Hospital/Medical Field AU

Lexa has been floating through life, trying to get a job, trying to find love. Clarke is tired of living a life that doesn't make her happy. This is the story of how they meet, how they hurt, how they love, and how they find each other despite life trying to get in the way.

Meet - check
Flirt - check
Chase - check
Live happily ever after? work in progress...

Notes

ah, what to say about this...

I guess I will let the work speak for its self and hope it captures a few readers attention.
If I have my way, this story will be long. However with that being said, it may take a few chapters to get into the swing of putting thoughts on paper and such. See you on the other side.
6:44 P.M.

*I have one minute. Damn.* Lexa thought groggily.

The last light of the day filtered piercingly through the cheap blinds highlighting dust particles and cat hair drifting lazily and with all the condescension of a cleaning job not well done.

The alarm starts screeching as Lexa pulls herself out of bed. Curly hair in disarray. She stumbles to her small bathroom to brush her teeth and hair in preparation for her first 12 hour shift of the week.

Working as a nurses aid wasn’t exactly in her life long plan of success, sports cars, and video games, but hey, it paid well. *Unfortunately no one else will pay my bills,* she thought wryly.

Besides, meeting different people and hearing their stories was always entertaining, and getting to know them throughout the night and into the morning hours was an excellent way to pass the time.

Today’s shift will be another round of endless cups of water, vital signs, and “*ma’am, can you get the nurse?*”

*I just hope i get to work on the GI floor today, I’m pretty sure Echo works tonight.* Lexa pondered the idea of having a quiet night with absolutely zero excitement with her old friend. Out loud she said, “Zeus, you lazy shit!”

A very large maine coon cat cracked his eyes to glare at her. After a lazy flick of the tail, he rose and approached yawning.

“Yeah, o’ so important one.” Lexa grinned. Zeus was a special cat. She took him in one rainy morning roughly a year ago. She was enjoying the sound of the rain and had her door open to bask in nature’s soft sounds when her ears picked up on a neighbor returning home. He was on his cell phone as he got out of his truck and Lexa could hear his conversation through her open door.

“I can hear it! Dude this is freaking me out, I really don’t like cats” Lexa went outside to see what was going on when she heard faint meows from the truck.
The neighbor popped his hood and the meows got louder. Lexa could recall the amazement she felt at the little kitten being alive after being under the hood of a vehicle that has been driven for who knows how long. The man grabbed Zeus and tossed him carelessly aside and ran for the comfort of his apartment.

A demanding growl broke her from her thoughts.

“Sorry, sorry.” Lexa said. She found her unappealing hunter green scrubs, donned them, scratched Zeus on head as she entered her kitchen. After feeding Zeus and grabbing an ice cold Red Bull from her fridge, she sat down in front of her computer. As had become her habit of late, she pulled up the university website to check the status of her application to OT school.

Occupational Therapy was the universe’s olive branch to Lexa when she had just about given up on a career. Getting paid good money to help people learn how to live again was something she didn’t know she needed until a random school email detailing the new program was sent out to the entire school 6 months ago.

That is how Lexa started her day, checking the status of her application, and everyday until now it had been the same. Processing. Today it read, Processed. Such a small change but it held such significance. Or so she thought.

Lexa took a deep breath and closed her eyes trying to calm her nerves and prepare herself for yet another let down. When she opened them, she realized there was not a place for her to find out more information.

Sighing she closed her laptop and ripped her phone off the charger. Lexa knew without looking at a clock that it was time to leave for work at the hospital, however all she could think about was her application. It would be a four year program, and she would have to work and go to school full time in order to survive, but she had been in worse situations before.

I just have to get into the program, and the rest will take care of itself, she thought.

She took one step towards her ‘96 Jeep Cherokee and a stray curl fell in her face.

“My hair!” she shrieked. Turning back towards her apartment she let herself in and rushed to the bathroom to find a hair tie.
I might as well cut it, I only ever wear it up anyway. She toyed with the idea of cutting her hair the entire way to work and up to the fourth floor where she would get her assignment for the night. Lexa worked as an aid but did not have a floor where she worked consistently. She was a part of the float pool. A strung together group of aids and nurses who would fill in when floors on the hospital were short staffed.

It worked out quite well for Lexa because she got to see and learn so much. So far she had worked on the cardiac, pulmonary, GI, and senior care floors. She had even worked one grueling night on the med surg floor on the west side of the hospital. Med Surg was known for its long days and even longer nights because the patients that were sent there were all recovering from surgery and in various states of health.

Lexa walked into the float pool office and said, “Harper, what do you have for me today?”

“Any news on the application?” was the response as she shifted through papers and ignored the ever constant ringing of the float pool phone.

“It went from ‘processing’ to processed’ so I suppose that means we are getting somewhere.” Lexa replied.

“Don’t worry, you will get it. I have something new for you today, and I am 99 percent sure you will enjoy it.” Harper glanced up slyly and said, “5 west.”

“The rehab floor! I have been wanting a permanent position up there but there hasn’t been an opening!”

“I am aware,” she laughed. “Go on up, John will be waiting for you.”

“You are an absolute gem Harper.” Lexa said failing to see the slight blush that dusted Harper’s cheeks.

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Across the hospital, Clarke was scrambling to get ready for her shift. She had already answered three call lights and she had not even managed to reach the time clock, much less clock in.
“Clarke, take two seconds and clock in! You know I get my ass chewed every time the pay period is up because you are too busy working to clock in.” John whispered fiercely.

“Please tell me they are sending someone tonight! And that is what I’m about to do! How do you expect me to walk past the call lights like they aren’t there and someone DOESN’T need help? That is why they are called CALL lights” she huffed.

“Calm yourself and clock in, Avery is still here from day shift and handling the floor for the moment.” John replied. “Plus there are four nurses out there, they will be done with report soon enough to help out.”

Still irritated, Clarke asked again as she swiped her badge to clock in, “So they aren’t sending anyone huh?"

“I just got of the phone with-” his reply was cut short by another woman walking up in green scrubs. “Ah, this must be her. Lexa?”

“The one and only.” the woman - Lexa replied.

Her hair looked hastily pulled up and her scrubs were wrinkled. Clarke looked at the book held in her hand as she gestured to the nurses station.

“Can I have a place to stash my stuff? I plan on getting through at least half of this book tonight” Lexa asked.

“Doesn’t look like we will get much down time tonight but throw your stuff anywhere and I will give you a quick tour of the floor so we can get started.” Clarke said. She was already predicting to cover the entire floor herself tonight. Nothing against Lexa, but in her experience, if an employee can’t show up to work looking decent, then for the most part they didn’t truly care about the patients.

“Don’t waste your time, I can figure it out” she said, “we can get started and please just ask if you need some help.”
Clarke almost let her jaw drop. *She thinks she knows this place eh? She thinks I will need HER help?*

“Suit yourself,” she said aloud, and turned to answer the closest call light.

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*She didn’t even introduce herself.* Lexa thought. Grimacing at the expected long night ahead of her with huffy staff, Lexa quickly found all she would need for the night. The galley was a few doors down and the linen was just behind the main elevators. The ice machine was always located next to the nurses station so that one was easy. She approached a nurse to get her room assignments and started in the first room, furthest away from the nurses station. She didn’t like backtracking. Despised it actually, so working from farthest to the closest was the most efficient way of keeping her patient’s vital signs done on time, and made sure the few turns she would have would also be on a reasonable schedule.

After a few hours, Lexa gave her nurses all the vital signs they needed and sat down with her book. All was quiet and it was approaching 11 p.m. *I have a good hour of reading before I have to start again,* she thought. She had not seen much of the other aid on the floor since the beginning of the shift, so she decided to seek her out and see if she needed help.

*She should be sitting down now if she is any good. Maybe she is just hiding out somewhere sleeping.* Lexa had worked with some bad aids before and some had the nerve to “work” night shift and just sleep. She had worked many a night covering all the patients of a floor for the other aid on staff to show up right at 5 or 6 claiming to have “accidentally” fallen asleep. The stories were always similar but that didn’t matter. Lexa was there to make money yes but the job was to take care of other people, not to sleep.

She found herself getting more irritated as she continued her search for the other aid. She checked all of the rooms and eventually approached John.

“Lexa, are my patients doing ok?”

“Yes everything is how it should be” One thing you learned while working in a hospital was to never say it was quiet. That was an open invitation for shit to hit the proverbial fan.

“Where is the other aid? Have you seen her? She should be getting done about now and I don’t
want her to tackle something alone while I am sitting here reading.” Lexa pried.

“Who? Clarke? She is probably in the doctors nook. She usually studies in their when its qui-
when everything is as it should be,” he smiled catching on to the phrasing.

“Okay, thanks.”

The doctors nook was a space for doctors and APN’s to come on the floor and dictate their charts. Throughout the night it was very rarely utilized, and for the most part other staff members weren’t allowed to use the space. Lexa approached thinking to catch this ‘Clarke’ at sleeping, what she saw though would end up changing her entire perception.

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TBC
Clear Introductions

Lexa was unable to keep herself from staring. The doctors nook was filled with textbooks, a computer, several notebooks, and 2 cans of Monster. Clarke was reading a thick tome titled Introduction to Anatomy, and didn't hear Lexa's approach.

She took the opportunity to take in the young woman. Blonde hair pulled up in a messy bun that looked intentional, Clarke used her free hand to push up slightly on the glasses perched on the end of her nose. A picture was thrown haphazardly on the table that depicted a pair of toddlers. A girl with striking red hair and freckles. A young boy with fierce blue eyes and dirty blonde hair that clearly came from his...mother?

_Are those her kids?_ Lexa thought intrigued. A voice broke her out of her speculation.

"Madi and Aden." she said. "3 and 1 years old respectively.” She swiped the photo and tucked into the book she was reading as a bookmark.” Did you need something?”

Lexa faltered a moment at being caught staring at the photo. "I didn't mean to stare. They are beautiful kids. I just wanted to properly introduce myself. I’m Lexa and I work in the float pool."

"Thank you," she said simply. Clarke stared at Lexa, willing her to get to the point of the interruption.

Lexa's eye flicked down to Clarke's hand, trying to discover if there was a ring on a certain finger. "I was just making sure you were caught up, and was also wanting to offer my services again if you do end up needing help." Lexa let the statement hang in hopes she would be inviting more conversation, however Clarke cut her off again.

"Clarke, and no thank you, I'm good."

_Well this is not awkward at allllll._ Lexa shrugged it off and went back to the main desk for the nurses and sat down. She got her book and opened it to her photo bookmark. The picture was old. Cracked with age and starting to fade. Its home for the longest of times was in Lexa's wallet. Behind her drivers license and in front of the guitar pick she always kept since she was a kid. The guitar pic itself was nothing fancy. Actually it was an old credit card cut into the appropriate shape. The piece of plastic itself wasn't important, just the fact that it was there.

_Not going there tonight_, Lexa thought.

The photo wasn't a better option to think about but it had a purposeful placement in her life as well.
To remind her that not everything is always as it seems. Lexa sighed as she looked at the happy couple. Herself very much the same as she sat now, and another. Zoe stared back at her from the picture, smiling slightly. *I wonder if any of it was ever real for her. I wonder... "ugh."*

Lexa struggled with her emotions for a moment remembering the hurt. She was surprised it didn't hurt as bad anymore. She knew now she didn't truly love Zoe. She knew now that she could look back that it was going to end. People are unpredictable to Lexa. Just when she thinks she has a good hold on who someone is, they make their true selves known.

Zoe seemed genuine with her care. She also made her self known to Lexa. One month ago today, Lexa received a text message. And that day her 2 year relationship with Zoe had ended. Lexa hadn't even responded. Still shocked to realize she didn't have a friend, a companion to do this thing called life with. Zoe had helped her fill out the application for the OT program, and now that was almost all Lexa had to look forward to during her days.

A beep jerked her back to reality. Lexa sat up a little straighter to see which rooms light was going off. 486. That was Clarke's room. Lexa knew Clarke was studying so she decided to help her out and give her more time to study. Lexa hadn't even got one page into her book distracted with her thoughts as she was.

Room 486 held a delightful elderly woman. She had a few questions about visiting hours for her family, the cafeteria schedule, and other random things such as “...so about my underwear.”

Lexa set her up nicely with water, clean clothes, and a small snack to get her through until morning. As she was exiting the room, Clarke walked directly into her chest. Lexa’s arms immediately circled Clarke’s waist steadying her.

For one small moment, Lexa saw a reflection of her own surprise in Clarke’s eyes. She felt...perfect. She simply fit. And then the moment was gone. Clarke stepped back, a slightly cold mask in place of the gentleness Lexa had just glimpsed.

“You did not have to do that,” she said.

“You were busy, I was not. It seemed like a good way to show I’m not entirely incompetent.” Lexa responded.

“That remains to be seen.” she said, gazing back with curiosity written plainly on her features. “Well I guess I should say thank you then.”
“No problem, I just wanted to help.”

Lexa walked away before she had to speak further on the subject. She failed to see Clarke's small smile.

The hours drug by slowly, the staff of 5 West was thankful for the slow paced night but a night without problems or excitement also has downsides. The main one being- staying awake and alert. Lexa had read a few chapters in her book but felt her eyelids getting heavy. She rubbed tiredly at her eyes wondering what she could do to help the time pass.

Inspiration struck when she realized she had yet to take a smoke break.

*Oh my lovely nicotine,* Lexa thought. She knew it was a bad habit but it gave her enough reason to move about the grounds at night during her shifts.

John was in the doctors nook speaking with Clarke when Lexa walked up.

“Hey John, do you mind if I take a smoke break really quick? I won't be long.”

“Sure you and Clarke take off.”

*Clarke? Hmm... surprising.*

“Lexa can go, I'll stay and cover the floor.” Clarke argued.

“Nonsense. We are set up good enough here for you two to go out, besides Lexa will be working her next few shifts with us anyway. You two should get to know each other.” John said, sending a meaningful glance at Clarke.

“I’m good with that if you are up for it…”

“Sure,” Clarke said. “Let me grab my keys.”
The headed down the elevator in silence. Lexa tried not to feel as if she was on trial for something. Clarke was intense to put it mildly. She seemed driven and passionate about her work, however Lexa had not seen her smile in the hours she had known her.

Well I’ll turn up my charm just a notch and see if I can get this one to crack a smile, even if it is small. Lexa thought determinedly.

“I am afraid I don’t know where to smoke on this side of the hospital,” Lexa disclosed, “I usually work on the East side.” She pushed the exit door open and gestured for Clarke to go through. “Ma’am.” Lexa said smiling.

The hospital looks as if it had 3 different architects that didn’t agree on how it should be built, but continued working anyway. The east side was the oldest part of the hospital. It housed the cafeteria on the basement level and also the gift shop on the first floor. The West side held the newest buildings. The ER was just recently completed, and the ICU has been running smoothly now for 3-4 months. The “central” part of the hospital housed the specialty floor ran by a different company, the pediatric units, and the dialysis unit.

“I’ll show you where I usually go. It is much closer than going out to the normal spot.” A few sidewalks and security badge doors later she announced, “Here we are.”

If viewed from above, the hospital would vaguely resemble an “E” and Clarke’s alcove was hidden in plain sight almost right in the middle of the hospital grounds. “Wow,” Lexa breathed. “This has been here this whole time? I have wasted so much time walking back and forth and all over to get to a good spot. I hope you don’t mind me using it from time to time.”

Clarke smiled in response.

Yes! Lexa thought doing a miniature happy dance in her head.

“I don’t mind at all.”

The smile seemed to break through Clarke’s walls. The two talked for 10 minutes before starting the trek back to the unit for midnight rounds. Lexa was trying to explain how people on YouTube could cover songs sometimes better than the original when they boarded the elevator.
“I’m telling you, give Conor Maynard a try. You said you liked the song “Hello” by Adele. He does an excellent cover and I prefer it to the original.” Lexa was so fixated on her topic that she didn’t notice Harper standing in the elevator until she brushed her arm.

“Lexa, are you enjoying 5 West? I held that spot specifically for you.” Harper said.

*Wow. Hello, you are touching my arm.* Lexa’s brain sort of stuttered for a moment.

She was not completely used to people coming on to her. Especially in a small town such as Polis. It wasn’t a secret that she was gay. Very, very gay mind you, but it wasn’t exactly on all the billboards in the area either.

“Hello Harper. How is your night going?”

“A little crazy all over, but that’s ok if I get to ride in elevator with you occasionally. Clarke how is your program progressing? I hear you made it through the first semester.” Harper added conversationally.

Clarke inwardly seethed. Tightly she responded, “It's much easier than I thought it would be, but it gives me something to do I guess.”

Lexa could feel tension rolling off of Clarke. *Looks like there may be some history there. That or I am just missing a piece of the puzzle.* She resigned herself to never know. It wasn’t her business. However she was stuck in the elevator with both girls at the moment so she turned to Harper.

“Have you heard of Conor Maynard?” Lexa asked.

“I love him! Have you gone on your lunch break yet? I would love to hear about your favorite songs.” she gushed.

“Not quite yet. I was thinking about going later in the night.”
“Let me see your hand.” She gestured impatiently so Lexa obliged. Using a dry erase marker, Harper started to write. “Lift up your sleeve a bit, this marker is old.” She laughed and held my wrist gently with one hand while the other shifted my sleeve up revealing the tattoos I try to keep hidden with long sleeve undershirts.

*Oh shit. I hope she doesn't start lecturing me.*

Harper started a moment then said coyly, “When you text me, you call tell me about this as well as your favorite songs.”

Lexa grinned with relief as Harper finished writing her number and said without thinking, “If you text back, we can arrange a time for me to show you this one and all the rest.”

The elevator chimed and a blushing Harper made her way down the hall.

“Aren’t you having an eventful night?”

Lexa turned to Clarke an apology on her lips, then she realized she had done nothing wrong. A small flirt here and there never hurt anyone. So Lexa winked and exited the elevator.

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Clarke stared after Lexa until the elevator began to screech. Moving down the hall slowly, she allowed herself to take in the other woman from afar. The skin that was visible was sun kissed and rich in olive tones. Her wild mane of hair was starting to come loose from its binding. *Okay, the whole messy is as messy does thing kind of works for her,* she thought. Her eyes trailed lower, following Lexa’s curves until her gaze rested steadily on her ass.

“Too bad we don’t have an opening so both of us can leer, eh Griffin?” John joked as he walked up. He was constantly trying to set Clarke up with fellow staff members from the hospital to ‘give her some much needed adult time’. With two kids, a full time job, and a full time student schedule on top of everything else, she did, in fact, need some adult time. *But my babies come first,* she thought glancing up to meet John’s gaze.

She replied with, “Well, why don’t you see if you can get her number, it seems that Harper has already taken an interest in her.”
“Harper? The float pool lead? I didn’t know she liked girls.” He mused.

“She can like whatever she likes,” Clarke responded. “It is a free country after all. Besides you should have seen how she came on to her in the elevator just now. Right in the middle of our conversation too.”

Clarke was not irritated that Harper had made a move on Lexa. Wasn’t even mad that she wanted to hear about this Conor guy on YouTube. No, she was irritated that men could be so narrow minded. *Yep, and that tattoo has nothing to do with my irritation either.*

It wasn’t like Clarke was going to make a move. She barely knew Lexa. Granted she knew how to run a floor so far, but still that wasn’t everything. Right?

“Stop trying to set me up by the way. We both know I don’t have the time or patience for a relationship no matter how casual. Plus with kids, nothing is ever casual.”

“I know, I just wish you would let yourself have some fun.” John sighed.

He really did mean well, but Clarke really didn’t have time. Besides Finn was at home with the kids. *Finn.* Clarke really didn’t know what she was doing with Finn. They had been together off and on for so long it was hard to pinpoint what they were.

Clarke groaned, feeling the familiar weight of responsibility settle on her shoulders. She started her midnight rounds and got lost in the hustle and bustle of the unit.

The rest of the night was busy, Clarke and Lexa did not go back outside on break together. They didn’t even really get to see each other as 7:30 rolled around and the night shift staff started to clock out and head home.

Clarke was gathering her numerous books and papers when a price of paper with unfamiliar handwriting caught her attention.

*Maybe a smoke break next time? -L*
Just like that, Clarke's responsibilities drifted away again and she smiled.
Is that You? Part 1

Chapter Notes

I have to say, this chapter was fun to write. Thank you everyone for the kudos and comments. I’ll try to post at least every other day. This is a long one and I had to break the scene up into two parts because it just felt as if it would not end. Happy reading!

-bleckfenix

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Chapter 3: Is that you?

After 3 shifts on the rehab floor, Lexa was exhausted. Even sleeping for 9 hours straight she still did not feel as if her body had caught up enough to be awake during the daylight hours. Night shift paid more, but it also had a tendency to fuck with your head.

Groaning, Lexa stretched. Muscles rippled like the surface of water with a disturbance, however, both knees smarted at the movement. High school basketball had left its mark on her physically as well as mentally. Her momentos included a matching set of scars on both knees from ACL reconstruction surgery, and a lifelong bond with the girls of her team. Lexa could contribute her work ethic, ambition, and discipline to basketball as well. Also her fierce loathing for useless running.

Lexa didn’t run for fun. Lexa found it completely pointless. Give her a ball and someone to guard against however and the name of the game changed entirely.

Zeus huffed from his side of the bed. He acquired his spot recently since Zoe was not spending time at Lexa’s apartment anymore. He yawned wide enough to rival Lexa and padded out towards the kitchen.

“Make me food while you are in there.” Lexa said gruffly. “It is the least you could do since you steal my pillows.”

Zeus returned with his stuffed Pikachu and promptly started an all out war against the poor pocket monster. Kicking and hissing at it, then licking it on the head.
“You, my dude, are so weird.” Lexa said as she got up to get some coffee.

She checked the time as she was making a fresh pot and was almost shocked to see that it was half past 5 in the evening. Well there goes any errands I wanted to get done today, she thought.

She finished with the coffee and went to the couch. Losing herself in video games for a few hours was a great way to wake up or get sleepy depending on the need. She let her mind drift while engaging in some crucible on Destiny.

Lexa had been texting Harper off and on the past few days. They had been enjoying the occasional flirt and shared gossip about the hospital staff. She was intrigued by Harper. She seemed fun when she wasn't at the hospital. It seemed that thinking about the brown eyed girl sent out a bat signal because her phone chimed next to her from the table.

H-You up?
L-Yeah for a bit
H-Want to go out tonight?
L-Sure I don't have plans, what do you have in mind?
H-I was thinking of going to Grounders. After that idk
L-ok I will meet you there at 10. Sound good?
H-sure see you then

Lexa decided it was the perfect time to go to a barber shop she had been eyeing. A new haircut will do me some good I think, she thought to herself.

Thirty minutes later, Lexa find herself showing the stylist how she wanted her hair. Buzzed on the back and sides with the hair on top still long enough to pull back and it off her face while she was working. She watched fascinated as long clumps of hair drifted to the floor. She had never cut her hair this short. EVER.

The stylist declared her new style was finished. Lexa could feel tiny hairs all over her shoulders. Everytime the door to the shop opened she experienced an entirely new sensation of the light fall breeze whisper by. She felt the chair turning to face the mirror and she let out an audible gasp. Her hair was gone. And she liked it!

Lexa could see numerous slivers of hair all over her face, shoulders, and chest. “Maybe not the best
day to wear a tank top,” she chuckled. Her hazel-brown eyes sparkled back at her from under short bangs that was swept to the side. “I look like Scarlett Johansson!”

The stylist sighed in relief. “Most people who come in here and demand to have most of their head buzzed end up leaving like we gave them the idea and forced them to do it.”

“Well I fucking love it.” Lexa ran her hand through her hair and let loose a devilish grin. “It feels better than I expected. We will see what the general consensus is tonight, I think.”

The stylist laughed and took the cash Lexa offered.

Lexa began to wonder what her friends would think about her new haircut on the short drive back to her apartment. Anya had been at her for years to just cut it off and be done with it. Jasper and Monty will just wonder why it isn't in a mohawk yet. She was eager to see Harper's reaction, and with that in mind made her way home to shower and get ready for the evening.

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“Clarke, seriously, the kids are with Bellamy and you don't have any assignments due until next week. You have no tests, and with all the work you have been doing you deserve a night out! With me!”

Clarke glared openly at her laptop screen trying to ignore Octavia’s pleas.

Yes the kids were at their dads for the weekend but she needed to be able to go get them at any time. Bellamy had been more reliable lately but she still didn't completely trust him.

“You know it's hard for me to go out when they are with him,” Clarke retorted. “Besides, I'm not really up for drinking right now.”

“I don't care if you drink woman! I want to dance!” Octavia ran over to the radio and turned on Slow Motion by Genuine, knowing it was her trump card to get Clarke ready to party. “Raven can't keep up with me and I miss you!” She called over the music.
“I can hands down out dance either of you,” Raven said as she entered the room. “And Octavia if you are just going to blast my stereo at least make sure I'm not on the phone first. This is my apartment after all.”

“See!” Octavia yelled triumphant, “even Raven wants to go!”

*Damn that song, damn Octavia, and damn my luck.* Glancing up at Octavia, Clarke gave in slightly to the idea of going out to be with friends for a while. She smiled slightly and could not keep her foot from following the grinding rhythm of the song.

“You know you want to.” Octavia singsonged, already moving with grace to the song thumping throughout the apartment. Her hips swinging back and forth teasingly. Eyes sparkling with mischief.

“Fine but I pick the place, and you buy.” Clarke bargained. She didn’t really expect the girls to go with that plan but surprisingly Raven spoke up quickly.

“Done!”

“And I get to pick your clothes since we are paying!” Octavia rushed out.

“Fine.” Clarke answered in a clipped tone. Secretly she was pleased so far. If she was going to give in and go with these delinquents, she would get to pick her favorite establishment Grounders and as a bonus she wouldn’t have to agonize over what to wear or how to budget out money for drinks. *Maybe tonight won’t be so bad,* she hesitated to think.

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Lexa had a problem. A big problem. She loved her new haircut but there was one thing she did not foresee. Her hats.

She has three hats that are her constant companions. A black Fox Racing hat, a Hawaiian themed green and white Hurley hat, and a black fedora with tiny pinstripes and a black and dark grey nautical star stitched into one side.

*How the fuck...okay, Let me get myself together. It is just a hat, so first do I want to wear one? She
cleared her mind completely and asked herself - why yes she did. More specifically she wanted to wear her fedora. It had been a while and she missed the old school gangster feel of the hat. It is almost impossible to wear a black fedora and NOT feel like a badass.

She grabbed the hat in question and put it on to evaluate what needed to be done to her hair in order to get it to work.

Well I’ll be damned. I am awesome. She chuckled to herself thinking it was about time the universe gave her a free one. Her hair feel perfectly, even just out of the shower, to wear the hat. She took it off and dried the (still) thick brown locks with her towel. She decided on light make-up, a black button up shirt, and light wash skinny jeans. She rolled the sleeves of the shirt up to just above her elbows. The tribal tattoo on her left arm started at the wrist and wrapped up its length then continued over her shoulder. The top 3 buttons on her shirt were left undone to show off pieces of the phoenix and dragon she had on her chest.

With the clothes settled, Lexa started digging through her closet for her old Darth Vader Vans and slipped them on. Time worn but comfortable, the shoes were some of her favorites. Plus who didn’t appreciate a little Star Wars?

Outfit complete, Lexa grabbed her smokes, keys, and wallet and practically skipped to her truck. The Jeep was a clunker to put it nicely. The black paint was fading and there were little indentions all over the hood and roof from a hail storm that passed through last spring. The interior of the truck showed Lexa’s dedication to her vehicles though. Tan seats were shampooed clean twice a year, and the air fresheners where replaced often. Just because the outside looks like shit on a stick didn’t mean Lexa didn’t take pride in her $500 purchase.

It ran good and smelled ok and that was enough for now.

Lexa strapped herself in and headed downtown towards grounders. As she pulled up to the strip that held all the bars, Lexa could tell it was going to be a packed Friday night. Cars filled almost all the spots on the main strip and it wasn’t even 9:30 yet.

She quickly sent out a text and pulled into an alley next to the bar. Grounders was the only ‘alternative’ bar in the area. Patchwork brick covered the interior and exterior of the walls, leaving little to the imagination as what you were looking at. The building was old, but her best friend Lincoln had done a beautiful job embracing the classic nature of the area.

Lexa parked next to Lincoln’s silver Dodge pickup in the back of the building, and made her way through the iron fence towards the back door. I wish Lincoln would get me that key already. Come
The mocking of Lincoln in her head stopped as she stepped into the dimly lit club. All the usuals were there at their designated tables. Jasper and Monty sat pouring over some papers. Anya was behind the bar. Echo was at the door. That’s new, she thought, I wonder when she started here. She found Lincoln chatting with other customers, expertly injecting his presence in conversation and bowing out after he assured everyone was having a good time.

Lincoln was the definition of tall, dark and handsome. A shaved head accompanied tattoos that ran down both arms and hid under his dark blue muscle shirt. He was definitely not someone to mess with.

Their gazes locked and Lincoln smiled his charming smile.

“Lexa, damn girl! You finally did it! You look amazing!” Lincoln said.

“You like the hair huh?”

“The hair? No. I mean you finally got off your ass and came out to drink at my bar!” He laughed at his own joke. “But hey the hair is ok too.” He pulled her in for a hug that turned into a mini wrestling match right in the middle of the dance floor.

Lexa promptly had him pinned, “I yield!” he choked out.

“You could’ve broke that hold, but I’ll take a victory when I can get one. How is the business going? I like what you have done with the place by the way it looks good.”

He reached down and grabbed the hat he had knocked off her head and handed it back with a grimace, “I work just as much as you do trying to get this place into shape for the concert season. I haven’t had time to practice kicking your ass.”

They both laughed and walked over to the bar where Anya was waiting with a Long Island Iced Tea. “Yes, this is on me, but the rest are on you. And no you can’t sleep here tonight if you get fubared,” she said before Lexa could make a sound.
“I was just going to say thank you, jeez what crawled up your ass? Tired of this ugly mug bossing you around?” Lexa gestured to Lincoln who put on a wounded expression.

“No I just don’t want a repeat of last time.” Anya responded. “The new girl says she knows you.”

“Yeah I went played ball with her in school. It has been a while since I last seen her.” Lexa waved to Echo from her spot at the bar. Echo waved back and mouthed “I’ll catch up with you soon.”

Nodding at her, Lexa turned back to Anya and Lincoln. “When did she start? I didn’t know she worked here.”

“Tonight is her first night,” Lincoln replied.

“Tonight will be her last night if she is anything like the last guy who had that job,” Anya chimed in.

“Well, we all knew Emerson was an ass. Anything going on tonight?” Lexa asked hopefully.

“Now that you are here I think I’ll do a karaoke night.” Lincoln answered.

Lexa threw up her arms, “I’m so in!”

“I figured you would be. I’m going to set up and I’ll catch you girls later.” He went up the narrow staircase next to the bar. Light scraping sounds and muttered curses could be heard faintly over the low music and the talking of the guests.

“Meeting anyone tonight?” Anya asked casually.

“Maybe.” Lexa clipped. She was not in the mood for Anya’s constant badgering about her love life. Since Zoe, Anya had taken it upon herself to find someone who was worthy of Lexa’s time. So far, Lexa had only found Anya’s suggestions to be poor choices.
“Maybe is better than I have for you. You seem to run them off.” Anya snorted.

“That’s because they are boring.” Lexa snarked. “I am meeting someone tonight but before you start I work with her and it is very casual. Also very new. Please don’t try to U-haul us. Useless lesbians like you give the rest of us a bad rep.”

Anya let loose a barking laugh. “Fine, fine.” She said still laughing. “I do like the hair. It suits you.”

A customer at the other end of the bar began waving for Anya’s attention. “I’ll be back. Be good.”

Anya said this as if Lexa was going to cause trouble on purpose. I always TRY to be good. It just never ends up that way. She removed her fedora and ran her hands through her hair before pulling out her phone to tell Harper she was at the bar. Music played softly in the background, but Lexa knew that when people started singing the music would blare loud enough to rival the bar across the street.

The Mountain was the ‘high class’ bar in the area. With high class meaning it had two floors and an open roof. It was a nice place, but Cage was a dirty bastard. The excellent view and well-equipped stage area that had previously hosted some pretty decent bands was not enough to balance the overpriced drinks and shitty service. When the building was ran by Dante, Cage’s late father, it flourished. Packing in crowds for mainstream bands of all genres. The Mountain would have lines that frequently wrapped around the block four nights out of a week.

Now Cage would be lucky enough if the hobo’s would sit in front of his building. I honestly don’t know why he keeps it open anymore. The last event they had crashed and burned when Cage insulted Aaron Lewis. The star left without playing and took his crowd with him. Lexa remembered that night because the singer went down to the waterfront of Polis and proceeded to invite all persons, paid ticket or not, to party with him. It was a legend around Polis. A legend that spat in the face of Cage, so Lexa treasured it.

A warm hand on her rib cage broke her out of her thoughts.

“Hi,” Harper said.

“Hey yourself. I was beginning to wonder if you had ditched me.”
Harper leaned in close enough for Lexa to feel her soft exhales on her cheek. “Never.” She closed the distance a placed a quick kiss to the corner of Lexa’s mouth.

The kiss took Lexa by surprise, but surprise morphed into appreciation as she took in Harper. She was a vision in red. A tight sleeveless red dress was paired with black heels. A small clutch was tucked under her arm, and a light leather jacket was in her hand. “You look amazing,” Lexa told her.

Lexa stood up and walked her over to end of the bar. “You can leave your little purse thing over here. No one is allowed behind the bar besides Anya. She will look after it for you.”

“Why thank you ma’am.” Harper smirked at her and placed her clutch down behind some bottles of Evan Williams. She threw the jacket on top and spun towards the dance floor, pulling Lexa behind her. “Little purse thing?” she asked still smirking.

“Hey to each their own, but I just simply don’t understand them. What happens if you get change from the single $20 bill you can fit in that thing?” Lexa joked.

“Usually I leave it as a tip,” Harper laughed.

“Drink to start off with?” Lexa asked.

“No, right now I just want to dance away my last shift. It was a rough one, we had several Code Blues back to back and we lost one of them. None of that now, I just want to be alive.” Harper explained, hips already swaying slightly to Do You Mind by DJ Khaled.

Lexa had never been fully confident in her dance moves, but looking at Harper with her intense eyes and sensual movements, she threw her self-condescension out the proverbial window and followed. Harper had her eyes closed as she moved with the song. She drifted lazily in a circle. Unable to get a read off of Harper, Lexa was unsure how far Harper wanted this to go. Lexa cautiously approached and placed her hands on her hips.

Harper pushed her back flush with Lexa’s front and slowly girated back and forth on Lexa’s groin. *Well that answers that question,* Lexa thought.

Lexa raised her arms, loosely cradling Harper’s moving form in front of her. As the beat of the song pulsed through their bodies, Lexa allowed herself to get lost in the moment. It was nice to be
next to someone again. Nice to feel like she was seen. The two women moved in sync until the end of the song and strolled back over to the bar.

Harper raised a hand to Lexa’s shirt collar. “So about these tattoos, when do I get a visual?”

“There are a few that would require me to undress completely for me to show them. I don’t think Lincoln would appreciate that.” Lexa chuckled. “I can show you these”, she unbuttoned one of the few remaining buttons and pulled her shirt open slightly at the top, fully revealing her dragon and phoenix. “And this,” Lexa pulled her shirt up on the left side and Harper gasped.

“That wolf is gorgeous!” Lexa’s skin prickled from Harpers lingering touch on her rib cage. Several nearby people threw in compliments of their own about Lexa’s ink.

Jasper and Monty made their presence known by a loud giggles. “I finally got it done Lexa!” Jasper yelled over the music. He started to trip halfway to them but was caught by Monty. “Sorry about him, he has already had two bowls.” Monty explained.

“What did you finish Jasp?” Lexa said still trying to settle her shirt back into place. Tired of fighting buttons, she decided to just leave most of them undone. She didn’t wear her American Eagle boxers to not show them off properly anyway.

The boys were always working on something to do with weed. Whether it be a new vaporizer, a new way to dry out the marijuana, or developing a new bong style, Jasper and Monty always had plans upon plans for their beloved plant.

“The final appeal to legalize marijuana for commercial sale,” Jasper said excitedly. “It is finally fool proof.”

“I’m glad to hear it guys,” Lexa enthused. “Guys this is Harper, Harper this is Jasper and Monty.” Lexa gestured to each with one arm as she introduced them. The other she casually slid around Harpers waist. A gentle tug was all it took for Harper to lean into Lexa’s chest.

“Hello,” she said smiling at Lexa’s action barely paying attention to the boys. “Lexa let’s go get us some drinks. It was nice to meet you boys.”

Harper walked a few bar stools down from where the boys approached them and signaled for
Anya’s attention. The bar was starting to fill with people that were eager to get their weekend started. Lexa reached down quickly to grab her drink by the register. She didn’t want anyone to think that they could do it as well so she tried to be tactful. Harper, however, had seen.

Lexa winked as Anya threw a towel down. “What can I get you beautiful?” Anya asked.

“I’ll have a Blue Moon.” Harper kept her focus on Lexa, barely even glancing at Anya.

Anya’s eyes widened, she was not used to be brushed off so easily. “Coming right up, ma’am.” The emphasis on ma’am Lexa did not miss, but Harper seemed to not notice the slight huff in Anya’s words.

Lexa knew that Harper was being rude, but the look on Anya’s face was quite priceless. Laughing to herself, Lexa gestured for her to get the beer. “You heard the woman,” Lexa mocked.

Anya glared at her, then turned away to get the drink.

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Clarke was standing outside Grounders waiting on Niylah. Octavia had done well with her outfit and she was feeling confident. Daring even. Decked out in a denim mini skirt, and a light blue tank top, Clarke peeked into the bar through the window while Octavia and Raven bickered over who would pay the cover charge.

The two were only getting more flustered with each other but Clarke took that as a win seeing as they had drug her out of her study session at Raven’s apartment. The bar was already quite full and there were people dancing to music she could only feel.

A tall brunette with short hair and a fedora was on the dance floor. Something about her tickled Clarke’s memory, however she didn't know any short haired brunettes. The hat covered most of her face and the lighting was dim as in most bars.

Out of the corner of her eye Clarke seen Niylah walk around the corner of the building. She looked beautiful as always, wearing blue jeans and a pink v-neck shirt and her dishwater blonde hair loose around her shoulders. For as long as Clarke could remember, Niylah had always favored a simple wardrobe over fancy clothes and multiple accessories.
“Hey Niy,” Clarke greeted warmly. “Ready to dance? These two are on a mission to make me let loose.”

