All the reasons I loved you for.

by LJT

Summary

They share a past.
But 10 years have passed, since they’ve last spoken and their lives couldn’t be more different now. They meet again at their high school reunion that neither of them really wanted to attend.
Will they find a way back to each other? Or is it too late?

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Notes

Hey guys!
So, I know, I should work on my other stories, but right now, I couldn’t stop thinking about this one, so I thought, I’d give it a try.
Hope you like it! I’m craving all kinds of feedback – it’s my personal heroine :D

I listened to Camila Cabellos song "Consequences", while I wrote this :)

Love you,
LJT.

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I’ve thought about life last night, when I couldn’t sleep.

Not it’s meaning in general or other similar philosophic questions. More like… the surrealism behind it.

You’d think, you’d get to life a happy life, following your own routine, and you’d get to choose, what you want to do. Good things.

Instead, someone decided to break me out of my routine by sending a fucking letter. And I decided to open it. To read it.

So I came to one conclusion regarding life’s mysteries: life is funny.

Those few words fit into every context and you can interpret them the way you need, like you can do with sayings.

*Life is funny.*

Just when you think, everything’s starting to fall into place, something happens, that throws you completely off track again. Its like the tale of Sisyphus, who keeps rolling a stone up a hill and it falls down again and again, as soon as he’s reached the top. That’s pretty much how my life goes.

And yes, life is funny.

Because I’ve never thought I’d set a foot in my old highschool again.

Not, that I’d hate it. Highschool was good to me. I played tennis, won a championship and a lot of hearts. I had good grades, a beautiful girlfriend – everything.

It’s just, that everyone had opinions on how I should live my life. I should take the offered scholarship and become a professional tennis player. I should be proud and happy.

Yeah, the thing is… I never liked fulfilling other peoples´ expectations. I declined the scholarship and joined the military instead. Nine years. Best time of my life. I’d do it again a hundred times.

But going back to Highschool – even if it’s just for one evening – means meeting people from the past. People, I’ve left behind for good. People, that changed my life – and I’m not sure, if I’m strong enough. I hate, that they’re going to judge me. And I hate even more, that their opinion is affecting me.

Could’ve, should’ve, would’ve. Doesn’t change a thing.

War broke me over and over again. I’ve seen some bad, savage and cruel things out there. Things, that have me lying awake at night. Nightmares, which leave me screaming from the top of my lungs, until someone shakes me awake.

But the person I fear most? That would be me.

Because I had it all back then. I had love, I destroyed it. Killed it even. And the look in those azure blue eyes, the eyes of the girl I loved so deeply, when I broke our love, is still haunting me some nights.
So going back means to confront the truth. I had it all and now it feels, like I’ve got nothing. Okay, not nothing. Just… very little. I’m this hollow, shadow version of myself. It’s scary to accept that. Because no matter how hard I try to overcome my physical deficits, they will be a part of me for the rest of my life.

Some fights can’t be won. One of the lessons I learned from life.

I’m doing it again.

I’m sitting in my office and I’m staring at the picture, I’ve been carrying ever since. I’ve had it, when I joined the military. I’ve had it, when I went overseas for my first tour. I’ve had it, when I was with Costia. I’ve had it, when she couldn’t handle her girlfriend coming back from war completely different.

I smile lost in thoughts, as my thumb brushes over the familiar face.

If I searched her name on the internet, I’d come across thousands of pictures, articles and videos. But none of them matters to me.

I’ve known her before. I’ve loved her before anyone else did.

The shy girl, with the laugh full of life and joy, with the nerdy glasses and sun kissed blonde hair, the beaming smile – so gentle and loving, that it would melt my heart – and those deep azure blue eyes I could get lost and drown in.

Even though the chances are small (like 1 to 10 million), that she’s even coming to this lame small town Highschool reunion, she’s the reason I’m going to go. If I could just catch a glimpse of her, I would be content. Because all I ever wanted, is to see her happy and I need to know, that she is.

I sigh deeply and put the picture back into my purse, just in time before my sister calls for me.

“Lexa? You in there?” Anya’s voice comes closer and then the door is opened without a knock. She never bothers with basics.

As soon as her eyes travel to the purse in my hands, she knows, what’s up.

Sighing, she sits down across from me. “Again?”

I hesitate, before I answer her question, like I always do, because talking is still hard, strange, like a foreign language. I’m weighing every word with purpose, before I speak it aloud. Or as loud, as I can.

“What do you need?” I whisper.

“Nothing. There’s just this couple outside to adopt a dog and I thought, you’d like to get the dog. You know, it’s one of the good days.”

A good day is one, when a dog leaves the animal shelter instead of another on being abandoned.

I nod hastily and get up.

“Lex? You know, it’s time to let her go. It’s been ten years.”

I shrug a shrug and give her a halfhearted nod, to tell her that I am trying.

But it’s a lie. I’ve tried and failed. It’s not like I’m still in love with her. There’s just a part of me will
always care deeply about the woman, because without her, I would be living a completely different life. She was my first love.

“Maybe you should try harder, you know? Get rid of the photo?”

“The… photo saved my life.” I answer, glaring at her. How can she even suggest that?

“I know you believe that, but—” I don’t listen to the rest of the speech. You could probably wake me up in the middle of the night and I could recite the whole damn thing by heart.

And I don’t just believe it, I know it.

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The couple, who is here to adopt a dog, has been coming here a lot over the last year.

Both are working a lot, so they decided on taking the dogs for a walk on the weekends first. But now they’re expecting their first child together and they decided on finally adopting one. I’m more than happy about it, because the sad part about my job is to see so many animals without a home and to know, that you can’t save them all.

I’ve got two dogs myself – an Australian Shepard named Ellie and a Jack Russell named Paul. Both came here as puppies the first week and stole my heart the minute I saw them. We saved each other.

Around these beautiful creatures I feel like myself again. Like I could move past the things I’ve seen and everything that followed. It’s why I chose to take the job at the animal shelter right after rehab, when my sister got the chance to take over, once the old owner retired. I didn’t know, what to do with my life, but being with the animals feels right.

Because around dogs, I can talk. It’s me making progress.

Layla and Grant Carson are the perfect couple. Highschool sweethearts, starting their own little family in a small house on the outskirts of Polis and looking for the dog, that needs love and a home the most.

“So, it’s Lucky then?” I ask to be sure, my voice barely a whisper.

Both share a smile and nod.

I can feel my eyes welling with tears, as I walk over to the shelter of little Lucky. He has been here the longest. He and his former owner were in a car crash three years ago, which left the poor puppy with three legs and no home. I’ve seen so many people walk by his shelter, not even bothering with a look – it broke my heart every time again.

And now, finally, it’s his turn.

It’s hard to let him go, but I couldn’t imagine a better place for him to go.

“Hey, buddy.” I say, kneeling down to greet the little sunshine, who’s wagging his tail excited, when my hands rub his belly. “You’re going home. You’ve finally made it. It’s going to be great, you know?”

I pick him up and carry him to his new family. He greets both with a lick all over their faces, but none of them seems to mind. Layla wraps her arms around him and buries her face in his fur.
“Shall we do the paperwork?” Anya asks.

“Yeah.” Grant answers, smiling at his wife and the little dog. She’s been dreaming about the day for a while now.

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“Oh god.” Anya says after a few seconds. We’ve been watching the Carsons drive off with Lucky. “One day I’ll be watching Ilian driving away for college.”

I chuckle quietly. Her son is two and a half, so she's exaggerating a little here.

“One day you’ll have kids on your own and you’ll understand.” She answers. “So, back to our previous topic. Clarke.”

I don’t like the way she pronounces her name. Like it’s … contagious. Something bad. Something one should avoid. Yeah, maybe all of that is true. But I can’t change how I feel and I’m tired of getting it shoved in my face all day.

I shake my head as a warning.

“I'm not letting it go, just because you want me to.” She says, and I get a feeling, this discussion is going to be a bit longer. “It’s my business, too. You’re my sister and ever since you’ve opened that damn letter, it’s like you’re back in 2007 again. She moved on, Lex. Don't you get it?”

I take a deep breath, before I say something myself. “I did too.”

“Yeah, and we all know how that went.” Anya replies. She stares into my eyes, making clear, she isn’t going to back down.

“Don’t you dare making this about Clarke!” I say, my voice a firm and insistent whisper this time. “I loved Costia, I really did. It was her, who left. She ended our relationship with a call, while I was in the hospital. She left me, because she couldn’t handle me being a cripple. That’s a difference, Anya, and you know it!”

During my speech, my sisters face softens visibly. She hates it, when I talk about myself like that. But it’s still true.

“You’re not a cripple.”

I laugh bitterly, but toneless. “You sure about that?”

“Lexa-“

I shake my head and try to ignore the rising panic in my mind. If she keeps pressuring, I’m going to have a panic attack. “I’m going to go to this reunion shit.”

“You don’t even know, if she’s coming. She's busy, in case you haven’t noticed. And it’s not like she's got something to return for. School’s been pretty hard on her.”

God, I know that. And how could I have not noticed. Her face seems to be everywhere these days. Tv, magazines, internet. Hell, everywhere I go, she's already there it seems. Sometimes I really miss the time overseas.

“This isn’t about her.” I murmur quietly, my eyes closed. “This is about me. I need to go there.”
“Are you still beating yourself up about what happened?”

Yes, I do. I shouldn’t have said the things I said. I should’ve apologized, should’ve fought harder. I could go on like this for a while. And ever since I’ve gotten this stupid invitation, I’ve been going through it all over and over again.

“No. I just need… closure.” I tell my sister instead. She doesn’t need to know the truth.

I can feel her eyes on me, as I turn around and return to the office, before I go on my last round for the day, because contact with animals is one of the few things, that really help. Maybe it’s their calm, their warmth. Maybe it’s the knowledge, that I can trust them.

I bury my hands in their fur, rub some bellies and feel their hearts beating. Slowly it calms my racing heartbeat.

After I’ve fed and cuddled all the dogs, I do some last paperwork, before I call it a night. I have to, because it’s Moms birthday and I need to get home.

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Dinner at home is something strange.

I have spent 9 years in the military and a part of me feels, like I’ve never been gone, when I step into the small hallway of my childhood home. Because all the things that happened, are surreal, somehow out of the world. At least for the small town girl I was before.

The other part of me feels like I’ve been gone a whole life.

I came home almost a year ago, discharged from the military due to the things, that happened, and my damages - mental as well as physical.

Everything feels different now.

As soon as I’ve stepped inside and congratulated, Mom starts interrogating me about therapy and stuff. I only answer her questions with a nod or a shake of the head, so she only uses yes or no questions. Pretty one-sided conversation.

"Are you still going to physiotherapy?"

A nod.

"Does it help?"

A nod.

"Do you like working again?"

A shrug.

"Have you thought about seeing the shrink?"

A nod.

"Will you?"

A shrug.
We've been doing this since I've returned home. Because one of my mental damages? I don't speak. Anya is in fact the only human being, who gets me to say some things, but even then, I only whisper.

At the beginning it was for healing purposes. But then I just couldn't start, as if I didn't trust my voice.

"Lexa." Mom says, her voice sounds almost pleading. "You need to get help. I know, you don't want to hear that, but-"

"Becca." Dad interrupts her, rolling into the kitchen in his wheelchair. "You're pressuring her."

I'm really grateful for his interruptions. Mom means no harm, but she's a bit overwhelming and I can't deal with emotions very well.

So I've been holding my breath, since she said my name, and the lack of oxygen started to send my body into overdrive. Next step would've been another panic attack and the last time that happened, they had to call an ambulance and they sedated me. Not my thing.

Moms eyes soften and she wraps her arms around me. "Oh honey, I'm sorry. I'm just... worried. You're still my little girl and..."

I nod, trying to smile reassuringly. After that I squeeze Dads shoulder while walking by and make my way outside to the patio. Sitting back in Dads Hollywood swing, I can feel my increased heartbeat slowing down.

She's right. But a shrink can't help someone who can't talk properly. And even if I could, I wouldn't be able to tell him or her anything about what happened.

I can hear Mom and Dad talking quietly in the kitchen. They've never been good at hiding things from us, but it seems, they think just because I'm mute, I don't hear well, too.

In fact, its quite the opposite - when I shut down this part of me, my other senses sharpened.

"She's not okay, Gus. Don't pretend, like she is."

"But she isn't broken either. Give her time. Please."

"I just... I can't stand seeing her in pain." Moms pained voice feels like a punch in the gut. This is exactly why I couldn't live with them after returning home.

"Me neither." Dad answers. "She's been through hell over there, but ... she'll be okay."

I try to hold onto his words, I really do. Because I want to be okay one day. I want to feel normal, to laugh about Anya’s stupid jokes and I want to go out and dance all night.

My phone buzzes and I pull it out to check it, without thinking about it.

Bell: hey, so I've got the weekend off (of course, I'm a teacher) and I we all thought about driving to the lake house after the reunion. By we all I mean O, Linc, Harper, Monty, Jasper, maybe Raven, if she's coming. And me of course. You're welcomed to join us!

Wow. Didn't expect that.

Bellamy Blake used to be my neighbor, but we haven't been friends until the last schoolyear. And even then, I'd hardly call us friends. He was best friends with Clarke and ... yeah.
Everything got turned upside down, when I turned stupid.

Just a few months ago we ran into each other, when I went for a walk. Under normal circumstances I'd be running, but it's still hard to do with my right arm, so... I've been walking. He invited me for coffee and we ended up talking (writing on my side) for two hours. It felt good.

We've been texting and meeting a few times now. He doesn't judge me for not talking or anything, which feels good. And he doesn't hold a grudge against me for breaking his best friends heart back then.

But inviting me for a weekend in his mom's lake house? That's a different level.

The whole group will be there.

His sister Octavia isn't on good terms with me after all. Even though she's dating one of the guys I served with - Lincoln Forrester, a good-hearted, loyal man. She even made sure, I won't attend his birthday party. Not, that I wanted, but ...

And Raven? I know, that she's the only one who kept close contact to Clarke, he told me that much. I'm not sure, I want to face her. Last time we saw each other, she hit me in the face and gave me a black eye. I deserved it.

Another message gets through, before I can answer.

Bell: and yes, I asked everyone. O isn't happy, but she says, she'll behave.

I smile weakly. Okay, it's more of a hint of a smile, but it's a start.

Me: I appreciate the effort, Bell, I really do. But I'm not going to ruin your weekend. You should enjoy having them all together again. No drama needed.

Bell: There won't be drama. It's been years, Lexa. Please, just think about it. It'll be fun, promise.

Me: Did you tell them about me? That I'm a cripple now? Because that'll kill the mood for sure.

Bell: you're not! Lexa Woods, don't you dare saying stuff like that!

Me: I am. There's no point in glossing over.

I can't even talk. How am I supposed to spend a whole weekend with them? One evening, okay. I'll write a note to tell everyone, who's asking, how I lost my voice and that'll explain everything.

Bell: you were hurt over there, while protecting our country. There's nothing bad about it. Don't belittle your doings.

I wasn't just hurt. Yeah, the nerves in my right arm got bruised so badly, that I probably won't ever be able to live without the sharp pain. Yeah, my vocal chords got squashed. But it isn't the whole story.

I won't tell him, though. I can't. I haven't even told Anya about the things, that happened over there, even though I could - technically. My vocal chords have mostly healed.

It's not, that I'm scared to use them. No, it's... Maybe I am scared. Maybe I'm mentally screwed up
and ill. Does it matter?

**Me: I'm sorry.**

I shut my phone off. There's no way I'm able to bear this conversation any longer.

"You okay?" Anya's voice startles me for a second.

I haven't noticed her coming home, which is both a bad and a good thing. Bad because I should've. Good, because I don't see her as a threat anymore. I'm making progress, I guess.

I nod. It's a self-defense mechanism to say yes, when I actually mean no.

Anya knows that by now, so she sits down beside me - leaving enough space between us - and offers her hand, palm upward. She waits calmly, not saying anything, until grab it.

"I'm here for you. I'm listening, whenever you're ready." She says quietly.

I notice her choice of words. When, not if.
Chapter 2 - Clarke.

Chapter Notes

Hey guys, happy sunday!!

I'm a little early today, but honestly - I couldn't wait any longer to get this out there. I don't know why, but this work means a lot to me and I'm curious about what you think! So... tell me your opinion? Please?

And: it's really hard to wait a whole week, before I upload another chapter. Never thought, it would be, but... Maybe I'll start doing it two times a week - what do you think?

Hope you like this one as much as I do,
Love,
LJT. <3

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See the end of the chapter for more notes

A simple smile.

Ten years have passed and my knees still feel wobbly, whenever I think of that smile. I still dream of those green eyes sometimes.

I add both of those things on the list, why I absolutely hate this idea.

“Raven, I don’t want to.”

“You’re going.” She answers determined, not even stopping to turn my closet upside down. “Lots of rumors, old stories and stuff. It’ll be great.”

No, it won’t. Highschool reunions suck. I'm not sure about a lot of things in my life, but on this case, I am, even though I’ve never been on one. Why do people do stuff like that anyways? It's not like you care about the people who gave a shit about you back then. Why meet them again?

Highschool sucks, too. At least, that’s my view on the worst years of my life.

And right now, I'm having kind of a mental breakdown. The third one this week, only this time I'm about to leave for the airport – if Raven finds something for me to wear.

“Please. Don’t make me go.” I beg.

“Nope. We’re all going. It’ll be fun, I promise.”

“And why would that be?”

“You can rub it in their faces, that you’re living a pretty fancy life right now?” She tries.

I love her, I really do. But sometimes she isn’t making it easy. I appreciate her trying and staying by
my side for all these years, but…

“I don’t want to do that. They know it anyways. I'm pretty sure, most of them have seen the show. Half of the country has.” I tell her.

Some of them wrote mails and stuff, saying, they knew I’d make it, asking for pictures, mentions or other things. Yeah, sure. And I'm Santa.

Fucking hypocrites.

“You know, for someone who hates attention in any kind of way, you’ve chosen a pretty odd job.” She says, knitting her eyebrows.

“I know. And who’s fault is that?”

Raven shakes her head, sighing. “I'm not going to apologize. You love your job.”

Yeah. I do. Most of the time.

I've been writing stories for all my life. And I would’ve never send them in, so one day Raven decided to play fate and hacked my computer. She read all of them (not even bothering with normal human basics, like sense of shame, privacy or morals) and send one of them to different publishing houses.

Three month later I got a call. Two months later they called again, saying they want a tv show, even before the book gets published.

Since then, my life has been pretty much turned upside down.

Between writing, book tours, producing and attending dozens of interviews, I don’t really have much time for private life. But it’s okay, because I've never been really social. I guess, I'm just not good with people.

Raven is one of the few exceptions that worked out.

I was a loner, before she came into my life. Like me, she was destined to be an outsider, since her family had that car accident the year before, that left her limping. Besides that, she was and still is a huge nerd. And a genius.

We met on our first day of highschool in a rather… special way. Some seniors decided it would be cool, to shove the nerdy looking, slightly overweight newbie with braces into her locker. Raven happened to have the one next to mine and she picked me up from the floor. The rest is history, she says.

Maybe it is.

“Ray, please. I can’t go back there, I just can’t.” I tell her, my voice trembling, as I think of the days in that hellhole.

Raven stops rummaging in my closet and walks over to me. She’s barely limping anymore and I'm glad. She sits down next to me, her face full of empathy.

“Clarke, I know, what they did to you. I was there with you. And even though you never talked about all the pain, I felt it, okay?” She says, and I can feel her eyes on my face. “But you can’t let them win. You made it. You made it further, then anyone of those people did. You deserve this
moment of malicious joy.”

She doesn’t think about the real reason, I’m not excited to go back home.

“I’m not one for gloating.”

“No, you aren’t. But you should. Because even after the cruel things they did, you’re a still good person. They didn’t break you. The made you who you are.”

I rub my tired eyes.

She’s right. I’m twenty-eight and one of the most wanted screenwriters out there, I’ve got my own book series, which landed on the bestsellers list, my own tv show running on its sixth season by now…

But despite all the fame and the money, deep down I’m still that scared little girl. The girl, who’s been hurt and broke.

“You’re not that ugly duckling anymore you’ve seen yourself as. You, my dear, are gorgeous, sexy and successful.” Raven tells me.

Yeah, maybe I am. Am I?

“You’ve got all these amazing dresses. You’ve got the money for a limousine. You can bring any date you want. You could make an entrance and all the guys would drool over you. Some of the girls, too.” Raven continues, as she notices, that I’m struggling.

“Ray-”

“No. I know, you don’t like the attention. But you’ve got it anyways. If you can’t handle that one evening, you should’ve stayed in med-school.”

“Raven-”

“If you’re not saying yes, I don’t want to hear it. We’ve been doing this for the last hour and we’ve got a plane to catch.”

“Ray-”

“Nope, not hearing it.”

“Yes. Okay. But if I hate it, we’re going to leave?”

“We’re going home!” She shouts triumphant, throwing her hands up in the air, squealing excited like a little kid. Sometimes, she’s worse.

I groan. Why am I doing this again?

“It’s going to be great!” Raven says, walking back to my closet. Or back into my closet, since it’s a separate room. “So, what color do you want to wear? Blue? Would match your eyes. Black? Always sexy, accentuates your figure and your boobs. Red? No, maybe not…”

Raven keeps babbling for a few minutes, until she decided on taking two options. Both end above the knee and are a little too short for my liking. More important, my best friend says, both are “absolutely screaming confidence” (whatever that’s supposed to mean).
Over the last years, I've gotten used to her packing my bags. First: she's way better at this, then I am. Second: I hate it. I hate makeup, dressing up and everything connected to it. I'm the happiest in some sweats, an old t-shirt, hair up in a messy bun and on my couch.

When all of the craziness started seven years ago, we were in college. Ravens dream was joining the NASA, while I wanted to become a doctor. Or my mom wanted it and I had no other idea for my future.

Well, Raven finished college, but instead of following her path, she decided on becoming my assistant and roommate. I'm really happy about that decision, because I would go crazy without her by my side, even if I'm feeling like holding her back sometimes.

She's way better at the business stuff, she likes the attention and she knows me like the back of her hands. She's the reason, I'm still in charge of my story. She's the reason, the tv-show is completely under my control, which is quite unusual for a newbie in the business.

I owe her everything.

“You ready?” Raven tears me from my thoughts.

“Am I?” I ask.

“You are. Phone?”

“Got it.”

“Well then, let’s go. Taxi’s waiting downstairs.”

The drive to the airport is quiet and I enjoy it.

Window open, hands feeling the air, music loud, sunglasses on. My favorite feeling in the world, because for a moment I can pretend, I'm an average person enjoying the freedom.

I’m not average. I’ve made it to the top. But it’s fucking lonely up here.

And sometimes I wonder, what my life would look like, if Raven never hacked my computer.

Guess, you always wish for things you don’t have, right?

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“No, she said she doesn’t care about it and I’m not-”

I interrupt Ravens phone call by taking the phone myself, because this is taking too long.

We’ve just landed and on the way to the car rent. I’m covering my face with some sunglasses, which help a lot. But I’m tired of having to discuss the same things all over again.

“Marcus? It’s Clarke. Screw the timetable. I’m not going to shoot over Thanksgiving nor Christmas nor will anybody else. Haven’t done that last year, won’t do it this year. Find another solution.” With these words I end the call and hand back the phone.
“Woah, Griffster, you’ve got balls.” Raven says, sounding surprised.

I don’t comment on that.

Marcus Kane, the producer of my show, has this tendency to rush things, because he’s impatient. But working over the holidays? He’s insane.

“Keep that confidence for the reunion, okay? I’m sure, you’ll get laid.”

Especially not by anyone, who graduated with me.

“I don’t need to get laid. I’ve got a girl waiting for me at home.”

Raven shakes her head in annoyance, while she grabs the keys of the rental car. I remember the countless times Raven discussed my sex life before. It’s not necessary to do it over and over again.

I’ve tried dating.

But since my parents practically lived the dream, I’m looking for something real. I’ve grown up with the image of true love and even though I know, these chances are small nowadays, I’m looking for something… honest. I want to feel the earth shake, racing heartbeat, butterflies and all that stuff.

And being famous isn’t exactly helping the case.

So I’m with a woman, who sees things the same way. Who’s fun to hang out with. Who’s really great in bed. We’ll see, where it leads us.

“Can we just drive home?”

“Sure thing.” She answers, noticing the change of topics. “Mama Griffin will be happy to see us! You think, she made her famous lasagna for her favorite girls?”

I answer that with a shrug.

Honestly? I don’t care. Being here isn’t exactly what I wanted and no matter, what Raven tells me – it’s not going to end well. Simple as that.

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Everything about the city is so familiar, so unchanged, like I’ve stepped into a time machine.

There’s still the small diner, my Dad and I used to get breakfast on Sundays, when Mom had a nightshift again. She would meet us there sometimes – dinner for her, breakfast for us. The good old times.

There’s still the graffiti on the wall of the cemetery, that a friend of mine did to celebrate graduation. It’s starting to fade, but it makes me smile.

There’s still the old ruin of a house up on the hill, where another friend took me on Halloween ten years ago, even though I was really scared.

I ignore the pang in my stomach, as my eyes wander across the familiar houses.
There’s still the swing on the old oak tree in our front yard and the small forest across the street, hiding the small lake, I’ve sneaked out to a lot during my senior year.

There’s still the same, familiar smell in the air – the smell of summer air, so characteristically August.

There are still the same neighbors.

Every time I come back here to see my Mom and my little brother, a part of me hopes, that everything’s different.

But nothing ever changes.

It’s like watching a movie for the tenth time and every time you’re begging the character to do something differently, as if that would change anything.

*The story’s been written.*

“We’re here.” Raven announces a few seconds later, as she stops the car.

I know that. It’s just really, really hard.

My eyes travel to the house on the right, where my best friend Bellamy Blake and his twin sister Octavia grew up in. Both left town after Highschool graduation. Octavia played soccer in college and decided to join the police. Bellamy, who’s even nerdier than I’ve ever been, became a teacher. I’ve always thought, he’d find a cure for cancer or something like that, but he’s living a content life, trying to make a difference in another way.

Somewhere along the way, I’ve lost contact to both of them. Maybe it’s been the distance. Maybe it’s been the year I’ve spent traveling the world after graduation, just to get as far away as possible. Maybe, I didn’t try hard enough.

I make a mental note to visit their Mom Aurora on this weekend, if I find the time.

I’m fighting the urge to look at the house on the left side for a while, but it’s hopeless. I just can’t resist.

Becca and Gustus Woods painted the house again, this time it’s a shade of light blue.

I smile sadly.

I’ve seen the house in about eight different colors over the years.

Becca is a wonderful human being. My Mom and her have been best friends since Highschool themselves and our families have been close ever since. Though an event during my senior year nearly broke apart the tight connection, our families got over it.

Well, most of them did.

My eyes wander upwards, to the window closest to my room in the attic.

For a short moment I let myself wonder, where she went and if she thinks of me as often as I think about her.

I’ve attended a few Christmases and birthdays over the last ten years, but there’s been one unspoken rule: never talk about Lexa.
They’ve tried once. They brought her up the year I returned from my travelling, before I went to med-school. Tried to let her name fall during a simple conversation, just to get me to talk about it. Let’s just say, it didn’t end well.

After that, I made my Mom promise to never speak about her again, if she wants me to come home. She wasn’t happy, but she accepted – maybe just for Aden, my little brother.

I let my eyes linger there for a second longer, before I turn to face Raven. She knows exactly, what I’ve been thinking about, I can see the compassion in her eyes. After all, she’s been there to pick up the pieces Lexa left behind.

Lexa. I haven’t even thought her name in a while.

“You good?” She asks carefully.

“Yeah. Let’s go.”

Slowly, but determined, I make my way over to the door. I haven’t even raised my arm, when the door opens and I’m pulled into a tight, motherly hug.

“Hey, Mom.” I chuckle.

“Clarke. It’s been too long. How was the flight? God, you look so skinny. Don’t you eat enough? Come in, I’ve made lasagna and-”

“Hell, yeah!” Raven interrupts her rambling.

I roll my eyes.

“Raven, language.” Mom warns her, before she lets me go and hugs Raven instead. After all, she’s like a sister to me. She’s family.

“Sorry, Mama Griffin.” Raven apologized halfheartedly, walking into the house, like she owns it. “So, where’s the lasagna? I’m starving.”

Mom snickers, while we watch my friend disappear into the kitchen. “Nothing has changed, I see. It’s good, you’re here.”

“Where’s Aden?”

“Upstairs. Do you want to get him? I haven’t told him, you’d come. Didn’t want to… Well.”

“Disappoint him, if I had to change my plans again?” I finish her sentence.

I get it, I do. But it hurts nevertheless. My lifestyle has slowly edged us away from each other and there’s nothing to gloss over.

Aden and I have been really close, but we’ve got this great age difference of twelve years. He’s turning sixteen soon. Old enough to drive, to date. It’s strange to think about that. Why couldn’t he just stay a toddler?

Mom doesn’t have to nod.

Nevertheless, I walk towards the stairs, picking up our bags in the process. Raven and I are going to sleep here for this night – and hopefully no paparazzi will be showing up.
My room is up in the attic. I’ve missed it dearly, because it’s been my safe bubble for eighteen years. The place, I could be myself. The place, I created the characters and places for my stories. The place, I could disappear in.

I leave the bags by the stairs and knock on Aden’s door, smiling lost in thoughts for a second about the “keep out” sign on it.

“Mom, just five more minutes!” He shouts back, a slight juvenile annoyance in his tone. He’s probably playing another video game.

“It’s me.” I tell him, as I open the door.

Aden is sitting on his couch, his PlayStation controller in his hands. “Clarke?”

“Yeah, that’s right. I’m glad you didn’t forget my name.”

He immediately stops the game and gets up to hug me. He’s taller than me now, somehow… more grown up.

It’s been too long. Skyping isn’t enough.

“I’ve missed you!” He says, grinning wide, as we sit down on the couch. “Why didn’t you tell me, you’d come?”

“It’s been quite… spontaneous.”

“The reunion?”

I nod. “How did you know about it?”

“Everyone at school is talking about it. After all, we’ve got someone famous. School’s going crazy about you, you know?”

“I’m sorry.”

“No, it’s great. Everyone’s nice to me, always asking, if I could get some autographs and stuff.”

I never meant to drag my family into this, but to be fair, I didn’t expect to get so famous. I just thought, I’d sell a few copies and earn some money extra to pay for college and stuff. Spare me a waitress job, maybe.

Be careful, what you wish for.

“I’m still sorry.”

“Hey, don’t worry. I’m good. And it’s got its perks to have a rich and famous sister.”

“How come?”

“Maybe she’ll buy me a car for my birthday?” Aden asks with a smile, that’s almost as cute as it was when he was five and asked for ice-cream.

I swear, it’s like kryptonite and he isn’t even trying really hard. If he would, he’d mix this cute little pout into the smile and get this sad look in his blue eyes.

“I’ll talk to Mom about it.” I hear myself say.
Shit. He’s good.

“Yeah!”

“Hey, that’s no yes.”

He grins devilish. “But it’s better than the no I got from her, when I first asked her. It’s unfair, by the way. You got a car, when you got your license.”

“Yeah. But let’s keep it between us for now, okay? No running to Mom.” I suggest, just to be save. “Raven’s downstairs and Mom made lasagna. You hungry?”

It’s a rhetorical question and we both know it. Moms lasagna is famous and even if you’re not hungry, you’re going to eat some of it. It’s an unspoken rule and besides, you can’t help it. It’s heavenly.

“Am I a Griffin?” Aden answers nevertheless.

“Yeah, sorry for asking.”

“Forgiven. Last one does the dishes?”

And with that, he’s out the door, not even waiting for my answer. I hate him. No, I don’t. But it’s good to be home, even if it’s just for a short visit. Better than nothing, right?

And for one evening it feels like nothing’s changed, like I never left and never grown up.

Chapter End Notes

thank you for reading!

feel free to leave a comment :) I’m dying to know, what you think of this?
<3
"Bellamy called." Raven says quietly, while we get ready for bed. But there's something in her tone, I can't make out. Something... wary?

"And?" I answer, trying to sound as indifferent as possible, as I sit down on my side of the bed we'll share tonight.

But honestly? I'm scared of what she's going to tell me.

Over the years I've lost contact to our group of friends. It's one of the few things I regret.

Raven kept in touch all those years, she returned home for a few birthdays and other events, but she made sure, not to talk too much about them, while I pretended not to care. It was easier for me.

There has to be a reason, why she's starting now and that's the problem.

"A few people are going to the lake house on Saturday, after the reunion. The Blakes, O's boyfriend, Harper, Monty, Jasper and his girl, maybe a few more."

A part of me senses, what's about to come next.

"And?" I ask.

"Okay, I'll just say it. He invited Lexa, too. But she said no."

I need a couple minutes to understand what she's trying to tell me.

He asked Lexa. Okay, that's unexpected. Her saying no? Not so unexpected - last time the group met her, Raven punched her and Octavia told her to stay the fuck away from me. She got the message.

(A small part felt guilty for that, because 1. nobody deserves to be hit in the face and 2. they were her friends, too. But I was too hurt to care about it back then.)

So... What's her point?
Oh.

Shit.

I understand.

I bury my face in my hands, as the news sink in. Lexa is here. She's back. She's probably going to be at the reunion.

Why not? Highschool was her playground. She was popular, successful, beautiful – everything a girl can dream of. Of course she'll be there. I guess, I just hoped, she'd still be wherever she went after highschool.

"Clarke?" Ravens worried tone brings me back to reality. "There's more."

More than her being back?

"Spill."

Raven sighs and sits down on the bed, facing me with a worried, hesitant look in her dark brown eyes. "She's..."

What?

Happy?

Still gorgeous? Or even more beautiful?

Married?

I can’t decide, which thought hurts the most.

"She's different."

"Raven, I swear to god-"

"She's hurt. Or damaged? I don't know, Bellamy couldn't really explain it." She says and while she tries to find the next words, I go crazy.

Hurt? What's that supposed to mean? Hurt like physically hurt? Like, in pain? I want to hate her, I really do, but imagining the green-eyed girl in any form of pain makes my heart ache.

"Okay, I'm going to tell you now, even if you said you don't want to hear about her." Raven says straight forward, suddenly sounding determined. "After you left for Europe, she... God, Lexa joined the military."

_The – what?

Oh my god..._

_Fuck._

After a few seconds of staring into the nothing, my mouth hanging slightly open, I blink.

"The military?" I repeat shocked. "But she... she had that scholarship for... I..."

That's why she never came home on Christmas. Why nobody spoke of her.
She served. And ... got hurt?

"How?"

"You mean how she got hurt?"

I nod.

"I don't know. Bellamy doesn't either. He ran into her a couple of months ago and ... She's got problems with her arm and her voice. Must've hurt her vocal chords or something. But you know Bell, he doesn't ask many questions. Especially not the important ones. Men." She says and rolls her eyes.

Lexa has a beautiful voice. Sometimes she would sing, when she thought nobody was listening. I'd lie, if I said I didn't miss her voice sometimes. Or her in general.

*Get it together, Griffin.*

"Why are you telling me this now?"

"To prepare you for tomorrow evening. She's probably going to be there. I know, we haven't exactly split amicably, but... it's been ten years. I will forgive her. And I'm sorry, if that bothers you, but she deserves it. I'm going to apologize for the punch, that was way below the belt."

I let her words sink in, before I answer. Raven's not one for saying sorry, so it means something, if she thinks about an apology.

Have I been too harsh? Was it wrong to accept our friends taking sides? My side?

Yeah, what Lexa did was shitty in so many ways, I can't even explain. And yes, our friends were my friends before we got together. But that's no real justification, is it? Because Lexa has changed so much during senior year and we’ve all become really close.

Oh shit. How is it possible, that I'm back in town for less then twelve hours and she’s already on my mind for most of the time?

"Are you gonna sit there all night not saying a word?" Raven interrupts my train of thoughts, a playful smile on her lips.

"What?"

"Just asking."

"No, I... it's okay with me. Apologize. Talk with her. Whatever it is you want to do, do it. I guess, it's time to move on." I say slowly.

I am trying not to think about the look on her face when I got into Bellamys car the day after graduation. This was the last time I’ve seen her in ten years – the day Bellamy drove me to the airport. It’s been a horrible day and she looked so... broken. She looked, how I felt.

"Should I tell him to convince her to come? To the lake house?"

"I won't back out, if she's there. But I'm sure she's got her reasons."

"Yeah. You. Us."
"Do what you want." I answer, slightly annoyed and unable to control my emotions.

"Chill, Griffin. I'm always doing what I want, remember?" Raven retorts relaxed, climbing under her blanket.

Yes, I remember vividly.

I get under my blanket, too, and try to find a comfortable position for the next few minutes, tossing and turning, until Raven slaps my shoulder.

"Stop moving."

"Sorry."

"How do you feel about it?"

"Raven." I say quietly. It's a warning, but she doesn't do well with them in general, so she ignores it.

"Just because you never talked about her, doesn't mean you haven't thought about her or missed her. Which is okay by the way."

"I didn't... miss her."

I still do. There's a difference.

Even though she broke my heart – no, in fact she ripped it out of my chest and trampled on it, like it didn't mean a thing. Well, even though she did that, a part of me still loved her.

"If you say so."

"Raven, what's the point of this talk?"

"I'm here for you. I've always been and I'll always be. You know that?"

I exhale audibly. Didn't even know, I was holding my breath.

"Thank you."

"Then get in here and sleep." She replies and spreads her arms for me to cuddle into. I obey and rest my head on her shoulder, melting into her familiar warmth.

I've spent more nights cuddled up with her than with anyone else. Nightmares, fears, loneliness - we've been through a lot together. After highschool we grew even closer and now we're practically sisters.

"Good girl." She comments.

"Shut up."

"Make me."

"Forget it."

"Ha! See, I win!"

I don't reply to this anymore, because I will lose - no matter what.
Ravens chuckle is the last thing I hear, before I drift off into a dreamless sleep.

Chapter End Notes

have a beautiful day :)
Hey guys :D
so as you can see, I decided on two updates a week - sure you won't mind.
And I'm currently writing chapter 20, so... this story will be a lot longer than originally planned. I guess, you won't mind either?

next chapter will be Lexa's POV again :)

Thanks for reading and all the feedback!! <3
Love,
LJT.
---

The next morning, I've got two options: stay holed up in my Mom's house or visit Becca and Gustus next door.

It's a pretty hard decision and someone else chooses for me, before I even leave the bed. I get both, because my beloved mother invites them for breakfast.

Why not? They're practically family. They were before Lexa and I stopped hating each other and started to date. They were afterwards, too.

Nothing's changed.

Except everything has.

"Clarke!" Becca shouts and wraps me in a tight, suffocating hug, as soon as she's opened our front door. (We never bother with knocking, which led to a few... let's say funny situations over the years.)

"Hi, happy birthday, Becca. Even though I'm one day late." I say, while I watch Gustus rolling inside in his wheelchair over her shoulder.

“Oh, I'm going to be fifty-four a whole year, so it's okay.” She answers laughing, while letting me go, so I can greet her husband.

"Hi, Gus. You're looking good. The beard is still growing, I see."

Last time I've been here, Becca threatened to cut it off in his sleep.

"Of course!" He answers, earning a resigned sigh and a pair of rolling eyes, while I hug the muscled guy. "But look at you. You're getting more beautiful with each month passing."

"Charmer."

"It's true. And before we start breakfast, I gotta say, the new season is awesome. Really great job! Especially the new character named Gustus is a really handsome and talented guy. Hopefully you won't let him die next season. By the way, when can I expect it?"
I chuckle. I knew, he'd like that. “Not before March, I’m sorry.”

He sighs dramatically, shaking his head.

Even though he’s been sitting in this damn wheelchair for ten years now, he never lost his sense of humor. He even managed to keep his restaurant up and running. He’s been a role model for me all these years, so of course I named a character after him.

And: this character won’t die, that’s for sure.

Gustus grabs my hand, as I turn to follow Becca towards the kitchen, to go on helping Mom. "Wait a sec."

Okay, strange.

He waits until we're alone, before he looks straight into my eyes and continues. "I know, that you miss your Dad. I do, too. It’s still strange without him, but I guess, that’ll never change. But I know, he'd be very, very proud, kid. I am proud."

And just like that, he cuts a long forgotten wound open and within two seconds a few lonely teardrops of emotion run down my cheeks, leaving hot, wet traces on my skin.

“Thank you.” I say, my voice barely a whisper.

He knows exactly, how much his few words mean to me, so he just squeezes my hand and rolls by, to give me a moment on my own.

Losing Dad has ripped a deep hole in my life. His death left a void, that nothing and no one could fill. Writing helped a little, because I could change the pain and the emptiness into something else. But not a day passes, without me thinking of him. He was great man, a fantastic father. My closest friend.

Aden was five, when he died. He barely remembers him. His laughter, he said, that’s his only memory of his father. Thinking about it breaks my heart. It’s so unfair.

Gustus has been there for us, as much as he could. He’s practically like a second father to Aden and me.

Suddenly I think about Beccas birthday. Under normal circumstances we would’ve celebrated her birthday together. A barbecue in their backyard or something similar, some music in the background and bad jokes. Why didn’t we?

“Mom?” I ask, walking back to the kitchen, after I’ve wiped the last traces of my tears.

“Yes, sweetie?”

She and Becca are standing in the kitchen, working in perfect unity.

“Why didn’t we go over yesterday?”

Both woman share a look, that doesn’t go unnoticed by me.

And then I understand. “Oh.”

It’s because of Lexa. She’s home, so she’s been there yesterday for her mom’s birthday. Of course. We’ve been so close and I didn’t know. Because I practically blackmailed Mom to not even talk
about it...

“I’m sorry.” I say quietly. “I didn’t mean to…” To what? To complicate their friendship, because I couldn’t get over a heartbreak in highschool?

When did I turn into this selfish person?

“I know. Don’t worry about it.” Becca answers. “I understand, Clarke.”

She shouldn’t be so damn nice. Both of them should be angry and should’ve ignored my poor attempt of blackmailing, because I’d never stay away from my little brother and everyone knew that.

“How… how is she?”

Everyone in the room – Gustus, Mom, Becca, Aden and Raven, who’s just about to join us – stops in the middle of what they were doing. It feels like I’ve opened Pandora’s box or something.

*Yeah, not awkward at all.*

Becca starts talking first, she’s sounding hesitant. “I don’t know, if-”

“I’m sorry.” I interrupt her, when I realize, what I had just said. “I shouldn’t have asked that. I’ve got no right to. I’m sorry.”

“No! It’s just… I’m not sure, how much you know and… it’s not my place to tell.” Becca answers quickly. “Maybe you should… ask Lexa? She’ll be there tonight. You two could talk, you know? She’d probably like that.”

I nod and try to fake a smile.

Lexa will be there tonight. I’m going to see her soon. I could’ve run into her yesterday.

Suddenly everything feels more real, more present.

The breakfast passes in a blur for me, because all I’m doing, is replaying the images of her in my head, over and over again.

I’m feeling sick in my stomach, when I think about the last words we spoke. Maybe all of this was a bad idea? I mean, I could back out. So far, no one knows I’m here. No one besides family. I could say, I’m needed back home for the show. It wouldn’t be that unbelievable. Except that they know me.

And only old Clarke would run again.

New Clarke is brave, right? She conquered the world on her own after graduation. It was fantastic! No, it wasn’t. It was lonely for the first months, I’ve spent lots of nights crying. Then I felt numb for a few following months, before I enjoyed the last four.

No, I’m not running again.

-----

Niylah: hey <3 How’s Polis?

Me: I’m not sure. Feels different now.
Niylah: because of her?

Me: no. Yes. Because of everything I guess.

Niylah: you know, I’m here for you?

Me: I do, thank you <3

Niylah: Do you know, when you’ll be back? We could leave the city for a few days, maybe for France? Breakfast in Paris?

Me: you know, for someone in your position, you’ve got a lot of free time. :P

Niylah: where else would be the fun of it? So, yes or no?

Me: yes! I’ll be back on Monday, I guess.

Niylah: perfect <3

Me: can’t wait <3

Niylah: me neither. <3

“The wifey?” Raven asks curious, glancing at my phone.

“Stop calling her that.”

“What? After all this time, you’d think, you two would seal the deal and stuff. Sometimes I don’t understand you. Like, at all.” She says, shaking her head. “She’s hot, she’s gorgeous, she’s successful, nice and funny. What are you waiting for?”

“It’s been two years. And you know, we aren’t like that.”

“Like what? Like an actual couple? Doesn’t having keys to the others apartment and going on a holiday to the city of love count?”

“Hey, stop reading my messages!”

I know, she’s right. Niylah and I should take the next step some time. But it’s going great right now and I’m not ready for the next level. Niylah isn’t either, she’s enjoying her “living-the-day”-lifestyle and she’s far too independent. I like that.

And I’m happy the way it is.
Chapter 5 - Lexa.

Chapter Summary

reunion, part 1 :)

Chapter Notes

so, we have mentions of a panic attack here, just in case.

guys, it's finally Sunday again :D I'm excited to hear your thoughts on this. Currently I'm writing Chapter 24, so... this will definitely be a bit longer. And omg, it's going to be great. I guess? I hope.

Hope you like it.

Love,

LJT.

............... 

“Should I go with you?’’

I shake my head.

“I mean, I could. Not as your date obviously. But for moral support.” Anya continues, while I’m adding a little eye shadow.

I'm using make up for the first time in years. A strange feeling.

A part of me is amused about her comment, so I take my notepad and scribble down few words for her.

“You're a little late for that, don’t you think? At your age, you’d need more than half an hour to clean up nice.”

“Are you for real?” She gasps indignantly. “For someone who didn’t even own a dress before, you’re really rude!”

“No offense, but I can handle one evening without your support, promise”.

I really don’t need a babysitter. People are going to stare, no matter what. But I’m not disabled or incapable of standing my ground.

“None taken. You ready? Want me to pick you up after?”

“We’ll see. Maybe I’ll meet some hot chick, who knows.” I try to smile, but I fail miserably.
“Would do you some good to get laid.”

And suddenly the mood’s changed.

Because even if I pretend I’m alright, I’m still the veteran with only one functioning arm, who’s barely able to speak.

Anya squeezes my hand. “You look beautiful.”

I hope so.

Outside someone honks once, twice.

“Seems Bellamy’s here. It’s really nice of him to pick you up.”

I nod, while grabbing my purse. “See you.” I whisper.

“I’ll wait for you. If you need an escape, text me.”

I write a few words on the notepad and show them to her. “Will do. Thank you. For it all.”

“Go, have fun.”

Fun. I don’t even know, what that is anymore. Was it the funny feeling you get in your stomach, when you’re doing something, that makes you laugh?

But I put the small notepad back in my purse, kneel down to cuddle Ellie and Paul, exchange one last look with my sister and leave the house.

Currently, I’m living with Anya and her husband Nyko. They let me stay in their guestroom during my recovery and later they said, I could take my time. I enjoy living here, but I’ve been looking for apartments for a while now. It’s time, I guess.

Bellamy’s waiting by his car, smiling brightly. He’s looking handsome in his black suit. So grown up. I watch him pushing up his glasses like he used to, before he opens his arms for a hug.

“Hey, Woods. You look hot!”

I chuckle quietly, shaking my head.

“Yes, you do. Ready for the party?”

I nod, while I get into his car, waving back at my sister.

Strangely, I’m feeling like I’m seventeen again and about to attend prom. Even the serious and slightly worried look on my sisters’ face seems fitting. Except, that I’ve got no idea, how one would feel on prom night, because I didn’t go.

“You know, I never thought I’d go to some reunion shit. But since I’m a teacher at this school, I kinda have to.” He says.

I can’t write an answer, because he’s driving, but I don’t want to be impolite. So I take a deep breath and whisper: “Me too.”

Bellamy turns his head, smiling. I haven’t spoken a lot of words around him and his genuine smile means a lot to me.
“I’m glad you’re going. And about that trip to the lake house? Last words aren’t spoken on that case.”

I sigh. Somehow I knew that already.

“Hey, I’m going to tell you, before we get there, so you have some time to prepare yourself.” He continues serious. “I know, that Clarke is coming tonight, too. She and Raven arrived yesterday.”

I gulp. Shit, so she’s really here then?

The last time I’ve seen her in person, was the day Bellamy drove her to the airport. I’ve been sitting in my window and couldn’t believe my eyes. Clarke going on a trip around the world on her own? A completely uncharacteristic decision. One, that broke my heart, because I knew, she was doing this to get away from me. Because I broke her heart.

I knew about her favorite hobby. I encouraged her to try her luck, even though she never let anyone read her stories – not even me. I always hoped, she’d fulfill her dreams.

I just thought, I’d be by her side, I guess.

“Lexa? You okay there?”

I turn my head to face him. “Scared.” I whisper. There’s no point in denying anyways.

“I understand. But I’m sure, nobody will hit you this time.”

That’s not, what I’m afraid of. But he knows that.

“Look. What you did back then was shitty. But ten years have passed. Ten fucking years. A lot of things happened and we’ve all changed. It’ll be okay, I promise. And I’m going to stay by your side, if you want that.”

Bellamy has a big heart. Looking back, I’m sorry for never seeing it before. He’s one of the best people I got to know and I wish, I’d have appreciated it sooner.

Yeah. Life is funny.

“Thanks.” I mumble quietly.

“You’re talking more, that’s good. Little steps, right?”

I nod, thankful for the change of topics, even if it’s still about me.

The rest of the drive (five minutes) passes in silence.

I can feel my pulse increasing steadily and by the time we arrive at the school, I’m close to having a panic attack. The parking lot is filled with lots of cars and I can see people walking up to the schools’ front door.

Bellamy seems to notice, but he doesn’t say a word. Instead he grabs my hand and sits there with me until I’ve calmed my erratic heartbeat to a bearable level.

_Inhale. Exhale. Inhale. Exhale._ It’s funny, how hard basic humans instincts can be.

“Okay.” I whisper after a while.
“Sure?”

Another nod.

“Well then, let’s go.” He hops out of the car and runs over to open the door for me, a cute, challenging smirk on his face. “Welcome back to highschool. Yay.”

Yay. What a pleasure.

Bellamy offers a hand and I don’t hesitate to take it. It feels good, somehow safe. He’s a friend and I really need one today.

I’m pretty sure, no reunion ever got so much attention. The whole entrance is besieged by paparazzi. I’m almost getting blind due to all the flashlights, but Bellamy keeps me focused and then we’re inside.

“Shit.” He states. “That’s a lot of attention. Poor Clarke.”

Oh, yeah. I haven’t thought about it before, but it must be annoying as hell to be followed around by cameras all day and night.

I can’t imagine, that she wanted this.

“Oh no. Are they for real?” Bellamy groans and that gets my attention back to reality.

What the hell happened?

He motions towards a small desk, shaking his head in disbelief. “Name tags. Do we look that different now? Come on, that’s way too cliché. I can’t believe it.”

Can’t say no to that.

But I take mine and pin it on my dress, before I help him with his. He’s still clumsy, I see. Don’t know why, but it lightens my mood.

“Yeah, chuckle all you want.” He grumbles. “Ready?”

I shrug.

As ready as I’ll ever be.

“Oh, I like it. Well, let’s follow the bad music, shall we?” He offers his arm for me.

The music playing isn’t that bad, but maybe my opinion isn’t meaningful, because I’m really not picky. Except for jazz, I listen to everything – depending on my mood. Excluding every Clarke-related song of course.

We are early, but not early enough.

She’s already here.

Clarke.

And goddamn, she’s so beautiful, that it takes my breath away.

She’s laughing about something and she throws her head back, like she did all her life.
She wears a dark blue dress, matching her eyes – those eyes, which still haunt my dreams some
nights. And not in good dreams.

Her face is a little more narrowed, but nothing else has changed. Her blonde hair is falling down over
her left shoulder and I notice with a smile, that she's still got those natural waves I love so much.

Loved, I correct myself quickly.

Suddenly she looks up, as if she felt my presence, and her eyes find mine, like there was a pull she
couldn’t resist.

Like magnets, searching for their opposite pole, their other half.

One day I was that.

My mouth goes dry and I stop right by the entrance, when her blue eyes meet my green ones.

Coming here was a bad idea.

Her eyes hold mine for what feels like an eternity.

Then she smiles – it’s one of her sad ones, one welling with emotion – and it hits me like a lightning
strike, deep down in my soul.

I shouldn’t have come.

I gulp, hastily blinking back my tears, before I excuse myself.

Panic spreads through my whole body, sending it into hyperventilation within seconds.

Shit. Please, not now.

But it’s too late.

I’m barely making it to the restroom, stumbling inside and crashing down on the floor, before the
attack hits me.
My feet give in and I sink to the floor, squeezed into this little ball. Every nerve in my body tells me to run, yet I can’t. Ice is running through my veins, my whole body feels tingly and dizzy, while my vision becomes spotty and tunneled due to the lack of oxygen.

Suddenly a pair of hands holds my face and Lincoln comes into view.

Lincoln? I wonder.

“Okay, Sergeant. I want you to breathe. In and out. In and out. I’m going to count backwards now and you’re going to count with me. You hear me?” He says, his voice loud and determined. “Ten.”

I’m shaking by now, feeling like I'm suffocating, but his presence is familiar and I try to cling to it, like my life depends on it.

“Nine.” N-nine.

“Eight.” Eight.

“Seven.” S-seven.

“Six.” Six.

“Five.” Five.

“Four.”

“Four.” I whisper.

“Yeah, great.” He says encouragingly, his eyes full of empathy. “Keep breathing. Inhale, exhale. Three.”

“Three.” I repeat quietly, feeling the panic subsiding slowly.

“Two. One. It’s over. You’re safe.”

I inhale deeply. Oxygen is reaching my brain again. “I'm sorry.” I whisper, before I even think about it.

“For what?” He asks surprised. “You saved my ass more times over there, than I could count. It’s the least I could do. Besides, I’m not exactly a fan of the music.”

“How?”

“How I knew? I saw you leaving. Wanted to check on you.”
I nod, not able to say another word.

Lincoln was in my unit. He’s from near Polis, so we quickly bonded over missing our hometown. We stayed in loose contact, after he left the military. And when I returned home, he visited me in rehab.

“Should I drive you home?”

I shake my head no. I have to face it, even though I’d like to avoid it.

“Okay. Let me help you.” He offers a hand, but I get up on my own, even though my body feels like I’ve just ran a marathon.

Fuck.

“Still stubborn, I see.”

I rummage in my purse for my notepad and write down a few words, because I’m not able to speak another word right now.

“Thank you. I’m just going to freshen up, okay? You can go. I’m good.”

“Are you sure?”

I nod, even though “sure” isn’t exactly the word I’d use right now.

But he gets the message and then I’m left alone in the girls bathroom. Alone with my reflection in the mirror, which looks pretty shitty.

But I’m a soldier. Right?

My fingers graze over the tattoo on my left wrist. Ge smak daun, gyon op nodotaim. Get knocked down, get back up.

It’s the credo of our grounder unit. And grounders don’t give up, we fight.

This evening, it’s got nothing on me. I’ve been through hell and came out alive.

I’ve got this.

I’ll fight this.

I splash a little water on my cheeks and my neck to cool off, before I undo my braided hair and shake it free. It’s better this way. A few corrections with the dress and I’m ready to go out again.

Ge smak daun, gyon op nodotaim.

Right?

The rest of the evening will be great.

Except it’s not. It’s shitty again the moment I return, because:

1. Echo, my ex-best-friend, who turned out to be a cold-hearted bitch, gives me the typical look, when I return to the reunion. The one, only women can give you. Eyeing you up and down, very slowly, with this… dismissive, arrogant expression on her face. I hate her.
And

2. Cage Wallace, the towns greatest asshole has arrived and he’s walking directly up towards Clarke and Bellamy. Within a few seconds her relaxed facial expression turns into a scared one.

*Oh, fuck. Don’t do this, don’t-*

I’m already moving.
Chapter Notes

So, here's the next one.
Hope you like it?

... 

I hate it.

Being home and being followed by paparazzi.

Fortunately, Raven had the idea to come here over an hour early, so we’d be here before the cameras.

Walking through the halls of my old school feels… strange. Wrong.

I’ve been a completely different person back then and even though I’m not ashamed or anything, I’d like to go back and change a few things. I’d like to be more open, more confident. I’d like to speak up and defend myself – even if I would’ve gotten punched for it, like I did in senior year.

I guess, that’s a natural thing for outsiders. The typical “what if” questions.

The school’s principal and a few colleagues greet me excited, as well as a few old classmates who’s names I’ve forgotten. Everyone treats me in this fawning way, it’s gross and annoying as hell.

I’m trying the best I can.

Some time later, I’m standing by the bar with Raven and Jasper, who’s gotten married a few month ago. His wife is really sweet and the way they look at each other makes me think about Niylah. Do I look at her the same way?

“Remember the one time Jasper blew up the toilet?” Raven tells and we all laugh, about Jaspers embarrassed blushing. Clearly he didn’t tell this story yet.

Suddenly – I can’t quite place it – I feel the need to turn my head. I can’t fight it.

I see her almost the same second, she’s entering.

Lexa.

She’s… stunning.

Long black dress, slightly opened, so one leg’s visible. She's wearing a fitting jacket, even though it’s warm in the room. Her hair is braided on one side. She's even more beautiful than in my memory.

Her familiar, sparkling green eyes meet mine without a warning, catching me completely off guard. My heart skips a beat.

A few long seconds pass and I know the answer for my question – I won’t ever look at Niylah the
way I should. In fact, there’s only ever been one woman I’ve looked at with such adoration and love.

And she’s standing over there, by the entrance, looking so… stoic and gorgeous.

I'm smiling, before I know it, while still holding Lexa’s gaze.

And then the surprised and soft expression in her face changes into something pained and broken. Before I can even blink or process anything, she's gone.

Next thing I know is I get jostled by a dark skinned, muscled guy, who runs after her.

“Lincoln!” Octavia’s familiar voice shouts, but the guy – Lincoln – doesn’t react.

What the hell just happened?

“Ah shit.” Octavia says next to me. “Hey Clarke!”

I’m still trying to process, what happened.

Why would she run? Okay, dumb question.

Didn’t she know, I’d be here today?

“Clarke?” Octavia winks in front of my face to get my attention. “Have you seen a ghost or something?”

“In fact, yes, she has.” Raven answers. “You okay?”

I manage a nod, before I clear my head and greet the smaller, blue-eyed brunette with a hug. “Hey Octavia. So that was Lincoln?”

“Yeah. Always saving the world.” She replies, rolling her eyes. “He seems to think he owes her or something.”

Raven’s curiosity gets the best of her once more, before I can ask. “Who? Lexa? Why so?”

“They’ve been on the same unit for a while, I don’t know, he’s not exactly talking much about it. It’s one of the things I love about him, but does it have to be Lexa? I mean, come on, out of all people-”

“Octavia.” I intervene. “It’s not your heart she broke. Please, not even I’m that resentful.”

“No, you’ve only left the state and never returned home again.” She says harshly and within a second I’m reminded, why we’ve never been as close as Bellamy and I or Raven and I. Because she can be a coldhearted bitch sometimes.

I glare at her, before I turn around. I’m not doing this right now.

“Clarke, wait-”

_Nope, so not doing this._

I walk over to the bar to get a refill for my drink, because if there’s one good thing about highschool reunions, then it’s the alcohol. School would’ve been so much better, if could’ve drank that stuff back then legally.

Bellamy’s standing there already, smiling at me, when he sees me walking towards him.
He’s looking good. Quite handsome, more grown up and less nerdy. If I wouldn’t see him as a brother, I’d definitely date him.

“Hey, princess.”

“Hey, Bell.” I hug him tightly, ignoring the nickname like I’ve done all my life. “Oh, you’ve grown muscles, hm?”

He blushes and shrugs. “Maybe?”

“You’re cute. How’s life as a teacher? Still great?”

“Pretty much, yeah. Only the unmotivated and lazy kids, who don’t appreciate the good old American literature, are a little annoying.”

“You’re a highschool teacher. Isn’t that part of the job description?”

“I know.”

“You’re really someone else.”

Bellamy chuckles. “Says Hollywood’s most wanted screenwriter and producer. By the way, any spoilers for the next season?”

Should’ve seen that one coming.

“Bell.” I groan. “I’m not going to tell you anything. You have to wait and see, like everyone else. I’ve already told Gustus.”

“Come on, please.”

“Nope.”

He sighs dramatically. “Was Octavia mean to you?”

“Oh, you know. Her annoying, arrogant self showed again.”

Bellamy takes a sip of his beer and eyes me closely for a while, not saying anything. I don’t like being watched like that, so I avoid his gaze for as long as I can. It seems, he’s waiting for something. For what?

And then I know. He’s waiting for my question.

“Can I ask you something?”

“Do you really need permission?”

“Guess not.” I say, taking a hearty gulp of whatever alcohol that’s supposed to be. I try to acquire liquid courage for the next step. “Are you… friends with her?”

He smiles, his cute dimples showing. He expected the question – maybe not this one exactly, but any Lexa-related one.

Sometimes I’m still surprised how well he knows me.

“She’s trying not to be friends with me.” He answers after a few silent seconds. “I’m not sure, why.
If it’s because of… our history or because of her.”

“How is she?”

He sighs again. I seem to have that effect on people.

“You should ask her that.”

Two times the same answer. Maybe I should. If I only could. I’d love to talk with her – especially since I’ve learned, that she joined the military and got hurt. Did she join because of me? She’s always been tough and courageous, but the fucking military?

She seemed okay, when she stood in the doorway. But that doesn’t have to mean anything, right? Raven said something about her vocal chords – that could mean a lot of different things.

And-

“Clarke.” He says carefully, interrupting my train of thoughts. “She’s all right. She will be.”

“Is it… crazy, that I still care about her somehow?”

Bellamy shakes his head no. “It’s not. It’s who you are. Your people come first, not matter what. And she’s still your people, even if it’s an a really bizarre way.”

Yeah, she is.

How could I not notice this all those years? Was it the distance? The hate for her I’ve talked myself into?

“Thank you for being there for her.”

“I’m not doing it because of you.”

“I know that. It’s just… The way it all happened… She deserves someone in her corner. And I know it’s not easy to be her friend, so… Don’t give up on her, okay?”

I didn’t mean to say all of this, but it feels good. Lexa pushes people away, who come to close to her. She’s good at this. You need persistence, if you want to get to know her. And time. Lots of it.

“I won’t.” He assures me.

“Well, if that isn’t our most precious golden girl!” A snarky, unpleasant voice shrills in my ears, making a cold shower of disgust run down my back.

Cage.

“You should leave.” Bellamy says immediately, stepping in between me and the asshole of a guy, who’s been my worst nightmare during highschool.

“Oh, the nerd has grown some balls. Fantastic. Happy reunion!”

Bellamy stays in front of me and I’m more than grateful for that, because that guy brings memories back, I’d like to forget.

I can feel my heartrate increasing.
“Unlike you, Wallace, I didn’t have to punch a girl to feel like a man.” Bellamy answers, his voice tense and angry.

“Little Miss Perfect found a bodyguard, hm?” Cage replies, eyeing me up and down in a disgusting way. “I wonder, how you got this shitty TV show. Slept your way up there? It’s sad, I never got to fuck.”

BAM!

Out of nowhere – literally – a fist collides with Cages jaw, sending him to the ground in the blink of an eye.

“YOU Bitch!” He screams, while I turn around to face… Lexa.

Within one second, everyone’s eyes are on us and the guy on the floor, while mine are on her – only her.

She shakes her hand, her face cold and hard. Her evergreen eyes are boiling with anger and fury.

Before I’m processing the events, Lincoln and a few other guys drag Cage out of the room and Lexa buries her hand in some ice by the bar.

Suddenly, I’m left alone with her – Bellamy and the rest of the people seem to disappear into the great nothing. Everyone in this room is well aware of the things that happened between us.

Fuck.

Lexa isn’t even looking at me, but I am looking at her, now that she's closer. She's looking tired, worn out. No makeup could hide the dark bags beneath her eyes and no smile could hide the sadness in her eyes.

“Thank you.” I say quietly, as I was afraid to scare her away. Maybe I am.

My voice seems to startle her, like she momentarily forgot I was here.

Then her eyes meet mine and it’s all back.

The pain, the memories, the feelings. I can see it right there in her eyes and I feel like I'm sucked into them and there’s no way of fighting it.

Lexa looks like I remember her and at the same time she’s completely different. I can see the war raging in her eyes, I can feel the hurt she tries to hide. And it stings somewhere in my heart.

Then she pulls her hand out of the ice, nods once, her facial expression almost stoic and completely unreadable, before she suddenly reaches out to tuck a loose strain of hair behind my ear, smiling sadly.

Her cold fingertips brush my earlobe for a tiny little moment and the simple touch sends a tingling sensation through my whole body.

I forget to breathe and blink for a split second and just like that, she’s gone.

Gone, like she's never been real.

And just like that, I feel old wounds being ripped open again.
What we had has never been real, has it? It couldn’t be. It felt too real, too good and too powerful.

I’m helpless, when it comes to her. And I hate it. Everything about it, about her. No, I don’t. But I wish, I could, though.

Fuck.

FUCK!

How could I let this happen? How can my stupid heart even think about letting her back under my skin again? Doesn’t it remember the last time? Has it forgotten all the pain she caused me?

“Clarke?” Ravens worried voice is the last drop it needs, to let my eyes water.

Almost immediately she wraps her arms around me and holds me close, her familiar warmth and scent calming me down a little, while I feel overwhelmed with emotions.

“Can we… go home? I just… I can’t…”

“Sure. Come on, let’s go.” She says and takes me by the hand to guide me through the people.

Lots of them ask for selfies, pad my shoulder and call my name. I don’t see or hear them. But I feel Ravens hand grounding me and right now that’s all I need.

-----

We sit in the rental car in the underground car park of the hotel Raven booked us for the night. This way, we won’t bother my Mom and Aden with paparazzi.

We’ve been sitting here in silence a while, because of two reasons. One: I can pretend to be anyone for a while. And two: I’m not able to move right now.

It’s crazy. I’m fucking crazy.

Ten years and one simple look into her eyes makes me feel like I’m eighteen again and she just broke my heart. I shouldn’t feel like it. I’m happy, right?

“Can’t believe she punched him.” Raven announces after a while. I can hear the content smile in her voice.

“Me neither.”

“That’s been one hell of a punch.”

I nod.

“Have you two talked?”

“She didn’t even say a word to me. She just nodded and… Next second she was gone.”

“Yes, I saw that. I overheard Lincoln and Octavia arguing earlier, she seemed to have a panic attack in the schools bathroom. Maybe that’s why she left?”

I don’t want to care. I don’t want to think or worry about her. But I do and it’s driving me nuts. This was supposed to be a fun night, where I could meet my friends and laugh about happy memories.
She ruined it. She ruined me.

Shit, when did I become this nervous wreck again?

“Can we get drunk tonight and watch some shitty tv show and forget everything that happened?” I ask.

“Sounds like a plan.”

“Thank you.”

“Don’t ever mention it.”

“But I feel like I’m holding you back all the time. NASA and now the evening. You’re always sacrificing something for me, Ray. It isn’t right.”

Raven grabs my hand and squeezes it. “Don’t ever think that. I gave up NASA for a real life with friends and family. I didn’t give it up for you, okay? It was my choice and I never regretted it.” She says.

“But.”

“No. Clarke, I love you. It’s been no sacrifice for me. I’d do it again a hundred times.” She continues, her dark eyes focused on my face. “And this evening? It’s been a shitty reunion. Everybody acted like a fucking bootlicking minion, it’s ridiculous. They didn’t even know our names back then.”

She’s right about that. Fucking hypocrites.

Raven wipes a few stray tears on my cheeks away with her thumb, smiling reassuring. “So, stop crying. Everything’s going to be okay.”

“Love you too.”

“Don’t let Niylah hear that, she might get jealous.” She replies and chuckles relaxed.

She always has this way to make me smile. It’s one of the things I love about her the most. She’s the best person I know – the smartest, the funniest, the most loving and gentle human being. A world without Raven Reyes would be a really sad one.

So I smile, of course I do. Because why not?

“There it is! My favorite smile in the world. Now let’s get out of here and order something really expensive from the room service, shall we?”

“Can we stay here five more minutes?”

“Sure thing. By the way, when the hell did cute little nerd Bellamy turn into that handsome guy? Have you seen his shoulders and arms? I bet, he’s got abs now. I crave for abs.”

“Uhh, Ray, gross.”

“What? He’s hot now.”

Yeah, I guess, he is.
And I know, he’s got a crush on her since forever – but since when does she return it?
Chapter 8 - Lexa.

Chapter Notes

We learn, who broke up with who :)  

hope you like it!

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

Punching Cage Wallace was – hands down – one of the best things I’ve done in my life.

Usually, I’m not one for violence, but this was long overdue. Ten and more years. He had it coming and he deserved it. Besides, he’s still walking and he’s got no broken bone, even though I’d like to change that.

My knuckles hurt a little, but it’s nothing a little ice can’t change.

I’ve left Clarke standing there, before my feelings got the best of me – because being close to her and at the same time not being close… It’s still killing me.

I’ve called a cab and went to my favorite bar downtown, to grab a decent drink. Mostly to kill some time and clear my head, before I go home.

Bellamys name flashes over my phones screen, he’s trying to call me, but I don’t answer. I’m too shaken and stirred up.

My fingertips burn where I touched her skin. Why did I do that? I’ve crossed a line, I know it. It just felt so… familiar, to be close to her. There was this overwhelming sadness in her eyes and I just wanted to ease it.

I down my drink and throw some cash on the counter, before I walk home. It isn’t far from here, so only fifteen minutes later, just a few minutes after midnight, I’ve reached my destination.

“Sis, I didn’t expect you to be home that-”

I interrupt Anya’s surprised speech, as I walk through the living room, without saying anything. I’m aiming for the freezer and pull out some ice for my hand.

“Please, tell me you didn’t punch Raven.” She says, slightly annoyed but too casual to be taken seriously.

She sounds, like I go around and punch people for fun.

I shake my head.

“Clarke?” Anya’s eyes widen with horror.

“No.”
She visibly relaxes. “Then who’s the lucky one?”

“Cage Wallace.”

“The bastard who hit-”

“Yes.”

“What did he do?”

I’m not even sure. I just saw Clarkes face full of fear and saw red.

My heart’s beating faster, just when I think about that asshole. He’s been so close to hurting her again, but I couldn’t let it happen. Not this time.

My eyes look around in search for my notepad and a pen, because I’m not able to tell her the story right now, but Anya’s faster. She hands it over and waits impatiently, while I write down my answer.

“He harassed and scared her. And I let you know, that I had a panic attack. But Lincoln helped me and I’m fine, so don’t worry.”

“A panic attack? You’re not fine, Lex, you-”

“Don’t.” I whisper sharply and scribble down a few more words. “Not this nickname, please.”

“Sorry. But still, a panic attack? Shit, you should’ve called me!”

“No, it’s okay. Seeing her was a bit overwhelming, but I’m okay now.”

Or at least it’s bearable.

“I’m sorry.” She says again. “I thought it would be good to see her, to get closure. I’ve had no idea how much it could bring back for you.”

I shake my head. “It was good. And I finally got to punch Wallace, so... It was great, actually.”

“Stop the sarcasm. I know you.”

“I’m really okay, promise. I’m gonna go to bed now. Sweet dreams, big sister.”

“Okay. I love you.” She replies, but there’s still this worried expression on her face, she’s been having for the last year. I hate to do this to her.

“Love you too.” I whisper and try to smile.

-----

Lying in bed, my thoughts wander back to the small moment I shared with Clarke alone today by the bar.

I should’ve said something – wrote something down. She must think I’m a creep or mentally damaged. Not that it matters, right? We aren’t friends. We’ve never been. We went straight from ignoring to dating and back. Maybe that’s the reason, why it went wrong in the first place?

No, it isn’t. I’m the reason.

And I remember every second like it’s been yesterday.
Ten years before…

Clarke dragged me into the girl’s bathroom, without looking at me.

I know, I’ve fucked up. I should’ve called her back, should’ve shared my thoughts, should’ve been there for her like I was supposed to. Honestly, I’m surprised she didn’t come over for the last days. But on the other hand, I asked for time and space and she gave it to me, because she loves me.

That’s what she does – her people are her first priority. I should’ve known.

And why didn’t she tell me, she’d come back to school today?

