Essays in Existentialism

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Summary

just a series of prompts
Jurassic (Part 1)

I really love your fics so I was wondering if you'll pleaseee write a clexa jurassic park au Tks

“Most meat eaters walked on two feet. This made them faster and left their hands free to grab their prey,” the professor explained, clicking the pointer so that the page changed. “Most plant eaters walked on four feet to better carry their heavy bodies. Some plant eaters could balance on two feet for a short time.”

“What about T-Rex?”

“What about them?”

“When do they show up and did they hunt humans?”

“Here we have the first instance of failure to read the material,” she shook her head and walked in front of the lecture hall.

Almost two hundred students watched her as she crossed her arms and smiled as she shook her head. This was her favorite misconception, and her favorite way to tease an entire group of freshmen. The professor leaned against the desk at the front of the room, with a giant projector screen displaying a large graph behind her. She felt powerful like that.

“Millions of years separate the faintest inkling of humans and dinosaurs. We probably wouldn't be sitting here today if we coexisted during the same time period. Not even because of the sheer amount of predators,” she explained before clicking through a few slides until she came to the graph she wanted. “There is a little gap in the estimates, but the Earth had about fifteen to thirty percent less oxygen than it does now. That means about five times the amount of Carbon Dioxide existed, which is thought to have contributed to the fact that everything was so damn big back then. Yes?”

“Could dinosaurs exist now?”

“No.”

From the back of the lecture hall, a gentleman smiled and watched the professor push herself up from leaning and begin to walk around, emphatically explaining with her hands so that every set of eyes was trained on her, riveted by her passion and explanations.

As the professor moves around the class, he melts into the crowd, unnoticed in the sea of eyes, but still, they are just like the kids around him, glued to the woman who is so excited, she has to push her glasses up on her nose from time to time as she explains, who has to shove her hands in her back pockets to keep them from gesturing to explain magnitude and such.

“That wraps up week seven,” the professor offered as the familiar shuffling that indicated the end of the allotted hour told her. “Remember, next week we will be tackling differentiation and specialization! If you close your eyes and sniff the air you can smell it. Tests are coming. Start preparing.”

Melting into the crowd, he pulls the phone out of his pocket and makes a phone call as the sea of students rush past him.
Hot as all hell, the day hung there, dirty and thick and angry at nothing in particular. The tropical afternoon made it impossible to breathe, while the sun itself pulled every ounce of sweat it could from bodies as sacrifice for existing. It was a warped version of the angels share if she ever heard it.

From her spot against the fence, Clarke ran her forearm over her eyes and pushed the sticky ends of hair from where they stuck, though nothing truly helped.

She was familiar with heat and sweat.

Her eyes never stopped moving, following a herd moving through the upper wall of the far valley before a truck pulled up and stole her attention.

“Dinner is served,” Raven called happily as she hopped out and slammed the door. Some animal squealed and complained in the crate in the bed.

“That’s my line,” Jasper complained as he parked.

“You’re late.”

“We had a little problem with the new pens over in quadrant Charlie,” the driver gave a pointed look to the girl in the brace.

“That’s what you want to hear when you’re surrounded by creatures that are literally faster and bigger and sharper than anything else on the planet.”

“Listen, I fixed it. There was an over—” Raven tried to defend herself.

“Please don’t do the engineer stuff again,” Clarke sighed as she grunted and opened the truck lift.

“I need to take a look at the wiring for the converter panel over here. Thought I’d catch the show first.”

“It’s not a show.”

“Sure it’s not,” Raven teased, earning a smile. “Release the pig.”

“She’s not a toy. She’s a dinosaur. I can’t make her put on a show, no matter what Jaha thinks I’m capable of.”

“You got the raptors to behave.”

“I got a pack of starving animals to believe that I was the only reason they could eat. I’m a long way off of—”

“Okay, none of that boring animal junk. Can you make them ride tricycles yet?” Raven interrupted, leaning against the truck as the other two carried the giant crate with the help of the keepers at the paddock.
“Did you fix the island’s surge problem yet?”

“I have a feeling you’re closer to the tricycles than I am,” Raven acknowledged before heaving herself up the first few steps toward the observation deck.

From atop the stand, the three stood there and watched, waiting for the beast to show.

“I haven’t seen her since the last trainer…” Jasper began before trailing off when he looked at Clarke. “Who really wasn’t as good as you, and had it coming, I guess.”

“Total asshat,” Raven agreed.

The trainer shook her head and crossed her arms, leaning back and waiting for the inevitable. The other two leaned a little closer until everything stilled. The ground shook. The trees parted and trembled. The pig squealed and fought to climb a wall it hand no chance of making a foot up.

And then nothing.

A few heartbeats went by, and everything tentatively resumed itself, the world kept turning, the sky kept sitting there, the clouds yawned.

The growl was quiet, subtle, melting into the world of the island. Clarke heard it though as she scanned the tree line. A few seconds later, it burst forth, teeth glistening and legs churning with all its might before eight inch teeth serrated dinner and swallowed it in two gulps.

“Holy fuck,” Raven and Jasper breathed in unison, unable to blink or take their eyes from the dinosaur below.

It let out a long roar, that shook the world and echoed from the stars, that brought quiet to the island for a long moment, as if everyone knew this was different.

“Yup,” Clarke chuckled as she made her way down the steps. “Buy me a drink at the canteen. I’m thirsty as hell.”

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For a full minute, Lexa stared at the stranger who now sat on the other side of the desk at her office. If she had been the type to be amused at such jokes, she was certain she would have laughed for the entirety of the pause that settled itself in the room quite comfortably. Instead she settled for quiet and a disbelieving stare that turned into an incredulous lean back in her chair, oddly disappointed the the meeting about potential funding to continue her dig in China was a ruse for a madman’s stupid prank.

“I do need you to say something, Dr. Woods. I have a few other appointments before I head back…”

“To your island,” she supplied, slightly amused.

“Yes. I leave in the morning.”

“To go back to your island of dinosaurs.”

“Correct.”
“An island that has genetically modified, brought back from extinction after millions and millions of years, dinosaurs, that used science which I can only imagine is still light years away from being stable or even… real. . . . that Island?”

“Yes,” Thelonious Jaha nodded with a warm smile, watching as the scientist leaned forward once again and tried to form more words to express her disbelief.

“You have to go back to the island with… what? Triceratops? and let me guess, you have… What? Ornithopoda? Just… running around?”

“We do have a nice little collection of those. Quite gentle creatures. My favorite though,” he explained, crossing his leg and folding his hands over his lap, “I think are the Apatosaurus. Did you know that they fight like giraffe’s often?”

“Often,” Lexa barked a laugh and caught herself before sitting up a bit straighter and blanking her face from the outburst. She pushed up her glasses and took a deep breath before a giggle escaped once again. “Often this happens. That Apatosaurus fight. Like giraffes.”

“Dr. Woods, I came to you with a serious business proposition, one that I think is more than fair—”

“You want to visit your fantasy island that is populated by dinosaurs brought back from extinction by DNA collecting and replicating methods which are… impossible at best… to study and monitor your collection… or real, live dinosaurs. Is that a good summation, Mr. Wells?”

“Fairly fair, I should say,” he agreed, smiling at her kindly.

“Mr. Wells, the wealthiest man in the world, spent his money making dinosaurs,” Lexa shook her head and whistled. “Well, I wouldn’t have guessed that one. But if you’ll excuse me, Mr. Wells. I have a class at three thirty I should prepar—”

While she spoke, she watched him reach toward his briefcase, which she assumed meant he was ready to depart after she rudely berated his craziness. Instead, a stack of pictures slid across the expanse of her desk.

“Those are not doctored in the slightest, Dr. Woods,” he explained as the paleontologist surveyed the array without picking one up, leaning closer than she would have liked to pretend. “I approached you because you are the best in your field, the most well-respected and honored scientist in the study of evolution and especially paleontology, and many of your theories have not only proven true, but also helpful in the development of behavior models of our subjects.”

As Lexa picked up a picture finally, her guest stood and watched her squint, trying to find the falsehood.

“My terms are simple. Just come see the park, Dr. Woods, and the money will be made available in a grant the second you step back off of the plane in this city.”

A plane ticket made its way to the desk beside the images. All the doctor could do was stare back at the man who placed it there before her eyes were drawn back to the image in her hand. It was impossible. There was no way.

“If you have any questions, my business card is here,” he smiled and pulled it from his jacket pocket. “I hope to see you soon, Dr. Woods. We could really use your expertise.”

Still stunned and unsure what to say, Lexa heard him leave as she leaned back in her chair and swiveled away from her door, holding what looked the picture of a pterodactyl soaring. She shook
her head to get the inkling of belief from taking root before she picked up the business card.

From behind her sunglasses, Clarke watched the small prop plane land and turn around at the end of the small runway. The metal of the jeep was hot against her hip, but still, she leaned there and waited for the professor who was coming to tell her how to do her job, as if training or working with animals could be taught in a classroom, as if it could be taught by a bone hunter who wrote articles and–

“Holy shit,” she whispered to herself as the door finally opened and the dorky, middle-aged professor with a paunch belly and affinity for wearing tweed and smoking pipes turned out to be a ridiculous beautiful, legs-straight-from-Olympus, short-shorts wearing, siren of a there’s-no-way-she’s-a-doctor, doctor.

It took a moment, but the trainer swallowed quickly and crossed her arms, not letting the momentary distraction keep her away from indignation too long.

“So that’s the person that’s going to tell you what to do,” Raven observed as she leaned over the top railing of the Jeep.

Clarke pursed her lip and crossed her arms tighter around herself.

“She’s here to study and offer feedback.”

“Looks like just your type.”

“I don’t have a type.”


Before she could argue the point, the newest arrival shouldered her bag and made her way from the tarmac. The closer she got, the more Clarke was vividly aware of how right the engineer was, and how much it bothered her.

The tan of her legs, the way her sleeves were rolled up, the old baseball hat that betrayed hair that lingered somewhere between chestnut and auburn, that curled up near her ears in the heat. Clarke was taken with her jaw and her collarbones, though she would never admit it.

“Hello,” the professor smiled awkwardly.

“Dr. Woods, this is Clarke Griffin, our trainer–

“Handler,” Clarke corrected.

“Of the dinosaurs,” Lexa took the hand offered to her and shook it before pulling off her sunglasses and tucking them into her shirt. “Because there are dinosaurs here.”

Her eyes made Clarke gulp, her words made her smile.

“Yes ma’am. I handle the dinosaurs.”
With a polite shake of her hand, Lexa shook her head and sighed as it dropped, still almost amused at the situation.

“If there are dinosaurs, I can’t imagine they handle well.”

“All animals handle well enough if you listen to them.”

“These would be multi-ton creatures that have millions of years of evolution and survival skills—”

“Two minutes on the island, and you’re calling my job a bunch of useless garbage,” Clarke inhaled deeply and nodded to herself. “You could at least wait to tell me how to do my job until after you see me in action, Professor.”

“I’m… I didn’t. I’m not here to tell you how to do your job.”

“Good.”

“I think we got off on the wrong foot—”

“I think it’s just fine. You’ll be gone in a few days and that’s fine enough,” Clarke opened the back door and motioned for her to get in.

Still distracted by the blonde and the lips and the words that came out of them, Lexa furrowed before slowly crawling in the back seat of the Jeep. She put her sunglasses back on and fanned herself through her shirt.

“Hi. I’m Raven. Head Engineer, persistent tag-along,” the girl in the passenger seat turned around and held out her hand. “You met our resident surly handler.”

“Lexa.”

With a smile that grew larger as she took in the newcomer, Lexa watched Raven turn around and say something to Clarke that was eclipsed with the roar of the engine back to life. Raven’s laugh was silent though her head tilted back as if she were enjoying herself.

Lexa leaned back in the seat as they began to rumble along through half a road into the jungle. All she could wonder was why and how she ended up here.

The jungle was thick and lush, sprouting up on both sides, blotting out the sun so that it came down in little shots of pure gold through the canopy. Lexa jumbled in the back over the uneven path that was barely a road to start with and more of a trail that was confiscated by the trees every chance it got.

When they emerged, Lexa wasn’t ready. The sunlight blinded her for a moment before it all registered and she saw them.

From the driver’s seat, Clarke looked at the professor in the rearview mirror, the astonishment catching again. She exchanged a look with Raven who shook her head, but that didn’t stop her.

Lexa didn’t notice they weren’t moving. She noticed the articulation of the spine of the stegosaurus. She noticed the sheer size of the apatosaurus. In a flash, she peeled off the sunglasses and leaned closer over the edge of the vehicle, gripping it tightly before murmuring to herself that it was impossible. As far as the view stretched, as far as the eye could see, nothing but life existed, pure, primeval live.
“Well, what do you think?”

“That’s… Those are…” Lexa shook her head. In a second, Lexa dug in her bag and slipped on a pair of large, round glasses.

“You didn’t think that it was real?”

“How can it be real?”

“Magic,” Clarke grinned, amused at herself.

“Those are… those are… Those are…”

“Yeah.”

“A doctor,” Raven rolled her eyes. “She doesn’t even know what those are.”

“Can we…? What? How?”

“Mr. Wells is going to meet us at the main property,” Clarke said before starting the engine once again.

“Can’t we stay with them?”

The amazement was infectious, and Clarke couldn’t remember losing it, though she did in the grime of her day-to-day life. Raven was right. She had a type, which apparently included hot professors with big glasses and old baseball hats and legs that were godly.

“You’ll have plenty of time,” Clarke promised.

Lexa didn’t hear anything. She stared, wide-eyed and blown away by the giants that walked along the valley floor. She was certain her heart didn’t beat at all the entire trip.

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The science, the show, the behind the scenes parts, Lexa was absolutely intrigued by, swallowed up in it the moment the handler and the engineer dropped her off at the main entrance.

Before she knew it, the day was over and her notebook was filled with notes and questions and ideas and observations, and she hadn’t even made it back out to the park that blew her mind.

“Finally escaping the lab, professor?” a familiar voice greeted her as Lexa attempted to make her way toward her room to try to type up her notes and see what else she wanted to look into in the morning. She had stacks of reading the doctors lent her so that she could be up to date on their findings. It was highly classified and she had to sign a million contracts just to read them, but she looked forward to it.

“I think I could live in there,” she confessed, head still twirling slightly.

“Where are you heading?” Raven asked, walking alongside the doctor, dragging her leg gently, appreciative that she slowed slightly.
"Just back to my room. I’m supposed to have dinner with some of the scientists in an hour to go—"

"You don’t want to do that."

"I don’t?"

"Come slum it with the hired hands. I promise it’ll be way better."

"I’m not sure your friend likes me very much," Lexa remembered, adjusting her bag on her shoulder and pushing up her glasses. "And you’re not exactly a hired hand."

"We all are in our own ways for Jaha. Trust me. Even you are. You just don’t know it yet."

All she wanted was to shower and go back to her room, and yet Lexa decided that detoxing from the science, from the pounding feeling in her head that came from the impossible existing, it was too much.

"Plus, Clarke doesn’t warm up often to people. You can’t take it personally. She’s an animal person."

"I don’t know that I’d consider these animals."

"You have a lot to learn, doc."

The little cantina was a slice of actual life in the middle of what felt like the Twilight Zone. Perched on the far side of the main compound, behind the employee’s only fence, leaning against what was left of an almost drained lake, the little open, sided hut was the nightly gathering place for everyone. Clarke enjoyed it as much as she could, though it made her feel as if she was missing out on actual life, far away, away from the tiny dome of the island.

The sun hung around, lazy and disinterested in leaving the day to give into the night. The big, fluffy clouds caught on fire and became embers, while the people below sipped drinks and ate from the communal buffet.

The addition of a stranger had everyone awake and buzzing. The little staff were all experts, all knowledgeable, all adventurous and running from things, and yet as tough as they strived to be, any kind of newness, of new person, made them yearn for the real world.

Clarke avoided it as much as possible. Something about a new person reminded her what she was running from, why she escaped from real life and wound up in this zoo.

She knew what Raven was doing, and Clarke wanted nothing to do with it.

The back porch looked out onto the field that led into the trees. From atop the slope she sat and drank the beer and let it cool her down, a near impossible feat in the weather.

"I think we got off on the wrong foot," a voice behind her offered. "After meeting with Jaha, I understand why."

Clarke didn’t move, didn’t say anything. She just took another drink and listened to the noises of the world beyond the tree line.

"I don’t want to tell you how to do your job. I came to study behaviors, not to… to… train them. I told him that’s impossible, and he said you said the same thing."

Wringing her fingers, Lexa ran her hand up her neck and tried to think of what else to say, hoping
not to do anything else to piss off the person she’d be working with for the next week.

“Anyway. That’s all I wanted to say.”

“Would you like a drink, Dr. Woods?” Clarke offered without turning around.

Somewhat relieved, the professor smiled to herself before grabbing the bottle offered and taking the seat beside the lounging handler.

“Lexa. You can call me Lexa.”

“You survived your first day. That’s impressive.”

“I don’t know how you do it every day. How long has it been?”

“About sixteen months.”

“Goodness.”

Both drank and stared at the sunset while the jukebox played something behind them. Clarke sighed and relaxed further while Lexa leaned forward and listened beneath the noise to what was happening out there.

“The Diplocodus sing at night,” Clarke offered.

“Like whales.”

“Yeah, something like that.”

From across the cantina Raven watched the two sitting on the back porch and congratulated herself on a job well done. It was no surge-proofed server system, but it was something.

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For two days, Lexa soaks up everything that she can. She can’t imagine her eyes being any wider at every glance and nook and cranny. The entirety of the island is mesmerizing. For nearly four hours just one day, she spends sitting in a Jeep on the edge of a field observing. She filled up three notebooks in the short amount of time.

As much time as she spends observing, a certain handler spends just as much observing the professor. It isn’t on purpose, just always seems to work out that way. Something about the nerdy, quiet, passionate, smart, funny, kind… and the list raged on as Clarke tried to make an excuse for her gazing. Something about her just distracted Clarke at inconvenient moments, had her spilling words out of her mouth, even when she thought she was being quiet.

“Are you busy, Professor?” Clarke realized she was asking as she stumbled upon Lexa at the cage for check ups.

She’d meant to walk by, to leave her with possibly just a wave, while she assisted the vet with some notes. Of course, Clarke was suddenly a mess, and very much angry at her best friend for planting seeds that actually took in the arid desert that was her mind.
“Depends on what you may have for me today,” Lexa smiled in that way that felt like dew on ankles at dawn.

“I don’t think you’ve gotten a proper introduction to what I do.”

“Do I finally get to go into the employees only section that’s hidden behind those high walls and heavy doors?”

“No, but I promise you’ll have a better time than examining with Dr. Lame.”

“Dr. Lima is going to give me my first contact with dinosaurs.”

Clarke smiled to herself and flicked the keys in her hand.

“Trust me,” Clarke offered. “I rarely disappoint.”

The ride to the southern side of the island was bumpy and even worse than the one from the airport, but Lexa held on and for some unknown reason, trusted the handler. She regretted her decision precisely six minutes into the trip as she was nearly bounced out of her seat, earning just a grin from the driver who shrugged and adjusted her sunglasses.

Far in the horizon, clouds emerged from the horizon, angry and black, contrasting perfectly with the bright white-blue of the clear sky. Lexa shielded her eyes as they hopped along and recognized the storm coming in the way the breeze shifted and then calmed to almost nothing.

“How far are we?”

“Can’t you enjoy the ride?”

“Has anyone?” she retorted. “There’s a storm coming.”

“It hasn’t hit the first set of islands yet. We won’t see that for another hour or two,” Clarke promised as the Jeep slowed and stopped.

“Now you’re a meteorologist?”

“I’d like you a lot better if you were nicer to me,” the handler grumbled, pulling herself up by the crossbar and sliding out of the rover. Before Lexa could muster a reply, the blonde shouldered her bag and walked around, towards the front.

Half tripping and half afraid of being left, Lexa scrambled out after Clarke.

“I’m plenty nice to you,” she argued, pushing up her glasses as the tall grass tickled her bare legs. “You’re the one that’s rude to me.”

“I brought you out here, didn’t I?”

Lexa almost slammed into Clarke’s back, she stopped so quickly. Humming to herself, she met the challenging blue eyes and a smirk and swallowed deeply, blaming the humidity most of all.

“Yes, but you’re very surly, did you know that?”

“Surly.”

“Surly.”
“I don’t mean to be, it’s just… people talk a lot, don’t they?” Clarke asked, almost too honest and real, such a flip that it caught Lexa slightly off balance. “I don’t like wasted words.”

All she could do was follow down the faintest semblance of a trail. She wanted to ask more, but she felt like they were all wasteful kinds of words, no matter how she flipped them around and examined their surfaces in her head.

“We don’t breed, we reproduce,” Clarke explained as she came to a stop finally, digging through her bag. “Which makes herd dynamics easier.” She let out a low whistle.

For a moment, nothing happened.

The trees jostled, the shrubs moved, the earth shook slightly. With a squeal, a blur emerged and rammed into Clarke’s side, knocking her over in a fit of actual laughter. All Lexa could do was watch as the baby stood atop her and nudged her with a dull snout, rooting under her arm.

The trees moaned and came down to their side a few seconds later as a full grown triceratops came forward, timid and waiting at the edge. Lexa took a step back, eyes wide. She’d been close to the specimens before, but behind the glass back at the lab, in the paddocks used for observation.

“Okay, okay, enough,” the handler shoved at the teenage rhino sized creature that hovered over her. “Easy there buddy. You’re getting bigger and stronger.”

“That’s a…” Lexa trailed off slightly before she felt a giant breath on her shoulder and wet, sloppy lips on her shoulder. A horn met her eyes when she turned toward the adult.

“Yeah. It is,” Clarke chuckled.

Gone was the tightness of her shoulders, the defensiveness of her face. Clarke was a new person, full of life and joy. She righted herself despite the insistence of the animal that nudged her hips and ribs.

“Looks like Doreen likes you.”

“Doreen?” Lexa swallowed and met the large, doleful eyes of the thing that nipped at her shoulder, covering her in slobber.

“I like giving them old lady names. They remind me of old ladies. Nice and gentle, would give you hard candies,” Clarke grunted as she pushed back against the newly forming horns on the baby as it lifted her. “But get them mad, and they’ll take you to town with a wrath of many years lived.”

“Can I…”

“She doesn’t bite.”

“Just slobbers.”

“I thought they’d be a good way to properly introduce you to the real thing. This is what I do,” Clarke laughed as she got pushed again by the antsy little critter who came up to almost her shoulders. “They’re real and alive, and have personalities. You hypothesize on what makes them do what they do.”

She ran her hand along the plate of the dinosaur’s shell, feeling the unique texture, smiling to herself as she did.

“Who is that?” Lexa asked, nudging her chin at the thing still nudging Clarke.
“CJ.”

“CJ. Not a very good old lady name.”

“Clarke Junior,” she explained, blushing slightly at the admission. “I never thought I’d have to explain that to anyone.”

“She definitely has your legs.”

“I think she takes after my personality.”

A slobbery nose dug into Clarke’s bag, and Lexa grinned at the display.

It took impending clashes of thunder for Clarke to convince the good professor to retreat back to the main part of the park. It took a promise of taking her to see the herds on the southside of the river to get her to not mope.

The entire ride back, Lexa raved, and asked a million questions, her eagerness overpowering her fear of the weather and her worry about the ethics and implications of what seeing an actual dinosaur in real life, would mean. Clarke just smiled and answered what she could, amused at the way in which this girl was absolutely in love with the science of it.

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As the rain started to fall, they dashed into the cantina and still, Lexa couldn’t stop talking, couldn’t stop gushing. Clarke realized it was maybe the best thing she’d ever done, to get a girl like that so excited and alive. She didn’t know how, but she liked it.

Gradually, the evening grew later, the rain came hard, the water coming down in buckets and the lightning flashing. Everyone emptied out as the lights flickered. Clarke was exhausted, but in no way eager to miss a second of Lexa, and she hated Raven for it.

“So we’ve made it clear that you love this, but you never told me why you study bones,” Clarke finally ventured, balancing the beer bottle on her knee as she leaned against the wall in their little nook.

“You never told me why you’re a handler,” Lexa countered, pushing up her glasses before tilting her head back for a long swig.

It was the drink and the hour, but Clarke let her eyes linger too long on the slope of her neck and shoulders.

“You first.”

“Fine,” the professor finally sighed with a grin. “I just like that for something so old, we don’t know anything about it. All of the information is there, we just have to find it. It’s a giant game. And I like hunting for them.”

“It was the cool hats and the digging, right?”

“And the computer models. That’s what really sold me.”
“I’m serious.”

“I went to the museum when I was a kid. My dad didn’t hang around much, but I did skip school
and he took me to the museum, and we learned about dinosaurs. After that, he always sent me
something about dinosaurs when he could. I don’t know where he went,” she shrugged. “Just
stopped coming around, but I don’t know. The dinosaurs stuck.”

“See? That’s a much more human answer.”

“I’m human.”

“You use the scientific name for things and speak in numbers. You’re far from human,” Clarke
chuckled and earned a look. She earned a blush and leaned across the table slightly, propping her
cheek up and really looking at her.

“Tell me your deep, dirty secrets then,” Lexa finally managed.

“I’m boring. Good mom, good dad. I just always liked animals, and I didn’t like school. I did odd
jobs. Horse trainer when I got out of high school. Dog and obedience classes. I joined the circus for a
bit.”

“You’re lying.”

“Yeah, a little,” she grinned.

“I went to school to be a large animal vet, and I worked at a zoo for a long while. And then I just…
My dad got sick, and I got an offer from Jaha that I jumped at to get away from home.”

“That sounds more like it.”

“Have you ever held your hand up to a tiger’s paw?”

“Can’t say that I have.”

“I never thought anything would beat that feeling,” Clarke explained. “And then I came here.”

“But this place…it can’t…it can’t sustain this. The animals…”

“It’s not as perfect as they make it seem,” she agreed. “We had a bacterial outbreak that killed off a
few dozen, and the raptors are showing signs of–”

“Raptors?”

That had been missing from the tour. Clarke gulped when she realized the words that came out of her
mouth. Frantically, she searched her brain for a way to back track it, though none presented itself
rightly.

“Um.”

“You’ve bred predators?!” Lexa yelled.

Clarke didn’t like that very much. She did, actually. She liked how angry she looked because her jaw
was tight and her eyes were fire. But she hated it.

“I didn’t do anything. I just help try to keep them all alive.”
“There’s no way this place is safe.”

“We have high walls, lined with electric charges, and the predators are kept separate.”

“I can’t believe this,” Lexa stood and grabbed her bag, ready to march out.

Quickly, Clarke grabbed her arm and tugged her back.

“Where are you going?”

“To shut this down.”

“Believe me, it’s too late for that.”

The storm roared outside, and Clarke stood there, holding Lexa’s arm until she yanked it away.

Slightly wounded, she just waited for the inevitable lashing that she was almost growing to expect from the professor.

Instead, she was met with quiet.

“You can’t be okay with it,” Lexa shook her head.

“I’m not, but I was too far in before I found out. Now I have all of those animals, like you met today, and I can’t just trust anyone else—”

“No, I get it.”

“I’m sorry.”

“What are you apologizing for?” Lexa asked, cocking her head slightly. Once more, in that place, in this room, around that girl, she felt overwhelmed.

“I don’t know. It just felt right.”

Once more, she shook her head and was met with a kind of grin that made her forget about giant carnivores who could eat her in one bite. Until she remembered.

“I should, um,” Lexa pulled away slightly, unsure how she got to be standing so close to an animal handler in the middle of an island in a jungle inhabited by extinct creatures. “I should go to bed.”

“Yeah, um, me too,” Clarke agreed, clearing her throat. “Tomorrow? See you early for the trip out to the river?”

“Yeah.”

With coy eyes, Lexa darted away as fast as her feet could take her without looking like she was running. Clarke stood on the porch and scratched her neck as she watched her look back and hurriedly look away.

And she hated Raven once again.
Art Exhibit.

The air in the museum was fake. That recycled, decontaminated, bleached, purified kind of air that was pumped religiously at the exact temperature of nothingness. But that was part of the experience, part of the magic, part of allowing one to get swept up in the art on the walls and the statues on the floor and the sculptures on stands.

“I like this one,” Lexa mused, cheek leaning on Clarke’s head as the artist wound her arms around her arm.

“I can’t imagine doing something so well,” Clarke sighed.

“I like yours better,” Lexa promised, pushing her on to the next canvas.

She liked museums with Clarke. She took her to the Museum of Natural History on their first date, and it went so swimmingly they made out in front of the mummies. And the dinosaur replicas. They ate hot dogs in the park across the street and stayed out too late talking about the entirety of the world.

But art museums made Clarke fret, made her anxious, made her feel unaccomplished, of which Lexa could not understand, because she loved her work, loved her designs, loved to find her in the attic with that old giant shirt covered in paints with a rainbow streaked across her forehead and cheek. But they don’t put those kind of things in museums, and she couldn’t exactly articulate it to the girl that sighed on her arm.

“I like it,” Lexa said again as they looked at the piece.

“What part?” Clarke lifted her head and peered. Lexa got distracted, watching her furrow and dissect and learn. She hadn’t expected to be quizzed, though after dating an artist for as long as she somehow managed to keep Clarke around, she knew a thing or two. For as much as Clarke loved art, loved museums, loved her work at the design company, loved painting, loved sketching, she put up with Lexa’s complete lack of knowledge about it well. So long as Lexa tried. She learned that on a terrible fifth date, a lesson she never forgot.

“The, uh, I like right there,” Lexa pointed to where water met sky. It was the colour of Clarke’s eyes, or at least as close as she’d seen. “I like how real just this square,” she held up her fingers in the shape of a box, isolating it, letting Clarke look through. “How do you guys mix the colour of the sky at 6:17 in the evening on a Tuesday in May?” Her hands dropped and she shoved one in her pocket. “That’s what that is. And I like that. I think that would be hard to accomplish.”

“First, there’s no we. Stop with the we,” Clarke corrected. “And I don’t know. Luck.”

“No,” Lexa shook her vehemently. “That can’t be luck. That isn’t luck. I refuse to believe that is luck.”

They looked at the painting for a few more minutes as people milled around behind them. The crowd was thin and light as they both ditched their respective jobs in the middle of the week for this, and they thought of no better place to play hooky.

“I like when you describe the parts,” Clarke pulled her girlfriend onwards and into another room, past the busts of dead thinkers and saints and rulers and villains who all looked alike.
Clarke fell in love with Lexa in the statue room. Specifically over the bust of some random prince of some land that was no longer a country or other. It did not matter. What mattered was that Lexa looked at it and told her it made her sad. She did not like busts. It always made her wonder who they were, but things she’d never know. No one would ever know if the man this bust was modeled after snored, or if he picked up his kids and made them laugh, or what his favourite smell was. And that bothered Lexa.

She wasn’t sure why, but Clarke thought about it often when she grew frustrated with the disinterested guest, with the stoic and unfeeling front she paraded. Because it was not that she was unfeeling or disinterested, but more that she computed them differently, and that view was gorgeous and complex and riddled with folly and fear. And that was something to be in love with.

“Not when I talk about the portraits,” Lexa disagreed with her girlfriend.

“You make fun of every person. You’re a landscape snob. You’re not happy if there’s a human in it.”

“That’s not true. That last one had a guy in it. He was on the boat. Anyway, I maintain that no one can draw a person non-comically,” Lexa shrugged. “Places are just so nice. I like oceans and hills and boats. I like paintings of boats a lot.”

“You’re like a ninety year old man. Boats and Picasso.”

“I know,” Lexa agreed as they meandered past the half broken vases. “And I’m so prudish. The less clothes the more I get freaked out. Which is really weird. I’d be that one Pope that made them paint leaves on all the dicks.”

“I remember our trip to see Georgia O’Keefe,” Clarke laughed and looked through the map. “You wouldn’t go down on me for a week.”

“Ugh,” Lexa shivered. “It was like I was being smothered in labia.”

“Nightmares for a month,” Clarke sighed, grinning and watching Lexa’s discomfort as she remembered.

If she could, she’d spend years in museums with her. Because she was funny, and she was thoughtful, and just when Clarke might have thought she was blowing her off, not listening, not interested, she pulled out moments like that, when she pinpointed a six by six square of canvas and made Clarke fall in love with it.

And the way she looked at Clarke’s work itself made her perfect. She knew they weren’t the best, knew they weren’t going to stop people in the Louvre. But when Lexa looked at them, she thought maybe they would. She would stare hard at it, quietly, think, ponder, squint, get closer. And she would tell her why she loved it, what it made her feel, what it made her think. And this was from a girl who was afraid of Georgia O’Keefe paintings, all that exposition, just for her.

Clarke kissed Lexa’s cheek, right there in front of a Victorian princess and Greek gods. It made Lexa stop her rambling about flowers. She slung her arm over Clarke’s shoulders and continued to walk.

“Now this is a painting,” Lexa decided, pulling Clarke into the giant mural that stretched from one end to the other.

Slowly the walked along the edge before taking a few steps back and settling in the middle. Clarke watched Lexa’s face, watched her take in the giant landscape, even with its tiny obscure people in it that were irrelevant completely.
“You should do one like this,” Lexa nodded.

“You think I can?”

“Why not?” she balked, confused at the doubt. “You can paint anything.”

Clarke grinned and let her continue to look at the painting, she wrapped her arms around her waist and rested her head on her shoulder before looking as well. Before them stretched the Palace and Gardens of Versailles, captured in perfect midday sunlight on a warm May day, or at least that was what Lexa would call it.

“We need a bigger attic if I’m going to try something like this,” Clarke whispered. Lexa was woken from her dreaming and parading through the work. She put her arm around Clarke’s shoulders and felt her squeeze her waist.

“That’s impractical,” Lexa decided. “How would we even get it out?”

“So a smaller version then?”

“I didn’t say that. I just think it’s impractical. You should still do it. You paint a painting this big, and I’ll build a room for it.”

“Alright,” Clarke smiled into her shoulder for reasons Lexa could not understand, and so she just went with it, stuck in Versailles and thinking about a giant room.
Lashes

Chapter Summary

Clarke does something that violates Grounder protocol and is to be punished (not to death). Lexa doesn’t want to appear weak and let Clarke off, but she can’t let her be hurt either, so she invokes a Grounder tradition that lets a lover take the place of their mate. She and Clarke are still in the not yet stage though, and Clarke doesn’t want to let her take her do it, but Indra convinces her that to deny what Lexa has asserted would shame her. However you go from there is up to you.

Chapter Notes

as always, coeurdastronaute.tumblr.com

Clarke does something that violates Grounder protocol and is to be punished (not to death). Lexa doesn’t want to appear weak and let Clarke off, but she can’t let her be hurt either, so she invokes a Grounder tradition that lets a lover take the place of their mate. She and Clarke are still in the not yet stage though, and Clarke doesn’t want to let her take her do it, but Indra convinces her that to deny what Lexa has asserted would shame her. However you go from there is up to you.

The lead in her stomach seemed to grow heavier and heavier with each anticipatory second. But Clarke stood there, her very being weighed down by self-loathing and guilt, merciless, hot guilt that felt like iron in her very veins. She could not look away, even though every muscle in her body dripped with this remorse, she wrung her tendons and stood there, staring at the guard who tied Lexa’s hands around the post, eyes unwavering.

There had to come a time when she would face punishment, and Clarke’s time ran out finally. Lexa hugged the post for her, head held high and disinterested while Clarke’s stomach did half-hearted summersaults in the crowd. The cloudling hated her in the moment, and in the next she loved her. So closely were the two feelings dancing in her heart that she did not know what to do with either. So she simply watched helplessly as her fate was decided. So delicate was the balance of honour and shame and guilt and love that she felt like a juggler who just wanted a glass of water.

From her post, Lexa refused to look at Clarke, knowing full well that it would just hurt the troubled, brave-faced blonde, adding to the guilt she did not deserve. The wood of the ancient post smelled of blood and earth. It was better this way, Lexa thought. There was honour in this. She would be uncontainable if she were watching Clarke’s hand tied here, and her own shame would burn her alive. She nodded to the guard and gave him a tiny smile to assure him that it was alright. He bowed, deep and doleful to her.

For just an instant, Lexa chanced a look at Clarke, her Clarke, the thing she chose to allow to hold
her heart. She smiled slightly at the thought, at the mere notion that she had any choice at all in the matter. She dipped her head gently, just for her, to tell her it was alright. In the blue of her eyes, normally cloudy or like the lake at noon, there were storms and hurricanes and monsoons and all matters of earthly destruction behind the calm, placidity of her face. Clarke hated her for doing this, to be forced to allow her to do it, but Lexa didn't care. She spent enough time making sure she stayed alive, this was easy. It didn't matter if she hated Lexa's interjection of herself. All that mattered was that Lexa didn't have to watch it happen to Clarke. Maybe one day the cloudling would understand how important this act was.

“You have to do this,” Indra whispered, standing beside Clarke.

“I know,” she managed, swallowing her self-hatred. It seemed to be pouring from every part of her body like an unstoppable dyke she didn't have enough thumbs to keep from bursting.

“She could never order this done to you,” the general reminded her.

“I would have understood.”

“Could you have ordered it?”

“I could have bore it. If I would have just listened, this wouldn’t be…”

The general from the visiting clan slid his blade down the back of Lexa’s old shirt, cutting it off of her back so it hung from her shoulders. Clarke was distracted by the hatchings on Lexa’s back, the puckered pale mountain ranges that created a cartographical wonder on the skin there.

“You do not think this is the first time the Commander has earned punishment?”

“I hadn’t thought.”

Dumb and perplexed, Clarke looked at the skin there, the plump, pink skin of healed flesh like hatchings in an old story ready to be dipped and printed on a page. Lexa turned her head away from Clarke, embarrassed by the scene she knew the blonde was seeing.

“She was not the most well-behaved child,” Indra remembered, lifting her head uncomfortably, remembering the hand she had in some of those marks. “Prone to quiet rebellions.”

“I shouldn’t have let her.”

“To let one you love bear that is dishonourable. She loves you, you moronic, undeserving waste. This is your punishment.” With that, Indra moved away, though Octavia remained beside Clarke, silent and sorry.

The first crack of the whip made Clarke sick. The second made her swallow it. Lexa gritted her teeth and refused to move despite the pain that scorched through her body. She pulled on the rope around her wrist, hugging the pole tighter. Her face retained a calm that was unheard of existing.

“It had to be this way,” Octavia offered. Clarke watched the general wind up again. Lexa’s shoulders moved under the urgency of her lungs to breathe through it. She tilted her head against the pole. To Clarke it looked like praying for just an instant before she looked straight ahead again. “She could never hurt you that way, and she could never appear to favour you, it would ruin her standing. This is for the best.”

“I could have done this. I did this,” Clarke gritted her teeth.
“She loves you,” Octavia echoed her general. Three more lashes rang out through the trees, silencing the birds and wind in its rampant crack. “You do these things for those you love.”

Silent and sturdy, Lexa did not flinch with each scalding slash of her back. She felt blood oozing down her back, licking at the tip of the whip when it cracked and broke her more. She stood there and thought she’d break her own jaw under the force exerted to keep it shut and appear unfazed. She felt her mouth spit as she inhaled and exhaled greedily beneath the veneer of serene annoyance.

The only movement observed on Clarke the furrow that clouded her brow and the flexing her her throat. Almost imperceptibly, her fist clenched and her forearms burned and smouldered under the strain as she held them. She was vibrating with the ache of it, but she could do little else.

From her position, she observed Lexa tugging on the rope around her wrist, her biceps trying to almost pull the sturdy rope in half, to keep herself on her feet. By the fifteenth lash, she was leaning more heavily on the pole, though her face only grew more red, not making a sound. Clarke saw the blood covering her back and ached to scream as well.

The final strike came and Lexa’s eyelids fluttered though she refused to bend. Instead she waited for her hands to be freed. She continued to hug the pole to stay up, though her arms were spent and she nearly fell before Indra caught her, scooping herself beneath her arm. Clarke was under her other arm an instant later.

“Please do not do that again,” Lexa tried to say, to make her smile. She wanted a smile, but her head slumped forward and the words were muffled by breathing.

They didn’t make it back to her tent before she was no longer helping them walk, instead passing out somewhere a few feet from the pole. Octavia went to work scattering the crowd who watched silently, who looked at Clarke curiously, trying to decipher what this meant for them, now.

“Go get water, as cold as you can find,” Lincoln told Clarke, already in the tent and emptying bags as Lexa was tossed atop the table gently. “I will show you what comes next when you return.”

“Is she okay?”

“We will see.”

By the time Clarke came back, bucket sloshing with her, Lincoln already began cleaning, eagerly soaking rags and gently laying them across the Commander’s back. Afraid of being in the way, Clarke pulled Lexa’s hair aside, ran her thumb along her jaw, kissed her forehead.

It took nearly an hour for Lincoln and Clarke to go about cleaning and placing the herbal ointment along her back. Clarke added to it with antibiotics and painkillers.

By dusk the tent was empty with Lexa’s fist tucked beneath her chin, huddled and shivering slightly from the cold rags on her back. Clarke sat at the head of the table listening to the dripping of her warm body. She ran her fingers through her hair and rested her chin on her palm. The twisting of her insides only intensified as she saw the battlefield of Lexa’s back up close. Her mouth had done this, her right hook had done this, her stubbornness had done this and she had regrets too large to swallow any longer.

“Hi,” Lexa whispered. Groggy and sore, she tried to move but settled for just her eyes opening. “Clarke of the Sky People.”

“I’m so sorry,” Clarke whispered.
“I will take this spot over your seat any day,” Lexa assured her.

“What can I do?”

“This is enough,” Lexa promised, swallowing roughly, her lungs not wanting to disrupt her back.

“I wish you would have let me face it.”

“I would never willingly let harm come to you, Clarke.”

“But I did it to myself.”

“It does not matter.”

“But I told you not yet.”

“It does not matter.” Lexa was interrupted with sips of water Clarke offered. “Even if I never told you what I wanted, I would be here. Now or never or tomorrow. I would still be here.”

“Be quiet and rest,” Clarke insisted.

“Stay. Please.”

“Of course.”

With a tiny movement, Clarke leaned forward and kissed Lexa as best she could. The Commander ignored the pain and tilted her head, craving lips, earning lips. She’d go back up on the pole that moment if it meant more of that.

“I’m so sorry.”

“Stay.”
The house was silent, was quiet, was void of all sounds and because of that it was a glorious slice of heaven in the middle of a maddening city. With no effort left, Clarke tossed the mail on the counter to be checked later, dropped her bag in the middle of the floor, opened her empty cabinets only to close it against disinterestedly before trudging down the hall and flopping face first and star-fished straight into her big, fluffy, wondrously perfect bed.

She wasn’t sure what time it was, and for a bit, without at least a little effort, she wasn’t positive which time zone she even inhabited at the moment, but none of that mattered. She had time, she had the day to herself, and she had glorious plans to suffocate in sheets and never move.

The jingling of her phone in her pocket made her whine and nearly cry with frustration.

“I just want to sleep, Ray,” Clarke groaned into her phone, barely moving her head from its position deep in the comforter.

“Counteroffer. Party tonight.”

“I’m not playing. I’m done for a few weeks.”

“Come as my plus one.”

“I want to sleep.”

“You’re the worst rock star in the world. Mick Jagger is rolling in his grave.”

“He’s not dead.”

“Exactly.”

“I just got home.”

“All the more reason. It’s been three months.”

“Please, Raven. Tomorrow.”

“No. We are young, we must be alive.”

“You’re here, aren’t you?”

“Pulling up now.”

Clarke hung up and threw her phone to the side, hearing it thud against the carpet and clack onto the wood. The doorbell rang beligerantly a few minutes later followed by it opening and a huge jump to join her in the bed. But she refused to move, oddly hoping for the sweet relief of a permanent sleep.

It took only a little bit more effort and a little bit more of grumping for Clarke to relent and agree to go with her friend. The truth of the matter was that she did, in fact, miss her after three months away, and she had been neglectful of returning calls and falling victim to the gross agitator called timezones.

And so she let herself be plied with dinner, and she let Raven fill her in on everything she missed while she’d been gone. The artist did her part, expounding upon her time spent with new people,
with their collective friends.

And the party wasn’t terrible, was quieter than Clarke had expected when it came to something Raven was involved in. Tired as she was and as sick of small talk as she grew, Clarke swallowed it and allowed herself to have fun because she was home and because she planned on hibernating for seventeen hours.

It wasn’t until her friend disappeared did Clarke feel the crushing weight of the timezone upon her eyelids. With a yawn she reached for another drink to avoid the same gazes of familiar people she barely remembered.

“Oh, goodness, I’m so sorry,” a voice plead as Clarke felt a huge bump against her side. “I’m literally all knees and terrible.”

“No, no,” the singer promised. “I’m broad as a barn and not nearly careful enough.”

“Well, we’re a lethal combination, aren’t we?” The brunette still looked at her skirt, brushing away the little bit of drink that spilled.

“You’re...” Clarke tried to remember the name for that face. She would have recognized her hips or her spine, and that made her blush.

“No, you’re Clarke Griffin,” she offered, eyes growing wide and cheeks growing just as red.

“I am. You’re Lexa.”

“All day.”

“You’re... wow,” Clarke smiled, dumb and stupid and hopeless. She felt her knees vibrate.

“I always thought Raven was lying about you being her best friend,” Lexa smiled as she bit her straw and sized up the blonde. “I guess this was the proof.”

“Since the days I used to play street corners,” Clarke nodded. She wasn’t sure how, but the noise of other mingling, the sounds of drunken laughter forced her to lean closer to this stranger she recognized from papers and billboards and such.

She always thought models were photoshopped, and she was certain they were, but somehow Lexa had the best smile and the prettiest eyes, and the crook of her nose and the slope of her neck were impossible to be man-made in real-life. Clarke gulped over her own vocation.

“She’s been trying to get us to meet for months now,” Lexa confessed.

“Why’s that?”

“Said we were both going to hate each other or get along swimmingly.”

“She’s always been a curious one.”

Clarke found herself very not tired suddenly in the night.

“Well, which is it, Griffin?”

“I detest you already.”

The two shared a grin and fell into talking like they knew each other’s secrets already.
“You hang out a lot,” the reporter needled.

“I’ve been known to do that with friends from time to time,” Lexa grinned. “I’m actually really looking forward to a bunch of my friends coming to the show. Making a weekend trip of it. You know, it’s hard enough getting everyone in one place. But they can’t say no when they’re playing a show in it or walking as well.”

“And Clarke Griffin will stick around after her set?”

“She better!” Lexa pulled away, moving down the carpet. “Two months locked up writing and I’m demanding she take a night off.”

The next wasn’t much different. The one after nearly the same. Lexa did what she did and she did it well enough.

“So we’ll play a game, and you can give a little back to us and caption our pictures for us,” the one after tried, holding up a few pieces of cardboard.

“I’m terrible at thinking on the spot, but we’ll go for it.”

“We just want to know the real story behind them, give you a chance to tell your side.” The camera was trained on Lexa and she was handed a microphone.

“Oh, right on, I can do this,” Lexa pretended to be pumped.

“Now this looks a little adorable, am I wrong?”

“Not at all. I love that sweater,” the model laughed, looking at the picture of herself in a big sweatshirt with GRIFF written on it. “I got it as a gift, actually. I meant to give it to Clarke, and I ended up keeping it. That’s who I am.” Lexa laughed nervously and barred her shame.

“What about this?”

“Okay, listen, this was very important. I was doing the Lord’s work,” Lexa promised earnestly as the picture of her apparently grabbing a certain singer’s bottom appeared. “She thought she sat on gum. Purely innocent.”

“Sure sure. It looks like quite a difficult mission. One more please.”

“Who doesn’t have a good ol’ fashioned slumber party?” Lexa winked and pulled away towards the next.

The morning was young, and Clarke was already despondent and grumpy. Journalists called it a kind of artistic streak, but really it was frustration at failing to get what was in her head translated into the
world, and it followed her around like a yappy little dog that loved the taste of her heels.

“I definitely need some sustenance. Is that a problem?” Clarke asked as she sat in the booth with the reporter. She tossed her sunglasses gently on the table.

“Not at all. Gives me more time to dig into some of my questions.”

“Yeah, I’m excited. I liked your stuff when you were abroad. Taqwacore is something I always wanted to know more about.”

“You read it?” the reporter was young, was nice, was smart. Clarke genuinely did enjoy her writing and did look forward to the interview. Which was rare.

“I did. Always looking for new influences, always curious about hearing new stuff. I have the world’s worst collection of music. It’s all over the place. I can never move because my records take a whole wall in the spare. And it’s growing.”

“A true connoisseur,” they nodded as Clarke flipped through the menu.

“It was part my dad’s. I just inherited it and added on. Will you judge me if I get chocolate chip waffles and not share?”

The interview started after she ordered, though Clarke realized it never officially began and she was alright with it. She talked history with the reporter, outing herself as a military history nerd to her own dismay. She talked music, what she loved, songs she always came back to, things people might be surprised to hear on her iPod, what she grew up with and what she craved. They talked the tour, the impending album, the string of nominations and award show, shows.

It wasn’t until after the dishes were cleared and Clarke followed outside to meet the photographer that the questions took that familiar turn.

“It’s a cool hat.”

“It was a gag gift. But I’m attached to it.” CLEXA was blazed across the front of the hat as the photographer snapped a few of Clarke against the wall in the back alley.

“Any comment on the rumours?”

“Not really.”

“What about Lexa?”

“She’s an amazing friend. I don’t think I’ve ever met someone so fiercely loyal or kind or goofy or smart. And she’s creative as hell. She’s amazing. That’s my comment on her.”

“What about the hat?”

“I’m an artist, can’t you make up some quote about being ironic?”

“I’m sorry to ask. I actually hate asking. But I had to. Literally. And the friendship, the group of young talent from all different disciplines you’ve formed. It’s like a table at the Algonquin of pop culture.”

“Don’t tell them that. Their heads are big enough,” Clarke laughed.

“Does it bother you, getting asked these questions?”
“I mean. Repetition annoys me. But it’s whatever. I mean, look at her. Who wouldn’t want to date Lexa Woods. She’s a supermodel who knows too much about science.”

“It must get frustrating though.”

“It does. I just never understood it. If I was dating someone like that, I’d be shouting it from the rooftops.”

“Maybe even wearing hats proclaiming your shared couple name?”

“Clever. You almost got me with that entrapment,” Clarke laughed and wagged her finger at the reporter.

The night was long and Lexa was exhausted. Her day started before dawn and stretched maniacally onward until her shows were done and her shoots were done and there was nothing left but shaking hands and having fun. Though that was work to her too at this point.

But this, this was fun for her. This moment, where she eeked out a little moment of calm and joy and quiet and happy in the middle of a room of screaming people where she was not being screamed at, and instead adding some of the screaming herself.

Lexa stood in the front to the side with Anya, nodding her head with the music. She realized she must have looked like a groupie, but it was the first time her schedule intersected with Clarke’s so that she could actually see her play. It was new and exciting and mystifying. She’d seen videos, heard the music, but to be within fifteen feet of the stage and watching her friend on the stage felt oddly personal. But Lexa came as soon as her last shoot ended, and she wore a tour tee and had no shame in dancing and singing along to words she’d all but memorized.

“I went down, I went down, I went down, d-d-d-down,” Lexa sang along to the familiar lyrics. The lights blinked behind the stage as Clarke froze, lifted her hand from the guitar, cupped the microphone. Octavia slammed the drums and Lexa lifted her hands and danced along.

When the music dropped and the crowd roared, she only had eyes for the singer. She watched the pile of blonde waves be pushed aside as Clarke wiped sweat from her forehead. It was the smirk that did it, that made Lexa gulp. Anya bumped her side as Clarke turned to talk to Bellamy. She pointed towards the models and the bassist grinned. That was the plan, to set them up, hence Lexa’s presence. That was what she told herself.

“We have just a few more. You’ve been so lovely tonight,” Clarke hummed into the microphone as she fidgeted with the microphone. Bellamy played and the drums started, gentle and slow. “This is our first try of our new single. It’s coming out soon.”

Lexa recognized the bass line, recognized the drums. She’d been in the video for it, asked almost as a joke but when she saw Clarke’s earnest eyes she agreed.

If she was being honest, then she would have admitted she heard things in the song, that those eyes made her agree to most things, and that spending time with the singer and texting the entire time they were apart was something different. But she wouldn’t. That’d be too hard.

Lexa was distracted by fingers at the base of the neck of the guitar, at the way Clarke played against her hip. The way her shoulders hunched against herself as she closed her eyes and crooned the slower song.

“In a dream, I was untrue,” Clarke hummed, deeper and sincere. “Shot up in sweats and I knew it was you.” Lexa felt Anya sway beside her. Her ears thumped and beat and begged. Her mouth went dry. She watched her friend sing and she couldn’t think. There was only that.

“If you need it, then I need it,” the singer paused. “And only we’ll know.”

If Clarke was being honest, she’d have admitted that it was about Lexa, that she hadn’t written anything until she locked her door and turned off her phone and drank herself hoarse and wrote with honesty. But she wasn’t going to be honest, and she was going to scream it from the mountain tops for everyone to hear.
Sisters

Chapter Summary

Wow… More amazing writing… Thank you. If u are taking prompts I would love a
forbidden love, like best friends little sister or from the wrong side of the tracks…

“We can’t,” Clarke whispered, shaking her head. Lexa pulled her shirt anyway, scraping her
fingertips along skin that became available. There was little resistance in her actions.

“This might be our only chance,” she whispered, nose dragging along Clarke’s. Her lips followed,
reaching to touch her own. “You’re graduating tomorrow.”

“Anya’s my best friend,” the blonde argued as her shirt disappeared. That sentence gave her a tiny
bit of spine to stand up to the onslaught of Lexa’s eyes and lips and nose and intoxicating closeness.
Not enough, but some.

“I’m negligibly younger than you,” Lexa insisted. “One year.”

“It’s not the age thing, or that I’m graduating. You’re my best friend’s sister. You’re my sister’s
sister. That makes you my sister,” Clarke worried, feeling Lexa’s fabric against her bare stomach.

“Sorority sisters,” Lexa corrected, running her hands along Clarke’s neck.

“Still,” Clarke sighed, hips betraying her, pushing, needing.

“I made myself a promise, that if nothing happened by the time you graduated, I’d be very brave for
just a few seconds,” Lexa explained. “You flirt with me all of the time.”

“I like you,” Clarke confessed.

“So much,” she dipped her lips. She kissed Lexa, forceful and eager, though she was overtaken. Her
legs hit the back of her bed and she had Lexa in her lap a second later, straddling her hips.

“Then stop thinking,” Lexa whispered, kissing Clarke’s neck, tasting her skin. She felt warm palms
sliding up her ribs until her shirt was disappearing. “I don’t want to do this if you’ll regret it. You’ll
“I won’t regret it,” Clarke assured her. “I’ve dreamt of this for a long time.”

“Oh yeah?” Lexa grinned. “Thought of me straddling you?”

“Among other things.”

There were nails dripping down Clarke’s neck, down her shoulders, down her chest, over her bra, through her ribs. She shivered. The light from the party out back came through the windows, flashing on skin Clarke had only dreamed of. Lexa kissed her again, dipped her tongue, heard a moan, earned a shifting set of hips atop her.

She only pulled away to remove her bra, flinging it to the floor of the nearly empty room, packed and emptied and ready to move, the room of the last three years, Clarke shared with Anya, Lexa’s older sister. Those thoughts only half formed in Clarke’s mind. Her mouth was thinking for her now, eagerly circling the new skin on display. Her hands couldn’t stretch wide enough to hold the thing in her arms closer.

“Show me,” Lexa whispered, arching into Clarke’s ear. Her lips bit at her neck.

It egged her forward, now. She had no thoughts at all other than having not one single regret. She lifted Lexa, rolling her onto her back, on top of her and spurred on valiantly.

“It’s okay,” Lexa sighed. Her hands were on Clarke’s cheeks, focusing her.

“Did my sister get back to her apartment okay?”

“Your sister? Lexa? How would I know that? Or anything about your sister?” Clarke kept talking and looking far away, looking at anything but her best friend. Anya grinned, even though Clarke didn’t see it, grinned right there into her coffee.

“She went through with it then?” the sister sighed a contented smile.

“Through with? No. What?”

“We heard you.”

“Heard. Me? What?” Clarke was nonchalant like it was her job, which of course was anything but nonchalant.

“You’re terrible,” Anya shook her head. “Stop saying what.”
“I didn’t mean for it to happen,” her friend shook her head. “I’m sorry. I don’t want to ever ruin our friendship. ”

“You made it six years,” Anya took another gulp of her drink. “Six years of being in love with my sister. And it took her throwing herself at you to finally do something about it, and even then I’m sure you were worried that I would hate you.”

“You have no idea,” Clarke sighed.

“I never want to hear about it,” Anya explained.

“It wasn’t one night. I wanted to see if you would mind if I asked her out properly.”

“I would hope so,” Anya laughed.

“You knew about her plan?” Clarke turned back to her friend.

“She told me, in no kind words, that she had plans and I should make myself scarce from our room last night. I wasn’t going to chance it. In case you proved weak.”

“Six years,” Clarke reminded her.

“I would have preferred eternity, but six years was an impressive feat.”
Sisters (Part 2)

Chapter Summary

Sorry! Sorry, I meant to say prequel for “Sisters,” not sequel! I could see why u say there’s no place for it to go, but I’m curious to see what their interactions were like before, the whole “you flirt with me all the time” and they’ve known each other for 6 years! Sorry for the confusion again!

“I’m beat,” Clarke grunted as she dropped her bat bag on the porch and collapsed onto the porch swing.

August complained in the afternoon, the long, deep monotone of the cicadas praising the sun and the heat. The yards were the dull green and brown of summer, thirsty and never satisfied while the heat hung stifling and heavy against the pale blue sky, and the two varsity players were covered in the sweat and dirt of a long and hard conditioning practice.

“Welcome back,” Anya chuckled as she sat down as well.

“Yeah, who can imagine I missed this.”

“I feel like this was punishment for leaving for a few years.”

“That’s what you get for moving, for sure.”

“My room isn’t even unpacked yet,” Clarke shook her head. “And it’s not getting done tonight, that’s for sure.”

“You looked good out there though. We needed some help on defense.”

“Your pitching though. I don’t remember you being that good in little league.”

“I was always good,” Anya corrected. “I’m going to go grab some drinks. Don’t move.”

“Like I could.”

When Clarke moved in sixth grade, she never imagined she’d be back in her hometown. She never imagined her best friend would still be there, and she never really pictured moving her junior year of high school either from a life she managed to construct with her father across the country.

But there she was, sitting on a familiar porch, wearing familiar colors, and playing on the same team as familiar friend. Her muscles didn’t let her think about it too much, but deep down, she was excited to be back.

Or she thought she was, for at least a moment.

“Who the hell are you?” an indignant voice woke Clarke from the stupor of afternoon heat and the long practice.

“Lexa?”
Gone was the gawky little sister Clarke remembered. Gone were the braces and the scratched knees, and in its place were the shortest shorts and yellowest bikini top in all of the land. Naturally, Clarke forgot everything else and she felt as if she were drowning.

The scowl turned to a grin as she pushed the sunglasses up from her eyes and put them atop her head. She recognized the softball player slowly, and then all at once.

“Anya said you were back,” Lexa smirked and leaned against the railing. Clarke was too distracted with the bit of sweat that rolled down a tanned stomach toward the unbuttoned shorts. “Welcome home.”

“How have you been?”

“Good. I think the last time you saw me I couldn’t tame my hair and I had a mouthful of metal.”

“And I hadn’t figured out how to put on eyeliner.”

“No, but you look good now.”

“Me? Oh. Yeah. No. I wouldn’t… okay.”

Thankfully, Anya pushed open the screen door and appeared with refreshments. Clarke looked away quickly and back just as fast because she was certain she wanted to remember everything about this moment.

“Lex, you remember Clarke, right?” she asked her sister.

“Vaguely.”

“Really?” Anya furrowed before smiling mischievously. “Because I seem to remember a certain crush that existed–”

“Okay, I have to go change before work. I’ll see you around.”

As quickly as she appeared, she was gone again, leaving Clarke staring at nothing at all. None of the words made sense to her, and she sipped the drink gratefully, gulping away the weird thoughts she suddenly had about her best friend’s sister.

“She literally played sad songs for a month when you left.”

“But we… we never hung out or… I don’t know. She ran away whenever I was around.”

“Yeah, she was a super weird kid.”

Clarke nodded to herself and looked back at the door before taking another sip of her drink.

There had been more pictures than she could count. Family from every corner of the country. Celebrating and gifts and all manner of purely enjoying the end of a chapter and the precarious start of another.

But that was done.

They did their walk, they posed and they ate the family dinners and were altogether wistful about their final chapter of high school. And thus, as the night settled, as grandparents turned in and homes were distracted with families visiting, the graduates took to the street, took to their familiar haunts,
and revelled one last time in themselves as nothing more than young and dumb and free.

The music spilled out of the empty house. The drinks spilled out of red cups. People spilled out of every hall and closet until it was a sea of bodies and laughter and celebration.

The night dragged on until all manner of high school party clichés were reached and experienced, and the group of friends enjoyed it all in one of their final few flings. Senior year culminated to that night, to the stage and the diploma’s and the tossing of caps, but it also led to the culmination of friendships and times.

Every since she’d been back, Clarke had been nothing but a distraction. She was always around Anya, she was part of their group, and Lexa hated it, and she loved it, because on nights like that night, on nights when they were partying or nights when they were hanging out, sometimes there were moments that kept her fueled and kept that stupid, nagging little crush as part of her life. It would have been easier to never see her again, but there she was.

“Hey,” Lexa breathed as she escaped the hot house with the wobbling walls from the sheer noise of it. “Are you leaving already?”

“I have an early flight,” Clarke smiled despite herself at the imposition of her best friend’s sister on her one last second of being home, of normal, of solitude.

“Always with the running away on me, Griffin.”

“Got to leave you wanting more.”

All the newest senior could do was smile slightly and lean on the railing to the porch beside the girl she had a not so secret crush on for a long while. No one knew though. No one suspected, and so Lexa let the drinks go to her head.

Clarke was funny, sometimes. She was happy and full of life and Lexa needed it. She needed that kind of steady and good. Lexa couldn’t explain it completely. She couldn’t figure out what the draw was, or how she always just ended up thinking about the blonde who liked to bake for fun on Fridays after games.

The truth was, it wasn’t an accident she ended up on the porch. She always just knew where Clarke was. They orbited.

“Are you going to miss it?”

“Home?”

“Yeah,” Lexa nodded.

She watched Clarke think it over. That was something else she loved, how much she thought about things and was honest.

The lights from a car passing skidded across the lawn while they huddled there, kings of the world, and ready for everything that was going to come at them, infallible and unyielding.

“I think I’ll miss parts of it. I’m ready for the new though. It’s like life is just starting.”

“I can’t wait to get out of here,” Lexa sighed, shifting the weight of her feet.

“You’re welcome to visit me and Anya if you need an escape.”
“That’s nice of you. I might take you up on it.”

“I hope you do,” Clarke smirked, despite herself. She leaned forward, closer because she was leaving to spend the summer abroad with her father, because all consequences were going to be left behind.

Clarke had those blue eyes. Blue that were constantly taunting, that were absolutely mesmerizing in the way that the indescribable weight of the ocean was beautiful. They taunted Lexa, dancing in the light of fires by the lake, twinkling with laughter after practice, shining with determination during a game or while reading. On the porch, that night, they were no more kind to her, daring her to do things she thought about since she had the capacity to think.

“I’m going to miss you, Griffin,” Lexa finally sighed.

“I’m going to miss you, too.”

It wasn’t a lie. All of the time spent together with groups, with each other, they found time together, and it was always heavy with something.

“I’m glad we are so agreeable. Do you think things will be different when I’m out of here, and you’re out of here?”

“You’re Anya’s sister.”

“That won’t change.”

“No.”

Clarke leaned forward as much as she could, and she kissed Lexa right there on the porch. All of the lights of the party, all of the noise of the music bumping, it never mattered. Lexa swallowed and leaned back into the kiss, melting against the lips, gripping at the shirt Clarke was wearing and keeping her close. Her lips felt good, felt kind and made her stomach turn to lava. She was burning alive and freeze from the outside in as the kiss moved well into PG-13.

It lasted forever, as they each savored the seconds they stole. When Lexa realized Clarke wasn’t kissing her anymore, she finally opened her eyes and took a breath.

“I have to go,” Clarke smiled, darting a look toward Lexa’s lips once again.

The weight of her palm fell on Lexa’s shoulder, on her collarbone, on her chest.

“Yeah.”

Lexa kissed her the second time. She lurched forward and pushed her against the railing in the corner, deepening it this time, enjoying it, stealing what she could. It was better than the first in that now it made her feel something deep in her belly.

“Be good this year, Woods.”

“Yeah, you too,” Lexa nodded as she stepped aside and let Clarke pass.

Even with the party, even with the promise of more festivities, Lexa watched Clarke leave, and she sat on the porch for a long, long time, memorizing it.

The lights were gleaming, glittering in the snow. All colors and all manner of festivities were
clouding the neighborhood for the holidays, crafting the nostalgic hue that made everything feel like home. Though it was the best season, though it was supposed to be the calm after the first semester, though she had a ridiculous amount of excitement to get home for a visit, to escape, to see Lexa, once she got home, Clarke found herself absolutely ready to go back to the hectic space of school.

“Not having a good time?” Anya ventured, handing over another sugar cookie as Clarke sulked on the couch.

“I’m having a great time,” Clarke corrected. “Thanks for letting me stay. My mom picked a great time to go to a conference.”

“I wasn’t going to let you spend the holiday alone.”

With a flop, Anya joined her best friend and new sorority sister on the couch. First semester had been kind to them, allowing them both to join the softball team and their sorority of choice together. It was busy and they adapted well. Clarke shouldn’t have complaints.

But then she came home with her friend for break, and she felt her stomach drop.

“Is this about Costia?”

“Who?”

“Lexa’s girlfriend.”

“Oh, her? No. Why would I– I wouldn’t care about— that’s ridiculous,” Clarke stuttered as she picked at the cookie and burrowed deeper into the couch.

“She liked you. I didn’t think you liked her.”

“I would never do that to you, I swear—”

“I’m glad you wouldn’t,” Anya shrugged. “How terrible would it be if you guys dated and broke up?”

Clarke nodded and nibbled her cookie while a merry movie played and described the miracles of the season. She knew Anya was just afraid of the worst, but she was also just as worried about jeopardizing all of that. And her relationship with Anya was important. It was the most stable, familial relationship in her life, and she couldn’t lose it.

Neither moved when the doorbell rang. Clarke only shifted to look out into the hall when she heard Lexa’s voice. From her spot, she watched her kiss her girlfriend and look at her happily.

“I can’t wait to go back to school,” she sighed.

“We’ll see if you’re saying that during practice.”

“Are you sure you don’t want a drink?” Anya grinned, half-buzzed and very happy.

The music from the club hummed to itself while the rest of the people danced and enjoyed themselves. Clarke watched it all and sipped her water, drawing the short straw in the form of having a midterm the following day.

But she couldn’t escape her sisters, and she couldn’t escape the crush her roommate and best friend was harboring on some guy who said he might be at a certain club. So she was sober and she was
watching. Mostly, she was there to wingman for Anya. It didn’t hurt that she also got to watch the newest pledge.

“How’s she handling it?”

“How? Lex? Oh, she’s heartbroken. That bitch cheated on her,” Anya practically snarled. “But she’s not good at thinking about feelings, so she’s hiding it pretty well.”

“She’s drunk and dancing with two girls,” Clarke snorted, sipping her water yet again.

“Like I said, hiding it pretty well.”

With a nod, Anya watched her best friend eye her sister before taking another drink and opting not to think of those terrible scenarios. Instead, she sought out the guy at the bar, leaving Clarke to sit there and not stew about a drunk girl on the dancefloor.

But the night progressed, and Anya made good on finding a boy, so Clarke was not in need of supervising. Yet she felt compelled to watch the freshman. So watch she did. As Lexa let another girl grind against her, as she kissed a stranger, Clarke waited patiently.

It was only when the bar shut down that Clarke interjected herself into the foray, careful to extract Lexa with as much dignity as the drinks would allow.

“I can get myself home,” Lexa complained, tugging her arm away from Clarke’s grasp as they walked outside into the air that was much more fresh than the smoky bar.

“I’m sure you can.”

“Just leave me alone.”

“I really wish that I could.”

“I’m fine,” Lexa slurred as they trudged toward the sorority house.

Contrary to what she said, Lexa stumbled and let Clarke wrap her arm around her middle. She liked that a lot, and she said as much, flirting relentlessly through her broken heart the entire way home.

Even drunk, she was pretty. Clarke hated her for it. But she set her up against the house as she used her keys to open it up. Only Lexa didn’t move, she just stayed there and waited for Clarke to tug her.

Somewhere between the entry and the top floor, Clarke found herself pushed against the wall by a girl who licked her lips and smelled like vodka. Drunk and eager and lonely and sad, Lexa kissed her, and she let the aching girl. She let her kiss her for longer than she should have, but Clarke liked it too much.

“Okay, let’s get you to bed,” she murmured, pushing gently on Lexa’s shoulders. She was just grateful that the drunk listened.

“I don’t want to sleep.”

“You have to. It’s going to hurt in the morning through.”

“It hurts now.”

Lexa flopped into the bed and Clarke tugged off her shoes before going to grab a bottle of water and some aspirin for the bedside table. With a little more coaxing, Clarke was able to get her under at
least a blanket.

“Hey, Lex,” she finally ventured as she stood over the almost asleep girl. “Can I ask you something?”

“Yes.”

“Why’d you break up with Costia?”

“Because of you.”

In her head, it was just drunk talk. But Clarke watched Lexa fall asleep and burrow into the pillow to escape the spinning. She didn’t want to believe that it could be true, and so she didn’t.
Lexa is covered with the blood of the people she killed. Clarke thinks she shouldn’t find it hot. But she does.

When the dust settled, Clarke imagined her to be feral. Shoulders rising, chest and back breaking under the inhaling and exhaling that she tried to control, eyes darting and wide, waiting for another move and muscles poised, tight, taut, ready to defend herself as she was trained to do. The most wild things are the most beautiful things for precisely that reason. The unattainability, the idea that containing them, breaking them, penning them, caging them diminishes their beauty, takes away the most important aspect about them. Lexa reminded Clarke that she chose her domestication, in that moment, and her heart was truly still a wild thing.

The only movement Lexa made after a few moments was the sheathe her weapon. She still took time to calm herself, to put it away, to cut herself in half. Her muscles ached, her joints were gnarled, twisted things and she felt the warm stickiness of blood and sweat, her own and others’, mingling on her skin. It took another moment for her to look at Clarke, to remember her, to make sure she was alright after the ambush, after seeing her in this state.

The snapping of a twig as Clarke took a tentative step towards her made her flinch. Clarke held up her hands in surrender, to promise her that she was alright.

“I should have kept one alive, I suppose,” Lexa offered.

“Are you alright?”

“Not a scratch.”

Clarke watched her, watched her stare at the heap of bodies, and she tried not to find the beauty in her face covered in blood. But God, it was. Her eyes, the streaks of it, the entirety of it. She took a step back, embarrassed and ashamed of what she thought.

It took longer than either would have liked to return to the camp. Clarke decided it was the eyes, it was the focus and violent fear that emitted from Lexa’s eyes that were making her weak and distracted. While she assumed Lexa was quiet and focused upon the scenarios of their attack, she was stuck with those twinges of teenage distraction and an inability to focus upon the more important tasks. Not when she was so rugged.

“We have to stop,” Lexa insisted, breaking right from Clarke until the blonde followed the quick
acceleration. “I have to get this off.” She knelt down at the tiny brook and splashed her face, scrubbing at it. “I can’t.” She sputtered and dipped her hands into the water, scrubbing the dried red staining her skin and nails. “I can’t.”

“It’s okay,” Clarke knelt beside her, stopping her frenzied hands.

“I thought I could, but I can’t. I taste it. I smell it. I can’t.”

“It’s okay.”

She rubbed Lexa’s hand between hers while the warrior’s face dripped pink into the shore. Carefully, the healer soothed the blood from her skin as best she could before switching to the other one and repeating the procedure. Cold and angry as the stream was, Lexa kept her hands submerged and watched the wisps of smoke like haze float slowly away until it became nothing but water.

There was a moment when she flinched when Clarke moved to her face. She shook her head slightly though Clarke persisted, dragging her thumb along the border of hair on her forehead. Diligently she rinsed the dirt and blood from her face until only small streaks of it remained.

Lexa felt herself domesticated in this act, felt herself drift away in the stream until she was diluted and crystal clear water again. She swallowed and counted the drips from the points of her face because focusing on Clarke’s fingers and palms, warm despite the chill of the water, were too much to comprehend right now.

“You are a beautiful, wild thing,” Clarke whispered, thumb running seamlessly over cheekbone to jawbone to neck and back.

“I thought I could, but I couldn’t.”

“I should have offered sooner. I’m sorry.”

“There was nothing else to do. I had to,” Lexa explained, afraid Clarke would not understand.

“Thank you.”

Water still beading and slipping along the contours of her face, still tinged pink and brown, Clarke leaned forward and kissed Lexa’s cut lips gently.

“Thank you.”
Orphans

Chapter Summary

Tradition says that Tree clan orphans become wards of the Commander. When the Sky people visit Polis nobody is surprised to see that Lexa is as stoic as ever even with children. Many are surprised to see how much the children love Lexa.

Chapter Notes

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The city was large, was in fact, an actual city, one Clarke had imagined when she thought of the ground and all of its magnificent possibilities. It was unlike anything she’d ever experienced, it overwhelmed every sense she had and it felt topsy turvy in a way that made her uneasy. But Clarke walked through anyway, because that was who she was, that was what she did, now.

It was the sound of children playing that echoed singularly above the dim roar of everyday life. Clarke traced it through the unfamiliar streets, drawn to it in a way that she was not to any other noises in the world. It was foreign and new, unusual and good, and she needed something good at this point.

“What are you doing here?” Indra stopped Clarke just outside of the gates of a large building with open windows. The curtains billowed out in the breeze. It enchanted Clarke, hypnotized her, even.

“I’m…” Clarke furrowed and looked at the general. There was a sense of worry in her, of confusion. “I’m not sure. The Commander told me to come here.”

“You did not die then,” Indra dropped her wrist with a toss. “And the mountain. We heard from scouts it was finished.”

“Yeah,” Clarke swallowed. “Finished.”

The laughter of the children erupted once more like a symphony’s crescendo in the final sonata. It was so innocent it broke Clarke’s spine in half, right there in the street.

“The Commander will want to speak with you,” Indra realized. “We heard of the battle. We did not… There was… It is…” Clarke heard her struggle for some reason that she understood though could never locate.

“What is this place?”

“The orphanage,” Indra cleared her throat, grateful to not have to explain anything else she was
feeling or thinking. “Those without parents are wards of the Commander.”

It took only another moment before Clarke made her way inside the gates. The grass was alive and soft, the stairs, swept and painted. She could not understand it, but she entered anyway, pushing through the open door. It closed in the breeze as she walked past the staircase and towards the doors in the back.

The backyard was large and full of children of all ages, toddlers hobbling, kids jumping, teens playing. She hadn’t seen so many children in one place since the Ark. But this was life, and she was suddenly inundated with a copious amount of life, so much so, that it punched her in the chest, repeatedly.

Lexa stood to the side, arms raised as kids hung from her. The armour she usually wore was stacked on a chair, and Clarke saw how tiny and young she was herself, no longer puffed up with metal and importance. It was just Lexa, smiling, huge and wide across her entire face, pushing her cheeks, even. She was mortal, now.

There was a pause as Clarke watched her move. Watched her growl and roar and chase a herd of little ones while others impeded her until she fell to her knees. It was when she went down that she caught Clarke’s eye and froze before the final blow killed her as a monster and she went down to the ground. The kids watched her not move, pretending to be dead. When they leaned close she popped up and scared them.

The children scattered and Lexa stood, the stoic back in her face.

“I did not expect to see you,” the Commander offered, crossing her arms, aware that she had never been so unshielded against this Sky person.

“I didn’t either,” Clarke confessed.

“We should-”

“Can we not?” Clarke stopped her, surveying the kids as they played, lounged, enjoyed the sunny weather. All of them there because of unfathomable pain, but there they were, running around, smiling, laughing, crying over scraped knees, alive, human, real. “Just. Can we have this for a few minutes. I need this.” Lexa met her eyes, the pleading in them, the fear and the hurt raging in them. She nodded an agreement to the unspoken truth passing between them. It was as much of a conversation as they truly needed.

“Heda!” A little girl appeared and Lexa crouched to listen to her speak. A second later, she was pulled away, giving Clarke a sheepish smile. It was the first time she remembered hearing the title said so lovingly, so innocently.

It was another few minutes that Clarke just stood on the old porch, watching the huge yard and recess happening. She wanted to remember each of their faces, to have them substitute the faces of those she saw in the mountain. The dead were gone. That was the best thing Lexa ever told her. The living are hungry. And here the living were laughing and fighting and happy.

“Heda,” a little girl with eyes like leaves tugged on Clarke’s hand. Clarke leaned down and smiled. She felt tears on her cheeks and wiped them away. “For you.” A bouquet of weeds and leaves and tiny yellow flowers appeared.

From a few yards away, Lexa watched it happen with a little boy in her lap. They weaved together a crown of daisy’s. She looked down and kissed his hair, squeezing him. They were the things she
thought about when she made decisions.

“Thank you,” Clarke smiled and looked at the collection.

“Do you want to see more flowers?”

“More than anything,” Clarke confessed, feeling her hand being held.

She was not certain how long she spent laying in the grass surrounded by kids, but she found herself becoming a pillow for them as they looked at clouds. Lexa appeared over her casting a shadow with that small smile that was more familiar. A little boy hung from her neck and peered at Clarke curiously.

“She came from the sky,” Lexa informed the children. “Let’s make her into stars.” There was a murmur of excitement as Lexa knelt. “Just stay still. It will make it better.”

Clarke felt the kids get off of her, heard them moving around. Lexa made a promise. Clarke nodded weakly a second later. Tiny fingers placed the heads of flowers on her outstretched arms, filled her outstretched palms. She felt the tiny accumulation of daisy heads on her stomach, on her chest. Lexa placed them in her hair, weaving them gently. She watched Clarke close her eyes. She traced her jaw, traced her nose.

The lines covered her, and she felt like a constellation on the ground. Her lungs stuttered and tears betrayed her, sliding towards her ears.

“It will be okay,” Lexa whispered. Tiny giggles followed in the distance. Feet were sprinting through the grass. “I am sorry.” Lexa placed the last flowers on Clarke’s closed eyes, a final on her lips. “You are alive. Be alive.”

Covered in daisies and tired, so very tired, Clarke felt the sun on her skin, heard the murmurs of children, heard the shouting of a game across the hard, heard the billowing of the curtains when she strained and listened closely. She pressed herself into the earth and tried to become this moment. For the first time in a long time, she did not think of the mountain or the Ark. For the first time since she landed, she felt the earth, she was anchored in featherlight petals and she could not move if she wanted.

“I have to watch mock fights with the older children,” Lexa informed Clarke. “Stay. My little thirds will protect you.” Clarke smiled despite everything else. “Right, warriors?”

“Yes, heda!” roared in tiny voices.

“Good,” she stood and surveyed the girl under the flowers, the most beautiful constellation she’d ever seen. “Tell her the stories of the animals we have been learning.”

“Yes, heda!” again the chorus. Clarke didn’t have to open her eyes to see that this Lexa was a Lexa without armour.

Clarke took a deep breath and held it.
Chapter Summary

Just this morning I was thinking about army!Lexa and doctor!Clarke…sure, in my mind they were both overseas, Lexa commanding her group and Clarke patching them up but…

“My favourite customer,” the doctor grinned looking over the chart as the soldier winced on the gurney. The tent was alive with dying, alive with the absolute chaos that came with cleaning up absolute chaos. “Glad to see you in one piece, Lieutenant.”

“We have to stop meeting like this, Doc,” Lexa flexed her jaw to avoid groaning.

“Take your shirt off,” Clarke said, pulling on fresh gloves.

“No foreplay?”

“No today. Figured you’d like it hard and fast.” For just a moment, the doctor forgot that there was limbs coming off at the seams in beds around them, forgot about the bullets and the vacant eyes she’d already seen. “Looks like the shrapnel missed anything important.”

“You mean like my face. Got to look good for you, princess.”

“It’d be a pity to ruin that,” Clarke grinned. “This is going to hurt.”

“You always say that and– Son of a bitch!” Lexa yelped as Clarke pushed her hand into the wound after extracting the metal. “You definitely have to let me buy you dinner now.”

“I don’t date soldiers,” Clarke repeated, holding her ribs in her palm. “Let me stitch you up so you can ignore my medical advice.”

“You miss me, when you don’t see me, don’t you?”

“Something like that.”

“Do you remember when I told you, you were beautiful?” Lexa shut her eyes as needle dug into her skin to close it up.

“When you were high on morphine and reciting poetry?”

“I meant it.” She watched Clarke blush and sat back on the table, victorious once more.

“I sincerely hope you aren’t getting hurt just to hit on me.”

“It’d be kind of romantic if I was though, right? Dammit!” Lexa flinched as Clarke grinned.

The tent ebbed and crashed violently with new patients. Clarke diligently worked as quickly as she could while avoiding looking at the girl on her table. It was a relationship forged on repeated moments of bad luck, but still. Sometimes the doctor found herself checking the List, making sure a certain bull-headed lieutenant wasn’t on it, though she’d never admit that was the reason she scanned
them. If she did, it’d be disastrous.

“You do good work, Doc,” Lexa surveyed her side without the giant gash in it any longer.

“Going to let me put in that you need a few days rest or are you going to ignore my orders?”

It didn’t take long. Clarke worked quickly, worked efficiently, oddly comforted by the fact that she could handle this, that she’d done this a million times, that nothing bad was going to happen on this one, in her bed.

“Have dinner with me.”

“Lieutenant.”

“You’re breaking my heart, Clarke.”

“What are you going to do if I say yes one day?” the doctor asked, filling out the script for painkillers. The soldier pulled on her shirt.

“Finally be able to die happy.”

“Try to stay out of my tent, Lieutenant.”

“Try not to miss me too much.”

It was a brazen move, but Lexa didn’t care. High on adrenaline and Clarke’s blue eyes, she took the paper that was held out to her after hopping off the table with a slight limp to one side, she bent down, cupped the doctor’s cheek and kissed her ferociously. She kissed her until she couldn’t breathe, until she was certain her stitches would burst, until a fist rooted in her shirt and held her closer and wouldn’t let go.

“Be safe out there, Lexa,” Clarke whispered, cheeks flushed and body nervous as the soldier finally pulled away.

“I know you’ll patch me up. Don’t worry.” With a nod and wink, she wove her way through the crowd and disappeared.

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The night was long and the sound of gunfire popped in the distance. It didn’t matter though, Clarke was deep into work and feeling miserable about each loss that seemed to rack up. The bodies came fast and came in a mess. Covered in blood and exhausted, the doctor moved mechanically without thinking, until dawn came with a small light through the flap of the tent.

It’d been a thirty-six hour onslaught of wounded. A string of attacks in the area was a surprise and was more than effective. Clarke hadn’t slept in longer, already towards the end of a shift when it began. The dawn was not so much the start as it was hopefully and end for her marathon.

“Refusing treatment, Lieutenant,” she sighed, picking up the scans. “Do I have to pick another favorite?”

“Three stabilized and sent to Germany. Two wrapped up and in bed here. And one stubborn leader who won’t let me help her.”

“I had to make sure.”

“What hurts?”

“We took a driver to the side of the humvee,” the solider explained, brow heavy and jaw tight. “I was on the other side.” Clarke ran her hands over her forehead before flashing her light in front of her eyes. “We rolled. I just. It’s my shoulder.”

“Okay. It’s going to be okay,” Clarke promised despite having no evidence to support her theory. “Hey,” she grabbed her chin. “It’s okay.”

“I did what I could on the scene,” Lexa’s eyes bore into Clarke’s, as if she was trying to convince herself of that truth.

“You saved their lives.”

“No. I shouldn’t have even been there. I should have been heading back. This wouldn’t have-”

“This would have happened no matter what,” Clarke stopped her, placing her hand on her thigh and rubbing gently. She squeezed and hoped she was believable. “Sometimes these things just happen. Fate. Kind of like you and me?”

“You think so, princess?” Lexa asked, looking up from her heavy lashes. Dirty stained her cheeks and forehead, blood smeared across her shirt and neck. She looked so innocent and young beneath the multiple layers.

“Yeah, I do. Just like I believed you saved their lives because that’s how it was meant to happen.”

“I don’t know-”

“I’m glad it wasn’t you on that side that got hit,” Clarke whispered, standing beside the bed, her hands on both sides of Lexa’s shoulders. She gripped firmly and Lexa smiled at her.

“Son of a bitch!” the soldier yelled as her joint was reset.

“Don’t butter me up, Woods.”

“Someone’s cranky.”

“Because you’re in here ever other day.”
“Well, that’s an exaggeration,” Lexa smiled, knowing it almost wasn’t. She found reasons to stop by, almost accidentally, also because she got hurt often. She watched the doctor shake her head and roll over on her stool.

“You’re keeping me in business, Lieutenant.”

“I wouldn’t want you to miss me too much.”

Clarke looked at the soldier smile. She looked at the face and the sweat on her neck from running around on her day off. Looked at the this girl who made her head swirl.

“No risk of that.”

“Remember when I called you beautiful?” Lexa smiled as the doctor took her swollen ankle in her hands.


“Go out with me sometime.”

“I’ll say yes one day, and then what? You’ll be stuck with a date you don’t really want.”

“I want it,” the soldier shook her head, grimacing slightly as the doctor tested the joint. “I’ll finally be able to die happy.”

“It’s sprained.”

“My heart’s sprained.”

“I believe it’s pronounced ankle.”

They shared a smiled as Clarke moved to grab a bandage to wrap the injury. Lexa watched her blush and decided it was even better than beautiful and she would ask her out forever.

“I never thanked you for that… thing…” the soldier cleared her throat. “I was kind of out of it and you were very nice.”

“I didn’t do anything.”

“You calmed me down. I was… Anyway. I appreciated it.”

“All in a days work.”

“Do you remember when I called you beautiful?”

“Lexa.”

“Clarke.”

“Stop getting hurt.”

“I can’t. I’m already in love with you.”

Furrowed and shaking her head, Clarke finished wrapping in silence. It was the quiet that was disarming. Never before had she been in such a precarious position with the cocky soldier, and never before had she been in such a state of peace amidst the chaos.
“You don’t even know me,” Clarke finally said, admiring her handiwork and refusing to look at the girl on her table.

“I want to.”

“Can I buy you a popsicle at the canteen?”

“That’s mighty forward of you, Doctor Griffin.”

“Shut up. Don’t make me change my mind.”

“Done.”

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The village was crowded. Clark found herself barely able to move with the kids swarming around her legs as she moved through the streets. It felt good to get away from base, to not feel confined, to see what they were doing.

The clinic was a small building on the corner of a crowded street. The doctors worked for a few hours with translators helping to bridge the gap between the two worlds.

Lexa could have been off, could have taken the day with the rest of her unit before their next mission. But she volunteered to go out with the doctor as part of the detail. And she let herself be climbed over by kids, and she put up with waking up early to follow her around like a puppy. Because they spent an afternoon talking about everything, and she kissed the doctor once and wanted to do it again.

“See, we can spend time together when I’m not injured,” Lexa said as they walked towards the vehicles.

“You’re a real romantic, Lieutenant.”

“After you,” she bowed and opened the door for the doctor.

“Was that…?” Clarke paused, one foot in the vehicle as a noise distracted her. Lexa looked around, holding her hand to her ear to listen to the bud there.

“Get in the car,” she ordered, tossing Clarke’s bag in quickly.

“Lexa-” An explosion rocked the neighbourhood.

“Get in the humvee and stay there!” Lexa yelled, pushing the doctor inside. “Get them in and back!” she directed her people.

“Wait. I need to stay!” Clarke argued.

“Get back to base,” Lexa insisted.

“There will be wounded.”

“Get back, now!” she yelled.
“Lex-” Clarke grabbed the soldiers vest and kissed her. “Be careful, lieutenant.”

“You going to agree to go out with me?” Lexa grinned, shutting the door and patting the top so the non-soldiers could be shipped out.

“Never.”

“We have incoming.” Clarke hopped out, grabbing her bag. Multiple explosions followed them as they were on their way back and she heard the radio booming. She pulled up her hair and marched into the tent.

The waves came, and Clarke did her best. The afternoon disappeared as just a faint memory now tainted and stained red as her arms and shirt.

“These ones are set for extract,” her nurse explained as the doctor surveyed the bloody bodies.

“Lexa?” Clarke leaned over the face that was bagged and covered in blood. There was no response from the soldier. “What happened?”

“I’m not sure, Doctor.”

Frantically, Clarke looked over her chart, looked at scans.

“Where is the evac?”

“Two out.”

Gently, Clarke lifted the bandage covering the soldier’s side, began to do what she could, as best she could, without looking at the face. If she looked at the face, she wouldn’t be able to do her job.

“I’m coming,” the doctor decided as the crew came to take her to the intensive unit.

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Tired as she was, filthy as she was, Clarke sat in the waiting room and did just that. Lexa was deep into her twelfth hour of surgery and suddenly, in a different country, in a different time, Clarke realized what it all meant.

She got chewed out from her commander already, and she didn’t care. She had to know.

It was well into the second day before Lexa woke up, eyes fluttering and body aching. A doctor was asleep in the chair beside her bed in borrowed clothes from the other doctors and nurses. Lexa looked around the room and tried to breathe, tried to think, tried to remember, but failed.

“Hey, hey,” Clarke woke and leaned forward quickly as the soldier woke to become more upset.


Her eyes welled up with tears and Clarke brushed them away.

“If I knew that agreeing to go out with you meant you’d actually go get yourself hurt, I really would have never agreed.”
Both were crying and both were quiet. Clarke ran her hands along Lexa’s cheeks as she leaned over the bed.

“You’re going to be okay. They fixed you up. Do you understand?” She nodded. “Rest. I’ll be here. I have a few days before I have to head back. And I think we have a date coming up at some point.”
Clexa greencard marriage? Lexa is an Australian working in the U.S. When she forgets that her visa is up, she is forced to find a quick solution to be able to stay. She rants to Clarke, a girl from another department she has been running into during lunch, when Clarke offers her a way out.

“Well, aren’t you more dour than usual?” the artist asked as she refused to look up at the sulking editor.

“You know I prefer surly.”

“You are both dour and surly, and you’re raining on my nice lunch.”

“I’m sorry.”

Smiling to herself, Clarke buried her nose in her sketch pad while her friend surely glowered from her spot on the fountain ledge. The city was alive, with everyone basking in the sun after the long, cold winter. It seemed to burst at the seams with life. Flowers and trees stretched up high and flashed in blooms wide across, filling in every space, while every metre of grass was filled with sunbathers and ball-throwers, blankets for picnics and books held up over heads like flocks of one legged flamingos.

Lunch became a habit. After bonding over an insanely boring meeting one day, followed by working together on a project that became marginally successful, the dynamic duo became a staple of inseparability. Clarke would never admit it was the accent that hooked her and it was the way Lexa cared, or the way she pushed up her glasses on her nose when they slumped as she read, in the most obscure and poorly-crafted ways that kept her coming back. Lexa would never admit that it was those eyes and that smile, and the way the artist would sometimes get ink or charcoal on her cheek when she was working, or how she furrowed and tilted her head as she sized-up a work.

Neither admitted anything of the such because both worked too well together to do something like that. Lexa found projects, pitched stories, worked with authors, and Clarke did the book art. It was an unstoppable one-two punch, and they both were oddly content with the friendship that developed over the past year.

“You should just accept my offer,” Clarke decided, as Lexa stole another fry from her bag.

“Young proposal, you mean?”

“Do I have to get down on one knee?”

“I can’t ask you to do that. It’s… I don’t know. And it’s supposed to mean something.” Lexa dismissed Clarke’s words and the mere thought of it all with an absent wave of her hand as she settled back and looked over the world in the park.

“In my experience a piece of paper doesn’t keep anyone together.” Clarke slapped her hands as she went for another. “So it’d be like getting a legal best friends forever bracelet.”
“We’d be ruining the sanctity of it. Marriage is supposed to be forever. I couldn’t do that.”

“That’s why annulments exist.”

“I don’t think a greencard marriage is the reason annulments were invented,” Lexa sighed and rolled her eyes.

“At least consider it, Lexa.”

“It’s five years of your life. At least.”

“I wasn’t planning on doing much anyway. And I never considered myself the marrying kind, so it’s not like it interrupts any ambitions.”

“I know you don’t understand it, but I’m the marrying type. Marriage isn’t a joke to me. It’s not something you just… do, so you can stay in a country. It’s supposed to be love, and I can’t piss all over it.”

“I offered because I don’t want to lose you, Lex,” Clarke softened as the editor folded into herself and looked at the people walking by instead of back at her. “I didn’t mean to mock what you believe. I know it means something to you.”

The argument was nothing new. It raged for the past two weeks, cropping up when Lexa’s surliness grew to be too much for Clarke to handle and the inevitable ‘marry me already’ popped out. She knew it was wearing her down because Lexa grew more and more eager to defend it, stoutly refusing and trying to find some resolve to the matter.

“Don’t be mad at me,” Clarke tried.

“I mean. I have to figure it out somehow. Who else would put up with you talking during movies,” Lexa tilted her head towards the blonde and grinned, lopsided and hers. Clarke recognized it as her smile, the smile that only she could earn from this girl. It melted her too easily.

“Exactly. It’s purely selfish that I even offer.”

“I knew it.”

“Why don’t you order your own?” Clarke watched Lexa take another fry. “I asked you if you wanted some, and you said no.”

“Because I like to pretend to eat healthy to give myself the upper hand, seem better than you.”

“But you eat all mine!”

“Get used to it, Griffin.”

“You know I’m going to get you to marry me. It’s just a matter of time.”

“We’ll see about that.”
INTERVIEWER: And how long have you known Ms. Woods?

CLARKE: I’ve known her for nearly two years. We’ve dated for about eighteen months.

INTERVIEWER: When did you decide to propose?

CLARKE: The moment I met her. I mean… I’m not sure. I just. It was. Probably. I just knew I didn’t want to lose her.

INTERVIEWER: There’s no need to be nervous, Ms. Griffin.

CLARKE: I’m sorry. I just. It’s all very official. Most people don’t get interrogated after getting married.

INTERVIEWER: Most people don’t apply for a green card a few months after said marriage. There’s nothing to worry about. You both seem very happy and in love. I’m very good at detecting these things. Almost a sixth sense.

CLARKE: Is that right? How do you tell?

INTERVIEWER: Looks, stories, the words that you choose, the movements of your hands.

CLARKE: Are you ever wrong?

INTERVIEWER: Everyone I’ve ever worked with is still married. Now where were we?

CLARKE: I’m not sure. Proposing.

INTERVIEWER: Why don’t you just tell me about Lexa?

CLARKE: She’s my best friend.

“Mãe!” Lexa begged through the computer. Clarke listened as Lexa spoke in her mother’s language, not catching a single word on either side, but definitely understanding the tone. “Eu a amo!” Clarke snuck a peak from the kitchen and saw Lexa’s hands moving as she spoke. “Não, não, não,” Lexa shook her head and rooted her hand in her hair. “Mas é só pelo dinheiro!”

When Clarke told her mother she was getting married, she got the standard disappointed diatribe she’d grown accustomed to with her family. There wasn’t yelling, there wasn’t much else other than that hum her mother made when she decided she shouldn’t have expected much else from her daughter. The yelling on Lexa’s computer felt like family, felt like normal, made Clarke feel oddly lonely.

“So my mom wishes us well,” Lexa muttered, walking into the kitchen as Clarke dried, oddly in a daze, deep and contemplative as could be. The editor opened the fridge and pulled out a drink.

“It’ll be okay, Lex,” Clarke promised. “She’ll calm down.”

“She was calm,” Lexa sighed, leaning over the counter. “I just disappointed her and broke her heart.”
“I know that’s a new sensation for you, but coming from a professional in that arena, I can tell you honestly that she loves you, immensely.”

“Not today she doesn’t.”

Clarke wished there was something to say, but the sigh was a mile wide and an ocean deep. The dishes sat in the sink and Clarke pulled her hands out, soapy and wet as they were. She wrapped them around Lexa’s stomach and pressed her cheek against her spine.

“It’ll be okay. I don’t know how, and I don’t know when, but I believe with every ounce of my being that it will be okay.”

For the longest, Lexa didn’t move. She stood in the kitchen with soppy wet hands around her and the weight of her new wife on her back. She closed her eyes and despite herself, trusted what she said.

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**INTERVIEWER:** When did you know that you wanted to spend your life with Clarke?

**LEXA:** The moment I met her.

**INTERVIEWER:** How did you know? Or how are you sure?

**LEXA:** I’m cold. I am. I’ve been told I’m cold, and I don’t get along well with other people often. But Clarke… when I’m around her… I’m just… When she’s around, I’m alive, and I’m happy, which might not seem like something, but for me, it’s everything. I never considered myself happy or unhappy. Now I do. Happiness is a word I would use in my life.

**INTERVIEWER:** The wedding was very sudden. What made you pull the trigger?

**LEXA:** My family is all back home, and Clarke isn’t religious. We didn’t see the point in a bunch of fuss. So we just went to the JP.

**INTERVIEWER:** But you are religious, are you not?

**LEXA:** I was raised that way, yes. I don’t go to church often enough, if you ask my mother, but still.

**INTERVIEWER:** Marriage isn’t just a legal means to an end then?

**LEXA:** It’s a sacred thing.

**INTERVIEWER:** Tell me more about your family.

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“Lexa,” Clarke whispered, creeping through the dark. The lump on the bed didn’t move.
The intruder bumped her toe on a half unpacked box. Three months Lexa lived in Octavia’s old room in Clarke’s two bedroom, and still she refused to unpack, almost like it was a protest against herself.

“Hey,” she tried again, getting closer to the bed. “Lex.”


“I can’t sleep.”

“So?”

“I can’t… sleep.”

“What happened?”

“Do you remember when I used to call you in the middle of the night? You’d mumble and just listen, and I haven’t had that because we’re married and share an apartment-”

“Shhh,” Lexa mumbled, pulling up the blankets again.

“Lexa…”


Clarke debated for half a second before she slipped in beside her wife. Stiff as a board, she laid there beside Lexa, her body growing accustomed to the different mattress and smell of the blankets. Slowly, the half-asleep bedmate gravitated towards Clarke, settling decidedly on her shoulder. Clarke relaxed at the contact.

“How can you sleep? It’s a huge meeting tomorrow.”

“It’s fine,” Lexa murmured. Her chest was pressed against Clarke’s arm, her own arms gripping there tightly.

“It’s not your art that’s going to be judged.”

“It’s fine, Clarke.”

“Do you think this whole married thing is going well?”

“Yes.”

“Me too.”

“Shhh,” Lexa hummed, burrowing into Clarke’s side.

“I can’t sleep.”

“You’re the best artist I’ve ever seen. That’s why,” Lexa yawned, hugging Clarke’s arm. “That’s why I don’t worry.”

“Go to sleep,” Clarke smiled in the dark. It didn’t take long for her own eyes to grow heavy.

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INTERVIEWER: Six months in and what do you think about your marriage?

CLARKE: So far so good.

INTERVIEWER: Care to elaborate? Any problems?

CLARKE: Not really. Well, sometimes she cleans up after me too quickly. Like, I don’t get a chance to clean up, and she doesn’t like mess. And she works late a lot more lately. But we still have these moments where nothing else in the world matters and it’s just us.

INTERVIEWER: What does marriage mean to you?

CLARKE: I don’t know if someone can answer that.

INTERVIEWER: What does your marriage mean to you?

CLARKE: Safety. Comfort. It might sound weird, but the more I’m in it, the more I feel more me.

INTERVIEWER: You’re happy?

CLARKE: I am.

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“Come on, it’s just dinner,” Clarke sighed, wrapping herself around Lexa’s arm as she urged her down the street. “You’re working too hard. I never see you anymore.”

“Work is just busy. You know that,” Lexa sighed, her breath cold and huffing in the spring evening that kept its bit of chill.

“I know that you’re working too hard,” The artist decided. “And I have things… I mean. I want to talk to you. We need to catch up.”

“I’m sorry. Just. My mom and work and this.”

“I know.”

“Lexa?” A voice stopped them in the middle of the sidewalk. “I thought that was you. How are you?”

“Hey, Indra, it’s so good to see you!” Lexa found herself hugged by one of her clients, actually grateful to have some distraction. It was easier, to not have to talk to Clarke. Lexa knew what this dinner was about. Knew that there was someone else and Clarke was going to tell her. That was why work got so busy. After waking up curled under Clarke’s chin, after an almost kiss at a party, after blushing and excusing herself from movie nights on the couch that got cuddly, Lexa was intimately aware with the fact that she was terribly in love with her wife.

“It’s been too long,” the author decided, smiling wide. “How are you?”
“I’d be better if you’d get me a draft at any point this year.”

“That was almost subtle.”

“I’m dying to know what you’ve got. The synopsis you gave was amazing. I need more. Purely selfish.”

“Soon, soon.” It happened and Lexa knew it would, that her eyes drifted to the girl beside her. “Hi. I’m Indra. Obviously my editor has terrible manners.”

“Sorry,” Lexa cleared her throat. “Indra this is… my. This is. This. Clarke, this is Indra. I worked with her a few years ago on her first novel.”

“It’s so nice to meet you. I’m Clarke, Lexa’s wife.”

For a moment, the blood ran from Lexa’s cheeks before storming back through them. The buildings were glowing bright and pink in the sunset but they were nothing compared to the rosy hue that burned through the editor’s skin.

“It’s so nice to meet you. I think I vaguely heard about it. I guess I’ll have to send a gift since I wasn’t invited to the wedding.”

“There wasn’t… it’s a long… story,” Lexa tugged on her collar.

“And to think you let this articulate thing near your writing,” Clarke smiled, shaking her head and sharing a look with the woman on the sidewalk.

“This is a good one, Lexa,” the author decided. “I won’t keep you. It was nice to meet you, Clarke.”

“I’ll call you this week,” Lexa promised. “We’ll have lunch.”

“I look forward to it.”

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INTERVIEWER: How have things been going, Lexa?

LEXA: Can’t really complain. Work is going well. My mom is coming to visit in a few weeks. My wife quit her job and has been working on her own children’s book. It’s been a good year for us.

INTERVIEWER: They say the first year is the adjustment period. What have you had to adjust to since you married?

LEAX: Well. She’s messy. So there is always clothes on the floor. I was used to having quiet time, but now I don’t get as much. Making decisions with another person. That was weird.

INTERVIEWER: Tell me one thing you’ve learned after one year that you might not have known before.

LEXA: I don’t think I knew that I was as in love with her as I am. Like. I didn’t realize that I was in love with her. It kind of surprises me, still.
INTERVIEWER: What about Clarke? Learned anything new about her?

LEXA: I always knew she was good. Like. She’s good. Probably the best person alive. She’s kind and considerate and lovely and funny and smart and talented and helpful and selfless and brave. I just… never realized how wonderful she was.

INTERVIEWER: Any fights?

LEXA: A few. Dishes or dinner or bills, but nothing that has lasted more than an hour.

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“I’m just going to stay at Raven’s,” Clarke said, shoving a few things in a bag.

“I would like to at least introduce you to my mom,” Lexa tried, not getting up from the edge of the bed.

“She knows it’s just for the card. We don’t have to pretend for her.”


“She’s good. You’d like her. She reminds me of you a little,” Clarke smiled.

“Can’t wait to meet her.”

It was the hardest sentence she ever said. The words felt like razorblades in her mouth on the way out, slicing through her throat, shredding her tongue, but she did, and she smiled because Clarke smiled and that’s what she could do.

“Maybe I’ll make it to dinner with your mom?” Clarke offered.

“Definitely.”

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INTERVIEWER: So, Clarke, how are things?

CLARKE: Really good. I’ve been so busy, but things are great.

INTERVIEWER: Why don’t you tell me a little about how things have been going with you and Lexa?

CLARKE: Good. Great. I mean. I don’t know. I… She’s stressed with work.

INTERVIEWER: Have you talked with her?

CLARKE: Do you remember what you said? In the first session? That you could tell we were in love? How could you tell, with her? What gave it away?

INTERVIEWER: This is inappropriate, Mrs. Griffin.
CLARKE: I just need to know. Please.

INTERVIEWER: The way she looks at her hands and smiles when she talks about you. She was complaining about how you talk through movies, but she looked like she couldn’t imagine ever sitting through a quiet movie ever again. I have a sense about these things.

CLARKE: I’ve been in love with her from the day we met. She smiled, and after the meeting, she blushed so hard, her ears turned red. Loving someone is hard.

INTERVIEWER: What seems to be hard?

CLARKE: Telling them. What if she doesn’t love me? What if you can’t tell anything? What if this is just a green card marriage and you can’t tell anything at all?

INTERVIEWER: Is it?

CLARKE: No.

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The air in the apartment was thick with summer. The open windows and fans did little to stop the heat that crept up through the very city itself. Covered in that thin sheen of sweat that never disappeared in the summer evening, Lexa sat on the fire escape with her latest manuscript and red pen, cold bottle of beer rubbing against her thigh to attempt to fight the heat that sizzled the buildings and made glasses sweat.

“Lexa!” Clarke’s yell came as soon as she came through the door. “Where are you? I know you’re here!”

“The neighbours will talk, honey,” Lexa smirked as she looked in from the window.

Clarke wasn’t supposed to be here. Lexa was supposed to have a night to herself and she needed it desperately after the decision she made.

“Get in here, right now!” Clarke bellowed, standing severe and violent in the middle of the living room, papers crumpled in her hand and pointing.

“Not if you’re going to yell.”

“Damn straight I’m going to yell, you stubborn ass!”

“Well, I’m not coming in then.”

“A divorce?” Clarke held up the stack of papers. “You ask for a divorce by currier? How could you—? Why would you do that?”

“Things seemed to be getting serious with Raven. I didn’t want to stand in your way,” Lexa shrugged, sliding back into the apartment. She desperately wanted to be back in the quiet with her drink and her book and her pen, but it seemed impossibly far away as soon as her feet hit the ground in the apartment.

“You’re such an idiot!”

“Well, there’s that.”
“A divorce,” Clarke scoffed and threw the papers on the couch.

Lexa could see the tension in her shoulders, could see the way she ran her hand over her mouth and refused to look at her. Clarke was mad, was more mad than she’d ever seen.

“I’m trying to do what’s best, Clarke.”

“I miss you, you know that?” Clarke paced through the house as Lexa remained rooted. “You’re my best friend and you’re just… gone. And now you’re trying to get out of this so you can leave? Go back to Australia? What about me?”

“I don’t want to be your best friend. I want more.”

“Lexa.”

“You think I want this?” Lexa tossed her stack on the table and pointed at the pile of divorce papers. “I’m so in fucking love with you I can’t be in the same room as you anymore. I can’t look at you. I can’t want you anymore and I’m trying to save us.”

“What are you-?”

“I stay at work late, I keep my distance. I’m trying. Go be happy. Go find someone who makes you happy and forget this ever happened.”

Surprised and still fuming Clarke stopped in the middle of the living room so both were staring angrily at each other, like predators circling and waiting to pounce. Muscles were taut, jaws flexed, nostrils flared, eyes dilated, the importance of the moment not lost on either. Nothing would be the same. Lexa knew it, but she was sick of the burden, flailing under the weight of it in her bones.

“I’m trying to let you go because I would gladly feel like this,” Lexa whispered, clutching at her chest, shoulders taut. “Just to see you happy.”

Clarke cleared the few feet between them in no time at all, she took a deep breath and clutched Lexa’s neck and shirt before kissing her.

It wasn’t as it should have been, gentle and sorry and finally. It was rough and angry and vengeful and afraid, but it was all so important still.

Lexa stood still, petrified once Clarke’s lips were on her, surprised and unable to breathe. It took a moment before she could think, before she melted into those hands that clutched and tugged on her shirt and neck. It was tentative, before she leaned forward, dipping down more to have more access. But Clarke hummed and she was off to the race.

It wasn’t until Clarke felt the wall against her back that she pulled away if only for a moment. Lexa pulled her shirt over her head. Clarke unbuttoned her wife’s pants before stealing her lips once more.

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INTERVIEWER: It has been a little while since I’ve been able to see you.

LEXA: I haven’t really missed you.
CLARKE: I don’t know. I kind of like these sessions. Do we still get them once we’ve been cleared?

INTERVIEWER: I wanted to get you both in here today at the same time to let you know that the paperwork has cleared.

LEXA: Finally.

INTERVIEWER: I just have some closing questions.

LEXA: Of course you do.

INTERVIEWER: Where do you see your marriage going? What do you expect from it in the impending years?

CLARKE: I’m kind of enjoying our sex life.

LEXA: Yes. That.

CLARKE: It’s been a long process. I’m kind of excited to see who we are, now. See what we can be.

LEXA: I have the utmost faith in our abilities to conquer whatever comes our way. She makes me think that.

CLARKE: I asked you what made you certain that we were in love with each other, do you remember?

INTERVIEWER: Of course.

LEXA: You knew before we did.

CLARKE: I always knew.

LEXA: Not this again.

CLARKE: I did.
Flight (Part 1)

Chapter Summary

Clarke is a flight attendant and sees Lexa in first class with an empty seat next to her, twirling an engagement ring in her hand. She goes up to her and offers her one of those tiny bottles of alcohol.

3B was an enigma. The entire cabin remained dark, save for the single light above the contemplative passenger. Ever since taking her seat, she seemed to not even notice how empty the plane was, how singular she was in her state of wakefulness. The world was entirely foreign.

From the front, Clarke leaned against the divider and looked out, scanning the smattering of souls stuck on the plane in the middle of the night while everyone on the ground slept, unaware of their existence.

With a slight yawn, she stared at the girl under the light, watched her stare at her hand, tilt her head and rest it on her other fist, brow furrowing and eyes deep and serious. Everyone else slept, and no one knew of the war being waged in 3B.

She could have been home, in her bed. Instead she was here, just like these strangers, traversing the skies and escaping that haven. Home was a scary place anymore, filled with this kind of loneliness that made itself known at inconvenient moments. Home was an angry kind of safe that felt like longing, though she couldn’t place it, and so Clarke found herself shoving a few bottles in her pocket and approaching the light on a flight bound for nowhere in the middle of the night.

“Not many people stay awake the whole flight,” she observed, placing a tiny bottle of whiskey on the tray table in front of the girl. “Only the kind that are either afraid or working, which you don’t seem to be either.”

The button of her shirt was undone, low, though it did not betray anything other than shadows. The sleeves of the perfectly pressed outfit were wrinkled from being shoved up above her elbow. A silver band was held between her fingers, occupying much of her attention until she was startled by the arrival of the stewardess.

“Business, family, or travel?” Clarke tried, opening the other bottle and pouring it into a coffee cup.

“I’m sorry?”

“What is taking you to the Land of Lincoln in the middle of the night?”

“Oh, um,” the ring was done being twirled and careful tucked into a shirt pocket as the guest sat up a little straighter and cleared her throat. “Business. No, sorry,” she shook her head and smiled to herself. “I don’t know why I’m lying to a complete stranger.”

“Second nature.”

“Yeah,” she nodded. “Travel then. Travel and family.”

“Okay.”
She just wanted silence, wanted to be left alone with the ring and the choice that distracted her. All she had to do was ask, and the rest of her life would unfold like a book, like a fortune plucked right from a cookie, measured in multi-year plans.

They sat quietly and sipped their drinks. Until it got to be too much.

“In my experience, someone is only found playing with a ring if they are over-the-moon excited, or absolutely petrified of what it could mean. If I was a gambling woman, I’d say you weren’t too happy.” She earned a look, which just made her happy to be right. “Which means this trip is an escape? Let me guess, you hopped at the chance when your boss said there was some kind of something to do somewhere else.”

The passenger downed the last of the liquor and ground her jaw so tightly that Clarke found herself somewhat turned on by the turn of the evening, and she had to look away.

“My brother,” she explained. “He’s at St. Anne’s.”

“Oh,” Clarke swallowed quickly. “Is he…”

“Leukemia.”

“Oh.”

A small ding echoed, and the attendant jumped at the chance to escape. She took a step away before sliding another bottle towards the girl under the light, lost in her own little world.

It took another hour for her to work up the courage to approach, another hour that she spent wishing she could ignore her and finish the flight, get on another in the morning, and just forget. But there was something, this torn, fragmented shape in the green of her eyes, that drew Clarke towards her.

“How old?”

“What?” she’s annoyed, but it doesn’t stop Clarke.

“How old is your brother?”

“Fifteen.”

“What’s his name? You can tell a lot about a person by their name.”

“That’s not true.”

“Try me,” the stewardess shrugged. The passenger simply sighed before setting down the freshly emptied glass.

“Aden.”

“Hmmm,” Clarke hummed, thinking quite heartily upon the subject, as if it were a calculus problem. “I bet he’s funny. Not overtly funny, like a clown, but witty. Maybe a bit dry, and definitely way beyond his age.” She earned a twitch of lips and felt victorious. “Not too far off?”

“No, pretty spot on.”

“See? It’s a science.”

“What about Lexa?”
“Lexa, as in Alexandra?”

“Yeah.”

“Hmmm. Well, that’s a strong name, so naturally the shortened version has to pack the same punch in a smaller package. Probably broody, smart. Maybe too smart. Hasn’t enjoyed something for a long time. In desperate need of something, she just can’t put her finger on. Close?”

“Maybe.” Lexa swallowed and met Clarke’s eyes as she continued to appraise the subject of the little game.

“Strong name because you have to be. There’s this… there’s a melancholy that goes with a Lexa. Deep down, but always there. It’s special. Makes you contemplative. Makes you brave and makes you appreciate when happy comes around. Never met a Lexa before, but that’s what the name sounds like to me.”

“Did you major in names in college?”

“Give me another.”

For a long beat, the guest paused. Clarke watched the emotions pass across her face before deciding on another.

“Costia.”

“Costia…” she tasted the name, swished it through her teeth and gnawed on it. “Costia. Exotic. Turbulent. Like a wave, uncontainable and absolutely powerful enough to knock you over. I wouldn’t count on anything from a Costia except a headache and a heartbreak, more than likely.”

Another round of silence before a slow nod.

“You have a gift for names.”

“People aren’t that hard,” Clarke shrugged at the confession. “Is your brother going to be okay?”

“Sure.”

“I mean it.”

“I don’t know.”

For the first time the entire night, the passenger met the attendant’s eyes. A mixture of the sweetest lostness and pleadingnest melancholy were almost innate to their color. Clarke held them as long as she could before fiddling with an empty bottle.

“If I know anything about Aden’s, it’s that they are always alright.”

“What about Lexa’s?”

“Tricky things, but I’d call them sturdy ships, the kind that weather any kind of storm.” The only thing she earned was a nod, and decided she had pressed her luck enough.

It must have been enough, to threaten her own departure, because suddenly, Lexa was hooked on the girl who sat with her and spoke nothing but nonsense in the middle of the night, in the middle of the world. She cleared her throat and sat up a little straighter.
“I’m supposed to ask her to marry me,” she whispered, quickly pulling the ring from the spot in her pocket, the one that weighed her chest down so deeply she thought she’d die. It was enough of a confession to keep the steady blue eyes upon her, though she could not look just yet. “My brother almost died tonight, and I’m supposed to ask her to marry me, and it doesn’t… it doesn’t seem right, or… she doesn’t seem right?”

“Then she’s not.”

“It’s not that simple.”

“It is.” Lexa growled slightly to herself, sinking deeper into the chair, exasperated at the notion that her life was a series of simple decisions. Clarke just sighed at how lost she truly was. “Well, let me see it then.”

“See what?”

“The ring.”

She wasn’t certain why she did, but after finishing the last of the whiskey, Lexa reached into her pocket and produced the ring. Clarke let out a low whistle when she looked at the diamond before reverently taking it in her hand. The owner suddenly felt free.

“Seems like a pretty serious ring for someone who isn’t quite sure what they want to do with it,” the attendant observed. Lexa just wanted her eyes. “It’s like walking around with a loaded gun.”

“My dad gave it to me. Said it was high time I figured it all out.”

“How’s that going?”

“He divorced my mother when I was ten. So I think it might be a bad sign.”

The two sat together, contemplating the notion of the hearts and love and what it could all mean. It could be simple, both eagerly hoped it could be simple, but in practice, neither had any idea.

“Do you love her?”

“No.”

“Then why are you even considering it?” Clarke asked as she handed it back to the girl on the plane. It sparkled in the violence of the overhead light.

First there was a shrug, and Clarke simply waited, because a story like that had a lot more to it, and they still had a few hours.

“I’m not sure if I believe in love, or if I believe in it too much.”

The words came heavy, as if they were a confession, and for a moment, Clarke wondered where she fell on the spectrum. While her knee-jerk reaction was to defend herself, to say that of course she did, suddenly she was allowed to consider the alternative, that perhaps she was too cynical.

The plane rumbled along as the two who were left awake were suddenly stuck, locked into the concept of the future and their whole entire life’s beliefs.

“What would you say, if you were going to propose?”

“Hm?”
“I’ve never known a Lexa who didn’t believe in the most epic kind of love, whether she wanted to or not.”

“If I were to propose to someone that I loved?”

“Yeah.”

“I think I would tell them…” she paused and smiled at the ring. “That I once sat on a plane in the middle of the night wondering if my heart was capable of ever feeling so full, or if I was ever going to be able to feel this kind of feeling. I think I’d want to tell them that I am different because of them. That they make me the most me, and that I want them to never have to sit in a plane and wonder if this exists, because I want them to just… know.”

Sheepishly, she wondered if she’d ever said that much before and where that stern desire to find that came from, exactly, but still, she only glanced at the rapt stewardess and looked away with a blush as she cleared her throat and tucked the ring in her pocket.

“Something like that,” Lexa twirled the glass once more and put it down nervously.

“Something like that,” Clarke agreed with an amazed look before leaning back in her chair as well. She sighed and smiled a dreamy smile. “So what are you going to do?”

“I’m going to find someone to say that to.”

“Hm, a mid-20s, articulate, I’m guessing… lawyer?” Lexa shook her head. “Finance?” Clarke tried again.

“I’m finishing up my doctorate at Berkeley. History.”

“Well, that changes things,” the stewardess coyly shrugged. “A mid-20s, articulate and brainy history nerd who is a secret romantic and has eyes like those.” It was an accusation that made her blush and turn the eyes upon the girl who cleaned up the bottles. “I can see how you might have trouble finding someone to fall in love with you.”

“I’m a bit of a project.”

“Plenty of curb appeal.”

“Drafty. The inside is completely gutted.”

“I can promise you this,” Clarke decided, standing and straightening her shirt. “Whoever gets that ring would be lucky to help out with that renovation.”

“Thank you,” Lexa nodded.

The mood was cheerful, but somber and silent when they realized it was ending, that the world existed outside of the little pocket of light.

“You never let me do your name.”

“What?”

“See if I’m any good at it.”

“Clarke.”
“Clarke,” Lexa tasted it and played with it in her mouth. “Clarke. That’s a boy’s name.”

“My dad wasn’t so coy in his disappointment at not getting a son. He settled for a daughter who threw harder than anyone else though.”

“That’s not true.”

“Arthur C. Clarke wrote 2001: A Space Odyssey, which is his favorite book. Made him want to be an inventor. I’m doing all the work for you.”

“Okay, fine,” Lexa smiled, long forgetting the ring in her pocket and the task of ending things. “Clarke. Meticulous, I bet you’re precise. Hard to make laugh, but when you do, it lasts. I’ve only met a small handful of Clarke’s, but they’re always nerdy. Am I hitting any of this?”

“My apartment is 98% art studio with supplies and paint all over it. I think I have a pretty good sense of humor, and I don’t know about the nerdy thing. I wouldn’t exactly go with that.”

“So no.”

“Valiant effort. Get some rest, 3B.” The stewardess turned off the light, leaving the cabin dark save for the floor lights and those at the front, muffled by the curtains. “We’ll land soon enough.”

It was an uneasy nap that Lexa found herself getting stuck in, but with the light gone and the weight of her dilemma oddly lifted from her shoulders, she settled in and washed the world slip by outside in the blur of evening and clouds until it lulled her to a kind of restfulness.

The ding of the intercom woke her and she suddenly saw the world appear outside, no longer a blob, a shapeless, shifting, rolling wave of nothingness that was oddly terrifying and soothing at the same time. Instead, it was real, and her hand moved to her chest, holding the pocket there and feeling the outline of the piece of jewelry.

The second act of the day was looking up to find the curious blonde who saved her soul in the middle of the night.

“I had a thought,” Clarke appeared, sliding into the seat beside her.

“What?”

“You want to get the really good toothpaste,” she began, quickly grabbing a napkin and beginning to jot down notes. “And you’ll want to tell him to take the nausea pills before he even gets a hint of it.”

“What are you talking about?”

“Aden.”

“What about… him?”

“My mom said that sometimes people get a little antsy about taking pills, but if they’re slinging them, then he should take them. It’ll make the process so much easier.”

Not once did she look up, instead she just wrote down everything she could. Lexa watched her though, and felt a small smile appear on her own lips at this person.

“You want to get a good toothbrush, go all out because he’ll want a fresh mouth. Maybe one of those self-cleaning kind.”
“Okay. I was thinking of a Gameboy or something…”

“Trust me. My mom is Chief of Surgery at Hopkins.”

“Your mom… Hopkins?”

“Lexa’s. What are you going to do? Always so dense in the morning.” She prattled as if she weren’t 
exhausted, as if it all made sense. “Get the toothbrush. Get some good mouth rinse. And a ton of 
fresh, good water. It helps with the Chemo.”

Again, Lexa just furrowed and looked back at the napkin that was quickly filling with instructions. 
She caught words as they came and went, but mostly she was distracted with waking and time and 
space and her.

“Make sure you’re buckled,” Clarke smiled and stood, putting the napkin on Lexa’s tray table.

Clarke was a fan of goodbyes. She loved the bitterness that came to them, loved the finality and the 
way it left behind a grey kind of space that one got to explore and start something new just after. She 
loved the look that came with a goodbye, the words that were left unsaid, the looks that lingered. As 
painful as it was, she was a masochist.

The five other passengers moved, nodding their thanks or walking out of the plane like zombies. 3B 
lingered before shouldering the strap to her briefcase and shuffling out of the aisle.

“Since you did so well today, here are your wings,” Clarke held the plastic wings out and placed 
them in Lexa’s hand.

“Thank you, Clarke,” she nodded, almost bashful, and extremely self-aware of how intimate the 
night suddenly felt. “For everything.”

“He’s going to be okay,” she tried, nodding her head.

“Thanks.”

“Good luck with the not proposing thing.”

“Yeah… that’s… first up today actually.”

“In case you need anything,” she moved and tucked another napkin in the shirt pocket that housed 
the ring. “I’m not exactly sure about this, but I think Clarke’s and Lexa’s get along fairly well.”

With the smile, the small smile, Lexa nodded and left the plane.

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Hospitals were the worst. There was absolutely nothing good about them, nothing worthwhile in 
there, even when good news could be found. Lexa hated them. She learned to dislike the smell and 
learned to avoid them like crazy. As a kid, they never had good news. She was sitting in one when 
she found out her brother was sick. She was in a hospital room when it got worse. She was there for 
the good, and she was there for all of the nights he shook, and stepping through the sliding doors, she 
found her confidence falling.
“Good flight?” her father greeted her in the room, hugging her tightly before she could even drop her bag.

“Not a bit of turbulence.”

“Thank goodness,” her mother came next, holding her cheeks and clutching her into a hug.

“I brought a few things,” Lexa offered. She still tasted the twelve hour old whiskey in her mouth but ignored it. “I met someone who said that these things would help.”

“Just go on in,” her father shook his head as his daughter. “He’s been excited to see you.”

It took a bit of steeling, but Lexa swallowed and nodded, finally dropping her bag outside the sliding door.

“Still haven’t made it up to the big leagues yet?” she asked, perusing the pediatric room. “I kind of like the jungle animals.”

“Fifteen, and they still don’t see my cancer as grown up cancer.”

“I suppose that’s good, I guess.”

Her brother hugged her as she bent over the railing of the bed. He’d grown since she saw him last, since almost a year ago when he was better and they were all a family for the holidays.

“I told Mom not to call you.”

“You’re doing the Chemo thing. You know I couldn’t miss some Jello and terrible movie marathons.”

“Don’t you have school?”

“Cancer is a valid excuse. And I can work from here.”

“Glad to be of service. Did you get to see the cockpit?”

“Huh?” Lexa looked down and followed his finger to the wings pinned to her shirt, making her smile slightly. “Yeah. No. I just… made friends.”

“You don’t make friends,” her brother scoffed as she took a seat. Outside, their parents watched and waited and inhaled the goodness in the moment. “And who’s Clarke?”

“How did you…?” she patted her pocket. “Been practicing?”

“A little.”

“Give me that,” the sister snatched it back and took a seat beside the bed, carefully smoothing it and gently tucking it back into her pocket. “I got you a new toothbrush.”

“Okay.”

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The hallway of her childhood home was eerily familiar. Even in the dark, the feel of the worn carpet, the creak of the wood beneath it, muffled by her gentle footsteps, it all was a memory she never knew she had, and yet when it came rushing back, when she lived it, she felt a certain loss.

Down the hall, she could hear her father snoring. She knew to hop over the fifth step, because it would squeak and wake the dog that slept on the landing.

It was the thought of her brother that kept her up, even after her unfit night of sleep on the plane the night before. That and the crumpled napkin in her hand that she couldn’t put down after she emptied her pockets for the night.

Forgotten in the hospital, the blonde suddenly came back to her thoughts when the ring and the napkin flopped onto her old dresser top. The ring remained and the napkin was fidgeted with all through the quiet house.

Lexa made it to the back porch before she stared at her phone and typed the numbers before closing it once again. It was stupid, but it was something. She sighed and brought the phone back up to her ear a second later.

"Why are you still up?" a familiar voice answered.

"Do you love me?" Lexa asked, crossing her arm across her chest, tucking herself into it. She walked across the back porch, before pausing at one end.

"You know I do."

"What do you think about when you hear my name?"

"Lexa, what is this about…" Costia sighed.

"What do you think about when you think of my name?"

"I don’t know. You’re… you. You’re Lexa."

"Do you ever wonder if true love exists?"

"Why do we have to do this?"

"Do what?"

"Why do you have to always be so…. Why are you so unhappy? Why can’t you just have what we have?"

"I think it’s done." There was a pause. "I think we’re done."

"What are you talking about?"

"You’re right. I’m unhappy."

"Lex…"

"My name is strong and melancholic. I want to be happy more."

"Is this about your brother?" Costia scoffed, "because if it is, it’s going to be okay."

"I have to go, Costia. But we’re done. We’ve been done."
“Lexa.”

She hung up the phone and felt infinitely lighter. It rang a second later, vibrating in her palm, but she didn’t care at all. Instead, she fell back onto the swing and listened to the familiar creak and groan of it while her phone stopped and vibrated with a notification before starting to ring again.

A sudden burst of life made her dial the number on the napkin.

“You were right,” Lexa sighed, still pacing through the yard, unable to keep still.

“You’ll have to narrow it down. I’m often right.”

“The toothbrush,” she rolled her eyes and smiled.

“You should know that about Clarke’s. They’re always right.”

The nerves were too much suddenly, and Lexa ran out of things to say. She wanted to just be quiet, and she wanted to forget that Costia existed and that she realized she’d been miserable for a long time with no inkling of how to fix it. So she stayed quiet.

“Where are you tonight?” she tried.

“Phoenix,” Clarke informed her. On her end, she juggled the phone as she walked through the airport. “Just landed. It was awfully weird not hanging out with someone in 3B.”

“Do you do it often?”

“Do you sit on a plane and fiddle with a wedding ring you’re not going to use?”

“No.”

“Me neither.”

Lexa closed her eyes and breathed in a smell that just edged on the border of a memory. So close was a person she vaguely remembered, so close was a time when that smell would be normal and not register at all. But now she was here, with more miles on her and more memories subverting all else.

“Tell me about your dissertation.”


“Now that sounds fascinating.”

“I focus primarily on Early US history, but the formation of cities, kind of working with geography and movements of groups is what I specialize in, or will specialize in, if anyone hires me and I pass my defense.”

“Have you interviewed?”

“Baylor, ASU, NYU, and in a few weeks, here.”

“Where do you want to be?”

“Right now or in the future?”

“Both,” Clarke smiled to herself.
“Right now I’d like to be back in 3B with some scotch and a pretty girl. In the future…” Lexa yawned again. “I can’t say I want much else than that.”

“You can’t just go saying things like that,” the attendant scolded her.

“I usually don’t. But I’m tired and my lips are loose.”

“Now that sounds like an invitation.”

“It is.”

“What am I going to do with you, 3B?” she sighed across the world.

“Tell me something.”

“What?”

“Anything.”

“I draw. I mean. I don’t want to be a flight attendant forever. I draw a lot. I’m working with my friend, we are making a graphic novel.”

“Seriously?”

“Yeah…” it came out quiet and bashful and Lexa did not like that noise, or that she caused it.

“I just can’t believe you’re… you… like… beautiful as hell, and talented. That’s insane.”

“You are tired, huh?”

“I just mean… it’s cool. Aden and I read a lot of comics. I know they’re not the same and junk, but it was one of my fields of study… or… I just… We read a lot when he was in the hospital, and so I began to study them, and just. Now I’m really sounding like a nerd.”

“Yeah. I like it.”

“Just wait until I get started about the formation of the census,” she sighed and shook her head. “Oh, goodness, and all of my friends get sick of hearing about my obsession with historical state elections.”

“I think I got you more excited than sleepy.”

“Yeah.”

“You sound so happy when you’re distracted from everything else.”

“I think it’s just you.”

“Tell me more?”

“About you?”

“About the early state elections. Goodness, do they know you’re so obtuse and still want to give you a degree?”

“Yeah. Idiots,” Lexa grinned. “How long do you have?”
Aden got worse on a Sunday. The doctors all shared specific looks that Lexa picked up on as she tried to make herself read from one of the books she dragged around and never found the inkling to actually peruse. Her parents fought again in the hall and she sat in the room and watched through the window.

“How you doing, kid?” she asked her brother, hoping to distract him.

“Hurts.”

“Yeah. I bet.”

“Will you…” he paused, trailing off as he licked his lips. “Will you make sure they don’t fight too much after.”

“After?”

“You know.”

“There is no after. You’re going to be fine.”

“And you should be happy. I mean it,” he ignored her. “You’re the best person I know, but you’re never just… happy.”

“You’re going to be fine,” she tried again. “I’m your big sister, and a big sister knows.”

“Alright,” he smiled.

“Plus, you can’t leave me with them,” she nudged her head towards their parents. “I’ll go crazy.”

“You’re right. It’s such a hard life, being the favorite.”

“I’m going to add that to the list of times I wanted to punch you, but I couldn’t because of cancer, and then when you’re all in remission, oh boy, you’re going to get it.”

They shared a laugh and Lexa was convinced he could win, for almost an instant.

“How was Seattle?” Lexa sighed into her phone as she collapsed on the twin-sized bed in her old room. She kicked at her shoes and let them flop onto the ground in a thud. Her legs hung over the edge and she refused to move as she listened to the flight attendant talk.

“-At the market,” Clarke continued some story that Lexa didn’t really care about, but liked the sound of the words. Her head was too full to concentrate. “How’s Aden?”

“It’s getting bad,” the almost professor sighed. “I’ve never seen him so bad. More bad days than good ones. They’re talking surgery again.”

In a move, she rolled over and dug her arms around her pillow, still half hanging from the edge of the small bed. It was the most comfortable she could ever remember being, and so she tried to freeze in

“All night.”

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the same spot.

“Listen, and do exactly what I say tomorrow, okay?” Clarke began. Lexa closed her eyes and hummed. “You tell your doctor to forward everything to Dr. Abigail Griffin, Chief of Surgery at Hopkins. I’ll tell my mom to take a look and see what she can do. She might know of-“

“He’s going to lose, Clarke,” Lexa realized, exhaustion covering her body like a snug blanket that smothered her, made her shiver and tuck her arm under her chest. “I’m almost relieved. Soon he won’t hurt anymore. My parents won’t fight anymore.”

“It’s not over until it’s over.”

“Don’t give us hope again. It will ruin them.”

“I still have a few things to teach you, Lexa Woods,” Clarke sassed.

The words made her smile despite herself. Still, she did not move though, and still, she dug into her bed and felt the phone warm against her cheek. It was safe and quiet there, in her bed, with Clarke, and it was a welcomed reprieve from the thoughts that haunted her throughout the day.

“Dr. Abigail Griffin. Got it.”

“Thank you.”

“When are you back in the city?”

“I can be back tomorrow if you want.”

“You’d do that for me?”

“Yeah, I would,” Clarke realized, the notion startling her with how honest it was.

The truth was, she waited for these calls, enjoyed them thoroughly, craved the texts and the voice and the eyes they were attached to completely. The world was spinning in all directions, and still, they had these few minutes, and each other, strangers to be honest with in the middle of the night, in their own little world, orbiting that same little light above. A week of calls and she would be there, she already knew. A week and she was hooked.

“I’m really tired, Clarke,” Lexa confessed. “I’m so tired.”

“I know.”

“Literally, emotionally, physically, mentally, every -ally way possible, I’m just exhausted. Bone-tired. I finally understand what that truly means.”

“A good night’s sleep will help with the literally and physically part.”

“I can’t even do that right. I keep waiting to wake up to the terrible news that… that… that I’m not a big sister anymore.”

“Yeah.”

“I’m tired.”

“I’ll be there tomorrow. We’ll figure something out.”
There was quiet. Only a timezone away, Clarke laid in the hotel room in a bed she would never see again, and she rolled over, curling up slightly against the sadness that seeped from the naturally melancholic girl and felt it overwhelm her, felt it stir her muscles to want to do anything to alleviate it, though she was unsure how.

“I gave my dad the ring back. Costia put all of my stuff in a storage unit. My doctoral thesis defense is in two months. And then there’s you,” she huffed, hiding in the pillows. Her body relaxed at the thought. “Twelve days and my life has been completely turned upside down. And I have never cared less.”

“Yeah. All of that.”

“You should bring the tiny bottles of scotch again. I liked those. Made a great first impression.”

“You’re a mess. Is it weird that I’m into it?”

“I told you. Curb appeal, but the roof leaks and the floor needs replaced.”

“Drafty and with no natural light.”

“Exactly.”

“Get some sleep Lexa.”

“Can you just keep talking? I like it. “

“Yeah, I can do that,” Clarke smiled and stretched her arm, turning out her own light and settling in for the night.

“Thank you,” Lexa sighed, relieved and not alone again.

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Her shifts were all put up and picked up, and she had the foreseeable future unaccounted for, but in some tiny way, she knew exactly how it would be spent. After dropping her bag off at the hotel, Clarke quickly changed, and hailed a cab before her phone buzzed in her pocket.

“Hey Mom,” she answered as she mumbled the address to the driver.

“Honey, did you look at these scans?”

“I’m not a doctor.”

“Clarke…” her tone was annoyed, but Clarke knew that she gave her mother a puzzle and a case and that was better than any hand-drawn Christmas card she’d ever made. “You’ve been reading scans since before you could read a book.”

“I saw them.”

“You said he’s fifteen?”

“Almost sixteen.”
“Mmm,” the doctor hummed.

Her daughter could picture her, brow furrowed and hand holding her chin, balanced on the arm that crossed over her chest, white coat pristine, glasses precise. At one time, before her daughter was born, she worked as a doctor in a war-torn country and when Clarke found the picture of her in a tank top and surrounded by injured children, she asked, but was given an answer that was unsatisfactory. It took some searching, but Clarke read the newspapers and saw what her mother did, and it made the pristine coat and staunch fierceness seem well-deserved.

As much as it was a fight when Clarke decided not to go to medical school, there was an almost relief that her mother felt, that she wouldn’t have to bear the same burdens she grew accustomed to having on her soul.

“I’m going to show them to Dr. Garcia. There’s a program that is going into phase two clinical trials. They have expanded the age group. I’m not sure if sixteen is going to be old enough.”

“What was the success rate?”

“There’s no succe-”

“Mom.”

“Thirty-seven percent remission, twenty-five remained cancer-free for five years.”

“Holy shit.”

“Language.”

“Does Aden qualify?”

“In everything but age. He actually fits a lot of the diagnoses as the successful completions.”

“Can you get him in?”

The city swept past and Clarke held her breath, suddenly distracted and holding her breath for the answer.

“Why are you suddenly so invested in a sick kid?”

“I honestly don’t know.”

“You’ve never asked me for a favor before.”

“It’s not for me.”

“Who is it for?”

“Mom.”

“Clarke, I don’t hear from you often, and the first time in two months I get something its a case file for a sick kid. You can indulge me a little, you know?”

The car stopped at a light, and Clarke rolled her eyes. She stretched out her legs and let her head hit the back of the seat, exasperated and not understanding her own actions completely, let alone enough to explain them to her mother.
“I met this girl. It’s her broth–”

“A girl?”

“Yes, a girl,” she huffed.

“Is she a cute girl?”

“Mom.”

“I’m just asking. You don’t bring anyone home. I’m just curious and I want to know what’s happening.”

“She’s a girl I met two weeks ago and who recently broke up with someone and whose brother is dying.”

“Always liked a challenge, my daughter did,” Abby chuckled and continued to scan the file as she took a seat at her desk.

A lone picture sat there, greeting her, the one of her husband and daughter at her graduation from high school, right before it all changed. She sighed and looked back at the chart before shaking her head and looking up at the sky.

“Thank you for looking. I appreciate it.”

“You know I’d do anything I could, Clarke.”

“I know. Just. Thanks.”

“Maybe you can stop in sometime. We can get dinner. Even if it’s just a layover.”

“That sounds good.”

“Be careful, will you?”

“I’m always careful,” she smiled.

As they pulled up to the hospital, Clarke slid money from her pocket and handed it to the driver. Quietly she juggled the phone and her bag as she left, butterflies violently eating at her insides.

“I meant with this girl.”

“What did Dad used to say, about the first time he met you?”

“Clarke, that was just a story.”

“What did he say?” her daughter insisted.

“That he was never a gambling man, but he was ready to empty his pockets and his tomorrows on me.”

“Yeah,” Clarke chuckled and paused before heading inside. “Chips are down, Mom.”

“You two were always too much alike.”

“I love you, Mom.”
“I love you, Clarke. Just be safe. When you gamble you can end up broke and empty.”

“Fifty-Fifty shot, right?”

“I’ll call you when I get in touch with Hector, okay?”

“Thanks.”

Brick and half covered in ivy, the house on the corner of the old neighborhood on the northside of the city with the lake in the background was a charming shadow in the dark. The old-style lantern lights that lit the streets were just a distant galaxy as they stood in front of the family home. Not too big, not too small, it was just right for its purpose. The age sat on it and made it seem worn in a way that was inviting.

“It’s not much,” Lexa confessed as she pushed the door with her shoulder and flicked on the light in the entry as they made their way inside. “But it’s been home.”

“It’s really nice,” Clarke offered. “Are you sure your parents won’t mind. I don’t want to be an imposition. I stay practically for free at the hotel, and I use my mom’s points and stuff. She has too many—”

“My parents don’t leave the hospital,” the professor smiled and let her keys hit the bowl on the table by the door. “They take turns coming back to shower, but that’s about it. I end up doing laundry and grocery and I’m mostly back to clean up after them, honestly.”

“If you’re sure. We just met.”

“I think we have something like a full day of phone calls under our belts. You might be the only person I talk to anymore. It’s okay.”

With a small nod, Clarke dropped her bag and followed Lexa through the house as she gave her a small tour. She pointed out the kitchen, the back, turned on lights and turned them off as she moved, offered something to eat, which Clarke politely declined.

The artist hadn’t anticipated the welcome she got at the hospital. When she turned the corner and Lexa saw her, she earned a hug that lasted well into a minute, neither letting go, neither saying anything, just simply being flesh and blood and quiet. And when they sat and talked, it was like they just knew, gravitated around each other so well.

When her mother called around dinner time with the news that her friend would consider Aden for the trial, the entire clan of Woods hugged Clarke, with Lexa’s mother kissing her cheeks and her father smothering her. Lexa showed it differently, she pulled Clarke outside for air and she kissed her so hard, neither could breathe. She said it wasn’t for the trial, but because she was beautiful and hopeful, and she had lost all of hers, and was grateful it was back. Clarke didn’t care about motivation. She just kissed her back with a smile, soaking in that joy.

Somehow she ended up here, in their home, and with Lexa, holding her hand as she dragged her around the house after dark, and she didn’t care how fast it was all happening, because it didn’t matter. She had her father’s genes, and believed in his folklore completely, as doctrine.
“You travel light,” Lexa noted, as she grabbed the bag after the short tour.

“All that training. I’m a pro.”

“No little bottles of scotch?”

“That’d be against my code of conduct, B3,” Clarke grinned as she followed. “So naturally there may have been a few that I borrowed but plan on returning at some point.”

“Did you really?”

“I liberated a few in case you needed them.”

“Goodness, I do,” she chuckled. “That’s my parent’s room,” she pointed towards the end of the hall. “We have a little office or spare, Aden’s room, the bathroom, and mine,” she kicked at a door and flipped the light before putting Clarke’s bag on the ground.

When the light on the desk came to life, Clarke was pleasantly surprised by how much the room still fit the professor who suddenly realized what was happening and pushed the glasses up on her nose a bit and fiddled with her hands before shoving them in her pockets.

“It feels like you,” Clarke decided.

“Yeah?”

“Yeah,” she whispered, perusing the shelf of books, skating her hand along the worn spines of the inhabitants.

A map of the world covered the wall over the bed, with little pins and lines drawn on it. A desk sat against the window with an older computer pushed aside for a sleeker laptop. It was hidden by books and pages and a briefcase that spilled forth notebooks and ideas.

“I wanted to be Mia Hamm when I was a kid,” Lexa explained, as Clarke perused old soccer trophies and medals and pictures. “I was no where close to that, but I got a scholarship. Thanks to that, I got to use my college fund to travel.”

Pictures of different places littered the wall beside her bed, spilling out like a cloud of dreams. It was all very teenager and full of a desire to live. It was very much like the girl who was suddenly existing in her life.

“I can’t believe you’re here,” Lexa confessed.

“I can’t believe you called.”

“My brother made me.”

“I’ll have to thank him.”

The room was small and full, and so when she moved, she orbited the professor, but Clarke didn’t mind. In fact, she liked seeing the different sides of her. When she paused and looked at the map, ran her fingers along the lines, she turned to face Lexa after seeing where she’d been.

Just like on the map, her fingers continued to move, to trace the professor. Her hands moved to ribs, to the worn and wrinkled button up that she wore, still precise, though it succumbed to the rigors of the day. Clarke watched her hands, and their hips as they came closer.
Lexa watched it happen and swallowed quickly, despite the dryness in her throat. When she kissed Clarke earlier, it was purely a reaction, an unrestrained moment, and she wanted to put her in the spare. That was a genuine offer.

But Clarke looked up with those eyes beneath those lashes and with her tongue darting out over those lips, and suddenly she was very far from sitting in that plane and spilling her guts to a stranger. Now she was feeling real hands on her and seeing those lips and very much enjoying the person who owned them.

“Is it cliché to say that you met me at a terrible time?” Lexa smiled, tentative and nervous. Clarke just returned it and shook her head. “I just broke up with someone and I can’t remember her the color of her eyes, but goodness gracious, your’s are my favorite color now.”

“Listen, I’m in no rush. I get it. Plenty of curb appeal, and I see the potential after a renovation, but you are definitely in foreclosure.”

“I am not enjoying these all these house metaphors.”

“I’m not enjoying the outdated kitchen tiles and wood panelling, but I’m working with it,” Clarke shrugged.

With a roll of her eyes, Lexa closed her eyes and leaned her forehead forward, resting it on Clarke’s. The artist smiled and swayed a bit, running her hands up and over Lexa’s shoulders as hands moved to her hip.

“I’ve already jumped in with you, 3B,” she whispered, her fingertips playing with the little curls at the base of Lexa’s neck. “I’m my father’s daughter.”

“I don’t know what that means.”

“You will one day.”

As much as she wanted to hear more, Lexa couldn’t. She kissed her and sighed and was too tired to do much else, but graciously Clarke held her up and leaned her cheek on her shoulder, hugging her tightly.

When her phone vibrated in her pocket, it intruded upon them, making them aware, making them suddenly unable to push aside the craziness of the entire situation. Sheepishly, Lexa jumped apart and answered, walking out into the hall as Clarke took a deep breath and steeled herself slightly.

“Did you ever bring your fiancée here?”

“She was never my fiancée, and no,” Lexa shrugged, letting her phone drop onto the end of the bed as she hung up with her mother. “She would have laughed at my pictures or trophies or something.”


“Something like that.”

“The Metamorphoses.”


“Such a nerd,” Clarke shook her head and blushed. With a flop, Clarke kicked up her feet and
situated herself on the small bed.

For a moment, Lexa looked around, as if at any second someone would barge in and catch a girl in her bed and she’d be grounded. It took a bit for it to sink in that a beautiful blonde was in her bed, and suddenly all of those high school fantasies were made real, which was daunting and terrifying and wonderful all at once.

“There was a fissure, a thin split, in the shared wall between their houses, which traced back to when it was built. No one had discovered the flaw in all those years – but what can love not detect? – You lovers saw it first, and made it a path for your voices. Your endearments passed that way, in safety, in the gentlest of murmurs,“ Clarke read, opening it to a dog-eared page in the much loved copy. “Not a history book I’ve ever read before.”

“I don’t know,” Lexa shrugged. “Seems like the only kind of history that matters.”

“I suppose,” she nodded, continuing on for another few lines before pausing and patting the bed.

Hesitant at first, Lexa soon settled beside her, laying on her back and staring at the ceiling. She listened to the words and the voice and thought she’d never heard a better sound than a girl reading her the best book of all time in her own bed. Gradually her eyelids grew heavy and finally she rolled over, unconscious of it and comfortable, still completely clothed.

Clarke faltered only slightly as the exhausted girl settled into her, wrapped an arm around her hip. Softly as she could, she paused only to take off her glasses and put them on the nightstand before reading again, quieter this time, vowing to herself to read all night if it meant Lexa got a decent sleep.

In the morning, Lexa’s mother makes it a few step down the hall before backtracking and looking at the two asleep on the bed, a book tucked over Clarke’s chest and her daughter still soundly asleep.
Could we have more of FLIGHT? it destroyed me.

“So I just have to take charity cases for you to visit,” Abby teased as she hugged her daughter tightly in front of the airport.

People came and went, not caring at all about the reunion occurring on the curb. But to Abby it was everything. She hugged her daughter so tight she thought she’d leave marks, though she didn’t care about that at all. It was rare and new and tenuous, and so she clung as tight as she could while her daughter wasn’t much better.

“And promise me dinner,” Clarke taunted, surprising herself as she hugged back just as tight.

As much as she missed her mother, Clarke realized that she was back and she hated the city as a place that existed and housed her memories, that kept her father’s bones tucked into its soil like a greedy little child hoarding the best things and never giving them back so that it could use it until everyone forgot. The town was haunted and she had to fight through that nagging thought the entire time. So she hid in her mother’s arm like she was a kindergartener afraid of going back to class.

“Did you have a good flight? Long trip?”

“Not a bad four day stretch. How are you?”

“Busy, but so excited you’re here. I cleaned out the spare, and put some of your old stuff in there. I know it’s not the house, but I just figured–”

“No, it’s good,” Clarke decided, not wanting to think of her childhood home that was sold and gone. “How’s Marcus?”

“Good, good,” the doctor nodded as they walked out of the airport. “He’s fishing this weekend.”

“You didn’t have to send your boyfriend away because I was coming. I’d like to think I’m more mature than I was last year.”

“He had this planned already,” the mother shrugged, her only tell when it came to lying. “How are you? How’s California? Life?”

“I think I can handle Kane, Mom.”

“I know. I just… maybe I wanted some time with you without him around. That’s a thing, too.”

“Okay.”

“Okay.”

Over a year Clarke hadn’t seen her mother, and she’d been unapologetic about it after her introduction to Kane as her boyfriend. It still hurt, still stung for some reason, and yet, she could
understand it a little better now. She definitely understood what it meant to miss her mother terribly. And so she linked her arm and pulled her suitcase behind her as they moved to the parking lot.

They made it to the freeway before her mother turned the talk back on her daughter with the only topic she knew was worth discussing.

“Lexa is nice,” she offered as her daughter changed in the backseat so they would make their dinner reservations.

“She is,” Clarke nodded. “They made it okay?”

“Yeah. Settled in great. Marcus let them have his apartment. He wasn’t using it.”

“Gross, but that was nice. They won’t use it though. I think they never leave the hospital.”

“I’ve noticed.” Clarke chuckled slightly as she tugged and moved and changed.

“Lexa has a thesis thing this week, and then an interview the week after, and I’m sure she’ll be out here again as soon as she can.”

“She is nothing like what I would imagine you dating,” Abby observed, hearing a thump and some swearing in the back. “Reserved and quiet. Polite and kind. Observant and stoic.”

“Yeah,” Clarke muttered, shifting back to the front seat in a way that she knew would make her sore later. “But there’s the part of her that laughs and snorts at three in the morning that brings it all together for me.”

“I like her.”

“I like Marcus.”

“You don’t have to lie,” Abby laughed as her daughter strapped in.

“I do. I like him well-enough. I like him for you.”

“Thank you.”

It wasn’t much, but it was something, and for now, it was the world for the two of them.

“I like Lexa for you, too.”

“We’re not… I mean, we’re. It’s. You know.” Clarke shrugged as she buckled once again, shaking her head and wondering how to say things. “I like her, too.”

Abby didn’t say anything else, but she did smile to herself as she drove them down the parkway toward their dinner plans.

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Nearly empty, the cabin was dark and Clarke was tired. Exhausted from the stretch she picked up to distract herself from Lexa’s move, from the fact that they once existed in the same city and never knew each other, and now that they did, were in opposite time zones permanently, figuratively.
The headache seeped in as they climbed. From the back of the plane, she checked her phone and sighed, waiting for the word from her mother that the surgery went well, waiting for word from Lexa that she finally made it halfway there on her cross-country drive as she moved home, waiting for her life to finally fall into the proper place, though that seemed nearly impossible to imagine completely.

Nostalgically, Clarke looked to the empty seat where she once met Lexa and smiled. Six months, and she was still riding her wager. Six months of infrequent visits. Six months of flybys and sleeping on hospital couches or fully clothed when they fell asleep after traveling. It took three months for them to even consummate the relationship. Three torturous months that now made the time between visits even more difficult to bear.

But six months of hard-earned, well-fought time together and she was absolutely hooked on the nerdy history major who was so full of… of… of life, that she didn’t know what to do with it. Clarke found herself enjoying the simple, the easy, the normal that came with Lexa. She was stalwart and sturdy and that was very new for the flight attendant. It was a much welcomed change.

I’m driving the whole way through. Don’t get a hotel tomorrow, Lexa wrote.

Are you sure? Be careful.

A mattress on the floor, a bottle of wine, no work talk, no cancer talk. I think it’s time I truly romance you.

Throwing a cursory glance out to see if anyone needed anything, Clarke smiled back at her phone.

You’re going to talk about work.

Nope. No more history talk. I promise that the early US can sleep for a night while I properly thank you.

Thank me?

For betting on me. For cleaning the gutters or putting in the new hardwood or whatever other analogy you want to use.

Those sound dirty.

Good.

Six months, and Clarke was absolutely nuts about the history nerd who couldn’t cook a can of soup to save her life. She knew her mother’s warning to take it slow was important, that these were extenuating circumstances, however something deep in her gut just told her the truth, that this was something her father would applaud her for putting all her chips down on.

I like you a lot, 3B.

I’m quite fond of you myself. Have a good flight.

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The apartment rattled when the train passed. The neighbors were all over the age of seventy, and they all had their own particular kind of peeves and quirks which was adorable to say the least. The
college was on the other side of the city, which meant two different trains and a good walk, but the apartment was worth it because it had a spare room that was not too big, but fit a solid desk and a drafting table for a certain girl who liked to visit.

The red brick building with the ivy lazily climbing up one side sat on the corner across from a tiny market and a very quiet electronic’s store. Other apartments were scattered on the quiet, tree-lined street. It wasn’t glamorous, but it was nicer than a lot of other places she’d looked at in the rush to move while balancing her brother and duties.

“Good afternoon, Mrs. Gaffy,” Lexa nodded politely as she juggled two large paper bags filled with groceries in her arms with her briefcase on her shoulder.

A large wolfhound nudged her hip with her cold nose while the tiny woman with huge glasses squinted at the youngest inhabitant of the building.

“Lexa? How are you, sweetie?”

“I’m doing well. How’s Trixie?”

“Spoiled, as always,” she smiled. “It’s supposed to rain tonight and tomorrow. Be careful.”

“Thanks. Hey, I saw these,” Lexa leaned forward and adjusted bags in her hands before handing over a produce bag. “Good tangerines. I thought of you. I know Mr. Gaffy’s been looking for some.”

“Aw, honey,” she smiled. “You’re the best thing that moved into that apartment in a long time. You know, the neighbors, we were all talking, and we don’t even mind that loud sex you have.”

“I’m–” Lexa coughed and blushed and cleared her throat, eyes bugging at the idea. “I don’t– We. Um.”

The little woman, the one in a bingo visor and coke bottle glasses, the one with the giant purse that held about twelve hundred napkins and mints, the one with the pastel pants and matching sweater, she heard… she heard Lexa… she heard fourth floor Lexa’s… sex. And mentioned it.

“Normally, we’d file complaints, but we all just love you so much. You’re so thoughtful, and with everything you have going on, we just couldn’t–”

“Okay, well, I will see you later, Mrs. Gaffy,” she said quickly, hitting the stairs as fast as her legs could take her, mortified beyond all repair.

“Bye, sweetie. Have a good night. Tell Clarke to stop by tomorrow. I’m going to make some bread pudding.”


It was Clarke’s fault, Lexa realized. She was the loud one. Sometimes. Most of the time. But still, when a woman who was her grandmother’s age said the word sex, it just ruined so many things.

The entire conversation swirled and repeated in her head with every stop up to the next floor.

“Lexa, is that you?” a voice interrupted her troubled thoughts as she made it to the second floor.

“Yes sir, Mr. Jefferson,” she hummed. “How are you?”

Tall and still wearing his veteran hat, the retired subway driver tentatively cracked the door until he
saw who it was. He was always doing something, always had a project that roped in the PhD, and she enjoyed the distraction, thought today, she very much wished they had an elevator.

“Just fine, just fine. You know, I saw on the news about the construction on F train. You’re going to have to take the G. Should add an extra sixteen minutes to your trip.”

“Great,” she sighed. “Thanks.”

“Hey, don’t look at me, I didn’t do it.”

“Just drive me in that sweet ride you keep parked out back,” Lexa grinned, digging in the bag on her hip. “I picked up that refill for your meds. The pharmacist said to remember to take them with food. Every day.”

“Not you too,” he growled, leaning against his door.

“Yeah yeah, just take the pills. I don’t want anymore youngins moving in here if your apartment opens up because you’re stubborn.”

“Funny girl,” he chuckled. “Want to watch the game on Tuesday?”

“Can I bring my papers to grade or are you going to complain?” It was always a bargain, always an easy battle to have.

“Will you bring the pizza?” he asked, leaning on his cane and adjusting slightly.

“Don’t I always?”

“Hey, wait a second,” he mumbled, taking a shaky, arthritic hand and tugging at his old billfold.

“It’s fine,” she tried to stop him.

“No, no, you need some chewing gum money. I was dreading going in the rain tomorrow,” Mr. Jefferson explained as he fished out two dollars. “Did you know it’s supposed to rain?”

“I heard something like that,” she smiled and nodded, shoving them in her back pocket. “I have to go. I’ll see you Tuesday.”

“See you later, kiddo. Thanks again.”

Her arms were nearly shaking apart when she made it to the top of the third floor landing. The groceries were suddenly heavier than ever, and the strap to her bag dug into her shoulder and collar so hard she was certain she’d lose the arm.

But still, despite it all, Lexa paused at a door on the third floor and dug in her bag as best she could, careful to leave a bag of catfood at 313 for Mr. Leary and Fritz, the stupid cat that made her eyeballs swell up with allergies. With Mrs. Leary recently departed, she had a soft spot for the widower, despite his gruffness.

