Vires Acquirit Eundo

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Summary

6 years after Praimfaya, Bellamy returns to the ground with Spacekru.

Notes

Written for the Bellarke 2017 Christmas Calendar.

See the end of the work for more notes

“You know, it really is just as beautiful as I remember.” Monty said, startling Bellamy from his reverie.

“It is,” Bellamy replied gruffly, his jaw tightening unconsciously as he fiddled with his rifle.

The two of them were positioned at the edge of the camp, standing guard while the others made preparations to move. They looked out over the green expanse before them. Much of the earth was desolate, which they had been able to see from space, but there had been a few disparate green patches, one on in the eastern edge of what was left of the the North American continent. Raven had aimed for that green patch, and they would have landed there if they hadn't run into trouble on the descent. The choice was between landing safely miles away, and landing in their destination in a fiery crash . As it was, it had taken them a long week’s journey to make their way there. Murphy had
joked the whole way that at least they weren't heading for the City of Light this time, but the trek hadn't been easy. The reserve of food they'd brought with them was quite small, so rations were tiny. Water was nowhere to be found.

Once they'd finally made it, it was truly as if they had found Eden. They weren't exactly sure how many miles the expanse covered, though Monty had made approximations. Amazingly, there was edible vegetation in spades, and Murphy had entertained himself by cooking non-algae dishes for the first time in six years. They were in search of any landmark that could lead them to the bunker, but the landscape had changed so much after the damage Praimfaya had wrought that they collectively tried to keep their expectations in check. They were arriving a year later, after all, due to difficulties with the fuel supply, and it was probable that the bunker had opened and everyone had dispersed. There was no reason for them to be anywhere but this verdant place. Bellamy hoped that they would come across familiar faces soon, but he knew the odds of all their friends surviving were low.

He couldn't help thinking of Clarke, of course. Over the six years they’d been in space, the pain of her loss had dulled over time. Back here, back on earth among the green and the warmth, the memories came flooding back. The cold grey of the ring had not reminded him of her as much, but earth was where he met her. Earth was where he fell in love with her. Earth was where he'd left her to die.

He knew Monty had a similar experience when they’d first landed. Feeling the ground beneath their feet again, the losses they’d experienced on this harsh planet overwhelmed them both. He’d gotten distance from his grief over Jasper, though never forgetting him, but being here again brought all those feelings back. Monty understood. Neither of them had slept much since being back. The thoughts they could push aside during their fight for survival during the day crept back in the night.

Their first year in space had been a hectic scramble too, one new system threatened as soon as they’d set right another. There hadn't been much time to grieve at first. The second year, when a routine had formed, Bellamy had felt grief creeping back into his thoughts, in the form of Clarke’s ghost. He’d been surprised to find that Raven had a similar experience, though she pushed through it. Monty, Harper and Murphy missed Clarke too, but not in the way he and Raven did. He’d only allowed himself to break in front of her once, but she’d been vulnerable in return, and that had been the worst of it. Things had been easier after that second year.

Back on the ground, he'd had trouble reading her. He only knew that she was as determined as he to continue surviving, and find those they’d left behind if possible.

“You two ready to move out?” Raven asked, walking towards them with her usual determined expression. She walked a little easier than she had six years ago. The time in artificial gravity had helped relieve the pain in her injured leg, and even back on earth again she was more agile. Bellamy smiled slightly to see her moving with relative ease.

Raven caught his eye, and he nodded. Bellamy and Monty followed her back into the heart of camp, which at this point consisted of only makeshift packs that Harper was now distributing. Everything they possessed in the universe was strapped to their backs as they pressed forward. They made their way in three groups: Murphy and Harper scouting ahead, Monty, Raven and Echo next, and Bellamy and Emori bringing up the rear.

Bellamy trailed Emori slightly, both of them keeping an eye out for any possible threats. They knew this land was barren but it was a harsh adjustment to be back on Earth, when most of them had only known it for a year. They couldn't be too careful. The supply of weapons on the ring had been sparse, but what they had was equally divided between the lot of them. Murphy had one walkie talkie, and Raven the other. Bellamy followed closely enough to keep an eye on the middle group.
Echo had taught them all hand to hand combat in space, though some of them took to it more than others. Raven in particular had learned to wield a blade (or, in actuality, a metal pipe) quite impressively, and she spent hours training to perfect her form. It was cathartic for her to be so physical again. Even here, with the weight of gravity pulling on her injury again, she did well. She and Echo continued to practice while they were camped, Raven often challenging Bellamy to a duel like she had on the ark, becoming still more competitive with each win. She was quicker than him, and more graceful. Bellamy never would have guessed Echo would be the one to help Raven the most, but life was unpredictable sometimes. Their year on the ground alone had proved that.

