**Dulcissima**

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**Dulcissima**

by **Aspidities**

**Summary**

In Roman-conquered Britain, the Barbarian tribe of Sky People has lost their omega ‘Princess’, and she is to be delivered to the feet of the Heda, Lexa Augusta Caesar, the ruler of the invaded land and alpha of her harem.

(Roman Alpha Lexa AU- it’s that Caesar Heda that y’all thirsty heaux know you want)

**Notes**

Hey folks! Welcome to this journey with me as I try my hand at Clexa series! Full disclaimer, I’ve watched the show in bits and pieces, and I’m no Ancient Roman scholar, so this will be a work of entirely AU fiction.

-I’ve done my research in the sense that I’ve watched a few lectures on the Great Courses Plus site and cracked open some of my old textbooks from college, but please, any actual historians reading, do not fall upon my work like a wolf and devour its inconsistencies with actual 42 AD Britain, I beg of you. I know very little about the actual Celtic people of this time and my knowledge of Roman Britain is scattered at best, so bear with me, folks.

-I based the city of Polis off of the original Roman settlement of Londinium, which was a
basically a very large swamp connecting to the outer world through a series of bridges, but was still very modern and metropolitan for its time. Traders from all over the world gathered in the Roman ports, and Londinium, later to become London, was no exception. The Romans built bridges, an amphitheater, barracks, and a curtailing stone wall, some of which can still be seen today; it's rad af. Anyway, all of that didn’t go over super well with the neighbors to the North and to Wales, and the tribe of the Iceni, specifically a great warrior queen named Boudicca, and that’s who I’ve essentially somewhat based Clarke’s character and people off of, although rest assured, if you know anything about Boudicca’s history, Clarke will have a happier ending.

-WARNING: This story is somewhat dub con, contains heat cycles and alpha/omega dynamics, girl penis, rough sex and all that entails. Do not read further if this would be triggering to you or upsetting. Thanks!

See the end of the work for more notes.
Chapter 1

The horses shifted in the early morning gloom, whickering softly to each other in their quiet language as they waited on the rise of the bog hill, dew cresting the tops of their hooves as the morning fog rolled across the swamplands. Clarke felt her mount stamp his hoof irritably below her but she couldn’t do anything to soothe his impatience. Her hands were tied, and just like he, she was a prisoner to another’s whims.

Beside her, she heard a low whistle as someone behind her gave the signal for the rest of the armored warriors to move into their strangely ordered lines, and the splashing sound echoed throughout the bog. Anya. The sharp-eyed brunette alpha who had captured her tiny pitiful band of outcasts, slain her former lover Finn before her very eyes, and was even now bringing her back as the conquered prize of her people. The Barbarian, they called her. Princess of the so-called ‘Sky People’, for their shifting, intractable nature. Of course, now she was Princess of nothing and no one, so the title was a mockery, an insult, but she bore it as best she could. She had no choice.

After all, there were plenty who wanted to do her further insult, to her body as well as her mind. A captive omega, bound and trussed amid a ravaging party of alphas and betas....she knew what her fate had been had the elder alpha not seen fit to earmark her for their Commander’s perusal. Anya was the only reason her cunt and ass hadn’t been used over and over like a common whore until she was dead and her limp body tossed to one side of the deep ruts in the road, but she found it hard to thank the alpha. After all, the invader had told her many times that this was no gesture of friendship; she was guarding Clarke’s virtue for someone else. A very powerful, world-owning, world-destroying someone else, who could use her just as thoroughly.

And that someone waited just beyond the timber bridge, straight ahead on the Roman road that led on and on.

Clarke twisted miserably again in her bonds, and Anya shot her a look that kept her still, but only as long as the alpha’s eagle eyes were on her. She couldn’t help but try, again and again, to loosen them in any way she could, although escape was unlikely and practically suicide; she was surrounded on all sides by what Anya called ‘centurions’ but her people had called Grounders. Heavily armored, heads topped with curious iron masks, and each bearing a pike and a short sword. They’d make her end quick, at least, but she had no intention of throwing herself to her death. Not yet anyway.

She thought of her mother, of her friend Bellamy and the rest of her tribe, and a lump rose in her throat. They would never know what became of her. Her scouting band of warriors would be assumed lost forever and her grieving mother would mourn doubly so because she would never be able to place her bones beneath the cairn of their ancestors. Where her father lay. And Finn should lay within his own family’s mound, not shattered and broken in the forest behind them, bloodied and still with the moss and the lichen drifting over his face that she’d once loved so well…

Finn. He’d been willing to follow her anywhere, even after knowing that she wasn’t interested in him anymore. She knew he had still hoped, that he still wanted her, but she’d brushed that aside because his help was all she wanted. And he’d been eager to do it. They’d been so foolish, so young…

She had realized too late, that their mission, to probe into the edges of the Roman invaders territory, to lance at their resources and try to cripple their strange stone tower, had been one of ego, not intellect. But by then, half of her band had been slaughtered and the rest had scattered into the winds, and she was kneeling before the strange alpha’s sword, regretting ever leaving the safety of her small home village. She’d been so sick of her mother keeping her from leaving their village, claiming that it
wasn’t safe, and exerting her alpha force over her omega daughter, that she’d been willing to risk her life to prove her mother wrong. And instead, she’d risked the lives of those who chose to follow her, believing she knew what she was doing.

And they’d been wrong. So wrong.

She turned, once more, to look back over her shoulder at the unfamiliar land. She’d tried marking her trail, tried tracing the path of the stars as once her father taught her, but she could barely see them, most nights, through the thick clouds, and the trees here were looming, omnipresent in a way that they had not been in the rolling hills and fields of her homelands, and the ground was sodden, heavy swamp that made following tracks impossible.

She knew they had to be taking her to their capital, the place they referred to as the Roman city of Polis, and it turned her heart in heavy circles. She would never escape their city, with so many present. She had to make her move now, but every time she tried, Anya was right there, as if the damn alpha predicted and expected her movements. It was infuriating as much as it was intimidating, and it inspired begrudging respect. Even the warriors of Clarke’s own tribe were not as adept as this older alpha seemed to be at sensing her captive’s inclinations.

Even now, the smug older woman was bearing down on her, urging her silvery mount alongside and slipping her hand around the reins of Clarke’s own horse, a chestnut beast of an irascible and unpleasant nature. He didn’t appreciate being the pack pony for an unwilling and unable rider, and for that she and the horse got along. The horses were, at least, one bright spot. Before her capture, she’d never seen one before, let alone ridden one, but the weeks on the Roman road to Polis had her well acquainted with the strange animals by now.

“Sky girl.” The alpha barked in her harsh accent, disrupting the omega’s scattered, disparate thoughts. “Do not try my patience today, or I will see you sold at auction. The fate I have planned for you is far more pleasant than to be stripped naked and paraded upon the block. Do I make myself clear?”

Clarke curled a lip, intending to make an insolent reply, but something in the alpha’s dull expression told her that would be a mistake. Instead she swallowed and nodded, to show she understood. The alpha’s ire was not worth risking at this point.

“Good.” Anya made a wave with her fingers and the row of centurions tromped forth as one. Their horses followed, and Clarke lurched to right herself, struggling against her bonds under the guise of searching with her bound hands for a purchase. It was no good. The hempen ropes bound her tightly. Anya gave her an arched brow, as if she knew what she’d tried to do, but said no more, leading her mount down the hill.

Clarke’s horse followed gamely, and she rocked with his clumsy steps through the mire, trying to keep herself upright and at least a little in the appearance of control. It was useless to try however, as the horse jogged along at an ungainly trot. Under the loose fabric of the white shift Anya had bade her put on this morning, her breasts bounced, much to the delight of the warriors, who snickered when they saw her and made lewd comments in their strange, rough language. Anya had to bark orders at them to be silent once more as they marched toward the city, which loomed before them. The wooden bridge creaked under the weight of the horses hooves but now, as the sun began to rise, the walls of Polis were visible ahead. Clarke, as miserable as she was, still had to gasp in wonder as the city grew close enough to see clearly.

The walls were at least six meters high and glinted with whitewashed stone, banded by red tile, and the height and color were such as Clarke had never seen. Her own village was a grouping of mounds and huts, arranged around the cairns of their ancestors, and they had no need for walls….at least, not
until the Romans arrived. In her village, the scouts and bands of warriors met and convened on the
high hill below the ancient tree, to paint their faces in the sight of the gods, and the nightfires blazed
bright as the dancers leapt before the flames.

But here, Grounders grouped on the walls and around the gate in clusters in their strange garb, some
armed, some not, some bearded, some not, some drawing carts, some chasing children, but all of
them stopped what they were doing to peer curiously at Clarke as the horses moved past. She
stiffened, and tried to draw herself together. She was now aware that she was representing her tribe
as a whole, and pride in her people filled her heart. She would not be mocked. Her chin raised in
defiance and she stared back at assembled crowds, unafraid. She knew she wasn’t the first of her
people to go through these huge wooden gates, but she promised herself fiercely right then and there
that she would be the last. *Look all you want, she thought grimly, you won’t see me for long. I’ll find
a way out of your city, walls or no walls.*

With that thought, the gates shuddered open, drawn by teams of oxen on either side, and the column
of horses ahead of her began to stream inside the city, allowing the exotic scents and sights to drift
out from the open doors. Bright cloth assaulted her eyes, and strange spices filled her lungs. A bird
called from a tethered position on a stand beside a stall where a man argued heartily with the
proprietor over a bulky-looking glove made from animal hide, and she widened her eyes at a
merchant leading a muzzled bear, silver ornaments jangling merrily from the collar. The street below
her mount’s hooves rang out like a bell, and she looked down to see stone set into the ground,
instead of the deep muddy ruts of the road she’d been used to in the woods. Stone was everywhere;
every house and shop and sign was carved or laid brick, and it gave a permanence to the city that
Clarke could have never dreamed of from a foreign invader. *How are we to dislodge this?* She
thought, miserably, as the road stretched straight before them, displaying a city of immeasurable size,
surrounded by the security of the curtailing wall.

Her eyes roamed everywhere, despite her confusion and fear, and what she beheld was beyond
words. Smell was everywhere, thick in the air: perfumed flowers, hot spiced food, and below that,
the omnipresence of shit, cum, rot. It stunk beyond imagining, and her eyes watered, but the sights
were just as thick, and she had to blink to clear her visage. A man breathed fire alongside a stall
where a dwarf capered to a flutist’s medley. A bevy of whores (assorted male and female omegas in
obscenely bright clothes) leaned from a railing and called raucous insults to the warriors as they
passed, blowing tremulous kisses in grand, dramatic style. Clarke even thought she saw a great cat,
what the warriors called a ‘lion’, but then she blinked again and it was a costume, hanging by a hook
in a stall, as if poised to strike.

Children ran underfoot, some naked, some clothed, and begged for coins. A warrior of Anya’s band
cuffed one to one side, with no more thought than as if a cat had crossed his path, and Clarke winced
in fury. Children in her village were treated with care, and a man who struck a child was considered
no man at all. She curled her lip. These Romans were *monsters*, no matter what they may think of
her people.

The next sight she saw only confirmed her suspicions. A great dome rose up before them, reaching
far beyond the tops of the red-tiled roofs of the houses and buildings along the road. It, too, was an
eye-dazzling expanse of white stone, barded in red tile, and from within the depths of its keep came a
mighty roar, as if a crowd were witnessing a spectacle.

Anya rode up alongside her. “The amphitheater.” She said, as if that explained everything. “There is
a battle today. A slave who struck his master will be pitted against a bear.” At Clarke’s horrified
expression, the leonine alpha arched a brow, uncaring. “I assure you, *Klark* Sky-Princess, should
you choose to do the same, your fate will be far worse, though no less public.”
Clarke couldn’t contain herself. “What manner of beasts your gods must be, to allow this bloodsport?” She snarled, with every ounce of omega fury she could muster.

The alpha only regarded her solemnly. “No further beasts than your own gods, to allow you to be captured by ours.” As Clarke absorbed that infuriating—but-accurate fact, she went on: “Our gods must have justice by battle. It is our way, and it is the only way. Blood must have blood.”

Clarke opened her mouth to argue, to deny hotly that this was the only way, but the alpha turned her back dismissively and urged their mounts forward again, letting her horse once more take the lead. The road was leading them to a great white tower, jutting proud and mighty at the farthest reach beyond the amphitheater, and the shops and buildings began to thin out around them as they made their way to its secondary walls. At the gate, Anya nodded stiffly to the pair of beta guards on duty, each carrying heavy iron-topped spears, and they nodded in return, signaling to allow the gates opened. The horses trotted through, and Clarke got her first look at the place which was supposedly to be her new home.

Beta slaves hurried through archways and up stairways the likes of which Clarke had never seen. The tower was winding and vast, and the courtyard revealed its heights, with a smaller crop of outer buildings within the main wall of the keep. She assumed these to be the stables, and was proved right as they drew alongside the building and a series of young alphas rushed out to take their horses, eagerly chatting with the warriors as they collected reins and offered hands to help the Grounders from their mounts. Clarke was afforded no such luxury, however, and was unceremoniously dumped to the ground by Anya, who ignored her ‘oof’ of surprise and roughly lifted her to her feet, brushing straw from her shoulders.

The sleek-faced alpha turned to a nearby rushing youngster and grabbed her collar, grunting at the younger alpha in their language. The girl nodded, wide-eyed and ran to take their horses, eagerly chatting with the warriors as they collected reins and offered hands to help the Grounders from their mounts. Clarke was afforded no such luxury, however, and was unceremoniously dumped to the ground by Anya, who ignored her ‘oof’ of surprise and roughly lifted her to her feet, brushing straw from her shoulders.

But such thoughts seemed farther and farther away now as Anya inspected her, gruffly eyeing the mud and muck gathered at the hem of her robes and streaked through her hair. “You will need to wash.” She informed Clarke, brusquely beckoning to a comely beta slavegirl who appeared like smoke from the shadows and nodded in response. “Raven will take you to the baths.”

Raven nodded briskly at Anya, and gave her an unreadable look. The slave took hold of her elbow and steered her away, and Clarke looked one final desperate time over her shoulder at Anya’s taciturn face, unreachable as always. Although the alpha was her captor, she had also been her only meager measure of security these many days and nights on the road, and she found herself suddenly, inexplicably reluctant to leave her company. The dark-haired beta didn’t seem to mind her recalcitrance, however, and was moving her along as easily as she would a horse.

“Come on,” she muttered to Clarke, and her nails dug into the omega’s flesh with the hint of sharpness behind the mild pain that indicated she was impatient with her task.

Clarke widened her eyes in surprise. “You speak my language?” She asked, a minor surge of hope lancing through her body.

Raven tossed her fine brown mane of hair and looked sharply back at the blonde over the curve of her shoulder and the lean expanse of her back, terminating in a shapely rear. “Keep up, Princess. And yes.”
They were headed into a pillared building with a sulfur-like smell emitting from its open walls. The interior was warm and smoke-filled, and the heat seemed to be coming from below the ground, which was pleasant to Clarke’s bruised and bare feet, bloodied and cold from the road. Here and there incense burners dotted alcoves in the walls, aiding to the haze and dim. Statues of strange gods loomed behind them, and Clarke darted quickly past their stone gaze, hoping they were benevolent to foreigners.

Raven didn’t pause long enough for her to wonder. She had to hurry to keep up with the beta’s smooth steps, and her eyes couldn’t help but follow her guide. The other girl was slim and well-featured, wearing a similar white robe as Clarke’s, but hers was attached at the throat to a collar made of a burnished bronze, inscribed with a green wolf. The collar was what drew Clarke’s attention. Slaves wore collars, but the way Raven carried herself and the fine clothes she wore were incongruous with the behavior of other Roman slaves that Clarke had seen in their settlements. But then again, those were small villages compared to the exotic mysticism of Polis, and perhaps things were different here. Perhaps all household slaves bore the insignia of their masters, and perhaps all of them wore such revealing, slippery linen as Raven did. Still...something told her Raven was a bed slave, a ‘concubine’ as the Romans called it, and her heart thudded in the recognition that this, too, was to be her fate.

The warmth beneath her padding bare feet increased to a comfortable glow and she couldn’t help but sigh, feeling herself shudder at the unbelievable luxury of such heat inside of a building. She couldn’t comprehend where it must be coming from, until she saw the baths, and her mind connected the dots. In her homelands, deep hot springs pulsed beneath the bogs in many places, bubbling up gases and sending strange flames dancing above the surface of the water, and here, the Romans who had built this place had taken advantage of the wealth of natural heat. The water that bubbled through the rocks was steaming, and it trickled down into a tiled pool, where a small group of omega women bathed, talking in quiet voices amid the haze of the fog and sound of the water. There were tiled benches were some reclined, dawdling pups on their hips or laying in clusters with their heads together, giddy and giggling. They were all nude, or in some form of undress, and as Clarke looked around, most were wearing the same style of collar as Raven, only inscribed with various other animals and colors.

One woman, her belly rounded and heavy and her collar sky blue with the image of a soaring bird, raised her head, and Clarke’s heart leapt to her throat. “Octavia!” She called, before she could stop herself.

Raven gave her a sharp look and opened her mouth, but Octavia was already clambering ponderously to her feet, hands cupped protectively over her swollen belly, and leaving her bench to approach them.

“Clarke!” Bellamy’s sister called back, her smile wide and her eyes sparkling. “I never thought I’d see you again!”

They embraced, hugging wildly, but Clarke withdrew, mindful of Octavia’s pregnant belly. “So this is where you ran away?” Clarke questioned, searching the younger omega’s face for answers. “Bellamy was so worried, and so was everyone else. I’m glad to see you’re alive, but oh to be here among these Roman monsters instead of our people!”

Octavia shook her head, smiling. “I didn’t run away, I was captured, like you. But Lincoln wasn’t the monster I thought he was.” She stroked her belly, looking lovingly at the taught drum of her body, and for the first time Clarke noticed the mating mark, prominent on her neck. She gasped, and Octavia took notice, meeting her eyes.
“It’s not what you think,” the younger omega promised. “He didn’t force me. Not at all. The first time I practically begged him.” She chuckled, and Clarke winced slightly. This was Bellamy’s little sister, after all, talking about willingly mating with a Roman, a Grounder, an enemy! Her fists constricted within her bonds, and Octavia’s eyes darted down. She frowned slightly. “Clarke, I know this is all hard to take in right now, and maybe it’d be easier if you were untied.”

The last part was directed significantly at Raven, who sighed and produced a knife from her robes. She slit the ropes quickly and efficiently and Clarke gaped at the weapon. “Your master allows you to have a knife?” She asked, dumbstruck.

Octavia and Raven shared a glance, and a hint of laughter flickered between their eyes. “My… master allows many things.” The dark-haired beta offered coyly. “Perhaps this city is not as restrictive as you thought, Sky Princess.”

Octavia snorted and rolled her eyes at the term, but she regained herself and touched Clarke’s arm, smiling in reassurance. “Roman ways are strange, Clarke, but not terrible. Let Raven bathe you, and soon, when you meet the Commander, perhaps you will see what I mean.”

She tossed a wink at the beta over Clarke’s shoulder with the mention of the Commander, whom everyone otherwise spoke of in reverence, if not fear. But these two seemed to share a camaraderie that indicated the formidable Heda, alpha general of the Roman legion, was not so formidable after all. Octavia made murmurs about seeing her later, but the omega could hardly focus as her fellow tribesmember left through one of the corridors. Clarke’s head spun and the incense and steam fog wasn’t helping. She allowed Raven to lift her arms, and felt the heaviness of her traveling shift lift from her body.

The beta girl tsked at the mud and filth caked on the hem. “We’ll need to dispose of these and get you new clothes. The Commander isn’t going to want to mount you covered in the muck of the road.”

At the word ‘mount’, Clarke’s body gave an unbidden shiver. Would the Commander really take me from behind? She wondered. Like a beast? The thought gave her another rush, and a bolt of fire streaked to her clit, swelling her body with more heat than could be attributed to the baths. She shook herself. What is wrong with you? She snarled in her head, angrily, and covered her body as best she could, flaming with shame as she realized she’d allowed herself to be led and undressed like a child. Her doziness over Octavia’s appearance and the warmth of the floor notwithstanding, now was no time to become slick with arousal. But yet…something in the air was calling to her, telling her to relax, to let go….

Raven took her by the elbow and guided her into the water while her mind was still a furious turmoil of shame and unhappy lust. They stepped as one into the tiled pool and Clarke had to give a pleasant hiss of surprise as the warm water lapped against her ankles. Raven turned her eyes back upon the omega, and she could see the beta’s lips curl into a smile. “It’s nice, isn’t it?” She asked.

“It’s warm.” Clarke confessed. “I’ve never felt so much warmth.” And she hadn’t. From her rough nights on the road, she’d practically forgotten what being close to a fire could be like, and her own village wasn’t exactly resplendent in baths such as this.