She made it only to the top of the fourth floor when she heard the door open and a gentle ‘thanks’ follow her upstairs. It was slow going, but she was wearing him down as best she could.

Her apartment was small, had not much to it, but it was the homiest home she could remember having for a long time. It didn’t hurt that all of the residents were nice and took care of her like she was each of their own. It didn’t hurt that a flight attendant filled her fridge with magnets from every airport she visited and took more trips that left her off in Chicago. It didn’t hurt that a flight attendant
left a drawer of clothes and still stole Lexa’s when she stayed. It didn’t hurt that the big bed that took up most of the bedroom always smelled like her.

The first grocery bag broke as soon as she closed her own door behind her and Lexa shook her head and laughed at her own luck. It made sense, oddly enough. But she was home, and after the oddessy of her day, she didn’t care at all.

“Hey,” Clarke smiled, setting her book down as she looked over her shoulder from the couch. “Your bag ripped.”

“Thanks,” she grinned. “I got caught by all of the other floors.”

“You’re seriously so cute. I would have never guess that you’d be such a softie, 3B,” her girlfriend decided.

Hair in a quick ponytail, clad in a stolen sweatshirt from Lexa’s alma mater that had certainly seen much, much better days, and nothing else, Clarke was the best thing to come home to, and Lexa was certain of it only because she’d once had someone else waiting at home, and it never felt like that. Like, like her heart was beating so fast it was standing still. Like the world stopped at her doormat and she could have her own kind of peace there.

“What do you mean?” Lexa asked, swallowing as she took in the sight.

“You’ve adopted an entire apartment building of elderly people without even thinking about it, and I find that so very much like you, which is so good.”

“Meh,” she shrugged, non-committal on her own attributes. “I just like the dog.”

“When I asked if there was another woman in your life, and you said Trixie, I have to admit, that wasn’t what I was expecting.”

“Yeah, well, just wait until I tell you about my chat with Mrs. Gaffy.”

Clarke smiled and helped pick up the contents of their dinner from the floor before giggling as Lexa pulled her close and they fell once more. She felt lips against her chin and neck and she wasn’t hungry again.

“Hey there,” Clarke hummed.

“Hey.”

“Did you have a good day?”

“I did. How was your’s?”

She didn’t stop kissing, she didn’t stop pushing Clarke against the door.

“Uneventful.”

“God, I like having you here,” Lexa realized as she nudged a box of pasta with her foot.

“Yeah?”

“They better turn their hearing aids off tonight,” she nodded, staring at Clarke’s lips.

“What?”
“Nothing.”

Before Clarke could ask what was for dinner, before she could ask what Lexa was talking about again, she felt hands on her hips and she was completely overcome by all manner of welcoming home her scholar and making the most of her three days off.

The thing about hospitals, was that they never changed. It didn’t matter the city, the time zone, the hall, the reason to be there. None of that mattered at all. They were buildings where people went in, where people sometimes didn’t leave. Where joy was born and lives were celebrated.

The smell was always the same, that clean, generically sterile kind of smell that eclipsed all others. Shoes all sounded the same there, squeaking against pristine white floors. Even the vending machines were all the same, half working, half holding coins and bags of chips hostage despite the rage enacted upon them.

Clarke grew up in a hospital. She thrived on leftover birthday cake in the nurses’ locker rooms and watching terrible daytime television when her mother inevitably got called in for an important operation on her off day.

It was different being someone sitting in a waiting room on purpose.

“I think you need a break,” Clarke observed.

Lexa sat back in the chair, her books balanced on her lap and stretching over two other chairs. She smiled quickly before it dissipated as she dug her fingertips into her eyes under her glasses.

“I think you might be right,” she nodded as a hand rubbed her back.

It was nice, to have someone with her. Lexa was used to her parents, used to them bickering or hovering. It was all about her brother, and she knew that. She lived it. But it was different, to have someone caring for her, hovering over her. It was nice.

“Do you want to do all of the mazes in the Highlights magazines or should we play STD bingo in the free clinic, 3B?”

“Mmm, I think we should play the take-a-nap-in-uncomfortable-waiting-room-chair game,” Lexa hummed as she leaned back, tilting her head against the wall.

It only took a second for Clarke to join her, a familiar weight settling on her shoulder. Lexa didn’t even open up her eyes as her cheek feel to Clarke’s head, burrowing into her hair. She turned to kiss her and settled there once more as arms wrapped around her own.

“Thanks for coming.”

“Thank you for existing,” Clarke yawned.

“Just a five minute nap.”

“Yeah, five minutes.”
Both were professionals at sleeping in uncomfortable chairs. Both were tired from travel and life. Both were not accustomed to having another person to spend the awkward time in a waiting room with, and yet when it happened, they were good at it.

“Five minutes,” Lexa hummed again after about fifteen, earning a nod that she felt in her cheek.

The truth of it was, she wanted it forever.

“Really?” Lexa asked as her face went blank, jaw slack, brow furrowing in disbelief. “Seriously?”

“Completely,” Abby smiled.

Clarke squeezed her girlfriend’s hand. Her parents hugged each other and her mother started to cry, but Lexa remained furtive and confused by the wonderful news about her brother.

“The treatment was successful, and after the last round, we’ve checked repeatedly, but can detect no more growths and no more instances of cancer in Aden,” Dr. Garcia smiled. “There is still much to do, and we still—”

He didn’t get to finish as Lexa’s mother hugged him so tight the words got strangled in his throat.

“I can’t believe it.” Lexa whispered as Clarke hugged her and kissed her temple. “We… he was dying. He was dead.”

“Now you get to be a big sister still,” Clarke explained. “This is good news, 3B.”

“I know. I just… I can’t believe it.”

The Christmas music still played despite it being the new year already. The decorations tried to peel themselves off the wall, and everyone in the office was overwhelmed for so many reasons. Clarke watched it all flash across the professor’s face, watched joy happen, watched relief, watched gratefulness and astonishment and happiness appear to new degrees.

“I hoped. I didn’t think I’d let myself. But I hoped this would happen,” she muttered.

“You. You did this,” Lexa’s said as her eyes widened and she looked at the girl beside her, the girl who changed bases and moved in with her just a few weeks ago. The girl who smelled like strawberries and left the lights on too much and drank milk from the container and crawled into her lap and read while she worked.

“I didn’t do anything except give a beautiful girl a free drink on a plane.”

“Fuck. I love you,” she finally said, shaking her head.

“You know he’s cancer free right? You can’t just choose these moments to blurt things anymore.”

“Shut up.” Lexa grinned and hugged Clarke harder than she thought possible. Picked her up from the chair and swung her around and kissed her until they were even more dizzy.

Abby watched it happen, watched her daughter be madly in love, and despite her worry, she felt a certain happiness in that her daughter was alive and getting everything she could have ever wished. Lexa kissed her again and Abby shook her head with a grin, remembering a handsome young man who once made her feel the same kind of joy her daughter was brimming with in the waiting room.
The plane loaded quickly as the two passengers took their seats. It only took another year before Clarke and Bellamy sold their book with enough to start another and potential deals on the way, leading to Clarke’s real goal of quitting the job that led to all of the wonderful things in life she presently had.

Every time she flew, she missed it slightly, though not as much as being in the same bed as her girlfriend every night, a novelty that never grew old, no matter what.

“Well, this is cute,” Clarke grinned as they took their seats. “3B is back at it again.”

“We can switch if you want,” Lexa offered nonchalantly.

“No way. I can’t take 3B from 3B, that’d be insane.”

“Whatever you say.”

XXXXXXX

Almost three years since she first saw a lonely girl twirling a ring in her finger in the middle of the night, and if Clarke had known what would come next, she wouldn’t have believed it. As the plane climbed and her girlfriend read her book, Clarke simply smiled and let herself be wrapped up in the goodness of the moment and nostalgia that came with it.

What she did not realize, what she did not notice because of the good mood and the impending trip to her mother’s for the holidays and the utter obliviousness of herself in general, was the antsy-ness of the girl beside her, or the way she couldn’t look at her, or the way her palms grew a little sweaty.

“Do you remember the night we met?” Lexa finally gathered up all the courage she had.

“I believe you had another girlfriend then. Does that make me a rebound?”

“I’ll never hear the end of that,” she chuckled and let her head lean back. “I remember when you sat down. I was very annoyed and wanted to be left alone in my misery. I think that summarizes my life fairly well. But a beautiful blonde had other plans apparently.”

“Apparently,” Clarke smiled and kissed her girlfriend before leaning her head on her shoulder and holding her arm.

Lexa closed her eyes and took a deep breath. Slowly, she fumbled with the ring in her pocket, the one that caused her to get pulled out of security because she refused to take it out of her pocket in front of Clarke, the one that started this entire moment.

“Still dragging that around on flights?” Clarke yawned. “Your dad must have a time limit on it. Every time you’re with someone for two weeks he gives it to you.”

“The night we met, you asked me what I would say to someone that I actually wanted to propose to, and I said I would tell them that I once sat on a plane in the middle of the night,” Lexa whispered. “Wondering if my heart was capable of ever feeling so full, or if I was going to feel this kind of feeling.”

“Lexa…”
“I’m different because of you, Clarke. You make me the most me, and I don’t ever want you to sit on a plane and wonder if love exists, or wonder how I feel about you. I want you to just… know.”

“Oh goodness,” Clarke swallowed and sat up.

All of the other lights in the cabin went out. She looked around and saw only the dark and Clarke covered her mouth.

“I got a new ring. But the sentiment is the same,” Lexa promised. “Will you marry me?”

“Of course!”

The ring on her finger, Clarke grabbed Lexa’s neck and tugged her, kissing her, hugging her tightly as the cabin erupted in applause. She blushed and whispered that she couldn’t believe it into Lexa’s neck.

“The best gamble I ever made,” she whispered as she smiled and kissed her once more.
“Why aren’t you in bed, pretty girl,” Clarke wondered, trotting into the kitchen where she found a nearly dozing Lexa on the stool, arm propping her face over a bowl of cereal. “I thought you might still be at work.”

“Got in about…” Lexa held up her wrist and squinted at it, pulling it forward and backwards to try to decipher it in her tired state. “Twenty minutes ago. Didn’t want to miss you.”

“I’m running late,” Clarke informed her, pouring her coffee into a travel mug and dancing around trying to get ready. “I am supposed to pick up Bellamy on our way in, and I can’t find-”

“Oh the coffee table,” Lexa watched the whirlwind between calm bites of her sugary cereal.

“Not those ones-” Clarke moved to the small table and began looking through he stacks of papers.

“On the coffee table,” Lexa reiterated, milk spilling from her mouth slightly. Clarke moved to the living room and found what she was looking for with a victorious aha.

“Thank you,” she grinned as Lexa looked back at her bowl.

It took only another moment for Clarke to have her bag ready. Despite the fact that it was still night outside, she knew traffic would get her and she’d be late.

But Lexa sitting at the table in half of her uniform was too much, especially after the fact that she’d been on night rotation for the past week.

“How was your night?” Clarke pressed herself against Lexa’s spine, wrapped her arms around her waist. Lexa nearly fell asleep sitting right there.

“A knifing, a car accident, a transfer, and at the end, another car accident,” Lexa sighed, feeling Clarke’s warmth all over, her chin on her shoulder. “Want some? You should eat.” She held her spoon up and let her girlfriend take a bite, right there in their kitchen, the day pressing and knowing full well she needed to run. She listened to Clarke crunch and took another bite herself.

“How bad were the accidents?” Clarke ventured. It was a touchy subject. She always felt bad asking, knowing that it wore on Lexa when she couldn’t save lives.

“Bad,” was all she got, so she squeezed harder.

“Okay,” she hummed, kissing Lexa’s shoulder through the shirt.

“I’m off the next few days.”

“I know,” Clarke nodded. She kissed Lexa’s neck, slid her hand up a little higher. “And you’re all mine this weekend.”
Lexa felt Clarke’s teeth on her ear, felt her hand on her breast, felt her hand on her thigh, felt her breath on her neck. She dropped her spoon and swallowed roughly, as tired as she was.

“But I really have to run,” her girlfriend pulled away as her eyes fluttered shut from how good it all felt. She growled and groaned and sighed. “I know, I know,” Clarke grinned, grabbing her bag, and then her cheek before kissing her quickly. “Shower and sleep, okay?”

“I’ll get you later, you know that right?” Lexa asked, swivelling and following her as she raced around the counter again, towards the door.

“I was counting on it,” Clarke grinned, giving her a wink before disappearing into her day.
Has anyone written a Clexa au where Clarke is an actual princess and Lexa is like the commander of her kingdom’s army??

The marble of the stairs was cold against her bare feet, but she had to pause and yank at the heels as she was hastily rushed from the gala. Asking questions and hiking up her dress, Clarke hopped down another few until she tossed the offending death-traps to her bodyguard as she followed her advisor to the Forge.

“How many?” the princess asked, pulling the earrings from her ears and handing them off as they reached the secure door.

“Nearly 10,000. Satellites report a movement to the north, much too close to the border,” the aide explained, scanning into the war room.

“And this isn’t part of drills or practice? We didn’t misplace a memo somewhere?”

“Feet on the ground tell stories of a growing movement to take back the northern cities.”

“Take back? That war ended eight hundred years ago,” Clarke sighed, exasperated and incredulous.

“At best it is just political posturing after the new elections.”

“That’s one hell of a posture. Sit down, everyone,” Clarke waved her hand and flipped through the file of images and numbers she was handed. The crowd around the large table buzzed and sat and murmured, all antsy and eager.

In the three years since she’d taken over, nothing like this had happened. There’d been minor whiffs of small things, things she could handle, but now… Clarke couldn’t help the small little thought nagging at her bare shoulders, sitting there like a doubtful gnat, wishing her parents had been there. Then she’d be at the party, unaware of this and decidedly drunk.

“Someone tell me what we know,” she looked up after a tense moment of quiet.

It was no unknown fact that many of her generals and military advisors thought her too young, thought her too inexperienced. She knew they were right and spent an hour a day studying to be ready for this, though now she realized it was woefully impossible for such a thing. But she could fake it. Hundreds of years her family faked it and somehow made it to this position.

She took it as a great responsibility. She put her heart on it. So much so that she was ironically nearly mocked in the papers for being single so long. The Next Virgin Queen. The Proper Princess. Too Busy for Love. But they had it wrong. Clarke had loves. Had a life. Her love of her responsibility trumped much else.

“Starting at 2315 tonight we received word of massive troop movement to the eastern and norther borders. Upon contact with the embassy, learned that it was called a preventative move for their own people,” the old, stuffy general relayed.
“This is a massive movement. How did they have so many troops ready?”

“Our intel is-”

“It is Remembrance Week in the capital,” a voice offered that Clarke couldn’t see.

“What’s that?”

“I said, it is Remembrance Week. That is the start of each years mandatory service.”

“Who is saying that?”

“Me,” a soldier stood towards the back end of the table. “Sorry. Commander Lexa Woods. I’m the new GNE liaison. And I was just saying-”

“You think this is just a couple of baby soldiers on their first weekend, getting lost in the forest?”

“Yes, I do.”

Clarke leaned forward and stared at her. She had so much adrenalin in her body she couldn’t see straight.

“Did we suddenly become Liechtenstein?”

“No ma’am.” The soldier grinned and Clarke bit her lip and looked away.

“General, any new images?”

“Not yet.”

“Any word from our patrols?”

“Not yet.”

“Can someone get Minister Baer on the phone?” the princess sighed, rolling her eyes and sitting back. “How sure are you, Commander?”

“Those woods are tricky in the daylight. The perfect storm of celebration, graduation, and the first weekend for mandatory service, my guess is a misunderstanding.”

“No one accidentally deploys almost 10,000 troops.”

“You’re right,” the soldier nodded. “Which is why it is probably closer to 1,000 and your numbers are inflated.”

“There’s no way-” the other general shook his head.

“The Minister is on the line,” an aide leaned forward and whispered to Clarke as the table continued to argue.

“So we think this is an act of war on our border from an ally we haven’t fought in centuries, right?” the princess said as she finally closed the folder in her lap. “Or we can believe that it is a simple lost troop of belligerent idiots.”

“There is intelligence that armouries are working at full speed the past few months-”

“Those were modified factories from the previous war, repurposed for civilian use,” the young
commander rolled her eyes and argued.

“So my intelligence community, my group of advisors, my experts in their field can’t agree on anything? You’re telling me we have a two billion dollar budget with a significant portion allotted to defence and prevention, and no one can tell me if we have a frat party on the back lawn or if we’re under attack with no provocation?”

“Ma’am, we are working within-”

“Maybe you don’t talk right now, General,” Clarke dismissed him as she leaned forward and picked up the phone. “Minister Baer, I have reports of troop movement on the border. Peter, tell me you’ve-” the princess paused and nodded. “Right, I assumed,” she hummed. “We can round them up and scare them a bit if you’d like,” they all watched her laugh. “We’ll see you next month. Give GiGi my love.”

The room was quiet as the phone was put down. The elderly men, the scurrying aides, the flipping televisions were stilled as the princess stood.

“The Minister was gracious enough to ask my forgiveness for breaking a six hundred year old alliance because of some teenagers who can’t read a god. damn. map,” Clarke threw the folder across the table. Her shoulders hunched as she held herself up. She was in a gown, she was dressed to the nines in a room full of soldiers and she needed to remind them of it. “At no point did anyone think this was ridiculous sounding? Did no one but Commander Woods, who apparently, on her first night, has more brains than my most seasoned generals, think that this sounded ridiculous?”

Clarke shook her head and ran her fingers along her brow as she stood straighter.

“Gentlemen, we will be doing many hours of reforming our techniques. I expect detailed reports of the many reasons we failed on many fundamental levels tonight and my perfectly good gown was wasted on you lot. Commander, if you would,” Clarke offered over her shoulder as she walked out to a chorus of wounded ‘yes ma’ams’.

In the hall, Clarke took her shoes back from her body guard. It was quiet and she let herself breathe, suddenly aware that she was faking it more than usual and it almost felt like she wasn’t.

“Yes, your Highness?” The soldier asked, standing stiffly in the hall.

“Stop that.”

“Stop what, your Majesty?”

“Lex.”

“Can’t do that, ma’am.”

“Did you think I wouldn’t notice?”

“Thought you might not remember me, your Highness.”

“You disappeared.”

“Dad got sick, and I had to move with my mom. By the time I got back, got the job, got deployed a few times and came home, you were crowned and such. Didn’t know the proper way to just appear in your life. Peasant and whatnot.”
“I was always crowned,” Clarke shook her head and stood straight, fixing the creases in her gown. She couldn’t look at her old friend without smiling. Her appearance was a surprise, and a very welcomed one at that.

Gone was the gawky kid who chased her through the halls, and gone were the dark freckles across her nose. Instead, a light dusting could be found in its place. Instead of ripe baby cheeks, now a slender, graceful profile. Clarke wondered what she must look like to her now.

“We were kids, and things were different when we weren’t.”

“Were you just going to show up and think I wouldn’t notice?”

“I hoped.” It was that stupid grin that Clarke remembered. That came before a dare, that came before a particular moment of victory. She knew it well, even after missing it for nearly seventeen years.

“I’m sorry about your dad. I tried to call, after. I just didn’t know what to say.”

“I’m sorry about yours. The King was the greatest man my father ever knew. He said it often. I didn’t know what to say. You kind of got swept up, and I didn’t want to interrupt.”

“We should catch up,” Clarke smiled, searching her old friend’s face. It’d been years and years and entire lives and centuries and thousands of miles that separated the two, knobby-kneed kids that ran through the gardens to now. But nearly every memory until the age of ten included this girl, and Clarke was somehow distracted by her eyes being exactly like the grass.

“We just did, ma’am.”

“Not a bad first day, Commander,” Clarke relented. “Preventing all out war.”

“Gotta start somewhere.”

“It’s good to see you.”

“The pleasure’s all mine, your Majesty.” Lexa bowed to hide her blush after spending so much time alone with her old friend.

“You know, I don’t usually have to put in so much effort to see someone,” Clarke muttered from the door of the small, crowded office. Though it was overflowing with papers and maps and a computer, it remained organized and very precise, which made the princess smile. “I do this thing where I summon people. And they can’t say no.”

“I never said no, your Highness. Just that I was preoccupied.”

“You’re avoiding me.”

“Yes ma’am,” Lexa grinned wryly, standing there as soon as she realized who was at her door. She wished she wore her uniform even though it was Sunday, even though she wasn’t officially there and simply catching up on a few things. She felt oddly out of place.

“You missed me.”

“I don’t really know you anymore, honestly.”

“Yeah, I suppose so.”

Clarke felt immediately awkward. She looked down at the book in her hands and straightened up
slightly. It’d been foolish and stupid and altogether dumb for her to think things were the same, to cling to the last inkling of childhood she could find.

“I’ll let you get back to work, Commander.”

“I actually don’t have much,” the soldier lied, noticing the switch, understanding that hint of forlorn loneliness all too well. Truthfully, she did still know the princess. She knew that she had the same eyes, the same smile, but both worn down with a new kind of worry and stress and odd despair.

“Did you want to go on a tour? Just across the grounds is the palace. You might remember that big monstrosity."

“Oh, did you remodel the ancient brick? Get rid of those pesky portraits and inlay work?”

“It’s basically the same,” Clarke relented. “Just wanted an excuse to invite you over.”

“Lead the way, your Highness.”

XXXXXXXXXXX

There was a new routine Clarke looked forward to most days that she could slip away, or most days when a certain grin appeared in a hall inconspicuous to most others. And she would excuse herself if she could, spurred on by Lexa nudging her head toward an exit where they would disappear for as long as possible.

It happened in the small moments. She felt like a kid again.

“Where is everyone?” Lexa asked, aware of the quiet in the private residence that, even though it was staffed by a smaller group, was particularly empty for the relatively early hour of evening.

“I can take care of myself for an evening,” Clarke admonished.

“Is that why you’re making a PB & J for dinner?”

“I’m making you one, too.”

“You can’t cook, can you?”

“I’m quite good, I just don’t feel like doing dishes.”

“You don’t have to, you know.”

“Come on.”

“We’re going to starve.”

“I’m feeding you now,” Clarke slid a plate across the small counter. Files were opened as Lexa attempted to explain some of the upcoming conversations during the Defence Summit next week. Clarke hated it.

“I never once in my life considered I’d be getting a sandwich made for me by the future leader of this country.”
“I never once in my life considered I’d actually have to be a leader.”

“Really?” Lexa took a bite as Clarke joined her.

“Yeah, I mean, my dad was young. I assumed my kid would take over. Skip right past me.”

“Hmmm.”

“Yeah.”

“Well, it’s a good thing I’m here then. Save you a bit of trouble.”

“Exactly.”

They were quiet as they ate, hunched over the files and maps and lists and notebooks. And the night went like it normally did, what with the fake work that turned into real joking, which turned into distracted perusing of alternatives, which ultimately lead to getting absolutely nothing done at all.

Lexa wanted to mind, that she had to work through lunch some days, that she brought files or work she actually didn’t have to do anyway sometimes, that it wasn’t much of a routine, but it was hers and she was getting afraid of doing it constantly.

Somehow the movie was halfway over, and somehow all notions of work were finally forfeited. Somehow Clarke found her shoulder against Lexa’s shoulder on the couch. Somehow she tuned out the world and took a deep breath.

The routine led to this, and she knew it. She couldn’t focus on the screen, she couldn’t focus on the words. All the world was, was a blur, was a blob, was a cacophonous mumble.

It started with a glance in her peripherals. That was all. That was what shot the Archduke. That was what kicked over the lantern. She wanted to say it wasn’t, but it was. It wasn’t when she met Lexa’s eyes, though that didn’t hurt.

There was a hesitation. Clarke stuttered, her movements stalling for just a movement, but somehow they resumed without a single thought in her head. The first touch was her fingertips on Lexa’s cheek. She wasn’t sure how it happened, but it did. She watched Lexa’s eyes darken, watched them move to her lips and Clarke did the same.

The feel of Lexa’s lips was wondrous, but not the thing Clarke felt most. She felt them, they knocked her out. But she liked the feeling of her hands better. Lips were liars. Lexa’s hand rooting in her shirt and pulling her chest closer was truth.

By the time Clarke’s hand reached Lexa’s neck, it was stretching forward, chasing her lips. Clarke obliged, turning slightly.

“Hi,” Lexa whispered slightly when they finally pulled away. Her cheeks were on fire, chest compensating for the years spent holding her breath.

“Hey,” Clarke hummed, closing her eyes and letting her forehead rest against Lexa’s as she chuckled.

“Wow.”

“Yeah.”

“Should we-”
“Stay?”

“Oh.”

“Yeah.”

“Yeah?”

In one movement, Clarke captured her lips again, devouring them quiet and whole. There were no more words.
Make Out

Chapter Summary

I need a fic where Clarke gets paint smudges on her nose and maybe her forehead from kissing our racoon of a warrior Commander every time. And then Raven, Octavia teasing her, or Grounder guards telling her “there’s a bit of a.. just a.. something…” all the time.

“I really have to go,” Clarke shook her head and pulled Lexa back again despite the words. Rough and needy she kept the commander’s lips on her own, pushing against her body so that she was nearly climbing atop her on the table in her room. “They’re expecting me,” she insisted again, eyes still knit shut as she attacked the commander again. She was rewarded with agreement that started as a yes and ended as a moan.

“Come back after,” Lexa tried, biting her lip, moving to her neck, licking and sucking at exposed skin greedily while her hand slid up Clarke’s thigh. The blonde moaned and her head fell as fingers toyed above clothes.

“I have to go,” she said again, swallowing roughly, thighs opening, a fluttering throb developing. Lexa moved the other side of her neck, sucking eagerly in time with her fingers. “No, no no,” Clarke somehow, through Herculean effort, detached herself an instant before she became a compliant mess. “I have to go.”

“Okay,” Lexa grinned. There was a mark forming on her neck that made her proud, there was a streak of black paint on her nose and cheek as well. “You have-”

“No!” Clarke smiled and backed away. “No more. I’ve missed every meeting in the past month. You’re a silver-tongued devil.”

“I agree, but you-” Lexa started to point but was silenced again.

“I’ll see you after. Prepare yourself,” Clarke wiggled her eyebrows.

She disappeared a second later, leaving Lexa watching the door, oddly aware of how mortified she would be the next time she saw a certain gaggle of Sky People.

Clarke found herself in too much of a rush to notice the look the guards gave her as she jogged towards the Ark. She didn’t stop to talk to anyone as she was needed at this council meeting and she couldn’t waste any longer.

“Sorry, sorry,” she said, slipping into her seat. “I’m so sorry. I was…” she wished she thought of something in the few minutes it took her to get to the room. “I was…” She heard Raven cough and saw her smile beside her. “We should just get started.”

Twelve pairs of eyes looked at her curiously. Clarke looked down at the table, her cheeks on fire.

“Hey,” Raven leaned closer. “You got a little something on your face.”

“Oh? I…” Clarke ran her fingers along her cheek and found them smeared black. “It's… soot. From
“It goes great with that hickey,” Raven focused on the bright purpling mark. It matched Clarke’s blush that now seemed to cover every inch of neck and face. The council was still watching as the two whispered and Clarke refused to look up.

“Did I get it?” she asked, rubbing her face, smearing it more.

“Not at all,” Raven failed at keeping her delight locked away. Clarke looked up to see whispering and chuckling from her peers.

“Alright, yes,” she stood. “We all know why I was late. Can we move on?”

“You heard the woman,” Raven agreed, voice full of mirth. “She has pressing matters to attend to and we’re interrupting.”

With a heavy sigh, Clarke rolled her eyes and shook her head before taking her seat and beginning the meeting, no longer trying to wipe away the black smears on her face. She sat through the entire meeting like that, mentally making lists of ways to pay back a certain commander for it.
In second year, Hogwarts celebrated the ten year anniversary of the Battle. As the sun rose on that late spring day, the feeling of something solemn and ominous rested heavy in the air. Dignitaries from all across the world arrived, stately and somber, to dedicate the memorial. Survivors and fighters appeared, adults that looked oddly shaken upon their return, while many declined the invitation, instead electing to spend the day as far from the school as possible.

To her credit, Clarke could understand that, the avoiding. She wanted nothing more than to be far away from the glitz and photos and eulogies and speeches that came with the dedication of the new memorial. But she was stuck, with nowhere else to go, and so she shuffled along with her friends as the entire dismal circus filled up the yard outside, that once was filled with rubble and effaced so thoroughly that they were still rebuilding sections of the ancient castle.

The new wall that stretched lazily down the side of the countryside, that stretched out into the expanse, that was filled with new protections, did not look any different than the old cobblestone wall that had been there since the fields were nothing more than grazing lands centuries and centuries before the hint of the first kind of magi. Upon closer inspection, however, the names of all those lost to the War were etched elegantly upon each different misshapen stone, composing one unified front one final time.

When it calmed down, when the speeches were finished up and the day had descended into somber celebrations, Clarke slipped away from her friends and made her way down the path beside the beautiful stretch of wall. She was in love with its simplicity, grateful that a giant monstrosity like the one downtown by the Ministry, didn’t mar the landscape of the bucolic school grounds.

The sun was out and sinking beneath fluffy clouds, and the world was as idyllic as she could ever remember seeing it, and for a moment, she fell just as much in love with the grounds again. Her first arrival at Hogwarts had been interrupted by this deep, heavy feeling in her stomach, that she was stepping into a history, that she’d been chasing a kind of memory she would never have. Instead, she fell in love with the school, and she fell in love with her name.

There were stories she heard, about her parents. She grew up her entire life hearing about their bravery and hard work. About her mother healing people on the front line, how she braved violence and persecution to marry her father fresh out of Hogwarts, how they fought against her own parents. How she was the first on the scene and ran into the fire and flames of the Battle of Hogwarts, even with a new toddler sleeping soundly at home. Her mother, the Slytherin healer who married a Gryffindor chaser. Her mother, the pureblood heir who threw it away for a small set of chambers at Hogwarts with her half-blood husband and saved twenty-nine people on that night, carrying some on her own back, setting bones, defending spells.

When Clarke saw her name there on the stone, looking out at the lake, immortalized and strong and beside her father’s, she tentatively held out a hand before retracting it and shoving it in her pockets. It was a lot to think about, to be born from their myth.

Awkwardly, Clarke looked around at the others milling about, finding names, remembering. She looked back at her father’s name, oddly afraid someone would tell her she didn’t belong, that it’d all been a joke.

There was not a single memory she had of either of them, but their names were there, deep in the rocks that were nestled together. She had pictures, a few gathering dust in her grandmother’s home. They were far and few between. The muggle prints remained still and unchanging. Her family said
she took after her father, but she thought there had to be parts that she didn’t know about that was her mother.

They were brave. They fought in many battles, her mother losing her fight at Hogwarts, her father falling three months earlier in Romania. Now, they were together, and it made Clarke feel a little better.

It took a few moments for her to move, for the thoughts to not attack her as much, to allow her muscles to contemplate moving once again. But she finally did, finally pushed her palm against her mother’s name, just the fingertips at first, followed by her whole hand. She watched as the other hand did the same with her father’s.

“I’d recognize her anywhere,” a voice murmured, though Clarke did not take much notice.

“It can’t be…”

“Mom,” an annoyed voice squeaked.

“Clarke?” a warm voice finally penetrated the thoughts of the second-year who was now woefully aware that she was touching the wall, and hopped back, eyes wide at herself. “I’m sorry. I didn’t mean to startle you.”

“Hm? No. I’m. Not. Yes. Sorry.” So many words attempted to come out of her mouth that not one complete sentence could be found in the bunch.

She found herself distracted by a couple in elegant robes. A bit of brown braids was by their sides, contemplating hiding behind her mother and ready to die of embarrassment. Clarke recognized her and them immediately. How could she not? Lexa Woods was the smartest witch of their year, possibly of the few years above them as well. Her name carried more than that. Her name had been worn by some of the most important spies and members of the Order, their aid coming to light as they were on trial, only to be recognized for their bravery. Their name was ancient and respected through the scandal of the Dark Period, despite defecting witches and wizards who gave in to the allure of certain pureblood promises.

“I can’t believe it,” the woman smiled and held her hands over her face. “You look just like your father.”

“You have your mother’s nose, which is a good thing, I promise,” the man mentioned with a wry grin.

Both stood and gawked at her as much as she gawked back at them. She had no idea what to say, and suddenly, neither did they. So many ghosts. Too many, in her own opinion.

“I’m sorry, we’re just… It is amazing to see you,” he grinned. “I’m Cadmus, and this is–”

“Lina Woods,” Clarke finished. “Thank you for your service,” she offered mechanically, shaking their hands. It was a nicety she offered so much it felt meaningless, ineffectual, and not nearly enough.

Regal and notably elegant, the couple was everything their pictures showed in the textbooks. Clarke tried not to, but her eyes wandered to the cane that the tall gentleman leaned against. The head of it depicted the three-headed dog that adorned the family coat of arms. Jet black hair slicked to the side, trimmed stubble covering his pointed chin, a scar ran across his nose and cheek, interrupting the beard. Despite the trappings of a villain, his green eyes danced and he smiled quite warmly.
“Thank you for your sacrifice,” Cadmus stopped her, held her hand a little longer. Still they stared at her as if she were growing an extra ear.

“I didn’t do anything… I was just a baby.”

“Your mother saved my life,” he explained. “She was hit while tending to me. All that I got was this bum leg, but she… She shielded me from a rather nasty spell.”

“I was in your mother’s class,” his wife put her hand on his shoulder to help steady him as the memories came back. “The only reason I passed charms.”

“You… you knew my parents?”

“I was the one who took you to your grandmother’s,” Lina explained. “Your mother didn’t want you to go to her family, and Jake was absolutely so in love with you, he made all kinds of arrangements.”

“You knew my parents?”

“Lexa tells me you are twice as good of a chaser as your father was.”

“I try.”

Her cheeks flushed as the news was processed, suddenly aware of this new tie to her family. So nonchalantly did they mention that they knew her parents, while Clarke died to sift their memories and greedily take whatever they got, to steal away the time with them that this couple had and she would never get.

“We didn’t mean to bombard you, sweetie,” Lina smiled softly, sadly. “I just couldn’t leave without paying my respects. Abby was…”

Slightly awkward and unsure of how to handle the most famous spies in the Wizarding world giving her compliments, Clarke gulped and met Lexa’s eyes finally. She never realized how much like her father she looked, while still retaining the innate nobility her mother owned.

Their interactions were few and far between, and in fact usually ended with the Slytherin calling the Gryffindor a meathead for liking sports over something productive, but there was never malice more than childhood laced with the words. Clarke remembered first year when Lexa was the only one brave enough to reach her hand out to the hippogriff. That was what she knew of her.

“Jake was a good man. Always smiling. We talked about running away to America, playing quidditch, forgetting this war that was brewing,” Cadmus remembered. “Abby was kind and smart. Told us we’d never make it.” He wrapped his arm around his wife’s shoulder as she rolled into him and sighed weakly.

“People only tell me war stories,” Clarke finally found a voice. “Thank you for something else.”

“I grew up next door to Abby,” Lina murmured. “She was always going to put people ahead of herself. She was born selfless and smart.”

“Anytime you want stories, please,” Cadmus offered. “It is the least we could do.”

“Thank you.”

With a hopeful smile, the father conjured a wreath of silver and yellow roses and placed it stop the wall where the two names were forever slumbering.
“If I find some pictures would it be alright if I sent them to you, Clarke?” Lina asked after a moment of quiet raged between them.

“It really would be amazing.”

“I’ll do my best,” she promised.

“It was an honor to meet you once again, Clarke,” Cadmus extended his hand, leaning heavily on the cane with the other. “A true honor. If you ever need anything, please, do not hesitate to remember the friends who are still alive because of your parents.”

“Yes, sir, thank you.”

It was hard, her eyes were glassy and she wanted to cry, but she couldn’t. Her whole body wanted to, and yet something mechanically stopped her from showing that, from feeling enough to do it. She looked at Lexa and remembered her setting her jaw and stepping up to the giant beast, and maybe this was her own. It didn’t help that Lexa’s mother swallowed her up in a hug and it was enough to make her heart hop into her throat. She hugged her back just as tight, though neither said anything else on the subject.

“Come on, Lexa, let’s give her some time.”

“Give me one second?” the second-year lingered, though Clarke was unsure why.

She waited until her parents were a few steps down the path, intercepted by some adoring fans and curious students. Clarke watched her kick the dirt before taking a deep breath and tilting her chin up.

“I’m sorry about them. I didn’t think you’d be out here. This is the only part of the wall they had to come to, and they wanted to come pay—”

“You never told me that your parents knew my parents.”

“I didn’t know how. Your name is said with reverence in my house. How do I say your mom died saving my father’s life?”

“I don’t know, but you do,” Clarke muttered, crossing her arms.

“I’m sorry.”

“They’re nice.”

“It’s a lot to live up to,” Lexa sighed and looked back at her parents.

“Yeah, I get it,” Clarke agreed, looking at the names once again.

“I’m not as good as my father, but,” she paused and moved her wand slightly. “If anyone owes a debt to you, it’s me.”

“You don’t.”

“I have a father because you don’t,” Lexa swallowed and concentrated before three stems started to form, followed by the bloom of blue daisies. She offered them to the girl with eyes that were still bluer, despite her best efforts.

“I know it doesn’t mean much, but I grew up idolizing your parents just as much as mine. Maybe more. I never take that sacrifice for granted, Clarke.”
Green eyes bore into hers and Clarke thought they might have been the kindest words ever spoken to her. She knew Lexa to be quiet and aloof, intense and prominent in her house, but this was different, this was honest and genuine and passionate.

“Thank you, Lexa. From a meathead to an egghead.”

“Mockery is not the product of a strong mind,” she snorted.

“There you go, calling me a dumb quidditch player again,” Clarke chuckled as she flustered the girl with forests for eyes.

“And think, if you put this much effort into your studies, you might come close to my scores.”

“We both know that’s not possible.”

Lexa smiled and nodded before turning slightly to meet her parents once again. Clarke smiled and looked back at the wreath and flowers before looking again at the ones in her hand.

The library was nearly empty so close to curfew, but still, the lingering third-years fought against time as best they could, soaking up the hours. One studied something she already mastered, while the other toiled with her help. They worked well together because it was easier now, when they had such an important first meeting to start.

There was an awkwardness at first. Clarke saw Lexa in the hall and waved across the lawn, earning only a duck of a head and averted eyes. Flustered, the Slytherin did not know how to handle it.

And then one afternoon, coming out of Herbology, Clarke caught a certain sight of chestnut hair sitting on a ledge, nose buried deep in a large book, big round glasses slipping down the bridge of her nose. And she told her that she appreciated her father’s letter and pictures. And she told her she missed her calling as a Ravenclaw, earning a begrudging smile as she pushed up the glasses for her. It was a short meeting, and Clarke was pulled away, but Lexa sat there and watched her leave as a slow kind of blush crept up her own cheeks.

And when Lexa saw Clarke again, she made conversation and walked her to class. Until some of those Gryffindors interrupted and mocked her, and she skulked away with a glare and rebuttal, catching Clarke’s apologetic glances.

And then Clarke walked up beside her a few days later and apologized emphatically, before pulling her into a conversation about her day, and Lexa was unsure how it happened so easily. At the entrance to the Slytherin Common Room, Clarke apologized again and promised it wouldn’t happen again, despite Lexa’s assurance that it would. Not without her standing up for her, Clarke promised. And when Lexa snarled slightly and said she could take care of herself, Clarke just laughed, unperturbed by the display.

There were a few notes exchanged during the summer. More than a few, if they were being honest. Busy as she was in her own world, Clarke waited for Lexa’s hawk to tap at her window, bringing notes about all of the places she dreamt of traveling and Lexa was seeing. From far away lands, she would watch the goshawk glide through the air, and tired as he was, she would take as long as she could to respond to give him a break. It was never more than a day.
It’d been tentative, the friendship after that. It was eased with the fact that Clarke needed tutoring, or at least said she did, and Lexa didn’t question it too much. Any reason to be of use, to pay back a debt she thought she owed, to spend time with those eyes and that smile.

“What are you doing for Christmas break?” Lexa interrupted the self-imposed quiet as their quills scratched notes on the parchment for the history midterm awaiting them in the morning.

“The whole family gets together at my uncle’s house, and then we have dinner, play games, all of that,” Clarke muttered, squinting at Lexa’s notes and making a face as she scratched out something on her own.

“For Christmas Eve, right?”

“Yes.”

“Do you think you’d want to come over sometime?”

The scratching of the quill stopped, though Clarke didn’t raise her head. Instead, she just stared at the words and tried to think about anything she’d just been thinking. Everything was suddenly very loud in her brain. She felt her cheeks blush slightly.

“I mean,” Lexa cleared her throat and adjusted slightly. “My parents told me to ask you over sometime. If you wanted.”

“Did they?”

“I might have told them I already invited you,” Lexa shrugged and gave her partner that mischievous kind of grin. “They liked having you over during the summer.”

Most people didn’t get that grin. Most people didn’t get the Lexa that was dry and funny and confused, and Clarke was learning these things.

“Your dad doesn’t have anymore tickets does he?”

“Is this the only way you’ll come visit?”

“The company is rotten,” Clarke smiled at her as well before ducking her head and blushing again. She hated the little flutter her lungs gave when Lexa gave her a smile like that.

“It’s Holyhead and Montrose.”

“You should have opened with that, Woods,” the chaser leaned back in her chair and nodded.

“Come on, Clarke. We’re heading back to the common room,” Bellamy interrupted. Octavia and Lincoln stood beside him.

Without a thought, she gathered her things to join her friends, while Lexa remained stoic and impassable, chin stiffening against the additions. Even though her parents were hailed as heroes, much of her name remained dark and tied to less than favorable wizards. Many of her classmates lost family members to someone in the Woods’ clan. She wore that often.

“You can just say you wanted me to come, you know,” Clarke paused as she shouldered her bag.

“You don’t have to say your parents invited me. We’re friends.”

“I know… I just. They asked, and– we’re friends?”
“I’d love to come visit. If you’ll agree to come spend some time in Muggle Dublin.”

“I’m not good at that.”

“I know. It’s fun to watch.”

“Fine,” Lexa relented, earning a smile.

“We’re going to be late!” Octavia called as Clarke lingered.

“I better go. Thanks for the help.”

“Anytime,” Lexa breathed, watching her disappear with her friends.

She earned a look over her shoulder, and that was all. Like a sad little puppy, eager for even that much attention, she ate it up and resigned herself to that kind of look forever as being enough motivation to be Clarke’s friend.

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“School just started,” Clarke sighed, holding a cold wet bit of her shirt to Lexa’s knuckles. “How in the world did you get into a fight?”

“Ouch,” the patient hissed.

Sitting out by the lake, they were alone as could be, not a sound, the school lost somewhere behind them. The dark clouds of an impending storm slunk over the mountains with a small complaint of thunder deep in its belly.

“Baby,” the fourth-year Gryffindor teased, dipping the scarf back into the chilled water and placing it once again on the swollen knuckles.

The bruising seemed so out of character for the pristinely kept youngest member of the Woods family. Normally so precise and hardly susceptible to an outburst, Clarke was amazed to find her pacing and flexing her hand on her way back from quidditch practice, but when she did, she shooed off her friends and tried to calm down the beast she encountered.

So rare was the moment, that even Lexa took a second to find herself before the air about her changed, and she was in control once again, her emotions firmly in their proper places and augmented for the situation.

“It’s nothing,” she winced again.

“This is about four or five punches worth of nothing,” Clarke surmised, surveying the damage. “Come on, Lex. You can tell me.”

“It was nothing.”

“I thought we were friends.”

“We are. Just. I don’t want to talk about it.”
“Fine. But you should get it looked at.”

“It’s fine.”

It only took until dinner for Clarke to figure out where she imagined Lexa’s fist went to become so discolored. Sitting at the other end of the Slytherin table, the team beater, Quint nursed a rather disgusting and poorly healed black eye and bruised nose, with what looked like a split lip for good measure. Sulking into his plate, he didn’t bother eating.

From her seat across the Great Hall, Clarke watched Lexa listen to her friends, ignoring the inevitable pain in her hand while they all spoke to each other and cast glances at the terrible sixth-year bully, rallying behind their chose leader.

It took some maneuvering, but Clarke made her way to follow Lexa as she stood when she finished eating. Excusing herself without touching her food, she promised to catch up with her housemates as soon as she could, and chased after Lexa as best she could, weaving through the halls and students.

“What did he say?” Clarke called as Lexa flexed her hand and made her way to her favorite room in the entire castle, the library.

The sound of the words make Lexa falter in her steps. She shouldered her bag protectively.

“What? Who?”

“Quint.”

Lexa froze and turned slowly until she met the Gryffindor with eyes that were distracting at best, and something to obsess over at worst. She was struck with the fork in the road she now faced, to lie or to confess. But with eyes like that it wasn’t much of a choice.

Hands on her hips, Clarke waited impatiently for an answer.

“I took care of it, as is our way.”

“What do you mean?”

Scornfully, Lexa lifted her chin proudly and did her best to fight against the words that ran steadily up her throat and threw themselves against her teeth. Her nostrils flared and she crossed her arms, as if that would help.

And then Clarke cocked her eyebrow warning her of something, though neither knew what or how or why that worked.

“I don’t know what decade he thinks it is, but if he thinks he can run his mouth—” she ranted, suddenly mad at herself for having to explain why she did what she did. She did not explain herself. She did not like that she felt that she had to.

“Lex.”

“I didn’t want to, but I couldn’t take hearing it. And then he said, he said that I– It was stupid, and I–”

“Lex.”

“What was I supposed to do?” Lexa finally stopped rambling and avoiding Clarke’s eyes. “He called you… that word. That terrible word, and then he said I was a traitor for… he said I was a shame to
the community of purebloods. For…” she swallowed and closed her eyes. “Looking at a mudblood like how I look at you.”

Clarke watched Lexa’s shoulders expand with the big breath she held in her lungs against her own nerves. It was a lot of information encoded in the ramble. A handful of first years passed them as they stood to the side of the hall, but neither focused much on anything else.

The word slapped Clarke roughly, though she didn’t want it to have that power. Then the rest of the words caught up to her ears.

“How do you look at me?” she asked weakly. Lexa ran her hand up her neck and blushed in the dim candle light.

“Come on, Clarke,” she sighed.

She knew the truth, but she’d been afraid to allow herself to see it. To see it would change so much, and yet, she couldn’t do it any longer.

Lexa watched all of it pass across Clarke’s face. The anger, the fear, the confusion, the wrath, the donning of the truth, the warmth at the suggestion, the blush and the way her eyes searched her own face. Anxiously she shuffled and clenched her fist in her pocket because the pain was grounding.

It happened slowly, unlike what she always imagined happened in the movies. But Lexa watched Clarke lean forward, causing her to lean back, away from the inevitable onslaught of curses for behaving so recklessly.

“Just…” Clarke furrowed and tugged Lexa’s robes slightly. “Stand still.”

A second later, her lips were on Lexa’s, and Lexa was stuck standing stark still and stunned. Eyes wide and muscles tense, she felt her body relax slightly after a few seconds. As far as kisses were concerned, it was one hell of a doozy. She leaned forward and kissed her back as her eyes closed and she let herself enjoy it.

She felt Clarke’s fists knit into her robes and she wanted to move her hand to touch her, to push the hair from her forehead like she’d dreamt of doing a thousand times, but couldn’t, because it was bruised and currently stuck in her pocket. Instead, she let her books drop with the other and she touched Clarke’s hip. Giddy at the boldness.

It took three faux coughs for them to recognize someone else was standing just outside of their bubble.

“Ms. Woods, Ms. Griffin,” the Headmistress cleared her throat once more and stood, amused at the display so blatant and in the open. “As happy as I am to see such house camaraderie, I must ask that you refrain from such displays in front of the impressionable younger students. This is a school, after all, and not a brothel.”

“Yes ma’am,” Lexa pulled back and blushed furiously.

“Apologies,” Clarke smiled, proud of herself and brazen about it, rakish to the very end.

For the life of her, the Headmistress could not imagine a more farfetched pair, until she thought of Abigail Warburton and Jake Griffin, and chuckled to herself.
The summer before fifth year was good to Clarke, Lexa learned right before school started back up. Owls flew back and forth multiple times per day until it got to be too much, and she was invited to spend time at her home. For too long, she put off spending time in muggle cities. Something about not knowing everything was unnerving.

But then she saw Clarke waiting at the station, filled out and beautiful, and doing all kinds of things to her heart, and she forgot all else. The only fear that existed was her fear of never seeing her again. That and the fear of telling her parents that she was never coming back, and she would set up shop wherever a girl that looked like that, was.

“Long time no see, Woods,” Clarke smiled, wrapping her arms around the new Slytherin prefect.

Like chocolate left in the heat, Lexa melted into her arms and hugged her back just as tight, letting it linger longer than friendly. It was sunshine and saltwater in her hair, and she inhaled it greedily, deeper than she thought her lungs would allow.

“You look amazing,” Lexa finally sighed as Clarke pulled away.

Still surprised by the act, and not expecting it despite how much she hoped, the Gryffindor chaser leaned forward and kissed her chastely, making sure to hold her hand as well. They were friends, Lexa thought, and hoped. And now they were something in between, but she didn’t care at all because it meant kisses from lips like those. Shocked and delighted, all she could do was follow limply.

The summer had been kind to Lexa, Clarke realized, earning a blush and flustering her completely with the kiss. Skin tan and little freckles appearing across her nose after a trip to Egypt with her parents to see relatives and conduct some business, her face thinned, her eyes were brighter, her legs sprouted what felt like two feet. She grew into her father’s angles and her mother’s looks. Gone were the glasses, though Clarke missed them terribly, and hoped they would make another appearance, while unobstructed green eyes came through clearer and the messy braids of her hair done a little tighter and better.

“Not so bad yourself. Are you ready?”

“Very. Nervous, but ready.”

“My Nan doesn’t bite.”

“That’s something, I suppose,” Lexa nodded, preparing herself.

Still, Clarke held her hand as they moved through the terminal. Lexa held on just as tight until they made it outside. Summer hung around and the smell of a passing storm wrangled through the street as the sun appeared behind the drifting clouds.

It wasn’t louder or much warmer, except that it was different than Montrose. Lexa was accustomed to the Wizardly type of activity, and she was intimately aware of how it was still hubbub, but not the same type of hubbub. Eyes wide, she took it all in eagerly.

“So how did the trip go?” Clarke ventured, hoping to put her guest at ease as they dodged busy passersby in the street.
“Really well. We got another breeding female for our griffins, and got two new hippogriffs. There’s an order for well-trained griffins coming from Gringotts,” Lexa rattled off. “And Mum convinced Dad to get a pair of mating Augureys. They’re young, but so beautiful.”

“I can’t believe you run a farm of magical creatures.”

“I don’t think Dad likes specializing in the guard type animals. He’s moving away from bigger mammals. He’s more about the harvesting. The hippogriffs were nice. They’re yearlings.”

“You’ll have to show me,” Clarke smiled.

Leya looked down at their hands and smiled, satisfied with herself.

“You will have to stop by before school.”

“I mostly want to meet the famed three-headed dogs.”

“Aries is getting up there in age,” Lexa shrugged as they paused on the street. Cars zoomed past without noticing at all, the dumbfounded look on her face. “Dottie is expecting sometime around spring.”

“I like when you talk shop. You’re so passionate about it. Normally I can’t get you to talk, and with this, you can’t stop.”

“Sorry. Was I being annoying?”

“No,” Clarke chuckled. “I like it. Maybe simplify it a bit for my grandma. She tries, but your story about baby dragons might kill her.”

The walk through the city was wonderful. Clarke took her time introducing Lexa to her world, buying her coffee and sweets before snagging street food and eating it in the park where they watched people live their lives. Lexa inundated her with questions, the natural bookish curiosity getting the best of her despite her own nerves. Deep down, Clarke was certain there’d been a mistake in her sorting. But then she would think about Lexa in her group of friends, and remember how innate her leadership and cunning ran. She would keep this part to herself.

She had plans to take her to a soccer game, to shower her some sport and see if that was more appealing to her. She had plans to take her to the museum where the paintings didn’t move. She had plans for swimming and bands playing and dinner and friends, and she had a lot to get done in just three days of visiting.

But something about sitting beside this amazed girl on the bench in the park, laughing and arguing, was honestly the only way she ever wanted to spend her time.

Lexa put her arm over Clarke’s shoulder as they made their way through her neighborhood finally with the promise of a fresh cooked dinner waiting.

“It’s so nice to finally meet you, Lexa,” Clarke’s grandmother smiled and hugged her tightly as they entered the cute little house that sat back from the white picket gate.

A little garden rested out front, full of flowers blooming in the summer evening, and Lexa was infatuated with how cozy and much like Clarke it felt. It was a long day for her, traveling and exploring, and yet there awoke a new set of nerves when they arrived.

“Thank you for having me, Ms. Griffin,” she offered with a polite nod.
“Please, come get settled. I made some lemonade,” the woman tottered through the house, pulling Lexa with her. The smells filled the place despite the open windows and fans. “Clarke, honey, could you get the glasses from the top shelf please? I can’t reach a thing. I need you to do one of those things to make my house shrink with me,” she chuckled to herself.

“Your home is lovely,” Lexa offered as she took a seat and dug through her bag. Her parents may have rejected their society, but something about the genetic composition within them did not dismiss the breeding that they then naturally imparted upon their daughter.

“She’s sweet.”

“I told you,” Clarke shook her head behind her grandmother’s back.

Strong and sturdy, with thick shoulders and glasses that hung from her neck, the dirty blonde of her hair had grown dark grey, but Lexa could see an obscene amount of life in her eyes, almost the same kind of blue that Clarke had, though a little darker. Evie Griffin was what Lexa would have imagined a grandmother should have been like, being as her two examples were far from welcoming or kind or sweet or made lemonade, but rather played cards and word dresses with stiff collars, an apt metaphor for their personalities, she always reckoned.

“Clarke tells me you were traveling with your family?” the grandmother asked, moving through the kitchen as Clarke handed Lexa a glass. “Egypt it was?”

“Yes ma’am. We are in the… livestock business?” Lexa chanced a look to see if that was alright with Clarke who chuckled and nodded.

“Lexa’s family has been breeding animals for centuries,” Clarke helped. “They train and sell different species.”

“My parents sent along this, to thank you for having me,” the guest offered, pulling out a tin from her bag. “It’s black tea from Egypt. Clarke said you were a fan of good tea. This is one of our favorites. We order it by the barrel.”

“Now this is lovely,” Evie smiled, sitting herself at the head of the table to peruse, lifting her glasses to peer at the script. She opened it and smelled, closing her eyes as she enjoyed it. “Spectacular.”

Clarke beamed at Lexa, balancing her chin in her palm as she stared at the charming girl who was absolutely perfect. She felt herself fall right there, and for once didn’t hold back as she’d done for the past few years. The dam finally broke.

“There’s also this,” Lexa cleared her throat. “Clarke told you that my parents knew your son.” An envelope appeared, and with shaky hands, the grandmother opened it. “My mother found this a few weeks ago when she was cleaning our basement, or trying to, at least. There is a lot of artifacts from the Order… from the… from school,” Lexa tried, furrowing. “We’re not supposed to share these, but she hates rules, and actively tries to disobey them.”

“Oh my word,” she whispered, hand over her mouth. Slowly, she tilted it to share with her granddaughter. Clarke grinned at the picture she’d already seen framed in Lexa’s father’s study.

Four friends held up their mugs of ale and smiled wide and proud, so young and so full of life. Her father winked at the camera on a loop.

For a long while, the grandmother stared at the picture, and anxiously, Lexa watched and waited. It took a bit, but she held it to her heart as she stood before leaning over and taking Lexa’s cheek in her
hands, she kissed the top of her head.

“Thank you, so much.”

“I’m just the messenger,” Lexa shrugged it off with a blush and cough that cleared her throat.

When the grandmother turned around to put the image on the fridge, Clarke gave her a smile that didn’t help, though she knew it was meant to be supportive. It just flustered her more. For the first time in her life, Lexa was certain this was how she died. Spontaneously combusting from feelings right there at a kitchen table before dinner.

“There is a lot I did not know about my son’s life, but a mother can always understand that he was happy, and that is all I needed.”

“If we find more, I’ll have my mother owl– send them.”

“I know how the owl works,” Evie laughed finally, hoping to shed some of the forlornness that seeped into her words. She wiped a cheek and smiled back at the table. “Why you haven’t figured out telephones is beyond me.”

“That’s the thing with the pictures? The box that makes noises?” Lexa furrowed.

“Isn’t she cute?” Clarke laughed with her grandmother at the description.

“That too though.”

Mildly embarrassed though eager to have that on her instead of the sadness of an old woman, Lexa blushed and let them ask her more muggle questions, just to hear her answers. She was a specimen for the grandmother, and that was fine by her because she wanted to make a good impression, and so far she thought she was riding a thin line.

“That was spectacular,” Lexa raved, finishing her second plate. “I’ll have to tell our house elv– Ouch!” she groaned as a foot met her shin. Clarke gave her a look. “I’ll have to tell our chef about it.”

“You don’t spend much time around us, huh?” the grandmother grinned, sipping her wine.

“That obvious?”

“You’re going to have a black and blue shin with how many times Clarke has kicked you.”

“I’m a slow learner.”

“That’s not what I hear.”

There it was. The look. The stare that betrayed the fact that Clarke’s grandmother had fought many of her own battles, as well as losing a son. Mother to six strapping boys, she lost her husband to disease, and worked when bombs were being dropped on the city. She was not just a cuddly grandmother with fresh lemonade, and Lexa knew it because of the way Clarke spoke with reverence and awe about her. Her parents were war heroes, but Clarke grew up with a living legend, and Lexa could smell it a mile away.

“Lexa is top of our class,” Clarke interjected. “Tutors this old meathead as best she can.”

“From what I understand, my granddaughter and my son are good athletes in a sport that is, and let me get this as close to accurate as I can, Clarke,” she held her hand up to stop interruption. “Soccer
and baseball and basketball, but flying through the air on brooms."

“I don’t know those sports, but I suspect that’s close,” Lexa nodded.

“And you have professional teams, same as us for soccer.”

“Yes ma’am.”

“And Clarke could be a professional?”

“It’s too early to think of that, Nan,” Clarke shook her head. “I just want to pass my classes at this point.”

“Without a doubt,” Lexa nodded. “My father said your son was the greatest chaser he’d ever seen. And my father adores the sport. And then he saw Clarke play, and he said she is ten times better. She has more points scored in one game than anyone in school history. And she’ll end her career with the most points more than likely,” she explained passionately.

Clarke was unsure why she never thought Lexa would follow her stats, or know anything about her sport considering the distinct lack of interest she expressed when her father brought it up, but then again, Lexa knew all and was too smart for her own good. It still made Clarke blush and smile so hard her cheeks might break.

“I wish I could see you play,” the grandmother smiled fondly at her granddaughter.

“Maybe one day,” Clarke offered. “You’d probably never let me play again when you saw how dangerous it is.”

“That’s true,” she chuckled. “Now do you play, Lexa?”

“No ma’am, not to my father’s displeasure. Now he hounds Clarke though, so I’m not that bothered anymore.”

“Your family is… what was it, Clarke? Pureblood?”

“Yes ma’am.”

“But your parents were spies that helped the other side?”

“Something like that.”

“An entire war fought, with hundreds of casualties, and no one here knows any different,” the grandmother shook her head.

Clarke shared a look with Lexa across the table, unsure of what to do. The mingling of the two worlds was harder than she imagined.

“Lexa’s family is the only family that breeds unicorns,” Clarke blurted.

“Goodness gracious,” she shook her head, staring wide-eyed at Lexa. “And she doesn’t even know how to call collect.”

When the evening finally wound down, Clarke helped Lexa excuse themselves from the grandmother who hugged them both before ushering them to bed. Lexa accepted a hug and a pat on her cheek and she assumed that was a good sign.
Unfailingly, she followed Clarke upstairs, shouldering her bag until she was directed into a guest room.

“She liked you a lot.”

“Unicorns usually help with that,” Lexa shrugged, dropping her bag on the bed.

“Thank you for the picture. And the things you said. You’re not half bad, you know that, Woods?”

As soon as she turned, arms moved to wrap around her shoulders, bracing themselves around her neck. Clarke’s body, her new, beautifully grown into and wonderfully perfect body, was pushed closer against Lexa, and on accident her hands moved to hips, the new hips, the pronounced hips that went with that figure that would now distract her in excruciating ways the entire year.

“It’s easy when you tell the truth,” she smiled slightly and stared at those eyes. For an instant, she let her eyes dart to lips and back.

“I’m glad you came. This is going to be fun.”

“Lots of hands on experience for advanced Muggle Sciences this year.”

“Just wait until I show you the grocery store.”

“I like your grandmother. I never had one. Yours seems good.”

She would have said more, but fingertips moved along the back of her neck in a soothing kind of way that sent chills down her spine.

“I like you,” Clarke confessed.

“Yeah?” Lexa asked dumbly.

“Yeah,” she nodded, kissing her slowly, holding her in place as best she could. It was deliberate and kind and excruciating, but Lexa kissed her back with no fear of a Headmistresses interrupting.

The thought made Lexa remember the grandmother though, which was not conducive to more kissing.

“It’s going to be one hell of a year,” Lexa realized out loud, earning a laugh.

Clarke let her hands slide down her chest where her palms rested on her collarbones. The warmth radiated from there and Lexa felt suddenly bigger, more powerful.

“I’m ready if you are.”

“Definitely.”

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The arrival of winter led to an undercurrent of excitement on the campus. The crisp hung in the air and crinkled up leaves that littered the grounds, and the clouds in the sky were long stretches of undistinguishable grey days.
It was Lexa’s favorite time of year, the few weeks where all of the leaves were gone, and the world was bursting with orange and brown and gold and reds, when the sun was hidden and the rain lingered, where days stretched and the hint of snow could be found in the frozen morning grass, but nothing more, just an abstract concept that could come any second. She lived for the first snow of winter.

“I’m sorry I’m late,” Lexa let out a breath as she made it to the spot– their spot– by the big, ancient elm halfway between the school and the pitch.

“And how is the newest Prefect enjoying her responsibilities?” Clarke asked, squinting up at the figure who stood above her, letting the charcoal pencil rest against the paper.

“Three second years decided to conduct some extracurricular studies in the bathrooms by the headmistress’ office,” she sighed, dropping her bag and taking a seat. “Turned it into a rainforest.”

“If only you’d followed my lead and just maintained average grades and social standing, then you wouldn’t have to worry about that.”

“You’re funny,” she rolled her eyes. “Can I see?”

“It’s just a sketch, a start,” Clarke shrugged, quickly sobered by the idea of someone see her little hobby.

Hands covered in charcoal, she tried to shut the book with the page tucked inside, but failed as Lexa sat beside her and pulled it out. It was simple and not specific, but the image of a thunderbird from Lexa’s letters stuck out in her head, and Clarke let her hands go on their own to follow her daydream while she waited. Now she was nervous.

As much as she didn’t want to, inevitably it was necessary, and she looked over at Lexa and watched her look at the page before deciding it was too much and worrying herself with the smudges on her hands.

“This is really good. I didn’t know you could do this,” Lexa whispered, not tearing her eyes away from the sketch.

“Just a little doodle.”

“Can I have it?”

“What?”

“I like it. I want to keep it,” she murmured genuinely, surprising the girl beside her at the base of the tree. “If you don’t want it.”

“You can have it,” Clarke offered quickly.

Proud of herself and amazed at the image, Lexa stared at it a little longer before nodding contentedly. That was all it took. Clarke leaned over and kissed her cheek.

“What was that for?” Lexa grinned, slowly forming and tugging at her lips in the amazed kind of way.

“Just being you.”

“Well, I didn’t think it had those kind of perks, but I’ll take it.”
The blush from the kiss ran up to her ears and hung around, burning the tips of it violently. It took Lexa a second to catch up to her swirling thoughts. The cold didn’t help, that was what she decided, hoping to hide it away from her own thoughts.

“Nan wanted to know if you were going to stop by for winter break?” Clarke ventured after clearing her throat.

Lexa’s shoulder leaned against her own as they sat comfortably beneath the tree despite the cold. They couldn’t go anywhere else, couldn’t risk anyone seeing, because for some reason they felt as if they were betraying someone, no matter how they rolled it around in their heads. It was a truce, of sorts, where neither pushed the other, neither brought up anyone else. They just stole moments.

“I think I could be persuaded. My father has meetings in London. New regulations they’re trying to pass.”

“We’re having a party.”

“And you want me to come?”

“I have a sweater picked out.”

“If I come I will bring my own clothes,” Lexa snorted.

“I doubt you have anything festive.”

“Festive?”

“Very festive,” Clarke promised, almost evilly in Lexa’s opinion. “Red and green, maybe a snowman or reindeer on it. Own anything like that?” The disgust on her face was enough of an answer, making Clarke laugh a little bit more. “See?”

“I don’t think I can make it.”

“She’s going to make those cookies you like.” Clarke watched her resolve crumble, her sweet tooth coming through violently. “You’re such an easy mark.”

“I am not,” Lexa argued, grumping slightly.

She earned another kiss and Clarke’s arms around her ribs, her chin on her shoulder. There beneath the tree, Lexa melted and she sighed because she knew she was going to give in to whatever the chaser wanted. This part of the making her earn it was nice though.

“It’s cold out here,” the Prefect mumbled.

“Should we take it inside? Maybe hang out in your Common Room?” Clarke chuckled.

“Yeah, we should,” Lexa nodded, looking down at the blonde on her shoulder. It was quieter than she would have liked, but she enjoyed getting kissed, and if she were being honest, she wanted to kiss more and harder and somewhere where her hands weren’t in gloves.

“I like us, now. It’s going to get complicated…”

“Times have changed. It’s not going to be a problem.”

“You punched someone for calling me names,” Clarke reminded her. “And your… I love your parents… but our names… Our last names and the myths and stories around them…”
“Can’t have a Griffin, the couple that could, the couple that stood tall and fought and saved people and loved despite it costing their lives, seen anywhere with a murderous, evil Woods, huh?”

“That’s not what I think. Just… we can make it until we’re out of here. Out in the world—”

“Not surrounded by kids my family orphaned or tortured part of their’s,” Lexa nodded and swallowed roughly.

“That’s not you.”

“I know.”

“I like you. I think I’ve made it pretty clear,” Clarke let her arms drop slightly. “I got you a Christmas sweater.”

“Sometimes I just think… what does any of it matter? Why can’t I sit beside you at dinner. Octavia and Lincoln are in different houses.”

“You know why.”

“Yeah,” Lexa agreed.

This time she kissed Clarke’s forehead and watched the lake out in the distance. The sun was hiding behind the clouds, hiding again behind the horizon.

They made it back to campus, and Clarke gave Lexa a smile and promised to see her in the library before they went their own ways. The words weighed heavy on Clarke’s mind and heart though when she walked back to her friends. Quietly, she rejoined her group and couldn’t find much in her to join them on whatever topic they had. The girl with green eyes and precise handwriting distracted her.

“They’re traitors and cheats,” Bellamy complained, slamming his book down at the table, making Clarke jump as she tried to not so covertly sneak glances at a certain Slytherin who avoided her like the plague.

“What?”

“Quint, that elitist piece of shit. The whole fucking lot of them.”

“What are you on about?” Clarke groaned.

“Did you hear about the healer Jackson’s father killed last week?”

“Smeared ‘mudblood’ on the walls of his cell.”

“That’s just gossip,” Clarke chided the group as they complained together.

“And then their kids take over, and the money stays in the same families.”

“I can see them poisoning Octavia—”

“They are traitors who should have never been allowed—”

The conversation was one she’d heard before, one she had quietly inhaled and hated and ignored, until it was just too much. With the words ringing in her ears, Clarke stood up, unsure as to why her body moved before her thoughts and caught up to it.
The eyes of her friends snapped at her and she furrowed at what was happening. Still and stuck, she waited for something else to happen. When nothing did, she grabbed her bag and walked away from the questions and confusion of her friends.

“Hey,” Clarke blurted, standing behind Lexa and feeling many eyes on her as she waited and adjusted her bag on her shoulder nervously.

“You lost?” Murphy asked, cold and calculated and from a tilted, superior chin. He caught Lexa’s glare and sat up a bit straighter, the smirk gone without a word.

“Can I talk to you?” she asked the unofficial leader.

There was almost a debate, but the mouths that opened to protest were silenced by Lexa’s look and a wave of her hand. A second later, and another hard look, the dissolved into the background, sliding down to new seats or leaving altogether with a few words muttered under their breaths about the Gryffindor.

“You were right,” Clarke began, wringing her fingers and looking around before focusing on Lexa. “What does it matter?”

“What do you…?”

“Is this seat taken?”

From across the hall, Bellamy and Wells watched Clarke take a seat beside their greatest enemy. They grumbled with the rest of their group while a gaggle of Slytherins watched from on end of the table at the spectacle in the middle.

With a smile, Lexa passed a plate and a bowl of food while Clarke let her bag fall to the ground. It was a new set of nerves between them, crackling in the air, but both ignored and smiled too much at each other, breathing a little easier and a little more anxiously.

On the way back to their dorms, Lexa slipped her hand into Clarke’s and pulled her outside, breathing deep. The first snow came down in fat flakes, and she kissed her right there.

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Spring came with rain and fog and a whole troop of spirit and stretching legs after the long winter. There were whispers and rumors and definitely a lot of gossip about the two daughters of famous veterans.

Seen walking through the snow along the lake, having breakfast with each other at each other’s tables, kissing too much in a dark hall when they thought no one was looking, studying in the library, holding hands through weekend getaways into town. It was a surprise and a spectacle to all, though they did their best to not pay attention to it.

Anya watched Lexa change slightly. She saw a few sketches appear beside her bed, taped above the pillows. And she watched her younger cousin seem actually happy, which was almost new, because although she was happy, it always seemed tempered. No longer was there a dulling of it.

Spring brought a relatively new addition of weight to the relationship, as the final game of the year
approached between the two houses at the top of the rankings for the House Cup. The entire week leading up to it added a fervor to the student body, one which Lexa almost did not notice, and would not have cared much for if it hadn’t been felt by a certain chaser who liked to pull her into closets and keep her out after hours.

“Another late practice?” Lexa asked, rubbing her hand along the back of the athlete with her head down on the breakfast table, exhausted from the course of drills that lasted much too long the night before. The shoulders moved with a response that was too muffled to understand. “Have some toast.”

“I missed our date last night,” Clarke turned her head and caught sight of her girlfriend who made her a plate, who sat down at a foreign table just to spend time with her despite whispers and looks still.

“I’ll be glad when this nonsense is over. You’re dead tired.”

“I’m sorry I missed it.”

“I heard you’re going to need all the help you can get,” Lexa teased lightly, licking her thumb as she passed off the jelly-slathered bread.

“What does that mean?” Clarke sat up slightly, furrowing deeply.

“That you’re going down, Griffin,” she shrugged. “I’ve been assured we’re getting a win.”

“What?”

“You really are tired,” Lexa chuckled. “Eat up. I’ll help you catch up on Arithmancy notes.”

“You don’t think we’re going to win?”

“I honestly don’t know.”

“You’re not going to root for me?” Clarke balked at the thought, not touching the breakfast that’d been created for her.

“I think we’ve put everyone through enough of a shock the past few months. Me in your colors, in your section, well that might be a bit too much for their little hearts.”

“Oh,” the chaser nodded and pushed herself up from the bench slightly.

“Hey, what’s wrong?”

“Nothing. I just… I hadn’t thought… you… huh.”

“Clarke.”

“No, right. I should go. I forgot my book in the room,” she stood.

“At least take–” she leaned down and grabbed a slice and nodded a thanks. “See you later.”

Left alone at the table, Lexa watched Clarke leave, oddly distracted with the movement, confused by her girlfriend’s quick shift in mood. Often, she was certain Clarke thought it was amusing that she didn’t follow quidditch too closely. In truth, Lexa never got excited by it, much to her father’s exasperation. And yet, it always worked. And she began to like game day weekends because it led to parties in common room sand empty towers and sneaky hands in sneaky beds and those were always
spectacular. The game itself was irrelevant, and she did like watching Clarke play. That was about the only thing that caught her interest.

The rest of her classes followed along as they usually did, though the undercurrent of excitement over the following day’s activities upended any tangible progress made in their studies.

“This game has her acting weird,” Lexa complained to her cousin as she adjusted large books in her arms. “I’ve never seen her so agitated. She’s very laid back and happy, but this was different.”

“Sometimes, I forget how dense you are for someone who has read every book ever,” Anya rolled her eyes and shook her head.

The family moved its way down the hall toward the common room where a game of chess inevitably waited them deep into the night. Lexa idolized her cousin, for she was always cooler and calmer and tougher and smarter, and it was a lot to want to live up to, but it was good and genuine and enough.

“She’s nervous,” Anya supplied as Lexa waited expectantly. “She has a lot of expectations, and a lot of visitors are coming to watch the game, plus the whole rivalry you’re sex life is singlehandedly trying to mute, but can’t, no matter how good it might be.”

“We’re not… it’s… we haven’t… there’s no way two people… we aren’t. We. Not yet. Maybe eventual– what I mean. I mean.” Lexa’s cheeks bloomed quickly and she shook her head, working herself into a tizzy trying to escape some conversation that she was having with herself.

“I’m just saying. She’s a ball of nerves who is working herself to the bone to win, and I guess it’d be hard to not even have the one person you want rooting for you, to care if you win or lose.”

“Well that’s stupid,” she snorted, finding herself once again. “I honestly don’t care. I want her to do well. I thought trash talk would be fun.”

“So naive. So cute,” her cousin teased once again, leaving Lexa pondering her words without enough brainpower to offer a rebuttal.

The Prefect tried to think about everything, about how to fix it, but by the end of the night she was no closer to finding an answer. And so after finding nothing but a grumpy girlfriend who ignored her at dinner, Lexa let sleeping dogs lie, and went back to her room, where she laid in her bed and stared at the ceiling, calculating as best she could. Lexa prided herself on being a thinker, cunning enough to get herself out of any problem.

“Hey,” Lexa grabbed at Clarke’s sleeve, tugging her away from her team as they walked toward the Great Hall.

Clad in her garnet and gold, hair pulled up and already sporting a certain game face, Clarke let herself be sidetracked, because as hard as she worked at maintaining the front, the nerves were eating her up and the fact that this weird stalemate with Lexa was not conducive to her brain being able to focus on anything very long.

“Hey,” Clarke sighed when they were alone. With no warning at all, Lexa slid into her arms, hugging her tightly, digging her nose into her shoulder. “I’m sorry, what was that?” she asked to the mumbling that went into her sweater.

“I misjudged your anxiety about the game yesterday.”

“I don’t have any–”
“I was trying to be into one of your hobbies,” Lexa interrupted her, “and I think it came out wrong.”

“No I get it. You’re rooting for your house, and that means you want me to lose.”

“I want you to do well.”

“They’re not mutually exclusive ideas,” Clarke reminded her.

“I know, but I can want both. We haven’t won a Cup in over a decade, and this is the closest we’ve been. I got caught up in it.”

“I just… you rooted for me every other game,” the chaser shook her head slightly. “I don’t know.”

“I always root for you, Griffin.”

“I know. This is just different.”

“You know, we didn’t get to set a wager. I was going to make a bet that I’m pretty sure you’ll find very appealing.”

“A wager so you’ll bet against me?”

“I think we’ll both win,” Lexa smiled, wrapping her arms around Clarke’s neck and keeping the sulking, nervous player close despite her inability to stand still or meet her eyes.

“What’s that?”

Despite her tension, Clarke melted with Lexa’s arms and body pressed against her own. It was the best kind of drug imaginable.

“Just… win. No matter what, I’m rooting for you. And I’ll have a special night for us at the afterparty.”

“Yeah?” Clarke grinned, despite herself. She didn’t want to, she wanted to focus, but Lexa kissed her and that was about all she needed to distract her.

“I have one of your old practice jerseys,” Lexa whispered. “I sleep in it.”

“Yeah?”

“Yeah. And I like watching you play. You smell terrible, but when you’re all sweaty and stuff after. It’s not terrible.”

“That’s the smell of preparedness,” Clarke reminded her with a low kind of growl.

“Go get’em, Griffin.”

“I’ll see you after.”

“Only if you win. I don’t think losers are very cute.”

The grin came, the cockiness and the bulk to her shoulders. Lexa watched her inflate somehow and she loved it because it was how she loved Clarke the most, alive and real and infallible.

“Like I said, I’ll see you after.”

“I’ll be the one in the green.”
“Not for long,” the chaser promised.

The Woods Estate, the ancestral home, the one that was built centuries ago, was long since gone, torn up from the very roots and demolished at the hands of Lexa’s father, something he took pride in, donating the lands and ridding themselves of that association and curse. It was enough to wear the name, let alone reside where such secrecy and anguish now seemed permanent residents.

Lexa never knew that house. In fact, many would be surprised to see the home now, out on the edge of the small hamlet they took up as their own. While they had once been removed from their operation, now they enjoyed their estate on the farm in the country.

Clarke fell in love with it the first time she visited. A dusting of snow, lights on the trees, a herd of thestrals peaking out from the treeline, every light on in the house so that it cast off this warmth no one would mistake to be part of the Woods. It was very much removed from the show of Lexa that existed at the school. Very hidden. Very wonderful.

“Wake up,” Lexa whispered, leaning over the bed to the mess of blonde hair. Dawn was still a long way off, but they had a different schedule at the farm. Gently, she tucked a bit of Clarke’s hair behind her ear as a nose scrunched up and dug into the pillow.

“It’s time,” she tried, kissing cheek.

“It’s cold out there,” Clarke protested. “Come back to bed.”

Lexa chuckled, certain it was no secret that they shared a bed though her parents feigned setting up one of the guest suites for the visitor. It had been hard enough extracting herself from the covers earlier, and she pulled away before she was sucked back in.

“Get dressed,” Lexa roused her again. “The baby is coming.”

For as poised and proper as the Woods looked when they were out and about, still fulfilling their duties to their status, Clarke learned that they were all terrible, huge, outrageous nerds who loved their work. Growing up, Cadmus spent so much time avoiding his family, that he spent more time with the trainers than at the mansion. Now he was more involved than ever. Squiring away money to double their net worth without wasting it on the airs of their fellow purebloods, while simultaneously doubling his donations to charities since the war.

From the main house, Clarke trudged, wrapping Lexa’s old sweater tighter around her hands, tugging the ridiculous hat lower over her ears as they made their way to the stable.

If her grandmother had visited, she’d mistake the property for an actual farm, until she looked harder and saw the creatures that lived there.

“They couldn’t wait until afternoon?” Clarke asked as Lexa hurried them along the path.

The family of winged-horses was one of Lexa’s favorite parts of being home. The other parts of the family business were of much less interest than the training of the chariot horses, a new venture she began herself. While her father focused on the bigger picture, the harvesting of supplies from well kept animals, the training of guards, healing of humans, and charming of creatures, Lexa spent much
of her time dreaming of the flying creatures. It was her who picked the first one on a family trip to Argentina, and her father gave in, because as her mother pointed out, she was a kid who truly did never ask for anything.

And so that was how a gentle, painted yearling ended up in the stable. And that was how Lexa learned to ride, a summer in Argentina, absorbing everything she could. And that was how, a year later, another yearling was bought from an Irish family that did not let their bloodlines go un-checked for anything, who prided themselves for their greatness. A big, hulking, broad-shouldered colt with thick feet and the darkest silver imaginable joined Lexa’s collection. And now she was welcoming the first of her own line.

“This is exciting,” Clarke nudged her girlfriend’s elbow as they leaned against the edge of the large stall.

Lexa smiled and nodded, eyes not able to leave the sight in front of her. The chill of the holiday break was outside, daring not to enter the overwhelming heat of the stable. The entire family, pulled from the slumber, along with a few hands, paced like it was a maternity ward and they were men chomping cigars.

With just two days left in the break, she was certain they were going to miss it. Being woken after just falling asleep an hour before was well worth it.

“What are you going to do with it?” Clarke asked, hiding a yawn.

“They are the start of the line. Large, broad work horses with the grace and speed of their mother,” she smiled. “They’ll be at least two hands taller. I already talked to Walsh and there’s a female we’re going to buy in the spring. This one will mate with that one’s hopefully, and so on.”

“You’re going to have a herd of flying horses.”

“Yeah,” Lexa smiled dreamily.

Across the property, the aviary was quiet save for the gentle hooting of a few lonesome owls as the caretakers let them out for the evening to roam the countryside. The others slept soundly while a few soared as well. Down by the lake, the sights of spouts of water turning into mist as they were blown out could be seen as the small pod of bake-kujira, the white skeleton whales, could be seen playing in the moonlight. A dreamy, quiet night for such things as entering the world.

Clarke let her cheek rest on Lexa’s arm as they watched, her eyes heavy in the warmth despite the agitated horse.

“Here it comes,” one of the hands motioned, exciting the group even further.

“Come on,” Lexa grit her teeth, and Clarke was certain she’ never seen anything so adorable.

The sac dropped and the mother did what she was known to do, cleaning the knock-kneed foal. Clarke held her breath and was awake suddenly, mesmerized by the activity happening, an experience she couldn’t imagine ever forgetting.

Still unable to stand, the foal whined after its mother who paced still, upset and distracted. A second foal dropped just as the older one stood for the first time.

“Twins,” Lexa breathed, shaking her head in disbelief, slowly to each side, unsure of the turn her day just took.
“I love them already,” Clarke decided, eyes wide as the youngest was cleaned by the mother. The oldest distracted her as well as it hobbled uneasily across towards the family.

Grey, save for splotches of white across its chest and splattered on its wings that now fluttered despite himself, it seemed larger than the one that didn’t get up just yet. It seemed healthy.

“It’s a boy,” Lexa realized. “They’re both boys.”

“Congratulations,” her father offered, squeezing her shoulders and kissing her head. “I’m so proud of you.”

The same, yet inverted, the second foal stood up with the aid of its mother’s nose under his ribs. Only then did they see the deformity, the way the one wing tucked and did not stretch or move. Smaller than his brother, the colt now stood and tried to practice walking.

“Poor little guy must have gotten hurt in the womb,” Lexa sighed, chin on the railing as she watched the new family.

“He’s still magnificent.”

They watched the little ones wobble and the mother clean them, nudge them, help them. It was a sight to see, it was a feeling to hold. The cold outside was relegated to the warmth of the room.

“I want to know what happened.”

“You will. Tomorrow. For now, you let them rest. It takes a lot of effort to be born, I think. I don’t remember much.”

“I want to hang out with them a little more,” Lexa whispered as Clarke kissed her temple. “Go to bed.”

“I’ll hang out a little bit more.”

Sitting on the edge of a bale, Clarke watched Lexa pull herself over the gate and let the little baby sniff at her hands. The group lingered and dispersed, knowing full well that they would be awake in just a few hours.

Gently, Lexa ran her hand against the weak wing of the younger brother. He shook his mane.

“Castor, seems very fitting for you,” she rubbed its forehead. “Pollux,” she chuckled as the other nudged her hip. “You did so good,” Lexa ran her hand along the mother’s neck, pulling stray strands of hay from it.

Clarke pulled her legs up under her and watched her girlfriend focus on her hands and her work. Quiet and passionate, focused and intense, it was the image she could never quite explain to anyone else who wondered why they were together.

With a yawn, Clarke hid her hands in the sleeves and bundled herself up, the warmth of the room and the quiet lulling her to sleep again.

Lexa bonded with the foals, helping to clean up, while at the same time shushing and touching them as much as possible. When they tired and could not stand any longer, she retired from the pen, smiling widely at the idea of them.

She found a sleeping girl on the hay and tugged an old blanket atop her, sitting beside her and feeling
her heart burst a bit at so much happiness.
lexa is entranced by the paint stains on clarke’s hands.

May is teal, torn between green and blue and living somewhere between saltwater marshes and little boxes of apology jewelry. While the trees and vines and bushes all bloom to life between storms and showers, teal leaks from every roof and collects in puddles, smelling like soft dirt and an evening chill.

Swirls of it stain the right backside of Clarke’s old jeans. Much too big, too holey, too faded and stained, starched and seared with previous months, they sit, drunk and half out of the hamper in the corner.

There is a tint that refuses to leave Clarke’s hands, her knuckles teal and pink after being scrubbed. Lexa smells the spray paint that lingers there with the colour, absently rubbing those hands against her own cheek as they lay in bed watching some movie.

In the television blue that shades the room in LCD light, Lexa watches the way teal changes on Clarke’s knuckles, rubs it gently, so as not to arouse suspicion. Eventually, she pushes her girlfriend’s hand flat against her own cheek and holds it there, feeling teal against her skin, remembering what that colour is to her.

The rain is trotting against the windows and the sheets shuffle with shifting shins running against each other. The softness of Clarke’s skin is around her shoulders, and Lexa can feel the texture of teal against her cheek, then neck as the artist plays with her hair absentely during the movie.

In the sunshine, the sunlight streaking across Clarke’s chin is man-made. Lexa nudges under it with her nose, smiling at how ridiculous it is to find buttercup hues beneath the artist’s chin, though by far not the weirdest place she has found part of the palette on her girlfriend.

Like a schoolyard game, Lexa teases her that she must be in love.

There is red in the lines and under her nails, stuck there, imprisoned and refusing to leave, even when evicted. July is a blush that matches the crimson staining fingertips, hot through the open windows and pushed around, sloppy and sullen and substantially unwieldy by the fan in the living room. In the thick kind of heat that hangs around well into midnight, Lexa surveys the garnet gathering on Clarke’s fingertips, half convinced that they drew blood from her back just a few minutes ago.

Sweat cools in the humid night while the streets glow orange, as if the lights themselves are angry and buzzing in the heavy hot that hangs from buildings and slumbers in the trees.

“I want a cold shower, but I don’t think even that would help,” Clarke sighs, eyes closed as a car alarm goes off a few blocks away.

“We could sit farther apart,” Lexa suggests, dragging her fingertips up each of the artist’s scarlet digits.
“Shhh.”
“A shower sounds nice. We can get this paint off of you.”
“That’s for life.”
“What do you call this one?”
“Balcony sex in July.” Clarke earned a pinch on her side for that, light and Lexa’s smile tucked in her ribs.

September comes green, forested and deep like an entire island must be, to Lexa. Streaked across Clarke’s collar bone, an entire tree line of pine. Lexa runs her nose along it before kissing her neck. The fuzzy moss-coloured line feels warm and new against her lips.

The ocean is in her hair. Deep into December, wisps of blue, swirling clouds of light sky to the deep, dark ocean stick to the ends of her hair and down the back of her neck.

It sticks out, pulling the cobalt of Clarke’s eyes out even more, as if they’d freeze Lexa right where she sat.

Soft as she could, she runs the warm, soapy rag against the dots of lapis, Clarke sitting firmly between her legs in the bath. Though she is warm and feels fingertips on her knee and Clarke’s head tilted back against her shoulder, she kisses the cool colours there when they refuse to leave at all.
You look as good as the day I met you
I forget just why I left you, I was insane.

There was something about being back in a place that once encompassed the entire known world. That world which blossomed from a single street as a kid, to a neighborhood as a teenager, to a city as an adult that was full of memories, until it became too small, too saturated, and then, like a colonial explorer, the first tentative steps were taken out into the world, and the tiny microcosm was held in the amber of swell memories and forgotten embarrassments.

But coming back was just… something, Clarke decided as she twirled the drink between her fingers around at the bar. Something indescribable, that lazily lingered between melancholy and relief. Two years she avoided it, and now, seeing it did this thing to her heart that messed with her head. She felt something, but more accurately, she felt too many things so that they all melded into this… something that sat on her shoulders and kept her company.

Memories hung from sign posts, and back alleys were menacing with gangs of repressed moments. Store fronts changed just enough to remind her that she was now a stranger, while at the same time, the look, the cursory glance one might throw at the town, was so much the same, that it provided enough comfort if she did not peer harder, something she could not avoid because she was soaking it up wholeheartedly. Her entire being was tangled up in a place that she could neither stand nor swallow, and yet she was forcing the pill of realization that time did not stand still down with as many glasses of vodka as the hotel bar would allow.

It was all too much, and yet she still found herself unable to say no to her best friend. None of them even lived there any longer. The entire group filtered out into the world from their small town, spreading like flames flung by the wind as far as the eye could see. And a single spark got them running back together. Nostalgia was a gruesome kind of bedmate.

The town was haunted, and for Clarke it held the delicious ache of longing and regret, all tinged in the sweet, sugar coating of a time that was too far away, when she was a very different person. While everyone that she knew ran off to college, ran out into life, she was the last one standing in that stupid town. She was the fixture that everyone smiled at sadly and tried to sound interested when they came back. For three years, she sat in that town and watched her father wither away to nothing while lives started for her friends, out there, beyond the edge of town, out in the real world.

The day the funeral was over, the second it was finished, she got into her car and drove away, not even looking back, refusing to allow herself to think of it. And she drove until she couldn’t stay awake any longer, and that was where she stayed. Two time zones and six states away.

One phone call brought her back.

It was too much though. The being back, the friends, the familiarity and all of it. So when the
reception was too much, when the dancing and the swirling and the memories overpowered her, she took to the bar, to the quiet of it.

The hotel was full and brimming, overflowing with the activities, but it was still nondescript and luckily was a place that didn’t linger with the tinge of some distant time. Not like the pub on Main Street that housed her first fake ID that didn’t work. Not like the coffee shop on Spruce that was where after school was spent with… Not like the bookstore or the high school parking lot or the bar by the train tracks or the pool hall by the water tower or the water tower or the announcer’s booth at the baseball field or the sidewalk by grocery store or aisle eight or anywhere. Everywhere was graffitied with someone who she wanted to make herself forget.

To her credit, she performed her maid of honor duties nobly. She got Octavia down the aisle, and that was all she had to do. The speech was delightful, the perfect mix of humor and sincerity. The bride was happy. And when that distraction was over, the constraints of the town tied her up, strangled her head and imposed themselves upon her.

In a gulp she finished her drink and held up her hand for another. A drink appeared too quickly.

“I didn’t order this,” she shook her head.

“Secret admirer,” the bartender shrugged.

“Is this a…” Clarke held it up and looked it over before taking a sip. “Sidecar?”

“Yes ma’am. Special order.”

“I don’t drink these.”

“I just make the drinks,” he tossed, moving on to the next order.

Alone despite the amount of people who surrounded the watering hole, Clarke was lost, staring at the drink, suddenly turning back to when she was nineteen and stupid enough to think that knowing a drink name made her fancy, reverting back to that stupid night, the last perfect night she could remember, when her mother’s wedding reception was never-ending, and she drank too many and danced too hard with–

“See, I always thought you liked those. Or maybe we were too stupid to know any different.”

“Lexa…”

The name came out as a sigh, as a gasp. It was only worse when she saw the smile, the smirk, the eyes, the lips, the whole thing sitting next to her on the barstool.

Six years had been kind to her ex. When Clarke broke up with her after Lexa had been away for just a few months at school and she was stuck at home, she imagined she would never hear that voice again. She made herself believe that she would never see her again, so much so that she never considered this moment. Lexa belonged to the streets and the bars and the trees by the creek and an entirely different Clarke than the one sitting at the bar. But this Lexa, was still her Lexa. This Lexa grew into the messy stock of chestnut hair, and figured out how to melt people with those forest green eyes. This Lexa was still the image of perfection.

“I’m doing well, thanks for asking,” Lexa smiled at her fondly.

Six years had been kind to her ex. When Clarke called her, ended it, ran away, apologized for holding her back, Lexa never thought she’d see that blue again. She chased it, still, without thinking
it. She just never thought this would happen, that she’d be confronted with it. It did a number on her wits. This girl. The one with the eyes like the sky and the lips that were candy. It was better than any stupid memory could ever hope.

From across the bar, Lexa spent too many drinks watching the blonde stare at her own drink. When the girl, that girl, walked into the bar, Lexa found herself useless when her associates tried to talk to her. Her eyes were glued and her heart raced and fell and dove and twirled. She was twelve and had a crush once more.

To say she’d pined would have been the most accurate thing, though she would deny it. For some reason, the moment Lexa let Clarke convince her to go off to school and leave her behind to take care of her father, she knew they were never going to make it. When she heard about Jake, she knew there was no chance they’d survive.

Something about seeing a girl like that though. It changed everything.

“Lexa,” Clarke mimicked her smile, still surprised. She savored the name, as she’d denied herself it for so long, now it was a reward and prayer all rolled together.

“You look good. Been doing good?”

“Yeah, good,” she nodded.

“Drink your drink,” Lexa nudged her chin.

Gratefully, Clarke took a sip, allowing herself a few more glances and the suddenly poise and real ghost that was drinking beside her. The liquor burned, but she finished the glass and held up her hand for another because suddenly the night called for it.

“Remember when we drank these at my mom’s wedding?”

“Yeah,” Lexa nodded. “You thought we were so cool.”

“We were.”

“You were.”

“It’s been a while,” the blonde finally realized.

Drinks were slid in front of them again, and suddenly the years seemed to disappear. It felt very far away, all those years, and yet very close.

“Of all the hotel bars.”

“I thought you were living in New York now. What brings you back?”

“Keeping tabs on me?”

“I hear things.”

“I had a business trip to the city. Thought I’d bring some associates back for a quick stopover.” Her eyes never blinked. She just drank in the blonde. “You look great, you know that?” Lexa grinned like a fool, despite herself. “Still as beautiful as I remember.”

“You’re still the charmer.”
“Have we had enough drinks to cover the elephant in the room or are we going to do the small talk?”

“So New York? You look good. It agrees with you.”

With a nod, Lexa bit back all of the words she planned to say. There were years worth of things she wanted to tell the girl that broke her heart, and then Clarke smiled and she was that fifteen year old girl who didn’t know how to speak to the girl who sat beside her in chemistry class and smelled so good she couldn’t remember what covalent bonds were.

Instead, she gave in, because that was what she did. She gave in to Clarke like it was all she could do, like it was what she was born to do. And so she bared her soul, told her about graduating, about work. The drinks rolled in and she couldn’t help but smile and hang on every word. She didn’t let it go that she knew a lot already. That she saw the little article in the paper about the little publishing house Clarke worked at. That she heard from Raven still and never had to ask about a certain mutual friend.

Drink one, and they covered their occupations, their cities. Lexa held her breath and fell again.

Drink two led to memories, all of the memories, the thoughts and the little bits of each other that they shared, that occupied so much of their natural brain space. The first kiss in Lexa’s bedroom during some group project. The third kiss that was sweet and innocent and came after a date in which everything went wrong.

Drink three led to leaning closer. Led to Clarke whispering the confession that she missed Lexa terribly. It led to Lexa inhaling sharply and smiling as her cheeks burned bright.

Drink four led to Clarke realizing what she already knew, that letting go was the biggest regret of her life when Lexa smiled at her and she found herself staring at lips.

The bar dwindled. Everything calmed until they were they only ones left and last call was bellowed to just them. Time became an enemy. Clarke felt it coming to an end and she was afraid.

“I’m glad you did well. I knew you would do something important,” Clarke decided.

“Only because you made me.”

“It was all you. Stubborn and humble.”

“You broke up with me in a phone call.”

“Yeah,” Clarke sighed.

“I was in love with you—”

“We were nineteen,” she sighed and shook her head, almost more against herself than against Lexa.

“I was in love with you, and you broke my heart.”

“Lex…” Clarke interrupted, seeing that telltale sign of agitation in the form of Lexa’s waving hands and refusal to meet her eyes. “I was broken… I just… I couldn’t hold you down.”

“I wanted to help you up. I tried to…”

“We were kids. Now we have lives, we grew up.”

“I tried.”
“I broke my own heart, too. It was a sacrifice. I thought I was doing the right thing…” Never had she thought to prepare a defense for her decision. Suddenly all rationale seemed weak and ridiculous and not enough.

Sad as she was, seeing Clarke upset made that instinct kick in, and Lexa looked at her and tried to think of the right thing to say. Her inability to do so made her more bothered. So she took a drink. And felt Clarke’s hand on her chin, lifting it.

“How could you be so much like how I remember, but suddenly so new? You’re like watching a favorite movie in a foreign language.”

“You’re drunk on Sidecars,” Lexa chuckled. “What is it with you, weddings, and sidecars?”

“You brought this one on yourself.”

“True. It was a nice ice breaker though, right?”

“Still as charming as I remember, that’s for sure.”

The lights came on, brighter and indicating the hour. The wedding would be almost done. Clarke didn’t think about anything else. Instead, she just stared at Lexa. Time was the enemy and she was fighting the losing battle. Maybe in another six years they’d reunite and they’d be different again. Each time, they’d be a little less recognizable. That made Clarke feel better, despite the lie that it was. She would always know Lexa, of that she had no doubt. They were innate, and it was not the fact that they were kids when they met. She always chalked it up to that, told herself she made it bigger than it was because they didn’t know any better. But she was a little wiser, and everything was even more elaborate. What was once a chaos of feelings became finely tuned and meshed into a harmony of need.

“You want to get out of here?” Lexa chanced, swallowing to herself before stealing against those eyes.

“Don’t give me that look.”

“What look?”

Clarke watched one corner of her lip quirk upwards slowly as the caught-in-the-act claim to innocence was ineffective. If a smirk could kill. She rubbed her thighs together, though dying was almost more welcomed.

“The I-have-plans look.” Lexa smirked and finished her drink, pulling out money and tossing it down.

“But I do.”

“Do what?”

“I have plans for you, Clarke Griffin.”

“You’re a little more suave than the girl who fumbled with my bra in the back of Finn Collin’s backyard.”

“A little older, a little wiser, a little more dexterous.”

“We’re drunk,” Clarke reasoned.
“Call it what you want,” her not-date shrugged, standing finally. “I’m going with curiosity.”

“Curious about what?”

Enigmatic as ever, Lexa looked down at the card she fiddled with in her hands before casting a look that broke Clarke’s heart, this happy, relieved, reverent stare that was stained with bad ideas that would feel much too good. Clarke was distracted by her lips most of all.

“Come on,” Lexa ignored the question and held out her hand.

“Just what I was afraid of,” Lexa hummed as she collapsed on the bed. Her hand rested on her diaphragm that spasmed as much as the rest of her body. Her hips wanted to keep moving. Her body could not stop wanting more.

“What’s that?"

“I’m still madly in love with you.”

The body beside her laughed slightly. When she turned her head, Lexa saw the profile of the girl who broke her heart. She closed her eyes and swallowed before running her hand through her hair. She was suddenly confronted with her choice. The alcohol and Clarke made her head swirl, and once she had finished the task at hand, now that the dust was settling, now she remembered it all.

“I can see your brain working overtime,” Clarke chided, rolling over and missing that smile, the grin, the peace.

Six years had been incredibly kind to Lexa. College taught her a thing or two that Clarke was grateful for, but there was something that lingered, the remnants of them, of how well they knew each other that defied time and space. That something. That something she couldn’t place, still, that lingered from the bar, from the town, from her life. She was confronted with something, the indescribable something that laid beside her. The world had been off since they’d been apart. She was suddenly distracted with how right it now felt.

“Hey,” she whispered, pushing the hair from Lexa’s face. She’d hoped more words would come, though none felt right enough.

Bodies still tingling, Clarke kissed Lexa. She bit her bottom lip, and when Lexa turned her head, she deepened it, slipped atop her, pulling the mess of tangled sheets as best she could. When she earned a moan, she knew she was safe from having to think of such things again.

There weren’t any more words. No need for such things. Not when Clarke had long neck on display and the way Lexa liked to mewl and grind when it was sucked. That was how Clarke ignored the implication, and that was a better way to spend her time, in her own opinion.

It wasn’t until the sun came up that an easy king of sleep settled in their bones. Still with the feeling of Lexa clenching around her fingers, still with the fragments of Clarke’s thighs squeezing her ears, both settled together.

Exhausted as she was, Clarke woke first, not letting herself get comfortable. The single sheet remained, hanging over Lexa’s hips. There were barks on her neck, already forming. Clarke felt at her own, reveling in that sweet hurt. She stared more at the scratches that ran up Lexa’s back. For a moment she remembered making them, remembered the way she clung and the way Lexa was capable of dragging out the pleasure to untenable ends.

Clarke shivered as she surveyed the scene, at remembering it. Her body remembered more than her
own mind. Her body remembered, her muscles could not forget. But if she stayed any longer, she’d admit the truth, that she was madly in love with the girl she tried to save, that she let out of her life. The girl she was about to walk out on again.

But Clarke was a masochist, and so she watched Lexa sleep just a moment longer before grabbing her clothes and slipping out of the room and making her way to her own.

Against her own will, Clarke gave herself an extra few days in the town. She didn’t know why, but she did. She didn’t know why she ended up on the front porch of her father’s house, but she did. She couldn’t even articulate why she slept with Lexa, but she did. The town was ruining her and it’d been just fifty-two hours.

The mid-morning sun hid behind the thin veil of light grey clouds. The porch creaked as she shifted and stood in front of the door apprehensively. Out of all the mixed feelings she had about the town changing, the fact that this house remained exactly the same was even more upsetting. It looked as if her father would be back from vacation at any moment. The swing was tied up so the wind wouldn’t blow it. The pots were stacked up, awaiting his inevitable failed attempt at gardening. A pair of boots remained beside the frayed welcome mat. The key was still sleeping under the duck statue. Not one thing was out of place.

There was still the lingering thought of the night before as she finally made herself open the door. It stuck and she threw her shoulder into it. Between the dead dad and the ghost of an ex, she was at her wit’s end. If there was one feeling Clarke hated, it was this. This helplessness. This confusion. This almost fear that was accompanied by the gnawing feeling of forgetting something important. All of the hard work that came with the years away of growing up, of not remembering, it was thrown away too simply.

The town limits turned her into a mess, an unrecognizable mess. The house ruined her. Still, she was unsure what she was doing, and it kept happening. The thoughts that told her not to do something never quite made it to her muscles. She heard her brain tell her no, she felt her conscious agree. And yet she did them anyway. Like going down on Lexa just inside the hotel room before the door even closed. Like showing up at the old house.

The key made a familiar noise on the table beside the door, but that was about it. Everything else was a slap in the face. The sheets covered the couch and chairs. The walls were bare. Not a sound was made despite the fact that Clarke strained her ears to hear something.

Air was stagnant, the dust thick and evident from six years of absence of any human occupant. When she first left, she could barely pay her own rent, but she kept up the taxes and bills because she could not handle losing it, though she could not handle having it. Her work was alright, her life was coming together, and then she stood there, in her father’s home, and she was confronted with how much of a sham it all was.

Her mother left, moved out, got married. Left the small town. Her father had a simple life, a better life, in Clarke’s opinion. She ran her hand along the fishing poles in the corner. In her head, she could smell him there, lingering among the dust.

For much too long, she remained standing there. The screen of the door puffed in the breeze, as if the house itself were breathing a sigh of relief.

With a single step, Clarke entered the house completely. Left the front door wide open and let the June air waft through. She tossed the curtains open and let the sunlight in for the first time in years. Begrudgingly, she moved through the house, touching everything she could, as if the sight alone
wasn’t enough, as if she had to remember the very feeling of the house and her home. She opened windows and tried to get rid of the dust, to add some life.

She picked up the old bobblehead that was left on the shelf, carefully bobbing the head and smiling. She traced the notches on the door to the office that were her heights through the years. She clicked the pull string of the lamp that remained on the desk. She flipped open the book her father kept to keep track of his work. The neat scrawl remained there in precise little letters.

Boxes were piled in all of the corners. The light made the walls look different.

The only things left in the kitchen were more boxes and a kettle. She searched the cabinets and found nothing at all except a dead moth. Almost accidentally, she pulled back the false board of the pantry and saw the little baggie that remained. Devoutly, she held it and smiled as well.

“Clarke!” the voice rang out as feet stomped up the steps. “I knew you’d be here! Saves me the trouble of hunting you down in Philly because I’ll be damned—”

“Hey,” Clarke smiled leaning against the kitchen counter as the door slammed shut, delayed with a rusty whine as Lexa made it to the back of the house.

“Hey. Don’t interrupt.”

“Okay.”

“Where was I?”

“You’ll be damned.”

“Right, right. Right.” Lexa furrowed, agitated and bothered. “I’ll be damned if I’m going to– This isn’t fair. Don’t look like that. Don’t look at me like that.”

“Like what?” Clarke chuckled despite the invader’s persistence and anger.

Angry Lexa was always one of her favorites. She had rants that would keep going, and she had internal battles that started in her head but only came out through her mouth fifteen steps ahead of where they started so that they were impossible to find. Angry Lexa was amusing.

“Don’t look at me like I’m crazy.”

“I’m not. Please continue. You’ll be damned…”

“You know what,” Lexa paced. Thunder rolled in as the sun that hid behind the clouds grew more muffled. The bugs yelled in the tall grass before quieting and finding shelter. “I have a lot of things to say to you. I’ve had a lot of things to say to you for a long time.”

“Well go on, you’re doing great.”

“You don’t get to just… just… just…” Lexa flailed, suddenly unable to finish the perfect speech she’d written in her head all those years and last night ago. “You don’t get to walk out of my life again. You walked out of it once, and you knew we were good. You knew we were a good thing. I used to try to convince myself—”

“I did,” Clarke nods.

“That we were young and dumb, but I’ve seen what else exists. Nothing like you. There’s nothing like us. And you know it.”
“I do.”

“I didn’t get a say in anything. You pushed me away. You were broken and I get that. But what did I do to deserve—”

“Nothing.”

“Being treated like that? And then I see you in a bar, and it’s a bit of fate, don’t you think?” Lexa asked, her voice fluctuating between yelling and genuine confusion at the answers she’s getting. “And you could have walked away, but you came up to my room. You kissed me in the elevator. You did all of that, and then you left. Which is exactly what you’re good at.”

“That’s fair.”

“Stop agreeing with me!” Lexa stalked about the tiny space as her shoulder’s hunched and her jaw tensed, flexing and gnashing to new degrees.

“You’re right. About all of it.”

“Dammit, Clarke! You can’t just leave again!”

“I left for you! I wasn’t going anywhere! I was the weight, holding you down. Two years I did nothing but take care of my dad. Had no plan, no future. I had nothing to offer you, and you were on the cusp of greatness. You’ve always been meant for more.”

“I was meant for you!”

“You can’t—”

The argument went no further. It couldn’t. Not with Lexa’s lips pressed against Clarke’s dispute. The tenderness of her lips counteracted the roughness of her hands tugging at anything she could grab. For a moment she was spellbound, distracted. It was a kind of proof, a moment to remind Clarke that Lexa was right.

“I can’t keep doing this,” Lexa muttered, pushing herself away, covering her mouth, shaking her head and beating herself up. Her chest heaved. Clarke tongued at her lip, now bitten again and aching slightly at the nip. “I can’t. I can’t keep doing this.”

“What do you want from me?”

“I don’t know.”

“That was a very good speech.”

“I had some time to work on it.”

“I was going to look you up when I got home.”

“No you weren’t,” Lexa sighs and leans against the wall across from Clarke, as if she had to keep herself pinned there, to stay there to keep from touching the blonde.

Awkward and suddenly aware of each other, suddenly very much full of truth and lies and different memories, they exchanged glances, but could not do much else. Everything was raw and fresh, new again, wounds reopened and finally healed.

“When do you go back?” Clarke ventured.
“Tuesday. You?”

“I’m here until next week.”

“Are you… staying here? Or the hotel… or… are you okay?”

Clarke didn’t have a real answer, not completely. She wasn’t alright, she was stuck in a blender and all gutted to bits. But even at her most upset, Lexa still worried about her, and that was something.

The rain came, pouring down making the curtains billow. It dripped in through the open windows and it gushed through the gutters.

“Remember that dime bag we bought from Raven in high school?”

“There’s no way that’s still good,” Lexa laughed as the baggie unrolled. “We finished that.”

“This is the one we got that last summer.”

“We got distracted with you breaking up with me.”

“Yeah. That.”

“So… do you want to use it?”

“Are you asking me to smoke very old weed with you, Lexa Woods?”

“I’m just asking…” Lexa grinned, grabbing the bag. She opened it and took a sniff. “This is going to be terrible.”

“You don’t have anything else to do today?”

“You got rid of me once when you were going through a hard part. You’re not doing it again, Griffin.”

With a knowing look, Clarke pushed her hair behind her ear and nodded, oddly grateful for the girl who embodied selflessness completely.

“She was perfect. I just couldn’t do it. I wasn’t happy,” Lexa shrugged, head lulling on the couch cushions that made a little mattress on the ground. The spare candles they could find flickered in the breeze as the storm kept complaining outside.

“Why weren’t you happy?” Clarke asked, inhaling and passing to the girl beside her.

“She was beautiful, talented, funny, smart. She was perfect.”

“Then why?”

“She wasn’t you.”

The words drifted out like smoke into the almost dark. The glow of the candles flickered across her roman features and Clarke watched the red end burn as she inhaled again, trying to fight against the admission as best she could.

“And you? How is life in Philadelphia?”

“I ruined you then.”

“You did.”

“This is terrible weed.”

“I can’t believe we’re smoking in my dad’s house. This is crazy,” Clarke shook her head and picked up the paper cup of wine. Lexa ate a piece of broccoli from their take out with her fingers and grinned.

“What’s crazy is that thing you did to me an hour ago.”

“Stop,” she rolled her eyes.

The night rolled. The candles burned. The oceans grumbled and the sky fell. The clouds slipped along while the stars hid bashfully. Unaware of it all, the two remained, camped in the living room until the darkness encompassed them completely.

Lexa kissed at the ink on Clarke’s shoulder. Bit at it as they snuggled into the sleeping bag that acted as a bed for them. The girl beneath her purred and she made her come again. And again. And she wanted to never stop because if she stopped then it would be over. In the wine and old weed haze, she couldn’t be satisfied with just one more.

“You,” Lexa whispered as Clarke ran her fingers along her chest. Fingertips trailed along rib cage and over breast, swirled around nipple. Lexa had never been happier than to just be touched in such a relaxed way.

“What?”


“I messed it up.”

Her hands paused until she pressed them flat against Lexa’s chest, feeling her heart beat and lungs expand.

“Maybe. But I don’t think so.”

“We can find out, I guess.”

“That’s the spirit.”

“It was a very good speech,” Clarke nodded to herself.

The hotel bar was crowded and nondescript, but still, Clarke sat there and twirled her drink. She inhaled and smiled to herself, grateful that the night was finally over, and marginally a success.

“Excuse me,” she called as the bartender left a drink in front of her. “I didn’t order this.”

“I just make them,” the bartender shrugged and walked away.

“A beautiful woman like you seems like the type that enjoys a nice Sidecar,” that voice appeared, velvet and close to her ear. Clarke shivered.

Lexa couldn’t take her eyes off of the newest addition to the party. She kissed her cheek a second later and let her hand rest on her hip.
“Stop trying to liquor me up,” Clarke argued. “I don’t even like Sidecars.”

“I don’t know about that. Someone keeps sending them to you.”

“Can we go home yet?”

“It’s your mother’s anniversary.”

“So no?” Clarke whined.

“I was thinking of getting a room. I get nostalgic in hotels,” Lexa explained, flashing a key at her fiancée.

“One more sidecar and we’ll be out of here,” Clarke promised, laughing as Lexa leaned over the bar and tried to flag down the bartender again to expedite the process. “I love you, you idiot.”

“And to think you tried to dump me.”

“When is that ever going to get dropped?” she groaned, but earned a kiss quickly after. “It was just a few years.”

“I have many years to make up for it,” Lexa grinned, kissing her again.
Before dawn, the snow that came on city streets was crisp and clean and pushed into piles on corners and hiding curbs. The city was soft, was frozen through its clothes and tucked safely beneath the fluff of a long night of precipitation. Even the sun was slow in coming up beyond the horizon, between the buildings, as if it too, was stuck, boiling beneath a sheet of ice that was slow to melt.

Despite the early hour, and despite the snow, Lexa ran through the city as it just began to shake its coat and rid itself of the weather that’d accumulated while it slept. Her breath turned to daggers in her throat and her limbs grew frozen and burned despite how cold it was, but still she trudged along, her thoughts keeping her warm and occupied.

It was easier to think when she was quiet and alone, lost in the city and on her normal route. If she wove up and down, went through the park and down to the lake, by the time she made it back uptown, it was seven miles and she would end up at Clarke’s door. And that was always a good way to start the day. Before the commuters took over the roads, as the buses were beginning to yawn down alleys, as garbage trucks moved methodically, creeping through sleeping neighborhoods, Lexa had the city and her head to herself.

Through the snow and sidewalks beginning to be filled with traffic of the day, Lexa wrestled with her thoughts. This was the time for such things. For thinking about Anya’s new uniforms she needed for the spring, and for thinking about bills and those endorsements her agent found that were stupid, but could easily pay for a semester of college, and for her schedule for the day, then for tomorrow, then for the week, and for the doctor who patched her up and made her breakfast and kissed her frequently. Lexa had to think at least four steps of her opponents, of her life, and this was how she did it.

It’d been an interesting few months, trying to balance all of it. But, weirdly enough, or at least weirdly enough to her, Lexa felt comfortable with Clarke, enjoyed spending time with her, liked that she supported her and liked that she was a place she could escape her house and responsibilities and forget, and be normal, for just a few hours. It all evolved at a slow pace and it all moved forward as easily as she allowed. Clarke made her feel normal, and not as if she were grinding herself away to fulfill others’ needs. In the scheme of her life, of where she was at the moment, it was good. And Clarke didn’t mind that Lexa was taking things slow, which was new and rewarding to the athlete, who found herself smiling as she finally slowed.

“You’re late,” Clarke greeted from down the hall her as she stomped her shoes on the mat by the front door. “You slowing down on me, Woods? Big match coming up you know.”

“Ah geeze, Mickey, give me a break,” Lexa smiled, pulling off her sweatshirt and tossing it on the railing of the steps as she made her way towards the kitchen and the girl. “Snow makes it hard. Don’t want to slip and break a leg.”

“I wish you’d run on that fancy thing called a treadmill,” Clarke sighed, moving to the toaster as it
popped. Lexa sauntered up behind her, giddy and on a high from running and the cold. Her muscles were limber and her mind was free, her blood was soaked with endorphins and morning and the way Clarke’s house smelled. “It’s not like Bellamy doesn’t have like six of them at the gym.”

“And miss out on my woman cooking me breakfast?” Lexa growled into Clarke’s neck, hands wrapping around her hips. Lexa lived for mornings. She loved them, she raved and she waxed poetic over them. There wasn’t a specific reason, though Clarke was certainly helping.

“Your woman just worked eighteen hours and needs someone to cook her breakfast sometime. I almost called and cancelled but I wouldn’t see you for a few days if I did that.”

“Why won’t you stay at my place?”

“Because you have a little sister and a whole life,” Clarke shrugged.

“So do you, and it’s closer to the hospital. I’d make you breakfast,” Lexa kissed higher, grinning as the blonde’s head tilted, giving her more room, more skin on display. “You could wash me up after practice. Sleep in the same bed for more than a few hours.”

“You’re serious about this?”

“I didn’t offer just to offer and say I did. Of course I meant it.” Hands slipped lower and hips pressed Clarke into the counter. “You spending the night could be fun.”

“Your eggs are going to burn,” she complained weakly though her hips swayed, and her back arched, and her hand instinctively lifted over her head, holding Lexa’s lips on her pulse.

“Can’t have that.”

It was hard, but Lexa untangled herself, realizing that eighteen hours was a long time to be at work, only to burn the food she’d worked so hard on as well. She kissed Clarke’s head, and pulled back, watching her work.

Their mornings together usually followed this kind of routine, depending on if Clarke was heading to work or just getting back. But Lexa got to get handsy and the doctor would complain about her sweaty shirt on the railing, and they had about twenty minutes together, uninterrupted, where they sat and talked and started the day together.

“So you’ll spend the night sometime?” she ventured again, oddly struck by the idea she’d been afraid to bring up. She’d mentioned it in passing, as a joke, attempting to see how Clarke would take it, but desperate times and such. It felt like the right step, a safe step. She’d spent the night a few times with Clarke, here and there, but overall they’d been distinctly separate.

“If you think that’s okay.”

“Don’t you?”

“I do, but I know you. You have so much to do in the coming weeks. I don’t want to get my hopes up and I don’t want to push. I am totally cool with how we are.”

“You’re not pushing. I invited you.”

“Okay,” Clarke smiled, pushing a plate across the island. Lexa smiled a little bigger, picked up her fork and stared at the sleepy doctor before her eyes. She fell in love on mornings like this morning.
“Tonight?”

“You eager or something?”

“Something,” Lexa grinned, loopy and dazed as she saddled up to the bar stool and watched the blonde lean against the opposite side. “I’m cooking dinner. Anya is done with school before break. My famous fish tacos. We were going to chill out and watch movies.”

“Famous?”

“In select markets.”

“Can’t pass that up, can I?”

“Listen, if you don’t want to come over, you really don’t have to. I don’t want to push you either—”

“No, no, no,” Clarke smiled, blushed, bashful and such to jump to her own defense so swiftly. “I didn’t say that. I just… you’re you. I move at your pace.”

“I’m quite speedy, I’ll have you know.”

“You’re an emotional snail.”

“I’m cautious.”

“Listen, I am over the moon crazy about you, but I know you. I know what you tell me at least,” Clarke shrugged and fiddled with her own mug. “You’re doing something important that takes discipline and courage and I don’t want to mess up that at all. I don’t want you to resent me for maybe distracting you or interrupting it all. And I get all of it. I really do. I’m not bothered—”

“I’m training for the Olympics, I’m not becoming a monk,” Lexa promised. “I was worried too. You know… about balance. I am worried. But I know when to focus. I know how. You help me focus.”

“I doubt that.”

“You don’t think I train a little harder when you’re watching to impress you?” she chuckled and took a bite, meeting Clarke’s eyes once more, both blushing and giddy. “I see you check me out when I’m working out.”

“You caught me. I’m only with you for your body.”

“Just wait til you see me after a fight. That’s the true test.”

“That’s going to be hard.”

“The black eye and broken nose aesthetic isn’t your thing?”

“We’ll see.”

“These are good,” Lexa pointed at the plate as the doctor rolled her eyes and took a sip of her coffee.

“Does Anya know?” Clarke stole a corner of toast. Truth be told, she loved her breakfast dates. She loved Lexa’s flyaways and the way her eyes looked after a run. She loved feeling like she contributed and was part of the team. She loved how happy the boxer was, first thing in the morning, waxing poetic about the entirety of the day before her and so much time to do so many things. It was a good way to start, or finish, a day.
“I’ll tell her when I take her to school.”

“She doesn’t like me.”

“She doesn’t know you. This is a good way to let you guys get comfortable.”

“Okay.”

“Okay,” Lexa grinned, excited at the prospect. “You’re not freaking out are you? It’s just a slumber party.”

“I’m excited.”

“Me too.”

“Doesn’t mean you’re getting laid,” Clarke added, turning towards the sink to start the dishes.

“Of course it does.”

“What a cocky fellow you are.”

“You haven’t had my tacos yet. You’re going to be all over me, Doc.”

The doctor shook her head for a moment, still tired from her shift, still amused despite the confidence exuding from her breakfast date. She smiled and rinsed the pan while Lexa grinned into her juice and watched her shoulders move, oddly victorious and excited at the thought of the night suddenly, oddly proud of herself for not being an emotional snail and having adult feelings and dealing with this all well enough.

The only noise was the crunching of toast when Clarke turned off the water and turned back towards her guest. Slow and steady, she walked around the counter. Slow and purposeful she leaned forward and kissed her cheek, sitting beside her.

“Tell me about your night?” Lexa ventured, sliding her plate between them and sharing her fork.

“Okay, I give,” Clarke huffed, pushing her plate. “I can understand why you’re famous in select markets.”

“She doubted me,” the boxer explained to her sister, taking another bite.

“I doubted she even existed,” Anya shrugged, earning an elbow from her sister and a laugh from Clarke. “I’m serious. A doctor who was so beautiful and smart and nice,” she sang, mocking Lexa. “I didn’t believe it at all. Let alone you’d find her and she’d agree to go out with you. Highly improbable.”

“Okay, I didn’t sound like that,” Lexa defended herself weakly, feeling the prickly burn of a blush in her neck and cheek. She couldn’t look up at the blonde across the table, much to the other two diners enjoyment.

“Kind of,” Clarke chuckled.

“I regret inviting you over if you’re both going to team up on me.”

“It’s called bonding,” Anya offered.
“Yeah, bonding,” the doctor agreed.

Dinner went well, went smoothly, despite the almost noticeable nerves that festered just below Lexa’s skin, making her movements a little clumsy and her thoughts jump around like a nervous cat. Lexa watched her sister, wary of her moods and mouth, warning her already to be on her best behavior before Clarke arrived. And when the doctor did, Lexa kissed her cheek and grinned, wild and nervous, doing the official introductions between the two.

While she cooked, they orbited. Clarke did surprisingly well, though Lexa knew she shouldn’t be so surprised by that. But she kept up with Anya, and she was genuinely interested in the high schooler. What did it, Lexa realized, was the conversation she vaguely overheard while she was finishing up and they sat on the couch watching television. When Clarke professed that she was glad Anya had some experience with dealing with a boxer, and that she was insanely out of her element. And her sister simply told her it was okay most of the time, and the best tip was to lie and say the bruises weren’t so bad.

“Your sister looks like you,” Clarke whispered as Lexa adjusted on the couch. The dishwasher swished away in the background, the house still and quiet as night grew deeper.

“Not at all,” Lexa snorted. “My nose had been broken so many times it hasn’t been straight since I last was.”

“The eyes. The mannerisms. The jaw,” Clarke kissed Lexa’s as she mentioned it. The movie played on while they whispered.

“She looks like our mom,” Lexa nodded, adjusting again and pulling the blonde closer as she burrowed against her side. “I don’t look like any of them.”

“Because you get beat up for a living.”

“Because I just didn’t get the good genes.”

“I like Anya.”

“I’m relieved.”

“Were you really worried?” Clarke lifted her head, giving Lexa a stern kind of look. She hemmed and hawed and shrugged as she was known to do when asked a question of substance.

“Anya has a way of… she has a hard outer shell.”

“I wonder where she got that from,” Clarke rolled her eyes.

“She can be vocal about her disapproval or when she dislikes something. I was just worried you two wouldn’t get along,” Lexa continued, ignoring her. “I was worried you might be a little nervous about my arrangement.”

“I put up with your sweaty clothes all through my house, and you think the fact that you work hard, provide for your sister, put her in private school, and are doting and her guardian would bother me?”

“Yeah.”

“I knew from day one Anya was part of the deal.”

“I know, but it’s different.”
“She’s a sweet kid and you’re doing a great job.”

“She likes you.”

“Why wouldn’t she? I’m likable,” Clarke wrapped her arms around Lexa’s ribs, ran her nose along her neck as Lexa dipped her lips, catching her. “You like me,” the doctor whispered, lips hovering near Lexa’s.

“I’m fond of you.”

“Are you going to make me breakfast tomorrow?”

“After my run.”

Clarke nodded finally, pulling away and standing up from the couch. She held out her hand to the boxer who remained rooted on the couch.

“Let’s go to bed.”

Work couldn’t end soon enough. Clarke found herself so antsy that she even paid for a cab to take her across town rather than wait for the subway. The entire ride though, she wasn’t too certain as to what was causing the nerves explicitly. It was a lot of things, and yet nothing that she could name.

Things were different the morning she woke up in Lexa’s bed a few weeks ago. Better. But still different. She wasn’t sure how it became so intimate, how that had made them grow together. It didn’t rush them, it didn’t become habitual, though it happened a few more times. It was simply nice and it was hopeful.

It wasn’t that she hurried to catch the end of Lexa’s workout, because that would be ridiculous. Though it wasn’t completely out of the question. Clarke found herself hurrying because she wanted to get in all the time she could and she was nervous about how to handle Lexa leaving for a week for Qualifiers.

It wasn’t that she hurried to catch the end of Lexa’s workout, but when Clarke opened the door to the gym and managed to find the boxer, she was rewarded with the site of her in her sports bra and gloves with the sweat and the muscles and it wasn’t the worst thing in the world to have to see.

Quiet and calm, Clarke hid her nerves and moved through the now familiar gym. Unnoticed, she didn’t get many chances to simply watch Lexa work, to watch her do what she did, but seeing it was almost a little bit of magic. Not knowledgeable at all about boxing or most sports in general, Clarke knew she was watching something special when she saw Lexa training. There was something magnificent about how she moved and how her eyes were so strong and burning with some kind of fire.

Regardless of what it is, when you see someone doing what they were put on this earth to do, whether it be mowing lawns or dribbling a ball or changing a diaper, there’s a bit of magic to it, a bit of goodness that is beyond words, but it is damnwell the most important thing.

“She looks good, right?” Clarke finally ventures, taking a seat beside Anya who barely looks up, stuck deep into her text book.

“Sure.”

“I don’t really know,” the doctor confessed.
“You have to not worry,” Anya shook her head, flipping a page. “She’s in the best shape of her life, and she doesn’t lose.”

“I’m going to worry. It’s my natural state. But I’m glad you decided to come home with me instead of staying all alone in that house all alone.”

“I didn’t have much of a choice. You or Bellamy’s sister’s place.”

“I’ll take being the lesser of two evils. I have the guest room all made up for you. And I’m a terrible cook, so maybe some take out and movies. Whatever you want.”

In the ring, Lexa punched and dodged, sweat and swore. Clarke fidgeted slightly and sighed. She wanted to be in Lexa’s corner, but she knew she couldn’t, and the two conflicting facts made her uncomfortable.

“Hey!” Lexa hopped down amidst Clarke’s internal thoughts. “There you are.” She ran a towel along her forehead and neck. Clarke gulped and watched gratuitously.

“I brought those clothes you left at my place.”

“Perfect. Would you believe I haven’t finished packing yet?” Lexa paused only to kiss her and resume running the towel along her stomach.

“I might be able to fathom the idea.”

“It’s tough, but I imagine you’ll get there.”

“You fly in like two hours.”

“I’m going to shower and head over to the airport. I was waiting on these important clothes.”

“Me and Anya are going to get Korean I think. Sounds good?” the doctor looked down at the teenager.

“Sure.” Lexa gave her sister a look. “I am excited,” she held up her hands.

“We’ll be fine. Don’t worry.”

“I really wish you both could come,” Lexa sighed. “But school and work. A week-long trip to the other side of the world would be irresponsible.”

“We know,” Anya finally stood and shouldered her bag. “Let’s not make this a thing. Go over there and kick ass and get back so we can get ready for the Olympics.”


“I’m always good,” Anya grinned. Clarke saw how conspiratorial it was and shook her head. She watched the younger sister allow the older one to put her hand on the back of her neck and pull her forward so their foreheads were touching. “Knock’em out, champ.”

“Listen to Clarke. If you need anything—”

“I know.”

“I love you,” Lexa smiled and hugged Anya.
“Have a safe trip.” It took a moment before Lexa pulled away. “Seriously. You’re ready. I know you can do it.”

“Can you give us a minute?” the boxer nudged her head at the doctor and Anya nodded and rolled her eyes.

“See you next week.”

Clarke always felt as if she saw another side of Lexa when she was with her sister, and it was no difference now as Anya walked away and Lexa turned her eyes to her.

The gym felt quiet, now, or at least different than it sounded when she first came in with a head full of jitters.

“Let me know if she gives you any trouble. I told her to be on her best behavior,” Lexa sighed. “Thanks for keeping her. I don’t like leaving her alone, and she hates Octavia.”

“It’s no problem. Gives us some time to get to know each other.”

“Don’t get your hopes up. She’s a tough nut to crack.”

“No hopes at all. Just glad I could help.”

“You going to like me if I lose?” Lexa asked, bashful and looking down at her fingers as they worried and knit themselves into knots.

“I’ve actually never considered it. You’ve never lost anything since I’ve known you. You’re still kind of this good Samaritan than stops a robbery,” Clarke grinned at the display.

“That was a while ago.”

“Yeah. Not too long though.”

“Long enough.”

“You’re going to do great. Don’t worry about Anya. She’s okay with me. And we’ll be eagerly waiting for you to come home to us,” Clarke promised, taking a step forward.

“I’m going to bring you the win. Just you wait and see.”

“I believe it.”

“Good.” Lexa slipped her hands around Clarke’s waist, pulling her closer. “I wish you could come. Is that too soon?”

“I wish I could, but it might be.”

“Plus work.”

“And Anya.”

“Right, right, her,” Lexa smirked and nodded. “Next one.”

“Definitely.”

“I’m insanely fond of you, and I’m glad I beat up those robbers because I got to meet you.”
“You’re going to do great,” Clarke promised, running her fingertips down Lexa’s neck and resting her palms on her collarbones.

“Thanks.”

“I like you a lot.”

“No need to get mushy on me.”

As much as she wanted to kiss her, Clarke was overcome with the urge to simply hug Lexa, and so she did. She wrapped her arms around the boxer’s neck and hung there, squeezing her close.
The city was frozen, though the thaw at its heart began to change it. Buildings dripped and streets cleared of ice, for a day or two, and the next wayward storm would blow its way through, punishing it for believing that it had a chance at all to reach the sacred gates of summer. But still, the city did its best to usher in the changing of seasons. The snow didn’t pile high anymore, but came in wisps and dustings, and the ice didn’t pepper the roads or sidewalks, but relegated itself to puddles and gutters. The city tried, so hard, to escape the perpetual winter, that it did not even notice or care at all, about what would happen on the other side of the world.

Stalling as she entered the only slightly less foreign townhouse, Anya strained her ears as the door clicked shut, listening for any signs of life. She hung the keys on the hook and kicked off her shoes, grateful to drop the heavy books in her arms.

Two days, and she’d grown almost used to it, and so as she detached her coat, she started to dig through the fridge for some kind of sustenance until the doctor got home.

She wasn’t dumb. Anya knew how her sister felt about Clarke, knew that this had the potential to be something that meant the doctor stuck around, and as much as she wanted to give her trouble, to really test her mettle, she couldn’t truly bring herself to do it. Not fully. A little here and there, but Lexa didn’t date, and she owed her sister this.

As she took a bite of an apple, Anya tried to message her sister in hopes of avoiding some of the homework that was waiting for her.

She took the time to snoop. She looked at menus and books, scoured the junk drawer, found baby pictures, and thankfully, nothing weird. Instead of being a nightmare, she decided to embrace welcoming Clarke, and thus, vetting her. It was the high road, and the younger of the sisters was proud at her growth as a human as she opened every drawer in the house.

For her entire life, it was her sister’s job to protect her, and now, she could pretend that analyzing Clarke’s Netflix queue was he same as taking a punch, that sacrificing her own dreams was the same as an informal background check, that being a punching bag for a living was the same as asking uncomfortable questions to really get to the deep down parts of someone. Anya found herself on a mission during her week with Clarke. That and a mission to finish the paper her sister would hound her about when she got back, win or lose.

It wasn’t that Lexa wasn’t smart. In fact, far from it. But her academic record only pushed her sister harder, and thus led to the stacks of books and AP classes and schedule that would make anyone want to bash their own brains out with a textbook. But Lexa was smart, and she was eager for Clarke, and it made Anya worried despite her sister’s carefulness.

As much as she hated to admit it, Clarke’s house was nice enough, and the company wasn’t
completely terrible. The doctor was nice and not a serial killer, which was important. She did her laundry and kept the fridge full of mostly healthy things, though Anya didn’t hold it against her completely.

“Hey, Anya, sorry I’m late,” Clarke came in through the back, arms full of bags. “I stopped and got a few things for the fight.”

“Yeah you did,” the teenager looked up from her books spread out on the table. “You do know my sister’s last fight lasted two minutes and forty-eight seconds, right?”

“Believe me, she made it perfectly clear,” the doctor shook her head with a smile, sharing it with the kid at her table. “A few times.”

“Sounds like her.”

“How’s it going? No problems getting back?” She asked, beginning to put away a few things after putting her coat on a chair.

“I have used the subway before, so yeah.”

“Have you heard from Lexa?”

“Just a few texts earlier. She goes quiet before a match. Aliens could invade and she wouldn’t notice,” Anya shrugged, tapping her pencil against her notebook. “What’s for dinner?”

“How do you two do it?” Clarke shook her head. “You’re both lanky and tall and all you do is eat.”

“Well, Lexa burns about a million calories per day, and I’m just blessed with exquisite genes that also may include addictive tendencies and terrible taste in men,” she explained.

“She was right about you.”

“How’s that?”

“Too smart for your own good.” Clarke earned a devious kind of grin from the teenager as she shook her head, somewhat trying to deny it. “Honestly, I’m exhausted. How about you order pizza while I shower?”

“I can do that.”

“Try to get some veggies on it at least.”

“Extra meat, Extra cheese. Got it.”

With a roll of her eyes, Clarke shared a smile and went to take her shower, leaving Anya with the menu from the fridge and her big books that made her feel incredibly stupid.

If Anya were really honest about it, she’d admit that she understood why her sister felt so nice around Clarke. She was together, put-together, all-together, basically an adult, and that was nice. Especially for the two girls who raised themselves and did not fully understand what that meant, nor had any good experiences with individuals as such.

Staying here, in this house, that had clean towels for the bathroom specifically for hands, and a revolving supply of fresh vegetables, Anya felt that kind of homesickness for a place that never existed for her, but one that she oddly liked, and found herself almost afraid of losing. It would make sense that her sister would understand, would feel safe here, would be as smitten as she was. A real,
live adult, who was funny and smart and so far hadn’t snapped despite all teenage attempts to make her break.

By the time Clarke made it back downstairs, her television was on and the teen moved from the table in the kitchen to the coffee table in front of the announcing and flashing screen. She towelled her hair and flopped down behind Anya after grabbing a glass of wine, oddly nervous for what she was about to watch.

“How’s the homework?”

“Not too much tonight.”

“You’ve been working for like, three hours,” Clarke scoffed, leaning forward and perusing the biology book. Anya just chuckled. “Anything strike your fancy that you might want to do when you go to college?”

“I’m not sure.”

“Well what do you like?”

“I’m good at math. I like physics.”

“You’re a freak of nature,” Clarke complained. “I hated that stuff.”

“Now you sound like Lexa. I don’t know. I was thinking of engineering. I just like how things work, I like numbers, and I’m good with them.”

“You know, my dad’s an engineer, right?” Anya turned around and looked at Clarke like she was kidding. “I mean it. He works downtown, not even a few blocks from the hospital. I had lunch with him last week.”

“Does he love it?”

“He’s kind of got a brain like yours. He loves it,” Clarke nodded with a faint smile. “I can see if he needs a little help, maybe you could spend some time with him. He could give you some advice and stuff. I can help with bio, but that’s about it.”

“That’d be… yeah,” Anya nodded, furrowing and serious. “Please. That’d be spectacular.”

“Alright,” Clarke smiled, pulling out her phone and firing off a text. For a second, Anya grew quiet, apprehensive even. She was unsure and surprised and suddenly very much alarmed at how easy things were coming. She stared at her notebook and processed. “Yeah, I can take you over after school tomorrow, if you want.”

“You just… texted him?”

“Yeah,” Clarke shrugged. “He is always way too eager to meld young minds. It’s like a dork convention when he has kids visit. No matter the age, he loves showing off.”

“What’s it… what’s it like?” Anya turned around, pulling her knees up and staring at Clarke as if she were a freak of nature who didn’t realize she was a spectacle. Instead the doctor just typed on her phone and rolled her eyes at her father.

“What’s what like?”

“Never mind.”
“His firm?” Clarke sighed, locking her screen. “It’s not too big. He takes on projects he likes. Always tinkering. He loves the job though. He was working on nerve sensors with one of my colleagues at the hospital before funding got pulled last year.”

“Sounds amazing,” Anya offered weakly, turning back to her notebook.

From the couch, Clarke crossed her legs and stared at the screen, hoping to catch some glimpse of Lexa, though it was preoccupied with a previous match from other girls. She wasn’t sure what exactly was supposed to happen, and so she just waited. She watched Anya work, her pen moving quickly across the page, filling it as her fingers moved along the lines in the book.

“You work really hard at school,” Clarke observed aloud.

“It’s my job.”

“Still. It’s impressive.”

“Lexa worked really hard to give me this opportunity. I can’t let her down.”

“I doubt you could. She’s insanely proud of you,” the doctor assured the girl.

“No matter what I do, I’ll always be in debt to her,” Anya sighed, leaning back against the couch slightly as she stretched her leg out in one direction. “But if I can take care of her, like she took care of me. I don’t know. Is it stupid? To think that?”

“Not at all. Though I don’t think there’s a debt. I don’t know. I’m an only child.”

“When I was four, my sister shoved me under the bed and got her arm broken in three places by one of our foster dads,” Anya rattled off. “When I was nine, her face got beat so swollen, her eyes couldn’t open for a week. When I was eleven, she won her first match and got us a shitty apartment on King. Fourth floor walk up. One bedroom. Barely working lights. Two years later, I started at one of the best private schools in the city, and I have my own room. I owe her everything.”

Quiet and surprised, Clarke simply listened, in awe and unaware of how absolutely astounding her girlfriend truly was, in awe of how adored she was by her sister, in awe of both for innumerable reasons.

“And one day,” Anya grinned, dreamy and determined. “I’m going make it all worth it for her.”

She couldn’t help herself, and she didn’t mean to, but Clarke slid down onto the floor and wrapped her arms around the student, hugging her tightly, though her body went slightly rigid at the sudden contact.

“Um. What are you doing?”

“This is how we communicate in my family,” Clarke mumbled, not letting go. It was in that moment that she realized she had two little ducks she had to teach how to be human and assimilate into the real world.

“Thank God,” Anya pulled away as the doorbell rang with pizza. “Lexa said you were a hugger. I didn’t get it.”

“You two are hopeless.”

There was the smile. The same smile Lexa gave her often when Clarke got fed up with, or utterly
annoyed by her girlfriend who did it on purpose. Anya had the same one, and in that moment, Clarke knew there were so many things genetics did, that it defied all logic.

Even from the stoop, Lexa could hear the chatter inside that awaited her return. The townhouse on the corner glowed in the evening, even exuded a warmth from the inhabitants inside, and yet she could not make herself step inside out of the cold.

The cut above her eye tingled in the frozen breeze, while the swelling on her cheek enjoyed the relief from the steaming it did to her blood. As eager as she’d been to fly across the world, with new news of her Olympic-bound journey and the fact that she suddenly had two people to come home to, she couldn’t make herself cross the threshold just yet.

From the window, through the curtains, she could make out bodies, saw a familiar bit of blonde, saw the long, lanky frame of her sister, arms over her chest against the fireplace. And she laughed. Her sister laughed so hard she snorted at something the blonde said. All at once, Lexa realized it was something she could get used to, and that was a dangerous kind of game.

“I thought you would have been in there already,” Indra approached, hands deep in her pockets and huffing against the bitter evening setting into the streets.

“You know me. Fashionably late,” Lexa grinned, allowing her mentor to hold her chin and tilt, appraising the damage when she was close enough. Even in the dim light, Lexa could see her glance of disappointment and tsk.

“It’s like you’re allergic to keep your hands up.”

“I won.”

“Sloppily.”

“High praise.”

“Stop. I’m proud,” she finally chuckled and hugged the girl who she’d once rescued from a street fight and made work in her gym to keep her busy and out of trouble. Lexa smiled and relaxed into her arms. “Just wish you’d stop trying to make yourself even uglier,” Indra teased, pushing the boxer’s head slightly.

“Can’t believe Anya managed to get you to come by. You’re usually the strong silent type.”

“Not everyday a street kid from my gym makes it to the Olympic team. Thought I’d show my support. Tell you to keep your hands up.”

“There’s someone I want you to meet.”

“That too,” Indra smiled, gently patting Lexa’s sore cheek and nudging her head toward the door.

With a deep breath and silent nod, Lexa finally opened the door, provoking a cry of welcomes and celebration at the arrival of the main event, the woman of the hour, the reason for the welcome home party entirely. It felt like everyone she ever knew was in the home, and it wasn’t many people, but to have everyone who mattered in one place was new and nice.

“Hey,” Anya punched her sister’s arm before hugging her quickly. “You did good out there. Do I get a ticket to Rio?”
“We’ll see how your grades look.” Lexa hugged her tighter than she meant to, but she needed it. The boxer held her sister tighter than ever and felt her lungs expand and fill because it was all because of her, for better or worse, and that was a lot to be personified in such a young thing.

“We have a lot to talk about,” her sister pulled away finally.

“Can’t believe I beat you to the free beer,” Bellamy punched her arm as well.

“Why is everyone doing that?” She shook her head in disbelief, hugging her trainer and partner in crime, both celebrating the victory happily.

It took a while to make it to everyone, to be overrun with love and support, so much so, that it was exhausting, and Lexa could understand why Indra stayed away so often. It was a lot. Too much, in fact, though she was thankful to share that burden.

“Come on,” Lexa finally met Clarke’s eyes and grinned. She held her arms out, waiting, and she was not disappointed.

Arms went around her neck and she smiled so wide she had to hide it in Clarke’s shoulder as she stayed there and refused to do anything else. It didn’t matter that her ribs were still bruised, or that her hands hurt, or that her cheek was going to break under the strain of it all. All that existed was the girl in her arms that invited everyone she knew to her home and celebrated.

“I am so unbelievably proud of you,” the doctor whispered, kissing Lexa’s cheek as glasses were dinged for them to kiss. Hoots and hollers erupted at their display, a little foreign to anyone who knew the boxer well enough to be there, but the happiness she beamed was more than enough to sway them to favor the blonde.

With her girl on her arm, Lexa swallowed the lump in her throat that she was unsure of its origins, and she faced everyone. She felt Clarke’s hand on her hip and she felt suddenly very different.

“Thank you all, for coming,” she smiled. “I think this might be the happiest moment of my life, this exact moment. It’s a lot, but,” she took a deep breath and grinned at her sister, met her friend’s eyes, surveying them graciously before looking down at Clarke and getting a dimpled smile back. “It’s something I could get used to, that’s for sure.”

“And now we go for gold!” Bellamy yelled, earning another round of yells and cheers and celebrations.

The music turned up and all Lexa could do was shake her head and kiss the girl beside her properly, because surely such happiness had to be shared, or she would explode.
Kidnapped

Chapter Summary

A clexa fic where the grounders are at war with another clan and they manage to kidnap Clarke (kind of like what happened with Costia) but Lexa manages to rescue Clarke just in time.

Rain continued to fall in small, needle-like pricks, filling puddles politely without much disturbance. The air was thick with the thinness, filled with nothing and emptier because of it. Mud and water streamed down the hills, engorging the rivers and lake with steady offerings in this, their time of plenty.

Half-unconscious and barely able to stand, Clarke grunted as she was tossed onto the horse’s back. Her clothes were caked in mud, more dirt than fabric as the ground continued to become a thick, sludge-like gorge.

Three days, she’d been bound and tied, thrown on the back of a horse and moved through lands which were now unfamiliar. Three days she’d waited, starved, drank from puddles when she could, bit and kicked and earned slaps and punches and whips, when they could. She and the weather rallied against her captors.

“It’s not too late, guys,” Clarke tried once again, smiling despite the raging pain in her ribs and back and arms and everywhere. “Just drop me off, I’ll head home. Forget this ever happened.”

The masks her captors wore were unfamiliar to her, were not the ones of the grounders or any visiting clans she could recall. All she saw was eyes, orange eyes, red eyes, black eyes. She wasn’t sure they understood her, but every time she spoke, they responded quite eagerly with the universal language for please, be quiet. She took her punches and spit into the mud as they packed their supplies from the night.

“My wife, she’s going to be mad. Like really mad. I’ve seen her mad, but I don’t think I’ll ever see her this mad,” Clarke continued, stammering over her bloodied tongue. “Commander Lexa?” she rolled, falling with a mighty wallop into the mud, making them madder. If her shoulder wasn’t already broken, that did it.

“You have to have heard of her,” she said, quite simply, politely, conversationally. “I doubt you took me for fun. But you have to know her. My wife. She likes mascara. Loves sharp swords. Dislikes anyone who is not her people. She’s going to be mad.”

Clarke watched them speak to each other in a language she could not even begin to understand. So she just kept going, dirt seeping into her eyes as one shook his head and moved to pick her up again, this time with more rope.

“She’s going to be mad at me too, for getting captured,” Clarke shrugged. “But, you know. What can I do?”

She allowed herself, with little option else, to be picked up and placed on the horse once more, her wrists tied around its neck, her waist bound to its body.
“Ah, you did a good job with those knots,” she tugged slightly and balanced herself with little other choice than to ride underneath the belly if she tried her stunt again.

The large, hooded man said something to her, both speaking and not listening.

“Like, really mad,” Clarke repeated, once more earning a look from the guard.

A few minutes later, he swung himself up behind her on the animal.

“Are we there yet?” Clarke asked, looking over her disjointed shoulder.

An instant later, she heard a gurgle and a gasp and the guard fell from the horse, three arrows sticking from his back. The rest of the unit pulled their weapons and surveyed the forest, waiting, not seeing. Clarke hushed the horse as best she could.

It came a few moments later, the attack, the ambush, the little battle. Clarke recognized her people, her friends, the guard, Lexa. She didn’t remember who, but someone cut her down amidst the fury and the noise. She stood in the mud while two grounders stood in front of her, unable to move.

The clamour came to a stop quite suddenly, the metal no longer striking metal, the dead, dying and no longer moaning. The mud was thicker, was hearty and seasoned with blood once more.

“Let me see her,” Lexa approached Clarke’s position eagerly, quickly, frantic beneath the severe. “Are you alright?” she asked, surveying her wife. She touched her cheeks, pushed wet tendrils of hair from her eyes.

“A little better now,” Clarke nodded. Her arm hung at her side, her body throbbing at every joint, her head spinning and throat dry and caked with as much mud as her clothes.

“The rain washed out their trail,” Lexa explained, shaking her head, her words moving quickly. “We came as quickly as we could. I swear. We have been-”

“I know,” Clarke nodded, head still in Lexa’s blood-stained palms. “Thank you.”

“We came as quick as we could,” Lexa said again. It was an apology, at least as much as she could word.

“I know,” Clarke smiled and kissed her wife, kissed the Commander, kissed her despite the cuts on her lips and the blood in her teeth, kissed her with as much gratitude as she could mean.

The group mingled in the background, picking up the spoils of battle, gearing up the new horses.

“I thought I lost you,” Lexa confessed, just a whisper, just a sigh, just a tiny fear that no one else could have but Clarke.

“There was not one second that I doubted you coming for me,” Clarke swore. She ran her working hand along Lexa’s neck, following the streams of raindrops and sweat.
Wisdom Teeth

Chapter Summary

Prompt: Lexa get’s her wisdom teeth pulled out or comes out of some sort of surgery and doesn’t know Clarke’s her girlfriend/wife.

“Who is that?” Lexa whisper hissed, one eye growing wide while the other refused to open. “Who is that? She’s beautiful.”

“That’s Clarke,” the aide shook her head and smiled behind her mask. “Your wife.”

“Shut. Up.”

The gauze hung in her mouth, stuffed in her cheeks, and the one eye still wouldn’t open, but her mouth sure did. It just hung there as she stared at the blonde and felt like she’d been struck dumb.

“That’s the most beautiful girl I’ve ever seen in my life,” Lexa confessed in her mumbled tone. “Who is that?”

“Clarke,” the blonde finally looked up as she continued to fill out the paperwork. “I’m your wife.”

“No way.”

“Three years now, honey,” she held up her hand and wiggled the ring that sat there.

Clarke watched the confused furrow appear on the patient’s brow. She smacked her gums a bit and tongued the gauze. Too many thoughts flew through her water-logged mind.

“Hey,” Lexa finally leaned her head slightly towards the nurse. “Hey. How did I get the most beautiful girl in the world to marry me?”

“I honestly have no idea right now.”

“Do you think she knows who I am?”

“I reckon she might.”

“Oh boy,” she hummed and quieted herself.

There was rarely a second or instant of her life in which Clarke ever saw Lexa so out of control of her own faculties. Rarely did her wife drink, and when she did it was cut off at two, three tops. Infrequently, she spoke her mind so blatantly. As beautiful as her sense of humor was when they were alone, Clarke knew that Lexa was not renowned for being a barrel of laughs for anyone else.

Laying back on the dentists chair, her wife now was remarkably childlike and honest, to a degree of which it made Clarke smile despite herself.

“You’re so pretty,” Lexa sighed, smiling half-dopey and amazed at the blonde beside her bed. “You look like you smell like cinnamon.”
“Just rest, Lex. Don’t talk. You’ll hurt your mouth.”

“Do I get to kiss you one day?”

“Sure.” The giggles were almost coming. Clarke felt them nearly escape as the nurse’s shoulders shook on the other side of the room. “Anytime you want.”

“Seriously? How? You are. So beautiful.” Her eyes shut again though she spoke with her hands waving through the air. “Can I touch your butt?”

“Maybe later. Rest now, okay?”

“Are we going to be married for a long time?”

“Yes, I think so.”

The nurse excused herself as she took the clipboard from Clarke, leaving behind nothing but quiet and Lexa’s occasional humming. Her wife scooted the stool closer and dabbed at her chin before running her hand through her hair.

“My mouth hurts,” Lexa murmured as her brow furrowed and eyes stayed shut.

“I know, babe. It’ll be better soon. We’ll go home and I’ll tuck you into bed with some pain pills.”

Green eyes appeared through the small squint of eyes until they opened wider and the smile spread wider once more.

“You’re beautiful,” she whispered. “You married me?”

“I did. You don’t remember?”

“I hope I do soon. Will you go home with me?”

“To our house? Yeah, I think I’ll come if that’s okay.”

“Okay?” Lexa scoffed before closing her eyes again. “It’s the best news I’ve had ever in my life.”
“I need glasses,” Lexa called over her shoulder as her barback scooted behind her.

“Again?” Lincoln sighed, surveying the bar.

“Duh.”

The crowd ebbed and crashed against the counter, hands shooting out for drinks, crisp bills folded long and waving. The bar was dark despite the bright lights attempting to make it a little more manageable. Lexa barely looked up in the rush, hearing orders, grabbing cash, and moving as deftly as she could.

The relief only came as the band went on and the orders slowed for the set. Lexa grabbed a cold water from the ice and ran it along her neck and jaw when she cleared out her section and everyone was taken care of as best they needed. She looked at her watch and sighed realizing it was still early. She looked at the register and smiled at the cash out she expected.

“Excuse me?” A voice made Lexa jump slightly as she dropped the water bottle and looked up, flustered.

“Yeah? Yes, sorry,” the bartender smiled as she leaned towards the girl at her bar.

“Can I please have a stiff, stiff drink and something fruity for my friend?” She finally looked up at Lexa and smiled slightly.

There was a moment, a stillness, a complete moment of silence. Not one sound infiltrated this bubble between them, and Lexa forgot to even hear at all.

“I think I can manage that,” Lexa smiled back, not moving at all to make a drink until the customer looked away and tucked her hair behind her ear. Frantic and distracted, Lexa returned to the task at hand, moving and failing to be as in control as she had been during the rush.

“You’re busy tonight,” the girl tried as Lexa worked, refusing to look up ever again.

“I’m not even sure why. This band is terrible.”

“My best friend is the bassist.”

“In all the right ways, terrible. You know, like so bad they’re good,” Lexa attempted as she watched the girl chuckle and look back at the stage.

“You’re not getting out of that one. Good try.”

“Well, let me buy you a drink.”

“Even better attempt, but I should get back,” the girl decided, picking up the drinks. “Don’t worry, I
think they’re terrible too.” With a small smile, Lexa watched her disappear towards a booth in the back.

She waited for color to appear. She would have loved for the world to burst alive when that girl smiled. It felt like it, but as she looked around, Lexa was confronted with the same black and white and grey world. It was a faint thought, a momentary curiosity, but the bartender shook her head and dismissed the way her heart stopped when the stranger smiled as nothing more than being tired on her part.

It was the blaring of her phone that did it, that brought the whole world into a sudden and jarring focus. As soon as she jumped awake and attempted to find the heinous device, the world crashed against her window. Cars honked, tires sloshed, sirens squealed through the tunnels and streets. The world was alive and crying like a newborn, a fact Lexa discovered harshly.

“I’m sleeping,” she mumbled into her pillow with the phone smashed against her cheek.

“You promised me you’d be awake for lunch,” Anya sighed as her sister growled into her phone. “I specifically made Tommy stay home to watch the baby.”

“Alright!” Lexa shouted for no reason into her bed. “I’m coming. Give me ten minutes.”

“Don’t bother coming if you’re going to be cranky,” her sister warned.

“I’m not cranky!”

“Because if I wanted-” Lexa hung up as the tirade started. For just a moment she contemplated sleeping. She could just go back to bed and ignore her sister, incur a wrath that would rival Vesuvius, but still, that’d be tomorrow’s problem.

With a reluctant grumble, Lexa pushed herself from the bed and hurried to get ready.

The first strike of color came as she was running down the sidewalk in the rain. She saw it like a blur as the taxi sped down the block, glittering and shining in the rain. It made her freeze, right there, only moving to follow it with her head, being bumped from the other pedestrians as they ignored her stall. Dumb and confused, Lexa watched it happen, watched the car turn and tried to remember what that color was supposed to be called.

Frantic and startled, Lexa looked at the rest of the street, hoping to see more, but everything else was still monochromatic.

It took longer than she’d admit to start walking again. Her shirt was soaked through at the shoulders, and by the time she reached the small restaurant they frequented, her hair was a frizzy mess.

“ Took you long enough,” Anya hugged her shivering shoulders. The clamour of the diner was no match for Lexa’s own thoughts as she took her seat. Her feet sloshed in their shoes while people leaving left squeals with their heels.

“What colors are taxis?”

“Yellow.”

“Okay,” Lexa smiled, looking out the window again as a streak of the color appeared again. “Yellow,” she whispered, nodding slightly. She was too busy looking out the window, eyes wide and fixed, to notice her sister staring curiously at her.
After a week, Clarke could recognize two colors. The grass was green. Her scrubs were green. The salad she ate was mostly green. She found herself partial to that color as it was the first she noticed. One morning she saw a weed in the pavement, she saw the lawn of the park and she touched it, curious and confused.

But that was all. She refused to acknowledge that she saw it at all. She dreaded this moment, unlike all of her friends or anyone else she’d ever spoken with in her life. She avoided the walk near the park. She avoided the trip to the museum her feet kept wanting to pull her toward.

Her pen was red. She learned that color quickly. Blood was red, and when it came so vibrant and warm, it suddenly took on new meaning to her. The first time she saw it was in the middle of the night during a response to a car crash. It was red, everywhere, on everything, on everyone. So much red she couldn’t think straight. But now she ignored it.

“There’s someone asking for you, Dr. Griffin,” the nurse mentioned as Clarke leaned against the counter, refusing to look up.

Tired and sore after refusing to leave the safe walls of the hospital in fear of seeing more colors, Clarke caught herself before snapping back at the innocent nurse. With a short smile she nodded and followed where she was pointed.

Certain she looked as bad as she felt, Clarke picked up folders she dropped in her death march towards the waiting room. Fumbling and lethargic she finally looked up to see who might have appeared. In her mind, she’d pictured her roommate, or possibly a friend stealing her away after avoiding them so astutely. In her gut, she knew it wasn’t.

“Hi,” the stranger approached. Clarke dropped everything in her hands once more when she saw the green of her eyes. “Sorry, did I startle you?” the stranger asked, kneeling down quickly to help as Clarke ducked down quickly.

“No, I just… you look familiar but I don’t know you,” Clarke mumbled, refusing to look anywhere but her own hands as they struggled to straighten her files and papers.

“This is going to sound weird,” Lexa stood slowly, handing the doctor the rest of her supplies. “But I can’t seem to shake the thought that it was you, from the other night. Why I can see how blue your eyes are and how yellow your hair is.”

“You… can… see color then?” Clarke cleared her throat and fidgeted in her pocket.

“Yeah, it happened a few days ago. I was wondering… well. This is weirder than I thought it’d be. See, I hunted down that band that played, and then called around. I promise I’m not a stalker, it’s just. You start to see color and you work in a bar, you see a lot of people on a given night. You were my best lead.”

Clarke watched the blood rush to her cheeks, watched the blood pool there and burn brightly.

“I’m sorry. I can’t help you,” the doctor lied. “Still blank here.”

“Are you sure? Maybe it’s…”

“I think I might notice.”

“Right,” the stranger smiled sadly before it faded and she took a deep breath. “I’m sorry to have bothered you.”
“It’s fine. Good luck with your search.”

Even after watching the bartender leave, Clarke stood in the same spot, clutching her files and staring at the green doors that led outside. She heard the beeping of machines, the screeching of shoes moving too quickly, the murmuring of families afraid to leave for even a moment, the squeaky wheel of the mop bucket moving down the hallway. And all Clarke could really focus on was the green eyes and blush and face and everything that had just disappeared forever because of her own decision.

