the back door. "What is it?"

"Can you come with me for a minute? It's important," she motions with her hand.

Sighing, Clarke glances down swiftly and catches the scowl before Bellamy can suppress it and transform his face into a blank slate. She slips past his knobby knees and takes a deep breath to calm
her racing heart.

***

Two hours later, the movie crew plus Jackson and Echo are waiting for Clarke's return in a lounge they claimed near the dining hall. They're also getting steadily more drunk on Monty's moonshine.

"All right! Enough waiting!" Jasper calls out from his perch on a flat bench.

His knees wobble as he sweeps out his arms, and Octavia clasps her fingers around his wrist to steady him. He blows her a kiss.

"It's time for truth or dare!" he yells to raucous cheers and applause. "Rules are that the dare's got to be kept in the lounge because it's already eleven, and I don't want Indra's shock baton up my ass. Other than that, let's get stupid!"

He jumps to the floor and sits down beside Monty on a blue couch spattered with yellow diamonds. Bellamy steers his sister toward the opposite couch by her shoulders and sits next to her, throwing a lingering look at Ilian who's been watching her blatantly ever since the movie ended.

"So who's going first?" Harper calls out just as the door creaks open, and Clarke steps into the room, followed by Niylah.

"Room for two more?" she asks brightly.

"Absolutely! Come on in!" Emori smiles at them.

Raven catches Niylah squeeze Clarke's fingers before following her into the lounge. She hopes Bellamy didn't notice. But he certainly won't be able to miss Niylah sharing a bench with her toward the back corner of their circle.

"Let's get started, shall we?" Miller says, taking a swig from his cup. "Monty, truth or dare?"

Monty considers it carefully, rubbing his chin. "Truth," he says at last.

Miller grins.

"Why'd it take you so long to make a move on Harper?"

"Because I thought she was too good for me," comes the answer, swift and direct.

"Awww, babe!" Harper gushes, standing up from her spot two seats down and kissing him hard as whoops and applause rise around them, oblivious though they are to them. When they finally break apart, Harper squeezes into the small spot next to Monty, weaving their hands together.

"Ok, person next to the one just chosen gets to continue the game. So . . . guess that's Harper!" Miller says, dropping his voice seductively.

She rolls her eyes.

"Echo!" she says full of energy. "Truth or dare?"

Echo drapes one leg over the other casually and leans back, flipping her hair over her shoulder like Allie had in the movie. "Dare, I suppose."

"Great. I dare you to kiss the most attractive person in the room," Harper levels a stare directly at her
A bolt of electricity seems to pass through them all, followed by nervous laughs and fidgeting. Of course, ever since the dropship days, there has been a lot of hooking up and partner swapping amongst the delinquents. But it's not like they let strangers into their weird rituals.

"Fine," she sighs, delicately licking her bottom lip before standing up.

She walks languidly toward Octavia whose eyes grow wider with each footstep.

But.

Then she swerves at the last minute, bracing her palms against Bellamy's knees as his whole body stiffens. She reaches out to sweep a lazy hand through his curls before wrapping her fingers around the back of his neck and drawing his face closer to her own.

*At least she's not wearing the white war paint* is the last thought that crosses his mind as her lips collide with his - somehow forceful yet easy all at once. She lingers for a few seconds, sweeping her tongue against his bottom lip, and when he gasps at the sensation, she briefly slides it inside his mouth.

"Holy shit," he distinctly hears Murphy say over the general foot-stamping, cat-calling mayhem that ensues.

When Echo breaks away, she draws back gracefully, keeping her hazel eyes on his (*is it wrong that he feels a small twinge of pride at how widely her pupils are blown?*), winks, and returns to her seat. *Yeah, it's probably wrong. And very fucked up.*

"Wow, gonna be hard to top that one, ladies and gents," Miller says uneasily, glancing at Clarke.

Her fingers are gripping the side of her bench so tightly they're bone white. She's crossed her legs at her ankles and tucked them around the back of the bench leg, too, as if she needs literal, physical help restraining her body. Bellamy for his part still looks dazed, hair erratically standing on end in several places.

"Emori, you're up!"

Emori's face breaks into a sweet smile as her intelligent eyes land on Jackson.

"Truth or dare, Jackson?"

He fidgets for a moment, hand clasping the back of his neck before mumbling, "Dare?"

"Ok. I dare you to do something unexpected."

Jackson's gaze sweeps around the large circle once before he stands up and walks over to Miller. Their eyes meet for the briefest of seconds, then Jackson leans in and kisses Miller's cheek, turning a deep shade of rose almost instantly.

Miller just grins, slapping him on the shoulder, while Bryan emits a large puff of air.

"Murphy, it's all you, dude!" Miller calls out.

Murphy rubs his hands together excitedly, eyes gleaming. "Octavia! Truth or dare."

"Careful, Murphy. I wasn't joking about opening the hatch for you," her smile is poisonous.
"That's not an answer," he slides a hand through his well-oiled dark hair.

"Truth," she pushes the word out with a flourish, swiping her high ponytail around a bit.

"Ok. Who's the better kisser? Jasper or Ilian?" Murphy bares his teeth in his feral grin, far too pleased with himself.

"None of your business, asshole," she hisses, as Jasper flips him off.

Ilian eyes grow momentarily wide. But then he stares down at the floor, shifting uncomfortably.

"You have to answer the question."

"Fuck you, Murphy."

"Nah, that's not one of your options."

But he jolts at the sound of Bellamy cracking his knuckles menacingly.

Emori elbows her boyfriend hard in the ribs, and he finally relents, holding up his hands in defeat as Bellamy moves to stand up.

"Moving right along to the lean, mean, King of Ice Nation - Roan, you're up!" Miller interjects hastily.

Roan rolls his shoulders, drawing himself up in his chair. His gaze zeroes in on Raven, but her spine straightens too under the challenge.

"Truth or dare?" he asks like it's a casual conversation.

The side chats quiet down as the energy crackles between the two powerhouses.

"Dare," Raven replies at once, not blinking.

"I dare you to reroute the electrical power back to the video cameras next week, so we can check what's going on outside."

Jasper's eyes narrow.

"Hey, that's not within the rules," he butts in, taking a swig of his drink. "Dares must be completed within this room."

Raven holds up her hand to silence him.

"I dare YOU to tell me my plan to reroute the power to med bay and the hydroponic farm was right," she trills back, smirking at him.

"We'll see when we're attacked in the middle of the night because we have no security cameras!" he thunders back, but somehow, he's still smiling at her.

"Roan!" she insists, clamping her hands onto her knees and leaning forward.

He snorts.

"All right, little bird, you did a good job," he admits begrudgingly.

She sits back, crosses her arms over her chest, and appears mollified. Bellamy notices her red top is
"Mind if I go next? I really do have things to do in the morning."

"Yeah, sure."

"Thanks," she says silkily, taking in the group before homing in on the one person whose hands are fidgeting.

"Clarke," her rich brown eyes seek out the startled blue ones. "Truth or dare?"

Bellamy sees the crease form between Clarke's eyebrows as she tries to work out the expression on Raven's face. The dynamic of the room shifts yet again to something more actively worried.

"Truth," she says carefully, as Niyah pats her shoulder fleetingly.

Raven's eyes narrow, and it looks like she makes some sort of decision.

"Did you ever really love Finn?" she drops the question like an atomic bomb, fast and merciless.

Clarke goes rigid, blinking rapidly as she stares at something over Raven's left shoulder.

"I-I . . . I . . ."

"Raven!" Octavia says sharply.

"That's all right, Clarke. You don't have to answer that," Harper says hurriedly, looking pained.

But the damage is done.

Tears spring to Clarke's eyes, and she gets up swiftly, almost tripping over the bench leg.

"Clarke!" Bellamy's deep voice echoes around the lounge as he stands up. There's no hint of threat in it, but she still rushes from the room.
you're in good hands (though they grab and grip)

“Life is a mystery
Everyone must stand alone.
I hear you call my name,
And it feels like home.

When you call my name,
It’s like a little prayer
I’m down on my knees
I want to take you there.
In the midnight hour,
I can feel your power
Just like a prayer
You know I’ll take you there.”

~Madonna, “Like a Prayer”

"I told you, it was just part of the game!" Miller reassures his boyfriend as they travel the hallway toward their dorm.

"I don't understand where he got the idea he could do it," Bryan argues, slowing his steps until Miller is ten feet in front of him.

Glancing over his shoulder after a moment, Miller realizes the gap and stops directly under an overhead light. It casts a rainbow-flecked halo around the top of his head.

"It. was. a. dare," Miller grunts into the stillness for what feels like the twelfth time, swinging around.

"Yeah, well, you had a big, shit-eating grin on your face for the rest of the night."

Miller rubs his eyes with his fingers, squeezing them shut. When he looks back at Bryan, he takes in his slumped shoulders and the cute way his wavy brown hair falls into his eyes. He sighs.

"Bryan, I wasn't smiling because of Jackson. I was smiling because everyone was together, just having fun for once. We weren't focused on destroying ALIE or a grounder attack or how to fight back against the end of the world. Things were . . . good for a moment, you know?"

Bryan stares down at his boots, digging his hands deep into his jean pockets.

"Yeah," he says quietly. "Ok."

"Ok." Miller nods once. "It's late. And we can talk about this more tomorrow if you want, sound good?"

Bryan bites his bottom lip, tilts his head to the side.

"You still want to raise chickens?"

Miller grins.

"With you? Absolutely."

"Then we're good."
"Come on, let's get to bed," Miller nuzzles the back of Bryan's neck, barely brushing his lips against the warm skin.

But Bryan's shoulder muscles turn to rocks under his grip as he halts a few steps into the dorm.

"Awww, hell, no!" Miller steps around Bryan to get a better look at what's in front of them. "Raven! Are you serious right now?"

The athletic mechanic's spine is pressed against the back wall next to the digital window. One hand is splayed against the side of Roan's ribs, her legs wrapped around his waist, while the other is curled into his dirty brown waves.

He continues kissing her neck, while her head lolls to the side, exposing more of her mocha skin to him, seemingly oblivious to the intrusion. Her hair flows, long and glossy, over her shoulder, and her lips seem redder than normal.

"Raven!" Miller yells louder this time. "Out in the open like this?"

Her hand shifts to Roan's shoulder and grips down to steady herself, showing off her impressive bicep, as her eyes flutter open. She makes no motion to drop to her feet, and Roan simply pins her to the wall with his hips, smirking lazily at Miller and Bryan over his shoulder.

"Well, what the hell did you two come in here for? Afternoon tea?" her voice is breezy, like music.

It's been a long, long time since he heard her sound anything like that.

"I don't give free shows," Roan grumbles, stepping away from the wall to face them with Raven still in his arms. "Though maybe you two could use one."

Bryan growls beside Miller.

"It's like . . . fraternizing with the enemy!" he sputters, face turning red-purple in disgust.

"Hey!" Raven barks in a tone much more characteristic of her. "He wasn't the King during the Farm Station attacks, Bryan!"

Roan chuckles darkly.

"No, that would have been my mother. Blood lust was more her thing," he sighs, bracing a hand around Raven's waist and nudging her thigh until she allows her simple black ballet flats to touch the floor, protesting the whole time.

"Butchery runs in the family, far as I can tell," Bryan spits.

Roan takes a measured step forward, though Raven does attempt to grab his forearm while regaining her balance on her brace.

"All right, it's cool. It's cool. Sorry to interrupt," Miller holds up one hand in a peace offering while throwing out the other in front of Bryan's stomach in warning. "We're leaving."

Clarke's shaky hands are pressing the key code to the main office when Bellamy finally catches up with her. He had to run down several hallways before he glimpsed her worn, navy Henley and
blonde hair.

"What the hell was that about? You heard me calling your name!" he slams his palm against the wall over her head, half caging her in. She shutters at the impact.

The door clicks open with a whoosh, and she hurries inside, Bellamy on her heels.

"Answer me, Clarke!"

She takes a deep breath, drawing herself up to her full height before spinning around. When she does, she finds herself practically toe-to-toe with him, but stares into his face resolutely, all pointy chin and flashing eyes.

"It was just a game, Bellamy. Raven was drinking, She wasn't thinking. I'm sorry I ran out like that."

But the cool, level way she says it, the heavy tears glimmering behind her eyes, it brings back a sharp memory for him.

Of her wearing three inches of grounder makeup and telling him to leave Polis immediately.

That she'd stay behind and make sure Lexa honored her end of their agreement after Ice Nation blew up Mount Weather, and he abandoned his girlfriend to fight his way up dozens of stories to free her.

All this bullshit is so exhausting.

So.

"I know you loved Finn, Clarke," he goes right for the core issue as the heavy, silver door locks into place behind him.

Her mouth twitches like she's eaten something sour. There's the crinkle again between her eyebrows.

"And you loved Gina, so what's the problem?"

His words - though they're not really mean, more resigned - still sting her like an ugly accusation, make her feel dirty. Not like a young girl who fell from the sky and took trips into the sun-dappled woods with a smiling, kind-eyed boy who told her jokes and whose "princess" sounded like music.

Hearing Gina's name is like a gut punch, even though he should've expected it.

"I don't have a problem. I'm not the one denying things," he gets nearer to her still, looming above her and forcing her neck to angle upwards to keep looking him in the eye. "You're the one who ran out of the room and wouldn't stop even when I ran after you."

"He broke my heart. Is that the truth I'm not supposed to deny?" she takes a few steps back, the heat coming off his chest in waves too much for her.

"Clarke, I don't know--" he rubs his hand aggressively over his face. His voice is full of grit, rumbling like an old engine.

"What do you care if Raven attacks me out of nowhere, anyway? You looked more than happy with the how the game was going for you!" she hisses meanly.

"What are you talking about?" he spits, feeling the anger rise within him. "We all saw you come in with Niylah, holding her hand."

"I don't have a problem..."
"So what?"

"So maybe something was going on in the two hours you were gone," he steps nearer to her again.

"That's ridiculous," Clarke snaps, balling her hands into fists at her sides.

"Is it, really?"

"Of course it is!" Clarke widens her eyes, reaching for his hand abruptly, but he jerks it out of her grip. "You're being a jealous, ridiculous asshole!"

"What were you doing with Niylah for so long then? Brewing your contraceptive tea together because you've got to make it fresh every day, or it won't work?" He hears the sarcasm dripping out of his mouth like syrup but can't seem to stop himself. His heartbeat increases, pumping the alcohol though his system in a way that focuses his attention even more sharply on Clarke's twitching rose petal mouth and the light brown mole above the corner of her lip. "Did you really think I was so stupid I wouldn't see the tea as an excuse for you to spend more time with her? You probably laugh about how you really pulled one over on me," he sneers.

Clarke's mouth opens in surprise. Pink blotches erupt on her cheeks like budding carnations.

"Pulled one over on you? Are you even listening to yourself?" she shakes her head in disbelief, hands clasping at her hips. "Where is this even coming from?"

"I know you used to fuck her, Clarke. Right in Arkadia down the hall from me. Don't deny it. You probably still want to--"

She raises her right hand up, swooshing it backward through the air, and he has enough presence of mind to widen his eyes, anticipating the sting destined for his cheek. But she stalls with her hand over her shoulder, the rage in her face ebbing into something desperately more sad as she watches his nostrils quiver and his jaw slide from side to side.

"Gonna hit me, Clarke?" the words are so coarse.

A few tears roll down her cheeks as she drops her hand. But he almost has the wind knocked out of him when she firmly shoves him toward the desk instead.

"You hypocrite! You made out with Echo right in front of me! She tried to kill Octavia! She's the reason Mount Weather got blown up - she betrayed you! And you have the nerve to tell me--"

He catches her wrists easily in his hands, and in a few steps, has braced them into the wall on either side of her wriggling body.

"I have the nerve to remind you that you let a bomb drop on my sister," he mutters, dark and serious. "That you loved the woman who betrayed us at Mount Weather," his words whisper across her cheek, her neck, her shoulder in a murderous caress that drives a shiver from her tired muscles. "And I'm still standing here."

Clarke turns her face away from him, looking toward the door. A flash of the explosion ripping through Ton DC, sending dirt and bodies flying, cuts across her memory. "Great," she spits out to his shoulder, struggling harder as he holds her down. "So me and Echo are interchangeable then, right?"

She forces herself to peer up into his eyes, surprised when she finds them swimming in an oil-like blackness. "Why don't you just fuck her and get it over with? Maybe then we'll be even."

The growl tears out from Bellamy's throat as he pins her to the wall with his hips. Her eyes card over
the beads of sweat popping up along the collar of his grey T-shirt and leaching into the fabric. There's stubble starting to grow along his jaw.

"SHE kissed ME, not the other way around. I didn't kiss her back," he says ferociously, dipping his head against her neck to bite the place it meets her shoulder.

Clarke thrashes wildly but can't escape the mounting heat and hardness of him pressed up against her as his fingers stay wrapped tight around her wrists like electrical cords.

"Whatever you say," she manages it with enough disdain to piss him off.

She gets in one swift kick to his shin when he draws back a little, but she's only made it a few feet toward the door when his fingers catch the soft cotton of her shirt and drag her back again.

"I swear to God, Bellamy! Let me go right now, or I will scream so loudly, I'll wake up every person in this bunker!"

He releases her, and she's three steps toward the door when his fierce words force her to a halt.

"Just tell me why you always get to run away because you feel like it without giving a damn about how I feel."

She marches right back up to him, hands on her hips and look one of pure indignation.

"I left that room because I care so much about how you feel! How Raven feels! What was I gonna say? If I said yes, I hurt you. If I say no, she thinks her boyfriend died for nothing."

Before she knows it, her shoulder blades scrape the wall, backing away from his fast movement forward. But her hands are free to claw marks down his biceps as he boxes her in between his arms.

"Get off me, Bellamy," she shoves her palms into the hard planes of his stomach but to no avail.

"No," he argues it in a controlled whisper, running both hands along her rib cage slowly but firmly until her body is fighting the arousal coursing through her blood on top of everything else. "I don't know what the fuck to say about Finn, but I have never wanted Echo!" his hand moves to squeeze fingerprints into the curve of her hip, the muscular hill of her thigh. She tries her best not to grind down into his leg when he pushes it between her own and bends down to suck at her neck. But she doesn't succeed, suddenly desperate to grind against him. She can't stop her hands from threading through his curls or the tiny moan that escapes her lips.

"No matter what you did, there has never been anything I couldn't forgive you for," his nimble fingers are working the button of her teal-colored jeans that narrow in at the ankle. The sound of the zipper slices through her brain, while her fingers try to swat him away, then cling to his chest when he won't allow it.

"You want to know why, Clarke?" he grabs her chin and forces her to stare into the vastness of his eyes all while her jeans pool around her knees.

His fingers push her panties to the side, immediately finding her wetness and stroking her delicately before dragging upward to bump repeatedly against her swollen, aching clit.

"Why?" she gasps, willing herself not to come from the intensity of it all because she refuses to give him the satisfaction.

He finally smiles and dusts his lips against hers in the faintest of kisses, holding himself there to
whisper, "Because you gave me forgiveness when I was falling apart, and I'll never forget that."

He plunges two fingers into her, and she shuts her eyes tightly as she feels her walls spasm and flutter around him as he rolls her clit in every direction possible with his thumb.

When her limp arms float around his neck, he kisses her earnestly, slanting his mouth over hers and tasting her fully. Her legs are trembling as he pulls back, and she lets her hazy eyes take in the pretty constellation patterns of his freckles she adores so much, lets herself really see him, her Bellamy. There's anguish in his eyes still. For once, she lets the reasons for it crash into her as well: Niylah. Finn. Lexa. Gina. Echo. The tea. Her bleeding out in his arms on the bathroom floor. The weeks of silence. Her stomach drops in a free fall, and her ribs crack as the tremors envelop her.

"I've got you," he whispers against her wet cheek, kissing it, too. "I'm right here."

"I don't want, Niylah, Bellamy," she manages.

He grits his teeth, turns away before looking back at her.

"I don't want Echo," he returns.

She lets out a sputtering laugh.

Then her hand is cupping his cheek, rubbing gently at the scars there. Bewilderment rests in his eyes, but so does the warmth he can never quite hide when he looks at her, even when he's so furious at their stupidity he could punch barbed wire fences.

"I didn't drink any tea today," she whispers into the crook of his neck, reaching up on her tiptoes to suck along the length of it despite his stubble scratching her.

"Wh-Wha-What?" he sputters.

"I didn't drink any tea."

He takes a large step back to look at her more carefully.

Under his gaze, she slips out of her tan sandals and kicks the stretchy teal fabric of her jeans away, too. She hooks her fingers under the edge of the faded gray Henley, then that too lies in a crumpled pool on the carpet.

Finally, she stands before him in a lacy white bra and panty set. It's amazing anything can match down here, but she must have found them while going through the piles of discarded clothing. She trembles, and he runs a hand along her arm before he can stop himself. All the blood in his body seems to be rushing toward his dick.

"Clarke?" he steps closer and pulls her toward him by the waist, his other hand stroking the easy softness of her stomach.

"I still want your baby," she tells him. "I want it to be you."

He feels himself harden painfully.

"You didn't take the tea today," he murmurs the words back against her hair.

"Niylah was helping me understand what would happen if I stopped drinking it. She noticed I didn't have any today, and that's why she came looking for me. I told her I wanted to start a family with you."
She can feel herself blushing and knows Bellamy must be able to as well with the way her cheek is crushed against his shoulder. But then again, she is pressing against a fully clothed man in practically see-through lingerie, so.

He forces himself to swallow.

Then he pushes her toward the desk by the small of her back, sending the papers scattered across it to the ground with a sweep of his arm.

"Lay down," his voice falls an octave, and a throb of heat returns in full force to the aching hollow between her legs.

She hurries to obey him, and he maneuvers her hips down to the edge, gliding her panties down to her ankles. They fall with the heaviness of a shot bird to the ground below. He doesn't bother taking off his own clothes, just unbuttons his pants and pushes them and his boxers to the space around his knees. His hands push apart her inner thighs as he steps between them, then unhook the front-clasp of her bra, so the cups spill to her sides, leaving her breasts with their taut, tight nipples open to his lingering stare.

"Wanted to give me easy access, Princess? That's very kind of you," he taunts her, leaning over her body, so his abs ripple and move. He pinches one pink-red bud hard between his fingers and she gasps, so he moves to the other.

Her knees dig into his hips when his heavy dick bumps against her leg.

He grasps her hand, drawing it down to her wet core and sweeping her pointer finger around and around her entrance.

"I love when you touch yourself for me," he urges, palming the full weight of her breast and squeezing it insistently.

Clarke emits a sound halfway between a moan and a growl, but she taps a rhythm over her clit and entrance until her juices flow in earnest, and she slips two fingers into herself the way she knows he'll like to watch.

"That's it, baby. Stretch yourself on your fingers," he murmurs, watching her writhe for a long minute or two. "Now add one more."

Her eyes haze over, but she shakes her head as she tries and meets resistance. He cups a hand around the soft, supple flesh of her thigh, and she relaxes a little in his grip.

"You've got to get ready for my cock, Clarke. It's been a while," his hands ghost up and down her body as he begins to suck a fresh bruise mark against her neck.

He tugs her hand away by the wrist and somehow manages to glide three of his own thicker fingers into her, licking her clit with the tip of his tongue just the slightest amount until she's coming undone.

She keens, rocking into his hand.

He steps up to the edge of the desk again, nudging at her sticky opening with the head of his dick. She whines as he rubs it in deliberate circles around her clit, feeling stabs of electric heat race through her chest and stomach.

"You ready to take it, baby? You're my brave princess, right?" he smirks at her.
"Stop talking, and just do it," Clarke gasps, gaze snapping from the breadth of his shoulders to the deep blackness of his eyes.

She groans loudly when his dick plunges into her fully at last.

"You look so sexy taking my cock, babe," he flicks at her clit once more and reaches up to steady one of her heaving breasts.

His hips snap against hers, forcing her to swallow up more of him with each thrust.

"I'm yours and you're mine, yeah?" he murmurs against her ear, and she nods fervently, too awash in sensation to verbalize anything.

Suddenly, he changes their angle, gripping the bottom of the desk and draping her legs over his elbows, so his dick rubs more abrasively along her outer wall.

It sparks nerve endings locked far away within her, and she trembles when he kisses her.

"Please . . . please . . . I can't,"

"You can," he manages to stroke her cheek with his thumb before moving it down to squeeze her thigh as he drives against the spongey patch of tissue over and over again.

"Ahhhh," she cries out, feeling herself rushing to the edge of her ability to bear it.

"Can I come inside you, Clarke?" he licks the slippery, lilac-scented skin of her neck. "Will you take it all for me?"

"Yeah." It's the only word she can manage as her pussy convulses around him, pulling him as deep into her as possible and milking him for every hot rope of come he offers.

"We need to calm down, or we're gonna kill each other," he huffs when he finally collapses on top of her, enjoying the feel of her stiff nipples rubbing against his chest for a moment before he lifts himself up on his forearms.

"That's not in my five-year plan," she jokes, kissing the top of his head. "We're gonna survive."

His rumbling laughter fills the room.
confess your secrets, bury your lies

“i'm sorry that you
seem to be confused--
he belongs to me
the boy is mine.

think it’s time we got this straight
sit and talk face to face
there is no way you could mistake
him for your man. are you insane?

but see i know that you may be
just a bit jealous of me.
but you’re blind if you can’t see
that his love is holding me.”

~monica, “the boy is mine”

harper presses her hip against the smooth door to the bathroom, leaning into it while hoisting the bath products she's wrapped in a towel more securely in her arms.

the voices floating to her through the gap force her to pause though.

"... because i know what it's like to lose the person you love, octavia."

"i know you're trying to be sweet and everything, but you really, you just can't understand what it's been like."
Harper turns her head a few inches to the left, catching the couple’s reflection from the wall mirror opposite them. Octavia's standing against the tile wall leading to the showers, her hands shoved deeply in her pockets. She's looking at the reflective floor while her dark hair falls loosely into her face. Jasper's a few feet away, leaning lightly against the golden countertop, his long legs stretched out before him far enough so that his shoes almost touch Octavia's.

"But let me guess - Ilian does?" comes Jasper's sharp retort.

"No! This isn't about Ilian," she insists, meeting his eyes with a fierce look.

Jasper snorts and crosses his arms over his chest.

"Then what's it about?" his tone is mean. "I'm still not good enough for you, is that it? I couldn't possibly understand your loss because you get to be the hardest hit victim, even in your grief? Nobody could ever understand what Octavia's going through because she's had it the roughest."

"Don't be a dick, Jasper," she tries to walk past him, but he's quicker, launching himself off the counter and directly into her path.

"I'll be whatever I want to be. You're not my keeper," he replies.

"That's very mature," she rolls her eyes.

"As mature as not letting in the guy you've been to Hell and back fighting for survival with since we crash-landed? The guy who's been your friend, who's been there for you when you've had your meltdowns, who's crazy about you? Mature like that, huh?" he arches a dark eyebrow at her, and Harper watches the muscle in Octavia's jaw clench as she glares at him.

She feels vaguely proud of the way Jasper is standing up for himself. Secretly, she always thought he played up Octavia way too much in his mind.

"Don't put how you're feeling on me and try to make me the villain," Octavia barks lowly. "I never promised you anything more than what I could deliver on."
"You don't get it!" Jasper snaps, hands clamping around her shoulders as he walks her back toward the wall. She's caught off guard enough that she stumbles a few steps before beginning to struggle under his grip.

"Just hear me out, ok? Then you can go!" he holds up his hands, stepping away.

She huffs, but makes no move toward the door.

Harper wants to sneak away desperately. She feels her muscles clenching in her shoulder but knows moving even a small amount will cause the squeaky door to groan loudly on its hinges. And it's a little too late to push the door open nonchalantly and say, "Hi, guys! Don't mind me while I grab a quick shower." There's no delicate way out of this situation. No way for them to not realize she's been actively listening to something she shouldn't have ever overheard.

Octavia stamps down one boot heavily. "Talk," she orders him.

"Listen, I'm not trying to force you into something you don't want. I can't replace Lincoln," Octavia winces, but he continues anyway, "and I don't want to. Hell, a few months ago, I didn't even want to live anymore."

"I didn't either," Octavia almost whispers it.

"I know," he skims his fingers down her bare arm before holding her hand. "But that's not a good enough reason for us to be anything, either. I'm . . . fuck . . . I'm trying to say that I really liked you before all of this shit happened. But I know you're different now, and I'm different. You, me, all our people, we've been through tragedy . . . destruction . . . war. But I don't want your pity, and I know you don't want mine. I just wanted to say that all our people have lost someone they loved. I know you want your loss to make you special, but here, on this planet, in this world, it just doesn't."

"You think I don't realize that?--" Octavia tries.

"You don't always act like you do," his words come hard. "Sometimes you act like a self-absorbed brat. I'm sorry, but it's true. And . . . I miss you. I miss the person you used to be."
Octavia swats at a tear and shifts her weight against the wall but doesn't drop his hand. Harper thinks she might be grasping it tighter.

"Maybe I made the wrong decision coming down here, I don't know. But I'm going to give life one more shot and see what happens. If it's all a cosmic joke, and we come out of this bunker to an unlivable planet, well, I guess I'll die then anyway. But we could live. And . . . I want you to be part of my living. You might not want to be though," he gulps hard. "And that's cool. It'll suck, but it's cool."

"Jasper . . . " Octavia tries as his voice catches and scratches.

"I'll respect whatever you want to do as long as you're not doing it out of fear or lashing out at people you care about because it makes you feel better. What you did to Bellamy wasn't ok. You're not going to treat me like that because I don't deserve it."

There's a long pause. Harper hears the blood flowing steadily in her ears and tries to hold her breath. "Yes, Jasper!" she wants to scream in triumph. But she remains silent, waiting, sweating slightly.

"It was wrong - I know that," Octavia tells him.

He cups her cheek gently in his hand.

"You're fierce, Octavia. You're full of fire. And I know you don't need me or Ilian or anyone else. But maybe, one day, you'll want someone again. I don't know. What I do know," his thumb is stroking the skin against her cheekbone delicately, and her eyes glisten with unshed tears. "Is I still believe in you. I know there's a good person in there who wants to treat people the right way," he drops his hand.

Harper doesn't expect Octavia to fall against his chest, crying softly. But she does. Jasper looks a bit startled by it, too, but awkwardly strokes the matted hair from her face and wraps his arms around her waist. She says a silent prayer the door's hinges won't give her away and tiptoes forward, allowing the slab of wood to follow her until she can retreat safely down the hallway.

***

Unsurprisingly, it was Jaha who discovered the skylights blocked by thick metal frames in an
infrequently used hallway toward the back of the bunker. When he first called the meeting to discuss what to do about them, of course nobody could agree.

“Exposing the skylights is the equivalent of waving a big, yellow sign above ground that says ‘Here We Are!’” Roan bellows, uncharacteristically red in the face. “It’s unwise to advertise our location to any survivors who might want to attack!”

Kane runs a hand over his salt-and-pepper beard, explaining, for the third time, how “having a window to the outside world might make the difference between some of our people losing their minds and connection to nature.” He keeps his voice calm enough, holding onto the back of a plush leather chair and squaring his shoulders.

Clarke thinks she hears her mother murmuring “Vera’s tree” to him as she strokes his forearm, but it’s overrun by Jaha’s enthusiastic “Exactly!” as he claps with delight, his genuine smile full of milk white teeth.

“It’s a way to stay connected to the outside and help our people keep the faith that we’ll leave here eventually. From the ashes we will rise!” he’s saying.

She turns to Bellamy, and the pair share a long look of unease. They can both vividly recall the constant fear of living behind wooden walls with chinks between the planks, exposed and vulnerable, waiting for the inevitable grounder attack.

“It would be nice to watch a moon rise again,” Abby admits. “Do you have any idea how thick the glass panels are, Thelonious? Or what kind of attack they could withstand? Maybe we could just keep them open periodically, like for special occasions.”

“You’ll see a moon rise in four and a half years,” Indra interjects with a degree of venom in her tone. She bends down to pass her arms briskly across her thighs as if to ward off the chilly air circulating around the room.

Abby blanches and looks at her wide-eyed but refrains from responding.

“I think Roan might have the right idea,” Clarke begins, stepping forward toward the center of the room and ignoring the King’s devious smirk as Bellamy shifts with her. “We don’t know what’s out there, if anything survived. Opening those skylights could make us sitting ducks. Why risk it at all?”
“Shouldn’t the people get to decide that, Clarke?” Octavia’s eyes flash at her. They hadn’t spoken much since the game of truth or dare, and Clarke knows her reaction to the Finn question rubbed Octavia the wrong way.

“Maybe O’s right,” Bellamy concedes carefully after a couple minutes pass without advancing the stalemate. “It might not be a bad idea to let the planet’s survivors decide if they want to see the stars again or not. We can tell them the security risks and the psychological benefits. I assume,” he turns to Abby. “that you’ve done research on both?”

“We have. Jackson’s written up a report after running simulations with Raven,” Abby confirms. A layer of uneasy silence blankets the space. Roan and Indra shift uncomfortably near each other, making the briefest eye contact. Clarke snorts quietly, realizing for once the two sworn enemies find themselves on the same side of an issue.

***

A few days later, they put the matter to a vote.

Kane and Jaha spend the morning and a great deal of the afternoon locked away in the main office, counting up the scraps of white paper either for or against the exposed skylights.

It’s an hour before dinner when Bellamy drops by the med bay, face a stoic, unreadable mask, and finds Clarke reorganizing one of the medicine cabinets. He catches her grin reflected in the mirror behind the shelves as his hands span the width of her hips and he noses into her sweet-smelling neck.

“You’re hard at work, I see,” she teases as he tugs the pale pink collar of her cotton scrubs to the side to obtain better access to the hard curve of her shoulder. A crimson design rushes to her skin’s surface with some prodding from his lips, and he watches it grow with fascination.

“Be nice, Princess, or I won’t tell you the results of the vote,” he inches his hands up her ribcage until they’re right under the upward swell of her breasts.

“Mmm,” she sings out noncommittally. “Not a big loss,” and she shifts up on her tiptoes to place a pill bottle on the top shelf, away from his groping grasp.

“Ah, ah, ah, not so fast,” Bellamy returns.
His right hand glides up easily to cup the weight of her full breast before pinching her nipple between his thumb and middle finger.

“Oh!” Clarke gasps, rocking her hips unconsciously into his groin. He takes the opportunity to bite into the fleshy part of her shoulder then moves his lips to her ear.

“They voted to see the sky again,” he whispers. “Kane is setting up special night viewings. We can apply to sit under the stars for an hour.”

Clarke swats his hand away from her chest and pivots on her heel, arching a dark eyebrow at him. Something about his tone seems too whimsical.

“You already applied, didn’t you?” she accuses.

He shrugs, smirking, still holding onto her waist.

“No comment.”

“Such a dork,” she leans in and kisses him anyway.

“Hey! Who else is going to teach you the constellations?” he manages to exclaim before colliding her back with the medicine cabinet as he resumes the kiss, knocking over a few prescription bottles in the process.

“Hold on a sec!” Clarke manages to lay a hand over his speeding heartbeat.

“Yeah?”

Her eyes sparkle like sapphires in the light when they meet his curious gaze. She bites her lip then glances away toward the examining table.
“I was thinking I should talk to my mom soon about going off the tea. You know, get checked, after . . . everything that happened.”

The warmth from his steady hand seeps into her skin, calming her, as he slips it under her doctor’s top.

“You sure you’re ready for all that? You can keep drinking the tea for as long as you want. I’m ok with that. I want you to be sure you’re ready,” he watches her with concern and care mingled together in his features.

“Yeah, I’m sure, Bell,” she says determinedly, tracing her hand down the arm stitching of his black guard’s jacket. “I’m serious about it if you are.”

She watches his Adam’s Apple bobble as he swallows with deliberateness.

A few curls fall toward his eyes as he nods, pulling her into his arms for a tight embrace.

***

Clarke stiffens slightly as she shuffles through the drawings pulled from the thin, tan portfolio made of genuine leather so soft she’s afraid it will disintegrate under the oils in her hands when he crawls into bed beside her. Bellamy takes in the wide, dark eyes, the strong jaw and well-defined nose jumping off the page. They’re alone in the dorm. It’s still early, but tiredness tore through Clarke’s bones after a day on her feet, and Bellamy agreed to go to bed when she did.

“It’s good. It looks like him,” he offers, pulling the sheets up around his waist and laying down flat on his back beside her. "It'll help you remember the good parts."

She wants to remember her childhood best friend, the young man who set the Ark’s sole tree ablaze in order to win a spot on the dropship and hurtle down to Earth with her and a bunch of juvenile delinquents. Wells was always there to protect her – from the Council, from her family, from herself. Yet a part of her still feels the need to lock away this loss from Bellamy. It’s a piece of herself he never knew, and one she's not sure exactly how much she's willing to share. She can’t even begin to figure out how to explain their chess matches, library study sessions, or lazy afternoons spent watching incredibly old football games. Their lives were ones of privilege, sure, but also a sort of gilded cage captivity that only they could understand with parents like theirs. Reminding Bellamy of those class divisions when they’ve worked together for so long seems pointless. And Wells’ memory belongs to a younger, more innocent Clarke, a girl still full of hope and potential. A girl made of colored pencils, braids, touchdowns, and butterfly stitches. It’s too pure for the young woman
drenched in blood and locked underground.

“I know,” she whispers, reaching out to turn off the lamp beside them. “It’s just... still hard,” she
finds his fingers below the blankets and slides hers between them.

She turns into him, so her pointy chin is resting in the middle of his chest.

“I was thinking about how he was willing to do anything to keep me safe on Earth, safe even from
you...” Bellamy twitches a little but says nothing. “And I was wondering if he’d recognize me
now. If I’d done anything at all he would be proud of.”

“You helped save the human race, Clarke. He would respect that,” Bellamy says firmly, bending
toward her to kiss her forehead. “Wells was honorable. He would proud of you for giving our people
hope for a peaceful future with the grounders.”

When she still seems glum a few minutes later, he tickles her side mercilessly, mumbling about her
needing protection from him until she squirms, and her muscles relax against his side.

It’s quiet for a short while. Raven’s silhouette enters the room, but she remains silent as she passes in
front of a panoramic of the Ancient Ottoman Empire displayed on the digital window and climbs the
creaky ladder to her bed. Clarke’s stomach squirms as a knot builds at the base of her throat.

“She’ll get over it,” Bellamy breathes against her hair so softly it’s like he didn’t speak at all.

Clarke rolls onto her side facing the wall, not so entirely sure.

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“No,” Clarke replies in a clipped tone, hands flying to her hips of their own accord. “I came here
because we need to talk.”
“You decided that, huh?” Raven laughs cruelly.

“Yeah, I did. After you decided to ambush me during truth or dare!” Clarke thuds her fist down on the metal table several feet away from where Raven’s working.

Raven flinches the smallest amount but then scrapes her chair away from the table with a squealing slide. She crosses her arms over her chest, purses her lips, and fixes Clarke with a glare.

“Great. Then talk.”

A flash of silver against Raven’s red shirt catches Clarke off guard.

“You’re . . . you’re wearing his necklace,” she says, confused, a flush tinting her cheeks pink.

Raven’s fingers jump up to the small bird, rubbing its wings.

“And?” she cocks up an eyebrow, and the sense of dread overwhelms Clarke once more.

“Raven, you’re one of my best friends. I don’t want to do this with you. I never wanted to take away what you had with Finn. You know that. Why are you doing this now?” It’s hard to keep the desperate plea from her voice.

Raven drums her nails against the table in a steady rhythm.

“Because we’re in this bunker. With the grounders,” she snaps. “And you killed him to save us from a war with them, and now all of it was for nothing because here we are.”

Clarke startles at these words but manages to pull herself together.

“You’re right. It was awful! And unfair. But there was no other choice after he gave himself up. I wanted to save him! But after he killed all those people—”
“He killed them all because he was looking for you!” Raven bellows, getting to her feet as quickly as her brace will allow. “He was afraid for YOU! He thought they were torturing YOU! And you did that to him,” she says it hard and accusingly.

Wispy flyaway strands of her caramel-chocolate hair float around her hardened eyes as she brushes her hand over her hairline, angry red blotches cropping up on her cheeks.

“Raven . . . “ Clarke whispers, tears brimming over her eyelids. “He loved you so much. You were his family. He thought he’d never see you again when we landed. I didn’t know you existed.”

“Maybe,” she barely concedes the point. “But he had a funny way of showing it. He murdered eighteen people to find you!”

“That’s obsession, not love. I didn’t want that. You wouldn’t want that,” Clarke tries once more, but suddenly she finds her boots fascinating. “It was unhealthy.”

“Don’t you think I know that?” Raven snaps. “But he was still my family, no matter what kind of shit he pulled. I was supposed to protect him, and you didn’t let me!”

Clarke gives her the briefest of smiles.

“Raven, I understand where you’re coming from, but it’s Finn who didn’t let you. He surrendered. And by that point, I’d . . . ”

A completely ancient grandfather clock tucked away in a corner ticks out the seconds loudly as Clarke’s words fall to nothing. Raven finally has the guts to vocalize it.

“You’d already started falling in love with Bellamy, right?”

“Yeah. Yeah, I guess so. I’m so sorry, Raven. I wanted to save Finn more than anything, and I never wanted to hurt you. And I-I couldn’t deal with Bellamy, with any of it,” Clarke wraps her arms around her torso in a protective gesture.

“I was drinking,” Raven says finally, gruffly.
"What?"

"During truth or dare. I was drinking, probably too much."

Clarke gives her a half-smile that doesn’t set Raven fully at ease. She shakes her head.

“I worked so hard, and you both were screwing it up,” she mumbles to the table, mouth too fast for her brain to rein in.

Clarke furrows her brow.

“What do you mean? Worked so hard on what? What did we screw up?”

Raven’s wide eyes search hers as she sighs heavily.

“It’s not important now,” she says carefully before looking guiltily away.

“No,” Clarke takes a step forward. “Tell me. If it has to do with me and Bellamy, I want to know.”

“It’s nothing. I was just . . . upset I guess because I saw you spending time with Niylah down here again,” Raven makes a split-second decision to hedge her bets. No need to bring up the near-miss kiss she witnessed between Bellamy and Echo. Clarke already saw a real one right in front of her face, after all. “And I knew it hurt Bellamy when he saw you with her back at the Ark, that’s all.”

Clarke’s eyes narrow as the familiar sour taste of guilt floods her throat.

“Niylah is just my friend now,” she says, voice hard. “She was helping me brew the contraceptive tea I wanted after my miscarriage, ok?”

Raven lets out a deep breath, then nods.
“Yeah, I guess I figured that, but I didn’t know for sure. I’m sorry, too. It was none of my business. I was being an overprotective jerk.”

The smile dies on Clarke’s lips before it’s even done curving upward fully.

“Wait . . . you said we were both screwing it up. What did Bellamy do?”

Raven’s neck snaps back, dragging her chin toward her chest.

“Clarke, I . . . “

But Clarke already is gripping her wrist tightly in one hand.

“Raven, what do you know?”

She tucks a stray bit of hair behind her ear and unclasps Clarke’s hand gently.

“Nothing,” she lies smoothly. “I just waited a long time for you and Mr. Rebel King to get your shit together, and I don’t want to see you guys screw it up over something dumb, all right?” she smiles.