Raven smiled secretively. “You’ll feel plenty soon enough. The Commander always keeps a fire in her chambers.” She stepped deeper, beckoning, and Clarke followed, gasping as the water moved from her legs, to her waist. If anything the heat was only spreading the warmth inside her, and she felt her skin tingle with more than just reaction to the bath. Again, she raised her head and sniffed the air, certain that the incense and sulfuric steam was affecting her somehow. She blinked, and realized Raven was now nude beside her, having shrugged her half-soaked robes off into the water and
balled them carelessly to one side on a bench. The beta’s body was all sleekness and curve, with breasts that were high as the tower walls, and a thatch of black hair guarding her sex, between her shifting, slimly-muscled thighs. She grinned devilishly when she noted Clarke’s gaze and tossed her dark head, moving to an alcove in the water where a bucket with a lathered soap and towel waited. The omega crossed her thighs, cursing her sudden wantonness as she watched the beta’s hips lift and fall with her movements. What’s happening to me? She thought again.

“Are you a virgin, Clarke?”

The question, as well as the feel of the soapy rag making a trail up her back, made her jump. “No-no?” She yelped in response, feeling her body flush as well as her mind ache with racing memories. Thinking of Finn at a time like this should sober her, but he was only a brief flicker in her mind as her body continued to pulse. “I mean, I’ve never….with an alpha…but I’ve-”

“Ah, good.” Raven nodded, matter-of-fact, and swept the rag around Clarke’s breasts, coating them as her hands lifted and shaped the heaviness and weight of them. Clarke wanted to slap her hands away, to ask what in the hell she thought she was doing, but instead she bit her lip against a moan as she tried frantically to avoid arching her back for more stimulus. The rag moved lower, to her belly, as Raven continued. “Being with a beta isn’t like being with an alpha, even a female one, since alphas are so much larger, but you’ll be fine. You won’t break, at any rate.”

The casual, almost caustic tone in Raven’s voice was belied by the sensual nature of her touch with the rag, followed up by the glide of her fingers. She dropped the cloth into the soap bucket again, ringing it and making a show of collecting more lather before she brought it back to Clarke’s knees, running it slowly along the trembling length of the omega’s pale legs and up to her thighs.

“And have you ever been in heat?” The beta asked, her tone conversational as the rag passed between Clarke’s legs, cupping and swirling over her golden curls, coating them in a fine film of bubbles.

The omega bit her cheek ragged against the whine that wanted to spill from her lips. Her hips wanted to rock forward, desperately, but she kept herself still and clenched her fists at her sides, seething in both fury and confused, frustrated lust.

“No.” She answered in as clipped a tone as she could manage, although her voice crackled and betrayed her, almost immediately. “All the alphas in my village are related to me or I’ve known them from birth so….oh. Ohhh no.” Sudden realization hit as Raven dropped the cloth into the bucket again.

“Yes.” The beta nodded, confirming Clarke’s dreaded thoughts. “You’re cycling now. You started the moment you entered the tower. Strong alpha scents can bring on a heat, as you should know, especially if it’s a first heat, and the Commander is the strongest alpha for miles. You’ve probably been smelling her since you walked in here. Your skin is already on fire, and the bath isn’t that hot.” She observed, drawing the cloth over Clarke’s pebbled nipples once more.

The omega shivered at the contact and hissed as Raven drew the rag down her belly again to circle her sex, making her body surge with the desire to buck. She couldn’t say anything in response, as her teeth were tightly clenched against a moan. Raven dipped the rag in the water and brought it up again, rinsing the soap from her wet, throbbing sex, and breasts, and she smirked as if she knew exactly what the Sky girl was thinking. “You’re not a bad looking barbarian, you know.” The beta slyly observed. “Maybe I’ll ask Anya to bring you to our bed once the Commander has had her fill.”

Clarke rolled her head on her shoulders, lost in the feel of the rag scraping against her sensitive nipples without the slick of soap, but her mind jolted at the mention of her captor’s name.
“Wait…Anya?” She rasped out in disbelief. “You’re Anya’s bedslave?”

Raven chortled, and moved the collar to one side so Clarke could see the mating mark, so like the one on Octavia’s neck, and the beta’s eyes flashed with meaning. “Not her slave, no. I’m her concubine, and her mate. The Romans can’t take barbarians like us to bride, but we can be mated, so long as we are discrete, and some would say that’s better.” She shrugged her shoulders. “Anya treats me well, anyway, and I have no complaints in bed.” Her smile was lascivious. “You know what they say about older alphas…”

Clarke’s jaw worked and for once, she had no response at the ready. The idea of Anya, her stern alpha captor, mating with this slip of a beta girl…she had no words.

Raven smiled at her confusion, and lead her out of the warm water, dripping, as she surveyed a row of hooks to one side of the ornately fresco’d wall, which displayed omegas cavorting with strange fish. She brusquely toweled Clarke’s body dry with a dry rag, clearly admiring the way the blonde omega’s ample breasts bounced with the rag’s rough effort, and then slid a clean white shift from a nearby hook over her shoulders, absentmindedly rearranging the blonde omega’s hair as she did so. Clarke felt half in shock, half dazed with arousal, and so she didn’t mind with Raven tweaked her nipple through the fabric of the shift and made it stand erect. She gasped, and looked down, but Raven was already beckoning her ahead to the corridor.

“Come, Sky Princess. It’s time to meet the Commander.”
Chapter 2

Chapter Summary

Meeting the Commander while in heat goes about as well as can be expected.

Chapter Notes

Hey folks! Just a quick reminder that I did tag this as Dub Con, so FYI, some of the smut ahead is quite dicey. Clarke is a prisoner here, and her consent isn’t really something she can give while captive, plus she’s in heat. After some further development, she’ll be enthusiastic, but right now she’s going to get it whether she wants it or not, essentially.

(She wants it)

The ringing sound of boots across the stone floor of the war council room did nothing to ease the tempo of the Commander’s own heart as she paced, furious, in front of the fire in the massive hearth. The light of the flames flickered across the faces of her insolently lounging captain of guard, as well as the soldiers she entrusted above any others, stationed solemnly at the door. Shadows danced on the stone walls, illuminating the shields that hung before the statue of Diana the Huntress on her altar, and the faded red poppies she’d picked months before. Pausing in front of Anya again, she shot her fellow alpha a furious, smoldering glare through slitted green eyes, and, although she did not normally use her pheromones to express her dominance, she was inadvertently directing several waves as she seethed.

Anya, for her part, did not seem altogether concerned, smirking from her seated position at the Commander’s table, drinking from the Commander’s own goblet full of the Commander’s own wine. Her feet were even propped up on the chair the young brunette alpha had abandoned upon hearing the news of what her captain had brought her. Her attitude suggested an overt lack of caring, but that was a ruse; her former protégé knew better. Infuriatingly, the lean older alpha took a slow draught from her goblet, swallowing with panache, and leveled her former second-in-command with a smug stare.

“I don’t know what you’re so upset about, Heda.” The title had a playfully mocking ring coming from the elder alpha, as it always did. “You need a good fuck. One quick rut and you’ll feel a lot better, I can assure you. And since you won’t show any interest in the harem...”

Her leader shot her a dark look, but Anya only shrugged. She inspected the rim of the goblet and sighed to see it was empty. “The girl is comely, blonde, and around your age. I selected her just for you, when I could have just as easily put her to the sword, and let me tell you, she did not make the journey pleasant.” A begrudging smile played along the alpha’s lips. “A fighter like that....she’ll make your afternoon interesting, at least.”

The Commander rubbed the bridge of her nose, smudging her ceremonial war paint. She was
attempting to fit in with the local tribesmen who were willing to trade with the fledgling city, and that meant adhering to their customs, even if the paint sometimes got in her eyes and made her scowl. “You know I’m still grieving Costia, and I—“

Anyaa gave a derisive snort. “Oh yes, grieving. For three years now you’ve grieved. And meanwhile your bed remains empty, your heart remains empty and nothing moves forward, Lexa.” Her tone dropped into a gentler, more coaxing register as she used the younger alpha’s name without her title attached, reminding her of their lifelong friendship, and she sat upright, dropping her legs to the floor. “You must move forward, for the sake of your people if not for yourself.”

“Moving forward does not require obtaining a new and heavily unwilling concubine, Anya.” The Commander snarled, baring teeth in a way that made her alpha guards, stationed on either side of the door, blanch in submission...but her former tutor refused to budge, crooking an eyebrow at her as if to ask if she was done, just as she had at the days when Lexa learned at her knee. Lexa sighed and relaxed her stance, aware her fingers were twitching with the urge to curl into fists. “You know I expressly forbade anyone to bring back prisoners from the Sky lands. Not after....”

“Raven.” Anya supplied. “After I mated with Raven, and it was decided that prisoners of the Sky lands were altogether too tempting to be allowed kept in the harem.” She leaned back and blew a strand of hair from her face, contemptuous.

“That’s not why, and you know it.” Lexa clenched her jaw, feeling her ire rise in her throat. “It was out of kindness to your mate, that she not be subjected with seeing her people made prisoner. After Lincoln’s omega joined us, I ordered the harem be closed to outsiders.” She sighed, heartily. “But apparently you decided the exact opposite was a good idea.”

“It wasn’t a decision, exactly, and Raven doesn’t mind. She was glad when the other omega came and she will be glad for another of her people.” Anya shrugged her lean shoulders, unsympathetic. “I just saw the girl’s eyes when she had to be forced to kneel to the sword, and something made me think she belonged with you.”

A fond look flickered across her face for an idle moment, and the ghost of a smile haunted the leonine alpha’s lips. “She reminds me a lot of you, actually. Same fire.”

Lexa waved a hand impatiently. “Be that as it may, she’s also a prisoner. Who is now my responsibility. You’ve saddled me with an unwilling omega who has, in your own words, ‘quite a lot of fight in her’.”

“I wouldn’t be so quick to class her as unwilling.” Anya’s lips curled indecently. “She’s already gone into the start of a cycle at the first smell of you. Raven sent a messenger from the baths.”

Lexa shot her a sharp look. “You’re joking.” She said flatly, trying to deny the jolt that the idea gave to her clit, which swelled threateningly within its hood. It had been long, far too long, since she had last satisfied an omega’s heat. Hurriedly, she twitched the fabric of her tunic away from the join of her thighs, and rearranged the drape at her neck, making a show of fussing with the bronze clasp on her shoulder.

“I do not joke.” Anya responded drolly, and then added, to Lexa’s raised eyebrow: “At least, not on the subject of omegas in heat.”

The Commander shook her head, trying to ignore the pounding pulse at her temples. “Chancellor Nia of the Azgeda council is breathing down my neck enough as it is. Were I to take another omega to my bed, she’d share the same fate as Costia. They want to see me wedded to a Roman, not to
some tribal Barbarian.”

She crossed to the large desk, where the scrolls and maps of her conquered land called to her once more; a thousand problems, with only two hands to field them. She drew in a breath, steadying herself once more. Heat or no heat, omega or no omega. She was Heda, She was Caesar, and Caesar ruled alone, beset on all sides by foes without and within, so one couldn’t afford to be careless. Candlelight danced over her hands, disguising the slight tremor there.

“If I give them more ammunition to think that Lexa Augusta Caesar has gone native, they will attempt to supplant me with my cousin, Ontari. I hear she’s much more willing to be aggressive in her negotiations with the savages of the North.” She shot Anya a significant look. “And much less willing to accept mating with them.”

“Ontari is the true savage.” Anya noted, her voice verging on the edge of a growl. The older alpha tensed her hands around the wine pitcher as she poured again, but she had regained her composure by the time she rose, and her hand offered Lexa the glass.

“Here. Drink and relax. No one is speaking of wedding the girl.” She scoffed, but then shot Lexa a serious look with her hooded eyes. “And even if I was, Nia isn’t here in the wilds, and no one will see the mighty Caesar bedding whomever she likes tonight. Your guards are loyal, and the doors are thick. No one need see or hear.”

The point was solid, and Anya knew it, which meant Lexa could say nothing in response. The lithe alpha raised herself from the chair and stretched, making a groaning noise as her shoulders popped, but the look she shot Lexa was devious and overt. “Oh, my old bones. So hard to keep warm in this cold land. A hot young body in your bed will do wonders, let me tell you.”

The younger alpha made a furious hand gesture that would’ve made the lowest echelons of Roman society blush, but Anya only grinned.

“Besides,” she continued devilishly, drifting over to the double doors. “I sent for Raven hours ago and she has the omega fed, washed and prepped in your chambers.” She shot Lexa a lewd wink over her shoulder. “You may decide what to do with her once you get there.”

“Anya!”

At her tether’s (admittedly-short) end, Lexa tossed the wine glass, but it shattered harmlessly on the door instead: the elder alpha had already slipped out, correctly predicting her friend’s reaction. Dark droplets of wine splattered across the surface and dripped downwards, creating an artistic spray, but it didn’t improve the Commander’s mood.

Lexa stalked back to the table, growling, and poured herself a fresh glass, but instead of drinking it, she sat down and put her head in her hands. Frustration warred with many emotions in her overworked brain: lust, obligation, responsibility, guilt, shamefaced desire. Anya was right, however infuriating she may be, in accusing her of being unwilling to move forward. Costia’s death had shattered her in many ways, much like the wine glass, and just like the wine glass, the blame lay squarely on her own shoulders. The vast gulf of duty that separated her from the people who looked to her to lead also sundered her to the constant hollow ache of her own loneliness, of her own bitter, fractured thoughts.

Perhaps just one night without the weight of that responsibility was all she needed….or, at the very least, perhaps she could allow herself to believe that it would be.

Lexa eyed her new wine glass and tilted the contents, considering. A ‘good fuck’ as Anya had so
crudely put it, would certainly release some of her tension, and perhaps that solace could be put to good use. Her fledgling city of Londinium was growing strong, amassing many trade routes and building more harbors by the day, but she was constantly at war with the strange neighbors to the North, who resented her incursion and the stone forts she’d instructed her soldiers to build near their villages. The brutal barbarians were said to paint their faces blue with strange magics, and ate the hearts of their enemies or sacrificed them, bloodied and screaming, to the bogs, in service of their dark gods.

The Commander was above such idle soldier’s gossip… but her soldiers were (obviously) not. A contented, pregnant Northern omega bearing the collar of the Commander’s harem could only help disappear such nonsense by virtue of the normalized truth before their very eyes. Not only that, but the rounded belly of a foreign omega would cement her status as peacemaker and uniter, both amid the rank and file of her legions and in the eyes of her tribal neighbors. And while the pups of such a union may not be recognized as Roman citizens, they could still be elevated to positions of power which would grant them political status and wealth…

But she was getting ahead of herself, she reminded her clit sternly, as it began to stir hopefully once more at the idea of impregnating an omega with her pups. First, she’d have to actually knot the Sky Princess. And that was a sobering prospect. She hadn’t fucked anyone since Costia, let alone allowed herself to achieve a tie, and the first time was bound to be emotional for her. She’d rather not have those emotions in bed with an omega who may or may not want to kill her once her heat subsided. She doubted Raven would allow the girl to sneak any weapons by (she’d never met a more adept weapons expert than Anya’s young beta mate; if anyone could find a hidden blade, it’d be Raven) and she trusted that, after so many nights on the rough road, the baths and a selection of fresh foods would aid in calming her, but still. The Sky girl was a captive, not a selection from the trained bedslaves on offer on the auction block. She might fight, as Anya had suggested, or she may try to harm herself, rather than allow her heat to take hold. It wasn’t unheard of. Lexa had no desire to see that, nor any desire to mate an unwilling participant, frustration or no frustration. She didn’t know what ease she could offer, however. Her courting techniques were woefully out of date at this point and she only spoke the girl’s language from what little Raven had taught them, which did not include negotiating acts of desire.

The presence of a strong alpha would have to be enough. Lexa’s cock was making the decision for her, growing steadily thicker and longer the more she thought about the logistics of mating with the Sky Princess, and before she’d come to any real conclusions, she felt herself extending to tent the fabric of her tunic, the needy tip grazing against folds of red cloth, smearing the interior with her excitement. She cursed herself for being a pup, and tried once more to pluck the tunic away from her heated loins, shifting uncomfortably. Thoughts raced through her mind. Although Raven and Octavia were lovely, she’d never once bedded either of them, so she couldn’t say for sure what the Northerners were like behind closed doors. Some of her soldiers suggested they mated out in the open, beside their great bonfires that blazed on the holy days. Would this Sky girl want to be mated outside? Did she want an audience? Lewder, more obscene rumors suggested all the Sky omegas mated with their alphas in groups, one after the other, as bulls do with cattle, and that they were only satisfied after five or more alphas had entered them in every conceivable hole. She had never given much thought to the barracks discussion of her alpha soldiers, but now she wished fervently she’d payed more attention, if only to which rumors were considered true versus which were false.

There was nothing for it, though. She downed the contents of her wine glass, grimacing at the sour notes. The vines they grew here in this damp land were in no comparison to the dry sweet fruits back home, but their best effort was still drinkable… vaguely. Rising to her feet, she swept the cape of her office around her shoulders, fastening it with the wolf’s head clasp that Anya had gifted her on her twelfth name day. The black, heavy material comforted her with its weight as she swept out into the corridor, nodding brusquely at her guards, Indra and Gustus, to follow her to her personal quarters.
Tonight she would put aside her feelings and do her duty to her body’s needs, and her body’s needs alone.

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Raven had been right. The Commander’s chambers were warm, and becoming rapidly more so.

Fire blazed from the hearth, which was adorned with a leaping lion carved into the mantle, and a selection of animal skins covered the stone floor, as well as the massive wood-framed bed, also carved with intricate scenes. Birds and beasts, hunters and hunted things, flowers and skulls. Clarke’s eyes slipped from a spiraling rose to a snarling wolf, but the images blurred before her eyes and she couldn’t seem to contain it all. The animals almost appeared to be moving. Her breath came in soft pants and perspiration gilded her brow. Her heat was coming fully now, and as inexperienced as she was, she was helpless to its onslaught.

With a critical eye, Raven watched her pant in the center of the room, chest heaving as if the light shift she’d put on in the baths was a heavy woolen cloak, eyes dilated and roving madly. Clarke couldn’t focus on her, however, and couldn’t seem to focus at all. The strong scent of alpha was everywhere around her, overwhelming her senses, and she could hardly seem to breathe. The air seemed hot, hazy, thick with it, and she didn’t know how Raven could be standing there so unaffected, hand on hip, until she remembered that the girl was a beta, and logic reformed in her dozy mind. She felt drugged; strange and skin-stretched and desperate for something, but what she did not know. If her mother hadn’t warned her this was what a heat would feel like, she would’ve assumed she was fevered and possibly dying.

The lightest touch of the beta’s hand on her elbow made her jump and cry out. Her skin singed like fire, and anything that wasn’t the alpha she could scent all around her was so unwanted by her body that she felt actually physically ill. Raven must’ve seen it in her miserable, confused face, so she let go quickly and motioned for Clarke to sit at the table, where a heaping feast, the likes of which her village never saw unless a harvest was good or the gods gave them good hunting, lay spread out for her alone.

Still, at first, she didn’t think she could possibly want food at a time like this, when her body sang and her thighs grew slicker with every inhale of the alpha scent. Hunger was the last thing on her mind, but she dropped into the chair, still scenting the air wildly with her nostrils flared, and practically ignored the food until Raven slid a teeming plate in front of her and spoke a gentle, yet firm, command: “Eat.”

Clarke obeyed.

She tore apart a roasted pheasant with her bare hands, and sucked the grease and meat from the bones, moaning out loud as her stomach growled. She hadn’t realized how hungry she was until the food was there and the command was given, but now it seemed the most natural thing in the world to sate herself. There were strange, spiced fruits that must have come from the Roman’s exotic faraway native land, rough hunks of black bread, as well as roasted leek and turnip that she could have plucked from the garden at home, but the meats were such as she had never seen, nor tasted, even as the Chieftain’s daughter back at the village. Suckling pig, roasted swan, braces of hare, half the hindquarters of an ox….Clarke had never seen such abundance. She ate and ate and ate until her golden head was hanging over her plate and her eyes swam with drowsiness.

Again, Raven was there, and Clarke blinked at her, as if she had appeared in a puff of smoke. The beta guided her from the table to the bed, all the while wiping her face and hands as if she was a pup, tutting to herself like a nursemaid. “Do you always eat with such…exuberance?” Clarke couldn’t
even begin to bring herself to answer, only yawning blearily in response, but Raven didn’t seem to mind. “No matter. There, you’re all clean. Wouldn’t do to have you staining the Commander’s linens with grease.”

She motioned to the bed, and helped Clarke clamber onto its impressive surface. Three or four warriors could have easily slept abreast in it, clad in full armor, and it was piled high with pillows and furs. The scent was strongest here, and Clarke moaned, feeling arousal rush once more into her tired limbs.

Raven waggled a finger at her as she arranged covers over the omega’s drowsy body. “Don’t start that. You need your rest, and the Commander won’t be done in the war council room for several hours yet. I’ll send a message that you’ve begun your heat, so she won’t come in unawares, never fear.”