With a grieving heart, Clarke sat down in one of the waiting room chairs and tried to convince herself that it was for the best.

Another week and another set of dead ends. Lexa saw taxi’s and the sky, the lake and the sunlight filtering through the grey trees, but she couldn’t shake those eyes and that hair of the doctor, no matter how many strangers said they might be her soulmate.

“It has to be one of them,” Lexa sighed as she walked with her sister through the park towards the subway. “I could have sworn it’d be the doctor.”

“Why?”

“She just. I can’t explain it.”

“Maybe you just wanted it to be her, but it isn’t.”

“Maybe.”

“Your soulmate won’t lie about being your soulmate,” Anya sighed. “It doesn’t work like that. It’s fate. It’s meant to work out in the end. And you just have to trust that.”

“I didn’t think I’d see the colors again,” Lexa swallowed, taking in the pale blue of the afternoon sky. “I don’t want it to go away. I keep waking up, waiting for it to happen.”

“It’s still only a few?”

“Yeah.”

“I don’t know what’s happening. It’s supposed to be everything within a few days. A week tops.”

“I’ve tried to look online, but there were no concrete answers, just guesses.”

They continued to walk as the stroller hummed and the gravel rustled beneath their feet. The birds whistled and the voices from the people playing on the lawn on the nice day mingled well enough above the traffic to hide away the fact that the city was alive and in full force.

“They won’t go away,” Anya tried to make her sister feel better. “Costia was a beautiful moment, and you know there is more than one happy ending for everyone.”

“I know,” Lexa lied, nodding and pretending to smile to make her sister worry less. “I know, I know,” she laughed when it didn’t work. “I’ll figure it out.”

Two weeks of non-stop work was all it took for Clarke to earn a warning to take a day off from her boss. She knew it would happen eventually, that someone would catch on to the way she never left. It was the after part that scared her.
She was sure how, though she’d blame it on the nagging noise in the back of her head that drove her feet to get off at the wrong subway stop. Though she meant to go straight home and shower for thrity-six hours straight to wash the world away and clear her head with nothing but white noise, she somehow found herself in the heart of downtown in front of the odd shaped museum.

It took her a few minutes to buy a ticket. A few minutes of standing outside staring at it, remembering the days she’d spend inside with her mother, of the promises that were made that one day Clarke would understand that majesty and beauty of everything housed inside.

Her hands shook as she bought it, handing over the crumpled wad of money with a certain type of fear she was unaccustomed to having anymore. In her ER, she was in control, able to handle any emergency, any dire situation, and yet now, here, she was grossly aware of how little control she did have, a thought that was becoming more and more apparent.

Though there was more to see, Clarke had one thing on her mind, one aim in her mission, and when she found the painting, she sat on the bench before it and stared, mesmerized by the colors.

It wasn’t until she sat there staring that she realized the true exhaustion that inhabited her body. Fighting against the colors, against the pull, against that dull buzzing between her ears that she assumed was meant to guide her forward, all of it was wearing her down until she couldn’t even think at all.

Instead, she just stared. She leaned back and stared at every inch of painting available surrounded by the grey of the walls and the grey of most else.

“I wasn’t sure why, but something told me to spend the day here,” a familiar voice sat down beside the tired doctor.

“Funny how those things go,” Clarke sighed.

“It was you, wasn’t it?” Clarke didn’t have the guts to look at her because she’d see the green of her eyes and she’d see the pink of her lip and she’d fail at this immortal task at hand. She simply nodded.

They sat in the quiet, both staring at the painting on the wall. Lexa saw new colors, saw new shades of old ones, saw the vibrant way things seemed to work there, and for Clarke, too, the painting became something new and more alive as soon as the stranger sat beside her.

“My mom used to bring me here,” the doctor cleared her throat and explained. “She’d tell me that one day I’d see this and I’d understand. She met my father here, and she said the whole museum exploded alive around her. And then she died,” Clarke coughed and looked away, clenching her jaw. “And my dad picked up drinking as a hobby, and I refused to ever give anything that kind of hold over me. So I lied to you. And I’m sorry.”

For another moment Lexa stared at the portrait of the doctor’s face, watching the angles of it as it fought against the day. She was so in love with her already it actually hurt, felt as if her bones were being pinched in a vice.

“I saw colors once. For just a few days. She died and everything went back to that. When you showed up, it scared the hell out of me.”

Neither did much else except sit there in the honesty, almost afraid to ask what it meant, almost unsure of what their options were at such an hour.

“Clarke,” the doctor offered.
“Lexa.” They shook hands and went back to looking at the painting.

“What do we do now?”

“Well, we can sit here a little bit longer, if you’d like. I have no where else to be,” Lexa smiled as Clarke nodded.

After a few more moments, Lexa was surprised by a warm weight on her shoulder, but Clarke rested her cheek there and sighed.

Seventeen hours straight, Clarke slept in Lexa’s bed. The rain came as they walked there from the museum and it didn’t stop the entire time. It still beat the tiny drums of her windows as Clarke found herself waking in the mid-morning.

The smell of the sheets was different, was new to her, but already she felt at home in them, and for a moment she gave up fighting it.

But she did. She pushed herself up and moved to find her other half.

“We have to talk,” Clarke stated, standing in the doorway as Lexa lounged on the couch, a book propped up over her head as she read along.

“Did you sleep well?”

“Yes, fine. Great, thank you.”

“You must work too hard.”

“I work hard because I save lives.”

“I know. It must be stressful.”

“We have to talk. About this situation.”

Lexa grinned. Clarke watched her do it and she stood there as it happened. She watched her sit the book down on the table and stand up. Clarke gulped and watched it happen, still.

“We should,” Lexa nodded. “But if I don’t kiss you, I think I might die. I don’t know why, but I think I might.”

“Yeah,” Clarke nodded despite the huge neon NO her brain flashed behind her eyes.

When Lexa kissed her, Clarke rooted her hands in her shirt and held it there as long as possible. Even after her lips were gone, she kept her eyes closed and try to remember if anything else was supposed to matter or if the atomic bomb felt something like this back then.

“Alright?” Lexa asked, still inches from Clarke’s lips.

“Okay.”

“What color did you see first?”

“Green. You?”

“Yellow.”
“Do you see them all now?”

“I don’t care. I see you.”

“This is crazy.”

“Yeah,” Lexa nodded. Smiling, she kissed her again.
“You shouldn’t be on your feet,” Lexa scolded Clarke as she moved around the kitchen. She tossed her bag on the couch and her keys on the counter as her wife rolled her eyes and drained the pasta in the sink, steam billowing up in a great cloud that disappeared quickly.

“I’m three months pregnant, not made of glass,” Clarke argued.

“The books said to be active within reason.”

“I think making dinner is reasonable.”

“I could have made that,” Lexa insisted, moving into the kitchen and pulling a wine glass down and reaching for the bottle. She received a stern glance as she realized what she’d reached for, and put it back sheepishly. “Sorry.”

“We were hungry,” Clarke shrugged, handing her plates and kissing her cheek.

“How did the check-up go?” Lexa put the plates down and wrapped her arms around her wife, kissing her shoulder, her neck, running her hands over the small protrusion forming at her stomach. She stretched her hands wide to cover all of it, smiling against the fabric covering her skin. It wasn’t much yet, just now noticeable if she was wearing tighter clothes. Lexa found her hand permanently glued to it.

“Really good,” Clarke assured her, turning her head and melting against Lexa’s chest, her hand over her wife’s before she moved to her back pocket. “Do you want to see?”

“Yes yes yes!” It all cam out giddy as Clarke pulled out the sonogram and held it up. “Oh my God,” Lexa whispered. Her arms dropped before she reached for the picture. “That’s…” she held it tenderly in her hands, peering at it.

Clarke watched her wife’s face, watched the way her eyes darted to every pixel on the picture, the way her face relaxed, eyes widened, smile twitched. Her hand went to her stomach automatically.

“Look at it,” Lexa looked back at Clarke excitedly before looking back at the page in her hands. “There’s a head. And nose. Oh God, it has your nose. Just look at him.”

“Him?”

“Her, whatever. Did you see this?”

“I did,” Clarke laughed at the amazement.

“The book, it said his fingers will move. And he will clench his eyes shut. But have you seen this?” she asked again, smile growing. “He’s as big as a lime. Just a little lime. Holy smokes. His fingers, look,” she pointed at the tiny hand. “Clarke, this is…” She didn’t have words. She kissed her wife,
kissed her repeatedly and quickly and widely to make up for the lack of words.

“You want to come next month? I booked an appointment early in the morning.”

“Yes please,” Lexa smiled, hand rubbing the tummy again. “I like the heartbeat thing they do.”

“I know,” Clarke smiled.

“Did he give us the okay to tell people?”

“Everything looks good.”

“Do you hear that, little lime baby?” Lexa crouched and rubbed Clarke’s stomach. “We’re going to tell Grandma. And all of our friends. And everyone. I’m going to tell the entire world.” She kissed through the fabric.

“You can’t call it that,” Clarke scolded.

“For now,” Lexa smiled and looked up at her. “Next month he’ll be an avocado.”

“Okay,” Clarke sighed, shaking her head as Lexa kissed her stomach again and rubbed once more.

“How are you doing? Did the doctor say you’re alright?” Lexa stood quickly, worrying herself.

“You’re okay, right?”

“I’m perfectly fine,” Clarke promised. “Though we might have to get you a script for valium if you’re going to be this anxious.”

“How can I not?” Lexa shook her head. “You have a person the size of a lime inside of you. You’re a walking incubation machine. I want you in bed wrapped in bubble wrap with four servants.”

“Women have babies in fields and rivers all over the world.”

“Don’t get any ideas.”

“Let me get you a glass of wine.”

“I’ll have water.”

“Go sit,” Clarke patted Lexa’s cheek as the momentousness caught up with the worry. She was a constant back and forth of excitement and fretting, and it made Clarke love her more, though could be trying at times. “You’re getting that face on again.”

“I don’t have a face.”


“Yeah,” Lexa nodded. She allowed herself to be pushed to the table and her seat. She just looked at the picture in her hands once more and smiled.

“What about Stevie?” Clarke ventured, flipping through the book once more.

“I used to make a Stevie cry in fourth grade,” Lexa towelled her hair as she moved through the bedroom to look for old sweats after her shower. “Why is he in bed?” she sighed as the dog lifted his
head from Clarke’s lap and looked at her daringly, challenging her.

“He’s protective over the baby,” Clarke informed her without looking up from the pages. She ran her palm along the dogs back.

“We agreed no bed,” Lexa sighed, surveying the scene. “Get, Petey,” she shooed. “Go on,” she nudged her head until he stood and hopped off, only to lay on Clarke’s side of the floor.

“You can’t veto names because you used to beat someone up with that name,” Clarke sighed. “We won’t have anything left. You were a little bruiser.”

“Are you sure you don’t want to find out the sex?” Lexa ignored clothes for now and crawled into the now vacated spot on the bed. “It could narrow the name thing down a bit.”

“I like the surprise of it,” Clarke smiled, setting the book down as her wife rested her head on her chest, her hand on her growing stomach.

“Your mom is losing her mind not knowing,” Lexa whispered.

“She’d lose it if she knew,” Clarke disagreed.

“Hi, baby,” Lexa spoke to the bump while Clarke held the book up and flipped more. “We’re going to meet you in a few months. Give you a name. Kiss you. Love you.” A little movement made Lexa retract her hand quickly and sit up. “What was that?” she sat up in bed.

“He’s been wiggling off and on all day,” Clarke rubbed her stomach.

“Why didn’t you…?” Lexa looked between Clarke’s face and her stomach.

“I wanted you to feel,” she smiled. “It’s your voice. The first movement I felt was when you were on speaker in the car when I was coming home from work. I pulled over and got a milkshake.”

“It’s January,” Lexa smiled.

“Come here,” her wife put the book down on Lexa’s pillow. “Talk to him some more.”

“Does it hurt?”

“’It’s just a little flutter. It’s not big enough to hurt yet.”


“What about Leah? Did you ever beat up any of those?” Clarke ventured.

“Dated one,” Lexa sighed. “She was nice.” Another movement. Lexa smiled and closed her eyes, listening to her wife’s heartbeat. “It’s a good name, but I don’t know. What about after your father? Jacob.”

“I thought about it, but I don’t know if I can call him my father’s name every day.”

“Yeah,” Lexa nodded. “We’re open to suggestions, little guy,” she told the stomach. “Did you feel that?”

“He likes your voice. I like your voice.” Lexa’s ears burned under the observation. She spread out
her palm and waited for more.

“Daisy. I like that name. Simple, peaceful, girly.”

“I had a cat named Daisy. She was really gross when she got old,” Clarke grimaced slightly at the memory of the old grey thing. “Delilah?”

“I like that. Lola?”

“That’s cute.”

“This is tough,” Lexa sighed.

“You make a list, and I’ll make a list, and we’ll see if we have any overlap,” Clarke offered, adjusting slightly as Lexa snuggled into her ribs.

“We can just not name you and let you decide one day,” Lexa told the baby. “Maybe he’s sleeping,” she offered after there was no more movements. “I am so excited to meet you,” she whispered before she kissed the stomach once more.

The dog hopped up on the bed once more, inserting his large frame on Clarke’s legs. Lexa rubbed his nose and between his eyes as his chin rested on the stomach as well.

“You guys are getting a little ridiculous,” Clarke complained half-heartedly.

“Good boy,” Lexa praised the dog. “This is going to be our new family member. And you will love him or her and they will love you, and pull your hair and ears and tail. But we protect Mama now.”

“Both of you need to relax.”

“He moved,” Lexa sat up slightly and met Clarke’s eyes. “Our little baby moved.”

“It did,” Clarke smiled as Lexa kissed her cheek and settled on her shoulder.

“Just wait til it happens to you,” Clarke complained to her friend. “I mean it, Octavia, just wait.”

“Don’t hold your breath.”

“Please sit,” Lexa insisted, moving Clarke towards the table. “I know, I know, but just for me,” her wife cut off the complaints before they began again. “I’ll go get food and drinks. Just sit. Don’t let her get up,” she instructed Octavia who watched the display with amused interest.

“See?” Clarke sighed as Lexa disappeared through the crowd. The wedding was full and crowded, and she felt self conscious with her belly already. But she couldn’t miss her best friend’s big day for anything, not even eight months worth of child inside of her womb. “This is all of the time. She won’t let me walk the dog. She cooks. She tells me to rest.”

“How dare her be so attentive and caring over her very pregnant wife,” Octavia feigned compassion as she took a sip from her champagne. “What is she thinking?”

“Listen,” Clarke eyed her. “I’m fat, I’m cranky, I piss every five minutes, and I’m so fucking horny I literally am dying, which does nothing to help with the fact that I’m hungry and even more cranky. Sarcasm isn’t the best route right now.”

“She loves you,” Octavia smiled.
“She practices,” Clarke smiled and watched Lexa across the dance floor, speaking with one of their friends. “Has like six bags packed. I swear. One at her office in case I call. One by the front door. One in the car already. One at my mom’s. She practices the route in her head, to the hospital. Ask her right now the quickest way to the hospital,” Clarke laughed and watched Lexa talking. “Oh, goodness,” she rubbed her stomach.

“Is it moving?” Octavia sat closer, seeing Clarke’s discomfort.

“Yeah, here,” she put her hand on her stomach.

“Oh my God,” Octavia smiled and placed both of her hands on the bump. “Auntie Octavia sounds pretty good, doesn’t it?”

“You are the godmother,” Clarke nodded.

From across the room, Lexa watched Octavia smile and feel her wife’s stomach. She didn’t like that part, the people touching. Because they could touch too hard, or they could make Clarke uncomfortable. There were a million things on her mind right now.

“Are you excited?” Raven asked, watching her friend worry.

“I can’t wait to meet it, you know?”

“Still don’t know the sex?”

“I say boy. Clarke says girl. One of us will be right.”

“Let me get you a drink,” Raven offered.

Lexa followed her friend to the bar and shared a drink, as it was her one free night of the pregnancy when Clarke lifted the mutual ban on alcohol and allowed her wife this freedom. Lexa had three shots under her belt before she gathered some food and returned to her wife’s table, slightly more relaxed.

Halfway back across the floor, she saw Clarke standing, though doubled over.

“What is it?” she asked, dropping the plats and leaning down, hand protectively around her wife.

“My water broke,” Clarke realized.

“No,” Lexa shook her head. “It can’t. We still have three weeks. The doctor said May. It’s only April. No.”

“Well, tell that to the puddle,” Clarke motioned to the flood on the floor.

“Oh shit,” Lexa breathed. “What do we do?”

“Probably the hospital,” Clarke tried. “Oh, God,” she leaned down again, a contraction starting. Lexa held her hand.

“You have to remember the breathing, remember? Do you remember? Do the breathing,” She said quickly, sitting her wife down in the chair. “Octavia, go get the car please?” she dug through her purse for keys. “I can’t drive.”

“You can’t drive?” Clarke looked at her warily.
“I’ve been drinking.”

“You’re going to be tipsy while I’m in labour?” Clarke shouted and everyone who wasn’t looking finally stared at them.

“Yes,” Lexa nodded. “Just a little.”

“He’s coming,” Clarke looked at her wife, terrified and confused.

“Yeah,” Lexa nodded and leaned her forehead on Clarke’s, holding her neck. “We’re going to do this. It’s okay.” She rested a hand on her stomach. “It’s okay. You’re going to do great. You’re going to do fine. You’ll both be okay.”

“Okay,” Clarke nodded, some kind of security in her wife’s words.

It took Bellamy and Lincoln to help Clarke to the car, and all of them hopped in or grabbed their own. Lexa asked them to call Clarke’s family, to call anyone who wasn’t already around while her wife groaned and squeezed her hand, no doubt spraining her fingers.

“Liberty to King to Tennessee to exit seventy-five,” Lexa informed Octavia as they pulled away quickly once loaded.

“Told you,” Clarke chuckled, leaning her head on the back of the seat. Octavia laughed as they moved.

“This is going to be fine,” Lexa nodded, still in motion and unsure of what to do. “He’ll be fine. You’re going to be fine.”


“He’s early,” Lexa nodded still.

“Oh yeah,” Clarke gritted her teeth and squeezed her hand once more.

“Breathe,” Lexa reminded her. “You’re going to be a great mom, you know that,” Lexa leaned close and listened to Clarke do the breathing. “You’re going to be the best. He’s going to be healthy and strong. I know it.”

“Do you have the bag?”

“The one you mocked me for having?” Lexa smiled and kissed her cheeks. “It’s in the trunk.”

“My water broke at Bellamy’s wedding,” Clarke realized.

“Yeah it did. Does it hurt?”

“Yeah,” Clarke nodded, a little fear in her eyes once more.

“Okay, okay,” Lexa nodded with her, breathing, calming her. “It’s okay. We’re going to meet our baby soon. Think about that. His little cheeks and hands and toes and ears. Okay? Just think about that.”

“Almost there, guys,” Octavia called as they veered down an exit.

“Ahhhhghhhghgh,” Clarke squeezed her teeth once more.

“Ahhhhghhhghhghh,” Lexa did the same as her hand was in a vice grip.

“So like, do we need to stop and get some cigars and whiskey for the waiting room? Is that still a thing?” Octavia asked as they grew quiet in the back.

“Yeah, just a quick stop,” Clarke chuckled. “We need some bread at home, too.”

“I’m low on toothpaste,” Lexa added.

“I’ll just run in,” Octavia played along as they sped towards the hospital.

“That’s him,” Lexa pointed to the bassinet in the front of the nursery. The window was filled with men in tuxes with ties hanging loose and dead on their chests and women in gowns and messy hair with dying holds.

“Look at that,” Abby put her arm over Lexa’s shoulders.

“He’s magnificent,” Octavia offered. Everyone held their breaths as the baby yawned and kept his eyes closed in his little bundle.

“Clarke’s sleeping right now for a little. It was rough, but she’ll be okay,” Lexa offered. “Six pounds, eight ounces. Technically he’s premature, but the doctor’s said everything is normal.”

“Look at that,” Abby grinned again, awestruck.

“They want to run a few more tests, but if everything is good you can all visit tomorrow afternoon. Or I guess,” she looked at the clock. “Later today.”

“And the name?” Bellamy asked, never looking away from the baby. His wife stood beside him, grinning through the window.

“Clarke made me promise to not name him while she was drugged. And I was… inebriated.”

“How do you feel?” Raven asked her friend. The window had no open spaces, the family filled it all, staring at the tiny, six pound thing in the little blanket.

“Like I just fell in love again,” Lexa leaned against the glass and smiled.
Killed

Chapter Summary

prompt: Lexa receives news that Clarke was killed within Mount Weather. “Sorry, I know it’s a terrible prompt, but it’s been on my mind, and if you’re into it, just...fuck me up.

The walk back to her village was bitter and violent in the Commander’s head. She felt her chest refuse to move, as if there was a hole in it, as if she had no need for such things as air. A vicious kind of hatred bubbled like acid inside of her ribcage, eroded her skin and nerves from the inside out. She waited for someone to notice, but no one did. While the trees, just stood there and watched, while the stars blinked and looked away, ashamed and repulsed.

The night passed by anyway, despite her eroding lungs, even though her throat was betraying her and making it impossible to read. The evening played on around her as if she was watching, trapped inside of her body. She saw and she heard, but Lexa could do nothing as a prisoner in her own life, in her own muscles.

But her people were back, and there was many things to attend to over such matters. Robotically, controlled, reserved, dying, Lexa went and spoke and watched herself do these things without thought at all. She could feel the tiny bit of her that sat inside her chest and curled up and slept.

By nearly morning, she realized she was alone in her tent, knuckles cracking under the pressure she put on them, holding her up over the table. Her spine broke and her chest turned into a cave.

It sounded like a wounded deer, a bleeding stag, the last chuff of a predator as the blade finished it, the noise she made. It felt foreign, felt different, felt like the most accurate representation of the way her bones were twisting and cracking beneath her skin.

The table withstood her abuse, undertook its mission quite seriously as she pounded against it until her shoulders ached and moaned, until her jaw hurt so badly from locking away her screams, until her hands were swollen.

But Lexa just stood there, body heaving under the strain of her lungs and heart and joints.

She scrubbed at her face, until it hurt, getting rid of every piece of paint, every ounce and drop of blood. She didn’t need to see it, she couldn’t look at herself, but she scrubbed until the water turned black.

It didn’t matter, though. She couldn’t escape the thought of Clarke’s face at the edge of the mountain. Lexa scrubbed and decimated the table until her skin bore the very bruises of her guilt. It did nothing to alleviate those eyes.

It didn’t matter, though. Lexa sat in her chair, fiddled with the blade, waited for the dawn to come. It would be easier in the light of day. The rest of her life started now, and love was weakness, once more something that she did not suffer.

There was a dull, deep, doldrum of a thump to her pulse, now. Three days later and it had not gone
away. It pounded, steady and firm, driving her mad with its force, not letting her sleep, not letting her think. She was simultaneously empty and bursting, simultaneously stuck in an amber-like thickness and incapable of sitting still.

"Is there word from the mountain?" Lexa asked as she returned from Polis.

"There was a battle," Indra nodded, surveying the Commander carefully. "The bodies were found in the tunnels."

"How many?" Lexa heard the dull, deep, doldrum in her heart stop.

"Twelve."

"And what of the Sky People?"

"They wait."

"And the dead? What do we know of them?" Lexa felt her cheeks grow taught as her jaw opened and she waited.


The breath Lexa took, she held, kept it there. Nodded. Closed her lips and kept them tight. She lifted her chin and blinked a handful of times before trusting herself to speak.

"We will give them a proper burial for the ground," Lexa decided. "Send word to Marcus that they are welcome here to safely say goodbye. Collect the bodies. They do not deserve to lay in a pile."

She had not eaten in days, she realized then, which made the feeling of the gagging in the bit of her stomach surprising. She inhaled once more, against her will, stoic and impassive as ever.

There was the image of Clarke in a pile of bodies, eyes open, blood, dried. She felt acid in the lowest part of her throat.

"We will send them off. Take the guard."

With little more than a nod, Indra turned away.

Lexa leaned against the table, until her legs gave way, until she found herself on the floor. The only thing certain was that she had to tear out the hurt, thresh the pain from her collarbones, crack open her chest and extract the words she should have said all along, the things she should have done from the start.

She crawled on all fours, barely able to support herself, falling back to her knees and palms when she tried to stand. The ponderousness smashing her into the ground. But all was silent. Her ears ached with it.

Her nails dug into her flesh, into the skin as desperate sobs rattled her bones. She scratched open her chest right there on the floor. She didn’t feel a thing, for as much as she hurt, as she died, she was numb to all else, living was numbness.

The bodies were returned within a few hours. Lexa was afraid to see them, for the first time in as long as she could remember.

But she did this, as well. She had many deaths on her hands, many murders, many lives ended. These were no different. If not them, it would have been someone else, someone else she knew,
another family, another clan. It didn’t matter. Death was permanent and impending.

“Leave me,” Lexa ordered as the last of the guards place the last of the bodies on the floor of the tent while the pyre was constructed.

She watched them leave, refusing to look down at the row of death. She knew that once she did there would be no doubt.

But she did it, because she had no misgivings about who she was and what that meant.

She met Clarke’s eyes and felt the very core of her bones snap. Blue and staring straight ahead, blind and finished, finally, the blonde lay there. It took longer than expected to move, but Lexa did, finally.

“Clarke of the Sky People,” Lexa whispered, kneeling beside the body. Her hand stuttered, reached out to touch her, but was sickened, was stopped, was frozen in the air. The warm feeling of spit filled her mouth and the familiar ache to empty her stomach returned, thought she could not. The acidic components of her chest pumped and pumped and pumped while her breastbone throbbed and warbled and ached. Every part of her ached. The scratches beneath her shirt and armour burned her alive.

Tentative, afraid, Lexa touched Clarke’s hair, pushed part of it from her forehead, felt it under her fingertips.

“I am sorry,” she stuttered. Her cheeks were hot, were tepid, were torturously scalding her skin. But she could not move her hand from Clarke’s cheeks. She watched the way her skin moved beneath her swollen and raw knuckles. “You will haunt me until I join you.”

She pushed closed the eyelids finally, unable to fathom and look at them, to be seen by them, any longer. She wiped her tears and dried her face and waited for this love to fade away, visited by the memory of her eyes and lips in the silence of the dead.

“Gonplei ste odon.”

The Sky People arrived, solemn and wounded and vengeful. Lexa nodded to Marcus, neither capable of saying anything at all. But the pyre is lit anyway, with complete silence.

Lexa fixated her gaze on one of the bodies. She knew which one. She felt withdrawn, prisoner again. But the little part of her did not curl up and sleep. She pounded on her ribcage, punched her gut, clawed at her lungs, shredding them to pieces. Inside of her very body a violent fire raged sadly. Her heart burned like a coal and fell in a pile of ashes, deep into the pit of her stomach. She felt teeth gnawing on her spine between her shoulder blades.

She knew that her insides would never be the same, she knew that her bones were scared, beneath the seeable, she knew that beneath her skin were claw marks that would never heal, unlike the ones seeping on her chest.

There are things we carry in the joints of our bones, in the pockets of air in our lungs, in the tiny nooks of our very being. They burrow into bones, hollow them like termites in a rotting tree, make themselves at home, weaving into the fabric of muscles. Lexa felt the harm done to her and the way it coated her through. She felt her self burning on the pyre as well. It was only a matter of time.

Because she was numb.

Because she was living.
The smell of the fire filled the air, the heat burned her cheeks. But she stared fixedly upon the one, upon the girl who fell from the sky and made her weak.

In her deepest beliefs, Lexa knew that she would not do this again.

When her people looked at her they saw perfect stillness and composure, strength and resolve.
Horror Movies

Chapter Summary

AU Clexa prompt: Lexa hates to admit she gets VERY FUCKING SCARED of horror movies and Clarke finds it absolutely adorable.

“Is that everything?” Lexa surveyed the coffee table filled with food and snacks and candles.

“I don’t think you got enough snacks,” Clarke turned off the other lights and grabbed the glasses of wine.

“You laugh, but you eat everything.”

“Well, if it’s there I’ll eat it.”

“Quite a predicament we have.”

“I’m okay with it.”

“Hi,” Lexa smiled as Clarke took the seat on the couch beside her. She flipped the blanket over her as she put the glasses down. “Welcome to date night.”

“You’re level of romance has reached new highs,” Clarke smiled, giving her a quick kiss.

“Excuse me, we have candles and dinner and wine and a movie in our pyjamas. I think it’s perfect.”

“I’m going to take you out this weekend.”

“Drinks and dancing? I’ll wear that black number you like.”

“Oh yeah?” Clarke grinned. Her ears burned at the thought.

“What did you pick to watch?”

“We were talking about genre in class the other day, and I had the urge to watch one of my favourites of all time, The Shining.”

“Oh?”

“I know. I’ve been looking forward to it all day.” Too enthusiastically, Clarke pressed play and sat back with a piece of pizza. Apprehensively, Lexa did the same.

Not even halfway into the movie, Lexa pulled the blanket higher around her chin, leaning into Clarke’s shoulder, hugging her arm tightly while the blonde simply popped candy into her mouth happily.

“Oh God,” Lexa closed her eyes and hid into Clarke’s arm at the first hint of danger or anything scary.

“Are you okay?”
“Yeah,” she lied.

Clarke spent a good portion of the movie watching Lexa react to the scenes she knew by heart. She enjoyed how she sat through it with no complaint, though she hid her eyes a good portion of the time. For someone so cocksure and scary, she discovered how very terrified her girlfriend was.

“You don’t like it?” Clarke ventured during the building of tension.

“It’s fine,” Lexa lied, straightening up slightly.

“You’re afraid of horror movies,” Clarke accused.

“I’m not afraid,” Lexa asserted, her brow heavy and her face stern. “I’m just not a fan.”

“You’ve spent most of it hidden under the blanket.”

“I don’t like them.”

“God, I love you, you know that?” Clarke breathed it out as a confession, startled by the words that came out as they did. She grabbed the remote and turned the movie off. She hadn’t meant to say those words, she shouldn’t have.

“I suspected,” Lexa smiled and burrowed into her arm again. Clarke kissed her hair.

“Should we watch cartoons? Is that more your speed?”

“Yes.”

“Okay.”

Lexa still stayed close to Clarke, still burrowed into her side and still hugged her forearm beneath the blanket, soaking in those words and greatly enjoying how they sounded, how they came out in a disbelieving kind of way. She couldn’t stop smiling.

“I’m sorry you didn’t finish your movie.”

“Aw, I don’t care,” Clarke murmured as she stretched out on the couch. “I’d watch the news if it meant you were loved up on me like this. Plus you look adorable when you’re scared.”

“I’m not adorable.”

“You look just as adorable when you pout.”

“I don’t pout.”

Clarke kissed her again and felt her lay down along her side.

“Want to watch The Exorcist next week? Out-” She earned an elbow.
Chapter Summary

Clexa propmt based on a post i saw a while back asking if a character would lick someone’s hand if they tried to cover their mouth and someone said that lexia would bite

The darkness was complete, or nearly so. The occasional flare of flashlights moving from the fire stuck out between the trees, but Clarke remained quiet.

“I do not see the point in this,” Lexa shook her had, perplexed and oddly unnerved by the way Clarke behaved, with clandestine meetings and refusals to say anything to anyone about them.

“Shh,” Clarke whispered, keeping Lexa against the tree.

“I think you’re ashamed of this,” Lexa eyed her. The noise from their friends, from drinks and music and all kinds of things of the sort lingered through the night.

“I’m not,” Clarke shook her head, breathless and nervous. “I just want to see how we do, before telling all of our friends.”

“So you just think we won’t make it,” Lexa nodded, feigning understanding.

“Shut up,” Clarke shook her head still. She kissed Lexa’s grin, held onto the tree they leaned against and kissed her hard, hopefully hard enough to forget that she was not ready for this conversation.

“Oh, this is just sex for you,” Lexa pulled away.

“Our friends are the worst,” Clarke groaned quietly into her neck, delving into the long stretch of kissable skin that made Lexa putty in her hands. “I just want us to have a chance before they do what they do.”

“Clarke?” a voice called out from the trail a few feet to their left.

“Shh,” Clarke whispered, pushing against Lexa, hoping to get a few more minutes of this before they would go back and sit separately.

“This is too much work,” Lexa rolled her eyes and let her head drift back in the dark. “You’re too much work.”

“You know I’m right. Now hush.”

“Lexa? You guys back?” the voice called more.

“Ri-” Lexa started to call, but Clarke covered her mouth with her hand.

Deep down, Lexa knew Clarke was right. This was new and accidental and actually exciting with the sneaking. She just liked to fluster the particular and uptight girl.

Even in the dark she could see Clarke’s smile that she tried to restrain. Lexa peered at her and licked her palm, to no avail.
“Do you think we should look for them?” the voice called back to the group. He was met with a chorus of no’s.

Gentle and quick, Lexa bit Clarke’s hand until she pulled away. They heard the footsteps disappear and the world went darker as the flashlight left.

“You’re an ass,” Clarke slapped her shoulder.

“You know what you’re getting into,” Lexa informed her, holding her hand and kissing where she’d bitten.

“Lord, give me strength,” Clarke sighed.
Serenaded

Chapter Summary

please do a fic of lexa serenading clarke. Thank you!

The phones were quiet, and wouldn’t be a problem. If the world were on fire and the heavens were crumbling, it would have to wait until tomorrow. For now, rain poured and threw itself against the windows, dripping through the slightly cracked one in the living room. The world was irrelevant because it was Sunday and nothing else mattered.

The sound of the whisk scraping bowl echoed in the dull splatter of raindrops against the window and woke Lexa to her empty bed. Pinching her eyes shut and stretching as wide and all-encompassing as she could, pulling the covers up to her ears and refusing to move at all. It was so warm and cozy in the bed, she could not imagine the sheer force of will exerted by a former occupants to leave it.

Lexa inhaled the faint smell of Clarke on her pillow. The lavender of her soap, the petals of her shampoo, the way it morphed and change into something else beside her own pillow. These were the things Sundays were made of, she decided, waking in the most delicious way possible.

Tomorrow they would turn on their phones, and they would sprint across town in opposite directions, and they would get home late and crawl into bed, exhausted and without a conversation. But those were tomorrow’s problems.

Unable to wait any longer, Lexa slipped from the bed in search of her Sunday. The cold floor made her regret it instantly, but she marched for anyway.

It was worth it, of course, the view and the girl. Clarke didn’t hear her open their bedroom door and remained unfettered by such things. If she had, she would have turned around and smiled and sighed a good morning.

But the music played from the small radio beside the fridge, and Lexa paused in the hallway, watching her girlfriend cook breakfast. Her hips swung slightly, her head bobbed as she licked her finger. There may have even been humming. There was definitely bare legs. And most assuredly Lexa’s old shirt hanging on Clarke’s shoulders. There was certainly a mop of messy blonde hair tied up half-heartedly. It blew her down.

If anyone were to ask her why he loved Clarke, Lexa would remember this moment and struggle to sum it up into one tiny blurb, and fail. There should be words for indescribable moments in life when you unexpectedly fall in love with someone. Just one catchall phrase to describe those instants when you least expect it, and something as stupid as making breakfast makes you just so smitten you believe in the most promising futures. There were sneaky little things, popping up and slapping someone when they least expected it.

Lexa felt it slap her and she smiled as the music stopped and the tape clicked. Somehow Lexa moved forward into the kitchen, no longer able to stay away from being involved in the loving part.

“When I sail, back home to you,” she hummed, slipping her arms around Clarke’s waist. Lexa buried...
her nose in her shoulder. “I know exactly, just what to do.”

Slow and steady Lexa moved against Clarke’s back, serenading her with the first thing that came to her mind.

“Oh no,” Clarke sighed, pouring batter into the pan. “It’s going to be one of those days.”

“Shut up and take it,” Lexa grinned into her neck, kissing softly the exposed skin of her spine.

“Ah, there’s the romance,” Clarke smiled.

“You don’t like my singin’?” Lexa gasped.

“I adore it,” Clarke confessed, hoping it wasn’t as earnest as she meant it. She couldn’t describe this moment to anyone, but this was a moment she had with Lexa that stuck with her and tinted the way she thought about her. This was it. This was what it was, and though she doth protest weakly against, Clarke craved the silly, the goofy, the funny parts of Lexa that were only occasionally given to her.

“Well you better get used to it,” Lexa shrugged. “You get all this for as long as you keep me around.”

“It’ll be an adjustment,” Clarke grinned despite it, flipping the pancake.

“Cause there’ll be sun and snow and a horse Jethro,” Lexa squeezed harder, humming happily. “and all the children I have fathered,” she felt Clarke turn around in her arms. Her grin made her smile.

“And I will learn.” She chuckled when arms went around her neck and Clarke smiled and shook her head, pulling her close. “to cook for you. It’s one thing that,” Lexa danced her head, rubbing her nose against Clarke’s, earning a bigger smile. Her hands slid along Clarke’s ribs in her shirt. “I plan to learn to do. And I will make.” Clarke tried to kiss her but was dodged, grinning once more and putting even more into the song. "Sweet dandelion wine and there’ll be no search for time.”

“You’re frustrating.”

“Spend all our lives, just having lives,” Lexa smiled and kissed her quickly. “And what else?”

“Sun and snow and a horse, Jethro,” Clarke sighed, squeezing her neck closer and earning a laugh against her very teeth.

“And all the children I have fathered ooohhhhh,” Lexa sang once more, loud and obnoxious and off-key.

“You’re ridiculous.”

“You do that to me.”
I wonder if any of the girls of the Trigedakru or the other clans ever giggle and blush when Lexa walks by. For real, no one can convince me that the Commander doesn’t have fangirls all over the post-apocalyptic North Eastern United States. And if you can throw in amused!Clarke/annoyed!Lexa that’d be awesome. Or jealous!Clarke/amused!Lexa.

The reception at the gate was grand and magnificent, if not extremely redundant. They all blurred together, as Clarke was becoming aware, as each of the clans under Lexa’s command welcomed a visit from the Sky People and their Commander. Already five deep in invitations, and Clarke wasn’t sure how she would handle the remaining five. But she smiled anyway, nodding and accepting the greetings, offering the gifts of her people, exchanging the pleasantries.

“How long do we have to stand here?” Bellamy leaned down and whispered to his friend.

“Until Lexa tells us not to,” Clarke shrugged. She just followed the Commander’s lead in these situations, patiently waiting for this part to be done. Her hips hurt from riding, her thighs ached from the travels, and the grouch in her cheeks grew with every night spent alone in bed.

“Did you see those girls when we came in?” he nudged his head to the side. “I know part of them were swooning over me, but still…”

“She does have that effect on people, apparently,” Clarke sighed before pursing her lips and tightening her jaw. She stomped her foot and shoved her hands in her pockets.

“Do you remember learning about that band, The Beatles in Earth Skills?” Bellamy continued to pester. Clarke crossed her arms and held her lungs in. “It’s kind of like that when we arrive.”

“Okay, it’s not like that at all,” Clarke gave him a glare. It just gave him that soppy grin.

“Kind of,” he whispered. “The past few camps we’ve been to, everyone if falling over themselves to see us, and her.”

“It’s mostly us,” Clarke turned her head slightly.

“I don’t think so,” he chuckled. “That one girl a few nights ago, at the dinner. Man, she was-”

“I get it,” Clarke watched Lexa smile slightly and nod with slight approval.

“I don’t think you understand,” Bellamy shook his head, wide-eyed at the memory. “I mean, she was all over the Commander.”

“Yeah, but Lexa didn’t notice.”

“Right,” he scoffed. “Like she didn’t notice the gaggle of giggling girls outside of her tent every night this trip?”
Clarke was quiet, simmering and fuming and, as much as she refused to admit it, jealous. She sat with this constant feeling under her skin for the entire night, at dinner, at the greeting. She played along and she played her part, but she was done feeling this way.

“What are you-?” Lexa pulled her arm away from Clarke as she pulled her into her tent for the night.

“I miss home,” Clarke confessed.

“We have to get back to the feast. They will miss us both,” Lexa reminded her. “Just a few more weeks and then we will be normal again.”

“A few more weeks of your constant fan clubs,” Clarke sighed.

“My… what?”

“You never told me about all of the people that are falling over themselves to just see you.”

“They are my people,” Lexa shrugged.

“Some of them really want to be your people,” Clarke complained.

“You’re my people,” Lexa promised, seeing Clarke’s face and recognizing the familiar emotion she often experienced when she saw her with her people, joking and laughing with Bellamy, walking and talking with Raven. She did not understand that Lexa felt that every day because she felt she could not make her laugh that much, or understand her that well, as hard as she tried.

For once, it was nice for Lexa to garner some of that jealousy back, and she revelled in it, as much as she knew she should not.

“I am their Commander,” Lexa informed her. “I do not enjoy the attention.”

“Right,” Clarke gave her a hard look that made her smile slightly at her own lie.

“What can I do? I’m their leader. They try to catch my eye. But no one does, you know.”

“But you’re mine,” Clarke insisted. Her hipbones rested against Lexa’s hipbones, pinning her against the table. She didn’t move to touch her, didn’t lift her hands, didn’t do anything except look at her.

“I cannot help-” Lexa began, swallowing through an awfully constricted throat as Clarke set the full force of her eyes upon her. She gripped the table. When she took a breath, she felt Clarke take a breath, their proximity making it difficult for her lungs to expand to proper widths.

“You can only have me in your bed,” Clarke informed her.

Lexa gulped and felt antsy as Clarke’s hands slid up her chest and shoulders and neck. Her eyes were just deep and black and encircled by the slightest bit of blue. They peaked from behind long lashes that batted effectively. The Commander wanted to do something, but she was suddenly aware of how rabbits in traps must feel, waiting for the blade.

“Unless you want them,” she offered. Lexa saw the flash of silver in her words and shook her head eagerly.

Clarke pushed her body against Lexa’s, ran her fingernails up her neck and into the nape of her hair. Lexa’s eyes rolled back and her knees felt weak, her thighs rubbed together, unfamiliar with the territory she currently found herself permanently stuck. This was different. Rarely did Clarke initiate, and rarely did Lexa allow her to do this to her. It was a red-letter day for everyone involved.
“Good,” Clarke whispered, leaning closer. Lexa dipped her head slightly, wanting to kiss her, needing to kiss her. “You’re mine.”

All she could do was nod and hope it was a good enough answer. It must have been, because fingers soon went to work on unlacing her pants, pulling on her hips roughly. She was afraid to move and ruin this moment.

“We should get back to the feast,” Clarke reminded her, nudging her ankle with the toe of her boot, spreading her legs slightly. Lexa stared at her, eyes half-lidded, ready to agree with whatever she said. “But I can’t wait until we get home.”

“Yes,” Lexa nodded, head bobbing quickly as she swallowed again.

Lips met her neck as fingers slipped into her pants. Of their own vocation, her legs spread further, her head rolled back, her throat purred beneath Clarke’s lips. Her nails dug into the wood of the table after crumpling papers. Unabashed and eager, her hips moved against Clarke’s fingers despite their rooted place under her own hips.

There was a noise, Clarke had learned, a certain gasp, a quick inhale from Lexa’s lips that meant she was almost there, almost ready to shudder and shake and give in. When she heard it, she smiled and kissed her throat before feeling her head fall forward in defeat as her hips jolted and shook as she moved her fingers before pressing slightly harder and keeping them still so the hips could move against them on their own.

Clarke felt Lexa’s breath, hot and humid on her shoulder, into her neck, felt her body still, felt a smug smile return to her lips. She ached herself.

“I don’t like being jealous,” Clarke finally said. “I don’t know how to get used to your legion of groupies.”

“We can just… do this,” Lexa nodded, still not lifting her head.

“We have to get back,” Clarke decided, finally removing her fingers as Lexa groaned and bucked.

“Come to my tent tonight,” Lexa stared at her hard as she tried to pull away.

“I can’t,” Clarke grinned. “I’m bunking with Bellamy. We’re going to work on our shadow puppet routine.”

“I do not know what that-” Lexa furrowed and watched Clarke focus on retying her pants. She did not let go of the desk, needing it to stand, knees ridiculously weak and ineffective in this, her time of need. “Why are you sleeping with Bellamy?” she balked.

“Because we still have a few weeks until home, and I get kind of lonely at night,” Clarke shrugged.

“Come to my tent tonight,” Lexa commanded, standing taller.

“Won’t your fans be heartbroken?”

“I swear to the highest heavens,” Lexa shook her head and blew an angry breath through her tightly clenched jaw. “You’re impossible.”

“I’ll tell Bellamy to cover for us,” Clarke looked up at Lexa with an amused smile.

“Good,” Lexa nodded. “Can we stop with these thoughts, now?”
“Okay,” Clarke agreed.

Finally, Lexa leaned forward and kissed Clarke, chaste and soft and slow, pulling away only after a fraction.

“Let’s go,” Clarke sighed, dazed and giddy at the kiss. “I have to go join the Commander Lexa fan club.”

“I quite enjoy this,” Lexa nodded seriously.
Clarke and Lexa are rival team captains with a little too much sexual tension. They both stay in the same hotel with their teams for a competition.

“I want absolutely no fraternization,” the coach said as he placed his hands on his hips and moved up and down the sidewalk in front of the hotel. “There will be no pranking, no fighting, no yelling, no touching, no post cards, no letters, no hugging, no anything, with the opposing team. Am I understood?”

The grunts of yeses followed his words as he started another long list of do’s and don’t’s for their weekend stay for the championship.

“Bellamy is throwing a party,” Octavia leaned over and whispered to her friend as they stood in the crowd. “There’s apparently a bit of a tradition. A good luck ritual.”

“You’re going to get us in trouble,” Clarke shook her head. “I don’t want to be a part of another Bellamy scam.”

“There’s no scam. Coaches know about it. It’s kind of like don’t ask, don’t tell.”

“We have a lot of prep to do—”

“Great. I’ll tell him we’ll be there.”

She wanted to fight it, but Clarke didn’t have it in her. She needed extra-curriculars, and this was one of them. She got to spend time with her friends, that was a bonus, but other than that, the rest of the game was lost on her. The rest of the traditions were lost on her even more.

The speech began to move into instructions and rules, complete with a handout being passed around by equipment managers. The cheerleading coach eyed them and handed out her own list of rules and schedules. Their last away trip had gone relatively well, though she knew what her team was capable of being.

It was an act of fate, or perhaps terrible timing. Clarke looked at her paper, though she could feel the air turn, become electric. The team stiffened, their backs straightening. It wasn’t until it got quiet that Clarke looked up and saw the other few buses show up, until red lettermen coats began to spill out and line up orderly.

“They’re so terrible,” Octavia rolled her eyes. “I heard they are basically robots.”

“They have a better record than us,” Clarke shrugged, watching all of them file out and give the cheerleaders a look and a few gave them smiles.

“Okay, cheerleader lesson number sixteen, you don’t say nice things like that about opposing teams. They’re always garbage—”

Octavia kept whispering in her ear, but Clarke found herself staring at green eyes and a small smile.
The words were lost on her, and suddenly she found herself very interested in football.

“They have a girl on their team?” she interrupted whatever ridiculous rule was being explained to her once again.

“Kicker. She’s some soccer star who they got to fill in when the regular guy broke his leg.”

“Wow.”

“She drained a fifty-six yarder two weeks ago. One hell of a leg. That’s what Bell says.”

“Wow,” Clarke sighed, never losing the kicker’s eyes.

“No! We just went over this,” her friend sighed. “Don’t go giving her eyes like that.”

“Right,” she nodded.

“I mean it.”

“Right,” Clarke nodded again.

“Let’s go,” Octavia sighed. “We need to go over the rules again and get you a cold shower.”

The hotel was brimming with people, flowing through the halls, sitting in the lobby and bar and restaurant and anywhere they could find space. The pool filled and overflowed with the extra bodies. Little meetings happened, different specialties and such. The cheerleaders put together their baskets to be delivered before the game.

It was better than school, it was better than the empty house of her parents being gone every other day with work. Clarke didn’t mind the crowd of their first evening. She didn’t mind the football players hogging the pool or being extra nice to them in their bathing suits. All of it was a perk she never asked for and as her life had become a series of giving up to the will of the world, she took it all in stride.

Senior year had been a lot, and Clarke had all of her applications in, her mother off her back, the rest was cake.

“We have to change quickly,” Octavia murmured as she tapped the button of the elevator. Clarke rolled her eyes and dried herself as best she could before tying the towel around her hip.

“I smuggled a gallon of vodka in the equipment bag,” Raven boasted. “Bellamy greased a few palms at the desk. There’s a field out back, beyond the trees.”

“This sounds absolutely terrible,” Clarke decided.

“We still need to get some spirit in this one.”

The elevator dinged and they came face to face with a squad of six players, still in their red, still smug. A stalemate raged between them for a moment as they sized each other. Clarke tugged her towel higher as she could, moving subtly so as not to drag more roving eyes to her bikini clad body. Her captain didn’t shy. She put her hands on her hips and waited for the inhabitants of the elevator to move.

“Hello there,” one of them smiled wolfishly. Clarke heard Octavia scoff, but she just looked at that kicker who shuffled beside the rest. “Anywhere we can accompany you to, ladies?”
“I think we’ll manage,” Octavia cut them off curtly.

“There’s going to be a party we’re throwing later, if you could be persuaded to join us,” another offered as he held the door. “We could convince you to root for us maybe.”

“No thanks.”

“Girl like you deserves a real running back. One that’s going to lift that trophy,” he continued, eyeing up Octavia. “You look so damn good–”

“I mean, we could show you a good time–”

“I don’t think it’s very fair that the Grizzlies get all of these hot girls.”

“Yeah, what you need is a true Warrior.”

They flexed a bit, smiled, winked, did all of that they could to catch the attention of the cheerleaders. One grabbed Raven’s hand and kissed at her knuckles.

“You can take your stupid red jackets and get lost,” Clarke grumbled, standing between him and her friend before he was tugged slightly, the rest of the group laughing at his misfortune of getting shut down.

The catcalls kept happening as they went into the elevator, passing close to the other team.

“We’ll be leaving you all alone,” the kicker nodded politely, pushing her teammates slightly. “I’m sorry for them.”

“Yeah, you should be,” the cheerleader retorted. “You and your stupid, pretty eyes. Just because you’re absolutely flawless doesn’t mean you get to talk like that.”

“I didn’t say anything,” the kicker smiled softly and shook her head. “I’m Lexa. If you were wondering.”

“You thought it though, and I wasn’t wondering at all,” Clarke challenged. “Now if you’ll excuse us, with your big, strong shoulders,” she observed, putting her hand there to push her away but instead squeezing and distracting herself. “And perfect lips. We’ll be going.”

Her smile moved to her ears, and Lexa stood outside the elevator, holding back a few of her teammates who made a few more comments and blew a few kisses at the other cheerleaders as the doors closed. The last thing Clarke saw was green, oddly perplexed eyes and a toothy grin.

“That went well,” Clarke decided, clapping her hands together before putting them on her hips and turning to her friends.

“Are you unaware of the words coming out of your mouth?” Octavia furrowed and yelled at her.

“I told them off.”

“I don’t understand you,” the captain shook her head and walked out into the hall. Raven just laughed when Clarke looked at her helplessly. “You’re a mess.”

The evening consisted of a practice, a dinner, and a curfew. At the hotel for exactly six hours, and everything completed, it was a slow kind of exodus after bed check toward the spot for the party.
“Big strong shoulders,” Raven teased as they snuck out into the hall. “You really told her off.”

“I thought it sounded more threatening than what you’re saying.” Clarke hissed, bumping into Octavia as they tiptoed toward the stairs at the end of the hall.

“Shh!” the captain hissed.

They meandered as best they could, their arms full of contraband until they pushed their way outside. Even from the parking lot they could make out the faint noise of the accumulation of people. Guests who travelled from out of town to see the game, friends, the team, it was almost like home.

It wasn’t the worst situation for a party. They’d had their fair share of backwoods fun. Down by the river back home, the beach by the lake, they didn’t need much to have a good time.

A few cars circled the field, a little bonfire remained in the middle. It almost looked like Friday back home after a game.

Clarke had a few drinks, but didn’t let herself have anymore, instead allowing herself to have the honor of babysitting the team equipment manager and cheerleading captain. It was a full time job that she couldn’t take lightly. Last time she did, Octavia gave herself a haircut and Raven broke someone’s windshield.

Tonight wasn’t much different for them.

The team celebrated and went about their night as they always did, performing a weird kind of fake ritual for the game in two days. The following day would be full of practice and nerves and training and actual bed checks. Tonight was their’s.

The first to join was the Warrior’s cheerleaders, which the team wanted to tell to leave, but caught sight of them and couldn’t bring themselves to do it. Clarke watched a million different interactions take out like the one they had on the elevator, though some were with more success.

The arrival of a gaggle of red lettermans shouldn’t have been a surprise, though it seemed it to the drunk team in blue. Clarke sipped her drink and moved away from the bonfire as her own team grew rowdy. Hoping to find Octavia after losing her, Clarke saw the other team walk up and groaned to herself.

“Looks like we had the same idea,” the boy with crazy hair grinned as Bellamy squared up with him.

“Looks like we beat you, just like Sunday’s going to be,” the quarterback retorted, crossing his arms.

“Hi,” the voice beside her startled her. Clarke cleared her throat and met the same kind of eyes that made her not be able to think. “Glad to run into a familiar face.”

The light of the bonfire freckled across her face, illuminating a small, safe kind of smile. Hands tucked deep in the pockets of her jacket, there were many pins and years and patches on it. Even in the dark, Clarke could make out that thin sliver of green.

“You can insult me some more if you’d like,” she offered.

“You all shouldn’t be out here.”

“That’s what I said. It’s kind of my job to keep them out of trouble,” Lexa nudged her head at the group that was seen talking to Bellamy and his group of people.
“I didn’t mean what I said earlier.”

“What part?”

The way she cocked her head was almost adorable. The way she looked genuinely concerned about it was even more so. Clarke wanted to be forceful, but she didn’t trust herself.

“The… all of it.”

“Could you not say anything then,” she sighed. “The guys were kind of impressed that I got angrily complimented by a cheerleader. Gave me a lot of cred as a kicker.”

“I didn’t compliment you.”

“Kind of,” she shrugged. “You’re shivering.”

“I’m fine.”

Clarke watched her take the coat off, pulling out her arms, watching the black shirt beneath stick to her body, and she was distracted by her neck, the slender curve of her waist and ribs.

“Here.”

“You guys are garbage and you have fucking abs. Beautiful, perfect…” Clarke swallowed. “You smell like Ireland looks.”

“Are those more insults?” Lexa chuckled and shoved her hands in her back pockets awkwardly as her coat eclipsed the cheerleader’s shoulders.

“What is wrong with me?”

“You never learned proper ways to trash talk, I guess.”

“I can’t keep doing this. You’re the enemy.”

“It’s just a game,” Lexa shrugged, enjoying the way that her coat looked on her. “Did you know that I’ve actually had college offers? One year of playing football and I get offers. A lifetime of soccer and I’m still waiting.”

“I mean, you’re fit. You’re super fit. Look at you,” Clarke shook her head and surveyed her again.

“You give me a lot of compliments for someone who doesn’t mean to. Anyway I can try to insult you a little without making you hate me?”

“Your face is perfect and we’re going to beat the hell out of you.”

“I don’t know if that’s a yes or no.”

“I don’t know,” Clarke shook her head and ran her hand over her cheek. “I’m a mess near you.”

“You’re not always like this?”

“Never.”

“Can I ask your name?”

“Clarke,” she mumbled, not trusting herself to speak. It didn’t matter. Her mouth was a traitor and
she’d say anything.

“Do you think we could tr—”

A rumble erupted, distracting the two that had somehow carved a bit of themselves out of the party. It was inevitable, but still, Clarke hoped to get a little longer with this pleasant surprise.

The scuffle was nothing more than a few guys rolling around in the dirt, grunting and attempting to hit at each other, before the rest of the teams pulled them apart.

Flashing blue lights illuminated the field. Clarke looked to her side but found no one. By the time she found Lexa again, she was across the field tugging at some of her players, and Clarke felt herself getting tugged by her friends in the opposite direction.

It’s not until everyone disperses, scattering in every direction, not until they make it back to their room that Clarke realizes Octavia is giving her a terrible kind of look.

“What the hell are you wearing?!”

Clean and fresh, that’s the smell Clarke breathes in as she picks up the borrowed red coat once again. After the stern lecture she got from a half-drunk captain, she knows she shouldn’t care too much about it, or the idea of having to see the kicker again to return it. Those were bad things that broke about six of the apparent rules Octavia deemed unbreakable.

She managed to make it the entire day without running into her again. The team’s schedules and her own duties kept the day fairly occupied. It didn’t stop Clarke from looking though.

That was how she found herself holding the jacket again, bringing it to her nose and breathing it in.

It was stupid. It was ridiculous. It was everything Clarke didn’t need to happen in her life.

She knew that her last name was Woods. It was sprawled across the back. She knew that she won state for soccer three years running. Clarke knew that she got honors subjects. that she carried a pack of gum and pen in her pocket.

For longer than she wanted to admit, Clarke stared at the key packet with the kicker’s name on it, right above the room number.

“Hey, O, I’m going to take this back real quick,” Clarke decided, nodding to herself, preparing herself. She leaned against the bathroom door and waited for a response.

“We have bed check soon.”

“I’ll be right back.”

“Just wait until tomorrow.”

“That’ll be in poor taste when we win.”

“Bed check!” her roommate called through the shower. Clarke shook her head, not allowing herself to be dissuaded.

She had to get rid of it and forget about the kicker.

After the mild bust up by the police the night before, Lexa was grateful that her captain imposed a
ban on anyone leaving their rooms after dinner. She didn’t know how the hell she ended up in a hotel room, two hours from home, playing in a state championship. She didn’t know how she ended up distracted by a strange girl who kept insulting her with compliments.

It was a mess.

Her coach told her to focus, to visualize, to spend her time thinking about her motions and the play and such. All Lexa found herself doing was thinking about the cheerleader who would get so flustered, she would blurt things, charming things.

She paced and let the television talk to itself. In the same hotel somewhere, a girl had her coat, and a girl would blurt nice things about her almost on command.

Lexa didn’t sign up for any of it.

She splashed her face with water and started to brush her teeth, trying desperately to prepare herself. The nerves came out before a game, and even after multiple important games under her belt, it didn’t negate them completely. Experience told her she would be okay. Experience told her that tomorrow was the end of the world, and after it was over, she would fall asleep and the world would start over, just as it did every time.

The knock on the door made her roll her eyes. Coach was getting too overzealous about the bed checks after the cops pulled him aside and let him known about his players.

“Yeah, I’m still here,” she grumbled, shoving the toothbrush back in her mouth as she opened the door.

A jacket was shoved in her stomach as soon as the door cracked. Lexa paused, stark still, barely able to grab at it.

“I didn’t get to give this to you last night,” Clarke hurriedly said. “And I can’t have it sitting in my room. My roommate had a heart attack when she saw me in it, and the game’s tomorrow.”

The ramble was adorable, and Lexa was reminded of that nagging thought she’d just started to try to scrub out of her teeth, about how something so adorable shouldn’t be in her head so close to game day, that perhaps it was a ploy by the other team to ice the kicker. It was super effective, and if that was the case, she thought they just might deserve the win.

“I didn’t mean to bother you or anything, just thought you might be missing it, and I’ll be going back to my room now—”

“Wait,” Lexa grumbled, the toothpaste in her mouth making it difficult to speak. She stuck her head into the hall and surveyed it for the inevitable bed check. “Come in for a second, or you’ll get me in trouble.”

“What?” the cheerleader scrunched her face at the indecipherable words before being tugged into the room.

Lexa tossed her jacket before slipping into the bathroom to rinse her mouth and emerge anew.

“Sorry, I had to finish and coach will be doing bed check soon I think.”

“No, I get it. I don’t want you to… look at you… fuck,” Clarke shook her head and held her hands out in defeat. “Are you serious?”
“I don’t…” Lexa shook her head before furrowing and looking down at herself. She wrapped her arms around her bare stomach, exposed in her sleep attire of just a sports bra and old soccer shorts. “I didn’t expect visitors.”

When she looked back up, Lexa met blue eyes with a mixture of emotions. She could see hundreds of thoughts thundering around behind them, she imagined they must have sounded like a thundering herd of rhinos or something.

“You have the room to yourself?” Clarke turned her attention to the room.

“Only girl on the team.”

“I just wanted to drop off the jacket,” she reminded herself.

“Thanks for that.”

“And apologize.”

“Oh?” Lexa cocked her head slightly. Clarke stood in the middle of the room and wrung her fingers slightly.

“For all of the things that come out of my mouth. They were mean, and I–”

“They really haven’t been mean,” she chuckled. “If anything it’s been nice to hear.”

“I’m not usually like this.”

“What are you usually like?” Lexa ventured, leaning against the wall as she cross her arms.

“Normally, I’m pretty calm, laid back.”

“Really?”

“I guess not, actually,” Clarke realized. “I don’t know who I am, much. I know who I’m trying to be.”

Lexa didn’t say anything else, just leaned there and smiled, all lop-sided and shaking her head ever so slightly. A tornado came into her room in the middle of the night, and it was the best kind of destruction she could imagine. She’d never fallen in love before, but she was fairly certain it was supposed to be like a natural disaster; beautiful and deafening and powerful and violent and tremor-inducing.

“I should get going.”

“Can I, uh, can I check the hall first?” Lexa straightened herself. “If we get caught with someone in our room, we won’t play, and I really want to go to college, and a personal essay about being a girl, kicking the winning field goal for a state championship is just too good to pass up.”

“Yeah, sure. I really didn’t want to get you in trouble.”

“Just… stand over there?” she nudged her head and moved toward the door.

A quick scan to the left was clear, but Lexa nearly jumped out of her skin when she looked to her right and saw three coaches looking back at her.

“Can we help you, Twelve?” her special teams coach asked, lowering his arms as they placed tape
on the door jamb of the door a few doors down.

“Um, no, just… wanted to ice my legs. Feeling a little tight after practice. I think I overstretched,” she lied quickly.

The tape screamed as it was tugged again and added to another door.

“You’re supposed to call a coach before you leave the room.”

“The ice is right there, I thought it’d be okay.”

“How much do you need?”

“Just a bagful, please,” she swallowed, unaccustomed to lying. She grabbed at the laundry bag in the closet and handed it to a coach. “Thanks. You are all out late.”

“Doors are getting taped, no running around since apparently burpies weren’t enough after your run in with the cops last night,” the defensive backs coach grunted as he finished another before moving and knocking at the next. “Room check!”

Lexa gulped and stood in the hall beside her door, her heart beating in her chest as her bag of ice was delivered.

“Anything else you need, princess?” her coach taunted. She shook her head quickly. “Let me do a quick check and then you’re getting taped. Don’t open this again,” he grunted, walking into her room. She closed her eyes and held the freezing bag to her bare stomach.

Her teammates across from her made polite conversation, taunting her attire while she taunted them back until their room was marked clear and they went back in.

“I can’t believe this,” Coach Rowling came back out. Her heart leapt into her mouth. “She gets a king bed!” he complained to the other coaches who kept doing their work. “Get in there, Woods. King bed,” he mumbled. “We’ll be out in the hall on watch if you need anymore ice.”

“Maybe if you could kick a sixty odd yard field goal you’d get one too,” another laughed at themselves as Lexa closed the door and leaned against it, hearing the tape stretch and get patted onto her door.

The knocks moved down the hall and she let her head drop forward, still not accepting the bag of ice as cold against her bare stomach, still not sure how her legs kept standing.

“Clarke?” she whispered, finally able to think straight. “Holy hell,” she gasped as her curtains moved. “What are you, some professional?”

“I’ve snuck out once or twice,” Clarke nodded, wiping her hands with a smile. “What does this mean?”

“I think you should call your roommate.”

“And you should put a shirt on,” the cheerleader decided.

She walked past the kicker who collapsed, exhausted and on one hell of a ride of adrenaline, in the desk chair. Lexa smiled slightly as she surveyed herself once again, flexing slightly before putting her leg up and putting ice on her knee and thigh.
“I can’t believe this is all you have in terms of food,” Clarke shook her head as she sat on the bed and picked up a powerbar and some weird protein drink that looked like something that would taste like chalk.

Lexa shrugged and sat back down on the chair, putting the ice she didn’t need, but now that she had it, enjoyed it, on her leg. She watched the cheerleader who was wearing her old sweatpants and shirt sift through the stash of food she brought.

An hour ago, she was pacing and watching shows about aliens. Now she had a girl in her room, in her clothes, on her bed. The world was a crazy place.

“Are you one of those health nuts who works out all the time?” the blonde accused with a powerbar as an extension of her hand.

“I work out a lot,” the kicker shrugged. “I like to eat well. I’m not radical about it.”

“But like a bag of Doritos would kill you?”

“I ate those already,” Lexa chuckled. “Sorry.”

“This is the worst hostage situation I’ve ever been part of,” Clarke sighed, tossing down the treat.

“Got many to compare it to?”

“No, but you’re setting the bar very low.”

“I’m so sorry you got stuck here, just to bring my jacket back.”

“If I wouldn’t have debated it so much, I would have been here much earlier,” Clarke realized, finally deciding on the trail mix as her only true option. “It’s my own fault. Although, if they had said at cheerleading try-outs I’d be trapped in a room for the night with someone who looks like…” her cheeks burned and she caught herself ogling before her hands waved in front of herself to try to help. “I would have signed up earlier is all.”

“You debated dropping it off? You were going to steal my coat?” Lexa avoided the part that made her smile.

“No… I just… I don’t know. I had to buck up, as my dad would say.”

“You can’t just pick all of the chocolate chips out of the trail mix.”

“I got a raisin accidentally a few bites ago.”

The two were quiet, and the night was young. Lexa ran her hand over her stomach and desperately wished she’d put on a shirt because now things felt different. Her leg was numb and that felt nice, but she couldn’t remove the ice because then she would move and things would change.

“We should just get it out in the open,” the kicker decided, tossing the bag to the trash bin under the desk.

“I’m not going to eat that kale bar. I tried to pretend I would to be gracious, but I just ca—”

“You like me. And if I would have had the chance last night, I would have insulted you a bit as well, and told you I liked your eyes and how you were funny.”

The room was quiet. Clarke stared at the bag of snacks and chewed what she could before
swallowing it and the lump that formed in her throat.

“Twenty-four hours from now, we’ll be on our ways home. I didn’t want to not say anything.”

“You’re wrong.”

“Am I?”

“I don’t like you.”

“Just looking at me.”

“I don’t know anything about you to like you.”

“Well, we have all night,” Lexa decided. “What would you like to know?”

She was thoughtful, pensive, perhaps was the best word for how Clarke would describe the kicker. Before she answers, she weighs words, decides how exact to be, how honest. She was smarter than she liked to let on, though that wasn’t hard to discern. When she talked about her little brother, she got nostalgic and sad about leaving to go to school. She was orderly and clean without trying. She was the kind of person who packed healthy snacks but ate the junk food first.

All of it was bad news to Clarke, because she enjoyed spending time with Lexa, and when her head tried to talk her out of it, it failed.

“I had visits with a few schools. I’m hoping one of them gives me a scholarship,” Lexa breathed, turning her head from the pillow and looking at the girl beside her.

They were still far apart on the bed. having separate blankets, but well late into the night, they were down to one light and just talking. Lexa was distracted by how the blue changed, how it grew darker and danced.

“Are you going to play in college?”

“If they let me. I don’t know what I’m going to study though.”

“Yeah, me too,” Clarke realized, rolling onto her side to stare at Lexa’s profile. “Mom wants me to be a doctor like her. Dad wants me to be an engineer like him. I kind of want to study art.”

“An artist?”

“Don’t laugh.”

“I won’t,” Lexa promised, rolling over as well, tucking her hands under her cheek.

“I want to make movies, stories, I don’t know. Something like that. I’ve been telling stories since I started babysitting. I have a few ideas, and I love it.”

“I don’t think that’s bad at all.”

“No?”

“Why would I? You want to make things that make people happy. I think it’s nice.”

“I haven’t admitted it to anyone, not even my art teacher,” Clarke closed her eyes and smiled.
Lexa was brave, but only because it was late, only because she liked be the only something. She pushed Clarke’s hair behind her ear, tucking it gently.

“You’ll have to show me your stuff one day.”

“One day?”

“You know,” Lexa chuckled. “If you officially like me after getting to know me.”

“I’ll never admit it.”

“I just have to wait until you’re near your squad and start trash talking me again.”

“Ugh,” Clarke groaned and hid her head in the pillow, burrowing deep in it to hide her blush. “I don’t know what that was about.”

“Hey, I was the one that came out and said I liked you. That was embarrassing as hell.”

“That’s true. It really was.”

Cheeks all red and overheated from hiding, Clarke finally emerged once again. She did like her. As much as someone could like a stranger they oogled and then got trapped with for a night. Perhaps it was just Stockholm Syndrome, she assured herself.

Quietly, Clarke shifted a little closer and made herself comfortable. Lexa did the same and smiled. She was a hard nut to crack, and always left this sense of wanting more. Clarke hated it and loved it.

“I’m not supposed to fall for someone right now,” Clarke whispered, eyes darting to Lexa’s lips.

The bed felt too big, but at the same time, when they met in the middle it felt as if it wasn’t big enough.

“I don’t think you get to decide those things.”

“You’re secretly a writer, aren’t you?” She earned a chuckle as Lexa nudged her forehead slightly closer with the adjustment.

“I didn’t want to admit that is what I want to study.” Dark green eyes were earnest in the admission.

“I know you already, twelve.”

“We only live about forty-five minutes away from each other.”

“I have rules for senior year. Get out, completely unattached,” Clarke continued. Lexa kept leaning forward.

“You know what they say about rules.”

“I was going to start over at college. You’ll go away to some other school, and then what?”

“I was thinking one official date first before we move in together.”

“That’s true. Maybe it’s just being here, and you without a shirt. In the light of day things will be different,” Clarke nodded and leaned forward, excruciatingly slow. She ran her fingertips along Lexa’s cheek.
“Exactly. I’m probably heinous back home,” the kicker promised with that charming grin.

“Exactly,” Clarke decided, quite seriously.

“Do you want to kiss me?”

“If I do, I might never stop.”

“I have something to do tomorrow, but I’m free after that.”

Clarke could feel Lexa’s lips against her own as she spoke, but refused to finish crossing that distance. It had to be Clarke, and they knew it.

Fingertips moved from cheek to jaw to neck and back. Clarke felt Lexa’s hand on her ribs and inhaled just to feel her palm stretch over more space.

It was soft at first. Tentative and slow, as if time were cold syrup, lethargically moving. Lexa smiled while Clarke furrowed and put everything she had into it. Scientific as all get out, she knew that if she tried her best, she could figure it was just a passing fancy, and have no second thoughts.

She hadn’t considered the alternative.

Her hand followed the warmth as the kiss deepened. Bare skin was hers to be had. She trailed over almost bare back, over muscles and ribs, over the little mountain range of her stomach and finally pushed at Lexa’s chest so that she could catch her breath.

“Nothing’s going to happen tonight, Twelve,” Clarke breathed, closing her eyes and looking at the ceiling.

“You kissed me.”

“Yeah and I liked it, thanks for nothing.”

“You are either incredibly complex or absolutely crazy,” Lexa laughed, falling back onto her back and pushing her hair out of her face as she stared at the ceiling. “And for some reason, I’m hooked.”

“Want to do that a little bit more?” Clarke offered after a few moments of quiet.

“Of what?”

Clarke didn’t answer, just turned off the light and rolled back until she was pressed against the baffled kicker.

It wasn’t just making out. Clarke did a lot of that though, just for science, just to be sure. It was the way Lexa was dry and witty without meaning to be, blunt without malice, honest with a bit of mystery, and just a fantastic kisser.

In the dark, she was unsure how long they managed to fight sleep to talk. By the time the alarm blared, both grumbled and realized they were still very close.

Lexa reached over Clarke and slammed her hand on the clock as the cheerleader burrowed and hid in the pillow and Lexa’s chest. Facing each other, still with different blankets, still oddly separate, they woke looking at each other.

“I have to get back to my room,” Clarke realized, yawning and pulling the blanket higher, against the
idea of moving.

“I have to kick some field goals and stuff.”

Lexa kissed Clarke’s cheek and curled into her own blankets once again, leaning her forehead on the grumpy girl’s. The sun slipped through the half-closed curtain while the faintest of noises could be heard from the room beside them waking as well.

“Is everything different now? Did the spell wear off?” Lexa whispered.

“Forty-five minutes away, huh?”

“I drive fast.”

“Maybe if we win today,” Clarke yawned and pulled the blankets higher to her chin. “I’ll let you ask me on a date.”

“And if we win?”

Even after sleeping, even after the weird, long first date of being stuck together in a room, even after all of it, Lexa woke with bright eyes and that soft kind of smile that you never wanted to turn the volume up on, just because it was more important when it was that way.

“I’ll ask you on a date.”

The laugh was everything. Clarke was ready to say anything to get another.

“You’re on.”

“Deal,” she held out her hand and they shook. “Should I steal your jacket again as collateral?”

“You look quite good in it,” Lexa shrugged.

“You’re charming first thing in the morning, Twelve.”

“You should see me after I have my Wheaties.”

“I wish we didn’t have to leave. Things will be different.”

“I’m hooked. One night and I’m hooked. Out there doesn’t change anything,” Lexa promised. She ran her hand along Clarke’s cheek.

A bang on the door disrupted Clarke’s thought, and so she gratefully swallowed the words before they came out as Lexa hopped up and earned eager ogling. Lexa promised that she was up, cracking the door slightly, taking note of the buzz now in the hall as everyone got ready.

“Maybe, uh,” the kicker ran her hand up the back of her neck and scratched, distracted and nervous. “You could get stuck again tonight?”

“I don’t know. Your snack selection is atrocious,” Clarke grins and closes her eyes, stretching long and languidly.

The bed moves as Lexa hops back in before getting closer to Clarke. She tickles her immediately, earning a fit, earning a shove, though it doesn’t deter her.
“Seriously?” Octavia complained as soon as Clarke walked back into their room, the door barely able to latch before she pounces.

Already dressed and perfectly quaffed, taking her job as head cheerleader excruciatingly serious, she’s ready to flip on her friend, softening only when she sees the dopey look on Clarke’s face and the smile that won’t go anywhere.

“What are you wearing?”

“Lexa’s clothes.”

“Did you sleep with her?” Octavia yelps, taken aback.

“No. Well. Yes, but not sex. We slept in the same bed. Like a slumber party.”

“You fell for the opposing team.”

“I didn’t fall…”

“Get these off and get showered. We leave in fifteen minutes.”

“Don’t be mad at me, O.”

Clarke was barely able to continue as her shirt was yanked and tossed on the floor. She stared at it for a second as her friend walks away and started to run the shower. Quickly, she followed protocol and stripped when Octavia left the bathroom.

“You spent the night with one of them,” Octavia growled, not giving her much time alone. “The night before the championship.”

“On accident.”

“I don’t want to know.”

“I’m going back tonight.”

“We have Bell’s party. He’s expecting us to be there.”

Clarke let the water cover her head and ears as she washed away her day and life. She’d made a daring escape and kissed a cute girl. It was a perfect night, and yet once again, she’d messed up all expectations everyone had of her.

“I really don’t care what Bellamy is expecting.”

“What?”

“I just…” she spit water and hung her head. “I’m tired. Go down to breakfast without me.”

“I set your uniform out,” Octavia explained, not hearing the first part, choosing not to press too much.

Through the curtain, Clarke watched her shadow move around as she finished her make up. Even though the water felt nice, she wanted to turn back time and be stuck in Lexa’s room again with that damn tape on the door.

“Bus leaves at twelve. I’ll be back up in a bit.”
“Alright.”

After an entire season, Clarke was sad to say that she hadn’t developed any more of an appreciation for football. She understood it, could fathom it, followed it, knew some strategy, she just never really cared. Octavia grew up with it, knew it better than anyone on the field, lived and died and bled for her team.

The stadium was electric, bigger than any they’d come to encounter before, and it was only going to get rowdier as the crowds began to arrive. Clarke stretched and kept quiet, knowing full well that it was going to be a long day.

It didn’t last long. She kept feeling her eyes lift and search the field. Warming up on the opposite end, a familiar new number stuck out violently in its red.

Clarke shook the thoughts away and followed the rest down the hall before the game was announced.

There was a major hesitation before she knocked on the door to the familiar hotel room. Entire minutes passed, she was certain, as she raised and lowered her knuckles, antsy and unable to make herself knock. There was a celebration raging from the victors, and no one noticed her hesitation.

“Were you not going to come if I’d missed that field goal?” Lexa smiled as she leaned against the door once Clarke finally knocked.

“We’ll never know.”

With a nudge of her head, she held the door open and waited for Clarke to come in again. She earned a few glances and a bit of applause from teammates as she shut the door.

It’d been a battle, to prepare herself. Coming down from the high of winning the championship was impossible, realizing that Clarke might come to her room kept her jittery. She fret around the room, showered and scrubbed and cleaned every bit of sweat and dirt she could find. She even raided the vending machine for proper snacks.

“Did you come to insult me a little more?”

“I came because I really wanted to see you,” Clarke promised, surveying the snacks on the desk and smiling.

“No wild parties to commiserate the loss?”

“I’m in huge trouble with everyone. I believe I’ve been branded a traitor.”

“I got you snacks, to make up for it,” Lexa tried.

“I appreciate the effort. Why is this so weird?”

“Because you’re here by choice,” she shrugged. “Because I’m clothed. Because you like me, even though I have a shirt on.”

“Yeah, all of that,” Clarke chuckled. “Congratulations on winning, by the way. You did really well.”

“Impressing a pretty girl was the reason I even suited up today.”

It was an excruciating kind of dance they had between each other. Lexa felt nerves like she hadn’t
in… as long as she could remember, not even when facing a huge line and a long kick. Clarke brought about way more nerves.

“I’m not supposed to fall for someone,” Clarke interrupted her own thoughts. “I’m going away to school.”

“So you do like me?”

“No.”

“Do you want to go out with me next weekend?”

“I really do,” she sighed, shaking her head as Lexa took a few steps closer.

“I just want to spend the night like last night. I liked it a lot.”

“I was hoping you’d say that.”

“I got snacks. We can watch TV.”

“Okay,” Clarke nodded.

She didn’t care about any of it though. She kissed Lexa and held her breath, enjoying it as best she could with her lungs burning.

“Or that,” Lexa swallowed. “I like that.”

With nothing more than a grin, Clarke kissed her again.
Snap

Chapter Summary

have you seen the story about the snapchat romance? can you do one based on THIS
snapchat story about two people meeting through snaps?

“Seriously?”

“Yes.”

“It’s Friday,” Anya complained, bent over the sink in the bathroom, looking up at her sister with a
dissatisfied glare of disapproval as she twisted the cap on her mascara. “How are you behind
already?”

“I have a test on Monday and two papers due next week.”

“That’s what you get, Miss I-Want-To-Be-A-Lawyer.”

“At least you’ll have a DD,” Lexa shrugged, gathering her stuff from her sisters bed. “Just call me
when you want picked up.”

“Come out with us.”

“Have fun, but not too much,” she shook her head, shouldering her bag.

“You’re soiling the family name!” Anya called as her sister finally left in search of some solitude and
peace at the library.

Evening was one of her favourite times to ride across campus. Once the lights came on, and the
sidewalk became dotted, the traffic was almost gone, and Lexa found herself in the middle of the
road, peddling and balancing with no hands for just a moment, enjoying the feeling of the prolonged
warmth of late September.

Clusters of people still mingled, all doing their own things, going their own places. In her head, as
she rode, for just a few minutes, she avoided thinking of the assignments and dauntingness of her
final year. Replacing it was this moment, this ride, the smell of the trees and the sound of the fountain
gurgling behind her. For a moment, she didn’t take it for granted, and she didn’t get overwhelmed.

By the time she made it to the library, locked her bike, and got fuel in the form of caffeine, that
feeling of early semester wonder waned. She tossed her bag down on her table in the back of the
philosophy section on the fifth floor. It was her in the way that everyone had their own table, that for
some reason was always open and available for just them, where they did their best work, or as
superstitions went, it was what would make or break a test or paper.

Look what you’re missing out on!, her sister snapped her a picture of the bar that was full and
practically booming. Lexa just shook her head and adjusted her headphones, not outright upset about
missing another night drinking and hanging out at the same parties with the same people.

Look at what you’re missing! Lexa took made a face and showed the other diligently working
people hiding in books.

I don’t need a ride home, she sent back, showing a picture of her with some guy.

Rolling her eyes once more, Lexa chuckled to herself as she tossed her phone in her bag, ready to ignore everything and try to study.

There was always a marked comparison between herself and her older sister, that was painfully obvious to anyone who knew them for five minutes. Free-spirited and laid-back, Anya commanded a party, commanded a room, filled the place with friends even if she just met them. It came easy to her, to talk to people and breeze through groups, becoming happier and happier by living loudly. Her little sister was nearly the opposite. Quiet and serious, Lexa respected order, and made herself work harder than most because she adapted a sense of self-discipline that was rigid and staunch. Life was easier that way, for her.

The dichotomy of the night, split in different ways between the two sisters, was merely a metaphor for their lives, for the perfect representation of their truest selves, and it was beautiful.

So studious and precise was Lexa, that she did not even know what was happening on her phone at the same time.

“Are you at least going to pretend to work?” Raven lulled her head back in the chair as she rolled it from the desk toward her friend who shamelessly scrolled through her phone.

The hall was quiet, would become busy shortly with returning freshman who couldn’t hold their liquor. But for the moment, their job at the dorm was easy and quiet. Raven filled the desk with heavy and menacing looking engineering textbooks, basically growling at anyone who might approach and ask for anything.

“I needed a break.”

“Yeah. Those sketches look like hard work,” she rolled her eyes and tossed her pen on her notebook, honestly reconsidering her degree choice.

“They are! My hand is cramping up, and I still have– Whoa,” Clarke stopped, distracted by the image that flashed on her screen.

“Another dick pic?”

“Even better.”

“That face says a lot.”

“I think I just fell in love in six seconds,” Clarke swallowed, her eyes growing larger as she stared at the screen still. “Watch the story for the university.”

“This is ridiculous,” her coworker rolled her eyes, digging for her phone in her back pocket. Clarke was already hurriedly trying to find the face again. “You mean the nerd in the glasses?”

“Yeah,” she grinned.

“Not what I imagine is your type, Griff.”

“She’s not, but I don’t even care. Think she’s still at the library?”
“You’re going to stalk a random girl because you saw her picture for six seconds?”

“When you put it like that,” Clarke sighed.

“Just put her on blast. Take a video and call her out. Maybe she’ll see it.”

“No, you’re right, it’s stupid. She’s just cute.”

“Don’t let me step on true love just because I’m sick of Robotics already,” Raven clicked off her phone and tossed it on the desk. She watched her friend stare at the screen on her own. “What!” she snapped at a freshman who came to the desk. “We’re having a moment. Move along.”

“Help the kid, Raven,” Clarke laughed. “You’re going to scare him half to death.”

With an exaggerated groan, Raven turned back to the desk, and without much thought, Clarke gave in and went for it.

The lawn in the middle of campus was brimming and alive with the beautiful day that made class unappealing and let people steal bits and pieces of time in the sun when they could. Behemoths of fluffy white clouds gracefully lagged through the sky casting infrequently and moving shadows on the ground. No one minded them at all, but just went about their days, soaking in the warmth and spring.

Clarke ran her thumb along the charcoal sketch of the ancient building. She squinted against the sunshine.

Days like that made her happy. Seeking out moments of quiet in the day, surrounded by people, not working on assignments or anything like that, but simply sitting in the sun and drawing what she wanted, they let the stress of work and school and her family drip away.

In the distance, she watched a girl weaving along on her bike. A group of boys played catch while a gaggle of girls bathed with sleeves pulled up and shifts lifted in attempts to get a jump on summer.

“Clarke!” Raven yelled, hands cupped to her mouth as she called with abandon. “Clarke!”

“What?” She hollered back so her friend could find her. She grinned as she watched Raven sprint.

“I have to show you something.”

“Did you run the whole way here?”

“You weren’t answering your phone.”

“I was busy.”

“This isn’t the time!” Raven yelped, swatting away Clarke’s phone before shoving her own in the artist’s face. “Look! You’ve been asked out by Library Girl.”

“Who?”

“The girl! It’s all over the place!”

“All over the… what?” Clarke balked at the idea.

“Library Girl and you. She invited you to meet up at the Law Library.”
“She really is cute,” the artist smirked. “But I have work tonight.”

“Clarke, a hot girl who looks to be as nerdy as you, is almost asking you out. This is like some fate-level shit right now.”

“It’s not fate. It’s just snapchat.”

“It’s fate. I’m going to tell your kids this story one day,” Raven argued. “I’m going to say their mommies met by being horny college kids who shouted at each other in front of an entire university.”

“Well, maybe not. I have work,” Clarke shrugged.

“I thought you were in love,” her friend insisted as she watched the artist pack up her stuff.

“That girl right there would break my heart in a minute. Plus I have work.”

“Whatever. Ask her out tomorrow.”

“No way.”

“Yes.”

“No.”

“Yes.”

“It was just an innocent flirt. Why are you so invested?”

“Because this is a real-life fairy tale happening and I’m the fairy godmother or possessed household good, ushering you to happiness,” Raven whined.

“Are you going to break out into song next?”

“Probably. That’s how weird this has been.”

“This is ridiculous,” Lexa complained, tossing another dress on the ground after pulling it over her head.

Her closet was practically dispelled on the floor, noting meeting a standard she wasn’t quite sure of just yet. It was all nerves, but she didn’t know what to do about it. All she had was this way to postpone by complaining about her clothes.

“I like the red one,” Anya tried, her patience wearing ridiculously thin, though her attempt at being supportive held fast. “It’s just a girl.”

“She’s not just a girl,” her sister rolled her eyes. “She’s got those eyes and those lips, and those… just her whole face area.”

“And those personalities.”

“Okay, it’s not just-”

“Lexa, you can find a girl hot and want to bring her back to your room. It’s not a crime.”

“Alright, well. It’s. I’m. That’s. No. I don’t. Okay.” She blushed furiously.
“You dated one person in high school.” Her sister stood, picking up a few things from the floor.
“You study too much. You work too hard. And now the entire school is watching to see if you choke when dealing with a hot blonde.”

“That started out shit, tried to motivate, and then turned back into shift,” Lexa shook her head.

“All I’m saying is that you’re allowed to have fun, even though you seem to be clinically allergic to it.”

“I’m not allergic.”

“She’s hot.”

“Yeah.”

“Wear this,” Anya decided, holding up another, not yet dismissed piece of clothing. “She’s going to love you.”

“This is really stupid.”

“Maybe, but I think it is more awesome than anything else. I wish I had selfie game strong enough to get a call out.”

“You think I look okay?” Lexa asked, nervous and fretting.

“Yeah. I think you’re going to knock her socks off.”

“Tequila please,” Lexa asked, hurrying to the bar. It felt crowded, and she felt conspicuous, and suddenly, all that she wanted was to be very far away from her own body. A lightning bolt or stroke or even freak aneurism would have been welcomed.

The shot made her wince, unaccustomed to the taste of liquor after her many nights as DD and unwavering dislike of hangovers. It didn’t deter her though, not with the nerves rattling her hands and joints so that she felt she might shake apart if given the chance.

“Another, please,” she hisses, sliding the glass across the bar.

By the fourth, she doesn’t feel better, but she certainly feels the weight of the liquor in her belly and decides to slow down, sipping the next, attempting not to check her watch too often and failing miserably.

The bar swirled and ebbed, whispering of such things. She tried to turn her ears off, she tried to exist and breathe, but all proved to be difficult.

“Can I buy you another?” someone offered beside her as Lexa stared at the glass in her hands.

“I think I should slow down. I’m meeting—” She looked up and felt the burn of the shot without taking it. Her throat went raw and dry. “Someone.”

“It was worth a shot,” Clarke smiled, signalling for another round between them anyway.

“I can’t believe it’s you. I’ve been racking my brain trying to figure out what to say.”

“What’d you come up with?”

can see, I’m eloquent.”

“I like it though,” the girl smiled, taking her shot and nodding to herself. “It’s honest, and sweet. Should we try again?”

“Yes.”

“Excuse me, I think you’re the girl I randomly called out in front of the whole school because I think you’re cute as hell. My name’s Clarke, and it is so nice to meet you, officially. The blonde stuck out her hand and Lexa looked at it for a second before finally sitting up straighter and shaking it.


“Well it certainly can’t get more awkward than this, right?”

“Give me a few minutes. I’m sure I can try to beat it.”

She made her laugh, and Lexa was a goner at the sound of it. She never considered herself funny. If pressed, anyone who knew her would think she’d been lobotomized because surely funny was never a word that would be ascribed to the focused, precise, and high-strung girl. But Clarke laughed and Lexa thought she’d be as honest as it took and make a fool out of herself to hear it again, even if it were the last thing she did.

“Now what?” Clarke ventured, sipping her second round.

“I’m not exactly sure.”

“Perfect. That gives us the night to do whatever we want, and I’m set to see how this goes if you are.”

For a second she considers it; for longer than Clarke thinks she can stomach it, but still, she watches Lexa debate before nodding softly.

“It was a joke, I swear. I didn’t think this would actually… happen,” Clarke shook her head, smiling to herself as she did.

The streetlights glowed golden around the lawn. The roses were red and full, blushing in the night as they made their way through the campus. Random strangers walked around, and neither seemed to notice, grateful they escaped the bar and the eyes that didn’t even try to pretend not to be invested in them.

“Do you even know how hard it was to ask you to meet me in the library?” Lexa scoffed.

“Alright, you win.”

“I mean, it’s not the worst that this could have ended up. I had a lot of weird scenarios in my head. Not one of them was a walk and you being charming.”

“Charming huh?” Clarke grinned, ducking her head slightly.

“You’re not terrible.”

“I think you’re beautiful.”
“You, what?” Lexa paused.

“I think you’re cute, and smart. Much more than the adorable picture you posted on accident.”

“See? Charming,” Lexa complained, watching as the blonde took a seat on a bench and nudged her head.

They sat on the bench together and watched the lights dancing in the fountain. Lexa cleared her throat and sat primly.

“Tell me the most important things about you that you would only tell a stranger,” Clarke began.

With eyes like that, Lexa was powerless.

By the time the sun came up, they spent the entire night talking. On the edge of the bench, with the sky the pink kind of dawn, Lexa kissed the girl with blonde hair and words that came with moving hands, and it was the best thing she’d ever done.
lexa asks abby for clarke’s hand in marriage

“And you are certain that is how it is done?” Lexa watched Lincoln nod. “They leave such things up to those not involved?” Another nod. “I hate so many things about them.”

“Yes, heda,” he agreed before she waved him out.

It was only after debating every step of her path that Lexa realized as unpolitical as she attempted to make this moment, it was very much planned out as strategically as any battle or conversation in Council she’d ever had.

The Commander was the one who made the trip to the Ark, as much as she hated the giant metal monstrosity and everything it meant. She was the one who found herself standing outside of its door, contemplating the way in which to embark upon this endeavour. She was the one that left Tondc in the middle of the afternoon to slip into Camp Jaha with little fanfare or notice. She planned to come when Clarke was in Tondc and would not notice where she went. She came up with the lie to tell her on a hunt. She had a boar being hunted right now by part of her guard who did not come with her.

Every part of this moment was calculated - save for what she was going to say. Her mind had a million things and it had no things to say. It either wanted to garble out a list of reasons that seemed ridiculous and obscure, or it wanted to be quiet and acknowledge that Lexa might not be good enough.

It was the asking for permission thing that really tripped her. She hadn’t asked for permission in too long. She needed no one’s permission. They needed her permission. She had her own permission to marry Clarke. The dissonant, indignant thoughts kept her rooted for longer than she would ever admit.

“Wait here,” Lexa instructed her guards as she finally took a step forward and was allowed inside.

Her trips inside the Ark were few and far between, but she knew how to get to the hospital, and she knew that Abby would be there because Clarke told her she spent too much time hiding there when Lexa asked about her mother. She counted on it, tonight.

“Commander, this is a surprise,” Abby said without looking up from her desk in the back corner as Lexa’s boots thumped along the hollow floors. Tentative and curious, Lexa took a few more steps, suddenly stuck in the middle of the empty, antiseptically precise beds. Lexa was not so certain it was the surprise the healer claimed it to be.

“I was in the neighbourhood,” Lexa lied.

“My daughter is supposed to be in your village tonight. Is everything alright?” Abby looked at the commander over the edge of her glasses, only dropping her pen slightly.

“Everything’s fine. She was on a hike when I left.”
“Good,” the mother nodded. “Is there something I can help you with?” The good doctor knew what was coming, savoured this small bit of control, of power she had over the young leader. She relegated herself to her work, but this moment, this act, was as normal as she could be, and so she let it linger, soaked up the juices from every second.

“I have been told of a tradition,” Lexa began, pseudo-confidence firmly in place as she stared at the healer. This wasn’t how she wanted to start, and now all of the words were wrong. Anxiously, her hand played with the hilt of the weapon on her belt. It played as cool and dismissive. “As you know already,” she tried again, looking at her fingers moving.

For what it was worth, Abby was surprised by the Commander’s ability to worry and fret while seeping this kind of flustered strength.

“I am not quite sure how to go about this, exactly,” Lexa confessed, meeting the mother’s eyes once more. “We do not have these customs.”

“Customs about what?” Abby put her pen down and leaned back in her chair. Lexa meandered another few steps towards her while trying to put her words back in order.

“I would like to marry your daughter,” Lexa stated firmly. It was concise and bold and blatant and she was oddly content with how it came out, and if that was the entirety of it, she would consider it a success on her part. “I am asking your permission to marry your daughter. I assume it is your opportunity to select a good mate for your offspring. I am not certain of the exact purpose entirely.”

“You want to marry Clarke?” Abby asked, suddenly aware of how official this became.

“Very much,” Lexa nodded assuredly.

“Have you asked-“

“Oh no,” Lexa shook her head. “I wanted to observe the traditions she would value.”

“She would hate it if she knew you were here,” Abby disagreed with a smile, much to Lexa’s confusion. She stood and moved around the desk, leaning on the edge and crossing her arms as Lexa tried to work it out in her head how the mat suddenly became a completely different subject. “Clarke hasn’t needed permission to do anything since she was five.” Abby chuckled slightly thinking about the stubborn, strong-willed bullheaded convictions of her daughter.

“Then I will not tell her,” Lexa nodded after taking a calming breath, realizing that this was for naught. But she met Abby’s eyes once more. “What would you say? Since I asked. Am I a good selection for your daughter?”

“You know it doesn’t matter what I say, Commander,” Abby dismissed the frivolity of the line of inquisition.

“It matters to me,” Lexa stood a little taller, eyed her a little more eagerly. “If she would listen to you or not, does not matter. I am asking if you think I am worthy of that, of your approval.”

“My approval matters even less to you than it does to my daughter,” the healer reminded the leader, adjusting her legs, recrossing them and watching her ankles do it.

“Not for this custom. This custom matters to you,” Lexa realized.

Between them now, in the quiet of the infirmary, in the emptiness of the room, an understanding existed, an honesty, a deference to the normality they existed and moved within throughout a normal
“Why do you want to marry my daughter?” Abby met her eyes. The question surprisingly one that Lexa had not considered when asking. She assumed it was just asking and letting her record speak for itself.

“I love her,” Lexa blurted. “I don’t know any other reason.”

“There’s times when love isn’t enough,” the mother sighed.

“I cannot imagine a day without her anymore. My life has become a series of events with her in the middle of each, filling up the seconds and hours in between them,” Lexa furrowed her brow and looked down at her hands again, nervous as to what they could do, should do.

“Is it a selfish thing? To marry someone?” she looked at the doctor. “Because the only reasons I have are about myself. I want her. I need her. I crave her eyes and who I am in them. My chest feels like it is heavy until she looks at me. And I cannot get enough of her voice. She could talk for years straight and I’d be happy just to listen,” Lexa smiled and looked away again.

“I want to make Clarke happy. That is all I want. I want her, I want to keep her safe. I want to talk to her, all of the time. I want to be whatever she needs. Because for some reason, when she’s around I am aware of how little time I have with her. There will never be enough.”

Abby watched the commander smile slightly as she spoke, realized things, worked through it.

“I’ve never heard you say so much,” the doctor grinned. Lexa just nodded, suddenly out of words completely. She thought she might never speak again after all of it.

“I know you’ll take care of her,” Abby nodded to herself. “You are fierce and strong and protective. That’s proven. I just hope that you can get her to let you take care of her.” Lexa looked at the mother and watched her sigh, watched her exhale, heavy and burdened. “What would you do if I said no?”

“Oh,” Lexa felt her head snap back quickly. “I guess I would - I would have-” The Commander cocked her head slightly. “I would try to convince you otherwise. I would wear myself to the bone proving you wrong, however that may be.”

“You should never tell her you asked me this,” Abby stood and uncrossed her arms.

“I won’t,” Lexa agreed.

“You can ask her,” Abby walked back around the desk. “It’s up to her to say yes.”

“Is that? Did we finish the tradition?” Lexa turned her head slightly, wear and warily watching the woman behind the desk as she sat.

“There is no one else on the planet that I would rather have marrying my daughter,” Abby decided, careful with her words, precise with their meaning. She smiled to herself. “You come with an army. You are employed. You love her. What else is there?”

“Thank you,” Lexa smiled once, quickly.

“Don’t thank me. I know what you’re getting into.”
Chapter Summary

Jake was a romantic at heart and a huge fan of old b+w movies, and he and Clarke went to the old local movie theatre every Sunday to watch them. So when Jake dies, Clarke carries on the Sunday tradition alone…til, one Sunday, she meets Lexa.

The funeral was at 1pm.

At six-thirty, with no will left for the rest of the people that crowded in her house, the only daughter left the wake without a single word. Wondered straight out off of the porch with no real thought at all, not even missed by anyone in particular.

There were pictures being shown, albums opened and passed around to the extended family who mourned and cried and tried to laugh, though found it almost impossible with the circumstances. The house on the end of the street, the one with the stupid miniature windmill in the front, the one with the big porch and tool shed in the back that once was always open, but now had remained shut for months, that house was very alive despite the somber reality it would face soon enough. It was too alive, in all actuality. Too many people filling up too much quiet with too many words of too much sympathy.

But none of that mattered.

At six-thirty, Clarke couldn’t handle anything else. She didn’t want to hear anymore stories about what her father was like as a kid, or the pranks he played on coeds in college, or even how sweet he was with her when she was just a toddler. She didn’t want to tell anyone anything either, instead, electing to horde all of her father that she could to herself, afraid that once she spoke the words, he would disappear and not be her’s any longer. Now she was a daughter without a father, and she was making it up as she went.

Like clockwork, her body moved on its own routine. The car drove itself without her thinking, stopping at signs and signaling accordingly. It parked in a familiar lot. At one point, she was certain there was a song playing on the radio, but by the time she stopped, all that there was in the cab of the car was silence.

“One, please,” she swallowed and dug in her purse for money at the window.

“The Sunday feature isn’t until nine.”

“I know. I was just. I was hoping that…” she furrowed and tried to speak words, only realizing that she didn’t have any left at all in her for such things, and there was no where else she wanted to go on a Sunday.

“We’re not even really open,” the clerk at the window shifted nervously. All of sixteen and very unsure what to do for the woman in the nice black dress who was four hours early for a movie.

Clarke dug into the purse that was just for show, coming up with about three and a half mints and a tampon.
“Ma’am, I’m not sure I can sell you anything…”

“I know I have… I can figure it out.”

“Let me get my manager,” he squeaked. “Just give me a second.”

Clarke took very little notice of what was happening on the street, as nothing interested her more than getting into her regular seat in her regular theater and seeing whatever was appearing. She didn’t even care what the clerk was actually saying. She was on a mission.

“Listen, I just… I have to get in. I have to see this movie,” Clarke murmured, her chest inflating with the many breaths she was taking. “You don’t understand. I can’t go home. There are thirty people at my house, all looking at me with these sad eyes, and I’m not sure how, but my best friend is dead, who happened to be my dad, and I don’t know what I’m going to do tomorrow, but I know that I can shut off my brain for two hours and sit in the dark and forget. That’s all I want. I just want to forget. So please. Can I just hide here for a couple of hours?”

“Um.”

“Just. Give me a second. I’ll be quiet. I’ll just sit there. But I can’t go home. I can’t… Thirty people who just want to apologize,” she shook her head and swallowed. “I come here every week. I swear I do. I know everyone’s names, and they know me. My father brings me here. Brought me. Brought me here every Sunday since I was like ten.”

“Like I said, it’s only seven.”

“Excuse me,” a stranger asked, interrupting the match between the frantic woman and the pitiful attendant at the window. Both just stared back at the newest addition.

The old flannel shirt slid off of one shoulder, while a necklace hung long from her neck. Hair a mess of dark brown, tucked up with sunglasses fresh from the early sunny spring day, green eyes squinted and perused the situation carefully. Shorts showed off long tan legs while her hand fiddled with the edge of her shirt. All at once, she was both severe and soft, a delicate balance politely on the slope of her jaw and the angle of her nose.

Opposite of her, the woman on the verge of tough tears tilted her strong chin. Blonde hair in a neat bun, single gold chain around her neck. Black dress and heels. Every part of her was rigid at the moment. Every bit of her ached and wanted to say yes. Not two more different images could have been seen so closely juxtaposed.

“Um. Yeah,” she continued, not earning a response. “What’s playing?”

“I’m… I’m not sure,” Clarke’s brow wrinkled into peaks as she looked helplessly back at the attendant.

“Abbott and Costello Meet the Mummy,” he offered.

“Abbott and Costello Meet the Mummy,” Clarke repeated.

“I’ve never seen it,” she smiled. “Is it any good?”

“One of the best. Lot’s of mummy puns.”

“I do love a good pun. Could I have two tickets, please?” the stranger decided, tugging some money out of her pocket and counting it as she squinted at the sign behind the ticket booth.
“The movie doesn’t start until nine,” the teenager repeated once more. Sundays were the easy days. That’s what they told him when he swapped shifts. He could picture his coworkers laughing evilly in the distance at the idiot who took a Sunday.

“I don’t mind,” she shrugged, sliding the money through the gap in the glass.

To his credit, he debated it before giving up and deciding his wages and three hours of training didn’t prepare him for this situation.

“Thank you,” Clarke nodded. “I’ll pay you back.”

“No worries,” she smiled and held the door open. “I was just walking by and happened to be thinking about how much I wanted to see a movie.”

It was a lie, but Clarke didn’t have the wherewithal to imagine anything other than what was presented to her. So she nodded, as if it were the most reasonable answer to the situation. As if it made sense that a stranger happened upon her and bought her a ticket because she really did just want to watch a random movie.

“I only caught a bit of that out there,” the stranger shrugged. “Sounds like you’re having a bad day.”


Without any other indication, Clarke moved toward her seat in the theater, unable to keep up polite conversation. The stranger took it as enough of a sign, and nodded once again, electing to take a seat a few rows up and on the opposite side of the theater.

Quiet and calm, Clarke felt relief to be somewhere safe, somewhere time couldn’t touch, where nothing bad happened and where she didn’t have to think about the closed casket.

By the time the lights dimmed only a handful of other people filtered in. Clarke didn’t notice the occasional glance from the buyer of her ticket. Instead, she disappeared into the movie, and it was, perhaps, the best gift anyone could have given her on that terrible day.

It wasn’t as if there weren’t anything else to do on a Sunday night. About sixteen pages of papers needed to be written and a stack of books that never seemed to get smaller needed to be read, but still, Lexa found herself checking her watch and once again refreshing the website for the small theater on Main Street.

“Hey, where are you off to?” Anya called from down the hall as Lexa tugged on shoes by the door. With a heavy sigh, she made her way toward the kitchen.

Tall, and skinny, much like their mother, Anya was responsible and always so much older than her years. With a dish towel over her shoulder and hair flying away from cleaning, she was beautiful and clever and still a pain of an older sister.

“Oh! Not nice!” the three year old complained as her aunt stole a green bean from her plate.

“Auntie Lexi stole my green bean!”

“Tattle tale,” she teased, kissing the brown hair.

“We’re working on asking nicely,” Anya reminded her little sister. “Now what do you say?” she said in that sing song way that haunted them from so many kids shows.
“I’m sorry,” she growled and made a face at her niece, earning a giggle.

“That’s okay. Do you want more?”

“No thank you.”

“So where are you going?”

“Out.”

“Out, out, you’re just going out?” Anya taunted, hands on her hips.

Four years separated them, and yet more than that. It felt longer that they were apart. When Anya left and then came back a few years later with a newborn, it bonded them. After their mother died, and Lexa moved in to pursue her degree and help. Now they were a tiny family. Now she was even older, even wiser.

“Out out out out,” the little girl echoed.

“Double-teamed, huh?” Lexa grinned. “I’m just going to go catch a movie.”

“Hmmm,” her sister hummed.

“Hmmm,” her daughter mimicked.

“This doesn’t have anything to do with the girl in the black dress from last week, does it?”

“OoohOOOhoooh,” Lenny teased with a big smile.

“You’re supposed to be on my side,” she moaned, putting her head down on the counter. “I don’t know anyone here outside of my classes. I just kind of want to go see a movie.”

“This has nothing to do with the pretty girl who didn’t even notice you?”

“Okay, alright,” Lexa shook her head and tossed her hair around. “On that note, I’m going. I’ll be home round eleven.”

“Or later if you’re lucky,” Anya teased.

“Night, Len,” she smiled and ruffled the hair of the toddler at the table. “I’ll see you later.”

It took a little more teasing before she made her way out to her car. Last week, it’d been pure luck that she was even downtown, choosing to usually forego drinks with people who described Kafka as one of their greatest motivations for studying literature. But her sister made her branch out.

There really was no reason to go back. She enjoyed the movie well enough, but maybe Anya was right, maybe it was to see if that stranger with the sad eyes was going to be there again. All of which felt like a very weird thing to feel. After Costia, after Chicago, after all of it, Lexa didn’t think she’d ever be curious about someone else ever again.

If she didn’t see her, then none of it would matter and she could focus more on her paper that was stalled somewhere between analysis and absolute shit.

To her credit, she second guessed herself about thirteen times as she sat in the parking lot before she just gave in and went.
“Good evening,” a different attendant met her as she approached the window.

“Hi,” she breathed, shy and anxious.

“I’d like to have one, please. For the… Um, what’s it?”

“Fantastic Voyage,” he supplied.

“Yes. That,” Lexa nodded, sliding across her money.

It felt weird, to hold the ticket, but still, Lexa fiddled with it as she made her way inside, out of the lingering heat of the summer. Careful to not look around too much, but still trying to see everyone, she cautiously approached the theater.

By the time she took a seat, she was all nerves.

*Nothing to worry about. No pretty girls in sight,* she typed, using her phone as a crutch.

*So you did go to see a pretty girl,* Anya retorted.

*No. Just proving you wrong. I came for some good, quality cinema.*

*Lenny said you’re lying.*

A box of candy rattled beside her, pulling Lexa from the bright light of her phone. It slid into the cup hole on the armrest before she could argue more with her sister.

“I didn’t think I’d get a chance to thank you, but I hope you like sno-caps.”

“Hey,” Lexa swallowed and sat up a little bit in her chair. “Yeah. I mean. Of course. Yeah I do. But you don’t have to give me… I mean. It wasn’t…”

“You might not ever know how nice of a gesture that was,” she continued. “But I really do appreciate it…”

“Lexa.”

“I am very grateful, Lexa.”

“Just… helping out I guess. It wasn’t a big deal…”

“Clarke,” she smiled, holding out her hand. “It’s nice to meet my knight in shining flip flops.”

“I should thank you. I’ve never been in this theater. And I never saw an Abbott and Costello movie. Now I’m teaching my three-year old niece bits,” Lexa rambled, shaking the hand one too many times, gripping it just a little too firmly. “Sorry. That’s a lot. I just. You don’t have to thank me.”

“I do,” Clarke nodded, crossing her arms as she leaned against the row ahead.

Gone was the dress and the neat hair and the heels. Lexa liked all of it though. Relaxed in an old, oversized sweater and long, long legs, her hair looked lighter than last week, if that was possible. The dim of the auditorium didn’t let Lexa see her eyes well enough, which was a travesty of the greatest degree.

“Then you’re welcome I guess.”
“So you liked the movie?” Clarke continued.

“I really did. I’m not too sure about this one, but I figured this was a good enough way to spend a Sunday evening. A nice detox from pouring over books and writing impossible papers.”

“This one’s also a good one,” she assured her.

The lights flickered and both looked up, knowing what it meant.

“I better get back to my seat. Enjoy those. I asked specifically for the not stale kind of candy,” Clarke promised, pushing off gracefully.

“Thanks.”

“Enjoy it.”

“You too.”

Lexa’s heart sank slightly as she made it a few steps toward the aisle.

“Maybe I’ll see you next week.”

“Maybe,” she nodded eagerly.

The lights faded not a minute after her departure, but the entire movie, Lexa felt herself fighting the urge to turn around and think of something clever to say, though nothing came to mind. Grateful for some otherworldly will power, she found herself enjoying the movie well enough.

As the end drew closer, she felt her body grow tenser with the idea that she would see Clarke when they left, an that was just another chance to look like an idiot. Surely she couldn’t not embarrass herself for that long.

“So, what did you think?” Clarke called as Lexa tried to hurry through the aisle.

“I liked last week’s better.”

“Yeah, hard to beat Bud and Lou,” she smiled.

“If you know all of the movies already, why do you come?”

“Now that is a question.”

“Sorry, it just seemed… I don’t know,” Lexa shrugged and tossed her trash as they walked into the lobby.

Clarke stopped and debated, staring out at the dark that settled on their quiet town, made much heavier due to the day. The entire city prepared for the new week, already in bed and anxious to be miserable with work.

“Do you want to maybe grab a coffee?” Clarke decided, finally turning back to the confused girl in her wake. “We can talk about movies, and why I watch them. And you can tell me about books and papers.”

“Um, yeah. Sure. That’s. We could,” she nodded eagerly.
Carefully, Lexa checked herself in the mirror once again. She ran her hand through the mess on her head and frowned as she adjusted her nerdy glasses that she dreaded. Of course her contacts ran out. Of course she dreaded today.

With a final sigh, she decided that was as good as she could do, though it did not help her nerves.

“Ohhh, look at this one,” Anya teased as she sat on the couch and dried off her daughter, fresh from the bath. “Someone put on her cute flannel for her date.”

“It’s not a date,” Lexa insisted.

“You’ve spent the past two months with this girl.”

“Okay, just seeing movies, and only on Sundays.”

“What about lunch the other day? And drinks last night?” her sister reminded her.

“You look pretty and smart,” Lenny offered after stepping into her pajama pants.

“Thank you, Len,” Lexa nodded politely as she slipped on her boots.

“You should tell Clarke that she looks smart. Mom said brains are most important.”

“Solid dating advice,” Anya reasoned, helping her daughter slip her head through the shirt. “And put your arm around her. That always works. Classic movie move.”

“I’m not making a… I wouldn’t… No. I told. No. I told you it’s just because I like movies. Her dad just died.”

“She’s giving off vibes. And you know it.”

“Okay, alright, well….” Lexa nodded and made her way toward the door. “On that note. Thank you both.”

“Love you!” her sister called.

“Home by midnight, missy,” her niece reminded her.

By the time Lexa made it to the theater, she was a ball of nerves, working it all over in her head. Her sister was absolutely infuriating and lovely and just exhausting. She just liked hanging out with Clarke. That was it. It wasn’t that she was fun and a breath of fresh air, and absolutely her favorite person to look at and talk to, because that would be ridiculous. She just liked movies. Lexa just liked an escape.

“I like your glasses,” Clarke smiled as Lexa approached, deep in thought and distracted.

“Oh, yeah? Um these? I…” she sputtered gracelessly and pressed them up on her nose. “My new contacts went to my old address.”

“I don’t know. These are adorable. You look like you read books and drink gross coffee in the park.”

“Well, that’s fairly accurate.”

Lexa watched the blonde appraise her face, though nothing really changed except her glasses. There was something about blue eyes on her that felt intimidating and violent in the best way.
“I like it,” Clarke finally decided, as if she was truly debating it the entire time, weighing her options.

“My niece said that I looked smart, which is what all girls should want to be.”

“A little feminist in the making?” Clarke chuckled, grabbing Lexa’s elbow as they got in line for tickets.

“My sister is insistent that her daughter is not going to end up pregnant, unmarried, and not ready like her. I mean, she’s a spectacular mother, but I know she thinks she isn’t doing well enough because she needs help. While our mother did it with two kids, completely alone.”

“I mean, Lenny sounds like an amazing kid. So I’m sure she does a great job. Plus Auntie Lexa probably just causes more trouble than the four year old.”

All Lexa could do was grin and order two tickets for them when they reached the window. It was unspoken that she bought the tickets and Clarke bought them candy and a drink to split. It’d been that way for what felt like forever, but wasn’t even that long at all.

“You never told me how she got the name,” Clarke reminded Lexa, as they took their normal seats after loading up. “Lenny isn’t a typical name.”

“And Clarke is?”

“As an expert in weird names, trust me. I know they have a story.”

“Well,” Lexa sighed, crossing her leg as she got comfortable. “Anya was very high on meds, and we’d been joking about names for the entire pregnancy. She was so stressed. I was still away at college, she was going alone until I came for the delivery. Len’s dad pops in and out, so she did it all. And I think she always knew what she was going to name her, but didn’t want to tell me. She’s named after our mother, Eleanor. Anya was going to call her Ellie.”

“And Auntie Lexa decided that was too normal?” Clarke asked, popping a piece of popcorn into her mouth.

“I did,” she grinned, digging her phone out of her pocket. “She knows she’s in trouble when she gets Eleanor’d. She loves her name. Here she is.”

“Aww, look at that,” Clarke cooed, softening as Lexa showed off.

They were just barely texting friends, in that they only started to text every single day. And Lexa loved it. Now she was going to send pictures.

“I swear, your smile must be genetic because that’s pure trouble.”

“We’ve been known to cause a bit, yeah,” Lexa shrugged. “How was your paper?”

“I got an A. Thanks for taking a look and editing.”

“Well, what good is knowing a PhD student if they can’t edit your papers, right?”

“That’s the only reason I keep you around, Woods.”

“I knew it,” Lexa grinned, stealing a handful of snacks.

They were there plenty early. It seemed as if it got earlier every week, both arriving before the other in an attempt to eek out a little more time to chat. Lexa just liked hearing Clarke’s movie facts, and
liked hearing about what her week was like, both past and the one that was coming up.

“So you said she was named after your mother?”

“Yeah.”

“As in your mom is…”

“Yeah, the year before Anya got pregnant.”

“Oh, I’m sorry.”

“No worries. You just… you know. You just get used to it,” Lexa shrugged.

“Yeah,” Clarke nodded, thoughtfully and distracted.

It wasn’t that she was sad, just that she was thinking, but Lexa didn’t want her to be sad, and it made her a little frantic. She stared at the screen before thinking of how to dig herself out of it.

“So you never told me what we’re watching. I need the Clarke Griffin preview, please,” she nudged, pretending to fight over the armrest.

“Lexa, we’ve been over this,” Clarke groaned, pushing back. “I get the armrest. You get to hold the drink.”

“Sorry. Slipped. My mistake.”

“Sure, sure.”

By the time the movie started, Lexa still wasn’t sure she cared about the film, but Clarke was excited, and it was infectious. And so she was quiet, nodding and not talking much until her partner leaned over and told her tiny parts of the film. That was her favorite part.

But this time, Lexa was more distracted than usual by the way the movie played on Clarke’s face. And she was more distracted by her sister’s words. She fiddled with the straw of the drink and tapped her thumb on her knee before steeling herself when the movie was over half finished.

With a slight movement, Lexa lifted her arm and placed it on the back of Clarke’s chair. Frozen, she didn’t turn her head to see what Clarke thought of it. Instead she stared at the screen like her eyes were glued permanently to that position.

It was only after a few minutes when Clarke sunk down slightly and rested the back of her head against Lexa’s arm that she chanced a sideways glance, still afraid to move her head at all. Lexa gulped.

Some things happened, though she didn’t register what was happening in the plot. All Lexa felt was Clarke tugging her hand down so that the blonde had Lexa’s arm wrapped around her shoulders like a scarf.

As much as she didn’t want to, Lexa knew she was going to wake her sister up to tell her.

It wasn’t close to snowing. Not even in the realm of possibilities. But the weather did dip below sixty, which was an absolute catastrophe as far as LA was concerned. Clarke took it in stride, happy that the semester was done, that she got her internship, that she got to wear that cute, warm sweater, and that it was Sunday.
It wasn’t just the movies anymore. It was Lexa. Busy as they got, there’d already been coffee on Tuesday and Clarke even got to help her Christmas shop on Friday morning. It was a nice thing, and made her smile.

“Wow, someone looks cute,” Raven teased as she lounged on the couch, a book held above her head that then fell to her chest.

“Thank you.”

“I mean. Like. More cute than normal. Are you wearing make up? Did you shower and do your hair?”

“No.” It was a lie. Clarke did those things. “I’ll be back later.”

“Wait wait wait. Are you going to see your girlfriend?”

“She’s my friend.”

“Okay, but still,” Raven rolled her eyes. “Are you going to finally make your move? It’s been like six months.”

“I’m not making a move.”

“Waiting on her?”

“We’re friends. She’s nice. And sweet. And kind of dorky, though you’d never know which is super cool, and she’s sweet. And kind. And pretty. And ridiculously smart—”

“But you don’t like her,” her roommate reminded her.

“Right. That’s. No. I don’t.”

“Okay.”

“Okay.”

“Alright.”

“Okay, stop. Bye,” Clarke decided, nodding to herself against the stupid words her friend wanted to say.

“Wear protection. You know I’m too young to be a grandmother!”

With a snort, Clarke made her way toward the theater. It was still too early for the movie, but getting there early was newly a thing.

It wasn’t that Clarke didn’t like Lexa. She very much liked Lexa. But the student was too hard to read, and their relationship was too good to mess up. She was a good friend when Clarke needed it most, a fresh face and fresh perspective. Lexa had an old soul, and that was comforting and peaceful when she felt the most disturbed.

But she also had these eyes and lips. The lips were a problem. And when she pushed her hair around, creating more of a mess when she thought really hard about something, or was explaining something she was passionate about. And when she put her arm around Clarke at the movies, and she could feel the little bicep there. And when Clarke chanced a look at ink that was on the skin there. And when Lexa wore glasses. And when she texted about stupid things. And when she sent
adorable pictures of herself. And when she was just herself. Basically, Lexa was always a problem, and Clarke didn’t have a crush on her.

Except she very much did, but still wasn’t positive what to do about it because they reached such a great place.

Instead, she just walked down the road after she parked and felt herself grow warmer despite the little chill in the air, just from the thought of seeing Lexa.

“No, that’s an interesting hat,” she smiled as she watched Lexa approach from the opposite direction, both meeting in front of the box office.

“Oh, this old thing?” Lexa grinned. “Had it lying about.”

“The infamous Len, I presume?”

“Sorry. Anya had an emergency at work— I guess another bar tender got sick, and there’s some Christmas party and they needed bodies, and extra money for the holidays doesn’t hurt, so—”

“Seriously? It’s more than fine,” Clarke rolled her eyes and looked up at the little girl perched on Lexa’s shoulders. Her little hands held onto Lexa’s cheeks.

“Care to say hi to my friend, Clarke?”

“Hi,” the little girl shrugged her neck into her shoulders shyly.

“It’s nice to meet you, Lenny. Your aunt tells me all about your funny stories.”

“You do?” she asked.

“Of course I do,” Lexa promised. “You’re my best friend. I have to tell lots of stories about my best friend.”

Clarke grinned at the display, her heart simultaneously feeling as if it was being crushed between someone’s fist while at the same time expanding to ridiculously new sizes from being too full of adorable. Lexa with her niece was enough to make her ovaries howl.

The little girl leaned to the side, carefully whispering something that made Lexa smile despite herself.

“She says you’re prettier than I described you,” Lexa explained. “For the record, I described you as beautiful like a princess.”

“Oh my,” Clarke blushed. “A pair of charmers.”

“Like ‘Punzel,’” Lenny offered.

“We watch a lot of Disney movies.”

“Tell me the truth, does Lexa sing all of the songs?” Clarke asked the little girl.

“Sometimes but not always. Mostly when we go on ‘ventures, she is the prince. Sometimes I am Wonder Woman, and then Auntie Lexa likes to be Hawkgirl.”

“Oh, now that sounds like a crime fighting duo I’d be afraid of.”

“Which superhero should she be?” Lexa tried as they got in line.
“Hmmm,” the little girl debated. “Make her Supergirl. Or Spider Gwen.”

“Wow, she is a total nerd like you.”

“I’ve corrupted her,” Lexa nodded proudly. “I could only handle so much princess shows before I was going crazy so I introduced her to superheros and life has been sweet.”

“Isn’t this a little late to keep her out?”

“Are you kidding? She stays up later than me,” Lexa scoffed. “Because Anya works at all hours, Len kind of doesn’t have a strict bedtime, so they can spend time together. At least until school next year. Pre-K here we come.”

“I’m going to read words soon,” she piped up from her perch.

“We’re working on the alphabet,” she explained, leaning forward once they made it inside, slipping the little girl from her shoulders to her hip. “Do you have to go potty?”

“No.”

“I’m not above buying affection,” Clarke decided. “Do you want to get a little candy, Lenny?”

She was all big brown eyes and chubby cheeks, and when her smile appeared after earning the nod from her aunt, dimples appeared. Easily, Clarke could understand how Lexa was so attached.

The little girl didn’t change much of their night. Clarke was actually surprised by how well-behaved she was, curling up on Lexa’s lap, tucking her head under her aunt’s chin, and falling asleep about a half hour into the movie despite her own insistence that she was not tired.

Clarke found herself sneaking glances at Lexa more than usual. It was the first movie she was excited for, after reading Little Women about fifteen times throughout her life. And Clarke was addicted to the small smile on Lexa’s face at times. And she liked how she kissed her niece’s hair from time to time, absently and soothingly.

Weirdly enough, Clarke found herself missing the feeling of an arm around her shoulders as she’d come to expect.

“Did it live up to your high standards?” Clarke asked as they watched the credits roll.

“I really, really liked it,” Lexa confessed. “I don’t know why I haven’t watched it yet.”

“Because you’re a book snob.”

“That’s true, but still.”

“Here, let me grab everything. You carry her,” she instructed, picking up Lexa’s coat and bag. “I’ll help you to the car.”

“Thanks. I’m sorry I had to change up our… thing… you know?”

“Are you kidding me?” she scoffed. “This kid is adorable. Glad I got to see what those Woods genes have to offer.”

“Are you going to try to make a baby with my sister?”

“I might after seeing this thing,” Clarke joked as she hung Lenny’s coat around her shoulders.
“I don’t know how my sister does it. She works so hard, and is raising probably the greatest kid on the planet. She’s astounding.”

“You’re not so far from spectacular yourself.”

“Nah, I’m not… I mean. It’s. She’s a superstar.”

They pressed out into the chill of the night. The Christmas lights were still on in the storefronts on the street. The lampposts were strung in garland and the world was all gentle and tinted in the impending holidays.

“Lexa, you graduated with a degree after your mom died and your sister had a baby, and then got into one of the best PhD programs in the country. And you live with said sister and help with her kid while commuting an hour to and from school, while working, while reading and writing papers and teaching. And you still make time for a stupid movie tradition,” Clarke reminded her. “You’re fairly astounding.”

“I try,” she murmured and nudged her head toward her car down the block.

Clarke wanted to know if her blush was from the cold or her words. She really wanted to know and didn’t know how to ask.

“I never got to thank you, properly, for that… that day,” Clarke swallowed.

“I believe Sno-Caps were involved.”

“No, but I mean. It meant a lot. I know it’s a stupid tradition to have, but coming every Sunday was just part of my life for so long. I fell in love with movies, you know?”

“Yeah.”

“I love the feeling of the theatre, the smell of the popcorn, the murmuring of people. That feeling, where you just forget the world and are sucked in, your heart racing, your breath hitching, your hands wringing as you watch lives unfold. My father gave me that, and it meant a lot that a stranger bought me a ticket when I was at peak crazy.”

“I’m sure you can be crazier than that,” Lexa tried, swallowing hard at the description. “Besides, I had nothing else to do.”

“Why did you come back?”

“I don’t know.”

Clarke watched her hesitate before digging the keys from her pocket and clicking the button. Clarke opened the back door where the car seat was, and watched the tenderness and ease that Lexa fastened the smallest member of the expedition.

Only when Lexa closed the door did she finally look as sheepish as she must have felt. She scratched her neck, a telltale sign that she was slightly nervous. That came when she didn’t know what to say. Clarke had already catalogued such things.

“I thought you were nice and… I don’t know. I thought you were pretty. Plus I really did like the movie.”

“You did?”
With a quiet nod, Lexa leaned against the car door and knitted her fingers in her hair, all anxious and honest at the same time. Her cheeks were pink and she huffed out a tiny cloud in the cold of the night.

“I didn’t… I didn’t know anyone here, and you just seemed very real, which is always unique.”

“I’m really glad it was you.”

“Me too,” she finally grinned.

“Did you really tell her I was pretty like a princess?”

“Yeah,” Lexa shrugged and crossed her arms. The smile was back, though it was the one that hid her kind of fake confidence.

“Do you want to grab dinner tomorrow?”

“Yeah, sure. Maybe we can try that place you saw, with… the… burgers…” her sentence trailed off with each step Clarke took toward her until she was standing right there, toe to toe.

“Sounds good.”

Clarke didn’t move though. She just stood there in front of Lexa until Lexa eyed her and made herself stand from the lean she’d protected herself with.

“I thought Rapunzel was a good comparison.”

“Will you just stand up so I don’t have to use some cheesy line from a movie?” Clarke demanded.

She regret it as soon as she finished speaking. But Clarke stood there, like every movie she’d ever seen, and she swallowed, suddenly aware of that fear in a new way. But Lexa called her pretty and normal, which weirdly enough were very nice things to hear for someone who felt neither, and often fought to achieve at least some semblance of real.

“What kind of lines would work now?” Lexa tried.

“I’m just a girl,” Clarke smiled. “Standing in front of a girl, asking her to love her.”

“I knew that one,” she smiled despite herself.

“Swoon, and I’ll catch you.”

“Hmm. Not familiar.”

“No, I don’t think I will kiss you, although you need kissing, badly. That’s what’s wrong with you. You should be kissed and often, and by someone who knows how.”

She felt the proximity and her head was forgetting all the right words. Lexa started with an intensity that violently disproved her previous quote.

“And you know how?”

“What do you want?” Clarke started, her heart beating wildly. “You want the moon? Just say the world and I’ll throw a lasso around it a pull it down.”

Lexa gulped. Clarke felt hands on her sides, weirdly enough. The weight of a thumb just above her
hip. And Lexa looked at her from beneath her lashes.

“Of all the gin joints in the world, she had to walk into mine.”

“That one works.”

Clarke ducked her head and stared at Lexa’s lips before meeting her eyes. It’d been months in the making and now she was here and she didn’t know how to do it, how to move that singular inch.

“It seems right now that all I’ve ever done in my life is making my way here to you.”

“Any more?”

She shook her head though she had about a dozen things she wanted to say. There was a time for lines and a time for quiet. Clarke licked her lips and cupped Lexa’s cheek and for the life of her, she’ll never know how, but she kissed her, right there on the sidewalk after repeating too many movie lines, in front of the old electronic repair shop with the santa that mooned people who walked by from time to time.

A little girl was asleep in the car, and Clarke kissed Lexa because she was perfect, and her father had taught to her appreciate movie moments, because they didn’t exist in real life, except she got one right now.

That, and Lexa kissed and the winter turned into a tropical summer with the humidity of the equator. Clarke melted into it, pressing her chest against Lexa and sighing as she felt arms wrap around her. Too many thoughts barraged her brain, but she could focus on kissing. That was what she was made to do.

“Wow.”

“Yeah,” Clarke agreed.

“Well, that’s going to be a problem.”

“What?”

“I won’t want to stop doing that.”

Clarke chuckled and shyly hid in Lexa’s shoulder, shaking her head slightly at the nonsense that seemed to always sprout so naturally from the girl.

“You ever use those lines on a girl before?”

“You ever use your adorable niece as a wingman before?”

“Never.”

“I might have used one or two…” Clarke murmured, earning a laugh.

The movie was very much forgotten. It was an old black and white with some damsel that Clarke was in love with and Lexa didn’t really care about one bit. It wasn’t that she didn’t enjoy the movies, just that some of them weren’t terribly interesting to her. Certainly not as interesting as her companion.

She liked spending time with Clarke. She liked that part a lot. Between school and life and
everything, it was hard to pick out moments of Clarke, but Lexa managed because it was important. She was madly falling for the weird girl who quoted movies and wanted to make them and said they were magic.

“Stop being so good at this,” Clarke complained, quiet, so as not to disturb the few people in the theater.

“At what?”

“Making out.”

Lexa just grinned and caught Clarke’s lips through half-lidded eyes before kissing her again, this time with a little more fervor to really drive home the good kissing part of Clarke’s assessment of her. It was difficult, with the armrest between them, but it was the only time they had.

“Want to come over to mine tomorrow afternoon? Anya is taking Len to the swimming pool for lessons.”

“I have filming all afternoon.”

Clarke closed the distance and kissed her back, fighting for the coveted position of being the best kisser, trying to repay and illicit just a fraction of the torture she was currently experiencing.

“What about after eight?” she tried.

“I’m watching Lenny.”

“My car after the movie?”

With a small chuckle, followed by a heavy sigh, laden with the realization that they were never going to have alone time ever in their lives. This was all they would have. Just torture in the back row at the movies.

“This is the worst.”

“My roommate is going to be gone on Tuesday,” Clarke remembered as she went through her own schedule.

“Perfect. I’ll reschedule my tutoring.”

“What? No.”

“Trust me. It’ll be worth it.”

The first Sunday, the usher noticed immediately as he closed the doors and the lights dimmed. While at first, he assumed she must have snuck through when he was busy doing something else, he scans the darkening theater to discern that, in fact, the usual girl who sat four rows from the back on the right side middle was conspicuously missing.

The theater seemed a little different, with that realization.

Across the city, Lexa saddled the picnic table and handed her girlfriend another beer as her sister made a grand attempt at telling a story, earning a laugh from the film buff. Their night was just starting, and the summer was thick and angry despite the lack of sun finally.
From time to time, after the first Sunday, the theater notices the lack of a certain pair. Not every week, but often, followed by more often than not, until it is as if they come only once or twice a month.

When they do come, it’s always together, and never in any other seats. Sometimes, a little girl trails along, especially around the holidays.

Clarke half expected it to hurt to not go on Sundays, as if everything would miraculously change for some reason. And yet nothing did. She didn’t miss her father any more or any less. She didn’t feel guilty or as if she betrayed him, but merely a new kind of sad that he would never meet the bespeckled girl who still bought her a ticket when they went.

And instead of hiding on Sundays, sometimes, she noticed that it was a different kind of being alive, to have dinner with her mother, or tag along with Lexa and Lenny for ice cream.

The theater kept showing movies, and it was still there for her when she needed that feeling of magic though, and for that, Clarke was ever grateful.

Lexa didn’t consider herself a film snob or even buff. She liked what she liked, and she had little real care for appropriate or award-winning. She liked the modern classics and she love the old funnies, while Clarke was a golden age snob with an encyclopedic knowledge of just about everything cinematic.

For weeks, she spent every Tuesday with bated breath, refreshing the screen, hoping to find an appropriate film to set the mood. It was like holding in a shout she had to get rid of, one that clawed at her throat. But still, she waited because she only got one shot at it.

But it came.

“Anything can happen, don’t you think?” the actor asked, but Lexa didn’t see it. Instead, she kept glancing at the girl who once bought her snowcaps in what felt like an entirely different life.

It seemed as if life was somehow bisected between meeting Clarke. There was the before, and then the now, and Lexa had trouble thinking of them both as congruent.

“An Affair to Remember is just one of my favorites,” Clarke sighed as they sat there and the credits began to roll. “I don’t know why, but I’m just taken with it.”

“It’s no Abbott and Costello go to Mars, but it’s passable.”

“Sometimes I wonder how I put up with you.”

“I’m not sure, but let’s not question it too much.”

“Shall we, love?” Clarke rolled her eyes as she started to stand. “You have an early morning sleeping in and not going to work.”

“Sure, just hang on, one second,” Lexa swallowed, fiddling with her pocket before bending down on a knee.

“You’re going to stick to the floor.”

It didn’t deter her at all. Lexa looked up at the girl she loved and forgot her speech, and so words just came.”
“I fell in love with you at the movies. I know we’ve seen Mary Poppins about six times here, but I still have no idea what it’s about because I just love watching you smile through the whole thing. I love that you hold your breath during Hitchcock movies, and that you laugh even though you know every punchline to Abbott and Costello.”

“Lexa…”

“I fell in love with you at the movies. You were heartbroken, but I was suddenly sitting here, very much curious about this stranger.”

“What are you…"

“I can’t promise you a picture perfect movie life. I can’t promise dance numbers and montages of hard parts and perfectly timed animal costars, but I know that through it all, we can have a happy ending that anyone of these movies you made me watch would be jealous of. Because I’m just… I’m so in love with you, Clarke. Will you–”

In a second, she was half tugged up and half tackled, so that all she could do was hold onto the thing in her arms.

“Yes!” Clarke yelped, throwing her hands around her girlfriend’s neck. She kissed her cheeks and felt herself be tugged up tighter. “Of course, Lex. Oh my goodness.”

“You mean it?”

“Yes. Yes. Of course, yes. What else could I ever want?”

“You want the moon? Just say the world and I’ll throw a lasso around it a pull it down,” Lexa promised, earning a wider smile, if it were possible.

“Kiss me, you fool.”

And with that, she did.

“This isn’t even a classic,” Clarke complained as she juggled the drink and candy and coats in her arms as they made their way to their seats.

“Don’t be a snob,” her wife teased. “Back to the Future is a modern classic.”

“I don’t like what is happening to this theater. You’re a bad influence on it.”

“If I have to watch Casablanca again, I’ll die, honey,” Lexa promised.

“Yeah. Plus I have to do research for my Halloween costume,” Lenny reminded her aunts. “I want it to be perfect.”

All in a row, the three took familiar seats, adjusting in a familiar way. It wasn’t every Sunday. It wasn’t every close to every other Sunday, but still, often enough, in some combination of family members or occasionally just Clarke herself, the theater was still visited as faithfully as a church. Not completely devotion, but religiously enough in comparison.

Not much changed over the years. A few coats of paints, different marathons, petty fights and making out in the back like kids. It housed many memories and it was still a home, a place of refuge for many moments.
“And you are going to be the cutest Doc imaginable,” Clarke cooed to her son as she pulled him out of the carseat in her wife’s lap.

Sleepy, the ten month old yawned and nuzzled into his mother, oblivious as to what the future held for him in just a few weeks.

“This is what I brought on myself,” Lexa rolled her eyes at her niece and her wife and their antics. It was too much, too often. But it was just enough, always.
Clarke and Lexa in the tent “planning for war” when they’re really having make out sessions.

“They will look for you,” Lexa insisted. Clarke kissed her harder to make her forget about anything happening outside of this tent.

“I told them we had to plan,” Clarke promised, pulling on her shirt.

“We’ve known the plan,” Lexa shook her head, confused at what was happening.

“They don’t know that,” Clarke nodded, capturing the Commander’s attention once more.

Lexa felt Clarke’s fingers on her neck, on her collar bone, her tongue on her lips. She pushed against her harder, leaned closer, searched for more of it all. It was a magnificent reprieve, to be kissed like this, to kiss like that, and it helped her forget the plans they’d perfected.

She did not know what to do with her hands. She knew what she wanted to do with them, but was unaware of how to do it because she was kissing something that fell from the sky, and such things were unknown to her, completely.

So Lexa sucked on Clarke’s lip, she tasted her, she teased her, led her, followed, scaled and clung and climbed and jumped with her, slow and languidly, she experienced every second of it, unaware of if or when she would get more.

“I don’t-” Clarke pulled away, leaving Lexa slightly dazed and significantly disoriented. They had moved, no longer in the middle of the room beside the maps where they’d started when Clarke kissed her, pressing her entire body against her, sitting atop her toes to get a few more inches over the Commander.

“Yeah,” Lexa egged her on, nodding eagerly. She was kissed again, breathless and mid-agreement. She felt the way Clarke’s lungs moved, felt her hips press tight against her, felt the hilt of a blade jutting into her stomach, but she ignored the pain of it.

“I will be with you, when you attack,” Clarke pulled away again. “Right?”

“No,” Lexa shook her head and leaned down again. Clarke dodged.

“I lead my people into this,” Clarke insisted, her fingertips on Lexa’s cheeks, holding her chin.

“You are not skilled in the art of combat,” the Commander reminded her, chasing her lips once more, only to come up empty again.

“I will be with you,” Clarke stood a little straighter. She sized up Lexa, her nose close, nearly brushing the leader’s. She moved infinitesimally, touching her nose to her cheek. Lexa followed lips, but Clarke pulled away again. The leader felt her breath on her lips. Her eyes searched everywhere for answers, for more kisses that left her hips on fire.
“No,” she insisted again, challenging, forehead on forehead. She tasted Clarke’s lips again for just a moment before the cloudling pulled away.

“We attack at dusk,” Clarke reminded her, hands hooking onto her belt. She felt the table against her back, felt Lexa’s leg between her thighs, she looked at her lips, puffy and pink and so fucking close it made her swallow the fight in her throat. She ran her fingertips along them before kissing her once again. She put everything she had into that kiss. It was a kiss to bring mountains to their knees. It was a kiss that made this immovable force shake and sigh and growl.

“I will see you there,” Clarke told the Commander, pushing her way past her arms that held her pinned against the table.

When she looked back before leaving the door, she saw Lexa’s shoulder’s hunched over the table where she had just been stationed, and she smiled victoriously.
Clarke shows up at Lexa’s door in the middle of the night, tears streaming down her face, sobs in the back of her throat. They had just broken up a couple of weeks prior.

She debated it for longer than she would readily admit, but when Lexa saw the red around Clarke’s eyes, she opened the door. She wasn’t sure why she would appear in the middle of the night, nor was she quite certain why it’d be at her apartment, of all places, especially following the break-up, but as cold as she wanted to be, Lexa could never deny the warm, deep feeling that she had when the blonde appeared.

“It’s late, Clarke,” She said, monotone and dismissive as she opened the door.

“I know,” the blonde nodded, wrapping her arms around herself, as if that was all that kept her standing there. “I didn’t know where else to go.”

“You broke up with me. So… anywhere else.”

“Yeah,” she nodded, clearing her throat and blinking quickly. “You’re right.”

“Wait,” Lexa stood up a bit straighter as Clarke turned to leave. “Do you… what’s wrong?”

“It’s nothing. I was just… I shouldn’t have.”

“Come in at least. It’s freezing out and you don’t have a coat.”

“Thanks.”

Awkward and suddenly nervous, Clarke stood in the middle of Lexa’s living room, and waited for her to close the door. Everything was slow. The click of the lock, the antsy way she gripped her own arms and clung there, the lingering flashes from the television that was already quiet. She looked around at the files open on the coffee table, at the laptop propped up on the couch, at the mug of tea and smiled slightly, remembering the way Lexa would work and slide into bed beside her.

“Can I get you anything?” Lexa asked, stiffly looking around her apartment with new eyes, afraid of anything betraying anything.

“No, thank you. I’m fine.”

“I don’t think you’re fine.”

“Do you remember when we got lost on that trip to your roommate’s wedding?” Clarke remained standing there while Lexa slowly made her way around towards the kitchen.

“It’s two in the morning, Clarke.”

“We slept in the car that night because all the hotels were booked because that town was having some festival. What was it? I can’t remember?”
“You’re crying,” Lexa pointed out despite Clarke’s smile.

“And the wedding. You wore that black dress. And there was this wisp of hair you could never quite catch at the base of your neck.”

“Clarke.”

“I should go. I’m really sorry.”

“You can talk to me.”

“Why did we break up?”

“Clarke.” Lexa shook her head and looked away.

“I’m sorry.”

“You walked away from me. You don’t get to show up in the middle of the night and ask me why you did.”

“I know.”

“Because I am holding it together as best I can, and this isn’t helping. It’s not fair and you know it.”

“I know,” Clarke nodded, looking down again. She felt the tears on her cheeks and wiped them. When she looked back up, she saw Lexa’s shoulders soften. “I just. You feel like home, still. I needed to come home. And I’m so sorry.”

“I can help, whatever it is.”

“You can’t.”

“Try me.”

“I can’t.”

“Why the hell did you come here, then? Why are you doing this to me? Just tease me, just use me? For what? Because I’m a security blanket for you to just fall back on whenever-”

“I have cancer.”

“You want. You have what?” Lexa had her hands on her hips and her brow furrowed, deep into telling off her ex.

“You couldn’t have won the fight to keep me. My mind was made up to spare you, but I just. I’m so fucking scared, and I don’t want to be. And nothing scares you. I thought I could do that.”

“You have. What?” Lexa felt as if she’d been kicked in the chest.

“I have my first chemo tomorrow, and I don’t know what it’s going to be, and I’m not brave. I thought I was,” Clarke sniffled, heaving a heavy sigh. She wiped her cheeks again. Lexa couldn’t think at all.

“You’re sick? That’s why you…”

“I’m so sorry. All I do is hurt you.”
“That was it?”

“What?”

“That was why you left?”

“Yeah.”

“Why didn’t you just tell me?”

“Because what if I die, Lex? What if I slowly shrivel up and die. The last memories you’ll have is cleaning me up and me in a bed, covered in tubes. I don’t want to do that to you.”

“Fuck, Clarke,” Lexa closed her eyes and put her forehead in her palm, looking to the ceiling for some sort of outlet for her anger.

“I’m sorry. I’m so sorry.”

There were mountains that were scaled with greater ease and perhaps even greater grace than the effort Lexa exerted in taking a step towards Clarke. It was feeble and weak and she needed a minute, so she moved into the kitchen, and when finally out of the same room, she gripped the counter with her hands, hung her head, and felt her shoulders ache with tension.

Clarke left one day and never came back. Lexa got angry, got mad, got hurt, got torn apart. And now she could be leaving again and she understood, but she couldn’t, and she forgave but she couldn’t, and she forgot but she couldn’t.

This was a fight or flight moment, as hurt and as scared and as lightheaded as she felt. This was a moment when she snarled and showed her teeth or ran for the hills. She was a doe and this was a semi, she was a hunter, and this was a grizzly, and any analogy she came up with sounded overwhelming for her, but that was life and she understood it.

It took her longer than she was proud of to get back into the living room.

Clarke felt her arms before she could wipe her eyes. She felt Lexa’s arms around her stomach, felt her chin on her shoulder and she couldn’t help but curl up slightly as the tears came too quickly. The sobs came deep in her throat, the noises shook her lungs until they nearly fell apart. Lexa clung to her for dear life, like a slow-motion bull-rider, squeezing and keeping her still.

“It’s going to be okay,” Lexa whispered, feeling Clarke’s breathing stutter. She held tighter. “It’s going to be okay.”

Maybe for a minute they believed.
Comfort (Part 2)

Chapter Summary

Could you write more of the Comfort one, please?

It was the maroon of the walls that did it, that made Lexa uncomfortable. That and the smell that seemed stained into the plastic and linoleum and every other fake surface in the doctor’s office. That and the hotel art that covered the walls and the terrible print of the strip of trip that ran through the middle of it.

Her head never stopped moving, her eyes darting around at knickknacks and diplomas, to pens on the desk, to her hands dancing along the armrest. There was rain and thunder outside of the window, pounding on the city below them, a sight to behold from one of the higher floors in the hospital downtown.

“I told you I could come on my own,” Clarke sighed, growing annoyed at the out of character antsy nerves squirming beside her.

“What? No. I’m good,” Lexa nodded and swallowed despite how dry her mouth felt. “I wanted to come.”

“You can’t sit still.”

“I don’t like hospitals, you know this.”

“Which is why you didn’t have to come. It’s just a quick meeting and catch up, see how I’m doing after a few rounds.”

“I know.”

“So… nothing noteworthy.”

“I’m alright. It’s okay,” Lexa decided, taking a deep breath. “Plus, I have some questions,” she remembered, leaning forward and digging in her back pocket, coming up with a folded, half-bent, crumpled piece of paper.

“Questions?” Clarke cocked her head and watched her girlfriend smooth and open the yellow paper on her thigh.

“Yeah, of course. I don’t like just looking things up online. It’s terrifying. So there are somethings I’m curious about and things I want to know how to handle.”

“Like?”

“I don’t know. Just stupid stuff.”

For a moment Clarke just watched the girl beside her, fretting over the creased paper, refusing to look up because deep down, Lexa knew she couldn’t look up and see Clarke without getting nervous. So the blonde watched her and smiled at how important she was.
“I really am in love with you,” Clarke realized out loud, though mostly to herself, not as if she were saying it, just as if her mouth had picked up on the truth her brain tried to grasp, and it all clicked in that one, singular instant.

“Yeah?” Lexa snorted and grinned, half-full and full smirk. She looked up and felt at ease.

“I’m sorry… about… you know. I hurt you. I should have just told you—”

“Don’t,” she shook her head. “I can’t say I wouldn’t have done something similar. But here we are.”

“It’s going to be okay, you know?” Clarke ventured, leaning forward from her chair. She slipped her fingers around the back of Lexa’s neck and leaned her forehead against her temple. Lexa closed her eyes and ducked her head slightly.

“I know.”

“It’s not like your mom.”

“I know.”

“Her’s was very advanced, and the way technology is today, we caught it so early-”

“I know.”

“I’m head over heels for you.”

“I know.”

“Well aren’t you just a know-it-all.”

Lexa smiled and took a deep breath, right there in the doctors office, while the grey clouds leaked all over the city and into the rivers, streamed down the mountains and people’s windshields. In the office that smelled that hospital smell, with the terrible colors on the walls and the horrible art in the gaudy frames, she smiled and kissed Clarke’s head before putting her arm around her shoulders.

Lexa saw stars, saw galaxies, saw bursts of lights as she dug her fingers into her eyes to stave off the burn and ache of too little sleep and too much fluorescent light. She yawned as she pinched the bridge of her nose before running her palms along her cheeks.

“Looks like you could use this,” Anya said, making her jump in her chair as she placed a cup of coffee on her desk.

“You scared the hell out of me,” Lexa breathed.

“Sorry. I didn’t sneak up on you.”

“You’re fine,” Lexa sighed, eagerly taking a sip. “I just didn’t get much sleep last night.”

“I don’t want to hear about your gross sexfests.”

“I wish that was it.”

Anya saw the heavy as it settled on Lexa’s shoulders, fell on her brow, hid in the tenseness of her muscles, all pulled taut just beneath her skin.
“You look terrible.”

“Thanks,” Lexa smiled, sitting back in her chair and finally dropping her pen as Anya took a seat across from the desk, as if she were a client.

“Please tell me it wasn’t a long night of talking about your feelings. I thought you guys were past that.”

“We are. We’re doing good. It wasn’t that. She just… Clarke got really sick last night. It was… I couldn’t sleep.”

“Is she okay?”

“Yeah, yeah,” Lexa nodded. “To be expected, all normal stuff, just terrifying. She was shivering, and shaking and sick. I got her back to sleep and I just listened to her breathe. I was so scared.”

“Is she okay?”

“Yeah. She’s sleeping it off today. She said she felt better when I left, but she lies because she doesn’t like to see me frazzled.”

“You are a mess when you’re frazzled,” Anya agreed, smiling at the thought, hoping it would help her friend.

“I am.”

“She’s going to be okay, Lex. You told me last week that the scans were good and surgery helped.”

“I know, I know,” she conceded, running her hands up her face once more and huffing. “It was just a long night.”

“At least she told you. You were miserable without her.”

“Yeah.”

“I mean it. You were useless when she broke up with you.”

“Can you imagine how’d I be if she died?”

Lexa found herself stark still and afraid of the words she finally uttered. Never before had she verbalized the thought, acknowledged the concept of a potential scenario completely. It startled her. To realize that she did not know who she would be if that came true… it left her speechless.

“Well, good think we don’t have to find out.”

“Yeah,” Lexa decided, finally focusing her eyes back on Anya after being lost for so long. “Good thing.”

“You smell good,” Lexa murmured as her lips moved along Clarke’s wet neck. “I like it.”

“I picked this up when I went shopping with my mom last week,” Clarke explained, tilting her head and smiling to herself as lips didn’t listen and crept up her skin.

“Mmmm,” Lexa simply hummed. She watched Clarke run the cloth along her own leg, up over her
knee so soon she’d smell just like the girl in her arms. She squeezed her arms around Clarke’s ribs. “Why haven’t we done this more often?”

“Done what?”

“Bathed.”

“We bathe plenty,” Clarke laughed.

“Together.”

“I’m not sure.”

“We’re lucky.”

“How do you reckon?”

“Tomorrow is going to be the day we start over, and not many people get that day, to just start over and live. But we do. You’re going to be cancer-free, and we don’t put things off anymore. We do things. We got that from all this. I feel a little lucky.”

“That’s one way to look at it.”

“You don’t agree?”

“I agree.”

“You’re sexy when you agree,” Lexa smiled, digging her nose into damp hair. Her hands wondered higher over soapy, sudsy skin.

“You’re sappy when you soak.”

“I’m grateful.”

Her nose ran against the stubble on Clarke’s head, inhaled the small bits of hair, kissed there, kissed her neck, rested her chin on Clarke’s shoulder.

“Remember when you broke up with me because you had cancer?” Lexa ventured in the quiet as Clarke lulled her head back against her shoulder and closed her eyes.

“One time.”

“Sometimes I still get a little twinge of like what the fuck,” Lexa laughed. “It’s such an insane sentence.”

“Whatever. It was a nice thought.”

“But alas, you loved me too much.”

“Something like that.”

“Tomorrow’s going to be a great day,” Lexa hummed, resting her chin against Clarke’s head as they lounged in the warm water.
Chapter Summary

Hi! Here’s a clarkellexa au prompt if it strikes your fancy: a mutual friend invited us to their laser tag party and we’re the last two alive on opposite teams and goddammit, if I’m going down, you’re going down with me.

“Is there anyone left?” Clarke called, peaking her head up over a barricade, hoping to see any kind of movement.

“Just me!” A voice came from another side of the complex. Clarke looked around, unable to pinpoint it. From the corner of her eye, she saw some movement, and she held up the weapon, waiting for another. “It’s Clarke, right?”

“Yeah.”

A noise made Clarke turn quickly, and she was shooting Raven a second later.

“Dammit! She got me, Lexa!” Raven held up her hands and gave Clarke a scowl before heading back towards the entrance.

Quickly, the blonde ran away from the area, afraid of running into the last one out there.

“I didn’t think you had it in you,” the voice called. “I’m impressed.”

“Listen, I hate this game, but I have fifty bucks riding on it.”

“So I shouldn’t kill you, then?”

When Clarke turned around she saw the acquaintance smirking at her, gun raised.

“Dammit,” she tossed her head back.

“I’m sure we can talk this out,” she smiled.

“Lexa, right?”

“I have a proposition for you,” Lexa held up her gun slightly, not pointing it at Clarke any longer. Clarke forgot she had one in her hand, refusing to raise it. “I let you win, and you take me out with your winnings.”

“A date?”

“I have a things for terrible laser tag players.”

“You pick many up out here?”

“I’m hoping to break into the field.”

“What if I shoot you?”
“Then I’ll take you out as consolation.”

“Either way you get a date.”

“Wow, would you look at that? This seems like a win-win for both of us.”

“Just one?” Clarke eyed her suspiciously.

“Unless you want to go for two.”

“But just one under this contract?”

“One, could lead to two. Could lead to four. Could lead to a white picket fence and two point five kids and a pet turtle named Chester.”

“Well that’s just ridiculous,” Clarke shook her head. “We would name the turtle Donald.”

“What’s it going to be, Clarke? A happy family and pet turtle in the suburbs, or me killing you and you leaving without fifty bucks or the girl?”

It too a moment, but slowly Clarke raised her weapon and aimed it at Lexa’s chest, her hands up, her face so sure and determined and eager.

“Pick me up around eight.”

The first date ended with a shy kiss on Clarke’s doorstep and a call the next day for another. The second date was rained out, literally, and they spent the evening stranded under a bridge in the park making out. The third date was proper, dinner and a movie, complete with ‘the move,’ and Lexa’s arm around Clarke’s shoulders. The fourth date came with Lexa on her doorstep with a stuffed turtle named Donald.

Many dates later came a wedding, and the night before a drunken laser tag bachelorette party.
I don’t know if you’re taking prompts at the moment, but if you are, could you maybe write a domestic AU piece about Lexa being welcomed home after a long business trip by a very caffeine hyped, paint covered Clarke? I’m a sucker for cute AU stories and I very much enjoy your writing, so thank you in advance if you take this prompt. :)

The house was clean. Cleaner than clean. Not a speck of dust, not even the high up shelves that were never touched, not even the backest part of the cupboard, not even the deepest corners of the closet escaped her unending and restless need to keep busy. When she stood in the spotless kitchen, Clarke surveyed and realized that she hadn’t recognized what she’d been doing until it was all done.

Everything was cleaned the first night Lexa was gone. By the next day, Clarke was digging into spring cleaning in November. She slept horribly in the empty bed and was up earlier than she could remember and thus the house was cleaner than when they moved in, all courtesy of a four-day business trip across the country.

It was good, Clarke knew that. It meant Lexa was impressing her bosses and it meant she was counted on. It meant they’d get some much needed time to themselves, and it meant that they’d get a long weekend together when she came back. But still, it was an annoyance that Clarke didn’t realize until she was elbow-deep in disinfectant.

The third day, Raven appeared and made Clarke go out. It wasn’t hard, but she could sense the anxious way her friend moved and sounded. Clarke did not even take the bait when Raven made fun of her for being a bundle of nerves without Lexa.

Work passed in the same way it did. It was the going home part that was hard. The going home and not making dinner with her girlfriend. Clarke was just plain bored.

The phone made it better and then worse. She never saw herself as someone who was bothered by the presence or absence of a significant other. She prided herself on her own identity. But she just plain missed having Lexa around and in bed. Hearing her voice made it better. After the phone was hung up though and the lights turned down, Clarke found herself on the opposite pillow smelling the familiar smell of the absent girl.

The plane ride was miserable. Screaming children and a chatty neighbor who wanted to do nothing but expound upon terrible politics and the state of the world. Lexa felt the twinge of a headache behind her eyes, between her temples, and she shook her plastic glass so that the ice melted and slushed around to drown out the noise.

The week away had been stressful, had been busy and exhausting and downright difficult, but she did it. She impressed the partners and she did amazing work, but all she could care about on the entire flight back was home. Her own bed. Her own house. Her own girl.

The taxi ride was slow, stuck in traffic and hot. Lexa rubbed her forehead and watched the sights grow more and more familiar.
It wasn’t until she got in their neighborhood that Lexa recognized the nervous twinge in her chest and the small, almost invisible pull of her lips.

She’d expected more fanfare when she arrived and dropped her suitcase by the couch. She’d expected something, at least. But instead, the house was empty, completely quiet, and oddly cleaner than normal.

The only noise heard was a faint melody coming from the garage, and instantly, Lexa knew where her girlfriend was hiding.

For just a moment, unseen and unrecognized, Lexa stood in the doorway and watched Clarke paint. Watched the way she furrowed and stood back, watched her anxiously dab the brush in the paints, saw the streaks of different colors on her old shirt that’d been stolen for just this purpose, saw the dried paint from other projects on those old shorts with the hole in the hem by the leg.

She hadn’t realized how much she hadn’t fully breathed until this moment, until she felt the responsibilities and the stress and the travel all slide from her bones at the image of this girl she loved right there.

It took longer than she thought it would but she cleared her throat, unable to wait any longer.

Clarke jumped at the noise and turned around quickly. Her smile replaced the shock in an instant and the brush and paints were tossed on the table a second later. In under five seconds, Clarke was a koala, legs locked and arms squeezing around Lexa, not caring about how dirty she was or what she looked like or that she’d forgotten what time it was.

This was the reaction she’d expected, and Lexa grinned into Clarke’s neck as she was squeezed and her face was covered in kisses.

“That’s more like it,” Lexa sighed.

“Welcome home,” Clarke smiled, feeling Lexa’s hands go to her hips to keep her up, dying to kiss her. “I missed you terribly.”

“Me too.”

“You can’t leave again.”