He glanced over at Emori as they made their way up a particularly treacherous bit of terrain. She had her eyes fixed ahead for the most part, though they darted back and forth every few moments. She was on guard, her hand resting gently on a dagger in her belt. Earth had never been an especially kind place to her, and she clearly hadn't forgotten that over the intervening years.

They had been walking for a few hours at this point. Bellamy could see Raven’s group ahead of them, though the scouts were lost to view at that point and must have been making their way through the forest. It was still early in the day, and they had to make at least twelve more miles before stopping for the night. Murphy and Harper had been instructed to find running water, and Bellamy hoped they would be able to. Their supplies were running low, and he wasn't kidding himself to think they would make it another three days without a fresh supply. His lips were dry and cracked from their week in the desert. He tried not to moisten them with his tongue. He tried even harder not to think about the last time he’d had a shower. Life on the ring hadn't been easy with the recycling water and meager food supply, but they had gotten pretty used to their routine over the six years.

Emori almost tripped over a sharp rock, emitting a low cry, and Bellamy reached out an arm reflexively to steady her.

“Thanks,” Emori murmured, catching his eye for a moment, then looking up she frowned. “I think Raven needs you.”

Bellamy glanced toward her eyeline and saw Raven waving at him with an odd look on her face. It wasn't concern, it was more like…happiness? He nodded to Emori and walked ahead of her, glancing past Raven to see what possibly could have caught her attention.

“You need to see this,” Raven called, as soon as he was within earshot.

“See what?” Bellamy’s voice sounded harsh to his own ears. His throat was so dry. “Did they find water?”

Raven nodded, “Yes, but that’s not all.”

Bellamy’s heart leapt. “What do you mean two people?” His mind was racing with possible explanations. He tried not to think of it, but what if Octavia had split off from the others, with just a companion, and made a life for herself there? She hadn’t been ready for the weight thrust on her shoulders when last they spoke, but surely she had survived—maybe it was her.

“Murphy said there was a grounder symbol somewhere in the house…shadow valley, he thinks,” Raven continued in a low voice and Bellamy’s hopes fell slightly. It was still possible that he would find a trace of his sister today, but it wasn't looking likely.
“Whatever it is, it’s good,” Raven reassured him. “Even if they’re hostile, it looks like a small group, and it means life is sustainable here again. There weren’t any weapons there, either,” Raven continued practically, “But that just means if they have any they’ve got them with them.”

Bellamy nodded, still processing. He hadn’t expected to find such a small settlement. He had thought the clans would probably break off after exiting the bunker, no delusions of long lasting unity there. But just two people? His heart beat faster with the thought of it, though he didn’t know why. He adjusted his weapon and glanced at Raven. “Let’s go, you and me. The others should hold back and keep the walkie. We’ll meet up with Harper and Murphy and let them know.”

Raven nodded, and the two of them set off into the woods.

It was almost an hour before they reached the scouts. Just through a gap in the trees Bellamy saw the hut they’d mentioned, with a thatched roof, wood walls, and what looked like a garden in back. It was set just to the side of a small clearing.

Bellamy’s heart pounded in his chest. For six years, they’d been in each other’s company only. Now, they would be dealing with an outsider.

Harper was waiting by the front door, keeping watch. “Murphy’s inside poking around. It’s pretty sparse, but we agreed not to take anything. No need to make enemies until we know who we’re dealing with here. I haven’t heard from him in a minute though, you might want to make sure he’s not getting us in trouble.”

Bellamy nodded, his mouth going dry, and he and Raven made their way over the threshold. Inside, there was a small bed, low to the ground, a few assorted pans and crude utensils, and a chair in which Murphy sat, holding a rustic leather-bound volume with an odd expression on his face.