Clarke still remains a bit hesitant, but returns the gesture.

“You’re hot commodities, and plenty of people will be lining up to get with you both if this goes south. But we all know you’re meant to be, so, don’t be stupid, ok?”

“Did you give Bellamy the same pep talk for the sake of equality?” Clarke demands playfully as Raven walks her to the door.

“Yeah,” Raven’s top teeth dig into her lower lip as she suppresses a smirk. “A version of it.”
Clarke’s light, weightless feeling lasts for several minutes as she roams the hallways before deciding to head to the library for a new book on best surgical practices. It’s Bellamy’s deep voice that lures her toward the open door of the planet room. When she peers around the corner, her face goes slack. Bellamy has a hand on Echo’s shoulder, babbling excitedly about Venus’ volcanic activity while she smiles at him with rapt attention.

*Hot commodity, all right.*

Chapter End Notes

Sorry for the wait! I made the chapter a bit longer to compensate for it. <3
“Hi,” Clarke says a little too brightly, walking into the darkened room and sidestepping Neptune’s aqua hues as it canters past her on its slow arc around the sun.

Bellamy blinks and immediately drops his hand from Echo's shoulder.

"Hey babe," he smiles at her, motioning her over to join them. It's genuine enough, but when she nears him, she can see the tightness of his cheeks and lines around his eyes.

"I didn't realize the planets moved. That makes things more interesting," she says carefully, smirking a little at Bellamy, whose face flushes.

"Uh, yeah, um, we just figured it out. Echo found a wall panel with instructions."

"Hmm," Clarke murmurs politely, attaching a small smile to her lips and nodding briefly in Echo's direction.

For her part, Echo stands tall and fierce, feet apart and chin raised in Clarke's direction. Her eyes are outlined in dark kohl, and her brown hair falls loosely over her shoulder, adorned with several, complicated braids. She's wearing dark cargo pants and a tan, short-sleeved top that exposes more of her midriff than Clarke would care to see.

"Hello, Wanheda," she says in a deep, melodic tone.

Clarke narrows her eyes and snorts.

"Echo," Bellamy says warningly. "Her name is Clarke."

She tosses her hair, exposing her neck, and chuckles. "My apologies, Clarke."

She looks as though the word tastes like acid in her pouted mouth.

"Echo was just asking to join my history class. Her education was cut short due to all her, uh, training for Ice Nation," Bellamy offers after a few moments of tense silence and dramatic glances. He shuffles awkwardly from foot to foot.

"Oh. That's nice," Clarke says tersely. "I didn't realize you were interested in advancing your education. Good for you."

Echo's answering expression is one of pure poison. But--

"There are a lot of things about me you don't know," she replies sweetly. "I'm sure there are a lot of
things you don't know in general, but nothing Bellamy can't teach," she rests her hand on his upper arm for the smallest second.

Before Clarke can open her mouth, Bellamy's already talking.

"Echo, would you give us a few minutes, please?" he asks pointedly.

She glances between them, takes in the close position of their bodies and way Bellamy's already moved a calming hand to the small of Clarke's back, and relents.

"Whatever you'd like," she simpers and heads for the door, closing it behind her.

When he turns to take in Clarke's face, her eyes are opened wide to him like saucers.

"What was that all about?" she demands, stepping out of his immediate physical proximity.

Bellamy watches her for a long moment, blinking slowly and not saying a word. The crinkle crops up between her eyebrows.

"What?"

"Jealous, Princess?" his smile displays more of his teeth than usual.

"No," she bites back, too quickly.

"Sure," he watches her appraisingly. "Then what's with the pout?"

"Nothing," she sighs heavily. "Just . . . just be careful around her, ok? She likes you. We both know she likes you. And I'm not--" she points her finger into her chest for emphasis, "telling you this to boost your ego." He steps a little closer until he can lean over her the way he likes and wiggles his eyebrows suggestively.

"Does she?" he feigns ignorance.

"I swear to God, Bellamy! If you start pulling your shit from your menage-a-trois days--"

"Hey, I didn't know you'd be interested in that, or I would've asked you sooner," he lilts, dropping a hand to her hip and eyeing her mouth.

"You . . . you're . . . Ugh!" she sputters, barely meeting his eyes.

"Calm down," he's suddenly serious as he slips a finger under her chin, so she's looking at him again and tightens his hold on her hip. Small shoots of electricity snap through her veins. "I only want you, you know that. I love you, Clarke."

"Yeah, I know, it's just that..." she glances away, uncomfortable.

"You can tell me."

"It's just that it works both ways. You tell me when we're," she's blushing so fiercely now her face is beginning to resemble a tomato, "having sex that I'm yours or that I belong to you. But you belong to me, too."

There's a challenge gleaming in her sky blue irises when they meet his again.

"You know I do," he says without missing a beat. "Always."
And then he's kissing her until there's no air left in her lungs.

"Your devoted knight, at your service," he murmurs while trailing his lips down her neck, making her shiver and squirm.

"Bell, I'm serious!"

"I am, too. I'm always going to be here for you, Clarke," he drops a quick kiss to her lips, before pulling her snugly against his chest.

"So nothing ever happened there? With Echo?" Clarke asks it so quietly he can hardly hear the words.

Yet she does hear the sound of him gulping as his arms tighten around her. Maybe he doesn't want her to see his face, she's not sure.

"No, nothing ever did," he says firmly. Then he sighs, and her body rises and falls against his with the motion. "After we lost the baby, I trained with her for a little while. One day I thought she was going to kiss me, but then Raven came in and stopped anything from happening."

Clarke breaks from his grip.

"Did you want her to?"

The question hangs in the air between them.

"No," he shakes his head slowly. "Not really. I was mostly just shocked. But it wouldn't have been the answer. You were the answer."

She looks away, remembering.

"Hey, it's all right," he says, reaching out for her hand to intertwine their fingers.

"So you think she's attractive?" Clarke's eyebrows tilt upward when she meets his gaze once more.

"What kind of question is that?"

"Just answer me."

"She's the reason Mount Weather got blown up, Clarke. She tried to kill Octavia. She wanted to kill you."

"Not what I asked. Do you think she's attractive?" Clarke squeezes his hand hard to make her point.

"Ugh," he scoffs, running his free hand through his hair. "How could I be objective about it?"

"That's a yes," she raises her eyebrows at him. "I speak Bellamy Blake."

"Whatever, it's like saying you think Roan's attractive. Maybe if you were just looking at him, but then you get to know the guy...."

"I do not think Roan's attractive!" Clarke shakes her head, missing his point.

"Right, sure, whatever you say."

But before she can pick another fight, he's already pulled her against his side, wrapped his arm
around her shoulder, and led them toward the door to leave the untold secrets of the universe room behind them.

"Let's quit while we're ahead, Princess."

***

"How many kids do you want?"

The question startles Bellamy, and he puts down the classics book he was reading. Clarke's head's in his lap, her legs curled up on the tan leather couch in med bay where they're waiting for Abby's examination.

"Huh?"

She struggles against the sinking fabric to sit up but manages to curl her legs under her and face him properly.

"I said how many kids do you want?"

"Uh, I don't know," he reaches out to tuck a stray lock of hair behind her ear. "Never gave it any thought. Didn't think I'd even have one with my situation on the Ark. And I never considered having more than one."

Clarke nods, leaning in to kiss his stubbled cheek.

"That makes sense. But now we can dream of whatever we want. So start thinking about it, ok?"

She climbs feline-like into his lap, throwing one thigh over his legs and settles her hands against his chest, kissing him languidly. He smiles against her mouth, running a lazy hand against the divots of her spine. She leans back a few inches, biting her lower lip and rocking deliberately hard against his pelvis.

"Clarke," he says in his best reprimanding voice. "Your mother would be scandalized if she finds us like this."

"Yes she would be," Abby's crisp voice comes from the doorway to the examination room.

Clarke looks a bit guilty as she climbs off Bellamy's lap and says "Sorry, mom," tugging him by the hand into the adjoining room with her.

Abby rolls her eyes, but her face is light and open as she follows them inside.

"Things look relatively normal from your examination, and the blood work mostly checks out, Clarke. But the radiation exposure you experienced will make things much harder for having a baby, at least for the foreseeable future. And maybe beyond that, we just don't know."

Clarke reaches for Bellamy's hand as she sits on the edge of the examination table, legs dangling against the metal side.

"What does that mean exactly?" Bellamy asks, glancing into Clarke's worried face.

"It means," Abby sighs, running a hand down the length of her thigh, "that Clarke is as healthy as can be expected when we take into consideration the radiation we all experienced. But, while it's obviously possible for her to get pregnant, we have no guarantee the pregnancy will be viable until the trace amounts of radiation completely leave her system, even taking into account the night
"But I thought the nightblood counteracted the radiation's effects," Bellamy says.

"You're right, it does. It's supposed to, and it mostly has been effective as far as Clarke's concerned. Her blood work is normal, as normal as nightblood can be, but there are a few indicators from her pap smear that lead me to believe there are still trace amounts of radiation in her uterus. I don't know if it affected her ovaries either, or your reproductive system for that matter, Bellamy."

"So you're saying all my pregnancies could end in miscarriage?" Clarke's voice is a little choked.

"No, honey, I'm not saying that for sure," Abby stands to rest a hand on her daughter's shoulder. "I'm saying that I don't know. There's just a lot about radiation's effects on pregnancy, not to mention nightblood and how it affects the female body, that Jackson and I are still trying to research. A lot of people are going to have these sorts of questions as implants give out, and we're ready to return to the ground. But we have the contraceptive tea for now and are encouraging everyone to begin using it before their implant's five-year expiration date hits."

"Do you plan to mandate new population laws?" Clarke asks sharply, staring into her mother's face.

She feels Bellamy's thumb soothe over her skin.

Abby moves back a bit uncomfortably.

"No, no, not exactly. I've spoken with Marcus and Thelonius about it, as well as Roan and Indra. We don't want to totally halt reproduction because that would work against our long-term survival. But we obviously can't have every woman of child-bearing age getting pregnant at the same time because we don't have the resources to feed and clothe many extra children for the next four years or so."

"So how do you decide who gets to reproduce?" Bellamy's voice begins to rise, and Clarke scoots closer to where he stands beside the examination table.

"We won't, Bellamy," Abby says decisively, fully catching his meaning. "We're offering contraception to each woman who comes to us asking about her implant, and some of them are choosing the tea. Clarke knows that from her time here."

Clarke nods at him slowly. "It's true," she breathes. "Ever since we perfected the tea recipe."

"So what makes Clarke so different than these other Sky Crew or grounder women who may get pregnant? I still don't get it," Bellamy questions.

Abby offers him a sad, but somehow still loving, look.

"She took the night blood first, before it was perfected and we gave it to everyone else. I'm guessing if there is any difference, that will be it."

Bellamy wraps his arm around Clarke's back, allowing her to turn her face against his chest as she feels the start of a few tears.

"Hey, hey!" Abby tries to see more of Clarke's face. "It will probably be all right, honey. I'm sure everything's going to work out. I just want you to be informed and prepared for anything. But of course it's your choice - yours and Bellamy's. If you don't want to drink the tea anymore for a while and see what happens, I'll support that. And if you do, I'll support that, too."

"Same for me, Clarke," Bellamy bends down to kiss the crown of her head. "Whatever you want."
On the other side of the door, Echo stands motionless, hands still wrapped around the box of medical supplies Roan asked her to bring to med bay. As she hears the clatter of Clarke's body working its way off the examination table, she jolts, dropping the box on the couch and leaving the room quickly.

Chapter End Notes

There you have it! The next chapter of Bellarke's relationship hangs in the balance. Feel free to share your thoughts below. Do you still want them to have kids? If so, how many should they have? Or is it too risky? Baby names?
enough to make my systems blow

"She doesn't own a dress

Her hair is always a mess

You catch her stealin', she won't confess.

She's beautiful.

Smokes a pack a day, but wait,

That's me, but anyway,

She doesn't care a thing

About that hair,

She thinks I'm beautiful.

Meet Virginia.

She never compromises,

Loves babies and surprises,

Wears high heels when she exercises.

Ain't it beautiful?

Meet Virginia."

~Train, "Meet Virginia"

Bellamy's already left for cadet training when Abby reaches for Clarke's wrist. Clarke's changed back into her medical scrubs and is about to head out the door, so she turns around with a look of surprise.

"What is it, mom?"

Abby gives her a half-smile, eyes like liquid amber.

"Baby, I just wanted to say that there will be so much time for all of this later. There's no rush. You know that, right?"

Clarke looks guilty for the tiniest of moments as she glances down at the floor, but then Abby drops her wrist, and her voice is confident when she speaks.

"I know," she says the words sweetly like she's talking to a small child. "But I want to give him something good, mom. He's lost so much. We all have. This could be hope. For me, too."

Abby reaches out and clasps Clarke's shoulder, taking in how her daughter's lips twitch a little.
"But there are risks, Clarke. There could be complications. I'm not saying there will be," she rides over Clarke's argument before it's even expressed. "I'm just saying it's possible."

"Dad took a risk spreading the message about the Ark's oxygen supply, but it was the right choice," Clarke says it calmly enough, pulling a strand of blonde hair out from under her collar where it's been tucked away. "You took a risk sending the 100 to the ground. You were both trying to save the human race, to do something good. Well, I want to be part of something good, too. You understand that, don't you?"

Abby sighs and grips Clarke's shoulder before crossing her arms.

"I get it. I know how much you love Bellamy. I know what you're trying to do. But the tea," Clarke looks away from her, so Abby raises her voice, "the tea isn't a horrible option, honey. Even if just for a little while. At least take the recipe card, so you'll have it on hand, ok?"

She opens her eyes widely waiting for a response.

Clarke shrugs and holds out her hand, and Abby is quick to slip a piece of crinkled note paper from her lab coat into it.

"It's still my choice," Clarke reiterates.

"Yours and Bellamy's," Abby gently corrects her.

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"She's already working on you, isn't she?" Clarke pauses over the painting she's been immersed in for the last hour. Her fingers are smudged with oil paint. She's trying to figure out what colors to blend to make the ocean seem more vivid.

"What are you talking about?" Bellamy's hunched over one of the small library tables right next to her, attempting to make out his student's cramped scrawl about the important innovations of the Ancient Egyptians.

"My mom."

"What?"

He leans back against his chair, sighing deeply, and rubs his bleary eyes.

"God, I wish we had enough tablets for all the kids, so they could type. Then I could actually know what the hell they were trying to say instead of just guessing."

Clarke grins at him, reaching out to rumple his hair.

"You're cute when you're grouchy," she says. "But you didn't answer my question."

"What about your mom? She saved me some spinach lasagna yesterday when cadet training ran late because Indra thought our people's hand-to-hand skills were below warrior quality," Bellamy adopts a sarcastic tone. "I don't poke the dragon, Clarke."

"Mmm," Clarke snorts, dipping her brush in a swirl of blue and green paint until the mixture begins to resemble an appealing teal.

"That looks good so far," Bellamy offers, peering over her shoulder. "Where's it going?"
"I don't know yet. Maybe somewhere near engineering? It's pretty drab up there," she reaches up a hand to brace against his left cheek as she kisses the other side of his face.

"Hey, watch it!" Bellamy instantly swipes at his face. "You're going to leave paint all over me again."

"Then everyone will know you're mine," she wiggles her eyebrows at him.

"Somehow, I think the bunker's gotten the memo," he tries for mock thoughtful, but fails when he leans in to tickle her sides, causing her to shriek.

In the last couple weeks, the medical interns have required less individualized training as they gained more skills. So Clarke's found herself with more time on her hands. At Harper's suggestion, she's taken up painting intense, abstract landscapes to decorate the walls of the bunker. Harper said it would be a "great use of her creative energy." Once in a while, Bryan will come sit down with her and dabble when he discovers her brushes and colorful tubes of paint fanned out on a table. Even Emori managed a pretty excellent desert scene last Friday. But for the most part, Clarke's on her own in the artistic realm.

She swats a sticky bit of hair off her forehead impatiently when she's caught her breath, leaving an aqua wave behind that has Bellamy shaking his head.

"Has my mom tried to convince you to get me on the tea or not?" she decides for the direct route, looking up at him.

"Oh," Bellamy's face smooths out. "No. Actually, she hasn't," he digs his fists into his pockets. "I thought she might, but it never happened."

Clarke nods, and he steps a little closer so his leg makes contact with the side of her thigh. It's a gesture that floods her bones with warmth.

"What are you thinking about it?" he asks quietly.

She rubs her hands off as thoroughly as she can on the white rag nearby. Bellamy sits back down, leaning his elbows against his thighs, so he can rest his chin on his hands. He watches her intently.

"I still want it if you do?" she says hesitantly, trying to gauge his reaction.

"I want you to be safe and happy and healthy," he answers more quickly than she expected.

She bites her lip, nodding.

"So... you don't want to try? It's too risky?"

He catches the warble in her voice. Her eyes take on a fresh glistening sheen.

"Come here," he opens his arms, and she falls into his lap, curling up.

He rocks her very gently and kisses the top of her head.

"I didn't say that," he says quietly.

"Bell, what if I'm... defective now? What if I can't...?"

She can't even bring herself to finish the question.
"You're perfect. You'll have babies one day, Clarke," he whispers reassuringly.

"I want to have them with you. There's no one to stop our family size anymore, Bell. Can we please try?" she asks him with her head tucked under his chin.

She has no idea why she feels this desire pulling at her so strongly. But ever since her mother told her it may not be possible, chubby-cheeked babies with dark ringlets and bronzed skin but light eyes have consumed her thoughts, weaving into her dreams at night where at least there she's able to cradle them in her arms.

They sit quietly for several minutes, Clarke's body rising up and down with his deep breaths.

"Ok," he says finally.

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Octavia's body is stiff as she stands beside Clarke, catching up ears of corn with metal tongs and shoving them onto people's trays aggressively as they come down the cafeteria line. They're down to the last ten or so customers as the dinner shift winds down.

"Octavia?" Clarke tries for the third time, pausing a moment to scoop mashed potatoes onto the plate of a grumpy-looking man. "You know . . . eventually you're going to have to talk to me."

"I'm not avoiding it!" Octavia spins toward her suddenly, gripping her tongs like a weapon. "But don't annoy me, Princess."

"What is it now?" Clarke hisses at her, feeling like she has split-personality disorder when she smiles kindly at a little brunette girl from Trishanakru who's pointing at the potatoes. "I know you were upset from truth or dare, but it's like I already told you, Raven just caught me off guard, and--"

"It's not about the god damned game!" Octavia avoids yelling but just barely.

The middle-aged Sky Crew woman passing by them jumps in shock, hurrying away toward where Miller is passing out carrots and peas.

"Then what is it?" Clarke demands angrily, dropping the lids over the food troughs with more force than strictly necessary. "I can't with you anymore! You're like the moodiest person alive."

"What if something goes wrong again? Are you going to run away and abandon my brother?" Octavia stares her down pointedly.

"He told you about the exam with my mom," Clarke says as the pieces click together for her.

"Of course he did. He's worried."

Clarke nods several times, gesturing for Octavia to follow her toward the kitchen doors. She stops in a quiet alcove away from the stoves and the constant clatter of scraping silverware, Octavia stomping at her heels.

"What?" Octavia snaps.

Clarke's eyebrows jerk up fast as she huffs.

"You know how much I love him, right?"

Octavia's face softens a smidgen, and she nods noncommittally.
"And you understand that we're going to make our own decisions about what we do in our relationship, right?"

Octavia appears poised to argue, but swallows it back. Instead, she nods once more.

"Then please lay off me for a bit, ok? All I can promise you is that I'm in this for real. And I hope that's good enough for you. I don't know what's going to happen in the future, but we've got to live, Octavia, the best way we can. Everything on Earth is a risk, you know that. But I just want him to be happy. I want to be happy. And we're happier together. I need him, but our family planning is our business, all right?"

"Fine," Octavia shoves gently at Clarke's shoulder. "You two idiots do what you want. I'm out with trying to save you from yourselves!" She does an excellent job with the high and mighty act, all flashing eyes and swishing hair.

Clarke grins at that and winks at her.

"What about you?"

"What about me?" Octavia demands like an Ark kid intent to know when her turn on the viewing deck will come.

"Your man troubles. Raven says Ilian's been polishing up on his engineering skills lately. Like he's trying to impress someone."

Octavia scoffs.

"Well, it isn't me."

"Mmhmm," Clarke breathes, unconvinced. "That's why he watches you with lost puppy dog eyes whenever you walk into a room. You know, you're going to have to choose between him and Jasper eventually. It's not fair to string them both along."

"Yeah, yeah, whatever, Clarke. Thanks for the sisterly advice," Octavia waves her hand in the air like she's swatting a mosquito and starts walking away, leaving Clarke to shake her head in her wake.

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Bellamy doesn't even hear her come in. He's stolen Jasper's iPod and is listening to a classic rock band, sorting through his recently laundered clothes, when she mysteriously appears at his side, knocking at the post of his bunk bed.

"Jesus! You scared me!" he says louder than necessary, pulling out his earbuds. "What's going on?"

Echo blinks a few times, smiling a little at him.

"I'm done with the homework you assigned. And we don't have guard training today."

"Ok?"

"Umm, do you want to - I mean, would you consider going down to the lounge and maybe playing chess or cards or something?"

The confusion on Bellamy's face is replaced with the shallow roots of a smirk.
"You're asking me to play a game with you?"

"Yeah," she leans against the bed, jutting out her hip.

"Is that so bad? What's the matter? Think you can't beat me?"

Half of Bellamy's face crinkles upward, exposing his white teeth as gestures dramatically toward the door.

"Lead the way."

They're halfway through a complicated chess match - he has the opportunity to take her rook, but he risks putting his bishop in jeopardy to do it - when her words come out of nowhere. He's busy eyeing the green and white squares, jumping ahead several moves in his mind and dreaming up counter strategies.

"You need to be careful with Clarke."

"What?" he splutters, raking his fingers through his curls and staring up at her, bemused.

"I just don't want to see you get hurt again," she irons the wrinkles out of her jeans with her fingers.

"What the fuck are you talking about?" he snaps, the muscle in his jaw acting up.

Echo swallows, gazing around the room as though searching for a good way to continue.

"Listen, I know Azgeda's ways are not Sky Crew's ways. But we are loyal to a fault, to the core. We don't leave our mates when things go wrong. Everything can go wrong when you live in the tundra. Just... be sure Wanheda is that person for you. I would hate to see you bring children into this world if that were not the case."

Bellamy is gripping his knight in his fist so tightly, its sharp ear cuts jaggedly into his skin.

"How would you know anything about my relationship?" he yells angrily, standing up.

Echo looks momentarily frightened but then rises to meet him, a challenge building in her eyes.

"It's a small bunker, Bellamy," she says simply. "I only wanted to warn you to be cautious. That's all."

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Monty has a lot on his mind when he ambles down the hallway toward the lounge, intent on finding a mindless comedy to watch where people make too many bathroom jokes. Harper had a checkup with Abby earlier that day, and her implant from the Ark is showing signs of failing. Of course, he told her the tea would be the next best thing, but there was something about the way she looked at him when he said it that's still irking him.

He pauses for a moment to take in the large, rectangular forest scene Clarke's hung up near the door. It's full of a tree canopy in summer. Birds fly overhead, and sunlight flows through the chinks in the leaves in beaming rays. It's peaceful. Serene.

"Enough, Echo!" comes the thunderous roar of Bellamy's voice through the door.

So much for that.
"Come on, let's go!" Bellamy hurries her toward the olive green stairwell and down several flights, into the heart of the bunker.

"What's going on?" Clarke cries out, nearly slipping as her smooth ballet flats catch upon the edge of one of the steps.

He doesn't look back at her. All she can see is the back of his curly head and his powerful shoulders as he practically runs down the steps.

"Bellamy! What is it?" she demands more insistently this time, tugging on his hand, which is clasping hers like a vice. "What's wrong?"

"We've got to get away," Bellamy mutters to no one in particular.

He forces the final, heavy door at the base of the stairs open and catapults them onto the lowest level of the bunker, deep underground.

"Bell?" Clarke asks hesitantly, stepping forward, so she can see his face, half hidden in shadow.

A long, vacant hallway stretches out from where they stand in either direction. A few doors lead off from it, but they're all closed.

"This is where the boiler room is and some storage and stuff. There's nothing down here."

"Exactly," he replies, turning to her.

The flash of mischievous danger flickers so briefly in his eyes she thinks she imagined it. But then he has her wedged up against the wall completely, so all she can do is hold onto his sides and open her mouth under the insistence of his own.

He kisses her fully, reveling in the softness of her lips and taking the time to work sweeping patterns over her tongue. Clarke absorbs the taste of him, winding her arms up past his shoulders and into his hair to get lost. One of his palms lies flat against the wall near her breast, while the other braces at her hip. He dips it up and under her shirt to feel the satin silk of her stomach.

"I want you," he whispers it feverishly against her ear.

Clarke strokes her thumb over the firm path of his eyebrow, sucks a kiss against the base of his jaw. She reaches up to rub both of his biceps with her small hands, breathing heavy and searching his eyes.

She waits, knowing he'll talk if she just gives him time.
"Everyone's always around. They all have opinions," he complains, raspy.

"Who?" the crease between her eyebrows emerges.

He swipes a hand up and down the outside of her thigh at each name. He rolls his hips against hers twice, and she bites back a whimper.


Clarke nods her head in sympathetic understanding, making agreeing sounds at the back of her throat. He rolls his hips against hers twice, and she bites back a whimper.

Bellamy's left hand wraps around her ribcage under her breast. He palms at the supple fullness there after a moment, and she lets him because it seems to calm him. His breathing grows more regular. So she ignores the tiny tremors the action sends to her clit. She wants to squeeze her thighs together for friction but keeps her face delicately open and earnest instead.

"What do they have opinions about, baby?" she asks kindly, launching up on her tiptoes to whisper a feather-light kiss into his mouth before drawing back.

But by the way he briefly meets her eyes, like he's both nervous and ashamed, she thinks she has a pretty good idea.

"Hey," she says quietly, tapping his dimpled chin twice with two fingers. "You and me get to decide how we live now, ok?"

Bellamy's quiet, but he clutches at her waist and dusts his lips across her forehead in a way that makes her know she's made her point.

He toys lazily with her nipple, running over it languidly until it begins to swell and rise under the attention. She can feel him hardening against her, their bodies are almost completely flush with each other's. But she shakes her head a little, trying not to let his physicality overwhelm her.

It's like warm, sparking river currents race through her chest in every direction when he grasps her breast suddenly before plucking the nipple tightly between his thumb and middle finger.

"Bellamy," she hears the wantonness in her voice as she moans, thrashing her head slightly.

"I want to play with them, Princess. Can I?" his look is so dark and smoldering.

She knows she's caving to him - about to offer him anything he asks for. Her pussy's walls are somehow already lightly clenching around absolutely nothing at all.

"Not out here," she argues, squinting her eyes to try to eliminate the fuzzy feeling floating through her brain.

Bellamy's amused. She knows it by the way the tiny lines crease around his eyes and his nostrils widen.

"Come on."

And he's tugging her again down the mostly pitch-black hallway except for some emergency lights along the rough floor. She's afraid they're going to run smack into the imposing wall right at the end when he stops finally in front of the last door. Clarke stumbles a little, clutching at his side.

"What's going on?" she repeats, watching him closely.
He digs into his pockets for a medium-sized metal keyring, jangling it up before her wide blue eyes.

"It pays to have your sister win the conclave," he smirks at her.

The room is small and cramped - maybe the size of a few closets tossed together. There's only one floor lamp with a dusty burgundy lamp shade atop it, a white cabinet that looks like someone painted over driftwood, and . . . a regular-issue medical cot.

A slow smile spreads across Clarke's face.

"You can scream my name down here, and no one will know," Bellamy whispers into her ear huskily.

"It's perfect," she says delightedly.

"Well, it's only ours for today. The guards usually monitor the stairs down here, but they have a meeting with Indra, and O tipped me off."

"It's ok." Clarke says agreeably. "So how long do we--"

"Enough talking, Princess," Bellamy drags her firmly up against his body and kisses her deeply. His erection is now painfully evident.

He tugs his shirt up from the collar in that boyish way that makes her heart beat kick up as his abs are revealed to her. She steps forward and kisses lazily down his chest, tracing her hand over the line of dark hair leading into his black pants. They haven't had time, real time and space to explore each other without fear of someone walking in on them, in ages.

Clarke moves backward, toes off her shoes and kicks them into the corner, while Bellamy sits on the edge of the cot. She stands between his knees, gracefully popping open each button of her Henley like she's engaged in a sort of dance. She rocks her hips, and he rests his hands on them, smiling up at her.

Soon she's out of her own shirt, and Bellamy divests her of her pants without much trouble. He kicks off his boots and pants and lays down on his back, letting her climb up his body until her bra-clad breasts sway near his face, and her ass rests above his erection straining against his boxers.

"Mmm," she pants, sliding down against his hard thickness when his fingers slip under her and dip past the edge of her panties.

"Always nice and wet for me, baby," he murmurs, pushing up on an elbow and pressing two fingers into her pussy shallowly, rubbing against her inner wall until she shakes a little.

Stretching forward, she nips at his jaw, bouncing her ass against the head of his dick until his tight grip of her hip stills her.

"Ride me," he says gruffly, reaching up to unsnap the clasp of her bra.

Clarke hooks her fingers under his boxers and pulls them down, stopping at the edge of the cot to wiggle out of her own underwear before climbing back up to take in his impressive length.

She bends down and kisses the head teasingly, running her tongue around the tip and sucking gently.

"Clarke, now," Bellamy demands, wrapping a hand into her hair and pulling lightly but enough for
her to stop.

His hips twitch as she throws a leg over both of his, straddling him. He helps situate her over his dick, a few drops of precum already visible.

When she slides down, she grips his hand, intertwining their fingers as the size of him stretches her core to the brink as always, a deep invasion her body loves to hate. But his thumb immediately begins tapping against her clit to ease the sensation, and he grunts, "deeper, baby, more," to her, sliding the flat of his palm slowly over her belly button and between the slick hollow of her breasts.

She pants, raising herself up a little before sinking back down, getting used to the position. Bellamy groans at the feel, grabbing fully at her breasts and kneading them.

"God, you're so tight, baby! You feel amazing Go on, move, Princess. Move."

He digs into her hips as she moans, thrusting up until he's fully seated within her as she discovers her rhythm above him. She scrambles for purchase on his chest as he quickens his pace, unable to hold back any longer.

"Oh my God, Bell!" she cries out.

Every sensation seems crazily heightened. He's never felt this deep inside her before. She's never felt so full and feels herself clenching tightly around him as his dick rubs up against the spongey tissue of her inner wall with its thousands of nerve endings. Heat floods her body as she rocks against him. And then his rough fingers are rubbing circular motions over the hood of her clit again, peeling it back to find her little nub, and she actually shrieks while he grins at her.

"There you go, Princess. That's it. Ride me, ride me," he chants it out, slapping her ass once before returning to play with her breasts.

"I'm so . . . close. So, so, close," she huffs, dragging her nails along his chest as he continuously fucks up into her.

The tingling starts at the base of her spine before radiating out in every direction, through her core until her leg muscles shake and tremble. The climax brings dancing, rainbow-colored spots to her eyes.

Bellamy wastes no time, but flips her over fluidly. And, still embedded deep inside her, he begins to pull back, only to snap his hips back into her. Her walls grip him, pulling him in, and she sees her own fluids coating him when he drags himself out of her still contracting pussy. Her hair fans out on the cheap, paper pillowcase, and she grabs him by the scruff of his neck, pulling him down until his mouth covers hers and she can taste him.

He nudges the tip of his dick against her clit, making her hips jerk sloppily. And he teases her entrance before entering her fully once more in a smooth thrust.

"Clarke, I can pull out," he manages to say a minute later as he breaks away. "Let me pull out."

He starts to, but she whines, clawing at his biceps with her blunt fingernails. She locks her legs around his back, heels digging into the base of his spine above his ass, urging him to his release. When he collapses on top of her, sweaty and sticky, she strokes his shoulders, his neck, and rakes her fingernails across his scalp. Chin on her sternum, he smiles at her, all boyish charm.

"I can't resist you, you know that?"
She grins back.

A few minutes later, he's on his side against the wall, cradling her in his arms. He's mindlessly running a hand along the length of her body. Though she can feel a bit of his come seeping out of her, she doesn't want to move yet, to have to get cleaned up and dressed and leave this safe haven.

When the sirens sound, they both jolt, Clarke sitting up so fast her head goes dizzy. High against the wall, a red light rolls around in its glass case as the sound blares on.

"What the hell?" she hears Bellamy say behind her.

And then, a voice comes over the intercom.

"Attention, attention. A spacecraft has been spotted outside the bunker landing near Polis. I repeat, a spacecraft is landing. It is large, but its origin is unknown. Kane, Jaha, Roan - please report to the skylight deck immediately. An unknown spacecraft is landing outside. Over."
still life in a snow globe

"Stand in the line just to hit a new low
You're faking a smile with the coffee to go
You tell me your life's been way off line
You're falling to pieces every time.
And I don't need no carrying on."

~Daniel Powter, "Bad Day"

Octavia skin is tinted a delicate shade of green.

Bellamy can see the tightness of her limbs and the hard set of her face. She's as emotionally volatile as a hundred sticks of dynamite. But here, in the bunker, there's no room to blow.

He holds out his arm to stop Clarke from barreling farther into the hallway, where Jasper's form lies crumpled beneath a skylight, that appears, from this angle, to be cracked in a hundred white-grey fragments.

"Jasper!" Octavia screeches, lunging down the hall toward him as Roan throws his arms around her waist from behind, dragging her back.

"What the actual fuck are you doing?" she yells at her captor.

"Easy, Skai Rippa, easy," he murmurs into her ear though she continues to kick at his shins and elbow him in the stomach. "You can't touch him until we know what it is."

"It's a containment breach," Clarke whispers, horrified, near Bellamy's shoulder, pointing upward. "But the radiation wouldn't knock him out that fast. He's a nightblood now."

Kane and Jaha arrive, standing off to one side of the broad hallway - the only one in the bunker to be lit from above - as if momentarily frozen.

Suddenly, Jaha snaps up from the wall like a toy solider come to life. "Abby's in the control room!" he cries to Kane. "Tell her to seal off the skylight corridor completely and prepare medical for potential radiation poisoning. We don't know how long the window's been cracked."

Kane glances up nervously toward the light, then nods once and sprints off in the other direction.

"We need to get out of here," Jaha says commandingly to the others. "There's no time to seal the window! And I'm not risking another death to whatever's trying to get in here!"

Octavia struggles more fiercely still at these words, managing to draw her sword from her side and slice it into Roan's calf.

"Damn it!" he howls, pressing a hand to his leg to stem the blood flow as Octavia rushes to Jasper's side.

"Come on, Jasper!" she shakes his shoulder hard, muttering feverishly. "You promised me! Come on!"
"Where's the ship?" Clarke demands of Jaha pointedly, stepping around Bellamy and gazing up at the skylight. There's no sign of anything but the blood-orange, dusty blanket of Praimfaya's daily atmospheric effects.

"How should he know?" Roan unexpectedly cuts in. "It could be anywhere at this point. It's not like we've got much of a view from here!"

"Isn't Abby watching the outdoor cameras?" Octavia asks desperately, looking up from Jasper's limp body.

Jaha pulls a walkie off his belt.

"Abby, come in. Now. Over."

It takes a moment, but then the doctor's voice echoes around them.

"Thelonious? I told Jackson and the medics to prepare the radiation spray. Are you all out of there? Can I close the doors?"

Jaha takes in Clarke's calculating demeanor, Roan's gruff disbelief, Bellamy's confusion, Octavia's raw panic.

"Not yet," he says. "Check the outdoor cameras. Do you see any signs of a ship? Anything at all?"

There's a long pause. And then--

"No, there's nothing. Nothing but a flat desert everywhere you look."

"Who sounded the alarm?" Bellamy quickly jumps in, walking over to stand near his sister, dropping a comforting hand to her shoulder. She hunches over Jasper's body and begins quietly weeping. "It sounded like a man, but it was, uh, muffled, from the basement level."

He glances at Clarke, and she meets his gaze briefly.

Jaha just shakes his head.

"You don't know?" Roan spits, entering Jaha's space in several strides. "Abby's on shift in the control room, and you all don't even know who came on the intercom with a threat to our lives? What the fuck kind of order--"

"Wait!" Clarke says sharply, staring down at the ground beneath the skylights. "There aren't any fragments." She toes the ground delicately with the tip of her ballet flat. "There's no glass or debris . . . nothing at all."

Octavia's shriek takes several years off their lives as she tumbles back against Bellamy's legs. Before her, Jasper pops his eyes open and grins up at her.

"Got ya!" he calls out jovially, sitting up and brushing the floor dust off his shirt. "No alien invasion today. Just a little chalk paint," he gestures up at the skylight, "And a voice altering megaphone I found in storage."

"Aaargh!" Clarke erupts in outrage, tumbling forward, but Octavia beats her to it.

SLAP! The hit is solid and strong, right across Jasper's face.

"What the hell were you thinking?" she blinks down at him, the disgust ill hidden in her makeup-
laden eyes.

"It was just a joke!" he protests, cupping his hand around his blistering cheek, staring back at her. "You've been complaining that they haven't been letting you lead even though you won the conclave. And the announcement only went off from engineering to the main offices. It was just supposed to be for Jaha and Roan, really," he sounds more sheepish and small with each passing word. "I mean, it's not like there are any humans left to fall from space in the first place--"

"You idiot!" Roan's eyes flash with anger. "The whole damn bunker heard you! You scared the hell out of everyone! And now we've all got to clean up your mess."

Jaha offers him a scathing look but says nothing, rubbing his closed eyes with his fingers instead and bringing the walkie back up to his mouth.

"Abby, Kane, come in, please. False alarm. I repeat, this was a false alarm. There is no spacecraft threat. There is no containment breach. Do you copy? Everything's all clear. I repeat, all clear."

Abby's frantic voice arises after brief static.

"What!? Everything's all clear? What happened?" she demands.

Jaha purses his lips at Jasper, holding out the radio device to him.

"I think you need to explain it to her, son."

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Jasper spends the next seventy-two hours in boiler room lockup. When Harper suggests a "We Weren't Actually Attacked Because We're The Last Humans Left (and we're not depressed about it)" party to try to cheer him up, she doesn't really think the group will go along with it. Mostly because they all fear Octavia slicing into them with the sword she's taken to carrying around everywhere if they so much as say his name.

"Uh, exactly how long did it take you to think up that party title?" Bryan smirks at Harper from across the dorm.

But Emori just tosses her a radiant grin from her bottom bunk like she's been told they're leaving the bunker tomorrow. And Roan manages to have a whole nonverbal conversation with Raven full of wiggling eyebrows across Miller's unsuspecting head. Murphy pauses from rolling socks and says, "Let's get freaky, McIntyre!" Perhaps the most unexpected thing of all is Echo offering to help her set up a few colored paper streamers and work on baking something sugary, depending on what they can find in the kitchens.

"And I'm on liquor duty, right?" Monty murmurs in her ear, coming up behind her and wrapping his arms around her waist.

She smiles against his neck as she turns.

"How did you guess?"

***

"Wow, this is nice!" Clarke exclaims, wrapping Harper in a one-armed hug while holding onto Bellamy with her other hand.
"Thanks, we wanted to make it special for Jasper," Echo replies, affixing the last streamer to the lounge wall with some tape. "What do you think, Bellamy?"

Clarke bristles a little.

"Great," he replies, not meeting her eyes and pulling Clarke closer into the side of his body.

"Drinks!" Harper says briskly, ridding over the tension and pushing them toward Monty's bar set-up at the back counter.

Twenty minutes later, the cozy lounge is vibrating with music and warm with body heat. Bellamy strokes the triangles of skin exposed on either side of Clarke's dress, giving her a lazy smile that makes her laugh in spite of herself.

"It tickles," she moves a little away from him. "And you're not answering my question."

"What question is that, Princess?" he sways into her, and she catches her breath, shaking her head to try to clear it.

"You were weird with Echo. Why?"

He rolls his eyes.

"Not this again."

"Bellamy!" she crinkles her brow at him, pouting.

"It's nothing, baby. I don't want to waste the time."

"But Bell--"

"Can we just skip it for once, Clarke?"

She swallows hard.

"Yeah, ok."

He gives her a half-smile, leaning further into her and kissing her mouth softly. He tastes like moonshine when she opens beneath him.

"Yo! Griffin!" Raven appears at her side, poking her insistently on the arm. "Come dance with me!" she shimmies her shoulders provocatively, winking at Bellamy who smiles back.

Clarke glances up at him, and he jerks his head toward the makeshift dance floor in the middle of the couches where the coffee table was earlier this evening.

"Can you dance?" Clarke holds up Raven's arm and starts to move her legs, looking toward her friend's brace.

"Hell, yeah I can!" she half-shouts over the Caribbean reggae beat, undoubtedly Miller's choice, "Your mom gave me a shot of some vitamins a few days ago, and the shit is amazing," her eyes glow. "It hurts a lot less, and I can sort of bend my knee now."

Clarke's bottom lip slides over her top one as she nods appreciatively, flowing to the beat herself and throwing her head back.
"Incoming," Raven hisses in her ear a minute later, and Clarke jolts, watching where she points. Octavia's got her arms encircled around Ilian's neck by the bookcases, murmuring something that makes him laugh as his hands hang low on her waist.

"Shit," Raven says, searching the dark room for Jasper.

She spots him doing shots with Monty near the lumpy cake splattered with what's supposed to pass for chocolate icing, Jasper's favorite dish from Mount Weather.

"I can't believe her," Raven mutters, taking Clarke's hands and allowing her to spin. "But just act natural."

"It's not our business," Clarke sings out.

"Since when has that stopped you?"

Clarke snorts. It must be the moonshine because she's definitely feeling loose-lipped.

"Since I've had my own issues to deal with," she shoots back.

Raven nods, looking a cross between pissed and resigned to the whole situation.

But then Clarke catches Roan's eye and waves. He raises his glass in salute, but he's intent on Raven's shimmery red dress and how it sparkles as she dances.

"You've got an admirer," she teases, chin jolting up in the Azgeda King's direction.

"Oh," Raven chuckles darkly. "He's more than an admirer."

Clarke laughs out loud.

"Figures. You're the two biggest hard asses left on Earth."

The familiar scent of Bellamy surrounds Clarke from behind then as his palms glide up her hips. She pushes against his chest, letting him support most of her weight.

"Miss me?" he croons into her ear.

The goosebumps rise immediately. She remembers the words she teased him with nearly six months ago now back at the Ark.

"Please," she says breathily, turning in his arms and grinding down against his thigh once she slides her own knees on either side of it. "You were too busy getting it on with Murphy to be missed. Don't think I didn't see. Wanna show me those sweet moves?" her arms float seductively over her head, and she arches her back up, giving him a nice view of her breasts straining against the white, stretchy fabric of her dress.

His eyes latch to hers, and they're quickly transported to their own universe of nonverbal foreplay.

"Jesus," Raven sighs, shaking her head. "You're like rabbits. I'm out."

But she can't quite keep the mild admiration out of her voice.
The future is coming for Bellamy and Clarke. No telling whether or not they'll be able to deal with it.