“Alright.”

“What’d you bring me?”

There was a grin on her face as she asked and didn’t wait for the answer. Clarke kissed her girlfriend severely. Kissed her until her lungs ached, kissed her until her muscles swelled.

“Yeah, I might have to start taking more of these trips.”

“Shut it.”
Soulmates

Chapter Summary

Could you do a clea soulmate au?

There was a café on the corner with huge windows and painted lettering. She passed it every morning, like clockwork, and never needed to venture inside, never had an urge, never noticed it at all, as things right in the open are often looked over. And then, she simply chanced a look, turned her head from her normal path for just a second, as those things are known to happen.

Consumed by the noises in her headphones and pencil currently sketching in her hand, Clarke did not notice the way the girl stopped moving on the sidewalk just outside, so quickly, that people bumped into her, unable to divert away from the rubbernecker.

But Lexa stopped and stood right there in the midst of the morning foot traffic, not even noticing the occasional bump on her elbow. She was practical, or at least she liked to view herself as such. She was efficient. She was intelligent. She was orderly. She was friendly. She was completely normal, and most normal people do not acknowledge the idea of a soulmate like the way Lexa felt it right there.

She had expected it to be more violent, more jarring. But it was not something that crumbled mountains. It was a soft little song that fluttered in her ears. It was the warmth escaping from a subway grate and blowing her hair. It was a tiny increase in pulse and a long heavy sigh. But that was all, and sometimes that is enough.

The knocking on the window startled Clarke after a moment. Her song ended and in the dull murmur of the world she heard a tap and looked up at the window.

Smiling, Lexa watched her look up, this stranger in the window. And she met her eyes and she felt the earth shaking. The violence came then.

To Clarke, the girl outside of her window was insane. But the slackened smile on her lips, the way her eyes grew bigger when she met her eyes, the everything, just made her smile back.

Stuck, staring at each other through the window of the café, they both tried to think of what came next. Lexa was certain this exact moment had played out in history only a few other times, which was why it was so universal.

“Coffee, tomorrow?” Lexa asked, trusting herself with only those words.

“I can’t,” Clarke pointed to her ears and pulled out the headphones.

“Hi,” Lexa smiled and waved.

“Hi,” Clarke laughed, still not hearing her well enough.

All Clarke could do was furrow her brow and wonder why such a thing was happening. She turned over a sheet of paper and wrote on it.

“Tomorrow, 7pm?” she wrote and held it up. Lexa peered through the window and nodded. Lexa dug into her purse as Clarke went to work writing something else. “Name?”

“Lexa,” the stranger printed on her palm and held it against the glass. “U?”

“Clarke,” was printed and held up as they grinned like mad at each other.

“Believe in soul mates?” Lexa scrawled on her other palm.

Clarke watched her write, watched her furrow and watched her debate before shrugging, smiling to herself, and placing her hand flat for Clarke to read it. Clarke peered at this eccentric, though harmless looking brunette that interrupted her morning ritual. She shook her head, though it did nothing to deter her new conversationalist.

Lexa held up a finger to tell her to wait and licked her thumb and scrubbed off her name before writing something else.

“Tomorrow. Here. I’ll show you.”

It was the way her smile spread, confident and challenging that made Lexa sure this beautiful girl was it. She wasn’t sure how. She just knew. She’d seen her before, somehow, somewhere. She was going with this feeling.

She waited eons for that small nod.

“I have to go,” Lexa mouthed and nudged her head towards the sidewalk.

All Clarke gave her was a small wave before watching her wave and blush and disappear down the street in the morning rush.

“I didn’t think you would show,” Lexa confessed, looking at Clarke and smiling. She took a deep breath and steadied herself. “I wasn’t even sure you’d show up today.” There was laughter in the room.

Lexa found herself fiddling with the flute of champagne in her hands and nervously looking at her new wife.

“I knew it that day, I’ll know it seventy years from now,” Lexa nodded, afraid of the sincerity in her words. “I looked up and I saw my soulmate, and not one thing in my life has been the same since.”

There was a clanking of glasses and Lexa felt her cheeks burning, glad to be finished speaking in front of their family and friends. So she did what came so naturally, she leaned down and kissed Clarke, kissed her lips as they stretched into smile.
Dreams

Chapter Summary

If you’re taking prompts. How about Clarke comforts Lexa after a nightmare?

It was the silence of it that scared her. The quiet. The stifling kind of lull that attacked her kicking legs. Lexa was unsure of what she needed to say, but she felt it, felt the words like entire bones in her throat, incapable of being swallowed and impossible to get out. They got lodged beneath her breastbone and attempted to pull themselves through her throat, and though she opened her mouth and felt the mechanics of the scream, she found only the quiet and stillness that existed in this dream. There was nothing else, only the need to make a sound to prove she existed, and she failed entirely.

It was her father in the chair, head cocked slightly, listening for the sound, listening to her for something. She had nothing for him, but she had to say it anyway, and yet she was incapable.

There were worlds inside sleeping heads. Clarke could almost see them happening as Lexa kicked her in her sleep. She woke slowly to the squirming girl in her bed, to the clutching of sheets and moving of legs and murmuring and tepid forehead scalding her shoulder. For a moment it startled her, to see Lexa so uninhibited, though that was solely due to sleep. For a moment, Clarke nudged herself closer despite being pushed and tried to relax the gripping hand.

Lexa woke with a gasp, as if she’d been holding her breath for months, as if her lungs were working for the first time ever. Her head was spinning and her mouth was dry, but she sat up slightly anyway.

“Hey,” Clarke hushed her though Lexa was still plagued by a severe cause of wordslessness. “It’s okay. You’re okay. It was just a dream.”

Still and startled and alarmed, Clarke watched her girlfriend as a silhouette, watched her refuse to move with her hand on her chest and the other a fist against the bed.

“I’m… sorry,” Lexa tried, swallowing again, tasting those words and making certain it was her voice. She took another large breath to supplement the disorientation. “I was…” She ran her hand up her neck and into her hair. “Did I wake you?”

“You gave me a good shin beating,” Clarke smiled, flopping back into her pillows. Lexa smiled weakly. “Come on,” her arm was out and waiting for Lexa to join.

“I’m going to go,” Lexa moved only to let her legs fall so her feet met cold floor. “I need,” she searched for a reason. “I need a bit of water.”

“Alright,” Clarke offered, rubbing her back as she stood.

It was cold in the real world of the hall and kitchen. In the dark Lexa dug out a cup and ran the faucet, filling it about halfway before turning it off and leaning against the counter. She clutched at the cup and gulped at the water eagerly, attempting to remember what had caused her to feel so alarmed and confused and quiet in the middle of the night, though nothing jumped out at her in her immediate recollection.

Clarke waited until she heard the shuffling in the hall. She held the sheet to her chest and tried to
readjust. She didn’t watch as Lexa sat on the edge of the bed and rubbed her cheeks a few times before laying back in the blankets. Instead, Clarke simply waited. It took only a moment for Lexa to inch towards her. It to just a moment for a forehead to nudge her jaw and an arm to wander its way across her ribs.

“It’s okay,” Clarke whispered, wrapping her arm around her girlfriend who melded into her side. She kissed her forehead and she breathed in her hair.

“I’m sorry. I don’t know what happened.”

“Bad dreams happen. Do you remember?”

“Not a second of it.”

“It’s okay, you know?”

“I know.”

“I love you.”

“I know.”

“Go back to sleep.”

“I can’t.”

“You can,” Clarke promised. Her hand slid under Lexa’s shirt and moved in a circle on her back. Her girlfriend was a stubborn toddler at nap time.

“Don’t go away, okay?” Lexa whispered into Clarke’s shoulder.

Clarke smiled and closed her eyes as she rubbed and consoled and promised and kept.

“Okay.”

Arms circled her tighter as Legs wrapped and twisted. Clarke continued her circles and pulled the blanket up high with her free hand.
The city was on fire. The steel and glass were merely coals, surrounded by the slowly burning embers of the trees and leaves that shook and clapped their flaming hands in the grey light that came before dawn. Every spare block, every inch, every glance burst alive with the bright colors of the dying world.

As she ran, Lexa heard the sounds of morning and the taste of autumn that hung in the air, that putzed through the streets collecting cans and sweeping up piles of leaves in gutters.

The path along the river was not full, but the regulars puffed along like a trainyard adding to the overcast sky and fog that tried to accumulate and kiss the ground.

It was her favorite time of year. That sweet smell of leaves and dirt that existed no matter how deep into the city you went. The colors, the reds and yellows and multitude of things that felt impending. Gone was the burn of the sun, and gone was that stifling kind of heat that sizzled and nipped at bodies throughout the day. Soon to come was the frigid kind of cold that burnt and broke and snapped the world’s skeleton. All that existed now though, was that final fizzle of the city, the final firework of life before retreating against the elements, and the chill that came only spurred life to thrive and battle that one last time, harder.

Huffing and puffing the steam of the run as she came to slow down outside of the apartment, Lexa put her hands over her head and watched the street fill with a rain of red and orange and yellow leaves in the breeze which kicked along newspapers in the gutters and sounded like scraping shoes along the sidewalk. The grey of the clouds sat snug above while the shades of vibrant lives were flickering flames that soared through the monochromatic world, defiant to the very end.

With a self-satisfied grin, Lexa loped her way up the steps and then again up the steps, skipping a few in her giddy mood. These were the days that she felt most comfortable and happy, and was scarcely able to contain it.

The apartment was quiet, the neighbourhood was silent, the city was disinterested in being awake at all, and Lexa loved that part as much as the weather. She kicked off her shoes by the door and grabbed a glass of water, leaning against the counter and feeling the faint pinches and twitches of her muscles.

The faint light of the morning lit the windows slightly in the bedroom as Lexa peeled off her shirt and wiped it across her back and neck before tossing it on the floor. Clarke didn’t move at all, not even noticing that her girlfriend had returned.

“Oh cold!” the blonde whined and moved, tugging the blanket with her as Lexa slid her hands around her hips and rooted her nose against her spine. “You’re freezing.”

“You’re so cozy,” Lexa whispered, kissing her back.
“Is it cold outside?”

“No, I just hung out in the fridge for an hour.”

“Lexaaaaaaa,” Clarke whined, boo-hooing and furrowing at the imposition. “It’s too early.”

“I know. I need you to warm me up.”

“Fine.” With an exaggerated move, Clarke turned over, tossing the blanket over Lexa and clinging to her as if she was dying of hypothermia.

“Thank you.”

“Go back to sleep.”

“I’m awake.”

“Sleep with me. I sleep better when you’re here.”

“Okay.”

“Is it cold out.”

“Yeah.”

“Can we stay in bed today?”

“Gladly.”
Frozen

Chapter Summary

Could you maybe do a fic where neither Clarke or Lexa falls into freezing water and the other goes “well now I’ll have to get naked to keep you from dying”

The trees creaked and cracked against the bitter cold that froze everything it touched. The entire forest seemed to moan with complaint against the frigid state of the world as the only two brave enough to venture out of the warmth of homes and buildings as the blizzard began to descend upon them.

Hooves trudged through the accumulation that obscured the familiar path, blurring out all directions in a multitude of white and grey. But still, they horses pressed on through the glacial midmorning with the foolhardy notion of beating the worst of it.

“We’re at least halfway, aren’t we?” Clarke called over her shoulder as she squinted against the squall and bleak blast of fresh snow and ice.

Wind kissed at exposed cheeks and eyes, making them water, while the rest of her limbs felt like they were breaking or made of glass in the coldest cold she’d ever experienced. Her first winter was nothing like the picturesque movies or books she’d grown up digesting. Instead, it was painful and full of wrath and bitterness, much like herself.

The entire first year on the ground was a lot. It seemed only fair that the winter was exactly the same and not a quiet, peaceful time.

“We’re getting close to maybe halfway,” The Commander called, carefully attempting to navigate the party as best she could. “Perhaps we should turn back?”

“If they found a new part of the Ark, we have to see what it means,” she insisted, trotting a few paces ahead. “There could be more of us, or there could be Ice nation, which is why we need you.”

“I understand the need to rush,” Lexa insisted. “But this storm isn’t even at full strength yet. We should find shelter. At least for a few hours.”

“We’ll be fine. We’ve made this trip a few times already.”

“Clarke, I’ve seen storms like this kill men, down trees, bury villages.”

“If we keep moving, we won’t freeze.”

The determination was admirable, but Lexa pursed her lips and squinted at the sky once again, praying that her heart didn’t get her killed. As much of an idiot as she felt herself to be, she would follow Clarke into the worst of anything, and she hated it for herself.

There weren’t enough clothes to fight the storm in the world, but Lexa tilted her chin and flexed her jaw, carefully following the headstrong girl. If there was another piece of the ark, then things could be more difficult. If there were Ice Nation involved, then things were going to be impossible. It was for that reason, they traveled alone, out into the storm, away from the warmth of their comfortable
dwelling high in the tower where Lexa liked spending time getting to know the girl who had pretty eyes and a sour demeanor. It was those eyes that made Lexa traverse the cold when a hopeful Clarke appeared after receiving word.

The Commander prided herself on knowing her land. It was the land she grew up in, though that was short-lived and long ago. It was the land she knew like the back of her hand. But the wind and the snow and the drifts made her disoriented and unable to see ahead of herself.

“Clarke, we really need to find shelter,” she tried again.

“I had friends on other parts of the Ark. We have to get there.”

They pressed forward, the Commander getting more and more wary of each step. But still, she pressed on slowly.

“Is there a reason you’re so eager?”

“I lost lot of people I would be happy to see any of them.”

“You seem more eager than I can remember ever seeing.”

Clarke’s horse slowed as they wove through the trees. She urged it forward despite herself as she thought about the tiny spark of hope she got to potentially see those missing. All she could do was grip the reins a little tighter.

“One of my best friends was on the Hydro station,” she finally confessed. “If I could see her, things would just… I wouldn’t be who I am. I could be who I was. That sounds stupid, I know.”

“You’re traversing snow for a friend?”

“She’s…. Home. She makes me feel like home.”

“Oh.”

“We weren’t in love,” Clarke decided, noticing the Commander’s quiet voice through the snow. “I mean. We were in love. I just. Not like. You know what, this is… I didn’t. She just…. She knew me. It’s stupid to be hopeful.”

“It’s not,” Lexa promised. “I never knew you then, but I don’t think there’s anything wrong with this person.”

“Except for making you trudge through the snow.”

“Except for that,” she nodded with a grin.

As much as she didn’t want to admit it, Clarke knew Lexa was right when it was too late. The trees were unfamiliar, and though she tried to make herself believe she knew the area near Arkadia, it’d been much too long that she’d been away for it to be a true statement. But still, she pressed forward because that was what she had to do.

For hours, they waged a war with the elements, freezing themselves to death in hopes of making it. The horses trudged as best they could, though Lexa was right and the storm got worse as they pressed onward.

“We’re still a few hours away,” Lexa wagered as she hopped down and tried to find her way.
“You said that an hour ago.”

“We should find somewhere for the night. Dark will fall soon.”

Clarke watched the Commander pat her horse’s neck and pull a container of water from her pack before taking a long drink. She hopped down and bundled her arms tighter around herself, defiant of the idea and the weather.

“A few hours. We’ll make it.”

“You’re insane.”

“You agreed to come with me,” Clarke retorted.

“Yeah, and I regret it already.”

“Sorry to be a pain for you,” she furrowed.

“I knew the struggle you’d be when I first saw you in the throne room,” Lexa sighed, her breath coming out in a deep cloud.

“Why did you come? You just keep complaining.”

“And send you off to die in the storm, wondering around in this with Ice Nation potentially getting antsy with a new station? You’d be dead already.”

“I’d be just fine.”

“I’m sure.”

“What does that mean?” she hitched her hip.

“You’d be just fine,” Lexa tried. “You’d realize we weren’t coming in from the normal road, that the storm probably filled the valley.”

“Of course I realize that,” Clarke huffed.

It went unnoticed by the Commander who finished adjusting part of her reins and saddle. All that Clarke could do was get frustrated by the truth she was saying. She wanted to disagree, and she wanted to keep moving.

She opened her mouth and wanted to speak, but nothing really came to mind, and so she just stomped off in search of some warmth.

Lexa gave it exactly one minute before she sighed and followed the steps in the snow. The guilt gave her just that long to not feel bad about feeling bad about Clarke talking about someone else the way she wished she talked about her. And so she followed because she was in it and Clarke was pretty.

Even in the cold, a chill ran up her spine when she saw the stretch of treeless area and the hole in the hidden lake. She dropped the reins and sprinted.

“Lexa?” Clarke barked through chattering teeth.

The words came out weak and weary, unsure of themselves and wounded with the frozen water still gurgling and swirling in her lungs. It didn’t help that no answer came back.
In the quiet, Clarke listened to her own labored breathing and stared at the fire in the cave she seemed to find herself. It was no more than six feet wide, less than ten feet tall. Even with the weak fire already started, it was warmer than outside.

“I’m glad you’re awake,” Lexa breathed as she rushed inside, arms full of sticks and logs for the already dimming fire.

“What… what happened?”

“You were under the water,” she explained, feeding the flames. “You were turning blue. I… I brought you here.”

Clarke noticed the worried look, the fear that was now defensive, and though her teeth chattered and her body couldn’t stop shaking, she tried to move and failed. Back toward what must have been the entrance, the horses shook slightly, enjoying their reprieve from the drudgery of the storm outside.

“Are you g-g-g-going to brag about being r-r-right?” she finally managed.

“I would rather keep you alive.”

“I’m fine.”

“You can barely move. I did what I could. Let me help you.”

“I’m fine. The fire will help.”

“Not quick enough.”

With some maneuvering, Lexa added what was left in her arms to the already decent supply on one side of the tiny cave, and approached the bundle, wrapped in a blanket from the horse she’d been riding.

“We have to raise your body temperature, or your body will stop. I’ve seen it happen as a child,” Lexa explained, taking off her own coat and tossing it on the rock near the fire. “Here, let me help you.”

“I need more clothes, not less.”

“Just let me help.”

Though she wanted to argue, Clarke felt weak and as if her organs were made of ice, and so she didn’t have a fight left in her. Lexa made quick work of her coat, and peeled away the wet layers that clung to her body.

Lexa gulped as she got closer to bare skin. It wasn’t how she’d ever imagined it happening, not that she even allowed herself a moment to think of such things. But if she had. If she really thought about Clarke that way, it wouldn’t have been like this.

“I, uh, your pants,” she furrowed.

“My hands won’t…” Clarke tried, unable to grip. The blush should have appeared. It would have, except her blood was frozen.

Without a word Lexa tugged quickly at the sticky pants. Without allowing herself a glance, she stood and placed the clothes by the fire to warm before feeding it once again.
“Wh-wh-what are y-y-you doing?”

“You were underwater for at least three minutes,” the Commander of their world explained, tugging off her own clothes. “The quickest way to fix, uh, to raise your, um. Skin to Skin contact to avoid frostbite and damage.”

“Oh. Oh! Oh…” Clarke furrowed and looked away as Lexa reached her final layer of clothing.

She laid back down and held the blanket up to her chin, curling up against the never-ending freeze her muscles felt. Even half-frozen, her body felt the flare of thinking of Lexa without clothes. It didn’t help that she snuck a look as Lexa tugged at her boots and Clarke found nothing but her worst nightmare. More ink on skin. More muscles defined and toned and shadowed by the fire. Quickly, she closed her eyes and swallowed.

“It’s going to be okay,” Lexa promised as she slid into the little pallet she’d formed on the ground. “I’m just… it’s not… Um. I’m sorry I have to do–”

“No, no, It’s not. It’s fine, Lexa,” Clarke promised. “Anything to warm me up.”

“Yes. Warm you,” she nodded before tentatively reaching out her arms.

The skin was warm, and it felt like fire against her own, but Clarke didn’t say anything at all. She didn’t even let her brain think things except about warmth.

At least for the first few minutes.

And then it was all over. She thought about Lexa’s arms wrapped around her own, and she felt about the points of nipples against her back, and she was distracted by legs pressed under her own, and hip bones against her back, and a nose in her neck, and lips against her shoulder doing nothing at all save existing and working hard to keep her alive.

The shudders of her body only slowed eventually, though the chill seemed permanent to her very being. Three minutes seemed like a long time. Her body felt like it was both on the sun and dark side of the moon at the same time.

“I should have listened to you,” Clarke finally whispered.

“I didn’t think the storm would be this bad,” Lexa tried to stop her guilt. “I should have fought you a bit harder with reason.”

“I was blinded with hope.”

“I know.”

“I’m sorry.”

“Don’t be sorry,” the Commander promised. “You saved my life.”

“Add it to the list.”

Despite herself, she found herself chuckling. The shadows of the cave danced while the horses nudged each other and inch ed toward the warmth emanating from the cave. Gradually, Lexa’s hands stopped moving up and down in their thawing way, and instead moved softly, of their own doing. Thumb dragged along the bones of her ribs beneath her breast, and Clarke felt her lungs defrost. A different palm pressed flat against her stomach, pushing her spine against Lexa’s chest.
“Do you feel warmer?” Lexa finally tried.

“I certainly don’t feel frozen anymore.”

“Let me stoke the fire one final time, and I’ll let you sleep.”

“You said you learned this?”

The body containing her warmth disappeared and Clarke felt as if she’d fallen back into the river, though she kept quiet about it as she elected to watch Lexa attempt to hold a horse blanket around her shoulders and add fuel to their fire.

“We had a bad winter before I was chosen,” she nodded, the fire playing across her brow in serious shadows. “If you warm someone too quickly, they will not heal. Skin on skin is the most effective way. Our healer knew this from the teachings.”

The blanket failed and Clarke’s mouth went dry at the sight of Lexa’s exposed skin.

“People died?”

“Yes.”

“All of your stories end the same way.”

“Not this one,” Lexa smiled slightly as she added and poked the last of her roaring fire.

With a little less hesitation as last time, the warmth reappeared and pressed against Clarke’s back. She pressed herself into it greedily.

“No. This one is ending pretty well, actually,” Clarke decided as arms encircled her once again.

“Good.”

“It… it could be better.”

“What’s better than surviving?”

The answer came in the form of Clarke turning over and facing the girl who must have jumped in a frozen river to save her. The girl who must have pulled her out, carried her to this cave, and built them a fire. Hair still damp and more curly with the way it dried, Lexa’s eyes were dilated in the dim cave, though they did not hide her confusion at the movement.

Legs slid beside her own, finding warmth and purchase against their savior’s. A cold hand pressed against her cheek and then her neck.

“I can think of a few things.”
The halls were empty and still shiny in the early morning as Lexa yawned and made her way down the steps towards the lower floors. The only noise that followed her was the sound of her shoes, soft and light against the tiles, and the eternal buzzing of the fluorescent lights.

With a slight adjustment of the bag on her shoulder, she began the descent into the bowels of the old music building.

It wasn’t until she took the headphones out of her ears that she noticed the noise that started and stopped, slunk through the halls and disappeared like a ghost before starting again, quicker or slower and inevitably stopping.

Six out of the seven days of the week, Lexa found herself early to the studio, carving out a little practice time alone to work on her moves under her own harsh eye with no distractions. To hear someone else in the basement practice spaces left her feeling oddly invaded, oddly thrown off of her routine, oddly missing the solitude of quiet.

The music stopped a final time until the silence grew overbearing. Lexa paused outside of her normal room, waiting to see if a person would accompany the quiet. Instead, a different kind of song started, different than the cumbersome, deep, dreary kind of liturgy which preceded. This one began quiet, started small and swirled smoothly into something swift and ardently sprezzaturial. Lexa wasn’t sure how long she listened, just that she did, she stood there for longer than she should have allowed herself and she felt her heart and muscles betray her as the imperfectly human attempt at music was pounded out of those keys.

As it neared the end, Lexa smiled and pressed down on the door handle, letting herself into the practice room.

The mystery pianist kept an irregular schedule. Lexa listened when they were there, playing, stopping, sometimes going for a half hour before slamming their hands against the keys in a disastrous sound. One morning when the music was missing, she found herself humming some familiar tunes she’d never heard anywhere else. It was becoming a habit.

It was back a few days later, even more off, the way each note felt off and rushed. Lexa tricked herself into thinking she could understand the mood that came with each. Some days it was as if her heart would race and she felt joy, felt genuine happiness. Some days it was heavy and dark. Some days it was simply lost, simply neither here nor there.

But Lexa paused outside of her studio and leaned against the door, listening to the dirge that felt unfettered, unrestricted, felt as if it were a war. When it stopped, it was sudden and the quiet lingered once the final note was cut.

She didn’t expect the door to open so soon after it finished. She definitely didn’t expect to see the pianist ever.

“Oh, I’m sorry,” the blonde jumped slightly when she saw another living soul in the dead basement. “Was I… too loud? I didn’t think anyone else was here this early.”

“No, no,” Lexa smiled, subconsciously pulling at her necklace. “I’m sorry. I just. I hear you some mornings. I like listening. I didn’t mean to startle you.”
“I’m Clarke. I… I play sometimes.”

“Lexa.” She put her hand out, adjusting her bag on her shoulder so it didn’t fall. “You’re spectacular.”

“Thank you. I don’t know about that, but I’ll take it.”

“Like nothing I’ve ever heard of, honestly,” Lexa confessed, blushing slightly.

“That bad, huh?”

“I liked it.”

They stood there, each clinging to the bags at their shoulders like life vests from the precariousness of the situation that accidentally occurred.

“I should let you get in there,” Clarke swallowed. She wanted to just keep looking at this girl with the slender neck and shoulders, with the protruding collar bone and wisps of flyaways at the base of her neck.

“Oh, yeah,” the dancer nodded, looking to the door behind her dumbly. “I’ll see you around.”

“Definitely.”

The semester continued as it was prone to do, gathering steam while meniacally slowing at the same time with the weight of assignments and life and work. Clarke found herself with less and less time available to sneak away and play. Not with finals and applications and labs and volunteering and such bogging her down.

It meant that she didn’t get to see the dancer again, and that was as much of a travesty of her lack of playing time. Clarke found herself daydreaming about her eyes, how big and soft and kind they were. About her smile, and those lips, and she didn’t even want to get started on her body. It was a damn shame in her opinion.

“You have to mingle, darling,” Abby nudged her daughter as she sulked in the back of the room. Her father laughed, loud and full, at the table full of his fellow lawyers.

“With who? Everyone is ancient.”

“These are the people you want internships and letters of recommendation from, Clarke. You know this,” the doctor explained once more.

“I’m all set with that,” Clarke lied, sipping her drink and swallowing the hiss that came with it.

“You’re graduating in a few months. It’s time for you to make these connections.”

“I know, Mom. Just. Stop.”

“Try to at least look like you don’t want to kill yourself in the bathroom.”

“I’m doing my best,” Clarke said between gritting teeth she tried to disguise as a smile.

Her best was a record of three hours before she excused herself and stumbled out into campus with the express hope of never having to hear that stupid story about her dad’s boss’ stupid dogs for a ninth straight time. The school was dead at the hour, but Clarke looked over her shoulder at the
shindig in the dean’s mansion and decided to chance her luck in the world.

There’d be a scolding waiting on her phone, but she didn’t care. She had a pilfered bottle of what she imagined was an expensive red, and a purse full of tiny, tiny sandwiches. She believed herself more than prepared for the wilds of her cross-campus trek to her apartment.

She made it a few blocks before eating one of the first stolen sandwiches. It was a few more before she helped herself to the wine. Nearly finishing it, she let herself into the music department and towards her favorite practice piano. She wasn’t supposed to abuse her key card, but she was giddy and inebriated and much too riled up with her mother’s words slurring in her head to go home.

Instead, Clarke let herself in and followed the music that was already playing somewhere in the practice rooms. Warily, and much like a terrible spy, she peered around corners, apprehensive of anyone else and vaguely aware that this was how horror movies started.

When she found the room from which the noise came, she smiled, leaning her head against the glass as her ballerina twirled and moved and leapt and looked absolutely astounding. Until she didn’t, she broke a pose and stomped to the side, hands on her hips, shoulders inhaling.

Clarke watched her redo the entire thing again and again, clones doing the same in the mirrors. It wasn’t until the fourth bout of anger that left the dancer tearing at the beam on the wall in frustration that Clarke opened the door, slowly at first, clearing her throat.

“It looked good, you know,” Clarke tried, tapping the wine bottle against her thigh as she leaned against the door.

“I suppose we’re even now in our voyeuristic tendencies,” Lexa tried, straightening and resolving herself.

“I didn’t mean to, honest,” the almost doctor defended herself. “I’m drunk and it’s late. Would you like a sandwich?” She offered her purse.

“If you’re drunk, why are you here?” Lexa’s face softened at the display. She was endeared. Clarke was endearing.

“I was going to play. It’s all I want to do.”

“I haven’t heard you in the mornings.” The blonde watched shamelessly as the dancer ran a towel down her neck, down her shoulders.

“So you’ve been listening for me.” It was a grin that was all booze and charm and Lexa knew it as such, but that did nothing to diminish its effectiveness.

“I just mean it’s been quiet.”

“Admit you miss me in the mornings.”

“Never.”

“I miss you in the mornings. I don’t really know you but I definitely want to know you.”

“Easy, sailor, you’re going to make me blush.”

“Good. You’re beautiful when you blush.”

“You’re charming when you’re hammered.”
“I’ll show you hammered.”

With a resounding shove, Clarke moved from the door and back out into the hall. Lexa took a step, afraid of her precarious balance.

“Easy there.”

“I’m fine. I’ll show you.”

“I should get you home.”

“I’m fine,” Clarke mentioned over her shoulder as she tried to get into the practice room across the hall. “Look,” she stopped once the door opened and put her fingertips to her nose, as if it was definitive proof. Lexa just tried to hide her smile and followed. “My mom was on my case about talking to these people that can give me a pre-made career path, and I just… drank,” Clarke continued, taking a seat at the bench of the piano. She paused as she placed her hand atop the cover. “Do you ever just wonder what the hell you’re supposed to be doing?”

“Often,” Lexa confessed.

She wished she’d been as loose with the compliments, that she told Clarke she looked spectacular in that dress. But she just met her a few times and Lexa couldn’t. She wasn’t that person, no matter how much she wished she had some sort of spine.

“I’m going to be a doctor. I’ve always wanted to be a doctor, but also just give me one of these in a hotel lobby or something, you know?” blue eyes looked hopefully at Lexa. “Do you want some wine?”

“I shouldn’t.”

“You should. It’s expensive and stolen.”

“When you put it like that.”

“Do you want to be a ballerina when you grow up?” the doctor asked, watching as the dancer swirled the bottle before taking a sip.

“Yeah. I do.”

“And what if that doesn’t happen?”

“It’ll happen. I’m going to make it happen.”

“I like that. My mom would like you.”

“Already have me meeting the parents and you don’t even know my last name. That’s forward of you.”

“I know what I want.”

“Are you going to play?” Lexa rolled her eyes and grinned before taking another gulp from the bottle.

“Promise not to laugh.”

“You watched me fall during my routine.”
“And I thought it was magnificent.”

“I’m sure I won’t be disappointed then.”

“I have to warn you,” Clarke said, lifting the cover to the keys finally. She ran the tips over the keys and looked up with boozy eyes and wine red lips. Lexa had never seen anything so beautiful, so simple and beautiful and still. “You’re going to fall in love with me when you hear me play. Just like I fell in love with you when I saw you dance.”

“Shut up and play.”

With a small smile and nod, Clarke finally looked away, running her fingers over the keys to their starting position. She closed her eyes and sat up a bit straighter. She took a deep breath and began.

Lexa would tell her one day, that it wasn’t the playing that did it, but that moment before, when she could have sworn she saw pure peace appear so suddenly she almost missed it.
Chapter Summary

Hi! I was wondering if you could entertain the thought of this prompt: Clark is new to the pro surfing circuit who has arrived early in Hawaii to practice for the next stop on the tour following a disastrous start to her tour. While practicing she meets local surfing royalty (Lexa)... The rest is up to you.

Despite the soreness that gnawed on her muscles and joints, despite the time zones and jet leg, despite the weather and the time, the surfer sat on the edge of the empty beach. The sun was toying with waking, casting that dusky grey net over the horizon so that the water was still darker, and the sky was a sleepy shade of foam. The breeze ruffled her hair and made her shoulders shiver, and she savoured it for the moment because in just a few hours, the sun would be sore for being awake, would try to burn the skin of her shoulders, would try to whiten the blonde in her hair.

Methodical and precise, Clarke ran the wax along her board. It was familiar and soothing despite the circumstances, and it was precisely what she needed.

As the sun cracked the horizon, Clarke pushed out into the ocean for the first run of the day. Her friends would arrive in the afternoon, and her little apartment would become overrun with them, her lonely morning routine would become infused with them, and for now she needed to simply be mechanical, to shake loose the grinding grip of the last stop on the tour, and focus on what was to come.

For just the morning though, Clarke was alone and the competition didn’t matter. Even as slowly, the beach filled with the early morning team of surfers, the regulars, the locals, she enjoyed the kind of solitude of the ocean.

After a few hours, after the sun was well overhead and after the sky was pale white with hints of blue, no longer the hopeful blue-grey of morning, Clarke decided to call it. She sat on the beach and watched the crowded spot fill and watched the local talent. It was mesmerizing, the entirety of it, the way the world filled and changed.

“You looked good out there,” a voice offered as a board was shoved into the sand near Clarke’s spot.

“Thanks. It was a good set,” Clarke nods, not looking up as she scrapes her board. She liked the routine of it. The ritual of going out to the waves and the final act of cleaning up. It was an entire event, and she appreciated the moments that built it.

“You’re not from around here, huh?”

“How could you tell?”

“I don’t know you. And I know everyone.”

“I’m here with the circuit. I just came in early for practice.”

“This is kiddie stuff,” the girl explained. “If you want to good waves, you have to go to the northside
of the island.”

“Thanks for the tip. I’m Clarke. Clarke Griffin.” She holds out her hand and the stranger takes it.

“Raven. If you want to hit the good stuff before the tourists descend upon it, just let me know. We usually head out that way a few times a week.”

“Yeah, I might have to take you up on it. I could use the practice.”

“Stop by Arnold’s if you want. I’m going to head out. See if you left anything or if it’s as flat as it looks. Nice to meet you.”

“Yeah, you too. Thanks.”

She debated it longer than she’d admit, but eventually Clarke decided to try to find the stranger she met on the beach. It took twenty-nine views of her last performance to remind her of how much practice she needed, of how out of sink she’d become, and as she clicked play for the thirtieth, she shut her laptop, disgusted with herself, grabbed her keys, and left without a thought as to where she was heading.

The diner was almost bustling, just shy of being actually busy. Clarke surveyed it and debated again what she was doing. But her stomach gargled and she knew it was fate, or at least close enough.

The stranger was no where to be seen, Clarke realized as she saddled up to the counter. But she wasn’t disappointed.

“What can I get you?” the waitress asked. Clarke just stared at her, as if she’d never been asked that question before in her life. “Maybe just a drink?”

“Water, please,” Clarke tried, earning a small smile before she turned away.

It was the freckles that dusted across her nose and cheeks that did it. That and her eyes, green and bright. That and her lips, and her face, and her hair, flying away and curling in the salt breeze near her neck. Clarke was desperate for the water by the time it arrived.

“You’re not from around here, huh?” The waitress asked, leaning over the counter and balancing her chin on her elbow. Clarke drank like she’d never seen water before, forgetting completely about her friend from the beach and the promise of good waves.

“Is that like the go to line around here?”

“Am I too late? Has it already been used on you?”

“Is it that obvious?”

“Most people don’t need a menu here. You gave yourself away. Plus, I’ve been working here for a while, and I’ve never seen you.”

“I was told to meet someone here if I wanted to find some good waves,” Clarke blushed, looking down at the menu again. “It kind of sounds silly when I tell it like that.”

“Must have been Raven,” the waitress pushed herself up and pulled out her pen.

“Yeah! That was it.”
“You’re her new puppy.”

“I… well…” Clarke debated it. “I don’t know.”

“Not the most articulate.”

“I don’t know the right answer to anything, honestly,” Clarke shrugged, growing more nervous when the waitress smiled at her answer.

“Why don’t I feed you first, and then I’ll try to find Raven?”

“Yeah, that sounds great, thanks.”

With a small nod, the waitress pulled away. Clarke looked down at the menu again, uncertain of what was going to happen. Reluctantly she pushed it away, folding it and putting it back in its place, deciding to let fate have its hand, not only in her life, but her dinner as well.

Adrift and out of her element, Clarke watched the waitress, looking away hastily at times, others, not leaving her eyes when they met.

Halfway through her meal, a rowdy bunch entered the dinner, greeting the waitress as they took to the back booth. Clarke learned her name, tasted it, turned it over in her mouth after learning it during their calls.

“I thought you might show,” Raven took the seat beside Clarke. “Intrigued by my sketchy offer of a little fun?”

“More like I couldn’t sit in my room another minute and re-watch myself eating it so hard I’m still sore,” Clarke countered.

“That’s a good reason. Come on over to our table. Lexa gets off in a bit and we’re going to head down to the shore,” Raven offered.

“Lexa?”

“Yeah,” Raven grins, watching Clarke watch the waitress, unsubtle and distracted completely. “Come on.”

The fire burned and crackled in the night. The heat of it burned the blonde’s cheeks, but she dug her feet in the cold sand to balance it and decided she’d never move. The waitress sat beside her, quiet and listening to her friends, beer tucked gently in her arms.

“I just bombed,” Clarke shrugged, keeping her eyes fixed solely on the fire after her questioning. “I was angry and dumb and I can’t explain it.”

“Your dad died, I think you could have taken a day off,” Anya shook her head from across the pit.

“I couldn’t. It was all I had,” Clarke shrugged. “So now I’m here. I probably would have saved a little face just not going out there. But…”

“You needed it,” Lexa supplied.

“Yeah,” Clarke nodded.

“So you’re dad’s been dead a month and you’re here?” Anya asked, earning an elbow from her
boyfriend.

“Anya!” Raven glared.

“I’m just wondering.”

“I couldn’t stay home,” Clarke shrugged.

“Well, we’ll get you back on that board. If you do anything like what I saw today, you’ll be alright at the next stop,” Raven nodded, taking a sip. “You should have seen her. She made Indra look like a novice.”

Clarke was grateful that the conversation switched and she wasn’t under interrogation any longer. She hid behind her bottle, answered what she could, asked what she could, but mostly stayed quiet.

“I think I’m going to head home,” Lexa finally decided after tossing her bottle into the fire, throwing embers up into the sky. The complaints flew and she shook her head, dusting sand from her shorts. “It’s been a long day. I’ll see you all bright and early for the trip. Are you coming, Clarke?”

“Coming?”

“I haven’t explained it all entirely, but she’ll be there,” Raven promised. Clarke simply watched Lexa nod, give her a look, and disappear.

Unsure of what she was getting herself into, Clarke appeared at the designated spot Raven pointed out the night before. Bag packed with essentials and board gripped tightly in her hand, she waited for the ride. Bellamy shifted and yawned, still waking up after the arrival of his flight, while Octavia eagerly asked as many questions as she could.

By the time Raven and the rest of her friends arrived, Clarke was well over having her friends around, quickly getting over the excitement at seeing them. But they jammed into the jeep and drove while doing introductions and Clarke smiled at Lexa, and even earned a smile back.

It didn’t take long to escape civilization, and it didn’t take long for them to park at some end of the road before grabbing the supplies and trekking over some gate and down a well-beaten path towards the ocean.

The beach was a stretch of paradise, completely and totally untouched, waves crashing and beautiful. They dropped everything in favor of tasting the ocean, in favor of running towards the waves with their boards, clothes tossed in reckless piles on the trip out.

“You looked like you were having fun out there,” Lexa took her seat beside Clarke as everyone else fret over dinner, the sun setting and the world almost slowing down in the amber liquid of dusk.

“It was fun. More fun than I’ve had in a while,” Clarke confessed. “How did you guys find this place?”

“I’m not sure. It’s just always been here.”

For a moment Clarke watched Lexa look around, almost anxious and calmed by the spot.

“Thanks for letting us come,” Clarke looked away after watching this girl’s face for longer than she should have allowed herself. “It was a nice change of pace for us.”

“Your friends are fun.”
“They’re… something,” the blonde agreed as they watched the group interacting.

“Do you want to see my favourite spot out here?” Lexa finally asked.

“Yeah,” was all Clarke could manage.

“When I was a kid, my dad used to bring me out here,” Lexa began as they sat on the ledge overlooking, what Clarke thought to be, the entire world. “We used to count stars and camp.”

“I used to do that with my dad,” Clarke nodded, surveying the stars that appeared despite the lingering presence of the sun. “He knew every story for the constellations.”

The breeze came with the technicolor sky, making the leaves of the trees wave away the rest of the heat that stuck to the ground like dew. Clarke stretched her sore legs and rubbed her knee while Lexa remained still.

An entire day spent together, and she felt as if she was still a stranger, someone Clarke had no idea how to get to know entirely, though one she wanted to get to know for unknown reasons.

“It’s nice up here,” Clarke nodded, pulling her sleeves over her hands.

“Yeah.”

“Should we head back down there?”

“Just a few more minutes.”

The week leading up to the competition was one of the best weeks that Clarke could remember in a long time. She found herself in a routine, of sorts. Breakfast after she did her morning run on her own, where she would mercilessly, though awkwardly, flirt with a certain waitress. Some days, Lexa got off early and would show her around the island, a few others, she was snagged by Raven and put back in the water.

By the time the day of the meet came, Clarke was relaxed beyond measure. And as she hoisted the cup above her head at the end of the day, Clarke felt different.

“Howdy champ,” Lexa greeted her with a smile as she wiped down the counters in the near empty diner.

“Oh, you heard about that?” Clarke pretended, setting the trophy down in a seat beside her, sharing a grin with the waitress. “I was going to subtly sit here until you asked about it.”

“Sorry to spoil it for you.”

“Well, it’s okay. At least my reputation proceeds me.”

“Shouldn’t you be at the afterparty?”

“This isn’t the afterparty?” Clarke asked, looking around, dumb smile on her face making Lexa laugh despite herself. “You’re here. I wanted to impress you.”

“Consider it done.”

“Yeah? Just wait til I break out the video and show you.”
“You’ve been drinking.”

“You’re still beautiful,” Clarke explained, quite seriously.

“And you’re quite brazen.”

“I’ve been known to be bold from time to time.”

“Let me get you something to eat.”

“Hold on,” Clarke managed to catch her wrist before she turned towards the kitchen.

Standing up and leaning over the counter, Clarke kissed the waitress right there, right in front of her trophy and the two old ladies in the back booth, and the chef peaking through the divider. It started slow, it started calm, and despite herself, Lexa tasted the salt on the surfer’s lips still and wanted more.

“Thanks,” Clarke swallowed, pulling away with her hand still on Lexa’s cheek.

“No… thank you,” Lexa sighed, still looking at Clarke’s lips.

Satisfied and victorious and oddly renewed, Clarke sat back down on the stool and smiled to herself as her dinner was being made.
Love

Chapter Summary

Okay, may I prompt you with that “One Hundred ways of saying ‘I love you’” that’s been going around on tumblr? I love all of your stories even that Comfort one that nearly killed me. :)

1. The party is loud, is overbearing, is winding down and spilling out into the street from the puncture wounds of the doors and windows. Streaks of light and laughter cut through the streets and yards. Lexa has never met anyone like this roommate of her friends’ girlfriend. She’s floating on whiskey and bad beer and those blue eyes. Snug and solitary, they sit smushed together in the back corner of the porch. It starts with a simple question about a shared professor from freshman year and it flows through majors and small talk into liquor fuelled dares to push the envelope and scratch beneath the surface. “I’ll walk you home,” Lexa states, standing as the blonde decides she will finally commit to heading home. “You don’t have to do that. I’m fine,” Clarke tries to wave her away. “I know you are. I’d like to walk you home anyway.” Lexa blushes at her insistence though she’d say that was because of the winter wind that blew through the trees. “If that’s okay,” she adds, bashful and oddly distraught at the idea of not being able to see Clarke. “Yeah,” she finally nods. “Walk me home then, champ.”

2. Three days the silence rages between the two exchanged telephone numbers. Seeing as Lexa breaks it first, Clarke decides it is her job to make the big move, to ask the question, to set up the date. And when she does, she’s more nervous than she had ever been before. But she does, and it goes well. Lexa is charming and sweet, deceptively funny and insanely smart. She ticks off every box Clarke never knew to have on a checklist for someone to go on a date with. It doesn’t hurt that she has a smile that is sad and small, but has the capacity to grow and exude pure sex. The face and the hair and the eyes and those damn lips don’t hurt either. Dinner is lovely, and the movie is terrible, the rain comes while they walk to the car and forces them to sprint until they get to it and Clarke stumbles searching for her keys, leaving them to get on in eventually, soaking wet and out of breath, shivering and grinning like fools who can’t help but laugh. Clarke fumbles again trying to turn the heat one, but when she does the quiet between them sits in the backseat and they are left close and grinning. “Can I kiss you?” Clarke gulps slightly as she asks. Lexa looks at her beneath her lashes, lips twitching slightly at the idea. She doesn’t answer, but she finally kisses this girl, this girl that snorts when she laughs and occasionally swears too much. Leaning over the middle between them, Lexa holds her cheeks, nudges her nose and finally kisses her.

3. The leaves fall and the trees, in their barren state, all shiver and knock their boney fingers together in the breeze. The first date leaves Lexa oddly excited for another, though nervous to ask. After class she decides, after class, she’ll call and even though it was less than twelve hours before, she’ll ask if Clarke wants to go on another. But the walk across campus proves to only make her more nervous as she stares at the phone and debates how to do it. A girl asks you to kiss her, and you have to assume she wants another date. “Hey, I thought it was you,” a voice walks up beside her as she is immersed in her phone. “Hi. Hey. Hi,” Lexa smiled, shoving her phone in the pocket. “I was just thinking of calling you. You have to be freezing.” Clarke looked down at her bare arms and shrugged. “I was running late. I thought I had a coat in my car, but—” she stopped as Lexa stopped walking in the middle of the sidewalk. “Take my jacket, it’s cold out,” Lexa insists, slipping out of it. “No, I couldn’t. I’ll be fine,” Clarke smiled. “Clarke, you’re going to freeze.” “Only if you’ll ask me out
again,” the blonde decides, staring at the jacket. “Jokes you you,” Lexa smiles, watching as her jacket went over this girl’s shoulders. “I was going to do that anyway.”

4. The apartment was cleaner than clean. Laundry was shoved in the closet, towels hung properly, dishes put away. Clarke spent a frantic hour making sure the sheets were fresh and any terrible pictures were taken from the walls, warning her roommate to keep quiet and be scarce, picking out the proper underwear. By the time Lexa knocks on the door, Clarke has manufactured a state of slightly dishevelled laziness that is the opposite of all the work she put in. She kisses Lexa at the door, each burning slightly as the stranger shrugs off her coat and offers the bottle of wine she brought in. Eventually, “What do you want to watch?” turns into cuddling on the bed, turns into a movie continuing with no one watching at all.

5. The semester is nearly over and campus takes a turn. As winter firmly settles between the big brick buildings and the vines on the towers wither and become nothing more than brown knotted fingers, students feel the impending tension of finals and papers, presentations and applications. “Okay, you have to go,” Clarke nudges Lexa towards the door, hurrying her out of the apartment and into the chilly evening. “Aw, come on,” she pouts, hanging on the door. “I’ll help you study.” Her eyes are deep and brown and her lips betray the tone with that smirk that makes Clarke so mad she has to kiss her. “I don’t think you’d be much help at all.” Clarke kissed her and pushed on her chest, earning even bigger puppy dog eyes. “Go write your paper. I’ll see you this weekend.” Lexa relents with a final kiss.

6. The airport is full of holiday travellers, long lines spilling out in all directions like half-frozen snakes stuck in perpetual slithers. “It’s been fun,” Lexa smiles. “Well, I mean,” Clarke shrugs and looks away. “Call me when you get home?” the local tries as the blonde fixes her coat and runs her hands up her shoulders and into her neck. “Definitely. Have a good holiday.” Lexa earns a kiss a second later and tries to savour it until the holidays are over.

7. Only asleep for a few minutes, or at least of that she was certain, Lexa shoots up with the sound of her phone buzzing beside her pillow. “Did I wake you?” Clarke’s voice is quiet and strong. “No, no. I couldn’t sleep anyway,” Lexa lies, smiling into her pillow. “I just missed your voice like crazy,” Clarke sighs, pacing absently through her bedroom, chiding herself for being worried about calling and admitting things so freely. “Hi gorgeous,” Lexa smiles and settles in for a long night.

8. The books are piled and open and flung about on the floor. Lexa types away on her laptop absently while Clarke flips pages and refuses to read another word. She watches Lexa, watches her eyes move across the page, watches her push up her glasses in the middle and falls infinitely in love with her in this little moment. “You’re watching me again.” Lexa sighs, rolling her eyes with a smile. “We need to talk about this.” “No we don’t.” Clarke taps her pencil against her notebook and purses her lip. “We’ll figure it out. New York and DC aren’t that far apart.” When it doesn’t help, Lexa moves her laptop aside and scoots closer to her girlfriend. “We’ll figure it out. I’m in it. If you think going to a different city is going to shake me, you’ll be sadly mistaken, Griffin.”

9. “I know, I know,” Lexa sighed, hastily adjusting her dress as she clamored into the restuarant. “Just an hour late,” Clarke smiled, earning a hasty, out-of-breath kiss as Lexa took her seat at the table, almost unnoticed by the rest of the party. “I’m so sorry,” she whispered. “Did I miss the cake?” The blonde rolled her eyes and slid a piece across the table as the dean of her speciality explained how proud he was of her team and how excited he was for their future. “I saved a piece for you.” “You are, without a doubt, the greatest girlfriend.” There was another roll of her eyes with a softer smile.

10. “You’re certain it’s not a birthday?” Clarke worried, smiling at the velvet box, “I didn’t miss an anniversary, right?” Lexa pushed aside the messy morning hair, the pale like summer wheat hair that
tickled her in her sleep, and slipped the necklace around her girlfriend’s neck. “Just because,” she decided, kissing her naked shoulder, “I just wanted you to have it.” Clarke blushed and played with it before pressing it to her chest. “It cost too much.” “A few extra shifts and that low cut shirt you hate me wearing to work.” “You bought me this with your boob money?” “You really know how to ruin a surprise.” Before she could complain anymore, Clarke pinned her in the bed and thanked her.

11. The bar was crowded, the summer crowd filling it beyond recognition. Clarke fiddled with her bottle, staring intently at it to avoid any sort of looks from freshmen pledges or summer seniors. “Katie called in, and I don’t think I’m getting out anytime soon. You should just go without me.” Lexa leaned close to her so she could be heard over the speakers. “I’ll wait. It’s no fun without you, Woods.” “I’ll get you another. Don’t worry. I’ll make sure you get home safe tonight,” the bartender winked, stealing a kiss before returning to work.

12. Despite the uncomfortable position, Lexa kept her shoulder pressed tightly against her ear, the phone cramping her neck. “No, no, it’s my treat,” she complained, scrolling through the computer on her stomach. “No way. I’ve got grandma birthday money,” Clarke insisted. “It should be fair, at least. If you’re going to come visit me, I should at least pay.” “You can take me to dinner.” “We’re splitting it.” “Let’s just be excited. It’s been a month and I miss you.” “I miss you, too,” Lexa admitted, though grumpy at having lost, for the moment.

13. The streets filled with people, all lugging bags filled with gifts and supplies for the holidays. Lexa looks up at the buildings that never end, that get stuck in the clouds and disappear above the snowflakes. The blinking lights and ringing bells on street corners make her feel a little more in the spirit than ever before, something she never realized she’d been missing. “You’re such a tourist,” Clarke giggles, her breath becoming more clouds. “Look at all of it,” Lexa sighs, amazed and enjoying her Christmas with her girlfriend in her city. “Look both ways, Woods. You’re gonna get us yelled at by a cabby.” “Isn’t that a right of passage here?”

14. Late as it is, Lexa can’t help but feel anxious more than tired. She taps the pen against her files on her desk and checks her watch once more, the sixth time in ten minutes. How’s the party? she types out quickly before sending to her girlfriend. Great. Me and Finn are dominating. Why? You okay? Lexa grits her teeth and pinches the bridge of her nose under her glasses before typing her answer. No reason. Have fun, Griff.

15. As the night wears on, Clarke grows more anxious on the stoop to Lexa’s apartment. She should have called, should have let her know, should have texted, should have done a lot of things, but she can only focus on the singular thing she shouldn’t have done, and that was let their relationship get so strained, so pushed to the back, become such a distant priority that she fully expected to fight the entire visit. “Clarke?” Lexa hesitantly approaches, finally inferring who the figure was in front of her home. “I was in the neighbourhood.” Awkward and tentative, her girlfriend approaches. “What are you doing here?” “I miss you, and things have been hard the past few weeks. I’m not going to let us fail. You and me. This matters more than anything else.” She wished she’d planned it more, but it came out, and that was that. She watches Lexa flip her keys in her hands, a nervous tick she memorized. “Come here,” she grins that grin that makes Clarke’s heart flip. Immediately, she finds herself hopping from the step and swinging her arms around Lexa’s neck. “I’m so glad you came,” Lexa whispers.

16. The phone screams, shrill and terrifying in the middle of the night. Lexa slaps around on the floor trying to find the offending device despite the deep sleep she is straddling. “Hello? Clarke? What’s wrong, baby?” she worries, pushing her hair out of her face. “I can’t do it, Lex. I can’t. This is stupid and I’m going to fail. And then what? You won’t love me. I’ll just be this failure that is unlovable,” Clarke cries, huffing and sniffling on the phone, blubbering and barely able to form the sentences with how upset she is. “Hey, baby, calm down,” Lexa tries. “Take a deep breath.” She listens to the
doctor-in-training try to control her breathing. “That’s it. Breathe with me. It’s okay. You’re okay. We’re okay.” Lexa breathes, exaggerated and full, aware that she is limited and hating it terribly. “Take a deep breath.”

17. “It’s stupid and I don’t see why I have to get all dressed up,” Lexa complains, fixing her earrings in the mirror. Clarke smiles, knowing this rant well. “You look gorgeous and it’s a big night. You did good work. Enjoy it.” The words are lost in the sphere of Lexa’s annoyance. “I don’t even have a good pair of heels.” “You can borrow mine.” “You’re killing all my reasons to not go!” Lexa wails, flopping down on the couch. “I’m terrible that way.”

18. Spring in the capitol is Lexa’s favourite time. She hangs her arm around Clarke’s shoulders as they walk along the Mall. Clarke talks about her schedule for the next few weeks and Lexa listens with half an ear, too distracted with savouring the last few hours of the visit. “I picked these for you,” Lexa offers a cherry blossom in a graceful motion.

19. “Do you know how to drive this thing?” Lexa frets, watching Clarke adjust the mirrors of the moving truck. “I can drive. I should be able to drive this,” her girlfriend decides, furrowing her brow and setting her chin like she does. “You drive a Civic, and most of the time you take the subway now.” “Are you worried?” Clarke gives her a grin as she starts it. “Why would you think that?” Lexa swallows. “It’s going to be fine. Don’t worry.” “Okay,” Lexa nods. Clarke begins to back up for just a few seconds before a loud honking is heard. Sheepishly she hits the breaks and looks at her girlfriend. “Is your seatbelt on?”

20. The morning came loud and violent through the open window. Clarke burrowed into the pillows to fight it, looking for the warmth of skin and her girlfriend only to find nothing there. With a great effort she pushes herself from the bed and traipses into the living room to find her humming there, preparing two mugs the individual ways each likes. Clarke rests her cheek along her girlfriend’s shoulder. “Happy Anniversary,” she whispers before biting there. “I made reservations.” “Any reason in particular?” Clarke grins, wrapping her arms tighter. “Happy Anniversary.” Lexa manages to turn in the blonde’s arms. “That’s more like it.”

21. Already tired and in no way, shape or form excited about spending the evening with Clarke’s family, Lexa stews on the couch, flipping through the channels. She slips from her beer and sighs again at the thought of the evening at hand. “I’m just not sure,” Clarke calls from the bedroom, antsy to find the perfect outfit for the anniversary dinner. “I don’t know why you’re worried. You’re going to look…” Lexa’s eyes drift to the door to see her girlfriend smoothing her dress in the doorway. “What do you think?” Clarke asks, brows furrowed and astoundingly beautiful. “It looks good on you,” Lexa nods, leaning forward slightly, “I mean… You look… You look beautiful.”

22. “Starving,” Clarke complains, looking at her girlfriend as she takes another bite of her sandwich. “You’re going to that tea party at that doctors house,” Lexa shrugged. “But that’s an hour away.” “I said I’d make you something.” “But I didn’t realize how hungry I was.” Lexa rolls her eyes and looks back down at her notes for work spread out on the table. She hears her girlfriend sigh once more. “You can have half,” she mutters, sliding the plate across the table.

23. The light from the bathroom wakes Lexa as she slept alone in the bed. For a moment she grumbles before getting up and checking the clock, noting it is much too early for her girlfriend to be home from work. Still asleep and confused, she follows the light, rubbing her eyes. “Clarke?” Lexa murmured, yawning into her hand. “Go back to bed. I’m okay.” “You’re not,” Lexa realizes, seeing the shaken girl sitting on the edge of the tub. “It was… a long night,” the doctor confesses, staring at her hands, staring at the blood covering her scrubs. Lexa looks at the red streaks on her neck. “Just let me get cleaned up. Go back to bed.” Her hands shake as she reaches for the faucet. “Hey, hey. It’s okay. I’ll do it for you,” Lexa takes a step forward. She pushes the hair from Clarke’s face and
kisses her forehead.

24. The rain slid down the windows of the office while the stacks of files on her desk and the emails that needed answered in her inbox grew at an alarming rate. Lexa sighs and takes the last sip of her coffee before finishing up the final remarks to some speech. “Woods! You got a visitor!” her friend calls from behind. “Hey baby,” Clarke appears a second later. “I thought you were working today,” Lexa smiles, earning a kiss for the surprise. “I got done early and I have a study session for boards tonight, so I thought I’d stop by,” Clarke grins. “Thought my girl could use a break.” “I was just thinking about you,” Lexa smiles, wider than ever. Clarke returns it, exceedingly happy for the distraction.

25. “Lex?” Clarke did a double take as she closed a chart and paused in the hallway. “Hey,” Lexa smiled, pushing herself up from the receptionist counter. “What are you doing here?” she asked as she kissed her cheek. “I didn’t want to distract you. I just brought you an umbrella. It’s raining bad.” “Dr. Griffin!” a voice called down the hall. “I didn’t mean to bug you, just wanted to leave it.” “You are the greatest,” Clarke smiled, kissing her girlfriend quickly.

26. The rooftop was covered in lights while the skyline paled in comparison to the universe Lexa created. “Watch your step,” she directed, holding Clarke’s hands and guiding her despite the blindfold. “This is crazy. Can’t I just walk up myself? If it’s a birthday party I’m going to cry. You know I wi–” Clarke stopped as the blindfold was removed and the table with champagne, the lights, the music. “It’s not a surprise party,” Lexa promised. When Clarke turned to her she was on one knee.

27. “It’s going to be terrible. I feel sick. Is it hot in here?” Clarke frets, holding her stomach as she bounces around the kitchen. Still waking and amused by the display, Lexa blows on her coffee and shakes her head. “You can do it,” she promises. “You have to say that, we’re getting married.” “I also know that they love you and you’re letters of recommendation speak enough, not to mention your work. They’re going to love you.” “I don’t know. I should reschedule.” Clarke finally stops and stands in the middle of the kitchen. “You can do it,” Lexa promises once more.

28. The bakery smells like what she imagines heaven to be. Cakes and cookies and desserts line the walls and another tray is brought out before them. “Oh goodness, this one,” Clarke moans. “Try some,” she offers her fiance. “This one,” Lexa agrees, kissing her quickly.

29. “Hey, I’m going to be home late,” Lexa cradles the phone closer to her mouth to try to be heard over the noise of the bar, “Is it okay if I’m a bit late?” “You didn’t have to ask,” Clarke chuckles, adjusting on the couch across town. “Yeah, well… you know. Just wanted to let you know.” “You’re fine. Go have fun. Come home and wake me up.” “Oh yeah?” Lexa grins, turning away from her mocking friends. She blushes as Clarke makes promises for her reward.

30. “Go to bed,” Lexa insists, grabbing her coat and bag. “I am, I just wanted to see you off,” Clarke yawns and rubs her shoulders, tired from the night shift. “I’ll grab dinner on my way home, okay? Don’t cook.” “You treat me good, good lookin’,” the doctor grins, following her fiance to the door, “Have a good day at work.” “Have a good sleep,” Lexa offers with a kiss on her cheek. She feels a tug on the chest of her shirt before she can walk away, pulled back into another, proper kiss.

31. The chair is cold and squeaks, but Lexa lays there, anxiously looking at all of the needles. “Don’t worry. For a tough guy, you’re kind of a wimp when it comes to needles,” her fiance jokes, chuckling in the other chair. “It is perfectly normal to not be a fan of needles, Clarke.” “You might like this,” the doctor tries, squeezing the ball. “It doesn’t hurt.” “It’s the blood leaving my body thing that I’m not a fan of.”

32. “I’m going to talk to them,” Clarke mutters, pacing through the living room, card in her hand,
tapping it anxiously on her thigh before looking at it once more. “Just let it go.” “They’re your parents, Lex,” she insists, “they have to come to our wedding.” “It doesn’t bother me,” she shrugs on the couch, continuing to make the lists from returned cards. “It bothers me,” Clarke complains. “It doesn’t bother me, so it shouldn’t bother you. You’re my family.” “I’m going to take care of it,” Clarke insists as Lexa smiles and shakes her head.

33. “It’ll be just like any other day,” Clarke nods to herself in the dark of her bed. “Just like every other normal, regular day,” Lexa promises. “Except you know, for the vows, and the wedding, and new name,” the doctor remembers, turning over in the bed. “Except for that,” Lexa does the same in her separate room. “I love you, you know that?” “I know. Are you nervous?” “Not at all. Kind of excited to finally make it official.” “Do you remember the first time we met?” “At that terrible party?” “I knew I was going to marry you that night. I’ve been ready for a long time now.” Clarke blushes and hides in her pillow, content and happy. “Go to sleep already,” she whispers. “Sweet dreams,” Lexa sighs, smiling and pulling the sheets up around her shoulders.

34. “How did you-?” Lexa stares at the couple before looking back at Clarke. “It’s your wedding day. I wanted you to be happy, and I knew that couldn’t happen without your parents here.” “But they… they said they wouldn’t…” “Some colorful debating on my part, and guilt. Mostly guilt.” “Thank you,” Lexa kisses her wife. She runs her thumb along her cheek and kisses her again.

35. “I never thought about fairytales when I was a kid,” Lexa nodded, steeling herself for the speech. “I was kind of a no nonsense child. And then I met you, and my life has been nothing but nonsense, and I mean that in the absolute greatest way possible,” she smiled, nodding towards her wife at the table. She looked out at their friends and family. “I never believed I could be this happy, and then you showed up. I’m not saying fairytales are real, but I do know that I believe in you, and that’s more than enough for me.”

36. “Are you sure?” Clarke grins, leaning close to her new wife, “It’s our wedding, we can’t sneak out.” “Why not?” Lexa smirks, “I want you all to myself.” “Coatroom. Three minutes.”

37. The apartment was full of smells by the time Lexa arrives home from work. Slowly, she hangs her coat and bag on the hook and tentatively follows the smells and noise, almost afraid of the sight considering Clarke’s aversion to cooking. “You’re home! I was hoping it’d be done. I need a few minutes,” the blonde smiled, nervously taking things out of the oven. “Do you need help? Did you do all of this?” “I wanted to surprise you. Show off my wife material.” “Well, I already married you, so I’m not too worried.” “Hush.” “Can I grab-?” “Go. Sit down, I’ll get it,” Clarke insists.

38. “Not the whole way out there,” Lexa shakes her head, holding open the paper as they peruse the real estate section over coffee. “But think of it. The yards, the quiet, the price per square foot.” Clarke circles another option she likes and Lexa groans. “I’ll meet you halfway. Nothing outside of this radius.” Clarke watches her hands move on the map, oddly victorious at the compromise.

39. The package is small, small and when she shakes it, it doesn’t make a noise, much to Lexa’s dismay. Her wife watches her anxiously. “I hope you like it,” Clarke tries. “I’m going to love it. Don’t worry.” When she sees the gift inside she smiles wide and kisses Clarke like her life depends on it.

40. “Oh fuck oh fuck oh fuck,” Clarke chants as she sprints down the street toward the dinner. She pays for the flowers on the corner and knows its not enough. “Lex! Hey! I’m sorry…” “I didn’t mean to-” “No, I got it. You were busy,” Lexa doesn’t even look at her as she hails a cab. “It’s not like that. I really didn’t mean to miss it!” Clarke pleads. “Let’s just go home.”

41. “I don’t want to go,” Lexa complains. Another shirt gets tossed into the suitcase while Clarke
 lays on the bed, half-covered in the vetoed options of her wife’s wardrobe. “You are killing it at
work. You have to go. It’s only a few weeks.” “A few weeks living in a hotel, helping some senator,
and missing you. No way. I should cancel.” “You’ll like it. Just promise me you’ll try to have fun.”
“No,” Lexa grumbled, flopping onto the bed, head buried in the pillows.

42. The airport is bustling, full of suits and families trying to get home. Lexa yawns and finds a seat.
“Hey, honey, I think we’re going to be delayed again,” she complains into her phone. “Are you
sure? Maybe you’ll make it.” “It’s not looking good.” “Okay, well, get home safe. The key is under
the mat.”

43. “It’s only for a few days,” Clarke promises, rubbing Lexa’s shoulders. “I don’t mind,” Lexa
sighs, continuing to read through her work. “I know, and that’s why I love you. And my parents love
you.” “They tolerate me.” “They love you. And you won’t even notice them staying.” “In our one
bedroom apartment? I might notice.” “Not at all. And we just have to have dinner with them, show
them around…” “We?” “I love you.”

44. “Are you kidding? I love it,” Clarke laughs, holding up the stuffed lion so that the girl on the
other end of the computer could see. “It reminded me of you,” her wife smiles despite the distance.
“He’ll sleep on my side of the bed,” Clarke promises. “Where are you going to sleep?” “I’ve been
ending up on yours lately. Must miss you.” “Now you have company.”

45. Tired and sore from the long day, Lexa flips through the mail she picks up from the front desk of
the hotel. Most are reports from the rest of the team there, a few are forwarded from the home office.
One sticks out in particular, though she waits and enters her room, juggling it all. “Hey, I was just
thinking about you,” she answers her phone as she tosses everything on the spare bed. “Did you get
my letter?” Too giddy to contain herself, she finally breaks down and asks, afraid it’d been lost. “I
did, but I haven’t read it yet. Should I now?” “No no!” Clarke jumps. “Not with me on the phone.
You have to wait.” “Or I could hang up.” “Shut it. Tell me about your day.” Lexa begins to list
things off, covertly opening the letter as she does.

46. Tired and sore from the long day, Clarke leans against the desk filling out the last bit of chart
while debating what to do first when she gets home: shower or just sleep right in her clothes.
“Excuse me, Doctor? Could you help me?” a familiar voice interrupts her thoughts. She looks up
slowly and her eyes light up. “It’s two sugars, right? I couldn’t remember because you switched it up
on me, which was just plain-” before she can finish, her wife is squeezing her neck, the coffees
nearly spilled at the jarring. Lexa doesn’t care, she hugs her back and laughs.

47. The rain taps against the windows and not a sound of the city can be heard. Lexa lifts her head
only to kiss the skin of Clarke’s hips. “What a nasty day,” the doctor complains, half-hearted and
happy. She pushes her hair around, out of her face before looking down at the girl between her legs.
She runs her knuckles along Lexa’s cheeks, her fingertips over her brow. “I think you’re beautiful.”

48. The party is crowded. The house is overflowing, the porch is stacked, and the yard is littered
with bodies. “Thank goodness, I was getting worried,” Lexa stands quickly and kisses her wife. “It’s
been a day,” Clarke sighs. “Take my seat,” her wife offers, “Let me get you a drink.”

49. “Not how I expected our first anniversary,” Clarke confesses, sitting in the candle-lit living room.
The windows billow in the breeze and noise from a city without power. “But kind of better,” Lexa
tries, “I mean, we can eat at Nino’s anytime. And who wants to get all dressed up. Plus, we have
about two more hours of music on the iPod left, and this assortment of pantry foods I’ve prepared.”
Clarke rolls her eyes and steals a bite of her peanut butter and jelly. “Do you think we’ll look back
on this in forty-nine years and miss this moment?” “I have no doubt,” Lexa assures her, “It’s been a
good year.” “Let’s do it again. Can I give you your gift?” Clarke asks, antsy enough as it is. “Only if
The smack of the screwdriver against the floor made Clarke grin, though she did not move. The swearing that accompanied the action made her chuckle, but still, she remained on the couch. “I busted my finger,” Lexa stalked into the room, walking past and heading to the bathroom. “Come here. Let me fix it.”

“I have to finish reading this speech,” Lexa sighed, rubbing her temples. Clarke ran her hands along her wife’s shoulders, up her neck, down her cheeks before resting her chin in her hair. “It can wait until tomorrow,” Clarke decided, rubbing her shoulders once more, “Come on. Let’s go. You need to relax.” “I’m relaxed. I’m perfectly relaxed. I just have to finish.” “Lexa.” The tone of the voice was too much, and Lexa just sighed. “It can wait until tomorrow,” she relented, following dutifully.

“You don’t have to say anything,” Lexa whispers, wrapping her arms around Clarke’s waist, “It’s okay. It’s going to be okay.” The doctor sits on the edge of the bed with her head in her hands and heaves a heavy sigh.

“I’ll be happy when you’re home,” Clarke whispered, crawling into bed. “Me too. Last trip for a while, promise,” her wife sighed amidst the hustle and bustle of the airport. “What time do you get in?” “Six-thirty. I’ll just cab it home.” “Nonsense. I’ll pick you up Clarke promised, yawning and turning off the light.

The kitchen was full of smells, warm and full. Lexa stumbled towards it in the morning light. “What’s all this?” she yawns. “I made this for you,” Clarke smiles. “Happy Valentine’s Day.”

“I dreamt about you last night,” Lexa grins into her coffee cup as her wife takes off her scrub top and tosses it on the floor, tired and sore from the past few nights of on-calls. “A beautiful stranger I barely recognized slipped into my bed.” “I share that dream,” Clarke sighs, “I’m done with work for the next two days.” “Good. I have plans after work.”

The kicking wakes her in the middle of the night. Slightly disoriented, Clarke turns over, half-asleep, to hold her wife, only to find her jerk away, sweating and gasping for air. “Lex, hey,” gently, Clarke sits up, running her hand over Lexa’s cheeks. “Wha-?” Lexa wakes, swallowing rough and out of her element. “You were having a bad dream.” “Oh, yeah. I don’t know,” she murmurs. Clarke pushes the tendrils of hair from her forehead before settling back beside her. She scoops her up until Lexa wraps her arms around her. “Go back to sleep,” Clarke whispers, rubbing her back.

“You can go first,” Lexa offers, collapsing on the floor of their new bedroom, “I’m never moving again.” “Come shower with me.” “No way. I’ll just get sad because I’ll want to touch you and then I won’t be able to because my arms don’t work. I’m just going to order pizza instead.” “That’s... quite a scenario,” Clarke chuckles. “I don’t want our first shower in our new house to be wasted on us being exhausted. You go first.” “I love you, you know?”

“We’re going to get stomach aches,” Clarke complained as she ate another cookie. “Good thing we’ve almost eaten the box,” Lexa laughed. “Gone too soon.” “That’s okay, I bought two.” “This. This is why I married you.”

The exam room was nothing foreign to Clarke, but somehow the experience was overwhelming. Lexa sat beside her, holding her hand, knee bouching anxiously. “Is this okay?” her wife asked, “That I’m here?” “I’m glad you are,” Clarke confessed as the doctor continued to prod around under her gown. “I have some good news for you both,” she finally said, surveying the screen.
60. The airport is crowded and the traffic cop gives them the eyes again, but Clarke doesn’t care. “Good luck,” she adjusts her wife’s collar despite how perfect it is, “You got this in the bag.” Lexa just smiles and kisses her, resting her palm across her wife’s stomach beneath her coat. “Be good til I get home.”

61. “I have an appointment tomorrow,” Clarke informs her wife from the bathroom between brushing her teeth and spitting. “Anything wrong?” Lexa frets, looking up from her book towards the bathroom. “No no, just routine check up.” “Oh, okay,” she exhales, nodding to herself before picking up the book again. “Do you want to come too?” Clarke asks, standing in the door as she turns the light off. “So much,” Lexa grins, finally admitting it.

62. “Lex,” Clarke nudges her in the middle of the night before another cramp hits her and she grits her teeth. “What’s wrong?” Lexa sits up quickly. “It hurts.” “I’ll drive you to the hospital.”

63. The bed is full of papers and books and empty plates. Clarke groans and tries to get out. “Get back in there,” Lexa demands, walking into the bedroom. “I can’t do it anymore!” Clarke huffs, sitting back down with a scowl and then tears. “I can’t sit here anymore. I’m going crazy.” “Hey, hey, don’t worry,” Lexa rushes to her side, “Not much longer now.” “I’m going to lose my mind,” Clarke cries, complaining. “The doctor said bedrest,” her wife reminds her. “How much longer?” Clarke asks, looking at her large belly. “Not much longer and then we get to meet this little thing, and that’s going to be exciting, right?” Lexa tries to cheer her up. “Promise?” “Cross my heart and hope to die.”

64. “That still doesn’t explain the wet clothes,” Clarke laughs, watching her wife change in the disgruntled manner of which she entered the room. “Because it started to rain and I was stranded outside,” Lexa huffs, which just makes her wife laugh harder. As much as she wants to hate it, she can’t. The blush burns the tips of her ears, but as soon as she is in dry clothes she collapses on the bed. “I like your laugh. Even if its from my pain.” “I needed this,” Clarke giggles.

65. “You have to eat,” Lexa insists, hands on hips, “I made your favorite.” “I’m not hungry.” “You’re about to pop, how are you not hungry?” Lexa complains, tossing the plate on the sink. “Don’t get sassy with me.” “I’m not. I’m just worried.” “Ooohhh!” Clarke grips her stomach.

66. The baby is bundled, swaddled, pink and perfect. Lexa stares at her in disbelief. She leans against the bed and has her arm around her wife, her other hand gently running along the sleeping baby’s forehead. “Wow,” Lexa whispers. “You did good work, Griffin.” In the quiet, she kisses her wife’s forehead.

67. “You don’t have to hold her the entire time,” Clarke admonishes as Lexa holds the baby, walking around the living room. “But I can’t put her down. She’s perfect,” Her wife informs her. “You’re hogging her,” the doctor complains with a sigh. “We can share… tomorrow.”

68. Painstakingly slow, Lexa closes the door to her daughter’s room, careful not to make a sound. She lights the candles on the table, turns on the music, low and slow, and uncorks the wine just as her wife walks through the door. “I thought we could have a date night in,” she grins as her wife looks over the display with a smile, “The baby is fed, bathed, changed, and asleep, and my wife is beautiful and talented and wonderful.” Clarke shakes her head and laughs as Lexa approaches, eyes lingering on lips. “I’m being seductive,” Lexa wiggles her eyebrows. “I noticed,” Clarke chuckles.

The roads are dark in the middle of the night, but still they trudge onward. “How much farther?” Lexa yawns. “Three hours.” “Remind me why we thought this was a good idea.” “You and me in a little cabin for three whole, uninterrupted days,” Clarke recites, “And I brought that lacey thing you like…” “Oh yeah?” Lexa perks up quickly. “Pull over. Let me drive for a while.” “No way,” she insists. “I’ll make good time.”

Fresh from the shower, Lexa towels her hair and moves into the bedroom to see her wife playing with the baby in the bed. Her daughter sputters and cheers and laughs along with her wife. “You know I have that conference next month,” Clarke reminds her. “Yeah, in San Francisco, right?” “Yeah,” the doctor nods. “It’s on your birthday.” “Just me and Emmy then. Probably take her for a night on the town. Tie one on,” Lexa decided, tossing the towel on the bed and scooping up the baby. “I bought you a ticket, too,” Clarke interrupted the diatribe. “Huh?” “I want you to come with me. We’ll stay in a nice hotel and drink and sightsee between my conference.” “Really?” Lexa smiles at the baby, brightening up to the idea. “My mom is dying to see the baby. I asked her to come down for the week.” “This is going to be a good birthday,” Lexa decides, kissing her daughter’s cheeks.

“I have to go, Lex,” Clarke calls as she pulls on her coat. She pulls her hair from her collar as she kisses her daughter in her high chair. “There was an emergency at the hospital. All hands on deck.” “Okay, okay,” Lexa comes back into the kitchen, half dressed and equally frazzled. “Hey,” she tugs her wife’s shirt after a quick kiss. “Be careful, doc.” “Always. I’ll see you for dinner.”

The sun came too quickly, but Clarke was already up. Her wife grumbled in bed. “I’ll see you tomorrow,” the doctor whispered, kissing Lexa’s cheek. “No, stay,” Lexa complained, rolling over, eyes never opening. “I have to work.” “Stay.” “I’ll see you tomorrow, love. Go back to sleep.”

It was going to be perfect. Meticulously planned and eagerly anticipated, Clarke got the day off and put it all in motion for the perfect day, and it would start simply. Gently, Clarke slips her arm around her wife, smiling, she kisses her shoulder. Her hands slip under her shirt, cupping her. “Good morning,” Lexa purrs, arching slightly. “Happy Birthday.”

“Baby!” Lexa blurs into the phone. “Lex?” Clarke mumbles, rubbing her eyes at the early hour. “I’m drunk.” “Huh?” “I’m at that party. We won!” “Congrats. Are you okay?” “Yeah. I just… drank more than I thought. You’re beautiful. And you’re the best mom. Seriously,” Lexa slurred. “Stay there. I’m coming to get you.” “Guys! Clarke is coming, and she’s bringing my cute little daughter! She’s so damn cute!” Clarke shook her head as the cheers came through the phone.

The light is too much. Lexa buries her head in the pillow. The wailing on the monitor jolts her awake so hard she feels like she is going to throw up. By the time she gets to the baby’s room, her wife is already there, changing the kicking, gurgling infant. “Look at that, that’s why you’re never going to drink, right honey?” Clarke cooed to the baby. “I think… I’m dying,” Lexa gagged. “Mommy smells like an old bar trashcan, yes she does,” the doctor made the baby laugh after snapping the last button. “I’m sorry.” “I think this is punishment enough.” “I’m so sorry,” Lexa followed, sniffing herself and acknowledging the need for a long, long shower. “Here, drink this. You’ll feel better,” Clarke offered, balancing the toddler on her hip.

The weather grew warmer, and Clarke was grateful for lunch breaks with her girls. Lunch became a few moments spent in the park as the sun warmed the grass and the toddler chased ducks in the wobbly way she was known to walk. “Remember the night we met?” Lexa asked, grinning and watching her daughter giggle. “A million years ago,” Clarke shook her head, resting her head on her wife’s shoulder. “Did you ever think we’d end up here?” “Yeah,” the doctor nodded. And as they gathered their things, and Lexa shouldered the baby, letting her grab her chin for support, her wife kissed her, a little longer than most others. “I’ll see you later.”
78. Music streamed through the hall and the rest of the hotel ballroom murmured with conversations. “Did I mention you look… ravishing? Beautiful? I can't believe this foxy body is the mother of my child, good?” Lexa whispered, hand on Clarke’s back as she directs her through the crowd. “Keep talking, Woods. You might get lucky tonight.” “Can I hold your hand?” Lexa smiled. “We've been married almost five years, you still have to ask?” Clarke rolled her eyes. “I still want to be chivalrous.”

79. “Then he just coded,” Clarke complained, flopping down by the counter, “And now I’m late and I missed seeing Emmy at all today. I didn’t see my daughter at all,” the doctor sighed as Lexa finished making her a plate. “I did the dishes,” Lexa offered. “There’s something.”

80. The restaurant was full, was alive and fancy. The sitter could stay until midnight and Lexa planned on using the entirety of it. “After you,” she murmured, guiding her wife to their reservation.

81. “The blue one,” Lexa nods, helping her daughter put pieces of a puzzle back together. The little thing in her lap took to banging the pieces together, unhelpful and cheerful. “This one?” Clarke appeared again, clad in that dress that made Lexa’s eyes get bigger. “Yeah, yeah, that one,” she nodded after swallowing roughly. “It brings out your eyes.”

82. “I made extra dinners,” Clarke reminded her as she moved through the “Don’t worry about me,” Lexa sighed. remaining still, “I can handle two days alone with the kid.” “I know, oh, I know you can, honey,” Clarke promised, “I just… you know. Better safe than sorry.” “Go see your parents. They need you. We’ll be fine.” “Okay.” “Don’t worry about us,” Lexa tried again. “Well that’s impossible. You’re my favorite people.”

83. “It’s just… weird,” Clarke whispered, sneaking through her old home. Her parents were still at the hospital and she simply waited to feel the tired she knew was coming. “Are you okay?” Lexa worries, folding another shirt on their big empty bed. “How’s my girls? Just tell me good things I’m missing.” “Well, we had s’gettis and bath time.” “The pictures help. I miss you guys.” “It’s been a day. Don’t worry about us, babe.” “I just miss you guys.” “Get some rest. Things will be better in the morning.” “I know. I’m going to try,” the doctor decided. “Call me if you need anything.” “I love you.” “I love you too.”

84. The airport was full of travellers despite how old it was. “Look, there’s mommy,” Lexa whispered to the toddler walking beside her. “Baby!” Clarke grinned as the little feet stomped towards her, squealing happily before getting scooped up and squeezed. “Hey,” Lexa smiled as she reached her upset wife. “I’m so glad you’re here,” the doctor sighed. “I’m so sorry, Clarke, for this… loss.” Lexa slipped her arm around her wife’s shoulder, held her head and hugged her tightly, careful not to squish their daughter.

85. As busy as the old house was with mourners, it stayed mostly quiet until the giggles of the baby could be heard. Passed from grieving relative to grieving relative, Abby clung to her when she got her finally, allowing Lexa the chance to slip away upstairs to find her wife. “I’m fine,” Clarke insisted, wiping her cheek quickly before looking over her shoulder at the sound of the door opening. “You don’t have to be. It’s just me.” “I’m fine, Lex,” the doctor insisted as her wife took a seat on the edge of the bed. “He was, without a doubt, one of my favorite people on the planet,” Lexa promised, putting her arm around her wife, “and I think I loved him so much because he loved you and I loved you and we shared that pride and love and concern for you.” “I’m fine.” “I know,” Lexa nodded as Clarke buried her head in Lexa’s shirt, tears streaming. “I’ll still be right here when you’re ready,” Lexa promised.

86. “Come on, let’s go take a nap,” Clarke yawns, walking into the living room, “I’m exhausted.” “Come here,” Lexa smiles from the couch, eventually pulling her wife on top of her. “There is
enough room for both of us.” “We have a bed, you know.” “Hush. Sleep on top of me. I’ll rub your back.” “You want to watch the game that badly?” “I love you.”

87. Late is a state in which Clarke always finds herself, especially when she is meeting after work. There is always something that keeps her longer than expected, primarily on days that she has somewhere to be. The crowd is huge around the bar and Clarke smiles and hugs Lexa’s colleagues that she knows before finding the one she wants. “Hey, I’m sorry,” Clarke huffs, finally reaching her wife. “I’m just glad you made it. I saved you a seat,” Lexa murmurs, kissing her quietly.


89. The dishes are done. The kid is asleep. The house is quiet and Lexa is stillworking on the stack of papers spread out on the coffee table. “Close your eyes and hold out your hands,” Clarke grins approaching with something behind her back. “Not now, babe. I’m swamped. I’m supposed to have these things in by tomorrow and they’re illegible.” “Come on. It’ll just take a minute.” She is weak against that, that certain pout, and begrudgingly, Lexa agrees. When she opens her eyes, she is confused at first, and Clarke can’t stop smiling. “I wanted to think of a better way to do it. But I can’t wait. I went to the doctor’s last week…” “But we only… it took so much longer last time. Just… It’s been one…” Lexa stared at the little hat in her hand, aghast and surprised, “time.” “Surprise.” “You’re…” Lexa furrowed and looked back at her wife. “Six weeks.” “Come here,” her wife stands up and hugs her tightly, kissing her cheeks and refusing to let go. “You’re happy?” the doctor smiles, clutching her wife’s neck. “Clarke, I am so happy. Are you kidding me? I love you I love you I love you.” “I’m so glad. I was nervous.” “Why would you be nervous?” “We’ve been so busy,” Clarke shook her head, Lexa’s arms still around her. “I’m never too busy for this. You should know that, Griffin.” “It’s kind of soon.” “It’ll be a three year difference between them. Holy crap. I have to… push back this presentation. And let’s see. Seven months will be midterms, but I can-” “Lex, don’t freak out.” Clarke holds her wife’s cheeks to still her. “I’m not. I’m not,” she nods, smiling wildly. “I love you so much,” she says, hugging the doctor again.

90. “You don’t have to do that,” Clarke admonishes gently, “I can carry my own box.” “It’s not heavy. I’m stronger than I look,” Lexa huffs, “How much farther to your new office?” “Just down the hall,” Clarke smiles to herself at her valiant mover. “Fancy new professor, you’d think you’d hire your own movers.” “Says the volunteer.” Halfway down the hall, Clarke pinches her wife’s butt before opening the new door and rubbing her protruding stomach.

91. Swaddled and sweet and yawning, the baby settles in her mother’s arms. “Look at her,” Lexa whispers, covering every inch of the new baby’s face. “You do good work, Griffin.” “Well, what do you want us to do now?” Clarke grins. “Develop a formula to keep them this small.”

92. “Hey, doc,” Lexa shouldered the phone and balanced a toddler on her hip while the other ran ahead at the park. “Hey, is everything okay?” Clarke looked up from her desk. “So we decided on pizza for dinner.” “Did we?” she smiled. “Yes. But from that place on Sixth.” “I’ll pick it up after work.” “Yay! Mommy’s bringing pizza!” Lexa cheered as her wife shook her head on the other line.

93. The charity ball is gowns and tuxedos, doctors and donors and the who’s who of the city. Lexa finds her wife in the crowd after getting a drink at the bar. Beautiful as ever, Lexa grins to herself when she finds her laughing with someone she recognizes from a faculty meeting. “Excuse me,” Lexa nods her greeting. “Can I have this dance?”

94. “We have to be at soccer at nine tomorrow,” Clarke yawned. “One more chapter,” Lexa
murmurs without looking up. Clarke kisses her temple and slides into bed.

95. “Oh goodness,” Lexa groaned, coughing as she rolled over in bed. “You sound worse than yesterday,” Clarke ran her hand over her wife’s chest, then cheeks, then forehead. “You’re warm.” “I’m fine.” “You’re staying home.” “I have to-” “You’re staying in bed.”

96. The snow blows through the street, kicking up dusting and piling it on cars. “I can’t find my hat,” Clarke complains, fully outfitted and ready for her trek in the snow. “Take mine,” her wife calls from the kitchen.

97. “Don’t do that,” Clarke complains. “I’m trying to understand,” Lexa sighs. “I feel like I can’t tell you anything anymore,” the doctor leans against the counter of the kitchen. “Whoa. No. Hey,” Lexa tries after being paralyzed for just a moment at the confession. She pulls her wife’s elbow until she’s facing her, though she can’t bring herself to lift her head. Lexa tilts her chin. “You can tell me anything.” “I know… it’s just. Hard sometimes.” “No. Anything. You have to know that.”

98. Clarke adds a flower to the display while the kids scramble to find the presents after a rather interesting foray into cooking. The pancakes are odd shaped, but edible, the juice, extra pulpy and fresh squeezed. “Where is everyone?” Lexa trudges in, still stretching. “Close your eyes, it’s supposed to be a surprise!” Clarke warns. “This looks…” Lexa stares despite the warning. Clarke hugs her, kissing her cheek. “Happy Mother’s day. You always surprise me, but it’s your turn. You’re important too.”

99. “Did you ever think we’d be here?” Lexa smiles despite how dark it is. She kisses her wife’s shoulder. “Don’t cry tomorrow,” Clarke reminds her. “You’re the crier.” “Um, no. That’s you.” “Shut it, Griffin.” “Make me, Woods.”

100. “I love you,” Clarke kisses her wife goodnight.
“You’re quiet,” Abby mentions, looking over at her daughter. “Can you put your phone down for one meal?”

“Sheh?”

“Clarke, you’re home for a week, I’m sure the world can manage without you.”

With another quick look at her phone, Clarke tries to hide the red in her cheeks and focus on the conversation and dinner. When she feels it vibrate in her pocket, she clears her throat and wants nothing more than to respond, though her mother’s eyes let her know she’d lose a hand if that happened.

*Come to bed. I miss you.*

Clarke grins and settles into her own bed across the country. It’d been the same one she’d had since she was a kid, and the familiarity of it always surprised her. She’d forget how it felt, until she was in it and then it was as if she’d never left. And as much as she misses her girlfriend, she is not opposed to the relief that comes with this tiny bit of nostalgia.

*my mom is dragging me to work tomorrow. I’m exhausted.*

See, if you were here, I’d keep you in bed all day.

*Without a doubt.*

*What would we do? Movies and pizza?*

*In the quiet of the old house, the walls shift and groan in the familiar kind of way in the winter winds. She pulls the old quilt higher around her shoulders and burrows into it.*

*I think my mouth could be a little busy for a movie and I’m hungry for something else…*

*Oh?*

*I wish you were here. I’m naked in our bed and its empty.*

Naked, you say? Prove it. Unsure of where that came from, Clarke anxiously waits for the ... to appear and is even more excited when an image pops up a minute later. Clarke swallows hard as she sees hips peaking beneath familiar sheets, naked ribs and goodness… more. Wow. I... why haven’t we done this before?
I don’t know. You’ve never asked.

That’s all I have to do?

Anything for you.

Anything?

Yeah.

Are we…?

I’m trying…

Oh! Yeah. Let’s do this.

Well now it’s kind of weird.

No no. Keep going. Tell me what you would do to me if I was there. For a while the dots just blinked as Lexa typed. Clarke watched them disappear and reappear and go away again.

Ugh. I can’t.

With a sigh, Clarke called her girlfriend before she had an aneurysm.
Chapter Summary

Imagine Lexa wanting Clarke but being respectful of the boundaries she has set
Imagine Lexa having to stop herself from kissing Clarke
Imagine Lexa holding herself back with even innocent touches because she doesn’t trust herself
Imagine Lexa struggling against everything being a grounder has taught her, despite knowing that Clarke wants her too, because it’s Clarke and she deserves her respect more than anyone
Imagine Clarke finally telling Lexa that she’s ready
Imagine Lexa trying to treat her gently and carefully, to show her that this can be good and wonderful and a place without pain or violence
Imagine Clarke reassuring Lexa that she doesn’t have to hold back
Imagine Lexa breaking down after months of restraining herself and taking Clarke the way grounders do, holding her down, biting her neck, kissing her like they’re fighting and leaving marks all over her body
Imagine Clarke playing a game called ‘how much teasing can I get away with before Lexa bends me over the nearest table’

The trees were dancing in the breeze. Pirouetting and dipping, tangoes and waltzes celebrating everything that came in the spring. Every inch of the forest was shimmering, so that the entire world seemed to be in motion. To Lexa, it was all just fuzzy edges and blurring backdrop.

Climbing through the rocks at the base of the waterfall towards the shore was a familiar head of straw blonde hair, tossing smiles over her shoulders to those following the fearless leader like she had an unlimited capacity for them in her being, slipping and hopping over mossy ledges and high rocks like she was born to move like raindrops, thrumming against surfaces for just a moment and bouncing and drifting to another an instant later.

Her horse lifted and dipped his head a few times, shaking against the flies and Lexa’s hand on his mane. She pulled on the ropes and yanked him slightly, away from the trail that slithered along the lake on her way to Tondc. She relegated herself to spend more time there, away from the Sky People’s camp, wary of the boundaries established and unfamiliar to her.

Laughter swam across the lake in mighty breast strokes. Splashes and hisses in the cold and premature summer celebration echoed along the cavernous edge of the mountain. Lexa simply watched for a moment while her generals readied themselves a few dozen yards back at the gate.

Many times, she spent time simply watching, unnoticed, unbothered, unintrusively, the moments Clarke sought to avoid. She listened to her talking with her mother and with Marcus when they were all together, and Lexa nodded, tightlipped and stoic. She watched her hands moved when she explained something intricate to her mechanic. Lexa simply stayed away and had moments like this, in which Clarke occasionally threw her a smile, on better days, even looked at her as if she wanted to say something, but never did.

“We are ready,” Indra approached tentatively as Lexa turned quickly and nodded.
“Let’s go then,” the leader nodded, following towards the waiting group. She looked once more at Clarke and allowed herself to be bothered the entire way back with the word yet.

The smell of the fire radiated its warmth along the summer sky as tiny embers escaped and tried their best to become stars, so that even the sky itself seemed to descend and fill up the spaces not filled with the shadows and silhouettes of the might, lush sentinels.

The phenomena repeated itself through the camp, clusters of people spending time together, weaving tales and playing games and debating facts of facts of facts. Clarke sipped on her terrible wine from the fruit from a southern clan, given as gifts just a few weeks ago. She held it to her lips and watched the fire, watched Monty and Jasper and their show rage through the flames as everyone laughed and someone interrupted to everyone’s amusement.

There was even a hint of a chuckle from the warrior beside her, though when she turned her head, she saw only the phantom of a smile on those lips. The wine made her stare for longer than polite at those lips, made her mind wonder a bit longer on those lips. For just a moment, an instant, a feather of a tick on a clock, she understood how centuries of humanity existed to write and taste and be consumed by lips like those.

“Is this how you normally spent your nights before we crashed in your backyard?” Clarke asked, curious and distracted by the sliver of grin. She felt Lexa’s eyes when they turned to her, grey and cloudy things, big and eager and untranslatable, unreadable. Clarke felt like they were constantly at war, illustrating a constant need to scream and whisper.

“We have been known to laugh and enjoy ourselves, Clarke of the Sky People,” Lexa nodded, taking a drink as well. Her elbows nudged Clarke’s ribs as she moved with how close they sat, hidden by the galaxy producing fire and the crowd.

“I can honestly say that I never imagined a night like tonight when I was up there,” Clarke confessed, though that could be said about any night she’d spent on the ground, as routine as they began to feel.

“And what were you expecting?” Lexa raised her eyebrows and leaned closer. Clarke could feel the amusement in her words. She felt her breath against her shoulder and caught herself staring at her lips, those lips, which entire songs and novels and wars were sung and written and fought to know.

“Not you,” Clarke confessed.

Their interactions had been minimal since the siege, since the victory, since the not yet, and Clarke regretted every part of that. But she watched her, saw the leader, listened to her, unwittingly sought her out, found reasons to ask her questions, made up situations to seek her council, received her whenever she returned. And that was all she got, for now.

“Your sky does not have anything like me?” Lexa leaned closer. She felt her throat grow tight and her fingers itch to touch Clarke, anywhere, for even just a moment. Her eyes scanned every inch of her, so close and there, right there, just there.

“Not even a little bit,” Clarke promised. They had been whispering without noticing it, and the world did not care to invade, but instead grew louder and more filled with noise.

It was when she licked her lips that Lexa knew that she had to kiss her, had to taste her again, had to feel her lips once more, had to, and she could not even fathom the consequences of not. With the fire-scorched stars fleeing the earth and the sky-borne embers mingling between the trees, with those
eyes that looked like night felt, and those lips that kept her awake at night, Lexa saw no alternative.

She felt Clarke’s nose against her cheek, her forehead against her forehead, her lips within an inch, she tasted her inhalation, and it lasted for centuries, of that she was certain, before it was gone in a blink and she pulled her head away and looked at the glass in her hands.

Clarke felt the coal in her cheeks glowing in the darkness as her head dropped slightly and she managed a hazy sigh and sad smile as she looked at the leader who refused to meet her eyes.

All the while, Lexa was stuck wondering if she had ever done anything more difficult than try to be worthy of Clarke.

The feeling of a summer sun is easily forgotten in winter, and despite her best efforts, Lexa could do nothing to remember it. As it beat itself tired against the world, against the tips of trees and face of the lake, and the slope of their shoulders, the summer sun would be forgotten at the first cold snap. Lexa memorized it on her face as she watched Clarke swing her fist and move the blade between her hands once again, fumbling once more.

“It’s impossible,” she complained as Octavia shook her head and smiled, not enjoying the duty of being a practice dummy as much as she had expected.

“It’s your eyes,” Lexa chided, stepping into the ring. She nudged her head and dismissed the warrior to her own work. She picked up a practice sword and felt the weight before challenging the cloudling. “I can see your next move in them.”

“Well I don’t know how to make them stop that,” Clarke shook her head and ran a dirty arm against her sweaty forehead. Lexa nodded and watched the shirt cling to her ribs, perused the sliver of skin on her hips, the tan of her shoulders before looking away and nodding once more.

“You have to trust yourself to move where you want without looking in that direction,” Lexa tried. “You are too much in the head.”

“This is hard,” Clarke tried.

“Because the idea is that the loser dies,” Lexa furrowed her brow. “Of course it is difficult.”

“You’re an unfair opponent,” Clarke tried, watching the leader test the balance of the wood, flick it a few times before getting ready.

“Do you not wish to learn?” Lexa taunted. “Hold it like this,” she gestured to the blade. It feels uncomfortable, but it helps.“

She was not sure how, but she found herself adjusting Clarke’s elbow and hand, eyes dancing at the contact.

"And you want me to attack you? I should warn you that I’ve been holding back. I am much better than advertised.”

“Yes, please attack me,” Lexa took a few steps back.

It was over before it started, as she moved and dodged and tapped Clarke’s knee, sending her to the ground.

“The eyes?” Clarke asked, grinning from the ground.
“Yes,” Lexa nodded, holding a hand out to her.

When she pulled up the dirty blonde, Lexa stood close, accidentally, their proximity magnified in the heat. Clarke smiled at her, face smeared with sweat and dirt and Lexa took it all in greedily. She pushed the hair from her face, dragging her fingertips along Clarke’s ear, down her jaw before letting it drop quickly. The smile faded from Clarke’s lips as she took a step back and picked up the blade once more.

“So should I just close them then?” she asked, clearing her throat.

“That might be more helpful,” Lexa sighed.

Somehow she made Clarke laugh, though she could not have figured out for the life of her how her words did that. But it was a mighty thing that felt like jumping into the lake on a hot afternoon, it danced, out of place and oblivious, in the arena they used to train. It knocked Lexa out.

So much so, that she found herself on her back with Clarke standing atop her, eyes squinted and challenging, just a moment later.

The storms were rare, at least so far, though rain was always a welcomed relief. Thunder bubbled up like the growls from sleepy dogs as the day drudged forward, lightning flashed now and then, letting them track how far away the storm was, though it was less eager to make itself known, to appear. The rain came down steady, unrelenting and lackadaisical. And none of it was unfitting to the mood Clarke found her head currently occupying, despite her best intentions.

“I should have gone for the hunt,” she complained, tapping her pencil against the desk in the basement workshop.

“In this weather?” Raven ignored her complaining. They worked on their respective projects with a quiet understanding of not wanting to be communicative at all, though the mechanic could hear the gears in Clarke’s head grinding, out of tune and off tempo.

“Yeah,” Clarke sighed, looking through the small window and watching the dark clouds move around outside.

“So you weren’t ready,” Raven shrugged, turning her back and digging through a pile for a part. “You told her you were now.”

“More or less,” Clarke nodded, the tapping growing more agitated until she annoyed herself silent.

“I thought grounders were a bit more eager,” Raven observed. “At least that’s been my experience. I mean. Just ask Octavia. Lincoln was all over her from before they met.”

“Yeah,” the small leader nodded and huffed and fumed. “I would have thought… I don’t know. I just thought she’d be more excited, more… something.”

“What did she say?”

“Nothing at all,” Clarke shook her head, swivelling around in her chair. “She knows what I want, and I know she wants more. I’m ready, and she just… nothing.”

“Well, she hasn’t exactly behaved like the others very often,” Raven surmised, ratcheting something so that it echoed in their quiet. Clarke just nodded and returned to her work, still troubled and not as eager.
When she returned to her tent, not interested in dinner or the results from the hunt, she found a collection of yellow flowers tied with a small string sitting on her desk.

When the storms were gone and the days were long, Lexa found herself pulled to all corners of her land. It took more and more work to stretch the legs of her journeys to the land of the Sky People’s camp. But she found ways, and she spent long afternoons of dauntless clouds and sun exploring Clarke’s lips and words and sighs and smiles.

She was gluttonous and sinfully aware of how much effort it was taking to tear herself away every time it came time to leave, to pull herself from Clarke. It was not her natural way, to be so restricted, to be so considerate, to be so anticipatory. So when she felt her tongue and teeth and lips, she was constantly spending half of her time trying to pull away despite hands and nails and urges to stay.

“Now,” Clarke whispered as Lexa pulled away once more in the evening. Her hands were deep under Lexa’s shirt, her lips were deep into swollen and pink and glistening. Lexa gulped.

All there was, all that existed were eyes, pleading, large, soft eyes, like night wrapped in sky, looking up at her. Eyes were smiling at her as hands slipped from the warmth of her ribs and appeared on her cheeks, tracing the skin that was usually tinted black with war paint. Fingertips moved to her lips and glided along the planes there as Lexa tried to catch her breath and still her swirling thoughts.

But there were eyes. All there was, all that existed were eyes, doe-like, warm and heavy. They saw everything, or so they felt. Lexa thought Clarke could see all of her fears and secrets and regrets, right there, with eyes like that. She was more afraid she saw the thoughts that involved her lips and tongue. Those thoughts kept her up til dawn and kept her aching until well after breakfast. Those thoughts were etched into Lexa’s very being, the things she wanted, no needed, the things she died to do.

But there were eyes, blue things, deep blue, like the lake at dawn, like the sky at dusk, like a foreign, distant memory, kind of blue that looked up at her and whispered things like now.

These things scurried through her mind, jumped like a herd being chased by a pack of worries. These things tightened her very muscles and tore her in half. Lexa refused to be anything less in Clarke’s eyes than worthy, than better, than the best thing. Moments like this were what gods heaped upon man to break them apart. Lexa knew such things, intimately. She saw it in her eyes.

The world was a tragic, terrible place, at times. Days spilled forth like blood from wounds, and wounds spilled forth like blood from months. The entirety of civilization is built upon this premise of survival, itself a dangerous and inherently violent undertaking most do without much thought at all, but simply because there is no alternative. Blind and deaf, humanity ventures forth into the despair, eking out moments of hope, moments of life.

Of what she knew of the ground, violent times were king and ruled every minute of the day, though there were seconds that lasted years when smiles appeared and sunshine erupted and burst forth flowers and happiness that was infectious. Of what she measured upon the ground, pain and violence and rage existed threefold within all actions. But this, this was different.

“Please,” Clarke whispered, fingertips clinging to the small, soft hairs on the edge of Lexa’s neck. Her lips nudged Lexa’s with each letter in the word. She felt her breath.

Lexa simply searched her face, watched her eyes, and nodded that single nod, that consent, that give to whatever Clarke asked of her. I made Clarke’s lungs squeeze tightly.
She expected an barrage, a rampage, a relentless attack upon her lips. But none came. Calm as the sea before the hurricane landed, Lexa only kissed her, softly, mirroring the first time she kissed her many months ago. She slid her hand along her neck and she kissed her so discreetly, so singularly, that Clarke felt her eyelids flush and flutter under the heat of it. But it was slow, it was measured, it was methodical and calm and reminded her of summer breezes from the lake.

Lexa felt Clarke squirm beneath her, felt her fingers pulling on her clothes. But she was not rushed. She moved with purpose, she moved with absolute reverence and respect.

Sitting up slightly, she helped Clarke from her shirt and pulled her own. She pushed the hair from her eyes, rooted her fingers there, pushed their bodies together, and she kissed her again, dipping her tongue in the cistern, praying quiet frankly, for strength not to break her.

Clarke’s hands slid along her back, feeling and reading the grooves and ridges of scars and ink and muscles. Like rocks, the contours of Lexa’s shoulders strained against her own thoughts. Clarke read it all there.

But her hands slipped to Lexa’s hair as it covered her shoulders and her lips moved to her chest.

It was a blur, for Clarke, the soft, gentle swirling of tongue, the reverent hands all over her body, the tugging of pants, the licks, the kisses, the kisses everywhere, the worship she felt. The rough feel of the callouses of Lexa’s hands offput by the skimming they did.

Lexa did not stop, though she restrained herself. She felt as if she was tied, like her horse, and her own restraint was yanking the ropes, keeping her from sprinting wildly and bucking roughly and scaring Clarke.

It was an effort unheard of or endured by mortals, in her opinion. To have so much skin open, to have so much to touch and taste and claim, to hear those noises, the pleas, the assurances, the prayers on tips of tongues. She felt the weight of it upon her chest and she pulled back and she moved slowly and purposefully.

There were men who lit themselves of fire to protest the way the world once survived. Lexa finally understood such impulses at this alter.

And so she smouldered and made Clarke tremble, and herself felt exhausted, not for what she did, but for the burden of what she fought to keep hidden.

The days were short and Lexa felt the daylight fleeing quickly. Everything was happening quickly, and she felt how little control she really had over any of it at all.

For weeks she set herself on fire and bowed before Clarke, never pushed, never pulled, simply was, and burned out quickly, careful to adore her after it was done, after she was shaking and thankful. It was eating her up inside. The bits that burned away began to chip and the roaring in her lungs was nearly audible.

It was harder to control when Clarke’s fingers made her clench. It was more difficult when she had to steady her breath and kiss Clarke after that, to taste herself, to want more.

Clarke felt the restraint and was wary of it. She had heard stories of the prowess of the warriors, had heard testimonials from her friends about the brutality of being claimed. She felt is simmer in Lexa’s blood when she looked at her and nodded once. Clarke could see her lock it away, felt it drag itself along the bars of the cage of her ribs, felt it growl in the taut muscles of her back which never seemed relaxed or pliant anymore.
“It’s okay,” Clarke nodded, rubbing Lexa’s back, rubbing her shoulders, feeling her fingers making her hips move. “Take it,” Clarke kissed her roughly.

The words, the timbre of them, the tone, the need in them, it took hammers to the cage of her chest. Each movement became more difficult as Clarke’s tepid breath scalded her shoulders and her moans begged. Lexa strangled herself, strangled her scream resisted it all, struggling under this weight and this burden. But she just could not.

Clarke felt it retreat, felt the wild thing go back to sleep, disappointed and defeated once more as Lexa collapsed atop her after making her scream and bit her shoulders and claw at her back. Clarke could not find North, but she felt Lexa’s breathing, as if she’d sprinted around the entire world, as if she’d battled an entire army. Her muscles were still tight and rigid as Clarke squeezed her, hugged her closer, let her remain limp atop her after the exhaustive suppression.

As terrible as the battle had been, as hard fought as Clarke made it, Lexa smiled, relieved and exhausted into Clarke’s shoulder at her victory. She felt Clarke’s lips on her forehead and nodded just once to herself, safe again from hurting the precious thing in her arms.

The day was bright until a violent wind kicked up from the east. Black clouds, the deepest black the day had ever looked, roared and slid into the sky as the trees blew themselves over and bent at extreme angles.

The storm raged in the night and left time for little else than staying dry.

It started quiet; it started still. She was not sure how it happened, exactly, but Lexa saw Clarke’s eyes, challenging and daring and she felt a roar with her chest. She felt her bit her neck and she groaned.

There was a wild thing inside of her that was starving. When she was a child she had learned that a skinny, mangy, starving wolf was a worse adversary than a fat, content bear. She was not sure how, but only when it was too late did she realize that the wild thing inside of her was starving, and Clarke smirked at her at told her to set it free.

“I don’t belong to you,” Clarke pulled away, continuing the argument that stemmed from earlier.

“You do,” Lexa nodded, promised, swore.

She kissed her roughly, pushing harder. Lexa’s hands held Clarke’s wrists. She left marks on her neck, on her shoulders, made her wince with her teeth. She ground her hips, rough and greedy and unfeeling. Clarke could not catch her breath at the onslaught. She had offered herself and coaxed this part of Lexa from its hiding place and she was eager to be claimed by it.

“Mine,” Lexa grabbed and squeezed and consumed. It was her moan that Clarke gave out, it was her gasp that she earned. She had not felt the need to exert power over Clarke, to push her, to keep her. But she had forgotten that she was in love with another wild thing. And wild things were fine, so long as they were tamed from time to time.

Clarke could do little to fight it, even if she wanted. Lexa pinned her, rode her thigh, teased her. She felt teeth marks on her shoulders, on her ribs, on the skin of her chest, on her hips. She felt bruises, purple and angry on her skin, on her thighs. She wanted to move her hips against Lexa’s tongue, against her fingers, but she was stopped, she was held, she was ordered.

And when she chanced a look, she saw Lexa’s eyes, dilated and full and dark, tempestuous as the sky outside, a tempest unto themselves.
“Mine,” Lexa informed her, making her back break and chest explode. Clarke just nodded and laid her head down, a delicious soreness soaking into her body.

There was a game, developed, that existed from time to time. Clarke perfect it. It was an unfair game for Lexa, because Clarke knew how to win every time, as the Commander was not a difficult mark to tease.

It started in the morning, with more skin on display than warranted, longer spent dragging the cloth along her skin before dressing, lingering kisses, sneaky hands, and above all else, deprivation.

After three days, Lexa was snarling at everyone. She was pacing and stalking about in a foul mood, antsy and jittery. Clarke could set her watch to it.

By the time Lexa made it to her tent, the sight of Clarke leaning over her table and map made her swallow a growl.

“Hey, I was thinking of taking a recon trip to the mountain,” Clarke tossed over her shoulder. There were legs on display. There was an old shirt and messy hair and a freshly washed Clarke ready for bed.

“You should take guards,” Lexa insisted, approaching and removing the last vestments of her armour. She was wary of this trap.

“Don’t worry, I’ll be fine,” Clarke smiled and ignored her.

“I know what you are doing,” Lexa insisted, though it did nothing to remove that mood that hovered on her brow.

“Yeah?” Clarke quirked her eyebrow and turned to her.

“I am not weak,” Lexa insisted.

That was the challenge, the gauntlet that was thrown down. Lexa watched Clarke stand and she swallowed.

“I know you’re not,” Clarke nodded, running her hands along Lexa’s tired shoulders. “But neither am I.”

“Just ask for it,” Lexa bore down into her. Her hands moved to the desk, trapping her between herself and the wood of it.

“Where’s the fun in that?” Clarke grinned, fingers slipping up into Lexa’s hair. Lexa leaned into Clarke, pressed her hips against her hips. “Seems we are at a stalemate then.”

“Seems,” Lexa nodded. Clarke loved her like this. Eyes on fire, face and muscles antsy, flinching, twitching, ready to attack and pounce and decimate. It was the closest she could ever get to playing with fire, like having a thundercloud between her palms.

She knew how to win though, and Clarke was ready for it. It was simple and cost her nothing, because in the end she won.

Bashful and stubborn, Clarke moved her lips closer to Lexa’s ear. She held her neck closer, slid her body against the strong, stoic front.

“Please?” Clarke whispered. She wrapped her arms around Lexa’s neck, dragged her nose along her
jaw, kissed her chin. She felt Lexa inhale and knew she won.

She did not get an answer in words. She got crushed against the table. She got smearing lips and strong hands on her hips.

It happened after a small smile from Lexa and half-lidded eyes caught Clarke off guard. She was distracted for an instant, and found herself on the table.

Lexa nudged Clarke’s legs apart with her toes. She ran her fingers up her thigh.

The table was forever ruined in Clarke’s imagination. The maps were ruined literally, torn top pieces as Clarke bit her forearm and struggled against Lexa’s fingers.

Not long enough later, Lexa was victorious, surveying the relaxed and exhausted girl on the table. She removed her hand and kissed the bite marks and bruises on her shoulder. Lexa wrapped her arms around Clarke’s waist and laid atop her, digging her nose into her spine. Clarke just breathed and tried to remember how her legs worked.
Clothes

Chapter Summary

Can I have a little fic where Clarke always steals Lexa’s clothes and Lexa doesn’t really mind because Clarke always kisses her to shut her up about it when she asks, but then Clarke steals Lexa’s favorite SnapBack and Lexa will be damned if she gets away with that one. (I absolutely adore your writing, by the way)

Sweatshirt

“Is that… is that mine?”

“What?”

“I haven’t seen many lawyers sporting a Mets sweatshirt lately,” Lexa leaned against the counter and surveyed the comfy girl across from her in the quiet of the shop. “Even their own lawyers root for the Yankees.”

“Oh, yeah, uh,” Clarke swallowed and looked down to verify that she was, in fact, wearing a stolen piece of clothing.

The buzzing from a machine in the back began again, and the ding of the storefront made the lawyer even more antsy as she pushed up a large sleeve.

To be honest, it was Lexa’s favorite sweatshirt, though she rarely wore it. It was always just there though, on some chair or hook or edge of something, tugged on during days spent at home when there was a chill that the radiator didn’t quite beat. Clarke had to know that it didn’t get much use despite the evidence of wear and tear from year of hard loving.

It wasn’t an unwelcome sight at all, though it did amuse the artist to no ends, because her girlfriend was overly polite and not prone to being impetuous. There was something about Clarke in, not just Lexa’s favorite team’s colors, but in her clothes, that was something she oddly wanted more of, despite not knowing how to say it.

“You stole from my apartment after I made you coffee and toast?” Lexa teased.

“It was cold and I forgot my coat,” Clarke whined. “It’s not like you even noticed.”

“What? How long have you had it?”

“A few… weeks? Shut up. I like it. It’s good to read in. Just… hush.”

“You steal my favorite sweatshirt and then tell me to shut up?” she smirked, crossing her arms.

“You’ve gotten brash, Congress.”

“I’m going to go back up to my place now,” the lawyer rolled her eyes. “And this is mine. Deal with it.”

“Wait, wha–”
The question was cut off with a quick kiss that left her marginally dazed.

“I’m making grilled cheese."

“I want that back, you know?” Lexa called after her girlfriend who just shrugged as she pushed her way through the door.

Only having spent a few nights at Lexa’s, the nerve to steal clothes was already apparent, and Lexa was ready for this war.

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**Boxers**

The apartment above the flower shop wasn’t big, and it wasn’t particularly nice or even that much cleaner, but it sure was closer, and the sheets were much softer, and the company was furrier and persistent and liked belly rubs.

Clarke liked that Lexa fit into her apartment in so many ways. She didn’t want to get too used to it, and so they had this quiet truce in which sleepovers were held to a minimum. But still, times existed when things just fit, and Lexa spent the night.

It only made Clarke fall harder, despite her best intentions to avoid any such thing.

Library book propped in front of her face, big glasses in their spot on her nose, cat curled lovingly against her side, Lexa fit in the bed, in the bedroom. While the fan hummed in the window, ushering forth fresh noises and smells from the world outside in the dark, Clarke stood there after washing her face and she brushed her teeth and gazed.

Freshly sexed, Lexa didn’t put on clothes after she splashed water on her face and hopped back in bed while Clarke dutifully completed her nightly routine despite the tired in her bones and that jelly-like feeling that came with a Lexa-aided orgasm. Instead, a naked girl, with sheets hanging just above her bellybutton, picked up a book and furrowed as she held an arm above her head and played with her own hair, interpreting the words as best she could.

It was a sight people would kill for, Clarke decided as she meandered back into the bathroom to rinse her mouth and hurry to join the pair in her bed.

“Hey, wait,” Lexa lowered her book after exchanging a smile with her girlfriend.

Clarke blew out a candle and adjusted a curtain as she made her way around the bed toward her side. Her side. Her. Side. A fact she didn’t think about, despite yelling it in her gut nonstop.

“Aren’t those mine?”

“What?”

“Those are my boxers. I sleep in those. I thought I lost them at the laundromat,” she accused as she sat up slightly in bed, disturbing the cat who raised his head in disgust before burrowing deeper. “My sister got me those for Christmas two years ago.”

“Oh, these?” Clarke played dumb, looking down as if she’d never seen them before, despite being attached to her person. “Yeah, I don’t know. I found them.”

“In my apartment?”
“Um, you know. Who knows, right?”

“Clarke… I’ve seriously been looking all over, and you had them the whole time?”

“I’m sorry,” she sassed, hands on hips, “I didn’t know that these ‘Hot Stuff’ boxers with a bunch of hearts on them were that big of a deal.”

“I mean, they are,” Lexa insisted. “I sleep in them. They’re so comfy.”

“I know. That’s why I stole them,” Clarke countered. “But if you want them back…”

Hands moved to her hips once more as she slowly pulled them down. She didn’t make it three inches before she was stopped.

“No, I mean. I’m just saying. You can ask before you thieve. So I don’t have to dig through the nasty lost and found at the laundromat,” Lexa promised.

“You don’t want me to take them off?”

“I’ll take them off of you myself, but this view isn’t terrible,” she shrugged.

Clarke smirked to herself with the victory before turning off one lamp, so that the room was dim save for Lexa’s side. She crawled into the bed, straddling her girlfriend’s lap, making Wagner hop off with a meow of complaint.

Carefully, she pulled Lexa’s glasses off and placed them atop the already closed and forgotten library book.

“Are you really mad that I stole your cute and embarrassing boxers?”

“Yes,” she faux grumped.

Clarke leaned forward and kissed her softly, all new and minty fresh, until she had her in the palm of her hand.

“Mine now,” her girlfriend purred, kissing her once again before reaching over and turning off the light.

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Jersey

“How did you even– You know what? I don’t want to know,” Lexa shook her head as she pushed off from the couch in her girlfriend’s apartment.

“I wanted to be ready for the game,” Clarke shook her head, looking down at the clothes she was wearing, as if surprised by her girlfriend’s attention. “It was in your closet.”

“Yeah, my closet.”

“That’s what I said.”

“My closet. My being the operative word there.”

“What’s mine is yours and what’s yours is mine.”

“Oh, is that how this works now? I’m new to this whole dating thing.”
“Don’t worry, I’ll train you soon enough.”

“Is that so?” Lexa shook her head and eyed the long legs on display below short shorts. She certainly wasn’t opposed to that outfit at all, but she did enjoy teasing Clarke, something that couldn’t happen enough.

“You don’t like it?” she asked innocently, knowing perfectly well what she was doing as Lexa adjusted her coordinated hat. Clarke toyed with the white jersey with the blue pinstripes and twisted slightly.

The tickets were a birthday present. The lace she was wearing underneath was to be opened in private, but she had a feeling Lexa was going to like it. The jersey was just a momentary whim because Clarke knew that Lexa wouldn’t notice.

“I was wondering where it was. I thought I left it back home,” she sulked. “You’re becoming a nuisance, Congress.”

“You like me anyway,” she ignored the fake complaint and leaned forward to kiss her girlfriend before tugging her toward the door.

“My wardrobe doesn’t,” she snorted.

Socks

Even with the rain and the head cold, Lexa knew that her girlfriend was unstoppable and still went to work. Even though it was Friday, and her boss would never accuse her of ditching for a long weekend. Even though she had perfect attendance in everything she did since the age of six.

And so, the normal stop at the shop was forgotten, and Lexa knew exactly why– Clarke was clearly dying from a contagious disease made worse by working through it.

Though she was unsure of exactly what to do in the situation, she persisted as she finished up with her final client of the night, leaving Bellamy to close up on his own whenever he finished.

The grey of early evening glowed behind the thick clouds that hung low on the streets, and still, Lexa made her way to the corner store and picked up a few things before returning the the apartment beside her shop.

Carefully, she buzzed and balanced the bags in her arms until she was let in without a question of who was there.

The cat met her at the top of the steps, weaving between her feet, rubbing against her shin as she fumbled and placed the bags on the kitchen table before searching for the sickly thing.

Despite the quiet, she followed the cat toward the bedroom, weaving her way past Clarke’s nice work clothes strewn across the floor. It was a pitiful sight, but wrapped up in the huge duvet like a burrito, Clarke burrowed and chattered her teeth against the non-existent cold as the chill wracked her body.

“How are you feeling, Congress?” Lexa tried, making a face at the display.

“You shouldn’t come in. I’ll get you sick,” a stuffy voice warned, followed by a ridiculous cough that lasted a bit too long to be funny.
“I’ll risk it. I brought you some stuff. How long have you been home?”

“Since three. I left work early.”

“You did?” Lexa balked, shock apparent. “Oh my goodness, and the entire judicial system didn’t fall down around us?”

“Shut up,” the pile of blankets grunted and sneezed before letting out a groan.

“Alright, easy. Why don’t I run you a shower, loosen things up a big, and then we’ll take some meds and have some hot soup.”

“I don’t want to move.”

“You have to. Go sweat it out a bit.”

“I don’t wanna.”

“Clarke.”

“Let me die right here.”

“Glad you’re not too dramatic,” Lexa rolled her eyes before moving to the bathroom.

It took a little bit of needling to get the sick girl out of bed, but Lexa persisted because it was what her mother did when she was sick, and she assumed those kinds of things were just universal enough to help. While Clarke showered, she went to work straightening up the bed, putting meds on the nightstand, and making a can of soup to at least loosen up the congested chest.

The pile of tissues on the floor went in the trash. The old clothes were tossed in the bin. And by the time Clarke finally emerged, with a little more color on her cheeks, the apartment was cleaner and warmer.

“Thank you,” she mumbled, shuffling into the kitchen.

“I just brought over soup,” Lexa smiled and kissed her forehead before placing the back of her palm there to test the temperature.

A nose sniffed against her shoulder before breathing a warm breath against her shirt.

“I don’t feel good.”

“I know, babe. Let’s have some soup and get into bed.”

“You’re going to get sick.”

“Good. You can take care of me then.”

Satisfied with curling up on the couch, Clarke accepted her bowl of soup before letting her legs drape over her girlfriend’s lap. For a while they just ate and watched some terrible movie before Lexa tugged a blanket and cast it across them.

“Hey, aren’t these…”

“Shh,” Clarke shook her head and burrowed deeper into the pillow.
“These are my winter socks.”

“These are my winter socks,” she corrected.

“What are you talking about? They’re wool and big and feel nice,” Lexa insisted, looking at the grey and blue knee-highs she often let droop on her feet on winter days she didn’t feel like leaving her apartment. “How did you–”

“I’m sick…” Clarke pouted, all innocent and with a blanket just beneath her chin. She coughed for good effect.

“Do I have any clothes left?”

“No.”

“Is that your plan all along?”

“Maybe…”

Mittens… & Scarf

There was snow on the ground. The streets were a slushy mess of black dirt and ice, while the sidewalks were a sludge of salt and puddles. But it was all still a bit beautiful, despite all else.

“I came to rescue you,” Lexa decided as she waited for Clarke to appear in the hall outside of her office. “Coffee break across the street for fifteen minutes.”

“I have to finish something today.”

“Please? I haven’t seen you all week,” she tried with a pout. “I’m trying to be charming.”

It was that exact smile, the mischievous one, the one that already smelled victory, that Clarke absolutely detested and loved all in equal measure and time. Though it was true she’d tried, Clarke knew she hadn’t made as much of an effort after being bogged down with work. And it was true that Lexa had been her usual, patient self. Fifteen minutes was welcomed.

“You’re too charming for your own good,” Clarke rolled her eyes and grabbed her coat. “If anyone looks for me, I went for coffee,” she explained to the secretary.

“The world will last without you for a moment,” her girlfriend promised.

It wasn’t until somewhere in the middle of a story about gerrymandering and legal ramifications of something proposed, that Lexa, in her half-listening state, kissed Clarke’s knuckles to be met with a familiar pair of mittens her mother made out of an old sweater.

Oblivious to her realization, Clarke kept chattering as Lexa sighed and shook her head before taking off the matching grey scarf her mother once knit for her.

“What’s this for?” Clarke cocked her head.

Lexa fell in love with her right there, with snowflakes in her hair and the red of the cold in her cheeks.

“Just cutting out the middleman,” she grinned, not understood and unperturbed.
Instead, she tugged the scarf and earned a kiss as they made it to the coffee shop.

“Smells just like you.”

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**Shirt**

“Look at this,” Lexa grinned over her beer as a sweaty girl approached from the south.

“I never would have expected it,” Bellamy agreed as the jogger sauntered over and finally took her headphones out.

The spring air was bursting. Every atom was buzzing with the pollen and litter of sunshine and murmurs of joy of the new season. Sitting in front of their shop after a mildly successful day, the owner and once-apprentice enjoyed the breeze and the taste of the evening upon it with a twelve-pack and homemade muffins courtesy of the runner.

“I didn’t know you worked at Jameson’s on 153rd,” Lexa cocked her head and pointed with her beer bottle at the tie-dye t-shirt she once had to wear when she barbacked after school for one of her siblings to make under-the-table money.

“Oh? You didn’t? Weird,” Clarke grinned, high on endorphins. She looked down at the shirt, owning it despite its stolen status. “Yeah, I got this working there.”

“How did you not meet Lex?” Bellamy furrowed, looking between the two of them. “She worked there before she moved here.”

Both girls stared at him and rolled their eyes.

“She stole it from me, you idiot,” Lexa finally clued him in. “I was mocking her natural predisposition to break the law and take things without asking, leaving me to search for things for weeks until she appears in them.”

“Oh, that makes more sense,” he nodded.

“Shut it, Woods,” Clarke taunted, picking up a fresh beer and tossing the cap on the table as she took a seat.

It was an urgent kind of kiss, a bossy one, if she could call a kiss something like that, but Lexa wasn’t too tied up in accurately labeling it, not with lips making her dizzy.

“Whatsoever you say, Congress,” she grinned, slightly numbed by the feeling of the world at the moment and lips attached to a mouth that sassy.

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**Hat**

“Alright, that’s it,” Lexa stood up as soon as her girlfriend approached.

Fresh from a trip home, still dripping with subway sweat and smell, Clarke grinned, expecting one of those patented Lexa displays where she was outlandish and embarrassing and perfectly adorable.

Clarke expected the rest of the sentence to go something like, ‘That’s it, no more. You can’t leave again.’ Or possibly even ‘I’m coming with you next time because it was such a boring weekend without you.’
And so she smiled widely, waiting for the dramatic girl she loved. No liked. The dramatic girl she liked, to kiss her hard and make her not feel so gross in her skin tainted with travel.

“Hello to you to,” she smirked.

“My hat?” Lexa balked, hands on hips. “My favorite hat. The one I wear every single day!”

“What?”

“Seriously, Clarke?”

“Seriously?” Clarke soured at the welcome, though she was almost amused by her girlfriend’s display.

To be fair, Lexa took it all in stride fairly well. Nothing was off limits. Clarke actually had to clean out her own drawers to steal more of her girlfriends because she just liked the feeling, liked the smell, liked that her girlfriend was around when she wasn’t. Plus, she loved the way Lexa would look at her right before she went into a completely made up argument about how it was annoying.

Secretly, Lexa loved seeing Clarke in her clothes, and the lawyer knew it.

“I draw the line at my favorite hat,” Lexa crossed her arms.

“Is that so?”

“It is.”

“That’s a shame, because this is my favorite hat now.”

“Clarke…” she whined, shoulders softening.

With a smile and a chaste kiss, Clarke tried to make her forget. She deepened it just as she was about to pull away, knitting her fingers into Lexa’s shirt, holding her breath and digging down as far as she could to make it a kiss she wouldn’t forget.

“You can have it back,” she promised. “You look too cute in it anyway.”

“What were we talking about?”
Chapter Summary

The revolutionist and the reporter sent to interview her.

On the busy corner, in the busy little converted storefront, the bell above the door rang almost nonstop with the constant opening and closing of the old front door. Telephones warbled in their cradles before being hastily answered in quiet voices. The general murmur and sounds of the office blended together until it was just a harmonious kind of hum with no real sound at all, melding itself to almost fill the large floor, going into every corner, never pressing too hard, but leaning against the walls and windows all the same.

Quietly, the reporter took it all in, careful to observe all that she could despite her disinterest in the topic at hand. She watched the handful of desks shoved into the old grocery store, saw the people moving about, eagerly writing on personal laptops or taking calls. Files were stacked and composed and the cabinets overflowing with manila. The secretary only looked up from time to time, sadly smiling in that sympathetic way they are known to do to illustrate that she truly had no control over her employer and to say that she would be back shortly, surely.

For Clarke, it was an almost welcomed break from her office that had, ever since her return from overseas, became nothing more than a company-appointed prison. She practically jumped at the chance to go out and actually do news work, to actually collect stories, even if it was nothing more than a puff piece about a neighborhood saint to fill pages. It was better than editing and crafting tweets and doing research. Every proposed story, every interesting thing happening in the world was nothing more than a tease to her, and so sitting in an office with no television or radio or need to check her phone was, indeed, an escape of some kind.

But waiting for an hour after her appointment time and the absolute crowd that ebbed and flowed through the offices, the fact that this is what her career had come to, it all quickly wore on Clarke, eliminating that relief at getting out of the office completely.

Absently, the reporter flipped through the notes she’d prepared, gazing through other articles and mentions of the woman she was tasked with interviewing, as well as the neighborhood she was apparently trying to save. From the picture attached, Clarke gathered that her subject was eager, was young, was naive, even maybe, though she’d built this storefront out of an old convenience store and into a low-income law practice. From the old black and white newspaper cutout, Clarke squinted and discerned what she could of her face, intrigued by the smirk that seemed to reside there.

“I’m so sorry,” a voice rang over the bell and the commotion, though soon the hive on the corner of Jefferson and Ninth came to life with renewed buzzing at her entrance. “I had to file an injunction at the courthouse and then traffic because—Well, you don’t really want to hear all of the excuses, but I can keep going.”

“I think you’ve hit my quota.” Clarke stood quickly, tucking her hair behind her ear before offering her hand to shake. “Clarke Griffin. It’s nice to meet you, Ms. Woods.”

“Lexa,” the lawyer smiled, unwinding her scarf after shaking hands. “I am sorry, about being late. It’s very unlike me.” The secretary cleared her throat and Clarke watched her smirk. “It’s almost
not like me. I’m working on it. This time, not my fault.”

“I have a few messages,” the secretary stood, interrupting the smiles happening between the two, stuck in the handshake and oddly surprised for no reason.

“After,” Lexa nodded, dropping her hand and hanging her coat and scarf on the rack. “I’ll be in with Ms. Griffin for the interview. Thanks, Anya.”

“Clarke,” the reporter offered, following and shouldering her bag to keep up with the quick steps weaving through the office to an almost hidden set of back steps.

“I didn’t want to be presumptuous.”

“It’s fine.”

“Can I get you anything? Coffee? Tea? A soda? Water?” Lexa hurriedly tried to straighten up her desk as best she could, motioning for the reporter to take a seat in her upstairs office.

“I’m fine.”

While she moved around, Clarke took her seat and simply watched, took in the office. The desk was large, was full of neatly stacked folders and a legal pad that seemed brimming with words. The old chair squeaked as Lexa took her seat and Clarke gazed out the window at the corner just outside and below them. The walls were covered in pictures, another had a calendar with intricate small writing on almost every date. The office, though, for all it was filled with, all the entrapment of hard work and dedication, gave little in terms of information about the occupants.

“It is really an honor to meet you,” Lexa began.

“I think that’s my line.” Clarke earned a small smile and nod.

“I haven’t done anything, but I’ve read all of your articles, and your pieces when you were abroad. I only agreed when I knew they were sending you.” There was a small blush there, but Clarke ignored it and smiled. “I was glad you weren’t hurt. And glad I get to read your words again.”

“That’s very kind of you-”

“That’s very kind of you-”

“I’m sorry, I’m just kind of starstruck. You were a prisoner, you were in a bombing, embedded with a unit in the jungles of Columbia, and rescued.”

“I didn’t,” Clarke smiled and shook her head, interrupting her resumé. “It’s really nothing. I just. I’m here and we can get started. I know you’re busy. I don’t want to keep you long.”

“I’m sorry. You’re just the most interesting person I’ve ever met, I think.”

“Says the women who,” Clarke flipped through her notebook, “Was arrested four times, and that’s not counting a sealed juvie record. Went to NYU and Columbia. And has since opened a law center while taking back her neighbourhood.”

“Are we on the record now?”

“Sure.”

“Well,” Lexa sighed and looked away. “I don’t really know what to say.”

“Why don’t you just tell me a little about what I summarized. How did you end up here?” Clarke
turned on her recorder and put it on the desk between them.

“What kind of story is it?”

“I’m not sure yet. I kind of have to form it by how this goes.”

“Am I allowed to ask you questions?”

“Sure, I guess.”

“Alright,” Lexa smiled. “We’ll trade then.”

“You know, I’ve interviewed actual military combatants who were easier to negotiate with than you. And wanted the attention.”

“I don’t think I need it, but Anya, you met her, she says it’s good for work and the neighbourhood, so. Here we are.”

“Alright, you go first then. Tell me the story of how you got here.”

“You really cut right down to it, huh?”

“Yes.”

“Well, I was born two blocks up at Memorial. Mom and Dad split before I could miss them. My grandmother and uncle raised me. Went to school, came back here. Worked for a year at the public defender’s office,” Lexa listed, counting off on her fingers. “All fairly boring.”

“What brought you back? I have here that you worked for Crane & Wiseman right out of school.”

“You’re thorough.”

“You’re not international drug smugglers, but I can do my homework.” Clarke cocked her head, almost challenging.

“I was there for three years.”

“And?”

“I quit.”

“Why?”

“Is this for the article?”

“No.”

“For you then?”

“Strictly.” For just a moment, Lexa paused and eyed the reporter warily, stern and flexing her jaw before taking a deep breath and relenting.

“Off record, Anya, my cousin, got into some stuff. Some illegal things here, and my quiet little slice of the city had been getting gobbled up, and so I came to help her. Now you.”

“Now me what?”
“Why do you have a death wish?”

“I don’t,” Clarke disagreed, sitting back in the chair and clicking her pen.

“Colombian drug lords, hostage, mortar fire, firefight, bombing—” Lexa listed with a smirk.

“Wrong place, right time” Clarke shrugged. “People need to know what is happening within humanity.”

“And yet you’ve never written about the murders and violence in your own city.”

“I find it intolerable.”

“Yeah?” Lexa furrowed.

“Any other group I have met are thoroughly oppressed by outside powers, by circumstance, by war. Here, we see the problem, we just refuse to fix it. I can write seventy in depth looks at money, violence, poverty, and no one cares. Out there, at least I can feel like I’m giving the voiceless some representation.”

“See, we are alike.”

“How?”

“That’s all I do, right here. Give a little voice to the voiceless.”

Between the two, and over the desk, both thought of what the other said, debated what they initially meant and they smiled, at an impasse and neutral ground. Lexa, still unsure of the interview, still wary of anyone knowing why she did what she did or even exalting it despite it being her job, felt better talking to someone who almost understood and would be fair. Clarke simply clicked her pen again and looked down after a moment to write something down.

“I think it’s my turn.”

“By all means.”

Tired as she felt, and busy as the little shop on the corner still was, Clarke nodded a hello to an Anya that was busy on the phone before weaving through and receiving welcome back’s from the few remaining lawyers. She smelled like an airplane and three weeks in Hong Kong, but still, she lugged her bag up the stairs to the little office she was almost coming to recognize.

The desk was still neat, still orderly and stacked. A new little picture frame sat there of the two of them at a photobooth on a second date, right before Clarke was given the alright to travel again. By the time her interview made the paper, Lexa had kissed and fallen from the reporter who was already gone to the next city.

Meandering around the empty desk, Clarke took a seat behind it, surveying the room and gazing at the clock on the wall.

“I thought you were getting better at this?” she smiled as the door to the office opened a few days later.

“I’m a work in progress,” Lexa entered swiftly, trying to hide how out of breath she was with sprinting across town and literally up the stairs.
“I’ve had this appointment scheduled for three weeks. And you’re still late.”

“Only by fifteen minutes.”

“I’ve seen entire protests with more punctuality than you.”

“How was Hong Kong? What’d you bring me?”

Lexa couldn’t help but smile as she moved around the desk, sitting on the edge near the new occupant of her chair.

“I’m not enough?”

“I mean.” While she shrugged, Clarke dug in her bag and placed an obnoxious snow globe on the desk. “That’s more like it.”

“It made me think of you.”

“How’s that?” Lexa chuckled, twisting the orb so that the flakes fell around the city inside.

“When I first came to interview you, I tried to get a feel for you, but this office is lacking in personality. So I thought I’d make it my mission to clutter it up.”

“Now noble of you. You know. For future reporters.”

“Exactly. So they know you have someone who fills up your desk with useless junk and thinks about you on the other side of the world.”

In just a move, Clarke tugged Lexa’s wrist until she was in her lap.

“How was it?” Lexa smiled, still shaking her globe. “No civil unrest?”

“Plenty.”

“Did you manage to go without another arrest?”

“Of course.”

“I missed you.”

Clarke leaned back slightly and felt Lexa’s hand on her cheek, felt her hand on her neck. Tired as she was, she was glad she skipped going home and kept her appointment.
1. Clarke looks hopeful and sad, and Lexa is unsure how someone can be both things. Hopeful despite sad. Hopeful and feeling silly for thinking such things. But she looks away and asks if they didn’t deserve more and Lexa is filled slightly with that hope, but moreso with this determination to prove Clarke correct in her hope. It is rare and it is needed. Lexa kisses her, surprises her, and kisses her and lets herself have a little hope, as foreign as it is. She feels Clarke pushed back and finally pull away and that is that.

2. There is a wrath to it, a betrayed subordination to the other half. Clarke gnashes her teeth and pulls her hair and bites her lip and walks away when the anger takes over. They are covered in blood and wounded all over. The Commander is uncertain if she should be hopeful or broken.

3. Lexa is afraid to kiss Clarke. She doesn’t deserve it, and she hasn’t been forgiven. Clarke kissed her, months after the battle, months after the anger had dulled and flared now at only small moments. It is soft and sad and weak, on her cheek.

4. It comes in a flurry after weeks of torture. Brave because of wine and indignant at being the receiving end of Clarke’s distrust, still. She holds Clarke’s cheeks and she kisses her and apologizes and looks in her eyes.

5. Her cheeks held tightly and Lexa’s eyes obscuring her entire view, Clarke swallows and is breathless after the kiss. She stares back at the worried, determined glance and knows this is her moment, to forgive or walk away because they can’t do this forever. It takes a moment, and Lexa’s hands fall, her head no longer locked into this space. Clarke kisses her back, for a long, long time.

6. Birds are chirping and there is a weight on her back as she tries to move. Clarke feels Lexa’s lips on her bare back and turns her head into the sheets, smiling.

7. Clarke digs her fingers into Lexa’s hair, eliciting a moan before she pulls away and finishes dressing.

8. A quick peck after everyone clears out after a meeting.

9. Her neck, Lexa realizes. Clarke’s neck is the key to her begging.

10. “Stay,” Lexa whispers, watching Clarke dress. The blonde chuckles and shakes her head, pulling up her pants. She slips on her shirt while Lexa lazes, naked and barely covered by sheets. Clarke moves to leave but returns and kisses Lexa until she is pulled back into the bed with a laugh and growling Commander.

11. Sore and satisfied, Clarke smiles as Lexa snores softly. She hasn’t expected the Commander to be so human. In the night she watches her in the dark, her face relaxed and unobtrusively beautiful. She pushes stray hair from her forehead and feels Lexa’s arm wrap and pull tighter around her ribs. She is insatiable and funny, things no one else except for Clarke knows, and there is a kind of pride she has for being the keeper of that knowledge. Clarke allows herself a moment to close her eyes and think that this is going to be something before slipping out of Lexa’s arms. Quietly she pulls on her clothes yet again and watches the candlelight dance along the contours of the leader’s back. Faint lines were appearing in the dim light, streaks of pink and dots of tiny red pricks from Clarke’s nails appeared. Clarke likes her, she knew that, despite how much she wants to fight it. She likes her like this, innocent and human as opposed to how mythical and regal she was when she was outside of the bed. Refusing to think of it any longer, Clarke leans over and kisses her hair, smoothing it once more.
before leaving.

12. On Clarke’s cheek with apologetic eyes for whatever she did to make her leave in the middle of the night. Lexa lets her lips linger before dropping her hand and walking away.

13. The first time she drinks the grounder’s distilled gin, she coughs until her chest hurts. Woozy and giddy, Clarke kisses Lexa, sloppy and hungry in the dark while everyone ignores them by the fire.

14. Lexa holds Clarke’s hand and kisses her knuckle, earning a blush.

15. When she readies to leave for Polis, Lexa sighs and saddles her horse. Never before has she been less eager to leave her small home and in particular a blonde who fell from the sky. Clarke appears to send her off as she promised, and she requests to see the leader in her room before they leave. Lexa follows and is inundated with lips and tongue, a welcome reward for her delay. She promises to return quickly for more of the same.

16. Apples. She tastes like apples, and Lexa likes the sweet crispness on her Clarke’s lips. She gobbles them up indiscriminately.

17. The day is done and Clarke kisses her lips and goes home.

18. Clarke can’t help but laugh, not with Lexa’s hidden silliness when it comes out and she earns oversized kisses all over her face, on her eyebrows, on her nose, on her cheeks, on her chin, on her ears, on her eyelids. She fails at controlling her giggle. It only spurs Lexa farther, wiggling atop her and kissing her absurdly to earn more of those delicious sounds.

19. Clarke kisses Lexa’s bicep.

20. The snow came and Clarke let Lexa kiss the snowflakes from her lashes.

21. Abby saw it happen, though she was certain she wasn’t supposed to see it. Smiling and happy, Clarke pushed on Lexa’s shoulders, laughing as the Commander chased her, kissing her with a small glimmer of a smile on her lips as well. The mother saw her daughter kiss the leader and skip away, just out of reach as she was paralyzed by it. Lexa followed quickly. Abby stood by the gate and watched them disappear down the trail.

22. Beneath the old willow tree, Lexa splits the branches and covers them behind the curtain. She kisses Clarke so sweetly the blonde sighs when it ends.

23. Grumpy and cold, Clarke complains and Lexa absently kisses her temple.

24. As difficult as it is, Lexa struggles to kiss Clarke after the meeting ends when everyone leaves. It’s rough and needy before it is cut short with the reminder of how busy they are.

25. “It’s just sex,” Clarke pulls on her shirt and tosses Lexa her coat. Lexa looks at the fabric in her hand before looking around the quiet of the forest. “Stop it,” she asserts, staring at her angrily. Clarke sighs and shakes her head, adjusting. She rubs at a mark on her neck she can’t see, but she feels it forming. “Wouldn’t that be simpler?” Clarke worries herself with lacing her boots. Lexa grinds her teeth, her body fearing this. She hasn’t moved, but Clarke kisses her lips quickly before leaving.

26. Emotionless and disinterested, Lexa lets Clarke kiss her.

27. Three weeks she’s gone. Clarke notices her absence after the first hour, though she did not spend much time with the Commander during the day and she’d been gone off and on always. She paces through her room, debating. But it doesn’t matter. Lexa barges in the night of her return, upset and
ready. “It’s not just sex,” she insists. “You know that. It’s never just been that.” She has more words but she’s agitated, haughty and fuelled by three weeks of waiting to say these things. She begins to stammer, her rage betraying her hurt. Clarke kisses her quiet and nods in agreement. “It’s not,” she whispers as Lexa relaxes and lets her kiss her.

28. The tent in Camp Jaha is illuminated by the fire outside of the thin curtains. Lexa doesn’t care. Clarke’s eyes are dilated and burning with more intensity. Aching and swearing oaths, Lexa feels her kiss her chest while fingers push.

29. The neck, Lexa remembers, returning to it, the taste of Clarke still shimmering like a fresh kill on her lips.

30. The way her hair feels pulled between her fingers distracts Clarke for an instant as Lexa kisses her and makes her see stars again until she’s in her own galaxy once more.

31. “It’s not just sex,” Lexa whispers, the sweat pooling between their bodies as they panted after said activity. The fire has dwindled outside and the night makes their skin prickle in the chill. Clarke kisses her languidly and finally acknowledges this for what it is.

32. Lexa gives a smile, a small, stunned smile. Her old heart thumps once, finally, as if it hadn’t ever. A rusty little beat that shakes off webs of age. Clarke tenderly kisses her forehead and leaves with a smile.

33. Indra is not surprised when she finally sees the kiss. She knew that they were not back in Polis more often because of Clarke, and she knew that Lexa was taken, though she lauded her efforts of keeping it to herself and not affecting her duties. But seeing it, the gentleness that exists, she is surprised by that. The fingertips along Clarke’s cheek, the soft motion of tucking the hair behind her ear, the way the cloudling leans her forehead on the Heda’s. It is a small, tender, honest moment they feel is just their own. Indra watches it without meaning to see. She looks away only when Clarke kisses Lexa once more before they separate and she leaves the Commander at the door of her house at dawn.

34. Lexa is in love with her palm. She kisses it eagerly.

35. Each fingertip as Lexa tells Clarke a story.

36. The droplet of sweat in the stoop of her lower back is reverentially hers, Clarke thinks and smiles as she makes her way up the spine.

37. Clarke tastes sunshine in her hair.

38. Coming out of the water, Clarke watches and sees how long Lexa is, how slender and long and beautiful she is, clean and dripping in the shimmering water. She lays on the shore of the lake by the rocks in the dusk, their only free time they could sneak away. The sun is most violent in its final hour and Clarke feels the sweat on her forehead and neck, but refuses to move at all. She watches Lexa twist her hair, wringing the water from it with a relaxed smile on her face. “You should learn,” Lexa comes up close and stands over the lazing girl. She wrings her hair and splashes Clarke with a devious smile earning a squeal. “I’m not a fan of water.” Lexa falls down atop her and kisses her, the sun warming her body through Clarke’s skin. “You’re cold and wet,” Clarke pushes her gently. “Warm me up.”

39. At noon Lexa’s hips are bare and worshipped.

40. The tattoo on Clarke’s rib is tiny and fragile and pink with newness. Lexa is gentle in sealing it
there with her lips.

42. “Heda!” Octavia barges into the room and immediately regrets her decision. “Oh my God!” she covers her eyes with a reflex she wishes were quicker. Clarke’s cheeks burn and Lexa looks up from her knees and sighs, kissing Clarke’s thigh to hide her embarrassment before standing.

43. Working at her table, Lexa barely hears Clarke enter. She doesn’t look up when she does. Clarke kisses the top of her head and slips a plate of food beside her as she moves to the bed.

44. Both are asleep. The night is chilly, dipping low despite the warm day. In her sleep, Clarke pulls Lexa’s arm like a blanket, bringing the sleeping Commander with her. Lexa kisses Clarke’s shoulder though neither know it.

45. Clarke’s neck is spotted and sore, bruised deliciously.

46. If she had to pick a moment, it would be when Lexa kissed her cheek in front of Kane.

47. Lexa kisses tiny bruises on Clarke’s back and especially those on her thighs from riding the horses bareback.

48. There is a rustling beside the gate. Bellamy flashes his light and catches a glimpse of Clarke’s eyes, guilty as they jump away from the Commander. He grins as she blushes and Lexa looks down her nose at him. Victorious for finally having proof, he clicks of the light. “Apologies. Please resume.”

49. Clarke holds onto Lexa’s hips while she writhes on her tongue. She kisses her harder before licking once more and earning a breathtaking moan.

50. There is a kiss that crumbles mountains. It comes with a sigh.

51. The little absent kiss before falling asleep.

52. The Ark is not her favourite place in the world, but Lexa is a fan of the small rooms called closets, and she is a fan of pinning Clarke against the walls and kissing her when she clenched around her fingers.

53. The neck, Lexa rediscovers. It makes Clarke dance.

54. At first light, Lexa finds herself awake, as she usually is despite Clarke’s propensity for sleeping at least an hour later. She does not extricate herself from the hold Clarke has on her, arms wrapped tightly, swaddling the blonde. Instead, she rests her cheek on the bare skin of her back, rubs it along the soft, warmth of it, closes her eyes and inhales it before placing a small, never-to-be-known kiss there.

55. People watch them now. Lexa walks self-consciously beside Clarke and debates what comes next. But as they approach the gates of the Ark, Clarke kisses her cheek and promises to see her in the morning.

56. In the streets of Polis, there is a constant movement, a rush, a stuffed feeling as everyone goes about their business and the smells of work and food fill the streets. Lexa shows Clarke so many things she’d only dreamed of, taking them down from shops, explaining them and listening to Clarke remember what they were. Lexa kisses Clarke’s hand as she holds it and they continue to walk.

57. Dawn is sleepy kisses as they finally drift off to sleep.
58. Dusk comes with Clarke’s lips.

59. Laying in the grass, Lexa lets the sun hit her face. She picks at a daisy and knits it in Clarke’s braid, weaving it carefully with one hand like an expert, as if her entire life was spent doing such simple, harmless things as adorning her love with flowers. About a dozen cover the blonde mane on her stomach while Clarke absentmindedly reads from some book in the quiet of an early summer afternoon. Clarke smiles and tingles as the occasional flower weaves in her hair. With a sense of fullness, she puts the book down and rolls over in the grass. “You will crush their petals,” Lexa warns. Clarke watches Lexa close her eyes and she kisses her ribs through the fabric of her open shirt. “You look beautiful,” the Commander smiled that smile that was reserved for Clarke. She kisses her chest and rests her ear against the stomach once more, closing her eyes.

60. Lexa kisses Clarke’s nose when she is sick and earned a sniffle. Clarke smiles happily against her chest as she burrows into the warmth to sleep.

61. There is a small freckle below the small curls of baby hair on Lexa’s neck that Clarke kisses from time to time.

62. The small cut on her palm is a source of healing that Lexa tries with her lips.

63. The little honeysuckle glows beneath her chin and Lexa smiles at the sight of Clarke’s tilted chin illuminated in yellow. “You are in love,” she teases, twirling the tiny flower between her fingers so it dances under the neck in question. Clarke smiles and shakes her head, plucking another. “So are you,” Clarke observes. “What’s her name?” Lexa grins from her lap pulling the flower apart and sucking at the nectar. She does the same for Clarke before the blonde leans down and kisses her.

64. The visitor’s from the other clans arrive and Clarke is nervous. She tries to remember what Lexa told her about each of them, to prove her worth. Lexa teaches Clarke the welcoming kisses to receive them.

65. She could go without it, but seeing as it is the last time she sees Lexa before she leaves and her warpaint is already on her face, Clarke kisses her anyway.

66. Warpaint on, Lexa becomes someone else, she feels it creep into her brain as she moves, sees it in the way Clarke looks at her. So she kisses her gently, timidly, worriedly before Clarke tells her to come home. And Lexa nods and kisses a promise.

67. Her neck, Lexa smiles against it before kissing there, lazy and trapped.

68. There is a streak of light between the leaves that Lexa gives attention on Clarke’s chest.

69. The hollow of her chest when she breathes, when she gasps and holds it in, Lexa kisses there, almost positive that Clarke never realizes it, her mind flying away and concerned with matters of greater importance.


71. “I’m sure,” Clarke nods, her nose bumping Lexa’s. The Commander kisses her again, though the largest smile Clarke ever saw on her was threatening to make it impossible.

72. The entire village is there, watching. Lexa smiles and nods and waits until she is told to do so, but she seals the bond and she kisses Clarke as the world erupts in noise. It is as innocent and feels like the first kiss, hopeful and scared. Clarke smiles halfway through it, even more convinced that
Lexa’s determination to prove Clarke correct in this hope for a real, new world with more, deserving of more, would be successful. For just a moment, Lexa smiles as well.

73. Clarke sees Lexa across the yard as her mother is explaining something in her ear. She excuses herself and kisses her wife when she makes it to her.

74. There is an awkwardness, now, an unaccustomed strangeness and awareness to themselves as they stand in Lexa’s home, Clarke’s home now, she realizes in this moment. Clarke is swaying slightly from the burning liquids she tried to keep up with at the wedding. She stares at Lexa from beneath her lashes, bashful and eager. Lexa watches her, leans against the table and taps her finger against the cup filled with the remnants of a final toast. She’s so fucking beautiful it hurts. She gulps it and watches her new wife grin. It took her a while get the courage to approach her. More courage than it took to kiss her first. She ran her fingertips along Clarke’s jaw, rested her forehead on her’s, dragged her nose along her nose. They swayed together, the blonde smiling before becoming quite serious with the task at hand, quite eager for it.

75. The rain comes and Lexa kisses Clarke’s rain-soaked lips.

76. With blood on her hands, Clarke is oddly attractive. Lexa watches her finish the kill. She kisses her to promise more soon enough.

77. Clarke kisses Lexa’s ticklish sides until she wiggles away and laughs, actually laughs.

78. When it rains, the puddles fill and Lexa kisses the dew that gathers on the field of Clarke’s chest.

79. The first time Clarke sees Lexa cry is accidental almost. She gives her orders to have her warrior executed, she carries out the sentence herself. Hands still bloody she sits at her throne, shoulder’s hunched. Clarke thinks her to be still and contemplating, but as she approaches Lexa looks up at her with rivers streaming down her face and shoulders vibrating under the strain of holding it inside of her bones. She wraps her arms around her wife’s waist as she stands beside her, presses her face into the spot between her ribs, below her sternum. Clarke clutches her there, feels the blood smearing her clothes as Lexa clings to her, silently sobbing, refusing to feel it all just yet. All she does is hush and soothe her, kissing her hair and hugging her tightly, protectively. It is only after a few moments that she realizes that she’d never seen her cry and this is a rarity.

80. There is a noise that comes when Lexa’s shoulder is bitten and kissed. Clarke lives for it.

81. Clarke kisses Lexa’s scar on her thigh.

82. Angry and violent, Lexa throws her chair and yells. Her warrior challenging her and forcing her hand. She seethed as Clarke followed, unfazed by the outburst. Clarke flinched when glass broke after another tirade, but she kept her ground. Lexa tries to pull away as Clarke holds her wrists. She kisses her forehead when Lexa leans forward in defeat after tiring the hate from her muscles.

83. The knee is so odd, but Clarke kisses it anyway, loving it more because of that.

84. When she is upset, Lexa kisses with thin lips, persuading herself that nothing else matters. Eventually the world fades away.

85. Lexa likes the scar on Clarke’s collar bone. She nudges her nose along it and kisses with reverence.

86. It takes two summers to get Clarke into the water. She wades out with Lexa swimming circles around her. In the early morning she shivered and wrapped her arms around her before it comes up to her hips and she fans out her fingers, testing it as if she would fall. She watched Lexa dip under
and appear somewhere else, grinning wildly until she approaches when Clarke stalls. “This is deep enough,” Clarke nods eagerly, shivering in the cold. The day is muggy and sweet already. Lexa wraps her arms, dripping and not helping, around Clarke’s shoulders, around her neck. She kisses her and grins. “Float with me,” she pulls the blonde along until she wraps her legs around her waist. She bobs them along deeper in the water as Clarke looks around, terrified and afraid, clinging to her wife. Lexa kisses her and teaches her to enjoy the water.

87. There is a hitch to her breath when Lexa bites and kisses it better quickly after.

88. The moment it changes is when Lexa stalls, Clarke notices. It goes from a kiss to the start of something when Lexa blinks for an instant, her body debating before losing to Clarke’s tongue. She likes that, doing that, winning. She kisses her that deep frequently.

89. Two weeks is too long for Clarke to be without her. Lexa knows it to be true, though she did not expect the welcome she receives when she approaches camp. Clarke hops up and latches on, kissing her wife welcome with a huge smile.

90. Her wrist is broken, and Lexa is sour about it. Clarke kisses her, amused and knowing she is in for a rough few months.

91. When she tells a story, Clarke feels Lexa kiss her forearm, hugging her arm.

92. Raven is not too keen on the Commander still, though time has softened her understanding. When she sees Clarke kiss her and smile, and kiss her again when they think no one’s looking, she only lets the hatred bubble up in her blood for a moment before giving up and finding some kind of beauty in this purity in this hell.

93. The neck, Lexa remembers. It makes Clarke sigh and grab her harder.

94. The first time Lexa sees Clarke truly crying she actually feels the stoicism fill up her bones, unsure of how to handle the situation. But Abby is dead and in the privacy of the tent, Clarke crumbles on the floor, exhausted from remaining very Lexa-like in her duties throughout the day. It takes a few minutes for Lexa to figure it out, but she sees her wife, sees her crying, and she yearns to fix this, though she can’t, and she knows it. She sits on the ground and pulls Clarke into her lap, rocking her softly and rubbing her back. She kisses her wet cheeks and rests her head against her hair, unable to say anything else. It takes over an hour for Clarke to fall into an uneasy sleep. She clutched her wife’s shirt until Lexa was forced to lay down beside her. She kisses her back and hugs her tighter.