“I need to hear, that we will make it, Lexa.” She says without beating around the bush. Her ocean blue eyes are overflowing with emotion – anger mostly, but there’s although sadness and fear. There are dark bags beneath her eyes and she didn’t even bother with covering them up. It’s breaking my heart to see her like that and to know, that I caused it.

And I try not to feel hurt by the use of my name instead of my nickname. I’ve got no right to.

“Please.” She continues, her voice trembling scared. “I need to know, that you don’t think it’s true what they say. Tell me, we are going to be okay. You promised, remember? Please.”

The words are out, before I know it. “I... I can’t. I’m sorry.” I want to them back the second, they’ve left my lips, because I can see my words clouding her eyes, the hope fading and pain taking over.

I never meant to hurt her like this. It’s just... I can’t lie to her either. And it’s the truth, right now I'm so confused and lost and...

But it’s too late.

I can see it happening, right in front of me.

I can see Clarkes heart shattering into a million pieces, right there in the school’s bathroom, and mine’s shattering right with hers.

Clarke swallows her tears and I know she’s fighting them, because she’s too proud to cry in front of me. “Then I guess, that’s it.” She whispers.

What?

No. No! NO!

“Please, Clarke, wait-”

She's already gone.

And somehow I know, that she’s too far gone to catch her.

-----

I know, what I did to her. I would see it every day for the last weeks of our schoolyear.

In the way she wouldn't look at me. She changed directions, even if it meant she would be late for her class. She would even take detention.
I saw it in the way Clarke switched her classes or never came to the cafeteria again.

She didn’t smile.

She didn’t laugh.

She didn’t climb out of her window to watch the stars.

She didn’t even draw anymore.

I would watch her getting shoved against her locker by Cage Wallace and his friends again, like they did before. I wouldn’t do a thing about it.

One time I tried to help her up, but she slapped away my hand, disgust raging in her eyes. “Stay away from me.” She hissed.

So I kept my distance.

I stayed away from her, even after the truth about the accident was revealed. Even, when Cage slapped her one day, because she fought back. I wanted to run over and beat the shit out of him.

But I didn’t. And god, I hated myself for that.

That’s one of the reasons, why I punched him today at the reunion.

What I didn’t know back then was, that those words would be the last, Clarke would speak to me for ten years. Ten fucking years full of regret.

I roll from one side to the other, only to roll back again, because I can’t lie on my right side. But tossing and turning isn’t working at all, so I get up and decide to go for a run.

It’s almost half past four in the morning and the horizon is starting to change its colors. I love this time of the day – the atmosphere, the clear and cool air, the silence. It so peaceful.

After I’ve been flown back to the States and after I successfully battled my infections and the fever, I had to go to rehab for a while. There was this park behind the building, I used to go to in the mornings.

Coming home was hard because of so many things. Being gone for almost a year and living in the desert made everything feel foreign.

But the things I had seen, did and endured over there, they made every good and peaceful moment feel unreal, almost wrong in some way. I’ve been on alert for most of the time, as if my body was waiting for something bad to happen.

Sitting on a bench in a park instead of going a mission at five in the morning in some deserted country was my way of arriving home.

Some native tribes believe, that your soul needs to catch up with your body after a travel. I’ve never found a better description. Sometimes it still feels like my soul hasn’t found my body yet.

My inner clock works perfect. Getting up at four thirty in the morning, going on a run only five minutes later. Showering and getting ready an hour later. Breakfast not later than six. It’s hard to fall out of one’s routines, I guess.

I take my favorite route down to the river and up a hill, from where you have a fantastic view over
Polis.

I can still feel the sharp pain in my shoulder, but I've decided to work against it. Not running was driving me crazy, because I've been doing it for fifteen years now and it’s the only thing that clears my head. And maybe it’s the pain that keeps me sane?

When I return home, a familiar person is sitting on the porch of Anya’s house, a big backpack is lying at her feet. I’m surprised – a lot – but honestly? In the best way possible.

I almost forgot, how it feels to miss someone.

“Sergeant Woods.” She salutes, standing up, after I’ve closed the garden gate. Her expression is serious, but mostly unreadable.

Chapter End Notes

Speculations on our new character?

thoughts? opinions? questions? :)

thanks for reading! <3
Chapter 9 - Lexa.

Chapter Notes

soooo...
This chapter is one of my favorites! And it's pretty long, but I'm sure, you won't mind ;)
Happy Valentines day!
I'd be happy to hear your thoughts on this! And they'll meet soon, I promise!!

Love,
LJT.

... 

“Sergeant Rivers.” I greet her with the same gesture, but with a playful smile on my lips, because it’s so damn good to see her here. Home. Safe.

“You look like shit.” She states.

I roll my eyes and open my arm(s) for her.

“Nope.” She says, shaking her head, making a disgusted face. “Not happening! No way, you’re sweaty and-”

I've already wrapped her in a tight embrace.

“It’s so good to see you.” I whisper quietly.

When we part, Luna smiles – clearly proud, that she managed to surprise me.

I grab her backpack with my good hand and gesticulate her to follow me inside. Before doing anything else, I'm grabbing a pen and a piece of paper, while she gets down on her knees to greet my dogs.

“Hey you two! You must be Paul then, hm? The one with the shoe kink?” She asks rhetorically, while burying her hands in his short fur. “Gotta say, I’m a fan of yours, buddy. God, Lexa, they’re too cute!”

I hand her my first question. “How did you know someone would be up this early?”

First things first, right?

“I’ve served four years by your side. I should know your routine by now, don’t you think?” She retorts with a wide grin.

Point for her. I continue writing.

“Did you have breakfast? Why didn’t you tell me, you’d be coming? I would’ve picked you up!
When did you get home? How long are you staying?”

“Slow down. No, I haven’t. If you have some decent coffee, I’ll be happy. I’m still not a morning
person.” She answers with a smirk on her face and hops onto the kitchen surface, from where she can watch me running around the kitchen.

I tend to start busying my hand(s), when I can’t process my emotions. Something I’ve picked up during my time in the military. The only difference between then and today is, I’m making coffee for Luna instead of cleaning my gun.

That’s, what I call progress.

“And the point of a surprise is to not tell the person you’re planning to surprise, you know? My plane landed about… three hours ago? I figured, you might get some sleep. And I’m staying for good.”

I stop in the middle of my movements. “Are you for real?”

Surprise got the best of me and I didn’t even notice I was talking, not only whispering, before Luna raises her eyebrows and comments the action.

“Holy shit, she’s speaking!” She exclaims enthusiastic and now it’s her turn to hug me. “Oh my god, Lex, that’s great!”

Is it?

I didn’t think about it and the words came freely.

“Say something.”

I take a few deep breaths, before I try again. “I… I don’t know…” Shit, it’s really working.” I can make a sound. Like an actual sound one can hear.

“Are you okay?” Luna asks, a frown on her face. “You seem a bit pale.”

“I’m…” Overwhelmed? Scared? Emotionally fucked up? My eyes burn, like I’m about to cry every second, but I close them and swallow the mixed emotions. I shouldn’t cry about finding my voice again.

I’ve just been so… scared to try and fail, because I don’t do well with failures and I guess, the panic attacks don’t help my case.

“It’s okay. You can go back to writing, if it’s a bit too much right now. Either way, where were we? Ah, yeah, the staying-thing. I’ve been officially released last week. No uniforms anymore. I’m done.”

The thing I love the most about her is, that she doesn’t pressure me into doing anything. She’s been patient with me this whole time, always writing long letters and even longer mails, whenever she could. She didn’t pressure me into talking or opening up about the things that happened to me. She acts normal around me, like nothing’s changed at all and… maybe it hasn’t.

“That’s great.” I say softly, but it’s not some soundless whisper. It’s a sentence with actual, spoken words.

“Yes, it is. So… I was wondering, if I could crash here a few days? If that’s possible? I’m already looking for a job and a place to stay.”

“Anya won’t mind.” And here I go again, talking like it’s nothing special.

“Yeah?”
I nod and hand her a cup of coffee, while I take in her face. The small scar from her left temple to her left earlobe, which is a constant reminder of the last tour we shared, is barely visible anymore.

“Do you still dream about it?” I ask, before I can stop myself.

Luna is surprised by the question, but she seems to be okay with it. “Every night.”

“What do you see?”

“Honestly?”

Another nod.

Maybe I can talk with her, because she was there. Because she found and saved me. We share a history and the connection between us is deeply rooted.

“You.” She answers unusually quiet after she spent a few seconds staring into her cup of coffee.

“Me?”

“Yes. I mean, you were lying on the floor of that cell, looking so lifeless and… I… I thought you were dead.” She says, her voice breaks a little at the end of the sentence. Her eyes look sad and pained at the memory. “I still feel guilty, you know? Of course, I do.”

“Luna, you saved me. Just like you promised.”

“You’ve been saying that for the last year, but it doesn’t change how I’m feeling. I should’ve known it was a trap. You paid a terrible price for my mistake.”

“I’m okay now.” I tell her and squeeze her hand, before I join her on the hard kitchen surface. I know, I can’t take away the guilt she feels, even if I want to, because it’s her emotion and only she can learn to accept the truth.

And the truth is: I don’t blame her. I never have. I didn’t notice the enemy’s trap either. No one can be blamed. The risk is part of the job.

“And your arm? It’s not okay.”

“It will be. Therapy is working.”

She sighs.

We sit in silence for a few minutes and she slowly drinks her coffee, while we watch Paul and Ellie chasing each other around the table, because Paul stole Ellie’s ball once more. Hopefully they don’t wake up the rest of the house.

“What do you dream about?” She asks suddenly – her tone careful, but direct.

“Pain. Fear. But mostly memories I’ve been replaying over and over, while I was… It’s strange, you know, the memories, that kept me going over there, are the ones, that pain me the most now.”

Luna nods understanding, before she looks at me again and smiles. “You know, that was more than one sentence.”

“It was.” I reply, a little lost in thoughts, but grateful for the change of topics. “How are the others?”
“They’re good. Ryder retired, too. Artigas returned to the states with me, he’s going to train a new unit. Roan stayed for another tour. He said, he’s got nothing else.”

Roan Queen. I smile, while I think about him. He’s one hell of a fighter. Of course he stayed.

“Lincoln’s here in Polis, too.” I tell her.

“Yeah? We could go on a drink some time, catch up, exchange stories and stuff. Would be cool, don’t you think?”

I chuckle. “If his girlfriend lets him go out with me, then sure.”

“What’s got his girl to do with that?”

“It’s Octavia. One of Clarkes friends.” I answer her question. She knows the whole story – how Clarke and I grew up hating each other for no reason, how we fell in love at the beginning of senior year, how her father died and how our relationship ended.

If you spend four years practically living together, you learn quite a lot about the other person. It’s unavoidable.

“Oh shit. It’s a small world, hm?”

I nod. Sometimes too small.

I think about the last time I’ve seen Luna in person. It was during the helicopter flight back to camp, before they patched me together as good as possible and flew me out of the country. She had that scared look in her eyes, but she held my hand and sang one of my favorite songs for me.

It’s been some time since that day. A lot has happened. But there’s still this familiar connection between us, build on trust, respect and mutual life saving.

“You said, you want to look for an apartment here?” I ask, as an idea pops up in my head. She’s got no family, no roots.

“Yeah?”

“Up for a roommate? Or three, so to say?”

Immediately her eyes light up and her beaming smile is answer enough. “Hell, yeah! Lexa, that’s a fucking amazing idea! Could’ve been mine!”

I swear, she swears too much.

I get of the kitchen surface and make myself a cup of coffee. A little bit of butter and some coconut oil and my breakfast is ready.

“Still that shit?”

“Yup.”

“You know, drinking coffee bulletproof doesn’t actually make you bulletproof? Just saying.”

I roll my eyes and take a sip. What a bad joke…

“So, what’s the plan for today?” Her grin gives her away.
“Umm. It’s Saturday, so I’m going to work to in the morning and then I’m free to do whatever you’re planning.”

I don’t mention the lake house invitation. Bellamy will be disappointed, but I’m sure as hell not going to walk into the lion’s den. I’m feeling better now, but definitely not good enough for a weekend with those people.

“Let’s just say, there’s a lot of alcohol, music and dancing involved. How does that sound?”

I remember an evening after a 48 hours tour, when we sat around a table – covered in dust, sweat soaked, tired and worn out. Luna said, she needs a drink and Roan answered, that we’re out of alcohol. Everybody groaned. And then we made the deal to go celebrate and drink, as soon as we’ve set foot on north American ground.

“Exactly like the plan we had for our retirement?”

“Well.” She answers, still grinning. “That’s because it is.”

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Oh, for god’s sake.

I groan, as I see the people waiting outside of the club, Luna dragged me to.

It’s not really late and we had a great day, but when she said drinking and having fun, this wasn’t what I pictured. I should’ve.

“What?” She asks innocently.

I shake my head vehemently. I’m not going in there. The girls waiting in line are barely old enough to drink alcohol and they’re looking like they’re part of some… horizontal industry.

And I haven’t been out since I’ve returned and even before, partying wasn’t exactly my first choice. I had a girlfriend and most of the time only a few days, before I had to go back, so… Let’s just say, I was distracted with other things.

Being close to people is hard. Especially, if I don’t know them. A handshake gave me a panic attack on my first day at the animal shelter. But a crowded room? I haven’t exactly thought about the consequences.

“Hey, you promised!” Luna complains. “I just came back from war, don’t you think I deserve to get to choose?”

“No.” I whisper, shaking my head and desperately trying to think about something else.

I take a step back, pulling my hand out of Lunas.

“Lex-” She stops herself, as soon as she lays eyes on my face. “Hey, you okay?”

I gulp, before I try to get a hold of myself again. It takes everything in me to manage a whisper. “I… I can’t.”
“Of course. I’m sorry. God, I’m so sorry, I didn’t-”

“You didn’t know.”

Luna carefully wraps her arms around me and draws soothing circles on my back for a short moment, before she pulls back and grabs my hand again. “Let’s just go for a walk, before we call a cab, shall we?”

I nod.

I don’t know, why my body reacts the way it does. The reunion scared me, but it seems, other fears were stronger yesterday. And the people weren’t exactly close. It’s been a big room and I’ve arrived early and left after a short time. Not even half of my classmates were there yet.

Maybe I am emotionally messed up for good.

Luna’s hand keeps me grounded and after a few minutes of silently walking, I’m okay again.

“Thank you.”

“Don’t mention it. I should’ve thought about it.” She answers gently.

I shake my head, but I’m not ready to talk again, so we just keep on walking, until we reach a bench beneath a streetlamp.

“You lied to me.” Luna states, after we’ve sat down.

I don’t know, what she’s talking about, so I wait for her to go on.

“You said, you’re okay. But you clearly aren’t.” She continues frowning, her eyes focused on my face. “Lexa, you’ve been on the verge of a panic attack, before we even got there. And don’t even try to deny, that you haven’t been sleeping for a while now. I can see the dark bags beneath your eyes, you know? What’s going on in that beautiful head of yours?”

I didn’t lie. I mean, not exactly, right? Most of the time, I am okay. Not great, not good. Just… okay. A neutral feeling. A numb one.

I can feel my pulse rising, but it’s just Luna. I trust her with my life.

So I take a deep breath, and then another one, before I start talking. “I… I don’t know. I’ve got good days and bad days.” I answer slowly and quietly. “It’s just… Everything feels so… overwhelming. Like it’s overloading my nervous system?”

Luna waits patiently, while I try to sort my thoughts.

“After I’ve been discharged from rehab, I… I needed some time to arrive home. It’s been really hard to get adapted, you know?”

She nods. “I get what you mean. I’m feeling it too.”

“But I wasn’t just coming home from service this time. I came home from three weeks of torture and endless pain and fear of death.” I tell her, my words flowing fast and freely, before I can even think about them. “It’s been… different. Everyone tried to act as normal as possible, but… at the same time, they’ve been walking on eggshells around me. I could feel it. I can feel it.”

I keep my eyes open, even though I can’t bear the look in hers. But if I’d close them, I’d see some
things I’d rather forget about.

“I wasn’t myself. Maybe that’s why Cos ended it… I don’t know. I’m not resentful or anything. It’s just… I’m scared. Of everyone and everything. But it’s more… physical fear, then emotional. Because honestly, I’m feeling numb.” Dead.

I take some time to think about the words I just said. I’ve never thought about it that clearly before, but saying them loud made me realize, that they’re true. It’s so deliberating to finally speak about it. Like some weight is lifted of my shoulders. Maybe I should’ve listened to my therapist.

“Why did you go to the reunion?”

Good question.

I shrug. “To face my demons, I guess. Old ones, new ones. I ended up having a panic attack in the school’s bathroom, so… it didn’t work out the way it should’ve.”

“Could it not… have to do something with a certain blonde maybe?”

Oh.

“You can say her name, you know?”

Luna chuckles. “Can you?” She retorts.

“Yes?”

She raises her eyebrows.

“Yes, I can say her name. Clarke. See? Clarke Griffin. Not-”

“What?” Luna exclaims, making me jump in the process.

Jesus.

“You’re ex is Clarke Griffin?” She continues, but it seems to be a rhetorical question, so I don’t say anything. “How come you never mentioned that?! I love her show!”

“I know.” I tell her with a sigh.

Her mouth hangs open slightly and she’s too shocked to say anything for a few seconds, before collects herself again. “You should’ve told me that!”

I don’t like the tone of reproach in her voice. “Why? It doesn’t change anything. Besides, I’ve known her before all this… madness. And what she’s doing now is nothing more than a job in the entertaining business.”

Luna watches me carefully, as if she’s thinking about declaring me crazy, before she nods. “I’m sorry.”

“Don’t be.”

“Wow.” She exhales audible. “No I get, why you refused to watch the show with me or read the books. Because it’s hers.”

Well, I can’t exactly deny it. Though I’ve always wanted to, I never did. Quite hard, when your
friends and family are literally addicted, but I’ve managed. It just felt wrong. She didn’t want me in her life anymore, so it felt wrong to read or watch her work.

A few minutes pass in silence.

I can hear her thinking about the news she just learned. Should’ve kept it to myself. But on the other hand, if she lives here now, sooner or later she’d have learned about it anyway.

“You know, you should watch it.”

I sigh, a little annoyed. Of course she wouldn’t let it go.

“Why?”

“Because now, that I think of it, there’s this blonde, female lead character from space, who falls in love with this badass warrior chick. And this warrior happens to look similar to a certain Sergeant I know. Long, wavy, brown hair, green eyes. I mean, it happens in the… third season? But still. Quite a coincidence, don’t you think?”

I’m not sure, how to feel about her assumption. Maybe it’s a coincidence, but maybe it’s not. But why should she create a character similar to me?

“Can we change the topic? I’d rather talk about those three weeks, than her.”

Okay, that’s a lie. I won’t talk about it, not now, not ever, but she should get, that this whole Clarke-related theme is a really disliked subject.

“Then let’s talk. Anya said, you haven’t yet. I’m a good listener.”

“There’s nothing to talk about. Just… let it go, okay?”

“A wound can only heal, when the bullet’s out, you know? That’s how it works.” She says and tries to smile, but soon enough her face saddens and she sighs in defeat.

Luna is good at hiding feelings – somehow, she reminds of Raven, Clarkes best friend. Both can smile, while they feel like crying. So I know, that there’s a speech following, probably a longer one.

“Listen, Lex, no pressure. I’m not going to force you and if you want that, I’m not going to mention it ever again, but… believe me, I know what I’m talking about. I’ve been seeing a therapist ever since… the tour. It’s hard to open up, when you’ve been drilled to do your job over there, to suck it up and keep going, because that’s what we’ve learned. We learned to handle the worst situations.”

I can feel the weight in her words, as she speaks. Her hands are fiddling with the sleeve of her jacket, while she stares at the floor.

“We’re trained for everything, for fights, for death. It’s who we are. But what happened to you? That wasn’t part of our job. It’s a risk we all agreed to take, but… We all try to ignore it. So, it’s okay to break, Lex. It’s okay to be broken. And it’s okay, to not handle it on your own. I’m here for you. We take on our fights together, as a unit.”

She offers her hand and after a few seconds of hesitation, I take it.

“I… I need some time.” I whisper. “Can you give that to me?”

“Of course.”
I smile relieved. “Thank you, Luna. You’ve got no idea, how good it feels, to have you here.”

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Groaning, I try and fail to roll onto my back. Luna’s cuddled against my back – or more like, lying on top of me – and she stole my blanket.

Nothing’s changed, I see.

“Luna, move.”

I get a grumble for an answer, but she rolls off of me.

I can’t remember, how we ended up in the same bed, but I guess, it could be connected to the whisky and the tequila shots we took after our heart to heart conversation.

My head pounds. I’ve almost forgotten, how a hangover feels.

_Fuck my life._

“Look, who’s finally awake.” Anya’s voice comes from somewhere near.

I blink a few times, before I decide it’s safe to open my eyes. My sister’s sitting next to me, holding a glass of water and an Advil for me. I take both gratefully. She even closed the curtains to stop the sunlight from killing me. She’s literally the best.

“I’ve put you into the same bed, so it’s been easier to care for you two. Really, did you have to get that drunk? Nyko had to carry that lightweight over there.” She explains, before I can ask.

“I’m not a lightweight.” Luna mumbles.

“You are.” I confirm.

“Am not.”

“Stop arguing and take that.” Anya hands her another pill and a glass of water and watches, as the soldier next to me takes both.

“Oh fuck. My head.”

“Yeah, that happens, when you drink too much.”

I chuckle quietly, but it’s an action I come to regret the same second. Oh shit, I won’t ever drink again. I swear!

“How late is it?” I mumble quietly, while massaging my temples.

“About two. But that’s not why I woke you guys. I did, because we’ve got a situation.”

The last time we had “a situation” was, when Anya organized a family skype date and announced, that she’s pregnant. The time before that was, when she told us, she’s engaged to Nyko.

So of course, I’m both curious and wary.

Luna senses the change in my emotions and sits up slowly, while I do the same.

“Spill.”
“Don’t you want to take a shower first? You look like shit.”

“Anya.”

She sighs. “Okay. Well. Ehm. Abby called Mum and after some back and forth, they decided on a proper family dinner with all of us, before Clarke and Raven head back. Mom wants us to be there. All of us.”

*Yeah, that’s definitely a situation.*

*Fuck my life.*

“But Clarke doesn’t want that.” I tell her.

Anya’s surprised about me talking with Luna next to us, but she doesn’t comment on that. “Yes, she does. She explicitly said, she’s okay with that.”

*Oh.*

“But are you? Okay with that, I mean?”

No?

Or yes?

I don’t know. Meeting her at the reunion was one thing. But sitting around a table for a whole evening? Talking? Being close to her?

“I’m not sure.”

“We’ll be there with you.” Luna says and squeezes my hand.

“It’s ridiculous, isn’t it? She’s my ex, not a monster.” I say after debating with myself for a few seconds.

I’m going to face her. How bad can it be, right? Awkward, okay. But a lot of things in life feel awkward, so that’s not really an argument.

“Feelings aren’t ridiculous, Lexa. They’re human.” Anya answers.

“Yeah, whatever. Tell Mum, we’ll be there.”

Luna sighs dramatically and lays back down. “Can I sleep some more now?”

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Dinner with the Griffins has always been really, really big. Even when we were supposed to have a movie night, Jake and Abby made a big fuzz about it. Either with setting a screen up in the backyard, games, loud music or making pizza themselves, they don’t do normal dinners.

It’s just not in their blood.

So I can imagine, that Abby does the same today – now, that her “long lost” daughter and Raven are back in town for a couple of days.

Luna is excited – or should I say, she’s over the moon?
I’m unsure about my feelings. A part of me is curious, another one is scared and another one tells me to run as fast as possible. And then there’s the last part of me, a really tiny one, which tries desperately to ignore the feelings I get, whenever I think about the blonde woman.

Yup, gotta say, I’m feeling great. Not.

But: I’ve decided to fetch my old soldier-self for this evening. The stoic, disciplined, cool, logic version of myself, strictly focused on the task. My task today? Survive without further panic attacks.

Shouldn’t be that hard, right?

I’ve survived war.

Except, that it’s a whole evening with Clarke. The girl, who told me to “stay the fuck out of her life”, if I might quote, and who ran off to Europe right after just to avoid going to the same college.

Yay. Fuck my life.

But it’s helping, that Luna will be there. Firstly, because she’s really good at interpreting what I want to say. And secondly, because she makes channeling my soldier-self a lot easier.

“Ready?”

“As ready as I’ll ever be, I guess.” I whisper, catching my reflection in the mirror. Nervous me can’t speak any louder, it seems. But at least I am still speaking, so that’s a progress.

“If you need an exit, just tell me. I’m good at making up stories.”

“I remember.” I answer sarcastically.

“Hey!”

“Sorry. Let’s go.”

“I’m not the one, who wasn’t ready on time.”

“No? Where’s your jacket?”

“Umm.”

I roll my eyes, take a deep breath and grab my keys.

I’ve got this.
hey guys!
so, i know, it isn't Wednesday or Sunday - but someone asked me to upload another chapter today.

here it is, C. hope you like it ;)

Next one will be the first part of their second meeting - a really important one on both sides.
See you Sunday for this one - or tomorrow for "When I met green and you met blue".

Love,
LJT.
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“Guys, no pictures of this evening online, okay? Please.”

“Party pooper.” Octavia says.

“Lame!” Jasper exclaims.

“Necessary.” Raven retorts.

“Of course.” Bellamy declares, smiling reassuring.

“Sure thing, Griffin. Planning on getting drunk?” Murphy answers. Who the hell did invite him by the way?

“Then let’s get this thing started, shall we?” Raven continues, ignoring his question like I am.
“Where’s the alcohol?”

And that’s, how the evening starts.

I should’ve known, what I signed up for, but frankly, I forgot. Maybe, because I wanted to.

But within an hour, everybody is buzzed and laughing, and it feels… odd.

I’m a responsible person and I haven’t got much free time over the last few years, so getting drunk and partying with my friends from highschool wasn’t exactly a regular thing. A few of them visited, of course, but it hasn’t felt like this. Carefree. Relaxed.

Though I’m aware, that one person is missing.

Around midnight I walk down to the water and sit down on a bench to catch some air and cool off a little. Moon light dances across the water surface and my fingers itch to draw the scenery, but I haven’t drawn in a long, long time.
I’ve had a few shots too many, but I’ve never known my limit. In contrast to Raven, who get’s all annoyingly happy and giggly – I tend to get philosophical. Wondering about life and stuff. And after that, I tend to get sad and lonely, so I pull out my phone and text my girlfriend. Or whatever Niylah is.

Me: hey babe u awake?

Niylah: now, yes. No, just kidding. How’s the party?

Me: it’s strange. Why didn’t you come with us?

Niylah: we talked about that, Clarke. Doing highschool reunions is some serious commitment.

Me: yeah and ur just doing one day at a time, got it

Niylah: where’s that coming from all of the sudden?

Me: I don’t want to fight. :( 

Niylah: we’re not fighting. I’m just curious.

Me: I don’t know. Thinking about life.
Me: I miss u
Me: a lot
Me: a lot a lot

Niylah: are you drunk?

Me: Maybe a little?

Niylah: ah, now I know. :D
Niylah: well, you should get some fresh air and some water. Talk tomorrow?

Me: leaving me alone?

Niylah: enjoy the party, babe <3

Suddenly I’m sober, after this short conversation.

I know, I shouldn’t text, when I had a few drinks, but Niylah makes things complicated, when she’s just “living each day” and crap.

For me, it’s not enough. Not anymore.

I haven’t thought about what we are in the past, because I didn’t feel the need to. But coming home, where everyone seems to be happy in their relationship or is getting married, makes me realize, that I’m not happy the way it is.

I want what they have.

I’ve always wanted that. And when you’ve tasted this life, when you’ve caught a glimpse of it, you always want to go back to that.

Lexa ruined it all for me. She ruined songs and memories, she ruined feeling home, she ruined
happiness and especially love.

Damn.

I should definitely drink more. A lot more.

“Mind, if I join you?” Bellamys deep voice startles me.

“Shit, Bell! Give a girl some warning, before you sneak up on her!”

A chuckle. “Sorry.” He sits down next to me, holding a bottle of wine in his hand. “Remember this one?”

“Is that…?” I can’t even finish the sentence. I remember the day I stole the bottle out of my dads’ wine cellar and we made the promise, to drink it, when I returned home after my year in Europe. I didn’t return, at least not for long enough to actually drink it.

“Yup. It’s our bottle. You said, we’d drink it, when you return, but… you never did. Might as well drink it now, right?”

For a moment, I’m tempted.

But then I hesitate. Because I haven’t returned home – yet. And it feels wrong. Everything feels wrong all of the sudden.

“No.” I tell him, ignoring the dull feeling in my stomach.

“No?”

“Keep it. I… I don’t know, but… Keep it, please?”

He stares at me for a few seconds, unmoving. Then a smile appears on his face and he pulls two bottles of beer out of his jacket, handing me one. “Right choice. I knew it.”

“Knew what?”

“That you’re still you. The romantic, optimistic and positive girl with all those dreams. About a garden with some old trees and a house with a rocking chair on the porch. About coming home to someone you love. Kids. Dogs. The whole package.”

The following sigh is heavy, filled with weariness and mental exhaustion.

I want to be that girl. I really do. So desperately, that I can’t find the strength to fight the burning tears.

“I’m not sure, if I ever get that. In case you haven’t noticed, my life has been pretty much turned upside down.” I angrily wipe the tears away.

“Don’t do that.”

“What?”

“Hide behind humor and sarcasm.” He states, his dark brown eyes fixated on mine, until it feels a little awkward and I turn away. “Tell me, what’s going on in that talented head of yours?”

“I…”
What? There are so many things on my mind.

Bellamy waits patiently, occasionally sipping from his beer, while he keeps staring at the lake.

I take in his features. He’s wearing a beard now, which surprisingly suits him. But there are still the same freckles on his nose and there’s still this curious sparkling in his eyes. Out of all the people in my life, he’s changed the least.

And that alone is reason enough for me to be happy about the decision to come here. Because I needed my oldest and best friend.

“I’m not sure, if… If my life is going the way it should. The way I want it to.” I finally tell him, contemplating every word, before I say it.

Silence.

“Isn’t it arrogant to think like that? I mean, I’ve been living the dream for years now.” I continue. “I’ve got everything. I have it all.”

“Except the one thing you always wanted.” He finishes my thought.

“Yeah.”

“I don’t know, if that helps you anyhow, but… You used to have a great instinct.”

“Are you saying, I don’t anymore?”

He shakes his head. “No. What I’m saying is, somewhere along the way you stopped listening to it. Maybe that’s why you’re feeling lost.” He answers, shrugging. “And maybe it’s something you should think about. Take some time off and see, where it leads you.”

“I can’t just take some time off. We’re in the middle of shooting.” I’m reasonable once again, but that’s what being a grown up is about, isn’t it?

“It’s your show.”

“Yes, but-”

“Clarke. Stop listening to your head for once and feel it. You know, my way of life isn’t that bad. Listening to your heart pays off. If I’d have followed my head, I’d sit in some lab all day and I wouldn’t be happy.”

“If you’d have listened to heart, you’d have asked Raven out in highschool.” I state, but I do know, what he tries to tell me. It’s just the perfect transition to a lighter topic.

“True. But I was scared back then.”

“Only back then? She’s single, you know?”

Bellamy blushes a little – I can tell thanks to the moonlight lighting up his face. “Don’t change the subject by trying to set me up.”

“Don’t pretend, you’re not still pining over her.”

“I’m not pining over her!”
“Over who?” Raven asks.

“Nobody.” He grumbles, shooting daggers in my direction.

“My call to get another beer. Ray, would you keep him some company? I’ll be right back.”

I won’t.

But it’s a good excuse to leave. And I’ve seen the look in Ravens eyes, when she set eyes on him at the reunion, even though I was pretty distracted myself. She never looked at him the way she did yesterday – or technically the day before. I guess, good things their take time sometimes.

I make my way back to the others, smiling. They’re dancing and laughing and I lean in the doorframe to watch them for a while.

I’ve missed it. This. Them. The whole package.

It’s really interesting, how your brain can manipulate your thoughts. How you can talk yourself into believing certain things – like being happy. But the longer I think about it, I’ve missed too much over the last years. Not just my friends and the carefreeness, the laughter. But my family and my home too.

Don’t get me wrong, I love my life. The stories, the fact that I get to share them with so many people out there. I am content. But I could be happy, too. If I wouldn’t have shut down this part of me.

Drunk me is annoyingly melancholic.

And honest, too?

----

We arrive back home in the early afternoon, slightly hung-over in Ravens case. She’s smiling, but I pretend not to notice. She’ll talk about it, when she’s ready.

“Hey honey!” Mom greets me and pulls me into a hug.

“Hi mom.”

“You look good.” She kind of sounds surprised.

“Thanks?”

“Listen, I’m going to say it straight. Becca and I thought about another dinner, before you two leave again. Maybe the whole family? Anya’s got this cute little boy, I’m sure, you’d like to meet him?”

_Do I now?_ I'm not exactly a kids-person.

“Yes, why not.” I hear myself say and immediately feel the urge to kick myself.

“Oh great! Just like old times!”

Except it’s not. It never will be. But it’s time for a fresh start.

“Will Lexa come too?”
Raven and Mom share a look, that doesn’t go unnoticed by me.

“We haven’t talked about it yet. We know, it’s… complicated.”

“I invite her. I’m going to be okay. It’s time to move on.” I say, before I can change my mind again. Despite that, I’m curious about her – can’t help it. Ten years are a whole lot time and I’ve thought about it the rest of the previous night.

It’s time for forgiveness, even though she probably won’t need it. But I do.

“Are you sure?”

“Yes. We’ll do a dinner just like old times.”

Moms smile is bright and gentle, but although proud. “Alright. I’ll call Becs.”

“Okay. I’ll freshen up and then I’ll come help you, okay?”

“Don’t worry about it, I’ve got this.”

And there she goes, completely in her element.

-----

Raven lies on my bed, when I get out of the bathroom after I’ve taken a shower. I recognize the smile on her face, but I don’t say anything.

Instead I walk over to my bag and pull out some sweats. It’s going to be a pretty lazy day and maybe I’ll play a few games with Aden later.

“Clarke?” She asks after a few more silent seconds.

“Yeah?” I answer, smiling, but she can’t see that.

“Can we… maybe stay a day longer?”

“Why’s that?”

“Umm… I kinda… have a date tomorrow?”

I mentally high-five myself, but try to sound as casual as possible. “A date? Anyone I know?”

“Don’t play dumb, princess. I know, you know.”

“Well I don’t know. But I may have an assumption.”

“Yes, it’s Bellamy. He asked me out tonight, after you’ve left us very discreetly. By the way, it’s good, that you don’t have to act. You’re really bad at hiding that damn grin.”

I chuckle. Yes, I’ve heard that before.

I let myself fall down onto the mattress, too. “So… You’re really going on a date then?”

“Yes. He… He’s cute. Confident. Authentic. I like that.” She answers and rolls over, so she’s lying on the side to face me. “And he’s grown up. Really sexy.”

“Please, he’s like a brother to me.” I groan. I don’t want to imagine him as “sexy” or anything. I’m
just playing wingman here.

“Don’t you think it’s weird? We grew up together.”

I shake my head, feeling seventeen again for some strange reason, because we’re lying on my bed in
my childhood home again, talking about boys. “No, it’s not. He’s a great guy and for now, it’s just a
date. Where does he take you?”

“Don’t know yet.”

“Did you kiss?”

“No?”

“Are you asking me?” I asks, laughing. Whipped Raven is the cutest. “Because you’re smiling all the
time.”

She sighs. “No, we didn’t. He’s too much of a gentleman. We talked a while. Or like… for hours. It
felt nice. Familiar somehow, you know?”

“Yeah. He’s good at that. So back to your previous question. No, I don’t mind. We can stay a couple
of days. I haven’t been on a vacation for years now, so I guess, we can take a few days off. I wanted
to write anyway and I can do that here, too.”

Ravens beaming smile is answer enough.

I grab my phone from the nightstand and send Niylah a quick text.

Me: hey babe. Can we postpone Paris? Raven’s got a date and wants to stay a little longer.

The answer comes immediately.

Niylah: sure. How are you doing?

Me: it’s okay. I’m going to write, hang out with my brother and my mom. A few days with the
family will do me some good, I guess.

Niylah: Sounds great! Text me, when you know, when you’ll be back?

Me: will do. Good night <3

Niylah: <3

...
hey guys :) 

I've spend the day in front of my laptop, while it was snowing like hell outside. One way to spend the first real winter day. Do you have snow? I'm more of a summer person, but when I don't have to leave the house, it's bearable. xD

I know, I'm a day early, but I'm not sure, if I'll be able to upload tomorrow, so here we are. Hope you like it!

Love,
LJT.
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See the end of the chapter for more notes

... 

It’s awkward in the first place. I can tell from minute one.

To avoid taking sides or feeling foreign, Mom decided on dinner in the backyard.

Between our gardens, there’s never been a fence or anything, so she and Becca placed a table in the middle and every family contributes to the dinner.

Sounds great, but feels like a truce. Maybe it is.

Everyone’s already here, when Raven and I get downstairs. Okay, well everyone except Lexa. But maybe she won’t come? I could understand.

Becca and Mom are bickering over where to place which plate, while Gustus and a man I don’t know have control over the barbecue. That has to be Anya’s husband. Nyko or something?

“Clarke.” The familiar voice still sound intimidating and maybe that’s on purpose.

“Any. Nice to see you again.”

We’ve never been close, not even when her sister and I were dating. Something about her scares the shit out of me, if I'm honest. But she's a good person and looks out for the people she cares about.

“Yes, yeah. Listen, Lexa’s not in her best shape, so I’d appreciate it, if you could control yourself today and be nice for once. Got it?”

“I… Yes. I wanted to… make peace with her?”

I didn’t exactly think about it before, so I’m as surprised as Anya is. But it’s still true.

“Did you just say peace?”
I nod.

Anya doesn’t say anything else, but keeps staring into my eyes, until Becca comes into view with a toddler on her arm. Ilian, I think, was his name?


That seems to break the ice, because the scary woman suddenly smiles and takes the little boy into her arms. “Thanks.”

“How old is he?”

“Two and a half.”

At this point, I don’t follow the small talk anymore, because two other people enter the backyard and one of them is Lexa.

She’s really here.

My mouth goes dry at the sight of her.

She’s wearing something simple, just some washed out jeans, an olive shirt that brings out her eyes and a fitting flannel – but she’s beautiful. I’d have to be blind to not notice that. Why does life has to be so hard?

I can’t decide, if she’s looking more or less tense than she did on Friday, but she’s definitely avoiding my gaze.

“Lexa!” Raven calls out and leaves me standing alone. “It’s great to see you!”

Maybe I should go back inside and see, if I can help mom?

I don’t do that. Instead I watch Lexa forcing herself to smile, while Raven approaches her. I get it, because the last time they met, Raven punched her. And she’s got one hell of a punch.

“You look great.” My friend tells my ex.

The brunette blushes and mumbles a quiet “you too”, before she looks at her company – a beautiful woman around our age, with chestnut brown eyes full of warmth and brown, curly hair up in a messy bun. Wait, since when does Lexa blush? And who’s that girl?

I can see Lexa answering something, but I don’t hear what she’s saying. Seems like she’s introducing her friend – or girlfriend? They seem close.

Raven takes the strangers hand. “Hey Luna, nice to meet you. I’m Raven. And that’s Clarke.” She points at me.

“I know.” The woman answers, smiling brightly. “I’m a fan.”

“Clarke?” Raven asks, beckoning me over. “Don’t be rude or weird. Come over.”

“Sorry. I was… lost in thoughts. It’s always nice to meet a fan. And usually I’m not weird or rude. And I’m going to stop talking now. It’s really nice to meet you, Luna.”

*Not awkward at all.*
Lexa’s eyes meet mine for a second.

“Hey.” I say quietly and let out a shaky breath, while I try to ignore, that my heart pounds heavily against my ribs, as if it was trying to do a thousand beats a minute.

It’s just beating like that, because I’m nervous. Right?

She forces herself to smile, before she nods.

Really? Still no word? Don’t I deserve something better? Sure, I told her to fuck off and leave me alone and I refused to hear about her for ten years, but still… I’m trying, right?

I try to hide my disappointment by looking at Luna again. I can see a fading scar from her temple down to her earlobe. She’s as athletic as Lexa – or maybe even more. She’s walking upright and proud. Is she a soldier, too? I can easily picture her in a uniform.

“We’ve served together.” She tells me, chuckling.

“Oh, okay.” I answer, tucking an unruly strand of hair behind my ear. “I just…”

“You were trying to place me somewhere.” She finishes my sentence, still grinning. “I get it, that’s okay.”

Absolutely not embarrassing.

Am I that obvious? But why? Lexa’s my ex. The only person, who ever hurt me that deeply. I’m totally, completely over her.

“Well, Luna, how about we avoid the awkwardness for a few minutes and I get you something to drink?” Raven breaks the tension and offers her arm for the other woman to hook into.

“Sounds great! Don’t kill each other.”

Lexa seems like she’s about to protest, but she doesn’t make a sound, before Raven and Luna walk towards my house.

There we are again. Alone.

Fuck.

“How’s the hand?” I hear myself ask and I motion towards the bruised knuckles of her left hand.

Lexa’s surprised, but she tries to hide it. “All good.” She whispers, barely audible.

So she is speaking.

Smalltalk done. Better get to the hard part, right?

“I’m not angry anymore.” I say as carefully as possible, after I’ve taken a deep breath. My eyes focus on Lexa’s face, which shows no emotion, no movement. Nothing. “And I’m sorry for the way everything… turned out.”

“Don’t be.”

“But I am. I know… Things went bad and shitty and... And I’m sorry for that.”
Lexa withstands my gaze for full ten seconds, before she nods. Ten, everlasting, torturous seconds, that leave me overflowing with emotions of all kinds.

“I am, too.” She answers then, the words nothing more than a quiet whisper.

Before I can ask, what happened to her or do anything else, we’re interrupted by Aden, who hugs the brunette tightly and starts talking about some PlayStation they obviously play both.

Am I feeling saved? Or interrupted? A little bit of both probably.

Why did I agree to this? I mean, I’m quite masochistic to endure a whole evening with someone who’s clearly not interested in talking to me.

Nevertheless, I find myself watching her for the next half an hour, until dinners ready. I notice a lot about her.

One: she’s always looking for Luna – not like lovers do or friends. More like… she’s depending on her?

Two: she isn’t using her right arm – like at all.

Three: she isn’t talking much, and when she says something, it’s always quiet.

Four: she seems to avoid me as far as possible. It’s almost, like we’re back in highschool, before we dated.

And five: she tries to keep an eye on everything and everyone.

Most of those things must be connected to whatever happened to her over there. I’m dying to know, but at the same time it hurts. I could’ve lost her, right? Yes, I have lost her back in highschool, but… I knew she was okay. And she’s far from that now, that much I can tell. I do notice the pained expression in her eyes she’s trying to hide so desperately.

Conversation flows mostly easily, though I’m not the only one rarely talking. Just like good old times.

I’m about to excuse myself, when Gustus asks Luna for stories about his daughter. Suddenly everyone goes silent and all eyes dart between him and Luna, while she looks at Lexa, as if she was waiting for permission.

Lexa clenches her fists, but nods slowly.

“Okay, well… Where do I start? When I met her, she was my superior. I’d heard a lot of stories and rumors about her, nicknamed the Commander, and her unit. I gotta say, I doubted them.” Luna tells us, a small smile on her lips.

All eyes are on her, except mine. I watch Lexa, who tries to keep her feelings in check. I recognize the action, because the muscles on her jaw are tensed. She’s fidgeting with the hem of her shirt.

“I doubted the stories, because some of them sounded really crazy. Especially when I first joined the unit. Most of the guys seemed more like big teddy bears. And Lexa? She seemed so fragile, so soft. I couldn’t picture her being the mighty Commander everyone was talking about.” Luna continues, smiling softly.

She earns a few nods, especially from Becca and Mom.
“But within the first week, I learned, how wrong I was, when I watched her carry injured, grown up men on her back under hostile fire. I’ve seen her and the crew do nearly inhuman things. The whole unit never lost a single man or a single woman under her command. I’m really proud to be a part of that.”

I can hear the admiration in her words and I can feel the connection between the two of them.

Then I try to imagine Lexa in a uniform, under gun fire and I get this sickening feeling in my stomach.


“Em pleni!” Lexa hisses suddenly, drawing everybody’s attention, sounding pained and shaken. “Beja.”

She stares at the fists in her lap and her leg is bouncing rapidly. She’s more than tense now, she’s… falling apart?

“I’m sorry. I…”

Lexa gets up faster than anyone can blink and before I know it, she’s inside the house, leaving nothing but silence behind.

Nobody moves a muscle. Don’t they see, that she needs comfort?

I make a move to get up, but Luna interrupts me. “No, stay. You’d be the wrong one right now.”

What the fuck?

“Who do think-”

“Clarke.” She interrupts me, her voice gentle, but firm, while she shoves back her chair. “I know. But trust me, she’s really vulnerable right now. You don’t want to see that.”

So I watch her walk up to the house and I do nothing.

I could feel Lexa’s pain. Whatever it is she had to endure, I could feel it. It resonated in my bones and my heart and my mind. My whole fucking existence!

For a few seconds, there’s an awkward and worried silence.

No one’s looking at me, because my behavior is different today. I went from hating her to caring for her. Just as abruptly, as we started dating.

Then we suddenly hear the sound of trashing dishes, followed by a shouted “Lexa!” and my heart stops for a split second.

...

Chapter End Notes

thank you for taking the time to read my story. <3
I’m jumping around the room, whenever someone comments on this, so... feel free :D
Have a great day!
Chapter 12 - Lexa.

Chapter Summary

Finally, they talk. A little. :)

Chapter Notes

My plans got cancelled due to the weather, so I had time to edit this chapter. And since I had a shitty day, I decided to do some good and make you guys happy with another chapter! Don’t get used to it ;)
See you on Wednesday!

See the end of the chapter for more notes

... 

I didn’t think, it would be that bad to hear her talking about it. True, I’ve avoided every military related topic for a while now and it worked well. But she didn’t even mention the three weeks.

Fuck.

With every word, the tension in me grows.

Until I’m storming into my parents’ house, slamming the door behind me.

I'm not a hero. I'm far from it.

I’m not panicking. Just… so damn fucking angry and scared and overwhelmed and… I’m overflowing with emotions of all kinds.

I walk through the living room into the kitchen and back, just to start again. It feels like I’m charged with too much energy, like I’m high on adrenalin. I recognize that version of myself. Fight back mode.

So when Luna enters the kitchen, my instinct tells me to do exactly that.

Fight back.

I grab a cup from the kitchen counter and throw it in her direction with full force.

“Lexa!” She shouts, gladly able to dodge it, thanks to her own instincts. She raises both hands to show me, that she means no harm.

Oh my god.

“Fuck, Luna, I’m sorry! I’m… I didn’t mean…”
Damn.

“It’s okay. Tell me what to do.”

“I…”

“Lexa, focus. What do you need?”

Before I can form a sentence, Clarke and Anya burst through the door, both look pretty scared. They’ve probably heard the cup crashing against the wall.

“Everything okay? We’ve heard something crashing and-“ Clarke stops herself.

“Sorry, sis, I tried to stop her.”

Clarke glares at my sister, before she looks back at me. Her blue eyes stare direct into mine, like they always seem to do.

After all these years, I still find comfort in them.

Seeing her in person is so much better, than staring at her picture, it calms me down immediately. But it shouldn’t.

Fuck.

“I’m sorry.” She says. “I just… I’m going back outside. I’m sorry.”

Sorry for what? For still caring for me, even after what I did? For coming to look after me? I want to tell her, that she doesn’t have to go, but it’s already too late.

After my little mental breakdown slash outburst, I feel worn out and tired and I sit down on the cold kitchen floor, legs pulled up.

“What can I do?” Anya asks carefully. She has seen me in a lot of states over the last months, but it seems, she’s getting more and more scared.

“Could you give us a second?” Luna asks, her eyes resting on my face.

My sister doesn’t move, until I nod an okay.

Slowly, Luna sits down beside me legs crossed. She leans her head against the cupboard and waits a few seconds, before she says something. “Sorry. I didn’t mean to bring back bad memories.”

“You didn’t. Bring them back, I mean. They’re always here.” I clarify quietly. “I’m getting angry really fast and then… that’s what I felt most of the time there. Besides fear and pain. I was so angry. And when I got home and the fear and the pain started to fade, the anger was all I had left.”

“What are you angry at?”

“Everyone. Everything. The world. Don’t know.”

“Come on, you can do better than that.”

Can I?

“At myself mostly.” I say honestly and close my eyes, as some images flash through my head. The

I take a deep breath, before I continue. “For not seeing, it was a trap. For not being able to safe the kid. For saying the things I said to Clarke. For giving in to the pain and the fear. Have your pick.”

“Nobody knew it would be a trap. None of us could’ve saved he kid. You didn’t mean to break up with her. You just... you were scared and confused and hurt and you tried to be honest.” Luna answers, trying to be reasonable. “And everyone would’ve given in at some point. We’re humans, Lexa. Humans break.”

Rationally I know all of that.

It’s the emotion, who doesn’t follow suit.

“You know, she’s been looking at you the whole evening?”

“Who? Clarke?”

I’m not sure, where to place the information or what to do with it.

I tried to do the opposite, if I’m honest to myself. Because looking at her brings up so many emotions and I’m already walking on the thin line between being okay and going completely crazy most of the time without thinking about her, so…

Luna nods. “Wouldn’t it lift some of the guilt you’re talking yourself into, if you’d speak to her? Tell her your thoughts?”

Of course it would. It would change a lot, I guess. “I can’t even talk to my parents. How am I supposed to speak with her?”

“Just like you talk with me.”

“It’s different with you.” I reply.

“How?”

“You…” I start, but it takes me a lot of will power to continue my thought. “It’s different with you, because you were there.”

That’s it. The truth.

Luna frowns, trying to understand, what I’m telling her.

“I’m not sure, if I…”

“You were there, Luna. With me. You got me out of there.” I tell her, looking straight into her eyes, and before I know it, I’m talking with deliberating fierce. “You dragged my body back into the sunlight and held my hand during the flight and you sang our anthem.”

The soldiers’ eyes glisten with tears. “I didn’t know…” She whispers, her words fading.

“I remember it all, Luna. You saved me. And nobody else understands. Not a thing. You even went back for my photo. For a stupid piece of paper, because you knew. You knew.”

Only when my cheeks start to feel wet, I notice, that I’m crying, too. But I’m not done yet. I pull out
my wallet and show her the picture, I’ve been talking about, for the first time.

“It’s been over a year, but I still carry it. I carried it all those years before. Of course, I want to talk to her. She didn’t do anything, but she saved my sanity back there. Or what’s left of it. Because of her, I didn’t break for so long. She saved my soul and you saved my life. I want to talk to both of you, I just…”

“You’re scared. Of what?”

“In your case, of being confronted with things I’d like to forget. In her case... of causing us both more pain, I guess.”

“Don’t you think, it’s time to think about yourself for once?” Luna’s question is a good one and she knows it – I can tell by her soft smile.

“Maybe.”

“Nope. Not maybe. Do you want me to get her?”

I think about it for a few moments. I don’t want to force her into talking to me. She has to do it, because she wants to.

I shake my head. “No. But could you ask her to meet me by the lake? She’ll know.”

“Sure. I’ll tell her.” Luna answers and gets up, before she offers me a hand and helps me on my feet.

“Thanks for talking to me.”

“Thanks for listening.”

I don’t watch her going back outside. Instead I leave the house through the front door and cross the street. Heat is reflected by the asphalt. It’s still light outside, even though the daylight is slowly fading into an atmospheric twilight.

A short path leads through a few tree rows and ends down by the lake. I haven’t been here for ten years, but it feels like I’ve stepped into a time machine, that send me back to highschool.

Our spot.

At least, it used to be.

But that’s not, why I came here. It is a private and quiet place. It’s neutral ground. And it’s calming my nerves.

Surprisingly, it doesn’t take long, until I hear the sound of footsteps coming closer. Seconds later, the beautiful blonde woman comes into view.

She brushes back her hair, smiling shyly. “Hey. Nice place. Come here often?”

I know, she’s just trying to lighten the tension, but it’s working.

I break the eye contact, take off my flannel and lay it down on the floor for her to sit on, because she’s wearing a beautiful, flowing dress, that she surely doesn’t want to get dirty.

Clarke hesitates, but accepts my offer with a shy smile.

When I sit down next to her in the grass, she is closer than I planned for her to be and just the
thought of it makes me shiver.
Clarkes eyes focus on my right arm immediately.

*Shit.*

I haven’t thought about it, while I tried to find somewhere to start.

Its covered in scars, but they became so normal for me, as if they had been part of me for all my life. Some of them are longer and thin, some of them short and thick, others are cigarette burns or from boiling water.
I got used to them, but they scare people, who didn’t know about them. So I cover them most of the time.

I never meant for her to see them.

“Lex.” She gasps, before I can do or say anything. “What... what happened to you?”

I can tell, that she didn’t mean to ask this question.

And I notice, that her fingers moved an inch closer, as if they wanted to reach out, but she quickly pulls them back.

But why does she have to use the old nickname? It shuts down the walls I try to build around me within the blink of an eye.

“I...” It is hard to talk with her so close and all the emotions hiding just under the surface. Especially about this topic, so my voice is just a murmur. “It happened during one of my tours. I’m good.”

“Good?” She repeats, clearly not believing me. Clarke isn’t dumb. She knows, that I’m in pain.

“Yes.”

I give her some time to process it and try not to meet her eyes.

“And why aren’t you talking?”

“I am talking.”

“Rarely. And you’re whispering most of the time.”

So she’s still as good at observing, as she was back in highschool. Good to know.

“My vocal chords got... hurt. Ever since I’ve been... scared to use them.” I answer slowly and swallow the fear. I don’t have to tell her the whole truth, right?

“Gosh, I’m... I’m so sorry, Lex, I...”

“There’s nothing you can do. It’s not your fault, either. But that’s not why I wanted to talk. First, I wanted to apologize for Friday night. I... I shouldn’t have left you standing there. I was rude and you didn’t deserve that.” I’m still whispering, but at least I’m speaking in complete, understandable sentences. Definitely a progress.

“You’ve got nothing to be sorry-”

“Yes, I do.”
And suddenly the mood between us changes.

Until now it felt a little like two acquaintances would be catching up. Now we’ve arrived at the heavy stuff.

“Clarke, I wanted to apologize. For a lot of things.”

“Lex, you don’t-” She tries again, but I don’t let her finish.

“Let me finish, please.” It sounds a bit like begging, but maybe I am begging, who knows. “I’m sorry for ever thinking, it could’ve been your dad’s fault. I’m sorry for not being there for you, when you just lost him. I’m sorry for breaking your heart. I know, it doesn’t change anything, but I didn’t mean to. I was… confused and sad and I… I lost my way. So I lost you. I want to apologize for all of that. I never meant to cause you pain, Clarke. Never.”

Clarke turns away to hide the glistening in her eyes and every following tear.

I know, she’s crying, just like I know, that I can’t give in to my first instinct, which tells me to pull her into my arms and comfort her. To hold her and never let her go.

I don’t move a muscle, as the time passes.

I feel relieved, just like everyone told me I would feel. Nevertheless, I feel sad, too. Because all the time there were unspoken words between us, unfinished business so to say. Sounds stupid, but it has been a connection. A connection I held onto like a lifeline.

And now, ten years later, it’s gone. Over. Just like that.

Suddenly the photograph in my wallet feels a lot heavier.

I swallow my hopes, I didn’t know I was having, my pride, my tears and avert my gaze from her face. I haven’t dreamt about those familiar features in details in a long time, but I certainly will tonight. Because no picture, no memory can do her justice.

“I…” Clarke starts, her voice trembling a little, before she wipes her eyes and turns towards back to face me, her azure blue eyes full of sadness. “I forgive you.”

“You don’t have to.” I say, even though her words fill a void in my heart and my soul, I didn’t know I had.

She smiles sadly. “Yes, I do. You’ve probably carried those words for years, didn’t you?”

“Maybe.”

The words, the memories, the feelings. Regret is one nasty, poisonous thing.

“I should’ve let you say them ten years ago. You wouldn’t have joined, would you?”

“Clarke, my decision to join the military has got nothing to do with you or our breakup. I joined, because I wanted to. I would do it again.” I tell her, not completely being honest. But I don’t want her to feel guilty for what happened to me.

“You never said anything about it before.” Her tone is sharper now, somehow reproachful. She doesn’t believe me.

“Please.”
She shakes her head. “I’m sorry.”

I stare at the lake for a silent minute, counting every second, before I change the topic. “Congratulations, by the way. You’ve made your dream come true. Your own show, that’s cool.”

God, I sound so awkward.

“Thank you.” She says, smiling a little proud.

Does she know, what that smile does to me? Probably not.

All I want is to let it go – the feeling of safety, her. I thought, I had years ago – at least as much as I needed to. But coming here, talking with her, finally saying all I wanted her to know… It brought more back, than it helped moving on.

Her presence feels painfully familiar.

“Do you watch it?” She asks a few seconds later, ending my probably inappropriate thoughts effectively.

I shrug. “Haven’t had much time.”

Clarke nods, because she doesn’t know, what else is there to say. I’m pretty sure she understood, what I wanted to say anyways.

And just like that, we’re out of discussable topics. We both feel it.

We sit in silence for a few more minutes, until the tension becomes unbearable and I suggest heading back.

Luna is waiting by the front door for me, when we step out of the woods, and I haven’t been more thankful for our friendship than right now.

I excuse myself for the rest of the evening, before Clarke can say anything. I recognize the knowing look in her deep, soulful, blue eyes. I feel it, while I walk towards the car.

But I need to get out of here as fast as possible, before I break in front of her.

...

Chapter End Notes

as always, thanks for reading, for the Feedback, for everything. you're amazing! <3<3
happy wednesday :)  
sadly, I hurt my shoulder, so I won't be able to write for the next days - but gladly, I've written enough, so I don't have to disappoint you! :D

thanks for every kudo, comment, ... <3 you're amazing!  
Hope you like it!

Love,  
LJT.

---

...  
I watch her getting into the car with Luna and drive away, with a dull and painful aching in my stomach.  
I watch, long after she’s gone.  
Those scars.  
Her eyes.  
She's still so… breathtaking. Calm. Focused. But she’s although careful, observing, nervous and tense. Those green eyes can still tell stories, but this time they’re not full of sarcasm, smiles and dreams. Maybe she knows it and that’s why she avoids eye contact.  

With every word she said, I could hear the ones she left out. Back then I could read between the lines easily, but now it’s like her eyes speak a different language.  

To me, it feels like a slap in the face.  
I want to scream so badly, but I’m trapped in my frozen body, eyes fixated on the empty road before me.  

Fuck. Fuck! FUCK!  
It’s like someone pushed a button and the universe decided to fuck up my life again.  

I was supposed to have moved on years ago. I did.  
Nevertheless, I loved her. God, I loved her so much and she went and broke our love in that damn bathroom, like it didn’t mean a thing. I remember the countless following nights, that I cried myself to sleep.  

But today, there was this look in her eyes, this sorrowed, regretful look and suddenly I’m doubting everything.
Was it wrong to deny her the chance to talk to me? Would it have changed anything?

She broke my heart. She teared it apart, when she chose the other side. When she thought, my dad was responsible for her dad getting paralyzed. My dad had died. The man, who was like a second father to me, was lying in a coma and wouldn’t walk a step in his life again. Everyone was blaming my dad. And my girlfriend couldn’t stand to be near me, even though she promised. She had made a promise and she broke it.

No, it wouldn’t have changed anything.

I wouldn’t have been able to forgive her back then. I barely could do it today. But I had to, because I want to move on. I needed closure.

And all I got was confusion.

Because I can’t shake the feeling of wanting to be near her again.

I hate it. Everything I feel right now.

“Clarke?” Anya’s voice rips me out of my shock state and I turn around to face her. “Where’s my sister?”

“She went home with Luna.”

“What did you say to her?” She’s using her harsh tone.

“Nothing. I swear. We…talked. She apologized.” I tell her.

Anya eyes me closely. “And you?”

“What about me?”

“Did you apologize? You didn’t give her a chance to explain herself. She deserved that, don’t you think?”

Haven’t thought about that, to be honest. “Umm…”

“Did she tell you, why she joined?” Anya asks with piercing brown eyes, crossing her arms. “Or what happened to her?”

I shake my head. “I didn’t really ask. I’ve seen the scars on her arm, but I guess, she doesn’t owe me an explanation, does she?”

“No. But you should still hear it, because she’s my little sister and I almost lost her.”

I swallow at her sharp words.

“Lexa joined, because she wanted to do something good, something worthy. Because she wanted to make something right.” Anya continues, and she gives me a few seconds, to let the words sink in, before she speaks again. “And while trying to do so, she got captured by a rebel clan and she almost died.”

“Captured?” I repeat, unable to comprehend.

“Yes, Clarke.”
I can feel my heart struggling to keep a steady beat.

“Oh my god.” I whisper horrified, my body paralyzed to the spot, while my lungs run out of oxygen for a few painful seconds, until I know how to breathe again.

I'm not stupid, I know, what this means. Pictures are filling my head, dark and heavy ones. Pictures, I won’t be able forget again.

And when I think about the different shapes of those scars, it suddenly makes sense.

“I'm trying to protect her. And I'm not sure, if it's doing her any good, if you're close to her. So I'm asking you to forgive her and move on.” Anya says after a few silent seconds. “Yes, what she said was shitty in a lot of ways. I get, that she hurt you. Believe me, I do. But she's been through hell and back and she's still somehow breathing, so—”

“I forgave her.”

“Did you?”

“Yes. Probably a long time ago.”

“Good. And one more thing. She's trying to heal, but she couldn’t let you go all those years, one way or the other. Now she's got closure and this is her second chance. Her new start. So stay away from her, please.”

“That’s not your decision to make, Anya.” I answer, trying not to let my anger show. I haven’t thought about, if I want to keep in touch with Lexa, but I don’t like being told what to do.

“I'm trying to protect, what’s left of her.”

“I know, that you’re doing it with the best intentions. But I never hurt her, Anya, and I never will intentionally. I loved her and I still care for her. Respect that. She's old and strong enough, to make her own decisions.”

And with that I turn on my heels and walk back to the barbecue, not even bothering with waiting for Anya to say anything.

Ten years ago, her posture would’ve intimidated me and I wouldn’t even have thought about saying, what I just said.

But damn, it feels so good.

Raven is right. I’m not the girl I was back then anymore – not even, when coming home scared me. It did. But coming home didn’t transform me into the girl I was, even though I feared it would. I’m still me – the new me, the strong, proud and successful me, that doesn’t bow down to anyone anymore. Those times are long gone.

I'm walking back with my head held high.

-----

“So… you talked?” Becca asks bluntly, when I carry the last tray into her kitchen.

“Yes.”

“Did it go… well?” Becca can’t hide the worry in her tone. It hasn’t even left after Anya told her,
that she called her sister and she's fine.

“Yeah. I… I'm sorry, that it took me so long. But I guess, we are good now. As good, as we'll ever be.” I shrug.

“She hurt you deeply.” Becca answers and gives me one of her motherly smiles. “You needed time to heal.”

“But ten years?” I ask.

“It takes as long as it takes. The heart isn’t an ordinary muscle. And it certainly doesn’t follow a timetable or any rules.”

“I'm still not sure, if we can ever be… friends. Or something similar. But I'm okay with spending an evening with her, I guess.”

“You two never were friends, Clarke. Nobody expects you to become now. It’s just nice, that we can go back to normal family dinners like this one.”

I nod, a little lost in thoughts for a moment, while I watch her loading the dishwasher. “Anya told me. About… what happened. I can’t imagine, what you all must’ve been through. You and… her. It’s… I can’t even find the words.”

“Yeah.” Becca nods, suddenly focused on folding the towel, she just used to dry a bowl. “The worst three weeks of my life and… sometimes it still feels, like I've lost a part of her. She isn’t the same person she was before anymore. A part of her never returned home.”

I catch my breath. What did she just say?

*Three weeks? Three weeks, that she has been held captive and…?*

Terror washes over me.

I can feel all color leaving my face, as I lean against the kitchen counter, trying to process all the thoughts flooding my brain.

“You didn’t know, did you?”

“Not about the three weeks, no. I… Oh my god.” I squint my eyes and look up at the ceiling, to keep myself from crying right here in Beccas kitchen, because I would choke on my own sobs.

I stay frozen for a couple seconds, my stomach churning, my eyes closed. Suddenly I want to be small and crawl into someone’s lap. My dad’s lap. The safest place on earth. I want to pretend, I'm safe from the monsters lurking out there, in the world.

Three weeks, enduring things I don’t even want to imagine…

“She's been home a year, but… she doesn’t talk about it. She refuses too. So I don’t know, what’s going on in her head. What I know is, that she cares for you, Clarke. She never stopped. So it will do some good for both of you, that you cleared the air.” She tells me, trying to muster a reassuring smile.

I hope, she's right.

“Can I do anything to help you here?”

“No. Most of is done and the rest is still here tomorrow. Go join your family.”
“You’re family, too, you know?”

“I do.”

I hug the woman, before I leave for my home.

Raven is sitting on my bed, already in sweats and her sleeping shirt, without make up. She frowns, when I don’t say a word, before I head to the bathroom.

But I couldn’t say anything to her, even if I wanted. I can’t even think right.

Three weeks of… And just because she wanted to make something right? Because… she broke my heart, she decided to join?

It’s my fault. Somehow, it is and I… Fuck.

As soon as I've stepped under the shower, I break down.

I can’t scream, though I can feel the urge to do so in every fiber of my body. I can only open my mouth to find that words have deserted me.

There are no words for how I'm feeling.

So my body gives in and I fall to the floor in a disheveled heap, tears of pure pain welling from somewhere deep inside, while the water leaves a burning warmth on my skin.

I don’t think, I can take it. I can’t. I refuse to.

My fist meets the wall and even though it hurts, it takes some of the pain away.

“Clarke?”

Raven heard me. Of course she did.

“Clarke, sweetie? Can I come in?”

She waits a few more seconds for an answer, before she slowly opens the bathroom door.

I'm still curled up in the corner of the shower, crying and sobbing, while I'm trying to understand, how the world can be so cruel. Is there even a god out there? Because if there is, how can something so horrible be part of his plan?

“Oh, sweetie!” Raven's words are full of empathy, affection and love, when my eyes meet hers. She grabs a bathrobe, turns off the water and wraps the warm material around my shoulders. “Let’s get you out of here, okay?”

She helps me to the feet without waiting for an answer, before she guides me to the bed.

“Want to talk about it?”

I shake my head.

So Raven tugs me under the blanket, even though its summer, and she crawls in bed behind me wordlessly, before she pulls me close and draws soothing circles on my back.
But there’s still the same thought running through my mind, over and over again.

I could’ve lost her.

Lexa could’ve died out there.

_I could’ve lost her._

...
hey guys :)  
There'll be a pretty dark scene in form of a nightmare in here, but it's marked - don't read, when you're triggered by mentions of fear of death, giving up or something similar. It's not necessary to understand the plot, but I felt like writing something heavy and I did.

I'm not sure, if I'll upload Tuesday, Wednesday or Thursday, because it's going to be a busy week for me - but I'll upload once in any case. Promise!

And I wanted to say thank you once more to everyone, who leaves a comment ( I read every single one, even if I don't answer every time), who leaves a kudo, a subscription or nothing at all. Thank you to anyone, who reads this. You're amazing <3

Take care of yourself and have a beautiful week <3
Love,
LJT.
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...  
When I was a kid, I was scared of the dark.

Mom would let a small light on for me and I kept that tradition, until I joined the military, when I had to share the room.

I think about it, while Luna drives us home.

Maybe that’s been a turning point in my life. The moment, when I had to grow up and face the monsters lurking in the dark?

Sometimes I wish, I could go back to the times with a night light on. Everything was easier. Clearer.

I wouldn’t feel so… confused.

Like a picture in a broken frame, that could easily be fixed, but the glue is out of reach.

“Wanna go home or somewhere else?” Lunas question interrupts my thoughts.

“Home.”

“Okay.”

It’s a short drive, just a few minutes. When we get there, I’m the first one to get out of the car.

While I reach for the keys, I decide to go for a long run, before going to bed. I’m still exhausted, if not even more. But I’m although running high on a lot of different emotions, so cooling off seems
like a good choice.

“Hey guys.” I tell my dogs, as they come running for us, and I bury my fingers in their furs. “Wanna go for a run?”

“Run?” Luna asks.

“Yeah. Want to join us?”

Luna tries to cover up her hesitation, but she fails. Nevertheless, I don’t comment on it and she doesn’t say anything either.

“Sure. Let’s see, if you can still keep up with me.” She tells me instead.

“Challenge accepted.”

Five minutes later, we’re jogging down the street, each one of us has got a dog on a leash and I know, Luna is going to go easy on me, but I don’t want to be treated differently.

So I set the speed from the very beginning.

As soon as my feet hit the asphalt, I’m not just angry or scared or in pain anymore. There’s something else than that now. I feel free. Everything else fades into the back of my mind and I’m getting lost in that feeling.

I’m just running, listening to the sound of Lunas feet behind me and my own breath.

Back overseas, I ran small laps around the camp every morning, before the sun was up, and every evening after sunset. It was my way of staying sane, of processing. That’s why I ignored the doctor’s advice to go slow.

Clarke and I talked. It was a good talk. Somehow.

The problem is, I can safely say, that I need to stay away from her as far as possible. At least right now. Because I can’t let my stupid heart decide to fall for her again. I know, it would. Of course it would. And I’m not going down that road again.

She’s a distraction.

And I need to focus.


After one round around block I’ve found my rhythm.

After the second, I’m not thinking about her anymore. Good.

After my third round, I know it’s going to be my last for tonight. I’m going to be able to sleep, I guess.

----

Luna isn’t pushing anything, but I know, she's curious.

For a moment I think about telling her about my conversation with Clarke, while we get ready for bed. But then I decided to just call it a night. We can still have that talk tomorrow, right? And I'm too
tired anyways.

So I lie down in the dark of my room, on a bed that’s still too soft, even after all this time.

For the first months home, I had slept on the floor, until Anya found out and declared me crazy. I was used to sleeping on the ground, even before the capture happened.

I'm lying awake for a while, before I can even close my eyes. Replaying the day I had – or the last days – and trying to place them in my confused head. Saving the way Clarke looked like and the way her voice sounded.

I’ve missed it.

When sleep finally finds me, it’s long after midnight.

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WARNING: pretty dark scene ahead, mentions of giving in, of pain and torture. You can skip it, if you want. It’s not necessary to understand the plot.

And some of you may need a tissue – I did while writing it.

----------------------------

I wake up in my cell. This time I don’t need minutes to figure out, where I am. I'm getting used to it. To the place, to the pain.

My whole body’s on fire, but it’s nothing compared to my right hand.

Fuck, it hurts.

I try to focus. It’s day twenty-one, if I didn’t sleep for days. Could be possible.

It’s not long, until someone’s going to come to get me for another round. Two days ago, the pain was so overwhelming, that I started talking. Yesterday I didn’t, and the punishment wasn’t easy to take. I'm not sure, how I'm going to do today.

I groan, as I roll onto my back. My head pounds and I can’t see straight, because my left eye is swollen and probably purple by now.

Maybe I’ve got another half an hour, before they come.

How many more days can my body take? About three weeks – in the same damn cell, with the same damn routines of pain, in the same damn clothes, open wounds in an unsanitary environment…

I’ve tried to fight the truth, but… maybe that’s it for me. Maybe I’ll die today.

I'm so fucking tired.

I’ve got a high fever by now. If they don’t kill me, an infection will for sure.

Suddenly gun fire goes off.
Once. Twice. And then again. Shouts. An explosion.

That’s, when I’m pretty sure, I’ll die.

And I accept it. Actually, I have accepted it days ago. Because hope is something for the first week, maybe the second. I’ve given it up days ago.

I crawl over to the other side of the room trying to keep my wounds away from the ground, and dig my fingertips into the ground, where they soon find, what they’ve hidden in the sand.

The photograph, which is the only thing, that kept me going this long.