"Cause you can't jump the track, we're like cars on a cable
And life's like an hourglass, glued to the table.
So cradle your head in your hands,
And breathe, just breathe."
~Anna Nalick, "Breathe (2 a.m.)"

When Clarke careens around the corner toward the classroom, she almost bursts in without looking. But a young boy's voice gives her pause, and she leans into the doorframe with a slow smile spreading across her face.

Bellamy's swirling his fingers over a digital map on the wall, zooming in so the rough edges of green coastline fade from view, replaced by ribbons of highways and the grey city-limit lines of long-extinct metropolises.

"So the Ark crash-landed back in the place where America began? On purpose?" the Sky Crew boy, Zephyr, asks, rubbing his nose.

"Not quite, buddy," Bellamy gestures toward the coastal city near the right end of the screen. The bold, golden letters under it say Jamestown.

"You know the United States started as an thirteen colonies governed by England's King. The colonists didn't start rebelling against all the high taxes - that means extra money they had to pay the government for everyday items - until the 1760s. But Jamestown was the first permanent English settlement in the Americas. It started as a fortress in 1607 for the Virginia Company of London."

"I still don't understand what that is," Zephyr admits sheepishly.

"Sure, it's a hard concept to understand as an adult, so don't feel bad about it. You're doing great!" Bellamy encourages him. "It was a joint-stock company that wanted to invest in the New World. People sailed for months across the Atlantic Ocean to get here."

Zephyr, Clarke realizes with a pang in her chest, has a heap of dark, curly hair piled on his head like Bellamy's. He's scratching at his scalp now, throwing his teacher a confused expression.
"Ok, think of it like this," Bellamy crouches down in front of him. "Remember those movies we watched that used old-time London as their location? Like there were white-and-brown houses packed in everywhere and cobblestone streets and corner markets where people sold meat on sticks, kind of like Polis used to look? There were horses everywhere because people used them to travel on, and the women wore big, long dresses, and men had funny hats with feathers in them. Can you see it?"

He pulls up a few archived images under the search term "1600s London," to illustrate his point.

Zephyr nods slowly.

"More importantly, can you smell it?" Bellamy winks at him. "This was way before modern sanitation. So there are flies on the food and no indoor plumbing, so people use bedpans to--"

"Ewwww, gross," but Zephyr's laughing.

"Point made," Bellamy grins. "So, there were really rich merchants back then - guys who ran shops selling food, clothing, weapons, really anything you'd need to run your house or business - like the Exchange on the Ark. Well, they wanted to get richer than they already were because money gave you power back then. So they created a bunch of companies to explore and trade in new parts of the world, mainly looking for resources like gold and silver that would make them rich. You remember we talked about the brave sailors who had already left Europe at this point to look for new places to live, right?"

"Yeah, I remember," Zephyr shuffles his feet and scrunches his face at the map.

"But I still don't understand about the Ark--"

"In a minute. I'm getting there, I promise," Bellamy claps him on the shoulder. "All right, so Virginia!" he points toward the map. "The Virginia Company - it was about 140 men and boys - settles the area in 1607."

"I remember, you told us in class today," Zephyr insists.

"You're right, I did." He wiggles his eyebrows at Zephyr and pulls a small packet of cookies out of his pocket, tossing it at the boy's open hands. "But you've got a good brain for this, so I want to make sure you get it."

The kid sits down in a front row desk, ripping open the package then giving Bellamy his full attention. Clarke feels another pang in her chest at this display of unfiltered respect.

"Ok, so the King of England in the early 1600s is named James meaning . . . ?"

"They named Jamestown after him?" Zephyr tries.

"Very good. And he decides to let wealthy investors buy stock in the Virginia Company - that means a piece, like a piece of cake. So if I split up a cake into four parts between you and three of your friends, you'd own a quarter of it, right?"

"Mmmmm, that makes sense," Zephyr resembles the perennial scholar.

"They do this to help pay for the cost of building a whole new town way across the ocean in Virginia. Because it cost money to buy the ships and supplies they needed to get there."

"That's the joint-stock part?"
"Yeah. You're getting it now!"

"But these British adventurers aren't just going to North America to move in. Some are just traders sailing to Russia, Turkey, Africa, and the East Indies for things like paper or spices and new foods to bring home," Bellamy drags his finger from England to each of the places on the map, as Zephyr gazes up, wide-eyed.

"That's far!" he says.

"You fell from space to the Earth, bud. They don't have anything on you," Bellamy jokes as Zephyr flushes with delight.

"But the North American colonists aren't just traders, right?"

"Right, they plan to move to Virginia because they don't know anyone lives there already."

Bellamy rolls up his shirtsleeves to his elbows, and Clarke allows her head to fall backward a little, half-exasperated, half-amused as she knows he's reaching a sort of nerd nirvana.

"They're hoping to make money from gold or gems in Virginia. As if the stuff grew out of the ground or hung from trees."

"Like grounder traps?"

"You spent too much time on the dark side of the woods, kid," Bellamy jokes.

But Clarke knows what he's thinking. A nine-year-old shouldn't have a conception of people dangling from their ankles by a vice of metal jaws, screaming in fear.

"Anyway," Bellamy shakes his head, "They don't find gold or diamonds. They're disappointed. They're going to have to work hard. And how do they do that?"

"Umm, you said they cut down trees for lumber. And they planted vegetables like Argo Station and made . . . uh . . ."

"Think about the skylights," Bellamy urges him kindly.

"Glass! They made glass!" Zephyr chirps.

"You got it! The New World was harsh and unforgiving, and they were going to have to work hard to survive. Just like we did."

"So did they make a lot of money?" Zephyr asks, bouncing his feet up and down below the desk.

"Well, depending on what they found or made, they shared the money among the investors based on how much stock they had in the company - like how much of the cake they owned."

"Ok," Zephyr scrunches his pale face in concentration. His stomach grumbles, and Clarke's grin widens.

"But the thing is the first men who came to settle it weren't the best farmers, and they weren't prepared for the cold weather. Remember when we first saw snow in Arkadia?"

"It was freezing," Zephyr shakes a little.

"Right. Just like that. So a lot of them died from disease and starvation, even though the Native
Americans who already lived on that land tried to help them survive at first. They were from a tribe called Powhatan - think of them like Trikru or Azgeda, a sort of clan of people."

"But the grounders tried to kill the 100 when you came to Virginia," Zephyr looks confused.

Bellamy catches Clarke's eye for the first time, and she watches him in wonder for a moment. She knows they're both thinking of the spear in Jasper's chest, the arrows whizzing past them in the woods at twilight. And the flames, the hot, yellow-orange, horrific flames erupting from the dropship that left their first enemies in a crisp heap of bone and ash. They've always done whatever they had to do to keep their people alive.

"Well," Bellamy clears his throat, dragging a hand through his hair. "That's true, buddy, but we crossed the boundary onto their land before we knew they were here, and they attacked."

Zephyr sticks out his little lip like he wants to argue but thinks better of it.

"But why Virginia? For the dropship?" he insists again.

"That one's easier," Bellamy smirks.

"The United States government was based in Washington D.C., on the edge of Virginia, at the time of the nuclear bombs. Mount Weather was built nearby as a bunker to keep the President - like our Chancellor - safe during an attack. And it had all the things you'd need to keep hundreds of people safe for years while the Earth was unlivable, plus cultural items like artwork."

"And the Council sent you all to Virginia on purpose to find Mount Weather?"

"Yeah," Bellamy meets Clarke's eyes again, and the warmth of the brown, the depth of their memories, makes her catch her breath. "They wanted to give us a good chance at survival. They didn't know about the Grounders, Zephyr. But the thing was -"

Clarke walks into the room at last, sliding down into the desk next to Zephyr and smiling at him. She casts her focus back to Bellamy, sitting up straight and crossing her ankles primly, hands clasped together like a model student.

He grins at her, cat-like.

"The thing was they dropped us on the wrong damn mountain."

***

"I can't believe you remember I said that!" Clarke murmurs a few minutes later when Zephyr's gone back to his mother's dorm.

Bellamy's arched back against his desk, and she's standing between his legs, taking her time to kiss him slowly and breathe in the soap on his skin.

"I remember most things you've said, Clarke," he traces his fingers down her bare arms. She grips his waist tighter.

"You know what today is?" she asks, watching him from under the curling fan of her eyelashes.

"Uhh . . . a day that's not Unity Day?" comes the sarcastic retort and shrug.

Clarke rolls her eyes then reaches up to massage the back of his neck.
"Oh God, that feels good. My muscles are so tight from all the sitting."

"Don't forget the hunched bending over books and screens because it's my favorite," she grins, pushing her fingers along the hard ridges of his spine in an attempt to release the pressure there. "You'll be an old man in no time, Blake."

He growls against her ear and drags her up against him, making her laugh and then huff as she feels him hardening.

"Not that old," he bites the words into the skin of her neck.

"Bell, wait," she protests, pushing on his shoulders until he gives in and shifts away.

"It's our turn under the skylights," she smiles. "Raven said the radiation has cleared enough that you can mostly see the stars at night."

"When did she go?" he asks, brows drawing together.

"Oh, uh, a few nights ago I think."

"With who?"

"You know who."

"I don't like it," he cracks his knuckles.

"Well, fortunately, it's not your decision, and you have nothing to do with it," she says pointedly, before leaning up and stitching a kiss to the corner of his mouth.

"You think that, but she's really starting to listen to me, and--"

Bellamy's sentence decays into a groan as Clarke pulses her hips directly against the tip of his erection.

***

That evening they pull two bedrolls onto the floor beneath the skylights and make sure the corridor's doors are locked securely behind them.

Clarke nestles herself against Bellamy's chest, wrapping her arms around his torso as they sit under the long, rectangular slice of heaven. She loves how his chest rumbles and vibrates as he points out the lines of the scales of Libra high above them.

"Can you believe we fell from the stars?" she whispers.

"Mmm."

"What's it been now? About a year and half since you threatened to cut off my wrist?" she chuckles, glancing slyly at the side of his face.

He picks up her wrist delicately and kisses it.

"Another two months, and we'll have been underground for a year," he says.

"It hasn't been that long since the dropship landed," Clarke says slowly, smoothing a curl back from his face. "But it feels like a lifetime. You with that slick-backed hair telling me I was a privileged
"You were," he says drily, then has to physically restrain her fingers from poking him in the hollows between his ribs.

"I didn't like you that much at first either, you know," she pouts.

He looks away, clears his throat.

"Yeah, I know. I've got a difficult personality."

She laughs at that.

"I think mine's worse, much more anti-social."

She snuggles back against him, listening to the inhales and exhales of his breath. He wraps an arm around her hip. Far above, the stars twinkle through a filmy haze of soot, dirt, and dust.

"We've come a long way, you and me," Clarke sighs.

"True."

His chin sits on top of her head, tucking it securely against him.

"Ready to go a little further?" she asks quietly.

"What do you mean?"

"Bellamy," she pulls back, meeting his dark eyes. "I'm pregnant."

Chapter End Notes

We've arrived, guys. We have arrived. Bellarke as parents. Bellarke babies. Kabby as grandparents. So many aunts and uncles. No telling exactly what shape it will take, so prepare for anything.
"Hold on to me as we go,
As we roll down this unfamiliar road.
And although this wave is stringing us along,
Just know you're not alone
'Cause I'm gonna make this place your home."

~Phillip Phillips, "Home"

They don't talk about it aloud, but Clarke knows he doesn't want to return to the dorm yet when their time beneath the sky runs out. So when Bellamy takes her hand in his warmer one and guides her down several flights of stairs at the back of the dim corridor, she doesn't question it. She follows him until they stand before a drab wall. Biting his lip, he narrows his eyes in concentration before reaching for a brick around eye level and pulling it straight from the wall.

"What is this?" Clarke asks clasping at his hand more tightly.

"It's a surprise, Princess. Come on. You trust me, right?"

After what she shared with him tonight, she can be nothing but a good sport about this. So she just wiggles her eyebrows, raises herself up to drop a kiss on his jawbone and clasps onto his belt loop as they head into the darkness.

"How is this even possible?" she breathes, gazing up at the vaulted stone ceilings in wonder. "What is it?"

Bellamy clicks the simple pine wood door shut behind them just as the brick wall in the distance slides back into place.

"It's a Turkish bath," he answers, grinning down at her and running his thumb across her cheekbone in a gentle gesture. "It was empty until two days ago. Kane and Jaha just decided our water supply was strong enough to open it up . . . at least once in a while."

Clarke's marveling face turns in every direction, drinking it in. A few white steps fan out in front of them, dropping down into the inviting water. Against the far wall, silver and blue hand laid tiles decorate an archway in a starburst pattern, creating a pretty border for a plush cushioned daybed nestled in its own alcove. One side of the pool is cordoned off with gold columns rising up to the ceiling from a thick, short wall broken only by a few white steps leading to a tiny pool with its own
bench and an intricate wooden carving of interlocking stars hung above it.

"Are we the first ones to come in here?"

Bellamy shrugs, amusement coloring his chiseled features.

"I think so. Wanna christen it with me?"

The growing smirk playing at his lips is unmistakable, and his hand coasts down to the planes of her waist. He dips his thumb delicately along the space next to her belly button, making her shiver. She immediately covers his hand with her own.

"I can't swim," she admits quietly.

"That's ok. I can. I'll hold you up. I'll hold you both up."

She nods, eyes glistening, and they slowly remove their clothes until Clarke's left in her pale purple bra and underwear, and goosebumps prickle up along Bellamy's forearms. She doesn't have to ask. She knows he learned to swim during the three months she abandoned Arkadia.

Bellamy's waist deep in the water, holding out a hand to her. A few lanterns cast a friendly glow at different intervals around the cavern, and the light sparkles on his skin. The water is surprisingly soothing. It's lukewarm and laps only to her waist when she reaches him.

"Want to try floating first?"

"Ok."

Her breath is knocked out of her with a gasp when Bellamy latches his forearm around her knees and stretches out her frame, so his other arm can cradle her upper back.

"Ah!" she releases the cry as the ceiling comes into focus.

Bellamy chuckles when she splashes water right into his face with her wildly moving hand.

"I've got you. It's ok," he repeats insistently until she stills and tells her muscles to relax.

"Water went in my ears," she pouts accusatorially.

"You'll live, babe," he smiles, warm eyes back on hers.

For a moment, she feels self-conscious of the way her breasts spill over the sides of her bra. Nothing ever fit her exactly right from the heap of clothes in bunker storage boxes. But now her chest is already swelling, leaving thin, pink lines where the fabric cuts into her skin. Bellamy's eyes follow hers and darken in understanding. Bracing his arm lower along her back, he lifts the fingertips of his right hand, dripping with water droplets, and runs them against her skin right under the edge of her bra. She gasps at the cool sensation and rests a hand on his meaty bicep.

"They're . . . bigger," he huffs quietly. "But, we just . . . a week ago . . . "

She smiles bashfully.

"It was literally overnight. Like last few days."

Bellamy moves his hand to her other breast, pushing the tight band away from her flesh and, dipping his fingers back in the water, cools the welt mark he finds there.
"How did I not notice?"

"You've been busy with your teaching and all the guard training . . . and, you know, top secret meetings about Turkish baths."

He laughs quietly and cradles her at the top of the waterline. She has to admit it, it feels nice. The water caresses the aching knots in her back and laps affectionately at her ankles. Bellamy ambles very slowly around the shallow pool, so she can relish in the sensation of the water passing through her fingertips. She clings to his broad chest like a baby koala when they reach the deeper end, knees digging into his sides to make sure her hold is secure.

"I got you. Everything's ok. It's all going to be ok," he promises, rubbing circles along her lower back while she leans her damp head into his shoulder.

He swallows hard. When he speaks again, his voice borders on reverent.

"How far along are you, Clarke?"

"Almost two months."

He nods and swishes the black curls out of his eyes.

"So we're not out of the woods yet, Bell. I'm sorry, I wish we were, but Jackson said he can't guarantee--"

"Shhh," he holds her tighter. "Don't talk like that."

Clarke swipes a teardrop from the corner of her eye.

"Bellamy, I'm scared."

He pulls back from her, gazing down into her face with a furrowed brow and the corners of his lips pulled down.

"It's ok to be scared," he says slowly. "But it's ok to have hope, too."

She blinks through a few tears and presses her mouth to his in a dry kiss.

"There's always hope as long as I'm with you," she whispers into the crinkle of his neck.

A few minutes later, she's seated on the bench, head lolled back against the rim of the pool watching Bellamy's strong shoulders tear through the water as he does laps.

"You're a good swimmer, baby!" she calls out, eyes widening when her voice echoes loudly, breaking and reverberating off the walls.

"I'm very athletic and nimble," he returns, tongue flashing between his teeth. "Hopefully our kids take after me. I can't spend all day freeing them from old grounder traps they stumble into in the woods."

She rolls her eyes and shakes her head. They both know the odds of rediscovering the woods they landed in and came to call home are slim.
"And humble, you're very humble, too," she scoffs as he swims over to her.

"Does anybody but Jackson know?" he asks, voice pitched low as his fingers reach around her to unclasp her sodden bra.

"Just mom," Clarke admits a little shakily. "She was there when I got my check up. They put me on prenatal vitamins. I want to wait . . . to . . . to tell everyone else if that's all right with you."

Her blue eyes search his looking for conflict but only find clear resolve.

"Sure, Princess. Whatever you want."

"You sure? Even about holding off on telling Octavia?"

Bellamy pauses for a moment, then gulps audibly and nods.

"Yeah, I'm sure."

She smiles softly at him, relieved he understands.

He leans halfway over her, the water hitting his abs as he cups the fullness of her freed breast under water. Her eyes flutter shut when his thumb passes over her tight nipple, and she moans a little at the sensitivity he pulls from her flesh.

It's always been a dance her body somehow knew all the steps to with Bellamy, and her calves float up of their own accord to swipe along the bristled hair of his legs. Keeping one palm braced against the wall of the pool near Clarke's golden head, he drops the other from her breast to dance along her stomach - still flat - to the triangular patch of cloth between her legs. Flicking a finger against the hood of her clit, he sucks at the sensitive skin below her ear before whispering, "Is it still ok if we . . . ?"

Her heart tightens in her chest at the hesitancy in his voice.

"Yeah," she cups his beautiful face in her damp palms. "It's ok."

She crawls up the ladder a few short rungs to the daybed nestled above the sparkling pool, smirking when Bellamy pinches the side of her ass as he clammers up behind her. Clarke lounges gracefully on the colorful pillows, hair beginning to dry and curl at the tips as it fans out in every direction. She opens her thighs and pulls him down on top of her, eager for the warmth of his body and the surety of his weight.

"I love you," she whispers as his lips roam from her forehead to her translucent eyelids to the hollow of her throat.

"I love you, too, Princess," he rasps, leaving a wet kiss on her belly that makes the back of her eyes prickle when he rests his palm over it. "I love you both so much."

They leave their wrinkled undergarments under the heated light tucked into the wall of the alcove near the cushions. And when Bellamy settles back on top of her, his kiss is consuming but gentle, massaging her tongue with his own while opening her folds with his fingers to slide smoothly inside her body. She plays with the curls at the back of his heated neck while he thrusts into her, arching her spine when he changes the angle by lifting her knee. In response, she digs her heel into the fleshy area right above his ass. Every movement he makes is slow and torturous, lighting her nerve endings on fire but also giving her the time to look into his eyes and slide her thumbs across his freckles. When at last he comes embedded in her warmth, she cries out his name lowly, feels herself clutch
hard to draw him in deeper still, before finally gathering him in her trembling arms, so his head rests against her breast.

Many hours later, it's Abby who finds them tangled together fast asleep on the creamy cushions. A gray throw blanket is curled around their peaceful forms with Bellamy's bronze arm outside of it, his hand splayed protectively across her daughter's stomach.

Chapter End Notes

I apologize for the long wait! I got sucked into writing "In Her Web She Still Delights," and it's grown into a much longer story than I originally intended. Anyway, I think I have a better idea now of where I'd like this story to end up. So with any luck, I'll be able to finish it soon. :)

If you're looking for a new story to check out, I HIGHLY recommend "Same Time Next Week" by Oseastarved. I am so in love with it.
all precious things discovered late

"If the whole world was watching, I'd still dance with you

Drive highways and byways to be there with you

Over and over the only truth

Everything comes back to you."

~Niall Horan, "This Town"

Clarke's stomach is still quaking as she swipes the back of her jean jacket sleeve across her mouth. It feels like an eruption of multiple tiny volcanoes all going off at once. She's a little dizzy, and her pale reflection sways before her in the mirror over the sink. She splashes water into her face, cups some with her hands and sucks it greedily into her mouth. Standing upright is a strange challenge as the rows of showers seem to tilt over like dominoes when she turns.

A door opens, and a brunette woman walks in. But it all happens behind her, far away from this spot where she's clutching the countertop, and she doesn't register the motion.

"Clarke!" an insistent voice yells. Boots stomp closer as she wrinkles her nose, throws a hand across her belly and heaves into the sink once more. The fluid is choking her; it's hard to breathe. "Clarke! I got you! You're ok!"

It takes her a few dazed seconds to focus on the heavy eye makeup and particular shape of the olive-toned forearms, so much like his.

Octavia pins Clarke's blonde hair back away from her face in a sure grip and rubs her back soothingly.

"It's ok. Get it all out," she encourages.

When her convulsions subside, she meets Octavia's steady gaze reluctantly in the glass, accepting the clean rag to wipe her sweaty face.

"Are you sick?" Octavia asks skeptically, raising an eyebrow.

"Yeah. Stomach bug," Clarke grits out, wincing. "Hit me yesterday. It's been brutal."

"Hmmm," Octavia takes a step back, surveying this girl she's never been able to fully understand. "Is that why your boobs are twice as big as normal--not like you needed any help there? Or why you turned green when Jasper tried to give you garlic chicken last night?"

"Oooh, God. Saving the livestock was such a bad idea," Clarke wrinkles her nose in disgust. "We should have let Praimfaya crisp them."

"Clarke, I'm not a moron! So please don't treat me like one. You're pregnant, aren't you?" Octavia's knuckled fists find her hips.

"It's ok. It's good. I'm happy for you," Octavia smiles at her, opening her arms. "Come on, I'm the only aunt your kid's got, so no time like the present to start sucking up to me."
Clarke grins at that and lets the willowy Blake wrap her up in a surprisingly warm hug. Octavia smells like crushed jasmine and rain.

"I just want to get through the first trimester, so we're sure before everyone knows. I'm scared . . . I'm scared I'm gonna lose this one, too, O. I'm Wanheda."

Octavia clicks her tongue and pushes Clarke back gently by her shoulders.

"You are not Wanheda," she says firmly. "You're young and healthy and creating life, ok? And I'm not Gaia or anything, but have a little faith. We could use some positivity in this damn bunker, and something tells me a baby just might make everyone a hell of a lot happier - or at least more distracted - about being stuck down here four more years, right?"

Clarke swipes at her nose with the rag and nods.

"Bellamy happy?" Octavia's eyes brighten with the question.

"He's really happy," Clarke says softly.

"And how far along are you?"

"Ten weeks."

"So two more weeks before you don't mind telling the others?" Something mischievous is brewing in Octavia's azure eyes.

"Octavia . . ."

"Oh, no! You don't get to be like Bell and keep me away from anything even remotely enjoyable! I want to throw you guys a baby shower! Please?" Octavia juts out her lower lip and blinks imploringly. "Please? I promise it'll be fun! And you'll get gifts!"

"We can't ask people to waste resources on us--"

"Those losers will do what I tell them to do," Octavia snaps, only half joking as she cracks her knuckles. "So it's settled? A party for baby Blake?"

The name strikes straight through Clarke. She'd never given what they'd call their children much thought. They're not married after all. She's most definitely still a Griffin. But her kids - what about them?

"Baby Blake," she says it slowly, allowing the words to trip playfully over her tongue.

It seems fitting.

"Is that a yes?" Octavia presses, trying and failing to suppress the excitement rising into her face. "You're going to let me do something special for my family?"

Her family. Well, yeah, Clarke realizes with a jolt. Octavia really will be her family now, married or not. She sighs, caving into the pink splashes painting Octavia's cheekbones.

"Ok," Clarke agrees. "But you have to give us the time, O. To be sure."

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Clarke tangles her fingers tightly with Bellamy's as she struggles to keep up with the fast pace
Octavia is setting. She thought they were going to the mess hall for the party, but Octavia just turned down the neverending residential corridor where most of Sky Crew resides. She catches Bellamy's eye, and he throws her a baffled look.

"Umm, O? Where are we going?" he calls out to her.

"Patience, big brother! It's a surprise!"

Octavia claps her hands, and for a second, she looks about seven years old. The change is startling. Clarke has a flashback to the overjoyed, too thin girl sprinting over tree roots and allowing blue florescent butterflies to land on her arms. When Octavia pauses outside a door Clarke's come to know as the major furniture and clothing storage area for this level of the bunker with a chiming "We're here!," Clarke throws her a searching look.

"We're going to the storage room?" Bellamy's deep voice is devoid of amusement. "Cute, Octavia. What's really going on?"

She works her mouth into a wrinkly O, lines cracking up between her brows while her eyelids flutter. "Seriously, trust me! For once."

And she throws open the door with a flourish.

"SURPRISE!"

The roar is deafening, and Clarke instantly twists into Bellamy's side as if protecting their child from a danger source. Her heart thumps wildly into her ribs - she never knew she didn't like surprises. But then again, she's had precious few good ones. Bellamy's laughter rumbles through her, and he drops her hand to put an arm around her side instead.

"It's all right, Princess!" he kisses the top of her head. "Open your eyes! Look!"

When she opens her eyes, her mouth falls open along with them. Their friends, their people are all gathered together in the center of the large space that definitely no longer resembles a storage facility. The whole room has been freshly painted in what Bryan later tells her is cornflower blue. Jasper's near the front of the pack, and he comes bumbling forward first to hug Clarke, then Bellamy.

"Well, what do you think?" he throws his arms out widely at the - for lack of a better word - apartment. There's a large bed in one corner, roughly hewn with wood beams but painted a rich mahogany hue. A tall dresser and bed side table stand beside it, and there are a few shelves built right into the wall with Clarke and Bellamy's books already taking up space there. A circular table made of some sort of welded plastic with four chairs and a hand-woven grey throw rug create a dining area. Someone - probably her mother - framed a few of her sketches, and they hang along the walls. She spots the Eiffel Tower, a field full of flowers, a city skyline, and a school fish swimming just below a pond's rippling surface. But what takes Clarke's breath away is the far corner, where a lovely wooden crib rests. The walls all around it are painted with a mural of the evening forest, the stars twinkling in the inky night sky above.

"It's . . . so beautiful!" Clarke cries out at last, delight filling her voice. "You all did this for us?" she stammers.

"Nothing but the best for The Chosen Ones," Murphy quips from where he stands with his arm draped around Emori, but he's smiling back at her.

"Come on! I'll show you around!" Raven rushes forward to take Clarke's arm despite her brace. Bellamy follows, a hand at her back, still staring around him in awe.
"First look up," Raven points above their heads, and Bellamy scratches the back of his neck.

"Are those . . . the constellations?" he blinks a few times in surprise.

"Yup, Bryan and Emori worked on them for the last two weeks. They painted the nursery mural, too, so you could really geek out when you tell your myths, Blake," she smirks at him. "Jasper and Monty built you the crib," she says it offhand as she passes, but Clarke takes the time to feel the light green and white bedding nestled inside as Raven moves on to tug open a drawer. "Harper and I found the smallest clothes we could from storage and refreshed them. And we sewed together the itsy-bitsy stuff ourselves from scraps. You'll find those in here," she gestures toward the bottom drawers of the dresser nearest the crib.

"Hey! I helped!" Octavia barks out over the crowd. People are beginning to talk amongst themselves and drink out of tin cups that Clarke imagines must hold some version of moonshine.

"Fine, Octavia helped," Raven throws up her eyebrows at Clarke knowingly. "And this," she rests her hand on the top of an antique-looking rocking chair before gesturing insistently at Kane, "Kane managed to cobble back together for you."

"I thought it might be good to rock the baby to sleep," he says kindly, warm brown eyes focused on Clarke when he comes to rest beside Raven.

Her eyes are swimming in tears when she unexpectedly launches herself into his arms, and he stumbles back a step before returning the hug and patting her on the back.

"Congratulations, Clarke. You'll be a wonderful mother," he whispers quietly to her.

And then her own mother is beside her, hugging her, and Kane's clapping a beaming Bellamy on the back. Before she knows it, Miller is presenting her with some adorable knit beanies wrapped in a crinkled tissue paper because "Baby Blake's gotta look sharp like its Uncle Miller!"

Bellamy actually squeezes Murphy on the shoulder when he presents Clarke with a teddy bear, looking at the ground and shuffling his feet. "Found it with Emori. I guess Cadogan was planning on some little kids being in here longterm, and I thought, you know," he shrugs, and Clarke surges forward to kiss his cheek. He takes a step back, rubbing the spot where her lips touched him before giving her a baffled smile.

Roan's gift is perhaps the most endearing, although Clarke feels like oceans of emotion are tumbling through her and everything is making her teary or giddy in turns. "It's a . . . cape?" she asks him, taking in his serious eyes and slicked-back dirty blonde hair when he presents her the green velvet cloth a few minutes later. "Yes, all Azgeda babies receive them. It's a tradition to mark their entry into the clan."

"You made this for our baby?" Clarke asks him quietly, eyes finding Bellamy's dark curls as he jokes with Miller and Jasper, snacking on some sort of rainbow fruit kebob that Octavia must have put together. She hasn't even seen the snack table yet.

Roan chortles.

"Not me, Clarke. I'm not much with a needle," he returns. "Echo made it."

Clarke's fingers freeze on the velvet, and she holds it gingerly with the smallest bits of skin she can. She cranes her neck, but can't see the tall, striking warrior anywhere.

"She didn't come," Roan reads her correctly, smirking outright. "Do with it what you will, Clarke."
It's a gift."

She knows the feeling in the pit of her stomach can only be called relief.

"Please thank her for me," she says tightly.

He lays a hand down once on her shoulder, gives her a knowing look, then melts away into the crowd.

"All right, all right, quiet!" Octavia yells a few minutes later from her perch chatting beside Indra and Gaia. When the buzz continues despite her announcement, she just rolls her eyes and roars, "Time to cut the cake, bitches!"

Jasper makes a short but remarkably sweet speech about how the delinquents always called Clarke and Bellamy "mom and dad" and now they actually will be, and no one could do a better job at it than them. Bellamy catches Abby wiping at her eyes with a bit of cloth Kane hands her. Then Jasper hands the knife to Clarke, who finds Bellamy back at her side. They're standing in front of a beautifully frosted two-tiered white cake trimmed in blue and pink roses. Welcome, Baby Blake! the cake reads in Octavia's icing scrawl.

"I know you don't know if the baby's a boy or girl yet, so I thought both colors," Harper tells them as they look up in renewed awe.

"Harper, it's amazing! You're the sweetest!" Clarke walks around the snack table to give her friend a hug.

From this angle, she can see the full banner they've hung up over the assorted drinks. Made of a golden paper, it says Congratulations, Bellamy & Clarke! in a looping script. Harper follows her eyes and points up at the banner. "Emori had the best handwriting, so we let her do it."

They feast on the rare sugar treat until Jasper yells for everyone to make their way to the lounge at the end of the hall where he's rigged up the sound system. Emori calls out to Clarke and Bellamy before they make it to the door.

"I still need to find one more piece of tech to make it spin, but I thought it would work over the crib," she pushes the package toward Bellamy. Though caught off guard, he takes it graciously from her.

"I'll rig it up for you, of course!" she insists, pushing her dark hair over her shoulder. "I just haven't had time with the painting."

"You did a beautiful job!" Clarke says honestly, ears still ringing slightly from all the noise just now fading from the room. "Thank you. It means so much to us."

"I don't know about that," Emori bites her lip. "Bryan's the one with the real patience. He can teach himself anything. My design work's kinda shoddy."

Bellamy delicately rips the paper off her package and finds a sort of mobile strung together with twine and string to a a metallic focal point. From the central orb hangs a painted model of the Earth, a miniature rocket ship, a replica of something resembling the Ark, and what looks to be a city of tents circling a bonfire, the delinquents' first camp. "So you can tell the baby where you came from," she smiles into Bellamy's freckled face. "Monty and Raven helped me with the designs, and I painted everything."
He gaps at her, and Clarke's throat constricts when his warm fingers leech into her side, tugging her
tighter against him.

"I'll get the tech to make it spin. John told me that's how mobiles worked on the Ark . . . for the
babies."

She's watching them closely, apprehensive. The silence stretches, and she's sure she's offended them
somehow. Clarke knows where Bellamy's mind has gone with one glance into his face. He's back on
the Ark, hiding a small, dark-haired girl beneath the floorboards. Octavia never had a mobile.

Bellamy clears his throat at last.

"Emori, this is really nice of you . . . " he searches around for the right words. "You didn't have to do
all this, work so hard."

A true smile graces Emori's features, crinkling the tattoo wrapped around her cheek.

"Emori?" Clarke reaches out to her delicately, brushing her hand along her upper arm. "Can I ask
why?"

"Why I did it?" she asks with surprise.

Clarke swallows.

"Yeah. Just . . . after what I almost did . . . at Becca's Lab," she chokes at the words, blinks, and
looks away.

Emori grimaces at the memory, but then her face turns resolute, and she clasps Clarke's hand.

"You didn't do it, Clarke. You were willing to sacrifice yourself for us all by testing the nightblood."

She feels Bellamy's muscles stiffen where they brush up against her softer curves.

"You got me a space inside this bunker with John, and I'm grateful for that."

Clarke nods slowly, and Emori flashes her eyebrows.

"Listen, I told you you were loved growing up, and you were. But I know it hasn't been easy for
you, for either of you. And you still keep fighting every day even after everything you've lost. You
lead your people. So it's ok to take a day and celebrate the start of something good."

She pats a speechless Clarke's arm and leaves quietly. Clarke gazes up at Bellamy, whose eyes are
warm and inviting when they find hers. Taking his free hand, she lays it over her stomach.

"You hear that, Baby Blake?" she says to the soft swell of her stomach, still barely noticeable unless
you look carefully. "You're going to be a very good something."

Down the hall in the lounge, Bellamy cradles Clarke's waist and spins them in a slow circle while
their friends dance with much more abandon nearby. At one point, she reaches up to glide her
fingertip across his freckles until he pulls her in closer and breathes into her neck.

"What is it?" he asks.

"I'll tell you later," she whispers back.
The party continues late into the night, but Clarke's ankles are swelling. Bellamy insists - she blames the moonshine - on scooping her up in his arms to carry her back to their new quarters to whoops of well wishes and cheers from the others. By the time Harper and Octavia clear the food table out of the room with Bellamy's help, Clarke's eyelids are drooping.

"Come to bed," she calls to Bellamy's muscular back, patting the space beside her persistently as he locks the door and steps into his worn, plaid pajama bottoms.

"My demanding Princess," he smiles at her, casting a hand through his curly mane. "Be right there."

"Hurry up," Clarke pouts. "Our new bed is very comfortable."

"And our friends are more talented than we knew," he gestures toward the nursery corner as he slips into bed beside her.

"They were always talented," she snuggles her achy back into the hard planes of his chest. "They're survivors. They can do anything."

Bellamy's hand dips under her loose cotton nightgown and comes to rest on the bare skin of her stomach, stroking slightly as his nose nudges at her jaw.

"Cold," she mumbles inching away from his face while a tendon jumps in her neck.

"Sorry, Princess," he breathes, kissing the white column of her neck slowly and deliberately instead until she relaxes fully into his touch. "What were you going to tell me before?"

"What do you mean?" Clarke asks sleepily.

She's getting more worn out by simple things, and today was overwhelming, emotionally and physically.

"We were dancing, and you told me you'd tell me something later," he prods her lightly.

"Oh," Clarke blushes into the pillow. "It was silly."

"I still want to know," he rumbles, rolling backward a fraction, so Clarke shifts onto her back.

He can see the lines of her jaw meet in her dainty chin and the upward curve of her nose.

He keeps his hand over her stomach though, and she doesn't protest it. The warm weight comforts her, makes her think this might really all turn out ok. She reaches out to take his cheek in her hand and thumbs across his freckles again.

"I like your freckles," she smiles.

Bellamy laughs lowly.

"Ok. Thanks," he flashes his teeth at her. "I think you might have mentioned that before though."

She rolls her eyes.

"No, I mean - ugh, it's silly, like I said. But I've been having these dreams."

"About the past?" he says, suddenly worried, propping himself up on an elbow to peer at her more closely. "You haven't been having the nightmares again, have you, Clarke? You haven't been tossing around or anything."
"No, no, that's not what I meant," she soothes, running her palm up and down his bicep. "They're dreams about the future. I see our babies. At least, I think I do. I know that sounds crazy."

Bellamy lays back down on his side, and she turns so they're a few inches apart.

"It's not crazy," he says slowly.

"Really? You really think that?" she arches her eyebrow at him, all sass.

"Well, it's not like Kane's mom talking to a tree crazy."

"Bellamy!" she hits his arm while he laughs, the rich sound filling the dark space lit only by the low circadian lights. "After he built us a rocking chair and everything."

"He's in love with your mom, Princess. He'd build you a castle and find you a unicorn if that's what you wanted."

"He cares about us, too, Bell," she whispers. "I don't know how far it goes with me, but he loves you and Octavia."

"He's a good person," Bellamy answers after a long moment. "Or he's trying to be."

"We're all trying to be," Clarke says softly.

"But what about these dreams?" Bellamy shakes his head. "I mean, do the kids talk to you or something?"

"No," Clarke chuckles. "They're too young. They gurgle."

"Gurgle, huh?"

"Yes, gurgle," Clarke widens her eyes for dramatic effect and slips one leg between Bellamy's. "And they always have freckles and dark hair like yours."

Bellamy lets out a sigh.

"I'm really sorry about that, babe. You're definitely the hotter one between us. All our kids would be better off looking more like you."

The corner of Clarke's mouth twitches, and she slides her hand under Bellamy's shirt, scratching at his abs and tracing the ridges there with her fingertip.

"I disagree," she husks, leaning up to kiss his lips. "You've always been the sexiest person in the room."

He tries to flick his tongue across the seam of her mouth, but she shifts away too fast.

"Oh, I'm sexy now, am I?" he stretches out languidly on his back, propping his head up with his hands behind it and observing her with dark interest.

"You know you are, Blake," she licks her lip. "Why else would I have babies with you if it weren't about winning the genetic lottery?"

"And here I was thinking you just wanted to repopulate the planet."

She shrieks gleefully when he rolls over her, one solid thigh between her legs when he pins down
her flailing forearms.

"No, it's just because I turn you on, is that right?" he teases, laying a kiss at her collarbone, then one in the gap between her breasts before shifting lower and kissing the little hollow above her belly button.

"It's not the only reason," she says sweetly, wiggling from side to side when his mouth drops to the inside of her thigh.

"Enlighten me, Princess."

"Bellamy."

Her tone recaptures his attention, and he holds her gaze, gently releasing her hands though she didn't ask him to.

"You're so good, Bellamy. Brave, loyal, smart, strong."

"What about funny? I want to be funny," he tries to joke, batting away her praise.

"I'm serious," she reaches beneath his underarms and tugs a bit, so he's positioned more fully on top of her. One hand rests so mildly along his cheekbone it's like the brush of an insect's wings. "Our baby should have your last name, Bellamy. I want to pass it down."

He swallows hard, not trusting himself to speak. The stillness grows thick between them. Finally, he manages.

"Clarke, it was just Octavia's cake. We don't have to make a snap decision because of it."

"Bell!" she huffs into his neck, pulling him by the waist toward her torso propped up against her pillow, so he comes to rest between her thighs.

He can feel her warm heat through his thin pajamas, and it sends a jolt of arousal through him, even though he knows this isn't the time.

"I mean it. And I want to be a Blake, too."
"If you're not the one for me,
Then how come I can bring you to your knees?
If you're not the one for me,
Why do I hate the idea of being free?
And if I'm not the one for you,
You've gotta stop holding me the way you do.
Oh honey, if I'm not the one for you,
Why have we been through what we have been through?
It's so cold out here in your wilderness
I want you to be my keeper
But not if you are so reckless.
If you're gonna let me down, let me down gently,
Don't pretend that you don't want me,
Our love ain't water under the bridge."
~Adele, "Water Under the Bridge"

Bellamy blinks at her a few times, bemused, then reaches out to cup her cheek tentatively.

"Clarke," her name is stretched and frayed yet precious in his mouth. "As far as I'm concerned, you already are."

Her smile is rich and reassuring.

"So . . . wanna get married?"

Bellamy emits a low chuckle and rearranges himself so he's next to her, pulling her back against his chest.

"I thought you wanted to wait until we were above ground," he mumbles into the few freckles dotting her shoulder.

His hands splay completely over her belly, stroking absentmindedly.

"I did," Clarke admits. "But it's four years away. She traces the puffy vein up and down his forearm, casting her eyes out across their dim apartment. "I don't know if I can wait that long. We're gonna have a kid. I want us all to be connected. It can't be like this Blake club I'm not part of, can it?"
His brow crinkles though she can't see it, and he bites his lip, deep in thought. He's quiet at her back for a while, and she feels the anxiety begin to churn in her stomach.

"Bellamy? What is it? Just tell me. Do you not want to?"

"That's not it," he kisses her temple. "Believe me. I love you. There's never going to be anyone else."

"So what's the problem?" Clarke shifts to stare into his dark eyes.

"I just hope you don't think I'd ever leave you out . . . that I'd want to or something. Getting married isn't going to change how I feel about you, Clarke. I kind of wanted the ceremony to be special, outside, in the sunlight. Maybe out in the woods somewhere like how we began . . . if there are any woods left," he mumbles. "Or by the ocean. We only saw Luna's oil rig, but I bet there are better places by the beach. . . ."

There's a mild blush coursing up his golden skin, and she reaches out to feel the warmth, make sure it's real. He catches her fingertips and kisses them.

"That's sweet, baby. It sounds nice," she whispers.

"So you don't mind waiting until we can do it right?"

Clarke bites her lip, swallows hard.

"I know what you have with Octavia, that bond. I want to be your family, too."

The soft words pulse into the air, and then she's buried her face straight into the crease of his shirt below his neck, crying.

"I'm sorry," she sniffles. "I know I sound ridiculous. It's the hormones. I'm a mess."

"Clarke," his arms tighten around her in alarm. "You are my family. You and this baby are my family just like Octavia and your mom. Just like our friends we fought with since we landed. You are my people. Nothing is ever going to change that. Did you think--"

A bit of her hair makes its way into his mouth as she trembles, but he doesn't mind.

'Did I think what?' Clarke sits back up, the shock-white yellow ends of her hair sticking to his face for a moment, swiping aggressively at her damp cheeks.

Bellamy surveys her for a long few seconds.

"Did you ever think about," he doesn't seem to want to finish the question, "why having a baby was so important to you?"

He watches her face fall and eyes going wide, immediately reaches out to stroke a pacifying hand down her forearm.

"Why was it so important to you?" she snaps back unexpectedly.

"Because I want a life with you in every way that's meaningful," he answers almost immediately, level-toned.