95. Lexa kisses Clarke’s elbow.

96. “Have a good trip,” Clarke whispers, kissing Lexa as she holds onto her belt.

97. The water was cool and soothing. Clarke waded out with Lexa, hair pulled tight up on her head. Lexa dived from a rock and disappeared beneath the calm, glass-like surface. The moon poured light into the clearing. The day had been so hot they couldn’t do much or even breathe. But now, even in the humidity of the day, the sweet coolness of the lake helped soothe the day. Clarke pushes off into the deeper end, doing a breaststroke towards her wife. Lexa kissed her and rested on her back.

98. In her sleep, Lexa feels Clarke kiss her nose.

99. Clarke’s neck makes her moan. Lexa kisses there.

100. Clarke kisses Lexa’s forehead as she leaves for the Ark to help Raven. Lexa grabs her arm from her throne, pulling her back and kissing her properly before she makes her way outside.
Deep in the heart of the spinning, cold star, a single prisoner stares at the window above her, curiously thinking of so many things that she finds herself unable to focus on any, thus reaching an almost eerie state of lethargic fear or even anxious calm.

The rumours ran rampant, like fire through the station, and despite her predicament in solitary, the prisoner hears the whispers of the guards, notices the scurrying of activity, counts the dwindling number of walks outside her window with nothing more than mild curiosity.

But in the quiet that comes in the middle of the night, Clarke ignores all of it and continues being alone, savouring the sweet, delicious kind of ache it brings when she adds to the days that she doesn’t use her voice. Her walls are covered, like the tombs she read about once, in pictures and words and moments and memories and dreams.

It keeps her sane, to occupy herself with the drawing. While the rest of the Ark is in complete upheaval, she remains, steadfast and calculating while simply drawing. It takes long enough for the world to infiltrate her cell. No what happens, she only knows that she must be ready, and she can’t be ready if she loses her mind.

The only surprise that comes when her mother sneaks in one night to tell her she is going to the ground is that it is coming so quickly. It made sense. She understood it.

“There are survivors on the ground,” Clarke nodded, looking out the window of the station.

“I doubt it,” Abby shades her head, heartbroken and wounded and out of ideas to save her daughter and the rest of them.

“There has to be.” It all clicks in an instant. She absently runs her thumb along her wrist, the ink there raised slightly.

Deep in the heart of the lush, foggy woods, the group of warriors sprint back to camp, the cold and the fear twisting their lungs as they fight through the underbrush. As they approach the edge of the area where the scouts lay in wait, they whistle, low and long, not tricking the birds or the trees at all.

Deep in her tent, the Commander paces, absently surveying the map spread out in all directions on her table while she twists her sword around her wrist, occasionally tapping it against her lips or chin or forehead when an incredibly difficult thought sneaks up on her.

“The scouts are back,” Gustus whispers. Lexa took a moment to prepare, sheathing her sword and rolling her shoulders before nodding.

“What do you say?” She begins, her words heavy and full.
“We bring bad news, Heda,” the out of breath warrior manages as they are brought before her. “They have weapons, speak English, and look for the Mountain.”

“Have they found anything? Did they see you?”

“We killed three of theirs,” the other scout swallows and shakes his head.

“Were you followed?”

“No, Heda.”

“Go send more scouts. I want more reports. Kill any that get close to the Mountain,” Lexa walks across the tent once more, eyes fixed upon the pieces on the map. “Do not engage. They do not know about us, as far as we can tell, and we should keep it that way as long as we can.”

“Yes, Heda.”

“Make peace and unite the Twelve, and then the sky falls,” she mutters, mostly to herself, partially to Gustus after the scouts leave. “Find Anya and have her here as soon as possible. Tell Indra to get her group of warriors ready.”

“We should take one of them. We need to make contact, figure out if they are here with the Mountain Men.”

“Do it,” she nods, not looking up as he departs.

Stretching before her, the clearly delineated areas for the twelve. A new piece to the puzzle sat in her own backyard, full of nothing but questions with no good answers and a world of trouble.

While her brain worked in overtime, Lexa ran her thumb along the scar on her wrist, raised well above the name etched there. The deep red and purple wound, long since healed, bisected the name, as if to cross it out. The world spun on for Lexa after she crossed out the stranger’s name. And now a new enemy appeared, pushing it farther from her mind.

But still, as her fingers were known to do from time to time when she was alone, they migrated to that scar, to that name written in her skin behind it as a way to calm herself.

“Bring her in,” Lexa nods her head at the door. Indra stands, tense and hand on the hilt of her weapon beside her. Gustus moves and those at the door stand aside. “300,” she shakes her head, yanking her dagger out of the arm of the throne, almost amused and mildly impressed by the single attack.

“And then the Mountain took them,” Indra offered.

“Curious times, Indra,” The Commander nods to herself while toying with her weapon.

When the door opens, she does not look up as she listens to feet tentatively approaching. But as she speaks, she meets blue eyes in a sea of scratches and blood and dirt and barely finishes speaking without stopping.

“You. You killed 300 of my warriors.”

“You sent them to kill us,” the stranger from the sky returns, straightening her spine slightly.

“Why should I stop my men from killing you where you stand?” Lexa spins the knife no the arm of
Because I think we can help each other defeat the Mountain."

"Lies," Indra growls.

"It’s the truth," the girl defends herself, stern and purposeful. "I have it mapped, I know its defenses, and I know what to do."

"Let me kill her," the guard pleads until Lexa waves her hand.

"What is your name?"

"Clarke."

Lexa feels a cool sweat form down her back and she swallows before picking up her knife once more.

"My people have been murdered, captured, and tortured by that Mountain since the beginning of time, Clarke of the Sky People. How am I to believe that you can, after just ten days, destroy it?"

"Because I escaped from it."

For longer than she could think, Clarke held the Commander’s eyes, stuck there until she felt her skin blush and shiver, though she did not look away. Absently, without realizing, she runs her thumb, cut and bleeding as it was, over the inside of her wrist.

"No one survives the Mountain," Indra guffaws.

"We did," Anya walks inside, still covered in mud, still almost unrecognizable. She looks at the Commander as she stands beside her new ally. "With the help of the Sky People, we can beat them, Lexa."

From her spot, Clarke felt her eyes grow wide before following Anya’s eyes to the girl sitting on the throne. Her nails dig into her skin at the sound of the name.

The battle prepared, the plans drawn up, there is nothing left, no moment, no detail remaining to be completed save for simply waiting for word from within the Mountain that it is time. The peace that is forged between the two groups is tenuous, made even more difficult by Lexa’s avoidance of their supposed leader for reasons no one can understand.

The first night after she hears her name, Lexa sits close to the fire and stares at the name still written on her wrist. The scar runs through it, as if cutting it right in half, but it’s still there, still readable, still haunting. She is uncertain how long she looks at it, but for the first time in years, it feels like, she tentatively touches it, traces the letters before running her hands over her face and groaning.

Clarke refuses to look at her wrist. She knows what it looks like and she knows the word branded there as it’d been since she was a child. She knows what it says there and keeps it to herself once she realizes, waits to see if it is the same for the Commander, but as they days pass and war approaches, she can’t bite her tongue any longer.

As the tent empties after the last meeting, Lexa feels her elbow jerked and instantly pulls her knife, a reaction that leaves it against the blonde’s throat.

“I could have killed you, Clarke,” she chides, only slowly removing it an inch as the stranger from
the sky swallows, throat bobbing against the blade.

“Are you going to?” Blue eyes are only mysterious and mischievous things with a smirk like that.

“I haven’t decided. Are you going to let go of me?”

“Not until I find out if we have something in common.”

Stuck in the stalemate, neither look away, neither move a muscle. Clarke makes the fatal mistake of looking at the Commander’s lips before she feels the blade lowered. The proximity is dangerous, but Lexa doesn’t care. She shoves the blade in her belt, pulls her arm free from Clarke’s grip and tugs the sleeve down before putting it in front of this girl.

“You’ve known this whole time?” the Commander asks. Clarke holds her wrist between them as well so both names are on display next to each other.

“What… what happened?”

Hesitant and gentle, Lexa watches her fingers move to the scar, to her name on her flesh. It doesn’t stop her from flinching to watch it happen, but Clarke presses forward. When she touches her, Lexa knows, she realizes what the difference between this one and any others before had been.

“I didn’t think you existed,” Lexa confesses.

“Now what?”

When Clarke looks up, watches Lexa, all she earns is a small shrug and shake of her head and she nods, just as lost as the other.

“We could both die tomorrow,” Lexa smiles, as if it is a good answer.

“We could,” Clarke agrees. “How about we try not to do that.”

“Okay.”
Hey I loved Soulmated!! If you could do continuation that’d be awesome. Thanks homie.

“It doesn’t matter.”

“It does.”

“Stop.”

“It matters.”

The look that Anya receives could freeze her entire blood supply, but it does nothing to deter her. At her scariest, at her most wrathful, she knows that Lexa is also her most emotional, her weakest, barely able to maintain any front she tries, the last of which is cool hatred.

Not looking away, she watches the Commander glare before looking down at the map of the Mountain once more, bracing her hands on the table, letting her shoulders hunch and carry all of the burden.

“It can’t matter,” Lexa finally sighs, pulling her dagger from its position embedded in the map where she jammed it with the news from the scout.

“But it does,” Anya needles her again.

Hiding behind the guise of twirling the blade on her finger, Lexa chances a look at the name on her wrist, just peaking out from her sleeve.

It was only a kiss. One kiss. A momentary lapse and a stupid experiment, a test of the will of the universe, and it meant nothing. She tells herself these things so that she can meet Anya’s eyes again, though she is certain the lie is readable.

The kiss changed everything. She understood how time could be told differently, how there was life before the end of the world and life after, how all it took was a single second for the rest of humanity to measure the new era differently. That was what that kiss was. It ended and it began, so that nothing was the same again.

All of the years of lessons, the Conclave, the grooming she underwent with mantras that love was weakness, they all seemed to both disappear and becoming highlighted at the same time. Lexa understood the weakness when she felt Clarke’s lips, and she understood why it was forced upon her to dismiss it, and yet she knew now that she could defeat anyone, save for the will of the universe, as much as she would try.


“She believes in it,” her second explains. “What? We spent a lot of time together marching through
the forest to find you.” Lexa rolls her eyes and grinds her teeth. “Said it was fate to find you. As soon as she got her people out, she wasn’t going to stop looking.”

“But stupid. I forgot that part.”

“I know a little part of you believes in it, too.”

“It’s a stupid mark. We’re all born with them. They don’t define us.”

“How many times,” Anya shook her head. “How many times did I catch you daydreaming, staring at the sky, staring at that damn name when you were supposed to be training?”

“That’s not—”

“How many times did you say her name in your sleep?”

Lexa knows enough to look guilty though all she does is bite the inside of her mouth and tap the blade against her fingertips once more, agitated and distracted.

“I can’t protect my people and save her. Just forget it. Forget she exists. I’m trying.”

“Not on your life,” Anya grins. “I’ll get you your princess. You just have to win her over.”

“We both have a duty, and a responsibility to our people. Clarke understands it, and there is no point in fighting it.”

“Then why are you still trying to convince yourself?” The question made Lexa pause and open her mouth before thinking better of it, closing it, and sighing.

“She’s in the Mountain. By choice. We can’t get to her.”

“I think it’s time we met with the Sky People.”

“Anya…”

“Stop thinking with your head.”

“That is the opposite of what you drilled into me,” Lexa rolled her eyes.

“We don’t have to break our truce with the Mountain. Doesn’t mean we can’t help them.” She softens slightly. “I know you believe in it. She’s your one.”

“She is,” Lexa swallows, finally admitting it.

“Then no matter how hard you fight it, you won’t be able to resist it. It will tear you apart.”

“It doesn’t make sense. I’ve spoken to her only a handful of times. She shouldn’t… I can’t make decisions for her.”

“The universe has a way of making it that way.”

For a long while, Anya watched Lexa brood, staring at the map and thoughts racing ridiculously through her head. It was a long, long shot; it was horrible and it was impossible, but still.

“Get the Chancellor.”
“You can’t be certain,” Jasper shook his head, whispering quietly and arguing adamantly with his friend as the radio played to conceal their voices in the dorms, deep in the bowels of the Mountain. “She just wants her people.”

“She’ll come,” Clarke disagrees patiently.

“You met a grounder once, that doesn’t mean we’re saved.”

“She’ll come,” she sighs.

“You can’t know that,” Raven rolls her eyes.

“I’m more sure of it than anything ever before,” Clarke leaned back on the bed and stared at the bunk. “Lexa is coming. She has to, I feel it.” Her fingers played with the name etched into her skin.

“Just in case, maybe we should have an alternative,” Jasper tries. “You know, if the grounder princess doesn’t really feel like rescuing a girl she just met.”

“What would you do to save Maya?”

For a long, thoughtful second, He closed his mouth, and he stared at the girl on the bed before looking over his shoulder at the girl with the dark hair that sat on another bunk, not even noticing his gaze for a few seconds, before some shift in the world told her to look up, as if it was instinct.

“It’s not the same.”

“She’ll come.”

“This isn’t a time to put all of our faith in a stranger with questionable motivation,” Raven shakes her head. “Tell me about the shafts and the control room.”

With a nod, Clarke sits up, leaning toward her friends. As much as she wants to argue, to tell them that her faith isn’t misguided, that no matter what, there isn’t a reason for Lexa to not appear. But she does not. She holds on to the idea of an I-told-you-so that will come one way.

Never one to wait to be rescued, Clarke understands the eagerness to get out of the mountain, and so she starts to plan.

It was different. As terrible and afraid as she was, the word on her skin made her brave. She was beyond infatuated with the Commander, but more than that, she believed. She saw it in the stars, felt it in her bones.

Lexa would come. She felt her.

Covered in blood so that it is nearly dripping from her chin, the Commander is nearly unrecognizable. Her warpaint is smudged and a long cut now sits on her cheek, casting a black shadow down her skin as she bleeds without noticing it at all. Chest heaving, her nostrils flare as she tries to catch her breath and sheaths her swords.

“Get them to healers,” she barks as the cages are opened and her people are freed. “Have Indra and her group finish the Reapers. We move–”

An explosion erupts in the distance, another follows a few floors below, and the group of advisors and the Commander are thrown to their knees.
“Clarke,” she whispers, scrambling to her feet and following the smoke, her legs sprinting as fast as she could. The sprinklers start, sputtering to life overhead, quickly filling the room with a drowning rain.

She is far too worried to realize the imprudence of her decision, far too out-of-her-mind afraid that something has happened to the girl that she refuses to think about but can’t stop imagining suddenly dead and the thought makes her frantic and unable to think.

“Clarke!” she yells as she moves through the halls, coughing against the smoke, her clothes sticking to her in the water.

“She said you’d come,” Jasper coughed, carrying someone by the shoulders as the Commander led her group into the room with all of the Sky People in various states of capture.

“The entrance is clear,” Lexa explains, searching faces, ducking against the filling of smoke. “Get them out!”

“The control room,” he nods his head.

Covered in blood and sweat and mud and bruises, Clarke can barely register that it is Lexa who walks through the door next. She holds the gun in her hands, unable to look anywhere but between it and the lever she pulled. The Mountain gurgled and rumbled as it recoiled from whatever she’d done to it, but she didn’t care. In the course of just a handful of minutes, she became more murderous than anyone else she knew.

“Clarke,” Lexa breathed, as if she hadn’t been breathing as she fought her way through the guards, as if she hadn’t been truly able to breathe until just this very moment. Her words came out like a prayer, full of relief and revelation. The name dripped from her lips, mingled with the blood and water on her face, tasted sweeter than anything else.

“I killed them all.” The blonde looked up and saw Lexa’s eyes burning through the smudged paint and blood caked on her skin. “Every single one of them.”

“I’m… I should have–” The sprinklers stopped, the quiet came, the smoke continued. “We have to leave,” Lexa decided, swallowing her apology, her regret because she knew nothing would make it better.

“What did I do?”

“Survived.”

Between them, they stared, bore into each other. Time was not passing and they were not monsters, though they knew it about each other and forgave, right there.

There was nothing left, no time, no moment, no escape between them once they left the Mountain. As painful as it had been, Lexa merely nodded slightly as Clarke left with her family. Not a word, not a second to reconsider, to talk about the future. Lexa watched her walk away and the wiped the blood from her cheek without a notion of ever seeing her again.

When the word came of the great Wanheda, Lexa felt her chest tighten, and she felt her lungs ache. Alone in the world, and gone for all intents and purposes, Lexa felt the burn of anger at the girl for dropping from the sky, making her fall in love, usurping her purpose, and disappearing into the wilds.
By the time the scraggly blonde walked to the gates of Polis, Lexa was bitter and worried and
disgusted with herself.

By the time Wanheda appeared at her throne, she was suffocating.

“Leave us,” Lexa muttered, waving her hand slightly. Clarke did not flinch, but stood there and
watched.

In just a few seconds, they were alone, same as they’d been the last time they were together; petrified
and angry, oblivious to much more.

“I’ve heard you’ve been asking about me,” Clarke began. She did not smile and she did not do
anything else except watch Lexa.

“Someone appears with the right name, and I take an interest. I did take down a mountain for you.”

“I believe I had more of a hand in that than I would have liked,” the blonde disagreed. “Hence the
new name, courtesy of your people.”

“That day,” Lexa swallowed, furrowing and placing her hands behind her back. She’d thought the
words, berated herself, beat herself down all night for weeks with those words.

“I’m not here because of that.”

“You are. You left because of it, and you’re here now because of that day.” She stepped down
towards the girl who refused to meet her eyes. “You did nothing wrong. I got there too late. It is my
fault, and I am so very sorry, Clarke.”

“There’s no way…” she shook her head. “It doesn’t matter. The past is the past. The dead are gone.”

Lexa hesitated as she drew closer, stopped herself at those words and nodded, careful to hold her
hands tighter so they did not reach out for the stranger.

“You were different, before.”

“I was unaccustomed to the ground, when you first met me. I suppose it changes someone,” Clarke
sighed.

For a second, Lexa wondered what it meant, knew that she would be trailed by that thought for a
long time. Instead of lingering she merely held out her wrist once more, unable to find the right
words. She was never a fan of them anyway.

“You exist,” Lexa explained, watching Clarke as she inched forward to see the new ink that now
made her name complete over the scar tissue of the wrist. “It changes everything.”

“I don’t know what happens next.”

“You can stay, if you’d like.”

The End
“This was fun,” Clarke nodded, pulling her shirt down and searching for her pants. The room was almost lit from the streetlight outside, though it was clouded and muted in the rain. Her shirt was still damp from the sprinting across the street in the storm, but she didn’t have an alternative.

“Yeah,” Lexa nodded, still propped in the bed watching it happen. She hovered her hand over the lighter as she lit the end of a cigarette she didn’t particularly want, but needed as a shield against having nothing to do with her hands. “Did I earn your number at least?” She watched the blonde chuckle and find her pants as she tossed the lighter onto the side table. Clarke began to pull them on as Lexa sat up in the bed, still naked and tingling. Though spotless, she found an old cup to flick ashes into.

“Was I wearing my jacket?”

“No.”

“Sweet,” Clarke nodded, buttoning her pants. She ignored the naked girl in bed with sheets barely covering her hips and a devious smirk with her cigarette. “This was fun,” she repeated. “A one time, fun thing.”

“Okay,” Lexa nodded, snuffing it out disinterestedly. She hid the dejected sigh with a small smile, pushing her hair across her head, a disaster in its own right. “I’ll see you around, I’m sure.”

“I don’t think I have to say that your dad can’t know,” Clarke paused.

“That you fucked the bosses daughter after lubricating her with drinks?”

“You’d been drinking when I ran into you,” Clarke corrected. “I did no… lubricating.”

“This was fun,” Lexa leaned her elbow on her knee and grinned at Clarke.

“This never happened,” Clarke insisted.

Before she left, Clarke leaned across the bed and kissed Lexa. It was a move she told herself she’d do if she ever got the chance, if she ever allowed herself the opportunity to make a mistake and have the balls to leave someone hanging. And now this was it. So she kissed Lexa as hard as she could until she felt herself being pulled back into the bed before letting go and leaving.

The door closed before Lexa realized what was happening. The lips were gone and she was sad about it. She grinned and fell back in bed, oddly eager to see that beautiful artist again somehow.

The snow was coming down in fat flakes, accumulating rapidly on every surface it could find. Clarke kissed the brunette with vigour, knitting her knuckles in her coat.
“I like your hair,” Clarke confessed as they leaned against the entrance to her building, the brick cold against Lexa’s back, she kissed her again. “It caught all of the snow. You look beautiful.”

“Don’t ruin this with art, Cézanne,” Lexa snorted, pulling her closer again.

“I’m not painting the Sistine Chapel in reverence to your beauty,” Clarke moved only to get her keys. “Just observing. You’re not terrible on the eyes.”

“Yet,” Lexa quirked an eyebrow. “If I get an ear in the mail I’ll die.”

Clarke got handsy in the elevator. It lasted down the hall and against her door. She liked how Lexa kissed, liked how she looked in that dress at the Christmas party. She wasn’t much of fan of the fact that she arrived at the party on her father’s arm. But that was forgotten when Lexa gave her a look and pulled her into the closet.

“This is your place?” Lexa asked, not looking around. The whiskey made her pull at Clarke’s clothes quickly. The tequila made Clarke ignore Lexa’s clothes at all, pushing the dress up with her wrist as her fingers slid inside lace.

“You want a tour or…” Lexa gasped and moaned until they fell back into the bed. There was no more words.

“Is this a booty call?” Lexa answered her door to a Clarke grinning like a rapscallion fuelled with warm whiskeys.

“Yes,” the blonde nodded. “It’s my birthday.”

“That explains the grin.” She held the door open until Clarke moved inside. “You didn’t even invited me to the party.”

“But I brought you cake,” she pulled the plate from behind her back.

Hours later as she was ready to force herself to leave, Lexa held up the cake for Clarke, lighting the lone candle and telling her to blow it out. The blonde, worn out from celebrating and celebrating, smiled, genuinely, truly smiled, contentedly smiled, graciously smiled and looked at those eyes in the candlelight.

Lexa watched her close her eyes tightly after a few moments before she blew it out.

“Did you wish for a pony?”

“I can’t tell you,” Clarke insisted, tasting the icing as Lexa put it down. “Maybe I just wished for this moment to never end.”

“Hypothetically speaking, that’s a worthwhile wish.”

Lexa couldn’t keep her hands off of her. The next morning, Clarke woke in her apartment, unsure and proud that she managed to make it home. A bouquet of new brushes and oil paints was delivered a few hours later.

“I don’t remember this,” Lexa paused, almost lifting a shirt over her head. It was Clarke’s shirt. The large last name burned on the back from inter-murals in college. Four times in seven days she ended up at Clarke’s. Thrice on accident after a handful of semi-lewd texts while out with friends in the
neighbourhood led to knocking on the door. The other time had been just Lexa appearing at the door with a grin and a bottle of wine.

“I just started,” Clarke called from the bathroom.

Lexa liked Clarke’s apartment. It was just one large room, canvases covering walls, huge pieces that were intricate and wondrous, different shades of the same colour. When she got a chance, Lexa stood very close to them, closed her eyes and walked backwards, taking them in from a different perspective.

There were books stacked from the floor by the windows, making makeshift tables for pictures. Mismatched rugs littered the concrete floor. Lexa flipped through a sketchpad beside the bed as she pulled the shirt over her head. The shoulders hung a little low on hers, but she liked the shirt.

The first few pages were the city, were parks and buildings. There were ads for work. There were cartoon doodles. Lexa found her eyes though, on the next page. Not much of her face, not an entire portrait, but her eyes and the slope of her nose, incomplete between them. There was a fierceness to those eyes. A sad, loneliness, too. Lexa knew that if it had been finished it wouldn’t have been a smile on her lips, but pure, anguished indifference. But the eyes. She pulled out the page and shoved it in her pocket, tossing the book back down.

“I like it.” Lexa yelled. She borrowed Clarke’s jeans, as she’d arrived in inappropriate clothes to be seen in the daylight. Clarke had Lexa’s shorts, but she refused to take them, enjoying the thought of Clarke painting in them.

“You look familiar,” Clarke towelled off her hair, observing the girl looking at the portrait.

“I have my late class tonight,” Lexa tried.

“I have work,” Clarke nodded, gesturing to the computer in the corner with papers taped to the walls as if it were a slow motion big bang right there in the living room.

“That looks good,” Lexa nudged her head toward the huge wall.

“Thanks.”

Clarke dropped her towel and started to dig for clothes. Lexa averted her eyes.

“I’ll see you,” Lexa finished her coffee and left Clarke’s on the counter.

“I have a good class,” Clarke approached, clad in just underwear. It was impossible for Lexa. It was insurmountable when she kissed Lexa and smiled. Her hands wandered to her hips, to the lace, to her legs. Lexa squeezed and grinned, pressing into her harder. “See you around.”

“Yeah,” Lexa smirked. “This was fun.”

“He hated every idea,” Clarke complained, pulling open the fridge and looking about eagerly.

“Every piece of work I’ve done for the account was worthless. He’s a real dick.”

“That’s my dad,” Lexa rolled her eyes from the living room, buried deep into her giant books. When she opened the door to a slightly tipsy Clarke, she regretted wearing her shirt, the large white GRIFFIN feeling oddly heavy. But she had a night of studying ahead of her before finals, and she hadn’t expected the blonde.
“He’s still a dick,” Clarke pulled out a container, suddenly forgetting about work.

“Yeah, that’s true.”

“You hate milk,” Clarke held it up and looked at Lexa.

“I got that ridiculous cereal you wanted. So I don’t have to hear you complain that I only have green, healthy things and you’re starving.”

Clarke stared at the small jug of milk in her hand and looked back at the girl with the messy hair on the floor with a very neat, very periodically ordered semi-circle of books and notebooks and highlighters. Everything about her was precise. The roll of the sleeves of her shirt so they stayed out of her way. The clean fridge. The constant selection of ripe fruits that never seemed to rot or go bad. The stacking of books. The way her leg extended in a straight line, the way her cheek leaned on her other knee. She was precise and she was goddamn beautiful and smart.

She looked at the milk once more and felt panic seep into her spine. She pulled the sugary cereal from atop the fridge and poured herself a bowl before taking her seat on the couch behind the studious almost-lawyer.

Lexa did not notice at all as Clarke sprawled out behind her with a bowl of cereal on the cushion, looking over her shoulder. Clarke wanted to look at the books and pretend to understand, but she couldn’t. She just chewed and looked at Lexa’s perplexed profile. It was late and she shouldn’t have been there, but there was no where else she wanted to be, as much as she didn’t want to admit it.

In the quiet, Clarke turned on the television and muted it, watching dispassionately. She held the spoon for Lexa to take a bite, surprised that she did. She smiled and scraped the bowl after. Lexa didn’t look at all, just nodded and turned more pages. It happened, irregular and steady, the late night snack of cereal Lexa couldn’t believe she bought.

Eventually, Lexa dropped her head and yawned, closing the book. When she looked back on the couch, Clarke was asleep, cradling the bowl in her arm. There was a sketch of eyes that sat in Lexa’s bedroom that she looked at every day, done by this artist on her couch eating cereal, watching muted cartoons, just to spend time wit her.

She looked so purposeful, there on the couch, as if this wasn’t the first time she’d napped there, as if she was at home already despite being in Lexa’s apartment for just occasional visits which didn’t last long periods of time, much less entire nights.

Sore and aching from being in this position for so long, Lexa crack her joints as she almost stood, taking the bowl and putting it on the ground. Lexa slid atop the blonde, situating herself between her and the back of the couch, pulling the blanket there over them. She fell asleep quickly.

“Have you thought about it?” Lexa asked in the dark. The rain threw itself against Clarke’s windows, blurring the world, making her feel secure in her timing. Summer came loud and rough in the storms of June.

“I think about how I’ve only see you smoke twice since then and it’s been almost a year.”

“It’s a thing to keep my hands busy. My grandfather, he said real men fill silence with smoking. It makes you look contemplative, keeps your mouth busy instead of making a fool of yourself,” Lexa mimicked his long drawl, though Clarke would never know it.

Clarke’s head vibrated with a chuckle against her thigh as she used it as a pillow. Lexa used hers for
the same purpose. tracing her hips with light fingertip circles.

“Well, you’re truly a real man,” Clarke promised.

“He wanted boys. And he said if he couldn’t have another one, he was going to build me as unconquerable.”

“So he’s who I should talk to about making my life so difficult.” Clarke sighed, kissing warm skin. The windows were open and roaring with waterfalls in the night, puddles were rivers flooding dams and levees. The cool air did more than the fans which littered the room.

“We’re just having fun,” Lexa reminded her. “That was you.”

“Is it finally that time?” Clarke laughed. “We put it off valiantly, didn’t we?”

“I’ll agree that it’s a bit overdue,” the brunette relented, shifting slightly, laying back on the bed once more. The sheets tangled and tied them together somehow. “Tell me about your grandfather.”

There was a quiet that prevailed between them despite the weather.

“He liked boats. Sailboats.”

“What if you don’t like me outside of our apartments?”

“I fucked you in a bar bathroom a few months ago,” Clarke reminded her.

“You know what I mean.”

“Who says I like you now?”

“Good point,” Lexa stretched and reached towards her bag on the floor.

Clarke watched her, the silhouette magnificent, the lines ones she’d used already in words, laced her paintings with Lexa’s body in ways she might not have understood just yet. Maybe she could tell Lexa that. That would impress her. That would make this near-lawyer not so self-conscious about a lowly artist who freelanced for her father’s firm. Clarke shook her head and flopped back into the bed as Lexa flicked her lighter and her face was illuminated for just a moment. She let her arm hang off the side of the bed with the red ember.

“It was supposed to be a one time thing,” Clarke insisted.

“Do you want me to ruin it?” Lexa asked, blowing smoke into the air above the bed, like their own thundercloud. Clarke sat up and watched her lounge in her bed.

“Go for it,” she challenged.

“Come to my graduation dinner.”

Lexa didn’t ask. That was purposeful. She stretched her arm to the side once more. The only noise was the crackling of the insignificant little cigarette between her fingers, a beacon in the night. It reminded Clarke of a buoy in the ocean warning of danger, bobbing along telling her she was losing this thing.

She moved her legs and laid her body along Lexa’s, propping herself over her chest, chin threatening her heart precariously, ominously, perhaps even. Clarke stole the cigarette from Lexa after she inhaled again. She snuffed it against the cement. She’d been turning people down for months
because of this thing in her bed.

“Talking about something beautiful is always hard, always runs the risk of ruining it under examination and explanation,” Clarke realized, her head moving with her words as her chin sat still on her crossed hands. “I am terrified of ruining this one-time thing.”

“Yeah,” Lexa agreed, staring at the ceiling.

“I’ve been in this for months,” Clarke sighed and informed her. “Since I saw you with my name on your back. I liked that. I was a goner.”

“You were drunk. You told me to run if you started to draw me because that meant you were in love with me, and that would destroy entire civilizations.”

“Sounds about right.” Lexa laughed.

“I saw your drawing of me after the Christmas party. I see them, on bits of paper, scraps, sketch pads.”

“Where are we going to eat for this fancy graduation?”

“I’ll ask my dad.”

“Oh God,” Clarke buried her face in Lexa’s chest, much to her enjoyment.

“He hates you,” Lexa laughed. Clarke just shook her head and groaned.

“I take it all back. It’s been fun. This was fun,” she tried to get up but Lexa pulled her in again.

“What did I ever do?”

“Slept with his daughter at the company Christmas party.”

“Dear God.”
“That was fun,” Clarke gasped, trying to catch her breath as best she could. Her shoulders relaxed despite pushing against the wall to keep herself up in the small space of the closet.

“That was fun,” Lexa smirked, barely visible in the dim light. She kissed the thigh next to her lips, wiped her mouth on the back of her hand, kissed Clarke once more between her legs. Clarke gulped and twitched.

“Best anniversary ever.”

“Anniversary, huh?”

“It’s romantic.”

From her knees, Lexa shook her head and pulled up her girlfriend’s pants before standing and buttoning them for her. She slipped her hands up her ribs and around her back while Clarke simply anchored her hands on that wall and tried to come down from that high that was Lexa’s tongue.

“Fucking you in the hall closet at the company Christmas party is romantic?” Lexa wondered, shaking her head.

“You can’t fool me. You’re a romantic.”

“You’re irresistible,” Lexa corrected, kissing jaw.

“You’re drunk.”

“Nah. Just a little.”

“Should I ply you with a few more before I drag you back to mine?” Clarke grinned, biting Lexa’s bottom lip and wrapping her arms around her neck. Her hands slid into her girlfriend’s hair as she moved to neck.

“I think we’ve made enough of an appearance.”

“I agree.”

The closet was at the end of a hall sandwiched between the bathrooms. Clarke kept her hand over her mouth to be quiet, and they’d been covert, but now the daunting task of emerging amidst a party that was well underway felt impossible.

But they made it unscathed from their hiding space, and they made it as far as the reception area before they were noticed and stopped on their singular quest.

As soon as she was able, Clarke pulled Lexa out into the snow and near empty street. Though the night was chilly, she took her time and kissed her as they fumbled with the lock to the apartment.

“I like your hair,” Clarke grinned, pushing it from Lexa’s face. “It catches all the snow in it.”

“Are you going to give me poetry or take me up to your room?”

“Let me be in love with you.”
“You’re drunk,” Lexa sighed, her breath mingling with the snow and turning to steam between them. In the cold, with her arteries constricting and the blood freezing in her skin, Clarke’s blue eyes were bluer than blue and Lexa wanted to believe her.

“Maybe,” she grinned slightly, eyes never pausing, tracing and outlining and memorizing every iota of this moment on the stoop to her apartment building, with the snow attaching itself to their shoulders and hair, with the slight tinge of red in Lexa’s cheek.

“Take me to bed,” Lexa murmured, her own eyes lingering on Clarke’s lips as she knit her hands in her coat, clutching her closer. She leaned forward, pushing from the wall until her cheek was against Clarke’s. “Show me,” she whispered.

While Clarke’s apartment was a true studio, filled with mostly art and supplies and with only the barest of necessities for living like a simple bed and kitchen and couch, Lexa’s was proper, was lived in and relaxing. But slowly, the walls bore the fruit of the artist’s labours.

Clarke noticed the first sketch one night, when Lexa was asleep and she was thirsty, trekking into the kitchen to find something. Sleepy and dazed as she was, Clarke remembered sitting in the park while Lexa read and spending the afternoon drawing the city, drawing Lexa in the city.

Another appeared in a frame by the bed. Propped up on a pile of books, a simple study of hands done in passing when they went for coffee.

“We look good, huh?” Clarke grinned as she looked at the newest addition. Not exactly art, but still, something of theirs. She held the strip of pictures from the photobooth in her hands, pulling it from its spot tucked into a mirror above Lexa’s dressed.

“Yeah. Not too bad,” Lexa agreed, towelling her hair as she walked out of the bathroom.

“I think I’m happy,” Clarke realized.

From her spot on the bed, Clarke grinned and looked at Lexa who stalled and returned that smile. With only a little step, she slid into Clarke’s lap and dropped the towel on the floor.

“When I first saw you, you were laughing. You tossed your head back and held your chest,” Lexa explained, her own hand migrating to Clarke’s sternum. “I thought to myself, that you, you were someone I needed to know.”

“So it was all a ploy?”

“Yeah. I thought, hey, if I can get this person, this beautiful person in my life, maybe a little of it will rub off on me.”

“I think a few things rubbed off on you,” Clarke wiggled her eyebrows.

“They did,” Lexa rolled her eyes. “What I mean is that I’m someone who now also sits here and thinks, I’m happy, too.”

“Not something you’re accustomed to then?” Clarke ventured as she wrapped her arms around the girl in her lap.

“Never,” Lexa confessed. “But I saw this picture and I thought it.”

“This was fun.”
“Yeah.”

From her spot in the kitchen, Clarke took another bite of her cereal and watched the naked sleeping back in her bed. The sheets rested lower than low, barely covering legs, and the real estate of Lexa’s back curved through the bed in the middle of the room. Clarke slurped her milk and took another bite, leaning against the counter and surveying the scene.

Lexa’s hair was a mess, spilling over onto Clarke’s pillow. She slept with a pillow tucked under her body, holding it tightly. The light from the windows came through the thin drapes in different colours. Clarke couldn’t do anything but watch and smile and eat her cereal.

She hadn’t heard her come in, nor did she hear her slip into bed, but Clarke woke when the bed dipped and the hard working lawyer kissed her. When hands ran up her sides and Lexa’s weight settled atop her. It was a good way to wake up. Not a word exchanged. Just fingers and moans and then wrapping each other up and falling asleep.

And now, Clarke ate her cereal and was struck with the thought that she had told Lexa she was in love with her months ago.

As her thoughts began to swirl, Clarke watched Lexa stir. She furrowed her brow and let her eyes move through her studio. Lexa’s books were stacked in a chair with papers and legal pads creating a nest in her favourite corner. Their clothes mingled together on the floor and hamper.

“So,” Clarke took another bite. “Do you live here?”

In the bed, Lexa shut her eyes tighter and furrowed, stretching and rolling over. She groaned with her stretch and rubbed her eyes.

“What?”

“You know,” Clarke shrugged. “Do we live together?”

“What are you talking about?” Lexa yawned, complaining as she pulled the sheet up and finally blinked a few times to open her eyes to the day.

If she hadn’t fallen in love with Lexa before, she would have right there, with sleep still in her eyes and her hair nothing more than a mess.

“Are we… do you live here?”

“I have my own apartment.”

“I know.”

“What are you thinking?”

“Nothing,” Clarke shrugged, dismayed at the news.

“Alright.”

“I have to get ready for work.”

“Good morning to you, too,” Lexa frowned as Clarke put her bowl in the sink and stalked into the bedroom. “This was fun!” she called.
Three nights, Lexa got no answer from Clarke. All the while their last conversation swirled in her head. Perplexed, the lawyer thought about it, about all she knew about the distant, quiet, broody girl.

It was a risk.

Lexa swallowed as she lifted her hand to knock on Clarke’s door. She had a key that she assumed still worked. But this was a gesture, and she had to do it.

Even if it was the riskiest thing she could ever do.

“Yeah?” the door opened. Music was low and coming through the air. Lexa saw the paint on Clarke’s neck first. If she hadn’t already been in love with her, and ill-equipped to admit it, she would have fallen right there. “Lexa?”

“You going to give me a hand?” the lawyer asked, adjusting the box in her hand.

“What’s this?”

“You were right. I live here.”

“Oh?”

“I’m assuming that’s what you were asking in your very eloquent way.”

Clarke smiled slightly, still surprised by the moment. She didn’t move at all, but let her eyes move from the box to Lexa and back again.

“You want to live here?”

“I’m here most nights anyway.”

“It’s purely practical.”

“Are you going to help me or not?”

“You travel light,” Clarke smiled as she took the box. Lexa moved down the hall and grabbed another from the stack that now filled the hallway.

“Here we go.”
Chapter Summary

Ever consider writing canon Clexa after Clarke returns from fixing the Pike problem and they’re alone together for the first time? Lexa is worried and nervous. Maybe Clarke changed her mind about them. Maybe it was a one time thing for Clarke. She doesn’t know where they stand and how to broach the subject. Just want to see your take on what Commander self-control would do :)

The fanfare was minimal. It was nonexistent. But there were glares and angry muttering, scowls and snarls, absolute hatred poured upon the returning sky people as they came, once again, with promises and hope for peace with a people who were not eager to be near them, let alone speak of truces and partnership.

But Wanheda was different. She had proven herself to be different. She returned after once again fixing the problems in their clan, despite it not being ultimately enough to assuage any justice in the Grounders’ eyes.

Though the new law of the land was against retribution, there was still a need for a certain kind of justice.

Clarke felt the weight of it upon her shoulders, and even with Pike dead, even with others jailed and put on work crews, she knew in her heart it wasn’t enough. She knew, deep down that she didn’t believe it was enough.

But still, she returned, and she grew more nervous as she approached the tower.

Preventing all out war once again, preventing the annihilation of her people, again, and all at the cost of her own personal life.

The nerves were about seeing Lexa again after the… after the whole… the sex. She killed a man and returned for peace, but nothing else, she lied to herself. Except the sex was really good, and Lexa was… Lexa was quickly becoming a problem.

Lexa was the first thing Clarke did for herself. She was the first thing that felt like a decision, whereas everything else was nothing more than a series of events that continually happened, back to back, all at once.

“The Commander will see you shortly,” a guard muttered before closing the door to the throne room.

All at once, Clarke realized it was too late to run back home. She would have to see her again.

The reception had been cold. That was done on purpose, as a form of protection against the potential of the meeting and the expectations of the rest of her people. But Lexa did her duty. She sat in her chair and she listened once again to Clarke’s bleeding heart, and she said her peace, to affirm her commitment to peace and how the policy was going to experience growing pains, however it was not to be trifled with again.
As expected, Clarke nodded and agreed and swore allegiance.

Lexa existed simultaneously between two distinct regions. One of which was absolutely dying to look at the girl who fell from the sky and who liked it when Lexa swirled her tongue around her nipple. The other was absolutely fearing what seeing Wanheda might mean or do or change in their own private history.

And so, the leader of the thirteen clans didn’t do either. She scanned the room, let her eyes flit to Clarke’s face and away again before anyone could be the wiser. It was an exhausting battle that left her feeling drained once she dismissed the court and renewed the vows of all clans within the coalition.

Some days, it felt good to take off the clothes and the paint and the mantle of Heda. Some days it felt as if it couldn’t leave. But on this day, Lexa was grateful to disappear from the burden of being herself.

She went through the motions of getting rid of her day as the sun finally began to set on her torture. To see Clarke again after knowing her, after kissing her, after hearing the noises she made when she was touched and kiss, after actually feeling like she had some control over the wild creature with a stubborn streak larger than anything that ever existed. For a moment, Lexa was all Clarke wanted and needed, and to be filled with that kind of knowledge was alright at first, and yet terribly daunting and scary when faced with never feeling it again.

To be near Clarke alone was a rush akin to battle, and Lexa knew it was just as life or death.

Piece by piece, she took off the the title and the requirements of her place. The armor was placed on a ledge, the sash hung, the paint scrubbed clean.

She dipped a cloth into the water and began wiping away the day. It was methodical, and it was routine, a perfect way to become human, or at least as human as she would allow herself to become when no one else was around to know any different.

For days, for weeks, ever since Clarke disappeared, Lexa dreaded being alone as much as she dreaded seeing her again, though both were inevitable. When she was alone, she replayed every interaction, debated every future one, had thousands of conversations in her head. The weight of her position made her stern against the Sky People. The weight of her feelings for Clarke made her desperate to see her again.

It was just the one time, she told herself. It was just the one time thing because they were leaving, because she was weak. That was it. Weakness.

Night settled by the time she took a seat and picked up a book once more. It was dark and the fire was a warm glow against it in her room. But all of the words didn’t mean anything, didn’t form any actual ideas because though she stared at the page, she could only think of how Clarke was in the same building, just two floors away. For weeks they were nonexistent to each other, except as dirty thoughts that wormed their way through the mundane days. And now…. They were real once more.

The knock at her door made her jump, but Lexa knew, before she opened it. She knew already.

“Clarke of the Sky People,” she smiled politely enough.

“We need to discuss the sanctions and stipulations against my people,” Clarke barged through the opened door.

All Lexa could do was smile to herself at the carelessness of the other leader, that which she almost
greatly admired.

“I think they’re more than fair, but please,” the leader shook her head. “Come in and tell me why they are not.”

The room felt different now. Not like it did before, not like when she was alone or even the last time Clarke was there, but different. Lexa reminded herself that she was not weak, that she was the leader of her people, that she had many cower before her and that she ended lives because she was mighty in the way that thunder is just a noise but can rattle a house.

From her spot near the door, Lexa tilted her head and surveyed the girl who she knew tasted like salt and fire and rain. She watched her pace and find a spot across the room to stand and stare and play the game she was too impatient to win.

Clarke had a knack for tough decisions, she had a gift for protecting and sacrificing, but she didn’t know anything about herself or how to be that, and so Lexa watched her debate how to exist at all.

Being together in the same room made Lexa’s heart feel like it was sprinting.

“You looked at me like you didn’t even know me,” Clarke finally muttered as she crossed her arms and looked away.

“What?”

“I didn’t know what I was going to say to you, or if we’d be alone again.”

“I didn’t know that I’d ever see you again at all.”

“What we did… the last time. It wasn’t—”

“You don’t have to… We don’t. You said you had a complaint about sanctions?”

Lexa swallowed and looked at Clarke yet again, hoping for some kind of roadmap to her unpredictable mind. It would have been easier to toss herself from the ledge outside, but still, she just stared at the stranger who wasn’t.

“What do we do?”

“You have to observe the sanctions and there will be monitors that I trust surveying and keeping track—”

“What do we do with this,” Clarke corrected, motioning between them, though an entire room sat there.

“I wouldn’t be… I couldn’t be as bold as to think that this… you said not yet. I don’t want anything from you that you won’t give freely. I didn’t—”

“I don’t think I’ve ever seen you speak so much.”

Flustered, Lexa swallowed more words and took a deep breath. Before, as Clarke was worried and anxious, an amused smile toyed with the corners of her lips. Someone not versed in the intricacies and who had not collected her smiles and movements might have missed it, but Lexa was a lepidopterologist, addicted to the very moth-like movements of muscles and lips ghosting along her face.

Clarke took a step and watched Lexa swallow before tilting her head as she did when she was most
unsure of herself, a betrayal of her concern through bluffing.

“To know you is torture, but to be near you and have known you is painful.”

“I know,” Clarke nodded.

“If we just get one moment, then I am glad it was good for us both.”

“Maybe… we get more.”

“Do we?” Lexa sighed. The question was heavy and laden with the knowledge of finality and hopelessness.

Clarke took a step and watched Lexa stare back at her, searching for something, calculating chess moves without knowing the rules.

“I want more moments.”

Clarke took a step and watched Lexa look at her lips. She placed her hand on Lexa’s chest, moved her fingertips to her chin, gently ran them along her lips, amazed to have memorized them so well already, amazed to have missed them so eagerly in the span of a few weeks.

“We’ll have to fight for them,” she whispered.

“I’ve seen you fight,” Clarke smiled slightly.

“Not like this.”
Then

Chapter Summary

Prompt: Clarke learns Costia through the little pieces of her left behind, and she feels like she’s learned Lexa better too.

Though like nothing she has ever imagined before, Polis is a welcomed change, an eagerly greeted distraction from the magnitude of the events of the Mountain. Every day, it plays in her mind before she even gets out of the bed Lexa had prepared for her. Every morning after falling into an uneasy sleep, Clarke sees their faces, smells the air, feels the cool slickness of the lacquered chairs and worn folds in the clothes.

But, perhaps even more surprising than the city, than the sprawling land of seeming contentment and at least attempted life, is the way in which the Commander treats the visitor, the kindness shown, the tenderness in certain movements, that, despite the guilt of the betrayal, beg a different kind of forgiveness, an apology for the personal part of the larger war.

In the truest form of it, though, Clarke has no room to hold a grudge, and if she did, she’d never deem herself worthy of holding it. Instead, the one who fell from the sky feels a kind of kindredness with the Commander, that only grows with her time in the capital. Lexa understands the weight of lives, almost more than anyone back at camp could, and she understands the heaviness that came with wearing the crown.

But, despite this give and take to their relationship, Clarke feels unknowledgeable about the Commander, and when she thinks about it, she truly knew nothing about her at all other than the blood on their hands.

“What’s that?” Clarke finally asks, unable to hide her curiosity one evening.

“A ring,” Lexa grunts, placing it on the window sill of her room, a habit Clarke observed every time they’d been together.

“You don’t wear it.”

“I keep it with me.”

The bare of her back is clear in the darkness lit only by the single candle on the table. Clarke pulls the blanket up to her chest as the dress falls from Lexa’s hips. The fabric is thin, light in the summer in the capital, and it doesn’t make a sound as it hit the floor.

“Why don’t you wear it?” Clarke ventures after a moment of watching Lexa finish her nightly routine. She watches the muscles of her back move, the ink there overing over sinewy muscles while a cloth runs over her face.

“It is not mine.”

“But it’s important.”

“It is. It was,” Lexa agrees, cupping her hand behind the candle and blowing it out, drenching the
room in the dark save from the sliver of grey from the window and the moon and the world outside. Clarke feels the bed move, the sheets lift and at first, Lexa’s hand against her ribs, coasting over her stomach and along the bones until it reaches spine. Legs run along her own until she lays back and feels warm lips on her neck. Her fingertips move along Lexa’s shoulders, up her neck, tangle in her hair.

“Whose is it?”

“Really?” Lexa sighs and pulls away.

“I’m curious.”

“We have more pressing matters,” Lexa hummed, resuming her work. Clarke gave one more thought to it before giving into the night.

Come morning, Clarke stretches as she wakes, the noises from the city finally tapping at the window and murmuring through the cracks. The bed, however, is empty where normally a slumbering Commander still sleeps.

“You’re up early, Heda,” she grumbles, the rasp of her sleeping voice still napping her in throat. Lexa smiles from her seat though doesn’t look up.

“You snore.”

“I do not.”

From her seat on the opposite side of the room, Lexa stares at the ring in her fingers. She sees, just beyond that, on the edge of her vision, a naked blonde push the mess of hair out of her face. She wraps the thin sheet around herself as she stands and approaches. Begrudgingly, the Commander drops her leg from her knee and allows her to stand between them before taking a spot on her knee.

“I don’t snore,” Clarke argues once more, drawing out that shadow of a smile.

“I carry this with me,” Lexa holds it up for Clarke to see. “Because before, back before you fell from the sky, I figured that if I died, at least I would die with a part of Costia with me. But I could never bring myself to wear it.”

“I understand.”

“I did not mind the idea of death. I welcomed it. But now, I’d rather live, which is new.”

“You know that you have her with you all of the time, right?” Clarke runs her fingers absently along Lexa’s bare shoulder.

“That’s ridiculous. She is gone.”

“Memories. You have them and this.”

“I do not like to think about the past,” Lexa confesses with a sigh, tossing the ring on the table and taking another look at the girl in her lap. “Let’s sneak out today.”

“You’re the Commander. I thought you didn’t sneak,” Clarke sasses.

“You have much to learn.”
The nights she spends in the Commander’s room are few and far between. Clarke has taken to the healers, shadowing, learning, teaching, helping when she can, keeping herself busy.

“Is that the Commander?” she asks Oma, one of the healers. Older and grey, she does not talk much and her hands move too quickly for Clarke to follow, but she shadows her as often as possible.

“Mmm,” she grunts, tying a sprain.

“Does she often go to the market?”

“It is to see the family,” Nesta offers.

“Which family?”

“The Commander visits Costia’s family, pays her respects, makes sure they are alright for the year to come,” he explains. “She was an only child. They grow older and have no one to take care of them. Heda assigned someone. It is a sign of respect and guilt.”

“Not guilt,” Oma grunts again, rubbing down skin of a patient. “She honours the dead.”

“Did you know… her? Costia?” Clarke asks, quietly, afraid, however improbable it is, that Lexa may hear despite the distance and noise separating them.

“Everyone knows her. No one speaks of her.”

“Why?”

“She is dead.”

“What was she like?”

“A sweet child. She was quick. A good hunter.”

“How often does the Commander visit?”

“Once per year.”

“Indra said you were out here,” Clarke calls, so as not to startle the ponderous girl sitting on the edge of the wall overlooking the bay. The waves are gentle, only lapping at the stones far below them, the water is still, only wobbling slightly in the moonlight.

“I thought you were going back to the Ark tonight,” Lexa replies as the blonde takes a seat beside her.

The walls on the edge of Polis are her favorite. Concrete and high, the water is all the can see. Clarke shivers slightly in the breeze.

“I didn’t want to.”

“You’ve put it off three times already.”

“Trying to get rid of me?”

“Not at all.”

“I’ll go tomorrow,” Clarke nods, almost to herself. “What are you doing out here?”
“It’s a nice night, and the world is at peace. I want to remember it.”

“You were going to miss me,” Clarke needles, nudging the Commander’s side.

“I was. I am glad you are here.”

“It’s hard to tease you.”

“Will you stay in my room tonight?” Lexa ventures, sneaking a glance at this girl who she is grateful
exists.

“Yeah,” Clarke nods, watching the smirk appear.

“I’m glad.”

“You seem different, lately.”

“How so?”

“Happier.”

“Maybe it’s you”

The room was dark and Clarke was already in bed. Lexa smiled at the sight, at the messy hair and
crooked smile that waited for her as she undid her braids. From her spot, on her side, Clarke watched
in silence as Lexa’s hands worked through her hair, as she poured water in the bowl and splashed
her face, as she laid her dagger on the table.

Out of habit, Lexa moved to the window, but retreated with nothing to put there any longer. She
undid her dress, pushed it over her hips, and blew out the candle.

“What happened?” Clarke whispered as sheets were lifted and warmth added beside her.

“I let her go,” Lexa whispered, kissing her collarbone.
If

Chapter Summary

After reading slow dancing II it got me thinking. If the other one died, how would they cope? Who would cope better? I'm guessing the answer would change based on whatever universe they're in, so maybe just your head canon(s) based on the works you've written or the 100 universe itself?

For a moment. For the briefest of instants. For absolutely a significantly insignificant measure of time. For the lapse in consciousness between being fully asleep and being fully awake, in that delicious, dream-saturated slice of the day, Lexa managed to forget and remember, simultaneously.

When the sun was still sleeping, still dragging the end of someone else’s day to an end before starting the rest, Lexa woke after uneasy dreams and a weak attempt at sleeping.

Muscle memory did it, reached out her arm and dragged it along the open half of the bed. The instant between nerve firings, between the muscles picking up on it and making her hand realize the bed was empty, that was all she got most days, to forget that Clarke was gone and remember that she was alone in their bed.

Wide-eyed and awake, Lexa stared at the empty pillow, the unruffled sheets, and as her eyes adjust to the darkness and she turns over, unable to look any longer, Clarke’s picture on the night stand. The cycle is only complete when she gives up and lays on her back, staring at the ceiling, and hoping to catch a few more hours of, if not sleep, maybe some rest.

The dreams were bad at first. Not terrible in the way that she was haunted by mangled corpses or ghosts, or unable to speak, or have spiders in her skin. But that horrible kind of terrible where everything was perfect and she woke up absolutely crushed remembering that she wouldn’t have those moments of peace ever again.

And so the first few months after the accident were spent in a comatose like state of chasing those dreams and wanting to never be awake. To be awake was a painful process.

“Mommy, wake up,” a little voice whispered. Lexa knew it was morning. She watched the sun warm her window from behind her eyelids, became aware of every minute passing so that time itself bent and folded for her.

Lixa tried not to smile until the accompanying pats came to her cheek. A cold nose met her nose as her daughter settled atop her.

“Mommy, I’m awake now.”

Every morning, without fail, the human alarm clock appeared. At first people helped, took her, distracted her, spoiled her because she had a dead mom and no one knew what to say to fix that hole that would exist forever in this little girl’s heart. And Lexa was useless to even breathe on her own, let alone take care of her, as much as it hurt.

For hours, sometimes, Lexa vaguely remembered her daughter laying on her wife’s pillow and
staring right back at her, occasionally rubbing her cheeks, or giving her Eskimo kisses, despite the unresponsive parent. But Lexa was trapped in her own body, despite herself at first.

“You are definitely awake,” Lexa smiled, wrapping her arms around her daughter and smothering her in a bear hug.

When the alarm clock sounded, when the feet could be heard pattering down the hall, and when the bed dipped in the far corner, and when a stuffed lion was tossed in beside Lexa, her day started. Her sadness took a back seat. It did not disappear, because sadness is a stain that one cannot get out, all of the time. Instead, Lexa wrestled it, wrangled it, hog tied it and left it there, on her shoulders, promising to set it free again once her daughter was asleep. Those were the two jobs she had, anymore.

“Good dreams?” Lexa asked.

“Great dreams.”

“What do you think we should have for breakfast?”

“Waffles.”

“I agree,” Lexa nodded.

“Let’s go! I have school today!” Rosie hopped up, grabbing her lion and hopping towards the end of the bed. “It’s field trip day!”

“That’s right. A trip to the planetarium,” Lexa smiled, pushing herself up and stalling at the end of the bed for her daughter to hop on her back. A lion’s mangy mane tickled her nose through the tight grip.

“Are you coming?”

“I have… work,” Lexa swallowed, moving down the hall towards her daughter’s room. She twisted her around and threw her on the bed in a giggling heap.

“You don’t have to work. Like sometimes I don’t have to go to school.”

“You always have to go to school,” Lexa rolled her eyes and began pulling clothes from a drawer. Her daughter was smart. Was ready to skip grades smart. Was too smart for Lexa, that was certain, a fact she was made aware of daily, one that she cursed Clarke for in the best kind of way.

“They have planets at the planetarium.”

“I don’t think that’s how it works.”

“It is,” her daughter informed her as she stood on the bed and began taking her clothes off.

“Get dressed. I’m going to go make breakfast,” Lexa shook her head, helping pull off the pyjama top that got stuck on wrists and neck.

Lexa didn’t have the heart to tell her daughter that she couldn’t go because she fell in love with Clarke in the planetarium. And they couldn’t go to the diner on fifth because she fell in love with her wife there, too. And they didn’t walk to school on the road that passed in front of the bar that she fell in love at, as well. And the entire town was mapped and restricted because her wife existed one minute, and then ceased to exist another, and it was too hard for Lexa, most days.
On brave days, Lexa could try it. Once, just a few weeks ago, she walked into the diner and sat at the bar, staring at their regular booth before leaving without ordering. Once, many months ago, she sat in the park on the bench across of their bench, and she felt as if her very heart muscle was deteriorating. And so Lexa was not that brave anymore. It was self-preservation. It was for her daughter. She could either be a widow or be a mother, but not at the same time.

There were moments she got away from Clarke. Not many, but a few. Reaching for the toaster, she slipped from her mind, and for a few minutes, during the mundane task of getting breakfast, she forgot about her. But by the time she tossed on her own clothes and made it back down, her daily reminder was sitting at the table, pouring too much syrup on her plate.

“Do you want strawberries?” Lexa asked, pulling out the milk.

“Not today. Strawberries are only good some days.”

Rosie had Clarke’s nose. Had her ears. Had that birthmark on her shoulder. Had her mouth, had her penchant for intensity and knack for trouble. She had that one curly bit of hair at the base of her neck that refused to go away and never wanted to be trapped in a pig tail. She had her facial expressions and her smell and sometimes, her smile.

“You know, tonight is your sleepover at Grandma’s house,” Lexa reminded her. “But only if you’re good at school.”

“I’m always good.”

“You punched someone yesterday.”

“He deserved it.”

“Why?”

“I can’t tell you.”

“Rosie.”

“Can’t.”

“If you get in trouble on your field trip you aren’t going to Grandma’s and Jake is going to be there, too.”

“I’m always good,” her daughter repeated, concentrating hard on her waffle. She had Clarke’s tell, her signal for lying, when she couldn’t meet your eyes and focused too hard on the task at hand, no matter what it was. Lexa shook her head and sighed.

“You know you can tell me anything, right? I won’t be mad. I would rather you use your words. Can’t just run around hitting people. Everyone will think I’m raising some kind of heathen.”

“What’s that?”

“A wild child.”

“That’s me.”

“No, that’s not supposed to be you,” Lexa chuckled and shook her head, already exasperated.

“I’ll be good.”
“Thank you. And not hit anyone.”

“I can’t promise that.”

“What?” Lexa paused, struck by disbelief.

“Mom says I shouldn’t say promises unless I can keep them. Especially to my moms.”

“You’d rather hit someone than make a promise to me?”

“Yes.”

“Rosie…”

“Can I go brush my teeth?”

“Yeah.”

As soon as she was gone, Lexa ran her hands over her cheeks. She looked at the ceiling, asking it what she was supposed to do with an answer like that, with a kid like that, with her daughter, with the day. It had no answers, and so she simply cleaned off the kitchen table from breakfast and started to get her bag together for work.

By the time they left the house, her daughter seemingly gave up on the conversation at the table, and Lexa was ill-equipped to try to fix it, afraid it could only be made worse. She made a mental note to tell the therapist when she took her daughter next week. It was a task she hated, but Rosie didn’t speak for the first year after Clarke, and Lexa had to fix it as best she could.

Rosie held her hand as they walked, her backpack snug on her back, her winter hat pulled far below her ears to keep her warm, her mittens squeezing Lexa’s own.

The walk to school was one of the best times of day for Lexa. The trip with her daughter, the things they talked about, the streets and the people, and for a minute they were normal.

“Hey, listen,” Lexa crouched down as they approached the school yard. She pulled the zipper a little higher on her daughter’s coat. “I don’t think you should make promises you can’t keep either. But you also should be able to promise that you won’t punch people.”

“Alright.”

“Alright.”

“I’m going to school now.”

“I love you.”

“I love you, too.”

Even though the air was crisp, Lexa stood opposite the school and watched her daughter walk into the school. She watched her stalk, watched her grumble, and felt an ache in her heart when she almost heard Clarke saying that Rosie was just like her, grumpy and stern. The wind seemed to tell her that.

Much like her daughter, she stalked down the sidewalk with those memories and words chasing her as she wove on her familiar route.
At work, coworkers vary between pity and over-zealous matchmaking. Lexa grins and bears it. Never one to be rambunctious or even extroverted, everyone she works with and her friends are able to notice a further resignation into herself after… after it.

Sometimes, in the middle of the day, Lexa can’t breathe. It seizes her, violently, as if she’s all but suddenly swallowed an orange whole and it is sitting in her windpipe. It does not seem to bother anyone else, but it lasts a few minutes. And she closes her eyes and tried to swallow until she can. And while her heart beats in her ears and blood rushes through her cheeks, the world spins on, as if it never happened.

That was her day. She did her job, and she did it well enough. Sometimes it was her salvation, her escape. She had to turn it on for her daughter, had to be alive, had to hide, had to live, and sometimes that was too much to ask. At work she didn’t have to be anything at all.

“Hey, kid,” Lexa smiled and greeted her daughter as she made her way down the front steps. “How was your trip to the planetarium?”

“There weren’t any real planets.”

“Yeah,” Lexa enjoyed her adorable disappointment. “Did you punch anyone?”

“No.”

“What’s wrong?”

“There were stars, on the roof, and they reminded me of Mom.”

There was a tiny hand in her hand now, and Lexa froze on the corner, trying to think of something to say.

“Well, that’s good, right?” she tried, pushing the button, afraid to look down at those eyes.

“I miss her. I try not to.”

“You’re allowed to miss her.”

“You don’t.”

“I do,” Lexa shook her head, quickly becoming frazzled. “Rosie, I miss your mom every single second.”

“Yeah?”

“Oh goodness, yes,” she smiled sadly as her daughter watched her face. “Every time I look at you, I think of her. You are just like her. And every time I smell certain smells. Or when I see something funny, I always want to tell her about it. I think about her always.”

“Okay.”

“What made you think of her?”

“The stars make pictures in the sky.”

“Really?” Lexa feigned dumb.

“Yeah. There are all kinds of pictures, and they have stories, and they all are up there because they
did something great and Mom used to tell me the stories and I remembered it today.”

“Well, that is always a good thing,” the mother tried, holding her daughter’s hand.

“Yeah.”

The two walked in silence, though Lexa’s head vibrated with the thoughts she tried to sift through. Her mind swirled all over the place, but nothing sounded right, nothing felt like the right thing, and the guilt of being at a loss roared all over.

She had nothing much left. Her daughter was quiet, and Lexa didn’t know how to make her not. By the time they got home, Lexa collapsed on the bed and stared at the ceiling again while her daughter changed.

The noise of pattering feet came some time later. Lexa stayed in bed. The corner dipped as her daughter approached, crawling up towards the head board. Lexa felt her lips move despite herself when those eyes appeared.

“I called grandma,” Rosie whispered, inching closer. “Told her I wanted to stay home with you tonight.”

“You can go, honey.”

“I kind of don’t want to. Is that okay?”

“Of course. Are you tired?”

“No.”

Lexa closed her eyes when her daughter leaned her forehead on her own.

“I won’t fight anymore.”

“Thank you.”

“Don’t be sad.”

“How could I be sad when I get to spend time with my favorite girl on the planet?” Lexa grinned. “I’m just tired. Long day at work.”

“Me too. Long day.”

“Yeah?”

“So much stuff to do.”

“How about I make us some super special grilled cheese? Maybe we can watch a movie?”

“Okay.”

“Tell me what you’re thinking at just this moment,” Lexa asked, remembering the question Clarke would ask whenever she got too broody.

“I’m glad I don’t have to go to grandma’s.”

“I thought you liked Grandma’s.”
“I don’t like not waking you up.”

“I’m plenty okay at waking myself up, honey.”

“I like you in the morning. You smile because of the good dreams.”

“You don’t like me at night?”

“I like when you smile.” Lexa felt her lips pull up at the corners as her daughter spoke those words.

“Tell me about the planetarium? What did you learn?”

“Jupiter has 67 moons.”

“Now that’s a busy sky.”

Lexa was always distracted when her daughter smiled. It was Clarke, personified. For the longest time, she was afraid of it, could barely look at her daughter, and now she drank it in as if she would never see water again.

The evening was quiet, was them, was their family, now. Rosie fell asleep tucked against Lexa’s side, her mother’s arm over her shoulder, both in their pj’s and fresh from the bath. Lexa let her sit there for a little while before making herself take her to bed.

It was their tradition, their schedule. It kept her going. If she didn’t have such a precise calendar, she’d lose it. And as the day ended, the familiar ache stretched and began to pull itself from its cage.

Gently, Lexa pulled the blanket up over her daughter’s shoulder. Her mouth was parted, and her curls a mess. She hugged the stuffed lion and nuzzled into the pillow.

“Night, kid,” Lexa whispered, kissing her forehead before turning on the nightlight and closing the door behind her.

The dishes were done, the house cleaned and ready for the next day. This was the worst time of the night, when there was nothing left to do. But Lexa checked the locks, turned out the lights, crawled into bed without needing any guidance at all.

For longer than she would ever know, she laid in bed and stared at the empty pillow.

“It’ll be easier tomorrow, right?” she whispered, her hand gliding over the empty space. No answer comes as she takes a deep breath and closes her eyes.
“Again?” Anya sighs, sitting up in her bed. The soft footsteps of the pacing Commander wake her for the fifth night in a row. The candles are low and dawn is close, the ground is hard in the impending chill, preparing for winter that will be harder than the last.

Sitting up slightly, Anya surveys the familiar scene. The Commander does not pace with purpose, and perhaps these moments are the only times Anya sees the last little bits of her Second come through. Before the battles, before the coalition building, before the plotting and fighting and decision making. No movements are wasted as Lexa paces, though her tempo changes almost in time with her thoughts. The deeper the furow, the quicker, the longer, the harder the strides, and then the relief, a small, curt nod and a meandering pace until the next fear or memory or thought strikes and twists the very nerves of her spine like those old mechanical wind-up toys she found once as a kid.

Absently, from years and years of practice, almost as if it is an extension of herself, Lexa twirls and taps her daggar against her palm, winds up and pretends to throw, moves it between her fingers.

Ever since the night she walked away from the Mountain, Anya finds Lexa awake before dawn, awake deep into the night, debating, torturing, punishing herself. It is hard to watch because suddenly, a decision which should have been so easy is death sentence. It should not matter, but Anya knows why it does. Lexa knows why it does. And still, no word about the blonde has been uttered.

“We have a long ride at daybreak,” Anya finally states. The Commander doesn’t stop her pacing, only looks up for a moment before nodding, clenching her jaw for a moment.

“Go back to sleep, Anya. You need your rest,” Lexa tries. Still feeble and aching, she is the reason they have not left for Polis earlier. The Commander refuses to leave without her, and she is still too weak from the second round of tortures of the Mountain.

“I’m fine.” Her legs slide out of bed and hit the ground with a thump. She stretches the soreness out of her bones, or at least tries. “You are the one who needs to rest. You haven’t slept in years.”

“I sleep.”

“When?”

“At night.”

“Liar.”

Lexa snorts and meets her friend’s eyes with a weak smile. Anyone else would have never muttered that word directed towards the Commander, but Anya is a special case.

“You had to do it, Heda,” Anya promises when the Commander looks away at the subject being brought up. “For your people.”
“Why is it so hard?”

“You formed an alliance with them. You want to honour that, and you’ve never been one to go back on your word. But perhaps it is for the best. The Skaikru strained your coalition.”

“They saved your life. You are alive because of their sacrifice,” Lexa reminds her friend, her protector now.

“I will pay my debt to Clarke kom skaikru,” Anya swears. “I am not worried.”

“What if she is dead?”

Anya sees the Commander grow agitated and flustered at the thought though she hides it well by turning away and tossing her daggar on the table.

“If I learned one thing during my time with her, it is that death may be afraid of Clarke kom skaikru.” Lexa smiles at the suggestion. “The alliance may still be formed with them. Marcus kom Skaikru was very receptive, and Bellamy was good. He saved many of our people.”

“You should rest.”

Before the words are completely out of her mouth, Lexa hears the commotion outside and grabs her daggar as a reflex. Anya stands just as quick, though it makes her woozy.

“Heda!” a scout approaches the tent and enters when Lexa gives him the clear, sheathing her knife. “The Moutain, it falls. The Mountain Men are dead!”

“How do you know?” the leader asks, apprehensive, searching him eagerly.

“Last night, we saw the Skaikru leave. The doors are open now,” the scout relayed eagerly.

“Send two others to observe the Skaikru, and take twelve and tell the rest of the clans. Some will be back home already. I call for a Senate in two weeks from tomorrow.”

“Yes, Heda,” he nodded before leaving just as fast as he came.

For just a minute, Lexa stands, still and unwavering, looking at the door to the tent. Slowly, she turns to Anya, and both furrow and try to think of the scenario in which this is possible, though the only thing that springs to mind is that indeed, this blonde who fell from the sky, has someone made even death fear her.

“Does this ease your guilt, Heda?” Anya ventures.

“We should start getting ready. It will be dawn soon.”

Polis is not home to Anya, though she does not mind staying close to the Commander in the wake of the news of the Fall of the Mountain. The high walls and the bustling city inside are almost a comfort, a small inkling of hope that is almost foreign to everyone inside with nothing left to fear. The ongoing warfare between clans ends with the coalition, the ongoing threat of the Mountain ends with the death of the Mountain Men. All that remains are stray reapers, and those are maneagable.

It should not have been a surprise, Anya decides, as she looks down from the gate tower at the entrance to Polis. Though thrown open in preparation for the celebration and arrival of the Coalition, thrown open because there are no more monsters left, the leader of the Skaikru stands outside, waiting to be granted entry.
When she is called to check on this visitor, she eagerly follows the guard, making sure Lexa is preoccupied in her study. If it is a false alarm, or another leader, other than the blonde, she could not bear to put Lexa through that.

But it is Clarke, unscathed and surprisingly intact at having made the journey on her own, and Anya smiles slightly to herself as she approaches.

“Your fight never seems over, Clarke kom Skaikru,” Anya greets her, arm held out. Though almost pained and different than the last time she has encountered her, Clarke takes Anya’s peace-offering, gripping her forearm, unable to look up at her eyes.

“I have no more fight left in me,” she confesses.

“Are you here as leader of the Skaikru for the Senate?”

“I have no Kru,” Clarke offers. “At least… not anymore. I don’t know why I’m here.”

“How did you find Polis?”

“I just kept waking up, and I just kept walking,” Clarke confessed. “I was in search of the ocean.”

“How are your people?” Anya finally asks the question she is afraid of hearing an answer to, one that she is almost guilty for, one that she needs to know to tell the Commander.

“All alive,” Clarke nods. “But the Mountain Men…”

“I have heard, they fall.”

“I killed them.” Clarke lifts her head and straightens her spine at the confession. It is not strength on her part, but the weight of it that makes her shoulders stoop. “318 people. Men, women, and children.”

“You… defeated the Mountain?” Anya stares at her, not believing it almost. She did not give Clarke time to answer, but simply takes a cursory glance at her appearance and finally nods. “The Commander will want to see you.”

“I shouldn’t,” Clarke swallows and takes a step back.

“No one will harm you here, Clarke.”

“I’m not worried about that.”

It takes hours to find time to introduce Clarke to Lexa once more, but when Lexa walks in with the leader of the Skaikru behind her, she sees Lexa’s eyes grow. Standing beside the throne there, it is a sight to see, the two of them dancing around any kind of actual communication.

“You will stay here, then.” Anya watches Lexa tilt her chin in that familiar move of sizing the girl standing in her room with her offer.

“I can’t,” the wanderer shakes her head.

“The threats may be dwindling, but it is not safe for you to be alone out there still,” Lexa reminds her. “You are grieving-”

“I am not grieving,” Clarke interrupts. “I am a murderer, and I saved my people after you broke our
alliance. I should not be here. I do not know where I will go, but I know it can’t be here.”

Anya looks at the Commander and back to the leader before her, watches them size each other, watches them argue and stew and plead and apologize and yell silently in their heads, their eyes straining as if they are screaming at each other between their respective ears.

“I owe you a debt,” Anya takes a step forward.

“What?” Clarke finally looks away.

“I owe you a debt. You saved me from the Mountain. I must repay this debt. Please stay as my guest and allow me to repay you for my life.”

“I did nothing to save you. Lexa did,” Clarke corrects her.

“You saved me and I owe you,” Anya repeated. “Stay, enjoy our city. You will not be bothered.”

“For a few days,” Clarke relents.

Anya watches the scene unfold, amused and barely able to hide it. The two leaders keep a safe distance during the first few days of Clarke’s adjustment to Polis, though in seemingly disinterested ways, Lexa asks after her, takes more strolls to see if she spots her, sends her things as she thinks of them, makes sure she hasn’t left yet.

But after three days, Lexa has reached her wit’s end, and, from what Anya could hear, has not slept in as long with more pacing and absent walks in which her mind wanders every which way.

“You were so close,” Anya offers, mildly hopeful as Lexa stalks back through the study after failing to grow the nerve to tap Clarke on the shoulder and say anything.

“What do you say to someone who kisses you and then blames you for forcing them to commit over three hundred counts of murder?” Lexa shrugged, leaning over her map, stretched wide from corner to corner. “I am busy anyway.”

“Yes, Heda,” the Second nods.

Though the arriving members of the Senate are preoccupied with the celebration, Anya searches for the Commander so she may be present to greet and celebrate, as well. From her spot atop the wall, she watches the Commander slip outside with a certain sky person, both walking as if they do not hate the other.

Instead, meandering along the sunset-lit path, the two seem to be deep in conversation, the blonde waving her hands for her point, the Commander nodding emphatically, hands clasped tightly behind her back as she ponders the words.

Anya decides to give them a moment before pulling them inside. From her post, she watches them sit, out in the world, oblivious and content.

Clarke has nothing to do with the Senate, refusing to act as representative of her people. The weeks pass and winter arrives, making the ground stiff and as unforgiving as the wind that strives to strip trees and paint. The few days the leader of the Skaikru plans on staying quickly evaporate into two months.
“You’ve kissed her once, haven’t you?” Anya questions, surveying the snow from the window.

“That was a long time ago,” Lexa sighs. “Too much has happened.”

“Exactly!” Anya argues. “The world is different than it was. The world is safer than ever, we have time to think of things like kisses and girls and we open the doors and we do not hear of war as far as the coalition spreads. That was long ago, but if it happened then, why can’t it happen now?”

“Because of the things we had to do to get us here.”

The ground is littered with snow, and still Anya sees the two walking through the market. Huffs of breaths and words float up onto the clouds, adding to the flurry.

Anya takes her job seriously, proud to have taken Gustus’ spot upon her return, to be with the girl she helped raise. She keeps her distance as the two leaders walk, greet shop keepers, greet kids, are met with waves and almost apprehension at times.

“Maybe I should go,” Clarke offers.


“Some of the other clans have been nice enough to invite me-”

“Please?”

Anya watches Clarke blush, though she’d blame the wind and the cold for the color of her cheeks, she was certain.

It only takes another month for Anya to meet Clarke in the hall outside of the Commander’s bedroom early one morning. Though she expected her to be bashful and shy about it, Anya is surprised to find a Clarke with her head held high and a permanent smirk, almost of a conquering hero as they pass.

Lexa, however, is less articulate when Anya knocks on her door.
Chapter Summary

Saw this floating around and thought you’d kill us a little more: AU - Lexa opens her eyes and there’s Anya’s face looking down on her, smiling.

She wakes with a gasp, as if she hasn’t ever breathed before, as if her lungs were completely empty. Her heart races to compensate as her eyes immediately bulge with the inhalation. With a few blinks, Lexa registers only the sky and the clouds, the dirt and grass beneath her, and the oddly familiar giggle that feels as if it were from another time, another place.

“You lasted longer than I thought you would without me.”

“You could have warned me,” Lexa smiles and closes her eyes, striving to conjure those eyes once more. The ache of it hits her as she struggles. The ache and the longing and the joy.

“Where’s the fun in that? You knew your time was coming. Death always comes. I thought I trained you better, but…”

“Not that,” she turns and sees Anya for the first time.

Gone is the warpaint. Gone are the scars. Gone is the dirt and the grime and the pain of their past lives. They share a smile and Lexa finally sits up, her hand migrating to where her wound should have been. She presses her palm there and closes her eyes, the ghost of her healer’s pressure there.

“You met Clarke.”

“Yeah,” Lexa meets her eyes. “I met her.”

The pain is overwhelming, quickly unsettling the surprise of being there, quickly usurping the joy at seeing her old friend. Anya watches, is prepared for this, must have known it was coming the moment she met the blonde so long ago. She sits patiently as Lexa’s eyes grow wide with the realizations, they grow glassy, they grow red as tears quietly slip down her cheeks while her mouth gapes like a fish. The tears run like rivers, dripping quietly from her chin, but Lexa does not move to stop them.

Before, she must have gotten more time with her. This time, it is just a moment. The truth is, she’s lived a thousand separations, and decades or seconds together, nothing is enough. Not one thing will ever stop her from wanting.

For the first time, for the entirety of her life, she lets them go, smiles despite them.

“I knew she would be it,” Anya places her hand on Lexa’s knee. “It’s okay.”

The entirety of the moment happens, sneaks up and overwhelms the Commander as she swallows and stares at her friend. Behind grey eyes, a million thoughts swirl, and Anya can practically count each zipping by, being catalogued, being memorizes and extricated.

“Tell me about her.”
Lexa doesn’t know where to start, and she doesn’t know where to stop once she does. The words pour out of her, the most she can remember ever speaking. They rush out, stepping on each others toes in the mad rush to be said, to be remembered, to be told.

She wipes her cheeks and laughs when she talks about Clarke’s learning of their language. She closes her eyes and pictures moments, explains them vividly, as if she can still taste them. She tells Anya about Clarke’s drawings, about her sass, about her fear, about her prayer. She could fill lifetimes talking about their time together.

The anger comes halfway through her stories. It sloshes through her bones and thoughts at the robbery, at the treachery of it, of not being allowed to be happy. It is quietly calmed by the moments she did have, how they act as a bandage for the rest, how even the few of them that there are, are enough. Even her anger is short-lived when it comes to the girl who fell from the sky.

“I just want to be certain,” Anya stops her as they both laugh. “Did you really stop an entire war just to impress a girl?”

Lexa just smiles, small at first, nothing more than a smirk before it grows too wide to be contained and she has to take a deep breath and close her eyes again, because what a girl she was.
Chapter Summary

**FIX IT PLEASE**

It takes longer than she would have wanted to get the bleeding under control. But frantic as she is, Clarke moves deftly, always calm when put into these situations, her brain always clicking, always shutting down that impulse in the back of her throat that filled her mouth with spit, waiting for the run, waiting for the escape, the sobs, the vomit. None of it existed.

“Get me Aden!” Clarke barks. “Get me all of the nightbloods!”

“Let me work,” Titus murmurs softly, preparing himself. “It is our way.” Anxiously, he looks to the Commander, still waiting for her permission, even in this state.

“If we do it my way, we save her,” Clarke insists, pushing harder onto Lexa’s stomach. “Get them now. Get my mother here. She should only be outside the capital. Send Octavia.”

“Clarke,” Lexa coughs, wincing slightly. Even soaked with blood, the noise is still tender and soft.

“No!” Wanheda snaps, her nostrils flaring, her jaw set. “We’re not doing this. You’re not dying, and you,” she looks back at the advisor, “are not shepherding in a new spirit.”

“Clarke,” the Commander smiles slightly putting her hand over the ones holding her together.

“Stop! I want this one! I want you!” the healer insists. She feels tears on her cheeks. she feels them the same warm and sticky feeling on her skin as Lexa’s blood. “Go now, Titus.”

It takes a moment of debate, but he disappears when Lexa nods his dismissal. From the bed, she lets her head fall back into the pillows as the pressure on her abdomen grows too uncomfortable. Her mouth is warm, is full of that dirty kind of grit that comes with blood replacing spit. It takes an effort unheard of before or imagined by anyone or beyond anything she has ever done before, but Lexa opens her eyes and stares at the blonde with the furrowed brow, unsure of where to go from there.

“It will be alright, Clarke,” she promises, swallowing as best she can.

“We’re going to fix it. I’m going to fix it. You’ll be okay. Stay with me,” Clarke agrees, though both know they are talking about different moments, fighting different battles. “Murphy. Come here I need your help.”

The pain grips her, scratches and tears at her in places she never knew existed. Her body rocks with the movement, and she feels as if she were drowning. But still, Lexa fights against it, tries to remain stoic and unaffected.

Th anger helps. While Clarke works and directs Murphy, asking and demanding and making arrangements, Lexa tries to focus on the words, though she can’t actually hear anything at all. It is all a blur while blood pumps through her ears and tries to spill out of her wound despite Clarke’s best efforts.
“Hey, hey, stay awake, Lexa,” Clarke demands, rubbing the Commander’s cheek. Black streaks appear on her skin as she smiles into the healer’s palm. “Open your eyes. Do it. Stay with me. I just got you.”

Lexa could hear the anger in Clarke’s voice, and despite herself it made her smile. The righteous anger a kind of amusing joke, as if the title of Wanheda had gone to her head. For a moment her own private joke made her forget her own wrath.

Until she opened her eyes.

She watched Clarke’s mouth move. She saw her lips and the slope of her nose and the smear of blood on her forehead as she worked. The sight of her made Lexa angry. As the pain rolled up through her, as it hurt more and more and she fought it, she felt the first pricks of rage tightening her muscles.

To be so close to happiness, to fathom it, to touch it, to taste it, to experience contentedness and safety and what she imagines being alive must mean, and to have it wretched away, just as she gets the faintest glimmer erases, for just the tiniest of seconds, the years of training and breeding.

“Lexa,” Clarke whispers, getting closer as she pulls the sleeve up the Commander’s shirt, ready to start putting more blood into what has now ended up on her own clothes. “You are not allowed to die.”

“You were right,” Lexa smiles despite the tear that falls down the side of her face and into her hair. Her body is wrecked with shakes as her lungs stutter and her mouth gurgles.

“You are not allowed,” the healer orders, jamming in the needle and placing both her hands on Lexa’s head, gripping tightly until the Commander is forced to open her eyes and meet those blue ones. “Do you hear me, Lexa? I need your spirit to stay right where it is.”

With a quick movement, before Lexa can argue or dissuade her, Clark kisses her, hungrily, worriedly, anxiously, fretfully, softly, presses their lips together, as if that could convince her to fight harder.

“Not yet,” she vows.

When the chaos clears, when there is nothing left to check or stitch or mend or monitor, Clarke is left with a surge of the past few hours. The entirety of the situation washes over her at once when the realization hits her that there is nothing left to do; there is nothing left for her to do.

As much as she doesn’t want to leave Lexa’s side, Clarke makes her way to the balcony as her mother and another healer from the capital finish, carefully making sure to avoid any sorts of infections. The cool air whips at her face though the layer of dried blood protects her.

Though she has nothing in her stomach, Clarke throws up, wretched over and weak and weary. As much as she thought it would help, she only feels worse as she rights herself and drags her wrist along her mouth before spitting again.

She almost lost Lexa. She might lose Lexa. Lexa could die. The thoughts swirl and only magnify how dizzy she feels. With a deep breath, she pushes her hands into her hair and crouches, sliding her back down the railing until she is hunched over in a small ball balanced on her heels.

The tears come. They come with an urgency that defies logic, but Clarke doesn’t stop, can’t stop. She steeples her hands in front of her lips and looks up, back into the room. She catches shadows in
the candle light as the evening grows well into night around her outside.

It grows harder to breathe as she wraps her arms around herself, hoping to constrict the sobs that rattle around like angry old me in her chest.

The work her mother did had been perfect, but even with that, in these conditions, with these tools, with the delay of travel, nothing is certain. It would be a long night.

None of that is at the forefront of her thoughts though, not like the singular notion that Lexa almost ceased to be, could cease to exist, and right now, right when happiness seemed… plausible. Clarke felt her hands rung along her own neck, where they begin scratching at the blood caked and staining.

It is all too much. All of it. The night, the day, the entire course of human events which has led to this exactly moment. She feels the weight of it all as her fingertips dig into her skin.

Ineffectual and antsny, she stops only when she can’t stand herself, only when her thighs burn and her back aches.

Quietly, regaining herself, Clarke stands, wiping her cheeks and sniffing as she turns away from the door. The wind soothes the raw skin on her neck and jaw, soothes her lungs from the punishment they’d endured, not being able to work at all during the surgery.

With a final deep breath, Clarke steadies, and turns back into the room.

At first she in convinced that she’s dead. It all would make sense. And then the pain comes, telling her that she is very much alive. Her chest feels as if it has exploded from the inside. When she tries to move, Lexa finds herself unable to sit up, unable to open her eyes. She tries to speak, but fails before falling back asleep.

Tired as she was, Clarke notices the change in Lexa’s breathing. Deep into the night and almost the morning already, the healer sees the Commander swallow, furrow, inhale sharply and fall back asleep.

As soon as she moves, Clarke is up from her seat beside the bed, hovering, her hands soothing Lexa’s hair. As if it would work, she runs her knuckles along Lexa’s cheek, waiting for some sort of reaction, though none came.

Deflated, she takes her patient’s pulse once more before sitting and balancing her elbows on her knees. Hunched over and rooting her hands in her hair, she sighs.

It is hard going, trying to swallow. Lexa forces herself to as she knits her eyes together against the light coming from some direction. The coughs that accompany her dry throat hurt. Tiny, weak things as they are, they feel as if a tornado is raging in her belly.

“Hey, hey,” Clarke’s voice cuts into the quiet, into the pain. Lexa turns her head toward its direction and fights to open her eyes, to see her again, to be certain she was still alive. It becomes vital. “Don’t move. Just stay still.”

Lexa tries to listen, though it is difficult. She finally manages to pry open an eye as Clarke rests her palm on her forehead, slipping it into her hair.

“We had to take out part of your liver. You needed a transfusion. A few, actually,” Clarke lists, her voice soft and soothing. Lexa searches her face and finally feels alive. “It was bad, but mostly it was
“lucky.”

“I am glad,” Lexa began, her lips sticking, dry and angry. “I’m glad you are so stubborn.”

“Your fight isn’t over yet,” Clarke smiles.

“You stayed.”

“You stayed.”

L Lexa closes her eyes and smiles as her healer leans forward and kisses her softly. It feels familiar, as if from a dream, as if from a moment she was certain she had made up for herself. But here it is, and it is just as marvellous.

“What has happened? How long have I–?”

“Rest, Lexa,” Clarke insists. “You can be Heda in the morning. For now, the world is just as you left it.”

Four days Clark refuses to leave the chair beside Lexa’s bed for more than a few minutes, instead opting to take all meetings just outside her door, hurrying them along.

When the blockade goes into effect around Arkadia, there is a silent acknowledgement that Clarke has chosen something, though no one is quite sure what it will mean.

As news of the Commander’s injury spreads, so too does they worry and anxiety along that border with the Sky People. Titus knows enough to stay away from Wanheda.

“Clarke?” Lexa asks as she opens her eyes, unsure of the time or day, unsure of how long she had been out, confused about many things and needing to rectify the many questions that suddenly plague her consciousness.

“Don’t sit up.”

“Okay.”

“How does it feel?”

“Hurts.”

Lexa feels the breeze on her stomach as her healer lifts her shirt and presses gently against the incision. She watched Clarke’s hands press into her skin, watches the focus stationed in the blonde’s gaze as she goes about her exam.

“I’m worried about infection,” Clarke explains, pressing the back of her hand against Lexa’s forehead.

“What is happening with the blockade?”

“It’s been quiet. No movement on either side, but I’m not sure how much longer that can keep up.”

“You should go,” Lexa tries. “Your people need you.”

“You need me.”
“I’m alive, Clarke.”

“You almost died.”

“Where is Titus?” Lexa ventures, looking around the near empty room. She tries to pull herself up so she is sitting, though her muscles don’t want to allow such a feat or achievement.

“I don’t know,” Clarke growls.

“I must speak with him.”

“He tried to kill me.”

“He tried to save me.” For a moment, Clarke stares at Lexa who tries to sit up again, stubborn and not accustomed to feeling this way in her own body. “I have to speak with him about what is to happen.”

“What is to happen?”

“Peace,” Lexa decides. Laying in the bed, she slips her hand into Clarke’s, finally believing it to be possible.

“The last time I thought about leaving, you got shot,” Clarke reminds Lexa in the dark.

The candles are all burnt out and the doors to the balcony are shut against the cold that begins to sneak around at night, lounging in the halls and settling atop the bed if one wasn’t too careful.

Clarke feels Lexa chuckle at the realization, her hand splays itself overtop of the Commander’s stomach, over the freshly healing scar. She doesn’t laugh because it wasn’t a joke. Instead, Clarke runs her thumb along a rib before propping herself up on her own elbow.

Even in the night, she can make out Lexa’s profile. The warmth of the blanket slips from her shoulders.

“Our people—”

“I know,” Clarke interrupts before settling back into Lexa’s shoulder, before tucking her head beneath her chin.

“I didn’t die,” Lexa whispers. “We are not done yet, Clarke. Of that, I am certain.”

“I can’t put it off any longer,” she agrees.

“We still have right now.”

“We have some day.”

“Right now and some day,” Lexa smiles, oddly full and content once again at the notion of such things.
Ice

Winter came.

The dead would not die and stay dead, the world was at war with itself, and to compound the misery, winter came with a wrath that was a distant memory for most who lived. It did not creep in, nor did it apologize for its untimely birth. Instead, it just rattled the doors and ravaged the land in a different kind of war.

The War of the Five Kings ended by a queen, the sky ruled by dragons and magic once more, and all the while great houses crumbled and turned to ash as others rose up to the true measure of their honor. From the ends of the world, no force in Westeros could have prepared for the Dragon Queen, nor her Stallion Khal who kept his word, who waded the sea with his landlocked horse tribe and rode into battle across civilizations.

Everything changed as the summer ended, when the Iron Throne was reclaimed and the War dismissed. Dissenters were unceremoniously executed or forced to the Watch which then brimmed with all new life against the constant threat of death. But just as the Mother of Dragons bloomed to life, her reign cemented with the execution of the Mad Queen, the first snow fell on the roofs of King’s Landing, and there was no denying what time had brought.

Those who were loyal were rewarded, and the Congress to the Throne was formed as the Seven separate kingdoms were granted their kings, Essos divided into its own principalities, and a fractured, almost strained peace began to emerge.

The Martell’s, some of the first great houses to take up with Daenerys Stormborn, first of her name, retained Dorne and took spoils from the Stormlands. The Tyrell’s, or who remained of the once lively house, on their own quest for revenge, retained the Reach, eager to help the Taragaryen cause, their lineage maintained only through a marriage from a Dornish princess to a first cousin, sealing the South as unified and content in their spoils.

The extinction of House Baratheon left Storm’s End vacant, and with the few minor houses torn in their fealty, the land was a reward for the Greyjoy forces who first took up the Queen’s resurgence, while their ancestral home remained their own, it became a second port for the waterborne people.

When the dust settled, House Baratheon was not the only house to experience an end of ends. Casterly Rock, left vacant and ailing since the beginning of the war was graciously gifted to the Hand of the Queen, as his name so righteously warranted, though Lord Tyrion spent almost no time at all there. Unmarried and heirless, distant, distant cousins only waited until it was their turn to squabble over it.

The northern houses quickly fell in with the Stark cause, and when the prophecy was revealed, when Jon Snow met the blood of his blood, he had no request other than for her help in killing the dead who sought a second war.

And so, as soon as the realm was settling, or settling as much as could be expected of a land that was war-worn and weary, as the Queen finally took the throne her husband promised her, with the battle with the Night’s King nearing its climax, she found herself deep in the North when the realization that another prophecy was unfolding inside of her womb.

While not the first Targaryen in Winterfell, the baby was certainly the first Targaryen born in the hallowed walls of the ancestral home, with Starks and Targaryen alike in attendance. And still,
swaddling the babe and saying her goodbyes, the war continued to be fought, as wars are known to be, regardless of births or deaths.

News spread quickly of the child born at the end of the world during the Battle of the Living and the Dead. Throughout the Seven Kingdoms and beyond, her name was whispered reverently, just as peace was achieved and foes vanquished. From their new stations, from their new houses, from the shuffling of land and prestige, gifts abounded upon their return to King’s Landing, and the world crowded around for a sight of the precious new heir.

And with her birth came the end of the War of the Dead, and the living chose to prosper. After a five year winter, the spring came, and the new Era of Peace could begin, ushering in the Endless Spring and the next Targaryen.

1. Dany

Just a few months old after the end of all Wars, she is officially announced to the world: Lexa Targaryen, first of her name, daughter of the Mother of Dragons, daughter of the great Khal of the Great Grass Sea, Warborne, Spring-bringer, The Rider that Shall Mount the World, Princess of Dragonstone.

Rumors swirl that she was born with scales, with wings, with fangs. Hair that was black as night or white as snow. All of it is a lot for a six month old to live up to, but when she makes her entrance to court, wrapped in a soft, worn horsehide, all are surprised.

The true blood of the dragon exists though, shines through her violet eyes. Her skin is darker than her mother’s, than the court’s than all those who gaze upon her minus the blood riders who remain. More Dothraki than Targaryen, she still has her mother’s natural beauty, has her quiet, thoughtful wonder, has those haunting eyes. It sneaks into the Court’s collective mind that inevitably a descendant of the horse-riding savages of the East will sit on the sacred Throne.

Many credit it to the fact that spring comes soon after her birth, but the baby is calm, is quiet, hardly cries or fusses, and she grows up with that personality. She is unaware of all that is happening in the world, about what has finished and what is starting.

Dany dotes on her daughter, making up for the absence of her own parents by pouring all love into Lexa. Mornings are spent running her fingertips over her sleeping daughter’s cheeks, playing with the soft hair atop her head. As a baby, she is rarely upset, despite being dragged to court, to the Sept, to every place her mother goes.

The queen watches her grow though, and struggles to keep up with her. There is no denying that as much fire and blood are in Lexa’s bones, she is her father’s daughter more and more. Stoic and cool, graceful and methodical, stubborn and brash, thoughtful and rational. She does not speak until she turned six, and then it is in full sentences in both the common tongue, high Valaryian, and Dothraki, as if she were just waiting to have something worse saying. Economical in her words and studious in her thoughts, Lexa is a constant surprise and radically unpredictable, a credit to her mother.

As busy as her mother finds herself, when a streak of brown races through the sept, when lilac eyes peer out amid a group of advisors, Dany finds herself sucked into a game for a few minutes. Often it means sprinting through the gardens and down to the shore where her daughter lets her catch her. Sometimes it means finding her hiding in places she can’t believe. Her husband grunts and pretends not to fall for it, but Lexa has the Khal’s eye. She hangs from his arms, braids his long hair, messy and sloppy as her boredom grows. The princess hangs on his every word, trains beside the bloodriders, smears paint on her face.
When the harvest is finished, they spend weeks in Essos, with the khalasar. Each time, she feels her daughter slip away a little more until she comes back, renewed and different, older and older in so many different ways.

Most of their time is in King’s Landing, and Lexa fits in both realms, takes bits of both and keeps them to herself, on herself. Every single day though, the Mother of Dragons looks at her daughter in complete amazement and awe.

“Tell me again,” Lexa smiles, sitting up in the bed. The wind comes in through the open window of the tower. As soon as her father and mother leave, she will sneak out to the balcony and stare at the lights of the huge city before falling asleep outside, still missing the feeling of the open sky and stars back in Essos.

“No,” Drogo grunts, grabbing her ankles from the bottom of the bed and pulling her down so she is lying flat again, earning a small giggle from his daughter.

“Please?”

“Sleep,” he insists. “Tomorrow we have work to do.”

Still uncomfortable in King’s Landing, the Khal is more at ease than before, but after a decade of being back and forth between the two, he has grown accustomed to the discomfort. Gone are the streaks of paint on his broad shoulders, gone are the heavy belts of leather. They come back on the ship back to the Great Grass Sea.

Ten and gangly, hair wavy from the braids it held all day, his daughter waits for him to crack because it is only a matter of time. She knew his rage, saw the anger in him, that he swore was in her as well, the blood of warriors that coursed through her veins. But now, most of the time, to her, he was the man who let her climb all over him, who cracked a smile when she learned to ride well and throw a knife.

“Please?” she tries again, turning the eyes upon her mother who smiles fondly and sits on the edge of the bed.

Softly, her hand runs along her daughter’s temple, tucks stray hairs behind her ear. She looks back at her husband who looks back and shrugs before kissing her head, and finally leaning down and holding his forehead against his daughter’s.

“Sun of my life,” he whispers. Small hands hold his beard and clap his cheeks, earning that rare smile. A second later he leaves, taking an extra moment to look at the two in the bed.

“Where are we going to start tonight?” her mother asks, adjusting the blankets around her daughter’s shoulders.

Dany smiles and runs her knuckle along the scrape on Lexa’s chin, new and pink in its soreness from a fall somewhere in her playground that is King’s Landing.


“Have you been learning Northern Houses with the Grand Maester?”

“Did you know that Lady Arya trained as an assassin?”

“That’s a rumor. You must learn the difference between history and legend.”
“Aren’t you both?”

“No,” Daenerys smiled. “Which is it then?”

“The fall of the Mad Queen. No. The story of Uncle Jon.”

“I told you the story of Uncle Jon last week.”

“It’s my favorite,” Lexa whispered, burrowing into the pillows, looking expectantly at her mother who finally began with a deep breath.

It was her favorite. Better than any battle or history of any family that she could remember, though a few legends, especially of her own family, were entertaining and amazing. And the stories her father regaled her with in her native tongue were always violent and taught her many things. It was the love story that ended in tragedy that she craved often. An entire war started because two people were in love, but bound by duty, then shirked it to be together. It was the most foreign of all stories to her.

“But how could Rhaegar do that?” Lexa asked as her mother finished the tale once more.

“Sometimes, you just feel so strongly for another person, it would be better to die than live without them.”

“But it is our duty to our people.”

“It is,” Dany nodded with a heavy sigh and sad smile. “But if you’re lucky, love does not cost you so much as it did my uncle.”

“Where has Drogon been?”

“In the North. I’m sure we will see him when we go back to Essos next month.” She kissed Lexa’s forehead. “Now sleep.”

As soon as the door to her room shut, she pulled the blanket from her bed and moved out to the balcony, taking her seat and staring out at the city and the water and the moon in the distance. The air was different than across the sea, but it was not worse.

The story weighed heavily on her mind as she let her eyes scan the city before inevitably turning upward and looking at the stars, or what was left of them. Still with the war just starting to fade from the collective thoughts of the world, Lexa vowed to never make the same mistake that triggered the almost end of the world; she vowed to never fall in love.

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2. Sansa

The winter wind swept along the fields outside of the castle walls. The cold prickled against her cheeks, but still, she needed air that did not reek of blood, she needed the cold, violent stabbing of the real, the frozen, the pristine clean of winter. The room inside smelled of blood, that sickly warmth and iron odor coating everything until it hung heavy in her throat. It was too much for her, it was too real, and so Sansa stepped outside to the wall and she inhaled until it hurt and rocked her chest with pangs of freezing.

She felt the chill of the brick and mortar as she leaned against it, forgetting her gloves and coat in her speedy exit. The white vastness of the rolling hills, of the arthritic and knobby bare branches in the distance were unbearable to see, left her nauseous and dizzy, and so she ducked her head and closed her eyes.
To the north, smoke could be seen beyond the horizon where camps had been made for troops who fought to hold the wall. The largest force that had ever existed sat just a few miles beyond the woods, and Sansa wanted nothing more than to never have to see a battle again.

“I’ll never get used to the cold,” Pod huffed as he rubbed his hands together and approached slowly.

“It feels good,” Sansa nodded, straightening herself.

“Here,” the knight moved, draping his coat on her shoulders. “As good as it feels, I can’t have you catching sickness, m’lady.”

They were quiet. The wind was not. It whipped through the castle, through the hills, hissed as it froze their skin, and still, they were immovable forces. Sansa was afraid to look at the knight, the one with the brown eyes that reminded her of her direwolf’s, who always looked as if he were ready to be kicked.

“What are you… “ he swallowed and furrowed, hugging himself tighter against the winter. “The.. uh… Have you thought about the…”

“Spit it out.”

“The baby, m’lady,” he blurted.

“Did you know?” She watched him shake his head regretfully.

“I imagine it was around the time she started showing that she had me made a knight so I did not have to squire for her any longer.”

“Not your bravery in battle?”

“When I first met her, I couldn’t even skin a rabbit. I do not believe she was done teaching me just yet.”

“I’m sorry,” Sansa inhaled, let the winds of her home inflate her spine. “I know Lady Brienne was important to you.”

“She gave her life for yours–”

“I didn’t know. I wouldn’t have allowed–” It was a plea, a justification, a confession of her guilt that she needed removed and didn’t know how to ask.

“That’s exactly how she would have wanted it, m’lady,” Pod stopped her. “She knew the risks. She would not let anything stand between her and the oath she took.”

Sansa heard his words, but still they did not make her feel better. It was her fault, and no one would tell her otherwise. She was the one that rode to the coast. She was the one that allowed them to get ambushed. She was the one that did not look hard enough to notice that her own knight was pregnant.

“It’s a girl,” the maester interrupted, just as the knight met Sansa’s eyes.

Noble as she could, she wiped at the traitor tear that slid down her cheek and cleared her throat before nodding him away. The door closed and she met Pod’s eyes once more, swallowing the lump that remained in the aftermath of her choices.

“Thank you,” Sansa nodded, taking off the coat and handing it to him before going back into the
castle.

By the time she made it to the room, the smell choked her once again, but still, Sansa entered. The warmth burned her skin until she was unsure if she were frozen or being thawed once again. She was just grateful that the body was covered, that the rags were being cleaned, that the blood was being dealt with accordingly.

The living were silent, were all locked in their own thoughts about the situation and the death.

“May I?” she asked, pointing towards the wiggling bundle in the handmaid’s arms.

Big blue eyes met hers as she carefully balanced the newborn. No cry was made, no gurgle or whimper or whine. Just large, wide eyes, the color of sapphires or the sky in the summer. The room held their breath as Lady Stark held the granddaughter of Lord Tywin, the half-sister of King Joffrey, the niece of the Mad Queen.

“We can have her taken away,” Jon stood from his spot against the wall. His sister dodged him, pulled away and shook her head.

“This child is an orphan because her mother saved my life, because her father gave his life against the White Walkers,” Sansa explained, unable to look away from the baby in her arms. “I promised her mother her safety, and as fiercely as she kept her word, will I keep mine.”

Waiting for the final word, the Lady of Winterfell looked at the Queen, refused to meet the eyes of her last husband. Queen Daenerys had enough right to order the extinction of the Lannister line right there. Sansa did not back down despite the haunting look of the ruler.

“This child has not committed a crime. I see no need for judgement. Lord Tyrion?”

“She will not be a problem,” he assured her. In Sansa’s experience, few men could keep to their word as well as the Hand of the Queen, her annulled husband.

“Care to see your niece?”

Sansa leaned down and handed him the bundle. The baby looked at him and closed her eyes. The Hand of the Queen nodded gratefully to Sansa who just returned it and stood.

“What do we do with her? I have no family. Tarth is empty.”

“She can stay in the North,” Sansa offered. “I imagine it will not be safe for a Lannister many places.”

“Lyanna,” Jon offered. “Close enough, but far enough from the rest of the world.” The Queen nodded thoughtfully before looking back to the other Stark before looking at the Hand.

Already asleep, the baby had no idea what its very existence meant, what it cost for it to be born, what it would come to carry and represent. Instead, it just rested in her uncle’s arms.

“Clarke,” Tyrion finally cleared his throat and looked up, meeting Sansa’s glance who wanted to flee the room, becoming suddenly drowned in the warmth of living. “My great grandmother’s name.”

“The Lion of the North,” Sansa nodded before leaving the room quickly. “Have a pyre made.”

The room remained quiet as all stared at the child. In the midst of death and dying, between the impending end of days and their desperate fight to end it all, amidst the fighting and hatred and
history came an innocent child, and for some reason, all of the leaders of the world in that room felt something new because of it.

3. Tyrion

The paper burned politely enough as he twisted the letter over the candle before dropping it in the bucket on the floor where the single flame erupted with the other dispelled attempts. The Hand of the Queen picked up the quill again before staring at it for a moment, shoving it back in the pot and picking up his goblet of wine.

The office was lined with books, with knowing things, with maps and charts and tapestries and oddities collected from his travels across the entire world. On a shelf sat a manuscript he started himself, about the War of the Five Kings. So far only written up to the almost marriage of a certain Stark to a certain King and ignored again due to difficulties he could not yet separate himself from entirely. On the table at a stuffed Viper. Holding down another pile of letters that needed answered was a golden hand.

He drank his wine and looked through the window at the courtyard. The rose bushes bloomed and the bees buzzed and murmured with the distant hum of the never-ending waves against the shore.

The palace was quiet with the Queen in the South and the Khal in Essos. The city was quiet because it was very much alive, and the Great Spring raged with prosperity for all, making the job of ruling it much easier. Dissatisfaction came from boredom, came from want and need, and the time of plenty that finally emerged with a certain stability dispelled any notions of problems. People behaved when they were fed and happy, Tyrion had learned. Fed, happy, and busy.

There was a hint of grey at the edge of his beard, at the edge of his golden hair. Sometimes his fingers ached as the years grew longer. As soon as the harvest season turned, he would be travelling again, back to the North, a trip that already made his knees hurt and his ass sore from riding. He raised his glass at the hand on the table before gulping the rest.

Though his door was open, a faint knock came as he poured another glass.

“You do not have to knock, Princess,” he smiled, knowing who it was without even looking. “The sooner you learn that, the better.”

“In The Lives of Four Kings, Kaeth argues that one of Aegon the Unworthy’s best traits was his utmost respect for all those without imposing his will and status,” Lexa recited. “He did not presume his status granted him rights over anyone’s personal free-will.”

“You’ll finish that book in record time,” the Hand raised a glass before gesturing to a seat. The breeze blew in through the window, flapping a curtain, ruffling the chestnut hair that remained braided intricately beneath the crown. “I’ve given that book as a gift twice in my life. I am glad it is coming to better use this time around.”

Tall and slender, naturally graceful and regal, even at just fifteen, the princess took the seat and nodded graciously. The summer dress of silver hung on her limbs, betrayed the tan lines of her darker skin and the freckles that grew after hours riding and racing through the countryside. She possessed her mother’s chin and cheekbones, her penetrating eyes. The stern rigidity was her father’s. The lethal combination of taut muscles evident just below her skin was his as well. She was, perhaps, going to be one of the most beautiful women of all time. Tyrion had seen her gut a man while riding bareback, and he was only certain that it added to her beauty. She reminded him of the gracefulness of a cat, constantly taut and ready to pounce, but poised and restrained enough to not
show it unless one truly searched for it.

“What is it?” she smiled self-consciously as he found himself staring.

“I remember the day you were born, and now you are here, quoting a great book. Time has flown by.”

“I am not interrupting you, am I?”

“Just writing letters,” he gestured, drinking again. “Or avoiding that, perhaps. How may I be of service, your grace?”

“Who are you writing? My mother?” she avoided her real question, and he noted it.

“No, no, nothing so serious,” Tyrion sighed. “I have just run out of things to do that have stopped me from writing to my niece.”

Over the lid of his cup, he measured her reaction to the mention of another Lannister, the other Lannister. She was raised off of myth and legend and history, and knew it better than anyone else might guess. Lexa owned enough tact not to bring it up or push it, despite her morbid curiosity at the spectacle of the Hand’s history.

“Why do you put it off?”

“She asks when I will visit again, and I have been delayed a few months.” Tyrion fiddles with his glass and leaves off the part about how it is his own choice to delay.

“You never talk about her,” Lexa observed, casually as she could.

“I suppose it is because I do not truly know her. It’s been almost two years since I saw her last. Whenever I’m with her I only see my brother, and sometimes that is too much.”

“Mother says it is a blessing I do not look like a Targaryen. She said it would be hard to see the eyes of her family staring back at her every day.”

“It is the sweetest sadness,” he agreed. “Care to distract me from such thoughts with a game of Cyvasse?”

Proud and smart and polite, Tyrion meets lilac eyes and earns a shake of her head. He has watched her grow, watched her master everything she’s ever wanted, and he is convinced that as good of a ruler that her mother is, she will be better. For years, she has disappeared for months across the sea and returned with rougher hands and a more noble brow, but also with an aura of calm and peace, a difficult balance for those many years earlier, but she was born of blood and fire and it made sense. He saw her anger, as well. Saw it rage and swell and knew what it was, the little secret of her being.

“I have to receive House Selmy this evening, and do not have time to beat you today,” she smiled. They were rare, the authentic smiles, despite her distinct level of contentedness, and she earned a snort from the Hand of the Queen. “And you have a letter to write.”

“What brought you down here, Princess?”

“How do you think your niece will handle having the name Lannister?”

“To be fair, I think she prefers Mormont. Not that I blame her.” He watched Lexa wait expectantly, accustomed to his deflections, just as he was to hers. “She’s smart. She might be the best thing Jamie
ever did, minus the whole king-slaying.” He chanced a look at his Targaryen audience and earned a thoughtful nod. “You hold the weight of two very heavy names. A Khaleesi and Targaryen. Both have been great goods in the world, both have put forth great evils. How do you hold it?”

“It is easier to bear from this side of the war,” Lexa decided. “I am not the mistakes of my ancestor’s, nor have I lived up to their greatness.”

“I tell her almost that exactly. She’s smart, like you. Kind, too. She is everything I believe my father would have loved and hated in a Lannister, and as far as I’m concerned, that is exactly what she should hope for.”

“What does that mean?”

“My father was a complicated man who despised goodness, and yet he loved intelligence and duty above all else. He loved my brother more than anything, too, perhaps, and anything of Jaime’s would be treasured. She is much more like her mother, and that is good.”

“You should spend more time with the Lion of the North before she is truly the Last Lion,” Lexa smiled and patted his hand before standing.

“I’m not sure which they will add to your name: The Just or the Good or the Wise.”

“None of those would please my parents, the great Khal and the Unburnt. The Breaker of Chains.”

“The Wise it is then,” he nodded earning a genuine laugh.

“Have you heard of the skirmishes in the Vale?”

The Hand smiled, tucking his hands behind his back as he sized up the girl before him. Her mother was not too much older the first time he met her. Lexa had a knack for incomprehensible conversation, swaying one way before returning to her point. It made her dangerous.

“Just a lower house. Someone is always unhappy.”

“I should go fight.”

“You are a princess, you send knights to do your fighting.”

“Khal Bharbo once said that it is our way to never ask those to do what we will not. You forget that I have not just the blood of kings, but the wisdom of Khal’s to learn.”

“You do not worry yourself with petty squabbles,” he assured her.

“My brothers are dragons, Lord Tyrion. We do not ignore squabbles.”

“The moment you become involved, it lends credence to the problem, justifies them as an outright rebellion other than a few belligerent drunks.” As they stood at the door, he watched her brow grow heavy as she considered it and finally nodded. “There will always be more fights to be fought, Princess.”

“I suppose you are right. Please, be my guest at dinner tonight. Regal the Selmy’s with your own tales of battle.”

“Only when I’ve had enough wine, and I’m afraid we’d empty the cellars to reach that limit, your grace,” he bowed, earning another chuckle. “A game of Cyvasse before bed, if you promise not to tell your father I kept you up late.”
With a graceful nod of her head, he watched her disappear down the hall.

Once more, he sat at his desk and stared at another blank piece of parchment and picked up his quill and began to write to the only other true blood of his blood. Every time he did, it tore him apart and made him slightly hopeful. Having all but effectively renounced his name, it was truly daunting to be nameless in the world. To know one more person held it made him feel full and capable. But still, he was a traitor to his very blood. He served the woman who executed his brother and sister, and yet his niece lived, and that was something.

4. Jon

There was a shortage of friends, even now in the spring of peace. Long was the rebuilding of life in the North, and long was the regrowth of the spirit of the people. But as the snows finally thawed, as the land was settled and shifted after their heavy losses, a certain solitude resumed that the northmen had always craved.

For the first time in a long time, however, there was not a shortage of family. As the woods grew thicker, as the rivers grew wilder, the road narrowed on the way to Bear Island. The King in the North rode towards his brother’s wedding with almost a smile, which was almost an irregularity, still.

He was not sure of the exact location, but he could almost feel the shift as he rode into Mormont land, newly acquired since the end of the war as a reward for their fierce loyalty. It felt different than he remembered as a boy, travelling with his father, the father he acknowledged still. The land was now one of the more busy, one of the more productive, and it still retained a certain wildness that separated it from the rest of the North.

He travelled with a small group, choosing not to drag many across the land and respecting his brother’s wishes to keep it small and quiet, though the King often caused a stir wherever he went, earning shouts and chants and well-wishes from those who now passed around his legend. But he wanted to move quickly, and so he travelled light, and made it to the bay earlier than even he had anticipated.

“We had to wait long enough for you, let’s go,” he called from the pier beside the boat as his sister arrived, carefully helping a little one out of the carriage on the shore.

“King in the North and he thinks he can just boss everyone around,” Sansa quipped, squinting against the sun. “I liked it better when you were a bastard.”

“So did I,” Jon smiles, the genuine smile that was almost natural and almost normal for him to have. He engulfed his sister in a hug and kissed her cheek. Little arms grabbed at his leg, hugging him as well. “Safe trip?”

“We got in last night. You should come down sometime,” she smiled, toying with his shorter hair. “I like this.”

“And how is my favorite nephew?” he asked, picking up the little boy with dark hair and darker eyes.

“Father said I am not to ask you about the White Walkers,” Robb explained, earning a sigh from his mother as Pod approached after directing their bags to the ship. “You might have another nephew soon you know?”

“I’ll tell you about them before bed,” his uncle promised with a wink to his sister as she rubbed her
“Nice to see you, your majesty,” Pod nodded his head and shook Jon’s hand.

“The Lady of Riverrun keeping you busy, Pod?”

“I don’t think I’ve had a moment’s rest since I met her, but I love it,” he admitted.

“Is Ghost here?” Robb asked.

“He’s on deck. Why don’t you go say hello?” Jon put him down, watching him scamper quickly up the platform. “He looks like Father.”

“Acts like him more and more,” Sansa confessed. “You really should come down for a visit, Jon,” she began to explain as they followed her son. “Get some sun, take a break from the North. It would do you a world of good.”

“Now you sound like your mother.”

“I will never understand how it took the world ending for you to develop a sense of humor.”

“Nor I how it took you becoming a Lady to act more un-lady-like.”

The distance made them closer. That and the war. That and the hard decisions they made together because it was in their name that they were to do it and their father had raised them in the true northern, noble spirit, that they knew their responsibilities and the heavy burden of executing them. As their entire family was killed, was brutalized, the last vestiges bonded over being just that, and it took a deeper root than all of their childhood.

As they pushed off towards the island in the distance, Jon watched Podrick play with his son in the front of the boat, tying knots with spare ropes, the seven year old fumbling and concentrating with more effort than seen much other times. Ghost sat at their feet, gnawing on an end. It was new and a certain peace that was capable of existing now in the summer. Some days he could last weeks without thinking of those who were lost to pay for it.

“Have you seen your niece?” Sansa asked, taking the seat beside the King.

“Not for a few years.”

“She’s quite beautiful. Smart. Has your hair and knack for brooding.”

“I’m due down in King’s Landing in a few months. I’m sure I will see her,” he nodded. “How have things been, Sansa? I mean truly. I heard there were a few problems with—”

“Everything is fine.”

“You can always come home, you know? For a visit? Or to stay?”

“I am home. Winterfell is too… haunted.”

“Yeah, I am beginning to realize that,” he agreed. “Have you thought of names for this one?” He asked, pointing at her stomach.

“Brienne,” Sansa smiled weakly.

“I was surprised to hear that you were coming. The last time I was at Bear Island I was almost
knocked over by how much Lannister is in that girl.”

“Clarke is a lovely girl. I’ve spent time with her often over the years. She was just in Riverrun a few weeks ago for the festivals.” She noticed the shock on his face. “She is the daughter of the woman who saved my life, who tried to save my mother’s life, who rescued Arya a few times, who saved my husband, who saved everything that matters to me. I will do everything I can to make sure she has everything she could ever need, Jon.”

“Did you ever think there would be a time that you said that about a Lannister?”

“Never.”

“Robb seems good. Have you thought of letting him train with his uncle?”

“His father would jump at the chance, but I couldn’t.”

“Fair enough.”

It was a quick ride across the bay, and they made it to the port at the island soon enough. The Starks sat in silence, both with new names, but still innately Stark. Jon could not be happier for his sister, when he saw the life she put together for herself. He lived vicariously through her happiness, through seeing everything she achieved. King in the North, and he still just wanted to know the simplicity of the Wall and the Watch instead of what he had now.

But when he saw the way Sansa looked at Pod, he knew what was missing, just not how to find it. House Payne catapulted to greatness because of the marriage to a Stark who took over for the loss of the Tully’s. And yet it was a genuine affection that the once squire felt for the natural-born lady. Jon saw it when he smiled at her, when he doted on his son.

As soon as they were in sight, he noticed a shock of blonde hair racing through the island until it disappeared into the woods. By the time they were closer, the dock was full of a welcoming party, and the Starks were eager to be together once more.

“I’ll never get over how big you are,” Sansa hugged her little brother tightly, standing on her tiptoes to grab his neck.

Tall and lanky, he finally seemed to broaden as the years got farther from childhood. His hair turned auburn, dark red, and still curled softly, still a shaggy mess on his head. The goofy grin and easy smile never left his lips now, and just his existence made the weight of the world lift off of Jon’s shoulders.

“I’m almost twenty-three,” he shook his shaggy mane and rolled his eyes. “I haven’t been smaller than you since I was twelve.”

“Too long enough to get married,” Jon joked, clapping his back.

“Says the bachelor king,” Rickon laughed and hugged his brother. “If I knew that getting her to agree to marry would be this difficult I would have taken that offer to move south a long time ago.”

“Lady Lyanna, it is good to see you,” Jon smiled and hugged her tightly. “I can still send him south, if you’d like.”

Still short, the angles of her face softened as she grew, but the King had no doubt that Rickon had his hands full with getting her to marry him.
“My family was given these lands by the Starks, seems only fitting a Stark takes them back,” she nodded to him with a smile.

“Seems only fitting that someone so honorable and loyal to our family is able to join us,” Jon argued. “Thank you for having us.”

“Lady Sansa!” a loud voice could be heard before the blonde hair could be seen, but the little girl made her entrance, dirt on her cheek and grass in her hair, though she wore a gown and pulled at it, obviously uncomfortable in the attire. The little girl stopped herself sharply when she saw the king and reminded herself to behave. “Your majesty,” she curtseyed so badly it made Jon smile and think of his other sister.

“Lady Clarke, it is a pleasure to see you,” he bowed deeply and kissed her hand. “How have you been on with your training?”

“I got a bullseye yesterday. Rickon said I was a better shot than he was when he was my age.”

“You’re probably a better shot than he is right now,” Jon whispered to her, earning a smile. He nudged her chin with his knuckle and earned a wink.

All of ten, and he could see every bit of Lannister in her. From the gold of her hair to the set of her jaw. But the blue of her eyes and the knack for trouble and adventure was all her mother, was all bred into her by Mormont raising.

“That is a beautiful gown, Clarke,” Sansa nodded, earning a larger smile. Jon swore the child had to be picking it up from his brother, for surely no Lannister ever felt so much joy in their entire life to smile as much.

“Thank you,” she nodded, hugging Sansa tightly. “I have been practicing, just like you said.”

“Like you said?” Lyanna sighed.

“I may have told her a few Arya stories.”

“It all makes sense now,” the guardian nodded and placed her hand on Clarke’s shoulder. The little girl leaned against her, very much comfortable with the woman who raised her. “Take Robb down to the den to see the cubs and then hurry up for dinner, okay?”

“Yes ma’am,” she nodded.

“Let’s get to the feast,” Rickon agreed.

While Bear Island was predominantly overrun with forest and wilderness, the growth in the area led to a small boom so that the small street in front of the castle had a few more houses and a shop and inn. The entire island was alive with the impending nuptials.

Never one to enjoy the spotlight, Jon took his seat to the side, deflecting invitations to the front by simply saying that it was his brother’s night, and he was not there as King, but as family. In reality, he could not stand the eyes, the whispers.

As the night wore on, Jon smiled and raised his glass, and spent his time observing and feeling that certain pride and dull ache of family in his chest, until it was too much to bear and he slipped outside for fresh air.

He followed the familiar sound of fighting to the yard and watched the little Lion attacking a wooden
man with a wooden sword.

“You want your stance to be wider,” he said, making her jump.

“I don’t like fighting,” she dropped the sword, “but Lyanna said that I should practice what I’m not good at the most.”

“What are you good at?”

“I like shooting arrows. I can draw very good, too,” Clarke shrugged.

“You draw? What do you draw?” He asked, moving around, picking up the wooden sword.


“Would you draw me?”

“I’m not that good yet,” she shrugged and leaned against the wall, watching the warrior parry with the dummy.

“When you get good enough, you can draw me.”

“Is it true that you’re a Targaryen?”

“Is it true that you’re a Lannister?”

“Kind of,” the little girl decided.

“Kind of me too.”

“Do you have a dragon?”

“I have a wolf.”

“Lyanna said Mormonts can change into bears. I wish I could do that.”

“If there’s one thing I’ve learned, and I think you should learn it too. It’s that it is not about the name you have, but the name you choose. It’s about who you are.”

“Did you know my mother?” Clarke asked, taking the sword as he offered it to her again. She set her feet and waited for him to nod an approval.

“No. I mean, not really. But I heard she was one of the most loyal and bravest people.”

“Uncle Pod said the same thing. But no one knows anything about my father.”

“Your uncle does.”

“No one talks about him. But I figure he couldn’t have been so bad if someone who was so good loved him, right?” Clarke whacked it a few times and stopped. “He was a great fighter.”

“He was.”

“Do you think you’re more like Rhaegar because he was your father, or Ned Stark because he raised you?”

“You certainly ask difficult questions for such a young girl.”
“Lyanna said a thinking mind is the only mind worth having.”

Jon watched her move again, attempting the same move and failing. Her question made him wonder himself what any of it could mean. He knew what he wanted the answer to be, but still.

“Did you know that there is a princess right now who has brothers who are dragons?” he asked. “Her mother rides dragons and her father rides horses. Both her parents are alive, and very different. Can you imagine how hard that is?”

“No,” she shrugs.

“You and me, we get to pick who we are. We get to take the good stuff and make ourselves good people with no one telling us which parts we’re supposed to have. Seems like a silver-lining, doesn’t it?”

“You’re a good king,” Clarke decided, not saying anything else as she continued her mock battle.

Jon was grateful and he understood the quiet, and so he sat there and watched, and they spent the evening training in the solitude of two almost-bastards who grasped at straws.

5. Tyrion

There was something to the North that always made him uncomfortable, but still he travelled whenever he could get a minute. Perhaps it was the wildness, he mused as he inhaled the saltwater and stared ahead at the island making its approach. It must be that, and all that he could not completely understand. He had travelled nearly every inch of the Seven Kingdoms and beyond, and still, it was when he made his way north that he felt the most foreign, as if it contained a secret he could only sniff at and never quite stir up to understand or get a glimpse of entirely.

It was where impossible things happened, and there was no normal, no history. Everything was myth, and that was disorienting.

Still, the Hand of the Queen travelled when it was an option, taking assignments and tasks, acting and envoy throughout the realm to get even a day’s ride closer to the island where the last bit of his name lived and breathed.

As soon as he was within sight of shore, he saw the blonde weaving among the rocks, racing barefoot through the paths until she disappeared among the trees. Every time it amazed him how fast she was, how much she was nothing more than a breeze that disappeared as soon as she was seen.

Like clockwork, she was waiting at the shore, dressed in her finest gown which was hastily thrown on over her pants in a hurry to meet the arrival.

“You look more and more beautiful, Clarke,” her uncle greeted her fondly, kissing her hand softly.

“Thank you, Uncle,” she nodded graciously. “It’s so good to see you.”

Seventeen and already the talk of the North, her beauty spread beyond the realm until it was, itself, a myth unlike any other, though one Tyrion could recognize as true. She smirked and she was Jaime.

“You look well enough. They’re feeding and watering you?”

“They are.”
“And what about books. Have you read?”

“Everything you’ve sent me. Twice.”

“Well, it is a good thing I bring more then,” he nodded, gesturing as the crates were unloaded.

“And?” she waited, playing the same game he played with her since she was too little to remember a time he didn’t.

“I think that’s about it, actually,” he shrugged. A gold necklace hung from her neck, a lion emblazed there, the last vestige of his mother on the planet. “Except for these,” he stopped one of the porters carrying a slender case. “Parchment from the Citadel, and I’m not sure if you need these, but color powder all the way from Essos. I had the Queen bring them back personally.”

“Thank you. Thank you, thank you!” Clarke smiled wide as she ran her hands along the supplies assembled with such care. She hugged her uncle tightly so that he was surprised by the extent of her gratefulness. “Now I can do a proper painting of King Jon. And I’ll take them when I visit Lady Sansa next month.”

“And your handsome uncle, naturally.”

“Naturally.”

“You like them then?”

“I really do. Thank you.”

“Just put them to good use, and I’ll be happy.”

“Lord Tyrion, you finally made it. I hope the problems in Pyke did not hold you up too badly,” another voice boomed as the welcome party approached.

“Lord Rickon Stark of Bear Island,” the Hand of the Queen extended his own and shook heartily. “I understand you have been busy.”

“I have my hands full,” the youngest Stark agreed. “Come on, come on. Up to the Castle. I’m sure you two have catching up to do.”

“If it’s alright, I’d like to take my uncle down to the shore. Do some sketching with these new supplies he got me?” Clarke asked politely. Tyrion smiled and looked to the leader.

“Be back before dinner, please,” was the only request. Clarke kissed his cheek and grabbed what she needed.

The travel was slow going, but still, they ambled along the island, familiar to Clarke in intimate ways that one has from simply knowing a place they live intrinsically. She retained a certain stoicism, a certain quiet and ease that rested in her shoulders from her years of training and educating. Tyrion spared no expense providing her with whatever was needed, and as foreign as it was to admit, the Mormonts and Starks took her in as if she were their own flesh and blood and gave her everything else, so that every time he visited, he was greeted with a more amazing girl who did not exhibit the meticulous cultivation of his life, but who did have the solid undertakings of a proper and good person. It was entirely mythical to him.

“Don’t forget my good side,” he said as she directed him where to sit. “Maybe polish off the scars.”
“No. They’re my favorite,” she furrowed and took a seat on a rock a few feet from him. He watched her pull up her long, blonde hair so it was off her of her neck so she could concentrate and he sighed because he very much loved his niece, and seemed to forget how being in her presence was good for his very broken, very twisted soul.

“Have you considered my offer?” Tyrion asked, keeping his head tilted as she directed.

“I have no desire to play the politics of King’s Landing.”

“You belong to Casterly Rock.”

“I belong to Bear Island,” she corrected with a grin. “I’ve never been to Casterly Rock, and yet I know every single log and twist of river on this island.”

“You’ve got a mind to bring back some goodwill for the name Lannister. A feat I would have once deemed impossible—”

“Don’t move, Uncle.”

“At least consider coming to King’s Landing. Let me show you off.”

“I don’t think showing off is exactly what I’m good at,” Clarke chuckled at the notion, still good-natured enough to let him explain without paying it any mind. “True or false: Casterly Rock is currently inhabited by second cousins who have married into the smaller houses who hold fealty to them?”

“True.”

“And the Tyrells have taken much of their lands back, including splitting what was Baratheon land in the west?”

“True.”

“And the Greyjoy control of the northern coast combined with the Dornish influence in Oldtown has made Lannisport a ghost of what it was with dwindling shipments and even less trade.”

“True, but—”

“And the Lannister fleet was depleted and never restored.”

“Yes, but—”

“Not to mention the tiny little footnote in history that attaches the name Lannister to not just one evil ruler, but two, as well as my father, the Kingslayer?”

“Long forgotten.”

“And my movement into Casterly Rock to petition myself as the heir could be looked at as a seizing of power, something surely no one in our family has ever done before…” Clarke didn’t stop sketching, simply stating her list in such an off-handed way that her uncle was convinced she must have found the entire situation a joke. “Don’t move.”

“You may not know it, but you have the mind to save it.”

“Why would I leave? My family is here,” she shrugged, realizing who she was speaking with she added, “mostly. Lyanna has Dacy and Jonah. I’ve watched them grow up. I help with the
“There is no doubt that the Starks have been kind to you, but aren’t you at all curious where you come from?”

“I come from Bear Island. I was born in Winterfell during the Winter of War. My mother comes from the Sapphire Isles, and I’ve seen them myself.”

“Clarke,” he interrupted. “Please consider my invitation, and the weight that comes with it from the Queen herself.”

The bit of charcoal stopped scratching along the surface of the paper as the artist cocked her head to the side slightly before adjusting something. She looked back up at her uncle and again at the paper in her lap.

“You are meant for more than Bear Island.”

“I think that’s the thinking that got us all into this predicament,” she shook her head and sighed before putting the small smile back on her face. “When?”

“A year.”

“Will you be disappointed if I decline?”

“Yes, but for the reasons you probably think,” he explained. “I would very much like to show you all of the good things that we are capable of doing. And the city.”

“Can I think about it?”

“Of course.”

“Have you been anywhere interesting lately?” she asked, changing the subject as she admitted she would consider the crazy notion. Again, she hid behind the book, only looking over the edge with the most focused eyes Tyrion could remember, feeling oddly small for the first time in years, under their gaze.

“I accompanied the princess to Mareen last month.”

The topic of visiting was not brought up again as they talked on the rocks and the artist went about her work. And before the sun was setting, they found themselves on the way back to the humble castle, new sketch firmly in place beneath Clarke’s arm.

Throughout dinner, Tyrion entertained the audience with his larger-than-life stories, everyone having their separate favorites, and always with a new one peppered in for good measure. No other man contained so much history than her uncle, and Clarke lived for his visits. When she was a child, she wondered what it would be like to go to King’s Landing, and the older she got, the more she heard and learned and understood, the more she realized she was in a precarious position, just by existing at all. But she was a Lannister. Hear me roar.

“She should go,” Lyanna finally sighed as Tyrion sipped his wine beside her. They both watched Clarke laugh as the kids did something funny. “That’s why you’re here, is it not?”

“I came to see my niece,” Tyrion promised.

“She told me about your offer, to visit King’s Landing.”
“You think it is a good idea?”

“I think she deserves more than Bear Island. She was raised in the North, learned its secrets, but she is not a true northerner. She’ll never be happy if she settles, and she won’t realize it herself until it is too late.”

Surprised by the astute observation, the Hand of the Queen nodded and drank from his cup once more. The music played and Rickon, hardly recognizable to the old Lannister, with his beard and thick shoulders, a far cry from the little boy he first met so long ago, offered his hand and pulled up the heir to Casterly Rock.

“You’ve been too good to her,” Tyrion turned to the Lady who changed the fate of the war. “You will have my eternal debt.”

“She’s one of my own. I treated her like that because one does not earn the loyalty of a new horse by beating it senseless, by treating it like it’s worthless because it was sired by an unlikely pair. One changes the very nature of a wild thing by treating it with kindness and care.”

“I am completely convinced that all goodness comes from you,” he lifted his glass.

“She’s destined for great things. I’ve known it since she was a child.”

“I could use about six of you on the Small Council.”

“She’ll go,” Lyanna sighed. “She already knows it. If she has taken to anything it is to a sense of duty.”

For a long beat, Tyrion thought about those words. He watched his niece dance around the room and laugh, golden hair bouncing on her shoulders. A lion raised by wolves, and he was oddly uncertain of what that would mean.

Tyrion returned her smile when she met his eyes and lifted his glass at the frivolity of the night.

6. Clarke

Clarke had seen many castles. As far as many others were considered, she was relatively well-versed and well-travelled, well-acquainted with the large buildings. She knew Winterfell quite well. Spent much of her childhood between the quaint hominess of Bear Island, visited the vistas of Hornwood, dared to enter the Dreadfort, stood between the Twins, held her breath at the Eyrie, and dove from the docks of Riverrun, and yet none of them prepared her for the stature, majesty, and life that burst the seams of the Red Keep.

She did her best to remain undaunted as she followed her uncle through the halls, as she was introduced to people she knew purely through legend and stories, but on the inside she was amazed and missing the quiet that came when she woke too early back home.

The glances didn’t help, the whispers and the looks. It only took a few moments for her to realize she was the spectacle to everyone.

“The queen is anxious to meet you,” Tyrion tried to distract his niece. “The last time she saw you, you were just learning to walk.”

“The last time two Lannisters were in King’s Landing, the Queen was burning it to the ground with dragons.”
“To be fair, it was already well damaged before she got here,” he wagered. “Let’s try not to bring up too much of the extensive family history, shall we?”

Clarke let her eyes wander along the high arching ceilings, to the wide open corridors and the beautiful, intricate carvings that depicted the exact past he alluded. She smiled at the irony of it all and just nodded.

“Does the Queen know we have arrived?”

“I imagine she has an idea.”

“This feels like begging.”

“You are not begging,” Tyrion sighed. “The Queen has requested to meet you, to validate your claim, and to help with the peaceful acquisition of your lands. It is not begging to take what is yours.”

She wanted to argue, but instead just nodded. Any thought of words left her completely as they moved to the giant throne room. Skulls as large as carriages littered the great room, with fangs and dead eyes barred for the world, fierce even in death. Threatening as they were, the sight of the Iron Throne itself was just as consuming, and Clarke realized how truly unready for this moment she truly was.

The colored glass of the windows stretched high, covering one side of the room in rainbow shading while the other was bathed in shadow. A cathedral of sorts, Clarke felt her eyes widen, but all she could do was take it in while her uncle told her a few other tidbits.

“I’ve been doing research into which ones these might belong to,” Tyrion explained, noticing his niece’s hesitation and amazement at the decorations. “They were once so common, that they had no names.”

“Are the… the alive ones… are they here?” Tentatively, Clarke reached out a hand and ran it along a bone.

“I honestly can’t keep track of them anymore than the Queen can. Don’t worry, you’ll know when they are around.”

“Good to know,” she muttered, pulling her hand away when she realized what she had done. “I don’t suppose you have a few of these laying around Casterly Rock? I quite like the decour.”

“Unfortunately not,” he chuckled, nudging his head towards the doors on the opposite side of the large chamber. “We can look into that though.”

The long winding staircase was speckled with slits of sunlight from the windows. The bells tolled in the distance marking the beginning of some ceremony or the welcoming of guests. The pit in Clarke’s stomach grew deeper with every step.

She was vaguely aware that her life was changing with the introduction the King’s Landing, that on this day, she would be different, she would lose the part of her that was the girl that had cold toes from running through the streams, or that she would have to acknowledge her family, and their history, and she could not hide behind being the daughter of Brienne of Tarth and ignore the rest of her. She knew that when she woke and approached the city, she would be different, but it became real on the steps.

And it all changed in the most unexpected way at the very top, just as the door burst open before
they reached it, and she found herself face to face with eyes the colors of the wildflowers that grew in the sun after a frost. Pressed suddenly front-to-front, all Clarke could do was swallow slightly and hold her breath. Everything was different now.

“I’m sorry,” the voice muttered, carefully grabbing Clarke’s waist as she almost fell back. Her hands moved to strong shoulders and held there. “Are you alright?”

“Hmm?” she hummed, eyes darting between lips and eyes, taking them all in as quick as possible. She inhaled and smelled sunlight, if the sun’s rays as they moved through the trees and turned green on the way down could have a smell.

“Articulate and beautiful is what you promised, Hand. Well done on one of those accounts.”

Quickly she put a space between them and Clarke still couldn’t think to say anything. Her traitor cheeks blushed though as she steadied herself.

“Princess,” Tyrion nodded. “Do you ever not run anywhere?”

“I’ve been known to dawdle,” she grinned, shifting her glance to the Hand before returning it and a small smirk to the girl. “I’m glad you returned safe.”

All at once, as they spoke with such familiarity, Clarke realized that this was the Sister of Dragons, the Bringer of Spring, the Horse Whisperer. The braids in her hair gave way to loose waves, and in the bit of sun, burned like the old trees in the deep woods. The angles of her face were forgiving and kind, while her eyes had an intensity that betrayed a constantly occupied mind.

“I finally get to meet the daughter of the Kingslayer,” she turned once more to Clarke. The nom de guerre making her bristle. “It is a pleasure.”

“Your highness,” Clarke nodded dutifully, not enjoying the joke as much as the heir to the Iron Throne.

“I’m sorry. I shouldn’t have said that.”

“It’s alright. It’s the truth.” She stood a little taller, bore it well enough, earned the esteem of the khaleesi in a single graceful nod of her head. “Both of my parents had a knack for killing Kings. Perhaps I will as well.”

“Perhaps I will have to keep an eye on you.”

Both stared at each other, both smiled at the exchange, and both were oddly aware of the way that the world worked and how it was different now. That things could change so quickly and so irreparably, though neither fully acknowledged that fact because it was so intimately upon them. Between them was a mirror image of two bound by their names and their families, and oddly enthused to meet someone similar, as if they were a rare breed that never knew of another’s existence, but now that they did, felt less alone.

Tyrion looked between the two and felt an immense relief that he didn’t have to worry about the first hurdle of the situation.

“I believe your mother is expecting us,” Tyrion interrupted nothing.

“You didn’t want to do this in the Chamber?”

“I think some things are done better without an audience.”
“I’ll take you in.”

“Weren’t you just on your way out?”

“Hmm?” Lexa only caught part of it. She made the fatal mistake of looking at Clarke once more. “Yes. It can wait. Lady Clarke, after you,” she opened the door.

“Do try not to threaten any more reigning monarchs,” Tyrion sighed, long and already worn out from this situation. He earned a chortle from the heir to the throne as his niece shook her head, embarrassed.

“I make no promises,” she shrugged, finally entering.

There were stories. Stories of Queen Daenerys, first of her name, mother of dragons and so forth. It all fell flat compared to the woman who sat out on the large patio with papers and maps stretching across every inch of the large table. Hair as silver as clouds, skin pale and ornate gold jewelry adorning her slender neck and wrists, she was beautiful, and she was composed of something that Clarke could not place, but imagined it to be something earned through conquest and perhaps simply existing in the place she was most meant to exist.

“I thought you were going to help your father,” she said without looking up.

“This seemed much more interesting,” Lexa explained, moving around the table and taking a seat.

“Did you hear about the pirates on the South Seas?”

“A few Braavosi sell-swords,” Tyrion shrugged.

“But who are they sold to?” she put down the paper she was reading and turned her eyes upon Clarke while her daughter sipped from a glass of wine. “The Lion of the North. I was there the day you were born, did you know that?”

“No, your highness.”

“I feel old now. Do you feel it?” she asked Tyrion. “What was it? Twenty some years ago?”

“Twenty-one, your highness.”

“I very much liked your mother.”

“Thank you.”

Once more she picked up the papers and looked for another. Clarke knit her hands in front of her waist and waited, unsure of what to expect.

“Your father, on the other hand, murdered my brother.” Lexa sat up a bit straighter at the words and looked almost worried. “Here, listen to this,” she read. “Every six days, at least one shipment is taken. Highly suspected to be sold in the black markets of Mareen.”

“I’ve already dispatched the Greyjoy’s to the region—”

“Casterly Rock is currently occupied by Merek Kenning of Kayce. None of the Lannys or Lantells have been able to unseat him, and so he remains. What do you plan to do to take your home back, Clarke?”

The queen finished her movements, placed a paper across from Tyrion, and looked up at the girl who
was suddenly on the spot. It was a favorite game of the Queen’s, to see how quickly one could think, and to see if they followed the same route of her own.

“I will ask him to leave.”

“That’s all?”

“I will tell him that I am the blood heir to Casterly Rock.”

“Because that worked so well when I sailed across to Dorne and asked politely for the Iron Throne back?” There was amusement in the Queen’s voice. Clarke set her jaw and Lexa watched it happen. The lion came.

“I will seek out House Crakehall to back my claim, and the Lannys and Lantells, and forgive all debts owed to the Lannister’s in return for the seat.”

“As long as you’re not there, all debts are irrelevant.”

“I will let Lannisport dwindle to nothing, but when I get my home back, I will open trade and rebuild. With my ties in the North, I can open up the West.”

“A reasonable argument, but reasonable men do not sit in castles and move when asked.”

“I’ll go,” Lexa sighed, placing the dagger she was playing with on the table after twisting it in her fingers.

“I would not ask—” Clarke furrowed and shook her head.

“I need something to do.”

To her credit, the Queen looked at the Hand and it was as if they wagered with each other in silence after the many years of working together. While they silently arbitrated the point, Clarke met Lexa’s eyes and felt her stomach flip.

“We did say it would be up to them,” Tyrion shrugged.

“I will send an envoy to Casterly Rock,” the Queen decided. “To let them know of the intentions. But we will reserve judgement on the Lion of the North. I cannot just give up a tax-paying castle to someone who wants it.”

“It’s mine by right.”

“If we argue rights, I’d say it was forfeited when a Targaryen took the Iron Throne after the Kingslayer stole it,” Daenerys explained, almost amused at the absurdity of it. “Your claim is valid only because the Hand has been invaluable to me and he has chosen you as his heir— almost a bastard.”

The sting burned Clarke’s cheeks but she did not look away. She felt her uncle’s eyes on her cheeks, but in whispers and behind her back, she heard nothing new in the ruler’s words, and the fact that it was merely fact almost made it bearable.

“I believe bastards can do quite well for themselves. Your brother certainly did. The King in the North knows no father.”

Amused, Lexa let her face remained impassive as she stared at the stranger. In that moment, she tilted her jaw and stood a bit straighter. Sun shining and breeze coming off of the water, Lexa was certain
she’d never seen anything so great. Hair like honey, like wheat, like soft bits of mane that drifted along, wafting along. Eyes like sky, like water. She couldn’t look away, even if she wanted, even if she tried. Lexa made no attempt to look away, she made no effort to not meet Clarke’s eyes and intimately remembered the weight of her hand on her own shoulder.

“Send Yara to Crakehall and have them deliver the message of the return of the Lannisters to their home and all others are to vacate,” she continued, picking up the papers.

“Thank you, your highness,” Tyrion nodded his head before turning to move.

“For now, you are welcome to King’s Landing, Clarke. I hope you prove me right in this risk of giving you this name.”

“Thank you.” With little more than a nod at the princess, Clarke followed her uncle.

It wasn’t until she was halfway down the stairs that she pressed her hand against her chest and felt it beating wildly.

That night, after stealing away from her uncle and proclaiming her own tiredness at the day, despite the early hour, Clarke sat at her window and after fighting the entire evening, gave into her thoughts and let them drift to the princess.

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7. Dany

It wasn’t as if she noticed much of a change in the palace since the arrival of the Lion of the North. Distracted by the comings and goings of the kingdom itself, while gearing up for the yearly meeting of the Seven, there was really no impact that the girl had upon the ruler of the Iron Throne.

There were glimpses of her from time to time, working studiously with her uncle, shadowing him as best she could to learn everything about the ins and outs of ruling and running. Walking through the Keep on business, Dany would catch glimpses and she would observe. Saw the polite way that the blonde graciously thanked the servers and stewards, watched her think no one was watching and sneak away to different vistas to draw. Though she had not yet learned that someone was always watching, she did nothing to make the Queen think less of her. Instead, she only surprised her every time.

What Daenerys did notice, however, was a change in her daughter. While the rest of the kingdom proceeded as normal, as no one noticed at all that the Lannisters had come to roost, Lexa did.

On the beautiful afternoon that the guests was due to return, the Queen made her way to the shore and found herself watching the two walking through the garden. Animated and precise, Clarke’s hands moved in front of her face while Lexa tied her fingers behind her back and nodded, furrowing as if she were concentrating on the most important information that could ever exist. And then it happened, her daughter’s face cracked, her lips pulled up and it spread around until she was beaming, and it was infectious, making the Lannister shake her head and smile as well.

While this was new and a revelation, as Dany could scarcely recall a time in which her daughter sought out someone, let alone enjoyed their company so much, the second surprise came when a second later, her daughter began talking. Always quiet and studious, more prone to listening, Lexa seemed to forget herself and ask Clarke something before explaining something else.

Ushered along by her attendants, the Queen cast one more glance as the two friends moved out of sight towards the back of the gardens.
It was impossible to be truly alone in the Keep. People were always there, guards always patrolling, news to be heard, and plans to be discussed. It was enough to make her mind feel as if it were going to rot and leak from her ears. Days spent learning everything her uncle had to teach her about the area, nights spent pouring through books and doing calculations.

When she could, after a few weeks of sneaking around, Clarke found herself a spot where no one would approach her. It was constantly changing, but she would seek out these bits of solitude to simply exist, or better yet, to not exist.

That need took her to new places, wove her through the stretches and canals, through tunnels and atop towers. It even took her down through the gardens and along paths that seemed to have no end but still remained within the walls that stretched around the palace but made her forget she was separated.

With a half blank book tucked under her arm and a bag of charcoal, Clarke declined her uncle’s invitation to dinner, seeing as the Queen was gone for a few nights, and there would be no formal affair. And when she was out of site of the stairs, she tucked her shoes in her bag and she ran until she couldn’t breathe, until she felt hidden.

Only then, did she take a deep breath and find a seat against a fence post and begin sketching all that she saw. It let her mind disappear.

Nearly half-way done with the castle, her hands moved to fill the spare page with a certain pair of eyes that seemed to haunt her around every corner. She moved her thumb along a stern brow and smudged the shade of it.

There had only been a few interactions with the princess, and none of them as intimate as the first accidental run in that still made Clarke groan in embarrassment when the thought crept into her head. But Lexa never brought that up, and if anything she was only exceptionally polite to the newcomer.

There were moments that Clarke found herself disappearing and finding the girl, and she wasn’t sure she’d ever met anyone who was so easy to talk with or to understand. But they joked, and they spoke about life, and it was a nice reprieve.

“You found it then,” a voice crept up on her, so close, Clarke jumped and felt her skin shiver, not hearing it approach at all. “Did you manage to escape undetected?”

A second later, Lexa lifted herself over the fence and came down softly in the grass beside the drawing girl who closed the book quickly. When violet eyes met her own, all Clarke could do was smile and try to think of something.

“When the princess asks me to meet her, I believe I am compelled.”

“You know I don’t do that,” Lexa sighed.

“I know. I wanted to come.” Clarke watched the smile appear for a second before Lexa ducked her head.

“May I?”

“Oh? This? No. You don’t want to… it’s… nothing.”

“You carry this around everywhere. It must have something in it.”
“Yeah, just drawings. Nothing special,” the artist shrugged.

“Whenever you want to show me, I’m certain there are special things in there.” Lexa stood and held out her hand. “Do you want to see them?”

The hand stayed there confidentially, waiting to be grabbed, and to her credit, Clarke paused and looked at it, suddenly knowing full well that to keep metaphorically taking Lexa’s hand would break her heart one day. But with a certain kind of resolve, she took it once more.

Carefully, Clarke left her book and bag and stood. The sky was pink and blue and turning purple as the sun didn’t even want to set on all of it. Still in her dress, Clarke rolled her eyes as Lexa offered to help her, hitched up her own dress and pulled herself over, much to the surprise of her partner.

“I heard they were extinct,” Clarke muttered, tying up the end of her dress, envying Lexa’s pants. She followed behind, trying to keep up. “My uncle said there were no such things as secrets. It’s highly unlikely—”

“Shh,” she turned her head slightly.

“There’s nothing out here….”

Her words didn’t do anything though, and the princess held up her hand and look off at the horizon. Nothing stretched out in the distance except for a few trees growing into shadows as dusk settled down. They stood still and Clarke strained to hear anything at all. For the first time since she left her home, did she feel complete silence once more.

“This is my secret. You cannot tell anyone.” She waited for something, an agreement to the quiet pact. It was hard, but Clarke held her eyes and nodded more solemnly than anything else before.

When she found a bit of trust, a foreign concept to her, the princess smirked and turned back to face the wilds before letting out a low whistle.

It was tentative, but Clarke heard it. She strained her ears and then she heard it as she felt it. The ground rumbled just a bit. Started as a gurgle and turned into a quake, and Clarke felt fear of the unknown. But she watched Lexa’s bare shoulders, the braids that stood strong and proud as the monstrous things stampeded towards her.

“Hey hey,” Lexa clucked, holding her hands up. She found herself being nudged by a horse whose head was almost as big as her body. Three surrounded her. Clarke took a step back, eyes wide.

It started as an innocent conversation, something off-handed, where she mentioned something about wishing magic still existed. And Lexa did not understand, not completely, because her world was entirely fabricated of magic, but the Lannister, overcome with days toiling with numbers and not grown up with dragons as siblings. lamented the order and normal. And with a glimmer, Lexa smiled and told her to meet her.

Now she was standing beside horses that eclipsed any horse she’d ever seen.

All she could do was watch Lexa smile, a truly genuine and huge smile as she was lifted slightly as she hugged the one horse’s head. Until a nose snorted against her neck and made her jump.

Completely grey, the one closest to her nudged her hip, pushing her to the side so that she had to stumble to keep herself up. Lexa pressed her hands against its sides, against its chest. Compared to her, Clarke saw that it was still a few feet taller at the shoulders.

“Not so extinct,” Lexa explained, patting a shoulder as the black and white splotched one shook its
“It’s… how? Khala’s horses haven’t been seen for hundreds of years.”

“My father said that when the great Wall came alive, the world changed, let back the good parts.”

“You brought them here?”

“My mother has dragons. I have these. Not as intimidating,” she shrugged and ran her hand along another’s neck. “But they’re good.”

“This is…” the words were lost. Lexa spoke in a strong language, whispering to them, rubbing them.

All Clarke wanted to do was watch Lexa with them. Like children, they ignored Clarke completely and flocked to her as she hushed and scolded and loved them. Her hands moved over their bodies, rubbing. She pressed her forehead against their shoulder, she rubbed her cheeks against their ribs, against their cheeks.

“Hold your hand up,” Lexa finally commanded, demonstrating. “They’ll come to you. If they like you.”

“If?” Clarke almost yelped.

“If they don’t like you, they’ll trample you.”

“What?”

“You’ll be fine. Hold it.”

Standing beside her, Clarke felt a little powerful, a little unafraid. The one, the color of wheat, the color of sunlight didn’t seem interested. The one who sniffed her eyed her, it seemed. And she waited, hand outstretched.

It took a couple of minutes, but she was not putting her hand down until she was certain she wouldn’t get trampled, until she was certain she was worthy.

“That’s Villo,” Lexa explained as a giant nose nuzzled Clarke’s palm. “He is the steady one. That’s Rhello,” she pointed at the other. “Haddi.”

“Khals?”

“Only Rhello,” she smiled as the Grey tried to lean against her. His legs came up to her shoulders.

“Do you ride them?”

“Sometimes. Haddi’s my favorite. She’s fastest. Her name means Gust of Wind because that is how fast she runs.”

“I’ve never seen you so… happy,” Clarke observed.

“I’ve never showed anyone before. It’s kind of,” Lexa paused and furrowed. “Freeing? Is that the right word for it?”

“You’ve only known me a few weeks. Why me?”

“They didn’t trample you to death, so I must have been right.”
She would have blushed, but she was too distracted with the giant creatures. And as the sun tried to go down still, and the sky turned almost red and deeper purple. Gentle, Clarke ran her hand along the distance of face that seemed larger than any animal she had ever seen.

9. Lexa

There were places in the crowded castle to disappear. As an expert in being alone, Lexa found all of them through years of trial and error, kept a mental map, knew the passages better than most because she spent her time chasing the elusive notion of escape. It was a hidden desire, but one that she fed regularly.

There was a tree at the edge of the garden, that was taller than the rest. It sat as far away as possible from the Keep, and yet it was not far enough. Even though her dress tore, Lexa still climbed to her favorite seat that overlooked the bay. Just a few feet from the top of the hedges that surrounded the area, she pulled her legs up to her chest and curled up as small as she could, watching the ships come and go without a care in the world save for a breeze and the tide.

When the news came, Lexa went to work. She consoled her mother who did not need much, and she sent the ravens, she conferred with the Small Council and called the meeting of the Seven. Before she could think, she did it all mechanically, and by the time it hit her, right in the middle of answering a question, she stopped. Dead. Her father was dead, and that was it. He ceased to be. Hours after she heard the news, she stopped, mid conversation, and found herself running.

She did not know where to go, nor did she use any brainpower to think of anything other than running and never stopping. By the time she made it to the tree, she’d kicked her shoes somewhere. Her feet were sore, her cheeks stained with dirt and tears, and still she ran until she found her tree and climbed and failed at catching her breath.

It took hours, she thought, for her lungs to stop feeling as if they were being torn from her chest. Hours, she sat there, unsure and hidden and stoic.

The Great Khal, dead. It was a sentence she realized that she had never considered before in her life, and that the last time she saw him was weeks ago as he returned home. There’d been a note in a book once, about a certain bird that flew across the world, back to where it was born, just to die, and that fact came out of nowhere to bring her a bit of comfort.

The day that he left, he pulled her neck and placed his forehead against hers and nodded. She did the same, and that was all. She would not have his braid. He would not be burned to live forever with their people. He was lost at sea to a storm, and Lexa hated what it meant for him, hated that she hated her mother for keeping them here.

The rest of the afternoon passed until evening came, and still, she sat in the tree, feeling the beginnings of her scrapes and cuts, noticing the tears in the dress. As soon as she climbed out, she would have to be real again, have to sit in more meetings, have to decide things and she would have to mourn in public, a notion which made her truly uncomfortable. She could live in the tree, she wagered.

From her spot, she watched the happenings of the world with an outsider’s perspective, unobtrusive and alone while surrounded. Twenty and accustomed to the pulse of the city, everything felt different, felt skewed, felt empty because such a large portion of herself was absent, and she would never have it back again.

Up in the tree, she watched the people, watched the world and strained her eyes as if she could see
the entire way to the plains of home, but all that glared back was the relentless horizon. She wished she were a bird, wished she could simply soar away and start again.

Long after the lights from the city appeared to the left, giving up on the day, long after the quiet seeped into the world, did Lexa slowly lower her sore body from her hiding place.

“I was wondering when you would come down,” a soft voice greeted her as she reached the final branch and let her feet swing there, considering retreating back up just as quickly.

“How long have you been here?”

“A while,” Clarke smiled and stood up, carefully wiping the grass from her dress. She lifted the end and gracefully pulled it above her knees. Lexa looked away from the way her skin looked in the moonlight. “How are you?”


After only two months, Clarke could read the princess. A month in King’s Landing, and all of her time not spent with her uncle had been captured by the enigmatic girl who had hair that always smelled like flowers, as if they were woven in her braids.

During a meeting, as she pored over old books with the Hand, Clarke would look up and find Lexa standing in the doorway, eating the last bits of a some fruit, smirk firmly in place as she lulled her head to the side, nudging it in means of an escape. And when Clarke did, they did not spend much time doing anything except Lexa showing her around the castle, showing her all of the small bits.

But there were things they talked about, until it was very late. Things like history and animals, problems in the land, and what different places were like, ones they both knew and ones they only dreamed about separately. And it made Clarke less homesick.

She leaned against trunk of the tree and watched Lexa run her thumbs along the bark before meeting her eyes. Clarke was unsure she had ever seen someone so wounded and fighting against that so violently, in her life.

“Yeah, you look it.”

“How is it going back there?”