Niylah glanced toward Raven and Octavia who were still bickering like an old married couple.

“You look exquisite Clarke,” Niylah breathed turning back to face her.

Some things never change, Clarke thought.

Niylah cracked a smile and Clarke could remember when they were young and exploring each other. Clarke and Niylah we never in a established relationship, more like friends with (sometimes) benefits. They both had a tendency to turn towards the other when they were single. There was never any questions or hesitations when they came together. Niylah was always there when Clarke needed to feel human.

Clarke wasn't sure why she reached out to Niylah tonight, and, by the looks she was receiving from Raven and Octavia, they were silently asking her ‘why now’ as well.

Shrugging off the looks, Clarke said “Thanks, ready to go inside? We were just waiting on you.” Raven rolled her eyes and Octavia snorted. Ignoring them both, Clarke took Niylah by the hand and opened the door.

A cloud of smoke greeted the four girls first. On the left side was a small desk behind which a woman stood. She was tall with dark blonde hair, and - apparently asking Clarke a question.

“I'm sorry, what?” Clarke said a little embarrassed by her open study of the other woman.

“Welcome to Grounders,” she smiled. “Mind if I take a peek at your ID?”

As Clarke searched her pockets she realized Raven had offered to hold her things tonight and explained, “My idiot friend behind me has it.” Suddenly an arm with 3 IDs reached past Clarke's shoulder.
“I do believe I’m the idiot you are looking for,” Raven sassed. “I’m Raven.”

“Echo,” she said looking over the IDs. “You ladies are good to go.”

“Do you work all night Echo? You look new, I don’t think I have ever seen you here before.” Raven commented.

“First night and yes unfortunately I do work until close. Have a good night.” Echo said uncomfortably, she was glanced back and forth between Raven and the small group of people that had formed behind us. All of them were waiting to get into the bar, so Clarke rushed the group over the security threshold and into the music.

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Lexa could feel sweet running down her back and chest. She had been dancing with Harper and sometimes Monty for a while. Feedback from the mic made the entire crowd wince.

“Sorry guys!” Lincoln apologized through the speaker system. “How about we have a little karaoke to get this party started? I’ll be taking names and songs just come over to the stairs behind the bar.”

“I wonder if there is any hidden talent in here with us tonight,” Harper mused aloud.

Lexa held her composure. “I’m not sure, I haven’t been in a while. Are you going to sing?”

“Me?” Harper looked truly panicked at the idea of singing in front of a crowd. “No, not me.” She laughed nervously, “I only sing in the shower.”

“Well maybe you can sing for me later.” Lexa let her voice drop a few octaves with that line, and when Harper turned to look at her, Lexa held eye contact until she broke it with a blush staining her cheeks.

“Someone is quite forward tonight. I like it,” she said trying to regain composure.
Lexa smirked as she stood, “I’ll be right back.”

“Where are you going?” Harper asked, a little to possessive for Lexa’s liking.

“Just to get a drink, I-” Harper cut her off saying, “Well I may or may not be here when you get back if you aren’t going to offer to get me a refill.”

Okay, so maybe this one is a little too far in the coo-coo’s nest for me, Lexa thought.

“Would you like a refill ma’am?” Lexa asked charmingly, trying to soothe her ruffled feathers.

“No.”

Oooooooooookay…

Lexa made a hasty dash for the bar and reminded herself that people aren’t always what they seem. First, she is all over me, and now she is wanting a leash around my neck. It had only been a week since they had started talking outside of work and yet here Lexa was, stuck in a shitty situation with her boss.

Well one of my bosses anyway.

She walked right behind the bar like she owned the place and poured 2 shots of whiskey and grabbed a Michelob Ultra from a beer fridge. She had already downed the shots and was taking a swig of the beer when Anya walked up.

“That one looks like trouble Lexa.” Anya wore a serious expression, and Lexa just nodded in response. “They are never crazy until you get them out of the element you met them in. Please be careful with her. You said she was your boss right?” Again, Lexa nodded. Anya released a sigh laced with frustration. “How do you manage to get into situations like this Lex?

Lexa turned the beer bottle up and finished it with a small flourish, “I guess I’m just destined for
trouble,” she said with a harsh laugh. “I’m going to talk to Linc.” Without another word she made her way up the stairs to the half-assed DJ booth.

“You really need to remind me to tidy up these cables,” Lexa said.

“FUCKING HORSE BALLS!” His shout was almost loud enough to be heard over the music downstairs.

Lexa jumped at the outburst and then started laughing. She doubled over in the small space tears leaking out of her eyes.

“You absolute ASSHAT.” Lincoln glared at her accusingly.

“Hey I didn’t do it on purpose, I just wanted you to play Confident so I can calm my lady friend down there,” she defended still trying to get ahold of herself. As she gestured to the crowd, Lincoln smiled and ran a hand over his face. “Get this damn system hooked up for me and YOU can choose all the songs.”

“I just want the one but let me see what I can do.” Lexa busied herself with cables, computers, and speakers while Lincoln went to check on his patrons.

“There you go all set, just like last time,” Lexa revealed.

“Sweet, I don’t know what I would do without you,” he looked at her with overly exaggerated batting eyelashes and a trembling lip.

Lexa smacked him on the arm and said, “Play that in 45 seconds.”

“Yes ma’am,” he gave her a salute and turned towards his setup.

Lexa could feel the alcohol now. She knew she had to handle Harper carefully so things at work weren’t affected by tonight, but at the same time she just wanted to have a good time. She could feel line between wants and needs begin to blur as she approached the bar.
Grabbing another blue moon, she used the crook of her arm to open it and made her way over to where Harper still sat sulking. “Here you go ma’am, and before you say anything come with me. There is something I want to show you.”

Lexa led Harper to the stage and sat her on a chair designated for just this purpose. Harper looked at her, distaste bleeding into confusion as the beginning notes to Justin Bieber’s Confident began to play. Lexa pulled her hat down further over her eyes to hide her face and create an air of mystery.

Settling into her element, Lexa plucked the microphone out of her back pocket and turned it on. “Hey everyone, I’ll start off Karaoke tonight if that’s ok.” A surprising amount of cheers and applause went up when the regulars at Grounders realized who was on stage. Just like Bieber, a mass of females rushed to the front as Lexa began to sing.

*Focus, I’m focused*

*She got a body like that*

*I ain’t never seen nothing like that*

*Like a fantasy in front of me*

Lexa continued singing. Dividing her attention between Harper and the crowd. A few women in the audience held up one dollar bills and Lexa felt to her knees to allow them to stuff them in her waistband. Standing she continued her fine dance between Harper and the crowd. Harper then the crowd.

*Then she started dancing, sexual romancing*

*Nasty but she fancy, lipstick on my satin sheets*

*What’s your nationality? I wonder if there’s more of you*

*She’s got my attention, she’s confident*

A pair of blonde haired women were moving, lost in their own little world and Lexa almost choked.

She faltered for a brief moment in her song. *Clarke. Holy shit...she can move.* Lexa gravitated down into the crowd and off the stage. She regained her rhythm and everyone was loving it. Multiple people were pulling at her, trying to get her to dance with them as she sang. She ignored
them all, firmly but politely. She was only a few people away in the crowd when Clarke looked up. Her eyes widened and Lexa could see her surprise through her movements that confused her dance partner.

Lessa couldn’t pull her eyes away. Clarke was a black hole that pulled everything to her. A spinning energy of darkness that Lexa could lose herself to.

_She said it’s her first time_

_I think she might have lied_

_Feels so good damn, and I don’t know why_

_I’m addicted, something like a headache_

_Got me twisted, but I still gotta have it_

After those lines, Clarke turned away from Lexa and towards her partner. Lexa was still several bodies away and couldn’t reach out without looking dramatic, so she spun and busted a few cheesy moves to make people laugh. During Chance the Rapper’s part of the song she made her way back to Harper on stage.

Feeling slightly guilty, she decided to turn up the heat for Harper. She prowled around Harper as the chorus came back into play and Lexa picked up where she left off.

_She’s confident_

_Oh no no, oh no no_

_She’s confident_

_Oh no no, oh no no_

_And I’m down with it_

_Oh no no, oh no no_

_She’s confident_

_You could tell by the way she walks in the room_

As the song finished out Harper was blushing madly. Lexa just smiled a slightly crooked smile and offered an arm to help her up. ”To the lovely Harper for helping me out tonight!” The crowd roared eagerly. Lexa shouted into the mic to be heard, ”Thank you all, until next time!”
As Lexa steered Harper back to their table Harper said, “I had no idea you could sing! You were so good!”

“Thanks,” Lexa said a bit out of breath. She used the motion of wiping her brow to scan the area for Clarke but couldn’t spot her in the crowd. She turned back and was met by Harper’s lips on hers. Lexa didn’t think, just reacted as she kissed her back.

Harper drug her hands up and down Lexa’s back as she ended the kiss. “That was really hot. I have never really cared for Bieber, but you have given me a newfound appreciation for his music.”

“Hey, you got to love the Biebs,” Lexa joked. “I need another drink after all that work. You good?”

Harper nodded, “Hurry back!”

_Well if that isn’t a change of pace._ Lexa thought.

She made her way to the bar, casually raking through the faces of the crowd looking for Clarke. She and her dance partner were lip-locked a few tables away from the bar near the front of the building. Sighing, Lexa continued on her journey for alcohol without interrupting them. _I just want one minute with her without distractions. Just one._

Again, she made herself at home behind the bar browsing for something to soothe her thirst. She snatched a bottle of tequila and poured two more shots. A voice from her left called, “You had better slow down Lex, I don’t want you driving that thing you call a truck after you have been drinking nonstop like this.”

“I’m fine Anya. I do want to stay with you tonight if it is not too much trouble.”

“I was just joking earlier, of course you can stay. You know I would rather you stay than drive home.” Anya said, a little softer around the edges. Most people didn’t know how to take Anya. She was crass, loud, and not afraid of giving her opinion. Wanted or not. She had saved Lexa’s ass many times over the years. With women and the bad situations she finds herself in sometimes.
“Thanks sis. I just need a backup plan in case I need to get away from Harper.” Lexa turned to leave the bar with her shots and met face to face with Clarke. Lexa felt the smile take over her features and did nothing to stop it from showing. “Clarke,” she breathed, “it’s nice to see you.”

“You are just full of mystery aren’t you Lexa?” Clarke said, eyes raking openly over Lexa’s exposed chest and down to her abs. Lexa jolted. The crowd had opened the rest of her shirt and it hung loosely from her shoulders. A few missed dollar bills drew her attention immediately. Her black sports bra was visible to the whole bar. Anya...you...you fuck.

As casually as she could manage, Lexa started buttoning enough buttons to cover her exposed skin and got the few straggling bills. Shoving the money the nearby tip jar she thought, No wonder Harper was all over me, I’m half dressed! Clarke chuckled at Lexa’s efforts. “After that performance I would think a little skin wasn’t enough to throw you off your game.”

“That wasn’t the whole show.” Lexa said before she could stop herself. Flirting was way too easy with Clarke. Most of the time she had to deliberately think of things to say to people when she wanted them to know she was interested. “Stick around if you want the encore.”

WHY DID I SAY THAT?

Clarke opened her mouth to respond when her dance partner walked up behind her and propped an arm around her shoulders. Clarke glanced up at the newcomer and said with emphasis, “Niylah, this is Lexa. She works in the float pool at the hospital. Lexa this is Niylah.”

“Another medical professional I see.” If Lexa could only imagine she didn’t have her arm around Clarke then she thought she might have liked Niylah. Calm and collected Niylah asked, “Do you work here? I have seen you go behind the bar and into the DJ booth without getting the boot, so at minimum you have some good friends.”

“I am co-owner actually.” Lexa said surprised. “Most people just think I come to sing.”

“Well, Clarke her hasn’t shut up about y-”

“What Niylah meant to say was - can we get a few shots of tequila?”

Lexa let loose her crooked smile and pushed over the two shots of tequila she had just poured for
herself. “Is this enough?”

“Silver tequila?” Clarke picked up one shot glass and smelled the contents.

“Is there anything better?”

“No, this is perfect but could I trouble you for two more shots?”

“Not at all.” Lexa turned back to the bottles and caught Anya’s eye. Anya raised her eyebrows dramatically and Lexa smirked and shrugged as to say, I can’t help it. She poured four more shots and handed two over to Clarke. “I’m not taking your money, so don’t try.”

“Sounds good to me.” Clarke smiled and turned away, making her way back to her table now occupied by two other women Lexa previously hadn’t noticed. They are regulars here, and always come up to the stage to cheer me on. How have I not seen Clarke before?

Lexa picked up one shot glass and studied it a moment before downing it in one go. Remaining shot in hand, she made her way back over to deal with Harper.

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“That is Lexa?!” Octavia asked as she and Niylah sat down with the alcohol.

“Yes, that is definitely Lexa.”

When Clarke had seen her through the window, the hair had thrown her off. The style and cut suited her perfectly. Even her outfit was on point -simple yet it held a powerful sex appeal. And that crooked grin. Raven and Octavia were gushing over her mini performance.

"She can sing!"
"I wonder how many more tattoos she has?"
"Do you think she will sing again?"
"I can't believe you know her!"
"We should ask if she can sing anything other than Bieber."
Niylah was sitting quietly, a small frown on her face. Clarke ignored the fan girls and worriedly asked her if she was ok.

“In all the years I have known you, I have never seen you look at someone like that.” Niylah's dark eyes shown with happiness for her, but small flashes of hurt bleed through her carefully composed mask. She started to say something further but Clarke cut her off.

“Don't be ridiculous, I barely know her.” Clarke brushed the comment off and took her shot. Her eyes drifted off their own volition back toward the bar but Lexa had already moved on.

She had not seen Harper until after she realized it was Lexa singing. *They seemed to be getting along well,* she thought somewhat bitterly. Reflecting on the focus Lexa had on her prey during the song.

Letting nothing show on her face, Clarke grabbed Niylah's hand and stood up. “Well Octavia, you wanted to dance so why are you sitting there?”

“You’re on. Me and Raven versus you two.”

“Done.”

“Losing team pays the tab!” Raven said.

“Well let's get going then, I can't afford to pay your tab.”

TBC

Chapter End Notes

Disclaimer: I do not own any of these characters. I'm just borrowing them for a short time. Any and all situations are fiction.
Chapter 4: Is that you? Part 2

Lexa groaned as a third group of girls sauntered over. She had done her part to keep Harper happy and engaged in conversation. She asked all the usual questions to keep the conversation flowing, “Why did you pick Polis Regional? Why did you become a nurse? Ever been married?” Everything was going fine until the first group came up to Lexa.

“We brought something for you,” the girl holding the tray said.

“You girls don’t have to do anything like that for me, really” Lexa tried to discourage. She ended up just sitting there helpless as shot after shot, and beer after beer was left the table in front of her. Thankfully, most just brought drinks and didn’t have the nerve to stay and chat because of the death glares Harper was sending out. “But I thank you nonetheless.” She smiled at them and they all giggled as they walked away. Any other time she would’ve thrown in a flirty wink to be funny, but not tonight.

Harper was glancing around the bar, a look of disgruntlement settled firmly on features. “Is it always like this for you here?” Lexa couldn’t tell if she was jealous of Lexa’s attention or mad because Lexa’s attention was split between her and all the guests. “Tonight I seem to be more popular.” Lexa deadpanned. She was losing patience - boss or not. “How about we go dance? I feel like I might float away if I drink anything else right now.” Lexa stood and waved her arm vaguely in the direction of the dance floor.

“I think I’ll just stay here and finish my drink. There seems to be enough skirts here to entertain you.” Harper replied shooting yet another glare over Lexa’s shoulder.

Lexa decided that there was not a way to win in the situation so she turned to see what had Harper’s attention. A woman stood at the bar staring at Lexa with a predatory gleam in her eyes. She turned back hurriedly. “I would rather dance with you one last time if thats ok.”

“One more dance? Just a dance?” Harper asked.

Fear passed briefly over Harper’s face, and a light bulb went off in Lexa’s head. “Harper have you ever be with a girl?”

“No,” was the quiet response, barely audible over the music and laughter.

Lexa stood, feeling much better about the situation, “I would just like to dance, you are an excellent dancer, but if you would like to leave I can call a cab or an Uber. I will go with you but only if you want me to and only if you are comfortable.”

“I’m sorry everything just went so fast, and I have never felt this way before.” she said tightly.

Lexa didn’t understand how she had misread Harper this whole evening. Looking back now it was obvious she just didn’t know how to act. Harper played into the stereotypes too much or too little. People usually over-thought being in a relationship when they weren’t completely comfortable with the idea of what they were doing. Understanding would come with time for Harper. People are just people, and they want to be treated as such, no matter their desires or attractions.

“Hey, seriously, whatever you are comfortable with, I’m good. Don’t worry about me, I’m just glad I understand what is going on.”

“I think one more dance then I think I will head home,” she said standing. Smiling she reached for Lexa’s hand shyly. Lexa realized this was the first true smile she had seen, and decided on a mission of utmost importance. Laughing Harper: Phase 1, Lexa thought at herself.

They made their way to the dance floor where Pharrell’s ‘Happy’ was playing. Lexa turned on her ‘goof’ mode and went full dumbass on the dance floor. Doing her grand impression of the robot, the running man, and the sprinkler. Harper was laughing, breaths coming often in small gasps, and Lexa’s classic dance moves came to a crescendo with the MC Hammer dance. The pair finally started to have a good time with the newfound understanding between them.

Harper’s eyes were sparkling with delight, and Lexa found that once you got past the crazy, Harper was extremely likeable. She wasn’t sure about the extent of those feelings yet, but Lexa knew she enjoyed being around her.
The Cupid Shuffle came on next, and the crowd gathered themselves in lines that covered the dance floor. Lexa and Harper joined in a line near the middle of the pack. When they had made a 180 degree turn, Lexa noticed Clarke and Niylah doing their own version of the song. Facing each other, the two women moved beautifully, and in sync with the crowd. The dance had an air of practiced ease, and Lexa’s chest constricted with a small dose of jealousy.

Lexa continued to watch them while she could. When the next song started Harper didn’t move away so they continued dancing. The sounds of Motivation by Kelly Rolland vibrated through air and bodies, duos of people coming together to get their sexy on. Lexa was mindful of Harper’s limits, however she seemed to have relaxed significantly. She wasn’t dancing as closely or as suggestive as before, but she was still smiling and that is all Lexa needed to know.

Lexa’s body language and focus may have been on Harper, but her eyes were cemented on striking blonde hair and blue eyes. She savored a new appreciation for the female body, as Clarke danced around Niylah suggestively. Suggestively yet - not. The longer she watched, the more she observed that the two women, who may have once known each other intimately, moved with familiarity, not intimacy despite the implied actions.

The difference is when there bodies came together, it was an with an ease of practice over time, not heavy with passion or need. The movements were slow and habitual. Passion was known between the two, that was apparent, however it had been long muted by time. In this moment, it was a burning ember of friendship, instead of the first impression of a heated flame, wild with light, heat, and power.

Lexa locked eyes with Clarke, and could immediately feel warmth between them. They were not close. They were not even dancing together. However, with eye contact it felt like they were the only ones in the room. The only bodies on the dance floor. As both couples moved, the warmth grew into a fire. Lexa was sweating. Neither had made a move to leave their dance partner. As if they were to engage directly, they would risk the flame puffing out as if it had never been.

So they danced.

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“Just go dance with her, Clarke. I won’t mind. I actually wish you would go dance with her. All this eye fucking is driving me crazy and I can’t even see it” Niylah complained. The two were weaving in and out of the crowd, working their way over to Raven and Octavia for some refreshments.
Clarke didn’t understand how Niylah could have known about the eye contact. “I don’t know what you’re talking about.”

“Mhm, I know you, though. I know how you move. You may have been dancing with me, but you were dancing for someone else,” she heard Niylah grouse from behind.

Seated firmly in her denial Clarke raised an eyebrow towards Octavia and Raven.

“You know you win. Don’t look at me like that.” Octavia snapped without malice. Raven and Octavia hadn’t even tried. The two spent more time checking people out at the bar throughout the night than dancing. “Did you happen to see the owner? So hot.” Dramatically Octavia fanned her face and plastered on a dreamy expression.

“The owner?” Clarke blurted.

“Yeah, big guy, bald. Tattoos a plenty. Octavia has been trying to get his attention all night but he has been in the DJ booth for most of it.” Raven supplied glancing sideways at Octavia.

“Don’t you come here frequently Raven? Why don’t you introduce them?” Clarke suggested, ignoring Niylah’s knowing look.

“Lincoln is a quick one, I have been trying all night to get them to share the same air,” she laughed. “Everytime I see him, he is disappearing back into the DJ booth. I can’t seem to catch him on the ground floor.”

“I’d like a chance to catch him comin-” Octavia started then squeaked.

“Hello ladies, how is everything going tonight?” Lincoln said, carefully avoiding eye contact with Octavia.

Raven guffawed loudly, “We are good here! Lincoln have you met Octavia?” The girl in question shrunk down in her seat with a muttered “hi.” Octavia must have lashed out at Raven under the table because Raven surged slightly out of her seat.
Lincoln lowered himself to one knee beside her, gently grasped her hand, and placed a slow deliberate kiss across her knuckles. Octavia started as he stood saying, “I have not had the pleasure. I apologize for being so scarce tonight.” He mimed the universal “beer please,” sweeping his gaze across Clarke, Niylah and Raven.

“It has been chaotic behind the bar and in the DJ booth.” He turned back to Octavia, “Might I get a dance tonight?” He asked the question with a smile that said please, you know you want to, and now all at the same time.

“Absolutely,” Octavia managed to get out. Impressed by his performance, the entire table got the impression that Lincoln didn’t ask people to dance frequently and when he did, they didn’t refuse him. “I’ll be here when you are ready.”

The group watched him walk away and Niylah said, “Well Raven it looks like it is you and me. Clarke has her sights set on Lexa, whether she will admit it or not, and Octavia has a promised dance with Lincoln. What do you say we pass the time with a game of pool?”

Always with the competitive spirit, Raven challenged, “Bet! As long as you don’t mind losing!”

“So what is going on with Lexa?” Octavia asked as the other two raced through the horde that separated them from their destination. “You didn’t breathe a word about her until we were getting our first drinks tonight.” Octavia looked at her without challenge, her fierce features only held curiosity.

“We worked together a few times, went on break together once.” Clarke said. “She seems really nice. She is also a complete nerd, did you see her shoes?”

Octavia rolled her eyes at the attempted change in subject. “I know I failed you with the whole Bellamy situation, but that was years ago. Talk to me please? What is going on with you?”

Clarke released a world weary sigh. “You didn’t fail me, O. I just need to get through school. I’m tired of working so hard and only managing to live paycheck to paycheck. I can’t stop until my kids are well taken care of, and that starts with a better job and education.” Clarke swirled her straw inside of her drink watching the colors meet and mix. This bar made Hurricanes that presented as a white drink with blue syrup layered on top. Using her straw she dipped and stirred absentmindedly, creating patterns with the colors.
“You can only do so much at one time, Griffin. You are not as invincible as you think you are.” Clarke cut her eyes at Octavia. “I’m just saying, you are always tense. You never want to do anything but sit and study. What did you get on your last test huh?”

A mumbled “97” was the answer, and Clarke smiled slightly. “A 97? That is awfully low for you don’t you think?”

At that, Clarke outright laughed. “I see your point. But people, in general, suck. I don’t have time to waste on someone who will treat me as a teen mom with baggage. I have two kids and they are what is most important to me. Maybe one day with one of your own you will begin to understand. And I don’t blame you for Bellamy. He may be your brother and you may have introduced us, but his mistakes are his own.”

Octavia moved to sit next to Clarke, “Then why not let yourself have some fun? Lexa is hot. You are hot. Just see where it goes. You never know how things will turn out if you never give people a chance.” She placed a comforting arm around Clarke’s shoulders and gave a slight comforting squeeze. “Seriously, she has been giving you some rather wistful looks. Just go say hi, because it looks like I am getting my dance.”

Clarke raised her eyes from her drink artwork as Lincoln walked up and held out a massive hand. “Have her back home a decent time boy!”

“Clarke, shut up, and go find Lexa!”

“Lexa?” Lincoln glanced between the two girls, “What do you need with Lexa?”

“We work together, I just wanted to say hi,” Clarke said quickly before Octavia could give out more information than she was comfortable with. “You guys go have fun. I’m going to rest up a bit, my feet are killing me!”

“For what it’s worth,” Lincoln started, “Lexa is like my sister. She is worth it if you are interested.”

See where it goes. Give it a shot. Everyone seems to be on the Lexa train except me, Clarke thought. Everyone keeps saying go for it.Spying the brunette on the other side of the room, Clarke thought it may just be worth a little extra time and heartache to see what Lexa was about.

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Lexa was waiting by the bar, eyes constantly drifting face-to-face just hoping to see Clarke approaching her. Not actively seeking her out mind you - just making sure she wasn’t going to sneak up on her again. Harper was still demanding attention but it wasn't as near as bad as it was in the beginning. She flitted from subject to subject in conversation like a hummingbird high on a sugar rush. Her new-found understanding was comforting to only her. Lexa, on the other hand, just felt bored.

Nodding and agreeing at appropriate intervals, Lexa’s mind drifted back to she had with Clarke while dancing. She felt a strong connection. A pulling embrace from Clark's presence. Clark was like a black hole. Exciting yet scary. Nothing and the only thing you could focus on. *We never even touched. We weren't even close to each other.*

Lexa’s mind was a ball of confusion; she had never felt a pull like this with anyone before. She wanted to know Clarke - to figure out what made her mind work. To get inside her head if only for a brief moment.

“I just don't want you to take it personally. I mean, I like you, but I don't think we're meant for each other. You know?” Harper's stammering declaration jerked Lexa back into the present.

“I'm sorry, what?”

“Don’t take this the wrong way, but I was just kind of wondering what it was like to be with a girl. You are incredibly attractive and for god sakes everyone here knows you ooze sex appeal. I just don't see us going any further than being friends.”

Harper was explaining things like Lexa was going to take it hard, yet she only felt relief. “I feel the same way, I just don't want you to be uncomfortable around me. I didn't mean to come across as presumptuous if I did. I was just following your lead.”

Harper look slyly at Lexa and said, “All is forgiven, it's not as if you were eyeing Clarke the entire time we were dancing anyway.”

“You caught that did you?”

“I'm choosing to take it as a compliment knowing you were looking at her but dancing with me.” Harper stood and walked over to the bar where she left her things. “Would you mind getting my
“I don’t want to get a death glare from Anya.”

“Going home already?”

“I think I’ve accomplished what I came here to find out,” she replied lightheartedly. “I do think you need to go talk to Clarke though.”

“And why is that? We are having a good time.”

“Sweetie, you haven’t heard a word I have said for the last 10 minutes.”

Blushing, Lexa grabbed Harper’s clutch and jacket. Before handing them over she hesitated. “You ok to make it home? I don’t mind getting you a ride.”

“Yeah, I’ll be just fine.” Harper said as she leaned over and left a much more friendly kiss on Lexa’s cheek. “In that case, thank you for your company ma’am and be safe.” Lexa escorted Harper to the front door to see her off.

Clarke watched the exchange from the table she had occupied most of the night. She was trying to decide how to approach the singer when a hoard of girls swarmed her. It seemed like they were just waiting on Lexa’s date to leave before they pounced like eager kittens with a new toy. She watched, curious as to how Lexa would handle the attention. You could determine a wealthy amount of information about someone by watching their interactions with others.

It seems like this is not the first time she has been ambushed by the local group of fangirls.

Lexa handled herself with glowing self-confidence, laughing and smiling with all the women. Making sure to speak to all and leave none out. Lexa sweetly pulled a girl to her side and kissed her on the side of the head while the gaggle of girls spouted on excitedly. What’s going on here? Clarke thought.

Lexa was all but ignoring the masses except for this one girl. She was nothing special. Clothes
worn and slightly wrinkled. Her makeup was pretty but looked completed by an amateur. Glasses sat on a round face with large eyes. Her fiery red hair was pulled up in a bun. *She is the textbook representation of the ’uncool’ friend that everyone is still friends with. Always there, yet always in the background.* Clarke thought.

Lexa yelled up at the ceiling for a moment and the audience looked excited once more. The ceiling yelled back. *What the…* Lexa led the girl towards the stage but didn’t get on it.

A simple and sweet piano melody played for a moment then stopped. More yelling from the ceiling, and Lexa gave a ‘thumbs up’ sign. The music started once again, and Lexa began to sing. No microphone, no flourish. Just singing to this one girl who was consistently placed second to everyone else. Clarke swooned so hard so almost fell out of her chair when she heard the lyrics to the song.

*You are my fire*

*The one desire*

*Believe*

*When I say,*

*That I want it that way*

Lincoln appeared from the thick of the crowd, Octavia at his side, and held up a lighter. Soon, more lighters filled the small area with a soft glow of many small flames that fit the mood of the bar flawlessly. The electronic lights of the bar dimmed to near nonexistence. Clarke had a fleeting curiosity of who did the lights, but soon it was gone.

The red-head Lexa was serenading was smiling with tears in her eyes. Everyone wished they could be her. For Lexa to sing to them. The entirety of the bar’s occupants was quiet or singing along softly, letting Lexa give this moment to this girl who held the features of innocence.

Clarke thought it was the perfect song if she was reading this whole situation right. The remixed version of the Backstreet Boys hit was precious. It wasn’t anything like when Lexa had sang ‘Confident,’ with dollar bills and playful dancing. This Lexa was adorable and caring.

When the song was over, everyone clapped and cheered. The red-head’s friends collected their protege and posed for some pictures. Some with Lexa, most without.
Clarke knew she had to talk to Lexa now. That was without a doubt the most caring thing she had seen done for a stranger in a long time.

*If I could just get her away from everyone....*

******

“I’m gonna go lay down,” hiccuping, Lexa made to grab for Anya’s keys, but Anya beat her to them.

“Oh no you don’t, we just talked about you going over there to talk to blondie. Don’t bitch out on me now.”

“Anya.” Lexa said as calmly and clearly as she could muster. “I. Am. Drunk. I don’t’ want to make an ass of myself.”

“You don’t need alcohol for that,” she laughed. “Besides you more forthright when you drink, and smoother than you give yourself credit for. Go on, I’ll give you the keys when you get back.”

Lexa’s glare bounced right off of Anya’a stupid smirking face. “Fine, but if I mess this up, it’s totally your fault.” An eyebrow wiggle was her only response.

Lexa took a deep breathe and gathered what little courage she could mobilize. She really didn’t want to fumble this. They had only experienced one moment if it could even be called that, however Lexa wanted to impress Clarke. Dammit Anya.

“Hi.” Clarke had watched her walk up making Lexa want to squirm under her stare.

“Hey yourself. That was a really nice thing you did.” Clarke commented.

“What the song?” Lexa asked to clarify, “Her friends told me that she had tickets for a Backstreet Boys reunion concert but couldn’t go because her dad had health problems. They thought I was adequate enough to be a temporary replacement I guess.” Lexa commendered a chair from a nearby table.
“Regardless, that was really sweet.” Clarke’s eyes were shining in the low light. She was fiddling with an earring when she continued speaking. “You really are a good singer. I don’t think i have ever heard a voice like yours.”

“Thanks, it keeps me busy when things get boring or awkward here at the bar,” Lexa said humbly.

“When did you start singing?”

“My grandpa had a lot to do with it. He was always singing and playing the guitar when I was little.” Lexa’s mind drifted to the pick she had in her wallet and smiled at the memory. You never know when you will need one, and if you have a wallet - whether its empty or not- you can have a pick. She could almost hear him say it.

“Does he know how good you are? I should thank him for teaching you.”

Pain flashed quickly over Lexa’s features, “He died a few months ago,” she said a little subdued.

“I’m sorry.” Clarke was inwardly cursing herself. This was obviously a delicate subject.

“No harm, no foul. What did you think of that remix?” Lexa crossed her legs as she spoke, trying to distract her body with movement to ease the feeble lump in her throat.

“I loved it!” Clarke smiled glad for the change of subject.

“That was a Conor cover,” Lexa said smug. “I told you he was good.”

“Well technically I didn’t hear him, I heard you.”

“Touche, but maybe my rendition was enough to get you to listen to him,” Lexa urged.

“Ok, ok. I will give him a listen I promise. How did it go with Harper?”
“Confusing, but it ended alright I think.”

Clarke felt a tightness she hadn’t notice throughout the night shrivel up and disappear. “It looked like an mutual ending,” she prodded carefully.

“That it was,” Lexa assured. “She is fun, but I think we work better as friends.”

The night had contained more than a few people brave enough to karaoke, so when she heard Lincoln calling for a sing-off, Clarke didn’t give it a thought. Lexa sighed frustrated but smiled. “Looks like I am being paged, care to join? A sing-off is how we usually end a karaoke night.”

Clarke’s phone went off at that moment, successfully cutting off her response. She picked it up off the table, then said, “I’m sorry I have to take this. It won’t take long.”

“Ok, no problem.” Lexa was being hailed by whistles and jeers from the audience to join Lincoln on stage.

Clarke rushed to the front of the bar, phone in hand, and made her way outside. “What’s wrong? Are the kids ok?”

She could hear crying in the background, but she could tell it was a tired cry, not a hurt cry. “No, no they are fine,” Bellamy said. “I can’t get Aden to sleep, and Madi has been asking for you for the past 45 minutes.” He sounded exhausted, and she smirked a little. “I don’t know how to get them sleep!”

“Bellamy, you are their father. Maybe you should try comforting them?”

“Do you really think I would call without trying everything I knew of first” he said exasperated.

“Yes, I do.” She said curtly. “You can handle them for one night Bell, I’ll talk to you in the morning. Is there anything else?”
“No.”

“No.” Then grow up. I’ll talk to you tomorrow.” She hung up without another word. Bellamy needed to get used to taking care of the kids by himself. He needed to form some kind of bond with them before she could step in and intervene.

Clarke opened the door and was spoiled with the unique sound that was Lexa. Once at her table she noted that Lincoln had a very pleasant baritone. They went back and forth, singing a variety of popular songs over a single beat. Clarke decided she liked karaoke night here at Grounders. It was nothing like The Mountain which was consistently Finn’s choice of hangout.

“I hate to say it ma’am, but we will be closing now.” Clarke looked up Lexa, and noticed the were much fewer people in the bar. It seemed that everyone knew that Lincoln and Lexa ended nights like tonight with a sing off.

“I need to get some sleep anyway. I have a few quizzes on Monday and kids to take care of tomorrow.”

“Will I catch you at work this week?” Lexa asked, trying to mute her hopeful expression.

“We will see. Add me on Facebook, and we will get together sometime if I don’t see you.”

“Excellent.” Lexa smiled was wide and toothy, her eyes a deep shade of green with flecks of brown drizzled through. Clarke snapped at herself to get moving when a cough broke her out of her mini dip into the pools that were Lexa’s eyes.

“Oh lord, now they both have heart eyes.” Raven said halfheartedly.

“And that’s my cue for a dramatic exit,” Clarke laughed as her friends gathered around her. On impulse she snatched Lexa’s fedora, and placed it upon her own head.

Lexa’s hair was sweat stained but that only made her look more appealing. “I had better get that back,” she laughed running her hand through her hair making it stick up and out in about 10 different directions.
“Goodbye, Lexa.” Clarke winked as she slid through the exit.

Lexa stood there a few moments rerunning the past few moments with Clarke in her head.

*It doesn’t even bother me that she took my hat. Looks damn good on her too.*

“You going to chase her down?”

“Why would I do that?”

Anya stared at her for a moment, then smiled widely. “No reason, Lex. No reason.”

Anya tossed her keys to Lexa who had to react quickly so she didn’t get a ball of metal bouncing off her forehead. “Go on up and go to bed, you reek and you are starting to tilt a little when you walk.”

“Sure thing, shake’n bake.”

Chapter End Notes

Disclaimer: I do not own any music mentioned in this work.

I want it that way cover: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kgqlyL4ECq4

Sing off: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dTsVONv6iWc
Lexa sat anxiously beside her apartments mailbox. She leaned forward, elbows on knees while she waited. Today, she should get news about the Occupational Therapy program. She spent most of her morning speaking on the phone with various advisors at the local college, and the general knowledge between them was that letters went out on Friday. If someone got selected, then today would have the news the 100 applicants would either cherish or despise.

It was a cool day thankfully. The sun was at its zenith, blazing brightly overhead. A group of determined mid-aged females were power walking down the sidewalk. Their outfits clashed brilliantly with neon pinks, greens, and teals. Further down the road a park was nestled in between two looming business buildings, that Lexa still didn’t know the purpose of. The squeals and laughter of the children could be heard even over the roar of passing cars, and Lexa envied their ability to enjoy the moment.

Lexa wished she knew when the mail ran. She never before had a reason to wait on ‘snail mail’ before now. She fished her cell phone out of her pocket and dialed Anya’s number.

She picked up on the second ring, “Did you get it?”

“No, I’m literally sitting on the side of the avenue right now waiting on the postman,” she groaned. “What if I don’t get it Anya?” She worriedly chewed at her bottom lip, tasting the cherry chapstick she commonly wore. “What if my essay wasn’t enough?” Lexa was working herself up into a frenzy.

“Lexa, chill. We went through that essay at least 20 times, I’m proud of that shit!” A variety of clangs and clashes assaulted Lexa’s ears as she listened to her feisty friends pep talk. “Fuck...everything will be fine, hang on a sec,” Lexa heard the phone being sat down and Anya unleashed a stream of curses. Lexa tried to remember what the bar had going on today but didn’t come up with anything before Anya returned to the phone.

“Ok, listen. You turned everything on time, right?”

“Yes”
“You checked over the forms for errors, had your name right and all that?”

“I didn’t misspell my own name if that’s what you’re trying to say,” Lexa laughed.

“See? You have everything covered kiddo!”

“I know all of that, but this program is competitive. There were over 150 applicants and they are only choosing 30 to be in a class.” Anya’s words only bolstering her for a moment.

“Have you found Clarke on Facebook yet?”

“What? Where did that come from?” The sudden change of subject had Lexa unstable.

“Just answer the question ass,” Anya barked.

“No, I have been dealing with advisors all morning.”

“Look her up real quick, I want you to see something.” Placing Anya on speakerphone, she pulled up Facebook and typed in Clarke’s name. “What am I looking for?”

“Have you found her yet?”

“Yeah, her profile picture is her and her two kids. They are adorable.” Lexa smiled at the trio, wondering if she was ever going to have kids. She had never really given it dedicated thought. Always brushing it off as a topic for later.