"You're sure?"
Bellamy's shoulders slump a little in comic disbelief.

"Of course I'm sure. You're the other half of me, Princess. For better or for worse."

"In sickness and in health?" a half smile bubbles up at her mouth.

"For as long as we both shall live," he says solemnly, eyes liquid chocolate.

"Ok," Clarke nods at last, voice warbling. "You're right, I'm being stupid."

"Hey, that's the mother of my children you're talking about, go easy," Bellamy chides lightly, pulling her back into his arms for a hug.

"Children, huh? Don't rush it, Blake," she hiccups into his spicy-smelling neck.

"Why was it so important to you?" he whispers into her blonde waves a few minutes later, still coasting his fingers up and down her spine, rocking her gently.

"On the Ark, I loved my parents and the Jahas so much," she says quietly. "I can't remember a weekend where we weren't all hanging out watching old football games or playing chess or just having dinner. I guess I wanted to rebuild that special world in a way. And you're the only one I'd ever want to build it with - I always feel safe with you, secure."

When she kisses his cheek delicately, he feels too stunned to move. A tear sneaks out from his lash line and drops onto her nose.

"Clarke, what if I'm not good enough? Everything I've done. All the pain I've caused and all the killing," he sucks in a deep breath to try to halt the shudder. "I killed those kids in Mount Weather. The three hundred grounders on the field. I destroyed families, ruined lives. I made parents sacrifice their air for their kids on the Ark . . ."

She braces herself against their pillows and lets him collapse on her thighs, running her fingers through his curls while he breaks down. She murmurs a never-ending stream of comfort to him.

"Shhh, Bellamy. Shhhh. You're ok. You didn't want to do those things. They're not who you are. You didn't know about The Culling. You begged me to find another way with Mount Weather. You didn't want to kill all the grounders, I know you didn't, baby. You feel the guilt and the pain because you're a good person. This isn't how our story ends. You deserve something good. We're going to build something good, something better."

"How do you know?" he chokes out.

"Because your heart is so big, Bell," Clarke begins slowly. But once she starts listing the things she loves about this man, she finds it's hard to stop.

She sits there with him on their brand new bed and reminds him of what they've been through. Of the camp they built together to keep the hundred safe when he could have run away just because she asked him to stay. Of how he tried to ease Charlotte's nightmares and had no way of knowing the girl was so mentally distraught. Of being willing to hang so that Jasper could live when Murphy hit
his breaking point. Of saving Mel rappelling off the side of a cliff and volunteering to sneak into Mount Weather to save all their friends alone. Of earning Kane and her mother's respect in the days after Mount Weather and being there for Miller, Harper, Monty, Jasper, Octavia, Lincoln, and Raven.

"I know because Gina was good, and Gina loved you," she continues even when he jolts and shakes. "I know because you came to save me, twice, even when I couldn't be saved. You worked against Pike and spared Indra and tried to save Lincoln. I know because you forgave me when it was hard to forgive myself for leaving. You came with us to see Luna. You kept me safe in the City of Light - you were with me. You saved our people from Azgeda slavery. You brought the hydrazine to Raven and went out into the black rain for Peter and his dad, even when Kane begged you not to. You let Octavia compete in the Conclave, you let her go. You won her back. You're always there for me, even when I drive you crazy or when you don't understand me. You always believe in me. You trust my judgement. You do what you say you'll do. You believe there's a right side to be on. You're honorable. That's how I know, Bellamy. That's how I know."

By this point Bellamy is staring at her in total awe. She laughs a little, flicking her thumb over the freckles spanning the bridge of his nose.

"What?" she asks cheekily. "You thought it didn't go both ways?"

"I love you. I don't know what I did to deserve you, but I love you so damn much," he breathes at last.

She grins fully this time.

When he gets up and begins rummaging around in the drawers near their bed, she cocks her head to the side, confused.

"Bell, what are you looking for? It's the middle of the night."

It takes him a few minutes, but he comes back with a small box, and kneeling by the side of the bed, opens it up in front of her.

"Your mom gave me her engagement ring a few weeks ago," he says softly. "She said it was passed down on your dad's side of the family, that it was one of the things the Griffins managed to bring to the Ark before the Exodus."

She stares at him in wonder, tears obscuring her vision as she smoothes her hair back from her face.

"I promise you we'll get married when we're free of this bunker, Princess. But I want to do this right. Let's get engaged."

His eyes look so earnest and soft.

"Clarke Griffin, you've been my partner in everything since we landed on Earth. I don't want to survive without you. I can't. Will you marry me?"

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"Some party, huh?" Jasper flings himself into the long swing pointed towards the vegetable garden.

Octavia sighs but keeps rocking with her boots, seemingly unaffected by the jolt of his body weight. Her eye makeup is more fierce tonight than usual, probably for the party, but it makes his stomach twist in apprehension nonetheless. She's like a whole different person with the intense colors smeared
across her face - it's an excellent mask.

"It was nice," she says simply. "I think we really surprised them."

Jasper throws her a sidelong glance.

"I'm happy for you, Octavia. That you'll have a real family. That's something special. I'm . . ."

Her blue irises flick to the corners of her eyes, and he sees her shift toward him a few inches.

"You're?"

"I'm a little jealous I think," he admits with a hollow laugh. "My parents didn't make it when the Ark blew up. Maya's gone. Monty has Harper. Bellamy and Clarke are having a baby, and you're--"

"I'm right here, Jasper. I'm still here for you. Don't be a dick about it," Octavia purses her lips and raises a well-curved eyebrow.

"It was just a dumb prank," he says quietly.

The corn is growing tall and proud in straight lines full of golden kernels.

"You made me look weak."

"I didn't mean to."

"Yeah, I know." She smiles a little bit when she catches his eye. "I guess I overreacted. I'm sorry."

Jasper grins, exhaling loudly.

"I'm sorry, too."

"Mmm," Octavia offers, but she doesn't get up when he slides closer to her.

"You know . . . I bet if we're really, really nice to Monty and Raven, they might consider building your niece or nephew a motorized car or maybe some tiny swords just like Aunt Octavia has."

She punches him in the arm, and he laughs outright.

"I'm not endangering the kid's life, Jasper!"

When she settles her head on top of his shoulder, his heart rate intensifies. He can feel it pound in his throat.

"Besides, Murphy would probably steal the car for himself."

***

"Did Kane give you your new assignment?" Monty asks Harper as he sits down across from her at one of the coveted tables for two in the mess hall.

They're eating late because he got caught up refereeing yet another disagreement between Raven and Roan.

"He did," she says, no hint of excitement in her voice. "I'm stuck in the kitchen cooking and mending clothes when I'm not doing guard training with Bellamy and Miller."
"I'm sorry. Maybe you'll get something more fun next rotation? But on the bright side, your lasagna is really delicious," Monty tries for upbeat.

"Mmm," Harper sighs.

"I'm serious! Adding in the eggplant was a stroke of genius last week."

"I've been thinking more about medicine, actually," Harper says tentatively after swallowing a bite of her own food.

"Really?" Monty's eyebrows quirk up as he fills his fork with a bite of cheese and tomato garnished with olive oil.

"Yeah, you know. Because of my dad and all. I thought it would be interesting to study diseases, maybe work with Jackson and Abby on cures down the road when there's more time and a bigger medical staff to help with everyday needs."

Monty reaches out for her hand across the table, and she lets him take it.

"I think that would be really cool," he tells her. "I'm sure Clarke would love to talk to you about all that."

"Maybe, we'll see," Harper tucks a bit of blonde hair behind her ear and smiles more freely at him. "They're not accepting new recruits for a few more months, but Abby said she thought it might be good for me."

Monty nods.

"What about you? Any big changes?"

"Kane's interested in expanding all our class offerings for the kids," he replies. "Raven's going to be busy teaching science with Jasper and engineering and tech stuff with me."

"That'll definitely take up a lot of your time," she agrees.

"Hey!" Monty says after a few minutes spent wrapped up in chewing and scattered thought. "Ilian was talking about making gardening and the food production an actual course too, and since you're already great with cooking, maybe you'd be interested in handling it for a little while? You could talk to Jaha and Roan about it, but I doubt they'd think it was a bad idea."

Harper narrows her eyes at him skeptically.

"Well," he rushes on. "You already know all about meal preparation, so this would just be like extending your education. Me and Jasper would help you - we grew up on Farm Station! And if you still decide to go the medicine route, you could add that, too. We've got nothing but time," he shrugs.

Harper looks pensive for a few moments.

"Maybe," she finally concedes.

Monty grins at her and continues to shovel food onto his fork.

"Did Niylah finish the next batch of tea?" he wiggles his eyebrows suggestively, knocking his knee into hers under the table.
"She did," Harper says, voice careful.

It's been a few weeks since she learned her Ark implant was failing, but she doesn't know how to phrase these next words delicately.

"Excellent, so we're good to go?" Monty resumes eating.

She draws her shoulders back and looks him square in the eye. No time like the present.

"Actually, I was thinking of going off the tea. I wanted to see what you thought," her eyes jump meaningfully under her side-swept bangs.

The grin dies from Monty's face, and he slams a palm against the tabletop, then against his chest, as if something's lodged inside. She jumps up and rushes behind him as his skin turns a tinge of green. She hopes she remembers the Heimlich Maneuver Jackson showed them all a while back.

***

"Yes!" Emori says gleefully as her fingers lock around the thick silver circle with clanking gears inside. She'd dug through eight boxes in the storage room before securing the part at last.

She holds the lightweight device in her hand, spinning it between her fingers. This will be the perfect final piece to make the mobile spin. Miller was right - it was worthwhile to check out the Azgeda side of the bunker for their tech.

She's still smiling, slipping the find into her large sweater pocket when the shock baton barrels straight into her chest.

"Uuugh!" she collapses to the floor in a heap, shoulder smashing painfully into the cold tile.

Her vision begins to blur as a looming man with long, brown hair peers over her, snarling. But the pain is too intense behind her ribs to care.

"You're trespassing, Freikdreina," he says nastily. "Azgeda does not tolerate thieves."

Her arm goes numb as she struggles to stay conscious. Then darkness covers everything like an oppressive blanket.

Chapter End Notes

Story Suggestions:
- Aurora Borealis by enoughtotemptme
- And Done With by Chash
- Feel Like You're Falling by HawthorneWhisperer
- Sparks Fly by winter waters
Emori has a congenital heart defect - a small hole embedded in her ventricular wall - that's gone undetected her whole life. At least, that's Abby's diagnosis later that day after extensive testing. The shock baton sent her into cardiac arrest, and only Jackson's quick-thinking CPR and use of a defibrillator saved her life. It was Kane who happened to be passing down the hall to see her crumple to the ground. His sprinting with her limp body from one end of the bunker to the other that saved her life. Though she wakes up groggily within a few minutes, Abby insists on keeping her in med bay for monitoring at least for a couple days just in case.

Murphy's an absolute wreck, maintaining a watch by her bedside at all hours as she recuperates, his hair growing oily while his dark, scraggly beard overtakes his face. Kane stops by on Friday afternoon with a sandwich for him, only to find Raven already there. She's gently rubbing Murphy's shoulder while they watch Emori's pale, dewy complexion as she sleeps from two chairs pulled up to her bedside.

"I - I could have lost her. She could have died."

"But she didn't," Raven reminds him bracingly.

"Raven, she's everything to me," he gazes at his girlfriend with red-rimmed eyes. "I don't know what I'd do if she wasn't here."

Raven sighs heavily, allowing him to slump against her shoulder in a rare moment of comfort. Only the sound of Emori's heart monitor beeps steadily. Kane doesn't even realize he's holding his breath. Finally, Raven speaks.

"You'd do what we've all done, over and over again. You'd survive. It would suck. It would hurt like Hell. It would rip you open. But you'd survive."

"Finn," Kane hears Murphy mumble.

"Yeah," Raven says after a long pause.
"But why are you being so nice to me?"

Raven lightly rolls her eyes.

"You're looking at the Ark's top Zero-G Mechanic with a heart condition. Sinclair took a shot on me."

Murphy's eyes widen momentarily, and the corner of his mouth tips up in the smallest smile. Kane drops the sandwich on the nearest table and backs quietly out of the room.

***

"It's her hormones. She's just more emotional lately," Harper whispers to Raven under her breath.

After a picture of a polar bear playing with its two cubs on a sheet of ice flit across the digital screen, Clarke fled the delinquents' dorm in tears mumbling something about carbon emissions and the frailty of life.

"Maybe, but did you hear about the latest shit she wants to do?" Raven groans, flopping down on her bed and scratching her leg under the brace.

"Hmmm?" Harper quirks up an eyebrow.

"She's been drawing all these portraits of everyone's who . . . died," Raven grimaces. "She wants to start a remembrance wall or something. I know pregnancy screws with your brain, but what do you think Roan's gonna say when she comes up to him with a sketch and says, 'Now do you think Queen Nia's face needs to be a little fuller or narrower'"

"Guess you better warm him up to the idea, Reyes. All that pillow talk time," she flashes her eyebrows.

Raven snorts.

"You want to walk by a picture of the woman who's responsible for Mount Weather blowing up every day?" she challenges.

It takes a minute, but Harper finally bites her lip and drops her shoulders.

"Yeah," the word sneaks out between her molars. "I see your point."

***

Bellamy finds Clarke sitting with Niylah at a library table, sketching the slope of Sinclair's nose. The ring on her finger sparkles where it catches the light.

"It looks good . . . like him," he offers hesitantly.

Niylah stiffens and rises from her seat.

"No, please stay. I didn't mean to interrupt," he holds out a gentle hand and clears his throat with effort, watching her sink back down. "I'm . . . sorry for the way I've been acting."

Clarke's eyes shoot to his as she stills her hand.

"It was stupid and . . . immature," he swallows. "You're Clarke's friend. You helped us when Roan kidnapped her, and you helped us when we needed to prepare the Ark before the reactors blew. You
deserved more respect."

Niylah takes in his words and after a very long pause where nobody breathes loudly, she offers a nod.

"It's ok. I understand. She is your hod. I always knew that."

There's a strange expression on Niylah's face Bellamy can't place, and Clarke touches her shoulder briefly.

"Sorry, I'm his what?" she asks kindly.

When she meets Clarke's eyes, hers are soft, and she flicks them down meaningfully at her swelling stomach then back to Bellamy.

"You are his hod, his true love. And he is yours," she says simply. "I knew this a long time ago. You circle each other like the planets circle the sun."

She smiles and taps Bellamy's arm lightly as she leaves. "I really am happy for you both."

"Good night," Clarke calls to her retreating back, confusion laced into her words.

Still looking a bit shell-shocked, Bellamy slides into Niylah's vacated seat.

"Well that was . . . nice of her."

"She's a nice person," Clarke throws back, pursing her lips at him a bit.

But another glance at his sheepish expression has her rumpling his hair, already mussed from training, and leaning over to press her lips to his.

"That was nice of you, too."

"I'm a very nice person," he rumbles back, tucking a strand of hair behind her ear.

"Yeah, yeah," Clarke wrinkles her nose suddenly. "You haven't showered yet."

Concern floods Bellamy's face.

"No, but you've never minded before."

She runs a hand over her stomach and crinkles her nose. "I didn't say I minded. It just smells more intense."

He catches the flush in her cheek as she turns back to her work and runs his fingers up her forearm as she continues to sketch.

"We can turn in early," he says suggestively, and she grins at the catch in his voice.

"Not tonight, Bell. I'm exhausted."

"All right," he sighs dramatically and stretches out his long legs under the table and starts flipping through the sketches laid out before him. "How are you feeling otherwise?"

"Besides my ridiculously swollen ankles and dizziness from all the extra blood flowing through me? Peachy," she grits back, adding shading to the contours of Sinclair's neck.
Bellamy leans in to nuzzle the side of her neck. "But on the bright side, your skin's glowing."

"Come on, I'm serious!" she shrugs him off. "I want to finish this one tonight."

"You look like your dad," he says softly gazing into the face of Jake Griffin. "I mean, you definitely look like your mom, too. But the resemblance with him is there for sure."

"Thanks, baby," she reaches over to squeeze his knee then resumes her work, biting her lower lip as she begins on Sinclair's shoulders.

"How many are you making? How are you deciding who to draw?"

Clarke wipes off the charcoal staining her skin on a cloth before answering.

"I'm doing everyone I know. If someone has a problem with them hanging on the wall, they can take it up with Octavia," she says, voice hardening.

"Clarke, you drew Pike."

"I drew Lincoln, too," she hums.

His fingertips pause on the one of Gina, and he stares at it for a long time. When Clarke realizes it, she halts her work.

"I didn't give her what she needed," his strangled voice comes at last. "I ran to save you, twice. I abandoned her, Clarke."

Her mouth puckers as she nods, scooting her chair closer to slip an arm around his waist. It's one of the things he likes most about Clarke - she never lies just to make him feel better. He feels her absorbing pieces of the pain flaking off his body.

***

The wall of the atrium is scrubbed down before the pictures are hung. Kane cries when he sees the eyes of his mother looking back at him. Jaha places a heavy hand on Clarke's shoulder before reaching out to skim mocha fingertips over the images of his son and best friend. Octavia blinks back tears when she finds Lincoln, but then the vulnerability turns to hardness when she sees Pike. Jasper digs his fingers into her waist, and she bites back her criticism. Ilian thanks her for including his family, sketched from his patchwork of memories shared with her.

"Is it wise to hang a picture of the old Commander?" Indra sings the words breezily into Clarke's ear, but she catches the menace underneath. "We are barely holding on to peace as it is. Octavia ordered the Azgeda man who attacked Emori to be shock lashed. There is discontent brewing under the surface here, Clarke. You know how Azgeda feels."

Clarke's eyes are flinty when she turns to view Indra's caramel-colored cheekbones.

"She was trying to bring peace in the end," she argues back.

Echo stands in a far corner muttering something to Roan, gesturing toward the wall in an animated
way while he looks displeased. Nia's jewels practically glow around her neck, even though the
drawing is in black and white.

"I followed her loyally, but you can't deny she was a contentious figure, especially considering what
we're trying to build here," Indra holds her ground.

"We can't erase the past. We can't forget it."

"Maybe not," Indra tilts her head to the side. "But you hung this boy on the wall, too," she points
toward Finn's floppy hair and easy smile. "He massacred innocents. My people. I do not forget."

"I'm not asking you to forget," Clarke sighs in frustration. "I'm asking you to remember with me and
help us build something better. I'm asking you to be my people, and I'm asking to be yours."

Indra's surveys Clarke.

"We will see how it goes," she responds sternly.

Halfway down the wall, Bellamy stands transfixed in front of the sketch of his mother. Abby's
unexpected touch to his forearm makes him jolt in surprise. He turns to her with wide eyes, but she
simply smiles sadly at him and whispers quietly enough so only he can hear, "It seems like it's your
lot in life to be surrounded by strong women."

Bellamy blinks a few times then nods, swallowing hard. She squeezes his arm once before dropping
her fingers.

"Your mother was brave, and I wish I had known her. I'm sorry she's gone. I'm sorry . . . things were
what they were on the Ark."

***

"Do you think it's stupid, too? Hanging all the pictures up side by side?" Clarke demands as she
throws back the blankets on their bed with more force than necessary.

Bellamy's jaw ticks, and he yanks the shirt off over his head, rummaging around for his shower
supplies.

"I think you meant well," he huffs out after laying hands on the shampoo-like substance Jasper
concocted after many long hours spent mixing chemicals in the makeshift lab in engineering. "I also
think--"

"Don't you dare tell me it's because I want to nest or whatever other bullshit you read in that
pregnancy book!" Clarke cries out, crossing her arms over her voluptuous chest. "People need to
remember, Bellamy! The good things and the bad things! It's the only way to make something
better when we finally get the hell out of here!"

"Ok," he says in a placating tone.

"I drew your mother, Bellamy. Our baby's grandmother. Is that wrong too?"

His hand stills as they reach for the door, and he looks back at her. Her blonde hair is getting long, a
little frayed around the edges. But the vast parts of it shine, and her cheeks are pink. She's been
gaining weight steadily, and her last exam with Abby was normal and reassuring.

"You made her beautiful, Princess. You made her real again," he says sincerely, the toughness
fleeing his tone.

"Then what is it?" she stomps her foot. "Don't tell me this is about Lexa again! You can't really agree with Indra! She was their leader - they loved her before they hated her!"

"I don't know if you can really love the people you're afraid will kill you if you say or do the wrong thing," Bellamy's eyes lock on hers, but he still looks pained.

"Bellamy . . ." she tries, taking a few steps toward him.

"You don't have to. I don't need it," he shakes his head. "But I killed those people in Mount Weather who trusted us, Clarke. She abandoned us and left us alone to fight. I know you see it differently--"

What she can see is his brown eyes sparkling with moisture.

"But I can't. I don't think I ever will. I'm try to respect how you feel, Clarke. And I didn't want more loss for you. Watching you cry in that cell was like getting run over."

Her face twitches as she draws nearer. He has a sudden urge to reach for her but suppresses it.

"It's not like I didn't miss you while I was gone," she says, softer.

"You thought you were doing the right thing," Bellamy says gruffly. "You're the diplomat."

"I don't always make the right choices," Clarke mumbles noncommittally, staring at the floor.

"Neither do I," Bellamy returns, Finn's features flashing into his head. "I shouldn't have let Raven attack you about Finn. The game got to me," he says unexpectedly.

"You were a drunk asshole," she stares right up into his face, but her eyes aren't mean.

"Fair," he replies. "But I did want to save him."

"I know. I did, too. We tried."

"I failed."

She reaches for his warm hand.

"He loved you, Princess. He saw your spark before any of us. That's how I knew he was smart."

A tear glides down her cheek, and her whole chin trembles. He catches her when she collapses against him.

"I loved him, but I wanted him to love Raven, Bell," she clutches at his side and breathes heavily. "I - I - I didn't want him to hurt those people for me."

"Shhhh, baby, it's all right. It's not your fault," he cradles the back of her head and rubs a palm up and down the divots of her spine. "It's not your fault." He rocks her gently from side to side. "I didn't want to upset you. It's ok to remember and feel; the wall was a good idea. But we can't live in the trauma forever. It's not healthy for us, or," he slides a hand around to the round curve of her stomach, "our kid. We have to keep moving forward, Princess."

She draws back from him, wiping at her nose and taking a shuddering gulp of air.

"Together?" she captures his face in her palms, strokes down the line of his freckles.
"For as long as we live," he's raspy when he finds his voice.

Clarke rises up on her toes to move her mouth to the center of his cheek. He catches her at the waist, and she watches his pupils widen as a dull vibration shakes low in her chest. His lips find hers and hover right over them, waiting for her to step into it or pull away. Clarke knows her mouth is dry and her lips chapped, but Bellamy's tongue toys with hers slowly and playfully until moisture begins to pool between her thighs.

"Come on," she winks lazily at him, feeling the bit of black mascara on her lashes catch for a second.

He grins.

Bellamy holds her like porcelain when he stands behind her in the shower, his bulk pushing her forward. A cascade of warm water splashes around them when her palms hit the tile, and he thrusts inside of her. He cups both her breasts as he moves, and she moans out loudly enough for him to clamp a hand down over her mouth. Unaffected, she licks at his finger until his swirling motions at her nipple and clit bring her to her climax.

"I love you," Bellamy grunts into her neck.

She senses the familiar heady rush that comes when he knocks against the end of her channel one last time before withdrawing.

"I love you, too," she chuckles.

"What's so funny?"

Clarke's blue eyes glint with mischief when she spins around and wraps her wrists around his neck.

"I was just thinking this is the new normal," she glances down. "I won't fit underneath you much longer."

Bellamy smirks, shuts the water off, and wraps her in a towel, rubbing her arms to soak up the water droplets clinging to her skin.

Back in their bed, the smell of soap made with pine sap fills her nose while he curves around her back. Before he knows it, she's tugging at his bicep until he's got her locked underneath him with her loose nightgown rucked up to the tops of her thighs.

"Again? You sure?" Bellamy searches her eyes in the darkness, raising an eyebrow. He rubs the side of her leg until goosebumps kick up.

"Let's take advantage while we still can," she smirks back, then arches into the hand he presses between her legs.

Chapter End Notes

The decision to read LaughingSenselessly's "How You Stay Alive" will be one you're glad you made. It's an investment, but it's so worth it.
doesn't look too good (on the face of it)

"Cherry lips

Crystal skies

I could show you incredible things

Stolen kisses, pretty lies

You're the king, baby, I'm your queen

Find out what you want

Be that girl for a month,

But the worst is yet to come.

Oh, no."

~Taylor Swift, "Blank Space"

Life in the bunker settles into a true routine for everyone as they pass the one year mark. Bellamy continues advanced guard training sessions with Indra, Octavia, Miller, Bryan, Harper, and Echo three days a week. Clarke doesn't know exactly what goes on there, but she always imagines a lot of hand-to-hand sword fighting and face paint is involved. On those nights, he flops into bed beside her after a quick shower, boneless and exhausted. He falls asleep quickly, absently stroking her hipbone while her ear catches the rise and fall of his chest.

Raven and Jasper agree to teach the children all they can about engineering and the sciences. Sure, Jasper's eyebrows get scorched once or twice during his lab demonstrations. And, yes, Raven storms from her classroom in a frenzy when a couple kids from Broad Leaf almost start a fire rewiring a heating system improperly, but she's trying.

Monty and Emori head up a computer technology class that focuses heavily on mapping the Earth's surface and projecting where they all might be able to settle once the worst of Praimfaya passes. Raven helps when she can, often when the computer programs get particularly complicated. Clarke once passed the room they were working in on the way to med bay and was shocked to find a large projection of a forest taking up the entire far wall. Birds were soaring through the thick trees, and she spotted some mushrooms and moss near the ground.

After spending her childhood hearing Bellamy's soothing voice lull her to sleep with fierce mythology stories, Octavia teams up with Ilian to teach the youngest kids how to read and write. Ilian smiled across the main office at her when Kane made the assignment, and his eyes looked so
earnest that she smiled back. They settle into an easier friendship as she realizes how gentle and patient he is with the children. Plus, he's kind of obsessed with Sherlock Holmes, and she may or may not find it adorable when he scoops up a black-haired boy into his lap and allows him to turn the pages while they're reading *The Hound of the Baskervilles*.

Harper pitches in with more of the gardening work. At first, it feels like a burden, but over time, she begins to find comfort in the feeling of rich soil under the pads of her fingers and the straight and even rows she creates. When Jaha takes notice of the intricate formula she perfected to increase crop yields-- resulting in hundreds of bright cherry red tomatoes and long, waxy cucumbers-- he talks her into teaching a few math courses on the side.

"Where were you hiding that big, beautiful math brain from me all this time?" Monty jokes as they head to the mess hall for lunch one day.

Harper smirks, rubbing the tightness in her shoulder and shrugs. "There's a lot about me you don't know I guess."

"Well, I want to find out as much as I can," he slips his hand into hers reassuringly and drops a quick kiss on her cheek.

Though she can't help the faint tilt of a smile from forming, something heavy and hot settles in her chest all the same.

"You know the important things," she meets his dark eyes. "You know about my dad's Parkinson's."

Monty's grip tightens around her fingers.

"Yeah, you said it was a horrible disease to pass down," the words have blades on the edges of them.

He grimaces.
"You know that's not the whole truth!" he interjects. "I said that after you said you didn't think you wanted to risk it."

"Oh, right, you were being supportive," Harper retorts more forcefully. "I forgot."

"Baby, you know I'll always support you," Monty grips the bone in her left wrist tightly, bringing her to a halt in the corridor off the circular atrium. Their faces are only a few inches apart, and Harper's breathing heavily, her thick blonde braid curling around her neck. "If you want to start working with Jackson and Abby to study diseases, I think that's great. If you have a brilliant mathematical mind that can help us grow more food, that's amazing. If your guard training allows you to kick Murphy's ass when he's being a dick, you know I'm right there for you."

His eyes sparkle a little with mischief, and she can't help but sputter out a nervous laugh. He squeezes her waist gently, thumb stroking over her abs.

"The odds are strong that it wouldn't be a problem," he says quietly. "You heard Jackson. We could do it if you wanted to. We could try."

The words land on her fully; he can tell by the way her eyes widen. It takes a moment, but she draws herself up to her full height and pulls her shoulders back.

"No need to decide today. Let's just keep talking about it, all right?" she asks.

He nods.

"I'm not really sure I'm ready for my ankles to look as swollen as Clarke's," she tries for a joke as they make their way toward the mess hall.

***

"I feel like a baby hippo," Clarke whines as Abby moves her hands along her daughter's bare stomach, where rich purple stretch marks are starting to form. They remind her of the crinkled lettuce of the same color that grows in the garden.
Her mother gestures for her to lie back on the examination table and prepares the ultrasound equipment.

"Clarke, you look--"

"If you say I look beautiful one more time, I will smack you," Clarke tries to sit up while shaking a finger at Bellamy, but Abby eases her shoulder back down.

"Calm down, honey. No need to spike your blood pressure," she soothes. "You look lovely - your skin is glowing."

Bellamy frowns from his spot in the corner leaned against the wall as Clarke sticks her tongue out at him.

"Have you felt the baby move yet?" Abby asks as she spreads jelly along a snake-like instrument and runs it across Clarke's rounded belly, staring at a dark monitor, waiting for an image to appear.

"No," Clarke says softly, gasping when their baby comes into focus.

"That'll happen soon," Abby starts to speak, but it's overridden by-

"Bell," Clarke reaches out her thin fingers insistentely to him, her discomfort immediately forgotten.

He takes her hand in his own and interlocks their fingers. When he quirks an eyebrow at her and pinches his lips together in an amused expression, she grips his fingers harder and bites her lip in a wordless apology. Then their eyes turn in unison to the screen. Clarke can make out a nose, the jut of a chin, the smooth curve of a foot ending in tiny little toes.

"That's our baby," she sighs.

He fluffs up her pillows, still staring in awe as he works.

"Yeah, yeah it is," he agrees.
"Well, you're four and a half months along now, so if you want to know the gender, I can probably tell you . . ." Abby trails off, breaking the spell of seeing their child for the first time. It had taken a while for Jackson to get the ultrasound equipment fully functioning.

"What do you think?" Clarke turns her face to his, all earnest excitement.

"Your call, Princess. I'm good either way," he smiles back, stroking her rose-tinted cheek.

Clarke blinks for a few moments. Bellamy's momentarily caught up in admiring the fan of her lashes before she's replying to her mom.

"I think a surprise would be fun?" she says sort of uncertainly.

Abby looks to Bellamy, who nods.

"Ok, I think I'd like that, too," he clears his throat. Clarke knows he's trying his best to keep the emotion from welling up there.

***

"How did I know you would like this?" Raven's hand drops warmly on Roan's shoulder, and she wears a satisfied smile.

She gestures toward the screen in front of his chair set up near her workstation in engineering where he's playing a game she devised to help her students learn coding. It's simple enough, but she was able to build some innovative backgrounds, as well as an avatar that vaguely resembles him. He must keep learning new coding techniques to earn points, and when he clears a level, a new clan is brought under his domain in the coalition.

Roan snorts.

"I can't believe you've got me playing with technology," he still says it like a dirty word.
"But you love it," she bends down to whisper into his ear, chuckling. "You enjoy being king."

"And you love to taunt me, Little Bird," he argues back with a rough grin, catching her around the waist.

She shrieks at the abrupt contact but grabs at the tips of his hair, weaving it through her fingers when she settles in his lap.

"You really could use a haircut," she arches an eyebrow at him while he rolls his eyes. "Come on, I could do it for you. I'm pretty decent with scissors."

"Raven..." he groans.

***

Clarke's walking - well, more like waddling - to her mother and Kane's room two weeks after her medical checkup. It's become pretty much impossible to see her feet when she's standing up, and she pauses every so often, pressing her fingers into the wall as a back spasm overtakes her. They've been obnoxious for the last few days, but Jackson assured her there was nothing to be concerned about. Bellamy is working late developing lessons plans in the library, so she's doing this visit alone.

It's the flash of pure blonde hair through the glass window of the library that catches her attention as she shuffles past. Bree arching up on her tiptoes against a bookcase, leaning right into the personal space of a dark-haired man in a leather jacket, giggling and smiling seductively. He takes a few measured steps back from her, the book in his hands a sort of wedge between them. Undeterred, Bree begins to move in closer again. Clarke feels her dinner curdle in her stomach and tears her eyes away, too tired to fight a fresh battle tonight. After huffing out an intense burst of air through her nostrils, she rubs a finger hard across her eyebrows and keeps moving.

"Come on, Clarke. Put your feet up, would you?" Kane shoots her a knowing smile and props a pillow up under her thick ankles, which rest on the coffee table.

She smiles back gently, rubbing a palm across her stomach and taking in the quick shoulder squeeze he offers her mother as he passes her on the way to his own seat.
"How are you feeling, honey?" Abby leans in, elbows propped up on her knees, and stares intently into her daughter's face.

"I'm fine, good," Clarke says absently, sipping on warm tea out of a chipped mug.

Abby exchanges a look with Kane, who nods his head mildly. She turns back to her daughter.

"I think it might be time to roll back your hours in med bay, Clarke," Abby continues.

"That's not what I want," Clarke's words are clipped.

"It's normal to be experiencing back pain and swollen ankles right now, Clarke," she says kindly. "And you know that heartburn is about to become more common, and when your baby starts to move, there will be more sleepless nights--"

"That's not it!" Clarke interrupts harshly, shaking her head.

Abby's eyes snap open in fear, and she immediately settles herself on the couch next to her daughter.

"Ok, what is it?" she strokes the glossy hair swept up in a wavy bun.

Clarke spins the diamond engagement ring around on her finger over and over.

"Is it about Bellamy?" Kane questions.

"Someone always wants him," she mutters lowly to no one in particular. "And the more I look like a whale, how am I going to keep his interest?"

Abby jolts back in sheer surprise.
"Clarke!" she bursts out. "I don't ever want to hear you talking like that about yourself! Bellamy loves you so much - why else would he have asked for my engagement ring?"

Her tone still borders on harsh. But when she opens her arms, Clarke falls into her lap like a little girl regardless, allowing her mom to rock her as she cries despite her best attempts to control it. It's not like her to open up a lot in front of Kane, even though she fully approves of his relationship with her mother. But pregnancy does very weird things to the state of your emotions.

"You deserve someone who loves you fully, Clarke, but unless you tell me something specific happened..." her mother is saying somewhere above her head, but she's not really listening.

She hears the creak of a cushion spring, and then Kane is kneeling in front of the Griffin women, patting Clarke's knee affectionately. It's hard to look straight into his sympathetic brown eyes without feeling the urge to cry harder.

"Clarke . . . " he starts, a bit unsure. "Do you remember when Roan kidnapped you, when Bellamy went after you into that old train station?"

Clarke hiccups and swats a frizzy flurry of hair away from her face before nodding.

Kane clears his throat.

"Well, afterward, when Roan took you away again, Bellamy's leg was bleeding heavily. He was in bad shape," Clarke cringes but keeps her eyes trained on Kane's beard. "But it didn't matter. He yelled out to all of us that we had to keep trying to get you, that we couldn't lose you. He was so desperate, Clarke. He was bleeding out, and all he cared about was you."

Kane allows his message to sink in, while Abby reaches for a scrap of cloth to wipe Clarke's eyes. Later, before Clarke leaves, Abby wraps her in a warm hug, maneuvering around her protruding belly. She leans in to whisper in Clarke's ear, "Your father would be so proud of you, baby. And he would love Bellamy because Bellamy loves you."

***
The nesting instinct is not just a footnote in her books about pregnancy. The urge to fold and refold blankets, attempt to stitch up holes in booties, and neatly lay out all the baby clothes she's acquired in drawers has gripped her over the last few weeks.

She's fluffing the pillows in the crib when Bellamy enters their room finally, snapping the door shut behind him.

"Clarke, you should be off your feet, baby," his deep voice sparks something in her despite all the rolled up anger and sadness choking her.

She whirls around, hand locked around the crib railing.

"You shouldn't have chased after me!" she hurls the words out like firecrackers, and he stares at her stupidly.

"What are you talking about?" he says slowly, taking a few measured steps nearer her.

"In the woods! When Roan kidnapped me!" she calls out more desperately, clutching at her stomach. "He could have killed you then. And you should never die for me, and--"

She can't even finish the sentence because Bellamy's enveloping her in his muscular arms, drawing her mouth right against his bicep and effectively silencing her.

"Clarke, I don't know what made you think of that, but trying to protect you has never been the wrong decision for me."

His chest vibrates with the words, and he runs a hand up and down her spine in a comforting motion. So her palms smacking into his chest and the bite of her nails into his flesh catches him a little off guard.

"I. Saw. You. With. Bree. Tonight," she changes track at the speed of light, punctuating each word with a fresh slap until he grabs her wrists and drags them down to her sides. It's not that she's hurting him, but that he's terrified she's overexerting herself the more riled up she becomes.
"Clarke, look at me," he demands roughly, crouching down a bit, so they're eye-level. "What you saw in the library was Bree being stupid, and me getting away from her as fast as possible."

He pauses before freeing one of her wrists hesitantly and taking her chin gently in his hand instead, turning up her face, so she'll meet his eyes. His chest tightens when he sees the tears welling up around her blue irises.

"I love you, Clarke. Always. I meant it when I said you were it for me," he tells her, his warm breath fanning her face.

"They're never going to stop," she mutters, unable to meet his gaze. He's not fully sure who she means. "I'll just keep getting fatter, and they're never going to stop because we're all locked in here together."

She breaks his grip and walks over to their bed, shoulders hunched, and runs a hand listlessly across their bedspread, picking at a loose thread.

His hands are large and somehow possessive when they fall on her hips from behind. She tries to shift out of his grip, but he catches her forearms before she can elbow him in the stomach and wedges her feet between his own boots. When he begins sucking on the tender spot of her neck beneath her ear, she moans despite herself and arches her ass into his groin. Yeah, it must be the hormones.

"I don't care about anyone else, Clarke," he hisses it directly into her ear. "I care about you. You're the mother of my child. And you're gorgeous."

She feels the blood jump in her veins, and when he releases her arms, she claws at his thighs, driving him closer.

He takes his time with her that night, laying behind her on their bed and flicking at her nipples, making them painfully hard and her hips jerk back against him. Grinning at that, he paws at her breasts until she's gasping.

"That's good, that's good," he hums. "I want you to be begging me for it."

He leaves trails of open-mouthed kisses down her arm to the hollow of her hip, then down her thigh
as well. His warm hands skim over her nakedness, cupping reverently at the swell of her stomach before coasting down to her blonde curls. She calls out his name, needy, when he slips a finger inside her because she's never been this wet, and it's just not enough. Clarke kisses him like she's desperate for oxygen and he's the only source, urging him as near to her body as he can get, all the while feeling the coil tightening painfully in her lower abdomen.

"That's my Princess. Go on and spread your legs for me, baby."

Bellamy lifts her top leg more roughly than she expected, and he teases her mercilessly, coating his cock in her fluids while bumping against her clit until she scratches at the dark hair along his thigh. He pins her hand to her hip with his own, rutting easily against her before slipping a hand around her body and spreading her open with his fingers.

"Bellamy . . ."

"You're mine, Clarke," he reaffirms, his thick cock nestled between her lips. "Let me hear you say it."

She groans, chest shimmering with sweat, Bellamy's scent surrounding her completely.

"I'm yours."

"And?" his eyebrows knit together while he runs a finger around her entrance.

"Please, please," she gasps. "Please fuck me. I need you, I only want you," she babbles.

And then he's pushing forward, forcing her tender walls open as he stretches her.

She practically weeps when his fingers discover her over sensitized clit, pinching and rubbing it.

"And I'm yours," he thrusts into her a little harder, and her eyes pop as her mouth falls open in a mostly silent cry. It's so good but so tight at this new angle with her legs close together.
He builds up to a quicker rhythm, and she keeps one of her hands tightly wound with his while she lets him take her. She can't kiss him at this angle on her side, but he sucks dark marks into the fragile skin of her shoulder and neck. Her orgasm is truly explosive when it comes, having built gradually as Bellamy nudged more and more firmly against the spongey tissue of her g-spot.

An hour later, she rests on her back, Bellamy tucked on his side watching her as his eyelids grow heavy. But her small gasp has him awake again, and he watches her with concern.

"Clarke? Are you ok?"

When she meets his eyes, she smiles and reaches for his hand, bringing it flat against the side of her stomach. It takes a moment, but then he feels it. A sure and solid kick, something like the strong fluttering of wings through a liquid membrane.

"Our baby is moving," Clarke grins at him.
breathing room

"Cause it's you and me
And all of the people with nothing to do,

Nothing to lose.

And there's you and me
And all other people.

And I don't know why

I can't keep my eyes off of you."

~Lifehouse, "You and Me"

Clarke is staring at the digital map spanning the classroom wall so intently, eyes squinted and wrinkles cropping up on her forehead, that she doesn't even hear Roan approach.

"Planning your great escape to a land far, far away?" he quips with a deep rumble, making her jump.

"Oh! Roan!" she brings one hand to the spot above her breast with a smacking sound, the other curling over her expansive stomach.

"Sorry," he smiles more kindly, the laugh lines showing around his piercing blue eyes. "Didn't mean to scare you."

Clarke snorts.

"As if I could run away like this."

She stares down at her stomach. It's been a long time since she could see her feet while standing.

"You'll be back to normal before long," Roan says thoughtfully.

"Mmm," Clarke returns distractedly, scratching at her nose.

"So what are you doing in here? Roan settles himself on the top of one of the desks, which groans noisily under his weight.

"Promise not to laugh?" Clarke arches her eyebrow at him, a smile hinting around her mouth.

"No."

She grins outright.

"Bellamy's kind of obsessed with all these mythological sorts of names. And I'm . . . not. I mean, not as much. So I thought," she gestures lamely to the map. "I could come in here for some inspiration."

"I see."

Roan slides back down to the floor and crossing his arms over his broad chest, moves to stand beside
her shoulder-to-shoulder. He surveys the old mountain ranges and winding rivers spread before him with vague interest.

"You were thinking more along the lines of, uh, Indiana or Wisconsin? Maybe Egypt or Brazil for a girl?"

Clarke rolls her eyes.

"You're not taking this seriously! Aspen is a better option than Dionysus as far as I'm concerned."

A few minutes later, Roan chuckles to himself as she leaves the room, anticipating overhearing his blonde friend arguing for the greater appeal of Kenya over Achilles the next time he's behind her in the dinner line.

***

By the time she's seven months into her pregnancy, Clarke journeys to the warm aqua waters of the Turkish Bath regularly just to get some relief for her aching muscles. She floats languidly on her back for an hour at a time until Raven complains that she's turning into a prune and it's time to go.

Harper begins interning with Abby and Jackson in med bay to see if she wants to pursue medicine. She's the first one to notice a bony knee and elbow poking out of Clarke's stomach, the result of a thinning amniotic sac.

Monty challenges Clarke to games of chess to keep her mind occupied as it gets more uncomfortable to stay on her feet for long stretches of time. Octavia even paints a vibrant flower garden across her stretch marks when she catches the blonde frowning at the lilac streaks in the bathroom mirror.