Over the years, it started to show traces of aging and usage, but the face of the blue eyed, blonde girl with the beaming smile is still visible. I wouldn’t need it to remember her, but she gave it to me herself and it’s the only thing I’ve got left.

I’d have protected it with my life.

If I die today, I want to feel close to her somehow. I want her face to be the last thing on my mind.

My fingers trace over the piece of paper, while I try to swallow my tears.

“I tried to hold on.” I whisper into the empty room once again. “I’ve tried to get home to see you again, Clarke. But I’m not sure, I can. I’ll always love you.” My quiet confession hurts more than all the torture before.

And then hell breaks loose just outside the door.

I press my dry and split open lips on the photograph for a brief moment, before I hide it again. They can’t have it.

Then I crawl back to the place they’ve left me the day before.

“I love you.”

Different kinds of pain overwhelm my tired and broke body, just when the door bursts open.

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YOU CAN START READING AGAIN HERE ;)

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“Lexa! Hey!”

My eyes flutter open.

My heartbeat’s pounding in my ears. My lungs scream for air. I’m drenched in sweat.

“It was just a dream, Lexa. You’re okay.”

Just another nightmare.

“Everything’s okay. You’re safe.” The familiar voice speaks again.
My eyes search the dim room for it’s owner. “Light.” I whisper, when I find the silhouette.

Seconds later the lights are turned on. Anya’s sitting on one side of the bed, Luna on the other. Both look pale and scared to death, like they…

I close my eyes and exhale, when I feel my vocal chords burning.

They look like they were woken up by me, screaming from the top of my lungs. Once again.

“It’s okay.” Anya tells me. “You’re safe.”

Am I, when the nightmares keep coming back? At least once a week, if not twice or more? Am I really safe?

I don’t notice, that they both share a look. One of mutual agreement.

“Anya, can you make her some hot chocolate?” Luna asks, without looking at my sister. Her dark eyes are fixated on my face. “Lexa’s going to take a hot shower first.”

Normally, I don’t like being told, what to do, but it sounds good.

A minute later I’m in my shower and the hot water’s doing its best to help me come down from the step before another panic attack.

Maybe day twenty-one has been the worst day of all. Because I had given in completely. I accepted fate and death. Looking back, this is the scariest part of me I’ve ever learned about over there.

Luna had pulled out some sweats and a t-shirt out of my drawer. They’re smelling like home and feel good on my skin, when I step out of the bathroom.

Luna’s waiting in my bed. She’s holding a cup with hot chocolate for me and she smiles reassuring.

“Here.” She says, handing me the cup. “Drink. Chocolate is medicine.”

“Just like in Harry Potter?” I ask, taking a sip and enjoying the warmth spreading in my stomach.

“Bad dreams and dementors aren’t exactly that different.” She shrugs, but even the smile on her lips can’t hide the worry written in her eyes. “You okay?”

“Better.”

I notice, that she’s opening her mouth at least for times, before she finally says something. “Do you want to talk about it? What you’ve seen or… in general?”

“Would that change anything?”

“Maybe. Don’t know.”

“Well, I…I’m not having nightmares every night anymore. They’re… irregular. And sometimes I’m not even seeing bad things, like tonight. It’s… complicated.”

“That sucks.”

A soundless and flat laughter escapes from my lips at her brief, but very true comment. Yes, you could say that.
“Thanks for the chocolate.”

“It helped, didn’t it?”

“Maybe.”

Luna chuckles, before the expression on her face morphs back to serious. “Do you want me to sleep here? I mean, your subconsciousness is probably sick of solitude, right?”

I haven’t thought about before, but it makes sense. The three weeks in solitary confinement, if you want to call it that, were the worst of my life. So yes, maybe being alone at night isn’t helping.

“Yes, please.”

“Oh, the big, bad Commander said please!” She retorts immediately, a smug and bold grin on her face. “I must mark that day in my calendar. A new holiday is born!”

“Haha.” I say dryly and roll my eyes. If she’s trying to lighten the mood, it’s working.

“You love my sense of humor, don’t you?”

“I’m not sure about that.”

“It’s got you smiling.”

“Yeah.”

“Yeah.” She repeats. “Now, scoot over and make room for me, Commander. Because I want to make good use of the rest of the night.”

I do as I’m told.

“And later you’re going to tell me about your talk with Clarke, okay? I’m not letting you off the hook so easy.”

“Luna. Stop talking.”

“No, no. I want a yes.”

I sigh, knowing that I won’t get out of it, no matter how hard I try. “If I must.”

“You do.”

“Then yes. Happy?”

“Very. And now shut up, I want to sleep.”

What?

Why am I friends with her again? She’s stubborn, annoying, sarcastic, too curious and – she’s like a second Raven Reyes.

Ah, yes. She saved my life. And she’s loyal and trustworthy and caring and funny (at least sometimes). And I’m happy, to have her in my life. Most of the time.
When I wake up, I'm alone and the sun is up high.

Shit.

Hastily I reach for my phone, but my suspicion is correct. It’s after ten – which is a miracle, because I never sleep in – and someone (Anya or Luna) has shut off my alarm.

I take a few seconds to think about, if I hate or love them, before I get up and leave my room.

Luna’s standing in the kitchen, making breakfast.

“Hey there.”

“Why?” I simply ask.

“Oh, someone’s grumpy. Sleeping in turns you human, hm?” She replies laughing and ignores my death glare. “Because you’ve got an amazing sister. I didn’t do anything. In fact, it’s quite boring alone.”

And here we go again.

“What’s for breakfast then?”

“I’ve made cupcakes and pancakes, because there’s never enough cake in the world. But you can have bacon and eggs, too.”

“I’ll take the pancakes.”

“One minute.”

I walk over to the coffee machine and pour myself a cup. How can I still be tired? Maybe I’ve slept too long.

“By the way, I’ve found an apartment I’d like to look at today. You still up for rooming in together?”

“Yes.”

“That was easy.”

“I wouldn’t have brought it up, if I wasn’t sure about it. Though I have to ask you, if you’re sure about it. I’m probably going to wake you up sometimes. I’m damaged.”

Luna stops in the middle of her movements to look at me. “Lexa. We’re all damaged goods.” She says. “I have them, too, you know? Just because I don’t wake up screaming, doesn’t mean, that I’m not haunted.”

Somehow, her confession calms my wounded soul a little. Perhaps she’s right. Everyone carries a package.

“And I should warn you, because if I’m having a bad dream, I may come to snuggle with you. I’m quite… a cuddler. And if you tell Roan or Lincoln about it, I’m going to kill you in your sleep.”
“Noted.” I answer, not able to stop myself from grinning.

Luna fake threatens me with taking away my pancakes, but just a second later she hands me the plate with a warm smile. “Eat up, Commander. You’re way to skinny compared to me. And we have to go hunting today.”

-----

At the end of the day I’ve got a few new things to say.

1. I’ve got myself an apartment with Luna on the outskirts of Polis. It’s got two large bedrooms, a nice bathroom and an open space with a kitchen and a living room. There’s even a tiny little balcony. But it’s highlight? Access to the roof. I’m pretty sure, that’ll become my spot. The apartment is on the second floor and there’s no elevator, but none of us is bothered by this little fact. It’s owner is an old man, who served himself, and he’s absolutely happy, that he can rent the flat to us two – or four. The rent is decent and there are only a few neighbors. All in all: pretty perfect.

2. I haven’t thought about Clarke all day. That’s little weird, but in a good way. Only when I get ready for bed, I think about her. Has she already left? Does she think, I’m a coward for running away again? But on the other hand, we’re not going to be friends. I couldn’t do it, even if I’d like to have her back in my life. So it doesn’t matter, what she thinks of me. Not anymore.

3. Somehow, life has become a little easier the past days. Even though a lot of things happened, which left me emotionally stirred up, I’m feeling a little lighter. I’m feeling something besides anger, pain and fear.
Hey guys!
Here it is - Chapter 15. Not my favorite (at least not the whole one. But I'm taking my time with reuniting our most favorite couple, because it feels right to me - don't hate me :)

And I wanted to ask you something. I don't want to disappoint anyone by not uploading, because there's always the possibility of another writers blockade, so I decided on two updates a week, to have enough chapters ready, so I could cover these periods.
But if you want 3 (and risk the no-update-possibility for a longer time period - which is unlikely at the moment, since I'm writing chapter 32, while you're reading this), you'll get 3. You know, what I mean? So... 2 or 3 ?
Maybe I'm overthinking this, too... Okay, I probably am. Yeah. I'll stop talking now.

Love,
LJT
---

See the end of the chapter for more notes

...  

“You’re gonna call as soon as you’ve landed, okay?” Mom’s using her “mom-voice” again. I don’t like it, when she does it, because I'm suddenly feeling like my seventeen-year-old self, that had just gotten the “let-the-door-open-all-the-time-speech”. Don’t know, why.

“Yes.”

“And you’re sure, you can’t stay longer?”

“Yes.” For the tenth time.

“Mom, let her go.” Aden intervenes, rolling his eyes behind her back. “She’s not leaving forever. She’ll be back for my birthday. Which is in seven weeks.”

Yeah. In seven weeks, he’ll be old enough to drive. Crazy.

She looks at her son. “I know. I just hate saying goodbye.”

“That’s exactly, why she wouldn’t let you take them to the airport.”

“Aden James Griffin.“ I warn him. “Don’t talk to your mom like that. You hear me?”

“Sorry.”

We both just chuckle, knowing he’s right. Mom tends to make a scene, when we part, so we decided years ago, that we wouldn’t do that on airports anymore.
“I love you.” Mom continues, looking at me again. She’s already got tears in her eyes, as if I was leaving for years, not weeks. “Take care of yourself.”

“Will do. Love you too.”

We hug for a long moment – because we’re huggers, it runs in the family. When we part, she wraps her arms around Raven, who’s been staying behind, while I pull my not so little brother into an embrace.

“Bye, little one.”

“Haha. Nice try. Last time I’ve checked, I was taller than you.”

“Yeah.” I say and step back. “You are. Love you.”

“Love you too. And we’ll talk about the car!”

“The car?” Mom asks, her eyes wandering from her son to me and back. “What car?”

“Nothing, Mom. I swear.” Aden makes his innocent, pouty face again. The one, you don’t believe, but accept anyways.

She just shakes her head, laughing, while Raven and I get in the car. We wave back at my family, before we lose sight of them at the next crossroad.

“You got home late last night.” I state.

Raven successfully avoided me during the breakfast, so I couldn’t get any news out of her. But she’s been on a date with Bellamy Blake, the boy we grew up with. The one, who’s been crushing on her for almost his whole life.

“Did I?”

“Raven. Spill.”

She sighs, but the dopey grin on her face tells me everything I need to know. “It was great. He’s… really sweet.”

“Oh, mushy Raven. That’s a first.”

“I’m not mushy.” She grumbles.

“Yes you are. Look at that blush! You’re whipped!”

“Am not.”

“You are. I want to know details, Reyes. Where did he take you? What did you do?”

“He cooked me dinner and we sat on his balcony. Nothing fancy, but… I don’t know. It felt right?”

“Is that a question?”

“No. I mean… It was perfect. We talked and talked for hours. It felt… familiar, but at the same time exciting and new. Kinda hard to explain. He’s still the same and yet he’s so… grown up. He’s smart and funny and somehow dorky, you know? But in this cute way and… It just feels right.”
“Trust me, I know, what you mean.” I reassure her with a smile, that she can’t see, because she’s driving. “Did you kiss?”

“Who do you think I am? Have you seen me?” She replies, faking indignation. “Of course we did!”

“And?”

“And it was... wow. Just wow. I... I want to see him again. Don’t know, how I’ll make it work, but I... I don’t want it to be just a one-time thing, you know? I’d like to see, where it leads.” Raven sounds really smitten.

I'm getting lost in thoughts for a short moment, my eyes wandering outside, over houses and front yards. Then I notice, that we aren’t taking the route to the airport.

“Ray, are we heading to Bellamys, so you get so say goodbye? Didn’t you get enough of him last night? Because you could’ve totally told me.” I ask and try to cover up my irritation with some sarcasm in my tone.

“No, we’re not.”

“Then where are we heading? Because we’ve got a plane to catch in... an hour.”

“In three hours.” She corrects me. “I may or may not have lied to you about that.”

“And why?”

“I’ve got to do one more thing before we can head home, Clarke. You’ll see soon, promise.”

Somehow her answer isn’t exactly helping, because Raven is too serious, to not have me wondering. And the lying is new.

----

Ten minutes, lots of brooding and speculating later, Raven pulls the car into a parking lot in front of an animal shelter.

“You want to adopt a dog?”

“No, silly.” She says and rolls her dark brown eyes. “You can stay here, if you want. It won’t be long.”

Raven gets out of the car and after a few seconds of thinking, I follow her towards the entrance. Curiosity gets the best of me.

What are we doing here?

Do you know the feeling, when you’re waiting for an answer and then you finally get one, but you’d like to go back to the question? That’s the situation I’m in.

Because as soon, as we’ve stepped through the door, I get my answer.

Hundreds of photos are hung up on a large pin board by the entrance. Dogs in all sizes, shapes and colors with their new owners. And on some of them, I recognize familiar faces. Anya and... Lexa.
Suddenly I remember, that Raven wanted to apologize to her and didn’t get a chance. I should’ve know she wouldn’t go home, without doing it.

She’s sitting in her office and I can see her silhouette through a window.

I’m frozen to the spot.

So this is, what she’s doing now. Somehow, I’m not at all surprised.

Maybe I should go back to the car and wait there? I’m sure, she doesn’t want to speak with me – there is nothing to say anyways. We broke up in a rather ugly way ten years ago and we talked about it. We made peace. I’m not going to try and start to be friends with her. Even if we were friends before we dated – she’s my ex. No one is friends with their ex.

But it’s too late, Lexa saw us already.

“What are you guys doing here?” Her question is barely a whisper. She doesn’t do well with surprises, it seems.

“Can we talk for a minute?” Raven asks. “I’ve got something, I wanted to tell you and…”

Lexa nods and leads the way to back to her office.

I’m not going to follow them. In fact, I need some air. No hello, no smile – she didn’t even really look at me. I’d like to pretend, that it doesn’t bother or hurt me, but both would be a lie. I didn’t do anything to her!

I step back outside, where the sunlight suddenly doesn’t seem that sunny anymore.

After all those years, she still gets under my skin. She’s still got that talent of annoying the shit out of me. Fuck her.

“Clarke?”

I turn around to face Anya. She’s got a dog on the leash and a frown on her face.

“Hi.”

“What are you doing here?”

“Raven wanted to talk to your sister, before we leave. Don’t worry, we’ll be gone soon.”

She nods, her eyes still locked onto my face. “You look like shit.”

“Wow, still charming I see.”

“No, I mean, you look… I don’t know. Not happy.”

“Well, might have to do something with being here and not feeling welcomed. Or with being here in general.”

She sighs, clearly uncomfortable with what she’s going to say next. “Look, I’m sorry for what I said. I know, I overstepped. It’s just…”

“Save it.”
After a few seconds of mutual staring, neither one of us wanting to give in, she clears her throat. “So you’re heading back to…?”

“Los Angeles. And after that, to Canada for filming.”

Why am I telling her this? It’s none of her business.

“You’re happy? With the job I mean?”

That’s definitely no Smalltalk.

“Umm… yeah? I mean, I’m living my dream.”

She nods, but it’s not the agreeing kind of nod, more like the “if-you-say-so-kind”, which is really annoying.

I can feel anger boiling in my veins and my temperature rising. “You don’t know me, so don’t judge me.” I tell her sharply.

“I’m not judging. I’m observing.” She replies, not even blinking.

By now the tension between us is so heavy and thick, that you could probably cut it with a knife.

“I’m going to wait in the car.” I’m turning on my heels.

“Clarke, wait. Okay, I’m sorry.”

“Sorry? For what especially? For judging me? For hating me, even though I did nothing wrong? You have to be a bit more specific, Anya, because I can’t read your fucking mind!”

She is slightly taken aback by my sudden outburst.

“Umm…”

“Yeah, thought so. You know what? Next time we meet, you better think about your words, before you say them. Because last I checked, your sister left me, not the other way around. She broke my heart.” I emphasize the necessary words, hoping she finally gets it. “And I’m so fucking done! I’m done with being blamed! If you want to blame someone, blame her!”

And with that I turn around again, only to be faced with Raven and Lexa. Both their mouths hang slightly open – because none can remember, that anyone ever gave Anya shit.

But on Lexas face, there’s although a hint of hurt and I can’t help but feel a little bit guilty. I forgave her and now she accidently heard my outburst.

Silence hangs in the air for a few long seconds.

Then Lexa turns on her heels and returns back inside.

“Was that necessary?” Raven asks.

“Yes. But I didn’t mean for her to hear that.”

Should I follow her? Or better not?

Anya exhales audible behind my back. “I’m sorry, Clarke. You’re right. I was being overprotective
and… I'm honestly sorry.”

I nod, even though I don’t really care right now. “Accepted.”

“Do you… want to talk to her? Or should I?”

That’s a damn good question.

Of course I want to explain my words, but do I have to? After all, she’s the one who owes me some explaining. I didn’t say anything, that she didn’t know already.

“We have a plane to catch.”

Anyā nods again. “Okay. Well then, save flight.”

“Thank you.” Raven answers.

We watch Anyā following Lexa inside, but I'm frozen to the spot.

Fuck. What a shitty start in the day. I can only hope, that the rest of it will be better. But it will, because I'm going to be back home tonight and I'm going to have dinner with Niylah and some good sex and then all of this will feel like a bad dream.

Yeah.

“Clarke? Let’s go.”

-----

It’s late afternoon, when Raven and I get home.

L.A. traffic is something special and even though I have been living here for years now, I'm still not used to it. But in my veins flows small town blood and we can’t change, who we are.

Two years ago, Raven convinced me to buy a house here. We’ve still been living in a small apartment in the middle of the city, which seemed to be enough for me, because we had to travel a lot anyways.

But looking back, it was a good decision. A reasonable investment. And having more space has its perks.

It’s not as fancy as the houses in the neighborhood.

Three bedrooms and a decent sized pool. I tried to find something cozy, a place where I feel at home and where the world stays outside of my fence. With a big kitchen, because when I've got some free time, I like to cook for friends. With a large living room, with enough space for a pool table – the only investment I really did for myself, because I've always wanted one. Though I'm hardly playing anymore.

I'm still living with Raven.

Sometimes she would joke, that we’d make a good couple, if she only wasn’t straight. But I guess, even then, I couldn’t look at her differently. She’s my sister. Eww, that would be gross.

“I'm going out tonight, wanna join me?”
“Nope. Niylah’s coming over later.”

“Ohhh.”

“Wipe that smug grin of your face, Reyes, that hasn’t been funny anymore since highschool. And before you ask, yes, I plan on getting laid tonight.”

“I didn’t say anything.”

“You didn’t need to.”

She’s still grinning like a teenage girl.

Living with her has its perks. She’s the sister I never had, my best friend and a child – and all in one person. Three for the price of one.

“You’re planning on flying to Paris on Friday?” Raven asks, while I take a look at the almost empty refrigerator.

“Yeah.”

“And you’ll be back on Monday?”

“Yes? Why?”

She shrugs. But I know, something’s up.

“Raven Marie Reyes. Spill.”

“Nothing, I just thought, that I’d have the house to myself.” Raven answers after a few seconds. She’s trying to sound innocent, but when I’m raising my eyebrows instead of saying something, she sighs. “Okay. Well I thought about inviting Bellamy? If that’s okay with you? I just... Can I?”

“You guys are moving fast, hm? Of course you can. It’s your house as much as it is mine.”

“That’s only half true. You’re the owner.” She corrects, ignoring my first comment completely. “Really?”

“Just one thing.” I say, enjoying the nervous look on her face perhaps a little too much. “No sex outside of your room. Not in the kitchen, not in the living room and especially not in the pool!”

“That was ONE ti-”

“Raven.” I warn her with a severe look. “I mean it.”

“Okay, okay. No sex in the pool. Got it.”

“And the kitchen. And the living room.”

“You’re no fun, Griffin.”

In moments like these, I really hate her. From the bottom of my heart.

-----
“I’ve missed you. Can I say that?” I tell the dark-blonde woman with those amber colored eyes and pull her down into a kiss, because she’s about one head taller than me.

“Sure you can.” Niylah replies with a chuckle, when we part. “I brought pizza.”

“You’re perfect.”

“There is no-“

“No such thing as perfection.” I finish her sentence, while I'm dragging her with me into the kitchen. “Yeah, I know. But you're pretty close. You feed me.” I set the pizza down onto the kitchen counter, before I turn around to face her.

“Thank you.” Niylah bows her head with a wide smile. “How about we eat some dinner, before it gets cold?”

“Just a minute.” I tell her, getting on my tiptoes to capture her lips again.

She tastes like mint. That’s the first thing I notice, when she grants access for my tongue. I like, that it feels familiar. Safe.

I let my fingers run under her shirt and across her ribcage, until my fingertips meet her bra, evoking a whimper from the woman.

“Clarke. We should-“

“Please.” I mumble breathlessly against her lips.

Instead of an answer, she connects our lips again and soon enough she’s backing me up against the wall, slipping one hand down the back of my jeans, while her lips suck on my pulse point.

Hell, it’s been too long.

“Bedroom. Now.”

...

Chapter End Notes

thanks for kudos, comments, ... you're great and I love to hear your thoughts! <3
Chapter 16 - Clarke.

Chapter Notes

hey guys :)  

So a few of you weren’t happy about the last chapter, because it’s hard to see a happy ending evolving from there. There’ll be a lot more Clexa really, really soon, I promise. I just had the feeling, that both of them needed to find a part of themselves again, before they can try to repair their relationship. Because how can you start a relationship, when you don’t know yourself?

I don’t want to spoiler you, but this one will be a big step for Clarke.

Next one will be a really short Lexa chapter and then we’ll have another one with Clarke. You’ll get both before next Sunday!  
And then you’ll get my favorite chapter so far on Sunday.

Stay safe and thanks for reading!  
Love,  
LJT.

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See the end of the chapter for more notes.

...

“Wait, why aren’t you in Paris?” A demanding voice from behind asks me, while I lock my front door.

*Shit.*

I’m too late. Raven and Bellamy are already here.

“Umm… Just heading out. Forgot something.” I tell her, suppressing a groan. “Hi, Bell. Nice to see you here.”

“No, no.” Raven intervenes, before I can hug him. “Don’t lie to me, Griffin. You’ve got many talents but lying isn’t one of them.”

“I’m not lying. Enjoy your weekend, I-”

“Clarke Elizabeth Griffin!” She shouts after me. “Come back here and explain! You’ve been hiding in your room for days and I’m not going to let you go, before you tell me why!”

Did I mention, that she’s demanding as hell? Raven Reyes could rule the world, because she’s got everything she would need. She’s got the brain, she’s got the heart and she’s got the balls. Definitively the balls.

“No need to full-name me.” I say, both hands raised and sighing in defeat. “Can we talk about it inside?” I’ve got noisy neighbors.
Raven nods.

I grab my tiny suitcase and walk back into the house I planned on leaving for the weekend.

“Wow, princess, that’s a nice house you’ve got here.” Bellamy states, looking around in awe. “Is that a pool table?” He asks a second later, even though he knows the answer.

Raven groans and I chuckle, while I drop my suitcase. He’s such a child.

“Now that the kid is busy, the adults can talk.” Raven states, earning a half-hearted “Hey!” from Bellamy, who’s already engaged in a game. “Why aren’t you on a plane right now? I booked your flight, I know, when you were supposed to leave.”

“We… canceled.”

“Why am I hearing it only now?”

“Because… I didn’t want to talk about it?”

Raven frowns.

Normally we talk about everything – except for the things that bother me. Because I’m not good at talking about feelings. At least not anymore, I guess.

“Everything okay with you guys?”

It’s no secret, that Raven never understood, what Niylah and I had or why we never talked about calling each other girlfriend or never said “I love you”.

“We… broke up.” I say quietly. And just like that, the truth is out there. “Or we ended whatever we had, I don’t know.”

Instantly, my best friend pulls me into a hug, not even waiting for me to finish my sentence. “Oh Clarke, I’m sorry. Why didn’t you tell me? I would’ve cancelled my weekend and we would’ve gone out and gotten wasted.”

“Because we never were together and it doesn’t feel like a breakup. It hurt, but… more like losing a friend.” I tell her honestly. “And besides, I’ve rooted for Bell and you since highschool. I wouldn’t ruin your weekend.”

“Clarke.” She says, as she pulls back.

“Raven.”

“Why? I mean, you were so excited about seeing her again and…”

And now we’ve reached the sad part. The one, who leaves my body cold and boneless, full of disbelief and frustration. Lots of frustration.

But nevertheless, I’m going to tell Raven the truth.

Even if my voice is breaking and my lips are trembling, when I do, because I’m about to say this one, scary thought aloud, that I haven’t even finished in my head. Even if I gave myself a promise a long time ago.

I’m going to say it, even if it suddenly becomes so much more real.
“Because she’s not her.”

Raven freezes and stares at me with wide eyes.

I know.

I know it’s the first time, that I speak about her freely, since I’ve left Polis ten years ago. And I know, that this alone is enough to leave Raven in a state of surprised shock.

But here I am, finally confessing the one thing, that’s always been present in my subconsciousness for all these years. Confessing the one truth, that everyone else always saw. Everyone – but me. Because confessing, that no one ever will be her, is so… final. So damn fucking final and that scares me. It terrifies me.

A great tremor overtakes my body and I'm covering my face with my hands, as if the simple gesture could stop the tears. It can’t.

Silent streams of tears well from somewhere deep inside, from a place inside me I kept hidden and locked. Like rivers escaping through small holes in a broken dam – holes, I tried but failed to fix.

I barely notice the arms, that wrap around my shaking body.

Burying my face in Ravens neck, I mumble the one question I never allowed myself to ask. “Why… why didn’t she stay?”

“Oh, sweetie.” My best friend says, her voice full of compassion and warmth, as she hugs me tightly.

“Why?”

“She did want to stay. She was just scared and confused. But she loved you. She did. Everyone could see that.” She tries to reassure me, but her words don’t make sense to me, just like Lexas actions didn’t make sense to me years ago.

If she had loved me, then why did she leave?

I don’t notice Bellamy coming towards us, until he wraps his arms around me from behind and I'm in the middle of a group hug.

We stay like that for a few more minutes, until Raven pulls back to look at me. “I'm going to get ice cream and we’re going to do a movie marathon, how does that sound?”

“No.” I shake my head. “I'm going to crawl into my bed and—”

“No.” Bellamy intervenes. “You hear me?”

“Where did you want to go by the way?”

“A hotel.” I’m kind of embarrassed. “I didn't want to bother you.”

“God, Griffin.” Raven shakes her head. “Sometimes I wonder, if you know us at all. I'm heading out for ice cream now and when I'm back, you’ll tell us, what happened, okay?” She demands. “Chocolate for you, vanilla for me and Bell, still strawberry?”

“Yup.”

“We’re so cliché.”
Tuesday, three days ago.

My back hits the mattress and the next second her lips crash hungrily into mine. Hands roam my body, until she grabs the hem of my shirt and starts pulling it up.

That’s when I feel it. It’s washing over me with full force and I can’t do anything about it. Even though I want to.

That’s one of life’s greatest tragedies – not loving the right person. Niylah could be the right one. But she isn’t and she never will be.

“Niylah, wait-”

The woman on top of me pulls back immediately. “Everything okay?”

“Yes.” I answer, turning my head away from her to avoid her eyes. “No.”

Niylah frowns and rolls off of me. “It’s about her, isn’t it?” She asks after a few silent seconds.

Complete helplessness converts into tears full of sorrow, which rain down my face at lightning speed. “I’m so sorry.”

And then Niylah does a very surprising thing.

She smiles and wipes the tears away in a soft and loving gesture I don’t deserve. “Don’t be.” She says. “We had many good days. Now it’s time for something new. Don’t cry, Clarke.”

“I didn’t mean to-”

“I know. The heart doesn’t follow rules or plans. We’ll still be friends and I’ll always be there for you. We’ll just skip the sex. Even though it’s a shame.” She chuckles and through my tears I laugh with her. “Everything’s going to be okay. I promise.”

How can she be so… understanding? Here I am, confessing, that I can’t get the one woman out of my head, who came close enough, to break my heart and she…

She’s too good to be true.

“Niylah, I-”

“Come here.” She says, pulling me into her arms to spoon me from behind. “Clarke. I know you. When I first saw you, I knew there’s a place in your heart that belonged to someone else. You may have forgotten about it, maybe you wanted to, but it’s still there.”

Her words resonate in my body, in my soul.

I swallow. “I’m sorry.”

“For what? For loving with someone? That’s nothing to be sorry for.”

“I’m not… I…” I’m not what? Having feelings for Lexa? Who am I kidding?

Fuck.
“Loving someone is no weakness. It’s a strength, even if it hurts us sometimes. But without some pain in our lives, we wouldn’t be living, would we? We wouldn’t know the worth of life, of love, of friendship. Without the possibility of losing it, we wouldn’t appreciate it for what it is. A gift.”

I wonder, how she does it. Always sounding so wise.

“But why does it feel like weakness?”

“Because when you love someone, you open your heart. You share your deepest secrets. You share your soul with somebody else.”

“Do you… believe in love?”

“I do.” She answers, smiling genuinely. “And you should, too.”

“I did.” I tell her, trying not to think about the feeling Lexa left in my whole existence.

“And if you’re really, really honest to yourself, Clarke. What do you feel deep down?”

----

Present time

“What the actual fuck.”

“Thanks, Ray.”

“No, I mean it. That girl is something else. Did she really pull the friends card?”

“Yes. I told you, she’s living this one-day-at-a-time-thing. I don’t know. It’s like she expected it. She was so relaxed and…” I shake my head in disbelief. “But that’s not the point. I couldn’t have sex with her, because I couldn’t get Lexa out of my head. After ten fucking years!”

“That’s a good thing.” Bellamy objects.

Raven and I stare at him, as if he’s gone crazy.

“And how exactly is this a good thing?” Raven asks, taking the question right from my lips.

“Because Lexa’s single, too.” He states. “They could talk it out and see, where it leads them. Wouldn’t be the worst case scenario, would it?”

Raven smacks him on the head, right before I get to do it. Seems, I’m pretty slow today. But honestly, is he insane?

“I’m more interested in moving on.”

“That’s making no sense. You love her and she probably still loves you. Where’s the problem?”

Guys aren’t thinking things through. I swear, sometimes I can’t understand, how woman manage to spend their wholes life’s with a guy.

“I don’t… love her. I just… can’t stop thinking about her.”

He frowns. “Earlier you said, Niylah isn’t her. To me it sounded like you’ve still got feelings for her.”
“Bell.” Raven warns.

“What? Just stating the obvious here.”

I focus on my ice-cream again.

Nope, I'm definitely not being part of this conversation any longer. So not doing this.

Earlier was just a weak moment, right?

No.

I can’t convince my heart to go back to ignoring this small part of my heart. It’s like Niylah opened a lock with her words and now everything’s coming back. I'm tired of shutting down my feelings.

Before I know it, I’ve gotten up.

“Clarke?”

“I'm going upstairs. I've... I've got something to do. Enjoy the rest of the night. Thanks for the ice-cream and the talking. See you tomorrow.”

“You sure?”

I'm already out the door.

After dad died, I shut down many parts of me. But after Lexa broke the promise she gave me – just a few days before senior prom – I felt even more lifeless.

Deep down I knew, I had to rebuild myself and start over, so I went to Europe. Some parts of me came back to life. Some didn’t.

Upstairs I lock myself in my art room. It’s not really an art room, since I haven’t been painting or drawing in there, but “writing-room” sounds strange to me.

Dozens of notes, ideas or unused scenes are hung up on a large pin board. My desk is overflowing with folders and documents. I take a stack of them and lay them down on a small side table, to have some room.

Then I search for an empty piece of paper, grab a pencil and start drawing.

My first draft looks like shit. My second is a lot better, but I still can’t get it right.

I'm content after my forth attempt.

Vivid shapes of eyes, a sharp jawline and plump lips are just the most remarkable parts of a face, that came to life out of nothing but a memory.

Drawing always helped, when I wanted to clear my head. Before I know it, I’ve drawn dozens of versions of her and that’s when I realize, that I can’t run from my feelings anymore. There still there at the end of the day. Waiting for me.

A part of me still loves her.

It probably always will.

The longer I think about it, the clearer I see things.
There’s this character in my books and my show, which I named Alex. She’s got chestnut colored hair and green eyes, but there are so much more similarities than her appearance. The way she protects her people. The way she thinks and speaks. The way the hero reacts to her and the other way around.

Mom always says, that a piece of me is part of the story. I denied it. But I was wrong. So wrong.

Suddenly I think about the script we have for the new season. We just started filming last month, but there’s something, that I can’t let happen.

Hastily I grab my phone and dial Marcus Kane’s number.

“Clarke? It’s late.” He sounds, like he’s been sleeping.

Oops. Sorry, not sorry. Because this is urgent.

“We need to change the script.”

“What? Do you know, how-”

“I’m well aware, thank you. But Alex can’t die.”

Silence follows and I can almost hear him thinking.

“You know, that it’s going to change the whole season, if the character survives, right? Like… everything we’ve planned? And then there are the scenes we’ve already shot and… I’m not sure, if the network’s going to be on board with this.”

“Yes. But it’s my show and it’s the networks most successful one. It’s a good thing, that I haven’t written the book already. And if it’s about the money, then I’ll happily pay for it myself. You can tell them that.”

He exhales. “I mean, it’s possible. The cast will be pretty happy, I think. And the fandom anyways. But… are you sure? I mean, why the sudden change?”

“I want the drama and the angst and the basic storyline. But I want a happy ending, too.”

“You’re planning to end the show?”

“No, not yet. But… I need Alex. She’s the one for Eliza.”

Am I still talking about fictional characters? Of course.

“Okay. I’ll see, what I can do.”

“Thanks, Marcus. I’m going to start writing the new version.”

“Don’t forget to sleep.”

“Sleep’s for the dead.”

He chuckles. “Well then, I’ll call you tomorrow. Good night, Clarke.”

“Night.”

...
thanks for all the comments! I don't reply to each and every one, but I read them and the
make me smile every time. They keep me going, so don't stop :D
have a great day, wherever you are <3
It’s a quiet Monday morning. One of the good ones.

I went for a run with Luna, had breakfast and got to work an hour early, so I don’t feel too guilty for leaving a little earlier.

Somehow – I don’t know how – Luna convinced the owner of our apartment, that we could move in over the weekend. And we did. But since none of us had a real home for years, we don’t have much stuff. So we’re going to buy some furniture and other necessities later.

“You won’t believe, what just happened.” Anya says and plops onto the chair across from the table I’m currently sitting at to get some paperwork done.

“Surprise me.”

I’m not one for surprises and most of the time, I’m not even surprised, because most people are fairly predictable.

“I just got a call from the bank. Someone’s donated all the missing four thousand dollars and five thousand more to the shelter. That’s nine fucking thousand dollars!”

Okay, I’m definitely surprised.

“That’s a lot of money.”

“Lexa, that’s not just a lot of money. That’s more than we need to fix the roof. Maybe we can buy the meadow next to the shelter and build a fence around it, so we’ve got a place to let the dogs run. Or we could use it for a dog school!” Anya’s enthusiasm is cute and it’s making me smile.

“Do we know, who donated?”

“No. The bank said, the donor wanted to be anonymous.”

Nine thousand dollars are a lot of money for an animal shelter in a small-town like Polis. I wonder, who’s got enough, to make such a donation.

“What are you thinking?”

“Nothing.”

“I know your nothing-face and it’s not this one.”

“I just… wondered, from whom the money comes. That’s all.”
“And you’ve got a suspicion?”

“You don’t?”

“Honestly, I don’t care. As long as the dogs are safe and we’ve got lots of problems less… No, I don’t. And you shouldn’t, too.”

“But why should Clarke donate money to the shelter?”

“Maybe because she’s got a good heart? Because she cares for animals? Or because she cares for us, for you? I don’t know!” Anya exclaims, clearly annoyed by my skeptical reaction. “What I do know, is that it’s a blessing! Thank you for ruining my mood.” And with that she storms out of the office.

I’m almost a hundred percent sure, that the money came from her.

But why on earth should she do that?

I don’t need her pity. We don’t.

So I grab my phone and text Bellamy.

Me: can you tell Clarke, she shouldn’t have done that?

Bell: good morning to you too, sunshine.
Bell: btw, what are you talking about?

Me: could you just tell her?

Bell: right now? Or can I sleep some more? I’ve got another hour, before I have to get to work…

I didn’t mean to wake him. But sometimes it’s hard for me to remember, that not everyone around me is an early bird like I am. Though half past eight isn’t that early anymore.

Me: sorry.

Bell: it’s okay. Everything alright?

Me: yes. And good morning. :)

Bell: I will text her later.

Me: thank you.

I don’t want her to take back the money. I'm not dumb, I know, that we need it. But I want her to know, that I know. Is that stupid?

-----

Bellamys report comes a few hours later, when I’m feeding the dogs.

Bell: so I texted her and delivered your message. She claims, she doesn’t know, what you’re talking about.

Unbelievable.
Me: tell her I know. And thank you.

A few minutes later another message comes through.

Bell: I'll just copy and paste her message.
Bell: What the hell is she talking about??
Bell: is that answer enough?

Me: tell her thank you. Still, she didn’t have to do that.

Bell: C: whatever she’s talking about, it’s got nothing to do with me.
Bell: can’t I just give you her number? That’s ridiculous.

Yeah, as if.

Me: no, thanks. I'm done. Sorry for bothering you with this.

Bell: you’re not bothering. How about some drink this week? I heard, you’ve got a new apartment?

Me: maybe next week. I'm pretty busy with all the moving.

Bell: okay. Text me :)

Me: will do.

I'm not that busy. But it’s easier to keep the contact at a minimum.

Not because spending time with him makes me miss her. No. Of course not.

-----

When I get to the apartment around two p.m., loud music greets me in the stairway.

So Luna managed to set up her stereo on her own – she’s been cussing and swearing the whole Sunday afternoon.

The thought makes me smile.

I unlock the front door and kick of my shoes, before I walk down the small corridor. On the left side, there’s Luna’s room. The next one after that is mine. On the right side there’s our bathroom – with a tub. Honestly, I squealed excited like a little kid, when I discovered that. Taking a bath is a privilege, that’s something I learned. And showers are lame.

After those rooms follows the open space with a small kitchen and the living room, which is still lacking a couch, a tv and some shelves. But that’s given Luna time to paint.

“Babies, I'm home!” I say loudly, so my dogs don’t go crazy.

Both come running and I kneel to cuddle both of them – fighting Pauls kisses once more.

Luna’s just finishing up the one wall towards the small balcony across the room.
“Did it have to be green?” I ask, arms crossed and barely enthusiastic.

“Green is a happy color!” Luna rolls her eyes. “Loosen up, Woods, you’re getting boring. But don’t worry, we’ll help you.”

“We?”

“Yes. We. We’re having a house warming party on Friday.”

“You don’t know people around here.” I tell her, even though I know it’s a weak attempt. Because if Luna has set her mind on something, there’s no stopping her. I learned that the hard way, being her superior.

“I know you. And Anya. And Lincoln. And he knows your old friends. It’ll be fun, I promise. Besides, maybe we’ll get Ryder and Artigas down here, too.”

I’d like to see them again, I guess.

“Can we go shopping now?”

“God, Lexa. Who pissed in your cheerios?”

“No one.”

Clarke did.

Always Clarke, it seems.

...

Chapter End Notes

sooo...
who donated the money? ;)

thanks for reading and the feedback and you're amazing! Have a beautiful day/evening, wherever you are <3
Chapter 18 - Clarke.

Chapter Notes

I'm a bit late today, but I went to see a movie and just arrived back home. This one's going to solve the mystery question about who donated the Money - one of you guessed right. I didn't want to make it a bigger deal. Aaaaand: a kiss happens. Well, sort of.

And: next chapter is one of my personal (and probably all time) favorites, so I'm excited for Sunday, even though that's still far, far... far away. (No, I'm not drunk, just very happy :D)

Have a beautiful day or Night, wherever you are :)

Love,

LJT
---

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

...

I'm in the middle of a heated discussion between Marcus Kane and my co-screenwriters Wells Jaha and Nate Miller about where to take the season we're currently filming, when my phone vibrates in the back pocket of my jeans.

Bellamy: hey, so… Lexa texted. She asked me to tell you, that you shouldn’t have done that. Bellamy: care to tell me, what she's talking about?

Umm… What?

There’s no way, she knows about the characters.

Me: I don’t know, what she’s talking about.

Bellamy: I'll tell her. Btw, next time I visit Ray, I’d like to get a tour around the set.

Me: we can do that. :D

It was nice to have him around over the weekend. I lied to myself, when I said, I didn’t miss him or the others. Because honestly? They are family – the part, that you love to pieces.

Bellamy: She says, she knows. What do you want me to tell her? And what’s this about? I thought, you don’t talk at all – even if it's through other people?

I frown. We don’t talk – so I’ve got absolutely no clue.

Me: What the hell is she talking about??

It doesn’t take long for another message to get through and I can’t help but think about this cute little
frown on Lexas forehead, whenever something was bothering her. Does she look like that right now, too?

**Bellamy:** She says thank you, but you didn’t have to do it. **Bellamy:** that’s all she says. **Bellamy:** I’m curious.

**Me:** whatever she’s talking about, it’s got nothing to do with me. But I'm curious, too.

“Who are you texting?” Raven asks discreetly.

“Your boyfriend.”

Raven blushes a little, before she goes into defense-mode. “He’s not my boyfriend. We’ve spent a weekend together and we’ve been on one date.”

“But you’d like him to be?”

“Don’t distract from the topic, Griffster.”

“I can text with Bellamy. That’s nothing special.”

“Yeah, you can.” She says. “But you’ve had this serious look on your face. So… what did you do?”

I sigh. Sooner or later, she’s going to know anyways. “Lexa accuses me of something I don’t know of. And after some back and forth through Bellamy, she said thank you. But I haven’t done anything.”

“Umm…” Raven blushes a little.

“Raven. What did you do?”

“Me? Nothing?”

I raise both eyebrows.

“Okay, I may have hacked into the computer Woods’ animal shelter and I may have seen, that they need money to fix their roof. And then I may have donated some money to the shelter. Anonymously. Maybe?”

“You did what?”

“I know.”

No wonder Lexa was pissed. I would assume it was me, too, if I were in her position. And then I would assume, that someone’s trying to buy something – because there aren’t that many nice people out there, who expect nothing from a donation like that. Does she think, this is my way of saying sorry for that outburst? Possible.

“You fix this. Very, very soon! Got-”

“Clarke, what do you say?” Marcus asks a bit louder to catch my attention.

“I'm sorry. What’s the last version?”

Marcus rolls his eyes, while Nate chuckles.
He’s one of the best people I know and really talented. He makes me change perspectives and when he learned, that I don’t want to kill off Alex, he literally jumped with joy.

“We decided on your idea, that Eliza will take Alex to the rebels’ camp to have her examined and operated. We can put her in some kind of coma, where she learns about the future. What do you think about that?” Wells explains.

I’m not sure about Wells. He’s a good guy and a fantastic screenwriter. He’s just not… the most social guy.

“Sounds good. I’ve written a lot of it down already, so we’ll work from there. How did the cast take the news?”

“They want to throw a thank-you-party for you, when you come down.” Marcus answers dryly and clearly not amused. “I suggest, we keep the news to ourselves until the season airs. For now, all the fandoms know, is, that Alycia signed for the first seven episodes of the season. We should use the heated discussions.”

Alycia’s the actress, who plays Alex.

“Okay. Then that’s it? Because I’d like to use my creative phase.”

-----

I’m staying holed up with Wells and Nate for six hours, but it’s worth it.

Before all of this craziness with the books and the show happened, I never thought, I could write with someone else. But both of them got into the story really well and we’ve been writing together for four seasons now.

Let’s just say, we were pretty successful.

Raven’s already home, when I arrive there at about 6 p.m. and she’s hanging on the phone, discussing some upcoming events.

I decide on taking a shower first.

When I get downstairs again, I’m wearing my beloved sweats and I’m feeling way better. *God, I hate people.* They make you wear something nice instead of something comfy.

“I ordered pizza.”

“I could’ve cooked something.”

Ravens eyebrows shoot up. “Yeah? As if. You’re a zombie.”

“Tomorrow then. We can’t live from pizza all week.”

“As if.” She snorts.

Okay, we can. But we shouldn’t.

---

We cuddle up on the couch with pizza, red wine and a movie. When did I become such a boring adult again?
“When are we leaving for Canada?”

“Tomorrow, at 3. You can join the cast’s party and sleep in the next day, but on Wednesday, we start shooting again. I’ve already told them.”

“Yeah. Party.” I say. “I'm enthusiastic.”

Raven chuckles and hands me the bottle of wine again.

“No, thanks. I… I don’t feel like it.”

“Listen, I just saw that they need money for the roof, before the winter comes. I wanted to help and maybe ease some of my guilt, okay? I’ve already talked to Bellamy. I’ll fix it, promise.”

“And you did. You’re helping. Stop worrying. Woods will get over it.”

Hopefully.

Thanksgiving is weeks away, but when I think about, I'm already nervous.

“Woods?” Raven asks teasing.

“Don’t push it.”

---

Later that evening, when I'm finally lying in my bed, I decide to forget the last week. To ban it from my head. I need to focus on work.

Flying back to set will help a lot, I guess.

The filmcrew are mostly really nice people and I’ve gotten quite close to some of them.

Watching something you wrote yourself coming to life is… magic. Pure and simple magic. Even after all those years.

I go over the script we wrote today again, before deciding, that it’s great. The fans are going to love it and I'm feeling at peace.

With a content feeling, I finally close my eyes, waiting for sleep to catch up with me.

And when it does, I dream about the brunette with those deep green eyes for the first time in a while.

---

I’m sitting on my roof, when voice startles me. “Didn't think, you'd be into adventures.”

“Shit? Are you insane, Woods?”

Fucking Lexa Woods. Of course she has to ruin the rest of my night, too.

I never thought about it, but her damn window is close to my favorite spot, even though I'm sitting higher.

So just like that, she’s ruined my favorite spot, too. Just by sitting in her window, smoking and being her usual annoying self.
Lexa shrugs and continues to smoke her cigarette. "You up for a party? A friend of mine is having one."

"Why?"

"Why the party?"

"No. Why do you ask that?"

Lexa shrugs again and finishes her cigarette, before she answers.

"Yes or no? You can bring friends."

"No, thank you."

"Oh come on, you can't keep living your boring life forever. One party is not going to kill you."

Boring life?

"Who the hell are you to judge my life? I'm not the one, who keeps following every trend and stuff."

Lexa raises her eyebrows.

"I'll be ready in twenty minutes, you can follow me in your car. Wear something nice. Or chicken out. You're choice."

Well, I'm a lot of things, but I never back down from a challenge. I'm very competitive and I never lose. So of course I'll go to the damn party. Even if it's just to annoy Lexa Woods.

I ask my parents (my dad says something like "finally") and I call the Blakes and Raven and all three agree to join me.

In contrast to common opinions on me, I do own some really cool (or sexy) outfits. And I can use makeup. I just don't see the sense behind it. Why hide yourself?

So I pull out some black skinny jeans, a tight dark blue top, that highlights my eye color and accentuates my curves and my boobs. Last my jeans jacket. Done.

I'm ready, when my people show up just in time.

"So, explain again. Why are we doing this again?" Raven asks, while I get into the car after Bellamy.

"Why not? Parties are your thing, aren't they?" I reply, trying to avoid the truth.

"Yeah, and we've planned on going, but you and Bell?"

"Bell and you. Learn English, Reyes." Bellamy corrects, looking strangely at unease at the thought of going to a party. He's avoided them successfully, in contrast to his twin sister and Raven.

I did join them for a few parties last year, but it stopped rather suddenly.

"Whatever, grammar nerd. So, it's not about trying to annoy Lexa Woods?"

"Nope."

Everyone knows, it is. Everyone except maybe me.
The party is exactly, like I thought it would be – I can tell after the first hour. Not, that my thoughts matter, because I haven’t been to a party in a while. But there’s loud, annoying music, the smell of beer and a lot of people I hardly like sober.

And party games. Lame, idiotic party games.

Throughout the evening we played a few rounds of beer pong – I’m surprisingly good at it and made stupid Echo drink lots of beer.

I had a few shots and beers and I feel good. It’s not enough to make me drunk, but it’s enough to lower my inhibition threshold.

That’s why I agreed to play truth or dare, when Echo challenges me.

It’s the seventh round and I kissed two people I dislike and Bellamy – which was awkward (because I didn’t want to be his first kiss).

But Echo, the cold-hearted bitch, hates losing. “Okay, Clarke. I dare you to kiss Lexa.” She says, grinning devilish, pointing across the room. “Twenty seconds and make it good.”

She expects me to back down. Everyone does, even Raven. Because they all know about the bickering and the problematic… relationship. If you want to call it that.

But I never bowed down to anyone, Lexa’s looking hot tonight and I’ve got probably hundreds of reasons to wipe that damn grin off of Echo’s face. Just a few weeks ago she ruined one of my paintings, just because she wanted to.

“Okay.” I shrug relaxed and get up, much to everyone’s surprise. “I’ll do it.”

Without thinking much about it, I walk over to Lexa, interrupting her flirt with a girl I don’t know.

“I have to kiss you.” I tell the green-eyed beauty, grab her neck and press my lips against hers, before she has a chance to react.

Her lips taste like beer and smoke, but like something sweet, too. They are soft and full and feel amazing against mine.

After a short moment, our lips start to move in sync.

A soft whimper escapes the schools most popular girl, giving me a confidence boost, before Lexa really kisses me back, deepening the kiss, sneaking her arms around my body.

I kissed a few people before.

But none has ever set my skin on fire like this, when the brunette swipes her tongue across my bottom lip and sends a tingling sensation through my body, all the way from head to toes.

Little do I know, that this feeling will stay there for the rest of the night.

And then tongue brushes against tongue and –

“Times up! Well done, Griffin!” Raven shouts, effectively breaking apart the heated kiss.

Lexa is breathing hard, pupils blown wide and almost black. She’s really turned on right now.
“Sorry.” I smile at her, before I return to the game, as if nothing happened. But my insides feel wobbly and my mind is running wild.

I could blame it on the alcohol. But honestly? It faded the moment I kissed my annoying neighbor.

Fuck.

That was hot.

...

Chapter End Notes

once again: thanks for reading and the Feedback. It's really great, how some of you got so invested in the Story. That's all I can ask for :)

<3
Hey guys! How are you doing?

Okay, so this is part 1 of my two favorites. There's a song mentioned in this, you can listen to it here: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Xwg6qRkgOkU
I highly recommend it :)

And recently, I was wondering, where you're from? USA? Or somewhere closer to Germany maybe? It's just a crazy thought, that the words I'm writing are read by someone, who's living on the other side of the world. You know, what I mean? I can't wrap my head around it.

Love,
LJT.
---

On Friday morning, our apartment looks like we're actually living here.

That’s mostly on Luna, because she’s kind of messy and leaves her stuff about everywhere (which I knew and accepted before).

But she’s got talent, when it comes to decorating and arranging.

Around noon, I'm slowly starting to get anxious, while we’re shopping for groceries. Luna (who’s got herself a job at a gym yesterday) decided on ordering pizza, after I denied cooking. But we need lots of alcohol and I can’t deny that one.

Just the thought of our small place crowded with people I tried to avoid at the reunion…

Luna says, she gets it. But she said something about getting back out there and breaking me out of shell, too. I hope, she knows, what she’s doing.

Late afternoon I go for a run to get rid of all the excess energy.

I planned on taking my usual route, but I find myself running twice as much.

So it’s almost seven, when I return home.

Luna’s a little annoyed, but Anya opted to help her, so I earn that look from two people, instead of one – really helping.

Nevertheless, I take a long shower, enjoying the soothing sound of the flowing water and it’s
calming, warmth on my skin.

Maybe Luna’s right. Maybe I need a little push.

I hope so.

When I finally leave my room, a few people are already here. I spot Bellamy next to Luna in the kitchen and Anya talking with Monty and Jasper.

I smile. Anya never liked these two, claiming they’re growing up the be terrorists, since they almost burned down the school once. But she seems to be okay.

“Hey, Lexa!” A familiar voice makes me turn around. Harper McIntyre makes her way over to me.

“Hi.” I say quietly, unsure of how to approach her.

“Don’t worry, I come in peace.” She says, holding her hands up. Harper used to be friends with Clarke, even though she didn’t belong to the inner circle.

I let out a breath I didn’t know I was holding.

“Thanks for the invitation. It’s definitely been too long!”

Yeah.

And somehow… not.

“Look, I’m sorry about… Can we start again?”

I nod, unsure of what else to say.

The blonde smiles brightly. “Thank you for your service, by the way. It’s really brave.”

I swallow my surprise. Barely anyone back home said that to me, because none really knew how to approach the topic. After all, I’m a wounded veteran. Delicate topic.

I try to muster a smile.

“I’m grabbing a drink really quick, we can talk some more later, yes?”

“I’d like that.” I tell her honestly.

She’s a good one.

Before I can grab myself a beer or do anything else, Luna opens the door and invites Lincoln and Octavia in.

The brunette has got the same, fierce look in her piercing blue eyes, that she had ten years ago – so much for pulling herself together. She’s clearly annoyed to be here, but it seems, she didn’t want to let Lincoln go on his own.

I take a deep breath.

No, I won’t let her presence ruin this evening. It’s my fresh start here, right? I’m doing better. Even Clarke forgave me.

If I need to do this evening in my soldier-mode, then so be it. I clench my hands to fists for a second,
before I release them.

_Ge smak daun, gyon op nodotaim._

Grounders don’t give up, right?

I can do this.

“Linc!” I say and engulf the big, muscled in a hug, ignoring his company. I even managed to put some tone in my voice.

_You got this._

“Commander.” He answers. “Thanks for the invitation.”

“It’s all on Luna.”

I’m proud of myself. I’m still talking quietly, but at least I am talking. A little.

He grins knowingly. “Sure it is.”

I turn to face Octavia and after a few seconds of mutual staring, I offer my hand. “Peace?”

“Look, I know, Clarke forgave you, but-”

“Okay, then not.” At least I tried. “Want something to drink?” The question is directed at Lincoln, who nods immediately.

“Sorry about her.” He says, while we walk over to the kitchen a few meters away, leaving her behind. “I don’t know, why she’s so…”

“Resentful?”

“I wanted to say unforgiving, but yeah.”

“It’s okay.”

“No.” Lincoln shakes his head. “It’s everything but okay. I know what happened back then and I’d say, ten years and the war are more than enough. You deserve forgiveness, Lexa. You deserve everything.” His expression is suddenly so serious, that I can feel my body tensing up. “You saved my ass out there.”

“It’s my job.” I whisper.

But Lincoln wraps his arms around me once more. “That wasn’t your job.”

I don’t like to think about this dark day, but his warmth his comfortable and spares me a panic attack.

“We’re even, Linc.”

“No, we’re not. We’ll never be. So if there’s anything you need, you call me, okay?”

“I will.”

He smiles genuinely. “I’m glad you’re talking by the way. Maybe we’ll soon play some music together again?”
“Maybe.”

I’d like that.

When you’ve been to war and came back to reality the way I did, it’s hard to think about the good parts. The jokes and the laughter, the games. The comradeship. The friends you found. The family you made.

“Hello party people!”

I wince, while Lincoln laughs.

Artigas is here.

The youngest of our group is the loudest, too. Everywhere he goes, laughter and bad jokes follow, but mostly? Chaos.

I watch, as Luna hugs him, before Lincoln high-fives the soldier.

“Lexi.” The black haired, short guy greets me.

I raise my eyebrows.

I may not be his superior anymore, but there’s no way I'm letting him call me that.

“Oh come on, Commander. Have some fun!” He says, grinning wide and open at me. To him, his whole life and everything about his existence, is a challenge. It’s his way of seeing the world and life in general.

And just like that, I'm feeling home. Surrounded by amazing people, who I shared the worlds most cruel things with, and all of them are safe – because I saved them. Lincoln was right. My sacrifice made this evening possible.

“I had fun, until you dragged your skinny ass up here.” I answer, but wrap my arms around him nevertheless. “It’s good to see you.”

“You too, Woods. You too.”

-----

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Xwg6qRkgOkU

“Play something with us?” Artigas asks later, as we sit around the couch, all four of us close together. He points at the guitar, that’s been resting next to the brand new tv – untouched for months now.

We had pizza and a few drinks, but no one’s more than a little buzzed.

I hesitate for a second.

Music and I, we were pretty close during war.

We used to sing and play a lot over there, but… It’s been hard to return home without it. But I'm feeling so calm, so relaxed right now, like I’ve finally arrived somewhere after months of searching.

So I nod and Luna hands me the guitar, while Anya’s looking at me questioningly. She hasn’t seen
my playing in years.

“You sure you can play?” Luna asks.

“Yeah. Nou get you daun.” I tell her with a smile. Stop worrying.

She nods.

I tune the guitar and play a couple of chords to test me arm, while Luna shuts off the stereo. There’s a little pain, but the longing is bigger.

“How about North?” I ask and all three of my friends nod with a smile.

It’s this song, that we used to play the most. It’s not a party song or a carefree one, but it feels right to return to the music with this one.

“Ogeda.” Artigas says, unpacking his guitar. Together.

We start playing the melody as one.

And seconds later all four of us start to sing the familiar lyrics, which bring us right back to the desert, to the camp and to the bonfire under the stars.

“We will call this place our home, 
the dirt in which our roots may grow.
Though the storms will push and pull, 
we will call this place our home.”

I catch Lunas eyes and smile back at her, hoping she understands the unspoken thank you.

“We’ll tell our stories on these walls.
Every year, measure how tall.
And just like a work of art, 
we’ll tell our stories on these walls.”

Lincoln lifts one arm to pull Luna closer, while they sing the beautiful words, drumming a quiet beat on his thighs.

I'm home.

“Let the years we're here be kind, be kind.
Let our hearts, like doors, open wide, open wide.
Settle our bones like wood over time, over time.
Give us bread, give us salt, give us wine.”

I'm back to the desert, smelling the air and feeling the sand beneath my feet. And I know, that it’s true, what they say about music. It brings healing.

“A little broken, a little new.
We are the impact and the glue.
Capable more than we know, 
to call this fixer upper home.”

I get lost in the music, with closed eyes, while my fingers play on their own, as if they never stopped.

“With each year, our color fades.
Slowly, our paint chips away.  
But we will find the strength 
and the nerve it takes 
to repaint and repaint and repaint every day.”

There were never words more true, more fitting.

“Let the years we're here be kind, be kind.  
Let our hearts, like doors, open wide, open wide.  
Settle our bones like wood over time, over time.  
Give us bread, give us salt, give us wine.  
Let the years we're here be kind, be kind.  
Let our hearts, like doors, open wide, open wide.  
Settle our bones like wood over time, over time.  
Give us bread, give us salt, give us wine.  
Smaller than dust on this map, 
lies the greatest thing we have:  
the dirt in which our roots may grow 
and the right to call it home.”

I let the melody fade, while stirred-up silence fills the room.

Luna is smiling brightly at me. She’s proud of herself, but even more of me. Because she knew, I needed this and she managed to get me out of my shell, just like she said she would.

Anyà’s eyes are glistening and I watch, as she wipes lonely tears away.

Bellamy nods, raising his beer in my direction.

And I?

I’m feeling good. Free. Liberated.

Safe.

...
The longer the night lasts, the easier it gets to talk to people.

Around midnight I’ve got a little too much alcohol in my system, but it doesn’t matter, because it’s supposed to be a party, right?

I’ve had a great talk with Harper after the little music session. We exchanged numbers and are planning to go for a run together, when she hasn’t got a nightshift.

I watch, how Artigas and Luna easily beat Lincoln and Bellamy in beer pong.

It’s so good to have them back.

I know, that my squad is the reason, I got a glimpse of myself tonight.

I haven’t seen Artigas and Luna since the day I got captured – at least not in person. Luna waiting on Anyas doorsteps was the first step in the right direction. I started talking, because I felt protected.

That’s one of the strongest feelings I get around them.

When you’re working with people under gunfire or in other extreme situations, you need to trust them with your life. A bond grows between you and them, that can’t be described in words.

Being around them makes the pain and the fear I had to endure, less… cruel. It’s been worth it, because I could save them, and I did. And now they’re here to save me.

I’m not dumb.

I know, Anya has been in contact with Luna and Luna talked with them about me. Of course. I would’ve done the same.

“Hey.” I say to my best friend and grab her by the arm, when I get the chance. “Thank you.”
She smiles. “You’re welcome.”

“How did you know?”

“That you needed to see them?”

I nod.

“When you saw me.” She answers, as if that was obvious. Maybe I was.

“You’re amazing. Anyone ever told you that?”

She chuckles. “Yeah, I’ve heard it a few times. Mostly after sex, but… You’re not one for compliments, so… I take what I get.”

“Idiot.”

“I believe, *perfect roommate* was the name you were looking for.”

“Was not.”

Luna laughs lightheartedly.

-----

“Hey, Woods.” Bellamy’s deep, still strangely masculine voice breaks me out of my thoughts.

I’m standing outside on the balcony to catch some air.

“Blake.”

“I wanted to let you know, that it was Raven.” He tells me, while he’s walking towards me, both hands in his pockets.

I stare at him, not knowing, what he wants to say with that.

“The money.” He explains. “She donated, because she wanted to say sorry for… well, for the punch.”

I didn’t expect that. And I’m sorry for thinking, it was Clarke. She’s got no reason to do that, right? We’re nothing more than exes. Except to me it feels like we’ll always be so much more than that.

“That’s a lot of money for a punch.”

“Yeah, well, she’s still the same, you know?” He says, shrugging, with a wide, dopey smile on his face. “Always pushing the limits. She meant good.”

“Thank you.”

He simply nods.

----

“Lexa?”

I turn around to meet Octavia. “What? Now you’re talking to me?”
“Okay, I'm sorry. I tend to be a bit protecting, when it comes to people close to me and… Yeah.”

Protecting seems to be a synonym for acting like an asshole these days, but if she thinks that.

I don’t say anything.

“Look, I'm trying to tell you, that I forgive you.”

“I don’t need your forgiveness, Octavia. In case you haven’t noticed, we weren’t in a relationship. But if you mean, that we can be in one room and act civil, then okay, I accept your apology.”

“I wasn’t apologizing.” The brunette disagrees.

“No? Because maybe you should?”

“Why?”

“Let’s see.” I say, pretending to think hard. “Maybe for treating me like shit? You knew, what’s been on my mind, I confided in you. I trusted you. And you didn’t even try to understand.” I can’t fight the reproachful tone in my voice, but honestly, I don’t want to.

We were friends. Out of all the people Clarke was friends with, I was the closest to her.

So I told her about the report Clarke and I had read, that claimed her father was responsible. About the feelings I had and about trying to make a sense out of it.

But she chose a side, before there even were sides.

“Because there was nothing to understand!” She exclaims. “You acted like an ass and clearly nothing’s changed! God, Lexa, you’re so full of shit. And you know what? I thought, you had changed. That maybe the military made you a better person, but clearly, I was wrong. I wanted to try for Lincoln, but… Clarke’s better off without you. Fuck you, Woods.” She turns on her heels and leaves me standing.

Wow. That was a low blow.

Who’s full of shit now?

Octavia is an asshole. A resentful one.

But she’s right with one point. Clarke is better off without me.

And this sad truth ruins my mood completely.

I down the drink, I just had gotten myself, in one go, before I slam the glass on the kitchen counter, grab my jacket and go for a walk.

A few times around the block and I should be feeling fine again. Although I know, that it won’t work to get rid of all the energy, the adrenaline and the anger.

I want to punch something so badly.

---

**WARNING: scene with violent content ahead!**
I’ve been walking fast for a few minutes, maybe ten, just around the block, when a snarky voice rings out from somewhere behind me. “Look, who we have here.”

Cage Wallace and his best buddy Carl Emerson.

*Fucking bastards.*

“Fuck off, Wallace. I’m not in the mood.” I tell him and continue walking.

“Oh, so she can talk.”

“What part of *fuck off* did you not get? Should I spell it for you?”

“I’ll end you, Woods.”

That makes me stop and turn around. Both of them have those damn grins on their faces, which I want to wipe off.

I shouldn’t even talk to them. But I’m too angry to care right now.

“Have your try.” I say, my words cold as ice. “Taliban failed.”

He snorts, looking for attention from his companion.

I calculate my chances. Even with two arms, I’d start sweating in this fight, because I haven’t done this in a while. But I should be able to do it – except one of them learned martial arts. Highly unlikely.

Cage grins, as he steps forward. Clearly, he doesn’t see me as a threat.

When he throws his first punch, I almost pity him. It’s too easy to step aside.

I send him to the floor with a black eye before he can even touch me, when Emerson lands his first punch right into my face.

Fuck.

He shouldn’t have done that. He doesn’t know, what he’s triggered.

I touch my bottom lip and spit blood.

Images flash through my head.

*A chair. The cell. A fist meeting my face. My hands clenched to fists, fighting the ropes holding them still. The woman’s scarred face.*

I haven’t thought about her in a while. But I’m dreaming about her.

Emerson tries to back me up into a wall, while Cage gets up again. Cage won’t be a problem, but Emerson is fast. Damned bastard.

They want a fight? They’ll get one.

Anger’s boiling in my chest, raging like a war. And that’s my advantage – because I’ve left the war, but it never left me.

“Sure you want this?” I ask them my head held high.
They don’t answer, they attack.

And everything afterwards is just a blur.

I remember kicking Cage in his balls, before I smash my knee into his face.

I remember getting a punch against my ribcage, before I break Carl’s hand like it’s a matchstick.

I remember the sharp pain in my shoulder.

I remember being the only one left standing, when shouts come closer.

What I don’t remember is the bottle that Cage smashed on my head some time during the fight. Or the knife, Carl pulled out of his pocket.

At least not until I’m starting to feel dizzy.

Oops.

I feel my legs give in.

“Lexa? Hey!” A familiar voice says, then someone's slapping my face. “Stay awake, please! You hear me? Lexa!”

But darkness is stronger.

...

Chapter End Notes

I'm going to hide somewhere else now...
“What the hell did she do out there?” Anya exclaims angrily.

“I don’t know. I thought, she was in her room or something.” Luna answers.

“Umm… That might be my fault. But I couldn’t know, that-”

But Octavia doesn’t get far, before Anya interrupts her angrily. “WHAT?”

“No shouting in here or I’ll throw you out.” Abby intervenes.

But Anya ignores her mostly. “What did you do, Octavia?”

“We had a fight.” The brunette admits sheepishly. “I said some things, that probably made her angry and…”

“Couldn’t you just let her have one good evening for once?”

“I’m sorry.”

“Tell that to my little sister in this hospital bed!” The dark blonde woman exclaims.

“She’ll be okay.” Abby says, trying to calm everyone down.

“Okay?” Anya exclaims. “My sister hasn’t been okay in months!”

It’s silent for a few moments.

It’s Luna, who breaks it, when it gets too much. “What happened to Cage and the other one?” She had been pacing on the end of the bed like a tiger in a cage, since she entered the room and she’s only stopping now.

“I had them arrested.” Octavia says, her voice ringing from the other side of the room, as if she put some distance between her and Anya. “We’ve got footage of a video camera. They attacked her. They’ll be charged.”

“And that’s supposed to help?” Anya replies, her voice sharp. She hates seeing her sister in a
hospital bed. Last time that happened, her sister was battling a severe infection, that had almost killed her. After three weeks of torture. It’s still a miracle, that she’s even alive.

“Anya.” Luna tries to calm her. “Lexa will be okay. It’s just a concussion and a stab wound into flesh.”

“Just? Have you seen these scars? Have you? Did she show you? Because she endured way more pain in that hellhole, than any of us will ever endure in our fucking lives! God, Luna, she’s been tortured! Have you any idea what that means?!”

“I know.” The soldier replies in a pained voice. “I was there, Anya. I found her.”

Heavy silence fills the room.

Four people knew about it – Anya, Abby, Lincoln and Luna.

“Torture?” Octavia whispers shocked. “I… I didn’t know.”

“Nobody does.” Anya hisses.

The door opens again and another person walks into the room, before the situation can get any more heated.

“I called Raven. She’ll take the next plane.” Bellamy tells them, not noticing his sisters’ pale expression, while she sits down on a free chair in the corner.

---

“I called Raven. She’ll take the next plane.” Bellamys voice says.

The light is really cruel on my pounding head, when I open my eyes. “She doesn’t have to come.” I manage to say.

“Lexa!” My sister exclaims nearly soundless, while everyone else – Lincoln, Luna, Abby, Bellamy and… Octavia – moves closer around my bed.

A hospital bed. Yay.

I'm engulfed in a sisterly hug, before I know it. “Ouch.”

“Sorry. How are you?”

“That would be my question. Anyone, outside. I’ll call you back in, when I'm done.” Abby announces and claps her hand.

The sound echoes in my head and makes me groan.

“Or maybe not.” She adds, chuckling quietly, after the door has closed behind everyone.

What happened?

Oh.


“So Lexa, you know the drill. On a scale from one to ten. How bad?”
“A solid four.”

“So a six?” Abby translates, rolling her eyes.

“Maybe.”

“Do you remember, what happened?”

“Yup. Those guys attacked me.”

“Before your mother’s here, I’m going to give you the talk. Because, Lexa. What the hell were you thinking?”

“I defended myself!”

“When I look at your knuckles, you didn’t just defend yourself.”

“He had a knife!”

“And a bottle.” She adds, sighing. “I thought, you’re better?”

“I am better. I even played guitar tonight.”

“You did?” She asks, truly surprised, sitting down on my bed.

So Mom and her are still talking about everything. Good to know.

I nod.

Wrong decision, when you’re suffering from a concussion. I’m pretty sure, I have one. Had a few in my life.

One time, Clarke and I had a bet going on, when we were seven, about who could climb higher on the old oak tree in her front yard.

I won. But I lost my balance, with a broken arm and a concussion as the outcome. But I beat her and that’s, what mattered to me back then.

Sometimes I wish, I could go back to that day and start all over. I’d do a lot of things differently.

“Lexa, that’s great!”

“And I’m talking, in case you haven’t noticed.”

She chuckles, silently resigning. “I have. You seem to be okay, since you’ve still got your sarcasm.”

“It would take a lot more than some assholes, to destroy my sense of humor.” I tell her smiling. I’m feeling strangely good, despite the enormous headache and the nasty sting on my left side. “When can I go home?”

“I’d like to keep you a night.”

“No. Not happening.”

Abby sighs, frowning. “You’ve been out for half an hour.”

“And I’m okay.”
She raises both eyebrows.

“Abby, please. I can’t stay here. I’m going crazy.”

“Still, Lexa. I can’t discharge you, not without a bad feeling.”

“Can’t you do a home visit? I can lie in my bed at home as well as here. And Luna will be there and probably Anya. And Raven’s coming down here, too.”

“You’re talking to Raven again?”

“Yeah. She apologized. And she’s coming, even though I’m fine.”

“I’d hardly call your situation fine.”

“Abby.”

Another sigh. “You have to sign, that you’re going home on your own responsibility.”

“Okay. Whatever it takes.”

She clearly disagrees but stands up to get the necessary documents.

Meanwhile I get up, too, and grab my clothes.

My body’s accustomed to functioning, while being under pain. It has learned to push itself to the edge. So I manage to put on my clothes and sit down on the bed, while waiting for Abby.

My knuckles are bruised and when I stretch my hand, it hurts a little.

I’ll need some ice.

“Couldn’t you wait for someone to help you?” Abby asks reproachful, when she comes back.

“You’re being irresponsible.”

“I just want to get out of here.”

“Your parents arrived just a few minutes ago.”

“If that’s supposed to stop me from signing those papers, you’re wrong.”

She hands my said papers and points to the places, where I have to put my signature. “Can’t blame me for trying.”

----

“Lexa! Are you insane?” Anya exclaims.

“Shh. Not so loud.”

Mom hugs me wordlessly.

“You’ve been out half an hour!” Anya continues, understanding my intentions. “You’re not leaving this hospital. Drag your ass back to that bed and-”

“She’s discharged herself.” Abby tells them.
“And you couldn’t do anything?”