But Clarke did fear, suddenly as a lance streaking through her midsection. She tried to shoot up in bed, but her well-fed body did not want to respond. You’re in heat, her brain screamed at her, unhelpfully reminding. You’re in heat and you’re about to be knotted by a strange alpha. Alarmingly, that thought was becoming less and less unappealing as time went on. The alpha’s scent was unfamiliar, to be sure, but comforting and so rich, so dense and full, like the timber of a forest….she realized she’d begun to rub her thighs together once more and cursed herself.

Raven was beckoning to the beta servants to begin clearing the table, but she crossed back to Clarke, noting the warring emotions on her face. “I wouldn’t fret too much, if I were you.” She offered nonchalantly. “The Commander….Lexa….she’s a broody one but she won’t hurt you.”

A sudden, devious look crossed her face and she amended her statement. “At least, not intentionally. I’ve attended her and Anya at the baths and she’s rather….large.”

At Clarke’s widened eyes, the beta gave a knowing chuckle. “Some omegas would say that’s a plus, but since it’s your first heat, I can’t blame you for a little apprehension. Don’t worry. I’ve never had the pleasure myself, but I can promise you; Lexa will be gentle.” Her tone was almost soothing, and something in the dark-haired girl’s eyes assured Clarke that she was telling the truth.

She had little choice but to accept it as such, anyway. Her body was softening against the bed, and the linens were so comfortable that she wanted to moan with sheer pleasure, and the scent of the alpha was pervasive, encouraging her to lay back, to relax under the strength of its pull. Clarke’s eyelids drooped, but she nodded sleepily at Raven and managed to bite back a yawn.

“What happens to me….after?”

Raven shrugged her thin shoulders noncommittally. “She will want to ride out your heat with you here for as long as it takes, and then….whatever the Commander decides. Likely she will send for me to take you to the harem quarters. We can find you a room there.”

Clarke nodded, hesitantly. She knew she shouldn’t expect a personal relationship with the alpha who was about to mate with her for the next several days, but her heart still sank in her gullet at the reminder of the harem and the existence of her role here. Would she merely spend her days as the meek, docile breeding cow for a Roman invader? Scrabbling for position in the harem, seething with omega politics and hierarchies? Would she be expected to service visiting dignitaries, as well as the Commander? Thoughts too guiltily arousing and terrible to contemplate flashed through her brain and she shook her head quickly, dismissing them for now.

She realized the beta was making her way to the door, following the servants who had cleared away the food, and panic gripped her once more at the thought of what was about to take place. “Raven!
Wait!

The beta turned expectantly but impatiently, and cocked a brow at her. “Don’t expect me to stick around and join in. Lexa’s not a sharer, from what I’ve heard.”

Clarke blushed wildly, feeling her loins heat in response, but soldiered on. “What about…ah….ways to keep myself from getting pregnant?”

That was the wrong thing to say. Raven regarded her with a slow, unfriendly look that cut through the image of camaraderie she had been projecting up until this point. “Those aren’t allowed in the harem. You may have forgotten, but you’re still a prisoner here, Sky girl.” Clarke winced, and Raven continued. “If the Commander wishes to breed you, that is her will to do so. Your body is not your own anymore.”

And with that, the beta turned on one heel and left the room, the door settling shut behind her with a mighty thud.

Clarke sighed and flopped back onto the pillows. That hadn’t gone well. She’d hoped the harem might have some drug, some herb that would prevent pregnancy: omegas in groups often knew of such things. But it seemed Raven would take offense to her even asking, so that was out of the question, at least for now. Her eyes roved the room, taking in its contents, as she yawned, intending to get up and scour it for a weapon, an exit, anything…

But even as her mind thought furiously of escape, her limbs grew heavy and her eyes dropped closed, as the trials of the day took their toll upon her exhausted body. Before she realized it, she had fallen into a deep and glorious sleep. Many long nights on the road, with only the ground for her rest, had left her unable to resist the comforts of a real bed. And so, she slept, and the scent of alpha comforted her, allowing her limbs to uncurl protectively from her body and her jaw to loosen in a way it hadn’t since she’d left her village, and although she was too unconscious to notice it, her sleep was deeper as a result. The light in the sky dipped below the horizon and the room grew dim, lit only by the fire, which crackled slowly as it died to embers. Hours passed.

Clarke was awakened all too suddenly, however, by the sound of the clanging rush of boots in the hallway. “Yes, Commander,” someone outside her door was saying, respectfully, and then there was a soft swishing of robes as the beta servant left. The door pushed open.

Scent flew to her nostrils, and she sat up, drawing the linens around her body as the alpha pheromone drew nearer and nearer. She swanned, feeling dizzy, and her lashes fluttered as her mouth dropped open to inhale more of that intoxicating aroma, until a sharp memory of Finn’s bloody body lashed across her mind like a whip and she sat up straighter, attempting to pull herself together as she squinted to see in the dark of the fading fire.

The first thing she saw was a burly, muscular alpha male, dressed in the strange bronzed armor of the Roman guard, leaning to rekindle the flame. He looked over his shoulder at her, but his face was a stone mask and he hardly cast her a second glance, focused as he was on his task. Her eyes left him, and she saw a second guard, this one a female alpha, dark-skinned and fiercely beautiful, standing at watch beside the door, staring at her with glittering, mistrustful eyes. It was then that she saw the shape of the third form, back turned to her, unfastening her cape at the small desk in the opposite corner of the room. The scent emanated from her like a river running to its source, and this small, dark-haired female alpha, whose face she could not see, she was the alpha whom Clarke had been scenting all day. She was the Commander. Clarke pulled herself even straighter, waiting, and took in a sharp breath as the Commander turned.

Whatever she had been expecting the mighty, fearsome Caesar, ruler of her people’s enemies, to be,
Lexa was not it. The young alpha was no more than a year or two from her own age, and her face was unlined, smooth, with a moody, far-away look. She was small, slight of frame and lean of body, with long, elegant limbs and a compact torso that spoke of a fighter’s grace. Her hair was the brown of autumn leaves, and the eyes that looked into Clarke’s own were the deep green timber that her scent suggested; a forest of quiet reflection. Despite the smearing of black warpaint that her people used to mark one as a warrior, those eyes were pensive, and Clarke saw no cruelty in them, only a murky pool of untouchable thoughts. She let out her breath, softly, and tightened her hold on the blankets.

“Are you the Commander?” She asked, boldly, uncaring. If she were to be killed for impertinence, better that then suffer as a slave. Her heat screamed at her, demanding that she show utter obedience to the alpha, to show throat and expose herself to be bred, but she fought it with bitter grit. She was a Chieftain’s daughter, not some Roman whore. “I wish to negotiate the terms of my release.”

The female guard snarled, and the sound reverberated through the room, sending a quake through Clarke’s body, and she clenched, unpleasantly, but refused to drop her chin. The guard growled, low and menacing. “Do not speak unless spoken to, Sky girl.”

The Commander raised a hand, flicking her eyes at the other alpha for the split second that it took to assert her dominance. Clarke sucked air through her teeth; she’d never seen another alpha as unchallenged as this one, but neither guard seemed at all shocked. Both bowed their heads quickly, and the male returned to a flanking position at the door.

“Indra, enough. She’s allowed to ask who I am.” The Commander’s green eyes shot back to hers, and she spoke slowly, as if unused to Clarke’s native tongue. Her accent was clipped and strange. “I am Lexa Augusta Caesar, the Commander of this land, yes. Some call me Heda.”

Clarke felt her heat calling to her, asking her why bother fighting, when the presence of such a strong, dominant alpha was so close, so damned close…She shook her head, vehemently, and tried again. “Commander, my mother will pay a hefty ransom for my return.”

“I’m sure she will.” The brunette alpha cocked her head, and gave her a cool, assessing look. “Her only daughter….any chieftain would do the same. But you’re in heat, at the moment. I cannot transport you without risk to my soldiers.”

The matter-of-fact reference to Clarke’s predicament sent a shiver through her body. “Yes, but it’s just beginning, so perhaps if we-“

“No.” The alpha stated, calmly, and began removing her armbands of station, placing them one by one on the desk. “I won’t risk it. You will stay here, and you will allow me to satisfy your heat.”

“‘No’?” Clarke mocked, infuriated by Lexa’s dismissal, and she rose from the bed, letting the blanket fall. She was aware the shift was relatively see-through, in the flickering firelight of the room, and her nipples were hard, dark points with the spreading scent of arousal dampening her sex, but she didn’t care. She was angry now. “You’re just going to take me by force, is that it?”

Indra snarled again, and this time the sound sent a chill through Clarke’s bones. The guard advanced, and she caught the omega in a vise-like hold. Indra snapped her jaws and twisted her captive’s arm behind her back before she could move, sending Clarke to the ground with a pained cry. “Enough of this insolence! You will behave as an omega should or you will be taught-“


The guard whined, frustrated and clearly unhappy. She looked at Lexa pleadingly but her hold on
Clarke’s arm only tightened. “Heda, she speaks to you with a harsh tongue, and she does not present herself to be bred. Allow me to kill her for dishonoring you.”

The green-eyed alpha’s face crackled like an oncoming thunderstorm, and she moved faster than a wolf. Suddenly, Indra had released her hold and she was on the floor herself, cringing, as the Commander stood over her, snarling and hot-eyed. “It is you who dishonor me, Indra. Remove yourself and I will forgive your overstep.”

“Yes, Commander.” The fierce alpha cast a sullen look at Clarke, but left quickly, clearly stung to have been reprimanded.

Lexa sighed, collecting herself. “Gustus, you too. Guard the door and see to it that no one enters.”

The male guard looked in askance at his leader for only a split second before he, too, bowed his head and nodded. “As you wish, Commander.”

The door thudded again, and the room was left in the quiet crackle of the dry wood on the fire. Clarke realized then, how close the Commander had come to her in disciplining her guard, and she felt every hair on her body lift in anticipatory heat as the alpha turned to look at her, now, her green eyes still flashing fire from her confrontation with Indra. Those eyes swept hotly over her body, covered only by the thin white shift, and Clarke felt her sex flush in response, her clit rising, begging to be touched as her nipples stiffened even further. The alpha shrugged herself out of her boots, carelessly kicking them to one side, and stepped closer, her scent pouring in dominant, unchallenged waves.

“Indra is right.” She commented quietly, stalking to examine Clarke from all sides as the omega tried to turn to meet her gaze. “You are insolent. Have you never been taken by an alpha before?”

Clarke’s mouth was dry, and she wet it, shaking her head. “No, I….I came from a small village with scant few who weren’t related to me, so I never cycled.”

“And do you understand your body’s demands?” The alpha’s voice was a hypnotic, seductive spell, and Clarke couldn’t look away from her eyes. “Do you understand what an omega in heat does to every alpha in the vicinity? My guards only resist you because of their loyalty to me, but if I were to allow you to leave my quarters…without my protection…”

Clarke was hardly listening. Her breath came in soft pants, and she watched, spellbound, as the alpha loosened the burnished belt from her torso and dropped it to one side, allowing her tunic to swing freely as the bulge at the join of her thighs grew significantly larger. “You are safe here, omega, but your heat must be satisfied, and I am the dominant alpha here. There is no one else. You will present yourself.

That broke the spell, somewhat, as Clarke shook her head again, panicking even as rivers of slick made their way down her thighs. “No, no I can’t, I’ve never-“

A firm hand pushed down on her shoulders and she dropped to her knees on the animal furs of the rug, beside the fire that pulsed with its warm glow. Lexa’s eyes were dark, but still sparkling; a night of stars that spoke of wild, ancient things. Gently, but persistently, her hand on Clarke’s back pushed her down, forcing her to her elbows. Clarke’s face met the rug, and she inhaled must and the stink of a long-dead wolf, which mingled with sex and alpha pheromones in an eddying haze that caught up her senses. Her shift was rolled up her hips and she was exposed then, the fire’s warmth heating the rise of her pale ass and pink, dripping sex. A small sob escaped her. “Please,” she begged, a tear streaking down her face. “Please, I-“
But she wasn’t sure what she was even asking for, as Lexa’s fingers stroked down her spine, sending a fire through her trembling body. She arched her back, involuntarily, as those questing fingers dropped to her thighs, and slid up the shift further, rocking it over her hips, as a second, calloused hand found her nipple and pinched roughly through the fabric. “You may give up the act now, Sky girl. You are so wet I can smell it.”

“No….please, you can’t do this.” Clarke thrashed on the rug, belying her words with shameful rocking of her hips as Lexa’s fingers collected the humiliating evidence of her arousal on her fingers and swept it up, sliding to cup her cunt with an experienced hand. Long, deft fingers split her lower lips open, tracing teasing lines along her entrance, and slipped up to brush over her clit with knowing precision. Clarke panted, breath wet and hot against the fur as she blinked in shock and arousal, feeling her body open and pulse for this stranger, who was touching her as if she’d known her all her life. The intimacy of it was melting her.

“I can.” The Commander assured her, with a gravelly voice that spoke of someone not used to being denied. “And I will. But you’re going to enjoy it.”

With that, a finger thrust inside, curling and seeking, and Clarke lifted her head to cry out, clutching at the fur as she felt Lexa nudge her legs open wider. Instantly she wanted more, and her cunt clenched greedily around the intrusion, fluttering and trying to draw it deeper, but Lexa only grunted approvingly and withdrew. She gasped against her teeth, trying not to whine, but lost the fight as the alpha pushed back inside with two fingers this time, stretching her more deeply than her own fingers could reach in the nights back in her village when her heat would come and ravage her senses. This was different; more intense, more terrifying and yet more gratifying than her wildest dreams could imagine. Lexa’s palm thudded against her clit and the grinding was enough to make her see stars. She bucked wildly, feeling her body release oceans of fluid as the fingers curled against a swelling ridge inside of her that she had never felt before, and the tension building inside her made her cry out and nearly fall flat on her belly.

Lexa held her up with her spare hand on her hip, making soft noises of approval even as her fingers rolled and stroked inside of Clarke’s velvet channel. “You’re stretching for me. Good. But still so tight….”

Something about the way the alpha said that made Clarke ripple like a tidal wave. She suddenly wanted more, even as her cunt strained to accommodate Lexa’s strong fingers, and she keened, releasing a high wail as her body demanded to be filled in a way she had never felt before. Unthinkably, however, Lexa pulled her fingers free from Clarke’s clenching pussy, and the alpha made a low groan behind her, rustling with something. Clarke didn’t know what it was and didn’t care, she just needed to be filled, and the alpha was’t doing it.

“Commander,” she gasped, fighting the urge to beg. “Your fingers. I need…I need…”

“I know what you need.” The alpha’s low growl behind her made her turn to look back, and what she saw made her moan out loud and raise her ass higher, uncaring anymore about looking like a common whore. Lexa was shrugging out of her tunic, letting her breasts spring free into the air, dark nipples pebbling instantly. Her body was sculpted, scarred, and tattoos of strange symbols marked along her forearms and wrists, planing her back and shoulders. Clarke shuddered in arousal, and let her eyes travel down the chisel-cut expanse of the alpha’s abdomen to the thatch of dark hair at her loins, where the thickness of her cock rose to meet her gaze, bobbing with a glistening tip as the alpha stroked her hand along its significant length, her fingers already damp with the omega’s slick as they coated the shaft.

Clarke moaned, long and low. Raven hadn’t been wrong. Lexa was big. But instead of before, when
the idea of a large, thick alpha cock gave her fearful pause, Clarke didn’t falter. She raised her hips, quivering, and felt her skin sing with anticipation. “Do it.” She whispered through clenched teeth. “I want you to do it.”

But Lexa didn’t push in right away. She nudged at Clarke’s drenched, silky entrance with the broad tip, making the blonde wail and weep with desire, but with a lazy thrust she slid it past, gliding through the omega’s over sensitive folds like a ship at sea. Creamy, glistening pre-come drooled from the tip, and she spread it around Clarke’s reddened, aching clit in slow circles, hissing in pleasure to see her omega sobbed for more. She thrust again, and the jarring motion brought their bodies together in a wet kiss, which made Clarke cry out again. “Hhhfuck…damn you, put it inside…”

Lexa’s body pressed against her back, leaning over her shoulder as her breath skated the omega’s ear, making the hairs on the back of her neck rise in tingling symphony. “Tell me. Beg me to fuck you.”

No, no, no, Clarke’s logical mind whispered, tiny and defiant, but her heat-riddled body was already screaming yes, yes, yes. “Please, fuck me!” She wailed, high and throaty as her body arched below the alpha, trying desperately to draw her inside. “Commander, please fuck me!”

She could almost hear Lexa’s triumph behind her, but soon she couldn’t bring herself to care as the Commander lined up with her entrance and began to push inside. Her breath hitched; Gods, but Lexa was big. Although Finn wasn’t small, he was nothing like this, and their single tryst together had been sweet and slow, not hard and primal. At this moment, she wasn’t sure herself which she preferred, but she knew that every part of her sang with the savage force. She felt her tender muscles sting with the briefest of pain as they parted for the alpha’s insistent cock, and let out a gasping moan shared by the Commander as the head popped inside her tight channel.

“Ah-!” Lexa groaned, and her fingers dug into Clarke’s hips. “Gods, you’re tight…so good…”

Clarke could only moan in response, and spread her legs wider to allow the alpha to sink deeper. The next few inches slid in and she felt the fullness increase, but incredibly, there was still more to go, and she let out a primitive, guttural cry as the alpha rocked slowly, pushing until the head bottomed out against her cervix. “Fuck,” she panted, feeling tears come once more to her eyes, but this time from pleasure. “Oh fuck, oh Gods.”

To her surprise, Lexa’s motion behind her stilled, and a hand curled with the gentlest of force around her cheek, tilting to her chin to look back at concerned green eyes. “Are you all right? Is it painful?”

Clarke shook her head violently, scattering tears. “So good. It’s so good,” she choked out, trying to impress upon Lexa with her eyes rather than her words as she rocked back against the alpha’s pelvic with her ass. “Please, more.”

The alpha’s face shifted from worry to smug assertiveness in an instant and she let Clarke’s cheek go, stroking her one more time before she put that hand on her shoulder, keeping the other firmly on her hip. “Then get ready.” She promised with a low growl that sent rivulets of desire pulsing down their joined thighs.

Clarke lifted her head but immediately dropped it again as the alpha’s hips thudded into her ass, cock thrusting hard inside her like a spear. She rasped out a cry, and felt Lexa’s fingers grip into her shoulder, pulling her back to be fucked more, deeper, as her body blossomed to welcome the alpha’s girthy stretch. The head was buffeting against her cervix with every savage lunge of Lexa’s tightly muscled hips, and she could feel the throb inside her, the pulse of the alpha’s restrained seed, and her body began to ache and long for it, for the hot spill in her deepest depths.
As if on cue with Clarke’s desperate thoughts, Lexa gave a primal groan behind her and began thrusting in earnest, faster and harder with every punishing stroke, until Clarke was screaming high in her throat. The wet slap of their bodies echoed in the stone walls, and the omega vaguely knew that they were probably keeping the entire tower awake right now, perhaps even the entire city of Londinium, but she didn’t care, couldn’t care, as a sudden swell began to rock against her cunt and the alpha’s thrusts became shorter, more choppy. At first, she didn’t realize what was happening and thought that Lexa was deliberately keeping herself halfway out, but when she rotated her head back to shoot a frustrated whine over her shoulder, she heard and felt Lexa growl and force her head back down.

“Hold still.” The grip on her shoulder and hip tightened, and the slight pain of the alpha’s strong fingers only aided Clarke’s dizzying spiral of pleasure, but still, she didn’t understand until the rasp of the Commander’s teeth set against her throat and the knot began to stretch her entrance.

“Oh Gods,” she cried out, and would have panicked if it were not for the teeth nudging against her pulse. “You’re too big….you’ll split me open…!”

“Shhhh,” Lexa soothed, mouthing her neck. “Relax and let it happen.” The alpha’s fingers slipped from her hip down to her cunt, feeling where the pinkness of her stretched almost paper thin along the ridges of the knot as it pushed against her, seeking more ground. The tantalizing dance made Clarke cry out, but she let out an even higher moan as Lexa began flickering over her clit, touching it directly this time, providing her just the right amount of distracting pressure.

The alpha’s hips rolled, and her fingers slid wetly, and with a slick, sucking click, the knot popped inside of Clarke’s grasping walls. She raised her head and screamed, but the sound was primal pleasure, in its purest and deepest form. She was filled, she was stuffed, she was knotted, and Clarke had ceased to exist outside of the overwhelming sensations from inside of her body. Every ridge and raise in the knot was molded to by her clenching cunt, and she drew it in, milking the shaft inside her as her climax rushed up on her with blinding speed.

“Come in me!” She screamed, arching back, losing her mind with the force of her orgasm. The alpha’s name was the only thing she could think, or speak, the only thing left after the tsunami of pleasure ricocheted through her heat-addled brain. “I need your come, please, please, Lexa, oh Gods-!”