A car horn spooked Lexa enough to lose her grip on her phone. Luckily, she caught it and immediately her mood flattened. The movement of her recapturing her phone must have swiped enough across the screen to advance to the next profile picture. Clarke was wrapped up in the arms of a brown haired surfer wannabe. The next picture was the pair again. This time with Clarke in a viking hat and the man had a mask on but it was pulled up enough for the camera to catch him staring at Clarke with a possession that made Lexa’s stomach roll.
“Lexa?”

“Yeah, sorry, I’m here. It looks like Clarke has a boyfriend.”

“Seriously? She looked at you like she was single. Plus she was dancing with that Niylah girl the whole night.” Lexa was just as confused as Anya.

“Yeah, she seems to have a lot of interests everywhere. Why can’t people just be straight forward, Anya?”

“My mouth isn’t a bakery, I don’t sugar coat things. Most people suck. They lie, cheat, steal, and neglect without abandon.”

“I know that, believe me.” Lexa said, thinking back on her time with Zoe.

“Anyway, looks like the mailman is here finally.” The little white box-shaped van sputtered into her complex’s parking lot like it was on its final dying breath.

“I’ll admit, my distraction blew up in your face but it did work.”

“Yes it did, let’s just see if I finally got a letter.”

“Want me to let you go?”

“Yeah, I’ll call you later.”

Lexa walked up to the mail drop, ending the call with Anya just as the handler was getting back into his truck. Lexa nervously fought with her mail key a moment. Hands shaking she forced the key to turn and the door to give way. One letter was in the box.
“Thank god you’re here,” Clarke stepped in the surprisingly clean apartment that Bellamy was now renting. The hardwood floors were newly stained and the counters in the kitchen held the bare minimum required to feed one person.

A fire engine red coffee pot sat next to a black and stainless steel toaster. Both were required when dealing with the pair’s children. Coffee for the adults, and toast for the kids. The refrigerator was a commonplace brand used in most apartment buildings. A black folding table with four chairs was shoved against a wall covered in, what Clarke assumed was toast crumbs and yogurt.

“I told you that I would be here at 6:30, Bell.” The windows of the small living area were open allowing a fall breeze to gust through the small space periodically. The soft sounds of Spongebob came from a small mounted tv on the far wall. “How did it go?”

This was the first time since Aden was born that Bellamy had kept both kids with no support from Clarke. “They have had a good time, colored on the walls in my bathroom, and you can see the yogurt disaster of 2018 over there in the kitchen,” he said gesturing towards the war zone. They shared a look, chuckling. “I have missed them, thank you for giving me a chance.” He looked at her sincerely and she mentally started a countdown in her head.

She could tell he was exhausted. His face was covered by a 5 o’clock shadow and he was wearing grey sweatpants with a hole in one knee. Random stains dotted his plain white t-shirt, and his hair, though clean, had not been tamed at any point that day. About time he has a day like this, Clarke thought. He is rarely so tousled and unkempt.

“No problem. And you have to watch them closely with anything that leaves a mark, especially Aden. Where are the kids anyway?”

“They are playing with blocks in their room.” Bellamy moved to clear up the mess on the table while Clarke peeked in on the kids. There were only three doors in which they could be behind, one obviously led to the bathroom. A small mirror sat over a tiny stand alone sink. Clarke could just see the edge of a tub/shower combo. The other doors where propped open with door stops. The first room she tried, held a mattress on the floor and a few piles of clothes to one side of the room. That had to be Bell’s room, so that left the door in the middle.

Clarke crept up to the threshold to observe a classic sibling scene. Madi had blocks stacked up as a seat for her single doll. Aden had clumsily built a wall between the Madi’s doll and his toy car collection. Interestingly enough, the cars were in a circle around another doll. Clarke had no idea
what game they were playing but it was all soon forgotten as Madi spotted her standing in the doorway.

“MAMA!” Madi yelled as she unceremoniously crashed through Aden’s careful setup of his area. They both must have missed her terribly because no tears were shed and Aden’s excited squawk of surprise overshadowed his kingdom’s demise.

The three were bursting with smiles, and Clarke’s heart soared with joy being near her babies again. It had only been two days, but it felt like forever when they were supposed to be at her side.

“I see you found them.” Bellamy reached over the trio to ruffle Aden’s hair. “I finally figured out the trick to get this one to sleep,” he said proudly. “Play anything by Staind, and the kid is out.”

In response, Aden barbled something unintelligible. He could be explaining the secrets to the universe, but at just over one year old, no one Clarke had introduced to Aden could understand him. His little face scrunched up causing dried yogurt to flake off his forehead and settle onto Clarke’s arm. “Yes, one happy meal on the way home,” Clarke rolled her eyes as both kids squealed in appreciation. “Staind huh? I’ll have to try that when he is being fussy.”

“I REALLY don’t understand how you do that.” Bellamy’s eyes held a tiny hint of jealousy, but he brushed it off quickly. “Their bag is on Madi’s bed. Everything should be ready to go. Unless you want to stay a bit.” He tacked on the end hopefully.

*Here we go.* “I think it is best if we get on our way back. Thank you for keeping them Bell, it was nice to get to go out with the girls.”

“If we could just try to work things out between us…” he began.

“No, Bellamy. We have tried and tried. That part of us is over, and we need to focus on our kids now.” Clarke needed to be firm, but she did still care for him and she let that reflect in her voice.

“I do miss you, Bell, but we really just don’t work. If you were to think on it for longer than a moment, you would see that too.” She allowed her features to soften while she spoke. She had known Bellamy and Octavia for so long, it would be hard to imagine her life without them. Primarily because of the monkeys attached to both legs as she tried to navigate herself and them back to the living room.
“I understand Clarke, but I am back now and I’m better. I hope we can be friends again at least.”

“We will always be friends, Bell.”

The dark haired man gave love to each of his children and threw a long arm around all of them before Clarke managed to escape. Growling playfully at him, Clarke retaliated by poking him in the ribs. Both kids giggled at his “manly” yelp.

Clarke hoped that she could rely on him in the future, she had missed him. She smiled, in his eagerness to please her, she could get a babysitter for just about anything.

With that thought in mind, she loaded her two monkeys into car seats, settled an argument over a coloring book, and drove towards the nearest Mickey D’s.

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This place was silent. Still -- devoid of any movement. Even the nearby tree branches’ soft dance to the lands inhales and exhales were muted and careful. For a place so rural, it was rare to spot an animal here, as if they too knew its significance. This was a place that could liberate -- or crush. The soil was still newly turned, unyielding to vegetation. This piece of the puzzle was novel in its existence, and to Lexa it felt surreal.

Lexa stared at the grave stone marker. Bland grey with stenciled onyx lettering that read “Nyko Black. Loved by all.” This place made her feel like she could still hear his voice if she just listened hard enough. She imagined his smile as he teased her grandmother about tea or her great uncle about the dents in the chicken house door. Uncle Jim would never admit to taking a hammer to that door, but everyone knew he did it to piss off grandpa.

She never spent much time with her parents before they died. They were busy people, always making sure the family had enough. Too busy for Lexa, but her grandparents were always THERE. They were the ones she had her earliest memories of. Indra and Nyko Black had done everything that her parents didn’t do before they died, and everything they couldn’t do after.

Lexa cracked open two beer cans of the six pack she had brought with her to the cemetery an hour away from Polis. One she brought to her lips and drank, the other sat untouched but not forgotten next the grave.
“I know you don’t like cans, but they didn’t have bottles. You’ll have to get over it this time.”

She never could control her snark with Nyko, even as weak as it now. He encouraged it in fact. He was a big man, consistently sporting a long sleeve button up shirt, blue jeans, and a hat with some sort of chicken reference on it. His size was intimidating for all of zero seconds because his presence to those that knew him was warm and inviting. He also harbored a love for making people laugh, and that made it so when he spoke, everyone listened. He was responsible for the only joke she could ever remember, and it wasn’t even a joke. More a punchline than anything.

Lexa was hand waxing her first vehicle, a small extended cab Chevy S-10. Nyko walked out of the house Lexa was practically raised in and whistled appreciatively. “Lex, that truck is looking so sharp, if a fly were to land on it, it would slip and bust his ass. After the two had a good chuckle he followed up with.

“Hey Lex?”

“Yeah Gramps?”

“What is the last thing that goes through a fly’s head when he hits the windshield?”

“I dunno, grandpa, what?”

“HIS ASS!”

Grandma had come outside and berated him for a solid 5 minutes about his language but Lexa could remember her smiling too. “Those were the days, huh grandpa?”

She smiled sadly, “I got my letter today. I didn’t get into that program. The one I told you about last time. I can hear you saying it, and no, occupational therapy as nothing to do with getting people jobs.”

Of course no one answered, but Lexa continued with routined ease.

“I know, I know. Everything happens for a reason. I wish you were here to help me. To knock some sense into me. Anya tries but she lacks your--- whatever it was you did. I could also use help with a girl too.” Lexa rambled on, making herself comfortable on the low stone wall that surrounded the cemetery. “She is smart and driven. Her smile is out of this world. You would like her.” She paused a moment, pulling out a cigarette and lighting it. “I’m not sure if she is available, and I’m not totally sure I want to get into something messy.” A frown settled across her features as she once again tried to sort out things with Clarke in her head. She shook herself out of that line of thought.
“Nevermind all of that. It hasn’t been long since we lost you. I miss you terribly.” A single tear escaped down Lexa’s sun darken skin. She forced control over her emotions, and sat down on the grass. “I could use your advice here.” She talked and hopelessly waited for a response. In movies, the breeze would pick up, or a butterfly would land casually on an appendage. Nothing like that happened now. The area was motionless, uncaring of her wishes and hopes.

She spoke softly, trying to infuse herself with his assurance. “I wonder if you are with mom and dad. I wonder if there is anything after death. Think you could reach through mortality and clue me in?”

Her thoughts were a gumble of emotion and unanswered questions. Lexa felt that every time she came back to this place a piece of her heart was healed, and at the same time, another part of her heart was crushed anew. It hurt but it also felt good.

“Time to go see grandma, I guess. She is going to kill me for cutting my hair.” Inspiration struck Lexa without warning as she hefted the four remaining beer cans, “If that was you reaching out to tell me to give grandma the beer, you are still a wicked old man.” It felt like an idea was forcibly shoved inside Lexa’s head. “I’ll try it but she will probably laugh at me.”

Opening the door to her Jeep, she looked over her shoulder one more time before leaving. Everything was still--blah. She didn’t know what she was expecting but regardless it never came. “I love you grandpa.”

Lexa drove the 5 minute drive with the windows down and the radio blaring. Old faulty wiring making her subwoofers spark to life when she hit a particularly deep pothole. She could drive this old dirt road in her sleep if needed. This is the road she was raised on and where the rest of her small family lived.

The first house she passed was her aunt and uncle's house. It was big, beautiful, and modern with shiny new cars dotting the drive. Her uncles obsession with having the best drove him to have multiple of everything he owned, and cars were no exception.

The next house was Luna’s. Her favorite cousin didn’t appear to be home. The GMC Sierra not occupying the overgrown driveway. She was out doing one of two things: chasing a new job, or chasing someone new. She seemed to always be looking for that special someone to divest her love to. Luna had also ALWAYS been looking for a job that wasn’t managed or owned by her parents.

The last house was her grandparents house (or is it just grandma’s house now?) and her favorite. The old two story farm house had been fancy back in the day. Perched on the edge of a steep hill,
the house was split into two parts. Grandma’s part was atop the hill, and grandpa’s part was over the edge. They shared the first floor dining room which served as a divider of sorts.

Grandpa’s ‘man cave’ on the hillside was a game room. A massive space filled with odds and ends only grandpa knew the significance of, guitars, record players, and even an old jukebox. It also held a bar with a mini fridge and a bathroom decorated with an Elvis theme. (The only touch of grandma in area.) Warped stairs led to the garage that housed all of the unfinished projects and tinkerings of an aged man.

‘Grandmas’ side was the novel depiction of a ‘grandma’s house.’ A large kitchen with marble countertops and a grand staircase that lead up to the only two bedrooms in the house complimented an open floor plan living room that could see the rest of the residents completely as long as all doors were open.

Lexa resigned herself to knocking on the door potentially without an answer. Her trip was spur of the moment, and she didn’t have time to call her grandmother the 852 times necessary to let her know she was coming. Grandma Indra had taken to going with her sisters to a local casino after he had passed, and she was never home when Lexa made the journey without announcing herself first. Oh, and she never answered the phone. Ever.

Giving up on the door, Lexa made her way around to the side of the house to knock on the living room windows. “Anyone home?!” Lexa bellowed at the glass. She could see someone shifting through the curtains. “Grandpa said to bring you the rest of the beer!”

“He would wouldn’t he?” Indra asked opening the door. “Go talk to him did you?”

Lexa held out the beer dubious. Indra looked at the cans for a moment then said, “Oh, come in child and we at least get some glasses to try an elevate this wretched stuff.” She gestured impatiently inside and Lexa followed, locking the door. “And you can tell me what possessed you to cut your beautiful hair as well.” Lexa winced.

Grandma Indra had always wanted the doors locked despite the fact that no one but the mail man ever came down the dead end road. She wasn’t very trusting of people, and had developed a hard exterior over the years making her gruff and difficult to read.

“It's just beer, putting it in a glass will only make it flat,” Lexa laughed as Indra playfully sent a glare her way.
“I never understood his fascination with beer. Now, a nice bloody Mary on the other hand, that’s my kind of drink.” Indra was busily pulling glasses and a bloody mary mixer out of cupboards.

Lexa went to the fridge to get the ice Indra would need for her drink.

“I don’t think he cared much for having to MAKE a drink, he just wanted to drink it.”

The two smiled fondly over the familiar argument. “How have you been Alexandra? I don’t see you much anymore.” She had finished making her drink and was putting things in the sink.

“I’m ok, grandma, working, going to school, trying to get into that program.”

“Cutting your hair,” she prodded again with a pointed look as she sat on the couch.

“Ok, I’ll tell you the truth,” after a loaded pause, “Anya made me do it.”

Indra scoffed, “Please, you have been wanting change it since you were little. It does look good though, I’m glad you went with this cut.” with a hand that had seen many years in a garden, she ruffled Lexa’s hair gently, making her sit in the process.

Relieved, Lexa said “Thanks, I really like it.”

Of course Lexa hadn’t expected the flimsy lie to work, but mentioning Anya had its perks and the gamble paid off. She was not above using her best friend to stay in her grandma’s good graces. At 23 years old, she was still kind of afraid of the slight woman with the fierce hazel eyes.

Indra made a sound between a scoff and a grunt, “Tell Anya to come see me, that child needs more food.” More seriously she added, “So what prompted this visit. I am glad to see you, but you haven’t been back since--in a while.”

“I told you about the occupational therapy program I was trying to get into right? 150 applicants, and only 30 would be accepted? Well, I didn’t get in, and before I knew it I was in my truck and pulling up to the cemetery.”
“Oh dear, I’m sorry.” Indra gathered Lexa in a hug that she relaxed into immediately. “I knew better than to get my hopes up, but there is always next semester right?”

Indra nodded thoughtfully, “Yes, but keep your hope Lexa. It is a part of you. Hold it close.”

Lexa barked a laugh as she was reminded of the professor from Hogwarts that made the prophecies. Indra had such a weird way with words sometimes. So serious and foretelling.

“I’ll keep it close I promise. How have you been? Splurged at the casino lately?”

Indra gasped with shocked indignation, “You know I don’t approve of such nonsense.”

A perfectly shaped eyebrow raised on the younger girl. “Last week, and my sister lost me more money than I took in with me!”

“How is that even possible?” Lexa missed times like these. Laughing in this house. This was her home, but she left after high school graduation and never came back. It was too small for Lexa’s big dreams.

“I have no idea,” she reached across to shakey wooden table that held her purse. “Here Alexandra, take this for some gas money.”

“I don’t need that grandma really.”

“Take it, you need it more than I do.” She didn’t, but she didn’t argue over it. Ever visit her grandma forced money on her and when she got home she stored it in a tootsie roll canister that she got ages ago for Christmas.

“Thanks grandma, have you seen much of Luna lately? I was going to stop and pester her but her car isn’t home.”

“She came by last week, said something about a new girlfriend.”

“I KNEW it. She always disappears on me when she meets someone new.”
“She’ll grow out of it eventually,” Indra said with a snort.

_I hope so, Lexa thought. I’d like to see her when she wasn’t trying to impress someone._

The next night, Lexa was at home doing a quick ‘spit shine’ of her kitchen when her phone buzzed. The notification sound from Facebook rang through her ears and Lexa picked it up curious. She didn’t have any notifications on for Facebook. (The dinging all day drove her crazy when she was trying to sleep.)

Facebook Messenger: New Message

Her heart rate picked up a few beats a minute as she read the message.

*Clarke Griffin: You working tonight?*

*Lexa Black: No, off tonight. What’s up?*

*CG: about to take a break and i thought i would offer a chance at that smoke break minus the work. Maybe add a little coffee to the mix. I am on my way to the coffee shop across the street from work.*

*LB: its 10 p.m. why would i need coffee?*

*CG: we work night shift*

*LB: be there in 15*

*Ok, I’m going to look at this as just friends, no potential anything until I figure out what is going on. Lexa thought determined. Even with that thought, Lexa still found herself changing clothes multiple times and trying to figure out what to do with her face. Finally deciding on her favorite Hurley shorts and a black tank top, she left the apartment with only a few minutes to get there on time.*

The coffee shop by the hospital was THE place to go on break. It was cheap, close, and had better food than the hospital cafeteria. The cafe was ringed with a wrought iron fence that would fit better in France or Italy rather than Polis. Beige walls had inexpensive stencil designs to try to make the space feel more -- extravagant? The the floor tiles had years of coffee beans ground to a fine dust in the grout, and the best part of the place was the smell. Just by walking in a person would feel more alert.
The place may have looked rough and put together but its coffee selection was out of this world. Breakfast blends, Columbia’s, French press, if you could think it then there was a good chance that the place had it.

Lexa searched for Clarke as she made her way to the cashier. As she ordered a small caramel macchiato, she found Clarke sitting in an abandoned corner. Her green scrubs had extra pairs of gloves and unopened alcohol swabs peeking out of various pockets. Her attire looked out of place in the coffee shop, but Lexa was beginning to realize that the woman could pull off any outfit if she chose to.

The blonde looked up as Lexa made her way over and sat down. “I didn’t know you were working tonight, I would’ve brought you food.”

Clarke grinned, “I’d rather spend time with someone that has brain cells.”

“Bad night?” Lexa stirred her coffee, sniffing the pleasant aroma.

“Just have a rough set of patients. Half are legitimately sick, and the remaining just like to complain.” Clarke was adjusting and readjusting her notebook and pen. Not with anxiety, just with a need to move.

“Ah, must be getting close to the full moon.” Clarke scoffed. “Hey, that shit is true!”

Clarke scoffed again, “It can get crazy any night, but I will agree that things around the hospital do tend to get chaotic around a full moon.”

Lexa leaned back in her chair and watched her continue to fidget, “You aren’t used to taking breaks this early are you?”

“I’m actually not going back tonight, they didn’t need me.” She laughed but it didn’t reach her eyes, “My floor is usually understaffed for the most part, but when it’s overstaffed they just send one of us home. It was my turn to take the hit to my paycheck.”

“I’m sorry, it’s always hard getting a short check.” She didn’t know what else to say to that. “How
about this, come to my place for a while and wind down. I know it can take me an hour or two for my body to realize that I’m not a work.”

Clarke glanced up, hopeful but dubious. “I don’t want to intrude, but if you’re offering…”

Lexa was extremely grateful that she had cleaned most of her apartment right then. “You’re not and I am. I have the perfect remedy for relaxing.”

Lexa let a slow devilish smirk take over her face, and Clarke raised an eyebrow. “I’m not sure what you have in mind, but it had better be good.”

Chapter End Notes

I want to be proud of the work I do. I am going to slow down on updates so I have time to go back over my work. Reading back through I can see things that I would like to change and clarify. If you are the type to reread fics while you wait for an update, yes I will be going back and fixing a few things in some previous chapters. I will probably do that throughout the entirety of this fic - unfortunately I can get it right the first time (I did try, I promise). I will not be changing any part of the story however or its over all arc. Like I say in the tags, I am teaching myself how to write, how to express what I see in my mind’s eye, how to get you (the reader) to feel what I feel. I have a deep attachment to these characters and I want to do them and their love justice. I hope to see you guys commenting in the future, and enjoy your day!

P.S. As you may have noticed, I tend to write mainly as Lexa. Clarke is hard to channel right now so I use her POV as a small way to help me progress through and scenes I have trouble with. Also this is a Clexa fic, but it will take them a while to figure out how things sit between them.
Lexa was amused but perplexed. She had brought Clarke back to her apartment to introduce her to the wonderful world of video games. When you were trying to wind down from a job as stressful as theirs, video games were a good outlet to deal with the remaining energy.

Little did Lexa know, Clarke was a damn gamer just like she was. Clarke waltzed in, downloaded her gamertag, made a few minor adjustments for her classes on Call of Duty, and then proceeded to rage. It was the cutest, sexiest thing Lexa had ever seen.

“I see what you see, and I didn’t see him at all.” Lexa lounged in her favorite spot on the couch gesturing vaguely at the screen. Clarke sat next to her jiggling with frustrated excitement.

“God this game always gets me so riled up.”

“I had no idea or I would have picked a different one-” Lexa started to say.

“WHAT THE FUCKING FUCK!!” Clarke tossed the controller to the side and relaxed back into the couch.

“...or something else entirely.” Laughing, Lexa took in the disgruntled look on Clarke's face. “You are ridiculously cute when your mad.”

Lexa froze only a moment after she had realized what she said. *Friends can say that right? Jesus Lexa calm down.* “Well my plan to corrupt you with video games is officially a dud. Want something stronger than coffee to drink? You don’t need to be anywhere immediately right?”

“A vodka Red Bull would be awesome. Do we need to make a beer run?”
Lexa peeled herself off the couch and disappeared into the kitchen. “I have everything we need, no worries.” Clarke glanced around the room, absorbing how Lexa left her mark on the world. There was a bookshelf near the front door with too many books on it. Most of the shelves sagged in the middle, weighted down by the thick texts.

Her tv stand was home to several figures Clarke assumed were characters from her favorite stories or games. A life size replica of the ghost from Destiny had its own little area. Laying close to the stand sat a media pass for GuardianCon.

“You really are a nerd, aren’t you?” Clarke heard an offended scoff from the kitchen. Lexa appeared holding their drinks. After handing Clarke hers, she turned her nose up dramatically, “I have a healthy fascination with science fiction and fantasy.” A touch more seriously she added, “Besides, it keeps me occupied when I have a shit day.”

Clarke’s smile shifted into concern. “So were you having a shit day when I text you?”

“Oh, no. I was cleaning actually.” Lexa waved the hand holding her cup toward the mop propped against the wall near the oven. “Just a regular day until you messaged me. Speaking of which,” Lexa turned to face her wiggling her eyebrows. “Who is the guy?”

“The one in my profile picture? That’s Finn. He has been around for forever. He's actually who is home with the kids right now.”

That was too close to ‘boyfriend’ for Lexa to question further. She decided ignorance was the better option. “That’s right. Aden and Madi right? I hope I get to meet them soon.”

“We are actually having a small party this weekend. I’m celebrating the last of the semester. Everyone will be there if you want to come?” Lexa caught Clarke’s gaze and held it a moment trying to read if it was a pity invitation or a genuine offer. Clarke returned her gaze, steady and unwavering.

The temperature in the room raised several degrees during that look. The same thing that happened at the bar, happening again but without people in between them. Lexa was conscious of everything, the imagined sweat on her brow, the increased rate of her breathing and heartbeat, and Clarke’s lips as she licked them. Lexa’s gaze broke first as she took in those lips not for the first time up close, but now there was a difference. The “friends only” idea was slowly drowning in the deep pool that was Clarke’s eyes.
Clarke’s phone buzzed loudly on the table, and both women jumped at the interruption.

“You had better get that,” Lexa said forcibly shoving all her emotions down and stomping on them. HARD.

Lexa noticed the annoyance flash across her pale skin. Hope bubbled dangerously in her chest. Stomp. “Kids ok?”

“Yeah, he just wants me to come home.” Clarke looked around the apartment a moment and then started to gather her things. “I meant it when I said I wanted you to come next weekend. I can message you the address.”

“Are you sure that’s a good idea?”

“Absolutely, I want you to show my worthless friends how to sing! Here let me see your phone.”

Lexa unlocked her phone and handed it over. “Then I’ll be there.” Clarke typed for a moment and her phone buzzed again from her pocket.

“Good. Now I don’t have to use Facebook to message you.” She handed the phone back and it took every single ounce of self control for Lexa to not smile like an idiot. There, on a text message, was “know any Ed Sheeran?” sent to an unknown number.

She mastered her body and grinned a lopsided grin. “I know a few by him, he happens to be one of my favorite artists.”

“Good.”

With that one word she drew Lexa into a hug and walked out, closing the door softly behind her.
Lexa’s work week flew by. Her excitement to see Clarke again was infectious. Everyone she worked with had comments on how happy she was. She tried not to think to deeply about the “who’s” and “why’s” and let herself enjoy the feeling.

Unfortunately she hadn’t had the chance to work with Clarke. They had taken two smoke breaks together, but they didn’t have any sparks flying between them. The interactions didn’t scream romantic, just companion-like. They mostly just bitched about co-workers or difficult patients, and exchanged small facts about them selves.

Lexa had learned that Clarke loved to be a mother and she often spoke of her kids adventures. She also learned that even though they were both under four years old, both kids went to a daycare ran like a preschool during school hours. Lexa didn’t know it was possible to put toddlers in a program that prepared them for kindergarten.

Clarke had learned a bit more about Lexa as well. Lexa had told her about her burger ordering process. Every time she would get a burger from her favorite place, she would order it with everything on it, then unashamedly scrape everything off but the condiments and cheese. Lexa held by the fact that the flavor was good, but the soggy textures of the old lettuce and nasty tomatoes and onions were too much.

Saturday evening Lexa had called Anya over for some advice. She was digging through her clothes with only her sports bra and boxers on when she opened the door.

Anya took a long look at Lexa before she started laughing. Loudly. “It’s just a party at a pretty girls house Lex, seriously.”

Lexa huffed and considered not letting her in. “You know, I think I can figure out what to wear without having to hear your shit.” She didn’t close the door, rather stepped back to make room for her to come inside. She could obviously dress herself, but she was nervous. Something felt off about tonight, but she couldn’t pinpoint the problem. She had a serious sense of foreboding when she thought of being there with Clarke, her kids, possibly Finn, and God knows who else.

Anya was there as backup even though Lexa would never admit to needing it.

“Well at least your hair isn’t going to be a problem now that you’ve cut it. What about clothes? Is
there anything you want to wear specifically?” Anya had already started digging around just like Lexa had a few moments before she knocked on the door. “Not really, but I do want to be comfortable.”

She threw a few shirts to the side, then some jeans next. “So nothing tight, and a black shirt.”

“Why black?” Lexa paced back and forth behind Anya, occasionally getting hit by a stray article of clothing.

“Because you feel more confident in black. Job interview - black. Date - black. Program interview - black. That time you went to court - black.” She tossed aside a low cut v-neck in favor of a black henley. “This will do the trick I think.”

Lexa smiled and thanked Anya as she put the shirt on and went into the bathroom to put some gel into her hair. Anya handed her a pair of jeans and she put them on not really paying attention, trusting Anya to make her outfit flow.

“You are an amazing woman, I don’t care what Lincoln says about you.” Lexa hugged her tightly and then remembered something. “By the way, grandma says you need to come over. I think she plans on feeding you AND sending you home with food.”

The two exited the apartment and walked to their vehicles. “When are you going to let this thing die?”

Anya had never trusted her Jeep. To be fair, it looked like crap, and Lexa was saving up for a new car; however she did enjoy her Jeep. She almost had enough to get something a little more appealing to the eye, but until that time came she'd be happy with what she had. “I’ll be getting something different soon. Maybe then you’ll ride with me.”

Anya gave her a stare that screamed “not fucking likely.”

Anya wrestled with her car door and threw her phone inside. She stood back up, previous glare forgotten. “Don’t get your hopes up too high kid. You know how people are, and this one just reeks ‘complicated’.”

“I’m just going to hang out, no big deal. We are friends.”
Anya didn’t believe her, neither did Lexa.

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Clarke was running back and forth, room to room, trying to get the various piles of toys associated with having kids toned down to at least three per area. “Aden, baby, please don’t leave Mr. Woody in the hallway.” The blonde headed boy garbled happily at his favorite character and took off towards the sounds of Dora the Explorer emitting from the next room.

She could now move from little kid toys to big kid disasters. The kitchen and living room looked like a frat house. Beer cans and boxes littered the area around the trash can, and multiple dishes heaped with half eaten food were piled by the sink. Clarke steadied her rising temper by taking a few deep breaths.

Clarke’s house was nothing fancy by any means, but it was a house. It was big enough for herself and her kids in the beginning. Now, there seemed to be a horde of guys that were always around. Eating her food, drinking her alcohol, and stealing her cigarettes. She had taken to hiding a carton in the freezer so she would have some by the end of the pay period.

Finn and his gang were harmless for the most part, but lately they had been treating her house like they paid the bills. Clarke tried to not let it get to her because without the constant presence of the boys, it grew too quiet at night.

“Hey, babe?” She could hear Finn and his usual shadows playing Halo in the living room.

“What Finn?” She tried to not let her annoyance show, but apparently not hard enough.

“Damn, what’s your problem? The house looks fine. It’s just me and the boys here anyway.”

Clarke continued her assault on the kitchen catching Finn enter from the corner of her eye. “I told you Raven, Octavia, and a friend from work were coming over tonight. Beyond that, it is disgusting in here. I wish you guys could at least rinse your bowls out after you eat. That way when I get home from WORK I can clean them.”
Ok, so maybe she didn’t have as good a hold on her temper as she thought.

Finn had that kicked puppy look on his face when she looked up. “And don’t give me that shit either. You all have functioning arms and legs. You and them need to help out. Especially since most of you basically live here.”

“You asked me to help with kids remember?” Finn started puffing his chest out in an attempt to make her cower but she was past petting his ego right now. How hard is it to clean up after yourself? Her kids where better behaved and they had way less experience being alive.

“Yes, to help with the kids, not let you and your buddies destroy my house.” Clarke threw beer cans into a trash bag that was already overflowing. Distracted by her anger she dimly noted the music getting turned down. Clarke had just about had it with this whole teenage boy phase that Finn was going through. She shoved the bag into his hands and gestured around wildly, finally losing her temper completely. “YOU need to get YOUR friends and AT LEAST get the alcohol items sorted! I don’t want my kids playing with beer boxes and wading through beer cans on the floor of the kitchen just so they can get to me or their toys! BOYS!” She called toward the living room. “Get your ASSES in here!”

Clarke was panting by the end of her little rant when Joey and Eric slinked into view. Neither boy was remarkable, just average teenage boys. She actually had no idea if they were teenagers, she just assumed because they acted like typical asshats. Both covered in the pimples of puberty and floppy hair that Finn had taken to wearing. She let her eyes focus on them and collectively they flinched.

“I want this kitchen clean by the time I get out of the shower.” Her voice was level but the fury she felt from thinking of her kids living in this filth was just under the surface. Leaving the boys to do her bidding, she peeked in one last time on the kids to make sure they were settled enough for her to get cleaned up, and disappeared with two beers to the bathroom.

Finn was excellent with the kids. He took care of them better than any babysitter she dealt with since Aden was born. He was caring and loved them like they were his own. She really couldn’t explain outright how SHE felt about him though, and that thought nagged at her.

It had started out when her and Bellamy’s relationship was falling apart. (What happened there wasn’t really a mystery, he got in with some bad people and started doing drugs that were more damaging than the occasional blunt. A lot more drugs. He would disappear for days and show up asking for food, a place to stay, and then money.) Finn was always around. Their friend circles meshing and weaving together into one over time.
One day Finn kissed her and she let him. Lonely and feeling abandoned by Bellamy with two kids, she felt like she had someone. Things were good for a while, then Finn was deployed to Iraq.

When he returned, he was different. Darker. Nothing she could put her finger on, but it was there, simmering under the surface and only visible in his eyes. He started becoming possessive and controlling. Calling her while she was out, frequently going through her phone, and a few times she thought she saw his car in the parking lot at work. Clarke didn’t care then that he was doing this. She could twist it in her head that he was showing that he cared about her, and she craved that attention. Only recently had she started to pull away from him.

Clarke started her shower and got in, thoughts never slowing as she washed her hair. Trying to figure out when the relationship started (if it could even be called that), and how it got this complicated with him. When she examined her feelings for him, she found she had a deep fondness for him. She respected him for helping her with the kids, but at the same time she gave him a place to stay and he didn't have to work. Her own mother had pulled back from Clarke after things fell through with Bellamy, but Finn stuck around.

A small part of her knew that Finn loved her. Well he thought he loved her. When they were new to each other, they had loads of fun doing all the things couples do. Now, it just felt like it was the way things were supposed to go. They had gotten comfortable, and Clarke was tired of feeling complacent. She wanted to feel an intensity that was lacking in her relationship with Finn. Even with Bell, she had felt like her life was scripted. Like that was what everyone did and expected, so she jumped on the bandwagon. Got married and had kids.

Looking back, Clarke didn’t regret her time with Bellamy because she had her two babies. The part of her that was a woman though; that part yearned for a deeper experience with a person. Green eyes flashed through her thoughts, making her thoughts shake and waver.

_Lexa._ She barely knew Lexa but something drew Clarke to her. Something primal and animalistic in nature. She was afraid though. Afraid that Lexa was a player. Afraid that she had too much going on in her life for Lexa to be bothered with.

It wasn’t about the sex. Clarke had plenty of opportunities for sex between Niyalah and Finn, however, she wanted a connection. _I am getting old. Fantasizing about a connection._

Clarke scoffed at herself, she hated to feel weak, and that’s exactly how those two occasions of eye contact with Lexa felt. Clarke was glad that the last one had been interrupted by her phone, she didn’t know if she had wanted to run from complex or give in and get lost in everything that was Lexa. She had caught her eyes flickering down. She had felt her skin feel like it was on fire. She really FELT in that moment. It was as scary as it was enthralling.
Clarke skipped from the bathroom to her room in the hopes of not catching Finn's notice. The music was back on, and she could hear the sounds of a FPS being played. He really could be annoying if he caught her trying to get dressed and she didn’t want to deal with it.

Her prayers went unanswered as Finn knocked on the door and pushed his way in. “I just wanted to let you know - in a hurry much?”

He took in her throwing on clothes, her jeans getting stuck on trails of water still making their way down toned legs. Clarke ignored him for the most part, throwing on her favorite shirt, a blue/purple Abercrombie shirt. “Wanted to let me know what?”

“Me and the boys picked up the kitchen. I’m sorry it got that bad.” He sat down on the edge of the bed and his eyes raked hungerly over Clarke. “You look beautiful Clarke. Are you trying to impress someone? Maybe this ‘friend’ from work?” He said that with a bitter taste in his mouth. Over the last few weeks, he had picked up on the fact that Clarke was pulling away from him. He knew they were growing apart but stubbornly refused to let it be an easy process.

Her stomach fluttered a moment then she responded, “I dress for myself, you of all people should know that.”

He followed her into the bathroom as she started to put on makeup. “I took out the trash too, and got the dishes caught up. I really am sorry.”

Hearing the speech as truth, Clarke sighed as she combed through her blonde locks with her fingers. “Thank you Finn. I know it gets away from me sometimes as well, but those boys out there don’t do anything but make messes and keep me up when I need to sleep.”

“I’ll talk to them, but tonight let’s just have fun. Like we used to.” He wrapped his arms around her from behind and rested his chin on her shoulder. “There was a time when you liked this,” he said softly.

Not wanting to have this conversation Clarke gave him smoke and mirrors. “We will see. And I am will have fun. It's my party after all.”

Since clarke had not responded to his touch, he took that as the dismissal it was and scampered out as someone knocked at the front door. “I’ll get it, you finish getting dressed.”
She heard Raven and Octavia loudly announce their presence and mentally prepared herself for an onslaught of questions.

“Griffin! Looking good! Wait, who are you dressing up for? Have you finally realized deep down that you cannot go on in life without me?” Raven, ever the drama queen, feel to both knees behind Clarke.

Clarke sat the blow-dryer down and fell to her knees as well. “Reyes, you couldn’t handle me.” Then Clarke tackled her. "Still not admitting you have a lady boner for Lexa huh?"

"Can't a girl dress up for just herself??” Clarke asked exasperated.

The two pushed and shoved until Octavia announced she had drinks for the both of them.

Clarke made her way into her freshly picked up kitchen where 3 bottles of vodka, orange juice, and Octavia were waiting, Raven in tow. “You are a blessing, Blake.”

“I know,” she said cheekily. “And you Miss Reyes, what will you have this evening?” Octavia was doing her best English butler voice while she gestured to the array of other bottles Clarke hadn’t noticed behind her.

“Well darling, how about you surprize me?” Raven returned Octavia’s leer.

Raven and Octavia jumped as Finn waltzed in. “What is up with you two? Have you finally banged?” He said it so harshly, not with venom but with that nasty look guys get when they see two women making out or get close. Like all men thought that women did it to get their attention.

“In your dreams Collins.” Both Raven and Octavia coursed, then they started to set up a beer pong table.

Playful mood broken by Finn’s entrance, Clarke left them to start the kids bedtime routine. *If Lexa doesn’t get here soon, she won’t get to meet them today.* Why was that important? Lexa wanted to meet them, and Clarke didn’t usually like introducing her kids to someone that may or may not potentially be in the picture - friend or not.
“Mama go to park?” Madi was tired but the kid always loved going to the park. “Maybe sometime next week sweetie. It is time for bed now.”

She ushered both kids to the bathroom to help them brush their teeth. Clarke could hear excited conversation from the living room but was focused on Aden. He had managed to get toothpaste EVERYWHERE, and he had only touched the tube. “Oh, monkey. Only you could do this much damage without even opening it.”

“Holy shit. Lexa Black, whats up?!”

Clarke’s ears picked the name out of the mayhem in living room.

“What are you doing here?”

“She’s Clarke’s date!” She heard next from Raven. Groaning Clarke knew she needed to get in there before shit hit the fan.

After rushing the kids to get their teeth clean, Clarke ushered them towards the living room. She wanted Lexa to get the chance to meet them, but a small selfish part of her just wanted to see the striking brunette with her own eyes.