“She’s a grown up, Becca. Even if she doesn’t act like one.”

Side blow noticed.

“I’m heading home.” I tell them – surprising my parents in the process, that I’m talking. Still quiet, but hey, it’s still progress, right?

And it finally feels like it.

“Honey, I-”

“Who’s driving me?”

No one moves.

I knew it.

“Octavia, would you?”

The blue-eyed brunette nods after she got over her shock.

“Well then. See you, guys.”

-----

“You found me, did you?” I ask, when we finally reach her car. It’s Lincolns, to be exact.

She nods. “We were on our way back home, when I… heard something.”

“Thank you.”

“I’m sorry.”

“It’s not your fault.”

“No, but I said stupid things and that made you leave and then you ran across Cage and…” She stops talking, nervously drumming a quiet beat on the steering wheel with her fingers.

When she’s nervous, there has to be a reason. And I can’t think about only one thing.

“You know, don’t you?”

No answer is an answer, too.

I’ve been very careful with this information, because I learned, that people treat you differently. And I hate, that suddenly everything in my life seems to be about those weeks. Like they’re the new center of my life.

It’s a short drive back home and I know, it won’t be long, until Anya and Luna and probably some others arrive there, too.

I watch Octavias face and the different emotions, she’s fighting.

“You can ask.” I tell her. I told my parents and Anya the same thing. But they never asked. They just… react to my nightmares or everything other little thing connected to my experiences. “I’m not sure, if I can answer your question, but… You can ask.”

But Octavia is a cop. And maybe that’s the difference between them.

She waits, until she stops the car in front of my apartment building. But then she asks quietly, as if she was afraid, her words would scare me. “Those… scars. They’re from torture?” She whispers.

“Mostly, yes.”

“How… how long?”

“Twenty-one days.”

She inhales sharply, eyes focused on the street in front of us.

“I’m sorry for what I said. About you not having changed at all. You have. And now, that I… know, I hate myself for saying those things. I don’t know, I… I’m really sorry, Lexa. You didn’t deserve, what I said.”

“It’s okay.”

“No, it’s not, don’t let me off the hook so easily.”

“I’m not. Life is just to short to hold a grudge.”

“I want to apologize, Lexa. For everything.” She says and finally turns her head to look at me. “I’m proud. Too proud. And I will never be so unforgiving again.”

“That’s a tough goal you’ve set yourself. How about we start over?”

“Yeah.” She chuckles quietly, before her expression turns serious again. “Can we do that?”

I smile. “We can. Thanks for driving me.”

“I’ll walk you upstairs.”

“You won’t have to. They’re already here.” I answer, pointing at the headlights coming closer.

“Okay.”

“Bye, Octavia.”

“Bye, Lexa. Be safe.”

“I will.”

...

Chapter End Notes

thank you so much for reading <3
Hey guys :) How are you?
Since we're back to Winter over here, I had more time for writing, so I just finished chapter 39! Okay, I shouldn't write. Actually I should study and write a 30 pages paper... But writing this story is so much more fun! :D

We're slowly getting there. Hope you like this one :)
Take care of yourself,
Love,
LJT.
......

See the end of the chapter for more notes

...

“What do you mean, you don’t have news?” I shout, pacing around the room.

I'm on the verge of going crazy. I never understood, what the term madness meant, until this very moment and if she doesn’t get news within the next seconds, I... Oh my god.

“Clarke, like I told you. Bellamy hasn’t texted yet. He’s-” She stops, when her phone rings again.

“Bell. How is she?”

I can’t make out, what he’s saying, there’s way too much noise around as, but Raven nods towards me.

What the hell is that supposed to mean. A nod?

Yes, she’s okay?

Yes, she’s dead?

What the hell does a nod mean?!

“Raven, I swear-”

“She’s okay, Clarke.” She tells me, listening to something Bellamy says. “A concussion, nothing more. She’s still unconscious, but your mom said, that’s not unnormal.”

She’s okay.

I exhale, not even noticing, that I’ve been holding my breath, since Raven dragged me out of the party to tell me, that Lexa got hurt and that she’s rushed to the hospital about twenty minutes ago.

Since then, my heart had been in some state of shock, beating an unsteady and shaky rhythm.

She’s okay.
Fuck.

“We’ll fly down as soon as we can. Tell him that.”

“What? Bell, could you wait please?” Raven says. “Just a second. I gotta talk some sense into Clarke.”

“You won’t. I’m flying home. I want to see her.” I can’t even speak of will, it’s more like... a need. An urge I can’t fight.

Raven stares at me for a few silent seconds, before she accepts, that she can’t change my mind. “Bell? We’re going to fly down as soon as we can.” She tells him, looking at my determined face. “Yeah. We.”

-----

“Are you sure, this is a good thing?” Raven asks, when we leave the airport around noon the next day.

“Yes.”

“Really? Because we all know, that you tend to make rushed decisions.”

“I want to make sure, she’s okay.”

“And it hasn’t got something to do with your feelings for her?”

“I don’t have feelings for her.”

“Keep telling yourself that, Griffin. If I remember correctly, you broke up with Niylah, because, and I quote, *she isn’t her*. She signs quotation marks in the air. “To me, that sounded like feelings.”

“All I wanted to say with that, was, that I should feel something for Niylah, that I felt for Lexa. But I didn’t.”

Yeah, I'm pretty got at talking myself into believing certain things.

One of my many talents.

Raven sighs and puts on her sunglasses. “You make it really hard to root for team Clexa.”

“Team what?” I ask, a little annoyed and very distracted with other thoughts.

“Your ship-name. That’s a thing nowadays.”

She leaves me standing alone for a few moments to get our rental car.

“I know what a ship-name is.” I tell her, as soon as she’s back. “I’ve got a tv show in case you haven’t noticed.”

“One you seem to have forgotten about. Because you’ve got a meeting on Monday actually.”

“We’ll be back by then.”

“Oh, I don’t mind a few days off.”

“Sure.” I say, rolling my eyes.
Since she started this thing with Bellamy, she’s been really whipped.

---

It hasn’t been easy.

I needed to convince Becca to call Luna, who is Lexa’s roommate by now, to ask, if it would be okay, if I came over.

Asking your exes mother for something should be strange, but since we’re all practically one big happy family, it’s not that embarrassing. Only a little.

But Luna asked Lexa and after some back and forth, I got an address.

“Clarke?” Luna asks, when I finally get to talk to the intimidating brunette with the curly hair in person.

“Hey.”

She crosses her arms, still standing unmoving in the doorway of their shared apartment. “You came all the way to Polis, just to make sure, she’s okay?”

“Yes.”

“Why?”

“Why not?”

“Because you’re her ex.” She states.

Yeah, she has a point.

“Look, Luna, I… I still care for her. I tried to talk myself into believing, that I didn’t, but I do. And she got beat up because she hit Cage for me, so… I feel guilty.”

“Are you really great at acting or just really, really dumb?” She asks, shaking her head in amusement.

“Excuse me?”

“She hasn’t seen your show or read your books. But I have. Alex? Really? Couldn’t you come up with something better than that? Those are even the same four letters.” She tells me. “And Eliza? What a coincidence, Clarke Elizabeth Griffin. I googled you.”

Honestly?

I didn’t even notice it, while I wrote it.

It took me years to understand that look on Ravens face. Or moms. Or basically anyone’s face.

And when everything fell into place, I spent days crying in my bed.

I created the story during my trip through Europe. All the hate and the anger between my lead character Eliza and that new character Alex, which I introduced in the third season for the first time? It’s based on true hate and anger. Yeah, I added two other stories as prequels but still… I started with these two and if you read precisely, you notice it. It’s deeper, than the rest.
Luna laughs dryly. “You didn’t… know?”

I shake my head. “Not for a long time, no.”

“God, you’re hopeless. But you’re good at writing, so I have to give you that.”

“Can I see her now?”

Luna stares into my eyes for a moment, as if she was weighing her options. But then she nods and steps aside.

“If I had known, that I’d have the famous Clarke Griffin in my apartment, I would’ve cleaned up.”

She says.

Somehow, I doubt that.

A Jack Russell comes running towards me, waggling is tail in excitement.

“That’s Paul.” Luna says, watching me closely, as I kneel down to greet the four-legged being. “He’s going to bring you toys, but once you start playing, you’ll never stop. And don’t leave expensive shoes.”

I stare down at my feet – simple sneakers. “I think, I’ll manage.”

She shrugs. “Lexa’s asleep. But you can go in.” She points at a door to my left.

I hesitate.

Because this is a way more personal space, than the lake.

But on the other hand, everything’s personal, when it comes to Lexa and I. Maybe that’s the way it is, when you’ve loved someone.

I don’t knock, but I peek inside, before I walk into her bedroom and close the door behind us.

Lexa’s face is hidden in the dim light, but it’s almost like I can feel her presence.

I take a look around the room, as far as it’s possible, and spot a chair by a desk. Quietly I place it next to her bed and sit down. Sitting on her mattress seemed tempting, but wrong.

Slowly, my eyes get used to the semi-darkness, and it gets easier to make out her features. She looks peaceful, when she’s sleeping and somehow it makes me feel, like I’ve stepped into a time machine.

I loved watching her sleep. Sometimes, I’d draw her to make use of the time.

I’ve still got a folder full of drawings of her. It’s in the top drawer of my nightstand and somehow, that helped me during all the craziness that came with the fame. Because it felt, like the few pieces of paper kept me grounded.

Dumb, right?

I didn’t allow myself to open the folder. Just like I didn’t allow myself to think about, what we could’ve been, if my dad hadn’t died. If she hadn’t believed the press, but confided in me or her mom. If she had kept her promise.

We had so many dreams. And we had plans. We had chosen the same college – tennis for her, med-
school for me. We would’ve shared a room.

It was supposed to be perfect.

I fight the tears for a few seconds, but I give up all too soon, because no one can see them.

Yes, I’m lying to myself.

Of course I’ve still got feelings for her. I’ll always have. She’s the first and only woman I ever truly loved.

But I don’t trust her anymore and I’m not sure, if I ever will again.

So the lie protects my heart and it has ever since I got into Bellamys car, the day he drove me to the airport.

That’s, when I forbid myself to feel.

That’s, when everything went numb.

And ever since I opened that damn invitation letter, I’m confronted with all the things I didn’t want to feel again. A fucking invitation.

We were supposed to be happy.

So the least I can do, is to let her character survive and to write her a happy ending. Sometimes, that’s all you get, I guess.

“God. What happened to us, Lex?” I whisper quietly into the room, as I stare at her face. “How the hell did we end up here?”

...

Chapter End Notes

As always: thank you so much for every comment and for reading of course!
If you have any questions or ideas or prompts - feel free to share with me :) have a beautiful day!
I don’t have to hear her voice, to know, she’s here.

I don’t even have to smell her perfume – the same she was wearing at the reunion and the barbecue. It’s new, a little more feminine, but it leaves me longing for something, that I haven’t felt in a long time.

No. I feel her presence, just like I always have.

A few more seconds pass – achingly slow seconds – before I open my eyes and blink a few times.

The room is still half dark.

My head is pounding, but it’s better than before, so that’s a plus.

“Lex.” She whispers quietly.

I wince at the sound of that nickname.

“Sorry.” She corrects herself. “How do you feel?”

She noticed.

“Okay.” I tell her, slowly pulling my body into a sitting position.

“You look… bad.”

“Yeah?”

She nods.

“Why are you here, Clarke? You didn’t have to come all the way from Canada.”

“You know, where I was?” She asks curiously.
I'm living with your biggest fan. I although learned, your favorite color is red and that you love horror movies.” I tell her, knowing, that both of it is wrong.

Her favorite color is green and it’s always been – sea green and gemstone green, to be exact. And she’s scared of horror, I learned that in a painful way on our first Halloween. But I didn’t correct Luna, because why should I?

“She even left your book for me to read.” I point towards my nightstand.

It’s a weak attempt to change the topic.

And it’s a lie. Luna didn’t leave that book. Mum bought it for me, because I was overseas, when Clarke got published.

I don’t even know, why I lied. Seemed like a safe choice.

Clarke smiles, but it doesn’t reach her eyes, when she grabs the book and weighs it in her hands. “First edition.” She states quietly.

I watch her frowning, as her fingers slide over the intact book spine. Maybe she caught me lying, but she doesn’t comment on it.

“Luna is right. You should read it.” She says quietly. “You’d like it.”

“Yeah?”

“Yeah.”

*What the hell are we doing here?* I wonder.

Clarke sighs heavily. “I'm so sorry, that Cage-”

“I didn’t really de-escalate the situation, believe me. And I shouldn’t have punched him in the first place.”

“Then why did you?”

I should’ve expect the question, because Clarke has a talent of asking the important ones. Under normal circumstances, I’d give her an honest answer, but now…

“Lexa. Why did you punch him?” She repeats her question.

“You don’t want that answer.”

“Yes, I do!” She exclaims loudly.

I wince again, but this time she doesn’t notice, because she gets up to walk her anger off at the end of my bed.

“Was it to mark your territory?”

What?

That’s way below the belt.

Does she think that poorly of me? I'm glad, I can’t shout at her, because I would. We were good at
shouting and fighting.

“I punched him, because he scared you.” I tell her. “Because I wanted to do it years ago! Hell, Clarke, I’d do it again a hundred times, if-“ I cut myself off, before I say something I regret later.

“If?”

Oh fuck. Only she can get me to say the things I don’t want to.

She’s already getting back under my skin.

“Forget it.”

“You know, if you would’ve spoken about your thoughts and feelings back then, things might have turned out differently.”

“You don’t have to tell me that.” I say, my voice bitter and sad.

I know that. I fucking know!

Clarke seems to realize, what she just had said, because suddenly her face softens, and she sits down again. She buries her face in her hands. “I'm sorry.”

“Why? You’re right. It *is* my fault.”

“No, I-”

“Stop it, Clarke. It is my fault. I blamed your father, because I believed the media. I blamed him, because I was so angry and lost and it was the easy way out. I abandoned you, when you needed me the most. It’s on me.”

She doesn’t say anything for a few minutes, while I'm trying to decide, if I'm feeling relieved or worse. Probably both.

I’ve been lying awake so many nights over the question, why I acted the way I did, why I broke her heart and mine right after.

I never found an answer.

What I do know is, that I’d go back in time and change it, if I only could.

“I'm still sorry.” She states then.

I chuckle. Of course she’s still stubborn.

“A lot has happened since then.”

“Yeah.” You could say that.

“I'm living quite the story, don’t you think? From being the nerdy outsider, to dating the schools most popular girl, to owning my own tv show. Would make a good movie.”

*Dating.*

I try not to be hurt by the term.

But I am, because to me we were so much more than just dating.
Or was it all in my head? Maybe it was. Because sometimes, I can’t distinguish the truth from my dreams anymore.

**Dating.**

Is that all we were to her?

“I knew, you could make it.” I say quietly, avoiding her eyes, because even in the dim light, she could read my face like an open book.

Clarke sighs. “What are we doing here, Lexa?”

“I don’t know. You came here.”

“I did.” She nods, seemingly lost in thoughts. “But why?”

“I don’t have the answer to that question.” But I’d like to know it nevertheless.

“I should leave.” She says.

She doesn’t move a muscle.

When I finally look up again, our eyes meet.

And right away, I feel better. Warmer. Safer. I can’t fight it, it’s like she pushes a button and my whole existence is flooded with all kinds of emotions and memories. Good ones. Happy ones.

It feels, like I could get a glimpse of my old self. I can see it right through her azure blue eyes.

Clarke has that talent of bringing out the best in you. She always had it. Even when we officially hated each other, just because we were so different, I noticed it.

I wanted to be better, when she was around.

For the longest, I used it in a competitive way – it pushed me to my limits and further, even on my worst days.

But when she first kissed me – completely unexpected– a longing feeling settled in my stomach, that never went away again.

It wasn’t just a longing for her, but for the person I wanted to be as well. I loved her, not only because of who she was, but because of who I was, when I was with her.

I’m still trying to be that person. The best version of myself.

But I haven’t even been close for the last years. Instead, I’ve been full of self-hate, doubts, regrets and memories to torment my mind with.

I pushed myself to the limits and further, again and again, physical as well as mental, but it felt, like I didn’t even get close. It didn’t change a thing. So I worked harder. And it still wasn’t enough. I wasn’t enough.

And now I'm looking into those deep, sad eyes, sparkling even in the dim light, and I can see, who I want to be.

*Who I was.*
Who I could’ve been.

Before I know it, my eyes glisten with tears.

I wipe my face, but there’s no use. For every tear I wipe away, two more follow.

And the look in her eyes break my heart even more.

A few silent seconds pass, until my jaw hurts and my eyes burn so much from fighting the tears, that it’s too painful, to stop the first sob.

“Lex-” She tries and moves closer, as if she wanted to comfort me.

I don’t deserve it, so I hold up my hand, trying to stop her, because if she comes any closer, I’ll break. Right in front of her eyes. And I can’t let that happen. I can’t...

“Don’t. Please.”

But Clarke ignores it – and she probably ignores every rule out there, to not comfort the ex, who broke your heart, too – by wrapping her arms around my trembling body.

The feeling of her being so close, the well-known scent, the warmth... I'm falling apart in her arms, before I even know it.

Tears start to fall freely.

Tears full of anger and despair, of sorrow and disappointment, of remorse, bitterness and pain. I try to fight them – an automatism, which I got over the last years – until my eyes are burning, my body is shaking and my jaw hurts full of tension.

“It's okay.” She whispers, her words meeting my skin.

Then I give in.

I sink into her arms, getting lost in the comfort she’s offering, crying and sobbing, burying my face into her neck, while I'm feeling, like I'm coming home.

Even though, I'm not. She isn’t my home anymore.

She can’t be.

And maybe that’s the cruelest form of torture.

...

Chapter End Notes

thank you so much for reading <3
Chapter 24 - Clarke.

Chapter Notes

hey guys :)  
I was early on tuesday, so I'm today, too. Since next week is going to be basically the same as last week, I'll stick to tuesday and saturday again :)  
Hope you like this one. <3  
Love,  
LJT.

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

...  
At first, it’s just a tear. Then there are more and before I know it, Lexa is crying.  
I’ve seen her cry before, but this…  
This is different.  
It’s like her eyes are bleeding pure pain.  
And I can see it happening in slow motion.  
It is so painful to watch, as she’s slowly falling apart before my eyes. It physically hurts my heart and soul.  
All I can do, is embrace her and let the torrent of her tears soak through my shirt.  
At first, she fights it, but I don’t let her go, until she lets herself break down.  
Then her fists clench in my shirt, as if she was afraid, I would leave her now. How could I?  
I can feel a silent scream of unspeakable pain rippling through her body, as she finally gives in, and I hold her even closer, trying to keep myself together, fighting my own tears, as my heart breaks again and again for this beautiful human creature in my arms.  
This is not how I imagined holding her for the first time after ten long years.  
I’ve never seen anyone break before, nor have I seen a broken person.  
But Lexa?  
She’s not just broken, I realize that now. She’s shattered. Into a million pieces.  
Whatever they did to her, it destroyed her – no matter, how hard she tries to deny it.  
I run my fingers through her hair, time and time again, in an attempt to calm the silent war within her
mind.

It feels, like I'm doing nothing. But can there be anything done?

I mean, if I could take away her pain, even just for a moment, I’d do it in a heartbeat. Without hesitation.

Her tears soak through my shirt, but I don’t care, because Lexa keeps crying and sobbing and her body keeps shaking in my arms for what feels like an eternity, and I can’t do anything about it.

I’ve never felt more helpless in my life.

-

Some time later I fear, that she’s going to run out of oxygen or to have a heart attack, because she just won’t calm down.

Her lungs must be burning, as if she’s drowning.

It’s like she’s crying tears she kept for years. Maybe she has.


She just keeps holding onto me more tightly.

I draw soothing circles on her back, repeating the same things over and over again, until she finally – finally – calms down a little.

Only to break my relieved heart again.

“It was horrible.” She whispers into my neck, before she starts crying again.

Horrible.

The word echoes through my head and now I can’t fight my own tears anymore.

Horrible.

I don’t want to think about it. But I do.

Because Lexa is the strongest person I know on earth and she’s… Fuck.

Horrible.

I almost lost her.

So I keep holding her, like I could protect her from all the cruel things out there. Like I could keep her close and save her, from whatever haunts her. Like I would never let her go.

I almost lost her!

-----

It’s the exact same position, that Luna finds us an hour later.

Lexa fell asleep in my arms, completely exhausted. Her fists are still holding my shirt tightly, but I
wouldn’t have moved, even if I could have.

It’s uncomfortable, but I don’t want to wake her up.

Luna narrows her eyes, clearly unsure of the situation. That is, until she sees the traces of tears on both our faces.

Then, she leaves me alone with her again.

-----

When I can’t take the pain in my shoulders anymore, I slowly lay her down on her bed, carefully unclenching her fists and tugging her in under the blanket.

I watch her sleeping figure for a moment, brushing loose strands of hair out of her face, before I leave the room.

Leaning against the door, after I’ve closed it, I take a few deep breaths.

Fuck.

That was… terrible.

Luna is sitting on a couch in the living room, carefully watching every move I make. I walk over to her and let myself fall down onto the couch, without even asking. I'm too exhausted.

“What happened?”

“She cried.”

“I figured. Why?”

“Because of the pain. The torture. I… I don’t know. Because of everything, I guess.”

Luna didn’t expect that answer, that much is clear from her pale face. “Did she say something?” She asks, after a few seconds.

“Three words.” I tell her. “It was horrible.”

Luna exhales. “I knew, one day she would fall apart. I… God, I don’t know, how she managed to keep on going like this. She… kept bottling it all up. I’ve been living with her for not even a week and I’ve heard her screaming from the top of her lungs nearly every night.”

“Has she been in therapy?”

“Yeah. But things like that don’t go away easily, I guess.” She sighs, clearly drained. “How are you holding up?”

“Me?”

“Yeah.”

“I'm good.”

“Yeah? Because one, you look like shit and two, you just learned, that the ex, who broke your heart in a pretty shitty way, has been held captive and… well. I mean, you probably wished her the worst
and now… You know?"

It’s not hard to follow her thoughts. She thinks, I’m feeling guilty – somehow.

“I never wished her anything bad.”

“No?” She asks curiously.

“No.”

“You surprise me, Griffin.”

“I loved her.” I say, trying to ignore, how wrong it feels to use the past tense. “Even afterwards. I was angry and hurt and a lot of other things. I even hated her or at least I thought so. But I never wished her anything bad, because honestly, I just wanted to forget her.”

We see, how that went.

“Lexa tried the exact opposite.”

“What do you mean?”

“Well, she… Why am I telling you that?” Luna frowns.

“You haven’t really said anything.”

“But I was about to and that would be wrong. You know what? Forget it. Everything.” She says. “Thanks for coming, though. Seems, you could get through to her and whatever it was, you said, it helped. She needed this breakthrough.”

I’m a bit surprised by her words, because it sounds, like she’s kicking me out. Is she?

“I did nothing.”

“Than nothing was more than anything I tried so far.”

I nod, because I don’t know, what else to do or say.

“You know, Lexa is family to me.” Luna suddenly says, looking straight into my eyes. “I thought, I lost her. Not just back overseas, when I thought, she was dead for three weeks, but… When I came home a few weeks ago, she was just finishing her morning run, like old times, almost as if nothing ever happened to her, you know? But she was a shadow of herself, I could feel it.” She pauses, as she’s trying to sort her thoughts. “That night, before these guys attacked her, she played guitar. She hasn’t since…”

Lexa loved music. Sometimes, I was sitting on the roof, watching the stars or just thinking about the bad day I had, and I would listen to her playing and singing quietly. I never told her, because she probably would’ve stopped – even, when we were together. She’s good at keeping her guard up.

“I could catch a glimpse of her old self. And I guess, that’s, what she needed. A first step.”

“Did she play with you over there?”

“With all of us, yeah. It’s been like a ritual. We almost played every night. One of us would pick a song and we sat around a bonfire or on our beds. It helped to feel at home.”
I can picture that.

“How long did you two serve together?”

“Four years, more or less.”

Wow, that’s a long time. Lexa doesn’t open up easily, but now it makes sense, that they are close.

“Clarke, be honest.”

*Oh no.* I know, what’s coming next.

“Do you still have feelings for her?”

...

Chapter End Notes

Thoughts? :)  
have a great day <3
Chapter Notes

hey guys :) 
Here it is, chapter 25. It's a bit lighter, at least at the end. Thought, that would do some good, so I don't destroy anyone out there. At least not with this one :)

I couldn't sleep last night and my brain wouldn't shut up (I'm sure you know that Feeling), so I started a new Story, it's called "all over" and you'd make me really happy, if you'd check it out. I've got absolutely nothing planned out, but someone recently told me, I'll miss life, if I keep planning everything. Yeah... Guess, that's enough personal Information for the day. :D

Hope you like this one and again: thank you for the feedback. It's making my day <3

Love,
LJT.

----

See the end of the chapter for more notes

... 

Not one word.

I haven’t said a single word for one week now. I haven’t even written one down.

I haven’t been to work either.

Honestly, I have only left the apartment for a run, for my dogs or to hide on the roof.

But what’s there to say?

Should I tell Luna, Mom or Anya about my nightmares? They already know, since at least one of them wakes me up every night, because I’ve been screaming from the top of my lungs again.

Or should I tell them, how broken I feel?

Or should I tell them about my feelings for the blonde woman, who cut open every wound I ever had again, just because she was here? Because she held me, while I cried for the first time?

How it felt to be near her?

How I prayed in that hellhole, to feel her close just one more time and how it tore me apart, when the universe granted me my wish? The one, that was supposed to be my last?

Should I tell them, that she still carries my heart? That it’s the only thing, that keeps me from giving in?

No.
A thousand times no.

No, I won’t.

So silence is the best for everyone.

But even though I'm silent, my mind is racing.

I spend my days on the roof, enjoying the last sun rays of the summer on my face, soaking them up like they were my last. I spend my time up there with staring at the photograph in my hands.

The photograph, that saved my life – one way or the other.

It’s my most precious possession.

The last time, I stared at it that often, there was barely daylight. The room was dusty and dim, the air was hot and dry and burned my throat. And I still had hope.

Life is funny.

Except it isn’t. It’s dark and unfair and cruel and ironic.

I think about all the reasons, I kept fighting, kept hoping. Every single one was connected to this one person and there was nothing rational about it.

Because in the face of death, your heart and soul don’t follow your head.

Logically, I should’ve thought about my family. About Costia. About my people.

But Clarke is my people. She always was. And every reason I survived, has got something to do with her. She always brought out the best in me – and in times of pain and fear, she made me stronger. She was the one thing, I held onto.

I held onto her laughter, her beaming smile, the sound of her voice and the taste of her lips.

I held onto her.

The question is: where does that leave me now?

It leaves me with the truth. I love her. I’m in love with her and maybe I never stopped.

- 

I throw Pauls toy one more time, before I get up and walk back downstairs, with my furry friends by my side. Even on the worst days, they make me smile. It’s company, when I don’t want company.

Luna isn’t home yet, so I make myself comfortable in the living room. Even though she’s the one, who bugs me the least, I feel some kind of pressure, when I'm around her right now. Pressure about going back to normal.

Just a few minutes, after Paul and Ellie have cuddled up with me on the sofa, there’s someone at the door.

Pretending, I'm not home, won’t work, because everybody knows, I'm home all the time. Still, I don’t make a move.
“Lexa. Open up! I come bearing gifts!”

Out of the long list of people, whom I suspected, he’s definitely the last – if he’s even on the list.

Because one: Aden is a teenager. And two: he’s the little brother of my ex-girlfriend.

Somehow, the surprise does the trick, and I walk over to the door.

“Hey.” He says casually. “Up for a game?” He holds up his PlayStation.

I blink.

“I take that as a yes.”

He walks inside the apartment and heads straight for the tv. “You’ve got one yourself? How come, I didn’t know that? Oh, these are some cool games you’ve got.”

I shake my head, still a little overwhelmed. What is he doing here? Why is he even here?

“You okay?”

His question pulls me out of my head.

“Come on, it’ll be fun. Promise.” Aden says, patting the couch next to himself. “What are you up for? Call of duty or racing?” He’s holding up two different games.

My sister would probably kill him – just for even suggesting a game about killing and weapons and stuff.

But I'm strangely okay with that. Maybe just because he suggested it without second guessing or without walking on eggshells.

Besides, it’s better than just lying around, moping and thinking, right? And I know exactly, who I’ll imagine to shoot.

I point at Call of Duty and grab my controller.

“Great choice.” Aden says, grinning from ear to ear.

----

It’s not a great choice after all.

Not for him. Because I level him to the ground. Again and again and again.

And it feels so damn good.

“You’ve got to be kidding!” He exclaims two hours later, clearly annoyed.
I shrug. It’s really not that hard.

“God, I won’t ever play that game with you again!” He scolds, throwing his controller into the pillows in a very dramatic movement.

I chuckle.

“Rematch?”

He’s just as competitive as his sister. Runs in the family, apparently.

“Okay.” I whisper, a bright smile on my lips. Finally, I’m feeling something real again.

Aden smiles, too, as he dives for his controller again. “Be ready, to have your ass kicked, Woods! This time, I win.”

I snort. As if.

----

“You’ve got to be kidding!!!”

This time, it’s not Aden, who complains about losing again – he did.

No, it’s my sister, who’s let herself in, because Luna gave her a key to check on me. “Call of duty? Are you for real, Griffin?!”

“She likes it.” The boy defends himself, without even batting an eye.

Now, he’s got balls. I’m truly impressed, because Anya can be pretty scary. Hell, I’m a grown-up soldier and her anger startled me. But Aden keeps lying on the couch just as relaxed, as he was, before she violated my privacy.

“She-”

“Anya.” I intervene.

My sisters head spins around, while I’m walking back to the couch again, to set down our drinks. You gotta stay hydrated, right?

“Lexa.” She states, as if she wasn’t expecting me to be here, which is strange, because it’s my apartment. “You okay?”

I nod.

“She’s been kicking my ass. Seriously, she’s really good at this.” Aden states enthusiastically. “Want to join us?”

Anya mumbles something incomprehensible and plops down onto the couch, while Aden grabs the bag of chips again.

“Don’t eat too much.” I tell him with a look at the time. “You’ve got to be home for dinner.”

“Yeah, yeah, Mom.” He rolls his eyes.

“Aden.” I warn him.
“Sorry. Rematch?”

“Not today.”

“How about Wednesday?”

“Work.”

“Saturday then. You want to come over?” He says and he’s clearly not asking.

“Okay.”

“Great!”

I wonder, why he’s doing this. Did anyone tell him to? Or has he just got the same good-natured personality as his sister?

He watches Anyas face for a moment. “You know what?” He suddenly announces. “I’m heading home now. You’re right, it’s dinner time soon and I can’t bear another lost game today.”

“Okay.”

Aden gets up and hugs me, before he grabs his games. “See you Saturday?”

“See you Saturday.” I confirm smiling, as I watch him leave.

He’s a good kid.

“How did that happen?” Anya asks just a second later.

I shrug – because I really don’t know.

What I do know is, that I enjoyed the afternoon. His silent company, the game, the relaxed and natural mood… It felt almost normal. And that’s all I needed to stop running.

“And you’re really okay with… the game?”

“I wouldn’t have played, if I wasn’t, so stop treating me like I’m made of glass.”

“That’s a sentence.” She states the obvious.

“Yes, it is, Sherlock.”

Anyas forehead is still one single frown and she looks at me, as if she was waiting for something. “So you’re coming back to work?”

“Monday.”

“Can I do something for you?”

“You could pick a movie and order pizza, if you’re asking that nicely.”

Anyas nods. “That I can do.”

While she gets up to make a call, my phone chimes on the table next to the bag of chips and because I’m curious and feeling okay, I decided to check it.
Unknown: hey, so I hope, it’s okay, but I finally convinced Raven to give me your number.
Don’t kill her.
Unknown: Maybe, that sounds weird, but I’ve been thinking about it for the past week, so I'm going to ask – how are you?
Unknown: it’s Clarke btw. :)
Unknown: And if you’re not up for talking now or in general, it’s okay. You don’t have to feel bad, I understand.

She manages to ramble via text messages. She’s really something else.

And then I realize, that I just got a text from Clarke, and my heart skips a beat. Or maybe two?

...

Chapter End Notes

<3
have a great day!
Chapter 26 - Clarke.

Chapter Summary

Cuteness for once :)

Chapter Notes

Hey guys!
Happy easter! (in case we don't "see" each other before that.) Happy Holidays, in case you have one!

Here's number 26!
I just realized, that a lot of things happened. Lunas question. Lexas breakdown.
And I noticed, that I'm having trouble with the correct us of "Clarkes' " and "Clarke's"
and all that stuff... So if you find any mistakes, you can keep them :D no, just kidding.
I'm trying to learn. But I've got no beta and, as I said before, English isn't my first language. Nevermind.

Hope you enjoy this :
Thank you so much for reading and all the feedback, it's amazing!
Love,
LJT.
---

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

...

Did you ever sit over an unsend message for an hour, debating whether to send it or not?
Rearranging the words? Deleting them and adding a few others? Only the start again? And did you ever hit send and panic right after?

Yup. That's me.

And to top it, I send three more messages, to shovel my grave.

It took me four days to convince Raven, to share Lexas number and then it took me another three days, to text her.

From Mom, Becca and Raven I heard, that she's in a bad shape ever since our talk. And I can't help, but feel guilty. Did I push her? Was it wrong to leave? Should I have talked to her again? Did it make her feel uncomfortable?

From what I know about her – and that doesn't mean much, because we didn't talk for years, important years – I know better than to push or to overstep the boundaries, she set. So I keep my distance.
And I keep away, because Luna knows. Even though I didn’t say anything, she saw it in my eyes and I can’t handle that.

I’m not even okay with it by myself.

Just like I’m not okay with being around Lexa and having to pretend, that I didn’t see her breaking down.

_It was horrible._

Those three words haunt me, even in my sleep.

I know, that she didn’t talk about her experiences in any other way before and I’m not sure, why she did with me – if you can call that a talk.

- 

I get lost in my thoughts for a while, until someone slams a door downstairs and seconds later Mom shouts my brothers’ name.

I chuckle.

Some things never change.

Just a minute later Aden shows up on my doorstep. “Hey.”

“Hey.”

“Mom says, dinner’s ready. You coming?”

“Yup. Where were you?”

“Nowhere.” He says.

He still hasn’t learned, how to lie, but I can’t hold it against him.

“A girl?”

“Something like that.”

I’m still not over the fact, that he’s old enough to date.

“Do I have to give you the talk?”

“What? No!” He exclaims. “That’s disgusting!”

“Sex isn’t disgusting.” I answer, just to tease him. “Actually, it’s fun.”

“Ughh. gross.” Aden groans, covering his ears. “I’m not hearing a word you say!”

“You’re a teenager, not a twelve-year-old.”

“No. I’m not having that conversation any longer.” He shakes his head, while he’s leaving my room. “Ughh. I won’t ever get that picture out of my head again! Thanks, sis!”

I chuckle.
“Do you know, how long you’re staying?” Mom asks, trying to sound casually, while she pours herself a glass of wine.

Seven days – that’s, how long it took. I'm impressed.

“No, I don’t. I took some time off due to… a family situation.” I answer after a few seconds. “I wanted to before. But if you want me gone, I’ll be out of here. You just have to say it.”

“As if.” Mom shakes her head laughing. “Actually, I was asking, because I’m invited to a conference on Saturday next weekend, which will last until Monday morning. And it would be great, if you’d stay that long to watch over this one.” She points at Aden.

“Mom!” Aden complains. “I already told you, I don’t need a babysitter!”

“She’s not a babysitter, she’s your sister.”

“Who had a party herself, when you and Dad were gone for your anniversary, if I may remind you.” I say, sharing a smile with Aden. “You sure, I'm the right one for this job?”

“I believe, that you’re responsible enough by now, yes.”

“Or old enough to cover up properly.”

“Clarke.” She warns playfully.

“Okay, okay. No party for Aden, I got it. Anything else?”

“So… you’re staying?” She asks, broaching the subject again.

I know, she’s missing me. I haven’t been home a lot and even when I was, I tried to spend as much time with Aden, as possible. Feelings of guilt, I guess.

“Yeah. I'm staying.”

A bright smile appears on her face, which leaves me thinking about how the last years were for her. Within a few months, her husband died and her daughter left for a whole year to travel the world, only to leave town for good afterwards. Was it selfish?

Meanwhile, Aden groans and Mom and I share a smile.

It’s good to be home.

- 

I forget about the messages I sent earlier, while we’re playing some board games and I'm losing against my brother at Mario Kart ten times in a row.

I forget about them, while Mom and I talk about Aden over a glass of wine.

Actually, I forget about them, until I'm back in my room around midnight and I spot my phone on my bed, where I left it.
I'm scared to look. Scared, to find an answer and scared, to find none.

To avoid the topic, I take a long and relaxing shower first.

Then, while I'm changing into comfy sweatpants and an old shirt, my phone beeps and I'm nearly having a heart attack. Holy shit.

**Lexa:** hey Clarke. It's okay, I won’t kill her. And I'm good. Thanks for asking.
**Lexa:** ok, I promised, to never lie to you. I'm sorry. So: I'm not good, but I'm better now.

I'm not sure, how to feel about her messages.

Lexa never lied to me – that’s the promise she kept. When I asked her, if we would be okay, she said, she can’t tell me that. And she was right. It only took me years, to understand, that she was just trying to be honest with me. I'm as much to blame for our breakup, as she is.

**Me:** I know, I'm probably the last one, you want to talk to, but if there’s anything on your mind, I'm here for you.

Her answer comes immediately.

**Lexa:** you’re not the last one. I just thought, I’d be the last one you wanted to talk to?

She’s honest and forward and I have to swallow my surprise.

**Me:** No. Not anymore.

**Lexa:** I never got the chance to thank you for being there for me.

**Me:** you don’t have to. It’s a matter of course.

**Lexa:** thank you.

I smile, imagining her frowning and serious face, while typing the message. She always looked so damn concentrated during texting.

She types again.

**Lexa:** …

But nothing comes and the dots disappear. And after a few minutes, I put away my phone, staring at the ceiling, while I’m running my hands through my hair.

It’s a connection and I want to hold onto it.

But it feels… empty. Hollow.

Maybe it was the wrong thing to do? Texting her, caring about her? Maybe I should try to move on?

But when Raven said, Lexa got hurt, my mind went blank. I couldn’t focus on anything and couldn’t bear the thought of her in a hospital. It made me sick to not know, how she is.

My phone beeps again.

**Lexa:** I told myself, I wouldn’t ask, but… what are we doing?
If I’d only know.

But I’m typing and sending an answer, before I change my mind.

Me: maybe we can try to be friends? Somehow?

It feels wrong, the second I had sent it. But I don’t get to panic or to dig my grave, because she answers quickly.

Lexa: I would like that. :)

And my heart goes crazy.

Me: why are you still awake?

Lexa: I like the nights. They’re quiet and peaceful. It’s easier to just be, you know? No expectations, no questions.

I smile.

Me: yeah, I get that. My favorite time of the day. I’ve missed watching the stars from the roof.

Lexa: overseas, the stars were even brighter, especially in the desert. It felt so unreal and yet so… logical. I don’t know. I’d like to think, I started to understand the meaning of infinity over there.

I’m surprised. She’s talking freely about her time over there? Maybe she really is better now. I hope so.

Me: you’re still they philosophic girl, hm?

Lexa: of course! Someone has to be.

Me: absolutely! What’s your opinion on ice-cream then? Is it okay to eat it after midnight? Because I’m kind of craving some…

Lexa: oh, I see. That’s a really hardcore philosophical question. Let’s see…

I have to wait a little longer for her answer, but there’s a picture of a bowl attached, that holds at least two portions of ice-cream.

Lexa: sorry. Had to get myself some. Your fault, if I’m getting fat. But I think, your happiness tops the risk of getting fat, so I would say, you’re allowed to eat some. Especially, because the time between midnight and six a.m. kind of belongs to no day. Technically, it’s the new day, but it’s still dark, so… it’s the night of the day before, too. So… who’s counting?

I like, how she thinks.

Me: :( not fair.
Me: but you’re not going to get fat, I’m sure of it.

Lexa: aww, thanks :)

We continue texting for another hour, talking about nothing special, but when we finally say
goodnight, I’ve got big bright smile plastered across my face. Maybe we can be friends, who knows? I’d like that.

...
I’ve never been one to have many friends. Most of my life, there were just Raven and Bellamy and later mostly just Raven. And when all the craziness with the show and the books started, I became even more careful. So gaining new friends has never been easy.

But being “friends” with Lexa? That’s not exactly something, I expected. How’s that even supposed to work?

After the texting last weekend, we didn’t talk more. Until Wednesday, when she send me a picture of the animal shelter and its new roof.

**Lexa:** I'm sorry for assuming it was you. I believe, I never told you.

**Me:** it's okay, I would’ve, too. And no, you didn’t. Not exactly.

**Lexa:** Then I've officially repaid my debt with this.

**Me:** yes. It wasn’t that hard, was it?

**Lexa:** you’ve got no idea.

**Me:** oh, poor Lexa. I'll pity you, when I've got time.

**Lexa:** haha. So funny.

**Me:** :D

That’s it. All, that happened in the span of a whole week.

And still I find myself scrolling through the short conversation all the time, because it makes me feel better.

---
I spend the week in my room, mostly rewriting the new storyline, that follows Alex’ survival, and outlining a few ideas for the next season. It’s like I’ve found my rhythm again and the words are flowing out of my head onto the keyboard, it’s kind of crazy.

On Friday, I drive over to Bellamy’s house. He invited me for dinner and a movie, just like old times. He lives above the local library. The two-bedroom apartment has a small balcony, that offers a really nice view over the old marketplace. We sit there after dinner (salmon and rice, with white wine, because we’re grown ups now) and talk about anything and nothing.

He talks about that kid, Madi, who’s constantly disturbing his classes with questions. About his colleague Bryan Miller, who’s asked him for drinks a couple of times. And about Raven, of course.

“I sound like a grown-up.” He laughs.

“There’s nothing wrong about that.”

“Yeah, but it feels strange. I’ve got the job, I’ve got the girl. I never thought, I’d have all that. High school wasn’t exactly… kind to me.”

“Bell, you’re amazing. I knew, you’d find all that.”

He watches my face closely, before he averts his gaze back to the street below us, taking a sip from his beer. “I’m glad, you’re back.”

“I'm not back.”

“You know what I mean. Being home is good for you.”

I look at him with a questioning glance.

“You’re… more relaxed. More calm. You smile more.”

“How would you know?”

“I'm your number one fan, Princess. And I may or may not follow you on every social media possible.”

“So, you’re basically a stalker?”

He shrugs. “Kind of?”

I chuckle, before I think about his words. I know, he’s right. But being home isn’t the main reason. It’s my growing friendship with Lexa. I’ve got no idea, how she does it, but there’s this confidence radiating from her, that I can’t evade.

He nudges my shoulder. “What are you thinking about?”

I sigh. A big part of me wants to say it out loud, wants to try to explain, what I'm feeling. But when it’s not working out the way I want it to, then saying it out loud will only make it more real and then it’s going to hurt even more.

“Lexa?”

“Yeah. That obvious?”
Bellamy shakes his head. “Not obvious. I’d say… logical.”

“Why’s that?”

“You love her. Even if you’re still in denial about it, you’ve always loved her. It’s okay, though. She hurt you pretty bad. It’s natural, that you’re guarded towards her.” He says in his warm and comforting deep voice. “I don’t want to wait another seven years, until you accept it though. Watching it for seventeen years once was enough.”

I punch his arm. “Idiot.”

Bellamy just laughs.

“I do love her.” I finally tell him a few minutes later. “It’s crazy, but… I can’t help it.”

“I know.”

“We’ve been texting last weekend. It felt…” I pause, trying to find the right words. “It felt like no time has passed. I got caught up in that feeling. And I… I want to get caught up in it again.”

“Is that, why you’re still here?”

“No.” I say immediately. “Yes. I… I don’t know. It felt wrong to leave, after she had this kind of breakdown, but it felt wrong to stay with her, too. And I just… I started questioning my life, you know? For a while. It’s stupid.”

Bellamy shakes his head. “No, it’s not. Everyone’s doing it once in a while. I do it almost every day, when I walk out of school. These kids, they’re… they don’t care about Wilde or Hemingway or Steinbeck. They don’t care and that’s frustrating. But sometimes, there’s this one kid in your class and you make a difference in his or her life. That’s, why I love my job. But that doesn’t mean, that I love it every day.”

“I love my job. I just can’t settle down with it.”

“Of course you can. You just haven’t found a place for your plans yet, Clarke. That’s a difference.”

_A place? Or a someone?_ I wonder secretly in my head.

-----

“And you’ll listen to your sister, okay?”

“Yes, Mom.”

“No party.”

“No, Mom.”

“And don’t stay up too long. You’ve got school on Monday.”

“Mom, it’s Saturday. I can sleep in.”

“Aden.”
“Mom, I'm almost sixteen!”

“Aden!”

“Yes, Mom.”

I chuckle quietly, watching the scene unfolding in front of my eyes. Mom’s acting, like she’s leaving for a month, not for two nights. I believe, I’m able to take care of my brother for three days.

“And Clarke? You don’t give in to his pout, you hear me?”

“No, Mom.”

“Good. Take care, you two. I’ll call tonight.” She says, pulling Aden and me close for a group hug.

“You don’t have to check in.” Aden tells her.

She raises both her eyebrows, while she steps back.

“Drive safe.” I say, before the conversation starts all over again.

Aden and I stand shoulder to shoulder in the driveway, as she maneuvers her car onto the street and drives away.

“So. Whom should I call?”

“No one, I mean it!”

He breaks into laughter. “I was just kidding, but you should’ve seen your face!”

I sigh. That’s going to be a long weekend.

- 

Aden and I order pizza for lunch and we spend the first hours on the couch, playing Mario Kart again – this time, I manage to win once.

We talk about all different kinds of stuff.

During the game, he tells me about the girl he likes – Ontari – and how she ignores him. He tells me about that his teacher Mr. Kane wants to sign him for an art competition and that he isn’t really sure, if he should.

It’s long needed bonding time.

Then, in the middle of the afternoon, the doorbell rings.

“I’ll get it. I need to move anyway, because I can’t feel my butt.”

Aden chuckles, but I don’t notice the grin on conspiratorial grin on his face, as I stand up and walk to the door.

I should’ve, because it would’ve given me some warning.

“Hi.” Lexa says quietly, as surprised as I am.

“L Lexa.” I mumble dumbfounded.
“Yup.” A cautious smile dances over her face, as she watches me staring at her. “I’m sorry, I didn’t know, you’d be here.”

“No, it’s okay. What are you doing here?”

“Aden and I made an appointment for a rematch last weekend. But I can go, if-”

“No, come in.” I tell her, stepping aside.

This will be fun.

Lexa walks by and aims straight for the living room, where Aden waits – clearly unsure, if he’s going to make it out alive.

“Do you want something to drink?” I ask the brunette, who’s staring at my brother, before she hesitantly follows me into the kitchen.

She’s definitely thinking about leaving, I can tell.

“I…”

“Lexa, we’re good, right? I don’t mind, that you’re here.”

She exhales. “Umm. Coke?”

“What were you going to play?” I ask curiously, while I’m grabbing another bottle of coke and a glass for her.

“Call of duty. We played that last week and he sucks.”

“I do not!” Aden exclaims from the couch – he’s eavesdropping. So he absolutely planned that.

Then I realize, what she just had said.

Lexa smiles. “I’m good, don’t worry.”

And then I understand, why Aden reacted the way he did, when I talked about him and the mysterious girl he spent time with. It was Lexa. No wonder, he said it would be gross.

“Clarke?”

“Yeah, sorry. We were playing Mario Kart. Are you up for that, too?”

“Sure.”

She follows me back into the living room and sits down next to Aden, so he’s a buffer between us.

“You could’ve warned me.” I whisper quietly.

“Sorry.” He answers. He’s not.

-  

“How can you be good at anything you touch!” My brother complains two races later.

“Good coordination?” Lexa answers, grinning. She wouldn’t admit it, but she’s a little proud of her victory.
I’ve lost again, but this time, not because I suck, but because I was watching her from the corners of my eyes all the time. She’s been smiling a lot and she broke into carefree laughter, when Aden lost his first place to her. They seem to be close – closer than ever.

I’m a little jealous of him.

*Shit, I did not just think that, did I?*

“What do you say? Another round?”

“No way. You can play with Clarke, I’m out of this.” He answers.

Because protesting would’ve been really awkward and I couldn’t think of anything else, before he left the room, I suddenly find myself sitting there alone with Lexa.

“He totally planned that, didn’t he?” Lexa mumbles after a few silent seconds and turns her head towards me.

“Yup.”

We both shake our heads in amusement.

“Why doesn’t it feel strange?” She continues. “I mean, shouldn’t it be more… weird between us?”

I shrug. Because to me, it feels strange. Not in a bad way, but…

“Why are you here?”

“I never left. I took some time off to focus on myself and family and…” *You.* I barely manage to keep this tiny little word inside my head.

“You can do that?”

“Yeah. I mean, it’s got its perks to be the boss. And I can write wherever I am, so…”

“Must be great.”

“Most of the time it is.” I say, trying to sound as casual as possible. “It’s a lot of pressure and work, too. But I guess, that’s complaining on a high level. A first-world-problem.”

Lexa shakes her head. “No, it isn’t. I mean, you should do, what makes you happy, right? And if some time off makes you happy, then that’s what you should do.”

I can’t fight the smile, that breaks through the walls I build around myself the moment she walked into our house.

We can be friends. Somehow.

Even though my heart starts beating like crazy, when she smiles at me – which she did only once today, but it was enough to make my breath hitch.

But I can ignore all of that, if it means, that I can spend some time with her.

I can be friends with her.
“What about you?”

“Me?” She asks, clearly surprised.

“Yeah. What makes you happy?”

I watch her eyes wandering over to the window, the tv and back to me. “I don’t know. Happiness isn’t exactly something I felt a lot over the past months.” She says quietly. “But I want to get there again.”

“You know, I never thought, we’d sit here one day.”

Lexa smiles sadly. “Me neither.”

“I shouldn’t have left the way I did. I’m sorry. How I know you, you probably carried that guilty feeling all those years and... that wasn’t fair.”

She shakes her head. “No. It wasn’t fair, how I treated you, Clarke.”

“You just said the truth, right?”

“But I did it in a really shitty way. And I didn’t do anything, when Cage…”

I put my hand onto hers, before she finishes her sentence. “No. Stop. We don’t go back there.”

Lexa takes a deep breath, staring at our hands, before she looks back up again, green meeting blue. “I didn’t carry guilt. Well, not most of the time.” She says and bites her lips, until she’s ready to continue. “I carried this.”

With her free hand, she pulls out her wallet and then she retracts her other hand from mine. Immediately, I miss the contact, but I watch her movements, as she fetches a piece of paper out of the used leather wallet her dad gave to her for her eighteenth birthday.

No, it’s a photo.

I try to swallow the lump in my throat, as she unfolds it. I recognize it.

“It saved my life, you know? All those days over there. Whenever I needed to think of something good, I looked at the picture.” She says quietly, her thumb ghosting over the face. My face.

She still has it?

I gave it to her almost ten and a half years ago and we weren’t together for long, so it was a really cheesy thing to do. But when I fell for her, I fell hard.

I’m speechless.

She hands it to me, watching, as I stare down at the photograph. “I don’t want you to blame yourself. I joined, because I wanted to. I would do it again.”

And once again, she’s crept straight under my skin.

“How did you...?”

“I know you.” She simply states with a soft smile.
Yes, she does.

I close my eyes, as I feel them watering with relief. I needed her to say this, but I wasn’t prepared to hear it.

“I’m sorry, Clarke.” She whispers, sensing the emotions overwhelming me. “I never meant to hurt you.”

“I know.” I reply, my voice shaking. “I know that now, Lex.”

Wordlessly, she pulls me into her arms.

I breathe in her scent. She never bothered with perfume, so it’s purely Lexa. A familiar, somehow earthy scent, which will always be the synonym of home to me.

And it hurts.

Goddamn, it hurts so much.

...
Chapter 28 - Lexa.

Chapter Notes

hey guys :) 
We're back to Wednesday and Sunday, even though it's kinda hard for me to stick to two updates a week. Especially, since we're getting to the good part :D Slowly...

Again: THANK YOU <3 to my awesome beta, Lucie :) it's really nice to share it with someone, before it's up here.

I really hope you like this one, see you soon!
Love,
LJT.
---

See the end of the chapter for more notes

...

A while later, she hands me the photograph back, but I shake my head, refusing to take it. “Keep it.”

“No, I-”

“Keep it. Maybe, it’ll save you too, who knows.”

“You think, I need saving?” She asks, eyebrows raised.

I shrug. “Maybe. Who doesn’t?”

“That’s pretty pessimistic.”

“Maybe I left my optimism in the desert.”

She shakes her head and her forehead suddenly consists of one single frown. “Don’t do this, Lexa. Don’t.”

“What?”

“Don’t hide behind sarcasm. You’ve done that back in high school and it didn’t work. Not with me.”

Yeah, she’s right. But what if that’s all I have? Hiding? What, if that’s the only way for me, to be close to her?

Being “friends” with her is something I never imagined. It’s all I wished for – being able to be close to her, to talk with her, hell, to text her, when I feel like it.

And still, it’s like a big, fat FUCK YOU from life itself.

“What’s going on in your head?”

“You mean beside the obvious thoughts? I was wrong earlier. It does feel strange.”
Clarke nods, her eyes wandering away from my face. “Maybe, that’ll pass. I don’t know.”

I'm not sure it will. I don’t know one person, who’s managed to be successfully friends with their ex. Too much damage, too much history.

“Why didn’t you read them? The books?” She suddenly asks.

“Really? That’s what you want to talk about?”

“Why not? Would you rather talk about something else? Life’s mysteries? Football? Family? Because we can do that, but if we want to be friends, we could as well start trying to be.”

She’s right. I should stop being so damn defensive.

“I don’t know, how.” I confess quietly.

“Do you think, I know?”

“You’ve always been better at communicating, than I was.”

Clarke chuckles. She knows, I'm right about this.

I think about her for a moment. Her personality, her life, her history. About us. About me. How our lives influenced each other.

I don’t want to answer her question, at least not right now. Someday, maybe.

“Can I… ask you something?”

She nods.

“Are you happy? I mean, you’ve-”

“How dare you ask that?” She exclaims, going into defense mode nearly the same second.

“Would you let me finish? I'm not judging or meddling with anything.” I ask, sighing. But I know her well enough to not get angry. “I wanted to ask something… philosophical.”

“Oh.” She blushes.

“Can I continue now?”

She nods.

“You've got everything, right? The woman, the fame, the money, the family, the dream. Does that make you happy?”

Clarke stares at me, momentarily forgetting to blink. She didn’t expect my question, that much is clear. “How do you know about Niylah?”

“Luna told me, a while ago.” I say, trying hard not to sound jealous. I have no right to be, but I am. I googled the woman and there’s like one picture of them together, but it’s enough for me to hate her. She’s gorgeous, successful, undamaged – everything I am not.

“We aren’t together anymore.” She answers after some time, but before I get to say sorry, she continues speaking. “I'm… content. I guess. I don’t think, happiness is something you can feel all
day, you know? It’s more like… momentarily.”

I disagree.

I was happy. For almost a whole year a decade ago, I was nearly non-stop happy. (And if I’m really honest with myself, I’m a little happy, that she isn’t dating that woman anymore. Very happy.)

“You don’t think that, do you?”

I shake my head.

Clarke sighs. “Can I ask you something, too?”

“Shoot.”

“It’s… About those weeks.”

Oh.

“Shoot.” I repeat nevertheless. I can still choose to not answer, right?

“Did you… did you think, you’d die?” She asks carefully.

That’s an easy one, though I wonder, why people ask that. They don’t ask, if I was scared. If I was in pain. They ask about death, like it’s the most important topic.

“Yes, I did. I thought, my time had come. But then again, I knew, I wouldn’t go down without a fight. So yeah, sometimes I thought, I would die. And sometimes I wanted to.”

Clarke nods, seemingly lost in thoughts for a moment. She stares down at the photograph in her hands. “You know, you should keep it. If it brought you back… home, you should hold onto it.”

I almost thought, she’d say: “If it brought you back to me.” God, I wished, she had said that. I could hear it in my head.

Slowly I take the picture, my fingertips brushing her hand in the process. Pure electricity courses through my veins, leaving goosebumps behind.

Fuck.

Clarke’s blue eyes stare into mine for one second.

Two seconds. Three. Ten. Twenty. Thirty. I don’t know, why I’m counting.

“Can I ask you another question?” I ask quietly, only this time it’s not because of my voice – but because I don’t want to break the moment.

Clarke nods.

“Did you ever think of me the last years?”

“Every day.” She answers without hesitation, but with a serious expression on her face.

I swallow heavily. I silently prayed, no begged for that answer, but the same time, I hoped, she would say no. It would make everything easier.

My heart is beating fast and loud against my ribcage.
“Did you?” She repeats my question. “Think of me?”

“Every day.” And night.

We were supposed to be the couple, that makes it. The high school sweethearts, whom hit the jackpot at the age of seventeen. Happily ever after and all this crap. Somehow, this thought weighs heavier than any other one about us. We could’ve had that.

And I still love her so much, it hurts.

It’s incomprehensible and yet so logical. She’s my one stable force, my constant, my lifeline – the one thing I always held on to. Even in times of complete chaos, just the thought of her calmed me down.

I can’t find words to describe it. It’s got no length or bound, no shade, no form. It’s simply everywhere. It’s overwhelming my whole body, my soul, hell, my whole existence.

Through her eyes, I can see it all – the past, the present, the future. The possibilities.

She’s the one for me.

She’ll always be.

And I should be sad about it, because I can’t have her and because she ruins every other one woman for me, but I’m not.

Because there are worse people, who I could’ve lost my heart to. And she deserves the world. So if loving her means watching her from afar, than that’s, what I’ll do happily.

Clarke’s eyes glisten, as if she understands, what’s going on in my head.

And somehow we both know, what’s going to happen next.

We know it.

We fight it.

We lose.

And Clarke’s suddenly closer than a minute ago.

I sit frozen, full of fear and excitement and memories and desire at the same time, while she leans in, so very slowly, that I’m sure, time has stopped. Then her forehead’s resting against mine, eyes closed.

My heart beats outside of my chest. The tension in the room makes it hard to breathe.

My hand gently cups her face, carefully stroking her soft cheeks, while we’re sharing the same air. Her hands rest above my hips, leaving a tingling feeling behind.

Don’t do this, Lexa. Don’t. Don’t you dare. Don’t you fucking dare…

But I can’t fight it.

I connect our lips, just for a tiny little moment.
One would think, when you’ve kissed someone a thousand times, you’d get used to the feeling. The warmth. The taste of her lips. The way she tangles her hand in your hair.

You don’t.

It hits me like a speed wagon.

I pull back just a second later, not able to process all the emotions and sensations.

But Clarke chases my lips and crashes hers into mine again.

This time it’s fiery and passionate. Desperate. Her hands do tangle in my hair, pulling me closer until our bodies are pressed together.

I can feel the warmth radiating from her body.

Her teeth bite my bottom lip, ripping a quiet moan from somewhere deep inside me, a place long forgotten, as she pushes her tongue into my mouth.

And if this moment is all I ever get, it’s okay.

...

Chapter End Notes

Yeah. That happened.
thoughts? :D
Kissing Lexa makes me want to suffocate.

It makes me want to suffocate, because if that meant, I’d never have to pull away from her lips, I’d happily do it. Kissing her is nothing like I remembered. It’s true, what they say – memories do fade. They don’t do justice to the truth – but how could they?

Lexa is the first one to pull away. Her pupils are blown and she’s breathing hard. And god, she’s so beautiful.

I can see emotions welling her eyes, as she tries to comprehend what happened between us. Hope. Pain. Fear.

“…” She starts and removes her hands from my face.

“It’s okay.” I say, missing the contact immediately. “We’re okay.”

Lessa shakes her head, but it seems, she hasn’t even heard my words. “I… I can’t… I…”

So I grab her face gently and make her look at me. “It’s okay, Lex.” I repeat softly.

Green eyes find mine again. “Clarke?”

“Yeah.”

She takes a deep, but unsteady breath.

“I… I should go.” She whispers.

“You don’t have to-“

She looks at me pleadingly, with so much pain and fear in her eyes, that I stop talking the very same second.

“I’m sorry.” Another whisper.

“Don’t be.”
Next thing I know is the front door getting slammed shut.

---

“Clarke.”

I don’t react.

“Clarke, come on.”

Nope.

“Hey!”

“What?” I exclaim angrily.

“You can’t keep ignoring me forever.”

“Watch me.”

I get up and walk back towards the kitchen to busy my hands, but Aden follows me.

“Look, I'm sorry.” His pleading tone almost makes me look at him, but I'm not ready. I'm not ready for forgive him for trying to play cupid. For meddling with my love life. Or my non-existent love life. For being somehow successful, until it wasn’t successful anymore, but painful instead.

And it hurts.

It fucking hurts and I could punch him for that.

“Clarke.” He tries again.

I’ve spent the last three hours since Lexa left, with ignoring him successfully, while I tried to form a coherent thought. One without her, to be exact.

“I thought-”

“I know, what you thought.” I tell him, slamming my hand onto the kitchen surface. “I know exactly, what you thought! But you know what? I don’t care about your intentions, because you’ve got no idea! And it’s none of your fucking business!”

“No idea?” He replies, strangely calm. “I know a few things, Clarke. I know, that I lost my sister, because of her. And I know, that you still love her. That much is clear.”

“So what? Sometimes love is not enough! Sometimes it’s a fucking weakness!” I shout back, ignoring what he said. “So stay the hell out of my life, okay?”

“I'm sorry, that it hurt you. I tried to fix things.”

My eyes meet his and suddenly I'm not angry anymore.

I know, he meant to help. And here he stands, with this pleading look in his sad blue eyes, looking like a kicked puppy. Like my not even six-years old brother, when I said goodbye to travel the world.

Fuck.
Only Lexa is able to turn me into this.

This… mess.

I'm a wreck.

That kiss? It turned my world upside down and just thinking of her makes my heart pound and my mind churn. I feel like I'm going nuts. Maybe I do.

Because I can’t want her again. I can’t.

Wanting her was the most painful experience I ever made.

Wanting her destroyed me.

And yet here I am, craving for more. That has to be the definition of madness, right? It has to be.

“Why don’t you talk to her?” Aden asks after some silent seconds. “I'm sure, she isn’t any better right now.”

“Because she doesn’t want it.”

Me.

Aden frowns.

“She said, she can’t.” I say quietly. Not even a steady stream of liquid trickling down my face can ease the pain in my words.

That’s, what tears are for, right? To relieve pain. To me that’s just a fairy tale.

When she said those words, time stood still for me. I remember, how Lexa released a heavy sigh, when we pulled away from each other. How she tried to open her mouth to speak and how she couldn’t form words. I couldn’t, either. I remember, how she sounded, when she finally managed to speak. So hoarse, barely audible for me.

It hurt her as much as it hurt me. But that doesn’t console me at all – in fact, it does quite the opposite.

“She can’t?” Aden asks unbelieving.

I nod.

“She’s even dumber than you.”

“Hey!” I complain half-heartedly.

“What? It’s true.”

-----

Late that evening, I'm sitting outside on the roof next to my window in the attic, enjoying the cool air and the night sky.

I haven’t been up here in a while, because somehow the place is connected to Lexa and I couldn’t bear it to return.
Now there’s no need to avoid it anymore.

I broke up with Niylah, because she isn’t Lexa.

I flew home from Canada, just to make sure, my ex-girlfriend was okay.

I stayed here two weeks. Because of her? Because I’m not sure, if I’m happy with my life? A little bit of both, I guess.

Right now, I’m just relieved, that Mom’s coming back on Monday. I need to get back on track with my life. Focus on work, the new season, writing. I need to start over, because I can’t keep pining over a woman, who doesn’t want me.

Staring into the night sky, I think of Dad. Not a day passes, that I don’t miss him. But it doesn’t hurt as much as it did ten years ago. It’s right, what they say – you learn to live with the loss.

Aden’s got so much from him. The looks, the humor. Hell, even the nervous ticks or the ability to roll his tongue.

There’s a knock at my door and a moment later I hear the familiar creaking of the door being opened.

“So, Clarke?”

“He’s up here.”

“Hey.” Aden says, as he slowly climbs out of the window. “It’s a cool spot you’ve got here.”

If Mom knew, I let him do that, she’d probably kill us both.

“You’re a smart kid, you know that?”

“Runs in the family.”

“Thank you.”

“Are we good?”

“We are.” I confirm, pulling him close for a moment.
“All right. Then my job here is done.”

He leaves me alone again. Alone with my many thoughts and my jumbled feelings.

After a moment of hesitation, I pull out my phone to send her a text.

**Me:** Hey, Lexa. I just wanted you to know, that I get it. I understand you. Now’s not the right time to start something. Take all the time you need. I’ll be here, if you want to talk. Maybe someday, you and I will get our chance.

I don’t expect an answer, especially not that quickly, but while I'm staring at my phone, thinking about the words I had just sent, she types three words.

**Lexa: I hope so.**

...

Chapter End Notes

thanks again for reading :)  
See you Sunday!
Needless to say, that I’ve been freaking out from the moment, our lips parted.

I haven’t calmed down since and it’s been six hours.

I know, I should’ve explained how I’m feeling. I probably owed her that much, but… I could feel a panic attack approaching when she opened her crystal blue eyes and I wouldn’t let her watch this.

I ran out on her.

That was the wrong way to react after a kiss that’s blown your mind. I know. But how do you explain, that you’re a mess? That you can’t dive into something so important head first, when you’re not even able to sleep through the night?

I can’t get involved into something so precious, when I can’t be sure, that I’ll be able to go all in.

Yup. I should’ve told her that.

Instead I ran off, leaving her behind on the couch, not even asking where she stands or what she wants. If she even wants something.

She kissed me. I kissed her?

Damn.

After a run, a cold shower and a few cookies on my way out, I go on a walk. A long one, half through the city. At first, I walk around aimlessly, just trying to get rid of all the unnecessary energy. And some time later, I’m aiming for the Griffins house, without even knowing it.

I’m about to cross the street, when I notice her climbing out of her window. So I stop and stare at her
from afar, like a creep.

It’s her “think-spot”, as I used to call it. Even before we started dating, I secretly watched her from my window. I never told her that.

I can’t remember, when my crush started. Maybe when she first kissed me at the party.

Maybe when I was freshman and realized that I couldn’t stop staring at her boobs during math. After all, she was the reason I realized I was gay. I never told her that either.

Or maybe in kindergarten, when she hit me with her shovel and started crying, claiming I started, acting without hesitating and leaving me speechless.

I don’t know.

What I do know is that I can’t get used to the sight of her.

It doesn’t take long until Aden joins her. I can’t hear what they’re talking about, but suddenly she wraps her arms around her little brother.

It’s one of the other few things I never told her – I envied her relationship with her brother. Or her family in general. Though Mom and Dad are the best and even though Anya and I grew close – especially during the last years – I never was as close to any of them as Clarke is to her family.

Maybe I'm not made for human relationships of any kind.

I'm getting lost in my thoughts for a while, not noticing that Aden’s heading back inside.

When my phone chimes, it takes everything in me not to scream.

Damn.

While I pull out my phone, I notice, that Clarke’s staring at her own.

Did she…?

My heart is beating fast against my ribcage, as I unlock my phone with trembling fingers and open the message I got.

**Clarke:** Hey, Lexa. I just wanted you to know that I get it. I understand you. Now’s not the right time to start something. Take all the time you need. I’ll be here if you want to talk. Maybe someday, you and I will get our chance.

I let out a breath, I didn’t know I was holding, not even bothering with fighting the tears.

She understands.

**Clarke understands.**

And maybe she knows what her words mean to me too. How they encourage me to fight the fears, the pain, the past. How they motivate me, to get better. How they give me hope. Purpose.

Because all I needed, was a reason. And she’s the most beautiful reason I can imagine.

I'm quick to type an answer.
Lexa: I hope so.

-----

When I arrive home, I'm overrun by my dogs, like I've been away for a week. It’s the best feeling in
the world and I'm smiling brighter than the sun, hugging both of them tightly, while trying to fight
Paul’s urge to kiss me. Especially, because I can still feel Clarke’s lips on mine and I want to keep it
that way for as long as I can.

“I'm home!”

Footsteps come closer and then Luna peeks around the corner, wearing an apron.

So it’s bake-night again.

“You look good.” She says, the corners of her mouth rising, when she sees me. “Better than before.
Did your walk help?”

“It did.”

“Want to talk about it?”

“No. I'm good.” I hesitate for a moment, before I pull her close and wrap my arms around her.
“Thank you.”

She laughs, surprised by the gesture. “For what?”

“For not giving up on me.”

She doesn’t answer, but there’s no need. She just hugs me back.

“What are you making?” I ask as I step back a moment later. Where both not the touchy-feely kind
of person.

“Brownies.”

“Brownies or brownies ?”

She rolls her eyes. “The commander found her humor, hm? Behave, or you won’t get one and I have
to share with Paul and Ellie. I'm sure they’d be over the moon.”

I grab a beer for myself and hop onto the kitchen counter to watch her work.

A few minutes pass in silence, while I'm nursing my drink.

I'm ready, I can feel it.

There’s a lot I want to tell her, but I'm not sure if I should talk to her about it. She’s already having
enough nightmares. But the stuff I need to share will probably cause anybody nightmares and she
offered to listen, right?

“Luna?”

“Hm?” She hums absent-minded, while she’s pouring the dough on a sheet.
“I… wanted to ask you something.”

The undecided tone in my voice gets her attention and her eyes narrow at the sight of my face. “You okay?”

“Yes, I just… I want to talk about it.” I don’t even need to emphasize the “it”.

Luna understands immediately. She puts away the bowl with the dough and wipes her hands on the apron.

“No, please, continue. It’s easier, if you don’t look at me.” I mumble, rubbing my thighs. “You’re really up for this? It’s pretty heavy stuff and I…”

Her answer comes quick and determined, with a reassuring and somehow comforting smile. “Of course I am.”

She continues her work, even though I know she’s waiting for me to start.

Shots and cries echo through my head and my hands are trembling, as I dive into the bad memories, sorting them out and trying to find somewhere to start.

Then there’s an image. Shivers run down my spine and cold sweat breaks free, as I remember the face. I swallow heavily, but I manage to hold it.

“There was this woman.” I start, closing my eyes.

I’m back to the desert, lying on the floor in that hellhole of a cell and the door is opened with a sharp creaking. It’s the first time.

“Her name was Nia.”

---------------------------------------------------------------------------------

WARNING: MENTIONS OF PHYSICAL PAIN, TORTURE AND MURDER !!! JUST MENTIONS.
--------------------------------------------------------------------------------

“She was the only one, whose face I could see. It was covered… scars. But not from an accident, they seemed… done on purpose. Like permanent warpaint.”

Luna knows that, but she keeps silent, because it’s my story.

“The others, they were afraid of her.” I continue quietly. “And her eyes, they… they were so cold, you know? Like really, fucking cold. And dark.”

I’ve never seen so sombrous eyes. Crystal blue and yet darker than the night.

“It’s like, she fed on pain. Like she lived of it. Sometimes, she would hit and punish someone else, just for fun. She… she reveled in power. I remember wondering, if she even wanted me to break. It was, like she enjoyed my… persistence.”

Luna’s movements falter. I barely notice it, while I’m lost in my memories of the woman, who tortured me.

I force myself to tell her more. “The cell she kept me in was dusty and hot and so damn sticky. On
some days, I thought I’d suffocate. There was only little daylight, but when the sunbeams were
dancing over the sand, it glistened like a thousand diamonds. It… it was so beautiful. It made me feel
less lonely.” I confess, thinking about how I found beauty in hell.

“Collateral beauty.” Luna whispers quietly, ripping me out of my thoughts. “Sorry, I… continue,
please.”

I do. “At night, it got cold. Like really, really cold, which was soothing for the pain, but… I liked the
hours in between. They were comforting, especially in the evenings, when I knew, another day was
over.”