“Yes, yes, take my seed, Clarke,” Lexa panted into her ear, her voice crackling with need, and the shuddering savagery of it made Clarke build up again, in a searing rush, as the alpha growled like an animal in her climax. “Fuck….take it all…!”

The alpha’s come emptied into her with searing hot spurts, lacing across her walls in thick jets that refused to stop pouring, flooding her even as Lexa’s hips rocked, releasing more. Clarke came again, instantly, bucking and shivering on the rug below Lexa’s growling, snarling weight, fucking into her with possessive thoroughness as her seed filled every inch of Clarke’s tight cunt and sought more room, tenting her belly as the alpha continued to pulse. She moaned incoherently, feeling her thighs shake, as the knot kept her securely full of the potent seed, increasing her chances of being rounded with pups, pregnant for the alpha Commander. The idea only made her shudder once more, a captive to both her lust and her instincts as her heat called for her to be bred, knotted, and tied.

Groaning, the alpha slumped against her, and her breath came hot on Clarke’s neck. A sudden, desperate desire thumped through the omega: to feel those strong, sharp teeth descend on her and bite down, not just to hold her in place for mating, but to mark her as the alpha’s own, to claim her forever. She wanted the mark, wanted the bite, and it was seconds before she stopped herself from whining for it, right then and there.
Oh Gods. She thought, as her heat began to subsume her mind again and her hips rolled back against Lexa, who moaned. Let me escape this heat without a mark on my neck, because I don’t know if I could deny her if she asked. I want to be hers, Spirits help me....I want to be hers.
Chapter 3

Chapter Summary

Lexa wakes up with a very angry Clarke.

Chapter Notes

Hey gentle readers! Welcome back after my hiatus- I had some things come up which almost prevented me from updating, but I’m back, never fear.

Some things:

-I did promise you that the dynamic would change, yes? And it’s changing. This chapter is much more fluffy compared to the risky dub con elements of last chapter. Some of you were concerned over that, and if you’re still reading, rest assured, now is where the good consensual pleasure smut begins.

Important terms:

-A Century is a section of a Roman legion, consisting of roughly 80 soldiers and 20 ‘camp aides’
-A Cohort is a group of around six centuries. Ten Cohorts make up a Legion.
-A Legate is a legion commander
-A Military Tribune is an officer who ranks below the legate, but controls a lot of legion politics

(Please, any Roman scholars feel free to correct my very loose usage of these terms, I appreciate your comments!)

And as always, thanks for reading!

Lexa’s first thought was: soft.

She was laying on her side, head buried in golden hair, hands cupping a plush breast and a rounded hip, respectively. She was still between the omega’s thighs, though not inside her, and the brush of her warm, rosy skin was like the the finest silk from the Far East; a texture beyond anything she’d felt. The softness of her body was incredible; the warmth of her, the gentle sighs of her sleep noises, all conspired to make the Commander weaken inside. Her hands flexed on the mounds of flesh she covetously grasped, and she let out a tiny moan as the blonde’s nipple began to stiffen in sleep.

Get up, she told herself sternly. You knotted the girl enough last night, now it’s time to resume your planning; six centuries need reshuffling into new cohorts and Anya is probably going mad by now trying to placate the military tribunes. You had your pleasure, now it is time to become Caesar again.

She stretched, slowly, trying not to wake the girl, but the arc of her limbs brought her in close range
with the omega’s pulse, where a dizzying, head-swamping aroma greeted her and set her reeling once more. The blonde (Clarke, she reminded herself, vaguely, I think Raven said her name was Clarke) was still in heat, and the pheromones were a head rush beyond any she’d yet experienced. They seemed to be calling her, and her alone, to come lay claim to that silken neck, to sink her teeth into that perfect, wild pulse.

She gave a soft groan and moved to pull the girl closer to her body, but her hands groped on air and she gave a startled snort to realize that the omega was gone. In an instant, her eyes were widened as the omega slipped nimbly from her grasp to straddle her chest, and placed a dagger to her throat with discomfiting, sober ease...despite being apparently asleep only minutes before.

Where did she get...Lexa’s mind turned over possibilities like a river tumbling over rocks until she realized, with chagrin, that it was her own damn dagger pressed to her throat. Of course. She’d be slapping herself silly for her arrogance if she wasn’t so taken off-guard. She’d left the dagger on her boots, not assuming the omega would wake from a heat-daze long enough to search her belongings, and certainly not as subtly as to not wake her in the process. She had to give the Sky girl credit for that; it was unexpected. Of course, it wasn’t easy to take Caesar completely unawares, but if she was exhausted after a night of heat-rut….well…

Damn you, she cursed herself quietly, keeping her body still. For lust’s sake you became complacent like a child. This is the last time you listen to Anya.

Clarke was glaring down at her, clearly none too-pleased with her captivity, but even as her eyes shot blue spires of ice down ontoLexa’s, her hips were still subtly grinding against the alpha’s well-muscled abdomen, as if by instinct. She seemed only half-conscious of her body’s movements, and Lexa could see her blinking to fight back the heat haze that wanted to expand her pupils and turn her into a dark-eyed wanton once more. Still, her fingers curled tightly around the handle of the blade and she held it firm, if quivering slightly.

This omega is no meek, humble thing. The Commander thought, in a distant, far-away place where there was not a deadly object at her neck. I’ve never seen anything like her.

But the omega in question was not having any of her daydreaming. She growled, and forced the blade up, raking it against Lexa’s skin just enough to raise a thin red line of blood. The alpha put her hands up, placating, even as she calculated her next move below the innocent mask.

“Release me.” The Sky Princess demanded. “Or I’ll slit your throat and leave you for the guards to find.”

Lexa regarded her with a blank expression that denied her pulse’s steady pounding against the cold bronze of the blade. “Release you? In heat? You won’t get two steps from this chamber without being set upon.”

“I’ve been set upon already.” Clarke snarled at her, eyes glittering dangerously. “By you.”

“Did you not enjoy it?” The question was phrased innocently, but Lexa’s eyelashes were heavy with desire. The omega’s heat was just as effective on her as it was on its originator, and she was already forgetting her proximity to danger in favor of rolling her hips under the golden-haired girl. A smug grin settled easily onto her lips and she jutted her chin, defiant.

“I could’ve sworn by the fifth orgasm you were begging me for more…not respite.”

“That’s not…you…you…” Clarke sputtered, and her eyes darted down for a split second to Lexa’s cock, stiffening against her ass. That was the only opening the Roman needed.
She curled her fingers around the blonde’s and forced her dagger back, pushing the girl’s wrist up as she rolled their bodies with a quick twist of her hips. Clarke cried out and tried to slash at her with her wrist held captive, but it was useless, and Lexa sat victorious on her stomach, riding her as she attempted to free herself. Now she had full control as she bent over the helplessly squirming Sky girl, who spat furious curses at her in a language she (thankfully) didn’t fully understand yet, and kept the hand still clutching the dagger in a crushing grip pinned above her head, pinned alongside her other wrist. Her eyes roamed lewdly down the blonde’s body, allowing herself the pleasure of a long look in the better light that morning provided, and she let out an appreciative groan…which silenced the omega briefly.

“I’m not going to keep you for much longer.” She promised, trying to force her hips to stop rolling as she spoke. “Your heat will end soon, and then we can negotiate for your proper release with your mother. But it’s far too dangerous to release you now. I can’t guarantee your safety to your tribe if you’re attacked by an entire legion’s worth of alphas before you leave the camp.”

“Your soldiers should respect their leader’s command. Perhaps the great Heda is not the leader everyone claims.” The omega spat, but it was with significantly less malice this time. Her eyes had a calculating light, and she appeared to be considering the alpha’s words more thoughtfully.

“They do respect my command.” Lexa sighed, searching for the correct words. “They do…to a point.”

She continued, trying to make Clarke understand by leveling her gaze on the other girl. “Romans respect an alpha who lays claim, and none will challenge that, but if I don’t make clear it is mine, then I am seen as allowing or condoning the claim of others. If I’m satisfying your heat, no other alpha would dare, for I am Caesar and you are my foreign prize, but if I do not…” She gave a stiff shrug, and looked down into Clarke’s glacier-blue eyes. “I do not mean to sully your honor, and I promise, no one will think less of you for laying with me. Quite the opposite, in fact. Your presence in my chambers signifies your value, and will aid your mother’s cause in negotiating for your freedom.”

Clarke snorted, and the defiant toss of her brilliant gold head was finer than any of the horses in Lexa’s vast stables. “You mean to tell me you’re doing me a favor by fucking me?”

The girl’s crudeness was not uncommon for the barbarian tribes, but it was still intriguing coming from such a lusty, pretty mouth. Lexa found she quite enjoyed it, even as Clarke’s devilishly arched brow demanded an answer. She arched her own in response, and rallied her nerves, letting her lips curl into a lascivious smile. “I’d say so, but you don’t seem to agree…except when my cock’s inside you.”

The omega shivered, and for a moment, just a moment, she seemed to melt below Lexa’s grasp. Her eyes were mesmerizing. Lexa couldn’t seem to keep away from them. Sharp and shifting and yet soft in certain lights. She swallowed quickly as she realized she was staring heedlessly, like a forlorn beggar child watching a baker make sweets.

Shaking her head, she concentrated on uncurling the girl’s fierce fingers from the dagger, tsking. Clarke fought her, thrashing wildly, but Lexa was stronger and she held the better position, so she succeeded. Her fingers prized the dagger loose, despite the frustrated growling of the omega below her, and slid it into a hidden compartment on her bedside table, where a similar blade awaited. The metal clinked as she pushed the drawer closed.

“Now.” She sat up and forced herself to look distant and unconcerned as she released her grip on the omega’s wrists, planting her hands on either side of her delectably-curved body. “You needn’t have woken me in such a manner, anyway. I have duties to attend to and won’t be staying to indulge my
rut with you. One night should suffice to keep my scent on you. I won’t visit you again.”

That was only half-true, and she knew it, since the omega’s heat hadn’t abated, and if anything was doubly as strong as it had been yesterday. The scent was likely sending hair trigger emotions flaring all across the tower’s grounds, and petty squabbles would be inevitable all day today, as well as many an interested paramour lingering in the hallway. Likely she’d have to pace outside of the omega’s door herself all night to keep all of them, even her own personal guard, away.

Small price to pay for avoiding a slit throat, she told herself grimly. The girl doesn’t want you. Her cock twitched in pitiful protest, but she ignored it.

Clarke was sullenly rubbing her wrists and refusing to look at her, but at the words ‘I won’t visit you again’, her eyes flew back to Lexa’s and there was a split second of longing and frustrated confusion roiling in the blue-black depths of her eyes. “You mean, you won’t be staying with me throughout my heat?”

Oh. The alpha’s surprise certainly flashed on her face for a split second before her usual defenses kicked in and she slammed that cool, indifferent wall back down. Mastery of emotions was not something she was able to achieve around this omega, who seemed determined to upend her at every opportunity.

“You sound….disappointed.” She observed, trying to keep the lusty tremble from her voice even as she grew harder against the tantalizing stretch of belly below her hips. “Did you perhaps think-“

“No!” The omega spat, but it was too quick, and all-but-confirmed Lexa’s assumption. “I just…” She sputtered, casting her reddened face away from the alpha’s intrigued glances. “You said you needed to lay claim…so…”

Ohhhh. Now that was interesting. Lexa’s jaw worked for a moment before she could respond, and when she did so, it was carefully. “You thought I meant to bite you.”

Clarke shot her an angry glance, but there was furious embarrassment below it. “As if I’d let you.”

The alpha wasn’t sure how to negotiate this new information. Clarke was certainly full of surprises, that was for certain. She swallowed, and let her eyes drift down to the pulse point beating on the omega’s neck, where her call was strongest. She couldn’t help the tiniest of groans as she inhaled, breathing in the heady aroma of sweet heather, crushed grass and soft linen that made up the golden-haired Sky girl’s appealing scent. Realizing she had begun to salver a bit at the mere idea of biting down, she hastily opened her eyes and averted them from her pinned prize, but stayed seated on her hips, considering.

Finally, she spoke, choosing her words with slow intent.

“I don’t imagine you would. I imagine any alpha who made their mark on you would have to be worthy of your choice. And that humbles even the mighty Caesar, I can assure you.” She let her eyes linger on Clarke’s and blue met green like the river meeting the sea. “I know you despise my touch, but you can rely on the truth of my words, at least.”

That seemed to have been the right thing to say. The blonde softened below her and coughed, her eyes slipping away again.

“I didn’t. Um. Hate it. What we did, last night.” She blushed, and it was beautiful to see. “You….you were very kind. I don’t think another alpha would have fed me so well or let me sleep in their personal chambers.”
Lexa was taken aback. “Is that not the custom in your village?” Before she could stop herself she had found a stray tendril of wheat-colored hair and was tucking it back behind the omega’s ear.

Clarke shook her head. “No, it is, but it’s more often done among mated pairs, to share food and bed. Typically alphas prefer a rougher sort of wooing in my tribe, at least, if you’re in heat. Challenges are the highest form of romance, and a good match is considered one in which the omega submits willingly and doesn’t kill her alpha paramour.” She gave a harsh sort of laugh, but it was fond, not bitter. “I picked a beta for my first lover for that very reason.”

“And where is your beta lover now?” Lexa asked the question casually, out of a vague interest, but regretted it as soon as the angry mask slid back over the omega’s eyes.

“Dead. Laying back in the forest where Anya killed him.” She responded shortly, and the glittering sapphire gaze was deadly, offering a vicious challenge to the alpha if necessary. Lexa was struck by both guilt and a strange shimmer of pride: she had met no other omega with such a fire. Anya had been right. She shook her head. Now was not the time, however, to dwell on her former mentor’s correct assessment.

“I am sorry.” She said, awkwardly, and Clarke blinked at her surprise. She wondered, then, if the omega knew that a Roman Caesar does not apologize, ever; for Heda is always right, and no one would dare to say otherwise. Judging by the look on her face, she did. Trying to recover as best she could, Lexa coughed and then smoothly changed subjects. “So your village must be quite violent during a heat, I’d assume?”

That brought another sharp laugh, and she let out a quick sigh in relief as the omega chuckled. “No, no we don’t cycle in our villages. There’s no unrelated alphas, usually. Omegas will go to ground somewhere private, but if an alpha finds them, they must give challenge or be mated. After, the alpha usually leaves to return to their own village, and the omega must recover in the woods before doing the same.”

“That is a strange custom indeed.” Lexa observed. “We do our best to provide well for an omega, so that they might be strengthened as they go into heat and will bear stronger pups. It is against Roman law to beat an omega or deny her food or lodging if she is pregnant.”

“And yet your soldiers would fall upon me like ravaging wolves.” Clarke offered, but it was almost sly, teasing. She had lifted a hand as if she wanted to trace a tattoo on the alpha’s bicep, and it hung in the air, faltering. She pointed with it instead. “What do these symbols mean?”

“My soldiers would want to claim you as their own. They would feed you well enough afterward, but I doubt that would matter much to you.” Lexa explained, and, after a moment of considering, guided Clarke’s hesitant hand to her tattoo, tracing the oracle’s marks with their combined fingers. “These symbols were given to me on my first visit to the Oracle. They act as guides for what my spirit may do in this world.”

“Strange.” Clarke commented softly, her fingers tracing featherlight against the alpha’s skin, raising the little hairs along her arm. “But…beautiful, too.” She raised her eyes to look at Lexa.

“As are you.” Lexa breathed, before she was fully aware she was doing it, and then shook herself, feeling silly. But Clarke was looking back at her with wide, soft eyes and that was almost making humiliation worthwhile. Before she could stop herself, she was tilting down, falling into those deep blue pools, and her lips were shifting with her…hovering scant inches above Clarke’s…their breath mingling…

*Oh Gods, I’m going to kiss her.* The realization was slow like molasses in her mind but filtered
behind it was a screaming, incendiary thought: *I haven’t kissed anyone since Costia.*

She jerked away, coughing to cover the sudden motion, and righted herself once more, rolling off of the omega to a sitting position on the edge of the bed. Her arms shook and she stared down at her white knuckles, mind afire. Behind her, she could hear Clarke let out a low breath, and felt the mattress dip as she pulled herself upright as well.

“Well,” she stuttered out, breaking the silence. “I should return to my legates. They’ve no doubt developed the start of a coup in the time I’ve been gone.” She was only half-joking; the politics of legion control were cutthroat, and there were many supporters of Azgeda in her own camp, particularly among the military tribunes; older, mostly male alphas who were given cushy seats of power within her camp and often sought to undermine her. Her absence would be noted if she did not appear soon. It was one of many reasons why she had not taken another omega to bed since Costia; a heat could take days, and that was precious time when it came to consolidating and securing power in a den of vipers.

As she ruminated morosely on that, however, she felt thin, strong fingers close around her wrist and she looked down, taken off-guard, and then back at Clarke, who was biting her lip with a furrowed brow.

“Stay?” The Sky girl asked, quietly. “My heat’s returning and I….,” She looked away for a split second and then looked back, and Lexa could swear she could hear her heart thudding loud as war drums in the grey-dawn quiet of the room. “I don’t want to ride it out alone.”

The alpha’s mouth suddenly went dry and her fingers seized on the bed, gripping the coverings with mad, desperate force. She looked at Clarke’s hand on her wrist like the girl had suddenly grown a dragon for a limb and her mouth worked on nothing as she tried to figure out how to respond. Gods, how that offer had taken her by surprise. She realized, in that heart-splitting instant, how much that idea resonated with her very bones, and suffused her skin with warmth. Oh, how I want to stay, she thought. Thinking carefully, she turned to face the omega propped up on her elbows in the center of the bed, looking as resplendent in the early dawn light as she had in firelight; only more so because now Lexa could see her fine, fierce features even clearer.

“Do you want me, truly?” She asked, delicately, keeping her gaze level and locked on Clarke’s blue, hesitant eyes. “Or…would you prefer me to bring you a selection of my guard so that you can pick an alpha of your choosing? I would not be offended if you….,”

She trailed off, because of course, she would be offended, and couldn’t bring herself to finish the sentence. Instead she gulped and shrugged, hoping her silence would be explanation enough.

When she could bring herself to meet the omega’s eyes, she saw that Clarke was shaking her head and her response was quiet, but sure. “You. I want you to stay.” Her fingers tightened on Lexa’s wrist. “Just you.”

The Commander let out the tiniest of groans, deep in her throat. She didn’t know what to do with the roil of emotions she was feeling. The Sky Princess was in heat and that was surely where her desires were originating, but the soft way she was asking for Lexa to stay was making the alpha fall hard, and fast. *Calm yourself,* she tried to reason with her twisting, pounding heart. *She’s not saying she wants you, not really. Just wants you for now.*

It’d have to be enough.
She gave in to her sinking, deepening feelings and turned to Clarke, catching her face in both hands as she leaned in and kissed her, letting out a moan as she pressed her lips into pillow-plush softness. Oh *Gods*, the taste of her, the slippery heat of her mouth…Lexa took her time exploring every inch, kissing her thoroughly, pushing her back onto the bed and crawling over her like a crouching wolf...feeling the heat rise as the omega pushed eagerly back up against her, arching. Her lips tasted of clear water, sun and bright stars. Lexa moaned over and over, losing herself, and Clarke, gasping into her, was just as lost, clearly.

She found herself struck by a sudden desire to see if the omega tasted as good elsewhere, and it funneled her brain down to the simplest of steps. She drew away from the kiss, letting her lips fall down onto Clarke’s collarbone and laving with her tongue at the little ridges there. There was salt, sweat from her pores, and it was the purest nectar she could imagine. She let her teeth graze the ridge, raking, as Clarke let out a moan below her and tangled her hands in her hair to bring her back up for another kiss.

Lexa couldn’t help pumping her hips eagerly against the squirming, golden form below her body as she groaned into Clarke’s seeking, urgent mouth, their tongues parrying like swords. This was the madness of lust, she knew in the logical part of her brain, and this coupling was as ill-fated as any could be, what with their respective peoples at war, but she didn’t care. Not as long as Clarke’s hands kept roaming her body like that, touching her desperately, as if she would drown. Not when Clarke’s scent was everywhere; in her nose, in her lungs, her heart. Lavender and heather and rushing waterfalls and sunlit fields. The copper tang of blood from where their teeth had collided. The heat and salt of her wanton, rampant desire, building in tandem with Lexa’s own body as they jostled and groaned together…grinding and rocking, with only the thin sheet separating their lower bodies.

Once again, she drew away from the nigh-irresistible pull of Clarke’s hot, insistent mouth, breathing raggedly. She began her descent, more determined this time, kissing her way down. She hadn’t had time to spend truly relishing the omega’s body last night, and hadn’t wanted to, hadn’t wanted to give herself like this, but it was happening beyond her control. Simple things took her heart and clenched it; the tiny freckles on Clarke’s sternum, between her breasts, the way her inner wrists glowed with the pulsing of her blue veins as she clenched the sheets, the pink pebbling of her nipples and the way they stiffened instantly as Lexa’s damp breath greeted them.