Lexa was in the process of a high five with Finn when she rounded the corner. She was wearing a black henley with blue jeans and converse shoes. Her hair was pushed back out of her face to just over her right ear as she surveyed the room. She was also holding - two bottles of Hawaiian Punch?

Lexa must have seen her confusion. “I didn’t know what to bring so I got adult punch with alcohol and kid punch without it.” Her voice was like velvet wrapping around Clarke’s consciousness. A breath she didn’t know she was holding let out in an audible whoosh.

“And you two kiddos must be Aden and Madi.” She looked at Aden, “Hello Madi!” and then to Madi, “Hi Aden! I’m Lexa.”

The kids giggled and Aden patted his chest. “Aye, aye.” He reached over carefully for an almost 2 year old and poked Lexa gently on the cheek. “Exa.” The two looked at each other for a moment
“Oh my, I’m so sorry little princess. It is nice to meet you.” Lexa was a natural. She had both kids eating out the palm of her hand. Clarke looked around the room and seen reflections of her awe in the faces of others. The kids NEVER took to someone new that quickly.

Clarke was turning into a puddle of goo. Lexa had only walked in the front door and she had the entire house ready to fan her like the ancient Egyptians. Eric and Joey looked like they got smacked straight back into middle school with both of their jaws hanging open comically. Octavia and Raven were glancing wide eyed at each other. Finn was trying to not be impressed, but awe and a trace amount of jealousy could still be seen on him.

Clarke came to her senses. “You guys know each other?” Lexa was busy untangling herself from the kids.

“What did you guys think of Lexa? She seem cool?”

Despite all the excitement and reunions, the kids still had to go to bed. Clarke was coaxing them down from the buzz of meeting someone new. Aden’s garbled speech was faster than normal, and his blue eyes sparkled at Clarke. “Aden seems to like her, how about you Madi?”

She turned towards the girl as she settled Aden down in his playpen.

“Want her to play dolls and watch Dora with me!” Her little Madi had apparently given it a lot more thought than she had expected.

“What about me?” Clarke asked as she poked out her bottom lip in a pout.

“Mama play too. Play tageder.”

“Play together with Lexa? All four of us?” Madi shook her head up and down in the affirmative scrubbing at her eyes.
“Maybe soon,” Clarke whispered.

The one thing that Clarke knew she had gotten right with her kids was when it was bedtime, they went to bed. Usually without fussing, and it didn’t matter how loud the house got, they slept through it all. Clarke had seen some wild parties in her house with the kids asleep, only a door between them and the chaos.

Clarke turned to leave the room when she ran into Lexa. Literally. Again.

And again, Lexa caught her in a strong grip, letting her regain her balance. Lexa’s eyes flashed in the dim light of the hallway, and Clarke’s breath lodged in her throat. *So beautiful.*

“Bathroom?” Lexa kept her voice quiet. “Finn is all about some shots and shotguns at the moment.”

“The next door down,” Clarke stopped in her directions when she heard a muted cry from behind her.

*****

Lexa was trying desperately to shake off Clarke’s touch. It seemed to linger on her skin. She felt painted with it. She watched Clarke go to her son’s playpen and talk softly for a moment. Lexa seen the deep inhale the child took right before he started wailing in earnest. Moving quickly, Lexa navigated the room in draped with darkness and leaned over Aden.

Calmly she started to sing the first song she thought of that had a soothing melody.

*You’re my world, the shelter from the rain*

*You’re the pills that take away my pain*

*You’re the light that helps me find my way*

*You’re the words when I have nothing to say*
And in this world where nothing else is true

Here I am still tangled up in you

I'm still tangled up in you

Still tangled up in you

By the end of those two refrains, Aden was calm and his eyes were drifting closed. Lexa stood up slowly to not startle him and quietly left the room. Clarke shut it after her exit, and looked at Lexa with an endearing expression.

“So, bathroom?” She wished that this could’ve happened on her way BACK from the bathroom. She hoped she didn’t overstep with Aden, but she had moved before she really knew what was happening.

Clarke cleared her throat and took a few measured steps back to put some space between them. “It is just in here.” She gestured towards the door she was standing next to, and Lexa slipped by.

She had almost talked herself out of coming tonight several times because she wasn’t sure about Finn. When she got here and realized it was Collins from her old school, things didn’t get much better. He had grown his hair out and shaved his goatee since she had seen him last. He looked like a completely different person.

Lexa took her time in the solitude of the bathroom, the three shots and one shotgun getting to her. Even for Lexa, that combination was almost too much. She could see little touches of the kids all around. A basket sat beside the bathtub filled with toys. Two small toothbrushes sat in their own cups on the counter top.

Lexa had never really been around kids. She worried her lip for a moment, trying to decipher if she had handled everything right, and almost immediately gave up because she had no idea what she was doing to begin with. She shook herself out of her thoughts. The kids were in bed now, and all she had left to deal with were the unknown people that were drinking.

“Hey there’s our very own Justin right there!” Raven and Octavia looked to be feeling it as well. They were leaning on each other and fighting playfully over who got to pick the next song.

“I have been hearing about this magical voice of yours now for a while, Lexa. Care to show us at some point tonight?” Finn had swaggered up and was looking Lexa up and down.
“Not yet, I get the next few songs. I have to catch up with everyone.” Clarke called loud enough to be heard over the music. “Lexa come help me make a drink?” She turned her cup upside down for emphasis.

Finn’s two cronies snickered and looked at Finn with teasing expressions. Finn spoke up trying to salvage some of his dignity. “Hey babe, get me a refill?” He had asked as a question, but Lexa could see it was more a of demand by his body language.

“I’ll get you one, Collins.” Lexa said as she passed him. “No need to get pissy.” She winked at him in an attempt to ease the tension.

“Ohho, someone thinks they're hot shit!” Finn sat on the couch in the living room like it was a throne.

“Always have been, always will be. You should know that by now.” Smirking Lexa left Finn to be interrogating by his friends. I’m sure he hasn’t told anyone that a girl in one of our classes chose me over him.

“Sorry about him.” Clarke poured a round of 8 shots.

“He doesn’t bother me, are you trying to get me drunk, Griffin?”

“Only two of these are yours, and as to you being drunk - maybe.”

Noting Clarke’s wording she made herself at home in the kitchen and poured some of the ‘adult’ juice she brought with her. “I’m pretty sure your boyfriend will take offense to this conversation.”

Clarke met Lexa’s eyes and avoided the comment all together. “You impressed the kids earlier. Hell you impressed me as well.” She gave Lexa a calculating look. “Do you have kids?”

Lexa about choked on her drink. After the coughing fit was over she got out, “No, kinda hard to have kids when your gay.”
“Hey, you never know. You were just so good with them.”

“I have never really been around kids to learn so that’s good. I think your kids just have excellent taste.”

Raven barged in at that moment with limbs flying in all directions. “Shots for me!”

Lexa barely heard Clarke’s comment under her breath. “That they do.”

Lexa allowed her lopsided grin to form, and then she threw a wink in Clarkes direction as if to say I heard that.

“So we doing this or what?” Ravens excitement was infectious, and the Latina was quickly beginning to be one of Lexa’s favorite people in this friend group.

“I’m game, so who gets what?” Lexa was preparing herself to take multiple shots when Octavia arrived.

“Two each, it is the rules of the house. The women get together and take shots.” Clarke and Octavia nodded along with agreement.

“Cheers to new friends!” Clarke raised her first shot to her lips, and raised her eyes to Lexa.

Lexa had never seen a sexier shot being taken. Her eyes were closed. Gloss covered lips molded them selves around the bottom edge of the shot glass while her head tipped back revealing an ample amount of cleavage and graceful collar bones. The view set a fire burning within Lexa’s chest and abdomen.

Lexa managed to shoot her’s like a pro, even though it was tequila. Again. “What is it with you guys and tequila?”

“Usually we drink tequila at the beginning of a night. Shots of tequila, and then anything else; usually some version of vodka.”
Drinks were made. Jokes were told. Karaoke battles were fought. Many rounds of beer pong had come and gone. The night was growing quiet as people gave up or passed out from the effects of alcohol. Octavia, Clarke, and Eric were the only ones left standing besides Lexa herself. Finn had tried to keep up with Lexa, but he didn’t have the strongest tolerance for alcohol and passed out before the third game of beer pong. Throughout the night he seemed to think they were competing.

Lexa knew there were kids in the house so she grabbed her half empty drink and went outside through the side sliding glass door in an attempt to sober up for the drive home. There were small concrete slabs on both sides leading up to the door. *Weird architecture,* Lexa thought, but she sat on one anyway.

Soon, smoke rings old and new and of various sizes, clouded the area around her. She was in the middle of trying to master a ring within a ring when a gush of air erased Lexa’s art as if it had never been.

Clarke sat down next to her and reached over with careful fingers to steal Lexa’s cigarette. The night had been filled with stolen glances, but neither of them had touched until now. Clarke’s hand was cool as she slid it down Lexa’s arm and over her fingers to grasp her prize. The blood pounding in her ears distracted Lexa, making it easy for Clarke to take it.

Clarke inhaled a deep lungful and released it slowly. Lexa had never envied air before. She may have been more tipsy than she thought (a tad bit). Alcohol had a nasty habit of lurking in the darkness of Lexa’s mind unless she stood up, then it came to the forefront holding a sign that read “going somewhere? here, let me take your balance.”

“That’s probably not a good idea.”

“You smoke too. Hypocrite.” Clarke put the cigarette out and leaned against the wall.

“Not what I was talking about.”

“What then?” The only thing that gave away Clarke’s inebriation was the glaze of her eyes and the complete relaxation of her shoulders. Lexa had never seen her look so at ease.

“Touching.” Gruffly, Lexa got another cigarette and lit it.
Clarke hummed. “Why’s that?” Her low graved voice almost a purr.

With the light of the moon, Lexa leaned closer to Clarke with a low chuckle. “You know why.”

Lexus refused to make the first move. They both knew something was building between them. If Clarke wanted to make a move, Lexa was weak enough to let her. She still didn’t know after an entire night with Clarke and Finn if they were together or not, and she wasn’t a homewrecker.

“I think I do.”

Everything around them seemed to slow as Clarke leaned forward. There was a determination in her eyes that stoked the fire in Lexa’s veins anew. A fire she had been desperately trying to smother all night.

Delicately, Clarke ran a thumb over Lexa’s cheekbone, as if trying to memorize her portrait. Lexa could feel her hands shaking and breath against her lips.

Lexus searched her eyes trying to gauge if Clarke really wanted this. As she looked, Clarke’s gaze was drawn down. Lexa wet her lips unconsciously, and Clarke followed the trail of her tongue. Lexa drew out the movement letting a teasing smirk grace her face. She enjoyed the widening of Clarke’s darkened blue eyes.

“If we do this, I don’t want games.” Lexa was still smiling but her words were serious.

“I don’t want games either, but my life isn’t exactly sunshine and rainbows.” Clarke relaxed against the wall again, the tension of the moment broken by Lexa’s words.

“I want to know you, Clarke. Even if it is just as friends.”

Clarke played with the necklace she was wearing, rolling it back and forth between the tips of her fingers. She released Lexa’s gaze and turned her face towards the moon. Her beauty was amplified by the pale light shining through the nearby trees. Rolling waves of blonde hair framed her pale complexion. Lexa watched as eyes closed and tension crept back into her shoulders.
“I think friends might be best right now.”

Lexa felt a pain in her chest at the words. Not a terrible pain, but it was there demanding to be heard. She turned her head and let her eyes close, breathing out trying to conceal the flash of disappointment she felt.

She gave herself only a moment to gather her thoughts and plaster the best smile she could manage on her face. When she looked at Clarke she could see sorrow in the lines of her body, in the set of her shoulders.

“I’m happy with that,” she said.

Chapter End Notes

For my girlfriend-

If one day you decide to read this, please know that I love you.
Confusing then Painful

Chapter Notes

NSFW - official warning, and with that being said....

Please don't hate me! *hides behind laptop screen*

Any mistakes are my own, my eyes are bleary and crossing at this point.

Oh, and is anyone who reads this interested in being a beta? I could use one! Leave a comment below!

*A few weeks later*

Summer’s death grip over the city of Polis was waning. Most of the population spent their time outside at parks, splash pads, or walking the city’s downtown district playing Pokemon Go. At night, the bar strip filled with cars as the concert season kicked off and cooler weather settled over the area.

Polis wasn’t a large city, but it attracted enough people to host a diverse group of bands and artists. Lincoln and Lexa had been working on budgets trying to decide if they could afford getting a band to play at their bar. Things weren’t looking good until Anya came in bristling.

“What’s up An?”

“Nothing.” She threw her bag underneath the bar and snatched a glass off the rack along the wall.

The bar owners watched as she poured herself a glass full of whiskey and took a long gulp.

“Sure about that?” Lexa raised an eyebrow at her in question and set the budget report she made (threw together) this morning down on the table. It looked like Anya was about to blow.

“Yes.” She took another long drink and glared at them. “Why are you in my bar?”
Lexa chose to let it go. She had learned to pick her battles with Anya. If she wanted to talk, Lexa would never be able to force her. “We came to your humble establishment to see if we could afford to host musical entertainment.” Lexa said sarcastically with a bow. She was seated and almost toppled over.

Anya snorted as Lincoln aimed a kick at her chair. Lexa’s yelp (not a yelp) was NOT high pitched. (It was.) Lexa would’ve glared right back at Anya, Lincoln too; however, she had accomplished her goal of getting Anya at least somewhat out of her shell of anger.

“We will just stay open about 2 hours longer. Catch them as they are leaving the stuffy places they have been for hours. Give them new scenery to look at and something like an after party with an after dark happy hour.” Anya thought out loud. “Maybe even do two or three hours, make a bell toll or something, and when the hour is up change the special to something different.”

Lincoln was nodding his head with his brow pinched together in thought. “I like that. It will be cheaper to pay staff for another two hours or so than to hire an act.” He picked up his phone as he got up. “I’m going to see if any of the staff is willing. Two hours isn’t much but I want to make sure we can staff it before we go any further.” He ambled out the back door already greeting someone on the phone.

“Ok, I am only going to say this once because it’s giving me a fucking headache. Ok?”

Hearing Anya’s seriousness, Lexa settled in her chair and looked at Anya expectantly.

“Clarke and the blonde we saw her with have a history but aren’t dating.”

“How did you -”

“Shut it, and let me get through this.”

Lexa pretended to zip her lips and raised an eyebrow inviting her to continue. It was childish, she knew, but she still wanted to help get Anya in a better mood.

“They have never been together it seems, but they are friends more than anything.” Anya pushed up her shirt sleeves and reached over to knick a cigarette from Lexa. “And they guy you met, Finny or Flint or whatever? He helps her with the kids. Lives with her. Their history is tangled and
messy but Clarke doesn’t see it going anywhere and has been trying to give him the boot without being an ass about it.” Anya only smokes when she drinks, so Lexa didn’t mind the theft.

The longer Anya spoke the higher her eyebrows rose. She had so many questions, but remembering how Anya had walked into the bar and went straight for alcohol cooled her desire to start firing questions.

“He isn’t the kids father either. Just helps with the kids, and he is good with them too. The father is Octavia’s brother. Don’t know much about him other than he got into drugs and disappeared for a while.”

Lexa thought her head was going to explode. How in the hell did Anya know all of this? Did she talk to Clarke? Did she kidnap her and torture her? She really wouldn’t be too surprised to find out that was the case.

“Basically, Clarke is single but has a history with the people she surrounds herself with.”

Anya tipped her head back to finish the whiskey she had been nursing, and Lexa took the opportunity to interrogate her while she couldn’t respond.

“How the hell did you find all of that out? Did you creep her facebook or something?” The hope came back stronger than before. Her fingers twitched with the desire to text Clarke. Not that she would say, hey now that I know your not with anyone wanna go out? Can I kiss you? Clarke had said friends might be the best option, and Lexa was going to respect that.

“Two lunch dates and a dinner date with a psycho.”

“A psycho? Dates? You went OUT with someone to get information?” Lexa was flattered Anya had figured out most of the mystery around Clarke, but she was astonished. Anya NEVER dated. Yeah, she had a few casual hookups. But dating?

“Yes a very loud psycho that never shuts up and always has to have the last word.” Anya was now glaring with enough heat at her empty glass that Lexa was shocked to see that the remaining ice hadn’t melted. “Now you know, and you can stop moping.”

“I have NOT been moping. So who did you torture to get this information out of?” Lexa grabbed
Anya’s cup and went to the bar. She gave Anya a top off and got herself some as well.

Anya remained silent, still glaring at nothing and everything until Lexa sat the glass down in front of her. “Clarke’s friend, the Latina.” She spat the words like they tasted bad; however Lexa knew Anya, and there was something else going on.

“Ok, thank you for doing this for me, but what has you so riled up about Raven? Do you like her? She would match you well I think.” Anya dropped the glare and adopted an expression of amusement.

“Like her? I guess I do.” A pause. “Wait. No, I don’t like her she is loud and obnoxious. She drives me nuts!”

Laughing Lexa said, “I didn’t even know you guys had talked, much less went on dates.”

“They were horrible.”

“You said that.” Lexa was trying to hold back her laughter. She didn’t want to make Anya mad, but damn, she was so stubborn. “You know, it is ok for you to like her, right?”

“She is annoying.”

“Yep, said that too.” She reached over to put a comforting hand on Anya’s shoulder. “I can do this all day Anya. Don’t give yourself an aneurysm. Just consider the possibility that you may like her. She’s feisty and doesn’t back down from what I have seen.” She caught Anya’s eyes. “It is ok to like someone.”

Anya was shifting uncomfortably under Lexa’s hand so she removed it and tried to lighten the mood.

“Holy hell, I think we stepped into some feelings. Better get rid of that shit.”

Finally, Anya smiled. It was a little smile but it counted in Lexa’s book.
“Like I said, don’t stress out over it. Just let it happen.”

Anya scoffed. “Like you were going to let it happen with your blonde?”

“I was! She asked to be friends so I’m happy to do that.”

“Well we have enough going on here at the bar. What are we going to call this anyway?” She was referring to the idea that had driven Linc out of the room on his phone.

“Good question.” They both grew silent trying to come up with something different and catchy.

“The Reaping!” Anya exclaimed. “And we can call the happy hour shots reapers!”

“I like that, like we are reaping the benefits of other people hiring all the bands. We have to make the place attractive enough to draw attention though.”

The muffled sounds of conversation from the back of the bar distracted the two idealists. Lincoln walked in with Echo.

“Did I hear a name? The Reaping? I like it. It’s edgy.” Lincoln said as he gathered his numerous papers.

“I don’t have a problem with helping out around here either, especially if it means an extra few hours on my paycheck. The hospital has been slow lately, and they are letting extra staff go home more and more during night shifts. There isn’t enough patients to pay extra staff.” Echo said dejected.

Lexa and Echo had been spending more and more time together the last few weeks. Lexa had been considering moving to a two bedroom apartment in the same complex and offering the other room to Echo to help them both out. Low census at the hospital was affecting everyone in a bad way.

Lexa pushed herself up from her chair and took a good look around the bar, trying to see potential as if it was hidden and she just needed to shine a light on it. “We can’t afford anything too crazy
but we do have the funds to change things up a bit. Since I’m not working so much at the hospital, I have time to finally fix up the audio equipment.”

“Like I said, I’m down to help with whatever.” Echo offered.

“I think I have a few ideas for the bar as well.” Anya put in thoughtfully, she and Lincoln were also looking around with ideas bouncing quietly between them. “Let’s do this…”

Each of the four contributed ideas for another hour or so. Lexa was on her way out as Echo caught up to her.

“Lexa, I just wanted to say thanks. I need this job now more than ever and you guys are giving more work. I just really wanted to say thank you.”

“Anya was the one to hire you, I just sign paychecks. Well, I don’t even do that,” she laughed, “I am mostly here to drink and offer moral support. That reminds me, I know you just got out of a bad relationship with Roan, and I was thinking if you were interested we could share a two bedroom apartment? Split everything and it would be easier to breathe financially. What do you say?”

Echo threw herself at Lexa wrapping her in a hug. “Thank you so much! That’s a great idea and hell yes I’m in! I don’t even have very much to move. Just clothes really.”

“Well alright roomie it’s settled. I’ll go talk to my landlord now. Shouldn’t be too hard to get done today or tomorrow.”

“Oh Lexa, seriously thanks!”

“No problem, no problem at all. It will be helping me out too so it is not like i’m doing you that big of a favor.”

The next night, papers were signed for the apartment and the new roommates were just finishing up with their new space. Lexa had to consolidate most of her nic-nacks for nerds, as Clarke called them, to her room. She liked having room for herself to spread out but this was a small sacrifice to make considering her bills were going to be half as expensive.
She had just finished putting sheets on her bed and throwing pillows against the headboard when Echo knocked on her door frame. “I’m tired of working and we need a break. I think I’m going to go get a drink at that old bar down the road. You up for it?”

Lexa shook her head. Old Town was a hole in the wall bar that had been there for as long as anyone could remember. It was a very laid back place in which the furnishings matched the bar title. It was OLD. It had old everything, and Lexa wasn’t in the mood for cheap, shotty drinks. She wanted to relax with good music and she was honestly sick of looking at her own bar.

“How about Xeno instead? I haven’t been there yet and I hear they have good drinks. Plus we can do a little recon while we are there.” She wiggled her eyebrows in Echo’s direction. “We could find you someone to flirt with as our next mission.”

“Ohho, Black is that a challenge I hear?”

Their friendship had always been competitive, so the question didn’t phase Lexa.

“Hear what you want to hear, Veyne. I’m just going for drinks. You can smooze if you want.”

An hour later, the girls found themselves with drinks in hand taking in the interior of Xeno’s. It was...lackluster so far. Everything looked new, but the bar lacked charm. The seating made you feel like a flyswatter wielding grandmother was going to whack you on the head at any moment for taking the plastic covers off her furniture. The flooring was old and stained, and the entire area just - smelled. Lexa couldn’t place the smell, and didn’t know if she wanted to.

“So I’m not feeling like this place is going to be bringing in any new business.”

Echo was getting the same gut feeling as Lexa apparently. “Let us at least finish our drinks. That is the main reason we came anyway.”

That was the only thing the bar had going for it. Lexa had to admit her drink was very good, but still this place was verging on creepy with how off everything felt.

Echo snorted as she swirled the liquid in her glass. “I feel like I’m 16, drinking out of my
grandparents liquor cabinet. Feels like someone's grandma is going to show up and go ballistic on everyone.”

“I’m glad I’m not the only one! It’s just weird here.”

The two sat nursing their drinks. The music wasn’t horrible and Lexa nodded her head to the beat of the songs while she watched people move about the bar.

“I’ll be right back,” Echo stood and sauntered over to a group of guys. After a few blushes and winks she led one out to the small dance floor.

“Well, I guess we are dancing now.” Lexa didn’t mind to let Echo have her fun, but she doubted she would be coming back quickly.

“Why hello plain white tee.”

Lexa turned to see a dark skinned girl staring her up and down. She was gorgeous. Dark brown curly hair, almost black, fell in kinks around her head. Honey colored eyes bore down on Lexa, and she shivered.

“Hello little red dress.”

When the mystery woman stepped closer she ‘tripped’ and ended up across Lexa’s lap. Lexa gulped as the woman surreptitiously drug her hand up Lexa’s thigh and over the apex of her legs.

“I’m - drunk.” A hiccup interrupted what Lexa assumed to be her introduction.

“Hello drunk, are you here with anyone? I think you may be ready to call it a night.” Lexa joked as she looked around the bar to see if anyone may be looking for her.

“Nope, here alone tonight,” she pouted. “I will call it a night, if I can call it a night with you.”

Lexa could taste the alcohol on the woman’s breath as she leaned in dangerously close. Lexa,
however was not about that life. If the girl was sober she might consider it, but no. This wasn’t right. “Sure thing, let me get my ride and we will get you somewhere safe. Do you have everything you brought with you? Keys? Purse?”

The group of guys Echo had extracted her dance partner from were watching them and there was no way in hell she was going to leave this girl alone at this bar. She didn’t care what the circumstances were. She did not trust any of the looks that were being thrown their way.

“I...everything...bar.”

Lexa assumed she checked her items in at the bar for safe keeping. She waved to Echo and gestured to the woman who was now practically hanging off of Lexa as they stood. Echo must have read the tension in Lexa’s face because she was quickly by her side ducking underneath the opposite arm of the girl.

The bartender looked at them with suspicious eyes as the she asked for the unknown girls things. When he finally handed them over, they quickly left the club and greasy stares behind. Lexa was grateful when they deposited her into the back of her Jeep.

“She’s clingy. I need a shower to get rid of the beer smell, and I didn’t even get to drink a beer!”

“Sorry but I didn’t trust those guys. I needed to get her out of there.” Lexa was still checking all around them to make sure no one did anything stupid. After catching the mood of the place, she was not in the mood for bullshit.

“Heroic Lexa Black.” Echo eyed her. “I thought you had already picked someone up.”

“Nope just trying to take care of this drunk ass.” Lexa checked on the girl in the back of her truck and noticed she was already asleep.

“Let’s just get home.”

The next morning, a timid shake of the shoulder woke Lexa up. She groaned thinking she needed a new couch if only one night of sleep could have her back in knots.
“Um...sorry...I don’t know where I am, and I can’t find my phone.”

Lexa cracked her eyes open to see the girl from last night. Her makeup was smeared and she had dark rings under her eyes.

“All of your things are on the table over there. Let me get some clothes on and I’ll take you where ever you need to go.”

The girl went through her purse as if looking for something and grunting in surprise when she found it.

“ALL of your stuff is over there. Like I said.” Lexa stood up, the blanket she had been sleeping with falling away to reveal her sports bra and ¾ length sweatpants that rode low on her hips. “Neither me or my roommate went through your things. We just brought you here to keep you safe.”

Lexa just caught the widening of eyes and appreciative stare as she shut her bedroom door. She threw on a shirt and brushed her teeth quickly not wanting to make her house guest more uncomfortable by taking forever to get her back to her car.

“I’m ready to go when you are.” She announced as she grabbed a water bottle from the kitchen.

“So what happened last night exactly?” The girl was trying to cover herself and appear at ease at the same time perched on the edge of the couch Lexa had just vacated.

“Me and my friend Echo went to the bar you were at and you came over to me. We talked for a bit and you told me you were drunk. Sorry about you waking up like this, by the time we got you in the car, you were pretty out of it. I didn’t want to leave you there, too many greasy guys looking at you in a bad way.”

“I don’t even know your name…”

“Lexa.”
“Lexa,” she said it as if she was tasting it for the first time. “Thank you Lexa for last night. I hope you can let me take you out sometime in repayment?”

“As long as we limit your drinks to less than 3 I think I can get on with that idea. But you still haven’t told me your name.”

“Costia.”

Lexa liked that name. It was different. Exotic.

“Well Costia, let’s get you back to your car.”

“Did you have a fun night last night?” Costia was pointing at the dark mark Lexa knew was on her neck. She had tried to hide in the hope to save the girl some embarrassment.

“Well, that is actually from you.” Lexa said hesitantly, not sure how she would react. “You woke up when I carried you in, and...uh...yeah.”

“Did we...?”

“No.” Lexa said it firmly wanting to emphasize that nothing had happened beyond putting her to bed. “No, you are gorgeous but you were also very drunk. Drunk enough to cuddle my cat and call him a “fluffy bunny.” Lexa laughed as she gestured to the gaming chair right inside her bedroom door where Zeus was laying.

“That is a huge ass cat.” Costia had wide eyes but there was a softness about them when she turned to face Lexa. “So can I take you out to make it up to you for saving me?”

“How about we get you back to a comfortable place. I’ll give you my number and after you have had time to sober up and process all of this then you can give me a call.”

“And they say chivalry is dead.” Costia must not have felt too uncomfortable because she slipped her arm around Lexa’s and let her lead the way to the Jeep.
Clarke was going crazy. She had a test in the next 30 minutes. A man child hounding her about her whereabouts, and a laptop that would NOT work. Her life was full to state it mildly. She had her full time job at the hospital, her kids, and the RN program she was attempting to not fail.

The program was harsh. Her professors had told her that it was going to be hard to juggle life and school, and they were not wrong. Quizzes everyday. Multiple classes that were all difficult. Clinicals to attend in the early hours of the morning twice a week. Copious amounts of notes and test prep items...that were all on her laptop. That would NOT work. She slammed the lid down, hoping that brute force would make it cooperate.

“Wow, easy Clarke. No need for that.” Fox slipped into a chair across from Clarke.

“I’m not ready for this test! All my notes and everything are on this piece of shit, and I can’t get it to load.”

“Hang on.” Fox slipped her bag off her shoulder and sat the food she was carrying in front of her. After a few moments of digging, she handed Clarke a set of papers.

“This is everything I have on the test. I’ve gotten all I need from it, so you can have it until test time.” She took a large bite from her burger smearing ketchup on her chin and cheek.

Clarke’s eye caught on Fox’s tongue as she cleaned herself up. It had been a while since Clarke had been...intimate with anyone. Things were distracting her that she never paid attention to before. Like Fox. Fox had always been in her classes because they were going for the same major. It has only been a few weeks Clarke, get your shit together. Shaking herself out of her sex-deprived haze, she pushed herself to get through the material as fast as she could.

After the test her school day was over. She stayed in place determined to get through the homework that was recently assigned as others filtered quickly out of the room.

“Earth to Griffin.” Fox called from the door. “You planning on staying the night?”
“Hell no I’m not staying here, I just wanted to get this done so I don’t have to worry about it later.”

“Alright, see you.”

Clarke didn’t dear her, she was focusing on the sheet in front of her. A few minutes later, she sat back content with her progress and rubbed furiously at her head and eyes. Trying to wake up and banish the headache she felt approaching simultaneously.

Clarke was stressed. It was only partly the way through the fall semester and she already felt as if she needed to have a break from school. Also, a break from Finn and his near constant influx of text messages and phone calls would be nice as well. She had finally told him they were better off as friends a few days ago. She had even told him that if he wanted to leave, she would make things work without him.

Unfortunately he had stayed, saying “You can’t take care of the kids without me.” She was so tired from class and work the previous night she hadn’t argued, just went to sleep.

The next morning was a different story, she was fully capable to deal with him being loud and obnoxious to Aden. She laid there a moment trying to figure out what day it was when she heard it.

“Leave my shit alone boy!”

Those words spoken from Finn to her precious little boy seared flaming rage through her system. She had stalked out of the room half naked and glowering telling everyone who didn’t pay bills to get out. Finn and his cronies had left without a word, and Clarke spent the morning with her babies, apologizing to them for leaving that asshole in charge.

Finn had been calling, leaving messages, and texting her everyday trying to explain what happened. Clarke did not want to hear it and had been avoiding him.

Her phone buzzed again. “Dammit Finn!”

She got it out of her backpack and seen Fox calling. Curious, Clarke answered.
“Parson just posted another workbook page online, just wanted you to know.”

Clarke cursed under her breath, but thanked Fox and resumed her miniature break in the abandoned classroom for a moment longer.

When her seat became too hard to sit on, Clarke headed home. The kids were spending time with Bellamy after the Finn accident so she could properly handle Finn getting all of his crap out of her house. A small side effect of the whole situation was she could enjoy the freedom it allowed. She missed her kids, but she was still 25. She still wanted to live, and hangout with friends. She was extremely thankful for Raven and Octavia. They pushed her when she needed it, supported her through everything, and Clarke always felt like they were in her corner.

Speaking of the duo, Octavia’s car was in front of her house, and the brunette herself was rushing out the door to greet her.

“Raven has news!” Octavia was always in the mood to pick on someone, and her eyes sparkled with devilish delight.

“What are we teasing her over this time?” Clarke tiredly gathered random items from her car.

“It’s not that big of a deal, O. Seriously.” Raven said as they entered the house. “What have you told? Nevermind, forget what she told you. I’ll tell you the real way things happened.”

Octavia looked aghast, but Clarke cut in before she could speak and the two started arguing.

“I just pulled up, see?” She swung her bag off her shoulder and let it land with a satisfying sound against the wall. “Now, what’s going on? O said you have news…?”

“Not really. I have just been kind of seeing someone.” She scratched the back of her neck, head down with a smile on her face. “She is fiery and gorgeous and I like her.”

“Wow, you got it bad. Who is it?”

“That’s the best part!” Octavia squealed.
“Anya, the bartender.” Raven blushed. Actually blushed!

“The mean bartender from Lexa’s bar?”

“Lexa’s bar eh?” Octavia joked.

The three gossiped like high school kids about Raven’s dates while Clarke showered and put comfy clothes on. It was not an uncommon occurrence for them to take over Clarke’s house in preparation for a girls night. Raven helped run an auto-repair shop and Octavia was in school for law enforcement, and their schedules didn’t always align. Clarke always looked forward to nights like these with her girls when time and schedules allowed.

The three settled in for a movie (that for once didn’t contain cartoons) complete with popcorn and screwdrivers. Raven and Octavia shared the love seat while Clarke occupied her favorite oversized, orange, squishy chair. With all the extra bodies out of her house, it was a cozy space.

“She asks a lot about you, you know?” Raven said through a mouthful of popcorn.


“I think maybe she trying to get details for Lexa.” Octavia piped up.

“Oh really? What did you tell her?” Despite herself Clarke was pleased. She liked the short haired brunette, and questions, even if they were secondhand, further emphasized Lexa’s fondness for her.

“I don’t know, a little about Finn.”

“Finn?” Clarke’s face scrunched up at the thought of the man-child.

“And Niylah…”

“What about Niylah?”
“And Bellamy...” Raven winced bracing herself for an outburst.

“You really shouldn’t go around telling everyone about my life Raven.” Clarke sighed. She wasn’t mad. She was a little annoyed, but not mad.

“I just told her who they are to you. I didn’t think you would mind. Anya only asked a few questions on the last date, so don’t blame her.”

“It’s fine Raven. Have you seen Lexa?” Clarke tried to say it casually even though it was anything but casual considering how it had just popped out of her mouth. They text somewhat frequently, but Clarke usually had something going on and couldn’t respond like she wanted to. The last time they had been texting, Aden had a chocolate milk emergency and she didn’t even remember her conversation with Lexa until later that night when she was trying to fall asleep.

“No. Maybe we should go out to the bar.” Raven said excitedly. “You can flirt with Lexa, and Octavia can finally get the ovaries to ask Lincoln out. “

“Raven,” Clarke whined, “I just sat down, and we just started the movie.”

Octavia launched one of the many pillows her and Raven had stolen to make their fort they had cocooned themselves in. “You hate this movie! You are just afraid Lexa is already taken. I can’t believe you told her you wanted to be friends.” Octavia accused.

“I’m with O on this one Clarkey. You need to face your feelings for the girl.”

“You guys act like she is my soulmate or something. That shit doesn’t exist. I like her yes, but I’m doing this slowly for a reason. My kids come first, then school, then work.” Clarke counted each item off with a raised finger. “Romance is the last thing I need. It’s why I finally kicked Finn out. I don’t have time for it.”

“Finn was a fuck buddy and glorified babysitter.” Raven said bluntly and with a roll of her eyes. “You needed to be rid of him long ago.”

“Lexa is the first person in a while that you have LIKED and TALKED about. It will not hurt you
to hang out with her if she makes you happy.” Octavia argued further.

Octavia and Raven looked at each other, grinned wicked grins, and dove for Clarke. Raven attempted to hold Clarke down while Octavia wrestled her phone out of her hand.

“GUYS! WHAT ARE YOU THREE?” Clarke gave in when Raven started tickling her. Laughing she said, “Ok, OK! Take it you monsters. What are you doing anyway?”

“We are getting you a date!”

“Do not even think of texting Lexa!” Clarke shrieked. “I’ll talk to her, just give me my phone back!”

“Sorry, Clarke! You need a romantic intervention!”

“I’ll go to the bar with you!” Clarke shouted desperately. “Just don’t send whatever message you just typed up.”

Octavia smirked at her. “Ok Clarke, we can go to the bar to see Lexa. You don’t have to yell about it.”

“You little -”

Raven cut her off before a real war broke out in the house. “We will give the phone back when we get there. Just trust us.”

Clarke had to wait for the perfect moment to steal her phone back. She was half heartedly putting on makeup and made an excuse to get something to drink. When she came back, as predicted both troublemakers were staring at their reflections in the mirror, correcting any mistakes and putting on finishing touches. While they were occupied Clarke slipped an arm around Raven’s waist.

“Thank you guys for dragging me out tonight. I can’t wait to see Lexa.”
Raven gave her a knowing smile and wrapped her in a warm hug. “Your welcome, Clarkey. O get in here.”

Octavia threw her arms around both dramatically almost making them tip over. Clarke saw her chance and struck, carefully swiping her phone off the vanity and hiding it in her palm. “Oh I think I hear someone at the door, be right back.”

As soon as she was out of the room she took off running and slammed the door behind her. Now in the safety of her car, Clarke opened her messages and growled. Octavia had only sent one message.

Your hot.

Lexa hadn’t responded yet so at least that was something. Clarke found she wasn’t upset at all about the spur to action. She had convinced herself it would happen if it was meant to be, but wasn’t she just saying she didn’t believe in things like that? Sighing at herself she started the message to tell Lexa what happened, before she got more than a handful words in, a message came through.

LB: I am actually
LB: * image_098*

Clarke about choked on her tongue. She was glad she had came out to the car. She didn’t want the others to see her reaction. Octavia and Raven must have realized by now that she had got her phone but left her to deal with the aftermath, and, damn, Clarke was happy about that.

There Lexa was in all her glory. Old black t-shirt with the arms cut out. Hair an absolute mess sticking up in all directions with dirt on her face and arms. She was smiling as she lifted her shirt revealing tattoos and a glorious six pack. Her stomach had lines of sweat running down, and she had sweat rings all over Clarke finally realized. Her brain wasn’t working well. She couldn’t seem to focus on anything else but the exposed skin.

Clarke went to ask what she was doing but remembered why she was in this mess to begin with. She groaned as she typed out her reply.

CG: It wasn’t actually me who sent that. Sorry

LB: Well at least you got a cosmetic upgrade for your phone
CG: lol yeah...it needed one
LB: and no worries about the text
LB: who was it that text me if not you?
CG: Raven and Octavia
LB: what were they trying to accomplish?
CG: trying to get me to go to the bar tonight i guess i’m not really sure
LB: hmm...you just wanted to talk to me its ok i wont tell anyone
LB: tonight isn’t actually a good night to come to the bar. We are trying to fix it up a bit before concert season
CG: is that why you are all dirty?
LB: yup
CG: well we might stop by anyway to see the progress
LB: if i see you, i see i see you :)

She left it at that, and Clarke went back inside with a smile on her face.