When I knew, I had survived another day.

I don’t have to say it. From the look on Luna’s face, I know that she knows.

“For the first week, I thought I couldn’t take it. The pain. I thought I’d die from it, instead of being
killed. She always found something new for me. But then… I stopped feeling it for a while. I
stopped… being human. I remember that thought, you know? If I wasn’t human, she wouldn’t be
able to harm me.”

Luna has just put the brownies into the oven and now, there’s nothing to do anymore. She sits across
from me, on the kitchen counter. Her knuckles are white from grabbing the work top – or maybe
from stopping herself from reaching out to hug me.

“And then she…”

Fuck.

Say it. Say it, Lexa.

“Nia killed a man. Slowly. Right in front of my eyes. With eighty-three cuts.” My words are more of
a sigh, than anything else.

I’ve replayed the scene in my head about a million times.

“I don’t know, why I counted. But every cut she made, it…” I close my eyes, my hands clenched to
fists, while I try to fight the urge to puke. But I said it. I finally said it. “She left me alone for two
whole days afterwards. No water, no food, no pain. She wanted to break me. And she did.”

----------------------------

You can continue reading now :)
----------------------------

It’s silent for a while.

All I can hear is Luna’s breathing and the constant whirring of the oven. It’s somehow soothing.

Slowly, I unclench my hands and stretch them a few times.

I made it. Without a panic attack. I told her about it. Just a few details, but important ones. And I still
feel okay.
“Thank you for sharing it, Lexa.” Luna finally says, looking up to meet my eyes.

“I still feel guilty.” I confess. “Logically, I know that it’s all on her, but… that man died because of me.”

“Stedaunon don gon we. Kikon ste enti.” Luna answers, channeling her inner book of sayings.

_The dead are gone. The living are hungry._

I nod, not able to fight a smile when I think about Clarke.

Yeah, they are.

I am hungry, too. Hungry for life.

...
Hey guys :)

It's song time once more! I suggest listening to it: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_MxkUUkR_U&list=PLw3FXUozGcwbA6m1GzoDk2NcEqlANjXeQ&index=36

This chapter is one of my favorites, too. Hope you like it!

Thank you again to my beta Lucie <3
And thank you to everyone who's still reading or who started recently as well. This means a lot to me <3
I can assure you: the happy and fluffy times are close now :)

Love,
LJT.
---

See the end of the chapter for more notes

...

10 years before…

I'm sitting on my spot on the roof again, trying to calm my nerves, when a car stops in front of Lexa's house and a second later the green-eyed girl slams the door shut.

Her eyes meet mine for a second, before she walks towards her house. Only to stop and turn around again.

"Can I ... join you?" She suddenly asks.

"What?"

I did understand what she had asked. Well, acoustically.

Its content? Not so much.

Could have something to do with the kiss that's still lingering in the back of my mind. And on my lips. And in my whole body.

I shouldn’t have done that, I know, but I couldn’t back down from the challenge.

Lexus shakes her head, before she makes her way over to our house.

A minute later she's in my bedroom. "Could you get in here, please? I don't like heights."

I hesitate. I should tell her to fuck off. God, I really should.
But then I do as I was asked. Mostly, because I want to tell Lexa that her behavior is really annoying. Of course. And that she’s got no right to be in my sacred room.

"Why did you do that?" Lexa asks immediately. She's standing a few feet away from the window, her green eyes focused on my face.

"What?"

"Why did you kiss me?"

"Oh come on, that little kiss is not going to ruin your reputation. And besides, you seemed to enjoy it."

"That's not what I meant."

I notice that Lexa hasn't denied it. Is it a bad or a good thing? Why am I even thinking about it?

"Well, what did you mean?"

"I..." She starts, but she seems lost for words.

Lexa speechless? That’s a first.

"Lexa, I don't have all night."

Lexa sighs, confusion spread across her face. "I mean, why did you have to do that?"

Now I’m confused, too. What the hell is she talking about? She knows why. Because of that game.

I don’t notice that the temperature between us is rising constantly, up to a point where Lexa can barely restrain herself anymore.

"Look, why don’t we just forget about it? It was a stupid game, Lexa. Just a-"

I don’t get any further, because unexpectedly Lexa’s hands grab my face softly and then she is so close that I can’t breathe.

I should push her away. I really should. But I don’t.

Instead I find myself whispering. "What are you doing?"

"I'm going to kiss you like I wanted to." Lexa answers, a slight tremble in her angelic voice.

And she does.

Holy shit.

Lexa Woods kisses me, Clarke Griffin. For the second time tonight.

Softly and with so much tenderness that my knees feel like they might give in any second.

Lexa’s fingers caress my cheeks, while her lips move so very slowly and temptingly that it drives me crazy.

Until my mind can catch up and I push her away. "Lexa, I-"

Suddenly Lexa seems to realize what just happened. She backs off immediately, as if Clark shocked
her. "Sorry. I'm ..."

She turns around and reaches for the doorknob, ready to flee.

"Lexa, wait! Goddamn, would you wait please?"

I shouldn’t want her. She's the exact opposite of me. She's loud and bold - well, not that much right now - and she's popular. She’s at the top, while I get pushed around at school. But I can’t help myself. I have never wanted anything so bad in my life.

I don’t even know, how it happens, but I follow her towards the door, effectively backing her up against it in the following seconds. "You can't just barge in here, kiss me and go."

"No?"

The insecurity in her voice draws me closer and suddenly we share the same air.

"No." I tell her.

"Then what can I do?" The green-eyed girl asks, her voice barely a whisper, pupils blown wide again.

My heart is beating loud and heavy and now I can feel the temperature rising into endlessness.

I can barely manage to form thoughts, let alone words. "You could shut up and do that again."

Lexa doesn’t hesitate a millisecond.

Her lips find mine - or the other way around, none of us could say it later.

This kiss is messier, heavier, deeper. Tongues brush against each other, dancing to their own rhythm. Hands grab hips or necks, roam across sides. Bodies press against each other. Soft, but needy moans escape our throats.

Until we break the kiss to catch our breaths, foreheads touching.

That's not what we expected. At all.

Never.

This kiss isn't the only one we share that night.

Kissing turns into heated make out sessions on my bed.

When the morning sun creeps through my window, so does reality.

The popular, sporty girl can't be with the nerdy outsider. Not even, when she wants to.

We both know it.

We don't say a word when Lexa leans down for a last kiss, before she gets up and leaves.

It's better this way.

For a night, we pretended. And now it's over. It's just as simple as that.

-----
Present.

Groaning, I open my eyes, blinking away the picture of Lexa leaving my bedroom.

It’s 6 a.m.

And it’s not the first time I dreamt about it since that moment on the couch – in fact, I’ve gotten strangely used to dreaming about her – but it’s definitely one of my most precious memories and just like every time I dream about her, I can’t go back to sleep afterwards.

God, we were so young and careless.

Sometimes I’d love to go back in time to relive it all. Even the bad moments, because, even then, everything was easier. And safer.

I pull back the blanket and toddle towards the bathroom. After splashing some cold water on my face, I stare at myself in the mirror without seeing anything, just like I did that morning ten years ago.

After a short breakfast – just a cup of coffee and an apple – I take a long hot shower, before I wake up Raven.

We’ve got two hours left, before we need to leave for the airport, but it feels, like I’m back to the beginning. Returning home, unsure of what’s going to happen there.

It’s been weeks since that text and her words still haunt every waking, idle minute.

I hope so.

I’m going to see her again. Probably tomorrow. For the first time since that kiss.

I pack my bag for the long weekend, trying not to think about it, but I do. Of course I do. It’s been all I could think about for the past weeks.

I don’t feel hopeless anymore. Or sad or angry. I just… want to spend time with her again. Is that crazy?

But she has to make a move and maybe that’s the hardest part of it.

---

“Finally!” Raven announces hours later, when we leave the airport. “I swear, if that guy kept staring at your boobs any longer, I’d have knocked out his teeth, so that he’d need to shove a toothbrush up is ass to brush-”

“No. I need to be that graphic?”

“Yes.” She announces, grinning happily. “I always wanted to use that line.”

I roll my eyes, while I take the keys of the rental car from her. “You’re something else, Ray.”

“By the way, when you’re saying something else. I wanted to talk to you about something.” She says casually. “A few of the guys want to meet by the lake for a bonfire tonight. You up for that?”

“The lake?” I repeat quietly, trying not to picture deep green eyes.

“Yeah. You don’t have to, I just wanted to let you know.”
“She’s coming?”

Raven nods.

“When?” I try to sound casual, but when I think about her, I think about that kiss and it leaves my insides aching for more and my heart racing.

“After dinner. Around eight?”

“I’ll think about it.” I don’t need to. In fact it’s an easy decision and I’ve made it the second she nodded.

I can’t wait to see her again.

-----

When we leave my Mom’s house, the horizon is colored in all kinds of yellow, orange and red, like there’s a fire burning in the sky.

My insides are.

Shit, I’m feeling like a teenager again. When did that happen?

Raven’s smile is wider than it ever was and somehow it’s contagious.

This is nothing I haven’t done before. Just an evening with good old friends (and my ex), drinking beer, enjoying the mild autumn night by the lake (where I just used to meet with my ex while we were dating).

There’s this certain smell in the air, something wooden and mossy, but somehow earthy, too. It’s characteristic for October and it’s mixed with something familiar. The smell of my childhood. Of home.

We can hear the gang laughing from afar. Someone’s playing tunes on a guitar and I immediately picture Lexa, sitting in her window at night.

I wonder if she’s still able to play like she used to, but my thoughts get interrupted once we step out of the woods, because she’s already here. A red hoodie hidden beneath a dark jacket, ripped jeans and old chucks. Like no time has passed between then and now. She’s sitting next to Lincoln on a fallen tree and she’s laughing.

Oh god, her laughter. I forgot how beautiful it is, how vivid and carefree. How intoxicating.

I’m frozen to the spot.

She looks up and after a moment of mutual staring she smiles softly.

That’s when I know, that, someday, we’re going to be okay. It may not be today or tomorrow, but I can feel it. Because every fiber of my body suddenly feels warmer, lighter.

So I smile back at her, staring into those deep green eyes for longer than I should.

Someday. That never sounded more hopeful.

My thoughts get interrupted by someone shouting at Bellamy and Raven, who can’t keep their hands to themselves – something I had to witness more often during the past weeks, than I’d like to admit.
With a sigh, I head for the cooler to grab a beer.

I watch Lincoln and Lexa talking from afar, while Luna and Octavia start a fire with Monty. Jasper and Maya are walking down the beach hand in hand, enjoying their time together. And it feels like I haven’t done anything else in my life.

Soon enough, we’re all sitting around the fire. A few of us are roasting marshmallows, some of us stick to beers.

I’m sitting across from Lexa, which leaves me catching her eyes more often than not. She doesn’t seem to mind.

She seems better. And pretty relaxed around her people.

I don’t know what to think of Luna – she’s nice, but somehow a little too good at reading people for my liking. I’m not very comfortable around her.

And Lincoln? A big teddy bear with a heart of gold.

“Hey, Lexa. Play something?” Jasper says, pointing at the guitar between Lincoln and Lexa. “Please?”

“I’m not up for it tonight, sorry.” She answers with a short smile, focusing on the flames again to avoid my gaze.

So she can still play.

“Come on, you’re really good at this.”

“How about we play something together?” Luna suggests, clearly trying to protect Lexa from further pressure. Her question is directed at Lincoln.

“Sure.” He answers, untangling his hands from Octavia.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_MxkUUKkR_U&list=PLw3FXUozGcwbA6m1GzoDk2NcEqlANjXeQ&index=36

He grabs the guitar and seconds later an unfamiliar tune floats through the night, only to be accompanied by his voice the next moment.

Spring will peacefully chase the leaves off my window sill,  
autumn seems so far away, yet oh so near.  
Trade of nothingness sleeps inside my pillow case,  
we’re awaking hand in hand and face to face.

I watch Lexa’s features, light up by the firelight, as Luna joins in for the chorus, drumming a beat on her thighs. She’s got this look in her eyes, like she’s far away.

I’d hate it if you go, if you go  
Remember up we rise, memorize.  
You have come to know forever and more,  
that I can’t say no,  
can’t say no.

Green eyes meet mine and suddenly she starts singing the next verse, eyes locked onto my face, her
voice clear and strong, but soft.

*Reality falls upon me now,*
*the chances I’ve blown, I try no more inside.*

I can feel wet stains of tears on my cheek, but I'm frozen to the spot, unable to move, to wipe them away. She hated singing around people before. And now she does it without hesitation, green eyes fixated on my face.

*Where have you been, oh tell me where have you been?*
*‘Cause I’m here alongside of my yesterday’s lonely life.*

The three of them aren’t alone this time, when they sing the chorus again and somehow that changes the mood of the song to something hopeful. Something… shared.

*I’d hate it if you go, if you go*  
*Remember up we rise, memorize.*  
*You’ve come to know forever and more,*  
*that I can’t say no,*  
*can’t say no.*

Jasper pulls Maya closer, Lincoln looks at Octavia, Raven’s head lies on Bellamy’s shoulder. Monty glances at Harper. And I'm still staring at her.

Everyone starts to sway with the rhythm, getting lost in their own minds.

I get lost in green.

Lexa smiles at me, while the sweet melodies and words fall from her lips. It’s sad and yet hopeful.

*Let no other good man close enough to your everything.*  
*It saddens me to no return, I guess I had my run, it’s over soon.*

*Let nobody else in, in the world where fire is king.*  
*Words are like a souvenir, forever lasting fear, of losing you.*

She feels it, too. I know it.

*Losing you.*  
*Losing you.*

*I’d hate it if you go, if you go.*  
*Remember up we rise, memorize.*  
*You’ve come to know forever and more,*  
*that I can’t say no,*  
*can’t say no.*

It’s the most beautiful thing I’ve ever witnessed and it cracks me open, so damn wide open that I'm sure she can see my heart and soul.

But I don’t mind.

She can have it all.

...
thoughts? :D
Hey guys :)  
It's Sunday again :D Obviously.  
There are two songs mentioned in this chapter, you can check them out here if you want (I recommend it):  
Lionel Richie “Easy”: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rfNpHdlGaQA  
Lionel Richie “Still”: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vBAkONUjukk

I hope you like this one,  
Love,  
LJT.

___

See the end of the chapter for more notes

…

Something has changed.

I can’t put it into words, but… something has shifted between us. And I never thought it would – especially not in this direction – but I wished that moment by the lake could last forever. I wished I could keep singing and staring into blue eyes, watching her moved to tears, because she could feel it too.

Throughout the rest of the evening I wanted to find the courage to talk to her. But somehow, we never found the time or someone else occupied one of us.

So it’s Saturday. Aden’s birthday. And I haven’t been excited for something like that in a long, long time.

I’m going to see her again and -

“Quit the daydreaming and wrap your damn gift.”

“What?”

Luna sighs and takes the games I bought for Aden from my hands to wrap them herself. She’s slightly pissed.

“You know, I somehow liked your sad self better. It was at least functioning.”

“Hey!” I complain halfheartedly.

“What? It’s right. Since that bonfire yesterday you haven’t stopped smiling. It’s annoying as hell.”

“I can wrap my gifts myself. Thank you.”

“No, you can’t, because you have to change or else we’re going to be late. And since Abby invited
me nicely, I wouldn’t want to be late. Besides, you’re gift-wrapping-talents suck. We both know that.”

I take a look at my watch.

Ooops.

I hurry back to my bedroom.

-----

Normally, I’m not the nervous-type.

But that was never true when it came to Clarke Griffin. Because ever since we kissed for the first time, she’s been able to see behind my façade.

So maybe there’s no normal around her.

The way she looked at me at the bonfire… I can’t place it – not because I’ve got nothing to compare the way her eyes sparkled to, but because I’m too scared to interpret it wrong and to have my heart broken again.

Maybe that’s ironic, because last time I was the one who broke both our hearts, but… There’s nothing I want more than a fresh and clean start. The chance to start all over and to do it right.

Nevertheless, I’m fidgeting with my sleeves all the way down towards the car, with the ribbon on top of Aden’s present while we’re driving towards the Griffin’s house and with my sleeves again when we’re walking towards the front door.

Luna sighs. “Lexa.”

“What?”

“Calm down.”

“That’s easy to say.”

“Yeah it is. Have you seen the way she looked at you? That girl, whether she knows or not, loves you.”

Hopefully. I mean, that would make a happy ending a lot easier.

“We kissed.” I tell her quietly before she can ring the bell.

“You what?” She exclaims surprised. “When?”

“The day I talked to you about… you know.”

“And why am I only hearing this now?”

“Because it’s going to be awkward and I don’t want it to be. But I panicked and I-”

The door flies open and reveals a grinning Aden. “There you are!”

“Happy birthday.” Luna says, before she nudges me.

“Happy birthday, Aden. This one’s for you.”
He takes the present and shakes it carefully. “Oh, I’ve got an idea. And if I’m right, that’s my second favorite gift.”

“Oh, I’ve got an idea. And if I’m right, that’s my second favorite gift.”

“Only the second favorite, hm?” I tease.

“Yeah. Do you want to see my favorite?”

He doesn’t wait for an answer. Instead he hands Luna the still wrapped present and grabs my hand to drag me over to the garage. Seconds later, a shining blue car is revealed.

Well, that explains the wide grin from ear to ear.

“Clarke convinced Mom. Isn’t that cool?”

“That’s really great.” I confirm smiling. “Now you can drive over by yourself and I can level you to the ground again.”

“Haha. Not funny.”

“Maybe I’ll let you win today, because it’s your birthday.”

“I’m not sure if you’ll get cake now.”

“Oh course she’ll get cake.” A melodic, familiar voice answers from behind us.

I turn around and I’m rewarded with a breathtakingly beautiful sight, which makes my heart skip a beat. Seems to become a habit around Clarke.

She’s wearing simple jeans and a navy-blue sweater, whose sleeves are a little bit too long, but this way she can bury her hands in them. She always gets cold hands.

“Hey, Lex.” She says quietly, with a shy but beaming smile on her lips.

Lex. She does it again.

“Clarke.” I exhale. I didn’t mean to lose my words but my mind is blank.

Yeah, something has definitely changed between us.

“And I’m out. Enjoy your Clexa moment.” Aden announces, taking off faster than I could notice – if I did. I don’t.

“I’m glad you came.”

“Wouldn’t miss it for the world.” I answer, swallowing heavily as I try to regain some sort of control over my head. “You look… beautiful.”

Well done, Lexa. Beautiful.

Her cheeks turn red with a blush and suddenly her eyes are fixated at the floor. She still can’t take a compliment. “Thank you. You do too. Do you… want to go in? Our Moms made about six different cakes or so.”

Really? Cake?

She seems to think the same thing, because she chuckles and shakes her head in shy amusement.
“I’d love to.” I say nevertheless and follow her back towards the front door – carefully leaving some distance between us.

---

In the end, there are seven cakes, because Anya brings one, too. But we’re a lot of people, so maybe that’s not too bad.

I find myself sitting across from Clarke once again and I can’t help but steal a few glances here and there. Just like I did when we started dating and we decided on keeping it a secret at first. Though that didn’t work out for long, there were a few painfully long dinners with our families which tortured me in a completely different way.

But there’s just something about her that keeps drawing me in. The way she brushes her hair back, the cute little smirk whenever my Dad cracks another lame joke, the way she licks her lips, the freckles on the tip of her nose, the way she blushes whenever our eyes meet.

I’m not embarrassed that she catches me staring because I catch her staring too. I don’t care about anyone else in the room.

I’m right where I want to be.

---

The afternoon passes in a blur of blue eyes and laughter. And cake.

Soon the daylight fades into the dark and Aden orders pizza for all of us.

After dinner, he starts playing one of his new games with Raven and Bellamy, while Luna and Anya talk in the kitchen with Nyko. Mom, Dad and Abby pour themselves glasses of red wine and they share old stories about growing up together.

And Clarke?

She’s dancing in the living room, with Ilian in her arms, to an old record of Lionel Richie, which her Dad loved. It’s “Easy”, one of the quicker songs on the album and I can’t help but put on a big smile.

The little boy is giggling and squealing excited with every turn she takes.

And I'm tired. So fucking tired. Tired of pretending, of hoping and praying for a day that might never come for all I know. Tired of waiting until it’s too late. I'm tired of being the lost and broken one. Tired of just surviving.

I’ve been doing nothing but surviving for these past months. For years.

But it’s not enough anymore, because I’m completely and undeniably in love with this woman. And the longer I stare at her, the more I fall for her.

Somehow – as if she could read my mind – her eyes find mine and, while she keeps on swaying to the song, she holds my gaze.

I swallow. She’s so damn sexy. And if she keeps on doing this, I’m going to walk over and I’m going to kiss her senseless and -

Clarke smirks and nods towards the backdoor, before she stops dancing and hands Ilian to Anya on her way outside.
I follow her like a stray dog looking for a home. And the strange, but yet so comforting truth is: I’d probably follow her everywhere, if she asked.

It’s dark outside and the light of the kitchen, that’s falling through the window, barely illuminates the terrace. A few raindrops are dancing on the canopy above us. The air is cooler than before, leaving goosebumps on my skin, and there’s a certain smell in the air – something muddy, purely autumn.

But I hardly notice all of this.

Clarke is standing there, just a few steps away from me, her face lit up with the dim light. She takes a step forward when I close the door behind me, a soft and gentle, almost playful smile on her lips.

“Hey.” Her voice low and husky.

I don’t say anything, because suddenly my vocabulary seems to be reduced to one word only.

After a few seconds (or maybe hours), while the song changes, she reaches out her hand and I take it. Of course I do.

I find myself being pulled close to her, so close that I can feel her body heat radiating from beneath her sweater.

Clarke wraps her arms around my neck. She hugs me.

My mouth goes dry and while I slowly bring up my hands to reciprocate the gesture, I’m reveling in the unbelievable feeling of relief and the sheer knowledge that she wants me close to her again.

So I hold her, begging to every god out there that this moment won’t be all I get.

Before I know it, we’re dancing.

Dancing to the old and familiar melody of one of Jake’s favorite songs, the one which never had meaning to me until this very second, when I get to hold the woman I love. Still.

“It’s a little bit cheesy, don’t you think?” Clarke whispers into the crook of my neck.

I manage a nod, fearing to break the moment.

We continue to move until the song is fading out. Then she pulls back, just a little bit, and for a few seconds, there’s nothing more than the sound of the raindrops hitting the canopy, and the sound of my heart beating fast – I’m sure she can hear it – until the next song starts.

It’s now or never.

“Let’s get out of here.” I suggest in a moment of bravery. “Meet me at the front door?”

“How about we go together?”

Clarke doesn’t wait for an answer. Instead she takes my hand, intertwining our fingers, as if she has never stopped doing it, and we walk back inside.

I notice the stares and smiles, but I don’t mind at all. We cross the kitchen and the living room, ignoring effectively that we mute every conversation on our way. Probably smiling like idiots, we grab our jackets and an umbrella and step out into the rain.

“So. Where are we going?”
I blush. I haven’t thought about that, to be honest. “Umm…”

Clarke chuckles. “I see. You’re lucky, I know a place.” She reaches for my hand again, definitely making me the luckiest woman on earth.

“Lead the way.” I say, enjoying the warmth of her skin.

We stroll down the driveway and turn left, fingers interwoven and shoulders occasionally brushing together, dumb smiles on our lips.

It makes me feel like this is a first date back in high school, where we’re desperate to be close to each other, but at the same time too damn scared. Only that I’m not scared at all.

“Where are we going?” I ask quietly, when we turn left once again at the next crossroad.

“You’ll see.”

And then we turn left again just a few minutes later.

And again.

“Clarke?”

She laughs. “So impatient.”

“Of course.”

“Wait and see. It’s a surprise.”

No, it isn’t. Not really, anyway. Because after another turn left we end up in front of my childhood home.

I frown. “What are we doing here?”

“Come on, let’s go inside.” She tugs my hand, acting completely natural, when she opens the front door and we walk inside.

“You know, we could’ve come over right away.”

“It was your idea to go for a walk, remember?” She answers and switches on the light. “It was very romantic. Besides, you look cute when you’re clueless.”

“I don’t look cute.” I disagree, but secretly I’m going crazy about her comment.

She called me cute.

“You do.”

“What are we doing here?” I repeat my question, hoping to get an answer this time.

But Clarke just takes off her coat and smiles. So I follow suit. And two minutes later we’re upstairs in my childhood room, which has barely changed over the last ten years. Old drums in the corner, lots of pictures over the headboard of my bed.

After looking around for a few quiet seconds, taking in the photos and everything else, she makes herself a home on the bed like she did all those years ago.
Suddenly I am nervous.

“You look like you’re about to have a stroke or something. Are you okay?”

“What? Yeah. I’m just…”

_Having dirty thoughts when I see you in my bed, but I can’t tell you, because I don’t know, where we stand or if there’s even a “we”. And I’m scared of every step I take, because I know you said you forgave me, but there’s still a little bit of doubt in the back of my mind, because I really, really hurt you and—_

“Lex.” She says, reaching out her hand once more, effectively interrupting my train of thoughts. “Come here.”

It takes me a few seconds, but then I take it and sit down next to her. “You feel it, too, don’t you? I mean, this…” I gesticulate between us. “I’m not making this up, am I?”

Clarke nods, smiling reassuringly. “You’re not. I feel it too.”

“Good. And where does that leave us?”

“Where do you want us to be?”

I roll my eyes. We’re both not really good at making decisions. But somehow, when it came to us and our relationship, we didn’t have to make a lot of decisions. It seems, most of the time, life made them for us.

“I… I started reading your book.” I tell her instead of answering, because the feelings-stuff is still scary.

A wide and beaming smile appears on her face and, for a moment, I forget how to breathe. It’s the first time she’s smiling like that around me and I’m just happy to witness it. A few weeks ago, I would’ve been content with just one smile like that, but now I want to be the reason she’s doing that every day.

“You did?” She asks, suddenly shy. Her fingers draw circles in my palm and it’s hard to focus on anything else.

“It’s great, Clarke. It’s really, really great. The way you draw pictures with just a few words, that’s… magic.”

“Thank you.”

I know I need to say it now. So I close my eyes for a second and take a breath, before I open them again and stare into blue. “I wish, I would’ve been there, Clarke. I should’ve been there. I’m sorry.”

“Lex.” She shakes her head, her hand coming up to lift my chin. “We’ve already been there. You don’t have to be sorry. It’s the past and we can’t change it, even if we want to. We’re starting over, okay? This is our new start. We’re good.”

I never feel vulnerable around anyone else. But around her every second feels, like I’m revealing my soul to her.

_Our new start._ My heart starts beating faster.

“These past few weeks since our kiss, they were important to me. I did a lot of healing. I talked to
Luna and I started therapy again. It’s helping.”

“That’s great!”

I smile at her honest enthusiasm, but that’s not what I want to say. “The point is, I don’t want to push you. But I’m ready, whenever you are. I want our someday to be now, Clarke.” I tell her, looking straight into her shining blue eyes.

I let a few seconds pass. And then – in a moment of bravery, because she hasn’t run out on me yet – I add: “I want you.”

...

Chapter End Notes

<3
Hey guys!
There'll be more fluff and cuteness, but don't worry - it won't always be like this ;)
I hope you like it, let me know what you think!
And kudos to my awesome beta Lucie again. Thank you :*

Love,
LJT.
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... 

I watch all kinds of emotions ghosting over her face, while she tries to find the right words.

I know, she’s scared. I know, she’s doubting herself with every move she makes. Just like I know that she’s better then the last time we spoke.

“The point is, I don’t want to push you. But I’m ready whenever you are. I want our someday to be now, Clarke.” She says, her voice firm and soft, while her almost surreal green eyes bore into mine.

“I want you.”

I’m not sure, which means more to me – the fact, that she’s slowly healing or the fact, that she just said, that she wants another chance. She said that, right? I mean, I didn’t dream it?

“I know that I’m asking a lot. I know that we’ve got a lot to talk about, but I’d like to try and see, where this takes us.” She continues and motions her hand between us. “And-”

“Me too.”

She knits her eyebrows in confusion and god, I adore that look on her face.

Well, I adore her face in general. The cheekbones I never get right when I try to draw her, the perfectly shaped eyebrows, the plump lips, the cute little nose, the depth of her eyes… But this look? It has to be my favorite.

“Yeah?” She asks carefully.

I nod, intertwining our fingers to stop myself from drawing on her palm. “There’s a lot to talk about, yes. There’s a lot to learn about each other again, that’s also true. But I’d like to try. There’s still this… connection and I… I’d like to explore it.”

“Go on a date with me.”

“What?”

“A date. You and me. No expectations, no people interfering, just us. A dinner and we get to know each other again.” Lexa says, her eyes shining with excitement. “I mean, if you want. Do you? Want
to go out with me, I mean?”

I chuckle. “I do.”

“Really?”

“Lexa. I already said yes!” I tell her, smiling. She’s so cute, when she can’t believe, how happiness feels.

After getting lost in her eyes for a little while, I pull back a bit to rest against the headboard. I pat the empty space beside me, until she sits next to me – carefully leaving some distance between us.

I swear if she doesn’t stop her insecurity around me soon, I’ll hit her.

I snuggle closer and rest my head against her shoulder. “That okay?”

“Mhm.”

A few seconds later she takes my hand into hers, her fingers are a little cold, but I don’t mind. “That okay, too?”

“You don’t ever have to ask that.”

“Okay.” It’s easy to hear the smile in her voice, especially because I’m smiling, too. “How long are you staying?”

I take a deep breath. Not because I don’t want to say the truth, but because I don’t even want to think about going back any time soon.

“Monday. I have two interviews scheduled for the week and a meeting with the producers.” I say quietly, staring at our hands. “Is it strange, that I don’t want to leave?”

“Well, I don’t want you to leave.” She chuckles softly. “But it’s your job and I’d never hold you back, you know that.”

“I do.”

“Then I’d say we make the best out of our time together. And whenever you get back, we’ll pick up right where we left. And I can take you on a date tomorrow night, right?”

“Yeah.”

“Or how about tonight?”

“Tonight?” I repeat. “It’s… almost midnight.”

“And?” She sounds so casual, that I find myself thinking: hey, why not?

“And what would we do?”

“We could do a coffee date. A romantic walk. Hell, we could even cook together and watch a romantic movie.”

“You hate romantic movies.”

She sighs. “Hate is a strong word. I dislike them. But if I watch them with you…”
“Suggestion. We stay here and cuddle and don’t move until we have to. You and this bed are way too comfy.”

Lexa laughs wholeheartedly. “You’re too lazy, Griffin.”

I stick out my tongue as an answer, which makes her laugh even more, so I put on a fake pout, knowing that she’ll give in eventually.

“You can’t do that every time you run out of arguments.”

“I can. And I’m not out of arguments.”

“Then why are you still pouting?” She answers. “And as much as I like cuddling with you, don’t you think, we should move this to a better place than my old childhood room? And don’t you want to change into some pjs?”

“Why? Don’t you like the vibe in here?” I tease, but Lexa sighs.

“It’s not the vibe.” She says. “It’s… a lot of bad memories, you know?”

Oh.

“I was sitting right there, when you left for Europe.” She points towards the window. “And I was lying in this bed, crying for days after you were gone. But other than that? I’m feeling like my highschool-self again.”

“Your highschool-self?” I repeat questioningly.

She nods. “You know, the one who was staring at your back from the last row. At you and your friends. Bellamy with his Harry Potter glasses and Raven with her feet on the table, annoying every teacher. And you in the middle, quiet and shy, but always so concentrated and focused. No matter what happened around you.”

“You never told me that.”

“No?”

I shake my head. “No. You were staring at me, hm? Well, it’s safe to say, I was staring at you too. At least after that kiss.”

“Which one?”

“Well, all of them.”

“Dork.”

“Why am I a dork now?”

“Because you are.”

I shake my head in amusement. “Do you think we would’ve talked about those kisses, if it wasn’t for Mr. Kane’s project?”

“I would’ve. Maybe?”

“Who’s the dork now?”
Lexa turns her head and presses a featherlight kiss into my hair. “We’re both dorks, okay?”

Just like that, with such a simple movement, my heart is full of bubbly happiness.

I turn around a little, to be able to face her. “Lex?”

“What about that date? Does the offer still stand?”

“Always.”

“Then I’d like you to take me home. I want a romantic movie and cuddling and pjs and everything.”

Lexa stares at me, as if she wasn’t sure that I’m here. As if she was waiting for me to disappear on her, to dissolve into nothing but a dream.

“Yeah?” She asks carefully.

So many unspoken things are still hanging in the air between us. Things we fear, things we long for, things we don’t understand yet. But I’m sure about this – us. It’s always been her for me.

So I brush a loose strand of brown hair out of her face, fingertips ghosting over her skin.

“Take me home, Lex.”

Suddenly, there’s this feeling hanging in the air. The warm feeling of something indescribable, something immeasurable. Something infinite.

The moment drags on for what feels like an eternity. I leave my hand on her cheek, not able to break away.

I’m scared to move a single muscle, hell, I’m scared to blink. Too afraid to destroy this precious moment of proximity, of deep connection. Because both of us can feel the changes happening between us. Within us.

And both of us are scared of what it could mean, if we let each other close again, but ache for more, too. I do.

God, every fiber in my body aches for her.

“Lex?” I hear myself whispering, my heart beating loud and fast.

"Yeah?"

And then I repeat the same question I asked her ten years ago, smiling like an idiot when I do, because I know she remembers. "Will you kiss me eventually?"

Lexa’s face lights up with a smile. "I’d like that." She answers.

Just like she did all those years ago, she leans in slowly – once more giving me the opportunity to back out. And just like I did all those years ago, I'm crossing the remaining distance impatiently, unable to wait for a second longer.

When our lips meet there are no fireworks, no racing hearts, no colorful explosions – or however people describe their kisses.
I don’t need any of this.

To me, it’s like coming home. Her lips move with so much tenderness against mine that I let myself melt into them. I let myself get lost in her, and the kiss, and I know that I’ll never get used to this.

Just like I know that she’ll go crazy, when I bite her lip.

Just like I know that our hearts will beat in unison, when we keep on doing this for a while.

So no.

No fireworks, because to me it’s more like sitting by a warm and cozy fireplace in the evening after a long, hard and cold day.

No racing hearts, because her heartbeat’s like the missing part of a symphony to mine and as they beat together they find their own rhythm.

No colorful explosions, because all my senses are overloaded and my mind is blank – except for everything about her. How her fingertips brush bare skin just above my hipbone for example. Or how my hands tangle in her soft hair.

Shit.

All too soon there’s too little oxygen in my lungs and I have to break away to catch my breath.

Only she can turn an innocent kiss, like this one, into something… hot.

As I manage to open my eyes, the first thing I see is this bold and cheeky smile on those perfect, plump lips.

“You’re beautiful.” She whispers and leans in once more to brush a featherlight kiss against my lips.

I try to chase her, but she pulls back, biting her lips with a worried look on her face. “Do you still want to go to my place?”

“Why wouldn’t I?”

She chuckles nervously. “Umm… I don’t know?”

“Let’s get out of here, so I can kiss you some more, okay?”

She laughs. “Okay.”

...
Hello again! :) 
I hope you all have/ had a nice weekend. I did. I spent two and half days writing and I'm happy :D

There'll be a few more chapters with mostly Clexa, but I'm sure you won't mind ;) 
Aaaand: I'm working on another shortstory right now. But in case you're looking for something else to read in the meantime, you can check out my other ones - they're called "can't change my heart" & "falling for you" (they belong together) and "all over". Especially the last one's kind of important to me.

And another suggestion: Falcon by AnonBeMe. One of my all-time-favorites!

Huge THANK YOU to by awesome beta! :) 
As always: let me know what you think!
Love,
LJT.
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... 

She’s different – in this cute and funny way – as she sings to a rock song playing in the background while we’re driving to my apartment. She’s got many talents, but singing isn’t one of them.

I don’t care.

For most of the drive she keeps holding my hand, grounding me and making me feel like flying at the same time.

It has to be a dream. But if it is, I don’t want to wake up.

“Last one’s a looser!” She shouts, as soon as I’ve parked the car, and the next second she’s sprinting over to the front door of my apartment building.

Her laughter echoes through the empty stairway as I chase her upstairs.

I could easily catch her, but I don’t want to win.

“Ha!” She says, pointing her finger in my direction as I reach her. She’s grinning proudly. “Looser!”

“I’ve already won tonight. I don’t want to push my luck.”

She frowns. “What did you win?”

“Another chance with you.”

She groans, rolling her eyes, and punches my arm slightly. “Smarty pants.”
“Was that supposed to hurt?”

“No.”

Clarke leans back against the wall next to my door, her hair messy from running, while I'm searching for my keys. But there’s this cute, bold look in her eyes and I can’t help but lean in and kiss her.

Just a short peck on the lips, because I'm still afraid she’s going to change her mind and leave again, but it’s enough to make my heart beat faster.

She’s smiling, when I pull back to unlock my door, so I take it as a good sign.

“Wait. Not yet.” She says and wraps her arms around my neck. She gets on her toes and then she kisses me again. Her lips move softly, almost innocently against mine, and so sweetly that my knees feel wobbly, especially when she pulls back a bit to change the angle just to connect our lips again.

Shit.

Please, don’t ever stop, I think to myself.

---

“As much as I love making out against the wall next to my apartment door, I’d love to take this to the couch, if you’re okay with that.”

“Why? It’s romantic.”

“Clarke, our definitions of romance seem to vary a lot.”

She shrugs casually. “You seem to like it.”

“How do you tell that?”

“Because you can’t stop staring at my lips.”

Guilty.

She chuckles. “It’s okay, though. And I'm not opposed to taking this to the couch either.”

She’s really here. With me. She wants to try again and I can’t wrap my head around it. How did I get so lucky? I mean, twice?

I'm standing there, in the middle of the small hallway in front of my apartment, and I'm staring at this gorgeous woman in front of me, unable to word how I'm feeling.

After a few silent seconds of staring into blue orbs, she takes the keys from my hands and unlocks the door herself.

And as if she’s always done it, she grabs my hand and leads me inside.

“I have to warn you, I’ve got two dogs.”

“I know. I've met them before.”

Oh, yes. I remember.

I watch, how she gets on one knee and cuddles Ellie and Paul with a bright smile on her lips. “Hey,
guys! You remember me, right? Of course you do!”

Both are waggling their tails excitedly. I take it as a yes and somehow that warms my heart.

---

“Just to get this right. You actually punched him?”

“Yeah. He deserved it.” Clarke shrugs casually and reaches for the bag of chips resting between us. I'm jealous of a bag of chips. When the hell did that happen?

“Who are you and what have you done to Clarke Griffin?”

She laughs, shoving another chip into her mouth. “Hey, not my fault that he didn’t get the hint.”

“You can’t punch someone for acting out things how he feels them.”

“He acted like he was in love with her and he wasn’t supposed to do that! And when I tried to explain, he said something about artistic freedom and stuff. Artistic freedom, my ass. It’s my show and I told him so. Then he said, it’s a shitty love story and that no one wants the lesbian couple. So I punched him.”

“Sounds legit.” I say sarcastically.

“When you’ve read the book and watched the whole first season, you’ll understand what I mean. And he was being a homophobic ass. If his character wasn’t so cool, I’d kill him off.”

“I will. Read and watch it, that is.”

She punches me with a pillow.

“You seem to have a problem with violence, Ms. Griffin.”

Another pillow, this time in my face.

“Clarke.” I warn her. “Don’t start something you can’t finish.”

“Oh, I will finish it.”

“Yeah?”

Her answer is the start of a fully-grown pillow fight.

Until I use my right arm and that’s not the best idea I had today.

“Ouch.” I huff, sinking back against the couch.

“You okay?” A worried frown appears on her forehead and she reaches out her hands, as if she wanted to comfort me, but she stops halfway.

“Yeah, just… I’m good.”

“Really?” She asks concerned. “You look pale.”
“It’s just my arm. There’s some neural damage and I… tend to forget about it, when I'm happy.”

“If that’s your way of changing the topic, then you’re failing. Though I'm happy that you are happy.”

“You are?” Technically I know that, but it’s still amazing to hear it.

“Of course, dummy. Now tell me, what can I do?”

“Accept your defeat and cuddle?”

“Nope. But cuddling sounds just right.” She says and gets up. She holds out her hand to help me onto my feet and uses the opportunity to push me onto the couch right after.

“Hey!”

Clarke doesn’t answer. Instead she curls into my left side, resting her head against my shoulder.

Now, there’s nothing to complain about.

And while my fingers run through her hair on their own accord, the pain in my arm fades quickly.

This is what being home feels like. This is what I dreamt about, as I was laying in that hellhole overseas. My thoughts wander back to those days, but with her in my arms I'm doing okay.

“Lex?”

“Hm?”

“I’ve missed this. I didn’t know that I did for so long. How can you not know something like that?”

“I guess you busy yourself with all kinds of tasks and things, you occupy your head and heart, so none of them has time for anything else.”

“Did you do that?” She asks carefully.

“Yes.” I press a soft kiss against her temple. “I did. I’ve always been good at denying the truth, you know that.”

For a few seconds, it’s quiet.

“It’s probably the wrong moment to tell you this, but I… I want to be honest with you. There was this woman I’ve been with for a while. Niylah. We dated for a little while.”

A pang of jealousy makes me swallow. That was unexpected. Not the woman, I knew about her vaguely, but the timing of this talk.

“I know.”

“We broke up a few weeks ago. But… I didn’t love her. I never did.”

That’s better.

“Okay.” I continue running my fingers through her hair.

“What about you?”

“Me?” I'm buying time.
“No, the other gorgeous woman in the room. Of course you.” She rolls her eyes. I can’t see it, but I know she does.

“Costia.” I say quietly. “I’ve been with her for about two years, but she broke up with me after I returned home.”

“Did you love her?” Clarke glances at me.

I didn’t know silence could feel that heavy.

“I thought I did.” I shrug, a little lost in thoughts for a moment. “And maybe I did, I… I don’t know. But I didn’t love her like I…”

Too early! Damn it!

Clarke waits for me to finish, showing no sign that she noticed what I was about to say. But I know she did.

“She isn’t you. She never was.”

That’s unfair to say about Costia, but it’s still true and she knew that. And in a way it’s self-evident, logical.

“Okay.” She answers after a few seconds, repeating my answer from before. “I’m glad, we’ve discussed this.”

“Are you?”

“Well, no. But yes, because we never have to talk about this again and I’d be happy to avoid this topic for the rest of our lives.”

The rest of our lives.

Funny, how five words can turn your world upside down. Five little, simple words.

...
Chapter 35 - Lexa.

Chapter Notes

Hey guys :)
This one's a bit longer.

What do you think about the season premiere?
I think it's awesome :D and I can't wait for more.

I hope you're doing fine <3
Love,
LJT.
---

See the end of the chapter for more notes

...“It’s ridiculous.” She announces.

“What?”

Blue eyes stare at me with a strange expression in them. Something amused, but yet serious. “That I think about how I'm going to miss you when I'm leaving this car, after we’ve just spent the whole night talking.”

“It’s not ridiculous. It’s sweet.”

Clarke huffs. “It’s cliché.”

“So what?”

It makes me too happy to care, even if it’s cliché or cheesy or whatever. Hearing Clarke say that she’s going to miss me is something I’ll probably never get used to. Surely it’s something I’ll never take for granted.

She sighs and her hand finds mine again. Her fingers are warm as they wrap around mine.

“You’re still going to take me out tonight?”

“Yes.”

“For our second date?”

“You really count the cuddling on the couch as a date?”

“Of course I do!”

“Then yes. I’ll take you on our second date tonight.”

I watch another smile taking over her face – first her lips, then her dimples, until it reaches the azure
blue eyes I adore so much.

I never told her, but there’s this sparkling in them that makes me wish I could draw, because this is something only art can express. No words in the world would be enough to describe how they make me feel.

Frankly, I can’t even draw stick figures – not without making her laugh anyway.

“What are you thinking about?”

“About stick figures.” I reply honestly.

She frowns. “What?”

“Doesn’t matter.”

“I want to know. And wipe that sly grin off of your face!”

I laugh. “You’re pretty impatient. Anyone ever told you that?”

“Yes. You. A dozen times.”

“Well, I was right. A dozen times.”

Clarke sighs, rolling her beautiful eyes. “Tell me? Please?”

“Make me.”

She raises both eyebrows. “Alexandra Woods. You’re such a tease! I’m not going to step into this trap. Change of topics. Do I get a goodnight kiss?”

“Technically, it’s early morning.” I deadpan.

Clarke shakes her head laughing. “What is it with you, that you always want to win every argument? Is that some kind of obsessional neurosis or do you just like winning?”

“A little bit of both?” I suggest, enjoying the amusement in her voice. “But back to your question. Of course you get a kiss. If you want.”

“The romantic kind by the door?”

“Anywhere you want me.”

Clarke’s cheeks turn unexpectedly red and she tries to hide her blush by facing the window. “The door would be enough.”

I think it’s adorably cute.

I raise both our hands and press a kiss onto the back of her hand. “Then let’s get you home, beautiful girl.”

After I’ve rounded the car to open her door she grabs my hand again, as we stroll towards the house. It’s dark inside, but of course it is – it’s six in the morning.

I’m still running high on adrenaline and happiness and even though I suggested getting some sleep, I know I won’t be able to do so. Because I’m feeling like my seventeen-year-old self, who just got
kissed by this annoying and gorgeous blonde girl.

Clarke turns around when we reach the door and there’s this daring, almost challenging look in her eyes again.

I wait for another comment, but none follows.

She just keeps staring at me – my eyes, my lips and all over again. Waiting for me to make a move. And then she bites her lips and I'm hopelessly lost.

Slowly I raise my free hand and push a loose strand of blonde hair behind her ear. It's just an excuse, even if I probably don’t need one. Not anymore. I let my hand rest on her warm cheek, before our lips meet halfway.

But it’s not just a kiss. Not this time.

Soon, it’s tongue and teeth and nothing like the innocent kiss we shared a while before. My insides churn, like every cell in my body physically aches for hers.

Clarke drags her hands down my sides, her fingers sneak into the belt loops of my jeans, tugging me closer against her body.

“Lex.” She pants breathlessly against my lips, before she kisses me again.

“Yeah?” I hum, not able to break away from her.

Another messy kiss.

“You’re driving me crazy. You know that?”

Her grip on my hips gets stronger, but I barely notice it. She reconnects our lips and slides her tongue into my mouth. Just a second later my mind is blank again.

We push and pull, fighting for dominance.

Clarke wins.

She always does.

Soon enough, she’s got me backed up against the wall next to her front door, like I did with her hours ago.

I never stood a chance.

She bites my lips only to soothe them with her tongue right after. Her hands pull my hair, but that’s the only thing keeping me from falling apart in her arms.

It doesn’t take me long to respond with the same kind of hunger, the same desperation. Hands tangling in her blonde hair, I'm pulling her body close against mine until they’re molded together. And they fit. Like puzzle pieces. Made for each other.

When she finally pulls back to catch some air, I slide down onto the floor, not able to stand. Whatever it is she’s doing to me, I don’t mind.

“You okay?” She laughs breathlessly.
“Never been better.” I tell her. “Just give me a second.”

“Sorry.”

“Never apologize for that. You can do it as often as you want.”

She chuckles and reaches out her hand to help me up. “Okay, tiger. Let’s go slow, how about that?”

_Haha. Slow._ That’s easy for her to say, after what she just did to me.

“Sounds just right.” No, it doesn’t.

She smiles – one of those genuine, loving ones, which could make me do anything.

“Thank you for tonight, Lex.”

I kiss her again – short and soft this time. “I’ll see you tonight?”

“Can’t wait.”

Slowly she backs off and unlocks the door.

“Good night, Lexa.”

“Good morning, Clarke.”

“Smarty pants.”

We both chuckle as she walks inside and closes the door after a few seconds of staring.

_Shit._

I turn around and let my head fall against the wall for a moment.

How can you get addicted to someone in this short period of time? It’s the most dangerous drug in this world. Happiness.

“Can I have a ride?”

I jump ten feet in the air (okay, maybe two, but that isn’t the point) and I almost hit my head at the lamp next to the Griffin’s front door.

“Fuck!” I hiss angrily. “Luna!”

The brunette with the curly hair is leaning against my car, legs and arms crossed, a smirk on her lips.

“What? You deserved that!”

“For what?”

“For completely forgetting, that I may need a ride back home last night?”

Oh.

That.

I didn’t even think of her – not once during the last six hours.
“I'm sorry?”

She laughs, shaking her head in amusement. “Hey, if it helped. You’re Mom offered the guestroom.”

“Why are you awake then?”

“Because the bed wasn’t that great and you know I can’t sleep everywhere, dumbass. But I see, you and Clarke talked?” She signs quotation marks in the air.

I don’t answer. Instead I unlock the car before I walk over to her, wordlessly handing her the keys. At least she had some hours of sleep. Not that I mind. I would happily stay up all night again, if it meant to spend time with Clarke – maybe not every night, because I like sleeping. But a few times? Easily.

Luna slides into the drivers’ seat, a knowing smile on her lips.

I know she’s going to tease and question me, but she’s going to wait until I had a few hours of sleep on my own.

---

It’s around two p.m. when I finally leave my bedroom after solid seven hours of sleep. And damn, does it feel amazing to sleep. A few years back, staying up all night was never a problem. Now? I'm feeling old.

Besides that, I actually slept. Without nightmares. Seven hours pure and simple sleep, waking up to the incredible fact that I’ll get to take her on a date tonight. Clarke. Just thinking about her makes me smile.

“Your phone has been beeping a few times.” Luna announces. She’s sitting on the couch, a bowl of cereals in her hand. “It’s annoying.”

“You’re just jealous.”

“Of your complicated relationship to blondie? As if.” She snorts. But she’s smiling, so I don’t take her seriously.

I unlock my phone and open the messages I got.

Clarke: I can’t sleep.
Clarke: are you awake?
Clarke: probably not. I'm sorry. I just get sentimental, when I'm tired and happy.

I chuckle.

Clarke: can’t wait for tonight. What should I wear? f
Clarke: In case you haven’t noticed: I had a really nice time today. :)

I realize, that I haven’t even thought about tonight. But Clarke doesn’t want fancy stuff and she’s a romantic. I should find something.

Clarke: I just realized, that I'm totally spamming you with messages, while you’re probably still asleep and that this may be a bit creepy, since we haven’t defined our situation. Not, that we need to. Except you want to?
Clarke: I'm going to stop making a fool of myself right now. And I'm going to hide under
layers of pillows and blankets. Sleep well <3

By now, I'm laughing. Only she can manage to ramble through text messages.

Me: relax, everything's fine. As for tonight, something simple. I don’t mind you spamming me, you can do that as often as you want. How about we talk about the definitions tonight?

*Be bold, Lexa,* I tell myself, *she send a heart, you can send one, too.*

Me: and I had a really nice time too <3

“Care to explain, how you went from not talking to making out against her front door?” Luna finally interrupts me staring at my phone.

“Umm… I don’t really now?”

“You gotta give me more than that.”

“We kissed a few weeks back and we… agreed that it’s too early. I just had so much going on in my head and I needed to get some control over my life, you know? And then, at the bonfire, I realized that I was ready.” I think about sparkling eyes while I sang. I think about the tears glistening in her eyes. “Yesterday we danced and then we went to my old room and… Yeah.”

“So you just went from there?”

I nod, unable to hide the smile taking over my face, when I think about it. “I'll take her out tonight.”

“Wow, you're moving fast.”

“You really think so? I mean, I… I could slow down, but…”

“No, I didn’t say that. Just don’t dive in headfirst. Take your time. You’ve got no reason to rush things. Learn about each other again, rebuild what you had.”

I need a few seconds to take in what she’s saying. “You sound wise.”

“Call me Yoda.”

...

Chapter End Notes

thanks for reading!! <3
Hey guys :)
I hope you're doing fine?
I'm going to post another shortstory soon, so keep your eyes open ;)
But since I'm starting to work on my bachelor degree my time will be limited during the next few months. Just so you know.

Thanks again to my awesome beta Lucie!! <3 thanks for doing this!!
And thank you to all of you who leave comments and kudos. I love every single one of them <3

Enjoy!!

Love,

LJT.

... 

Being with her again – even if we’re just talking or holding hands, makes me feel so many different things, it’s overwhelming. And frightening. And amazing.

There’s something about her that fascinates and captivates me.

It’s not her sense of humor, her eyes (even though they’re the most beautiful pair of eyes I’ve ever seen), her laughter or the sound of her voice. It’s not the way she moves with so much pride and grace. It’s not her kindness and gentleness.

No. It’s her entire soul.

It feels like she’s the missing puzzle piece to mine. And I know that metaphor is cheesy, but it’s the truth. I can exist without her, showing my part of the picture, and it’s okay. But with her everything’s so much more.

After standing for a few long embarrassing moments in the hallway, trying to calm my erratic heartbeat, I tiptoe upstairs.

Raven is fast asleep. She’s snoring quietly and I debate with myself, whether to record it for proof or not. I decide against it and creep towards the bathroom.

I am just about to close my bedroom door ten minutes later and I’m doing it really, really carefully when Raven’s voice makes me jump.

“Don’t think you could sneak past me, Griffin.”

“Shit, Raven!”

“What? Your own fault!”
“Why are you even awake at this time?”

She smirks. “Shouldn’t you be sleeping in your bed?”

She has a point.

“Umm…”

“You were with Lexa, right? I saw you two dancing on the terrace. Your Mom said you left together. Did you have hot and steamy make up sex? I mean, it’s been ten years. That’s a lot of time to make up for.”

I groan, turning around to change into my pajamas. “Not everything is about sex!”

“It should be.”

“I am so not having this conversation at six in the morning.”

Raven shrugs and falls back into the pillows. “Then we’ll have this talk in a few hours, I can wait.”

And that’s exactly what I fear.

----

She, however, waits until Mom calls us for coffee in the afternoon to make it even more embarrassing.

“So, Clarkey.” She starts, prolonging my name in this annoying way that makes me want to punch her. “Did you or did you not?”

“Did she what?” Mom asks completely unaware of the smug grin on my best friend’s face.

“Raven!” I motion towards my brother, who knows exactly what Raven is talking about if the look on his face is anything to go by.

Oh my god.

“So you didn’t. God, you’re boring.”

“We talked!” And made out against the front door. Not that I minded.

I can feel my face redden.

“Mhm.”

“Ah, you’re talking about Lexa!” Mom says, suddenly taking part in the conversation. “When did you get back home?”

“She tried to sneak back in the early morning.” Raven grins smugly.

“Ah, just like old times.”

“I did not sneak!”

“Yes you did!”

“Just so you wouldn’t wake up!”
“So you did sneak?”

I sigh in defeat. Why am I even trying to explain? It’s not like they listen. And by the way it’s none of their business, right?

“And they’ve been texting all day like two lovesick puppies. That’s so cute, Abby.”

“Just like old times.” Mom says, smiling at my facial expression. “I’m happy for you, Clarke. For both of you.”

“Thank you. But we’re just… seeing where this takes us. We’re not…”

What? Dating? Because we are. Somehow.

“Who are you trying to fool?” Raven asks, shaking her head both in amusement and disbelief. “You’re in love with her, she’s in love with you. You’ve cleared the air.”

“It’s not that simple.”

Mom puts her hand on mine. “Sweetie, it is that simple.”

“I’m just… scared.”

There, I said it.

“Of getting hurt again? Clarke, you can’t get a guarantee that she won’t hurt you again. Just like you can’t give her one. There’s no such thing when it comes to love. That’s not how it works.”

I shake my head. “That’s not it. I’m not scared of getting hurt.”

I don’t notice the look both women share. Instead I stare at the piece of cake in front of me, without really seeing it.

I’m scared of something entirely else.

Raven frowns. “But?”

“I’m…” I exhale audible, after leaning against the back of the chair. “I’m scared of losing her. I don’t think I could take it. I wouldn’t.”

For a while it’s silent. The only sound in the room comes from Aden, who’s munching on his piece of cake.

It’s okay, though. There’s nothing anyone could say to ease that fear.

Maybe it’s pathetic that I feel this way.

She isn’t mine and she’s safe. She’s not going back to war. But I can’t pretend that there aren’t scars on her skin and that she didn’t get beat up because of me. I can’t pretend that losing her all those years ago didn’t rip my heart out and that the mere thought of her getting hurt or leaving again isn’t driving me crazy.

Still. It’s way too early for confirmations or reassurances or promises.

“Talk to her about it.” Mom suddenly says, her voice full of warmth and empathy. “I’m sure she understands. And maybe she feels the same?”
Here goes nothing. I think to myself as I knock on her door.

Just a few seconds pass before Lexa is standing in the doorway, smiling surprised. Grey sweatpants and an old, a little bit oversized black t-shirt, hair up in a messy bun. She manages to look sexy, no matter what she’s wearing.

“Hey.” She says with a cute little frown on her forehead. “Weren’t we supposed to meet later?”

“We were. I just…”

I can’t say it, because her right arm catches my attention. It’s the first time except for that day by the lake that she’s wearing a t-shirt. And those scars, they… Fuck.

It takes me a lot of strength to look back up at her eyes again. I don’t want to stare and I don’t want to be rude. It’s just… heavy.

Lexa steps aside to let me inside and she closes the door behind us. I turn around to face her, opening my mouth to speak, but no words come out. Why is it so damn hard?

She waits patiently while I stare into her deep green eyes, desperately trying to form words.

On the drive over I planned a speech.

I know that this is maybe the wrong timing, but I have to say it, so you know where I stand. This isn’t just some experiment for me. Not with you. But you need to know that I’m scared. I’m so fucking scared of losing you that it makes me feel sick.

Then I rejected the whole thing because it’s pathetic.

Seconds pass and turn into minutes.

After a while, she steps into my personal space and wraps her arms around me. Her body is warm against mine. I bury my head in the crook of her neck, breathing in the familiar and addictive scent of hers.

“I needed to see you.” I whisper after a few seconds.

“I don’t mind. I like your spontaneous visits.” She answers. I can hear her smiling. “You okay?”

I nod. “Just…. don’t pull back.”

“I didn’t intend to.”

“Good.”

We stay there, in the middle her hallway, wrapped up in each other’s arms. I listen to her heartbeat and her breathing. And I tell myself over and over again that she’s here. She’s holding me.

---

“I’m sorry.” I tell her a while later while we cuddle up on her bed.

Luna came home from a run, so Lexa took me by the hand and guided me wordlessly into her bedroom.
“Don’t apologize. Do you want to talk about it?”

I sigh. “I’m not sure how to explain. I got… overwhelmed and then I got scared and then… I had to see you.”

“Scared of what?”

“Of losing you.” I mumble quietly, avoiding her eyes.

Lexa is quiet for a moment, her fingers keeps stroking my arm, but I fear that this was too early. Too much.

“It’s stupid.”

“You won’t lose me, Clarke.” She says, determination clouding her words. “I’m right here. And your feelings aren’t stupid, okay? Don’t ever apologize for how you feel.”

I can feel her lips pressing a kiss against my forehead. They linger a little while before she continues to speak.

“I’ll tell you something now, okay?” Her voice is softer and more fragile now. “Ever since I got home, Anya, Mom and Dad are walking on eggshells around me. Not once, did they ask about what happened, too afraid to trigger something. They were scared and so was I.”

She pauses for a moment and I’m not sure if she does it to give me time to process her words, or if it’s so she can sort her thoughts.

“I’m scared of many things, if I’m honest. Of remembering, of making new memories, of shopping, of turning on the tv, of sleeping, of waking up. Sometimes I think it’s ridiculous.” She continues. “But you know what makes everything better?”

I shake my head, curious for her thoughts.

“You.” Her hand tilts up my chin to make me look at her. “Ever since you returned into my life, you’ve been bringing nothing but emotions back. You brought me back to life. And yeah, sometimes I still get scared. Maybe I always will. But I start to feel something whenever you’re around and that means so much to me, you can’t imagine.”

I still don’t know where she’s going with this, but her words make my eyes teary. “Lex-”

“I’m not going anywhere, Clarke. I’m right here and I’m safe.” She takes my hand and presses it to her chest where I can feel her heart beating. “I’m here, okay?”

I really want to tell her how much she means to me.

...

Chapter End Notes

thoughts? :)
I really hope you liked the way their "date" turned out.
Hey guys :)  

I'm sorry I'm a day late. But I have a good reason - well, actually two. **reason number 1:** I got to listen to one of the most amazing artists out there yesterday evening in Munich (my first concert ever). To **Clare Bowen** and her amazing band. If you've never heard of her, you should definitely check her out. She writes beautiful, soulful music and she's a wonderful human being. During the concert I saw grown men cry and the next second the whole crowd was laughing again. Music is one of the greatest gifts in the world - just like stories are. That's why we're all doing this, right?  

**and 2:** this chapter was the hardest one I ever had to write and I wrote about... 10 (?) versions? Because to me it's maybe the most important one for Lexa - or at least one of them. I love this chapter with all of my heart and I'm never happy with anything because I'm a perfectionist. It's a bit shorter than the other one's, but I felt like it should stand alone.  

So I really hope you can forgive me and I hope that you love this chapter too. I'd be happy to hear your thoughts on this, because comments are the best kind of feedback and they make me try harder.  

Thank you again to my lovely beta Lucie ;)  

And thanks for reading this. It means the world. <3  

Love,  

LJT.  

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

...  

I wipe stray tears from her soft cheek while she tries to muster a smile.  

She fails, because her eyes wander back to the scars on my arm and shoulder and it pains me to see the hurt in her beautiful blue eyes.  

I’ve noticed it before, in the little movements she makes or in the way her eyes fill with sorrow. She’s trying to hide it and she’s good at it, but not good enough.  

Her voice breaks a little when she finally speaks. “Can I... see?”  

Her question catches me completely off guard. This is not how I planned the evening to go, but that’s not even what surprises me.  

I’ve come to accept the scars for what they are – symbols of strength, of surviving the worst. But they’re not pretty and definitely not easy to bear. And I had no choice, because they’re on my body.
Because of that, I have to make sure she’s ready for this. “Are you sure about it?”

Clarke nods, though I can see lots of insecurity in her eyes.

Slowly, I grab the hem of my t-shirt and pull it over my head, listening to Clarke taking a sharp breath while I do so.

I'm left in a simple black bra, but I've never felt more naked, more vulnerable than right now, in this moment when her eyes roam over my exposed and harmed skin.

No one wanted to see them before.

No one.

And I get it, I really do. They’re ugly and terrifying and they make people sad and angry. I learned to cover them up much as possible. I'm wearing flannels whenever I leave the apartment. No one except my doctors has seen the extent of the scar tissue on my body.

It simply moves me to tears that she wants to see this part of me too.

“Lex.” She breathes, a lonely tear rolls down her face.

I'm too afraid to move, so I let it fall down into the empty space between us.

My eyes never leave her face. I'm ready to cover myself up again when it gets too much for her. I’d understand.

I watch how she swallows heavily and how her lips tremble, before she regains control over her emotions.

She exhales, reaching out her hand, before pulling it back again.

“It’s okay.” I tell her, surprising myself in the process. “You can touch them.”

When her fingertips meet my skin, it takes everything in me not to stop breathing – all my willpower and all my focus. It’s almost as if her fingers are ghosting over my body – barely touching and still there.

It feels unreal and yet so, so beautiful.

“Is this okay?” She asks in a shaky voice.

I manage a nod. It’s more than okay. It’s… it’s everything.

Her fingers wander from my right wrist to my elbow and further up towards my shoulder, carefully tracing the different shapes and lines of each and every scar. Then, they’re brushing my ribcage on the side and from there they follow one scar, that’s reaching around my stomach. It’s a nasty red line straight across my abs.

Wherever her fingers touch me, they’re leaving goosebumps behind. It makes me shiver.

I watch her biting her own lip and normally it’s the sexiest thing ever, but now she’s doing it to stop herself from crying.

“I'm okay.” I whisper, trying to comfort her. “I'm safe.”
Slowly her hand sneaks around my waist, following one of the thicker scars that reaches around my back, and from there it wanders back up, tracing the largest burn scar on my shoulder.

And then her eyes meet mine for an infinite moment.

I try to ignore my rapid heartbeat, but there’s no use when her palm rest against my skin.

Clarke crawls closer until her forehead is resting against mine. “I'm so sorry. I… I can’t imagine… The pain you… I… Lex.”

“I'm here now. And I won’t leave. Not unless you ask me to.”

Hot lips brush mine for a split second. I can feel her breath on my face.

Then she kisses me again, this time with more intensity, more… passion. She pushes me back and before I know it, she’s on top of me.

Blue eyes are dark with desire when she stares down at me.

*God, she’s so beautiful,* I think to myself as I got lost in the way she looks at me. Even with tears in her eyes.

But Clarke doesn’t kiss me again.

No, instead her lips travel down to my right shoulder, kissing the scar there carefully.

The small gesture leaves me shaking beneath her. I’ve never felt more fragile or more loved. This feels so much more intimate than all the times we made love.

It’s still hard for me to let people that close to me, let alone touch me, but with her everything’s different. I’ve let her in before she even tried.

Slowly, almost painfully slowly, her lips kiss every inch of every scar they can reach on my body, caressing the damaged skin with so much love and tenderness that now I’m the one crying.

And when she’s done she crawls back up to kiss my tears away.

“You’re beautiful.” She murmurs, lying down beside me, her hand resting against my stomach. “You’re beautiful, Lex, and every scar of you is beautiful too.”

She pulls me into her arms and holds me close. I don’t know if she’s doing it for me or for her, but either way it’s the first time in months that I feel like myself.

Human. Vulnerable. Loved.

Her fingers stroke through my hair on their own accord, and I lose track of time, while we lay there.

This is all I ever wished for.

...
Soooo?? :D

@ the100shadesofme - I hope you're happy with the way it turned out ;) I knew this had to be special. They haven't done IT yet, but I guess this way it's even more... intimate.

Aaand: I'm currently discovering that shortstories are pretty cool to do, so if there's something you'd like to see or read, feel free to tell me. Maybe I can include it or write one :) don't be shy!
Chapter Notes

Hey :)  
I hope you enjoy this. Thanks for all the comments. I'm a little busy right now, but I do see and love them all <3  
Probably on Tuesday I'll start uploading another shortstory, so keep your eyes open :) It won't be as long as "all over", but I hope you like it!

See you soon <3  
Love,  
LJT

See the end of the chapter for more notes

…

Lexa’s head is lying on my chest, her arm wrapped around my stomach.

Seeing all those scars – far more than I expected to find on her body – made me realize how short life can be. How fragile it is. So holding the woman I love ten years late makes me both happy and sad.

I don’t want to miss another day. But I’ve got my job and the second I start thinking about it, a melancholy feeling settles into my stomach. For a while, my job was the only thing that could make me smile. Now it means leaving Lexa and the thought became almost painful within a few hours.

“I have to go back tomorrow.”

“I know.”

“I’m not sure, when I’ll be back.”

“I know.”

I sigh and continue to draw soft patterns onto her shoulder. She’s loves that and somehow, we always end up in this position. But I never told her how much I love doing it.

“I’m sorry that I ruined your plans for us.”

“You didn’t ruin them. I’ve got you right where I want you.”

“In your bed?”

She chuckles. “In my arms.”

“Well, technically, I'm the one holding you.”

“Smarty pants.” She mumbles.

“That’s my line.”
For a little while we both get lost in our heads. I think about the intimate moment we shared before. I know how hard it has to be to share those scars with someone. But I’m relieved she showed them to me, because somehow it eased my fears a little, and I feel like I’ll be able to understand her more too.

I guess she’ll need a lot of understanding and patience.

As terrible as those scars are – they’re a part of her know and I needed her to know that I want every part of her, damaged or not.

“Lex?”

“How?”

“We’ll make it work, right? We’ll do that, even if it means long-distance for a while. Because if you don’t want that we better stop right now. Because I feel like I’m already in too deep and—”

“Clarke.” She says, trying to stop my rambling. She sits up. “We’ll make it. You hear me? We’ll make it and we’ll be happy whenever we see each other. I’d rather have you one day a year than not at all.”

“It’ll be more than that, I promise.”

“That’s good.”

“But I feel like we’ve still got so much to talk about, like what we are or what we want and I’m leaving tomorrow morning. And it just feels like it isn’t enough.”

I feel Lexa’s green eyes on my face, but don’t look at her. I don’t want to seem clingy.

“What do you want us to be?”

“I… want you to be mine.” I admit, avoiding her gaze for as long as possible, but when I finally meet her eyes, she’s smiling.

“I am yours.” She answers, and I finally look up. Lexa smiles softly, adoration clouding her eyes. I’ll never get used to that look.

---

I’ve lost track of time, but in the meantime it’s gotten dark outside. Not that I mind.

Lexa’s cuddled against my body again, still in nothing more than her sweatpants and the black bra that leaves only little to imagination.

I intertwine our fingers and that’s when I notice a few words engraved in the skin on her wrist.

“What’s that tattoo?” I ask, trying to decipher the words. “What does it mean?”

“Ge smak daun, gyon op nodotaim. Get knocked down, get back up.” She explains, eyes closed. “My unit’s motto.”

“How come I didn’t notice it before?”

She chuckles. “Oh, I’ve got a few more.”

“What? Where?”
“One’s on my back. One on my neck. And one…”

“Lexa?”

She smirks, eyes still closed. “On my hip.”

“Let me see!”

“Which one?”

“All of them.” I untangle myself from her body and sit up, but she falls down onto the bed face first, not planning to move.

I can see a tattoo down her spine. Lines and circles and a few other shapes. “Wow. It’s beautiful. When did you get it?” Carefully I trace the ink, trying not to stare at the scars on her back.

I’ll never get used to them, I guess.

“Hm.” She confirms quietly. “When I left the hospital.”

Oh.

“What does it mean?”

“I’ll tell you another time.”

A part of me wants to protest, but that’s just because I’m a curious person. “And what other tattoos do you have?”

“Maybe you’ll find one.”

“Maybe I’m done looking.”

That gets her to open her eyes. “Is that so?”

“Yeah. I’m getting hungry. You must have planned something for tonight, which has to include food in some way. So feed me.”

She laughs. “Well, the reservations I made are probably not valid anymore, so…”

“So…”

“We could order something and stay in. That’s not what I had planned, but if you’re leaving tomorrow, I don’t really want to share you with anyone else.” Lexa says, turning around to face me. “Would that be okay?”

I nod with a wide smile. She’s sweet.

“Okay then. What do you want for dinner?”

“Pizza.”

“Pizza?” She repeats laughing. “Nothing’s changed, I see.”

“Well, technically something has changed. I decided to do without extra cheese a while ago. I want mushrooms.”
“You started to finally accept, that mushrooms are the best thing you can put on a pizza?”

I shrug. I’m not going to admit that I started to eat them to remember her. “Well. Yes.”

“Ha, that’s a first!” Lexa exclaims and sits up, too. Her excitement is so cute, it makes me smile. “Clarke Griffin accepts she’s wrong with something. I declare this day a holiday!”

“Yeah, yeah. I can live with that. Happy now?”

“Tremendously.”

I playfully roll my eyes. She’s so dorky sometimes.

“All right.” She announces. “I’m going to order and see if Luna wants one too. You want to stay here?”

“I’ll follow you.”

*Wherever you go, I’ll go.*

I could swear, the same memory echoes through both our heads.

We’re dating for about two months and by now, everyone knows about us, which makes it a lot more easier to spend time with each other – basically all the time.

Our fathers are working on Dads old car, laughing, when we return from school hand in hand. Music is playing in the background – Aerosmith, I think. We’ve come home to this more often, than I could count.

“Look at our girls.” My Dad says. “Who would’ve thought they’d get inseparable.”

“Dad.” I groan, while Lexa chuckles beside me.

“I think, it’s cute.” Gustus answers, a smug grin on his face, because he knows his daughter hates being called cute.

“Dad!”

*Both men laugh and continue their work.*

“They’re insufferable.” Lexa says when we reach my room.

“Why?” I ask, letting myself fall onto the mattress. “The big bad Lexa Woods can’t take some teasing about following me around like a lost puppy?”

“Though that’s the puppy-part isn’t true I’d follow you everywhere.” She answers after dropping down next to me. She lays on her stomach and stares at me with so much adoration in her eyes that my heart flutters. “Wherever you go, I’ll go.”