She devoured it all, ravenous.

“Oh *fuck!*” Clarke cursed, and her fingers fist ed in Lexa’s hair as she drew her nipple into the warm recesses of her mouth. She smiled around Clarke’s breast and let it withdraw from her mouth with a wet noise. Rising to kiss her as she moaned felt only far too natural.

As her lips left Clarke’s once more, their eyes met, and the omega’s fingers in her hair tightened. There was a fiercenes s in those dazzling, sky-mottled blue eyes that was breathtaking and startling to behold, and Lexa felt herself drawn in, helpless as a roe deer. The Commander was laid low before the hold of those eyes, and it took everything in her to wrench away, kissing her way determinedly back down the omega’s chest once again, lips grazing her freckled skin and dancing along her belly.

Clarke seemed momentarily confused over what she meant to do, as Lexa drew the sheet down and exposed her golden, damped curls to the morning light, sighing with desire. Then, as the alpha descended, nipping and licking along her hipbones, her eyes widened and she gripped into Lexa’s hair, looking as if she didn’t know whether to pull her away or hold her closer. The alpha made the decision for her, letting her eyes linger lustily on the omega’s as she dragged her lips through the thatch of blonde hair above Clarke’s pouting, weeping sex, and allowing her tongue slip out to taste the first sips of delicious ambrosia that trickled from her lower lips. Clarke gasped like her lungs were
on fire as Lexa took her time, letting her tongue explore her pussy as thoroughly as she had her mouth.

“Oh Gods, that’s…what are you….ohhhhh Goddddssss…” Were the only words the omega seemed to be able to summon as Lexa went to work with a will.

She wasn’t unaffected herself, moaning into Clarke’s sweet flesh and feeling her cock stiffen hard against the down-stuffed mattress. The omega just tasted so good. So damn good, that she couldn’t concentrate on anything but her writhing, moaning prize’s pleasure. Her tongue swept and circled and plunged, and she finally settled into a dancing, flickering rhythm just over the Sky girl’s prominent, begging clit. The dark tango of her tongue was slick, and growing slicker as Clarke gasped and cried out like a broken-winged dove mixed with the mouth of a sailor.

“Oh fuck, oh Lexa, oh fuck, yes don’t stop!”

The sound of her own name on the omega’s lips had the same effect on her in the morning as it had the night before. She groaned, and renewed her fervor, planting her lips around the swelling raise of hood surrounding Clarke’s lovely reddened little clit. She sucked, thrashing the swollen bud with her tongue as she did so, and it drew a scream and a gush from the omega almost instantly.

Sweet, sweet wetness soaked her chin and her eager mouth, lapping it all up as Clarke howled and wailed, bucking up into her again and again as a seemingly-endless series of orgasms took her. Lexa could feel each one convulsing onto her tongue as she flattened it to allow the omega a surface to grind against and thrilled to the feel of her hands desperately clutching at her head. She was almost shaking herself, her cock throbbing in sympathy and her body thrusting inadvertently against the tangled sheet as she guided Clarke’s pleasure with her mouth.

Finally, arching and gasping one final time, Clarke pushed gently at her shoulders and she knew the omega was done. At least, for now. Lexa wiped her mouth with the back of her hand and let her tongue swipe over her knuckles like a cat, seeking more of that dark ocean taste, and crawled back up the blonde’s panting, sweat-glistening body. Clarke immediately grabbed her and pulled her in for a greedy kiss, and they shared the lingering taste of her essence between them like a melting sweet.

Before she knew what was happening, the omega had recovered fully in a flashing instant, and she was being rolled, flipped as Clarke slammed her shoulders back on the bed. Lexa’s eyes darted wildly to the bedside table with its hidden compartment; did she just get played for a fool? Was the omega about to strike?

But no, Clarke only leaned forward, breasts grazing the tips of her own, which hardened, and hair dragging along her heated skin. She kissed Lexa again, slowly, meltingly, and the alpha realized that kissing Clarke was rapidly becoming her favorite thing in the world. Why had she feared it so much? She didn’t know. All she knew was that a wicked, lithe hand was streaking down her abdomen, reaching for her cock, even as Clarke’s lips descended on the same path she herself had laid upon the omega’s body. Starting with her collarbone, and then slipping down to her nipples, Clarke’s hot mouth was a brand, searing across Lexa’s skin, but her hand was even more fiery, grasping Lexa’s length and spreading the arousal dripping from her tip down to her base, coating the shaft, which began to thicken instinctively at the warm grip. Her hips pumped up into empty air and she groaned, feeling helpless as the omega’s mouth left her nipples and her breath skated over the aching tip.

“Clarke…” She managed to choke out, but nothing else followed except a series of groans as the omega ran her tongue along the seeping well of pre-come in the slit, and laved along her length. Blue eyes rolled up to meet her own as the head of her cock popped into Clarke’s warm, wet mouth.
Lexa could barely resist the urge to thrust as Clarke slowly worked down her length, taking her time to swallow the generous proportions. The Sky girl’s tongue was a silken, fluttering tease, moving from her leaking slit down along her shaft. She let it slip from her mouth, peppering kisses with her plush lips at the base while her hand worked the tip, and once again looked up at Lexa as if to say ‘See? I’m in control here’. And she was. Lexa’s eyes rolled into her head and she ground out a moan, fisting the sheets as she propped herself up on her elbows to look at the glorious sight of her cock disappearing into the blonde omega’s rebellious mouth.

Clarke choked slightly, gagging as she withdrew the considerable length from her throat, and Lexa would’ve been overcome with concern….if the sight wasn’t about to make her come over Clarke’s face. She grit her teeth, clenching, and felt a pulse ripple through her needy shaft, as the sheets twisted into a ball under her hands. Her cock twitched, and a tremble ran along its length, and Clarke looked up at her with eyes glittering bright blue, her lips drawing away from the swollen, red tip, with a glistening trail.

“You better not come yet. Not until it’s inside me.” She ordered, eyes wild and passion-black, and while Lexa would normally rear up, remind the girl who was Heda here, she merely nodded meek as a slave and lay back, resting her hands on Clarke’s hips.

Clarke was all she could see or feel, and she was helpless to the feeling of surrender as she watched, groaning, as the object of her desire mounted her cock like a mare taking a stallion. The omega’s hands trembled as she guided the tip inside her petaled outer lips, and the head smeared a shiny trail of pre-come along her puffy vulva, leaving them both shaken for breath. At the first grasp of Clarke’s tight inner muscles around her tip, they both cried out, and Clarke’s hand slammed down onto her chest, holding the omega upright as she almost fell forward.

Her hair fell into her face and she pushed it back with her other hand, sweaty and careless, and the motion made Lexa fall even harder, moaning as she resisted the urge once more to thrust upwards. Her fingers dug into Clarke’s ample hips instead, and she hissed through her teeth as more of her slid inside of the omega’s grasping walls. Clarke steadied herself with both hands on Lexa’s chest and allowed her hips to slowly roll forward, accepting more of the thick length with each pass.

The steady glide was torturously beautiful and agonizing in its slowness, but Lexa wouldn’t have traded it for the world, as, finally, the omega settled herself fully down, the base rocking gently against her clit. The soft cries and slick, tightly-grasping heat…she was lost. Her cock twitched, glorying in the tightness all around her, and she grunted in animalistic passion, unable to stop her hips from bucking upward, just a bit. That little bit was enough, though, and Clarke moaned low and loud, rolling her pelvis down in response.

She began a slow, easy rise and fall, allowing Lexa to thrust up as she sank down, and together they started a rolling rhythm, moaning in unison as the waves of pleasure built back and forth between them like a tide caught in a rock pool. And, just like a minnow tossed upon a wave, the alpha Commander was helpless to stop the building rush. The rhythm picked up speed, and the waves started to crest. She thrust and thrust, gripping into Clarke’s beautiful ass as she lifted her body to slam back down, and the omega whimpered in such a lovely way that she had to do it again, and again, and again.

“Oh fuck, oh Lexa, yes, yes….!”

Blonde hair swept into green eyes and breasts bounced in her face as Lexa shifted them, grunting in pleasure as she lifted Clarke more fully into her lap and sat up, thrusting deeper. Her teeth grazed...
across the omega’s pulse point, and Clarke lifted her head to cry out, as her body shivered and her pussy convulsed. She was coming, Lexa realized belatedly as fist-like contractions gripped her cock, and in doing so she was drawing out Lexa’s knot, pulling it from her base as she thickened rapidly in her primitive desire to fill, to flood the recess of Clarke’s cunt during orgasm so her cervix would dip and drink up the seed.

“Oh Gods, Clarke…” Lexa’s growl choked and rattled in her throat as her knot expanded and she instinctively dug in with her teeth against the omega’s bare, perfect shoulder.

Her body thrust up, and she felt Clarke gasp and take her in, blossoming open to accept the start of her knot. She managed to meet the omega’s eyes in the midst of stretching her way inside, and through the sex-haze, she could see Clarke’s joy at being filled, her wonderment at Lexa’s instinct, and it only thrilled her more. The knot clicked in, as Clarke sank down one final time, and she screamed, shuddering into climax once more as Lexa growled into her shoulder, biting down hard. The tie was tight, tighter than Lexa had ever experienced, thanks to the angle and the gravity, and hot ripples molded to every ridge in her swelling knot, coaxing her to release.

She came, screaming Clarke’s name like a hawk’s mating cry, until her throat was hoarse. Jets of hot come pulsed from her tip, and was greedily accepted into Clarke’s swallowing depths, filling and flooding her as the orgasm didn’t stop, but continued into one long, moaning, breathless emptying. Clarke slumped forward, crying softly in what appeared to be abject abandon and pleasure, and she curled onto Lexa’s chest, clinging as the alpha slowly released her grip with her teeth and pressed her face into the sweat-damp mass of golden hair.

Neither of them had noticed the knocking. Nor the tentative, hushed voices asking; ‘Caesar? Commander? General Anya is without and wishes very much to speak with you-’ followed by a much louder voice, demanding entry. Sounds of a slight scuffle emitted from under the door. The knob of the great oaken door twisted, and it creaked open just as Lexa was stroking down Clarke’s back and resting her hands on the curve of her ass, whispering nonsense words in her own language into the omega’s hair as she continued to empty into her, the knot keeping them tied in place on the bed.

The sound of boots woke them from their stupor but not in time to cover themselves. Anya had grown impatient outside the door.

“Lexa? Lexa, dam, you, you can’t sleep late just because you were up all night rutting that-”

But the General’s words died on a strangled whimper as she caught sight of the entwined pair on the bed: Clarke huddled against Lexa’s chest, hips still faintly rolling, and Lexa holding her in place, looking over a purpling mark on the omega’s shoulder in rising fury at the intrusion. Anya’s mouth snapped shut and she swallowed, several times, staring.

“Well.” She said, finally, her voice a much higher pitch than its usual rusty timbre. “You two seem to have gotten along well.”

“Anya, get out!” Lexa roared, crouching protectively against Clarke as the omega stared, wide-eyed at the alpha who’d captured her, now observing her naked and tied to the Commander. Lexa’s hands fumbled past the omega’s body, reaching for her bedside table, but Anya was already turning smartly on her heel by the time she’d reached the dagger with her stretching fingers. It sailed past her head to bury itself in the door as she strode past, and the leonine alpha only gave it a smug glance and a derisive snort as she curled her fingers around the handle, pulling it free, and slipping the dagger into her belt.

“Told you you’d like her.” She gave one finally shot over her shoulder, and then slid the door closed.
They could both hear her delighted chuckling in the hallway, despite the solid oak of the door.

“I’ll cover for you with the tribunes for another day, Heda, but you’ve got some explaining to do when you’re out of there.”

*Another day.* Lexa looked up into Clarke’s eyes, and a slow grin spread between them in mutual understanding.

“You did say you’d stay.” Clarke reminded her, brushing a sweaty, limp strand of hair from the alpha’s face.

“I did.” Lexa assured her, feeling herself already stirring once more inside of the omega’s deliciously tight warmth. “And a Commander keeps her word.”
Chapter 4

Chapter Summary

After Clarke’s heat ends, the claim remains....

Chapter Notes

Hello my dear fellow lovers of sin! Today’s chapter is a doozy; took me a while to decide whether I wanted to do more plot or more smut, and in the end, I decided on plot, and to extend the chapters for this particular series. So never fear, smut is coming soon.

But first....the drama.

It was in the grey-silence of the early dawn that Clarke awoke.

Her heat was subsiding, she could feel it. The tender, buzzing ache that had been driving her toward near-constant sensory overload was leaving her limbs, and her sex felt sore and swollen, no longer pulsing with mad, hot desire. It was strange. She felt mournful, strangely sad about it leaving, and couldn’t place why.

Then a dark form beside her shifted, drew her close to the warmth of her skin, surrounding her in a familiar smoky woods scent and she knew.

Because Lexa won’t hold you like this when your heat is done. A sibilant, mocking whisper hissed through her mind. That’s all this is. Your heat. When it’s over you’ll go to the harem, no matter the mark on your shoulder. You belong to her, that’s what that means.

A shiver ran through her, despite the plush coverlet and the warmth of a sleepy alpha nuzzling into her back. She knew, despite the tenderness of the alpha’s touch, and the generous way she’d given to Clarke’s pleasure, that Lexa could just as easily now ignore her in favor of another omega, providing for that girl’s heat in place of Clarke’s. That was the way of the Roman conquerors. Their harems were interchangeable based on whims, and the so-called ‘barbarian’ omegas were to be pleasure slaves, not bred and mated like their presentable, haughty wives. This was what she had known as Anya’s warriors had taken her prisoner, and what she had feared when Raven first drew her into the baths, but the swamping force of her heat had taken the fear from her, and she had been lost. Now, with no sweet trickling of desire pooling in her loins, she could think clearly, and clear thought was as chill to her as the grey of the morning.

But she marked me….Some quiet, longing part of her was petulantly insistent upon saying; she marked me, and I’m hers. Hers. Clarke shook her head, careful not to disturb Lexa behind her, but furious at the pervasive thought. You’re not hers, she told that part of herself, cruelly. The mark was heat lust, not mating. And even if she did, what of it? She doesn’t love you. It was the heat. You are not her mate.

That did not stop the thoughts, unfortunately, and she gritted her teeth against the unwanted images:
Lexa tenderly running her hand down Clarke’s belly, feeling the tent and swell of her seed inside….Lexa’s eyes, dark with passion, locked on hers as she plunged into Clarke with her straining length on fire between the omega’s grasping lower lips…Lexa kissing her, whispering words in her strange Roman tongue that sounded like praise and poetry all wrapped into one melting package…And the mark, throbbing on her neck as Lexa sunk her teeth in again and again…biting to hold her still, biting to reinforce the deep purple bruise, biting to make Clarke climax in gasping, dripping waves.

It was all surreal to her now, in the wake of her heat, that she had sundered so easily, given in even after having the conqueror under her knife, at the mercy of her own blade. She had let this happen to her, asked for it, even, and practically begged the Commander to stay in bed with her for days on end, giving in to every carnal urge of her heat’s demands. Her cheeks flushed a violent shade of red as she remembered her desperate, wanton cries in the throes of her heat; begging that Lexa fill her, knot her and bite her. It was unbelievable to her now, in the steadily increasing light of dawn, but the words had tumbled so easily from her throat just hours before…

Beside her, as if sensing her distress, Lexa shifted, making a mumbling sleepy noise as she drew Clarke tighter to her chest, burrowing her face in the mass of tumbled dirty-blonde hair. The Commander drew in a deep draught of the omega’s scent, and her brow furrowed, clearly smelling the end of Clarke’s heat. Her eyes blinked awake, slowly, and the omega turned away, unable to stop her heart constricting at the deep green pools.

“Klark..?” Lexa asked in her sleep-raspy drawl, pronouncing Clarke’s name as the Romans did, and as usual, her rough tongue gave a small shiver to the blonde’s spine. “Why are you awake? The hour is early yet….” Her hands paced the span of Clarke’s waist, stroking the skin she found there.

“My heat is leaving me.” Clarke explained, simply, and prepared herself to see the business-like mask slam down onto the Commander’s face, prepared to be ejected from the bed and returned to the dark cavernous warrens of the harem. She expected it, truly…and was more than a little disoriented when Lexa only continued to look at her quizzically, stroking her sides.

“I expected it would be soon, it’s been three days.” Lexa rumbled in agreement, brows lightly raised. “But why should that upset you?”

“I…” Clarke was at a loss. “Aren’t I to return to the harem?”

The way that Lexa kept looking at her was disconcerting, and it doubled when the Commander merely replied: “Do you want to?”

Clarke shook her head. She disliked this feeling, this meek pit in her stomach. She wanted to banish it. “Well, I’d rather not be used like a Roman whore,” she spat, taking a small merciless delight in the hurt that crossed the Commander’s face for an instant. “But seeing as you’ve enslaved me, I doubt I have much choice.”

Lexa’s eyes darkened and the hands stroking her sides fell away. “If that is how you see it, then I suppose you don’t.”

“How else should I see it?” Clarke sat up, not caring that the blankets fell away to expose her breasts. She was searching for more fury, building herself up…but to what end she did not know. She just knew it felt good to yell at Lexa for the conflict she was feeling inside. “I’m your slave and you used me as such.”

That hurt, Clarke could tell. A punch-like blow to the Commander’s ego had been landed, and her face turned sour. “I didn’t hear you complaining. Much the opposite.” Lexa spat, drawing herself up
on her elbows. “And I told you, you’re a prisoner, not a slave. You have far more choice than you realize.”

“How is that any better?” Clarke was in a fine frothing rage now, and she gloriied in it. She stood up from the bed, naked, and put her hands on her hips, glaring down at the Commander. Lust sprinkled with red rage in her hazy, discombobulated mind, and she unthinkingly admired the lean, muscled length of the alpha’s belly, dropping down to her cock, which was rapidly softening and retreating into her dark curls of pubic hair.

That gave her a pang, as she remembered what that cock had been doing to her, only hours before… but only for a moment, and she resumed with a will: “A prisoner! So I suppose it’s the dungeons, then? I hear you Romans prefer to use sewers for holding your captives. Perhaps you like your barbarians covered in filth before you fuck them.” She finished acidly, enjoying the shock and rage her statement provoked.

“I think that may be the only suitable place for someone as foul-mouthed as you!” Lexa roared back, sitting up fully. “You’re the only omega I’ve ever known who doesn’t have the grace to say ‘thank you’ after you’ve been so well fu—”

But Lexa didn’t get to finish her curse. Clarke had moved like a fire-borne wind and mounted the bed once more, raising her palm and striking the Commander full across the face with a ringing slap. Lexa cried out in shock, raising her hand to her reddened cheek, and for a moment, the tableau was frozen in time: Clarke pulling her hand back, and Lexa putting hers forward.

What have I done? Clarke realized her mistake in a horrific, thundering instant. She remembered, with a sickening rush, the roar of the crowd from outside the stadium, where Anya had said…Anya had said…

“A slave who struck his master will be pitted against a bear… I assure you, Klark Sky-Princess, should you choose to do the same, your fate will be far worse, though no less public.”

Clarke let out a sharp gasp, and stared at her hand as if it was a snake that had just bitten her. Gods. I’ve struck her. I hit the Commander. I’ll be torn to pieces for this. She couldn’t look at Lexa. Couldn’t see the face of the woman who could clearly now sentence her to death and call for Indra and her guards to drag her away…couldn’t see those eyes turn stone and cold after they had been so warm. What have I done? She thought again, miserably. What have I done?

Lexa drew in a long, low breath. “You struck me.” She commented, quietly, as if in disbelief.

Clarke let out air that she didn’t know she’d been holding, and squared her shoulders. Whatever happened now, she was a member of her mother’s tribe, and she would present herself to death as bravely as any of their warriors.

“You deserved it,” she returned, and allowed her eyes to find Lexa’s face again, defiantly.

What she saw there took her so deeply by surprise that she almost stumbled. Lexa was laughing.

“You may be right,” she said, through a throaty chuckle. “I don’t know what I expected, taking a barbarian to bed.” Her teeth flashed in her mouth, white and strong, and she laughed again, exposing her neck as if she had no cares in the world.

Clarke opened her mouth, ready to defend against the slur, but dropped it closed again. She had no defense against this, no ready quip to fire back. How was she to go to her punishment bravely if the damn alpha wouldn’t stop laughing at her?
“Just do it already.” She snarled, and was gratified to see Lexa stop giggling to look at her questioningly. “Call for Indra and have me publicly beheaded, or torn to shreds by wild beasts, or whatever it is your people do with prisoners who have attacked their captors. I tire of your enjoyment.”

“Clarke…” Lexa sighed and pinched her brow, as if the thought was hurting her. “I don’t have any need for my guards, unless you intend to go for the knife again.”