Bellamy couldn’t believe it. A book, an actual physical book. There were only a handful of those on the ring, mostly old manuals and ledgers. Everything had been digitized to conserve space years ago, and the historical artifacts that had been saved were lost when the majority of the stations plummeted to the ground. Bellamy had wished sometimes for the copy of the Iliad Gina had found for him, but that had perished in Praimfaya along with most everything else he’d loved about this planet.

“Did you find anything useful, Murphy?” Raven asked, lifting the worn coverlet off the bed in search of clues.

Murphy stood up and met Bellamy’s eye. “I think you need to see this.”

Bellamy stepped forward and took the volume from Murphy’s hand. The weight was a little heavier than he’d expected. The cover was rough to the touch. The page open revealed a sketch of a the shelter they were in. He turned the page. He saw a group of trees he was sure they had walked past on their way. Something tightened in him. He turned the page again.

On the left facing page, a young girl with dark hair and bright eyes….he thought she looked a bit like Octavia had, years ago, when she was still the girl under the floor. Something about these sketches was so familiar to him. His heart dropped as he turned his attention to the right facing page.

A man with curly hair, freckles, and a strong jaw looked back at him. Bellamy was staring into the eyes of his younger self, clean shaven, youthful and full of hope. He couldn’t believe it. His hands shook. He looked up to see Murphy looking back at him, biting his lip.

“I don’t understand,” Bellamy said hoarsely. Raven was suddenly at his side, her fingers delicately
“Holy shit,” Raven whispered. “Holy shit…” Her eyes were locked on Murphy. “You think it’s hers?”

“It can’t be.” Murphy shook his head. “How would it be here? Unless someone in the bunker had it…maybe Abby.”

Bellamy’s heart grew heavy at the thought of being confronted by Abby Griffin after all this time. If she knew he was alive, she would expect Clarke to be with him. He tried to shake the idea.

“It doesn’t seem like Abby to split off from so many of the others,” Raven replied, though Bellamy could tell she wished it wasn’t true.

“Raven’s right,” Bellamy said, finding his voice again. “We can’t bank on knowing who lives here based on this. It’s a strange coincidence, but we need to be on guard here.”

“Coincidence?” Murphy spat, gazing in disbelief between the two of them. “Coincidence? Are you both crazy? That’s you Bellamy. Without a doubt. This is Jasper, Lincoln,” he began to flip pages frantically, “here’s you, Raven. Here’s Abby herself. Here’s Wells, remember him? I barely do, but you know who would?”

Bellamy’s jaw tightened. “What are you saying, Murphy?”

Raven crossed her arms, glancing between the two of them. Harper looked back from her position at the door, clearly worried a fight was about to erupt.

“I don’t know,” Murphy admitted, running a hand through his hair. “But this is no coincidence. If I didn’t know better…if I didn’t know better, I’d say Clarke was alive.”

“She’s dead, Murphy,” Bellamy said, and he almost pitied him. It wasn’t like Murphy to be this delusional. This hope was insanity. They should have all buried their dead after six years in space. Murphy had Emori, anyway. His losses in their year on the ground had been minimal. Not like Bellamy’s, or Monty’s, or Raven’s. There was no call for this nonsense.

Murphy shook his head and took a seat, still holding the journal in his hands. “Fine. You’re right. But we’re keeping this with us, until we figure out what’s going on here.”

Bellamy met Raven’s eye, and she nodded. “Fine. Let’s get a plan together.”

“Fine,” said Murphy hoarsely, looking defeated.

Bellamy watched concern flit across Raven’s face, and she offered her canteen to their companion.

“You need to drink this….you clearly haven’t taken advantage of the fresh water yet. We can fill up when we’re heading out. The others are meeting us not too far from here, and we’re going to try and track the occupants.”

Murphy accepted it and took a long draught to soothe his throat, then rubbed his eyes with a shaking hand after Raven took the canteen back.

“You alright?” Bellamy asked, the strangeness of his manner not lost on him.

“I’m alright,” Murphy replied, then he stood up and pressed the book into Bellamy’s hand. “Carry this, huh? You’ve got more pockets than I do.”
Bellamy took a sighed, squared his shoulders, and nodded. Stuffing the journal in his pocket, he moved out behind Murphy, Raven trailing them both.