“We can go to the bar for a while but we aren’t staying long.”

A chorus of yes and fucking excellent was accompanied by the others rushing back to Clarke’s room to resume getting dressed. The three girls made themselves presentable and within the hour were at the bar getting drinks from Anya.

“Ladies, funny meeting you here.” Anya was serving another couple as they sat down not bothering to go for chairs because almost the entire back half of the bar was roped off to keep people out. “Raven.”

“Hello sparky!” Raven always had a way with words. “Where’s Bieber?”

“Lexa went home to shower. Apparently she felt the need to get cleaned up when you said you guys might stop by.” Anya gave Clarke a knowing look that said so many things. It was a tease and a warning.
“I’m going to go pick a song on the jukebox.” Clarke fished in her jean pockets as she walked over for change. She didn’t have any change but looking over the selection could prove handy later. A tattooed arm reached over and entered a number into the machine.

“What would you like to hear?”

She couldn’t see Lexa, but her sound of her voice set off multiple alarms in Clarke’s head. She smelled like woodsmoke and freshly turned soil. It was earthy and warm. Her voice made Clarke’s legs want to shake, and she hard a firm talk with her knees about wobbling. She could Lexa’s exhales wash over her bare shoulders. Clarke pulled away slightly to hide the gooseflesh that rose along her arms.

“Anything really. I was trying to escape Anya’s stare.” Clarke turned to face her, and she could have swore the smile on Lexa’s face made the room brighter. “It is good to see you.”

She had on a dark blue tank top with khaki shorts and simple black flip flops. She looked amazing. Clarke thought that even in that outfit, Lexa could make people feel underdressed. With hair still wet from the quick shower she had taken, Lexa brushed a drop of water away before it went into her eye.

Lexa reached behind her again, and Clarke could hear the tapping of keys. “You have 3 credits, play what you want. And don’t mind Anya, she is harmless.”

“Thank you…” It came out more breathless than she wanted, but it was better than a squeak. She turned back to the jukebox as Lexa walked away.

Clarke had forgotten how strong Lexa’s presence was. She wished the magnet pulling them together didn’t have such a strong hold over her. She choose a few good songs to listen to and went back to her friends at the bar.

“So what is the plan?” Raven was trying desperately to make conversation with Anya who seemed keen to make her work for it.

“Just going to clean up. Move some things around. Paint a little bit.”

“I’m going to be honest with you, it’s looking a little rough at the moment.” Leave it to Octavia to
point out the obvious. “I’m surprised you are even open right now.”

“We have to make money somehow.” Lincoln smoothly inserted himself into conversation with a well placed wink in Octavia’s direction. “How is everything ladies, besides a little cramped?”

Clarke watched Octavia melt in his presence. *I hope I don’t do that with Lexa, or at least it’s not that obvious.*

“We are all good here.” She smiled at him. Clarke decided that Lincoln was a trustworthy guy. He was extremely nice, well mannered, and could knock O off her game.

The six stood together for a while, sharing stories and small talk. There wasn’t much else to do at the moment with the bar being half closed. The dance floor was part of the section roped off, and Clarke couldn’t help the regret she felt at not having a place to dance with Lexa. *Not that I would ask, we are just friends right now. Just getting to know each other.* Clarke knew she would hear Raven and Octavia laughing at her if she said it aloud.

“When is the big reveal?” Clarke asked just so she could continue the conversation with the group.

“The Mountain is hiring a band for next weekend. The whole point of the bar overhaul was to attract people as they left the other places during concert season. We are going to stay open a little later and have everyone else’s after parties here.”

“The is actually brilliant.” Raven commented. “I can help with wiring and light setups if you need it.”

Lincoln looked relieved. “That would be a great help. Today we just got finished placing the new lights in along the dance floor but we haven’t started wiring them in yet. If you could do that then we can move on to the flooring.”

“New flooring and lights?” Excited, Octavia grabbed Lincoln’s arm. “Can we have a sneak preview?”

Lincoln looked around for Lexa and Anya’s reactions. Seeing everyone in agreement he offered to let them all take a look.
“Wow,” Raven said, “It’s like an engineer junkie’s dream in here.”

Clarke didn’t see the appeal Raven had. All she could see was half finished projects in the form of exposed wires, piled up flooring, and heaps of paint buckets and supplies everywhere.

“I know it doesn’t look like much, but we have more work to put in before it can be cleaned up.” Lexa said humbly.

Clarke walked forward and did a complete turn to take in everything as Raven had. She could see how they had completely opened up the floor so people could have more room dancing. The DJ booth looked more organized, and Clarke could see they had replaced the support beams for it as well. “Get tired of the floor moving on you Linc?”

Lincoln turned to see Clarke facing the booth. “Yeah, with me and fattie over here up there it had a tendency to sway a bit.” Lexa rolled her eyes.

“Yeah, alright dude, with your - what?- 225 pounds. Yeah that had nothing to do with it.” Lexa laughed as Lincoln flipped her the bird.

“I volunteer myself as tribute! The only thing I want as payment is free drinks while I work.” Raven announced.

Anya scoffed at Raven but she was smiling. “How about three drinks instead of free drinks?”

“Ah - that will work.” Raven shrugged it off, still happy at the prospect of free drinks, regardless of how many.

“Done.” Lexa led them all back to the front because Anya couldn’t leave the bar unmanned for long. There aren’t many patrons here tonight, but it would be bad practice.

“Alright I think we have taken up enough of your time.” Clarke attempted to met each of their eyes. “Thank you for showing us, it looks like it really has potential.”
The other two pairs only had eyes and ears for each other, so Clarke turned back to Lexa. “Really, it looks good for what you have done so far.”

“It looks like shit, but you’re right. It does have excellent potential.” They both sat there a moment taking each other in. Lexa’s hair was drying in the cutest of ways. Curls made odd patterns without the help from a brush, and Lexa was constantly sweeping it back out of her eyes.

“I just wanted to let you know, I didn’t ask Anya to try and figure you out.”

Clarke jerked her eyes away from Lexa’s hair when she spoke. She was toying with her lighter lost in thought, and Clarke was grateful she hadn’t been caught staring.

“It would have been okay if you had.”

“I’ll admit I’m glad for the clarity, but I wanted to wait until you got comfortable enough to tell me yourself.”

Lexa looked like she was admitting stealing something of Clarke’s, not that she was apologizing for an ambitious friend. “It’s ok, Lex. Don’t worry about it.” The two sat in silence, and Clarke wished she knew how to break it.

“So how is Collins anyway?” The question was random and forced.

“I wouldn’t know. I kicked him out a while ago.” Before things could settle into a more awkward state Clarke called out to her friends. “You guys ready?”

Everyone was in the process of goodbyes and Clarke watched as Lincoln slipped a piece of paper to Octavia smiling and talking softly. Raven and Anya were also giving heart-eyes to each other shocking both Clarke and Lexa at their open display of affection. They turned to each other laughing at their friends, earlier tension gone.

“I hope you can make it out for our grand re-opening?” Lexa looked at her hopefully.
“I’ll do my best, but with kids you never know.”

“Just try, that’s all I ask. I haven’t got to work with you or anything. Seems like life is trying to keep us apart.”

Clarke mouth dried a little with the use of the word *us*. She liked that idea way too much. “It does seem that way, doesn’t it?”

Lexa smiled that lopsided grin. “Well I’ll let you guys out of here. Be safe.”

“Always.”

*****

Lexa could not believe she let it get awkward with Clarke. She stood there as the group of girls drove off and desperately wanted to kick herself. *I need to take a step back from this. My feelings are getting too intense for the situation.*

Anyaa called her over from the bar. “You’re phone keeps going off.”

Lexa snatched it but didn’t recognize the number. She answered anyway thinking it might be Costia.

“Hey plain white tee.”

Lexa chuckled as she sat down in front of Anya making the universal sign for ‘beer please.’

“How’s it going little red dress?”

“I was wondering if you were free at the moment…?” Costia left the end open for Lexa to answer.
“Come to Grounder’s. I’m free and bored. Know where it is?”

“Across from the Mountain right?”

“Yes but better.” She said lightly, teasing. “I’m here now if you want to swing by.”

Costia arrived twenty minutes later. Lexa tried to keep her eyes inside her skull but -wow- she could help but gape at her.

“You look good too,” she giggled.

“Wow, yeah...you look downright edible!” She had skipped the little red dress in favor of leggings and a long sweater. The style perfectly fitted Lexa’s mood. Sultry and sexy.

Lexa saw a flash of blonde hair and blue eyes in her minds eye and roughly pushed it away. She said friends.

“Why here?” She was looking around taking in the mess that was the bar at the moment. “Seems a little rougher than Xeno’s.”

Lexa knew she meant it to be teasing, but she couldn’t stop the huff from leaving her lips as she led her to an open bar stool. “It’s a damn sight better than that filth. Want anything to drink?”

“Do you vouch for the drinks here?” She raised an eyebrow, open doubt written on her face.

“I do because I own it.”

Costia turned quickly to face her. “Really? Why were you at Xeno’s when you have your own bar? That is so cool.”

“Even I like a change of scenery, and I very much like the view I have now.”
Lexa let her eyes roam over Costia’s form and she licked her lips fervently. “Want to dance?”

“Where? There isn’t much of a place to go from where I’m sitting.” Costia glanced around the area for emphasis.

“Well I’ll just have to give you a tour then.” Lexa gently took her hand and led her past the flimsy blockade to where the redesigned dance floor would be. Grind with Me by Pretty Ricky was playing as Lexa pulled her close and started singing the words of the song just loud enough to be heard over the music.

Costia wrapped her arms around Lexa’s shoulders and pulled her down close enough to whisper in her ear. “Do all the girls get private tours?” She took Lexa’s ear lobe in her mouth and sucked gently.

Lexa held back her gasp of pleasure but just barely. “No only the ones that look thirsty.” She dug her fingers into Costia’s hips as she swayed to the music.

“I am rather thirsty.” She hooked a hand behind Lexa’s head and pulled her down into a searing kiss. Lexa let her control it for a moment while she let her hands wander down Costia’s back and over her rear. She squeezed and this time it was Costia’s turn to release a gasp of pleasure.

“Your place or mine?” she said as she turned to put her back to Lexa.

Lexa didn’t respond. There were too many stimuli to her sensory deprived body. Lexa flexed her fingers again and pulled Costia flush with her front.

“In a minute, I’m enjoying our dance.” Costia chuckled low in her throat.

“Alright. If a dance is what you want then that’s what you’ll get.”

She turned up the heat significantly as they moved. Lexa seen Anya peek through the curtain separating them from the rest of the bar and shake her head, but Lexa ignored her. She wasn’t doing anything wrong, and she wanted to enjoy this.
Costia ran her hands deliciously over Lexa’s taut abs, and Lexa felt her desire thicken and pool. Lexa spun her around and kissed her passionately. Tongues clashed and fought for dominance. Costia slotted a leg between Lexa’s and they used each other to ease some of the now burning lust between them. Costia guided one of Lexa’s hands over a voluptuous breast. The material of the sweater was thick, but Lexa could still the outline of a hardened nipple.

Costia moaned loudly, and Lexa had enough blood circulating through her head that she knew she needed to get them out of the public space before things got out of hand and clothes started coming off.

She pulled away and grabbed Costia by the hand, “Are you ready?”

She nodded and said, “Where are we going?”

“I own the bar remember?” She lead Costia outside and up the stairs that led to Anya’s small apartment.

Once through the door, Lexa found herself pushed up against the nearest wall. She could feel Costia’s wandering hands playing with the button on her shorts. She didn’t want to get clothes all over Anya’s apartment so she reached down and picked up the smaller woman, Costia’s legs immediately wrapping around her waist.

Blonde hair and blue eyes flashed again through her thoughts.

She sat on the guest bed after kicking the door closed, Costia still firmly wrapped around her. She grabbed her hips urging her to use her body to grind on. Lexa helped her along by tightening the muscles of her core and rolling her body in a way that had Costia panting. Costia’s moans grew in volume and length.

“Clothes. Off.” Lexa said.

Costia untangled herself and pushed Lexa flat on the bed. “I agree.” She leaned over Lexa running a tongue down her exposed neck as she gripped the edge of her tank top and pulled. Lexa arched her back enough to help her get it off, and ran her hands up Costia’s thighs to remove the sweater.
that was keeping her from devouring the nipples she was previously teased with.

Sweater disposed of, Lexa reached around Costia and expertly unhooked her bra with one hand. She leaned up locked her lips around a nipple, pulling Costia down on top of her with a soft gasp. The skin to skin contact was electric, and Lexa moaned deep in her throat. She swirled her tongue one way then back the other, then gently bit down and pulled back on the pebbled flesh. Lexa didn’t know of a woman who didn’t like a little nibbling.

“Getting distracted are we?” Costia pulled on Lexa’s sports bra breaking her attention away from Costia’s chest. Lexa removed it and pulled Costia’s pants down and off leaving her in just lacy white underwear.

It was a very nice sight. A gorgeous girl in nothing but her panties. All for doing the right thing at a lousy bar.

Hands pulling on her shorts snapped her back to reality, and she lifted her hips. Costia cocked an eyebrow at her boxer’s but said nothing.

Lexa rolled them over and placed a thigh between the brunette’s legs. A gentle rock of the hips was all it took to get nails drug down her back. “Fuck,” she let out, voice low and with gravel.

“Shit, did I hurt you?”

“Fuck no, do it again.”

Again, nails raked furrows down her back, and Lexa couldn’t stop her hips from jerking forward. Her body demanded release, it had been too long; however Lexa was stubborn and wanted to draw this out.

“We still have too many clothes on.”

Lexa dipped her fingers inside of Costia’s waist band to highlight her displeasure.

Costia nodded and she sat up to slip out of her boxers as Costia shimmied off her lacy attire. Lexa
paused a moment to check over her to make sure everything was how it should be, and Costia did the same.

“I was tested two months ago. I’m clean.” Lexa offered.

“I was tested last week. I’m clean too.” Costia smiled and crooked a finger. “Well what are you waiting for?”

Lexa laid down beside her and kissed her gently on the lips. She placed a fingertip on her throat and drug it slowly down. Between her breasts and over her stomach. She skipped the apex of her thighs for now, continuing the path of her finger down one thigh then up the other.

“If at any point you want me to stop. Just say the word. Okay?” Lexa checked in before she continued.

“Lexa, shut up and fuck me.” With that she pushed Lexa flat and straddled her. Lexa’s hands automatically went to her hips, but Costia had other plans. She grabbed Lexa’s right hand and raised up slightly on her knees. Lexa got the idea and slipped one finger inside clenching walls of wet heat. Costia sank down on her digits slowly allowing the stretch and getting comfortable with the sudden intrusion. Soon she was increasing her pace, breasts bouncing with her effort to ride Lexa’s hand.

“Oh Lexa, right there.” Lexa let her set the pace and followed her lead; soon adding a second finger. Costia increased her pace yet again. Lexa brought the other hand down to rub quick circles around the small bundle of nerves.

(Blue eyes, blonde hair.)

Lexa shook her head and swiftly switched their positions. She took an ear lobe in her mouth and sucked hard enough to leave a mark, and she palmed a breast as Costia did the same.

Lexa worked her way down, intent on tasting her lover. To drown in her lovers scent to remove those knowing eyes out of her thoughts for good.

She reached her destination and looked up. Costia nodded breathless, and Lexa flattened her tongue and tasted her for the first time. Costia positively writhed in front of her. Her body begging to be driven over the edge.
Lexa playing her like a violin and she was a master artist. Seconds later, Costia went tense and still. Her body shook as Lexa pushed her over the edge, and Costia released a held breathe loudly and groaned. Lexa helped her ride through the aftershocks and then cleaned her up with her tongue.

Everything was oddly dull and muted. Even when Costia returned the favor, Lexa felt the rush and had an orgasm; however, underneath her bodies shaking and her calls of pleasure, Lexa could only think of one person and it wasn’t who was in the bed.

(blue eyes, blonde hair)

Lexa laid there exhausted with Costia wrapped around her blissfully ignorance to her inner torment. This was torture. Her feelings for Clarke were starting to get in the way of everything. She still wasn’t even sure if Clarke wanted to pursue a relationship with her, but her heart stubbornly refused to let her have a moment of peace.

Lexa sighed rubbing her head with the heel of her hand.

“It seems like you have something your dealing with, care to share with the class?”

“There is a girl but it's complicated. But that isn’t a story for now.” Lexa pulled her closer as much to reassure herself as to reassure Costia.

“A story for another time then.”

Costia leaned over with fire burning in her eyes. She kissed Lexa’s neck placing a darken mark just over her artery and tried to spread that fire, but Lexa knew it wasn’t going to happen again. At least not tonight.

“I’m sorry Cos, I’m exhausted. You wore me out, plus I worked on that dump downstairs all day.”

Lexa tried to laugh but it fell flat and she knew her smile didn’t reach her eyes. “I think you had better go.” Lexa told her quietly.
Costia huffed and threw herself out of the bed. “Hit it and quit it huh? I didn’t expect you to be that low.”

“No it’s not like that, this isn’t my apartment and I can’t stay either.” Lexa placated.

“Oh well maybe next time you will cuddle me appropriately.”

“Next time?” Lexa raised her eyebrows.

“Yes, silly. I like you and I think I will keep you for a while.”

Lexa let out a genuine laugh and rose buttnaked to kiss her goodbye and see her out.

She had just pulled on her tank when Anya opened the door letting herself in. Lexa kept her back to her, hoping she didn’t have the need to comment. Of course she was wrong.

“Jesus Lexa it smells like sex in here.” She wrinkled her nose in disgust. “You didn’t actually get with that girl did you?”

“Yeah, I did. Everything ok down at the bar?” After Anya’s nod she bolted for the door. She wasn’t in the mood for a lecture even though she knew she needed one.

Anya stopped her with a hand on the arm. “Lexa, this isn’t like you.”

Lexa paced back to the kitchen for a bottle of water. “I have had hookups before, An. Nothing is different.” She took a long drink letting the coolness of the water metaphorically bath her dry, itchy throat.

“What about Clarke?”

“There is nothing there, she wants to be friends. Are we done here?”
Anyya nodded and sadly stepped away from the door as Lexa stormed out.

A few days later, Lexa answered Costia’s call again. They ended up in Lexa’s apartment in a sweaty heap. The following weekend, Clarke didn’t show up for the reaper party. Raven and Octavia did; however, both were busy with Anya and Lincoln, and Lexa felt like a third wheel.

Lexa was the one to call Costia that night.

That is how the next two months played out. Lexa would go about her day, and at some point would call or text Costia or vice versa. They would meet and hookup mostly at Lexa’s place. Soon, Costia was spending more time at the shared apartment than Echo was.

Echo pulled Lexa aside at work claiming that Costia could make her forget her feelings for the blonde. She thought the dark skinned beauty was the answer to Lexa’s romantic issues. Lexa didn’t really understand how Echo would know considering she was rarely home. Lexa couldn’t actually remember the last time Echo had slept in the bed placed next door.

Costia was great, but she wasn’t Clarke. She didn’t have a pull on Lexa. She didn’t make Lexa’s heart rate increase when she walked in the room. She didn’t make Lexa daydream about a chance meeting in a dark hospital room.

Lexa hadn’t seen Clarke except in passing at work, and she hadn’t been responding to Lexa’s messages frequently either. She would eventually respond, but it would be days later without consistency. Their conversations were always mundane and rushed. Lexa never asked, and Clarke equally never said anything about the shadow of a possible…thing between them. She was worried and hurt. A small voice in her brain spoke up frequently reminding her with visions from her times with Costia, and that all Clarke wanted was friendship. They both went hand in hand; Costia’s moans and Clarke’s eyes as she told Lexa friends.

Lexa could not believe that she was this hung up over someone she had never even kissed. Someone she had never danced with. Someone who had gently but firmly suggested friendship over any romantic entanglement. Someone who was never really there.

She was never there, until she was. Lexa caught a glimpse of Clarke through the windows leading to their little smoking hole between buildings at work. She panicked, quickly checking her phone. She had went on her lunch break at the same time Clarke had; both seeking nicotine to get through the night. The only problem was Lexa had invited Costia to spend some time together. It had been a few days since she had seen Cos, and she missed the shorter woman with an intensity that had surprised her.
Looking at Clarke making her way to where Lexa was standing, she couldn’t help but to feel dread at what was about to happen, and she found herself missing Costia a lot less.

“Hey Lex.” Clarke smiled like she was truly happy to see her, and she probably was. She didn’t know the turmoil Lexa had been going through. She hadn’t been around.

“Hey Griffin.” Lexa held out her cigarettes and Clarke plucked one from the offered pack. Lexa reached into her scrub top and got her lighter, lighting Clarke up before stepping back to resume her stance leaning against the wall.

“How have you been? It’s been a while since I have seen you at work.” Lexa said offhandedly with a flick of a finger to disperse built up ash.

“I’ve been insanely busy,” she laughed. “My classes are kicking my ass, and with Finn gone and Bellamy not answering calls, I haven’t been out much lately. How did reaper night go?”

Lexa inwardly winced. Nothing shown on her face but polite interest as she responded. “We did well. The idea worked which was more than I had hoped. We almost doubled our revenue on the nights that others have bands in the area. So in short, it worked out very well.”

“That is awesome!” Clarke goodnaturedly punched her on the shoulder. “I’m glad to hear it. It looks like we have another tweaker that is hanging out back here.”

Random people from the homeless camps periodically stationed themselves around the hospital. The pair have had to call the cops previously on pedestrians who were causing trouble around the hospital either by badgering people for cigarettes or for pain pills.

Lexa glanced up to see who she was talking about and almost groaned. Costia looked completely lost, and Lexa could see where Clarke got the idea of ‘tweaker’.

“Nah, I know her. Hey Cos!” Lexa stepped out from behind the wall revealing herself to the lost girl.

Costia spun on her heel following Lexa’s voice until she spotted her. She squealed and took off
running and when she neared the two staff members jumped, trusting Lexa to catch her.

Lexa did indeed catch her with a grunt at the impact of the smaller woman. “Hi plain white tee.” She smirked glancing quickly to the side at Clarke before returning her eyes to Lexa, “Want to get out of here?”

Lexa cleared her throat trying to cover Costia’s words, but the tightening of Clarke’s jaw said she was unsuccessful. “I didn’t know if you would make it tonight.”

“Why wouldn’t I? You text me remember?”

“That is true. Sorry, night shift must be getting to my head.” Lexa turned to the blonde with Costia still stubbornly hanging off of her.

“Clarke, Costia. Cos, this is Clarke.” She put a tiny amount of emphasis on Clarke’s name hoping and praying Costia would get the hint to cool it. Over the last few months, Lexa had told Costia a bit of Clarke and what had happened between them, but it seemed like her karma for the day - hell her karma for the year- was dead set on being cashed in now.

“Oh! The one that friendzoned you?” Costia said it playfully like it was all a big funny joke between the three of them.

Lexa pushed on her thighs to get her to let loose. When she slid - slowly- down Lexa she pressed her chest close and let her lips linger on Lexa’s neck in plain view of Clarke and the daggers she was throwing.

“I think I’m done with my cancer stick. It has left a horrible taste in my mouth.” Clarke spun and stomped her way up the nearest steps and through the door that was in the complete opposite direction she was supposed to go.

“Cos, really?” Lexa whined, “Did you have to do that?”

“What? Maybe that will light a fire under her ass.”
“FUuuuuuuuck.”

“Cheer up cupcake! It will all work out. Trust me.”

Lexa wasn’t in the mood for any sort of intimacy, but Costia had learned her body over the course of time that they had spent together. She kissed up Lexa’s neck and tugged on her ear lobe. Lexa felt herself relaxing against her will with every press of Costia’s lips, and when Costia started leaving little bites along her jaw, Lexa gave in to the feeling of a warm body.

Neither one seen the watery blue eyes watching from a one of the many dimly lit windows above.
I can't...help it.

Chapter Notes

OK, so...there was a lot of discussion over the course of things. I tried to keep everyone happy and stay true to how I wanted the story to play out. So, for those of you who wanted a scene with Clarke and Fox...you got it, but not here. That doesn't belong in my story. But...I did write it out, kinda. Honestly, it just happened and I realized when I was through typing that it didn't fit. So I will post it either as a one-shot or as an alternate chapter? an alternate reality of the chapter? You get it. Anyway, hope you all enjoy and see you on the other side.

"I told you Finn is gone and your precious Bellamy disappeared," Clarke argued. "Again!"

She was on the verge of tears. The kids had been moody today; wanting everything and nothing. Clarke had learned that sometimes kids were just not happy with life. As long as they had clean, dry clothes, food in their bellies and a warm place to sleep. They could be mad. Her mother on the other hand -

"Well, I told you, Clarke. Good men do not come around often. You should have tried harder with Bellamy."

Clarke's eye bugged out, then she laughed harshly. "Mom, you do realize he disappeared, left me with a newborn, in the middle of summer no less, and took all the cash we had saved? That money was close to $2,000! I know I have told you this, but have you really given it thought? I didn't see him for months! He left me for MONTHS! I have zero romantic interest in Bell anymore. He made sure of that."

She was furious; her mother always tried to make her feel as if Bellamy leaving was her fault. Clarke had done everything right. She took care of Madi, (Aden wasn't born yet) made sure the house was picked up and there was food on the table when Bell got home, yet for some reason, Abby refused to believe Bellamy had any part in the demise of the relationship.

“Clarke, honey, please don’t yell at me,” a pause, “your dad wants to talk to you.”

“Hey princess.” Her father’s voice was low and rough with sleep.
"Hi, dad. Did you just wake up?" Clarke glanced at the clock on the wall, 10 a.m. "You're getting old, OLD man."

She heard him chuckle through the phone and for a moment she could almost imagine she could talk him into beating some sense into her mother. Jake’s response shattered that illusion.

"Yes, I did. I deserve a nap every once in a while. I was meaning to ask you - when are you and that boy getting married again?"

Why does it have to be before I married Bellamy? "I'm not sure Dad, we haven't talked about it."

"Well, he asked you ages ago." You have no idea Dad, Clarke thought sadly. "You should marry him and make me grandbabies!"

"How about this, I'll come by soon and we can watch the Big Bang Theory?" Clarke asked knowing it was a safe question and completely avoiding his question altogether.

Jake Griffin was an amazing carpenter and architect. Was. Five years ago, the family started noticing small changes in the blonde headed man. He would blank out for minutes at a time and forget random facts about his life. After many visits to a doctor Abby trusted, the family was given the news that the head of the Griffin household had a brain tumor. One surgery and several rounds of radiation later he was cancer free; however, he was still not himself. He didn’t drive anymore and couldn’t work. Abby was balancing work and providing care to her husband. Clarke hated everything about the situation, and she did everything she could to help.

Clarke had even hunted down one of her dad’s old friends, Marcus Kane, in an attempt to get her mom some help. Kane and her father were very close for much of their lives. After Clarke had made contact with him, Abby had to grudgingly accept the help offered.

“Ok princess, I’ll see you soon.”

“Bye Dad.” Clarke heard some shuffling and mentally prepared herself for her mother.

“Clarke I’m sorry about hounding you, I just worry about you and my grandbabies.” Abby for the first time in years sounded sincere. “Please do come by soon. I’ll make dinner and I can see how big Aden has gotten!”
“I don’t know, Mom.” Clarke was very hesitant to trust she wouldn’t be grilled as soon as she walked in the door about her love life. “Maybe later, it’s getting close to Christmas. Sometime around then?”

"Oh, Christmas! You could come on Christmas Day and it will be just like when you were little!"

"We will see, Mom." She hated to leave her mother hanging like that but she really didn't want to be stuck at her mom's with her kids on Christmas day. She didn't want to provide Abby with an opportunity.

“Ok, honey I’ll let you go, your dad is getting hungry.”

“Bye Mom.”

Clarke sat her phone down and sagged in her chair. Phones calls to home were always draining in some way. Madi streaked by with Aden hot on her heels as they raced in circles around Clarke’s chair.

“Hey, be careful guys. Madi, slow down!”

Clarke had still not gotten used to the fact that she was in charge of these two precious souls. She felt like any moment someone was going to swoop in, take them away, and say ‘just kidding!’ She would do anything for them, and give everything to protect them.

“Hey cuties,” she called out to them, “how about we watch a show while Mommy reads this big boring book? It's that ok with you guys?”

The two toddlers burst into the room, excited at the prospect of using the ‘rweally rweally big pv.’

The usual argument of Dora vs. Diego ensued, and Clarke sat back to watch who would win this time. As long as they didn’t resolve to physically attacking each other, she let them work out their own issues, and so far it had proven to be a parenting win.
While they argued about the show, (which consisted of Madi patiently trying to get Aden to say ‘Diego’ instead of ‘eggo’) Clarke escaped getting a glass of wine and two sippy cups for herself and the kids.

When she returned, she smiled. The kids were piled almost on top of each other. Aden laying across Madi’s back, both sets of eyes glued to the screen where Diego played on. She quietly sat the cups next to them and curled up on her ugly orange chair to get some reading done.

The last few months had been hectic - her Mom needed more help with her dad, her programs intensity was slowly consuming her every extra second, and her babies were home almost all the time. Bellamy had disappeared again, but not completely. She had heard from him but it was in bits and spurts. He was seeing someone and Clarke was happy for him; at the same time, she was frustrated. He had promised to help her with the kids since she had kicked Finn out, and yet he was being shady. He didn’t seem to be getting back on drugs from what she could tell, but either way, he wasn’t nearly as available as she wanted him to be. Her trust in him too was wavering.

Night shift at the hospital had been taking the place of much-needed sleep during the weekends when she didn't have any help with the kids. Octavia had become a godsend, stepping in for her brother when he wasn't around and helping her out at night. Granted all she had to do was sleep at Clarke's house. Clarke always had the kids fed, bathed, and in bed asleep by the time she got there. Clarke also made it home either before or right after the kids woke up, trying to make things as easy as possible for O since she was doing her such a huge service.

It was rough, but it was working.

She took a small break around lunch to make the kids something to eat. She was cleaning up her mess in the kitchen when she heard a knock on the door.

“MAMA DOOOOORRRRRR.”

If Clarke would've missed the sound, Madi was a pretty good doorbell.

“Thank you baby, I got it.”

She spied through the peephole and then threw open the door.
"Hey princess." He smiled that old familiar smile.

"This is a surprise. Kids look who's here."

"Hi, daddy!" Madi was excited to see him, but Aden turned and looked, seemed unimpressed and returned to his show.

“What are you doing here Bell?” Clarke went back to the kitchen and he followed, Madi trailing after him clutching his leg.

“I just came to see my family and explain what has been going on.” He settled at the kitchen table pulling a squirming Madi into his lap for kisses.

“Why haven’t you text me back?”

“That’s another reason I’m here. I broke my phone at work, and I didn’t have your number to get your messages to begin with. This is a prepaid phone until I get my new one in the mail.”

Clarke rattled off her phone number and then sat down with him. Madi escaped the boring grown-up talk and wandered back towards the sounds of the tv.

“Is everything ok Bell? You can tell me if you need help, you know?”

He huffed at her. "Babe, everything is fine. I just wanted to see my kids. The phone situation was annoying, and I was in the area anyway. I wanted to see them. Oh, by the way, I thought you said you kicked Finn out?"

“I did. He hasn’t been here in weeks. Why?"

"I saw him pull off in his car as I pulled onto the road. I thought he was just leaving, but he wasn't even in here?"

Clarke hummed. "That is weird. No, he never came to the door, and he hasn't text me or anything."
Maybe you scared him off. Either way, I don't care. You still working at that temp agency?"

“No, I got a permanent job at the place they had me working. Azgeda Inc. Heard of it?” He stuck out his chest proudly. “It's the fastest growing factory in the area. They pay well too. I have everything ready for the kids. I got them new beds and a few sets of clothes each. I’m not sure if I got the sizes right, but if anything they are a little big. I wanted to take them to the toy store and get them a few new toys too.”

“Don’t you spoil them too much, Blake!”

Clarke was so happy for him. He looked to have finally gotten on the right path in life. She was touched that he put so much thought into having the kids at his apartment, and she found herself forgiving him for much more than a broken phone and a few missed text messages.

“I’m so proud of you Bell. You have made some big changes and it shows. You can have the kids whenever you like. Please, just keep the one night stands scheduled to when they are with me.”

Clarke watched as Bellamy’s eyes filled with tears. A few escaped and she reached out to him pulling him into an awkward hug almost across the table.

“Thank you, Clarke. It has been so hard and I have waited so long to hear you say that. I know we are over but I love you and my kids so much.” He paused to wipe away a few more stray tears. “I don’t ever want to let you or them down again. Aden doesn’t even know me. I wasn’t even there when he was born. I was so stupid. I’m so sorry that ever happened to you. To us.”

Clarke fought to hold back her own tears. This was the man she knew from all that time ago when they were kids, sneaking out and playing hide and go seek in the dark with Octavia.

“I will always love you Bell, your one of my best and oldest friends. I forgive you. Let it go like I have so we can rock this co-parenting shit because I could seriously use some help.”

"I'm glad you're not secretly head over heels for me," he teased, "because the girl I have been seeing wouldn't have liked that. And yes before you start I know your methodology for introducing new people to the kids. Honestly, she is amazing and is a big part of the reason I am doing so well."
“Well I’m glad, just be careful with who you let around the kids. Protect them for me please.”

“I always will! It’s in a dad’s job description right? Just wait until Madi has her first boyfriend. It is going to be like that scene from Bad Boys 2 except I’m going to start out holding the gun.”

They both laughed at the mention of Bellamy's favorite movie and proceeded to clean themselves up. Clarke checked over her reflection to make sure the kids couldn't tell that she or Bellamy had been crying. The parents both felt as if the air was a little lighter and had little more crisp with the new honesty and trust between them.

“Hey Mad-dog, do you want to come stay with me for a few days? I have a new bed for you and some princess dresses.”

Clarke opened her mouth to say he didn’t have to keep them that long and to ask about his work, but he answered her unspoken question.

“I have a few days to get settled into the permanent role. It was luck really that I have a few days off in a row, and if it is ok with you, then I want to spend that time getting to know my kids.”

She watched the kids as Bellamy drove off, already giggling and planning their trip to the toy store. She waved until they turned the corner and was happy that Bell got his shit together.

Later that same day, Clarke was putting the books down for the night and went outside to have a cigarette. After sitting her wine glass down, she opened her facebook app and mindlessly scrolled through memes and vine videos. One update caught her eye.

_Fox McGregor:_ _So. Bored._ 9:52 p.m.

Clarke swirled the wine in her glass. She pulled up a new message to Fox and sent a casual hello.

_Fox: _whats up pretty lady_ 

_CG: _bored same as you. Just got done with reading assignment_ 

_Fox: _dude that shit was brutal_
CG: you’re telling me
CG: Bell came and got the kids. I’m free!!
Fox: ohho...so what are the big free plans for the evening then?
CG: i’m not sure. I dont really want to go out.
Fox: up for some company? I’m tired of staring at the same four walls
CG: hell yeah sounds good. I have wine

Clarke snapped a picture of her wine glass not really paying attention to what she sent.

Fox: wow

Confused Clarke checked the picture and smirked at her unintentional tease.

CG: would you believe me if i said that was an accident? Lol like i said...no kids...i’m free

The picture had the wine glass, and a set of muscular, pale legs running long behind it. She had an oversized t-shirt on and underwear and that was it. If she would've been anywhere but on her small back porch, she would've had on more clothes. It was a hella good shot for an unintentional sexy selfie though.

Fox: i was hoping it wasn’t, it's an amazing picture

Oh really?-

CG: well in that case your welcome, see you soon?

Fox: uh...yeah...be there in a bit

Clarke had small butterflies in her stomach. She loved flirting - innocent harmless flirting. The simple give and take of compliments that meant someone appreciated you and/or your body.
Clarke had always felt a small attraction towards Fox. She was smart, kind, and witty. Anyone in the same room with her was either jealous or hungry for her. Not in an all-consuming way, not like the fire she felt with Lexa, but still a generous flare of heat.

Clarke decided to forgo pants at all for the rest of the night and see how things played out. If anything, the look on Fox’s face when she let her into the house was worth it. She stood there a moment, slack-jawed and wide-eyed. Fox ran a hand through her red-brown hair, and Clarke allowed her feast on exposed skin with her eyes.

Fox looked pretty damn good too. Low cut blue jeans barely met the edge of her tight baseball tee with a slit at the neck exposing more tan skin on the woman’s chest. She had on Converse to throw the look together. The look reminded her of a sultry voice, short, wild brown hair, and tattoos.

“Come on in, and I’ll find you a glass of wine.”

Fox had been to her house before for study sessions and group projects so she left her at the door and walked to the kitchen for the offered wine.

“So,” Fox said as she followed her into the kitchen, “are you trying to kill a girl or are you normally half dressed when the kids aren’t home?”

Clarke laughed and shrugged her shoulders, “Usually it's just Raven, Octavia and me. Pants are optional when it is a girls night.”

“Clarke! Bell said he got a new phone and had the kids why didn’t you call - oh, am I interrupting something?” Octavia glanced between a blushing Fox and a glaring Clarke. “Raven get in here!”

“You could’ve helped with the beer, O. Seriously I’m dying here.” Raven stopped at the fridge and shoved the armload of alcohol inside with a flourish. “Didn’t need your damn help after all.”

Raven turned, “Oh my, are we interrupting something?” Raven let loose a dangerous smirk.

“Idiots this is Fox, Fox these are my idiots, Raven and Octavia.”
Fox was still blushing while she exchanged greetings with the blonde’s best friends.

“What the hell are you doing in my house?” Clarke pulled out her best mom glare and set it loose on the troublemakers.

"Bell called me, told me he stopped by earlier," Octavia said.

Raven nodded, "O called me. I got the beer, and here we all are."

The four situated themselves at Clarke’s kitchen table and Raven brought out a deck of cards. “Waterfall, anyone?”

“Hell yeah!” Fox said.

“Do you really have to ask?” Octavia snarked.

“Holy shit, you guys are just here to get me drunk.” Clarke groaned but got up and opened all the windows in the kitchen and living room. If they were going to play waterfall, then she needed to be able to smoke.

Fortunately, all players had similar rules to the versatile game and the game was extremely fun. Clarke found herself relaxing completely. Every once in a while she would catch Fox’s eyes on her. Usually tracing the exposed flesh of her legs.