“Then what?” Clarke persisted, almost hellbent on getting an answer out of the Roman leader. “You’ll deal with me yourself?”

“I should,” Lexa quipped quietly, seemingly to herself. She straightened her shoulders and looked searchingly into Clarke’s eyes, which made the omega drop her gaze in a blushing, furious rush, but Lexa was not deterred.

“Clarke, I have no desire to see you killed. I have no desire to see you unhappy in any way, regardless of what you may think. I chose to put my mark on you, Clarke,” the alpha reminded her, almost tenderly. “I don’t harm what is mine.”

“‘What is yours’.” Clarke mocked. “I don’t belong to you, just because you put your teeth on me. I didn’t bite you back. I didn’t choose you.” She spat.

Those words seemed to hurt the alpha far more than the blow. Her green eyes widened, and for a moment she looked as if she may cry; a lost child in a bed made for a conqueror. Then the armor of her face slammed back into place, and she narrowed her eyes, giving Clarke such a darkened look that the blonde regretted her words in a painful, heartfelt instant.

But there was no going back.

“That’s right. You didn’t.”

Lexa rolled from bed, drawing a robe from a nearby chair onto her shoulders and belting it around her waist. The black material only clung to her shapely form, making her movements heartbreakingly attractive as she crossed swiftly to the door, pulling it open. “Indra, summon Raven for me. Our prisoner wishes to return to the harem, and I require a bath.”

“Yes, Commander, right away.”

Clarke only caught a glimpse of Indra’s eager salute, before the commands resonated with her and she realized what was going to happen. Lexa shot her one final look over her shoulder. Her breath caught in her throat, but the alpha seemed to be looking above her head, eyes blank and shoulders straight.

“I will not send for you again until your mother arrives to negotiate.” She informed the omega, coldly. “I will see to it that Raven appoints you well.”

And with that, Lexa pulled the heavy, oaken door closed with a shuddering thud and was gone.

Not for the first time, and certainly not for the last, Clarke cursed herself.

What have I done? She bemoaned, and sank back down on the bed to await Raven’s arrival.

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The room Raven had provided her in the harem was large and lush, almost as well-appointed as the
Commander’s, with a plush bed, simple porcelain washing basin, and an untold luxury of a fireplace indoors. But the walls were thin. Clarke could hear the soft sighs and moans on either side whenever her two neighbors entertained lovers, and they entertained lovers often. The harem was filled with the soft pitter of bare slave feet slapping the marble and the soft wet thud of bodies slapping together, and the noises were like the cooing of the doves or cries of the peacocks kept in the courtyard; soon, they became ubiquitous.

Days had passed in a silken, deadened haze inside the white marble walls of the harem before Clarke realized that time had even gone by. The sound of the doves and the warbles of the orioles kept in cages around the hallways seemed to lull her into compliance; falling in step behind Octavia and Raven who kept her close, walking with her to the baths each day and to the courtyard after. Their murmured voices had a muffled quality within the walls, as if the marble buffeted the sound, and for a while Clarke couldn’t keep track of time. Nights passed and days came and the harem went on, as if it would go on forever. Clarke barely even noticed anymore…except on days when Raven entertained her lover, and she was reminded of her capture.

She had been in the harem a week the first time Anya came, slipping furtively around a corner wall at night. Clarke had watched her from the peephole in her door, creeping to Raven’s room, and heard the warm, loving whispers as the dark-haired beta drew her inside. Raven was softer with Anya than could be believed, melting into her embrace and sighing into the alpha’s neck as she inhaled her scent. Anya was not to be left out, either, and her tenderness with the harem girl belied the rough captor Clarke had known on the road; here, in the quiet darkness of the hall, she touched Raven as if she was made of glass. When they withdrew into the room, the omega could see no more, but she could hear Raven’s rising, desperate cries, and the echoing rumble of Anya’s answering voice.

It was surreal, as were most things in her day to day life now.

No one came to her door at night. Or in the day, either. Guards, visiting dignitaries, warriors and Roman elite all drifted through the halls, knocking on this door or that, but they never stopped at Clarke’s. Or, if they did, they were always quickly hustled away by Indra, who remained at her door, guarding her with a stone-faced expression and a short pike spear. There was sometimes…in the darkest hours of the night…a familiar scent that called to her, as if Lexa was just outside…but it was always gone by morning.

It was in this way that Clarke realized, after a drowsy couple of days, that Lexa had kept her promise. She was not a slave, she was a prisoner. And she would not be used or called for again. In many ways this should have been a comfort to her. Strangely, it was not.

Her mother would come soon, and negotiations would begin for her release. That should have been comforting too, but it was a hollow, false feeling that gave her only shallow relief from the haze of regret in which she filled her days. The idea that she would never see Lexa again (and would likely never again be allowed to leave their village, either) after her mother came was disconcerting, miserable. She wanted to attribute it to the claim the alpha had made on her during her heat, but it wasn’t a complete answer. She knew it also had to do with the hurt Lexa had felt when Clarke told her she didn’t choose her. The way the alpha’s mouth snapped shut in a thin line, and her eyes hardened to emeralds. The way she’d left the room as if she couldn’t stand to be near the omega.

All of that was troubling her, weighing heavy on her mind.

It was around the second week of the harem life that she snapped, and pulled Raven aside on one of the daily walks to the baths, asking if she could see the Commander. Raven raised a brow at her, but for once she didn’t answer back with a quick rejoinder. Instead, the beta merely nodded. Clarke had waited, pacing her room as if it were a gilded cage, until Raven returned. The beta kept her eyes
averted in tacit sympathy as she informed the omega that Lexa had ‘declined’ to see her. *That* was a surprise, and more hurtful than Clarke wanted to admit, but she thanked Raven anyway.

That night, as she lay in bed, her resolve hardened with diamond-strong force: if Lexa wouldn’t see her, she would simply have to see Lexa.

The paths that led around the sanctity of the harem were confusing, true, but no more so than the slipways and rough hunting trails of her homeland. Many times, without realizing it, she had traced their circumference and sought out all the dark passageways she could see from her limited view, each day as she passed, encircled by Indra, Octavia, and Raven. She had been seeking a way out, even then, but the dull routine of the plush harem life had lulled her and she forgot, each time, to break from her guards.

This time, she wouldn’t be so drowsy, she promised herself in the dark, amid the raucous calls and animal noise of the night drifting in her window. This time, she would escape. Not the city itself; that would be impossible, as she had no clue how to summit the walls without aid. No, she would escape to the inner chambers of the fortress. And find Lexa.

What she would do when she found her, she still didn’t know. Kiss her, kill her, bite her….all of the options danced like demons in the quiet turnings of her mind. Clarke still didn’t know what was best, but she found herself inexorably drawn along her course at any rate. So along she went.

She made good her plan the next night. The hour was late when Clarke knocked on the door, summoning Indra, who entered smooth as silk. Her stern expression was overlaid with irritation. “Sky-girl, what are you-“ The guard’s impatience became surprise, and then outright shock, when Clarke rushed her, eyes set and mouth determined. The omega swept past her still-rising arm, and slammed a quick, decisive fist under her chin. The alpha’s eyes rolled up white, and she dropped, still reaching feebly for her pike, even as Clarke neatly stepped over her twitching form.

“My people don’t need weapons to fight. You’d do well to remember that.” She told Indra’s unconscious body on the way out.

At the door, she paused, sniffing the air. Her easy victory over the smug alpha was fun, indeed, more fun than she’d had in a long while. But she needed to focus. Lexa’s scent was faint under the layers of other alphas that had stunk up the hallways in their lusty musk, but even so, it was there. It almost smelled recent, as if the Commander had been outside her door a few nights before….perhaps pacing back and forth. But Clarke ignored these idle thoughts; she needed to follow the scent to its source. It was surprisingly easy. Lexa’s scent *called* to her.

She slipped along the hallways of the harem on bare feet, silent as a ghost. Whenever she caught sight of movement ahead, she melted into an alcove, alongside one of the many urns and statuettes the Romans were so fond of, until the shadows passed and she was free to pad along again, illuminated by the moonlight along the corridor. There was a secret passageway off to one side of the baths; Raven had brought her that way on her first day here, and had probably assumed she was too heat-struck to remember it. But she had.

The passage led to the Commander’s chambers, almost directly.

Clarke knew she was getting closer as the marble led her up a steeper ascent, climbing the tower. She could smell Lexa closer, too, and it made her slaver, a little bit, and a light sheen of sweat shone on her bare arms. Outside the Commander’s door, two guards were posted on either side, and these she knew she couldn’t rush as she had done to Indra. Gustus and Lincoln stood firm, tall and silent as statues. She took a deep breath, and then summoned every ounce of omega persuasiveness before
stepping from the shadows.

“Lexa called for me.” She explained, pursing her lips ever-so-slightly. “It’s late, do you know what she wants?”

The question was framed innocently, and she could see it worked; distracting the guards from asking themselves any too in-depth questions about her abrupt presence. The waves of sweet, aroused pheromones, from her body hungrily seeking the touch of an alpha...well, that didn’t hurt, either. Lincoln shook himself, seemingly blinking awake, and bowed his head respectively, but Gustus stared her brazenly up and down, curling his lip. There was only one reason an alpha would summon a harem omega to her chambers this late, and all three knew why, but Clarke continued to feign innocence.

“How should I know, girl?” Gustus sneered, but he relaxed his grip on his pike sword, and he and Lincoln each stepped to one side. “If the Commander summoned you, you’d best hurry up and not be asking questions.”

He motioned her in, impatient, and Clarke concealed her smile as she slipped between the oaken doors. That was almost too easy. Different the Grounders may be, but alphas were all the same, no matter where you went.

At least...most alphas...

The one alpha in particular who seemed an exception to this rule was not in bed, despite the hour. The Commander was sitting in her deerhide chair, close to the fire, with a goblet of wine close to her hand, and had turned questioningly at the door’s opening, eyes rounding in sudden surprise before her composure closed back over her solemn face. Lexa, as always, looked taciturn and yet so, so tantalizingly beautiful that Clarke’s heart clasped, thudding like a bird in a clenched fist between her ribs.

“Clarke.” Lexa’s voice made her body seize in appreciation, but her tone was stern. “I have not sent for you.”

“I know.” She responded, simply, crossing to Lexa’s side. “I needed to see you.”

She knelt at the chair, and that got the alpha’s attention. The brunette’s eyes widened, showing the depth of her green irises, as she took in the sight of the omega on her knees. Clarke swallowed a lump in her throat. “I needed to tell you...” She croaked, and coughed, trying to get her voice to cooperate.

Strong fingers traced her chin and lifted, bringing her eyes up. “I’m sorry,” Clarke said helplessly, drawn in by those eyes. “Sorry I said those things. I’m sorry I said I didn’t choose you, Lexa...”

“I should never have assumed I could claim you without your consent.” Lexa cut her off, simply, and Clarke couldn’t find it in her to answer as the Commander touched her skin. “You are by far a finer thing than anything I could offer you. Clarke...if your freedom would make you happy, I shall give it to you. You are not mine to keep, though that I would...”

Her fingertips trailed along Clarke’s neck, playing with the ridge of her collarbone just below the mark, which now rose in a throbbing ache, wanting Lexa’s touch. They both hesitated, and Clarke kept a ghost of a breath she didn’t know she’d been holding, until her lungs burned and she exhaled. The alpha was offering her her freedom, her escape, and Clarke couldn’t say anything. She wasn’t even sure that was what she wanted most in that exact moment. What she wanted most was right in front of her. Without thinking, she guided the battle-scarred hand to cup her neck, feeling the ridges
of the pads of those hard, warrior’s fingers lace against the mark, which sang in blessed relief to be touched by her alpha, hers, mine……

Clarke snapped out of her trance, and went for Lexa’s lips in a wildfire haze.

She surged up onto the Commander’s lap, rocking the heavy wood chair back in her haste, and clambered aboard, hiking her night shift up to her waist in the motion. Lexa broke the kiss and her eyes darted down to the already-dampening blonde curls now rocking against her tunic-covered groin, and she let out a soft whimper that was entirely unbecoming of the fierce Grounder conqueror. Her strong hands swept down to curl possessively over Clarke’s ample thighs, thumbs sweeping up to tease at the join...

Clarke couldn’t take it. She’d missed this, and the longing for it cleared the dull mire of the harem’s routine from her mind in a burning, blazing rush. She threw herself headlong into Lexa’s pulse, the only thing she could focus on, and breathed in hot panting gasps over it, nuzzling and whining distractedly, as if she was a pup. Lexa’s neck was corded and strained, and her breath came in tight pants, fingers gripping Clarke’s thighs as if she couldn’t decide what to do, whether to take her prize or demand that Clarke bite her, and the helplessness of the alpha in indecision’s grip was enough to make up the omega’s primitive mind, hallowed down to its finest, and most honest point.

She leaned into the smell that she had followed all night, and bit down on the gloriously sweat-sweet flesh that called to her, marking her claim.

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Abby waited, impatient, as she watched the scout scurry back up the ridge to their position. The city of Polis loomed before them, red and white and as impenetrable as a locked box…except by small incursions of her scouts. She’d sent the best of them out half a day ago, hoping for news of her captured daughter, and now he had returned. She motioned for her guards to hasten him through to her; she was not overly fond of waiting, and when it came to her daughter, her impatience was legend.

“Chief.” The scout panted, dropping to his knees in a bow. She waved him up, distractedly, and motioned for her guards to close ranks again. As a chief of a newly-formed conglomerate of multiple tribes, each with shifting interpersonal alliances, she certainly didn’t want sensitive information getting out before she could control it, and this was indeed sensitive information.

“Did you see her? Did you see my daughter?”

The scout nodded. “With a group of omegas, going to the baths.” His words were short, as he caught his air, but he took a draught of wine from one of the nearby guards and regained his strength. “She is kept close, Chief, too close to sneak away. They have her always with one or two of the other harem slaves. A beta with a knife is almost always nearby, and she nearly saw me, it was close.”

“Saw you?” Abby wrinkled her nose, impressed. “Bellamy, you’re the finest of my scouts. If the beta girl could spot you, she’d have to be one of us.”

Bellamy nodded, taking another swig from the wineskin. “She may be, Chief, she looks like one of the girls who went missing after the Roman raiding party last year, but far too comfortable with the Roman ways, in my opinion. She was kissing a tall alpha, and—“

“What of my daughter, though?” Abby waved a hand, interrupting him dismissively. “I care not for some beta turncloak and less for her sexual habits. Where is Clarke being held?”
“In the harem.” Bellamy confirmed Abby’s worst fears in a single sentence.

She cried out, bringing her hands to her forehead. “The harem! They’ll have her bred and collared before we can wait for the full force of the tribes to gather.” She shook her head, savagely. “No, we cannot wait for Kane and his reinforcements. We must attack. Tonight.”

Bellamy hesitated, opening his mouth as if he wanted to speak out, but a dark look from his Chieftan silenced him. She was in no mood for his independence on this afternoon, not even if it had served her well in the past. She looked past him, to the ranks of her soldiers amassed in their hundreds, hidden among the trees at the crest of the hill.

“Tonight!” She roared, a red mist falling over her eyes and an iron rod bolting down her spine. “Tonight, we take back my daughter, and return these Grounder oppressors to the filth they came from!”

The answering rattle of shields was almost deafening.
Chapter 5

Chapter Summary

While Clarke and Lexa solidify their bond, war is in the making outside the gates of Londinium.

Clarke knew in a white-hot instant that she’d made the right choice, as soon as her teeth sunk into Lexa’s coppery skin.

Sundown and starbursts exploded into glorious, visceral relief behind her eyes. The barbarian omega could taste iron and poppies, peat bog and fire, blackberries and blood. She could see the first kill that the alpha had made, and could taste her fear along with the surge of victory, standing over the body with her heart pumping and every vein alive. She could taste the first loss that Lexa had felt; a mate with dark eyes and a thunderously emotive heart, and Clarke mourned for the emptiness of that void. But her mind raced on, showing her still more images as the bond ignited. She could taste Lexa’s determination, her will, and her strength that was overwhelming, overarching. Strength like a pillar, like a thousand-year-old stone placed on a hill. This alpha had seen loss and had seen triumph, and she held strong through both. She would hold strong through anything.

Clarke had sensed that in the first instant she’d known Lexa, but in the bond, her instincts were proven correct. It wasn’t just the taste of her, the surety and sweetness she could feel in that ethereal connection, but the way she let out the tiniest of moans as Clarke’s hold sunk in; the way that she could feel the mighty Commander soften to her touch, just barely. That was thrilling and intoxicating, like taming a wild beast. Clarke knew that she had taken a prize, just as much as she had been taken earlier, and her inner omega seethed with victorious joy.

Her alpha groaned against her, jaws snapping in frustration; seeking her own bite. Clarke tilted to offer her shoulder, all while refusing to give up her hold, and sighed in blessed relief as Lexa eagerly bit down, reinforcing the mark she’d left. There was feeling of completeness, of surety, when the bond was sealed. An absurd sense of right. Though she barely knew the woman who had held her prisoner and taken her heat, Clarke knew she was choosing a mate who absolutely would treasure her and keep her safe, no matter the cost. No matter the consequence.

Lexa didn’t seem content to merely seal their bond with teeth and timeless reflection, however. She grunted, and her fingers dug into Clarke’s hips as she lifted with impatience. The omega had to quickly fling her arms around her new mate and wrap her legs tight around Lexa’s lean waist as the alpha was standing, insistently drawing their joined bodies up. The Commander hefted her omega’s weight and reached the bed in a few uneven strides, still growling into her hold, and lurched until she found the mattress, dropping their weight down. She draped herself over Clarke, who arched eagerly up to greet her, and the heat of their lower bodies meeting made the need for more intimate access immediately obvious.

There was a swift, blind fumbling as two sets of hands tried to assist the process, but neither wanted to relinquish the bite, and, finally Lexa had to bat Clarke’s hands impatiently away so she could undo her pants. The alpha’s cock sprang free, bobbing with desire and already hard as a hammer, and Clarke moaned to feel the tip drag against her open entrance. Lexa had rolled the thin fabric of her
night clothes up, and the shift now bunched around her waist, giving the alpha full access. Lexa greedily took it, lining her cock through the sick, open folds that pulsed needily to welcome her return. The alpha gave a harsh groan, and pushed bluntly inside with a forceful, impatient thrust.

Clarke wanted to cry out her approval into the heights of the room, but she moaned around her bite instead, still unwilling to give it up. Lexa seemed to feel similarly, and grunted into the join of Clarke’s shoulder and neck, refusing to release. Her hips drew back, agonizingly slowly, and Clarke felt her muscles sing at the stretch, but her breath caught, anticipating the pleasure as her alpha sunk back inside. Lexa began a driving tempo, her mouth working on the raw flesh of Clarke’s neck, and the omega drew her knees up to her chest to allow her as deep in as possible, locking ankles around the alpha’s sweat-streaked back.

There was no grace to this lovemaking, but it had lost none of their earlier fire. If anything, the hasty, rough quality of their frantic coupling only aided the shared lust, spiraling into a crashing, chaotic pinnacle. At last, Clarke had to tear her mouth away to howl out her pleasure when one of Lexa’s thrusts hit home against her inner walls, and she did so again; when Lexa repeated the action, over and over. The alpha thundered away, huffing and growling while her muscles bunched and flexed below Clarke’s bouncing calves, but her pace never flagged. The sharp, sweet drags of her cockhead against that spongy pad of flesh was making Clarke’s eyes roll up, and soon she succumbed to a shuddering orgasm. The Commander refused to stop or slow, and fucked Clarke right through the clenches and contractions of her climax, until once again she was gasping, as the pleasurable peak she’d reached seemed a molehill compared to the mountain that now loomed ahead.

But the alpha’s cock never seemed to tire, and though her thrusts increased to a battering-ram pace… she still growled and grit into Clarke’s neck, seemingly no closer to her own climax. She was drawing deep, frustrated breaths, but her hips were pushing just as fervently as if she was possessed. Clarke felt her body go boneless and soft with omega sympathy to her alpha’s heightened state. She mewled, whimpering encouragement, and felt Lexa eagerly stiffen and speed up at the sound of her voice.

“Fill me,” she ordered, breathless and lost in her lust. “I need it, I need you to fill me…. ahh —!”

Her voice broke, but it had done its job. Lexa let out a strangled grunt and tore her mouth away from the mark at last, gasping for air. She lunged forward, heaving, and her body shook as a splash of cum jetted from her tip, emptying into Clarke. It was quickly followed by another, and then another, and then finally a tidal wave as the alpha groaned with relief, shuddering as she collapsed onto Clarke’s waiting form. The omega sighed as her ribs compressed under the warm weight; the pressure was comforting even as she felt her body clenching and drawing more of Lexa’s release.