They decided to create a perimeter several dozen yards around the hut, in order to see the occupants returning as soon as possible. Raven took one walkie and gave the other to Bellamy. He and Murphy stayed near the hut, waiting on one side of the clearing. Raven or one of the others would signal when they saw anyone approach.

It was while Bellamy was exploring the ground near the garden that he came across the trap. It was a roughly made, hidden under a pile of leaves, and if he hadn't been so distracted by Murphy’s madness he would have seen it before it snapped down on his foot. He bit on his lip hard to prevent calling out, cursing his own carelessness under his breath. It was clearly designed to catch small animals, but it had hit him right on the ankle.

Murphy was at his side in a moment and helped him extricate himself. “Careful, you’re going to make it worse—hold still, Bellamy.”

“I’m fucking trying.” Bellamy placed a hand on Murphy’s back as he knelt to undo the trap, trying to keep from moving too much. “At least we know there are edible animals roaming around now.”

Murphy grinned up at him after freeing his ankle. “Either that, or just other morons who aren’t looking where they’re going.”

Bellamy rolled his eyes. Then, suddenly, he heard a familiar sound that sent a shiver running down his spine. There was a snap, then a metallic scraping noise—a gun was being cocked. It wasn't one of their own…someone must have crept past the perimeter.

He whirled on his feet, ignoring the spasm of pain in his leg, and signaled to Murphy to take cover. All his earth instincts came flooding back as the two of them headed for a nearby boulder, his arm draped over Murphy’s shoulder to stay upright.

He scanned the area, trying to find the source of the noise. It took him a moment, but he finally did it: he could barely make the figure out, they were crouched behind a log opposite them, but he could see the top of their head peeking out. They were wearing a hat, and he couldn't really make much else out.

Out of the corner of his eye, he saw Murphy rose slowly to his feet, hands raised above his head in surrender.

“Murphy, what are you doing?” Bellamy hissed, looking up at him incredulously.

Murphy didn't answer, just moved slowly across the clearing towards their mysterious threat. He was less than six feet from her when she rose to her feet.

Bellamy could immediately tell that she was the girl from the sketchbook: her face was dirtier than it had been in the picture, and she looked a bit older and thinner, though she couldn't be much older than twelve, but it was definitely her. He rose to his feet as well, cautiously, hands raised high like Murphy’s.

“Who are you?” Bellamy asked incredulously.

The girl narrowed her eyes at him, and kept the rifle trained on Murphy. “You’re not them.”

“Not who?” Bellamy asked.

“The men in the ship. They landed three days ago, a few hours’ drive from here.”
“A ship landed?” Bellamy asked.

“You drive?” Murphy interjected.

“Yes, but they weren’t dressed like you,” the girl answered Bellamy, gestured to his worn blue shirt and dark pants, “They wore red and grey. Uniforms. My nomon says they are dangerous and we’re to keep clear of them.”

“Your mother?” Bellamy mind worked hard, trying to piece together the mystery.

“Yes, she will be here soon, so it’s best if you don’t move.”

“Please,” Bellamy begged, “I have to ask you something.” He reached into his pocket slowly, and gingerly pulled out the journal.

The girl’s eyes widened, and her grip on the weapon tightened. “You were in our home!” she accused.

“We were, I’m sorry.”

Murphy intervened. “We came down on another ship, about a week ago, but we landed in the desert and only just found our way here. We needed water and supplies and we came across your house…I need you to tell me, who drew these?” he gestured to the book Bellamy held.

The girl frowned up at them.

“Please,” Bellamy begged, gesturing to the page with the portrait of him. “That’s me. Or at least, it used to be.”

The girl looked truly stunned. Lowering her weapon, her eyes flashed between the book and his face. ”She didn't say you'd have a beard.”

Bellamy swallowed hard. He could feel tears pricking at his eyes, though had didn't know why.

“Who—who didn’t say…”

A noise from the woods interrupted them, and they all turned to see Raven and Emori emerging from the treeline, a third figure between them. The third figure was a woman, same height as the other two women, short white-blond hair framing her face like a halo. Bellamy squinted…his eyes were playing tricks on him, the light filtering through the leaves cast an odd shadow on the three figures as they approached.

Raven was holding the third woman’s hand. They were all…smiling. And then he saw her.

It was Clarke. Her body and face leaner and tanner than he remembered, but his eyes locked on hers, and then the world was spinning and the darkness came. He lost consciousness before he’d hit the ground.