Still, she's not sure what has her so uneasy this late in her pregnancy. Bellamy wraps his arms around her, pressing sweet kisses to her temple, cheek, and neck, whenever he returns from teaching or guard duty. She often finds herself melting into his touch, fingertips grasping at his T-shirts with more ferocity than normal. They eat together most nights, sometimes with their friends' chatter surrounding them, and sometimes in a private alcove where they talk quietly about where the survivors might someday settle above ground.

***

She's propped up on many pillows on her bed one evening, eyes drifting shut as she allows Bellamy's voice to lull her toward sleep. Aching back muscles have plagued her all day, caused in part by her prominent breasts which continue to grow despite her dismay. Her feet are nested in Bellamy's lap, and he's very engaged with the reading material featuring Helen of Troy. Until suddenly he's not.

She cracks a sleepy eye open to inspect him when he ceases speaking.

"Bell, what is it?"

He's staring pointedly down at the slopes of her chest. Her bra has long since been removed under her grey top. She jolts as she realizes there are two wet marks widening across her breasts, each over an inch in diameter.

She feels the heat of her blush immediately.

"Sorry," she drags a pillow over herself, sitting up properly. "It's colostrum. Mom said it comes before the breast milk. It's normal, but I guess I was so tired, I didn't even feel it."
"It's ok, Princess."

Bellamy's movements are graceful, swift, and completely unexpected. He carefully shifts her ankles to the blankets, flicks the pillow out of her hands and onto the floor as if it weighed nothing, and throwing his weight onto his forearms, surges forward to kiss her.

Clarke freezes underneath him for a moment before moving her dry lips along his own and stroking his back in simple, comforting movements. His fingertips skim the sides of her swollen breasts, and she groans from the pressure there. Then his palms migrate lower, scratching over her sides under her shirt while he nibbles her protruding collarbone, making her forget her embarrassment momentarily and giggle when she feels his teeth curve around the bone.

"So lactation turns you on, huh?" she says sarcastically when her shirt's rucked up below her breasts a minute later, and his thumbs rub over her expanded nipples, which now leak more white-clear fluid onto the cloth.

"You carrying my kid turns me on," he whispers into her ear.

The breath is knocked out of her lungs by the urgency of his tongue. Clarke pushes herself up on her elbows with a straining effort to meet the hardness of his knee between her thighs. She presses into it needy, trying to ignore the whimpering noises dancing at the back of her throat as Bellamy's hand meets the sensitive flesh of her breast and squeezes it mildly as if checking a fruit for ripeness.

"And your breasts. I really like your breasts."

He's still a little sweaty from training, and drops of moisture bead into his hairline. She licks their saltiness away, feeling down the toned planes of his chest. Bellamy wraps an arm around her lower back to secure her, so she can bite along his jawbone, scratchy with two days' worth of stubble growing there. A quick pinch to her nipple leaves her gasping, and she locks eyes with him, her senses flooded with his aroma, which contains hints of citrus.

Her hand moves in place over her shirt to cover his own, which rests under it, stilling his motions.

"Bellamy," she murmurs his name into the crease of his neck, panting as he presses his free hand into her lower back, forcing her hips forward to knock against his thigh.

"What can I do for you, baby?"

There's laughter and charm in his smug tone.

"Would you . . . ? Could you . . . ?"

She glances down at the stretched cloth outlining the ridges of his knuckles on her and feels her walls clench. *This is so embarrassing to even consider. What if he thinks it's a disgusting thing to ask?* He follows the path of her eyes and smiles a little.

"Take some of the pressure off?"

"Yeah," Clarke breathes out, relieved. "Please."

"Sure," his eyes gleam, and she's sure the face he makes comes straight out of his dropship tryst days. "Not a problem." His wink is brief but easy.

Bellamy pulls her shirt up over her head delicately, smoothing down the blonde locks caught up in static electricity and cups her cheek before lowering her so she's flat on her back. Her breasts jiggle
with the movement, and a trail of liquid coasts down her stomach toward the edge of her belly button. Bellamy's scratchy tongue catches the fluid before it disappears around the curve of her belly. Her breathing quickens as he licks back up, tongue flat and firm as it nudges along the underside of her right breast before latching onto her raised red nipple.

Though he does a good job staying elevated on his forearms - she rubs the muscles of his biceps appreciatively when she isn't fistig her hands into his black hair - his erection still rubs into her thigh like an insistent reminder he can't quite completely suppress.

"Oh, God! Bell!" she whimpers near his scalp when his lips roll the hyper sensitive flesh of her nipple around while his hand presses into her flesh, stimulating her and her glands simultaneously. She knows there's a rush of liquid seeping into her panties. The feel of him alone so close by has her hips rocking up involuntarily as small bits of the milk-like substance escape her under his careful ministrations. When Bellamy rolls onto his side to flick at her other nipple and suckle it into his mouth, the wave of physical heat swims up her pale stomach and makes her legs clench around the hand he slides into the dip between her pajama-clad thighs.

"Bellamy . . . Bell . . . it's too much," she pants.

His thumb is poised right over her clit applying mild pressure to it, and it's making her squirm.

"All right," he pulls his hand away and kisses the birthmark a couple inches below her collarbone instead. "Feel better?"

"Yeah. Thank you."

The sight of his pink tongue darting out to lick up a bit of her milk into his mouth makes her groan and fall back onto the pillows in her frustration.

"Anything else you need, Clarke? I just want you to feel good," he massages her thigh muscle instead as he folds himself onto his side to survey her. Just the tip of his erection rubs along the side of her leg when he moves.

"I'm good," she makes herself look straight at him one time, but he seems completely nonchalent. "But I didn't mean to get you all worked up."

Clarke watches him under half-closed eyelids, the thick swath of her eyelashes providing a mini screen to hide behind.

He laughs drily.

"I can go take care of it. Won't take long," he nods toward the door.

"No, you don't have to," Clarke catches his wrist when he tries to slide off the bed.

She slips her hand straight underneath his boxers to stroke him. He's painfully hard as she expected.

"Clarke."

"Shhh," she hushes him.

A small smile decorates her lips when he gives in and tumbles back into her pillow fort, throwing a forearm across his closed eyes and allowing her to tug his boxers down his muscular legs. She slides his precum over his length before speeding up her hand. Then, when he thrusts up into her curled
palm, she bends over him and seals her mouth over the head of his dick, licking around it.

His fingers massage at the muscles in her neck, clutching at her long hair tightly before relaxing his grip.

"Fuck, Clarke," he gasps out.

The sensation of her mouth wet, tight, and hot around him is forcing him to come undone. She feels the blunt edges of his nails cut across the tops of her shoulders and teases the heated skin of his inner thigh. She releases him with a pop and resumes the steady glide of her hand.

Clarke leans in close to him several minutes later, enveloping Bellamy in her vanilla scent tinged lightly with sweat.

"Let go, Bellamy. Let go for me," she says it so softly against his ear, the words flutter with barely a sound.

***

"Clarke! Are you ok?" Miller rushes over to where the blonde is crouched on the floor of the lounge, back arched up in a curving arc as if trying to pick herself up from a fall.

"I'm fine, thanks," she holds out a palm and shakes her head insistently. "Just stretching."

"Isn't that . . . uh . . . uncomfortable?"

"It's not ideal, but it's supposed to help shift the baby's head toward the cervix to increase dilation," Clarke explains.

"Oh, ok," Miller makes a face and turns a bit green.

Clarke sits back against the wall with effort and smiles up at him.

"I'm ok. Sorry to freak you out. Too much information," she nods knowingly.

Miller's in the process of responding when Clarke's entire face fills with fear. He lurches forward once more, crouching down this time as she clutches at her stomach.

"Clarke? What is it?" he places a bracing hand on her shoulder. "Talk to me. Should I get Jackson? Your mom?"

She gestures down to the floor, and he spots the puddle pooling out across the dark tile.

"My water broke," Clarke gasps out. "The baby's coming."
chasm between canyons

"High dive into frozen waves
Where the past comes back to life.
Fight fear for the selfish pain--
It was worth it every time.
Hold still right before we crash
Cause we both know how this ends.
A clock ticks til it breaks your glass,
And I drown in you again.
Cause you are the piece of me
I wish I didn't need.
Chasing relentlessly,
Still fight, and I don't know why.
If our love is tragedy, why are you my remedy?
If our love's insanity, why are you my clarity?"

~Zedd, "Clarity"

There's a zinging whoosh in his ears before Bellamy hits the mat hard enough to hear something in his hip crackle.

"Ugh, Harper, was that really necessary?"

He struggles to his feet, rubbing his side ferociously in an attempt to deter the huge black-and-blue that's sure to develop there. When Clarke finds it later, he'll be a dead man for sure.

"You're the one that taught me about the element of surprise when we were guarding the dropship." Harper winks at him and throws her braid over her shoulder. "Maybe your reflexes just aren't what they used to be, old man."

Bellamy makes a grumbling noise.

"I'm 25 for God's sake. It's not like--"

He never gets to finish his sentence. Miller comes crashing into the training room, throwing his arm against the doorway to steady himself and sucking in deep lungfulls of air.

"Bellamy! You gotta come - now! Clarke's having the baby."

***
Bellamy hears her agonizing scream before he even sees her. Her hair's damp with sweat, and her face glistens. She's squeezing the hell out of Raven's hand. The mechanic appears to be grimacing through the pain but still continues to coach Clarke on breathing through her contractions.

Clarke's stretched out on a makeshift hospital bed in med bay. Jackson and Abby already wear masks and hair caps, looking fully prepared for surgery.

"How long did you all wait to come find me?" he rounds on them angrily, shaking his head.

His best friend is only a few steps behind him and meets his fierce stare squarely.

"I came as soon as we got Clarke comfortable," Miller replies.

"There's no time for this!" Raven snaps unexpectedly. "It's happening too fast!"

This clears Bellamy's head enough for him to seek out Clarke's eyes. Her breathing is coming quickly, and she reaches out a shaky hand to him. She looks scared.

"Bellamy . . ."

He hopes it's his imagination that she sounds weaker than usual.

"I'm here, Princess. I'm right here. Everything's gonna be fine."

He rushes over to her side, flopping down in the chair next to her and bringing her hand up to his lips. Her skin feels clammy to his touch. Abby, though momentarily taken aback by the sudden commotion in her operating room, surges back into action a second later, adopting her stern, medical tone.

"All right, Nathan, Raven, I appreciate everything you've done today, but I need you out of here please. *Now.* I'll send Jackson out as soon as there's word."

They nod to her, Raven kissing the top of Clarke's head before she leaves and Miller clapping Bellamy on the shoulder.

"You hear that, Clarke? It's just you and me."

He tries to smile reassuringly at her, but he senses the water building up behind his eyes.

"Bell," she huffs, looking like a labor pain is about to engulf her at any moment. But her gaze is steely when its piercing blueness finds him, cuts deep inside his being. "If anything happens to me--"

Jackson and Abby share a look his brain refuses to take the time to try to unscramble.

"Nothing is going to happen to you," he interrupts forcefully, willing his voice not to break. "I love you, and I'll be here the whole time."

He presses a mild kiss to her panting mouth and strokes her wrist as she attempts to crush every bone in his hand when a new contraction overtakes her.

The words spoken around him like "active labor" and "epidural" blur together into a sort of frenzied backdrop as he feeds Clarke ice chips and wipes her face and neck with a cool cloth. It's only when Abby glances up encouragingly from between Clarke's bent knees and says, "It's time to push" that he returns fully to the reality of the moment.

Clarke's nails rip the flesh of his forearm at one point, and he's pretty sure she tells him that she will
never, under absolutely no circumstances, do this again. He tells her she'll never have to, but still she
shakes her head violently from side to side, some color a blend of eggplant and tomato leeching
across her face from the strain. Crimson blood stains the light cloths that reappear from where
Jackson drops them out of sight.

Then Abby is smiling at him and urging him to feel the top of his child's head crowning. There's an
abundance of dark hair, both scratchy and soft beneath his fingertips and Clarke's eyes focused
intently on him, her expression inscrutable. He really believes this all must be happening to
somebody else.

"Come on, Clarke! One final push, baby! You can do this!" Abby calls out with more lightness in
her voice at last.

"Aaahhhh!" Clarke roars like a banshee one last time, and their child slides into the world with a
powerful set of lungs.

Abby catches the squirming bundle, all tight fisted and pink-red and perfect. Bellamy's eyes widen,
and his stomach starts doing cartwheels all on its own accord.

"It's a boy, you two," tears are slipping down Abby's face. "A beautiful, healthy boy."

"Is he ok?" Clarke gasps while Bellamy rubs her arm. "Ten fingers? Ten toes? I want to hold him,
mom. Let me hold him!"

"You will in a minute, sweetheart," Abby replies.

A thick tension still remains in the room that Bellamy doesn't understand. Abby hands off their son to
one of her brunette trainees, who starts cleaning him off with a towel and clearing out his nose and
mouth of fluid.

Clarke sinks back into her pillows heavily, utterly spent. But Jackson leaps forward, siphoning more
rich blood away with his rags.

"Clarke, I need you to relax. Can you do that for me?" he says calmly enough, but Bellamy can see
the frenetic pulse in his eyes.

"What is it? What's wrong?" she sounds weary and exhausted.

When she tries to sit up, Bellamy gently holds her back down, kissing her cheek and whispering
soothing words into her ear while he keeps one eye turned toward the doctors. He's panicking. The
wave of nausea is churning in his gut, steadily rising up his esophagus, and he's going to expel it at
any moment. Clarke's pale - it's his imagination, or she's losing her color.

"You did so good, Clarke," he traces the back of his hand very lightly over her cheekbone. "My
brave Princess."

She gives him a weak smile, but one of her arms floats upward toward their baby nonetheless. He
cuts the umbilical cord when Jackson prompts him, but his questioning eyes barely leave Abby's
face.

Clarke is peaceful for the minute or two Jackson allows their son to rest on the pale skin of her
shoulder. She watches him in utter amazement. His arms and legs are pudgy and wrinkled, but his
hair's black and a little curly. And his nose is the cutest button shape right in the center of his golden-
pink, chubby cheeks. An inward spasm of pleasure hits her stomach when she realizes her son has
Bellamy's complexion.
"He's so perfect," she turns her wide eyes up at him, blinking back tears. "Bellamy, look what we did. Look what we made."

A few tears do cascade down his face at her words, and she wraps an arm around his waist, tugging at his shirt until he bends and kisses her properly. Then she turns her full attention back to their tiny boy cradled in the crook of her elbow.

"Hi, little guy. Welcome to Earth. I'm so happy you got to be born here. Your momma loves you. And your daddy loves you."

She thinks the top of his head smells something like crushed petals and powder. It's intoxicating. So Jackson pulling him away from her is both unexpected and cruel.

"Wait!" she pleads, and Bellamy steps forward as if to snatch the child back. "I need to nurse him!"

"Clarke, there was tearing. You're bleeding. We have to get that under control first," Abby interrupts, louder than her daughter. A true professional, Abby's voice barely shakes, Bellamy notes.

Jackson is saying something about them having no oxytocin to inject Clarke with and her uterus needing to get firm. Suddenly Bellamy's pacing the room as she delivers her placenta and cries for her child. His heart's beating wildly, and all he can do is keep her arms pinned to her sides when he returns to the bed, so she can't take a swing at Jackson or her mother.

Her protests become more feeble as she continues to bleed, and Abby flies around the small room, rummaging for supplies before injecting her with something he can't see from his position cradling her head against his chest. Abby tells him she's massaging her uterus, that it has to get firm to stop the blood flow, that the IV they hook up will help. The beeping machine which materializes next to Clarke hums and whirs too slowly, and he knows without looking that her blood pressure is dropping.

Abby's hand's shaking too much, and Jackson has to do the stitches. Bellamy holds Clarke's hand tightly until the trainee returns with his son swaddled in a pale green blanket and places him right at the spot where her heart beats a little too weakly.

"Look, Clarke, open your eyes, baby, please. It's our son. It's our son!" he says fiercely. "You have to name him, Princess. Anything you want. Come on, open your eyes!"

Her eyelashes flutter and sway until he can glimpse flashes of that robin's egg blue that is his only true home.

"Jacob," her lips on the tender skin of the baby's head are incredibly soft. "For my dad. And Augustus for you. One day he'll have a sister, too," she murmurs before closing her eyes and letting the darkness take hold.
"When I was younger, I saw my daddy cry
   And curse at the wind.
He broke his own heart, and I watched
   As he tried to reassemble it.
And my momma swore
That she would never let herself forget.
And that was the day that I promised
I'd never sing of love if it does not exist.
But darling,
You are the only exception."

~ Paramore, "The Only Exception"

Octavia is stalking up and down the thin carpet outside the medbay door like a caged beast. He can see her through the small window as he approaches, cradling his infant son in the crook of his elbow.

"Hi, Aunt Octavia."

The deep timbre of his voice - made rougher by sheer exhaustion - stops her in her tracks.

"Bellamy!"

She swirls around and whisper-shouts the word, eyes glowing when she takes in the blanketed heap in his arms, just a tuft of dark air and the slope of a nose visible.

"Meet your nephew, Jacob Augustus Blake."

She rushes over, delicately pulling back the green fabric to examine the baby.

"He's perfect, Bell! So beautiful."

Her voice is hushed, reverent. Tiny Jacob gives a yawn, and his eyes flash open for a brief moment. Dark blue, like the sea. Octavia's gaze meets her brother's with sheer surprise. Then she grins.

"There's a little bit of Clarke in him, but I hate to break it to you, big brother. He looks like a Blake."

Bellamy's face falls, and she frowns.

"What is it? Abby wouldn't let me in - I've been waiting out here for hours. Everyone else . . . well," she looks hesitant, biting her lip, "Jackson told everyone else to stay away for a bit. They're raising hell about it back in the dorm, but--"

"O."
It's the splash of liquid sliding down her cheek that snaps her back to the present moment. It's not her tear, it's his. His shoulders start to shake, and without thinking, she scoops the child straight out of his arms and begins gently rocking him in her own. Bellamy's hands jump up to cover his face, and he slumps into the wall.

"Bellamy, please." Octavia's voice wavers now, too. "Don't tell me - Clarke - please. Don't. She's not--"

"No," he says it more harshly than he meant to. "She's alive."

Octavia lets out a shuddering breath.

"Thank God."

She rubs the very edge of her fingertip gently across Jacob's plump, rosy cheek, and he makes a little noise, eyes closed once more. She sits beside Bellamy in the chair he's collapsed into, clasping the baby securely with her right arm and rubbing his shoulder with her left hand.

"What happened?"

A shudder passes through her brother.

"She bled. A lot. So much blood like . . . like mom," he gasps out the last word before a sob shakes his strong frame. Octavia stares in alarm. "They sewed her up, but something they gave her, I don't know, the oxytocin I think, wasn't good. Abby yelled at me to get out when she started to seize up. I just took Jacob and ran . . . I . . ."

"Shhhh," Octavia rubs his arm with much more force. "She's a fighter, Bell! She's going to pull through this. Abby and Jackson will make sure of it! Nothing's going to happen to her."

Her voice is bullet-proof steel.

Bellamy sighs, and his head hits the back wall.

"You don't know that, O." Her stomach floods with nausea as she hums tunelessly to the baby. "You don't know that."

***

Abby comes to his apartment in the night, looking as though a truck hit her. Her hair is thick and frizzy, and there are deep lines around her mouth and eyes. Her body slumps, curls inward like a drooping flower against his doorway, and the bolt of fear slices through his stomach anew.

"Abby? How is she? Can I go now?" He says it in a rush, tapping the side of his fist nervously into his thigh. He moves aside and lets her enter the space, closing the door behind her.

She shakes her head wearily.

"Not yet. She's sleeping. She had a bad reaction to the oxytocin, Bellamy. It's really rare, but it can happen. She seized and then went weak on one side of her body. I don't know if she can speak properly yet. Her heartbeat's getting stronger, but Jackson's monitoring her because it's not where it should be yet. There was a rash - her skin was - starting to blister, and I wanted to make sure she could breathe, so Jackson got the ventilator, and--"

Her amber honey eyes flood with moisture in the hazy circadian light.
The hallway starts to rise up in a wave on the edges of his vision.

"How?" he stutters, shaking his head. "No, no. She's going to be fine. You have to make her fine!" his tone hardens, strengthening in his anger.

He hears her swallow.

"I didn't know she would react to it like that! I'm - I'm doing everything I can!" she throws it out to him like a plea, a prayer. She seeks out his eyes, and he finds himself turning away. "She seized and fell out and woke up screaming, screaming in pain. I had to make it stop!"

He doesn't expect her to crumple against him but finds himself squeezing her thin shoulder tightly when she does, willing himself not to lose it right along with her. He lets her seep tears all down his front, desperately shoving horrific thoughts of Clarke, incredibly still and ice cold, hands clasped together against her stomach while she lays motionless, out of his mind as quickly as they spring up.

His feet are itching to fly down the halls of the dark bunker and rocket to her bedside. He makes a move toward the door, only for Abby to throw out her forearm, so it lands directly across his stomach.

"You can't go yet! We can't risk germs or infection while she heals. She's not lucid right now anyway!" Abby says forcefully.

"I don't care!" Bellamy snaps at last, livid. "I'm going!"

Abby darts in front of him, throwing her hands out across the door like a human shield.

"You're not!" she says back with a ringing finality. "When she wakes up and sees you, she'll want to see Jacob! And she can't right now. She can't even sit up and hold him properly. She can't nurse him - she's flooded with drugs. I'm not putting her through that kind of torture, Bellamy, do you understand me? She needs to be in a clean bubble for a few days."

Bellamy's eyes are wild, crazed, and he shuffles his hand through his hair roughly until it stands up in all directions.

"How long?" he says finally. "How long before I can see her?" His face is a dark cloud of anger, of fear. His broad arms cross over his chest, but he knows sheer size cannot intimidate Abby Griffin.

"We're doing everything we can, Bellamy. A few days I think. You have to give it a few days. I'm so sorry - I know," she cuts off at the clench of his jaw. "I know what I'm asking, but we can't risk any infection spreading to her, or to Jacob. It's cruel, I'm not saying it's not. But she needs to have the best chance."

Bellamy's stomach completely drops out, and there's a strange buzzing in his ears. He hears his heart, feels its insistent thud against his ribs. Knows it's going too fast as he pulls at the neck of his shirt, desperate for more air.

Abby's cool hand on his forearm is surprisingly welcome.

"You're pale, Bellamy. Go sit down please. Take a few deep breaths. I can't have you going into shock. Everything's going to be ok. Where's the baby?"

Her eyes suddenly dart around the dim space. He hasn't made a sound since she entered the room.

The springs of their bed groan in protest when Bellamy drops onto the mattress and points toward the
crib. Abby rushes over to peer down at her grandson. She stares down in wonder for several long seconds before turning back to him with a small smile creeping across her haggard face.

"He's lovely, Bellamy. He couldn't be better."

He vaguely sees her flicking on a lamp and examining the child more closely, picking him up and rocking him in her arms as he sleeps on. So much quieter than Octavia was, he finds himself thinking blearily.

"I have formula and bottles for you to feed him with until Clarke's better. And fresh diapers. Cloth ones, so we can reuse them."

Abby's expression softens further as she settles into the rocking chair that's Clarke's - it's supposed to be for Clarke - and thumps her foot lightly on the ground to sway the chair, arms supporting Jacob fully.

"I, umm, I guess you're already familiar with both of those things from Octavia?" she raises an eyebrow at him.

"Yeah," he says gruffly after a while. "I know what to do."

***

He's holding Jacob near his chest, a warm but writhing, bundle in the bright blue onesie with a moon stitched on the front. The child won't stop crying no matter what he does. He's squalling, chubby hands in fists and pink gums exposed as he opens his mouth up widely.

"Shhhh, Jacob, shhhh, buddy," he bounces his son lightly. "You've got to calm down. You're going to wake everyone up."

On a whim, he turns on the mobile Emori made, lets it spin and brings Jacob closer to where it hangs over the crib. The baby's eyes open and appear to focus on the rocket whizzing by. Bellamy's throat tightens. He can see the flash of a blonde braid coming down the ladder like it was yesterday, can hear her strong voice crying out for him to stop because the air could be toxic.

It's been three days since Jacob's birth. From Abby's latest report, Clarke is still kept under sedatives half the time to eliminate the searing pain of the rash that overtook her body. She's regaining motor functions now that she's off the ventilator. But she only utters a few words at once, and often, they don't make a lot of sense.

He feels gutted out and hollow.

"We're going to be all right. We're gonna be just fine," he speaks loudly over Jacob's wails. "Your mom's coming home soon, little guy. She's gonna be so happy to see you."

He risks a fist in the nose to bend down and kiss Jacob's head and continues to bounce from foot to foot around the room. A sparkle of silver catches his eye, and he looks up, seeing the constellations Bryan and Emori painted on the ceiling as if for the first time.

His mouth presses into a thin line.

"All right, little guy, it's just you and me for now, so I'm gonna tell you a story about mom, ok?"
Jacob's small foot jerks out, and Bellamy takes that for a good sign, clearing his throat.

"Ok, so once upon a time, there was a giant, floating castle that circled the Earth in a sky full of stars. Inside, there was a beautiful Princess training to be a doctor . . . "

***

It's Jasper who gives him the extra push - literally - to start the walk to medbay the next day. He's petrified by what he'll find there now that his raw, gripping need to be by Clarke's side has had time to temper into a boiling brew of anxiety, fear, and longing.

"Go get your girl, Blake," Jasper nods at him once, jaw set and eyes clear.

Octavia wraps an arm loosely around Jasper's waist and smiles encouragingly.

"It's going to be good, Bell. We'll watch Jacob for as long as you need."

Bellamy takes a deep breath and nods back before setting his eyes ahead. The hallway has never seemed longer.

Jackson's eyes - mildly panicky at the sight of him - are the first warning sign when he steps into medbay.

"How is she?" he knows his voice is too rough, too aggressive. "I want to see her."

"You can see her today," Jackson claps a hand on his shoulder and gives him a thin smile. There's a flash of underlying unease there, but he doesn't know why.

The reason comes a few moments later as he arrives at the open door to her room, catches the sight of her flowing yellow hair. Her wide, blue eyes meet his, and he sees they're slightly unfocused before she starts yelling loudly enough for the brunette in training to come running.

"No! Don't let him! No! Please! I can't -- not with him!"

She's shaking her head too violently and slamming her hands into the tangled bedsheets around her before the other woman restrains her and begins muttering soothing sounds to Clarke, whose forehead is streaked with sweat from the outburst.

He tries to step into the room toward her, raises his arm in gentle supplication, but it brings a fresh frenzy to her shuttering body.

"Princess..."

His heart clenches tightly at the fear in her eyes. He doesn't realize he's clutching the doorframe in horrified silence until Jackson pushes past him and plunges the sedative needle straight into the blue-green vein on the inside of Clarke's elbow.

She whimpers before falling limp into her pillows.

"I'm sorry, Bellamy," he says quietly when she's settled back into oblivion. "We told her what happened when she was lucid two days ago, but she's been like this every time you're mentioned. She can't say enough to explain - but she just . . . looks so afraid when we talk about you."

Jackson is staring somewhere in the vicinity of his right ear. He realizes his own breath is coming in ragged gasps. He shakily regains his balance and sits down at the side of Clarke's bed, taking her cool, too-pale hand between his tan ones and bringing it up to his cheek.
"Clarke, I'm here. I'm here, and I love you. Jacob loves you. We want you to get better. Please, I need you to get better. I can't . . . I told you I can't do this without you. You said I wouldn't have to. Come on, Princess. Fight back."

The same thing happens the next day he visits her. And the next. Each time, he feels a shard of his heart break off and shatter. He can't shake the frenzied look in her eyes, the way she clutches her knees beneath her chin and folds herself into a ball at the mere sight of him, even pointing her slender finger toward the door once though her speech is incoherent after that first day. He can't stomach Jackson shooting her up with sedatives just so he can sit by her side and stroke her cheek or kiss her forehead. There's no way he can bring Jacob here, not like this. After the fourth day, he stops showing up all together. He spends the time at the bar instead, where Miller's pours are over-generous.

***

She finds him at a barstool two weeks after Jacob's birth. Her touch on his forearm is light, but it lingers. He whirls around - heart catapulting up in his chest for the briefest of moments - but it sinks like a stone when he takes in the brown eyes, the too-tall stature.

"What are you doing here, Echo?"

"I came to check on you. To see if you were ok."

He grunts, tipping his scotch up to his lips.

"I'm great."

"You're not."

"Well it's not your help I need," he snaps.

"Always so fierce."

He turns only halfway toward her, swiveling on the stool. Her eyes are smoky, and she's wearing black pants and a burgundy halter top that suits her complexion.

"We have a child together, Echo. What do you think that means?"

She tilts her head to the side, surveying him.

"It can mean whatever you want it to mean. You're not married." She tosses her hair over her shoulder casually, "You deserve someone who wants you, Bellamy."

Something sour floods his throat and dips down into his chest. So she knows. They all know why he can't visit Clarke.

"Clarke wants me," the words slur a little as he refocuses on her. "We're getting married. Soon as we're back on the ground."

"I see."

But the way she watches him makes it very clear she doesn't see at all. Or, maybe, how she doesn't believe.

He continues to stare at her coldly.
"That means I don't want you. I love Clarke."

He throws the rest of the drink down his throat, slamming it on the counter where the ice rattles and picking up the fresh one Miller's already left for him.

"Mmmm," Echo purrs out the noise, hoisting herself up onto the barstool beside him and taps his thigh, feather light before drawing her fingers back.

"You're strong, Bellamy. Noble. That's good."

He feels the alcohol singing through his blood, making everything seem fuzzier and less real.

"But it hurts to love the person who pushed you away when you lost a child. It hurts that she pushes you away now after the birth of your son."

Her words can't be real.

"Clarke's sick. She's gonna get better," he hates the inflection of doubt infusing his voice.

Echo sighs. Neither of them pays attention to the entrance to the bar.

"I hate to see you keep doing this to yourself when it's not your fault."

"You don't know a damn thing about what's my fault."

She sees the look of desolate resignation coloring his features, the tough set of his jaw.

"I know you're in too deep. Maybe you always were. The bonds forged when you fell from the sky are strong, no doubt. But if you ever want . . . " she coasts her fingertips up the bare skin of his forearm. "Something new..."

He twitches but doesn't bat her away. Her eyes seem darker when he looks into them.

"Something new . . . ?" Bellamy blinks a few times, pulling himself up straighter.

"You're a smart man," she smiles at him.

"Go ahead, Bellamy. Have her spell it out for you. God knows I'd like to hear her offer, so at least I'll know I'm not crazy," comes the sudden, sharp voice of Clarke Griffin right behind him.
"I've been tryin' to do it right
I've been livin' a lonely life.
I've been sleeping here instead
I've been sleeping in my bed,
Sleeping in my bed.
So show me family --
All the blood that I would bleed.
I don't know where I belong
I don't know where I went wrong,
But I can write a song.
I belong with you, you belong with me, you're my sweetheart."

~The Lumineers, "Ho Hey"

"Clarke."

The word is a cracked seed that threatens to sprout a promise of together he doesn't know if he has the strength to watch take root. Still, as always, the more insistent, gut part of him feels magnetized to her presence.

Bellamy turns fast enough at the sound of the voice that something in his neck pops, forcing him to cradle it in his hand. It's her. Really. He's awestruck by the light hitting her hair in gentle glimmers - she looks unearthly. Yet her skin glows more healthily than the last time he saw her, and her eyes are luminescent as they bore into his own. There's the familiar crease between her eyebrows. It makes his throat shutter closed in a strange way. Her lips purse as she stands, hands on her hips, demanding a reaction from him.

He wants to pull her close to him and feel her body heat, make sure she's real, that she has a pulse. And he half begins to before the crash of her fist into his chest slams him back against the bar. An incessant pounding is taking over the space above his left eye.

"Don't pull that shit with me," Clarke barks. "I heard what you were talking about!"

Echo barely blanches. If anything, she seems a bit bored by the whole thing, inspecting her cuticles. But she does jump back when Clarke drives the barstool noisily across the floor in her direction to make room for herself and snaps, "Move. You're in the way."

"Clarke, I didn't--" he begins.

Echo opens her mouth as if to address Bellamy, but Clarke cuts her off, elbowing into the narrow space between them and facing him.
"I almost die giving birth, and this is how you behave? Are you serious!" she shrieks, slamming her fist into the bulk of his bicep this time.

"I just came here for a drink, Clarke. I was alone. I didn't want her here."

Clarke scoffs.

"You were really trying hard to get her to leave."

"He's right," Echo cuts in unexpectedly. "I found him. I started talking to him."

Clarke's blazing glare turns straight on Echo, whose face does fall a little in response.

"Why the fuck can't you stay away from him?" It comes out as a shout. Her hands shake. "What part of finding someone who's unattached is so hard for you to grasp!?"

"He didn't seem to be attached to me," Echo bites back, hand slipping to the smooth handle of the short dagger sheathed at her waist.

"Don't sink to her level, baby," he throws out the gruff warning against her ear, momentarily trapping her with a hand banded around her waist. "I'm only yours, remember? You're my Princess."

But when she breaks away and turns to face him, the heightened red splotches of color on her cheeks send Bellamy into high alert mode, sobering him up instantly.

"Come on, Clarke," he says it more urgently. "You have to calm down."

He reaches out and rests one hand on her hip, rubbing it lightly. Relief floods into his muscles when she doesn't immediately fight his touch.

But, then.

"Don't tell me to calm down when you're the one being an asshole!" she grits back, swinging out an arm and narrowly missing his chin.

Instead of stepping away from him, Echo watches her step closer, angling her face up to his in a strange sort of challenge. Nobody says anything, nobody even breathes audibly, for the next few moments as the pair peer long and hard into each other's eyes.

Echo clears her throat. The near-palpable electricity sparking off them too intense for her.

"I'll guess I'll just leave you to it," she whispers, slinking back from the bar, shaking her head.

"Do you remember anything? About what happened after Jacob was born I mean?" Bellamy asks her in the softest tone once they're alone.

Clarke's azure eyes sparkle and flash at the sound of his name.
"Where's my baby, Bellamy? He's not in the apartment, so where is he while you sit back and get drunk?" she spits.

Bellamy squints his eyes shut, brushes a hand over his face, exhausted.

"He's with your mom and Kane, and I'm not drunk."

"Could've fooled me."

Somehow though, despite the ugliness of her words, he realizes she's carefully pressing the length of her body against his. The alcohol gets the better of his tongue before he can think it through.

"What, you decided you want me again now that you saw Echo still does?"

It's mean, and he knows it. Nevertheless, he can't erase the picture of her shrinking back from him in medbay as if he had leprosy.

Clarke blinks at him in utter confusion.

"What are you talking about?" she demands roughly, wrapping her hands around his shoulders and squeezing. "I just had a baby with you, you idiot! Of course I want you! You're the one who can't keep it in his pants."

He turns away and rolls his eyes despite the seriousness of the situation.

She frowns at his silence and is about to speak, but he suddenly erupts.

"I've never done a goddamn thing with Echo for the last time! She always comes and finds me - you saw how she was at that game!"

Artlessly concealed rage swarms over Clarke's delicate features.

"Yeah, and you did a hell of a lot to stop her then!" she sneers.

"Enough! I'm not doing this with you anymore!"

"Oh, you get to decide it's the last time we talk about it, huh? Just like that?"

Clarke stares up at him, eyes icy. She's breathing heavily and swats her hair behind her shoulder impatiently.

"Yeah," he says slowly, "I think I do. I'm not saying I've had the best judgment with Echo. I should've told her to fuck off a long time ago, and I'm sorry."

She tries to speak, but he cuts her off with a finger over her lips.

"Hear me out. My fiancé has a baby then has an allergic reaction to the oxytocin she needed to stop from bleeding out, and I go out of my mind with worry. I'm trying to take care of our son, but I can't be with her because it's too risky to expose her to infection. I'm helpless for four, agonizing goddamn days until I can finally visit her, but she just screams at me to leave and almost hurts herself in an effort to stay away from me for no apparent reason. Do you know how that feels, Clarke? Do you have any idea how fucking terrified I've been?"

She's staring at him in the shock you'd expect from someone struck by lightning.

"I did that?" she urges quietly, fingers biting into his waist.
His hand floats to the porcelain curve of her jaw without much thought on his end, and she leans right into his touch.

"Jackson didn't tell you? Your mother . . . didn't . . . mention?" his words die away as the blue of her eyes swallows him whole.

She shakes her head slowly, closer to tears.

"They didn't want to upset a new mom." It clicks in his head all in a rush.

"The secrecy of the Ark lives on," Clarke says bitterly.

"But they explained what happened to you, right?"

Her next words steal the air out of his lungs.

"Yeah, but I'm only a new mom because of you, Bell."

He strokes the back of his fingers against the firm line of her jaw.

"I didn't want you to visit me? That's true?" Her voice is more fragile now.

"Let's just say you were more horrified by the sight of me than usual, Princess."

"Sooo..." he tries after many moments pass with her heart pounding against his as their only sound.

"I take it you don't mind me so much now?"

She's smiling the tiniest bit when she draws back and looks at him, eyes star bright.

"A bad run-in with oxytocin can give you minor memory loss or kind of . . . scramble your memories. And the drugs they gave me must've made me delirious. But I remember mom telling me I couldn't get an infection, that seeing other people could get me sick. I didn't want to die. I didn't want to lose my life with you or with Jacob. I remember that," she says firmly, scratching the back of his neck affectionately and dipping her fingers into his curls.

He presses the pad of his thumb to the hollow below her right eye to draw away a tear.

"You know I can’t live in a world where you don’t exist, Clarke. I wasn't going to let anything happen to you. even if it meant staying away, so you wouldn't get so worked up and get put on sedatives—" he begins but halts when she arches up on her tiptoes and kisses him.

There's a trace of lingering sadness in her face when she pulls away.

"You could if you had to, Bellamy. Survive without me I mean. We’re parents now. We have to think of Jacob, too. About what's best for him. He needs you."

The shake of his head is almost imperceptible.

“Let’s hope it never comes to that.”

"Mmm," she hums in agreement. Anything more tonight is simply too much. Reaching out, she squeezes his rough hand in her smoother one, swishes her fingers across his inner wrist to feel his
pulse, strong and sure.

He swallows hard, kissing the top of her head before wrapping an arm around waist snugly. His musk fills her senses and grounds her to the moment.

She seems to understand. She always does.

"Come on, let's go see our son."
The sound of bullets slamming into targets is loud and jarring, no matter how many times you've experienced it before. But not quite loud enough to weaken Raven's hearing.

"I'm sorry? You just said I was right?" she purses her lips at Bellamy. "About what?"

There's a smirk dancing around Bellamy's mouth as he shakes his head ruefully. He reloads his weapon, eyeing the silhouette outline far ahead of him riddled with holes. He shrugs and takes aim again, but Raven's stare burns the side of his neck. Finally, he sighs and lets his gun slip.

"About Echo. About everything. I shouldn't have let her get into my head like that."

"Mmm," the noise comes from somewhere deep in Raven's throat. "Cheaters suck."

"I didn't cheat," Bellamy says emphatically from a little bit closer now.

"You're damn right you didn't," Raven half-snarls back. "I wasn't going to let you become one."

The memory of that day he attacked Murphy hangs in the air, thick and unspoken between them.

His voice takes her by surprise. It's low and gruff with the hint of accusation peppered in for good measure.

"I shouldn't have let you call her out at that party though, either. About Finn I mean. I know how you felt about him, but--. Clarke never wanted to hurt you. She didn't know."

Raven shrugs again.

"Water under the bridge, Blake. She and I talked about it. We're good."
Bellamy doesn't reply, just cocks his gun toward the far wall and squeezes the trigger. He misses the mark by many inches. It's unlike him. It's not, however, unlike Raven to fail to own up to certain things - at least where he's concerned.

"You know," Raven begins quietly after a long pause. She leans her body weight against the barrier separating their stalls from each other. "You can love more than one person in your life. At least, I think you can. It's ok if she loved . . . other people. It doesn't mean she loves you less. But really - what the hell do I know about it?"

Her mind flashes to the boy with the floppy hair and easy smile, to the engineer with the quick wit and faster hands, to the muscular arms of the Ice King and sharp profile of-

Bellamy's jaw clenches painfully, and she's sure she's gone too far.

The world of Bellamy and Clarke isn't a place she understands much about. To be honest, she's done a good job avoiding traveling to that uncharted space of meaningful eye contact and soft caresses because it unsettles her to an extent. Not so much because she doesn't respect it. She does. She realizes what they've fought through to get to this point. But more so the way so much of it will never fully make sense to her keenly rational mind. The very essence of their bond seems able to withstand what would normally be deal breakers for most people. She appreciates how they always seem to forgive each other. But it's more than that. It's like they understand each other so well the unthinkable thing is almost forgiven before it occurs. They're too connected to be broken, and that just fucks with her head.

"Bellamy, I didn't mean--"

"It's fine," he rasps.

He doesn't seem any older than eight as his eyebrows wiggle at the edges like caterpillars.

"What is it?" she regretted her speech almost as soon as it fled her mouth and reaches out to touch his bicep carefully.

"Nothing," Bellamy snaps.

"Come on, Blake. Tell me, would you?" the seasoned snark is returning to her voice now. "I don't have all day here. Actually, I--"

"I've only ever loved her," he's staring at his black boots as the words fall out.

Raven can't suppress the "What?" from escaping her before it's too late.

"It's true," Bellamy says simply, sliding down into a nearby bench.

His words hang there, heavy in the stillness surrounding them. Raven's mouth remains open for a few moments like a gaping fish before her bottom teeth find her top ones. It's not like she didn’t know it. Gina had been her friend too, but Gina was dead. Like Finn—killed inadvertently by the ones they’d loved most.

"All right," she says briskly instead, collecting herself. "This is too sappy, even for me. Buck up, Blake."

She shoves at him, but he barely sways with the impact.

"Clarke would walk through Hell for you. You're lucky. Don't forget it."
His dark eyes flash to hers, and she realizes in that instant how young his freckles make him look in the half-light. That they're actually all not very old at all. She winks at him finally, and some of the tension slips from his shoulders.

"Ready, Raven?" a man's voice calls from the doorway.

"For what?" she shouts back, shattering the moment.

Murphy strolls into the space, hand over his heart.

"I'm offended, Reyes. Insulted, Surprised, hurt, confused-"

"Jesus, I don't have time for you. What is it?"

"I'm here to take you to lunch, remember?" he says with a smile that causes something to unfurl oddly in her stomach. It's like a butterfly with a broken wing trying to take flight.

"Get the hell out of here, Raven," Bellamy jerks his head swiftly from beside her. "I'll be great at this," his chin moves in the direction of the target, "By the time you come back."

***

Octavia takes to pacing the length of the bunker back and forth, cradling Jacob in her arms and regaling him with stories about the Blakes' life on the Ark and subsequent fight for survival on the ground.

"And in that moment, your brave Aunt Octavia knew she'd finally won the Conclave, so she--"

"Are you hoping he becomes a great historian, so he'll make you the hero of our story, O?" Bellamy tosses the question out as he and Harper pass her near a digital screen adjacent to the lobby one afternoon.

They're already running late for guard training as it is. But still, he glances over at Harper in an attempt to share the joke. Her face strangely seems pained when she glances at Octavia and Jacob. The baby's wearing a blue-and-white striped onesie with a family of deer expertly stitched across the front.