Despite her best efforts, though, it seemed the alpha wasn’t yet finished with her needs. She growled into Clarke’s neck, feverishly running her fingers over the rosy peaks of the omega’s nipples as if they were precious stones. Lexa’s calloused hands became as gently exploratory as a potter melding clay, cupping her breasts, but Clarke needed more, and pressed herself more firmly into the alpha’s hands. This caused a ricochet effect as Lexa swelled even harder, rising to further intensity as her lips grazed Clarke’s collarbone. The alpha was moaning a little as her hips began to stir again, urgently, and Clarke soothed her by tilting her body, obligingly offering herself.

Lexa hissed out a breath. “Can’t get enough of you,” she choked, her words garbled and uneven. “Need you, still. Gods, what have you done to me…”

Clarke wanted to protest that it was hardly her doing, but her body was too busy greedily responding. Despite her heat, she was calling to the alpha, demanding more, and, without either of
them realizing it, she was bringing it out of the Commander. She felt Lexa’s knot inflating at her base, and the sensation of rough slapping against her clit was driving her into a heightened desperation. The alpha would not be satiated until she had bred, Clarke realized with a snapping clarity, and that made her only shiver harder with pure, wild need.

She clutched at the Commander’s back, slithering hard against her as she pressed her lips to the sweaty shell of Lexa’s ear. “Knot me. Breed me.” Her suggestions were pants of hot breath and each brought another increase in speed from the alpha. “I want to bear your pups along with your ma- ah-ark, oh Gods, Lexa please ..”

The bed shook and groaned threateningly under the renewed fervor of the pair’s lust, but neither noticed the protesting creak of the wood. They were, obviously, too wrapped up in each other, and soon, the act was complete. Lexa slotted her knot once more into Clarke’s welcoming warmth, and the omega felt tears sting her eyes in the sheer relief and joy of it, even as her alpha shuddered against her and began the process of emptying herself. The orgasm rocked back and forth between their bodies, shared, until neither could remember where the other began and they ended, or vice versa. The pleasure seemed to obliterate identity, and with it, all concerns about past, present or future…

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Outside the door, however, it was a far less pleasant scene.

Anya and Raven stood together with Indra, grimly assessing, as behind the heavy oak the thudding, rhythmic sounds of lovemaking only increased with each passing minute. Anya winced, as a particularly loud groan from Lexa echoed through the hall, and Raven laid a hand sympathetically on her mate’s shoulder…only to shudder herself as Clarke gave a wrenching, gasping cry that sounded like a helpless bird.

“You go.” Raven said, through clenched teeth, as the noise died off. “I’m not about to interrupt them.”

“Absolutely not!” Anya protested, gesticulating in horror at the door. “I had to interrupt them the last time! That was plenty, I assure you.”

“You’re really going to insist that your mate —“

“No, don’t pull the mate card on me, you obstinate barbarian, I told you—“

“This is pointless,” Indra interjected, irritably. “The Commander is not to be disturbed, as I told you both earlier.”

Anya rolled her eyes and jutted her leonine chin skyward. “And as I told you earlier, you imperceptive fool, there is an entire army of barbarians at our gates and we have no Commander to lead us to battle.” She flopped her hands at Indra, mockingly. “What would you suggest we do? Put out the mummer’s lions and perhaps perform a puppet show?”

Indra snarled, alpha fury seeping thick into the hallway, and Anya hackled right back at her, displaying her teeth in a fine seething rage. Raven rolled her eyes, clearly unimpressed by the stand-off, and placed herself between the two, giving Anya a pointed, dangerous look. Her mate dropped her hackles, looking mildly chagrinned but unrepentant, and Indra sneered, but also stepped back.
“Quit your posturing,” Raven was in no mood for alpha displays, and her tone showed it. “I’ll go and interrupt them if it means you two will stop acting so cockheaded.”

Indra, to her credit, had the grace to show a flicker of regret, and she stepped away from Anya, dipping her head slightly. Anya’s stance relaxed, and she nodded, gruff and quick, to show the challenge was over. Just like that, the hackling was done, brief as it had been. Indra jerked her chin in response, and moved to the door, pulling the bolt free. The guard pushed, and the oaken door eased open a crack.

As she did, however, a guttural, unpleasant warning echoed from within the Commander’s chambers, aimed directly at the door. There was a primal threat implied in that noise, and Indra shuddered, looking pale. She quickly slammed the heavy oak closed again, sliding the bolt home for good measure, but it was too late: musk was already leaking from the cracks like shrapnel from an arrow. Both she and Anya wrinkled their noses and whined as a pervasive dominance seeped out the door in the form of a heavy dose of pheromones.

Raven looked from alpha to alpha, observing as each woman cringed under the smell as if being lashed. “What was that?” She asked, waving her hands to disperse the air as the alphas continued wincing. “Some kind of alpha pissing contest?”

“That was a dominant warning growl.” Her mate informed her, gently, even as she had to inhale hard to stifle a cough. “Lexa will not allow us entry; she’s mating with Clarke.”

“We cannot interrupt them during a mate bond.” Indra coughed on the musk, but her eyes were grave. “The Commander will kill anyone that dares to challenge her in this state.”

“Mating ?!” Raven sputtered, but Anya appeared unsurprised. She, too, had caught wind of the scent, and though her nostrils flared and her lips curled, she looked pensive. Raven looked nonplussed, however. “They can’t be mating. They’re fucking, sure, but…you…” Her question died off as she looked from alpha to alpha.

“I agree. There’s no point entering that room until the Commander has rutted out her last and the bond is fully sealed. Lexa would kill both of us in a red mist fury and never see our faces.” The lithe General cast an apologetic look at her mate. “Not even a beta such as you would be tolerated right now, my love.”

“They’re mating ?” Raven asked again, but disbelief was fading from her voice. Anya laid a hand on her arm, and she patted it, absentmindedly. “I’m okay, I guess, I just…this complicates things a bit.”

Indra snorted wryly. “You underestimate Roman politics. This complicates things beyond measure.” She sighed, but the sound was sympathetic; not chastising. “Our Commander will have a full plate when she next goes before the senate.”

“I’ll be there to help her, Indra.” Anya reassured, giving a significant look to the guard. “I won’t allow that den of vipers to assassinate her on my watch.” The gruff alpha let out a dismissive noise, but she dropped her gaze, looking deferential and almost grateful for a split second before she harrumphed and shook herself, righting her shoulders.

Anya did the same. “What we will do now, though, is beyond the allowance of any of us.” She continued, rubbing the bridge of her nose. “I could recall the hunting and scouting parties from beyond our borders, but that aid may take days to reach us. We could withstand a siege here, but not if our water supply is polluted, and the source is, unfortunately, outside of our walls.” The alpha
grimaced. “The only option is to muster the full force of the legions we have available to us and destroy their force in a rout. We have better numbers, and our soldiers are better armed.”

Indra nodded with stone-faced agreement, but Raven’s eyes flashed. “You’ve got to be kidding,” she spat. “That’s Clarke’s mother , even if she is currently outside our gates with an army. The Commander won’t take well to learning you’ve killed her mate’s only family.”

“The Commander won’t take well to waking from her mating-daze to find the city under siege, either.” Anya snapped back. “I know Lexa, and she won’t thank me for just sitting back—“

“She won’t thank you when Clarke refuses to ever talk to her again, either!” Raven blazed, flinging her arms open. “I know the Chieftain of Clarke’s tribe, Anya, and if she will agree to meet with me —“

“A parlay?” Indra questioned, interest showing on her face for the first time, but Anya was in fine fervor, and her face hardly registered that the guard had spoken.

“How do you propose to do that?” The alpha general spat, stepping up to her mate and drawing herself up to her full height, towering over the beta. “You think I’m going to let you go out unprotected to face the whole damn barbarian forces—“

“Anya, let me finish, damn it —“

“Both of you, be quiet .” Indra ordered, stomping the butt of her stout pike spear on the ground. The sharp, ringing sound seemed to shake the arguing pair out of their angry stupor. Anya even shook her head, looking mildly dazed, before her brain restarted. She looked in askance at Indra, raising an eye at the disrespect to her seniority, but the fellow alpha dipped her chin, and indicated the door with her eyebrows. “You’re both being affected by the Commander’s growl. She’s warning anyone to stay away, so both of you feel snappish and uncomfortable. I do too. But we must focus.”

Anya’s face cleared, and she looked morosely back at her second-in-command. “Gods, you’re right. Lexa is our dominant alpha, and she’s in a vulnerable position right now. We’re all affected.” She turned to her mate, shoulders dipping apologetically. “I’m sorry, my love. I should know better.”

Raven jerked her chin, arching a brow in a way that clearly said we’ll discuss this later, and her mate swallowed slowly. The dark-haired beta ignored her, and focused on directing her words to Indra. “I still think my plan is sound, alpha pheromones or no.”

“What is your plan?” Indra was looking both interested and exasperated with the pair squabbles. She was clearly also affected by the pervading hormones of the other, more dominant pair nearby, judging by how she shifted from side to side on the balls of her feet. “We have little to lose from considering all options. And you are, after all, a barbarian yourself.”

Raven sniffed, but continued, ignoring the mild jab. “That’s the hinge of it, really. I ride out and meet with Abby, the Chief. Because I used to be one of them, they may be more likely to treat with me. If not…” She trailed off, but both alphas caught her meaning.

Anya was already shaking her head. “No. No, it’s far too dangerous.” Her eyes were pleading. “Raven, they could brand you a traitor and take you prisoner. They’d kill you in the most public way they could.”

Raven shrugged, feigning nonchalance, even as her thin shoulders exhibited a mild tremor. “I agree,
but I don’t see what other choice we have.” She straightened, and motioned to the door with her usual crude aplomb. “Not while the Chief’s daughter is busy being knotted.”

Anya grimaced, but Indra cocked her head, consideration crossing the warrior’s face. “That could work.” The guard admitted, and stroked her chin. “The Chief is far more likely to take the news of the pair bond from a fellow of her tribe than one of us. General, even you must know that.”

“This is my mate you’re talking about, Indra.” Anya protested. She knew she’d been beaten, however, and allowed Raven’s hand to drop consolingly onto her back as she let out an unhappy, instinctual whine. “I don’t like this at all. There are so many ways it could backfire.”

“I’m not quite happy about being a beta negotiator, either, but it’s something I’ve done before.” Raven tried to inject a little levity, as she patted her mate’s spine in slow circles. “You alphas and your hackles…all in a day’s work for this barbarian.”

“Then we’d best get you suited up and ready.” Indra interjected, before the other alpha could protest again. “You’ll need a horse and a retinue of guards, but they may insist that you come through their ranks alone. I assume you’ll be able to stash a few weapons on your person?”

Raven grinned. “A few.”

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The haze of mating seemed eternal. No time could pass…and yet it seemed all of time had already come and gone. Just when Clarke thought the lust had left her limbs and she couldn’t possibly need anything else in the world, the weight inside of her would shift, and the heavy warmth would be full once more, and she would come to aching, keening life. So desperate, so wanton…it was almost like a second heat.

Eventually, however, her swollen body was no longer pleasantly malleable, but over-stimulated and puffy, afire with too much sensation. She had to push at Lexa several times, but the alpha finally relented, and withdrew. Clarke could tell the over-sensitivity was hurting her new mate almost as much, but still, she could not help the moan of reluctance to feel Lexa slip out. Neither of them seemed to want to let go. She couldn’t fully fathom why they ever should. It was a world, a lifetime away that Clarke had ever felt conflicted about her decision to tie herself to the Commander. Now, the idea that she had ever had doubts was ridiculous; beyond absurd. Lexa was the only choice. The best choice. How could she have ever questioned that?

Her new mate sighed deeply and flopped down, peeling their sweaty bodies apart as she rolled to her side. Lexa’s hair was tousled, and sex-mangled, but, as she grinned down at Clarke from her elbow, she had never looked more gorgeous. Clarke smiled back in a way that she would have described to Raven as ‘dopey as a lovestruck fawn’, but none of that mattered now. She didn’t care what she looked like. Especially not when Lexa leaned down to touch her nose gently to the raised scar of her mark, nosing it with such fragile tenderness, that the Sky girl felt her heart melt into her ribcage and run liquid through her veins.

“Lucky,” Lexa murmured, and, though it was only one word, Clarke knew exactly what she meant.

“I am,” she countered, and laughed hoarsely to feel her new mate protestingly shake her head. “Quit. We can both be lucky.”

The alpha let that concede and passed her lips along the mark, brushing Clarke’s jawline until she
reached her ear, nibbling until she heard a squeak. Satisfied by that, Lexa brought herself back to
Clarke’s lips and teased her with featherlight kisses until the omega petulantly bit at her lower lip,
tugging it.

Clarke nipped at her to get her attention. “We might,” she began, hesitantly, “get luckier still.”

Hoping Lexa would catch her meaning, she twined their fingers together and laced them over her
womb, so that the alpha could feel the heat below her skin. She as almost certain that she would be
pregnant soon, if not already. It only remained to be confirmed with the healer women...but Clarke
knew her body. She knew, and perhaps had always known: that, deep down a bond had been forged
between them on that very first night, and that bond had borne its fruit inside her body. Pregnancy
was imminent, or very possibly already assured, and though the idea had terrified her when she’d
lain awake at night in the harem, it now seemed like the greatest gift in the world.

Lexa seemed to feel the same way. All of the Commander’s stern features dropped into a childlike
smile, and she stroked the soft skin of Clarke’s lower belly, as if entranced. “Really?” Lexa asked,
sounding foolishly hopeful in a way that made Clarke’s heart clutch. “A pup?”

“Or even a litter.” Clarke offered, quietly, and was rewarded with the gentlest of gasps from her new,
suddenly vulnerable mate. “I think,” she began, careful to choose her words, “I think on that first
night, when you—"

But she was interrupted by a jarringly loud clattering as the door swung wide open. The doorknob
had crashed into an ornate shield hanging on the far wall, which had made the terrific noise as it fell
to the ground. However, far more startling, was the presence of Anya. The older alpha had barged in
without a second thought, and her face looked ashen, distraught. Without regard for the warning of
the pheromones swirling in the room, Anya paced to the bed, hands clenched at her sides. Her chest
was heaving, and her eyes bloodshot. For a wild, tense moment in which everything seemed unclear,
Clarke actually feared for her life.

Lexa, breathing deeply, had caught wind of frightened omega hormones and suddenly every hair on
the alpha’s body was standing on high alert. Static electricity swirled among her raised hairs, as if she
was caught in a thunderstorm, and her pupils consumed her eyes, going red with rage. A low,
challenging snarl issued from her lips, and suddenly Clarke was aggressively thrown behind the
alpha, as Lexa rose up to her full height, naked and resplendent. She towered over Anya, standing on
the bed, and within seconds, she had brought her hands to her second-in-command’s throat, as fast
and fluid as a snake. Clarke gasped, shaken, and pulled back on Lexa’s shoulder, but it was too late:
the Commander had thrown Anya down by her neck and was advancing on her, climbing down
from the bed, as a bone-shaking growl erupted nonstop from her lips.

“You…dare…”

“Lexa, no!” Clarke screamed, and scrambled down off the bed, pulling her alpha back with all of her
might.

She was caught in a horrible vision that she was too late, that her mate was already killing the other
alpha in a blind, post-bonding fury, and she grabbed at Lexa, her emotions rising to crazed heights
…but her terror and anxiety swarmed around the alphas, unintentionally heightening the situation.
Lexa’s snarls were only increasing in volume, and she was ignoring Clarke as if she couldn’t even
see her anymore, so intent and focused was she on establishing her ancient right to breed. Anya had
ceased to be her close friend anymore, and instead had become a challenger to her throne; another
alpha trying to couple with her omega. And, to make matters even worse, her omega was in distress,
and this alpha was the cause. The primordial dominance that held sway over Lexa’s very bones would not allow it.

She would tear Anya to pieces and Clarke knew it.

Anya, however, seemed to have accepted her fate. She closed her eyes, and her body went slack in the dominant alpha’s crushing grip. Her knees slumped, and she splayed, quiescent and submissive, as Lexa stood above her. The sight was altogether unnerving: an adult alpha showing her belly to another was reserved for only the most dire of dominance offenses, which, Clarke realized belatedly, this was. The fact that Anya was in full armor as she did it was even stranger still, but Clarke didn’t comment on it. She couldn’t do anything but gape, and it was incredibly lucky that she did, because her panicked hormones eased up, momentarily, enough to allow her to draw a breath. The scent of omega fear and stress faded from the room, and the red fog receded from Lexa’s eyes. She stepped back, and her hands dropped from Anya’s throat, looking horrified at her own fingers as if she barely remembered what they were for.

“Anya?” The Commander shook, and her face went green-grey. “Gods, I almost…What are you doing in here?”

The prone alpha drew a pained breath, wheezing, and both Lexa and Clarke winced in guilty reaction, but Anya was determined to speak. “Raven,” she croaked, and tears streamed down her face, seemingly unrelated to the pain she was in. This was a different, deeper pain. She looked at Clarke, and the omega’s eyes widened at the pleading in her former captor’s face. “Please,” Anya begged, quietly. “Your people, they have my mate.”

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Chapter 6

Chapter Summary

Clarke and Lexa must rescue Raven, make peace between new family members, and stop a war. All in a day’s work.

Chapter Notes

You thought I left you all hanging, didn’t you? Nope, not me. ;)

I know, I know, it’s been a while. But this story is finally done, and I’m happy with it. The lovebirds are gonna nest for a bit, and then I’ll return to Clexa in a few months or so. Thanks to everyone who read along this journey with me, and I’m so glad to have all of your comments and kudos. You’re wonderful. <3

This was such a bad idea.

Raven swallowed down the urge to bolt as the ranks of the tribe closed around her. Everywhere she looked, on either side, there were spears and shields. The tribe formed a line to the Chief’s tent, and Raven was surrounded on all sides by bristling, unwelcoming faces. Whispers ran through the crowd, and somewhere she could hear her namesake bird, a raven, let loose its ominous call.

A very, very bad idea.

The beta managed to put one foot after the other. She kept her gaze on the Chief’s dyed-red tent, saddled all around with rabbit skins and stag horns. Blue wode marked the faces of the fierce alphas guarding the tent flap—these were elite warriors. Raven knew what the splash of bright cobalt meant.

Once, it had adorned her own face.

The warrior behind her grunted and shoved at the small of her back with his spear butt. Raven nearly stumbled, but righted herself carefully, brushing down her tunic. It would not do to appear weak right now. She drew a deep breath, shot a hateful look over her shoulder at the disdainful warriors who had accompanied her, and pulled aside the tent flap to duck inside.

The smoky, musky air filled her lungs and Raven coughed, needing to get her bearings. The room swam before her eyes, and she had to blink away the redness to see clearly. It was dark inside. A fire in the center of the tent was slowly guttering, and the smoke twisted out through a hole in the top. On the spit, a young beta warrior was slowly rotating a charred hunk of meat. He didn’t look up as she approached.

“I have come to treat with the Chieftan,” she announced, and the words felt thick on her tongue from lack of use. She hadn’t spoken her own language since Clarke first arrived, and it was gradually becoming rusty.
The male beta didn’t acknowledge her, but a rustle in the shadows told her that the true Chief was sitting on a deer hide chair, leaning back in the dark behind the fire. She saw a glimmer of interest reflect back at her from a set of dark, stubborn eyes. *Family resemblance. I've seen that look before.*

“Are you she?” Raven spoke boldly, trying to ignore the tremors she felt in her spine.

“I am.” The Chieftan leaned into the light, gripping the white bone arms of the chair. Raven could see blue tattoos circling her wrists, and rings of beaten bronze. This was a warrior queen indeed. She needed to tread carefully.

The beta cleared her throat, but the older woman cut her off by rising to her feet. The Chief was a dominating alpha, and her movements had the lithe grace of an experienced hunter. *This is Clarke’s mother, then.*

Raven rotated on her heels as the alpha moved around her in a wide circle, assessing. She tried to stay calm, but her heart was beating in her throat. There were many knives at the older woman’s side; long, wicked, and terribly sharp-looking.

“I have come to treat with you,” she told the Chief, but there was no recognizable acknowledgement.

The alpha grunted, and the younger male snapped to attention. “Bellamy. Search her.”

Raven’s heart began to pound faster and faster. Hidden weapons at this point would be death. Close to her ribs, she could feel the imprint of her blades. If the male found them, she would die a swift death. There was nothing for it now but to wait….and see.

The warrior approached her. His eyes were suspicious, but kind, and his hands were clean, at least. He lifted every flap in her tunic, and slid his hands into her boots, as well as checking her braid, but he did not go anywhere near her thighs or breasts—apparently too chivalrous for that. Raven thanked her lucky stars; if the Chief had been attended by a female beta she might not have been so lucky. When he stepped back, he nodded briskly to his Chieftan, and she jerked her chin in response.

“You come to treat with me.” The alpha woman said at last.

Raven nodded, feeling her heart continue to bob in her throat. She swallowed. “Your daughter. She is within the city, safe and healthy.”

“And why should I not tear these fine white walls down to bring her back to me?” The Chief’s eyes never blinked, and her teeth flashed as she spoke.