The first thing he saw when he came to was her face, hovering above him. He blinked, shook his head, sure he was dreaming. The sharp pain in his leg and a dull throbbing in his head indicated otherwise. He heard chatter around him but he paid no mind to anything but her. This wasn’t happening, he told himself. He felt sick. This wasn’t real, this couldn't be real. He curled one hand into the ground, digging his fingernails through the grass and dirt. That felt real, but she couldn't be.

She was worried, wearing that creased brow he had known so well. A cool hand touched his forehead—her hand—before coming to rest on the side of his face. His breath caught in his throat.
“Clarke,” he breathed. “Clarke…I thought you were dead. You were dead.”

“I’m right here, Bellamy.” Her voice was lower than she remembered, but there was a joyful tremor to it. “I’ve been right here for a while. Where have you been?”

“The landing…I mean, the fuel supply…Raven-“

“Raven told me,” Clarke replied gently. “I’m just teasing you. It’s been a while.” There were tears in her eyes, but her smile was so bright he could barely focus on anything else.

He tried to sit up, but Clarke pressed a hand to his chest. “You hit your head when you fell, take it easy.”

“I’ll be fine.” He wrapped his hand round hers and pulled himself into a seated position. She was kneeling next to him, her face close to his own. It was a possibility he hadn't even entertained in his dreams the past few years. It couldn’t be real. The pressure of her fingers on his was something out of a fantasy.

She leaned forward and wrapped an arm around him. He did the same, pinning their intertwined hands in the middle of their embrace. He could feel the tears filling his eyes, and knew from her ragged breathing she was crying too. He nuzzled into the curve of her neck. Memories washed over him, brought back from the depths of his thoughts by the softness of her hair against his face.

After a time, he felt his arm growing numb. She pulled back, still grasping his hand tightly and wiping the tears from his face with her free hand. It was the first time he’d cried in years, and the first time ever he’d cried from pure joy.

He had so many questions, but first, “How?”

“The nightblood worked,” she answered, though he could tell she was checking his eyes for signs of concussion. “I made it back to the lab, and waited out the storm there.”

He couldn't stop staring, his eyes never leaving her face. “You waited it out? The end of the world?”

She smiled. “Somehow, yeah.”

“And the girl?” He remembered what the girl had said. “Your daughter?”

“I left the island after a year, when my rations ran out. I had hope for a better spot, and I made it here. I found Madi on my way.”

“Madi,” he repeated, glancing up to see her sitting nearby with Raven, talking in hushed tones. “She’s a nightblood too?”

Clarke nodded. “She’s the only survivor I’ve found. I’ll fill you all in on that later, for now…” her face darkened, and she tightened her grip on his hand.”

His mind was stuck on that. “Only survivor? So the bunker—“ Octavia.

Clarke shook her head. “Nothing. I’ve been trying to contact them for years. It’s buried too deep, under a pile of rubble, and I couldn't dig them out.”

“You have a radio?”

“Yes, I found one in the lab.” She blushed, a strange expression on her face.
“You alright?”

“You alright?”

“Yeah, I’ll tell you all about it later. You feeling well enough to stand?”

Bellamy didn't answer, just glanced down at his leg.

Clarke followed his eyes. “You’re hurt.” Worry crept back over her face.

“Your traps are very efficient,” Bellamy replied, the corner of his mouth twisting into a smile despite the pain.

“Let me take a look.” Clarke pressed his hand before releasing it. She rolled the leg of his pant up, pulled a canteen from her belt, and began to clean and inspect his wound.

He couldn't feel the pain any longer, he just focused on the way her hair fell over her face as she began to wrap his ankle. It was her, it was really Clarke. He still couldn't believe it.

“That’ll do for now.” She glanced up at him, and her smile widened as she met his eyes. She was real. In his dreams, she’d never looked so happy.

“I’m sorry we’re late,” he whispered hoarsely.

She shrugged. “I think I can find it in my heart to forgive you.”

He laughed, and she did too. She had finished wrapping his injury, and her hands found their way back to his.

“You’ll be alright.”

“Clarke, I—” he paused, realizing that he couldn't put words to what was in his heart. The tears pricked at his eyes again. “I’m so sorry. If I had known—“

“If you had known what?” she chided gently. “You did the right thing, Bellamy. You survived. You all survived.”