"No, you ass," Octavia snaps back, but there's no real fire behind it. "It's been proven that talking to babies normally without all the goo-goo-ga-ga crap enhances their language skills later."

"Ah! Well when you put it that way . . . "

Bellamy lunges for his son's sides unexpectedly, hoisting the laughing child up in his arms and tossing him gently skyward.

"You're gonna be brilliant, kid," Bellamy kisses the top of Jacob's head as he gurgles in glee. "All these take-no-prisoners women in your life will make sure of it! Do you want to hold him, Harper?"

She runs a hesitant fingertip up the soft skin of his arm but shakes her head. Jacob's eyes track to meet hers. When she speaks, it's quiet and reverent.

"No, that's ok. He's beautiful though. You're lucky, Bellamy. Really lucky."

Octavia cocks her head to the side, but for once, says nothing.

***
It's red. Bright, shiny, vibrant red. With polished wheels and a retractable roof, four small, perfect seats and even miniature silver pedals. Raven presses a button on the handheld remote, and Clarke gasps.

"You even made headlights?!” she cries out.

"That was Monty's idea," Raven grins.

"Raven, Jacob can barely even grip things yet, can you big guy?"

She strolls around engineering, bouncing her infant son on her hip and making big eyes at him while he pats his chubby hand against her arm in time to her motion.

"So?" Raven arches her eyebrow. "What's your point?"

Clarke sighs and smiles tiredly.

"My point is you built him a car. I mean, it's amazing, but isn't it sort of . . . premature?"

Raven scoffs.

"Nah, if I have anything to do with it, he's going to be the best zero-G mechanic Earth's ever seen. So why not practice driving early?"

The girls exchange a long look - Clarke's face caught between an indulgent smile and a frown.

"Come here, buddy!" Raven sings out, reaching out to take the warm weight of the baby into her arms.

Clarke strokes a dark curl away from his forehead as she lets him go. He's nearly five months old, smiles often and easily, and can officially hold his head up when he's laying on his tummy and just about roll over. Aside from his piercing blue eyes, he looks like Bellamy in miniature. A small thrill of pleasure courses through her whenever she sees him.

"Seriously, Raven?"

The brunette rolls her eyes, shaking out her long ponytail and tucking a slipping bra strap underneath her tight, dark green jersey.

"He'll grow into it, Clarke. Calm down. And," she raises a suggestive eyebrow, fingers skimming over the extra seats as Jacob gurgles and traces her neck, "You and Blake may just have more of these little monsters."

“I don’t see that happening anytime soon,” she admits before she can think about it.

Raven turns to face her with a quizzical look.

"Really?"

Clarke rubs her arms nervously. They feel empty without Jacob.

“You know what happened. He’s scared it’ll happen again. I have the tea, but he won’t,” she blushes fiercely, “touch me.”

Raven’s mouth actually falls open.
“You haven’t…? In all this time?”

Clarke rolls her eyes.

“There are other things you can do, Raven.”

***

With Clarke back to her work in medbay and his constant teaching schedule, their evenings spent together as a family are particularly precious. Bellamy discovers some of the peace that’s alluded him in the years since his mother died when he walks into their soft glowing apartment after dinner to find Clarke bent over Jacob’s crib whispering to him or sitting in her rocking chair and lulling him to sleep. One evening when he opens the door gently from the hallway, he hears Clarke's steady voice pitched higher, reciting some sort of poem.

"Now shadows fold the sunset gold,

The vesper stars gleam fair,

No robin sings, no swallow wings

Its eager flight in air.

But dews the drooping roses fill

With silent, balmy rain,

And murmuring rill and zephyr thrill

The hush of grove and plain--

Good night!

Good night! Good night! The moon will light

The east before the dawn,

And stars arise to gem the skies

When these have westward gone.

Good night! And sweet be thy repose

Through all their shining way,

Till darkness goes, and bird and rose

With rapture greet the day--

Good night!"

He pads quietly over to her where she stands next to the sleepy form of their son. Jacob's tiny fist is cradled near his chin, and he's curled half on his side. He hopes his dreams are serene and carry him away to an unblemished Earth full of rivers and rolling hills.

"Pretty impressive recitation skills,” Bellamy husks into Clarke's ear, wrapping his arms around her waist and bending his lips lower to wind along her neck.
He feels the jolt of a shiver zing up her spine, but then her own smaller, paler hands fold over his, and she rests her head heavily back on his shoulder.

"I had a lot of time to read in the library waiting for him," she responds, half dry wit.

"Yeah, but wasn't it worth it?"

Bellamy's eyes trace over Jacob's plump cheeks and delicate eyelashes. Clarke turns to watch as he stretches out a forearm and braces it along the side of the crib, so he's sort of boxing her in.

"Of course it was."

She says it light and breezy, but the kiss she smacks into the underside of his jaw is firm and lasting. Clarke turns in his arms and steps them away from their baby's bed and toward their own.

"Monty made a fresh supply of tea. He gave me some today."

He has to almost strain to hear her words, and her eyes are hard to fully capture in the haze of the circadian lights. It's as though everything's been coated in the dusky swish of an indigo paintbrush. She begins to chew her lip when Bellamy doesn't respond.

"That's what we both want, right? Baby, you have to talk to me."

"I want to give you as much breathing room as you need. But you're doing an amazing job," she presses on after a few moments' silence.

He swoops down briefly to coast his lips across hers before pulling back. Her eyes contain glistening worlds when she reaches out to switch on the lamp on their bedside table.

"We're doing an amazing job," he says sternly. Clarke slings her arms around his neck. "I think we've come a long way since . . . the beginning. We're better now - not so rash. We listen. Or . . . you know . . . we try to."

He emits a weak laugh. But she can tell by the inflection of his voice, the faraway look in his eyes, that he doesn't just mean their baby who died. Clarke travels back to the dense woods around the dropship, to an earnest, adolescent face and midnight talk of demons. She sees Wells' rigid body lying beside the moss-covered tree trunk, dotted with decaying leaves.

"We lost a lot, Bell."

"But we gained a lot, too," he widens his eyes and arches his eyebrows in his no-nonsense face for her. It pulls her back, stops the tears that threaten to flow.

Bellamy sits down at the edge of their bed and peels off his jacket and boots. Her intense gaze lingers on the tops of his shoulders as he bends.

"I don't think I can go through that again, Clarke. But I know you want to feed the baby, and I don't want the tea to hurt him, so I--"

The smile on her face is soft, and she pushes her bright hair behind her ear when she brushes against his knee. She lays a hand on his shoulder and kisses the top of his curly head. His arms slide to her
hips automatically, glide over her backside until his fingers find her belt loops and pull her into his lap.

"The tea won't hurt Jacob," she reassures him, peppering her lips across his swath of freckles.

She feels her inner thigh muscles clench all the same as Bellamy's uncharacteristically slow fingers climb her leg.

"I miss you," he leans in to kiss the space between her generous breasts, hearing her breath hitch. "But I can't lose you, too, Clarke."

"You won't," her answer is swift and sure.

She reaches up a hand to cup his face as he tugs her firmly against him, so her calves fold together behind his back.

"You can't guarantee it, Princess. But I'll be damned if I put you at risk again."

Her face nestles into the side of his neck, and he feels wetness slip down the back of his T-shirt.

"Shhh," Bellamy whispers to her, dancing his fingertips up and down her spine and rocking her gently. She's like a doll curved around his body.

"This isn't what I want," she manages finally. "I don't want to live in fear anymore, Bellamy."

"What does that mean?" his tone drops several octaves, but she unconsciously sways her hips into him.

"I want you, no matter what," she says sternly, looking straight into the eyes she so often drowns in. "I want a family with you, brothers and sisters for Jacob. I want too much. I'm afraid . . . "

Her chin trembles and he places a finger under it to steady her.

"Of what?" he says softly.

She swallows hard.

"I'm afraid we'll lose it all somehow. And I'm afraid my whole life with you still won't be enough time."

It's against his better judgment when he allows her to climb onto him, pushing his shoulders back into their mattress and kissing him hungrily. It might be a mistake, but he can't seem to stop either.

---

Alas, the poem is not mine. It belongs to Edna Dean Proctor and can be found in her work "Poems."
accidents on purpose

"Out of the tree of life, I just picked me a plum.
You came along, and everything's started to hum.
Still, it's a real good bet, the best is yet to come.

The best is yet to come, and babe, won't it be fine?
You think you've seen the sun, but you ain't seen it shine."

~Frank Sinatra, "The Best is Yet to Come"

Jacob is propped up on his chubby hands and knees gurgling at the end of the bed, positively beaming at Clarke who's making exaggerated funny faces at him and playing peek-a-boo.

"Who's my big boy?" she coos. "Who's my handsome baby?"

Bellamy grunts and flings the back of his arm over his eyes, trying to roll over.

"I was up until 2 grading papers last night. Can't we get some more sleep?" he moans.

"Well, I wouldn't mind, but I think somebody's hungry," Clarke chirps back, still throwing big blue eyes at her son who's now smacking his fist into the blankets bunched beneath him.

"Ba! Ba. Ba!" Jacob cries happily, reaching out his tiny fingers toward Bellamy.

They've been working on "da-da" and "ma-ma" for the past few weeks, but Jacob seems determinedly stuck on calling Bellamy by his own special name.

"Somebody wants to say hi to daddy," Clarke grins.
"I'll say hi in a minute," Bellamy mumbles.

Rolling her eyes, Clarke reaches forward and lifts Jacob into her lap, unbuttoning her airy, blue sleep top and bringing him up to her breast to latch on.

"Ahhh, there we go," she sighs after a few moments, reaching over her hand that's not supporting the baby to stroke the back of Bellamy's neck.

"You want to try to get some more sleep?" she asks in a conciliatory voice.

"Already up now," he says sleepily, cracking an eye open and grinning at Jacob. "And Kane'll be after me if I'm late to guard duty again. Apparently being a new dad is no excuse when it comes to keeping the peace."

Clarke snorts. "He's finding his way back to law and order down here, isn't he?"

"In small ways, maybe," Bellamy gives a noncommittal jerk of his shaggy head.

"Hey little man. I heard you talking up a storm this morning," he says, stroking the fine silk of the baby's cheek with his thumb. "I think you get that from mama."

"Bell!" Clarke laughs, smacking his arm.

"Love you, Princess," he winks at her, throwing his feet over the side of the bed and rummaging through his dresser for fresh clothes and a shower towel.

"But I think you might need a hair cut soon."

"Debatable," Bellamy flashes her his teeth and wiggles his eyebrows as he moves toward the door.

"So we're all hanging out later for Monty's birthday, right?" Clarke asks.
She flips her hand through her long, blonde waves and winces momentarily as Jacob's gum grips into her flesh a little too energetically.

"You ok?"

"I'm fine. He's just hungry this morning, aren't you?" Clarke rearranges Jacob's position then falls back into the pillows with a breath of relief. "So the party? You up for going?"

"Yeah, I'm good with it as long as we've got someone to watch Jacob," Bellamy replies.

"Already taken care of," Clarke says. "Indra offered up her services, and I accepted yesterday."

"Indra?" Bellamy raises an eyebrow. "Really?"

"What?" Clarke tries to make her voice sound offended but fails and giggles instead. "You don't like the idea of a few swords and some war paint? Personally, I think he needs a bit of toughening up."

"Clarke..."

"Oh, calm down," she huffs. "It'll be fine. She did raise Gaia, you know."

Bellamy throws her a look.

"We need a night out. Please?" she trills out the last word for too long in a way she knows he won't be able to resist. She catches the slump in his shoulders and knows he's close to caving.

"Whatever the hell you want, baby," he says, shaking his head with a grin. "See you tonight."

Clarke glances over at the digital clock Bellamy left on their bookshelf and feels her spine tingle unpleasantly.
"Shit," she mumbles.

She's going to be late for her medical rounds at this rate, and she still has to drop off Jacob with Octavia. She strokes her son's sweet-smelling head reverently for a moment, allowing him to wrap his little fingers around her much larger one before unlatching him from her chest. She places him in his crib and turns on his space mobile before whirling around the room, trying to get ready in double time. She's finished sliding his adorable jungle shirt over his mop of dark curls - careful to avoid bending his ears - just in time to leave their quiet sanctuary. As she clicks the door shut behind them, her daily dose of tea rests in a gauzy bag on the counter, forgotten and untouched.

Clarke walks into the lounge later that evening to find it already brimming over with the people she likes best. She'd got caught up with Kane and Jaha running simulations of how much arable land they'd have in three years when the worst of Praimfaya passed, and she'd practically run down the hall to leave the meeting. Harper waves from where she's watching a fierce game of ping pong between Jasper and Jackson in the corner, saluting Clarke with a silver mug full of a mystery substance.

She winds herself past Niylah, who's engaging Ilian in a deep conversation about what sounds like grounder defense strategies, before making her way over to Raven, who's somehow dazzling in a simple, white V-neck cotton dress.

"Where's the birthday boy?" she asks, sliding along the wall next to her friend.

"Be glad you missed him for now," Raven says with a smirk taking a drink from her cup. "Last time I saw him, Miller was chewing his ear about how 'possessive Bryan is being lately'" she threw up air quotes for effect. "Apparently their relationship just isn't what it was on the Ark, and Señor Beanie doesn't know what to do about it."

"And Monty was being . . . sympathetic?" Clarke raises a skeptical eyebrow.

"Has Monty ever been sympathetic?" Raven shoots back while Roan emerges from the crowd at Raven's elbow. He morphs his chuckle into a loud cough, and Clarke clocks how Raven leans back easily against Roan's chest.

"Point taken," Clarke replies, shaking her head at the cup Roan extends to her. "I'm still feeding the baby," she explains, and a spark of understanding flashes in Roan's blue eyes.
"How's the little man doing?" Raven jumps in.

"He's good, really good, babbling like a pro - I think he's trying for one of his dad's inspirational speeches," Clarke jokes.

She catches a glimpse of Bellamy's dark jacket across the room where he grabs a paddle from Jasper and faces off with Monty across the ping pong table.

Raven opens her mouth to respond, but just then, Niylah taps Clarke on her shoulder. She's holding herself still and straight, an intricate braid coasting down her back.

"Clarke, a word?" she asks quietly.

Clarke presses her lips together but nods, chancing one last glance at Bellamy, who's swinging at the whizzing white ping pong ball ferociously and yelling out jubilantly when he knocks it away from Monty's reach.

"Sure."

Niylah leads her to the hallway just outside the party and turns on her heel, leveling Clarke with a serious stare.

"What's up?" Clarke asks hesitantly.

Niylah's eyes widen.

"You know what's up."

"No, I don't," Clarke returns slowly.

"I'm the one who brews the tea, Clarke. It's my recipe. I keep track of the inventory. And it's been
too stable lately. You're not taking your share, are you?"

Clarke lets out an exasperated noise.

"I'm sorry, but that's really none of your business, and I don't appreciate you tracking me."

She moves to turn away, but Niylah clamps down on her wrist.

"Clarke," she says insistently. "You're my friend, and it definitely is my business because your mother's going to hold me personally responsible. You have to drink the tea! You don't want what happened last time with Jacob to happen again, do you?"

Clarke stares at a brown stain caked in the corner near her boot.

"What I do with my body is a conversation I'm only having with Bellamy, all right? I appreciate the concern, but we're done here."

She widens her eyes and turns to return to the party, leaving a wordless Niylah in her wake. Drumming her nails against the makeshift bar, she waits for Jasper to serve her.

"You sure? With the baby and all?" he tilts his head to the side and watches her quizzically.

"Yeah, I'm good, promise," she smiles brightly, catching a dark, messy bun streaked with amber headed in the direction of the ping pong game. "It'll be out of my system before his next feeding."

"All right, then," Jasper responds, pouring her a cup of what appears to be some kind of berry punch.

It's strong and pungent and burns the back of her throat, causing her to sputter.

"Easy, easy," Jasper says. "You don't have to drink it all at once."
Clarke holds up her hand and guzzles it down, ignoring his warning.

By the time she makes it back to the small crowd gathered around the game tables, Echo is crouched over one end, a purely carnivorous look on her face as she hits the ball back to Bellamy with definite skill. They're well-matched, Clarke has to admit, and she notices that Bellamy's removed his jacket and tossed it over a nearby chair. She steps right under one of the rare lights near the table, letting it shine on her hair while she watches his biceps flex with each swing.

"You won't win," Bellamy taunts her easily, making a truly spectacular save right off the edge of the table.

Echo just laughs.

"You're talented, Blake!" she calls out. "But I'm not sure if you're man enough to beat me."

A ripple of amusement coasts through the crowd.

"I don't know," Clarke tries for a girlish tone when they pause for a break, but her voice is still loud and it carries. She leans forward, allowing Bellamy and anyone in his general vicinity a view down her laced bodice. He makes the next swing, but barely, eyes locking on hers briefly in surprise. "I think the guy who fathered the first kid born on the ground is man enough."

Another titter of appreciation passes through her friends - she catches Miller's shoulders shaking with suppressed laughter. Well, at least he looks happier, she thinks.

Bellamy's upper lip curls in what can only be defined as a predatory way, and he slams his paddle into the next and final shot, sending the ball bouncing onto Echo's side of the table and off into the distance, winning the game.

Clarke whoops in glee, bouncing on her heels and launching herself forward the few steps necessary to be in the circle of Bellamy's arms.

"You won!" she whisper-shouts, lacing her arms around his neck while he grins lazily at her. His eyes are black and a little glossy, but his warm touch at her waist sends a spasm of heat through her stomach.
"I did," he bends down to nuzzle her jaw for a second before dipping further down and pressing a
swift kiss to her neck, making her squirm in pleasure. "I had a lucky charm."

"Hmmm, that's sweet," she presses her palm straight into the flat of his stomach, tipping up to catch
his earlobe between her teeth. "I think you're lucky streak is just starting tonight, Bell."

She pulls back from him grinning, all teeth, and dipping her hand lightly into the gap between his
jeans and T-shirt, pulls him toward the other dancing couples.

An hour later, Bellamy's got her slammed up against the door of their apartment, kissing his way
down her neck. She fights with his jacket until it's pooled on the floor, leaving bite marks along his
jawline.

"Clarke," he rasps into her ear, hand settling right under her ass and squeezing hard. "Where's
Jacob?"

"With Indra all night," she returns before pressing her lips insistently into his.

"So we're alone?" he manages when he can speak again.

Clarke eyes his swollen mouth with satisfaction, tracing a finger along the freckles bridging his nose.

"All alone."

Bellamy grunts and rocks his hips into hers, causing a spasm of pleasure below her belly button. He's
already hard, and she's not even sure how that's possible.

"Off," he demands, tugging her simple halter top over her head - causing a rush of static electricity to
wash over her hair - and planting his mouth into the swells of her breasts spilling out over the cups of
her meager white bra.

"Mmmm," she huffs, head hitting the wall as she scraps her nails along his scalp, rooting his head in
"Bellamy!" she moans when he brings his thumbs up and begins stroking the tender flesh on either side of his head.

"You need something?" he taunts, dropping his fingers to the button her her jeans and biting into the groove where her neck and shoulder join before deftly sliding his hot hand straight into her underwear and dipping into her folds.

"Sssss," she hisses, bucking into his fingers.

"Greedy, Princess," he murmurs, watching her pupils burst open while her nails clutch into his bicep.

"Just for you," she insists, gripping at his shirt with her fist and sliding her tongue back into his mouth.

"I'm gonna fuck you hard tonight, Princess," he says it like a steel promise. "All night."
"But if I fall for you, I'll never recover.

If I fall for you, I'll never be the same.

I really wanna love somebody.

I really wanna dance the night away.

I know we're only half way there,

But you take me all the way.

You can take me all the way."

~Maroon 5, "Love Somebody"

Everything feels impossibly warm. It's like her insides are full of lightning bolts, and her hair's streaked with sweat. But she loves it because Bellamy's on top of her, pressed even closer to her body than normal.

"Bell," she rasps.

"What?" he manages after a moment, drawing his hips back only to plunge farther into her tight heat.

Clarke catches her breath with an effort. Her fingernails slice right into the space where his arms meet his shoulders.

"I'm not protected. You...have...to..."

There's intense pressure flooding her chest and stomach from where she teeters on the brink of her orgasm. The way Bellamy slows his hips and takes to grinding himself purposefully inside of her does nothing to dull the sensation. He bends low toward her ear while simultaneously capturing her tight nipple between his thumb and forefinger.

"What are you doing to me, Clarke?" he grunts, withdrawing several inches then pushing back inside her with force.
"I'm sorry," she murmurs and twists her neck to the side, so she doesn't have to watch the emotions flick across his face and the confusion, or worse, betrayal, linger in his eyes. He takes the opportunity to suck a bruise into her creamy neck and bend her leg at the knee, pushing it to the side a little.

Still, he doesn't ask her what she's done or even reprimand her. Maybe he already knew. Maybe he always knew this was the inevitable path for two people like himself and Clarke - their paths inextricably linked together. Life's already taken them from one step to the next, deepening their relationship at every turn, so why should this be any different, really? Bellamy smooths the wispy waves back from her forehead and traces the edges of her lips until she looks back at him.

"Do you want me to?"

Her tired arm falls to the sheets and clutches limply at them. She barely manages to brush her mouth across his before he thrusts back inside of her and holds himself there. It's a visible strain, and the tendons in his neck pop out.

She glides her hand up his tan chest to the place where his heart's beating fast and rubs a thumb across it.

"One day . . . you'll teach Jacob how to hunt . . . to shoot," she pants out. She's so stretched, so full it's like he's invaded her.

"Clarke . . . " he grits out, resilience breaking down. "Tell me right now."

Her hazy eyes take on a grayish hue in the darkness when they latch to his.

"No," she whispers. "But I'm crazy," she rocks her hips back into his jerkily. "We didn't talk about it."

The muscles of Bellamy's body ripple as he moves into her slick channel, gliding one finger up and down the bumpy ridge of her clit, so he can watch her clench her teeth. She clings to him even as his dick retreats, glistening with her moisture.

"You really sure?"
Her breath hitches.


Clarke bucks her hips into his and knots her fingers in the blankets below her, legs starting to shake with the effort of being kept from her bliss for so long.

"You can't ever leave me," he murmurs into her temple. "And the next one better look like you."

Her walls clench painfully tight around him, and he curses. Clarke hisses when he withdraws from between her thighs with great effort, emptying himself on the smooth plane of her stomach instead while rubbing her clit until the wave of pleasure rolls through her fully, and she pushes his hand away.

"Sorry," he says.

But Clarke's chest is heaving, and her eyes are tight shut, her muscles too heavy to move where she rests on her back.

"I'm the one who should apologize," she mumbles. "I should've told you I stopped taking the tea."

Bellamy takes a deep breath then goes in search of a towel to wipe her clean. Confused, she lays there - trying to reconcile his words with his actions, but it's hard.

"It would be nice for Jacob to have someone to play with," she says to his back after a few moments. "Two little boys or even," she swallows, "We could have a girl."

When Bellamy returns to their bed, his face is unreadable. He stretches out next to her, pulling her into his arms, so her blonde locks spread out like a fan across his chest and shoulders.

"It could be nice, Bell, to have a family like that. Just think about it."

"Mhmm, go to sleep, Clarke," he replies, clutching her tighter.
It's two hours later, and they still can't sleep. The sweat's dried on their skin, and Clarke's eyes follow the slow sway of Jacob's mobile, tracing the path of the fragile Earth to the tents to the rocket to the Ark and back again. She has the strange thought that she's taking their journey in reverse. Finally, she turns her head - there's a definite crick in her neck - and takes in Bellamy's taut profile. His jaw looks too tight. His eyelashes are thick and curved.

"Why did you stop drinking the tea without telling me?" Bellamy says at last into the quiet room, sensing her intense gaze.

Clarke can just make out the mural of the twinkling constellations above their heads.

"Why would you want to risk it?"

She turns in his arms and fixes him with that soft, loving stare she reserves especially for his freckled face.

"Bellamy, you're right. I should have - I'm sorry. But you know this is what I want. We have talked about it. I want your babies. And I know you want it, too. Is that so wrong? Can't we have our dream?"

He cracks a smile at that, and she can hear his low snort.

"Life on Earth is no dream, and you know it, Princess. Just look at where we are."

"But it's not where we're going to stay!" she says emphatically, propping herself up on her elbow. "We will get out of here in a few years, and we'll have the chance to start building a new life!"

He wraps an arm around her waist and tickles the skin around her hipbone with his callouses.

"What do you want?" her voice is so small, the question barely even exists.

"I want you and Jacob and O to be safe and happy and healthy. That's what I want," he says sternly.
She smiles sadly, turns in his arms and unexpectedly throws a leg over his legs, hoisting herself on top of him.

"I don't think that's all you want," she says playfully, pushing her hair out of the way and leaning down to lick the tip of his dick.

"You never get tired, do you, Princess?"

But his eyes are already glued to her breasts and half hazy.

"I never get enough of you," she says with true seduction this time before taking him more deeply into her mouth. Her name falls from Bellamy's lips, and his fist finds her familiar, brilliant hair to massage her scalp.

Minutes later, he's heavy and hard just behind her ass, and she's rocking herself into Bellamy as he pushes his thumbs almost painfully into her hips before running them up her sides to cup her breasts. Her clit sparks small fires through her abdomen as it grinds against his bristly, dark hair.

"Can we try? Please? Do you want to?" Clarke flattens herself across his torso, so he can tease her nipples with his tongue. She hums the words into the skin of his cheek.

His grip at her waist tightens, and he yanks her down to kiss her properly.

"I can't regret this, Clarke."

"But you can't resist me either, huh?"

"Never could," he grunts.

She's trembling a little when she lifts up and balances over the red head of his dick, already oozing a few drops of precum. Her teeth dig into her bottom lip when she sinks very carefully down onto him, feeling him force her open as always.
"God, I love you," she throws back her head, muscles like jelly, when gravity brings him to her cervix.

"Show me by picking yourself up and sinking back down," he smart mouths back.

Her striking blue eyes fly open in indignation, and she scratches along his collarbone until he cups her hips and forces her to move a bit faster.
curve balls

Chapter Notes
See the end of the chapter for notes

"Don't tell me that I won't, I can
Don't tell me that I'm not, I am
Don't tell me that my master plan
Ain't coming through, yeah.

Don't tell me that I won't, I will
Don't tell me how to think, I feel
Don't tell me 'cause I know what's real

What I can do

Something that you don't see every day
A little girl who found her way
Through a world that's designed to break

All your dreams."

~Joss Stone, "Free Me"

The monitor's steady hum is the only noise filling the small space as Abby stares at it. One of her hands reaches out toward the image, fingers trembling slightly, while her other goes to cover her open mouth. She sucks in a deep breath that expands her shoulders.

"Clarke," she says it choked.

Clarke's sharp blue eyes find Raven's immediately, and Raven grips her hand tightly.

"Abby, what is it?" she says, voice barbed with sharp wire.
"It's . . ." Abby starts, taking a step back. "It's twins."

"What?" Clarke cries out, half in surprise and half in excitement. She's already struggling to sit up, and Raven rushes to situate the two thin pillows behind her to support her back. "Are you sure?"

Abby turns to her daughter, a frail smile ghosting across her mouth.

"I'm sure. There are two heartbeats."

"But nobody has twins!" Clarke splutters, gazing at the screen Abby twists for her to see. "Nobody ever has twins."

"The Ark made that kind of complicated, didn't they?" Raven says drily.

Abby arches an eyebrow and perches on the edge of the makeshift examination table.

"People did have twins on the Ark," she says, eyes focused on her hands folded primly in her lap.

Raven cocks her head to the side, a shrewd look crossing her features.

"Wait . . . you didn't!" she calls out angrily, voice echoing around the walls.

The seconds stretch out painfully.

"Tell. Me. You. Didn't," Raven enunciates each word through clenched teeth.

"We didn't have a choice!" Abby shoots back at last, equally fired up. "You don't think I wanted to float babies do you, Raven! Do you? Thelonious demanded it - it was part of the Exodus Charter. It was rare, but," she sighs heavily. "It happened."

A picture of her mother cradling a tiny infant with pink cheeks and chubby hands, leading it to the
airlock, pressing the red button so the doors fly open sneaks into Clarke's mind. She shuts her eyes hard.

"That's horrific," she gasps.

Raven is still staring Abby down.

"You could have given the second kid to another couple, someone who wanted to have a kid and couldn't," she snaps.

Abby makes a small noise of agreement.

"That's what I thought, too," she rests a warm palm on Clarke's thigh. "I used to argue with Kane about it, but he was adamant. Then when we ran out of oxygen, I finally understood. We never had enough dropships for everyone to return to Earth, Raven. We had been trying to cull the population down for a few decades. The Council didn't know that, but eventually we learned."

Several minutes go by where they all seem lost in their individual thoughts. Clarke drops her own hand to the tiny swell of her stomach.

"So two?" she says carefully.

"Two," Abby smiles at her through watery eyes. "The first twins to grow up together."

Raven claps Clarke on the back, the spell broken. But the blonde barely moves.

"Still setting records, Griffin," she grins.

***

Miller is hurrying to meet his father for a meeting in Jaha's office off the main atrium, buttoning his shirt as he goes. He's looking down at his fumbling fingers as he turns the corner and collides with a smack right into Jackson, who's absorbed in the contents of a tablet that begins to fly out of his
"Woah!" Miller cries, deftly catching the glossy device before it crashes to the ground. "Sorry about that, man! My fault - wasn't paying attention."

"Oh," Jackson blinks several times and accepts the extended tablet. "No, I'm sorry. It was my fault. Got too wrapped up in these records. I didn't think the implants would start giving out this fast, but it seems like . . . " he trails off as Miller's shoots him a quizzical look. "Never mind, I'm blabbering on about medicine. Not interesting, I know.

Miller gives him an easy grin.

"No! I always thought medicine was . . . fascinating," he says a little awkwardly. "I mean, that operation Clarke pulled off on Finn at the dropship when he was stabbed with the poisoned knife, that was some impressive shit. And, uh, you and Abby walked her through that one, didn't you?"

Jackson nods, "Yeah, that was a really tricky one. I'm glad we were able to help. I wish we could've done more later."

Thick, gray storm clouds pass overhead, while nothing but mud exists underfoot. It's cold from the recent rain, and his clothes are damp. As far out as he can see beyond the wire fence, there are burning torches. They're surrounded by the grounder army - waiting to die. Clarke steps back from the stake, a tiny, glowing figure in the sea of black, and Raven's screams rip through the air. Bellamy catches her as she collapses.

A light touch on his arm awakens Miller from his dark musings.

"You ok?" Jackson asks kindly.

"Yeah," he shakes his head, running a hand over his face. "Yeah, I'm good."

"Where are you headed?"

"Meeting up at Jaha's office. We're already starting to prepare for the return to the ground. He wants
some guard representatives there."

"Nothing like having two and a half years to prepare, am I right?" Jackson quips.

"Exactly," the tension finally slips from Miller's shoulders as he laughs a little.

"All right, well," Jackson casts a glance down at his tablet, and Miller realizes with a jolt in his stomach that Harper's smile graces the top of the report, "I'll let you get going."

"See you around," Miller manages, stepping around Jackson and clapping him on the shoulder as he takes off in the opposite direction.

***

Clarke can feel Bellamy's eyes boring into the side of her head as she tries to focus on what Kane and Jaha are arguing about. He'd been teaching that morning when she went to her medical appointment, and she hasn't had the chance to fill him in on what happened there. They've been trapped here for almost an hour, and she can't wait to burst through the doors and drag Bellamy away to a quiet spot to tell him about the twins. She doesn't realize her left leg is jittering up and down relentlessly until Bellamy scoots his chair a bit closer to hers and lays a hand on the spot above her knee to still it.

"You're ok," he says calmly, eyes never leaving Jaha.

She swallows and slides her hand over his tan one, letting her fingers glide between the gaps of his.

"You can't really be serious, Marcus!" Jaha's booming voice cuts through her mental clutter. "Even if Becca's lab survived Praimfaya, which is highly unlikely, using the rocket to search for livable land is," he throws up his hands and looks around the small band of people before him as if searching for the right word, "preposterous!"

"Why?" Kane argues back, standing up near the desk. "The odds of any land within miles of here being arable are slim to none. We won't have the rovers anymore or other means of transportation - do you think everyone is going to follow you into the desert for another pilgrimage?"
Jaha snorts in a mean way, and Abby looks swiftly between the two men before getting to her own feet.

"Marcus," she says, conciliatory. "The rocket won't fly like a plane or helicopter, at least, I don't think so. I can check with Raven."

"So we take it to space and examine the Earth from there for patches of green," he says, hitting his palm onto the wood. "We use GoSci's technology and figure out exactly what we're working with."

Jaha actually rolls his eyes.

"It's a suicide mission, Marcus! There's not even a way to turn on the power up there."

"We'll figure something out!" Kane says emphatically. "We have our best scientists here."

"That's unnecessary," Abby says swiftly before they can continue. "Raven and Monty ran the projections for us while we were still at Arkadia. We know which land will most likely survive Praimfaya . . . "

"But you don't know for sure!" Kane interrupts. "And that still doesn't solve the problem of how we're going to get 1,200 people to a new location. What if we have to cross water? Or mountains? Or more deserts? Am I the only one who sees what a problem this is going to be?"

He looks around desperately, eyes falling on Bellamy and Clarke.

"Raven's projections said there will be a sort of Eden - a green place - about 300 miles from here when we're ready to leave," Clarke says.

Jaha nods his head, a gesture of pure indulgence at her support.

"Exactly, and the girl has never let us down before, Kane! I've seen the simulations myself. I'll show them to you this afternoon if you'd like."
Kane's mouth hangs open.

"So we're just going to trust we can walk 300 miles with all our things to the promised land?" he scoffs. "That will take weeks! We're going to leave all our technology from the Ark and this bunker behind and take a chance?"

"What's left of the Ark's been destroyed, you know that," David Miller calls out from the wall.

"We don't know that!" Kane says more adamantly. "I'm just saying we need to be sure! Sure about all our options before we lead the last members of humanity onto a trek that could end in all of our deaths! We didn't survive this long to collapse in the desert."

"What choice do we have?" Bellamy says quietly, knotting his fingers in Clarke's.

Kane turns to look at him.

"I want to give your kids the best chance to survive, son, do you hear me?"

A muscle clenches in Bellamy's jaw, but he nods.

"I'll go," he says out of nowhere, and Clarke spins her head toward him.

"Go where?" she demands.

"I'll go with Raven, in the rocket, if we need to. If we need to get a full range view of the Earth. If we need to use GoSci's technology to see exactly what the hell happened. I'll go with her. The rocket only seats two people anyway."

"No," Clarke says fiercely, digging her nails into his skin, making him wince. "Someone else will go!"
"I agree," Jaha cuts in silkily. "You two have given enough over the last few years to keep us all safe. It's someone else's turn to--"

"This is bullshit!" Octavia suddenly erupts from her place leaning against the bookshelves. "We can't just decide the future of everybody without even including the grounders in what we're planning! Roan and Indra should be here!"

"This is just a preliminary gathering, Octavia," Jaha says kindly. "We fully intend to open up the meeting to Roan and Indra as soon as--"

"As soon as what?" she spits back at him, flicking back her floor-length black jacket, exposing the silver glint of her sword at her waist. "You decide exactly how many of them are expendable in whatever plan you dream up?!"

"Octavia!" Abby says waringly. "Nobody else is going to die! We're trying to work out a way for us all to live and start a new society - you know that!"

"All I know is the Council still makes the rules," she hisses, stalking toward the door. "And I don't belong to Sky Crew, I--"

She's almost hit in the face by the door thrusting open and launches backward into a startled Kane, who barely manages to slip his hands under her arms to support her before she falls.

"Abby!" Jackson's dark hair and pallid face appear in Clarke's line of vision. "I need you in medical now!"

"What is it?" she says hastily, already moving to follow him.

Clarke jumps up as well and heads for the door. She waits for her mother to tell her to stop, that she'll overexert herself, but the warning doesn't come.

"It's Emori," Jackson says, and they can all hear the dread filling his throat. "She's gone into cardiac arrest."
I think we're slowly but surely reaching the end, guys! And that's fortunate because I want to wrap up "Closing Time" soon and then focus on my S5 reunion story and a new one on a Bellarke arranged marriage set loosely in canon times (that one hasn't been published here yet). Thank you so much for sticking with this story for so long! I'm sorry it hasn't been finished faster for you all. If you're looking for something to read, "sometimes words are all we have to hold onto" (season 5 reunion) is great as is "willingly damned" (Modern AU). I'm working my way through "things we shouldn't do," and I LOVE it. Good for those who like Bellarke and Beliza because there's a lot of fiction/reality blending there.
impossible surrender

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

"I've got my ticket for the long way 'round
The one with the prettiest of views
It's got mountains, it's got rivers
It's got sights to give you shivers
But it sure would be prettier with you.
When I'm gone, when I'm gone.
You're gonna miss me when I'm gone.
You're gonna miss me by my walk
You're gonna miss me by my talk, oh,
You're gonna miss me when I'm gone."

~“Cups,” Anna Kendrick for Pitch Perfect

There's no sound except the harsh, buzz of the flatline drowning out the old-fashioned clock ticking away the seconds on the wall.

Abby's hands push a furious beat on Emori's chest, hair falling into her face with each forward thrust.

"Come on! Come on!" she implores.

"Abby," Jackson says at last, putting a hand on her shoulder.

"No!" she cries out. "I won't do this to John! I can't!"

Clarke feels the tears burning the backs of her eyes and the sour bile rise in her throat. She runs her hands over her face, breathing deeply, trying to process it. The room is too white, Emori's lean body too still.

"Abby," comes Jackson's voice again, sterner this time. "You did absolutely everything you could. I'm calling it."

He glances over at Clarke, gives her what she can only assume he means to be a nod of reassurance, and walks back to the computer screen.

"Time of death: 1:55 a.m."

***

Clarke tells them she will be the bearer of bad news because the devastation on her mother's face is breaking her heart. She leaves her with her back against a barren wall, chin tilted toward the sky they can't see, one hand at her hip and the other over her eyes.

Her hand is bone white on the dark door she pushes open, and she's surprised - though maybe she shouldn't be - to find all her friends waiting there with Murphy. He's got his knuckles clenched around his knees, staring at the faded carpet while Bellamy pats his shoulder and whispers something to him she can't hear. Raven's on his other side, nodding fervently along with the speech.

"Clarke!" Jasper pops up like a jack-in-the-box at the sound of the door's squeaky hinges. "How is
she? Can Murphy see her yet?"

Her vision is a little hazy, cobwebs swimming at the sides of it. The chatter ceases immediately, and she feels their eyes on her, expectant. Octavia and Miller rise to their feet, too. Murphy lifts his face. His eyes are rimmed with red, and his nose seems swollen. He has no color. There's an untouched glass of water on the tiny table in front of his seat. Clarke lets the door swing shut behind her.

"I . . . " she tries, throat completely dry. "I'm . . . "

It's a small miracle to find Bellamy's eyes on hers, warm and grounding, because her fingernails are digging bloody half-moons into her palm.

"I'm so, so sorry, Murphy," she whispers it.

"Oh my God!" Harper exclaims into the quietness, shock coating her features.

Murphy stands slowly, takes measured steps toward Clarke as if he were a prisoner escaping his cell for the first time in years. The deliberateness, the inhuman hollowness of his expression scares her more than if he'd come lunging at her.

"You," he points a steady finger at her, voice dead. "You did this to her."

Shame floods her system like hot water, dousing her, running through her veins and arteries.

"Murphy," Bellamy's tone is hard and warning.

He stands and puts a restraining hand on his friend's shoulder. "Clarke was trying to save her!"

But Murphy knocks the hand aside and closes the gap between himself and Clarke. Her eyes are riveted to his, and somehow, she just feels like she deserves it, whatever it's about to be. Up close, he looks even worse, clothes wrinkled, cracked lines around his dulled blue eyes. His lips are chapped and dry, his voice hoarse.

"You. Did. This," he enunciates every word, jabbing her near her collarbone.

Small flecks of spit land on her cheek, but she doesn't move. She barely breathes.

"I'm so sorry," she repeats, beginning to cry. "There was nothing we could do. Her heart was already weak."

"IT WAS WEAK BECAUSE OF WHAT HAPPENED IN BECCA'S LAB!" he roars suddenly, and her eardrums vibrate.

"Murphy!" Raven jumps up, but Clarke shakes her head swiftly.

"I shouldn't have done that," she acknowledges, much more calmly than she feels. The ants are crawling under her skin and into her stomach.

"You gave her unnecessary stress!" Murphy continues yelling as if she hadn't spoken. "You wanted to sacrifice her! You made her attack that grounder - get herself all worked up! That was the start of it! She was never the same after that - always on edge. Always believing she didn't fit in!"

"Murphy, that's enough," Bellamy's at her side, and she's not sure where he came from. He's wrapped her against the warmth of his side. She's shaking.

"I didn't want this to happen," she tells Murphy. "Emori was my friend."
Murphy sneers.

"Yeah, well, we all know what happens to the people you care about, _princess_!"

He bangs the door so ferociously on his way out, the walls shake. Monty calls after him, hurrying out the door with Jasper on his heels.

Harper comes to comfort Clarke while Raven just shakes her head at Miller before pressing the palms of her hand against her eyes.

"He doesn't know what he's saying," Harper says reassuringly. "It's shock. Grief. You didn't kill her, Clarke. You didn't."

Clarke returns her soft smile with a miniature nod. Deep within herself though, she's just not sure.

***

"How's Murphy?" Clarke asks as soon as Bellamy steps into their apartment an hour later.

"Raven's trying to talk him down in engineering with His Majesty," Bellamy sighs, shrugging off his jacket and letting it fall to the floor. "What a fucking horrible day."

Clarke squeezes the damp, knotted handkerchief harder in her fist, collapsing against her pillow. Bellamy walks over to Jacob's crib and fluffs the blanket over his sleeping son before moving to the dresser.

"He's right," she whispers as Bellamy strips off his pants and pulls on an old sleep shirt.

"He's not," he says emphatically.

The bed dips when he slides in. His hands are warm and large where they curl around her hip and tug her back against the line of his abdomen. "This wasn't your fault. She had a bad heart," Bellamy huffs into the crease of her neck.

"I made it worse," Clarke grits between her teeth.

"You didn't," he kisses her shoulder and snakes his hand to rest over the bump of her stomach. "You need to relax and breathe, baby. You can't get worked up like this - you're pregnant."

"She was my friend, Bellamy!" Clarke snaps, spinning to face him although it takes her two tries to get enough leverage to turn over.

They're almost nose-to-nose, and she's amazed by how calm he looks.

"She was my friend, too. And it's horrible. But I can't fix it tonight, and neither can you. So you can't get yourself worked up because . . ." he bites his lip and looks away.

Clarke feels a hard kick somewhere near her kidney and groans, rubbing her stomach.

"Because I'm a pregnant monster," she supplies bitterly.

Bellamy's eyes flood with concern.

"Are you all right?" he pushes her gently onto her back and slides his hand over her protruding belly. "Wow, that's a big one!" he half-smiles when the vibration touches his skin.
"Fine."

Her eyes are shut, and she's rolling her head from side to side as if trying to increase blood flow to her neck muscles.

"Clarke, how did you appointment go today?"

"Yesterday."

"Huh?"