Clarke had enough confidence that she didn’t mind being half naked with Fox in the room. It was all girls and that was when they could let their hair down so to speak.

When Fox started following the path her eyes were taking with careful fingertips, Clarke grew immediately more alert. Fox kept a straight face but she was watching Clarke; looking for any signs that she should stop. Clarke let her continue with her light touches and eventually brought a barefoot to Fox’s unclothed ankle, rubbing gently up and down in tandem with Fox’s touch.

Raven finally caught the movement from her side of the table and gestured to them. Octavia’s eyes sparkled with mirth. “I think I have had enough games for the night, Raven. What do you say to a
movie at my place?"

Fox was now wholeheartedly focused on Clarke and not paying attention. Several bottles of beer and empty cups littered the area around the two that were undressing each other with their eyes.

“I think that’s a good idea, O.” Clarke said, one hand vaguely waving to the door. “I’ll text you guys tomorrow.”

"You had better!” Raven shouted as the door slammed. Muffled curses and laughter of the two morons filtering through the now closed door.

"Hey, Fox?"

Fox jerked her eyes to Clarke’s and she swallowed thickly. They were both drunk, they both knew it. Clarke didn’t want to be alone, and her guilt made her speak up.

“I have told you everything the last few weeks going on with me. Are you sure you’re ok with this?”

Fox had become her uninvested third party she could talk to about Lexa, Bellamy, and even Ray and O. She knew how Clarke felt about all of them, yet Clarke didn’t know anything going on with Fox except that she had a bad relationship months back that didn’t end well. She hardly ever spoke of it, and Clarke didn’t want to pressure her into talking. Clarke thought that Fox may have been in an abusive relationship with someone and her trauma from that time caused her to hesitate in telling people her story.

“I like you Clarke, and I know what I’m doing. I’m ok with this if you are…”

"Ok…” Clarke breathed the last word out and Fox dropped her gaze to Clarke's lips.

She reached up and cradled Clarke’s face in her hands, making Clarke look up into her eyes. When eyes met, Fox leaned in and kissed Clarke gently. So gently Clarke couldn’t be sure if it was an actual kiss.
A hand traveled further up into unexplored territory and rested lightly on the hip of the blonde’s panties. Clarke had a moment’s regret that she didn’t put on anything fancier than regular white bikini cut, but pushed the thought away quickly when Fox started nibbling on her bottom lip.

Fox released her lip with a pop. “If I do anything you don’t like, tell me.”

That line sent a jolt of panic and confusion through Clarke. Fox stood and with a broad sweep of the arm cleared the kitchen table of beer cans and cups. She took Clarke by the hand and stood her up. Clarke was confused. So confused. What changed? Her body still craved someone’s touch, however, he head was spiraling into ‘please don’t fucking touch me.’

Fox went to guide her to sit on the table. She hadn’t yet noticed Clarke’s hesitation.

“Wait,” Clarke said as she sat, “just wait a minute.”

The request finally broke through the fog of alcohol that had settled over Fox. She took a measured step back and looked Clarke over. “You ok?” Clarke could hear the fear and concern in her voice.

“I’m sorry, I thought I wanted this.”

“It’s ok, really Clarke. I’m ok. I didn’t come here expecting anything. I’m not going to lie and tell you I didn’t want to try things with you, but I know you. I think I know you better than you do yourself at the moment.”

“I shouldn’t have done that, I’m sorry.”

Clarke didn’t really hear Fox speaking, she was lost in a swirling pool of emotions. A lopsided grin and smirking green eyes seem to stare at her from the shadowed corners of her mind. Clarke really felt like she had to get a handle on herself. She needed to control herself so she didn’t hurt other people. The things would’ve happened differently, Clarke could’ve really hurt Fox, and she wasn’t that type of person.

“I’ve had the biggest crush on you for forever. I’m glad I got to kiss you and I don’t regret it, but it just solidifies my theory on women.”
“Don’t tell me I’m your coming out story?” Clarke questioned uneasily. She didn’t want Fox to go all ‘stage 5 clinger’ on her despite her good intentions.

“Yes and no. You have caught my interest since we started this program, but there is another girl that has had my heart for much longer. She lives about an hour away and we went to high school for a brief time together. I have always known that I loved her, just never had enough courage to do anything about it.”

Clarke exhaled mightily with relief.

“Please, I didn’t mean to offend you. You weren’t an experiment or anything. I just -”

Clarke stopped Fox’s speech by placing a finger on her lips.

“It’s ok, Fox. We both know how I feel about Lexa. Damning as it is.”

“Speaking of Lexa, have you seen her lately. It might be a good time to go on a few dates while your baby daddy has the kiddos.”

"Not since she was sucking face with that twat at work." Clarke tried to conceal the venom and pain in her voice, but of course, it didn't work.

“Clarke, either she will come around or she won’t. I wish we could dup her like she did you.”

“Thanks but no thanks. If she feels anything for me then I don’t want to hurt her.”

“You really do have it bad don’t you?”

“I really do.”

“You said her name. Earlier. You had your eyes closed and I was touching you. You whispered her name.”
Both girls picked up the cups and cans attempting to clean up a little before heading into the living room to collapse of the sofa. They watched a movie and fell asleep on their own ends of the couch. Feet entangled to ensure the presence of another person. Neither one mentioned the kiss they shared again.

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Clarke woke up the next morning to the sounds of snoring. Initially, she panicked thinking Finn was with her, but soon she remembered her night with the girls and relaxed. She really hoped things with Fox wouldn't be weird after what happened last night. Fox was right in pointing out that she probably knew Clarke better than anyone at this point, but it didn't make her feel better about what she had tried (and failed) to do.

Her guilt made her instantly think of Lexa. *Fucking Lexa.* She had no idea why...Clarke let out a sigh and readjusted her blanket. She would never be able to pinpoint her feelings on that woman. She knew she did NOT enjoy seeing her with that other woman. Her throat felt like it had molten lead poured down it, and it had sat; hot, heavy, and smoldering for hours after she had seen them.

Anger had come first. Then came pain, not sharp; not consuming, but persistent. After those two died down, she was absurdly jealous. So, so jealous. Clarke wanted to nibble on that jawline, she wanted to hear Lexa's low voice whispering words to unknown songs in her ear as they danced. She wanted to feel Lexa's body moving with her own while they danced. She wanted to feel nothing but Lexa's body, and hear nothing but her moans while they danced under the sheets.

Yeah, she had it bad.

She finally mustered the energy to remove herself from the couch. Fox’s sleeping form sprawled out on the other end. She made her rounds through the house: brushing her teeth, checking the door locks, and getting a LARGE glass of ice water.

Ten minutes later, she was finishing up in the shower when she heard a light knock on the door.

“Hey, I’m going to get out of here. You ok this morning?”

Clarke wanted to see her out, so she quickly rinsed out her hair.
“Give me a second. I’m almost done.”

Clarke dried off but hesitated when she reached for her robe. It was old, frayed and short. She opted just to skip it in favor of getting some real clothes on.

“I’m glad I didn’t miss you,” Clarke said as she walked into the living room, still ringing out her hair on a towel.

“No problem, I have to be at work in a bit and I wanted time to shower and chill for a bit before going in.”

“Thanks for hanging out with me and the weirdos last night. We should do it again sometime. Maybe you can bring that mystery girl you talked about last night.” Clarke playfully nudged her with a shoulder.

“Maybe, but I have to talk to her first. I don’t know; she probably doesn’t even remember me, much less like me.”

“You never know until you try, trust me.”

Fox looked at her incredulous. “Really?” She laughed, “You are right, but you should take your own advice.”

“I may, it depends on Lexa though.” Clarke’s brow pinched up while she thought of a way to find out Lexa’s intentions with that girl Costia. “Maybe I’ll just swing by her bar, and see what’s going on.”

"I'll leave you to your planning. See you in class, girl."

Clarke hated when people referred to her as 'girl'. So disrespectful. Inwardly she fumed a bit, but on the surface, she smiled and waved at Fox as she shut the door.
“Girl….not a girl….fucking ferocious woman. Hear me roar bitch.”

Clarke kept grumbling under her breath as she finished getting ready. She didn’t know where she was going, but she was definitely going somewhere. She dug through her clothes until she found her jeans. You know those jeans that just….fit. That make you feel strong and confident and sexy? These jeans were like those jeans on crack. Clarke bought them right after she had Aden and now they fit perfectly on her hips like they were made for her.

She slipped into her jeans throwing the pajama pants on her bed. Clarke now had to find the perfect shirt. She stood in the middle of her room and looked around for inspiration. Seeing a hint of blue peeking out from underneath a winter coat, she snagged it and unveiled an old shirt she had forgotten about. It was an old tank top that was a nice shade of turquoise.

Clarke heard a noise from the living room and paused in the act of putting her shirt on. She listened and heard it again. It sounded like someone was trying to break into her house. She raced into the living room armed with her softball bat she kept inside her room from high school days long past.

She crept up to the door and looked through the peephole. Finn was going through keys on a key ring, apparently trying to get inside.

She threw the door open startling him. She didn’t say anything, just looked at him coolly.

“Clarke.”

“What do you want Finn?”

He stepped closer, “I want to come inside. I miss you.”

Clarke looked at him and the tension rose within her. She didn’t want him here. Something was off.

“Please Clarke. I left when you asked me too. I just want to come home. I’m sorry about Aden. He wouldn’t leave my phone alone, and he almost dropped it!”
Clarke sighed, “Finn, we grew apart. You treated my son like shit. You really need to ask yourself if you truly love me, because I just don't feel anything for you like that anymore.”

Clarke seen anger cross his face, but he chased it away quickly. “I do love you, Clarke. We have been best friends for so long. I helped you raise our kids. What more do I have to do to prove it to you?”

Finn couldn't see what she was trying to tell him. The anger in his eyes had scared her, and she didn't want to spell things out for him. No, she didn't love him, but she didn't want to risk having to kick his ass right here in her doorway. She wasn't a fan of cleaning blood out of the carpet.

“Ok, how about this. Give me some time to think about things. I have been super busy with school and the kids. I’ll call you and we can sit down and talk about this.” In a public damn place too, she thought.

“Where are you going in such a hurry?” He asked quickly like he had been waiting on an opportunity to interrogate her.

“I’m going to meet up with some friends. Have a drink.” She shrugged as nonchalantly as possible. She needed to get out of here, and she definitely needed to be away from him.

“Will you call me after? I want to talk to you soon.” He tried acting hurt and innocent for a moment.

“Maybe Finn. I’m not sure. Look Bellamy is going to be here any minute with child support. You need to get out of here before he throws a fit.”

That was a bald face lie. Of course, Bellamy wasn't coming by, and he obviously didn't give two shits about Finn. But Finn didn't know that, and Clarke knew he was after of the taller man. Finn always tried to be tough, but always managed to disappear when Bellamy was supposed to be around.

“Okay, your right. Call me later.” He was looking both ways down the street as if Bellamy was going to pop up from nowhere, and he quickly got in his car and left.

I’m going to have to do something quickly about him...he is getting too intense for me.
Later that day, Clarke was driving to the downtown district of Polis. She had spent the day blissfully by herself. No kids. No adults that acted like kids. No one to ask who, what, why, where, and how. It was wonderful. She got a mani/pedi, her eyebrows waxed, a haircut, and a facial treatment.

In short, she felt fantastic. She grinned and sang along with the radio, speaker blaring music to anyone who cared to listen with the windows rolled down. It was the middle of December and there was a chill in the air. She pulled into a nifty little shopping center close to the strip and ran inside to find a light jacket just in case.

Now that she had the hair, the clothes, and the confidence, Clarke prowled around Grounders. She parked further down the road just in case Lexa was there. Now that she was here, she tried to decide if she WANTED to see Lexa.

If she didn’t lie to herself then, yes. The answer to that question was simple. She did want to see her. Clarke missed her more the longer she allowed herself to think about the brunette. She missed her voice and smile. She missed her little winks and the way she seemed to try and take care of everyone around her.

“Fuck it.”

Clarke climbed out of her car and strutted her stuff all the way to the door.

*****

Clarke had to double check that this was the right bar. It looked so much better than the last time she had been here. The bar was polished dark wood instead of textured raw material. The dance floor had Raven’s touch written all over it. Lights flashed from under the rails that surrounded the area, and small pinprick lights were embedded into the floor. It looked like you could dance on the stars with the light of the milky way to guide your steps. The only overhead lights that were visible were two rows of black lights spaced evenly further enhancing the space feel. Clarke thought that maybe they should change the name now considering the stark difference between the title and the newly decorated dance floor.

The DJ booth was simple like before yet it held a fresh coat of dark purple paint that the lights had to hit right for you to not think it was black. She strained her eyes trying to pierce the space with her gaze looking for anyone she knew.
The aesthetics of the bar wasn’t the only thing different. Anya wasn’t behind the bar, Lincoln wasn’t meandering with his guests, and Lexa was nowhere in sight. Where was everyone?

She sat down at a bar stool and signaled the unfamiliar bartender. He approached and introduced himself as Miller.

“Care for a drink?” He was striking simply because he wore nothing but pants and a vest. Clarke admired him for a moment then responded.

“No thank you, but I was wondering where the owners were. They are usually here when I come by.”

Nodding he threw the towel he was drying his hands with down on the sink behind him. “Yeah, since business picked up, they were able to hire extra hands to take off one or two nights a week.” He grimaced. “Anya trained me for two weeks before she said I was capable of making the drinks right. Eleven days straight of her looking over my shoulder.”

“I bet you’re glad you passed her test then!”

“That I am!” They shared a laugh and Clarke decided the move on. She waved to Miller and left.

Outside, she pulled out her phone and text Raven.

CG: what up ray
RR: wait

Raven Reyes added Octavia Blake to the chat.

RR: ok
RR: spill
OB: srsly what happed??
CG: calm down nothing happened
CG: well i kissed her but that’s it. We aren’t like that
RR: hmmm...sorry?
CG: all good where are you guys?
OB: wllllllllllll
RR: you see clarkey
OB: linc is off
RR: and anya too
OB: they invited us over for drinks and cards against humanity
RR: we didn’t know we would be here it just kinda happened
OB: exactly
CG: where are you guys exactly?
RR: you tell her
OB: nope

*Raven Reyes added Anya Cole to the chat.*

AC: what
RR: tell Clarkey here where we are please
AC: why
OB: just cause
CG: this is ridiculous. Just tell me already
RR: im too young to die
AC: Lexa’s

Clarke was still standing outside of the bar. The night was starting to get busy and cars with loud music and expensive lights were taking over the roads. She got in her car and checked her phone again. *7 new messages*

AC: Lexa doesn’t mind if you come over. It's basically a party anyway
RR: yeah, come over clarkey poo
OB: please please please
AC: 2100 Phoenix Ave. Apt A10
RR: we have wine
OB: and vodka!
Clarke laughed at her friends. Even in text messages, they finished each other's sentences. She realized she had another new text that wasn't in group chat. She backed out of it and seen it was from Lexa

LB: plz come over

*****

“Hey! Gimme it back!”

Lexa was drunk. She had a good day. The bar was doing amazing. She had awesome friends. She loved Anya and Linc. She loved Zeus. She loved her truck. But An was being an assssssssssshole and ruining everything.

“Nope.” Anya tucked her phone away into a pocket of her jeans. “No drunk texting for you tonight.”

“But it was Clarke! She could have sent something back! I need to talk to her! She hates me.” She was very, very drunk. So drunk, the group of friends had given up on card games and focused their attention on Lexa.

“If Clarke decides to respond she will do it to your face. I just invited her over dumbass. Calm down.” Anya pulled Lexa back down to the couch. Lexa vaguely heard the others laughing at her attempt to get to the door.

“Is she here? I want to kiss her!”

"Lex, you have said that so many times I think I'm beginning to like Clarke," Lincoln said as he settled a massive tattooed arm around Octavia.

"No Clarkey boo for you sir." Octavia nuzzled his neck and they settled into staring into each other's eyes.

Lexa gagged. "You guys are so gross. Go make out already." Neither one paid attention to her just spoke softly off in their own world.
“This is fucking priceless. Does she usually act like this?” Raven had her phone out filming Lexa as she talked nonstop about everything that entered her brain.

“Most of the time, no. She usually doesn’t get THIS wasted.” Anya had a firm hold on the back of Lexa’s shirt as she again tried to get up to ‘see her beautiful truck and hear her beautiful speakers.’

"We need music people, I have to practice," Lexa said seriously.

“What do you want to hear?” Anya asked grabbing the Xbox remote to turn on music.

“What are you practicing for?” Raven egged on.

“CLARKE!!” She held both arms apart as if saying ‘duh’. “I have to win her back with songs and praise.” Lexa was a little dramatic when she drank this heavily. She wriggled again trying to get up.

“I can’t wait for her to see this!” Octavia giggled to Raven.

“Me either. She is too cute!”

“She is cute huh?” Anya asked Raven. She finally settled on a random rock radio station, and music filtered into the room.


A muttered ‘Backstreet boys are so much better than N*SYNC’ was heard from Lincoln and Lexa glared at him.

“If people only knew how much you like boy bands, Lex, I swear.” Lexa shifted her glare to a laughing Anya.
“She is cute but you are dead sexy.” Raven flirted from across the room.

“You two should sit together. An, go sit with her.” Lexa pointed to Raven. “Go!”

“In a minute, Lex. We are waiting on your babysitter to get here.”

“Babysitter?” Lexa asked completely confused. Previous glare forgotten.

“Yes, Clarke.” Lexa brightened.

“Clar-”

“Yes, we know. Clarke is beautiful. Clarke is amazing. Blah, blah, blah. She will be here in a minute if you would sit the fuck still.” Anya winced when she realized she said Clarke was coming.

“Clarke is coming? Is she here?!” Lexa grabbed her friend by the shirt trying to get answers.

“Yeah, Lex. I’m here.”

Lexa turned and smiled. "Clarke. You're beautiful."

“She is all yours blondie. Good luck.” Anya huffed as she got up and crossed the room to plop unceremoniously next to Raven.

“Hi.” Clarke sat next to Lexa, and she drunkenly snuggled into the blonde.

“Hi.”

Clarke looks good. Really, really good. She didn't have much control over her thoughts at the moment but that thought echoed in her head.
“I missed you.” Lexa watched as Clarke took in the new apartment and said hi to her friends. They were talking about something, but Lexa didn’t care. Clarke was here, and she was happy.

It could have been minutes or hours that passed, but Clarke was there the whole time. She vaguely remembered a trip to the bathroom, cold water, and laughter; but she didn’t really know what happened.

She remembered being thirsty, and Clarke's mirth-filled eyes helping her with a cup that felt too big for her hands.

Lexa knew she was going in and out of consciousness, but she wasn’t worried; everyone was here with her. She could see Clarke, hear Anya, and smell Lincoln’s cologne. Everything was ok.

The last thing she remembered from that night was cool lips on her forehead and a whispered good night.
Lexa groaned. Where was she? What the hell happened? Her head felt like Lincoln’s last attempt of making a kamikaze, sluggish and able to produce a rotten taste in your mouth. She could hear indiscernible voices that were too loud and echoed harshly in her ears.

Lexa cracked her eyes open, wondering why people were in her room. She froze at the sight of Clarke and Anya sitting at the little two-seater table Echo had brought with her when she moved in. In the living room... She expected to see them stiff with tension or discomfort; however, they were both smiling over something.

“What happened?” Lexa croaked. She busily untangled herself from the blanket that she had wrapped around her legs in sleep. It was then that she noticed where she was. On the floor. Partly behind the couch. There was a pillow in the space in front of her, but her head didn’t feel like it had seen a pillow last night.

“Hey drunkie,” Anya teased. “Did you like your new bed?” Clarke smiled but didn’t say anything. She was looking at Lexa with an unreadable expression, and Lexa immediately tried to recall every single detail that she could about what happened last night. If I had kissed her, oh my god.

“You talked a lot, then tried to go see your truck for the tenth time. Anya tripped you, and you passed out.” Mirth jumped in the flecks of deep blue eyes. “You said you were comfortable.”

“Shit,” Lexa was mortified. “Why do I remember everyone in the bathroom with me?” She scrunched up her face when she tried rising to her feet from the floor. Her balance was seriously fucked but missing a shoe didn’t help either.

“You wanted us to try and guess what you were saying.” Anya had a vein sticking out of her forehead and neck from trying to hold back laughter. Her lips were pursed tightly together.
“Do I want to know?” She looked at Anya with tired, desperate eyes, willing her to say it wasn’t too embarrassing.

Clarke spoke up as Anya finally couldn’t contain herself anymore and started snickering loudly. “Well, you said you were hot. Then got in the bathtub. It started with Anya, she was helping you. You were screaming and it sounded like she was trying to drown you so Lincoln went in and then immediately came back out to get the rest of us.”

Anya’s snickers turned to a roar complete with tears streaming down her face. She was laughing so hard that she didn’t make a sound except for great gasps for air in between her silent guffaws.

Lexa quickly looked down, ignoring Anya for the moment. The bitch was worthless - absolutely worthless. “I still have clothes on…?”

“Said you were lazy.” Now Clarke was having trouble containing her amusement. She tried to hide it behind a raised hand and a cough. After clearing her throat she said, “It's ok Lexa, it was cute.”

Lexa grunted sourly, “Because cute was what I was going for. I don’t even remember when you got here.”

“Just keep swimming, just keep swimming,” Anya singsonged and collapsed again into hysterics. “I don’t doubt that, you curled up into blonde’s side and feel asleep!” Anya wasn’t going to let this go. She was going to do everything she could to further humiliate Lexa. “You said...pretty....soooooooo pretty.... Where’s Clarke?...she here?....” Worthless.

“Alright, alright. I’m going to shower. Leave you two to your discussion.” Lexa got up and with as much dignity she could scrape together, locked herself in the bathroom.

“Fuck me,” she groaned again.

Her clothes were all crunchy and smelled weird from being drenched then air drying. Her hair could’ve given a rat and several birds a place to live. She turned on the shower and stripped, wanting to wash away the previous night.

When she put fresh clothes on and made her way back to the others, Clarke was already gone. A plate with pancakes sat on the table where she was sitting, and Anya gestured for her to sit and eat
while she sipped on coffee.

“What time is it anyway? Where is my phone?” Lexa looked around her scared for a moment she ruined another phone, “I didn’t get in the tub with it on me, did I?”

“No, I had it for most of the night. It’s dead but fine.” Anya looked her over. “You look like shit.”

“Feel like it too. Did I make a complete ass of myself?” Her stomach retaliated at the thought of food, but she had not eaten since lunch the day before and dug in any way.

While she chewed, Anya got her phone and charger and brought it to her. “Here. I like her by the way. I’m not sure if I have told you that.”

Lexa raised an eyebrow for her to elaborate as she had a mouth full of food.

“She is a woman, Lexa. She isn’t a girl that is just out for fun. She has kids, responsibilities. She is going to school to become a nurse, did you know that? She has a drive I haven’t seen in a person since Lincoln said he wanted to buy out Grounders.”

“He did everything he could to get it, and he would’ve pulled it off with or without my help,” Lexa said proudly. Lincoln was a good man. He was never anything less than one hundred percent loyal and dedicated to what he wanted. “I’m glad I could help him pull it off though. It has been a wild ride so far.”

She took another bite and while she chewed pondered what Anya had said about Clarke. “I like her Anya, but like you said she has kids. I have never even been around kids; not even to babysit. I want to try things with her, but that is a big decision. I’m not just getting a girlfriend, I’m getting kids too.”

It was an enormous thought. A heavy thought. That was more responsibility than Lexa had ever dealt with. “I have always taken care of myself. I’m used to it just being me.” Kids. Little tiny humans.

“There is a serious connection between us,” Lexa sighed, “but I don’t want to have a negative impact on a family, An. Clarke may just be one person, but my feelings for her, our feelings together, could affect her family. I don’t want to be the cause of that. I don’t want to get in her
Anya stretched out in her chair, crossing legs in front of her and crossing hands behind her head. “Why? Do you think it will end badly?”

“I thought I was in a good relationship before, and I was sorely mistaken.” Lexa toyed with her food lost in thoughts of Zoe. “I think I’m just clueless.”

“Look, being friends, making a connection with someone, hell- even sleeping with someone isn’t going to break down the walls Clarke has built up. And don’t even get me started on that whore,” Anya said hotly. “She never was good enough for you. And you can’t tell me you didn’t see it coming.”

Lexa shrugged but remained silent.

“You seriously think Zoe was your one true love? Lexa don’t be stupid. I never seen you look at her like you do with that woman.” She gestured to the door Clarke left out of.

“I knew we were growing apart, but she just left. Grandpa died, and I’ll admit that I wasn’t the happiest person to be around, but she just left. One text message.”

“Everyone grieves in their own way, Lex. There is nothing wrong with the way you have handled his death. There isn’t a right way to do it anyway, and I know that better than most.”

“I know, An. I’m sorry.”

Anya’s mother had died during childbirth and her father had passed not long after. She spent the majority of her life with a man named Titus. Anya rarely spoke of it, but Lexa knew she didn’t have a perfect childhood. Lexa did everything she could for Anya growing up. They had lived in the same town her grandparents did. They went to high school together and had been inseparable for as long as they could remember.

“Not that I’m not enjoying the talk, but - we usually don’t do this. You know, the whole I stepped into feelings thing?”
“Yeah, well maybe I just want you to get your head out of your ass. Stop playing games with that tramp Costia, she just hangs around for sex and free drinks. Clarke is wanting a relationship; something that may last. She is looking for someone to settle down with because anything less than that is a waste of her time.”

“Yeah, I guess I have been a bit stupid.”

Since Lexa had been single again, she wanted to have fun and get to know people. Costia was fun, but if it was hurting Clarke then maybe she should do something about it. Or not do ANYTHING about it. Maybe just let it fizzle out and die.

High school was rough, not in the bullying way, but in the I-didn’t-know-I-was-gay way. Small town beliefs and expectations made Lexa feel like there was something wrong with her. In her first semester of college she met Zoe. It was a life-changing experience, meeting and getting to know her. When she realized she wanted to kiss her, she spent several days avoiding Zoe and locked in her room at the dorms, panicking over what she was feeling.

When Lexa finally accepted that she may be different from what she had thought her whole life, almost everyone she knew had nothing to say but things like ‘about time’ and ‘duh’. Anya being the ‘duh’. She asked Zoe out and the rest is history.

Clarke was something to work for. Clarke was worth it to work for. Lexa needed to act more like the adult she was and stop playing.

“Where did you go there, kid?” Anya asked.

“Thinking about the last few years. I guess you're right, An. As bad as I hate to admit it.” Lexa grinned at Anya’s ‘duh’ face. She was getting really good at getting her to make that face lately.

“So what are you going to do?”

“I have a plan. First I need to make some plans.”

“And you need to call of Costia. She is driving me crazy always asking for free drinks.”
“Yeah, I’ll deal with her too while I’m at it.”

*****

Clarke left Lexa’s house and went straight to Raven’s. She beat on the door until the brunette answered groggily. “Getting you a key,” she grumbled.

“Get some?” Octavia asked from her spot on the couch. She never opened her eyes and her voice was thick with sleep. “You had her all wet after all.”

“Oh yeah, O.” Clarke rolled her eyes. “It had nothing to do with the impromptu shower she took. Anyway, what is this video you guys keep yapping about?”

Octavia’s eyes shot open, “Ray get your phone! She has to see this!”

Raven was already running to fetch it and the three friends settled in for more than 3 minutes of a very inebriated Lexa. Clarke smiled the entire video. This was a sweet side of Lexa she hadn’t seen before. She never once mentioned that cunt, Costia, either. Since things had settled in her life, with the exception of school still being school, she had leaned more towards getting to know Lexa.

When she witnessed the PDA at work, it had hurt because she had just opened herself up to the possibility. “Was she like this the whole time?”

“It started randomly when she read a card out loud for the group during cards against humanity. After that card, she always had something to say about you. When she didn’t shut up, I decided to start filming,” Raven explained.

“If you were even mentioned she tried to leave. I even asked where her girlfriend was and you know what she said?” Octavia had the most satisfied look on her face. “I don’t know where Clarke is. It was the cutest thing, she was all sad and shit. Then the ‘where is Clarke, when is she coming, I’m going to go see her’ statements started.”

“She was dead set on being around you.” Raven looked seriously at Clarke. “I have seen how she acts at the bar. I have seen her around Anya, Lincoln, and us two.” She gestured between herself and Octavia. “I have never seen her act so smitten, Anya said the same thing.”
“Yeah, I had quite a talk with your girl this morning,” Clarke teased. “She told me a few things. Lexa is 23, but she is still growing up. Still mostly just a kid. She only had one serious relationship, and it ended without warning to her.”

Clarke told them about how Zoe had left Lexa when she needed someone to support her the most. “Anya also told me how bad she was freaking out over me seeing her and Costia together.”

“Costia,” O mused, “such a dumbass name.”

Raven laughed. “It is kind of weird.”

“Don’t be ugly.” Clarke’s mom side came out like word vomit sometimes. Ray and O looked at her with arched eyebrows. “You know what I mean, we don’t even know her.” Mom side was REALLY out if she was defending Costia.

“So, what’s the plan?” Raven asked after their amusement died down.

“I’m going to tease the absolute shit out of her,” Clarke said with a sly, mischievous smirk. “Bellamy has the kids until Wednesday, so we have a few days to plan and execute something good. I can also see if she just wants to get in my pants or if she actually does like me.” Clarke said that last bit more to herself than anyone.

She paced around the apartment trying to think of ways that were just sexual enough to tease Lexa without being prudish, and then she noticed Finn’s car outside as she walked past a window.

“Is there ANY chance one of you invited Finn over?”

“Why would we invite that douche over?” Octavia asked confused.

“Because he is outside.” The three girls crowded around the edges of the window trying to see but remain unseen.
“What is he doing?” Raven whispered.

“I don’t know. He came by the house yesterday and was acting weird.”

Octavia spoke at a normal volume, “Why are you whispering? He can’t hear you from there. Why was he at your house?”

Clarke sighed and walked away from the window to get her phone. “Said he wanted to talk.”

The other two took turns bashing Finn. Each name they called him escalated in ridiculousness every time they took a turn.

Clarke held the phone up to her ear and walked back over to the window not bothering to hide. He picked up on the third ring. “Hey, Clarke!”

“Are you a stalker now? Why are you sitting outside of Raven’s apartment?” Clarke was tired of tiptoeing around her feelings for the man-child. She just wanted him to understand that she was done.

He jerked his head around to look at the apartment and his eyes found her. “I was just checking on you making sure you were safe. You weren’t in the best of places last night.”

“Were you following me?” She was starting to get pissed and the brunettes in the room turned to her, faces showing the alarm that Clarke concealed.

“I just wanted to make sure you were safe. Who’s apartment were you at anyway?”

“Listen, Finn,” she paused to take a steadying breath, “We are no longer in a relationship.”

“I know, but I am just trying to prove to you how much I love you by keeping you safe.” He wasn’t getting it.

“Finn, you don’t live with me.” Clarke worried her lip a moment then took a gamble. “I’m
interested in someone else.”

“Who.” He said it flatly and Clarke’s alarm grew again inside her chest.

“That’s really none of your business, but since you asked so nicely, it is someone from work.”

“Is it that red head that was over at your house the other night?”

Clarke quickly walked to Raven’s door a slid the deadbolt in place; locking them in and, more importantly, him out. She muted the phone so he couldn’t hear and asked Octavia to see if Lincoln could come over. He was a big man like Bellamy, maybe that would scare Finn away.

Octavia started texting rapidly, her trembling hands showing how concerned she was. “No, that was Fox from my LPN class. I have told you about her before.”

“So you are just kissing everyone nowadays huh? You should come outside so we can talk Clarke. I can’t really hear you.”

“I don’t think that is going to happen. Look, when you have chilled out and have stopped following me and hanging around my house, then we can talk.”

She watched him get out of his car and sit on the hood. “Come on Clarke. You said we would talk.”

“That was before I found out you have been following me.”

Octavia waved to get her attention and held up a hand. *Three minutes away,* she mouthed.

“I can’t believe you are acting like this, you know me. I’m coming inside,” a knock, “let me in.”

“No Finn, you need to leave.”
He knocked harder. “Clarke this is crazy, I have been here with you a dozen times. We have the same friends, we hang out in the same places. We used to anyway, this Lexa is changing you. She is just a lesbian. She probably only wants to be with you to have kids.” His tone was pleading now. Manipulative.

“No Finn, like I said, you need to leave.” She wasn’t surprised he knew about Lexa if he had been following her. She relaxed as she seen Octavia give her a thumbs up. She opened the door and took one step out, minutely aware that Lincoln had brought Anya and Lexa as well. *Shit.*

“Hey, guys, what’s going on?” Lincoln said happily.

Finn spun, “Not much bro, you must be Lincoln! And Black as well! It must be a party!”

Clarke was amazed that he could go from low-key threatening to welcoming that quickly.

“Anya come inside,” Raven’s stare said to keep quiet. “I want to show you my new beer cooler.”

“Alright, have any beer to go in that cooler?” Anya made her way inside and Clarke immediately felt better. Lexa had glanced at her questioning but Clarke shook her head and turned back to Finn.

“I’ll see you later, Finn.”

“Damn, caught you as you were leaving huh?” Lincoln threw an arm around the much smaller man’s shoulders and turned him around, loudly talking about Finn’s car as he and Lexa escorted him back to his vehicle.

She heard them all laughing, and then Finn left. She exhaled loudly and sat on the little porch.

“You ok, Clarke?” Lincoln said as they walked up.

“Yeah, Linc I’m good thanks for coming.” She smiled at him and she told herself to do something nice for him to repay him for his intervention.
“Alright, see you girls inside.”

“Clarke, what’s going on? Did he hurt you?” Lexa looked concerned - and angry. Clarke watched as Lexa clinched and unclinched her hands over and over. There was a vein in her neck that stood out, even her stance had changed like she was a prowling cat ready to pounce.

“Calm down tiger, everything is fine.” She was a little embarrassed that Lexa was here. She had asked for Lincoln on purpose, but oh well.

“Are you sure you are ok?”

“Yes, silly, I’m perfectly fine.” She was still shaking but she could control it. “Let’s go inside.”

Raven was in the middle of telling the others what had happened when the pair walked in. Lexa grew more stiff with every word that passed through the Latina’s lips.

“And then you guys showed up. My heroes!” She pretended to faint and fell into a waiting Anya’s arms. She was trying to look like she was annoyed but Clarke caught the hint of a smile that she tried to hide.

Clarke excused herself and went into Raven’s guest bedroom and shut the door. She could not believe he had the nerve to act like that. She also couldn’t believe that she left that man with her kids. She didn’t want to talk to him. She wanted him to disappear and never come back.

After a few minutes of silence had allowed Clarke to simmer in her anger, there was a tap on the door.

“Clarkey?” Raven called, “can I come in?”

“Sure.” Clarke was tired, she had a long night taking care of Lexa, and then all this drama with Finn. She just wanted to sleep, and she told Raven that when she settled on the bed next to her.

“Go ahead, I’ll take care of everyone outside. It will do you some good to get some rest.”
“No, I shouldn’t do that. It’s rude. I need to at least go say goodbye and tell them thank you.” Clarke made to get up but Raven pushed her back down.

“Don’t worry about it, Griffin. Let me take care of you for once. The real question is do you want me to let your girl in here or not?”

“I don’t really want to see anyone right now, Ray,” Clarke said sadly.

“Ok, Clarke. Get some sleep. Everything will be alright, I promise.”

Clarke laid down and was asleep before she had time to worry about anything else.

*****

Lexa was furious. No one should ever have to feel scared of someone they loved or once loved. It just wasn’t right. It didn’t matter if it was Clarke or not. NO ONE should ever have to feel that way.

But it was Clarke. Her head pounded with a headache. She knew her blood pressure was probably up because she was so mad, but she couldn’t help it. That idiot Collin’s had some damn nerve. Lexa didn’t even know what happened. At least not the full story.

“But it was Clarke. Her head pounded with a headache. She knew her blood pressure was probably up because she was so mad, but she couldn’t help it. That idiot Collin’s had some damn nerve. Lexa didn’t even know what happened. At least not the full story.”

“Ugh…” she said aloud with disgust. “Is he always like that?” Raven was still talking to Clarke and Octavia answered.

“He has always been a little controlling. I know that they fought over it multiple times when they were dating. “He has never been that aggressive though before now.”

Lexa wanted to punch something. No she wanted to throw something, then punch it. Then stomp on it. She didn’t know why she was so bent out of shape over this. She had seen douchebags act like this at the bar. She stepped in and did what she could with the people who were the victims because it wasn’t always the men that were the aggressor. It was never Clarke before, a voice in her head whispered.
“I’m going for a walk. Are you staying here for a while?” She looked between Anya and Lincoln and they both nodded. “Ok, I’ll be back.”

Lexa stormed out of the apartment and walked a half a mile in each direction from Raven’s apartment to make sure Finn didn’t just park somewhere else. She was making her fifth pass of the apartment when she saw a cop car pull up to the apartment. By the time she had trekked back, the cop was leaving. Raven was standing outside waiting for her.

“I filed a police report. Tried to anyway. The cop said that since he left there was nothing he could do.”

“Fuck!” Lexa shouted.

“Anya is staying here tonight. You should go home.” Raven looked at her with a sympathy Lexa didn’t like.

“Is Clarke ok?”

“She will be.”

“Can I go talk to her for a minute?”

Raven shook her head. “She is sleeping. She had a long night taking care of a certain cute girl she likes.” Raven winked at her but Lexa wasn’t in the mood for playing games.

“Ok, can you tell her I will be here in 5 minutes if she needs anything. I mean anything Raven. If she wants a hamburger and mouthwash I’ll bring it.”

“I’ll tell her.” Lincoln walked outside and spoke up. “Ready Lexa?”

“No, but I guess I’ll have to be.”
“I have got this Lexa, stop worrying. Anya is staying here for a while anyway, ok?”

Lexa wanted to throw up. She needed to check on Clarke but it seems like she wanted to be left alone. The lump in her throat didn’t go away until hours later.

The next day Lexa resisted the urge for hours before she text Anya to see how things were. She had to work at the hospital in two hours. She had managed to wait almost a full 24 hours before cracking.

LB: ??

AC: she is fine

LB: has he been back?

AC: nope, been quiet. Clarke and Raven have been watching movies all day

LB: ok

LB: does she look tho?

AC: ask her yourself

LB: i don’t want to bother her

AC: pussy

LB: yep

AC: wow not even denying it anymore

LB: nope

AC: she is fine tho srsly

LB: thanx

Lexa didn’t want to bother Clarke, but she wanted to do something for her. She left her apartment early and drove to the store just around the corner.