Raven had an answer for that, however. “Because our army is five thousand strong, and the legions will destroy your warriors. The numbers do not bode well for you.”

“Numbers do not win battles.” The Chief returned to her chair, seating herself casually. She leaned forward. “You speak as if you were one of these Roman dogs, but you are not. When did they take you from your tribe?”

“…” Raven lifted her chin. “But they were not my tribe. Not truly. They abandoned me when I took an arrow in the leg, and ran like cowards. The Roman who found me cared more for me than my own kin, and she is my family now.”

Raven pulled aside the collar of her tunic to reveal her mark, proud and defiant. *Anya is no dog,* she wanted to say, but kept herself in check. Her mate wanted her to come home alive, she reminded herself.
The Chieftan did not speak for a long time, and her eyes glittered, unreadable, in the pale gloom of the tent.

“So you have forsaken your own kind and mated to a Roman alpha.” The alpha woman’s voice was more curious than accusatory, but still, Raven bristled.

“No more than my own kind forsake me.” She fired back, folding her arms.

The Chieftan snorted, but she put a hand out to stop Bellamy from coming forward. “You are a bold one. I see how an alpha would want to mark you, beta that you are. But still. Your choice was foolish. My warriors can scale your walls at night and cut a thousand throats before your army wakes to heed the call.”

“Your daughter could die that night as well.” Raven warned, ominously. Her heart pounded, but she kept her face still. “It is easy for one life to be lost amid many.”

The threat had Bellamy drawing his weapon half from the sheath, and the noise was sharp in the dim, muffled tent. “You dare—” he began, but the alpha once again silenced him with a look.

“Where is your Commander?” The Chieftan changed tactics, suddenly, and put Raven off her guard. “I would have assumed she would have wanted to treat with me herself, instead of sending a beta messenger. And you come unguarded. What kind of parlay is this?”

An unofficial one. Raven swallowed. “I was sent—“

“—You were sent by no one.” The alpha finished for her. “You came on your own and have no bargaining power here. Your Commander must be weak, to allow such machinations behind her back.”

“No—“ Raven protested, feeling the situation slip from her control, but the Cheiftan was having none of it.

“Bellamy.” She motioned and pointed to Raven. “Tie her up. When the real messenger arrives, we will have a bargaining coin of our own.”

Raven tried to dart away, to escape, but she was grabbed almost immediately. The beta male regarded her impassively as he wrenched her arms behind her back, and the Cheiftan folded her fingers together, looking pleased.

“Our Commander will never bargain with you,” Raven spat, struggling against the iron grip on her wrists, even as hopeless guilt raged in her chest. Oh Anya, my love, I am so sorry. “You will all die here.”

The alpha didn’t even bat an eye.

“Then so will you.”

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The irritable chestnut horse that Clarke had ridden into the city seemed no more happy to bring her out, but Clarke was glad to see him, all the same. Lexa had offered her the pick of the stables, and Clarke had gone right to her old friend’s stall. The alpha seemed confused as to why she would pick ‘the meanest horse in the stables’ but she only shrugged and said the chestnut was hers, if she would have him.
The chestnut did not seem to relish his new owner, or the current assignment of standing in waist-deep bog grass. His ears pinned; unhappy to be near Lexa’s war stallion, who passively ignored him, even as the chestnut shied uneasily away from his glossy black side. He was even less happy to be near Anya’s young, dancing charger, who paced and pawed the ground as they waited on the ridge below the hill, but he managed to restrain himself from raking the bay gelding with his teeth, and that was all Clarke could ask of him.

Before them, arrayed in camps that sprawled haphazard all around the edge of the forest, was an army the size of which Clarke had never seen before. She didn’t know how her mother could have found this many tribes, let alone to bring them together as one. It would have been impressive, had she been at her mother’s side, but, as it was….

She took a look over her horse’s choppy mane at her mate. Lexa was grim, surveying the camps, and her long fingers gathered her stallion’s reigns tightly. Her fierce, proud face looked even more regal under her war helm, which was gold and red with the colors of her people. The mark on her neck was hidden, but Clarke could still sense it, below the heavy leather armor draped over her collarbone. The breastplate was burnished bronze, and a roaring wolf leapt from each of her shoulders, picked out in rubies and gold.

Conflicted feelings rose in her. Love for her newfound mate. Love for her mother. Concern for Raven. Fear for their lives. She brushed it aside with a shake of her head. Now was not the time to be lost in emotions.

Lexa saw her face. “Are you alright?” She shifted in the saddle, leaning toward Clarke. “I told you, you can go back into the city and wait. It would be safer.”

Clarke made a face. “And I told you that my mother won’t meet with anyone but me. I’m not going to go wait quietly while you get stabbed.”

“I’m not going to get stabbed.” Lexa told her, but the protest was mild. “Clarke, we don’t know if that’s true. You could be putting yourself at risk for—“

“Raven put herself at risk for me.” Clarke interrupted, stubbornly. She raised her chin. “For both of us. And this is all my fault. If I hadn’t been distracting you—“

“Clarke…”

“No, it’s true. We should be the ones to treat with my mother. We should have been all along. Then no one would be in this position and Anya would have her mate.”

The alpha captain shifted awkwardly on her charger, looking from her Commander to Clarke with chagrin. “We didn’t know what to do, Commander. Sending Raven seemed—at the time—to be the wisest course.”

“I understand completely.” Lexa told her second-in-command. Her eyes flashed guiltily over the ring of bruises that were blossoming on the older alpha’s throat. “And Gods, Anya, I’m so sorry—“

“Lexa.” Anya told her firmly. “It’s fine. I would have done the same. Any alpha would. It was an emergency, and I knew the risks when I interrupted your mating ritual.”

Lexa winced, all the same, and looked deeply uncomfortable. Clarke reached out and patted her armored thigh. “Knock it off. Anya needs you to focus so we can get her mate back.”

“Yes.” Anya chimed in, shooting Clarke a grateful smile. “Help me get my Raven back and I’ll go a few practice rounds with you until you’re as bruised as I am. Then we’ll be even, eh?”
That seemed to mollify the alpha. She nodded, and re-fixed her vision onto the army below them. “How are we to approach?”

“Loudly.” Clarke told her, and nudged her chestnut forward. “You two just watch me.”

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Lexa hadn’t thought her mate to be fully serious, but she should have learned by now. Clarke barged her way through a line of teeth-baring alphas, ignoring them all as she towed Lexa and Anya behind her like lost lambs. She even kicked one warrior out of the way, and snarled at him like an alpha when he attempted to protest. Once again, the Commander was left silently proud at how her omega was unlike any she had ever known, and she thanked the gods once again for allowing her the chance to mate with such a woman.

“Mother!” Clarke fairly bawled at the tent they could see looming before them. “Mother! Get out here, damn you!”

Anya looked mortified. “Clarke, do you not perhaps think tact would be—“

Lexa took hold of her arm and shook her head. “Best to let her do this, I think.”

“But Commander, if the barbarians don’t kill us outright—“

“Barbarians?”

A statuesque alpha female was emerging from the tent, face splashed with a formidable shade of blue. Her eyes were dark and her brow heavy-set, but her facial features twitched in a way that was intimately familiar to Lexa. This was her mate’s mother. She drew in a deep breath, preparing to meet her new family member...and current adversary.

“Who are you to speak so ill of us?” The Chief pointed at Anya with her short axe—a blunt, ugly looking thing. “I ought to carve out your tongue for that.”

Anya blanched, and looked stricken. Lexa nudged her former mentor, and leaned in to whisper: “What was that about tact, again?”

Clarke only rolled her eyes, however. “Mother, quit it. You can see I’m fine. Drop the theatrics.”

“Theatrics?”

Abby tilted her head, and the bone beads braided into her hair clicked ominously. “These Grounders kidnap you, and I arrive with an army to rescue my wayward child, yet you think this is ‘theatrics’. I am sorely tempted to put you over my knee.”

“I’m too big for that now.”

“You’re not too big for a good clout in the ear. Come here, daughter.” Abby crooked a finger and half-turned, clearly expecting Clarke to follow. The warriors behind them moved closer.

“No.” Clarke planted her feet stubbornly. She reached for Lexa’s hand behind her and pulled her closer. “I’ve come with the Commander to give you the terms of my release. Let Raven go, now.”

“The Commander?” Abby turned around fully and fixed Lexa with a glare that left the younger
alpha swallowing hastily. She drew herself more firmly upright and put her free hand on Clarke’s shoulder. Her other hand went to her sword hilt, just in case.

“Mother. Raven. Let her go.” Clarke pointed at the tent. “And if she’s hurt—”

The alpha Chief rolled her eyes. “She is not hurt. She tried to pull a knife on Bellamy, however, and he had to tie her quite tightly.”

She motioned, and a set of warriors ducked inside the tent. They emerged again with Raven between them, gagged and bound with strips of hide. Anya stepped forward, making little noises in her throat.

“Raven!” Clarke and Anya broke ranks once the beta was past her mother. Anya went to work on her ankle restraints while Clarke pulled the gag from her mouth. “Are you all right?”

Raven gave her a lopsided smile. “Fine. But someone owes that Bellamy a punch in the face for me.”

“Raven, thank the gods you’re safe.” Lexa told her, and accepted Anya’s grateful nod over her shoulder. “But you may end up wanting to punch me by the end of this. I nearly killed your mate earlier today.”

Raven whirled on Anya. “Did you try to go in there? After I expressly told you not to?”

A throat-clearing noise interrupted Raven’s tirade, and for a moment Anya almost looked grateful, before she pulled her mate behind her and stood at Lexa’s side. Attention turned back to the Chief, who was watching the little reunion, while drumming out an irritated beat with her fingernails on her arms.

Lexa squared her shoulders. “I am the Commander, Chieftan. I have come to treat with you.”

Abby dropped her arms and stalked forward. “So. You are responsible for holding my daughter captive.”

Lexa didn’t hesitate. “Yes.”

Abby looked between the two of them and her lip raised. “And, judging by how my daughter is standing with you, you appear to have fucked her at least once.”

“Mother!”

Lexa felt her ears flush bright red, but she didn’t flinch. “Yes.”

“I suppose you were kind to her, and now she thinks you will be kind to her always.” Abby was only looking at Lexa. “And she thinks you are a kitten, not a conqueror, but we both know the truth, don’t we?”

Lexa nodded, this time.

“So what do you want, conqueror?” Abby folded her arms. “Our lands, for my daughter, is that it? That’s always the way with you Grounders.”

“That is not the way with them.” Clarke interjected, angrily. “And you don’t even know what she’s offering, yet.”

Abby put a hand up, not even looking at her daughter. Her eyes narrowed on Lexa. “Then let her speak.”
Clarke closed her mouth indignantly and folded her arms. Everyone else was staring at Lexa, waiting for her to open her mouth. The alpha drew in a deep breath.

And dropped to her knees.

The mass intake of breath was palpable. A hush fell over the assembled crowd of warriors, thick as an ice blanket. Lexa bowed her head, exposing her vulnerable neck, and closed her eyes.

Abby sounded shocked. “What is the meaning of this?”

“I come to you today to ask for partnership. To offer help, and trade, and aid should you need it against your enemies.” Lexa spoke slowly, and calmly, but her blood was rushing in her ears and she felt close to passing out.

“All I ask in return is your permission to have your daughter as my mate.”

“Your mate?” Abby sounded lost.

Clarke tugged on Lexa, insistently. “Get up, please.” When her mate rose reluctantly to her feet, Clarke pulled the side of her dress down and showed her mother the mark on her neck. “See?”

“You have already marked her.” Abby’s voice was stone cold. “How is that asking permission?”

“I bit her, too, Mother.” Clarke was clearly exasperated. She pulled at Lexa’s leather armor until she could expose the twin mark on Lexa’s own neck.

Abby didn’t register any surprise. “Still.”

“I...was not in a position to ask you permission before biting her, that is true.” The words felt awkward in Lexa’s mouth, but she soldiered on. “But I ask your permission now. As a gesture of faith and good will. I would offer you my allegiance.”

“The allegiance of Rome is nothing to sneer at, to be sure.” Abby acknowledged.

She spread her arms, however, and indicated the surrounding field of warriors. “But I am the first known Chief in all the tribes to unite such a force as this. Perhaps I do not need the allegiance of Rome. Perhaps, I would prefer to kill you, and take my daughter back by force.”

The answering rattle of shields was deafening, and the warriors chanted, slamming their spears on the ground. When the noise died down, however, Clarke was standing in front of Lexa, every inch of her bridled in fury, and she wasn’t alone: Anya and Raven were flanking her. Clarke was more angry than Lexa had ever seen her, including the morning after their first night together.

“Then you would never again see my face, and never know peace as I spend my days harrying you and our entire tribe until you are all dead.”

She told the elder alpha, eyes flashing. “This is my mate, Mother. How dare you?”

“Clarke.” Lexa pulled at her, gently, but there was no give. Her mate stared down her mother like she was ready to pull a dagger on her at any moment.

“No, Lexa.” Clarke responded, angrily. “She has no right—“

“You’re right, my daughter.” Abby sighed, wearily, and her shoulders slumped. She rubbed the bridge of her nose and shot Clarke a saddened look.
“I am sorry. I should have known. I would have done the same for your father.”

There was a faraway glint in the Chief’s eyes for a moment, but she came back to herself and sighed heavily. “So, my back is against the wall then. I have no choice but to let you go.”

“Did you listen to a thing Lexa said?” Clarke put her hands on her hips but her eyes were softening, apologetic. “Mother, she’s offering allegiance. You’ll get to see me.” She hesitated. “And...the pups.”

“Pups?” Abby was instantly alert. “You’re pregnant?”

“We don’t know yet.” Clarke took Lexa’s hand and laced their fingers tightly together. “But I feel it. You could check for us. And, perhaps, when the time comes…”

“Of course, I would be the birthing woman.” Abby was moving forward, nodding. Her eyes had rounded, and suddenly she looked far less intimidating, even with the bones in her hair and blue on her cheekbones. “There is no other option. And I’ll care for them too, when you cannot.”

“Mother—”

Clarke released Lexa to welcome her mother into her arms, and the two women sagged together. There was a murmur through the assembled tribal warriors: some dropped their shields, others did not. A discontent ripple spread through the crowd on the left hand side, and a fierce, red-bearded man stepped forward.

“What is the meaning of this?” He spat, disdainfully gesturing with his spear haft between the two women. “Some family squabble? We are not here only for your omega daughter. We came to make war upon these Grounders!”

There was an answering cry and a rattle of spears. Abby stepped away from Clarke, glaring, and her jaw was tight. Bellamy drew up behind her, along with most of the contingent from the right. In the middle wafted those too indecisive or unwary to choose a side, and there was a general whisper of unease.

“There is no need for a war, Murphy. The Commander offers us allegiance. Are you so foolish that you would spit on the bounty of trade with Rome?” Abby’s hand was straying dangerously near her sword belt.

“Aye.” Murphy curled his lip at her. “And I spit upon your leadership, Abby, if you would not make war upon the filth that rutted your daughter.”

He made good on his word, too. A thick, hawking gob of spit landed on the muddy ground between them, and a roar went up from his contingent of warriors. An answering roar of indignation came from Abby’s group, and the spear ranks moved forward.

Lexa nudged Anya with her elbow: the older alpha was clinging tightly to Raven, as if unwilling to let her go even a single step away from her mate’s side. Anya looked at her, questioning, and Lexa jerked her chin at the forest. A flicker of understanding passed between them.

“Get Raven out of here,” she told her second, in a low voice. “Wait for my signal.”

Anya bobbed her head. “Yes, Commander.” In a swift, silent moment, they were both gone—melted away in the crowd as angry voices raised louder and louder.

Lexa took hold of Clarke’s elbow, and drew her back from the center of the fray. Her mate flashed a
look of despair at her. “I don’t think this is going to work.”

Just as she did, Murphy spotted Lexa holding Clarke off to the side, and pointed his spear at the couple.

“Right there stands *my* enemy. That is who I came to fight. You cannot tell me now that because she offers you gold and fat bellies that you would accept a *Grounder* mating with your child.”

“Gold and fat bellies keeps folk alive in the barren times,” Abby was arguing. “Wars leave only dead. Dead men don’t birth pups, Murpny. Our people need *trade*.”

“We will have all the gold of Londinium,” Murphy promised, eyes dark and set on Clarke. Lexa felt her fists curl, instinctively.

“All the gold and more…once that Grounder bitch is dead, and your traitorous daughter, too.”

He started forward, hate clear in his eyes, and Abby cried out in alarm. Bellamy drew his dagger, starting to move, but Lexa had had enough. She drew her sword, and the steel sung against her burnished armor as she raised it to catch the light. A bright beam flickered from her sword into the forest, and a loud war cry answered it.

From the hills, woods and streams on either side of the encamped army, Roman troops emerged, dressed for battle in full armor. They had been waiting since dawn, before the arranged meeting, in secreted coves and copses, along the ditch banks and in the muddy waters of the moat. Each unit dropped their shields in a locked, formidable wall, and closed off escape. Swords and spear points leveled over the wall of solid bronze, and the sound of it shook the ground with its force.

Lexa dropped her sword slowly until it was level with Murphy’s chest.

“I disagree.” She said, flatly. “Now yield, or this ‘Grounder filth’ will tear your host to pieces.”

“Yes.” Anya had appeared from nowhere and was behind the warrior with a dagger pressed in the unprotected side, where his boiled leather armor did not reach. “I believe that is wise.”

The older man dropped his spear slowly to the ground and a startled cheer rang up from Abby’s forces. Anya began the work of tying Murphy up with a leather cord, and Lexa let her eyes meet her mate’s mother’s shocked expression. She lifted her shoulders apologetically.

“I came to make peace, but if that wasn’t going to be an option…”

“You wouldn’t have let my daughter go without a fight.” Abby was looking at Lexa oddly.

“No.” Lexa replied, simply, and a modicum of understanding seemed to pass between the two alphas, as Clarke’s eyes darted from face to face.

Abby’s face relaxed. “Wise move.”

Lexa felt a breath fill her lungs, and a sense of surety settled over her whole body. There would be peace. She had her mate, and there would be peace. She held Clarke’s fingers, tightly, and jerked her chin at Abby in acknowledgement.

Clarke, meanwhile, sighed and rolled her chin back at the fort behind them. “Maybe now that there isn’t anymore alpha posturing, you two can talk about how this peace arrangement will work?”

Abby gave their joined hands an appraising look. “Yes, I believe we can.”
It took several days to hammer out the trade accord. During that time, the barbarian host almost ate and drank Londinium dry, and Lexa had to send out for more wine on several occasions. She didn’t particularly mind, although the legion’s stewards were hand-wringing over the expense. Any expense was worth the joy the reunion had brought to her mate.

Not all of the forces choose to stay within the walls. Some, mostly those who had followed Murphy, slunk back into the wilds with mutterings of threats and revenge, and some others had simply scattered to the winds; probably going home to tend their crops and ignore the machinations of others. There were those in the war council who urged the Commander to follow them, rout them out before they could regroup, but Lexa did not feel this was necessary.

Let the defeated lick their wounds and take their time. Lexa had other priorities.

Several things had taken place: the harem was disbanded, the legions dispersed from occupying barbarian territory, and Clarke and Lexa were bonded as mates in a private, quiet ceremony in the great white tower. Abby presided over the match, and to everyone’s surprise, Raven wept openly, clinging to Anya as the words were spoken. Afterwards, Abby had dropped to her knees, and sworn her life and sword to Rome, as well as all of its causes, from now until her death.

By the time Abby and Clarke had shared a tearful goodbye and the great army made its way slowly out of Londinium, Lexa knew the trade agreement she had made was a solid one, and one that would continue to benefit her and Clarke’s people long after they were gone. That was more important that any war. She had even managed to accept a stiff, awkward hug from her new mother-in-law, and that alone had made Clarke glow like a fireplace.

Now, as they watched the wagon train wind down the road, carrying the first load of goods in accordance with the agreement, Lexa felt Clarke shift into her side, sighing quietly.

“Are you alright, my love?”

“Just missing my mother.” Clarke admitted, but she smiled at Lexa’s worried face. “I’m sure we’ll see her again soon, though.”

Lexa was nonplussed. “Surely not for a while, unless…”

Her eyes widened when Clarke continued to smile, and the realization struck her then. She gripped her mate’s shoulders, eyes roaming wildly to the slight swell in her belly. “How do you know?”

“Mother has her ways.” Clarke looked pleased and secretive. “But it’s for certain.”

“Oh, love.” Lexa crushed Clarke to her chest, overcome. She looked across her city, built by the sweat of her brow and the strength of her sword, and down into the woman in her arms, who had built life from their love alone.

“You have made me so happy.” She admitted, feeling her throat tighten. “I could never love anything so well as I do you.”

“You may wish to amend that statement.” Clarke pointed out, grinning. “Because I fully intend to be a demanding omega for the next nine months.”

Lexa pressed a kiss to her forehead. “I would expect nothing less.”
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