Larke

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Larke

by R_D

Summary

The war with the Mountain Men is over and Clarke and Lexa are victorious. They fall in love but Lexa's position as Commander complicates things at first. This story follows them as they explore the world and the clans that swear allegiance to Heda. I began this piece after episode 2.10 and it doesn't follow canon from that point forward.

Notes

I just want a place for Lexa and Clarke to live happily ever after. #dontkilllexa
Victory Celebration!

Chapter Summary

Sparks fly between the Commander and the Sky Princess at the celebratory feast. Clarke's friends conspire to bring them together but Lincoln warns of some Grounder traditions that must be observed.

The celebration was lavish. There was a mouthwatering feast of roast boar that sizzled over the spit like a savoury heaven. There was music provided by Jasper and Monty, with a little technical help from Raven. Since there was music there was dancing, wild, free, and drunken dancing.

The Skai People, the Grounders, and what was left of the 100, drank, ate, and celebrated. They had come together and defeated the Mountain Men. They had fought side by side and become brothers borne of blood. They had freed the army of Grounders and the 47 Sky People that had been held captive in the mountain. Clarke’s capacity for mercy had stayed Lexa’s quick hand and they had spared some of the people inside the mountain; Maya, a handful of others, and the children still lived. They were going to have to deal with the ramifications and logistics of that later. Tonight they celebrated.

Clarke and Lexa sat at the head of a large table, blonde head and brunette head leaning together as they talked. They were both feeling the high of the victory and enjoying watching their peoples celebrate together. They were drinking some of the Grounder’s ale and feeling a pleasant buzz from the alcohol. Suddenly a thought jumped into Clarke’s head and she looked into Lexa’s eyes with a sobering question. “Will this last?”

“I don’t know,” was the truthful reply from Lexa. “I want it to, and I promise you I will do whatever I can to make it so.” She leaned even closer and looked into Clarke’s eyes with such intensity that Clarke felt her heart rate increase. She felt herself drawn into Lexa’s eyes, felt her body respond to Lexa’s closeness.

Clarke broke the eye contact and forced herself to focus on the conversation. “I promise you that I too will do everything in my power to keep this peace, to keep our people together,” she finally answered, looking back into Lexa’s eyes. Suddenly, feeling too hot even in the cool evening breeze Lexa broke eye contact and grabbed her glass of ale. Breathing deeply she turned to Clarke and offered a toast.

“To peace between our people,” she offered.

“And to the freedom of our people,” Clarke finished. They clinked glasses, once again found each others eyes, and drank deeply without breaking the contact. Then Clarke smiled, “Let’s talk about this tomorrow. Tonight let’s enjoy being here, alive, and together.” The two women smiled at each other and Lexa nodded her head in agreement gracing Clarke with one of her rare but breathtaking smiles. Clarke felt her breath catch in her throat and her stomach tie itself into a large knot.

Lincoln and Octavia were dancing with each other when Bellamy came over and pulled them aside. “Sorry to interrupt,” Octavia’s brother said, “but what are we going to do about Clarke and the
Commander?” he asked nodding his head in the direction of the two women.

“What do you mean?” Lincoln asked. “The Commander and Clarke are the reason for our peace, and for our victory. Without them this peace can not last. If there is something wrong between them we must act quickly to make it right.” Lincoln’s concern and earnestness earned him a kiss on the cheek from Octavia.

“I think Bellamy means, what are we going to do about them being so obviously in love with each other. Am I right brother?” Octavia smiled.

“BINGO” Bellamy smiled at his sister.

“BINGO?” Lincoln repeated his eyebrow arched in a question.

“It means exactly,” Bellamy laughed. I’m pretty sure those two have grown to love each other but both of them are too scared to admit it. Maybe neither is sure that the other feels the same and they probably both fear rejection,” Bellamy expanded on his theory. “Or maybe they are worried about how the people would react. Our people would be surprised but ultimately bless them. Lincoln, how would the Grounders react?”

Lincoln was now looking intently at the two women seated so close together and seemingly sharing such an intimate conversation. “If what you say is true it will be the one thing that either destroys our alliance or brings about permanent peace and a true joining of our peoples.” He looked at Octavia and smiled, “We will have to make sure it brings peace.”

“How would it bring destruction? Octavia asked quickly. “We really need to avoid that scenario.”

Lincoln paused in thought before answering. “Lexa is our Commander. Any relationship with her has a great significance. She may take lovers to please her but they are her subordinates. A lover acting otherwise would be a great insult. Clarke would never submit to being Lexa’s subordinate, nor would Lexa allow her to. If she did it would mean that by extension her people would have to submit to Lexa’s rule as well. The only option is for them to be joined in an unbreakable union as true equals. They must do this before they become lovers for Clarke’s position not to be compromised.”

“A union, you mean like married?” Bellamy asked. “Before they sleep together? Damn we’d better keep an eye on them, especially tonight by the looks of things over there.” Octavia and Lincoln both turned to look towards the head table and what they saw brought smiles to their faces.

Lexa was laughing. Her head thrown back and her beautiful neck exposed to the moonlight. Her hand was on Clarke’s shoulder and Clarke beamed her own 1000 watt smile back at Lexa. Anyone near enough to hear the Commander’s laugh stopped and stared. It was not something they saw often, in fact many of them would swear it was the first time it had ever happened. Those who had known her longer remembered that she had sometimes laughed like that with Costia. They eyed the Sky Princess warily and yet their hearts rejoiced to see their beloved Commander happy.

Abby and Marcus were also seated at the table in a discussion over the disappearance of Jaha and a handful of people they knew to be extremely loyal to him. They of course speculated that he had gone off in search of the “City of Light” he had told them about. They were both shocked out of their conversation by the boisterous laughter of Lexa and as they watched Clarke leaned in and whispereded something to Lexa that made both women laugh again. Clarke had her hand on Lexa’s thigh and Lexa’s hand was still possessively on Clarke’s shoulder. Abby watched with a mother’s concern and Marcus looked into her eyes. “I think you might have a candidate for daughter-in-law
over there,” He surmised.

“It appears so,” Abby agreed reluctantly. “Although I don’t know what that means to a Grounder,” she admitted fearfully. “Marcus, can you try to subtly find out more about that in the next few days. For some reason I can’t see the Grounder’s culture allowing the Commander much freedom in her dating life.”

“Of course. I will look into it first thing tomorrow,” Marcus agreed.

Lexa and Clarke were both feeling the electricity between them and the strong ale was lowering all inhibitions the women had. Clarke opened up with some of her memories of the Ark. “When I was on the Ark I used to draw all the time,” Clarke started, wanting to share more of herself with Lexa.

“What did you draw?” Lexa asked, placing her hand on top of Clarke’s in a show of support to let Clarke know she wanted her to continue.

“The ground” was Clarke’s reply.

“The ground? But you had never seen it, how did you draw it?” Lexa asked,

“Well I had read about it in books, and had seen pictures of what it used to look like before the bombs. The rest was my imagination.” Clarke smiled shyly, feeling kind of silly, “I used to dream about what it would be like down here.” She shrugged looking down at her feet.

“And has it met your expectations, Clarke of the Sky People?” Lexa smiled as she asked moving so she could cup Clarke’s chin in her hand and gently lift her face so she could look into those lovely blue eyes once again.

Clarke felt Lexa’s gentle touch on her chin and it melted her heart. She looked up into the most beautiful green eyes she had ever seen and everything around her seemed to stop. The music was replaced by her heartbeat thudding in her own ears. She reached out and touched Lexa’s cheek.

“Exceeded,” was all she could manage to say as she was overcome with emotion and felt her eyes fill with tears.

“Clarke, what’s wrong?” Lexa questioned softly.

“I’m just feeling emotional.” Clarke tried to laugh it off and look away but Lexa held her chin firmly and as Clarke tried to duck her eyes Lexa bent down following Clarke’s movement and forcing her back into eye contact.

“Clarke, share your thoughts with me.” Lexa wasn’t sure why she felt this was so important. She knew she was making very public displays with Clarke tonight and she knew there were always eyes on them. She just didn’t care.

“I…” Clarke started but trailed off in thought. “I feel so connected to you right now. It’s overwhelming, and I fear that it will be gone when this celebration is.” Clarke suddenly felt brave. “I don’t want it to be over. I still need you.” their eyes were locked together and Lexa’s face was so close to Clarke’s. “It’s not just for this peace,” she gestured out to the mix of people celebrating in the field in front of them. “I need you for more reasons than I did before.” The ale running through her bloodstream gave her more courage and she leaned forward to kiss Lexa.

Lexa felt her heart pounding her chest. She wanted Clarke so badly but she knew what the traditions of her people demanded and she refused to reduce Clarke to the status of mere lover. As Clarke
leaned forward she struggled with the intense desire to feel the softness of Clarke’s lips on her own but she forced herself to turn her head and allow Clarke’s kiss to land chastely on her cheek. She felt Clarke pull away in embarrassment.

“Lexa, I’m so sorry. I misread… I’m sorry.” Clarke felt like she had been punched in the stomach and she wanted to throw up. How could she have been so stupid as to think Lexa wanted her that way. She tried to jump up and run away but felt Lexa’s strong grip on her arm pulling her back down into the chair.

“Clarke, wait.” Lexa insisted. Panic rose in her throat at the idea of Clarke leaving like this. “Wait. You don’t understand. I do want to kiss you, but you don’t understand the traditions of my people. If we kissed here, like this, it would mean… it would mean something we couldn’t take back. It would brand you as my lover and…”

“I get it,” Clarke spat back wrenching her arm from Lexa’s grip. “I’m not good enough to be the Commander’s lover?” The alcohol fuelled her feelings of rejection and turned them into anger. She quickly got to her feet and turned to leave.

Lexa stood quickly, with a violence of movement bred into her muscles, her chair toppled over backwards and crashed to the ground. “You are too good to be my lover.” Lexa said loudly. Clarke turned and looked at her, confused. She shook her head to try and clear some cobwebs and make sense of what Lexa had said.

Everyone in the vicinity of the table had stopped to watch the two women and Lincoln quickly ushered Octavia in for damage control. “Clarke, hey come dance with me.” Octavia said as she swooped in and grabbed Clarke’s arm before the drunken blonde could say or do something the Grounders might take for disrespecting their Commander and that both her and Lexa would regret. She pulled Clarke away quickly and just as quickly Abby moved in to sit in Clarke’s former chair.

Indra was nearby and stepped towards her Commander looking for orders. “Has the Sky Princess offended you Commander?” she asked in a stern voice.

“No Indra, thank you for your concern. It is I who offended her. Luckily the Sky People are forgiving.” She smirked purposefully knowing how her people saw forgiveness as a weakness and would appreciate the joke. “There is no harm that won’t be undone after the ale wears off.” All of the Grounder’s in earshot laughed and Lexa smiled for her people even thought inside she felt like screaming. Indra backed down and returned to her table.

Abby looked at her very seriously. “What just happened between you and my daughter?” she demanded to know.

Lexa looked long and hard at Abby, while she thought Clarke a much better leader, she saw strength in Abby and a genuine love for her daughter. She chose to answer direct and truthfully. “Clarke wanted to kiss me. That would not be acceptable.” She turned and picked up her chair, righted it and sat. She looked Abby in the eye unwavering at the hard edge she saw there.

“Why not? Do you not share her feelings?” Abby asked bluntly.

“I do share her feelings. I love your daughter,” She admitted to Abby and to herself. She saw Abby’s left eyebrow rise but no other reaction came. She took a deep breath and continued. “We are not of the same Clan. Clarke is not my subordinate. As so she cannot kiss me until we are joined in a union. That is the only way my people will view her as my equal. That is why I had to stop her from kissing me. She misunderstood and I did not explain well. I should never have let it go this far without explaining these things to Clarke, I just wasn’t sure that she shared my feelings.” Lexa sighed and
when she met Abby’s eyes she was relieved to see they had softened.

“Until we are joined in unity…? You mean you intend to marry my daughter?” Abby asked, scared of the response and what it would mean for Clarke either way.

Lexa rose up to sit even straighter in her seat, her pride as Commander firmly on her face and she did not hesitate in her answer. “Yes. Abby, healer and Chancellor of the Sky People, I intend to join with your daughter to live as one. Will you bless this union?” Once the words were out of her mouth Lexa suddenly felt lightheaded she had no idea how this night ended up with her declaring her intentions to Clarke’s mother.

Abby paused, but seeing Lexa’s face painted with vulnerability for the first time since she had met her she quickly replied, “I will bless your union. But the decision is Clarke’s and you better respect her choice either way.” Abby looked at Lexa intently, “And if you hurt her I will cut out your heart, Commander or no Commander.” Lexa smiled in appreciation of the attempt to intimidate her and nodded her head in acknowledgement.

On the dance floor Clarke was a bit of a mess. “Octavia, what the hell was she talking about!? She was giving me all the signs that she wanted to kiss me and then she backs away? What the hell… and then she tries to say I’m too good to be her lover? What is that, some Grounder version of ‘It’s not you it’s me’? Same sort of shit…? What kind of game is she playing!?”

Raven had been in conversation with Bellamy about the situation and witnessed the rejected kiss as well. She walked over to Clarke and Octavia to try and help with the damage control. She knew Clarke was drunk and feeling unsure, scared of her feelings, and hurt. She was also quite sure that Clarke had no experience with women and wondered if that was fuelling some of her insecurities as well. She jumped into the conversation and decided that to get Clarke’s mind off of what had just happened she’d piss Clarke off a bit. If she got to have a little fun in the process well, all the better for it. “So Clarke, you like girls now huh? She smirked her trademark Raven smirk and continued. “I mean, that’s cool don’t get me wrong, I dated a girl before Finn. I just didn’t think you had a lesbo vibe is all.”

Clarke’s immediate reaction was as Raven has planned. “Screw you Raven! I don’t know what I am, and… I mean it’s just that she is so… and she makes me feel so… damn it Raven! It’s none of your business!” The words spilled from Clarke’s mouth quickly and as she spoke her agitation gave way to tears forming in her eyes. She slowed down, became serious, and looked Raven in the eye. She suddenly felt like she had even more to be nervous about than she had thought “I didn’t even think about the fact that she’s a woman. Is it different? Should I be different? Did I do something wrong?” Clark sighed, dropped her arms to her sides, and looked rather helpless.

Raven and Octavia, not used to seeing Clarke Griffin looking so pathetic, both wrapped their arms around her and they started swaying to the music with Clarke between them. Raven cooed reassuringly to her tearful friend “Nah, nothing to worry about. Being with a woman is easier than being with a dude, it will come naturally to you,” She laughed. “And she is totally into you, anyone can see that. You’ll figure it out tomorrow, tonight dance with your friends and celebrate.” Raven winked at her and started swaying her hips seductively to the music.

Octavia jumped in to reassure Clarke some more “Listen, Clarke. Lexa is the Commander. I’m guessing there are going to be protocols to dating a commander right? She didn’t reject you Clarke. You two will talk tomorrow and figure everything out. Just enjoy the rest of the celebration with us and talk to her tomorrow.” Then Octavia started to pick up the dance pace and Clarke, being sandwiched between the two girls, had no choice but to start to dance as well.
Clarke felt much calmer after Octavia and Raven made her dance for a few songs and much drunker after grabbing a couple of shots of whiskey from Monty and Jasper’s table. She stood back after taking one last shot and surveyed her friends. They were people she hadn’t even known on the Ark and now they meant the world to her. She smiled at Octavia and Lincoln together on the dance floor fitting together so perfectly. She watched Raven roll her eyes and Bellamy laugh at something Jasper and Monty were animatedly trying to persuade Raven to do. She smiled and felt at peace for the moment. Her gaze moved back to the head table where not long before she had been seated next to Lexa. No one was there. She assumed Lexa had retired for the evening and decided to slip away back to her own tent and do the same.

She was stumbling home alone along the path to her tent when she suddenly felt a strong arm loop through hers and pull her up straight. She started and turned quickly to see who had grabbed her arm and found herself looking into those same green eyes that had so consumed her earlier. “Lexa, what are you doing?” she slurred.

“I am making sure you get back to your tent safely,” Lexa told her honestly. “It will not do for any harm to come to you tonight. Or ever…” she added softly. Clarke was too drunk to argue and allowed herself to be led home.

When they arrived at Clarke’s tent Lexa opened the front flap and allowed Clarke to go inside. Lexa followed and took Clarke’s cheeks in her hands. “Clarke, I am sorry if I offended you tonight. Let us talk tomorrow. Please know that I want nothing more than to be intimate with you, but we must wait for the time to be right. Until then know that I will dream of you, even when I am awake.” Lexa leaned forward and kissed Clarke gently on the forehead before exiting the tent. Clarke stood alone looking at the entrance to the tent and wasn’t sure if that had really happened or if she was just so drunk she was hallucinating. She crawled into her bed fully clothed and immediately fell asleep.

Lexa walked back to her own tent deep in thought. She knew what would be expected of her from her own people but she also wanted to please Clarke, to woo her. She realized she would have to talk to someone, Octavia perhaps, about the rituals required for a Sky Person’s union. She went to bed but her mind would not quiet down enough to allow sleep to come just yet. She formed a plan in her mind and only when she was satisfied with it did she allow herself to fall asleep.
Chapter Summary

Lexa starts to prepare a dowry for her proposal to Clarke but gets distracted on her way to hunt.

After a few short hours Lexa woke. Despite the lack of sleep and the drinks the prior evening she was clearheaded and in high spirits. First she would arrange everything she required to satisfy the customs of her people for the beginning of unity courtship. She dressed quickly and exited the tent with a sense of purpose and excitement growing in her belly.

She took an early morning walk from her village to the Ark, she scouted the land and walked the perimeter looking for the perfect spot. She would build a home for her and Clarke and she wanted to build it between the two settlements in hope that others would build nearby and create a new village mixed with the Tree Clan and the Sky People.

As she was contemplating the lay of the land she was joined silently by Indra and her second, Octavia. She turned to them and said in her own language, “I claim this land as my own. I will build a house here for my betrothed.” It was the first official statement of her intention and she was glad to make it to her top general. Indra’s reaction was key in gauging what her people’s reaction to this unity would be.

It was known that Clarke had been in a relationship with Finn and their hatred for him combined with Clarke not being a virgin could cause some of the Tree Clan to challenge the union. Traditionally anyone from another clan had to be a virgin in order to join the Commander in a union. She knew it was an old tradition that most would not care about but the ones who hated the Sky People could use it as an excuse to challenge the union. She was prepared to deal with that and silence all challenges.

“Yes Commander.” Was Indra’s only response, though she did not smile nor offer congratulations.

“No Commander.” Was Indra’s only response, though she did not smile nor offer congratulations.

“It is safer.” Indra knew her commander loved the golden haired Sky Princess and she also knew this union was the only way peace with the Sky People would work. She would not admit it out loud but she also approved of her choice. Lexa exhaled deeply, she hadn’t realized she had been holding her breath. If Indra would not challenge she thought most others would follow that lead.

“Clarke once told me that when we finally had peace she wanted to paint the sun as it rises over the lake. This spot will give her the perfect view to do just that.” The Commander spoke almost wistfully as she pictured the scene in her head. “I also hope that others from both camps will choose to build nearby and we can create a new village here.” She added.

“Shall I task some of your warriors to start the hunt Commander?” Indra asked knowing that part of the dowry the Commander was preparing would involve a great deal of meat.
“Yes, thank you Indra.” She looked her general in the eye and nodded her head to her they both knew the thanks was for her acceptance. “Tell them to prepare the rabbits, deer, and boar. Leave the bear for me, I will kill it myself. Have others prepare bushels of fruit and seeds. I want furs and swords as well. One for each council member. The dowry must be paid to her village,” She instructed. “And leave your second. I wish her counsel on Sky People unity traditions.”

“Of course Commander.” Indra bowed her head towards the Commander and turned back towards the camp to begin preparations.

Octavia didn’t wait to be asked, “You’ll need rings Commander” she stated plainly.

Clarke woke late in the morning with a terrible hangover. Her head pounded and her stomach was threatening to spill its contents if she moved at all. Her tent was spinning and she groaned out loud. As soon as she made a noise indicating that she was awake a voice called to her from just outside her tent. “Clarke of the Sky People, I am Nyko, the healer. The Commander has asked me to bring you something. May I enter?”

Clarke really didn’t want to see anyone, and certainly didn’t want anyone seeing her in this state but curiosity won and she allowed him entrance. He carried a small bottle with him and held it to her lips. It smelled of herbs and honey and didn’t make her want to vomit. “Drink” was all Nyko said. Clarke took the bottle gratefully and drank it all.

“What is it?” she asked.

“It is a cure for the sickness caused by celebrations.” He laughed. “You will start to feel better soon. Drink a lot of water today and sleep if you are not needed elsewhere.” He advised.

“What is Lexa?” Clarke asked shyly remembering the events of the previous night bashfully. “I would like to speak with her.”

“The Commander will be out of camp and she asked me to tell you that she will come to you when she returns.” Nyko answered. He handed her a water skin and turned to leave.

“Wait, where did she go? And when will she return?” Clarke asked hoping she didn’t sound as desperate as she felt.

Nyko turned his head and offered only a shrug of his shoulder and a nod as he left her tent.

Clarke drank some of the water and decided that more sleep would be a good idea. She rolled over and tried not to think about Lexa.

The Commander had cleared most of the trees and brush away from the build site by noon. She was joined by some of her people and she gave them instructions on what she wanted them to do. She then left them to work on the land as she returned to camp for her hunting bow and knives.

She saw that some of her hunters had already returned with several plump rabbits and two fine looking partridges. They were being prepared for the smokehouse and she also saw a dowry cart being built off to the side. Another hunter emerged from the woods with a large buck over his shoulders. He smiled at the Commander. “The hunt goes well Commander, the union will be blessed.” She favoured him with a smile and then mounted her horse and disappeared into the woods for her own hunt. She intended to kill a large bear today. The meat was considered the best for a
Lexa knew that usually a dowry of this size took several weeks to put together properly but she
would not wait that long to feel Clarke’s lips on her own. She feared that she could not wait, and if
that happened all would be lost. She was determined that this union would take place within one
week. She wondered if Clarke had woken yet and if so if Nyko’s potion had helped her get over the
hangover Lexa was sure she would have. She smiled at the thought of Clarke and rode deeper into
the forest where the larger more dangerous prey lived.

As she rode her thoughts strayed to Clarke. She thought of Clarke’s smile and of her lips. She
imagined how soft they would be. She pictured the large flat rock overlooking the lake where she
loved to sit and think in the hot summer evenings. It was very close to the place Lexa had chosen for
their dwelling. Suddenly an image sprang to her mind that made her inhale sharply. She could
imagine Clarke naked lying upon the rock in the moonlight. Her head was thrown back and her back
arched. She heard Clarke’s voice in her ear moaning her name. She licked her lips as she imagined
herself kneeling between Clarke’s legs and tasting what would soon be hers.

Suddenly a small animal darted from the bushes and spooked her horse a bit. She fought to stay on
and regain control. It would be embarrassing for the Commander of the twelve clans to be thrown
from her horse. When she did regain control she pulled on the reins, stopped the horse and
dismounted in one smooth fluid motion. Her lithe muscles quickly moving her in front of the animal
so she could calm him. She tied him to a tree and took out her water skin to drink.

She knew she needed to regain her focus before facing a bear. She would never have been caught
unaware by movements in the forest around her if it weren’t for the wicked thoughts that kept
creeping into her mind. She needed release, that would allow her to refocus. She knew that at least
four of her warriors would be tracking her, staying far enough back not to see or be seen but close
enough to hear any sounds of distress from her. She had to be quick and the throbbing between her
legs let her know that she certainly should have no problem finding release in a hurry.

She moved quickly to a small clearing close by. She spread her cape on the ground near a large tree
and lay down. She undid the leather ties of her pants and slid her hand down her hard, flat belly. She
bit her bottom lip and a groan rose to her throat unbidden. She pictured the scene in her head again,
Clarke’s smooth skin glowing in the moonlight, Lexa’s name on her lips.

Lexa’s hand found a wetness between her own legs she had never imagined she could produce, not
even with Costa had she been so obsessed with thoughts of sex. Her skilled fingers found what they
were looking for and she rubbed her clitoris in small quick circles. She imagined the taste of Clarke
on her tongue and Clarke’s thighs squeezing her head as she came. She imagined Clarke’s hands in
her hair pulling, as she brought her to her peak. She was quickly approaching her own peak and she
was arching up into her own hand. Alone on the floor of her forest she came, hard, and in one long
shuddering breath moaned Clarke’s name.

As her breathing started to steady she thought how ridiculous this situation was. She had never
allowed anything to distract her like this and reduce her to pleasuring herself in the middle of a hunt.
She laughed a short barking laugh and shook her head. “Sky Princess, we had better be joined soon
before I am distracted to my death” she spoke aloud into the forest.

Clarke had been back and forth between the Grounder’s camp and Camp Jaha three times already
since waking hangover free thanks to the Grounder medicine. She went to Lexa’s tent every time
only to be told the Commander was out hunting. She had also noticed that some Grounder’s were
clearing some ground near the lake but for some reason none answered her when she asked why.

Resigned she headed back to her tent and thought about the previous night. Had Lexa really walked her home. She had a faint memory of her there with sweet words on her lips. Clarke thought at once that Lexa was not one for sweet words and that must have been a dream. The truth was Lexa had rejected her advances last night and that was probably the end of it. Lexa may have even gone out hunting to avoid Clarke today, after all Lexa hated discussions. Especially ones about feelings, and she probably assumed Clarke would seek her out to talk about last night. She couldn’t figure out why Lexa had sent her healer to her in the morning but she assumed it must have been peace offering. A ‘no hard feelings’ parting gift. She sighed heavily and in her distraction almost bumped into her mother.

“Mom!” she started. “I’m sorry I didn’t see you. I’m just a little distracted today.”


“No!, I mean yes… but don’t worry I will push my feelings for her away and get over them. I won’t let this ruin our alliance.” Clarke squared he shoulders and set her jaw with determination.

“Clarke. What are you talking about?” Her mother asked, taking Clarke’s hand with concern.

“Mom, everyone saw last night that Lexa obviously does not return my feelings. I know when to give up. Don’t worry.” Clarke said with a hint of sadness betraying her voice.

“Clarke…. what did Lexa say to you when she walked you home last night?” Abby asked, starting to feel anger bubbling up. If Lexa had hurt her daughter after the conversation they had had she would not be pleased.

“What!” Clarke asked a little too loudly. “Walked me home? That really happened?”

“Yes of course.” Realization dawned on Abby. “You don’t remember,” it was a statement not a question.

Embarrassed Clarke shook her head and quietly added “Sort of, but I don’t remember what she said. It feels like it was a dream.” She admitted.

“Jasper’s whiskey?” Abby asked. Clarke nodded. Abby frowned and made a mental note to either shut down the still or set some clear rules about consumption. “Well Clarke, she continued. I don’t know what was said but I saw her come out of your tent last night. After she left I went in to check on you and you were already asleep. I think before you jump to any conclusions you should talk to Lexa.”

Clarke agreed and in her head she was already trying desperately to remember what Lexa had said. She thought she remembered a chaste kiss on her forehead and feeling safe and happy. She thought she remembered sweet promises on the lips of the one she loved. She shook her head realizing her mother was right, she had to talk to Lexa. “I will talk to her.” Clarke said with determination. “Just as soon as she gets back from this damn hunt.”

Abby smiled a mother’s smile at the mention of the hunt. “She’s out hunting, is she? I wonder whatever for? Indra told me the smokehouses were almost full for the coming winter.” She grinned at the look of confusion on her daughter’s face.

“Mom, do you know something…” Clarke asked.
“I love you Clarke. Trust me when I say calm down and talk to Lexa.” Abby reached out and lightly pinched her daughter’s chin with her thumb. She bent over and kissed Clark on the cheek. “Now if you will excuse me I have some Chancellor business to attend to.” She walked off leaving Clarke deep in thought.

Clarke allowed hope to bloom in the pit of her stomach and decided to find her friends and see if she could find something to do to help them and be productive. She wanted to take her mind off of waiting for Lexa.

Deep in the forest Lexa was breathing heavily from the fight with the very large bear she was now sitting triumphantly on top of. She had yelled her victory call into the night air and knew that her warriors would have heard it and would come soon to help her skin and clean the kill. She felt exhilarated from the chase and the kill. The bear had been a mighty opponent and had almost caught Lexa with its powerful paws more than once. She had escaped with only a few minor cuts on her body and the bear would make good blanket for the bed she would soon be sharing with her beloved.

As four men stepped into the clearing she rose from her perch and smiled a feral smile at her warriors. She spoke to them in Trigetasling “My kill is good” she said.

“Your kill is good, it will bless your union,” they said respectfully, staring a the large vicious creature that the Commander had killed with nothing more than her bow and a dagger. She gave them orders of what to do with the bear and left them to it. She wanted to see Clarke. She mounted her horse and rode for camp.
Lexa answers Clarke's questions and Clarke reveals a secret.

Even though it was late when she returned she went looking and found Clarke bent over Raven’s workbench trying in futility to get a radio working. Her hair was falling in her eyes and she had such a look of concentration on her face that Lexa stopped to watch for a minute musing over how adorable Clarke looked. “Sky Princess,” she said loudly finally stepping into the room. Clarke jumped a bit, startled by her sudden appearance.

“Lexa!” She exclaimed. “You startled me,” she blushed.

“Yes. You should be more aware of your surroundings Clarke,” Lexa said earnestly. “I could have killed you before you even noticed me.” Losing her last love to such a violent death made her overprotective and she needed Clarke to take more caution.

“I know, you have told me many times how loud and unaware I am.” Clarke rolled her eyes, but seeing Lexa's worried expression she softened. "I'm just not sure how to concentrate on something if I always have to be wary of what might come out of nowhere to attack me,” she sighed and looked steadfastly at Lexa’s boots, refusing to meet the other woman’s eyes. “I’ll try to do better,” she offered. Clarke’s pulse was racing. She wasn’t sure what had passed between them last night and she didn’t know how to act with Lexa right now.

“I will teach you,” Lexa promised. “And I will not allow harm to come to you while you are at my side. So perhaps my side is the best place for you, no?” Lexa smiled at Clarke and moved forward to take her hands. She ran her thumb across Clarke’s knuckles and then raised Clarke’s hand to her mouth to place a gentle kiss on the back of her hand.

Clarke inhaled sharply and butterflies exploded in her stomach. Her mouth hung open and she stared wide eyed at Lexa. Lexa tilted her head to the side and eyed Clarke with curiosity. “What is wrong?” she asked. Her question more a command than anything.

Clarke swallowed hard. “… well I don’t really … um…” she stammered not knowing how to tell Lexa that she had no idea what was happening between them or what had happened in her tent last night.

“Speak plainly Clarke. Do not fear me,” Lexa picked up on Clarke’s nervousness and she did not like seeing this confidant, beautiful woman stumbling over her words.

Clarke took a deep breath and squared her shoulders. Lexa was right. Clarke had been the one to forge the alliance between her peoples and had led an Army into battle alongside this women. She trusted Lexa and forced herself to speak her heart with a steady voice. “When I woke up this morning your healer gave me some medicine. Thank you for your kindness, I was in a lot of pain. I drank too much last night. After you rejected my kiss I tried to drown my feelings.” Lexa winced visibly at this last remark giving Clarke more courage to continue. “When I woke up I thought I remembered you in my tent last night saying sweet things to me. But I think maybe it was a dream. I don’t know what you want. I don’t know where we stand. If your rejection was real I promise I will
not dishonour you by pursuing you again. I will continue to work for peace between our people and I will always be your friend.” Lexa started to speak and Clarke shushed her thinking in the back of her mind that might be the first time anyone had EVER shushed the Commander. The thought made her smile and she continued. “Even if that is true I want you to know how I feel. I love you Lexa. I am in love with you.” Clarke fell silent and looked away from the woman in front of her feeling too vulnerable to look into Lexa’s eyes.

Lexa had known how Clarke felt but hearing the words from the beauty’s mouth made her eyes burn and threaten tears. She wanted to speak but found a lump in her throat. She cleared her throat and took a deep breath. “Thank you Clarke,” she said simply, softly. “I was indeed in your tent last night. That was no dream. I am sorry that you did not remember and that you went through this day feeling such turmoil. Had I known I would have visited you before I left camp.”

“Yes, how was your hunt” Clarke asked feeling nervous about hearing more, feeling like Lexa was going to tell her everything was OK but still scared that she would tell her they had to remain friends.

Lexa smirked and arched an eyebrow in such a sultry way Clarke’s knees felt weak. “Do you doubt my prowess?” Lexa teased purposefully running her eyes down Clarke’s body with a lascivious look on her face.

Clarke shook her head no and swallowed hard she felt her stomach tie in knots and a blush creep up her neck to claim her cheeks. Lexa took a step closer to Clarke and continued speaking. “My hunt was successful. I killed a very large bear.” Her head was held high and she was oozing sexuality. She knew the effect she was having on Clarke and she was enjoying every second of it. She moved closer still and leaned in to whisper in Clarke’s ear. “I did have a problem on the way to the hunting grounds. This type of thing had never happened to me before, but I was very distracted with thoughts…. thoughts of you Clarke.”

Clarke was shuddering now and goosebumps erupted along her arms. “What thoughts?” she managed to squeak out.

“Naughty thoughts Clarke, very naughty. I had to stop in the middle of the forest to regain my focus before the hunt. Do you want to know how I did that Clarke?” she purred into Clarke’s ear. Clarke’s voice failed her so she stood rooted to the spot and nodded her head. “I needed release Clarke. The thoughts of you had sprung a river between my legs and I needed to quell the passion so I could think clearly.” She reached out and took Clarke’s hands into hers and started to slowly run her hands up Clarke’s arms as she continued. “I laid down on the forest floor Clarke and I slid my hand into the fire that was burning in my loins. A fire started by mere thoughts of you Clarke. I pleasured myself and I cried your name into the night.”

Clarke felt heat rise between her own legs and she was trembling with desire. “You touched yourself?” Clarke closed her eyes and imagined the scene. “Oh God,” she breathed. “Lexa does this mean..?”

Lexa took a step back a feral grin slashed across her beautiful features. “It means I want you too Clarke.” She knew she was again on dangerous ground so when Clarke started to step forward she grabbed her by both arms and stopped her. Her grip was firm but she took care not to hurt Clarke. “It means that I love you too Clarke. I’m sorry for teasing you just now but you are just so sexy I couldn’t help myself.” Her grin softened into a smile and she took Clarke’s hand and lead her over to two chairs by the wall. “Sit” she commanded. She sat next to Clarke and took her hand. “Clarke, as the Commander my situation is complicated. Since you are not of my clan this is also complicated. If I take you as a lover you are subjugated to me, that can not happen. You are my equal Clarke. There is a way for us to be together. Please trust that I am working to make that happen… quickly,” she
added with a smile, “before I have to stop in the woods again.” Clarke blushed once more and Lexa loved watching the red creep up and bloom onto her face. “Until I have made the arrangements we must not engage in any acts of passion or lovemaking.” She looked into Clarke’s eyes to make sure she understood.

“Including kissing.” Clarke understood.

“Correct,” Lexa agreed. “I know it might seem silly to you but it is the way of my people. Trust me Clarke, I will make this happen. In the meantime perhaps you should follow my lead to relive your tension.” Lexa once again had a sexy smirk on her face and allowed her gaze to lustily roam Clarke’s body.

“You mean…?” Clarke gulped. Feeling like she should share something with Lexa. She was inexperienced except for some making out with Finn and she wanted Lexa to know. She was scared to disappoint her, scared she wouldn’t know how to please her. She had never seen this side of Lexa, she was always so stoic and calm. Clarke was now realizing how passionate and sexual Lexa was under her iron clad commander mask. “I wouldn’t really know where to start.” She admitted embarrassed.

“You have never given yourself pleasure?” Lexa’s question held no judgement.

“No.” Clarke answered still embarrassed.

“Then take your lead from what other’s have done to you. Ways your lovers have touched you.” Lexa offered trying to be helpful.

“Lexa, I still don’t know…” she trailed off not wanting to say it.

“Was the boy, Finn, such a poor lover?” Lexa asked not comprehending.

“No! I mean he was gentle and he did touch me a little but never there…”

“Clarke” Lexa’s blood rushed loudly in her ears. “What are you saying?” she needed clarification.

“I’m a virgin.” Clarke said looking away in embarrassment “I want to please you, but I’m not sure I know how. I’m sorry” she finished.

Tears formed in Lexa’s eyes and Clarke was shocked by the sight of them. “Lexa…” she said softly.

“What is it? Is it a bad thing for us?”

Lexa dropped to her knees in front of Clarke. “No Clarke, it is not bad. You intend to honour me by giving me your blood?” she choked on the question.

Clarke was feeling overwhelmed and relived. “Yes.” was all she could manage her own eyes filling with tears.

“A woman’s first time, the willing giving of her blood is sacred to my people.” Lexa explained. “I hope it does not dishonour you that I can not offer you the same.”

“No! I mean I’m glad one of us will know what she’s doing,” Clarke joked and smiled at Lexa. The two women’s eyes met and they both started laughing.

Just then Raven walked in. “Commander,” she respectful greeted Lexa who stood immediately. “Clarke if you can’t get that part working don’t worry, I’m not even sure it can be fixed she admitted. You just seemed to really need a distraction earlier.” She grinned sheepishly at Clarke.
“That's ok Raven. I did appreciate the distraction,” Clarke admitted. “But I skipped dinner and now I am feeling hungry. If The Commander will accompany me I think I will go and find some food.” She rose from the chair and held out her hand to Lexa. Lexa took Clarke’s hand and they walked out together.

“So holding hands is OK?” Clarke asked.

“Here yes, but we should probably not in my camp. For now,” she added. “Come Clarke, it is late but there will be food at the camp for the night watch as they come and go. We will eat.”

She led Clarke along the path to her camp and as they passed the smaller path that led to the build site of their future dwelling Clarke asked. “Lexa, I walked up that way earlier and some of your warriors seemed to be preparing to build something. Do you know what it is?” She asked curiously.

“Of course Clarke, I am the Commander.” Lexa’s reply was absolute, “I know everything that happens.” Clarke found the self assurance sexy but slightly maddening.

“Well, all knowing Commander,” she mocked lovingly, “what is it then?”

“Patience Clarke,” she replied ending the conversation. Clarke turned to look at her ready to be irritated but the happy grin that Lexa was unsuccessfully trying to keep off of her face was enough to make Clarke smile too.

They walked the rest of the way in silence reluctantly dropping each other’s hands as they approached the Grounder camp.

While Clarke ate Lexa got updates from her people in their language. She smiled and realized how quickly her people were working on the dowry meant their approval. She sighed a happy sigh and watched Clarke eat.
Lexa has prepared the dowry and now she will choose her bride.

By noon the next day the cart for the dowry had been fashioned and bushels of peaches, apples, and figs had been loaded. Seeds that would be needed next spring for the planting season were next to go on the cart and there were six beautifully made swords and leather scabbards. The one for Abby had a special sheath woven with beautiful designs. Several boars and deer were being smoked in the smokehouse and would be added right before delivery. Their skins were being made into blankets and coats that would also be added to the cart. The bear skin had been cured and was soon to be made into a blanket. The house was almost ready for the roof to be added. Things were progressing nicely. Lexa was deep in thought about the things she had learned from Octavia. She had sent out a party to a neighbouring clan immediately after speaking with the newest member of her clan. They had a strong alliance with them and Luna’s Clan was known for their jewellery. She was sure Luna would be pleased to forge rings for the union of the Tree Clan’s Commander. Her only worry was how long it would take, she had never felt such impatience.

As if in response to the growl of frustration she uttered two of the riders from the party she had sent to the coast arrived, dismounted, and bowed their heads respectfully. “Heda,” they waited for the Commander to acknowledge them.

“Speak.” was her sharp reply.

“News from the Clan of the Boat People, Commander. The rings are being forged with haste and in 3 days will be delivered by Luna herself. She wishes to see your ceremony and celebrate with you, she also wishes to have clothes made for you and your chosen one for the ceremony.” The Boat People’s Clan had a strong alliance with one much further south than Lexa had yet to visit. That clan grew a strange plant that they somehow made into beautiful soft cloth. Lexa was sure that Clarke would be pleased. "Her entourage promises to bring gifts of food from the sea, drink, and gifts for the newly joined," her warrior finished.

“Excellent. Thank you. Dismissed.” Lexa’s words were curt but soft and the look of satisfaction she favoured her men with made them proud.

Lexa went over her plan in her head. She would deliver the dowry tomorrow and propose the union to Clarke. They would have two days to prepare for the ritual. It would be tight but she was confidant. She spent the rest of the afternoon working on her house and overseeing details at the field where the ceremony would be held. She had chosen a beautiful field near the lake that her people had used for celebrations in the past. She had the altar arranged right in front of the lake and the bridal tent set up off to the side. She shivered in anticipation of what would happen in that tent.

As evening approached she returned to her camp and found Clarke waiting for her. “Have you waited long?” She apologized.

“No, I knew you would be busy so I kept myself busy in Camp Jaha all day too. I thought we could eat together so I came here a little while ago.” Clarke had been dying to see Lexa all day and now she hungrily drank in the sight of her. Lexa looked so young without her war paint and Clarke
suddenly realized she had no idea how old Lexa was. “Can I ask you a personal question?” At this point in their relationship it seemed strange to ask but she wasn’t sure how Lexa would respond.

“I am glad you came,” Lexa smiled. “And you can ask me anything Clarke.” She took Clarke’s hand and led her over to a nearby table. With a gesture of her hand two plates filled with a delicious cooked root vegetable and some meat appeared in front of them. “I must warn you though, if I do not wish to answer you, I will not.” Lexa was teasing Clarke again with a smug grin on her face.

“You are terrible, you know that?” Clarke shook her head but smiled. “I just realized that I don’t know how old you are.”

“I have seen 20 summers.” Lexa replied.

“Well, I’ve only seen one so maybe you’re little old for me?” Clarke laughed at her joke and made a face at Lexa.

It never failed to amuse Lexa how easily she could cause so much embarrassment to Clarke, and since she enjoyed making the blonde blush more than just about anything she could think of she leaned toward Clarke and spoke in a low voice with a wolfish grin tainting her features, “Don’t worry Clarke, even in my advanced age I am a remarkable lover. You will never want for satisfaction no matter how many summers I see. Do not doubt my….”

“I know, I know do not doubt your prowess!” Clarke interrupted her, blushing as red as the apples on the table. She fanned her face to cool the blush and tried to change the subject to escape the teasing before she died of embarrassment. “I took a look at the mystery building again, it’s going up fast. I saw some walls already.”

“Clarke, please stay away from there,” Lexa answered exasperated.

“Why?” Clarke looked triumphant thinking she had Lexa admitting a clue, “Is it something I shouldn’t see yet?”

“No. I ask you for my men. I am sure you just distract them from their work with your nosiness,” Lexa quipped refusing to give up a clue. “If they do not finish on schedule their Commander is sure to be displeased. Do you want to see them punished because of your curiosity?” Lexa knew she had won and looked at Clarke with such a cocky expression that Clarke vowed to find a way to knock her down a peg or two very soon. Clarke decided that knowledge was power and when she considered the way Lexa insisted on teasing her she thought of a plan. She smiled and looked at the woman she loved. So brave, so strong, and as Clarke was coming to learn, also sweet, funny, and quite possibly the sexiest woman alive.

When they finished eating Lexa held out her hand “Come, Clarke, It is late and you should sleep. Tomorrow will be a long day. Let me walk you home.”

They walked in comfortable silence joining hands as soon as they were out of the camp. When they arrived at Clarke’s tent Lexa stopped outside. “I will leave you here tonight, I dare not go inside with you for fear I would lose control.” she raised her eyebrow suggestively and smiled at Clarke.

“I understand,” Clarke smiled back blushing yet again. “Will you join me for breakfast tomorrow?” she asked hopefully.

“I cannot, I will be very busy again tomorrow.” Lexa answered seriously. “I will come to you just before dusk. Wait in the gathering area of Camp Jaha for me,” she raised her hand to tenderly brush Clarke’s cheek. “Sleep well my Sky Princess,” she turned and was gone so quickly Clarke stared in
awe. She was reminded that sweet and funny Lexa may be, but her eerily silent way of moving was borne of long practice and many kills. Instead of feeling fear, revulsion, or pity as she used to for the Grounders, she felt a sense of pride. The woman who had united the twelve tribes, defeated the mountain men, and forged peace with the Sky People was in love with her. She smiled a cocky smile and thought of her newly hatched plan. Whenever Lexa had finished with her secret plan and sorted everything out so that they could be together she was going to make the great Commander lose that unflinching self control. She would make her beg, make her body sing, and her mind forget everything except for what Clarke would be doing to her.

The next morning Lexa woke early and oversaw the construction on the roof of the simple house that she was to share with Clarke. She had her bed moved from her tent and gathered furs and the beautiful new bear skin blanket that had come from her hunt. Killing a bear by oneself was a traditional show of strength and prowess and was considered an impressive addition to a dowry. Any woman’s clan would be impressed if a suitor came calling with a dowry including a bear. The head of the animal would be hoisted at the front of the cart and the size of the jaws were an indication of the strength the suitor. The bear Lexa had killed was extremely large. She had seen few larger in all of her hunts. Even if the Sky People did not understand she knew that when her people saw the size of the beast’s head respect for their commander would grow.

There were many other preparations that she had to see to around the camp ensuring that the ceremony was to be perfect, and more importantly, on time. When she was happy with the way things were developing she called Indra to her. “I am leaving now to find gifts for Clarke.” Indra knew of what she spoke. “I would like some fresh flowers added to the cart and placed into the house while I am gone. Hyacinth,” Indra showed no sign of her surprise for the Commander’s romantic actions and only nodded strongly.

As Lexa left the camp she mentally went over everything again making sure she had left nothing to chance. She rode through the forest with her entourage for over an hour wondering how Clarke would react to the gift she would give her. There was a place with many old bunkers built near each other into the ground almost like some sad doomed village. Her people didn’t like the bunkers and normally stayed far away from the area. Superstition ran deep in the Grounder’s culture and they thought the bunkers were haunted. Knowing her men did not want to stay any longer than necessary Lexa moved quickly in and out of several bunkers picking up things here and there and moving on. When she was done she had several books that had been well preserved in the air tight bunkers. She also had some pens, pencils, and ink for Clarke. In one bunker she had found some paints, brushes and several large empty sketch books. She decided she had enough and as she was leaving the last bunker something else caught her eye. It was a large white box that had a red cross on it. She had seen a similar symbol in the Ark’s medical area. Abby might find this useful and the thought of impressing Clarke’s mother pleased her. She grabbed the box and left the bunker. While the pile of gifts was being divided and placed carefully into the saddle bags of her warriors, a quick look at the sun told Lexa that she had enough time to return to her camp, check on the final preparations and bathe in the hot springs before going to Camp Jaha.

Three hours later everything was ready. Lexa was ready. She was dressed in her finest armour, her sword was in an intricately woven and bejewelled sheath, she had no war paint as it was tradition for one to show her true face for proposals. She looked beautiful, powerful and awe inspiring. She walked proudly to her spot at the head of the procession. It was time to make her proposal to Clarke official. She smiled in the hope that Clarke did not expect such a grandiose proposal and would be surprised and delighted.
As they approached Camp Jaha Lexa noticed with satisfaction that all of the Sky People seemed to have turned out to see what was happening. Rumours had been flying about her and Clarke since the night of the celebration but no one knew for certain what the relationship was. She noticed their awestruck faces as Lexa passed them, she was in full Commander mode and knew how intimidating a figure she cut, especially being followed by such a large entourage. She commanded the attention of everyone but had eyes for only one.

Clarke was talking with her mother in the gathering area when she heard the murmuring of the people near the gate. Her stomach clenched and adrenalin raced through her veins. She knew it was Lexa but she had no idea what to expect. As the entourage came into her view her breath caught her throat. “Mom, what is all this?” she wondered aloud.

“I suspect this is what Lexa has been so busy with the last few days, dear.” She moved over to put her arm around Clarke who stood in awe watching the both sexy and imposing figure of the woman she loved approaching her with a cart filled with gifts. “And I imagine this is some sort of gift”

As soon as Lexa was close enough the two locked eyes. Lexa noticed that Clarke had changed from her normal clothes into a soft blue dress. The sight of her in that dress just made Lexa want to tear it off her. Clarke could barely breathe looking at Lexa. She was magnificent.

“Sky People,” Lexa announced projecting her voice to everyone with no trouble. Her voice was confident and rang with authority. “I am Lexa, Commander of the twelve clans. I bring you gifts for payment of a dowry.” Immediately her people grabbed the swords and presented them to the council members, one warrior handing Abby’s sword to Lexa as he passed. “Weapons of steel for your leaders.” Lexa stepped up to Abby and took a knee. She bowed her head once to Abby and then held up the sword in both hands. “Steel and beauty for the mother of my beloved, for that is what you have instilled in Clarke. She has steel in her veins to lead at my side and beauty enough to take away my very breath,” she said with devotion. Lexa’s eyes never left Abby’s and Abby was moved by the reverence in her words.

“It was forged by my best blacksmith, it is deadly and yet beautiful and light. I present this to you with the promise that I shall care for your daughter until my body burns and my spirit moves to another. I also agree that you may use it to cut out my heart should I break that promise.” Abby laughed remembering those were her words at the celebration just two nights before.

“Thank you.” Abby smiled at Lexa. “It is a beautiful sword. And a beautiful promise. Take care of her.”

Lexa rose and continued addressing the Sky People “I bring you food for celebration and for your winter stores, I bring you seeds to plant in spring. I bring you the promise that your people will always have food. I bring you furs to warm you and the promise that you will always be protected. By taking one of your clan in union I am not only joining our two lives, I am joining our clans. You are my people now and are under my protection. I will allow your clan council to rule you as they see fit here in your camp, and our peoples will live together in peace. If we learn about each other together we will thrive.” The Sky People cheered at Lexa’s words most finally feeling like maybe they could actually survive here on Earth with the protection of the Tree Clan.

Lexa turned to her people. “I am the Commander.” She spoke in Trigedasleg not realizing Octavia had slid in next to Clarke and was translating quietly for Clarke and Abby. “A dowry has been paid and it is my right to claim any woman I wish. I claim her and bring peace between our people. There is no more them and us there is only we. This is a union of equals and you will obey my chosen one as you would me. It will be important to teach the Sky People our ways but to also learn their ways. In that spirit I tell you that the Sky People’s tradition says every woman has the right to accept or
refuse any proposal, even a Commander’s.” She turned to Clarke who seemed to be staring into her very soul. She looked into the beautiful clear blue eyes and moved forward to take Clarke’s hands in hers. “Clarke of the Sky People, will you consent to joining with me in an unbreakable union of our lives? This union will be one of hearts, minds and bodies. We will promise to live as one until fire releases our spirit’s from our bodies. Do you accept?” Lexa’s voice carried through the whole camp and then she did as Octavia had said and knelt on one knee and added softly just for Clarke, “Will you marry me?”

Clarke wasn’t sure what the appropriate way to answer was but her heart was bursting with joy so she pulled Lexa to her feet, threw herself into her betrothed surprised arms, and clutched her tight. Their peoples shared a laugh at the beautiful blonde’s exuberance and even Lexa smiled happily. Clarke regained her composure and took a step back projecting her voice as Lexa had. “I accept your proposal and willingly join you in this union.” She addressed Lexa solemnly for all to hear and then turned to the Grounders. Octavia translated for her earning a respectful appraisal from Lexa. “My people, I promise to help Heda rule you fairly, justly, and with love. The Sky People’s weapons and technology will be used to help you prosper. As you protect us we will protect you.” As Octavia finished translating Clarke tuned to the people of the Ark. “This union will bring a lasting peace and a lot of change to us. We will have to open our hearts to our new clan. We will need to learn what it means to live on Earth. The Tree Clan can teach us to prepare for winter, to grow crops in spring, and to hunt and to protect ourselves. We can teach them science and share our technology. This will make us all stronger.” Her people cheered loudly.

She turned back to Lexa. “Yes, I will marry you,” She smiled happily.

Lexa stepped forward beside Clarke and grabbed Clarke’s left hand in her right. She raised their hands together and shouted loudly in Trigedaslag “She is mine!” Upon hearing the traditional words that solidified the betrothal the grounders cheer was loud and happy. She turned to face Clarke and smiled softly. “I have a gift for you as well my betrothed,” she turned her head and shouted to her people, “Bring it forth.” A large wooden box was brought forward and Lexa felt heat rising to her face. She was blushing in nervous anticipation, would Clarke like her gift…?

Clarke stepped forward and opened the cover. She gasped in surprise. “Books! And supplies for painting and drawing! Where did you find this? Oh Lexa, thank you!” She turned and hugged Lexa. “May I kiss you yet?” she asked with a small pout that Lexa found adorable.

“Not yet Clarke, have patience. Three days from now we join,” she smiled at Clarke whose jaw had just dropped open.

Abby, who had been standing by overheard and jumped in. “Three days!? To plan a wedding!?"

Clarke interrupted with the same concern. “I’m glad you want to make this happen quickly,” she said, “but what about the preparations, what will I wear? Can we get enough food for the feast? Where will the ceremony be? What do I have to do? Where will we live?” She felt a slight panic creep into her mind.

Lexa laughed at the two women and responded winking at Clarke, “Doubting my prowess again Clarke?” she purred.

Clarke punched her lightly on the arm while Abby couldn’t help but laugh. “You know I don’t. Now answer my questions please.”

“Very well Sky Princess. The preparations for the ceremony are well in hand. Everything will be taken care of. Your dress is being fashioned by another clan who are known for their skill in weaving soft garments. As to where we will live, come with me.” She held out her hand and
motioned for her warriors to walk ahead of them. The sun had just gone down and the Grounders lit torches and headed toward the path. Lexa turned to Clarke, “Your mother and your friends may accompany us,” she invited.

Clarke looked at her friends and Raven, Octavia, and Bellamy nodded excitedly wondering what else Lexa had prepared. Abby smiled and nodded as well and they all turned and followed the Grounders down the path towards the new house. When they walked into the clearing Clarke gasped. “Lexa, you built this for us!!?” She was blown away by how fast the dwelling had been completed.

“I built some of it, but I had many other things to prepare so my people took care of most of it. It is a good house Clarke, strong and warm. Does it please you?”

Clarke walked in to the simple house, there were only two rooms but it was all they would need. There was a window overlooking the lake and the large bed in the far corner of the back room that caught Clarke’s eye. She blushed thinking of what would happen there in just a few days. “It’s perfect,” she breathed.

Abby was impressed and complimented Lexa on the dwelling. She wondered if Lexa would like for other dwellings to be built nearby. She was proud to have such a thoughtful and powerful woman marrying her daughter. Bellamy looked around and noticed the bear fur blanket. “Is that from the same bear as the head on the dowry cart?” He asked, awe touching his voice. “That thing was huge! Did you kill it?” He asked Lexa.

“Oh course,” was her self assured reply.

Clarke really took in the size of the thing for the first time. “Lexa, it really is huge. You could have been killed!” she exclaimed in horror.

Lexa smirked, Clarke just made it too easy for her. “Clarke, why do you continue to doubt my prowess when I have proven many times that you should not. Perhaps after the night of our joining you will no longer have any doubt?” Lexa purred the last part to Clarke quietly but Octavia overheard and laughed out loud at the Commander’s sexy joke. They both smiled at Clarke who was once again blushing a deep crimson.

Raven echoed Abby’s thoughts. “Commander?” she asked shyly at first but bolstered by Lexa’s open expression as she turned toward her. “Would it be ok for other’s to build similar dwellings in between the camps? I mean near this house?” She asked. “People from both camps of course. Maybe make a real mixed village…?” She hoped Lexa would approve.

“Yes Raven. I think that is a very good idea.” She looked at Abby. “Chancellor, bring your people out from the fallen Ark. A metal box might be a good home in the stars but it is not on the ground. We will show you how to build homes and live on the ground. There will be many of my people who insist on living next to Clarke and I for our protection but I would also like to see Sky People in the village that will grow out from our home.” She turned to Octavia. “You are paired with Lincoln.” It was not a question and Octavia understood merely holding the Commander’s gaze and allowing her to continue. “He is welcome in our village and I will no longer allow for him to suffer the title of ‘traitor’. It would please me if you two built your own dwelling close to ours,” she glanced at Bellamy and added, “and your brother as well. He should live close by. My generals will be close and so should Clarke’s.”

Octavia knew how much that would mean to Lincoln and she bowed respectfully. “Yes Heda, this will please Lincoln, we would be honoured.”
“I would be honoured as well.” Bellamy told her, his chest puffed out with pride at being called Clarke’s general.

When everyone finished looking around and talking they left Clarke and Lexa for some time alone. The two women stood in the middle of their house facing each other both hands joined. “Lexa, today was perfect. I am so happy. Thank you for all of the gifts and the preparations. I asked Lincoln a few questions yesterday about marriage traditions. He wouldn’t answer my questions directly, I suspect for fear of ruining your surprise, but he did tell me that the one chosen by the Commander would normally present gifts to the Commander and her clan at the ceremony. I don’t know what kind of gifts are appropriate and I’m damn sure the council doesn’t have a clue,” she laughed but got serious again, “I don’t want to do anything to cause problems with the ceremony or insult your people, please tell me what to prepare.”

Lexa turned to Clarke and cupped her chin in her hands, “Clarke, your gift to me is your blood. A union between a Commander and an equal from another clan is very rare. If you were from my own clan, or below me in rank it would be different. But you are a woman who leads her clan as I lead mine. You lead your army into battle at my side and we defeated an enemy who had lived off of my people’s blood for as long as we can remember. My people see you as my equal and they will be honoured when we announce that not only are we joining but there is to be a blood bonding at our ceremony. That is the greatest gift I can receive. You must not prepare a large dowry like mine or you imply that your blood is not an honourable gift and cast doubt on your purity.”

“You’re telling me that we have to announce to EVERYONE at our wedding that I am a virgin?”

Clarke’s face was already red with embarrassment.

Lexa looked perplexed, “Why do your people think it is bad to be a virgin?” she was honestly confused by Clarke’s lack of pride in her virginity. “My people live passionately, we fight hard, and we survive. Sex is a normal part of life for us. We do not frown on it or feel embarrassed by it and we do not require our women to wait for a union, most do not. When a woman joins with another as we will, offering her blood is a very great honour for her betrothed. Because our union is unbreakable and infidelity is not allowed I know that I will be the only one to ever enjoy the pleasure of your flesh. It is the most beautiful gift you could give me and my people will weep with joy for me when it is announced. Please tell your council not to belittle that gift by preparing things such as I did.”

Clarke felt pride grow inside her as Lexa spoke with such veneration about her being a virgin. She was also happy with the thought that her body would now and always belong to only Lexa. “I understand. I will make sure of it,” she said leaning in to hug Lexa needing to feel her fiancée’s strong arms around her.

Lexa held close her and kissed the top of her head. “We should go Clarke, people will be watching us to make sure we do not have intimate contact before we are joined,” she smiled and took Clarke’s hand. “I will escort you back to your tent and tomorrow I will join you for breakfast. I will explain everything that we need to do in the next few days and help you prepare for the ceremony.” Clarke nodded and sighed contentedly.
The next morning Lexa showed up for breakfast as promised. She smiled at Clarke as she came out of her tent, greedily enjoying the sight of the woman she would be joined to. “I would like for your mother, Kane, Raven, and your general to join us for breakfast.” Lexa went ahead and oversaw two of her people preparing the meat she had brought for the breakfast meal and setting up a table. Abby and Kane came out of the Ark and sat down with her. Lexa, at the head of the table, motioned for Abby to sit on her left and Kane to sit on her right. When Clarke, Bellamy and Raven arrived she gestured for Clarke to claim the opposite end of the table with her general on her right and her engineer on her left. When they were all seated Lexa sat and addressed them formally. “I am here to explain what you can expect from the next few days and the weeks after that. My camp is preparing a field just east of here, next to the lake, as the place for our ceremony. I believe you will find it to be a place of great beauty,” her eyes held Clarke's as she spoke. "There will be a feast prepared and tents arranged. All of this will be ready by tomorrow evening, Abby as the mother of my chosen one you may go and oversee the arrangement. You have my authority to change things and add your own traditions where you see fit. The only thing you cannot change is the altar where we will take our vows and the bridal tent that will be nearby.”

“Thank you Lexa that is very thoughtful you,” she smiled warmly at the young woman before her.

Lexa nodded at her but did not smile. She was all business this morning. Clarke watched her with a small smirk knowing that her stoic expression belied nervousness. It warmed her heart to know that Lexa was also feeling nervous. Lexa continued, “Kane, at the beginning of the ceremony an elder of my clan will bless our union and the joining of our people. I would like you to speak as well. Although Abby is Chancellor, as Clarke’s mother she will have to be by Clarke's side until the final ceremony begins and she gives her daughter to me.”

“It would be a pleasure and an honour.” He smiled as he agreed.

“Bellamy and Raven.” Lexa continued. “Indra is my number one general. She and her second will stand behind me for the ceremony. I believe you two should do that for Clarke.”

“Shouldn’t she pick her own best man?” Raven snipped, not liking how much control Lexa already seemed to assume over Clarke’s decisions.

“Actually, I agree with Raven, it is my choice,” Clarke interrupted. “I just also happen to agree with you. Bellamy, Raven will you stand with me?” she asked looking at her two dear friends with affection.

Lexa cut them off before they could answer. "I am… sorry.” she paused over the word, not used to apologizing to anyone for anything. “It was not my intention to disrespect my betrothed,” she addressed Raven and then looked at Clarke. “Clarke, you are my equal and I would not stop you from choosing, I only presumed to do so because of the duties involved. Part of the ceremony involves an open call for any challenges to the union. Anyone from either group can challenge Clarke’s honour or mine. The challenge must be answered with a fight, sometimes to the death.” She
looked at Bellamy, “It would be you who would fight for Clarke’s honour as Indra and Octavia would fight for mine. I do not expect any challenges, but I do think you would be best suited to handle the duty.” Her level green eyes and always unflinching demeanour impressed Bellamy and he felt proud that she thought him capable of the duty.

“It will stand behind Clarke and defend her honour to the death.” Bellamy said fiercely.

“As will I,” echoed Raven and then she added, “You’d better not lose if there is a challenge Bellamy.” Everyone laughed as Raven’s joke cut the tension and even Lexa seemed to relax a little bit, pleased that they all accepted their duties.

“On the morning of the joining some of my people will come for you, your mother, and Raven.” Continued Lexa once again focusing on Clarke’s clear blue eyes. There is a hot spring not far from the celebration field and it is tradition to bathe with your attendants on the morning of the ceremony. Octavia will also join you there to tell you what you need to know about the ceremony. She is currently in my camp studying the rites so that she can translate for the Sky People. She will most likely remain there until the day of the ceremony as she has much to learn. I will be at the hot springs before you, bathing with Indra and Luna, the leader of an allied clan who will attend our union, she is coming to bless our joining. As you arrive we will leave. The couple may get a glimpse of the body they will soon enjoy as they pass each other at the hot springs. They may not touch nor speak to each other but looking, looking they may do.” At this Lexa smiled a lustful smile at Clarke and watched in satisfaction as Clarke once again blushed a deep red. “My people believe that this ritual ensures a successful ceremony and a blessed first night.” Everyone laughed at the red-faced Clarke, and Lexa looked around at each of them, “Thank you for being a part of this special ceremony. Do you all understand what I have asked of you?”

Everyone nodded in agreement at her instructions and Lexa smiled at them before suddenly becoming serious again, “this brings me to the last detail that you should be prepared for. Although I am confused by her embarrassment about it, I am pleased to tell you that I will be Clarke’s first lover.” Raven gasped and everyone else looked confused, except Clarke, who turned and even deeper shade of red and looked down at the table. “This is a great honour for me and my people take it very seriously. It is considered the greatest gift that can be given on the day of the ceremony. It is vital that you do not prepare any other gifts than this. During the ceremony the elder will ask if there is blood to be given. Clarke will stand and promise that she is virtuous and that she willingly gives her blood to me. This promise is sacred and the bridal tent will be arranged in such a way as to collect evidence of the truth of it. The bed will be covered in soft white blankets and Clarke and I will consummate our joining. In the morning Indra and Abby will bear witness to the evidence of Clarke’s promise. The sheets will be taken to the special pyre next to the altar and burned so the blood will become a blessing to our union. Clarke and I will also reveal our body’s to proudly show that we have marked each other, taken each other as our own.” The Sky People were listening intently and very quietly. “Clarke’s virginity will make the likelihood of any challenges very small and will endear her to the Tree Clan. Most of us, myself included, assumed that Clarke had been Finn’s lover. The morning ceremony, the proof of blood and the burning of the sheets, will assure everyone that she was not.”

Being a doctor, and Clarke’s mother Abby spoke up quickly, “Lexa, even though Clarke is a virgin do you realize that there may be little or no blood? Every woman is different and I don’t want her safety to be risked on the idea that she should bleed during her first sexual experience. Many women don’t bleed at all.” She opened her mouth to continue and Lexa cut her off.

“I know this Abby. In fact, I had no blood the first time I gave my body to a lover. If Clarke is like me there are other ways to mark the sheets with blood.” Abby’s expressions changed to fear at this last sentence. Lexa was quick to reassure her. "I will let no harm come to my wife.” As she said this
last word her eyes went from Abby’s to Clarke’s and they both smiled.

Clarke finally spoke. “I think we all understand. Thank you Lexa. I know I feel better knowing what to expect and I imagine my mother and my friends do too.” She was still embarrassed and could feel Raven’s questioning eyes on her but she pressed on. “We will bring no other gifts that would dishonour you or your people. I will be your gift, my blood, my body, and my heart.” She smiled softly at Lexa and then looked around the table. “If no one has any other questions let’s eat.”

During breakfast Lexa explained that there would be a honeymoon period of two weeks during which the women would take a trip together. Clarke wanted to know where but Lexa stayed quiet. She had already decided that if Luna was willing they would ride with them to the coast so she could show Clarke the ocean, but she wanted it to be a surprise. After the breakfast meal was over Lexa said a quick, formal goodbye and left to oversee preparations. Since she was going to the field Abby went along with her, happy to feel like a part of her daughter’s wedding. As Clarke was turning to go Raven’s hand on her arm stopped her. Bellamy, knowing what questions were coming, made himself scarce. Raven spoke, “Clarke, you and Finn. You didn’t…?”

“No Raven. We just kissed and stuff. I was scared and I wasn’t ready. He was a gentleman and didn’t pressure me. I’m sorry I let you think we did. I wanted the camp to think we had. I know it sounds stupid but I thought it made me seem more grown up, tougher, better able to lead,” Clarke sighed. I’m so sorry Raven. I should have told you from the start.”

“I understand. Thank you for telling me now.” She hugged Clarke and Clarke breathed a sigh of relief. She was glad Raven wasn’t angry, she needed Raven.

Lexa had suggested that Clarke start preparing to move into their house and Clarke happily spent the rest of the day moving some things from her tent and decorating a little. She took a walk around the house and followed a path towards the lake. On the way down to the water she came across a large flat rock overlooking the lake and nestled in a small private clearing surrounded by trees. She climbed up and sat on the rock, leaning back resting on her hands and her legs stretched out in front of her. She raised her face to the sun and let out a deep and contented sigh. In two days she would wed. She loved Lexa and she knew that none of them would be alive if any other person had been Commander. She thanked the Commander’s spirit for choosing such a wise, rational, and controlled person. She laughed out loud as she realized she had just thanked a spirit she didn’t really believe in. Then she thought more about Lexa. She thought about how sexy she was and how she loved to tease. She thought about how she would look without her armour, without her leathers, without her clothes. Then she thought about how Lexa would look without the control over her emotions that served her so well as Commander. She thought about her plan. She had been researching everything she could about the female body and had good anatomical knowledge and clinical know-how. She just needed some real life advice. She suspected that she wouldn’t have much time to gather her friends together to ask them for help because everyone was so busy. As embarrassing as it would be to talk about this with her mother she knew she’d have to corner Raven and her mother during the hot spring visit. Raven had admitted to having been with women and Clarke had heard the rumours that before her mother had married her father she had been quite the womanizer. Her dad once joked that Abby had dated more women that he had. She knew that between the two of them and Octavia’s possible insight into sex with a Grounder she could do this. She laid on the rock and pictured Lexa being there with her. She shivered with longing and considered taking Lexa’a advice about giving herself release. She decided against it because Lexa seemed so enthralled with her being a virgin she suspected that giving Clarke her first orgasm would also be something Lexa would treasure.

With that thought Clarke got up and walked back to Camp Jaha. Along the way she was surprised
when people from the Ark kept stopping her and congratulating her on her upcoming nuptials. Many of them thanked her for protecting the peace they had with the Grounders. She smiled and thanked them all but made sure to let them know this was not an arranged marriage, she loved the Commander.

When she got to her tent her mom was waiting for her. “Clarke, honey,” she smiled at her daughter. “The decorations at the field are so beautiful. You’ll love it. I think your future wife had her people cut down every flower left on the ground for you.” She laughed softly and reached out to squeeze Clarke’s shoulder.

“That actually wouldn’t surprise me,” Clarke laughed too. “Mom, this is all happening so fast. Sometimes I can’t believe it’s real.” She took a deep breath. “Please tell me it’s real, tell me she really does love me and that soon I will finally be in her arms.” Clarke was getting very emotional and her mother pulled her into a warm embrace.

“My darling daughter I promise you it is real.” Abby stroked Clarke’s golden hair tenderly and reassured her daughter. “At first I was worried. Worried that the grounder traditions would be brutal, or that marrying the Commander would mean little more than being her slave. I thought it was too soon, too soon after you had led an army into battle, too soon after Finn. But, I have to admit your soon-to-be wife won me over quickly. Giving me the sword with which to kill her should she hurt you was a nice touch too.” They both laughed at that.

“Only Lexa would do something like that,” Clarke agreed wiping at the tears that had escaped from under her eyelids. “Touching, romantic, poetic and yet somehow so very arrogant.”

“She loves you Clarke. It is plain for anyone to see. I believe that you two will be very happy together.” Abby teared up and hugged Clarke tighter. “I love you Clarke. I wish your father could be here and I am so sorry that he is not.”

“I don’t want to talk about Dad right now. I do understand better than I did before. The burden of leadership is heavy and you thought you were doing what was best for the people. But, I just don’t want to talk about him with you. Is that OK?” Clarke bit her bottom lip, suddenly looking so young all Abby wanted to do was pull her into her arms and protect her forever.

“Yes, Clarke. That is ok, and thank you for saying that.” Abby wiped tears away and laughed. “Look at us! Getting all weepy. Let’s go in your tent. There are a few more details I want to go over while you get ready for bed.” They moved inside and Clarke sat down to brush her hair. Abby looked around and noticed the anatomy book Clarke had borrowed from the medical centre was open to a very particular page. “Sweethart, please don’t be embarrassed, but do you have any questions for me about your wedding night…?” She looked at Clarke who stopped mid brush stroke and blushed.

“Actually, I do,” Clarke admitted. “But I was planning on talking about it with you, Raven, and Octavia at the hot springs. If it’s OK I’d like to stick to that plan. I want to get my beauty rest.” Clarke laughed and then thought of what she was going to wear. “Do you think the clothes Lexa is having prepared will be nice, Mom?” She was a little worried.

“Darling, don’t doubt her prowess,” Abby said with a wink. “I’m sure they will be lovely. Now, get some sleep.” Abby laughed happily, hugged her daughter one more time and left the tent.
I Do

Chapter Summary

Clarke and Lexa finally say their vows. The advice given to Clarke by her friends before the wedding is certain to pay off in the next chapter.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

The last day of her single life had arrived. Clarke woke up to a sound outside her tent and stiffened reaching for her knife. She had it in her hand when Lexa ducked inside. Lexa smiled proudly. “Excellent, Clarke,” she praised her alertness before quickly moving on, “I cannot stay long but I wanted to see you for a moment. I will not see you again until the hot spring.” Lexa’s face took on the wolfish, lusty expression she got when she pictured Clarke naked. “We will not be able to talk then so I wondered if you had any questions. I do not wish for you to be anxious.” Her voice was soft and Clarke marvelled at how feminine it was. When she spoke as Commander she sounded like a warrior, but when she spoke like this to Clarke she was just a woman, a very beautiful woman.

“I’m glad you came. Tell me about the ceremony. How does it work?” Clarke sat on her bed looking up at Lexa, secretly memorizing how her face looked in this moment. Thinking only of the ceremony and how to best explain it to Clarke she was free from the burdens and worries of a Commander and looked at peace with happiness dancing in her eyes.

“After the hot spring you will be led to a dressing tent. There your mother and Raven will help you get ready. Your clothes will be waiting for you in the tent.” Lexa stopped for a moment and looking Clarke up and down realized she should mention something else, “you will not need your boots either Clarke. We will both be barefoot. Do not worry the path to the altar will be soft and dry.” Unable to prevent herself she suddenly got a mischievous grin, cocked her head slightly to the left and chuckled slightly, “and do not worry, the night will be soft too, but I promise you it will not be dry.” Lexa was so turned on at the thoughts racing through her mind she slipped, stepping dangerously close to the blushing Clarke she asked, “May I steal a kiss?”

Clarke felt Lexa’s breath hot on her face, they were so close and she wanted nothing more than to give in. She refused. Clarke would be strong when Lexa was weak. “No, you most certainly may NOT!” She put her hand on Lexa’s forehead and pushed her away standing suddenly. “Now, finish telling me about the ceremony and get out of here.” Clarke crossed her arms over her ample chest and fixed Lexa with her ‘don’t mess with me’ look.

Lexa bowed her head to Clarke, “Thank you Clarke, for not letting me fall to my weakness.” She truly meant it and her heart swelled even more for Clarke. She was relieved that she had stood up to her on this. Truth be told a certain amount of her bravado was to cover up that she felt nervous about being Clarke’s first lover. She was a Grounder and she suspected her people were used to a little more roughness with their sex than the Sky People. She was determined to control her own lust and fill the night with soft, sweet touches for Clarke, but she was glad to realize that should she lose control Clarke would tell her when she crossed a line.

Lexa stood looking at Clarke with adoration and Clarke had to prompt her to continue, “the ceremony, Lexa.” She couldn’t help but smile at this remarkable woman who seemed so lost in
thought at the moment.

Snapped out of her thoughts Lexa continued, “Yes, the ceremony. After you are dressed and ready you will come to me. Your mother will be next to you and Bellamy and Raven behind you. I will be waiting at the altar. The necessary sacrifices will already have been completed so the ceremony may begin.”

“Sacrifices?” Clarke demanded. “What sacrifices?”

Lexa laughed, “you still think my people, no, our people, so barbaric Clarke? Do not worry, they are not human.” She pursed her lips and arched an eyebrow giving Clarke a very condescending look.

“No, I didn’t think…. OK maybe a small part of me worried a little. I’m sorry.” Clarke admitted

“It is OK. You have much to learn about my ways, as I do of yours. I will make the sacrifice in the morning before I bathe. There will be a boar to kill using a ritual knife and many different herbs to be burned and prayers to be said. We will roast the boar as part of the feast so it’s life is not taken for no purpose. But do not trouble yourself with this Clarke. It is all my responsibility. By the time you leave your dressing tent it will already be roasting on a spit.” Lexa paused and paced around the tent stretching like a cat and looking equally as likely to pounce. “There will be a table at the altar, I will be seated on the right. Indra and Octavia will stand behind me. In the middle will be the clan elder and Kane. You will sit on the left and Bellamy and Raven will take their places behind you. The elder will speak, Kane will speak. There will be songs, one from my people and one from yours.”

“Songs!? I didn’t know someone had to sing, I’ll find out who is the best singer and…”

“Clarke,” Lexa smiled at her. “Please relax. I know it is hard for you to give up this much control but I wished this wedding to be a gift to you. I have thought of everything. The one called Jasper advised me on who should sing for your people.” She smirked and Clarke cut her off.

“If you say anything about your prowess I will knock you out!” She threatened good-naturedly.

“Do you really think you could?” Lexa laughed and then conceded, “Perhaps you could Clarke, you are strong. That is one of the reasons that I love you.” She watched Clarke smile and it warmed her belly. “After the singing the elder will ask us to stand facing our people in front of the tables. The spot will be marked by a ring of flowers. He will then ask if there is blood to be given this night. You must speak clearly and loudly, with pride and confidence. Answer ‘Yes’, and that you willingly give it to me this night of our joining. Expect a large uproar and do not flinch. Some may not believe but the elder will simply call for the gift to be proven and sacrificed by fire in the morning. You must agree to the ritual so none will doubt that you speak the truth.” Lexa looked proudly at Clarke and knew that she would do well. The Sky Princess had a backbone of steel and Lexa had never known her to back down from anyone or anything.

Once this is done the elder will ask if anyone challenges the union. If anyone comes forward there will be a fight,” her jaw tightened as she said this and Clarke watched with wonder as she saw the Commander come out. She could see the subtle differences in Lexa, the coldness in her eyes, the clench of her jaw, and angle of her head, always held high. As Lexa let out a breath to continue Clarke watched her Lexa return, her eyes softened and her jaw relaxed. She again looked her twenty years instead of the Commander’s agelessness. “Once the challenge passes the elder will call upon your mother. Abby will bless our union by lighting a bundle of sage and baptizing us with it’s scent. Your mother will take your hand in one of hers and mine in the other and then she will give your hand to me.” Lexa felt a lump in her throat and moisture in her eyes, she steadfastly forced her emotions down and continued, “the elder will ask us one at a time to make a vow of fidelity, love and devotion. The vow is yours to create Clarke, speak from your heart. Know that the vow is
binding and cannot be undone in this life.” Lexa looked shyly at Clarke, vulnerability on her face, “You must be sure, Clarke,” she finished.

“I am. I have never been more sure about anything, I don’t need a ceremony to tell me that I will be with you for the rest of my life. Tomorrow is for everyone else Lexa, I am already yours.” With these words Clarke washed away the last bits of fear and doubt that had hidden in Lexa’s mind. Clarke stopped breathing in astonishment at the brightness of the smile that crossed Lexa’s features then. It changed her face completely and her beauty shone like the sun.