Twenty minutes later, she pulled onto Raven’s street and slowed to a crawl. This was stupid. Flowers? Why would Clarke need flowers? She needed a bat. Or a shovel. Or a taser. NOT flowers. She shook her head and pulled off on to the side of the road.

What am I thinking? Seriously. Flowers.
Lexa grabbed the steering wheel with both hands and shook it angrily with as much strength as she could throw at it. *Fucking shit.*

After the anger melted away from her hissy fit, Lexa decided that she had already bought the damn things so she might as well give them to her. Should she knock on the door? They weren’t about to go on a date. Her stomach swooped at the thought, but this wasn’t what that was. *I’ll just leave them on Raven’s doorstep.* She hoped someone would find them and get them to her sooner rather than later. *Finn had better not even think about touching my flowers,* she thought darkly.

She left them with a note for Clarke and scampered back to her car before anyone could stop her.

The night drug by slowly after she text Costia about finally making a move on Clarke. She was cool with it of course but told Lexa to stay in touch. “You never know when you’re going to get lonely,” she had said. Lexa got a surprise at around midnight when her phone vibrated on the table beside her jolting her from her nap that was definitely not a nap. She was at work and was a responsible employee.

CG: hey sexy
LB: hey clarke you ok?
CG: yeah i’m fine, how is work?
LB: oh you know, usual BS
CG: yeah, to bad i’m not there we could have some fun on our breaks
LB: someone is in a good mood :)
LB: i’m glad to hear it
CG: so what are we?
LB: we are whatever you want us to be clarke
LB: i don’t have any expectations
CG: i want you
LB: i want you too, but i think we should take things slow
LB: if that’s ok i mean
CG: slow is boring
LB: not when it means something
Lexa thought it was weird that Clarke was being so...direct, but returned to her messages when her phone buzzed again.

CG: Finn won’t leave me alone
LB: anything I can do to help?
CG: maybe
CG: could you call him?
LB: what do you want me to tell him?
CG: tell him everything that has happened between us. He deserves to know
LB: um ok? If that’s what you want
CG: tell him how you feel about me that way he can see that i’m not lying

Clarke sent Lexa the number, and Lexa took her lunch break to call Finn. She didn’t mind to help Clarke get rid of him, but at the same time why did she say he deserved to know what had happened between them? Other than some smokey eye contact, nothing had happened between them as far as Lexa knew. She was sure Anya would’ve told her if something had happened while she was drunk. Multiple people probably would’ve stepped in and smacked Lexa if she had tried anything last night anyway.

Confused, but determined to do what she could she called Finn.

“Hello?”
“Hey, Collins.”
“Black? What’s up?”
“Is this a bad time? I need to talk to you for a minute. Sorry I know it's pretty late.”
“No, I’m actually wide awake. What’s on your mind?”
“Listen, man, Clarke wanted me to call you. She wanted me to tell you what’s been going on between us.”
“Have you been sleeping with her?”
“No, I haven’t touched her. We have never kissed. I like her though, Finn. She wanted me to call you and explain.”
“Lexa, you realize that is my whole world your talking about, right? I have been with Clarke for
years. We have raised a family together. All of the sudden here you come, fucking up everything for us.”

“Dude there is no ‘us’ for you and Clarke. She kicked you out remember?”

“You have some fucking nerve calling me about my relationship.”

“And you have a lot of nerve being an asshat and trying to force Clarke into letting you inside today. Seriously, dude, she told you she was done. What’s your deal?”

“My ‘deal’ is that everything was fine until you started hanging around. Now I don’t have a home and you think you can just waltz in and play house with my girlfriend.”

“Ok, you obviously are either deaf or stupid. You and Clarke are not a thing. Regardless this conversation is pointless. Leave Clarke alone. She doesn’t deserve to have to deal with your bullshit.”

Lexa hung up before either her or Finn could say anything further. He called back two or three times but she ignored it. She opened her messages and started typing

LB: I called him
LB: it didn’t go so well

She went back work, checking her phone every thirty minutes or so. She really felt like something was off. Clarke was just texting her.

2:04 a.m. LB: everything ok?

After her shift was over hours later, she drove home as the sun rose to embrace the day. She still had not heard from Clarke. She considered texting Anya, but by the time she pulled into her parking space and went inside, all she wanted was her bed.

3:36 a.m. LB: i hope he leaves you alone now at least.

5:29 a.m. LB: Clarke?

7:46 a.m. LB: im leaving work, i hope you are ok

*****
“Trikru County Sheriff’s Department: Open up!”

What the flying fuck…. Lexa rolled over and tried to go back to sleep.

“THIS IS THE POLICE! OPEN THE DOOR OR WE WILL HAVE TO USE FORCE!”

Lexa jumped out of bed, the sheer amount of noise coming from the door should’ve woken her but that voice sent a jolt of panic through her system. She hurriedly ran for the door and threw it open.

“I’m so sorry I was asleep!” Lexa said heart racing.

“Is the black Jeep Cherokee your vehicle ma’am?” The police officer asked.

“Yes, sir. What’s wrong officer?” Lexa had learned at a young age to be polite to everyone but especially cops.

“In what condition do you leave your vehicle last?” He had a clipboard and was reviewing the information on it as he talked.

“Um…this morning? I got home from work at around 7:45, 8. Why?”

“It was found parked at the police station down the block.” He pulled out a tablet and turned it toward her. “Is this your truck?”

Lexa was pissed. The picture showed her truck with all the doors open and the back hatch open as well. Across the hood, someone had spray painted ‘fuck da police.’ The officer went to the next picture and she went still. Her speaker system was gone. The last thing she had gotten from her dad. And it was gone.

“Yes, officer that seems to be my truck. We can pull the CCTV footage from the complexes security cameras. I had nothing to do with that sir. I sincerely apologize for the insult regardless.”

She went from pissed to sad. She had taken care of that system. She wanted to see it in her future
car and every car she ever had. She loved it.

“Will you come to the station and fill out a report? I will have to send another officer to retrieve the footage from the security cameras.”

“No, sir. I don’t mind at all. Would you be comfortable with letting me change into some street clothes?” She was still wearing her scrubs from the night before and desperately wanted to brush her teeth before spending all day at the police station.

He looked at her for a moment then told her to go ahead and change. “It seems you are the victim here, so I’m going to trust you.” She thanked him and let him escort her to the station.

It was going to be a very long day.

*****

In the end, Lexa got to drive her truck home. She didn’t want to drive it. She didn’t even want to touch it but it was all she had at the moment. It was close to 6 p.m. and there was no way she was going to work tonight. She called Harper and explained what happened. Luckily Harper said she needed to send someone home tonight anyway so it wasn’t a big deal and she wouldn’t count it as a call in.

The speakers were not the only thing the vandalizers had stolen. Her old iPod touch was gone, some sunglasses, all of her CD’s, and about $400 worth of tools were gone too. She felt sick, and even after the massive hangover she had two days ago, she wanted a drink. Or drinks.

She changed her clothes and not for the first time, was happy she owned a bar.

*****

Clarke found Lexa in the DJ booth singing old country songs hours later. She had on a black Fox hat and a white button up Western shirt that looked like it belonged to an old man.

“Thought you weren’t talking to me,” Lexa said. She wasn’t expecting to see Clarke after she
ghosted her the night before.

“What are you talking about? I just got here.”

“You said all of that stuff then disappeared.” Lexa was hurt. So hurt. She wanted her stuff back. She wanted to hold Clarke close to her chest and weep brokenly, but Clarke made her call Finn; then she vanished. Now she was crouched in front of Lexa looking at her with such confusion Lexa found she didn’t want to talk. Just sing.

She left Clarke in the booth and changed the music from her phone. It was a neat little setup she had going on with the bar’s sound system now that she had taken the time to set up all the equipment Lincoln and she had bought forever ago. It had taken desperation to get this bar the way she and Linc had envisioned it. Now, it had a damn near perfect arrangement and no one had to constantly go back and forth to change music or adjust the volume.

Lexa hadn’t told anyone about her police encounter yet. Everything was still fresh and hurt too badly. She really didn’t understand why Clarke was here. Did she just come to rub it in that she has been with Finn this whole time? Has she been playing games this whole fucking time? Anya had seemed convinced that it was a good idea to invest energy into a relationship with Clarke, but now Lexa didn’t know what to do.

It was a quiet night at the bar, which suited Lexa’s mood. Tennessee Whiskey rendered through speakers and Lexa swayed mindlessly to the soothing song.

“Are you ok?” Clarke said from somewhere behind her.

“You know, I asked you that last night after we talked and you never responded,” Lexa said without opening her eyes.

“After we talked…? Lexa, what are you talking about?”

Lexa opened her eyes and found Clarke’s gaze in the dim light. “Last night we texted for almost two hours. Don’t tell me you were too drunk to remember.” Lexa was so over this bullshit. Things around Clarke were too messy for anyone with a few brain cells to rub together.

“Lexa my phone stopped working yesterday. I didn’t notice until I tried to call Bellamy and check
on the kids.”

A bolder would’ve felt lighter than whatever found its way into Lexa’s stomach at Clarke’s words. “Then who the fuck was I texting?”
Thorns

Chapter Notes

I'm not happy with this chapter. I rewrote it 4 times before it got to this. Forewarning, it is kinda, blah. At least I think so, there is a lot I want to happen before certain parts of the story progress, and my characters are being difficult. The next chapter may be written in first person to try and mix things up. I hope that doesn't throw anyone off, but it is what it is. Happy reading and I hope you enjoy.

And for the few that care enough to debate over my story, you made my entire week. It was nice to someone so invested in my depiction of these characters. I would ask you this however....keep naming things you would like to see. Keep asking for clarity. Keep asking for little things that would make you happy. This may be my idea and story so far (loosely) but I want input from you guys. So keep it coming!!!

“Lexa my phone stopped working yesterday. I didn’t notice until I tried to call Bellamy and check on the kids.”

A bolder would’ve felt lighter than whatever found its way into Lexa’s stomach at Clarke’s words. “Then who the fuck was I texting?”

*****

Confusion churned alongside the still burning anger deep within Lexa’s chest. If not Clarke, then who? The answer was obvious after dealing with the ramifications of the vandalism applied to her truck. She had been wrapped up in what she had lost, not potentially on why she had lost it. She had been played. Collins had questioned her as Clarke, then tainted one of the only things she cared about with harsh words and spray paint.

“That son of a bitch.”

Lexa filled Clarke in on her shitty day as she flipped her hat around backward.

Clarke sat quietly across from her at the small table they shared at the back of the bar. Anya and Lincoln were off again tonight which was another reason Lexa came here. Lexa had not wanted questions when she elected to have a few drinks then go to bed. Before she had wanted nothing more than for this stretch of crummy events to end, now she was just glad Clarke was here with her and safe.
“I didn’t think he was capable of acting this way,” Clarke said sadly. “I’ve known him forever.” Anger dripped from her words when she exclaimed, “I left that unbalanced man-child with my babies!”

“What are you going to do?” Lexa’s mind was racing. She tried thinking of anything and everything that the blonde could need and how much she could give her. “I have an extra phone at my house. It’s nothing special, but it wouldn’t take long to get it working.”

Clarke reached out and stopped Lexa from repeatedly twirling her lighter. The habit was annoying to most she knew, including herself. Tucked loosely between thumb and middle finger, one good spin would set a lighter spinning; Lexa didn’t know when she started, but she assumed it was due to a lighter being in or near her hand for the last five, six years. She hadn’t realized she had started as she explained the current state of her truck, progressively getting faster as thoughts competed for dominance of Lexa’s attention. “Lex, everything is fine. This isn’t your problem to fix.”

“It may not be mine to fix, but,” Lexa smiled her lopsided smile. “It was my poor truck after all that caught the brunt of his anger.”

“We need to go back to the police station and tell them about the text messages. I don’t know if they can do anything, but I’ll have my babies back in a few days. I will not have him pulling this shit when they are around.”

Lexa loved when Clarke’s ‘mama bear’ came out to play. It was very attractive when her fierce eyes took on that dangerous glint. She was the human equivalent to a wolf with hackles raised.

“Why don’t we run down there now? Get it out of the way so we can scavenge for food before it gets too extremely late.” Now that she had spoken to Clarke, she felt ravenous. Lexa bottled her emotions. It was the way things had always been for her. It was never easy or comfortable to let someone inside her head.

“Are you asking me on a date, Black?” Clarke looked at her with both eyebrows raised. “My drama doesn’t scare you off?”

“I’m scared of you undoubtedly, but not because of Finn or drama.” Lexa smiled to take the sting out of her words and to let Clarke know she was joking. “That overbearing mother thing you got going on is pretty terrifying. What are you doing here anyway?” Lexa gestured to the bar around them.
“I wanted to thank you for the flowers. It has been a long time since someone took the time to get me something as normal as flowers.”

Lexa mumbled a ‘your welcome’ and they both stood blushing and gathered their things. “Would you mind driving us? Normally I would insist, but I don’t want to drive my truck and have been drinking. Not a lot, but we are going to the police station. I’d rather not tempt fate.”

Clarke laughed and agreed, “Maybe we can identify Finn in the footage while we are there.”

Whoever it was in the footage was smart enough to disguise themselves enough to not be recognized. The two spent almost an hour going over only a few minutes of footage. The police had decided to spread the word to the public about the vandalism on the news the following day, and Lexa had offered a $200 reward for any information leading to an arrest pertaining to her truck.

After the police station, the two went to eat at a local diner. It was a decent sized place complete with greasy floors and an ever-present smell of fried potatoes. They served excellent food, and it was a favorite for the hospital staff due to the twenty-four hour operating schedule. Lexa herself had been sent her to get food for an entire floor. She had left with four bags and had to make another trip to get the accompanying drinks.

“I really am sorry about your truck,” Clarke started to say after the waiter brought their food. They had snagged one of the better booths in the place that looked out the front of the building.

Lexa cut her off with a look, “Don’t be. You didn’t do it.” Lexa took a bite and savored the flavor of the huge delicious waffle she had ordered. “So tell me something.”

“Like what?” Clarke checked her eggs and nodded satisfied they were cooked.

“Um, I don’t know. How are the kids? You said Bellamy had them?”

Clarke smiled at the mention of her kids. “Yeah, he has them for two more days. I’m glad he got his priorities straight and is cleaning himself up. I love them and miss them so much when they are gone, but it is good to have a break now and then. Bellamy was supposed to send me pictures of their room and the things he bought them, but without a phone, I can’t see them at all.”
“Don’t worry about that. Like I said, I have one for you. They have both had birthdays since I met them right? That makes Aden, 2 and Madi, 4?” Clarke nodded with a mouthful and Lexa continued. “So is the terrible two’s a thing? I mean, I have heard about it, but there is no way that’s true.”

After a drink of water, Clarke answered. “I’m not sure if they are or Madi is just cool like that. That kid is so well mannered. She is always at my side, and if she isn’t, she’s not far away from me. Aden is going to be trouble - well - he IS rouble now but that started before two. I’m hoping it is all wives tales and doesn’t hold a lick of truth.” She took another sip of water. “I miss them so much when they are gone.”

“They will be home soon, where they belong…” Lexa’s eyes caught on movement outside but when she looked, the night was cloaked in the darkness. Clarke followed her gaze and muttered something under her breath.

“Excuse me, Lexa, I’ll be right back.” Clarke’s tone was terse and clipped. Anger flaked off her in great sheets of power as she stalked outside. Lexa craned her head trying to glimpse the cause of the blondes sudden departure. She finally found the object in question and immediately debated on calling the police.

Finn stood beside his car parked at the end of the diner parking lot. Anyone in their right mind could tell the blonde was on a warpath. Lexa watched as Clarke stalked up to him, and she thought she had never seen Finn look so small.

“To hell with this,” Lexa got up and told the waiter as she passed not to get rid of their food. She wasn’t going to make the blonde face him on her own. Especially since the fear in her eyes at Raven’s apartment.

By the time she had made it outside, Finn was already leaving. Lexa approached Clarke noisily afraid she might scare her. Her back was turned and she was taking obvious deep breaths. She watched Clarke’s shoulders rise and fall a few times. “Clarke? You alright?”

Clarke turned and Lexa balked at how unaffected she looked. Lexa searched her eyes for fear and found nothing but calm resolve. “How did it go?”

“I told him to leave,” Clarke said as if she wasn’t afraid of that very thing the other day.
“I gathered. Do you want to take me home so you can go to Raven’s?” Lexa asked concerned.

“Nope, we just ordered. Come on.” Clarke took Lexa by the hand and drug her back to the dinner to finish their meal.

“Is this a good time to say I never want to be on your bad side?” Lexa joked as they sat down.

“I have had enough of that...person for the day.” Clarke huffed. “I don’t want to talk about him anymore. So what about this phone? Is it pay as you go or what?”

Lexa pushed away from the questions that had been simmering since Finn had shown up. “It’s actually on my phone plan. You can do what you want with it, but I don’t mind to reactivate it. Wouldn’t take…” she thought a moment stirring her coffee, “fifteen, twenty minutes?”

“No, it’s ok. I’ll just get a prepaid until I figure something out.” Clarke said, eyes glued to her food.

Lexa could hear the hesitation in her voice. “Either way, it’s yours.” She ducked her head down trying to catch Clarke’s eyes. “And I’m hoping you’ll take me home so I can give it to you.”

They finished their food, and Lexa worried that she had spooked Clarke. The last thing she wanted was for Clarke to think she wanted to control her like Finn had. After insignificant small talk on the ride to Lexa’s apartment, Lexa couldn’t take it anymore. “I’ll be right back, don’t go anywhere ok?” Lexa gave her a pleading look, and Clarke nodded.

She sprinted to her door and quickly made work of the lock. After searching for what felt like an eternity, she ran back outside happy to see Clarke still waiting. “Sorry, with the move I couldn’t remember where it ended up.”

Lexa handed the device over and Clarke’s smile touched her eyes for the first time since Finn had shown up. “I had this phone not too long ago. It’s terrible,” she snorted. “At least you gave me a charger to go with it.” She fingered the cable with it's frayed outer layer.

“Hey now! I didn’t say it was the new iPhone!” Lexa said in mock offense.
“I’m just teasing you, Lex.” Clarke finally connected their eyes, and Lexa fought down the urge to go in for the kiss. Who knew where Finn was at the moment, and she didn’t want to stir up more drama for either of them.

“Well, be safe and let me know if you want me to turn it on or not. If you don’t, you can take it to a phone doctor or something, and they should be able to get it working.”

“Thank you, you really didn’t have to do this,” Clarke said honestly.

“It was my pleasure, my lady.” Lexa bowed at the waist and flourished an invisible cloak.

“You’re such a nerd.”

“You like it,” Lexa fired back.

“I do.” Clarke rolled up the window they had been talking through but stopped halfway up. “Oh! I almost forgot.” She reached into the backseat and grabbed something. Clarke handed the fedora she had stolen from her that first night at the bar, “I like this hat.” She left Lexa standing with a dumb smile on her face. She put the hat on and was engulfed in the sweet smell of Clarke’s perfume.

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Clarke was driving down Main Street trying to find the place Raven described to get this archaic piece of technology working. She must have passed it a dozen times before finally spotting the tiny shop on the end of a strip mall.

It didn’t look very reputable, but Clarke needed a way to check on her kids. She went in and seen a bored looking man behind the only counter playing with some wires. “Hello, Raven sent me here to get this phone working.” She held out the phone to him.

At Raven’s name the man snapped his head up, “Reyes sent you? Well, you’ll get priority then! Name’s Wick, what can I do for you?”
The guy had an easy charm and Clarke wondered if he and Raven had a history. “Just need this to work. I was going to put it on Raven’s plan. She said I needed to have it flashed?”

“Yup! Which service provider does she have?” He took the phone and turned it in his hands studying it.

Clarke looked blankly at him. “Service provider?”

“She always does this to me. Hang on a minute please,” he grabbed his own phone, a large thing that was comparable to a brick with a touchscreen.

“Jesus, where did you did that thing up? The stone age?” Clarke asked.

“This is a one of a kind, Wick special,” he said puffing his chest out. “It has all the benefits of a phone AND a complete computer.” He held his hand up and spoke into the phone, “Reyes, service provider.”

Clarke could hear her yapping at him and while the two barked at each other, Clarke thought over the last few days. She was flattered that Lexa had offered the phone under her plan, but Clarke was wary. She didn’t want to give someone power over her again. Raven, Octavia, and she had spent the morning changing locks on her house and putting all of the remaining things Finn had at her home outside. Octavia had seen fit to put a ‘free to who needs it’ sign on the pile. Clarke laughed as items disappeared throughout the day.

A shouted ‘Griffin’ got Clarke’s attention and Wick handed the phone over. “You’re all set princess.”

“Why does EVERYONE call me that?” Clarke asked dumbfounded.

“Must be the hair, it’s ready to use now though and there is no need to pay.” Wick winked at her and she just knew he was going to ask her out. “So, I know a place that has good food and cold beer. Want to join me sometime?”

“Thanks for fixing the phone up, but no thank you. I’m seeing someone.” Clarke hadn’t meant to say that, but he shook his head, dejected all the same.
“Lucky guy,” he commented.

“Yes, she is.” She turned and left before he could respond.

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Raven was howling. She had just got off the phone with Wick, and Clarke was smirking at her. She drove home, and, as usual, found Ray and O waiting for her in the driveway. Clarke told them both the story, and Raven had called to tease Wick mercilessly.

“It’s not that funny, Ray,” Clarke admonished halfheartedly.

“If you only knew how big of an ego he had,” she gasped out, “this is so perfect.” She continued laughing and the other two rolled their eyes at the Latina’s antics.

“So how was your night with the hottie?” Octavia asked. “After all the excitement, I didn’t expect you to go on a date.”

“It wasn’t a date, O. Just food after all the legal tape we had to go through.” Clarke was still tired from the past few day’s events, so she quickly filled the girls in on all they had missed. “You guys do your thing, but I need to get some sleep before work.”

Raven finally found her self-control and yelled from the floor. “Does little Lexie poo poo work tonight as well?”

Clarke fought down a blush, she really wanted to get to work to see the brunette. “Yes, she does. See you guys. If you leave, wait, you don’t have keys, don’t leave. I’ll lock up after I go to work.”

They both said they were more than happy to chill at Clarke’s place now that it was man-child free. She threw herself in bed to get a nap in before work later that night.

*****
“I get rehab?” Lexa fist pumped when Harper nodded. “You’re still awesome!” She ran out before anyone else in the room could try and take her spot. She desperately tried to remember if Clarke worked tonight, but couldn’t. With everything going on and all the emotions, she hadn’t thought to ask.

Lexa walked down the familiar winding hallways and spotted blonde hair when she got to the correct floor. Ok, so tonight may not be half bad. Operation woo Clarke is a go!

“Fancy meeting you here,” Lexa said. She walked up behind the blonde and when she spun to face her, they were almost nose to nose. Clarke jerked backward flushed, and Lexa grinned at her.

“Jerk!” She grabbed at her chest dramatically. “You about gave me a heart attack.”

“Well, at least we are in a hospital, no?” Lexa went to her usual corner and sat down her book. The day shift aid signaled her and quickly filled her in on the patients for the night. There were three aids staffed, so it was going to be an easy shift.

“How does your side look?” Clarke asked as she looked over Lexa’s shoulder to read the report sheet. “Not bad. Tonight is looking good!”

A good night with easy patients was a rare thing indeed. Working in a hospital, you never knew what cards you were going to get dealt until you were on the floor. However, the situation could change quickly, and she said so to Clarke.

“I doubt it. Most of these guys were here when I worked last week. Your side is a breeze. Come find me if you need help though.”

As Clarke gathered the required equipment for her rounds, Lexa cheered internally. She had offered to help her! The change between them was beginning to show. From what Lexa had seen of the blonde at work, she rarely worked side-by-side with anyone that wasn’t from the floor. Since the first night, Lexa had offered her help, Clarke had handled everything with a grace and knowledge that astounded Lexa. She was going to make an excellent nurse one day.

Lexa set up her machines and started her night off with a bounce in her step.
Rounds were done, medicine was given, and the staff of 5 West collectively regrouped around the nurses' station. Most patients were asleep or on their way to dream-land. Clarke had surprised Lexa by setting up her things in the area next to her. Clarke was tapping quietly on the keyboard trying to get all her charts caught up when she glanced over at Lexa and casually said, “So where are we eating tonight?”

Lexa took it in stride. Friends spent their lunch breaks together all the time, right? Lexa knew they had formed a tentative bond over the fiasco with Finn, but she still questioned where the blonde stood. “I hadn’t thought about it. Anywhere you want in particular?”

Clarke rested her head on a propped up elbow and frowned cutely. “Something quick and cheap.”

“Mickey D’s it is then. I could use some chicken nuggets.” She pooched out her stomach and Clarke snickered at the insinuation.

“Sounds good to me,” she glanced at the clock, “we could probably escape around one. John usually doesn’t care as long as the floor is covered.”

“Cool,” Clarke turned back to her charting, and Lexa watched her a moment. She tried thinking of a way to ask Clarke what was going on between them. She could be patient, but she wanted nothing more than to spend the lunch break telling Clarke how she felt. The anticipated first kiss was going to throw her heart out of rhythm. Lexa huffed, exasperated at herself as she returned to reading her book.

Now that the bar had picked up on business, Lexa was comfortable. She still had goals for herself, and she seriously wanted to get into the OT program. However, since the letter that started with the words “We regret to inform you…” she hadn’t given it much thought. Noticing her wandering thoughts, Lexa placed the book down and leaned her head back on the chair.

She was trying to decide whether or not to pursue that area of opportunity. There was a high job demand in Polis, so work wouldn’t be hard to find, and the best part about the job was it paid extremely well. She daydreamed about the sheer amount of gadgets she could buy. She had always wanted a smartwatch. It wasn’t something she had to have, but it would be nice to tinker with.
Deciding to get an early start on midnight rounds, Lexa went through each and every one of her patient’s rooms. If they slept she crept out as quietly as she could. If they were awake she chatted with them for a bit and asked if they needed anything. She really did have a cool group of patients. There was a Vietnam vet, a brother and sister who both recently had hips replaced (they claimed it was each others fault, and Lexa had to politely ask them to stop shouting at each other from room to room), and a younger kid who had broke his leg in a bike accident to describe a few.

Lexa tapped lightly on the last patient’s room and then poked her head in. All was quiet, but something was off. She turned on a small light in the bathroom so she could clearly see the state of the patient and room. The elderly man appeared to be sleeping, yet Lexa hesitated when she turned to leave.

Walking back over to the bedside, Lexa listened for breathing and heard faint shallow breaths. Relieved but still wary, she gently shook the man’s arm. “Mr. White, sorry to wake you, but are you feeling ok?”

He cracked his eyes open slowly, painfully. “Not feeling too good, sugar.”

“What’s bothering you, sir?” He gestured to his chest and croaked, “water.”

Lexa left the room quickly, got him fresh water, and grabbed the set of equipment she was using to check over his vital signs.

As she was checking him over, the door cracked open and Clarke stepped in. “Is everything ok?”

“Would you mind to get John, I think I need a second opinion.” Lexa didn’t bother to look up from her current task of measuring the man’s breaths, and the light faded as the door shut. “I’m going to turn on the overhead light, alright? I sent for the nurse, and we are going to check you over and see what’s going on.”

John came quickly and Lexa was thankful. Mr. White’s vital signs were not looking good at all, and his breathing had slowed significantly.

“Mr. White, can you open your eyes for me?” John asked loudly. It may seem rude to outsiders, but when a nurse was loud like that in the middle of the night, however, they HOPED you would respond with anger. Anger meant good things in situations like this.
“Tired,” the patient mumbled.

“Lexa, call the rapid response team, this isn’t looking good.” John had the stethoscope to his chest and was listening intently.

Lexa leaned over and pressed the grey button on the wall that called the correct team. Soon the overhead speakers in the hospital were blaring, “Rapid response, Room 587. Rapid response, Room 587.”

“Can I get anything, John?” Lexa asked worriedly. She never liked this part of the job. Just four hours ago, she had been chatting with this nice man about his tomatoes in his garden. Now, he was struggling to breathe.

“Gather his things please.” John was focused still on the man’s chest. “You know where the belonging bags are right?”

At that moment Clarke walked in with the very items in question. “I heard the rapid. Figured I’d be of some use.”

“Thanks.” Lexa took the bags and did as John asked, gathering the man’s meager belongings and folding the change of clothes he had stated earlier in the night he wanted to wear home upon discharge.

The team filed in and fired off questions at John who responded just as quickly. Lexa and Clarke were pushed out of the room as the sheer amount of medical personnel filled spaces around the bed.

“He’ll be in ICU before the night is over,” Lexa said. She walked sluggishly back to the nurses’ station and collapsed in her chair. “He was only here for a knee replacement. I wonder what happened.”

Clarke sat next to her and patted her on the leg. “Sometimes patients deteriorate after surgery. It’s rough on the body, and he is 87. It could be any number of things. You did everything right.”

Lexa gave up her staring contest with her shoes and looked at Clarke. Her eyes were watery, and Lexa couldn’t help but to think that this woman had seen more pain and heartache than she let on.
The state of the floor was too emotional for Lexa to ask, but Clarke’s demeanor held such sadness Lexa wanted to hold her and tell her everything would be ok. She had no idea what was going to be ok, but she wanted to reassure her nonetheless.

“I’m going to go find Emori. I, at least, need a smoke after that.” Both knew that a lunch break now would be out of the question, but they could sneak out for 10 minutes or so. Clarke looked around trying to spot the usually grim woman.

With the floor covered, they walked in silence to their spot and Lexa immediately remembered the last time they were there. Awkwardly she looked at Clarke, but Clarke was busy with her lighter and not paying attention. “So, about Costia….”

She had her attention now. Clarke’s posture stiffened and her eyes shot up to meet Lexa’s.

Lexa swallowed and pushed through. “We aren’t….well….we never really were together. I just...I just wanted you to know that I told her I liked someone else.” Jesus, she felt like a teenager, stumbling over her words.

“One else?” Clarke said, slowly bringing up a cigarette to light it. She purposefully licked the end and her lips, and Lexa wanted to die. She knew Clarke could have some words to say, but this! This was a different kind of torture.

“Yes,” she stuttered, “someone beautiful,” she found her words and her rhythm, “someone with blonde hair, blue eyes, and legs to die for.” Lexa risked a glance to see Clarke’s reaction.

Clarke hummed as she - finally- lit up and inhaled. “Really?” She drew out the word and lowered her voice to emphasize her disbelief.

“I like you, Clarke. I have liked you since that first shift.” Clarke seemed content to watch the tobacco burn and ignored Lexa’s gaze.

“Did you like me with her tongue down your throat?” Clarke suddenly snapped.

Lexa actually took a step back from the venom in her words. “Yes, I did. I mean,” Lexa tried to recover, “How I feel about you is nothing compared to Cos. She is a friend, but you... You are so much more. Can I be honest with you about something?”
Clarke glared at her but nodded silently.

“I was only with her to distract myself from you. I didn’t really know where you and Finn stood. I was a little intimidated by the prospect of being around two kids, and I like you so much that it’s terrifying. Costia was a mistake. I’ll freely admit that, but you said friends might be the better option.” Lexa deflated as she finished. Her body felt wrung out like a dishcloth after numerous piles of plates - dirty and in need of a good washing.

Clarke finally looked at her, “I have two kids, Lexa. It’s not as simple as dating me. I come with extra work and sleepless nights. I rarely do anything that doesn't involve my kids. I need a real relationship, and if you can’t give that to me, then I don’t really know what to say.”

Lexa found strength from Clarke’s words surprisingly and spoke without thought, trusting her heart and instinct. “Good.”

“Good?” Clarke asked taken aback.

“Yes, good. I don’t want to jump into anything without a thought either. I realize now that first and foremost you are a mother - provider for a family. I know you take it seriously, and I do too. I want you to give me a chance if, and only if, you think it won’t hurt your family. Those kids come first.” Lexa spoke honestly, and she could see that it had an effect on Clarke. “Besides, I don’t know how to raise kids,” Lexa permitted a little of her uncertainty to reflect in her tone and expression, “what if they hate me?”

“I wouldn’t worry about that. You are a natural,” Clarke comforted grudgingly. “Besides, no one really knows what they are doing when it comes to raising kids.”

Lexa needed Clarke to know she was serious. Since she had met the blonde, Clarke consumed her thoughts. Even while she was seeing Costia, Clarke was never far from mind. Lexa was captivated by her drive. Her ambition and strength were unreal. It was rare to meet someone with such potential and desire to do better, to be better - for themselves and for their family. “You’re like Superwoman.” Lexa didn’t mean to speak it aloud, but it was the truth.

“I’m sorry?” The earlier tension between them dissipated by the time Lexa accidentally announced her thoughts. Clarke had heard her clearly, it was the reason behind it that puzzled her.
“You do all these things all the time. Work full-time. School full-time. Your kids. I was just thinking you are Superwoman, and that’s only the things I know about that you do.” Lexa never spoke so candidly with people, but here she was, letting her mouth do as it pleased.

“Thank you? I think?” Clarke scrunched up her face. “I’m not sure if I have ever been called that.”

“Well, it was a compliment.” Lexa gestured to the doors and held out an arm the old-fashioned way. “This way my lady or they may come looking for us.”

“Thank you, kind woman.” Clarke played along as far as the elevators. “Wouldn’t want to be chased down by security.”

The rest of the night was a flurry of activity. Three more patients had complications from surgeries and a single confused patient kept everyone busy. Clarke and Lexa accomplished rounds of vital signs and passed ice quickly twice more before the sun shone into the buildings higher windows. The two worked around each other in sync like they had done this a thousand times, and neither had asked to work side by side. They just went about their night, this time together.

When day shift slowly filtered in grasping coffee cups and breakfast sandwiches, Lexa had never been happier to see them. On the bigger scale of things, the night wasn’t rough and she got to work with Clarke for the last half of it, but night shift is draining simply because the human body is wired to sleep at night. It is written into biological DNA.

Lexa filled in the same aid she had received report from twelve hours ago, telling her of Mr. White and the confused patient, Mrs. Brown. They shared remorse for a moment over the different patients but soon the aid - Lexa really needed to remember her name! - took off to get started and Lexa moved listlessly, weaving in and out of nurses and doctors to collect her possessions. Clarke walked just as slowly. A shift like this left you depleted. It would start out slow then everything would happen at once. Time would drag, then speed by as you tried to keep up with the increasing demands of the patients and other staff as everyone woke up.

“Wasn’t a bad one,” Lexa started as she and Clarke ambled an open elevator.

“Just a long one.” Clarke finished.

They walked in silence to the parking lot and went their separate ways without fanfare. Lexa’s tired brain had a brief spark of energy as she remember her idea from before Finn had ruined
everything. She remembered how Clarke had looked when she had told her about getting the flowers. Her eyes sparkled the prettiest azure blue Lexa had ever seen. Her mouth had quirked up a little on one side, the same side that held a small but prominent freckle above her lip.

Lexa’s embarrassment over the whole ordeal had made her brush off the genuine thanks Clarke tried to show her, so she devised a plan to make up for it and make that little quirk of the lips into a full bright smile.

Lexa shot off a text and got a response when she reached home. She stepped into the shower when the phone buzzed still on silent for the shift at the hospital. She turned the water off, and read the message.

LB: Going to school today?
CG: unfortunately. Don’t get home til 2

Lexa didn’t say anything else further and scrambled back into her scrubs. She grabbed the huge kitchen scissors that usually came with a cutlery knife set - How does that fit together anyway? - and made her way to the flower shop.

The rose Lexa picked wasn’t a normal red. The florist had a group of roses off to one side that was more expensive but striking in their coloring. A deep violet red swirled around the classic rose red in a marble pattern. The florist rambled on about dyes and whatnot, but Lexa was only focused on the flowers and her plan.

“I’ll take two dozen,” she threw money at him calling apologies over her shoulder and bolted to her truck.

It was a 20-minute drive to the school that Clarke attended, and Lexa wanted to get there and set up before Clarke could ponder the reason behind her question. Besides, she wasn’t sure if Clarke and her classmates took breaks, and she refused to be caught.

Armed with scissors and two dozen flowers, Lexa spotted Clarke’s car and littered them all over it. The hood, windshield, door handles, back glass, windshield wipers, in the rims of the tires, anywhere and everywhere she could see, Lexa filled with different shades of red. She stepped back when she was finally satisfied with her work and gave it one more circle before declaring it perfect.

People had watched Lexa during the entire process. Some had even snapped a few pictures, and
Lexa hoped that no one knew Clarke’s vehicle to spoil the surprise. She ignored them and moved her truck several parking spaces closer to Clarke’s car, and threw an old sweatshirt over her window to block out the light.

In a last-ditch attempt to be sweet, she got out some paper and wrote, “I hope you liked it.” With that done, she took a paperclip and clipped it on her chest, promptly falling asleep.
Clarke could hear people whispering. She could feel eyes on her but didn’t pay it much heed. In college, people are always gossiping about someone or something. Fox was across the classroom flirting with someone if the looks she was giving her phone was any indication.

“Ok guys, that’s it for today,” the teacher closed the folder she was reading from and removed her glasses to wipe at her eyes. The declaration spurred students into action shuffling papers and tucking them away in bags.

Clarke fought down a yawn as a last minute case study was thrust on top of the never-ending pile of tasks the nursing class dealt with. Seriously, they must use the workload to weed out the bad eggs lacking dedication and focus.

The yawn broke free allowing any bystander to count and examine each tooth if they had only looked in the back row of desks. She cracked open a workbook pushing through the fog that accompanied twenty-four hours without sleep. She made it through the first paragraph of the text when Fox barged back into the room. Dully, Clarke noted she was the last person in the room, again.

“Clarke! You have got to come outside!”

Fox’s excitement needed to chill. It had been too long since Clarke had slept. “I need to get this done. I won’t have time before it’s due-”

“No! Not happening!” She pulled Clarke’s pencil out of her hand and tossed it carelessly on the desk, “Get your ass up!” Pencil dealt with, she reached for Clarke’s hands and pulled her to her feet making her stumble in her haste. “UP!”

“Fine, fine. I’m up. What are we doing anyway?”

The redhead smiled, “You will see.” She pulled Clarke outside, and Clarke assumed it was for an impromptu smoke break. Maybe Fox needed to vent about something or gush about her crush. A crowd gathered outside in the parking lot, and Clarke sent Fox a questioning look.

“Look,” she pointed.
The initial reaction was confusion - what the…? - who? Flowers in different states of bloom and maturity were tucked neatly around Clarke’s car; beautiful eggplant and cheyenne marbled roses Clarke noticed as the gentle fragrance danced along the breeze.