“Ravens are coming and going. I had to get out of there. It was so busy.”

“I wasn’t missed, was I?”

“Only by the careful observer who missed your brooding,” Clarke smiled again before carefully fist the end of her dress, hitching it, and pushing herself up on the tree limb. “I’m sorry for your loss. I’m sorry I never got to meet him.”

“He would have liked you. He had a thing for blondes,” Lexa laughed suddenly at her own words. It came out as just a huff at first until she giggled a little more and shook her head. It was worth it, to do it, to earn Clarke’s laugh along with her own.

“So that’s where you got it, then?”

“I don’t have a thing for anyone,” Lexa snorted, still catching her breath from laughing. “I never will.”
“Oh really?” now Clarke laughed even more at the notion. To Lexa they were birds of a different kind. “How did you manage that?”

“When I was little, I heard the story of Rheagar and Lyanna and I swore I would never fall in love. Look at what it did.”

“Reasonable, and yet, you see one blonde and you go back on it..”

“It hasn’t,” Lexa decided. “You’ve really thrown a kink in it though.”

They sat quietly and felt their smiles waiver. All was quiet, or as quiet as could be in the moonlights. Behind them, far beneath the cliffs, the water soothingly rubbed against the shoreline, apologizing for the heat of the day.

“Are you hungry?”

“No.”

“I should at least put something on those cuts.”

“I’m fine.”

“I never knew my father,” Clarke sighed, running her hands over her thighs, straightening her dress. Lexa watched her hands until they settled. “I never really heard any good stories about him until my uncle accidentally told me that out of everyone, my father was the only person to show him kindness, in the family. There is all of the other stuff, too. But I wish I had gotten to meet him, at least once.”

Lexa sighed as well and flexed her jaw, brow growing deep and rigid at the thought of her father, or fathers in general.

“What I mean is,” Clare continued, “Is that you got to know your father, and you are going to miss him terribly because he was yours.”

“No,” the girl beside her shrugged, nudging her shoulder before sliding down onto her feet. “But nothing is going to make you feel better tonight. Just… now you know you’re not the only one who survived this.”

Only after a pause did Lexa look up from her lap and meet the squinting face of the girl on the ground. All she did was nudge her head once more and Lexa found herself following, as if she were helpless and needed only suggestions.

“Are you sure there’s nothing I can do to cheer you up?” Clarke asked as Lexa’s feet touched the ground and meet the squinting face of the girl on the ground. All she did was nudge her head once more and Lexa found herself following, as if she were helpless and needed only suggestions.

“Are you sure there’s nothing I can do to cheer you up?” Clarke asked as Lexa’s feet touched the ground and she tentatively tested her sore muscles. “I’m growing to know your brooding moods, but this is—”

Her words were cut off with Lexa’s lips. She was beautiful and could climb a tree and tried to take care of her in the unobtrusive way that gave Lexa choices, including the choice to stay wounded, and that was everything.

She pushed the girl against the trunk of the tree and held her breath as her lips moved against the pretty pink ones she often found herself staring at when they spoke together, she tasted them, drank them like she had been stranded, ate them, gave in to the delicious need that suddenly was set free due to loss. Feeling as inhuman as possible, Lexa craved only a little bit of real life and humanity to
bring her back.

Hands grabbed at her bare shoulders, roped around her neck as back bent and allowed her more to kiss until she felt hands pushing her away.

“You’re grieving,” Clarke whispered, chest heaving from the monumental strained placed upon it by surprise and want.

“Yeah,” Lexa nodded, kissing her again. Tentatively, her shaking hands moved down Clarke’s sides, felt her bones through the soft fabric. Lexa was convinced she could feel the deep green colour there, just beneath the gentleness of her palms.

Once more, hands dug into her hair, lost in the sweetness, in the softness of it all when juxtaposed to the feeling of the tree. Until they tried to extricate themselves.

“You’re… you,” Clarke shook her head.

“Yeah,” Lexa nodded, kissing her again.

It was all too much, too fast, too sudden, too good, too terrible, and as long as she could repress it she did, until she couldn’t. Lexa pulled away, breathing deeply, inhaling as if she were suffocating. The best thing to happen was when Clarke grabbed her, hugging her to her tighter, as counterintuitive as it felt. Lexa felt the squeezing, felt the warm body pressed against her, and she tried to breathe regularly. No tears fell, no crying could be found, she just tried to breathe and let Clarke strangle her tightly, inhaling with every gasp, the smell of dirt and bark and skin.
Walls

Chapter Summary

I love your fics and was wondering if you’d write a smutty one where Clarke and Lexa are neighbors and have never met but the walls are super thin and they can hear each other through them.

Sunday, April 4th; 12:04pm

As soon as her face hit the pillow, the noise started. Or at least that was what it felt like. It wasn’t even the normal noises of the city creeping through her window. Those things, the car horns and mufflers, the traffic and creaking brakes, the general hum of the world where she lived, those things all sang her to sleep most of the time. But this, this low hum, it was new.

“Are you kidding me?” she growled after looking at her clock and seeing that it was lunchtime. It didn’t matter. It was her only day off, and thus she was angry that any kind of sleep was taken from her.

The windows were all bright with the afternoon sun. Her apartment was alive and the breeze was quiet and wafted papers on her desk and the leaves of plants. And a noise vibrated through her walls as she flopped back in bed and shoved a pillow over her ears.

For the past year, her neighbor was a student who didn’t make a peep. How was Clarke to know that there could even be noise. She assumed her brick walls were soundproof, her neighbor was so quiet and unobtrusive. Clearly, she was mistaken.

“Shut up!” she groaned after tossing the pillow off of her face, though it didn’t help at all.

She laid there and stared at the ceiling as her ears honed in on the offending noise. At first it was just nonsensical, a dull hum, some racket, some annoying blurb of sound that intruded upon sleep.

And then the sounds came together, and she found the song in it. It didn’t help at all, but still, at least it wasn’t just pure noise, but rather a melody.

With a growl, Clarke pushed around her messy hair and got out of bed. She grabbed an old shirt from the ground and tugged it on before traipsing barefoot and pantless through her studio. The large door squealed when she tugged it open while the noise grew a little less raucous as she registered the sound of piano.

Still, she was on a mission and she was angry.

The noise didn’t stop when she first started pounding on the door. It took a whole second round of banging to get the attention of her new neighbor, but thankfully, all went quiet again.

“Hello?”

Clarke was proud of her body. She was content in her own skin, never had time to worry so much about what she looked like, though was remarkably happy with how it worked, how it got the job done, how it existed. She was never self-conscious, hence the disdain for pants and a bra, even when
confronting a complete stranger.

And then she saw her neighbor.

Three more hours of sleep was all she wanted, and now there was this.

It only took the morning to move in. It wasn’t because she was especially proficient in moving, or that she was very good and labeling or lugging. Instead, it was merely because she owned a truck and two strapping friends and little else in the world.

There was only three duffels of clothes. Two boxes of books. A mattress. Those were the only things she had as she embarked on her own, no longer part of a pair, evicted from her previous abode by a cheating girlfriend and an unbridled rage and hurt.

The piano, on the other hand, that was a task. That and the record collection and the music equipment that once took up an entire basement.

But still, after all of it, regardless of the little amount of things she actually owned to wear, it only took a few hours and two trips to fully move in enough to decide to take a break.

And then came the banging on the door.

When Lexa registered what it was, she tripped over cords and half-unpacked equipment as she tried to get to the door, though that felt like an obstacle course, and when she thrust it open, she was certain nothing would be the same.

“Hello?”

A pantless, wild-haired girl in a tank top with a rainbow on it stared back at her. A very welcoming neighborhood, Lexa thought to herself as she gave this stranger a once over, to make sure she wasn’t seeing things.

Nervously, for no reason at all, the musician ran her hand through her hair and pushed up her glasses before leaning against her door. It was a spur of the moment apartment pick, a large open loft where she hoped to freelance, but Lexa patted herself on the back a little more for this perk of naked women who apparently appeared at the door—

“What the hell do you think you’re doing?” the stranger screeched as she regained her senses.

Immediately Lexa furrowed and took back her previous self-congratulatory pats.

“Hold on, what do you–”

“I work two jobs, and that means I’m up at dawn and sometimes awake until nearly dawn the next day, and I get one day off a week. Do you know what day that is?” she explained, crossing her arms in front of her chest.

“Um, Sunday?”

“Sunday. I just want to sleep. On Sundays. That’s all.”

“Oh!” Lexa stood a bit straighter. “Could you hear me playing?”

“Yes! And we share a wall where it looks like you’ve parked a piano.”
“I’m sorry. I didn’t know. I just moved in and–”

“I don’t care,” the neighbor shook her head. “Can you just… keep it down?”

“Until when?”

“Forever.”

“Well, see, I’m kind of a–” she started to explain.

“Shh. Just. Shh.”

And with that, she nodded and took a step toward her own loft.

“Nice to meet you too,” Lexa called, leaning out of her door, trying her best not to stare at the nearly bare and barely lace covered ass that sauntered to the other end of the hall.

She failed.

“Welcome to the building, 5B,” the blonde taunted before disappearing and closing her door.

For a moment, Lexa stood there, oddly dumbfounded at what had just transpired and what she had just seen. As much as she wanted to go back and play even louder, she couldn’t actually bring herself to do it, not with the sexy angry neighbor.

Instead, she grabbed a coat and explored her new street, hoping to forget both her neighbor and her ex in one fell swoop.

Wednesday, May 20th; 6:29pm

Clarke had a habit of leaving her door open. It was a bad habit she knew, one that her mother would tell her she was going to get murdered, if she found out. But her building was full of people her age with varying level of karmic debts and an almost communal understanding to pretend no one else existed.

That was, until, the newest inhabitant of 5B.

The groceries were still packed up in the paper bags she left on the counter as she caught the sound of music once again, this time louder. Nearly seven, and with friends on the way, Clarke allowed herself just a moment to listen.

A light and airy piece that had to be classical in origin began and floated about like a spring shower through the hall and into her kitchen.

It’d been three or so weeks since the half-naked encountered with the new neighbor, and Clarke kept it that way. That singular encounter was enough to haunt her for many hours to come, though she had succeeded in earning perfectly silent Sundays, while the rest of the week was filled with music of varying kinds and guests coming and going.

Some afternoons, there was a band practice, or different bands, or something of the sort, with different kinds of sounds. Sometimes there were songs Clarke recognized, oozing through speakers. Sometimes, there was just piano. But every day there was sound through the walls, and it livened things up a bit, to be honest.

She saw her, a few times, out on the street in their neighborhood, sunglasses over her eyes,
headphones in. She was gorgeous and cool and effortlessly so, which was infuriating and made Clarke’s foggy recollection of her sleep-deprived tirade even more embarrassing.

It didn’t help that she could apparently make noises like the piece that provided the soundtrack to Clarke’s unpacking of her groceries. Someone would could bend notes and sounds like that was someone who knew too much of the world, and still, found joy in sunshine.

Despite herself and her mother’s disapproval, Clarke found herself leaving the door open even more out of habit.

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**Saturday, May 28th; 3:59am**

“Oh God. Right... Mmm– Yes!”

The noise echoed through the wall, jolting Lexa awake. As she caught her breath, she squinted at her alarm clock and stared at the wall as if she could see through it, though the dark greatly hindered that unrecognized superhuman ability.

“Ohhhh yes.”

Three in the morning, and slightly still asleep, it took a moment for Lexa to figure out what exactly the noises were, and then it clicked, and she hopped out of bed, as far away from the wall as she could, tripping over a laptop cord and slamming against the opposite wall.

All of a sudden, she was awake and she was listening to her hot neighbor having sex.

“Oh God I can’t listen to this,” Lexa muttered, covering her ears.

And then she uncovered and listened to the darkness, hoping it was over. She held her breath and tried to still her heart.

“Fuck fuck fuckfuckfuck.”

“Oh no,” Lexa shook her head and moved away from the back of the loft where she assumed her neighbor’s bed must have been.

The entire night was awkward, not just because of the sexy noises, not just because Lexa frequently thought about the ass of the girl who yelled at her a month ago–

“Mmmm ooohh.”

– but also because for the first time since the initial run in, Lexa saw her neighbor. She’d seen her at times around the neighborhood, walking with friends, rushing off to work, tying her hair up as she walked through the sidewalk, paint covering bare legs or the creases of her knuckles.

No, last night, Lexa actually saw her, actually spoke to her.

It wasn’t much, but as Lexa was coming in, Clarke was going out. And she was dressed. And she nodded and said hello and complimented the way Lexa played, and Lexa only stood there, dumb and with her keys stuck in the lock, attempting to respond.

“Oh God!”

She wanted to listen so badly, and for that she was ashamed.
It was a problem, to see her again, to speak with her because she was downright beautiful and feisty, which was oddly charming. To hear her having… doing… that…. Now, after having thoughts about her lace-clad ass was just…

The small light by the desk was a pick up from a yardsale, and her first furniture pick up. It didn’t cast much light, but it was enough to help her avoid tripping. Somehow, Lexa sat at her piano and started to play to drown out the noise. She played for an hour before she was brave enough to chance hearing those moans.

All was quiet, though her brain kept replaying them laced with her sonata.

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Tuesday, June 9th; 1:12am

“Oh yes, fuck, right there!”

It wasn’t a scream, but it certainly wasn’t quiet. Clarke cocked her head as she closed her door and dropped her bag on the floor.

All was quiet, and she told herself she imagined it. Dollars and fives poured out of her pockets as she began to empty in hopes of hopping into bed at a reasonable hour for her. She didn’t even care to count it with the idea of bed and eight hours within her grasp.

“Fuck, Lexa. Oh yes!”

“Oh no.”

Halfway between ironing out a crumpled bill, she froze upon hearing the apparent sexing happening with her neighbor. It’d been a long time since Clarke heard sexy noises. A long time since she participated in it with someone else, but she sure as hell still recognized it.

“God, Lexa…”

From the sounds of it, the two were conflated in whoever was moanings opinion, and Clarke found herself both turned on and jealous, but in no way surprised, somehow, that Lexa was capable of eliciting that kind of reaction.

It was the jealous part of her that made her leave her apartment after a long moan. Something about hearing what was happening was too much, even with the idea of eight hours of sleep lingering and forgotten.

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Thursday, June 11th; 10:10pm

“I don’t want to do this again!”

“I came over to talk, to figure out—”

“There’s nothing to figure. You left me. You quit me. I just want my records.”

“And Tuesday?”

“A mistake.”

Clarke tried not to listen, but the shouting continued next door. With a frown, she picked up her
paintbrush once again and started on the piece that took up an easel in the corner. It often felt like the time between painting was so long she forgot how to do it, or forgot what she wanted to add. Life pulled her away from finishing anything, no matter how hard she worked, though she fought against it as best she could.

“No, stop. We’re done.”

And now, even when she eked out a moment, she still couldn’t concentrate with the yelling. Every since the new neighbor– Lexa, she learned– Clarke felt a little bit more relaxed, or at least enjoyed the soundtrack of music that now filled her life. Every day was something new, every afternoon was a new emotion or feeling or style. It helped with painting.

But a fight was not on her docket of helpful noises for her current painting.

And so she resigned herself to tossing her paints down once again and deciding that perhaps a cleaning was in order, finally. That was what she told herself, though in reality, she listened to the fight to learn anything she could about her new mysteriously hot neighbor.

Don’t worry, she hated herself enough for it. But it didn’t stop her curiosity, and so when the squeal of the door in the hall came, she hurriedly stuck her head out to catch a glimpse at whoever could make the seemingly mild-mannered musician raise her voice.

The girl who trudged down the hall was gorgeous. That shouldn’t have hurt as much or have been such a surprise. Naturally a musician with long fingers and a jaw like that would have a hot ex. That was basic math. But to see her, to see the hypothetical in the real world, that was just plain heartbreaking.

With a sigh, Clarke waited for the slamming of the door down the hall, though nothing came. The quiet reminded her she had to paint, because she sure as hell wasn’t going to start cleaning.

As if on cue, a gentle kind of song, deep in the bass of the piano began as she picked up her brush.

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**Friday, June 12th; 1:13am**

After a fit of intense playing, Lexa always found it necessary to burrow. She was a burrower. She needed to feel small and safe, and in her new place, she hadn’t done it yet. It took Costia’s annoyingly effective attempt at reconciliation to worm its way into her head to cause her to finally commit to burrowing.

That was why she had Blondie playing on her turntable as she sorted through records that had been finally dropped off, with the promise of the rest another day, just in time for another attempt at her willpower.

“Knock knock,” a voice rang out from the front door as she dug in the box and pulled out another handful.

When Lexa looked to the door, half spilled back onto her floor.

“Is the… I can turn the music down,” she offered quickly, afraid of more wrath, though not opposed to more pantlessness.

But perhaps even better, her neighbor, Clarke, which she learned during an awkward elevator ride a few days ago, was fully clothed and smiling. And if she was beautiful when she was angry, she was damn near thought-stopping when she smiled.
“No, no, it’s fine. I’m actually getting used to having constant music,” Clarke offered. “Can I come in?”

“Oh, yeah, sure, I mean,” Lexa sputtered, picking up the fallen records and trying to have some sense of cool when her apartment was a mess of wires and recording equipment and instruments and mismatched rugs.

It was a lost cause.

“I realized that you hadn’t gotten the proper Welcome Wagon,” she explained after a few steps before holding up a six pack. “And I should probably apologize for that first time. Now that we know each other’s names.”

“The first time wasn’t terrible.”

“I yelled at you and was barely dressed.”

“Yeah, like I said. Not that bad.”

“Well, in the spirit of you getting yelled at again,” she rolled her eyes.

“You heard that?”

“Oh. Um. I mean.”

“I’m sorry. I’m the worst neighbor—”

“Lexa, no, really,” she tried to calm her worries. “You’re not bad. I get beautiful music all the time. While I’m sure all you get to hear is me banging around at night when I come in from work or leave in the morning.”

“Yeah, um,” Lexa gulped and blushed. “You could say that.”

“So, you sound like you had a shitty day. I just so happen to have some beer. The math seems sound. What do you say, neighbor?”

There was no point in even thinking about it, though Lexa pretended to have a choice. She had a beautiful blonde with a cheshire cat smile egging her on with beer and those lips and even if she didn’t know it, those moans. And all of a sudden, the musician was parched.

“Yeah, I could go for a drink.”

Friday, June 12th; 4:01am

“She cheated and she wanted me back. Wants me back,” Lexa amended, deep into her fifth or so mixed drink.

The confession found them colluding on the floor after hours of talking. It wasn’t intimate, but it was cordial, and it was cozy. Just two people on the ground between furniture and instruments, divulging information with the recklessness egged on by alcohol.

“What do you want?”

“I want to go back in time three months and not figure out she didn’t love me.”
The sight was pitiful, but more than that, it was genuinely sad. Clarke looked at the musician who was a tough, tough nut to crack, and finally saw that honest part, that soft and tender-fleshed part, that was buried deep beneath shyness and bravado and eventual self-deprecation.

“Can’t do that.”

“I know,” Lexa sighed and leaned her head back.

Both sat on the floor, sorting through records. They were not very good at it at all, but still, Clarke tried to help until she just started asking questions. She liked finding nerves and parts that people kept tucked away in little boxes under their beds and clavicles.

“How could anyone cheat on you?” Clarke found herself wondering aloud as she looked around the spartan apartment and with all that she’d learned.

“I don’t know. Pretty easily I guess.”

“No, I mean it,” she shook her head and was prepared to fight, spurred on by whiskey. “You mix sound for a record label, which is the coolest. You play instruments on records sometimes. You make music. You’re classically trained and a piano grand champion.”

“I think that’s chess.”

“You’re hot as hell, and you are really nice. How does someone do that?”

“I must not be that nice,” Lexa shrugged.

“I think you’re nice.”

“I think you’re nice, too.”

“I yelled at you the first time we met,” Clarke reminded her, nudging her thigh with her foot.

“Yeah, but you brought me beer when I was yelled at by someone else. Seems a little protective if you ask me.”

“I am,” she shrugged. “I’m protective of my little music elf.”

“That’s all I am?”

“You help me paint. I like hearing what you can do.”

Lexa grinned to herself, or at least that was what she meant it to be. Instead, it was a goofy smile that played all across her face. Clarke stared at it and she wanted to kiss her, but she couldn’t kiss her neighbor.

First, because she lived right beside her. And despite that fact, Clarke didn’t mind that Lexa’s hand was on her knee.

Second, because Lexa had just gotten cheated on, and was a mess of feelings and who knows what other kinds of baggage. And still yet, she didn’t seem too bothered when Lexa met her eyes.

Third, because the musician was kind and soft and stern and stoic and altogether someone that isn’t a one night stand, and though she hadn’t had one in months, that was all Clarke could handle at the point in her life in which she worked two jobs and chased her passion. But she didn’t move when Lexa stared at her lips.
“It’s late,” Clarke jumped slightly when her wits appeared, even for just a flash. “I should get going.”

“Long walk back,” Lexa grinned, nodding to herself as she, too, regained something. “Will you make it okay?”

“I think I might.”

Politely, Lexa helped pull the neighbor up from the floor and remained there, close but not touching.

“Thank you for properly welcoming me,” she smiled.

“Anytime.”

“I’m sorry about the yelling, still.”

“I’m more sorry I yelled,” Clarke promised. “Will you play me something to sleep?”

“Whatever you want. I’ll never stop playing.”

It was goofy and melodramatic, but something about the notion struck a chord with Clarke, which was exactly what she wanted to avoid. The words made her ears burn. It didn’t help that the lanky musician was leaning against the door and her shirt rode up and exposed hip, or that her eyes were whiskey brown and whisky faded.

“You’re a lot more trouble than you let on.”

“I know,” Lexa smiled a bit more.

“Goodnight, 5B.”

“Goodnight, Clarke.”

It didn’t take long for her to crawl into bed once she walked away, though the first step was exhausting. Clarke understood why Buzz Aldrin must have napped for a century after his moonwalk. But she did, and she locked her door behind her, and she stripped off her clothes and flopped into bed in under two minutes, even before a song could start in the room next door.

But when it did, she smiled into her pillow at the lullaby, and promptly fell into the best drunken night’s sleep she could ever remember having.

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**Saturday, July 1st; 3:28am**

“*Oh God, Yes!*”

Lexa sat up with a start, oblivious to her surroundings and confused that it was dark while she was obviously awake.

And then the moaning.

“Oh no,” she muttered, squinting and swallowing the cottonmouth of sleep.

“Oh yes!”

Five months she’d lived in her apartment, and overall, enjoyed the experience. It didn’t hurt that she had a large space for her equipment and neighbors that didn’t mind the music. It didn’t hurt that the
light was amazing through the large factory windows, or that some of the restaurants were actually really good in the neighborhood. It didn’t hurt that her hot neighbor was sometimes friendly, and they became more friendly as summer progressed.

The problem, however, was that said neighbor had loud sex and was Lexa’s crush, which produced a moral grey area in which Lexa found herself torn.

Because it was super hot to hear those noises. But also it felt dirty in a not sexy way. And so she trudged her way to the piano and sat there, taking a deep breath, ready to work out her frustrations in the most un-lascivious manner imaginable.

As her fingers moved along the keys and her ears focused on the noises they produced, she thought long and hard about how much she liked talking to Clarke, and how she should just ask her out. That seemed like a mistake though. They would have to live next to each other if it didn’t work. Or one would move. And the one to leave would be Lexa because she was the last one to move in. And she didn’t want to lug the piano again.

“Please. Yes!”

She played a simple song, one she memorized so long ago, she wasn’t even certain when or where or how, just that it was part of her muscles and made her feel at peace to contain such things.

It was so mechanical, she soon found herself thinking about how she still hadn’t caught anyone leaving her neighbor’s apartment. She hadn’t heard Clarke mention a boyfriend. She hadn’t seen the slightest hint of anyone other than a few friends come over on spotty occasions. But Lexa knew that Clarke worked during the day at a non-profit art program for low-income families. And she knew that at night, she bartended. There left little time for someone to make her moan like that. And what little time the artist seemed to have, it was split between painting and camping out in Lexa’s studio, more and more, it seemed.

Still, she played on as sunrise turned the darkness grey and then blue, and only then, did Lexa stop and listen into the night for the silence that told her she could sleep again.

Tuesday, July 30th; 4:41pm

After the drunken night, Clarke would have called her neighbor a tentative friend. It wasn’t that they hung out often, except that pretty much every day she ran into her, and from time to time, one would knock on the other’s door under the pretense of paying back for the previous time they hung out, and that was that. They got to know each other the way that strangers do, strangers with that hint of I-want-to-know-everything shrouded under because-you-amaze-me and missed with I-want-to-kiss-you. Though neither dug deep enough past the first part.

That was way it was so easy for Clarke to constantly knock on the stranger’s that was not a stranger’s door.

It was not, however, any kind of prep she needed for what she found when it opened.

“Hey, Clarke, hi,” Lexa grinned that stupid grin that made Clarke’s eyes roll back, attached to those lips that she dreamt about deep into the night.

“Oh, hey. Is this a bad time?”

Without any kind of pretense, Clarke looked down at Lexa’s sweaty body. Shorts hung low on her waist, pointing out the rounded edges of hips. A sports bra covered absolutely nothing to the
imagination, though that was for the best because in no way would Clarke have guessed that the staunch, button-up wearing sound geek was hiding abs. Or that she was hotter than previously imagined. That was going to be a problem and star in a few fantasies.

More than a few.

“Hey,” a hand waved in front of her face as she gawked. “Earth to Clarke.”

“Sorry. I’m sorry. Am I interrupting… something?”


“Oh, yeah, that. Okay.”

“You knocked on my door?”

“I did?” Clarke asked helplessly.

“You did?” Clarke asked helplessly.

“Yeah… like a minute ago. This is my apartment,” Lexa gestured behind her.

“Right, right, yeah, I uh,” she made the mistake of looking at her body again before meeting her eyes. “I was making a cake for my best friend’s birthday and–”

“Is this the cup of sugar thing?”

“Flour. And three cups.”

“You started baking a cake without any flour?”

“I’m not a baker.”

“That’s evident,” Lexa teased before nudging her head for her neighbor to follow. “I think I have some actually. But you might have to go begging to a few other doors.”

“It can be a small cake.”

Gently, Clarke leaned against the desk with some equipment while she watched Lexa move toward the small kitchen section. She tried not to watch the muscles of her back as she stretched taller and dug through the cabinet. But that was, naturally, impossible.

“So, I’m having a party,” Clarke began, attempting to not watch the body moving around. “You–”

“Hey, Lex, where are your clean clothes?”

The door to the bathroom opened, and Clarke’s jaw dropped. All twenty-six feet of glorious legs were on display beneath the short towel that led up to shower-wet shoulders and cheekbones that could probably murder someone. She was, by far, what Clarke would have guessed the old poets all sang about when they described nymphs or sirens.

“One second,” the musician grunted.

“Sorry, I’ll just…” the stranger smiled politely, and awkwardly scooted toward the bedroom.

“You were saying?” Lexa tried, handing over a bag of flour. “About a party?”

“Um, yeah. If you hear noise. You know,” she took the bag and nodded, not looking up at the girl or
the other girl. “Feel free to stop by or tell me to keep it down.”

“No worries. I’m actually going to be out tonight. Probably stay with Anya. So feel free to party hard.”

“Awesome, yeah, thanks.”

“See you later.”

“Yup. Yeah, bye,” Clarke offered dumbly as the door closed behind her.

It wasn’t far, but the walk back to her place was long and distracted.

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**Sunday, August 18th; 11:29pm**

*Bang*

Lexa dug the tips of her fingertips into her eyes as she pushed back from her desk and the multiple computer screens. Her ears ached from the headphones, and she finally took them off before another noise erupted from next door.

*Bang*

Normally, Clarke was fairly quiet. Normally, she was barely home. Lately, she rarely said much, and Lexa missed her, weirdly enough.

*Bang*

There was an entire song that she had to work on, a whole couple more hours of work that needed to be done, but her eyes were tired and her head was in need of a Clarke-shaped break. So despite the business at hand, Lexa pushed herself away from her work and made her way toward her neighbor’s door.

It was a surprise to Lexa when her sister said she must be in love with the neighbor. Costia was still fresh in her head, though she was on her way out, and the idea of anyone else was baffling. Anya was referring to the look she said Lexa had given the blonde as she left after borrowing flour. Or at least, she said there was a look.

That thought burrowed deep in Lexa’s brain.

*Bang*

The door was open, as it always seemed to be, and Lexa pressed forward, pushing her head inside to see what the noise could have been. She was grateful that her sister wasn’t there to see the look she must have had.

Paint covered streaks across the old overalls that hung low on the painter. Hair up in a messy bun, it failed to stay completely contained, and little streaks of color showed the attempts to tuck loose parts near neck and ear.

She must have had a look. She could feel herself having a look.

“Welcome party,” she tried with a knock.

For the briefest of seconds, the painter looked over her shoulder and smiled before returning to the
large canvas that took up much of the wall.

“That excuse doesn’t really work that much anymore.”

“I kind of like it,” Lexa shrugged, making her way across the apartment to the fridge where she snagged a beer for herself and Clarke.

“Was I making too much noise?”

*Bang*

“No, I just needed a break from mixing.”

“That band hired you?”

The paint splattered, making a mess on the painter, on the canvas, in a beautiful kind of chaos that Lexa was honestly intrigued to understand, though she couldn’t.

“Yeah, the one my sister took me to see.”

“Sister?”

“Yeah, that girl. You’ve seen her a few times,” Lexa explained, tossing the cap into the trash. “The tall one with my mother’s cheekbones and my father’s knack for getting into trouble. I think you met her when she was wearing a towel.”

“Oh!” Clarke furrowed and cocked her head, turning back to her friend. “Your sister?”

“You were a bit jealous, weren’t you?”

“No. Not at all. Why would I be?”

“My sister is convinced that you’re madly in love with me,” she bluffed and handed over the bottle.

“After meeting me for two minutes?” Clarke teased, finally putting down her paintbrush and giving the poor canvas a break from being beaten raw.

“She calls it a gift.”

Without meaning to, Lexa found herself standing close, sipping her drink as a distraction. She avoided Clarke’s look though and instead looked at the newest piece of art forming so close to her.

“Good to know.”

“Mmm.”

Greedily, Lexa watched the girl in front of her take a long drink of her bottle, she watched her wipe some dark green across her forehead, leaving a shooting star above her eyebrow.

“What?” Clarke furrowed.

“You have paint,” she pointed with her chin, leading only to more being put on the artist’s face, making her chuckle a bit more. “No, now you’re just making it worse.”

“Oh, it’s funny, Ms. I-sit-at-a-piano-and-don’t-get-messy-for-my-art.”

“It’s actually Mrs,” Lexa explained. “My husband is a writer.”
“Very funny,” she rolled her eyes as sat down her drink on a pile of old books that were just as paint-
spattered as the tarp on the floor. “I think we can change it a bit though.”

“Oh?”

“How many drinks until you take your shirt off?”

There was a glint in her eyes that Lexa didn’t miss. So she took another sip.

Monday, August 29th; 2:21am

“I don’t think–”

“Shh.”

“It’s cold.”

“Shh,” Clarke insisted once again, surveying the canvas below her. “You mock my methods and you say you have work to get done, but for now, you’re my art.”

“Do you do this to all your neighbors?”

The brush moved along stomach, weaving together splotches of color that was supposed to be a slice of the sky at all times, in all places. It was drunk and optimistic and perfect for a splash of motivation.

“Only the ones who play me songs all night.”

There was a glimmer of a smile as Lexa closed her eyes and stretched her hands out to the side. Clarke watched it happen, still surprised she got to paint on Lexa’s body. Still surprised she hadn’t been discovered to take her time and use the smallest brush she had.

“Lexa, what do you want from life?” she whispered as she leaned close to ribs, stretched out on the floor perpendicular to her canvas.

“That’s a big question.”

“All questions are big questions.”

“I don’t know if I’ve ever met anyone who talks like you.”

“Swears at you one second and then waxes poetic the next?” she snorted as she reached for a new color.

“Yeah.”

Petals began to form as a forest and garden bloomed to life on one side. Flowers with all manner of color and height started to weave up the trellis of bone and muscle.

“This,” Lexa decided after a big breath.

“This what?”

“This is what I want from life,” she turned her head and snuck a look at her side before watching the artist. “I want to contain galaxies and flowers. I want… I want to fill up the world with pretty songs and I want to be happy and brave and take the chances my parents never did.”
“That was a better answer than I expected.”

“Is that good or bad?”

“Honestly, I don’t know,” Clarke sighed, sitting up slightly as she moved around before straddling Lexa’s hips. “You’re complex.”

“I’m not.”

“You’re right. I’m projecting.”

“What do you want from life?” Lexa asked, feeling oddly different under the artist’s eyes.

“Take off your bra.”

“What?” she balked.

Clarke felt her face relax from concentrating as she sipped her next drink and tucked the paint brush behind her ear. Sitting atop her work, she put her hands on her hips and waited.

“I want to paint you. Don’t worry, I’ve done a nude modeling class before.”

“Oh, yeah, because that was what worried me.”

“You asked what I want from life,” Clarke reminded her. “This is it. To disappear from real life, and to spend as much time as possible creating.”

“So I have to take off my bra?”

“Why not?”

It shouldn’t have been such an effective argument, but it was, and Clarke was surprised when Lexa moved, arching her back to unsnap it and toss it to the side. She did her best to remain professional, which she honestly thought she could do with a topless girl underneath her. And booze. That was not helping.

But she didn’t speak, and she met Lexa’s eyes after surveying her exposed chest and the newest part of her canvas. Regret. That was pure regret because now she sure as hell was going to think about those moans.

“I told you my petty love problems, but you’ve never told me about your love life,” Lexa dispelled the awkwardness by bringing in another awkward thing as Clarke leaned forward and began to paint.

“Not much to tell.”

“Really?” she flinched as cold paint moved along her sternum.

“I date a guy last year, didn’t work. Since then I’ve just been… not really interested, if that makes sense. I don’t have an urgency to date. I like my life right now.”

“Oh, yeah, no that makes sense.”

“I’m not opposed, but I did wrong people already,” Clarke shrugged, beginning a chrysanthemum near Lexa’s nipple. “I know it might sound silly, but I want good. I want the real deal. And I’ll know it.”
“How do you know?”

“How have you ever kissed someone and just known that all of the entire world had done that, just for you?”

“Honestly?” she thought about it. “No.”

“Well, I guess it’ll be a surprise for both of us.”

Naked and cold but oddly burning alive from the inside-out, Lexa laid on the floor of an artist’s loft and allowed her to paint whatever she wanted on her body. She thought about love and life and she thought about lips and moans.

“I’m glad you moved in,” Clarke finally decided.

Lexa couldn’t help it. Her hands landed on hips and held the artist there.

“Me too.”

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**Sunday, September 22nd; 3:12am**

“Oh fuck.”

The moan was low and quiet, but it still woke up the musician. She pulled a pillow over her face and tried to go back to sleep. But once again, that was pointless.

“Mmm, Lexa, please.”

Ever since the naked painting, things had been heavy with her neighbor. Heavy and layered with meaning. Flirty. And it didn’t help that Lexa saw Clarke on the roof in a bikini. And it didn’t help that she watched her do yoga one afternoon. And it didn’t help that she was stuck with a kind of writer’s block and too busy with work to fix it.

It certainly didn’t help that Clarke liked to tease her, always saying she was thankful they had an understanding about being friends. Thank goodness they didn’t have to worry about awkward sexual tension as neighbors, she’d said. Lexa had smiled weakly and nodded.

“Oh, fuck me, please.”

“If only,” Lexa groaned and shook her head before shoving off her sheets and bumping her way toward her lamp.

It changed, from time to time. Different songs at different times of night, but still, it was something that required a lot of thought. That was how Lexa disappeared from reality and the fact that she couldn’t very well date her neighbor. Despite the large crush and insistence of her sister. She was still heartbroken about Costia, right? Right, she thought as she started to play. Right.

Why did she somehow manage to get the neighbor who was sexy and apparently enjoyed orgasms in the middle of the night?

That thought bothered her for two whole minutes before a different sound interrupted her music.

“Clarke?” Lexa asked, squinting out at the brightness in the hallway.

Much like the first time they met, All she was wearing was an old baseball shirt, underwear nowhere
to be seen though certainly hidden just beneath the hem. Hair still a mess, eyes still on fire, there was a different look in them now.

“Why do you play in the middle of the night sometimes?”

“Um, well. Because to. You. Um,” she blushed and scratched her neck awkwardly, suddenly very aware that she was just wearing short and a sports bra. “I’m sorry. Did I wake you?”

“Come on. Out with it.”

Expectantly, she waited, arms crossing over her chest.

“To cover up noises coming from your apartment.”

“Mine?”

“Yes. Uh. Private noises. Noises of an intimate origin. And I didn’t want to…”

“I’m not understand— OH!”

“Yeah,” Lexa nodded and shifted on her feet. “I didn’t want to be weird. But you’re definitely not quiet.”

“Oh God.”

“Yeah, that’s something I hear a lot.”

“Well, I’m mortified.”

“Same.”

“Perfect.”

Both stood there and thought about it and tried not to think about it, but there was no way that either were successful in this endeavor. No way at all.

“You… you said my name?”

“Yeah, duh.”

“Duh?”

“Maybe next time you’ll take a hint.”

Stupefied wasn’t the proper word. Dumbfounded was closer. Just plain marveled, even. Clarke was already gone before Lexa realized it.

She pushed the door shut and remained standing there, waiting for… something.

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**Sunday, September 22nd; 3:57am**

Not two minutes after closing her door and catching her breath, Clarke lost it again. The knock at her door made her heart jump into her throat. The person standing on the other side made her stomach drop.

“I can’t wait,” Lexa shook her head.
Determination sat on her brow, evident even in the shadows and the dark of the room. It was pure force of will that Clarke managed to stay standing through it, as Lexa took the step forward and kissed her.

Every moment led to it. Every second since the first time she knocked on the door. It wasn’t simple or even easy. It was as impossible as the planets forming. But the degree of difficulty didn’t matter.

Not when hands lifted her up and she wrapped her legs around Lexa’s waist without breaking the kiss. The kiss. The kiss that she never knew could even exist. That was the kiss.

Somehow she hit the bed. Clarke wasn’t certain how, only that she thought she was holding onto Lexa’s shoulders as she felt her tongue, and then she didn’t.

And then she did. Hands pinned beside her head, she felt Lexa’s body press against her own, pinning her to the bed.

“I want to hear you,” Lexa whispered between kissing and sucking on neck. “Not through a wall.”

“Oh fuck.”

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**Sunday, September 22; 12:08pm**

There was a soreness in her body that confused her for just a moment, until the memories of the night before returned, full-force. Bruises on her neck and chest ached as she stretched in bed. Her thighs felt like she’d gone on a long run. Her forearm ached deliciously.

The walls were similar, but it definitely wasn’t her bed, Lexa realized, once again, as she opened her eyes.

She’d done that. She… did… that…

It wasn’t a dream.

“Stop wiggling,” the girl beside her in bed complained. “Sundays are for sleeping.”

An arm slid around her stomach. A head slid onto her shoulder, burrowing deep against her neck. Skin was warm against her own under the sheets, and though it was autumn already, the windows were open, allowing the smells of an already awake city to taunt them and urge them to give up on sleep.

“Welcome wagon indeed.”

“Do you think the neighbors heard?”

“Maybe. If the floor and ceiling are as thin as the walls.”

“I don’t even care,” Clarke yawned. “Will you still be around later?”

“Nah. I got what I came for. I can move now,” Lexa grinned, closing her eyes once more, sleep sounding very good on the lazy Sunday.

For the moment, they didn’t have to think about the future. They didn’t care. They had the night and they had however long.

“Hopefully the next neighbor won’t take as long.”
“You gave me mixed messages,” she complained with a groan as a leg draped over her own and got more comfortable.

“Yeah, I do that.”

“Shh,” Lexa decided, ignoring all manner of worry. “Sundays are for sleeping.”
Chapter Summary

Could u do one where Lexa and Clarke are both very well known athletes competing at the olympics, both are expected to win gold in their respective sports. Maybe they get together and the media finds out.

“Okay, okay, just one,” Clarke smiles and holds the phone of the fans waiting outside the hotel. She snaps a picture and hands it back. “Okay, one more. You’re going to make me late, and they aren’t going to hold the plane.”

She likes this part well enough, she’s able to separate it from when she’s on the pitch. Somehow people like that she plays, and that she plays well enough, and that she will stop and talk to them after earning a Cup and going after a medal. She just likes the weight of expectations and seeing who she plays for most; the little girl with knobby knees and red, white, and blue paint on her cheeks.

“You’re my favorite!” a little girl explains as she signs a jersey that has her number on it, still slightly amazed that it exists at all.

“Don’t let Octavia hear you say that, she gets jealous,” she grinned as she jotted her name.

The chants and the cheers followed as she adjusted the headphones that hung around her neck that wanted to fall up as she moved her bag to the other shoulder and turned towards the bus.

“Good luck!” the cascade of voices echoed through the noise that wished them well as the national team embarked on its trip to the Games. The voices roared together in a send off of love and support.

“That kid has terrible taste,” Octavia decided as she walked beside her friends. Clarke chuckled and shook her head before tossing an arm around the defender’s shoulder. “I signed my name bigger than yours.”

“Are you excited, O? We’re actually going to the Olympics. Nothing can ruin this day.”

“Except defeat and ultimately shaming the entire populous or over 300 million people. 300 million hopes and dreams resting on our shoulders for victory and to earn a medal. No pressure.”

“I know,” Clarke smiled. “It’s it great?”

“Kind of,” Octavia finally relented, smile growing wide at the notion of it all, at the surreality of the situation.

Partners since freshman year of college, this was a dream only muttered when severely drunk at the second party of the year, where both stumbled out onto the pitch on their way home from the other side of campus, and stared up at the dark lights and laid in the grass and said that they would one day be in this exact spot. it took five years of pure work, unadulterated will and sweat and blood, but it led to this moment where they were about to board a plane to fight for a medal for their country, and it was the closest that unbridled joy could be visualized, in human form.

And even after the surgery, the torn ACL, the recovery, Clarke gave her entire soul to be in this
moment. For some reason it was all worth it, every single ounce of sweat and sleepless, painful night when her leg throbbed for the past three months; it led to this.

“How are you both doing tonight?” the interviewer stopped them before they could load up, but neither minded. “Ready for the trip?”

“We’ve been ready since we were six,” Octavia promised. “I know I don’t think I ever even allowed myself to dream about this, but secretly, I hoped.”

“Yeah, we were in first grade when the women first won, and I remember watching it, and just… it changed my life in little ways. That one moment in time,” Clarke nodded eagerly. “Plus Brazil. I never thought I’d get to travel there.”

“You guys have a pretty busy schedule and a pretty gruelling group to start in,” he continued as they both nodded. “But is there anything else you want to see while you’re there?”

“I like the diving. I’m excited to watch the women’s tennis, too. I’m so bad at it, that I love watching them do it perfectly.”

“Have you met any fellow Olympians? Any you want to meet?”

“Every now and then your path kind of crosses with another, and its always fun to talk about how much of a fan you are of each other,” Octavia nodded. “I can’t wait to meet all of them. Actually, maybe the entire water polo team from Croatia. Or the divers.”

“Basically anyone in a Speedo, she’s excited to introduce herself,” Clarke laughed.

“What about you, Griff? What are you looking forward to in Rio?”

“Our games. I honestly can’t wait to step out there for the first time. But I have always loved watching swimming races. I’m a well-below average swimmer. Track and field, it looks like they’re working hard, the swimmers look like anyone can do it and it’s a lie.”

“That’s true. Same with gymnastics though.”

“Exactly.”

“From all of us here, we wish you luck and know you’ll make us proud,” he smiled and thanked them.

“The entire water polo team?” Clarke sighed as she followed her friend onto the bus to go to the airport.

“And the divers,” Octavia nodded, quite seriously.

“I don’t think Rio is ready for us.”

“Highly unlikely.”

The cold current of the water as it slipped past her was soothing and calming in equal measure despite what it did to her muscles to move that quickly and fluidly. She flung herself out of the water and dove once more, flexing her body and moving like liquid through the pool. The rhythm was perfect, and she felt it in her muscles, but still, Lexa could not allow herself to stop or catch her breath. She craved that almost drowning, almost exhausted feeling like it was perfection and paradise.
The world was never so pure, never so rational and easy, as when she was exhausted and sore with nothing left to give.

When her return trip was finished, she clung to the gutter of the pool and took off her goggles before squinting at the time and nodding before dunking her head.

The other lanes had the occasional swimmer getting in practice. None went as hard as Lexa, and none let on that they were amazed that she just beat her own record, just during practice.

“You have to get out,” Anya reminded her, legs dangling from the starting block.

“I don’t want to,” her sister shrugged and fiddled with the perfect strap of her goggles, afraid to look up at her family.

“You’re working yourself too hard.”

“I’m fine.”

“Wait until Indra hears.”

“I’m fine,” she lied, blowing her frustration out in a bubble as she sunk deeper into the water, contradicting her brave words.

“It’s going to be alright, Lex.”

She didn’t believe her sister despite the fact that she never lied, and had never been wrong. When things got hard, Anya got strong, and Lexa fed off of that strength, bravery, to make her feel brave and strong.

“If I get out they’re just going to keep asking about them, and make it a story.”

“Yeah.”

“I don’t want to be the one with the dead parents fighting against poverty to be the Cinderella story of the games.”

“Yeah.”

“I got here because I worked hard.”

“I know.”

“I’m more than all of that. Why not talk about the multiple records I set at World’s? I’m competing in the most events out of any swimmer in history?”

“You’re human. They want to make you human.”

“Dead parents and a shitty one bedroom apartment in Jacarezinho doesn’t make me human. If anything it makes me un-human!” Lexa argued, tossing her cap and goggles and snatching her towel before stalking towards the locker room.

For a second, Anya just watched her feet dangle over the water. She was not unaccustomed to her little sister’s moods. She understood them though. Lexa was proud, had a violent kind of pride that poured forth from her soul, and it hid this fear and this anger and this worry that constantly plagued her. Anya was aware of her sister, and she loved her because despite the seriousness that always
seemed so heavy upon her brow, there was an innate love of life that permeated above it. Lexa was the best thing Anya had ever done, and she was unsure her sister even knew it.

“Yeah, went about as well as I thought,” she mumbled before pushing herself up and following her sister.

Alone in the locker room for a minute, Lexa stretched and sat on the bench before letting her head fall between her shoulders. She heard her sister come in and sighed before turning her eyes to meet her’s.

“I don’t want to be a story. I just want to swim.”

“You’re in the Olympics. You’re going to win. That’s what you have right now. It doesn’t have to be anything else.”

“Okay.”

Anya wanted to add more, to do something more, but her sister was a woman of few words, and appreciated brevity, and so she bit her tongue. Instead, she kissed the crown of her sister’s wet hair and hugged her shoulders, allowing herself to get wet from the swim suit.

There was an entire lifetime of hard work, and the nerves and pressure of it all was eating her sister alive.

“They’d be really proud, you know?”

“Yeah,” Lexa nodded, allowing her sister to hold her.

“They’d want you to have fun, too.”

“I wouldn’t know fun if it ran into me.”

“I heard that this Olympics is going to be giving out the most condoms yet. I think we can find you some fun.”

“Please let go of me,” Lexa sighed.

As soon as they landed, the world erupted. There was a frenzy that seemed to settle on the players as it all became completely real. By the time they made it to the Village, the team was crackling with eagerness.

Despite the exhaustion, Clarke was too wound up to do sleep when the rest of the team settled in for the night. Even though they were do for warm ups in the morning, she wanted just a few minutes to herself, to enjoy the moment, to enjoy simply being there.

And so she somehow found herself walking around the near empty neighborhood in search of the pitch, hoping to escape the feeling of pressure and weight of what it all meant.

It was no secret that she handled pressure well. She was accustomed to expectations, but this was an entirely new level that did not sink in until they landed.

“Oooph,” a noise and body jolted into the racing mind as the soccer player rounded the corner.

“I’m sorry,” Clarke rushed, grabbing at the body. A different language came back at her until the commotion died down. “I know…you… You’re…” she smiled, gawking at who she nearly knocked
“I know you,” the other responded, a slow smiling tugging at her lips. “I’m sorry. I should have been more careful.”

“I’m Clarke.”

“I know, remember?”

“Right.”

“I watched you beat my team in the World Cup. Your goal was beautiful, but a dagger in my heart.”

“I would apologize, but I’m not sorry.”

For a moment, now that their senses were back, they stared at each other and smiled. Clarke hadn’t imagined her so tall, but she was. And gangly, and with such sharp features that all but melted with the mirth in her eyes.

“I’m Lexa,” she stuck out her hand. “It is nice to officially meet you. I’ve been a fan for a long time.”

“Same,” Clarke nodded, shaking it eagerly.

Hands still held tight and shaking, Clarke stared at the swimmer and found herself completely distracted. She knew the story, she knew the woman, and yet now she was human and real, and that was very different.

“I didn’t think anyone else would be out this late.”

“I didn’t either,” Clarke confessed. She looked down and realized she had not dropped the hand yet, and so she did, smiling awkwardly. It didn’t stop Lexa’s intense gaze though, which did not help.

The swimmer cleared her throat and tried to think about anything she’d been thinking about until just a few minutes ago. It was impossible. She knew the soccer player, knew her name, watched her play. She had an appreciation for her face, enjoyed the pictures of her in no clothes for a magazine. Never in her life did she think she would see her. Never in her life did she think that seeing her would make everything different.

“It was nice to meet you,” Clarke offered, waiting for something.

Still there was silence and a confused glance from the swimmer.

“My sister said I should have more fun,” Lexa yelped as Clarke smiled and tried to take a few steps away.

“Hm?”

“Do you want some company?”

“You don’t know where I’m going.”

“I don’t really care that much. It’s somewhere.”

There was a moment of thought, an instant of hesitation, but Clarke nodded because it was the middle of the night and she had never seen someone look so lost and happy about it. And so they walked towards the stadium in the distance.
It was a moment she would never forget, and it wasn’t even about her. But Lexa stood a few steps back, and watched the soccer player look at the pitch in the large stadium for the first time, where all would be decided, where all would be left, and she saw religion and she saw pure, unbridled contentedness.

The emergency lights were the only spot of illumination, but still, in the half-dark grey of the stadium, the immensity was not lost on either occupant.

“When I was twelve, I told my dad I was going to play soccer in the Olympics. He was the only person who never laughed at that idea. And now look.” Her smile was immense, was relieved, was so happy and pure.

“And now look,” Lexa echoed, in awe of the entire spectacle.

“He’s going to be here,” Clarke explained. “He’s going to sit right over here,” she pointed, walking towards a side. “And do you know what I’m going to do from right here?” she asked, jogging out onto the field.

Like a puppy, Lexa followed, meandering after amused at the show and innately invested in the answer for some reason she didn’t think about too much.

“Tell me.”

“From right here,” she explained, holding her fingers up like a director framing a shot, “I’m going to score.”

“How can you tell?”

“I don’t know. I just know.” She laughed and Lexa did as well. “What about you?”

“I’ll probably score from over there,” Lexa pointed to another spot.

“You know what I mean.” Clarke rolled her eyes and walked towards the bins on the sidelines as Lexa shuffled around the field, taking it all in, thinking about how very different their sports truly were.

“I never told my father I was going to play football in the Olympics.”

“I told you something,” Clarke reminded her, rolling a ball between her palms as she walked back. She put it on her hip and watched the swimmer.

“We’re telling each other things now?”

“Who else are we going to say these things to but a complete stranger in the middle of the night while breaking and entering?”

“My father called me peixinho. Little fish. I lived in the water. He said I’d grow scales and I kept waiting for it to happen, like a promise,” Lexa smiled at the memory she refused to admit or say aloud before. “I wanted to grow up and become a fish.”

“And so you did.”

“Yeah,” she nodded.

In a move, she took the ball that Clarke was juggling, moving around, juggling it herself.
“Not bad,” Clarke nodded appreciatively, noting the skill and precision.

“I am Brazilian, you know? Contrary to what you may think, football is in our blood. Has been before it was in yours.”

“You really are mad about that World Cup win, aren’t you?” Clarke chuckled as she was passed the ball.

“I’d be branded a traitor of the country if they knew I was here with you. Probably demand I break your leg.”

“You’d have to catch me first, you’re in my turf now, little fish.”

In a move, Clarke twisted, moving effortlessly around the mock defender. It wasn’t much of a game, but still, Lexa had fun, and Clarke took it easy, playing just to enjoy how a new ball felt on fresh grass.

After a shot that hit the post and went in, Lexa made faux crowd noises as Clarke held her hands up and jogged around as if she really had just won until she collapsed on the ground, breathless and smiling, not at all preoccupied with catching it.

“Come on in, the water’s nice,” she said as she patted the spot.

Self-conscious and confused, Lexa was slow to sit beside her. A minute later she gave in and settled on the ground beside the scorer.

“This is going to sound silly, I think,” Clarke began, turning her head to look at the girl beside her who stared at the brightest stars that beat out the city light. “But I’m really glad I ran into you.”

“I’m really glad I got to watch you score your first Olympic goal from such a good seat,” Lexa smiled and refused to look.

If she turned her head, she knew what she would see.

“Are you as scared as I am?” the voice came in a whisper. Both stared at the night and felt the earth beneath their backs.

“Yeah,” the swimmer nodded, the honesty breaking her heart but feeling so wonderful to finally admit.

All that existed was the quiet of their breathing and the faint hint of cricket music in the distance. A car honked a few blocks away, just a faint mumble in the air. Lexa swallowed and felt Clarke’s knuckle against her finger. If she turned her head, she knew what she would see, and so she still refused. There are moments we don’t come back from, and she knew it.

“We should head back,” Clarke decided, finally making herself sit up. Propped on her hands, she looked back at the swimmer.

“Just a little longer?” Lexa asked, finally meeting her eyes.

“Okay,” she agreed, settling back down.

She was closer, on accident, not meaning to come down so near to the athlete beside her. She felt Lexa’s hand move until it was against her own and she smiled.

“What else are you scared of?” Lexa finally asked.
“The ocean. Doing my taxes wrong and being audited. Breaking my leg again. The future.” It came quite easily for her to list them all. “You?”

“I’m honestly quite scared of you.”

“Me?” Clarke balked and turned to see the profile in the almost dark.

“I’ve only known you for an hour and I think you’re spectacular. That terrifies me.”

She did not say anything else, but Lexa felt Clarke’s eyes, heard her turn back to the sky, could feel the furrow in her brow and felt the embarrassment in her chest at the confession. She was not someone who said such things, but she blamed it on the fact that she was not properly socialized due to training. Now she was just a mess.

Clarke just scooted closer, until their arms were flush, and when she settled, she slipped her hand into the swimmer’s.

Lexa was funny. She was sad and she was witty and she was flirty and she was happy and she was profoundly heavy, but with everything she was, she was it passionately and with a liveliness that felt so real and honest it was enchanting. To see someone feel and be, was new to Clarke, was refreshing and addicting.

She wasn’t sure when it happened, but she decided to invite herself up because she craved the feeling of peace that came when Lexa was around, as new and as scary as it was.

“I like it,” Clarke nodded, looking around the room as Lexa closed the door behind them. “Nicer than mine.”

“I don’t need it. I live twenty minutes away,” she shrugged.

“Do I really scare you?”

“Yeah.”

Lexa wasn’t sure how it happened, but she suddenly had a girl with pretty blue eyes who wanted to kiss her, and she found herself kissing her back. She’d be very honest about what scared her if it meant those kind of kisses.

Clarke knew it, right then. It was because no one had ever said they were afraid of her, and it was oddly endearing; it was oddly personal and intimate and important.

“I don’t usually do this,” Clarke pulled away.

“Me neither,” Lexa tried, pinning her against the wall.

It was a sprint after that. A violent, loud, eager, needy sprint that did not give them a moment to rethink it.

For as much as she didn’t usually, Clarke was amazed by Lexa, wanted her in new ways she didn’t realize before, and so she went with it until she lost count, until she was jolting herself awake in the bed beside a naked, sleeping swimmer who could do this thing where she made Clarke see stars.

In the light from the city outside, Clarke hesitated, and finally allowed herself to run her fingertips along the strong back of the girl in the bed before she let herself gather her clothes and stealthy leave the hotel room, scolding herself the entire way back to her own bed.
No matter how seasoned, the nerves always crept up when it was time to talk about what she did, about what was expected, about the promises she would make. Clarke found herself fidgeting in her shirt, adjusting her collar and tugging it as it stifled her throat. The inevitable questions made her nervous, the thoughts of the night before made her blush and clear her throat and feel as if everyone could read her thoughts, as if she was projecting that she met someone and fucked them two hours later and left without even a note. It felt like it was written right on her forehead.

“In all of the Olympics in the world, she had to walk into mine,” a voice warmed the air beside the fidgeting soccer player.

It was an accident, that Lexa even thought to look twice at the splash of blonde out of the corner of her eye, and when she did find her, she felt a little jolt in her chest, as if her sternum was a summer storm that rolled up quick and grumbled and exploded in a beautiful day. Even though she was in a rush, she had to stop, found herself hovering without being noticed, enjoyed the light of the day that redefined the slope of the athlete’s nose and jaw and lips in a new way.

She didn’t have to look up. Clarke adjusted her sleeve and smiled to herself before meeting those eyes that were somehow greener than she remembered from the night before in the dark and the evening.

“And you thought we’d never have to see each other again.”

“I’m not complaining too much,” Lexa smirked.

It was the proximity that made it so difficult to concentrate, but Clarke allowed her eyes to drift down to the lips attached to the face and she felt her cheeks glow. The swimmer stood beside her, the smell of lavender and vanilla drowning the air between the bodies. Lexa leaned her shoulder against the wall, crossing her arms, the picture perfect image of relaxed amusement, her arms nudging Clarke’s.

“Good swim this morning?” Clarke tried, hoping it would distract herself from the thoughts that Lexa’s eyes gave her as they voraciously took in her own features.

“Not bad. Good practice?”

“Not bad,” she shrugged, mimicking the girl beside her. The entirety of the world disappeared behind them. They wouldn’t have noticed a nuclear blast. Clarke watched Lexa’s lips moved and didn’t hear the words, and so she cleared her throat and blushed. “I’m sorry?” It just prompted Lexa to lean closer.

“I said you look very beautiful in blue,” Lexa promised, earnest and smiling at it all. She pushed a bit of blonde from Clarke’s forehead, letting her fingertips drag along her forehead softly. “Your eyes. I’m sure you get that often. They look like warm water. There’s this waterfall, and the water is warm and this blue that just… your eyes.”

“Yeah, no I don’t… I haven’t… no…” she shook her head and ducked the glance.

“You should be told that often.”

The intensity of Lexa’s eyes was soothing, for as violent as it was. Clarke liked the memory of those eyes in the early hours of the morning.

“You’re trouble,” she decided, shaking her head and looking out into the crowd that didn’t care at all about them. “Pure trouble.” She earned a chuckle and sigh.
“Like anything terrible has ever come from complimenting a girl’s eyes. If anything, I’m sure only greatness has been a result.”

“You certain?”

“I’ve never been a romantic. I am uncertain in this area. It’s merely a hypothesis.” The degree to which the swimmer debated it and took it seriously, as if this was a great matter in this history of the world, further endeared her to the soccer player. “And then I saw you.”

“Trouble,” Clarke decided, huffing and nodding quite seriously, afraid to meet her eyes once again.

“But the good kind, correct?” she leaned forward, as if it were a secret they shared.

All there was was them, was Clarke’s eyes and the tint of her cheeks. Lexa held her breath and waited. Both jumped when someone called the swimmer’s name. Clarke stood a little straighter while Lexa simply lifted her head and nodded, not putting any distance between them.

“I had a good time last night,” Lexa confessed. It was light and a certain gravel to it. “You left.”

“I had to get back for breakfast. And I wanted to avoid the whole awkward morning after.”

“I was afraid you didn’t want a repeat of the night before.” The words made Clarke burn.

“No, that’s not it. At all,” she shook her head and earned another cocky smirk, the kind that said the wearer had seen her naked. “That was good. Real good.”

Once more, their names were called in separate directions and the world would not be silenced any longer, and for that, Clarke was almost grateful.

“I should be going. Maybe we’ll run into each other again,” Lexa smiled, pushing herself away with all of the willpower she could summon. She had not realized how close they had become, leaning towards each other almost accidentally, unconsciously. She watched Clarke lick her lips and it was too much.

“Maybe.”

“Are you going tonight, after the Ceremony?”

“I was,” Clarke nodded, looking over her shoulder at those who called her name to come to the interviews. She looked back at Lexa and sighed.

“Don’t,” she grinned again. “Meet me at the corner again.”

“Okay.”

The word came out before Clarke could register it. But a beautiful Brazilian swim god was lanky and grinning in front of her, and she was ready to swear oaths and denounce her own home for more time with her.

“Wear comfortable shoes,” Lexa leaned forward and whispered before subtly kissing her cheek, before mostly pressing her own cheek against Clarke’s. “I will see you tonight.”

“Okay,” Clarke repeated, like a record that was stuck and only sure of one noise.

She stood for an extra moment and watched braids disappear into the crowd before finally taking a genuine breath and closing her eyes, her hand pressing against her chest.
“What the hell are you doing?” she grumbled to herself and followed into the series of questions that awaited her.

The relief came and washed over her when she saw the silhouette standing at the familiar intersection where they had first officially met. For the life of her, Lexa was almost certain that the beautiful soccer play who distracted her for the entire day, would not show. She was completely uncertain about why she found herself distracted, but she was infatuated, plain and simple and it was all encompassing and a welcomed reprieve from the all-consuming thoughts of her work and duties.

“You came,” she sighed, content and happy and excited. She pressed her hand to Clarke’s hip and kissed her cheeks in greeting.

“You’re a mystery. I’m a curious person.”

“And a rebel. I understand you have curfew for your game tomorrow.”

“Like your sister let you out.” Lexa chuckled and relented.

“Is it just me or do we sound like teenagers?”

“A little,” Clarke laughed and Lexa was done right there. “I did pass up a get together tonight, so I hope you have something fun planned.”

“Depends,” Lexa shrugged, taking a few slow steps, waiting for the blonde to follow. “How much of a rebel are you?”

And then the smile, the self-assured, cocky, almost, smirk that let Lexa know that Clarke was certainly up to at least prove how much she thought she was brave and fearless. Ready to walk through hell for fun, she followed.

“Trouble. You’re trouble and you know it,” she teased.

It was the first time she left the village, but Lexa held out her hand, and Clarke took it. And when Lexa hailed the cab and held the door, she held her breath and slid inside, aware of how absolutely alive she felt, and how amazing it was that she had not thought about soccer in an hour. Her head was clean and clear and it was a blessing.

It felt like a daring escape, like they would be tailed and were on the run, despite the fact that they were adults and allowed to do almost anything they wanted. It was illicit, to spend time away from their disciplines, and it was everything they needed to feel human again after months and years of preparation and competition.

“You’re from here, right?” Clarke asked, knowing the answer already, having spent more time than she wanted to admit reading bios and interviews, or at least the ones she could in English, and trusting the terrible translations when needed.

“Not from the part of the city I am taking you to,” Lexa said after telling the driver something that Clarke could not understand. “I am from the other side. A little neighborhood.”

“You don’t live there anymore?”

“No. I still train there though.”

“You’ll have to show me that next time.”
“Maybe,” Lexa nodded. The thought made her queasy, but she smiled anyway.

The rest of the drive was better, once she put it out of her head. Instead, she pointed out things to Clarke, things she knew and things she wanted to share.

“You look beautiful in white,” Lexa whispered in the back of the cab. It made Clarke gulp as she tucked her hair behind her ear.

“You can’t say that about every color that I wear.”

“I can until I find one it’s not true for.”

“Shut up and tell me about your heat today,” Clarke rolled her eyes.

“Let’s not talk about work. I like this because it’s not work. We can be two regular people on a date,” Lexa decided.

“A date?”

“Or, you know, an outing before the inevitable sex that you demand before you go back to your hotel.”

Cocky as hell, Clarke hated it, but she also enjoyed it for some weird reason and she shook her head as the car came to a stop on a street she would never recognize again, about fifteen minutes from the Village that she could never get back to if she tried.

“Awfully sure of yourself,” Clarke decided as Lexa held the door and slipped money from her pocket to the driver.

“Let’s just not talk about work and see how that goes.”

“Okay.”

The dancing was a blur of bodies and sweat and music that seemed excessively tied to the way Lexa’s hips moved to a degree that Clarke was almost unsure which caused which, half-believing that every song was made by her movements and not the other way around. She was exhausted just trying to keep up, but the best, most delicious kind of exhausted that meant her cheeks hurt and she couldn’t breathe because all she did was laugh.

The bar was tiny, a little thing on the corner of an alley that seemed almost hidden, and much more private. Tables spilled out into the slim alleyway, with people enjoying the night, lit only by the light of the bar that spilled out through the open doors and windows. Inside, there was even less room to move, but they found enough of it. It took just one drink and Lexa’s face for Clarke to assent to dancing so long as Lexa taught her, and taught her she very much did.

Hands on her hips, and then holding her own, Lexa showed her how to move, showed her some steps to her favorite songs.

Every change of the song, Clarke told herself that she would allow just one more. And then Lexa would laugh or look at her and they all bled together into one sound with different rhythms.

There was no question when they took the cab back to the Village. Lexa held her hand and led her into the elevator despite the fact that it was not her hotel. Still, with the sweat cooling on her neck, her hair tied up haphazard and escaping, she let Lexa kiss her in the elevator. Let her hitch her thigh
up on her hip and run her hand along it under her dress.

Just like the music and the dancing, the moved too well together. Even after fiddling with the key and laughing as they went inside, feeling as if they were drunk despite only having one drink, they didn’t make it to the bed.

“We have to stop doing this,” Clarke decided as she felt Lexa push her underwear down in one fell swoop.

“Why?”

“We have things we came here to do.”

“We can multitask,” Lexa murmured. “Unless you want me to stop,” she hummed, cupping Clarke through her dress, tugging down the top as she let her lips drag along skin until she took her nipple into her mouth. She ran her finger through her, testing her, teasing her.

It was all too much, and Clarke only knew that out of the history of the world, she did not want anything to stop less than this moment. She dug her hand into the mess of hair and fell back against the wall.

“Just sex,” Clarke whispered.

“And dancing.”

“And dancing,” she nodded as she rocked into Lexa’s fingers.

By the time they made it to the bed, Clarke was voracious, already kneeling at the end as Lexa lets her tug off her shorts.

By the time they catch their breaths it was deep into three in the morning, and neither wanted to move, and neither wanted to admit that it was better than any other night ever.

“Maybe we’ll run into each other again,” Lexa murmured at the door. She didn’t bother dressing. She just held a sheet to her chest, one she gathered as she watched Clarke pull on her clothes from their scattered spots throughout the room.

“Good luck tomorrow.”

“You can come, if you want.”

“I know.” Clarke grabbed Lexa’s chin and kissed her sweetly. She rested her forehead against Lexa’s and closed her eyes. “You’re good and strong. My grandfather said that will take you far in life.”

Greedy and unsure of herself, Lexa closed the gap and kissed her again.

“Should I leave a ticket for you?”

“I already have one. We got invited by the women’s team.”

“Who are you going to root for?”

“It’s not obvious?” Clarke smiled and kissed her again before making her way down the hall. Lexa leaned against the door and watched her turn the corner with a wave.
“What the hell are you doing?” she asked herself as she closed the door and leaned against it.

“Before the opening ceremony?” Octavia yelled, not even bothered by the looks she got from the crowd. Clarke rolled her eyes and sighed, shaking her head. “Don’t you lie to me.”

The arena was packed with milling spectators awaiting the series of races that would decide the finals for the following few days. A handful of races down, Clarke felt the eagerness creep up on her as Lexa’s second of the day approached, already having missed the first as a result of their own training schedule.

“Tell me right now or I’ll scream,” her friend threatened.

“Will you lower your voice?” Clarke sighed once more, looking around at the eyes that tried to not notice the disruption. “It’s not a big deal.”

“You can’t casually drop that you’ve been sneaking out to have sex with an Olympic swim, sex god.”

“Are you calling her a God of Sex or of Swimming?” Clarke debated.

“This isn’t the time, but why don’t you tell me?”

“It was just once before the Opening Ceremony,” she shrugged. “Like, one time, but a few times during that one time.”

“And last night?”

“You know. Just… dancing and I went back to her’s. One time before and one time after.”

“God of sex, definitely. The title of God of swimming is to be decided,” Octavia wagered. “Do you like her?”

It was then that the soccer player watched the girl in question enter, and she smiled to herself and knew the answer, though she tried to debate it and talk herself out of feeling anything at all. Her teammate watched her face and knew already.

“I like getting to know her,” Clarke decided to be as democratic as possible.

“I thought I’d be the one sleeping with a swimmer before our first match, but you had to go and beat me to it.”

“I’m sure you can find one tonight.”

“No way. It’s game time tomorrow. You better not even think of seeing her. I don’t care what you do any other time,” Octavia raised her voice and crossed her arms over her chest. “I mean it. I swear to God if you ruin this because of a vagina, I’ll kill you.”

“Sheesh. It’ll be fine.” Clarke could feel the worry radiating from her friend, and so she smiled and nudged her to make her smile. “You were just excited that I was having Olympic sex.”

“I am very jealous and I am very upset about it now that it has sunk in.” They sat and watched and waited.

“It’s going to be fine.”
“Okay.”

“I mean it. It’s just sex.”

“Sure.”

Tired as she was, Lexa didn’t move when she heard the door open. She didn’t move when the sunlight fell on her face and warmed her skin. She didn’t even move when arms slid around her waist and lips sleepily kissed her neck and shoulders, lulling her back to the serenity of her dreams.

She did, however, move when she heard the scream of her sister. It jolted her awake in an unholy way.

“What the hell do you think you’re doing?” Anya barked, dropping bags on the ground.

The body beside Lexa jumped up as well and began to swear quietly under her breath as she grabbed at the sheet.

“I have to go. We have a game today,” Clarke realized, pushing her hand into her messy hair. “Shit. Octavia is going to kill me.”

“Lexa. I thought we talked about this,” Anya complained, her voice still high and angry.

The swimmer was helpless, missed the feeling of just thirty seconds ago when she had a bed and a girl and the quiet. Now, her eyes were the ball in the tennis batch of the two other people in her room, and she just woke up and couldn’t see straight.

“I’m naked,” Clarke realized as she stood.

“No shit. That’s what happens when you decide to fu-“

“Anya!” Lexa warned. “Just give us a minute.”

“I have to go,” Clarke slid back down into the bed, covering with a pillow.

“That’s a good idea.”

“Anya!” she tried again, arguing with her in Portuguese.

Clarke watched the sister’s, watched the hands flying in the air and the glares they tossed each other until finally, the older sister gave her a snarl and once over before tossing something else at her younger sister and turning on her heel to leave, not closing the door the most gently as she left.

As soon as the noise echoed, Clarke hopped up and started grabbing clothes, frantic for no reason at all other than being caught with her hand in the cookie jar and such.

“Clarke…” Lexa tried.

“We fell asleep. We shouldn’t… I shouldn’t…” She paused for a moment after slipping on her underwear. “I’m an idiot.”

“What? What’s happening?”

“We shouldn’t have done this.”
“We fell asleep, after another rather gold medal performance, if I do say so myself,” Lexa wagered, watching Clarke slip on her shirt before giving her a look that was less than amused. “We didn’t do anything wrong.”

“I have a game today.”

“And I have races. Those facts have nothing to do with last night.”

Lexa watched the blonde mass of hair be skillfully tamed into a rambunctious bun before pants were slipped on. She watched Clarke think and digest and freak out and fight the urge to bolt through the window in mortification.

“Hey,” the swimmer tried, finally standing. She placed her hands on Clarke’s shoulders, cupped her neck and then cheeks, ducked to find her eyes. “Don’t freak out. You’re freaking out.”

“Your sister saw me naked.”

“Yeah,” she grinned, mischievous and happy. “Now she’ll know why I’m such a sucker for you.” Clarke rolled her eyes again and finally leaned her head forward so that it rested on Lexa’s shoulder where she lamented the situation. “We’re adults who did nothing wrong. We don’t even compete against each other.”

“I know.”

“I can’t make it to your match today.”

“I can’t make it to your races.”

“Want to sneak out tonight?”

“You already have two medals. I might have to work a little harder for mine.”

“Remember dancing?” Lexa moved her hips, held Clarke’s, guided them to invisible music.

“Trouble.”

“Maybe we’ll run into each other again.”

“I really have to go,” Clarke pulled away slightly. She made it the whole way to the door before she looked back at the swimmer. “Win today, okay?”

“Only if you do.”

“Deal.”

“Hey,” Lexa followed after a second. “We’re okay, right?”

“Keep doing that thing you do with your tongue, and I couldn’t stay away if I really wanted.”

“Gladly.”

With two more medals around her neck, Lexa was on top of the world. The only thing she wanted to know, however, as soon as the podiums and interviews were finished, was the score of a certain match. She found herself just as anxious for the results as when she looked up at the times for her own race, because as soon as she found her time, as soon as she knew the results, the focus of her
job faded and the world crept back into her thoughts.

There was a relief when she heard about the 3-2 win. There was an almost surge of pride when she heard that Clarke scored one of the three in the debut.

It faded when she found herself wondering out to the familiar corner a few hours later and finding it empty. It turned to worry when an hour passed and no one else joined her there. And so she retraced her steps.

If there was any doubt that they had a common ground, it was gone the minute she stepped foot back into the soccer stadium to find Clarke shooting on the goal, all alone save for a few of the remaining staff mingling throughout, picking up the trash and remnants of the game.

“I heard you won,” Lexa said as she stood on the sidelines.

“I heard you won,” Clarke said through gritted teeth as she shot once more, heaving her leg at the ball and firing it into the top right corner.

“I waited for you at the corner. What’s wrong? It’s not… this morning? I thought that was okay?” she watched the ball go back into the net in the exact same place it had gone just a minute before.

“Are we talking about work? Or is this still just sex and banter?”

“I’ll take all of it.”

For a moment, Clarke debated, was unsure of herself, and so she gathered a few of the balls that rolled around the bottom of the net and stalked about while Lexa crossed her arms and waited expectantly.

“I should have had it. I should have ended it before extra time. I missed.”

“It happens.”

“It can’t happen.”

“What are you going to do? Shoot until your next game?”

“I’m the captain. It’s my team. They’re counting on me not to miss, not even once. That’s how it is.” Her voice was cold and angry, but Lexa bore it anyway because it was new and different. She just nodded as Clarke boiled against herself and set up another shot.

“I can’t really say anything, can I?” Lexa sighed. She just earned a head shake. “Alright then.” Calculating her choices, Lexa finally gave up and sat down on the ground by the sideline. “I’m just going to sit here until you’re done, if you don’t mind.”

“You don’t have to watch me. It’s not like… we’re not… we’re not anything, you know?” Clarke blurted, stuttering at the realization.

“Sometimes, I swim for hours. More than I should. I just don’t want to breathe, and my sister sits there. Doesn’t say anything, just sits there, lets me know that if I win or not, like if you miss one shot or not, someone still likes you enough to stick around while you try to disappear.”

Clarke weighed the words and furrowed before ignoring them, setting another ball and taking a few steps back. She tried to ignore the girl on the sidelines who leaned back and stretched her legs out, the girl who won three gold medals in the past two days and was suddenly stuck in the middle of the
night keeping her company.

With a glance, she checked out of the corner of her eyes and watched Lexa watch her before kicking once more. At first it was distracting, but she couldn’t stop. And then it became a kind of security, and it made the soccer player relax until she wore herself out beyond comprehension.

After another half hour of practicing, she kicked the last ball and put her hands on her hips before meandering over to the sidelines. Lexa didn’t say anything, just watched her come, watched her debate, watched her sit next to her.

“I knew you’d win,” Clarke finally sighed.

“I knew you’d win.”

“Will you take me back to your hotel room and do ungodly things to me until my brain stop swirling?”

Lexa chuckled and shook her head at the notion.

“Keep talking like that and I’ll fall in love with you, Clarke Griffin.”

The applause and cheering was deafening, and Clarke was a part of it, clapping her hands and whistling with the rest of the arena that just witnessed another world record being broken. The home crowd let their appreciation be known for the swimmer who yelled herself, pumping her fist and hitting the water with her excitement that bubbled up over her naturally reserved demeanor.

Quickly, she hopped up and met her sister who hugged her despite the water that ended up on both. Cameras circled, capturing the moment that Lexa smiled and closed her eyes and squeezed her sister’s neck.

“You know if we win, and if she keeps winning, the relationship will be heavily skewed her way in terms of medals, right?” Octavia teased. “Like ten to one.”

“Shut up.”

“You shouldn’t be clapping. She’s single-handedly keeping our country out of the top.”

“She’s on the hunt to break history. That defies countries. Stop holding the fact that I’m getting laid against her.”

Clarke watched Lexa wave and begin to be questioned by the commentator on the edge of the pool. Her hands moved, her shoulders wavered as she tried to catch her breath, and her cheeks were bursting with happiness at the performance, and Clarke understood that feeling.

Quickly, however, the smiled faltered as the questioning turned to the familiar thread of her family. It was subtle, but Clarke saw it happen, saw the slight turn and the tightness of jaw.

And then she looked up and found her in the crowd and smiled, half and almost a smirk.

By the time she made it back onto the podium, Lexa was hidden, at least the Lexa that Clarke had come to know. She recognized the mechanism, the hiding and the fulfilling a certain role. She bit her medal and hugged the other competitors before disappearing into the tunnel to prepare to do it all over again.
“Five,” Clarke whispered, grinning against bare skin in the dark.

“I thought we didn’t talk about work,” Lexa sighed, purring into the pillow as the other inhabitant of the bed languidly adorned her in kisses and touches.

“It’s impressive.”

“You’re going to the semi-finals. That’s impressive.”

“For one second, you’re allowed to not be modest.”

Rolling over, Lexa found a hand on her chest a second later as she wrapped an arm around Clarke’s shoulder. With a contented sigh, she closed her eyes and played with blond hair and smiled.

“I swam really fast. It just felt so good.”

“I think you might be part fish.”

“Anya’s letting me come to the match tomorrow.”

“I would imagine. Who are you going to be rooting for? Your country?” Clarke asked, kissing the swimmer’s neck. “Or the naked girl in your bed?”

“Let’s not talk about work,” she tried, pinning her to the mattress.

“What are we going to do when this is all over?” the soccer player chuckled as hands moved along her body. “Avoiding talking about work and having sex are all we have going.”

“And dancing,” Lexa reminded her.

“And dancing,” she shook her head and tugged on neck to kiss her again.

“Ten! Ten! Ten!” the announcers were screaming and the crowd joined until it was so loud it was deafening.

Lexa couldn’t hear a thing. She couldn’t feel a thing because she couldn’t believe it. Not until she was out and felt her sister squeezing her for dear life, not until she looked over her shoulder and saw Clarke cheering louder than anyone else in the stands.

“Go on,” Anya nudged her slightly, and it was all that she needed.

In a jog, Lexa climbed up on the bench and met Clarke who did nothing but smile and congratulate her. Lexa didn’t want to hear any of it though. She tugged the shirt and kissed her through the smiling and the cheering and the ruckus.

“You won,” Clarke caught her breath. Lexa stayed close.

“Yeah. Sorry. I just realized what I did.” The weight of the world came back as the noise continued.

“I think we broke the Olympics.”

“I’m very happy right now,” Lexa confessed, kissing her again.

“Go get’em, tiger.”

Blushing fervently, Clarke stood up and tried not to look as embarrassed as she felt, but her ears
burned and she felt cameras on her in a new way. Lexa just smiled and hugged her coach and team.

The headlines were absurd, and the Kiss, now famous and immortalized on more front pages than Lexa would like to admit, followed the story that now had a happy ending the news stations were angling for the entire time. It was not enough to set a few world records. It was not enough to have more gold medals than anyone else in a single go. It was not enough to be the undisputed greatest. There had to the happier ending, of the slum kid who beat the world and the girl.

To Lexa it was only bearable because she got to play coy about Clarke instead of feeling the anxiety of the other storyline. It was bearable because suddenly the stress was off of her and now her sister was the one fielding the calls and making the plans, and all she had to do was bask and try not to think about the immediate future.

As much as she was relieved to not have any more work left to do in the pool, somehow, she learned, watching Clarke play for her life was just as daunting. Watching her after the display at the pool was even more intense.

The difference between the watching the semi final, before the Kiss, and the final, post liplock, was like the difference between dimensions. The most confusing part being that they had not talked about anything that it could all mean. They kissed and they bumped into each other, and soon they would be done with work. It was harder to try not to think of that than anything else.

From the seat in the stands, Lexa liked watching Clarke play, almost as much as she liked looking in the exact spot the player once told her that her father would sit, and watching the man wearing his daughter’s jersey, cheering and clapping like the fiercest fan she could ever imagine.

Lexa realized she was not far from the same, finding herself yelling at calls and cheering Clarke on her breaks, absolutely losing it when she scored, completely falling apart when they tied it up in the second half.

By the time Clarke went down after a particularly brutal hit, Lexa was out of her mind. The red card went up in the air, and still, Clarke rolled, huddling up into herself. She found herself hopping out of her seat as number eight rolled around on the ground, tucking her arm into her chest. The stadium grew quiet, almost eerily so, as everyone waited for some type of movement.

It took a few moments, but with the help of the doctors, Clarke was up, her nose bleeding profusely over her jersey, her arm cradled. She let them check her and pushed them away, making herself ready for the remaining few minutes of play. Lexa watched hands on Clarke’s head, flashing the light, watched them shove tissue up her nose to stop the bleeding. Already, the bruising was apparent under her eyes. Lexa felt her shoulders bristle and the entirety of it.

The swimmer was not part of the standing ovation. Instead, she simply stood, furrowed and feeling as if her insides were lined with sparks. Clarke rubbed the blood on her shoulder and stood without any other word, waiting for her penalty kick.

Arm tucked against her ribs, Lexa watched the player wait for the whistle and if she were being honest, fell in love right there, blood staining her cheek and jersey, eyes on fire.

And when the ball sailed into the top corner, just like the thirty plus shots Lexa watched a week ago in the middle of the night, she lost it more than she could remember when she won herself. As the team circled around and worshipped the girl who fell to the ground in absolute relief, Lexa yelled so much she thought she would go hoarse. Even with the point, and as much as she wished Clarke would get off the field and get properly checked, the swimmer knew she was a goner when the
player finished the game, still at full speed.

When the final minute concluded, and it was all over, Lexa watched Clarke sprint across the field. She pointed at her father and yelled, still favoring one arm, her friends crowded her and they were animals who peaked. Lexa enjoyed it all, felt the joy of it, and when Clarke was draped in a flag, while the confetti fell, she jogged along the sidelines, hopped up the wall, met her at the edge, returning the favor.

“Are you okay?” Lexa fret, holding her cheeks.

“I think my wrist is broken,” Clarke confessed, using her good one to tug Lexa’s shirt. “Meet me at the corner tonight.”

“Broken?” she yelped, but to little effect, as lips soon silenced her before disappearing and sprinting across the field once more to join the revelry of celebration with her team.

“Just a little.”

“You’re incredible,” Lexa sighed, this time burning bright pink as the player slid back down the wall and returned to the celebration.

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4 Years Later

“Can you believe they let us come back?” Lexa sighed as she adjusted her legs on the side of the pitch.

Dark and foreboding, the empty stadium was a nice reprieve from the business of the press and the arrivals. It was different this time, going through it with someone who understood, but it was still the worst part. Maybe it was the being human part, but Lexa still disliked it entirely too much.

“I can’t believe they let you in,” Clarke teased. “Taking all the medals and such.”

“Says the bloody mess.”

Another ball went into the back of the net and Lexa looked up at the stars that peaked through the open roof.

It’d been an interesting four years since she bumped into the soccer player in the middle of the night, and now they were sneaking out again. Two years of back and forth, travelling and hoping. And when Clarke asked Lexa to move in with her after the World Cup, it was a dream come true. Their schedules were hectic, but still they were together.

“Hey, are you listening?” Clarke nudged Lexa’s foot with her own as she approached.

“Not a bit.”

“Not much has changed.”

“Plenty has,” Lexa argued, tugging her girlfriend down.

“I’m still going to beat your team.”

“Dagger in my heart.”

“Shut up and take me back to your bed and do ungodly things to me.”
“You’re less bloody this time around,” Lexa grinned as Clarke hopped up amidst the cheering of their newest victory. It’d been a long few weeks and both were exhausted, but still, Lexa got as much of a thrill watching Clarke play as she did competing herself.

“Marry me.”

“What?”

“You heard me.”

Lexa couldn’t answer, but she could kiss her, and so that was all that she did.

“Hey,” Lexa smiled and pushed herself off of the wall as she waited for the team to walk out from the locker room.

“Hi,” Clarke smiled and kissed her, her cheeks unable to stop from the good kind of hurt. She let Lexa hug her and lift her off of the ground.

“Want to go to the party?”

“Of course.” “So… earlier… you…”

“Let’s go!” Octavia came barreling out of the locker room, until the rest of the team followed. The reunion with family and friends was magnificent and loud.

“Earlier,” Clarke turned back to her girlfriend. “That was just the moment, right?”

“You didn’t…” Octavia shook her head and sighed.

“I meant it,” Clarke promised, letting go only to dig into her gym bag that hung on her shoulder. “I meant it completely.” She handed her bag to Octavia as the crowd grew quiet. Behind her, her father smiled and held her mother’s hand, a few players put their hands over their mouths while others hooted. “Whenever I think of what to say, I only come up with puns for medals and it gets corny. I didn’t trust myself with anything other than to ask you to marry me.”

Lexa held her breath as Clarke opened the ring box that’d been sitting in the bottom of her bag.

“Win or lose today, I looked forward to this more than anything else. Lexa… will you—” “Yes!” once more her arms were slung around the soccer player. The area erupted with cheers as everyone circled.
Can you write something along the lines of this tumblr post: ‘imagine clarke and lexa making out and getting really into it and lexa suddenly makes a little catching noise in the back of her throat and clarke is v. smug and starts grinning against lexa’s lips and lexa says “if u tell anyone i made that noise i will have u and them killed” and Clarke is all “i don’t doubt it for one second…kitten”’?

It wasn’t the candles, thought they didn’t hurt. For the life of her, Clarke could not grow accustomed to the flickering, the shade of the golden glow the produced, the way it was both bright and yet not enough at the same time. They made shadows on Lexa’s skin, made her eyes dilate and glow. It might have been the candles.

Clarke didn’t have any time to think about it. Lexa’s lips were back on hers, rolling her over in the small bed behind the curtain. All she could hope to do was hold on.

It was warm, the movements, the room, the bed, the lips, the breathing. Clarke couldn’t decide which was worse and she didn’t care at all. Not with Lexa’s tongue, not with the weight of her hips, not with her hands, not with the feeling of the muscles of her back rolling and ebbing just beneath Clarke’s fingertips.

Lexa felt herself rolled over this time. She had Clarke’s lips and her hands clamped around her ears and she could not hear anything but the way her blood flowed like electricity through her veins now.

The searing weight of Clarke’s lips moved to her neck, to below her jaw, fingers rooted in hair. It was not a purr, so much as it was a moan that rolled and growled at the same time. Clarke felt it, on her lips before it escaped Lexa’s mouth. It was tiny and it was eager, needy, impatient, contented.

She hadn’t meant to stop, but the break in the stoicism on the leader’s façade made her pause before planting one more kiss on her jugular and moving back to her lips, purposefully and ready. Lexa closed her eyes and swallowed embarrassment and another noise ready to come with the determined shifting of Clarke’s body atop her.

“Enjoying that are we?” Clarke asked, propping herself over the commander who kept her eyes shut tightly and shook her head.

“You cannot-”

“Oh no, don’t worry,” Clarke smirked. “That’s just mine.”

“I will have to kill you if you tell anyone.”

“Tell them what?” Clarke hovered over her lips. “That you purr like a kitten when I kiss a certain spot on your neck?”

“Yes!” Lexa growled. She covered her face with her hands and hid right there. “I am not a kitten,” she mumbled.
“Are there other spots?” Clarke asked, peeling away a hand.

“No,” Lexa lied.

“I like that one a lot.”

“Clarke.”

“I like the noise.”

“You can’t tell-”

Lexa was silence by a small catch in the depths of her throat as Clarke sucked and kissed a certain spot.
Because you’re doing such a badass job at writing Clexa fics, I’m sure everyone would be greatly appreciated if you wrote one of them making out on Lexa’s throne. ;) i mean, how could we not? for science.

“You look tired.”

Lexa lifted her head from where she cradled it between her palms on her throne. She’d braced herself, elbows on her knees, back hunched and sore, doubled over with the frustration of the predicament in the Alliance. She just needed the quiet after Indra and her warriors left. Just a few moments.

“Clarke,” she breathed the name with a smile tugging on her lips.

“I didn’t think you sat there when no one was around.” Clarke approached the weary commander, smiling at the scene and knowing full well that she was worn down, though would never admit it.

“I am sorry,” Lexa sat up slightly, oddly self-conscious, though refusing to look it. “I did not know you were coming. I thought I would see you tomorrow.”

“A little boy broke his leg, and I came to help Lincoln set it.”

“Oh.”

“A good reason to see you.”

“How is he?”

“The little boy? He’s tough. He’ll be alright.”

“I have to do things tonight. Are you staying?”

“If you want me to.”

“I do.”

“Okay.”

Clarke was closer, now. She slipped her hands to the arms of the chair and leaned down to kiss the Commander. Lexa sat a bit straighter to reach her lips, oddly confused at how being pinned in the chair made her feel. This was her point of power, and she sat upon it menacingly. Now, though, she was caged by Clarke’s arms.

“Want to know a secret?” Clarke tried.

“Yes.”

“I like you in this chair.”
“Yes?”

“Yes.”

“Indra is due back any moment,” Lexa gulped.

“I don’t care.”

Lexa didn’t lose her eyes as she felt Clarke’s weight settle on her legs, her thighs grabbing around her hips. Her heartbeat quickened, that was for certain. She licked her lips. Clarke watched her eyes grow hooded, darting between her mouth and her eyes. Clarke felt Lexa’s hands move to her hips.

For just a moment, Lexa was in charge, leaning up to kiss Clarke, thought he blonde only sat up straighter to pull away and kiss her back, hungry and gobbling her lips, her tongue moved agonizingly slow. Clarke earned a hum. Her hips moved on their own, gently mimicking the eagerness of her lips. It drove Lexa crazy. She grabbed at Clarke’s neck roughly, eager to open her up for more.

“Please?” Clarke whispered, unbuckling her own pants just enough. Lexa willingly obliged. Clarke sat up, allowing Lexa’s hand the chance to find leverage. “Oh God,” she groaned.

Lexa kissed her neck, kissed her skin as she pulled on her shirt, anything to have her writhing and grinding against her fingers more. Clarke gripped at the gnarled wood and tusk of the throne over Lexa’s shoulders while the Commander watched her head tilt back. The look of concentration on the blonde’s face was mystifying. Lexa tasted the panting on her lips, moved her fingers until her forearm burned. Until Clarke’s thighs tightened and a small moan hitched in her throat, until her hand grabbed Lexa’s wrist as a warning. Clarke wrapped her arms around Lexa’s neck, tangling herself in her hair, unable to hold herself up, her spine folded and she leaned against the Commander.

“I like this visit,” Lexa realized, oddly uncomfortable herself.

“You can’t imagine how long I’ve thought of that.”

“Any other ways I can help with these thoughts?” Lexa asked, earning a whimper as she retracted her hand. Clarke remained dazed and grinning that goofy half-grin, her pants open and arms like vines hanging to her sides.

“I am suddenly thoughtless.”

A clearing of a throat startled them. Lexa looked over Clarke’s shoulder to meet Indra’s eyes. She felt her cheeks redden at the precarious position she’d been found in. Clarke looked down and buttoned her pants as discretely as she could.

“I apologize for interrupting,” the general looked at the ground purposefully.

“I’ll see you later,” Clarke dismounted. Lexa crossed her legs and cleared her throat as well, wiping her lips and hoping she was not a disaster. “Indra, always a pleasure.”

“Clarke,” she nodded.
Can you write canon where Clarke and Lexa are laying in bed (naked of course) and Clarke asks Lexa about the battle scars all over her body. And Lexa tells her of all of her experiences.

The quiet that came in the middle of the night was addictive. It made the bed an entire sun, with the bodies wrapped in galaxies of sheets, with stars twinkling in fingertips and the low orbit of hips and palms orchestrating entire constellations with deft, god-like movements.

Outside, that quiet kind of summer rain fell. The kind that existed only to cover the world, that snuck in like a thief, tiptoed through the streets, hung heavy and slowly accumulated on the edge of leaves and created those tinny, gentle kinds of rivers that sloshed along paths and streets. It was a curtain that further hid the rest of the universe.

In the bed, none of it mattered, not planetary science or the storm that rolled through the hills and gorged the valleys and streams and would lead to a humid morning. All that existed was two bodies and the sheets.

“What about this one?” Clarke murmured, tracing the crescent shaped scar between the Commander’s rib and hip. She rested her ear against Lexa’s stomach, felt the warmth of the skin against her cheek, and ran her fingertip along the protrusion of healed-skin that was paler, pinker than the surrounding area.

“Mmmph,” Lexa growled, adjusting, burrowing her shoulders deeper into the mattress. She stretched away the soreness that was still the comedown from their earlier activities. “Why?”

“I like knowing what made you a little more you.”

The Commander ran her hand through Clarke’s hair, closed her eyes and took a deep breath, reveling in the feeling of fingers on her scars.

“A run in with a Reaper.”

“Yeah?”

“It wasn’t a weapon. He surprised me, threw me down, and I landed on a broken branch.”

“Must have made it a tough fight,” Clarke murmured, lifting her head slightly so that Lexa’s hand fell back on her own chest. She kissed the spot there.

“It wasn’t terrible. I had to pull it out and I ended up using it to kill him.” She was quiet, still thinking about that moment in her life, about how Indra patched her up, about how Anya mocked her for being wounded by a tree. It made her smile.

“Show me another?” she asked, settling between Lexa’s legs.

“Oh, you don’t want to know about all of them. There’s too many.”
“I like them,” Clarke promised. “What about this one?” Lexa tucked her arm behind her head and watched the girl slip down lower, hitch her hand behind her knee and kissed it there.

“I don’t remember.”

“You’re lying.”

Clarke watched Lexa roll her eyes and close them before smiling softly. She watched her other hand run along naked skin and rise with a sigh. She rested her head against Lexa’s thigh.

“I was little. Very little. I don’t remember what I was doing, probably running after my brother and not able to keep up,” Lexa recalled.

“You have a brother?”

“I did.”

“Oh.”

“I was little. Maybe seven or eight?” she ignored the sound, so she didn’t have to explain that part. “And I fell really hard from my horse. My knee was all bloody and I couldn’t stop crying. I remember that. I remember what it felt like to cry so freely from such a simple kind of pain. And my Mom patched it up and I just remember sitting in her lap and rocking me and hushing me and telling me I would grow up big and strong.”

“She wasn’t far off. I wouldn’t say you’re exceptionally big though.”

“I’m bigger than I was at seven, and I think that was my only goal.”

“I like this one,” Clarke decided, running her thumb along the knee.

She let her fingers run up along thigh, played with all the skin that peaked beneath the tangle of sheets. This was a night, a good night, the kind of moment that no one else could ever have because it was just theirs. Clarke craved these moments, these nights, this girl.

“Give me more.”

“Greedy.”

“Yeah. You know that.”

“Find another.”

Clarke grinned, dragging her lips along thighs. Hips rolled toward her mouth and she had that smell in her nose that made her mouth water. She kissed Lexa between her thighs, looked up and met those eyes, those eyes that were not hidden beneath a furrow and a serious mask of want and need.

“What about this one?” Clarke asked, earning another growl. She knew this one, not of humoring her or stifling a yawn, but of pure annoyance at not getting what she wanted.

The intrepid explorer ran her hand along three lines towards the back of Lexa’s ribs.

“Training. Anya did not like to take it easy on me,” Lexa smiled at the memory. “She was a very good fighter.”

“Believe me, I learned first hand.” Lips moved to the sight of the imperfection once again. “I want
more.”

“Me too,” the Commander decided, using her hips to flip the girl that hummed along her. She earned that laugh, the kind that seemed to run outside and splash in the puddles, that lingered as the rain lingered on windows and leaves, disinterested in dripping in the lethargy of the summer heat.

But it was her turn now, and as Clarke pushed aside her hair, flickering gold and soft in the candlelight, Lexa saw the smile and kissed her neck, opening her mouth to taste all that skin could offer on a night like that.

She tasted the hum that came there, at the base of her throat, and she gobbled it up as best she could because she truly was insanely greedy and insatiable when it came to the girl that squirmed beneath her.

“You didn’t let me get to my favorite one,” Clarke complained, half-heartedly as her arms wrapped around neck and pulled lips to her own. Legs slipped between her own and she writhed against them.

“Later,” Lexa promised. “Let me enjoy your unmarked skin.”

“I like your scars. They’re like little landmarks so I don’t get lost.”

“Lost?” she looked up as she began to move down chest.

“Yes,” Clarke smiled, pushing her over once again, pinning hands above wild and wavy hair, rebelling now that it was freed from the braids of the day. “I can get distracted and stray from the path quite a bit.”

A naked girl on top of her, and Lexa was ready to give into any demands she might make. But as soon as her hands were freed, they navigated to bare hips.

“What’s this one?” she asked, letting her thumb run along the tiny scar between hip and belly button.

“My appendix had to come out when I was younger.”

“I like this one,” Lexa nodded, watching her finger on the pink line. It was almost invisible, but it was there, and Lexa knew every inch, every curve and break of path.

Hands raked over Clarke now, with Lexa becoming unable to control herself. They raked along ribs, they slid up her chest, they grabbed and cupped and were filled with a needy kind of arch. A beautiful lip slipped between teeth as Clarke’s eyes closed. Lexa was torn between wanting to watch her face and hips grind against her own.

Lexa sat up, tilting the blonde in her lap back slightly until she settled between her legs. It was too much, and so she gave in to the compulsion to kiss Clarke and swallow the needy kind of noise.

“Do you want to see my favorite?” Lexa whispered with a small smile. She only earned a small nod, as Clarke gulped with the feeling of skin pressed against her own. “This one,” she pointed to the one closer to her shoulder. “Where you saved me.”

She had Lexa covering all of her senses, and Clarke didn’t know what to do, and so she just clung tighter.

“More,” she sighed, ghosting along Lexa’s smirk.
Scars (Part 2)

Chapter Summary

Can you please do another scars one but this time with Lexa discovering all of Clarke’s ones?

The noise that came in the middle of the afternoon was addictive. It made the bed an entire galaxy, with the bodies wrapped in clouds of sheets, with leaves and branches lazing through fingertips, and the low rocking of hips and palms orchestrating entire maps and landscapes with deft, god-like movements.

Outside, that quiet kind of winter snow fell. The kind that existed only to cover the world, that snuck in like a thief, tiptoed through the streets, hung heavy and slowly accumulated on the edge of leaves and created those tiny, gentle kinds of drifts and piles that became mountain ranges after being traversed by daring feet. It was a curtain that further hid the rest of the universe.

In the bed, none of it mattered, not cartography or the blizzard that rolled through the hills and froze the streams and suffocated the valleys and would leave a tundra come morning. All that existed was two bodies and the sheets.

“What about this one?” Lexa murmured, dragging her lips along the two inch scar near Clarke’s hip.

Pink and almost childlike against the paler skin that rarely saw the sun, it sat there, almost perfectly straight and very much different than Lexa’s jagged and misshapen accidents. She kissed there before placing her cheek on Clarke’s hip and tracing it with her fingers.

“Shh,” Clarke whispered, eyes still shut despite their duties awaiting.

It was dangerous, to steal time alone, and yet they did it with reckless abandon because there was nothing better than the feeling of the warm sheets and lips and escaping, the freedom each provided for the other to shirk all else and exist solely for pleasure and gratification.

“Tell me.”

“I had my appendix removed when I was a seven. Nothing too exciting.”

“What happened?”

“There’s a little part inside of you that can sometimes go bad, and they opened me up and took it out. Nothing traumatizing.”

“What were you like when you were six?”

Clarke furrowed and her hand that raked through Lexa’s messy stock of hair paused at the question, because it was so intimate, she didn’t know how to answer. She couldn’t remember being six, and whoever she was then, was so far removed, it wasn’t even possible that she existed anymore.

Instead, she just played with Lexa’s hair a little more, because she knew that the Commander of the Thirteen Clans enjoyed it more than any other feeling on the planet. She knew that.
But Lexa kissed her scar once again and though Clarke forgot about the mark, she swallowed and took a deep breath.

“I was perfect,” Clarke decided. “I was polite and quiet and I read a lot. I played with friends and hated corn. There wasn’t even one second that I could have imagined I’d end up here, in this moment.”

All she earned was a small nod and an almost purr of contentment with her answer. The fire crackled in the fireplace while a candle reached the end of its wick, making one corner a little darker, though the room barely noticed or stopped to say anything else on the matter.

The only acknowledgement of time, of however long it’d been, was when Lexa shifted and languidly moved her body. To Clarke, she was a lion, all muscle beneath a shaggy coat, poised to strike at any moment, full of power and not wasteful with movements. The Commander lazed in her bones, aware of her own abilities, not fearing much else. The sinews of her muscles and bones all worked in perfect harmony so that she constantly looked like she prowled, and still, Clarke felt like prey in the most unbelievable sense of the word.

“What about this one?” she asked, kissing toward a long winding slash on calf muscle with little dots on each side where the sutures had been.

Clarke stretched her toes and bit her lip as Lexa lifted her leg slightly, settling her own hips between them, and kissed there, a lazy kind of sex in her eyes and messy mane.

“Curious now, all of a sudden, aren’t you?”

“I’m quite familiar with your body, Clarke,” Lexa grinned, putting the leg back down. “I know what it does. I want to know its hows.”

Completely naked, she sat there, unperturbed and unknowing of how distracting she was.

“There was an accident when the drop ship landed a second time, part flew off and sliced me. I had a pretty good piece of metal sticking out.”

There was no purr this time, nor was there any kind of movement save for Lexa furrowing and thinking a little deeper than before. But Clarke slid her leg up, ran it along her hip and made her bend back to a kiss. She knew how her body worked, and she knew how Lexa’s did as well.

She liked the way Lexa kissed, which was so out of character from the girl she once met twirling a dagger. Stoic and unyielding on a throne, in bed, Lexa was passionate and fire, she was soft and graceful and did this thing with her tongue and teeth on Clarke’s neck that made her body catch on fire. To say she was powerful before was unfair; in bed, she had all of the power of a myth.

Lips slid along sternum and then captured nipple while hips pushed harder into the bed, pinning the map there.

“What about this one?” Lexa whispered against shoulder.

“An arrow, from my first year on the ground.”

Tenderly, Lexa kissed there once again, gentle as she could. Hands raked along her back, distracted and disinterested in the history of a body and instead eager to continue with the exploring.

The mapper was disinterested in it though. Instead, she moved toward neck and jaw, kissing there, knowing it all by lips alone.
“And this one?” she asked, nudging ribs with nose as she moved once more.

“The Mountain,” was all Clarke had to say and Lexa froze, her body growing tense.

“What… what happened…?” Lexa tried, sitting up slightly and clearing her throat.

Clarke watched her jaw grow tight. But there were eyes on her that she couldn’t even fight, especially in a winter afternoon like that. And so she nodded and lifted her head.

“I tried to break out,” she explained, pointing to the thin pale line along her forearm, over the bone of her wrist. “I broke a window and the glass got me. I turned out to be one of the more unruly prisoners. And so I was the first on the block. A tube was placed into my chest—”

“Enough,” Lexa shook her head and looked away wildly, unable to hear anymore of it despite the honor and duty and guilt to it that made her feel as if she deserved it.

A sick kind of pain dug up through her stomach as she refused to meet Clarke’s eyes and instead stared at the circle of matted scar tissue on her skin. This body was pristine before the ground came, before Lexa.

“It’s okay,” Clarke promised, running her hands along naked shoulders and scars she knew well herself.

She ran a knuckle along Lexa’s cheek, cupped her palm there until the face turned slightly and kissed her there before the tension slackened enough for the Commander to breathe again. She was very human for Clarke, and it was still very new.

“I like this one best,” Lexa decided, moving back to Clarke’s hip, settling her chin near her belly button.

“Why’s that?”

Clarke watched her play with the tiny, two-inch scar from her appendix, tracing the tiny, downy white hairs that surrounded it sparsely.

“It’s the only one you got before you landed here. The only one I didn’t somehow give you.”

The girl beneath her smiled despite herself at the description. Her skin was going to burst with love for the leader of their world. Lexa dug her face into Clarke’s stomach, hiding there, holding her breath and not wanting to move. Once more, the girl from the sky played with her hair, pushing around the knot of mane.

“I’m quite partial to this one,” Clarke smiled and shifted, pointing to one on the backside of her hip.

“Where is this from?” Lexa asked, unfamiliar with the still new mark.

“When you pushed me against the table and the candle burned me,” she laughed, earning a rare shade of blush.

“Oh good. I really have been the sole source of marks on your body.”

“You haven’t. You didn’t shoot an arrow into me, or tie me to a chair to experiment on me,” Clarke promised, rolling over slightly to allow Lexa to explore the new twist of road. “And as far as I’m concerned, the only scar you’ve given me is my favorite on my body.”

“No more,” she swore.
“You can’t promise that. Not with your knack for candles and pushing me against things.”

“Stop looking so delectable.”

“No,” Clarke decided defiantly. “Because I don’t want you to stop.”
Shopping

Chapter Summary

Want a prompt? While strolling down the busy streets of Polis with Lexa, our favourite Sky Girl sees something she absolutely wants in a shop and argues with Lexa about buying it.

The streets were so full, so busy, that Lexa and her guard only attracted a small amount of attention. Clarke marveled at how this could be, but gave up, eager to see everything. Though she was the spectacle, now, the word of her arrival in the capital sparking a flurry of interest in the ones that survived the greatest fall of all time, she was too feared to be approached. The shooting star, the asteroid, the one who brought down the Mountain. She had many names whispered in her wake, many eyes curious as to how someone so young, so normal looking, could be so mighty.

And so they rarely stopped moving on their excursion through the city. Only for Clarke to admire and ask questions, to smell and touch and taste. Lexa slipped coins to vendors for tiny pieces of breads and meats and fruits, most met to Clarke’s enjoyment, a few falling grossly short.

The walk was something Lexa enjoyed tremendously, educating Clarke on things, proving herself capable, making the blonde laugh and hang on her every word. She was king and god and everything else in those moments.

“I like these,” Clarke decided, quite seriously, popping another blueberry into her mouth. Lexa ate another as well and smiled with a satisfied nod. The gravity that Clarke gave to each decision was the best part, the careful considerations, the mulling, the dwelling, the way in which she was a connoisseur and truly made decisions was a process that Lexa enjoyed because it felt so important, even though it was about something as trivial as tiny berries.

“But you already knew that.”

“They’re different than the ones we grew. There’s a different taste.”

“Alright, if you say so.”

“I do,” Clarke nudged her slightly and stole another berry. Bashful, she looked away and hid the smile she got from spending this time with the Commander. It was easy, this banter, this walk, this town, this girl, as much as she did not want it to be.

With a sense of pride, Lexa led them down the streets once more, weaving through crowds and browsing the sights and offerings in the stores and windows. She had the Sky Princess hanging on her every word, smiling at her like that, looking at her like she was important, and not just in a way for survival or because of menacing guards and armour, but simply because she was there. She didn’t even flinch when Lexa guided her with her hand on her lower back, gently keeping her close, or when she extended her hand during especially busy sections of streets so they would not be separated. Clarke would squeeze her hand when they were smushed between busy people, almost afraid to lose her, and Lexa liked that, was judicious in how often she held it, afraid if it was too much, the guest would not hold it.
“Oh my God,” Clarke whispered, pulling Lexa to a stop before a collection of knick knacks. Her heart skipped and her mind went blank as she stared at the tiny thing in the window.

“What is it?”

“I… I had one,” Clarke sighed, still in disbelief. “That,” she pointed at the case. “They took it, in the mountain. It was my dad’s.”

“That?” Lexa peered over at the watch. She waved a hand for the merchant to come and show them. “Where did you get this?”

“I cannot keep track of all of these things,” he shrugged. “It is here now, and that’s all I can say.”

“How did it get here?” Clarke wondered.

“How much?” Lexa stared at the unscrupulous man. He smiled and offered a price that Lexa scoffed away.

“What are you doing?” Clarke asked, not understanding as they refused to speak English.

“That’s ridiculous,” Lexa ignored her and stared at the man. “Half of your items were stolen from dead bodies.”

“I do not ask where they come from,” he shrugged again. “It is nice, yes?” he asked Clarke, letting her hold it. Lexa watched her rub her thumb over the glass of the face, gently feel the leather between her fingertips. She held it to her ear and listened to that familiar tick still happen and she closed her eyes. Lexa sighed.

“You will suffer for profiting from the dead,” Lexa growled at him as she dug for the money.

“What are you doing?” Clarke put the watch down.

“Being robbed,” Lexa grumbled.

“You can’t,” the blonde insisted. “Don’t.”

“This is yours. You need it.”

“No, there’s no way…” Clarke shook her head and sadly looked at the watch again. “I can’t pay you back. I don’t think it’s necessary.”

“But you want it,” Lexa argued. Clarke put her hand on Lexa’s that was counting money until the Commander looked at her.

“I can’t take anything else from you that I can’t return or make up for,” Clarke assured her. “Please, let’s just drop it.”

“It is important to you,” Lexa furrowed and tried to understand.

“It was, when I was someone else. My dad wouldn’t even recognize me,” Clarke promised. “Thank you for showing me,” she smiled at the vendor and turned away.

Confused and slightly sorry, Lexa followed, though that moment in the day burrowed into her head and sat there, bothering her every thought. Clarke wouldn’t let it show that it did the same to her. So she tried to make up for it with excited interest in whatever Lexa showed her and introduced her to.
When they returned to their rooms, Lexa was rewarded for the day with a kiss on her cheek and Clarke’s barely rimmed in blue eyes, dilated in the night and warmth of the summer. Lexa simply nodded and waited until Clarke turned away to smile and sigh.

Clarke leaned against her door once it closed and sighed the same sigh that came with the kiss that came with the wanting more. It took a few minutes for her to move to the bed, and as she did, she noticed the watch waiting on her pillow.
Slytherin (Part 1)

Chapter Summary

I don’t know if you are a Harry Potter fan, but some HP!Clexa maybe?

It was when the weather broke first, completely broke, honestly broke, not fooling around, broke, the genuine break when the snow melted and the sky was blue that promised summer and not another foot of the cold, frozen stuff, that the halls and classrooms and grounds emptied into every inch of grass and sunlight available. Between classes, walking to and fro, venturing out into the world once more, the raucous hoards of students of every age were given new life at the first sign of spring.

Though there was still a chill in the air, no one could be kept indoors. Quills scratched in the lawn, books howled on the benches, games were played beneath the trees as everyone’s only real goal was to avoid the shadows casted by the buildings. Sunlight was a unifying element among the houses and students.

Time ticked by too slowly for Lexa deep in the dungeon during potions. The few windows were obstructed and gave only the most minute assurances that sunlight was here to stay. She could feel her leg jiggle unceremoniously anxious to hear the dismissal.

“You okay?” Octavia whispered, watching her warily. Lexa went stark still and nodded. “Calm down then. You’re driving me crazy.”

“You got it, chief,” Lexa smiled cunningly, giving her a wink as she packed up her supplies quickly when they were set free with a long, long, terribly lengthy assignment.

“They have closed practices,” Octavia yelled after her.

“I'll see you at dinner!”

Lexa was gone in a flash, disappearing into the roaring mass of students jostling along out in the hall. She waved and said her hi’s, turned about and spoke to her fellow Slytherins as they made their ways here and there, confirming plans and projects, dodged the many obstacles that stood between her and a promise.

The walk along the path once she made it out off of the grounds was wondrous. The sudden escape from people, from their enjoyment in the sunlight, from the noise and the tastes of the crowds, it all melted and Lexa took a deep breath as she slowed for just a moment to enjoy the day herself.

Despite the cold, she pulled off her cloak and rolled up the sleeves to her sweater and shirt. The sunlight changed everything.

As she jugged her books and cloak and went about her business, she realized she was running late, despite her best intentions. Even at a full sprint she wouldn’t make it to the pitch by the time practice let out. But that didn’t stop her. Sunlight energized her. Sunlight promised to bring spring and then summer, and summer this year included a few weeks with her girlfriend, at her house, with muggles, and it was terrifying and wonderful and Lexa was dying the final few months of school waiting for it to arrive.
You’re damn near dying,” Clarke observed, shouldering her bag of equipment. “I thought we agreed that I’m the athletic one.”

“He just…” Lexa inhaled deeply. “Wouldn’t let us go.” She stopped her sprint and tried to breathe again. “I didn’t want to be late.” She leaned over and tried to breathe still.

“Practice let out early,” her girlfriend informed her, grinning at the display of physical perfection on display before her. The sweat on her uniform cooled against her skin in the afternoon breeze. She was distracted by Lexa’s shoulders and arms and the sun on her cheeks.

“You’d think it’d run late,” Lexa got more normal breathing patterns and approached the gross, sweaty blonde leaning cockily against the fence. “Since you’re facing the best team at school this weekend.”

“Those old Slytherins? Nah,” Clarke dismissed it. “Not a worry. I’ve seen some of the athletic charisma running through that house recently, and I am far from worried.”

“Hi,” Lexa ignored her and kissed her finally.

Clarke grinned into the kiss, tugging on the loose knot of her tie with her finger, keeping Lexa closer for a moment longer. She tasted the warmth and the chill and the sun on her lips and it was a good way to end practice.

“You’re smelly and gross.”

“That’s the smell of preparedness,” Clarke informed her. Despite the complaint, Lexa kept her arm around her girlfriend’s neck and kissed her again. “You might not understand. You’re late to pick up your tired girl from practice. Leaving her out to fend for herself. Shame.”

“It’s just such a pity this uniform isn’t green. Because you’d look good in green,” she gazed down between them. “Then I could root for you loudly.”

“Same bet as last year?” Clarke raised an eyebrow. “I liked seeing you in my jersey. All Gryffindor’d. It was a good night.”

They were infatuated with each other and spring only enriched it, the sunlight only fed this moment as they smiled and caught their breathes and were young and dumb.

“Not this close to game time, Clarke,” Bellamy strode out from the pitch with a few of the straggling seventh years. Lexa sighed and felt Clarke squeeze her chin in a promotion of steadfastness.

“I come in peace,” Lexa raised her hands and backed away from Clarke a step. “I promise. No worries about fraternizing.”

“Don’t let her get in your head,” Bellamy insisted as Clarke tugged on Lexa’s hand and made her laugh. The lanky chaser shook his head at the pair by the fence. “I thought we agreed that you guys break up for one week. I need you to be ready, Clarke.”

“I can’t possibly explain to you how much she motivates me to win,” Clarke grinned wryly, sharing a small glance with Lexa who sighed and shook her head. “I sincerely doubt you could motivate me to win more than Lexa does.”

“An entire school, an entire house full of girls, and you choose one of them,” the captain shook his head as the others started the walk back.
“Always a pleasure, Blake,” Lexa nodded graciously, overly so as it was. “I could have always tried to go after your sister. You should be more supportive of this.”

“You better -” he flexed and puffed and stood taller, doubling back a step towards Lexa who did not shy away at all. Clarke stood up between them. Again. Always again.

“Alright, let’s drop it,” she tried. Lexa cracked that smirk, that challenge, that dare at Bellamy. If only he had seen her running, Clarke thought to herself between theses brutish idiots. “We’re all friends here.”

“Get your traitor under control,” Bellamy took a step back.

“Come on, Blake,” Lexa called, even though Clarke was warning her to stop. “Your sister doesn’t mind.”

“Lex,” Clarke really gave her a warning now. She flexed her jaw and looked away, smirk still there. “I’ll see you tomorrow, Bellamy.” Clarke waved him off. “Every time. Every single time.”

“He started it,” Lexa shrugged, watching him leave.

“Do you have to bring up his sister?” Clarke asked as Lexa pulled away her hand from being restricted. “You know it bothers him. And it just upsets Octavia, who is your friend, remember?”

“How can he insult me when his sister is the same? That just… bothers me,” she shook her head. “I’m sorry. I tried.”

“If that was you trying, then it’s going to be a long, bumpy road,” Clarke sighed and watched Bellamy disappear down the path.

It wasn’t that Lexa didn’t get along with her friends, or that she didn’t get along with Lexa’s, but occasionally it boiled up. It would all pass in a year. That was Clarke’s motto. One more year.

“I never told you it wouldn’t be. But I come with perks to make up for it.”

“Getting me in trouble with my house is a perk now?”

“No,” Lexa grinned. “But I did trade some history notes for a rather intricate set of notes for our herbology final. I was hoping to study with you sometime.”

“I guess that’s one.”

“And I’ll carry your bag,” Lexa shouldered the practice bundle. It dug into her shoulder and hurt, much to Clarke’s amusement. She struggled with the thing.

“So chivalrous.”

“He did start it,” Lexa tried again.

“I’m going to tell your parents if you don’t stop it with Bellamy,” Clarke took her bag from her struggling girlfriend. “Your mom wouldn’t like you picking fights, especially as some of the few who stayed and fought in the Battle.”

“Are you kidding me? Dating you already fills their quota,” Lexa reasoned, balancing her books on her hip as she held Clarke’s hand and earned a smile and a shake of her head.

They strolled, much slower, on the way back towards school, taking their time being alone and away
from everything else for just a while. These moments were few and far between.

“Can I ask about practice, or is it a conflict of interest to tell me?”

“I’m just so sore,” Clarke sighed.

“My dad sent an owl, asking if you’d heard anything from the Magpies. He will make you marry me if you play for Montrose,” Lexa laughed and eyed Clarke warily, as it was a subject that was prone to setting her off into a bout of nerves.

“I’m sure the game this weekend won’t be missed,” Clarke nodded.

“You’re going to do great,” Lexa promised.

The sun began its slow setting, as even it realized that this was a day that shouldn’t end just yet. The two walked, grinning in the sunlight and so very thankful for a few minutes.

“Library after dinner?” Clarke ventured, pulling Lexa towards a corner before they entered the Great Hall.

“Only if you shower.”

“It’s the smell of preparedness,” Clarke insisted, kissing Lexa before she could protest.

“I want the smell of a clean girlfriend,” Lexa pushed her chest slightly.

“You root for me, don’t you?” Clarke asked, eyes big and doleful and worried, close to Lexa’s.

“I root for you,” Lexa promised. “I don’t care about anything else.”

Clarke kissed her again.

“I’ll shower,” she promised.
Slytherin (Part 2)

Chapter Summary

I love your writing. Would it be possible for you to write a short based on this quote: ““Same bet as last year?” Clarke raised an eyebrow. “I liked seeing you in my jersey. All Gryffindor’d. It was a good night.”” (Slytherin).

The rain came down and battered against the tall windows. It slipped along the panes on the journey to the ground, blotting out the world, creating nothing more than a watercolor blur of the deep green trees outside.

In the common room, the general commotion took a backseat to the soft pecks of the rain. Burrowed deep into the dark leather couch, Lexa turned the page again and tried to focus on the words, though she found it very difficult with the soothing noise and the clanging of the bells that signaled the hour.

Top of her class, the studying part came easy. Tests and papers were some of her favorite things, much to the chagrin of her friends who mocked her relentlessly. To most, it seemed as if she did it effortlessly. Most of her life looked effortless, but in truth, she was just good at making it look as such, and worked incredibly hard. Something about someone else seeing her struggle was inhospitable in her inhibitions.

But today, studying was not as easy. As soon as the bells finished ringing, she shut her book tightly, tucked it under her arm, grabbed her bag, and exited, shrugging off as best she could, the people who called and invited her to do things.

These plans were for herself, they were something she was too embarrassed to admit, even in private, and so she satisfied herself and others with the excuse of returning a library book. It was true, that the book needed returned. The expediency was only warranted by the time and the day and the plan.

Quickly, she picked up her speed as she wove through the halls. The rain kept coming, kept slipping along the eaves, draining into puddles in the corners of courtyards. Nothing slowed her down though. She had a place to be, if she timed it all right.

The weather did not deter the teams from practicing. Muddy and damp, they marched through the soggy lawn, climbing up to their house. The yellow and garnet sweaters were nearly all brown, but still, Lexa saw them and slowed her pace.

“Hey, Lexa,” Clarke called as she jogged up the hall. Lexa grinned to herself and hugged the book tighter in front of her chest.

Wavy blonde hair was tied up in a ponytail. Mud was warpaint on her cheek. Even with the grey day, even with the tint of mud and dirt and sweat, the eyes were bluer than blue, like warm waters that lapped at white shores. Lexa was completely taken with the Gryffindor chaser, had been since the first day she saw her fourth year.

“Didn’t think I’d see anyone out in this rain,” she smiled and balanced against her broom.

“I was just returning a book to the library.”
“You’re seriously the most Ravenclaw, Slytherin I’ve ever met.”

“Hang out with many Slytherins?” Lexa teased. They were friendly enough that it was almost not weird. It egged the Gryffindor on slightly.

“Just one,” Clarke grinned, goofy and loopy. There was a blush on the girl who was dry and shivered and did not enjoy quidditch at all. The chaser craved it, ever since she earned it the year before in potions.

“You should get out of these clothes. You’ll get sick before the first game,” the Slytherin offered, realizing that they were not quite alone in the hall.

“The dirty, rugged look not working for me?”

“The shivering, wet dog look isn’t the worst.”

“I was actually going to try to find you,” Clarke stood a little straighter, seeing as their time was coming to an end. The bubble between them was popped as a gaggle of kids walked past. “You’re the smartest person I know, and I needed a little help.”

“Flattery will get you everywhere, Griffin.”

“I knew it.”

“What can I do for you?”

“Transfiguration.”

“Yeah…” Lexa nodded, dragging it out and waiting.

“Do you… could you… help mestudyyforthetesttomorrow?” In one whole breath it all came out, the captain of the team never quite okay with asking for anything from anyone.

“Sure. The library okay?”

“What? Yeah, definitely.”

“Did you think I’d say no?”

“I just didn’t expect yes. Thought you might be busy.” It was endearing. It was cute. The unsureness was a little out of character, but Lexa enjoyed seeing it on the normally brazen and bold girl. “Can I carry your books?”

Juggling the equipment bag, her broom, and now Lexa’s stack of books, Clarke grinned triumphantly.

“Don’t you want to get cleaned up first?”

“What? Oh, yeah,” Clarke nodded, looking down at her clothes, realizing her boots were covered in a layer of muck, that her sweater was cold and still wet, heavy on her own skin. “Um. Let me walk you anyway. It’s on the way.”

“It mostly isn’t.”

“Kind of,” Clarke conceded.
If she were being honest, Clarke would have admitted that she didn’t need any help studying for her test. In fact, she wasn’t sure she’d have the guts to have searched out the genius and ask for help. She wanted to, formulated the whole plan, but wasn’t sure she’d be able to have gone through with it. Seeing her was luck.

“So, was it a good practice?” Lexa asked as they moved through the halls.

“It was. Cold and wet and I may have crashed a few times,” Clarke confessed. “But we were doing pretty well.”

“You really love it, don’t you?”

“I do. The thrill of the game. The crowd. The moment where I can beat someone, or when I do something well. It just feels nice. I like the feeling of my muscles being tired and sore. It’s delicious.”

“I saw you play last year.”

“That’s another reason,” Clarke grinned, adjusting her bag and fumbling the books before regaining control. The library doors were just at the end of the hall. “Impresses pretty girls who really don’t like sports.”

“I didn’t follow much, but I knew you were doing a good job.”

“It worked.”

“I’ll meet you in the back aisle. There’s a table against the shelves I like to sit at,” Lexa explained as she blushed at the door.

“Yeah, I know the spot.”

She knew it because she spent a lot of time not studying and watching Lexa read. Clarke actually got a lot of time logged in the library for that exact reason, though she didn’t know how to articulate that.

Outside of the library, Clarke handed Lexa her books with a smile. She watched the girl run her hand through her hair and look at her from beneath her lashes. Still wet and freezing, Clarke was only distracted by lips.

“I’ll see you in a little bit,” Clarke promised.

The day took a turn. Lexa was hoping for just a few seconds with this girl who was almost her friend, who distracted her at dinner from across the room. Now, all she could do was sit at the table and wait anxiously.

By the time Clarke came in, fresh and clean, Lexa was skimming a few pages, making a few of her own notes. Last summer, she spent too much of the time telling her mother about school, about the girl who now sat at the table. High from endorphins and her work out, she was bold and courageous like her father had been when he met a beautiful muggle on vacation in Egypt. There as a beginning doctor donating her time where needed, he fell for her and never looked back. Clarke adored that story. She had her own now, she was almost certain.

“Sorry it took a while. I ran back, I swear,” Clarke explained as she took a seat.

“Don’t worry. I had some reading to do.”

“You always have some reading to do. I don’t think I ever see you without a book.”
“There’s so much to read.”

“Have you ever been to a muggle library?”

“Once,” Lexa nodded, watching Clarke pull out her supplies and adjust in the seat beside her at the table. “We went on holiday, to a small town in France. And my mom and dad were at some party. I snuck away and found this little building. It probably only had as many volumes as this row, but I spent every day reading all of the books I could.”

“Which were your favorites?”

“I don’t even know where to start,” Lexa shook her head, wide-eyed and still reliving that summer. “Sometimes I’m a little jealous of you all who grew up there. You get to live in two worlds.”

“When I first found out, I was so upset I didn’t know sooner,” Clarke agreed. “But more and more, I do like being able to go back and forth. My mom doesn’t get it at all. But it’s like I get a part of my dad.”

“I’d love to see more of that world. I read about these towns, that are very tiny, and people spend their days farming, and gossiping, and living. It seems so simple and wonderful.”

“There’s more than that,” Clarke chuckled.

“I know. I just kind of enjoyed the simple stories. In one of them, a boy floated down a river on a board. That’s all.”

“You have a weird list of things to experience.”

“Maybe I do.”

“Remind me to tell you about the National Archives one day. It’ll blow your mind.”

“Deal.”

“I don’t want to keep you too long. Do you want to get started?”

Studying lasted approximately three pages of notes before it devolved into just more conversation. It was easy to get distracted, and even easier to talk to Clarke. Lexa always was around her in groups. There was always a handful of others around. When Octavia invited her to the fifth floor spare classroom for an impromptu party. When their group were hanging out on the lawn and Lexa would get dragged into it.

Dinner came and went. The bells rang and neither noticed. The library emptied and thinned, filled again after, and they remained, looking over notes but talking to each other about anything but school.

By the time the announcement came that it was time for the library to close, both were well past pretending to study. Clarke made Lexa laugh, and she was done after that. Nothing else would be imprinted on her brain more than that moment. No amount of staring at notes would beat it. Lexa watched Clarke blush, and she liked that more than any book, which was alarming.

“I hope I helped a little,” Lexa offered.

“You did. I am guaranteed a great grade now.”

“I feel like we didn’t go over that much.”
“Not a problem,” Clarke grinned and shouldered her bag. “I have a pretty solid grasp on it.”

“I missed dinner and you know the stuff already?”

“It was a good excuse.”

“Excuse?”

Clarke grabbed Lexa’s books as well, not thinking of it at all.

“Excuse to spend time with you,” she shrugged. “Are you hungry?”

After hours, there was nothing to eat. Clarke knew this, and yet she still had a plan. Leading the girl who would surely be Head Girl next year, Clarke directed them down a hall, up some stairs, down another, down again, and to a corner of the castle that Lexa kept asking about, not recognizing anything after a few minutes.

“We’ll get in trouble if we’re out much longer.”

“I knew you didn’t break rules, but still. Have a little adventure, one in a while.”


“Often?”

“Sure. Loads.”

“So perfect grades, perfect family, never had detention, always impeccably coiffed, Lexa Woods, breaks lots of rules?” Clarke chuckled, opening a door and nudging her head to invite Lexa inside.

“I’m not… what is… I’m… coiffed?”

“I’m just saying. Maybe a little danger would do you good.”

“And you’re going to provide that?”

“I am. And food since I kept you past dinner.”

Charming as she was, the words rang truer with Lexa than perhaps intended. It made her a little bold. Dinner consisted of tiny sandwiches Clarke concocted from the back of the pantry then ended up in after their sneaking through the halls.

By the time they began sneaking back to their dorms, Lexa was stuck trying to think of a time she’d spent with anyone else so consecutively. An entire afternoon and into the night. Close to eight hours or more. There were a few hours she spent with Octavia in class and such. There was the lounging she would do with Anya. There was the times when everyone was together. There were times when she was alone. Never did she spend so much time with someone.

“Thanks for the help,” Clarke smiled and finally handed Lexa her books.

“Thanks for dinner.”

“Maybe we can do it again sometime.”

“Yeah,” Lexa smiled and nodded. “Without the rule breaking.”
The fact that she managed to get an entire night with the girl she had a crush on, the girl who broke up a bunch of bullies picking on a first year, the girl who used a pen instead of a quill, the girl who liked the dirt and mud and playing a game, the girl who sometimes kept her company— it was too much.

“I’ll see you tomorrow,” Clarke promised.

“Yeah,” she nodded again, juggling her books.

“Night.”

“Night.”

Clarke made it three steps before she turned back, took those steps and stood back in front of Lexa. She took a deep breath, clenched her fists. With the vaguest hint of a smile, just before she could ask what was wrong, Lexa felt Clarke lean forward. It was gentle and it was chaste, but it was purposeful, and that was all she needed.

“Alright. That’s as bold as I have in me. Not too much?”


“Goodnight, Lexa. I hope we get to do this again.”

She stood in the hall and watched the figure disappear, unable to do anything but bring her fingertip up to her lips and smile. By the time she got into her common room, she was floating on air, and Lexa knew exactly how she wanted to spend her year.

The sun shined its hardest despite the chill that still crept in through the fall. The leaves caught fire, burned up in the chill and the season, shook on the highest branches, the bravest, hanging tightly and defiantly until the limbs were just a smattering of the last survivors of the first cold streak seen on campus. The dew froze the grass and melted away by mid morning, the clouds were big, fluffy, lumbering giants lazily lingering through the sky and creating shadows that spotted the countryside. The entire world was changing, and Lexa enjoyed it immensely. Autumn was her favorite time of year. More specifically, those few weeks that alternated between winter and fall, those weeks of cold and then warmth, or the unseasonable moments where one or the other seemed very far away, and then roared back to life the following day. The onset of scarves and mittens, heavy cloaks and warm drinks accompanied by afternoons in which most were shed and the last vestiges of sunlight were savored. She lived for the middling of the distinct seasons.

“Come on,” Clarke smiled and held her hand out, Lexa lagging as she inhaled the crisp tinge of autumn. “I’ll never get to show you anything if you keep dawdling.”

“I’m allowed,” Lexa decided, taking her hand, still enjoying that feeling, that it was a thing she was allowed to do.

“I have a busy birthday planned.”

“We were in Hogsmeade a few weeks ago.”

Amidst the clump of students heading out for their weekend, the two were on their own, locked in with each other. Lexa let Clarke tug her along, determined and excited. Dating just two months, she hadn’t expected a celebration or even a gift, not even for Clarke to know that it was her birthday. Her
parents liked to ignore such things, not because they were terrible, or even forgot it, just that they were the type of people who had a kid, but didn’t quite know what to do with it. She was just an adult, much sooner than most. Not that she didn’t love them. She just knew that her status and position led to many nights of parents away at work.

“Who said that’s all we were doing?”

“Oh goodness, what else?”

“It’s a surprise.”

“Do you know about this?” Lexa asked as Octavia meandered closer, still searching out for her own boyfriend.

“I know nothing,” she shrugged.

“Let’s go, Clarke!” the taller Blake sibling called from the group of her fellow class members. “We have Monty’s homebrew to spike the butterbeer a little more.”

“I have plans today. I’ll meet up with you guys back at school,” Clarke told them.

“Busy chauffeuring around your Slytherin?”

“Still mad it only took me a month to steal your girl?” Lexa quipped.

“Okay, none of this today,” Clarke sighed, the tension forming between her brow at the usual row that always came about when these two were close.

“I guess I just didn’t have the money to keep up with you,” Bellamy retorted. “Not all of us have the spoils from a pureblood war.”

The talk made the two puff up in the middle of the lane that led to the town. It was par for the course, an almost regular occurrence in her life now, despite how much Clarke tried to avoid it. A few of her house did not understand, did not see Lexa. She knew there would be problems, when she returned to her common room after kissing Lexa for the first time. She didn’t care at all.

“It’s amazing what a personality can do. The money is just a perk.”

“Alright, go on. You’re not ruining today,” Clarke pushed her housemate along and stood between them. She waited until they were on their way, pushed along and begrudgingly making comments. She felt Lexa growl slightly at some. “Why do you two have to do that?”

“I didn’t do anything,” she complained. “I’m not going to let him say things about me that aren’t true.”

“I hate it. And you don’t have to feed into it.”

“He starts it.”

“I hate that you are literally nothing like what they think, and then when you’re around them, you just play that part.”

“I’m not dating your house. I’m dating you.”

“I know, but you’re sweet and kind, and thoughtful, and nerdy and not uptight or harsh or rude or even arrogant. But you let them think you are.”
“As long as you know it,” Lexa shrugged again, shoving her hands in her pocket.

“One day you’ll all get along.”

“I have a surprise, I think I was promised.”

“Maybe for my birthday then.”

“Maybe,” she grinned as Clarke wrapped her arms around her own and they returned to their trek into the small town.

Lexa’s guesses grew outlandish as she tried to determine what was happening for their Saturday away. They grew only more as Clarke paused outside of the pub and put her hands over her girlfriend’s eyes.

“You’re not going to tie me up or something are you?”

“Hush.”

“I don’t really like my birthday. Never celebrated.”

“Step,” Clarke instructed, following as she guided Lexa forward into the bar. “I know this already.”

“I’m not good at being the center of attention.”

“For today you’ll have to be,” she whispered.

The crowd cheered, erupted. Lexa was stunned as hands finally left her eyes and her entire house, and any other friends she considered were all yelling at her, wishing her well. A banner hung up from a rafter. Games and hats and noisemakers were tossed about at once, and Lexa was certain she’d never seen anything like it.

“I know you haven’t really celebrated, so we’re going to catch up. We have seventeen years worth of birthdays, all rolled into one.”

“Are you serious?” Lexa grinned, still in shock.

“Muggle themed, naturally, since that is your favorite topic. Everything is non magic. Pin the tail on the donkey, piñata, cake, Twister. Everything I could remember from my birthdays.”

“Goodness,” Lexa breathed, unable to comprehend it.

Her entire life, she’d gone without such extravagances, and yet in just a month, this girl was able to surpass even her wildest dreams and secret desires when it came to a birthday. And so she kissed her, right there in front of everyone, earning boos and cheers and whistles.

The party was perfect, or as perfect as Clarke could have hoped. It took much planning and precision and secretiveness on her part, but it paid off beautifully. And when she walked Lexa back, leaving her at her common room, she earned a deep kiss before a great hung that lingered long past attraction and bordered on innate appreciation.

Arms wrapped around Lexa, she closed her eyes and knew how she wanted to spend the next year.

Game day was never high on her list of favorite days, but still, Lexa found a way to enjoy it. There was a kind of pride that came when she watched Clarke play, when she got the customary
congratulations and praise for being linked to someone who was thought of so highly. When she wrote to her father, in their weekly correspondence, she hadn’t expected such a quick response, nor had she ever received something longer than a page. But he loved the sport. And he knew of Clarke.

Her mother followed soon after, asking questions in an unfamiliar fashion. To Lexa, it was because she was dating Clarke, to her mother it was because she had finally learned something personal about her daughter. The school followed just as soon. The image of the detached, rich pureblood dating the muggle with hair and a smile like sunshine did wonders.

Things changed with every part of her life because of Clarke, and it wasn’t terrible.

Except for the time she lost watching games. She could have been studying. Instead, she was at the game. Clarke knew it and appreciated it more. The only kind of enjoyment she got was being the girlfriend of someone everyone adored.

“You looked good out there, Griffin,” Lexa smiled, as her player found her girlfriend leaning against the fence outside of the changing room after the third game of the season.

“You look good right here. Come on. There’s a party to celebrate.”

Lexa grinned and wrapped her arms around her girlfriend’s neck, kissing her eagerly. She liked that she was allowed to do that. She only did it when they didn’t have an audience. To her house, she was perfect. Aloof and precise, she was who they looked for in a leader. She helped the young ones with their studies. She took on fights for the older ones. She couldn’t be two things at once, and so they only saw one. Clarke got the other.

“Let’s ditch the party,” Lexa offered, lingering over the kiss.

“I have to make an appearance.”

“My roommates are out on an astrology workshop tonight,” she whispered. “Whole room to myself.”

“Five minutes. That’s it,” Clarke nodded quite seriously.

“Yeah?”

“If you want to…”

“I mean, if you want to…”

“I do!”

“I do, too. If you do,” Clarke swallowed, searching Lexa’s face for the right answer.

“I do,” she whispered again, leaning her forehead closer, kissing the freshly showered player once again.

“Seriously? Enough,” Bellamy complained as he walked out onto the trail back to school. “We have a win to celebrate.”

“I am,” Clarke grinned and tried to kiss Lexa once again, ignoring the complaints of her teammates. The Slytherin turned her head, dropped her hands and pulled away slightly. “Trying at least.”

“Leave your Vold lover and let’s go.” This earned a snicker from the group that hung about, enjoying the revelry. “We play them at the end of the season, too.”
Beside her, she could feel Lexa tense. She watched her jaw clench and she stood between the two. The subject was tense. But there was no way that Lexa could be all she was accused of and date Clarke. There was no way her parents would have allowed it. One of the few families who fought from within, they were widely regarded as heroes, and yet still questioned, bearing that burden gracefully.

“Just give me a second,” Clarke offered so that only Lexa could hear it.

Lexa nodded and watched Clarke take the steps over to the group where she leaned close to Bellamy and told him something, her head nodding. She watched the Beater roll his eyes before he opened his mouth again and the group laughed. Her parents advocated actions over words, which led to the cool demeanor of their prodigal daughter, it led to them taking the whispers and not batting an eye.

Her parents probably would have been secretly proud of the punch that Clarke cocked back and let fly against Bellamy’s cheek until she hissed and shook her sore knuckles after it. With a decided nod, she walked back to Lexa, still flexing her sore fist.

“Why did you do that?” Lexa followed as Clarke walked away from the group.

“Doesn’t matter,” she grunted, looking back over her shoulder at her friend who rubbed his eye and shrugged off anyone who wanted to take a look at it. “I don’t know how you just listen to it. I can’t.”

“I’ve heard worse. I hate when you hear it, and I don’t want to get between you and your friends,” she shrugged, quickening her pace to keep up with her girlfriend. “Let me see your hand.”

“I’m fine.”

“I bet, but still, I can help.”

“I won’t listen to him say things. I should have done it sooner.”

“You can’t punch everyone who says something you don’t like,” she chuckled, finally catching up once they were far enough away. “Let me see.”

“I can and I will. I’ve talked to him. I told him the comments are unnecessary, and he can’t help himself.”

“That’s alright. I know he’s wrong,” Lexa promised, taking the hand as Clarke talked with her other moving around to punctuate her point. “You’re going to be sore.”

“I helped him. He doesn’t get to say anything hateful. You’ve been nothing but great, and he’s been the jerk.”

“Okay, calm down.”

“I’m so mad,” Clarke grunted, squeezing her hand.

Lexa smiled to herself at the thought of it all, about how Clarke punched her own teammate, about how she was still ranting as they walked up to the castle, about how absolutely weird her life had become since the Gryffindor showed up and kissed her that night.

“The party?” Lexa interrupted the middle of the diatribe as Clarke stomped up the stairs to the opposite side of the tower away from the inevitable gathering in the gold and garnet common room.

“Can we just… I’d rather not.”
“You can’t let what one jerk said bother you.”

“I know.”

“You have a party celebrating your brilliant playing. I know because I watched you score a lot of goals and everyone said you were brilliant.” To her credit, Clarke resisted, but Lexa stopped and waited for her to turn around. She sighed and flexed her fist. “I’ve had my dad give me some pointers on terms. I’m basically a quidditch expert.”

“I see this.”

“Let’s go. I’m not going to let you be a grump.”

“Five minutes,” she relented.

The party was the standard fare expected after a win. Lexa still didn’t feel comfortable in the Gryffindor common room, but that didn’t stop her at all. Clarke put her arm over her shoulder and lingered when she could, pulled away minutes with her.

Octavia provided enough of a buffer. Lexa watched Clarke eventually relax, watched her talk with Bellamy until both sheepishly nodded at each other.

“There’s no way,” Lincoln argued as Clarke walked back over and offered Lexa a drink. She sipped her own and listened.

“Without a doubt,” Lexa argued quite sternly.

“Yeah, what are you trying to say?” Octavia nudged her boyfriend’s ribs.

“He’s being honest,” Harper teased.

“What’s this?” Clarke interrupted.

“Your girlfriend thinks we’re going to lose,” the keeper laughed. “Thinks her team is going to be the one to give us that first loss.”

“Well, she would know,” the captain smiled, amused at Lexa’s eager agreement with the summation. “She is an expert now.”

The argument swelled, but Clarke didn’t have any real need for it. She hadn’t considered the day she would play lex’a’s team and they would face a game in which she wasn’t rooting for her. She ignored most of it, but this seemed different.

Lexa leaned against her. Their five minutes stretched into an hour or so before she whispered to her girlfriend and they snuck out as inconspicuously as possible.

It was a risk, but one that was well worth taking. The tired crept into her bones, but Clarke still cast the silencing charm around Lexa’s bed and shut the drapes behind her. The luxury of an empty room was not to be wasted.

“Do you really think you’re going to beat us?” Clarke pulled away as Lexa kissed her tenderly.

“Not me personally. I’m not very good,” she grinned, pulling at her hero’s neck, capturing her lips again. She had more important things to think about than a game. Lexa had a blonde in her bed in her empty room. They didn’t get chances like this often.
There’d been a few moments. Twenty minutes stolen between classes. A trip to Hogsmeade they didn’t go on to give themselves a few hours. An entire night was new and a gift.

“You’re not going to be rooting for me?” the player asked as the bed’s owner settled atop her own hips.

“I’m rooting for you right now.”

“You think I can’t win?”

“I have to have some kind of pride in my house, you know. Some things are just innate,” Lexa decided, tugging on Clarke’s shirt and kissing her again. “I can root for you and still want my house to win.”

“Care to make it interesting, quidditch expert?”

“What do you have in mind?”

“If I win,” Clarke murmured, hands grabbing hips. “I want you, in my jersey.”

“And when my house wins?” Lexa taunted, pulling off her own shirt as well, settling atop the girl in her bed. The deep green of the sheets in the faint light of the night made the blonde almost glow.

“You don’t have a jersey.”

“I want you to come visit in the summer.”

“Well, I planned on that no matter what,” Clarke shrugged. “Do we have a deal?”

The answer came in the form of lips. Lexa smirked and got her way.

“Ten points,” Anya complained, kicking rocks as they walked with a dejected group back towards the castle. The rain came down in a drizzle, making everything muck and mud. “Ten points.”

“I know,” Lexa shook her head and looked down, secretly hiding her amusement. “Octavia really gave Bellamy a wallop though. The Battle of the Blake Beaters.”

“Yeah, that was nice.”

“And Clarke looked good.”

“She was the reason we lost!” Murphy joined in the complaining. “We get the snitch, and she still puts up so many points we lost. Who does that?”

“It hasn’t been done since 1804, in a tournament match between Poland and Finland,” Lexa recited. “A final score of 420-370.”

“You studied?” Anya sighed and shook her head.

“I like to know things.”

“Hey, we’re going back to the common room,” Anya paused as Lexa broke away when they entered campus.

“I… uh… I have a previous engagement.”
With a few hoots and whistles, she blushed and waved them away, moving quickly. She only had a short amount of time to get to Clarke’s room before the celebration.

“Now this is a sight I can get used to,” Clarke grinned as she saw what was waiting in her room. High from the win and the ensuing victory, she knew exactly what her night was going to entail, and it was better than she could have imagined.

“I made a wager.”

“I had the best game of my school career tonight,” she informed the girl that was kneeling in her bed.

“I am intimately aware.”

“Lexa Woods, you are some hell of a motivation.”

As foreign as it was to see, the brown messy braids cascading over gold and red, it really was an image Clarke could never imagine forgetting ever. The bulkiness of the jersey hung on Lexa’s narrow shoulders. The length of it eclipsed her hips and hung down to her thighs.

“Get me out of this already,” she rolled her eyes.

“Not a chance.”
What about when Clarke hears Lexa laugh, loud and clear, for the first time??

The day that the leaves started to fall, that the brutal summer finally blinked and the chill emerged, salting the ground with crisp dew and adding shivers to the sunshine, the entire world changed.

Nothing was different, not really, not officially. The world still turned. The leaves still rained down in the breeze. The rivers still flowed down the mountains and toward the oceans while the clouds still didn’t care about a single thing at all. Not one thing changed at all, and yet, for Clarke, everything changed.

In the steady hum and beat of the crickets, the accompanying rustling of leaves trying to work their way loose, in the natural sounds of the bird, the occasional treble of a woodpecker doing what it did best, the deep, haunting call of the loons out on the lake, the robins warbled as star of the show.

But none of that was more than background to the laugh that started as a snort and ten crescendoed uncontrollably until it was an unwieldy entity on its own, pure joy and happiness in song form, so free and unrestrained, it changed everything.

“It wasn’t that funny,” Clarke smiled despite herself at the Commander’s reaction.

“You thought that…” a laugh interrupted, loud and melodic. “But it was… Oh my!”

“Yes, I made a fool of myself. I know.”

“You thought she was her mother!”

As embarrassed as she was, Clarke let her cheeks burn and instead focused on the way Lexa tilted her head back with abandon as she laughed, decided to fixate on the way she held her stomach and had watery eyes with that kind of enjoyment. Never had she been more alive or more free or more unabashedly herself, free of the weight of her paint and the rigidity of her position.

And Clarke was ready to become a professional clown in order to get more of it.

“That might have been the best thing I’ve ever seen,” Lexa breathed, her stomach hurting from laughing.

“I’m glad my mortification is enjoyable to you.”

“I didn’t expect it. I nearly cried holding it in out there.”

“Great,” Clarke hmph’d, crossing her arms sourly, though she really didn’t care. She wanted more of that Lexa. She hoped for more of it.

“Thank you for that.”

“Anything to make you laugh like that.”
Chapter Summary

You’re an underwear model and there’s a giant billboard of your toned body just across from where I work so I have to look at you every day AU

The office on the twelfth floor was fairly empty. Despite three years in the position, the inhabitant did not add much in terms of personalizing it. There was a soft leather chair in the corner with a blanket from her alma mater draped over it. There were a few stacks of books around it, on her large desk, littering the floor neatly. It was fairly boring, until she opened the window.

Grading papers, it was almost impossible to not get distracted on nice days when the windows were opened because the air was faulty at best so high up in the building. When Lexa first got the office, her view consisted of a slushie ad for a gas station. A year later, she opened her blinds one day to find a fancy billboard about watches she’d never afford.

And that wasn’t the worst situation. It went unnoticed for the majority of the time in the office. She had meetings, students arrived for office hours, and the world continued to turn, classes continued to be taught, papers were read and written, books were read beneath the view of the black and white watch.

The first day back, a few days before winter semester, the professor found her office disrupted as her view was no longer a soothing, nonsensical watch scene. Blinds tugged up and scarf half unwrapped from her neck, she stared at perhaps the most beautiful person in the world was not even half-dressed and very much in lacy underwear, seventy-five feet high.

Though she’d never had a stroke before, Lexa was almost certain she was having one as soon as she saw the billboard. Still stunned and unable to move, she felt her glasses slip down her nose slightly and she felt herself gulp, but more than anything, she just stared at that lingerie billboard and decided her office was never going to be productive again.

It took about two weeks for her to ever open the blinds again, and when she did, it was just as much of a heart attack. The professor made it exactly two hours of office hours and one afternoon class before she googled the girl whose boobs stared at her and had cleavage the size of sedan.

That was a mistake.

Slamming her laptop shut when she was confronted with more face and more lingerie pictures, Lexa found her heart beating too fast and she looked around her empty office as if she would be caught at any moment.

That was how Lexa discovered she was now trapped in a distracting hell that would never allow her to get any real work done. That was how she learned to never open the blinds. That was how she lived her boring, safe life.

“Alright, I’m out of here for the night,” Lexa shouldered her bag and dropped off papers for the secretary.
“Do you want me to have the janitor take those plants out of your office?”

“Hm?”

“You have to let them have some light,” she shook her head, stacking the papers neatly. “You keep it so dark in there.”

“Headaches,” Lexa cleared her throat. “I get headaches.”

“Oh honey, that makes sense.”

“Have a good evening,” she nodded, adjusting her bag on her shoulder nervously.

Life wasn’t terrible. Life wasn’t even bad, though that conversation with the secretary was embarrassing enough to last a few weeks. Lexa’s life was absolutely normal, even with the giant lingerie billboard mocking her sexless life.

But it wasn’t completely sexless, just like it wasn’t completely lonely, though it had its moments. As the elevator descended, Lexa tried not to think too much about all of that jumble. She had a lot of fun at her job. She loved studying and working with students. It was her dream job to teach at a university and present her own research. But after the move, after the break up, there was a kind of normalcy in her work.

It wasn’t that she was prone to risk, just that risk never really presented itself to her. Why would it? She was a college professor who only had one steady relationship in her life that was boring and normal. Boring and normal were her operative words.

She had her friends, and she had a life. She also had a large, scantily clad billboard that taunted her, and that was Lexa’s life. Normal and boring and her own.

Her phone buzzed as she walked through the lobby toward her subway and eventually toward her house where a new test was to be written for her Intro to Ancient Cultures class. With a roll of her eyes she tried to recuse herself from an invitation to drinks down the street.

“Oh, I’m sorry, excuse me,” she muttered, pushing up her glasses as she regained her footing after bumping into a body.

“No, no, not a problem,” a voice chuckled and hands grabbed at the professor’s arm. “I was just standing here.”

“Holy. Fuck.”

“Are you hurt?”

“No, I’m fine… I just. I’m sorry,” Lexa shook her head, eyes wide and very confused by the turn of her day. “I’m just certain I’m dead right now.”

“Why would you say that?”

“Because there’s absolutely no way I’ve bumped into the girl who is half-naked and on a billboard across from my office.”

“Oh, you work there?”

Discreetly, the professor pinched herself and stared at the supermodel who was somehow outside of her office on a random Tuesday evening. No more words came at all, though her mouth was wide
open, and she couldn’t stop gaping.

Clarke Griffin was beautiful. She had… personality. Personality that Lexa was face to face with on a daily basis. She had pretty blue eyes and she had a smile that was absolutely sock-knocking off.

And she was standing on the sidewalk outside of the Kent Building.

“Why are you here?”

“This is my first billboard,” she shrugged and looked back at herself. “I kind of had to see it in person, and this is the soonest I could get back.”

“You’re here,” Lexa nodded to herself and looked back at the giant sign before blushing and shaking her head.

Two minutes ago she was walking out of her office in hopes of ditching drinks. Now things were just different and they couldn’t be the same.

“I’m sorry you have to stare at me all day. I am significantly more embarrassed than I was a moment ago,” Clarke nodded to herself without meeting the professor’s eyes. “It was lame enough coming out to see it, but yeah. Now I feel even dorkier.”

“It’s. You. You’re that. Okay.”

“I’m Clarke,” she finally held out a hand.

“Lexa.”

She didn’t register it, that her muscles moved and she took the hand of the model who didn’t wear clothes and had good cleavage. Great Cleavage, both capitalized and an example to humanity. Nope. She didn’t shake her hand, except somehow she did.

“You work in that building?”

“Yes,” she nodded, still shaking her hand.

“What do you do?”


A wry smile appeared on the model’s face when the hand was unceremoniously dropped and the shaking hand was retracted at lightspeed.

“I suspect you are very good at it.”

“What do you do?” Lexa gaped dumbly before she shut her eyes and tried to mentally kill herself.

When she opened them again, she pushed up her glasses and met a smirk that made her positive she was dead. In what world does she bump into and chat with the lingerie-wearing model of her dreams. She was dead. She was hit by a bus and would wake up momentarily or be ushered into heaven or something. That was it. She just had to survive another few seconds and avoid the light.

“I model. You might not recognize me with my clothes on.”

“Oh, no. I do. I mean. I saw your face. And I saw all of,” her hands moved in front of Clarke’s chest. “I mean. I’m sorry. I did see part of. There’s the. My office is right up there, third window from the
left on the twelfth floor.”

“Right across from my cleavage.”

“Yes.”

“I’m so sorry.”

“I’m not.”

“Hm?”

“I mean,” Lexa scrambled. “It’s not that bad.”

“I suppose there could be worse views.”

Neither moved and neither looked at each other for a moment as they stared at the billboard. Clarke snuck a peek at the bespectacled professor and smiled to herself for the first time in a long, honest while. There was something refreshing about her.

“I’m going for drinks, with my friends,” Lexa finally tried. “If you aren’t doing anything you could come. Because I’m pretty sure this is a fever dream or I’m having a stroke. So. Why not.”

“Why would you think that?”

It was evening and the sun was stuck between the buildings, though it didn’t want to set, not fully, not yet. Clarke knew there was an early shoot in the morning. She also knew that the past two years of her life had been the busiest and best, but also the loneliest, and she was still far from home.

“Because I walked out of my office and you just appeared.”

“I suppose it is just a bit silly.”

“A bit?”

“Isn’t it amazing what ten minutes can do?” Clarke asked. “If you’d left ten minutes sooner, if I’d been ten minutes later.”

Lexa couldn’t think of anything except for boobs. Which was a problem because that sounded smart and like it should count for something.

“Drinks?”

“Sure.”

The answer was not the one she anticipated, and yet again, Lexa was convinced that she was dead or dying and ready to wake up at any moment.

“I’ve never been in a professor’s office before,” the model decided as the lights were flipped on.

Neither were drunk, though Lexa wished she could have used that as an excuse. She wished she drank more than two beers. She wished Clarke was sloppy because then she would just want to take care of her and not kiss her. She wished that her sister hadn’t been wing-manning for her. She wished that it had been a fever dream or a car to the temple. That would explain it.

But Anya said people won the lottery with just as much improbability. And to Lexa’s logical brain,
that actually made sense in a disturbing kind of way.

“It’s not much,” Lexa shrugged as she leaned against the door. “But the view is something.”

“Is it weird that I wanted to see it?”

“Yes.”

“I knew it,” Clarke sighed and shook her head as she picked up a few books on the neat desk. “I just never expected to be on something. I never expected any of this. So I guess I had to see it, to believe it, if that makes sense.”

“It does.”

“Is this where you sit and grade papers?” she changed the subject and pointed toward the chair in the corner.

“Sometimes.”

Awkwardly, Lexa stepped into her office, looking at it with fresh eyes. The blinds finally opened and the dim city still had enough lights to show the billboard at the late hour.

“Wow. That definitely takes away from the stateliness of your office,” she whistled as she took in the display.

“All of my plants died because I have to keep the blinds closed,” Lexa informed her.

“Really?”

“Yeah.”

“I’m sorry.”

“There are worse views I’m sure.”

Despite herself, Lexa stood beside Clarke just as they had a few hours ago when they met, both staring at the same thing they stared at then. The major difference, however, was that Lexa looked at the model and couldn’t care less about the stupid picture that she had memorized already.

“Did you have a crush on me because you’ve seen me in my underwear?” Clarke asked.

“Definitely.”

“Is that what I’ve become?” she crossed her arms. “Is this what I wanted?”

“I don’t know.”

“It’s weird, to be thought of as just… that.”

“Everyone has that, though,” Lexa furrowed. “People look at me, they see a dork. Anyone could look at you right now and see that you’re drop-dead and stunning. No one is ever going to ask for your number because they think you look like someone who has great conversations.”

“Ah, so you’re justifying your perviness?” she teased, taking the words as best she could.

“No. I just… I looked at that picture and I thought you were hot. Like, I couldn’t even work in my
office anymore, hot,” she explained. “But I definitely only got a crush on you when you recited the speech from the Sorting Hat over drinks with my sister.”

Slowly the smile formed while Lexa realized her words and snapped her mouth shut tight. She wasn’t going to admit anything ever again. Not about anything. Clarke kept the smile to herself as best she could.