“Once the vows are said the elder will lay a soft braid of flowers over our clasped hands and will ask each of us if we freely accept this unbreakable union. After we both accept he will declare the union to be complete and we will be joined for life. And then I will kiss you, Clarke. I will kiss you like the rising summer sun kisses the still waters of the lake and the gentle spring rain kisses the flowers along the river. I will kiss you until I cannot breathe and then I will kiss you more.” Lexa’s voice was husky and filled with emotion. Clarke quickly grabbed her hand and dragged her to the door.

“I love you Lexa, now get out of here before we ruin everything.” She shoved her betrothed out of the tent and turned around taking deep breaths trying to calm herself. He body had reacted strongly to Lexa’s romantic words and promises of sweet kisses and she didn’t think she had ever felt so aroused. She heard the tent flaprustle again and whirled, “I thought I said…” she stopped as she saw Raven’s face.

“Clarke are you OK…? Raven looked concerned.

“Raven, yes I’m fine… of course.” She stuck her head outside and looked around not surprised to find no trace of the Commander who had been in her tent less than 30 seconds ago. She laughed and turned her focus to Raven, “What’s up?” she asked.

“I need to show you something” Raven sounded ominous. “Come with me.”

“Shit, what now.” Clarke felt her stomach drop and a cold fear replaced all the warm feelings Lexa had left her with. She grabbed her coat, “Come on, let’s go.”

Raven led her towards the drop-ship and told her she had found something important there while searching for some spare parts. Raven’s face held a look of concern and Clarke reached out to Raven taking her by the arm, “whatever it is Raven, we’ll figure it out, don’t worry.”

Raven nodded gravely and motioned for Clarke to take the lead into the clearing. As she did what she saw before her made her jaw drop and she turned to the now grinning Raven and laughed. “You really had me, what is all this?”

“Your bachelorette party!” Monty shouted, “Now get over here bride to be! Wait, since you are both women are you both brides, or is…?”

“Shut up Monty,” Clarke ordered and looked around. All of the 100 that were left alive were standing around the clearing cheering and laughing. She smiled at them knowing that it was these few survivors, not the adults from the Ark, these were truly her people. She embraced Monty and Jasper and asked, “Let me guess, you two did this?”

“Of course, who else?” They replied in unison. Now come on Clarke, we have a party to start. Monty turned on the music system they had rigged up and everyone cheered. There was music and food and everyone seemed to be very happy about tomorrow’s event.

Bellamy came over to her and handed her a drink. “They made more beer,” he said. “Lot’s of it for tomorrow night too. Everyone is really happy for you.”
Clarke took the beer and tasted it, they were getting better at brewing it. “Thanks Bellamy. And thank you for standing with me. It means a lot.” She sipped the beer and then set it aside. “I don’t want to drink much though, do me a favour and drink that for me?”

“I’m glad you said that,’ he laughed. “When Lexa found out about this party she tasked me with the protection of your ‘life and your virtue’. She made it clear that she didn’t want you drunk today.” He laughed, “your almost wife is very…. persuasive.”

“You mean terrifying?” Clarke asked, “yes, I have been on the end of that glare once or twice.” They both laughed.

“She loves you. I can see it. I’m happy for you.” Bellamy put his arm around Clarke’s shoulders and squeezed. “The Ark people, they will learn to follow the Grounder’s and the 100. It might just take them a little longer. Your people are the future Clarke. Your's and Lexa’s people.”

“They are your people too Bell,” she said softly. Just then Octavia and Lincoln walked into the clearing. “Octavia! I thought you would be at Ton DC until tomorrow?” Clarke was very happy to see her friend.

“And miss this party?” she quipped. She hugged her brother and then her friend.

“Indra sent you, right?” Bellamy asked laughing.

“We are officially here to make sure everything is peaceful and to protect Clarke.” Octavia answered truthfully, “But that doesn’t mean we can’t enjoy it!” She moved with Lincoln over to get some food and then went to talk to Jasper and Monty.

Clarke watched as Lincoln, ever the warrior, slipped silently from Octavia’s side and into the trees to patrol the perimeter. She wondered if her fiancé had spoken with him or if it was just his instinct to protect. A question popped into her mind, “How did Lexa find out about this party anyway? She asked Bellamy.

"I think Jasper is telling that story as we speak, come on.” Bellamy led her over to where a crowd had drawn around Jasper and Monty.

“I was dead terrified,” Monty said, “the two guards that are always at her tent had swords pointed at our throats and I thought that was it.”

“We had just gone straight there without asking Octavia or Indra for permission to approach the Commander,” Jasper explained, “after she had come and asked me about…. he trailed off looking at Clarke not wanting to give away a secret… anyway I thought she liked me so I just figured I could go and talk to her.”

“Yeah, and I was stupid enough to listen to him,” Monty rubbed his neck where the swords had been pointed like even the memory could cut him like a blade. They both laughed and someone asked them what had happened next.

“The tent opened and The Commander stepped out.” Jasper’s face took on a kind of admiration, “and I mean The Commander.”

“She is something, Clarke. I mean wow!” Monty added. “She ordered her guards to put away their swords with one word and then looked at us like we were crazy.”

“Yeah, it felt like we were being reprimanded by the strictest teacher you could ever have, but she was just using her eyes,” Jasper added. “She told us that it was foolish and dangerous for us to have
come here like this and that we were lucky her guards were smart enough to know that two dead of
the 100 would displease the Commander’s betrothed. Apparently the guards have authority to kill
anyone approaching the Commander’s tent without prior permission.”

“What, why?” Clarke demanded. If there was some kind of threat and Lexa had not told her she
would be very angry with her. “Is there a threat” Clarke snapped.

“Wow,” Monty added looking around at everyone as if to prove a point, “that look right there, that’s
the same one Lexa gave us. You two sure are a good match.” He laughed.

It was Octavia that cooled Clarke’s fear. “The last few days before a union like this are always high
alert for the clan. Since this union will join the Sky People and the Grounders we have to make sure
we protect the ceremony and allow it to happen. There have been no threats as the 12 clans are
united now, but we are on high alert.” Octavia added. “Clarke, don’t tell me you haven’t noticed
your hidden guards following you everywhere?” Octavia asked hoping Clarke hadn’t been that
distracted.

“Of course I noticed them,” Clarke lied smoothly. She felt better after Octavia’s explanation.

“So anyway,” Jasper continued, “she told us how foolish we were and then she asked us what was
so important that we risked our necks to see her. You should have seen her face when we told her it
was a party!” Monty and Jasper broke out into raucous laughter. Clarke joined the laughter
imagining Lexa’s response and everyone else joined in.

“We had to do some pretty fast talking, I really thought she might kill us herself,” Monty laughed.
“We told her that is was an important tradition of the Sky People and she finally relented.”

“She gave us her permission and told us that she knew you would appreciate this chance to be
together with your people, she meant us Clarke, the 100.” Jasper got a little emotional. “We are you
know, your people.”

Miller unexpectedly piped up, “I know I have challenged you and questioned you in the past Clarke,
but you are our leader, our Commander. I will follow you unquestioning, we will all follow you.
Chancellor and the Ark be damned.” His statement was echoed by every one of the remaining 100.

“Thank you Miller, Jasper, everyone, but we have no reason to damn the Chancellor for now.” She
smiled, “I know I have your support but I am happy to say I believe that this union with Lexa will be
enough to keep peace for all. But I do want to invite you to build houses near Lexa and I. Grouders
and the 100 together will set the example and build a strong village. Now stop being so serious and
let’s party!”

At that Raven turned up the music. Jasper and Monty grabbed Clarke’s hand and led her and the rest
of the teenagers in an exuberant dance. Bellamy, Octavia and Miller, with his newly resolved
devotion to his leader, slipped into the woods to join Lincoln for a sweep. They returned a while later
satisfied in the safety of the group.

They stayed at the drop-ship for hours, they danced, laughed and enjoyed their time together. As the
sun grew late in the western sky Octavia and Raven approached Clarke and whispered to her. Clarke
nodded and Raven moved to turn down the music. “Thank you so much everyone. I had a
wonderful time today, it was good to spend my last day before everything changes with the people I
fell to Earth with what seems like forever ago. I have to go now, I still have vows to write,” she
smiled happily. “We are bound by that drop-ship and all that has happened since. Please don’t
hesitate to come to me with anything. I love you all.” She looked at Monty and Jasper, “don’t worry
I will make sure my wife does not kill you as you approach our door.” Everyone laughed and Clarke
reminded them that she expected them to all be at the ceremony and NOT too hung over to enjoy the celebration before she left with Raven and Octavia. Miller cleared the path before them and Bellamy and Lincoln flanked them in the tree line. Unbeknownst to any except Octavia and Lincoln, who had both picked up on the change in the forest as the Commander walked through it, Lexa watched silently smiling at the proud and safe escort Clarke was receiving on her way home.

As Raven and Octavia dropped Clarke off at her tent they hugged her and wished her good luck with her vows. As they turned to leave Raven got a gleam in her eye, “Hey, Clarke. Make sure you get lots of sleep tonight, I'm pretty sure the Commander won’t let you get any tomorrow night.” Octavia high fived Raven and the two friends walked away leaving Clarke with her thoughts.

A while later Kane dropped by to wish her a good night and tell her he was looking forward to tomorrow. Then lastly came her mother. Clarke was just finishing up her vows and asked for mom’s opinion. The tears in Abby’s eyes told her all she needed to know. “Beautiful sweetie. Lexa will be moved.” They talked for a short time and Abby got up to leave. “Sleep now, Clarke. You need your rest. Tomorrow you are a bride.” She hugged her daughter with tears in her eyes and then left. Alone now, Clarke wrote one more line and then memorized the words she had written. It didn’t take long because the words were from her heart. She realized how sleepy she was and as her head hit the pillow she was out like a light.

Morning came. Bright, with the heavy, fragrant smell of late summer. Clarke was woken by the sound of Raven’s voice. “Rise and shine sleepyhead! You don’t want to miss your own wedding!” Clarke smiled and called out to Raven that she was up. Raven yelled for her to hurry up and meet her in front of the Ark. Clarke dressed quickly and went to see what Raven wanted. She found her mom, Raven, and several women from the Ark waiting for her. Her mom had a beautiful delicate braid of blue wildflowers in her hands. “It’s for your hair Clarke.” Her mom smiled. “Some of the ladies got together to make sure you look your best today. I’ve already been to the dressing tent this morning Clarke, Luna arrived very early and the clothes are in your tent. The dress is beautiful dear.”

Clarke stood and looked at the women surrounding her and felt tears well up in her eyes. “Thank you all so much.” Her heartfelt gratitude brought hugs from everyone gathered there. They spent the next hour or so talking while they ate a light breakfast. Clarke only had some fruit, the butterflies in her stomach not allowing her to chance anything heavier.

Clarke heard giggles from the ladies before she saw the group of Grounder women who had come to lead her to the hot springs. They looked so different than she had ever seen any of Lexa’s people. There were three women who looked to be just older than her and three who looked much younger. They all wore loose clothes or dresses and they were smiling. Clarke’s ever growing attention to details picked out the daggers on each woman’s belt and she knew Lexa was still being a protector.

One of the women embraced Clarke, “Heda waits” was all she said. “Come.”

They led them to waiting horses and Clarke’s entourage mounted up. The ride took around one hour and as they passed the field where the ceremony would take place one of the younger Grounders moved her horse to flank Clarke’s. “That is where your wedding will be,” she pointed at the field. Clarke could see the peaks of several tents and smell the feast that was being prepared.

“Thank you,” Clarke smiled at the girl. “You speak English?” she asked.

“I am a warrior,” she replied proudly. Head held high imitating the demeanour of her beloved Commander.
“A warrior in training,” came the reply of one of the older women. She smiled at the girl and looked at Clarke, “We are warriors, and they are our seconds. Heda would not trust your safety to just anyone, especially on this day.” She smiled at Clarke who smiled back.

As they neared the hot springs and dismounted the horses Raven noticed Clarke was shaking. She knew how nervous her friend was right now and she grabbed her hand to steady her. “Easy tiger,” she winked using her trademark humour to break the tension. “I know you’ve been waiting to see Lexa in her birthday suit but let’s stay calm. OK?” Raven’s soft expression belied her teasing words and Clarke nodded in appreciation to her friend.

Clarke took a deep breath steadied her nerves and took her mother’s hand in one and Raven’s hand in the other. She looked at the warrior who was leading them. “Let’s go,” she said, surprising the warrior with how much she sounded like the Heda.

They walked through the trees for a few minutes and came through into a clearing. There were several large rocks blocking the view but Clarke heard laughter, she recognized it as Lexa and her heart jumped into her mouth again.

“Heda,” the lead warrior called out. “Your bride has arrived.”

Lexa was laughing at the continuous banter between Indra and Luna when the warrior called out. Her face went pale and she looked slightly terrified for a split second before schooling her features into the Commander. This did not go unnoticed by Luna who laughed softly, like music. Luna was a beautiful woman, tall and lean. She had fiery red hair and ruby red lips. It was her who answered. “Prepare the Sky Princess, we will prepare the Commander,” was her order.

Indra placed her hand on Lexa’s shoulder and lent her strength to the younger woman. Lexa felt Indra’s steady hand and it calmed her nerves. She allowed the Commander to surface, cocky, confident, in control. She stood from the hot springs, steam rising from her body, and allowed Indra and Luna to help her step out from the springs. Luna and Indra covered themselves with thin blankets tied around their naked forms and Lexa stood naked, glorious, smelling like the lavender scented water and smiling in anticipation of seeing Clarke naked for the first time.

On the other side of the rocks the warriors helped Clarke undress and provided the same thin blankets to Raven and Abby. Octavia joined them seemingly from nowhere and nodded at the warriors silently taking over the protective detail. When they were ready Octavia positioned them as she had been taught. Abby and Raven stepped around the rocks first creating a kind of wall. Both women were confronted by the sight of the still steaming and gloriously sexy body of the Commander, Raven whispered out the side of her mouth to Abby, “Wow! Lucky Clarke!” and Abby giggled in spite of herself.

Octavia led the naked Clarke out behind them and overheard, “Are you kidding, have you seen our Princess? Lucky Lexa!” was her whispered answer. The three women laughed out loud, joyous and proud.

Clarke was so nervous she was shaking but she fought her nerves and steadied herself, she just needed to see her beloved. Lexa was feeling the same exquisite torture on the other side of the steaming pools of water. Finally Luna spoke, “Clarke, of the Sky People, step forward.” She called out. Lexa held her breath.

Raven and Abby stepped to the side and Clarke took two steps forward. Both women stared at each other as if time had frozen. Lexa took in Clarke’s beautiful white skin, it was like a canvas waiting
for her to paint her marks on Clarke. Her eyes roved Clarke’s round curves and the soft curls of the
golden hair that covered the place Lexa wanted most to be. She looked so soft it made Lexa want to
weep. She saw Clarke’s breasts, full and rounder than her own. Clarke’s nipples were hard, straining
against the air and crying out to be kissed. Lexa felt her desire stirring in the pit of her stomach
stronger than she had ever experienced. She began to feel lightheaded at the sight and Luna,
laughing, reminded her to breathe. She inhaled sharply and her eyes found Clarke’s.

As Clarke stepped forward she was greeted by the most beautiful sight she had ever seen. The Earth
from Space, Space from the Earth, neither compared to Lexa’s naked, steam covered skin. Her
muscles were tight and her body had not an inch of fat. She was covered in many scars but they
added to, rather than diminished her beauty. Clarks eyes slid possessively over Lexa’s pert breasts,
smaller than her own, and came to rest on Lexa’s erect nipples. She took in the color, more brown
than her own pink. She thought about having them her mouth and gasped. She watched drops of
water dripping down Lexa’s muscular belly like they where in slow motion and then her gaze moved
lower as she looked longingly at Lexa. A giggle from Raven brought her back to herself and she
looked up to find Lexa’s eyes boring into her own. They stayed like that, staring into each other’s
eyes, naked, breathing heavily, breasts weighted with desire and skin tingling with need, until Luna
once again took control of the situation.

“Sky Princess, enjoy your bath,” she said to Clarke. It was also a signal to Indra to cover the
Commander and lead her from the area. Clarke’s eyes mourned the loss of her prize and she realized
with twinge of guilt that until that point she hadn’t even noticed the beautiful redhead.

She bowed her head respectfully and spoke, her voice not wavering despite the fact that all of her
insides felt like jelly. “Thank you Luna, Commander of the Coast. Please see to my bride,” she
added possessively.

Luna laughed her musical laugh and nodded at Clarke. “Your bride will be well taken care of dear
one.” She was very impressed that the beautiful young blonde had dared to refer to the mighty Tree
Commander as her bride. She liked this girl, she could tell already.

Once Lexa and her entourage were out of sight, Octavia let out a long, low whistle, “wow, intense!”
was all she said before catching Raven’s eyes and then the two women broke into fit of giggles.
Abby wasn’t far behind and Clarke was thankful for the break in tension.

Raven turned her appraising glance to Clarke and grinned, “Wow, Clarke. Octavia has a point, lucky
Lexa!” More laughter followed and the four women settled into the hot steamy water. Octavia had
been instructed where to find herbs, oils, and soaps for the skin and hair, and the women immediately
get comfortable with each other and began washing each others hair and backs talking excitedly
about Clarke’s wedding. Once they were all scrubbed clean, and smelling the best they had since
falling to the ground, they sat back and relaxed in the water.

“Now or never Clarke,” her mom prompted. “What questions do you have.” Abby had warned
Octavia and Raven beforehand so they were all ready for the questions, she didn’t want anyone’s
embarrassment at unexpected questions to cause Clarke to shy away from the conversation.

Clarke took a deep breath, “have you noticed how Lexa teases me?” she asked. The women all
laughed and nodded affirmatively. “I am still a bit shy about sex, and even though I know what to
expect, I don’t know what to expect, you know?” Clarke shook her head annoyed at sounding so
confused but everyone nodded in understanding. “I want to please her,” she paused, “no, I want to
make her lose control. I want her to be left breathless and unable to speak. I want to be her equal in
every way, especially in bed.” Clarke felt herself feeling more confidant as she spoke. “I need some
help. I know all about the clinical side of things, I’m sure I can find her clitoris and all, but what do I
“do to really drive her mad?”

Octavia was the first to answer, “Clarke, remember that she is a Grounder. And not just any Grounder, she is the most feared and respected Commander the clans have seen in many years. She has lived a harsh, brutal life and yet she still refuses to be ruled by that. She rules with a wise reason beyond her years and she has also shown a deep capacity to love when she is with you. It has taken her people by surprise. They whisper about it at night. They respect it. Remember who she is and what life has brought her. Start with a gentle touch, like your love for her, and when she is pressing into your hands wanting more be rough Clarke, use your teeth and your nails. Bite her and scratch her, but then be soft again as she is with you. Bite your mark into her and then kiss it better. Pull at her nipples and then soothe them with your tongue. Pain and pleasure go together Clarke. When she pleasures you dig your nails into her skin, pull her hair, give into the primal instincts she will draw out of you.”

Raven joined in the conversation, “Don’t move too fast Clarke. Tease her until she threatens you in Trigedasleng. Make her hot before you move between her legs. One you get there, no matter how much her pussy draws you in don’t forget about her clit. Fingers from one hand inside of her and the other hand, or better yet your tongue, on her clit will make her crazy.

Her mom joined in as well, “circles Clarke, circles are your best friend. Don’t blindly thrust into her like a stud in heat, enter her and find the g spot,” Clarke nodded in understanding and Abby continued, “when you find it rotate your wrist with upward pressure, slowy at first to get a feel for her reaction and you’ll be able to tell how fast and hard she wants you. Start with two fingers, but she may want more. Once you have a rhythm going and she is arching up into your hand do what Raven says and add your tongue to the mix.”

Raven picked up where Abby left off, “Abby is very right about circles, it’s true for giving her head too. Oh, and don’t get all poky with the tongue slashing or jabbing at her clit like a spear, flatten your tongue and really get your face in there, use your hand to pull back her lips and the hood of her clit. You’ll have to rely on her reactions to tell you how much direct stimulation she likes, it’s too much for some women, if she presses her hips into the bed away from you back off on the direct tongue on clit and circle around it. If she presses her hips up into your mouth or grabs your head and presses it into her keep going with small circles directly on the clit. Once you have her going you can change it up and try different things with your tongue, but when you feel her getting close to orgasm a steady rhythm is important.” Raven grinned, “slow steady circles gradually increasing in speed has rewarded me with legs wrapped around my head on more than one occasion. Follow our advice and she’ll be screaming your name soon enough.” Raven had a cocky look on her face confident in her advice.

Octavia added, “maybe add a little teeth action, carefully and lightly, to the oral sex. And as you are fucking her reach up on occasion and squeeze her nipples or scratch her stomach and hips with your nails. The combination will unhinge her.”

“At first you will probably feel overwhelmed by the sensations of being inside her, it is a heady experience, pun intended,” Abby quipped, “keep repeating to yourself, ‘slow circles’ make it your mantra so you can stay in control and make her lose her’s. Watching her lose control will be intoxicating and more arousing than you can currently imagine. Don’t forget that you love each other. Slowing down when things are getting really heated and returning to her mouth to kiss her will further your bond and melt her heart.”

Clarke took in all of the advice feeling more confident by the second. “Got it, tease her, hurt her, soothe her, and circles are my friend.”
Just then the warriors arrived and asked Clarke if she was ready to go get dressed for the ceremony. The four women shared a meaningful look before Clarke answered with certainty, “Yes.”

They gave Clarke a towel like the rest of the women had and they walked to the dressing tent. It was a twenty minute walk and Clarke could tell there were warriors hidden in the tree line making sure their scantily clad procession was undisturbed.

When they arrived Clarke was delighted by the large airy tent and the flowers that were arranged all over the place creating a lovely scent. Abby went to a table and picked up the dress that Clarke would wed in. It was white and beautiful in it’s simplicity. She smiled and reached out to feel the material, soft and smooth. She couldn’t wait to try it on. When she pulled it on it was like it had been designed and fitted just for her, she couldn’t believe how well it fit. She knew her wife-to-be had an appraising eye but could she really tell Clarke’s size that well? She smiled and turned to her friends and mother, “How do I look?”

Raven just stood and stared, Octavia murmured something in Trigedaslang that Clarke thought meant beautiful. Her mom cried. The dress had a halter neck line and gathered at her waist only to fall simply with a clean line down to her feet. There was a light blue sash that tied around her waist and Clarke marvelled at the skill it must have taken for this to be fashioned. She had much to discuss with Luna when she had the opportunity.

They finished helping her dress by braiding flowers into her hair. She doubted anyone but Lexa would notice them they were so delicate, but Lexa was the only one who mattered. She felt self conscious, all dressed in white and flowers, it was surreal to her, did she deserve this after so much blood had been spilt since she arrived on the ground? She pushed the thought out of her mind and all of her insecurities fell away from her when Lexa’s female warriors came and told her it was time to begin. She watched the faces of the women as they saw her. They had an almost religious look on their faces as they bowed respectfully to the Commander’s bride. It gave her confidence to begin the walk to the altar.

On her way out of the tent one of the young warrior second’s shyly handed her a basket of hyacinths. “The Commander likes these flowers,” she confided shyly, looking at Clarke like she was some kind of goddess.

“Thank you,” Clarke bent and hugged the girl before taking her mother’s hand. They walked out of the tent and around a small thicket of trees. Bellamy and Raven were waiting there to take their places behind Clarke and Bellamy let out a low whistle when he saw her, “damn Clarke, you clean up nice,” he joked. Clarke hugged him and told him to shut up. She looked past them and noticed that they were at the end of a large field and there were people everywhere, Grounders and sky people alike rose when they saw her. Monty had been on lookout and singled Jasper. As Clarke stepped onto the path that would lead her to her beloved music suddenly began to play. Not too loudly, just a pleasant background for all the cheers that were erupting form the happy crowd. Her eyes searched out Lexa and she found that she couldn't take her eyes off of her.

When Lexa saw Clarke walk onto the path she lost her composure and made to stand and go to Clarke, Indra’s strong hand on her shoulder kept her seated as tradition demanded. “Heda, just a little longer” Indra teased happily.

Lexa was in turmoil. She dared not shed tears in front of her people but the sight of her bride was overwhelming. Clarke looked like an angel. The closer she got the more Lexa felt her emotions well up inside of her. She set her jaw and bit down on her cheek, the pain clearing her mind. As Clarke approached the altar they locked eyes and Lexa smiled at her beautiful bride. She could see her own emotions reflected on Clarke’s face as both women struggled not to weep with joy. Clarke took in
her bride's fine form, she was wearing a fitted suit that looked a lot like a white uniform. Her Sword was proudly on her back and her daggers at her side. Her hair was braided with flowers like Clarke’s. She was breathtaking.

When Clarke finally reached the altar and was seated Lexa was wound so tightly she barely heard the blessing from the Clan elder or the beautiful speech Kane gave. She was thinking ahead to the challenge, would anyone dare? Lexa was roused from her thoughts by the cheers signalling that Kane had finished his speech. She smiled and nodded to him pretending she had heard the words. Then a beautiful young Grounder walked out of the crowd and stopped in front of the altar. She smiled and bowed to both Lexa and Clarke. She sang, and Lexa’s heart threatened to beat out of her chest. It was a hauntingly beautiful melody and many eyes burned with tears at the story the lyrics told. Clarke was mesmerized though she understood not a word. Octavia choked up and tried to translate. “It’s a love song, Clarke. It’s hard to translate but it speaks of great sorrow preparing one for great love. The girl wrote it for the Commander.” Clarke listened in rapture as the girl’s voice soared and wove a tale and a spell over all gathered there. She sang with passion and her body moved with the song. It was the most beautiful thing Clarke had ever heard.

When she finished she bowed again and the crowd cheered for her performance. Clarke called out her thanks as the girl returned to her table. She was shocked with what happened next. Jasper and Monty pulled a very old piano out into the open and Monty sat at it grinning as only he can. Then Miller stepped out of the crowd and stood next to the piano. He bowed to Clarke and Lexa as respectfully as the Grounder singer had. Miller took a nervous swallow of whiskey for courage, the girl had been magnificent he only hoped the song he and Jasper had found in the music archives would speak to the brides in the same way the girl’s song had.

He took a deep breath and signalled for Monty to start. The sound of the piano silenced everyone and when Miller’s clear strong voice started to sing both Clarke and Lexa inhaled sharply and sought each others eyes.

The song he and Jasper had found in the music archives proved to move both Clarke and Lexa to tears, although Lexa’s was limited to a single tear that fell fat from her eyelid and dropped directly onto her hands. It was called “All of Me” and the lyrics felt true to both of the women. When he finished there were applause and Clarke gave him a tender smile and nodded her head to him letting him know he had done well.

The Clan elder stood, moved to the front of the altar, and called out, “Let those who would be joined be judged. Come forth.” he said in a booming voice. Clarke’s mother’s arm held her steady as they walked to the front of the alter and into the ring of flowers. Clarke was nervous, her teeth were set firmly and her jaw started to ache. Lexa was feeling something akin to blood lust as she entered the ring and stood next to her bride she wondered if she would be able to prevent herself from running any challenger through with her own sword the moment he or she put forth the challenge. She pushed those thoughts away as she thought of Clarke and the promise she would now make. She knew Clarke was nervous and wanted to be strong for her. She forced away any other thoughts and let the level, steady, piercing eyes of the commander fall on Clarke. Clarke found her courage in that unwavering stare.

“Will blood be given this night?” The elder asked. No one expected anything to happen, and murmurs started from the crowd as Clarke nervously stepped forward, one more look into Lexa’s steadfast eyes gave her strength to speak proudly, projecting for all to hear.

“Yes, there is blood to be given,” Clarke announced to the shocked crowd. “I give it willingly to my love on this night of our union,” she continued. A roar rose from the crowd, half questioning, half cheering. Lexa took a small but menacing step forward and anyone who noticed was silenced.
immediately. Indra once again held her Commander back.

The elder held up his hand for silence and gave Lexa a knowing look to stop her advance. “The people demand proof. Will you undertake the ritual that proves your purity?” Blood must be collected, shown, and placed as an offering in the fire the morning after you join.”

“I gladly accept the ritual. Let any who doubt my words be at the pyre in the morning.” Clarke spoke with a fierceness that impressed the Grounders and snuffed out the doubts of most. The rest would be placated at the ceremony in the morning.

The elder continued as the crowd quieted to a deathly silence knowing the next question. "Does anyone here challenge this union? If so step forward now and fight." Clarke glanced at Lexa and saw the Commander looking like she did in the heat of battle. Her face was flushed and her senses heightened, her hand gripped one of her daggers and Clarke noticed the white knuckles indicating the strength of the grip. Indra and Bellamy had stepped to the front showing their swords and daring any challengers to step forward. Time seemed to stand still as the elder waited. No one stepped forward. He waited longer. Still no cries of challenge came from the crowd. After what had seemed like an eternity he raised his hands in the air, turned and announced, “Time is up, any challengers keep silent, your time has passed.” This was all done in Trigedasleng and Octavia was rapidly translating for Clarke and Abby.

Clarke let out a sigh of relief and looked to Lexa. She watched as the Commander stepped down and her Lexa reappeared, a smile on her lips and love in her eyes. They smiled at each other and Abby stepped forward. She lit a bundle of sage and let the smoke drift over her daughter and her new daughter-in-law. When she finished she handed the sage off and stepped forward facing Clarke and Lexa. She took Clarke’s hand in her left and Lexa’s in her right. She smiled and spoke in a clear voice. “I bless this union and I give my daughter to join with you Lexa, Commander of the Tree Clan.” She gave Clarke a tender smile and moved her hands together. She placed Clarke’s hand in Lexa’s and squeezed both of them. Abby stepped away and Clarke and Lexa were finally alone inside the circle, hand in hand.

“Your vows, Commander,” the elder nodded respectfully to Lexa.

She looked deep into Clarke’s eyes as she spoke. “Clarke, of the Sky People, I pledge to you my loyalty, fidelity, and strength. This bond is unbreakable and I gladly accept you as mine for the rest of my life. I give myself to you willingly until the end of my days. You will be my only lover, my only love, my only heart. I give my love to you and I call you my own.”

Lexa’s vow mostly followed the traditional Grounder vow but she had added most of the words of love. She knew Clarke would like to hear them.

The elder called for Clarke’s vows. Still staring into the eyes of her beloved she spoke in her husky voice tinged with emotion that Lexa loved so much, “Lexa, Commander of the Tree Clan, I pledge to you my loyalty, fidelity, and strength.” She began with the traditional vow that Octavia had coached her on. “This bond is unbreakable and I gladly give myself to you until the day I die. I take you as my own and claim your heart until the day fire takes your spirit from me. You are the answer to my every question and the beating of my heart. I will love you until my body burns. You are mine, and I am yours.” Lexa’s eyes glistened with tears she refused to let fall and she smiled at Clarke.

The elder placed a long braid of flowers over their hands and looked directly at Clarke. “Do you freely accept this union, knowing it is for life?” he asked.

“I do.” Clarke didn’t think she would ever say these words to anyone but smiled at the beautiful simplicity that seemed to have survived the war, destruction, and rebirth of Earth.
He turned he gaze to Lexa and repeated his question.

“I do” was her reply, her voice clear, deep, and filled with emotion.

The elder placed his hand on top of theirs. “The union is complete. You are joined.”

A great cheer rose up from the crowd and Lexa held up her hand to silence them. She turned to Octavia and held out her hand. Octavia placed something in it and smiled at Clarke. Lexa addressed Clarke but loudly enough to heard by the curious onlookers as well. “I am told that the Sky People use a ring to signify a union.” She held Clarke’s hand and slid an intricately designed silver band onto her finger. She recognized the design as one of the tattoos on Lexa’s arm. Lexa handed her the other ring, “please Clarke,” she held her own hand out and waited for Clarke to put the ring on her as well. When Clarke slipped the ring on Lexa’s finger she felt such an intense surge of happiness she laughed aloud. Lexa looked at their fingers and raised Clarke’s hand to the sky, she shouted a victory cry as the people erupted in another round of cheers. Clarke laughed happily and waited for the lips Lexa had promised her would find hers in this moment. She didn’t wait long as Lexa pulled her into a tight embrace and looked into her eyes. “Mine Clarke, you are mine” she growled before lowering her lips to the waiting blonde.

The moment she felt Lexa’s lips on her own she thought she would never again need anything else. No food, no water, no air, just Lexa’s kiss. It could sustain her. Lexa kissed her softly moving her lips over Clarke’s with such light touches it was maddening. Clarke pulled her closer and deepened the kiss running her tongue over her wife’s lower lip. She heard Lexa groan and felt a sudden contraction in her stomach. Then Lexa’s tongue was dancing over Clarke’s lips, teasing her tongue, and causing goosebumps on her arms. They stood like that, aflame in desire, kissing each other until the cheers of their people became so great they were forced to remember they were not yet alone.

They broke the kiss reluctantly and turned to face their people. As the cheers died down a bit Lexa announced, “Let the celebrations begin!” The crowd cheered yet again and Clarke heard music start up somewhere as Lexa pulled her towards the large table where their friends waited for them. Luna rose to formally greet Clark.

“Clarke,” she smiled, “I am Luna, leader of the Coastal Clan and friend to your wife. I am happy to meet you. The ceremony was beautiful and you make a stunning bride. I see why Lexa is so taken with you.” She smiled warmly at Clark who blushed and thanked her for the compliment. Bellamy and Raven hugged her in congratulations and wandered off to find food and drink. Octavia conferred with Indra and went off with Lincoln to do a perimeter check and make sure the guards stayed alert. Her mother came and kissed her cheek, then kissed Lexa’s. The surprise was evident on Lexa’s face and again Clarke was struck by how well she knew Lexa but how little she knew about her. She didn’t know anything about Lexa’s parents. She made a mental note to ask her sometime in the near future and then she was swept up into the celebrations.

Well wishers approached the couple and many left small gifts, Food was brought to them as well as a sweet wine. There was music, and when a slow song played Lexa took her hand, “I have also heard that your people insist on a dance after being married.” They made their way to the area where everyone was dancing and watched as people cleared a space for them. Lexa pulled her into her arms and began to sway to the music. Neither of them knew the song that played but that didn’t matter, they didn’t hear it anyway. The moment they started dancing it was like they were in a vacuum of space all their own. They smiled at each other, held each other and then Lexa dipped her head to claim Clarke’s lips once more. They held each other like that until Clarke noticed that the tempo of the music had changed and then she broke away from her wife laughing. They returned to their table and tried to focus on everything that was happening, tried to be thankful and polite to the well-wishers and revellers. They tried to stop touching each other, stop kissing, stop staring. They failed
miserably. Finally Luna took pity on them and stood. She walked to the front of the crowd and the music died down for her to speak. “The party will continue without the joined ones, I send them off with love. Let the first night begin!” One more loud cheer went up and Clarke felt her face turn red.

Lexa shot an appreciative glance at Luna before pulling Clarke away from the crowd and toward the bridal tent. As they passed Raven she gave Clarke an encouraging thumbs up hoping her advice would prove useful. Clarke was laughing and happy as they followed the path toward the tent, It had been set back far enough from the celebration ground to ensure privacy for the couple. When they arrived Lexa stopped in front of the tent and turned to Clarke. “I love you Clarke,” she whispered, and then pulled her wife inside.

Chapter End Notes

The song that was playing as I wrote about the Grounder girl's song was '25-21' by Korean band Jaurim. Check it out. The lyrics are not what I imagined the girl would sing but the melody is beautiful and haunting.

I couldn't think of a more perfect song for Clarke and Lexa than John Legend's, 'All of Me'. Of course the lyrics couldn't be added to the story for copyright reasons but if you are not familiar check it out too.
First Night

Chapter Summary

Lexa and Clarke finally consummate their relationship.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Clarke shivered in anticipation as she was pulled into the tent. Once inside she looked around and there were more flowers everywhere, she laughed and reached out to her wife. She took Lexa’s cheek in her hand and favoured her with an adoring look. “You really did pick every flower left on Earth for me, didn’t you?”

“Well, I couldn’t resist,” joked Lexa, “had I known I would have bombarded you with flowers long ago.” She took the hand that was cupping her cheek and turned it so she could kiss the palm. She kissed the palm, then the wrist, then the forearm, and then her lips fell on the sensitive crook of Clarke’s elbow. Clarke’s breath got stuck in her throat and a soft moan escaped her lips.

Lexa pulled her wife into a strong embrace. “Is there anything you need?” she asked, “we have food and drink here for us and anything else you require will be attended to.” Lexa looked very serious.

It was Clarke’s turn to play the vixen and she leaned into Lexa’s slightly taller frame, rubbing against her, “Do I need anything…?” she asked in a whisper. She kissed the hollow of Lexa’s neck and licked the salt from her skin. “I think I have everything I need,” she breathed, looking up into Lexa’s eyes.

They began sway together like they had on the dance floor. They kissed slowly, taking the time to learn each others lips. As they both began to breathe heavy they pulled apart and looked with longing at one another. Clarke glanced toward the large bed that dominated the tent. The sheets, blankets, everything was white. She suddenly felt shy and nervous again. Lexa’s always watchful eyes caught the change in Clarke’s demeanour and she held her hand. “Clarke, nothing has to happen. If you aren’t ready, I will wait for you.”

Clarke was surprised, “Lexa, the ritual in the morning?” she reminded her.

“Let me worry about that.” was the firm reply.

Clarke smiled at her wife, “Thank you. Knowing you care more about me than the ritual makes me happy.” she leaned forward and kissed Lexa. “Now, please let me take your clothes off,” she requested with a smile, “I want a much closer look than I got at the hot springs.”

Lexa was pleased by Clarke’s answer and nodded her assent. She allowed Clarke to remove her daggers, and place them on the table. Next, Clarke took away her sword. Then she peeled off Lexa’s jacket and then set to work removing the shirt she wore. When the shirt was gone Clarke gasped in appreciation of Lexa’s uncovered breasts. She didn’t touch her yet, just focused on unbuckling Lexa’s pants. Lexa’s hands covered hers and stilled her. “Together Clarke,” was all she said. Lexa slid around behind Clarke and untied the back of the dress she wore. She slid it down slowly over
Clarke’s exquisite back. She reached around to free the blue sash that held the waist of the dress and once it was free Lexa let the dress fall away from Clarke’s body.

Lexa felt her heart stop beating and she wondered if time had stopped. She looked at the beauty in front of her clad only in her bra and panties and she felt dizzy. “Clarke, you are so beautiful,” she choked out, voice thick with emotion.

Clarke was feeling very exposed and shivered. She glanced again at the bed in a silent communication with Lexa and was soon pulled in that direction. It was still warm enough that blankets would not be needed but Lexa pulled back the covers anyway, wanting Clarke to feel more comfortable. Clarke was grateful and slipped in between the sheets. She watched as Lexa removed her pants and climbed in beside her. Lexa was now naked, not having worn any underwear, when Clarke saw this she felt her excitement start to climb out of control and turned to kiss her wife.

They kissed for a long time. Exploring each other’s mouths, necks were suckled and earlobes were licked and nibbled. They needed this time to connect before they moved any further. After what seemed like forever Lexa finally felt Clarke relax in her arms. She pulled away from the kiss and breathlessly spoke, “Clarke, may I see your body please. May I touch you? I want to learn your skin.”

Not sure what Lexa meant but sure it would be heaven Clarke answered, “Yes, I want you to touch me.” Lexa did not need further encouragement and threw the blankets aside causing a laugh to erupt from Clarke. Lexa claimed her lips again as she pressed her body into Clarke’s. The feeling of Lexa’s naked body on top of her own made Clarke cry out in pleasure, “Oh! Lexa, your body feels so good on my skin.”

“It is about to feel even better love,” Lexa promised as she removed Clarke’s bra and then sat up straddling Clarke with her hands on either side of Clarke’s panties. She slowly started to pull them down Clarke’s legs, and as Clarke’s golden curls appeared before her she sighed in pleasure. “So beautiful,” Lexa repeated again and again. When she had her wife completely naked she once again lay down on top of her and kissed her lightly.

Clarke squirmed beneath her luxuriating in the feel of skin on skin, “Kiss me please” she requested. Lexa complied. And this time she allowed the kiss to deepen, grow hungry, demand more. She suddenly broke away and Clarke missed the contact immediately.

Lexa looked lovingly at Clarke, “I want to memorize your body. Lie still please.” With that request she started at the top. She ran her hands over Clarke’s head, ran her finger’s through the golden hair that was splayed out on the pillow. The felt Clarke’s neck muscles and traced them down to her collarbones. She traced that line to Clarke’s shoulder and from there slowly ran her hands down Clarke’s arms. When she reached her hands she picked up each one and lifted it to her mouth placing a loving kiss on each finger before returning them to the mattress. She worked her way back up to Clarke’s shoulders and then proceeded down her torso. She avoided Clarke’s breasts, saving them for later. She slid her hands down Clarke’s sides, eliciting a long sigh from her lover. She brought her hands across Clarke’s stomach and then moved down to trace the hip bone that jutted out from her body, guarding the entrance to Clarke’s centre. Clarke drew a sharp breath when Lexa ran her fingers there and exhaled a shuddering moan as Lexa slipped her hands down further to trace her legs. She studiously followed the line of Clarke’s legs, tracing every muscle and brushing every sensitive corner, like the back of Clarke’s knees. Clarke was breathing heavier now and Lexa started her ascent. This time she added her mouth to the exploration, placing chaste kisses on her ankles, her calves, on the inside of her thigh, on her stomach, her collarbone, her lips. Clarke was shivering with desire by the time Lexa returned to her lips and she knew it was now or never.
She used a fighting technique Octavia had taught her and flipped the unsuspecting Commander onto her back. The look of surprise on Lexa’s face was made even better by the stupid grin that followed it. “Clarke?” she questioned happily.

Clarke sat up straddling Lexa’s hips. She had her hands on her, palms down, pressing into the tightly muscled stomach. “I want to touch you,” Clarke almost whispered, “may I?”

“I am yours Clarke.” Lexa nodded in response.

“Yes, mine,” Clarke’s smile turned almost feral and she allowed her eyes to rake down Lexa’s body like hot coals. Lexa felt the heat of the lusty stare and wondered in anticipation what her wife was planning. Then Clarke’s expression changed, became soft, “You are mine. But I need to know that you want me to touch you too.”

“Want?” Lexa laughed. “I believe, Sky Princess, that you will find the proof you need running down the inside of my thigh.” Lexa moved her hands on top of Clarke’s and dragged them up her torso until they were just under her breasts. “Yes, Clarke. I want your hands on me. Claim me.”

Clarke smiled and leaned in for a tender kiss. Then rising back up to a sitting position she once again began to look like a wild animal stalking her prey. She sat up with her breasts jutting proudly from her body and she shook her head to get her hair from her face. Lexa watched and felt her mouth go dry. She had never seen Clarke look so sexy, so untamed. Clarke began to run her hands over the incredible body that lay under her. Lexa sighed happily to feel those hands exploring her naked skin. Clarke began to add soft kisses, and more pressure. She swirled closer to Lexa’s breast the second time down her body. The third time she brushed the soft curves of the breast but avoided the sensitive nipple. Lexa began to breathe erratically. She began to push her body up into Lexa’s hands silently begging for more.

Clarke moved lower. She followed what she had done to the upper half of her lover’s body. She began with feather light touches and ran her hands up and down Lexa’s legs. As she increased the pressure and added kisses she also changed the path of her hands sliding them up the inside of Lexa’s thigh instead of the outside. As she got closer to the apex she found the wetness Lexa had spoken of. Clarke could not believe how soft and slippery Lexa was. Her entire inner thigh was covered in her need. Clarke moaned in desire knowing she had caused this flood, “Oh! Lexa, you are so wet,” Clarke moaned.

Lexa whimpered as Clarke moved so close to her throbbing centre but passed by without touching. “Clarke, stop torturing me, and touch me” Lexa’s voice was deep and full of desire. It still held the steely self control that Clarke so wanted to destroy, she knew what to do next. She moved quickly to lie on Lexa and claim her lips in a kiss. It was passionate and drew moans from both women. Tongues fought for supremacy and breathing became ragged. That’s when Clarke claimed victory. She bit down hard on Lexa’a lower lip and felt her wife’s body respond. Lexa cried out and Clarke immediately began to suck gently on the wound. When she felt Lexa relax she moved her kiss to her neck. She kissed down to her collarbone and ran her tongue along it. Lexa moaned and a hand cupped the back of Clarke’s head appreciatively. Clarke bit again, not sharply but steadily increasing the pressure until Lexa growled deeply. Then she pulled back and blew gently on the skin she had just bruised. She kissed the area gently whispering words of love.

She moved down Lexa’s body to her breasts. She reverently allowed her hands to explore the beautiful mounds softly and enjoyed the gentle groan from her wife as she ran her hands over the sensitive nipples. She played with them gently for a while and then felt a primal need to take one in her mouth. She lowered her head to Lexa’s left breast and opened her mouth to surround the darkened bud with the warm wetness of her mouth. She enjoyed the feel of it, hard against her
tongue, yet pliant. Lexa was encouraging her again with the hand gently pressing the back of her head and Clarke began to use her teeth. She didn’t bite hard just yet, merely nibbled and then licked. Her legs felt the contracting of Lexa’s stomach and the small shakes of desire running through her wife’s body. Clarke smiled into her kiss continuing to be gentle. Her right hand slid up Lexa’s now trembling torso and traced the round curves of Lexa’s other breast. Her fingers danced up over the rise and found the proudly erect nipple they sought. She wasted no time. While gently sucking on the left nipple Clarke squeezed and twisted the right one with her fingers.

A deep cry of passion exploded from Lexa, She arched her back to press her breasts closer into the torturing hand and soothing mouth. The hand that was entangled in Clarke’s hair flexed, pulling painfully. Clarke gasped at the sensation and smiled at the reaction she had caused. She let up the pressure and quickly slid her mouth over to soothe the right nipple. Lexa groaned in thanks as she sucked gently on the sensitized bud, but the relief was short lived as Clarke’s left hand repeated the action. “Oh, Yes!” was the throaty cry from Lexa, “Clarke, what are you doing to me?” she asked breathlessly.

Clarke stopped what she was doing long enough to release her prize from her mouth and look up at Lexa. “Claiming you,” was her reply, and as she took the nipple back into her mouth she bit down, hard. She heard a litany of words in Trigedasleng come from her wife’s mouth and Lexa dug her nails into Clarke’s shoulders. She relented, kissed softly again and then moved to the other breast. She bit into the underside of the curve and then rubbed the mark softly with gentle fingers. She moved to Lexa’s slim side, curves more like the edge of a blade waited for her quivering. She marked her again, she made her cry out again. Then repeated this all over Lexa’s body, she added pinches and scratches and stoked Lexa’s desire.

Lexa was always in control. When her past lovers had given her orgasms she let them take over her body quietly, and never completely relinquished control. She held on to the Commander’s consciousness even as she allowed Lexa to take her pleasure. She felt that start to slip from her grasp as Clarke marked her body with bites and scratches. As much as the exquisite pain from the bites fuelled her desire, It was the soothing love filled kisses that came after that were tearing apart her control.

Clarke was enthralled, she felt powerful and exhilarated. Lexa’s moans, the clenching muscles, and shaking breaths all told her one thing, Lexa was hers. She knew Lexa was aroused enough and had been teased enough to heighten her desire. She knew Lexa wanted more, and she was almost ready to give her that. First, she moved to lay on top of her wife again to connect with a kiss, and she rubbed her naked body against Lexa’s. Both women shuddered and Clarke felt Lexa’s hands on her hips. The strength in her arms easily allowed her to slide Clarke’s body up so that her breasts were in front of her waiting mouth. She claimed one of Clarke’s full pink nipples in her mouth. It was Clarke’s turn to moan. The warm wetness of Lexa’s mouth felt incredible on her. She was aching with desire and had to fight the urge to surrender to that beautiful sensation.

Lexa felt Clarke pull away and with sadness released her from her mouth. Clarke bent her waist and moved her face to Lexa’s. She kissed her again, trying to put all of her tenderness and all of her love into that kiss. Lexa felt her heart break and be mended by those lips.

Then Clarke sat up and looked down at Lexa. She held Lexa’s eyes as she shimmied down her body. She was leaving a wet trail of her own desire down Lexa’s torso and Lexa was sure there had never been anything sexier in all of the world. Clarke continued until she was straddled over Lexa’s thighs. She placed her hands on Lexa’s hips and continued the eye contact. As she moved her fingers across the hip bone heading down to her thigh she spoke, her voice husky, laden with desire, “Lexa, tell me what you want.” Her hands moved across the tops of Lexa’s thighs and dipped down in between her legs. Still only resting on the inner thigh but achingly close to their prize.
“I want you to stop teasing me and touch me,” Lexa managed to say, even though she was holding her breath waiting for Clarke’s hands to slide into her wetness.

“I am touching you my love,” Clarke was smiling smugly down at her, “shall I continue just like this?” she punctuated her question with a scratch down the inside of Lexa’s thigh and then immediately rubbed it better.

“No, please not like this,” Lexa’s body shook “Clarke, I need more.” The Commander had never begged for anything, and not that long ago she would have laughed at, and promptly killed, anyone who told her she would one day beg the Sky Princess to touch her. But that is exactly what she did, “Please, Clarke. I want you to fuck me.” The coarseness of the language and the desperation in Lexa’s voice moved Clarke. “Please,” She continued gasping for breath, “I need your hands inside of me, and your mouth on me. I need release. Please.”

Clarke looked at Lexa’s body, she saw the flush of her chest red with desire, and the deep rising and falling of her breath, she saw her abdominal muscles clenched and flexing her hips upwards towards Clarke. She marvelled at the sight of this gorgeous woman laid out before her and begging to be fucked. She had never felt so alive. She quickly changed position from straddling Lexa’s thighs to kneeling between them. Lexa moaned with a sound like relief and she drew her knees up and let her legs fall to the sides wantonly opening herself to Clarke.

Clarke gasped, she had seen pictures in medical texts, but nothing prepared her for the glorious sight of Lexa’s dripping wetness. “Lexa, you are so beautiful,” she whispered. She moved her hands then, she slid her right hand up into the heat that was waiting and when she slipped her fingers into the folds both women gasped together. Clarke swallowed hard and bent over so her face was within kissing distance of Lexa’s quivering mons. She began to explore. She ran her fingers over Lexa’s outer lips, placed kisses on the them, enjoying the feel of the soaking wet hair against her mouth. She inhaled Lexa’s soft scent and licked the inside of Lexa’s thigh tasting her lover. She moved in further finding two hairless, slippery lips waiting for her. She carefully avoided the bundle of nerve endings at the apex and lovingly licked them from top to bottom. She moved her fingers in deeper still, finding the opening to her lover’s sex. Lexa was so aroused she was very wet, open, and ready. Clarke lifted herself back onto her knees so she could watch Lexa’s face as she entered her. She placed her left hand on Lexa’s abdomen just above where the coarse hair started to grow and then she called to her wife. “My love, look at me.” she begged softly.

Lexa had her eyes squeezed shut in delicious agony at Clarke’s ministrations and had to steady herself before opening them. When she did, she found herself staring into such blueness, such tenderness, such love. She was an accomplished huntress but this desire she was fighting was a different kind of beast; It was going to swallow her whole and she knew she didn’t have much time. She felt her resolve, her carefully curated and ever present self control, slipping away. She was amazed to find that she didn’t care.

Clarke held her wife’s gaze as she sunk two finger’s into her heat. Lexa’s body shook, her eyelids fluttered open and shut as she drew a shaky breath. She was lost in the blue of Clarke’s eyes and Clarke was lost in the sensation of being inside of her wife for the first time. Both women thought of the ocean

Clarke was taken by surprise at the feeling, she was shaking with pleasure and beginning feel the sharpness of her own need. She forced herself to remember the advice she had received, ‘slow circles’ she repeated inside her head. She pushed her fingers in further and was rewarded by Lexa’s hips thrusting to meet her. She explored the wet cave of desire slowly and testing Lexa’s patience. Her hips gyrated demanding more. Clarke thought she had found what she was looking for, she knew for sure when she pressed into the spot and Lexa threw her head back and cried her name.
‘Slow circles, Clarke, slow circles’ she repeated reminding herself to stay in control. The scent of Lexa’s rising desire and the liquid heat that surrounded her fingers was making her drunk. She began a slow thrusting rotation, pulling out of Lexa slightly but never leaving her entirely. As she sunk back in she rotated her wrist and curled her fingers up into Lexa, she continued this rotation, the circles, and the curling of fingers. Lexa continued her moans.

Lexa had her knees bent and splayed to the side, her heels were dug into the mattress and her abs contracted keeping her lower back flat on the bed and her hips turned up into Clarke. She was panting and so close to losing control.

One more swirl of Clarke’s wrist. A growl, “Clarrrke,” Lexa’s voice was deep and low and came from the very back of her throat.

Two more strokes of Clarke’s fingers. Lexa’s hands grabbed the sheets in a vice grip and twisted.

A single swipe of Clarke’s tongue starting from the entrance where her greedy fingers were taking all that was offered and moving slowly up to find Lexa’s clit. An exhale of breath, shaking, soft, the pitch much higher now, “Claaarke.” Shaking fingers wrapped themselves in Golden hair. Lexa let herself go then. Gave herself entirely over to her beloved wife.

Clarke was an apt student and while she continued the pressure with her right hand she used her left hand to pull on Lexa’s skin and expose where she needed her tongue to be. She smiled at the beauty of her lover and lowered her head to feed. She flattened her tongue and used it’s entire surface to lick the sensitive area.

Lexa held her breath and every muscle in her body was tense. She unknowingly whispered encouragement and professions of love to Clarke as Clarke began to make love to her with her tongue. She found a rhythm that had Lexa pulling her hair and driving her hips up into Clarke’s mouth. She discovered the Lexa enjoyed the intense, direct contact of her tongue on her clit. She traced figure eights around the area, teasing Lexa and making her groan loudly. Her fingers were always in motion, sliding in and out, always returning to the special spot she had found and swirling upwards there to bring cries from her lover. Lexa gasped, “More Clarke, more fingers, fill me up.” Clarke added a third finger, sliding in easily but feeling the extra tightness it caused. The finger was rewarded by a loud shaky, “Oh, fuck, yes,” from Lexa. Clarke allowed her fingers to be squeezed together by Lexa’s walls and she used her thumb anchored outside to give her leverage to push up into the spot Lexa needed her to be.

While she was doing this she was experimenting with Lexa’s clit. She was using her teeth ever so softly to nibble and found this caused delicious ripples to run through Lexa’s body. She sucked the bundle up hard into her mouth and was rewarded by hair pulling and swearing. She stiffened her tongue to a point, lashed it over her clit and Lexa’s hips bucked in response.

She knew she had Lexa completely and she started to settle into a steady rhythm of her tongue flat, circling on Lexa’s clit, she was gradually increasing the speed and pressure. The three fingers buried in her lover followed suit. Curling up inside Lexa rhythmically.

Lexa felt herself climbing higher, her muscles tensed, her back arched, she cried out to Clarke, “Yes, please. I’m so close Clarke, take me there.” Clarke complied, she added more pressure on both fronts and matched her speed to Lexa’s thrusting hips. Lexa teetered on the edge of ecstasy for what seemed to her hours before Clarke bit down on her clit with just the right amount of pressure. Lexa felt the pleasure wash over her so intensely she wondered how she didn’t die. She called Clarke’s name out into the night, a loud cry of unbridled passion. Her muscles contracted on their own with no heed to Lexa’s motor control, her legs squeezed Clarke’s head tightly and her hips bucked up and then away from the pleasure so fierce it was pain. She felt Clarke continuing light strokes of her
tongue and feather touches of her fingers, she shook and writhed and through it all felt Clarke’s loving touches carrying her home.

When the flood gates broke and unleashed Lexa’s orgasm Clarke held on and milked her lover through it continuing to lick and thrust ever so gently until Lexa came back down into herself. When she did she cried out hoarsely for her wife. “Clarke, please, I need you to hold me.”

Never having imagined those words coming from her normally stoic wife Clarke quickly disentangled herself from Lexa’s legs. She slowly and gently removed her fingers from Lexa and placing a gentle kiss at her quivering opening, she slid her body up to cover Lexa in a loving embrace. They kissed, slow and gentle, Lexa tasting herself on Clarke’s tongue. Lexa’s desire had been sated but Clarke’s was still singing through her veins and she was fighting against it. Trying to ignore the throbbing of blood in her ears and the burning heat in her loins she concentrated on being as loving and gentle as Lexa needed her to be as she recovered. Lexa’s breath steadied and she buried herself into Clarke’s arms. She rolled them over so Clarke was on her back and she casually threw her left arm and leg over Clarke’s body. She propped her head up on her right elbow and fixed Clarke with her gaze. She had a question that she had to ask. “How did you? She stopped and started over, “I’m not doubting you, but how did you do that when you have no experience?” She was genuinely curious.

“Research darling, those books you tease me about reading have some very important information in them.” Clarke teased. Lexa laughed long and loud and Clarke delighted in the sound. “Plus I had some advice from some people I trust very much,” Clarke added.

“Whoever they are I will have to thank them,” Lexa sighed and nuzzled into Clarke’s neck. As she was moving to hug Clarke her leg brushed over Clarke’s hips and just below she felt a wetness that caught her breath. The way Clarke’s body jumped at the slight contact reminded Lexa that her wife had not yet been given satisfaction. “Clarke?” she cooed softly into her ear, “do you need something?” Her voice was thick, sexy, and maddening.

“No, I’m fine. Take however much time you need to recover.” Clarke breathed back unconvincingly, shivering at the breath in her ear.

Lexa smiled down at Clarke and then moved gracefully to cover her body with her own. “I am the Commander, I do not need recovery time, let me show you.” She let her lips fall on her lover's and kiss her with passion. Her thigh slid in between Clarke’s legs and she groaned as she felt the wetness there. She let her hands roam over what was now hers. Her hands found Clarke’s breasts quickly, she saw no reason to tease her already highly aroused partner and the earlier taste she had gotten had not quenched any of her thirst for the perfect globes. The kneaded them and playfully tugged on her nipples.

Clarke’s head jerked back and she hissed as Lexa’s mouth joined her hands. She sucked and licked and nipped ever so gently with her teeth until Clarke’s hips gyrating against her thigh started to become frantic. Lexa didn’t want Clarke to come yet. She removed her thigh and Clarke whimpered, begging, “Lexa, please…”

Lexa moved quickly to kiss her lover and then even quicker to position herself between the legs of the woman she loved. She stared lovingly at Clarke. She stroked her fingers up and down along Clarke’s slick heat. Clarke’s muscles clenched and her voice was heavy with passion. “Please, Lexa, take me, fuck me, anything, please. I need you.” The words lit a flame in Lexa’s belly and she let her fingers dip inside the beautiful, wet folds a little more. She followed the path to the top and gently circled Clarke’s clit with her fingertip.

She felt Clarke’s desire becoming too rough, too ragged, and she kept her finger in place as she
moved back up her lover’s body to envelope her in a loving embrace with her strong left arm. She pulled Clarke to her and kissed her softly, whispering, “I love you, it’s ok. Just breathe darling I will take care of you.” As she whispered her practiced fingers danced, insatiable over Clarke’s clitoris. She kept her gaze locked on Clarke’s eyes and continued her loving whispers. It didn’t take long for Clarke to lose control. Her back arched off the bed and she threw her head back with a keening wail. Her legs squeezed Lexa’s hand in place and they stayed like that for a minute or two allowing Clarke to breathe again.

Green eyes found blue and they kissed softly. Lexa allowed Clarke’s breathing to steady and then she moved her hand causing Clarke to jump. “Oh! sensitive” she exclaimed. “Hold me?” she asked shyly.

“Always,” was the heartfelt reply. Lexa pulled Clarke into her arms and they both relaxed into a heavy lidded trance. Lexa allowed them to rest like this for a few minutes but she was far from done with Clarke this evening. She let her free hand start to roam. The wandering fingers provided fuel to reheat a cooling ember and Lexa’s thigh slipping back between Clarke’s legs was the oxygen that reignited the flame of passion. They both forgot the sleepy, post orgasmic bliss and once again jumped into the fire.

Lexa began a slow assault of tender kisses all over her wife’s body, stoking the fire in Clarke’s belly. Where Clarke had bitten and been hard, Lexa kissed and was soft. Where Clarke had scratched, Lexa tickled. Clarke felt her passion soaring to heights she didn’t know existed. Lexa wanted her to reach out and touch the stars from which she had fallen.

Lexa’s mouth found it’s way to the place she had always wanted to be and she buried her face in Clarke’s wetness. She quickly found her mark and circled Clarke’s clit agonizingly slowly. The heat Clarke felt burned Lexa's name into her heart, branding her. Clarke’s hands had found Lexa’s curly hair and were pressing, encouraging, begging for more pressure. Lexa conceded, and sped up her movements, she was steady and held her course through all of Clarke’s thrusting and bucking beneath her. She felt Clarke tense, pause, and break. She heard her name screamed lovingly from the lips of the beauty beneath her. Clarke saw stars, she saw the sun. Lexa saw the high tide, and waves crashing on the shore.

Lexa did not move as she felt Clarke come through her orgasm. She simply changed her position slightly and continued. Clarke, bucked, “too sensitive, oh god, too much,” she pushed her hips down into the mattress trying to back away from Lexa’s tongue.

“Trust me love,” Lexa purred, and when she felt Clarke relax in silent consent she continued. She ran her tongue all over Clarke’s pussy. She licked the inner and outer lips savouring the taste of her lover. She mercifully stayed away from the tender, sensitive nerves for the moment and dipped her head to nip at the insides of Clarke’s thighs. She used her hands to open Clarke to her and placed kisses at the opening to Clarke’s sex. She used to hands to squeeze and tickle Clarke’s ass, hips, and thighs, she reached up and stroked her breasts. Only when she felt Clarke’s desire rising again did she return her attention the clit that was begging for more. She was rewarded by Clarke’s husky voice, swearing, affirming, demanding more.

When she had Clarke once again burning with heat, and dizzyingly high with lust she moved her hand to find Clarke’s opening. She paused and lifted her head, she wanted to be sure, “Are you ready?”

Clarke answered, looking deep into Lexa’s eyes, “I want you up here with me. Kiss me, look in my eyes, and then take my blood.” Her reference to the Grounder ritual made Lexa want to cry tender tears. She slid her body up keeping her hand drawing lazy patterns through Clarke’s wetness, teasing
her opening but not entering.

They kissed then, awash in desire and grounded in love. Lexa felt a tear begin to fall from her eye and Clarke moaned lovingly into her mouth. “Claim me, I am ready.”

She lifted her head from the lips she loved so much and locked eyes with Clarke. The bright blue shade had deepened and they were stormy with passion. Lexa let her fingers slide forward slightly. Clarke was so wet that Lexa knew she could not be more ready. Keeping her eyes locked on Clarke’s, she entered her. Clarke winced a little in pain and Lexa stopped moving allowing Clarke to get used to her finger. Clarke’s eyes darkened still and she exhaled heavily starting to undulate her hips against Clarke’s hand. “I’m ok baby, keep going.” Clarke’s voice was breathy, husky, filled with desire. Lexa began to move slowly, she watched her lovers eyes and saw pain flare as she added a second finger. The pain was soon replaced by pleasure. Lexa stroked Clarke gently but firmly and revelled in how it felt to be inside of her.

Clarke felt like Lexa was pulling her apart cell by cell and putting her back together, rebuilding her. She felt the initial pain of penetration and then Lexa stilled to let her become accustomed to the sensation. Clarke squeezed her muscles like she had read about and a flash of pleasure ripped through her. That’s when Lexa started to move slowly. Clarke felt more pain as Lexa added another finger. It was worse this time but there was pleasure behind it and Lexa’s hands were skilled and soft. The pleasure soon outweighed the pain and Clarke let her head fall back and she cried her lover’s name wantonly. She felt Lexa’s teeth on her neck, nipping but never hurting, She felt Lexa’s strong hand on her back holding her up. She felt herself shudder as Lexa pressed deeper into her centre. The pain and pleasure were mixed now and she couldn’t separate them. Lexa used her thumb to press on Clarke’s sensitive clit and her finger’s found the spot inside of Clarke they had been looking for. She pressed her lover’s name, whispering in Lexa’s ear. Her husky voice detailing all the sexy feelings she had, begging for Lexa to take her more deeply, to let go and fuck her. She licked the ear she was whispering into and bit down on the earlobe. Her hands were scratching Lexa’s ass and driving her to pump harder against Clarke’s leg. Lexa lost control for the second time that night, she gave in to Clarke’s whispers and she increased the pace and pressure of everything she was doing. Coached by a sexy whisper in her ear she brought herself to climax against Clarke’s thigh. She was shaking as she fought to regain control. She had wanted to be tender and soft with Clarke all night and was suddenly worried that she may have hurt her bride.

Her worry was assuaged quickly by the same sexy voice in her ear, “Baby, please I’m so hot, make me come.” As Lexa started to move her thumb over Clarke’s clit again she felt Clarke’s hands move up her back and tangle in her hair. “Use your mouth,” it was not a request and Lexa delighted in this side of Clarke. She allowed Clarke’s hands to push her head to where she wanted her and when she arrived she lustily began licking her lover into delirium. She knew Clarke was ready to come and she used her skilled tongue to bring her to the brink quickly. When she was sure Clarke was close she started fucking her slowly with her fingers. The combination set Clarke off and the orgasm that rocked her body was intense and intoxicating. Her body writhed in pleasure under her wife and her mind soared into the stars. She cried out loudly praising Lexa’s tongue and strong fingers. Lexa held her hip with her free hand trying to keep her mouth in contact until the wave abated.

Clarke was breathing heavily but Lexa recognized the hitch in her breath that came with a sob. She
moved so quickly that Clarke was in her arms protected before the tears even left her eyes. “Clarke, my love, did I hurt you? Tell me what’s wrong.” Lexa was holding her gently, stoking her hair and kissing her forehead.

Clarke cried into Lexa’s shoulder for a minute and then she fought to control her voice, “No, lover, you didn’t hurt me. Don’t worry,” she sniffed and raised her eyes to Lexa’s. “I’m sorry,” she laughed shyly feeling a little foolish, “it was just so powerful, and so beautiful. You are so beautiful.”

“If beauty is the cause, I guess I am to weep every morning as I wake up next to you?” Lexa wooed her love with sweet words and a gentle kiss.

“I’m going to write all of the sweet things you say to me down in a book,” Clarke threatened, “and when you don’t listen to me I’m going to read it to your warriors.” She grinned at Lexa who laughed at her wife.

“I will always listen to you Clarke of the Tree Clan, but I can not always do as you ask.” she said sadly.

“Clarke of the Tree Clan, I like that. Lexa of the Sky People, will you kiss me now?” Clarke’s tears had dried and her eyes shone with love.

Lexa didn’t answer with words. She answered with her lips, and then her teeth and then roaming hands. Clarke responded with biting teeth, scratching nails and a hungry mouth. They fell into the deep pit of desire again not realizing the sun was rising and a crowd was starting to gather near the tent to witness the morning ritual.

Luna went to Abby immediately when she arrived. She and Abby had spent a lot of time talking and getting to know each other the previous evening. She knew that her friend would most likely be embarrassed at the noises she heard her daughter making from inside the tent. Especially since she was the only Sky Person present so far. Luna laughed and hugged Abby. “It is a joyous event. Your daughter has blessed all of our people with this union.” She paused as she heard Lexa cry Clarke’s name to the heavens. “And it seems she is giving as good as she gets.”

Raven had just arrived with Octavia and Lincoln and as they heard the cry they giggled like school girls. “Atta girl Clarke!” Raven cheered.

Abby looked over and laughed glad for all of the company. “I can’t even remember being so young as to have the stamina for that all night.”

The growing crowd was becoming boisterous and when Clarke screamed Lexa’s name once more they cheered the Commander.

Inside the tent Clarke was just coming down from her orgasm and noticed Lexa was trying to hold in a laugh. “I swear, that time it was like I heard a crowd cheering for your prowess,” Clarke shook her head and laughed.

“You did,” Lexa replied before collapsing in a fit of giggles, “it’s morning, Clarke.”

Clarke turned beat red and looked at Lexa, “They heard… Oh God.” she laughed too curling into her lovers arms. She stiffened suddenly and looked at Lexa with fear, “The ritual, what if there was no blood,” she was scared to look.

Lexa smiled tenderly at her. “It matters not to me Clarke, I know the truth. If there is no blood I will simply bite my cheek until blood flows freely, and then pleasure you with my mouth. That should spread it around in all of the right places, don’t you think?”
Clarke blushed again but wasn’t feeling like being teased at the moment. She took deep breath and got up to inspect the sheets. Lexa got up too and held her from behind. There was a red stain on the sheet much larger than Lexa had imagined. She felt sick, she hadn’t expected it. The whole time it had been her plan to create the blood by biting her cheek but time had gotten away from her. She turned Clarke around and sat her on the mattress. She kneeled before her with tears in her eyes, “Clarke I am so sorry, I hurt you. I was too rough. There should not be so much blood.”

Clarke looked incredulously at her, her medical knowledge assuring her that it was actually a very small amount of blood. “Are you kidding me, you’re the one who made such a big deal about this and now you are crying. Lexa, baby, you didn’t hurt me, you loved me. We loved each other. If anything I hurt you, I mean look at the bite mark!” Clarke’s eyes grew wide and she pulled Lexa to her feet. “Oh god, baby, I’m sorry!” Clarke was shocked at what she had done to Lexa’s beautiful skin. There were large bruises and bite marks everywhere and scratches that looked red and angry.

Lexa looked down at herself and laughed, “I wear them with pride.” she reassured Clarke.

Just then Luna announced herself outside the tent and informed them that she, Indra, and Abby would be entering. Clarke grabbed the top blanket to cover up and Lexa stood behind her naked and proud with her arms around Clarke.

The three women entered the tent and Clarke blushed deep crimson. Lexa quipped, “My blushing bride is happy to see you all this morning.” She kissed Clarke on the cheek and laughed.

Abby smiled at her daughter and tried not to look embarrassed for Clarke’s sake. The women confirmed the blood on the sheets and Indra collected them and left to prepare them for the fire. Lexa couldn’t meet Abby’s eyes, “Chancellor, you are a doctor. Tell me, that blood, it seemed like too much. Did I hurt her?” Lexa looked so sorrowful that Abby almost wanted to hug her. However, since the woman had just taken her only daughter’s virginity she did no such thing, but she did answer her as a doctor would. “No, that amount seemed normal. Also, that was far less blood than you think as it mixes with other fluids and therefore creates a bigger stain. Since you two seemed to have been involved for most of the night…”

“Mom! Shut up!” Clarke hissed and realization dawned on her “Oh God! Mom, you heard, didn’t you?”

Luna stepped forward cutting Clarke off and trying to save the mother and daughter any more embarrassment. The Sky People were obviously not as comfortable about sex as the Grounders were. “Clarke, Lexa, your joining is complete, your first night was a success and we celebrate the passion you have for each other. Now, we must see your bodies and confirm that you have sufficiently marked each other and then we can go and complete the ceremony.

Lexa stepped out from behind Clarke and revealed her beautiful body with no shame. Luna laughed and Abby almost choked. “You’ll need to have some of those tended to later Commander.” Abby smirked at her daughter. “I’m sure Clarke can take care of it?”

Clarke raised her head defiantly refusing to just stand there and blush. “Yes, of course I will. I did put them there after all.” Lexa looked proudly at her wife and reached to take the sheet from Clarke’s body.

Abby flinched expecting the same severity of bites and scratches on Clarke and not knowing how she would react to seeing her own daughter with bruises like that. When the sheet was pulled away her heart was once again warmed by Lexa’s obvious care for her daughter. Clarke’s skin was peppered with small hickeys and not a scratch or bite on her skin except for some deep red scratches on her back and shoulder. Abby figured Lexa had done that unconsciously while being bitten so she
couldn’t hold those against her. The flesh of her thighs was stained slightly red but that was to be expected. Abby smiled at Lexa and nodded her head.

Luna smiled too and nodded to them both and then she turned and left the tent. Abby followed closely behind her and soon the lovers were once again alone. Lexa pulled Clarke into a kiss, “Should we go back to bed and make them wait a little longer?” she mused.

“Oh, I think they heard enough of a show already mighty Commander.” Clarke admonished. "Let’s get dressed and get this over with. I just want to be your wife.”

Lexa smiled and they dressed silently. Clarke noticed Lexa strapping on her daggers but leaving her sword. “Why do you need those?” she asked.

“Jus drein jus daun,” Lexa answered simply and leaned in to kiss Clarke. “Don’t worry, trust me,” she reassured Clarke.

Once outside the crowd that had gathered cheered for the newlyweds. They were led to the pyre where the sheet had been bundled ready to burn. Lexa took out her dagger and sliced her own hand, “Blood demands blood” she spoke loudly and laid her hand on the already bloody sheet.

Clarke looked at her shocked and then laughed. “I can’t believe you didn’t tell me you were going to do that,” she shook her head.

Lexa grinned, “You would have fussed needlessly. It's not deep and it will heal.”

Once Lexa removed her hand she lit the sheet on fire and turned to her people. “Proof of blood has been given, the ritual is compete. If anyone questions the honour of my wife again they will die by my sword.” Her words were absolute and although the Sky People were shocked the Grounders cheered the Commander even more.

Clarke shook her head and smiled. She had many issues with what Lexa had just said but trusted that her wife knew how to navigate the tricky Grounder politics better than she did.

There was a large breakfast prepared nearby and they moved to the table. It was arranged with two seats at the head and Clarke and Lexa sat there both suddenly feeling famished. Raven and Octavia sat down on Clarke’s side and they immediately began whispering with Clarke. The three young women giggled and whispered some more. Finally, Raven and Octavia jumped up to grab some more food and Lexa looked pointedly at Clarke, “I assume those two were the source of your ‘advice’, am I correct?” She asked.

“Yes,” Clarke answered, “why?”

Just then the girls returned and sat down again. Lexa fixed them both with a look that stopped them dead. “I understand that you gave my wife some council about our first night together?” she asked. They both looked guilty and nodded reluctantly, fearing the Commander was angry. Then a miracle happened, Clarke watched in amazement as a slow blush creeped up Lexa’s neck, “I wish to thank you,” she told Raven and Octavia, ”your advice was most… appreciated.” Clarke watched happily as the crimson spread to her wife’s cheeks and burned there.

Chapter End Notes
I had a couple of snowed-in days so instead of a Netflix binge I decided to let my thoughts wonder to this fic. I admit I was mostly just looking forward to writing the wedding night. ;-}
Lexa shows Clarke the ocean and takes her breath away.

Clarke and Lexa left camp two days after the wedding. Accompanied by four of Lexa’s best guards they travelled with Luna and her entourage back to the lands by the sea.

Nearing the end of the first day of travel they passed through some small villages at the outskirts of the Tree Clan’s territory. They stopped for the night in one of the villages and Clarke was pleased to discover that the people had arranged a large tent for them and a feast in honour of the newlyweds. They showed respect and fear for Lexa but the reverence they had for Clarke moved her. “Is it just because I’m your wife now?” asked Clarke quietly, wanting to understand.

“Clarke do you recognize those three men?” Lexa pointed to the three large Grounder warriors who had approached them when they first arrived and had stayed nearby ever since, protectively facing down anyone who came near. When Clarke and Lexa first dismounted the three had kneeled before Clarke heads bowed even before greeting their Commander. Clarke thought it odd but didn’t mention it at the time.

“I don’t think so,” then Clarke looked closer and saw a tattoo on one of the young men’s neck that tugged at her memory. It was a large mountain lion that covered most of the young man’s back. The impressive claws seemed to dig into his neck. Clarke had asked him about it as he had lain strapped down in a medical bed recovering from his addiction. “Lexa, that tattoo,” she exhaled, “he was one of the first Reapers I helped rehabilitate after Lincoln.”

“You gave this village back three sons, three husbands, three fathers. I Command their respect, but you have their love.” Lexa smiled in sadness and in love.

On the second night they stopped in one of the villages under Luna’s leadership. Clarke was surprised to find that the people there seemed to treat Lexa the same as the Tree People did. They even called her Heda. Lexa did not give orders to them and everyone looked to Luna for direction but Clarke got the distinct impression that if Lexa were to say jump… “Why do they call you ‘Heda’ here? Shouldn’t that be Luna?” Clarke was curious.

Lexa’s level eyes fell on her and her eyebrow arched. “Do you not know?” The confused Clarke shook her head and Lexa laughed, “Well at least I can be sure you didn’t join with me for my title.”

“What do you mean? You are the Commander of the Tree Clan, and you were the one who united the twelve other clans as well, I know that.”

Lexa rose to her feet and everyone immediately quieted, stopped what they were doing, and looked to her. Luna came to her right away, “Commander, what is it?” Clarke realized that was the first time
Luna had not addressed Lexa by name.

“My wife seems not to understand exactly who it is she is joined to.” Lexa said. “I do not wish you to feel my hand too heavily Luna, but if you don’t mind I will enlighten Clarke.”

Luna looked curiously at Clarke, “Of course Commander,” she immediately stepped away from Lexa and called to her people loudly. Clarke didn’t understand what she said but everyone gathered immediately and stood facing the tall, and suddenly intimidating Commander. Luna turned away from her people to face Lexa and shouted in English, for Clarke’s benefit, “We pay tribute to the Commander of the Clans.”

“How?” came the great shout as all of the people in the village suddenly dropped to one knee and bowed their heads. Clarke gasped and looked at her wife in awe.

They stayed that way until Lexa shouted, “Your tribute is recognized, you may rise.” Luna rose first and looked Lexa in the eyes. She bowed her head once more and then turned to dismiss her people.

Lexa turned to Clarke and her face was the ageless, emotionless mask of the Commander. “It was not only my actions and my skill in battle that united the clans Clarke. It was me, It is me. I do not just command the Tree People; I rule them all.” Her arms stretched out to her sides and her voice was flat, confident in it’s own truth. Clarke found she couldn’t breathe. “I’m sorry Clarke,” Lexa’s voice dropped to a whisper but did not loose it’s steel, “I thought you knew.”