“And you say you’re bad at romantic stuff.” I chuckle quietly, while I stare at her – still not believing, that this is real. “Sounds good to me, though.”

She smiles. “What can I say. You bring out the best in me.”
I blink a few times to chase away the old memory.

Lexa’s standing in the doorway, looking back at me. “You okay?”

“Yeah. I’m good. What about you?”

She smiles. “Never been better.”

---

“Careful, you’re getting crumbs on my bed.”

“Yes, Mom.”

“Clarke, I mean it!”

“Don’t be such a baby.” I say, wiping the few crumbs off of the bed sheets. “There. All gone. Happy now?”

“Very.”

I roll my eyes.

“I saw that! You wouldn’t be happy either if you would have to stay in a bed full of crumbs.”

“One, it’s not a bed full of crumbs. There were like three or four. And two, I could stay in a bed full of crumbs, because that’s not that terrible.”

“Yeah? How about next time we eat pizza in your bed and see if you can sleep?”

“You’re happy to join me whenever you want.” I say, grinning wide when a frown appears on her forehead. She hates losing an argument.

“You too.” She replies, clearly not ready to accept defeat. “And then we could see, if you’re able to sleep.”

Oh, she’s good.

“Are you suggesting I stay the night?” I raise both eyebrows. “I’m not that kinda girl.”

“Well, then don’t say you could sleep in a bed full of crumbs.”

“Are we really still talking about crumbs? Because they’re not what would keep me awake all night, you know?”

Lexa’s face reddens faster than I would’ve thought possible.

Now it’s definitely time to grin proudly.

Before I can do or say anything further, I’m suddenly attacked by a pillow that hits me on the back of my head without warning.

She just shrugs, a teasing smirk on her lips. Lips I long to kiss.

“You just didn’t do that.”

“Oh, I did.”
Carefully I place the pizza box down onto the floor, before I take revenge.

Within two seconds we’re in the middle of a heated pillow fight (once again), that only ends with Lexa beneath me and my lips on hers. Still the best way to make her stop talking.

When we part, her eyes are truly shining for the first time. *She’s happy.*

“Stay.” She whispers, almost pleading.

“I’ll stay.”

...

Chapter End Notes

thank you so much for reading this <3 Have a beautiful day wherever you are!
Chapter Notes

a little more fluff. Don't worry, it won't stay this way forever ;)
And if you'd like to read something else until Sunday, you can check out my new short-
story. A new chapter will probably be up tomorrow!

<3

…

Waking up next to her is one of the most precious things in life.

She’s an active sleeper – hogging the blanket, turning a few times a night, sometimes she cuddles
closer, sometimes she ends on top of me. I never minded and I don’t do now.

Today, when I open my eyes, she’s already awake and we’re lying face to face, just a few inches
apart.

Her blonde hair shimmers golden in the morning light, her blues eyes are sparkling. She’s been up
before, because there’s no makeup anymore and she looks wide awake.

She’s smiling when I rub my eyes.

“Still sleepy?” She asks, brushing a few strands of hair out of my face.

I hum a confirmation and enjoy the small gesture.

Normally I’m the one to rise and shine first. But not when she’s next to me. Then, she’s the one to
get up first, to watch me sleeping, to wake me up, when she’s getting impatient.

“I made breakfast.” She tells me softly.

“You did?”

“Yeah. It’s after eight. I have to leave in an hour.”

That dampens my mood.

But wait – after eight? What? How the hell did that happen?

“You okay?” She frowns. “You look confused.”

“I just… I haven’t slept well in a while now. Nor have I slept through the night. It’s… strange.”

“What’s a while?”

I sigh. Not the kind of conversation I wanted to have in the morning. But she deserves an answer.

“Ever since I came back. It’s hard.”
“Then I'm glad you could sleep tonight.”

“Me too.” I answer. *Me too.*

Clarke leans over and kisses me softly on the lips. “Good morning, by the way. Now get up and take a shower, I’ll be waiting in the kitchen.”

“Yes, Mam.”

---

When I emerge from the bathroom, hair still wet, Clarke is standing in the kitchen, talking to Luna. Both women great me with a smile, but I only notice one.

Do I hug her? Kiss her? Keep my distance?

Technically we still haven’t talked about us and what we are, so I'm not sure how to proceed.

Clarke thankfully takes that decision away from me when she crosses the remaining distance and kisses me again. This time it’s with a little more determination and passion. “You look hot.” She whispers quietly, before she turns around and leaves me standing.

Wow.

I could definitely get used to that.

“I made pancakes.” She tells me, moving around to gather the breakfast as if it’s her kitchen.

“With chocolate chips?”

She chuckles. “Of course.”

“You’re amazing.”

“I know.”

“Lexa, you better keep her. Those really good. And by good I mean heavenly.” Luna says impressed, taking another pancake.

“I know.”

And I'm dying to eat one.

“So, Clarke.” Luna announces a little while later. “Tell me, what are your intentions with our precious Lexa?”

I groan. Is she serious right now?

Clarke doesn’t seem bothered by the question, because she just shrugs casually and looks me straight in the eye as she says; “To make her happy.”

If hearts could burst, then mine would. Out of joy.

Luna stares at the blonde at our table for a while, contemplating whether to accept the answer or not. “Sounds good to me.” She finally replies with a smile. “What do you think, Lexa?”

“Sounds perfect.”
“Well then. I have to get to work. Thanks for the pancakes, Clarke. Out of all the things I imagined happening when I first came to Polis, this was not one of them. See you soon, I hope?”

“I hope so, too.” Clarke smiles at my roommate, who’s grabbing her plate and puts it in the sink before she takes her stuff and leaves with another smile in my direction.

It’s silent for a moment and I use it to clear the table. I can feel her eyes on me, following every little move I make.

“So.” She says, grinning.

“So?”

“I think, I passed the test.”

“I think so, too. But I had no doubt about it. Your pancakes are one hell of an argument. And then there’s this tv show of yours that she happens to love. Love in big, fat letters. You’re basically her hero.”

“We’re alone.” She continues, unfazed by my compliment.

“And?”

“And we’ve got… forty minutes left, until I need to go.”

“Plenty of time.” Though not enough.

“Then what are you waiting for? Kiss me already.”

“Yes, Mam.”

And I do. God, I do.

---

“Can I say it?”

She stares at me a little confused. “What?”

“I hate that you’re leaving.”

Her expression softens, with a hint of sadness in her azure blue eyes. “I know.” She says quietly. “I’ll come back as soon as I can.”

“Where will you go?”

“Home and then to Canada again. We’re filming a lot of new scenes because I changed the script a bit.”

“How long?”

She sighs.

That long?

“Three or four weeks.”
“It’s almost Christmas by then.”

“It’s not. It’ll be the end of November.” She corrects me with a playful eye-roll, but that doesn’t change the fact that three or four weeks are way too long.

But we’ve got no choice.

After a few silent minutes of staring into each other’s eyes, I know it’s time for her to leave. “Do you want me to come with you and drive you to the airport?”

“No.” She shakes her head. “I’d never go if you would be there. And I have to.”

“Okay.”

“We’ll text and call and facetime and everything?”

“Of course. I’ll probably stalk you all the time. You’ll want to get rid of me pretty soon.” I try to joke, though it’s lame.

Her lips form a weak smile. “I look forward to your stalking.” She wraps her arms around me and presses her lips to my pulse point.

I take in a sharp breath. I’ll never get used to that.

There are so many things I want to say to her right now, but for some things it’s way too early. We’re taking it slow and that’s the right thing to do.

“I’m going to miss you.” She says as she pulls back.

“I’m going to miss you, too.” I tell her and I take her face into both hands, ignoring the pang in my shoulder before I kiss her softly.

“I…” She starts, but stops herself.

I’ve got a feeling what she wanted to say. “I know. Me too.”

“I’m going to go now.”

I nod.

But Clarke doesn’t turn around and I swear, if she’s not leaving soon, I’ll kiss her senseless, tug her with me to the bedroom and lock the door, so she can never go again.

Instead her lips crash into mine in another hungry kiss, full of want, desperation and passion. Full of… love, I suppose.

It takes me exactly one second the respond to it, to get lost in the way she tastes and the way her lips move against mine. In the way her teeth nibble on my bottom lip to get me to open my mouth.

When she pulls back abruptly, I haven’t even opened my eyes when I hear the door closing.

She’s gone.

For weeks.

Before my heart gets to miss her my phone chimes somewhere in my bedroom. It takes me a few
minutes to find it – under the bed, how the hell did it end up there? But when I do, I see a text from Clarke.

Clarke: <3

And just like that, I'm whole.

We’ll make it work.

…
If you had asked me a year ago, if I’d ever wake up next to the green-eyed woman who stole my heart back in highschool again, I would have declared you crazy. I would’ve said: over my dead body. No way.

It’s crazy how quickly a life can change.

Just a few days ago everything felt… good. Normal.

I knew what I wanted, what I had. Routines, plans, work. Everything was going as it should.

Now?

Well, now I’m staring at a picture I secretly took this morning.

Lexa was still sleeping and her hair was a mess all over the pillow. She had a cute smile on her lips and she looked so peaceful that it moved me to tears. I ached to kiss her, but I didn’t want to disturb her sleep.

So I took a picture to safe the moment. To take it with me on this plane.

Even though I’ll be back this time and she’ll be waiting for me, it feels like I’m leaving her behind and the thought fills me with great sadness.

Spending time with her makes you feel endless. Like everything’s possible.

She’s this person that everyone admires.

Years later, it’s still a mystery why she chose me. She could’ve had every girl and she could’ve ruled the world if she tried. And yet she chose me.

“Nudes from your girl?” Raven asks, being her usual annoying self.

“No.” I hand her my phone.

She stares at it for a moment, before she’s sporting a teasing smile. “Why is she wearing clothes? Damn, you’ve lost game, Griffin.”

“Raven, this is really important to me and I don’t want to mess it up, okay?” I say a little louder than I originally planned to be. “So please stop this shit and support me.”

“I’m sorry. I just… I’ll stop.”

“Thank you.”
“So you’re back together?”

“I’m not sure.” I take back my phone and stare at the figure between the sheets. “She said, she’s mine. I guess, we’re halfway to being girlfriends?”

Raven chuckles quietly. “I’d say she is your girlfriend. Not halfway or whatever.”

“I should’ve asked her.”

“Totally.”

“Yeah.”

“It sucks that we’re here and they are home.” Raven continues. “It’ll be a while, until we can see them again.”

“You’re pretty serious about Bell, aren’t you?”

“He’s great. I mean, it’s only been a few weeks, but…” She stops, but from the blush on her cheeks it’s not hard to tell what she wanted to say.

“You’re falling in love with him?”

“I guess so.” Raven tries to sound casual, but with her background story that’s understandable.

Though she’s practically grown up at my house after we met on my first day of highschool, where she was loved like a second daughter by my parents, she hasn’t experienced a lot of… let’s say loving relationships of any kind.

She never met her father and her mother was an alcoholic for the longest time of her life and somewhere along the way Raven gave up trying to save her. She’s sober now, but their relationship can’t be repaired. There’s just too much damage.

The few dating attempts she made weren’t really successful and though she denied it, I know that pained her a lot. She said she doesn’t need somebody to make her whole, but deep down we all want to be loved.

“I’m happy for you.” I tell her with a smile. “You deserve it.”

“Thank you.”

---

As soon as we leave the airport and get a cab I send a message to Lexa.

Me: we just landed. Can I call you when I'm home? I'd like to call now, but Raven’s been teasing me half of the flight already…

“You know, it’s good that you’re back together.” Raven says. She’s been watching me closely during the rest of the flight and now she’s doing it again.

“I know, but… why do you think so?”

“You’re smiling more.”

“I’ve been smiling over the last years too.” I state. I'm not sure where she’s going with this.
“That’s exactly what I mean.” She answers, pointing at my face. “You get that… glow. Normally I’d say it’s a freshly fucked glow, but in your case…”

“Ray.”

My phone vibrates again in my hand.

Lex: sure ;)

“I know. I’m just stating the truth.”

Something tells me she won’t ever stop her inappropriate sex jokes. So I decide to ignore it with a sigh and respond to Lexa’s text instead.

Me: thanks <3 What are you doing at the moment?

Lex: already stalking me, hm?
Lex: I just cleaned all the kennels and now I’m about to do some paperwork. Anya’s not really good at this. And after that I’ll grab something to eat.

I chuckle quietly to myself.

Me: of course! Sounds… exciting. :D

Lex: it’s boring, but it’s slow and relaxed and that’s exactly what I need at the moment. Besides, the dogs are cute and I get to text with you whenever I want. That’s a plus!

Me: That’s definitely a plus!

---

Raven’s talking about my schedule for the week. When, where, why, what. The whole package.

Only I’ve been having trouble listening, because I'm tired and I really just want to call Lexa and sleep some more and I get whiny, when I lack sleep and then I can’t stand myself and… yeah.

“Are you even listening?”

“Yeah. Tomorrow, interview at 10 and then meeting with Kane.”

She sighs dramatically, before she shakes her head at me. “I’ve been talking about Wednesday to Friday for the past five minutes.” She says. “You know what? Go call your girl. Maybe that’ll make you more useful.”

My cheeks redden a little. “I'm sorry.”

“It’s okay. I get it. Go.”

I don’t want to be that clingy, but after getting high on my favorite drug in the world I need to come down slowly.

So I’m already calling her on the way upstairs.

“Hey.” She says casually, but her voice sounds low and somehow husky.

My heart skips a beat. “Hey yourself.”
“It’s crazy.”

“What?”

“Being on the phone with you.”

“The good kind of crazy I hope.”

“We’ll see about that.” She laughs. “Just kidding. You know I love our kind of crazy.”

“I strongly advise you so.”

For a few seconds there’s nothing but the sound of her breathing.

“Clarke?”

“Yeah?”

“Thank you for yesterday.”

“For what?” I ask, frowning.

“For not seeing my scars as something… repellent. For accepting them as a part of me. That means so much to me, you can’t imagine.”

I’m not sure, what to answer to that.

“Lex.” I manage to say. “Of course! How could I see those scars as something else then signs of strength? Of surviving unspeakable pain? Nothing will change how I feel about you. You’re still you, okay?” God, I wish, I could look into her eyes right now.

“Okay.” She croaks after a minute. “It’s just… I did horrible things, too, and I… I’m not sure, if I deserve it. You. Us.”

When did this conversation became so… deep and depressive?

“Lex, who we are and who we need to be to survive are two very different things. The things we did don’t define is, okay? Whatever you had to do out there brought you back home. Back to me.” I tell her, trying to sound firm and determined, but comforting too. “You endured way more than anyone in this world deserves. So if you need forgiveness, I’ll give that to you. I forgive you. You hear me? You deserve the world.”

A quiet sniff is all I get for an answer for a while.

Damn. It pains me to hear her crying and to not be able to hold her.

“Thank you.” She finally whispers on the other side of the phone and there’s a tension in her voice, like she’s trying to stop herself from sobbing. I recognize it immediately. “I… I have to get back to work. I’ll call you later, okay?”

“Lexa, wait-”

“I’m okay.” She says.

“Wait-”
The line has gone silent.

...
Whenever I get overwhelmed I tend to hide somewhere. Or in this case – I end the call. I don’t want her to witness my emotional breakdown.

It’s not okay. I know that.

Clarke deserves better – but that’s exactly what I fear. A part of me is still a cripple and I can barely sleep through the night. I watched a man die and did nothing. I watched her getting bullied by Cage.

Dozens of pictures flood my brain.

Maybe the things we did don’t define us, but they’re still a part of us.

Stop it.

Where’s this coming from all of the sudden?

Just a few minutes ago I was happy – the bubbly excited kind of happy – when Clarke’s name flashed over my phone screen. Now I’m emotionally messed up again. Is that ever going to stop? Will there ever come a day when I feel normal again?

I lay my head down on my arms and take a few deep breaths.

Clarke deserves better.

But she’s right, I do too. And she’s the best I can get. So when I’ve calmed down, I call her back, silently hoping that I haven’t screwed it up before it started.

“I’m sorry.” I tell her before she can say anything. “I’m sorry for hanging up on you. I…”

“It’s okay.”

“No, it’s not. I’m doing it again. Shutting out everyone I care about and I don’t want to do that with you. I… I need you to be patient with me, Clarke. But I’m trying, okay? And I don’t want to lose you.”

“Lex. You won’t lose me.” She says and it’s easy to hear the smile in her voice. “I promise. You’re not going to get rid of me that easily.”

Here she goes, having me smile again.

“And yes, that’s a threat, Woods.” She adds in a playful tone. That’s when I know she’s not pissed or angry.
“I can live with that, I guess.”

“Me too.”

“As much as I love talking to you, I need to get back to work and you need to sleep.”

“How’d you know?”

“You sound sleepy. Go take a nap. We’ll talk later.”

She sighs. “Okay. Bye, Lex.”

“Bye.”

I’m relieved. Though Clarke never gives up on someone, it’s amazing that she didn’t even get angry with me. If I would’ve hung up on Costia like that we would’ve fought about my lack of commitment.

But Clarke gets me. She gets me in a way nobody else does and most of the time I don’t even have to say something.

I’m good at shutting people I care about out. Most of the time I don’t even let them in. That’s what Costia said, and she was right about it. For a while, I was angry that she broke up with me – I tried to ignore the truth and blamed her. But she was right, I know that now. I probably would’ve left me too.

--

“Lexa. I know, it’s unfair of me to do it like that, but I… I can’t do it anymore.”

“You’re breaking up with me, don’t you?” I ask quietly, my voice barely a whisper. “Just say it.”

“Look, it’s got nothing to do with what happened to you. I wanted to do it before, because… You keep shutting me out. Hell, most of the time you don’t even let people in.” She tells me, while I clench my jaw. “I love you. And I know you think, you love me, but you don’t. Not the way you should.”

“Just say it, Cos. You’re not able to handle me being a cripple. That’s the reason.”

Costia sighs. We had that talk before and she’s tired of it, I can hear it in her voice. “One day you’ll understand.”

And then the line goes silent and I throw the device against the wall across the room.

Love is weakness.

 Fucking shit.

--

She was right. I understand it now. It only took me about a year, but hey, at least I do now. Deep down I already knew it back then, but I was messed up and angry.

I’m not anymore. I’m getting better.

----
It’s half an hour later, when Anya shows up in the office and drops lunch in front of me. “Hey kid. What’s got you smiling like that?”

Since I’m currently not really smiling it’s not hard to know for what she’s aiming.

“You know, don’t you?”

The grin on her face is answer enough. “You and Blondie, hm?”

“Yeah.”

“I’m happy for you.”

“Thanks.”

“Alright, spill. I want details.” She places her legs on the table and leans back in her chair, while she unpacks her sandwich. I hate it when she does it, but that’s the reason she keeps doing it, so I decide to bite my tongue and swallow the words I want to say.

“There’s nothing to talk about.”

“Nothing to talk about?” She raises both eyebrows. “You’re really using that stupid line on me? I’m your sister. I know how you feel about her.”

“Then why are you asking?”

“To make you uncomfortable of course.” She states, grinning from ear to ear. “As I said, I’m your sister. That’s pretty much my job.”

I sigh in defeat. “Okay. I’m happy that she’s giving us another chance. She’s amazing. And she… she cracks me open, you know? She can see right through me, like I’m made of glass. I can’t hide anything from her. I never could, but now… It’s been ten years and she still sees right through me.”

“And?”

“It scares me.”

“Why are you afraid of that?”

“Did you even listen to me?”

She nods. “I did. But you’re still stupid. She’s Clarke. Your Clarke. You love her. There’s nothing to be afraid off.”

“I’m not scared of her. I’m scared of… how do I say it… I’m scared of failing her. She’s willing to put time and energy and feelings into this, but what if she sees how screwed up I really am and what if she can’t handle that long time? I mean, she’s seen the scars, but that’s just the shell, you know? The visible damage. What, if I never fully recover-”

“Wait a minute.” Anya interrupts me. She sits up straighter and takes her feet from my desk. “She’s seen your scars?”

“Yeah, but-”

“No, no, no. She’s seen your scars?”
“We didn’t have sex, if that’s what you’re implying.”

“I wasn’t. Lex, you’re really stupid, you know that?” She says, shaking her head in annoyance. “You’ve shown her? You’ve let her see them?”

I nod slowly, not understanding where she’s going with this.

“You haven’t even shown me.”

“Yeah, because they’re ugly and I don’t want to cause you nightmares.”

Anyas piercing brown eyes hold mine. “But you trust me, right? And still you couldn’t show them to me.”

“I’ll do it if you want. No problem.”

It is a problem.

“Shut up and listen.” She shakes her head in annoyance. “You’ve already let her in, Lexa. And as you said, she’s always been able to see right through your façade. Don’t you think she understands that you need time to heal? Mentally?”

I think about her words for a while. Of course she does.

“She knows what she signed up for.” Anya continues after a few seconds. “She isn’t Costia. With Clarke you never had a choice when it came to letting her close to your heart. So do me a favor and stop overthinking everything. Enjoy it. You deserve happiness.”

I take deep breath, while I let her words sink in.

“Thank you.”

“Any time.”

It’s time that I finally move on. Anya’s right. Clarke’s right. I deserve more than that. I deserve love and the happy ending. Why didn’t I see it before?

“What happened to moving on from her? To letting her go? I remember a talk a few weeks back when you wanted me to do that.”

Anyas sighs. “I forgot how persistent you are about your feelings for her. Runs in the family. It’s a Woods-thing.”

Yeah, she may be right about that.

“Lexa?”

“Hm?”

“You didn’t deny it.”

I frown. “What?”

Normally, she’d grin right now, but instead it’s a soft and heartfelt smile that shows on her face. “That you love her.”
I reciprocate the smile after a few seconds.

Yes, I know. Because I’d be lying, if I had.

“Have you told her yet?”

I shake my head no. “I will. Soon.”

“Good. Don’t wait too long. You’re not getting younger.”

“If you say, you want nieces and nephews soon, I have to disappoint you.”

Anya laughs and puts her legs back onto my desk. “Hell no. I don’t want a mini Clarke or worse, a mini Lexa running around. The two of you cause me enough headaches.”

“Glad to be of service.” I salute with a serious expression on my face.

“Jackass.”

I laugh relaxed and unpack my lunch. “Runs in the family.”

…

Chapter End Notes

And for another story: do you prefer Octaven / Ranya or Luna/Raven?
Two weeks later.

Two weeks are 14 days. Or 336 hours. Or 20.160 minutes. Or 1.209.600 seconds.

Doesn’t sound that much, because BAM – one second has passed.

But if you’re missing someone it’s definitely too much.

It’s been two weeks since I had to leave Polis (and Lexa) and I hate it. Because it feels like I'm missing out on too much and that’s crazy, if you actually think about it, but being away from her after missing out on ten years is fucking torture. Just torture.

Lexa has been teaching Aden how to park his car right, after he ran it into Beccas and Gustus’ fence. She’s been out with Luna – just for drinks, because she says too many people scare her. She went for a few runs with Lincoln. She’s getting better every day, she says so herself.

It’s great to hear that. But I can’t be there with her and that sucks. Simple as that.

“Clarke?” A familiar voice asks, clearly coming closer.

I stuff my phone into the back pocket of my jeans and turn around.

“Where are you?”

“Here, Rae. Chill.” I tell her, stepping away from the wall I’ve been hiding behind for the last minutes to stare at a picture Lexa has send me in yesterday. On of her in nothing but a sports bra and shorts.
I begged her for one for the past days and she wouldn’t relent, claiming her scars ruin the view, but I was… persistent.

And now I'm staring at it like a fucking moron. (Well, a fucking moron who’s hopelessly in love with a girl halfway across the country…)

“That’s easy for you to say. You haven’t been looking for a special someone for the last ten minutes!”

“Wow, ten minutes. I'm truly sorry.” I mock her.

She snorts. “Sarcasm noted. Your annoying self is showing, Griffster. And give your phone back, you’re supposed to be working!” She reaches out her hand, palm up, waiting.

“Excuse me? I am working!”

Raven glares at me. “Phone. Now.”

I sigh in defeat and hand her the device.

“Good girl. Now, back to work. You’ve got an interview in… oh, wait, ten minutes ago!” She pushes me forward.

A minute later I’m sitting in a chair.

“Sorry for the delay, Echo.” I tell the brunette interviewer across from me. “My roommate says I’m the most unpunctual person in the whole world, and she’s right about almost everything.”

“Absolutely no problem. We’re not live here. We’re going to do just a few basic questions for teasing the season, okay?”

“Yup.”

“Great. Then let’s start.” Echo answers with a smile. “Clarke, the crew is currently filming the seventh season. How does that feel?”

I smile. “It’s amazing. When all of this started, I used to go to bed and think: tomorrow, you’ll open your eyes and it’s all a dream. Sometimes I still feel this way.”

Only now it’s about something entirely else. Someone.

“What can you tell us about the new season?”

Here it goes. She’ll probably ask the same ten questions that I’ve been asked by all the other interviewers.

“Not much. I don’t want to spoiler anyone. We’ve relocated half of the set to explore more of the culture. That’s going to be a main part of the new season. It’s going to be a tough ride for Eliza, that’s for sure, but for the other main characters too. We’ll see a lot of character development and some… let’s say emotional moments. It’s going to be great.”

Echo nods. She expected the answer. “If you would have to describe the season in one word, what would that be?”

That’s an easy one. “Epic.”
“Is it true that Alycia only signed for the first seven episodes so far?”

“Yes.”

“You’re not going to say more?”

I chuckle. “Nope. Sorry. My lips are sealed.”

“What about Eliza’s love life? Any hints??”

“Well, she’ll have to endure a few ups and downs. The final episode of this season left a few questions and we’re going to pick up right there. There won’t be a time jump, so the characters are left with lots of emotional baggage of course. That’s going to influence the characters a lot. And of course their love interests, too.” I tell her, trying hard to suppress a smile. The fans are going to love it.

“Fans have been talking about a possible new relationship for Eliza. Can you tell us something about that? Will there be a special someone for her this season? Something…lasting?”

“I guess you’ll have to watch the new season.”

“And what about you?” Echo suddenly asks.

“Excuse me?”

“You’re very secretive about your private life, there’s only little that we know about you. I can only imagine, how hard it is, given the circumstances. Is there anyone special in your life right now?”

Raven is going to kill her. No one is allowed to ask about my private life.

“I like to keep my private life to myself, yeah. Because it’s exactly that. Private.” I tell her, shooting daggers at her.

“I understand. You can’t blame me for trying, though. A simple yes or no?” She tries again.

I shrug with a faked polite but playful smile. I’m really glad when this shit is over.

“Ah damn. You’ve heard it, ladies and gentlemen.” Echo says. “Thank you for the interview, Clarke. I’m really excited for the new season!”

“Thank you, Echo.”

---

“What the hell was that?”

“Relax.” Raven puts both her hands on my shoulders. “I’ve already spoken with her boss. They’re going to cut the last sequence, don’t worry.”

“I thought you briefed her?”

“I did!”

I sigh. Raven isn’t the one I’m angry at. “I’m sorry. I just…”

“You miss Lexa and you get grumpy when you do. I get it, Griffin.” Raven finishes my sentence.
“The first part is correct.”

“And the second part too, you know it. But I’ve got some news for you and you’re going to love them, so be nice or I’ll change my mind.” She says with a wide grin on her face. “I’ve rearranged your schedule. You’re free after tomorrow.”

I exhale audible. Free? “For how long?”

“Except for two meetings with Kane? The rest of the year.”

What??

I’m speechless, but Raven continues talking.

“You’ve been really busy those last weeks. The interviews, the writing, the shooting and all the red carpets. You’ve done enough promoting. There’s not much to do anymore. And most of it can be done from home.” She explains. “So I thought, why not?”

“Ray, I…”

“Life should be about more than just working. You deserve it.”

I pull her into a hug. “Thank you.”

“Uff. You’re welcome. Fix your relationship with Lexa. It’s the most important thing right now.”

“How did you convince Kane?”

Raven chuckles. “Well, for the next season you have to write something, right? And I know you. You need time to yourself and space and distance to all of this.” She motions her hand around. “You don’t need pressure and all this hectic stuff. And he’s a reasonable man. Well, most of the time.”

“You’re the best.”

“Oh, believe me, I know.”

Free. For the rest of the year.

That means I get to spend many, many hours with the green-eyed beauty who’s been on my mind every waking second. I can’t really wrap my head around the news, but I really want to call Lexa right now. God, I’m definitely whipped.

But I owe Raven.

She seems to see my inner struggle, because she hands me my phone back. “Go. Call her. I know you want to.”

I don’t even bother with denying. “I love you, you know that?”

“You better should.”

With one last smile I step outside and dial Lexa’s number. Yes, it’s early for her. Way too early, only half past five in the morning. But she’s probably already awake.
Indeed, she is.

She picks up after the second ring. “Hey.” Her warm voice makes the butterflies in my stomach do somersaults.

“Hey yourself. Did I wake you?”

“No. I’ve been up for a while.”

“Couldn’t sleep?”

Lexa sighs. “Not really, no.”

It makes me sad every time, but I’m glad that she’s honest about her insomnia. Old Lexa might have pretended.

“See? Crumbs have nothing to do with sleep.” I tease, hoping to at least make her smile.

Lexa chuckles quietly.

Mission accomplished.

“How are you?” Lexa asks then.

“I had that interview with Echo today.”

“How did that go?”

“She’s a stupid bitch. She asked me about my love life.”

It’s quiet for a few seconds. “What did you say?”

“Nothing. It’s none of her business. But that’s not the reason, why I’m calling. I wanted to tell you as soon as I’ve heard the news. I’ll be back earlier.”

“Yeah? When is earlier?” There’s a hint of excitement and joy in her voice and that’s when I make a decision.

“Wednesday next week.” I lie, biting my lips. It’s going to be epic, when I surprise her, because she usually senses surprises ten meters against the wind.

“So it’s… eight days instead of twelve? Not that I’m counting.”

“Yup.”

“Better. But still not good enough.”

“I know. But I’ll be home for a few weeks. It’ll be great. You’re going to have to take me on a date, Woods. Not just crumbs in your bed. A real date.”

She chuckles softly and I swear, one of these days she’ll kill me in the sweetest way possible with that sound. “I will, I promise.”

“Lex?”

“Clarke?”
“I can’t wait to see you.”

“You’ve seen me yesterday evening.”

“Stop making fun of me. I’m suffering over here.”

L Lexa laughs relaxed. Yeah, she’s definitely better. “You’ll be home soon.”

Yeah, I will be.

“I’ll call you tonight. Raven turned a few things around to be able to send me back home earlier, so it’s going to be a long day. But it’s totally worth it.”

“Okay. I’ll be here.”

“I’m counting on it.”

The same day I book my flight back home for tomorrow night. It’ll be early morning when I arrive at Polis, but I remember how Luna surprised Lexa and I plan on doing exactly the same.

…

Chapter End Notes

Thank you again for reading this <3
Leave a comment (they make me really happy :D )
Hey guys :)
God, what a week so far. Work was good, but yesterday my professor who's going to grade my final paper basically told me "FUCK YOU" and made me write a short report about what I'm going to write in my final paper (which would be totally unnecessary if she just would make some time for me outside of her normal office hour. But she doesn't and it's that one day per week that I can't take some time off from work). To top that, I had to write it after having two hours of sleep the night before and after working ten hours straight. Sorry about that. Just needed to let it out.

But on the bright side: I got an offer for a permanent job from my place of work, which is totally awesome because I love my colleagues and the kids I'm working with (those just most of the time) and it's exactly what I'm looking for. So that's a plus!

Anyways. Back to the reason why you're all here: the chapter. I haven't got much to say except that you can all start looking forward to the next one, because it's going to be awesome :D (I think so) ENJOY!

To those who read Crash & Burn too - I'll probably update tomorrow again! I promise to try :) 

Love,

LJT.

PS: I think we're a little bit past the formalities since I'm ranting about my life here... I guess you can call me Laura from now on :P
And you're awesome for still sticking with me and the story! <3

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... 

"What’s got you smiling like that, kid?” Dad asks, as he rolls around the counter.

I’m at Dad’s restaurant to get lunch for Anya and me. Dad’s pizza is the best in the whole world – and I'm not just saying that because I'm his daughter. Well, I haven’t tried a lot of pizzas. I had maybe two overseas and whenever I'm home I come here, so… Yeah.

“Clarke.” Mom answers for him with a wide smile. “Right?”

Sometimes I think my parents are even more excited about Clarke and me than I am. Which is – theoretically speaking – not possible. But I love them for being so supportive.

So I nod, trying hard to suppress the beaming smile everyone around me is teasing me for daily.

“She’s coming home earlier.”

“When?”
“Eight days.”

My parents share another smile, but I’m too happy to be annoyed about it.

It’s crazy how much I miss her. Luna says, we’re in the honeymoon-phase of our relationship. I didn’t even know there was such a term, but we probably are.

Talking to her, having her back in my life – it’s overwhelming in this beautiful kind of way. I can’t stop thinking about her and just hearing her name makes my heart’s beat like crazy. Probably not healthy, but who cares, right?

“I gotta go. Anya’s hungry.” I tell them and take the pizza from Dad’s hands.

“Tell her we said hi!” Mom shouts, while I walk through the front door of the restaurant.

“Will do!” I shout back, shaking my head in amusement, before the door falls shut behind me and I run into another person. Literally. “Oh shit, I’m sorry!”

The other person catches the pizza. “Lexa?” The brunette with ice blue eyes asks surprised.

“Octavia. Hi.”

“How are you doing?”

“I’m good, thanks. And you?”

_God, this feels awkward._

“I’m good too. It’s funny, I was just thinking about you.”

“Yeah?”

“Yeah. I wondered, if you’d be up for getting coffee some time soon? I feel like there’s a lot we should probably talk about andI… umm… I feel like I owe you an apology.” She stares at the asphalt, avoiding my gaze.

“You already apologized.” I state as a matter of fact. I’m buying time this way. Should I get coffee with her? I mean, it’s just coffee, right?

“I did. But that’s not enough. I treated you badly, Lexa, and I’d like to talk about all of that, if you’re up for it.”

I hold her gaze for a few seconds, debating whether to accept or to decline her offer. I’m still healing and maybe that’ll take a while longer. But I could as well start somewhere, right?

“How about later this afternoon? We could go to our old coffeeshop, if you want. Let’s say… at four?”

Octavia’s beaming smile is enough for me to know that I made the right decision. “Of course, yeah! That sounds great!”

“Okay then. I gotta go, deliver the pizza. A hungry Anya’s a grumpy Anya.”

Octavia chuckles. “Can’t have that. See you later, Lexa. I’m looking forward to it.”

“Me too.”
I'm nervous.

Octavia and I used to be good friends. I confided in her more than in anyone else from Clarke’s friends. She didn’t need to say a lot, we just… understood each other. Until I told her about my thoughts about Jake and the accident. About the doubts in my head.

It’s a big step for me to sit down and talk with her. I can feel anxiousness lingering in the back of my mind.

But I’m here and I’m on time.

Octavia comes two minutes late. “God, I’m sorry! I couldn’t find a parking lot. Can you believe that? It’s the middle of the day!”

“Don’t worry.” I tell her with a smile.

“Did you order?”

“No, I was waiting for you.”

“I’m dying to get something to eat. I’ve been busy the whole day and then I forgot my lunch at home, so this is kind of saving my ass.” Octavia says as we walk over to the counter to order. “Though I’m kind of happy to see you, of course.”

“Only kind of? I’m disappointed.”

We both laugh.

Just a few minutes later we’re back to table and we fall into light small talk for a while. It’s nice to catch up.

“What was Lincoln like?” She suddenly asks.

I almost choke on my piece of cake – maybe it’s just chocolate and they call it cake so it doesn’t sound as unhealthy as it is. But I won’t complain. “You mean overseas?”

Octavia nods.

“Umm… He was the best. He had a great instinct and that saved our asses a few times. It’s like he smelled the danger or something, I don’t know.” I answer her question as good as I can. I still have to get used to her direct way of approaching delicate topics.

But when I start talking, the words flow easily out of my mouth and suddenly there are so many vivid pictures in my head that I continue. “But he also never failed to lighten our moods and to make us laugh when we needed to. It was his idea to start singing songs every day and at first most of the guys weren’t exactly thrilled about it, but he… He was persistent. And I like to think that this was what saved our sanity.”

“Yeah, persistence is his second name.” Octavia chuckles. “Did he tell you how we met?”

I shake my head.

“We ran into each other at a bar. He tried to flirt with me, but he… he was really bad at it.” She says. “I thought he was cute, but I went back to Bell and the boys. The next week we were at the bar
again. And Lincoln was there, too. So he ran into me on purpose again. He spilled my drink and offered to buy me a new one. We went on like this for weeks. Until I finally gave in and we went on a date with him.”

“Really?”

“Yeah. Told you.”

“Wow. Can I tease him about that?”

Octavia laughs. “You can try. But he’s proud of winning me over.”

“God. That guy’s one of the best people I know.”

“Yeah.” She nods in agreement. “I heard you’re back together with Clarke?”

And here we are. She’s still the most obvious person in the world, which shouldn’t surprise me. But it does.

“Yeah. It’s only been two and half weeks.”

“How does it feel?”

“Honestly? Amazing. I know I screwed up in the past. We both did. But maybe that was supposed to be, you know? Maybe we wouldn’t be here today if we stayed together back then.” I stop myself from fidgeting with the salt shaker between us. I don’t need that. I’m good and I know what I’m feeling.

“Maybe. I’m sorry for what I’ve said and done in the past. It wasn’t my place.”

“Apology accepted, O. Let’s forget about it.”

“Can I… say a few more things? And then I’ll never talk about it again, I swear.”

I hold her gaze for a few moments, before I nod. She looks sincere and maybe she’s been carrying her thoughts for as long as I carried mine. So I guess if this is a new start for me, she might as well get one too.

“I reacted that way because I had these thoughts, too, Lexa.” Octavia says quietly, staring at the cup between her hands. “About Jake. For a while at least. I mean, everyone probably did. But I… I was ashamed, because Clarke is my friend and, even though that’s no excuse, it was the shame I was feeling about it that made me… that harsh. I played moralizer to cover up my own thoughts.”

Wow.

I didn’t expect… that.

“And that’s why I cut you off, Lexa.” She continues and looks back up to meet my eyes again. “I never told Clarke that you told me about your thoughts beforehand. I’m not sure if that was right or not, but… After you two… broke up, I busied myself with helping her and I should’ve looked after you too. Maybe I could’ve helped you guys.”

“It’s in the past, Octavia. We can’t change it anymore.”

“Yeah. You’re right. But I wish I could.”
“I don’t. I’m good the way it is.”

“Even with… all that happened?” She motions towards my arms.

I nod. “Even with all that happened.

Octavia leans back in her chair. “You still surprise me, Woods. I mean you …”

“Were Tortured?” I finish for her. “Yeah, I was. But I’m alive and I get better every day and I’ve got Clarke back. I miss her like hell. But she’s coming back in eight days and I can’t wait to spend more time with her. She’s… she’s still the one for me, you know? Who knows how we would’ve turned out. Maybe all of that was worth it in the end.” I pause and think about the last years, about the people I met and the things I had to endure. They all led me to where I am now. “So yeah, I’m good, because I’ve got everything I need.”

“I’m happy for you. For both of you.”

“Thank you.”

“Hey, a few of us plan on going out tonight. Just a few drinks at Trikru. You should join us!”

A bar means people. People mean anxiety. It’s a simple equitation.

“I'm not sure…”

“Come on. It'll be fun! Bellamy’s coming and Lincoln and you could invite your roommate. It’s nothing big, I promise!”

I hear myself agreeing before I know it. “Okay, I’ll try.”

---

(Note to self: never believe Octavia when she says something isn’t big.)

(Note to self: it’s not funny to tie up someone’s shoes when they are drunk. It’s easy to confuse the shoe laces and you might end up tying someone’s feet together, which might end badly, if you know what I mean.)

(Note to self: if your head starts feeling fuzzy and your legs start feeling funny, you should stop drinking.)

…

Chapter End Notes

thanks for reading <3<3<3
Chapter 44 - Clarke.

Chapter Notes

Hey <3
So this chapter is another one of my favorites and I hope you like it too. It's a bit longer than the previous ones and there’s a bit more fluff before we get to the angsty part again :P
Not much else to say today.
Enjoy!

Love,
LJT.
---

... 

It’s half past four in the morning when I finally get to leave the sticky airport full of grumpy people. I have to suppress the urge to jump all the way out – yes, I'm that happy to be home.

It took almost an hour to get my luggage and if this was be a business trip, I’d be annoyed as hell by now. But I'm still in my best mood because I’ll get to see Lexa soon. She’s just half an hour away.

I'm not a morning person, but the prospect of seeing Lexa’s surprised face is enough to make me smile widely when I get a cab.

Polis in the early morning reminds me me that it’s just a small town. The big cities never sleep, but here there’s not one single soul on the sidewalks and the roads are almost empty. It’s home and I realize how long it hasn’t felt like this to me.

When the driver stops in front of Lexa’s apartment building I tip him way more than necessary just to get out of the car as fast as possible. The man’s laughing quietly when I run off without my stuff and return ten seconds later a little embarrassed.

“Sorry. I'm just... glad to be home.”

“Don’t be. I know the feeling.” The middle-aged man answers and lifts my suitcase out of the trunk.
“Make sure you never forget that.”

“I won’t.”

“Good. Have a great day.”

“Thank you. You too.”

The man smiles and nods before he gets back into his cab and drives off.

Just when I turn around, another car stops right where the cab stood before and a second later Bellamy comes into view.
“Clarke!” He exclaims surprised. He jumps out of the car and runs over to me, throwing his arms around my neck and pulling me close.

“Bell?” I ask confused, but I reciprocate his hug. “What are you doing here?”

“I was about to ask the same thing. Shouldn’t you be in Canada?”

“I wanted to surprise Lexa.”

He laughs, giving me a look I can’t decipher. “Well, now she’s going to surprise you.”

I frown in confusion. I get the feeling that this day won’t go as I planned.

“We were out for a few drinks.” Bellamy explains amused. “And then she and O and the other girls didn’t want to leave and… Yeah. One thing led to another and then everything was a big mess. I’m the designated driver.”

“It’s almost five.” I state dumbly.

“Yup. And she’s drunk. Can you handle her? Because her roommate went home with a guy she met and she already accused me of trying to get in her pants and I’m not sure if she’ll get sick or not. She says she won’t, but…” He shrugs, biting his lip unsure of what else to say.

“I can.”

*That’s going to be interesting.*

There is only one time I remember Lexa being that drunk. And I personally loved it, because she almost never loses control and watching her actually letting go around people… It’s something else.

“Well then. I’ll help you get her upstairs. She’s really something else like this. She actually tried to tie O’s shoelaces, because my stupid sister couldn’t do it on her own, but then she ended up tying the wrong one’s together. Short version: she’s a handful.” He sighs and opens the door of his car. “And I’m not sure she can walk.”

“I can walk!” Lexa protests immediately. She tries to do so and falls against his chest just a step later.

“Sure you can, Commander.”

“Sergeant, Sir!”

“Sorry.”

I watch Lexa poking into his cheek and bite my lip in amusement. Did I mention that I love the affectionate version of her?

This is not how I planned this morning to go, but I can work with that, too. God, she’ll be so embarrassed later.

“Oh, you’re soft.” She states and pokes his cheek again. “Really soft.”

Bellamy groans and slaps away her hand. “Lexa.”

“Yes, Sir?” She giggles adorably cute.

“I brought you someone.” He announces seriously. “But you have to stand on your own feet. Can
you do that?”

“Yes, Sir!” She fake-salutes and breaks into laughter.

“Clarke.” He whines. “Help me.”

“Clarke is prettyyy. But you can’t have her.” Lexa tells him sternly. “She looks like an angel, but she’s mine. You hear me?”

“Aww, thank you. You’re very beautiful yourself, Lex.” I say with a beaming smile on my lips. If I wasn’t already madly in love with her, I’d definitely fall for her adorable and drunk version.

Lexa peeks over his shoulder and notices me for the first time. “Clarke!!”

“Hey babe.”

“You’re here!” She pulls back from Bellamy and stumbles into my arms. “I’ve missed you!”

“I’ve missed you too. Let’s get you to bed, hm?”

“Only with you!”

Bellamy chuckles, but when I shoot him a warning look he starts coughing.

_Really subtle._

“I’ll be there, yes. To sleep.”

“With me?”

“Next to you.” I correct her, while we start making our way to the front door.

“I don’t want to sleep. I want to sleep with you. You’re so sexy!”

I blush and bite back a laugh.

If Bellamy was in control before, he definitely isn’t anymore. He bursts into laughter. “Told you. She’s a handful.”

“Shut up, softie.” Lexa answers, slurring the words a little. “Softies don’t talk.”

“Bellamy is not a softie, babe.”

“Have you touched his cheeks? And his hair, I bet it’s soft—”

Bellamy slaps away her hand again when she reaches out to touch his locks. “Keep your hands to yourself, lady.”

Lexa just giggles and continues to talk. “But it’s not as soft as Clarke’s. She’s got the softest hair. I love her hair. And her eyes! She’s—”

“That’s great.” Bellamy interrupts her, then he looks at me when we step into the elevator. “I swear, she was talking the whole drive back here. Does she ever stop?”

“When she passes out, I guess. Why did you let her drink so much?”

“At first she was a little uncomfortable, so Derrick handed her one of his devilish drinks. And then…
she just let loose. I don’t know. She had fun tonight.”

“Clearly.” I answer dryly.

“I thought she’d earned it. Though I didn’t think about the consequences.”

Together we manage to get her into the apartment and into her bedroom. We lay her down on the mattress, where she cuddles into her pillow and sighs happily.

She’s an adorable drunk.

“You’ve got this alone?”

“Yeah. She’s talkative and affectionate, but I can handle it, don’t worry. Thanks for bringing her home, Bell.”

“Sure. I’ll just get your luggage really quick, okay?”

I completely forgot about that. “Oh, thanks!”

Bellamy leaves while I struggle to take off her shoes, which is kind of hard because she tosses and turns, giggling like a little kid.

“Lex, hold still.”

“Trying to get me to bed?” She tries to tease.

“You’re already in your bed.” I point out amused. “I’m just taking your clothes off.”

“I’m not that kinda girl.” Lexa laughs about her own joke and giggles again, while she pulls up her legs so I can’t take her jeans off.

“Lexa, please. Just let me help you get comfortable.”

“Come cuddling.”

“Soon. First I need you to take off your clothes. And then I’ll get some water for you.”

“And then you’ll cuddle with me?”

“Of course.”

“I’ll do it.”

I leave her alone to get a glass of water, when Bellamy returns with my bags. He drops them next to the door.

“Thank you. You’re the best.” I say and hug him.

“Oh believe me, I know. Call if you need anything, okay?”

“I will.”

He shows himself out with a smile on his face.

While I’ve gotten a glass of water for Lexa and said goodbye to Bellamy, she has stripped off her clothes.
But unfortunately, she has taken off all her clothes.

All. Of. Them.

Except her socks.

Oh my god.

I try not to stare and immediately walk over her drawer to find something for her to wear instead. A large t-shirt and some panties should do for now.

“Lexa, can you put this on?”

“Why? It’s comfortable.”

“If you want me to cuddle with you, you’re going to put this on.”

She pouts. (Still naked.)

She’s going to kill me, I think to myself while I take a few deep breaths to calm down.

As shy as Lexa can be during (sober) private moments like these, she knows she’s sexy. And she knows how I’m affected by too much naked skin. She’s drunk, but she’s definitely doing this on purpose.

“Lex, please.”

She shakes her head.

“Alexandria Woods. You are going to put this on or I won’t cuddle with you!”

She huffs and stares at me for a little longer, but she finally obeys.

Goddamn. You’re really making this harder than it has to be.

Lexa struggles a little to find the right holes for her arms and I try to help as much as possible without looking, but finally she’s wearing the large grey shirt and some panties.

Everything’s hotter than before. Or is it just me?

“Good. Now drink that.”

Another ten minutes later she’s finally ready for bed. I’ve prepared for all situations – puking, headache and sunlight – when I tuck her in.

“Oh my god, Clarke, it’s so soft! How can it be so soft?” She exclaims happily as she snuggles into the duvet.

“I don’t know, Lexa.”

“Look at this! It’s so soft! And fluffy. How can it be that fluffy?”

I bite my lip, so I don’t start laughing.

“Cuddle with me.” She commands.

Slowly I climb into bed next to her and open my arms for her. “How do you feel?”
“Great!”
“Yeah? Not sick?”

She shakes her head vehemently before laying it down on my shoulder. Suddenly she’s quiet and I enjoy holding her close.

Yeah, I imagined different circumstances, but let’s be real here – as long as I get to hold her I’m a lucky woman. And I’m happy that she’s better and that she enjoyed herself. But most of all, I try not to think about her bare legs and her barely covered body against mine.

My heart speeds up even more at this thought.

Turns out I’m just a human being.

“Clarke?” She asks after a while.

“Yes?”

“You’re beautiful.”

“Thank you.”

“Like really, really beautiful. I probably shouldn’t tell you that, but… can you keep a secret?”

“I can.”

“You can’t tell yourself. Promise me.” She says seriously.

I frown amused, but agree nevertheless. “I promise not to tell myself.” I’m curious about what she’s going to tell me next.

“I love you.”

My heart skips a beat. Two maybe.

*Did she just say…?*

I know she’s drunk and she won’t remember this later, but nevertheless I blush. She loves me?

“Get some sleep, Lex. I’ll be here when you wake up.”

“Promise? It’s not like back in the desert?”

I swallow my surprise. “What happened back in the desert?”

“I was holding you close and kissing you and talking to you, but then you just disappeared all the time. The doctor said it was because of the infection.” Lexa explains, her voice small and quiet like the voice of a little child after a nightmare. “I don’t like you disappearing.”

I’m glad she can’t see my face right now. I sniff as quietly as possible, while I stroke her arm. “I’m not going to disappear. I promise.”

“Good.”

Again, it’s quiet for a while.
I think about her words. I didn’t know she had had an infection, but considering the circumstances it’s no surprise. There’s so much we need to talk about some day. But I’m not sure if I’m ready for that. To hear about all those cruel things that those people did to her.

I try to wrap my head around all the news. She was hallucinating about me? She loves me? I mean, I love her and I’ve never been surer about anything in my life. But it scares me. The amount of love I feel for her… That is scary. But her words are meaningful and beautiful too, because I’m not alone in this. She feels the same.

“Clarke?” She asks again, interrupting my thoughts.

“Yeah?”

“I’m glad you’re here.”

“Me too, love.” I whisper, pressing a light kiss on her forehead. “Me too.”

...
hello my lovely readers! :)  
First off all: thank you, Lucie, for still proofreading all the stuff I'm writing <3 you’re awesome.

So, the thing is: I thought last week was shitty, but this is even worse. My professor decided to drop me, which means that I have to look for someone else, which is really fucked-up, because you normally have to find one the semester before you actually start working on your degree, which means chances are really bad that I get to finish this semester. Wish me luck! :)  
On the bright side: since I don't have anything to work on right now, there's more time for writing, which makes it a bit better!

Enjoy reading :)  

Love,  
LJT.  
PS: next chapter will probably be up on SATURDAY, so keep your eyes open <3

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See the end of the chapter for more notes

…

I feel as if I was thrown under a bus. A tank maybe. Two probably. Something big at least.

My head pounds and I don’t dare opening my eyes. Why do people like to drink alcohol again? Did I drink some?

I did. Too much of it.

Groaning I lift my arm to cover my eyes and the other to massage my temples. At least I don’t feel sick, just… bad. Really, really bad.

I roll over, but something’s stopping me halfway. No. Someone. A woman lies next to me on her stomach, face turned away from me and hidden in the pillow.

Fuck. Did I…?

I blink.

The room’s bathed in a dim light, but I recognize blonde hair.

No, I wouldn’t… I would never cheat on Clarke, right? I mean… Never!

I sit up a little too abruptly for my pounding head and let out a few profanities the very same second. The woman next to me moves and turns her head around. “Hey, you’re awake! How do you feel?”
There’s only one time in my life when I felt as relieved as I’m feeling now. Because the woman next to me is Clarke.

“You’re here.” I state dumbly, but my brain’s still trying to form coherent thoughts.

She nods with a bright smile and sits up too. “I am.”

Clarke’s gorgeous in whatever moment, but the early mornings with her are my favorite – hair messy, eyes still sleepy but full of excitement and brightness…

I realize that I could get used to that, before I wonder why I get to experience it today. “Why are you here?”

She chuckles and takes in my confused face before she answers. “You don’t remember anything, do you?”

“I… I remember going to the bar with Octavia. Drinks from Derrick. Dancing maybe?”

“It’s okay.” She says, biting back laughter. “I got here early to surprise you.”

Suddenly I feel guilty. She came all the way here earlier just to surprise me and I got blackout drunk. “Clarke, I’m-“

“No, no, no, it’s okay! It was an interesting morning.”

_Oh god._

Instinctively I bury my face in my hands. I almost don’t dare asking, because I know how talkative I get when I’m drunk and from the look on her face I can tell that I did talk a lot – and probably about inappropriate things.

“Interesting? How?”

I still hide my face in my hands, but I glance through my fingers to find her smirking. “I’ll keep that to myself.”

_That bad, hm? Shit._

Groaning I sink back into the pillows and maybe I’m praying for them to swallow me.

She moves away from the bed while I try to put the few pieces of last night I have left together.

Shoelaces? No, that doesn’t make sense. There were definitely too many drinks involved.

“Here.” Clarke says as she returns a few minutes later. She hands me a glass of water and an Advil while she sits back down next to me. “You’ll feel better soon.”

“Could you call Anya? There’s no way I’ll be able to go to work today.”

“I’ve already called her.”

“How did you know her number?”

“It’s next to the wardrobe on the mirror. And I own something called iPhone. You know the thing with internet?”
“Thank you.”

“You’re welcome. Can I get a kiss?”

Now it’s me who smiles wider than I’ve smiled in years. “Sure about that?”

“I am sure.”

We lean in at the same time and connect our lips in a sweet and innocent kiss.

For a moment I forget I’m hungover.

---

“How do you feel?” Clarke asks about half an hour later.

I’m in bed again after a shower, but I’m sitting with my back against the headboard. I’m feeling a bit better. Clarke has made some eggs and some bacon for breakfast a while ago and I’m currently drinking my second cup of coffee.

Clarke’s sitting across from me on the other side of the bed, cross-legged; the tray with our breakfast is set between us.

“Almost human again.” I chuckle and take in the soft expression on her face. “Thank you.”

I notice that her eyes follow my tongue as I lick cream from my lips.

She smiles at me and my heart melts at this sight. “Of course. Besides, you’re getting kind of affectionate when you’re drunk. I like that.”

“You do, hm?” I interlace our fingers.

She nods. “I do.”

“What else do you like?”

“Being here with you.” She answers. She reaches out and steals some bacon from my plate with her free hand. “You know, I kind of missed you.”

“Only kind of?”

She shrugs playfully.

“Well, I kind of missed you too.”

“So… Did you have fun last night?”

“Yeah, I guess. I mean, I’ve got a massive hangover, so there’s that. But I don’t remember everything, which is kind of weird. How did I get home?”

“Bellamy brought you.”

“And where’s Luna?”

“I guess she’s still at Derrick’s place.”

“What?” I repeat shocked. “Wait a minute. What’s Luna doing at Derrick’s place?”
“Umm… are you asking me to give you the talk? Because if I remember correctly you’re past that.”

I blush and try not to think about that while she’s here, with me, in my bed.

But seriously – Luna and Derrick?

I decide to change the topic. “And why was I only wearing a shirt and panties?”

“Because I told you to change your clothes and you thought I meant a striptease.” Clarke explains casually with a shrug, but that doesn’t hide the hint of blush on her cheeks. “I had to blackmail you into putting on at least this.” She tugs on the shirt.

I groan. “Oh shit. I’m sorry.”

“Don’t be. I liked the view.”

Now I know she’s teasing me. But two can play a game, right?

“You did, hm? How about this one?” I put the tray aside, before I shuffle a little closer to her so that our faces are barely inches apart, while I’m biting my lip in that way that drives her crazy.

Contently I watch desire taking over her blue eyes within a few seconds.

“Y-yeah.” She whispers.

“And how do you like that?” I close the distance between us and let my lips graze over her neck.

Clarke hums a confirmation and gives me better access. Her eyes fall shut and her breathing changes, which does funny things to my body. But I’m supposed to tease, so I pull back abruptly and she actually whines.

Then she realizes what I was up to and punches my shoulder. “Asshole!”

I chuckle.

“Seriously, you’re mean!” She crosses her arms.

“I’m sorry. Forgive me?”

“Only if you kiss me. And not just some teasing. A real kiss.”

I surrender and Clarke wins. She always does.

So I kiss her with all I have. And damn does it feel great.

“How long are you staying?” I ask quietly when we pull back to catch some air. I wanted to wait with that question, but I can’t help it, I need to know how long I have her.

“For the rest of the year. I’m going to work from here, it’s mostly writing, and I can do that everywhere. And I kind of like it here, you know? It’s good for inspiration.”

My heart skips a beat. The rest of the year?

-----

A little while later we hear the apartment’s front door closing and then the sound of keys falling onto the kitchen table follows, accompanied by a hangover-groan – a characteristic one for Luna.
Clarke’s in the shower – I could get used to sound of that – so I walk out to look after my roommate.

“Hey.” I greet her.

Luna jumps and hisses. “Jesus!”

“It’s Lexa actually.” I joke.

Another groan. “Asshole.”

“Oh, you’re still in this state, hm? Did you take an Advil at Derrick’s? Or were you too busy for that?”

She shoots my look that says: I’m going to kill you if you don’t stop talking right now.

“I take it as a no. Let me get you some water.”

Luna hesitates, but she finally sighs and sits down by the table with a grunt. She buries her face in her hands and from the kitchen sink I can see a few bruises on her neck that tell me she had fun last night.

I didn’t know she was into one-night stands, but Derrick the barkeeper is hot – objectively speaking. And it’s been a long time since Luna had been with someone. Her ex-boyfriend was a nice guy, but he couldn’t handle her being out there to protect our country, while he stayed at home to teach kids. She’s not big at talking about feelings, but I know that hurt her more than she let on.

I put the glass in front of her together with a pill, before I sit down next her.

“Thanks.”

“You okay?”

“Yeah, just… a headache.”

She wants to say more, I can see it in her eyes, but she isn’t ready to talk and I won’t push. So I leave it be and change the topic. “Clarke’s here.”

Luna lifts her head. “Yeah?”

I nod. “She wanted to surprise me this morning.”

“She’s good for you.”

“I know.”

“Is she off of work or…?”

“Yeah. She’ll be here for a couple of weeks. She needs time to write the new book and she can do that everywhere. Are you okay with her staying over sometimes?”

“Of course. I’ve got amazing headphones.”

“We’re not there yet.”

“But you’ll be. And I’m prepared.”

“If you say it like that it sounds creepy.”
“Seriously, I'm okay with her being here. I like her. And maybe I can get a few hints for the new season.” She shrugs playfully.

“You won’t. Sorry to disappoint you.” Clarke says as she walks by. She leaves the bathroom in nothing but a towel and my mouth goes dry as I stare after her.

*Fuck. Why are you doing this to me?*

“Not there yet, hm?” Luna chuckles.

“Shut up. She’s my girlfriend. I’m allowed to look.”

Two minutes. That’s how long it takes me to follow her to my bedroom.

I close the door behind me and leans against it, while she looks up. “You can’t do that.” I tell her firmly.

Clarke furrows her eyebrows. “I can’t do what?”

“Walk through the apartment in nothing but a towel. That’s unfair.”

The confused expression on her face turns into a smirk. A sexy smirk. And she’s still nothing more than a towel. The only difference is that she’s rummaging through her suitcase for something clean to wear, but she stops after a few seconds of staring and walks over to me.

“Unfair, hm?” She asks, standing just a few inches away from me.

I can practically feel her body heat. But maybe it’s my own body heating up. I stare at few drops of water on her shoulders, dropping down from her hair. I swallow. “Mhm.”

She’s close. Too close for me to not lean in and connect our lips in a bittersweet kiss. I let my lips wander down to her neck, nipping and sucking there. She smells heavenly. So purely Clarke with a hint of my shampoo on her skin, which drives me crazy. I didn’t know I was that possessive until this very moment.

*Oh my god.*

But there’s something lingering in the back of both our heads and we’re painfully aware of that.

When I pull away I let out a shaky breath. My whole body is on fire and it wasn’t even one of those moments. My hands have found their way to her hips, securely wrapped up in a towel. But my fingers itch to touch her – her, not just the nasty towel that separates them from her skin.

I'm not the only one who’s fighting her instinct. I can see it in her eyes, which have darkened with desire.

“Lex.” Her voice comes out as nothing but a whisper.

One decision.

I know better, right?

…
Thoughts? <3
And I just realized that we've been doing this for over 4 months now! Crazy! :D
Hey :)  
Early update, same on Tuesday (instead of Wednesday).  
All I can say is: don't hate me.  

Enjoy! Hope you like it!  
Love,  
LJT.  
---  

…

I feel like I'm on fire and from the look in her eyes I know I'm not she only one. My whole body aches to touch her skin. I feel like I might burn alive and I love it.

I don’t dare to move a muscle, because she needs to be the one who takes this step, she needs to decide if she’s ready for this.

But then the expression in her eyes changes and the mood changes with it. Suddenly there’s a vulnerability in her eyes, something fragile and defenseless.

“You can’t do that. Please.” She says, her voice barely a whisper.

“Okay.” I answer, immediately taking a step back to give her more space, because she looks like she needs it.

“Really, Clarke. Because I…” She sighs and closes her eyes, while she leans her head against the door. “I'm not there yet.”

Oh my god. I'm so stupid. Of course she isn't, you idiot.

“I'm sorry.” I say quickly. “I should’ve had more self-control.”

“No, it’s fine. I just… I haven’t… I haven’t been with anyone in a while and I…” She pauses and rubs her forehead while she tries to find the right words. “I'm just starting to accept this new me, you know? This.” She gestures to the scars visible on her forearm.

I nod in understanding, silently cursing myself for my mindlessness. “Of course, Lex.”

“I'm just… I'm this new me and I'm still not comfortable with it. Not even close.” She wipes a few tears, but new one’s follow.

I'm shocked by the sudden hurt in her eyes. “We’ve got all the time in the world.” I say as calm as possible, hoping to ease some of the pain.

Lexa shakes her head and she looks like she’s about to fall apart. “God, Clarke, there’s so much you don’t know about me. And I… I…”
“Then tell me. Tell me everything you want me to know.”

Lexa shakes her head again. This time she avoids my gaze.

Is she ashamed of something?

Or does she regret this? My heart clenches in pain at this thought.

“Okay. Whenever you’re ready then. How about that?” I try.

She doesn’t answer. She just sniffs quietly and stares at her fisted, but still trembling hands.

I'm unsure of how to act. I want to wrap my arms around her and tell her that she’s save, that I'm not going to leave her because of the things she’s been through, but I'm pretty sure that would be the wrong thing to do right now, because she looks so fragile. So I just kind of stand there awkwardly for a while, in front of the bed, a few steps away from her.

Lexa’s sudden mood change took me by complete surprise.

I haven’t planned walking around in that towel. Really, I didn’t. I’m not stupid and I’m not a masochist. Except maybe I am. Because the way Lexa looked at me with her deep green eyes, like she wanted to devour me – it did something to my body.

But I didn’t think about having sex with her or anything. It’s way too early for that. We agreed we would take it slow and we will. Hell, we haven’t even talked about half of the things we need to.

I should’ve thought about how me walking around in nothing but a towel affects her. But sometimes I just forget that things have changed, that time has passed. Years. Happiness does that to people. And most of her is so familiar to me that maybe I got lost in that feeling.

“I’m going to put some clothes on now.” I tell her, trying to ease the tension.

Lexa nods and the next second she’s out the door.

I’m concerned. Worried. Yup, that’s the short version.

I hurry to put on my clothes and follow her outside.

Except Lexa is gone.

There’s only Luna at the kitchen table and she looks at me with a sad expression in her dark brown eyes. “She went for a run.” She explains, except it’s not really an explanation.

I exhale deeply, trying to sort the different thoughts on my mind.

Lexa’s always been good at avoiding complicated topics. She needs space to think about things, before she’s ready to talk about them. She closes herself off when something bothers her. She’s not a talker. She solves problems on her own and in her own way.

I get all of that. I know how she works.

But nevertheless, it hurts me. Because it brings back old memories and I can’t help it. It’s like I'm back to that last schoolyear, back to the summer I lost my dad and the girl I loved within not even one month. Back to the day I felt her slipping through my fingers and I couldn’t do anything about it.
Ten years ago.

Lexa stares at the television where the news have just finished. She’s as shocked as I am, but there’s an expression on her face that scares me. It’s distant and cold.

So fucking cold.

And it’s all I can think about.

It’s not my Dad’s fault. They’ll prove it soon, I know that. It can’t be my father’s fault. He didn’t drink. And he didn’t fall asleep behind the wheel. Why should he have? He is – he was a healthy man. Healthy and responsible. He wouldn’t have ever...

But Lexa...

We were cuddling on the couch, just the two of us. We watched a kid’s movie, because it’s the only thing that doesn’t make me cry.

My dad is dead for not even a week, but it feels like so much more time has passed with the funeral and all. And then it feels like it’s just happened. I’m still expecting him to turn up at the doorstep with ice-cream in his hands and a bright smile on his face, saying “Hey, kid, up for chocolate-chip with your old father?”. And I would say: “You’re just as old as you feel, Dad.”

The movie finished, but we weren’t ready to move yet, so we just stayed wrapped up in each other and I listened to her heartbeat, when the news started.

I watch Lexa leaning forward, elbows on her knees, fingers intertwined.

“I’m going to go home.” She says quietly.

“Lex, baby, please don’t. Let us talk about this, you know it’s not true.” I reach out to grab her hand, but she pulls it away before I can even touch it.

I swallow heavily, trying to ignore the sting of pain in my stomach without luck.

“I just need some air and space, Clarke.” She answers and gets up.

“But...”

Cold green eyes silence me.

“Please.” She adds, except she wouldn’t have had to say something else.

“Okay.” I say, even though it’s not. Nothing’s okay.

A few days ago everything was perfect and now my world has fallen apart and the only one keeping me from falling apart too is Lexa.

“Just tell me, that we’re gonna be okay. Promise me, we’re gonna be okay, Lex.” I beg, staring into her green eyes. The expression on her face is distant and so cold that it actually makes me shiver.

I hate the desperate undertone in my voice. I hate that I feel like suffocating when I look into her face full of confusion and pain. And I hate that those eyes I love so much don’t seem to see the same pain in mine.

“I promise.” She whispers, pressing a kiss on my lips, before she leaves.
I watch her leave with tears in my eyes.

The kiss was cold and hollow.

.

Present

It was the last time she kissed me before we broke up in the school’s bathroom one week later. I didn’t sleep all those nights in between and I cried myself to sleep for months after that. I never really recovered from this, even though we were just teenagers.

So of course it hurts like hell.

And of course I get scared when she runs out on me.

I can understand that she’s not ready to talk about the things on her mind. That’s okay. I meant what I said – we’ve got time. There’s nothing rushing us.

Hell, if she’s never ready to go a step further, I’ll be okay with that too.

I just want her. I want her for her soul and her heart and her beautiful mind.

But she can’t always leave. She has to let me in some time if she wants this to work. She doesn’t even have to tell me anything, she just has to stay.

For once.

I fight back the tears and head over to the sink to busy myself.

“She’ll be back soon. Give her time.” Luna says suddenly, breaking me out of my thoughts abruptly.

“I know.”

I hear footsteps coming closer and then Luna’s hands reaches for my shoulder. She turns me around and wraps her arms around me before I know it.

That’s what cracks me open. Hell, she’s a stranger and even she knows that it hurts me.

So I take comfort in her embrace for a moment.

“It just… it feels like every time we move one step forward, she takes two steps back. It’s always been this way. She doesn’t… let me in on her thoughts. She… I don’t know.” I say quietly. “And then I feel bad for even thinking like that, because she’s been through hell obviously and she must have suffered unspeakable pain and maybe I’m expecting too much, maybe I’ve got no right to feel the way I do. I just… do and I can’t help it!”

Luna pulls back, both hands resting on my shoulders. “Hey, look at me.” She demands. “There’s no such thing as a wrong feeling, okay? You’ve got every right to feel the way you do, just like Lexa has. And yeah, she’s been tortured. Yeah, she’s seen and done a lot of horrible things over there. That’s war. But that doesn’t make your feelings less worthy, Clarke.”

Logically, I know that.

“Thank you.”
“You’re welcome.”

“It just… overwhelms me when she does that.” I answer quietly. I’m a little bit more in control of myself now, which makes it easier to think clearly. “I’m going to see my Mom and my brother.”

“Are you sure? She’ll be back soon.”

“Yes, I am. I need some air.”

Luna eyes my face for second, before she nods in understanding.

Within a few minutes I’ve gathered my stuff and I’ve called my brother to come and pick me up. It’s got it’s perks that he’s old enough to drive now. But it’s still weird.

“Should she call you when she gets back?” Luna asks as I grab my jacket.

“No, thanks, I’ll text her.”

“Clarke?”

“Yes?”

“Give yourself some time, too.”

I let her words sink in for a few moments, before I nod.

She’s a good person.

-----

Maybe it’s wrong to leave Lexa’s apartment like that, but staying here when she’s not home feels strange and like I’m intruding a personal space. I don’t know when she’ll be back and I won’t sit around and wait for her. Especially not when I'm not sure if she even wants me to be there.

I sit down on the second one of the three stairs in front of Lexa’s apartment building while I wait for Aden to show up.

After debating with myself over what to write I finally send out a message.

Me: I'm going to go see Mom and Aden. Call me later?

It’s light and without pressure, so she doesn’t have to feel guilty. And since we haven’t discussed whether I'm staying with her or with my Mom, it’s as casual as possible.

It still feels wrong. But everything feels wrong right now.

And I hate that she can close herself off in a matter of seconds.

One second she’s looking at me like I hung the moon, and the next she pulls up her guard so high that I can’t even see her anymore.

I hate getting pushed away. I hate what it does to me. I hate feeling like that.

Aden, hurry up! Please, I beg silently with closed my eyes.

…
Hey :) 
Here we are again. I'll stick to Saturday and Tuesday for now, just so you know! :) 
Anyways. They'll move forward really soon, I promise. But I can just write what feels right to me, so... Be patient with these two lovebirds!

See you Saturday (or maybe earlier with another short shortstory, we'll see about that ;) )!

Love,
LJT.
---

See the end of the chapter for more notes...

...

It’s been an hour. Or better: I’ve been running for almost an hour straight after I stormed out of the apartment before I could break down in front of Clarke. Again. Well, crying in her arms was one thing. Having a panic attack?

I don’t want to seem any more vulnerable than I already seem to be. Granted, it’s always been hard for me to show my weak spots. Hell, it’s hard for me to even accept that I have weak spots like every other normal human being.

But I felt so many different emotions boiling right under my skin in this moment – desire, anger, fear. It overwhelmed me and the next step would’ve been losing control. And I can’t lose control. I just… can’t.

So I’ve been running.

And now I’m ready to continue this conversation.

I know I need to explain myself to her.

It’s quiet in the apartment when I return home. Luna’s lying on the couch with a cooking show playing on the tv, but she mutes it when I walk in.

“Where’s Clarke?” I ask while I grab myself a bottle of water.

“Didn’t she text you?”

“Umm…” I start looking for my phone. “I’ve got no idea. Why? Where is she?”

“She went to see her family.”

“When?”

“A while ago.”
Something about the look on Luna’s face makes me wary, so I go to my bedroom and find it empty. Clarke’s suitcase is gone too.

“What happened? What did you say to her?”

“Me? I didn’t say anything.”

“Why did she leave then?”

Luna raises both eyebrows as she sits up. “Well, think about it, Lexa. Maybe because you ran out on her? Whatever happened between you two, you left without a word. Why should she stay?”

“I… needed to let off some steam.” I justify myself, but I know that this is on me. Looking back, it was a really shitty move and Clarke didn’t deserve it.

“Maybe you should explain that to her before you disappear next time.”

I slump into the armchair, all energy suddenly drained from my body. I’m an asshole. “Was she angry?”