“Clarke you should probably close your trap before you begin to catch flies,” Fox teased.

Clarke snapped her mouth shut and walked briskly over to her newly decorated vehicle. There wasn’t a note tucked in her wipers, and she couldn’t spot one in or around her door handle either. No note, but numerous roses, none of which had the thorns removed either and she smiled. Gorgeous and potentially painful; such a great combination.

The crowd mostly contained men and women from her class, and they were snapping pictures of the scene. Clarke searched those faces and found plenty of awe, swooning, and snickers; however not one gaze helped give up the charmer she was looking for. She looked past the crowd, eyes flicking over new faces, different vehicles, patrolling security cars, and finally, she spotted a potential suspect.

A grey hoodie attempted to block the rays of sun shining into the cab, but a movement from its occupant must have knocked it loose. It hung from one corner, and Clarke could spy a stunning brunette in hunter green scrubs. Her face appeared much younger than her 23 years in sleep. Frown lines faded away and left smooth skin unmarred by stress or worry.

While she watched her very own sleeping beauty, Clarke’s body started adjusting to Lexa’s presence. She could feel her smile straining the muscles of her cheeks with its size. She dimly heard people losing interest and walking away continuing previous conversations or making an escape of the campus with roaring cars and trucks.

To say she had butterflies in her stomach wouldn’t be accurate. She had felt nervous excitement before when thinking about and dealing with Lexa, but this time it was different. She was calm. Worries over her studies and work schedule dwindled, and important matters from ten minutes ago now existed as an unchecked box on a task list somewhere in the back of her mind.

As quietly as possible, Clarke cracked the door open and observed Lexa curled up in a ball on the tiny amount of space her seat offered. She didn’t know how Lexa had managed to fit that awe-inspiring body in such an awkwardly confined space.

A note clipped onto her scrub top caught Clarke’s eye and reading it confirmed that...
had done it. Clarke sat on the door jam and carefully ran a palm up and down a tanned forearm speaking softly.

“Lex? Hey beautiful, wake up. I loved the flowers,” Clarke toyed with one of the still bulbed roses in her free hand.

Lexa didn’t move, but she did open her eyes. Blue met green, and the intensity came rushing back. Clarke didn’t think she could ever look at Lexa and not be attracted to her, but this intensity wasn’t as sexual as the other times. It was more emotional - more intimate. She craved contact with Lexa, so she gave in to the base urge draping an arm over Lexa’s scrunched legs and then laid her head to rest on top of it all.

“’Ello, gorgeous,” the brunette's voice was graveled and deep with sleep. The cadence of her speech made a tightness grow in Clarke's stomach, but she ignored it. A warm hand weaved under and over the blondes thick locks, and Clarke sighed into the touch.

“Hi,” Clarke said, her voice partially muffled by limbs.

“How was your day in class?” Lexa asked as she pulled herself upright in her seat. She reached to the passenger side and patted the seat in obvious invitation. Clarke’s grumpy glare made green eyes sparkle in amusement. “That bad?”

Clarke skirted around the truck and slipped into the passenger side seat. The truck smelled like Lexa, earthy and somehow warm - like sunshine. “Bunch to do, never enough time to do it.” Even after the truck was stolen and vandalized, Lexa took the time to clean it out and make it presentable. The spray paint had been hastily covered with a patchwork job of flat black. It wasn’t pretty to look at, but Lexa didn’t have to run around with slander on her truck.

“That's college,” Lexa agreed. “So, do you ever sleep?”

“Not as much as I need too.” Clarke relaxed back stretching arms high above her head. “What are you doing here anyway? I thought you would be home sleeping.”

Lexa shrugged, “I wanted to see you smile.”

The brunettes actions held a certain charm and swoon. Clarke found herself leaning towards Lexa
without thought. She rested her head once again upon a strong shoulder.

“You are a cuddler aren’t you?” A laugh.

“No.” Clarke readjusted her head. He upper body was across the console of the Jeep, and she found that at the moment she didn’t care. “I don’t know what you’re talking about.”

Everything surrounding Lexa was...not messy but had the potential to get complicated. Clarke was tired enough to not care at the moment and enjoy the calm peace that Lexa brought with her. They sat in the quiet for a long moment taking each other in. No looks were exchanged. No eyebrows raised. No expectations were felt. Clarke sighed a looked up searching for green eyes.

Green eyes that were now closed. An easy rhythm of breath against her cheek and twitching eyelids were the only things that met her gaze. Clarke snuck out of the Jeep and ran inside to gather her things. Lexa was still asleep when she got back and settled in with her workbook propped up on her knees. She would let her sleep while she worked. After would be dealt with when it came.

*****

“He was MY husband! It should have been ME!”

Lexa winced at the anguish in her grandmother’s voice. Her own anguish was a close second. She couldn’t imagine living 54 years with someone, and then being the last in the room to know that he had passed on.

“I know,” Lexa tried.

Indra rounded on her. “How DARE they!” The look in the elderly woman’s eyes was haunted. “WHY DIDN’T THEY WAKE ME UP FIRST! WHEN DID IT HAPPEN!”

An unlucky nurse decided to enter the room at that moment. “Ma’am, I’m so sorry for your loss.”

“When?” Lexa had never heard that word spoken with so much venom. Especially by the sweet lady that was her grandma.
“We did rounds about 45 minutes ago and he was still fighting ma’am. We knew that this time would come. Is there anything we can do for you?” The nurse looked like she wanted to run but impressively stood her ground in front of the enraged widow.

“45 minutes?” Indra’s tone calmed then cracked. With her attention firmly settled on the nurse, Lexa left the room. The walls looked so starkly white here at the local hospital. The same one in which she was born. Lexa expected pain. The all-consuming rage that her grandmother had shown, but she felt nothing. She pulled out her phone and dialed Luna’s number praying she wouldn’t answer because of the late hour.

Her prayers went unanswered and she was the first to break the news to her cousin. Luna was crying softly and made promises to start the drive back to their hometown.

Lexa shut the phone, and suddenly she was standing in a space blacker than pitch. Nothing was visible. Nothing could be heard. Then the pain hit. Something was inside her chest and it wrapped clawed fingers around her heart and squeezed. A wail built in her throat and she set it loose into the void.

She tried to raise her hands to her face but couldn’t. Something was holding her down.

“Lexa.”

Lexa opened her eyes. Her heart was beating wildly. The grief of losing her grandfather was a fresh splash of paint on an already stained canvas. A sob built in her throat as she struggled to get control of her emotions. She looked around trying to figure out where she was. When she attempted to raise herself in the seat, she felt comforting hands holding both of hers.

Clarke.

“I’m so sorry.” Lexa gently pulled her hands away from Clarke’s hold and rubbed at her eyes trying to dislodge the accusing stare of her grandmother’s dark brown eyes.

“It’s ok, Lexa. You’re safe.”
“I didn’t mean to fall asleep on you,” Lexa took in the books and papers littered across her Jeep. “At least you got some work done I take it.”

Lexa could feel Clarke studying her, and she didn’t want to explain her dream. Not now. Not yet. Clarke stayed silent while she picked up her lighter and twirled it end over end. Lexa didn’t like feeling like she was on display so she searched quickly for a topic. “So, are you done after this?”

“Yes, I am done. I usually stay after class and get homework done if I can.” Clarke started gathering her things. “I’m sorry for taking over your truck. I didn’t want to leave you in the parking lot to study after you drove down here to see me.” She smiled and Lexa felt herself relaxing a bit.

“I’m glad you appreciated my fine gesture of ‘woo’.”


“Really, really,” Lexa said with her best Shrek impression.

“Do you need to talk about it?”

Lexa lit the cigarette she’d been toying with, “‘bout what?” She pretended nothing had happened and wasn’t going to play into the questioning easily. She could feel her metaphorical heels digging in as she became slightly defensive.

“Okay, let me rephrase. If and when you want to talk I’ll listen.”

Lexa looked the blonde over as she continued to sort and pack away notes and diagrams. “It was about my grandpa. Nothing special.” She watched her carefully, looking for pity and waiting for the inevitable ‘I’m sorry for your loss’ bullshit. “He died. Grandma didn’t take it well.”

“Did you have to tell her?”

“Yeah.”
Clarke rested against the seat, and Lexa could see pain in the blonde’s eyes. “Who did you lose?”

“No one. Not yet, anyway. My dad, he was diagnosed with brain cancer a few years ago.”

“That sucks too.”

“Yes, it does.”

A phone chimed and Clarke pulled the device out of her bag. Lexa fished out her own phone and checked the time. No work tonight, but she wasn’t in the mood for going to the bar. “I think I’m going to head home. I know you are tired, but are you ok to drive back to your place?”

Clarke turned from her phone and smiled. “Of course. When you are a mom, you live tired. Thank you again for the roses. They are beautiful.”

Lexa looked her in the eye. “Not nearly as beautiful as you, Clarke.”

A blush rewarded Lexa’s words. “There you go with your woo-manship.”

~~ AUTHORS NOTE~~

Yes, yes. I know, ok?

It has been a while since I uploaded on this story. In part it was because I went on vacation, and partly because I’m struggling with the writing. I’m still trying to figure out what to include and why. What to cut from my drabbles and how to focus the story without it taking a billion words. I struggle greatly with Clarke’s POV. Seriously, hopefully, when this is finished and I can mark it as
complete the readers who stick around will find out why. Unfortunately, there will be plot holes, bad sentences, horrid grammar, and other things that I can only see after I post. Getting this story out is cathartic for me in so many ways, and I am still shocked to see kudos on this piece of trash when I log in.

In short, I’m sorry I haven’t uploaded. I will be getting back into the swing of things soon. This is a short fluffy chapter. I hope some of you can get some enjoyment out of it.

Happy reading,

Alex
Lexa and Clarke fell into an easy rhythm. They took advantage of time shared in the workplace to ease into things. Innocent passing glances turned into shy smiles and light lingering touches. By an unspoken agreement, nothing physical went any further, and they didn’t spend any more time outside of work together.

They both wanted things to work and were enjoying the time spent at ease with another person that could truly understand them.

It was 5:30 in the morning and Lexa couldn’t sleep. She had Youtube playing music softly throughout her apartment, and she was listening to the gentle rain outside. Her feet were stretched careless atop the coffee table and a steaming cup of coffee was sitting within arms reach. The fragrance wafted towards her every so often.

It had been almost a week since she had heard from Clarke. Radio silence wasn’t unusual for them, and Lexa understood why now. Over the last month, she had learned that when Clarke said she led a busy life - she meant it. Clarke’s text messages were sporadic and inconsistent, However, when she did manage to get one out, Lexa text as quickly as she could as to talk to the blonde for as long as possible.

Just last week, she had kept Clarke on the phone for three hours slobbering drunk.

“Clarke, everything is spinning.”

Lexa had been drinking because she was bored and missed the blonde terribly. She hadn’t really expected her to answer, but when she did, Lexa rambled about anything and everything until she started to feel ill.

“Have you ever heard of the song Firefly? Breaking Benjamin?”
Lexa let herself be caressed by the low sound of Clarke’s voice. She shifted on the floor (didn’t make it to the bed) for a more comfortable position.

“Never really listened to them...Benjamin...nope. Don’t know it.” Lexa closed her eyes and her stomach lurched. Nausea rolled along her body in waves and she struggled, gasping trying to keep from spewing up her dinner. “I don’t feel so good.”

“Hang on, Lex,” shuffling and muffled curses could be heard before Clarke returned to the phone with a song playing barely audibly in the background. “There. Can you hear it? Listen to me and the song, Lex.”

This girl is amazing. So beautiful. Lexa lost herself in daydreams of Clarke, and finally fell asleep with the blonde’s name on her lips, and Clarke still whispering the words.

Lexa shook her head. The words had wanted to explode during that entire conversation but something held her back. Now, she knew it was because: one, Clarke was seriously busy. Two, neither of them were ready for some reason. It just didn’t feel...right. Not yet. All of this was unspoken and fragile.

The early hour was weird for Lexa, usually, she went to bed at night to retain some semblance of normalcy to a daily routine. Fucking night shift. She played games and surfed the web for new books and was, at last, starting to wind down to sleep. Nights like these didn’t happen very often, so Lexa wasn’t too concerned about ‘normal’ sleeping patterns.

Headlights flashed outside. The beams of light making shadows dance on the walls of the apartment. Lexa heard a door open, then shut and she curiously leaned up in her chair to see what was going on. It was fairly early and the absence of street lights outside her door made her body tense. A figure ambled purposefully towards her open door.

“Hey, I didn’t know if you would be up,” Clarke stepped just inside the door and pushed damp blonde locks out of her face. Rain dripped from her as she glanced anxiously back at her car.

“Clarke?” Lexa was surprised to see her here, with no warning and outside of work. “Don’t take this the wrong way, but what are you doing here?”

“I was wondering if you wanted to ride with me?”
“Sure,” Lexa grabbed her jacket and keys. “Where we headed?”

“I’m taking the kids to Bellamy’s. I work the next three days straight, and with Finn awol I needed a place for them to go. I will be useless from work.”

Lexa saw the dark circles under her eyes and slightly paler than normal complexion. “Do you need me to drive you?”

“No, just wanted some company for the trip.”

After locking up, Lexa followed Clarke to her car and the situation hit her. She saw the two sleeping children in the backseat. Toys and blankets were piled in the between the two car seats, and backpacks with each of their names stitched on where stuffed full in the floorboard.

“Why so early? If you don’t mind me asking that is…”

Clarke sighed. She looked completely buggered. “I got off work at 4, and wanted to get some decent sleep today before my shift tonight.”

Garbled speech came from behind Lexa as she strapped her seat belt on, “Hey, little man,” she smiled at Aden and his cheeks dimpled when he smiled back. He took tiny chubby fingers and rubbed at his eyes sleepily.

“Don’t worry. He will fall back asleep as soon as we get out of town.”

Lexa smiled softly at Clarke. The blonde was busy navigating out of the parking lot so Lexa reached over and ran a hand soothingly down her arm. “I don’t mind a little company. Besides, he is a part of you.”

“You really have no idea how true that statement is,” Clarke laughed. “Those two back are my personality split in half. He is my wild child and she is my snarky sweetheart.”

“So you are a wild child with an attitude, huh?”
Clarke narrowed her eyes in challenge. “You have no idea.”

Lexa chuckled, “So you caught me completely off guard. Showing up like that. I could’ve been asleep or at the bar.”

“Oh singing firefly,” the blonde teased.


“Why did you have your door open at five something in the morning?”

Clarke’s words halted Lexa. Why did she have the door open? Lexa usually cracked the windows. She wasn’t afraid of anyone doing anything stupid in her little part of town, however, Lexa always erred on the side of caution. “I’m not sure.”

Clarke asked her to map out the directions claiming she didn’t know the way in the dark.

“I call bullshit.”

“No, really. I’m terrible with directions.”

“Haven’t you been there before?”

“Several times.” Clarke sighed, “You don’t have to be so smug.”

“It would help if you learned which way was North, South, East, and West, Clarke,” Lexa said biting her lip to keep her amusement concealed.

Clarke slotted her eyes again playfully, “I have things that do that for me. It’s a waste of brain power.”
“Oh no. You’re not one of those people are you?” Lexa asked a slight whine to her voice.

“What people?”

“You take your car to the dealer when your tires are low, don’t you? Turn right here.”

Lexa watched with horror as she deftly turned LEFT. “Right! I said right, Clarke!”

Clarke blushed and muttered, “You said turn right HERE, not turn RIGHT here.”

Both girls laughed and made a few turns quickly correcting Clarke’s mistake.

“And to answer your question, maybe I do.”

“I knew it. Can you even change a tire? Or a spark plug?”

“Why should I when I can pay people to do it for me?”

“Fair point, but why would you pay for it when you are perfectly capable to do it yourself?”

“I chose to pay. That and these nails don’t stay pretty long.” She wiggled her fingers in Lexa’s direction. Lexa focused on those dainty hands, and her mind took off on a short fantasy about those hands.

Clarke had noticed her widened eyes and lazer focus, so she casually brought her hand up to her mouth and played with her bottom lip.

“Jesus,” Lexa’s faint mutter caused Clarke to smile smugly. “Now who is smug?”
“What can I say I find your attraction to me to be...intriguing.”

The two locked eyes. Blue on green. Lexa swallowed and Clarke followed the movement of her throat.

“In-intriguing, huh?” Her splutters only made Clarkes grin wider as she turned back to watching the road. She was driving after all.

“Yes, ma’am.”

“Mommie, we at daddy’s yet? I’m hungry and Aden stinks.”

The tiny voice shook both adults back into reality. Clarke chuckled at the little girl with red hair. Lexa fought with herself a moment desperately trying to remember the little girl’s name. Clarke and her flirting had made Lexa a mess. A wet mess. She could feel her arousal. Annddd….that was not helping her remember the damn child's name!

“We are almost there, Madi.”

* Madi . Of course.

*dumbass*

distracted by full lips and sultry smiles, pathetic

“So what is your full name Madi?”

“Madison Emma Blake.” The little girl's nose crinkled up with distaste. “It's boring.”

Lexa hummed, “How about I give you a nickname? A short name that you like better.”
The sweet girl looked up at the roof of the vehicle with deep thought for a 3-year-old. “Like what?”

“How about ‘Adi’? But here is the deal. Only I can call you that? What do you say?”

Upon hearing the name, Madi grinned a toothy grin and nodded vigorously. “I weally like that.”

“Alright then, Adi.” Lexa turned back around in her seat and caught Clarke staring at her. “Um...sorry...I hope that was ok. I didn’t mean to-”

Clarke had pulled into a small apartment complex and stopped, so she was free to lean silently toward Lexa and leave the smallest of kisses on the corner of her mouth. “It was perfect. Want to help me with your mini-me over there,” she said gesturing to Aden who still slept soundly.

Lexa panicked and she worked quickly to control her emotions. “Sure.” She was glad it came out steady and lacking in nerves.

The adults got out of the car and stretched simultaneously. Lexa closed her eyes and with hands above her head stretched to her full height and then some, bones creaking and popping. She opened one eye to see if Clarke was watching. The clothes she wore fit perfectly in with her plans for retaliation against the blonde’s earlier teases. Capri sweatpants that rode low on her waist matched with a faded black cut off t-shirt.

As she stretched the shirt went up and the pants settled back down where she usually wore them. Clarke’s eyes widened and she stared until Madi caught her attention from the back seat still strapped into her car seat.

“Momma, help.”

Lexa opened her eyes fully and their gazes locked again across the top of the small car. “I’m coming, baby.” She mouthed, “not fair” at Lexa before ducking down to help the girl get unstrapped.

Lexa smirked and then realized she had agreed to help get Aden inside. She leaned towards the window and took in the sleeping boy. He was almost a mirror image of the girl she had been chasing. She quietly opened the door and spoke softly not wanting to startle him.
“Hey, little man. We are here.” Bright blue eyes glared at her for a moment, then he turned his head away. “Now, now. We have to get up.”

*garble*

“Yes, it is early. An ungodly hour actually.”

*more garbling*

“We adults are truly inhuman creatures to do this to you, I know.”

*more garbling*

Lexa freed the toddler from the numerous straps and buckles and went to slip her hands inside the car seat the pick him up.

An unexpected giggle was released as her hand tickled his side. “Ticklish are we?”

Lexa watched as the boy stopped smiling and scowled at her, “Ok, you asked for it!”

Her fingers darted for every inch of skin she could reach and Aden was giggling hysterically. “Bop it!” He screeched. “Bop it exa!”

“Oh looky here at who is awake!” Quickly she scooped him up and despite all the laughing and smiles, the boy was still tired from interrupted sleep. He melted against her a soft smile on his lips, eyes closed.

“There’s a good boy.” Lexa knew she was deep shit now. She didn’t want kids. Didn't have plans for kids. These were not anyone’s kids though, they were Clarke’s kids. Clarke’s kids. She could feel her heart melting and couldn’t resist smelling the boys head as she held him a moment getting accustomed to his weight and the way he always moves his fingers as if he is restless. “Let’s go inside and see dad. How about that?”
Such a weird day so far. Lexa walked to the entrance that Clarke and Adi had vanished to and hesitantly stepped in.

“You are in one piece. You’re a tough one then. This guy doesn’t like mornings. Bellamy Blake,” he said raising his hands to take Aden.

“Lexa Black.” He smiled a charming smile and told her thanks for the help. He took Aden and left her alone standing in the entryway of his apartment. It would be awkward just to stand here so she nervously followed the path Bellamy had taken. When she reached a door she looked inside and her heart sank down to her stomach.

Clarke and Bellamy each had an arm around the other’s waist silently gazing at the kids who were miraculously already asleep. Lexa tiptoed out of view, not wanting to disturb the family moment the parents (the real parents she told herself sternly) were sharing.

She went back to Clarke’s car and lit a smoke. Using nicotine to dull her mind. She knew Clarke wasn’t into Bellamy. Over the last weeks, they had shared more about their lives, including Clarke’s view on Bellamy and how their relationship wasn’t over, it just had boundaries. They were strictly platonic co-parenting. That was it. Right?

Lexa got in the car and rolled the windows down. The oil light flickered on and off warningly and Lexa sighed at the blonde.

That embrace didn’t look platonic. It had the years of familiarity behind it and two amazing kids linking them. How could she compete with a ‘platonic’ relationship like that? Lexa had nothing to offer Clarke. She had money that was true, but Clarke had never once mentioned it. The two took turns paying for lunches at work and buying cigarettes and drinks. Was that all Clarke seen in her? Money?

Lexa huffed at herself. I am completely ridiculously all about this girl. I can’t even think straight. Lexa chuckled. Think straight. Right.

Voices and footsteps caused her to look up. Bellamy and Clarke were walking with a distance between them now. Did they mean to hide that moment?

“Thanks for riding with her here. She is hopeless with directions.” He grinning goodnaturedly and
Lexa’s smile fell flat.

“No problem. I had nothing better to do anyway.”

“Please Bell, no sweets after 6, and absolutely nothing after they brush their teeth.”

“Oh come on, princess. I have got this.”

“I’m serious Bellamy, remember the party on our one year anniversary?”

Bellamy paled and plastered a smile so fake on his face Lexa thought she could have reached over and pulled it off like tape. “Now Clarke, there is no need to be bringing that up. I will have them and myself follow your rules down to the letter.”

Earlier emotions (not jealousy) forgotten, Lexa admired the blonde staring down a six foot two man. *Fuck, mama bear Clarke is hotter than playful Clarke.* Her blue eyes flashed with lightning and her voice was low with thunder, “It had better be that way exactly, Bellamy Blake. Or you can deal with mom.”

The older man paled again. He hastily said his goodbyes and practically ran to get back to the safety of his home.

When Clarke was tucked in the driver's seat, she cackled evilly. “Oh my goodness, I haven’t had that much fun teasing him since before the divorce.”

Clarke’s jolly laughter didn’t give Lexa the choice about smiling. Her muscles strained and stretched into a full grin. Just at hearing this blonde goddess laugh. It was almost an evil laugh, but it was still endearing.

“So, sleep time for you now I take it?”

“I should, but I’m wide awake now.”
Lexa arched an eyebrow, “What do you have in mind?”
SURPRISE AMIGOS! I was inspired greatly today. I have been struggling to get this part perfect and tonight it just...worked. All of the words worked tonight! AH! I'm so happy with this chapter and I hope you are as happy with it as I am. Peace, love, and joy to all and I hope you like it!

Happy reading!

-Alex

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“So, sleep time for you now I take it?”

“I should, but I’m wide awake now.”

Lexa arched an eyebrow, “What do you have in mind?”

 Lexa looked at Clarke, incredulity written plainly on her face. “Dancing? At 7:30 in the morning? Where can you even do that?”

Clarke waited patiently for Lexa to catch up with her thought process. The brunette was smart but she could be….thick at times. To speed things along, Clarke gave her a pointed look.

“What? What could I- oooooooh. That’s actually brilliant.” Lexa smiled and Clarke knew she was getting in deep for this girl. She was younger than Clarke by two years, and sometimes two years in age could make things hard in a relationship. Hell, relationships in general were hard by default.
“Do you think Anya would mind?” Clarke asked hopefully but still hesitant.

“Anya?” Laughing, Lexa shook her head. “I own the place Clarke, and if you want to go dance we can go dance. One stipulation though.”

Clarke narrowed her eyes suspiciously. “Only one?” Lexa nodded. “Well let’s hear it then?”

Lexa’s blinding smile made Clarke think that she would do whatever just to see Lexa smile like that. “You have to dance with me this time. Not just in the same building. You and me. Deal?”

Clarke’s heart fluttered and her thighs shook at the mere thought of dancing with this bombshell. “I suppose I could squeeze you in.” She drew the statement out conveying her doubt and teasing Lexa just for the fun of it.

“Oh come on, Clarke! You know you have been dying to gauge my moves for yourself.” Lexa pulled out her phone and played the first thing that came to mind. So that’s how Clarke got the first-hand show of Lexa trying to do the cupid shuffle in the front seat of a moving vehicle complete with a few booty bumps and shoulder shimmies. Clarke was in hysterics at the brunettes antics.

“Lexa, oh my god, Lexa, stop.” Tears leaked silently down her face as the hilarity of the situation once more took over and she giggled soundlessly while trying to keep her eyes on the road.

“See? I told you.” Lexa fixed her shirt from where it had ridden up on her stomach and reattached her seatbelt. “Ok, we have a plan, but baby,” Clarke about snapped her own neck as she spun to face Lexa at the term of endearment. “Pull over, I’m driving.”

Clarke sat 5 minutes later wondering what the hell was going on with herself. She NEVER let ANYONE drive her car. Not Raven. Not Octavia. Not Bell. NOONE. Lexa was an excellent driver. Clarke knew that from past experiences, however, she was still shaken by the fact she had said yes, THEN PULLED OVER. To push astonishment further at herself, she simply got up and switched seats with her. It’s all absolutely crazy. She must have dosed me with something.

A little voice in the back of her mind was yelling at her, tell her no! Drive yourself!

Lexa must have noticed her mini mental breakdown because she took Clarke’s hand and started
rubbing soothing circles across the back of her palm. “You can drive if you wish it, Clarke. I don’t ever want you to be uncomfortable because of me.”

Naked sincerity painted the green of Lexa’s eyes. Clarke took a deep breath, “I just don’t like having other people drive me. I’m fine. I should have gotten over it long ago.”

They were pulling into a spot at Grounders when Lexa couldn’t stop the question from escaping anymore. “What happened?” She couldn’t stop it from coming out, so instead, she made her voice low and soft. She didn’t want to scare Clarke away with unwanted questions. This was the first time they had been around each other in weeks, and alone to top it off. To go dancing. Lexa was sure anyone would be able to see her heart trying to jailbreak out of her chest. It was thundering while she waiting for Clarke’s response.

“Me, O, and Bellamy were in a wreck a few years ago. Flipped a few times. I let O drive because she was excited to go see a movie in theaters. One minute me and Bell were talking and then the next minute I was facedown on the ground with smoke everywhere. Everyone was ok, but I’m still terrified to let other people drive now.”

“I’m sorry, I didn’t know.” She made eye contact with Clarke so she could try and read the blonde’s emotions. It took a moment but when she looked up she was smiling softly.

“It’s ok, you couldn't have known. I didn’t even think twice about letting you drive until about five minutes into your driving. Everything on the outside was fine, but inside my head it was chaos.”

Clarke watched Lexa fiddle with her key ring looking for the key to the bar she guessed.

“Well thank you for letting me drive then. It was an absolute pleasure.”

Clarke decided right then to end the heavy talk, so she rallied her courage walked as sultry as she could towards the shocked still future OT. Clarke took note of the slight sheen of sweat on the brunette’s chest (it was a bit hot in the bar), and throat as she swallowed. “If driving me was an absolute pleasure, just wait until I let you dance with me.” Clarke trailed her index finger down Lexa’s jawline, down her neck, down her chest as she walked by towards the bar. She thought she heard a low moan, but decided THAT would be too good to be true. Finally behind the bar, she poured 4 shots and uncapped two beers.

Slapping the table she said, “Well, music?”
Lexa had been staring at her with eyes blown heavy with desire. Her body was poised as if she was preparing to attack. Lexa visibly shook her head from side to side. Then smiled. *Fuck*. That smile can kill.

“Two can play that game, babe.”

She walked with an air of confidence that screamed sex appeal. It was now Clarke’s turn to *stare* watch. “Anything you want to hear in particular? Specific genre?”

With Lexa’s back to her, Clarke took a shaky breath. ‘Dear sweet baby Jesus and all that is holy. This woman… “Anything, I’m just here to dance.”

A completely unfamiliar song started, and Clarke knew she was in trouble by the look in Lexa’s eyes and the beat of the song. They both slammed back the shots and then proceeded to chase them with beer. Just as Clarke sat down her beer bottle, she felt Lexa’s presence directly behind her.

*Don't be aroused by my confession*
*Unless you don't give a good goddamn about redemption, I know*
*Christ is comin' and so am I*
*You would too if this sexy devil caught your eye*

Clarke felt an immediate pull in her lower abdomen to Lexa’s voice singing those words low into her ear. She could feel Lexa’s breath on her cheek. She was so close. She could feel her body heat. She leaned back slightly away from the bar to gauge how close she was. Definitely not to touch the woman. Definitely not.

She didn’t have to move very far back because Lexa was close, and Lexa was *moving*. Clarke easily followed her rhythm and matched her hips to Lexa’s pace. Slowly the two moved away from the bar entirely and onto the dance floor with its beautiful sparkling lights. Clarke’s back was still glued to Lexa’s front. Lexa’s hands on her hips guided her movements and good god. Lexa was grinding on her backside, Clarke could feel herself dripping. However, when the next verse started Lexa easily led her to turn and face her.

*Jesus is risen, it's no surprise*
*Even he would martyr his mama to ride to hell between those thighs*
*The pressure is building at the base of my spine*
*If I gotta sin to see her again then I'm gonna lie, lie*
She'll make you cry
I'll sell my soul to be back in your bosom
Gladly now please suck me dry
And still you'll cry to be back in her bosom
To do it again

Clarke could feel her inner walls clenching on nothing as the tension built between the two. This song and this woman was a deadly combination. Clarke’s skin turned into an inferno as Lexa sang the next verse with deadly eye contact that promised...things. Mature things. A thigh was slotted in between Clarke’s and she unashamedly ground down lightly to help the need building at a frantic pace. A tiny moan escaped her parted lips at the contact.

She felt cool hands frame her face and looked up again to be shocked by the vivid deep sea green of Lexa’s eyes. Eye’s that had very blown pupils. At least she wasn’t the only one that was being affected. Lexa’s eyes flicked down to her lips and Clarke licked them in response. Clarke gave herself one look, and damn, Lexa was biting her bottom lip appearing as if she had no idea it was happening.

She'll suck you dry
And still you'll cry to be back in her bosom
To do it again
She'll make you weep
And moan and cry to be back in her bosom
To do it again

“She’ll make you cry I’ll sell my soul to be back in your bosom Gladly now please suck me dry And still you’ll cry to be back in her bosom To do it again

“Lex,” Clarke heard herself say. She didn’t know what to say, but she had to speak. She pulled the brunette closer. So close they looked more like one person than of two. She could feel the low groan in Lexa’s chest. She wanted to hear that out loud. Determinedly, Clarke shifted just enough to slot her leg to where the brunette would get friction whether she wanted it or not. Lexa’s hands fell to hips again. Clarke then ran her free hand through that thick luscious chestnut hair grabbing the top length and pulling her head to the side and exposing her neck. This was a dangerous game. A dangerous game that both were playing as if they couldn’t get burned.

The low moan from Lexa made Clarke pull the girl tightly to her again. Their bodies still moved as one, hips swayed and hair was pushed and pulled. Clarke lightly ran her tongue from Lexa’s shoulder up to her earlobe. She sucked lightly on the lobe, occasionally flicking it with her tongue while Lexa continued to sing. Clarke felt roaming hands underneath the back of her shirt going up and down her back - trying to memorize it by touch alone.

My pulse has been rising, my temples are pounding
Lexa snarled as she sang the last line and dipped her hands low to catch the blonde's thighs. She pulled her effortlessly up and paused after Clarke had secured her legs around the taller woman’s waist. Both women were panting. Both were searching the eyes of the other. Searching for an invitation to proceed. Clarke didn’t know where she wanted this to end, but she knew she didn’t want it to end without finally tasting those beautiful honey lips.

She framed Lexa’s face again with both hands. Lexa’s unengaged hand cupped Clarke’s cheek. They were so close. Noses touching, Clarke’s center was placed firmly against Lexa’s rock hard abdomen.

“Clarke,” Lexa breathed, “is this what you want?”

Her eyes were so open and vulnerable. Clarke smiled and nodded, to overcome with emotion to speak the words aloud.

Lexa took the initiative and leaned in slowly, carefully. She ghosted a kiss across Clarke’s mouth. It wasn’t enough. She leaned in again, this time with a little more pressure. Clarke unknowingly followed the brunette’s retreats when she pulled away, desperately hoping for just a little more.

BANG BANG BANG

“Delivery!”

BANG BANG BANG

“Yo, Anya, I can hear you in there.”

To Lexa’s and Clarke’s utmost surprise, Anya yelled back, “I have been waiting for these two to kiss for MONTHS and you just ruined it! I’m coming, Dax!” The narrow-faced woman was holding her phone at chest height, and turning to them she said, “I’m playing this video on your wedding night.”
Lexa froze still holding Clarke, and Clarke didn’t blame her. Marriage? They had only just kissed and it wasn’t even a REAL kiss! Clarke chanced a look up at Lexa and seen that she was full on glaring at Anya’s back as she signed off for the alcohol.

“Don’t mind me, I’m going back to bed. Continue.” And with that Anya disappeared through the back door.

Clarke felt Lexa relax her hold and she straightened her legs to support her own weight for the first time in what felt like hours. Clarke was at a loss for what to say though. That was without a doubt the world’s worst timing she had ever heard of or experienced. Lexa still looked as if she was going to explode. She was looking everywhere but at Clarke. Unease leaked into her mindset. What if Lexa didn’t want this now? Was I not good enough? Is she disappointed?

Clarke sat on a nearby barstool and shotgunned the rest of her beer. “Well, I guess I need to get you back home.”

Lexa was silent while they gathered their things and locked up. She still hadn’t spoken when they reached her apartment. “Lexa, look at me.”

Shiney green eyes looked up and Clarke hated this look immediately. She never wanted to cause this much disappointment to someone she cared so much about. “What’s wrong, lo-lad?”

*LAD???? What the flying fuck Clarke??*

“Nothing, babe. I’m right as rain.” The smile she attempted was half-hearted at best.

“Lexa, really. Talk to me.”

She watched Lexa fight with her emotions for a moment before she looked up again and spoke slowly.

“I wanted that moment to be perfect. The first taste of your lips. The smell of the alcohol on your breath. The warmth of your body on mine. I spent weeks trying to find the perfect song. Spent weeks waiting on an opportunity to show you how I feel and how you affect me. I needed it to be
perfect because you deserve perfection.”

Clarke’s eyes stung in response. Never had she seen someone care so deeply for something. And this was only a kiss. Their first kiss to be exact and Clarke could understand why she was upset. “You know, I thought it was incredible.” Shyly, Clarke looked away. The alcohol was settling firmly in her system by now, making her look and act like a complete fool.

“I wanted perfection. If I could say I had you -- it would be better than perfection.”

Clarke snapped her gaze to the brunette who was studying the door to her apartment intently as if trying to memorize the patterns in the wood. “Oh Lex,” Clarke had a gut feeling and she went with it. Being around Lexa, and sharing that experience together made her trust in her feelings for the girl for the first time since she had seen her. It was more than a physical attraction, and it was more than friendly. Her chest ached to see the brunette so forlorn over something that seems so insignificant.

Clarke climbed out of the car and jiggled Lexa’s door open. Lexa looked up at her with eyes so hooded with regret and remorse. Clarke pulled her up and flush with her body. The brunette’s breath hitched and Clarke raised up on tiptoes to kiss this wonderful woman.

At first touch, their lips were cool from the outside weather. Then, little bolts of electricity shot down and outward. Clarke turned her head to deepen the kiss automatically. At first, she had just wanted to get a good kiss, now it looks like her body wanted a taste more than a kiss. She ran her tongue lightly along Lexa’s bottom lip asking entrance.

Lexa groaned and wound her hands in Clarke’s hair pulled her almost roughly. Tongues met, danced, chased, and fought for dominance. Lexa was a fantastic kisser. Clarke could feel her toes curling in her shoes, could feel her face and chest flush with desire. She took that amazing damn bottom lip in her mouth and nibbled on it lightly testing Lexa reaction. The brunettes hips gave away her arousal as they canted in Clarke’s direction.

Wait. Not like this. Special. Perfection. That’s what Lexa wants for this. For us.

Clarke slowly pulled out of the kiss, but couldn’t resist a taste of the tanned flesh along the brunette’s neck. She left little nibbles and kisses, trying to slow the rate of her heart, but Lexa’s hips canted again. Clarke suddenly remembered they were in a parking lot and needed to get control of themselves. And there was absolutely no way they were going to continue this today.
“I’m sorry,” Clarke whispered as she laid her head down on Lexa’s chest.

Clarke felt Lexa’s chest expand as she took a long deep breath. “You have nothing to be sorry for, Clarke.”

“I like how you say it.”

Lexa looked down at her as much as she could with the question in her eyes. Clarke didn’t look up but answered nonetheless. “My name. I like how you say it.”

“Clarke,” Lexa said the name slow and low. She let a little gravel into her voice Clarke thought just to get back at her for the time spent on her neck.

Fuck. “Yeah,” she cleared her throat, “like that.”

Lexa put more distance between them but didn’t let go or let Clarke move from her spot on Lexa’s chest. “We need to sleep soon. Do you want to stay here?”

Clarke heard nothing but sincerity and concern in Lexa’s voice. It wouldn’t be a bad thing to stay here with Lexa right? They could control themselves like grown adults. Clarke didn’t know if that small pep talked worked but…. “If you don’t mind and it won’t be too much trouble.”

“I don’t’ mind at all. Come on in. Me casa es tu casa.”

Clarke got her keys and phone and walked behind her into the apartment.

Chapter End Notes

Please comment. I'm really proud of this. I think I finally managed to channel Clarke in this one, and I would really enjoy feedback. Even if it is just 'good job'. Thanks!

-Alex

p.s. name of the song is Rev 22:20 by Puscifier Youtube it so you can get all the feels. ;)
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