Clarke was aware that this probably meant more danger, more wars, more blood, but at the moment all she could think about was how incredibly sexy Lexa looked. She could tell that Lexa was worried about how she would take the news so she sauntered up to her wife and wrapped her arms around her neck, “Wow, my wife is kind of a big deal, huh?” Lexa smiled then and kissed Clarke. They heard giggles and cheers coming from the villagers. “Are people going to cheer every time we kiss?” Clarke asked.

“It is the Commander’s first standing order,” Lexa teased.

The next day Clarke felt the air change as they rode. There was an unfamiliar smell and when she asked Lexa about it her wife merely smiled, “Patience Clarke,” her reply. Just past noon on that same day Clarke began to hear a sound, it grew as they travelled. It was a roaring, crashing sound like thunder. She knew there was no reason to be nervous because the Grounder’s continued the journey undisturbed by the sound, her curiosity was getting the better of her but she refused to ask the questions she knew Lexa was waiting for. Lexa kept looking at her with a grin and laughing, “Why so quiet Sky Princess?” she teased, and Clarke just ignored her with a smile.

They were travelling through a field of tall, sun kissed barley that was almost ready for harvest, there was a wide worn path meandering in front of them and a small hill rising up to the left. Luna stopped and turned to Lexa, “There,” she smiled and pointed to the top of the nearby slope, “but don’t get too close to the edge” she warned knowing neither Clarke, nor even Lexa, understood the coastal lands and how the Earth could crumble so easily into the sea.

Lexa dismounted and held her hand out to Clarke. Clarke slipped easily from her mount and took the outstretched hand. She looked curiously at her wife who could barely contain her excitement. “Come Clarke, I have something to show you,” Lexa’s smile seemed as bright as the sun and Clarke, having long since figured out that Lexa wanted to show her the ocean, thought that there was no way it could compare to that smile.
Lexa spoke as they climbed up the incline. “The thunder that you hear is the pounding surf, and the scent you picked up on the breeze is the salt air. I have brought you to see the ocean Clarke, for it is the same as the blue I see when I look into your eyes.”

Despite knowing what was going to be at the top of the hill, despite having seen pictures, and despite having imagined it millions of times, when she reached the top of the hill and saw the ocean spread out before her Clarke wept.

Lexa held her wife and looked at the impressive view. A long rocky beach and the blue of the ocean. She watched the white caps of waves as they rushed towards shore only to throw themselves onto the rocks in a thunderous display. She inhaled deeply enjoying the distinct smell of the ocean and the feel of Clarke in her arms.

They stood like that for a long time until Luna approached. “Lexa, I’m sorry. I am needed in the main village. I will leave my guards to guide you but I must go on ahead.”

Clarke pulled herself from the view. “No, it’s OK. Let’s continue together” She nodded at Lexa who smiled at her and took her hand to walk back to the horses. “Luna, thank you. That was the perfect place for my first view of the ocean. It is so beautiful.”

“I’m glad you think so Clarke. I have many things I wish to show you and the Commander, including my boats that Lexa reuses to step foot on. Perhaps with you by her side she will be brave enough, no?” Luna teased Lexa quietly and Clarke wondered at this. None of the Generals of the Tree Clan teased Lexa, ever. She wondered why Lexa permitted it with Luna.

“Bravery!? Huh!” Lexa snorted, “It is not a question of bravery, but intelligence, Luna. It is folly to board one of those things.”

“I’d love to go out on a boat!” Clarke offered smiling brightly.

Lexa scowled at her and Luna laughed her musical laugh as they turned to continue their journey.

A short while later they joined a larger path that Clarke was sure headed to a bigger village. She was anxious to see how people lived next to the ocean. It was then that Luna paused once again. She pointed to another smaller path that led away from the main one. “Your cabin is that way Commander. There are sentries already posted so your guards may rest. The cabin is fully stocked with food and drink. There is also a rather comfortable bed and soft blankets. It is yours as long as you are here with us. Anything else that you want, you merely need to ask. I invite you and Clarke to the main village tomorrow to have lunch with me, and I request the honour showing your wife my lands. As for tonight, I expect you two will find some way to entertain yourselves.” Luna looked at them with a mischievous grin and bid them goodnight.

Lexa smiled at Luna. “Thank you Luna. I will do what I can to try and ensure Clarke, of the Sky People is not bored this night.” Clarke blushed and Lexa looked very pleased with herself.

The two parties separated and on the short path to the cabin Lexa’s guards let it be known that they would not trust sea warriors to patrol the perimeter of the Commander’s cabin. Lexa nodded and they left the warriors to their duties. Once they dismounted by the cabin Clarke asked why. “Clarke of the Sky People, everyone knows who the best warriors are, Trigedakru Gonas are legendary.” Lexa spoke with pride and more than a little arrogance.

“Much like their Commander?” Clarke added, teasing.

“Finally, my wife begins to understand.” Lexa swept Clarke up into her arms and kissed her.
The next three days were full of exploration and delight. There were boats, awe inspiring seascapes, beaches, and the gentle hospitality of Luna’s people. The next three nights were full of exploration and delight. There were cries of passion, fevered hands, the sharpness of teeth and the softness of kisses. They made love all night and slept in until late in the mornings.

When Clarke woke alone on the sixth day of their honeymoon she was startled by the empty spot next to her. She rose quickly and pulled on her clothes. As soon as she exited she saw the normally unseen guards were posted at the door, like sentries. It reminded Clarke of the camp during the preparations for the recent war. There had always been two guards at Lexa’s door then. Clarke’s heart was in her throat. “Where is the Commander?” she demanded.

“Heda is training,” one of the guards answered. “I will take you to her.” He turned without another word and walked off behind the cabin not turning to see if Clarke followed.

After a short distance the path descended towards the beach and flattened. The sand was packed hard and was easy to walk on. Clarke could finally see her wife in the distance, she let out the breath she had been holding and watched in fascination and appreciation of Lexa’s swordplay. It seemed like a dance, the footwork was fast, almost too fast. The strong arms that had held Clarke’s body shaking in pleasure just a few hours ago now wielded the heavy sword like it was made of air. The sword swung, twirled, thrust. Lexa had stripped down to her tank top and her muscles shone with a sheen of sweat. Clarke felt the familiar signs of her own arousal and stood transfixed watching Lexa.

Lexa heard the approach long before she caught the movement in her peripheral vision. She knew it was Clarke and she had a pretty good idea that Clarke would enjoy the show. She continued her practice feeling calm and strong as she manipulated her weapon with great skill. When she finished she purposefully took a long drink from her water skin and with her head back let some water splash on her face and run down her neck. Only then did she turn and meet her lovers eyes.

The guards said something and laughed, Lexa smirked and nodded. Clarke was still staring hard at Lexa. “What did they say?” she demanded, trying to control her desire to run to Lexa and beg to be bedded.

“They merely asked if I required privacy at this time.” Was her answer. Her warrior’s blood still rushed through her veins from the swordplay and she felt every inch the Commander. The guards quickly disappeared undoubtedly to sweep and set up a perimeter far enough to afford them privacy but close enough to protect.

Lexa looked at Clarke with lust burning in her eyes, “Come.” she said and Clarke obeyed without thought. When Clarke was close enough Lexa pounced. She wrapped Clarke in her arms and kissed her breath away. Her rough hands tore Clarke’s shirt open and she grasped Clarke’s breast in her strong grip. She felt Clarke shake and tremble in her arms. She slid her hand from the heaving chest to Clarke’s pants. She quickly unbuttoned them and aggressively tore the zipper down scraping her knuckles. She silently cursed the sky clothes but did not stop. Her hand slid into the pants and immediately dipped into Clarke’s wet folds. Clarke broke their kiss to cry out her name. Clarke’s face was raised to the sky and her hips were rocking against Lexa’s hand. Lexa held her firm with her strong left arm and fucked her with her right. She slid her fingers deep into Clarke and let her thumb rake over the attention seeking clit. She kissed the graceful, pale neck Clarke was exposing to her and then greedily let her teeth bite into the supple shoulders. She had learned much about her wife’s body during their honeymoon and knew that Clarke was ready to come. She tightened her grip on the beautiful woman, ready to catch her when her knees failed her, and she quickened the pace of her hand. She felt the pool of liquid heat grow deeper in her hands and for a moment wished
to drown in it. She heard Clarke’s breath hitch and grow deep, like a primitive growl in her throat. She felt her wife lose control of her muscles as they contracted in pleasure. Clarke could do nothing but cling to Lexa and sing her name into the ocean breeze. Lexa held her strong through the shaking, the cries, the shudders.

As Lexa felt Clarke’s strength returning to her she began to loosen her grip. She slowly slid her hand out of Clarke’s pants, causing a hiss and sharp inhalation of breath. As Clarke’s blue eyes swam back into focus she looked at Lexa blushing, “I can’t believe we just did that,” she laughed and punched her wife on the shoulder lightly, “why didn’t you at least take me back to cabin?”

“I did not want to.” Lexa smiled with satisfaction. “Now, help me remove these clothes and we will take our morning swim in the ocean.”

Later that afternoon a rider arrived from Luna’s village. She was accompanied by the guards. “Heda,” the guards called out, “a message.”

The young woman smiled at Clarke and Lexa and bowed her head. “You are invited to join our village in celebration tonight. Our largest fishing crew returns with boats filled with food. They returned whole, not a single warrior lost to the sea. Luna request’s your presence at her table. It is a happy time for her for she is joined to the captain of this crew and the safe return of all is a remarkable feat.”

Lexa nodded gravely at the girl. “Assure Luna of our attendance and thank her for her invitation.” With a gesture she dismissed the messenger and then she sighed. “Clarke, walk with me please,” she requested. The two joined hands and strolled towards the sea.

“What’s wrong, love?” Clarke’s voice was soft.

Lexa didn’t speak right away. She led Clarke to the beach and gestured for her wife to sit on the sand. She sat next to Clarke and sighed deeply before she spoke. “Luna’s partner. I had hoped the boats would not return so quickly,” she sighed again and squeezed Clarke’s hand. “As Indra is to me, she was to the previous Commander. Even when I became Commander she was one of my most trusted generals.” Lexa stopped to gather her thoughts.

“And now she is a fisherman?” Clarke asked confused.

“Fisherman?” Lexa laughed, “do not let Luna hear you say that, Clarke. They are warriors, hunters, as much as my people are, perhaps more. Most long fishing trips end with very high casualties. The sea is a very dangerous place. When Luna took us on her boat we did not leave the shelter of the harbour. I would not allow her to take you any further. There are monsters in the deep, Clarke,” Lexa shivered. “I went out on a sea hunt once with Luna, long ago, when we were young and before either of us were leaders… I assure you that my courage did not fail that day, but I do not wish to speak of what happened. The sea holds many horrors.”

“OK, so tell me about Luna. How did you know her when you were so young? Why do you allow her to tease you and to speak to you in such a familiar way. I have seen you punish others for far less.” Clarke looked at Lexa with such concentration Lexa had to smile at her.

“Luna’s father and my father fought side by side in a battle against the Ice Nation when we were both small girls. Our father’s died bravely in that battle holding back twenty Ice warriors and protecting the Commander until more of our warriors arrived to the fight. They sacrificed themselves to save the Commander and died at each other’s sides. Luna and her mother came to our village for
the burning of the corpses and our mother’s shared their grief and then their beds with each other for the next six years. Luna and I were like sisters then. Two years later I was called to become Anya’s second and six months later my mother disappeared into the mountain. Luna and her mother returned to the coast and a few years later Luna claimed her birthright as their leader. That happened around the same time as I was called on to lead my people.” Lexa looked wistful, lost in her memories. “Luna holds the proper respect for me in front of our people, but she has the freedom of a sister to speak to me however she wishes.”

Clarke smiled, “I’m glad. You seem more peaceful, happier when she is around. Thank you for sharing that with me. Now tell me what bothers you about her partner,” Clarke prompted, she loved when Lexa shared herself like this.

“Rachel is Costia’s older sister. Rachel raised Costia as her own after their mother died. Costia and I met when we were both very young and until her death we were together always. Rachel acted as a mother to me as well as to her sister. After Costia was murdered and I did not kill every single Ice Person who lived she refused to serve the Commander any longer. It is punishable by death for a general to abandon me but I let her go. She left our clan to join Luna’s and I have not seen her since. She always goes on sea hunts when clan business brings me here.” Lexa sighed, “When she left Ton DC I told her that she could not return or face death for abandoning her Commander. She loved Costia, and I believe she loved me, but I am the Commander and I could offer her no more compassion than sparing her life.”

“Lexa, I’m so sorry.” Clarke put her arm around her wife. “What will it be like to see her again?”

“We will speak less than kindly to each other I am sure. And then she will probably challenge me to a sword-fight, she always did when she saw me outside of battle. She usually won too.” Lexa laughed at the memory.

“She’s that good?” Clarke asked, surprised.

“She is a legend among my people, and now among Luna’s. Anya was her second before she became a full warrior. She is very skilled with a blade. Do not worry Clarke, I am younger and faster. I have years of training and battle experience now. I will not shed blood.”

“Wait, Lexa! Blood? Why would anyone shed blood if you are just sparring?”

“Clarke, my love. Have you ever seen my people ‘just sparring’? We train like we fight, but we will not kill each other. Not tonight, tonight is a celebration. It is almost unheard of to lose no one in a sea hunt. Rachel will be pleased.”

They spent the rest of the day walking on the beach, playing in the waves, only returning to their cabin in time to bathe and get ready for dinner. Clarke noticed silently that Lexa had forgone the more casual clothes she had been wearing since they had arrived and once again wore the Commander’s armour and cloak. When it was time they mounted their horses and the guards joined them silently, moving behind them like ghosts. As they rode into the village people called out to Heda with exalting praise. “The people love you, Lexa” Clarke smiled. “As do I.”

Lexa allowed a small smile for her wife but her expression remained the unreadable Commander. They approached the centre of the village where everyone was gathered and the delicious smell of fish and other ocean delights being cooked over open fires permeated the air. Lexa and Clarke dismounted and the horses were immediately tended to by some of Luna’s people. The same young woman who had brought them the message greeted them with a bow of her head, “Heda, Sky Princess, your seats are ready, please come with me.” They followed the girl to the head table.
As they approached the table Clarke watched in curiosity as a tall, proud looking woman with light brown hair and ice blue eyes stood from her seat next to Luna. The woman looked Lexa in the eye even as she bowed her head slightly for the required greeting, “Commander,” she said evenly in English. Her eyes flicked down Lexa’s tall form assessing her “You look well.”

Lexa nodded slightly to the woman eye’s never betraying any emotions she may have been feeling, “As do you. The sea life agrees with you Rachel. Congratulations on your hunt.”

The woman smiled at the formal compliment from the Commander and replied, “This will fill our winter stores and we will not have need to go out so far until spring warms the air. It is good.” She turned and smiled at Luna who was lovingly watching the two women.

“Clarke, this is the woman to whom I am joined, or ‘wife’ as your people say,” Luna made a formal introduction, “Rachel this is Clarke, Princess and leader of the Sky People, and wife of the Commander.”

Rachel looked at Clarke with appraising eyes, “That is a lot of titles young one,” she smiled sadly, “I know they can weigh heavily, I hope you do not feel their burden while you sit at our table.” The woman’s voice was strong and steady, much like Lexa’s.

Clarke favoured her with a smile. “My people are no burden to me, and my wife is my heart; but I thank you for your words, and for this seat at your table.” Clarke’s eloquent words earned her a smile and a nod from the woman and a look of love from Lexa.

Once Lexa and Clarke had been seated Luna stood to address the crowd. “The captain and the sea hunters have returned. It has been many years since all have returned alive from such a hunt. Perhaps the Commander and her joined have blessed our people with a luck as strong as the love that binds them together. We praise our hunters and offer our thanks to the Commander.”

The people answered with praise and thanks and the feast began. When the second round of delicious seafood was placed before them Rachel spoke again, “Do not overfill your belly Commander, I intend to confirm that my second completed your training properly.”

“Foolish woman, Anya has not been your second, nor I hers, for many summers. I Command the army’s of all the clans and have defeated our greatest enemy, driving them from the mountain. Why do you wish yourself injury and embarrassment on a night when your people celebrate your prowess on the seas?”

Clarke recognized the posturing that was happening and remained silent, although she glanced questioningly at Luna who smiled sadly and nodded to Clarke to let them go.

“Lexa, are you scared that I will embarrass you in front of your beautiful bride?” Rachel goaded intentionally. “Do not worry young one, I will take it easy on you. Being the Commander I assume you have been using your head more than your sword in battles and may be rusty.” She looked at Lexa with an arrogance that sparked Clarke’s anger.

While Lexa remained perfectly calm and did not reply Clarke jumped in. Her voice was strong and clear despite the anger she felt rising in her chest. “She led our people from the front line. Her sword was soaked in the blood of our enemy and her courage led our people to victory. Do not speak to the Commander in such a way, I will not allow it.”

Lexa looked at Clarke with an expression Clarke could not place, and Luna smiled at her. It was Rachel that answered, “Well spoken Sky Princess. You are as strong and fearless as rumours say and your loyalty to Lexa will inspire many. My words were meant to rise anger from Lexa, I am proud to
see she did not take the bait. But, I am also pleased that you spoke as you did.” She smiled at Lexa. “You chose well Commander.” She raised her glass and stood, the crowd quickly fell quiet. “To the joining of the Commander and the Sky Princess, may they live long and live well at each other’s side; and may the union they have created bring a time of prosperity to all of the Commander’s people.” As the crowd responded to the toast and as everyone drank Lexa pulled Clarke to her feet and kissed her deeply. A fresh cheer rose into the night air and when Lexa released Clarke she was breathless.

Not long after that Rachel stood and picked up a sword. She looked at Lexa and raised an eyebrow in a silent question. Lexa merely nodded and rose moving stealthy to an area that had been staged for such challenges. Clarke leaned over to Luna, “Do they really have to do this?” she asked worry threading through her words.

“They have not spoken directly to each other in many years. Tonight they will move past the memories that have haunted them. Let them fight, they will not seriously injure one another. I am quite sure Rachel does not realize the swordsman Lexa has become and will lose soundly. It will be for the best. She needs to see the Commander and not the young girl she loved and who she feels betrayed the memory of her beloved sister.”

Clarke sighed and watched with apprehension as the two women entered the circle, readied swords and dropped into almost identical fighting stances.

“You’re stance is too low, Lexa. It will slow you.”

“I am fast enough old woman.”

Rachel moved then, deceptively fast, her blade whirling through the air. Steel crashed with steel as Lexa easily blocked the advance.

“If that is your best I ask you to retake your seat, I have no wish to hurt you.” Lexa spat smugly at her former mentor.

“And yet, you did. Deeper than any wound your steel could cut.” Rachel came at her again sword flashing, and as Lexa blocked Rachel twisted her body and spun landing an elbow to Lexa’s ribs as she passed. Facing her from the opposite side now she pressed forward thinking she had the advantage. Lexa remained calm, stoic, and in control. As Rachel came forward this time Lexa blocked the advance easily, gracefully sidestepped, dropped lower and swept Rachel’s feet from under her with a low spinning kick. Barely had her body touched the ground than she sprung back to her feet and faced Lexa down once again.

“I had to be the Commander, not just Costia’s lover. I wanted nothing more than to raze every one of their villages to the ground. But that was not what was best for my people. Your head knows this, although your heart will not allow you to see it. The blood was paid by the blood of the Ice Queen. It soaked my blade. The new king willingly allied himself with us and made my people stronger.” Lexa spoke quietly but firmly betraying no emotion.

“You should have let me go and find her as soon as we knew she was missing.” Rachel’s sword shot out quickly aiming for the Commander’s heart. Lexa easily avoided it, moving too gracefully, too quickly, and too silently, she seemed more a wraith than a flesh and blood woman.

“Costia was already dead before we knew her to be gone. You know this is true. You wished yourself dead at her side, I know that because I wished myself there as well. Perhaps I was selfish to not allow you to throw your life away on a murderous suicidal rampage; but I expect Luna, and the families of the sea hunters you keep safe, are glad that I was so.” Lexa began a graceful assault as
she finished her words and Rachel was hard pressed to defend herself from the Commander's movements.

Clarke realized she had been holding her breath since the swordplay started but in this moment she released it watching in rapture the terrible beauty and violence that was bred into the very movements of the woman she was now bound to for life. She knew Lexa would not lose this night, she knew the other woman’s sword would not touch her unless Lexa allowed it. She saw the power and the death that simmered just below the surface of Lexa’s skin and she was only slightly surprised to find that she loved even that.

Lexa and Rachel traded more blows, sword blocking sword, fist meeting flesh. The crowd roared and the two women continued sparring, neither seeming winded. Rachel spoke again, “What of your sky bride?” she sneered, “what if another clan sees her the way the Ice Clan saw Costia? What if someone takes her?”

Lexa felt her blood begin to heat, her bile begin to rise, she felt the lust of battle creep into her muscles, felt her sword strokes become stronger, her focus become narrow. She fought the urge to strike down her enemy. She forced herself to remain calm. “Clarke is the leader of her people. If she is taken it will be because of that and not because of the love we share. Costia’s death was because I loved her. Clarke’s will not be so.”

Rachel looked keenly at Lexa. She was proud that Lexa held herself together, proud of the effortless way she moved, the way she stalked like the apex predator Rachel knew her to be. She moved forward with another volley of blows and Lexa easily defended herself. The crowd was enjoying the display of skills from both women and lustily cheered for someone, anyone to claim victory.

Rachel smiled at Lexa before she began her final attack. She moved like lightning striking with three quick overhead blows and as Lexa blocked the third she spun and landed another solid punch to the Commander’s abdominal area. Lexa let out a loud grunt but her training allowed her to absorb the blow and continue fighting without hesitation. She spun away quickly, catching Rachel by surprise and in one quick movement the Commander had her opponent disarmed with steel at her throat.

The crowd began to chant, “Heda, Heda, Heda…” and Rachel lowered her head in a nod acknowledging her defeat. Only then did Lexa remove the sword from the older woman’s throat. She nodded formally to Rachel and waved to the crowd.

As they sat down again Clarke sensed that whatever had passed between the two women as they had fought had cleared the air, broken the tense feeling that had been growing between the two all evening. Rachel confirmed this by smiling easily at Lexa, “Lexa, your swordsmanship is remarkable. I am proud of you. You stayed in control as a Commander must and I do believe that is the first time you have ever bested me? Well done young one.”

“It is because you were the top general to the Commander before me, and because you held a place in my heart when I was young that I allow such familiar language without reprisal. Remember Rachel, this body may be young but the spirit of the Commander lives here, ageless, and without fear. I do what I must do for my people. I always have.” Lexa’s level gaze brought Rachel to tears. She rose from her seat and knelt in front of Lexa.

“Heda, forgive me for my weakness so long ago. I will not abandon you again. Call on me if you have need, I will fight for you again.” The solemn vow made Luna’s blue eyes spill tears and Clarke hold her breath yet again. She looked at her wife wondering what reply would come from those lips that she so longed to touch.

Lexa spoke as Heda, loud, and with unchallenged authority, “Rise Rachel, general of the Sea Clan. I
hear your vow and will remember it. You lead your warriors of the sea with valour and it is my great
honour to Command such skill and heart. Now please let us finish the evening in peace and
camaraderie.” She added quietly reaching out to take Rachel’s hand and pull her to her feet.

The four women fell into an easy conversation for the rest of the evening and Clarke found she
enjoyed the company greatly. She was impressed with Rachel’s sharp wit and with the stories she
shared about Lexa in her youth. “She was always so impetuous. Could not sit still, had no patience.
She had great skill and none her own age could best her in a fight. However put her against someone
with reasonable skill and the patience to wait for the right moment and she could never win. The
Commander matched her with Anya because Anya was the most patient fighter she had. Lexa almost
broke that patience, I have to say I never saw Anya so angry as she was the first six months with
Lexa as her second.” Rachel chuckled and Lexa smiled at the memory. “You have changed, Lexa.
Now you are perhaps even more patient than Anya was.” Rachel’s voice was proud.

“After Costia… that was the first time I felt the soul of the Commander really take hold of me. It
stilled me, slowed me, made me see through the fog of rage and allowed me to think of my people. It
was Costia’s blood that truly made me become Heda.” Lexa spoke with a weight in her voice that
made Clarke’s heart hurt. Lexa smiled sadly at Rachel, “I am not that child you speak so kindly of,
though it warms my heart to hear it.”

The women sat in silence after that finishing the last of the wine before them. When Lexa had
drained her cup she stood. Rachel stood as well and they grasped each other’s forearms in farewell.
Lexa next turned to Luna and hugged her, much to everyone’s surprise. “Thank you Luna. This
dinner has been nourishing for my body and my heart.” Clarke marvelled at how poetic her warrior
wife was and hugged both women goodnight herself.

Clarke and Lexa mounted up and began the return trip to their cabin, Luna and Rachel stood and
watched them go. Luna spoke, “I’m glad you got that out of your system. You love her like a
daughter, it has been cutting at your heart to be estranged from her.”

Rachel nodded in agreement and then sighed sadly, “She is no longer that young girl. She is Heda. I
proudly admit that she commands us all well, better than any that came before her. Now with Clarke
at her side, they will change our world. The two of them will make everything better.” She shook her
head as if to rid herself of all thoughts and then leaned in to kiss her lover.

Clarke and Lexa didn’t speak until they were safely inside their cabin. Clarke broke the silence first.
“Do you want to talk about anything?” she probed lightly.

Lexa had been talking off her Commander’s garb and stopped turning to look at Clarke. “That is the
wrong question Clarke. What you should be asking is how much do you need to know, how much
do you need me to tell you.” She levelled Clarke with her gaze and waited for a response.

“I want to know everything; but what I need is for you to be honest with me. What do you need to
talk about?” Clarke reached out and started to undo Lexa’s armour and undress her wife.

“Rachel, she was like a mother to me. When Costia died I lost her too. It hurt.” Lexa paused in
thought, her brow furrowed, “but I wasn’t lying when I told her that is when the Commander’s soul
truly took me. If Costia had lived I may not have. I was impatient as she said, and hot headed, always
rushing into battles before thinking, before weighing the price of everything. Her death forced the
Commander inside of me to assert itself.” Lexa sighed, “Costia had a great gift of foresight, she
refused my offer of union every time I asked her,” Lexa laughed at the memory, “she told me I was
far too sure myself and that one day I would meet my match. She insisted that we were not to be
forever and that I should not offer myself so hastily. If she had accepted and we had been joined you
and I would not have been able to. I feel like her spirit is still with me sometimes, I know she would
be happy for me, for us.” Lexa looked down into Clarke’s eyes and reached for her wife. They kissed softly, so softly Lexa wasn’t entirely sure it was real.

Clarke felt Lexa’s need heavy in the air. She knew her wife needed to be loved, softly, gently, with fervour. She let Lexa control the kiss at first, but as time passed she slowly took control. She walked her wife backwards towards the bed, when they arrived she maneuvered Lexa onto her back and soon covered her body with her own. She kissed her and she held her close. She whispered sweet nothings and kissed her more. Lexa let herself be attended to without any fuss. She needed to feel Clarke’s healing embraces, her mending kisses, her miraculous touch.

Clarke undressed her wife and then herself. Lexa remained still except for her ever watching eyes tracing every movement of Clarke’s hands. When Clarke had shed all of the clothes there were to be shed she arranged herself over top of her wife, her golden hair hanging down and creating a curtain blocking out everything except Lexa’s face. She dipped her head down and placed a soft kiss on Lexa’s lips. She kissed the tip of her nose, her left cheek, then her right. She came back to the sweet lips and kissed them harder this time, longer. She let her tongue sneak out and lick Lexa’s lower lip and she felt a shudder of desire go through the body that lay quiet beneath her.

She lowered her naked body to lie on top of Lexa’s possessively. She let her right thigh slip in between Lexa’s legs and she began to slowly and gently thrust her hips bringing her thigh into contact with Lexa’s centre of pleasure. She used her left hand to support her own weight and her right hand moved to caress Lexa’s perfect nipples and engorged breasts. She was gentle. No scratches, no bites, no marks left anywhere but Lexa’s heart. Clarke kissed her neck, sucked lightly on her ears and licked her collarbone. She trailed soft kisses down her beloved’s body and showered her nipples with her mouth’s adoration. She licked and sucked and whispered lovely words of devotion. Lexa felt like she was frozen in the sunshine. She could not move and she felt the warmth of Clarke’s love all over her body. She felt trails of fire follow wherever the golden haired beauty’s hands roamed. She felt her body respond and she knew she had never been touched so gently in her life. It aroused her in a different way, it was like a slow cascade of lava beneath her skin rather than the fiery flames that licked at her skin during the normally rough and aggressive way Clarke claimed her.

Clarke was steadfast, she was true and devout in her gentle worship of Lexa’s body. She moved with a slow ease and her fingers remembered every spot they had scratched and pinched since the night they had wed. She sought those places out again and she touched them with soft fingers, traced the marks that lingered still, and placed gentle kisses to heal any hurts. She took her time and tasted Lexa’s sweat and the saltiness of her skin from the earlier sword fight. She found the crook of Lexa’s elbow and sucked softly at it. Lexa moaned and breathed her delight and Clarke moved to the inside of her wrist. She licked and sucked each of her fingers, she moved on to press her lips into the palms of her hands. She went down to kiss the outline of Lexa’s kneecap and then tickled her behind her knees. She kissed her ankles and each of her toes. She let her hands gently run along the muscular calves and drift up slowly along her thighs.

Clarke looked at her wife, whose eyes were still watching her but now with the heavy lidded look of desire, she smiled at her wife. Clarke spoke softly, “I love you Lexa,” and then she moved her head between Lexa’s legs and drank deeply of their love. She buried her face into the wetness and she heard the voice she loved cry out for her to continue. Clarke’s tongue found her entrance and slipped inside, she let herself explore the depths and enjoy the flavour before pulling out and moving up to find Lexa’s waiting clit. Clarke used her arms to hold Lexa’s thighs wide open and she rubbed her face into her pussy softly, gently using her chin and cheeks to open Lexa to her. She let her tongue swirl around letting the tension build for her lover and she slowly began to build a rhythm. She hummed into Lexa’s pussy as she ate her and the added vibrations were delicious torture to Lexa. Clarke was loving her ever so slowly but with just the right amount of pressure. She sucked gently to
add more sensation and she continued running her tongue in small circles around the clit and over the hood. She fought the urge to speed up and match the thrashing and bucking that Lexa was now doing under her ministrations. She kept her loving, slow, maddening pace and even when Lexa started to beg her to make her come she didn’t change course. Lexa became noiser, and more desperate as Clarke continued. She felt her fingers entwine in Clarke’s hair and couldn’t remember moving them there.

Lexa felt Clarke’s tongue once more over her clit, she let out one more moan, again the wet, soft sensation, again a plea for mercy to her wife. Another slow soft stroke of Clarke’s tongue circling her clit lit her on fire. Lexa felt her desire turn into an all consuming tidal wave and she let her wife know she was coming, “Clarke, yes, yes, I’m there baby, don’t stop.” Her voice was shaking as much as her core. She felt the pleasure overwhelm her and she knew nothing else until the throbbing bliss eased and released her back to her senses. She was in Clarke’s arms when she opened her eyes. Her wife was nuzzling her neck and placing loving kisses on her cheek.

“Lex, baby? Are you back?” Clarke smiled and laughed an adoring laugh. “You make me feel so powerful, like a goddess, when you come for me like that.”

Lexa fought back tears as she gazed into Clarke’s eyes. “Clarke, that was beautiful, I’ve never felt something quite like that. So soft…. thank you.”

The women kissed and passion returned soon after. Lexa needed to hear her name on the lips of the woman who had just so expertly loved her. She poured her heart into the embraces, the touches, the kisses she gave Clarke. She loved her with strong arms and a gentle tongue, she made Clarke come and come and bathe her tongue in sweet desire. They did not sleep that night.

Far too soon the time came for them to return to their people in the woods. They said goodbye to Luna and Rachel and promised to return as soon as they could. Lexa also declared that Rachel was once again free to enter the land controlled by the Tree Clan and they embraced as they said goodbye.

Clarke took one last look at the ocean and then turned to look at the woman she loved. “Let’s go home Lexa. I want to lie in the bed in the house you made for us. I want to bathe in our lake and help our people with the harvest. Come my love, let us go home.”

Lexa smiled her best smile and bowed her head to her love. “Yes, let us go home. There is a certain large, flat rock that overlooks the lake near our house. I am anxious to visit that rock with you Clarke of the Sky People.” Lexa checked to make sure Clarke was blushing and then happily urged her horse into a quick trot along the path home.

Chapter End Notes

It took me a while to figure out what I wanted out of the honeymoon. I guess I was looking for some clarification and closure regarding Lexa's relationship with Costia. That and some sexy times for our two heroines. ;-)
Chapter Summary

Clarke and Lexa return to their village and find everything going well.
Oh, that rock though.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Chapter 9

Lexa and Clarke had enjoyed a peaceful journey home flanked by the four guards. As they approached their village they were spotted by scouts who shouted out welcome, “Heda, Houmon, Mounin Houm!” Two scouts raced back towards the village to alert the people and the others joined the guards to bring the party safely the rest of the way back home.

“Did they just say, “Commander and ‘wife’ welcome home?” Clarke asked with a look of distain, “I’ve gone from ‘Clarke of the Sky People’, to just ‘wife’?” She fixed Lexa with a glare.

Lexa looked at Clarke with a faint expression of pride and surprise for her having understood the greeting. Then she shrugged and grinned at her wife, “I cannot control everything my people do, Houmon,” she said as innocently as she could muster.

Clarke smirked, “Fair enough, wife. I know you’d be OK if the Sky People just started calling you Clarke’s wife, right?” She grinned at the look of consternation that quickly crossed Lexa’s face before she schooled her expression back to the passive mask of the Commander.

“I do not believe the Sky People will be so brave in the face of the Commander, Houmon,” she teased.

“Oh, well I bet I could get Monty and Jasper to help me with that, wife.” Clarke teased back.

“Yes, those two….” Lexa growled, “you must instruct them to stay out of trouble… I worry about them.”

“Ha! I think you know better. Trouble finds those two even when they aren’t looking for it. Although I am pleased that you like them,” Clarke laughed, “seriously though, I would prefer to be known as Clarke of the Sky People, or just Clarke. I think it speaks to the equality between us better than just being known as your wife. Don’t get me wrong, being your wife brings me so much happiness and I am so proud to be yours, I just want our people to know that we are truly equal. Is that OK?”

Lexa met her wife’s eyes and smiled softly, “I am proud to be joined to you Clarke of the Sky People. I will have Indra instruct our people to call you by a more appropriate title. Although I may continue to use Houmon when I address you, I like the way it sounds.”

“I don’t think I will mind that at all.” Clarke said softly, surprising Lexa who thought she would continue to argue.
As they were finishing their conversation the first of the welcome party had reached them. Children were racing through the trees to get a glimpse of the returning women. They were cheering and some were carrying handpicked wildflowers that they handed off to Lexa and Clarke as they dismounted their horses to continue on foot. They greeted the children and as they got closer still they were met by adults cheering equally as happily as the kids had. Both women had handfuls of flowers by this time and two Grounders took control of the horses with a nod. Clarke and Lexa approached the wide open gate of the village and smiled as they saw their friends waiting for them.

Abby hugged her daughter and kissed her cheek, “Welcome back, sweetheart,” she said before giving Lexa an equally warm embrace and kissing her cheek as well. Lexa almost blushed and thought to herself that she would never get used to the motherly way Abby treated her now that she was joined to Clarke.

Octavia and Lincoln bowed their heads in formal address to the Commander and smiled at Clarke. Bellamy engulfed Clarke in a bearhug and proclaimed that her had missed her. He then looked sheepishly at Lexa who raised an eyebrow at the hug, “Commander,” he cleared his throat, slightly embarrassed, “welcome home.”

“Thank you Bellamy,” Lexa replied and then she turned to address Indra quickly getting updates on what had happened in her absence.

“Clarke, tell us about the ocean!” Raven called out as she made her way to her friend.

“Raven, I can’t explain it. You’ll have to go. I talked to Luna about Sky People doing learning exchanges with her people. You just have to go and see it for yourself.” Clarke’s blue eyes had such a wistful, faraway look that Raven just smiled and agreed.

After a few more minutes of greeting people and getting updates on the progress of the village Lexa grabbed Clarke’s hand and pulled her away from everyone. “Come Clarke, our house is waiting for us.”

Clarke smiled and nodded to her friends as she willingly followed her wife towards their home. She stopped just outside the door and looked at the sturdy wooden dwelling. “We’re home, our home. This is real!” She breathed out and squeezed Lexa’s hand. Lexa smiled at her and opened the door motioning for Clarke to enter first. She walked in and looked around. Her things and Lexa’s personal things were arranged neatly around the place. There was a bit more furniture in the house than there had been before and lots of fresh flowers everywhere. “Again with the flowers? You better be careful darling, I may get used to it.” she winked at Lexa who was also looking around getting acquainted with the new home.

“Do you like it Clarke?” she asked, the softness of her voice showing her vulnerability.

“I love it Lexa. It is perfect, it’s our home.” Clarke turned and stepped into Lexa’s arms. She raised her face to Lexa and leaned in to kiss her wife. Lexa accepted her wife’s soft lips and kissed her gently. She made no attempt to deepen the kiss or to stir Clarke’s passion, she just kissed her softly and ran her fingers along her back.

When Clarke finally broke the kiss she looked at the beautiful woman before her and smiled. “What are our responsibilities today? Do we have time to bathe in the lake, or better yet visit those hot springs again?” Clarke’s body was aching slightly from the long ride home and she was sure she did not smell pleasant.

“Hot springs, perhaps not today. We have a briefing to attend in the war tent to hear about what happened in our absence and we have a welcome home dinner to attend as well. I promise you we
will take the time to visit the springs soon but today our lake will have to do. We have two or three hours before we are needed at the briefing.” Lexa motioned to the bedroom. “I believe our clothes are in there.” She was suddenly, unexplainably, nervous about entering the bedroom with her wife. Her face turned red in a rare blush and she lowered her eyes from Clarke’s.

“Are you blushing?” Clarke smiled in disbelief, “What images came into your head when you thought of our bedroom that caused this, my love?” Her voice dropped an octave and she seductively pulled Lexa by her hand toward the room.

Lexa smiled and tried to pull herself back together. “I will demonstrate later, Houmon.” she quipped. They both laughed and as they entered their bedroom together Clarke also felt a rush of nervous glee. “Our bed,” she breathed out, “should we test it…?” she felt like she had on her wedding night and blushed deeply.

“Not now love.” Lexa stepped behind Clarke and wrapped her muscular arms around her wife enjoying the feel of Clarke’s soft curves against her hands. “Let’s wash first and leave our bed for tonight’s enjoyment.” She kissed the nape of her wife’s neck eliciting a shudder and a sigh.

“Good idea, I know I smell like the horse I’ve been on for the last two days.” She laughed. “we haven’t had a chance to bathe since we left the coast, let’s go.” She moved over to the rod that held all of their clothes on makeshift hangers that had been one of Raven’s contributions to the house. She chose some clothes and gestured for Lexa to do the same. Clarke retrieved some soap from the small washing area in the home and Lexa found two towels and a handful of other necessities.

They walked arm in arm down towards the lake and as they passed by the large rock that had been a part of both women’s erotic daydreaming before they were wed Lexa smirked and Clarke blushed. “Perhaps we should bathe quickly and let the early autumn sun dry us on that rock there, no?” Lexa asked pretending her motives were not lascivious.

A sudden jolt of arousal coursed through Clarke’s centre and she felt goosebumps break out on her arms. “That sounds like a very good idea, lover,” she agreed.

They quickened their pace to the lake and quickly disrobed when they arrived. The water was cooler than it had been before the wedding, the last two weeks having seen the end of the long summer days of heat and humidity. It was still a bearable temperature and they set to work trying not to think about the damned rock and focusing on clearing the grime of travel from their skin. Lexa washed Clarke’s back and lathered the soap into her golden hair. When Clarke had rinsed she turned and did the same for her wife. She enjoyed the feeling of Lexa’s tanned skin beneath her hands, the two weeks at the coast had seen Lexa turn from her normal tan into a deeper golden brown. Clarke’s hair had become even lighter with all the time spent in the sun and the salt air had left them both looking and feeling healthy and rested.

They rinsed in the lake a final time and turned to embrace before climbing out and grabbing towels to dry off with. They wordlessly gathered their belongings and headed back toward the rock clad only in the towels. As they arrived Clarke felt the now familiar rush of desire flooding her veins, her breathing was already deepening and she could feel a wetness between her legs that had nothing to do with the bath she had just taken in the lake. Lexa was feeling the same heady arousal and wanted to take her wife quickly and thoroughly. She held back, let the feeling build and grow. She sat Clarke down on the rock and climbed behind her. She took out Clarke’s comb from the small collection of things she had brought from the house. As she began to brush the tangles out of Clarke’s hair her wife spoke, “Really, what you want to do right now is comb my hair…?” Her voice was husky, each word punctuated with desire.
Lexa didn’t answer, just continued. Once she had Clarke’s golden locks tangle free she leaned in and kissed her wife’s neck. She didn’t escalate, not yet. She simply stood and moved to the front of the rock wordlessly handing the comb to Clarke. Clarke cocked her head to the side and looked enquiringly at her normally impatient wife and scooted back on the warm surface of the rock to allow Lexa to take her place and sit. She wrapped her legs around Lexa’s body and began to comb her wife’s hair the same way Lexa had done for her. Clarke found the exercise surprisingly intimate and enjoyed the connection she was feeling as she ran the comb through the dark wavy hair that adorned her lover’s head.

When she finished, satisfied that there were no more tangles, she carefully removed her towel and set it off to the side, she set the comb on top of it and then she wrapped her arms around Lexa. Her hands went to the towel and softly requested permission to remove it. Lexa lifted herself slightly from the rock in permission allowing the towel to be removed. She turned and stood before Clarke, gloriously naked. Clarke let a small gasp escape her mouth as she found herself once again enthralled at the toned, muscular body that she loved so much. She found the contradiction of the hardness of Lexa’s muscles and the softness of her skin to be thrilling and it never ceased to send her head spinning with lust.

Lexa put one knee on the rock between Clarke’s legs and she moved forward to straddle her left leg. She gently took Clarke’s chin in her hand and lifted it up towards her. She let her lips enjoy Clarke’s kiss and she tasted the rising passion coming from her wife. She slowly began to rock her hips forward and back letting her sex drag over Clarke’s thigh and making her shiver with pleasure. Clarke felt the wetness on her thigh and deepened the kiss in response. Clarke’s tongue explored the inside of Lexa’s mouth gently and her teeth bit lightly on Lexa’s bottom lip.

Lexa felt her desire reaching a point where she was no longer satisfied with the small amount of contact she had with her wife’s body and pushed against Clarke until Clarke slid further back on the rock. She then put her hand on Clarke’s shoulder and pressed her lover down onto her back. She slid her whole body against Clarke’s, the feel of her naked skin against her wife’s sending her into an even more powerful lust-filled state. Lexa groaned out loud and her breath caught as she tried to speak, “Clarke, I want you so badly. Your body sets me on fire,” she whispered into Clarke’s ear before gently biting down on the tender earlobe.

Clarke was beginning to lose her sense of reality, there was no rock, no lake, no forest, there was only Lexa’s thigh between her leg and her mouth breathing into her ear. “Lex, baby. I need your hands on me. You have me so hot, so wet, I can’t wait. Please, Lexy…”

Lexa loved the names Clarke called her when they made love, and the blonde’s husky voice never failed to send lighting bolts of desire through her body. “Talk to me Clarke, she demanded. Tell me what you feel, what you want.” Lexa’s mouth left the perfect ear it had just whispered into and trailed down her neck leaving kisses and bites along the way. Her hand reached the swell of Clarke’s breast and quickly began squeezing and caressing before teasing the nipple and tweaking it erect.

“Yes, Lex, lover. Squeeze my nipple lover. That feels so good. Your mouth love, please use your mouth. Take my nipples in your mouth, bite me baby. Please.”

Lexa felt the wetness between her own legs deepen with every word from Clarke’s mouth and she dropped her head to Clarke’s breast to follow her instructions. She sucked the engorged pink nub into her mouth and brushed her tongue against it exciting Clarke even further. She teased her and licked and sucked before complying with the blonde’s request for a ripple of pain. She bit down, slow and steady, increasing the pressure until Clarke swore loudly.

“Fuuuckkk. Lexy, stop baby it’s too much. Go to the other breast, please. Fuck, your mouth is
heaven.” Clarke gasped out the words and Lexa immediately switched breasts and continued her work. She moved more quickly with this beautiful mound and Clarke soon found herself crying out again. “God damn it, that is so fucking good.” She held on as Lexa’s teeth drew her deeper into her desire until she couldn’t take it anymore. “Ugh, Lexa, ease up baby, ease up. kiss me gentle now baby, I need to feel your love.”

Lexa soothed the gentle bud with her adoring tongue and then lifted her head to Clarke’s lips. She kissed her with passion and with love before once again heading south. She placed a quick kiss on each breast before passing them by and continued down to the hairline of Clarke’s sex. She stopped and teased Clarke by biting her hips, licking her thighs, and breathing on her clit. She wanted to hear that raspy voice, full of need, telling her what she needed. Clarke did not disappoint. “Lex, fuck, Lex. You know what I want baby, don’t tease. I’m ready for you, I’m so wet and I need your tongue and your fine fingers. Please baby, don’t make me wait. Devour me.”

Lexa couldn’t hold back anymore, she appeased Clarke’s potent need, lowered her mouth to Clarke, and immersed herself in the wetness she found there. She let her left hand continue to pull at Clarke’s sensitive bosom and her right hand slid in between the thighs that Lexa loved so much. Her fingers slid inside Clarke’s cunt, rose petal soft and waiting impatiently, Clarke’s hips thrust upward greedily at the first touch. As her fingers entered Clarke, Lexa rubbed her entire face into the wet folds until her lips found their trophy. She sucked gently at Clarke’s clit encouraging the sensitive button out from it’s hood. She began her worship Clarke’s body with her strong tongue and her hungry fingers. She became lost in the wetness, her fingers and her tongue were submerged and held captive by the heat emanating from Clarke and she knew with certainty that this love was not a weakness.

Clarke was writhing beneath her. Her hips gyrating, pressing up into her face, into her hand. Clarke was moaning and her voice was singing a litany of praises, “Lover, love, wife. That feels so good, you feel so good. Your tongue melts me, I’m liquid heat now lover. Keep going, please don’t stop. Your fingers, baby I want more, fill me up like you’ve filled my heart. Lexa I love you. Don’t stop, more baby, more.”

Lexa couldn’t focus as Clarke’s words made her feel drunk. She had never used more than two fingers when fucking her wife but the way Clarke was begging for more convinced her to try. She added a third finger and as she slid inside Clarke’s molten hot pussy she couldn’t stop the moan of pleasure that erupted from her throat. “Clarke, oh Clarke, you are so hot, so soft, so perfect. I love fucking you. I love you.”

Clarke’s speech failed her as Lexa added a third finger. She simply moaned and arched her hips into Lexa’s hands with more force. She threw her head back drew her knees to her sides, digging her heels into the warm rock beneath her. She pressed up into her lover’s touch and she dug her fingers into Lexa’s still wet hair.

Lexa continued her tongue’s caresses and her finger’s exploration and soon she felt Clarke beginning to tense. She felt her abs clench, she felt the fingers on her head pull at her hair, and the strong thighs that were surrounding her head squeeze together. She heard her lovers voice lose coherency and she felt Clarke’s body begin to shake. Once it began, the orgasm consumed Clarke quickly. The buildup of tension broke in that spot in Clarke’s stomach and the contractions began. Her mouth shouted Lexa’s name, her hips bucked up and her legs squeezed together capturing Lexa’s head in a vice grip. Her hands both pulled and pushed Lexa’s head into her and away from her, and the pleasure that rushed through her left her weak and half in the fetal position with Lexa’s head still trapped between her thighs.

Lexa rode the waves of Clarke’s orgasm letting the sense of power she always got when she caused such a reaction in her wife wash over her. She stilled her hand and let her tongue lap lightly at the
juices she loved to taste. As Clarke regained her ability to think, speak, and move she pulled Lexa’s hair to remove her from the sensitive area and she called for her wife to hold her.

Lexa moved quickly to wrap her arms around her lover and whispered sweet words of love into Clarke’s ear until Clarke spoke softly, shyly, and with love, “Lexa, I love you. I’m sure your hands have reached into my very cells, taken my DNA and rewritten it, adding your own to mine. Now, I’m certain that I would die without your touch.” She sighed and snuggled closer to her wife, savouring the feel of the warm rock against her back and the late afternoon sun on her skin.

Lexa wasn’t sure what DNA was but she understood what Clarke meant. She too felt that Clarke was now a part of her, a part that she could not lose lest she lose her entire self. She inhaled deeply of Clarke’s delicate scent and she stitched every moment of that afternoon into her memory.

Lexa had begun to feel drowsy when Clarke started her sneak attack. It began with a lazy hand roaming across Lexa’s skin. She followed up with a pinch of Lexa’s incredibly toned ass and then dragged her fingernails across the same sensitive skin. She let her lips find Lexa’s collarbone and kissed gentle suckling kisses across it’s length. Lexa began to stir, she exhaled strongly and groaned slightly in pleasure, “Clarke,” she warned opening an eye and peering at the position of the sun in the sky, “we have just less than one of your sky hours before we are expected at the war tent.”

“I can work with that.” Clarke assured her as she moved out from Lexa’s embrace and rolled her onto her stomach. She sat up and threw her left leg over Lexa’s lower back. She sat straddling her wife’s torso and set her hands to work in a light massage of Lexa’s upper back. Moans from her wife let her know the contact was much appreciated and Clarke began to sexualize the contact with light scratches and featherlike teasing touches. She felt Lexa’s body shift under her as desire began to rise in her body.

Clarke lowered her mouth to the back of Lexa’s neck and bit lightly at the base. She licked her way down Lexa’s back drawing a line down the straight powerful spine of the Commander. Lexa shivered with craving as Clarke’s tongue traced the line all the way to her ass cheeks. She stopped and Lexa cried out with loss. Clarke moved to kiss each cheek of her wife’s sexy bottom and then returned to the centre. She traced the crack with her left hand and probed the opening lightly.

Lexa gasped with delight and arched upwards in search of a more firm contact. Clarke was still sucking on and biting her ass cheeks as she began to slightly dip her finger into Lexa’s ass. It was the first time they had tried any anal play and so she went slow and paid attention to Lexa’s reaction. Lexa soon let Clarke know that her experiment was welcomed, “Clarke, baby,” she gulped in air and her ass wiggled and shook as she begged Clarke to continue, “that feels amazing, keep going, don’t stop. Oh, yes.” Clarke was turned on and emboldened by Lexa’s response and she pulled her hand from Lexa’s ass suddenly. Her wife groaned in disappointment until she felt the sensation of Clarke’s talented tongue beginning to rim her sensitive ass.

“FUCK, Clarke, what are you doing to me? Fuck, fuck, fuck. Yes,” she hissed the words out, her whole body shaking out of control with this new sensation. Knowing how clean her wife’s body was after their recent bath Clarke uninhibitedly licked her ass top to bottom and then settled in to flutter kisses over her sensitive anus. She began to eat Lexa’s ass like she had her pussy so many times over the past two weeks. She ran her tongue in circles over Lexa and darted her tongue slightly in and out of her ass. She reached her right hand under Lexa’s body and found the slippery pathway to Lexa’s clt.

Lexa began to lose control. The sensations of Clarke’s fingers rubbing her clit and her mouth on her ass were overwhelming. She began to shake and buck her hips, feeling the tension in the pit of her stomach build and take her higher. She squeezed her eyes shut and her nails tried in vain to dig into
the solid rock to hold on tighter. She let out a shaky breath and begged her wife to make her come.
“Baby, I’m close. You are making me crazy, Please baby take me there.” Clarke smiled against
Lexa’s heaving bottom and worked Lexa’s clit in just the way she knew would push her off the
edge. The added sensation of Clarke’s warm wet tongue pressed firmly against her hole set her off
faster than normal. Lexa felt like she was dissolving outward as the tension released from her centre.
She convulsed in pleasure and Clarke’s name flew from her lips along with some Trigedasleng that
Clarke had yet to figure out the meaning to.

Clarke had moved quickly up to hold her wife as she regained her strength from the orgasm and
Lexa turned to her wife and laughed easily. That laugh was Clarke’s lifeblood, and every time she
heard it Clarke knew it was the best thing in her life. Lexa’s voice, husky with her recent pleasure,
found Clarke’s ear, “Where did you get that idea?” Her laughter continued letting Clarke know she
was pleased with her.

“I’m just very creative darling, I am an artist you know.” Clarke teased.

Lexa bent her head to kiss Clarke and tasted herself on Clarke’s lips. They were starting to heat up
again when a voice called to them from the path not too far away. “Heda,” It was Octavia and she
could barely keep the giggle from her voice, “Sorry Clarke, Indra sent me to make sure you two
didn’t get distracted and miss the meeting.” She lost her battle with composure and when Clarke
heard her friends giggles break free she too began to laugh.

“Thanks, Octavia. We’ll be coming right along” she punned on purpose relishing the fresh burst of
laughter that came from Octavia.

“That’s what we were afraid of,” Octavia practically hooted as they heard her footsteps retreating
back up the path.

Lexa just shook her head and smiled at Clarke, “You are trouble, Clarke. My people are going to
think their Commander has become addicted to sex.” She kissed Clarke’s back as they sat up and
reached for the clothes they had piled beside the rock.

“Don’t worry lover, I’m sure the ‘honeymoon’ will wear off in no time and we’ll just be a boring old
couple who barely makes love anymore.” Clarke assured her.

“Never, Clarke. I swear to you that will never happen. Especially with the creative streak you
showed me today,” Lexa laughed again as she began pulling on her clothes, “I will never stop
wanting you, needing you, or loving you, my wife.” She looked deeply into Clarke’s eyes and they
kissed once more before pulling on the rest of their clothes and heading back to their house to
prepare for the meeting.

The meeting went smoothly and they learned that most of the 100 had already started building homes
in the area surrounding Clarke and Lexa’s house. Several Grounders had joined the settlement as
well and plans were being drawn up to organize the land into building plots and roadways. There
was to be a large communal kitchen tent and the War Tent was to be relocated at the outskirts, closer
than it’s current position but not directly inside the residential area. They were updated on the
progress of preparation for winter and the food stores.

This lead to a conversation on Mount Weather and what seeds and food had been found there. That
led to a conversation about the survivors of the mountain. Those who had helped the 100 and the
Grounders escape had been spared and some of the Sky People had freely offered bone marrow for
their treatment. Abby was in charge of this and made sure the procedure was painless for the donors.
There was some pain during the short recovery time but nothing that couldn’t be handled. They were
spacing out the treatments and there were still ten people left to undergo the procedure. Maya had been one of the firsts as Jasper had insisted he give his marrow to her. It turned out that he was not compatible but his marrow ended up curing two of the children from the mountain. Luckily, Miller was compatible and willingly gave his marrow to cure Maya. She and Jasper had moved in together in the village and Lexa was surprised at how the Grounders accepted her presence. She suspected it had something to do with Echo, one of her most fierce warriors, living next to them. She had been held captive in the mountain and caged next to Bellamy when he was first captured. She had seen Maya’s bravery and would not let anyone doubt the girl. Lexa also wondered if this beautiful young woman was not spending some of her nights in Bellamy’s bed but kept that thought to herself.

The meeting stretched on and when it finally completed there was food ready for everyone outside. Grounders and Sky People all gathered around together, those who had missed the morning return wanting to see Clarke and Lexa. As the couple came out of the tent the crowd came alive with shouts of, “Welcome back,” and even a few “Hail the Commanders.” Clarke was overwhelmed and she looked happily at her wife.

“We are important. Our union is important to all of them.” Clarke was really just starting to realize how true her words were.

“You are lucky my prowess caused you to fall in love with me, Clarke. We would have had to wed regardless of our feelings. We would have done it for our people.” Lexa looked lovingly at Clarke and grinned.

“I don’t know Lexa, I think they see how much we love each other and that is what makes us so important. It wasn’t just for them, it isn’t just a name, or a political union. Our love has made our people stronger,” Clarke looked at Lexa with an air of superiority, “and to think the Commander once told me that love was weakness,” she laughed and reached out to cup her wife’s cheek. They leaned in to kiss one another and both women were surprised by the cheer that rose from the crowd.

“Maybe you should change that standing order my darling, Commander.” Clarke laughed again and moved to the table to join her mother and Kane for dinner. They ate until their bellies were too full and their faces sore from smiling at the stories their people told them. Clarke told the Sky People about the ocean and Lexa regaled the Grounders with stories of how she had finally defeated Rachel in a sword fight. Indra looked doubtful, but Clarke backed up the story and so she gave her Commander her most respectful nod.

As the night came to an end the two women walked back to their house hand in hand and they both realized neither had ever felt such happy contentment in their lives. Although they knew that life on the ground would eventually bring more upheaval and trying times they delighted in today. They entered their home, washed up, and got ready for bed. Then they happily fell into their bed and wrapped their loving arms around one another. They kissed and professed undying love before falling into a peaceful, deep sleep.

Chapter End Notes

It's nice to see our two heroines happy and strife free but I'm afraid the next few chapters will bring back some of the harsh reality of life on the Ground.
Wamplei

Chapter Summary

Winter brings an epidemic. Clarke and Lexa fight to keep their people alive.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

The winter was deep and cold, and full of snow, and hunger, and death.

It was early January when the first child fell sick. The Grounder healers recognized the symptoms immediately and began to try and quarantine the family and friends who might have been exposed.

Nyko sent for Abby even before he briefed Lexa knowing he needed her skills and knowing Lexa would not let her anywhere near the tent if she knew first. She came quickly, with her medical knowledge and technology. She was determined to find out what the disease was and to find a cure. The sky healer was shocked by how fast the little one was gone. She was terrified at how fast the tent filled with others, both Sky People and Grounders, who had the same symptoms. She pushed all other thoughts away and ordered the tent quarantined. The sick could enter but no one was to leave until this was over. She was surprised and pleased to find that the Grounder healers had already done most of what she wanted. The tent was off limits and when she asked about the people who were setting up a tent and posted guard outside Nyko told her that they had survived this sickness before and that they would not catch it again.

Clarke insisted on helping. Lexa insisted on stopping her. “Clarke, you cannot go in there. My people call this disease Wamplei. The name just means death. You cannot go in there, I can not allow it. The healers who are already inside will help the sick. We will set up another tent next to that one. The healers will sleep there and any who do not die will recover there. The tents will be guarded by those few that have lived through Wamplei before. No one else will be allowed within 50 feet of the tent. That is our way to survive this Clarke. You can not enter. I am sorry your mother went in before I knew about this. I would have stopped her also.” Lexa looked at Clarke with empathy, but her decision was final. She would not allow Clarke to put herself in danger.

“Lexa, I am a healer. I have to go and help them. My mother isn’t just a doctor she is also a pathologist, the best the Ark ever knew. That means she knows about diseases like this, and she will figure out what is causing it and how to kill it. She taught me a lot back on the Ark and she’ll need my help to try and cure our people. You have to let me go.” Clarke pleaded softly caressing Lexa’s cheek with the palms of her hands as she spoke, hoping in vain to convince her wife.

“No, Clarke. You don’t understand. Very few who are touched by this come back alive. Very few…” Lexa shook her head and looked into Clarke’s eyes, “my people have been devastated by this sickness many times. We have rules now to make sure as few as possible die. I will not break those rules, especially to put my wife inside that tent. I could not even break the rules to get you out were you in there. We will find a way to help from the outside.” When Clarke nodded in understanding Lexa squeezed her hand in support and they walked out into the village to address the scared population.

Lexa spoke in Trigedasleng first, “We all know this sickness. Wamplei is on us again. Remain in
your homes as much as possible. Food and water will be delivered to you. No one may leave the
village for fear or infecting other villages. No one may enter the tent unless they fall ill. No one
comes out of the tent until this is over. Some will be chosen to work. Those who have lived through
the sickness before will guard the tent and tend the sick and a few others will help me burn the
bodies of the dead. Anyone with any contact with the sick or the dead will stay away from their
homes until this is over. Tents will be provided. Stay strong. We will survive this once more.”

Her people did as they were told. This disease used to strike far more often and take far more lives.
The quarantine rules Nyko developed eight years ago, after a village lost 40 percent of it’s people
one winter, had reduced the number of deaths and the severity and recurrence of the disease. People
trusted him after that and followed Lexa’s rules without question. People held their children tight and
returned to their homes determined to beat death once more.

Clarke didn’t know what to tell the Sky People but she knew they needed to hear something, “My
mother is inside that tent. You all know Abby Griffin is the best pathologist the Ark ever knew. She
will figure this out. In the meantime we are under a strict quarantine. Everyone will stay in their
quarters. We will start to ration and deliver food and water. Anyone with symptoms must come
forward for treatment immediately. We will set up another treatment facility on the Ark. Jackson will
head it while my mother heads this one at ground zero. I will be setting up a research station with
Raven’s help. I know you are scared but we lived through many epidemics on the Ark. This is no
different. Remain calm and we will get through this.” When she finished speaking she realized that
she had filled herself with purpose and she turned and began to stride off towards Camp Jaha in
search of Raven.

Lexa grabbed her arm as she was heading for the camp. “Clarke you must go home and stay inside.
This is not something I know how to fight.” Clarke looked into her wife’s eyes and saw a deep fear
in them. She had seen Lexa saunter fearlessly into battles, charge dauntlessly into war, had seen her
face down a giant Gorilla with a steely determination to greet death with her sword in her hand, but
she had never seen this fear in her eyes before. “My sword is useless against this Clarke, I cannot
protect you, even though I would gladly give my life to do so. Go home, please.” Lexa was
distraught and Clarke chose the only way she knew to quiet the fear in the Commander’s eyes. She
drew a battle analogy for her.

“No, I’m sorry Lexa. I can’t and won’t do that. Raven can help me set up a lab and I can help them
figure this out. I have training that no one else has. You should go home and stay inside. The
Commander cannot get sick. I love you and I know it scares you that you don’t know how to fight
this, but I do. I’m the warrior in this battle. You cannot ask me not to fight.” Clarke smiled a sad
smile at her wife and sighed deeply, she saw fear replaced by acceptance and worry in Lexa’s eyes
as she nodded her understanding to Clarke.

“Fight well, warrior. The enemy you fight is named death.” Lexa took a deep breath and steadied
herself. “I will be fine Clarke, I have been around this many times and it has never taken me. I will
be the one burning the bodies and taking food and water to our people. There are others like me, they
will help.” When Clarke opened her mouth to protest Lexa held up her hand to stop her. “I have
done this every time the sickness has taken my people since even before I was Commander. My
father almost died from this in my 10th winter. My mother and I were in the same tent as him when
he first became ill, but neither of us got sick. After that I helped out whenever the sickness came.
Besides, it gives my people comfort to know that the Commander burns the bodies of their loved
ones when they cannot.” Lexa looked at her boots for a long time before looking at Clarke again.
“Clarke, we don’t know how the Sky People will be affected by this. You must be careful not to
come in contact…. I will sleep in tents near the treatment centre with my warriors. Please be careful.”
Lexa used all of her willpower not to kiss Clarke fearing the sickness was already on her body, then
she turned and strode off in her own direction, barking orders and pushing all of her fears and doubts
deep inside her chest.

Clarke watched her go with a knot growing in her belly. This felt different than all of the battles and blood they had seen together. This put a look of fear in Lexa’s eyes that made Clarke’s heart ache. She vowed to herself to find a cure for this and she turned and jogged off in search of Raven.

“Raven, we need to set up a lab! We need microscopes and….” Clarke burst into Raven’s work space and stopped dead. “What would I do without you…?” she wondered aloud as she looked around at the lab Raven had already been putting together. Monty, Jasper, and Maya were there too. They had a basic lab set up with microscopes and all of the other equipment they could scrounge. Monty had hooked up a computer and had downloaded the Ark’s medical database onto it. Maya was in the process of sterilizing the area while Jasper and Monty were putting up tarps to separate the lab area from the rest of the workspace. Raven had a box full of radios that she was testing.

“Hey, Clarke. I figured you’d be here eventually, if Lexa managed to stop you from doing something really stupid like going into the sick tent yourself,” Raven gave her a smirk and then continued, “we don’t know what this is. and we have to find out fast. Report is that Jackson already has five sick and one dead in the Ark treatment station, what does Abby have?”

“Seven sick and two dead,” Clarke’s face was grim, “it takes them fast Raven.”

Raven and Clarke were simply looking at each other finding strength in the bond they shared when Bellamy walked in with Wick. “We’re here to help,” was all he said but Clarke felt a wave of relief flood through her with those four words from her general.

“Take these radios Bellamy. Give one to the Ark treatment station, one to the treatment tent in the village, one to Lexa and one to Octavia. Tell Abby and Jackson they can reach us on channel 5 so we can all work together, tell Lexa she can reach her wife privately on 6, and your sister can reach you on 7.” Raven gave orders and Bellamy didn’t hesitate, he thanked Raven, took the radios, and started walking out. On the way out Maya stopped him explaining that they would need blood samples and Abby would give them to him. She gave him latex gloves, a medical mask, and vials for blood samples. He nodded at her in thanks and continued.

“Raven, thank you.” Clarke’s eyes filled with tears that threatened to spill down over her cheeks before she fought them back and regained her composure. If Lexa could be strong, so could she.

“I just figured you’d be hell to live with if you couldn’t get in a little radio sex at night.” Raven cracked a joke that made everyone laugh and Clarke could feel the tension in the small space start to dissipate.

“Let’s get to work.” Clarke clapped her hands and took over. She headed to the white board and started to list everything they knew about the mysterious illness. Maya joined her and Clarke quizzed her, “Do you know what this is?” her question was direct but lacked an accusatory tone.

“No, we knew that the Grounder’s got sick sometimes but the doctors were never concerned with finding out more as long as no one in the mountain got sick.” She blushed in shame remembering the things her people had done to Lexa’s.

“OK. Let’s work this out. Maya, I need you. Raven, Wick, Jasper, and Monty are all really smart, but they haven’t studied biology and medicine like we have. We have to lead this fight.” Clarke looked at the brave young woman and let Maya draw strength from her own steely conviction. Only when Maya’s eyes were filled with courage and she nodded with confidence did Clarke break the
eye contact and turn back to the board.

“We need to know the symptoms, incubation period, possible modes of transmission, try to figure out the pathogenesis, and we need to get a look at infected blood.”

“Lab? Clarke? Raven? Come in?” a voice cracked over the radio. It was Jackson calling from his infirmary.

“We’re here, Jackson.” Clarke answered. “We’re just getting started. What information can you give us that will help us figure this out?”

“It’s bad Clarke,” he sighed, “but that may be our saving grace. It is so fast acting that it might burn itself out before having much chance to spread. From 1st symptoms to death was just seven hours in the first boy and not much longer in the adult patient I lost. I had my first patient this morning and now I have six. The boy who came in first is dead, and now his mother is barely hanging on.”

“OK, we know it works fast. What else?” Maya was making notes as Clarke spoke. “Did you get a chance to do an autopsy on the boy? Was there anything to give us a clue if this thing is viral, bacterial, mould, parasite…”

“I did the autopsy, he was a mess inside. Whatever this is it caused a lot of internal bleeding and cell necrosis. I’ve never seen anything like it Clarke. The patients all came in with muscle aches, headaches, and a high fever, some become delirious soon after that. They have respiratory difficulties and some bleed from their eyes, ears, and nose. I suspect all have internal bleeding as well. The ones who have died have had organs shut down, one system at a time starting with the liver and kidneys.”

He sighed into the radio. “I have to go and check on my patients. I’ll check back in with you every hour and once Abby gets her radio we’ll find time to talk it through together. If anyone can figure it out we can.”

Clarke let out a long breath and turned to Maya. OK Maya lets just talk about history. What epidemics do we know of and what caused them?

“The Plague, also called Black Death. It had extremely high death rates every time an outbreak occurred. It killed millions of people throughout history. It was caused by a bacteria and spread by ticks on rats and other small rodents, and if it got into the lungs of humans it became airborne, spread by fluid. It caused internal bleeding and cell death like Jackson talked about.” Maya began listing the epidemics she had studied with the one that she thought sounded the most like this Wamplei.

Clarke considered this. “There aren’t a lot of rodents or fleas around camp especially in winter, I suspect there are lots of them in the tunnels that are all over the place around here but people aren’t out in the forest where they could be exposed very often right now. But I do want to know where the first two patients were before they got sick. There was one Grounder boy and one Sky boy first right?” when everyone nodded she continued, “Jasper, I need to know about those two boys. What they did and everywhere they went for the last few days.” Clarke turned back to Maya and encouraged her to continue.

“Yellow Fever, caused by a virus and spread by infected mosquitoes. Since it’s winter, and there are no mosquitoes moving on.” Maya continued, “Cholera caused by a bacteria and transmitted mostly by a contaminated water supply. Symptoms mostly diarrhea and vomiting and death from dehydration. Doesn’t fit the symptoms.” She paused and looked at Clarke for affirmation, Clarke nodded at her and she spoke again. “Smallpox, caused by a virus. But we don’t have the major symptom of the rash and blisters. Meningitis, an infection of the lining of the brain, caused by virus
or bacteria and most common initial symptoms being neck pain and headaches. It had a telltale rash that would indicate if it was bacterial in nature, again it doesn’t really fit the symptoms.” Maya looked deep in thought before she continued her list. “Influenza, caused by a virus and spread through contact with an infected person. Symptoms, fever, aches, malaise, coughing, runny nose, sore throat, vomiting in children, it mostly killed the young and old and healthy adults rarely died. There were several mutations of the influenza virus that caused stronger, deadlier outbreaks, transmission often came from animals like H1N1 and Swine Flu.”

Clarke looked up suddenly, “mutations…” she mused and then nodded at Maya to continue.

“SARS was caused by a virus, had similar symptoms to influenza but higher death rates.” Maya stopped and let Clarke catch up with her notes, her face set in rigid determination.

“This is good, keep going Maya,” Clarke smiled slightly at the young woman and kept writing.

“Ebola, caused by a virus and quite deadly. It killed an average of 50% of infected people. The incubation period was relatively short and symptoms began about two days after exposure. Headache, muscle ache, sore throat and fever. After that the liver and kidneys start to fail. Then internal and external bleeding occur. Death would occur anywhere from one to two weeks after the infection. It was spread through contact with infected bodily fluids directly or indirectly. It also kind of fits.” Maya paused for effect and then finished with, “There are several other epidemics that I learned about but they don’t seem to apply, like HIV for example.” Then she looked expectantly at Clarke, waiting for further direction.

“OK. This is a good start. I really need to talk to my mother,” Clarke sighed and almost on cue the radio crackled.

“Ark medical, research station, Clarke? Come in.” It was Abby’s voice and Clarke lunged for the radio.

“Mom, I’m here.” She felt a surge of relief shoot through her from hearing her mother’s voice. “Bellamy sure didn’t waste any time did he.” She smiled at her group of friends, all feeling the same pride in the way Bellamy had jumped into action yet again, risking himself to save people.

“Clarke, thank god.” They heard Abby let out a long sigh. “Lexa told me your plan. She has been bringing us supplies and she took the bodies away to burn them,” Abby sighed again, “three dead already and I saw my first patient this morning. Are you set up to be able to analyze blood and tissue samples Clarke?” She was all business, hoping to find a way to fight this disease.

“I don’t have anything fancy, but I have a couple of microscopes and other basic lab equipment. It’s a start, but once I begin to pin this down I will need access to the lab inside the Ark.”

“No, it’s too dangerous. You will send your research and samples to Jackson and he will continue with it in the Ark.” Abby said firmly.

“He needs to treat his patients.” Clarke countered.

“Mount Weather,” Maya interrupted, “The labs there are more advanced than even yours in the Ark. We can analyze samples much faster there.” She explained.

“Maybe, but Lexa ordered the power shut down and the mountain sealed once the last of your people were cured. I don’t know if she’ll reopen it. Even for this.” Clarke warned and Maya nodded.

Abby and Clarke talked and kicked ideas around for a while longer and then Jackson’s voice joined the conversation. Both doctor’s had stabilized some and lost others. Jackson had 14 patients total and
lost three children and two adults. The others seemed to be stabilizing as time passed. Abby and Nyko had treated 17 people and lost four, two children and two adults. Abby filled Jackson in on the treatment methods used by Nyko that seemed to be helping people breathe as they got worse and they compared what seemed to be working for each of them.

Clarke brought them back to finding a cure instead of treating the symptoms and as they were talking she had a sudden realization that made her kick herself. “Lexa!! Mom I was so focused on her being OK, I didn’t hear what she was saying. Mom, she’s immune. I need a sample of her blood!”

“Yes, Clarke. I took care of it. Bellamy is on his way back to you with samples from the infected, Lexa and others who claim they have natural immunity and also the ones who have survived this in the past. I also want you to draw blood from an uninfected Sky Person, Grounder and someone from Mount Weather.” Abby instructed.

“She thinks we did this,” Maya interjected, “the sad part is, I don’t know if we did or not. That’s why we need to go to Mount Weather Clarke. Lexa will listen to you. We have to know, I have to know if this came from the mountain too. If it did at least there will be a cure.” Her large brown eyes looked at Clarke with such pleading vulnerability that Clarke couldn’t hold the girls gaze.

“I’ll talk to her Maya, but I can’t promise anything.” Clarke said dropping her eyes and turning away from Maya. She refocused on her mother and Jackson. “Is there anything else that can be done in the meantime?”

“Follow up with the history of two boys that came in first. We lost both of them but we have to know what they were doing the days before they got sick. Considering how fast it seems to progress I think you won’t need to look much further than the last two days.” Abby instructed Clarke. “When the blood samples arrive get to work on them and keep me up to date. I’m going to try and get a few hours rest before the next wave of patients arrive, I’m expecting tomorrow to be much worse than today. Jackson, you should try to rest too. Stay safe everyone.”

Clarke sat the radio down and sighed a long, tired sigh. She turned the radio to the frequency set for Lexa and tried to reach her wife. “Lexa, it’s me. Are you there? Please be there?” Clarke’s head fell forward and she lifted the radio, leaning her forehead against it. She needed to hear her wife’s voice, needed to draw strength from her, to reset herself with Lexa’s devotion.

“Clarke?” Lexa’s voice sounded unsure, as she tried her best not to show her annoyance with the Sky People’s communication device. “Can you hear me?”

“Lexa, love. I can hear you. I know you don’t like our radios. But I am so glad to hear your voice.” Clarke’s eyes filled with tears and she let out the breath she hadn't realized she’d been holding in.

“Yes, I am glad too. Thank Raven for her thoughtfulness.” Lexa sounded quiet and tense and Clarke knew things must be bad. “Today wasn’t so bad, we only lost a few. Your mother is a very good healer Clarke. I may even let Nyko live after this is over.” She laughed a short, dry laugh. “He called for her before he called for me. He knew I’d quarantine everyone and he knew he needed her help. She shouldn’t be in there, I’m sorry Clarke.” Lexa sighed again, stretching her head back and looking at the top of her tent, blinking her eyes willing tears not to form.

“She should be in there Lexa. Nyko did the right thing. A doctor’s place is where people need her.” Clarke hoped she was reassuring her wife but without seeing her eyes Clarke wasn’t sure. She could read almost all of Lexa’s expressions now, if you could even call them expressions. She was so good at keeping her face stoic and emotionless but Clarke knew how green light danced in her eyes when
she was pleased and how deep grey thunderstorms clouded over when she was angry. Clarke imagined that right now her wife’s eyes would be the color she most hated to see, the icy light grey color of steel, the look she wore when she was battling all the sorrow that she held deep in her soul. “Lexa, how are you? It must be hard to burn the bodies of children. Especially when their parents cannot be there to grieve for them”

“My warriors and I grieve the young ones together. There is no shame in shedding tears for ones stolen from us by Wamplei. We weep for them and send them off as their parents would. It is honourable.” Lexa sighed. “How are you Clarke?” She needed to focus on her wife and forget the scenes that played behind her eyes, and the smell of burning flesh that threatened to never leave her nostrils.

“I’m OK Lexa. Bellamy should be back soon with blood samples and I can start examining them. I need your help with something. Jasper is finding out what her can about the Sky boy who was the first to get sick here. I need to know all about the boy who got sick first. Where he was and what her did for the last two days. Can you get that information for me?” Clarke asked.

“Yes, Clarke. Whatever you need to fight this my warrior.” Lexa breathed into the radio her voice thick with determination and pride. “You can do this Clarke.”

“Lexa… I also need to ask you something you aren’t going to like. I might need to go back into the mountain. The equipment they have in the medical centre is more advanced and I might need it…” Clarke paused and released her talk button wanting to see if Lexa was going to have a violent reaction to the idea.

“Try to use what you have Clarke. Your Ark has computers and equipment as well. Do not ask me to unseal the mountain,” she paused and sighed, “do you think they made this? Speak true Clarke, I cannot see your eyes but I know every lilt and tone of your voice. If you lie to me I will know.” Lexa sounded firm and Clarke knew she was serious.

“I don’t know. I thought about the possibility. Diseases have always been around but this one seems to be especially deadly. It’s possible that it is a weaponized strain of an old Earth disease that people called Black Death.” Clarke opened up to Lexa about the theory that had been running through her head. “It’s also possible that it wasn’t the mountain, that whatever disease this is mutated after the war like so many other things.”

“I understand. I will open the mountain if you tell me there is no other way. Understand that other villages, and clans will not be pleased about the mountain being open. That could have repercussions we are not prepared for. Do not ask it lightly.” Lexa was as honest with her wife as she could be about the delicacy of the situation surrounding the mountain.

“I understand. I’ll do what I can from here. I hope it will be enough.” Clarke ached for Lexa’s strong arms around her, “I love you, rest now. My mother thinks tomorrow will be worse than today.”