My roommate eyes me closely, before she shakes her head. “No. But she was hurt, Lexa. And she felt guilty for feeling like that.”

*Why would she…?*

*Oh.*

“I’m an asshole.” I say out loud.

“Yes, you are.” Luna nods.

I recognize the look in her eyes. She understands, but she’s still rightfully disappointed with me.

“If you’re not ready to open up, it’s okay. But at least explain yourself to her. Because one can get a whiplash from your sudden mood swings.” She says.

Her words are harsh, but true.

Her expression softens, as she continues. “That girl’s amazing, Lexa. And you’re not the only one who’s got scars. Whatever happened between you in the past, it left scars on her heart too. She knows you’ve been through a lot, but you can’t use that as an excuse for behaving like an asshole towards her.”

“I know. I just… I try to be normal, Luna. And sometimes I try so hard that I almost convince myself. But then the reality comes crashing down on me and I… I panic.”

“Tell her that. And tell her you won’t run away from her.”

“I already did.”

Luna raises her eyebrows. “That’s good. But your actions tell a different story, Lexa.”

She’s right. I should’ve told Clarke about my panic attacks. I should’ve told her that I get overwhelmed sometimes and that it’s got nothing to do with her. Of course she thought this was on her. Of course she thought I ran away from her.
“When did she leave?”

“About an hour ago? I'm not sure. She called Aden to come and pick her up, but she didn’t want to wait here.”

“Thanks.”

I leave Luna behind in the living room and close the door behind me, before I grab my phone from the nightstand and dial Clarke’s number while pacing the room. I need to explain myself to her.

But after a few rings the call goes straight to voicemail.

I try again.

“Lexa.” Clarke answers after the third ring.

“Clarke!” I can’t hide the relief in my tone. “Thanks for picking up.”

“Why wouldn’t I?”

“Because I acted stupid and I’d deserve it?”

“I'm not one for silent treatments. I just… Maybe we’ve rushed this. I mean… I don’t know.”

I close my eyes, trying to fight my tears, praying she isn’t implying what I think she is. “What are you saying?”

“Nothing. I don’t want to put pressure on you. Maybe I shouldn’t have surprised you. Maybe we need more time, more boundaries?”

“No, Clarke. That’s not it. I'm just… I'm not as good as I seem to be. I got good at hiding it, because everyone expects me to actually be better, because it’s been a year. And I know that I don’t have to hide anything around you, I do. But it’s hard to stop. Please, don’t give up on us.”

“You think I’d give up on us that easily?” There’s a hint of hurt in her voice and I can’t blame her.

“Do you know me at all?”

Deep down I know she’s not like that.

But Costia gave up on me before I even really got a chance to adjust to this new life and the new me that came with those three weeks. And even though I never loved her like I love Clarke… I still loved her. So it hurt. Maybe way more than I’d like to admit.

“I guess I gave up on myself.” I say quietly. I'm not even sure I said it out loud. But that doesn’t change the fact that it’s the truth.

“Lexa, I won’t. But I need you to talk to me instead of running away.”

“Okay.”

“Yes?”

“Thank you. Where are you?”

“Aden picked me up. We’re getting pizza for a movie marathon. Do you want to join us?”
“No, it’s okay. Enjoy the time with your brother.” I tell her, even though her offer is tempting.

“You sure?”

I nod, until I realize she can’t see that. “Yeah, I’m sure.”

“Okay.”

“Clarke?”

“Hm?”

“Can we meet later? I mean, I feel like I owe you some explanations. For how I acted and all that.”

“How about that Diner where I went with Dad sometimes?”

I smile at the bittersweet memory. “Okay. Text me?”

“I will.” She pauses and I fear she’s going to change her mind. But she doesn’t. “See you later, Lexa.”

“See you later.” I respond.

-----

I’ve been pacing around my room until Luna practically forced me to eat something.

Then I’ve been sitting on the couch next to my roommate. We were watching a lame action movie, but I couldn’t focus. Halfway through the movie Luna punched me with a pillow and told me to leave.

My thoughts kept wandering to Clarke and what I wanted to say to her later.

Then, finally, she texts.

Clarke: Hey, so I'm not really up for more food right now. Mind if I come over?

Me: I don’t mind. I’d love to see you.

Clarke: okay then. Be there in 15.

“Luna?”

“Yeah?”

“Clarke will be here in fifteen minutes. What should I do?”

Luna groans annoyed, pauses her movie, and walks over to my room to lean in the doorway.

“Really?”

I nod.

“Okay. You’re going to tell her that you’re sorry for acting like an ass. That you’re in it as much as she is. And then you’re going to tell her what you want her to know. Alright?”

I nod again. I feel a bit better, but I’m still nervous.
“Can I continue watching my movie?”

“You can. Thanks.”

“Good.” She turns around to leave.

“Hey, Luna?”

“What?”

“Will you see that guy again? What’s his name? David?”

“Derrick.” Luna corrects and she crosses her arms as she leans against the doorframe again. “Are you asking just to distract yourself or because you’re really interested?”

“Would it be wrong if I said both?”

“I guess not.” She shrugs. “And I honestly don’t know. He asked me out on a date.”

“Did you accept?”

“He literally asked an hour ago.”

“And?”

“And I may be out of any dating business for a while, but responding after an hour seems a little desperate, don’t you think?”

“Are you? Desperate I mean?”

Luna raises both eyebrows. “Careful, Woods. I’m not you.”

“Haha, good one. But you didn’t answer my question.”

She sighs and stares at the floor for a few seconds. “I think I’ll say yes. I mean, the sex was really great.”

“Eww.” I make a face. “I don’t want to hear that.”

“Oh, just because you haven’t gotten laid in like forever doesn’t mean I can’t.” She answers relaxed. “By the way. Blondie will be here in a few minutes. You ready?”

“Luna!” I whine. “I was just calming down!”

“I know.”

“I hate you.”

“You love me.”

“No.”

“Yes you do. And because I’m the best person in the whole wide world, I’m going to leave for a few hours, so you have this space to yourself. But no sex outside of your room please.”

“I hate you.”
She just laughs and turns around to leave again.

“Wait! Where are you going?”

“For drinks with Derrick. Don’t expect me home.”

“Really?”

She shrugs with a playful grin on her lips. “Yup. Changed my mind.”

“Be safe.”

“Are we really talking about protection and safe sex now?”

I groan. “That’s so not what I meant!”

And then I realize that she just tricked me again. I hate her. Why am I living with her again? Ah, yes. Because I’m a loner and I’ve been living with my sister and her family for almost a year, which is pretty sad if you actually think about it.

Suddenly there’s a knock on the door.

Clarke’s here.

…

Chapter End Notes

thank you to my lovely beta Lucie <3
And thank you for still sticking with me and the story <3
Hey again :) 
These past few days have been a bit crazy. Or actually these past two weeks. But I've got a little more time for writing right now, which makes me really happy :D I started working on another story last week, which kind of challenges me a bit, but I hope it stays that way. I'm currently thinking of how to end this story, if you have any suggestions feel free to tell me! There'll be about 15 or 20 chapters more, I think. 

I hope this chapter does both characters justice. Enjoy reading!  
Love, 
LJT. 
---

See the end of the chapter for more notes

…

“Talk to her.”

“What?”

Aden rolls his eyes at me and plops down in the armchair across from me, legs swung over the armrest. “You heard me. You’ve been moping around on this couch for the last two hours or so. Talk to her.”

“I'm just giving her space. Seems like she needs it.”

“Want to tell me what happened?”

I shake my head. No, I don’t.

It’s hard to get to know the new Lexa. Whenever it feels like we move a step forward it’s like we move one back again a second later – or maybe two steps. Maybe I shouldn’t have left, but what should I have done there?

So far she hasn’t even reached out to me.

When we restarted our relationship I knew it wouldn’t be easy. There are some old wounds and new problems we can’t ignore. But I thought we were in this together.

Maybe not?

Out of nowhere my phone rings and, in my hurry to pick it up, it falls down onto the floor and slides under the couch.

“Fuck!”

“Wait, let me help.”
Aden lies down on his stomach and I'm really grateful for his long and slim fingers, because he’s able to get it out without moving half of the living room around.

But by the time he hands it to me, it has stopped ringing.

Before I get to do anything else (panic, feel guilty or call back), Lexa calls again and I pick up after swallowing down my nervousness.

“Lexa.”

“Clarke!” She says, clearly relieved. “Thanks for picking up.”

“Why wouldn’t I?”

“Because I acted stupid and I’d deserve it?”

_Can’t deny that._

“I'm not one for silent treatments.” I tell her, trying to sound relaxed. But then I decide on telling her how I feel, because our miscommunication has once led us into a painful breakup and I don’t want to go through that again. “I just… Maybe we’ve rushed this. I mean… I don’t know.”

“What are you saying?” Lexa almost whispers.

I know she’s whispering when she can’t process something or when she gets overwhelmed, so I hurry up with an answer. “Nothing. I don’t want to put pressure on you. Maybe I shouldn’t have surprised you. Maybe we need more time, more boundaries?”

“No, Clarke. That’s not it. I'm just…” She exhales. “I'm not feeling as good as I seem to be. I got good at hiding it, because everyone expects me to actually get better, because it's been a year. And I know that I don’t have to hide anything around you, I do. But it’s hard to stop. Please, don’t give up on us.”

“You think I’d give up on us that easily? Do you know me at all?” That sounded more like an accusation than I wanted it to.

But before I can say something else, she speaks.

“I guess I gave up on myself.”

I close my eyes, unsure of how to respond to so much… fear and resignation. Especially the resignation makes me shiver. I get it, I do. I’d probably sound the same. It’s just… terrifying to watch happening to someone you love.

“Lena, I won’t.” I say after a few silent seconds, hoping she can hear the sincerity and the promise in my voice. “But I need you to talk to me instead of running away.”

Lexa sighs. “Okay.”

“Yes?”

“Thank you. Where are you?”

“Aden picked me up. We’re getting pizza for a movie marathon.” I tell her. “Do you want to join us?”
“No, it’s okay. Enjoy the time with your brother.”

“You sure?” I feel awful now, because she’s someone who needs actions, not just some words. She’s a person who needs to have some sense knocked into her – metaphorically speaking.

“Yeah, I'm sure.”

“Okay.”

“Clarke?”

“Hm?”

“Can we meet later? I mean, I feel like I owe you some explanations. For how I acted and all that.” There it is. The sign I was waiting for. She’s reaching out to me.

“How about that Diner where I went with Dad sometimes?” I suggest with a smile. I love that place.

“Okay. Text me?”

“I will.” I answer quickly, secretly relieved that I'm going to see her tonight. “See you later, Lexa.”

“See you later.”

---

After too much pizza and three Star Wars movies with Aden I'm not really in the mood for changing my clothes and dressing up. And I would have to, because sometimes fans recognize me and in that case I’d like to look like a decent human being.

So asking Lexa if we could meet at her place seems more than right to me. Maybe it'll help her relax too.

It’s almost ten when I finally knock on her door after giving myself a pep-talk.

It doesn’t take Lexa long to open the door and when she does, she’s biting her lips nervously.

“Hey.” I say.

“Hi.” She answers shyly and steps aside to let me in.

I stop in the middle of the doorway and pull her close. It’s my way of showing my forgiveness and of telling her, that we’re okay.

It feels a little stiff at first, but then she melts into the embrace and exhales into my neck. “Thank you.” She whispers.

I nod, still holding her close.

We stay like this for a long moment, before she pulls back with a smile. “Do you want to drink something?”

“Whatever you’re having.”

“Then it’s beer. That okay?”
“Sure.”

I make my way over to the couch and get comfy while she gets our drinks and a bag of chips.

It feels like days have passed since our… encounter this morning, which is kind of stupid. She’s still Lexa and I'm still me.

I just wish we could return to our bubble of happiness. But I guess all couples fight, right? Are we a couple already? We haven’t really been on a date.

Lexa sits down on the other end of the couch, facing me, while she opens up her bottle of beer and takes a small sip.

I watch her tongue darting out to lick away a drop of beer. Let’s just say it does something to me, so it’s better to busy myself with opening the bag of chips she has put between us.

“I owe you an explanation, I guess.” She begins quietly, eyes fixated on the bottle in her hands. “And an apology.”

I can’t deny that.

“I’m sorry, Clarke.” She says with sincerity in her voice, as she looks up to meet my eyes. “I shouldn’t have left the way I did.”

“Accepted. Why did you?”

A sigh. “Because I wanted to avoid a panic attack. I still get them sometimes and I could feel one approaching after we… kissed against the door. It’s… god, it’s so stupid.” Lexa buries her face in her hands, before she brushes back her hair, seemingly nervous.

I try to take in what she’s saying, but all I can think about is that she almost had a panic attack because we made out. So it’s basically my fault that she panicked?

“Did I… did I do something wrong?”

“God, no!” She shakes her head. “This has nothing to do with you, Clarke, I promise. I can’t process feelings very well. I mean, I’ve never been good with feelings before, you know that, but… When an attack hits, it’s like my whole body gets sent into overdrive and the same happened when we… It was in a good way, but it reminded me of the bad moments, and I just… freaked out.”

“Will it…” I don’t even know how to ask.

“Will it always happen?” Lexa finishes my question. “It won’t. When I came home I panicked when a door got shut too loudly or when a car had a misfire. That went away after a while. I just needed to get used to it.”

I frown in amusement, the corners of my mouth from twitching upwards. “So we have to practice more? Is that what you’re saying?”

Lexa blushes, but she chuckles. “Maybe?”

“I mean, I'm not opposed.”

“You aren’t?”

“Lex. I already told you. You’re not getting rid of me that easily.”
“But I hurt you.”

I take a sip of my beer while I hold her gaze. “You did.” I say then. “But you didn’t do it on purpose. I guess I have my own scars in some way. We all have our stories, Lexa, and that’s nothing bad. They make us who we are.”

“But I don’t want to hurt you.”

“Then try to talk to me. Try to explain how you feel, tell me when we’re moving too fast, when you don’t want to talk, when you need to go for a run or whatever it is. I don’t care. Just… talk to me. Okay?

She nods. “I will.”

“Good.”

We share a smile – hers is still shy, but there’s a hint of relief in her beautiful green eyes, mine is sincere and forgiving.

I love her. I’m not ready to say it out loud and I guess she’s not ready to hear it either. But it’s still the truth. So maybe I should let her know that I’m sure about us. That I’m a hundred percent in this.

“Lex?”

She looks up from a spot on the couch between us.

And I guess I could do better than sitting on the couch with a beer in our hands and wearing comfy clothes, but it feels like the right moment for me, so why not?

That’s why I gather up all my courage and ask her. “Will you be my girlfriend?”

Lexa blinks. Once. Twice. Her green eyes are wide.

“I mean, we’re already kind of dating, but I just wanted to make it official, if that’s okay with you.” I start to ramble, trying hard not to fidget with the hem of my hoodie. “If you’re not there yet that’s okay, we can just-”

“Yes.” She interrupts me. “I thought we were already girlfriends in some way, but I’m happy to make it official.”

My smile could probably light up half of the town, but I’m content with reaching out one hand. “Then come here and cuddle with me.”

Lexa happily scurries over and right into my arms, hugging me so tight that I can feel the desperation.

---

“Clarke?” Lexa whispers quietly.

We lie in bed and I’m holding her close. Her head rests on my shoulder and I’ve been running my fingers through her dark brown curls for a while, until I was sure she fell asleep. So I stopped myself from continuing and just listened to her breathing. It’s crazy that I didn’t know how much I missed the sound of it.

I don’t even know when we decided that I’d stay the night, but I’m happy where I am.
“Yeah?”

“You’re awake.”

I chuckle and continue running my fingers through her soft hair. Lexa always claims she doesn’t like the natural curls in her hair, but I love them. Just like I love every part of her, from her head to her toes – yes, even her toes.

“So are you. What is it?” I ask, sensing that there’s something on her mind.

Lexa’s leg tangles with mine and her fingers curl into my t-shirt (well technically her t-shirt since I’ve borrowed it) a little more firmly, as if she’s trying to ground herself. “I’m going to tell you about it one day. Soon, if you’re sure you want to hear it.”

“I’m sure.” No, I’m not.

She nods. “I’ve been talking to my therapist about a few aspects of it. She thinks it would be good for me to share it with you.”

“You’re talking to her about me?”

“Of course. You’re the most important part of my life. You know that, right?”

I press a kiss to her forehead, unable to hide a smile. I thought so, but it’s still nice to hear it. “You’re the most important part of my life too.”

Lexa snuggles closer, if that’s even possible, and sighs contently. I can smell her shampoo in her hair, it’s something peachy and sweet. I can’t remember a time in my life where I’ve felt more at ease than right now.

All the times we shared a bed when we first were together didn’t feel like this. Back then everything was new and exciting, even after months. Everything felt young, free, adventurous. But now? Now it feels like home. Safe.

We’re both adults now. We’ve been to different parts of the earth, we’ve seen and experienced a lot of things and places. We’ve grown as individuals and it’s amazing that we still found our ways back to each other.

Talking to her still feels easy. Natural almost.

Kissing her still makes my head spin.

“Clarke?” She mumbles sleepily.

“Hm?”

“I’m glad you’re here.”

“Me too. Now sleep, Lex. Let go.”

“Good night.”

I keep holding her until she falls asleep. I keep holding her until my eyes fall close too.

…
Thoughts?

I just wanted to thank you guys again - for still reading, for commenting... I know I do almost every chapter, but this here has become pretty important to me, maybe more than you'll ever know <3 , so I'll keep thanking you until the end :P
And thank you to my lovely beta again ;)

Chapter End Notes
Chapter 49 - Clarke.

Chapter Notes

Some happy and cute moments - because there's not enough happiness in this world :)  
I hope you're having a good day, "see" you Saturday! Take care <3

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

…

“Clarke.”

“Nooo.”

“Come on.” Fingertips ghost over my shoulder in a featherlight touch. “Wakey, wakey.”

“Don’t wanna.”

“I made breakfast.”

“Don’t care.”

Fingers skate through my hair. “I need to go to work.”

Blindly I reach out my hand to pull her closer. “Stay.”

Lexa just chuckles and I feel the mattress giving in as she lies down beside me. “Anya will be pissed if I don’t show up.”

“Tell her the truth then.” I say, wrapping my arms around her, tugging her even closer. She smells of something peachy again and I hum contently as I breathe her in.

“What? That my girlfriend’s a sleepy cuddler in the morning, who wouldn’t let me go? I bet she’d be thrilled to hear that.”

I open one eye to look at her.

Just like I suspected, she’s smiling. No, she’s smirking.

“Girlfriend, hm?”

“Yup.”

“I like that.”

“Me too.” She answers. “No breakfast?”

I shake my head. I'm too tired or maybe too lazy. After yesterday and the night before I deserve some more sleep.

Lexa’s nose brushes against mine for a second, before she kisses my temple. “Okay then. I'll leave
some of it for you in the kitchen. Do you want to meet me for lunch?” She whispers mumbles quietly into my ear.

I shiver, before I nod.

Lexa giggles again. My favorite sound in the world.

“Good. Call me when you’re among the living.”

“Mhm.” I’ve got my eyes closed again, but I feel the kiss she ghosts on my lips thrumming through my whole body.

---

Returning to the land of the living however takes another few hours.

It’s late morning when I’ve finally showered and dressed properly. After a short breakfast (just one of the little cupcakes Lexa made this morning) I’m about to leave to pick up Lexa for our lunch date, when Luna comes home in a hurry.

“Hi.” I say and wave at her.

“Clarke, hi.”

“Long night?”

“Umm… yeah. I have to be at work in… like ten minutes ago. Shit.”

“Can I drive you somewhere? I’ve got my brother’s car.”

“Really? That would be great! Just give me a second.”

I nod and pull out my phone to text Lexa.

Me: **hey, I'm going to be a few minutes late. Luna needs a ride.**

Luna returns just a moment later. “Thanks for doing this. Normally I’d take my bike, but I'm already late and…”

“No worries. Where to?”

“You know Trikru?”

I frown confused. “The bar?”

“Yeah. The gym is just across the street.”

I chuckle. “Very smart choice.”

Luna just laughs and shrugs, while she locks the door behind us. “So, you two made up?”

“We did.”

“Be patient with her. She’s… she’s trying. But she’s been on her own for a while now and you probably know she’s not exactly the best when it comes to expressing her feelings.”

“I know, yes.” I answer and smile at her to show that I appreciate her words. It’s great to know that
Lexa has friends like her. She deserves it.

We’re just taking the last stairs when Lexa’s answer comes.

**Lexa: take your time :) I’ll wait for you.**

---

When I enter the animal shelter after dropping a very grateful Luna off at her place of work, Paul is the first one to notice me. He comes running to me, barking excitedly, which works better to announce my arrival than a bell would have. A moment later he jumps right into my arms.

“Hi little guy!” I laugh, fighting against his urge to kiss me. “Where’s Lexa?”

“She’ll be here soon.” Another voice answers. “She’s just finishing a call.”

I look up to meet Anya’s gaze.

Our last… encounter wasn’t that friendly. And I understand it, but she’s always been intimidating and what she said last time wasn’t exactly nice.

“Anya, hi.” I take in her body language. Arms crossed, brows furrowed.

“You look better.”

“Thanks.”

“You make her happy.” She says after a few seconds of mutual staring. “Don’t screw it up.”

Is that a threat? I'm not sure.

“I don’t plan to.”

“Good.”

“Clarke!”

I exhale relieved when Lexa saves me from the uncomfortable talk with her sister. “Hey, Lex.”

She walks over to me and pulls me into her arms, acting so natural that I almost tell her that I love her – just because it feels so right in this moment. Almost immediately I can feel all tension subsiding from my body and I relax into the embrace.

That changes when she presses a small kiss to the corner of my mouth.

I swear, one of these days I’m going to get a heart attack.

“I’m glad you’re here.” She tells me, when she pulls back, and grabs my hand. “Come on, let’s go.”

Anya watches us warily, but neither one of us notices that, while Lexa leads me to her car.

“Where are you taking me, Ms. Woods?”

Lexa just grins mischievously as she opens the passenger door for me. “You’ll see it when you see it. Hop in.”

“That’s lame. And I hate surprises!”
“You’ll like this one.”

I don’t notice the smile on Anya’s face as she watches us leave the parking lot.

“Thanks for the cupcakes.”

“You’re welcome. I couldn’t sleep and then I remembered that you love them, so I made a few.”

“You’re too nice to me.”

Lexa reaches over to take my hand. “No, I’m not.”

“Yes, you are.”

She grins mischievously. “Don’t get used to it.”

---

When we reach our destination, I let out a laugh. “The lake? How very original of you.”

“Hey, stop making fun of me!” Lexa complains, but she’s laughing too, so she expected my reaction. “No, I thought if this is us starting over, then we might as well go back to where it all began.”

I smile at her. This is one of those moments that I can’t believe I get to call her mine. She can be so damn sweet sometimes!

“You’re a romantic, aren’t you?”

“Maybe.”

I lean over to kiss her. I love you.

---

About 11 years ago.

Lexa jumps when I step out of the woods.

“Sorry, didn’t mean to startle you.” I tell her quickly. “I’m a clumsy mess.”

“It’s okay.” She answers.

I notice that she’s looking even more beautiful than at school today. And I notice the disbelief written all over her face. “You look surprised.”

“Umm...”

I made Lexa Woods speechless? Maybe I’m not the only one feeling things she shouldn’t feel.

“You thought I wouldn’t show up, didn’t you?”

Lexa shrugs, not knowing an answer.

“Well, that’s strange. I mean, you’re Lexa Woods. Why wouldn’t I?”

There are probably a thousand reasons. At least there have been a thousand reasons until we kissed
after that stupid party. Since then she’s been on my mind constantly.

"And you're Clarke Griffin." She answers, holding my gaze. “Why wouldn't I show up?"

"Don't say it like that, when you don't mean it. I'm an outsider. I'm a nobody. And I guess I was curious."

Lexus steps closer in one nearly invisible movement and touches my chin to make me look at her. "You're not a nobody, Clarke. You hear me?" She demands. "You are not a nobody."

I can feel my eyes glistening with tears, but I don’t look away. "Okay."

"I'm gonna make you see, what I see."

"Is that a promise?"

It doesn't sound as teasing as it normally would between the two of us. Instead, my voice is barely a whisper, unbelieving and full of insecurities, while her expression seems to reflect it like a mirror.

Lexa’s hand remains under my chin and my eyes keep locked with hers.

"If you want it to be, then yes." She answers.

So many unspoken things hang in the air between us. Things we fear, things we long for, things we don’t understand yet.

The moment drags on for what feels like an eternity.

None of us wants to break away or move, hell, they I'm even scared to blink. Too afraid to destroy this precious moment of proximity. Because both of us can feel the changes happening between us. Within us. And both of us are scared of what it could mean, but ache for more, too.

The night we spent making out on my bed almost three weeks ago should've been the only one. But I don’t want to stay away from her. I tried. Damn, I tried and still here I am.

"I'd like that." I finally answer quietly.

"Okay."

Lexa's eyes flicker down to my lips and then back up to mine. And again. And again.

"Lex?"

"Yeah?" She croaks.

"Will you kiss me eventually?"

Lexa’s face lights up with a smile. "I'd like that."

Slowly, as if she wants to give me the opportunity to back out she leans in.

I could count the eyelashes around those deep green eyes if I wanted.

But instead, an impatient me crosses the remaining distance, pressing my lips against Lexa’s in a soft and sweet kiss, while throwing my arms around the brunettes neck the same second.

Lexa escapes a small moan when my teeth catch her bottom lip, before I swipe my tongue across it,
effectively making her open her mouth.

Both our hearts and heads go crazy.

We kiss for as long as can, until we run out of oxygen. But then we have to break away, grasping desperately for air, feeling the other’s hot breath on our faces.

We’re still standing close. Lexa’s arms sneaks around my waist, while mine remain around her neck.

“Can we ... maybe ... keep doing this?” Lexa asks, while I try to ignore the heat of her body pressed against mine.

I fail.

“Id like that.”

“Good. Because it's effectively stopping you from talking.” Lexa teases.

I laugh relaxed. "Same goes for you."

"I guess, that's true."

…

Chapter End Notes

Prepare yourself for a heavy chapter ;)
A few days later.

When Lexa’s figure appears in the entry of the giant building I’ve been occasionally staring it, I stuff my notebook back into my bag and take in her appearance.

Her shoulders are hanging down when she steps out of the building. I can tell her session with her therapist has been a rough one from across the street. Her eyes scan the area until they lock on me.

When she comes closer, my heart breaks at the sight of tear stances on her face. She looks pale and really, really worn out. Pained. Older, somehow.

Lexa wordlessly wraps her arms around me, as soon as she reaches me, taking a few shuddering breaths. Her embrace is almost too tight, but I just hug her back, hoping she finds the comfort she’s looking for.

“I’m here.” I whisper, running a hand up and down her back.

“I know.” She says. “I know.”

I’m not sure if she’s not just hugging me because she wants to reassure herself that I’m here, but I can feel that she needs it to stop herself from falling apart. Whatever this session was about, it left her completely stirred up.

Just yesterday she asked me if I’d pick her up after her therapy session and I agreed immediately. But I honestly didn’t expect to see her like this. I mean, I don’t know what I expected. Just not… that.

Lexa buries her face even further into my neck, hot lips pressing against my pulse point now, but not to leave a kiss there. She just needs to feel as close to me as possible.

“I…” She starts, hands grabbing my shirt even tighter. “I told her.”

I’m not sure what she means, but I guess that’s not important now. What matters is that she’s been able to open up.

“It’s… it’s like Pandora’s box. I opened it and now I can’t…” She sounds so broken that my heart
clenches in pain. “I can’t shut them out. They’re everywhere and I… I’m not strong enough.”

“You are strong enough. You made it back here, Lex. And now you’re safe.”

“Am I?” She asks, her voice small, as she pulls back. Her eyes are emerald pools filled with nothing but sadness and they still manage to captivate me. “Because I don’t feel safe. Except when I’m with you.”

“Then I’ll stay by your side and we’ll face those demons together.” I say, leaning my forehead against hers. “Okay?”

For a long moment there’s no answer.

Then she nods and I close my eyes, sending a quiet “thank you” to whichever god out there – or to the universe itself, I don’t care. Because as hard as this is for her, she’s finally opening up. Really opening up.

“Don’t leave me.”

“I’m not going anywhere. I promise.”

---

In the early morning the next day something wakes me up.

The sun’s leaking through the not fully-closed blinds. It’s a sight I’ve quickly gotten used to. Nevertheless it takes me a few moments to remember where I am.

*Ah, right. At Lexa’s place – or better in Lexa’s bed.* I smile at this thought.

It takes me another few moments longer to figure out what woke me up.

Lexa.

I switch on the light to make out what’s wrong, when I see it. She’s tossing and turning, mumbling words in a foreign language. She’s sweating and shaking her head, hands clenched to fists.

“No.” She says, her voice full of horror and pain. “No, please, stop!”

I freeze.

“No!” She shouts again, turning her head from one side to the other, pressing herself into the mattress as if she could just disappear. “No, please! Please, stop!”

Pulled out of my state of shock, I put both hands on her face. “Lexa, it’s okay. You’re safe.”

“Please.” She whimpers.

I start shaking her. “Lexa. Come on, wake up.”

“Please, let me die. Take me. Please!”

Utter terror washes over me, while she continues to squirm beside me. I thought I was ready to learn her story, but maybe I’m not. I’m not ready for this amount of pain.
Tears stream down my face as I continue to shake her shoulders. “Lexa! Wake up!”

Suddenly she awakes with a jolt and before I know it she rolls us over in one swift motion and presses her forearm against my throat with a brutal force. Her eyes cold and scared. She’s breathing hard and she looks so terrified that I don’t even realize her action, until my lungs miss oxygen.

“Lex.” I croak, patting her forearm softly, but a little scared too. “It’s me. You’re safe.”

Green eyes frantically search for something to hold on to, something to ground her.

“Clarke?” She whispers, finding my eyes.

“Yes. It’s me.”

Lexa stares at me as if she isn’t sure I am here.

Then she realizes that she’s been practically choking me, and she scurries away from me as fast as she rolled on top of me, looking even more panicked. “Clarke, I'm… God, I'm so sorry! I-”

“It’s okay, you’re-”

“I'm so sorry, I didn’t mean to… I swear, I don’t know what happened, I just…” She bursts into tears on the other end of the bed. “Clarke, I… I swear. I didn’t mean to hurt you, I… I'm so sorry, I…”

“Lexa.” I start to crawl over to her, but she only starts to panic more. “Listen to me. It was a nightmare. That happens. You’re safe now. We’re both safe. Take my hand, please.” My voice is a little hoarse and I feel the urge to cough, but I manage to swallow it down.

She shakes her head, her bottom lip trembling, and she begins to rock back and forth slightly. “I hurt you.” She whispers. “I hurt you, Clarke. I didn’t mean to.”

“I know that. I'm okay, Lex. It’s okay.”

She shakes her head again, eyes fixated on my throat.

It feels a little sore now.

Shit. I didn’t notice that she grabbed me that hard.

“It doesn’t matter, Lex. It wasn’t your fault.”

“Yes, it was.”

“Lex, look at me. I'm okay.” I tell her, my voice still a little husky. I clear my throat, before I continue. “Let me hold you, please.”

“No.”

“Then tell me what you need.”

“I…” She closes her eyes, while her fists clench into the bedsheets below her. “I can’t… I can’t breathe.”

“Listen to my voice, okay? I want you to name three things you can feel. Right now. Start with the first thing you think about. What do you feel?”
“M-my heartbeat.”

“Okay that’s good. What else?”

Lexa stares at me with wide eyes, tears are still running down her pale face. In the dim light of the room that makes her look even worse. “The bedsheets. They’re cold.”

“What else?”

“M-my fingernails. They dig into my palm.”

“Great. Now tell me three things you can hear.”

She shakes her head again and then she starts fidgeting with the sheets. “I… I need some air.” She says quickly.

A moment later she’s on her feet and she hurries out of the room.

Feeling helpless, I bury my face in my hands for a few seconds, before I decide to follow her. I’ll give her space, but I need to make sure she’s okay.

Well, “okay” depends on its definition, I guess.

The door to the balcony is open and I make out the outlines of her figure hunched up against the wall, huddled in a corner. She’s got her legs pulled up and she holds them close to her chest, slowly rocking back and forth.

I’ve never seen her like this.

I stay away from the door and stand hesitantly in the middle of the living room for a few minutes. I just want to hug her and comfort her.

But she didn’t run away, so she deserves the space she asked for, no matter how hard it is for me.

Yes, she hurt me. She scared me. But she didn’t do it on purpose. God knows, she probably thought I was the one who tortured her.

After her session yesterday late afternoon, she didn’t really talk. She would often get that look like she’s spacing out, getting lost in dark thoughts. I tried to comfort her and to take her mind of those bad memories and for a while it seemed to work. Whatever happened in that session, it’s a turning point. I just hope it’s for the better – long term.

Minute after minute passes in silence.

“Clarke?” She asks, her voice barely audible.

She knows I’m here.

“Yeah?” Carefully to not frighten her any more, I walk over to the door.

Lexa looks so small and fragile right now that I fear making the wrong move or saying the wrong thing.

“I never meant to hurt you. I’m so sorry.” She says. She’s been crying.

“I know. You didn’t do it on purpose.”
“Still, I…” She stops talking and closes her eyes.

I stare at her for a moment, debating over what next step I’m allowed to make. “Can I come closer?”

She nods.

After a few seconds she even reaches out a hand and I happily take it. Slowly I let my thumb draw
patterns on the back of her hand. I can feel her pulse against my fingertips. It’s still irregular and too
fast.

“Tell me something.” Lexa whispers.

“What do you want to hear?”

“I don’t care. Just… talk, please.”

I think about it for a moment and decide on the most casual topic I can think of. Work. Because I
know I can talk about it a lot.

“Okay, so I’m currently thinking about where to take the next book slash season. I don’t want to
spoiler you, but there’s this love interest for Eliza that I haven’t completely figured out yet, so I’m
kind of stuck at the moment. I know she’s fierce and loyal and that she’s got two different hearts
beating in her chest. One for her people and one for Eliza. I think about how to make it a great
storyline, but then I think about how much I want them to have a happy ending and that kind of
throws me off track every time.” I chuckle quietly. My characters mean the world to me – now more
than ever.

Lexa hums. “Happy ending sounds good to me.”

“Yes? I was hoping you’d say that. And then there’s this thing that I can’t discuss it with anybody,
which is really, really hard. I mean, there’s so many different storylines now that I could explore and
I can’t keep them all in my head. And when I follow one, I suddenly realize that I’ve been missing
out on so many opportunities that it drives me crazy.”

“Maybe you should talk to Luna.” She answers quietly, but there’s the hint of a smile on her lips.

She’s probably amused by my rambling, but that happens all the time when someone asks me about
my stories. Not that anyone asked right now.

“I’d rather talk with you. But for that you’d have to read all the books and watch all seasons.”

“Sounds good to me. Though I don’t know if I’ll be able to help.”

“Oh, everything helps. Especially because I really like this one character. She’s got a lot from you.” I
say with a smirk.

The corners of her mouth twitch a little. “What would that be?”

“She’s smart, powerful, strong-headed, passionate and someone people look up to. She’s a natural
born leader, but there’s also still this little girl inside of her head, which kind of makes her adorable
sometimes. Though she’s good at hiding this side of her from other people. There’s just one person
she can open up to and even then, it costs her a lot of strength.” I answer her question, my eyes never
leaving hers. “And then there’s the looks of course. The eyes, the smile, the jawline, the legs. She’s
gorgeous.”
Lexa hums again. “Sounds like a great character.”

“Oh, she is.”

“I wish I could be that way.” There’s something wishful in her tone.

“Lex, you are that way. You’re more than that. I just don’t have enough words to describe it right now. Remember when you told me you’d make me see what you see one day?”

She nods.

“I’m going to make you see what I see in you too.”

Lexa sighs. It sounds so defeated that I can feel my eyes welling with tears again.

“Does it… does it hurt?” She asks silently after a few seconds and motions towards my throat. “Can I get you some ice for it?”

“No, I’m good.”

“I'm really sorry.”

“Stop apologizing.”

“-”

“Lexa, look at me.” The firm tone in my voice seems to do it, because she raises her head and her green eyes finally meet mine. “I'm fine. It was a nightmare and you were asleep. You had no control over what you did and I'm good. See? It’s okay. We’re both okay.”

She buries her head in the crook of my neck instead of an answer and I carefully wrap my arms around her.

One minute she’s fierce and badass, like she’s about to conquer the world, and the next second she’s this tiny little girl, afraid of the world, that I’d like to hold and protect from every evil out there.

--

We stay like this for an hour or maybe longer.

The sun is peaking over the horizon when I can’t ignore nature’s call any longer.

“Lex.” I say. “As much as I love sitting here with you on this uncomfortable floor, I really need to pee.”

She chuckles quietly. “That’s okay. My ass is asleep too.”

We untangle ourselves from each other and get up.

It’s when I see my reflection in the mirror when I realize the extent of her nightmare for the first time. A red bruise in the middle of my throat shows where she pinned me into the mattress with her forearm.

I'm still standing in front of the mirror when Lexa knocks.

“Come in.”
Immediately her eyes fall down onto the bruise, now visible in the bright light.

She gasps. “Clarke-”

I can’t deny that there’s a bruise, nor can I say that she didn’t hurt me. So I just reach out to take her hand and squeeze it. “We’re okay.”

---

We curl up on the couch after a short and early breakfast, which consists of only a coffee for Lexa, because she can’t bring herself to eat something.

She’s shook to the core – maybe more than I am. Scratch that. Definitely more than I am.

She’s been alarmingly quiet since the session, but now she feels guilty too and I don’t know what to do or how to help. I’m just happy she didn’t shut me out.

“I need to go to work.” She whispers, breaking the heavy silence.

“Should I drive you?”

“No, it’s fine.”

“I’ll visit my Mom in the meantime. Want me to pick you up for lunch?”

She nods, but it looks like she isn’t really here right now.

“You sure I can’t drive you?”

“Yeah. I’ll just… I’ll shower and maybe go for a run. I…” She exhales. “I need a couple of minutes for myself, I guess.”

I nod, thankful for her honest words. “Okay.” I say and get up. “I’ll go get changed then.”

When I emerge from the bedroom a couple of minutes later she’s still on the couch and she hasn’t moved. Maybe I should warn Anya about what has happened? She doesn’t look like she’s able to work right now, but on the other hand distraction could be good for her.

“I’ll pick you up at 12:30. Does that sound okay?”

She nods.

Lexa doesn’t move when I lean in, so I cross the distance between our lips alone and press a soft kiss to her lips.

I earn a soft, but hollow smile.

A few happy days and then this. Life has to hate me.

…
Hey :)  
Thanks for the feedback on the last chapter, I hope this one fulfills your expectations ;)  
Just a little more angst ahead before we get to a (hopefully) happy ending.  
Enjoy!

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

... 

What have I done? 

This thought – and this one alone – runs through my head like an endless mantra. Again and again and again. 

Logically, I know it’s not my fault. We can’t control what we do when we sleep. Or subconsciousness takes over and we can’t be blamed for that. 

But that’s not how it works, not for me. 

There are a few things I could always be sure of regarding the person I am. 

1. I like women. I’m a lesbian and I’m proud to be one.  
2. I’m a family person and I’d do everything to protect those I love. 
3. I’ll probably be madly in love with Clarke Griffin for as long as I live and maybe for as long as time itself exists. And I’m totally okay with that. 

And last but not least: 

4. I’d never lay hands on anyone who doesn’t deserve it – but most definitely not on the woman I love. 

What have I done? 

- 

It takes me about ten minutes to break out of my state of shock and to follow Clarke out of the apartment before Luna wakes up. 

I send out a text to my sister to tell her that I’ll need to take care of something really important and that I’ll be late for work (once more), before I run down the stairs and jump into my car, not even waiting for her answer. 

It’s early, so the streets aren’t that busy yet even though it’s Monday, but half of the town is one single construction site at the moment. And every traffic light seems red. 

Really??
“Fucking shit!” I mumble angrily, punching the steering wheel.

I decide to take the highway around the city, because I need to explain some things to her. I need to come clean about everything. There’s no point in glossing it over anymore. She’s seen the worst version of me this morning. Hell, I’ve seen the worst version of myself.

Drumming nervously on the steering wheel, I think about the way she tried to comfort me – despite what I did. She’s more than I deserve.

These past few days were a mess. First, I came home drunk when she wanted to surprise me, then I ran away after making out and then, just a few days after getting asked to be her girlfriend, I hurt her. I feel like shit for that.

Logically I know that I didn’t do it on purpose. Ever since that session yesterday there’s been running the same sequence through my head. Again and again and again. I couldn’t shut it down or shield it out. It’s no surprise that the very same sequence haunted me in my sleep. But still…

I’ve driven a few miles on the highway when the end of a short traffic jam comes into view. It’s pretty new and a few hundred meters later I can see the reason. A bus has – for whatever reason – fallen over and is now lying on the side on the middle of the road.

But that’s not what catches my attention.

No. My attention gets caught by a glimpse of blonde hair that belongs to a familiar car behind another one that got pressed against the road embankments. The same second my foot hits the break violently.

Clarke.

A few more seconds and it would’ve been her car.

And then, just for split second I know how it feels to be scared of losing her. For a moment I can't breathe, can't move and can't think.

Relief is about to overwhelm me, but there are people screaming for help, injured people.

I start running towards the bus, towards Clarke, who's helping a little boy out of the car, while his mother is still stuck in her seat.

"Get her out through the window and move away from the bus as fast as possible." I tell Clarke, before I crash my lips into hers for a bruising kiss. Her eyes flutter closed with a little delay, but I already pull back a second later. "I'm sorry."

"Lex, what are you-"

I'm running again. This time towards the bus, where a few people have gathered by its windshield. There's the smell of gasoline hanging in the air and I know that there isn’t much time left.

And it's so easy to slip back into my soldier-mode. In fact, nothing’s ever been easier. I just… act.

"Lexa!" Clarke shouts desperately.

But I can't hear her.

I'm functioning on pure instinct now and I know exactly what to do. How to do it. I know how to analyze the situation within split second and where to put my hands and feet.
Within a few seconds I've climbed on the upper side of the bus to check the situation. About ten people are still trapped, some of them injured. I kick against a window a few times to break it and then I lower myself carefully into the wreck.

Wide-eyed faces stare at me. There’s a little boy, reminding me of one halfway across the world. But this one’s still alive and I want to keep it that way. No child will ever die again under my watch.

"I'm going to get you out of here, but we need to work together, okay?"

It happens in a blur.

Person after person, they follow my instructions and are able to get out. Some of them have broken bones or nasty cuts, some of them need a lot of help to climb up there.

I don't feel the pain in my arm and shoulder, while I do what I'm good at. Helping people. Saving lives. It’s all I can, everything I’ve learned.

The smell of gasoline gets stronger. Let's just hope this thing doesn't catch fire before we're all out of here.

I'm the last one to leave the bus and I'm just about to do so, when a flame ignites at the end of the bus.

I vaguely hear Clarke shouting a desperate and panicked "LEXAAA!!" the same time I see it.

There isn't enough time to climb up there, jump down and run away far enough. Maybe through the windshield. There's a wall at the side of the highway close to it. It's my only shot, so I start running and jump against the windshield with all I have.

I hit the ground outside hard just a second before the whole thing bursts.
The explosion rings in my ears and for a moment the shock wave paralyzes me, squishing me onto the ground. I'm unable to move.

Dozens of pictures flood my brain, accompanied by shouts. The little boy looking scared but determined, the sunlight reflected by the sand, a scarred face, blood. I fight them back where they belong.


Then there it is again.

I can barely hear anything with the ringing in my ears, but it's there and Clarke's voice has never sounded so... desperate. So utterly frantic and hopeless.

"LEXAAAA!!"

Groaning I manage to get on my knees and onto my feet.

There isn't much left of feeling invincible by now. In fact I can feel the aftermath of crashing through the windshield and the shockwave in every fiber of my body, the stinging pain in my shoulder hasn’t been that bad since Nia drove a knife through it. But Clarke needs to know I'm okay.

"She's alive!" Someone shouts, as I round the bus.

I don’t hear it. But a wall crashes into me with so much force that I fall over and land roughly back on the floor.
No. It wasn’t a wall. It’s Clarke.

"You're stupid! So fucking damn stupid, Lexa Woods!" She shouts and punches my uninjured shoulder. “I could kill you! I hate you, you asshole!” Even though I can’t hear a word she says, it’s pretty easy to guess from the angry look on her face. Then her hand comes up to my cheek. "You okay? Are you hurt?" Her eyes roam my body for injuries.

"I'm good." I tell her before pressing a kiss to her forehead. I pull her close again and hold her as tight as I can. "And I'm sorry."

---

Turns out being the hero is pretty exhausting. Or in other words: I'm beat.

Adrenaline is something wonderful for a little while – until there’s nothing left of it. It burns through your body and leaves nothing but ashes behind.

Clarke insists on getting me checked over in the hospital, where her mother wants me to stay the night just in case.

But other than feeling really, really tired, I’m good. And I’ve had enough of hospitals for two lifetimes. I just want to go home and sleep in my own bed, preferably next to the woman I love.

"That's reckless." Clarke tells me for the tenth time, as we pull up in front of my apartment building.

"I just want to hold you." I say quietly. "Can I?"

Blue eyes stare into mine for a few painfully long seconds. They look so sad. Sad and drained.

I haven't thought about what happened earlier this day and considering that there's a bruise on her throat... Maybe it's better if...

"I think it's better if I stay at home tonight." She finishes my thought quietly. She stares at her hands, unable to meet my eyes.

I avert my gaze, so she won't catch a glimpse of how my face falls. I can’t blame her. But that doesn’t mean I didn’t hope for another answer.

"Okay. Thanks for driving me home. Have a good night." I say a minute later.

Her eyes glisten with tears she won't let fall. There’s care in them, but also sadness when she opens her mouth to speak. "Lex-

This time the nickname doesn’t do things to my body. In fact it sounds too much like pity instead of comfort or warmth.

I shake my head to stop her from saying she’s sorry. "I understand." I reassure her with fake smile.

Clarke sighs, but she lets me go without a fight.

I told her the truth.

I do understand. I mean, god, I hurt her. I physically hurt her!

But my whole being aches to be near her tonight and not being able to have that hurts way more than getting pushed to the ground by a shockwave.
I feel numb when I walk over to the front door and unlock it.

I feel empty when I don't turn around to look back at her, because I can't take it. I don't want her to see the tears I can't fight any longer.

I sink to the floor with my back against the door after I've switched on the lights in the apartment. I'm exhausted in too many ways to count. This day's been a mess from its first second and I can't shake the dreading feeling it leaves behind.

Ellie waggles her tail, while Paul runs off to get a toy. It almost makes me laugh. Almost.

But all I can see are scared blue eyes looking at me from underneath me, while my forearm is pressed against her throat.

"Lexa? Is that you?"

I bury my face in Ellie's fur, so Luna can't see the tears. "Hey baby girl. I've missed you."

Luna comes out of her room, wearing black sweatpants and an oversized t-shirt. "What are you doing here? Shouldn't you be in a hospital bed?"

"I'm good. Just a few scratches."

"What's wrong?"

"Nothing." I wipe my eyes with the back of my hand.

"Why are you sniffing?"

I finally look up to meet her eyes. "Because I'm crying."

Luna's facial expression softens. "Clarke?"

"I hurt her." I say, my voice even more fragile than before. “I had a nightmare and she tried to wake me up and I… I hurt her. I…”

"Oh Lexa. Come here." She opens her arms for me.

I'm not a hugger, but I still get up and sink into her embrace like it's a lifeline keeping me from drowning. Maybe it is.

"She'll come around." Luna says. "It just was a lot to take in today."

"What if she doesn't? What if she realizes that this isn't what she wants?"

"She loves you."

"But what if that's not enough? I fucking hurt her while I slept, Luna! I put my forearm against her throat when she tried to wake me up from a nightmare, because my fucked-up mind thought it was Nia!"

"Lex-"

"What if this is all I'll ever be, hm? Look at me, Luna, and tell me that you don't see it? What if this just isn't enough?"
Luna's eyes sadden with helplessness. "If that's the case, and that's a big if, then she isn't worth it and you'll find someone who deserves you. But that won't be necessary, Lexa. I know that."

"How can you be so sure?"

"Have I ever been wrong?"

No.

But there's a first time for everything and I fear that this is one of them.

...

Chapter End Notes

Thanks to my awesome beta <3
Chapter Notes

Hey guys :) 
To be honest, I wasn't sure if I could make it tonight, because I didn't really feel inspired and then I was busy with other stuff and... Yeah. But: we're here! I'll answer to some of your comments later, right now I'm just happy to be able to share this chapter with you. I hope you like it!
Love,
LJT.

___

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

…

Sleep doesn't come easy.

In fact, it doesn't come at all.

I'm a wreck and without a few hours of sleep I'm a zombie.

I was too scared to look at my phone in the early morning, fearing that I won't find a text from Clarke. And when I finally found the courage to look two excruciating hours later there was none.

Clarke's scared of me. Scared of what I can do. To her.

"Indra called." Luna tells me when I return from a long run that didn't help either.

There's still no text from Clarke and it's after eight by now. Well. Eight isn't late – not for her.

Then I realize what Luna has said.

WHAT?

I freeze in the middle of grabbing the handle of the refrigerator.

"What did she want?"

"She said she needs someone for a lecture. It's just for a few days. And you'll get paid for it."

The way Luna says someone it's clear what Indra wants.

"She wants me?" It's more of a statement than a question.

Luna eyes me warily before she nods. "She wants you to call her by the end of next week. She said take your time and sleep about it."

"No."

"Lex-"
"No!"

"No one knows better what these guys are going to be up against. No one, Lexa, and you know that!"

I slam both hands onto the kitchen surface. "I SAID NO, LUNA!"

She sighs, raising both hands in surrender. "I'm just delivering a message. No need to get bitchy."

She's right. She's just trying to look out for me.

But Indra was my superior a long time ago, my mentor. Later she became somewhat of a friend. She's general by now and I haven't called her back in a year.

"I'm sorry."

"Can I say one more thing?" She won't relent, no matter what I answer.

So I nod.

"Well, I just thought you could save a few lives, you know. Like you did before."

"Before, I was a soldier. Before, I wasn't a fucking mess." I tell her firmly.

"What happened to you doesn't make you any less of a soldier. You've still got your knowledge and your instincts. You've proven that yesterday."

"Yeah? You mean when I bruised Clarke's throat? I can't trust my instincts, Luna. They tell me to run every time something gets complicated. My so-called instincts made Clarke leave." As soon as I think about it I feel bad again.

"Just think about it. Okay?"

I nod.

Luna knows how to push my buttons. Of course I want to help them. But I'm not sure if I can. What if I panic when I'm back on a military base – surrounded by people preparing for a war that nearly killed me? It's a possibility.

No. I can't think about it. Not right now when I've got absolutely no idea where Clarke stands.

-----

It's only an hour later when I pull up at the Griffin's house.

Maybe I'm pushing her into a corner with what I'm about to do, but I'm not going to make the same mistake twice. This is me staying and facing the problem directly. This is me trying.

She still hasn't reached out. And I get it. I really do. Yesterday was a hard day for both of us. First, I scared her with my nightmare and the aftermath, then I ran off towards a bus that's about to catch fire.

But I'm going to be as honest as I can from now on.

So I raise my hand, aiming for the bell, when the door opens, revealing Clarke with keys in one hand and a jacket thrown over her shoulder.
“Hey!” She says. The surprise in her blue eyes turns into something insecure within a matter of milliseconds. “I was just on my way to you.”

*I can see that.*

Somehow, it’s calming that she was coming to see me. Nevertheless there’s a tension between us and we can’t ignore it.

“Can we talk?” I ask, careful to leave a distance between us. If she’s really scared of me, then it’s the best I can do.

She nods and moves towards the living room, where she sits down on her father’s armchair. She never liked that damn thing and I’m painfully aware that she chooses distance between us over bad memories.

“My old superior called.” I tell her quietly. “She wants me to give a lecture for the new recruits.”

Maybe I should’ve started with something else, but it’s easier for me to sort out my thoughts when I can discuss them with someone and I think that Clarke deserves to be a part of the decision.

“You’re doing it?”

I shrug, while I continue rubbing the palms of my hands against each other. “I’m not sure yet, I wanted to discuss it with you first. But I think it could save lives. It would only be a couple of days.”

“So you’ve already decided?”

I don’t like the tone in her voice. Nevertheless, I try. “I haven’t. But-”

“No, Lexa. I thought we’re trying this. I thought we’re in this together.”

“We are!”

“Then why are you running away again when it’s getting complicated?”

“You’re the one who’s been avoiding me since yesterday evening.” I say, unable to hide the bitterness in my voice. “Besides, it’s just a job, Clarke. You of all people should understand that.”

“What?” She exclaims and gets on her feet. “What did you just say?!”

I sigh. This is so not going into the direction I wanted it to go. “I didn’t mean it like that.”

“Yes, you did. Do you know what I moved around to be here with you? Do you know what Raven did to be able to get me a few free weeks?”

I can’t help but go into a defensive position. “I didn’t ask you to! I’d never!”

“I know! But I did it because you mean something to me, but you still keep holding me one arm length away from you, just like you did back then! And I'm sick of it, Lexa!”

“I'm here, Clarke! I didn’t ignore you!” I answer furiously. “If you’re scared of me, then tell me, and I’ll keep my distance! I’d understand, okay? Hell, I’ve hurt you! But you can’t accuse me of shutting you out this time! This is me trying!”

“But you are doing it again!” She insists, her tone furiously and hurt at the same time. “Pushing me away, just like you did all those years ago! Leaving me when it’s getting complicated, when I need
you the most!"

That’s when I understand.

This isn’t about the bruises. It’s not about yesterday. It’s not about this job. It’s not about anything that happened between us since we started us again – not really.

It’s about me risking my life when we aren’t on good terms.

It’s about her fear of losing me.

It’s about what happened between us ten years ago.

My arms fall to my sides in defeat as realization hits. “It always comes back to this, hm?”

“Yes!” She shouts. “Because you pushed me away! Hell, you promised, Lexa! You promised me we’d make it and then you left and-”

“You knew I was messed up too!” I shout back, angrily wiping a few stray tears from my cheek as I get on my feet too. “Damn, Clarke, I’ve lost him too! Jake was like a father for me and he died! My own father was fighting for his life! Don’t you think I would’ve deserved some credit for that too?!”

“You broke up with me!”

“I didn’t! I told you the truth about my feelings, just like you asked me to do, and you ended us before I even got a chance to process any of this!”

Defying silence fills the room.

That’s so typical for us. I thought she broke up with me. She thought I broke up with her. And in the end none of us really meant to break up with anyone. Goddamn, we’re so bad at talking to each other, it’s a wonder we even managed those eight months.

Then, “You left me alone.”

I exhale, forgetting how to breathe for a moment until my lungs scream for oxygen.

There’s nothing else I can say now.

Yes. I did. Yes, I left her alone with her grieve. I didn’t talk to her after the report on the news for a whole week. And after our breakup I didn’t put up much of a fight after the first attempts failed or ended with a black eye. I gave up.

I did it because I thought that’s what she wanted and I didn’t want to feel more pathetic that I already felt. But it’s still true somehow.

“I did.” I say quietly, and my voice abandons me. “That’s on me. Blame it all on me, if that helps you. I can take it. Maybe I deserve it.”

Clarke clenches her jaw. She didn’t mean that, I can tell as much. But that doesn’t change how her words make me feel. She accuses me of shutting her out and she’s right. But she pushed me away too. I’m not the only one to blame.

Her blue eyes still look so furious, but there’s something else in them. Something… sad. The longer she keeps silent, the more difficult it gets for me to bear it.
I wait for her to say something, anything, but she keeps silent and slowly suffocates me. Slowly, but steadily it takes away my ability to breathe, because what if we just don’t match? What if the fact that we’re so bad at talking to each other is nothing but a large warning sign from the universe?

I wait for her to say something, with a racing mind, an open soul and a scared heart, until I can’t take it any longer.

I close my eyes for a moment, before I say what’s on my mind. “Maybe we should return to our own worlds.”

A heartbeat.

“What?”

I shrug, but it feels like something’s weighing my shoulders down. “I’m a mess, Clarke. Maybe I’ve always been. And god, I physically hurt you.”

“It’s just a little bruise. It’s not even visible any-”

“I can’t sleep, I can’t function like a normal human being and I probably never will.” I interrupt her before she can play it down again.

I know she’s lying. I can see the bruise. I can see where I laid hands on her. And just thinking about it makes me feel sick, so I continue.

“Yes, therapy is helping somehow, but… I’m fucked up, Clarke.” I say. “It’s always been hard for me to talk about things, you know that, but… It’s gotten worse ever since the… the torture.” I pause, trying to choose the right words. “And in the end it always comes down the same thing. The same problem. We’re bad at talking to each other and then one of us gets hurt, even if it isn’t on purpose. You deserve better than that.”

You deserve the world.

“How about you let me decide what I deserve?” She interjects.

I stare into those blue orbs that kept me alive during the darkest times of my life, while everything falls into place in my head. The eyes that kept me sane.

“You’re right.” I continue, ignoring the burning in my eyes. “I run away when things get tough. I’ve always done that and maybe I always will. Maybe that’s just who I am. Maybe I’m running away from my trauma too. But I won’t let you suffer the consequences. I can’t.”

Clarke shakes her head in despair and I absolutely hate the look on her face, but I’m not done.

“Maybe we just don’t work. Maybe we never had a chance.”

If the silence before was heavy, then this one’s crushing us.

…”

Chapter End Notes
Thank you for reading! :)  
Let me please know what you think! I'm addicted to that sound my phone makes when I receive an email :P
Hey :) 
I'm sorry for the massive cliffhanger... It was the last one this big - I think? I'll go hide somewhere if I'm wrong, I promise :P
This chapter is a bit shorter than the last ones, but I hope it does both characters justice. There's light at the end of the tunnel :D Finally!

I'm still not sure how to end this story at the moment, there are a few things still missing. If you have unanswered questions, please tell me. I've got a dozen Clexa-stories in my head and this one's gotten a lot bigger than I originally thought, so I may have forgotten about a few details! But even if this one ends, there'll be more :) My last days have been pretty productive and I've got a dozen little one-shots, ideas and scenes. Now I only have to put it together somehow... Once again: if you have prompts, wishes, ideas, even if it's just a sentence you can't get out of your head... I'll see what I can do!

Have a beautiful day/night wherever you are, know that you reading the words I wrote means the world to me. <3
Love,
LJT.
---

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

... 

“Yes, therapy is helping somehow, but... I'm fucked up, Clarke.” She says, her voice on the verge of breaking. “It’s always been hard for me to talk about things, but... It’s gotten worse ever since the... the torture.” A pause, too short to interrupt her, but too long to not feel the weight of it. “And in the end it always comes down the same thing. The same problem. We’re bad at talking to each other and then one of us gets hurt, even if it isn’t on purpose. You deserve better than that.”

I can feel where she’s going with this before she says it. Because I know how she thinks and how her head works. God, I know her like the back of my hands. At least I used to.

And I feel guilty for keeping silent all night, but I couldn’t find the words to explain my feelings to her.

I’ve been doing exactly that what I begged her to not do. Run away.

I almost lost her yesterday and I feel like I’m going to lose her now, if I don’t make her see what I see. “How about you let me decide what I deserve?” I say, trying hard not to sound as desperate a I feel.

But Lexa doesn’t really listen.

“You’re right. I run away when things get tough. I’ve always done that and maybe I always will. Maybe that’s just who I am. Maybe I'm running away from my trauma too. But I won’t let you suffer
the consequences. I can’t.”

I close my eyes for a split second, shaking my head.

No. Don’t do this, please!

But Lexa does.

“Maybe we just don’t work. Maybe we never had a chance.”

She can’t mean that. She can’t!

“Don’t say that.” I shake my head again, feeling more than just desperate on the inside. “Don’t you dare say that!”

“What? It’s true.”

“No, it’s not!” I say, my heart beating heavily and irregularly at her words. “I don’t believe for a second that we don’t work and you don’t either! The truth is, none of us works without the other, we’ve established as much already. Getting over you was the hardest thing I ever had to do, and it didn’t work, Lexa! And you know why?”

She shakes her head, looking so small and broken that I can feel myself tearing up.

“Because you’re in here.” I point at my heart. My stupid, messed up heart where she claimed a place for herself so many years ago. A place that’ll belong to her no matter where I go, no matter where she goes. “You’re in here and I can’t get you out, no matter how hard I try! Believe me, I’ve tried!”

I pause. She needs to understand what I’m saying next. She needs to understand it, because if she doesn’t, then it’s all in vain.

“But I don’t want to get you out anymore! I’d rather die than get you out of there! I want this! Us! You!” My eyes bore into her green ones. “So tell me, do you want the same? Do you want us as much as I do? Because if you don’t, then say it. Say it, Lexa.”

It’s an all-or-nothing moment.

There are a few in life. Moments when you’re forced to jump into the unknown or stay stuck in the same old place you’ve always been. I had a few of these in my life and didn’t always make the right choice.

But not a single one of them has ever felt like this. This… final.

Because if she doesn’t want this, it’s going to break me. It’s going to shatter my fucking heart, yeah. But it’ll do so much more.

I can picture it. I’d close off the last pieces of my heart and never open it again, because she’s the one for me. I’d throw myself into work and write the best stories ever – stories full of pain and sadness, of love. But I’d never laugh as freely as I do with Lexa by my side again. I’d never smile as brightly and I’d never sleep as well. Because she makes everything so much better.

What I said before is true. She left me alone so many years ago and somehow that fear always surfaces again. But I never saw her side of the story. I left her alone too. I could’ve tried harder, but it was easier to blame her, to take her doubts as the end than to actually fight for us. I’m as much to blame as she is.
“Clarke, I… I want this!” Lexa replies, eyes wide and teary. “It’s never been a question for me. I didn’t want to tell you like this, but it’s true and I can’t help it.” She slowly comes closer and reaches out both hands to grab mine. Her fingers are cold as they wrap around mine. “Feeling that much for you still scares the hell out of me, but I wouldn’t want to have it any other way.” She laughs nervously, shaking her head at the seemingly surprising confession, before her face turns serious again. “I love you.” She whispers. “It feels like I’ve always loved you. I love you, Clarke. I’m in love with you and if you let me I’ll make up for all my faults and mistakes.”

I stare up into green eyes, trying to find out if she’s saying the truth, if her words are sincere – because if they aren’t… But all I find is green, pleading me to believe.

There’s something about listening to those words… I can’t describe it. Logically they’re just a series of letters, building words we use to communicate. Except it is so much more than that. It’s everything to me and I can feel something wet running down my cheeks before she’s even finished her sentence.

She loves me?

Just a second ago she was ready to break up with me and now she tells me she’s in love with me? Is that woman for real?

“That’s good.” I say after a few very loud and fast heartbeats have thrummed through my body. “Because I love you too, you dumbass.”

Lexa chuckles softly through her own tears. “You do?”

“Of course.”

We sink into each other’s arms before we know it. Lexa smells heavenly and with every breath she takes I can feel that she’s just as desperate as I am. Desperate for the other to stay maybe.

“And I love that we’re fighting about things.” I mumble against her neck. “Promise me we’ll fight about everything from now on?”

“Everything?”

“Everything.”

“Okay.”

“And I’m sorry for keeping silent. I never meant to make you feel like this. I’m not scared of you or of what you’ve done or seen. I’ve never been. The only thing I’m scared of is losing you again.”

Lexa wraps her arms around my body more firmly instead of an answer. We stay like this for a few minutes, just enjoying the other’s warmth.

Then I think about what she has said about herself. I can’t let this stand lthat way.

“And don’t you dare saying or even thinking that you’re fucked up or broken. You’re beautiful, Lexa, inside and out. I know what I signed up for. Yes, you’ve got your scars on your skin and your mind. But I don’t care.” I can feel my words resonating in her body.

She relaxes into the embrace and it’s almost like she melts into it.

One day she’s going to believe me. And I’m going to tell her the same thing all over again, for the
rest of our lives if I have to.

“I. Don’t. Care.” I repeat, emphasizing every word. “I just want you, okay? All of you. Every little part of you.”

At first, it’s a sniff, quiet and barely audible. Then it’s a sob. And in the end she’s crying with her hands clinging onto my t-shirt like she’s afraid to drown in her own tears.

I bring one hand up and run my fingers through her hair, trying to soothe her. “I love you, Lex. And I'm not going anywhere. Okay?” I feel her nod against my shoulder.

How can someone so wonderful like her not believe she’s worth it? How can she think of herself that poorly? She’s… she’s perfect. And I love every little thing about her (except her tendency to altruism maybe, because she’d give everything for other’s and she never looks out for herself, which is kind of hard to watch).

“And don’t you dare trying to break up with me ever again, okay? First off all, because you gladly suck at it, and then because I couldn’t bear it.”

“Okay.”

“Can I kiss you?”

Lexa nods.

And I do. God, I kiss her with all I have and I know she can feel it, because she kisses me back in the same, desperate way. And while I do I wipe away her tears.

…

Chapter End Notes

What do you think about this one? Leave your thoughts if you want/ can. I love them all <3
Chapter 54 - Clarke.

Chapter Notes

Hey you :)
I'm sooo sorry for missing yesterday! Life came in the way...
Since I haven't said it in a while: thank you for still reading this!
Hope you like it!
Love,
LJT.
PS: in case you haven't noticed it yet - I started publishing a new story :) Check it out and leave your thoughts!
---

See the end of the chapter for more notes

...

Lexa is asleep with her head in my lap, while my fingers run through her hair. I watch her sleeping face and it's easy to tell that she hasn't been sleeping last night. She looks exhausted, drained even.

This day has been a mess. Actually, the last two days have been.

I didn't want to avoid Lexa. Not at all.

There was this look on her face when I told her I wouldn't stay with her last night. I knew she blamed herself and yet I couldn't… It's not because I was scared of her.

I simply got overwhelmed with everything that has happened and then hour after hour passed and I still couldn't pick up the phone. I'm pretty good at psyching myself into things.

When the bus exploded, I just… I freaked. I panicked.

God, she could've died!

I just saw the flames and I saw her running and then everything got blown up and I couldn't see her and… I thought she was dead. For maybe half a minute I thought she was dead and it broke me. It killed me. I only had her back in my life and losing her…

So my brain thought it was a good idea to keep my distance until I've processed things. A self-defense mechanism.

I close my eyes for a moment and take a deep breath. *Everything's good. Stop overthinking. She's here. You're here. She's safe.*

The fight took a lot of energy from me – from both of us. Maybe it was the most horrible fight we ever had. And we had few of them.

We settled onto the couch not long after and she fell asleep after a few minutes of silence. I cradled her head against my chest for a while, but when she got to heavy I laid her head down onto my lap and that's where it still is.
There’s still a lot to talk about. Tons maybe.

But right now, none of that matters.

---

Lexa stirs a while later.

“Hey.” I say softly as she looks around in confusion.

“How long have I been out?” She asks, rubbing her eyes while she sits up.

“An hour maybe. Don’t know.”

“You could’ve woken me up.”

“No. You needed it.”

“Still.” She insists.

“It gave me time to calm down. I’m sorry for avoiding you. I guess, I needed a few hours to think about the bus and all that.”

“And the choking.” She adds, shoulders hunching down.

I shake my head. “Don’t call it that. And no. Yesterday, when the bus exploded, I… I imagined my life without you, just for a moment, and I realized more than ever that you’re everything to me. That scared me. I can’t lose you, Lex.”

“You won’t.” She carefully reaches out for my hand and intertwines our fingers. “I promise that I’ll do everything in my power to grow old with you.”

“Yeah?”

She nods sincerely. Then she sighs. “I should probably head to work.”

“No.”

“I really should. I’ve been late a lot recently.” She tries to reason.

“No.” I shake my head, fingers cupping her cheek. “We should head there, Lexa.”

Her eyes widen in surprise. “We?” She croaks with difficulty.

I nod, squeezing her hand. “We. I’m going with you. I won’t let you out of my sight for a while, if that’s okay with you.”

Her eyes seem to be searching for a hint of doubt in mine, but she isn’t successful because there is none.

“That’s a little more than okay.” She answers with a smile.

Lexa helps me into my jacket and when we sit in her car she intertwines our hands almost automatically. I don’t mind and enjoy the somersaults my stomach does.

Time is a funny thing. Sometimes a minute can feel like a lifetime. Sometimes years can feel like the blink of an eye. And sometimes the time stops for a split second and I could swear the earth feels it.
She just *has* to feel it.

---

From my spot under an old tree I occasionally steal glances at Lexa working with a few dogs, while my fingers dance over the keyboard of my laptop. Okay, my eyes are more often on Lexa than on the screen in front of me. And I spend most of my time correct.

Writing has always been my way of dealing with emotions and the last day has been a mess. So I feel really inspired and sharing a smile with the woman I love sometimes helps too. *She loves me back.*

Lexa seems to feel it whenever my eyes land her, because she looks up to meet my gaze every time and it makes my heart skip a beat each time.

During lunch she sits down next to me, being her quiet self as she unpacks my second book and starts reading. She gets that cute little frown on her forehead, when she’s concentrated. And sometimes the corners of her mouth twitch in amusement, which is the cutest thing ever. But really, I’m working!

(It’s a wonder that I actually managed a few pages today. )

-----

Lexa suggests getting pizza for dinner.

I’m not the only one who’s happy with our choice, because as soon as we set foot into the apartment, Luna squeals excited. “Pizza! Did you bring me one too?”

“Sure. Extra cheese and seafood.” Lexa answers, still making a face. She spent literally five minutes of our drive here discussing Luna’s weird choice and expressing her disgust for it.

I was more occupied with the fact that she’s finally stopped tiptoeing around me. She’d never admit it, but she’s been doing exactly that the whole day.

So when Luna suggests a movie night and Lexa looks at me to let me choose, I agree. A few hours of normality will do us both some good. That’s why I grab beer and settle close to Lexa, snuggling even closer during the movie.

We’re back to being us and I’ve never felt more at ease than now, knowing that she loves me too.

---

“You can use the bathroom first, if you want.” Lexa mumbles awkwardly, when we reach her bedroom.

“Lex, we can brush our teeth at the same time, you know? We did it before.”

“Yeah, I just…”

I smile. She’s so cute sometimes.

Then I cross the distance and get on my toes, so that our noses almost touch. Looking back that wasn’t the best idea I had today, because I have a hard time speaking now and I wanted to say something… smart.
But Lexa smirks before I can do that and then her eyes flicker down to my lips and I'm lost.

“Yes?” She asks.

Oh, she knows exactly how she affects me.

I withstand her and those lips for maybe thirty seconds. Thirty extraordinary long seconds, but still it’s not exactly speaking for my willpower.

Still something’s different, because Lexa meets me halfway and when our lips connect it’s like someone’s shutting down my brain. As cheesy as it sounds, it’s like reality fades. I remember wondering if this feeling would ever go away. But then her fingers knot in my hair and she urges me even closer until our tongues dance with each other.

She’s smiling against my lips and somehow that’s contagious.

When we break apart we both laugh quietly.

Until Lexa bites her lips in her stoic manner, one hand resting on my cheek. “I… I think I’m ready.”

I frown in confusion. “Ready for what?”

“For more.” She answers quietly, her green eyes suddenly darker than before. Or maybe that’s just imagination? “I mean, I’m nervous, but… I love you.”

Oh.

That.

Holy shit.

Are we there yet?

I swallow. “I love you too.”

“We don’t have to. I mean, obviously. I just wanted to let you know that you don’t have to hold back. And when it gets too much I’m going to tell you. Okay?”

I nod.

What do I do now?

My heart pounds and I feel like flying and falling at the same time, while my legs feel funny and my brain refuses to work properly.

“Clarke?”

Only then I realize that I haven’t said anything.

Maybe because I’m completely swamped with all kinds of thoughts. Maybe because I’m struggling to keep it together. Or maybe just because she implied that we could have sex and that took me by surprise.

Of course I thought about it. I mean, she’s Lexa. She’s hot and sweet and so fucking sexy that, when I start thinking about her silky skin or the sound she makes when she comes, my own body can’t help but react to that.
But I refused to think about it because she wasn’t ready. And now she is and I realize that maybe I’m not, which is absolutely ridiculous if you actually think about it. What the hell is my problem?