"It's 3 in the morning. And I should be with Murphy - make sure he doesn't do something stupid," she starts to sit up, but Bellamy catches her upper arm and pulls her back down.

"That's what our friends are doing right now. Your mom and Kane promised to keep an eye on him, too. I've got the morning shift," he says.

He rakes a hand through his messy curls and maneuvers them, so she's half-sitting up in the space under his arm, both their backs against the headboard.

"You need sleep."

"I'm not tired," Clarke argues.

Her head is pounding, but she still yawns.

"Sleep," Bellamy repeats more firmly.

Her head lolls on his shoulder, and he brushes a kiss to her hairline.

"Was everything ok with the baby?" he repeats after she's draped an arm across his waist and turned in the only comfortable position. She's more tired than she thought. It's like a drug is weighing her body down.

"Babies," she mumbles. The memory already feels distant though it was only hours ago.

Bellamy's eyes snap open.

"Babies?" he says to her blonde head.

"We're having twins," she grips the cotton of his shirt harder between her fingers and breathes in his pine musk, finding it relaxing.

Bellamy's hand stills where it was rubbing her spine.

"As in . . . two?" he croaks.

"That's right," Clarke says sleepily. "If one of them is a girl, we're adding Emori to her name."

"Uh-huh," Bellamy agrees in a dazed-sounding mumble.

She knows his internal freak-out has already begun. It's like the sound of his wheels turning is palpable. If his brain is anything like hers, he's seeing blood splashed on tile floors, hearing her labor screams pierce the night in medbay.

"We can't worry about what hasn't happened yet. Isn't that what you're always trying to tell me?" she
presses a kiss above his navel. "I love you, I'm terrified, and I'm sick over Emori. But there's nothing I can do about any of it right now like you said since you won't let me go to Murphy."

"It's not a good idea right now," he says tightly.

She'd never admit it to him, but the thought of facing Murphy again - of gazing into his accusing face - actually scares her a little.

"Life on the ground is insane," he says it to the mobile floating over Jacob's crib.

"Life underground was supposed to be more stable," Clarke's eyes are gummy in their heaviness despite the knots in her stomach.

"You did the best you could, and that's all anybody can ask," Bellamy says fiercely, stroking up and down her arm in gentle patterns.

It's the last thing she remembers feeling before sleep overtakes her, allowing her a brief exit from the pain of their lives.

Chapter End Notes

Cheers to the TRAILER COMING WEDNESDAY & all of Eliza's positive Bellarke comments this weekend. Our ship is sailing!!!!!
small mercies

"Remember when you hit the brakes too soon?

Twenty stitches in the hospital room

When you started cryin', baby, I did, too

But when the sun came up, I was lookin' at you.

Remember when you couldn't take the heat?

I walked out and said, "I'm settin' you free."

But the monsters turned out to be just trees,

And when the sun came up, you were lookin' at me.

You were lookin' at me.

You were lookin' at me.

I remember, oh, I remember.

Are we out of the woods yet?

Are we out of the woods yet?

Are we out of the woods yet?

Are we out of the woods?

Are we in the clear yet?

Are we in the clear yet?

Are we in the clear yet?

In the clear yet?

Good."

~Taylor Swift, "Out of the Woods"

At the sound of footsteps, her long, thin fingers snatch up the fuzzy bit of fabric lying on the bed into
her palm, which she slides behind her back. But not quite fast enough.

"Whatcha hidin'?" Jasper asks jauntily, stretching his long legs out in front of him where he leans against the wall of their dorm.


"It didn't look like nothing."

"Well, it's nothing for you to worry about."

She sounds more sure of herself and takes the few steps from her bunk toward where he stands, prepared to push past him if necessary.

"Come on, Harps! We're friends," he sings. "And friends share."

"Not everything, kid."

She's almost to the door when Octavia, clad in a black, wool dress (the heat has been hit or miss lately despite Raven's best efforts) appears.

"Stop her!" Jasper shouts playfully.

With a strange, partly amused look on her face, Octavia engages Harper in a game of chicken for a few seconds.

"Why? What's going on?" she demands.

Jasper closes on the puff of fabric still locked in Harper's palm while she's distracted.

"Damn it, Jasper!" Harper screeches, whirling to face him.
Octavia narrows her eyes.

"Hard to keep secrets in this bunker, blondie," she winks.

"So what do we have here?"

Jasper holds up a hand-knitted bootie, pale blue, with circular holes between the thread where it wasn't pulled tightly enough. Before he has time to open his mouth, Octavia's already talking.

"They're too tiny for Jacob," she reaches a bracing arm forward to place on Harper's upper arm, a smile tugging at her mouth.

Harper stares at the floor, shifts her feet. The twinge of rose climbs into her cheekbones like flowers stretching up a vine.

"Ahhhh!" Octavia shrieks, immediately throwing her arms around the startled girl. "So happy for you guys!"

Jasper's brown eyes widen.

"My best friend's gonna be ... a ... a ..."

"A dad, yeah. Keep up," Octavia rolls her eyes, and with one more gentle squeeze for Harper, ruffles Jasper's floppy hair, grown long once more, and smacks a kiss to his cheek. "It'll be fine. It'll be good."

"Harper, uh, I--"

"You can't tell Monty yet," Harper implores, taking back the boot. "He doesn't know."

"Of course he won't," Octavia throws him a meaningful look. "He knows when to keep a secret."
"You promise?" Harper urges, a touch of desperation in her voice.

"Uh, yeah, yeah, I swear."

Jasper throws her a sweet smile, then with a shrug, opens his arms to her. She chokes out something between a laugh and a cry and falls into them.

"I'm really happy for you guys, too," he whispers into her ear.

"Thanks, Jasper. That means a lot," she tucks a bit of her bangs back behind her ear. "It's just with everything going on with Murphy right now, I don't want to be insensitive."

Octavia nods wisely.

"Makes total sense."

The three former delinquents glance at each other, a wave of uncomfortable understanding spreading between them.

***

"Raven? I brought the extra wires for the heating system-"

Ilian stops dead, dropping the tangled mess of color in his hands. The room is dark and quiet, save for the creak of rusty chair legs rocking rhythmically against the floor. Murphy sits on the edge of the cracked plastic seat beside a bookshelf, head bowed, gun pointing at his temple.

"Murphy! Stop, man! You can't! Please!" Ilian crashes forward, falling to his knees before Murphy even realizes who's walked into the room.
"Get out of here," Murphy spits at him. His breath is stale. Shiny, purple bags hang under his eyes. Thick stubble dots his jaw and chin. "You don't know me. You don't know anything."

But Ilian gasps a sigh of relief when he sees the cold metal knock against his thigh.

"I don't know you well," Ilian tries bracingly. "But I know you're a good guy. I know there are a lot of people in this bunker who care about you. I know you deserve to live."

"Deserve to live?" Murphy spits nastily. "Have you been paying any attention at all, or were you too busy chasing after the grounder pounder?"

A tense muscle jumps in Ilian's neck, but he lets the comment roll off him.

"There are no good guys. No bad guys," Murphy continues, waving his arms wildly, gun glinting in the low light. "We're all just fucked, all right? Maybe we're already dead, and this is Hell. Whatever, I'm not sticking around to find out."

Ilian's ready for him as he raises the weapon once more. Springing from his knees, he knocks the gun out of Murphy's grip and straight to the ground with a clatter. Murphy launches from the chair, attempts to choke him, eyes bugging out as if demented. Ilian punches him once, hard, straight into the stomach, sending Murphy back wheezing. The chair collides with the ground with a zinging vibration where metal hits concrete.

Ilian lurches for the gun, but not fast enough. Murphy, remarkably nimble for someone winded moments before, grabs the chair legs over his head and tries to smash it down on Ilian's legs. He rolls out of the way just in time.

"What the fuck?" Ilian yells, holding out his hands in supplication, though one's now waving the handgun. "I'm trying to help you!"

"Nobody can help me!" Murphy manages before careening on the spot, sending the chair straight into the glass-encased cabinet nearby, sending shards splintering through the air and all across the floor.

Ilian's never been more happy to see Bellamy and Miller when they appear moments later.
"What's going on?" Miller demands, moving between the brawlers and snatching up the gun effortlessly. "Get the hell up, both of you. We don't have time for this shit."

Bellamy furrows his brow, and crossing his arms over his chest, takes in the scene.

"He attacked me!" Murphy hisses, rubbing his stomach and pointing at Ilian.

"I was trying to stop you from shooting yourself in the head!" Ilian bellows back. "My options were limited."

"Enough," Bellamy says forcefully.

He lets out a deep sigh, and Miller's rubbing his eyes. Murphy's been like this for weeks, totally unconsolable, no matter what they've tried.

Miller seems to be momentarily reading Bellamy's mind because the two nod at each other. Ilian's confused but finds he can't break the grip Miller's fingers bite into his skin as he is led away.

"Where are you taking me?" he tries to shove the guard off, but Miller's grip just tightens painfully.

"Out of a bad situation and to medical. You've got glass in your skin," comes the terse reply.

"And you think Bellamy's gonna be able to handle all that?"

"No," Miller says after a long pause, boots pounding the floor. "But with Raven, most things are possible."

***

The room is covered in a tunnel of open-ended boxes, which Jacob happily crawls through at top speed in his padded onesie. Clarke smiles, tracking his progress and sipping a glass of water while
rocking in her chair. Her ankles are swollen, and she's already feeling like a whale, though she's just in her fifth month of pregnancy. Twins make things rougher though.

Jacob is too dexterous for his own good. He's starting to toddle around and now slips through his box tunnel, gurgling happily, before pulling himself up toward the top of the box with chubby palms.

"No, sir," Clarke groans but gets up and crosses the living space quickly to him. "No climbing. I've seen enough blood for one day."

His little, pudgy feet kick out rebelliously as she scoops his warm body into her arms.

"Down, mama. Down," he insists as he flails.

"No, my little wild boar," Clarke chuckles, kissing the top of his sweet-smelling dark curls. "We're gonna relax and wait for daddy."

Jacob is drooling lazily down her blouse when the door shutting wakes her from her short nap.

"Hey, Bellamy," she smiles at him where he's standing, staring right back at them.

"That's a nice picture to come home to."

Despite her tiredness and what she's seen tending to Ilian that afternoon, something in Bellamy's intent gaze still heats her up from the inside out.

"Me and Mr. Slobber do what we can," she quips as he kisses her cheek and takes Jacob into his arms, rocking him easily.

"How are you feeling?"

She sighs.
"Exhausted. Swollen. Fat. Yeah, that pretty much sums it up."

"You're radiant, Princess."

"Charm will get you nowhere, Blake, when you're lying."

He laughs drily.

"You'll never know what I see when I look at you, will you?" he bends down so their faces are close together.

Her smile is small but true.

"If it's a fraction of what I feel when I look at you, I think I've got an idea."

"Always got to one-up me, don't you, Clarke?"

But then they're both laughing, short-lived though it is. He lays Jacob down in his crib and crouches down on his knees before her, gently massaging her calf and leaning forward to kiss her.

"Such a charmer," she nips at his lips.

They stretch out on their bed, Clarke on her side. Bellamy rucks up her top and runs his fingertips lazily across her bump, sucking soft kisses into the sweet vanilla of her neck.

"Raven talked Murphy down," he whispers into the stillness.

"I'm glad to hear it," her eyes are fluttering closed. "Ilian was stitched up, too."
"Was Jacob good today?"

"Only one tantrum when I wouldn't give him extra apple sauce at lunch."

Bellamy's laughter presses into her spine.

"So stingy, Princess."

"We have to ration, Bell!"

He can hear the indignation already building in her voice.

"All right, all right, calm down," he strokes at her side, too dangerously close to her aching breasts for her sanity.

She pushes a little into his hand until he gets the idea that she wants him to cup them in his large hands.

"Ohhhh," she sighs into her pillow. "That feels amazing."

"Good, good," he soothes.

"We need to start helping Jacob walk. He'll be doing it for real soon," she huffs, the last coherent thought in her mind before Bellamy's thumb and forefinger pinch her nipple through her bra.


The shudder flowing through her back is more intense than usual.

He molds the weight of each breast carefully as she fits her ass perfectly into the arch of his hips. He's surprised when she manages to swing a leg over his hip, and it takes him a moment to figure out
what she's after. But soon she's pivoting her hips down with intention, knocking against the hard muscle of his leg.

She grins when his teeth leave a mark in her shoulder where he pulls the cotton of her blouse away.

"Still my dirty Princess, huh?" he rasps, slipping a hand to the waist of her stretchy pants and yanking them to her knees with Clarke's help. Her clit is somehow already swelling and slick. "Trying to grind on me?"

"Took you long enough," she flings over the arch of her shoulder. But her sass is quickly killed when Bellamy pushes two fingers straight into her opening, brushing them hard along her g-spot.

"You were saying?" he teases, pumping them in a sawing motion in and out of her until her neck muscles go limp, and her head lolls against his chest.

It's right before her orgasm rises up - he feels the tightness of her channel, the quivering of her inner thighs - that she grips the top of his wrist so hard it hurts.

"You can't go to space," she pleads as the tremors overtake her. She draws his slippery fingers to her belly and presses them down. "I can't lose you. They can't lose you. Promise me, please."

With effort she rolls over to onto her back to look into his face, where she watches a single tear glide down his freckled cheek.
Bellamy is rinsing the last soap suds off his freckled forearm when he hears the slam of a door. The shouts are somehow simultaneously high-pitched and deep as the yeller's cadence switches mid-sentence.

"What the hell, man?" he rasps at the thin guy before him.

"You've got to come with me! Come on!" Jasper yells, half a madman. He's waving his long, pale arms like windmills and flicking his lengthening hair out of his eyes.

"Calm down," Bellamy holds out a pacifying hand. "Take a deep breath, and tell me what you're
talking about."

Jasper wheezes and bending over, places his hands on his knees.

"Clarke .... it's Clarke."

"Goddammit," the hiss is frightening.

Jasper winces as Bellamy's hand tightens quick around his forearm.

"What happened?" he demands.

"She went into labor a few minutes ago," Jasper gulps. His sigh of relief is evident when Bellamy's grip on his arm weakens. A rush of pale pink color seeps across the yellow patch of skin where he rubs it.

Bellamy's dressed in moments and racing behind Jasper down the long, gray-dim halls of the bunker, droplets of water soaring from his hair all over his shirt as he moves.

"Jasper?" he asks shakily as they turn the final corner. "Is it... it is bad this time?"

Jasper's face clouds with sympathy, and he puts a bracing hand on his friend's shoulder.

"I don't think so. It's just ... happening fast. Harper said I needed to get you now."

Bellamy nods and with one final, deep breath, wrenches the door open. There's a long curtain of blonde hair, but it's Harper's. Her eyes are wide, and her ponytail swishes as she hurries over to him.

"Bellamy!" the relief in her voice is warm and alive. "Clarke's been calling for you. Come on!"
gently deeper into the belly of med-bay. A light flickers weakly overhead, buzzing and twitching. He takes it as a bad omen but can't remember when he started believing in omens.

"It's going to be ok. Just breathe. Clarke needs you to be strong," Harper whispers.

A flood of dread coasts down Bellamy's throat and settles in his stomach in a hard knot. He can still remember the crimson-stained sheets from Jacob's birth, the hollows of Clarke's cheeks, the weakness of her grip.

His eyes flick to Harper's, and he sees her pity there and hates it. But he can't stop himself--

"What if it's not?"

She shakes her head.

"Enough of that. You're all survivors. It will be."

The door creaks on its hinges with Harper's weight, and he hears a moan, sees a pale hand gripping the bedsheets. His feet have a mind of their own.

"Bell - ah - meeeeee! I'm not doing this myself!" Clarke's voice is sharp and crisp and floods him with something damn near joy at its strength.

"I'm here," he offers his hand for her to grip. (She does. Tightly). And leans forward to press a kiss to the top of her sweaty forehead. "I'm right here."

Abby's cloth mask is dark green, but her eyes momentarily sparkle above the fabric when she takes in her daughter's shoulder slumping into Bellamy's side.

"You can do this, Clarke," he whispers in her ear, sweeping a few sticky, blonde strands behind her ear where they've fallen out of the loose, matted ponytail.

From below the tented sheets, Abby raises one eyebrow.
"Ready, baby?"

Clarke bites her lip hard, sucks in a breath, and nods.

"Then let's do this."

***

Four hours later, Clarke's warm head lolls on Bellamy's shoulder as she holds one of their sons, Liam Wells, in the crook of her arm. They gaze at him in wonder while Jackson finishes taking measurements of his twin.

"He's so perfect," Clarke breathes, running the pad of her forefinger over his cheek, feather light.

"He is," Bellamy tries and fails to suppress the emotion in his voice. He watches Liam yawn and sees his tiny tongue. "And so are you."

"You're such a softie," Clarke grins, turning her head enough to press a kiss to his cheek.

"Hey, I thought I was the best dad in the universe," Bellamy pretends to be offended.

"Yeah, that too," her eyes dance when they meet his.

Jackson's bright smile appears over Bellamy's shoulder, and Clarke tries to straighten up.

"And here's baby number two. A healthy 7.5 pounds!"

He slides the blanket-wrapped bundle into Bellamy's arms, and Clarke beams.
"This one has your hair, like Jacob."

"I can see that," Bellamy returns. "But this one needs a name."

"Perseus is not an option!" Clarke throws out immediately.

Bellamy laughs.

"All right, all right. No Greek heroes. What's it going to be, little guy?" He rocks the gurgling infant with the barest motion.

Clarke's eyes flick down to Liam, who already sports a tuft of her shock-blonde hair and a dusting of freckles the color of tree bark peppered across the bridge of his nose. When he blinks at her sleepily, there's a glimpse of robin's egg blue.

She looks at Bellamy who's already looking back.

"Do you think she'd mind? Would it upset her?"

He thinks a moment before the corner of his mouth curves up.

"She's come such a long way. We could ask but--"

"It's what you want though, isn't it?" Clarke cuts in.

"Yeah."

Their dark-haired son begins crying, a weak squaw, and Bellamy takes to shushing him immediately, providing a finger for him to suck on.

"Well, since you let me pick the first name, I want you to be happy."
"Oh," Bellamy grins. "Is that the only reason?"

"It's the best one at the moment."

"All right then," Bellamy's low rumbling voice is something she wants to sink into. Her eyelids droop with exhaustion.

"Henry Lincoln, welcome to the world."

It's the peaceful, golden bubble of hope that he doesn't really know what to do with as Clarke drifts into sleep beside him and Abby reaches for Liam.

"She did so well," Abby smiles down at her daughter before turning her attention to her wiggly grandson.

"She's the strongest person I know," Bellamy says.

"I'm happy for you both. I'm glad this ... went smoothly."

They gaze at each other for a moment. He feels a lump in his throat, a sudden urge to explain himself though he knows Clarke would be livid if he did.

"Abby, I never .... she's my ...

She shakes her head abruptly.

"I know. She's a force onto herself. Always has been. I know how much you love her, but even so, you can't change her mind once it's made up."

She wiggles her eyebrows and coos at Liam as he gurgles.
"But, her stubborn streak has its advantages sometimes."

And a moment later, she's left him with a new baby in his arms and the comforting weight of Clarke nestled against his hip and thigh.

***

She's warm, and her head feels heavy, almost like she's emerging from a pond and swimming toward the light at the surface. There's a mild dampness near her chest when her hand skims past it and lands on thick, solid, muscle.

She squeezes Bellamy's thigh.

"How are our boys?"

"They're all good, Princess. Octavia already came by. She said Jacob's doing fine. Jasper is making dirt pies with him in the vegetable garden."

"Perfect," Clarke smirks, snuggling underneath the arm he lifts for her. "He'll smell like fertilizer for a week even after I give him a bath."

Bellamy's chuckle is low.

"She cried over the name."

Clarke's eyes dart open, and his fingertips push carefully into her hip. "Easy, she was happy about it. Honored, I think."

She lets out a sigh.

"Oh, ok, then."
There's a soft knock at the door, and Harper and Jackson appear with their boys. "I think someone's hungry," Harper grins down at Henry, who's waving a chubby fist in the air.

Clarke sits up more fully with Bellamy's help.

"Come here to momma," she stretches her arms out.

Bellamy knows he should probably look away when her Clarke tugs down the shoulder of her loose, white top and draws Henry close to her breast. But she shines with a radiance he missed right after Jacob's birth, and he finds he can't focus on anything but her.

Thirty minutes later, he's humming the tune to "Lavender's Blue," a favorite nursery rhyme of Aurora's, to the twins when spiky brown hair shows up in his line of vision. His body tenses immediately.

"Murphy ... " he hisses between gritted teeth.

Raven appears a moment later beside him, all bouncing movement and shiny teeth.

"Hi guys! Congratulations!" she chirps.

"What did we practice?" she grunts, elbowing Murphy in the ribs.

Bellamy's about to stand up when Clarke lays a light hand on his arm, shaking her head infinitesimally.

"Hi, Murphy," she says. "Thanks for coming by. Do you want to meet the boys?"

Murphy rakes a helpless hand through his hair, eyes latching onto the tense line of Bellamy's jaw.

"I'm ... I'm really sorry for being such an asshole," he says in a rush.
"And?" Bellamy's boom fills the room.

Raven hums something incomprehensible from beside him.

"And for threatening Clarke. What happened ... to Emori ... I know it wasn't her fault."

"Yeah, well, you've got--"

"Thank you for saying that," Clarke interrupts Bellamy loudly. She motions him closer, and he reluctantly steps forward. "I'm not angry at you, Murphy. I know how much you loved her. I know what loss is like."

"I wanted to die too," his voice is quiet, the declaration sharp and out of the void.

Clarke accepts the tiny teddy bear he hands her.

There's a long silence where Clarke blinks back the tears she sees reflected in Murphy's eyes. At last, a monitor beep in the corner of the room breaks the spell.

"Let's celebrate the living today, shall we?" Raven interjects. "Aunt Raven gets to hold chubby cheeks first."

Chapter End Notes

  
  Story recommendations!
  - take to the sky
  - challenge accepted
Roan sighs. "Do you want me to ..." he waves his fork in the air aimlessly. "Slide a sword through your stomach and put you out of your misery? It'd be faster."

"His Majesty is so clever today," she snipes acidly.

"You know you can just say whatever it is you mean down here. I'm not your King any more than Octavia is Heda or Jaha's the Chancellor."

"Life doesn't make sense without a sense of duty and place," comes the tart reply.

"Even so... " he sends her what he must assume is a charming smirk.

"Fine," she smiles as if eating something sour. "Screw you, Roan."

"I've been offering for weeks now, but you keep finding excuses."

She throws her apple core at him; it makes a nice thwack against his shoulder. He laughs. "What happened to your little bird?"
Roan shrugs casually, but she thinks something resembling sadness passes through his pretty eyes. "She flew away."

Echo thinks about this, momentarily distracted from her own thoughts. "Since the girl, Emori, died, right?"

He nods once. "So it would seem."

"You're telling me you can't compete with that greasy-haired arsonist she's been comforting?"

Roan pushes back from the table and collects his tray. "This is what you never understand, Echo. And it fucks you over every time."

"What's that?" She leans into the table, her sleek, chestnut hair framing her bright eyes and pretty, oval face. He's slightly uncomfortable with the thought passing through his mind, as he used to depend on her to guard his life under any and all circumstances alongside being his chief spy. But she does look better somehow than she did when they all descended the gloomy steps into this underground prison. Maybe it's the more casual, form-fitting clothes or the touches of makeup she applies now. Maybe it's just that her breasts are more visible.

"You lack subtlety," he says simply, enjoying the effect his words have on her.

"You don't understand how it is, how it was," she quickly corrects herself. "When they weren't talking, he was nicer to me, he had started to forgive me for what I did. He ..."

Roan licks his teeth. "... loves Clarke with everything he's got. It's who he is, you know this."

Echo purses her lips and looks away.

"You read people every day. It's what you do. You tricked him into leaving the place where an assassin killed his girlfriend and blew up his people. You threatened Clarke in Polis if those stories are true," he shoots her a meaningful look. "You almost killed Octavia, whom he'd move Heaven and Earth to defend. Only a fool fights a battle she knows she can't win. And I know you're not a fool."
Jasper's not exactly surprised to find Monty in the library late at night, but it's also not what he'd call a regular occurrence. He peers over his best friend's shoulder, swiping *What to Expect When You're Expecting* out of his thin hands.

"Hey!" Monty shouts in protest as the weather-beaten book flies away from him. "Careful! There's nothing else like it in here!"

Jasper makes a face, toying with the crinkly, yellow corners of the book with nothing resembling delicacy. As his eyes track across the page Monty was reading, his mouth curls unpleasantly, and his face turns a tinged shade of pea green.

"Monty ... this is ... this is ... disgusting." He lays the book down on the table and points to the diagram depicting childbirth.

"It's no spacewalk, that's for sure."

"Why would anyone *do* this?" Jasper's mouth falls open as he points to a passage featuring expressions like "evil heartburn" followed by "sneeze-peeing."

"Continuation of the human race?"

"Maybe it's just not worth it, man." Jasper falls back in his seat.

Monty frowns.

"Did you come here for a reason, or just to bug me?"

"Oh, yeah," Jasper runs a hand through his hair. "Raven needs your help. Kane's up her ass about reverse engineering a way into the nearest radio tower."
Monty raises an eyebrow. "Because?"

"Because ... it's a power source to connect to Go-Sci." Jasper says deliberately slow. He gives Monty a playful shove. "Weren't you paying attention at the meeting last week? I think all this baby stuff is throwing you off your game."

"Excuse me for being preoccupied about bringing a life in the world."

"I think that's Harper's job."

Jasper gets the shove back.

As quiet settles between them, he glances around the cave-like space. It smells musty in a comforting way, and nobody's around to overhear them. His eyes land back on Monty, who's raking his hands through his spiked, shiny black hair, making it stand up.

"I told you I'm happy for you, right? That I'm proud of you?"

Monty gives him a small nod and half-smile.

"Ok, good. 'Cause I am." Jasper lets out a relieved sigh. "I'm horrified for Harper, still can't figure out why she let you knock her up, but really happy for both of you and your little alien-to-be."

"Jesus!" Monty exclaims, but then they catch each other's eyes and are laughing in earnest seconds later.

"Ready to roll?" Jasper asks, clapping Monty on the back. "That power's not going to turn itself on!"

As they walk down the hall toward engineering, Monty turns over Kane's plan to use the rocket to reach Go-Sci and search the Earth for arable land over in his mind. It's slightly insane, sure, but no more ridiculous than the rest of the crazy shit they've pulled since they came to the ground. He just
hopes they find a patch of green somewhere out there at the end of five years. Green would be good.

***

"What am I looking for again?" Bellamy pushes his sweaty hair out of his eyes and glances at Clarke.

She's leaning on some old cartons watching him work and sighs affectionately.

"Extra scrap cloth for baby bibs - Harper's going to need all the help she can get with Monty's concoctions. Can I just -" She moves forward to pick up a box, but Bellamy swoops in, swatting away her arms.

"No!" He says seriously. "I'll do it! I don't want you to strain yourself."

She rolls her eyes. "I'm fine, babe. It's been almost two months."

"You had twins," he says pointedly.

Clarke cracks a roguish smile, running her hand up her thigh invitingly.

"Not my fault you're overly virile."

He groans and resumes the search through the nearest batch of disheveled, ancient electronics that Raven would have a field day with. Clarke examines his back muscles as he bends; they flex and ripple and a small twinge flares between her thighs.

"Know what this reminds me of?"

"What?" Bellamy huffs, picking up a small generator and placing it lightly on the ground. "This'll be useful to bring back," he mumbles to himself.
Clarke rocks against the wall enough for him to notice.

"When we first landed and went looking for winter supplies in that bunker, and you found the guns."

He throws her the smallest smile.

"I remember being high on the jobi nuts and that you were a decent shot."

"I remember you being afraid to flirt with me." Her grin is lethal and cat-like.

Bellamy stands fully, brushing some dust off his pants and rakes his eyes over her body. Her baby weight is almost nonexistent now - limited food reserves will do that to a person. There's just the hint of extra fat around her hips and the tiniest amount over her stomach that he likes to run his hand across to remember how he put life there.

"I'm not afraid now," he says gruffly.

"No," she sings in agreement. "Now you're very macho."

He flashes his teeth. "You're going to regret that, Princess."

But she doesn't, she can't when the strength of his body presses her into the gray wall with a hard, sucking kiss to her neck moments later before claiming her mouth with the careful dive of his tongue. It's a slow, seductive game he's playing, stroking up her sides while she scrambles to run her palms up his abs and pull him closer still. She's embarrassed by her moan when his fingers slip under her dark dress and latch into the waistband of her leggings.

"This ok?" He scans her blue eyes for hesitation.

"Yeah." Her nod's a touch frantic.

He's spicy with sweat, and her stomach curls. Her leggings and underwear hit the floor while she
scrambles with his pants button and zipper. When he grips under her thighs to hoist her up, she goes willingly, knowing he'll bear her weight and slide inside her deeper at this angle. Clarke plays with his curls, curving her torso upward to lay a kiss on his temple. He stutters at the gesture; she watches the clench of his bicep and leans forward to place her lips on his bare arm, too before looking back into his eyes.

"Love you," she breathes.

"Bellamy grinds into her damp heat through his boxers, not even bothering to kick off his pants. He groans into the wildflower scent of her neck, and her stomach flips for him.

"Always, Clarke." His grumble against her skin sparks tears in her eyes. "You're my girl."

"We don't have a lot of time," she whispers into his mouth before kissing him fully.

"So let me take care of you." Bellamy's sure fingers reach between her thatch of sticky curls to stroke the side of her clit, and she goes limp against his tan shoulder, parting her thighs wider for him with a sigh. The squish of him pressing his fingers into her slick heat brings color to her face. Bellamy mouths at her jaw while his fingers stretch her open for him, tickling her folds and squeezing her breast through her dress. She keens when he pinches a nipple to hard attention, knees digging into his hips more fiercely.

"You're so sexy, Clarke. So sexy," he teases her as she rips down his boxers and frees his hard length from its encasement. Bellamy sweeps a finger around her opening. Clarke sighs, a pink wave of heat rushing across her damp skin like a storm above her breasts. "Always so wet for my cock. You want it deep inside you, don't you, baby?"

"Yes, yes, yes," she babble-chants, trying and failing to angle her pelvis forward to catch the head of him between her folds. He holds himself a little off her, making it harder.

"Don't tease me. I want you," she grits and sinks her teeth straight into his shoulder, nails slicing across his back in retaliation.

Bellamy hisses but then his fingertips find her opening once more, and her eyes flutter closed, head tipping into the wall, when he thrusts two of them slow and lazy inside her. It's laboriously mild, a gentle rub that makes her legs twitch, and her stomach spasm.
"Bell... Bell..." She rocks herself down shamelessly searching for the right kind of pressure.

"Yeah, give yourself what you need, babe. There you go, that's it."

A protest rises from her throat when he pulls his fingers out and jerks his thumbnail along the underside of her clit twice before drawing away entirely.

"It's ok. I got you." His mouth seals over hers, and she can't help but smile when his fingers sticky with her arousal interlace with her own, pinning them to the wall near her head while he slides a thumb back and forth on her hipbone.

"You want it?"

"God, yes. Please." Clarke jerks upward, but he stills her immediately.

"You can't," she whines, dropping a kiss to his jawbone.

Her hand sneaks between them, latching around him and stroking none too gently, sweeping her thumb along the head and sliding the precum gathered there back down to his base. Up and down she goes, eyes fixated on the thick cock that's about to pry her open for the first time in weeks. Bellamy jerks into her hand a few times, and she loves the effect she always has on him.

"I want you to take me hard," she murmurs, not looking up at him. "I want it from behind."

"Clarke--"

"Come on," she cuts him off, already hearing the hesitation coloring his voice. "Give me what I want."

He huffs.
"Let's see how you do with this first."

His hand is mean and grips more harshly at her left breast, bearing down on the soft, pliable flesh before leaning forward, yanking the loose collar down and suckling a taut nipple into his mouth.

"No bra?" he raises his eyebrows at her.

"Laundry day," she shrugs casually. "And ... you know ... this makes breastfeeding easier."

His eyes flash and darken.

"Sink down on my cock, Clarke," he rasps, sucking kisses up her chest and neck. Her legs latch harder against him. "I'll give it to you good."

Her hand is sure when it grips him and guides him to her warm moisture, bumping it against her clit for an added jolt. Then his stiff flesh is pushing her apart for the first time since the twins arrived, and her choking moan is absorbed by Bellamy's mouth gliding over her own.

"You feel so amazing, babe. Tight. Wet," he huffs, not letting her adjust as much as she thought but rocking straight into her, nice and deep. And hard.

Clarke groans, exposing her neck when his cock bottoms out inside her in a few strokes. His hands are tight on her hips, driving her up and then pulling her back down onto him. It's overwhelming. She's not sure if it should be, but she can't seem to find the will to care. Electric sparks race through her bloodstream, pulse in her hips.

"Jesus, you're perfect," Bellamy watches her glistening tits shake and bucks into her roughly. "This how you wanted it? A little rough?"

She bites her lip but nods with a swift sureness that, if anything, gets him harder, blonde hair falling into her sweaty face. "Fuck me, come on," she grinds her pelvis down against his, keeping him close when he starts pulling away.

"I plan on it, babe."
He kisses her neck, teeth lingering on her chin a moment, one hand slipping back to her pussy to flick at her clit with practiced ease. A tremor shoots through her at the action, and she clenches down on his thickness invading her.

"There you go, grip my cock, babe. I know that's how you like it."

But then, quite suddenly, he's drawing back and picking her up bodily at the waist.

"Beeeeeellllll," she whines at the loss of him filling her, feeling empty immediately. Her walls flutter and clench at nothing, chasing a rising orgasm that is being stunted now. "What're you--"

"Turn around," he says, darker than before. "Hands here," he pushes her palms into the smooth surface and bends her over at her waist. He's rubbing his calloused fingers over the fleshy part of her ass before giving it a small slap, causing her to yelp.

She's grinning a little, but he can't see it. He knows she likes it when he gets like this though, that she'll feed off his energy. He fits tightly against her, the hair of his thighs chaffing but familiar, and he glides the head of his wet cock across her folds teasingly while playing with her nipples, rubbing his fingers around and around them, so the fabric of her dress abrades the delicate skin.

"I want to watch you swallow my cock up, babe," he says at last. "Fast or slow as you want. And I'm going to keep my big fingers on your little clit until you come twice for me. No stopping, ok?"

Clarke takes a deep breath, stares down at her toes butting against the wall, and nods.

"Good girl," Bellamy kisses the divots of her upper spine, shifts forward a little so his head is brushing against her opening.

"Whenever you're ready."
"Maybe I'm amazed at the way you love me all the time.
Maybe I'm afraid of the way I love you.
Maybe I'm amazed at the way you pulled me out of time
And hung me on a line.
Maybe I'm amazed at the way I really need you.
Maybe I'm a man, and maybe I'm a lonely man
Who's in the middle of something
That he doesn't really understand.
Maybe I'm a man, and maybe you're the only woman
Who could ever help me.
Baby, won't you help me understand?"
~Paul McCartney, "Maybe I'm Amazed"

There's a steady, throbbing pulse between Clarke's legs and a warm sheen of sweat painting her skin shiny as she stares straight ahead at the drab wall before her. Bellamy's close and hot against her back, so close that when he raises an arm up to wrap strong fingers around her waist, she feels the impression of his abs shift against her spine.

"Something for you to play with while I get myself ready," she says into her shoulder.

Bellamy's fingers twitch against the bare, jiggling flesh. He hasn't been able to touch her like this for weeks now. Clarke sighs, dropping her head down at the neck almost immediately.

"Sorry, does it hurt?" His hand goes still immediately.

"No, no," she says quickly, laying her own hand over her dress to cage his in and keep it in place. "Just a little sensitive, but much better than they were. It's ok," she strokes her thumb down his wrist.
"You can manhandle me a little."

He snorts with laughter against her neck before pushing her hands back against the wall and out of the way. In truth, there is a tenderness to her breasts from feeding her babies and a strange, painful pleasure that shoots through her stomach as Bellamy runs a thumbnail across her peaked nipple before confidently taking the generous mound into his palm. The ache intensifies when his other hand slips up to cup the right one more tightly. She knows how much he likes this, can hear it in the way his breath is more ragged now. It's not something she would ever deny him.

"They're so damn big now, babe," he nuzzles her neck, drawing his teeth mildly across her shoulder. She shivers, feels the tightness in her upper thighs intensify. "Perfect."

Smiling a fraction to herself, she reaches between her legs and strokes the head of his cock, nudging it closer to her sticky opening.

"There you go," Bellamy husks, somehow shifting closer still and releasing one breast to lock her wrists together on the wall. "Rest back on my cock."

As soon as she leans backward a fraction, he's as good as his word. He gives her stiff nipple an intense twist before dropping a hand over her cunt possessively. The tips of his fingers dance around her opening where she flirts with his cock, but his thumb begins an insistent stroking along the thin skin at the side of her clit almost immediately.

"Bell!" she huffs when she takes a tiny step backward, allowing him in an inch deeper.

"Yeah, what? You're doing good, Princess. So good. Take some more when you're ready. I know you want to be filled up."

The thing is, she really does. She wants to jolt as the fat head of him runs over something sensitive deep inside her. Wants to whimper as he does it again and again and again.

He pinches her clit between his thumb and forefinger, and she downright loses it. It forces her hips to rock back, and with a gruff, "Leave your hands up here, Princess," his free one drops to her waist, and he closes the centimeters-large gap between their legs and thrusts the tiniest fraction inside her.

"Can't help it," he whispers into her hair. "Gotta be inside you." She's already resting her forehead
on her forearm, eyes closed. She rocks back against him, an "ahhugh" sound breaking free from her throat as the strumming on her clit intensifies.

He's overwhelmed by the honey vanilla smell rising up from her and the smoothness of the skin at her hips where he's rucked up her dress to her waist.

"Reach under and take the rest, Clarke. Push it inside. I'm gonna bottom out like this, all right?"

His breathing is shaky, but his voice is strong and hits her like lightning. She nods hurriedly, rocking into his probing fingers while wrapping her own around the middle of his cock and then pushing herself back onto it. She's wet from their foreplay, but it has been a while, and her body's gone through a lot. She wonders in a moment of panic if it'll still even feel as good for him, as tight. She's so sensitive right now that she imagines anything he does would feel wonderful. Still, he feels thick and hard as ever, the velvet granite of him forcing its way up her channel and over the lump of tissue that brings small, golden starbursts to her eyes. She pushes the thought from her mind.

"Go, on, Bell," she pants, wrists slipping from the sweat, but she holds them steady as her ass grinds against his groin. "Take me, please."

She can feel his smirk right below her ear when he sucks at her pulse point.

"I'm always gonna take you, Princess. You're mine."

And then he's thrusting hard and fast and deep against her shuttering frame. The sound of his skin slapping against her fills the small storage space right alongside her moaning as he continues to massage her clit, first slowly, and then with more abrasive bite.

She squeezes her muscles around his thickness once and hears his breath stutter, so she does it again. He palms her chest wildly through her dress in retaliation. The pain is counteracted by him stroking her folds and tapping circular patterns at the nub exposed from lifting the hood of her clit. When she shatters the first time, all she can see is the never ending grey of the wall.

But then Bellamy slides out of her momentarily, and there's a rush of loss. There's wetness seeping out of her, and she knows without looking his cock will be coated in it. He turns her around gently, and when her eyes meet his, they're nearly black. She nods to a question that hangs unspoken between them.
His cock remains hard and ready between them, and when he lifts her up and onto him, he slides in easily enough despite her fluttering walls.

"Oh my God!" she cries out at a particularly sharp thrust.

"Play with your clit. Don't stop until you cum again, Princess," he says warningly. His jaw muscle is tight, and then he's too close to her for her to look at it, his own lips ghosting over her collarbone, nibbling at it.

"Bell," she whines when her fingers slip back under her dress and tentatively touch the area right above the spot where their bodies are grinding together. "I c-can't. It's too much."

For a moment he stops moving entirely, brown eyes sweeping over her upturned face as if reading a map. Then, never abandoning her gaze, he covers her hand with one of his and presses their index fingers together over the swollen tissue. A more pleasant shudder goes through her. "You can. Go easy until you can take more. Go on." He pulls his hand away and raises his eyebrows at her.

Biting her lip, she continues. Moments later, she's rocking back against him, and he slams into her until all her muscles go lax with a fresh orgasm.

"Such a good girl for me," Bellamy grits out before swelling and spilling inside her.

***

The black, old-fashioned camera Clarke finds in the storage area as searched for her clothes, flushed and satisfied, quickly becomes the talk of the mess hall.

"It's the kind that spits out a picture almost as soon as you take them," Monty says confidently, examining the contraption between his long fingers. "I've read about these."

"But how do we know how much film is inside? It is called film, right?" Harper raises an eyebrow at her boyfriend.

"Yeah, McIntyre, it's called film," Murphy rolls his eyes and takes a small bite of his vegetable lasagna before making a face. "Kara is loosing her touch in the greenhouses."
"Like she ever had much of one," Octavia comes out of nowhere and drops her tray at their table with a clatter.

Harper ignores them, stroking one hand across her growing stomach. "What about the film?"

"Monty shrugs.

"I'm really not sure," he flips it around in his hands, examining it more closely. "I guess you just keep taking pictures until it runs out."

"Amateurs!" Jasper laughs and snatches the camera away from his friend. "This is a chemistry thing! It's an instant camera and uses self-developing film to create a chemically developed print. This number," he points at the turn dial hidden behind what looks like thick plastic, "Tells you how many photos are left."

"So," Clarke squints her eyes and leans over his shoulder, keeping a firm arm wrapped around a wriggling Jacob. "39?"

"Cam-ma?" He looks up at Clarke with wide, almond-shaped eyes, and she grins, leaning forward to kiss the top of his head. "That's right, buddy. It's a camera! It's going to take our picture."

Just then, Liam gives a squalling cry from the double baby carrier Ilian kindly built for them.

"What's wrong, little guy?" Bellamy peers down to examine his son, fingers tickling his stomach lightly.

Clarke sighs, pushing a frizzled bit of blonde hair back behind her ear. "He's probably just hungry again. Nobody can eat like our child."

Harper emits a nervous laugh, while Octavia leans across Murphy to smack the back of Bellamy's head.
"What?" he turns on her, angry.

"You can't just stare at Clarke's chest all the time, Bell. Some people are actually trying to digest food here."

Clarke blushes a pretty rose, but her eyes are mischievous when they meet Bellamy's. It takes him a minute, but then his smile exposes his teeth, too and Octavia just shoves his shoulder.

"You know what would be a good idea?" she looks pointedly between Clarke and Harper.

"What's that, Skairipa?" Murphy blinks his eyes quickly and throws a hand under his chin, leaning forward in exaggerated interest.

"A photo shoot!" she says delightedly. But she's immediately frowning when six identically blank faces stare back at her.

"Like, guns?" Bellamy asks.

"Noooo!" she sings out dramatically. "People used to pose for pictures with their families and friends. Or to sell things like clothes, watches, cars ... you know. Like in magazines and on billboards?"

"Sorry," Harper shrugs with a pained face.

"No clue," Monty chimes in.