“Your mother is correct. It will get worse before it gets better. I love you too Clarke. Be careful. I will contact you again tomorrow when I have information about the boy.” With that Lexa put down the radio and left her tent to start gathering information.

Clarke turned to Maya and they shared a knowing nod. Clarke knew Lexa wasn’t telling her everything about her reasons for sealing the mountain but she trusted her implicitly and would try to do her job without having to go into Mount Weather.
Jasper returned with news of the boy from Camp Jaha who had fallen ill first. “He was friends with a Grounder boy and girl. The neighbours told me that the three of them had been out of camp exploring yesterday. Do you think his friend is the same boy who got sick in Ton DC?”

“I’d bet on it. We need to find the little girl. Great work Jasper. I’ve got Lexa looking into the boy. Hopefully she will track down the girl.” Clarke felt hopeful that this would lead her to important information. She was staring at the notes on the white board when she heard Octavia’s voice behind her.

“Need any help here?” She and Bellamy walked into the lab with files and samples from Abby. Clarke went to her and hugged her. “They let me come here and help you since I was just under house arrest anyway. Lincoln had this when he was a boy and recovered so he is immune. He’s helping Lexa with the body’s. I’m glad they have each other, what a horrible job. The people really respect the Commander for doing this, Clarke. You should hear how they talk about her, and you.” Octavia reached out and laid her hand on Clarke’s shoulder giving it a squeeze.

“Cool it with the mushy stuff sis, we have a disease to kill. Where do want these samples Clarke?” Bellamy pushed his way past the two women wanting to keep Clarke focused on fighting this thing, not on her emotions.

“Where’s my radio?” Raven asked immediately noticing Octavia didn’t have it on her, “Please tell me you left it with Lincoln and didn’t lose it.” She poked Octavia and rolled her eyes.

“Yes, Lincoln has it…. and speaking of mushy he promised to share it with Echo.” Octavia smirked at her revenge on Bellamy for his mushy comment.

“Over here Bellamy,” Maya answered rescuing Bellamy from he curious looks her was getting. She indicated the table where the microscopes were set up. “I’ll start preparing slides, Clarke.” She offered.

“Let’s do it together,” Clarke answered moving over to the table with Maya, “we’re going to find this thing and we’re going to beat it.” She had a certain look in her eye that told all of her friends that the disease didn't stand a chance against Clarke Griffon.

The next morning Lexa radioed very early. “Clarke? I need to talk to you. The boys were friends and there was a girl with them. She showed me where they went Clarke. Are you there?”

“Lexa?, Yes I’m here. Talk to me.” Clarke answered eagerly.

“The three of them played together everyday. Yesterday they found a cave not far from camp. I went inside and looked around. At first I thought it was just a small cave but the girl showed me a short tunnel in the corner that they had squeezed through, it came out into a larger tunnel. She blames herself. She said both boys were scared to go deeper but she teased them and told them there weren’t any Reapers anymore so they should be brave like warriors. Anyway, the tunnel goes quite deep. I didn't follow it to the end. The girl said they only went a little further and a few rats had run at them. One tied to run up the sky boys leg and she kicked it off of him. They left right after that happened. Does this help?”

“Yes. It does. Thank you Lexa.” Have some of your warriors who are immune go and burn everything in that cave, including the rats.” Clarke had found some rod-shaped bacteria in the infected blood she had analyzed the previous night and with help from Abby over the radio had identified it as a mutated form of the Plague causing Yersinia Pestis bacteria. The rats in the cave
confirmed her suspicions of first transmission but the fast rate of infection between people who had only casual contact was a mutation of the illness that still had her stumped. Was it invading the lungs quick enough to become airborne so quickly, or was there some other method she was overlooking?

“We will take care of it immediately.” Lexa said and was gone.

The next week was hell. Clarke was still struggling to find the markers in the blood of the immune that could be used to make a cure. Abby and Jackson had seen patients increase daily and the number of dead was well over thirty with twelve more threatening to join them within the hour.

Lexa and Lincoln had personally gone to destroy the cave and as they watched for fleeing rodents they identified several more caves nearby and cleared those out as well. The last cave they tracked the rats to pulled at Lincoln’s memory. “Heda, this cave becomes a tunnel. The Reapers used it to go under the mountain. It leads almost directly to the underground entrance.”

“Clarke will want to know this. We still can’t be sure if this sickness came from the mountain or not.” Lexa looked at Lincoln and added, “this stays between us for now Lincoln.”

“Yes, Heda,” was Lincoln’s respectful response. As he turned to survey the cave once more he noticed something strange. “Heda, over there. Those rats are white...?”

Lexa looked with curiosity before drawing her bow and nocking an arrow. She drew back and loosed the arrow in one smooth motion. One of the white rats fell dead where it had sat. She carefully bagged the animal as Lincoln began to set the cleansing fires to rid the tunnels of as many vermin as possible. They returned to camp and Lexa’s mind was ablaze with thoughts. Were all of the people she had lost to this sickness over the years just more victims of the mountain? She thought back to the day the mountain fell and how close she had been to making a deal with them. She hated the weakness that had crept into her mind as she had listened to Cage Wallace make her an offer over the radio. They had taken everyone inside the mountain prisoner again and the surprise plan had been ruined. All they had wanted was the 100 and they promised all the Grounder’s would live and peace for the future. She had been close to taking the deal when Echo had sounded a war cry that she heard over the radio. That cry had let her know that even though her people were drained and weakened they could still fight. It had inspired her to cut the hand off of the smug soldier who had held the radio and drive her sword into his heart. Her people killed the rest of the men on the ridge quickly. She had never told Clarke about what had happened up there but now she thought she would have to.

There had been more bodies for them when they returned to camp, three of them children. Lexa and Lincoln took the bodies and wrapped them with care. They gave them the funeral rights that their families would if they could be there and wept for the loss. It was exhausting work but Lexa welcomed this short respite from her thoughts as she gave the victims her full attention. Once they had completed the rites they went back to the medical tent and Lexa told Abby what she had found in the cave.

“Lexa, where is it?” she whispered, “she grabbed a sealable bag from the tent and gave it to her. “Seal it in here. It isn’t the rat that is dangerous, there are fleas on the rat that you can’t see easily. The fleas spread the disease. We have to be very careful with them. I will make sure Clarke handles it properly, don’t worry.” She smiled at there daughter-in-law’s worried expression.

“It is tied in my saddlebag on my horse,” Lexa hesitated, “Is my horse in danger?” she asked quietly.

“I don’t know.” Abby answered seriously. “But take the saddlebag to the site where you burn the
bodies. Open it there, put the rat into the bag I gave you and seal it. Then burn your saddlebag.”
Abby gave Lexa precise instructions. “Then you have to get the bag to Clarke as quickly as possible.
But you can’t go in her lab. Call out to her and drop the bag off several feet from her door.” She
knew they two women needed each other and thought even a glimpse across the quarantine would
do them both a world of good. “Go now, and be safe.” Abby added before moving back into the tent
to see to her patients.

Lexa followed Abby’s instructions and added her own precaution of removing all of the clothes she
had worn into the tunnel and burning them. Lincoln did the same and the two of them hosed each
other down with the water they had set aside for bathing. Then they walked together through the
cold winter air completely naked back to the tents where they had spare clothes. The warriors who
witnessed it started to laugh and make comments about the two perfect bodies they were seeing until
the Commander’s icy gaze caught them and stole the breath from their lungs. They stopped laughing
and bowed their heads respectfully before turning away.

Lexa knew that Lincoln missed Octavia the same way she missed Clarke and asked him to be her
guard for her walk to the camp. He knew she didn’t need a guard, for the paths between the camps
were completely safe, but he gratefully accepted the offer.

Clarke and Maya were still trying to isolate something from Lexa’s blood that would explain her
immunity, something they could use to create a treatment. It had been a frustrating week for the two
with limited resources and still no usable results. They had extracted antibodies from Lincoln’s blood
that they hoped would help develop a vaccine and Raven and Wick were trying to figure out how to
grow more of the antibodies in the lab. Bellamy and Octavia were sitting at the table figuring out
logistics and how they should proceed once they had something.

“Clarke, Octavia. Come to the door.” Lexa projected her voice enough to be heard in the tent. Her
stomach was tied in knots and she felt the weight of the days she had been away from her wife bear
down on her. Lincoln was equally tense beside her.

“Clarke, did you hear that? Wasn’t that…” Octavia started.

“Lexa,” Clarke breathed the name like she was saying a prayer and jumped up from the microscope.
She grabbed Octavia’s hand and the two women ran to the door. As they stepped outside Lexa held
up her hand to keep them away but Lincoln noticed that when she saw her wife her voice caught in
her throat and her words would not come out.

“Stay there!” Lincoln’s voice boomed out. “We brought something for you to examine, we found it
in one of the tunnels we were clearing.”

“Why were you two clearing the tunnels?” Clarke spoke to Lincoln but never took her eyes from her
wife. “You two have to take care of yourselves, it could be dangerous.” she knew her words would
not be heeded but felt the need to say them anyway.

Finally Lexa found her voice, “Clarke, you look like you aren’t sleeping. You need to sleep so you
can focus and figure this out,” her voice caught in her throat again and she paused, “Abby says this
rat is dangerous. You must handle it carefully. Promise me.”

“I promise,” Clarke felt a real smile form on her lips for the first time days as she looked lovingly at
Lexa, “thank you for bringing it to me. Seeing you gives me strength.”

Lexa could only nod in return and Clarke understood that she felt the same.
Lincoln and Octavia didn’t speak, just looked at one another and felt comfort in that. As Lexa turned to go Octavia merely said, “What doesn’t kill us, makes us stronger.” Lincoln responded with a smile for his lover and a nod of his head. As the two proud Grounders left Clarke and Octavia watched them go for a minute before Clarke went inside to put on a makeshift hazmat suit and figure out how to deal with the rat.

Clarke found a particularly virulent strain of the sickness in the ticks that fed on the rat but she couldn’t find any disease in the rat itself. She sighed as she stood and looked at Maya. “It looks like maybe your people did make this. Or at least were aware of it. This rat is a lab rat and it seems to be immune to the disease even though it’s covered in diseased ticks. None of your people have gotten sick yet either… I’m missing something. Help me talk this through.”

Maya nodded with tears in her eyes, feeling the guilt of her people’s legacy all over again, “Lexa and around 15% percent of the Grounder population appear to be immune although we can’t isolate anything in their blood yet. We haven’t found any natural immunity among Sky People although they seem to have a slightly higher survival rate. All survivors retain the antibodies that fought it off and become immune to catching it again. This implies that the same, or very similar strain strikes every time. Also, it seems that all of the people from Mount Weather are immune.” Maya went over what they knew. “Clarke, what if we forget about the bacteria for a moment and just compare Lexa’s blood and my blood. Maybe we’ll see something they both have in common that we missed because it seems unrelated…” Her train of thought intrigued Clarke who nodded immediately.

“It’s got to be in the DNA. We have to go into the Ark and use the sequencer.” Clarke said snapping out of her thoughts. Her blue eyes were shining with a spark that her friends hadn’t seen all week, and they knew that she was onto something.

“You have to let me do it. We know I’m immune.” Maya pointed out. “And I sill think we should be going to the mountain, Monty could hack Dr. Tsing’s medical file database and I’m sure we could find…”

“The Ark first Maya,” Clarke interrupted. “if we get what we need from the DNA sequencer we won’t have to go into the mountain. There was something in Lexa’s voice when she talked about reopening the mountain. I suspect all of the clans agreed; on pain of death or something else just as horrible, never to open it again. I’d like to avoid starting more inter-clan fighting if we can.”

“She’s right,” Octavia offered, “I heard Echo and Lincoln talking about it after they sealed it. I thought we should have searched for more useful equipment, food, seeds, medicine. I actually suggested trying to sneak back in.” She laughed at the memory. “Lincoln told me not to say such things but then Echo went off in Trigedasleng that I barely understood and told him he’d better make sure I didn’t because the Commander had agreed with the other clans that it would remain sealed. After that Lincoln got really serious and made me promise him one hundred times that I’d stay away.”

“Yeah, I wanted to go back in too. Echo made me promise one hundred times.” Bellamy laughed, "what is it about one hundred promises? Maybe one for each of us that came down on the dropship?” He smiled sadly at the memories of the friends they had lost before shaking his head and refocusing on Clarke. “Maya’s right though. She has to go. She’s immune. That whole area is under quarantine and Jackson can help her if she needs it.” Clarke reluctantly agreed and sent Maya off with the samples and a radio.

They found one single unmapped allele in common in the blood of the immune grounders and the people from the mountain. The advanced gene therapy program the United States Army had been
developing before the bombs was a part of the Mount Weather medical database. Clarke and Maya had yet to see the extent of the program but with the discovery of that single allele they knew for certain that Wamplei was from the mountain.

When Clarke talked to Lexa that night she told her everything they had found out. “Why are some of my people immune, Clarke?” Lexa’s blood was boiling with anger her head full of the lifeless faces of the four children she and Lincoln had burned today. “What does this mean?”

“We won’t know exactly unless we go into the mountain and look in the medical databases.” Clarke’s voice was gentle, she knew her wife needed her softness right now. “We suspect it was Mount Weather’s way of controlling your population but also ensuring that at least some of you survived.”

“Survived so they could drain our blood!” Lexa’s anger was a rising tempest raging in her heart now. Her head was full of dark clouds pushing away her coherent thoughts, the blood in her veins was rushing so fast it created a roaring in her ears, and her heartbeat was thudding in her chest like hailstones off of the mountainside.

“Lex, baby,” Clarke dropped her voice an octave and tried to soothe her beloved beast. An angry Commander full of bloodlust was not going to win this battle so Clarke focused on bringing back Lexa; strong, reasonable, patient, Lexa. “I need you to hear me lover. I know you are angry, and I promise you I will find the truth for you. Right now I need you to hear me and help me beat this. I need my wife to help me talk through this calmly and well get it right. Can you do that Lexa?” Clarke held her breath not knowing if Lexa was even still on the other end or if she had already stalked off into the forest looking for something to kill.

“Houmon, I’m here. I can do that. Talk.” Her response was terse but the affectionate greeting she used let Clarke know she was truly listening.

“With what we know it seems like at least 15% of your population is immune. I need to know if there is some way the Mountain People could have put that immunity into the population. Is there any contact you had with the Mountain People that you can think of that could have caused this?”

“No! The first day I set foot in that terrible place was the day it fell.” Lexa’s voice had a hard edge to it that warned Clarke to choose her words carefully.

“Of course, darling. We know none of you had this done to you willingly. You said your mother was also immune. Is there anything about her that you can remember? Did she escape the mountain, or…?” Clarke was cut off by her wife.

“You and Anya were the first to ever escape the mountain Clarke.” The edge was still there but Clarke also heard a measure of pride Lexa’s voice as she reminded Clarke of her own bravery. “But there was something. My father used to tell me how strong my mother was. He said she once fought off the drugs in the mountain men’s darts and returned to camp when the rest of her hunting party were taken by soldiers.”

“Yes, Lexa that’s it. It’s got to be.” Clarke felt some excitement at this new piece of the puzzle. “I need you to find out if the other immune warriors have similar stories from themselves, parents, or possibly grandparents.”

“Right away.” Lexa paused before leaving her tent and let herself be a woman who missed her wife, just for a few seconds. “I love you, Clarke” She almost whispered into the radio before setting it down on the floor of her tent and turning to leave on her newest mission. As she was letting the flaps of her tent fall down behind her she heard the voice of her beloved waft though faintly. She felt the corners of her mouth tug up slightly into an almost smile as she heard Clarke’s voice telling her that
she loved her too.

Clarke felt like she had all the pieces of the puzzle and just needed a small nudge to get them put together correctly. She got Jackson and Abby on the radio and she and Maya were hoping the combined intellect would give them the answer that had so far eluded them.

“Mount Weather develops this disease. They use some kind of gene therapy to immunize all of their people and they use darts to immunize a certain percentage of Grounders to ensure the blood supply they need. When the Grounder population gets too big or they begin to fight back too much they let this disease loose. I’m guessing it’s unpredictable how long it will take for the infected rats to make it to the population and this current outbreak could have been planned up to three years ago. We have antibodies from the survivors that might work as a vaccine but so far we aren’t having any luck reproducing enough of them. We have isolated the allele in the immune blood, but I can’t figure out how to extract it or how Mount Weather introduced it with darts. The immunity seems to last for no more than two generations for the Grounders and Maya says that all babies and children in the mountain get a lot of immunizations so she can’t begin to guess which one held this allele. Mom, I’m stuck, I need help.” Clarke was exhausted, dark circles painted her eyes and her hand shook as she held the radio.

“You’ve done an amazing job Clarke.” Her mother assured her. “I need Maya to go to the Ark and help Jackson. I can talk them through how to isolate and extract what you’ll need.” Abby sounded relieved.

“I’ll be waiting for…” Jackson’s voice was interrupted by coughing and heavy breathing.

“This is Dee, Jackson is showing symptoms, I have to get him started with treatment.” A nurse from the Ark had taken the radio from Jackson and her words caused a renewed sense of urgency in Clarke.

“I’ll go with Maya, mom.” Clarke immediately offered. “I have a sort of makeshift hazmat suit, it’ll do, it’ll have to.”

“Clarke, be careful.” Her mother felt tears threaten but she knew Maya needed help and Clarke was the only person she knew for certain could follow her complicated instructions. “Get in, radio me, we’ll do what we need to do, and then you two will get out. The samples we’ll make can go back with you to your lab to mature. They will need to sit overnight and then we can add it to uninfected and infected blood samples and see what happens. If it doesn’t work we will have to go in the mountain, war or no war.” Abby spoke with the certainty of a Chancellor. “I’m still officially Chancellor, I can take responsibility as easily as Lexa can.

“Like she’d let you,” Clarke laughed into the radio, “we’ll leave for the Ark in five minutes and radio once were there.”

The process took five hours. Clarke and Maya were both very impressed with Abby’s precise instructions. Maya secretly thought that Abby would be able to perform miracles with access to the medical database and equipment that was in the mountain. When they had ten samples of potential cures and ten potential vaccinations created they left the Ark and returned to the workspace where their friends waited. Bellamy had set up a decontamination room for them and they hosed each other dawn with painfully hot water. They put their old clothes out to be burned and once they were dressed Clarke followed the path they had created for her to an isolation area where she would spend
the night in case she had been infected. With the fast incubation period they would know by morning.

She talked briefly with Lexa on the radio and peaceful in the knowledge that there was truly nothing more she could do until the ten hours her mother told her the samples needed had passed, she slept.

When she woke the next morning Maya was next to her taking her temperature and checking her vitals. She felt fine. Sleep had reenergized her and she was showing no symptoms. Once Maya cleared her they moved back to the main lab where all of her friends were waiting to hug her now that they knew she hadn’t been exposed. “Clarke, step outside for a moment.” Raven grinned at her.

When Clarke stepped outside of the lab she saw Lexa standing just past the 25 foot mark waiting, stoeic and strong. As she saw her wife emerge healthy and whole Lexa felt such a wave of relief flood through her that she felt her composure crumble and her legs could no longer hold her. Lincoln’s watchful eye caught her knees starting to buckle and he subtly reached out, grasped her elbow, and held her upright. Clarke noticed the momentary weakness and shot Lincoln a look of gratitude knowing Lexa would not want to be seen falling to her knees like she almost had. Clarke looked at Lexa and smiled at her. “I’m OK. How long have you been waiting out here in the cold?” She shook her head at Lexa admonishing her. “Go home, wife. Rest. We’re about to run our first tests. If this works this will be over soon.”

Lexa nodded, tears in her eyes and she and Lincoln returned to their duties.

The initial tests of the vaccine were successful. Under the microscope it appeared that the medicine would work. The cure for the already infected didn’t show any dramatic effects on the blood, but it did appear to help fight the bacteria somewhat. They quickly sent off some of the remaining vials to try on the sickest patients in the Ark realizing it couldn’t do any more harm. It was then that Clarke realized she hadn’t thought ahead enough. The vaccine still had to be tested on people and they had no way to know what the reaction would be. It was a two part vaccine. A weakened form of the virus itself would be introduced along with some killer t cells from the recovered victims.

Bellamy had already thought about this and had stepped forward as he saw realization on Clarke’s face. “I’ll do it.” he rolled up his sleeve and looked expectantly at Clarke.

“Bellamy…” Clarke shook her head silently pleading with him to change his mind but knowing he wouldn’t.

“No, Bell!” Octavia jumped in between her brother and Clarke. “Clarke he can’t!” She was adamant and Bellamy cut her off before she could say anything else.

“Octavia move.” He tried to shove her aside but forgot that she was a fully trained Grounder warrior now and somehow ended up on his butt a few steps back.

“I overheard him talking to Echo on the radio last night. He’s going to be a dad.” Octavia dropped a bomb on all of them and Bellamy looked angrily at her, she turned away from him and faced Clarke as she yanked her sleeve up, “Inject me Clarke, I’ll do it.”

Octavia’s bravery brought tears to Clarke’s eyes and then a commotion of shouting and questions broke out as her friends were trying to figure out what was going on with Bellamy and Echo and also trying to talk Octavia out of volunteering at the same time. Clarke’s voice silenced them all as she pushed her own sleeve up and jabbed herself with the needle. “Tell Lexa, I’m sorry.” she said as she injected herself with the potentially deadly contents.
Not even Lincoln’s strong arms could hold the Commander on her feet. Lexa fell to her knees in front of Abby when she told her what Clarke had done. The warriors who saw it held the scene in their hearts. They had figured out not long after the marriage that loving Clarke was their Commander’s greatest strength. They also loved the Sky Houmon and the news filled them with worry and dread. Abby had given Lexa the news as soon as Clarke had radioed. Maya had quickly isolated her and was monitoring her, promising updates every ten minutes. If the medicine didn’t work they knew it wouldn’t be long before Clarke started showing symptoms.

Lexa had already decided to reopen the mountain before she had heard what Clarke had done. She cursed herself for not telling her wife her plan as soon as she had decided. They needed to know everything that the Mountain Men had done and that information was inside the mountain. She knew she would face challenges from other clans for going back in, but she had decided her people deserved to know everything. She knew she had to hurry now and she forced herself to be the Commander and get back to her feet. She started yelling orders and refused to let the terrified wife inside of her show her face again.

Clarke felt the fever start and her first thought was for her wife. She prayed to gods she didn’t believe in to spare her so that Lexa wouldn’t have to suffer another loss.

Lexa and Lincoln were already on their way to get Maya, Monty, and Raven when Abby came out of the tent with bad news. When she saw that Lexa wasn’t there she knew where she had gone and prayed she wouldn’t be too late.

The thundering hooves of the horses caught Bellamy’s attention. He went outside to greet the Commander and the look on his face told her everything she needed to know. “I’m sorry, Commander, she did it so fast I didn’t have a chance to stop her.” his eyes filled with tears and she held up her hand to stop him.

“When Clarke decides to do something I don’t think there is a single person who can stop her. I need Maya, Raven, and Monty. Now. We are opening the mountain.” She strode past Bellamy no longer caring about the quarantine. She went into the room where Clarke lay and took her wife in her arms. She placed a kiss on Clarke’s feverish forehead and told her to fight, to hold on. Then she looked at Maya and told her to follow her. When Lexa demanded that Raven join them the stubborn engineer swallowed her pride and refused.

“Take Wick. He is just as good as me and he’s faster. He can get the power on faster than I can.” She gestured at the brace on her leg and Lexa nodded in agreement and thanks. Wick kissed her on the cheek quickly before following the Commander out the door with Maya and Monty.

Maya had set up an IV to keep Clarke hydrated and had already administered one of the medicines they had formulated from Lexa’s blood. She had known Lexa would come and was ready to go. She had given Octavia instructions on how to care for Clarke. All of the friends agreed that the risk was worth it and they would keep her with them. They had Abby on radio and Jackson had already passed the critical point in his illness and while still weak was beginning to recover, so they had radio support from him as well. Bellamy had already gone to gather the supplies they needed and they were ready to help Clarke fight through the disease.

They rode the horses hard through the snow and as soon as possible they redirected underground
into the Reaper tunnels. The team that had gone ahead to open the mountain had been instructed to open it from the medical bay in the tunnels and Lexa expected it would be open when they arrived.

As soon as they were in the mountain Wick and Monty set off to find the emergency generator and Maya started organizing the computer equipment in the lab. She made sure everything was connected and ready to go as soon as they had power. It took only 45 minutes but to Lexa it felt like days. When they heard the whining of turbines and the lights began to flicker on she let out a sigh of relief and turned to Maya. “Work as fast as you can. I will let you and Abby come back here later, we will not close the mountain again. Get the information we need and don’t let anything else distract you.” Her voice was steely but she felt weak inside.

Maya had the computer booted up and ready when Monty came back in a few minutes later. She had opened the database and was stuck without a password. Monty quickly ushered her aside and got to work breaking in. Wick positioned himself at Monty’s shoulder and watched the progress giving some ideas here and there. Monty really didn’t need the help and within five minutes he had made short work of the security systems and had full access to everything. He jumped up and high five Wick, “Yes! We are in! It’s all your’s Maya!” He moved aside and Maya slipped into the chair and began to search the files.

Lexa nodded her thanks to Monty and Wick and paced nervously as Maya was searching the database. As she got closer to finding what she needed she started directing Wick and Monty to plug in certain machines and to look for certain supplies. They had everything ready when she exclaimed, “I found it! It’s here!” she looked up excitedly pointing at the screen. “There is a treatment that is listed as 70% effective on infected people and there is a vaccine too.” She quickly jumped up and began fiddling with some of the machines and punching in some data here and there.

“How long will it take Maya?” Lexa asked impatiently.

“I’m printing the cure first, this machine can make ten doses per hour.” As soon as the first ten are done someone should ride back. I will stay and make more. We can send a rider every hour. When everyone who is infected has a dose I can start with the vaccines."

“I will take the first ones myself. Lincoln will take the next batch.” Lexa made the decision quickly.

“Heda, we should go together. The way can be dangerous in the winter. If one of the horses falls we will have another to continue with.” Lincoln stepped forward unwilling to allow the Heda to make the trip alone in her distracted state of mind. She heard the edge to his voice but also heard the truth in his words and relented, nodding to him.

“Lincoln, tell the guards in the tunnel that they will ride two at a time with the next two batches. And tell them to see to all of our horses. Make sure the animals are ready for the return trip. As soon as we arrive with the first batch we will send more healthy riders back here.” Camp Jaha was a four hour ride in the snow but Lexa planned on making it in less than three. With the decisions made there was nothing for Lexa to do but pace until the medicine was ready.

Clarke was burning up and delirious. Octavia was wiping her down with a cold sponge and making sure she gave her the herbal solution Nyko had developed to fight Wamplei, every hour though her IV. Raven and Jasper were updating Abby on her daughters symptoms every few minutes and getting instructions from her to relay to Octavia. Everyone was tense and Clarke’s delirious hallucinations were not helping. She would suddenly shout out, “Finn, No! Stop shooting!” or she would Scream “Lexa, watch out, the gorilla!” and sometimes, “Wells! No. Please!” and the worst for all of them was the loud wailing sound she made when her mind conjured the scene of her dad being
“Daaaaaddd!” was all she screamed but the sound of her voice was so haunted it gave her friends goosebumps.

“Our princess sure has seen her share of death, huh?” Jasper said.

“We all have, Jasper.” was Raven’s sad reply. “Don’t worry, she’ll fight through this. She will.” Raven clenched her jaw refusing to cry.

Clarke’s delirium subsided but her liver function started showing signs of distress and Octavia noticed that there was blood when she coughed. She was in and out of consciousness and whenever she could speak she told Octavia to tell Lexa how much she loved her. Octavia steadfastly refused. She told Clarke she’d better live or Lexa wouldn’t know. She told her she’d better live or Lexa could not. She told her she’d better live.

With only six miles left to the camp Lexa’s horse stumbled in the snow and broke it’s leg. She looked at Lincoln in relief thanking him for insisting they travel together. She mercifully killed her horse quickly bending over to lay a gentle hand upon the beast’s head and telling it, “Yu gonplei ste odon,” before jumping up behind Lincoln and continuing the journey. The horse was slightly slower with the extra weight but as they got closer the path became worn and the way clear. As soon as they were within an hour’s walking distance Lincoln stopped the horse and quickly jumped off.

“Heda, go, you’ll be ten or twenty minutes faster without my weight.”

Lexa didn’t hesitate, “I will send a rider for you.” she promised as she urged the horse on.

Octavia was starting to panic. Clarke was getting worse and nothing seemed to help. She called out to Raven. “Get Abby on the radio. I need help. We can’t lose her.”

“We won’t,” the voice was Lexa’s. She strode over to her wife and handed a syringe to Octavia. “Maya said to put this in her IV.” She knelt beside Clarke and took her hand as she watched Octavia jump into action and add the medicine to Clarke’s fluids. Octavia yelled for Raven to get Abby on the radio and soon enough Abby was giving her a few more instructions and she adjusted the drip rate of the IV and checked a few other things.

Lexa knew she had to deliver the other doses to the sick people in the Ark but she couldn’t tear herself away from her wife’s bedside. She asked Jasper to take them for her and he quickly ran out into the cold with the precious cargo.

About two hours later the first shipment reached Abby in the Ton DC medical tent and every hour after than more medicine arrived. Every able bodied Grounder and Sky Person who could ride paired up and headed for the mountain determined to bring back the medicine as quickly as it could be made.

Night came and Clarke still held on. Her delirium came back and Lexa tried to chase away the ghosts that haunted her. The fever burning in Clarke’s body was too high, Lexa went outside and brought back snow to pack around her. When that melted she got more. She continued caring for her throughout the night refusing to give in to the despair that was creeping into her heart.

Morning came. Clarke was underwater and everything was dark and cold. She heard a voice quietly speaking to her of devotion and she swam toward it. As she got closer to that voice she got closer to waking up. When her eyes blinked open she saw her wife sitting next to her, wiping the moisture
from her skin and wringing out the cloth and doing it again. As she worked she spoke quietly to Clarke of promises and tenderness and of how she had filled her heart and her soul with love and light. Clarke listened to her for a minute before Lexa realized she was awake.

“Clarke!?” Lexa stood so suddenly her chair fell over backwards with a bang, waking up Raven and Octavia who were resting not far away.

“What happened! Is she OK?” both girls questioned racing over to Lexa who had thrown herself over Clarke’s body embracing her.

“Clarke, Clarke, Clarke, my beautiful Clarke,” Lexa kept repeating. “You came back to me.”

Octavia and Raven squeezed Clarke’s hand and Raven quickly went to radio Abby with the good news. Octavia set about checking Clarke’s vital signs the way Maya had taught her and when Lexa finally released her from the tight embrace Clarke found her voice, “Baby, you’re here? What is happening?” she shivered and Lexa realized that she was freezing now that her fever had broken. She immediately covered Clarke in a warm blanket and sat down next to her taking her hand again.

“I couldn’t be anywhere else.” Lexa confessed. “I opened the mountain and Maya made the medicine. By now everyone who was sick had been treated. It won’t cure everyone, but Abby and Jackson have had good results so far. Nyko says it’s a miracle.” She laughed with tears in her eyes. "You’re alive,” she sighed happily.

“What about your agreement with the other tribes not to open the mountain, will there be war?”

“Awake less than ten minutes, and already talk of war? I didn’t realize I had married such a bloodthirsty warmonger,” Lexa teased. ‘Rest, Clarke, we will work it out. The mountain gave us this disease and now it will take it away. The other clans will benefit just as much as ours from the medicine Maya is making. They will not fight me on this. I need you to rest now and get strong.” She kissed her wife’s forehead and then continued, “I have been here all night. I must go and see to our people now, Clarke. Can you promise me that you’ll rest? I will come back as soon as I see to everything.

Clarke felt tiredness pulling at her body and agreed, “come back as soon as you can, please,” she barely got out before falling asleep.

“Nothing could keep me away, love.” Lexa whispered gently before exiting the tent.

Octavia and Lincoln were standing just inside the doorway wrapped in an embrace and when Lexa approached they parted. “It's OK. Take comfort in each other's arms now. You have both been very brave and I owe you so much. Thank you.” She held out her arm to Lincoln and then to Octavia and they each grasped her forearm in turn. She nodded at both of them and left the tent to see to her people. She wasn't surprised when Lincoln fell into step beside her after a minute.

It took several hours for Lexa to make the rounds and speak with the people who were recovering. She spoke with the families of those who had been lost and she kneeled before them and took the blame for their deaths. She told them them the truth, had she opened the mountain the first time Clarke suggested it many lives could have been saved. In their heartache many shouted at her, some mother’s of dead children even dared to hit her but she took everything in silence and made Lincoln stay back. In the end her people understood that opening the mountain had saved them from Wamplei but it might cost them a war, and would certainly cause power seeking warriors from other clans to challenge the Commander. There would be blood shed over this decision and they saw their
Commander accept everything with a calmness that they respected. When Lexa returned to Clarke’s bedside she was tired and emotionally drained but there was no way she would be dragged from that chair. She sat and held Clarke’s hand while she slept and refused to be moved even when Octavia and Raven insisted she sleep in the nearby cot.

A couple of hours later, Abby came. While Lexa’s devotion to her daughter warmed her heart she could see the exhaustion in the Commander’s face and knew the girl needed to sleep. She insisted that Lexa lie on the cot Raven had moved even closer to Clarke’s and she took Lexa’s spot in the chair holding her daughter’s hand. She promised that she would wake Lexa if she got called from Clarke’s side and as she covered Lexa with a blanket she watched her slip quickly into an exhausted sleep.

A short while later Clarke woke up. Abby quickly checked her daughter’s vitals and asked her how she was feeling. Clarke only asked about Lexa and as soon as Abby pointed to the nearby bed and Clarke felt assured that her wife was safe and resting she smiled at her mother. “You made her rest, didn’t you?”

“Yes, I was afraid if she didn’t sleep I’d have another patient tomorrow. She is strong, but she has been pushing herself too hard. She was amazing through this whole thing Clarke. I wish you could have seen her. She led with bravery, compassion, and empathy like I didn’t even know she was capable. Your wife is quite remarkable.” Abby kissed her daughter’s forehead and then insisted Clarke try to rest again. “We were close to losing you sweetheart. Your body has been through a lot and it’s going to be a few weeks before you are 100% again. If Lexa had been just an hour later…” her voice trailed off and she pulled Clarke into an embrace. “I’m so thankful that you’re OK,” she stood back up and then pinned Clarke with a look “I’m so happy that we won’t even discuss what the hell you were thinking when you injected yourself. That we can discuss in a few weeks when you are healthy again.”

Clarke grinned sheepishly and then remembered what had led her to do it, “Well, I couldn’t let Bellamy do it, he’s going to be a dad!” She laughed at the look on her mom’s face and let her in on the secret.

“I will check in with Echo as soon as things settle down at the clinic. It will be nice to have a baby around.” She smiled and leaned back in her chair still holding Clarke’s hand. “Sleep now my daughter,” she insisted and when Clarke complied she closed her eyes and listened to Clarke’s breath deepen as she fell asleep.

Two weeks passed, the winter lost most of it’s bite, and the sun started to melt away some of the snow. The last of the sick had been healed and cleared to go home and the ones who had avoided becoming sick had been vaccinated against the disease. Lexa had been back in their house for a week but refused to sleep there and spent her nights in the cot next to Clarke’s bed. Today Clarke finally came home. Lexa walked hand in hand with her wife and they entered their home together in silence. Clarke looked around and took a deep breath. “Home. We’re home.” she sighed and moved into her wife’s arms. Lexa held her in a warm embrace until Clarke pulled back and spoke, “Lexa, I need to know why you have been up every morning practicing your swordplay even more than usual. You have also been sparring with your warriors more than I’ve ever seen. Is this about opening the mountain?” Clarke pinned her wife with her unexpected questions.

“You see many things for a woman who was supposed to be recovering in bed, my love.” Lexa teased.

“I am the wife of Heda. I know everything,” Clarke teased back, “now tell me.”
"You are right, it’s about the mountain. I don’t think any clan will break the alliance and declare war over it because they will all get the same medicine we did,” Lexa started. “I do expect that some who desire power will use this as an excuse to challenge me. That will mean a fight to the death, Clarke.” Lexa told her somberly. “So I am practicing to make sure I am in top form and that my spirit will stay where it is until we grow old together.” She smiled and pulled Clarke back into an embrace.

Clarke pulled back from Lexa’s arms and nudged her towards their bedroom. She still got tired easily and the walk from the camp to their house had drained her a little. She climbed into their bed and revelled in the softness and warmth of it. When Lexa joined her she wrapped herself in her arms and sighed happily.

Lexa was suddenly overwhelmed. Seeing Clarke in their bed was bringing everything home for her. It was over, Clarke was safe and she was here. Lexa pulled the blonde tight to her and her lips sought Clarke’s. They kissed slowly and Lexa rolled Clarke onto her back. She lay on top of Clarke but was careful to keep her full weight off of her in her weakened state. She kissed her softly, all lips and no tongue, soft, slow, and filled with reverence.

Clarke was enjoying the feeling of her wife’s lips on hers when she felt the first tears fall. They hit her cheeks and ran down her face to join the kiss. Clarke tasted the salt and kissed Lexa harder. Lexa moved her kiss to Clarke’s cheeks and then her chin, she kissed Clarke’s ears and her neck. She stopped to suck lightly at the nape of Clarke’s neck and the hollow at the base of her neck soon filled with Lexa’s hot salty tears.

Lexa didn’t speak, just wept and kissed her wife. When she was out of breath Clarke cupped her head in her hands and pulled her back to her lips. She kissed her lightly and whispered to her, “It’s OK, Lex. I’m right here. It’s OK. I’m not going anywhere baby. It’s OK.” Her words of reassurance filled Lexa’s ears and her heart, but still she wept. All of the stress and emotions and terror that she had held inside since the sickness began had finally caught up to her and she needed to feel Clarke’s body beneath hers, she was compelled to taste her skin and touch her bones, she needed to know she was real. Clarke felt Lexa’s need and gave herself freely. “It’s OK lover. Touch me. I need you too.”

“No, your mother said you are too weak for activity and need to rest.” Lexa argued and forced herself to stop.

“Yes, I’m weak, but I’m alive and I need you. I can feel how much you need me. Heal yourself darling, touch me and know I’m real. Take me slowly and gently. I won’t break,” Clarke promised her. Lexa searched Clarke’s eyes and found love and desire in them. She began to remove their clothes and once they were both naked she gazed at her wife. Clarke had lost more then ten pounds and her skin was pale and gaunt. Lexa wept again at the beauty of her lover’s body - the beauty of her being alive. Her tears spilled down Clarke’s shoulders and ran down her torso. Her tears marked Clarke’s body with salty trails of love. Lexa kissed Clarke’s shoulder and wept into it for a long time, like she couldn’t convince herself her love was here, alive, in their bed. She laid her head on Clarke’s chest and listened to her heartbeat and her tears drummed their own rhythm as they fell onto Clarke’s skin. Lexa was starting to lose control. Her weeping was becoming frenzied and she clutched at Clarke, terrified at the loss she almost suffered. She pressed her head into Clarke’s neck and then she began to bite down into her shoulder.

Clarke saw what was happening to her wife and she started talking to her, whispering lovingly as she stroked Lexa’s back with her hands, “I’m here baby. I’m real, I’m alive. I love you Lexa.” As Lexa began to bite her she steadied herself against the pain. She drew in a deep breath forcing herself not to show the pain as Lexa bit down harder into her shoulder. She continued talking to her wife helping her get through the panic that was gripping her.
Lexa cried more tears and bit harder. She had a terrible feeling that Clarke wasn’t really here and that she had lost her mind with grief. She had to know if her wife was real and so Lexa bit until she tasted coppery blood, as the skin gave and broke beneath her teeth.

Clarke exhaled sharply in pain and dug her fingers into Lexa’s back as she felt Lexa’s teeth break through her skin, but her voice remained steady as she reassured her, “I’m here, Lex. It’s really me. It’s OK.”

The taste of Clarke’s blood brought Lexa back to herself and she moved to look into her wife’s eyes and kissed her lips in apology, “I’m sorry Clarke, I hurt you didn’t I? I don’t know why I did that, I was scared that you weren’t real and I needed to taste your blood, warm and flowing, so that I could be sure.” Lexa blushed in shame and looked away from Clarke’s eyes.

“Yes it hurt, but I needed you to bite me too. I’m yours Lexa, I trust you. Tonight, take what you need.” Clarke kissed her wife with more passion then and felt fresh tears stain her face.

Lexa began her slow traverse of Clarke’s body. Her kisses and her tears covered every crease of skin, every joint, every bump. She licked the blood that had escaped the wound on Clarke’s shoulder and gently kissed the surrounding bruise. She returned to Clarke’s lips as she let her hand dip lower and find Clarke’s wetness waiting for her. Lexa looked into Clarke’s eyes and saw her own desire reflected there. Clarke nodded at her and smiled, “slow and gentle baby, I won’t break.”

Lexa let her finger slide into her wife then. She watched Clarke’s eyes as they rolled slightly back and then her eyelids opened and closed in a flurry. Clarke let out a deep sigh and sucked in a sharp inhale as she moaned out, “Yes, Lexa.”

Lexa’s touch was maddeningly slow and soft as she claimed her beautiful lover. Clarke felt a rush of lust and tried to deepen the contact and make her go faster, but Lexa kept it bridled and steady. She no longer wept as Clarke’s clenching walls distracted her from the anxiety of what had almost happened and grounded her in the reality of now. She was finally able to focus on the living, breathing, sweating, panting, woman in her arms. All of the ghosts she had been carrying left her and she gave her full attention to making love to Clarke.

“Please, Lex a little faster, baby,” Clarke pleaded with her but to no avail. Lexa’s fingers were slow, steady, and true. She stayed soft and gentle determined to bring Clarke to completion with a soft touch and without causing her to much exertion. Despite the slow pace, Lexa’s fingers were talented and they had memorized Clarke’s body. She touched her in just the right places and put just the right pressure on just the right spots, Clarke soon found herself lost in the touches.

Lexa was watching Clarke. She never wanted to let Clarke out of her sight again. She watched closely, studying the way Clarke reacted to her. She saw the blush of red travel up her chest and across her cheeks as her body temperature increased. She watched her bite her own bottom lip and groan aloud as Lexa’s finger brushed a certain spot particularly adeptly. She watched her head get thrown back bit by bit and her chest arch upward with the curve of her back. She watched her nipples strain against the skin that confined them and grow fat like dew on a morning flower, begging to be lapped up and savoured. So deep was her concentration that she saw all of these things happen as if in slow motion.

As deliciously slowly as Lexa’s fingers stroked inside of Clarke and as frustrating as the speed of Lexa’s thumb over her clit was, her aim was true and Clarke felt her core tighten as she drifted towards orgasm. Lexa continued to watch as Clarke approached the edge of her orgasm and her body began to tighten and coil starting from her stomach. She watched as the muscles began to flex and contract on their own, she watched Clarke’s eyes open wide and her mouth form an O as she reached her peak. She heard her own name fly from her lover’s lips and watched her eyes roll back
into her head and squeeze shut. She saw Clarke’s muscles all lose control and she saw the shaking and shivering of pleasure run through. She watched closely as the orgasm subsided leaving her curled up, her body turned towards Lexa’s, and glowing with a sheer layer of perspiration covering her skin. Lexa’s hand was still happily between her legs, her fingers refused to move from the throbbing flesh that held them tight, her eyes could see nothing that was not Clarke.

Lexa’s tears came again but they were of relief and happiness and Clarke kissed them away.

Chapter End Notes

Sorry this update took so long. I had to recover from last weeks episode and try to incorporate it into this chapter. I also had to brush up on my biology for this one. Thank you Wikipedia!
Lexa and Clarke try to move past the emotional repercussions of Clarke's illness.

Spring came and Clarke gained strength every day. She and Lexa walked in the forest and enjoyed watching as everything around them sprung to life. For Clarke, the changing seasons were still a wonder after a life spent in the sterility of the Ark. For Lexa, seeing spring through Clarke’s eyes made everything new again. Truthfully she mostly watched Clarke, as she was prone to burst into brilliant smiles and bubbly laughter at every new blossom, every tree bud that unfurled into a leaf, every bunny, chick, and duckling she saw.

Clarke felt Lexa’s eyes on her everywhere they went. Ever since Clarke had gotten sick Lexa had stayed by her side as much as she could, and whenever they were together she constantly watched Clarke. It was almost as if she was scared Clarke would disappear if she looked away. She didn’t mind though, as long as it made Lexa feel safe and didn’t interfere with either of their duties as leaders amongst their peoples, Clarke just didn’t mention it.

Lexa was also much more reserved and gentle with their lovemaking which, while Clarke appreciated where it was coming from, was starting to get on her nerves. Whenever she tried to escalate the passion and have more adventurous sex, Lexa told her that she was still weak and proceeded to love her slowly and gently. She flat out refused any sort of reciprocation telling Clarke she had to save her strength until she was 100% healthy. Abby had given her a clean bill of health a week ago and Clarke was getting frisky and frustrated. She needed a plan. So the next morning when Lexa was out training with her warriors she sought out Raven for advice.

“Hey, Raven.” She greeted her friend as she walked into her workstation. “You got a few minutes?”

“If you can get Jasper to give up some of the coffee he’s been working on, I’ll walk and talk with you.” She smiled and gestured to the door. Clarke laughed and nodded and the two women linked arms and walked back outside heading towards the gate. Jasper and Monty had set up a workspace of sorts just outside of Camp Jaha and they brewed many things there, coffee being one of their newest undertakings.

“Spill it Griffin,” Raven demanded with a grin, “what’s on your mind?”

“Lexa,” Clarke sighed, “she’s been acting strange since I got sick.”

“Strange how? Like you mean the way she follows you like a puppy and won’t let you out of her sight?” Raven arched her eyebrow and gave Clarke a knowing look.

“You noticed, huh?” Clarke replied sheepishly.

“noticed…? Are you kidding? Everyone has noticed.” Raven laughed. “No one can get any time alone with either of you these days; that is, unless Lexa is out training to get ready to fight to the death as everyone says she’ll have to when the spring meeting of the clans happens. She probably has a lot on her mind, including wondering what the hell her wife was thinking when she jabbed herself with a deadly needle.” Raven was still mad a Clarke for injecting herself with the ill fated
vaccine and wasn’t scared to show her.

“I know, I know. It was stupid. But who should I have let take it then, Raven? You? Wick? Bellamy, with a baby on the way? I did what I had to do OK?” Clarke was not one to lay down and take anything from her friend and made sure Raven knew it.

Raven sighed, “I know. It’s just… you’re…” she sighed again and mumbled, “you’re kind of important to me and, just don’t die, ok?”

Clarke pulled Raven closer to her and snuggled into her side as they walked along. She loved it when her friend let down her walls a little and admitted that she cared. “Don’t worry Raven, I won’t tell anyone that you have a heart.” Clarke winked at her and Raven curled her lip in feigned disgust before they both started laughing.

They arrived at Jasper and Monty’s and waved happily at Maya who was out front helping the boys set up a table for the morning coffee they brewed. There were a few others waiting around for the first pot and Raven and Clarke chatted with the boys and Maya as they waited. Once they each had a steaming cup of coffee in their hands and had said their goodbyes they turned and began to stroll back into Camp Jaha. They stopped along the way and sat on a bench someone had made from a couple of fallen trees.

“So what is it about Lexa that is bothering you? How she is constantly around you or how she won’t take her eyes off of you when she is around?” Raven laughed.

“Well, neither.” Clarke admitted sheepishly. “I expect she will naturally stop doing that and go back to normal as she realizes I’m not going to die. It’s the sex.” Clarke blushed and looked away from Raven. “She won’t let me touch her because she says I need my strength to get better, and when she touches me it’s always slow and gentle, too gentle.”

Raven looked at her friend with a smirk and a glint in her eye, “Well Clarke, I suggest that the next time you decide to inject yourself with untested and potentially fatal medicine, you consider the ramifications that action could have on your sex life before going ahead with it.”

“I’m serious Raven! I need help.” Clarke pouted and tugged on Raven’s arm.

“Fine, keep going.” Raven relented.

“Like I said, she is all about slow and gentle and making love.” Clarke sighed, “I sound like a complete asshole, don’t I? Complaining that my devoted wife is too gentle. And it’s not like we haven’t been doing it. We make love almost every night, and she’s amazing, I always have an orgasm. It’s just that before, she was always up for anything, the adventure was part of the excitement. Plus I’m dying to get my hands on her. She won’t let me touch her and it’s killing me. We used to have fun in bed, now it’s always so serious and devout. I know it’s just a part of how she’s dealing with everything that happened…”

“Everything that happened? Clarke, you almost died.” Raven reminded her. “Lexa spent weeks burning the dead bodies of her people, most of them children, and then her wife almost died. You need to talk to her about what happened. You need to tell her it’s ok to be apart for more than a couple of hours. You need to tell her that she doesn’t have to keep her watchful eye on you every second she can. She is obviously still dealing with a lot of anxiety and stress, Clarke. It’s all tied together. If you want your sex life to get back to normal you need to confront her on the rest of it too.” Raven surprised herself with her compassion for Lexa and the very adult sounding lecture she had just given her friend.
Clarke looked at Raven and blinked, letting the words settle into her brain, “You’re right. God, I haven’t even tried to talk to her about what it was like for her. I’m a terrible wife.” Clarke berated herself sighing and plunking her chin into her hands. She leaned her elbows on her knees and stared dejectedly at the ground. “What the hell is wrong with me? I’m more worried about my sex life than my wife’s mental health.” She looked at Raven again, “What do I do?”

“You two have a strong relationship, and such a bond, Clarke. Just talk to her.” Raven put her hand on her friend’s leg and squeezed. “You love her and she loves you. You’ll figure it out. Just remember how awful and stressful it was for us in the lab racing to find a cure. She was out there among the people, dealing with the death and the despair. At least we were working on treating it, we had a purpose. She was helpless, and she is not used to being helpless. And then you got sick. We weren’t sure you would make it, even after Octavia gave you the medicine from Maya. Lexa stayed next to you that whole night, Clarke. She took care of you and she whispered to you the whole time. She kept telling you how much she loved you, it was like poetry, Clarke. Her words were so filled with devotion…” Raven’s voice trailed off at the memory. She shook her head and focused on Clarke again, “Imagine how you’re going to feel if Lexa has to fight to the death to defend her decision to open the mountain.” Raven knew it was mean but she needed to make a point.

“I… Raven… she…” Clarke’s eyes filled with tears and her bottom lip trembled. Raven pulled her into a hug and was quick to reassure her.

“Easy cowgirl,” Raven liked that better than princess, “she’s going to be fine. No one will be stupid enough to challenge her and if they do, she’ll win. I just wanted you to think about this from her point of view. She almost lost you. That is definitely going to take some time to get over.”

Clarke nodded and started to brush away her tears when she heard a familiar voice behind her on the path, “Clarke? You’re crying, what’s wrong?” She turned to see Lexa giving Raven a dangerous glare, her jaw was twitching and she advanced menacingly. “Raven, what is happening here?” Her voice was a low growl.

Raven quickly stood and stepped back waving her hands to show she had nothing to do with the tears, the look on Lexa’s face at that moment scared her a bit but she was never one to back down, “Don’t look at me chief,” she said shaking her head, “I’m not the one who was out all morning practicing for a fight to the death.” She punctuated her sentence with a raised eyebrow as she met Lexa’s eyes.

Lexa stopped her advance and her face fell. She looked at the ground and could only say, “Oh.” She took a deep breath and forced herself to look at Raven again. The cool grey eyes of the Commander meeting the young woman’s fiery brown ones evenly. “My apologies, Raven. I should not have assumed it was you who upset my wife.” She bowed her head at the engineer who rolled her eyes at the two women and turned to leave.

“Sort it out you two…” she yelled to them over her shoulder as she walked away.

“Clarke, are you nervous about the challenges I might have to face?” Lexa turned and walked over to the bench. She knelt on one knee and grasped Clarke’s hand as she bent to try and catch Clarke’s eye. Clarke raised her head slightly and met her wife’s concerned gaze.

“Of course I am. How could I not be?” Clarke began with a sigh. “But it’s not just that, Lexa, we need to talk.”

“I’m not going to find this pleasant am I, Clarke?” Lexa surmised from the look on her wife’s face. “Very well. Where do you want to have this…. talk? Here, at home, shall we walk while we talk? I am due for a visit to the mountain to check on our people there. Would you like to come with me?
We can talk as we ride. I will order the guards to stay back and give us privacy.”

“Let’s do that. I would love to get out of the village for a while, and you haven’t let me go with you to the mountain since you opened it again.” Clarke decided, rising and pushing her feelings down and her tears away until they had more privacy.

“Our mother said you needed to rest…” Lexa began.

“My mom said I was fine a week ago, Lexa.” Clarke fixed her wife with a determined look, turned and strode off to get her horse ready.

Lexa smiled as she watched Clarke storm off in a huff. She knew what Clarke wanted to talk about, she knew she couldn’t keep trailing Clarke everywhere and watching her like a hawk. She was surprised Clarke had let her do it this long. One of the many things that Lexa loved about Clarke was her strength and her independence. She followed her wife thinking that she knew exactly how this talk would go. She was very wrong.

They enjoyed the first hour of the ride, Clarke relishing the spring breeze on her face and her first real freedom in weeks. Lexa pointed out some apple blossoms and a doe and her fawn in a field they were riding past. It should have been a nice, peaceful ride but it felt forced to both of them, the unspoken conversation hanging over their heads. Finally Lexa pulled her horse alongside Clarke’s close enough for their legs to touch and began, “Clarke, we are both avoiding what we know has to happen. Speak openly, I am your wife and I want to hear your thoughts.”

Clarke turned her head and captured Lexa’s eyes with her own. “Lexa, I haven’t said this yet and you haven't asked for it, but I want you to know that I am sorry.”

Lexa was caught off guard. She stared at Clarke with her mouth half open. She wanted to say she didn’t understand, but she did. She wanted to laugh and tell Clarke there was no need for any apology, but there was. She wanted to go back to pointing out flowers and deer and ignoring all the words that needed to be said, but she couldn’t. She looked at Clarke but did not speak. She didn’t dare open her mouth for fear of what terrible cry of anger, hurt, and terror would erupt from her soul. She nodded tersely at Clarke, just once. She swallowed hard and had to look away from her wife.

“I made a decision that had to be made. It was the right thing to do. You would have done the same thing in my position. You know that and you accept it. But I’m sorry, Lexa. I can’t imagine what you went through when you heard what I had done. What you felt when you realized that I had Wamplei,” Lexa flinched, “how long and terrible that night was while you held my hand not knowing if I would wake up the next morning or not.” Clarke reached out and touched her wife’s arm tentatively. She ran her hand along her forearm and followed it to Lexa’s hand, which was resting on the horn of her saddle. She laid her hand on top of Lexa’s and continued. “I know it hurt you and scared you and somewhere inside you must be angry with me. I need you to talk to me about that. We need to talk to each other about everything that happens. We need to be true and real with each other. Can you do that?” Clarke let the question rest in the air and was prepared to wait because she saw her wife struggling with her emotions and she knew Lexa hated to lose her composure. She was surprised when Lexa replied right away.

“Of course I can, Houmon. We are joined.” Lexa had grown accustomed to the sky words, ’wife' and 'married', but to her English still lacked the reverence she felt about her union with Clarke. She didn’t speak again for over a minute and Clarke let her sort her thoughts without rushing her. “I am angry. You had no right to put yourself in that kind of danger without even talking to me about it first. I had already decided to open the mountain. If you had told me what was happening I would have told you there was no need. We would have gone to the mountain with Maya and found the medicine without you having to get sick.” Lexa’s voice was hard and cold as she spoke, but her hand
had turned over and her fingers laced themselves with Clarke’s.

“I knew you’d open that mountain and I didn’t want to risk a war over it. I thought the medicine would work.” Clarke’s excuse sounded feeble even to her.

Lexa continued as if Clarke hadn’t spoken, “It might be true that it was the right decision, the only decision you could have made. If that is so then I would have stood by you while you made it. I would have held your hand as you injected yourself. I would have been there with you. Our union is sacred Clarke, except in times of war and battle, we cannot make such important decisions in haste without input from the other. Our lives are joined, and you almost took both of them without even talking to me about it.”

“Both of them…?” Clarke asked for clarification and Lexa looked surprised.

“It is acceptable among my people to follow a union into death if one so chooses. When your body burns on the pyre mine will burn too. You did not know this?”

“Lexa, no…. our people will still need you, even if I am gone.” Clarke was genuinely shocked to hear this.

“It is a personal choice Clarke. I hope your’s will be different. If my body burns first, I hope you will continue your fight. I would be nothing more than a shell without you to fill me with love and light. My people already know this and the spirit of the commander will come back to them,” Lexa dismissed her argument, “but this is not the conversation we are having now, love. You can fight with me about that another time.” Lexa allowed a smile at her wife and squeezed her hand.

“Of course.” Clarke sighed and thought about what Lexa had said. “You’re right. I accept your anger and I promise you I will try and do better. I am impatient and hotheaded and I make crazy decisions when I’m trying to protect the people I love. But you’re right, I should have radioed my mother and talked it through before I did anything else. And then I should have called for you, I should have done the whole thing differently. I was so caught up in Bell, and Octavia volunteering and Echo being pregnant, and the whole thing. I knew it was wrong when I did it, but I just wanted the decision to be made, I wanted it done.” Clarke admitted.

“I know. Bellamy told me what you said, ‘Tell Lexa, I’m sorry.’ I remember you before the battle with the mountain, so impatient, you couldn’t sit still and wait. It drove you crazy. I know you meant well Clarke. That is why I forgive you.” With that Lexa let go of the hot ball of anger that had been sitting her belly.

“Thank you.” Clarke’s voice was full of gratitude. “Can we talk about the challenges…” She felt herself shiver.

“I am prepared Clarke. I know it scares you to think about it, but I am not a stranger to these. There have been seven challengers so far.” Lexa turned her head to watch Clarke’s reaction to her words.

Clarke inhaled sharply and swallowed heavily. “Seven!? When?”

“The first was not long after I took command. One of Luna’s warriors tried to claim Costia as her own. To do that she challenged me. She was skilled and I was young and had far less experience. She challenged the elders, said the commander’s spirit did not live in me, that they had misread the signs. If she had been right she would have won. My skill in battle was far less than her’s and it was the spirit that guided my hand and moved my feet. With her dying breath she called me Heda, acknowledging that I am indeed the living body of Commander’s immortal soul.
The second challenge came not long after. A man from a far away clan, not of the alliance. He said women should not be rulers. He was much bigger than me, faster and stronger. But he was stupid and I killed him quickly.” Lexa watched Clarke’s face go from horrified, to proud, to worried. “Shall I continue, love?” She asked gently.

“No, I get it. You’ve done this before. But, is there no other way?” Clarke asked, her voice raw.

“At the spring gathering I will explain to all of the leaders why I opened the mountain. The last time we all met, after much discussion, I allowed a vote. It was decided to seal the mountain and never open it again. Some will be angry that I ignored this for my own clan’s gain. I will bring them to understanding. You and your mother will speak as well. Luna and four other leaders were against sealing it in the first place and there are two tribes that were hit by Wamplei very hard last year. They will be happy to get the medicine. I think the other leaders will agree quickly. But any who harbour desires to lead or to kill the alliance will see this as an opportunity to have their best warriors challenge me. I broke my word about the mountain and that allows a legal challenge. If I fall the new Commander will be young and have no experience in politics. The alliance will be in danger. Some want this and will seize the opportunity. I have been training hard Clarke. My mind, body, and soul have never been in better form. I will not lose, no matter the challenger.”

“Can more than one person challenge you?” Clarke asked fretting that multiple battles would wear her wife down and make her careless in battle.

“They will have one day to submit challenges. Many may challenge but only one will be chosen. I will only have to fight once, this time.” Lexa assured her.

“I hate the idea of this. But I accept it and I trust you. I know you will win. You are not allowed to die, Lexa.” She told her very seriously.

Lexa laughed and the sound was beautiful. “As you command, so shall I follow.” she murmured through a smile.

Clarke turned slightly in her saddle so she could watch Lexa’s reaction to her next words. “OK. So now let’s talk about sex.” Lexa almost fell off her horse and it was Clarke’s time to laugh.

“You have my attention, Clarke.” Lexa exclaimed, blushing ever so slightly at the unexpected comment.

“You have been really sweet while I recovered. I appreciate that you are still feeling anxious and overprotective. But I’m fine now. I love when you make love to me, but sometimes I want you to fuck me. Sometimes I want a little pain with my pleasure. And you have to stop telling me I need to save my strength so I shouldn’t be touching you. I want to, no, I need to touch you. And I need you to want me to touch you.” Clarke just let everything she was thinking spill out and Lexa listened intently. “Remember who we are Lex, we have sex everywhere, we try every position we can come up with, we play with each other, we push each other’s boundaries. That is us. Some nights sweet and soft and tender is us. Some nights hard and fast and rough is us. I miss feeling like an equal partner in our sex life. I’m not a pretty flower that you have to protect and nurture.”

“You are a pretty flower,” Lexa insisted letting her eyes travel down Clarke’s body and purposefully lingering on her crotch.

Clarke blushed and smiled happily, hearing Lexa’s playfulness for the first time since she had gotten sick. “Perhaps,” she quipped back to her wife, ”but be careful, I have thorns.” She winked at Lexa and let go of her hand as she nudged her horse to pick up speed and soon she was galloping down the path whooping with joy.
Lexa soon chased her down and after a good run they slowed back to a comfortable trot. “I’ll stop following you around so much, Clarke. And try to stop watching everything you do. It helped me get through my fear at first. Then it just became a habit I didn’t want to break. We need to get back to the way we were before this happened. I trust you and I know you are strong.”

“I kinda liked the way you watched me,” Clarke teased. “I didn’t want to rush you. I knew how scared you had been. But I think all of our friends and generals would feel better if we got back to normal.” Clarke laughed again.

“I believe you are correct.” Lexa agreed thinking specifically of Indra’s worried looks as she watched Lexa watch Clarke.

The rest of the trip was uneventful, except once when Clarke noticed Lexa whip her head around to the left and stare into the forest. Clarke couldn’t see anything unusual but she noticed that the guards had also closed rank and were much closer than before. When she started to ask Lexa about it she hushed her and held up her hand. They rode in tense silence for a while before Lexa looked over at Clarke. “I’m sorry, it’s nothing, I just thought I saw... no, don’t worry.” Lexa shook her head and dismissed the shadows she had seen. As they rode up to the entrance of the mountain Clarke wondered what had disturbed her wife and made a mental note to make her tell her later on.

Everything was going well at the mountain. Maya and Abby were there and had already found and manufactured several other useful medicines. Abby also insisted that she, Clarke, Jackson, and the Grounders spend time with Maya going through the entire database in the near future. They saw Wick and a team of Grounders who wanted to learn Sky engineering gathering some wires and other pieces of equipment and they were surprised to come across Bellamy and Echo. Most Grounders who had been prisoners there absolutely refused to enter the mountain. Bellamy had insisted she confront her fears and they had spent the morning walking through the entire place. Echo wasn’t as scared of the mountain as she had been and she told Lexa she was glad for it being open. “We should not bury what happened here, Heda. Let the mountain be open so everyone can come in and see the horrors. We must remember the blood that was spilt.” She bowed her head respectfully and Lexa reached out and grasped her forearm before letting her and Bellamy go. They were returning home and said their goodbyes, Lexa whispered something quietly to Echo in Trigedasleng and Echo’s eyes widened a bit before she schooled her features. She nodded tersely and then turned to go.

After a couple of hours checking on the people working in the mountain, Lexa told Clarke it was time to head home. They rode a steady pace on the way back. Lexa and her guards much more alert on the return trip. Clarke knew it was getting close to dusk and wild animals were hungrier in spring and more likely to attack so she didn’t distract Lexa with more talk. She felt tension coming form the guards and whenever she looked at Lexa she noticed the stern expression of the Commander firmly in place. They arrived without incident but once in camp she heard Lexa talking to her guards very seriously. She immediately went to Camp Jaha, Clarke in tow. She announced that no one was to travel to the mountain without a group of guards, and no one was to travel after dark, ever. She went to Raven and asked her to contact the mountain by radio. Abby answered the radio and said she would be heading back to camp soon.

Lexa grabbed the radio. “Abby you must stay there tonight, there is a pack of wolves stalking people along the path. We saw them briefly on the way to the mountain and on the way back they followed us the entire way. No one is allowed to travel after dark. It is much too dangerous.”

“Wolves!?” Abby exclaimed. “I will make sure everyone gets the message, Lexa. Thank you.”

Lexa thanked Raven for her help and turned to Clarke curious. “Did you know there were wolves in
the woods?” she asked.

“No.” She admitted, expecting a lecture. "And why didn't you tell me?"

“Way to go Clarke,” Raven teased, “Leda saves you from a horrible disease so you can get
ambushed by a pack of wolves.” She wanted to see what reaction mentioning the illness drew so she
could gauge whether or not the couple had talked things out.

Lexa’s small smirk and Clarke’s eye roll told her that things were much better between them. She
smiled and thanked Lexa for warning everyone. Wick was in the mountain too and had planned on
returning tonight. She was certainly glad he wouldn’t end up dinner for a hungry wolf.

Lexa nodded to Raven and turned back to Clarke. “Wolves are excellent hunters, Clarke. They are
silent and deadly. There is no shame in not seeing them. My people believe that wolves use fear to
help them hunt. If you knew they were there you would have been nervous and you might have
made a mistake. If you had fallen from your horse as we rode they would have attacked. To defend
yourself from wolves you have to learn how to hunt them. Learn how to not fear them. I went on my
first wolf hunt when I was 12.” Lexa laughed at the memory.

“How many did you kill,” Clarke asked exasperated, fulling expecting another story of her hunting
prowess.

“You know that scar on my back, on the right side, that covers from my mid-back to my bottom?”
Lexa grinned like a teenager.

“Yes…?” Clarke replied.

“I killed no wolves that day, and I had most of the skin torn off of my back. Anya saved me, killed
three full grown wolves that were beginning to tear me apart and then dragged me back to the
village. Nyko was still a healers second then, but he patched me up. From then on he was my healer.
I let only him stitch me back together. Until you…” Lexa smiled again.

“I can’t believe how proudly you tell the story of the day wolves almost ate you…” Raven shook her
head at Lexa’s laughter. “At least you two seem to be sort of normal again, thank god! So get out of
here and go have some hot sex will you.” Raven laughed at Clarke’s blush and Lexa joined her.

“Clarke, your friend has a point.” She tugged Clarke’s arm and led her out of the camp towards their
house.

When they got home they both found that they were too tired to really be in the mood. They laughed
at each other and were both so glad to be rid of the tension that had been between then since
Wamplei that they both fell into a deep peaceful sleep in each other’s arms.

Clarke woke in the morning and Lexa was gone. She knew she was out doing her morning training
but the thought didn’t fill her with as much dread as it had recently. She thought about the talk they
had had yesterday and smiled to herself. She didn’t have long to bask as Indra banged on their front
door.

“Skaikru,” that was her chosen designation for Clarke and some of the other Grounders had been
picking it up as well.

“Indra, Is everything ok?” she felt anxiety rise in her chest.
“Yes, Heda requests your presence in the war tent, right away!” She waited as Clarke quickly pulled on her jacket and boots.

“What’s wrong, why is Lexa in the war tent?” Clarke questioned even though she knew Indra wouldn’t answer.

Indra silently led her to the tent and stopped a few feet away. “She is inside. Only you are allowed to enter.” With that Indra turned and stalked away toward Octavia and a hunting party that Clarke assumed would be going after the wolves.

She took a deep breath, squared her shoulders and marched into the war tent expecting terrible news.

The tent flaps were all pulled tight and the interior was dark despite the growing light of morning in the sky. There were candles lit all around creating a warm glow and what Clarke saw washed in the soft glow of that candlelight stopped her heart. Lexa face was obscured by her war paint, her hair was twisted into the complex braids she always wore into battle. She sat proudly on her throne playing with her dagger the way she had the very first time Clarke had met her. She was completely, gloriously, naked.

“Sky Princess. You grace me with your presence, finally?” The voice was not the soft, loving voice of her wife, but the steel punishing voice of the Commander. Clarke was so shocked she could only nod, dumbstruck by the gorgeous body on display in front of her.

Lexa splayed her legs allowing Clarke a clear view of her pussy and then she spoke again. “Do your people always remain clothed when those around them are naked? On the ground that is considered bad manners.” She dug her dagger into the side of her throne and pinned Clarke with a lustful glare. “Disrobe, Princess.”

Clarke’s voice had yet to return so she again nodded and her face turned such a deep shade of red she was sure Lexa could feel the heat of her blush from across the room. She shucked her clothes with the speed of a horny teenage boy and stood in anxious excitement wondering what her wife had planned next.

“Better, much better. The Sky Princess pleases me. I think I will keep her.” Lexa snarled possessively as she pounced out of her chair and over to Clarke. She sauntered up to her and stood millimetres away but with the great control she exercised over each and every muscle in her body she never made contact with Clarke. Clarke shuddered with desire and she could already feel her wetness pooling and was sure it would be dripping down her naked thighs at any moment. Lexa sniffed the air and declared that she could smell Clarke’s arousal. “What is it that makes you so wet Sky Princess? Is it my body you crave?” She held her arms out to her sides and turned slowly letting Clarke get a good look at her firm ass, tight abs, pert breasts, and her scarred and tattooed skin.

“Yes, Heda. It is your body that I crave.” Clarke’s voice was husky and laden with desire.

Lexa arched an eyebrow, “A risky game, calling me Heda right now, don’t you think, Clarke?” She smiled a feral smile and looked like one of the wolves that had stalked them last night. “You want me to command you? Is that what you want, Sky Princess?” She stepped even closer to Clarke who was mesmerized by the beauty and power emanating from this sexy creature in front of her.

Clarke swallowed hard and licked her lips. She forced her voice to work. “Yes, Heda. Command me.” She felt a shiver of excitement and perhaps a tiny bit of fear rush though her spine.

Lexa looked satisfied at her answer and suddenly turned from her and strode over to the war table. She faced the table and placed her hands firmly on it’s hard surface. She spread her legs and she
arched her hips back and up exposing the pink opening of her cunt to Clarke. She turned her head and
looked back at the blonde who was unable to tear her eyes from Lexa and unable to move.

Clarke’s mouth was hanging open and her eyes were as wide as Lexa had ever seem them. She
grinned in satisfaction as she called her lover to her. “Sky Princess, I have a command for you. Are
you ready to serve Heda?”

Clarke gulped in air as she realized she had been holding her breath and she shivered in delight and
anticipation. She repeated her earlier answer, “Command me.” She could not believe how sexy Lexa
looked, standing back to her, legs spread, and ass in the air begging to be fucked.

Lexa licked her lips and wiggled her ass slightly as she bent over about 20 degrees allowing even
more access to her dripping sex. “Fuck me, Sky Princess. It’s been too long.”

That was all Clarke needed to hear and she strode across the room quickly, melting her body into
Lexa’s long, curved, spine she wrapped her arms around Lexa. She crashed her lips into the back of
Lexa’s neck and kissed her with bruising force. Her hands went immediately to Lexa’s gorgeous
breasts and they squeezed and pinched. She pressed her hips into Lexa’s ass as hard as she could and
then shifted and slipped her thigh in between Lexa’s spread legs. Lexa moaned loudly and wantonly
as Clarke’s thigh pressed against her. She rocked her hips up and down and left a trail of wetness on
Clarke’s thigh that was evidence of how ready Lexa was.

Clarke’s right hand let go of Lexa’s breast and slid down her muscled belly to her hips. She stopped
there to scratch and pinch a little more and then slid around Lexa’s side, over her hip bone, to find
the curve of her ass waiting. She slapped her ass suddenly and sharply and it made Lexa cry out.

“Sky Princess, I gave you an order.” Lexa growled in desire. “Fuck me, now.”

Clarke immediately slid her hand into Lexa’s wetness and through the folds of her pussy. She slid
three fingers into her wife meeting no resistance. Lexa was soaked and ready for penetration. As she
entered her Lexa raised her head to the sky and let out a shuddering moan. She called Clarke’s name
and repeated her command. “Fuck me, fuck me, fuck me…” she moaned over and over.

Clarke kissed and licked and bit Lexa’s back and shoulders and her left hand caressed and bothered
Lexa’s left nipple until Lexa twisted her hips around and pushed Clarke’s head toward her breast.
Clarke took the abused bud into her mouth softly sucking and soothing it. Her right hand was
following orders and slid in and out of the silky wetness between the Commander’s legs. She stroked
over the rough, spongy ridge she found inside Lexa’s cunt and she pulled her fingers almost out
before driving them back in again. Lexa’s hips were thrusting up to meet her and as she fucked her,
her moans were getting louder.

Clarke kissed back up to Lexa’s neck and bit lightly at her earlobe, she whispered into Lexa’s ear,
“Do you want more Commander?”

Lexa sucked in a breath and sighed, “Sky Princess, fill me up.”

Clarke added her fourth finger to Lexa’s soaking wet pussy. She cried out and dug her left nails into
the sensitive skin of Lexa’s breast. She couldn’t believe how amazing it felt to have all four of her
fingers curled inside of Lexa. She pushed herself in all the way until her thumb blocked any further
progress. She shuddered and moaned with pure lust.

Lexa had never felt so full. She was impaled on her lover’s hand and she was so turned on she
couldn’t think coherently. She felt Clarke’s intense reaction to being inside of her like that and it
fuelled her desire even higher. She rocked her hips encouraging Clarke to keep her rhythm going and
she found her voice again, “Yes, Princess. That’s it. Fill me up and fuck me.” She felt Clarke respond and start to swirl inside of her. “I want your left hand on my clit now, Princess.” Clarke’s hand slid down and Lexa felt Clarke shift behind her to give herself a better angle to fuck her from behind while she stroked her from the front.

When Clarke’s hand found it’s target Lexa burned with pleasure. Clarke’s four fingers had her in a kind of trance and the added stimulation put her over the edge into a new kind of desire. She wasn’t yet at orgasm but her cunt was thrumming with pleasure. She screamed Clarke’s name heedless to who might hear it.

Clarke felt like she was at worship, love spilled from her heart for this exquisite woman. She was fervent with her touches, she concentrated on the strokes of her right hand, the feel of her fingers inside of Lexa. How wet and soft and beautiful it felt. Her left hand knew Lexa’s clit by heart, by touch, by feel. Her finger’s knew how to draw moans and shudders from Lexa. Her efforts were rewarded when the Commander spoke again in a breathy, shaky voice, “Sky Princess, fuck me harder, and make me come.” Lexa was holding onto the power play knowing how much this was turning Clarke on.

“Oh fuck, baby. You are so sexy.” Clarke breathed into Lexa’s shoulder and bit down lightly as she picked up the pace of her right hand. Lexa was so wet her fingers slid easily in and out. Her fingers were curled up inside Lexa’s cunt and with every thrust Lexa gasped in pleasure. Clarke let her thumb find Lexa’s ass and enter her slightly as her left hand pressed harder onto Lexa’s clit. That did it. Lexa exploded in a writhing, screaming orgasm. Clarke held onto her and supported her weight as Lexa’s knees weakened when she came.

Clarke expected the powerful orgasm to have sated her wife and was looking forward to the soft kisses and words of adoration and love she usually got from her wife after Lexa came down from an orgasm. What she got was more of the sexy, stoic voice of the Commander. “Release me, Princess,” she commanded and when the shocked Clarke didn’t move Lexa flipped their positions and pressed Clarke against the war table, leaning forward and speaking in a whisper directly into Clarke’s ear. She watched as her breath brought goosebumps to Clarke’s flesh. “Clarke of the Sky Crew, if you do not follow orders, you will not get your reward.” Her thigh was between Clarke’s legs and she felt silky wetness cover her leg. “You are wet Princess, very, very wet.” Lexa reached her hand down and swiped her fingers once through the sensitive folds. She brought them to her own lips, which were only inches from Clarke’s face, and slowly licked Clarke’s juices from them. Clarke was so aroused she wanted to pounce on her wife and ravage her gorgeous body until neither of them could move. But Lexa’s power held her like she was hypnotized. She knew she would not move until she was commanded.

Lexa turned suddenly and walked away from Clarke eliciting a whimper from the almost painfully aroused woman. She strutted over to her throne purposefully swinging her hips as she walked letting Clarke enjoy the view. She lounged on her throne like a cat, stretching out, and licking her lips. She looked at Clarke and smiled showing her teeth. “Sky Princess, did you like fucking me?”

Clarke nodded, “Yes Heda. I love fucking you. Your pussy is my favourite place to be.”
Lexa looked at her wife’s sky blue eyes and smirked, “You didn’t think I would be sated with just one orgasm did you, Clarke? I have not had such pleasure in many weeks, I want more. Since your mouth speaks such pretty words, let us see if it has other talents, shall we, Princess?” Lexa slid her hips to the edge of her throne, leaned back, and threw her left leg up and over the arm of the chair, exposing her pussy completely. Clarke could see the glistening wetness and the slash of pink in the middle of her wife’s olive skin. “Serve Heda with your mouth, Sky Princess,” Lexa commanded.

Clarke’s heartbeat was thudding in her ears, her body wanted to run to Lexa and thrust her face into
the waiting delights. She restrained herself and upped her side of the game. “As you wish, Heda,” she replied and then sank down to her knees. She crawled across the floor of the tent on her hands and knees. Her muscled body swayed side to side, her full breasts bounced slightly, and she moved with a sexy, lithe grace that made Lexa’s breath catch in her throat. Her golden hair fell around her head like the mane of a lion and Lexa felt as if she was being stalked by a great, sleek cat; she wanted nothing more than for Clarke to catch her and sink her teeth into her.