“Hey, are you okay?” Lexa’s worried question breaks me out of my state of shock.

“Yeah, I just…”

“You’re not ready.” She finishes for me.

I nod. “I’m sorry. That’s stupid and-”

“No.” She smiles softly, brushing a loose strand of hair behind my ear. “It’s not. I didn’t want to pressure you.”

“You didn’t. I’m just not ready. Not yet.”

Lexa lowers her hand and her thumb grazes over my bottom lip. “That’s okay. We have time. As long as I can do this…” She leaves the sentence unfinished and replaces her thumb with her lips.

It’s a soft kiss, a really, really sweet and innocent one. But it’s the world for me and when we part I rest my forehead against hers.

“Soon.” I whisper.

“I’ll be here.”

“Really soon.” I add.

Lexa chuckles. “Let’s get ready for bed.”

- 

We brush our teeth standing next to each other in front of the mirror. Doing that feels intimate in this cozy kind of way.

When I was young and thought about love, this wasn’t what I pictured at first. I imagined dates and sex and laughter and being so cute together that everybody around us envies us. But then I thought about my parents and what they had and I realized I wanted the same. The same kind of love, the same affection – a story to share and to tell.

Lexa respectfully looks the other way when I strip out of my clothes and put on some sweatpants and a t-shirt.

I don’t turn around when she does the same. Really just because I react too late and then my eyes fixate on her body on their own... I can’t help it. I don’t stare at her scars. I can barely see them in the dim light, but I’m too focused on the curves of her silhouette to notice anything. My fingers itch to paint her.

Lexa only wears panties at night. I told her I wouldn’t mind a couple of days ago and since then I’m having trouble falling asleep.

I think about her tattoos. The small sailing boat on her left ankle for example, which I discovered a few days ago when she walked to the bathroom in nothing but panties and a shirt. She said it was her first. Or about the long one on her back, which moves gracefully with her muscles when she pulls on a t-shirt – a sequence I’ve been replaying more than just a couple of times in my head. I still don’t know what it means, but maybe that’s a story for another day. Or about the one I haven’t seen yet.
Soon.

Blame it on curiosity. Not on sexual attraction of course. Nope. Not at all.

Why did I tell her I'm not ready again?

…

Chapter End Notes

thank you, Lucie <3

And: leave a comment if you can! I crave them... Just a little :P
Have a beautiful day! <3
We’re at Abby’s house for dinner, after our Moms decided we spend too little time with them and invited us over. But I don’t get far, because Aden crosses his arms and glares at me as soon as Clarke gets dragged away by Abby, blocking my way.

Eyeing him skeptically I take off my shoes in the Griffin’s hallway. “What?”

“So, you and my sister, huh?” He asks.

I frown, unsure of why he’s asking me a question he already knows the answer to. “Yes?”

“I know you’re a badass soldier and older than me and all that, but I feel responsible for giving you the talk.”

I can’t help but grin at this. I try not to, but there’s no chance. I mean, he’s too cute. And I appreciate him trying to threaten me on behalf of his sister, but come on – he’s Aden. He’s my girlfriend’s little brother, ten years younger than me. Hell, I watched him pee his pants when he was six. I watched him go through puberty (which wasn’t exactly thrilling). And now he’s trying to give me “the talk”?

He rolls his eyes. “Can you at least pretend to be serious?”

I bite back my laughter. “I’m sorry. The talk?”

“Okay, here it goes.” He says, pointing his finger at me. “If you break her heart again, I’m going to hunt you down and I’m going to kill you.”

I nod. As seriously as I can. Really. “I’m not going to break her heart. I love her and I plan on making her happy as long as she wants me by her side.”

“Good.” He stares at me.

Is he trying to stare me down?

I withstand his look for a long and very painful moment that brought me close to choking. Three seconds later I burst into laughter.

“Nice try, buddy.” I shovel his hair on my way to the kitchen.

“Lexa!” Aden complains and runs after me, but I’m a bit faster and burst into the kitchen, after a few roundabout routes through the living room.

I hide behind Clarke, pushing her between Aden and me to avoid whatever he’s about to do.
The blonde giggles with me, when her brother storms into the room. “What’s going on here?”

“She’s making fun of me!”

“Aden, you’re always going to be the little boy in my head. I can’t help it.” I try to explain.

He takes a step in my direction, but Clarke intervenes. “Sorry, bro. She’s under my protection.”

“Pff.” He crosses his arms and marches off.

I can’t tell if he’s faking indignation or if he’s really indignant, but I’m still laughing, and Clarke laughs with me and the sound is too distracting to think about him.

“Thanks.” I wrap my arms around her waist and pull her closer, enjoying the carefree moment, while I press a kiss into her neck.

She chuckles. “Of course, babe.”

My heart skips a beat. Babe?

For a moment I can see it. The life we missed out on.

We would’ve gone to college together – I would’ve played tennis, she would’ve studied medicine. We would’ve called each other babe or love and been the couple everybody was jealous of, we would’ve moved in together as soon as we could, we would’ve ignored our alarms just to have morning sex, we would have had parties at our place. We would’ve laughed and cried and we would’ve danced after midnight in the middle of a sidewalk, just because one of us felt like it. Because that’s what we are together. The best version of ourselves.

For a tiny little moment, I’m sad about missing out on so many things with her. But then happiness overwhelms me and for the first time I’m not sad about missing all of this. Because I can have it now and maybe that’s more than I deserve in this lifetime, but I don’t care. I don’t care about any of this. In fact, only one thing matters: having this beautiful woman who wants me in my arms.

“I love you.” I whisper in her ear.

I can feel her body shivering at my words, before Clarke turns around and her arms fall loosely around my neck. “I love you too.”

And then everything around me moves in slow motion. I can see the rise and fall of her chest, her eyelids closing softly before they reveal her crystal-clear, blue eyes again. I see how they fall down to my lips for a tiny little moment.

I feel the air between us turning into something… electric.

And it’s easy to cross the distance and kiss her. It’s even easier to feel my heartbeat thrumming through my body, like the beat of a song, loud and clear, from head to toes.

She’s only been home for a couple of days, but she’s already everywhere.

And I wish I was as good as Clarke with my words. Maybe I would be able to put my feelings for her into more than an “I love you”, which doesn’t seem enough. But I’ve always been more of an action-kind-of-girl, so I tug her body closer to mine until our bodies are flushed against each other, until our heartbeats become one and I couldn’t tell where she ends and where I begin even if I wanted to.
My fingertips sneak below her shirt just a little to brush the skin there. It sends shivers through both our bodies.

“Girls.”

Clarke pulls back after hearing her mother’s voice, but I’m having trouble opening my eyes for a moment. When I do I catch the hint of a smirk on Abby’s face.

“I’m glad you two are happy and all that, but we’re supposed to make dinner.”

Clarke takes my hand and starts tugging me to the door, completely unaware that my feet have trouble working. “We’re out of here.”

“No, you’re-”

“Sorry Mom.”

I follow Clarke upstairs without noticing it.

What I notice after entering her old room is that she pushes me against her bedroom door and attacks my lips with a bruising kiss.

Every nerve in my body tingles with desire.

Her lips move to my throat, to my collar and up to my neck again, claiming every inch of skin she can get.

“Clarke.” I moan, not able to process the events.

She seals my lips with hers again, while her hands come up to unbutton my flannel. One button. Two. Three. Four. The silky material slides from my shoulders.

“Clarke.”

It’s hard to form a thought, let alone a whole sentence when she’s kissing me like that. Because damn, her lips feel amazing and she wants me and I want her and if I’m honest with myself I want to rip her clothes off every time I see her.

But this is neither the right time nor the right place.

“Clarke. We can’t-”

“Why not?” She mumbles against my lips, pulling back an inch but not more.

“Because this is your Mom’s house and we’re supposed to have dinner with our families in about an hour and your brother’s next door.” I say and it takes all my willpower to finish my thought. “And I want to take my time for the things I plan on doing to you.”

Clarke still doesn’t take a step back, so our noses almost touch. “You’re right. I… I got carried away. But you look so hot when you smile and laugh and I…” She sighs deeply.

“Hot, hm?” I tease, my own eyes flickering down to her mouth.

“Mhm. So hot. Tell me again why we can’t skip this dinner?”

“Because our Moms asked us to be here and we will be there, because we love them. And yesterday
you said you weren’t ready.”

“Maybe I’ve changed my mind.”

“Maybe you’re just really turned on right now?”

“Maybe.” She shrugs, still smirking. “But would that be so wrong?”

“No, not at all.” I let go of her hips, where I tried to ground myself during her attack (I really love her hips), and brush a loose strand of slightly disheveled hair out of her face, before I ghost a kiss on her lips. “But we should definitely go back down there now, because otherwise I won’t be able control myself.”

“Maybe I don’t want you to control yourself?”

“Clarke.”

She groans, but she finally steps out of my space and picks up my flannel. “You’re going to be mine, Woods. Soon. One way or the other.”

I smirk at the playful threat. “I look forward to that, Griffin.”

…

Chapter End Notes

thank you, Lucie <3
And thank YOU for reading!
Leave a comment if you can ;)
 Chapter 56 - Lexa.

Chapter Notes

hey :) 
Not much to say here, except that I hope you're happy with this.
Love,
LJT.
---

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

... 

“I’ve thought about that job offer you told me about.” Clarke announces on our way back home later that night.

I’m thankful that she’s driving because I’m barely able to keep my eyes open, but her statement catches my attention immediately. “And?”

“You should do it. If it’s something you want to do, you should do it.”

“I’m not sure if I want to. A part of me wants to help, but… what if I freak out? What if it’s too much for me? Too soon?”

Clarke takes the opportunity to look at me when we reach the next red light. “I can only guess what’s going on in your head and heart, Lexa. You have to make that decision by yourself. And I’ll support you, no matter what you choose.”

“Indra, the one who’s called about the offer, was my superior for a long time. She’s been something like a mentor to me. I don’t want to let her down. But I’m scared of facing all of it. Especially my demons.”

“Demons?” She asks curiously.

“There’s a lot of darkness in my head. Not just from my last tour. It’s… hard to put into words.” I answer after a few seconds, unable to find better words to describe it. “The bus showed me that a part of me is still a soldier. A part of me still wants to save lives and I’m good at it, you know? Really good. But last time I tried to save my brothers and sisters, I almost didn’t make it.”

“And that’s scary.”

“Yeah.”

“Apart from all the heavy stuff. Did you love it? Being a soldier I mean?”

I nod without hesitation. “Absolutely. I loved it all. The exercise, the danger, the comradeship. There grows a bond between you and the people you serve with. They become family. They make you a better person. And I wanted to protect the country we live in. It sounds cliché and maybe not all the wars we fight are ours to fight, but who else would protect the people out there? I’m proud that I could be a part of something bigger.”
I can feel her eyes watching me with a mixture of admiration and astonishment as I speak.

Back in high school I had a talk with a career adviser. He spoke with the same passion about his time in the military that I speak about mine now and that talk never left my thoughts again. Who knows where I would’ve ended up without it.

“It’s green.” I state softly after a little while.

Clarke nods, a little lost in thoughts, and slowly averts her gaze before she lets the car roll over the crossroad. “I can’t imagine doing it.”

“Being a soldier?”

“Yeah. Joining. I would’ve shit my pants.”

I chuckle quietly. “Nice picture.”

Clarke laughs too. “Sorry. It’s just… I don’t know. I couldn’t have done what you did.”

“You did other things.”

“Compared to yours, much safer ones.”

I get the feeling that she uses the word “safe” instead of “less important” and I can’t help but frown at that. “I think everyone’s got its own role in this society. You inspire people’s minds and hearts, you enrich our culture.”

“You really think you can call my work culturally valuable?”

“Of course.” I reply without a doubt.

“Okay, I’ll let it stand like that for now.” She smiles. “Tell me, do you have a picture of your good-looking self in a uniform?”

“Maybe.”

Clarke raises both eyebrows. “Do you?”

“Luna might have some. Why?”

She shrugs with a playful smirk on her lips and pulls into an empty parking lot below a streetlamp close to my apartment building. “I’m just asking.”

I know she’s trying to lighten the mood, to change the topic maybe, but she doesn’t need to. I turn my head to look at her, wondering how she manages to look so beautiful at any time of the day, wondering why she chose me.

“I think I’ll try it.” I say after a few minutes of silence. “Will you come with me?”

“Me?”

“No, the other gorgeous blonde in the car.” I roll my eyes.

Clarke rolls her eyes too, but she’s smiling as she does. “If you want, yeah.”

“We could make it a vacation.” I suggest and suddenly my head’s coming up with all kinds of ideas
– hopeful ones that make the idea of heading back onto a military base a lot easier. “We could rent a cheesy hotel room and explore the area. Arkadia’s a military town, but the landscape’s interesting and I could show you around.”

“Is that where you got trained?”

“Mostly.” I nod, still waiting for an answer. “I mean, if you’re up for it. You don’t have to, I know you have to write.”

Clarke’s warm smile makes my stomach flutter. “I’d love to come with you. I can write anywhere.”

“So, it’s a yes?”

“It’s a yes.”

I intertwine our fingers and lift our hands to press a kiss to her knuckles instead of an answer.

“Let’s head in.” Clarke says, lips still wearing a smile.

We leave the car in silence, holding hands all the way upstairs. Clarke’s feels warm in mine, safe. It’s crazy how quickly I got used to that.

Sometimes it already feels like those nine years in the military and the one after happened in another lifetime. Like we paused and now we’re back in the reality. Clarke makes everything better and I want to cherish that every day.

That’s why I pull her close as soon as we enter the bedroom and just hold her in my arms, breathing in that characteristic, sweet scent of hers. For a moment I get lost in that feeling.

“You okay?” She whispers into my neck, arms sneaking around my waist to hug me back.

“Thank you.”

“For what?”

“For being here. For being you. I love you.”

“I love you too.”

I can feel her smile against my skin. I can also feel her heartbeat against my ribcage and something just… shifts. For the second time today, except this feels different.

We’re alone.

Suddenly I’m too aware of the skin I’ve got my lips pressed against, of the warmth radiating from her, of the way my body reacts to hers. For the first time since I’ve been to war I feel… human.

Clarke seems to sense it, but she decides to play with me or maybe she just feels the same, I don’t know. But I don’t really care when her lips start to kiss from my neck to my earlobe.

Then she pulls back a little and there’s something different in her eyes than just sapphire blue. They’re darker now and I recognize that look.

It’s easy to lean in and kiss her, it’s natural to let my teeth nibble on her bottom lip, just enough to let her moan quietly. The most addicting sound of the world.
I pull back a bit and get a little lost in the way her eyes flutter open, in the way she looks at me with so much… warmth, her lips forming a cute smile. I’ll never get used to that and I don’t want to. She’s… she’s everything to me. And she’s mine.

So I stare at her in wonder for a long moment.

And Clarke laughs quietly, brushing a loose strand of hair behind my ear.

“What?” I ask, a little embarrassed.

My whole body is on fire every time I’m close to her and there’s an ache in my stomach that I have trouble ignoring now. Something tells me she knows how I feel, but I’ve always been an open book to her.

Clarke shakes her head. “Nothing, I just… I realized that I’m stupid.”

I frown, but I forget what I want to ask the second she bites her bottom lip.

God, I’ve missed feeling like this. I’ve missed being crazy in love, losing track of time and feeling like a hormonal teenager. But then she leans in and ghosts a kiss on my lips, forehead touching mine. My heart explodes, and my head is flooded with thousands of pictures and ideas.

“Lexa.” She whispers, her breath meeting my face, her hands tugging my body closer against hers.

If she doesn’t stop doing those things to me soon I’m not going to survive it, I’m sure of that. What a sweet death it would be.

“Hm?” I reply, barely restraining myself from throwing her onto the bed behind us. Because god, she’s got her eyes closed, her breathing is shallow, her body is warm against mine, and she’s the only one I ever ached for.

“Sleep with me.”

My eyes go wide. “What?”

“Sleep with me.” She repeats, eyes still closed.

Oh my god. Did she just…?

She can’t just say that.

„Are you sure? We don’t have to-”

“I am.” She says, opening her eyes to finally look at me. “I want you.”

I want you. Oh, the things this small sentence can do to a human being.

My heart starts to race, when she speaks up again. Her voice is full of confidence and… raspy with desire. “I’m madly in love with you, Lex, and I want you. It’s that easy.”

I stare into deep blue eyes, full of love and desire.

She wants me.

Me.
The damaged and scarred girl.

I swallow. Not because I’m nervous, but because it’s the first time since we got back together that I really, REALLY understand it. She loves me. She loves me as much as I love her, if that’s possible.

*She’s in love with me.*

And I know what this means – what it can mean. All the wonderful talks we had, all the love we made – it’s engraved into my mind and it has been replayed dozens of nights when I felt lonely and miserable. All those nights we spoke about our future, about the dreams we had – it’s still there.

And now suddenly all of that is back in reach again. I can have all that.

“Sleep with me.” Clarke whispers again, her fingers coming up to trace my jawline.

After an infinite moment I let my hands wander down to the hem of her shirt, holding her gaze while I do so. I could count every eyelash, but instead I pull the piece of clothing over her head and lean in to kiss her. But she’s already there, meeting me halfway in a slow but passionate kiss.

I pour everything into this kiss. All the love I feel for her, the gratefulness. And I pray that she feels it.

Her fingers fidget with the buttons of my flannel for a few moments, but she seems to be unable to focus with my lips on hers. She groans annoyed, but I just chuckle, replacing her hands with mine.

“Let me.” I say, simply ripping the offending piece of clothes apart, so that the buttons jump away in all directions. It’s easier that way.

Clarke laughs against my lips. “Eager, are we?”

“You’ve got no idea.” I reply, diving in for another kiss the next second, while she slides the flannel off of my shoulders.

Her hands wander down my back, completely unfazed by the scarred skin there, and dive into the back pockets of my jeans, where my phone is. She pulls it out.

I lean back confused, missing the sweet taste of her lips immediately. “What are you doing?”

“Making sure no one disturbs us.” She announces with a wicked grin on her face, before she shuts the device off and puts it on the small bookshelf next to us. “That okay?”

“More than okay.” I reply. I take a moment to admire the creamy skin, before I press a kiss against her neck, unable to fight the urge to be as close to her as possible. I’ve never loved losing as much as right now. “I love you. I know I said it at least ten times today, but I feel like I can’t say it often enough and-”

She cups my face, pressing a soft kiss against my lips, effectively cutting off my rambling. “I love you too.” She answers, before her fingers knot in my hair and the next kiss is deeper, more passionate.

We just stay there for a while in that bubble we created around us, kissing deeply, until it all gets too much and too little at the same time.

Clarke is the one who pushes me towards the bed and we land there laughing quietly. Her fingers dance across my stomach as she settles beside me, her lips hovering close over mine. I reach out to brush blonde hair out of her face.
God, she’s stunning.

Clarke smirks, as if she knows what I’ve been thinking, before one of her hands wanders downwards, dipping into my jeans just barely, making my breath hitch in my throat. I’ve never wanted anything in my life as bad as I want her. I’m nervous, yes. But there’s no need to be when she’s around and I’m slowly starting to believe it.

I watch as she leans down to kiss my shoulder. Slowly her lips move to kiss one of the deepest scars there, barely touching it.

She’s kissed my scars a couple of times by now, but each time makes me feel like I lay my core open to her, my heart and soul, like she’s seeing the real me, the one I’m used to hide. And I understand that I don’t want to hide anything from her. She’s the only person in the world, the only woman I’d give everything to.

“Are you sure?” Clarke asks carefully, nuzzling my jaw with her nose before kissing it. She’s staring at me with so much love that there’s only one answer.

“I am. Just… go slow.”

“I can do that.” She says, interlacing her fingers with mine. She pulls our hands up to press a kiss against my knuckles, before placing my hand above my head.

Her blue eyes hold mine, while her fingertips open the button of my jeans and then the zipper in an achingly slow motion.

My veins are pure lava by now and every nerve in my body tingles in anticipation.

Clarke smirks again, as her hand reaches its destination, ripping a gasp from my throat. “I.” She kisses a spot below my ear. “Plan on.” Her lips graze my pulse point. “Making love.” A kiss on my jawline. “To you.” She kisses the tip of my nose, staring at me with sparkling blue orbs. “The whole night.”

And she does.

Until I forget time and space around me as I scream her name.

…”

Chapter End Notes

Thoughts? 0.0

This is like... version 22 or so :’D

I decided against an explicit sex scene, because it didn’t feel right to me. Hope that’s okay with you :)
Hello again :)  
I'm not sure if I'll be able to upload at the end of this week, don't hate me if I can't. BUT: there'll be an update on Lullaby Without You tomorrow!  
Hope you like this one!  
Love,  
LJT.  
---

There’s something about her sleeping figure that has always fascinated me.

I remember the first night we shared like this – naked, legs intertwined, blankets kicked to the floor, the room smelling of nothing but sex and us. I was exhausted to no end, but I couldn’t stop staring at the sleeping beauty beside me. So I carefully got up and grabbed my sketchbook and a pencil to make that moment last forever.

I still have that drawing.

Smiling, I trace her jawline with my fingers.

My head is spinning and I’m still on cloud nine after this night. I mean… wow. What a night.

No one’s ever been able to make me feel the way Lexa does. But I realized only tonight that there’s a difference between sex and making love. Lexa and I never had just sex. It was always more than that.

In my head I replay each and every second of the night, a smile on my lips.

*The softest exhales after our lips part.*

*The darkened green of her eyes, a color that can’t be found elsewhere.*

*The quiet moans escaping from her lips, created in a place deep inside of her.*

*The hint of sweat on her skin.*

*The way her body shivered, whenever my fingers traced a scar.*

*The way her body quivered and trembled when she came.*

*The look of pure bliss and happiness on her face.*

I let my fingers wander over her shoulder, to her spine, tracing the tattoo there on her smooth skin.

“That tickles.” She mumbles, a sleepy smile on her lips.
“Sorry.”

“Don’t be. I like it.” Green eyes open to meet mine. “Hi.”

“Hi.” I reply, unable to keep a smug grin to myself.

“So… that happened.”

“Yup.”

“Wow.”

I chuckle. “You could say that.”

“Are you okay?”

“I’m great. And you?”

“Me too.”

A bright smile escapes my lips, before I lean over and kiss her softly, just because I can.

Lexa hums. “How late is it?”

“Don’t know. Early. It’s still dark outside.”

Another toothy smile that could kill me. Then she pulls me closer into her arms, our bodies molding together perfectly like puzzle pieces. It’s probably my favorite place in the world.

There’s something about sharing yourself with someone like this – skin against skin, heartbeats in unison – that makes my soul calm down. Something instinctive and natural. I haven’t felt like that in years and the thought makes one lonely tear roll down my cheek. We’ve missed out on so many things. But at least we’re here now.

I let my thoughts wander while I listen to her heartbeat, head on her chest, as her arms stay wrapped around me.

There are no words spoken. No words could to this feeling justice anyways. So we just lay there, sharing ourselves with each other.

Lexa falls asleep after a while. She’s the kind of person who falls asleep after sex. But I stay awake because I couldn’t sleep, not even if I wanted to. This moment is too precious for me, too important to spend it sleeping.

---

When the sun peeks through the blinds, Lexa’s breathing changes and I know she’s awake again.

I prop myself up on my elbow next to her. I let my fingers wander up and down her back, tracing the lines of her tattoo, trying not to get distracted by her scars. I could look at her all day and she probably knows that, but this tattoo fascinates me.

“It’s beautiful.” I say quietly, my voice barely a whisper.

“I got it when I returned home. After rehab.”
“What does it mean? You don’t have to tell me, I’m just curious.”

Lexa takes a deep, almost shuddering breath. “See the circles?”

“Seven?” I ask curiously, tracing each of them with my fingertip.

“Yes. One for each member of my family. Mom, Dad, Anya, Aden, your Mom, your Dad and you of course.”

Oh.

“And… and the lines?” I ask, trying to process. “And the other one? The… orbit?”

Lexa laughs quietly. “The orbit, hm? I never saw it like that, but that’s mine. No matter how broken I felt, no matter where I was, no matter what happened to me, I always carried you with me. All of you. That’s why I chose to get it.”

“And why isn’t yours colored black like the rest of them?”

“Artistic freedom?” She suggests, but I can hear that it isn’t the whole story. Just a few seconds of waiting later Lexa sighs. “Because I didn’t feel whole. Not when I was still feeling so far away from all of you. It’s a reminder that I still had a connection to all of you. I just had to find it. And in doing so I’d find back to myself.”

I try to take in what she had just said. “That’s a beautiful story. Did you design it yourself?”

“No. There was a girl with me in rehab. She did it.”

“What’s her name?”

“Echo.”

“You’ve never talked about her before.”

“There’s not much to tell.” She answers. “I don’t know much about her. Her unit walked into a trap. She was the only one who made it out alive. When she left rehab, she didn’t leave a number or anything, I don’t know where she went.”

“That’s… horrible.” I don’t want to imagine what it has to feel like losing all your comrades.

“Yeah.” Lexa slowly turns around to face me, the expression on her face masked with seriousness, but unable to hide a hint of sadness. “Can we talk about something else?”

“We don’t have to talk at all.” I answer quietly in understanding.

Lexa doesn’t waste any time as she leans in, her lips sporting another toothy smile – the second one tonight, I register vaguely. I want to be the reason she smiles like that every day.

My thoughts narrow down to a handful pretty quick, when her tongue darts out to meet mine. And when her hands wander downwards, pulling my body flushed against hers, I don’t think anything at all anymore.

---

“Look who finally decided to leave their sex cave!” Luna shouts from the couch as we finally get up to hydrate and eat something after a shared shower – to save water of course. Okay, maybe it’s been
two showers. But she’s really hot and I can’t help myself.

I groan and hide my face in the crook of Lexa’s neck in embarrassment.

But she just laughs. “You’re just jealous.”

Luna shrugs. “Maybe. Sounded like a great night.”

*She did not just say that.*

“Perv.” Lexa shoots back and leads me to the kitchen. “Ignore her, please.”

“She probably recorded us and put it on YouTube or something.” I bury my face in my hands at this thought.

That would be a nightmare.

Lexa laughs. “No, she wouldn’t do that. Pancakes?”

“You’ve got no time for that. You have to be at work in like… ten minutes.”

“Damn.” Lexa’s face hovers close to mine, effectively terminating every chance to have pancakes for breakfast.

“How about I drive you to work and we pick something up on our way?”

“Can’t get enough of me, hm?”

“Never.” I stare right back at her, fighting the urge to close the distance between us. I’m not going to be the one who’s giving in. Not this time at least.

Lexa sighs. “*Clarke.*”

“What?”

“You’re making it really hard.”

I shrug. “Not my problem if the almighty Commander can’t keep it in her pants.”

“If I recall correctly it was you who dragged me back into the shower.”

“Just because you’re a tease. And you looked really sexy in those jeans.”

“Yeah, I can forget about those sexy jeans now, thanks to you.” She answers, but she doesn’t really seem to mind that they’re wet now. At least not enough to stop her hands from wandering below my shirt, where they caress the skin.

I contemplate losing as I stare at her lips. They’re very kissable. And tempting. And close. And I -

“Damnit get a room. You’re disgusting!” Luna announces loudly.

Lexa groans at the sudden interruption.

This time it’s Lexa who hides her face in my neck, but she makes good use of her embarrassment because she presses a kiss on a mark she left on my body last night. Lexa really enjoys marking her territory.
When she pulls back, her smiling eyes search mine before glancing down at my lips.

“Come on, I’ll drive you to work.” I say, my throat a little dry – contrary to my panties. They’re already far from dry again.

“Do I have to go?”

“You do. And I need to write a little. Come on.”

---

I watch Lexa’s figure disappear behind the door of Anya’s animal shelter, trying hard to suppress a smile – or maybe more of grin (the freshly-fucked-kind as Raven loves to call it). Making out in a car is far more tempting since last night. It’s as if we opened flood gates. Honestly, I feel like I’m my horny seventeen year old self again.

“Clarke!” I squint against the sunlight before I’m able to find out who’s been calling for me. “Becca! Hey, how are you doing?”

“Oh it’s so nice to see you! I’m good, thanks.” Lexa’s mother replies with a warm smile, as I let myself be wrapped in an embrace. “I was just thinking about you.”

“You were?”

She nods. “Are you up for a cup of coffee?”

“Yeah, why not.” I’m probably not able to write one word anyways. Not without thinking about last night.

_Last night._ The thought makes me grin even wider.

I follow Becca back into town in my own car and we sit down outside of a small café across from the bookstore my Dad loved to go. Somehow everything’s still connected to him. But contrary to a few years ago now it’s nice to think about him. It doesn’t hurt as much as it used to.

“Tell me. How are you doing?” She asks, sporting a motherly smile. She’s gotten older, that much is clearly visible, but she’s still got the same soft eyes.

“Great, actually. It’s always been good to come home again, but with her everything feels different, you know? Better. It’s more of a home now.”

Becca smiles warmly.

I don’t remember everything that has happened after Lexa and I broke up, except running home from school and not leaving my room for days. What I do remember is that Becca was the one who told my Mom what happened, after she couldn’t get a word out of me. Somehow, I’m still thankful for that.

“And how is Lexa? I haven’t seen her a lot these past days and with the bus and all I just… I’m worried about her.”

“That’s hard to tell. There are good days and bad ones. But she’s opening up to her therapist and I think that’s changing things for her.”

The older woman nods. “There’s a time for everything. And maybe it’s finally time for her to heal.”
“I hope so.”
Last night felt like the first time Lexa took her armor off and I hope she never has to carry it again,
because there’s such a wonderful human being hiding behind it and I love every inch of that person.
…


Chapter Notes

hey guys :)  
I'm still sorry for missing last Saturday, but the last few days have been somehow weird and confusing and (as you may have seen) I finally settled on the number of chapters this will have. 62. Weird number.
I hopefully will answer all the questions you guys might still have in the remaining 5 chapters. I've been thinking about how to end this story for a while and let me tell you: I HATE WRITING ENDINGS. There. I said it. I'm never satisfied with anything I wrote (yes, I'm a perfectionist in case you didn't already know), so that's a huge reason, but... This has been going for a while and it has become a part of my life somehow.
Yeah. Anyways.
The point is: if you have any questions, please tell me, because I have like ten different Clexa-stories in my head and it's possible that I miss something and I'd hate that. AND: an ending for this story doesn't mean there won't be more. Their story before this, one-shots, ... Everything's possible!
I'll let you read now <3  
Love,
LJT.
---

…

I’ve been scared to be called out on that famous glow people are said to get after sex for exactly one time in my life. The day after I lost my virginity to Lexa Woods that winter day during my senior year of highschool.

Most of all, I was scared that my parents would see through it, because we had a dinner planned with both families and I… God, I was glowing. Lexa noticed, of course, but only because she wore the same radiant smile the whole day – like we knew a secret no one else knew. We sort of did, of course. Maybe my Mom noticed too, but even if she did she never said anything and I am grateful for that to this day.

Today it’s pretty much the same, except that there seems to be a glow in my voice to, because as soon as I pick up the phone, Raven starts laughing hysterically, before she shouts: “You got laid! Finally!”

“What? No?” It’s a poor attempt and I’m mostly trying to get away with it, because having that conversation in the hallway of Lexa’s apartment building doesn’t seem appealing.

“Oh come on, Clarke, there’s no use in denying that certain tone you get. I know you, remember? And hell, I spent months watching you discover the infinite lands of sex with Woods, so spare me the lies, you late bloomer.”

Even though she’s miles and miles away, I can’t fight the blush. Yeah, Lexa and I did have a lot of sex back then. We were teenagers.
I unlock the front door and kick it shut behind me, as I try to balance the bags in my arms at the same time. Finally, I manage to drop them onto the kitchen counter with a huff. I’m one of those who don’t believe in multiple runs, but in creative stacking and a good amount of luck. So far it worked.

“You still there?”

“Yes. I’m…”

Raven laughs. “God, you’re such a prude sometimes. How was boning Woods after such a long time? Was she good? A lot of pent up sexual tension, hm? And don’t even let me get started on the amount of catching up you have to do.”

“Rae, you did not just ask that.” I put her on speaker and place the phone next to the bags, while I start unpacking. A part of me wants to end the call right there, but I’m still grinning, because… Yeah, lots of catching up.

And is it weird that I’m happy Raven called me out on it?

“Oh, I did. And you’re going to answer, because other way I’ll fly over and stalk you until you do.”

“Nope. I’m not asking about Bell and you either.”

“That’s because I tell you without you asking because I am a great friend!” She says, emphasizing the I.

I groan, fighting against the image of my two best friends having sex with each other. That’s something you don’t want to think about, not even when you’re an adult. Hell, I grew up with them.

Suddenly there’s a knock on the door.

“Rae, I gotta go, there’s someone at the door. I guess it’s Luna, can we talk later?”

“You’re not getting away that easily, Griffster.”

“Yeah, yeah. Talk to you soon, okay? Love you.”

“Love you too.”

I end the call and head for the door, but when I pull it open it’s not Luna.

“Surprise!” Raven yells, her phone in one hand, before she throws her arms around my neck, effectively making me stumble backwards. She lets go of me as quickly as she attacked me, giving me a scolding look. “Now spill! I want all the juicy details!”

“Hello to you too.” I answer dryly. “How are you? I’m good and you? Great! What are you doing here?”

Raven snorts and aims for the couch without hesitation, like she owns the place. “I’m here for you!” She exclaims, making a dramatic face. “I wanted to woo you and maybe fight a duel with Woods for your love. But I’m too late it seems, since she already got your cookie.”

I roll my eyes at her, heading for the kitchen to grab something to drink for us. “You’re such an idiot.”

“Tell me something I don’t already know. When will she be back?”
“Two hours.” I say, glancing at my father’s watch around my wrist.

“Perfect. Now come here and spill. I didn’t fly all the way out here for nothing.”

“For the record, you came here because of Bell.” I hand her a glass of coke, before I plop down next to her, getting ready for the talk I won’t be able to avoid anyways.

“Maybe. Maybe not.” She grins. “I’m still waiting.”

“Okay. It was great. She’s great. Can we change the topic now?”

Raven raises both eyebrows. “Great. Is that all I get? Come on.”

I exhale loudly. It was worth a try, right? “What do you want to know?”

The Latina grins widely, when she realizes that I’ve given in. “On a scale from 1 to 10. How good was it?”

“Twenty.”

“How often?”

“Really?”

She stares me down.

“Five.”

She whistles. “And on a scale of 1 to 10. How needy are you?”

I hit her with a pillow.

“Okay, that desperate? She must be good.”

“Are we done now?”

“I just enjoy torturing you.”

“Wrong choice of words.” I remark, a bit snappier than I intended too.

“I’m sorry.”

“How’s Bell? I haven’t really spoken to anyone these past few days.”

“He’s good. He’ll take me out on a date tonight, we’re going all in. It feels… right, you know? Never thought I’d have that.”

“Makes us two.”

“Aww, look at you! Getting all dreamy. It’s like we’re back in highschool!”

I certainly feel like that.

---

Barely two hours later I can hear Paul and Ellie running up the stairs, only to be scolded by Lexa in a loving (and therefore completely ineffective) tone for not waiting for her.
“Oh, the wifey.”

I hit Raven with a pillow as I get up. Sometimes I ask myself why I’m friends with her. But the Latina just chuckles and watches me walking to the door.

“Hey.” I greet Lexa with a smile. Damnit. How does she manage to look at me like this?

“Hey.” She kisses my forehead and sneaks her arms around my lower back to pull be closer. “I missed you.”

“Missed you too.” I mumble into her neck.

Paul’s barking reminds me that we’re not alone.

“Raven’s here.”

“Not how I planned the evening to go.” I could swear there’s a hint of disappointment in Lexa’s green eyes.

“Later.” I whisper with a mischievous grin, before I connect our lips in a real kiss. With last night still being present in the back of our heads, it turns deep and passionate within a matter of seconds.

Her fingers sneak below my shirt and brush bare skin, ripping a quiet gasp from my throat. “How about we throw her out and I take you on a date?” She mumbles against my lips, a smug look on her face.

“How about we throw her out, we skip the date and go for desert right away?”

“Sounds right to me.”

I pull back, grab Lexa’s hand and drag her towards the living room.

“Hello, Raven.” Lexa greets her, her fingers dipping into the back pocket of my jeans, as we stand there. We’re probably glowing with anticipation, but neither of us really cares about it right now.

“Hey, Lexa.”

Okay, this is taking way too long.

“Rae, I’m sorry, but you have to go now. We’ll talk tomorrow.”

Judging from the way my best friend looks at me, she’s not mad. If all, she’s amused. “Sure thing.” Raven answers with a shit eating grin and gets on her feet. “Have fun, you two.”

“You can show yourself out, can’t you?” Lexa throws back over her shoulder while she’s already dragging me towards her bedroom.

Raven’s reply barely reaches my ears, but I could swear she mumbles something about “opened floodgates”, but Lexa’s hand settle on my hips and she’s biting her bottom lip in that way that drives me crazy before she seals our lips with a bruising kiss and I don’t care about anything else.

“What do you want for desert, Miss Griffin?” Lexa teases, as I pull my shirt over my head and throw it somewhere without care.

“You.” I say, tugging her closer by the belt loops of her jeans. “Right now.”
“Wouldn’t have figured.”

“Shut up and kiss me.”

“Your wish is my-”

...
Hey,
you still out there?
Next chapter on tuesday or wednesday, I'm not sure yet. We're almost there, guys. Feels weird. But it's time to let this one go, I think.

...

Clarke’s body falls onto the mattress next to me completely spent. “Oh my god.” She pants breathlessly. “That was…”

“Mhm.” I hum, unable to form words.

Without looking at her I know she’s got the same radiant smile on her face that I couldn’t get rid of all day. It has even caused an interrogation from my sister, but I don’t care. I’m happy. I could shout it from all the rooftops in the world. I would, if Clarke asked me to.

“You know, dessert was the best part of our date.”

I laugh. “You could say that.”

“And you know what’s the best thing about this kind of dessert?”

I meet her gaze, already knowing what’s going to come next.

“We’re never out of it.”

“I knew why I like you, Griffin.”

“So you only like me for dessert, yeah?” Clarke rolls over onto her stomach, facing me in all her naked glory. “I can live with that right now.”

“If you say desert one more time, you won’t be getting any for a long, long time.”

She chuckles. “You’re hungry, aren’t you?”

“Hey, everyone needs sustenance. And you’re pretty insatiable.”

“You didn’t seem to mind a minute ago.”

“Oh, believe me, I’m willing to starve any time if it means, and I can’t believe I’m going to say that, if it means having dessert with you.”

Clarke bursts into laughter, burying her face in my shoulder. “You're adorable.”

“But”, I continue unfazed by her mocking tone, “If you want more, you need to feed me first.”

She sighs, sending shivers through my body as her breath meets my skin, before rolling over onto her
back again. “Sounds fair. Give me a few minutes first. I still can’t feel my legs, you know? Then you have yourself a deal.”

I roll over too, only to sneak my arm around her stomach, nuzzling my face into the crook of her neck while she pulls me closer. She smells of sex and my shampoo. There’s something primal about this fact that makes me grin from ear to ear. I didn’t know I had this side.

“Sounds good to me.”

Clarke hums, her fingers ghosting over my shoulder, tracing a small scar with her fingertips.

I can’t be close enough to her. If I could stay like this for all eternity – naked, in this bed, with her body pressed against mine so closely that I can’t say where she ends and where I begin. I’ve never felt safer in my life.

“I love you.” I whisper, listening to her heartbeat.

Clarke’s hold on me tightens. “I love you too, Lex.”

-----

A while later I blink myself back into consciousness. I’ve fallen asleep and now the sheets next to me are cold, which means she’s been gone for a while.

Before my brain starts spinning, I hear her talking to Luna. Yawning, I get up and pull on a pair of sweats and a large t-shirt, before I pad out into the hallway.

Clarke’s standing in the kitchen, with her hair pulled up in a messy bun, working on something that smells like pasta, while looking at a photo that Luna shows her.

“And this was about two years ago. See that guy? That’s Roan.” Luna says. “Hey, Commander.”

Clarke’s head whips around. She hasn’t heard me, but Luna’s instincts are out of this world. “Hey Commander.” She replies, wearing nothing but a toothy grin, one of my shirts and a pair of sweats. “What’s with the nickname anyways?”

“It’s just that, a stupid nickname.” I answer, walking up behind the blonde to press a kiss into her neck. “What are you looking at?”

“Not stupid.” Luna disagrees. “Your girlfriend wanted to see pictures of you in a uniform. And by pure chance I happen to have lots of them.” She hands me a stack of photos.

I can feel both pairs of eyes looking at me, waiting for a reaction as I flip through them. There’s Roan, Lincoln, Artigas and Ryder around a bonfire, laughing and joking about something I can’t remember. Then there’s me with an arm around Luna’s shoulders. Then me with a bunch of kids. All six of us in front of a school.

“I haven’t seen those in a while.” I say with a soft smile. Looking at those pictures leaves a warm feeling in my stomach. It’s good. “Feels like another lifetime.”

“It was somehow.” Luna replies, taking back the photos.

I sneak my arms around Clarke’s waist, completely content with my life right now. “What are you making?”

“Pasta caprese. My dad’s favorite.”
And that’s how true happiness feels.

---

“So, what’s the story behind that nickname?”

We’re sitting in the living room, all three of us. Each one of us had too much to eat and we’re too full to move, so we just stayed on the couch or the floor in my case.

“Clarke.” I whine, while her fingers run through my hair.

“Stop fuzzing, Lex. I’m just braiding your hair.” She replies, completely unaware of the fact that I’m not fuzzing over her intentions on giving me a new hairstyle. “What’s with the nickname?”

Luna chuckles. “There’s actually two parts to the story. Her first unit used nicknames as some sorts of codes. That’s the name they gave her. But it became our thing, when we had a night off. We were out for drinks and you probably know how she gets when she’s drunk.”

„Hello? I’m here.“

„Oh yes! Talkative and really adorable.“

„Yes, and then she blacks out. So we thought, why not use the opportunity and play a joke on her.“ Luna giggles at the death glare I shoot her. „We smudged her makeup and made it look like a raccoon, aiming to tease her about her love for those animals.“

I groan, still embarrassed by my attempt to recover from the joke the played on me. But in my defense: I had a massive hangover, okay?

„When she woke up and saw her reflection in the mirror, she shot me a death glare, similar to this one right now. And then she said it looks more like ancient warpaint than a raccoon, before thanking me for making the Commander look badass.“ Luna recounts with a wide grin. „That’s when Lincoln came up with the idea to add whatever you want. Commander Grumpy for example.“

Clarke glances down at me with a serious expression on her face, before she presses a kiss on my head. „Commander Hearteyes.“

I groan. „Traitor.“

„I can totally see it.“ Luna comments.

„I hate you both.“

Luna laughs, before meeting my eyes. Her smile turns into something else, something I can’t really name. „No. In all seriousness.“ She says, holding my gaze as she speaks. „Commander is a title we use with respect. None of the units she was part of has lost a man or woman during her time there. She’s the best I’ve ever worked with and it was an honor to serve with her.“

I mouth a quiet thank you, which is answered with a smile, while Clarke’s hands sneak back into my hair to continue her work. She doesn’t say anything, but I’m sure she has a dozen questions. Someday soon I’m going to answer them all. But for now I want to keep living in our bubble of happiness a little longer.

“I’m going to go sleep, I have to cover the early shift tomorrow.” Luna announces a moment later, getting on her feet in one swift motion. “Good night, you two.”
“Night, Luna. And thanks for showing me the pictures.”

Luna smiles. “Sure.”

“Sleep well.” I add.

“You too. And don’t worry about me, I’m a sleeping dead.” She adds with a smirk. She doesn’t catch me rolling my eyes anymore.

“She’s a great friend.”

“Yeah, she is.” I confirm, thinking about all the moments she had my back in the past, before a sudden yawn overcomes me. “Are you done soon? My ass is getting sore and I could really use some sleep.”

Clarke chuckles. “Almost.”

…
Chapter 60 - Lexa.

I’m up early on this Saturday morning, going for a run while Clarke is still peacefully asleep in my bed.

It’s like sky gave me a look, silently calling me outside for a run, while the earth hasn’t awoken yet. Not really at least.

The air is colder now that it’s autumn, a lot colder, and I can see every breath I take in the air. It reminds me of the runs I did around the camp overseas, back in the desert, where the nights where freezing and the days could burn you alive.

I remember thinking about how the mornings seemed so peaceful, while the days and nights where that cruel. I guess war is a part of who we humans are. In the past that thought used to weigh me down, but now I’ve come to accept it.

There’s good things too. And where I thought the good and the bad in the world would hold a balance, I think the good is the greater part. At least that’s what I want to believe in.

I take a route through the park, my feet hitting the ground in a steady rhythm. I get lost in some music, falling into the even beat like all those times I ran here before. Only now I see a lot of things differently. A lot of things have changed for me – for the better.

At home Clarke will be waiting for me.

It’s getting easier to sleep through the night. Sure, there are still nightmares and there probably will be for the rest of my life, but… It’s okay, because I no longer feel trapped in my past.

I finally found a way to let other people in.

Ten years later I finally feel like I belong somewhere again, like this here, this town with its people and places is a home.

---

After a long shower and a breakfast with Clarke, I take off to work. I feel like I need to make up for all the hours I missed, so I’m a bit early and start cleaning the kennels before Anya arrives.

There’s a smile on her face, when she spots me in work clothes, so I know I did the right thing.

“Look who the cat dragged in.” She teases.

“Haha. Very funny.”

“You’re not spending the weekend with your girlfriend then?”
I don’t answer to that, but I playfully roll my eyes and shove her away, as she bumps into my shoulder.

Then I think about Indra’s offer. “Hey, sis?”

Anya stops in the middle of her way to her office. “Yeah?”

“I need next week off.”

“How?”

“Indra wants me to give a lecture. I’m going to do it.”

I can see the wheels spinning in her head at those news. “Indra?” She repeats.

“Yeah.”

“And you’re sure about this?”

I nod. “Clarke’s coming with me. It feels okay, I’m actually a bit excited. Nervous too, yes, but…” I leave the sentence unfinished and focus on her face, which quickly morphs from surprise to skepticism to pride.

“Sounds great.”

“Yeah.”

“The whole week?”

“If that’s possible, yes.”

Anya smiles. “I managed all this without you for years, I guess one week won’t kill me.”

“Really?”

“Really. Sounds important, so do it.”

Lead by a feeling I close the distance between us and wrap my arms around my sister for a moment, ignoring that she’s not a hugger and her protest too.

“Thank you.” I tell her quietly.

It’s not just a thank you for the upcoming week. It’s for everything and I’m sure she knows it.

Anya sniffs, wiggling herself out of the embrace with a shy smile, before wiping her eyes. She really can’t deal with affection. “Argh. Feelings. Emotions. Stop it.”

“You’re not fooling anyone, you know that, right?”

“Pff. Get back to work, Woods. You owe me couple of hours.”

“Sir, yes, Sir!” I fake salute, wearing a wide grin on my face that Anya returns, before she rolls her eyes.

---

Around lunchtime we’re back to our usual seating arrangement in our office – I’m sitting like an
actual normal human being in my chair with my feet under the table, while hers are placed firmly on the table as she leans back and devours the Chinese takeout she got us.

I swear, I’m going to get fat from all the trash we eat.

We normally don’t talk much while we eat and if we do it’s mostly about work, so when Anya speaks up in that strange tone, I perk up immediately.

“Lexa?”

“Hm?”

“Remember that day you came out to me?”

“Sure.” I reply, unsure of where she’s going with this.

-  

It’s Christmas day during my sophomore year, a few months after I finally accepted the truth that my crushes on girls weren’t just normal teenage jealousy and that staring at Clarke Griffin’s boobs during math (and every other class we share) was a sign that I might be a lot, but straight would never be one of those characteristics.

It’s late night and we’re laying on my bed, staring up at the ceiling like we used to do a lot before Anya went to college the end of summer.

I miss her. Talking over the phone just doesn’t compare to this.

“Have you met some cute boy already?”

I barely swallow down my surprise, together with a good portion of shock. Anya isn’t one to ask about stuff like that. We’re not really great talkers, more like… the best when it comes to sharing silence.

“No. I haven’t.”

“So, no one’s asked you out? What’s wrong with them boys? You’re single, you’re sexy and not dumb either.”

It feels weird to be called “sexy” by my own sister. I’m not. I’m… normal. Almost no pimples, I’m a fan of everything fitness related and I know how to use makeup – it’s enough.

“Some asked me out.” I reply quietly.

“But?”

None of them has boobs?

I don’t answer. What could I say? That I turned them down, because I’m hopelessly gay for my nemesis-kind-of, freaking hot, blonde neighbor, and I’d never admit that?

Anya frowns. I know she does without turning my head to look at her.

For a while it’s quiet.

Then, “You’re gay, aren’t you?”
And I should be scared, terrified even, but I wasn’t. Because for once it felt like I could breathe again.

It’s not that my parents are homophobic or would have a problem with me being gay. I just wasn’t ready to accept it myself. Not until tonight, until this very moment. This quiet and seemingly ordinary moment.

“Yeah.” I whisper quietly to the room. “I’m a lesbian.”

There. I said it. I said it out loud to someone, not just to my room or to the image in the mirror.

“Well, what about cute girls then? Anyone caught your eye?”

I exhale, not realizing that I had been holding my breath. Anya’s casual reaction is almost too perfect. I pictured dozens of different endings for that conversation, but none went like this. Funny, that the mind always comes up with the worst-case scenarios and not the best-case ones.

“Maybe.”

“Is she a good one?”

“She is.”

“I thought about it a lot these past few days.”

“Why’s that?”

I can’t find a connection between this memory and anything recent.

“Ever since you came back from the war, it felt like you were… I don’t know… afraid. Afraid of the world, of anything.” She replies after a few seconds of staring into her noodles. “It reminded me of the time before you came out. It’s like you were scared to accept who you are again.”

I never saw it that way. In my head I never found the words to actually explain it like she just did. I didn’t see the similarities either. But that doesn’t mean they weren’t there.

Being openly gay isn’t that huge of a problem as it was thirty years ago maybe – still it was for me.

You grow up with the pictures of normal, “perfect” families – father, mother, two kids, a dog and a backyard. Those kinds of pictures.

And then you notice things about yourself. That you can’t imagine kissing boys, that you find yourself thinking that girls are way more beautiful, …

It makes you feel like an alien, like a stranger in someone else’s skin.

Coming back from war the way I did – I felt pretty much the same. Confused, trapped in a weird mind and body, unsure of everything I said and did, afraid that people might see the real me – the broken and damaged one, the one that just couldn’t move past all of this.

It’s not the same and yet similar to me.

“Just a thought I had.” She shrugs. “Don’t know if-“
“You’re right.”

Anya looks up to meet my eyes. “Yeah?”

“Yeah.” I reply with a reassuring smile.

I think about her words, the past week, the last years. Pretty much everything that happened since that somehow fateful night when I came out to her.

I never would’ve thought that my life turns out like this. But that isn’t a bad thing, because I’m definitely in a good place now.

-----

“Octavia was here today.” Clarke tells me later, while we’re making dinner.

“Yeah? What did she want?”

“She wanted to tell you that Cage and his minion are going to jail for quite some time. It’s official.” She stares at me, waiting for a reaction.

I’m not sure how to take this information. I thought he would, but… actually hearing it makes a difference. That guy hurt many people, not just me, and not just physically.

“That’s good news.”

“It is. The judge was military herself and she’s quite famous for her support to the LGBT movement, so that’s going to add some time to the judgment, I think. I have to be honest, I’m a bit relieved that this dickhead won’t be running around for a while.” Clarke hands me a large wooden spoon. “Here, hold that for a moment.”

“Me too.” I answer, watching her adding a few spices to the sauce with meticulous care. She’s a perfectionist, even though she always denies it.

“How was your day?”

“I had a great talk with Anya.”

She looks up from her task with a smile. “Yeah?”

I nod, thinking about how on some days it feels like everything falls into place. Being here, cooking dinner with her, talking about what’s going on in our lives… There’s something beautiful about it.

“To be honest, she still scares me.”

“Don’t tell her that, but she scares me too. Sometimes.”

Clarke chuckles, taking the spoon back, before resuming to work on our dinner. I don’t know what it’ll be yet, but I’m sure it’ll be amazing.

“Is there anything I can help you with?”

“Go, take a shower.”

“Are you saying I stink?”
Another laugh, before she leans in and connects our lips in a short and soft kiss.

“No.” She answers then, her face close enough so that I can feel her words meeting my lips.

It’s like I can taste her without tasting her and it drives me mad, she knows that. I actually shiver and I’d be embarrassed about it, hadn’t I already accepted that she is my weakness years ago.

Her next words are even worse. “But I plan on doing bad things to you later and I love your shampoo.”

My heart skips a beat.

“Yuk!” Luna groans from the living room. “Sterilize the kitchen!”

“Shut up!” I shout back, barely catching the smirk on Clarke’s lips.

_Yup, definitely a good place._

…
Two days later.

The rustling of the bed sheets next to me rips me out of my thoughts quite abruptly. Then Clarke’s confused voice breaks the silence of the night again. “What are you doing down there?”

“I couldn’t sleep.” I explain, even though that’s not really an explanation for why I’m lying on the hard floor, next to the bed I’m supposed to share with her.

We’re at the base, in an unused quarter Indra gave us for the few days we’re staying. I spent the whole day showing Clarke around and getting to know the soldiers I’ll be working with for the next days.

Only today I realized that those men and women are the next generation. Our successors. It’s weird to think about it that way, but it’s strangely okay at the same time and I’m glad to be here to see all of this from a new perspective.

Clarke chuckles softly. “You know that’s not an answer, right?”

“It reminds of the nights in the desert. Some of them were really, really breathtaking. The stars, the silence. It’s mystical and somewhat primal maybe. Just you under the endless night-sky. It has always calmed my mind.”

She doesn’t answer right away, instead there’s more rustling and then her bare feet hit the floor right next to me. “Scoot over.”

“You don’t have to, the floor’s uncomfortable, I can-”

“I said scoot over, Woods. Move.” She insists, her tone offering no room for discussion. “Besides, the bed isn’t any better.”

I do as I’m told, trying to calm my heartbeat as her bare shoulder brushes against mine – I’ve a hormonal teenager ever since we started having sex again and the slightly questionable part about it is that I don’t care.

But she may be right about the bed.

“Are you okay?” Clarke whispers a moment later. “With being here?” It’s not the first time she has asked me that today.

“I’m good.”
“No nightmares?”

“No. I just… It’s weird to see it from the other side. The safe one, you know? Talking about overseas is different than knowing that you’re going there soon or actually being there. And not all of those guys will see their families again.”

Her fingers brush mine before she intertwines them. “But thanks to you more of them will.”

“You talked to Luna again, haven’t you?”

Another chuckle, quieter this time, and I can feel her shrugging her shoulder. “Maybe?”

“I swear, the two of you give me headaches. Do you have to share all my embarrassing moments with each other? Isn’t it enough that one of you knows about them?”

“Nope. Besides, some of your embarrassing moments are really cute.”

“They’re not.”

“They are.”

“Clarke.” I whine.

“Lexa.” She whines back in the same tone, before we both start to laugh.

That’s the thing about her, she always makes me feel lighter.

“I hope to make a difference.” I answer her previous comment after a long moment of silence. “I mean, some of them show potential from what I’ve read in their files. I’m not sure what Indra’s expecting me to do, but I guess I’ll learn that tomorrow. Or today.” I add with a look at the alarm clock resting on the nightstand above me. “It’s going to be strange. I could never imagine being a teacher and now I am, somehow.”

“You’re going to do great.”

“You think so?” I turn my head to look at her, trying to make out her eyes, but there’s nothing to see in the darkness. So I stare back at the ceiling, enjoying the feeling of her hand in mine.

“I do.”

I raise our hands and press a kiss against her knuckles. “Thanks for being here. I wouldn’t be strong enough to face this without you.”

“You would.”

“No.” I disagree, shaking my head vehemently. “A few weeks ago, I couldn’t even speak, not even with my family. You changed that, Clarke. You changed it all.” I know she’s blushing without seeing her face, but I wish I did because then she could see mine too – and the sincerity in it.

Clarke doesn’t say anything.

So we just lay there, on the hard floor, next to the bed that’s not much better.

And I think about how far I’ve come since Luna and my people rescued me out of that hellhole. Since that hospital bed that nearly would’ve been my deathbed because of the infection. Since rehab. Since that highschool reunion, during which I had a panic attack in the bathroom.
These thoughts keep crossing my mind more often.

“Lex?”

“Hm?”

“I’m sorry for giving up on us back then. I know you made that decision to join on your own, but you wouldn’t have done so if we still had been together. We would’ve gone to college together, you would’ve played tennis and I would’ve studied medicine.”

“Clarke-”

But she squeezes my hand. “Let me say this, please.”

“Okay.”

“The point is, we would’ve lived a completely different life, you and I. But we have this one and in it you endured something horrible and I… Coming here made me realize that even more. And I know I shouldn’t, but a part of me feels guilty for that, because if I had listened to what you actually said, I-”

“Stop right there, Clarke.” I sit up and reach for the light switch next to the bed, because she needs to see my face for this.

Clarke sits up too, staring at me with an insecure and vulnerable expression on her face, looking so cute it that large shirt, without makeup.

“When Jake died on that street, it threw both of us off track. If learned something during my time in the military, it’s that everyone deals differently with death and everything that comes with it.” I say, thinking about the few losses I witnessed overseas. “I wanted to blame someone and I chose Jake, because it was easy to blame a dead man, way easier than to think about how the slippery the street was that night and way easier than to accept that sometimes things happen without a reason. We both made mistakes after that night. But don’t ever feel guilty about it, Clarke. Please, don’t. None of this is your fault.”

“But-”

“Did you hold the knife that caused those scars?”

She stares at me for a long moment, before she shakes her head.

“Did you hold my head under water?”

Clarke swallows, but she shakes her head again, eyes glassy now.

“No, you didn’t. I joined. I’d do it again, even if I had known what was to happen. I’d do it again, because I’ve saved lives. Lincoln’s alive because I was there. Luna is here, because I was there with her and I saw the trap before she did.” I pause, looking for the right words. “Coming back here today made me realize that. Don’t blame yourself for anything. We’re here now and nothing else matters anymore.”

After holding my gaze for a few seconds, she finally nods. “I love you. Have I told you that today?”

My smile is wide and toothy. “I don’t think so. But you’ve got… twenty-two hours left to repeat it again and again and again…”

Clarke chuckles.
I watch how her eyes trace every inch of my face, before her hand comes up to cup my jaw, her fingers grazing my earlobe just barely. The touch makes me shiver.

“I’m proud of you.” She then tells me quietly.

“For what?”

“For coming here. For the progress you’ve made these past few weeks. For letting me in.” She shrugs. There’s something sad in her eyes that makes her words seem even more thoughtful and attentive. “And I admire you for your strength.”

I stare at her for a few seconds, before I lean in to ghost a soft kiss on her lips.

There’s probably a hundred things I want to say to her, but none of them would do justice to what it means to me that she stayed despite all my problems. Coming home that damaged has taught me that staying isn’t self-evident.

So when I pull back, I know how to show her how much I appreciate it.

“I want to tell you about it.”

The words linger between us for a split second, before she understands the weight of them. I see the moment she does in her eyes.

“Are you sure?”

“Are you?” I reply. It would be okay if she isn’t. I don’t have to tell her. I’d like her to know all about me without exceptions, yes, but if she doesn’t want to bear the truth, she doesn’t has to. I’d absolutely understand.

“No.” She says honestly, shaking her head. “I’m not sure. But I want to know. No secrets.”

I nod. Sounds good to me. “Can we… go for a walk? I’m better at handling it when I can move.”

Clarke gets onto her feet immediately, a reassuring and affectionate smile on her lips. “Lead the way.”

I love her. I mean, I’ve known that before, but… it still amazes me. Only she would be willing to go for a walk at two in the morning and I… I love her.

…
Chapter Notes

Hello guys!
I'll keep this short and leave everything I want to say for the end-notes.
WARNING: mentions of torture, murder, pain in this chapter, but don't worry, it won't end with that :)

There's also a song mentioned - check it out here: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yWxH_Bn5Xk&list=PLw3FXUozGewbA6m1GzoDk2NcEqlANjXeQ&index=69

Enjoy!

Love,
LJT.
---

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

... "Where are you taking me?"
"You'll see."
"Lexa." I whine dramatically, making her laugh. "I hate exercising."
"I know you do."
"Then why are you making me do this?"
"Because you'll like the view."
"It's dark. What's there to see anyways?"

She just chuckles and I'm proud to make her do that, because what's about to come is heavy enough, so I try to take the weight of it for as long as this talk still lies ahead of us.

"Here it is." She finally announces, pulling me away from the little path we were following.

We're far away from the quarters where we're going to stay for the next few days.

Just a few steps later she guides me through a few lonesome trees and a small valley is revealed. It's glowing calmly in the pale moonlight, outlining the silhouettes exceptionally detailed.

My fingers itch to draw immediately.

"Wow. It's..."

"Yeah." Lexa confirms. "I discovered it on a run, a couple of weeks after I joined. It was my spot to
remind me of home.”

Peaceful silence hangs in the air after we’ve sat down in the grass. Lexa has her legs pulled up and her arms are resting loosely on her knees. What seems like a relaxed posture is nothing but nervousness in reality.

I watch her fingers ripping apart a few blades of grass, while I try to steel myself for what she’s about to tell me.

I’m not sure whether I want to know what happened to her for the sake of knowing or if I just want to know because she needs to tell me. Either way makes my heart clench, because logically I know what torture means. And I’ve seen the scars, I’ve explored each and every one of them, felt their structure, traced their shapes with my fingers and my lips.

Still it’s different.

Lexa exhales, before locking her eyes on the horizon. “We were on a mission. Luna, Lincoln, Artigas, Ryder, Roan and me. We were supposed to take out a leader of a splinter group of the Taliban, when we stumbled across a little boy, maybe six years old. We thought he was playing with a ball in that alley, but… it wasn’t a ball. It was a trap, they used him to lure us closer and…” Lexa pauses.

I can see the pain in her eyes and I don’t have to ask about the boy. Somehow I know he didn’t survive that day.

“Hell broke loose pretty quickly. Luna got shot.” Lexa continues, her voice surprisingly controlled and objective. “I managed to get her out of the crossfire, but we were outnumbered and there was no use in… I stayed behind and bought them time to get out.”

“You sacrificed yourself.” I don’t even notice I was speaking until Lexa looks up to meet my eyes. “You chose to give your life for the lives of your comrades and friends.”

“I did what I had to do for my people.”

I’m not surprised and a really huge part of me wants to punch her for doing that, but it sounds exactly like her. “That was brave. And stupid.”

Lexa chuckles, reading my thoughts like she’s never done anything else in her life. “Yeah, I know.” Slowly she reaches out for my hand and intertwines our fingers. “I got overwhelmed and ended up in a small cell. There was a small, barred window which made it possible to count the days. I’m sure that was done on purpose.” Lexa pauses, and I start drawing patterns on the back of her hand, trying to comfort her as far as she lets me. “My captor was a woman. Her name was Nia. She…” Lexa closes her eyes.

I can see her lips quivering for a moment, before she bites them. I wait, unsure of what to do, but she manages to calm herself after a few seconds.

“She thrived on pain.” She says. “I’m not sure if she wanted me to break or if she just enjoyed hurting me. She could’ve gone further, I think. But she gave me breaks and kept me hydrated enough to keep me going.”

I swallow, fighting the image of a bruised and broken Lexa lying in a dusty cell.

“She tried it all, experimenting with all kinds of tools. Knifes, fire, water. For the first days I thought I’d die there. I wanted to die. I thought the pain would kill me, but it didn’t.” She says, her voice
trembling a little. “And that’s when I decided not to give in. I couldn’t, I wouldn’t give her the satisfaction of breaking me. I found a place to go to in my head, where she couldn’t reach me.”

Trying hard to fight the urge to cry, I clench my jaw and wait for her next words.

Lexa turns her head to look at me, a sad smile tugging on her lips. “I thought about you.”

I remember her telling me about the picture. I’m grateful for giving that to her, if it meant that it kept her sane in times of unspeakable pain and fear of death.

“Without you I wouldn’t have made it.” Lexa adds quietly. She raises our hands and presses a kiss to my knuckles. I hadn’t realized that my hands had gotten cold and that they were shaking, but Lexa had, and she cups my face with her free hand, looking straight into my eyes. “You saved me without knowing it.”

We stay like that for a long and tender moment, soaking up the comfort the other is offering.

But Lexa isn’t done yet. “It took her a while to realize she wouldn’t break me by hurting me. So she found someone else.” Her grip on my hand tightens and she stares back at the horizon again. “She tortured someone else, right in front of my eyes. She… she killed him.”

My head is spinning, coming up with pictures without giving me a choice. Lexa, tied up on a wall, while a faceless woman with a cold laughter punches a faceless man. I don’t know if that’s what happened, but I don’t want to know.

I don’t even want those pictures in my head, but at the same time everything is making so much more sense now. The heaviness in Lexa’s green eyes, her shoulders which seemingly carried so much weight…

“I remember thinking about giving in, but… I couldn’t.” Lexa whispers. “Giving in would’ve meant that she kills me and I couldn’t die, I had to… I had to come back and see you, even if it was just for one time, as cliché as it sounds.” Another pause, longer this time.

As I wait for her to continue, my fingers rub soothing circles on the back of her hand. It’s something I can focus on, something that keeps me grounded.

When she speaks up again, her voice is cold, which could be taken as emotionless, but it’s not. It’s… broken and that’s what makes it worse for me. “It was the guilt I felt that finally broke me. The knowledge that my selfishness had killed a man.”

Tears are spilling from both our eyes now. I can’t imagine how she must feel thinking about this. How it must feel to be put into such a situation.

Only humans can be that cruel and while I look at her, I know that I’d willingly trade places with her, if it meant to take that weight off of her shoulders.

“Two days later my unit found me. I was barely conscious, and I wouldn’t have made it much longer.” Lexa sighs, looking down out our hands in her lap. “The first weeks back home were the worst. After surviving the infection and a severe pneumonia, I couldn’t sleep without high medication, I panicked because of the smallest things, screeching sounds, loud voices… For me being back was even worse than the torture itself, because I… I didn’t deserve coming home. I didn’t deserve surviving.”

“Yes, you did.” I say emphatically, taking her face in my hands to make her look at me. “Lexa, that woman, that monster put you in a position where you had to make an impossible choice! And you
said it yourself, she thrived on pain. Don’t you think she would’ve killed him no matter what?”

Green eyes find mine. They shine with tears and I wipe away the ones falling down her cheeks.

“It wasn’t your fault.”

“Sometimes I think you’re right. Moments like this one make me believe it. And sometimes I don’t. I’ll probably never shake those weeks, it’s just that… I want to.”

“You don’t have to.”

She looks at me with narrowed eyes. “What do you mean?”

“I mean that you don’t have to try to shake it. It’s part of who you are, but it doesn’t define you. Not more than your family does or the job you have or the music you listen to or the girl you date.” I tell her with a smile that’s reciprocated softly.

Reaching out to brush a few loose strands of hair behind her tiny little ear, I think about my next words carefully.

What I’m going to say next is important for her and I think that now she’s ready to hear them. A few weeks ago she wouldn’t have been, but now… Now she just might be.

“It’s three weeks of a year with fifty-two weeks.” I say quietly. “Three weeks of a lifetime. I’m not trying to downplay what happened to you, Lex, not one bit, but it’s not everything you are and it never will be. And if you let me, I’ll make sure the rest of our lives will be filled with as much happiness as possible, if that’s what you need.”

Lexa tilts her head, a curious expression on her face, as if she’s trying to find out if my words are true.

“Where did you come from?” She finally asks, smiling back at me.

“From next door.”

She laughs quietly, the sound finally lifting the weight of the situation, replacing it with a strange calmness, with complete understanding and closeness between us.

Lexa takes a deep breath and sighs. “Thank you.”

“You don’t have to-”

“Yes, I do and you’re going to accept it.”

“Fine.”

“Thank you for reminding me that I’m more than that story. Thank you for reminding me how it feels to be loved. Thank you for being so patient with me. Thank you for coming with me, for listening. For everything, I love you. I’m madly in love with you, Clarke Griffin.” She says, her words full of determination and passion.

Instead of an answer I lean in and kiss her.

She is more than those weeks. She’ll always be more than that, how could she not?

She’ll always be the first girl I loved.
And she’ll always be the woman that holds my heart. Simple as that. Except there’s nothing simple about us. But that’s what makes it even more beautiful in the end, right?

...THE END...

Epilogue - A few months later.

...

A simple smile.

Ten years have passed, and my knees still feel wobbly and my stomach still gets butterflies, when she smiles at me like that.

Time is a beautiful thing, I realize that now. It’s beautiful because in the end it brought us back together again. That’s what I think about, as I watch Lexa laughing over something Lincoln said across the bonfire between us.

I look at Raven and Bellamy, holding hands and sharing quiet whispers only for themselves. They found each other too.

Yes. As mysterious as time can be, in the end it’s worth it.

“Woods, are you up for a song?” Luna asks, letting herself fall down into the sand next to Lexa and Lincoln, holding a guitar in one hand, a beer in the other.

“Sure, why not.” Lexa grabs the guitar and strums a few chords, before her eyes lock onto mine over the flames and she smiles softly. “I already know a song.”

Everyone goes silent, but I wouldn’t notice if they shouted and screamed. It’s like this moment is only between Lexa and I, and maybe it is, who knows.

“This is for you, Clarke.” Lexa says, before she closes her eyes and the mellow sound of an unfamiliar melody floats through the air, only to be followed by her wonderful voice seconds later.

“You were mine, yeah, I always knew.
From the moment I first laid my eyes on you,
your blue eyes sparkled a perfect match for your dress.

You know I love it when your hair's messed up.
And the tightness in your eyes when you first wake up.
Let's play hide and seek in the comfort of blankets and sheets.

And all of my love for the rest of my life
will be only for you ‘til the day that I die
‘Til the day that I die.

Did you know I can still taste our first kiss?
The warmth of your breath,
the cool of your lips,
the softness of your fingertips on the back of my neck.

*And darling I still hear the words*
"To have and to hold until we grow old",
choking back tears of joy,
tears of joy.

*And all of my love for the rest of my life*
will be only for you 'til the day that I die,
'til the day that I die.
And all of my world it revolves around you.
There is no part of me that exists without you.
Yeah, I'm lost without you

*Hold me tightly in your arms,*
In your arms.
Breathe in deeply my love,
my love.
Hold me tightly in your arms,
in your arms.
Breathe in deeply my love,
my love.

*I was yours from the start*
Every breath and beat of my heart
Forever and always, you'll be
forever with me.”

…

Chapter End Notes

Hey guys :) I hate writing endings :D I hope this ending meets your expectations.

Let me say a few more things before I let you get back to your lives.
First of all: thank you to my lovely beta Lucie, who's slowly teaching me how to properly use punctuation in the English language. Thanks for your patience, I'm trying :D

Then: to those of you, who have been with me on this read since January, to those of you who joined me on the ride somewhere along the way, and to those who might discover this long after it's finished. I want to say thank you - for the comments, the kudos, for simply reading it and making it that far. <3

I know, I've said it before, but writing is my life and if there was a way for me to make a living from it, I'd do it in a heartbeat. Maybe, someday.
Until then I'll share it with you, if you let me.

This story was posted over the span of six months and a lot of things happened during this time in my life (not just writing in a language that isn't my native language).
I'm trying to find out how I fit in this world, who I am and who I want to be, maybe now more than ever before. But writing keeps me grounded when everything else makes me feel like shit. Sharing it with the world - and literally the world - makes me feel like I'm not alone and on some days that's all I need.

This ending doesn't have to be and ending for this story forever. I've got a few chapters of their teenage-years written out, I've got a few ideas for one-shots and stuff. Stay subscribed, if you're interested in those kind of things.

If you've read this far, let me give you a virtual hug wherever you are. I wish you the best, may we meet again!
Until then, one last goodbye from Germany for now, take care of yourself! <3

Love,
Laura.

Please drop by the archive and comment to let the author know if you enjoyed their work!