Lexa flinched as she felt a hand slip into her own. Though she was too afraid to look and see who it was that was holding her own, she squeezed it back.

“Excuse me, I’m looking for classroom D108?”

The student barely looks up from his book until he sees leaves and a pot juggled in arms, and then he does a doubletake. The polite girl asking for directions smiled sweetly, waiting for an answer in the tiny hallways of the large building across from her billboard.

“Um. What?”

“D108?” she tried again, looking at a piece of paper the secretary gave her. “I thought it was on the other floor, but I can’t seem to find anything with D attached.”

“That’s the lecture hall,” he said, staring at her intensely. “Ground floor, to the right of the entrance facing the stairs.”

“Oh, great,” Clarke nodded, juggling the plant from her hip to her arms. “Thank you.”

“Anytime.”

It was stupid, but still, the model found herself repeatedly riding the elevator and search every inch of the giant english department building in hopes of finding the professor that was nerdy hot, but also insanely human and normal, which was addicting. It was her eyes and her face. That was important. Plus she had a cute butt that the model found herself checking out on the way to the bar.

There comes a time when one must simply stop worrying though, and that was what Clarke decided. She didn’t care. She had a billboard where she was barely covered and millions of people saw it, so, what else was there to really be afraid of anymore?

That was fine and good until she stood in the back of the lecture hall and saw the stupid professor with her stupid rolled up sleeves and stupid cute butt when she wrote on the board, and her stupid glasses that she adjusted when she pondered, and her stupid face that was the explicit material anyone would imagine between their own legs.

So Clarke did the only thing that she could, and she took a seat and took in the class.

The professor had everyone’s attention, and to someone who had never taken a college class ever before, it was actually interesting. Lexa spoke with her hands, and with confidence that Clarke would have never imagined the girl who taught ‘words, books and words,’ to have. There was something about a girl with passion that was mesmerizing.

It ended with a reminder for papers and responses to be submitted. It ended with laughs and a few people lingering to ask questions as she packed up her bag and wiped down the board, and politely, Clarke waited, ducking her head slightly away from any eyes of dreary students who were more worried to get out of the room and onto the weekend.
Somewhere between a question about an extension and a flirtatious coed, Clarke caught those eyes and earned a double take. Still, she waited her turn kindly, though she saw the little rush that the professor got to clear out the room.

It wasn’t that she didn’t get looks, ever. Clarke got many looks. Many annoying people asked her out and made little remarks. No one blushed and stuttered and asked her questions like Lexa. That was it.

“Excellent lecture, Dr. Woods,” Clarke smiled as the professor climbed the stairs toward the exit. “Riveting material. I might go buy that book and read it now that you’ve explained what it all means.”

“Glad you could join us, Ms. Griffin,” she grinned. “I see you’ve visited our bookstore.”

“Oh, yeah,” she nodded after looking down at her own shirt and the bag on her arm. “I thought I might as well.”

“Because why not,” Lexa tried. “You just appear, and you appeared again, and everything is bonkers and I’m in a coma.”

“I’m not sure about the last part.”

“Are you coming up?”

“I did come to see you.”

“Right. Right. Because that’s not crazy. I’m in a coma,” she shook her head and pushed the proper button to the floor her office was on. “I just keep running into the supermodel that has haunted my office for the past few weeks.”

“You’re not in a coma.”

“Sure.”

“I had fun last night. I thought it wouldn’t be terrible to see if you actually taught words and books and things.”

“And? How did I do?”

“I bought it.”

Lexa chuckled despite herself as they walked toward her office. She fiddled with the lock and finally tossed her bag on the chair when she made her way inside. Once again, Clarke stood there and surveyed, as if anything could change since the twelve hours since they’d been there together while the city slept.

“I suspect you’re not here for a question about my paper requirements.”

“I brought you a plant. I feel responsible for the other ones.”

“Trust me, it’s mostly me,” Lexa sighed before taking the offered pot. “But it’s kind of your fault.”

“This thing doesn’t need much light. I made sure.”

“Thank you.”

Clarke took a deep breath, suddenly with empty arms and not sure exactly what else there was left
for her to do. So she shoved her hands in her back pockets and watched the professor pick a good spot for the new pot.

“I had fun last night. More fun than I’ve had in a long time,” she finally broke the stalemate. “I wanted to thank you for being normal near me.”

“I don’t know if I was especially normal,” Lexa shook her head. “But I am glad it was fun for you.”

“Would it be weird to ask for your number? To maybe be in touch when I come to town next?”

“My number?”

“Yes.”

“My telephone number?”

“No, your social.”

“What?”

“Yes, your phone number,” Clarke shook her head at the dense doctor across from her. “So I can call or text or something.”

“Oh. Yeah. That thing.”

Still, she didn’t move. Instead, she just stared at the person asking, as if she couldn’t believe it, because that didn’t make sense at all. But Clarke waited expectantly, done with her burst of eagerness for the day, high on the adrenaline of risk.

“I think I’m due back next week,” Clarke explained. “And then I’m back for a while, which will be nice. I haven’t been home in weeks.”

“Right. And now you’ve bought out our bookshop, so it makes sense.”

“Exactly.”

“I’m giving the girl on the lingerie billboard my phone number,” Lexa mumbled to herself. “She brought me a plant.”

“Do you have any more classes?” Clarke asked as she pocketed the piece of paper with digits on it.

“One at four.”

“Could I interest you in lunch?”

“With you?”

“Lexa. When are you going to get over the almost naked ad and model thing?”

“When you’re naked in my bed– Oh fuck. I meant. No. What I meant was that I won’t ever get over it because that’ll never— okay. See. The thing. You know? Okay. Stop.”

Clarke watched the panic set it and enjoyed being able to do that to someone who was so successful and talented and kind. It was all in a day’s work.

So the funny thing that Lexa never counted on after her hours spent avoiding opening her blinds,
after her days spent staring at the pretty girl with the great personality, after weeks talking to said girl who was suddenly real and no longer a fantasy, was that the company she modeled for would give her things.

Or that she would be on the receiving end of pictures of some of their samples during office hours.

Or that she would get kind of attached to the stranger who appeared out of nowhere and convinced her that she was currently inhabiting a parallel universe in which she was, in fact, dead, like a shitty ending to a television show where the past few years were just a dream and really only a few days had passed in the real universe.

Or that, despite her own shortcomings as a person who got tongue tied near a pretty girl, she would still get texts and calls from a model.

Or that her crush would become a supercrush that might be reciprocated.

Or that when she said the black set of lace and such were her favorite, that Clarke would take it as an invitation to kill her and wear them when she came back to town.

Or that she would get to see them in person.

Or that she would get to take them off. In person.

“So, you believe I like you now?” Clarke asked, still out of breath and with her clothes tossed to all corners of the apartment.

“No.”

“Why?”

“Because I was prepared for the whole ‘she’s hot’ thing. Not for the whole funny and charming and nice thing.”

“So obviously I can’t like you?”

“Obviously.”

“We just fucked.”

“Clarke!” Lexa gasped.

“Hey, you’re the one that used that word a lot. Like a chant, actually,” Clarke smirked. “I like you, Lexa.”

“You’re the model wearing nothing in the ad across from my office,” she groaned, covering her face.

“And now here you are.”

“Yes.”

“Are you sure I didn’t get hit by a bus?”

“No. But why not make this fantasy last a little longer if you did?” she reasoned.

For a long bit of heart beats acclimating to normal resting rate, Lexa considered it. She stared at the ceiling and debated.
“Why not.”

“Perfect.”
Day 1

The street was filled with bright yellow and orange leaves, burning bright against the deep black of the road. A beautiful sunny day, the leaves fell down like rain, glittering in the late morning light, while the breeze tossed them around, filling the almost dead lawns with another layer to add to the piles. A lone car made its way through the neighborhood, watching the canopy road become a little more bare.

“You’re really a lawyer?” the driver asked, drumming her thumb against the steering wheel anxiously. She was unable to sit still the closer she got to her childhood home, suddenly become a ball of electrons as they turned onto the street.

“Do you want to see my business card again?” the passenger grinned, lolling her head to the side as she watched the driver seem to have an argument with herself before clenching her jaw and nodding. “I can have my college send my transcripts, if that would work.”

“I’m sorry. I’m just…”

“Stressed.”

“Yeah.”

“Anxious.”

“Yeah.”

“A mess.”

“Okay, that’s not helping,” Clarke snorted and gave her a look. The small grin and she was certain, dancing eyes hidden behind the sunglasses, made her chest hum. “You never told me why you’re doing this, you know?”

“I like a bit of adventure,” Lexa shrugged.

“I can’t believe I’m doing this,” the driver moaned again.

“What can’t you believe?”

“Seriously?”

“If we can’t be honest with each other, who can we be honest with, darling?” she teased.

“I’m an idiot,” Clarke exhaled a deep breath.

If she hadn’t been an idiot, then she wouldn’t have ended up driving four hours to her old town to
see her family that she avoided like the plague. If she hadn’t been an idiot, she wouldn’t have lied
and said she’d been seeing someone when her mother accused her of being cold and alone. If she
hadn’t been an idiot, she wouldn’t have let it bother her that her childhood friend was getting
married. If she hadn’t been an idiot, it wouldn’t have bothered her that her mother’s voice changed
with a not so subtle despair at her wayward daughter, lost to the wilds of the city and the world, that
the guilt of being a disappointment wouldn’t have flared up so violently and made words come out
that Clarke didn’t recognize, even when she hung up the phone.

But she was an idiot. A right idiot. A proper idiot. The biggest idiot.

“Hey,” Lexa whispered as they parked in front of a pleasant looking house on the corner of a street.

She watched the girl who posted a stupid tweet looking for a Thanksgiving date now close her eyes
in the driveway but not move to turn off the car, or even unhook her talons from the death grip she
had on the steering wheel.

“If you’re an idiot, than I’m an idiot,” she offered, hoping it would be soothing.

At first, she was afraid it was unsuccessful, until Clarke tilted her head back and let it lay against the
headrest where she closed her eyes and smiled.

Lexa considered herself an idiot now. That was the only reason she found herself responding to a
friend of a friend of a friend’s offhanded tweet about needing a date to make her family not think she
was a failure. That and four glasses of wine. But she was an idiot because when they met for coffee,
she felt her heart skip and she felt her palms sweat and then she talked to Clarke, and just a few
meetings to prepare and debate if they were actually going to go through with it, Lexa considered
herself an idiot for agreeing to pretty eyes and a nice ass. But she was an idiot. And now she had to
give into her idiocy.

“It’s going to be fine,” Lexa promised. “Just remember, no matter what, we get to leave in three
days.”

“And never look back,” Clarke nodded. “I seriously can’t believe you agreed to this.”

“I like an adventure,” she repeated, “And you, my dear, look like one hell of an adventure.”

“You ready to be my fake girlfriend?”

“I’m ready to be whatever you want me to be,” Lexa smirked and wiggled her eyebrows, hoping to
make her laugh. She liked when Clarke laughed.

“Come on, Casanova,” Clarke chuckled, finally opening the door.

Victorious as hell, Lexa allowed herself .2 seconds to consider what the hell she was doing. With a
rehearsed move of emotional repression, she ignored it and followed.

Clarke handed her two bottles of wine and a pie before adjusting her scarf for her, keeping herself
busy with nerves. Lexa let herself be laden with the offerings, let herself be fret with because it was
oddly nice and foreign.

“Remember, my grandpa is sexist, and my uncle got caught cheating with his secretary.”

“Got it, bring up feminism and ask if your uncle’s date is his daughter,” Lexa repeated.

The two stood on the porch as Clarke knocked. Her face went white with Lexa’s words and she
snapped her head towards her, riled up by the cocky grin still there.

“It’s going to be fine,” she promised once more, offering her elbow for Clarke to hold. “Let me pretend to be wildly in love with you.”

“It’s a good thing you’re not terrible on the eyes. Pretending is a little easier,” Clarke teased. “It’s the sense of humor that’s lacking.”

“I enjoy a solid teasing session.”

“Good to know.”

Lexa felt the tips of her ears burn with the way Clarke said it, with the implications. She cleared her throat and felt her cheeks tense slightly, the smile faltering. Clarke leaned close to her.

“You’re right, teasing is fun,” she whispered, earning a snort and begrudging chuckle.

“Clarke!” the door was thrown open with the name shouted loudly. “Everyone, Clarke finally made it!”

It was all over after that. The door opened and spilled for its contents, with people streaming and pulling. Lexa finally understood what a riptide must be like, and for the life of her could not remember what those signs at the beach all said in how to escape.

In the middle of being hugged and asked a million questions, her fake girlfriend was no use to help, and so Lexa held up the pie and wine as a shield. Gone quickly was the cockiness, and replacing it immediately was the defensive kind of fear. She was certain she must have looked like a deer facing the headlights.

“Mom, Dad,” Clarke clung to her fake girlfriend’s elbow once again. “This is Lexa.”

“It is so nice to meet you,” Abby smiled sweetly, wiping her hands in the towel she brought with her.

“We brought some pie and wine,” Lexa smiled, trying to find her footing.

“Come on, come on,” the mother smiled. “Let them in the door. Here, Jake, take these,” she nodded her head at Lexa’s full hands. “Let me get a look at you.”

“These look good,” the father nodded as he grabbed the bottles and they ended up in the foyer. “It’s so nice to finally meet you, Lexa,” he turned and shook the lawyer’s hand finally.

“It’s a pleasure. Clarke’s told me so much about you all.”

“Well, it’s half true, we promise,” Abby smiled still. “Take off your coats, come on, settle in.”

“Let me introduce you,” Clarke offered, taking off her coat and holding out her hand to take Lexa’s. “Everyone, this is Lexa. That’s my Uncle Kane.”

“Hi,” Lexa nodded.

“Dr. Jaha, my godfather.”

“Pleasure,” she waved slightly.

People were in the kitchen and living room and dining room, all mingling about, all happy and with eyes trained on the newest arrivals.
“Finally!” a voice interrupted, tossing her arms around Clarke. “I didn’t think you were coming.”

“I told you I was,” Clarke tsk’d.

“Good. I finally get to meet this girl.”

“Lexa, this is Raven,” the artist offered with a big smile. Lexa could sense the relaxation that occurred with a familiar, and most likely less hostile, face.

“Congratulations,” Lexa offered, earning a hug as well. “Oouf. It’s nice… ah. It’s nice to meet you.”

“We are going to have a fun weekend,” Raven promised.

Lexa looked at Clarke, hoping for reassurance that it wasn’t a threat. She only got a weak smile that wasn’t too helpful in assuaging her fears. So she smiled back, ready for a glass of wine already.

The bedroom at the top of the steps, third on the right, was nothing short of a museum. It was like one of those towns that just remained stuck where it was, when one intense event forced all inhabitants out at a remarkable rate. Lexa was infatuated with moments like that, with life that was not cleaned up or tidied or altered, but was simply preserved in a flash.

Still not 100% on the details of the uneasiness between Clarke and her family, Lexa searched for clues in the childhood room, though she found none. She did, however, use it like a chance to learn Clarke herself.

It was a simple room, standard teen angst and knickknacks. The windows looked at the road and the driveway. A gaggle of kids were outside using an old basketball hoop over a garage.

The walls had a few posters of bands that Lexa would be sure to mock soon enough. There were pictures from dances and field trips and weekends with friends tacked up. The bookshelf was full of the standard selections, and trophies from every other sport imaginable.

 Mostly, though, what distracted Lexa was the sketches, the pages torn from sketchbooks and put up, covering all different subjects. A pile of different sized notebooks were piled on a desk, and she let herself flip open a page, and then another.

“Taking your time rejoining us, huh?” Clarke asked, leaning against the doorway, watching someone try to decipher her childhood.

“Did you do these?” Lexa asked, not even attempting to hide it.

“Yeah, a long time ago. I’ve gotten better, I think.”

“I brought our stuff in. Your dad pointed me upstairs. I wasn’t sure if we were going to be in the same room…”

“If you had been a boy, no, but the Hotel Griffin is currently filled to capacity, so we’re sharing. I can sleep on the floor if you’re uncomfor–”

“No, no,” Lexa shook her head, looking at the double bed. “We’ll manage.”

“They like you.”

“They don’t seem so bad.”
“They’re not, if you’re not related to them.”

“What do we do now?”

“There’s alcohol downstairs.”

“Perfect,” Lexa grinned. “See? We’ll be fine.”

The house was beautiful, though Lexa would have expected nothing less from a family consisting of a doctor and engineer. Clarke led her downstairs, holding Lexa’s hand tightly, as if it were a ward. Football played in the living room while couch quarterbacks lamented the terrible coaching.

“Red or white?” Clarke asked as they snagged a spot at the bar.

“Surprise me,” Lexa whispered, leaning close. She let her hands linger on hips.

“You’re good at this.”

“At what?”

“Making someone feel like your girlfriend.”

“I aim to please,” she smiled, clinking their glasses together.

“Go watch the game,” Clarke ushered her.

“No, I can-”

“I saw you sneaking peaks. Go on. I’m going to go help in the kitchen.”

With a relieved sigh, Lexa kissed Clarke’s cheek, surprising them both, before meandering toward the other room. She looked over her shoulder just once to see the blush she earned before hiding her excitement in her wine glass.

“Take a seat, Lexa,” the patriarch of the group motioned as she entered.

The brief dossier Clarke gave her on the trip up was barely enough to keep everyone straight, but Lexa had something up her sleeve, and that was unbridled honesty. She had no skin in this game, and she just had to make Clarke seem amazing. It didn’t seem like rocket science.

“Let me get a look at you,” he asked, leaning a little.

Eighty and still feisty, the old man sat up in the recliner slightly. Lexa shook his hand properly.

“Is it Major, or The Major?” she smiled.

“I like you,” he decided quickly.

“Clarke said you did three tours in the Great War.”

“Don’t get him started,” a few cousins groaned from the couch.

“Operation Morvan,” he ignored the complaints. “We dropped in just behind the Western Front back in ’42. I made it the whole way down to Italy and then ended up being redirected to Algeria toward the end.”
“What was your MOS?”

“MOS?”

“Yes, your—”

“Where did you serve?” he interrupted her.

“I just went over once,” she offered. “I just made Sergeant, and two months in, I took shrapnel to my arm. Caused a little nerve damage, so I got out.”

“Well, now I like you more,” he grinned. “How in the world did you go from that, to being a lawyer?”

“You know, I figured I’d helped humanity enough, so I should probably see how many problems I could cause.” He chuckled at her answer.

Soon enough, they were engulfed in conversation that proved too boring for those who passed through to interrupt. Lexa figured if she had an in with at least one member of the family, everything else would fall into place. She got a boost of confidence from it.

“Here, Gramps,” Clarke met them well into the second half of a football game and debate over training bases later. She offered him a new beer before filling Lexa’s glass as well. “You two are thick as thieves, I see. That worries me.”

“You didn’t tell me you were dating a sergeant.”

“Hm?” she furrowed and took a seat on Lexa’s knee.

“I was just telling the Major about my trip abroad.”

“Your…” Clarke furrowed and met Lexa’s eyes. “Oh, right. I didn’t want to ruin the surprise,” she covered smoothly. “He always told me to never date a marine, so I didn’t want to upset him.”

“Good thing you found yourself a grunt then,” Lexa pursed her lips and tried to speak so much with her eyes.

“Right,” she smiled. “I’m sure you two had a lot to talk about. Being in the army.”

“You know, I took shrapnel too,” the grandfather nodded to himself. “And that was on leave away from the lines. You had it easy.”

“Shrapnel?” Clarke squeaked slightly, looking at Lexa quickly.

“I’ll show you my scar later,” she whispered. “You didn’t tell me your grandfather would have all of these amazing stories,” Lexa ventured, louder this time.

“I like to keep a little mystery between us, babe.”

Sitting in the living room, both grinned to themselves, oblivious to all else, let alone a few sets of eyes that tried to analyze the entire interaction.

Finally, Lexa had a mission. While Clarke and her mother did a passive aggressive dance while cooking, occasionally having to disappear for a few minutes at a time to calm themselves down, Lexa tried to be supportive, but her only real lifeline fell asleep in his chair during the second game,
and everyone else made her have the same conversation twelve times.

But she had a mission, and she was ready to execute.

“Back of the garage, right hand side, bottom shelf,” she repeated to herself as she walked through the yard to the garage in search of refreshments. “Oh goodness!” she yelped, finding a body already inside, tinkering at a workbench.

“Fuck!” he yelped as something zapped his fingers.

“I’m so sorry!” Lexa apologized, taking a step toward Clarke’s father. “I just came to get drinks. They’re running low.”

“Don’t worry. I used that excuse about an hour ago to escape out here,” he smiled. Lexa shared it and saw so much of Clarke in him that it put her at ease. “They can be a lot to handle.”

“It is,” she agreed. “But it’s nice. A good kind of overwhelming.”

“Take a seat. Catch your breath,” he offered, hands clapping against his thighs as he looked back at his work bench. “I was just tinkering with a few things. Helps me relax.”

“It’s definitely quieter out here,” Lexa nodded, taking the offered stool. She finally realized she’d been hold a breath since they arrived.

For just a few minutes, she watched him work and spun on the chair, enjoying the escape of it all. She’d been roped into conversations with uncles, told their meeting story twelve thousand times, held Clarke’s hand as much as possible, had three glasses of wine, and been generally as impressive and charming as she could, and just then she realized how much hard work it was to be likable for such an expanse of time.

“You didn’t have plans for the holiday?” Jake asked, not looking up.

“Not really. I’m not a big holiday celebrator. It’s never been something I did, not like you all do.”

“We do set the bar high,” he nodded with an amused smile. “I didn’t think Clarke was going to agree. I’m glad you could get away from work for a few days.”

“When Clarke wants something, I’ve learned to just give in early. Works out better for me.”

“You’ll go far, Lexa,” he chuckled. “I have a theory that Clarke isn’t fond of, that her mother and her have a strain because they’re so much alike.”

“I can only imagine.”

“She’s doing alright, isn’t she?” the father murmured, finally looking up at meeting Lexa’s eyes. She swallowed under the intensity before nodding and attempting to find her voice.

“You raised an amazing person, Mr. Griffin.”

He didn’t say anything else, just nodded to himself with a small smile. Lexa hoped she was doing it right, because suddenly, she felt very out of her element, and as if she were in over her head.

Dinner was perfect, and Lexa felt as if she were encased in a Norman Rockwell painting come to life. The food, the table, the people, the laughter, the kid’s table. It was all too much, and it was all utterly perfect. She couldn’t understand Clarke’s aversion or nerves. The only thing she felt, was a
deep, burning kind of longing, to actually be a part of something like what was happening at dinner.

Clarke sat beside Lexa and enjoyed watching her watch her family. There was something about having new eyes that made things seem different and new. Though she felt herself on edge, ready for the inevitable sparring that would come, she let herself hang on the ropes in favor of having fun with Lexa.

An entire day they survived at her parent’s, with her family, and the times she got to sneak away with Lexa had been her favorite. She liked how she fit, and wondered if someone would actually fit that well, or if it was all the act. There was no way a stranger who she met just a handful of times, could fit so organically and be completely honest, not playing up different parts to elicit the best kind of responses. It had to be the act.

But she liked that her grandfather liked Lexa. And she liked watching Lexa play basketball with the kids, putting little ones on her shoulders to reach the rim and doing a victory lap when her team beat Wells’. And she liked finding Lexa and her father tinkering with her project car, and telling them to wash up before eating. And she liked that Lexa held her hip and kissed her temple absently, almost so absently, it didn’t feel methodically plotted. And she liked that they snuck out and went on a hike by the lake with Raven and her fiancée, and Clarke felt a little like she belonged, contrary to the usual feelings of an animal ready to flee whenever the chance arose.

“Six threes,” Lexa said as she put the cards face down in the pile. A chorus of ‘oh’s’ erupted with the move.

“I just don’t know,” Clarke eyed her from across the table, watching the lawyer take a sip of her wine.

“That’s a risk to call,” Raven chuckled, looking at the pile Clarke would have to take up if she was wrong. “Do it.”

“She could have them,” Jake said, putting his cards down as he deliberated as well.

The only dishes that remained were from dessert plates and drink glasses. Lexa hid behind hers, feeling the burn of a steady days drinking under her belt. She enjoyed Clarke’s lips more than she did a few hours ago. Though she thought it wasn’t that she enjoyed them more, just that she allowed herself to enjoy them more.

“Look at that face,” Clarke complained.

“What’s wrong with it?” Lexa pretended to be concerned.

“I enjoy it an all, but it’s so shifty right now.”

“Are you calling me a liar, darling?” she acted offended.

“Do it, do it, do it,” Raven chanted low, until Wells and Kane and a few others joined in, enjoying the stare down.

Lexa held blue eyes and tried to control her face as best she could, not giving anything away. Clarke found herself taking more time considering than ever before, just so she could watch the lawyer. Which was stupid. Because this was a favor.

“I’m calling it,” the artist finally decided, to hoots and hollers. “Bullshit!”

“Wow,” Lexa hld her hand to her chest. “Go ahead. Flip them.”
One by one, Clarke flipped over six threes, the final one earning a loud batch of yelling and amazement.

“You’re going to pay for that one later,” Clarke nodded, turning bright red.

“Tease.”

Lexa listened to the water in the bathroom running and laid perfectly still in the small bed in the childhood bedroom of her part-time, fake girlfriend. She stared at the ceiling, at the slits of blind illuminated by the streetlights outside that danced when a car crept down the quiet suburban street. The wine sloshed around her head and she spent all of her time making herself as small as possible on the very farthest edge. She felt sober and intoxicated all at once when the door opened and Clarke made her way to the bed.

“Do you have enough pillows?”

Even getting as far away as she could on the real estate provided, Lexa could smell the mint of the toothpaste and the unmistakable smell of Clarke that haunted her all day, that was vanilla and laundry and soap all rolled together and served warm.

“Hm? Yeah. I’m good.”

The bed dipped slightly as Clarke shuffled beneath the comforter.

“I’m not going to take up the whole bed,” she muttered.

Both were still, both were holding their breaths until begrudgingly, Lexa rolled over onto her side and found herself facing the artist in the dark.

“Well, how did I do today?” Lexa tried, unsure of what to say in the dark, unsure of what to say when they were finally alone again.

The drive in felt like years had passed. Time flew and yet they felt different. It was an intimate thing they did.

“They loved you.”

“I thought you handled your mother well,” Lexa offered.

“You heard those digs, huh?”

Clarke stretched slightly, shifted her hips. Lexa felt her knee against her thigh and swallowed, distracted by it.

“I liked her face when I told her how much I liked your art. And when I told her watching you teach the second graders was one of my favorite things.”

“Thank you for that,” she smiled and found herself shifting closer. “Thank you for all of it. If only I’d met you under different circumstances.”


“I didn’t know you were overseas.”

“Just for a second.”
“Tell me how you ended up there.”

“I was eighteen and had nothing else to do, so I enlisted,” Lexa shrugged.

Tentatively, hands touched her cheek, pushed hair behind her ear, trailed along her temple until she closed her eyes and felt like a cat, ready to purr and curl into the warm palm.

“I got shipped out my second year, lasted two months. Got hurt.”

“Where?”

Lexa didn’t answer, just took Clarke’s fingertips and guided them to a spot behind her elbow, moving them to the familiar scar that rested there. She let her own hand tuck back under her cheek, but let Clarke explore the mark to her heart’s content. It felt different to have someone else’s hands on it.

“Goodness,” Clarke sighed.

“Now you know.”

“Now I know.”

In the dark, another car drove by and the room was lit up for just a moment, just enough to make more of her outline out, but Lexa grew bold, lifted her shaky hand to drag along Clarke’s jaw.

“My dad asked me about your parents. I didn’t have an answer.”

“Oh.”

“Oh?”

“Yeah. I… uh.”

“Come on, Woods. Don’t get soft on me now.”

“I have no idea why I tell you the truth.”

“Me neither, but I like it,” Clarke hummed to herself, sleepy with wine and winning.

“I didn’t have Thanksgiving plans. I never have plans. My parents died when I was about sixteen. Went out to dinner and a truck ran a red light. That’s why I figured I could play along with you. Seemed better than another holiday of dive bar whiskey and Alien.”

“Alien?” Clarke scoffed after a moment, attempting to digest it all. “Not a very festive choice.”

“You’ll find that any movie can be a Thanksgiving movie if you drink enough.”

Without asking for it, Clarke knew what Lexa needed, and so she scooted closer.

“Fake or not, I’m very glad you ended up here,” she whispered. Forehead to forehead, hands on different parts of each other, innocent and tired, they smiled though neither knew it.

“Me too.”

Day 2
Morning came quiet, came slow, came tinted cabernet and sauvignon and such. Lexa knit her eyes shut tighter against the sunlight that made itself known. Instead, she snuggled back into the warmth of the blanket, of the pillow, of the arms around her waist…

It took a second to dawn on her, but when it did, her body went rigid. The move only made the warms and body behind her meld into her spine harder with a small hum, attempting to quiet her.

Wide-eyed and very aware of what was happening, she debated for as long as her wits would allow before she gave in to Clarke’s body fitting against her own. Hell-bound, Lexa resigned herself to such, and closed her eyes with a small smile on her lips for just a few more minutes of whatever was happening.

The noises from downstairs began as life could not be stifled in the busy and full house. Clarke growled, despite the fact that no one would hear it, and pulled her arms tighter around the source of warmth in her bed. She dug her nose into shoulder and hair that smelled like lemongrass and everything warm, like sunshine encapsulated.

It took a second to dawn on her, but when it did, her body went rigid. As a complaint, the body in her arms noticed and sighed, adjusting her hips slightly. Clarke swallowed as Lexa ground her hips into her own, as legs moved along her own, as hands pulled her closer.

Of their own vocation, her lips pressed against the fabric of Lexa’s shirt before she closed her eyes and allowed herself a few more minutes of whatever was happening.

“So what are the plans for the day?” Abby asked as her daughter sat at the bar and drank from her coffee like it was a magic fix-it elixir.

“I’m not sure,” her daughter yawned.

“Your father and uncles and grandfather have all gone over to the lake fishing, so they’ll be gone all day.”

“Nice.”

“I was going to go into town and run a few errands, if you wanted to come along.”

“Maybe. Raven wanted to go out to get drinks tonight with Lexa and I.”

“Is Lexa still sleeping?”

Clarke blushed slightly at the question before sipping more coffee to cover it.

“Yes.”

“Well we’ll be home after lunch. Plenty of time. We can get some shopping done.”

“Mom, we don’t want to waste our vacation shopping.”

“It’s time with your mother. You’d think that since you don’t visit, you don’t call, you don’t want to be here, you could fake a few hours of hanging out with your mother.”

“Okay, alright,” Clarke relented. “But I want to take Lexa to lunch at Jimmy’s. She loves a good sandwich.”
“Deal.”

“How did we get dragged into this?” Lexa whispered, arm lazily over Clarke’s shoulders as they moved along the sidewalk of the downtown street.

“You’re a benevolent and understanding girlfriend,” Clarke offered. “And I’m a sucker.”

“That sounds more like it,” she snorted.

Clarke just wrapped her arms around her tighter and let herself pause at the window.

To any of the shoppers out and about, they were a perfect couple. Lexa doted, listened, followed, and Clarke teased, tugged, and promised. It was natural and it was easy, until at a point, both gave up pretending, and just were themselves, did the things they wanted to do, did not think about it too much.

If they did, they would have focused on waking up wrapped in each other’s arms, and that would have been too much. This was easier.

“I love Christmas,” Lexa hummed as they followed Abby through another store, inevitably pausing, getting lost, and making her hunt them down.

The Christmas trees all on display turned half of the store into a wonderland. Lights glittered and red and green covered every available surface.


“We had a lot of traditions. We had movies, and food, and decorations,” the lawyer explained.

“What do you do now?”

“I usually visit with my friend, Anya. She kind of adopted me. Sometimes I just stay home and watch movies and order Chinese.”

“We’ll have to pretend to date and I can bring you back here.”

“I think this is my first and last pretend girlfriend gig.”

“I can still bring you back,” Clarke decided.

“Yeah?”

“We’ll see.”

Lexa rolled her eyes and kissed Clarke’s forehead before continuing their perusal of the displays, eventually settling on decorating their own tree with a hodgepodge of ornaments and decorations.

“Oh shit,” Clarke grumbled, catching sight of her mother approaching.

“Shit?”

“My mom found us,” she sighed.

“Is it lunch yet?”

“Oh shit!”
“It’s not?”

“Just… shut up,” Clarke looked around after seeing who her mother brought.

As much as Lexa tried to open her mouth to argue, she was stopped by Clarke’s fists in her collar and her lips on her own. Clarke kissed her hard and rough, silencing her easily. It took a few seconds of surprise before it melted and Lexa pushed herself forward, cradling Clarke’s cheeks in her palms, stretching out her lips and the kiss as much as humanly possible. For pretend, of course.

“Wow,” she whispered, slightly dazed.

“Hey,” Clarke turned as her mother cleared her throat. “Hi.”

Lexa wanted to hear what was happening, but the blood was trumpeting in her ears too loudly. She still had Clarke’s hand holding her shirt, she still had her own hand on her back, and she still had the taste of her on her tongue. She shook someone’s hand, an ex’s, she was certain, and she smirked, knowing full well what he was realizing he’d given up.

“Anywhere else we can run into an ex?” Lexa asked as they walked out in search of lunch. “I’m definitely okay with being fake kissed like that.”

“Oh, babe, you’re cute,” Clarke smiled. “There was nothing fake about that.”

“Not this again,” Clarke sighed as she slid into the bed.

Stoic and not moving, Lexa remained on her back and stared at the ceiling, taking up as little real estate as possible.

“You can use more of the bed.”

“I’m fine,” Lexa murmured, not moving at all.

A second later, she flopped on the ground, Clarke grinning triumphantly after nudging her off with little effort.

“Very funny,” she grunts, picking herself up and crawling back into bed.

“I thought so,” Clarke smiled, rolling over to turn off the light. “Fine. Stay over on your side,” she gave up when Lexa didn’t give in. “You’ll just end up as my little spoon by morning.”

“I am not the little spoon.”

Clarke shook her head as she rolled over.

“Okay Lexa.”

“I’m not.”

“You were this morning.”

Quiet, they laid there, both confused as to how they ended up there, like that. The day went smoothly, nothing changed, except Lexa felt different, and she knew that in just a few hours and a drive, she would never see Clarke again, and she wasn’t sure why and she wasn’t sure how.

But she did have a few more hours, and so Lexa gave in, and she rolled over, slipping her arm
around Clarke’s waist.

“I’m the big spoon,” she mumbled, defiant and stubborn.

Clarke just smiled in the dark.

“Whatever you say, Lexa.”

“The bed is tiny. We have to be this close.”

“Mmhmm.”

“Just for show.”

“Right.”

“Kind of like that kiss.”

“You’ve kissed me all weekend.”

“Not on the lips.”

“What are you, a hooker? No lip stuff?” Clarke taunted.

Lexa shifted and ran her shin along Clarke’s. She pressed her nose against her back and closed her eyes.

“I don’t want this weekend to end,” she confessed with a sign, hiding deeper against Clarke’s back.

“I can’t wait to get away from my family. Twelve hours is my limit. Anything else is too much.”

“Yeah.”

“But we don’t have to end. You know… just because this was… an unorthodox first date… doesn’t mean we can’t have a second.”

“Yeah?”

“Why not?”

“I don’t know. I just thought this was… this,” Lexa shrugged.

“You’re the little spoon of everything,” Clarke decided. “Little spoon of emotions. Little spoon of cuddling. Little spoon of family game night.”

“This is already off to a bad start,” the lawyer grumbled.

Despite her complaint, Clarke felt Lexa’s smile when she kissed her shoulder. She pulled her hands tighter and held her closer, more happy than she could remember ever being while visiting her family.

“Happy Thanksgiving,” Lexa whispered.

“To many more.”
Chapter Summary

Thanksgiving was so beautiful! :) could you write a second part? Like how it goes for them after thanksgiving? Or something! Thank you so much for your stories. They always help me relieve stress.

The sunlight came down through the blinds and the crack in the curtains of the childhood bedroom. Buried deep in an unruly mane of blonde hair, Lexa inhaled the smell of it there, enjoying the feeling of it on her nose. Beneath the fluffy comforter, she let her hands slide along Clarke’s hips, held her tighter, let the morning come in a slow kind of welcome, not rushing it, but merely sipping from the new day, dragging seconds out like the last bits at the bottom of the cup.

It still felt foreign, but still, Lexa gave into the feeling of the body that felt molded for her own. It was nice, how well it fit, and she couldn’t stop her hands from roaming, her sleepy brain bypassing any actual thought and instead electing to move muscles alone.

Slowly, hands moved up Clarke’s ribs, slid beneath the shirt, ran over her stomach while hers glided along the fabric of old sweatpants until they also found some skin.

It wasn’t until her hands earned a moan that Lexa woke up enough to understand her hands and become awkward.

“Don’t stop,” Clarke pushed her hips back against the sleepy girl in her bed.

“I can’t.”

“Why?”

Turning slightly, Clarke turned her head without opening her eyes at all. She hugged the pillow and furrowed against the body behind her.

“Your childhood bedroom?”

“Don’t stop,” she whispered, kissing cheek and forehead and whatever she could reach. Dangerously, she rolled her hips into Lexa’s lap.

Still sleepy and cozy in the bubble of the bed and the morning, Lexa kissed neck and earned hums and purrs. If she was dead and this was heaven, it would make a lot of sense, because a body pressed against her like this was wonderful and torture.

“Don’t stop,” Clarke whispered again.

Lexus slipped her other arm under the sleepy blonde, slid her hand under her shirt and took as much as she could. It was easy for the sweatpants to be tugged and for a hand to be slid lower.

“Please don’t stop,” she hummed, breathy and needy and all kinds of distracting, as if she had to ask, as if Lexa could imagine doing anything else.
Instead, she kissed neck and cupped her beneath the shirt, earning arching back and a whimper as her fingers teased and circled between her legs. Pressed tightly together in the bed, the quiet movements of Lexa making Clarke unravel sounded like dawn and morning in a way that Lexa wanted to have every morning.

“Don’t… stop… please…” Clarke swallowed and begged between ragged breaths.

Lexa wound her up tighter and tighter and tighter until there was nothing else for her to do but for her muscles to completely relax and her body to go slack. Lexa gripped her tighter, held her closer while she relaxed and sighed, trying to catch her breath.

“Oh, okay, stop,” she chuckled weakly.

“Good morning.”

“Do you wake all of your fake girlfriends up like that?”

Lexa chuckled as she kissed cheeks and pushed aside messy, bed-headed hair. She let her lips move along the girl’s face and neck as her arms relaxed. Clarke couldn’t open her eyes, and she didn’t want to at all. She didn’t want to do anything ever again, just let herself stay in those arms and warm and cozy with that girl.

“I didn’t mean to do that. I would have wanted a more fitting moment.”

“This was plenty fitting.”

Slowly, as her body came back to her, Clarke turned over and faced the girl who gave her the best wake up she could remember in a long while. Eyes still closed, she tucked herself deeper under Lexa’s chin and ran her nails up Lexa’s back after slipping under shirt.

“One hell of a first date,” Clarke purred.

Somewhere between the making Clarke come and the feeling of lips against her chin and neck and chest coupled with nails gently up and down her back, the morning and the warmth of the bed and the bodies tangled up, Lexa felt herself drift off again, tugging Clarke with her as well.

By the time she woke up again, Clarke was wrapped around her back, perfectly mirroring the position from earlier. Oddly, both satisfied and intensely needy, she extricated herself from the arms in the bed and made her way downstairs.

Had it been any other place, she would have stayed there, had this been any other girl, she might have lingered, but this was a joke that was suddenly turning very serious, and Lexa had to figure it out as best she could because she was getting in deep.

“Good morning, Lexa,” a voice made her jump as she rambled into the kitchen, distracted and deep in her own thoughts.

“Good morning, Mrs. Griffin,” she returned, gulping slightly.

“Clarke still asleep?”

“Yes, she said something about being back in her bed meant a good sleep.”

“Out of all the things she could get attached to,” the mother shook her head and kept moving around the kitchen as Lexa took a seat at the counter. “Coffee?”
“Yes please.”

In the quiet, Lexa looked down and felt underdressed in her sweatpants and old shirt, but the house had been quiet, and she anticipated no other souls in her quest for sustenance.

“I haven’t gotten much time to talk to you,” the mother mentioned as she pulled out mugs.

“It’s been a quick visit.”

“What do you think the odds are of getting Clarke to agree to come home for Christmas?”

“That’s pushing it, I reckon.”

“Yeah,” she smiled and nodded, turning back to the coffee maker. “How did you like it?”

“Thanksgiving? It was wonderful.”

“We usually are a little more organized, but Clarke threw a wrench into it, making everyone so excited.”

“Thank you,” Lexa smiled and eagerly took the mug that was handed to her. “It was better than any Thanksgiving I’ve had in a long time.”

“Your parents died, right?”

“Yeah.”

“That’s a same. What did they do?”

Lexa took a sip of her coffee and watched Clarke’s mother take a seat and suddenly she wished she was anywhere else. This was the interrogation that she knew was coming, and yet she couldn’t escape it.

“My mother was a secretary at the high school, and my father was the accountant at an office.”

“Sounds pleasant.”

“I didn’t want for anything.”

“You put yourself through law school?” the doctor eyed her cautiously.

“Leave the girl alone,” Jake ventured through the kitchen, already wiping his dirty hands on his old sweatshirt. He winked at Lexa and kissed his wife’s head.

“I’m getting to know Clarke’s girlfriend. She never brings anyone home,” she defended herself.

“And she won’t again if you interrogate this one.”

“I’ll survive,” Lexa promised.

“Your brave enough for visiting,” he reminded them.

“You put yourself through law school then?” Abby returned to her questioning, ignoring her husbands teasing.

“I did. Still have loans, but I worked and my parents had a small bit tucked away for college, and then a little more of an inheritance.”
“Prudent.”

“All in all it worked out alright,” she nodded.

“How long have you and Clarke been going out?”

“It honestly feels new,” Lexa sipped. “She’s exciting, every day is different.”

“That’s important,” Jake nodded, leaning against the counter as he drank.

“Is everyone awake already?” Clarke made her way into the kitchen before the parents could ask anything else, and Lexa was grateful because suddenly the joke of telling the lie was wearing her down, and she wanted nothing more than to be honest, and probably would have, if it weren’t for the girl that appeared with the messiest nest of hair pushed all over her head.

“Not all of us can sleep in,” her mother reminded her.

“It’s ten, that’s not even sleeping in well,” her daughter rebutted. “Hey,” she whispered, kissing Lexa’s temple, voice groggy and gravel before slipping between her legs and standing there to steal her coffee. “You okay?”

“Yeah. Sleep well?”

“I woke up earlier, but must have passed out again,” she grinned with her eyes over the mug.

“You tow get ready. We have breakfast down at the club before you leave,” Abby interrupted the morning moment. “Since you can’t stay an extra day.”

With an exaggerated sign, Clarke hung her head and flopped all of her weight on Lexa.

“We should have made a break for it earlier.”

“Someone was too sleepy.”

“Your fault.”

The ride back to the city was different, less enjoyable than the nervous one out to the house. As soon as they made it to highway, Lexa felt the shift of it, and yet there was nothing she could do. Three days with Clarke, and returning, Lexa felt anew.

By the time the city came into view in the distance, Lexa was rubbing her hands on her thighs when she realized she wasn’t even sure what Clarke’s address was.

“It feels like we haven’t been here in years,” Clarke realized.

“It does,” Lexa agreed.

“What’s wrong?”

“Hm?”

“You’re quiet.”

“The weekend is over.”

“Almost, we still have a few hours.”
Distracted, Lexa watched cars pass outside, felt the city and real life lingering ever closer to their reality. To her credit, Clarke tried. She had no real answers, no real idea what to say, was just as lost. So she just drove and debated a million different conversations.

“You said it was one hell of a first date,” Lexa remembered.

“Well, it was,” Clarke chuckled. “Not many first dates involve a lot of family and a story about fake dating. But it worked well enough.”

“First date, as in there will be a second?”

“I wasn’t really looking for anything…”

“Yeah, no. Me neither.”

“Lexa.”

“No, I wasn’t. Seriously. It just… Yeah. I understand.”

“I wasn’t looking, but I think we found something good,” Clarke amended. “I would like a second date, if you’re somehow asking me for one.”

“I was,” Lexa smiled, finally meeting those eyes she was quickly becoming very attached to in the short amount of time. “Only if you were saying yes. If not, then I wasn’t.”

“Seriously? You think I let a girl feel me up in my childhood bedroom and then don’t want another date?”

“Well, I don’t know you very well, Clarke.”

“Shut up.”

Ten pounds off her chest, Lexa laughed and let Clarke hold her hand in the middle.

“So, what did you and my parents talk about?”

“You. Me. Us. I like your dad a lot.”

“He’s awesome.”

“He asked me about my parents, what books I was reading, if I liked Game of Thrones, stuff like that.”

“I got him the seasons for his birthday. He’s obsessed. I’m sorry,” Clarke offered.

“No, don’t be. He was super nice. It was nice to talk to him. And your grandpa was so neat. You have a good family. You should see them more.”

“It’s hard.”

“Coming from a person without a family, I’m telling you that you’ll want to see them more.”

“Don’t guilt me,” she whined.

“Your mom on the other hand…”

“She’s a pistol.”
“Something like that,” Lexa nodded.

In the recap of the weekend, Lexa could feel Clarke relax as they moved through the city towards her own townhouse. It was if the physical proximity to her childhood home wound her up tighter than before, and now, escaping its reach, meant she was calm and more like herself. Lexa liked both.

“Thank you for a nice Thanksgiving, Clarke,” Lexa sighed as she stood with her bag in front of her house.

Double parked and hazards on, Clarke stood beside her, not caring much about the traffic, suddenly dreading this moment that she had not anticipated in the slightest.

“Thanks for being my pretend girlfriend.”

“I hope I played it well enough.”

“Well enough to earn yourself a callback.”

“Good,” Lexa decided seriously.

“No more pretending right?” Clarke checked.

“I haven’t really faked it much,” she shrugged and felt her shirt tugged slightly.

Clarke kissed her, a true, honest, good and proper kiss that lingered with the honking and swearing of traffic, with the lifeblood of the city and the chill of late November. Lexa cupped her neck and deepened it because she really liked it and wanted to do it more, because she could.

“Call me?”

“Definitely,” Lexa nodded, falling even harder for the girl that hopped off the sidewalk with a skip in her step before unleashing a string of insults that would make a sailor blush before getting into her car.

Inside her house finally, she leaned against the door and shook her head, wondering what mess she was getting into with that girl.

Decked in all manner of holiday, the city glittered and gleamed in the snow of the early season. Three dates under their belts, and the holiday spirit was catching up to them.

Lexa held Clarke’s hand as they made their way down the street. Once again she inhaled her sigh and held the bags as Clarke shopped. Dragged from store to store all evening, she was a good sport, that was what she told herself. She got kissed outside in front of the displays and the lights and the trees, and that was damn nice. She got an invitation to spend the night, and that was worth being a pack mule, and nodding and agreeing to things Clarke held up.

“How did that deposition go?” Clarke asked, pausing with Lexa outside of the ice rink filled with people moving around gently.

Carolers sang somewhere else, deeper in the park. The world smelled different, smelled fresh and the cold tightened their lungs.

“Not too bad. We’ll be closing up in the next few weeks.”

“Good. You need a break.”
“Shopping all evening doesn’t count?”

“You didn’t buy anything.”

“I don’t have anyone to buy presents for.”

“Not even me?” Clarke balked stopping as they made it to a street corner.

The buses passed, the street cars whooshed through the slush. On her own, Clarke placed her arms on Lexa’s shoulders and kept her there, in the moment, with the lights, with the moment.

“I have to get you something?”

“We’re dating.”

“I don’t know these rules.”

“What’d you get me?”

“Nothing,” Lexa lied, pulling hips towards her.

“Good. I didn’t get you anything either,” Clarke shrugged, pulling away and tugging Lexa down the street again.

“Wait, what?”

“I can’t get you anything now, you’re here.”

Shaking her head, Lexa followed, adjusting the bags in her hand as she huffed out the cold into a cloud. Bells rang on corners while displays called for peace on earth.

“Did you figure out what you want to do for Christmas?”

“Sleep all of winter break and eat a lot of cookies,” Clarke decided quite seriously.

“Your mother called me.”

“My mother?”

Nervously, Lexa broached the subject, unsure of how to really bring it up.

“Well, she thinks we’ve been dating for over a year, so she thought she would invite us for Christmas.”

“Right, the fake girlfriend thing,” Clarke nodded, furrowing at the new information. “Do you want to go?”

“Are you going to hire someone else if I don’t?” she grinned, nudging the teacher’s shoulder.

“I didn’t hire you, you volunteered,” she corrected. “And no. I don’t care either way.”

“I don’t know. You bought a lot of presents for someone who doesn’t care.”

“You should come.”

“Yeah?”
“I mean,” Clarke paused, taking all of her resources to say those words. “I mean we should go. You as my girlfriend.”

“I already did that.”

“I mean it.”

“What if I’m not good at it?”

“You just keep giving me morning quickies and I think you’ll be fine.”
Hey! Would you write a story in canon world where Clarke and Lexa are taking a bath together? Lexa sees Clarke eyeing the bathtub and finds out she never got around to using one. Lexa then takes matters into her own hands to give Clarke her first and best bathtub shower experience ever…

Careful to make sure that Clarke was on her way back from Arkadia and returning that very night, Lexa checked three times with the communication tower, making them subtly radio with different questions about the returning party’s location. It was as stealthy as she could be, and she had plans.

The evening settled carefully on the city as the returning party made their way through the gates. High atop the the tower, Lexa opened the doors and windows, filling the room with the last bits of the summer breeze through which the world breathed and the curve of the horizon was a slowly burning fire.

It took a little more work on her part, but Clarke managed to shake her family, promising to find them later, though they knew it was a lie. She nodded and blushed and walked away from the welcome party quickly.

The dirty of the day was a layer on her skin that she was certain she’d never escape. As the elevator slowly crawled toward the penthouse, she tried to brush off the dust of the trail and the mud of the recent storm, an attempt to make herself presentable, though it failed thoroughly.

Three weeks was a long time to be away, and three weeks was longer when she knew what she was missing. The slow climb made her antsy.

“Lexa?” she called, emerging into the quiet of the Commander’s chambers.

The curtains billowed slightly in the breeze, dancing lazily against the deep purple and pink of the unending summer twilight. The big bed in the corner remained there, as inviting as ever. Sore from the long trip and the hard work, Clarke wanted to collapse in it. She dropped the bag from her shoulder to the ground with a bit of relief.

“Oh mighty heda,” Clarke sang, taking a few more steps. Her muscles ached.

“Clarke?”

“You just let anyone come up here? I didn’t even have to ask permission,” the sky crew called, following the voice that met her. “Seems a little dangerous.”

“They know who is allowed up to my quarters,” Lexa murmured as Clarke turned the corner to the back room. “You are welcomed here.”

Dumb and mute, Clarke stood there, the heat and the smell meeting her as she turned the corner. The sight wasn’t terrible either, and it all overwhelmed her senses.

“You look like you survived the trip well enough.”
Clarke just nodded, distracted by the girl who looked like she wasn’t made to do anything at all other than speak quietly and walk beside flowering trees. The grey dress hung on her, draped gently, as if it was just waiting for gravity to finish the job. All manner of skin and bone appeared, all that what was normally hidden by bulky armor gave way to delicate angles and generous curves. The dirt and grit in her mouth made it dry.

“I missed you,” Clarke found herself confessing, unsure why, but not completely hating the way it sounded.

It was a small smile, but it was hers, and Clarke chased it with purpose. She’d say whatever popped into her head to get that shy little nod. “What’s all this?”

The large tub sat in the middle of the room, nearly full and speckled with flowers and petals. Candlelight remained overshadowed by the stagnant sun that did not want to give up to the night just yet. Lexa looked around, as if checking to make sure it was all that she’d planned, as if uncertain as to her original intent.

“You said you never got the chance to take a proper bath, and the lake doesn’t count. I thought a nice warm soak would help relax you after your trip.”

“For me?”

“You’re not getting into my bed looking like that,” she nudged her chin at the mud-crusted outfit, making Clarke look at herself once more. “Come on.”

The dress fell and long legs stepped out of the puddle of it on the floor before moving toward the basin.

“You don’t have to tell me twice.” Her clothes came off in record time, a trail on the ground.

The water gushed over the side as she tentatively stepped into the tub, earning a smile as she braced herself nervous, slowly sitting as the warmth enveloped her. She could feel the grime slide off of her, she could feel her muscles sigh.

It smelled like Lexa. Like the flowers out by the lake, and the sweetness of the strawberries in summer. Hot as it was outside in the season, the heat of the water was a relief.

Carefully, their legs tangled slightly. Lexa leaned forward just enough to lift her hand from the water and rub away a streak of stubborn dirt from Clarke’s cheek.

“This is amazing.”

“I thought it’d be a good way to welcome you home.”

“Home?” Clarke asked, smiling at the word.

“Yes, home.”

“No other reason?”

“What do you mean?” Lexa cocked her head.

“I don’t know. Maybe to get me naked.”

“If anything it was to get you clean.”
“You’re funny.”

“Sometimes.”

Lazily, Lexa leaned back, proud of herself for all of it. Clarke just rolled her eyes and sank deeper before closing her eyes and dipping her head, hoping to get rid of the accumulation of days and rain in her hair.

When she came up, she spit a mouthful of water at the Commander.

“Thank you for this,” Clarke chuckled, yelping as she was pulled across the tub for her attack. Water sloshed all over as they turned around and fought before settling. “Hi there.”

“Why do you turn into a child whenever we’re having a nice, quiet time?”

Clarke squirmed until she settled between Lexa’s legs after earning a kiss. It melted her deeper into the water, deeper into the Commander’s chest.

“I can behave,” Clarke argued, still laughing as the water sloshed around.

“Of all the things I know you can do, behaving is never one of them.”

“You made me a bath,” she sighed.

“I did.”

The sun finally disappeared in a tuft of smoke, the brilliantly deep purple became darkness, with just stars and flecks of flames leaping through the sky. The room grew darker, cast in just the light of the candles in the small bathroom.

Lexa dug her nose into Clarke’s bare shoulder, kissed at the specks of water that remained there. A small sigh came, one of unchecked relaxed feeling, of this safety and unabashed calmness not normally seen by anyone else. Clarke leaned back and let her kiss her neck, she played with her forearms and the little bones of Lexa’s wrist.

The ache of her muscles vibrated and dulled with the feeling of Lexa’s hands on her thighs and ribs, with her lips on her neck and back. Quiet and lazy they sat there.

“I never want to get out of here,” Clarke closed her eyes and let her head drift back to Lexa’s shoulder.

Lexa tightened her arms around Clarke’s waist.

“The water will get cold soon.”

“I don’t care.”

“Let me wash you, and take you to bed,” Lexa countered. “We can do this again. I promise.”

“If you ever needed a moment when I fell in love with you, then look no further than right here, right now.”

“Me too.”
Chapter Summary

Hello! Your writing is so on point and you’re really talented! On a prompt post, I saw ‘You’ve always been a good cook so I encouraged you to start your own restaurant and seven years down the line I track you down and you own one of the most successful businesses’ AU and I was wondering if you’d do the honor of writing a Clexa AU because I feel like you’d do such a fantastic job. Thanks so much! :)

The wine was poured and the table was full of laughing. The restaurant ebbed and was stacked to the rafters, full and content. Lexa spent the evening, however, trying not to be bored to death by her date, gazing at other tables of happy couples, at celebrating groups, at contented strangers smiling and having fun.

Her blind date was terrible, was utterly tiring, and completely obtuse, and Lexa could think of no way to escape. She couldn’t, because Anya would get mad, and Jasper would be offended, and he had set it up. So Lexa planned on ordering dessert and drinking all of the wine and getting a headache as soon as the check came. That would be good enough. One dinner. That was the first step, that is what her therapist said, that is what Anya kept saying. Still, Lexa couldn’t shake the disinterest, the sadness. She fiddled with her ring finger, now empty after Costia, something she just couldn’t get used to, no matter how long it’d been.

“You should eat,” Jess said after telling another pretentious Wall Street story. “You shouldn’t have to wait just because the chef can’t get my meal right. Fourth time’s the charm, right?”

“You’d think,” Lexa nodded, taking another sip of wine.

“I can’t understand it. You know, my assistant told me this place was great, but I’ll have to let him know, maybe threaten him a bit with the terrible recommendation.”

“It seems to be doing well,” Lexa mentioned, looking around.

“How, is beyond me,” she chuckled.

It wasn’t that she was terrible. She had redeeming qualities, and wasn’t terrible to look at, but in the intricacies that was her personality, Lexa was already so eager to get away from her, there was no coming back.

“So you know Jasper from…”

“We went to high school together, way back when. Just always kept in touch. He said he knew you from some meeting?”

“We met in… It’s a support—” Lexa fumbled suddenly with the words until a plate crashed down on the table in front of her date.

“What the hell is this?” she looked up quickly.

“This is a peanut butter and jelly sandwich because it is the only thing I am going to make for you,
and if you don’t like that, might I suggest you leave.”

Lexa looked up at the person who slammed it down. The restaurant grew quiet for just a moment until everyone murmured and looked in their peripherals at the situation. For Lexa, it was all silent, her ears suddenly forget how to hear when she saw who was attached to the mildly familiar voice.

For just a moment, she was sixteen again, and the chef was the girl down the block who made her stomach feel like it was full of angry butterflies. The blonde was just a memory incarnate that blindsided Lexa out of nowhere. She felt the butterflies almost instantaneously, as if they were waking from some slumber they’d been in since the day Clarke left Lexa sitting there on that bench, both broke-hearted and torn.

“This is ridiculous,” Jess stood, wiping the debris from her pants. “I want to speak with the manager.”

“That’d be me,” Clarke crossed her arms. “Can I bring you your bill now?”

“I’m going to tell everyone what an ass runs this place,” she huffed, tossing bills from her purse on the table without counting.

“I’m shaking in my apron. Now take your pretty date-” Clarke froze, finally taking a look at the girl still sitting at the table. “And… go…”

Lexa felt the smile appear on her lips. It was small and slow, but she had forgotten the exact blue of Clarke’s eyes, and unfortunately for her, they had not dulled in the decade that stood between them now. If anything, Clarke was even more beautiful than the eighteen year old Lexa watched walk away.

“Lex?” Clarke chuckled and smiled, a full wide smile that spread from ear to ear and kept on growing as her brow furrowed at the incident.

“You know this joker?” Lexa’s date remained standing there, hands across her chest.


“She has to go, but you can stay,” the chef grinned, mischievous to the bone, still.

“We should be going,” Lexa stood, ducking her head slightly. “It was nice to see you, Clarke.”

“Don’t be a stranger,” was all the blonde could manage, the grin on her lips noticeably suffering at the news.

“Sure.”

It took everything in her to not look back as she followed her date out of the restaurant. It was not for her, and it most certainly was because of that dull, achy pain that reemerged once she saw Clarke’s eyes. That familiar kind of warmth that spread through her chest. That dizzying kind of thought processes that swarmed and swirled around her head. It was all too much.

As soon as she managed to escape from her date a few blocks away, Lexa found herself aimlessly walking the city. Starting from her door step she managed to get blocks and years away as the night grew dark.
“It was her, Bell,” Clarke shook her head, tossing the cap from her beer on the table. “Like a damn ghost.”

“You have the worst luck, I’ve ever seen,” her friend chuckled as she clung to her bottle, as if it were a life raft, her eyes distant and far and thinking about this girl still.

“And I let her leave. I should have… done something, right?”

“What were you supposed to do, follow her and her date?”

“I should have done something. Asked for her number, given her mine, gotten a fingerprint from a glass. She just appeared and I couldn’t think,” Clarke confessed.

The restaurant was empty, the tables cleaned and chairs flipped. The lights were still on in the back and the front, and the two friends sat at the middle table in a ritual of sorts. It started after their first night opening, and continued whenever Bellamy made an appearance. Clarke was grateful he was there for a night like this.

She almost wished she hadn’t recognized her, that when she saw a pretty brunette, it’d just been someone else and she’d gone another night without thinking of Lexa. But time was cruel, and Lexa was even prettier than she remembered, and her voice was sweeter, and her lips more kissable and it made Clarke have that feeling she’d forgotten, the one of lead in her veins and fire under her skin.

“I’m kind of upset that the one hour I run to get smaller bills is when the love of your life appears.”

“She’s not…” Clarke shook her head, sitting up a little straighter. “It was forever ago. She probably thought I was crazy for staring or for throwing a sandwich at a customer.”

“Probably not the best tactic for wooing her,” Bellamy agreed. “Or for running a business. I thought we talked about that.”

“I was so in love with her, Bellamy,” Clarke confessed, looking at her feet as she adjusted them. An early morning truck roared down the street outside. She felt the honesty burning in her cheeks. “It wasn’t just young love. It was… I can’t explain it, but nothing has lived up to it.”

“Maybe you’re idealizing it.”

“No,” she shook her head. “It was just so real. She’s the reason I’m here. She’s the one who told me I could when everyone else said it was stupid, when my mom wanted me to go to med school. And after my dad… I just pushed her away. I left. I got on a plane without looking back. I forgot who I was,” Clarke nodded to herself at the realization. “It’s like I haven’t remembered who I am and then I saw her and things are different. I’m not idealizing anything.”

“You should have gotten her number,” he agreed, quiet and contemplative.

“Then what would I say?” she snorted. “Sorry I ran away after my dad died? I showed up on your campus and saw you and couldn’t bring myself to say hello when I got back? I’ve missed you like someone might miss their right hand, or breathing, or seeing, or the sky?”

“Any of those would have been good,” Lexa said, the door closing with a soft thud behind her.

Clarke stood, her heart in her throat, nearly knocking over the table behind her, almost as if Lexa had been a ghost.

“It was ten years ago, Lex,” Clarke shook her head.
“Feels like yesterday, tonight.”

“Yeah,” the chef agreed.

“Well, I think you two have a lot to catch upon,” Bellamy stood, patting Clarke’s shoulder. “I’ll see you tomorrow for staff meeting.”

Even after he left, they stood on opposite sides of the room, a few tables between them, but nothing more than that. Neither knew what to say, and Clarke still smarted from the embarrassment of Lexa hearing her words while Lexa felt too much entirely.

“It’s been a while,” Clarke finally decided to start.

“Yeah.”

“Are you hungry? You didn’t get to eat, I can make you something.”

“No, I mean yes, but that’s okay. I don’t want to be any trouble,” Lexa shook her head.

“Come on,” Clarke nudged her head. “It’ll be my honor. After all, I do have to thank you for all of this.”

“I didn’t do anything,” Lexa followed, setting her clutch on the table in Clarke’s wake.

“Way back when, you said I could be a chef. You said I didn’t have to be a doctor, and no one else ever said that to me,” Clarke nodded, looking around the kitchen for something to make, trying to decide on one thing. “Do you still like grilled cheese?”

“A fancy chef and all I get is grilled cheese?”

“The best damn grilled cheese you’ve ever had,” Clarke amended, grinning and meeting her eyes.

“So how did you end up here?” Lexa ventured as the chef busied herself with the task at hand. She surveyed the pristine kitchen, making note of the small office in the back with a light on. She settled on the counter, leaning there in her black dress and watching her work.

“After graduation I travelled,” Clarke began. “England, France, Italy, Turkey, India. Picked up a few things here and there. Then I worked for a few years here in the city. Me and Bellamy finally opened here this summer, so it’s been about six months.”

“Seems to be doing well.”

“We’re doing okay,” she nodded as the stove lit.

Lexa simply watched her work, watched her move around her space and command it with purpose. It was strange, to be in the same room with someone who was so important at one point in her life and know absolutely nothing about them.

“We were so young back then,” Lexa realized. “I didn’t think… but it was so long ago.”

“Yeah,” Clarke agreed. “A lot has changed.”

“Yeah.”

“Well, you have to tell me about you now. At least an abridged version, skim along and give me the good stuff,” the chef urged letting the sandwich cook in the pan and searching out another wine
“Alright, the shortest version I can,” Lexa nodded as Clarke held up a bottle. “Went to Sarah Lawrence. Got a job at a publisher. And I…” Lexa swallowed and cleared her throat. “Met a girl, fell in love, got engaged and she was hit by a car one evening. That was three years, two months, and twenty-six days ago.”

“I’m sorry. I can’t imagine.”

“Tonight was my first date since.”

“In three years?” Clarke balked.

“Yeah. And I run into you. The world is a funny place.”

“I am sorry,” Clarke met her eyes after flipping the thing in the pan. “It sounds hard.”

“It is. It was. I don’t know. We don’t have to talk about it. I hate talking about it, and weirdly enough it’s all people want to talk about when they find out.”

“Well, three years is a long time to go without a date,” the chef grinned, missing Lexa’s point on purpose and making her smile before sipping her wine. “Can you grab a plate? They’re right there, yeah, behind your head.”

“It certainly smells good.”

“They never actually taught us grilled cheese in culinary school, so I don’t know if it’s any good.”

“That’s not how I remember it,” Clarke argued, pouring the last of the wine into Lexa’s cup after topping off her own.

“You did though! You were the one driving when the car got dinged!” Lexa argued.

“I don’t think so.”

“You know, you’re as stubborn as I remember.”

“Excuse me, if anything I’m more stubborn.”

“Great.”

Their laughing slowed finally and the quiet settled there, each almost woozy from wine and each other’s company. Lexa blushed, though she’d swear it was the drink. Clarke sighed, content and happy to be near her at all.

The hours seemed to blaze by, first with cooking her something, and then with re-learning, with talking, with confessing and with catching up completely, and Clarke was afraid for it to end.

“Do you think we would have made it if I hadn’t walked away that day?” Clarke finally ventured, the nagging question that attached her at times like this, early in the morning before the sun came up.

“Clarke… that’s an impossible question.”

“I know. I was just wondering if you thought about it.”

“I did,” Lexa nodded. “And then Costia happened, and I grew up.”
“What about now?”

“I don’t know. Maybe we missed our shot. Maybe it’s a bit of fate,” Lexa decided, shrugging. “But you do make a good grilled cheese.” She watched Clarke duck her head and smile. “And I was happy to see you. I kind of got this like, twittering, flutter in my chest when I realized it was you. I felt like I was sixteen and you were kissing me for the first time.”

“In your bedroom,” Clarke leaned back slightly on her stool. “Tuesday afternoon. We were blowing off chemistry homework. And that band was playing. You were obsessed with them. They had that song and it was something like… what could I say… I was… far away,” she hummed. “And I’d been in love with you since I was ten and you walked into Mrs. Giovanni’s fourth grade class. And you kissed me, of that I am certain.”

“You remember the day?”

“Of course.”

“But you can’t remember dinging that mailbox?”

“Some things are more important than others.”

“It’s been a long night,” Lexa cleared her throat. “I think we covered a decade in two hours.”

“Yeah,” Clarke agreed, standing and moving the plate and glasses to the sink behind them. By the time she turned around, Lexa was standing just a few steps behind her. Clarke smiled, that small smile that told Lexa a million things were on her mind. She could concur.

“I’m sorry I walked away,” Clarke said, quiet and true. “I wish I could have apologized sooner, but I was young, and dumb, and then… I saw you with her when I came back. And I saw how happy you were. I did what I thought was right. I…”

Lexa kissed her, kissed her like they were sixteen and afraid of what it meant, kissed her like she’d wished she could have kissed her a thousand times after that. And it was better than before, than what she could recall, because it was here and it was now. Clarke froze for a moment, surprised by it, but eagerly taking her chance.

“Good first date night then?” Clarke grinned, coming up for air.

“One of the more interesting nights in a while.”
Chapter Summary

I love your work and how you make everything so amazing. I was wondering if you could do a fic about clexa getting walked in on while doing, well, each other. Thank you in advance for the brilliant work you do.

The rain hung around for a week. It slopped up the yards, filled the river until its shore was engorged and rushing at breakneck speeds to the lakes and oceans, streaming down the mountain in older and new creeks that filled footpaths. The branches that were weakest succumbed to the constant weight of the drizzle while the thick soupy mud of the ground clung to all parts of tires and boots and pants.

The weather did a number on the electric generators, keeping Raven at a constant state of exhausted due to running around at all hours, helping to correct the surges and outages. At one point she was uncertain what part of her was mud and what part was skin, but still, she yawned in the shower and tried to figure it out.

By the time she was finished, the village was alive and the storm was still grumbling above the trees, not at all interested in helping them with even a day of dryness. She gave up to the will of the world though, admitting defeat, and not caring any longer about power.

Toweling her hair, she moved through the skeleton of the Ark, still somewhat snarling at the visitors who followed the Commander on her visit. In the aftermath of what had happened since their arrival, Raven was only just attempting to figure out who she was and what her life was going to become. The reminder of the grounders made her remember why it was so difficult.

Tiredness dripped from her bones while the rain dripped from leaf to leaf to roof to ground. The weight of the world, of the weather, of her duties weight upon her muscles, as if the earth itself was keeping her from floating away.

The only saving grace of the entire situation was Raven’s ability to dodge the entire group of the Commander’s guards and the leader herself. The mechanic took a bit of solace in the entirety of it.

“Oh my fu–” Raven yelped as she opened the door and simultaneously heard the commotion and saw the flailing of limbs. “What the hell?”

“Just… give us a minute,” Clarke stood first, holding a discarded shirt over her chest a few seconds too late.

Hair all cocked and cheeks flushed, the blush spread through her chest like a forest fire. Raven frowned, the disgusted face apparent.

“Her?” she shook her head and referenced the oddly stoic Commander who remained non perturbed by the situation. “Seriously?”

“It’s not… it’s just…” Clarke struggled to find words.

“This is my room, too!”
“I thought you’d be gone… It just… we were… nothing was…”

Every beginning of a sentence felt like the wrong way to start, felt inadequate, felt like a lie, and so Clarke didn’t make it more than a few words in before stopping herself, before reconsidering and thinking too deeply about something she didn’t want to think about.

“This is ridiculous,” the mechanic growled.

To her credit, Lexa didn’t help the matter at hand. Slowly, precisely, she took her time and stood, naked from the waist up, pleasantly enjoying the way Clarke blushed and became frazzled. Raven stared at the leader of the entire world as she knew it, naked and brazen and bold.

Stuck between a girl who wouldn’t look at her, and another who wouldn’t look away, Lexa fiddled with her shirt before pulling it over her head.

“I can’t believe it.”

“I told you we should have gone to my tent.”

“Lexa,” Clarke warned.

“What did I d–”

“Lexa,” she interrupted again.

With a deep huff, the Commander met a glare and returned it, this time from the girl who had just been under her. She recognized her own defeat though and grit her teeth. Without another word, she left the room, breezing past the mechanic.

“Seriously?” Raven muttered again, tossing her towel on the ground before yanking back a sheet.

“I thought you were going to be busy.”

“Apparently, she thought you would be too.”

The trip back to Polis was much more difficult because of the weather. Horses slogged through deep mud, the rivers became treacherous, the forest remade itself, fell and became reborn again with youth usurping age and weakness.

Camp set and the perimeter manned, Anya sifted through the reports of attacks in the south. The dark slipped around, fought only by the fires that popped up with the troop movement.

After scanning the final sheet, Anya gathered the papers and made her way to the Commander’s tent.

“Lexa, plea– OH God,” Clarke moaned and then yelped, pushing herself away from the girl in the bed.

“With her?” Anya held up her hand with the papers, accusing the girl who fell from the sky.

“Anya!” the Commander warned.

“This! This is why we are away from home?” she continued to rant.

While it happened, Clarke pulled up her pants. She looked around for her shirt and failed to find it, so she pulled on her jacket and zipped it. Unperterbed by the situation, Lexa argued in another
language, their voices grew quieter, yet more agitated, until the Commander put an end to it.

Another snarl, and Anya glared at Clarke before walking through the tent and leaving.

“I’m sorry,” Lexa offered, sitting back down on the edge of the bed. “No one else will be in.”

“I should get going,” Clarke shook her head, awkward and distracted, unable to focus.

“Or you could stay?”

“Lexa,” she sighed, still embarassed.

“What?” she smiled, eager to get back to what had been stopped. Her hands moved to hips, but were met with pulling away. “She’s gone. We won’t be interrupted.”

“It’s hard to think about anything else,” Clarke shrugged. “I better go.”

As soon as she left, Lexa flung herself back on the bed and whined.

Polis still didn’t feel like home, didn’t feel comfortable. Still, Abby made her way to the capital because two months was too long to go without seeing her daughter, because time passed hard on the ground.

The nice weather helped, with the wet spring falling into a warm summer, and they made it to the city in record time, their Rovers loaded with supplies to trade and barter. Still a tenuous relationship, Abby watched the grounders assemble and watch them.

“Clarke, honey, are you—”

As soon as the door opened, Abby regretted every choice she’d ever made that led to that moment.

“Mom!!” Clarke sat up quickly, the table she was on, wobbling until she fell off to the side.

In the same instant, Lexa slipped forward, earning a knee to the eye in the scuffle. The loud noise of the hubbub made the guards outside approach before diverting their eyes just as quickly. Abby covered her eyes and turned around.

“You weren’t supposed to get here until tomorrow,” Clarke muttered, buttoning her pants.

“We made good time.”

“Are you okay?” her daughter turned to the Commander who now nursed her eye, testing it, blinking, a bruise already forming.

“Great,” Lexa deadpanned, hissing as she covered it again.

“This is what you do up here? This is why you’re away from your home?” her mother said, hands on her hips, facing the opposite way.

“Try to,” the Commander growled, low enough so only Clarke heard it.

“Let’s… go… take a walk,” her daughter offered once she finally made herself decent.

Lexa held up her hands, confused as to how this is how her day was turning out. Unable to return the wonderful favor she’d gotten just a few minutes ago, left her frustrated once again.
“I’ll see you later,” Clarke promised.

“Nice to see you, Chancellor,” Lexa sassed as they left. 

As soon as the door shut, she held her eye and cringed.

In the early bit of morning, when the first bit of sun appeared, Bellamy woke. It was a simple routine, one that he perfected, one that led to an absence of thought at all. And so he splashed his face, and made his way out of the Ark and toward the garage where the Rovers waited for the early patrols.

Even with the doubling of guards and the presence of the grounders, something about the routine and the steady checking and rechecking of the boarders made Bellamy feel as if he contributed, as if he were doing all he could.

“Bellamy!” Clarke yelped as the back door to the Rover was pulled opened absently.

Struck by the flashes of images that he found, he found himself staring and unable to stop, no matter how much he wanted to badly do so. Clarke lifted her head and pushed her body in front of his view of the naked Commander who was mid moan.

“Close the door!”

“What the hell is this?”

“Bellamy!”

“The Rover?” he balked.

“Get!”

“I thought you said it’d be fine,” Lexa groaned, covering her face once again. Her eye was barely done being bruised from the last intrusion. “Is there no place—”

“Lexa!”

“What the hell?” Bellamy interrupted again.

“Shut the door!”

The night was quiet. The sky was interrupted by shaking leaves playing tiny songs in the breeze while the crickets argued with each other about the heat. On the other side of the mountain, the rain washed it clean, blurring out any part of the distance.

In the tiny room that was no bigger than a closet, the noises were lost completely on the inhabitants. Instead, they were distracted by themselves.

“What are you doing?” Clarke asked, watching in the dim light as a naked back moved to the door. The dark lines of tattoos and shadows made her lick her lips.

“Why don’t any of these doors have locks?”

As if on cue, knocking rang out. Lexa turned back and looked at the girl in the bed with an exasperated shrug. Clarke chuckled before standing up and opening the door while Lexa huffed and maneuvered herself to find her gear.
By the time she finished talking, the Commander was dressed and waiting on the edge of the bed. Clarke shut the door and tugged at her hair, pushing the mess around her head before meeting Lexa’s glance. Over it and upset, though completely used to it by now, Lexa

Softly, Clarke settled in her lap and kissed her cheek.

“We’re alone now,” she promised, moving to neck when she pushed aside hair that stayed there.

“For two minutes,” Lexa grumbled, not moving at all.

Clarke made it to collar bone before she stalled and noticed how ineffectual her lips had become.

“I know things have been vusy lately. I’m sorry.”

“It’s not you. We just have responsibilities.”

“But now we’re alon–”

The door knocked again and Lexa grumbled. Clarke let her lips trail under chin despite the swearing coming out of her chair’s mouth. Once more she got up and answered.

As soon as the door was shut, Clarke bypassed her waiting seat and pulled up her hair before tossing a shirt to the girl on the bed.

“Come on.”

“Where are we going?” Lexa ventured.

“Just… come on. I have an idea.”

They passed by the remainder of people who were awake at the hour, the constant mingling of the world seemed a plight that would never end, and so Lexa took solace in the notion that never again would she have sex, it was that simple, and that easy.

When Clarke took her hand Lexa was alright with it for a second, until she met eyes with Bellamy on their way out through the fence. It just reminded her of another missed chance.

“It’s dark.”

“We’re not going far,” Clarke explained, padding her way through a familiar path.

In the dark, the town was a little glow. Lexa ran into Clarke as she paused and lifted a latch that whined with rust.

“I found this a few weeks ago,” she explained, climbing down into the dark with only a flashlight.

“A sex room?”

“Get down here,” Clarke chuckled when she reached the bottom.

As soon as she made it to the ground, she took in the small bunker. She didn’t get much of a look. The flashlight sat up on a small table, Clarke jumped on her, kissing her quickly.

“We won’t be interrupted,” she promised. “Not again.”

“I’d feel better if it had a lock…”
“Shut up.”
Neighbors (Part 1)

Chapter Summary

Clexa prompt (something light to tide us over): Clarke has a crush on her next door neighbour who just moved in, but she always seems aloof and guarded. Though she can’t be that bad, not when Clarke hears her sing this ridiculous song in the shower every morning. In the elevator Clarke decides to tease the neighbour by whistling the song.

“These are… a lot of boxes,” Clarke observed, making her way through the maze that appeared in the hallway leading to her door. She pushed her bag against her back and wove herself through it as best she could so as not to disrupt a thing.

She thought she would make it to her door, but it wasn’t where she left it, instead a wall of boxes with very obscene labels blocked it.

“You moving?” Octavia asked, both standing at the foot of this great wall, confused and unsure of how to proceed.

“Not the last time I checked,” Clarke genuinely thought about it, unsure of if in her sleep-deprived brain she decided to go apartment shopping.

“I’m sorry, I’m sorry,” a voice came from the other side of another wall. A pile moved and came at them, zigging and zagging through the tight path. “I’ll move them. Somewhere.”

It wasn’t until the pile passed that Clarke saw the slender girl carrying them, and was more than surprised by her strength. She watched her run her forearm along her forehead and Clarke dropped her keys.

“Wow,” she whispered, low and without moving her lips.

“Yeah,” Octavia agreed, earning a gentle shove.

“I’m trying to coordinate it all, but I have the truck until a certain time, and they didn’t give me the keys to open the door until just now, and then there’s boxes that aren’t coming in,” the girl listed, moving around Clarke and Octavia and beginning to try to excavate the door. “I’m sorry.”

“I’m Clarke,” Clarke offered, keys still gripped tightly in her hand, held up as if she was ready to put them in the door.

“Lexa,” she nodded, not even looking back at the blonde for more than a second.

“And I’m Octavia,” the Costello to Clarke’s Abbott tried.

“Do you need some help?” Clarke offered. Octavia gave her a look that was not amused at all, nor excited to participate in such things. She had come over to pick up a certain dress, not help. Do anything.

“I’ve got it,” the new tenant grunted, moving a stack to another stack.
“Awesome, she’s got it,” Octavia clapped her hands once and pointed towards Clarke’s door.

“Here, let me get that,” Clarke offered, picking up a few crates. “If you open your door, we might not get trapped.”

“Yeah, okay,” Lexa looked around, overwhelmed and genuinely afraid, almost ready to light a match and just buy new everything. “I can do that. I should do that.”

There was a noticeable humph from the shorter of the friends as she crossed her arms and gritted her teeth. Clarke sheepishly shrugged, box already in her hands.

It only took a few trips after Octavia rolled her eyes and dropped her bag, becoming an unwilling participant. The door emerged.

“I should have this all cleaned up in an hour,” Lexa explained, hand on her hip, the other rubbing her cheek warily. “I won’t make you help me with the rest.”

“Good, because we weren’t,” Octavia offered. Clarke handed her the keys to her door and gave an apologetic look to the surprised neighbour.

“Thanks!” Lexa stretched to offer a wave as Octavia disappeared inside. “I’m sorry, again.”

“It’s not a problem. She just has a date, and she’s a terrible person,” Clarke offered truthfully. For just a second she hated herself as Lexa debated if it was a joke or not before offering a small nod and smile.

“Well, I better get back to work. My friend needs his truck back by seven,” Lexa tried.

“Yeah, no of course,” Clarke nodded, furrowing and swallowing and looking at her empty hands, oddly wishing her keys were there to play with or rustle.

“Thanks again, 7C,” Lexa looked at her door before grabbing another box.

“Yeah, anytime,” Clarke smiled. “If you need anything… I’m unusually prepared for most situations.”

“Good to know.”

With that, Clarke watched her disappear into her door. At first stunned and hating herself, she repeated her words, tasted them in her mouth and wanted to spit them out, but instead she just found herself shaking her head and going into her apartment, grossly uncool and insanely aware of it.

It isn’t until nearly a week later that Clarke sees her new neighbour coming home. A week spent debating if it would be too forward to knock on her door and welcome her formally to the floor. A week of remembering her weak, terrible way of speaking around her and dying of embarrassment all over again, repeatedly.

“How’s it going, 7C?” Lexa asked as she smiled small and stopped, sprinting onto the elevator.

“What? Oh! Hi,” Clarke grinned despite the tired. She was barely standing up, exhausted and dozing after forty-eight hours at the hospital.


“I can see how the lack of blood and bodily fluids might make you mistake this sexy blue number I
have on for a proper job like that,” Clarke looked down and was thankful she had changed because
of said fluids before leaving. Normally she didn’t, because that meant she didn’t have to share a seat
on the subway. “I’m year three of my surgical residency at General.”

“Well, if I’m ever in the market, at least I know who to come to for a new spleen,” Lexa watched the
floors pass. Clarke adjusted her bag and smiled.

“And you?” Clarke managed, careful tasting the words before saying them, debating them,
measuring them, to avoid any embarrassment. The door dinged and opened to their floor.

“If you’re ever looking for a twelfth grade history refresher,” Lexa explained, digging in her bag.
“I’m your girl.”

“You teach?”

“I dabble.”

“I don’t…”

“I work at St. Pat’s just a few blocks over,” Lexa explained as Clarke came to her door. She slowed
only slightly.

“That must be fun,” Clarke eagerly agreed.

“I also coach volleyball, so if you really want some fun, you can buy some raffle tickets.”

“Oh, yeah, definitely,” Clarke agreed, patting all of her pockets and looking for her keys as Lexa
made her way to her place at the next door. “I’ll keep a lookout for any spare spleens.”

“Thanks,” Lexa laughed, actually laughed as she opened her door. Clarke kept looking for her keys.

“That must be fun,” Clarke eagerly agreed.

“Spare spleens,” she groaned and shook her head against the door. “Hit me with a bus, please
someone.”

The new month is a blur for Clarke. Twelve hour surgeries and sleeping at the hospital wore her
down. The occasional times she saw her neighbour, she earned a small wave and little else, though
often she found herself too tired to really do anything else, even if the quiet, aloof stranger would
have wanted to talk to her.

The first morning she heard her singing, though, Clarke groaned and rolled around in bed, not
wanting to wake despite the nagging of her alarm. From her open window, and she assumed Lexa’s
bathroom’s open window, she heard the water running, heard a dull bit of music, and then came the
singing.

It was not terrible, but it sure was eager. Clarke rubbed her face and woke up but stayed in bed,
stretching her muscles and listening, a giant smile appearing on her face.

“Oh oh, bring your hips to me,” Lexa crooned, sassy and mimicking the voice on the song playing.
“The fall of your face, the wish of the well,” the pop number continued and Lexa gargled under the
spray of the water.

In the elevator Clarke held it as she came running down the hall. She did her best not to meet her
eyes, but she ended up looking at her face.

Hair tied up in a tight bun, skirt, blazer, bag of papers; it had been a mistake to look at her, Clarke realized.

“Many bodies to cut up today?” Lexa moved her head towards Clarke’s dreamy line of sight until she heard the question she’d asked once already.


“Good luck, or break a leg,” Lexa looked at her curiously. “Or don’t break a leg. What is it you tell a surgeon?”

“Good luck is fine,” Clarke nodded quickly, following her out of the elevator. “Enjoy Sherman’s March to the Sea,” she offered.

“Oh, we’re well into Reconstruction,” Lexa explained. “You’re living in the past, Doc.”

Clarke had nothing to say, no comeback, no nothing, because Lexa smiled at her, squinting against the light that flooded the street. She held her hand up dumbly in an awkward wave. Lexa returned it and made her way towards school. Clarke found herself standing there with her hand held up until she looked at it as if it betrayed her for not going down.

Head shaking disparagingly, she thought of the singing and still felt embarrassed.

There was a month of on and off hearing the morning operas. A month of the occasional elevator trip. Rarely any small talk, but even that, Clarke did not mind because she was oddly incapable of small talk with this girl.

She was incapable of a lot of things, she discovered.

“Bring your hips to me, oh oh, bring your hips, to me, to me,” Clarke grinned in bed hearing her new alarm clock. The song began its normal break down. “All my love I don’t deny. When they place their hands on both my si-” A loud crash and large ruckus erupted.

For just a moment Clarke listened for signs of life and heard only a singular, loud curse followed by more as the water cut off. She could not wait.

“If this doctoring thing doesn’t work, you’d make a top notch elevator operator,” Lexa thanked her as she slid into the elevator Clarke held for her.

“Yeah, scouts are interested,” Clarke nodded. “Might go pro. Who knows.”

Lexa gave her a small smile and looked down at her bag. Clarke saw her rub her elbow, hold her arm gingerly, favouring it.

Without meaning to, Clarke began to whistle a familiar tune that was stuck in her head all of the time now.

The shade of red Lexa’s ears piqued was stunning. Clarke caught herself and stopped, lungs refusing to inhale, lips refusing to unpucker.

“Sorry,” she sighed, bracing for the worst embarrassment she could ever conjure.

“You heard that, huh?” Lexa nodded, cheeks burning. The two in the elevator refused to look at
each other. One looked at the ground, the other at the ceiling.

“Yup,” Clarke nodded, quirking her mouth and nibbling on her cheek. She could feel her stomach doing barrel rolls.

“Great,” Lexa nodded and died inside.

“Your arm, eh?”

“Just a bump.”

“Come by and I can look at it. If you want,” the doctor offered.

“I think I just want to kind of die, right here, thanks,” Lexa felt like a heat lamp lived in her cheeks, in her neck.

“Listen, if this teaching thing doesn’t work, I would buy your album,” Clarke tried. Lexa laughed despite herself, deserving it and hurting and mortified all at once. “Come by. I’ll squeeze you in.”

“I might take you up on that,” Lexa thanked her as they made their way out of the elevator.

“Griffin,” Clarke offered after holding the door open. She watched Lexa’s face. “Ask for Clarke Griffin. If you wait til school lets out, I can buy you a coffee between surgeries.”

“Okay,” Lexa nodded, bashful and achy.
Neighbors (Part 2)

Chapter Summary

More in the neighbors ‘verse? I am in LOVE with stuttering embarrassed Clarke!!

“Allright, listen. Come on, Holly. Right here. Eyes on me,” Lexa leaned into the huddle of towering high school girls, her voice rough and almost hoarse as it always seemed to become during games. “You’re all lagging out there. I know it’s been a long game, but I want to see some proper digs out there. Set the spike. Angie, you have to take your shots when they’re there.”

“She’s blocking me left and right!” the girl complained as the coach looked towards the clock once more.

“Give me those cuts we’ve been practicing, okay? Yours are good. Just trust that.”

“They’re fast,” another girl panted, hands on her knees.

“They are. We knew that though,” Lexa nodded, trying to get in her team’s head. “But more importantly. You guys are making me look like a terrible coach to my hottie neighbour I invited to watch tonight. I need you to step this all up for my love life, okay?”

The huddle immediately erupted in laughter after a few shared glances sharing a confusion and disbelief at their usually stern coach’s words.

“Are you serious right now? The playoffs are on the line!” a short blocker shook her head.

“My heart is a very serious matter,” Lexa insisted, standing up straight. “I know you guys can do this. I have no doubt. Why do you think I’m joking around? I trust you all. I believe in you all. I know what we are capable of as a team. My faith is unwavering in each of you.”

It got them pumped up to hear the conviction from their coach. Lexa continued, preached, plead, pounded her clipboard to accent certain words, to accent the natural cadence and rhythm to their huddle.

From the bleachers, Clarke grinned at the sight, at the image of her neighbor amidst these teenagers and doing well and being ridiculously cute because she was ridiculously passionate and caring and good to them. The crowds clapped as they took back to the court, and Clarke joined in, stopping only to wave to the coach who knew exactly where to look in the stands.

By far one of the more interesting first dates that she’d been on, Clarke hadn’t thought it’d be a date. When she set the teacher’s arm and wrapped it a week ago, she took the invitation as nothing more than an obligated offer. But an awkward meeting in the elevator ended with the words it’s a date, and Clarke, standing there, somewhat stunned.

Once more Clarke clapped as Lexa’s team scored. As the game came to an end, she felt the nerves starting to come back, because they would be alone, and as evident in every awkward interaction on the elevator, Clarke was terrible at being alone with the coach. But it was her one day off this week, and she shaved her legs, and she was ready, despite the nerves.
As they won the game, the bleachers cleared in celebration. Clarke stood, clapping and cheering. As everything started to calm down, as the team moved to the locker room, the coach climbed up a few steps and took her seat beside the doctor.

“Congratulations,” Clarke smiled as she sat beside her.

“Thanks. I take all the credit.”

“Naturally.”

“Thank you for sticking around. Not much of a date so far, huh?” Lexa rested her forearms on her knees as she surveyed the remnants of the game, the lingering family and fans milling about near the court.

“So far so good. I haven’t been able to embarrass myself.”

“The best kind of dates are when we don’t have to actually spend any time together,” Lexa grinned.

“I just feel bad. On your only day off in weeks, and I drag you to a volleyball game.”

“Um, a playoff qualifying volleyball game, thank you very much.”

“True.”

“It’s been fun.”

“I’m stepping it up. Give me ten minutes.”

“Take your time.”

“I do have things planned, just so you know,” Lexa smiled, backing down the bleachers.

“I don’t believe you.”

“I have to start somewhere, right?”

It was worse than she could have imagined. Her neighbour was beautiful, but Lexa already knew that. She was smart and kind, but she knew that already, too. She was also a major dork, but again, Lexa had an inkling of that in all of their interactions in the hall.

What she never saw coming was the fact that it was such a damn lethal combination.

The doctor was absolutely mesmerizing though. As much as she bumbled and nervously became aware when she thought she was talking too much, as much as she listened to intently, Lexa was oddly alright with speaking about herself, was how deep Lexa fell over the course of a single date.

“I didn’t think it’d be so late,” Lexa confessed. “Are you sure this is okay?”

“Honestly, it’s a lot less pressure than sitting down. Less of a chance for me to make a fool of myself.”

“I don’t know about that,” the teacher shrugged. “Still plenty of opportunity for, 7C.”

“Too true.”

Clarke took her seat at the little picnic table outside of the pizza stand and watched Lexa appear a
“So you’ve won the big game, you got the girl and pizza. What on earth is next for you, Coach Woods?” Clarke asked, grinning silly and absolutely enamoured with the girl who sat across from her.

“Playoffs and another date. If all goes well.”

“Lofty ambitions,” the doctor agreed as she took a bite.

“I’m a dreamer. Relentless optimism.”

Dinner was nice, was cute, had Clarke blushing a few times and stuttering just a little when she caught Lexa’s eyes. It was hard not to be nervous, but despite it a sense of ease enveloped the conversation as they ate.

“Is it a cliché date question to ask why you wanted to be a doctor?” Lexa ventured, wiping her hands and tossing the napkin on her plate.

“No. I think everyone wants to know. Usually I make up some answer about my mom being one and coming from a long line of doctors, but the truth is,” Clarke shrugged and took a sip of her drink. “My mom didn’t want me to be one. She said it was a life she didn’t want for me.”

“I don’t think I’ve ever heard of a mom trying to dissuade a kid from being a surgeon,” Lexa chuckled.

“I grew up in it. It is hard. Makes dates hard to come by, or keep,” the doctor confessed warily. “But I don’t know. The truth is I love how the body functions. I love how regular it is. I love its absolutes. I love the intricacies of it… I’m sorry. I got really intense there.”

“No, no,” Lexa shook her head eagerly. “Don’t stop.” She watched the blonde talk with a kind of conviction that she could almost feel.

“It’s terrible hours and often messy and sometimes its actually terrible and trying,” she confessed. “But there’s something about fighting death. It’s a battle. One I’ll always lose. But winning for just a few hours, a few years… It’s good.”

“Wow.”

“Sorry,” Clarke grew self conscious.

“Never apologize for talking like that.”

“Should we just get all of the cliché date questions done on this date? You know… save us the trouble of having to have another?”

“Oh? Bailing on me already?” Lexa piqued her eyebrow and suddenly Clarke was insanely turned on. With that smirk and those eyes it was nerve-racking.

“No. Just excited to get to the un-cliché ones. You’re a tough nut to crack.”

“Alright. Well,” Lexa rolled her shoulders and stretched her fingers. “Scorpio. Born in a small town surrounded by lakes. Mom was the school nurse. Dad was an insurance salesman. They died when I was twelve and I moved in with my uncle. Went to school here in the city. I worked at Jefferson High before getting into Saint Joe’s. No siblings,” she listed, counting on each finger. “I actually do
like hikes. Cat person. No pineapple on pizza… I think that’s all of them, huh?”

“Why did you become a teacher?”

“I really like history. And I really like the kids. I kind of always knew it was what I wanted to do. I never really thought about it. But the moment I see one of them get something, and I mean truly get it, or make a connection to the present, to who they are, it feels…”

“Yeah,” Clarke smiled as the bravado faded and realness radiated, that kind of honesty that comes more in unfound words and excitement than anything else. “I can imagine.”

“It’s not as vital, but I imagine it’s like fixing up a spleen or something.”

“That’s the closest analogy,” Clarke smiled.

“Do you want to see my favourite spot in the city?” Lexa blushed, oddly nervous with the way she simply said everything.

“More than anything.”

It was late into the night, well into the next morning, but Clarke didn’t care. She didn’t want to go to sleep. She didn’t want the sun to rise at all. But she followed eagerly, ready to fight it with Lexa.

“Alright, it’s your turn,” Lexa decided as she led the way a few blocks away.

“Goodness. Well, let’s just get it all out there the,” Clarke nodded. “Gemini. Born here. Mom’s a doctor. Dad’s an engineer. I have a brother and a sister. Bellamy, he’s in the Army. Octavia’s in her last year at uni. Definitely like dogs better than cats. But I’ve always wanted a fish.”

“We can just end this right now, huh?” Lexa smiled as she opened the door to the subway station.

“Where in the world are you taking me?”

“Do you trust me?”

“That’s a dangerous question.”

It happened as they waited for the train. Lexa paid for their ride and anxiously stood beside the beautiful doctor and took a deep breath before slipping her hand into her’s. She was too distracted by the way her lungs didn’t want to work to think too much about how it felt.

When it happened, Clarke blushed and looked down before looking straight at the tracks.

“The first time I came to the city, I made my parents ride the subway for like four hours,” Lexa admitted. “I sometimes come down here and just ride it and read.”

“You’re full of surprises, neighbour.”

“Do you remember the first day we met?”

“When you filled the hallway with all of your boxes?”

“Yeah,” Lexa nodded. “It was such a bad dy. I was so overwhelmed. But you were very kind, and I never got to thank you for it.”

“Just being neighbourly.”
“But also I heard your sister telling you to hit on me,” the teacher grinned.

“Is that why you tortured me in the elevator for so long?”

“I was flirting.”

“Oh. Oh?” Clarke swallowed.

“Is that new for you?”

“Obviously. Or I’m incredibly oblivious.”

“I bet there’s an absurd line of people who have flirted with you that you’ve taken for simple niceties,” Lexa decided, tugging Clarke into the train as it arrived.

“Well, I guess they weren’t as effective as you.”

“Proximity helps.”

“Pure convenience. That’s what’s been keeping them away,” Clarke agreed as she took her spot beside Lexa.

The car was empty, just like the station. Clarke let Lexa hold her hand and she smiled as the subway moved through the tunnel. Their legs touched.

“Can you tell me something date non-cliché?” Lexa asked.

“Hmm. I was terrified of getting into the elevator with you.”

“Yeah?”

“You frazzle me.”

“What do you think of our first date?”

“I think it has been pretty good.”

“It’s coming up,” Lexa leaned forward.

“What is?”

“The best view in the city.”

When the train emerged from the tunnel, when the morning appeared and the sky was that light blue that shrouded the city in all of that color, so that the world was that beautiful, monochromatic shade. The lights were still glimmering in the buildings, the lake was still lapping along the shore and with the start of boats beginning their day.

It took Clarke’s breath away, to see it like how Lexa saw it, to catch the glimpse like it was magic and for them alone.

Only when they crossed the valley, only when they were back in the dark did Clarke meet Lexa’s eyes and realize she had been holding her breath. She couldn’t breathe, even if she wanted.

With the subtlest of movements, Lexa leaned forward and stopped. It was Clarke who finished, who moved closer and kissed her, right there in the subway.
Lexa smiled to herself as Clarke pulled back. Until they both sat there and grinned.
Costia

Chapter Summary

Prompt: Clarke learns Costia through the little pieces of her left behind, and she feels like she’s learned Lexa better too.

Though like nothing she has ever imagined before, Polis is a welcomed change, an eagerly greeted distraction from the magnitude of the events of the Mountain. Every day, it plays in her mind before she even gets out of the bed Lexa had prepared for her. Every morning after falling into an uneasy sleep, Clarke sees their faces, smells the air, feels the cool slickness of the lacquered chairs and worn folds in the clothes.

But, perhaps even more surprising than the city, than the sprawling land of seeming contentment and at least attempted life, is the way in which the Commander treats the visitor, the kindness shown, the tenderness in certain movements, that, despite the guilt of the betrayal, beg a different kind of forgiveness, an apology for the personal part of the larger war.

In the truest form of it, though, Clarke has no room to hold a grudge, and if she did, she’d never deem herself worthy of holding it. Instead, the one who fell from the sky feels a kind of kindredness with the Commander, that only grows with her time in the capital. Lexa understands the weight of lives, almost more than anyone back at camp could, and she understands the heaviness that came with wearing the crown.

But, despite this give and take to their relationship, Clarke feels unknowledgeable about the Commander, and when she thinks about it, she truly knew nothing about her at all other than the blood on their hands.

“What’s that?” Clarke finally asks, unable to hide her curiosity one evening.

“A ring,” Lexa grunts, placing it on the window sill of her room, a habit Clarke observed every time they’d been together.

“You don’t wear it.”

“I keep it with me.”

The bare of her back is clear in the darkness lit only by the single candle on the table. Clarke pulls the blanket up to her chest as the dress falls from Lexa’s hips. The fabric is thin, light in the summer in the capital, and it doesn’t make a sound as it hit the floor.

“Why don’t you wear it?” Clarke ventures after a moment of watching Lexa finish her nightly routine. She watches the muscles of her back move, the ink there overing over sinewy muscles while a cloth runs over her face.

“It is not mine.”

“But it’s important.”

“It is. It was,” Lexa agrees, cupping her hand behind the candle and blowing it out, drenching the
room in the dark save from the sliver of grey from the window and the moon and the world outside.

Clarke feels the bed move, the sheets lift and at first, Lexa’s hand against her ribs, coasting over her stomach and along the bones until it reaches spine. Legs run along her own until she lays back and feels warm lips on her neck. Her fingertips move along Lexa’s shoulders, up her neck, tangle in her hair.

“Whose is it?”

“Really?” Lexa sighs and pulls away.

“I’m curious.”

“We have more pressing matters,” Lexa hummed, resuming her work. Clarke gave one more thought to it before giving into the night.

Come morning, Clarke stretches as she wakes, the noises from the city finally tapping at the window and murmuring through the cracks. The bed, however, is empty where normally a slumbering Commander still sleeps.

“You’re up early, Heda,” she grumbles, the rasp of her sleeping voice still napping her in throat. Lexa smiles from her seat though doesn’t look up.

“You snore.”

“I do not.”

From her seat on the opposite side of the room, Lexa stares at the ring in her fingers. She sees, just beyond that, on the edge of her vision, a naked blonde push the mess of hair out of her face. She wraps the thin sheet around herself as she stands and approaches. Begrudgingly, the Commander drops her leg from her knee and allows her to stand between them before taking a spot on her knee.

“I don’t snore,” Clarke argues once more, drawing out that shadow of a smile.

“I carry this with me,” Lexa holds it up for Clarke to see. “Because before, back before you fell from the sky, I figured that if I died, at least I would die with a part of Costia with me. But I could never bring myself to wear it.”

“I understand.”

“I did not mind the idea of death. I welcomed it. But now, I’d rather live, which is new.”

“You know that you have her with you all of the time, right?” Clarke runs her fingers absently along Lexa’s bare shoulder.

“That’s ridiculous. She is gone.”

“Memories. You have them and this.”

“I do not like to think about the past,” Lexa confesses with a sigh, tossing the ring on the table and taking another look at the girl in her lap. “Let’s sneak out today.”

“You’re the Commander. I thought you didn’t sneak,” Clarke sasses.

“You have much to learn.”
The nights she spends in the Commander’s room are few and far between. Clarke has taken to the healers, shadowing, learning, teaching, helping when she can, keeping herself busy.

“Is that the Commander?” she asks Oma, one of the healers. Older and grey, she does not talk much and her hands move too quickly for Clarke to follow, but she shadows her as often as possible.

“Mmm,” she grunts, tying a sprain.

“Does she often go to the market?”

“It is to see the family,” Nesta offers.

“Which family?”

“The Commander visits Costia’s family, pays her respects, makes sure they are alright for the year to come,” he explains. “She was an only child. They grow older and have no one to take care of them. Heda assigned someone. It is a sign of respect and guilt.”

“Not guilt,” Oma grunts again, rubbing down skin of a patient. “She honours the dead.”

“Did you know… her? Costia?” Clarke asks, quietly, afraid, however improbable it is, that Lexa may hear despite the distance and noise separating them.

“Everyone knows her. No one speaks of her.”

“Why?”

“She is dead.”

“What was she like?”

“A sweet child. She was quick. A good hunter.”

“How often does the Commander visit?”

“Once per year.”

“Indra said you were out here,” Clarke calls, so as not to startle the ponderous girl sitting on the edge of the wall overlooking the bay. The waves are gentle, only lapping at the stones far below them, the water is still, only wobbling slightly in the moonlight.

“I thought you were going back to the Ark tonight,” Lexa replies as the blonde takes a seat beside her.

The walls on the edge of Polis are her favorite. Concrete and high, the water is all the can see. Clarke shivers slightly in the breeze.

“I didn’t want to.”

“You’ve put it off three times already.”

“Trying to get rid of me?”

“Not at all.”

“I’ll go tomorrow,” Clarke nods, almost to herself. “What are you doing out here?”
“It’s a nice night, and the world is at peace. I want to remember it.”

“You were going to miss me,” Clarke needles, nudging the Commander’s side.

“I was. I am glad you are here.”

“It’s hard to tease you.”

“Will you stay in my room tonight?” Lexa ventures, sneaking a glance at this girl who she is grateful exists.

“Yeah,” Clarke nods, watching the smirk appear.

“I’m glad.”

“You seem different, lately.”

“How so?”

“Happier.”

“Maybe it’s you”

The room was dark and Clarke was already in bed. Lexa smiled at the sight, at the messy hair and crooked smile that waited for her as she undid her braids. From her spot, on her side, Clarke watched in silence as Lexa’s hands worked through her hair, as she poured water in the bowl and splashed her face, as she laid her dagger on the table.

Out of habit, Lexa moved to the window, but retreated with nothing to put there any longer. She undid her dress, pushed it over her hips, and blew out the candle.

“What happened?” Clarke whispered as sheets were lifted and warmth added beside her.

“I let her go,” Lexa whispered, kissing her collarbone.
Reunited

Chapter Summary

Clarke and Lexa (who were dating on the ark) were separated the day Clarke was sent to the ground with The 100. When the Ark came down, Lexa was the only survivor in her station, and was taken in by the grounders, where the two of them, out of all places, are eventually reunited. But a lot of things have happened since they last saw each other — and the two are no longer the same people they once knew.

The explosions on the other side of the mountain make the horses buck, make them sprint and paw the ground anxiously. The pack of hunters watch from the edge of the forest as the giant object crashes into the Earth, so hard that even miles away they can feel the ground shake with the impact. For just a few seconds, an unnatural silence blankets everything.

“What do you think that was?” Bellamy swallows and looks over at Clarke before looking back at the smoke filling the sky.

“I think that was whatever was left of the Ark,” she whispers, brow furrowing, wondering if anyone would have survived three more months, let alone that crash.

The party all stand stark still, the grounders whispering to each other in their language about what it could be, and what it meant. The afternoon light fades slightly as they remain for what feels like an eternity.

“We must go tell the Commander,” Knox decides, sheathing his weapon. “The Mountain will be in the area soon.

“We have to go see if any of our people are down there,” Clarke argues, a flash of nostalgia twisting her gut as she realizes she is about over 300 murders different than she was when she, too, fell to the ground. But this reminded her of what she once was. Beneath the warpaint smeared across her temples and cheeks, she fought to find some unhardened bit.

“Clarke, the Mountain already has over a dozen of our people. We aren’t taking risks,” Octavia reminds her as the grounders grow uneasy.

With a final glance over her shoulder, Clarke nods and vows to sneak away as soon as possible.

The ringing in her ears is so severe, she is certain her brain is going to melt and escape through her mouth. So severe, she cannot even open her eyes. So deafening that she can feel her jaw crack and creak when she goes to ask for help, and nothing else.

By the time her eyes open, the world is spinning and all she can see is white. Lexa tries to move her hands, tries to reach for something but fails desperately and pulls against the restraints. Strangers in protective suits hover above her as she eyes grow wide and frantically search for something familiar.

She makes sounds, although she cannot hear them. Words gurgle out of her mouth and her head moves from side to side as she looks for answers though her brain is far too preoccupied to actually
find any.

Though the captors move their mouths, Lexa cannot understand them, nor can she read their lips. She feels hands on her shoulders, pinning her down.

“She’s in bad shape,” Cage worries. “We should drain her.”

“Don’t you hear what she’s saying?” the doctor fills a needle, nudging her chin towards the terrified girl on her table. “She knows their leader.”

“Clarke!” the name comes out in a yelp, swallowed down and garbled as it is.

“She’s valuable if we ever want to get the rest of those who landed. And her blood won’t put a dent in how much we need.”

“Fix her up,” he agrees as the needle breaks skin and the girl calms into a slumber. “Do not tell my father who she could be. He doesn’t understand the threat that the new alliance outside had made for us.”

The burns on her side healed the slowest. The bruising on her body seems permanent, but every day, Lexa feels a little stronger, is able to stay up a little longer without needing hours of rest. It is slow to recover from crashing into the planet, but she tries to be patient. It never has been a strong suit for her.

The crisp whiteness of the walls of her room make her uncomfortable. She aches for some sort of reprieve from it but knows she couldn’t make it to the door, if she tried.

“You are looking much better than the first time I saw you,” an elderly man smiles as he strolls into the room quietly. Lexa swallows and turns her head to the door, away from the painting of the ballerina, her only source of colour and distraction. “Though, I suppose you might not remember that. You were in a bit of shock.”

“Who are…” Lexa coughs as she sits up. “Where am I?”

“You are safe. You are among friends. May I?” he pulls the chair forward. Apprehensively she nods after a moment.

“Friends who are keeping me prisoner?”

“You are not a prisoner.”

“Who are you?”

“I am the president of this community, Dante Wallace. You’ve already met my son, Cage. He rescued you.”

“Why am I a prisoner?”

“Lexa, isn’t it?” he leans forward. “You are here in the clinic ward because you are special. You fell from the sky and survived. Unfortunately, we have been underground since the bombs, and the outside air is poisonous to us. These are both precautions for us, and for your injuries as well. I can promise you that you will come to no harm here. And you are lucky, too. I cannot say the same if you had stayed out there.”

“What’s… out there?” Lexa swallows.

“What about the other stations? There has to be more that survive.”

“Some, yes,” he nods. Lexa closes her eyes and takes a deep breath. She made a promise once, and she the hope that she could fulfill it still rang anew in her lungs, just louder than the searing pain that seemed to live in her skin. “Rest, Lexa. We have much work to do together.”

The tent is full of mingling by the time Clarke barges in, as she became known to do. It grows quiet as she storms to the front, demanding time with the Commander.

By the time she went to the drop ship, it had been wretched open by the Mountain Men. No bodies remained, no sign or signal as to who had been there, or if any lived or even died. And she hated herself for not being back soon enough.

It was Lexa’s station, though, and Clarke could not shake the feeling of her girlfriend being there. Renewed was the hope that she hid deep inside herself ever since she had to survive on the ground. Now it burns her alive.

“What a surprise,” Anya sighs, disinterested on the throne as the blonde appears. “Our fearless sky liaison is back to demand something.”

“It’s about the crashed station,” Clarke begins, ignoring the jab.

“Of course it is,” the leader shakes her head and toys with her knife. “I have a new clan that everyone wants me to kill and who keep asking for favours, an impending war from the North, Reapers growing in numbers, and a Mountain that likes to kidnap my people. But let’s focus on the scrap metal that landed in our backyard. Please,” she waves her hand. “Enlighten us, Clarke of the Sky People.”

“I want to go to the Mountain.”

The quiet stays for a moment before laughter erupts. Clarke feels her cheeks burn though she does not look away, her gaze strong as it focuses upon the Commander who merely smirks at the notion.

“By all means, Clarke,” she simply shrugs. “Go on. I’m sure they will welcome you with open arms. Is this a joke?”

“You want to end the Reapers? You want to get your people back? There’s only one way to do it.”

“And how do you propose this works? You getting killed and then what does that do for us except strain relations with your people.”

“If I can find my way out, I can find my way back in,” Clarke decides. “You know what it is in there, Anya.”

“Why the sudden desire to go back, Clarke?” Her words grow bitter.

“If there were survivors on that drop ship, they are my people, and they are in danger.”

“The last time you were in the Mountain, you killed a dozen of their guards. I do not think they will welcome you with open arms.”

“Let me get the door open for you, and then we can take it down together.”
“And if you die?”

“My people will understand."

“Now you want me to declare war on the Mountain?”

“Yes.”

“It’s been months since that ship came down. Anyone on board has been killed and thrown out by now.”

“Then I want to kill them all even more,” Clarke growls, fist clenching. Anya eyes her apprehensively before sitting back on the throne. She looks around at her warriors before looking back at her hands in her lap.

“What were you thinking?” she relents.

By the second bone marrow extraction, Lexa begins to realize she truly is a prisoner, despite all assurances otherwise. By the time she starts to fight it, there is less and less opportunity for escape.

By the time the third appointment starts, Lexa figures out what she has to do. She does not like it, but she knows. When the nurse comes in, Lexa only feels the way his skull cracks and the warmth of the blood as it sprays in her face. The white scrubs become splashed in red and for a moment, Lexa is unsure of who she is and what she has done.

The first time she is outside of the room, she scrambles away until her back hits the wall and she drops the bloody lamp. There isn’t time to think though, to fathom what she has suddenly become capable of doing, as guards turn the corner and she has to run.

Bare feet padding along the cement, Lexa takes a corner and grabs a fire extinguisher.

Before she can do anything with it, she feels arms wrapping around her as she screams. The fire extinguisher goes into his gut.

As soon as the guard doubles over, Lexa swings once more, knocking him to the ground. She grabs the gun on his hip and the tag on his vest before continuing to run.

Frantically, she stumbles and fumbles with the key at the door. The sirens start to go and the strobes blink above her, but still, she presses on. Guards turn down the hall telling her to stop, their voices muffled behind the gas masks. When she doesn’t, they start to shoot as she runs through the door.

The first time her feet touch dirt, she’s confused for a second, though cannot allow herself a moment to think about it. Instead, she just runs, keeps running, follows the small prick of light at the end of the tunnel.

By the time she makes it to the end, more voices, more noises, more shouting and a different kind of threat. Nothing deters her. She shoots and she runs and she doesn’t look back. The entirety of the most vibrant green stretches out before her. The daylight would have blinded her if it weren’t for the rain, but the difference between it and the artificial light of the bunker hurts. She feels branches and stones scratching and cutting her legs as brambles rip at her arms and face, but still she presses forward. The sound of the chase continues and her lungs can’t work. The holes where they bore into her ache and the metal of the gun makes her hands shake.

With a loud crash, thunder starts and the sky opens. Lexa is certain she will drown, that she’ll never
breathe again. As she reaches the edge of the cliff, she slides to a stop just in time before tumbling over into the churning waters below. Well over a dozen guards appear, guns focused on her.

For a moment, Lexa looks up at the sky slightly and feels the rain on her face.

“Come on, Lexa. There is nothing out here for you,” Cage mutters as the guards clear a path for him.

“If Clarke is alive, she’s out here.” He takes a step towards her and she cocks the gun, though it shakes. “Don’t.”

“This doesn’t end with you living.”

“You either,” she smiles and pulls the trigger, clipping him in the shoulder as she turns and jumps.

Despite the noise, the yelling and occasional riffs of gunfire in the distance, Clarke makes her way methodically through the Mountain looking for any sign of life of Lexa. Once Cage let her know a few weeks ago that he had her, Clarke was renewed, she was reborn, and she was unstoppable, ready to tear the mountain down stone by stone if that was what it came to, with her bare hands even.

“She’s not here,” Bellamy sighs, leaning against the door. “He could have been lying.”

“How would he have known her name, Bell?”

“I don’t know. Heard you talking while you were here, found records. Something.”

“She was here,” Clarke shakes her head and continues to let her eyes appraise the room before shaking her head and moving to the next.

“We have a lot of work to do.”

“Go do it.”

“You can’t waste all this time—”

“Aha!” she interrupts, picking something up from the ground. A second later, a small pendent drops from her hand as she holds up the necklace to which it is attached. Grinning like a madman, Clarke stares at it as it swings gently. “She’s on the ground. She was here.”

“We don’t know how long, and we don’t know where. If she’s not here, she was probably—”

“Don’t. She’s alive.”

“How do you know?”

“I would know if she wasn’t.”

For a week, Lexa wanders. She exists on what she can, she freezes at night and burns during the day. Her feet grow rough and her entire body is a new level of filthy she never truly imagined. The blood from her first kill still stains her face. The blood from her second and third are newer. She does not allow herself to think of it, instead she tries to make her way back to where she wrecked because it is the only thing she knows of the ground, and even that is useless, essentially.

It got to be too much.

Convinced she would die, she laid on the dirt and refused to get up, but instead pressed herself into
the ground as much as she could, felt it, pressed her palms into it and wondered how she managed to make it here, to this.

She had been careful. She knew there was one bullet left in the gun. At night she stared at it in the dim light of the small fire she can sometimes manage that goes out too quickly. Her entire body aches, her entire body is ravaged with open wounds and dirt caked atop barely there clothes.

Staring at the sky once more, at the fluffy white clouds she’d dreamt about, Lexa swallows and brings the gun to her temple, wincing as it rests against her head for the first time. She’d killed people. That registered with her finally after battling with her innate need to repress it.

Finger on the trigger, Lexa waits. Her breathing grows deep and angry until she pulls the gun away, her cheeks now stained in warm, mucky tears.

If she still had enough strength in her body to hold a gun, she had enough to keep looking for Clarke.

“You have to rest,” Octavia warns as they continue to move in larger and larger circles, all radiating out from the Mountain. There is the occasional hint of a trail, though no way to determine who it belongs to, and thus they follow as far as they can before continuing the large circles.

“I’ve rested long enough.”

“Are you going to look forever?”

“Yes.”

“It will be dark by the time we get back if we start now.”

“You can go,” Clarke mutters.

“There are still Reapers in the woods, Clarke. We can start again at first light.” Ignored, Octavia spurs her horse forward, cutting off the undaunted searcher. “I mean it, Clarke. No sense getting yourself killed. Be smart.”

As much as she wants to argue, to fight, she is quite certain Octavia has no problem taking her back to camp by force. The sun sinks again and Clarke clucks, guiding her horse back towards the dropship, despondent once again at the results of the day.

They are silent the entire way back as the grey darkness becomes absolute and they move by memory towards the faint twinkle of their home. Octavia wants to say something, but deep down she knows that none of the words would make a difference or lighten the burden her friend felt. And so she remains quiet.

“If she escaped before the battle, she might have gotten out the same way I did,” Clarke finally thinks aloud as she hops off of the horse.”

“The river?”

“Tomorrow I’ll follow it and try to find something.” The gates open and Clarke starts to lead her horse inside before pausing, as if because of the wind itself. “Did you hear that?” she turns to Octavia.

Out of instinct, their hands move to their weapons, draw them as they hear a shuffling by the tree line. The whisper comes out as an almost bark, but Clarke is certain she hears it.
“Lexa?” she drops her gun immediately. She squints and peers through the darkness at the figure that has emerged from the shadows.

Covered in dirt and mud, the only thing she can see is the relieved kind of smile that glows in the torch light. Eyes closed and head tilted back, all Lexa can do is smile and laugh despite the pain in her body, the aching in her bones, the hunger that claws through her throat in warm waves, the delirium of not sleeping. She is convinced she has finally died, that it was a dream, a terrible dream, but she reached some kind of salvation for the purgatory.

“I told you I’d find you,” she laughs, unable to stop. Clarke watches as she drops to her knees and looks to the sky in relief. “I found you. I found you.”

Overcome, the blonde watches her girlfriend collapse a second later.
Birthdays

Chapter Summary

Modern!AU Clarke waking Lexa up on her birthday under the sheets… If ya know what I mean ;)

It was late when she crawled into bed, and her body knew it, felt every hour of the past thirty-six, aching and sore as it was from work. Lexa was asleep even before she could even properly kiss her girlfriend and wrap herself around her as she was known to do. So consumed and eaten alive was she by the stress and wear of the past week, she needed only to crawl into blank dreams and sleep through the dreaded, impending day.

Clarke knew she would be in late, and tried to stay up, hoping to celebrate at midnight the memorial of her birth, something Lexa was oddly stuck against doing, citing past birthdays and their disasters. But Clarke adored birthdays, lived for birthdays, excelled at them and decided that this year would be different. She even made a special trip to a special store to get special lace to make it worth it. But when Lexa still wasn’t in around two, Clarke found herself dozing. She didn’t even hear her come home an hour and a half later.

When she woke, Clarke found herself curled into Lexa’s back, forehead against her spine, somehow finding her in the night. For just a moment, she debated her options. She had entire day planned, one that would wipe away the stress of the past week, but the terribleness of the past twenty-some birthdays. It consisted of breakfast in bed and presents and a day of movie hopping and a surprise party at Raven’s and all of her favourite foods and music.

But at this moment, Clarke could think of no better way to start the day. Absently her hand slipped under Lexa’s shirt and ran across her abdomen, slow and steady, it shifted higher, she ran her nails over breast and nipple, earning a growl from her girlfriend as she adjusted.

Clarke moved and kissed Lexa’s neck, nudged her nose under her hair, kissed her shoulder that peaked from beneath the old tank top. Lexa tilted her head, dreamy and drowsy.

“Happy birthday, beautiful,” Clarke whispered, slipping her hand from toying with Lexa down to her hip, down to her thigh.

“Mmmm, we’re skipping it,” Lexa reminded her, curling up harder into her pillow.

“I lied,” Clarke lifted the end of Lexa’s shirt and kissed her spine.

“I just got home,” Lexa rolled over, taking away skin for Clarke to tease. “I don’t like celebrating this day.”

“We’re going to work on that,” Clarke decided, pushing hair from her girlfriend’s face. Her hand rested on her ribs, slipped higher over the shirt. “I have presents for you.”

“I love you, but nothing could make me-” Lexa refused to open her eyes, though Clarke watched them grow as she gently pinched through the shirt.

“You had a busy night,” Clarke reminded her, propping herself up. “I want to help you relax for
“Yeah?” Lexa asked, eyes fluttering open as her legs squeezed together. She saw Clarke smile, devious and terrible, before kissing her jaw, before kissing her neck.

“Do you want your presents?” Clarke whispered. It was a voice that made Lexa shiver and ache and forget how to think about anything at all. So she simply nodded, short and quick. Her girlfriend pressed one final kiss to where her shoulder met her neck and slipped her leg over Lexa’s hips.

The sheets fell to their collective hips. For the first time this morning, tired and sore as she still was, Lexa saw Clarke. She loved her like this, fresh from sleep, hair messy and tossed at all angles, curly and wavy and a disaster, eyes clear and awake and full of ill-intentions. Her hands moved to Clarke’s thighs, her thumbs holding her tightly.

“Good morning, birthday girl,” Clarke smiled, running her hands down Lexa’s forearms. She saw the small smile forming on the lips beneath her. “Any ideas how we are going to celebrate?” Slowly, she began unbuttoning the old shirt she’d been wearing. Lexa shook her head slightly, eyes waking and becoming little embers following only Clarke’s fingertips.

By the second button’s dismissal, Lexa saw the hint of black lace. Her hips moved slightly and Clarke adjusted against her roughly, on purpose.

“But we don’t have to celebrate if you don’t want to,” Clarke shrugged, dropping her hands.

“No!” Lexa said quickly. Her hands slid higher, slid around Clarke’s hips. “We can,” she nodded. “Show me.”

“I’m not sure you’re going to like this present…” Clarke sighed, moving to unbutton another.

“I like it,” Lexa nodded, still focusing and drooling over fingertips. “I do. I like it.”

“But there’s a catch,” Clarke explained, reaching the last button. Lexa saw black on her hips. Her lungs couldn’t keep up with her singular thought and watering mouth.

Clarke pushed the shirt from her shoulders, slow and teasing, watching Lexa’s eyes as they drank in her skin and lace in the morning sun. She finally threw it to the ground.

“I like this,” Lexa nodded, seeing the thin layers before her, obscuring though not. She moved her hands, sliding them up Clarke’s hips, to her ribs. She wanted to touch it all.

“There’s a catch,” Clarke tapped her before her fingertips touched frill. “You don’t get to touch this present until later.” Her hands were suddenly relegated to the bed.

“What? No. No, no no on no,” Lexa furrowed her brow and shook her head, face alarmed and weak and eager. “I want to touch.” Her hands moved up again and Clarke smiled before holding her wrists.

Her arms were pinned on the pillows beside her ears a second later as Clarke leaned over Lexa.

“Later,” Clarke promised. Eyes flashing and enjoying herself, making Lexa so anxious, making her so inconsolable. “Let me help you relax baby,” she whispered, dragging her body against Lexa’s, kissing her cheek. “Can you be good?” It took a second for Lexa to agree because she genuinely wasn’t sure. She was two seconds from tearing Clarke’s lace and making her scream. And nothing sounded better to her. “Be good and it’ll be worth it,” Clarke promised, biting her ear gently. It was her breath and how it felt on her shoulder. It was her hips, pressing into her own. It was the lace
through the shirt. Lexa nodded weakly.

“Good,” Clarke decided, kissing her neck. She let go of one wrist and slipped it under Lexa’s shirt. Lexa dug her fist under the pillow. Clarke’s hips moved against her own. She ached.

Somehow, her other wrist was released, and moved to grab the sheets, because she was not going to ruin this. Her shirt was pulled up above her chest and Clarke’s lips soon followed her hands.

“Oh God,” Lexa sighed, feeling Clarke’s warm mouth and fingers. Her back arched and eyes closed tightly. Clarke slid between her legs, taking her time on her skin, on every part of her.

“Are you going to be a good girl for me?” Clarke looked up at Lexa from her hip where her hands were steadily, and in Lexa’s opinion much too lightly, stroking her underwear.

“Yes,” Lexa nodded, swallowing weakly. Clarke watched her lungs expand and her chest flush and blush and sigh.

In one movement, Clarke pushed aside Lexa’s panties and slipped a finger inside. Lexa felt shivers emerge in her spine and spread all over. Her hips rolled. her eyes shut. Clarke kissed the small tuft of hair, there and moved her finger, adding to it, slowly, stretching each second. She watched Lexa’s head turn to the side, watched her breathe, watched her pull the sheets.

She teased her, longer than normal. She kissed her thigh, sucked on her hip, kept her fingers still. And by the time she licked, Lexa was shuddering, moaning, praying. Clarke did not stop until she watched Lexa’s back move at ungodly angles, until her thighs closed around her ears, until her body shook and her voice was gone.

She did not remove her fingers until the clenching had slowed, and even then, Lexa growled and groaned and shook.

“All right,” Clarke whispered, kissing her thigh once more. Lexa was speechless, and in her head, believed she was dead, died of being blown apart by her birthday celebration.
Lost

Chapter Summary

Sometimes I read books and quotes from them give me fic prompts. Here’s one for you, if you want: “I hate her”/ “Not so. You have forgotten how to love. That’s a different sorrow.”

As much as the cold and the wind bit at her ears, nibbled and wanted to draw blood in the way it cut through trees and streets, Lexa kept walking. The world was black and white. The snow covering everything, every inch of branch, every canopy and umbrella and table in front of closed restaurants. Heavy were the pines, the tall legacies that were allowed to stay at the edge of the park and in front of private homes, burdened with the weight of the heavy kind of snow that piled up suddenly, as if it had come down in one lump sum.

Her shoulders grew covered, as she walked, hunched things that they become under the strain of her mind against replaying the argument, and her body against the cold. Her palms were sweltering, sweating things, bunched up into fists in her pockets.

It was a long walk across town. Lexa stopped at intersections despite the lack of traffic and waited until the light told her to walk, even if there were not cars. She did nothing else but walk and think and not think and walk. The crispness of winter sank into her skin, pulled it tight, made her eyes water, made her nose run, made her lips dry, but she kept walking.

There was a street car she could take. It could have connected with a bus and she could have gotten there quicker. But then where would her rage sit? Where would her guilt have room to run ahead a few steps, look back, and wait for her to catch up? How would she keep quiet the very loud, very boisterous, very vociferous, very sorrowful thoughts that hopped and jumped and climbed on everything in sight?

So she walked with them. She walked with her pack of feelings, plagued by them, guardian of them like volunteers on the third grade trip to the art museum. She worried over them being run over in the street and kidnapped by a stranger.

It kept her busy as she trudged through the slushy sidewalks, distracted her from the way her very shoulders were like the branches of the big confers by the little school, kept her warm by adding coal to the boiler room of her pockets and fists.

By the time she found herself at her sister’s door, she had worn herself out completely. So much so, that she debated to knock at all.

“Lexa, it’s like… one in the morning,” Anya squinted in the porch light she turned on to see who was knocking. “Are you alright?”

“Yeah,” the little sister lied, feeling the chill creep into her hands that felt cramped from their positions. “No, actually,” she confessed.

The older sister looked back at her, looked at the accumulation on her shoulder, saw her eyes drop and her face blank. She bounced the baby on her hip and held open the door. Lexa pounded her
boots on the carpet, stumbled slightly as she pulled them off, as her sister walked down the hall towards the kitchen.

“Do you want something to eat? Have you eaten?” she called.

“I’m not hungry,” Lexa returned, hanging up her scarf and hat and coat. The chill of the night still seeped in through the closed door. “How’s he feeling?”

“Better,” her sister answered. “We were just waking up for a midnight snack. Hold him while I get his medicine.”

It took twenty minutes for Anya to put her son down to sleep. Lexa heard her upstairs in the small bedroom, humming and rocking. Lexa sat at the table and didn’t move at all, her body defrosting slowly in the warmth.

“You’ll catch cold out there,” she warned, putting the kettle on the stove when she returned.

“It’s not so bad,” Lexa fiddled with her fingers on the kitchen table. “Where’s Tommy?”

“Working graveyard,” she sighed, pulling down two mugs and setting them on the counter. “You haven’t come by in a while,” she turned and leaned against them, arms crossed and maternal. Lexa hated her eyes, and how they looked like their mother’s.

“Been busy,” Lexa lied again. She had to stop that, she knew, but it was so much easier. She watched her thumb rub against palm as if it were the most interesting thing in the world so she didn’t have to look at those eyes.

“Cut the shit,” Anya shook her head, too tired from a sick baby and years of her sister to waste time.

“I’m going to lose her,” Lexa felt her eyes stretch as she pondered her top lip between her teeth.


“No, I’m pretty certain,” Lexa shook her head.

“You don’t lose someone like Clarke,” the sister explained.

“I always lose someone like Clarke,” Lexa laughed to herself, ducked her head, tried not to hide it in that channel. “I can’t be what she needs, what she wants, what she deserves. I don’t know how. I’m broken. Defective.”

“She’s good for you,” Anya argued. “You haven’t done this well in a long time. What happened?”

“I don’t know,” Lexa lied, growing fidgety under the examination. The water started to boil in the kettle. Her foot bounced, her knee jiggled.

“You don’t have to lose her, Lex,” Anya sighed and waited for the whistle. She watched her sister root her hands in her hair and pull slightly before tossing it around in a giant heap. She watched her struggle to sit still.

“I’m going to.”

“She’s good. Good and strong. You won’t lose her.”

“I will,” Lexa nodded. “I lost Mom, I lost Costia,” she began her list as the kettle whistled. “And now, I don’t know how to keep her. She says she needs these things and I give them and it’s not
enough. I just don’t know. I try. I do. I try.”

“I know you can try harder,” Anya scolded her.

“I do try! I try to try. I told you, I’m defective. I should have walked away earlier,” Lexa argued. “I just hate her. I hate her hope. I hate her smile. I hate her eyes. I hate her understanding. I hate what I do to her. I hate who I am and I hate how she makes me think I can be better.”

“You don’t hate any of that,” Anya poured the drinks and t’sked her quiet. “You have just forgotten how to love, how to be open to it. You are afraid of everything, as much as you won’t admit it. But that is a different sorrow.”

“What do I do?” Lexa clenched her jaw and wrapped her hands around the scalding cup.

“Do you want to lose her?” Anya pulled out the chair across from her and took her seat carefully.

“I want to be who she makes me feel like I can be,” Lexa confessed. It was the most honest thing she’d said in years.

“That’s good,” Anya smiled and steeped her tea. “That’s where you start.”

The walk back was worse. The crews were out plowing with their trucks and the mute yellow lights that ricocheted between the buildings and bounced off of glass. Salt crumbled and ruined the freshness of the wonderland, of the disruptive snow. Restless and listless, she flicked her shoulders like a drowsy mare, shook her neck to keep the dust and snow from settling, from slowing her down. And Lexa found herself no longer surrounded by rambunctious heathen thoughts, but instead followed by a neat, Madeline-like row of docile things she simply had to keep in order and remember the names.

Their apartment was quiet, was dark, she even feared it was empty. She kicked her dirty, salted boots and left them on the rug by the door carefully. She hung her coat where it always went.

“I was worried,” Clarke muttered from her mug on the couch. “I didn’t think you were-”

“I think we should fight,” Lexa stopped her. “I want to fight.” The words came from her chest, came off of it like a hot brand, like a burning, scorching verb.

“You walked away,” Clarke stood. Her eyes were like snow, like cold in her lungs that made it hard to breathe.

“I don’t know how to lose you,” Lexa shrugged, ran her hand through her hair, pushing it around atop her head apprehensively. Clarke watched the muscles in her face struggle to remain undisturbed, to maintain composure. “So I left.” Her jaw wobbled. Her cheeks stretched and shook. Her eyes grew wide and red and lost and timid. Her nostrils flared and her chest sunk.

“What do I do? Just tell me?” her lips pursed, she bit her bottom one. The glass in her eyes was blinked away quickly. Her arms crossed anxiously. She was in movement, a frozen flurry of action in which she could not control, which Clarke knew made her uncomfortable.

“Just tell me what to do,” Lexa said sincerely, fervently. She looked at Clarke expectantly.

“I don’t know,” Clarke shook her head, suddenly just as misplaced and unsure.

The quiet was deafening. They could practically hear the lightness in the falling of the snow, the way it floated and landed on the ground. Clarke was certain that they were no longer on the precipice of
losing it all, but that they had, in fact, already been falling, and now the real question was going to be how they landed and bandaged the wounds.

“Okay,” Lexa looked at the roof and blinked quickly. She swallowed the thumping in her chest. “I will just... I’m sorry,” she wiped her cheek quickly and met Clarke’s eyes and nodded, as if in agreement of something they were screaming at each other. With a final defeated smile she turned.


“Okay,” Lexa swallowed and nodded eagerly, grateful for some sort of instruction on how to do this.

They stood in the apartment in the middle of the night and held their breaths.
San Francisco (Part 1)

Chapter Summary

ooooooo prompt: indie painter/artist clarke and bohemian writer lexa. basically i just wanna see them as hipsters. possibly living in san francisco.

The notebook exploded into dozens of pages against the wall, like a sad, lonely kind of firework. The cat wasn’t even bothered, blinking slowly and turning its head to the side after adjusting slightly. Not even the stalking owner of said notebook and semi-owner of said cat, huffing through the room, shoulders hunched and hands gripped, face stoically full of wrath, bothered the feline who had grown accustomed to such things.

The apartment was pristine, was perfectly packed and placed without precariously situated possessions and filled with purposeful placements. The mess on the floor was an anomaly that wouldn’t last long. But it did stay there, untouched and bitterly rotting as the hurler ignored it completely after the outburst.

Frustrated and furrowed, Lexa walked once more through the mess, pulling on her coat as she moved to the kitchen. The cat watched her with a yawn. She appeared once more, shoes on this time. He watched her move through again from his position on the window sill, furiously tying her scarf around her neck.

“I’m going out,” she said to no one in particular. She’d never admit it was to the cat, her unwilling housemate.

She’d also never admit that it was half to the pages of manuscript and notebook that lay dead upon the floor there after being flung from her office with such unending rage she thought she’d never be able to resuscitate it.

Both things were the only other living entities in the house, and both were her most constant companions. Both annoyed her. Both were unwanted. Both kept her up at night and drove her mad.

With a decided nod after surveying the crime scene once more, she slammed the door behind her, unaware that the cat did not even flinch at the antics.

The wind whipped, violent and vicious, through the narrow streets as the writer bitterly made her way through the city. Bundled up against the cold and her own thoughts, Lexa furrowed and followed her feet fearing only the freezing way the cold front sliced through her hems.

The smells changed with each block. The warm yeasty thread that lasted a few shops from the bakery. The lingering salt and fish that were a few blocks from that. The steam and sizzle of the metal on metal contact of the trollies. The city smelled and ebbed and moved within these ways, often lingering and following aimless walkers that moved through the city with a lost kind of worry.

She wasn’t sure how she found herself in the park, nor was she certain where exactly she was. This was a habit, to walk and simply not realize where she would end up. It wasn’t that she was in search of the untraceable spark of inspiration, but rather that she was direly attempting to run from the
plethora of problems in her work.

Her feet kept moving, her legs kept flexing and she refused to stay still while her brain turned over things, fiddled with them, prodded and peeled and picked apart things. She did not notice the smells so much, at least not overtly. She didn’t notice the traffic, nor the noise, nor the other pedestrians, nor the time of day or the distance travelled. She simply had to escape it all and face it at once.

It took her brain a few minutes to catch back up with her stalled body. It walked right by and had to loop around to where she sat on a bench, quiet and still. The sun was still up, still bright despite the chill that shivered through the trees, the entire way up the branches and to the tips of the leaves themselves. Lexa sniffled and felt the same way.

But Lexa sat there and poured over her work because it was a welcomed distraction from her life. The pressure to produce something, anything, and it be as well-received as her first work. The pressure from her sister to go on a date, to go out of the house. The attempt to refuse to think of Costia for one more second. It was a lot of work to avoid so much at once, but the writer took on the cause valiantly.

Bundled, hiding her chin in her scarf and her hands in her pockets, she sat in the park and watched without seeing, heard without listening, existed with living. It was much easier.

As much as she tried, Lexa took no notice of anyone at all for the longest time. She watched faces walk by, she followed them and attempted to care, to see them, to try, but she felt very much momentary and singular, wrapped up in her avoidance and thoughts.

She sat until it was well past dark before hailing a taxi and returning home.

“This is stupid,” Lexa hissed as she tugged on her collar and pushed her glasses up her nose.

“One night I ask for you to be somewhat human. Can you try? I have worked hard on this. Which you might now if you picked up your phone, answered your emails or texts, listened to voicemails, left the house,” Anya listed, counting each method on a different finger.

“I leave the house,” Lexa pursed her lips.

“Have a good night. Try not to make anyone cry. And don’t worry, okay? Mingle, be merry, it’s okay to live, Lex.”

“I hate mingling.” She tugged once more at her collar, loosening her tie.

“Dammit, Lexa. Then just go home. Don’t consider that I sat at every reading, meeting, and schmucky academic-infested dinner and lecture for you. Because I’m proud, and that’s what family does for each other,” her sister whispered, defeated and bothered. Lexa clenched her jaw and took it.

“Well, I’m going to stay,” Lexa shrugged, guilty and sorry and not knowing why.

“Oh, don’t do me any favours.” With a toss of her hands in the air in defeat, her sister disappeared into the crowd, dismissing that and plastering her work smile in place.

Lexa sighed and watch her mingle across the room. She turned to the bar and raised her hand, signalling for a drink, wishing she was capable of feeling those normal things that made her sister not have to put up with these things.

Two glasses in, and Lexa sat in the same spot swirling the honey-brown liquor in her tumbler. She
tried. She put up with conversations for longer than normal and she met her sisters eyes across the crowded room and offered a small smile of apology.

But her patience wore thin. The crowds, the people, the talking. It was too much for too long.

“You look like you have the right idea,” a voice smiled beside her, saddling up to the stool and holding her hand up for a drink from the busy bartenders.

“Always safe at the bar.”

“Not a fan of art?” Lexa swallowed and nearly coughed when she met blue eyes and that breathless smile. She simple stared, her glass stuck halfway up to her lips, her mouth open and stunned. She watched the girl turn and order her drink, watched her thank the bartender and sip from the flute of champagne. Still, she couldn’t bring the whiskey to her own lips despite the dryness in her own mouth. “I’ll take that as a no?”

“What?” She furrowed and looked away, taking a gulp and putting the glass down.

“The show, the event, the opening, the art? Hiding out at the bar doesn’t really scream enthusiast,” the blonde observed.

“Oh, yeah, no, yes,” Lexa articulated, looking away again. She stared at the bar. It was safe to look there. “I’ve seen it. My sister put it together. I got invited to bolster her guest list pretentious level.”

“You think you carry that much weight?”

“I don’t. But my name does. Lexa Woods,” she held out her hand for the first time that night.

“The writer,” the blonde nodded, slowly taking her hand.

“See? You feel a bit more pretentious just breathing the same air, don’t you?”

“A bit, yeah,” she smiled and Lexa looked back down, taking another drink when her hand was freed. She couldn’t look. “I almost hate to admit, I never picked up your book.”

“Good. I don’t have to answer any questions about it then.”

“I have read your works though. Your opinion pieces in the Times and Atlantic Monthly and a few other places.”

“Those rags,” Lexa grinned for the first time.

“Your funnier than I would have guessed. I mean, I thought you’d be clever, almost like you’re forever smirking in each word. But not exactly what I expected,” the blonde confessed.

“I aim to exceed expectations.”

“Mission accomplished.”

Lexa refused to look up again. Her cheeks were burning and she wasn’t sure what else to do.

“Clarke, I have a collector I’d like you to meet,” Anya said, growing louder as she approached. “Oh good, I’m glad you two finally got to meet.”

It slowly pieced together as Lexa began to think of something other than the legs of the blonde as they crossed under the bar. It occupied more of her brain than she’d be willing to admit.
“Clarke, this is my sister-”

“The writer,” the blonde filled in. “You didn’t tell me who she was.”

“You never asked,” Anya smiled, putting her arm around her sister who sat up slightly. “Lex, this is Clarke Griffin. The artist of this show.”

“We’ve been somewhat introduced.”

“Thanks for lending your pretentiousness to my show,” Clarke grinned, standing and leaning towards her slightly, sharing a grin. Lexa saw her dimples and just nodded after a tight smile.

“Thanks for reading my book.”

“You got me there.”

“Lex, go mingle. I’ve had people asking for you all night,” her sister insisted, leading the artist away. Lexa leaned forward slightly, wishing to follow though remained sitting at the bar.

For the rest of the night, the writer found herself watching the artist. Not meaning to, but not being able to stop. The whiskey made her woozy, made her cheeks blush, but she thought Clarke was the most beautiful thing she’d ever seen and she wasn’t sure how that could happen.

She met her eyes once and looked away quickly, her cheeks on fire and burning her brain alive. Clarke smiled at her and that made it worse. Lexa adjusted her glasses and looked away hurriedly.

She suffered through four more of her sisters events in hopes of seeing the painter again. She’d never admit it to her sister, and in fact emphatically denied any motives for wanting to go other than the free bar. But that was secondary to seeing those eyes.

Lexa couldn’t write. She expected to go home and write, but suddenly she couldn’t. She even used her sister to send her own book along to the artist with a note she agonized over and ruined fifteen copies trying to perfect. And after she did, she felt like a tool and hurriedly got it back before it was delivered.

“Are we going to make this a habit?” a voice smiled as it sat in the chair next to Lexa’s. Instantly the writer froze.

“I was hoping,” she admitted honestly.

“Your sister is good. And very talented at what she does. I’ve been up to my ears in work,” Clarke smiled, electing to order the same as Lexa. “How have you been?”

“Haven’t been able to write in weeks.”

“I’m sure your publishers like that.”

“I wouldn’t know. I don’t answer my phone. Or emails. Just ask Anya for a comprehensive list of things I don’t do.”

“I’m sure everyone loves that.”

“My agent will show up on my doorstep every few weeks to make sure I’m alive and things for me to sign.”
“I picked the wrong field.”

“I don’t know about that. I spent a day staring at your paintings. I think it’s amazing.”

“You spent the day?”

Lexa cleared her throat and felt her muscles tighten in her neck. She furiously looked away, afraid of the admission.


“Now I just starting to like you. Why would you go and do a thing like that?”

For a moment, the two shared a small smile before looking away bashfully, neither able to think of much else. Lexa finished her drink and summoned all the courage she could find.

“Do you want to get out of here?”

“God, yes,” the painter grinned.

Early morning was quiet in the streets, but in her head, it was crashing and loud. Lexa struggled to measure every word, so as not to make a fool of herself with the gorgeous painter. It was proving to be a full-time distraction.

But Clarke didn’t notice. She simply liked listening to Lexa when she allowed herself to rant about something, the way her hands would be agitated and flail in front of her before being tucked into her pockets to corral them.

“So the first one came out just after graduation, and then the second was my Masters’ thesis,” Lexa answered, watching her feet move. “And this one is taking me longer than both put together.”

“Sometimes that’s just how it works.”

“I guess.”

“Your sister said you get very distracted when you’re writing. Very focused on it.” Clarke chanced a look at the writer beside her who seemed to shrink into the coat that was too big for her.

“My sister talks too much.”

“It’s not a bad thing,” the painter assured her.

“I think she’s still worried that I’m twelve and getting kicked out of school for failing because I wouldn’t talk.”

“She’s your sister. That’s what sisters do. I guess.”

“Sometimes I feel bad, for everything she gave up to take care of me. And I didn’t make it easy on her. I still don’t.” Lexa was unsure where the confession came from, but the lights were one and the city was full of empty arteries.

“I think she’s doing okay now. You know, she kind of saved me. I was dead broke before that show. Ready to pack it all in, take a job at some marketing firm spitting out magazine ads. Ready to head back to DC to tell my mom she was right all along.”
“Anya has a way of swooping in,” Lexa smiled, oddly proud of her sister.

They stood on the corner and waited for the light to change, unsure of which way to go, unsure of how many more hours they could brave the cold and the night and each other.

“This was much better than that stuffy party,” Clarke confessed.

“It was.”

“I should head home, before I freeze.”

“I live just over there,” Lexa hitched a finger towards her house. “If you maybe want a drink or something.”

“I’m not going to sleep with you,” Clarke eyed her.

“I wasn’t. I hadn’t. No. Yeah. I wouldn’t. I didn’t. Okay,” Lexa swallowed and stuttered and couldn’t bring her hand down from signalling the direction of her home.

“Because if I go to your house, I’ll be tempted to sleep with you,” Clarke continued, not hearing Lexa’s ineptitude. “Because you’re kind of gorgeous. You have this like sexy, bookish thing that weirdly enough does it for me.”

“Yeah?” Lexa grinned, delighted at the news.

“And I never thought it would. But here we are. You got this broody, tortured past thing and your face. I sleep with people too soon. And I won’t sleep with you.”

“Okay.”

“I want to.”

“Yeah?”

“But I won’t.”

“So no drink?”

“What?” Clarke finally looked up, realizing she was having a conversation.

“Maybe we could get a drink or something some other time?”

“Okay.”

“So the nerdy thing works for you?”

“It really does,” Clarke smiled, side and broad and full, much to Lexa’s enjoyment. “You’re so fucking cute.”

“Here I was worried you were way out of my league.”

“No way.”

“Would you like to go out sometime?”

“I’m not sure.”
“Why?”

With barely a movement that Lexa could register, Clarke looked at her lips and stepped closer. Her mind short-circuited as Clarke’s hand felt to her neck, her thumb on her jaw.

Clarke kissed her. Gentle and soft, it was nothing more than lips on lips until they started to move. Lexa held her breath as the city took no notice. The lights on the corner changed and they could have moved across the street. Instead they stood there, hands tugging onto clothes and coats, lips moving victoriously between the two.
San Francisco (Part 2)

Chapter Summary

Cheezus you are absolutely amazing at these clexa prompts, I need more nerdy author lexa and painter Clarke. Love ❤️, love ❤️ it

From its perch in the bay window, the cat yawned and appraised the cars moving through the street. It saw the biker coasting down the hill, and it saw the family taking their daughter to school. It stretched, adjusting as the sun peaked over the opposite roof, and let it warm its belly while the big green eyes never ceased observing the familiar sites of its street.

On the sidewalk, the housekeeper stared at the cat as it licked its shoulder and finally met her eyes when it finished the beginning stages of its bath. With a sigh and a tightening of her lips, Indra swore at the damn animal as she dug in her bag for the keys to the familiar house.

Even when the door opened and shut, the cat didn’t move. He yawned, shifted, and tucked his arms under himself, king of all he saw and indifferent to any other breathing soul in the house. Indra hung her bag on the hook. The same hook she always used. She slipped off her coat and hung it beside her bag. The pattern existed as it had for many years, and all the while the cat slept in the window.

There were many scenes the housekeeper witnessed upon her weekly entry to this home in particular. By far, it was one of the more interesting homes on her route, and because of that, because of the girl, she took special care and interest there.

The house was spotless, at least as far as she could tell. It was sparse. There’d been more furniture before the breakup, but now, Lexa devoted herself to writing. It made Indra’s job easier, though also more difficult now that the job became checking on Lexa.

With a shake of her head, she picked up the empty whiskey bottle that sat on the edge of the desk. Papers were thrown about the floor and desk, pinned up, tapped on, strung through the wall. Amidst the organized chaos that was part of the process Indra was still learning, everything seemed exactly like it was in its proper place.

The glass that went with the empty bottle was observed tucked beneath the chin of a sleeping writer, curled up tightly on the couch. A pen was stuck behind her ear, ink on her arm, words speared on her body, jotted haphazardly, a piece of paper crumpled in her hand.

Sometimes, Indra worried about her. She started each project with order, with methodical, precise writing which inevitably descended into an almost heathen, animalistic mania. With a dissatisfied huff, Indra nudged a half-open notebook with her foot and shook her head, knowing full well what stage they were at in this endeavour.

“I was gone for one week,” Indra muttered, bending over to pick up the stray cigarette butts that missed the other stray glass of whiskey.

“Don’t move anything!” Lexa groaned as curtains were flung open. The cat jumped and sat itself against the fireplace, angry and sullen for the disruption to its day. Indra glared back.
“Get up.”

“I’m up,” Lexa lied, nuzzling the bottle and pen a little tighter.

“I’m making food. And you’re not going to fight,” the housekeeper turned back towards the couch with a victorious nod to herself at the pain she caused to the inhabitant of the couch.

“I’m fine.”

“You’re a goddamn mess.”

The only response was a grunt because Lexa couldn’t argue too much with it. Instead, she curled into herself and tried not to vomit. The clanging of pans and preparation of food rang in Lexa’s head as she propped herself up, wiped the drool from her mouth and blinked against the daylight.

“You don’t have to do that,” Lexa mumbled as she trudged into the kitchen, wincing as she sipped on the remnants of the bottle.

“I do, actually,” the housekeeper shook her head after grabbing the bottle and tossing it in the trash. “You know two people in the world, and one is your sister. Someone has to make sure your liver lasts at least until you’re thirty.”

“I know… people.”

“Alright.”

“I finished last night,” Lexa changed the subject and sat at the table. “It’s finally done, Indra. And it only took a bottle of whiskey and three days with my door locked and phone off, but I put it all together, and I slept,” she looked dreamily out the window staring at the tiny back yard. “God. I slept so well.”

“I’m not picking you up off the floor anymore,” Indra muttered, not looking at the girl at the table. She raised her kids already. She had six grandkids and an entire family she already raised, and yet here she was.

“That was one time.”

“Still. You know better.”

“I’m fine.”

“Yeah.”

“I am.”

The kitchen got quiet, filled only with the noise of eggs frying and toast popping from the toaster. Lexa’s head swirled all over and she wanted to die, but instead she placed her palms flat on the cool table and tried to stop from falling out into the world. She wanted to tell Indra thank you, but it was impossible, and she wanted to be someone that people didn’t know only knew two people. She wanted to be happy, and she didn’t want to lie when she said it.

“I was gone one week and you descend into an animal,” Indra complained, slipping a plate on the table and turning away quickly, wiping her hands in the towel on her shoulder.

“Yeah.”
“How is it?”

“You going to read it?” Lexa asked as she took a bite of toast and tentatively watched her housekeeper’s back as she began scrubbing dishes.

“Of course.”

“These are good eggs.”

“Is that story of yours any good?”

“I don’t know,” Lexa shrugged, mouth full and confidence waiver with the actual question and filtering in her kidneys and liver.

“I have work to do.”

“Okay.” Lexa watched Indra leave the kitchen, oddly confused that her best friend was an older housekeeper who visited once a week.

By the time Lexa finished eating and took a shower, she felt almost human. And her house was immaculate. Her clothes didn’t hang from the hamper, and her bed had fresh sheets and the pillows looked fluffy and she was continually baffled how Indra did it. The living room was perfect, not betraying at all the fact that there’d been genius thrown all over it.

The cat tucked into itself on the edge of the couch and Lexa ran her finger’s along its back which it enjoyed despite the disdain it held for that fact. Indra turned another page at the large desk that took up the living room window.

“Well, what do you think?” Lexa tried, sitting on the couch.

“You should dry your hair. It’s cold outside.”

“I meant about the–”

“Sh.”

“Alright.”

She lasted about three minutes of sitting there watching her housekeeper read her manuscript. Three minutes of fiddling with her fingers and watching the sun not move at all from the lines on the floor. Three minutes of rubbing the white spot on the cats chest which turned into its belly and then down its black back. Three minutes of excruciating waiting.

“Can you tell me what you-”

“Sh.”

“Alright.”

With a disinterested purr, the cat hopped to the floor and Lexa stood, picking up her phone and dialling her sister, remembering that it’d been too long since she’d returned a phone call.

“Indra’s reading my first copy,” Lexa blurted as she moved into another room, closing the doors to the living room behind her.

“I know.”
“Why do you and my housekeeper text?”

“Why do you let your housekeeper be your editor?”

Lexa could only grunt and furrow her brow at the argument. She paced through the library which was simply piles of books stacked against each wall, and she peaked through the glass of the windows at the woman at her desk.

“That’s where you’ve been then?” Anya asked.

“Yeah. Finishing.”

“There’s a party tonight.”

“I can’t.”

“You’re done with work. The only thing left is to let Indra read it and then ship it off to your actual editor. Come have a drink tonight.”

“I’ve had enough to drink.”

“Lexa, I’m asking to see my sister wrapped in whatever excuse I can come up with, and you could at least humour me.”

“Anya.”

“I’ll come over there.”

“Indra told you to get me out.”

“It’s not my fault your best friend is your housekeeper and I know when she comes.”

“I have to finish—”

“Clarke asked about you last week.”


“I’ll see you at nine.”

With another grunt, Lexa shoved her phone in her pocket and nearly tripped over the cat that bolted as she opened the door.

“Did you—”

“Sh.”

“Alright.”

“You look like you have the right idea,” Clarke grinned and saddled up to the bar beside the beautiful girl who blushed into her drink and pushed her glasses up her nose a bit.

A month or so between visits, and Clarke zeroed in on her quicker than she would have liked, though she was able to avoid the writer for a little while. The zigzag she made through the crowd was subtle, though shamefully eager and short. It was easier because it wasn’t her show, and it was much more fun to get lost in the crowd. But when Anya smiled and pointed towards the bar, Clarke
“Couldn’t help herself.”

“Not much has changed then,” Clarke held up her hand to signal two drinks at the end of the bar. “Still brooding at bars and hiding from your sister.”

“It works well for me.”

“It does.”

“Haven’t seen you at one of these in a while,” Lexa observed, taking the new cup and hoping to find courage located at the bottom of it.

“Because you haven’t been out in a while.”

“My sister says you asked about me.”

“Wondering when I can expect another work of staggering brilliance in my local bookstore.”

“I finished today. Well, this morning. Yeah, I finished this morning actually. Yes. This morning. I finished. Writing,” Lexa swallowed and sighed and killed herself for not being able to form sentences when they moved past a handful of words. Anxiously she adjusted on the chair and pushed the glasses up her nose.

“So soon then?” Clarke blushed at the anxiousness.

“Well, maybe a few more months.” The writer resigned herself to short phrases. That was safest.

“Well, I am very excited.”

“Can we get out of here again? I really hate these things.”

“Yeah, alright,” Clarke took the last sip of her drink and grinned.

The night was chilly and the rain was far away in the bay, ready to pounce upon the city whenever everyone went to bed. The lights were all angry, burning against the night and shimmering softly beneath their wrath as the two walked through the city. There was no direction in their feet, no gnawing pull leading them around the area, but instead simple happenstance moved them, pushed them along with a breeze and the burn of whiskey on their tongues.

“But why is she your best friend?” Clarke chuckled.

“I don’t know. I like her.”

“That makes sense.”

“You kissed me, you know,” Lexa remembered. “You kissed me.”

“Yeah, I did.”

“Okay.”

“I want to do it again,” Clarke smiled. “I would have done it sooner, but you disappeared.”

“I have a cat.”

“Okay.”
“I have a cat because the girl I think I might have loved left me, and now I have a cat.”

“Alright.”

“Okay.”

“Is it a nice cat?”

“I mean, not particularly,” Lexa reasoned, thinking deeply about it. “I mean, he’s not mean or anything like that. Just kind of indifferent.”

“I wouldn’t have thought you as a cat owner.”

“Yeah, me neither.”

“Do you want to introduce me?”

“Sure.”

“Smooth move with the whole pet angle.”

“The first time he’d be useful.”

“I haven’t done that in a while,” Lexa cleared her throat and pulled the sheets up higher. They barely covered her co-inhabitant’s hips, but she didn’t care. She needed to feel covered, to escape.

“Could have fooled me,” Clarke chuckled, hand splayed across her stomach. She felt Lexa’s hand move along her ribs, felt her lips against her shoulder. “I’ve been thinking of doing this since I saw you in that party.”

“The glasses thing, huh?”

“Yeah.”
San Francisco (Part 3)

There was a way to the city after dark, so that something was always happening. But on the rainy, dreary Friday night, Clarke had something in particular in mind to occupy her time. That was how she found herself skipping over puddles and tightening her raincoat up against the squalls and wind of San Francisco’s wind and rain as she made her way downtown.

There was a little invitation that hung on her fridge at her apartment, and Clarke tried to ignore it every single day. She didn’t want to go to the reading. She hadn’t heard from the cute, nervous author since Clarke snuck out of her bedroom a few weeks ago. It all made sense, as to why, but she kind of hoped she’d made enough of an impression to hear from her.