Clarke crossed the tent as slowly as she could bear, and when she found her face perfectly aligned with Lexa’s wide open pussy she merely dipped her head and lapped at the juices she found waiting for her. She licked her like a cat drinking from a bowl and all the while her eyes never left Lexa’s. It was a challenge for power and as hot as Clarke’s earlier submission had been for her, Lexa loved her wife’s independent spirit and her strength was what made her sexy. Clarke’s small challenge stoked Lexa’s fires and her desire burned even hotter, but she would not lose this game yet, “Perhaps, the Sky Princess is too thirsty to obey?” Lexa had to use every bit of her remarkable self control to push Clarke’s face away from her pussy. She shifted, swung her leg over Clarke’s head and stood, walking away from the throne. Clarke hissed in frustration but remained on all fours in front of the throne. Lexa retrieved a cup and filled it with water. She walked slowly back toward Clarke with mischief in her eyes. Lexa stopped a fingers width from her wife and in one motion swung her leg back over Clarke’s head and sat down with her pussy so close that Clarke could have tasted her with one swipe of her tongue. “Drink Clarke, of the Sky People. Quench your thirst so you can concentrate on submitting to my will.” With that Lexa grabbed Clarke’s head and pushed her down so her mouth was in the perfect position to catch the water that she poured from the cup. It ran down her stomach and over her vulva and as she drank Clarke felt her thirst grow and deepen rather than be quenched.

“Heda, please let me taste you,” Clarke begged, conceding this round to Lexa.

Lexa smiled at her wife and leaned back to enjoy the spoils of victory. She draped her long, muscled leg over the arm of her throne and her pussy opened like a flower for Clarke’s hungry mouth. “Please me. Just your mouth Princess. No fingers for now.” Lexa felt Clarke’s mouth descend on her and begin to consume her wet flesh with such devotion it moved her. Clarke heard ‘oh’ and ‘yes’ breathed softly as she began her onslaught of kisses. She wanted to pull Lexa apart and make her bones shatter with ecstasy. She used her fingers to pull Lexa’s engorged labia apart and she ran her tongue from the source her wetness along her centre to her clit. She flicked the sensitive button and then drew it into her mouth sucking gently. Even lounged out on her throne Lexa’s back arched in response. Clarke smiled into her cunt and continued loving her wife with her talented mouth. She feathered light strokes of her tongue across Lexa’s clit and heard ‘mmmm,’ and a whispered, ‘fuck’.

Clarke inhaled the scent of her lover and felt dizzy, she wanted more. She slowly moved her head side to side opening Lexa further and then pushed her face deeper into Lexa’s pussy. She took her whole clit into her mouth and sucked gently then rolled her tongue over the sensitive tip. She backed off a bit releasing Lexa and then flattened her tongue and began firm, steady strokes using the entire rough surface of her tongue to draw pleasure from the Commander.

“Oh, yes! That is exactly what I want, Princess. Don’t stop.” Lexa sighed and brought her hands to rest on Clarke’s head, tangling her fingers in her hair and pressing down encouraging firmer contact. “That’s so good. So fucking good.” Lexa panted and her stomach began to coil. Her blood simmered and she felt her body start to tense. Clarke’s mouth was hot and the way she was licking her was bringing her close to the edge. She gasped for air and her fingers curled tighter around Clarke’s mane of hair. Her thighs squeezed Clarke’s head pinning her in place and she tilted her head back and moaned “My body is on fire Clarke, I’m close. Do you want me to come?”
The question caught Clarke off guard and her tongue had better things to do than answer, not that she could anyway with her head held in place by two strong thighs. She reached her hand up, sliding along the scarred and beautiful skin to find Lexa’s tit. She grabbed it roughly and squeezed hard in the way she knew her wife loved. Her tongue continued pressing into the wetness as it slid over Lexa’s clit and Clarke knew she had her on the brink. Just a few more strokes and she would come for Clarke.

She stroked once more and felt Lexa’s hips buck into her face. Again and Lexa’s grip on her hair became painful. Next one and Lexa was curling up flexing her abdominals involuntarily. It was the fourth stroke that broke the dam and flooded her face with Lexa’s essence and filled her ears with cries of, ‘mmmm yes, fuck, Clarke, I love you, fucking love you, Clarke…’

Clarke kept lapping at her clit until Lexa pulled her away by her hair. She leaned forward and captured Clarke’s lips into a deep kiss, savouring the taste of herself on Clarke’s tongue.

“Sky Princess, my Clarke. You did well. Are you ready for your reward.” Lexa recovered quickly as her insatiable desire spurred her forward, wanting to feel Clarke tremble as she came.

“Yes, Heda. My Lexa, I am ready. Please.” Clarke was past caring about the game they were playing, her need was so great she just wanted her wife’s hands on her body.

Lena stood and pulled Clarke with her to the bed that was in the back of the tent. She lay down on her back and looked at Clarke with a lascivious stare. “Climb on top of me, Princess. Bring me your sweetness and let me taste you.” Lexa loved it when Clarke straddled her face, the visual of being under her watching as she writhed in pleasure was something she found extremely titillating.

Clarke just wanted Lexa’s strong tongue on her clit no matter how it happened. She climbed on top of her wife and kissed her deeply before rising to sit on her stomach. She slowly worked her way up Lexa’s body giving the Commander a show as she shimmied into the position Lexa wanted. She hovered with her pussy just out of Lexa’s reach until she heard a growl come from the horny woman under her. Lexa grabbed Clarke’s hips and pulled her down onto her waiting tongue. In this position Clarke could control the pressure and as soon as she felt Lexa’s tongue slide over her clit she knew she wanted to come quick and hard. She pressed herself down onto Lexa’s mouth and felt Lexa smile into her cunt. Her tongue found it’s mark and she soon had Clarke shaking with desire. Lexa looked up at Clarke and saw a beautiful piece of art, her skin was glowing in the candlelight. Her back arched, pushing her hips down into Lexa’s hungry mouth, and she rolled her shoulders back causing her proud tits to jut out in front of her. Lexa’s hands roamed up to cup Clarke’s breasts lovingly as she worked on her clit bringing her closer to letting go. When she came Clarke threw her head back and Lexa watched in awe as the beauty arched, shook, and let the pleasure consume her.

Clarke collapsed on top of Lexa and looked through heavy lids at her wife. “Lex, baby. kiss me.” she begged needing closeness with her wife.

“As you command, my love.” Lexa answered and ran her tongue lightly over Clarke’s lower lip before covering Clarke’s mouth with her own. It was a tender, loving kiss and Lexa interrupted it to whisper to Clarke, “My love, your beauty stills my heart and calms my soul.” She kissed her again and then, “your passion lights me on fire, and your strong hands bring oceans from between my legs.” Another kiss, soft and sweet, “Your fingers have burned trails across my skin and I am branded by the fire of your touch. Do not ever doubt that I am yours, Clarke. Yours.”

Clarke stilled Lexa’s words with her kiss and let her hand rest on Lexa’s cheek, stroking her face gently.

They stayed like that holding each other, whispering lyrical professions of love and devotion until
they were disturbed by a sound from outside. They heard a triumphant war cry from a familiar voice as Octavia returned from the hunt with her first wolfskin.
Before the Fight

Chapter Summary

Lexa and Clarke sit through boring political meetings and try to steal time for themselves before the day arrives when Lexa must fight.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

There were whispers of discontent from the North even before the clans met for the annual spring summit. The meeting was to be held in the realm of the Horse People due south of Luna’s clan. It was good ground for Lexa, the leader of the Horse People agreed with Luna on almost everything, and had been one of the clans arguing to keep the mountain open from the beginning.

Lexa knew her people were firmly behind her and the Tree Clan had always been one of the dominate clans. She knew the reverence with which her people now beheld her and Clarke would win over many others. She also knew that there would be challengers and that at least one fight to the death was going to happen. She made sure she was as ready as she could be and she did her best to prepare Clarke for the day when she would step into the battle circle and fight.

One week before the summit began Lexa and Clarke, accompanied by a Grounder guard so large Clarke thought it unfathomable until they actually left, headed towards the Horse People’s capital of Sapeake. Lexa had told her that these people were Luna’s closest allies and that it was fortunate the summit was to take place on friendly soil. She had also told Clarke that they would once again be near the sea. She promised her a few days by the ocean after the summit was over.

Clarke had also prepared a delegation from the Sky People. Lexa had told her it was not necessary this time but Clarke encouraged her mother and Kane to choose a few essential people such as Raven and Bellamy and to join the meetings as official delegates. She had done this all without Lexa’s knowledge. She had known Lexa was preoccupied with the possibility of challenges from other clans and she had also wanted to ensure another vote in favour of Lexa if it came down to that. The Sky People could be the thirteenth entry into the alliance Lexa had forged and Clarke would use that to her advantage as much as she possibly could.

Lexa and Clarke’s entourage arrived in the city to a magnificent welcome. Hirrim, the leader of the Horse Clan was waiting with his wife, Ro, to greet them and lead them to their accommodations. Luna wasn’t far behind and pulled Clarke into a warm embrace as soon as she was close enough. They walked to a large, beautiful villa in the centre of the city and Hirrim informed Heda that it was hers to use for her delegation, and possible guests. They also provided two smaller villas next to the large one in order to accommodate the entire entourage that had accompanied the Commander in a display of her strength. The next day Abby’s delegation arrived with much less fanfare, but perhaps more purpose. Lexa was made aware of the Sky People’s arrival and instructed that they be shown to her Villa and given rooms there. She didn’t mention it to her wife, she was sure Clarke was aware of the arrival and she did not begrudge her wife the support of her people over what she expected to be a difficult two weeks.

Clarke had a couple of days to marvel over the city before the summit officially began. Ro was a gracious host and showed her and the other Sky People around and let them enjoy the beauty of
Sapeake. As soon as the other clans began to arrive it was all business. Clarke met with leaders from several clans with Hirrim and heard Luna speak about the importance of Lexa’s decision to reopen Mount Weather. Medicine had already been sent to other clans and those that had recently suffered from Wamplei were firmly on Lexa's side. Clarke was feeling confident that with the support of a few clans and once her mother spoke and reiterated the need for the scientific discoveries from the Mountain she hoped she would be able to avoid a challenge to the Commander. Little did she know that politics were never so simple.

Eleven of the twelve clans had arrived and settled in by the day before the meetings were to begin. Clarke and Lexa were walking back to their villa from a light lunch in the market when she overheard two of the guards excitedly mention something about iron and horses. Then she heard something about lake clan. She was intrigued because these guards never sounded excited about anything, in fact when walking anywhere while guarding the Commander they rarely spoke at all. She felt Lexa's hand tense in hers and thought they were probably going to get an earful when they got back. Despite knowing her wife would be unhappy with her addressing them as they walked through the crowded market, adding to their distracted state, her curiosity was piqued and she turned to them and asked. "What are you talking about? Iron horses?" The shock of Clarke having understood them showed clearly on their faces and they looked quickly to Heda for direction. Lexa just laughed and nodded to them that it was ok to answer.

"Clarke, of the Sky People." The guard addressed her formally bowing his head before continuing. "The Lake Clan has been spotted nearing Sapeake. They ride on iron horses. The noise will reach your ears soon." He nodded with confidence and then broke into a grin that made him look the young age Clarke often forgot he was. He was slightly older than Lexa and entirely too young to be so serious all the time. Clarke smiled back at him.

"Iron horses?" She questioned. He looked again at Lexa who offered no help and so he continued.

"I am sorry, I do not know the word in English." He furrowed his brow thinking of how to explain it to Clarke. "Before the bombs, the Lake People were known for building machines that moved people. They still build them, but much smaller and not as many. Only one or two people can ride on each, like a horse. Their leader always arrives on one." The man's eyes shone with excitement as he described it, "I have heard that it roars like a beast and moves faster than a horse on smooth ground. I have always wanted to see one." He confessed blushing slightly while dropping his eyes.

Clarke smiled at the boyish excitement the seasoned warrior was showing and the pondered the iron horse for a moment before her eyes lit up with excitement mirroring the guards, "A motorcycle!?" Lex, am I right? "Clarke almost never used Lexa's shortened name in front of other people but in her excitement she forgot about decorum. The guards snickered and Lexa merely raised an eyebrow and nodded to her excited wife. "Cool!" Clarke suddenly felt younger than her 20 years, which hadn't happened since falling to the ground. "She grabbed the very surprised guard's hand and pulled him along with her, "Lex, we're going to watch them enter camp, don't worry, I have a guard, I'm protected!" Lexa watched with wry amusement as her wife pulled one of her deadliest warriors along with her like a child leading a puppy. She looked at the other guard and he just shrugged and tried not to look too disappointed that he wasn't with them.

"Go, they are both distracted. Protect them." Lexa ordered barely concealing a smile.

"Sha, Heda." The guard nodded and hurried after his partner and Heda's love. He broke into a smile as he got closer to the two and Clarke giggled at him as he fell into step alongside them.

"Lexa sent you to look after us, huh?" Clarke guessed correctly. "Don't worry, you know she'll follow us too. You can enjoy the view with us." Clarke wasn't sure why the idea of motorcycles
filled her with such excitement and joy but she was happy to share this moment with two of the men who tirelessly guarded her wife and her by proxy. When they approached the edge of the village Clarke could hear the engines roaring, getting closer. She felt goosebumps erupt on her arm and her heart beat faster in her chest. A small crowd had gathered and Clarke was not surprised to see Hirrim and Ro joined by Luna, Rachel, and her wife. They stood at the entrance ready to welcome the last of the twelve clan leaders. Clarke smiled at Lexa and then turned back to look for a glimpse of the approaching clan.

When they finally rolled into sight the crowd drew a collective breath at the sexy power of the thrumming engines. There were six riders at the front of a larger entourage who traveled on horse. The bikes were black and shiny, they were built like picture's of Harley Davidson bikes that Clarke had seen in movies and pictures of the past. Clarke watched in awe as the bikes pulled up and glided to a halt in front of Hirrim. A tall, lithely muscular man dressed head to toe in black leather got off of the lead bike and removed a black scarf he had tied around his face. His skin was pale but his cheeks were flushed from the ride. Clarke noticed that he had sad eyes, like her wife, she thought. His hair was slicked back and he was undeniably handsome. He did not offer a smile to Hirrim, but only a solemn nod. When Lexa stepped forward to receive him Clarke watched as he stiffened and saw his hands clench into fists. He regained his composure quickly and greeted Heda formally. Another man stepped off of his bike and approached them. Clarke felt her two companions tense and she knew they had hands on their weapons. Clarke watched with interest as the new man also removed his dust mask to reveal a rugged, tanned face with sandy brown hair. He was also quite handsome and Clarke was even more intrigued when after he greeted Heda her wife turned, knowing exactly where to find her in the growing crowd, and motioned for her to come forward. Clarke moved forward, the crowd parting respectfully before her. The guards followed her, interest in the bike forgotten now, only thinking of their duty to protect Clarke and Heda. When she reached Lexa's side she was formally introduced, "This is the woman I am joined to, Clarke, Heda Kom Skaikru." The two men nodded formally to Clarke, the leader still not smiling, but the sandy haired man offered her a grin which she returned. "Houmon," Lexa used the term to show people their union was one of the heart not politics, "this is Cade, Leader of the Lake People." Lexa began introductions but was cut off by Cade.

"Steward, I am the Steward of the Lake Lands. I lead only until the true leader of my people is restored." His voice had a hard edge to it, like he was fighting a deep rage. Lexa corrected herself smoothly and continued.

"Cade, the Steward of the Lake Clan." Clarke looked directly at the man and smiled at him, she swore she saw his eyes soften a little. "And this is his husband, Dal." Lexa motioned to the other man and Clarke smiled at him also.

"It's very nice to meet you both." Clarke began. "And I love your bikes! I used to read about them on the Ark, my Dad always said if he had been born on the ground he would have ridden a Harley." Lexa looked at her wife, surprised, but quickly schooled her face into Heda's impenetrable mask. She thought Clarke's comment explained why she was so excited, and anxious to see the bikes.

"Cade and I are pleased to meet you Heda, Kom Skaikru." Dal bowed his head to her and Cade nodded stiffly.

"Please, call me Clarke." she offered.

"Clarke, thank you." Dal smiled.

"The Steward is a man of few words," he smiled as he glanced over at his husband and quirked an eyebrow, "but we are both pleased to meet you. We have heard the stories of the girl who fell from the sky, took down the mountain, and stole the heart of the great Trigedakru Heda. We would be
honoured to show you more of our bikes and perhaps even teach you to ride. But now we must tend to our people, horses, and bikes after a long ride. Heda, we beg your understanding but we prefer to dine in our rooms so we can prepare for the meetings that begin tomorrow.” Dal met Lexa's eyes and when Lexa nodded in acknowledgement he nodded back. They returned to their bikes and the engines roared to life. Clarke felt the vibrations through her body and clutched Lexa's arm giggling like a schoolgirl with a crush. Lexa was staring at Cage, a million thoughts racing through her mind, but as soon as Clarke began to giggle Lexa cleared her mind and just watched her wife's moment of excitement.

Once the summit officially began Clarke often found herself relegated to the status of first lady. People nodded gravely at her every word but disregarded her ideas quickly when they decided she had no actual clout. Clarke found that going to meetings with the Sky Kru delegation gave her more insight than the meetings she attended as Lexa’s wife. She found the entire process exhausting and when they retired in the evening it was all the couple could do to ignore the rest of the world and just be together.

Several days of political meetings had pushed the Commander’s patience to the limit. Lexa was ready to kill the next politician whose posturing caused already long meetings to become marathons. Clarke, equally frustrated, was ready to allow it. On the evening of the sixth day they found themselves at the head of a table of yet another formal dinner. “My mother has made many allies in the past few days.” Clarke regarded her wife steadily. “They all agree that opening the mountain was the right thing to do.”

“Indeed.” was Lexa’s stoic reply. She looked at Clarke and tried to smile for her, tried to give her hope.

“You still expect a challenge,” it was not a question.

“Yes, Clarke. There will be a fight. Do not place your hope in diplomacy. There will be blood.”

Lexa pressed her lips into a thin line as she looked into Clarke’s eyes and prepared her for the reality of the situation.

As if on cue Indra and Rachel approached Lexa. Clarke eyed them curiously and Lexa raised an eyebrow. “Heda,” Indra began, “Rachel has asked for an audience.” She seemed upset, unsettled, unsure of herself. Clarke and Lexa were equally curious as to what could have had this effect on the unflinching general.

“Heda, I ask your permission to act as your second.” Rachel respectfully began, “The leader of my clan and I agree that a challenge to you is a challenge to us all. Let me uphold your honour in the crowds and amongst the people. It would discourage a challenge.”

Lexa looked upon her former mentor and then her gaze shifted to Indra. “Thank you, Rachel. I am honoured by your request. But I already have a second. I have no doubt that she would defend my honour all the way to the gates of Hell, if the opportunity only presented itself. She has stood by me and my decisions through Costia, the Sky People, and Mount Weather. She will stand with me now; I have no doubts. Indra will remain my second.” She gazed upon Indra’s face and saw fierce pride take over from the unsettled look that had marred her expression. She burned with it. She nodded to Indra and then turned to Rachel and with a very serious tone added, “Should Indra and I both fall, I do ask for you to step in and defend my wife should anyone demand her as prize. Protect her and take her with you to live among Luna’s people.”

“Heda, I would never allow Clarke to be dishonoured. Luna would not stand for it, nor would I.” With a respectful bow to Lexa and one to Indra, Rachel turned to Clarke and spoke, “When the fighting begins please find Luna and go to her. I will protect you with my life. As will all of Luna’s
Clarke nodded to Rachel and spoke, “Thank you Rachel, but do not forget I am Clarke, Heda Skai Kru. I will be protected by the smartest, bravest warriors of Sky Kru. I will join Luna because of our sisterhood, not because I am in need of protection. I will bring the Sky delegation with me. My people are not weak, but peace and allies are important to us.” She spoke loudly for the next part, “I am also Houmon to the one Heda, the most fierce warriors of Trigedakru will protect me.” the nearby Tree Crew warriors grunted in agreement. None of them would allow Clarke to be harmed while life still flowed through their veins.

As Rachel and Indra left the two alone once more Lexa sighed and reached for her wife’s hand. “It will be over soon Clarke. I expect tomorrow to be the last day for talks.” Lexa squeezed Clarke’s hand.

“And then you fight?” Clarke’s blue eyes stung with tears but she fought to keep them from falling.

“And then I fight.” Lexa leaned forward and kissed each of Clarke’s eyelids feeling her stomach tie itself in knots over Clarke’s unshed tears.

As soon as Lexa deemed it acceptable to do so the couple excused themselves from the dinner table and walked hand in hand back towards their tent. Someone approached them and the guards who followed them tensed and moved to step in front of their Commander until Lexa’s raised hand stopped them. The King of the Ice Nation stopped in front of them and Lexa eyed him warily. She subtly let go of Clarke’s hand and gripped her dagger as she stepped forward slightly putting her body between the man and her wife. He bowed slightly and his smile was cold like his lands.

“Commander,” he spoke in English with a cruel sounding accent. Clarke shivered in revulsion at the sound of his voice. “Tomorrow my son arrives.” He let his eyes travel up and down Clarke’s body and she felt bile rise in her throat and she suddenly wanted to vomit. “She is very attractive, Commander. You chose well.” He laughed a thin, malicious laugh before Lexa stepped forward and shut him up.

“I chose well?” She repeated inches from the man’s face, her voice dripping with sarcasm. Although he towered over the thin girl she seemed ten feet tall and he stepped back from her nervously. “You have no idea, it was only with Clarke Griffin at my side that the mountain fell. She has turned reapers back into people. She returned husbands, sons, and fathers to all of the twelve clans and so she holds the love of the people. She is the true leader of the Sky People and she is my equal. She chose me.” Lexa heard gasps from the guards behind them and saw the Ice King’s eyes grow wide before he quickly turned from the angry Commander and retreated from their path.

“Lexa. What just happened?” Clarke was confused.

“He threatened you. Not directly but it was thinly veiled.” Lexa fumed.

“OK. And why did you say that I chose you? And why did those two freak out about it?” She asked gesturing good-naturedly at the two guards who looked as sheepish as their stoic expressions allowed.

Clarke’s questions brought Lexa out of her anger a little and she actually smiled. She shot the two guards a look and then looked back at her wife. “Houmon, being chosen by the Commander for a union is the biggest honour that my people can imagine. When I said that you chose me I was saying that you are above my station, that you had the right to choose me, and I the honour to accept.” Lexa looked at Clarke with such tenderness it took Clarke’s breath away.

“Lexa… I…” Clarke began but paused as her emotions welled up, “I chose you,” she smiled, “and
you chose me.” She leaned in and kissed her wife sweetly on the lips. Neither woman cared who saw them. The guards steadfastly searched the crowd for potential danger and tried not to smile at the display.

As they returned to their room in the Villa they shared with most of their delegation and the smaller Sky delegation as well. Lexa gave some terse directions to the guards in Trigedasleng before moving inside the room and shutting the door. “Think you are going to get lucky tonight, huh?” Clarke teased.

“What do you mean?” Lexa feigned innocence.

“You just told the guards that we were not to be disturbed unless a war broke out and to ignore any noises they heard coming from our room.” Clarke put her hands on her hips and gave her wife a knowing look.

Lexa’s face broke out into a beautiful smile. “Your Trigedasleng is improving, Clarke.” She moved over to tug Clarke’s hands off of her hips and into her own. She pulled her towards the bed and put on her best ‘come hither’ look.

Clarke couldn’t help but laugh at her ridiculous attempt to look sexy and promptly told her so, “Lex, stop trying so hard. You look so much sexier when you don’t try at all.” Clarke moved forward and captured Lexa’s bottom lip in her mouth. The mood was lighthearted and the two women tumbled onto the bed together laughing and kissing.

They soon had shucked off each others clothes and hands were roaming, caressing, pinching, touching. Lexa’s right hand was becoming very preoccupied with Clarke’s right breast and as she squeezed the pale white globe Clarke felt her smile through their kiss. Lexa broke away from Clarke’s lips and kissed down her neck, nibbling and sucking as she went. She kissed her way to the exquisite line of Clarke’s collarbone that she loved so much and traced it with her tongue. “I love this bone, Clarke, the line of it is so elegant and it pulls me apart with it’s loveliness.” Lexa whispered to her wife.

Clarke giggled, “That’s because your poor collarbones have both been broken so many times that they no longer form a nice straight line like they should.” Clarke grinned at her and Lexa ticked her in punishment and she laughed even harder.

“Not true, Clarke, I have seen many collarbones and none have had the effect on me that yours do.” Lexa unwittingly dug herself into a shallow grave. She felt Clarke tense and stopped her kisses immediately, “Darling? Are you alright?” She looked at Clarke and saw her wife looking at her with an arched eyebrow and a pout.

As Lexa tried to figure out what was wrong Clarke rolled them over flipping the surprised Lexa onto her back and pinning her arms above her head. Lexa looked up wide eyed and delighted at the turn of events. “Many collarbones? Exactly how many?” Clarke narrowed her eyes to show she meant business and Lexa laughed.

“In battle Clarke, I have seen many, in battle and training.” Lexa tried to escape her wife’s line of questioning.

“You so did not mean in battle. Why won’t you tell me how many people you have slept with? You always do some fancy talking and avoid the subject. Tell me.”

“Why do you want to know?” Lexa questioned.
“I’m asking the questions right now lover.” Clarke leaned down and kissed Lexa softly and sensuously. “Tell me and we can go back to what we were doing.”

“Clarke, I don’t think…” Lexa started but was cut off.

“I want to know how many people you have had sex with. Stop avoiding the question.” Clarke grabbed both of Lexa’s hands in her left one and continued holding them above Lexa’s head as her right hand trailed down to find a waiting breast and started swirling a delicious pattern around her nipple.

“Why do you say people? I have never bedded a man. You know that right?” Lexa asked trying to distract Clarke.

“I did not know for sure. I thought it was likely, but how could I know, you had never told me until just now. Kind of like I still don’t know how many women have enjoyed the pleasure of your touch, or had the taste of you on their tongues.” Clarke pinched Lexa’s nipple tightly to punctuate her last sentence.

Lexa groaned and arched up into Clarke’s touch. “No one has ever touched me the way you do.” She told her lover honestly. “Not my body, not my heart.” She watched Clarke’s face as she spoke the quiet, reverent words and was pleased to see a soft smile grace Clarke’s lips. “I have had many lovers Clarke. When I was young they were conquests to prove my prowess, as I became a seasoned warrior they were there to let passion quell my bloodlust after battles. Then I fell in love with Costia and there was only her. Later there were bodies to cling to, to avoid the nightmares of her death. As I hardened my heart I found some who were short distractions from the numbness I forced myself to feel. That was what filled my life before you fell from the sky and claimed me as yours. I do not know how many women I have fucked. I only know that now there is only one body that will have mine, one woman I will love, one scent that will mark my fingers, and tongue for the rest of my life.”

“Lexa, I swear you are a poet. Your words are my undoing.” Clarke let a single tear slide down her face and Lexa broke one of her hands free to catch it. Clarke leaned down and kissed her wife, satisfied with her answer. She broke the kiss and teased Lexa a little more. “Aren’t you going to ask me how many lovers I have had?” She gave a coquettish grin and batted her eyelashes at Lexa who growled.

“How many, Clarke.” she licked her lips, knowing the answer and feeling the knowledge sink into her skin and turn up the heat on her desire.

“One.” Clarke held up one finger and let it land on Lexa’s nose. She let her finger slide down the bridge of her nose and land on Lexa’s lips. “One woman has fucked me.” Lexa opened her mouth and sucked Clarke’s finger in, enveloping it with her tongue. “One knows the taste of my desire and the way my muscles clench when I come.” Lexa quirked her eyebrow and rocked her hips up where Clarke straddled her searching for friction. Clarke continued, “One face has travelled my thighs and found my centre, one tongue has wrung orgasm after orgasm from me, one woman has seen me shatter and explode in pleasure.” Clarke released Lexa’s hands and slowly slid her hands over Lexa’s upper body. She wanted to feel every inch of skin, soothe every scar and enflame every sensitive spot on Lexa’s body.

“Tell me more.” Lexa encouraged. “How many women have you fucked?”

Clarke’s eyes were dark blue, stormy with desire and she let her hands find Lexa’s breasts. “My hands have caressed one woman’s breasts, and my fingers have squeezed only her nipples.” She grinned as her hands mirrored her words and Lexa took deep breath and shuddered with desire.
She trailed her hand down over Lexa’s now clenched abs, “I have experience with only one clitoris. But I have studied her well and I believe I know how to make her dance.” Her hand slipped through the wetness between Lexa’s legs and made good on her words. Lexa’s back arched up off of the bed and a breathy moan escaped her lips.

“Clarke, that’s it. Make me dance” Lexa gasped as Clarke continued her swirling caresses.

“Do you want to know exactly how many women I have been inside of?” How many women’s wet, silky walls have squeezed around my fingers? How many women my hands have brought to orgasm?” Clarke had shimmied down to straddle Lexa’s left leg and she rocked her hips to grind herself into the toned thigh as she spoke. Her right hand slipped gently down to find Lexa’s opening and her left hand elicited sighs and shivers as it brushed gently over Lexa’s swollen clit.

“Yes, Clarke. I want to know. Tell me, show me. I need to know.” Lexa’s words tumbled out, needy, gasping. Her hips rocked up encouraging Clarke to enter her.

Clarke was bringing herself close to orgasm on Lexa’s thigh, touching Lexa always aroused her to the point of soaking wetness and the friction between her legs was too gratifying to ignore. “Lex, do you feel how wet I am on your leg, baby?” When Lexa grunted a yes she continued, “Touching you does this to me. Your body makes me so hot.” Clarke wanted to come, she leaned forward, planting her left hand on the bed, hovering over Lexa and letting her hair fall around her lover’s face. She leaned in for a kiss, her breathing was heavy. Her hips moved faster and her body was starting to shake. She looked at Lexa and saw pure lust reflected in her wife’s open mouthed gaze.

“Clarke, you are so fucking sexy.” Lexa tensed her thigh and pushed her leg up to increase the friction for Clarke’s frantic movements. She let her hands find Clarke’s hips and dug her fingers in as she held on while Clarke rode her thigh. She wasn’t expecting Clarke’s fingers to come back to life as her wife’s pleasure increased. It quickly pushed her to the edge along with Clarke.

It had been Clarke’s plan all along to sink her finger’s into her wife as she was just about to come. She knew the feeling of Lexa’s walls, wet and soft, around her fingers would push her over the edge. She was hoping it bring on an orgasm for Lexa as well but if it didn’t she knew she could quickly take care of her wife once her own need was sated.

Clarke timed it perfectly, she knew she was close and she pushed three fingers into Lexa’s waiting wetness. She immediately curled her fingers and thrusted upwards. That feeling, that soft, wet, beautiful feeling of being inside the woman she loved so much gave her that last nudge she needed, and she came. As Clarke came the vibrations and contractions going through her whole body were felt by Lexa through the fingers that were buried deep inside of her. Clarke felt Lexa tense and begin to shake beneath her and heard her name and some vulgar Trigedasleng fly from Lexa’s lips. The two women rocked against each other. High on need and pleasure. Somewhere in the pleasure, swearing, and shaking they found each other’s lips. Clarke collapsed down on top of Lexa and they kissed; lips hungry, bodies temporarily sated.

They kissed for a very long time and Clarke broke her lips away. “Will you fight tomorrow?” She was very serious now.

“No lover. I think it will be the day after tomorrow.” Lexa answered just as serious.

“Then let us make love all night tonight. Tomorrow night we will sleep so you can save your strength to fight, and live.” Clarke’s hand fell on top of Lexa’s and guided it to her own breast. “Please, baby. Soft and gentle tonight.” Lexa nodded and rolled Clarke onto her back.

“There is nothing in the world I would rather do, Houmon.” Lexa spoke quietly into Clarke’s ear as
she began to stroke her breasts gently running the palms of her hands over Clarke’s erect nipples. She trailed kisses down her neck and sucked on the spot where Clarke’s much loved clavicle met her sternum. She moved slowly but with great purpose, and her actions soon had Clarke riding yet another wave of desire.

“Lex, fuck. I need you to touch me. I’m on fire baby.” Clarke had asked for slow and gentle but as Lexa touched her she felt her need grow fierce and her pussy throbbed and ached for Lexa.

“I am touching you, love.” Lexa teased.

“Baby, don’t tease me. I need your fingers inside me and your mouth on my clit.” Clarke knew it turned Lexa on when she talked like that and she hoped that would be enough to spur her wife to compliance.

“Clarke…” Lexa groaned at her wife’s words and raised her head to look at her, “tonight I shall give you all that you ask for.” She looked into Clarke’s eyes as she spoke and then quickly dropped her mouth to Clarke’s skin and began to kiss her way down to where Clarke needed her.

She parted the folds of her lover’s vagina softly, like she was coaxing a flower to open it’s petals. She let herself enjoy the unique scent of her wife and then she lowered her mouth and drank in the sweet liquid she found pooled there. Her tongue explored Clarke’s labia and she sucked and nibbled the slippery lips. She dipped down further and pushed her tongue inside revelling in the taste. Lexa thought of peaches as her tongue slid over Clarke’s swollen pussy, she loved peaches, but not as much as she loved the taste of her wife.

Clarke was holding her breath, letting it out in shaky sighs, and then sucking air back in again only to hold it inside. Lexa was driving her mad. She was already gripping the blankets and her toes were curled. She wanted to beg for more pressure, for firmer contact. She wanted this sweet torture to continue. She couldn’t choose, so she let Lexa explore, tease, and draw her pleasure out.

Lexa felt her wife shiver in pleasure, she felt her stomach clench and she was aware of the way Clarke pushed her lower back into the bed to give herself leverage to thrust her hips up to meet the mouth that was pleasuring her. A quick glance up revealed the fingers she so loved clenched around the blankets, an open mouth drawing shuddering breaths, and eyes squeezed shut. This all told her that Clarke was very aroused and likely in need of something more than Lexa was giving her. She relented and abandoned her explorations. She moved quickly to capture Clarke’s clit with her tongue. The loud cry that broke from Clarke’s lips then make Lexa smile. Unbeknownst to the lovers it also brought giggles out of the hardened warriors that were guarding the door.

Lexa was a skilled lover. Her tongue rolled in sweet circles around Clarke’s clit, she paid attention to the cues from her love’s body, she knew when to back off and swirl around the outside of the sensitive area and when to pull back the hood of Clarke’s clit and let her tongue envelope the nub in the soft, passionate, wetness of her tongue. She knew when to bear down and provide more pressure and when to use feather touches. She also knew when to let her fingers join the mix of sensations. When the time was right and Clarke was so open to her she entered her. Two fingers, diving into the ocean of wetness, drew another loud cry from Clarke. Her hips bucked and in her passion she begged Lexa to fuck her. Lexa complied, she kept it slow but the pressure was intense as she slid her fingers deeper inside Clarke. She felt Clarke begin to unwind from the inside, she felt the flickering desire and the heat of lust build as her walls clenched rhythmically around her fingers. Lexa’s fingers rolled in circles inside of Clarke, hitting the right spot on every upward turn. She slid in and out and rolled again. Clarke was wet, open and perfect. Lexa loved being inside of her.

Clarke was in heaven. She knew that this woman between her legs was her happiness, her heart, her love. The feelings Lexa was drawing out of her were like colours to her; she saw a white heat of
pleasure, pink, like Lexa’s pussy, that was desire, and a deep red, blood red, was the love she felt for her wife. These colors mingled and crashed together in Clarke’s mind until her mind could think no longer. The pleasure took all coherent thought and tossed it aside. It was greedy and hungry and it consumed Clarke. Lexa had found a rhythm with her fingers and had returned her concentration to her mouth’s work, when her tongue once again covered Clarke’s clitoris and began to lick firmly, Clarke’s mind shut off.

Lexa felt her wife go limp for a second before her whole body tightened and coiled like a snake ready to strike. She felt the tightness in the muscles and heard the needy moans. She knew she almost had her and her tongue continued it’s firm caress. A few more strokes and Clarke’s abs jerked so hard it lifted her entire torso from the bed. Lexa’s eyes flicked upwards and watched as Clarke threw her head back and cried Lexa’s name over and over. Her thighs tightened around Lexa’s head and she shook in pleasure. The orgasm was so powerful Lexa had trouble holding on as Clarke shook and moaned. Lexa couldn’t control her smile, couldn’t control the heady feeling of conquest and power that washed over her. To make this beautiful woman come like that, to make this Princess of the Sky scream her name in pleasure, Lexa was sure it was the most impressive thing she had done with her life. She was sure it was the reason she existed. It made her burst with pride and arrogance.

“Tell me what I did to you Clarke?” Lexa was hot and bothered and wanted to hear from Clarke’s ruby lips what she had just accomplished. She was not disappointed.

“You ruined me,” Clarke gasped, smiling at her wife. “I can’t think, my mind is clouded with pleasure. When you do that to me I lose all of my senses one by one. The only thing I care about is your fingers, your mouth. Nothing else exists except you. My mouth will only speak your name and my heart will only beat to the rhythm of your fingers inside of me. Is this what you want to hear, my love? How in that moment I would swear that you own me, that my pleasure is not mine to feel but only yours to give? How Clarke of the Sky People would abandon her pride and beg you to touch her if you stopped?” Clarke knew how to play on the arrogance of her wife’s prowess and Lexa was growing more and more aroused as Clarke stroked her ego.

Lexa was stretched out lying on top of Clarke and when she shuddered in appreciation of the words her wife spoke Clarke slipped her hand between Lexa’s legs. Lexa drew in a gasp and raised her hips to give Clarke better access. Clarke whispered as her fingers began to draw lazy figure eights around Lexa’s vulva “Now, Lexa, tell me who owns you? Who can give you pleasure?” Clarke smiled a sexy, possessive smile and dipped into the wetness.

“Clarke,” Lexa’s voice was a growl of passion, “you. It’s you. Always you. Only you. Please.” She couldn’t articulate any more than that and she heard Clarke’s soft laughter at her ear.

“I love you Lexa. I love you all the way to the stars and back.” Clarke smiled and pulled Lexa to her for a kiss as she rolled her wife onto her back and let her fingers play across Lexa’s sex.

She soon had Lexa arching her back, breasts jutting up into the air. Her head was tilted exposing her graceful neck to Clarke’s teeth. Clarke nibbled on her neck, kissed her crooked collarbones and licked the sweat that pooled in the hollow of her neck. Her fingers were enjoying the tightness of Lexa’s pussy, dipping and out, swirling over the sensitive spot they found inside of her. Then they would pull out, slide up to find a waiting cltit, fully erect and bursting out from under it’s hood. She wanted to make this last. She wanted to tease her wife. She flicked her fingers across and played for a while, never establishing any real rhythm before abruptly moving to tease and pinch a nipple, then to scratch a thigh, slap her ass. Eventually they would once more find themselves sliding into the lovely wetness of Lexa’s vagina. She would add a finger, take one away, push inside and swirl her wrist, then pump in and out. She let her thumb slide up and provide some friction for Lexa’s cltit but again kept her from that final build towards orgasm.
Lexa was frustrated, but deliciously so. She made whimpering noises every time Clarke’s hand left her pussy. She tried to arch her back and thrust her hips just so to capture the most pressure and friction she could, but Clarke was too good. She knew just how to play Lexa’s body and she knew that as much as Lexa wanted more she loved the slow torture of waiting. Clarke played her like an instrument and Lexa sang for her.

Lexa began speaking, but she didn’t realize it, she was half begging, half exalting. “Clarke,” it was no more than a whisper but it made Clarke’s arms break into goosebumps and her pussy tingle. “I love what you are doing to me. Your fingers on me, playing me. I am so hot right now. I want to come.” Clarke had Lexa’s clit squeezed between two fingers rolling it. “Please baby. Oh. Fuck. Clarke. Just like that, yes. Lover.” She had flattened her hand and began a steady movement over Lexa’s clit, firm pressure and quick strokes. “No… baby don’t stop.” Clarke grinned at the weakness in Lexa’s voice as she let go of her clit and once again palmed Lexa’s breast. “Oh, Clarke. You are so good at fucking me. You lit me on fire and I need you.” The begging made Clarke shudder. The Commander of thirteen clans was begging her to fuck her. Clarke thought she might lose control and come if Lexa kept talking like this so she slid her body up and swallowed the litany into her kiss. She rewarded Lexa with three fingers sliding slowly into her pussy and Lexa’s body clenched and shook. When Clarke broke the kiss Lexa continued.

“Come back,” Lexa’s voice broke over the words as Clarke slid out of her and moved to caress her hip. “Lover please.” she begged again and Clarke moved her hand very slowly towards her clit. “Yes, that’s where I want you. Burn my flesh with your hands Clarke, make me come. Please.” Lexa’s ardent plea for satisfaction moved Clarke and she felt a sudden determination to make Lexa explode in pleasure. She forgot how she had wanted to tease and excite the woman, she only cared for Lexa’s pleasure and her hand slid into position. “YES! yes, yes, Clarke. Your hand on my clit is heaven. Heaven is you, Clarke.” Clarke knew Lexa was close. She just needed a rhythm to bring her home. Clarke quickly and gently began to slide her fingers through the wetness over Lexa’s clit she pressed down with the perfect amount of pressure and felt Lexa arch up into her touch. Each stroke brought forth new praises and words from Lexa. “Don’t stop. Clarke. Fuck. Fuck. I’m close. It’s so good. Please don’t stop. Fuck. Yes. Don’t you dare stop Clarke,” This brought a smile to Clarke’s lips and she increased the pressure in answer. “Ahhh. Oh. Yes. My love. A little more. I’m so close. Fuck you feel good.” Lexa suddenly stopped talking and drew in a sharp breath. Her body coiled and then the tension broke. Clarke felt her wife’s release and it took her breath away. Lexa shook and dug her fingers into Clarke’s back. She moaned incoherently but Clarke thought she heard her name in the cries of pleasure. As she came back down from the heights of orgasm she pulled Clarke’s hands away from her now too sensitive clit and she snuggled closer to her wife. Clarke was sprinkling soft kisses over her face and neck and telling her how beautiful she was, how much she loved her. Lexa sighed happily and when she was sure her voice would hold she admonished Clarke, “You’re terrible. Such a tease. I was in agony.” Her tone was teasing even as she tried to sound wounded.

“Agony, was it? Is that what you’re calling it these days?” Clarke giggled and placed more kisses on her wife’s body. “I love you Lexa. I love watching your body when I touch you. I love making you come.” Clarke smiled at her wife.

“You did. And it was wonderful. Please don’t torture me like that every time but sometimes… sometimes it’s amazing.” Lexa sighed happily and looked at Clarke. “Are you satisfied, love? I know fucking me often gets you ready to go again. May I?” Lexa asked the soft question as she started to slide her hand down Clarke’s body. Clarke laughed and stopped her hand.

“Not so fast tiger. Fucking me would get you ready to go again and then I’d fuck you and be ready
to go again…. It’s an unending cycle Lex.” Clarke giggled and snuggled as far into her wife’s embrace as she could. “I’m not opposed, I just think you should be aware of the consequences lover.” Both women laughed again.

“You did say tonight we’d make love all night, Clarke. That set certain expectations.” Lexa quirked her eyebrow and tried her best to look serious. She moved in and slowly began to kiss Clarke. Her hands began to move over Clarke’s skin and she felt desire well up inside her again. Clarke moaned and pressed her body closer to Lexa, and Lexa knew morning would come too soon.

The guards outside of the room blushed and giggled several more times that night. They marvelled at the stamina of the two women and as the sun rose one of them slipped off to find the Sky Delegation to see if they had brought the coffee drink Clarke often dramatically claimed to need on mornings when she didn’t get enough sleep. They figured both women would need to drink a LOT of it today.

Chapter End Notes

Just a quick, fun chapter before things get serious.

I am deep into writing the next chapter and a few things had to be added to this one. Now that the update on this chapter is complete I hope to have Chapter 13 ready very soon!

Thank you for your patience.
Clarke and Lexa had fallen asleep just before sunrise. The guard had procured coffee for them from Abby and Kane. He tried not to explain why he thought the Commander would need it saying instead that Heda and Klark Kom Skykru had been awake all night discussing battle strategies. Abby however, had walked past their room on her way to her own and heard enough to let her know what the couple had been up to all night. Kane laughed as Abby fussed around preparing the coffee and lecturing the lovers even though they were not there to be chastised, “What is wrong with those two? Today is the most important day of the talks. It’s the day the council decides if it will allow challenges or not. They need to be alert! And what do they do? They spend the entire night… ugh… Clarke should know better! And Lexa, she should save her strength. Those two… ugh”

As the guard took the coffee from them and quickly made his exit Kane reached out and pulled Abby into an embrace. The two had become much closer since arriving on the ground and he knew she was worried about her daughter-in-law. He saw how Lexa’s tender reverence for her daughter won her over again and again. She cared very much for Lexa and was a nervous wreck hiding behind the stern mask of the Chancellor. “She’ll be fine, Abby. You’ve seen her fight. Not even her own warriors can defeat her, and everyone says Tree warriors are the most fierce in battle. Her love for Clarke makes her strong and the people are firmly behind her, behind them. They are young and their passion is too strong to spend a night worrying about tomorrow.” He laughed and patted her on the shoulder. “Now will you please accompany me to breakfast?”

Abby nodded and pulled herself together. She knew Clarke would need her strength today, she would need all of her friends. Raven, a very pregnant Echo, Bellamy, and Octavia were all at breakfast and Abby asked about Lincoln’s absence. “He is checking on something for Indra,” was all Octavia would say but she looked worried.

“Clarke will need us today. Make sure one of us is always with her.” Abby spoke quietly. “There will decisions made and things said about Lexa that won’t be nice.”

“Not to mention if challenges are allowed there will be a ceremony where all who wish to challenge Heda will have a chance to speak to the council.” Octavia added. “Indra has assigned me to be Clarke’s shadow today. She will be Heda’s. Neither of them will be alone for even a second. Trigedakru are on high alert. Remember the last time the Ice Nation tried to get to Heda they went through Costia.” Octavia looked grim.

“Who is Costia?” Abby asked and Octavia’s eyes widened.

“You didn’t know…? Shit.” Octavia tried to get up and leave but Bellamy’s hand made her sit. “I can’t. Lexa will skin me alive.” She pleaded.

“I got this,” Raven interrupted, “Costia was Lexa’s lover. The Ice Nation kidnapped her. They
tortured her and cut off her head. Then they sent her head to Lexa in a basket. Lexa killed their Queen but realized how many of her warriors would die in a war and so she buried her feelings and brokered peace with the new king and eventually they joined the alliance.” Raven paused, "That's why she was all like 'Love is Weakness, Clarke' in the beginning.”

“Oh God.” Abby looked horrified.

“I will be with her every second of the day. I won’t even let her go pee without me. I swear Abby. I will protect Clarke.” Octavia stood and squeezed her brother’s shoulder. “The rest of you keep your eyes open. Indra thinks the Ice Nation, and a couple of others are up to no good. Something is afoot.” She looked directly at Bellamy, “Keep your wife at your side Bell.” She smiled at Echo. “She is smart and fine warrior, her instincts are way better than yours so if at any time she feels like something is wrong listen to her and take action immediately. Trigedakru will back you up. Even if they aren’t so happy about a Sky man knocking up one of their warriors.” She teased the couple and ruffled her brother’s hair before stepping away from the table. “I have to go now. Indra has said it’s my job to wake the lovebirds. Thank God you gave them coffee or Heda would probably kill me as soon as I entered the room.” She laughed as she walked away.

As she approached the room she spoke to the guards in Trigedasleng and they looked relieved that they weren’t going to have to be the ones to wake Heda. They handed over the coffee and stood aside for Octavia. She entered the room silently and took a step forward. In the early morning light the two women looked so peaceful tangled in each others bodies as they slept that Octavia smiled a tender smile at them. She prayed silently to all of the Gods and Goddesses she had read about while she was under the floor of her mother’s room in the Ark, she asked them to let these two live, let their love guide the nations they led. She shook her head to clear the sentiment and loudly cleared her throat. “Heda, Clarke. It’s me, Octavia. You have to wake up. The meetings start soon.”

Lexa woke first, Octavia saw the change in her breathing and saw her very lethal body tense about to spring into action. As Octavia spoke she saw with relief that Lexa relaxed again and so she continued trying to appeal to Clarke to get out of bed, “Clarke, I’ve got coffee!” She tried to sound cheerful but she really wanted to be anywhere but standing here trying not to stare at her naked friend and her naked Commander.

“Coffee…” Clarke’s voice was huskier than normal. She still refused to move from Lexa’s arms but her head did perk up a bit at the mention of the magic liquid.

Octavia unscrewed the thermos Abby had given her and let the aroma waft into the air. “Yeah, coffee. The good stuff, from your mom.”

‘The Chancellors coffee?” Lexa perked up. She had developed an affinity for the sky drink but complained to Clarke that only Abby made it right. She said Monty and Jasper didn’t have the refined taste buds that her mother-in-law did, and she refused to drink it unless Abby had made it.

“Mom’s coffee.” Clarke smiled and placed a kiss on Lexa’s neck, where her head was buried.

“Hey! Don’t start that or I’m taking the coffee and running!” Octavia protested. “Come on Clarke. Indra will be pissed at me if you two are late. She made it my task to make sure you are on time.”

Lexa laughed, “Octavia Kom Trigedakru, my general enjoys yelling at you. That is why she gives you the most impossible tasks. But I will endeavour to speed my wife along so you won’t be in too much trouble. Lexa untangled herself from Clarke and got out of bed. She was still very naked and Octavia noticed several scratches and hickey on her body from last night’s love making. She blushed and dropped her eyes as Lexa approached her and took the coffee thermos from her. “Thank you Octavia. You may go.” Lexa dismissed her and Clarke opened one sleepy eye to see her friend’s
flushed face as she turned to go.

“Lex,” she laughed, “Sky People are shy, you should put on clothes, or wrap yourself in a blanket before you go parading around in front of one of us. You embarrassed Octavia.”

“Octavia is Trigedakru. It is an honour for her to have seen the Commander naked.” Lexa shot back.

Octavia heard this and as she reached the door she turned, her face was back into an unreadable expression, “Mochof, Heda.” She bowed at her Commander and then grinned at Clarke, pride showing through her stoicism “I'm your shadow today Griffin. I'll wait outside for you.”

Clarke stretched and rolled about on the bed for a few minutes and Lexa took a seat and poured herself a cup of coffee. She watched her wife as she yawned, stretched her legs and arms, and ran her fingers through her hair. She was happy. She wanted to remember this moment right here. She knew the rest of the day would be difficult. She wanted to stay here with Clarke, but the world was not that kind. She sighed and Clarke looked at her with concern. “The day already wears on you?” She asked.

“I was just thinking how I want to stay here with you all day.” Lexa answered and then she spotted deep scratches on Clarke’s back from last night’s passion and she chuckled, thinking suddenly that the world had been plenty kind to her. “Come here, Houmon. You have made me injure you again.” Lexa and Clarke had both had their share of scratches, bruises, and even an occasional sprain to show for their sex life. Clarke could manage to tend to Lexa’s injuries well enough, being almost a fully trained doctor. Lexa had little skill as a healer but after the third time Clarke had to embarrassingly ask her mother to clean and wrap particularly deep bite marks or scratches Lexa had Nyko teach her. She didn’t like the way Abby looked at her after Clarke’s visits to the clinic and since then had always carried a small jar of ointment, and alcohol to clean wounds with.

“I made you injure me?” Clarke admonished. “How is it my fault that you shredded my back?” She loved to tease Lexa about her sex injuries, just to hear her admit how Clarke had made her lose control the night before.

“I can not be held responsible.” Lexa insisted as she began to lovingly clean the scratches. Clarke hissed in pain at the sting of the alcohol. “Hold still, Clarke. This does not hurt.” Lexa frowned at her wife although she found her adorable. She leaned in and kissed her. “I am sorry though. You know I never mean to hurt you. Your hands did terrible things to the poor Commander and I lost my mind with pleasure. Let me put the ointment on it, it will soothe the sting.”

Clarke let Lexa take care of her back and she poured herself a cup of coffee. “I know you didn’t mean to hurt me love. I was teasing you. They are scratches from my wife. She's the Commander you know. I wear them proudly. Perhaps I will go shirtless to the meetings today so everyone can see them.” Clarke enjoyed the banter between the two of them in the mornings more than most other things. She laughed when Lexa’s eyes widened at the thought of her wife topless at the summit.

“Sky Princess. Your people are shy and modest. I am certain you would not go topless to the summit. Can you be so sure about me?” Lexa threatened displaying a deep bruise on her shoulder where Clarke had bit her particularly hard last night. “Perhaps I’ll stop by the Sky Chancellor’s table first? I’m sure your mother would be pleased to see that her daughter has strong, healthy teeth.” Lexa laughed as Clarke blushed and punched her lightly on the shoulder.

“You’re terrible, Lexa” Clarke smiled and kissed her. “Do we really have to go? Can’t we run away to the sea and make love on a beach?” Clarke was starting to feel her chest tighten and the responsibilities of their situation settle back onto her shoulders. She knew today would be stressful, and potentially dangerous. She knew both of them would once again be targets for their enemies.
“If that is what you want let us flee the city now. But we could never come back love.” Lexa held Clarke’s eyes and leaned in to rest her forehead against the blonde’s.

“You would do that for me?” Clarke asked, breathless. Knowing she would never ask that of Lexa but overwhelmed by the idea that Lexa would walk away from everything she had ever known for her.

“Of course, love. I would give up everything for you. But I don’t know how you would survive without your coffee? You’d better consider that before you make your final decision.” Lexa teased her wife and kissed her again before rising to start getting dressed.

“Well, for coffee I guess we’d better stay,” Clarke laughed and began to brush her hair, “will you braid my hair today, Lex?” she asked quietly, “like yours.”

Lexa solemnly nodded and slid in behind her wife to begin. When she finished she did her own braids and then she began to put her armour on. She hadn’t worn her full armour to the meetings the previous days, but today she would be Heda, commander of all, fearless and awe inspiring. Watching her put on her armour now made Clarke feel proud but also sick to her stomach. She forced the queasy feeling down and pulled her own mask on. Stone-faced, she reached for the jar of warpaint and turned to begin painting the Commander’s face. When she was done Lexa took the paint and to Clarke’s surprise she began to apply it to her face as well. “Clarke, Heda Kom Skaikru, you are a warrior. Today, you will present yourself as one. Do not ask or beseech anything of anyone during the meetings. You are a natural leader, people will follow you.” When Lexa had finished painting her face Clarke stood and pulled on her clothes. She chose black leathers, much like Lexa’s, and a black jacket. She strapped her pistol to her waist where everyone could see it, and she pulled on her boots. Lexa looked on approvingly at the fierce profile of her wife.

When they were done they embraced and then Lexa stepped back from her wife and took a deep breath. She looked so powerful and determined it took Clarke’s breath away. She didn’t realize that she also looked like force to be reckoned with. The two of them together were enough to drop the guards and Octavia to their knees as they exited the room. “Heda, Heda Kom Skaikru,” the guards murmured and Octavia just bowed her head in awe. Lexa motioned for them to stand and they headed toward the meetings. As they strode through the city people stopped and knelt calling out praises to Heda. The two women cut such a strong, commanding profile that the people who saw them that morning would tell stories for years to come of how they were there on that morning and they saw the legends as they strode toward a day that would go down in history.

When they arrived at the building where the meeting would be held Bellamy and Echo were outside. Echo bowed her head and utter a respectful, “Heda”. Bellamy whistled at Clarke and winked. Octavia, who had been within an arms reach of Clarke the entire way, was joined by Indra who took up a similar position behind Lexa.

“Echo, you and Bellamy will patrol the streets around the building. Stay together, try to look like you are just a couple enjoying the day. There are many things happening that we do not know enough about. Find ten other warriors and give them the same task. They report to you. Do what needs to be done to secure the city.” The Commander spoke in a low voice so as not to be overheard by others and Echo immediately bowed and took Bellamy’s hand leading him away. “Octavia, protect Clarke.” Lexa turned to look into the warriors eyes and satisfied at what she saw there she turned to Indra. “Indra, I know you have assigned yourself to guard my back today.” Indra nodded. “I will not order you away, but I would rather see you organizing and delegating the men. You know there is more going on here than it appears. My back will not be in danger today. Those who would see me fall want the entire city to see it during a challenge. I need my best general getting to the bottom of what is happening, and preparing counter measures for the enemy’s plans.” Lexa looked steadily at
Indra smiled proudly, “Heda, while you were… indisposed last night,” she looked pointedly at Clarke whose blush showed even through her warpaint, “Rachel and I met in secret. She has had Luna’s warriors and the guards of the host city spying and gathering information since the summit began. Since we have been doing the same we shared what we both had discovered and we are quite certain we know what the plot is. I will brief you during the first break. Rachel is perfectly capable of handling things, I have already ordered Trigedakru to follow her orders. I will be at your back, as my second will be at Clarke’s.” Indra was firm and Lexa nodded in agreement.

Finally she turned to her wife, “Clarke, I haven’t told you everything. I didn’t want to alarm you until I had more information. Time is up so I will tell you a little now. We have every indication that the Ice Nation and at least two of their bordering clans, York and Lake, are going to make a grab for power.”

Clarke had been expecting the first two but frowned at the Lake Clan’s mention. “But I have spent so much time with Dal this week, even Cade seemed to have warmed up to me. Lexa, are you sure?”

“Nothing is sure at this point, Clarke. Just that today you must lead the Sky People. I will have you added as the thirteenth clan of the alliance this morning. You and the Chancellor will swear an oath of peace and cooperation. After that you will have a full vote in all matters of the alliance. Tell your mother to beware of the Ice Nation, the Clan of York, and yes, even the Lake People. The leaders are dangerous, and they are not to be trusted. Be careful today, and do NOT try to lose your guard. Octavia is skilled and she can protect both of you if you let her. You will sit with the Sky People in the designated area. You are the Commander of the Sky People, your mother the Chancellor. I will introduce you as such and explain that you two share power. Today you are Heda Kom Skaikru.”

She paused and watched as Clarke schooled her face into the set jaw and steady eyes of the leader she had first met in her tent, the one who had impressed her by responding to her comment about Clarke having burned 300 of her warriors alive with a stoic comment about Lexa having sent them to kill her people. She reached out and touched Clarke’s cheek and spoke quietly to her, “Ste Yuj, Houmon.”

Clarke nodded at Lexa, “I will be strong. Lexa. Promise me that you will let Indra protect you and that you will meet me in our room tonight. Yu gonplei NO ste odon. Don’t you dare get killed.”

Clarke reach out and grabbed the Commander’s collar and pulled her in for a quick, but rough kiss.

Lexa pulled away with a grin on her face, “As you wish, Heda Kom Skaikru.” Her face softened and she looked into Clarke’s eyes, “Houmon, Ai hod yu in.”

“I love you too. Let’s go inside.” Clarke answered and with her face set in Clarke Griffin determination she turned to face what would be an eventful day.

The Commander let Clarke enter the meeting a few seconds before her. She wanted everyone gathered there to see Clarke march in. Lexa knew how powerful Clarke looked with her pistol, her war paint, and that stubborn look of determination on her face, she wanted everyone in that room to believe the rumours of Clarke’s prowess that had spread across the land. She knew that Clarke’s gentle manner and intelligent conversations throughout the week had done nothing to back up the rumours of the fierce Sky Princess who had brought down the mountain and brought reapers back to life. Lexa knew the way her wife looked today would let people know that she was indeed a warrior.

Clarke strode in full of confidence with her Trigedakru warrior at her back and surveyed the crowd quickly. She caught Luna’s eye and bowed her head in respect. She did the same with a few other leaders she had formed good relationships with over the past few days. When her eyes passed over the Ice King she glared at him for just a second gripping her gun. Then she moved with a leader’s
stride over to where her mother sat. Abby had been briefed by Indra and had left the seat next to her open for her daughter. As Clarke sat, and Octavia took up an intimidating stance right behind her chair, Abby leaned over and whispered to her, “You look incredible! Completely badass!” Clarke smothered the grin that threatened to erupt.

Then Lexa walked in and everyone fell silent. Heda, full armour and warpaint, looked menacing, she moved with a deadly grace and her eyes roved the crowd like she was daring anyone to challenge her. She took her seat at the head of the room and the way she sat left no doubt to anyone that it was indeed her throne. Some of the gathered leaders had never seen the Commander in her full armour and war paint and they stared openly in awe of the power that radiated from the woman.

Once she had taken her place she called the meeting to order. There had been a diplomat from the Horse People who had been acting as a sort of speaker during the meetings. He had been in charge of making sure they moved along as quickly as possible, ensuring each nation got to speak, and raising all of the allotted issues for each meeting. As he stood to begin the meeting Lexa held out her hand and spoke, “Em Pleni,” she dismissed him with a wave of her hand and then she addressed the delegates. “Today I will run the meeting. I trust no one has a problem with that?” Her intense glare searched but found no objections. “First we vote on the Sky People. They wish to join our alliance. They have proven themselves worthy and loyal in the alliance they have with the Trigedakru. I know many of you have had the chance to speak with their Chancellor and their Commander this week, I trust you have learned enough to know that they can be a great help to all of us. Those of you who oppose them keep in mind that through my union with the Commander of the Sky People, Trigedakru is already joined to the Sky People in an unbreakable bond. We will stand by them whether you do or not.” Lexa let her the weight of those words sit for a moment before she continued. “They have different ways than us, two rule together, a chancellor and a commander. Their words carry equal weight with their people. If the vote passes, they will swear allegiance together. Any questions?”

The Ice King spoke, “Two women rulers. Do we really want more nations with female heads of state?” He sneered and laughed as he spoke but was soon put in his place by Heda’s sharp words.

“Your queen held more power than you do, King. That is, before I cut her head off.” Lexa spat. “Be silent if you have nothing more than that to offer.” Her dismissal of him enraged the man and he sat back down with a look of pure hatred on his face.

Clarke watched as Cade looked at the Ice King with disgust and she once again thought that he couldn’t be in league with that terrible man. When no one else spoke up Lexa commanded, “We vote. All in favour of allowing the Sky People to join us, speak now.” Lexa was pleased to see eight hands in the air. Her own made nine votes and the Sky People were accepted easily.

“It has been decided.” A cheer rose from the delegates and Lexa allowed it to continue for a few seconds before silencing everyone with her raised hand. “Chancellor, Heda Kom Skaikru, come forth.” She watched with pride as Abby and Clarke approached her, she also arched her eyebrow in satisfaction when Octavia followed Clarke glaring in the direction of the Ice King the whole time. When Abby and Clarke were in front of her throne she stood and offered her forearm to both of them and then had them turn and face the crowd. Mother and daughter stood proud and unafraid. Octavia and Indra’s watchful eyes scanned the crowd for any signs of treachery. Kane had also began to circle the crowd, hand on his weapon. His training as head of Arc security told him that this was a pivotal moment and he was on high alert.

Lexa had Clarke repeat a vow of allegiance to the clans and of fealty to her. Clarke held her hand in the air, spine straight, voice strong, as she swore to protect and support the other clans. When she started her pledge of fealty to Heda her voice grew emotional, although none but those who knew
her best would have picked up on it. As she finished and Abby stepped forward Octavia’s eyes picked up a flash of metal somewhere in the crowd on the second floor balcony. Lexa and Indra had caught it as well and they all moved as one. Octavia had Clarke on the ground covered with her own body and Lexa had shouted to Indra to protect the Chancellor. Indra was tackling Abby to the ground when an arrow whizzed past them, grazing Indra’s shoulder, and struck the Commander’s throne. Lexa herself moved like a wraith. She dropped low to the ground and somehow in the time it took for Clarke to realize what was happening her wife was already launching herself up the stairs to the balcony. People shouted and screamed as the meeting began to descend into chaos.

As Lexa reached the second floor she was gratified to see that Kane had already apprehended the would-be assassin and had his gun pressed to the archer’s temple. She was impressed, she had always liked Kane and this elevated him even further in her eyes. She motioned for Kane to follow her and returned to her place at the head of the meeting. Her voice carried over the frightened and confused din of noise in the room and silenced everyone quickly. “It appears we have a traitor among us. One who would see the Sky People dead before seeing them join us. That will not happen.” As Kane brought him to her she grabbed the man who had tried to kill her mother-in-law, “Yu gonplei ste odon.” She slit his throat and let the blood spray. She heard the gasps from the crowd as people saw her ruthlessness. Her eyes searched the crowd looking for others who would try to harm the Sky People. She saw warriors from the Horse People, Luna’s people, and her own mixed throughout the crowd and realized that even if there were others they were unlikely to try anything now. She moved quickly discarding the body to the side with an uncaring shove. She came to stand between Clarke and Abby, her drawn sword dripping with blood, and she finished the ceremony that would officially make the Sky People a part of the alliance.

Abby was quite shocked at seeing Lexa kill so easily. She knew that Lexa was known as a ruthless Commander, but she had gotten used to the Lexa who doted on her daughter and spoke sweet words of love. She had almost started to think of her as more a poet than a warrior. She was so shocked she blindly repeated the words Lexa told her and didn’t realize what was happening until a cheer rose from the crowd and Lexa’s blood covered hand grasped hers and raised it into the air. Lexa shouted, “Chancellor and Commander of the Sky People, our newest clan of the alliance. May we all have peace and prosper together.” The leaders of the other clans cheered and then came forward one at a time and congratulated the two women. When the leader from York stepped up Lexa stepped forward. “He has Yorkish tattoos.” She gestured toward the dead body with her head. Her level eyes never straying from the man’s face. He was tall with wide shoulders and a puffed out chest, he had greasy back hair that was slicked back off of his forehead. He had shifty brown eyes that never met the Commander’s gaze for more than a second and Lexa hated him.

The leader of the York Clan just smirked, “Does he? How foul.”

Lexa stepped even closer and Indra inched toward him as well, “If I find out he was acting on your orders I will kill you.” Lexa’s voice was even but her knuckles were white as she gripped the hilt of her sword in rage.

“Heda, do you think me so foolish?” The man laughed, “I welcome the alliance with the Sky People.” He moved over to Abby and his eyes trailed up and down her body, “In fact I would like to extend an invitation to the Chancellor to celebrate her new status in the alliance with me over dinner. She may bring her daughter too.” His smile was lusty as he let his eyes roam from mother to daughter and Clarke had to stop herself from pummelling him with her fists. Lexa felt her wife tense and stepped forward slightly to place herself at a strategic advantage to stop any confrontation between the two. Abby, while still reeling from everything that had happened in the past few minutes, recognized the sleazy look the man was directing at her and Clarke and anger rose in her gut. She was about the raise her had to slap the leering man when she felt a familiar presence at her side calming her.
It was Kane who stepped in and took control of the situation. Clarke remembered him as he had been on the Ark. He had that same military stiffness to his body, that same ice cold manner and control, that he had exuded when he led the Ark security forces. She realized how much the man had changed since coming to Earth and even though she had hated him on the Ark she was relieved to see that side of him assert itself once more. She knew they could use the help in getting through the rest of this summit, and Marcus Kane would be a formidable general. Kane stepped smoothly to Abby’s side and spoke, “There has been an attempt on the life of our leaders. They will be under lockdown this evening, protected by our security team and Heda’s warriors. I’m sure you understand. Security is paramount.” He did not wait for an answer just stepped in front of Abby and led her back to her seat, nodding for Octavia to follow with Clarke.

Lexa remained in place glaring. The leader of the Clan of York was known simply as ‘Yor’, and she didn’t know much about how he had been chosen by his people but she knew that it was some sort of military coup that had occurred during the life of the previous commander. She saw how his warriors looked at him, with fear and hatred, she knew her own warriors feared her but it was steeped in a deep respect and Lexa knew that they willingly fought and died for her. She had cringed on the day Yor arrived to see that along with his entourage of warriors he also had a large group of female attendants who were all young, pretty and terrified. She had seen the way he looked at them, like they were his chattel. His eyes always held a threat and he frequently raised his hands to them as if to strike. She had also seen how filled with fear they were when they were near him. She wanted to run her sword through him and tell his people they need not live in fear anymore. She wanted to do this, but the alliance was important. She had to follow the rules she herself had created. She knew that Yor was close allies with the Ice King and she did not trust either of them, she was quite certain that the assassination attempt had been planned by Yor and probably the Ice King. They didn’t want the alliance to survive, they wanted to conquer other clans, not live in peace with them. Only the combined strength of the Tree Clan and the original eight allies had stopped them from attacking their neighbours and taking their land. The Sky People added to that strength and so it made sense that they would try to stop them from becoming official members of the alliance.

Lexa glared at Yor as he turned and leered at the two Sky women. Only when Abby and Clarke were safely in their seats, Octavia and Kane by their sides and two of Lexa’s guards alert and in place behind them Lexa allowed herself to unclench her fists and exhale.

“Be seated Yor, we have more business to attend to.” Lexa growled at the man.

“Certainly, Heda.” Yor laughed a horrible laugh as he returned to his seat.

Heda held up her hand and the room fell into an eerie silence. She stepped forward feeling Indra at her side. She looked out into a sea of eyes on her and felt the comfort of familiarity. Some eyed her in hatred, most in awe and respect, and all in fear. All but Clarke, but Lexa was sure she saw lust tinge those blue eyes and that was also something she knew. She knew this feeling, this was her life before Clarke, before peace. This was who she was bred to be. It was a familiar steel that steadied her spine, a long lost coldness that settled into her mind making her precise, calculating. A deep confidence in her own power allowed her to control the rage burning inside her. When she spoke it was all Commander.

“People of the alliance. I have given you peace. I have been fair and good to you, and your people are thriving under my rule. The Sky People will make all of our lives better, will make your people stronger and allow them to live happier, better lives. That is what we as leaders want, is it not?” Heda’s voice dropped several registers to a threatening growl, “Anyone with any knowledge of the attempted assassination speak to my generals, or Rachel of the Coast. Trust me, I will find out who
gave the orders and when I do he will feel the steel of my blade run through his chest. Make no mistake, neither peace among our people nor a union of the heart have weakened me. I am Heda. I will not hesitate to protect my people and this alliance.” As she finished speaking a cheer rose up from the crowd.

Clarke looked around and saw looks of loyalty and devotion on many faces. She turned her gaze to the Ice King, he was sneering. She glanced at Yor, his lip curled into a look of utter contempt as the other leaders cheered for Heda. Last she looked at Cade, he tore at her heart to see that his expression was pure malice. She hated to think she had been wrong about him and Dal, but she pushed that aside and steeled herself. She would not let him, or anyone, hurt her wife. She kept her eyes on him and when she saw him catch someone’s eye from the other side of the room and nod she grabbed Octavia’s hand. “Cade,” was all she said and she felt Octavia pull away from her slightly. A quick word to Lincoln, who had snuck into the tent after the assassination attempt, and she was back at Clarke’s side.

“On it, Heda Kom Skaikru.” Octavia whispered straining to catch a glimpse of the coconspirator.

“Don’t call me that, O.” Clarke allowed her irritation to come through in her voice. “I need people, my friends, who I can be myself with. It’s bad enough that you have to call my wife Heda. Don’t start that with me.”

“Sure thing, C.” Octavia’s voice was laced with sarcasm but a squeeze of her hand on Clarke’s shoulder let her know the message was received. “There are so many guards in here, I don’t think Cade is stupid enough to try something is he?”

“I think we’re going to find out.” Clarke breathed out.

As Lincoln circled around he saw Dal whispering to a Lake warrior. The warrior nodded and turned, walking out the door. Lincoln followed him silently.

Back inside Lexa was once again holding up her hand for silence. “By opening up the mountain, I defied a decision that we all made together. By doing that I saved my people and many of yours, present and future. The decision is done and will not be undone no matter what is decided here today. The mountain will remain open and the Sky People will help us all use it’s secrets to better our lives. I know you expect to vote on whether this decision violates our laws and allows a challenge to my leadership.” The crowd began to murmur.

“No Heda, we need you to keep this alliance strong.” One member called out and his voice was supported by many others.

The Ice King was quick to respond, “She opened the mountain for her own selfish reasons, her wife was dying from Wamplei. There was no nobel desire to help her people. Do not be fooled. She is weak with her love of the Sky woman. They are trying to play on your emotions to win the vote and avoid the challenge we all know is justified.”

Lexa held her hand up once more, the heat of her gaze stopping the Ice King from continuing. As she waited for the crowd to quiet her eyes searched out her wife. She held that gaze for a few seconds before speaking, “There will be no vote. I fear my wife has done her duty well and if I allow a vote you will deny the challengers their right to be heard. An unheard challenge is dangerous, it breeds contempt and defiance. I will hear all challengers, I will accept responsibility for going against the voice of the alliance. Tonight after dinner all challengers will be heard in the square. Let all who would see me fall give voice to their reasons.” Lexa looked regal standing fearless as she shocked the
crowd into silence.

It was Clarke who broke the silence, “Lexa, Heda, you must rethink this. Your life is more important than you realize. You hold us all together.”

The Ice King leapt to his feet, “Her lover begs for her life. Their love is weakness that we cannot tolerate.”

Other leaders began shouting at the Ice King, supporting Heda, supporting Clarke, fearing for the alliance should Heda fall.

Cade stepped forward and raised his hand indicating he wished to speak. He rarely attended in person and never spoke, so curiosity won out and people fell silent one by one. When everyone, including Heda, was looking at him he spoke, his voice clear and strong, “My people respect Heda’s choice, it is noble and brave,” he spoke to the crowd before turning to look at the Commander, “I am surprised, Heda. You would have clearly won the vote and avoided the battle circle. You clearly love your wife, and your people. Not to mention that all of our people are flourishing in the peace you have created. Why risk all of this when you have only two loud voices of dissension?” He asked Heda, gesturing towards Yor and the Ice King.

Lexa stepped forward until she was an arms length away from the tall, raven haired man. “It is not the loud voices of dissension that pose any real threat, Steward of the Lakes. It is the unheard voices that will whisper and skulk and plot and so I accept any, and all challenges.” Lexa spoke firmly and with purpose. Not letting her emotions infuse into her words. She raised her voice for all to hear clearly, “tonight in the square, bring me your grievances. Let the challengers come forth.” With that she once again met Cade’s eyes and saw a flicker of something she thought was uncertainty behind the mask he wore so well.

She turned and strode back to her throne, she sank into it with the grace of a killer cat, stalking it’s prey. Once seated she once again raised her hand for silence. “This meeting is over. I expect all clan leaders to be in their seats tonight. Now, leave me to the wrath of my unioned.” She said with a wry smile, showing a rare glimpse of her humour to the leaders.

As they filed out of the building most called out words of strength and encouragement. The Ice King offered a cold smile and informed Lexa that his son looked forward to meeting her, Lexa knew he would be one of the challengers. She had heard of the Ice Prince, he was a feared warrior, but Lexa had no fear. She knew him to be an arrogant fool like his father and she had defeated many arrogant fools in her lifetime.

As the Sky delegates began to leave Abby pulled Lexa into an embrace. “I hate what you are doing, but it is brave. Be safe, Lexa.” Lexa was surprised by the hug and blinked wide eyed at Abby before nodding her promise. Abby exited with Kane and Lexa was left with Indra, Octavia and Clarke. Clarke who had said nothing since her earlier outburst. Clarke who was still avoiding her eyes, Clarke who was shaking, Clarke who she needed to understand.

“Houmon…” Lexa began but was stopped by Clarke’s raised hand.

“Octavia, Indra, get out” Clarke’s tone was not one to be questioned and the two warriors exited quickly.

“Do you think Heda will live to see the challenge?” Octavia whispered to Indra as they stepped outside and took up positions guarding the entrance. Her joke earned her a slap to the back of her head from her first but she also saw a small smile tug at Indra’s lips.
Inside Clarke didn’t move until the warriors had closed the doors and left her completely alone with Lexa. Then she stepped forward and walked up to her wife until she could lean forward and rest her forehead on Lexa’s. Lexa saw the tears, and then she felt Clarke’s fists hitting her on the shoulders. They weren’t physically painful, Clarke would not injure her before the upcoming fights, but they tore at Lexa’s heart.

“Why, Lex? We had it. We would have won the vote.” Clarke’s voice was remarkably steady for the tears streaming down her face.

“That’s why, Houmon. If I didn’t do it this way someone would try to stab me in the back or kill me with an arrow like they did your mother earlier. There are many traitors in the alliance and I want to meet them head on, not fear what they would try in secret.” Lexa closed the last of the space that was between them and kissed Clarke. “I am ready for this, Clarke. If I was not I would have allowed the vote and delayed the challenges. I will not give you up, our life together gives me something to fight for.”

“I know, I know you're right. But I’m scared.” Clarke reached for her wife and clung to her, they stood like that holding each other until the edge of Clarke’s desperation wore off. Lexa kissed her softly and stroked her hair.

“Come love. There is a war council waiting for us.” Lexa sighed and kissed her wife once more.

As they approached the exit Lexa shouted to Indra and the doors quickly parted for the Commander to stride through. Octavia fell into step beside Clarke and let her hand stray unnoticed to squeeze Clarke’s. Indra walked tall beside Lexa and the guards who had gone with Clarke to see the motorcycles brought up the rear. There were a number of unseen guards wordlessly clearing the way ahead of them and the two women strode towards the war room that had been set up on the first floor of the Villa they were staying in.

When they entered they immediately noticed that Rachel was bleeding from a gash on her forehead, Luna stood worriedly by her side as Abby treated the wound. Lincoln was also in the room slumped over on a chair, Clarke and an anxious Octavia went to his side. Abby nodded to a vile on the table in front of him and Clarke understood and set to work right away. Bellamy and Echo were there, as well as Ro and the top general of the Horse people. Lexa knew that each of her allies would search her out before the evening but right now she had the people she trusted the most in here and needed to know everything.

“Report,” her voice was terse, commanding.

“Heda,” Indra began, “Last night Rachel’s scouts circled the city to the northeast and our scouts scoured the northwest. There are three army’s gathered a days ride from the city.” Indra was matter of fact, showing no emotion.

Clarke looked up from treating Lincoln and watched Lexa nod, unsurprised. “Our armies?”

Rachel spoke next, “My ships are an hour off shore, ten ships with 30 of Luna’s warriors each. They can be here in three hours.” Lexa nodded and looked at Ro.

“Hirrim’s army is gathering south of the city. We have 250 mounted warriors who will stand with you Heda.” The woman nodded with respect.