“I left you.”

“I told you to,” she reminded him, and in her eyes he saw no malice, no anger, only happiness. “You came back. That’s more than I could have hoped.”

“I thought we weren’t going to make it, on the way back,” he confessed, remembering the terror that had gripped him as they hurtled towards earth for the second time. “The landing was a miracle, Raven pulled through somehow.” He remembered what Madi had said earlier, suddenly, and his mind began to race again. “There’s another ship…who are they? Are you in danger here, Clarke? Have you seen them? Do they know you’re here?”

“So many questions,” she teased, but he could see the worry hadn't left her face.

“You’ve got to answer them sometime. We’ve put you at risk here, Clarke. They might have seen us.”

“That’s the thing,” Clarke replied. “They’re heading to the site of the bunker, I’m sure of it. They’ve got mining equipment, too. Bellamy…they want to get in.”

“What do you mean? Who are they?”
“A prisoner crew, from all I can tell. But that’s all I know. I don’t know who they are, where they came from, or how much they know. But we’ve kept our distance,” she glanced over to Madi as she spoke, “we didn’t want them knowing we’re here.”

“I can’t believe no one ever made it out of the bunker.”

Clarke winced at the look on his face. “I’m sorry. I tried, I really did, but it was too much work to dig with just me, Madi, and the rover. I only hope that the work will provide enough distraction for the other ship until we can determine who they are and what they want.”

“You think they might come looking for us,” he realized, his grip on her hand tightening.

The threat on the horizon was clear. They needed to develop a plan. Bellamy could see the others spread out across the clearing. The adults were all deep in conversation at this point, Madi hanging back slightly, cleaning her rifle. Bellamy shook his head.

“Bellamy?”

“I need to stand up. We’ve got to talk about this.” He pushed himself up off the ground, keeping the weight off his injured leg and brushing the dirt from his clothing. Clarke dropped his hand to help steady him, and walked with him to meet the others.

“You alright, Blake?” Harper asked, half concerned, half amused.

“Fine,” Bellamy replied gruffly. Everyone else had clearly already had their reunions with Clarke. They were all standing about, watching him as if he were some kind of spectacle.

“I told you so,” Murphy muttered under his breath.

Bellamy tightened the arm around Clarke’s shoulder. “Shut up, Murphy.”

Clarke had waved Madi over, and the girl slowly approached Bellamy.

“I don’t think you two have been properly introduced. Bellamy, this is Madi.”

Madi stepped forward and looked up at him with even more curiosity than before.

“You fainted,” she said.

Laughter overcame him, and the others joined in.

“He taught me the word,” Madi filled in, pointing to Murphy, who had tears in his eyes he was laughing so hard.

Raven came to his defense, though she was grinning too. “He hasn't been sleeping or drinking his ration of water in days, and I’m sure this injury didn't help.”

“Yeah, seeing Clarke had nothing to do with it,” muttered Monty.

“Well, you won’t have to worry about water rations any more,” Clarke interjected. “But we do have other things to worry about.” She glanced at Raven. “I told Bellamy about our problem. We need to all determine a plan now.”

“How long do you think we have?” Raven asked.

“Probably about a day,” Clarke replied. “I don't know if they will send just a few scouts, or a larger
group. Depends how badly they want to get access to the bunker, I guess.”

Bellamy’s thoughts veered back to the possible struggles facing Octavia, Kane, and the others, but he quickly refocused on the known danger.

“Murphy, Monty,” he said, “Why don’t you prepare a meal with what we have? We’re going to need to eat before we decide on any action.”

“I can help,” Madi offered, looking to Clarke for permission. Clarke nodded, and Madi led the two men towards the fire pit.

“Alright,” Bellamy continued. “Harper and Emori, fill every container you can find with water while there’s still light.” He glanced back to Clarke. “You said something about the rover?”

Clarke nodded. “Raven knows where it is.”

“Raven, Echo, can you bring that round please? I want to set up a base here if we can.”

Raven glanced from Bellamy to Clarke and back. “We will, but you need to rest, Bellamy. You’re no good to us like this, limping around and sleep deprived. We’ll meet in a few hours, after we make camp. Try to sleep until then.”