"God, how is it that I grew up under the floor and know more about civilized Earth life than you people?"

"Maybe because your mother actually spent time telling you stories," Murphy offers. It's not cruel at all, but there's a hint of a bite to it.

Harper lays a brief, soothing hand on his forearm, clicking her tongue.
"Whatever," Octavia sighs. "The point is you both have kids or at least a kid on the way, so it would be cool to take some pictures and remember what they looked like at this age, right?" She levels her glance right at Clarke, who's taken to bouncing a babbling Jacob on her knee while Bellamy reaches down to pick up the fussing Liam.

"Well..." Clarke hesitates a moment. "I guess it could be nice? But do we really want to waste the film on--"

"Perfect!" Octavia says loudly. "Yes, we do want to waste a few pictures on my nephews. "Maybe even one on my big brother and," she cocks her eyebrow up with sass, "the Princess he loves and can't keep his hands off of no matter who might be walking by."

Clarke looks down and pats her son's sides as the others chuckle. She's long gotten used to the mostly good-natured ribbing at how ... physical ... her relationship is with Bellamy. It's not that they don't try to keep things private. But they live in a bunker, and it's just not always possible to ensure nobody sees or hears anything.

"A few pictures of the rest of us wouldn't be bad, either," Murphy says pointedly, clapping Monty on the shoulder.

"Yeah, yeah, as long as you're photogenic," Octavia returns.

"Maybe the planets room? It would be cool if we could figure out the light," Jasper suggests.

"Yeah!" Harper's eyes light up. "That would look really good!"

Octavia tilts back in her chair grinning, bringing her fingers together with a satisfied flourish. "Excellent ... let's do it as soon as we can get everyone's schedules lined up for a group shot."

***

"Hey, baby." The sudden knock at the med bay door surprises Abby, who has her back turned and is rearranging medical supplies on the shelves across the room. "How are you?"
"Oh! Hi, Marcus," she smiles tiredly at him. "I'm fine. Just sent Harper out of here a few minutes ago. She'll be ready to give birth any day now."

"Mmmm," he nods thoughtfully. "The youth really are going to inherit the Earth, aren't they?"

"That's the dream," Abby returns as she slips off her white coat and hangs it on the hook on the wall. "How was your day?" His usual goatee has been growing into more of a salt-and-pepper beard lately. She'll have to trim it for him soon.

"Long ...." he sighs, walking toward her and slipping his arms around her waist, kissing her temple. "Exhausting, but revealing."

Abby quirks an eyebrow up at him.

"Revealing in what way?"

Kane swallows carefully, searching her eyes.

"Thelonius found another one of Cadogan's design books buried away in the library earlier this week."

"You mean a book about the design of this bunker or something else he built?"

"This bunker," he begins running his thumbs over the grooves of her hip bones.

"Ok," Abby steps back, pushing her long bangs behind her ear. "So did he discover something new? We've searched this place high and low; I don't see what --"

"We missed something." Kane rubs a hand across his face for a moment. "In that room with the planets in it. The floor falls away when you hit this code hidden behind a quote panel."
"What?" Abby stares at him, eyes narrowed. "The floor falls away to what? The center of the Earth?"

"No," Kane says slowly. "To a rocket hidden under the floor. It's not huge or anything," he holds up his hand as Abby's mouth falls open. "And we haven't figured out how to raise it up yet to climb inside, but it could fit more people than the one at Becca's lab."

"For what though?" Abby demands. "What did he even need a rocket for if he was hiding people under the ground? Wasn't the plan to return to Earth when the apocalypse passed?"

Kane nods. "We still think so. But maybe it was an escape plan if things got bad down here. Thelonius thinks Cadogan might have wanted a way to reach the Ark if necessary. It's not like people didn't know we were up there."

Abby just blinks.

"There's only one way out of this bunker, and it's the way we came in. You can't fit a rocket through it!" she cries.

"It's tilted sideways to run under the floor. There must be mechanisms to allow it to release through a side wall and then shoot upward into the sky. I'm not sure - Thelonius is the engineer. He's looking over all the plans now."

"So what does it mean? He wants to use it, doesn't he? To reach the Ark?"

There's a long pause, and Kane sighs deeply.

"It means we won't have to wait for the five years to be up to see what's left of the Earth, Abby. A few people can reach the Ark and see what's left of the ground. We could make better plans," he grasps her hands, but she draws them back almost immediately. "We won't be in the dark about what's waiting for us. We won't have to cross the desert wasteland to get to Becca's lab to figure this all out."

But his face still looks so pained that fear begins to curdle in her stomach.
"What else?" she says sharply.

Kane looks away for a moment, and when he faces her again, there's a glimmer of tears in his brown eyes.

"He took Raven with him to find it. They were working on an electrical glitch on the atrium level anyway, and --"

"No," she shakes her head slowly, voice fierce. "She's not going."

"She wants to. We can't stop her, Abby."

Her eyes flash with a darkness he hasn't seen there for a long time, not since the death of her husband. "She's not taking Bellamy with her."
"This one’s for believing

If only for its sake

Come on friends, get up now.

Love is to be made."

~Greg Laswell, "Comes and Goes (In Waves)"

The cut is deep, a gash dribbling droplets of scarlet down his dark skin as Clarke works hastily to secure some gauze around it. Miller kicks his legs uneasily against the side of the table, avoiding eye contact with her.

"It's a waste of medical supplies when you're getting hurt just screwing around in training. Apply pressure."

She yanks the cloth tighter than necessary before rummaging around for the supplies needed to stitch him up.

"Clarke. I know you're angry--"

Her back stiffens.

"You don't know the half of it," she grits.

"Have you ever tried to change his mind when it's made up?"

Clarke spins around, bearing her top row of teeth. She's not used to any sort of whiny quality to his voice.
"I was the one who talked Bryan down when you broke up with him," she hisses, stepping closer to his legs until their faces are only a foot apart. "You're Bellamy's best friend. I asked you to talk to him for me, tell him this is ridiculous, and you--"

"I did!" Miller interrupts, angry. "But he's a stubborn ass, just like you!"

"He doesn't even have the tech experience to go up there with her," Clarke grips the side of the examining table. "It should be Monty."

"But now that Jordan's here, Harper's not going to go for that," Miller says flatly.

Clarke jerks back, throwing up her arms.

"Well how the hell do you think I feel?! We have a two-year-old and eight-month-old twins who screech every time he leaves the room!"

It's too much. The headache is building above her ear, and her neck muscles are tightening considerably.

"Clarke... my arm..." Miller gestures down where the blood is rapidly seeping through the cloth.

She lets out an exasperated sigh, grabbing the needle and thread to work on him.

"I'm exhausted," she mutters, and he's not sure she's really talking to him anymore. "The twins still don't sleep well, and Bellamy just has ... some kind of magic touch with them. But if he's not in guard training, he's teaching. And if he's not teaching, he's wrapped up in top secret meetings with Kane and Jaha about recolonizing the planet."

"I know it's hard right now, but--"

"You don't know anything. You have no idea what it's like when the person you care about most, the one you've done everything you could to save just wants to throw his life away!"
"I know nothing about it?" Miller raises a dark eyebrow at her as the sharp point of the needle pricks his skin.

"Damn, it stings!"

A flash of guilt explodes in her stomach at the thought of him imagining Bryan dead on the Ark when they were all living at the dropship. But, she reasons, Bryan wasn't dead. Not by a long shot. And they'd been happy together when they'd been reunited at Arkadia, at least until recently. Something had shifted; she wasn't completely sure of the details. All she knew was that Jackson and private medical tutoring sessions were involved. She couldn't really blame Bryan for being pissed, not after watching Echo throw herself at Bellamy at every available opportunity.

"He's ... my person, Miller. We have three kids together," Clarke says more gently. "If anything happened to him--"

"Nothing will," Miller says solemnly, patting her shoulder with his good hand.

Clarke swallows back the stinging tears.

"You don't know that."

***

Later that afternoon, Clarke's hands are full of Jacob's most gently used baby clothes. She balances the soft stack precariously on her raised knee before knocking at the classroom door.

"Anybody home?"

"Yeah, come on in!"

When the door swings open, she finds none other than Miller bent over Harper's teaching desk, chuckling at the polaroid she holds out to him with bright eyes.
"I got to hand it to you, kid. Being able to lift me up when I was pregnant like that was impressive," she's smiling up at him.

"Hey, Clarke! Here, put those down," the blonde hurries to get up and help her friend. "What's all this?"

Harper's body is almost totally back to normal after the baby, toned and lean from her love of fitness. Clarke would be lying if she said she wasn't a little jealous.

"Oh," Clarke laughs nervously, brushing some hair behind her shoulder. "Just some of Jacob's old baby things. I thought it might be nice for Jordan, even though, you know, a lot of them are blue and green."

"Thanks!" Harper throws her arms around Clarke's shoulders, beaming. "I don't buy into that gender color theory bullshit anyway."

Clarke watches Miller look awkwardly at the pictures over Harper's shoulder. Harper's eyes dart between them as she pulls away.

"I'll let you two catch up," Miller says politely, grabbing his guard jacket off a desk. "See you and Monty for dinner later, Harps?"

"Yeah, absolutely. Jordan can spit up on you for a nice change of pace," Harper teases.

"Where's that little trouble maker, anyway? Chilling with Monty and Raven in engineering?"

Harper opens her mouth to reply, but finds she doesn't need to. Bellamy's deep voice has morphed into a sing-song melody from right outside the door.

"Where's the teddy, Jordan? Where did he go? Can you find him for me?"

Bellamy's boot pushes the door open lightly, and he's waving a tiny, fluffy teddy bear through the air near Jordan, whose wide brown eyes follow it around as she gurgles happily.
"There's my girl!" Harper sings, rushing over to pluck her daughter from Bellamy's arms. Clarke's heart clenches when she sees the baby's tiny fist reach out for Bellamy's shirt as she's picked up. But her fussing ceases nearly instantaneously when she's back in her mother's arms. Harper rumples his hair affectionately. "Thanks for watching her during my class."

"No problem," Bellamy says easily. "Someone's got to teach the kids math, so we can build a new civilization, right? Sure as hell isn't going to be me."

"Nah, you really excel at ancient civilizations, shooting practice, and natural brooding," Harper quips.

When he glances up from his grin, it takes him a moment to realize the awkwardness spreading through the room like the grounders' acid fog.

"Hey, Blake, wanna go for a jog around the track?" Miller interjects suddenly.

"Uh..."

Bellamy raises his eyebrows, raking his fingers through his curls. He turns toward Clarke for guidance, looking like he's about to take a step in her direction, but she moves backward to stand next to Harper, glancing down at the desk instead. Beside the picture of Miller and Harper is one of her pretending to steal Jasper's goggles from him and another of her grinning in between Harper and Raven. Octavia's in the next one, smacking a kiss to her brother's cheek. Clarke's already taken the one with her, Bellamy and their boys back to their quarters and wedged it carefully on the side of their one mirror. Bellamy likes to call it the Blake Family Portrait.

It's the first time she's actually seen him in three days. Their schedules are both full and conflicting, and by the time he's made it back to their apartment near midnight, she's been sleeping. She's normally worn down after giving the kids sponge baths and begging Jacob to sleep in his pajamas while he argues because he's turning into a little exhibitionist.

"Hey, Clarke," he says, soothing and careful.

"Hi." She draws her arms tighter around her body.

"I got off shift sooner than I thought. Do you want to get an early dinner and spend some time with
the boys? I've been working around the clock," he says the last sentence to Miller apologetically.

"I get it, that's cool," Miller gives Bellamy a playful shove as he heads for the exit. "See you all later."

"Bye! Thanks for bringing the pictures!" Harper calls out, rocking Jordan back and forth in her arms.

"You should have went with him," Clarke says quietly.

Bellamy frowns.

"But I've barely seen you and the boys," he narrows his eyes. "We haven't talked all week."

"It's not like you listen when I talk to you anyway," she snips.

Harper shifts awkwardly, glancing up at the clock.

"Shit, is that the time? I've got to lock up this classroom and meet up with Jaha to discuss next month's crop yields before dinner. Sorry to cut this short, guys. But let's do dinner soon with Monty, ok?"

Clarke's not surprised when they're practically pushed into the hall, Bellamy's boots thudding behind her as she power walks in the direction of their apartment.

***

"You're going to eat all that?" Bellamy gestures down at the mountain of rainbow vegetables on Clarke's plate as she drops her tray unceremoniously on the table across from him.

"I'm still breastfeeding the twins. Of course I am. I don't waste food, Bellamy," she says acidly.
You know you don't have to breastfeed all the time if it's becoming too much. The boys can have more solid food now."

"It's a natural form of birth control. Did you know that?" Clarke says sharply. "I'm doing you a favor making sure we don't have any more kids. You should be thanking me."

He looks stricken, paling a bit beneath his splash of freckles.

"Babe, we talked about you drinking the tea again..."

"Why is it always me who has to sacrifice in this relationship, Bellamy?"

He blinks, confused.

"What? I'm trying to help, Clarke. If you don't want to drink the tea, we'll figure out something else. But I know feeding the twins takes a lot out of you, so--"

"How would you know? You're never home!" she hisses unexpectedly. His eyes widen in surprise.

She tries to pull back when his warm fingers clasp around her wrist, fork already in hand. But he holds on too tight, stroking the soft skin where her veins converge.

"Hey, look at me," he says lowly. It takes her a few seconds to bring her eyes up to his. The carrots and zucchini are so colorful. "I'm sorry," he smiles too warmly at her, and her stomach squishes in a way she wishes it wouldn't. "I didn't mean to offend you. You should breastfeed for as long as you want. I know I've had a busy week, but babe, what's really going on?"

"Nothing." She shakes free of his grasp, stabbing at a piece of broccoli with bloodlust in her eyes.

"Come on. Don't be like this. Talk to me."

He grasps her knee lightly under their small, rickety table, petting up the side of her thigh.
"You don't even listen to what I say when I tell you how important it is to me. And now you want to talk?"

"What?"

Clarke throws down her silverware with a clatter that catches Roan's attention at a table off to the right of theirs.

"You know when you were playing with Jordan today?"

Bellamy nods slowly. "Yeah..."

"That's what I want. I want you safe. Happy," she widens her eyes. "I want you teaching kids about Julius Caesar and building cabins and lifting weights and practice fighting and whatever the hell else you and your idiot friends do in the guard."

"Ok." Bellamy still looks confused.

"What I don't want is for you to strap yourself into a rocket with Raven to blast off into the sky in the hopes of reaching the Ring and finding some green space on Earth."

Bellamy sighs, pushing his own tray to the side and making a temple with his fingertips under his chin.

"So you don't care if we survive beyond this bunker now?"

"You know that's not what I mean. But it doesn't have to all be on your shoulders."

"That's not fair. Somebody's got to do it. Raven's our friend; we can't let her go alone. You're being irrational--"
"Well, guess what!" Clarke hisses violently. "I'm allowed to be irrational sometimes! You're the father of my children. Do you think I want you to die in space after everything we've gone through to get here? Someone. Else. Can. Go."

"Clarke--"

"I said no."

"Princess--"

"Don't you try to sweet talk me."

Bellamy scoffs, falling back into his chair and spearing a bit of yellow pepper at the end of his fork, which he twirls between his fingers.

"We're not done talking about this. It's important to me."

Clarke scowls, narrowing her eyes at him.

"Well, you're important to me. But I guess that doesn't count for much these days."

His face softens a fraction.

"Then please let me help our people. Let me do this."

"Why is this so important to you?"

Bellamy tenses, the tick in his jaw back.
"I've done so many things ... things I shouldn't have done. I want to help rebuild, Clarke. I want to be part of something that's not about killing and destroying."

This time when he reaches for her hand, she slides her fingers between his, soft cream against mocha, and squeezes.

"This wouldn't be the path to redemption, Bellamy. And if it were, I'd need to go too, because I've killed just as many if not more than you," she says quietly.

"Baby," he smiles sadly at her. "I want to be someone our kids can be proud of." A surge of soft emotion rises in her chest for him, but she pushes it down, steadily breathing in more air.

"You already are," she keeps her voice as level as possible. "Bellamy," she says his name like a soft prayer. When his eyes float up to hers, he tilts his head to the side a fraction.

"Don't you know you're already a hero?"

***

They finish dinner early and walk quietly back to their quarters. Nothing's been decided, but when Bellamy wraps his arm around her shoulder, she leans into him and slides a loose arm around his waist. It's good to feel him solid and firm beneath her skin.

"How were they?" Clarke asks her mother when they step into their apartment.

"The perfect little gentlemen," Abby smiles, arms full of Henry in the rocking chair. She looks tired, lines around her eyes and her hair messily swept up in a side braid.

"I highly doubt it," Bellamy says against Clarke's back, so she feels the reverberation of it. "But thanks for watching them, Abby."

"It will always be my pleasure." Abby hands off Henry into Clarke's outstretched arms. He begins to squirm and fuss, reaching for Bellamy.
"Mama!" Jacob calls, popping out from being the crib and darting straight into Clarke's leg, wrapping himself around her.

"At least one of them loves me," she jokes drily, picking up her son and decorating his face with kisses.

Abby leaves, and Bellamy takes the opportunity to change into a more casual T-shirt and pair of pants from his very limited selection. He scoops up Liam, zooming him lightly through the air like a helicopter as the child chirps in delight.

"Feel like a game of chess?" he asks Clarke over the squealing.

"No," she says shortly, Wells’ almond eyes and sly smile springing to mind.

"How about a movie then?"

"Like they'd ever sit still through it," she gestures at their sons.

"The pool downstairs?" he questions, settling Liam into his crib beside his brother.

Clarke laughs hollowly.

"Yeah, so you get to have fun splashing around with Jacob, while I keep the twins from crying from a lounge chair? No thanks."

"They'll sleep some. You can swim, too," Bellamy offers. "Or we can take turns keeping them occupied."

Clarke cocks an eyebrow at him, hand on her hip. "They only sleep well when you're here." He's hanging up his work pants on the tiny closet rod in the narrow alcove along the wall, so he doesn't think he hears her right when she murmurs, "They’re just like their mom."
But when he pulls back, Clarke is hugging her elbows and swaying a bit from side to side. He reaches her just in time to wipe away a stray tear with his thumb before she burrows her face into his chest, wrapping her arms around him and hugging him close. She smells like the new herbal shampoo Jasper's been working on.

"I love you," he whispers into the crown of her head. "So much."

"I'm so angry at you." He feels her shaking. "I'm so angry at all of it."

He holds her tighter, drawing her over to their bed and settling down next to her, reaching for the book he'd left on the small table near his pillow. Jacob taps the top of the blankets imploringly, trying and failing to climb up the side of the bed on his short, chubby legs until Clarke hoists him up under his arms and into her lap.

"Come here, little man," she laces her fingers around his middle and leans his head back into her chest, resting against the headboard next to Bellamy.

"Family story time it is then," she can hear the smile in Bellamy's voice. "Should we leave the twins-"

"Yes," Clarke says rapidly. "They're happy in the crib and not making noise. Let's consider ourselves lucky."

"All right," Bellamy chuckles, skimming a finger up his son's smooth forearm. "They can listen from there."

He opens up the frayed and delicate cover of the book, flipping open to the first page.

"Sing in me, Muse, and through me, tell the story of that man skilled in all ways of contending, the wanderer, harried for years on end, after he plundered the stronghold on the proud height of Troy."

He reads until his entire family sleeps peacefully around him.
Chapter End Notes

A new chapter? In this bellarke economy?! I know - it's been a while. Sorry! But I'm pleased to say the muse struck at last, and this story will FINALLY REACH ITS CONCLUSION shortly. I cannot believe I started this when s4 was airing. I also have an ending mapped out for my S5 reunion AU (but that'll take a few more chapters of work to get there).

Thanks as always for reading and your comments! <3
only one demand

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

"Under the sunlight
Welcome to this place
I'll show you everything
With arms wide open."

~Creed, "Arms Wide Open

Clarke blinks, and suddenly Jacob is nearly three years old, his dark curls growing shaggy like his father's as he zooms around in the hot red car Raven built him, shrieking in glee. There's the one time he drove straight into Murphy's ankles and was tickled so hard in retaliation that he could barely breathe. It's those moments Clarke cherishes. They show how far they've all come, despite everything.

The twins are nearly a year and a half old and tiny terrors who make her heart burst whenever she catches them in a sweet moment. Liam sharing his mashed peas with Henry for example, or Henry absently patting Liam's shoulder and then Bellamy's cheek as he tries to wrangle them both into the small tub Jaha installed in the bathroom for them.

It's at Jordan's first birthday that it happens. The adorable, chubby-cheeked baby has a rare bit of icing smudged around her pink lips. She's waving a frilly tutu Octavia managed to piece together from scrap material around her head like a lasso when Bellamy wraps his arm around Clarke and says off-handedly, "She's acting more like our daughter than Harper and Monty's."

Clarke stares up at him in surprise, missing how Jacob is playing a nearly effective game of catch with Jasper or how Roan is feeding a sulky looking Echo a bite of vanilla cake. Bellamy's distracted by a melody that sounds unexpectedly, floating up from the corner where Kane stands chatting with Niylah and Ilian, Abby smiling at his side. It takes him a few moments to realize Clarke's still and mute beside him, mouth slightly open.

"What, babe?" He grins at her, pressing a quick kiss to her temple before waving to Jacob who's yelling, "Daddy! Watch! Daddy! Watch me!"

Somewhere off to the left behind the crowd of people milling around, Raven is building a block tower with the twins, despite all their efforts to knock it down.
"You never talk like that," Clarke chooses her words carefully, though her heart starts to race.

"Like what?"

She gathers her courage but tries to keep her face neutral and blank. "About having another kid."

His eyes grow wide and incredulous, and he squeezes her hip, issuing a nervous laugh.

"That's because we're exhausted as it is keeping up with," he gestures around at their sons, "all of them."

She grins, smile stunningly white and full of affection.

"But they're worth it, aren't they?"

"Course they are, baby. But there's time if we ever want to think about it. This time next year we'll be back on the ground, breathing fresh air with real sunshine on our skin. Won't that be nice?"

"Yeah," Clarke murmurs as the party whirls around them, resting her head on his shoulder. "I love our boys, Bell."

"I know you do."

"But I'm still going to give you a daughter one day."

He arches an eyebrow, bending down so she can see his face, which appears to be questioning her sanity. "Because I did such a great job with Octavia?"

She laughs at his ridiculous expression, blushing a little. "You did all right. Look at her," she jerks her chin up to where Octavia is serving slices of cake at a table covered in pink paper, talking to Miller as she works.
Bellamy grunts noncommittally. "Some years were better than others," he admits.

Clarke takes his hand and guides them to two spare chairs propped up against the back wall of the lounge. "I have a proposal to make."

He sees the wheels spinning behind the smooth expanse of her forehead.

"Clarke--"

"Hold on," she pats his thigh reassuringly. "You haven't even heard what I'm going to say yet."

"You're forgetting I know you."

She smirks.

"All right, listen. I'll let you go to the Ring with Raven because I trust that she'll bring you back to me safely..."

The vibrating noise of him clearing his throat rings loudly.

"Excuse me? You'll let me?"

"Yes," Clarke passes over the point briskly, not willing to be led astray. "If..."

"Here it comes," Bellamy mutters under his breath.

"I stop taking the tea once we're back on the ground."

It's quiet for a moment between them, Bellamy running a hand over his facial hair.
"I want you to shave, too," she adds as an afterthought. "Did you forget where the razor was or something?"

He scoffs.

"Not gonna happen. I like being abrasive."

She rolls her eyes, but then his warm hand is reaching for hers, twining their fingers together. Her stomach sparks when he rubs his rough thumb over her softer palm.

"Ok," he says simply.

"Ok?" her sky blue eyes snap to his Earth brown ones. "Really? That simple?"

Bellamy's intensity in that moment both grounds and overwhelms her. Like always, it makes her feel so seen. But it's comforting, too, like she never has to look outside of what they share for her peace of mind.

"Yeah, I think so. I love you, and I want you to be happy."

Clarke smiles, sliding over into his lap.

"Well, I love you, and I want you to be able to do what you feel you need to do for our people."

He nods, rubbing her waist soothingly.

"But you're still not happy about it, are you?"

Clarke frowns, and he scoops her up into his arms, standing up.
"Bellamy!" she calls out. "What are you doing?" Fortunately, over all the chatter and music, nobody seems to notice except Harper, who winks at them.

"Taking this outside," he rumbles. She still gets a thrill out of pressing an ear to his chest when he talks.

When they're safely away from the noise, Clarke leans back into the wall, gripping his hands in hers and pulling him in closer.

"No, I'm not happy exactly, but I do understand. It's who you are. You want to protect all of us."

"But you've got to understand, Clarke..." he fumbles with the words a little, running a hand through his hair. "I can't keep you safe from your own body if anything goes wrong. It makes me feel helpless. And I don't want to be helpless about keeping you safe ... not again, not after everything we've gone through."

She blames the tear that slides down her cheek on the estrogen, cupping his scratchy cheeks in her palms and leaning up on her tiptoes to kiss him soundly.

"All right. We don't have to do anything right now," she says when she draws back. "There's no rush, and I know how lucky I am with all my boys in my life."

Later that night once their children are slumbering peacefully, Bellamy reaches around Clarke's body curled away from him and presses his hand into her stomach, tapping to rouse her.

"What?" she rubs at her eyes. "Something wrong?"

"No. Just come with me," he breathes in her ear. "Quietly."

They make it as far as the stairwell at the end of the hall before he's pushing her gently against the wall and kissing her hard, reaching under her nightshirt to stroke the soft skin of her inner thighs.

"You're a damn menace, Bellamy Blake," she gasps into his neck a minute later when he pulls down her underwear and lifts her, so she can wrap her legs around his hips.
"But your favorite kind," he teases grittily, testing her with his fingers while she bucks against him before thrusting inside her smoothly and capturing her moan with his mouth. It doesn't take long - they don't have time. The steady brushing of his thumb along the outside of her peaked nipples through the cloth, the nearly frantic grind of her public bone, his harsh breaths at her neck, and her own slippery fingers pressing at her clit and then she's clenching around him while he groans her name.

Three days later, Kane and Jaha begin the formal meetings about sending Cadogan's rocket to the Ark. One week after that, Monty and Jasper come skidding into the classroom where Jaha is discussing the most pressing needs for building a new society, flushed from running but looking pleased with themselves. In a huff, they announce they figured out a way to remotely turn the power on at a radio tower nearby that miraculously withstood Praimfaya in what looks like a tiny strip of green from their careful, computerized mapping calculations.

"That means there has to be more land; there just has to be!" Raven grins encouragingly at her friends. "Right?" her eyes seek Jaha's and then Kane's.

The two older men look at each other.

"It's a good sign, Raven. Yes," Jaha smiles.

Things are finally going right when Bellamy strolls down the hall to medbay to drag Clarke away that evening, so she doesn't overwork herself. He finds her curled up in the corner of the old, coffee-colored couch, her head in her hands.

"Clarke?"

She startles at the sound of his voice, forcing a smile that looks like it makes her muscles ache.

"Are you all right?" He drops to his knees in front of her, but the motion causes her to draw back.

"Just a migraine."

"Your lying could use some work," he teases, rubbing the sides of her legs.
"Bell ... you're going to be so upset," her voice cracks.

"Jesus, what happened? Is it the boys? Octavia?" He starts to stand up, pulling her to her feet with him and placing steadying hands on her shoulders. "Come on, Princess. Tell me."

"No, they're all fine," she manages.

"Then what is it?"

She takes a long, steadying breath then says to the medical supply cabinet over his left ear.

"My period never came, Bellamy. I'm late."

Chapter End Notes

Check out Vienna Waits For You if you want something new to read.
"I loved you first: but afterwards your love
Outsoaring mine, sang such a loftier song
As drowned the friendly cooings of my dove.
Which owes the other most? my love was long,
And yours one moment seemed to wax more strong;
I loved and guessed at you, you construed me
And loved me for what might or might not be –
Nay, weights and measures do us both a wrong.
For verily love knows not ‘mine’ or ‘thine;’
With separate ‘I’ and ‘thou’ free love has done,
For one is both and both are one in love:
Rich love knows nought of ‘thine that is not mine;’
Both have the strength and both the length thereof,
Both of us, of the love which makes us one."

~Christina Rossetti, "I loved you first: but afterwards your love"

"You don't have to do this," Octavia breathes the words harshly through her nose as she lunges toward Bellamy with her sword in the gym where they're training.

"Yes, I do," he argues back calmly despite swerving to narrowly miss her blade near his bicep.

"You don't," she launches herself up onto one of the padded exercise benches, panting. "You don't always have to be the hero, big brother. You have a family. Stay with us."

Bellamy sighs, running a hand over his sweat-stained face. "I'm not doing it to be the hero, O."

"Then why?"

It was a good question. One he kept asking himself. What one life was worth, how one life could create so many more. He'd spent countless nights fixated on forgiveness, determining the nature of loyalty, unwrapping what duty meant in his mind. His people. His friends. His family. Himself. He knew Raven couldn't go alone, and he didn't want anyone else to have to sacrifice themselves anymore if it came to that. His feelings were too tangled and complicated to explain, though Octavia stared him down in pure frustration waiting. So he didn't try.
"It's just something that I have to do."

High above where the Blakes clash and shout and taunt, Raven walks slowly with Clarke around the beaten track.

"This isn't doing anything for the back pain," Clarke complains, rubbing at her lower spine.

"Your mom said it would help, so we're going to give it a good effort," Raven says bracingly, taking Clarke by the elbow.

"...So I told Murphy there was no way he was getting a cabin all to himself, and he--"

With a swish of her ponytail, she stares at her friend in concern a few minutes later.

"You haven't heard a word I've said, have you?"

"Hmmm?" Clarke jerks her eyes from where they've been glued to Bellamy's shoulder blades through the railing. "Sorry, I'm just..."

"Distracted. Worried. I know," Raven spares one glance at the dueling siblings before pushing them forward. "You know... he doesn't have to do this." Her voice is gentle. "I've told him several times that Monty can come instead. I know he's been training with me to get ready, but Monty already knows how to work computer systems."

"I'm not asking Monty to leave his family, Raven. I already asked him to irradiate Mount Weather and told him and Harper they weren't on the original list of people getting saved in here," she snaps. "He killed his own mother, twice, to help us stop ALIE. It's enough. It has to be enough," she says it like she's convincing herself.

"Ok," Raven says bracingly. "How about Jaha then? He was an engineer before he was Chancellor, and he's created all the plans for this project."

"Was that your idea?"

Raven can't take the electric blue intensity leveled at her. Clarke radiates a special ferocity when she's pregnant, and she's already six months along.

"Raven?!!"

"It was Abby's," she answers quietly.

***

Her mother and Kane's couch feels squishy and lacks support as she moves around trying to get comfortable.

"I just want Bellamy to be safe, honey. You know that." Abby pats her knee and takes a sip of peppermint tea in a chipped green mug, nodding her head encouragingly for Clarke to follow suit. "I don't want..." she emits a big sigh. "I don't want what happened to your dad to happen to him. Think of your babies. They need their father!"

"Do you think I want him to go?" Clarke leans forward, eyes a little wild. She feels the baby kick somewhere in the vicinity of her kidney and winces. "You're acting like I put him up to it!"

"No, no, that's not what I think," Abby says placatingly, pushing her braid behind her shoulder. "What I'm saying is it might not be a bad idea to try talking to him again about it."
"I'm not going to be the reason he doesn't do what he feels he needs to do for his people. That's not how our relationship works. We don't control each other, and we don't manipulate each other."

The tea scalds down the back of her throat when she takes too large a gulp. She doesn't notice the sadness lining Abby's mouth or the flash of pride in her eyes.

***

Kane's pacing back and forth past the silver gloss of Mercury, hands tangled in his dark locks.

"I know you still feel responsible for the lives lost at Mount Weather, for the massacre, for not being able to reach Peter in the acid rain."

Bellamy clenches his teeth tightly together where he stands near the hatch that leads to the rocket. His sins are marks he can never wipe clean.

"But you've turned the page, son! You have. You don't have to prove anything to anyone with this mission."

"You were fine with me going a few months ago."

Kane looks at Bellamy like he struck him.

"I've never been fine with your endless desire to sacrifice yourself! You've grown into a good man. And ..." he rolls his lips, "You know that I care about you, don't you?"

Bellamy blinks twice, looking away.

"Yeah, I know. But Monty's not going in my place, and Ilian doesn't know Raven like I do."

"Then Thelonius--"

"Jaha's smart," Bellamy cuts in abruptly. "He knows how to survive against all odds. He's led us all through Hell before. We don't know what we're going to be facing out there when the bunker door opens. But we're going to need him."

"Bellamy, we need you, too."

He sees the exhaustion in Kane and yet the determination layered right below it. Smiling slightly, Bellamy takes a few steps forward and claps him on the shoulder.

"It's going to be fine."

***

"It's my fault Raven got shot, Clarke. I'm the reason she'll never walk without that brace."

This new bend in the argument surprises her. Cool waves lap against her body, the pool holding her in blissful, weightless suspension. She cranes her neck to look at him in just his boxers, legs dangling into the water from where he sits at its edge on the white steps.

"How do you figure that?"

"Because Murphy was aiming for me - or Octavia, he didn't care which Blake he killed."

"That's ridiculous," Clarke scoffs, flipping herself over carefully and swimming up to him. The water
clings to her eyelashes and she blinks, trying to dispel it. "I support you if you have to do this, but don't twist in some weird obligation that doesn't exist."

He swallows noticeably, canine biting into his lower lip.

"I'm not letting her sacrifice herself alone. If Jasper and Monty are wrong, and the power on the Ark doesn't turn on ..."

"Then she'd turn right around and come back."

"To a bunker that's only sustainable for a few more months?"

"That's everybody's problem, Bell. Not just yours."

He nods, but the distance seeping into his eyes tells her where his mind has gone. Limp bodies on a field soaked red with blood. Jasper grasping at a young woman taking her last breath. Lincoln on his knees in the mud, collapsing as the bullet embeds itself into his skull.

"You don't have anything to prove, baby. Nothing to atone for." Her hands slide up to his knees, and she leans up to kiss one.

"You've told me I had blood on my hands more than once, Clarke."

Shoulders slumping, she crawls up next to him on the steps, and he immediately slides an arm around her waist, tucking her into his side.

"I've said a lot of things. There's blood on all of our hands. But that doesn't mean we don't deserve a chance to make Earth better, to build something that's better."

"I thought that's what we were supposed to be doing the first time."

Clarke emits a dry laugh, twisting her sparkling engagement ring on her finger.

"ALIE had other plans."

"She did."

They're quiet for a while, each lost to independent thought. Clarke takes a small dose of comfort from the steady beat of Bellamy's heart near her ear. Finally, she tugs at his hand and moves its warm weight to her swelling stomach.

"I want you to pick her name," she says. "Pick it so you know exactly who you're coming home to."

He draws back, gazing at her in pure disbelief, this fierce, blonde artist-doctor-warrior-diplomat woman so uniquely his. It still astounds him that she chose him but now that she has, her love knows no bounds.

"You're going to trust me with that?"

"I'd trust you with my life."

***

Bellamy stands in the dark atrium, hands in the pockets of his jarring orange space suit. He's said goodbye to literally everyone who's important to him, except Clarke. Many of those people are still milling around the area. The rocket launch is in thirty minutes, and Raven's already gone to prep the
system for takeoff.

Clarke's standing off to the side with their boys beside a pillar, watching him with a softness that he's not used to despite their years together.

"Come back to me," she murmurs when he approaches.

"Come on, babe. It'll be ok," he returns softly.

Her hands grip his tightly, moisture pooling around her irises.

Bellamy pulls her into his chest, trying not to cry himself. He has to hold it together for her.

"I love you to the Ark and back," he murmurs.

She hits his chest, half laughing and half crying.

"Your jokes are horrible."

"I still made you laugh," he smirks.

She clings to his neck as best as she can with her round stomach in the way, breathing in his scent. Her tears flow out too quickly to be ebbed.

"Hey, hey," he rocks her gently, patting her back when she starts to shake. "You're gonna be Mrs. Blake in a few weeks."

She stills underneath his fingers, cocking her head up to look at him questioningly, silent and unblinking.

"No?" he crinkles his nose and puckers his mouth, sweating slightly. "Ok, how about Griffin-Blake?... Or you could just keep your name if you want to do that..."

"No, no," she smiles after a beat. "Mrs. Blake. That sounds right. We'll all be one family."

"Really? You're sure?" His grin is so hesitant it breaks her heart.

"I'm sure."

He presses a chaste kiss to her mouth and scoops up Henry who's playing at their feet, nuzzling the top of his sweet smelling head.

"I'll be back before you know it."

He drops to his knees to hug Jacob and Liam, pausing on his way back up to kiss her belly. "Can't wait to meet you, Princess," he says reverently.

"Am I losing my nickname to the kid?"

Bellamy chuckles.

"Never thought you liked it that much. Ok then, see you soon, Lucina Aurora."

He meets her eyes to gauge her reaction, and she beams at him, tugging him up by his collar.

"Lucina was a Greek goddess who kept women in labor safe. I couldn't resist the myths. I'm sorry," he shuffles his feet bashfully.
Clarke nods, eyes leaking again despite her swiping at them. "It's perfect. May we meet again," she whispers. Then she's kissing him like they're running out of time.

***

"Ready to go, Blake?" Raven's all strapped into the driver's seat, fingers flying fast over the multi-colored buttons of the control panel. "This is gonna be a quick trip, don't worry. It won't take long to pinpoint whatever green is left up there."

Bellamy nods, settling into his place on the two-seater and strapping in. "Let's do this."

Raven grins, and it lights up her whole face.

"That's the spirit! Operation Find Eden, here we come."

By a blessed miracle, Jasper and Monty didn't screw up the electricity quotient. When they reach Go-Sci, it's like traveling back in time to a place preserving who they used to be. Raven only allows Bellamy a moment to run his hand along the smooth wall in wonder while she's turning on the oxygen before she opens up their helmets and tugs him toward the viewing deck.

No longer a floating orb of green and blue swirls, Earth hangs sleepily amongst the stars and darkness. But it's red and gray and brown. Dusty. Sucked dry of life. It reminds Bellamy of a picture he saw once in a book of dinosaur bones being bleached white under a desert sun. They wait for what feels like hours, Raven passing him protein packs to keep his energy up. Finally, the green appears. One patch of it so far away it seems like a dream. They immediately begin running calculations on it from the computer system in the control room just like they practiced. An hour later, Bellamy turns to his friend with a smile. "If I didn't screw this all up," he waves his hand at the machine, "I think it's a five-day walk from the bunker."

Raven nods, smiling.

"And more importantly," she adds, standing up to take in the green dot of paradise once more before it disappears as the planet rotates, "It's big enough to keep us all alive."

"Raven, Bellamy, do you copy? This is Abby in the bunker control room attempting to reach Go-Sci. I repeat, do you copy?"

Jerking back in surprise, Raven grabs at the radio mounted on the panel in front of her.

"Holy shit, Abby! The comms actually worked," she cries out.

"Good," Abby says with relief. "Jaha thought they would since most of the radiation has cleared now."

"What's going on? Is there a problem?" Bellamy cuts in, snatching the radio from Raven despite her whine of protest.

"Yes. Bellamy, I wanted to tell you Clarke's gone into labor. We're going to take good care of her. You two be safe coming back. Take care of yourselves."

Bellamy blanches while Raven stares at him with wide eyes.

"I have to get back to medbay."

"Wait, Abby-" Bellamy tries, trying to shake the shock from his body.
But there's a click, and she's already gone.

"Jesus, you two keep it interesting," Raven huffs several minutes later, standing and clapping him on the shoulder. He's just been staring at the planet through the glass in a daze, useless as she flew about in a frenzy. "I sent everything we need back to the bunker's computer system, so we're good to go."

"You sure?" Bellamy raises an eyebrow. "You did it that fast?"

Raven blinks at him.

"Have you met me?"

***

"Clarke! Clarke!" He's yelling it out so the sound ricochets off the walls, boots pounding against the floor leading to medbay.

Harper smiles tiredly at him when she lets him in.

"This is becoming a pattern."

"Am I too late? Is she ok? Is the baby ok? What's going on?" he holds himself against the wall with a fist, rubbing the stitch in his side and breathing heavily.

"Slow down, everything's fine," Jackson walks into the room from the adjoining hallway. "It was a false alarm. Abby took her back to your apartment. She's resting." He's striding back through the door before his mind can catch up with his feet.

It's very late when Bellamy pushes the door to their apartment open quietly, catching the glint of Clarke's blonde hair from the low hum of the circadian lights. She stirs as the door snaps shut, and he grimaces.

"Bell?" she sounds drowsy and weaker than he'd like.

"Yeah, it's me. I'm right here, baby." He rushes over to the side of the bed, taking the hand she offers him.

"I'm glad you're ok," she murmurs softly. "There's a big patch of it a few days' walk from here. Our kids are going to grow up there, Princess. Surrounded by green."

She nods, curling her knees up slightly and shifting back on her side to make room for him. "Good. Now lay down," she pats the mattress. "I want you to hold me. Everything hurts."

***

Octavia stalls at the foot of the staircase leading upward into daylight and fresh air, turning back to take in the hazy gloom of their home for the last five years.

"I know it's sick, but I'll kind of miss it."

Jasper scoffs, reaching out a hand to pull her up, which she accepts.

"Not me, I miss real wind and rivers and even the damn crickets chirping."
"Gonna save me from a sea monster up there?" she gestures with her chin before leaning in to kiss him.

"Any day of the week," he wiggles his eyebrows suggestively, and she laughs. "Come on, time to go."

Further back in the line of exiting survivors, Raven shuffles her pack on her shoulder, turning to Murphy.

"You sure cockroaches can survive above ground?"

He rolls his eyes.

"It's easier when the sun's out," he snarks back.

She smiles, giving his shoulder a quick push and winking. "We've got a world to rebuild, John. Better get a move on."

***

Lucina sleeps peacefully in the crook of Bellamy's arm despite the people jostling from every direction. Only three weeks old, and she's already got him wrapped around her little finger.

"Jacob!" Clarke flies past his right shoulder, Liam on her hip. "You stay with mommy and daddy, understood?" She takes Jacob's chubby hand carefully in hers, smiling kindly at him when his bottom lip starts to waver from her tone. "I don't want you to get lost because that would make mommy very sad, ok? There's a lot of people leaving at once, and I need to keep you safe."

His son stops moving and nods up at her, clinging to her fingers. "I was trying to find Jordan."

Clarke smiles at that, then notices Henry toddling right into his older brother's back, always wanting to be wherever he is.

"I got him, Mom," Jacob holds onto Henry's hand, and they form a little chain.

Bellamy catches up to his family a moment later, narrowly missing a bag embroidered with flowers knocking him in the cheek when a woman swings it through the air too quickly.

"You ready for this, Princess?" he gestures at Jaha high above them on a gray platform, about to program in the code that will open the bunker door at last. "The air could be toxic, you know."

She smirks, catching his free hand with her own. "We didn't come this far to die anyway," she says. "I think it's about time we inherited the Earth."

Chapter End Notes

And we're out! Thank you so very much for sticking with this story for well over a year as it haunted me. Sorry it took so long to complete! I hope you liked the ending, and I appreciate everyone's comments along the way. :)

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