Echo spoke next, “the other clans have offered support as well. There are another 300 warriors close enough to join should a war break out.
“Trigedakru?” Lexa asked.

“As we speak our army is surrounding the traitors in the woods. They stay a few hours ride back of the Ice army but will be ready to move in when needed. We have left half of our warriors at home to defend our land with the Sky People and three clans have sent 200 warriors each to support Ton DC and Camp Jaha in case this is a distraction and the real attack happens there.” Indra spoke proudly.

“Who are the other two armies here in the woods?” Clarke knew but had to ask.

“York, and Lake.” Octavia answered her and Clarke sighed shaking her head.

“What happened today?” Lexa demanded meeting Luna’s eyes.

“Rachel and I were returning from the coast. We have been staying on my ship there in order to keep a closer watch on the shore and stay in contact with my army. Rachel spotted some suspicious tracks and once I joined the meeting she left to investigate. She took two warriors with her. They are both dead.” Luna sighed and stepped closer to her wife who was remaining stoic as Abby stitched the large gash on her forehead.

“We found some sort of war machine. I suspect the Lake people have been making them. It is made of steel and our arrows cannot penetrate it. It doesn’t have guns like the Mountain Men or the Sky People but I am certain it is made for them. I think their goal is to get the weapons from the Sky People and use these machines to conquer the rest of the clans.”

Lexa nodded and then looked to Lincoln. “You left the meeting following a Lake warrior, what happened?” Clarke was surprised that Lexa had noticed Lincoln’s exit but quickly realized she shouldn’t have been.

“I followed him, He met another man in the market, I can't be sure but I thought I saw the tattoo of a York assassin. The assassin gave the Lake warrior a small cloth bag and then I followed him here, Heda” Lincoln paused, “To your bedchamber.”

Clarke interrupted, “but Lincoln I’m treating you for a snake bite.”

“Indeed,” came his reply as he reached under the table and pulled a small, black, and very much dead snake onto the table.

“The poison is mild,” Abby pointed out. “It would make you lethargic, and tired, your head would not be clear. But it would not kill you.”

“Unless you were going into a fight to the death suffering from the effects…” Clarke pointed out.

“Surely you would not fight if you had been bitten.” Abby started but was stopped by Rachel’s raised eyebrow and Luna’s sad frown.

“We can use this. Did he see you?” Lexa asked Lincoln.

“No, Heda. I followed him from a distance and waited until he left to enter and find the snake.” Lincoln had anticipated his Commander’s plan and she smiled at him.

“Well done, Lincoln. we will let our enemies believe we are weak when we are strong.” Lexa allowed a smile before turning to Echo, “are we ready for tomorrow?”

“Sha Heda,” she replied, “we are ready” she reached over and squeezed Bellamy’s hand.
Clarke finished giving Lincoln the antidote and stood up facing her wife. “How long have you known about all of this? It sounds like you have been planning this from the beginning?”

“I have been planning for all possibilities, Clarke. It is what I do as Heda. I did not tell you because it was not something you needed to know. You worry too much and it is safer if you are not privy to all of my war council.” Lexa sighed, “But now that the Skai Kru is officially the thirteenth clan of the alliance and since you are their Commander, I will include you from now on. Choose your closest generals, they will work with mine.”

“Bell, and Kane.” Clarke answered immediately. “And the Chancellor should be included as well.” Clarke added looking at her mother.

“Indra, from now on Kane will liaise with you on all of our scouting reports. Bellamy will join the meetings with Rachel and other clan generals and the Sky delegation will join all general war meetings.” Lex made it official and Clarke nodded.

“I still feel unsettled about the Lake Clan, Lexa.” Clarke admitted moving on from the subject of her wife keeping things from her, not wanting to fight, not today.

“Yes, there is something in Cade’s eyes. He hates me, but I confuse him. He looks at me like I would look upon the Ice Queen who killed Cosita. There is something unsettling about it.” Lexa looked pensive but was interrupted by guards announcing the first visitors.

After that was a steady stream of leaders offering support to Heda. She did not confide in any of them, the ones she trusted had already been briefed. This continued until it was time to go to dinner. Lexa insisted that they all attend, together. The show of solidarity between the Horse Clan, Luna’s Clan, the Tree Clan, and the Sky Clan would impress she insisted.

She took Clarke’s hand in hers and marched proudly to dinner. Clarke didn’t ask her why just decided to enjoy this moment of public affection. At dinner Lexa looked relaxed as she spoke loudly, addressing the other leaders with confidence. She seemed at ease, she appeared to have no cares. Clarke knew better as she felt her body coiled tight, she knew every one of Lexa’s muscles was ready to spring into action. She saw he lines around her eyes as she never stopped scanning the crowd for threats. She saw the white knuckled grip Lexa kept on her dagger under the table and she saw the way Lexa leaned forward slightly putting her body between Clarke and anyone who approached. Dinner seemed to drag on forever and Clarke was becoming antsy. Lexa’s firm hand on her thigh stilled her, and a soft whisper of love in her ear gave her the resolve to follow Lexa’s lead and act non-plussed about the situation.

As dinner wound down Hirrim appeared. He bowed respectfully and announced, “The battle circle has been drawn. The council has gathered and we await you Heda.”

The Commander nodded to him and stood. Her dinner entourage stood as well and they led the way to the gathering. There was a flat area near the market that was used for gatherings. There was a clear area wide enough for sports, and battles in the middle. It was down several steps from the ground and created a kind of pit for battle. People were seated along the steps on all sides of the pit and many more gathered behind them watching. One narrow side of the pit had been cleared and one person from each clan sat there to act as judge. It was either a leader or a general. Lexa moved confidently down into the pit, still holding Clarke’s hand. Kane moved to sit in the judge’s seat for the Sky People and Echo took the seat for Trigedakru. Luna took her seat and Hirrim took his. The rest of them sat on the bottom row, with Lexa in the centre. She sat until Ro and Rachel entered the battle circle.

“We are gathered here to honour a tradition of our people. Heda will hear challenges. Know that
even a successful challenge does not transfer Heda’s power. The Commander’s spirit chooses it’s host and the alliance would follow the newly chosen one. Each challenger will be judged. If the challenge is deemed worthy and Heda accepts they will do battle. If the challenge is not deemed worthy Heda’s warriors will fight for her. Two enter the circle and one leaves. That is our way.” Rachel spoke clearly and with authority.

Clarke leaned over to her wife and questioned, “someone can fight for you?” she was confused by this new development.

“Only for foolish challenges, some wish to die like this, there are always a few fools looking for glory.” Lexa did not smile.

Ro continued outlining the rules, “Once Heda opens the circle, anyone who wishes to challenge her may step forward. Enter the circle and state your reasons. Then be judged.” Ro nodded at the Commander turning it over to her.

Clarke grabbed Lexa’s hand before she stood and Lexa squeezed it and looked at her wife with a small smile. “It’s ok, Clarke,” she whispered. She waited until Clarke let go of her hand and then she stood. As she stepped into the circle Ro and Rachel bowed their heads to her and vacated. Lexa was one hundred percent the Commander and she raised her chin and surveyed the crowd, a sovereign addressing her people. “I am the Commander of the thirteen clans. I rule as I see fit for all of my people. Those that question me have a chance now to be heard. Choose wisely, your life will be forfeit. I stand before you now and tell you that it will be your blood staining this ground, should the judges refuse your challenge you will fight a Trigedakru Gona. You will lose. Should they approve your challenge you will fight me.” Lexa smiled a deadly grin, all teeth and violence, “I will kill you.” Lexa let her words sit. She strode back to her seat and before she sat she once again turned to the crowd. “Those who would challenge me, come forth! I open the circle!”

Clarke held her breath, she was torn between the excitement of seeing her wife so powerful, so commanding, so sexy. The atmosphere was charged with excitement and lust and it was powerful. The other side of Clarke was just completely terrified. No matter how prepared Lexa was something could always go wrong.

The crowd was chanting, “Heda, Heda, Heda.” when a young man stepped forward. He was from Trigedakru and Lexa sighed and shook her head. Clarke arched her eyebrow at Lexa in a silent question.

“He is a foolish, angry man from a village near mine. His challenge will not pass and he will die a foolish, angry man.” Lexa looked coldly at the man.

“Liar!” The man shook with anger and Clarke watched Lexa’s hand slide to her dagger just in case he charged.
“Holden, retract your words and leave.” Clarke was surprised to see Echo rise from her seat. “She
was mine, not yours. You were nothing but a childhood friend to her. The mountain men took her
from me. Sharing Heda’s bed once when they were both warriors in training had nothing to do with
you, or her death. Leave or fight it is up to you, but you will not fight Heda.”

The judges all agreed and when Holden stood his ground Clarke was surprised to see her motorcycle
loving guard step out of the crowd. He bowed his head to the Commander and took his place in the
circle.

Lexa nodded to him and ordered the fight to begin. She watched with no pleasure as Holden was
crushed by the quick efficiency of a deadly warrior. Clarke inhaled sharply watching her guard in
action and looked at Lexa, “How good is he?”

“I would not want to fight him,” was Lexa’s truthful reply. “He guards us of his own choice. He
could be a top general, but he chooses to serve me, and you.” Lexa was proud of him, Clarke could
see it in her face.

Once the body had been removed the next challenger stepped forward. He was a hulking man from
the Ice Nation. He said he wished to avenge the Queen but was judged to have no credence as he
had never even met her, and the Queen had been killed for killing an innocent, Costia.

The second of Lexa’s regular guard stepped forward, he was the older of the two and no less deadly.
The Ice warrior fought well and managed to inflict a large gash into the side of the guard, probably
breaking a rib or two in the process. Once that blow had landed the guard, fighting the pain, spun
away and ended up slightly behind the blonde haired hulk, he quickly ran the man through with his
sword and claimed another victory for Trigedakru. As victory was announced Clarke watched as her
mother stepped forward with Nyko to help the injured guard out of the pit.

The third challenger was a young woman from the Delta Clan south of the Horse territory. She
claimed to be the true spirit of the Commander and when her petition failed an equally young
Trigedakru woman stepped into the pit. Clarke recognized her as one who had fought alongside
them as they freed their people from the mountain. She remembered an emotional reunion she had
witnessed inside the mountain as the girl had met Echo. The girl was Echo’s second, and Clarke
glanced up to see Echo watching intently from her seat.

The challenge didn’t last long. The Delta girl might have fought well against her own people but
Trigedakru warriors train for battle from the time they are seven or eight years old. Echo’s second
killed her quickly. Clarke was glad to see that she didn’t suffer.

Two more challengers came forth and were denied. They were killed quickly by Lexa’s warriors.
Clarke was beginning to hope that Lexa wouldn’t have to fight at all. That hope was squashed when
the next challenger stepped into the circle. Clarke knew who he was just by looking at him. He was
blonde and pale with bright blue eyes, he would have been handsome if he didn’t look so cruel. He
was tall, with wide shoulders and a muscular body. Octavia thought of the Norse God, Thor when
she looked at him. Lexa didn’t flinch. She listened to his challenge. The Ice Prince demanded the
chance to avenge his mother, her insisted that as Prince of an allied clan he had the right to challenge
Heda for breaking her word and opening the mountain. He spoke with authority and he was heard.
The judges approved his challenge and he bowed at Heda, promising to see her tomorrow. As he left
Lexa stood.

“The judges have accepted a challenge for tomorrow. I will fight the Ice Prince at first light. Are
there any others who would be heard?”

Clarke held her breath hoping for it to end. She exhaled slowly and felt fear grab her heart as she
watched the Ice Prince stop in front of Cade. He bent and murmured something to the Steward of the Lake People and he pressed something in Cade’s hand. Cade looked down and then stood, flushed with anger. His eyes sought out the Commander, full of hatred. Dal tried to stop him but he pushed him aside and stepped into the circle. The crowd drew a collective gasp and then broke into murmurs and excited chatter. Lexa was surprised, it was not common for a leader to challenge her himself. But she had seen the look of hatred in Cade’s eyes and was glad to finally know why.

“Speak, Steward. What is your grievance with me?” Lexa asked him.

“You murdered my sister. If by some miracle you survive the Ice Prince, I wish to kill you myself.” Cade’s voice trembled as he spoke betraying the depth of his hatred.

Clarke understood Lexa’s expression as confusion. No one else would have even registered that the Commander had any expression to speak of, so schooled in neutrality was her face. Lexa slowly looked Cade up and down, cocked her head to one side and narrowed her eyes, “Explain, I have killed many people.” Her tone held no remorse, “In which battle?”

“There was no battle.” Cade spat back.

“A challenge? Few women have challenged me.” Lexa was curious now.

“No challenge, Heda. She went to you seeking peace.” Cade could barely contain his fury.

“Cade. I do not remember your sister.” Lexa did not back down from the enraged man, she stepped closer.

“She was the ruler of my people. She went to you, looking to join your alliance. You had only five clans then. She went with only four of her best guards, she insisted she could trust you. She went seeking peace and you murdered her.” Cade stepped forward now only a breath away from Lexa.

“I did not. She did not reach me. The only leader of the Lake Clan I have ever met stands before me now.” Lexa looked Cade in the eye and he wavered if only for a second, baffled by the truth he saw there. But he had carried his hatred too long to let it go and he stepped back trying to calm himself.

“The challenge stands, Heda.” He looked to the judges who were not sure how to proceed.

“I accept.” Lexa waved off the judges, “On one condition, tomorrow after I defeat the Ice Prince you and I will discuss this again. I did not kill your sister, Cade. But I wish to know the circumstance of her death, and how you came to know of it. After we speak, should you still believe it was me who ended her fight, I will fight you. Although I will take no satisfaction in your death.” Lexa turned and walked back to her seat. Once she was seated Rachel and Ro once again came into the circle.

“The time for challenges is over,” Rachel spoke with authority.

“Tomorrow at first light let all gather here to witness a battle to the death. Two will enter the battle circle, one will leave.” Ro looked at Clarke and Lexa with sadness in her eyes.

“It is our way.” Rachel added solemnly.

Lexa sat in her seat as the crowd cleared. Clarke sat next to her. Lexa was deep in thought. Memories were pulling at her. Deep memories, memories that she understood were not her own. Cade’s voice rang in her ears. The memories tugged. She knew she could not afford a distraction but still something tugged.

Indra was the one to break the Commander’s concentration. “Heda, we must move to the war tent.
Scouts have returned with more information.”

Lexa’s head snapped up and she looked around. “How long have we been here?” She asked.

Clarke’s gentle voice answered, her hand reaching out to find Lexa’s, “It has been almost one of my Sky hours since everyone else left.” She had seen the look on her wife’s face after Cade’s revelation. She knew Lexa needed to think. She had not wanted to disturb her, so she just sat watching her wife trying to recall a memory that was not in hers.

Lexa stood, surprised by the amount of time that had passed. “Why didn’t you tell me?” She spoke quietly so only Clarke would hear.

“You looked like you needed to think.” Clarke admitted. “What is it, Lex?”

“I don’t know yet.” Lexa frowned, “Something.” She sighed and turned to Indra, “To the war room.” As they strode off Lexa reached for Clarke’s hand and clasped it tightly as they made their way back to the Villa.

They were almost at the Villa when Indra and Octavia stiffened and drew weapons in almost synchronized movements. Lexa and Clarke’s hands went to the weapons at their waists and the guards stepped forward ready to kill or die. They all stopped at once as Lexa’s voice ordered them to wait. Two young women had stepped out of the shadows on the left and one more from the shadows on the right. All three women wore scarves over their faces, only their eyes were visible. Octavia and Indra were a second away from killing them but Lexa’s command stayed their hands. Lexa looked at them, her eyes saw blue eyes on the right, brown and green like her own on the left. Her eyes picked up the tattered clothes, and the snaking tendrils of tattoos peaking out where flesh was exposed. Her eyes saw and her soul tried to make her remember.

It was Clarke who spoke, “Who are you, what do you want?” Her voice was hard but not unkind. “Speak and be gone or my guards will feel the need to get to know you a lot better.” She watched the blue eyes on the right, she saw understanding and knew they spoke English.

The reply came from the green eyes on the right, “Heda, good luck tomorrow. Kill the false Prince and free the Ice People.” With that the three stepped back into the shadows and when the guards chased after them they returned confused, reporting that there was no sign of the three mysterious visitors.

“What the hell did that mean?” Octavia spoke, “That was creepy as hell, who were they?”

“To the war room,” was all Lexa said and continued forward. When they arrived they found Abby, Kane, Bellamy, Echo, Ro, Hirrim, Rachel and Luna all gathered waiting for them. As they entered Luna stepped forward and pulled Lexa into a hug. Everyone but Clarke looked away from the display of emotion. “En Pleni, Sis.” Lexa gently pushed Luna away but smiled warmly at her.

“Heda, we have news.” Rachel began. The conversation lasted hours. The planning, the timing the preparations. When it was done the sun had long since abandoned the sky over to the moon. Lexa led Clarke back to their room, which had been cleared by Lincoln moments before. They fell into the bed exhausted. Lexa held Clarke tightly to her. Clarke tried to bury herself in her wife’s strong arms. The two women didn’t speak, there was nothing they dared say. They knew that words were dangerous, with edges that could cut. Clarke was the first to move. She raised her head from Lexa’s chest and sought Lexa’s lips. The kiss was slow. Lexa felt it give her breath. Give her strength. With only a few hours before dawn Lexa did not want to sleep. She wanted to kiss her wife and draw the strength she needed from her lips.
Clarke was the only one to speak that night, it was a quiet whisper into Lexa’s ear before her lips returned to brush Lexa’s, “take whatever you need tonight, Lex.” Lexa heard her wife and she sighed into her kiss. She kept the kiss slow and Clarke followed her lead. Lexa felt tense, she felt the stress of tomorrow digging into her muscles. She knew what she needed and she loved her wife for offering, for understanding. Lexa’s hand moved to find Clarke’s. She shifted until she was on her back pulling Clarke on top of her. Her hand guided Clarke’s down her stomach and between her legs. Clarke broke away for just a moment to quickly undress both of them, she tugged at the laces and buckles of her lover’s leathers and her practiced hands quickly accomplished their task. When they were both naked she settled back into Lexa’s arms, she let her thigh slip between Lexa’s and she rested her upper body on her wife’s. She lowered her head and her lips met Lexa’s full of softness and love. Lexa began to undulate her hips slowly, finding Clarke’s tense and muscular thigh and relaxing into the pleasure it sent snaking though her.

Clarke watched as Lexa closed her eyes and a sigh escaped her lips. She watched Lexa bite her bottom lip and watched as pleasure relaxed the jaw muscles that had been clenched in worry the entire day. She kissed along that precious jawbone and she pressed her thigh into Lexa gradually increasing the friction. When Lexa’s breathing became laboured and a flush spread up her chest Clarke shifted her weight slightly to the left, supporting herself on her left elbow. She let her right hand slide slowly down Lexa’s chest. She bent her head to cover each nipple in a soft kiss as her hand continued moving down. Lexa arched into her touch and her legs spread apart to welcome Clarke’s hand. Clarke moved slowly, luxuriating in the feel of her wife’s skin and the way Lexa looked, naked and spread out under her hands. Even as she dipped her fingers inside her wife and Lexa’s hips demanded more speed, more force, she couldn’t bring herself to quicken the pace. Her movements were steady, true and ardent in their adoration of the woman under her.

She moved her fingers skillfully over Lexa’s clitoris and then slid back inside of her. Lexa was moaning, a soft and vulnerable sound coming from her lips, as Clarke’s hands took her to a place where there was no blood waiting for her at dawn. As Clarke watched Lexa slowly coming undone under her fingers she felt the realness of Lexa, like her existence was something Clarke could hold in her hands. She suddenly understood her wife’s actions after Wamplei. She understood that Lexa had been proving Clarke to herself, had been assuring herself that Clarke was still there, had been reading her skin and probing the solidity of her bones. She planned to remember to tell Lexa that she finally understood but just then Lexa arched her back and begged Clarke to make her come. Clarke's thoughts flew from her mind.

She felt Lexa’s wetness and she watched Lexa bite her bottom lip and watched as pleasure relaxed the jaw muscles that had been clenched in worry the entire day. As Clarke watched Lexa slowly coming undone under her fingers she felt the realness of Lexa, like her existence was something Clarke could hold in her hands. She suddenly understood her wife’s actions after Wamplei. She understood that Lexa had been proving Clarke to herself, had been assuring herself that Clarke was still there, had been reading her skin and probing the solidity of her bones. She planned to remember to tell Lexa that she finally understood but just then Lexa arched her back and begged Clarke to make her come. Clarke's thoughts flew from her mind.

She felt Lexa’s wetness and she watched Lexa’s eyes as they fluttered open and closed. She whispered to Lexa to keep them open and she sunk two fingers into her wife. Her thumb found Lexa’s clt and she began a slow, steady rhythm that drew more breathy moans from her wife. She could feel the tension building in Lexa and she kept up her steady pace. As Lexa got close to orgasm her hands found Clarke’s skin and she gripped her wife so tight Clarke would have bruises. Clarke encouraged her with a kiss and a very slight increase in the speed of her thumb. She wanted the bruises. Needed them. Needed Lexa’s mark on her.

Lexa was breathing hard and Clarke’s name flew from her lips as she suddenly stilled and held her breath. Clarke’s thumb drew one more circle over her clt and her fingers pressed into the ridge inside one more time, that was all it took for Lexa to shatter. She cried out, her voice breaking with the intensity of her feelings. Her body shook and her thighs closed on Clarke’s hands. The walls of her vagina contracted hard forcing Clarke’s fingers out. As she withdrew she felt a river follow her fingers and Clarke moaned almost as loudly as Lexa.

As Lexa stilled and her breathing returned to normal Clarke felt her relax. She slid her left arm behind Lexa’s neck and pulled her wife into her arms. Lexa fell asleep, peaceful. Clarke watched her, she memorized how Lexa looked lying there, sleeping on her shoulder. She watched her and
loved her. She watched her and she silently begged her to live. She watched her until she heard Octavia and Lincoln in the hallway.

When she heard them outside tears sprung to her eyes but she forced them down before waking her wife. She would be strong today. Tomorrow she could cry, not today. Tomorrow she and Lexa would go to the sea. They would sit on a beach and they would hold each other and cry. But today Clarke was going to be a reservoir of strength that Lexa could draw from. When she was sure her eyes were dry she leaned forward and kissed Lexa. Lexa woke from her short but peaceful sleep feeling softness against her lips. She smiled into the lips and opened her eyes reaching up to caress Clarke’s cheek.

Allowing only that small moment of softness for her beloved she quickly slid herself into the hardness of the day to come. They rose together and Lexa moved to the door. She was still naked but Clarke knew that didn’t bother her so she said nothing. She opened the door and allowed Lincoln and Octavia stepped inside. Clarke knew it was a deep honour for the two of them to be allowed to enter the room and when Lexa indicated that they were also allowed to help her prepare Lincoln bowed his head deeply. Clarke watched as the two of them entered with water, and a small meal for the Commander and for her. Clarke rose and dressed hastily before moving to help Lexa bind her breasts and pull on her fighting leathers. Octavia and Lincoln stepped forward with the shoulder armour and long coat that Lexa wore to war. Once they had attached everything Lincoln handed Lexa her sword and as the Commander sheathed it he handed her dagger to Clarke. Clarke knelt before her wife’s stomach and placed a reverent kiss there before standing. Octavia handed her the war paint and she proceeded to gently transform the face she loved into the fierce, unfeeling mask of Heda.

When they were ready a memory jolted Clarke from her thoughts. “Lexa, last night, those three women…”

“Were important,” Lexa agreed as she finished Clarke’s sentence, “but now is not the time to discuss them. We will figure it out tonight. I promise.”

Clarke understood the double meaning of the promise and nodded, “I will hold you to your promise Commander.” She kissed her then. Kissed her with passion and longing. Kissed her to leave her wanting more. When they broke apart Lexa smiled a feral, merciless smile, and marched out the door toward the battle, toward the blood.

The guards fell into step behind Lexa and Indra appeared at her side as soon as she exited the villa. Abby joined them and they all began to set their plan into action. Clarke fell behind and mussed her hair, made herself look disheveled. She nodded at Octavia and then she began to cry. Clarke played the part of a worried, distressed lover and Octavia comforted and protected her. As they arrived at the circle Lexa stumbled on purpose and Indra held her upright trying to make it look like she didn’t want anyone to know all while making it obvious.

Abby stormed over to Ro and demanded in a loud voice that the fight be put off until tomorrow. Ro looked worried as she informed Abby that it was not possible. The crowd watched and they grew antsy and they worried. There was obviously something wrong with Heda. She looked tired, she looked shaky on her feet. The crowd called treason and treachery by the Ice People and the King glared at them in contempt. The Prince grinned a cold, cocky smile and waited for Rachel to announce the battle. Rachel pretended to be purposefully delaying the battle and the Ice King shouted for them to stop stalling and begin.

Rachel whirled eyes on fire, “We will begin when I say we begin. Hold your tongue.”
Yor stood from his seat and challenged Rachel, “You cannot delay the battle, let them fight!”

Lexa stood, letting her knees wobble slightly and shouted, “Rachel, I am ready. Let the fight begin.”

As soon as she said that Clarke broke free from Octavia and ran forward begging Lexa not to fight, Lexa ordered Octavia to restrain Clarke and stepped into the circle. She drew her sword and steadied her breath.

The Ice Prince laughed as he stepped into he circle. She drew his own weapon and sneered at the woman he towered over. He had his father’s disrespect for women and had no doubt he would kill the Commander. He planned to draw it out. Make the blonde Sky girl scream as he cut her wife over and over. His father had promised him that he could take the blonde as a slave once victory was his. He had known the Lake Steward’s snake had been successful as soon as he saw the worried look on the Sky Chancellor’s face as she entered and tried to argue for a delay. When he saw the tremor in the Commander’s step he laughed and thought it was almost going to be too easy, it took some of his enjoyment away. He had assured his father and Yor that he could defeat the Commander without any help, but they insisted. Regardless, he would enjoy taking this life.

Rachel and Ro stepped into the circle and raised their hands. They looked at Lexa and nodded. Together they announced, “Only one of you may leave this circle, let the battle begin!” They stepped out of the way and the prince began to circle, his leering grin was taunting. Lexa kept up the charade of weakness. She wanted to kill him quickly but she had to wait for a signal from Bellamy that all other preparations were in place.

The prince charged, swinging his heavy sword and Lexa blocked it easily, trying to look as if it had required great effort. The prince swung his fist and Lexa let it connect with her jaw, she allowed herself to fall to the ground and appear winded. The Crowd gasped, they knew the was not the normally unbeatable Heda, they cried out asking what was wrong, they yelled encouragement to her and screamed in hatred at the prince. The King wasn’t worried about the unruly crowd, he thought he had everything planned perfectly, he thought he would rule them all in a matter of days. He was smug, and arrogant, and very wrong.

Yor watched the Ice King, laughing to himself at the smug grin. His own plan was to stick a knife into the back of his ally as soon as they controlled the alliance. He would continue to manipulate the Lake Steward by feeding him more lies about his sister until he had enough war machines to ensure his dominance. In the end he would kill him and his husband without remorse. Yor would rule the all, the woman of all the clans would be his to take and he would be rich beyond measure. He thought he might keep the Sky rulers alive, he found them both attractive. He would let them choose his bed or his blade. He laughed and smiled pretending to be sharing in the Ice King’s satisfaction.

Cade watched the fight with a heavy heart and a heavy mind. He had thrown his lot in with the Ice King and Yor when they told him how Heda had murdered his sister. They had witnesses, they had bloody clothing, the bodies of her four guards, and the one thing his sister would never abandon, her dagger. It had been given to her by their grandfather when she began her training as a warrior. He had forged it himself and it bore the symbol of the Heda of the Lake People. His sister, Rock, had taken command at 15, when their mother was killed. Rock had led their people well. She wanted them to grow and prosper when she heard that the Heda of the Tree Clan was forming an alliance, she insisted on going and joining. When the news of his sister’s death came to him via the Ice Prince his anger was white hot and made him ally himself with the two leaders he hated the most. His people were more like Trigedakru, women ruled. He was only steward now until his cousin was old enough and had completed her training. He sighed, he knew she was not strong like Rock and she didn’t want to be the leader of their people, she had asked him to continue but he firmly believe a woman should lead. After all, it had been men in charge when the bombs had fallen. His family had lead for five generations, mother passing her knowledge along to daughter. His sister was a mighty
Commander, a passionate and fair leader. He hoped his cousin would be able to grow into her role. He was disturbed by Heda and even more so by Clarke, he was supposed to hate them but they were good leaders, they reminded him of his sister. Had he been wrong? Heda denied killing Rock and Dal was inclined to believe her. He shook his head to clear the thoughts and turned his focus back to the fight.

Lexa had dragged herself up from the ground and was blocking another attack by the prince. Clarke knew it was an act, that Lexa was not weak at all, but the sight in front of her tied her stomach into knots and kept air from entering her lungs. Octavia kept reminding her to breathe and reassuring her that Lexa would be OK. Clarke didn’t think she could have sat there watching Lexa take a beating if not for her friend by her side.

The prince had started using his fists, he was punching the commander, her nose was bleeding and blood also flowed freely from her split lip. Clarke was sure she would have two black eyes after the fight and she hoped that would be the worst of it. Lexa was putting up a minimal fight and still waiting for the signal. But then the prince leaned in and whispered to her what his plans were for Clarke and she could no longer still her hands. She caught the surprised prince with a quick uppercut and he fell to the ground. She followed up with a roundhouse kick to his jaw and was satisfied at the snapping sound she heard as a bone snapped. He roared in pain and jumped back to his feet.

“Still have some fight left in you do you, Heda. Don’t like my plans for the Sky girl? Don’t worry, you won’t be around to see it.” He laughed and advanced swinging his sword. Lexa parried and stepped to the side. She was finding it harder to feign weakness and her whole body shook with anticipation of driving her sword into the foul man’s chest. He was advancing on her again and he did have considerable skill with the blade. His arrogance and lack of respect for his opponent were his mistakes, and would be his death. As Lexa continued blocking his sword he used his left hand to grab his dagger and managed to slice a nice gash into Lexa’s stomach. It wasn’t deep but it bled a lot. The crowd fell silent in fear.

He came at her again and used his brute strength to knock her off her feet. He reached out and took her by the hair. He dragged her a few feet closer to Clarke and with his eyes on the Sky Heda he punched her in the face once more. Lexa reached behind her, grasped the hand that was holding her and in one smooth motion she pivoted, kicked the back of his knees and brought him down to the ground, she twisted his arm and his wrist broke. She grinned at him, bloody and dangerous. The crowd erupted in cheers hope filling their bellies.

He quickly rolled away from her and once again stood, but this time he was wary. She was drugged and a mere woman, but had still managed to break at least two of his bones. He decided to forgo the pleasure of killing her slowly and get this battle over with. He stepped forward, sword in his good hand and thrust it at the heart of his opponent. She easily avoided the blow, spun around, and sliced a gash into his back. He fell to the ground rising much more slowly than before.

Lexa saw realization cross his eyes and he knew he had been tricked. She was not weak at all, the snake had not worked. He shouted in rage and charged once more. His sword spun and whirled through the air, intent on blood. She blocked the first attack and sidestepped the next one only slightly too slow, his sword grazed her side and cut into her.

Clarke watched as her wife’s blood spilled onto the ground and she gripped Octavia’s hand far too tightly.

When the prince came forward the next time Lexa met his attack and forced him to backstep. She pressed forward blow after blow being blocked by the prince. He twisted away from the last blow and managed to spin and kick her feet out from under her. She went down, feeling the pain in her
side but still rolling neatly back to her feet in time to block the attacking prince. He swung again and 
she raised her sword to block it. They stepped close to each other, each trying to push the others 
sword away, the clang of metal on metal ringing in their ears. Lexa twisted her sword in a violent 
wrenching motion and both swords went flying into the dirt. The prince tripped her and went after 
his sword. Lexa quickly recovered her balance and went after her own. She dove for her sword, 
tumbled, grabbed it as she rolled by and smoothly popped back up onto her feet ready for another 
attack. The prince had changed tactics and Lexa barely had time to react as he threw his dagger at 
her. His aim was true and the dagger flew towards her head. She swung her sword like a bat in a 
game Jasper and Monty were trying to teach her warriors back at Ton DC. The clang of metal on 
metal and that fact that she wasn’t dead let Lexa know she had successfully blocked the deadly 
weapon.

She circled the prince, catching her breath and waiting. She hated waiting. She could have killed him 
more then three times already but still she waited. Her patience was rewarded when Bellamy snuck 
though the crowd and sat next to Clarke. He whispered something in Clarke’s ear and then Clarke 
stood.

“Kill him Lexa.” Her wife didn’t mince words as she confirmed that the plan was ready. Lexa moved 
forward, thrusting her sword in a wide arc over her head. The Ice Prince blocked her attack his arm 
reaching high to do so. Lexa stepped inside, under that raised arm. She watched as his eyes showed 
the surprise and the disbelief. Her dagger was firmly planted in his abdomen, she had struck between 
his ribs and punctured his right lung. She pushed him back forcefully and he fell over and she was on 
him faster than he could defend. She stood over him and without hesitation her sword pierced his 
heart. She heard the cry of grief and anger from his father even over the roar of the crowd cheering 
her victory.

She knew she had no time to savour her win and she turned and sprinted toward Clarke. Indra was 
already running toward her along with four guards. When they heard the order fly from the Ice 
King’s lips they had already started their counterattack.

Yor and the Ice King shouted orders and suddenly York assassins and Ice soldiers sprang up from 
the crowd, throwing off cloaks, revealing swords and bows. They began to shoot arrows at the 
Commander, understanding that she was the most important target. One of Lexa’s guards stepped in 
front of her and took an arrow that would have killed her. He died well and would have a hero's send 
off when this day was done. Other guards ran forward creating a wall around the Commander and 
more had already surrounded Clarke. The traitors were advancing, firing arrows and attacking the 
crowd. They thought the element of surprise would allow them to take control of the crowd quickly 
and take all of the clan leaders prisoner. They didn’t expect to find an equal number of alliance 
warriors also throwing off cloaks and revealing weapons.

Fights broke out. Alliance archers fired on the traitors and a combined force of sword welding 
warriors moved in defending the crowd of onlookers and quickly overpowering the small assault 
force. Lexa stepped out from behind the wall of guards and went after the Ice King. Yor and the 
King had already realized their plan was doomed and were trying to escape. A group of guards 
surrounded each man as they ran from the city. Lexa pursued them and as she got ahead of her 
warriors she heard a shot ring out. She whirled around to see Bellamy with his rifle pointed at a 
second floor window in a nearby building. She was tackled by a guard then and heard him grunt as 
an arrow pierced his skin. There were York assassins in the windows all around them. Lexa cursed 
herself for charging into the situation before clearing the area. She whispered into the guards ear 
commanding him to hold on, promising that the Sky People would fix him up. She heard Bellamay 
and Kane take control they stood watch taking out any assassins that showed their faces in the 
windows. Rachel and Lincoln had their own arrows trained on the windows lending support. Indra 
lead a group of warriors to clear the buildings on the left side of the street and Octavia led the group
clearing the right side.

It seemed like forever to Lexa until she heard the all clear. Her guard was still alive and had refused to budge from her until he heard Indra say clear. He grunted then and nodded, “Heda,” before rolling off of her awkwardly.

Before she could stand Clarke was on her. Clarke’s hands feeling her bones, Clarke’s eyes looking anxiously into hers. “Tell me you’re alive. Say it. Please.”

“I’m alive, Houmon.” She allowed Clarke a few seconds to breathe and then, “this day is far from over, your healing skills and your warrior skills will be needed before nightfall.” Clarke nodded and kissed her once. Then she stood and turned her attention to the guard who had taken an arrow for Lexa. She knew he was embarrassed but she also knew the tips were likely poisoned and the needed to remove it immediately. Lexa rose and her look of concern quickly turned to mirth when she saw where the young man had been shot.

“OK motorbike,’ Clarke had affectionately dubbed the young warrior after they had shared a moments excitement for the machines. “I have to pull it out. It’s going to hurt.” The guard was blushing, terribly embarrassed to have Heda and her wife staring at the arrow that was sticking out of his left butt cheek. Clarke counted down from three and pulled it out in one smooth motion on two. To his credit the guard merely grunted and showed no other sign of the pain.

He was much more concerned when Clarke told him he’d have to drop his pants so she could treat the wound. Luckily Nyko arrived and insisted on taking over, He informed Clarke that Abby was looking for her to assist on a surgery, one of the clan leaders had been seriously injured when a York assassin's arrow caught her close to her heart. The guard looked at Nyko and whispered, “Muchof.” Lexa grinned.

Clarke jumped up and made sure Nyko knew about the poison she suspected tipped the arrows. She also asked him quietly to see to the wounds Lexa had from her fight. He nodded and informed Clarke that this was not his first war. She smiled at him in apology and then turned to Lexa. “I’d better go. You are alive. I expect you to stay that way! Don’t do anything stupid Commander. That’s an order.” She kissed her wife and then turned and to everyone’s surprise she planted a chaste kiss on the guard’s surprised cheek before turning and marching off to help save lives. She called over her shoulder, “That’s for saving my wife, Motorbike. Muchof!

As Clarke walked away Lexa bit her lip to keep from laughing as the guard blushed and grinned. She stared after her wife and watched in pride as she saw her taking control as she walked through the confusion. She was directing injured people with a few words and reassuring the scared people as she passed by them. Lexa nodded in satisfaction knowing Clarke was a leader that all of the people of the alliance looked to almost as they did her.

Heda turned and began issuing her own orders. She saw Kane approaching with two prisoners and was surprised to see Cade and Dal passively allowing themselves to be led to her.

“You did not run.” She surmised.

“No. We have much to discuss, Heda. After we talk if you wish to kill me for my part in the attack so be it. The only mercy I will beg is for my husband.” Cade spoke quietly and with great purpose.

“You are prisoners. You betrayed the alliance. We will speak on other matters when I have control of the city. Where is your army, and who leads it?” Heda’s tone told Cade that he had one chance to answer if he wanted an opportunity to earn her trust, even slightly.
“Northwest of the city. My warriors are led by my top General, we are separate from the Ice and York armies. I will not have my people mix with theirs. My general has orders to stand down and retreat if I do not return.” Cade told the truth.

‘Will she obey?’ Lexa asked.

“If she thinks we are dead? I know she will not join with the Ice or York clans, she detests them. But she is a bit of a hothead, so it is hard to know if she will attack you and try to avenge us.” Cade shrugged.

Lexa shot a glance at Indra and responded, “I understand what it is like to have a hotheaded general.” She called Indra to her. “Send a scout in peace to the Lake People. Have him take one of the Sky communicators, and send Raven to the villa with one.” Indra went immediately to locate the engineer. “You will talk to your general, tell her not to attack. There is much to be said between us and I suspect much to discover, Steward of the Lakes.” Lexa turned to Kane, “Have Bellamy and Echo guard him until the call is done. When you have radio contact let him speak with his general. He is only to tell them he is unharmed, and that they are not to attack. If he does otherwise kill him.” Lexa turned to look at Cade once more and then strode off to take control of her armies.

Chapter End Notes

There is so much left to tell, but the chapter was already so long I decided to split it into two so I could update faster. I also skimped on my editing time so I apologize for the hundreds of typos that are sure to be hiding in there.
The alliance moves to stop its enemies and Lexa tries to unravel a mystery.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes.

The Trigedakru army advanced, making their presence known to the three armies between them and the city. Luna’s army swept in from the east and the mounted warriors of the Horse Clan rode up from the south. They took up position on the northern outskirts of the city, between the people and the would-be invaders. Joining them were bands of warriors arriving daily from the other clans of the alliance. Heda’s plan was executed perfectly.

The Ice Nation and The Clan of York were surrounded, except for the western front which the Lake Clan’s army held. Since Cade had contacted his general by radio she had stood down her army and was waiting on further orders from Cade. Riders had arrived from Ton DC with reports of raiding parties. Assassins from York, and soldiers from the Ice Kingdom had attacked Camp Jaha. The Ice King had bet on Lexa’s death and thought it would weaken her people so much that raiding parties would be able to breach the defences of Camp Jaha and steal the Sky People’s guns and other weapons that he thought would help him conquer the clans.

A battalion of Lake People had set up camp a half day’s ride from Ton DC but did not join the marauders, nor aide the Tree Clan, not that they needed it. Half of the Trigeda army had remained behind, as well as most of the Ark security force. That combined with the warriors who had been sent by clans loyal to Lexa were more than enough to defeat the raids, losses were minimal for Lexa’s people, and total for those who had dared attack. None were left alive.

All of this information was brought to Heda in her war room. The other leaders gathered around her and there was much debate over what to do about the Lake Clan and its captured steward. Lexa had all of the armies supporting her in a hold pattern, waiting to see what the Ice King and Yor would do. The only variable in the situation was the Lake People’s army, it was a sizeable force and it’s position to the west of the city was unfortified. If she covered that far with her Trigeda army it would spread them too thin. The troops arriving from the south were not skilled at war and she knew the Lake Kru would slaughter them quickly. Lexa had to know what they would do, nodding at Clarke to follow her, she went looking for her prisoner. It was time for them to speak.

Heda Lexa swept into the room where Cade and Dal were being held, “Cade, Steward of the Lakes. Let us speak. First, tell me about your battalion of soldiers who wait by Ton DC.” She pinned him with the full force of the Commander’s glare.

Cade looked her in the eye and spoke without wavering, “They were there for two reasons. I sent them to take control of any weapons recovered should the raids be successful.” He eyed Lexa with a look of pride that comes from knowing your own truth. “I do not trust the Ice King, nor Yor to have that kind of power.”

“The second reason?” Lexa demanded.
Cade held Lexa’s gaze. “Yor asked me to join them in attacking the Sky People. I told him I would send a support battalion, to manage the village after the attack, but not warriors for the actual attack. What I didn’t tell him was that I sent my number two general and a full battalion of hardened fighters, they could have easily handled Yor and the Ice King’s men had your village fallen. I sent them to protect the survivors. Their orders were not to interfere with the attack but to ensure that the Ice warriors and the assassins of York did not rape and murder the women and children of your villages.” He looked at Clarke and Lexa and when both women nodded he took deep breath. “I told them to camp there until I contacted them unless your people defeated the attackers and demanded they leave. Then they were to retreat and hold at the edge of your lands.”

“The attacks were not successful. My soldiers and the Sky People’s guards killed all of the invaders. I will send a rider to tell my people not to attack yours. I will let you do the same.” Lexa nodded at Cade and then sent away the warriors who had been guarding the prisoners with orders to send a rider. She handed Cade a radio and he contacted his General and had her dispatch a rider as well. With that taken care of Lexa and Clarke sat down and gestured for Cade and Dal to do the same. It was a purposeful show indicating that they could relax, that Lexa believed them for now. When they had first entered the room Cade’s head had been leaning on Dal’s broad chest, the two men taking comfort in each other. As Lexa entered Cade had stood and moved forward facing Lexa and Dal had nodded gravely as he also stood and faced Clarke. The two men had been obviously tense and on edge. Once all four were seated on the floor facing each other and the tension had eased somewhat Lexa spoke again, “Tell me about your sister’s death.” Her tone let it be known that this was not a suggestion, but there was a hint of softness in it as well.

Cade sighed and Dal reached over and squeezed his hand in support. “She left with four of her personal guards seeking an audience with Heda Kom Trigedakru. I begged her to take a full armoured guard but she said they would slow her down. She was very stubborn.” He sighed and continued. “She had been gone for two weeks when I began to worry. I sent riders looking for her, when they didn’t return I gathered a full guard and went myself. Our trails are easy to follow, even after so long. The bikes mark the ground much differently than horses, and besides, I knew where my sister would go first. I followed her to York and as I was a day away from entering the city the Ice Prince approached my camp from the North. He said a scouting party had come across some of my people’s bikes. I followed him to the scene. It was a day's ride south of York.” Cade’s eyes filled with tears and he shook his head.

Dal picked up the story without hesitation, “We followed the prince. He led us to a wide field near a great river. There was a large oak tree and as we approached we startled several deer that were grazing under it’s branches. It was a beautiful place. Rock would have appreciated the beauty.” His voice was wistful and his hand was on his husband’s shoulder, giving strength and comfort. “Not far from there we found Rock’s bike and the bikes of the guards she took with her when she left. There were no bodies, but there was blood. The bikes were covered in blood, the ground was stained with it.” Dal’s eyes teared up but he fought them back and continued.

“Cade began to organize a search of the nearby villages, he would not give up without a body. On the second day of our search Yor arrived. The Ice Prince had sent riders to him since we were on his land. He arrived and he carried this.” Dal reached inside his shirt and pulled out a white cloth, there was something wrapped in it.

“The Ice Prince gave that to you after he challenged Lexa.” Clarke recognized it immediately.

Cade nodded and reached for the item. He took deep breath and resumed where his husband had stopped. “He gave me this dagger.” He unwrapped the cloth enough to reveal the handle of a dagger, the blade had been broken off but the handle was intact, the workmanship was detailed. It was forged from iron and inlaid with a bronze crest. The crest was a circle with thin rays, also of
bronze, coming from it. "My grandfather made it for her. They were very close. He was a historian, he felt we had to learn from our past or be doomed to repeat it. He named her too. He said there was a song about our city that was popular before the bombs. His grandfather had sung it to him when he was young. Our home was once called the Rock City and so he named her after it. This symbol was also a part of our city’s history. He crafted it for her on her twelfth birthday, when she was to begin training as a warrior."

Clarke sighed and shook her head thinking how young that seemed, Lexa looked at her wife and smirked, "Twelve? Kind of old to begin training, no?"

Cade and Dal knew that Lexa was teasing her wife with the comment and they both smiled. Dal replied, "Not everyone trains like the Wood Clan, Heda. That is why you are feared above all others."

Lexa smiled at the compliment and gestured for Cade to continue. "She would never have given up her blade. She loved my grandfather dearly. Only in death would someone have been able to pry it from her stubborn hand. Yor also brought villagers from a nearby village. They claimed to have seen her and her riders attacked. They said it was a group of Trigedakru warriors. They said there was a woman leading them and that she had killed the woman on the bike. They said that this was torn from the horse of the leader as the battle happened." Dal unfolded the white cloth and only then did Clarke and Lexa see that it was a flag. It had a circular symbol painted on it that Clarke knew immediately from the large tattoo on the middle of her wife’s back. Lexa stiffened and watched as Cade spread out the flag. It was covered in blood stains.

"Costia…" Lexa whispered the name and stared at Cade with a pained look on her face.

Cade looked confused and continued his story. "Yor told me that this was your symbol, Heda Kom Trigedakru, the one my sister went to seeking peace. He told me that your peace was like slavery, that my sister had rejected your terms and that you had murdered her. He took me to the bodies of her guards and claimed that you had taken my sister’s body as a trophy. The Ice Prince told me of your bloodthirsty ways, how you had murdered his mother. I wanted to march on you right away, but they convinced me to wait. A month later they joined your alliance and one year after that I followed. It was our plan from the beginning to disrupt the alliance and take control from you. I didn’t trust myself to see you face to face which is why I always tried to send emissaries instead of attending myself. But as my people reported back to me that you were holding the peace, helping the other clans, and fighting for all of the people under the alliance to thrive, I began to doubt Yor and the Ice King."

“They are not good rulers, their people suffer under them.” Dal spoke with contempt.

Cade nodded and looked at Dal, "I should have listened to you my love. I am sorry." He turned to Lexa and continued his explanation, "They were never friends of my mother, nor my sister. The Ice Queen who ruled before the one you killed, and the Mayor of York before Yor took control," Cade’s expression grew angry and his eyes dark, "they were friends of my mother. Neighbouring rulers who worked together much like your alliance does. In fact I believe the Mayor of York was trying to create an alliance before she was killed. I have heard that she had even contacted the Heda who ruled before you.” Cade looked at Lexa keenly, searching for something. He shook his head and continued, "Anyway, I followed them in order to take my revenge on you. You say you did not kill my sister. I want to believe you. Explain this.” Cade’s hand shook as he reached out and pushed the flag bearing her own symbol toward Lexa.

“Costia.” Lexa repeated the name softly and reached for the flag. She picked it up and stared at it, her face betrayed pain, anger, and sadness. Tears formed but she refused to let them fall. She whispered
hoarsely. “This is not your sister’s blood, Cade.” She swallowed and tried to find more words, but her concentration was all taken up in fighting back her emotions and her tears.

Clarke’s hand found the small of Lexa’s back and she spoke to the men of the Lake, her voice was harsher than she intended, “Costia was Lexa’s lover. She was murdered by the Ice Queen. That is why Lexa killed her. Did the prince tell you that too?” Clarke felt anger welling up inside of her and she stared hard at the two men who looked at her with shocked expressions. “How could you have followed those terrible men so blindly?”

“En Pleni, Houmon. Good judgement and revenge never occur together, we can choose only one. Cade chose revenge, as I did when I lost Costia. Many of my warriors were killed when in my blind rage I attacked the Ice Queen. We made it to her village and I ran my sword through her heart. I threw this down onto her lifeless body before leaving her village with the warriors who had survived the fight by my side.” Lexa dropped the flag like it had suddenly burned her. “As we returned to my lands we collected a trail of bodies all the way back home, and then burned one hundred bodies of the warriors who had followed me. They died for my revenge. It was at their funeral pyre that I vowed to make peace with even my most hated enemies when I could. I promised to save my people when I could.” Lexa’s voice had steadied and her wife’s hand on her back gave her the strength she needed. “That flag is the symbol of Heda Kom Trigedakru, my symbol. I bare it on my skin, it was tattooed there as soon as the elders confirmed the Commander’s spirit was indeed within me. Costia made this flag, she was preparing for a meeting with the other clans. She wanted to hang a flag like this on each of the leader’s tents. She had it in her saddlebag when they took her. When the Ice Queen sent her head to me it was wrapped in this.” Lexa stared at the cloth on the floor in front of her. She couldn’t look away from the rust coloured stains.


“You did not kill her, Cade,” Lexa looked at him and sighed, “and I did not kill your sister.”

Cade’s eyes hardened. “No, but I believe I know who did.” He trembled with rage and shame, “I joined with them to plot against you. I believed their lies. I am a fool Heda, but if you allow it I will stand with you and the alliance now and fight them both. My armies will fight with yours. Once we have defeated Yor and the Ice King I will accept any punishment you give. Spare my life until the battle is won, let me help defeat them.” Cade rose to one knee and bowed his head. “Heda, you have my allegiance.”

Dal moved to mirror his husband, “and mine, Heda.” he vowed with sincerity.

“Rise, Steward of the Lakes. We will go to the war room together. I do not know what punishment I will have to give later, but for now we will fight a common enemy side by side.” Lexa stood and turned from the room, Clarke at her side. She waved the guards aside, and although they eyed the two men suspiciously as they followed Lexa from the room they dared not question the Commander. When the foursome entered the war room Indra jumped up and drew her sword.

“Heda, the traitors!? Why have you brought them here?” Indra moved closer to the men, ready to end their lives. The other leaders joined her in condemning the two men.

“They are under my protection. No one touches them.” Lexa looked pointedly at Indra who complained quietly in Trigedasleng as she sheathed her sword.

Clarke moved quietly over to Indra and whispered, “Remember, you felt the same way about me once. Trust her, Indra.” Clarke’s hand on her arm and her quiet smile brought a begrudged grunt of acknowledgement from the general but no more.
Lexa moved over to the table and placed a radio on it. “Cade, contact your general.” She commanded while looking all around the room, daring anyone to make a move against the man. The leaders merely glared at Cade, but no one dared move against him knowing Lexa protected him.

“Yes, Heda,” he moved forward immediately and turned on the radio. “Ford, this is Cade. Answer.”

After a brief pause a strong voice replied, “Steward, are you unharmed?”

“Yes, Ford. We have joined Heda, we will fight with the alliance. Advance the army to the western flank of the Ice Nation. Be ready to fight on my command, if they attack first, don’t wait for me.”

“Steward…” “The voice on the other end wavered. Lexa knew what Ford was thinking, was he being coerced, or was this truly his order. “I need to see you before I can follow that order.” Lexa knew then that she was indeed a good general.

“Ford. I am giving you an order.” Cade’s voice was sharp but Lexa held up her hand.

“She is a good general, Cade. Indra would not be moved by words over the Sky People’s radio either.” Lexa glanced at her general and saw Indra huff and shake her head certainly not. “We will go to her. Tell her to expect us to approach her south-western front at daybreak.” Cade relayed the message and his general told him she would be waiting for them.

Lexa explained her plan to those gathered in the war room. The leaders of the alliance asked questions and added ideas. Lexa answered questions expanding on details until everyone understood. She accepted good ideas and incorporated them into her plan and with equal skill she turned down bad ones all while managing not to upset the leaders. Clarke marvelled at the brilliant strategy her wife had developed and the way she handled herself in the war room, bringing the leaders together and building their camaraderie. She loved this complex woman more with every new side of her she saw. By the end of the meeting the others were beginning to warm to Cade and Dal, they were still wary, but were willing to accept them if the Commander was.

When the plans were finished and everyone knew their roles Lexa nodded to Cade, “Go with Indra and Dal to the stables. Prepare horses, we ride for your army as soon as we can.” Cade nodded and Indra followed him to the stables.

Rachel and Luna approached the Commander, “Heda, let me ride with you. Your guards will not be enough to protect you if this is just another trick.” Rachel spoke and Luna nodded her agreement.

“Lexa, why do you trust him?” Luna added, her voice gentle but betraying her worry.

“His eyes. He cannot hide how he feels. He believed I had murdered his sister. He now knows that is not true. It seems the true murderer is either Yor, or the Ice Prince. He will not betray me. My personal guard will be enough” Lexa stood her ground, ”and you know Indra will not let me get away without her.” Lexa chuckled.

Luna was not convinced. “Clarke, how do you feel about this?” The look of concern on Luna’s face made Clarke move and embrace her.

“I wouldn’t let her go if I didn’t trust him.” Clarke rubbed Luna’s arm and smiled at her. “I am a little fond of the Commander, you know.” Luna chuckled and hugged Clarke. Rachel watched Lexa watching her wife and Luna embrace, she saw a look on the Commander’s face that gave her a glimpse of the young woman she had loved and protected like she had her own sister. She saw Lexa, just Lexa, and she felt resolved to protect her.

“I am going with you Lexa.” Rachel turned and placed a kiss on Luna’s cheek and then walked
away calling back over her shoulder, “I’ll help Indra prepare everything in the stables.”

“She called me Lexa.” Lexa sighed and frowned, a little exasperated at how Rachel could still make her feel like a child. “In the war tent especially she should call me Heda.” She looked at Luna who was trying to hide a smile.

“She wants to protect you like she did when you were young. She loves you.” Luna put on her best ‘big sister’ look and then reached over to touch Lexa’s cheek. “It does not diminish you in the eyes of the people of the alliance. We all want what only you have been able to provide. Peace, and stability are our goals. They followed you in the beginning because you were the strongest and to not follow meant death for their people. Now they follow you because you have delivered on your promise of peace and a better life for all. With the stories of you and Clarke bringing down the mountain and of your love and your union the people and the leaders see you as more than a fearsome commander. Now they follow you for the same reason that I have always followed you, they love you, Lexa.” Luna said her name softly and purposefully.

Lexa looked around at the leaders still gathered there, seven clans were represented in the faces she saw. She saw people of many different skin colours, there were men and women, both young and old. They had different hairstyles, wore different clothes, they all had different customs, and yet they all followed her. They put their trust in her to bring peace and happiness to their people. It was a heavy burden, but one she knew she would die trying to uphold.

The leader of the Lanta Clan stepped forward. She was a tall and very beautiful woman. Her brown skin had warm orange-red undertones and she had amber eyes that sparkled when she smiled. She stood proudly with her shoulders back, her spine straight, and she moved with grace and precision. Lexa had always found her both attractive and intriguing, she was one of the leaders who was also an excellent warrior, Lexa respected that. Lexa also found Cole to be one of the most intelligent leaders, as skilled in politics as she was with a blade. Lexa always enjoyed the conversations she had with her and she respected her opinions. Before Clarke had fallen from the sky, Cole had even secretly shared Lexa’s bed on more than one occasion at meetings of the clans. It was a mutual attraction and nothing more and Cole had been the first of the leaders to offer her sincere congratulations to Lexa and Clarke on their union. She stepped forward now to agree with Luna. “Heda,” She bowed her beautiful face and dropped her eyes in a show of respect, “Luna speaks true. Your union with Heda Kom Skaikru has earned you the hearts of the people. You have shown us more of yourself than just the face of the Commander. Your rule is no longer dependant on your iron grip and merciless reputation. You no longer have to show your strength and put fear in our hearts to ensure we will follow you. We follow you in fealty, loyalty, and in love.” Cole bowed her head once again and smiled.

Lexa smiled back and nodded slightly in acknowledgement, “Thank you Cole.” When the other leaders offered agreement Lexa looked at Luna and suddenly grinned, “I guess I won’t have to cut out Rachel’s tongue for addressing me so informally in the war room then.” Clarke looked taken aback but Luna laughed.

“Thank you Commander, I must say I am rather fond of her tongue.” Luna winked mischievously at Lexa who blushed slightly at her sister’s implication before schooling her features into the mask of the Commander and addressing the leaders.

“Thank you all for your help here tonight. We will win this war. The Ice Nation and the York Clan will not break this alliance. I will return from Cade’s camp tomorrow evening. Until then, do as we discussed.” Lexa reached her hand out to Clarke who joined her immediately and the two women strode out of the war room and outside toward the stables.
As they exited the building, Octavia, Motorbike, and the other guard, who Clarke had dubbed ‘Ribs’ for his stubborn refusal to stay in her medical clinic and let his seventy stitch gash and two broken ribs heal after his fight with the hulking Thor of the Ice Nation, fell in behind them. The stable was a five minute walk and as they neared the halfway mark Lexa stopped and looked into an alley. She held up her hand to stop the guards who had immediately turned to enter the alley, and she spoke an order into the darkness, “Show yourselves.”

Clarke, who had not seen nor heard anything to indicate there was anyone in the alley looked at Lexa worried that her wife was under too much stress. She jumped as three figures cloaked in black with their faces covered by scarves moved silently out of the alley. She looked at her wife again, respect and a little awe on her face. Octavia moved in closer to Clarke, weapon in her hand.

“Great, it’s the ‘toil and trouble’ sisters again.” Octavia whispered through gritted teeth, though Clarke didn’t get her Shakespeare reference.

The green eyed woman who had spoken last time bowed her head to Lexa, “Heda, you live. You killed the false prince. We thank you.”

“You already know who we are, Heda. When you remember we will come to you again.” She turned to leave and Lexa reached out with frightening speed and grabbed her arm. The other two women reacted just a quick and there were two swords under Lexa’s chin before she could do anything else.

“Unhand her, Heda. We are not your enemy.” The brown eyed woman spoke for the first time.

“Drop your swords.” Clarke’s voice didn’t waver, she surprised herself by sounding very much like her wife as her gun aimed squarely at the head of the blue eyed woman whose arm Lexa still gripped tightly. Motorbike and Ribs were seething at the women for daring to raise their swords to Heda’s throat but dared not attack them when they held the Commander in such a dangerous position. They looked proudly at Clarke.

While eyes were focused on Clarke and her gun, Octavia had silently and unnoticed slipped around into the alley and come up behind the two women who had their swords drawn. Her blade settled on the jugular vein of the green eyed woman and she breathed in her ear, “The lady said drop your swords.”

Lexa laughed, a hard, cold laugh that was the Commander’s, not Lexa’s. “Clarke, Octavia, it’s OK. They won’t hurt me.” She looked into the blue eyes, bright like her wife’s. “You had better tell your friends to lower their swords, my wife is not a patient woman. Beautiful, but not patient.” She laughed again and Clarke looked at her like she was crazy, laughing in such a tense situation. The three women looked at each other and a silent understanding passed between them. Swords were lowered and they began to laugh with Lexa. Octavia looked confused but lowered her weapon anyway. Clarke still held hers in both hands but lowered it toward the ground. She looked at the four of them, and saw something that shocked her. They carried themselves like her, stood like her, cocked their heads in the same way when considering something, the creepy way they moved unheard and unseen in and out of shadows was like her. She didn’t know who they were but she felt they had a deep connection with her wife.

“Heda, my arm…” blue eyes looked at Lexa requesting release.

Lexa looked at her and stepped closer. She still held the woman’s arm and as she moved forward she
stared at the end of a tattoo. She began to roll the woman’s sleeve up revealing more of the tattoo and she stared at the pattern, feeling recognition in the back of her mind, but still not able to grasp it. Clarke finally lowered her gun and stepped forward. “Lexa, that is your symbol.” She would recognize it anywhere, she had first seen the circle on her wife’s forehead the first time they met. Since then her fingers had traced the much larger version that was tattooed on her back, many times. On the mysterious young woman’s arm it was the centre of a much more intricate tattoo and it was indeed the symbol of Heda Kom Trigedakru. Lexa merely nodded studying the other symbols that radiated out from hers, still trying to pull memories from the back of her mind.

After a minute Lexa released the other woman’s arm and stepped back. She looked at each of the women, looked into each of their eyes. They held her gaze and each bowed respectfully. Then they turned, brushed past Octavia with a harder than necessary bump, and started to disappear again into the alley. One woman stopped and turned. Brown eyes looked into green, “The Steward of the Lakes knows more than he realizes. Ask him about the past.” When Lexa nodded she turned and followed her two friends into the alley.

“Creepy!” Octavia repeated and heard Motorbike grunt an agreement as she stared after the women.

“Lex?” Clarke reached out and grabbed her wife’s hand.

“It’s OK Clarke. They mean no harm. I’m sure of it.” Lexa squeezed her wife’s hand and they turned and continued on to the stables.

When they arrived at the stables they all looked curiously at Cade. He assumed it was a lingering distrust and he knew the only way to change it was to stand by the Commander and the Alliance and wipe out the threat from the Ice King and Yor forever. He nodded at Clarke, “We will return tomorrow before your evening meal. Your wife is safe with us.”

He didn’t look quite as cool as he had the day he rolled in on his bike but Clarke was slightly breathless watching Cade and Dal as they mounted the horses and sat straight and tall in their saddles. They were a handsome couple with Dal’s sandy hair and piercing blue eyes and the contrast of Cade’s jet black hair, strong chin, and deep, sad, brown eyes. Clarke could barely take her eyes off of them. That is until a second later when Lexa, still suffering from the morning fight with the Ice Prince, effortlessly mounted her horse and sat proudly in full armour and war paint. Even with the bruises on her face from the fight Clarke was certain Lexa was the sexiest person on the ground. Lexa smiled down at her wife, enjoying the way Clarke’s eyes raked up and down over her body. She urged her horse over so she could reach down and cup Clarke’s face. “I will return tomorrow. Take charge while I am gone. Hirrim and Luna will support you. Stick to the plan. If they attack, Trigedakru will wipe them out from the back and Hirrim’s riders will hold them at the front. Ste Yuj, Houmon.” With that Lexa sat straight and kicked her horse into a quick trot. As soon as the riders were away from the stable she quickly accelerated into a gallop and Clarke smiled as she saw Rachel and Motorbike overtake her and ride in front of Heda, her first line of defence.

She watched them until they turned a corner and she couldn’t see them anymore. She sighed and turned to Luna. “Get some sleep. I am going to go and find my mother and see if I can help out in medical for a few hours. I’m too wound up to sleep.” Luna nodded and turned towards the villa where Clarke and Lexa stayed, she would be staying there tonight. “Octavia why don’t you go find Lincoln and get some rest?” Clarke tried to dismiss her friend but Octavia laughed at her.

“And leave you with just Ribs here for a guard? He can’t even ride a horse, how’s he supposed to protect you!?” The girl ducked quickly as Ribs shot his fist out to show her just how much damage he could still do. He had not been happy when Heda had dismissed him from the group that would ride out to Cade’s army. She had told him he could not ride with his injuries, when he had still
refused to rest in the medical tent she assigned him to protect Clarke. She had raised an eyebrow and warned him that if anything happened to her wife because he could not protect her due to his injuries he would feel her blade. Clarke had given Lexa a dirty look then but she had seen how Ribs’ face had glowed with pride that the Commander had trusted him to fight through his injury and protect her. She had rolled her eyes and thought to herself that she would just never understand some parts of her wife’s culture.

Clarke laughed at Octavia and Ribs as they continued to jokingly spar and she began to walk towards the medical tent that had been quickly constructed to deal with the injuries from today’s attack. “Fine O, you can both come with me. It’ll give me a chance to change his bandages and check on the wound anyway. He won’t let me unless there is another Trigedakru warrior to stand guard.” Clarke rolled her eyes and gestured towards Ribs.

“At least he does something right.” Octavia jabbed and ducked another punch from Ribs.

“How does Lincoln put up with you?” He grunted.

“He speaks!!” Octavia laughed and slapped him good-naturedly on his uninjured shoulder.

Clarke smiled at her escorts and led them into the medical tent. Her mother was still going from patient to patient, talking with healers from other clans and generally trying to do the work of five doctors. Clarke walked over to her and put her hand on her mom’s shoulder. “Mom. I’ll take over for a couple of hours. Go and get some sleep.” Clarke was worried, her mom looked dead on her feet. Abby shook her head no and Clarke pressed on, “Tomorrow a real battle will likely break out. There will be many more people who will need your help. You need to sleep.” Clarke insisted and Abby gave in.

“Fine. I will. But only if you promise to do the same. One hour here and then straight to bed. Deal?” Abby smiled at her daughter. “The healers have everything under control here anyway. They can handle all of the injuries without us. I have been able to teach them a few things, and to be honest I’ve learned a few things today too.” Abby looked around and felt satisfied at the work she had done today. She hadn’t lost any patients who had come to her alive.

Clarke looked around and spotted Kane. He had been at the war meeting earlier but had come directly here afterwards. He saw the two women talking and came over. “Clarke, you should rest. Tomorrow will be a long day.” He looked at her with concern.

“I know. I was just making a deal with mom. She’s going to go to bed and I am going to follow in about an hour.” Clarke smiled. “I can have a guard escort you back.” She offered.

“We’ll be fine. But thank you.” Kane assured Clarke gesturing to the pistol on his right hip and the dagger on his left.

Clarke watched her mom and Kane leave and hoped the two of them were finding their way romantically. She thought they looked good together. When they had gone she turned to her guards. “OK, off with your shirt Ribs. Let’s take a look at those stitches.”

He frowned and looked at Octavia. When he was satisfied that she was acting sentry at the entrance he pulled his shirt off grimacing at the pain in his side. He was a huge man. His chest was like a barrel, solid muscle and covered in tattoos. Clarke remembered how even he had looked small beside the Ice Warrior he had killed and she shivered. “Ribs. I’m glad you won that fight.” She confessed. “I kinda like you and Motorbike.” She felt a small chuckle go through his chest and then he winced in pain. “Your ribs are broken, laughing hurts,” Clarke teased him.
She cleaned and inspected his wound and changed his bandage. Then she looked at his bruised side and gently felt the broken ribs. They seemed to be lined up properly and there was nothing more she could do for him. She looked up at him and nodded. “You’ll live.” She winked at him. Looking at his face she suddenly realized how young he was. Because of his long beard she had assumed he was much older but looking closely she thought maybe not. “I know Motorbike is just a baby, but how old are you Ribs?”

He looked down at Clarke surprised, “I have seen 26 summers.” He told her.

How long have you been Lexa’s guard?

“Since she was called to lead.” He answered. “In my sixteenth year I got Wamplei. I lived, and the following year when it came again I was assigned to burn the dead. It was a bad year,” he shook his head remembering. “Heda was only eleven then. Already a warrior in training, already leading. There were only six of us who were able to handle the dead. There were more than sixty bodies to burn that year. Many of them no older than her. It is exhausting work and when we would tire we would watch a tiny eleven year old girl carry bodies herself and give the full funeral rites to each and every one, no thought for her own pain and exhaustion. She gave us the strength to continue. After that I knew Heda’s spirit would choose her when the time came. I stayed close, became one of Anya’s top soldiers to stay close to her. When she fell ill with the dreams I was there to help bring her to the elders.” He spoke with such love for Lexa that Clarke was moved.

“The dreams? What do you mean?” Clarke asked, wanting to hear more.

“When the Commander dies the spirit is released. There are many young warriors who train hard to prepare themselves to receive the spirit. Only one is chosen, the spirit chooses the one who is best able to lead, the one who can bear the title of Heda. Once the spirit chooses it enters the body of it’s chosen leader. The new Commander falls ill, memories like dreams invade her mind and her soul. She sees things, relives the lives of the past commanders and feels each of their deaths. It is a terrible experience.” He paused, a faraway look on his face. Then he continued.

“Heda Lexa collapsed during a hunt, her head bombarded with memories that were not her own. He body suffering the pain of the deaths of the previous commander. Anya and I were with her. We both knew immediately that The Commander had died and that the spirit was choosing Lexa. Anya held her though the initial pain and I went quickly to find Nyko. Some of the chosen do not survive the transition. The memories drive them mad, or the pain is so great they find ways to end it. When we got Lexa back to the camp Costia came and held her hand through the first night. The next day she was in and out of consciousness, she shouted things to people she had never met and had been dead since before she was born. She discussed old battles and she felt the pain of more deaths. Anya left to bring back the Trigeda elders and while Costia rested I sat with her. I talked to her, answered her shouts and heard her confessions.” Ribs looked at Clarke. “She was very brave. I knew she would be a great leader, but she is even more than I imagined. With you she is more than anyone imagined. You two make us all strong, Heda Kom Skaikru.” He bowed his head to Clarke and then got up and put his shirt back on, wincing as he pulled it over his head.

Clarke knew the conversation was over but she had so many questions. Again she thought how little she knew about Lexa’s past. She sighed and forced herself back to the present. She smiled softly at Ribs and thanked him for sharing, then she went to talk to the healers. She checked on some of the more serious patients and adjusted their IVs and meds. Once that was done she went back to the entrance ready to retire for the evening. Ribs and Octavia waited for her and she was pleased to see Lincoln there as well. “Did your scouting trip bring any news? She asked as Heda.

“No, Heda Kom Skaikru. All is the same. Our enemies do not advance or retreat, yet.” Lincoln gave
his report to Heda Kom Skaikru and then continued but dropped the formalness addressing her by name, “Clarke, Octavia and I will stay in your room tonight. If you are uncomfortable with me being there I still must insist that Octavia stay. I don’t want you to be alone. Our enemies have shown they can infiltrate, even as far as your bedchamber.”

“Lincoln, I’ll be fine,” she started but a look from Octavia stopped her, “Fine. You two can stay.” She gave in and Octavia grinned.

“Sleepover!” She joked and Clarke rolled her eyes refusing to admit that she felt slightly relieved that they would be with her.

When they arrived back at the Villa Clarke turned to Ribs, “Your injury requires that you rest. Lincoln and Octavia will be with me until morning. Go to your bed and sleep.” She tried to sound like Lexa did when she talked to the guards because they never argued with her. She didn’t think she had gotten the tone quite right by the small smirk on the large man’s face, but he bowed his head in acknowledgement. After looking intently at both Lincoln and Octavia who met his gaze with their own intensity he wished Clarke a good night and assured her he would be waiting at her door come first light. Then he turned and walked down the hallway towards the rest area that was provided for the guards.

Clarke suddenly felt the length of the day wear on her and she entered her room and looked at her bed. She realized that she hadn’t slept in days. Between the marathon of love making two nights ago, and last night’s long meetings and then watching Lexa sleep until daybreak, Clarke was exhausted. She crawled into the bed and barely noticed when Lincoln left and came back with a mattress of furs and Octavia curled up on them as he took the first watch. Clarke’s last thought before sleep took her was of her wife. For that last second before sleep she concentrated as hard as she could on envisioning her wife coming back to her safely, just as she had promised.

Lexa let Rachel lead the party as they galloped out towards the Lake People’s army. They passed through several checkpoints of warriors from several different clans. All of them parted to let the riders through as soon as they recognized Heda. She made it a point to look directly at the warriors as she passed by them, nodding to them all. She knew that she might be asking them to fight and to die in the coming days and she wanted to remember the faces of as many as possible. She also knew that personal interactions with the Commander made them braver, stronger, and more sure. If she could give them strength she would.

They approached Cade’s army as the sun was starting to rise. Lexa could see snipers in the trees and although Ford sat perfectly straight in her saddle her horse fidgeted beneath her, belying the rider’s nerves. She suspected this general was more comfortable on one of the motorbikes her wife was so enthralled with, Lexa’s own horse would never had fidgeted so. Despite that, she approved of this general and as Indra closed the distance between them and put herself into position to cover Heda from the hidden archers she thought that the two of them could probably win this war without input from her or any of the other leaders. She smiled inside but her face remained Heda’s impenetrable mask.

Cade moved forward as they closed the distance, he and Dal pulled up next to Rachel and he held his hand up in the air signalling his people not to attack. When they reached the waiting general Cade greeted her and Ford briefed him quickly and quietly. With a quick hand signal he stood down the rest of his soldiers and then he turned to Heda. “Commander, we should move our meeting into the camp. It is safer there. There have been a few skirmishes with assassins from York trying to break through this front.
The Commander nodded her consent and she felt the eyes of the general burning into her. She met her gaze and was impressed when the young woman held it until a word from Cade took her attention away. It reminded her of the way Cade had looked at her but there was something else there. Rachel took up position in front of Lexa, Indra and Motorbike flanked her and the other guard brought up the rear. They all felt the eyes of the Lake soldiers on the Commander and none of them were willing to chance giving anyone a clear shot at her.

Dal had picked up on it as well and he dropped back to ride even with Rachel giving stern looks to his people as they passed by. Cade and Ford rode together discussing recent events as they got closer to the centre of the camp.

When they stopped their horses near a large tent that Lexa realized looked very similar to her own war tent she knew that was where they would talk. She dismounted and heard the murmuring of the crowd grow louder. It was obvious to her that his people shared the same false notion that she had murdered their leader. Her face showed no emotion but she knew what she had to do, she also knew Indra would most definitely not like it. She stepped into the centre of the clearing and looked at Cade. She projected her voice loudly, “Cade, Steward of the Lakes. Your people need to be taught some manners.” She sneered the sentence, dripping with sarcasm and laced with power. She felt Indra and Rachel move to flank her and draw their swords. Motorbike and the other guards were two steps to the front and back of her, eyes scanning the crowd for any signs of attack.

The crowd reacted violently, shouting and surging forward. Cade stepped forward quickly and shouted to his people in an angry, harsh voice. “Be silent!” He bellowed. He drew his sword and faced his people. Ford drew hers and stood next to him. Dal circled the Commander’s entourage, eyes scanning the crowd, like her guards. The crowd quieted and Cade continued, “Your steward has brought the Commander of the eleven clans here. We are one of the eleven, and you will show the proper respect to Heda, or you will answer to me.” His voice was strong and held a challenge. He let out a breath when Ford jabbed her sword into the ground and dropped to one knee bowing her head to The Commander. Once they saw the general paying respects the soldiers slowly followed suit.

Lexa had begun to relax her tensed muscles when a shout came from her left side, Rachel turned just in time to bat a dagger from the air with her sword. Lexa felt Indra's body slip into place in front of hers, between Heda and the danger, and her guards closed ranks and cut them off from the crowd. As the man who had thrown the dagger charged Lexa watched, trying not to show how impressed she was, as Dal moved with an assassins deadly grace and blocked his path. He knocked the man’s sword arm away with a quick blocking thrust of his forearm and quickly closed the distance between himself and the attacker. He slid in behind the man and his strong arms closed around the man’s neck. A quick movement of his biceps and he snapped the attacker’s neck. He let the body fall at his feet, dead, and then he glared at the crowd.

“Anyone else?” Dal shouted to the crowd. “Your Steward has given you an order. Are there any others who would like to disobey? If so, please come and see me. Perhaps one of you can even make me have to draw my weapon?” Dal made it a point to make sure they didn’t forget that he had just killed an armed soldier with his bare hands.

Ford had risen and was at his side now. She nodded to him and took over, “Enough! bow to Heda, leader of the eleven clans!” As she shouted all of the Lake People gathered bowed and gave Heda the respect she demanded. When she was certain no more attacks were coming Lexa spoke again.

“En Pleni. Stand, people of the Lakes. Your Steward and I have come to an understanding. Know this, your leader, the one known as Rock. She did not die by my hand; but any of you trying to stand against me will.” With that Lexa walked into the war tent followed closely by Cade. They heard the
crowd outside demanding more information and they heard Dal and Ford ordering them back to their training. Lexa knew Rachel, Indra, and the guards had taken up positions around the tent and when Dal and Ford entered she asked Cade for two guards he trusted to replace Indra and Rachel, she wanted her generals in the tent.

When her generals joined the group and Ford’s second had also joined them Lexa nodded to Cade and he explained to his people what he had found out about the Ice King and Yor. When he told Ford that Lexa did not kill Rock Lexa watched the woman’s face. Ford turned to her, “Is this true, Heda?” Her eyes were staring at Lexa with an intensity that felt familiar.

“It is true. Rock did not complete her journey, I never met her. She was killed before she reached my lands.” Lexa held the general’s gaze and watched the emotions war on the otherwise pretty face. She recognized the pain in the woman’s eyes. “You loved her.” It was not a question.

Ford looked at Lexa, surprised and blushed. “Yes. But she was not mine. She loved another and I was content to devote my life to leading her armies, trying to keep her safe. She should have taken me with her that day.” Ford’s eyes were haunted, “I could have protected her.” Lexa could tell the woman believed that.

“No, Ford. You could not have. The Ice nation took someone from me too, long ago. My first love, her name was Costia. They tortured her and murdered her because she was mine. Had you gone, they would have done the same to both of you.” Lexa reached out and squeezed the shoulder of the woman and held her gaze for a moment longer. “Now let us discuss the plan. Yor and the Ice King will pay.”