Bellamy’s jaw tightened, but he nodded and waved Raven on her way.

Everyone had dispersed, except Clarke. “Raven’s right. You should rest, Bellamy.”

“Octavia—“

Clarke sighed, knowing he wouldn’t rest until the two of them had talked at length. “There’s a chance she’s still alive, Bellamy. There’s a chance they all are. Hell, if you and I both survived, why not them?”

Bellamy frowned. “But they clearly can’t break out.”

“And we can’t dig them out.”

“Not without help.”

She frowned. “You want to ally with this group?”

“It might be our only shot at getting them out, Clarke.”

“We don’t know who they are, or how they know about the bunker.”

“I don’t want to do anything risky, but if we can find out more about them we may be able to use their assets to our advantage.” He felt his strength fading, and leaned more heavily on Clarke.

She shook her head. “You’re exhausted, Bellamy. Come with me, you need to rest. Raven and the others can set up the camp without you.”

Bellamy nodded, too tired to fight. There wasn’t much more than an hour of daylight left, anyway.

“Come inside. I want to dress that wound properly.” Clarke helped him through the door of the hut and eased him onto the bed.

He lay back and felt his body relax into the makeshift mattress. Clarke lit a fire and began boiling
water in a small pot. She pulled a box from under the bed and he saw that she’d assembled quite a
nice stash of herbs and plants that he assumed had various healing purposes. It was impressive, that
she not only had survived the apocalypse, but that she’d done it so well. The small shelter, with
Clarke in it, felt like as warm and secure as any place he’d ever called home.

He propped himself up slightly, unable to take his eyes off her for a moment, and realized that her
journal was still in his pocket. “I believe this is yours,” he said, holding it up for her to see.

Clarke’s face registered surprise when she recognized it.

“Murphy was snooping,” he explained, placing the book on the bed next to him. “You know, I think
he knew you were alive when he found it. Or he hoped you were, somehow, anyway.”

Clarke chuckled. “He was right. Maybe he’s never truly been the self serving cynic he appears.”

“Maybe not. He almost got us into trouble though. Madi was quite perturbed to discover we’d been
inside. I count us both lucky not to have been shot on sight.”

“She’s a smart girl,” Clarke laughed. “She must have had you in line.”

“She did,” Bellamy agreed. “She’s amazing, Clarke.”

Clarke smiled over at him from the fire. “She is. I’m so lucky to have her. I don’t know what I’d have
done for all those years by myself. Lost my mind, probably. But between her, and the radio, I stayed
sane.”

Bellamy frowned. “The radio?”

Clarke paused for a moment, bent over her box of herbs. “I radioed you every day. I tried to call the
ring, I mean. I know now that you never heard any of them, but talking to you every day kept me
going.”

Bellamy shook his head. “The calls never came through. We had problems with our comm system…
we tried to call the bunker, too, but no luck. I wish I had known. I’m so sorry, Clarke.”

“If you keep apologizing like that, I’m going to have to send you back.” Clarke was teasing, but
there was an edge to her voice.

Bellamy stayed silent while she prepared a salve and dressed his wound.

“I’ll let you get some rest,” she said as she finished, preparing to stand up.

He reached for her and captured her hands with his own. “Don’t go.”

She bit her lip, sizing him up as she considered.

“Please don’t go,” he begged. “I promise I’ll get some rest, but if you aren't here with me, I’ll just be
worrying about you the entire time.”

A sad smile crossed her face, and she reached out to ruffle his hair. “I’ll only stay if you promise to
sleep.”

“I promise,” he replied, and she lay down next to him, resting her head on his shoulder.

His mind was still racing, but having her next to him reminded him that she was real, that she was
there, that she was alive. He wouldn't have continued to believe it otherwise, but the smell of her hair
and the feel of her breath rising and falling grounded him.

“I can’t believe we might be going to war again,” he murmured.

“I know,” she answered, and burrowed her head in his chest.

He could feel himself drifting off to sleep, thoughts of doing battle with the mysterious strangers competing with his heavy eyelids. He pressed a kiss to Clarke’s forehead. Her breathing matched hers. For this instant, in this moment, they were at peace. Whatever happened, whatever enemies lay in wait on this strange reborn planet, he had no doubt that together they could meet them head on.

End Notes

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