It was a packed event, but Clarke wiggled her way and took a seat in the middle of the crowd as everyone awaited the first reading of the newest novel from wunderkind Lexa Woods. She listened to people around her as they beamed and speculated and conversed about their favorite parts of the last novel.

While Clarke skimmed the room and saw the novel-types that wrote important articles about things like this, she looked at the hand out and the picture of the author that was tucked on the page. People were beaming and dissecting her work, and yet Clarke was the one that knew about the cat she didn’t like but loved anyway, and who knew about the whiskey and the glasses and what Lexa’s sheets smelled like, and how her voice sounded at four in the morning after three orgasms.

Across the crowded room, Clarke caught sight of Anya and tried to make herself blend in. She didn’t want to have a conversation, and she didn’t really know what to say.

Luckily, the host for the evening Q and A, and reading came out as the lights dimmed somewhat. Nervously, Clarke settled in and cheered when Lexa emerged a second later, once her accolades were recited.

She was mildly self-effacing, in a somewhat humble sort of way. She was brilliant, but maybe didn’t know how much so, and Clarke found herself captivated by the author on the stage as she sat there and took questions from both the audience and the moderator.

Halfway through, Lexa did a double-take in the middle of answering something about being a young, female writer. Clarke smiled a smile reserved for the writer, and Lexa adjusted her glasses and returned it slightly after stumbling slightly on her train of thought. From that moment on, her eyes drifted to about six rows back and the blonde, curious, confused, and encouraged.

“How much does your life influence what you write?” the moderator continued down a line of questions. “You write along the themes of family, pain, past, secrets, and the intersection of the uncertainty of the future and society. You write of these secrets, and you are very secretive.”

“I’m private,” Lexa corrected, adjusting slightly in her seat. “I think anyone who says they aren’t influenced by their life is lying. It’s formed how I view the world, but I don’t purposefully address things. I just tell stories.”

“Some have claimed that your first work, your Masters thesis, was as close to an autobiography as could be, is that true?”

“I told a story that I had to tell.”

“The secrets continue,” he smiled, sensing her discomfort and electing to switch paths.
Despite herself, Clarke was only more intrigued by the writer who now nervously avoided looking in her direction. She smiled and watched Lexa relax.

After the reading, Lexa felt impossibly eager to find the girl who proved to be a figment of her imagination. When she woke up exactly twenty-three days ago, she was certain she’d never hear from the artist again. It made her afraid to go out to Anya’s events, and it made her afraid to call.

But she locked eyes with Clarke during the question segment, and she felt a little skip in her brain, as if she’d died for an instant, and all neurons refused to work. It might not have registered as more than searching for an answer to a question, but Clarke knew, and Lexa knew that she knew.

But whatever bravery she had left in her, was gone the moment the applause died and she joined the mingling. Inundated with more conversations and oddly enjoying herself, Lexa was constantly on guard. She was convinced one of two terrible things would happen, namely that if she didn’t pay attention, Clarke would sneak up on her, or worse yet, disappear without a word, leaving her wondering what it all meant for another extended amount of time.

When she woke up alone, exactly twenty-three days ago, Lexa didn’t know how to feel, and if she were being honest, she still hadn’t unpacked it. And it was because of that, that she excused herself to the bar.

“You look like you have the right idea,” a voice joined her as soon as she got her drink and savored the first sip. “Gin and tonic.”

They were quiet until the bartender slid over another glass. Lexa looked at Clarke slightly before drinking again.

“The glasses and nerdy thing, right?” Lexa grinned, almost devilishly, if she would have had that in her.

“I can’t stop thinking about you. I’ve tried.”

“You left.”

“I’m good at that.”

“I stay,” Lexa finished her drink and stood up a little straighter. “I’m someone who stays. I’m good at it.”

Clarke swallowed and nodded. Stern as Lexa was, she adjusted her glasses and sighed, betraying some nerves and an unsteadiness to herself in the situation. She couldn’t meet Clarke’s eyes except in tiny glimpses.

“I want to stay, if that’s okay?”

Very seriously, almost too seriously, Lexa weighed the words, furrowing with the new information. Clarke smiled because she was absolutely crazy for someone who thought like that.

“What if you leave again?”

“I’ll do my best not to.”

“The last time I asked someone, they lied and said they’d never leave. I like your answer better.”

It was that instant, that moment, after twenty-three days and just a handful of meetings, after listening
to the humble, talented, wondrous genius of a nervous girl introduce her book to the world, after finding her in the bar, with just those words, that Clarke realized she was in love. She would look back on it fondly, she decided. That even when Lexa looked away to order another drink, unaware as to what was happening beside her, that Clarke decided she’d tell her one day, because as much as it was simple, witty banter, she was telling the truth. She had no good reason to leave that day other than fear. She had no good reason to offer to stay, except for the exact same reason.

It happened gradually, and all at once, and for that, Lexa was grateful. When she woke up the morning after her reading, and found an artist sketching in her favorite chair with a cat curled up against her side, she didn’t want to believe it.

Instead, she poured herself a cup of coffee without saying anything, sat down in her usual spot at the usual end of the table with her usual red notebook and regular old, usual pen, and let herself jot down notes and ideas and things.

Clarke wasn’t dumb though. She sat stark still and refused to move, as if doing so would make Lexa bolt or something. Instead, she drew the same line, over and over again with the flourish that artists sometimes give for no reason at all, and she took little peaks at the girl at the table in the old, bleach-abused track shirt.

And like that, there was almost a routine.

Lexa liked routines, Clarke learned, which was an adventure. She hated how much she loved her cat, despite how much she’d argue otherwise. She was very particular about her methods, and Clarke respected that.

But when they were together, Lexa was different. She kissed like she was desperate for nothing more than that feeling. When she wrote, she was maniacal. But all other times of her life, Lexa was so restrained. She was absolutely fascinating.

To make matters worse, she said things that made Clarke’s head and heart explode. The third week of dating, Lexa mumbled something about liking the order that came to traffic jams. A few days later, as she hovered in the kitchen with the cat, and Clarke cooked and made a mess, she muttered an old spell that her grandmother once prayed and sipped her wine. Not long after that, Clarke learned that one of her favorite things was to win an argument by making Lexa throw her hands up in the air at the illogical nature of Clarke’s insistences.

Dating Lexa was filled with learning things.

It was hard at times, with the shows and the book tour that came with inevitable success. And though Lexa refused to believe that Clarke would stay, she did. She stayed so long, in fact, that Lexa got used to it.

The notebook exploded into dozens of pages against the wall, like a sad, lonely kind of firework. The cat wasn’t even bothered, blinking slowly and turning its head to the side after adjusting slightly. Not even the stalking owner of said notebook and semi-owner of said cat, huffing through the room, shoulders hunched and hands gripped, face stoically full of wrath, bothered the feline who had grown accustomed to such things.

The apartment was pristine, was perfectly packed and placed without precariously situated possessions and filled with purposeful placements. The mess on the floor was an anomaly that wouldn’t last long. But it did stay there, untouched and bitterly rotting as the hurler ignored it
completely after the outburst.

Frustrated and furrowed, Lexa walked once more through the mess and poured herself a drink. For a week, Clarke was away visiting her parents. Lexa was home and eager for more staying, but something messed with her head, and she just couldn’t... couldn’t... word, right.

She looked at Clarke’s coffee cup that sat, unwashed and a reminder of their last night together a few days before, and she realized it was difficult to write when she was happy, which then led to the realization that she was, in fact, for the first time in her life, happy.

And it absolutely left her fucking irate.

“Lexa! What the fuck am I just hearing about Clarke Griffin and you?” her sister stormed in a moment later as Lexa stared at her notebook on the ground and debated arson.

She felt her muscle tense between her shoulder blades.

It should have been expected, for her sister to appear. She heard her phone buzzing almost non-stop in the other room for almost two hours before the inevitable explosion.

Everything was changing, and everything was different, and she felt the tight grasp of control slipping out of her hands despite her stranglehold on it.

“Please get out,” Lexa sighed and grit her teeth as she gripped the counter.

“I will not get out,” her sister pursed her lips and stepped over the notebook on the ground. “This is insane. Months, and you haven’t told me anything!”

“Please get out.”

“Are you kidding me? This is amazing news, and I need to know everything. You can’t–”

“Get out!” Lexa bellowed, shaking her head from side to side. She closed her eyes and tried to take a deep breath.

“Hey, don’t you start yelling at me–”

“Anya! Leave me alone!”

“If you’re having an ep–”

“Get out!” she barked again, finally facing her sister. “Get out! Get out! Get out!”

The silence that followed was enough.

But Anya weathered storms like that before, and it did not surprise her that it was happening. Instead, she just nodded to herself, crossed her arms, and waited for her sister to relax somewhat.

“You’re up in your head, aren’t you?”

“Please.”

“You know how to deal with this,” Anya softened. “I should be able to talk to you about dating someone. I can be mad at you. You don’t get to hold the monopoly on feeling things. Get over–”

“You think I haven’t tried to be different? You think I haven’t wanted to not be like this?” Lexa
scoffed and shook her head. “It’s not from lack of effort.”

It was things like that, that broke Anya’s heart. And as much as she wanted to hug her sister, she couldn’t do anything like that. It would have been counterproductive. Instead, she moved to pick up the notebook.

“Don’t. I have to,” Lexa murmured.

“Okay.”

Instead, Anya sat at the table and waited the fifteen minutes it took her sister to regain herself.

“What if she figures me out, and leaves?” Lexa sighed. “That’s why I didn’t tell you.”

“Not everyone is Costia.”

“Clarke isn’t,” she nodded, almost to herself. “Anya, there’s a beautiful girl who likes me and smiles and makes my heart feel like its tap dancing, and she often doesn’t wear pants and my old rowing shirt from college, and that’s all, and what if she leaves?”

“She won’t.”

“She will.”

“From what I’ve heard– you know– the only reason I found out about you dating my client,” Anya guiled, half with a smile, “Clarke can’t stop talking about you. She beams. I saw one of her pieces, and it’s… it’s… “

With a shake of her head and smile, Anya pulled out her phone and found a picture before sliding it across for her sister to take a look at.

“I don’t know what this means,” Lexa furrowed and stared at the art that didn’t make sense to her.

“She’s in love with you.”

Lexa just furrowed harder with the answer and stared more intently, looking for something like that in the brush strokes. Once, she almost tricked herself into seeing it, though she just couldn’t.

“I don’t see it.”

“Yeah, you wouldn’t,” her sister grinned.

Almost a year after her sister found out, almost a year of thinking and not thinking and growing and becoming someone who was happy and still lived, Lexa realized that she had to do something.

Everything happened so slowly, so calmly, so easily, that it snuck up, right into her lap. She realized it as she had her hand on the small of Clarke’s back at some dinner party of a friend of a friend. She realized it as she snoozed on the grass at the park with her head in Clarke’s lap while she read or sketched or napped herself. She realized it in the morning when she woke up with lips on her neck and a thigh already between her own, in that lethargic kind of need that settled between their bodies.

She had a cat from a girl she once though she loved, but that girl got sick of her brain, sick of her mind, and she left. Plain and simple, she marked Lexa unloveable, and she disappeared to be happy.

Clarke got irrationally angry and protective after hearing that story, which was the funniest thing that
Lexa had ever seen.

That was a moment, too.

As the water ran, and Lexa brushed her teeth, she thought of all those things, and she thought too much about something she was trying to write, and failed to see. She spit and stared at Clarke in the mirror as she tried to have a conversation despite flossing. It was about her father’s birthday, and by now, Lexa was good at deciphering such things, though that was the last thing on her mind.

“I’m difficult to love,” Lexa swallowed and nodded to herself, pushing the glasses up on her nose as they slipped with the movement. Clarke stopped. “I’m a difficult person to be around sometimes, and no matter how hard I try, I can’t fix it, not completely. It’s okay if that’s not okay. But I love you. I know I love you because I didn’t love Costia, and what I feel for you is so much more. It must be love, logically. What I want you to know, is that you don’t have to love me. I just hope that despite me, you’ll still love me.”

There was never really a moment when Clarke knew why or what Lexa was talking about. Sometimes conversations just happened, right there in the middle of something as mundane as making breakfast or walking to the grocery store.

Lexa put her toothbrush back in her mouth and resumed her routine, avoiding Clarke’s eyes in the bathroom mirror. Clarke was stuck, rigid and frozen, and very unsure of where it’d come from, only learning Lexa well enough to know that to have that many words meant she’d been thinking it for a while.

“I’m difficult to love,” Clarke promised. Lexa kept brushing her teeth. “I am. I get moody and irrational and I like a nice mess from time to time. It wasn’t hard to fall in love with you. It happened right under the red light the first night I met you. It happened again at your reading. I love you. I’m in love with you, and I’d like to stay.”

She smiled. Clarke smiled, too, and went back to flossing as Lexa finished, spit, and rinsed her toothbrush.

Clarke rinsed her mouth, and despite their normal routine, Lexa didn’t move from the bathroom door. Instead, her smile was busting her cheeks and she swallowed Clarke in a hug, twirling her around the small room.

The party was the same crowd that asked her what the ending of her last book meant because they only skimmed it. Lexa excused herself and made her way to the bar, dissatisfied with their nonexistent selection of snacks and eager to find her girlfriend and escape to that fish taco place down on Lynn Street.

She absently wondered if there would ever come a day when she told her sister no when it came to those boring parties she threw. The answer was obvious, but still, Lexa allowed her imagination to flex with the thought as she smiled and sipped her whiskey.

Her goal shifted to getting slightly drunk and taking Clarke home after getting a very unhealthy snack by the bay, and breaking in the new bed Clarke made them get in her ongoing quest to help Lexa modernize her home. Modernize, Lexa was learning, simply meant buying actual furniture.

“Looks like you’ve got the right idea,” a voice joined her, earning a smile.

“Gin and tonic for the beautiful lady,” Lexa told the bartender. “Another double for me.”
“Did you know,” Clarke whispered, the sultry slipping into her voice as she leaned her chin on her girlfriend’s shoulder, “how absolutely sexy I find it when you order me a drink?”

“Is that why when I order smoothies for us, I get lucky.”

“We all have our kinks,” Clarke chuckled before thanking the bartender and earning a wary look from Lexa.

“I wish you’d stop calling everything kinks.”

“Where’s the fun in that?”

With a roll of her eyes, Lexa allowed Clarke to win the battle and tug her toward a familiar group of friends, stuck in an intense debate about something that Lexa actually enjoyed. She even outlasted her girlfriend, past their normal signal to try to sneak out was initiated.

“I just want tacos,” Clarke groaned as she tugged Lexa toward their coats. “I don’t care if they’re good or bad. Tacos are always good.”

“It’s ten minutes farther, but much better,” Lexa argued. “Why does proximity have to dictate what we eat when we know superior tacos are down by the bay?”

“But our house is the opposite way, and our house is where the bed is, and these heels are killing me and I just want food, sex, and sleep, in that order– oh, sorry.”

The whine that amused Lexa to no ends was immediately cut off as Clarke bumped into another body with a little more force than usual. The amusement ended almost instantly, to some degree, as the body turned around.

“I’m so sorry, I was just– Lexa?” Costia cocked her head and stared at the writer, ignoring the body that bumped into her own, catching her off guard and spilling some of her drink.

“Hello.”

Both just stared at each other, sizing up what time had done to them, picking out the parts that changed, that stayed the same, and then debating whether or not they’d always been that way, or if their minds had crafted littler alternatives and imperfections.

Clarke cleared her throat and rubbed Lexa’s back.

“Oh, sorry. Yes. Um. Costia, this is my much more talented, much less graceful better half, Clarke Griffin. Clarke, this is Costia.”

“Much less graceful,” Clarke repeated with a smile. “It’s nice to meet you.”

“Likewise,” she forced a smile.

She was gorgeous, but Clarke knew that already. An intense afternoon of weakness was spent looking into Lexa’s ex, as any normal person would conduct upon entering a new relationship. A writer herself, she was not as good as Lexa, in Clarke’s literary opinion. She certainly wasn’t a nice or good person either, in her personal estimation.

“It’s been… what? Three years?”

“Four years,” Lexa quickly interrupted. “Four years.”
“How’s Simon?”

“How’s Simon?” Clarke interrupted.

“The cat,” Costia furrowed. “You didn’t get rid of him, did you?”

“Oh, you must mean Jeff.”

“You renamed our cat Jeff?” the ex shook her head and frowned.

“He likes it better,” Lexa nodded.

Clarke sensed the impending weirdness as the standoff commenced. She felt Lexa squeeze her hip as she held her close.

“How long have you two been together?” Costia asked, ignoring Lexa’s simple explanation, hiding the sting of moving on.

“Oh, about two years now?” Lexa asked, looking to her date for confirmation. “Going well, wouldn’t you say?”

“Going great,” Clarke chuckled and nodded.

“Wow.”

“Yeah.”

There was an awkwardness between them all, and no one knew how to escape it. There were years and years and miles and time and distance between where they’d once been, and where they were, and yet Clarke couldn’t shake the nagging protective anger against the Ex, as irrational as it was, and she certainly couldn’t shake the feeling of contempt that she’d seen her girlfriend naked. That was the real kicker.

“I read the novel. It was impressive. Well received. I could see little bits in it of all those things you kept raving about,” Costia offered. “I didn’t get it, but you saw it. I meant to say congratulations, but it felt weird.”

“Thank you,” Lexa smiled. “It’s still doing well. Been trying something new with the current project.”

“Care to share anything?”

“You know the answer already.”

Despite the time and place and distance, they shared a knowing smile.

“And what is it that you do?” Costia turned to Clarke and waited.

“Oh, not much, I paint–”

“She does these big, beautiful, colorful paintings,” Lexa interrupted the modesty. “And I didn’t get them at first, but then, it clicked. And they feel like… they feel like things.”

“And you’re talking about feelings,” Costia whistle quietly, amazed at the display. “They must be something.”
“They really are though,” the writer nodded eagerly, beaming.

“I can’t beli–”

“I’m sorry,” Lexa stopped her. “But we have a date with a fish taco truck, and I see Anya making her way toward me.”

“Which means we have to run,” Clarke chuckled.

“It was nice to see you.”

“Pleasure to meet you, Costia,” the artist smiled. “I’m sorry for being clumsy.”

“No harm no foul,” Costia nodded, perplexed at the almost happiness and joy on her ex’s face, a state of which she’d never seen it before. “Nice to see you. Keep in touch.”

“Alright,” Lexa nodded.

Before she could offer anything else, she watched Lexa begin to slip through the crowd. Bewildered, Costia stood there and watched them leave. She watched Lexa kiss Clarke’s temple as she put her arm over her shoulder, and they both laughed at something meant just for them.

She wasn’t jealous, or at least that was what she told herself. More so, she was simply amazed.
Valentine's Day (Terminal)

Chapter Summary

With Valentine’s day coming up, how about a themed Clarke and Lexa story?

The hospital swirled with the quiet steady of patients and doctors, all taking their time getting anywhere at all. Nurses stations filled with deliveries of bouquets and cards and chocolates, while the halls were littered with cardboard hearts and babies with little wings and bows. Reds and pinks of every shade and color turned the fifth floor into a haven of sappiness and commercial love.

They agreed on no gifts, but that didn’t matter, and Clarke was secretly and very shamefully giddy when Lexa broke the vow and had a beautiful bouquet of her favorite flowers delivered. The nurses smiled and crooned over them when they called Clarke over the speaker and she appeared to find a bouquet in front of Lexa’s face.

“I never formally asked,” the soldier grinned as she pulled the flowers down from hiding herself. “Do you want to be my valentine?”

“I don’t know, I got a pretty enticing offer from a three year old this morning,” the doctor played coy, earning a bit of a pout.

“You didn’t see this yet,” Lexa realized, quickly pulling a tiny cartoon valentine like school children gave to each other, from her back pocket. “You are the apple of my ayyeee,” she read, pretend pirate voice complimenting it well.

“Well, now I’m sold,” she laughed and kissed her sweetly.

“To sweeten the deal, I thought lunch would be appropriate.”

“What if I’d said no?”

“Failure wasn’t an option.”

“You’re sweet,” she sighed, holding Lexa’s arm as they made their way down the hall. “Thank you. You didn’t have to get me anything.”

“I know. But I really wanted to, and I actually got myself something too,” she shrugged.

“What’s that?” Clarke asked, hitting the button for the elevator.

“Something for you to wear tonight,” she explained with a blush.

“Perfect. I don’t have to shop.”

“This is quickly becoming my favorite holiday.”

Across the city, each member of the Woods clan found themselves preoccupied with the holiday. A rather romantic bunch, they were never very good at the execution, though privately, they all
promised themselves that this was their year.

The patriarch picked up the new necklace he ordered weeks ago and verified his reservations while his wife was at work. He scurried through the house, cleaning as best he could, preparing for their date.

Theo lined up not one, but two babysitters, and had a hotel room filled with pizza and wine prepared, where they would do nothing but sleep and eat and not have kids for an entire day.

Henry sat on a plane to New York to surprise a certain doctor’s friend, complete with reservations and an extra key to his place on his key ring.

Reed juggled babies while his wife was at the spa, completely relaxed and oblivious to it all.

And Marshall, he begged his sister for a favor because his brother wouldn’t share a babysitter.

The Woods clan was a romantic bunch, doing what they could to spoil their others because it was what they had grown up seeing, because it was what they liked to do, because deep down, they knew, that anyone who stuck around deserved a day of recognition.

The house was spotless, completely clean and almost unrecognizable to the doctor as she walked inside after her shift. Music played softly from the den, while candlelight filled every inch that she could see. With a smile, Clarke hung up her coat and kicked off her shoes, very much in love with the girl who pretended that Valentine’s Day wasn’t one of her favorite holidays.

Quietly, she followed the noise toward the kitchen, hoping to have a surprise of her own.

Lexa stirred a pot and balanced a baby in her arms, humming to her quietly. The sight was enough to make Clarke pause, make her think, give her ideas and glimpses and utterly distract her from any other thoughts she might have had just a few seconds ago.

“Hey,” she finally interrupted, unable to contain herself. “Did you get yourself a new valentine between lunch and now?”

“Marshall,” she grunted, frowning terribly. “He hit me with the guilt and I just… I’m sorry.”

“Never be sorry for this,” Clarke cooed, carefully taking the baby, still lingering with the fresh from the bath smell, and the cozy kind of warmth from her onesie. “Hi gorgeous.”

“Hi.”

“I meant–”

“Oh, right, right,” she nodded quickly, smile growing as she earned a kiss. “Dinner will be ready soon. Do you want some wine?”

“You’re really spoiling me, you know that?”

“I aim to please.”

“Oh yes she does,” Clarke hummed at the baby who just stared at her before smiling a toothless grin and gurgling slightly. “She always does, too. Yes she does.”

“I really am sorry we got stuck with the pipsqueak tonight,” Lexa finally mumbled as she slid a glass of wine across the counter. “But I already have her fed and bathed. Her crib is made in the spare, and
we won’t have to worry once she’s down.”

“Oh stop. This is the best present.”

“Good. I meant for it to happen then,” she boasted, resuming her cooking.

It was domestic bliss. Clarke played with the baby while Lexa finished dinner, and she hummed along to the music, earning some giggles.

“We could do it, couldn’t we?” Lexa ventured as they sat down at the table to eat, the baby bouncing in her swing without a care in the world.

“I mean, I plan on it later,” the doctor returned, wiggling her eyebrows in a move that Lexa was sure had been stolen from her own playbook.

“You know what I mean,” she laughed despite herself. “The kid, the baby.”

“We’re not even married yet and you already want me barefoot and pregnant. I’m onto you, Woods. You and your whole, potent family.”

“Hey, as much as we try, I know I won’t be able to do it myself.”

“I like the trying though.”

“God, me too,” Lexa groaned, slightly relieved.

For a while, Clarke thought about it, looking at the baby and then at her pretty girlfriend who lived with her. Who got blown up and came home. Who she met in passing at an airport and spent an entire day trying not to fall in love with, and failed. It was what she wanted, even though she never could grasp the idea of it. It just lingered, beyond her imagination. But there it was, alive and in vivid detail. It wasn’t the worst way to spend her life, she realized with a smile.

Dinner was perfect, the baby was quiet, mumbling to herself as she hopped along and chewed on a ring. Lexa watched her from time to time, though her attention swayed back to Clarke just as often, who she found a good date, if she had forgotten. It was the day for such things, for quiet dinners and just themselves. She liked that.

“Thank you for today,” Clarke finally smiled and kissed her again. “Flowers and lunch and dinner. It was very thoughtful, and the perfect amount of Valentine’s.”

“You haven’t even seen what I got for myself yet, so I’d hold your thanks.”

“You’re going to make me wear some skimpy little thing after feeding me all this food?”

“Don’t say skimpy in front of the baby,” Lexa hissed, dramatic and smiling that mischievous grin that made Clarke’s heart still flip. “And I am, because I find you absolutely gorgeous, and I only want one present today and that’s you. On top of me. In very little lace. I’m a simple girl, Griffin.”

“More dirty girly stories for you and your friends.”

“I mean, you come up sometimes,” she smiled shyly, completely caught.

“So you don’t want your present?”

“Present?” her ears perked and she turned in the kitchen as she dropped off a few plates, wheeling around on her cane. “I mean. If you got me something…”
“You didn’t think I wouldn’t get you something?”

“I don’t like to presume,” she said with a flourish.

“Close your eyes,” Clarke ignored her, standing and moving toward her coat. She dug in the pocket while Lexa tried to peek. The baby tossed her toy and cheered.

“Remember, there are children present, so keep it PG, please, Doc.”

“Will you just stop for two seconds?”

“Too late, you already agreed to be my Valentine. No take backs. That’s the deal. “

With a sigh, Clarke looked at the woman she loved and tried so desperately to debate herself out of it, though it was a fool’s errand. Instead she just smiled and held up the present she bought two weeks ago.

“You didn’t,” Lexa smiled, staring at the tickets. “Opening day? Opening day!”

“You and me. Third base line. I got us a room downtown so we can drink and enjoy the day, I’m off work that weekend. I know it’s awhile away, but I thought it’d be nic–”

Her ramble was stopped quickly, as Lexa kissed her, nearly losing her footing as she lunched forward and held her neck. She kissed her breathless and dizzy and all manner of disoriented, but Clarke realized she would have bought every ticket imaginable to get a kiss like that.

“I picked a good Valentine,” Lexa mumbled against her lips. “See that, kid?” she turned to the baby. “That’s how you pick’em.”

“Shut up,” Clarke rolled her eyes and tugged her close again.

Though the clock had ticked as it always had, though the date had changed, it was still Valentine’s day as long as they were awake, and Lexa was going to savor every minute of it. Baby asleep in the spare, the monitor whirring politely beside the bed, dishes cleaned, candles blown out, her mission for the day was a complete success, if she didn’t say so herself.

And so, self-congratulatory and very happy, Lexa sat on the edge of the bed, randomly adjusting her position, hoping to keep the perfect streak alive, as she waited for her girlfriend to change into an absolutely terrible excuse of lace masquerading as any form of underwear, and its matching bra. Because she deserved it. Because she had swept a smart, funny, hardworking doctor off of her feet and made her her’s. Because she very much had plans for that outfit not surviving the night.

“So this is what you really like?” Clarke ventured, slowly peeking around the door from the bathroom.

Lexa just gulped and stared at leg and leg and a lot of leg. It took her hours to make the trip along it. Weakly she nodded and tried to remember to think, but the only thought in her head was that there was surely a merciful God, and she would take being blown up a hundred times to get a girl like that.

She liked the red. That was what her brain kept saying. She liked Clarke in the red and the lace and the way it clung to her hips and the way she leaned against the door and watched Lexa watch her.

“If you ever wanted to know what getting blown up felt like,” Lexa nodded, her eyes still wide as she stared. “Something like this.”
“Are you seriously going to make a bombshell pun?”

“I was trying.”

“I kind of like this,” Clarke decided, taking a few steps into the room. She turned around a little, looked at herself in the mirror, earning a slack jaw. “I might let you go shopping for me more.”

“Dear God,” the soldier groaned.

There was certainly a kind of gratifying feeling to having a completely mute and dumb girl staring at her, and Clarke found it endearing and absolutely hilarious, but so often it felt as if Lexa had the upper hand, always so quick with her wit and kisses and lips in general. To see her sluggish was a nice change.

Clarke would be lying to say she didn’t play it up.

“So you got me in this for your present,” she husked, taking a few steps until she put her hands on Lexa’s shoulders. Slowly, she raised her eyes, taking every inch in at such proximity. “Now what are you going to do with me?”

“To be honest, I never planned on anything past this moment. I never planned on this,” she furrowed, quite upset at the present realization.

“No plans at all?” Clarke murmured, carefully moving very slowly to straddle her girlfriend. “Not one?”

Very slowly, Lexa shook her head and felt her hands move along Clarke’s thighs. They slide up the back, her thumb ran along the edge of the lace.

“You’re the best valentine.”

“Okay.”

“I mean it.” Clarke promised, kissing her softly on her lip, lingering there, tugging quietly. She felt hands wrap around her and she grinned. “I love you.”

“I love me too right now.”

“Do you remember our night in Albuquerque?” the doctor chanced, wrapping her arms around Lexa’s neck before dipping down to kiss her again.

“I remember what I hoped it would be. This pales in comparison.”

“Yeah?”

“You’re so fucking beautiful,” Lexa murmured, finally brave enough to kiss her neck and chin. “And all mine.”

It was a slow kind of dangerous. A dangerous kind of slow. Lexa didn’t care about the semantics of the situation, just that she had a scantily clad girl in her lap, and she wanted to never wake up from the dirty dream.

What started as slow, as lazy quickly grew tempestuous. Quickly grew over eager and muggy, like the equator at noon. There were many geography analogies, but Lexa was satisfied with her hands south of the Mason-Dixon line and her lips lingering somewhere near the Great Lakes.
“I’m going to have to take it off, if you want to–”

“No, leave it,” Lexa grinned, gingerly rolling them over. She was healed. Her leg didn’t even ache, or it didn’t yet, and she was superman until the morning, hyped up on adrenaline and the way Clarke’s chest moved when she took a deep breath. “I’ll work around it.”

“Is that so?” she giggled.

“I’ve done much more with much less.”

“Do tell.”

“I could,” she breathed, hitching Clarke’s leg, settling between it. “Or I could show you.”

“Much better plan.”

“I thou—”

The cry rang out over the monitor and Lexa’s entire body tensed. Fearful, she looked at Clarke and shook her head, as if they were negotiating something.

“She’s fine,” Lexa offered, as another roar of a scream erupted. Not a bit amused, Clarke gave her a look. “I’m going to kill him,” she grunted, pushing herself up. “Just don’t move. Don’t do anything. Just pause. Don’t move.”

Without even her cane, Lexa meandered her way into the spare bedroom, grumbling to herself the entire way.

It took a bottle, a diaper change, an entire song, and so many back rubs that she was certain her arm was going to fall off, but Lexa wrangled the infant back into a cozy slumber. Quietly, she turned on the lullaby machine and closed the door nearly silently.

The entire time, Clarke listened to the monitor, about how the aunt told her niece that she’d been relegated to the lowest ranking of favorites, and how she was never going to forgive her. She heard her hum and promised a pony, she heard her kiss her cheeks and sigh and be absolutely wrapped around her finger.

By the time Lexa made it back down the hall, she was not at all surprised by what remained. Half-covered and half waiting, Clarke slept, tired from her day and work and the late hour she didn’t keep that often.

For a long moment, the soldier stood there and grieved her Valentine’s celebration. Until she remembered that she was in love with Clarke, and could ask for her to only wear that whenever she wanted, and if she asked enough, her odds had to be pretty good. That was the logic that made it okay. That and next Valentine’s day when she was going to literally book them a trip across the state.

With a smile, she pulled out an old shirt, and gently woke her girlfriend. She carefully unclasped the bra, and helped her slip into the shirt.

“Happy Valentine’s Day,” she whispered, crawling into bed beside the sleepy doctor as she turned off the light.

“Let’s do it again next year.”
“With more sex.”

“With more sex,” Clarke agreed.
Chapter Summary

“a man almost got to kiss charlize for charity but this sapphic hero saved the day and outbid him by five grand.” “Charlize was doing a charity and no one was bidding over $37,000 so she said she’d kiss the highest bidder for 20 seconds and obviously the rich guys started to outbid each other until this random woman stood up and bid $140,000 and won.”

It probably shouldn’t have been such a surprise that the event was such a success. Like all things her sister set her mind to, it was a complete and total smash. The ballroom of the ritziest hotel downtown was absolutely teeming with important people with big wallets who, more than likely, didn’t truly know what they were supporting, but who didn’t care, because altruism was a myth to the cynic.

When Lexa graduated law school, it was the happiest moment of their family’s life. She felt the pressure of all of their hopes and dreams, and she delivered on them with flying colors. Of course, her sister was just as, if not more so, talented. While Lexa worked her way up to a corner office at a firm, her sister quietly fixed the community. While Lexa paid their parents mortgage and made sure everyone was taken care of, Anya took the world upon her back, and brought Lexa along for the ride.

What started out as a single case as a favor turned into a nonprofit network of actually well-trained lawyers to help those who couldn’t afford it. While Lexa specialized in human rights violations, she still exercised court muscles with small time drug offenders. It helped her keep her self-perceived anarchist punk rock dreams of actually helping while still feeling obligated to take care of her family. Something about growing up without money made her giving to a fault and also so hard working and thrifty, it was a bizarre combination.

From the parents who were immigrants and barely spoke english, came forth two spectacular daughters who tried to do good things and who took care of them. Lexa was proud of her true American dream.

Of course, that didn’t mean she enjoyed the fundraisers her sister thrived in, nor did she enjoy shaking hands and being personable. It wasn’t that she was particularly icy or apathetic, but more that she was busy, plain and simple, and taking an entire night away from work and the nonprofit was a lot to ask. Lexa begrudgingly went because her sister asked nicely, and when that failed, threatened her.

That was how Lexa found herself at a Valentine’s Day themed event, the pink and red hearts and the roses and the lights creating an oddly romantic atmosphere and a good way to spend a rather lonely holiday, though she’d never admit it.

The ballroom was filled and stacked with people, and Lexa meandered around, admiring it all and hoping that spending as much as it surely must have cost, would return more money to the ever dwindling coffers.

“Lexa, honey, I found a nice girl I want to introduce you to,” her mother interrupted her quiet walking.
For just a while, she got away with being quiet.

“As much as I appreciate your efforts—”

“You’re never going to find someone if you don’t look,” a stern voice interrupted her attempt to go back to hiding. “This is a party full of successful, smart, pretty people, and you’re a catch.”

“You have to think that,” she drawled with a smile, appeasing her mother. “I’m too busy for someone. I have the practice and maybe partner soon, plus this whole thing. I’m busy.”

“Too busy to talk to a nice girl?”

Her mother had stern eyes. She had the logic of a steel trap. She had the logic of a viper, and Lexa was actually ineffective against it. Most court cases, she studied, she prepared, she could last a few rounds in the ring. But her mother— she was a different story entirely.

“I’m too busy to date a nice girl,” Lexa corrected. “Which is what you want.”

“Who says that’s what I want?” her mother shrugged, talking with her hands. “You meet a nice girl, you become friends. I don’t know why you like to jump to conclusions and marriage all of the time.”

“Because as soon as I meet whoever you want me to meet, you’re going to take step back and admire your work. Then you say something like ‘what a pretty pair you are,’ and you leave, after promising this nice girl a lawyer from a good family.”

“When have I done that?”

“Last Tuesday at that Ethiopian restaurant.”

“She was a doctor, Lexa.”

“Last month when we were in line at the dry cleaners.”

“Her family has a few businesses. They are well connected and we’d get good deals on getting things done.”

“A few weeks ago when you begged me to go out with one of your coworker’s daughters.”

“I don’t know, it sounds like there’s something your doing wrong. I’ve been a perfect wingman,” she shook her head, hands on her hips, as if it was all Lexa’s fault for not being charming enough to land one of the many opportunities she brought around.

“Who taught you that word?”

“Your father and I like to watch that show with the intelligent people who get into humorous situations. Geniuses that this country likes to mock,” she shook her head, as if that was common knowledge.

“Mom, you have to stop setting me up with people,” Lexa chuckled, holding her shoulders. “I appreciate it, but you don’t have to worry about me. I’m happy.”

“You could be happier.”

There was the look. It was worse than the stern one. The one that looked like worry and guilt and pride and unsureness. Lexa crumbled under it even worse than before.
“Introduce me to Future-Daughter-In-Law number seventeen,” she sighed, earning a smile from her mother, who just led her across the hall.

It took all of five seconds for Lexa to know that her mother hadn’t really picked a winner. She was a lovely girl, and a nice girl, as her mother put it, but she definitely wasn’t captivating. Even with the wine and the light and the ambiance, Lexa just wasn’t bowled over. She always imagined she’d be knocked out by a girl. Maybe it was unrealistic expectations. But it couldn’t have been, because she’d been absolutely murdered by the singular glance that Costia had given her when they first met in a lecture at law school. That defined all future interactions and relationships.

Of course, that relationship failed, so perhaps it wasn’t the best barometer.

Lexa debated that to herself as she sought out the bar and earned herself a drink after the long conversation of getting to know someone who there wasn’t much to really know.

“You’re hard to find.”

“Not hard enough, apparently,” she shook her head and looked over at her sister.

Somewhere on the dancefloor, she was certain her father was dancing with her mother; swirling her around and making her smile.

That was another nail in the romance coffin for the lawyer. To see her parents put a whole new level of pressure onto a significant other. She knew what could exist, and she’d never settle for a drop less than the magic that she grew up idolizing.

Of course, that was unrealistic, so perhaps it wasn’t the best barometer.

“I have to go start the auction soon,” Anya huffed, finishing the rest of her sister’s scotch and then wincing with it in her throat. “How was mom’s attempt at finding you a nice girl?”

“On par with the rest.”

“She thought Evan was a nice boy when she introduced us, and then we got married, and now she just uses him to change light bulbs around their house.”

“True.”

“I’m just saying, her infatuation wears off once you get hitched.”

“So I should just get married to keep her off my back?” Lexa laughed and signaled for another.

“Drastic, yes, but life has been nice since she’s stopped meddling.”

“Also you love him.”

“Right, yeah, all that too.”

The sisters shared a look and laughed, shaking their heads as they relaxed together for just a brief moment.

“What did I bid on last year?” Lexa asked, typing an email on her phone.

“You got drunk and bought a ski trip, even though you don’t ski.”
“Right, right,” she nodded, smiling at the vague memory. “What ever happened to that trip?”

“You gave it to me for Christmas,” Anya rolled her eyes.

“How was it?”

“It’s where your niece was conceived.”

“Alright, too much information,” Lexa pursed her lips and sipped some water as the room filled up with busy and important people. “Can I just write a check, An? Do I have to be here for the whole thing?”

“I worked hard on putting this together, so you actually get to do both. The check and staying,” she shutdown her sister quickly. “It’s your nonprofit.”

“It’s not mine. It’s yours.”

“Oh, so now it’s mine. I can’t buy staplers without you complaining.”

“It’s a nonprofit for good attorneys and low-income families,” Lexa argued. “How many staplers do you need? Every nickel should go into fees.”

“And thus, this event.”

“Dammit.”

“I hope you’re better at arguing in court,” Anya shook her head with a smile as she stood from the table. “I have to go work the room. Please help me make some money.”

“Fine. But I’m going to drink.”

“There’s a trip to Italy being auctioned. Go for that since it’ll be my Christmas gift,” she winked and disappeared with a chuckle.

There really wasn’t a good, concrete reason that Clarke could find as to why she was at the charity event on Valentine’s Day. There was her civic duty and using her platform for change and such, but in all reality, she wasn’t sure how she got there.

The worst part of it was that she really didn’t have any other plans on the special day. Not really. She had a few date offers from people she wasn’t particularly interested in seeing, which, only served to make her feel even worse about being alone.

“Why am I doing this again?” she asked as she sipped her drink and listened to the people in the green room.

“Because I know Anya, and she’s a good person and deserves a break,” Octavia ignored the subtle whining.

“This is so different than the other stuff we’ve done.”

“It’s a favor for me then,” she stopped the train of thought in its place.

“I don’t mind. I just can’t remember agreeing to it.”

“You didn’t,” Octavia shrugged. “I did for you though.”
“That was nice of you.”

“You said you wanted to do more charity things, and you had a break between movies, so I figured I’d help out. Plus, again, Anya–”

“Is a good person, right,” Clarke smiled and watched her friend roll her eyes. “You owe me one.”

“Enjoy yourself,” Octavia grinned. “You said you were sick of Hollywood types. Well, I got you a ballroom full of serious people on Valentine’s day. You’re welcome.”

Before she could argue with that logic, Clarke watched her friend disappear back into the man area and she snorted to herself before adjusting her makeup in the mirror.

She wasn’t mad. She couldn’t be, because she did say that. After the stint with her last co-star ended badly, Clarke had nothing left to do but reevaluate her choices and life. There was a dangerous place to exist, where she did– already owning an Oscar, already being critiqued as a hasbeen. The break between movies was welcomed for some soul-searching.

Of course, searching one’s soul was an exhausting thing, and Clarke wasn’t enjoying it. Which must have been how she agreed so eagerly to exhume herself from her self-imposed exile and wellness retreat for the fundraiser. Pure boredom.

When they knocked at the door, she made her way toward the stage, carefully tucking her phone away after doing some googling into the charity. It was a great cause, and so she didn’t begrudge Octavia too much.

“Three years ago, I asked my sister to help me on a case,” the speaker began as a hush prevailed across the auditorium. “It was a boy we grew up with in a part of town that most of you, I’m sure, are unfamiliar.” There was a chuckle, and Clarke didn’t understand why. “But by then, my sister had graduated law school and barely had time. Still, she took every free second to stand up for this kid, this man, now, that we knew when we were eleven. If she hadn’t, an overworked, underpaid public defender with too many cases might have not done for him what she did. We both realized that she could do more, and I wanted to help. It started small, but look how far we’ve come in three years.”

There were cheers and applause to her description and Clarke found herself smiling. Just two sisters who wanted to change the world, and sometimes that was enough.

“All right, the kid we grew up with is in school for audio technology and isn’t like a lot more of the ones we weren’t able to help,” the speaker continued.

It started to sound familiar then, and Clarke looked to find Octavia in the crowd. Beside her was Bellamy, and though they were too far and it was too dark, she knew he must have been blushing. All of it made sense, and Clarke was grateful to help. It started small, but look how far we’ve come in three years.”

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“Now, it’s Valentine’s Day, and I’m sure you’re ready to impress your pretty dates with your bets, so without further ado, please let me introduce our guest auctioneer, Clarke Griffin!”

There was applause and banter and all manner of the normal duties associated with being the guest auctioneer. Clarke was good at it by now, and sometimes she even enjoyed it, playing up the crowd, seeing how much she could get them to spend.

The night wore on and they all celebrated, laughing and joking and filling up the coffers for a good cause.

It wasn’t until the end that the bidding started to wane. And for a particular item, it all but stalled. But
not for Clarke Griffin. She certainly wasn’t going to allow one thing to go without being upcharged to hell.

“Alright, folks this is our second to last item, and it is being underappreciated. Remember, this is for a good cause,” Clarke said, walking around the stage. “Anyone? Thank you!”

A paddle went up for another thousand dollars, but it was still getting quiet.

“Alright, well, to go with this lovely piece of art, I am willing to, in the spirit of Valentine’s Day, throw in a kiss of at least ten seconds, but no more than thirty seconds, to the highest bidder. Now you have to–”

The hands started flying up quicker than Anya could keep track as she laughed and began upping the price with every paddle and bid.

“I was going to say bid out of pity for my ego, but this seems to have worked.”

For a few seconds, the bidding went on, and after a full minute, it had died down to just two stubborn people, both of whom Clarke was not eager to kiss. That didn’t matter though. She would have to and she would chalk it up to charity. For a moment, she wondered how to file it on her tax return.

Was it prostitution?

“To the tune of $100,000, going once,” Anya waitd, scanning the room as everyone held their breath. “Going twice.” Silence. “Going th–”

“One fifty!” a voice piped up near the front.

Clarke squinted and tried to find the voice.

“That’s… um. That’s a new bid,” Anya said, as if she was considering it. “One hundred and fifty thousand dollars. Going once.”

From her spot, Clarke grinned and locked eyes with a bespectacled woman who couldn’t have been any older than herself. From the distance and through the dark, she was beautiful. Surely closer would be worse.

“Going twice.”

All were quiet as they considered the art they’d be stuck with in exchange for a kiss. All stopped after that, and Clarke wasn’t upset. She’d never spend that much to kiss anyone.

“Sold to my sister, who I’m sure will be gifting me this… art… come Christmas,” Anya sighed and let her gavel rest on the podium. “Come up and get your prize, you big gay idiot.”

Doing her best to look worth it, Clarke put her hand on her hip and waited, as the night suddenly got exceedingly more interesting.

Well, Lexa considered herself fairly f**ked.

Most of the time she considered herself bright. She was bilingual, top of her class, worked on important cases, read books. She forgot, of course, that she was a gay disaster, and nothing, not an Ivy League education or almost being a partner at a prestigious firm could change who she was at her very core.
She hadn’t expected to actually have to kiss someone, but there she was and her feet were moving toward the stage amidst cheers and applause.

“What the fuck did you do?” Anya hissed as she met her sister at the stairs, quickly smiling so no one would know.

“I don’t know,” Lexa snapped back. “I just… he’s the fucking worst prick on the planet.”

“Do you have that much money?”

“I was going to pay in hours.”

“That’s not how it works.”

“Well what do you want me to do now?”

The bickering reached a new level before they heard a voice clearing behind them. Sheepishly, they stopped and smiled, fake and pretending to not be in a bit of a pickle.

“Alright folks, let’s see what a lot of money can get you,” Anya cheered, getting the crowd into it again as her sister approached the actress.

It was unfortunate, Lexa thought, that she was going to die on Valentine’s Day, and that it was her gay little heart that did it to herself. Death by gay. And if the beautiful blonde in the sinful red dress didn’t kill her, well, her sister was waiting in the wings to beat her alive, so there was that to look forward to if she survived.

“Hi,” Clarke smiled and leaned forward, kissing Lexa’s cheek in greeting, earning a blush. “I can’t believe a kiss is worth that much, but I’ll do my best.”

“Um, we don’t have to,” Lexa cleared her throat and adjusted her glasses nervously. It was endearing to the actress. “I just didn’t want you to feel like you had to kiss that idiot. He smells and he’s terrible in court.”

“I never welch,” Clarke promised, taking a deep breath. “If you’re game, I’m game. Unless you don’t want to kiss me.”

“Kiss you? Are you– I mean– anyone– who wouldn’t want to… kiss you…”

The crowd was going restless as the murmured to each other, and Lexa felt it in her sweaty palms that she tried to hid in her pockets. It didn’t go well though because Clarke took an inch closer and that made everything worse. She was even more beautiful up close.

“I don’t have that much money,” Lexa confessed. “And that art is hideous.”

“I won’t tell if you don’t.”

Lexa gulped and nodded, staring at the lips attached to that smirk. A hand slid behind her neck and she held her breath. Waiting for some kind of permission, big blue eyes almost asked if she was allowed, and for some reason, Lexa saw it and nodded.

Her lips were much better than previously thought. Lexa saw her in movies, knew of her, despite her busy, pop culture-less life that she led. She knew she was gorgeous, but tallied most of it up to movie magic. The truth was, Clarke was pretty and she was pretty quick, and she could kiss so well it was like taking a masterclass.
All Lexa could do was hold on and enjoy the ride. It was languid and warm and radiated down to her toes. Her hand went to Clarke’s neck and then to her hip, tugging her closer, taking over, for some reason, though Lexa wasn’t sure why or when she thought to do that. Her body just did it. Clarke hummed and her tongue traced Lexa’s bottom lip before it was met with another tongue. It was a kiss that took away breath and one that was ready to go much longer than twenty seconds.

“Five, four, three… two… one!” Anya counted down the end of this kiss, and it took an extra second for Lexa to pull away.

“Wow,” she whispered, mostly to herself as she wiped her lips and stared at Clarke, quickly putting a gap between them.

“Yeah, I agree,” the actress nodded, primly making sure her lipstick hadn’t been smudged.

In the same instant, Lexa watched the bewildered look disappear and the actress come back, smiling and waving to the crowd. She posed for a picture with Lexa, hugging her hip close to her body.

“I have to finish. But do you want to get a drink?”

“Me?” Lexa swallowed, the taste of the actress still lingering on her lips. She pushed up her glasses and messed with her hair nervously. “Get a drink?”


She earned a laugh, and Lexa knew she was a goner, though she tried to talk herself out of it. There was no time for such disasters.

“I look forward to it,” Clarke winked as she moved toward Anya again for the final, big ticket item. “Thanks for saving me.”

“Anytime.”
Warpaint

Chapter Summary

Clarke putting on warpaint for the very first time (together with grounder clothes of course) and Lexa’s reaction.

The morning mist was still burning and sizzling outside, but not a creature remained asleep on a morning like this. There was a stillness about, etched into movements, so that even the slightest was non-existent. Heavy and cumbersome, the dawn came as a reminder.

For just a moment, Clarke allowed the bulk of the day, the future of it, to sink in with the past that followed. She sat before the tiny mirror in their quarters, and she tentatively picked up the brush before setting it down once more. She felt intrusive, like an impostor.

But she picked up the paint and she smeared some with her finger, rubbed it beneath her eye, covered her eyelid, filled in the spaces as she had seen Lexa do. She never denied or mentioned her skills in combat, but something about this step, made her menacing, made her terrible, and Clarke would need it. She was not forbidden from the front, but Lexa was in no way eager to allow her there. So Clarke would belong there, would offer to die there, just like everyone else.

It felt foreign, to do this, but the ritual of it was necessary.

“What are you doing?” Lexa stalled, stood stark and stuck, sacked by such displays. “You can’t use that,” the leader approached the table and snatched it from her hands. “Why would you-?” she couldn’t speak. “Take it off.”

The look on her face tore Clarke’s nerves apart. Lexa held her chin between her fingers, tilted Clarke’s head. She felt childlike and scolded.

“Why would you?”

“Am I not one of you?” Clarke asked, pulling her face away from the scrutiny.

“No,” Lexa shook her head slowly, holding Clarke’s chin again. “You are not. And that is all the difference.”

“The sky has no place here,” Clarke argued.

Tall and angular, slim and lean, Lexa peered over her cheekbones at Clarke, at the smeared start around her eyes. It felt like a violent offence- to what? she was not certain- but it was not right.

“You have survived,” Lexa told her. “You will survive.”

“You don’t like it?”

“It breaks my heart,” Lexa told her, finally dropping her head from resting on her fingers.
Museums

Chapter Summary

Art Exhibit.

The air in the museum was fake. That recycled, decontaminated, bleached, purified kind of air that was pumped religiously at the exact temperature of nothingness. But that was part of the experience, part of the magic, part of allowing one to get swept up in the art on the walls and the statues on the floor and the sculptures on stands.

“I like this one,” Lexa mused, cheek leaning on Clarke’s head as the artist wound her arms around her arm.

“I can’t imagine doing something so well,” Clarke sighed.

“I like yours better,” Lexa promised, pushing her on to the next canvas.

She liked museums with Clarke. She took her to the Museum of Natural History on their first date, and it went so swimmingly they made out in front of the mummies. And the dinosaur replicas. They ate hot dogs in the park across the street and stayed out too late talking about the entirety of the world.

But art museums made Clarke fret, made her anxious, made her feel unaccomplished, of which Lexa could not understand, because she loved her work, loved her designs, loved to find her in the attic with that old giant shirt covered in paints with a rainbow streaked across her forehead and cheek. But they don’t put those kind of things in museums, and she couldn’t exactly articulate it to the girl that sighed on her arm.

“I like it,” Lexa said again as they looked at the piece.

“What part?” Clarke lifted her head and peered. Lexa got distracted, watching her furrow and dissect and learn. She hadn’t expected to be quizzed, though after dating an artist for as long as she somehow managed to keep Clarke around, she knew a thing or two. For as much as Clarke loved art, loved museums, loved her work at the design company, loved painting, loved sketching, she put up with Lexa’s complete lack of knowledge about it well. So long as Lexa tried. She learned that on a terrible fifth date, a lesson she never forgot.

“The, uh, I like right there,” Lexa pointed to where water met sky. It was the colour of Clarke’s eyes, or at least as close as she’d seen. “I like how real just this square,” she held up her fingers in the shape of a box, isolating it, letting Clarke look through. “How do you guys mix the colour of the sky at 6:17 in the evening on a Tuesday in May?” Her hands dropped and she shoved one in her pocket. “That’s what that is. And I like that. I think that would be hard to accomplish.”

“First, there’s no we. Stop with the we,” Clarke corrected. “And I don’t know. Luck.”

“No,” Lexa shook her vehemently. “That can’t be luck. That isn’t luck. I refuse to believe that is luck.”

They looked at the painting for a few more minutes as people milled around behind them. The crowd
was thin and light as they both ditched their respective jobs in the middle of the week for this, and they thought of no better place to play hooky.

“I like when you describe the parts,” Clarke pulled her girlfriend onwards and into another room, past the busts of dead thinkers and saints and rulers and villains who all looked alike.

Clarke fell in love with Lexa in the statue room. Specifically over the bust of some random prince of some land that was no longer a country or other. It did not matter. What mattered was that Lexa looked at it and told her it made her sad. She did not like busts. It always made her wonder who they were, but things she’d never know. No one would ever know if the man this bust was modeled after snored, or if he picked up his kids and made them laugh, or what his favourite smell was. And that bothered Lexa.

She wasn’t sure why, but Clarke thought about it often when she grew frustrated with the disinterested guest, with the stoic and unfeeling front she paraded. Because it was not that she was unfeeling or disinterested, but more that she computed them differently, and that view was gorgeous and complex and riddled with folly and fear. And that was something to be in love with.

“Not when I talk about the portraits,” Lexa disagreed with her girlfriend.

“You make fun of every person. You’re a landscape snob. You’re not happy if there’s a human in it.”

“That’s not true. That last one had a guy in it. He was on the boat. Anyway, I maintain that no one can draw a person non-comically,” Lexa shrugged. “Places are just so nice. I like oceans and hills and boats. I like paintings of boats a lot.”

“You’re like a ninety year old man. Boats and Picasso.”

“I know,” Lexa agreed as they meandered past the half broken vases. “And I’m so prudish. The less clothes the more I get freaked out. Which is really weird. I’d be that one Pope that made them paint leaves on all the dicks.”

“I remember our trip to see Georgia O’Keefe,” Clarke laughed and looked through the map. “You wouldn’t go down on me for a week.”

“Ugh,” Lexa shivered. “It was like I was being smothered in labia.”

“Nightmares for a month,” Clarke sighed, grinning and watching Lexa’s discomfort as she remembered.

If she could, she’d spend years in museums with her. Because she was funny, and she was thoughtful, and just when Clarke might have thought she was blowing her off, not listening, not interested, she pulled out moments like that, when she pinpointed a six by six square of canvas and made Clarke fall in love with it.

And the way she looked at Clarke’s work itself made her perfect. She knew they weren’t the best, knew they weren’t going to stop people in the Louvre. But when Lexa looked at them, she thought maybe they would. She would stare hard at it, quietly, think, ponder, squint, get closer. And she would tell her why she loved it, what it made her feel, what it made her think. And this was from a girl who was afraid of Georgia O’Keefe paintings, all that exposition, just for her.

Clarke kissed Lexa’s cheek, right there in front of a Victorian princess and Greek gods. It made Lexa stop her rambling about flowers. She slung her arm over Clarke’s shoulders and continued to walk.
“Now this is a painting,” Lexa decided, pulling Clarke into the giant mural that stretched from one end to the other.

Slowly the walked along the edge before taking a few steps back and settling in the middle. Clarke watched Lexa’s face, watched her take in the giant landscape, even with its tiny obscure people in it that were irrelevant completely.

“You should do one like this,” Lexa nodded.

“You think I can?”

“Why not?” she balked, confused at the doubt. “You can paint anything.”

Clarke grinned and let her continue to look at the painting, she wrapped her arms around her waist and rested her head on her shoulder before looking as well. Before them stretched the Palace and Gardens of Versailles, captured in perfect midday sunlight on a warm May day, or at least that was what Lexa would call it.

“We need a bigger attic if I’m going to try something like this,” Clarke whispered. Lexa was woken from her dreaming and parading through the work. She put her arm around Clarke’s shoulders and felt her squeeze her waist.

“That’s impractical,” Lexa decided. “How would we even get it out?”

“So a smaller version then?”

“I didn’t say that. I just think it’s impractical. You should still do it. You paint a painting this big, and I’ll build a room for it.”

“Alright,” Clarke smiled into her shoulder for reasons Lexa could not understand, and so she just went with it, stuck in Versailles and thinking about a giant room.
“I’m currently filming something not comic related in Georgia,” Clarke explained, smiling as the reporter began to ask even more. “But I can’t wait to get back to the sequel. It’s going to be bigger and just… I can promise it will be mighty. That’s the best word for it.”

She dazed in and out of words, the jet lag and schedule creeping up on her slowly. Her bones ached and she barely had time to put on new clothes on the way over from the airport, but she smiled and laughed and was only relieved when she saw her cast mates that she would see in a few months to start the sequel, but had been away from since the wrap.

As she finished answering the questions, she felt her phone vibrate and was eager to check it as she carefully scanned the crowds in search of a certain girlfriend who she was supposed to see the night before, but had missed due to delayed flights.

“You are going to be late for the Women of Marvel panel,” Raven explained, nudging Clarke slightly as she took a few pictures and waved before moving towards the back entrance. “And then it’s meet and greet, followed by cast pictures.”

“But when do I get to eat?”

“I’ll toss you a granola bar between the Translating Characters and Future of Marvel halls.”

“Perfect,” she sighed, moving as quickly as she could in her heels. “This is my favorite press thing of the season, do you know why?”

The hair and make up people began to touch her up as she stood outside the curtain.

“Because Lexa has to be here too,” Raven supplied nonchalantly, not even looking up from the tablet balancing on her arm as the fired off emails and balanced the schedule, a true hero in her boss’ and friend’s eyes.

“Because my girlfriend is geographically locked in the same place as I am. Contractually, even,” she shrugged, not caring that Raven didn’t care. “And we like to sneak out and actually go to the panels and walk around.”

“Because you’re nerds.”

“Because we’re nerds,” she continued, shaking her head. “And I haven’t seen her in five weeks. Five weeks, Rave. Five weeks without any alone time. You know. Girlfriend alone time.”

“You can have a granola bar. I can’t help with that other thing.”

*Where are you?, her phone read.*
Quickly, Clarke separated herself from everyone and huddled over her own phone.

*About to go on in a few minutes. Where are you?*

*Same. You’re going to do great. See you after?*

*Try to find me as soon as you can.*

*Got plans for me, Griffin?*

“And coming up in the newest movie, and filming her sequel, please welcome to the stage–”

*Big plans.*

*“Your Thor– Clarke Griffin.”*

With a sigh, Lexa shoved her phone in her pocket and returned to the land of the living. She took a gulp of water and let her friend nudge her shoulder.

*“Please do not let me drink as much as I did last night,” Anya pleaded. “For my liver’s sake, and to make sure I can function tomorrow.”*

*“I will hopefully be leaving the party early tonight,” Lexa said, half prayer and half oath. “How crazy is it that I’m in the same mile radius as my girlfriend and still haven’t seen her?”*

*“Schedules are pretty strict.”*

*“Still. Not even a drive-by. Five weeks.”*

*“Poor little thing,” Anya teased, pinching Lexa’s chin, earning an eye roll. “Look at her, Bellamy. Poor little sex-starved super villain.”*

*“I barely recognized you with the brown hair again. When are you bleaching it back?”*

*“Ugh, too soon,” she complained, pushing him away as they all began to tease her.*

It was no secret how much she was in love with Thor. It was frequently mocked in good spirits by her cast of bad guys, but still, whenever they were together, it was easy for everyone to see how compatible and actually amazing they were together. Mocking was always easier though.

*Do we have to go to these parties tonight?* she fired off as they began to announce for the stage.

*“The Clown Princess herself, the Maiden of Mischief, the incomparable, your Harley Quinn!”*

The crowd cheered and Lexa smiled and waved as she took her spot on the panel, excited for the day.

*It’s been a while since I’ve seen her, but I’m pretty sure none of these are @–Griffin*

Lexa typed it out as she posted the picture she took with all of the Thor cosplayers. All different sizes and shapes and ages with her in the middle grinning wickedly.

*Finally found her! Lookin’ good @-Woods*
Clarke stood at the back of the hall where Lexa’s panel was being held, finally being in the same room. Far far to the front, the speck could be seen that was her girlfriend sitting at the table listening intently. Clarke stood and made a pinching motion, holding her head in between her fingers from the camera.

“This is as close as I get,” Clarke complained as she ate her granola bar and was ushered to another room.

“You’re lucky you got that,” Raven informed her, still pouring over her schedule and list of requirements.

**Is there something you wanted to let me know, babe?**

Another accompanied it with the picture of Lexa holding a toddler dressed up as the famed, wing-helmeted superhero. Her face was worried and confused to exaggerated degrees.

As Clarke scrolled through the feed and smiled at the images of her girlfriend enjoying the day, despite the distance they seemed to never be able to traverse to see each other.

**I don’t know what Thor (@–Giffin) is talking about. It’s not that heavy.**

Lexa lifted the mock hammer and twirled it around with a shrug in the picture. People around her laughed, and even with her hair back to dark brown before it would be bleached almost white and tinged in colour, the distinct smirk was instantly back in place that recalled the mischievous vixen she portrayed so well.

“You play Harley Quinn, a bad guy—”

“Okay, I think bad guy is a little harsh. She has a warped moral code, sure,” Lexa shrugged with a mischievous grin. “But she’s definitely not the worst, you know? She just so happens to be on the wrong side of the law frequently.”

“You play a law breaker, and your girlfriend plays a hammer-weilding hero. Who would win in a fight?”

“Listen, I stand by the notion that take away the god-like stance, Harley would put up quite a fight.”

“So you’d win?”

“I think Tor would fall in love in a minute.”

“That’s a bold statement.”

“For me, Harley would infinitely amused by Thor. Without a doubt,” Lexa explained quite seriously. “She’s good when its more fun, and when that gets boring, she’s a little not so good. But she has these morals that she just won’t break, and I love that. I love that you don’t know what she’ll do, she’s a flip of the coin. Something tells me a god shows up with thunderbolts and a hammer, she’d be pretty intrigued.”

“Does Clarke Griffin know that she’d lose?”

“Without a doubt,” Lexa smirked again.
“Without a doubt,” Clarke nodded quite seriously. “No contest. Thor grand slams her into next year.”

“We actually asked Harley Quinn herself, maybe you know her, Lexa Woods, and she had a little different answer,” the reporter grinned.

“I have yet to see her,” the actress complained. “And that’s ridiculous. I need to set her straight on this. She’s a villain. I’m a hero. It’s a no brainer.”

“How is that, at home, being on opposite sides of the spectrum?”

“It’s rough. It’s rough. She’s DC, I’m Marvel. She is more bad. I’m more, you know. Heroic. I think the best thing that summed us up was I was working out. I was lifting weights, and she was watching a movie while sitting on a yoga mat. It just works.”

“Goodness, you look…” Clarke grinned and finally turned to meet the girl who had her hands over her eyes at first. “Hi.”

“Not so bad yourself,” Lexa smiled. “Took me twelve hours, but I finally found you.”

“But are you sure I’m the right one?”

“I give up at this point,” she shook her head and kissed her girlfriend. “You’ll just have to do.”

“What’s this that I hear you’d win in a fight?”

“I said I’d win and make you fall in love with me.”

“We’ll fight about this another day,” Clarke decided as Lexa wrapped her arms around her neck.

**Found my girl!**

The picture that came next was both grinning. Lexa wore Clarke’s helmet that was left over from the promotion table and earned a kiss on her cheek as she blushed with the display.
The halls were full. The crowds were alive and the excitement was absolutely addicting, coursing through the convention center like its own entity, sweeping through hallways and meeting rooms, infecting everyone it came in contact with, and the stars themselves were not immune.

“Do you know why I love this?” Clarke sighed and smiled dreamily.

“Because you’re a dork?” Raven supplied.

“Because–”

“Because my girlfriend is geographically locked in the same place as I am. Contractually, even,” Lexa answered, leaning against the doorway to the tiny green room behind the main stage.

“Lexa!” Clarke smiled so big she was convinced her face was stuck that way.

Before she could fully brace for it, Lexa felt arms around her neck and her girlfriend tackling her with affection. It was one of the greatest feelings in the world, and she would gladly give up all sleep and even take an early flight just to have a second of that.

Two weeks wasn’t anywhere close to the longest they’d been apart, but any kind of time and distance just felt long. Clarke squeezed her girlfriend tight, inhaling all of her as gluttonously as she could, not caring at all what else was happening.

All around them, the green room ebbed and flowed with people coming and going, with handlers rushing along guests and panels and taking pictures. But neither Thor nor Harley cared at all.

Both of their assistants quickly went about adjusting schedules for the inevitable begging and pleading that came when they got together.

“I missed you so much,” Lexa smiled into Clarke’s shoulder.

“Dinner tonight, right?”

“Definitely.”

“Maybe after the Heroes and Villains panel we can do some looking around?” It was said with that kind of pout that Lexa knew she’d give into in a minute. And then the eyes.

“Costumes?” she groaned.

All Clarke could do was grin.

“She’s incredible. One of the most amazing directors I’ve ever worked with,” Clarke gushed on the panel, earning a squeeze on her arm. “We had so much fun making it.”

“There were many days spent on wires though, where you were not as excited,” the director teased. “The fight scenes, though. Clarke actually scared two trained stunt doubles.”

“I get a little close, sometime,” the actress shrugged, earning a smile.

Deep in the crowd, Lexa smiled, familiar with the descriptions of Clarke having to apologize
profusely to a few guys she got slightly too eager to pummel with her magic hammer.

**My girl is lethal. Check out her panel for Thor 2’s trailer unveil. You won’t be disappointed!**

@-Woods

A picture appeared attached to her words, that depicted Clarke at the panel. The second appeared of her with blood streaming down her face, over her chin, her nose broken, a smile wide and bloody with thumbs put up to signify she was alright.

“Is there any truth to the rumors of a DC/Marvel crossover?” a fan asked from the line of questions as soon as the panel started to wrap up.

“I’ve never actually thought it a possibility,” Clarke shook her head, adjusting in her seat. “I’m honestly a little nervous to work with Harley Quinn, or Lexa Woods. But I know we have a lot of things in store for Thor.”

“So no comment?”

“I don’t make the deals, I just wield the hammer.”

The crowd chuckled at her answer, though didn’t accept it much.

“Would you want that though?”

Nervously, Clarke adjusted again and thought about the question while one of her costars hopped in and said something about constantly expanding.

“Lexa is amazing. What’s she’s done with the character is amazing. I’m in awe of her, and truly, I’d be daunted to work with her.”

“Next question is a bit broader on the themes–” the moderator interrupted the train of thought, clearly steering them back toward the task at hand.

Lexa watched her girlfriend on the stage and she smiled and blushed to herself because it was important and she never actually heard those kind of words of support. Clarke was viciously protective, but to hear her describe her craft in those kind of ways, was just mesmerizing, and it made Lexa a little confused.

I’m just madly in love with her #ThorlyQ- @-Woods

It was a rarity that she got a minute. And she couldn’t say agents and studious didn’t constantly give her warnings and tell hr to keep down the love for the competition, but Clarke long since ignored it, instead constantly being her girlfriend’s biggest fan, being the fan of every female hero or star or crew member.

It didn’t help that she cut out a meet and greet to go to Lexa’s panel. It didn’t help that she was so damn excited about it that she took to wearing a Daddy’s Little Monster shirt. It didn’t help, but Clarke didn’t care. She was very in love with her girlfriend and her talent and her promise, and she loved to be that person.

“I feel very protective over Harley,” Lexa explained, her hands held out and moving to emphasize her words. “I’m protective over who she could be, and I hate that her relationship is deemed iconic. It should be infamous in the way that all terrible things are. A cautionary tale.”
“But this movie explores that relationship, doesn’t it?”

“It does. But we are very careful in how we handled it. Some want to call it Harley’s weakening. I call it a rebirth, and that’s how we went at it,” she nodded, motioning for the director to help.

Clarke took a picture of the panel and smiled to herself.

“She’s just so brilliant, isn’t she?” she beamed to Raven.

“Sure.”

“Thanks,” she smiled, undeterred by her friend’s disinterest.

**Harley Quinn for president. @-Griffin** Clarke wrote, smiling to herself as she attached a convincing picture.

The panel continued, winding down. Raven tugged at her friend’s sleeve to get her somewhere on time.

“The helmet is too bulky. How do you wear this?” Lexa complained, adjusting the plastic toy that kept falling in her own eyes.

“How do you wear all of this makeup,” Clarke frowned in the mirror.

There was an answer, or at least she thought she had one, and then Lexa looked up watched her girlfriend adjusted the tights and short, short short short shorts. She always knew that Clarke liked her uniform, and now she understood it. The helmet fell over her eyes again.

“You look good. Great. You look really great,” she managed, shyly peeking from beneath the wing helmeted visor.

“Not so bad yourself, God of Thunder.”

Regaining herself, Lexa smirked and twirled the toy hammer. She was nervous, for many reasons, but she was very in love, and that was enough. She would follow whatever crazy scheme her girlfriend would come up with.

“Shall we, my lady,” Lexa offered her elbow.

**Got to dress up as my favorite hero! @-Woods.** Lexa posted the picture of her in a helmet and her girlfriend dressed as herself.

**Finally got to do ComicCon up right @-Griffin.** Clarke put up a few minutes later.

“It was a good year. I liked the trailer,” Lexa grinned, arm around her girlfriend’s shoulder as they made the way down

“This was our last time together for like three months.”

“We have a few days.”

“Not long enough,” Clarke complained, holding the hand that was near her shoulder. A yawn came despite herself.
“Hey, you know how you kept saying how ou liked my work, and stuff? You know that I love watching you, and I’d be down right afraid of working with you, too, right?”

“No, I mean… I don’t know. You’re just…. You’re good, Lex. I do alright.”

“They might try to compare us, but that’s not what we do.”

“I know. I’m just. You blow me away,” Clarke promised, kissing Lexa’s knuckles as they walked toward the car waiting to take them home.

“You knock my socks off.”

“You’d make a pretty good hero, just so you know.”

“I like being bad a little more,” Lexa chuckled, kissing Clarke’s temple.

“Me too.”
Separation

Chapter Summary

how about one where (AU or canon) Clarke and Lexa have been separated for some length of time but when finally back in the same space they are forced to be around other people and struggle both with being around each other again and not being able to get away by themselves and basically have very little chill about everything

After fifteen days, Clarke was grumpy.

It wasn’t a normal kind of grumpiness that came with too little sleep or maybe a blister that annoyed the owner with every step. Instead, it was a sad kind of grump that was bothered by the entire world for existing solely to keep her apart from the best night’s sleep she ever had because it came with a warm body that smelled like flowers and fields.

The first few nights, Clarke was more than distracted enough with the business of working around Arkadia and seeing her friends and family again. By the time she stumbled into her little room at the end of the ship, she was too exhausted to think about anything other than hitting the pillow before she collapsed. By the end of that week though, she found herself having trouble falling asleep and more importantly, by the time she woke up, she was wrapped up in her pillow, burying her face in it.

By the second week, the realization became apparent, and the news was a shock to her, but still Clarke fought against it. To crave someone was against her nature, and she stubbornly asserted her independence by pretending that she did not miss the warpaint-clad Commander.

It failed tremendously until the third week when she found herself tossing and turning with no news of the leader for a few days, and in the dark of the room, she whispered to herself the truth.

After twenty-two days, Lexa was throwing things around her tent.

Stuck in the south due to the unseasonably long rains, her entire trip was delayed. To her people, Lexa was undeterred, stalwart, even. And yet when she checked reports every night, she saw that she was on the wrong side of the river for that time of year.

There wasn’t even anything she was rushing back for, explicitly, and yet Lexa found herself homesick for a feeling that was almost foreign, just a distant memory that she forgot to remember. And so, without even thinking, without giving another thought to her dour mood, she tossed this and that around her room in frustration.

For a week, she toured the south, going deeper and deeper into it to places she only vaguely recognized as places she visited when she was younger. Still, the rain fell, and still, she sighed before staying up much too late analyzing what it meant to be so infatuated with the girl who fell from the sky.

After thirty days, Clarke was smitten.

Her anger simmered until the realization came to her that she could not stop thinking of anything other than Lexa’s lips. The few months they had together before their duties finally encroached
enough to make them move again, they were the best months she could ever remember having, and her head swirled with many thoughts and especially the memories.

Without even meaning to, she found herself daydreaming about the way Lexa’s skin was warm against her own cheek. How the skin of her back was soft and betrayed the ripple of muscles that slumbered there. She had frequent thoughts about the noises Lexa made when Clarke used her tongue. Her taste. That made her mouth water. Clarke was certain she was about to bite a hole in her own lip stifling the urges she had to hold inside of her.

In the evenings, when things were quiet and she was finished distracting herself with mundane parts of the day, the flashes of sunlight on Lexa’s shoulders, or the feeling of the hum when she was kissed on the neck, were vibrant phantom limbs that haunted Clarke.

And she realized how eager she was to find any kind of reason to return to the capital.

After forty-seven days, Lexa was despondent.

Not even home for a full week, not even able to make plans to find an excuse to venture to visit the Sky People, before she found herself called to oversee the territorial disputes of two groups in the north. With a nod of her head, she pursed her lips and had arrangements made, gone before she got more than two nights in her own bed.

The two nights were a torture unto themselves. If she closed her eyes and focused intently, she could still smell the persistent smell of Clarke among the sheets. Through her dreams danced the images of arching back and pale hips. It felt as if her entire skeleton was infused with this response to the faintest sniff of honeysuckles.

Before she left, she found herself face down in her bed, filling her lungs greedily, as if she could happily smother herself in the scent and just die right there. Instead, she lived, and got herself on horseback again.

After sixty-one days, Clarke found herself agitated.

When she was welcomed to the capital only to find out that Lexa was no where close, that she was gone off to fight some battle, the ambassador swallowed her dejection and nodded, continuing her mission of offering trades for goods.

When she slipped into Lexa’s room for the night, given to her by word of the Commander herself, she took her time, feeling oddly more alone and more at home. Clarke ran her fingertips along the edge of bed, along the couch, along the chair, along the side table before taking a seat and sighing as her eyes drifted to the large windows.

Already dark outside, she stared at the lights and laid back, not even bothering to light a few candles. She didn’t need the light. With another heavy sigh, she laid back and took a deep breath. When she rolled over and grabbed a pillow, swallowing the smell of Lexa, she found a piece of paper and pulled it out, shifting to pull in the light from the fireplace and see the sketch she once did.

After eighty days, Lexa was vengence.

She was fire on the field, and she finished the hunt for the rest of the reapers with blood smeared all over her blades and face. The dispute took them far west, and the string of reapers who tortured the remnants at the edge of the empire had been a problem in waiting.

Even on the return home, the Commander did not let up, calling for double time and exhausting her guard despite the fact that she was almost certain that a particular girl was not hanging around,
waiting for her return. She barked orders and snapped when they were delayed.

Ever since she realized that she was madly in love with the stupid ambassador who liked to make her life incredibly difficult and did not listen at all, she was a woman on fire, and everyone knew it, yet no one said anything, in fear of her wrath.

At the end of the night, when all was quiet and the world was asleep, all Lexa could do was lay in her tent and count the seconds as the night passed.

After ninety-five days, Clarke was on fire.

When the word came that there would be a visit from the Commander, a squeal nearly escaped her lips. The memories of which she found herself feasting were not nearly enough to sustain her or even appease her appetite. Clarke was gluttonous for more. She needed more of the taste of Lexa’s stomach, and she was fretful she was forgetting the smell of the skin beneath her left breast, all things the ambassador would never willingly let slip away.

And so, she found herself awake at dawn, awaiting the arrival of the esteemed guest under the pretense of outlining their territory and finishing with the Mountain. It didn’t matter the reason. Three months, and Clarke was ready to walk to Polis herself and tell everyone it was for orgasms that made her forget her own name. It was valid enough reason, she thought. Hell, the leader of their entire world nearly said the same.

On day ninety-six, Lexa was in the best mood anyone could ever remember.

“Welcome, Commander,” Kane greeted her happily. He bowed in his deference before clasping Indra’s hand. “Indra. You look well.”

“You have done a lot with this place,” the warrior nodded.

The leader of the expedition didn’t say anything. She spent her time ignoring the greetings as best she could, scanning the sea of people for that familiar stock of blonde that she was afraid she’d fabricated entirely.

Until it appeared and she felt herself breathe again, letting go of a tenseness in her muscles that’d been there since they separated.

“We have much to show you,” the leader welcomed them all eagerly.

The crowd that formed made it difficult to move through it, formed an almost impassable and insurmountable current of which Lexa delicately attempted to navigate without being increasingly obvious. To let anyone know what she really wanted would be dangerous, in some way, she was convinced. Conditioned to distrust happiness, she refused to put in in jeopardy by making it known. It was no secret that Clarke was a weakness that she craved.

Unsure of what she even itched to do, Clarke smiled and breathed, swallowing air as if it were new and she’d just arrived from underwater. She followed along as best she could, bashful suddenly when she met the familiar green that was a forest and alive. She knew the color intimately, probably having seen it much closer than anyone else in the entire world. It was her’s, and her’s alone.

Welcomed and greeted, the guests followed along, seeing everything Kane had prepared, including the improvements to the fence, the hunting, the smoke houses, and all of the intricacies that their daily life now included. Like a good leader, Lexa listened with interest, feigning as best she could, all the while stealing glances at a certain blonde who lingered along with the group.
The festivities had been planned since word was given that there would be a meeting of the two
groups. Clarke found herself vigorously thrown into helping. As the night descended and the fires
from the accompanying camping guests outside began to form, the ambassador realized she had
ultimately ruined any chances of stealing the Commander.

Drunk with punch and the late hour, the groups merged and enjoyed themselves as best they could.
The unease gradually diminished over the past year, though it was still apparent at times. Lexa did
not know what to do with it, and for a night, she didn’t want to care.

From across the way, Clarke watched the Commander, watch her blatantly sip from the heavy
drink that made herself a little dizzy. Viridian eyes met her own every time she looked up, and did
nothing to deter her from continually checking. Lit by flame and fire and the lights that could be
brought outside, the darkness left them dilated, rimmed in this dark green that reminded Clarke of the
forest after it rained.

No conversation was especially entertaining or even interesting. Nothing could compare with the
distraction of the blue eyes and the low cut of the top. Voraciously, Lexa swallowed those images
and felt the drink make her brain swirl with the knowledge of what her tongue could do to the girl
who once spit in her face and defeated an entire mountain.

It took well into the night until Clarke noticed that the crowd was slimming itself down. It took even
longer to realize she could escape. It took an eternity until she did, and it took the rest of the millennia
to hear the flap to the tent open.

“It took you long enough,” Clarke grinned, leaning against the table in the tent.

The same table she knew too well, it made her smile when she saw it set up in the Commander’s
tent. It made her smile that the guards let her in without a question either, but she didn’t want to think
about it too much.

“Ninety-six days,” Lexa shook her head. “And only because I had to march an army all of the way
out to this trash heap—”

“Hey.”

“You weren’t going to come back to the capital?” she asked, tossing her belt on a chair. There was
disappointment in her voice.

Across the room, Clarke uncrossed her legs and then recrossed them. She looked down, almost
guilty at her own hand in their separation. Lexa tossed her coat on the pile.

“Next week. I believe that we have a meeting scheduled.”

“You made up an excuse for me?”

“I was trying.”

“Ninety-six days. That’s a lot of days,” Lexa realized, buzzing and fluttering close to Clarke as if she
were a flame.

“This last day felt the longest,” Clarke sighed.

When Lexa saw her look up, she met her eyes and gulped. How blue could be so warm and so deep
and so welcoming and so much like home, was a mystery, but there they were, and there she was,
stuck and lost.
“Never again,” the Commander decided.

“Oh yeah? How do you prop–” The words were cut off by Lexa’s hand on Clarke’s hip, and the sudden closeness that tinged the air a kind of summer storm between them. “-ose that?”

“Come back with me.”

Thighs touching, hips hovering, palms on shirts, burning for skin, the offer is clouded with this kind of lust that glows in Lexa’s eyes. Clarke knew not to make a decision in the state she found herself. Instead, she leans forward slightly, her hands finding ribs beneath the thinness of shirt material.

“You don’t mean it,” Clarke whispered. Her nose slid along Lexa’s. She closed her eyes when her lips moved toward the ones she wanted to kiss. Her lips remained untouched and she sighed.

“I wanted to tell you to come back the day you left.”

“I can’t leave.”

Lexa sighed this time, letting her forehead dip until it rested on Clarke’s. She felt deft fingers play with the nape of her neck, slip along her shoulders and jaw. All she could do was grip her hips tighter and growl.

“I can’t do another ninety-six days.”

“Then don’t.”

“I can’t stay here.”

“Sure you can. I’ll make it worth your while,” Clarke promises, pushing her hips forward, dragging her hands over Lexa’s clavicles. She felt the breath there. “Are you going to kiss me or not?”

“I’m going to do more than kiss you.”

It never had a chance to be calm. Instead, it is teeth and held breaths. Lexa’s hands slid up Clarke’s side and she clung as tight as she could. There was something preposterously fulfilling in the way Clarke’s lungs expanded and what her moan felt like in her palms.

“Come back with me,” Lexa begged, breathless and needy.

“Okay,” Clarke nodded.

“Really?”

“Just shut up,” she groaned and hopped up so that she was on the table and her legs were open.

Frantic, and before she could change her mind, Lexa obliged. It was better than she ever could have imagined, better than she remembered, and all Lexa could do was jump into the warmth that was Clarke. The way Clarke’s hands dug into her neck and shoulders. The way her hips rolled when Lexa slipped her hands down her pants. The way hot, open kisses bruised her neck.

The floor was good enough. Clarke didn’t need anything else. The clothes were a pile around them, a nest, and Lexa never wanted to stop, and so she didn’t. And Clarke didn’t want to stop, and so she didn’t.

“I can’t do ninety-six days,” Lexa murmured. She sucked and kissed Clarke’s chest.
The blonde beneath her smiled and purred. The weight of the Commander was suddenly not so foreign, not so forgotten.

“I can’t either.”

“I can’t do another dinner where I stare at you and think about this.”

“I can’t either.”

“How many more times tonight until I convince you to come back with me?”

With a shake of her head, Clarke tilted her chin and looked at the girl that wormed her way down her body again. The appearance of bruises, both from lips and grips, were beginning to rear their heads beneath her skin. She didn’t care at all. She wanted more.

Lips moved lower and as much as she wanted to argue, Clarke only made a strangled noise and wanted more.

“Ninety-six.”

With a smirk, Lexa lifted her head, as if to argue before nodding, lifting her eyebrows, and agreeing.
Chapter Summary

Im sure you probably saw the newest ep, where lexa bows to Clarke. Can your write something that goes deeper into it maybe the kiss we all wanted to happen.

There should have been quiet. The world was an awful kind of silent, and yet Lexa was deafened by the pounding of her blood in her ears. She knew there had to be a kind of stillness in the world because it was night, and the lights were all burning so low that it meant people were asleep or going to sleep, and yet, all she heard was a kind of pulsating heartbeat stuck in her ears that must have woken the very Earth from its slumber.

It felt like ages passed and it felt like the world was electric. As soon as her knees hit the ground, Lexa regretted it. Not because of what it meant, but because of the act itself. She was suddenly very bare and very much aware that it was a precarious position she did not enjoy or see herself in often.

Though the words came out slowly, came out shakily, they came out. As soon as they were, Lexa took a deep breath, swallowed the lump in her throat as best she could though it threatened to strangle her.

It should have been quiet, the world and the stars and the night at that moment when Clarke held out her hand for the Commander to stand. And it was. It was so quiet that the nonexistent breeze was howling through the crackling air, and the screaming in her veins, just beneath her skin, was a dull tingle in her bones. All of it was overwhelming, as if entire storms were happening inside her, so much that she understood what those summer storms, the ones with the heat lightning rolling along the water and fields, she realized what it was to be within one of them, or to contain one herself.

And all the while an entire summer storm raged across her sternum, marched through her veins, with the cacophony that came on humid summer nights, Lexa felt her face remain stoic and rigid.

By the time she stood, Lexa felt completely different. Baptized and washed, completely anew, the Commander stood there. If she could have, if she really could have heard anything, she might have heard her very spirit leave, felt it rush out of her, if she hadn’t been filled with something new entirely so swiftly that she didn’t realize anything had ever been different.

“You can’t… mean this,” Clarke swallowed and shook her hand. For a moment she stared at the Commander, and just as swiftly, her eyes dropped to their hands that were still grasped. She ran her thumb along Lexa’s knuckles.

“I’ve never meant anything more.”

“I don’t believe you.”

“I know.”

“You made it so I can’t believe you.”

“I'll probably die for it,” Lexa inhaled and nodded, meeting blue eyes once more.
She was never afraid of death, not truly, not vigorously, and yet she never truly fathomed it, not even
with blades against her throat. But she knew that eventually her decision at the Mountain, her
betrayal, her choice, Clarke— they would all come together and kill her, sooner, rather than later. She
did not say those words to elicit guilt or to fight it at all. She’d resigned herself to it, to her fate, in
fact. Clarke would never trust her, and it would kill her, somehow. Once she knew that, she was
more at ease in life than she’d ever been before.

It was a good enough reason to die. It was her reason. And then nothing else would matter. That was
the relief in it. Nothing would matter.

“You shouldn’t promise these things,” Clarke cleared her throat, moved her hand slightly, playing
with Lexa’s, intertwining their hands further, knotting them despite her words. “To me.”

“I can, and I have.”

“If you-”

“I won’t.”

Despite her words and worry, Clarke refused to let go for Lexa’s hand. She took a step closer and
erased any space between them. Neither could hold the gaze, and instead their hands dropped to their
hips.

“I’m so angry,” Clarke confessed. Lexa simply nodded.

It was not unlike the first time, like the first kiss that happened what felt like years ago, as if they’d
watched it happen to two completely different people. Except Clarke reached her neck out, hovered,
pulled back, this time while Lexa remained fixed.

And then it came all at once, like the rain, like a storm, as they are known to do. First with a few
sprinkles and then suddenly, with a rush, with a gust, with a downpour. The air was filled with
slanted fat rain drops and Lexa was drowning.

She hadn’t thought she’d ever feel Clarke’s lips again, and then she did and they were better than she
remembered because she hadn’t allowed herself to remember.

Once she had Clarke’s lips, all she could think of was memorizing it in case this was the last time.
Every time would be the last time, and so she didn’t waste this one.

Lexa grabbed Clarke’s neck and kissed her back, kissed her harder until she earned a hum which
only brought the thunder.

As soon as it came, the rain blew away, Clarke pulled back and snatched back her hand, almost
ashamed of herself. Lexa remained standing there, the air was hot and humid and muggy.

“I won’t,” Lexa repeated.

She watched Clarke wipe her mouth slightly, nod, and turn to leave her room. With a heavy sigh and
exhausted brain, Lexa sat on the edge of her bed and stared at the floor, wondering if this was what
Atlas felt like at the end of the day when he took the world off for just a moment.
Royalty

Chapter Summary

Two princesses who can’t be together but secretly love each other.

Inside the palace, the evening roared. The ballroom filled and ebbed as the doors were thrust open and the inhabitants flowed out into the garden. Like a chamber of the heart, it pulsed, keeping beat with the band that played while the platelet-like people in gowns and tuxedos all swirled about, dizzy on wine and champagne and the evening.

The only reason to go to such a frivolous display was because it was simply what was to be done. The same conversations happened at the speed of sound, over and over and over again. So formulaic and redundant, that even the most seasoned veteran would lose their mind if they did not keep moving.

The only reason Lexa went to the party was because she knew Clarke would be there. It was a masochistic kind of reason, but it was her’s and that was who she was. Just one more look, she told herself, every single time. One more glance, one more smile, one more forced, polite introduction where they pretended to not remember meeting already.

The only reason Clarke went to the party was because she knew Lexa would be there. As much as that wasn’t a good reason, when she saw her across the room, in the giant rush of people mingling, she held her breath and was grateful for that.

They were smart enough to wait until the liquor started flowing. Constantly keeping track of each other, silently catching each other looking and smiling, small, tiny things that no one else noticed. When Clarke nudged her head toward a door, Lexa didn’t mean to follow. But her feet had other ideas.

She kept her distance, as she made her way down the hall, carefully watching the golden hair and the bare back weave through the crowd before slipping into a room.

Anxiously, Clarke waited. It was torture, and she knew it was wrong. Her mother would have her excommunicated, expelled, extracted, exonerated, extinguished. But she couldn’t help it, and she didn’t want to help it.

It was the dress. She had a thing for Lexa in green. It made her eyes feel like emeralds, like the way the moss grew down by the side of the river when they were kids. It was just Lexa, if she was being honest.

As soon as the door opened, she waited, her heart stuttering and skipping. The only light that existed was from the windows, casting pillars of moonlight that made everything pale and colorless.

Lexa didn’t say anything when she clicked the lock behind her. She didn’t know what to say and she didn’t have to.

In an instant, Clarke felt the familiar lips and she clung with all of her might. She pulled Lexa to her and she felt herself pushed against the wall. It was like being reacquainted with someone she always
knew. Her dress was pulled up, hot teeth and tongue were humid against her neck.

Gracelessly, Lexa was everywhere, unable to control herself when she had Clarke beneath her, pinned between her and a wall. It didn’t help that there were noises, the little gasp, the murmur, the hum, the moan. If that was all she got, she was going to make a meal of it and savor it all.

Nothing stopped Clarke. She rolled against the wall and pushed Lexa against it. Slid her thigh between her’s and pushed against her harder.

“I love you,” Clarke whispered, her forehead against Lexa’s as she makes her moan before she tilts her head back and clenches tighter.

It took just a few moments, for her to come down, for it to stop feeling euphoric. The tiny little kisses Clarke peppered along her collarbones, the soft, lingering lazy kind along her neck, the corner of her mouth, under her chin, they anchored her to the real world.

With all the effort inside her, Lexa kissed her back. She pushed her back against the opposite wall and dropped to her knees, carefully pushing up the dress. Hands on her thighs, she didn’t stop until Clarke was lifeless, unable to hold herself up. Carefully, she fixed the dress, smoothed it all again as she moved her way up, adding kissed to her favorite parts.

“I love you, I love you, I love you,” Lexa chanted between each of them.

Clarke allowed it to happen for as long as her heart could stomach it. The words felt heavy against her skin. Her chest broke in half.

With a final kiss, she stood and ran her hand over Lexa’s cheek and chin. One last time, she promises herself before walking back out into the party.

The neighboring families were friends for centuries and all of history. Lexa couldn’t remember a time in her life without Clarke in it. Every summer, every holiday, every stuffy party she was forced to wear itchy dressed to, a certain blonde with big blue eyes that reminded her of the sky on the best days, was there, beside her, getting her into and out of trouble.

Lexa was whatever Clarke needed.

An accomplice to steal those good cookies when no one was looking. A lookout while she stole the chauffeur’s hat. The one who could reach the BB gun from the pantry. The patient to her doctor, the shooter to her goalie, the co-pilot to her pilot.

It was always that way, since the beginning of time.

“I’ll save you!” Lexa yelled, running through the field, her fake sward too big for her, flopping wildly.

All of ten and gawky and tall, she was the perfect knight in shining armor. An elaborate tale unfolded that took her and Clarke and a collie named Dragon all across the grounds. But as the sun set, they knew the game had to end, that evil had to be vanquished, once and for all, before supper.

“The witch has taken me!” Clarke yelled over her shoulder as she sprinted down the back hill toward the water.

A second later, she collapsed to the ground, the dog licking at her cheek before laying down close to her, panting from the exercise.
Lexa sheathed her sword in her belt, though it dragged on the ground as she took the last few steps. 

“I don’t know how to remove a curse,” she said anxiously, kneeling close to the pretend, peacefully sleeping princess.

“You kiss me,” Clarke rasped, trying not to open her lips, peaking through just one eye.

“Oh!” she nodded before looking at her there, with the grass around her, the summer gold wheat blending into her hair. “Oh.”

It took a second, a little bit of bravery, a lot more needed than what the dragons and the spells and the treacherous journeys required of the knight. She leaned over and kissed her, right there in the field with the sun above them and the smell of grape soda on their breath.

“My brave knight,” Clarke pretended to wake. She watched the dopey smile on her friend’s face.

Even as Clarke got up and ran ahead back toward the palace, Lexa lingered for a moment, unable to get up as quickly. She squinted and watched her running, and she knew she was in trouble.

Deep in the palace, atop the second stairwell in the East wing, the same room that the servants gave up telling to turn the volume down, blared. Even late into the night, the music could be heard as a dull kind of hum, though late into the night, no one really cared.

That was how Clarke got the room in her own side of the house. Music. Loud music, playing late into the night herself. It was her need for noise to block out the overwhelming quiet.

The lights from the holiday kept away the dark. The trees in every corner, the garland, the ancient white glow that warmed the wings and rooms, it all made the world seem different. Something about the night being broken up by festivity was surreal.

Clarke didn’t care about any of it. She let the music strum along, she moved her hips along with the rhythm.

For the past forever, for as long as she could remember, Lexa was part of her life. And then it changed. She saw her one summer and it was different. Nearly ready to graduate their individual boarding schools, it was their last holiday before the real world, and Clarke was not wasting time.

Lexa visited often. Clarke liked Lexa’s country, but she loved having her for the holidays, even if it was just for a few days.

She slid her hands up Lexa’s side, held her closer. If she was being honest, she wouldn’t have ever let go. Lips moved to her neck, and the familiar little noise escaped her mouth, spurring the princess atop her to bite a little harder.

“What does it mean though?” Clarke asked, pulling away slightly.

“Clarke,” Lexa sighed, her head dropping slightly. “Don’t ask that, please.”

“Why not?”

“Because… the more you talk about something beautiful, the less beautiful it becomes, or something,” she explained, dipping her head once again to kiss the princess. If she didn’t think about it, didn’t allow herself more than this moment, it wouldn’t hurt. That was what she kept telling herself.
“I think I love you.”

“You can’t tell me things like that,” she clenched her jaw and shook her head, pulling away a little more. “You can’t.”

“Why not?”

“Because I know I love you, and that’s hard enough.”

From the bed, Clarke ran her fingertips along her best friend’s cheek, ran her thumb along her jaw, tugged her earlobe softly. Her entire life, she’d been in love with Lexa. Her entire life, it’d been forbidden.

They had this. They had the occasional slumber party, and longing looks. The make outs at parties and the arguments over their lives. They had nights spent running outside and hiding in the boathouse. They had an entire lifetime of moments, and they were fleeting, the older they got.

“We’ll always be us, won’t we?” Clarke asked, breathing heavily after a long, deep kiss, tongue making her weak.

“I don’t know,” Lexa shrugged.

“Do you want to run away with me still?”

“I’ve been ready since I was ten,” she smiled.

Instead of running, she knew what was coming. She pulled off her own shirt and reached over to turn off the light. There wouldn’t be disappearing together like a fairy tale to a cabin in the woods with dancing animals. They were destined to sit on thrones and continue lineages that were thousands of years in the making. Lexa felt the weight of it all.

And then Clarke giggled against her neck and she clung tighter.

It was done purposefully, the avoiding. It wasn’t difficult as they would have imagined. Classes and different majors made it easier. It was an almost unspoken rule. Clarke kept to the North side of campus, surrounded by labs and her science and her research. Lexa took to the South, with her old ivy-covered buildings and the library that was a church to her.

As the years continued, they saw less of each other, because it was easier. Clarke had Finn, hand-picked and an excellent match, if they still believed in marriage for political gain. To the public, that was ridiculous, surely no one did that. But the princesses knew better, knew the massive game of politics to which their lives were leading up to, and had been forever.

It didn’t mean that there weren’t still those moments though.

There were lunches and parties and always seeing each other as often as possible, despite the avoiding. It was how the world worked.

Lexa stayed away for duty. Clarke knew it. It was one of the reasons she was so deeply in love with the broody, melancholic girl. She wore duty like the world on her shoulders, gracefully navigating it, not even straining, or at least not looking like she was straining.

Clarke hated it.

There was a moment when her mother caught them once, where Clarke had been brave, but it faded.
Lexa stood there, never looking away, head held high, ready to fight an army for her. Clarke pulled her back and told her never again.

It lasted a few weeks, but it was the moment it became officially unofficial, and Clarke hated herself for it.

“Don’t be mad at me,” Lexa worried, fiddling with the cigarette between her fingers. She looked away and inhaled deeply, the red end of it burning across the room.

“I’m not, “Clarke lied.

“I know you.”

“I’m not mad at you.”

“I just can’t do it anymore,” Lexa explained, shaking her head and crossing her arms.

Clarke watched her inhale again and blow smoke from the side of her mouth. Her hair was a mess, an absolute wavy mess, the ends curling with sweat from dancing all night. The vodka made her lips tingle, and Clarke knew it, watched her the entire night. She wouldn’t have been smoking if it weren’t for the liquor in her veins.

“Why don’t try?” she offered.

“I’ve asked you that a million times. You shut me down. I have a life now. I’ve made promises,” Lexa countered, pushing her hair around, digging her hand in her pocket again.

“Don’t you want me?”

“Are you kidding me?” she scoffed, tossing the cigarette into someone’s old cup. It sizzled before extinguishing itself. “You’re the only thing I’ve ever wanted.”

“I know.”

“I was ready to give it all up for you,” Lexa stood up, pushing herself off of the desk she leaned against in someone’s dorm. The party raged downstairs, their security waited everywhere. “I was ready to be absolutely nothing with you! I was willing to give up the throne, my family, but you…” she shook her head and ran her hand through her hair again.

Clarke inhaled and held it, biting the inside of her cheek, willing herself not to cry. Her knee jiggled anxiously, shaking her body as she looked away from the tiger that prowled through the room and had the lingering bit of nicotine on her lips.

“You are the one that didn’t want me,” she reminded her, pointing at her chest, pointing out the window to emphasize her point. “You’re the one that said it was too hard. I was the one who put it on the line, and now, I’ve taken my steps toward my future without you.”

“I know.”

“Don’t you dare ask me if I want you,” Lexa squared up to Clarke, angry and bitter. She ducked her head until her forehead was against the princess who refused to look at her. Her jaw clenched so tight she was certain it would break sooner rather than later. “I was going to set myself on fire to have you. You wouldn’t have given me a bucket of water.”

Clarke closed her eyes and felt her hover, inhaled the familiar smell, the leather of her jacket, the
vodka, the honey of her skin, the salt of the sweat that slid down her neck. Her heart broke every which way.

“I can’t do this anymore,” Clarke murmured.

Lexa felt her anger swell before it dissipated when those eyes met her own. Like a popped balloon, she remained there, pushed back slightly as Clarke stood up straighter.

“Let’s leave. Right now,” she said. “I mean it, Lex. I can’t… I don’t want to do this anymore. I don’t want back rooms and hating you because I love you.”

“Clarke…”

“I mean it,” she offered, kissing her quickly, to stop her from objecting, to stop her from talking her out of it.

“We can’t do this anymore,” Lexa shook her head and took a step back, intoxicated in every way.

“Leave with me.”

“Clarke.”

“Please.”

“I’m not doing this again. You can’t do this to me again,” she swallowed and tried to catch her breath.

As soon as the door opened, Clarke knew she wouldn’t see her again, not if it could be avoided. Lexa didn’t even look back, and the princess couldn’t even blame her. Clarke knew that she broke her heart so many times, there must not have been much left, she knew that she did that, and she hated herself more for that than for Lexa leaving.

The church was full, all manner of dignitaries and important people. The news outlets covered it for months. It got to a point at which Lexa gladly and eagerly jumped on the opportunity to tour impoverished countries, to work with remote non-profits just to escape the coverage.

It was the masochist in her though, that made her go. She hadn’t meant to be there, but Clarke sent her an invitation, or her mother did, or somehow it ended up and it was understood that she would be there. It was her duty, and like the entirety of her life, Lexa would bear it with a silent magnanimity.

And then she saw her in that dress, and she was ten years old again, staving off dragons and pilfering cookies from the bakery. She was thirteen again and realized what that little feeling in her chest was when Clarke laughed at her joke. She was fifteen again and recognized the feeling of Clarke’s lips as the feeling of home. She was nineteen and petrified of losing her. She was twenty-two and they were fucking in a spare bedroom at some huge party. She was twenty-four, and lost her, but still had hope.

“You look…” she offered, swallowing deeply to remind herself to exist.

The room cleared as Clarke dismissed her attendants. The people in the cathedral were filling into their seats, excited for it to be over. A polite enough boy was pacing at the other end of the church, almost ready to stand before the world and agree to a life. And Lexa just saw Clarke.

“You’re the most beautiful thing I’ve ever seen.”

“Lena,” Clarke sighed as she turned around to find her old friend. “I didn’t think you would come.”
“On the most important day of your life?”

“I thought… after… I just…”

“It’s always been you, Clarke. I can’t help it. Whatever you’ve wanted from me, I’ve given it, and I wouldn’t change a moment.”

“I can’t do it,” she confessed, looking back at the giant mirror before looking at Lexa once again. “Don’t make me do it.”

“I don’t think anyone’s ever made you do anything, once in your life,” she chuckled.

“It’s supposed to be you,” Clarke whispered. “It’s supposed to be me and you.”

“Don’t say that.”

“Why not? It’s the truth.”

“You’re getting married,” Lexa said, straightening her spine.

“It’s supposed to be us,” Clarke shook her had defiantly. “It’s like you haven’t existed the past few months. I… I can’t live in a world where you don’t exist.”

“I’m right here.”

“I can’t be in a world where we don’t exist.”

Lexa bit her lip and looked at the ground, shuffling anxiously, unsure of why she was there, wanting badly to be anywhere else.

It didn’t help that Clarke approached her, or that she stood close and touched her chin and her cheeks, or that she kissed her softly, and Lexa remembered what it was like to breathe again.

“You said you’d give me whatever I wanted,” Clarke breathed, knitting her eyes together tightly. “I want you.”

“Clarke.”

“It’s always been you. It was always supposed to be you. I’m so sorry. I’m so, so sorry.”

“I…”

“I messed it up. I messed up. I’m asking too much,” Clarke blurted. “But let’s go. I don’t need it. I don’t need any of it. I just need you.”

Lexa kissed her back, pushing her back against the door, shutting her eyes so tight she saw stars with the feeling of lips. She held Clarke’s cheeks, held her neck and she kissed her so hard she thought this was what a star must feel when it collided into another, because surely the universe couldn’t be the same after it happened.

“I’ll love you forever,” Lexa promised as she pulled away. Her eyes fluttered all across Clarke’s face, memorizing every detail. “I’ve only ever loved you.”

“Please?” Clarke asked. “Did I hurt you so much that you can’t see what I want? What I really, truly want?”
“Yes.”

“Give me forever,” she smiled sadly, her fingertips running over Lexa’s lips. “I’ll prove you wrong.”

Lexa just smiled and kissed her again.

“You have me forever. What are you going to do with it?” she whispered.
Outside of the open window, the ocean kept up its steady rhythm. It murmured and whispered against the rocks below, not bothering to change anything at all. The birds called from time to time and the steady rhythm of the waves made a song outside that was soothing and grounding beyond all else.

The hotel room was barely lit in the early dawn light that rose over the sea, but still one of the bodies in the bed shifted slightly. The door to the balcony was open, and the world outside existed only in the small impositions of noise and dawn. Clothes were left, strewn across the floor. There was the remnants of a room service order in the living room. There was the Do Not Disturb on the door that seemed more apt than anyone would guess.

All of it seemed to be waiting for her as she woke, and Clarke first heard the waves, and then heard her thoughts start to pound louder against her skull than the sea outside. She left her own wedding, and she didn’t regret any of it. Not truly.

There was a hand on her hip, and there was a girl she’d been in love with forever in the dim dark of the following morning.

Slowly, Clarke turned over and stared at the sleeping princess beside her. There were bruises on her own shoulders and hips. Her body ached from staying up too late and from distracting herself from thinking too much. But morning let her think until it was all too loud.

And then she listened to Lexa’s breathing. Steady and soft, it was even with the waves and even more effective in soothing her.

Lexa’s hair was messy. Her lips were still puffy from being bitten and kissed far too much, but there was a certain peace and ease that existed on her features that Clarke never recalled seeing before. The girl beside her in bed was lovely. She was kind and gracious and polite and good, genuinely good. Clarke had been in love with her since before she knew what love could possibly mean. And now they were in bed together, hidden, at least, for a little longer.

With her movements, the sleeping one gripped the girl in her arms a little tighter, earning a smile. Clarke ran her fingertips over Lexa’s collarbone and neck before kissing her chin and settling impossibly closer. It was all she ever wanted.

Some hours later, Lexa woke to a streak of sunlight making itself known on her face, and she had Clarke tucked under her chin. Her nose itched with the blonde hair that ended up there, but still, she smiled and inhaled the moment.

The seclusion lasted almost sixteen hours. While the world was frenzied, while their families were in self-defense mode, while the jilted lover left at the altar took it all well enough, everyone scoured the globe for the two princesses who ran off with each other.

To the credit of the hotel, it lasted longer than even Lexa anticipated. Things just always had a way of coming out. A housekeeper offered an entire year’s salary for just a snippet of information, a bellman slipping info to a friend of a friend, or a valet bragging to some buddies. Lexa couldn’t blame them.

The first pictures appeared a few hours later, of them eating breakfast on the balcony. Blurry as it
was, they were clearly labeled and shown to the world through a telescopic lens.

“This settles it,” Lexa decided as she tossed a newspaper onto the table. “We’re caught.”

“We should get out of here,” Clarke decided, relaxing into Lexa’s lap, disinterested in moving as she further stretched out on the couch.

“We should.”

“Where do we go?”

Her voice was much less confident that just a second prior, but Lexa took it as her chance to be brave. She was brave for Clarke, that was plain and simple enough.

“Home.”

“Princess! Princess!” “What happened after the wedding?” “Princess! Over here!” “Have you abdicated?” “Where have you been?” “Princess, Princess, Princess!” “When will you be addressing the public?” “Princess!” “Why did you do it?”

Flashes and camera lenses clicking provided a nice beat and harmony to the barrage of questions that waited the pair at the hotel exit and separately the entrance to the palace once they made it to their destinations.

Both did their best to not notice or listen to them, but it was impossible with the commotion. The human ear has to pick up on a sound, the problem was, they couldn’t find any other sounds in the cacophony that was the press and the media shitstorm they created.

Clarke sat for a moment in the quiet that came when the gates opened and the car cleared the crowd and the outside world. Once inside the gates, she was home, though she just wasn’t sure what that meant quite yet.

“The King requests your presence as soon as you settle,” the assistant explained as soon as Clarke stepped out of the vehicle.

“Is Dad in the garden?”

“The office, your highness.”

“Upstairs?”

“The business office.”

Clarke paused for a moment at the edge of the door, not wholly committed to entering. Her father never went to the business side of things, least of all did he ever have Clarke in there. He was a kind and gentle and mindful man, and he was a doting father to boot. Of all the places she never expected to have the talk she’d been dreading since she was old enough to know it must come, she never wanted it to be in the formal business office.

Already, she knew what it meant.

“I will send word that you are on your way,” the assistant offered as the princess regained herself. She swallowed hard and clenched her jaw before nodding.

There was something different now. She wasn’t sure how, or when, or if, but she knew that things
just couldn’t go back, and she was forever changed by it. But somehow her feet moved, and she made her way down the familiar halls, past the maids and servants that skittered away, afraid to make eye contact.

All through the halls, Clarke took the time to look at the aloof and stern faces of her ancestors and accepted all of their shame. It was hers to wear, and it felt like what she deserved. In her head, she recited their histories, their great accomplishments, and she piled it upon her shoulders willfully.

The corridors that she grew up in, where she chased the dog and skinned her knee and stomped around during winter storms, they were inhabited strictly by ghosts of a life she thought was gone forever.

And as the princess came to her father’s office in the business side of the palace, she took a deep breath before knocking, not allowing the weight of it all to make her spine fold.

“Enter.”

The voice was firm and hollow. It reminded Clarke of when her father caught her blowing off French homework in favor of some terrible weed.

Seated as his desk, King Jacob III did not look up from whatever he was jotting notes on, even when his only daughter walked into his office. Instead, he just finished while Clarke stood in the middle of the room and waited. It was part of her punishment.

She took the time to look around at the rich, deep colors of it all, and she inhaled that smell of her father’s office. This old, oaky musk that was fresh, like his cologne, and reminded her of that hearthy tone the earth gets after a thunderstorm.

There was the official portrait of the family, tucked in its stately gold frame, each with similar aloof sternness to their eyes and jaws, all genetic, she reckoned.

“You’ve made your choice then,” her father finally stated. She wasn’t sure if it was supposed to be a question or not. They both already knew the answer.

Clarke knew enough to tilt her chin up and not look as ashamed as she felt.

The king nodded and capped his pen before tossing it on the desk and leaning back. He set his square jaw and his eyes grew as thin as his pursed lips.

“I am so proud of you, for making your own decision. The bravery you’ve shown– it shouldn’t be lost on anyone,” he managed before furrowing his brow. “But you’ve chosen something else over your responsibility to the country and crown.”

Her heart beat in her chest like a wrecking crew, desperate to take down a cinder block wall. But she did not flinch or move at all.

“On the day you were born, I held you in my hands. You fit, right in my hands,” he explained, holding up his hands and staring at them disbelievingly. “I hope you can one day feel that joy, of purity and as if everything in life was worth it. I hope you never have to live to see the day in which it is taken from you.”

Clarke wouldn’t wipe away the traitor tear that slid down her cheek. She left it there on the carpet and swallowed more down. Just one. That was the last thing she’d leave there.

“Parliament will move to have your titles and all ascribed responsibilities removed in the week,” the
king informed her.

“Where’s Mom?”

“She hasn’t left her room in a week.”

“That’s it then?” Clarke asked, nodding slightly to herself.

“Your actions have affected not only this family, but the state of the entire nation, and as such, as the keeper of the–”

Before he could finish the story, Clarke gathered the bits of her broken heart, looked at him one last time, before turning around and walking out of his office. She knew it would be the last. She knew it, deep down. She knew that it wasn’t him, except that it was him. She knew that he loved her, but he was his country, and he couldn’t escape it. She betrayed him by betraying the duty he placed in her.

Quickly, her ribs turned into fists, squeezing her lungs, but she was doing it all on her own terms.

Inside the office, the noise of anguish could be heard at the end of the hall. What sounded like the desk flipping echoed with a following silence before that was interrupted with a crash of an award against a wall.

“Have my driver made ready,” Clarke muttered to an assistant that quickly followed.

“The King–”

“Wants me gone as soon as possible. Let me help with that. Get the car.”

“Yes, ma’am,” she nodded and scuttled away.

Clarke couldn’t stop moving. She didn’t. She made her way back down the hall of her genetics and glared back at each. She climbed the stairs to her bedroom and looked down a corridor that she knew went to her parents suite, though her body couldn’t do it. Instead, she pushed open the old door and was confronted with her childhood. It’d been years since she’d been there, instead electing to take the palace downtown as her own. But that was just as gone to her as the rest.

From her suitcase which was already left on the bed, she didn’t open it. Instead, she walked over to the dresser and looked at herself, took in the red of her puffy eyes, all made worse with the defiance of it. She took off the earrings which had been a distant aunt’s. She took off the ring which had been her mother’s. She took off the necklace which had been her grandmother’s. She took off everything that wasn’t her’s.

Left with little more than her clothes, she reset her phone and placed it on the bed, neatly leaving herself behind for all of time.

Before she left, Clarke paused and took a deep breath after realizing she hadn’t been breathing in too long.

It was all gone.

Without breaking, she made it back down to the car and waited until they were outside of the gates before the tears came.

“Where to, your highness?”
The driveway turned into the street of the palace, and life continued despite everything feeling as if it were definitely ending.

“Clarke,” she corrected absently.

There was no way she wasn’t anxious, but there was nothing Lexa could do about it. She did her best to ignore the headlines, she did her best to ignore anything else that entered her docket of things to do. Instead, she just allowed herself to be an anxious wreck.

Quietly, Lexa paced through the halls of her childhood. She tried calling Clarke’s cell again, but was once more directed instantly to a non-existent mailbox. So she just kept walking. She meandered toward the open door on the fifth floor. Without really meaning to, Lexa walked into her father’s study and found him sitting in his favorite chair, reading.

“Still no word?” her father asked, once his daughter sat languidly in the chair across from his own.

The king was different than Lexa remembered him as a child. Before her mother died, he was often jovial and laughed so full, his beard would practically vibrate. But some of the life of him disappeared when his wife did, and Lexa was left with not just her father, but a wounded, wounded man.

“What if I ruined everything?” she managed, absently staring at her anxious fingers as they toyed with the fabric on her knee.

The king smiled slightly and set his book down before picking up his tumbler of scotch and taking a sip as he appraised his daughter. It was hard because she looked so much – too much, even– like is wife. Lexa didn’t have King Gus’ wide shoulders and black hair. She didn’t have his calm and reserved nature. She didn’t even have his eyes. The only similarity that his wife used to mock them for were their ears. That was it.

And yet, as she sat there, he saw this woman he almost didn’t recognize. The girl who used to ride on his shoulders, who he used to watch out riding horses, she was gone, and someone with the weight of the world ached quietly across from him.

And she did it all with the same slender jaw and green eyes and chestnut hair as his wife, rest her soul.

“You love her. You’ve loved Clarke since you were five,” he realized as he tried to put a date to it all. “And I didn’t see it. You didn’t ruin anything. To bring love into the world is the best thing anyone can do.”

“I ruined her life.”

“She chose you. You can’t tell me she’ll change her mind.”

“It’s complicated.”

“Yes, it is,” he nodded.

“Did you hear that her father disowned her?”

“I did.”

“Why didn’t you?”
“Would you ever think I could?” he asked, cocking his head slightly.

Lexa finally looked at her father and shook her head. She should have told him from the beginning. She should have done something. Instead, she was left to wait.

“I know I’ve put you in a bad spot, with the world. I’ve disappointed you, and I’ve brought shame—”

“You are anything but a disappointment to me,” the king promised quickly. “You love someone. I’m nothing but happy for you to experience that. I know it is the best feeling in the world.”

“But I messed up the entire—”

“What? Country?” he laughed. “You think the country cares at all? You’re beloved by all of them, and I support you. I always have, and I always will.”

For a few moments, Lexa thought about it. She was uncertain and she was lost, but she had this anchor, and she was beyond grateful. She couldn’t imagine what Clarke would be feeling. To imagine that her father would have not wanted her around was heartbreaking, and she was so grateful. So so grateful.

“Pardon me, your majesty, your highness,” a guard bowed as he entered the room, baseful at having interrupted. “There is someone to see you.”

“We don’t want to see anyone right now,” Lexa shook her head, dismissing him absently.

“It’s Princess Clarke.”

Lexa was out of her chair and pushing past the guard in an instant, flinging him against the door in her haste. All the king could do was chuckle slightly and smile.

“You should have led with that,” the king explained, finishing his drink and picking up his book again.

The sun beamed down on the beachside town as the party kicked up. The carpet was brimming with cameras and pictures and interviews, while everyone else was in good spirits. Every year, it happened to be Lexa’s favorite duty as princess, presiding over the film festival in the remote riviera city. This year proved no different.

“Relax,” Lexa whispered.

Behind her sunglasses, she snuck a look at the girl on her arm.

“I’ve done this a thousand times,” Clarke sighed and reset herself, shaking away the nerves. “Never without my title though. Kind of silly how much I often hated it and now…”

“None of it matters,” her girlfriend nodded and smiled for the camera, tightening her grip on Clarke’s hip. “You know I’d give it all up for you in a second, don’t you?”

“I do.”

“Good,” Lexa decided, kissing Clarke’s temple as they walked along the carpet. “It took me this long to get you, and there’s no way I’m letting go now.”

“Good.”
Jurassic (Part 2)

The water of the river was ice cold compared to the humidity that existed, even at the early hour. A hot, angry kind of buzzing could already be felt, even when the sun wasn’t even fully above the horizon. The sticky mist of the morning dew evaporating hung around the low leaves that littered the barely visible path that Clarke had come to know almost perfectly.

The rain from the previous night left the world fresh and new, washed clean with brute force and fresh water, turning dirt into mud and making the air feel thicker than normal. But still, they headed out before anyone else, following a hidden trail toward the herds.

Clarke filled her canteen and ran a hand full of chilled water along the back of her neck before righting herself and watching the doctor explore. On the edge of the Great Plateau, Lexa leaned against a downed tree and jotted notes between gazing through her binoculars as she took in the different animals.

The world was alive. From the large, monstrous long necks who’s footsteps cocked the world itself, slowly moving toward the edge of the treeline, to the tiniest pack of lizards that hopped and wove their way along tall legs and big feet, Clarke had been right, and it was the best place to see them all. Even though lex a still couldn’t believe that she was seeing dinosaurs. That part still didn’t seem right despite how enthralled she was.

For a few moments, Clarke just watched Lexa look out onto the world, forgetting that she should be taking notes, forgetting that she didn’t want to believe in it, and she saw her give into the majesty of the park, the same feeling that kept Clarke there, and she watched Lexa feel it all, and then pass.

“What do you think of our little park?” Clarke asked, handing over the canteen and drying off her face in her shirt.

To her credit, Lexa took it and tried to figure out the right thing to say, though that felt impossible. She wiped her forearm across her forehead and handed back the canteen.

“It’s beautiful. It’s... It’s everything I ever wished for as a child.

“Jaha wants you to tell him that it’s safe, that the dinosaurs are healthy and behaving normally.”

“I haven’t even begun to figure out the implic–”

“I need you to tell him that the park is unsustainable, and you can’t predict the behavior of ancient animals.”

Clarke adjusted her sunglasses and stared at the confused scientist. Lexa began to talk a few times before taking a deep breath.

“I believe I’ve already done that.”

“I need you to mean it.”

“The scientific discovery... the fact that the science exists for something on this magnitude changes everything, you know that, right?” Lexa shook her head.

“And you know that he can’t open this park.”
“Are you going to show me the predators?” she challenged.

Clarke smirked and shook her head this time before shifting her gaze back to the field and the herds of animals roaming around, as they might have millions of years before. It was a thing of beauty that she’d almost started to view as normal until Lexa appeared.

“Do you want to see the babies?”

“I’m supposed to meet Dr. Lima to look into more of the samples they’ve found in—”

Beside her, a snore erupted as the handler let her head drop, mocking. Lexa pursed her lips and rolled her eyes, waiting for the show to be over. She crossed her arms when Clarke finally woke herself up from the boredom induced nap.

“I’m sorry, I’m sorry,” Clarke cleared her throat. “I just thought you’d like to spend time with actual dinosaurs. But if you’d rather go to the lab and look at—”

Lexa nudged Clarke with her shoulder before turned around as she walked away.

“Are you going to show me or not?” she taunted.

Clarke just smiled and adjusted her glasses before following quickly toward the Jeep.

The first rumble of thunder came as the Jeep rumbled its way toward the small ranch-like establishment on the far end of an old, still muddy, dirty road about two miles from the main campus of the park. As it was slapped in park, Lexa hopped out and covered her eyes as she peered toward the sky, and from the edge of the island, watched a large thunderhead grumble about in the far eastern corner of the horizon. Clouds circled closer to it as it seemed to chug along, complaining the entire way.

“Another storm?”

“We get them almost every other day.” Clarke promised. “One good one per week is a good rule of thumb.” She saw Lexa’s frown grow a little more. “Don’t worry. Raven has the fences and secondary system running sometimes.”

With that, the handler made her way toward the barn looking structure and the paddocks filled with animals. Everything looked like it was done in miniature compared to the inhabitants.

“Wait. Sometimes?” Lexa yelped, stuck stark still as she watched Clarke saunter away, amused at herself.

It was almost too easy for Lexa to spend most of the day with Clarke. It wasn’t just because of the baby dinosaurs, or the fact that Clarke cooed and melted with the animals, or that she kind of blossomed as a person when there were less people around, and she could just be herself. None of those were reasons that she realized, but it was true.

Somehow, Lexa found herself sitting in a stall full of baby Ankylosaurus, wobbly legged and waddling with their long, heavy tails dragging around behind them, eyes barely open. One curled up, right in her lap, and Lexa sighed, amazed and happy and not wanting to ever move again.

The rain came at some point, yelling against the windows.

“Storms finally here,” Clarke observed, not moving at all.
"We can stay, can’t we?"

Clarke smiled at how innocent it sounded, and she waited until a rumble of thunder reminded her that
the road might wash out or be impassible, and they still had things to do.

"We should leave soon."

"My whole entire career was spent studying, hypothesizing, and now look at me," Lexa shook her
head and surveyed the dinosaurs. “What is left for me?”

“I’m sure there’s a place that’ll hire you.”

“I know that you’re right,” she continued. “I know that this is dangerous. But I can’t imagine not
sharing the awe with everyone else, of seeing one of them, alive. It’s a miracle.”

“You don’t think I think the same thing?”

“I know you do.”

“I love my job, but this is unsustainable, and I don’t know how to help them, long term,” Clarke
confessed. “I’m not even sure what else this island is going to be used for.”

“What do you mean?”

“I mean, this is an island, with seemingly little government control, who is perfecting cloning
dangerous weapons,” Clarke explained. “I’m just an animal handler, but I know things are never this
good unless there’s a catch.”

To her credit, Lexa nodded and inhaled a deep breath.

“I don’t think my recommendation is going to do anything.”

“Break your non-disclosure. Tell the world about the potential problems—”

“Clarke, they’ll own me. I can’t just—”

The lights flickered as another crack of thunder interrupted their conversation. Lexa looked to the
handler who just set her jaw and surveyed the lights.

“We should head back. The roads will wash out, and then we’ll be stuck.”

“You were joking, earlier, weren’t you? About the fence?” Lexa asked.

“Yeah, of course. You think we’d open up an island with predators with no back up generator?”

“No.”

Clarke nodded to herself, hoping Raven had everything fixed so that her statement was true. She said
things with confidence though, so she was certain the pretty doctor didn’t catch onto it. She shook
her head at the idea that Lexa was pretty. That was a stupid thought.

“Come on, Doc. I’ll bring you again before you leave if you’d like.”

“Yeah?”

“Yeah,” Clarke shrugged, offering her hands to help pull Lexa to her feet. “You can help me train
“You train them all?”

“I run a team that works on behavior modification. Think of it like whales in aquariums. Makes our job easier when it comes to routine check ups and moving them around the enclosure.”

“Is it effective.”

“Would someone hire me to train massive living tanks if I wasn’t good?” Clarke asked, cocky and sure of herself, all swagger and annoying to Lexa.

“I haven’t seen you in action, so I’m not sure.”

“You’d like that, wouldn’t you?”

“What?” Lexa asked.

“To see me in action.”

“I doubt it’d be interesting,” she shrugged, grabbing her coat from the entrance.

Before Clarke could respond, Lexa opened the door and made her way out into the rain, fearless and impatient. She just smiled to herself and followed.

The rain came down in a monsoon. A wall of water made it nearly impossible to do anything other than creep along the old muddy road toward the main compound. Everything was wet, everything felt wet, and there wasn’t anything anyone could do about it. All at once, despite not even being dinner time, the sky grew dark and a heavy, deep grey.

“It looks pretty bad out there,” Lexa ventured as she tried to find a dry spot of shirt to clean her glasses. She squinted through the windshield as the wipers worked at a maniacal pace.

“As long as there isn’t any flooding and the generators keep, they won’t evacuate,” Clarke swallowed as she gripped the wheel a bit tighter.

“Have you had to evacuate before?”

“Twice,” she sighed. “Took us three weeks to get the pens back and the grid back up.”

From her seat, Lexa furrowed.

“I don’t like boats. Especially in weather like this.”

“Not much of a swimmer?”

“No.”

Sensing the worry, and perhaps understanding the little bit of fear the doctor must have, Clarke tried to think of something to do or say. It was easier with animals. If they were scared or afraid, they either whimpered or lashed out. They just needed kind sounds and patience. Lexa, though, she was realizing, needed something that Clarke couldn’t figure out.

A flash of lightning illuminated the world outside for an incident before a loud crack of thunder echoed across the acreage.
“Don’t worry. It’s not going to come to that. We’ve put in some upgrades since then,” Clarke tried, earning a small nod of thanks.

“I would hope so.”

“And they would have already made that call by now. We’d have heard the alar–”

Before she could finish, a loud air horn wailed somewhere in the distance, slicing through the storm, muted only by the constant whir of the heavy rain and rumble of thunder. The normally dormant radio attached to the dashboard of the Jeep crackled to life, cutting in and out. Lexa watched the driver’s brow grow heavy as she reached forward to grab the walkie.

“This is a – call – to – – REPEAT – Code – Return to main campus – leaving in t-minus forty –” the robotic voice on the radio called out in a frantic message, broken up by distance and weather.

“Rover 15 requesting a repeat on the code. I repeat,” Clarke muttered into the phone. “Roughly four clicks out with no visibility. Requesting coordinates for launch.”

“Launch?”

“Remember when I told you about the boats?”

“You just told me everything was fine!”

“I was being supportive!”

“What does this mean?” Lexa yelped, her heartbeat increasing exponentially.

“It means we have to get to the docks.”

“What about the generators?”

“I don’t know.”

“The emergency system?”

“I don’t know.”

“The perime–”

“I know as much as you do at this point!” Clarke barked, gritting her teeth. “But I’m going to get us to a building, reach out to Raven, and see what comes next, so calm down and we’ll figure it out.”

“Don’t tell me to calm down! I’m allowed to be upset right now! I was brought to a crazy island with gigantic creatures and apparently lethal predators and it’s crumbling in front of my eyes!” Lexa ranted, shaking her head and breathing heavily. “You don’t get to tell me to calm down. In this situation, I feel as if I’m acting appropriately.”

If she hadn’t been driving, and hadn’t been annoyed, Clarke knew she would have found Lexa insanely attractive when she yelled and got angry. She knew it was not the time for such things, but still, she couldn’t help it. Raven was right; again.

“Everything is going to be fine. We’re not more than ten minutes from the dock. There is no way we’re going to miss–”

“Clarke!”
Before she could finish her promises that they’d make it, Clarke snapped her eyes back toward the road to see the headlights shine on a tree as it was about to fall.

All at once, they weren’t moving any longer. Clarke veered the Jeep as best she could, but failed to avoid it completely. With the mud and the road, they started rolling, and the fear and Lexa’s scream that was caught in her throat were the last things the handler remembered before her head hit the steering wheel and everything went black.
The rain came steady, big and thick drops joined puddles along familiar paths, hung from the branches until the very last second, like overripe fruit, and stained the air with this smearing of lazy, low clouds against the quickly darkening sky. The world grew a chill to it, as if the weather was finally turning after the long, hot summer, and the rain was the first indication of an end and a beginning.

There was almost a rhythm to it, to the tapping of the weather against her window and roof, just irregular enough to ignore pattern, but quick and full enough to trick anyone listening. But Lexa knew the song, and she knew the way it felt, and so she just listened and found her own beats within the night punctuated by the occasional crack of the fire.

Peaceful as it was, Lexa was surprised by the interruption of the door to her chambers thrown open with little disregard for the order that she was to be left alone. Innately, before the voice and before the noise, she knew who would disregard that order.

With a sigh, Lexa sat up a little more on the couch near the fire, attempting to look more nonplussed, though she was actually fairly relaxed before the intrusion. She stared at her book, but couldn’t read another page.

Glowering and full of wrath, Clarke stood there, staring, waiting to be recognized. She gave it approximately six seconds before the anger swallowed her inhibitions completely.

“You are fighting Pike tomorrow?”

“Mmmhmm,” Lexa nodded, turning the page and refusing to look up. She could hear the reserve in Clarke’s voice, and she knew it meant the storm was at her doorstep. There was no time to batten the hatches though. She would have to weather it as is.

Clarke didn’t say anything else though. She stood there and crossed her arms, her eyes zeroing on in Lexa, growing more istraught by her seeming boredom with the facts. Her hair was down, nothing but a wavy mass, tossed across her head haphazardly. The light of the candles and the fire cast shadows across the sharp features of her slender face. Long fingers slid through a page, prepared to turn it again until the book closed and moved to folded in Lexa’s lap.

Despite herself and the momentary reprieve of seeing her safe and sound on the couch, Clarke took a second to follow Lexa’s bare arms, up her nearly naked shoulders, up the thin skin of her neck to the scar on the edge of her chin and over her cheekbones until she met fiery eyes that smoldered, plain and simple. Dangerous and seeming perfectly welcoming, could still burn you if you handled them incorrectly.

“Is that all you came to ask me, Clarke?”
Just like that, she was boiling again, and Lexa stifled a satisfied grin knowing she could do that to the
girl who fell from the sky and fell an entire mountain.

“You weren’t going to tell me?” she accused.

“I guess I didn’t have to, seeing as you’re standing here now.”

“Dammit, Lexa! Why are you doing this?” Clarke huffed, hands on hips, jaw set firmly. “Can’t you
just solve something without fighting? Hasn’t there been enough blood?”

“I have agreed to adopt less bloody ways, but I haven’t given up my position amongst my people. I
will never be weak to them.”

“How have you not proven yourself yet!”

“Getting power and keeping power are two very different things,” Lexa muttered, tilting her head up
slightly, haughty and in a way that was dismissive and condescending and Clarke absolutely loathed
it. “You may be part of our world now, but you still have much to learn.”

“We’re handling Pike. There’s no reason for you to fight to the death.”

“He murdered my people. Our people. He must pay.”

“Kane and my mom are in the process of–”

“There is no process. There is no doubt of what he did,” she shrugged and finally stretched forward
to put her book on the table. “Therefore he is to be punished like the criminal and murderer he is.”

“Punished in a ring with you?” Clarke scoffed. “I’ve seen you fight, but this isn’t punishment. This is
a battle. One you could lose.”

“You’ve seen me fight. How can you be worried?”

“I’m not worried. I’m sick of refereeing all of these groups and the constant threat of all out war.”

From the couch, Lexa pushed herself up and stared at the girl who barged into her quarters, who was
allowed to do it, who was intensely frustrating, and so damn beautiful it was hard to remember the
rest of it. But Clarke didn’t flinch or even move as Lexa took a step toward her, faint hint of
amusement playing at the corner of her lips.

“There won’t be a war,” Lexa promised. “But there will be order.”

“You haven’t been able to establish order since you let us join the coalition,” Clarke taunted back,
her words seething. “You just like to fight.”

“Just because I am good at it, doesn’t mean I like it, though I will enjoy killing Pike tomorrow,” she
wagered, taking another step. “Sky Kru will fall in line or they will not survive the ground. You
know this.”

“I thought you were done with this blood must have blood mentality.”

“Clarke, your people asked for this. Your people were foolish enough to challenge for my throne.
None of the others would imagine it, but I have to show the new ones what it means to toss out these
challenges.”

“Are you punishing him or are you fighting him for power?”
“I can multitask.”

Clarke’s jaw flexed as she stared at the figure who got closer and closer.

“Pike isn’t going to be an easy fight.”

“But he lacks something very important.”

“What’s that?”

“I’m right,” Lexa shrugged. “I’m the rightful Heda. I’m the rightful dispenser of justice for my people. I have their weight behind me.”

“This is stupid,” Clarke shook her head, growing more agitated. “Pike is a trained killer and has about twice your bodyweight. Let us take care of our own.”

“I can’t do that.”

“Why not?”

“Because I don’t believe you can take care of it.”

Clarke’s neck whipped so quickly to lock eyes with Lexa that she was certain she heard it break. All at once, she had the entirety of Clarke’s wrath boiling at her, and Lexa knew she took it a step too far. But Clarke made her do it. Clarke had a knack for pushing buttons that didn’t need to be pressed, and she had this skill for asking the Heda to explain herself when Heda never had to explain herself.

“Why do you have to fight constantly? Why can’t you usher in peace and productivity?” Clarke snapped.

“Why do your people have to fight me every step of the way toward peace?”

By now, Lexa was towering over Clarke, though despite the inches that separated them, Clarke somehow seemed taller at times. So close she could feel the harsh breath on the skin of her chest, Lexa felt Clarke’s fuming.

“But why do you have to fight? It’s stupid. You’re stupid for–”

“You can’t come into my chambers and call me stupid,” Lexa barked, forgetting herself and some restraint. “I won’t tolerate your people’s rebellions, and I won’t listen to you–”

“I love you, you idiot!” Clarke yelled, her voice finally cracking through the control she tried to exercise. “I love you and you keep trying to die!”

Whatever other point Lexa wanted to make, she certainly wasn’t going to be able to remember it after that. The problem that remained was that she still had a lot of anger now, after being pushed and prodded and provoked to such a degree, that she didn’t know what to do with it, just like she didn’t know what to do with that revelation.

“That’s the second time you called me unintelligent,” Lexa observed finally.

“Stop being dumb then.”

Lexa smiled at that as Clarke looked away from her.

“I’m going to win tomorrow, you know that, don’t you?” she ventured.
“Nothing is ever safe here. That’s the one thing I’ve learned on the ground.”

“You’re safe here,” Lexa promised. “I’m safe here.”

“I can’t believe that.”

“You love me, don’t you?” The blush appeared on Clarke’s cheeks, fire and fear all combined together in a pink blaze. “Stop yelling at me in the middle of the night.”

“Stop being dumb,” Clarke repeated.

Hands slipped to her arms, ran there, tugged her closer though she wasn’t sure she could get any closer. Instead, she just Let Lexa though, because her heart felt light and she had no more secrets left in the world. She was essentially nothing but in Lexa’s hands, and like an obstinate stallion she rebelled too long, even after already knowing the truth.

“Pike challenged me and my throne. I will fight and kill him tomorrow,” she promised.

“Okay.”

Lexa tilted Clarke’s chin which jutted out in defiance. She moved her jaw and made her look at her finally. She smiled and surveyed the face of the girl that said she loved her, and in an instant, she kissed her again, clutching at whatever she could to say the words back without having to say them. It didn’t matter though because she knew he would fail at keeping it in.

“I love you, Clarke. And if you think you aren’t good enough motivation to survive, then you’d be very mistaken.”

Before she could blush even more and break her cheeks, Clarke felt Lexa’s lips again, and this time, she wound her arm around her neck, keeping here there.

“Your argument might have been more effective if you’d just walked in and done this,” Lexa smiled.

“There’s no need for you to fight him to the death tomorrow,” Clarke shook her head.

“You know that’s not true, don’t you?”

She considered it and sighed before nodding.

“You’re terrifying to be in love with, just so you know.”

“I have to watch you fight to the death tomorrow,” Clarke rolled her eyes. “You don’t get to complain that I yelled at you.”

With a newly signature smirk, Lexa shrugged and pushed Clarke forward again, pinning her against the wall. She looked at her and pushed hair away from her eyes before kissing her again.
Halloween

Chapter Summary

“my kid unknowingly tricks or treats at your house and it turns out he’s wearing the costume of the character you’re famous for playing in film/tv” thank you for the great stories!:

The street was absolutely inundated with people. All shapes and sizes and ages and levels of joy ran up and down, ringing doorbells and shrieking with joy. Cobwebs hung from palm trees while tall hedges were riddled with skeletons and gigantic spiders and all manner of monsters and creatures.

While the streetlights burned bright orange, different houses had different noises mingling with the joys of the kids and their parents trying to keep them from running all over and into everyone. Parties littered the block, with Monster Mashes and ghoulie songs wafting through open windows and doors and pools.

It was purely orchestrated chaos, driven by kids and the fun that came in a little fear.

“Do we have to do another block?”

“Yes please!” a little voice responded, happily tugging on a hand, carefully lugging a much too full bag of cavities.

With a sigh, Clarke took the first few steps toward the new block while her five year old practically skipped in search of more food.

“We shouldn’t have come to Grandma’s neighborhood. It’s so big,” Clarke complained.

“But Gramma’s friends give out the big candy,” Maddie argued, proving her point.

The real reason they were trick-or-treating in the opulent neighborhood across town was that Clarke had just got off work, and Grandma was babysitting, but her daughter didn’t have to know that. At any point she could, Clarke tried to make the struggle seem effortless. It was a losing war, but she won some battles, even if it meant schlepping up and down long driveways and up and down long blocks of giant mansions.

Her daughter was happy, and that was all she needed.

“This is the last one, and then we’re going back to Grandma’s house. Grandpa will check the candy while we take a bath.”

“I can eat all of my candy?”

“You can eat two pieces.”

“Five pieces?”

“Two.”
“Fine,” her daughter sighed, adjusting the helmet that sometimes slid into her vision. “But you guys can’t eat it all like last year.”

“We won’t,” Clarke lied, standing back as the little astronaut from her favorite movie ventured forward to another door.

Very slowly, as the made it down the final street, the crowds inevitably thinned as dusk settled and the darkness came out more clearly. Wearily, after over sixteen hours in the ER and another one trudging around, the porches graced Clarke with the escape of being out of candy.

“Looks like we’re all done,” she smiled, swinging her daughter’s hand. “Did you have fun? Feels like you got a lot of candy.”

“That one! We still can go to that one,” Maddie pointed to the house on the corner as they finished their loop and tried to return home.

“We don’t–”

With a tug, the precocious little girl was on her way across the street, and her mother could do nothing but agree, because it was ending soon.

The decorations were minimal, but an effort was made. The pumpkin on the front porch was hand-carved and had a very poorly fitting stem, and misshapen eyes, but the house itself was gorgeous. Slowly Clarke followed up the walk while her daughter skipped ahead, eager for her favorite phrase.

“Trick or treat!” she squealed, just as excited the final time as she’d been at the first door.

“Well, this is incredible. You look like–”

“You! You’re… you’re… MOM!” Maddie shrieked just as Clarke climbed the few steps. “It’s Commander Flare! MOM!”

“Okay, don’t yell,” Clarke chided the hopping girl.

She smiled and prepared herself to apologize until she looked up and met very familiar eyes. The problem being only that they were familiar because a certain DVD played non-stop in their house about a badass space crew and their adventure across time and space. A global phenomenon, it was slated to have a sequel in a few months already. Maddie wouldn’t understand what it meant that Lexa Woods was currently smiling at the miniature version of her character, but Clarke sure as hell knew that a megastar was handing out Twizzlers.

“Commander, it is an honor to meet you,” the actress clicked her heels together and saluted, immediately at attention.

Maddie did the same, her hand bumping the large dome around her head as she misjudged how to hup to.

“How has your mission gone tonight? Lots of candy?”

Kindly, Lexa bent down near the little girl, appreciating her costume and smiling at the idea of seeing a little person dressed like herself. It wasn’t that the movie wasn’t particularly meant for kids, but it had some scary aliens in it. Clearly, this one was a badass.

“Yes ma’am, Commander Flare, sir. Are you on a break from your missions to the stars?”
“I am,” she nodded, quite seriously. “Are you thinking about joining Light Force when you get older?”

“I’m already five, but my mom said no until I’m at least nine,” Maddie explained, casting a look back at her mother just to confirm that she still couldn’t enlist for a fictional army unit based in deep space.

“Hmmm,” Lexa nodded, meeting the stranger’s eyes once again, her face changing slightly before it returned to the little girl. “I think your mom is right. But I promise to put in a good word for you. What’s your name?”

“Maddie,” she chirped, all smiles and dimples. “Maddie Finn Griffin.”

“That’s a strong name for a space explorer. Do you eat your vegetables?”

“Sometimes.”

The actress looked over the little astronaut for confirmation and gave her a wink.

“And do you brush your teeth?”

“All the time.”

“And do you help people whenever they need it?”

“Yes.”

“Do you listen to your mom and dad no matter what?”

“I listen to my mom. I don’t have a dad.”

Slightly taken by surprise with that answer, Lexa furrowed for a second and regained her composure after sharing another look with the amused mother who instantly went into panic mode. To think of her daughter and the situation Finn left her with… it was sometimes too much.

“Well, that still counts,” Lexa promised, deep and honest. “I’ll send my report along to Fleet Commander.”

“Mom! Did you hear that? I can go to Mars!” Maddie smiled, her own jack-o-lantern smile of missing teeth glowing brighter than any other that night.

“When you’re nine,” Lexa reminded her. “In fact,” she whispered, “I think twelve is the cut off, but I’ll try to pull some strings for you.”

“Would you? Promise?”

“Of course,” she nodded, finally standing up. “It’s nice to meet a fellow explorer.”

“Thanks for… that,” Clarke nudged her head toward her daughter who stared intently at her hero in the flesh. “I’m Clarke.”

“Lexa.”

With an extension of her hand, the actress made Clarke come into the light on the porch to shake it, and she faltered slightly when she realized what she was looking at. For a moment too long, they shook hands, holding onto each other while looking back and forth into each other’s eyes.
“I swear, we didn’t know you lived—”

“No, no, I know,” she dismissed it, finally letting her hand drop. “It’s Halloween. I haven’t see a better one of my costume though. Did you make it?”

“It’s her favorite movie. I could do it from memory with how many times we’ve watched it.”

“Wow,” Lexa nodded, looking once again at the little girl who pushed up her visor to look at her with a toothy grin. “Maddie, would you mind taking a picture with me? I’d love to show the rest of the group.”

“Can I, Mommy?”

“If you want,” Clarke nodded.

Instantly, she earned approval, and Lexa picked up the five year old and fished in her pocket to hand over her phone.

“This is the best night of my life,” Lexa sighed contentedly.

“Count of three say cheese. One, two, three!”

The chorus rang out and Clarke snapped a few different ones before Lexa put her daughter back on the ground.

“I know your mom might get mad at me for this, but…” with another wink, something Clarke was becoming incredibly angry about because who in the hell actually did that and how in the hell did it actually work, she slide the rest of her candy bowl into Maddie’s waiting candy bag. “You’re not only my last customer, your my best one, and my trainer will thank you from stopping me from gorging and watching monster movies.”

“What do you say?” Clarke prodded as her daughter leaned back against her, happy and bashful and overwhelmed and tired.

“Thank you, Commander.”

“You, are very welcome,” the actress offered with another salute. “Be good out there.”

“Yes, sir!”

“Thank you for this, seriously,” Clarke sighed. “I can’t imagine a better ending.”

“If you want, I could send you the picture, and you could have it, for her or you, or whatever,” Lexa offered, the mysterious bravado she had when performing for a five year old all but dried up. She scratched the back of her neck and swallowed, avoiding Clarke’s eyes until the last minute.

“Yeah, yeah, of course, I’d love that.”

“Cool, cool,” she nodded, fiddling quickly with her phone before handing it over for Clarke to enter her information. “So you live in the neighborhood?”

“My mother does,” Clarke explained. “We decided bigger houses meant bigger candy, and I just got off work.”

“I thought it was a costume,” she grinned, nudging her chin toward Clarke’s outfit.
“Nope, I’m a doctor over at General,” she nodded, embarrassed slightly by her dark scrubs. “Busy day today, so I came straight from work.”

Maddie busied herself staring at the actress and rummaging through her own candy bag in search of her five treats she would have after her bath. Clarke handed back the phone and Lexa glanced at it before smiling.

“Must be nice to have a built in back up plan.”

“Doesn’t hurt,” she grinned.

“I can’t imagine.”

An awkwardness settled between them, and neither really knew how to address it, so they blushed and cleared their throats and shifted their weight back and forth.

“Mommy, can Commander Flare come home with us?”

“Yes, can I?” Lexa smiled, wide and innocent.

Clarke found herself stuck with two sets of puppy dog eyes and no real defense against it.

“The Commander has a busy night and monster movies to watch. Maybe another time.”

“I’ll hold you to it,” she taunted.

“You have my number,” Clarke shrugged. “Come on, baby. Say thank you again.”

“Happy Halloween, Commander,” Maddie waved as they made their way back into the street and the remaining stragglers from the river of exhausted trick-or-treaters.

“Happy Halloween,” Lexa waved back, empty candy bowl in her other hand as she watched the most peculiar twosome walk away, and suddenly feeling very different about it.
The sky opened up. The rain came and came and came, covering the world in all manner of water for hours upon hours, for the entire day. The corner office glowed in the mid-level of the office building downtown, while so many of the neighboring ones remained dark and empty. The rain twinkled against the streetlights below.

The large desk found itself covered with open books and files, while a computer monitor was covered in sticky notes in vaguely organized piles that seemed to betray some sort of method to the madness. A large yellow legal pad became covered in writing, filled with notes and things to remember as more and more research was needed for the case.

With a resigned sigh, the girl in the heavy leather chair sighed and tossed her head back as she slumped, her pen flopping on the notepad. It’d been a long day and week and month, but she couldn’t stop. It was a way to preserve herself.

Despite the urge not to check her phone, Lexa gave in, picking it up once she located it on a pile nearby. In an instant, she was dismayed that the only notification was for an email, and so she tossed it on the desk again and sighed even harder. Her stomach grumbled, eager for the chinese food she'd ordered what felt like eons ago.

Lexa swivelled slightly in her chair, face the monitor and the screen saver that danced around it, though her gaze fell on the picture frame tucked just behind it on the corner of the desk where it split and wrapped around the wall. She smiled longingly at the picture of her girlfriend and herself at some party, where they both dressed up and looked ridiculously pretty; though she attributed the beauty to Clarke more than anything else.

For almost two years they’d danced around each other, chasing the distance and finding something good from their busy schedules– sometime it was a few days at a time for a while, and sometimes they eked out a few months before Clarke was off to some new project. But Lexa was in, and she wasn’t sure how, but she didn’t care about how hard it was, especially when it got to be around that time of year, when all of the drug stores had cartoon cupids and red heart boxes of candy.

There was this part of Lexa that couldn’t believe it’d been nearly two years since her life completely changed because of a stupid, drunken flick of her wrist. If she hadn’t flung her hand up in the air when she saw a pretty girl and an ugly painting, and she hadn’t been mildly drunk and very gay, she wouldn’t have met the best person in the entire universe.

What started with a simple drink after a rather not simple kiss, then led to an exchange of phone numbers, which led to a date, which led to a nervous Lexa arriving early and having a drink to loosen herself up for being human. And that date led to another, which led to another, which led to another, which inevitably led to spending time at each other’s places, which somehow led to another Valentine’s day at Anya’s fundraiser, but somehow Clarke wasn’t being auctioned because she was on Lexa’s arm.

There was a picture of Lexa’s niece, hanging from her neck with Clarke laughing beside them at the pool at Clarke’s place, the ocean in the distance behind them. It was a day six months ago, where Clarke made Lexa take a weekend away from work, and they had a cookout, and they had drinks, and Lexa was reminded of how much Clarke was a breath, a peace, a pause, and a very welcomed uge to be human again.

With another sigh, Lexa looked at her books and her case notes for the future battle and interpretation
to a rebuttal and she dug her fingers into the corners of her eyes, pushing up her glasses.

“I’d say I’m a sight for sore eyes, but you seem to already have them,” a voice grinned from the door to the office.

Lexa squinted and adjusted her glasses, slightly started mid-5 minute break. It took a second for her exhausted and overworked brain to understand what was happening.

“Clarke?”

“Hey gorgeous. Didn’t I tell you to stop working so late?”

Grinning wide, leaning against the door, the actress watched the realization shape, watched the shock turn to a smile. There was something about the glasses, the big round glasses and the way Lexa hated wearing them because she felt like she was a geek enough on her own without them. But Clarke had a thing for lawyer-Lexa. She had a thing for the Lexa with her shirt pushed up to her elbows, collar undone a little, hair a bit messy at the end of the day, glasses on, it was just an adorable sight of a smart girl who tried to fix the world.

“I thought you were…” Lexa looked for the planner on her desk and flipped a few pages when she found it. “You were supposed to be in Montana still filming this week.”

“Did I send the wrong schedule to throw you off?” she teased. “Would I try to surprise you for our anniversary and Valentine’s Day by possibly telling a white lie?”

“You did that?”

“I did.”

Clarke grinned, proud of herself and her tricks, happy to be a good surprise, happy to see the lawyer who just did things differently. Lexa was addicting, and Clarke liked who she became when she was near this girl.

Finally, still soaking up the shock she’d caused, the actress made her way around the desk and toward the lawyer. She tugged her up and gave her a huge hug, squeezing and being squeezed back as it all finally clicked.

“How long do I have you for this time?” Lexa ventured, slightly dazed from the first kiss in a few weeks.

“A few days.”

“Thank goodness. Any longer, and I’d get attached.”

“Wouldn’t want that,” Clarke hummed leaning up to kiss her girlfriend again.

The pink and red hearts and the roses and the lights creating an oddly romantic atmosphere and a good way to spend a rather lonely holiday, though she’d never admit it.

The ballroom was filled and stacked with people, and Lexa meandered around, admiring it all and hoping that spending as much as it surely must have cost, would return more money to the ever dwindling coffers. But she went because her sister had this guilt thing, and Lexa didn’t mind things as much anymore. She was good at going to things.

“Where is that girlfriend of yours?”
“Hi, Mom,” Lexa sighed, but smiled. “You look beautiful.”

“You finally get a girlfriend, and I never get to see her.”

L lexa rolled her eyes as she sipped more of her wine. She couldn’t help but smile because Clarke was laughing with a group of people and she looked so pretty. The best bonus in the world was that she didn’t have to get set up with strangers her mother met. Lexa somehow got the perfect girlfriend whose only flaw was that she worked too hard. But Clarke loved Lexa’s parents, and she loved how much Lexa loved them and took care of them.

“She’s mingling around.”

“Hopefully you won’t have to buy another one this year,” her mother quipped and Lexa blushed and shook her head.

It was a running joke now that Lexa had to bribe a girlfriend. She handled it well, she thought. Her mother enjoyed it more than she’d admit. Frequently, Clarke was dubbed a “steal at any price,” and she relished it.

For a moment, Clarke sipped her champagne and stood there in that red dress, and Lexa watched, toying with the stem of her wine glass, slightly bashful for thinking about kissing her as much as she was. Her chest grew warm, but she blamed the wine and the lighting and the season, and not the distinct feeling of love she knew she felt but was afraid of feeling.

“You should get her to settle down,” her mother decided. “The two of you are always going, but you’re never still.”

“I wouldn’t want her to stop. She’s happiest when she’s working.”

“She’s happy with you.”

“I don’t want her to stop doing something she loves just to be with me. She wouldn’t ask me to stop working late and taking hard cases.”

“She should.”

“Yeah yeah,” Lexa chuckled. “I know, we work too hard.”

“You do.”

“But I’m happy, I promise.”

“I guess I’ll take it.”

“I should go rescue Clarke. Anya is looking very pregnant, you should go mom her.”

“Will you bring Clarke over for dinner this weekend? I’ll make a big lasagna and we can catch up.”

It was the look she got that made Lexa agree. She couldn’t tell her mother no, and she wouldn’t want to, because as much as she was relentless, she was still the best person, and Lexa had to make her proud.

“I’ll ask her, but maybe Sunday?”

“Sounds good,” she smiled. “Now go save her.”
“Gladly.”

“I’m exhausted,” Clarke growled as she flung her heels on the floor and stumbled her way into the dimly lit house.

“At least you didn’t have to sell yourself this year.”

“Would you have bought me again?”

The smile was cloaked in champagne and mischievous intentions. Arms wrapped around Clarke’s hips as she wrapped herself around her girlfriend’s neck. Humming happily, she swayed slightly, leaned her forehead against Lexa’s, and waited for the inevitable kiss that she desperately needed.

“In a minute,” Lexa promised.

The lights from the city in the distance played against the full glass walls of the living room. While the twinkling was perfect, hiding away the stars, neither noticed. Instead, Lexa kissed Clarke, right in her living room, right in their fancy dresses and slightly dishevelled hair that refused to stay up any longer.

“I love you,” Clarke whispered.

“I know,” Lexa smiled.

Hands slid from her neck to her shoulders to her chest before Clarke dropped her hands completely and took a step away. Lexa didn’t move, but rather watched. It was one drink shy of professionally seductive, but it did nothing to deter Lexa, nor did it lose its effectiveness as Clarke began to slip out of her dress, tugging the zipper on her side and stepping out of it.

“Holy fuck,” the lawyer whispered, barely able to think.

Even in the dim light, she knew she was a goner. There wasn’t much left covering her girlfriend, and that was perfectly fine.

“Happy Valentine’s Day,” Clarke grinned as she took a step toward the bedroom.

But Lexa’s feet wouldn’t move. She stretched her neck, as if she were nailed to the ground, and she fought for a glance of more skin.

“Come on,” Clarke called. “I’ve got another surprise for you.”
High in the tower, the ruler sat on the throne and pinched between her eyes in an effort to get rid of the annoying headache that seemed to exist just beneath the surface of her thoughts. It was never enough to completely distract her, but it never actually went away either. All of her efforts to just survive her day was exhausting enough, but this, on top of it all, was terrible.

“The Ice Nation has pushed onto our lands, and my farm is suffering,” the man in front of her complained, wringing his hands as he did.

The ruler did her best not to show any feeling for it. She was the uniter of ever kru, and wouldn’t have a preference for one over another, though that was sometimes difficult, especially in these blatantly defiant moments.

“They have to be put into place. Six other farms are at risk. The–”

Lexa waved her hand to stop the talking. She had no use for many more specifics in the case. She had the dying need to escape and smell real air again, and not the stifling summer heat of her throne room atop the tower. Sweat slid down her back before she leaned back once more in her throne.

“I will send a small group to patrol the border, your lands shall be restored to you per our original agreement in the peace talks,” Lexa promised. “New maps are being made over the next few weeks by the Sky Kru to better keep track of lands.”

“Thank you, Heda.”

“See my guards on the way out.”

“Yes, Heda. Thank you again.”

He bowed and bowed and thanked her repeatedly as he backed toward the door. Lexa looked toward her advisor as to how many more she would have to answer that afternoon. It felt like she’d been doing nothing but fixing petty squabble ever since the world suddenly figured out what peace really was.

She should have been more grateful, and she knew that. But Lexa couldn’t help but mope for a little that for now, her battles seemed done, and her life was now monotonous and, like the weather, stifling. There was certainly more bureaucracy to living than she previously anticipated and than she experienced in all of her battles.

But they came throughout the day, and Lexa tried to remember what she’d been taught, and she knew the honor and the weight of her decisions. She felt it constantly. No one ever prepared her for her growing need to live though. She hadn’t expected to meet a beautiful girl and realize that living might be fun.

Just after noon, Lexa grew uncomfortable and antsy, too distracted by the ache in her head, too
bothered by the pounding there and the buzzing of the heat and the people and the day to stand it any longer. She told her advisors such and left the world in the council’s capable hands before retiring to her chambers.

It wasn’t a complete lie, that she had a headache and would rather rest.

Lexa hadn’t counted, once again, on Clarke Griffin.

Meet me at our spot when you’re ready for a break.

The leader of the entire world smiled as she read the note left on her bed. Conspiratorially she looked around at her empty chambers, as if someone would be there to tell her no, or to tattle that she was thinking about leaving.

Lexa took off her heavy armor, and she wrapped up her braids before reminding the guard that he will be thrown from the roof if anyone is allowed to pass and bother her while she rests.

The note was alluding to one single spot on the planet that Lexa knew, and she wanted to go badly. With a small bit of work, she pushed the bookcase that was against the wall, and slid into the passageway that was hidden behind it. The dark stairs breathed and cobwebs shifted. Lexa didn’t need a light. She carefully followed, counting the steps and dragging her hands along the wall.

She needed the sun, and when she slipped out from behind the grate on the ground floor, she smiled towards it, and her freedom.

The water by the bay lazily lapped at the shore. It gleamed in the sunlight, making the water shine white, and the sky turn such a pale blue, it nearly lacked it entirely. The heat hung so heavy it was almost tangible; thick and loud, the world hummed in complaint.

Right on the edge, water gliding along her curves, Lexa watched as Clarke took in all of the sun she could, her skin freckled in sand and water drops that tried into salt. Lexa watched for a few minutes because there was no better sight, and she would want to memorize it forever.

A smile grew on Clarke’s face, though she didn’t open her eyes.

“Finally escaped, huh?”

“You know it’s a crime punishable by death to enter the Commander’s chambers uninvited.”

“Was I? I don’t think your guards opened your door all day,” she squinted and fond Lexa as a shadow covered her face, blocking out the brightness.

“You should use that passage again tonight.”

“Should I?”

Without an ounce of effort, Clarke found herself tossed over Lexa’s shoulder. She laughed at her new predicament.

Far off in the distance, beyond the trees and the wall, the rest of the city churned along, while they did nothing more than escaped.
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