Rachel, Indra and Ford went over Lexa’s plan. Ford added a few details and together with Indra, she pointed out a few weak areas. With Cade and Lexa’s permission she left the tent and immediately dispatched small groups of her warriors to shore up the weak areas and Lexa radioed Echo and Bellamy to let them know when and where to expect reinforcements from the Lake People. Echo and Bellamy were her field generals, Bellamy had snuck through the enemy lines on the eastern flank and joined the Trigeda army and Echo was with the Horse Clan’s general. They each had radios and thanked Heda for the support assuring her that riders would be dispatched to greet the Lake warriors immediately.

When the details were worked out and Lexa was happy with the plan she finally allowed her mind to drift back to the mysterious women that kept approaching her. “Cade, I need to know more about your sister, and your mother. I need to know about your past with the Ice Nation and the Clan of York.” Cade looked uncomfortable but he nodded. Rachel’s head snapped around and she looked intently at Lexa.

“Heda, how much do you remember about the week you were chosen?” She asked, suddenly pale.

Lexa turned her gaze to Rachel, “Very little… I can see you have something to say, but I would like to hear Cade speak first,” Lexa spoke firmly. Rachel nodded her head, still looking like she’d seen a ghost. Lexa was intrigued and she heard Indra curse the mystery they found themselves intwined in.

Cade and Dal exchanged a look and when Dal nodded at him Cade took a deep breath and began to speak. “You are right Heda there is more you need to hear. Let me start at the true beginning.” When Lexa nodded he spoke again, “Our people were strong allies with the Ice Nation and with the Clan of York when my mother was our leader. We had peace between our people, trade flourished and we helped each other survive however we could. The Ice Queen who ruled then was the older sister to the woman who killed your Costia. She ruled strictly but fairly. The Ice Nation was a matriarchy, power would pass to the Queen’s eldest daughter. The queen had a daughter, Skadi. She was young but she ruled much like her mother. She was murdered about one year after her mother. When she
died and her aunt took over my sister distanced our people from the Ice Nation. The new queen, Sula, was greedy and cared not for her people, only for power.” Cade stopped and thought for a minute before continuing his tale while Lexa grimaced at hearing the name of the woman who had murdered Costia.

“My mother was next. It seemed to be a hunting accident. Her entire party was wiped out by ice cats, it was a spring hunt and strange for the beasts to be so far south so late in the year. Rock believed that Sula had brought the beasts there and that our mother’s death had not been an accident.” He looked hard at Rachel. “Your Commander fell a season later, around the same time as the leader of York.” When Rachel nodded in agreement, tears shining in her eyes, Cade continued.

“I know more about York, my sister had close ties there. The leader of York was a woman as well, she was known by the title of Mayor. Her name was Ja-Kie. Yor was known by a different name then, Gunther. He was one of her advisors. I remember how much my mother disliked him. She questioned Ja-kie about him often, but she insisted he could be trusted, He was her late husband’s brother. Ja-Kie had been a peace builder, like you. She wanted trade and peace and cooperation. She had been the first to reach out to the Ice Nation and to my mother. Our peace was built mostly on her effort. Her next step was to be a truce with your people. I had only seen fourteen summers, and my sister twelve when they held the first secret meeting. The four leaders came together and peace was discussed. It seemed like a deal had been reached and after that skirmishes on the border of Trigeda territory stopped.”

Lexa glanced at Rachel who nodded, “Heda was there.” She confirmed. I remember you, young Steward. And your sister, she was impressive even at her young age.” Rachel nodded solemnly with her compliment and Cade dipped his head in thanks.

He looked back to Lexa and continued, “The Mayor was also murdered a season after my mother’s death. Rock told me that she was killed coming from a secret meeting. She said it was a meeting with Heda Kom Trigedakru. They say that the Tree Commander was murdered the exact same day, ambushed as she rode back into her own territory. Rock heard that the mayor had been killed by a single arrow. She was told the arrow was the type used by the York army assassins. The coward slipped away without a trace and no one else was killed. Her people passed power through the female leaders as well but in a different way. There was a special school for young women who could one day become leaders. They were chosen young and enrolled in the school. When the Mayor died or stepped down the next leader was chosen from that school. There was always a time in between when an advisor would lead temporarily. When Ja-Kie was murdered Gunther became the temporary leader. The Mayor’s daughter was the top student in the leadership school and it was widely known that she would be the next to lead. Her name was Zora. She was remarkable.” He glanced regretfully at Ford. “My sister loved her. They stole moments when they could. It wasn’t easy for them, but they were young and in love.” He sighed. “That is why I headed straight for York when I went looking for Rock. She would have gone there first. To see Zora. Gunther was still in charge when this happened. Zora had to complete school before formally taking command.” Cade took a deep breath and gathered his thoughts before continuing, “It was shortly after Rock was killed that the school burned. All of the students were trapped inside. No one survived. Gunther declared himself permanent leader and he took a shortened form of Mayor as his name when he took power. No man had held the title of mayor since before the bombs fell. The people likely would have fought against a male mayor, so he took the name Yor, and named himself the commander of the armies and of the people of York. He claimed he had no choice, that with the school destroyed there was no one else to take control.” Cade paused and looked at Lexa with his deep brown eyes. “The fire was suspicious. My mother had spies in each nation for years before her death. They reported to Rock and to me. They told me that they were certain the fire had not been an accident.”

Cade finished his tale and Lexa looked to Rachel. “Rachel, speak. Tell me of the death of my
predecessor."

Rachel looked intently at Lexa. “You know, Heda. It is in your memories. Search them.”

Lexa lost her temper. “It is buried deep in the soul I carry. It isn’t easy to make sense of the memories and it is a dangerous to pry open that part of me, Rachel. Tell me, now.” Lexa ordered.

Rachel nodded, “I was with her. There was indeed a secret meeting. They talked in secret about the deaths of the Ice Queen and The leader of the lake People. I believe the Mayor suspected treason but I was not privy to that conversation. The mayor mostly talked of peace. She had the Ice Nation and the Lake Clan behind her. Heda questioned the abilities of the two young and untested leaders but Ja-Kie insisted they were strong. Heda had the support of the Coast - Luna’s people have always wanted peace, and the Horse Clan. She was certain she could get the Lanta Clan to join as well. The meeting went well and peace between the clans was looking like reality.” Rachel trailed off and looked at the ground. “On the way back it was like Cade explained, there was no warning, a single arrow shot from the trees. Heda was covered on all sides by guards and the shooter threaded the arrow through an opening so small I don’t believe even I could have made the shot. He had to have been at least 200 meters away in order to get away before we caught him. The only people trained to shoot like that are the York assassins.” Rachel sighed. “When we got back to camp Costia told me you had been chosen. I went to you and you were shouting about treason and murder. You spoke of treachery and you called out the names of the fallen leaders of the three nations to our north. El, Ja-Kie, and Diana.”

“My mother,” Cade breathed out. “Diana was my mother and El was the Ice Queen, Skadi’s mother. How could you know that?

“I didn’t, the Commander’s Spirit did.” Lexa frowned. “It’s hard to explain. When I was chosen it was like a battle was being fought inside my head. My mind was bombarded by memories from the spirit. I was filled with the knowledge and power of the previous commanders but I was also tormented by their mistakes, the people they had lost. I felt the pain of death rack my body, arrows pierced my skin, swords ran through me, teeth of wild animals tore at me, and even the pain of a death by slow torture. It took me days to block it all out, to try and hold on to the knowledge that was imparted and lock away the unwanted memories, the pain and loss. Trying to see the memories of the spirit is risking letting all of that flood my mind again.” Lexa stopped and looked at Rachel. “I will not risk the distraction.”

With that Lexa rose and addressed Cade. “Let us check your perimeter and make sure your soldiers are ready.” Cade and Ford rose and accompanied her out of the tent. Indra as always, was at her side. Rachel stayed behind and asked Dal to prepare a rider for her. He took her outside and brought her to a young woman who blushed as he insisted she was the fastest rider in the Lake People’s army. Rachel relayed a message for her wife and sent the rider to Sapeake.

Lexa and Cade walked through the entire camp and Lexa tested some of his warrior’s skills. She sparred and defeated his best, even though she was still suffering from the injuries inflicted by Ice Prince’s blows. She did this to gain respect. She knew his people did not trust her and that could only be fixed with time. Until that day she would make sure they respected, and feared her. When they returned to the war tent it was almost noon. Lexa could feel exhaustion trying to creep into her body and she fought against it. She accepted the food Cade offered. Dal watched her keenly and as she ate he approached her. He had a drink in his hand and he took a drink from the cup before offering it to her. “It will give you energy, Heda. You have not slept in some time. I assume Clarke kept you awake the night before you fought the Ice Prince in the same way I kept Cade awake.” He smiled and a slight blush brushed his cheeks. Lexa offered him a smile.
“She did. But as commander I am accustomed to days without sleep.” She forced herself to sit straighter, but she reached out for the drink anyway. “I will not refuse your hospitality, though. Thank you.” Lexa drained the cup and only grimaced slightly at the taste. It reminded her of some of the Sky People’s medicine, but it also had a taste of the sea. She eyed Dal suspiciously. “What did I just drink?” She asked wryly.

Dal laughed, “It is made from a combination of medical herbs and certain algae from our lakes. You will feel it in a few minutes. It will get you through the rest of the day, Heda.” Dal bowed his head to her and left her to finish her meal.

When they had finished eating Cade gave some more instructions to Ford and told Lexa he was ready to return to Sapeake with her. She told him he did not need to return with her, that she trusted him. He insisted he would be by her side until this was over and the same group that had arrived that morning set out for the city once again.

As they passed the south western front they saw that a group of soldiers from Lanta had moved North and joined the Lake army. Lexa stopped and spoke with their general and Cade made sure his people knew they were to cooperate completely with the allies.

The ride back was quick and Lexa rode hard feeling energy running through her veins. She glanced over at Dal and when she caught his eye she nodded her thanks. He just smiled at her. The party arrived back in the city earlier than they had expected but scouts had reported their arrival and they found Clarke waiting at the stables flanked by Octavia and Ribs.

As Lexa dismounted Clarke briefed her on the situation. The Ice People had been sending small scouting groups trying to punch through on all sides. York had been trying similar tactics sending assassins to try and cut through the wall of the Trigeda army between them and freedom. The allied armies were containing them for now and no major moves had happened on either side. Lexa followed her wife to the war tent and she went over the plan with the additions from Cade’s general. When everyone was satisfied and they all knew to meet back in the tent at dawn Lexa dismissed them. Ro informed them that dinner had been prepared for them and most of the leaders went directly there. Lexa remained behind wanting a moment with Clarke. As soon as they were alone she pulled her into her arms and kissed her lips.

“Lexa, you must be so tired, I haven’t even been able to examine you for injuries after that fight.” Clarke’s hands sought her wife’s lower back massaging small circles and eliciting a sigh.

“Don’t worry Houmon, very soon you can examine my body as closely as you like.” Lexa grinned and shot a lusty look at Clarke.

“I’m serious you pervert.” Clarke giggled and kissed her wife’s lips softly. “How are you still standing? And don’t even say the word prowess…” Clarke threatened.

Lexa tried to look insulted but ended up with a sheepish grin. “I am tired” she admitted, “Dal gave me some horrible tasting tonic his people use for energy. It works even better than Abby’s coffee.” Lexa smiled and stole one more kiss before taking Clarke’s hand and pulling her towards the door. “Let us eat and then retire, I feel I should inspect your body for injuries too Clarke.” When she felt her wife swat her shoulder she turned and very seriously said, “It’s OK Nyko has shown me the basics of being a healer” She continued walking feeling more energy return to her with Clarke’s magical laugh ringing in her ears.

As they exited the building Lexa frowned. Luna and Rachel were waiting for her. She knew this wasn’t good. “What?” Her tone was terse.
“You need to remember.” Rachel wouldn’t meet her eyes.

Luna stepped between the two women, when she saw the dangerous glint in Lexa’s eyes. “I asked Cole, she sent me to the Creole Clan. Their healer prepared something for you. Take it before you sleep. The dreams will open your mind and when you awake the effects will be gone, but you will remember everything.” Luna pressed a small bottle into Clarke’s hand and addressed her “It is important that she does this Clarke. There is more going on than we yet realize and Lexa holds the memories that can reveal everything.” She turned back to Lexa, “I am sorry, sister of my heart, I know you don’t want those memories. But you know as well as I do that it is the only way.” Luna and Rachel turned to leave and Clarke looked at Lexa who still hadn’t spoken a word. Clarke looked to Indra who shrugged and Octavia who purposefully looked away.

“Lex, tell me what’s going on.” Her voice was soft but would not be turned away.

“I will Clarke, after we eat. We will go to our bed and I will tell you everything. Then we will decide together if I will drink that damn tonic.” Lexa sighed and walked toward the sounds and smells of the dinner Ro’s cooks had prepared for the clan leaders.

Dinner was more conversations of strategy, more proclamations of impending victory, and more words of tribute to Heda. Lexa turned to Clarke after a particularly long tribute and grinned, “Do you hear how they laud my prowess, Houmon.”

Clarke narrowed her eyes at her wife and wiped the grin from Lexa’s face, “I have learned many things while you were away, Houmon. Cole, leader of the Lanta Clan, beautiful woman. How many other’s here are lauding your prowess because they have been in your bed?”

Lexa swallowed against the lump suddenly in her throat and looked closely at Clarke trying to tell if she was really angry. She guessed that wasn’t the case and hoped she was right. “As Heda there have always been many women and men who wished to be in my bed. Just as there are many who wish to be in yours, Heda Kom Skaikru. What I did before I met you, and who I did it with, should not concern you, Houmon.” Lexa watched Clarke’s face relax a little “What concerns you is that your mother has a sword that was designed specifically to cut my heart out should I bring anyone else to my bed. I plan on keeping my heart in my chest, Clarke.” Lexa smiled and Clarke laughed at her.

“I was just teasing you, Lexa. Your past lovers don’t bother me, I just wanted to watch you squirm.” Clarke smiled in victory and Lexa tried unsuccessfully to look gruff. She gave up and reached for Clarke’s hand. She brought it to her mouth and kissed her knuckles. “Let’s go, Lex.” Clarke whispered to her wife. “I want to be alone with you for a while.” When Lexa’s face lit up in a knowing grin she shook her head, “Not that! You are insatiable!” She laughed at Lexa’s suddenly glum expression and added, “I want you to hold me for a while.” Lexa nodded and stood immediately. She was craving closeness as well and quickly said goodnight to their hosts and shot Luna a forgiving look before turning back to Clarke. She took her hand and led her to the villa. Octavia and the guards followed and Lincoln joined them halfway to the villa.

“Nothing to report, Heda.” He informed Lexa and the group quickly made their way into the building.

Lexa turned to her guards. “Rest. Send your seconds to guard the door tonight. Tell them to enter only if they hear one of us call for help. Other noises can be ignored. Octavia, Lincoln, rest together. Octavia, Raven has a radio if you wish to talk with your brother. Indra, you did well today working with Ford, rest tonight. Tomorrow we will need our wits about us.” She dismissed them all and walked with Clarke to their room.
They entered, closed the door and turned to look at one another. Clarke reached for her wife’s face, fingers tracing the black eye she sported and inspecting the busted lip. “You’re lucky he didn’t knock out your teeth, Lex.” She sighed. “Did you have to let him beat on you so badly? It was hell to watch.” She led Lexa over to sit on the stool by the wash basin that had been provided. She had also instructed that a bath be drawn for them and she wiped the leftover blood and dirt from her wife before carefully removing the warpaint. She stripped Lexa of her clothes and then removed her own. She led her extremely tired wife to the steaming hot bath that was waiting for them in the corner of the room. They sank into the water, Clarke leaned against the wooden frame of the tub and Lexa leaned back against Clarke’s chest.

Lexa sighed in pleasure feeling the hot water relieve some of the aches in her muscles. She pressed against Clarke and feeling her wife’s breasts against her back reminded her of why she fought so hard; happiness and peace. Her people deserved the chance to find what she had with Clarke.

Clarke washed her wife gently, cleaning the day away from her skin. She let Lexa relax against her for a while before speaking.

“What remember what?” She asked once she had Lexa clean.

“When the Commander of the Tree Clan dies the spirit of the Commander chooses the new Commander. When one is chosen the spirit enters her body. All of the memories of all of the commander’s since the bombs fell exist in my soul. Some Commander’s in the past accepted all of the memories at the expense of their own sanity. Most of us try to take what we need from it and block the rest from our conscious minds. When I was chosen the memories flooded my brain. I fell into a dream sleep for days before I could regain control of my mind. I blocked the memories and I have no wish to revisit them.” Lexa sighed and pulled Clarke’s arms tighter around her. “But it seems that the previous Commander might know more about the murders of the previous leaders of the Lake, Ice Nation, and York and their daughters. It seems likely that they were all connected and that Yor and the Ice King were behind it. If we can prove it Cade wants to inspire the people to rebellion. He says they both used to be peaceful clans and that the people are suffering under Yor and the king. We will defeat their armies here but Cade and I want to ride into their lands with proof of treason and be liberators, not conquerors.”

Clarke remained quiet listening to her wife. Her hands running healing patterns over Lexa’s skin.

Lexa continued the story, “The Ice Queen and her daughter were murdered. The queen’s sister took over, she killed Costia to get to me. I lived. I killed her. Her husband and son took over. The Mayor of York and her daughter were both murdered. Yor took over. The leader of the Lake people and her daughter were murdered. Her son was told that I murdered his sister and he turned against me. He helped the Ice King and Yor plot another assassination attempt against me, here. The Commander before me was murdered returning from a secret meeting with the Mayor of York. I became Heda, I brought peace to the clans. Yor and the Ice King seem to be fixated on having me killed and the alliance broken.” Lexa sighed, “there is something else that keeps pulling at my mind. It all fits together but something is still missing.”

“What about the three women we keep meeting in dark alleys?” Clarke asked.

“They are a piece of this puzzle, I’m sure. Perhaps they are leaders of underground rebellions, or even distant heirs in hiding.” Lexa furrowed her brow. “I have to drink the tonic.”

Clarke kissed the top of her head, “Yes, you do.” She stood from the tub, and wrapped a towel around herself. Then she held the other towel open for Lexa. When she stepped out of the tub Clarke wrapped her in the softness and rubbed gently, drying her skin. When she was dry Clarke led her to the bed and brought her some clean sleeping clothes. While she dressed Clarke found the small bottle
Luna had given her. "What is going to happen when you drink this?" She questioned.

"I will dream. Probably talk, shout, maybe move around. I won’t be conscious, I won’t be myself.” Lexa looked apologetic and Clarke shook her head.

"I will be right here with you, if it is too much call for me. I will bring you back.” Clarke promised. She quickly dried herself and dressed in sleeping clothes. She climbed into the bed and watched as Lexa drank the tonic in one quick shot. Lexa grimaced at the taste and looked at Clarke, she kissed her lips chastely before lying down and allowing the sleepy feeling to envelop her.

Clarke kept watch, she monitored Lexa’s breathing, her heart rate, and she readied the shot of adrenaline she had snuck into the room just in case.

Lexa woke in a foggy haze. She was confused at first but slowly realized she must be inside of her dream. She looked around and she saw bodies on the ground. Lake People, torn to bits, it looked like a wild animal had attacked them. She searched for the leader. She called out for Diana. A corpse answered her, “Protect my daughter.”

The fog grew thicker and then cleared, she was in the Ice Nation’s capital. There were arrows flying. Guards fall trying to protect the queen. They cry out cursing the traitors, they die. The queen’s body is struck by arrow after arrow. Lexa calls out to her, she knows her name, El. The lifeless lips speak, “Protect my daughter.”

The fog grows again, and clears to reveal a forest. Ja-Kie is riding with her guards. An arrow flies, finds it’s target. The mayor falls. Lexa says her name softly and she answers, “Protect my daughter.”

Again the fog overtakes her and when it clears she is in the field where she married Clarke and she is looking into the eyes of the Commander, the one she served as a young warrior. She bows her head out of habit, “Heda.” She says out loud. Clarke hears her and presses her cool hand onto Lexa’s burning forehead. Dream Lexa feels warmth and love run through her like a shiver. She doesn’t know why, she thinks of the stars.

Dream Lexa raises her eyes to the Commander. Heda looks closely at her and bows her own head, “Heda” she addresses Lexa. “You are my equal now Lexa. Let us speak plainly.” Lexa merely nods, she is distracted by the meadow, it is filling up with women; with Commanders. She sees all of them file out of the woods. They all have something to tell her, they want to show her how they died. She knows that is not why she is there. She looks at the one who chose her and says a name. “Ja-Kie.”

The Commander nods sadly and takes Lexa’s hand. The fog comes again.

When it clears Lexa and the dead Commander are watching a meeting. The Commander and Ja-Kie walk into a tent. Lexa looks around. Rachel is guarding the tent but there is a commotion and she leaves her post to a guard from York and goes to check the perimeter where one of her men and one of Ja-Kie’s swear they saw someone in the woods. Lexa watches as Yor dismisses the guard and circles to the back of the tent pressing his ear to the tent listening. Lexa enters the tent, pulled by the dead Commander. It is important that Lexa hear this conversation.

“Ja-Kie, how do you know it was Sula? Skadi reported that is was a rebel village from far in the North that had sent the assassins; and Diana was killed on a hunt.” The Commander had both hands on Ja-Kie’s shoulders and she stared into her eyes.

“Sasha, I can’t prove it to you. You know me, I’m not pone to fancy,” the woman pleaded with the Commander. “I think there is someone helping them, someone from my people. The arrows that killed El were from York. I fear that some of the assassins Gunther has been training may have gone rogue.”
“Gunther,” The Commander grunted, "if there is a traitor among your people look to him first."

“No, he was my husband’s brother. He would not betray me.” She shook her head.

“Even when you turned down the offer of his bed, to be in mine?” Sasha pulled the woman into an embrace and Lexa gasped in surprise as they kissed. Sasha had been one of the few commanders to live with a man and bear a child. Shortly after the boy had begun training to be a warrior his father had been taken by the mountain men and turned into a reaper. When her son became a warrior he killed his father in a battle with a group of reapers who had threatened a village. Lexa had been at his side after the battle when he realized who the reaper was. She had laid her hand on his shoulder and told him that he had had no choice. Then she helped him wrap the body and light the funeral pyre, releasing his father’s tortured spirit. Since then Carter had been close to Lexa’s side and when his mother was killed and she was chosen he had immediately volunteered to be in her personal guard.

Real Lexa called out his name as dream Lexa remembered, “Carter.”

Clarke wondered why Lexa was saying his name, “What does Motorbike have to do with this?” she wondered aloud.

Dream Lexa watched as Sasha and Ja-Kie shared an intimate moment. Ja-Kie broke the kiss. “We will have time for that later lover,” she promised, “we have to talk about the girls. If I am right they are all in danger. You and I are in danger, and whoever your spirit chooses when you pass will be in danger too. There is darkness threatening the peace we have been trying to bring to our people. I feel it in my bones. If anything happens to me, protect the girls. Promise me.” Ja-Kie grabbed Sasha’s hands and pulled her close.

“I promise, I will protect them, and when I pass my spirit will protect them.” Sasha reassured her lover. The dead Commander looked pointedly at Lexa, making Lexa feel the weight of the promise they had just overheard. Then the fog took over once more.

Lexa felt darkness creep in, she was her younger self, she was stalking a buck about to move in for the kill. The forest blurred and she felt a force behind her, coming for her. She screamed, “No, not me. Don’t take me.” She ran blindly into the forest, tree branches wiping her face, cutting into her skin. She didn’t care, she was overcome with panic and desperate to get away from this thing that was chasing her.

Clarke held her wife and looked worriedly at her. Her pulse was racing and her fever was reaching a worrying temperature. She wiped Lexa’s face with a damp cloth and pleaded with her, “Remember who you are Lex. You can do this, and I’m waiting for you.”

Dream Lexa stopped running and turned to face the thing that was chasing her. She had suddenly remembered that she was a warrior and running was not in her blood. The thing was huge, a monstrous warrior with many faces, it was always looking at her with different eyes, different eyes that were always covered in the same thick black warpaint. It communicated silently with her. Putting thoughts into her head.

It told her she was the chosen one and that it was there for her. She asked if she had a choice. It laughed at her. She fought against it as it tried to take control of her mind. It was impressed by her strength. It told her she might be the one they had been looking for, the one who could join them all. Still she fought against it.

Real Lexa was speaking in a deep voice that scared Clarke. She used that voice to speak for the spirit and her own to voice her answers. Clarke was horrified knowing Lexa was reliving being chosen.
Dream Lexa kept avoiding being taken by the spirit. Her will would not break, no matter what the
spirit tried. The spirit was angry, Lexa held out. The spirit pleaded, Lexa refused. The spirit tried to
bargain. Lexa asked what they could possibly offer her that would make it worth her life. The spirit
answered, we will give you the stars.

“Take me then. I chose her.” Was Lexa’s reply as she saw stars in her head. She saw a ghost of a
woman in the stars, golden hair like the sun, eyes as blue as the sky.

Clarke stopped breathing. “Lex, even then, you chose me? She asked softly as she heard her wife
answer the spirit. Tears formed in Clarke’s eyes and she stroked Lexa’s forehead.

Dream Lexa felt a searing pain as the spirit took control of her. There had been thirty-five
commanders since the bombs. The longest had ruled for thirteen years, the shortest for two hours.
Lexa felt them all invade her mind at once. Memories flooded her, first kills, battles, strategies, hunts,
loves, losses, everything. It overwhelmed her.

Real Lexa screamed, Clarke held her and spoke quietly to her wife, all while holding up a hand to
stop the young guards who had burst into the room. They stopped and took in the scene, the
Commander appeared to be having a nightmare and Heda Clarke was taking care of her. They went
back to their posts but jumped at every scream that came from the Commander’s lips.

Dream Lexa felt the pain of the deaths come next. She lived every scene, felt every blade, tasted
eye poison. It was a relief to her when the fog came for her again. When it cleared she was in a
healer’s tent standing to the side and was watching Costia holding the hand of her younger self who
lay in a bed, unconscious. She was choosing then, choosing the stars and the woman they promised.
She watched Costia, the shock of understanding washing over her face and then she watched as
Costia rose and called to a guard. It was Cato, he had been with Lexa since a Wamplei outbreak
when she was very young. He came and sat with her then as Costia left. Dream Lexa watched in
sadness. She knew that was why Costia had refused her when she asked her to be joined. Costia
knew Lexa had chosen another, even when Lexa didn’t. She watched her first love pull herself
together and wipe away tears. She watched Costia’s face set in acceptance. Real Lexa called out
dream Lexa’s apology and gratitude. “Costia, I’m sorry, and thank you”

Clarke whispered to Lexa that she was sorry and then she whispered her own words of thanks. She
needed Lexa to know how thankful she was that Lexa had chosen her.

Dream Lexa went back into the tent and watched as her younger self struggled with the memories
that flooded her. She knew there was something else that happened and she willed the dream to take
her there. The fog came again and she was back inside her mind, the spirit was once again in front of
her. “There is something I need to see, to remember.”

The spirit laughed at her. It told her that she was Heda, she commanded the memories. It mocked
her. “Mockery is not the product of a strong mind.” Lexa growled at the spirit as she gritted her teeth
and walked into the fog determined to find what she was looking for.

Clarke jumped at the words Lexa had once directed at her and when she heard the next words from
Lexa’s lips she knew her wife was about to find whatever it was she was searching for.

Images of the dead leaders telling her to protect their daughters flashed in her head over and over.
She grabbed her head in both hands, trying to get the image out of her mind and she screamed,
“Protect my daughter.” Dream Lexa shouted it into the fog and real Lexa into the night.

With that a vision came to her, she had seen it before. Lexa remembered now, she had seen it in her
head while she lay in a medical tent, Cato at her side. A bronze sun, three intersecting triangles, a
torch, and then the circle that represented her. These symbols repeated in her head, and she screamed ‘Protect them!’ There was a flash of white light inside her head. The fog cleared, Sasha was there, Ja-Kie, El, and Diana were behind her. “Protect them,” they whispered.

Lexa woke suddenly, she bolted upright and gasped for breath, Clarke moved in front of her telling her it was ok, she was safe, she soothed Lexa and stroked her face. Lexa looked at her wife and still panting for breath she revealed what the dream had shown her, “Skadi, Rock, and Zora! They’re alive!”

Chapter End Notes

This update took longer than I had planned but I do hope you enjoy it!
Lexa tried to get up and Clarke held her in their bed, “Love you can’t go now. You are still groggy from the tonic, you haven’t slept in days, and tomorrow we go to war.”

“Clarke, I have to protect them.” Lexa’s voice broke, “I promised, the commander promised, she promised the woman she loved. I have to keep that promise.” Lexa was overcome with exhaustion, stress, and the strange tonic that had induced her dream sleep. She stopped fighting Clarke and let herself be held by the strong arms of her wife. Clarke had immediately understood that the three women from the alleyway had to be the one’s Lexa was talking about.

“We will protect them darling, but remember both of our meetings with them. For now they can protect themselves just fine. You need sleep. Lie down.” Clarke’s voice calmed her and she let herself be pulled down onto the bed, into the warmth of Clarke’s arms. She fell asleep to the sound of Clarke’s voice whispering words of love and reassurance.

When she woke Clarke had already risen. She was dressed in Earth clothes, like Lexa’s. She chose dark leather pants and a lace up leather shirt that fit snugly along her torso and tied along the sides. She had donned her armour, the shoulder pads making her look much larger and more intimidating. When Lexa sat up in the bed she was just braiding her hair. She smiled at Lexa when she spoke groggily. “Why didn’t you wake me?”

“It isn’t time yet. I have to go and see the Chancellor before we go to the war tent. Having two leaders is more complicated, I need to make sure we are on the same page.” Clarke smiled at Lexa and rose from her seat, finishing the last of her braid. She crossed the room quickly and sat on the bed next to her wife. She kissed her, softly and slowly. She let her tongue run over Lexa’s bottom lip and then bit down gently on it. Lexa sighed into her mouth and then she pulled away.

“Come back here before we go. I want to have a moment alone with you before this day starts.” Lexa looked so vulnerable that Clarke could not refuse her.

“I will be back soon, and I will give you that moment; but you know that Indra and Lincoln are already outside of this door waiting and that this day has already started.” Clarke kissed her once more and then stood. “War bears down on us, let us not keep it waiting.” Clarke turned and strode from the room leaving Lexa breathlessly thinking that her wife sounded very much like a grounder.

As soon as she was gone Lincoln and Indra entered the room. Lexa rose and greeted them. “Heda Kom Skaikru looks fearsome this morning,” Indra noted and Lexa smirked and nodded at the compliment to her wife.

“I need to find the three women from the alleyway.” Lexa started and quickly filled Lincoln and Indra in on the mysterious women and what her dream had revealed. Once she had finished she sent
Lincoln to search the city for the three women. When he was gone Indra and Lexa discussed the days strategy while Lexa dressed herself in her battle gear. As she was finishing Clarke returned with a look of grim determination on her face. Lexa did not like that look, she knew what that it meant. Clarke was going to put herself in harm’s way and that there was nothing Lexa could do to stop her. Lexa sighed and asked Indra to wait outside.

“I know that look, Houmon. What do you have to tell me?” Lexa prepared herself to argue with her wife.

“Just that I love you. Leave the war talk for the war room, Lex.” With that Clarke closed the distance between them and crashed into Lexa’s body with her own. Passion flared between them immediately as Clarke’s lips crushed Lexa’s already bruised ones. Lexa winced in pain but pressed harder against Clarke anyway. Hands found waists and the smalls of backs and shoulder armour bumped against shoulder armour. They kissed for not nearly long enough and then broke apart. Lexa leaned her forehead on Clarke’s and they just stood like that for a moment, still.

“Let me paint your face, Houmon.” Lexa guided Clarke to a chair and began to mark her wife’s face with the black paint. When she was done she stared for a moment at the contrast, Clarke’s pale skin against the black war paint. It reminded her that her wife was not a warrior, that her personality was the same contrast, peaceful and kind against the horrors of war. Her heart clenched in pain as she looked at her strong, fierce wife. She knew Clarke would always fight for her people, for their people, and she would always do what had to be done. She also knew it went against everything Clarke was to take lives, even in war, and yet somehow she was strong enough to do it without hesitation. Lexa marvelled at the wonder of Clarke Griffin. Clarke looked at Lexa studying her and she cupped Lexa’s chin and planted a soft kiss on her lips, the kiss was a promise that she was OK, that they were OK, and everything else would be too. Then Clarke took the paint and Lexa took the chair. Once the war paint stained both beautiful faces the two commanders stood and shared one last tender look before steeling themselves for war.

They strode from the room Indra and Octavia taking up positions at their sides as they exited the building. It was still before dawn and fog hugged the city streets. As they arrived at the war room they were pleased to see that Cade and Dal were already there. The two men were sparring, unable to remain still as they waited for the war council. As Lexa and Clarke approached they stopped and stared open mouthed at the two women emerging from the fog, beautiful and terrible all at once. They bowed their heads and uttered a respectful, “Heda” to Lexa and then “Sky Commander” to Clarke.

Lexa nodded as she brushed by them and into the war room. She went to her throne and sat, taking out her dagger and twirling it as she thought about the day. She went over strategies in her head and tried to think of everything possible that could go wrong. She sat there playing with her blade as the rest of the leaders entered the room. Clarke was joined by a worried looking Abby and Luna arrived looking curiously at Lexa, wondering if she had remembered anything. Lexa took this all in showing no emotion and giving no sign of acknowledgement until the last leader had been seated and the doors had been closed. Then she stood and she slowly and purposefully sheathed her dagger into the holster on her upper thigh as she let her gaze settle briefly on each member of the war council before speaking.

“I am Heda Kom Trigedakru, chosen by the spirit. All of you have, of your own free will, given your allegiance to me. I tell you now that the treachery we have witnessed in the last few days goes much deeper than you know. I tell you that the people of York and the Ice Nation will be freed, not decimated. They are my people, as you are my people. We will see order and peace returned to them. The people of the Ice nation have been robbed of their true leader. The tyrant who calls himself king has no claim to that title and I will take his head off in order to remove his stolen crown. He would
see this alliance crumble, would see it’s leaders dead, all for his own power and his own greed. Soldiers loyal to him will die by our swords but the people of the Ice Nation will be freed from tyranny and once a rightful leader is returned they will still be a part of this alliance.” Lexa looked around and saw fire in Cade’s eyes, and some confusion in the others.

“Yor is no different.” She continued, “He is not the rightful leader of the Clan of York. The people suffer under him and we will free them. The truth is that El, Queen of the Ice Nation was murdered by Yor and Alain, the Ice King. Diana, leader of the Lake People, was also killed by them. Ja-Kie, mayor of York, and Heda Sasha were assassinated by these two villains on the same day as they were leaving a secret meeting about forming an alliance. After that they tried to take the lives of the heirs of these leaders, Rock of the Lake People, Skadi of the Ice Nation, and Zora of York, all daughters of murdered mothers; and then me, Heda Lexa chosen by Heda Sasha’s spirit. We four were targeted by Yor and Alain, but I stand here before you now, telling you that this treachery stops today.” Lexa’s voice shook with fury as she gave her speech and she could feel the tension in the room build as the leaders realized what Yor and Alain had done.

“I will call for the unconditional surrender of Yor and Alain and offer to let the soldiers live. If they take the offer the armies will be allowed to return to their home lands. If not, we will show no mercy and leave none alive.” Lexa paused and offered to hear dissent, “If anyone does not agree, speak now,”

There were several voices raised at once. Cole’s stood out from the crowd, “Heda, why should we let them live? They follow the tyrants, Do they not deserve death for their parts in this treason?”

“Any who stand with the king will fall. Any who renounce him and swear to follow the true leaders will be spared.” Lexa insisted.

“How will we find a true leader for those clans?” Cole continued. “Their lands and traditions are foreign to us, and the bloodlines of the true rulers have been broken. It makes more sense to destroy the armies that sit before us and send our people to offer peace to those in power who remain in York and Otta. Leaving the armies alive will read like weakness to your enemies, Heda. I cannot get behind this plan.” Cole spoke with passion and half of the rulers backed her up.

“Cole, of the Lanta Clan.” Clarke stood and spoke, “I understand your concern, we cannot seem weak now. We must let it be known that treachery and betrayal is met with death. Yor, Alain, and any who aid them in their plan will pay for the lives they have taken with their own. But all of the soldiers who fight cannot be held responsible for the leaders they follow. We will give them a choice, if they rise up against the men who lead them they will live. If they continue to follow the traitors the ground will run red with their blood. The Sky People stand with Heda’s decision.” The council once again began to argue and debate. Lexa looked disinterested as she sat in her throne and once again began to play with her dagger.

While the war council was meeting Lincoln was tracking three women he had never met. He knew from Octavia’s descriptions that they were well trained warriors and even though he was the best tracker in the Trigedakru army he was not used to tracking in a city. It presented different challenges than tracking in the forest. He went to the alleyway where Heda had told him they had last seen the women and he walked all the way in until he came to a dead end. There were walls on all four sides of the alley and he slowly examined all of them. He noticed that there was a narrow space between the front and rear buildings that made up the left side of the alley and he saw some scuffs on the wall in front of it. He hoisted himself up with ease and perched on the top of the wall for a moment gathering his bearings before jumping lightly down on the other side and slipping into the space
between the buildings. He saw that the space ended at a rear entrance to the front building but as he moved along he saw more scuff marks and a few small slightly hollowed out indentations in the wall of the rear building. It was three stories tall but Lincoln was a Tree Clan warrior and he quickly used the hand holds to scale the wall and pull himself onto the roof.

From there he followed the few footprints he found toward the far right corner of the building. He looked over the side and saw that it dropped down into another alley. He followed his suspicion and dropped himself over the side, hanging by his arms until his feet found the holds he knew would be there. Once he found the first few his instincts led him swiftly down the side of the building and he landed silently in the alley. He walked into the darkened alley and followed the small signs his eyes continued to find. After scaling two more buildings and snaking through several more alleys he found himself in a back alley behind the building. He could tell by the sounds and the smells that he was close to the fish market. The alley widened and he could hear the bustle of the market just a few meters away on the other side of the wall that still framed the alley. He continued on and the alley led him under a building, the building had no walls on the first floor, it served as the loading docks for the market and Lincoln was thankful that it was late enough in the morning for the deliveries to be done. He walked silently through the darkness and shadow and soon he could hear that someone was following him. He reached the far corner and saw a doorway that led into another alley. As he reached it the footsteps behind him quickened and a young man with a scarf over his face drew a sword hoping to catch Lincoln by surprise. Lincoln quickly disarmed him and wrenched his arm painfully behind his back. His dagger was at the young man’s throat and he spoke very clearly to him. “I come at Heda’s request. If you know where the shadow women are take me to them. Fight me and you will die.” His voice was steady and matter-of-fact and the young man stopped struggling.

“Let me go. I will speak to you,” the man said. Lincoln released him but kept his dagger in his hand. He cocked his head to the side studying the man in a manner he had picked up from watching Heda.

“Speak” Lincoln commanded.

“You say you seek the shadow women. How do I know you are truly here for Heda?” The man looked questioningly at Lincoln. “You could be an assassin.” He narrowed his eyes in distrust and stepped back away from Lincoln.

Lincoln laughed, “If I were an assassin you would be dead my young friend. I was able to track them this far, I do not need you to track them the rest of the way. Now take me to them and I will not hurt you. But I warn you, Heda asked me to make haste so delay me and I will hurt you, badly.” Lincoln stepped forward, his voice like a growl and the young man backed away from the fearsome Tree Clan warrior.

“I will take you to them. I recognize your tattoo, you are Trigedakru. But I must have your weapons. I will not take you there armed.” The man was obviously afraid but he stood his ground earning a small nod of respect from Lincoln. He handed over his sword and his dagger and he smirked knowing he needed neither to end the man’s life. Once the man had Lincoln’s weapons he nodded and spoke again, “I am Seth, I serve the three you call ‘shadow women’. We have been waiting for Heda, many of us think that if she was truly chosen by the spirit she should have known about us and come before now.”

Seth had barely gotten the words out of his mouth when Lincoln’s hand on was on his shoulder whirling him around and then on his throat squeezing the air from him. “Do not speak ill of Heda or I will kill you with my bare hands. Heda is the chosen one and I will not suffer doubting words from you or anyone.” His breath was hot on Seth’s face and as he released the terrified man he growled, “take me to them, and let us pray no one else sees fit to insult Heda Lexa, I will not be so forgiving.
next time.” Seth just stared at the man who he now realized was more dangerous than he had imagined. He had heard of the infamy of Trigeda warriors but the only time he had seen them in action was at the challenge a few mornings before. He had incorrectly assumed that the ones who fought were by far the best fighters, he now realized that perhaps all Trigeda warriors were that fierce.

Seth was a native of Sapeake and not a warrior. He was a fish monger at the market and he had met the women there while they were buying food. He earned their trust by noticing that they seemed to be hiding from soldiers and offering them a secret place to stay in the back alleys of the market. He thought they might be criminals but he was entranced by Skadi’s beauty and decided he didn’t care. He brought them to a secret back alley and set them up with rooms in a nearby forgotten and half demolished building. It was so far in the back alleys of the market that he didn’t think the soldiers even knew it existed. The market vendors stayed away from it because they swore it was haunted by the ghost of a woman who had been murdered there. The three girls scoffed at Seth when he told them he would stay with them if they were scared and quickly informed him that the ghosts of murdered women were not new to them. He had helped them gather supplies and brought them food when they were in Sapeake. He had been doing this for the past three years and the stays had gotten longer and Sapeake had become a sort of home base for the three young women. Soon there were others who arrived and sought them out, and the women frequently went off on long journeys to gather information. They usually went together but on occasion one of them would leave alone for some time. He didn’t ask questions and only recently had the three shared with him who they were, and why they were hiding. He would never betray them but something in his gut told him that Lincoln was for real, otherwise he would have let Lincoln kill him before taking him to the three leaders.

As Lincoln followed Seth deeper into the alleyways he began to notice other people watching them from the shadows. He wasn’t sure if Seth knew they were there and he didn’t think they knew he was aware of them. His hand itched for his sword but he continued following Seth calmly. As they approached an area where the alley widened they suddenly turned a corner and stopped. In front of them was a building that was broken almost perfectly in half. A much larger building had been built behind it, destroying half of the smaller one in the process and at the same time holding up the remains of the smaller building. There were signs of life all over, smells of food cooking, clothes slung out over walls to dry and there were people. They were all staring at him and dropping into defensive positions and pulling weapons from hiding places. Lincoln’s breath was taken away by the secret mini village so perfectly hidden away in the city and he almost didn’t respond in time to the attack that came from behind him. He almost missed the sound of the footsteps as he took in the sight in front of him, he almost didn’t hear the sound of a sword being drawn from it’s scabbard. Almost, but he was Trigedakru, a warrior bred and trained, his blood caught the threat and his muscles moved without needing his direction. He twirled gracefully and the sword that shot out was quickly knocked aside and the arm that wielded it was snapped cleanly. The sword was soon in Lincoln’s own hand and the man who had rushed him was groaning in agony on the ground in front of him. Several others rushed forth, swords in hand set to challenge the intruder but Seth jumped in between them.

“Stop! He is not the enemy. He comes with a message from Heda Kom Trigedakru!” With that they stopped advancing. Lincoln was not afraid, he knew he could fight his way out of here if necessary, not one of the people there was a warrior who could threaten him, he could tell by the way they moved and held their weapons.

His mind was changed soon enough when three women slipped noiselessly from the broken down building and the people there all bowed their heads. Lincoln turned to look at them, assessing them as they approached. They walked like warriors, held their blades like warriors, and they moved much like Heda Lexa. He knew he could fight one and maybe even two of them off, but there was no way he could escape from three of them. He hoped Heda was right and allowed his faith her to steel his
mind and he sheathed his sword as he stepped forward, unafraid.

The blond stepped forward first. She was tall and thin, her muscles long and limber. Her blue eyes were bright and piercing and she looked into Lincoln’s brown eyes as she approached. Her hair was pulled back, several small braids started at the front and met in the back to form one large braid that fell down the centre of her back and ended just above her hips. Her cheekbones were high and the sharpness of her features reminded him of Octavia. She silently appraised Lincoln, taking in his tattoos, and his sheathed weapon before her gaze moved and settled on Seth. “Who is he, and why did you bring him here?” she demanded.

“I found him in the alleyway, he was tracking you here, When I pulled my weapon on him he disarmed me.” Seth was honest, “he told me he was sent here with a message by his Heda, and I believe him.” Seth looked at Skadi, reverence in his eyes and she searched his features finding truth and devotion in his eyes. She nodded and smiled at him.

“Very well, Seth. I shall hear what he has to say.” She turned her icy glare back to Lincoln and raising her chin to look down at him she demanded, “Who are you?”

“I am Lincoln, gona kom Trigedakru. I serve Heda Lexa.” He held her glare and didn’t flinch as the other two approached him with swords drawn.

“Why would she send you looking for us?” The green eyed woman asked as she brought her sword up to Lincoln’s throat. She was the tallest of the three and more than the other two she was built like a warrior. Her muscles rippled as she moved and he was again reminded of Heda Lexa, a much larger Heda Lexa. There as not an ounce of fat on this woman and her dark brown hair was cropped short against her skull not much longer than his own. A scar glowed white against her olive skin, seeming to grow out of the back her skull and run all the way to her forehead before dropping down and marring her cheek. She was beautiful, not like the ethereal beauty of Skadi but with a fierce earthy beauty. Her dark green eyes were lit on fire as she challenged Lincoln.

Lincoln laughed, “Zora of York, do not threaten me. I am here to speak for Heda Lexa. She will not be pleased if you kill me.” As he spoke her true name the woman drew back. Her eyes widening in disbelief. As she dropped her sword and drew back the shortest of the three women stepped forward her sword pressing into Lincoln’s skin almost breaking the surface.

“How do you know her name?” The intense brown eyed woman demanded. Her heart shaped face was set in gritty determination and a slight tremor in her hand betrayed the calm detached manner she wished to project. Her hair was pulled back in a complex array of braids and Lincoln looked at her with a small smile, she reminded him of his Octavia. Short, slim, beautiful, and full of strength and determination. “Why do you smile at me warrior? Do you doubt that I will cut you? That would be a mistake.” Her voice was calm and full of truth.

“I do not doubt that,” Lincoln began. “I smile because you remind me of my love. She is small and filled with more bravery than a warrior twice her size, like you. I believe you have met her, Rock of the Lakes. Her name is Octavia and she guards Clarke, Heda Kom Skaikru.” Lincoln kept his gaze on the woman as she dropped her sword and stepped closer to him.

“Heda’s joined one? Your Octavia is her guard?” She questioned.

“I believe Zora felt her steel against her throat the last time you met?” Lincoln smiled again, “She is brave, foolish, but brave.”

Skadi stepped forward again, “The guard with the braids, she is yours?” Her curiosity was piqued.
Lincoln laughed again, “I will tell her you said that, she will either laugh or punch you.” He chuckled imagining Octavia’s face. “Octavia fell from the Sky with Clarke… Heda Kom Skaikru,” he corrected himself. “They have been friends since before the Commander became the leader of their people. They have been through many trials together and so they share a deep bond, much like the one I assume you three must share. She is a Trigedakru warrior now, trained by Indra, but she was born in the sky. They are not lovers, Heda Lexa and the Sky Commander are joined in a union. Taking a lover outside of that union is not permitted. I recommend you do not repeat what you thought to Heda Lexa, I do not think she will find it amusing as I did.” Skadi nodded at Lincoln and stepped away allowing Rock to step forward again.

“You know our names, how?” Rock questioned.

“Rock Regent of the Lakes, Zora Mayor of York and Skadi Queen of the Ice Nation,” Lincoln nodded to each woman in turn. “Heda bids you come forward, give her your allegiance and reveal yourselves. It is time to punish the men who murdered your mothers, and lead your people once more.” With his words the three women knew that Heda Lexa truly had the memories of the past commander and that she knew the truth. They moved to stand side by side and they stood tall and proud as they drew their swords. They dropped to one knee simultaneously, stabbing their swords into the earth and swearing allegiance to Heda Lexa Kom Trigedakru. Once they had completed the oath they rose and followed Lincoln, who had already turned to go back to Heda.

Lexa allowed the council to debate for some time. She was only half listening to them just waiting for time to pass. She was waiting for a signal from Lincoln. When he slipped into the room and nodded at her she stood and finished the debate. “Enough! Heda has spoken. You have given me your allegiance and now you shall follow me. Don your armour and mount your steeds, we ride to war!” With that Lexa stepped away from the table and strode to the exit. Clarke and Luna were flanking her and the rest of the leaders fell in line behind them, the bickering stopped by the shock of Lexa's sudden outburst.

When they reached the stables the horses had already been prepared. As she mounted her steed Lexa quickly took stock of the situation and barked out her final orders. “You know the plan, We ride in two groups, one to face the Ice nation and one to confront York. I will order my army to advance from behind them and Hirrim will advance his army with us. Rachel has already left to lead Luna’s army from the East and Cade’s general, Ford will be advancing with the Lake Army and the Lanta warriors from the West. They have nowhere to go, but they are dangerous, and we all know that a dangerous thing becomes deadly when caged.” She looked at them and nodded, “We fight for peace, and for the prosperity of our people. No one is allowed to threaten that. Now ride with me!” Lexa pulled on the reins of her horse sharply and her stallion obeyed by rearing briefly. As soon as it’s hoofs were back on the ground it broke into a fast trot slowly building up to a gallop as they moved into an open road.

The leaders of the alliance followed her until they reached the fork where the groups would split.
They divided themselves quickly and Lexa took a quick look behind her to ensure her orders had been followed. She stopped suddenly pulling on the reins. “Heda, Kom Skaikru, what are you doing?” She felt her pulse racing as she saw Clarke at the head of the second group.

Clarke stopped her horse and turned to look at Lexa, she had expected this response but she knew what she was doing was right. “I am leading our people and the alliance. The Sky People are a strong ally and by our union my people are bound to Trigedakru more than any other clan. I wish to show the clans that I fight for all of us. I will lead this group with Cade, it is right. You know that.” Lexa gritted her teeth and nodded her head to her stubborn wife, it would do no good for them to argue now, and Clarke was right, she was the best person to lead the second group and Lexa knew it.

“Ste yuj, Houmon.” Was all Lexa said.

“Be strong, Lexa.” Clarke replied, the two women shared a gaze that held enough love in it that the words would have been redundant.

The shadow women, as Lincoln had called them, moved in secretly joining the ranks of the mounted soldiers of the Horse Clan. No one questioned them as they were accompanied by Lincoln, a general of Heda. They moved forward slowly until they caught up with the clan leaders. They followed behind, only Trigedakru noticed them, Octavia included. She subtly let Clarke know and Clarke merely nodded already knowing Lexa’s plan. At the crossroads the three shared a heavy look and separated. Lincoln and Skadi followed Heda, Rock and Zora followed the Sky Commander.

Lexa approached the front line and Echo was waiting for her. She briefed Lexa on the recent movement of the Ice Army and Bellamy’s report from the North. Lexa nodded and dismounted, she quickly briefed Echo and with a quick glance she made sure that Skadi was in the back with Lincoln. She also looked for Wick, he and Raven had been secretly working on a project for the Commander and he was here to unveil it.

Clarke arrived at the Western flank of the front line to find Echo’s second waiting for her. She had a radio and updates from Bellamy, Ford, Rachel and Echo. Clarke quickly learned that Lexa was in place and they were almost ready to begin. Clarke looked around searching for her friend. When she heard the familiar voice she smiled and jumped down from her horse, she strode forward closing the distance quickly and pulled Raven into a bear hug. “You’ve been out here for days, I worried.” Raven looked smug and grinned, “Of course you did, you were stuck with O for company.” She winked at Octavia who snarled playfully at her. “Anyway, it’s done Clarke, we haven’t been able to test it but Wick and I have been back and forth across the lines and we are sure it’ll work. Trust me.” Raven smiled a reckless smile and Clarke couldn’t help but smile back.

“I always have, Raven.” Clarke squeezed her hand and turned back to the leaders who were behind her. Her eyes sought out the two figures at the rear, still covered in scarves but watching her every move. Clarke addressed the leaders, “We’re almost ready. Heda Lexa will give the signal and then we’ll hear the war horns, and the war drums from the Trigeda army as they advance. Once that happens our plan begins.” Clarke moved closer to Dal and Cade, she looked at him and sighed, “Cade… I’m sorry…” she began, her voice very quiet.

“What are you talking about Heda Kom Skaikru?” He questioned.
“I just wish I could have told you sooner…” Clarke said but her voice trailed off as she heard the first of the war horns sound out. Cade looked at her in confusion but soon got swept up in the sounds of the advancing Trigedakru army. They could hear shouts and questions coming from the York Army as they realized that they were boxed in on all sides. The Lake army had established a perimeter in view of them to the west and now Lexa’s army made itself known from the north. Clarke felt a twinge of uncertainty as she heard the sounds of turmoil coming from the York army.

To the east Lexa was watching a similar scene unfold in front of her as the Ice Army started to fight amongst themselves. Some began shouting for the army to fight and some were shouting to surrender. She could hear their shouts, see the flurry of movement in the camp and she felt an ominous feeling creep up her spine at the lack of leadership she witnessed. A few stray arrows were launched but all fell short of the front line.

When her army was in place and Bellamy radioed that they were ready Lexa singled Wick. He flipped a switch and all along the front line they heard a buzzing hum rise from the black boxes he and Raven had been working on so feverishly.

Echo radioed her second who nodded to Clarke. Clarke grinned and looked at the beautiful mechanic she was so lucky to have on her side, “Raven, you’re up.” Clarke and Octavia watched the grinning, grease stained, beauty flip a switch and they heard the hum that signified Raven’s victory.

Raven and Wick had managed to run wires and connect several large speakers along the front line. They had been working on the speakers for the past week after Ro had shown them the remains of several large naval buildings just outside of the city. They had told the Sky engineers that any technology they found was theirs and Raven had been drawn to the sets of large PA speakers that had been abandoned in one of the hangers. Raven stepped forward and handed Clarke a headset grinning ear to ear.

Back on the eastern front Wick had presented Lexa with a headset as well, and briefly shown her how to use it. Lexa put it on her head, she still felt strange using technology but being married to a Sky Person had taught her a lot so she put the headset on with confidence and nodded to Wick, silently congratulating him on a job well done.

Lexa started first, the gathered leaders all jumped when her voice boomed out from the speakers. Wick grinned and whooped and Lexa fought back a grin herself. “Ice Nation, I am Heda Kom Trigedakru. I am here to offer you a way to live. Turn over your king to face his punishment and stand down. I will spare your lives. Follow him any longer and you will die with him. I expect your answer by the time the sun reaches it’s highest point.”

Clarke was delivering a similar speech over the speakers to the York Clan, “Soldiers of York. Turn over Yor and the leaders who plotted to assassinate Heda Lexa. We will let you live. You have until noon.”

The speakers worked and both the Ice Nation and the York Clan heard the message clearly. Lexa and Clarke watched the movement in the camps. They watched as generals found horses and white flags were raised. Four top soldiers from each camp began to ride to the middle of the divide between armies under the white flag of truce.

Clarke looked at Cade and he looked back at her answering the questions he hadn’t needed to ask, “They are not Yor, something is off. We should ride out to meet them.”

Clarke nodded in agreement, she turned to the rest of the leaders, most of them were true politicians not warriors. She looked them over and spoke choosing her representatives well, “Four of them approach so four of us will ride out, Cole of Lanta, Cade of the Lakes, and Wyne of the Nash Clan
will come with me.” Everyone nodded and her selected leaders followed her as she rode to meet the York generals.

Lexa had done the same thing. Hirrim, Luna, and Haley of the Savannah Clan rode with her to meet with the generals from the Ice Nation. When they met under the white flag in between the two armies Lexa was not pleased. “What say you? Where is Alain? Turn him over to me now!” The man who answered her was older than the others, he was more grey than blonde and there were wrinkles around his eyes. He held his head high and his eyes met Lexa’s without fear. “We cannot do that Heda. He is not here.”

Lexa had been expecting this after watching the camp since her arrival at the front, but that didn’t stop her from snarling an angry reply to the general, “Where is he and how long has he been gone?”

The same man answered, “He returned only briefly from the morning of the fight. We were informed that you had killed the prince and a price was put on your head. Then he and his company of private guards left for our lands. He ordered us to stay and delay your chase. Heda, I would surrender to you now and help you hunt him but my men resist.”

“Why do they resist? He is not your people’s true ruler and he is likely the one who planned the murders of your true queens.” Lexa demanded to know why the soldiers followed a man like Alain.

“His personal guard is made up of men like himself, cruel and hungry for power. He gives them that. They have the power to take from us. Serving him in the army is the only thing that protects our families, before they left they told us that if we ran or surrendered they would murder our families. My men fear that.” The general shook his head. “They would rather die here and believe that their families are safe than return to find the ones they love dead at the hands of the tyrant who calls himself our king.”

Perhaps I can give them some inspiration.” Lexa mused. “I will come to your camp and give them something to rally around, a reason to have hope. And then we will track down your false king together and he and his guardsmen will taste the steel of our blades.” The general looked at Lexa with a question in his eye. He could not imagine what could convince his men to risk their loved ones.

Clarke rode out to meet the York soldiers. They told her the same thing. Yor had returned from the arena and he and his assassins had given orders for the army to stay and fight Lexa. Then they had left quickly riding for the unprotected pass between the Trigeda army and the Lake army. The general who spoke for them asked Clarke to have mercy, he told her that Yor and his assassins had a reign of terror over the people of York and that most of his soldiers had sons or daughters, wives or husbands to consider. He told her that the last time one of his soldiers deserted the army Yor had taken the man’s only daughter and made her serve as one of his many personal attendants. The remorse in the man’s voice told Clarke everything she needed to know about what happened to the women forced to become attendants.

Clarke looked at the man and made him an offer, “I have something that your people need. Your men will be able to put aside the fear that grips them and believe in something bigger. Ride back to your army and tell them not to despair, we will not let Y or make it back to your capital and harm their families, and we will not let him stand as your leader. I will come to you soon, and I will bring the greatest weapon we have, hope!” With that Clarke turned her horse and galloped back to the rest of the leaders. When she arrived she moved quickly to Zora and Rock. “Are you ready?” she asked
The two women nodded and Clarke turned and led them back to the gathered leaders. “I have two young women here who you all need to meet.” They all looked curiously at Clarke, all but Cade who had already dismounted and fallen to his knees. One look at the eyes of the woman on the horse to Clarke’s left and he knew who it was. His sister was alive.

“Rock…? How can it be?” He choked back tears and stared wide eyed as the young woman removed her scarf and revealed herself to them. She jumped down from her horse lightly and with grace and she moved to her brother quickly. She looked at him with such remorse that the others gathered there had to look away.

“Cade, I’m sorry. I had to do it this way. We couldn’t risk anyone knowing, especially you. You love me too much and would never be able to fake a believable reaction. Yor would have seen through you. I’m so sorry..” She was cut off as Cade rushed forward and enveloped her in an embrace. He held her face in his hands and he called out for Dal.

“Dal, please tell me if I’m dreaming, or have I lost my mind with grief finally? Is she real? Tell me Dal, yours are the only eyes I trust right now.” He had tears streaming down his face and his hands shook as he stroked his sister’s cheeks.

Dal was in just as much shock as Cade and he stared at his sister-in-law in disbelief. He laid his hand on Cade’s shoulder and reassured him, “I see her, clear as day. You are not dreaming, nor have you gone mad. She is alive.” He embraced her as well and then stepped back and looked at Clarke and realized why she had apologized earlier. She had known Rock was alive. Lexa had known. Dal felt angry. “How long have you known, Heda Kom Skaikru?”

“Since early this morning. Heda Lexa saw them in the memories of Heda Sasha. I wanted to tell him,” she nodded at Cade who still couldn’t move, “but there was no time.”

Dal was placated by the answer, he thought they had known the entire time, all these years that Cade had suffered. Now that he knew the truth he breathed a sigh of great relief and turned to face Zora. “Cade, she is not the only one who lives.” Cade finally tore his gaze from his sister’s face and watched as Zora revealed herself.

Clarke introduced the two women to the leaders, “Leaders of the clans of the alliance, I present to you Rock, leader of the Lake Clan, and Zora, Mayor of York.” Zora removed her scarf and her green eyes shone with pride. She sat tall in her saddle and she spoke with authority.

“Leaders of the Clans, I am Zora, Mayor of York. Heda Lexa has my allegiance, but first I need to reclaim my land and my people. I start today, by reclaiming the York army that is gathered here. They will follow me and I will lead them from here and in pursuit of the one who calls himself Yor. Forgive my hiding and my sudden return from the dead, it was too dangerous for the three of us.”

“Three of you?” Cole asked her.

“Skadi lives. The Ice Queen is with Heda Lexa and will reclaim her army today. We will go after Alain and Yor together.” Clarke answered. “Now, Zora come with me, it is time the people of York know their mayor has returned.” Clarke, and Zora were quickly joined by Rock, Cade, and Dal as they rode towards the York army camp.

Lexa had returned to the group of leaders on the eastern front and called for attention. “Clans of the
alliance, you are witnesses to a historic day.” She nodded at Lincoln who rode forward clearing a path through the crowd followed by a mysterious girl whose face was hidden by a scarf. When they arrived at the front Lincoln moved away and the girl reached up and unwrapped her scarf. “I present to you, Skadi, Queen of the Ice Nation!” Lexa watched as Luna’s chin dropped, every one of the people gathered there stared, open mouthed as the young queen unveiled herself. She nodded respectfully at Heda Lexa before speaking.

“I am Skadi, Queen of the Ice Nation. You will not have to do battle with the army across the field from you today. They will follow me, I am their true queen. We will hunt down the false king and I will bring peace to my people.”

Skadi and Lexa rode side by side across the field. The general Lexa had spoken to earlier came forward and waited for them just in front of his army. Skadi kept her head down as they approached and the general shouted to Heda Lexa. “Heda, there is no use. My men have too much to lose to be swayed by any words that Heda Kom Trigedakru can utter. Turn back and prepare for battle.” He stepped forward and stood proudly at the front of his army willing to die with his men.

“There are no words that Heda Kom Trigedakru can utter to move you or your men,” Skadi dismounted as she spoke and stalked up to the general, “But there are words that I can speak and you will hear them, Varga.” Skadi stopped directly in front of the general she had known most of her life. He had served her mother well and helped her during her brief time as ruler. She watched as his face betrayed recognition, shock, and then remorse and relief. He fell to his knees.

“Reine Skadi,” Was all he could get out of his mouth. The murmuring around them grew as the soldiers tried to see what was happening and why the general was on his knees. Skadi turned and walked towards them. She raised her voice and pulled out her sword. It had the unmistakable blue tinge to it that was fired into the best of the Ice Nation’s steel. The ornate hilt was unmistakable, as was the girl’s face. The sword was an heirloom. It had been her mother’s and her grandmother’s. It was the Queen’s sword, Skadi’s sword. Her eyes were the eyes of a ruler and she looked so much like her mother who had ruled before her that none would dare question her birthright. As she strode down the line of soldiers and they saw her they fell to their knees calling out to their queen.

“Reine! Skadi, our Reine is alive!” Lexa watched with satisfaction as every one of the Ice Nation soldiers was overcome with emotion and fealty at the sight of their long lost queen returning to them. She spared a small thought for Clarke and hoped Zora was faring as well.

Skadi had tears in her eyes when she returned to the general and held out her hand to him, “Rise Varga, we have much work to do.” He got to his feet still speechless and staring at the sight of his flesh and blood queen, alive and well. Skadi turned and addressed her army, “My people, you have suffered under the false king long enough. I am alive and the time had come for me to reclaim my throne. We will march for Otta and I will kill all those who follow the tyrant Alain. I will see his head raised on a pole in the capital. All of my people will be free from his tyranny.” Skadi shook in anger as she thought of the suffering of her people and she was humbled by the cheer that rose from her army. Varga stood next to her and as she finished addressing the soldiers he stepped forward and called for the soldiers to kneel once more. He turned facing Skadi, drew his sword and plunged it into the earth in front of him as he too kneeled. He bowed his head and as he stared to speak his voice was joined by the voices of hundreds of his soldiers.

“I do swear, that I will be faithful and bear true allegiance to Her Majesty Reine Skadi, her heirs and successors. So help me.” The soldiers recited a pledge that had been taken by people of the Ice Nation since before the bombs. When they finished Skadi responded with her own oath as was custom in the Ice Nation.
“I solemnly promise and swear to govern the Peoples of the Ice Nation according to our laws and customs, I will use my power to cause law and justice and I will execute my judgements with mercy and let love for my people, above all else, guide my rule.” Skadi held her sword high in the air and the sun glinted off of it in such a way that it appeared to the army in front of her that their queen was holding a lightning bolt in her bare hand. Her legend began to grow in that moment, the story would go that she returned from the dead to lead an army holding lightning in her hand.

The York army’s generals were fighting amongst themselves when Clarke approached them. Two of the generals had drawn swords and were fighting each other. The crowd behind the men was restless and split among themselves shouting to either join the alliance army or to kill as many as they could right now. Clarke assessed the situation quickly and saw the danger immediately. She flipped the switch to turn the headset back on and quickly called reinforcements. “Octavia, advance the army, now!” She glanced at Cade and nodded he quickly grabbed his bow and drew and arrow, as he nocked a specially prepared arrow Dal drew alongside him and lit it on fire, it smoked a thick black smoke as the noxious oil on in burned. Cade let it fly into the western sky and watched as it drew a black line across the sky alerting Ford to advance. He heard the loud horns of his army and knew the signal had been spotted.

Ro had a company of her mounted warriors just a few meters behind Clarke in under a minute. She sat tall in her saddle in front of lines of her warriors. Octavia slid into position next to Clarke ready to move should a threat arise.

As this was taking place Zora looked over at Rock, grinned, winked and dismounted. Rock was just close enough for Clarke to make out, “Shit, here we go.” as Rock watched her lover stride overt to he two generals who were still fighting.

She hollered at some bystanders, “You, tell me who fights for remaining loyal to Yor. Who wants to kill the leaders of the alliance to gain his favour?”

The soldier looked at her curiously, he felt like he should know her but could not place her face. The only thing he knew for sure was that her commanding demeanour demanded an answer and so he pointed to the general who wanted to follow Yor’s order and fight the alliance. She nodded at him and he inexplicably felt important.

Zora marched forward and stepped in between the two generals. She held out her sword and pointed it at the man the soldier had identified. “You are loyal to Yor?” She demanded. He answered her with a swing of his sword. She blocked it easily. The general behind her backed away slowly in shock. He had seen her green eyes and knew immediately who she was. He had been one of her mother’s most trusted generals before they were all betrayed by Yor. He stepped back and let his leader reclaim her army.

The other general had no idea who she was and he sneered at her, “Woman, I know not who you are but clear out. This is a battle between the men who would lead this army.” He spat at her feet and she sighed and looked over at Rock shaking her head.

Rock again muttered, “Shit, she hates it when they call her ‘Woman’, and did he just spit at her? Crap, if his next answer doesn’t please her he’s going to die a very unpretty death.” Clarke noticed that the girl seemed to be talking to herself but dropped back and listened.

“She does this kind of thing a lot?” Clarke asked.

“More than you care to know.” Rock sighed, “Patience is not her strong suit. And she hates it when
men act superior, at this rate she’ll be coated in his blood in about thirty seconds.” Clarke raised her
eyebrow and turned back to watch the scene unfold.

Zora stood looking at the man with narrowed eyes, “If this is a battle for who leads this army let me
end it for you. This is MY army.” Zora stuck her sword in the ground and quickly pulled off the
jacket she was wearing. She had a large golden key around her neck and when it was revealed
soldiers close enough to see it gasped. The young man she had spoken with earlier realized who she
was and rushed forward. He went down on one knee and shouted to his fellow soldiers.

“It is Zora, Mayor of York! She lives! Long live the mayor!” His words caused a stir in the crowd.
Many others joined him but not all of the soldiers were so quick to kneel. The general she was facing
down merely sneered at her and spit towards her again.

Zora laughed at the man and stared him down, “I am Zora, Mayor of York, follow me or fight me.
Choose wisely it is life or death for you.” She laughed again and the man lunged forward striking at
her with his sword. She deflected his attack easily, redirecting his strike off to the right and still
laughing she twirled her blade back to the left then dropped to one knee and swung her sword across
the man’s midsection gutting him like a fish. His blood sprayed all over her and she rose to her feet
laughing and dripping in blood. The remaining soldiers fell to their knees not willing to stand against
her after she had so easily cut down their leader.

Rock sighed at the sight of her lover coated in blood, “told you” she muttered dryly and Clarke
fought not to giggle. She didn’t find anything about the scene funny but somehow Rock’s reaction
was amusing her to no end.

Clarke once again focused on the impressive young woman who now stood in front of a small army
of soldiers on their knees with bowed heads. Octavia had her bow out and she noticed that Cole had
done the same. The two women searched the crowd and were ready when a small group suddenly
jumped up and screamed a challenge into the air. Two of them rushed forward swords drawn and
two drew arrows back in their bows. One of the bows was pointed at Clarke but before the archer
could loose his arrow Octavia’s arrow was embedded his skull and he fell to the ground. The second
arrow was meant for Zora and Cole’s arrow felled him before he could get his shot off. In the middle
of the archers was an assassin who had stayed behind to try and influence the soldiers to follow
Yor’s orders. He had rallied this small group to action and his hand drew back with a dagger
intended to kill Zora, before he could throw it at her Zora’s own dagger hit him in the throat and he
fell back making gurgling sounds as he died.

The two men who had charged her with swords drawn were met by the young soldier who had
spoken with Zora first and by the general who had recognized her. Zora was pleased to see that they
both fought well and the two traitors were quickly dispatched. When the excitement died down Zora
raised her voice, “Any others who wish to test me? Is there anyone who believes that Yor is the true
leader of our people? Are there any who believe he is a good leader?” Zora searched the crowd and
when none stood she continued. “I am your true leader and I am here to take my rightful place at the
head of this army! We ride for York where I will reclaim my position as mayor. We will free our
people from the darkness Yor has brought upon them and anyone who stands against me will fall,
their blood will stain my sword.” A cheer rose from the army then and Zora raised her bloody sword
to the sky, standing there in the midday sun it looked as if she had stabbed the heavens. Her people
would hear the legend of how she returned from the dead and drew blood from the sky.

Heda Lexa and Heda Clarke would be whispered about around campfires. They already knew that
Heda Clarke could bring reapers back from the dead, her legend grew when there were murmurs that
she had also been the one who brought back the murdered young women whose birthrights had been
stolen. Heda Lexa was said to be so fearsome that she even commanded the allegiance of long dead
queens.

As the long day drew to a close the five legends rode into the forest in pursuit of an illegitimate mayor and a false king.

Chapter End Notes

I revisited a couple of the earlier chapters and made a few changes. I changed some things that were conflicting from one chapter to the next - such as the origin of Rock's dagger - and I took another look at Lexa's fight with the Ice Prince. I'm putting her through a lot in such a short time and she has to come through to the next chapter with enough strength left for some overdue hanky panky with her wife so I lessened her injuries. ;-}
The Forest has Eyes.

Chapter Summary

Clarke stumbles across something the forest that she just can't look away from.

Chapter Notes

Trigger warning: The first half of this chapter (specifically paragraphs 6 and 7) contains some explanations of the crimes committed by Yor and Alain. It could be triggering for some.

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

Two weeks had passed. Lexa had used her strength as Heda to send united forces from all of the clans to secure the capital cities of York and Otta. Skadi, Zora and Rock had agreed with her that their top priority should be hunting down Yor and Alain. They took a small but mobile force with them on the hunt and sent people they trusted most to reclaim the capital cities from the puppets of the two nefarious men. The people of the cities were told that their leaders lived and that they would return to them only when they had the heads of the men who had usurped their thrones.

Niro, the general who had been the first to recognize Zora, rode ahead of his army and accompanied Bellamy and Echo who led the alliance force that went to York. They were supported by Rachel and Luna as goodwill ambassadors. The Boat People were well known for being peaceful and Luna’s presence in the city would help people believe the intentions of the alliance were true. They met some resistance at first, Yor’s politicians had proclaimed that the city was under attack and they fought at the gates of the city. When the people heard from Niro’s mouth that Zora lived an already existing rebellion rose up and fought against the oppressive regime. With the help of the alliance soldiers they quickly took back the city. Echo knew that there were many pockets of resistance outside of the city where many of Yor’s men had fled in an effort to retain their power and that Zora would have to lead her soldiers into those villages and free her people herself once she returned. For now the city was secured and Bellamy and Echo were doing their best to keep the peace until Zora’s return. There was still the very real danger of the assassins. Yor had handpicked the men he allowed into the elite group and they were loyal to him. With the training they had they were a dangerous threat to the tentative peace in the city and Bellamy and Echo spent most of their days training young men and women to fight and protect the citizens from the assassins. Luna and Rachel met with the cities powerful people and smoothed over political disputes promising that Zora’s return would answer all of their questions.

The people of York were on edge, wanting desperately to believe that Zora was alive and would return to them, but also holding onto the fear that it was a lie and Heda’s army had just annexed their city. Years of living in fear of Yor and his men had set the city on edge and they were wary of the soldiers that now patrolled the streets. When most of Niro’s army marched back into the city almost a week after the smaller alliance force had arrived the people began to relax. The soldiers told tall tales of Zora. They had seen her with their own eyes and she was ten feet tall and her sword bled the sky and she killed twelve men with her bare hands just because they didn’t like her hair. The stories were
wild and exaggerated but every single soldier agreed on one thing, she was real, the Mayor lived.

Ford, and Cole rode at the head of the alliance force that went north to Otta, they rode with a company of Horse warriors lead by Ro, the march of the Horse Clan was a magnificent sight to behold, especially when Ford and her bikers were leading them. Abby and Marcus accompanied them as ambassador’s of peace and Varga’s army was with them so they met little resistance as they entered the realm of the Ice People. It was a slower march to wait for the whole army but the Ice Nation posed a different threat than York and the alliance forces would have had to fight their way through the outskirts to even reach the capital city of Otta had they not been accompanied by Varga and the Ice Army. The Ice Nation was well known for it’s nationalism, the people would have never joined alliance soldiers to overthrow Alain’s government without the support of a general they all knew and trusted. Word spread quickly to Otta that the army was advancing and when they arrived they found Alain’s advisors and supporters had already fled the city. The people had began to rebel against them when the rumours of Skadi’s return from the dead circulated and so they had set fires and escaped as chaos enveloped the city. The armies fought the fires and made safe the city. Then Varga took control of the government and with the help of the Sky Chancellor and Kane he began to reorganize the city and prepare the people for the Queen’s return. Cole and Ford organized their armies to patrol the street paired with Ice soldiers loyal to Skadi. Ro and her mounted warriors guarded the city with the rest of Varga’s army. The Ice Warriors and those of the alliance mixed together and side by side they defended the city.

The hunt for the murderous villains was going well but too slow for Lexa’s taste. The anger in her heart for the suffering Yor and Alain had caused was red hot and demanded blood. She wanted them brought to justice and she wanted it now. Lincoln, Octavia, and Jay, the young York soldier who had been the first to declare that Zora lived, were scouting ahead of the hunting party. They had gathered intelligence from Lincoln’s tracking abilities and from small villages they passed. They had discovered that Yor and Alain had met not too far from Sapeake and now travelled together with around twenty guards each. There were also smaller groups of York assassins that seemed to join and leave the group at different times. Lincoln’s small group moved like ghosts gathering information and reporting back to Heda each night. The hunting party had been attacked by three groups of York assassins so far. They had lost five warriors but had managed to wipe out ten assassins each time. There were around fifty people in the party. They had to be mobile and quick so they gave up numbers for stealth and speed. Lexa knew that despite the small numbers her force was the deadliest strike force she could create and no matter how many guards Alain and Yor had they would not be able to stand against the group that hunted them.

Zora, Rock, and Skadi shared with the war council what life had become for their people under the reign of tyrants. Skadi remained stoic as she told the council what her spy’s reported. Alain had taken control by force and built a private guard from men of poor character. He had given them power and in return they policed the people for him, any resistance was met with a brutal death and the people lived in fear of the man who called himself their king. He rationed food, giving those in position to help him more and leaving many of the average citizens to starve. Her people were oppressed and miserable and she vowed to free them all and hunt down every single one of the wicked men who helped Alain.

Zora had been moved to tears as she revealed the information her spys brought her from York. She had secretly gone to the capital twice to see for herself and each time she was shaken to the core to discover how sick and brutal Yor’s reign truly was. In her mother’s time York had been a bastion of diversity and equality. Yor had driven women from public life, outlawing female soldiers, healers,
and leaders. He employed criminals who took joy in raping and torturing women as forms of punishment for breaking Yor’s laws on what women could and could not do. He passed a law outlawing homosexuality. He told the people that Ja Kie had been seduced by the evil Heda Sasha and that was the reason she had been killed. Punishment for a same sex relationship was rape, torture, and sometimes public execution.

He threatened powerful people with the death of their children and if any dared stand against him he would take their daughters as one of his personal attendants or accuse their sons of homosexuality and have them punished accordingly. Zora shook with hate when she confirmed what they had all suspected about his personal attendants. The girls were his personal sex slaves and he used them to entertain his generals and himself. If they stepped out of line they were beaten and if they tried to escape he killed them slowly and hung their bodies from the gates to his mansion. Zora had always known her uncle was a terrible person, but once he gained power the true depths of his depravity had been revealed. The people of York were living in terror and oppression, Zora’s heart ached for her people and her hand ached to close around her uncle’s throat.

The war council had been short and unanimous. The two men were sentenced to death and any who followed them would receive the same. Lexa quickly organized the armies to ride to York and Otta, she would not let the people suffer under the regimes while they hunted the leaders. The armies set out with orders to protect the people and spread the word that Skadi and Zora lived. Indra had been tasked with organizing the hunting party and she did not disappoint. She chose her best Trigedakru warriors, and one or two of the most skilled warriors from each of the clans. The Ice Army sent her their five best swordsmen and from the York army they got Jay, the best tracker, and three archers whose skills exceeded even the assassins. They had been elite archers in Ja Kie’s army and Zora knew they were loyal to her. It was a mixed group but skilled and lethal.

Two weeks into the hunt and hot on the tail of their prey the group had melded into a finely tuned machine. They had already taken down thirty assassins and they had learned from each attack. The first attack cost three lives but only one died in the two subsequent attacks. Lexa was confident that the next attack would be detected before it happened and hoped that none of her warriors would die. They had been tracking the enemy steadily northwest and were camped a few miles east of the start of the dead zone. They were waiting on Lincoln’s scouting report and had been camped for almost two days now. Lexa was impatient. While the warriors made good use of the short break, resting the horses, training with each other, and relentlessly searching the perimeter of the camp for assassins, Lexa was brooding and not even Clarke could stand being around her for more than a few minutes.

When Jay returned early that evening with no news Lexa’s frustration broke and she laid into a nearby tree with her sword. When she had toppled the tree and ordered it to be cut into firewood she stalked away into the small clearing that held the tent that she and Clarke shared and sat down roughly against a large oak with a terrifying glare on her face. She looked at her sword with a frown and pulled out her sharpening stone. She sat there grinding her teeth and sharpened her blade. Her guards knew well to stay far away from her when she was in a mood like this and the whole camp seemed to expand its borders to give the brooding commander more space.

Clarke watched as her wife lost her battle for self control and then stalked away to sharpen her blade. She knew how much it had hurt Lexa to hear of the travesties Yor and Alain had committed against the people they purported to lead. She blamed herself for allowing them into the alliance while they tortured and murdered their own people. She felt that she should have sent her armies against them and overthrown them. Clarke didn’t know what to say so she gave her wife space. She walked over to their tent and strapped on her pistol and dagger. She sheathed the sword Lexa had given her and she pulled on a long leather coat that covered all the way to her boots. The spring evenings held a chill that Clarke knew the coat would keep out, she called out softly to her wife. “Lexa, I’m going to patrol with Skadi and Zora.” When Lexa grunted in response Clarke made herself scarce.
Clarke walked over to where Motorbike was returning from his patrol. He looked questioning at Clarke and frowned when she told him she was heading out to patrol. “Heda Kom Skaikru, it is dangerous. You shouldn’t be out there. I will go with you.” He was adamant and Clarke rolled her eyes at him.

“Motorbike, I’ll be with Zora and Skadi. Everyone here does patrol, why should I be any different?” She raised her eyebrow when he opened his mouth to answer and then narrowed her eyes at him, “Don’t you dare say it’s because I’m loud and clumsy in the woods either!” He snapped his mouth shut and looked sheepish. “You just got off of patrol, go and get some rest. You are guarding my very grumpy wife tomorrow morning and it won’t be fun.” With that he looked at her and nodded, growling at the truth in her words. He sighed and turned to go. Zora was coming towards Clarke and Motorbike stopped and spoke quietly with her as he passed. Zora started laughing and smirked at Clarke as she nodded reassuringly to Motorbike.

“What did he tell you? Clarke demanded, already planning some sort of revenge on the guard.

Zora answered still laughing, “He said the Sky Commander is strong and brave but makes more noise in the forest than a Pauna. He encouraged us to be extra vigilant when we are with you.” She good-naturedly punched Clarke on the shoulder as she rolled her eyes. The young women had bonded quickly with Clarke but despite the strange deep connection they had with Lexa, the Commander’s brooding anger prevented them from having more than brief strategy conversations with her. Clarke worried about it but wasn’t sure yet how to reach through the guilt and anger Lexa was holding onto.

“I’m not that bad, I mean, I’m not freakishly silent like you guys but I’m getting better!” she wanted to keep insisting but Skadi had silently slipped in beside her and made her jump slightly, she saw Skadi’s arched eyebrow and knowing look she decided to change the subject. “So why do you two always patrol together? Is Cade still insisting he keep Rock in his sight and only allowing her to patrol with him?” Clarke was curious, generally Rock and Zora were inseparable but they never patrolled together.

Skadi laughed, which Clarke had come to learn was a rare sound. She was as stoic as she was beautiful and Clarke saw many similarities with Lexa. When she caught her breath she answered as Zora blushed, “I learned a few years ago never to let those two patrol together. We were heading to the outskirts of the Ice nation on a scouting trip and I was resting while they took watch, I woke up to find a small band of thieves going through our stuff. I fought and killed all three of them and rushed into the trees fearing that my friends had been injured or captured. I found the two of them completely naked Zora fucking Rock up against a tree. The thieves had passed by them completely undetected and they hadn’t even noticed the sounds of my fight. It took them several minutes to realize I was standing in the clearing with them. After that I made a rule…” Skadi laughed again and Zora spoke up.

“We didn’t do it every time we patrolled, I swear… it was a full moon that night… and you know I’m sorry” Clarke laughed at Zora’s attempt to excuse her and her lover and as if on cue Rock strolled into he clearing.

“What are you sorry for?” she asked Zora as she slung her arm around the woman’s waist.

“Clarke asked why you two don’t patrol together.” Skadi answered with a smirk. “I told her what the two of you tend to get up to when you are left alone in the woods at night.” Clarke giggled at the teasing and Rock gave her a look.

“Like you and Heda Lexa wouldn’t do the same,” she accused, and Zora eagerly agreed. “You always join one of us for patrol, I suspect it may be for the same reason.”
“Hey, how did I get dragged into this? Clarke wondered aloud. “I have been avoiding patrolling with her because she is has been in a really really bad mood the whole time we’ve been chasing these assholes.” Clarke admitted and then blushed. “I don’t know how to bring her out of it.”

Zora grinned, “patrol with her” she planted a kiss on Rock’s cheek, “a good romp in the woods knowing you could be caught at any time always did wonders for my mood.” She winked at her lover and Rock shook her head at her but smiled in adoration.

“You’re terrible,” Rock said but kissed Zora’s cheek in return.

Clarke laughed and shook her head, she walked into the forest to begin the patrol. She tried really carefully to be extra silent but as soon as the first twig snapped under her feet she heard Zora and Skadi snicker. The three of them did a sweep of the perimeter and checked in on the guards who were stationed at certain checkpoints. Lexa had set up more night watch than normal because of the threat of assassins. The women enjoyed each other’s company and chatted in between sweeps, the shift promised to be uneventful. On the next sweep Zora and Skadi were walking slightly ahead of Clarke when they both froze in place and raised a hand for Clarke to stop. The three of them stood still, listening. Zora and Skadi exchanged worried glances and drew their weapons. Clarke heard the rustling noise too, it was coming from somewhere to their left, away from the camp. They sneaked through the forest and as they got closer to the sounds it got louder. They heard what they thought was a struggle and they picked up the pace in case one of their people was being attacked. When they were close to the source of the sounds Zora suddenly gave hand signals indicating Skadi and Clarke should circle around so they could surround the clearing and attack from three fronts. The other two women obeyed quickly and Clarke ducked through the woods until she found herself alone and approaching the clearing that she now distinctly heard a moan of pain coming from. She stepped forward and when she peered through the bushes she was crouched behind she froze and her jaw dropped open. It turned out that the moan was not one of pain.

In the clearing just beyond her position Clarke watched as a very naked Cade hooked his thumbs on a shirtless Dal’s pants and slowly pulled them down. As he removed the pants he grasped Dal’s erection with his hand and quickly brought his mouth to it. Clarke watched mesmerized as Dal’s head jerked back at the contact and he moaned again. His hands went to Cade’s head and he entwined his fingers through his lover’s black hair. Cade’s mouth bobbed up and down and he seemed to take the entire length of Dal into his throat. Clarke knew she shouldn’t be watching this but found that she couldn’t tear her eyes away. Dal’s hips were gyrating and he was breathing hard as Cade’s tongue danced over the head of his cock. When he once again sucked his dick deep into his throat Dal let out a whimper and leaned heavily into the tree behind him as his knees buckled slightly. She noticed that Cade was using one of his hands to cup and caress Dal’s balls as other one held the large dick he was feasting on steady. Dal was panting and whispering something Clarke couldn’t hear and Cade picked up his pace sucking hard and fast. Dal’s body tightened and he called out Cade’s name as quietly as he could manage before collapsing a little more, Cade moaned and quickly wrapped his arm around Dal’s hip steadying him. Clarke knew that Dal had just come in Cade’s mouth and she silently berated herself for watching this private moment her two friends were sharing. She wanted to back away but as Dal regained some strength and he smiled at Cade with a look of pure desire she couldn’t make her feet move.

Cade got to his feet and Dal pulled him in for a sensual kiss. He ran his hands down Cade’s back and cupped his ass squeezing it and then slapping it as he pulled back and laughed happily, He whispered something in Cade’s ear and Cade moaned loudly, “Yes, please. It’s been so long baby.” Dal quickly turned around to face the tree and took ahold of the trunk to steady himself, he bent over slightly, spread his legs and then turned his head to look back at his lover. Cade was standing behind him stroking his own hard cock as he looked his lover over lustily. When Dal nodded Cade once again kneeled and Clarke watched as he used his tongue to prepare Dal for his cock. Dal sighed
happily and his sculpted torso and very fine ass shook in pleasure. When Cade was certain there was enough moisture there to provide some lubrication he got back to his feet and took his cock in his hand. He guided it to Dal’s tight ass and moaned as he felt the opening give and his cock slide inside.

Clarke stood transfixed, her heart pounding and her hormones racing as Dal moaned and Cade sunk his cock all the way into Dal’s ass. In the back of her mind she vaguely registered that she was dripping wet and that she was a huge pervert for standing here and watching this sexy scene in front of her. She watched as Cade began to pump in and out and he threw his head back and moaned in pleasure. Dal rocked his hips into his lover’s cock and whispered sexy words to Cade as he fucked him. He hissed and sighed and begged quietly for Cade to go faster and harder. Clarke was in a haze of desire and she was just about to shove her own hand down her pants when a hand snaked around her and clamped down over her mouth. She began to struggle but a familiar voice in her ear calmed her. Zora dragged her away from the clearing and back towards camp.

As soon as they were far enough away that Zora was sure they wouldn’t be heard she let go of the laughter she had been holding in and Clarke blushed so hard she was sure Zora could see it even in the dark. They met up with Skadi who looked relieved at seeing Clarke safe and then when she realized that meant Clarke had just been by the clearing the whole time she joined Zora in laughter at Clarke’s expense.

“I… I… they were… wow.” Clarke managed to mumble and the two women exchanged knowing grins.

“Clarke why don’t you take the rest of the shift off?” Skadi offered, knowing what Clarke needed to do and that she would have no concentration until she did it.

“Yeah, thanks. That’s a good idea.” Clarke was still aroused beyond her ability to ignore it and suddenly she couldn’t wait to return to her brooding wife. She had an idea of what might help Lexa get past the mood she was in. As she quickly rushed away she heard Zora and Skadi’s laughter what she was pretty sure was a high five.

Clarke stopped just beyond the clearing where her tent was. She heard the incessant scraping of the sharpening stone and knew Lexa was still sitting against the oak tree sharpening her sword. Clarke smirked to herself and after glancing around and making sure no one was nearby she quickly removed her pants and underwear. She gasped softly at how wet she was and wondered what kind of reaction Lexa would have when she discovered this. Then she buttoned up the long coat she was wearing concealing her half nakedness. She didn’t want Lexa to suspect anything. She folded her pants into a small bundle and tucked them under her arm. She strode into the clearing and Lexa looked up, her face showed worry and she looked Clarke up and down searching for any injury.

“Your patrol is not over, why are you here? Is everything OK, are you OK?” Lexa looked concerned and she immediately set aside her sword and made to stand.

“It’s fine, stay right there. I just have to grab something and I’ll be over to sit with you.” Clarke’s heart was warmed by her wife’s reaction, she appreciated the deep loving concern her wife had for her. It made her want Lexa even more and she hurriedly ducked into the tent and quickly put her pants down and shed the rest of her clothes from under the long coat. She buttoned back up and smiled to herself then took a deep breath and left the tent. She walked toward Lexa who was looking at her wife curiously. “Lexa,” Clarke began, stopping in front of her, just past the end of her outstretched legs. Clarke’s voice was even more husky than usual. The lower octave was not lost on Lexa who felt goosebumps erupt on her arms. “I know you are frustrated that we haven’t caught them yet, and I know it weighs heavily on your mind, but if you can put that aside for just a little while, I need your help.” Clarke tried to look nervous and scared and Lexa felt confused, she was picking up on signs that her wife was aroused and at first she thought Clarke had come looking for a
tyrst, but the look on her face as she asked for help appealed to Lexa’s protective nature and she immediately straightened her spine and set her face to the steely gaze of the Commander.

“Of course, Clarke. I will help you with whatever you need. Tell me what happened let us fix the problem together.” She started to stand up but Clarke quickly moved to stand over her and push her back down. Clarke stood with one foot on either side of her wife’s legs, Lexa’s face was just a few inches from Clarke’s pussy and she wondered if Lexa could smell her arousal.

“You can help me from there Lex.” Clarke stood straddling her wife and she felt wetness drip down the inside of her thigh.

“Clarke, what…” Lexa’s question trailed off when Clarke began to unbutton her long coat. She did it slowly and flesh was slowly revealed to Lexa who felt herself becoming more aroused with each button.

“Lex, do you want to know what happened in the woods…” Clarke had to lean down and cup Lexa’s face to drag her gaze from the next button.

When Lexa felt Clarke’s hand cup her chin and pull her gaze up to the beautiful blonde’s face her brain finally registered the question. “Yes, yes of course Clarke, tell me what happened.” Lexa licked her lips, she was sure Clarke was aroused and seducing her and she was certain she could smell her wife’s wet pussy. But she was not completely sure what was happening, first of all there was Clarke asking for help and also she did not expect her Sky wife to be so forward as to try something when her guards were so near and they could be discovered. When Clarke began her story Lexa felt her own desire spike and she trembled in anticipation of Clarke continuing to undo those damn buttons.

“We were patrolling and we heard a sound, it sounded like a struggle and we split up to check it out. When I found the source of the sounds I was shocked and I couldn’t look away.” Clarke fingered the next button and Lexa’s gaze went right back to her fingers. Clarke chuckled and abandoned the button as Lexa swallowed audibly and licked her lips again. Clarke undid the button finally revealing her cleavage to Lexa’s hungry gaze, only then did she continue her story, “It was Cade and Dal, Lexa. They were fucking.” Clarke drew out the pronunciation of the word and then flicked open the next button of her coat. Lexa could finally see that there were no clothes at all under the jacket and understood her wife’s intentions. Clarke heard the sharp intake of breath from her wife.

“Did you watch them, Clarke?” Lexa whispered the question, her eyes fixed on Clarke’s hands as they moved down to the next button.

“I did. I couldn’t stop myself.” Clarke breathed out and popped open another button revealing her dripping wet vagina to Lexa. Lexa started to reach for her but Clarke stopped her with a shake of her finger, “Not yet, Lexa. Be patient, I’m not finished telling you my story.” She chuckled again, a deep throaty sound that made goosebumps erupt once more along Lexa’s arms. “I watched as Cade thrust his cock into Dal’s ass and the moans they made turned me on so much I couldn’t help but get really really wet. I can’t get the image out of my mind and it is making me crazy. I couldn’t concentrate on patrol anymore so I came back here. I need you to help me Lex.” She continued unbuttoning the coat down to the last button and when it was done she threw the coat open and then sunk down onto Lexa’s lap. “I need you to fuck me, lover. I need you to make me come. Can you do that?” Clarke’s voice was thick with desire and she leaned in to whisper the last part in Lexa’s ear.

Lexa’s eyes were as wide as a frightened doe and she looked around making sure her guards were not waiting just beyond the clearing. “Here, now? Clarke are you sure, anyone could walk over and catch us.” Lexa wanted to make sure Clarke wasn’t going to regret this, they had done it outside several times before but never with the potential threat of an attack hovering over them and guards patrolling so close by. She knew it could heighten the arousal but she had to be sure that Clarke
really wanted this.

“What happened to your prowess, Commander?” Clarke teased, still whispering in Lexa’s ear. She grabbed Lexa’s right hand and pulled it toward her pussy. “I’m sure. I need you Lex, please,” she breathed the last word so quietly and with so much need that Lexa moaned and felt a shiver of desire run through her.

Lexa leaned forward and brought her mouth to Clarke’s ear, “I can help you Clarke, my prowess is still most impressive.” Lexa chuckled as Clarke shook in desire as Lexa’s breath caressed her ear. Clarke stopped directing Lexa’s hand when it was just above her hip and she wrapped both of her hands around Lexa’s neck. She spread her legs as wide as she could and looked into her wife’s eyes.

“Feel how wet I am baby, feel how much I need you.” Clarke rocked her hips forward a bit as Lexa moved her hand through her curly golden hair and into her wetness.

“Clarke… Oh… Clarke… so wet, so soft. mmmm” Lexa groaned and sighed as she felt the slick heat between Clarke’s legs. Clarke’s head fell forward, her mouth open and she gasped in pleasure as Lexa’s fingers stroked her clit.

Lexa moved quickly to take control, the sight of Clarke half naked, cleavage showing, and gyrating her hips into her hand wantonly was making Lexa crazy with desire. She slid her fingers down from Clarke’s clit and she quickly sunk two fingers into her cunt. Clarke let out a moan and she sat up straight and then arched her back making her cleavage too appealing for Lexa to ignore. She buried her face in between Clarke’s breasts and began to suck and lick. Clarke threw her head back and gripped her own thighs with her hands to steady herself. Lexa looked up at her wife, head thrown back, mouth open and breathing hard, her body awash in moonlight, she thought she looked like a goddess and she worshiped her accordingly. Lexa thrust harder and Clarke sucked in a breath and let it out, shuddering and catching in her throat. She ground her hips into Lexa’s hand faster and harder and Lexa completely forgot about everything else and focused on her intense desire to make Clarke come.

“Do you want to come, lover?” Lexa breathed out. Clarke met her gaze and nodded, eyes pleading for release. Lexa stroked her inner walls and curled her fingers inside of Clarke. She added a third finger, knowing Clarke was stretched and wet enough to take it. Clarke bit down on her lower lip to stop the cry of passion that was building in her lungs, she was trying to be quiet but when Lexa then moved her thumb to rub over Clarke’s clit she couldn’t keep it in and called out Lexa’s name loud enough that Lexa was sure most of the camp heard it. She grinned, loving the fact that the others would know that right now she was fucking this gorgeous woman. Lexa used her thumb and the three fingers she had thrust inside of Clarke to build a rhythm that was steadily pulling Clarke apart. She stroked and rubbed and felt so much wetness coming from Clarke that she knew Lexa was about to explode. Clarke was frantic, bucking her hips trying to fuck herself harder on Lexa’s hand and as she reached the edge she tilted her head back again and bit her lip to try and hold in the scream that was coming. Lexa easily read the signs of how close her wife was and as she ran her thumb over her clit once more. Clarke’s whole body shook and a stifled scream of passion escaped even as she bruised her own lip trying to hold it in. She shook and moaned through her orgasm and Lexa watched mesmerized by the pure beauty of Clarke’s pleasure. When Clarke was sated and trying to catch her breath she leaned her forehead on Lexa’s and panted.

“Fuck, Lex. That was so hot. Your are so fucking good at that..” Clarke looked up at Lexa’s grinning face and when Lexa kissed her softly she felt a heady desire to feel how wet she knew Lexa would be right now. “Change places with me Lex, I want to fuck you.” Clarke felt a growing need to feel her wife’s cunt clench around her fingers as she fucked her. She didn’t want to be nice and soft and romantic, she wanted to claim Lexa roughly and hear her own name on Lexa’s lips. She was
Lexa chuckled, and shook her head. Her hand never left Clarke’s pussy. She was cupping the warmth and wetness as Clarke recovered. “I am Heda Kom Trigedakru. It is one thing for me to fuck my beautiful wife in the forest like this, but it is quite another to be fucked. I cannot allow myself to be in such a position, vulnerable and unaware, when we are under threat of attack.” Lexa’s green eyes bored into Clarke’s blue betraying her arousal. She blushed as she continued, “Believe me Houmon, I want to feel your hands on me, inside of me, But it will have to wait until this hunt is over.” Lexa’s voice was firm but loving and she leaned in to kiss her wife. Clarke wasn’t happy but she nodded. Then she grinned and kissed Lexa hard, if Lexa wouldn’t let herself be touched Clarke was just going to have to make her come without touching her at all. Lexa felt Clarke’s still burning desire and smiled as she began to move her hand and stroke through her folds again exploring the wetness, Clarke encouraged her by rocking her hips forward. She knew how much fucking her made Lexa hot and very bothered and she leaned in to place her lips next to Lexa’s ear as she felt Lexa slip a finger inside her again.

Clarke used the best weapon she had for besieging Lexa’s composure, she used her voice. “Lex, fuck, your fingers feel so good inside of me.” Clarke began whispering softly into Lexa’s ear. She felt her wife tense and was pleased to feel an involuntary shudder run through her muscles. Lexa added a second finger and Clarke rocked forward and squeezed her muscles, momentarily trapping Lexa’s fingers in her slick warmth. “Fuck! I love the way you touch me. I’m so high right now, you make me so fucking high.” Clarke’s voice went thin and high and Lexa’s thumb brushed across her clit and she bucked her hips into Lexa’s hand. Clarke heard Lexa’s breathing deepen and she heard small moans escape her lips as her fingers slid in and out of Clarke’s wetness.

Clarke continued her verbal assault on Lexa’s self control, “More, Lex. Fill me up,” she encouraged and was rewarded by a third finger and Lexa’s teeth on her shoulder. Clarke shook with pleasure and dug her fingers into Lexa’s skin. Her voice became breathy and pleading, “Your teeth mark me, let your fingers claim me, deeper Lexa.” Lexa’s mind was a haze of desire and she heard Clarke asked to be fucked deeper, she grabbed the small of Clarke’s waist with her left hand and she leaned in to give herself better leverage, she thrust into Clarke harder, deeper, and felt a rewarding gush of liquid heat flow over her fingers. Clarke had thought about this many times, she wanted it. Wanted to feel Lexa completely inside of her, she knew Lexa wouldn’t do it on her own so she fought the tide of desire that was pulling her down and she purposefully leaned back away from Lexa’s ear. She moved back slightly so she could look Lexa in the eye as she spoke, “your thumb too baby, put your whole hand inside me.” Lexa let out a small gasp, her abdomen tightened and her cunt throbbed. Clarke’s eyes were so deep and dark with desire and Lexa’s matched hers with need. Then Clarke leaned back away from Lexa, she leaned back so she was supporting herself with her hands on the ground stretched out behind her. She lifted herself off of Lexa’s legs and let her wife slip out from under her. She settled onto the ground, her ass on the long coat she was certain would be Lexa’s favourite going forward. Lexa quickly scrambled into a kneeling position between Clarke’s legs and she once again imagined that she was worshipping a goddess. Her hand had never left Clarke’s centre and as she leaned forward and claimed Clarke’s mouth in a searing kiss she began stroking Clarke’s soft wet walls again. She had four fingers curled up inside of Clarke and she was shaking with the lust that coursed through her veins.
“Are you sure, love?” Lexa asked as she broke the kiss.

“Do you think I am wet enough to take it?” Clarke whispered sexily into Lexa’s ear and enjoyed the moan that Lexa gave her when she flicked her tongue over the shell of the brunette’s ear.

“Yes, fuck yes, Clarke. You are like the ocean in my hand. So wet.” Lexa was so turned on that her breathing was erratic and her whole body was tense.

“Take me. Fuck me. Fill me.” Clarke whispered into Lexa’s ear before throwing her head back and losing herself to the sensations flooding through her. Lexa slid her fingers out most of the way from Clarke’s cunt and pressed her thumb into the centre of her hand, she pushed her hand forward and felt resistance at the last knuckle of her thumb. She paused and called for her wife. “Lover,” she waited until Clarke raised her eyes and met her gaze, “are you ready, you need to relax for me?” She was teasing Clarke with fluttering touches, wiggling her fingers inside of the tight, wet walls.

Clarke felt the fullness spark an intense desire to thrust her hips forward but she let Lexa control the pace and took a deep breath, releasing the tension she had been holding in anticipation of being fisted. She looked into Lexa’s eyes, hooded with desire, and nodded. “Take me, Lex. I’m ready.” Lexa had felt Clarke relax against her fingers and with slight pressure her last knuckle slipped inside and her hand entered Clarke completely. The sensation was overwhelming. Lexa cried out as loudly as Clarke. The two found each other’s lips and kissed desperately. Lexa felt destroyed, she was not capable of any coherent thought and the sound of her own blood rushing though her blood vessels filled her ears. She broke the kiss and buried her face in Clarke’s neck. She moved her hand slowly and felt Clarke’s responses acutely. She felt the clenching of the walls, the wetness that filled her and leaked out around her wrist. She felt Clarke tighten and she heard the quiet moans and felt the shaking in Clarke’s muscles.

Clarke was fighting not to come, she needed to hold out a little longer but she felt so full, and Lexa’s fingers were tapping out a delicious rhythm on her g-spot. She leaned her head down and once again went for Lexa’s ear. “Lexa. Your hand filling me feels amazing. You are so fucking amazing. You make my body sing. Fuck, Lexa. You feel so good.” She sucked Lexa’s earlobe into her mouth and bit down lightly as Lexa started to slowly rotate her wrist. It caused a whole new cascade of sensations to shoot through Clarke’s cunt and her body shook with the pleasure of it. “Lex… fuck, yes… yes… fuck” Clarke’s breath started to get away from her and she panted the next question into Lexa’s ear, “do you like fucking me?”

Lexa groaned her answer, swearing on her honour that fucking Clarke was her one true purpose in life. Clarke grinned and chuckled though her lust. “Does fucking me make you wet, Lexa? Are you wet for me right now?” Clarke felt Lexa’s whole body shudder and tense and she heard a strangled, rushed sentence comparing her pants to a great river fly from Lexa’s mouth. Clarke continued and she felt Lexa tensing and gasping for breath. “How much do you love fucking me? Does Heda enjoy fisting the Sky Commander?” That got a loud moan from Lexa and Clarke felt her body tense and her chest shudder trying to suck in enough oxygen. “You are making me so hot Lexa. Fucking me here in the open, your fist inside me.” Clarke’s breathing picked up and she was canting her hips forward as Lexa’s fist drew pleasure from her in ways she hadn’t known were possible.

Clarke was closing in on orgasm, she could feel that Lexa was losing control too and she wanted to make her wife tumble into the fire of pleasure with her. “Lex, I need you to come for me. Can you do that. Does your fist inside of me give you enough pleasure? I’m so close Lex, come with me.. please.” Clarke let this plea leave her lips and then she was too gone to think anymore. She let Lexa carry her past conscious thought and into the stars. Her mouth kept going, singing a litany to Lexa’s talented fingers. “Yes, yes, fuck your fingers moving inside of me feels so good. I’m so close, I’m so full. Lex, your hand is so fucking big inside of me. I love the way you move. Fuck, fuck, fuck.
Faster, oh shit. Lexa.Fuck it feels so good. I’m close. Lex, take me there. Please… fuck… fuck… Lexx… ahh, ahh oh Lexa Lexa Lexa. Ahhhhhhh

It was Clarke’s husky, sexy, voice in her ear, giving words to the orgasm as it overtook her that pushed Lexa to the edge. But it was the intensity of Clarke’s cunt squeezing her hand with the force of her orgasm that sent her over the edge. Lexa came, she cried out Clarke’s name and she shook and panted along with Clarke.Both women were wet, panting, and not caring where they were. Clarke had collapsed back onto the ground and Lexa was on top of her. They lay like that for a minute, catching their breath.

Lexa slowly and gently extracted her hand from the warm walls that held them and Clarke moaned in protest. Lexa kissed Clarke’s neck and sighed happily. Finally Lexa spoke. “Clarke, my love, we should move to the tent.” She giggled a little and Clarke joined her. Soon they were in an uncontrollable fit of laughter and trying to shush each other.

“Be quiet, Lex, they’ll hear us!” Clarke admonished.

This brought forth a fresh burst of laughter from Lexa, “right because they didn’t hear anything before this…” She pressed her lips to Clarke’s as Clarke giggled some more.

“I can’t believe we just did that… Oh lord, Lex I spied on Cade and Dal… and then seduced you…” Clarke buried her head in Lexa’s neck hiding her face in embarrassment.

Lexa grinned and tucked a finger under Clarke’s jaw, raising her face up so they could look at each other, “Clarke, I know you are from the sky and your people are embarrassed easily, but there is no reason for it. Cade and Dal would not be upset. It is a natural thing to enjoy seeing people’s passion. Seducing me like that was exactly what I needed, your passion refreshed me, Clarke. My head is clear now. Thank you, Houmon.” Lexa placed a soft kiss on her wife’s lips and then stood pulling Clarke to her feet and leading her towards the tent. Once Clarke was inside she returned to the tree and with a huge grin she picked up her sword and sharpening stone. Lexa smiled and quickly retuned to the tent and dove into the fur blankets where her wife’s embrace was waiting. They slept soundly and woke feeling refreshed.

At breakfast Clarke avoided everyone’s eyes, Lexa on the other hand paraded about with a large smile on her face. Cade and Dal joined them and commented on Lexa’s demeanour, “Heda, you seem refreshed. It is good to see you like this.” Cade clasped Lexa’s forearm and smiled at her.

Zora and Skadi were whispering to Rock off to the side and when they heard Cade they burst into laughter, “It seems she has you to thank for it, brother” Rock commented and Clarke’s eyes widened to an unnatural size as her cheeks burned an even brighter shade of red than they had been for most of the morning.

Cade and Dal looked confused but the uncontrolled giggling of the three women and Clarke's obvious embarrassment tipped them off. They looked at Clarke bemused before addressing Lexa once more, “we are glad we could help, Heda.” They winked at Lexa who laughed and smiled at Clarke. Clarke was quite certain she had just died of embarrassment and prayed for a distraction.

Her prayers were answered when the guards reported that Lincoln and Octavia approached the camp. They rushed in and Clarke forgot her embarrassment as she looked at her friend’s face, flushed with excitement. “Heda,” Octavia addressed Lexa respectfully, “we found them!”

Chapter End Notes
This was my first m/m smut and I hope you enjoy it! Feedback is appreciated!
Shared Stories

Chapter Summary

Lexa and Clarke bond with the Shadow Women.

Chapter Notes

Trigger warning. This chapter deals with rape. It can be skipped and the story continued with the next chapter. This chapter is all about providing some background on the Shadow Women, it is not absolutely necessary to the rest of the story.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Lexa and her strike force were very close to capturing Alain, the man who had usurped the throne of the Ice Nation, and Yor, the military dictator of York. Lincoln, Octavia and Jay had tracked down the criminals hideaway and the alliance soldiers were closing in. That morning Lincoln had detailed the location to Heda and they had decided on the best avenue of approach. The most direct route was no good, there were too many places with high ground where an ambush could devastate them. They decided that a day's ride North would bring them to the best position from which to attack the camp.

The group moved silently though the forest carefully moving forward and constantly on the lookout for the assassins that Yor had at his command. It was a slow and steady day but they arrived at the point Lexa had decided on without incident. They set up camp and everyone was tense. The Commander told them they were to attack at first light and set up a double watch to guard the camp throughout the night. She called the three young women, who until recently had been thought to be dead, to her tent. She and Clarke welcomed them and as they sat Lexa went over the plan with them. They already knew the plan inside and out from that morning and hoped that Heda Lexa had other reasons for calling them to this private meeting.

As Lexa finished going over the plan she sighed and looked down. Skadi noticed as Clarke subtly put her hand over Lexa’s and squeezed showing her support. Gathering her courage Lexa raised her head and looked into the eyes of each woman before speaking. “You and I are bound by the actions of these men, by the women who were murdered by them and by the weight of leadership that lies heavy on our shoulders. I should never have supported Yor and Alain in the alliance. I should have spoken out at the things that made me uncomfortable, I should not have let the cost of peace be paid in the blood of the people of York and the Ice Nation. I feel responsible for the suffering of your people, of our people.” Lexa spoke slowly and as she paused again, mulling over her words, Zora interrupted her.

“Is that what has been weighing on you this whole time Heda?” A sardonic and bitter bark of laughter escaped her lips, “Are you so vain, Heda Lexa?” This got Lexa’s attention and she looked at the young woman in surprise. “You rule the clans but is everything good or bad that happens your doing?” Zora shook off Rock’s hand as she reached out to quiet her partner. “If anyone should feel guilt and pain for our people’s suffering it is us.”
Zora spoke with passion and pain in her voice and she tapped herself in the chest hard enough to bruise as she spoke. “We are the one’s that hid for years in order to save our own lives. We knew exactly what terrible crimes were being committed against our people and still we hid. We waited until we knew we had a chance to succeed and free our people for good, a chance to live. If we had just fought from the beginning we probably would have died, but we may have been able to spur a rebellion and our people may not have had to suffer and die under these tyrants for this long.” Tears ran down Zora’s face as she continued, “Heda, you can not shoulder this blame, this guilt. It is not yours to carry. I know what my people have suffered through. Gunther, the one who calls himself Yor, is my uncle, I know better than most what a monster he really is.”

Lexa swallowed hard and searched for the right words. “I do feel guilt, I feel pain. Your people are my people. That is what this alliance means to me. I do not mean to belittle your responsibilities or your feelings. I only mean to share in that, I cannot lead people well if I do not feel love and compassion for them.” Clarke moved closer and placed her arm around Lexa in support and Skadi nodded gravely understanding Lexa entirely. Lexa looked each of the young women in the eye and paused at the understanding she saw reflected at her in the eyes of the Ice Queen. She took a deep breath and nodded to Zora, “Zora, Mayor of York please tell me your story, tell me more about your uncle. What monster is it we will slay tomorrow?”

Zora nodded at Lexa and took deep breath “He was often away when I was young. My father sent him on many trade missions, it seemed like he didn’t want him around. I never understood why, he was always smiling and charming to me and my mother. He brought me gifts from his travels but my father always refused to let me keep them. Gunther would find ways to sneak them to me and I was always thrilled by it. I thought he was the best uncle I could ask for.”

Zora’s large biceps bulged as she wrung her hands compulsively as she spoke about Yor. “When I was around twelve, during one of his brief stays in the city, my mother left me alone with him and went to a late meeting. She didn’t really know him, just that he was the brother of the man she loved, so she gave him her trust by default. My father was a different story. He was embarrassed that such a man shared his blood; he knew how sick his brother was. He was returning from a hunting trip when he found out that I had been left in Gunther’s care. He raced back to our home. He burst in just in time. Gunther had pulled me onto his lap was trying to undress me as I struggled to get away from him. My father beat him badly. He would have killed him had my grandmother not entered and stopped him. After that my father sent him away from the city. We never spoke of what happened to my mother, he told her that my uncle had family matters to attend to far from York.”

Zora’s face showed her anger and disgust as she spoke of the man they were hunting, “I knew my grandmother went to see him frequently but I didn’t see him until a few years later after my father’s death. He returned to the city and pretended to mourn his brother. He put on a show for my mother. He was embarrassed that such a man shared his blood; he knew how sick his brother was. He was returning from a hunting trip when he found out that I had been left in Gunther’s care. He raced back to our home. He burst in just in time. Gunther had pulled me onto his lap was trying to undress me as I struggled to get away from him. My father beat him badly. He would have killed him had my grandmother not entered and stopped him. After that my father sent him away from the city. We never spoke of what happened to my mother, he told her that my uncle had family matters to attend to far from York.”

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Zora’s hard eyes softened and she looked at her partner, tears filled her eyes and Rock brushed them away. She whispered softly to Zora and Clarke heard the words, ‘it wasn’t your fault’. Clarke felt like a large stone had been dropped into her belly, she felt sick. Zora sighed and continued, “Anyway, by that time I was highly trained and could have killed him had he tried to touch me, but the fear was still there thick in my head from when I was a helpless child.”

Zora’s emotions showed plainly on her face as she shared this with Lexa and Clarke. There was hatred, anger, and a deep sadness in her eyes. Lexa was moved by it and fought her own rising emotions in order to keep her face passive and stoic, she glanced once again at Skadi and saw
through the stoic expression to the same tightly clenched jaw and creases around her eyes that Lexa
was sure were currently on her own face. Lexa saw so much of herself in Skadi, the more time she
spent with her the more she felt it. The first time Clarke mentioned it to her she had been surprised,
but now she knew what her wife had seen in the Ice Queen. It both warmed Lexa’s heart and made
her worry for the young woman, Lexa knew all too well the difficulties of burying emotions and
trying to hold yourself to impossible standards. She returned her eyes to Zora who continued her
story.

“He tried to convince me that he had changed but when he discovered that I could not be convinced
he soon gave up trying. When my mother was not around he would look at me and my friends with
an evil leer and make horrible comments to me about what he would do to us if he got the chance. I
threatened to tell my mother but he laughed at me and told me she’d never believe me. He wanted
power and thought that he could marry my mother to get it so he was always a perfect gentleman
around her. I was young and he fed me doubt. I should have told her, she would have believed me.”

A heavy sigh followed those words and Zora reached up and rubbed her closely shorn hair
distractedly. “When he found out about her relationship with Heda Sasha he lost it. I think that is
when he came up with the plan to murder everyone. After that Alain was a frequent visitor to York,
and Gunther went to the Ice Nation often as well. He is a monster. The world will be better off when
we kill him.”

Zora looked at Rock and a silent question passed between them, Rock nodded and Zora reached out
her hand and took Rock’s in hers. She began to weep silently for the words Rock was about to
speak. Rock began, looking straight at Lexa, “When I was attacked on my way to meet you, Yor
was there.” she laughed bitterly, “if he wasn’t a sexual predator he would have succeeded in killing
me. We rode into an ambush, my guards and I were on low alert as we were passing through friendly
lands, Zora’s lands.”

Zora gritted her teeth through her tears as Rock continued her story, “His assassins picked my guards
off as we were riding through a field. They could have easily shot me as well but Yor had other
plans for me. The assassins closed in on me and I fought them off as long as I could. I managed to
kill three of them before they overwhelmed me. There were just too many of them. They tied me up
and I was dragged into a tent where I was tied to four posts in the ground. A few hours later Yor
came into the tent. He told me that he knew I was his niece’s lover and he was going to enjoy
defiling me and telling her about it before he killed her. He laughed at me and he cut my clothes off,
than he cut me several times. They were shallow cuts, not life threatening, just enough to scar.” Rock
lifted her shirt and showed Lexa and Clarke some of the scars running across her tightly muscled
abdominal area.

Clarke felt outrage growing in her belly, and Lexa trembled in anger beside her straining to contain
her feelings and remain composed. Zora’s tears continued to fall and Skadi remained perfectly still
and stoic, in much the same pose as Lexa.

Rock continued, “After he cut me he left me there bleeding. As he left he told me I would always
remember him because of the scars he would leave. Then he laughed and told me it would probably
be a short life so I shouldn’t worry anyway. I tried not to panic but I spent that night terrified, I
thought every sound I heard was someone coming to hurt me, I desperately worked the ropes against
the poles and tried to free myself. I wasn’t fast enough, I had managed to wear through a small part
of the rope but not nearly enough to escape.” Rock paused and her composure broke slightly, her lip
trembled and her hand shook. Zora steadied her.

“The next day he came into the tent and he wiped the dried blood from my body. He inspected the
cuts he had made and then he smiled like a demon and happily told me he was certain the cuts would
leave thick, ugly scars. When he finished admiring his work, he took off his clothes and then he raped me.”

Hot tears fell down Clarke’s cheeks, “Rock, I am so sorry.” She shook her head, not knowing what else to say. Lexa couldn’t speak or move rage was burning inside of her that had only ever been matched by the rage she had felt over Costia.

“I survived.” Rock said simply, her voice was void of emotion as she continued, “When he finished he left the tent and I continued trying to free myself. He returned later that evening and assaulted me again. When he left I kept trying to escape. I had almost worked through the rope that tied my right hand when he returned a third time. This time as he left he told me he was done with me and in the morning I would be turned over to his assassins. He laughed and told me he couldn’t wait to tell Zora what fate I had met.”

Rock paused for a moment and pulled Zora’s arms around her. She kissed the tears on her lover’s cheek and continued stoically, “I managed to free myself about an hour or two after he left. I heard sounds of drinking and laughter coming from outside and overheard two men saying they planned to sneak into the tent to attack me before Yor left in the morning. He had ordered them to stay out of the tent until he left for York. Apparently he wasn’t sure if he would want to assault me once more and he didn’t enjoy raping a women after his men had done it.”

The hard edge to her normally lyrical voice drove a knife into Lexa’s heart. Rock reminded her of Luna, cheerful, kind, and prone to smile. Hearing her sound so cold, and emotionless angered Lexa even more. She wished Rock hadn’t suffered such a terrible crime and that she could be full of happiness and light once more. Yor had stolen some of that light from her and given her darkness to carry in her heart. Lexa hated him. Rock contiuned, “I used the two men's drunkenness against them and when they stumbled into my tent I killed them both and stole some of their clothes. I escaped on one of their horses and rode for York. I knew Zora was in danger.”

Skadi finally spoke, “I have heard your words before, but I don’t think I have ever told you how very brave you were, Rock. It is very difficult to keep calm and find a way to escape such a terrible situation. I wish that hadn’t happened to you, but I am glad that Yor did not shoot you from afar as he did Zora’s mother and your guards. I am glad he was foolish enough to try and kill you in close quarters. I am also very, very glad that tomorrow you will have your revenge.”

Rock looked at her and the two women locked eyes in a way that made Clarke think Skadi understood Rock in a much more personal way than the rest of the women in the tent. Rock held Skadi’s gaze for a moment as she continued talking, “I knew that come morning the assassins would be on my trail so I travelled as far as I could through the night. I didn’t take the main road into York fearing Yor’s men would be patrolling it. I circled around and approached from the east and I came across a small village.”

Rock stopped and lost her battle to control her emotions, tears filled her eyes. “Everyone was dead. The village had been razed to the ground by Yor's assassins. I walked through it, death greeted me everywhere. I could feel the spirits of the dead lingering and I set fire to the village to free them; all except one.”

Tears fell from Rocks eyes as she repented what she had done. “I found a young girl, my age and my size. I put her body on my horse and circled back towards the main road to York. I took her clothes and dressed the girls body in the clothes I had stolen from the assassins. I left the broken handle of my dagger with her body. I had managed to find it and take it with me from the tent but I knew I had to leave it now. I made it look like she had been in a battle with assassins and I burned the top half of her body so they could not see her face. I left her there to be discovered hoping that would be
enough to convince Yor that I was dead. As morning approached I snuck into the city and into Zora’s school.

Zora swallowed hard and hugged Rock tighter to her as she took over the story, “She snuck into my room and woke me. I was so happy to see her but when I looked into her eyes I knew something was terribly wrong. She told me we had to run, that my uncle had tried to kill her and that I would be next.” Lexa watched as Zora clenched her fist tightly, “She didn’t tell me what had happened until later.”

Skadi replied for Rock, “You would not have left, you would have gone after him and probably gotten yourself killed. Your anger would have blinded you as it did Heda Lexa when my aunt killed Costia.”

Lexa turned her head sharply to stare at Skadi in surprise. Her eyes held a question that Skadi promptly answered, "I was already in hiding then but I saw you fight through the village I was in. I had never seen such rage, nor such beauty and grace, watching you fight is like watching an artist or a dancer.” Clarke nodded in agreement at that statement.

"The people of the village were hiding me, protecting me, so they did not join in the fight against your army. It was Alain’s soldiers who fought, and you killed them all.” Skadi looked at Lexa with an intensity that Lexa could feel.

Lexa returned the heavy gaze with her own, Heda spoke, “I am not proud of that, Queen Skadi. I fought without thought for anything but my grief and anger, and because of it many of my warriors died needlessly.”

Skadi did not flinch, “Warriors die for their leaders all of the time, Heda. They followed you to their death willingly because of your fire and passion. That is why they still follow you. Why all of the clans follow you.”

“Enough,” Lexa said softly to Skadi, “I wish to hear Zora speak.”

Zora continued, “I hid Rock in my room and went to my classes that day. And as soon as the evening room check was complete we snuck away. As we were slipping out of the city we heard an explosion and saw the fire. I knew it was the school, I wanted to run back and try to rescue my friends but I knew it was already too late and I knew I had to get Rock to safety. I didn’t know why or exactly how, but I could tell she was hurt.”

Zora sighed and pulled Rock closer still, needing to feel her warmth. “We moved quickly to a little known village not far from the city. It was the childhood home of my mother’s most trusted guard. It was very well fortified and sure to be left alone by Yor’s men. His family hid me and let Rock and I recover there for a week. As Rock recovered we talked about everything that had happened with our mother’s, the Ice Queen and Heda Sasha. It was then that she revealed to me that she believed Skadi lived and was hiding in a village near the border to Trigeda territory. We set out to find her the next day.”

“How did you know she was alive?” Clarke asked and Lexa nodded adding her curiosity.

“I had a lot of hints and help in that area.” Rock admitted. There were visitors to my lands, several young women who came and went for trade and every time they insisted on seeing me to present me with gifts. One told me that they lived in a secret village away from the new King and that someone special lived there with them. Another told me that a young woman around my age and much like myself lived in her village."
Rock looked fondly at Skadi as she spoke, "A third told me that she was the most talented tattoo artist in the Ice Nation and offered her services for free. She gave me this." Rock turned and pulled her shirt over her head. The tattoo on her back was an intricate design, a larger more colourful version of the one Skadi had on her arm. There was Heda’s symbol, the black circle within a circle that looked sort of like a gear. Starting Inside of the spaces of Heda's symbol, intertwined with it and interrupting it, were three more. The bronze sun with rays shooting out, her own symbol. Skadi’s three intersecting black triangles capped with light blue snowy tops. They represented the mountains and snow of the Ice Nation. And last was Zora’s symbol, the raised torch of freedom.

“Once I saw what she drew I understood. I knew that the four of us had a large part to play in freeing all of our people. I knew Skadi’s symbol would not be there if she did not live. The woman pressed a map into my hand as she left. She whispered to me that I should memorize it and burn the paper. I did.”

Zora picked up the story again, “She lead us directly there,” Her voice was full of pride as she looked at Rock, “She has always been good at directions and maps. I get lost going to the bathroom.” She laughed sheepishly and Rock favoured her with a gentle look.

“When they approached the village I was so happy that they lived.” Skadi looked fondly at her two friends. “Our mother’s often met and we all grew up together. We saw each other several times a year. When I went into hiding my worst fear was that Alain and Yor would get to them like they had our mothers. I felt such relief that they lived.” She paused and pinned Lexa with a look, “Much like the relief I felt when I watched you and your army retreat back to your own lands after having killed Sula. I always knew that you were a part of our fate Heda Lexa.”

Zora, Skadi and Rock looked at each other and then at Clarke, “When you fell from the sky our scouts reported to us that there was another young commander to be reckoned with. The Sky Princess was reported to be magical, she brought reapers back to life and she burned Heda’s warriors with a fire that she controlled.” Skadi looked at Clarke who blushed and looked away.

Rock continued, “Then we heard that she had joined Heda Lexa and that together they had taken down the mountain.”

Zora finished proudly, “I was the first to trust you, to proclaim that you must be part of this connection, this kindred relationship between us. I added a symbol to my tattoo.” Zora stood eagerly and pulled her shirt off, her muscles rippled as she moved. The many scars on her skin looked like a roadmap, Clarke thought she was even more scarred than Lexa. She was certainly the largest of the five women, she was very obviously strong. Her perfectly toned body was impressive to say the least, her physique was muscular, almost masculine, but her breasts... oh her breasts. Even though she had them bound to her chest tightly they strained to free themselves and her cleavage drew everyone’s eyes even as they tried not to stare.

Clarke looked at Rock and smirked, “Now I know why you can’t patrol with her. Hard to keep your hands to yourself”

Zora blushed slightly but laughed at Rock’s pink cheeks. “She does tend to get handsy.” She teased her partner who laughed and shook her head.

“Show them the tattoo already,” She grinned sheepishly and then added, “can you blame me…?”

Zora turned and quickly unwrapped her breast bind, Lexa watched with interest as the tattoo was revealed. It was the same as Rock’s but in the very centre there was a golden star. There were five points to the star, three reached out to touch the other smaller symbols and the other two points of the star reached all the way to the circle and touched Lexa’s symbol. Lexa gazed at it and smiled, she
Clarke’s mouth dropped open and she looked around at the other women. Skadi answered the question that she wanted to ask before her voice found words for it, “Clarke of the Sky, you are a part of us. Heda Lexa speaks true. Rock and I already have plans to complete our own tattoos and add you as Zora did. There is no doubt in any of our minds that you are one of us.”

Clarke’s mouth went dry and her heart was pounding so hard she was sure Lexa would hear it. She felt so honoured, so pleased that they thought of her that way. She couldn’t speak so she merely nodded and smiled at the three women.

Lexa leaned over and kissed her softly on the cheek. Then she looked at the women, “Please, call me Lexa. Unless we are in a formal meeting of the clans I would be honoured if you would speak to me as a friend.”

Skadi, Rock and Zora nodded and echoed her words, “Lexa, please address us with just our names, no need for titles among friends.” Skadi spoke for all three of them. Clarke had already formed a friendship with the women and they had already dropped the formality of language among each other, but they felt it was a big step forward for Lexa to request it as well.

Zora had trouble binding her large breasts herself so Rock was busy helping her as the women fell into a moment of comfortable silence. When she was done Zora pulled her shirt back on and sat down. She looked over at Skadi and reached out to nudge her. “Your turn, Ska.” She used the diminutive form of her name and spoke very softly, knowing how much Skadi hated sharing personal stories.

Skadi merely nodded and took a deep breath. “When my mother was assassinated I became Queen. I had noticed the despicable Yor visiting my power hungry aunt and her equally despicable husband a lot in the months leading up to that day. I loved my mother very much, she taught me how to rule our people. She was kind and she loved our people, but she ruled with an iron fist. Her rules were just and fair and anyone who broke them felt her punishment swiftly. I learned so much from her about being a Queen.”

Skadi’s face hid her emotion well, but her eyes grew wet as she thought of her mother. “She also made sure I was a highly trained warrior. I learned to fight and to survive in the harsh wilderness of our country. When she was taken from me I had the army track down the murderers and I executed them in the capital for all to see. They were York assassins, but they wore the crest of a rebel clan to the north-west of Otta. That clan followed a strange religion and fought against my mother’s rule. I assumed the assassins had been paid by that clan and I was sure I knew how to lead despite my young age and so I marched on the clan and killed all of their leaders.”

Skadi looked over at Zora, remembering, “Then I marched to York and I demanded answers from Ja-Kie about the assassins. She grieved with me and assured me that it was not her doing, that the assassins responsible must have been rogue. She had loved my mother as a dear friend and she promised to help me in whatever way she could. What I wasn’t ready for was the discovery that my own aunt had been behind the execution.”

Skadi shook her head with a bitter expression as she discussed her traitorous aunt, “Ja-Kie uncovered the plot several months later. I got a message from her, a rider came late one night with a warning. He repeated a message for me from Ja-Kie. My aunt was responsible for my mother’s death and they were planning to kill me as well. One of my personal attendants, a young woman who looked very much like me, was there when he arrived. She heard everything, her name was Hélène. Hélène loved me like a sister and had served me her whole life. She was three years older than me. We basically grew up together, and despite her being my servant, we were very close.”
She paused and let a tender look fly briefly across her face for Hélène, “I was caught off guard…
She put a sleeping potion in my drink that night and had Ja-Kie’s messenger smuggle me out of the
city. She put on my clothes and walked out onto my balcony. She was shot through the heart by an
assassins arrow and my two other personal attendants who had been briefed by Ja-Kie’s messenger
quickly put her plan into action. They covered her face in our traditional funeral veil. They
proclaimed that I was dead and they paraded her body through the streets, telling my people that it
was me. Her face was covered, she wore my clothes and they had no reason to doubt my attendants.
They burned her the next morning and Sula was proclaimed queen.”

Lexa’s already clenched jaw squeezed even tighter as she thought of Sula and Clarke felt all the
tension in her wife’s body. She pictured Lexa coiled like a snake and was actually looking forward
to watching her unleash her tension in battle tomorrow. She did not like violence but she really felt
that these men deserved to die.

Skadi continued her story and Clarke refocused on her, “My attendants escaped the city and went in
search of me. They finally found me a week later, I was near death, by my own hand.” Skadi’s stoic
voice trembled and Rock and Zora both had tears in their eyes as they looked at their friend. They
held each others hands tightly and Zora reached out her other hand to grasp Skadi’s. Clarke could
not imagine what could drive such a calm, composed woman to such desperation and she added her
support by reaching out her left hand to grab Lexa’s and taking Skadi’s hand in her right. Lexa and
Rock closed the circle when they too grasped hands. This joining seemed to give Skadi the strength
to go on.

“As I told you, my mother taught me how to be a Queen, how to lead justly, and how to be a
warrior. She did not teach me how to live in the world as a woman without the protection of a title. I
don’t believe she knew it herself, or understood what life is like for our people in the villages far
from the capital. When I woke up from the sleeping potion the rider from York told me what had
happened and that I had been proclaimed dead. He left me at the outskirts of a village with only a
small bag remaining of my former life. The bag contained my royal clothes and my sword. He had
found me some clothes that the people wear in the villages and he gave me his sword. I entered the
village and discovered that I knew nothing of how my people lived.”

Lexa wondered if she could survive as a normal person among her people now that she was used to
being the Commander. She thought she was a good enough warrior to gain the respect of any village
head and assured herself that she could, but as she listened to Skadi her confidence waned.

“I had to find food. I went to the village head and offered my services as a hunter. He laughed at me
and told me that women from the capital do not know how to hunt. He said I had the accent of a rich
family and that if I was so far from the capital I must have run away from my husband. He sneered
that the Queen was dead and that the new King and Queen would let men like him rule as they
should and that women like me would be punished. He ordered his men to grab me and I had to fight
them off. I killed three of them and escaped the village with the help of two young women.”

“We ran off into the forest together and I asked them why they helped me. They told me I had just
killed their husbands and therefore they owed me a debt of gratitude. This was my first lesson that
there are many men like Alain and Yor in the world. It takes the strength of women like us to keep
them from destroying our people.”

Clarke thought of the Ark. They had a very strict policy on sexual assault and on domestic violence.
Any man or woman convicted of either was floated, everyone knew this and yet every year there
was at least one man who was floated for rape, usually two or three, and one or two other floated for
domestic violence on his spouse and children. She wondered what made someone hate so much that
they could do such a terrible thing. She squeezed both of the hands she held a little harder as she
“I hunted and fed the women and myself. They camped with me for the night and then they set out to return to the villages of their mothers. They said their fathers had been in debt to the head of the village where I had found them and that he had claimed them for the men of his village in payment of that debt. Their fathers had fought him and been killed. I asked why they had not reported this to the royal guards and they told me that so far from the capital there was no protection for them. It opened my eyes.”

“After they left I continued on not knowing where I was going but I soon found another village where I was welcomed by the village head. He provided me with food and shelter and I was treated well. I thought I had found a proper village that followed my mother’s rules. That night as I slept he and his two sons entered my room with four guards. The guards held me down and the man and his sons raped me. I fought them but when I realized I could not win I fought my emotions to remain calm and conserve my strength. When they thought I had no strength left and their hold loosened I broke free. I disarmed one of the guards and used his danger to kill the guards and the sons. I held the blade to the throat of the man who had welcomed me and then betrayed me. I asked him if he knew the punishment for rape in the Ice Nation and he said that Queen Sula had retracted that law and there was no punishment. I leaned down to his ear and I told him who I was, and that since I was the only real queen the retraction had no authority. Then I slit his throat and let him bleed to death in front of me.”

Lexa’s blood boiled in anger once again, “The punishment for rape in Trigeda territory is death as well, I always assumed that was a good enough deterrent, you have opened my eyes by sharing your story Skadi. I will tour the outlying villages and personally speak with the women who live there before this year is through. I will not let tyrannical men like that hide from my rule by living far away from me. We must ensure that doesn’t happen in any of our lands.” Lexa clenched her teeth as she spoke and the other women agreed with her.

Skadi continued, “I left that village as the man’s wife found her slaughtered sons and began to wail for her loss. I felt no pity for her and I stumbled into the forest again. I was in shock I couldn’t think, or feel, or make shelter for myself. I collapsed near a river I had gone to for water. When I woke up I was in yet another village. I was in a warm hut and a young man sat next to me. I flinched away from him even though he assured me he would not hurt me. He asked if I was the one who had killed the men in the neighbouring village. He gestured to the blood on my clothes. I nodded that I was indeed that person and I reached for the sword Ja-Kie’s messenger had given me.”

She looked down at her hands as if she was imagining that sword as she spoke. “He watched me pick it up and then he motioned toward my torn shirt and ripped pants. He asked if they had assaulted me. I nodded and began to weep. Even through my tears I held tight to the sword, my trust in men had been destroyed and even though the young man was speaking to me kindly I shook in fear. He stood and told me he was sorry for what they had done and that they deserved their death. He told me he would have his sister come and sit with me as a man would surely make me uncomfortable. He told me I was safe and that I should sleep.”

Skadi sighed and her eyes had a faraway look as she remembered the kindness that had been shown to her in that village.

“His sister came in sat with me, she told me her name was Isabelle and she gave me a potion to drink. I refused but she told me it would make sure I was not pregnant. I drank it and clutched my sword as I rested. An hour later my stomach clenched and I thought she had poisoned me. I threatened her but she showed no fear and she pulled me close to her in an embrace as she assured me the pain was normal for what had to happen. She comforted me through the pain. Blood came
from my loins even though it was not yet time for it to happen. She told me that was good, that there was no way for a baby to form now. She asked who I was. I couldn’t meet her eye and I told her I was no one. I felt like no one.” A single tear fell from her eyes and Lexa watched her struggle briefly with emotion and win as her features schooled themselves into the stoic Ice Queen once more. Lexa felt oddly proud of her for the control she was showing.

“She bathed me and gave me clean clothes. In the morning her brother gave me a horse and told me that royal guards would be coming to investigate the deaths of the men I had killed. He gave me directions on how to make it into Trigeda Territory without having to pass through any more villages. I knew the coming guards would recognize me so I took the horse that was offered and said goodbye. As I left the young woman who had sat by me all night looked at me and bowed her head, she said softly, ‘Au Revoir, Reine.’ That means ‘goodbye my queen’ the girl had visited the capital before and she recognized me, she whispered that she was the only one who knew and swore she would tell no one.”

Skadi sighed and continued, “The next few days I camped in the forest and followed the directions the man had given me. At night I was plagued by nightmares and my mental state declined day by day. I felt wretched, I hated my own body, I could not look at myself. I mourned my mother and my friend who had sacrificed herself for me; and I mourned the life I had known and my own privileged innocence.”

Clarke couldn’t help herself, tears flowed freely and she just wanted to provide comfort to her friend. She let go of Lexa’s hand just for a moment and leaned over to pull Skadi into an embrace. “I’m so sorry that happened to you Skadi. I am glad you lived through it, I am glad you are here with us now.” Clarke’s heartfelt words broke through Skadi’s mask slightly and her lip trembled as she thanked Clarke. Then she continued.

“After three days on my own I finally decided I couldn’t do it. I couldn’t face what had happened to me and my uncertain future. I decided to kill myself. I sat by a stream and pulled out my sword, the sword of the Queen of my people and I prepared to thrust it into my broken heart. As I finished our warriors prayer for the dead and dying I heard horses approach. I took a deep breath and resolved to act quickly, then I heard my attendants voice. “Reine! Arrête!” she called out to me to stop and I looked up not believing what I saw. The two women who had fooled Sula into believing I was dead had somehow tracked me down. Céline and Geneviève had found me and they lept off of their horses and ran to me. They pried the sword from my hands and pulled me into their embrace. We wept together on the forest floor. They had passed through the villages where I had killed and the village where I had met Isabelle. The girl had told them everything that had happened to me.”

Skadi suddenly let go of the hands that were holding hers and stood. She stretched as best she could inside the tent and then she spoke the last of her story, “They took me to their home village. The hidden village near the border. The Queen’s attendants always come from that village. It is very well guarded and there are not many who can find it. I stayed there and recovered until Rock and Zora came to find me. Then we all recovered together.”

The five women sighed and were glad the stories were told. They were heavy stories and painful ones but ones that needed to be told nonetheless. Lexa sighed and dug deep inside herself for her Commander’s mask. She stood and bowed her head to her new friends and she looked each of them in the eye and promised them that tomorrow would see the end of tyranny and the start of a new day for them and for all of the people of the alliance.

The five strode together out of the tent and into the forest to relieve the warriors who were keeping watch. They all knew there was too much on their minds for sleep to come and they all wanted a distraction from the sorrow that lay heavy in their hearts. They kept watch over the camp and over
each other until it was time.

The camp woke and prepared for battle. Lexa stepped in front of the men and women who made up her strike force and looked at them with confidence and pride. She addressed them as they fell into the battle formation she had planned, “Today we slay monsters. Today those who have used their power to oppress and torture will pay for their sins. It is a day for us to be on the right side of justice, it will be a red day and blood will stain our swords. Leave none alive save the monsters themselves, Alain is the Ice Queen’s kill, and Yor belongs to Rock of the Lakes, and the Mayor. Ride now, the sun rises.”

With those words the Commander of the thirteen clans kicked her horse’s sides lightly and led the charge herself.

Chapter End Notes

Don’t worry, we’ll get those monsters! And then I hope we can get back to peace and happiness for a while.
Hunting Monsters

Chapter Summary

Lexa takes a strike force in search of the traitors.

Chapter Notes

Mentions rape, and other violent crimes that Yor and Alain stand accused of.

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

As the sun rose the thundering sound of hooves baring down on the camp caused a flurry of movement from inside of Yor’s camp. The night watch sounded the alarm and a squad of assassins were roused and moved quickly into defensive positions.

As they fell into ranks they held their bows at the ready, eyes searching the forest for the source of the hoofbeats. Arrows flew from different locations in the forest in front of them and cut the squad down in under a minute. The assassins never had a chance, Lincoln, Jay, and the three archers from the York clan were heavily camouflaged and had crawled into sniper positions in the dead of night and waited.

Lincoln had allowed the guards to sound the alarm even though his snipers could have easily taken them out while the entire camp slept. Getting the assassins out into the open was pivotal to Heda’s plan, and the guards had done that job for them.

When Alain and Yor were roused by the alarm they both rushed from their tents and moved quickly to their horses, escape was all either man considered. Fighting back never even crossed their minds.

Lexa had counted on their cowardice and her foresight was rewarded. Indra and Octavia with Cade, Dal and the five Ice Soldiers were waiting south of the camp. They had mapped out the most likely escape route and this group was tasked with apprehending the cowards as they ran. Lexa had no doubt Indra was up to the task. She only worried that the tyrants would already be dead when she saw them next and she desperately wanted to run her sword through both men. She knew Indra would follow her orders if it was possible to capture Alain and Yor alive, but she also knew that none of the group would hesitate to kill them both if capture seemed unlikely.

Yor took three men with him as he fled, the rest of his guard grabbed their weapons and ran towards Lexa’s approaching warriors. The sight of the ten dead assassins at the perimeter stopped some of them in their tracks. Several of them fled into the forest to the East.

The personal guards of Alain prepared to fight the approaching force with the Ice Nation’s famed stoicism and loyalty. Two of them rode with the retreating leader the rest stayed and prepared for battle.

Lexa had sent Motorbike and four of her Trikru warriors to patrol the eastern forest. The York guards who ran were dead within 500 meters of the camp. Motorbike and his team then closed in
from the east and formed a tight border to prevent any from escaping. The western border was so close to the dead zone that Lexa didn’t waste her resources covering it. She knew any who escaped into the dead zone would die before getting far.

All of this happened within minutes. Lexa and her force were in sight of the camp within six minutes. They saw the Ice guards and the remaining York guards try to form a wall. Lexa was in the front row leading the charge along with three mounted warriors from Ro’s army and three Trigeda warriors also on horseback. They rode through the wall breaking the defence and then the battle really began. Numbers were almost even and the sound of clashing swords soon filled the air.

As soon as Lexa was through the front line, her sword already dripping in the blood of the York soldier she had almost decapitated as she broke through, she pulled up on the reins and dismounted. She preferred to fight on foot. She saw her three Trigedagonas drop from their mounts as well and noticed the Horse clan warriors remained on their steeds as they circled around and began to fight.

The second wave was the shadow women and Clarke. Skadi had quietly promised Lexa that Clarke would not leave her side. Motorbike had gone to her as soon as he had been assigned to lead the team on clean up duty in the eastern forest. He trusted few with the duty of protecting his Heda and his Sky Commander, but the Ice Queen he had known since they were young. He trusted her, and she trusted him. She agreed without question and in doing so allayed Lexa’s worry and concern without Heda having to ask.

They rode through the front line swinging swords as they passed through and taking out several guards. Like Lexa they all dismounted as soon as they were through and then turned and began to fight.

The rest of the warriors were seconds behind Clarke and the shadow women and soon it was an all out melee. Lexa was fighting her way through the guards instinctively fighting her way toward Clarke. The Commander fought with grace, and deadly precision and no guard matched her skill or stood long against her. She was soon covered in blood and sweat as she left a trail of dead or dying bodies on her way to the Sky Commander’s side.

Skadi was quite a warrior in her own right. She was using the sword of her people’s royal family and the ice blue blade cut through the traitors that dared stand against her. She kept Clarke in her periphery and she was gratified to see Rock and Zora doing the same. The four women fought side by side and Clarke Griffin was doing quite well. Clarke had been practicing with a sword and Lexa was a remarkable teacher. Skadi watched with pride as Clarke successfully defended herself against a large York guard.

Skadi finished off yet another of Alain’s guard and then stepped quickly toward Clarke. She had spent a lot of time with the Sky Commander and while she would never step in unnecessarily when Zora or Rock were fighting, she knew Clarke didn’t enjoy fighting and hated killing. She didn’t think her interference would be unwanted.

She stepped in front of the blonde and raised her sword blocking the guard’s latest attack. Then she stepped in close to the man and brought her knee up solidly into his midsection. As he bent over in pain she spun away from him and brought her sword across in a deadly arc slicing open his midsection. She stood and pushed the dying man away from her and glanced back at Clarke who nodded in thanks. She could see that Clarke was getting nervous.
Clarke had sheathed her sword and taken out her gun, she was more comfortable with her Sky weapons. Skadi noticed the whiteness of her knuckles as Clarke gripped the gun tightly. She knew the Clarke had been at Lexa’s side when they had taken down the mountain and she had heard the stories of the young woman killing 300 Trigeda warriors, but she knew Clarke was not a warrior in her heart. She knew that Clarke would do what she had to, but Skadi really wanted her not to have to do anymore killing. Especially when she would gladly do it for her.

Clarke nodded at Skadi and then shouted a warning to watch her back, she watched in awe as the Ice Queen turned just in time to catch an attack from two of Alain’s guards. She watched the woman’s beautiful face twist in rage as she parried the sword of the first attacker and then like a dancer she evaded the other’s thrust with a quick turn of her body. She ended up in between the two swords and both men had looks of shock as the queen spun, stepped closer, and smashed her elbow into the face of one, breaking his nose. She then continued her spin and ended up behind the other man, she ran her sword through his chest killing him quickly. She pulled her sword free from the man’s body and while the other soldier was still holding his broken nose in shock she swung her sword and slit his throat cleanly.

Clarke once again thought how much the Ice Queen reminded her of her wife. Her lithe, graceful movements and deadly prowess in battle were very much reminiscent of Lexa. As soon as this thought entered her mind she felt panic, her lungs burned but she couldn’t find air. She looked around desperately for Lexa, she needed to see her and know she was alright.

Her eyes found her wife quickly and she watched as Lexa, looking fierce with her warpaint and her face sprayed in the blood of her enemies, easily defeated a guard twice her size. As the brute fell Lexa’s eyes met Clarke’s and they both let out a breath of relief. However Clarke’s relief was short lived; she saw one of Alain’s guards cut down the Lake warrior he had been fighting and turn his attention to the Commander. He was behind her and as he raised his sword Clarke screamed.

Lexa saw her wife’s face change and knew there was someone behind her. She instinctively dropped to one knee and twisted her body raising her sword to protect herself. She was just in time to block the blow but it knocked her off balance and the Ice Guard was skilled. He saw his advantage he took it. He stepped towards the Commander and his arm drew back to land a fatal blow. Lexa scrambled away but knew she was in trouble. She vaguely heard her wife scream her name.

As the man above her began to swing his sword a small hand reached out and grabbed his left shoulder. Then the tip of a familiar blade protruded from his chest, he made a gurgling sound as his lungs filled with blood, and his sword arm fell uselessly to his side. Lexa grinned. Clarke almost passed out in relief. Skadi, Zora, and Rock had closed ranks around the woman when they saw how distracted she was. They all knew too well that distraction in a battle like this could soon mean death.

Lexa jumped to her feet and nodded to Benson. The young warrior was Echo’s second and Lexa knew her well. Shortly after Lexa had become commander there was an attack of Reapers on a village near Ton DC. Lexa went there with her warriors searching for survivors and found most of the village dead or taken. One of the villagers had called out to Heda as he lay dying, she went to his side and he raised his bloody hand and weakly pointed toward an outcropping of rocks at the outskirts of the village. In his dying breath he told her that the children had gone there and he asked her to take care of them.

When Lexa approached the rocks she found there was a small opening not quite large enough for an adult. The opening led into a small cave and Lexa, a teenage girl herself at the time, managed to
squeeze herself through without her armour. She found a girl around ten years old sitting in the dark and whispering to the smaller kids behind her, keeping them calm, promising that she would protect them. Lexa called out to her but she brandished a sword and refused to move.

Lexa told her who she was and promised the girl that the Reapers were gone. She spoke softly and told the girl stories until eventually she coaxed the child out of the cave. Once the children had been relocated to Ton DC and families had been arranged to take care of the orphans Heda called for young Benson to come to her tent. The girl arrived and Heda found out more about her. Benson’s mother had been a healer and her father a warrior. The girl wanted to fight like her father and her grandmother. It was her sword the child still clutched in her hands.

When the village was attacked her father had grabbed his weapon and rushed to fight, he told her mother to get the children to safety. She grabbed the sword her mother had wielded as a Tree Kru warrior, and with Benson at her side she ran off to find the rest of the village children. They were almost to the rocks when a Reaper attacked. He killed Benson’s mother right in front of her and as he turned his attention to some of the terrified children Benson had picked up her grandmother’s sword and stabbed the Reaper through the heart. She led the children as far into the cave as they could go and she sat between them and the entrance until Heda found her.

Lexa sat and looked at the brave little girl in front of her. She asked the girl if she could see her sword and the child reluctantly parted with it. It was an old sword and it had an intricate design along the blade. Lexa knew the workmanship was of the Lake Clan and she knew Benson’s grandmother must have been an impressive warrior to have such a sword. She asked the child for permission to have the blade sharpened and had to promise that only her best blacksmith would touch it before Benson agreed. Once the blade was as sharp as Lexa’s own Lexa presented it to Benson and then led her to Indra’s mother.

Alala took care of all of the orphaned children who were to become warriors. Once they started to train she gave them a home. She was tough on them and expected them to be strong and train hard, but she was also loving and supportive. Benson found a home there and trained hard, she was the best of her class. Lexa always watched out for the young warrior and was pleased when Echo, one of her most promising warriors, had taken her as a second. These memories flashed through Lexa’s mind and she felt like a proud parent when Benson’s wide grin was revealed as the now dead man fell away from her sword.

Lexa was grinning just as widely and couldn’t even bring herself to berate the warrior when she quipped rather disrespectfully, “Heda, be more careful, the Sky Commander will be really mad at you if you get yourself killed.” Lexa just laughed as Benson spun away to rejoin the battle.

Lexa took a moment to survey the battle, eyes taking in the entire camp in one sweep, she felt a pang of regret when she saw her fallen warriors but overall the battle was going well. She estimated that her people now outnumbered their enemies by three to one, they were winning. Lexa turned back toward Clarke and she picked up her pace.

The four women Lexa fought her way towards were surrounded by seven of Yor’s guards and Lexa meant to even the odds. She skirted around the skirmishes she could, and stopped to quickly lend her blade to fights when it was needed. She made short work of any enemies who slowed her down and as she neared the group she saw the shadow women break into action.

Rock moved first. Zora had distracted the guards with a war cry and Rock broke free of the formation. At first Lexa was confused, she knew none of her friends were the type to run from battle but that was what Rock appeared to be doing. She sprinted quickly away from the group drawing
two guards with her. They chased her down, laughing and calling her a coward. As they gained on her Lexa’s chest tightened with apprehension. Rock seemed to be confused, she was running full tilt at a giant tree. What happened next made Lexa’s mouth drop open a little bit, she thought it was the coolest thing she had ever seen.

Rock didn’t let up as she sprinted towards the tree and she reached it just as the two men were an arms length away. She jumped and ran three steps up the side of the tree, then she pushed off the trunk and flipped using her speed to propel her back over the heads of the guards. Her sword was at the ready and as she landed behind the two very surprised men she quickly slashed fatal wounds across both of their backs.

Back in the circle Zora was showing off. She was almost as big as some of the guards she faced and she was by right their true leader. She informed them that they were about to die for their treason and she engaged three of them at once. It was a show of strength and talent. Zora handled the three guards with a grin on her face. As they were fighting the last two men made a move for Clarke. Skadi stepped in and Lexa picked up her pace, literally throwing the next guard who crossed her out of her way.

Zora fought with skill and bravado, she blocked a thrust from one guard and then used her body to bowl over another knocking him onto his back. She continued fighting the two still standing guards and managed to spin and kick the third guard in the stomach as he was getting to his feet. He fell back down clutching his abdominal area.

Skadi had her hands full with the two guards who seemed intent on harming the Sky girl. They swore at her in their language and in English they yelled unspeakable things at her, things they said they would do to her once they killed the Ice Bitch. Skadi narrowed her eyes and gritted her teeth. She refused to hear one more filthy word out of the mouths of these lowlifes.

The Ice Queen suddenly rushed forward sword held high to block the surprised guards reaction. Once she was in close enough she brought her knee up into the groin of one man and turned swinging her sword at the second. The guard was one step ahead of her and easily blocked her sword. He brought his fist down into the side of her face, knocking her off balance. She recovered quickly, continuing to fight through the stars she was now seeing, but he had already slipped past her.

He laughed at Skadi, told her no woman could stop him, then he looked directly at the Sky Commander and he told Clarke that he was going to make her choke to death on his cock. As those words left his mouth three things happened all at once. The recovered Ice Queen’s blue sword was thrust into his back, Lexa’s dagger flew from several meters away and embedded itself in the side of his neck, and a bullet from Clarke’s gun entered his forehead and exploded out the back of his head.

Skadi was covered blood, bits of bone, and brain matter but her laughter rang clear. She laughed as she spun around and shoved her sword through the heart of the still living guard she had kneed in the groin moments ago. She laughed as she swept over to Zora’s side and the two women quickly finished off the three men the Mayor had been handling on her own until now.

She continued laughing as Lexa finally made her way to them and Rock rejoined the group. She laughed harder as Lexa looked around and saw that the battle was finally coming to a close. Her warriors were combing the camp for their injured comrades and making sure the fallen enemies were all dead. None survived, no mercy was given, even those who had tried to run were either sniped by Zora’s archers or hunted down by Motorbike and his men.
Lexa let out a victory call, it was a Trigeda tradition and her warriors answered it. It was loud and long and everyone whooped with joy as the Tree warriors held their swords aloft.

When the jubilant voices died down Skadi was still laughing, Zora and Rock had joined her by this time and even Lexa felt an irresistible pull to her lip, it curled up into a smile and a laugh bubbled up from inside her. Clarke grinned and began to giggle as her wife lost her composure and joined in the laughter. It was infectious and soon all of the surviving warriors had joined the leaders in the short respite.

Clarke was the first to regain her poise and she shook her head as the other women continued to laugh. She smiled at her wife and reached up to cup her bloody cheek giving her a look that both thanked her for living through another battle, and chided her for almost getting killed. Mostly it was a look of pure love and adoration. Lexa calmed under the steady gaze and nodded when Clarke spoke.

“I have to see to our wounded, Lex. I’ll report when I have some numbers for you.” Clarke’s voice brought Zora and Rock out of their laughter. Skadi continued laughing and Lexa gave her a quizzical look.

Rock pulled Lexa aside. “She does this sometimes after a really emotional battle. It’s a stress relief, plus I think she found all three of you killing that guy at once pretty funny.” Rock grinned at Lexa.

“Yes, I suppose it was.” Lexa grinned back, “and by the way, nice moves over there with the tree… can you teach my younger warriors?” Lexa’s face was lit up with uncharacteristic excitement and Zora teased her.

“Heda too old to learn the Lake People’s moves?” Zora quipped.

“Yes,” Lexa laughed again, “far too old, Zora…. far too old.”

Skadi finally got control of herself and took a deep breath. She squared her shoulders and turned to Lexa, “Let us congratulate our warriors, Heda. They fought well.” She grinned again and Lexa nodded.

The women made their way quickly through the camp, congratulating the unharmed, stopping to talk with and bolster the spirits of the injured warriors, and offering words of peace to the dead and dying. Lexa was pleased to see Benson mostly in one piece helping one of Ro’s men round up the scattered horses. She saw a nasty gash on the girl’s shoulder but knew she would heal. Clarke would stitch it shut once she had treated the life threatening injuries.

Once they had made their way around the camp they slipped into the forest and circled around to meet all of the sentries and hear the reports. Motorbike had already visited the camp when he heard the victory call and recruited a few more bodies to guard the perimeter. Lincoln and his snipers had the area to the north covered and the only place left to go was south. Lexa wanted to charge forward and see what had become of the two hunted men but she forced herself to be patient, to show her trust in Indra, and to take care of the camp and her warriors before running off like a hothead.

Skadi and Rock stood with her and showed great restraint not even asking Heda any questions; Zora was another story, “Heda, the camp has been cleared let us ride south. We have to find Yor and Alain.”

“Be still Mayor, Indra will not let them pass.” Lexa’s reply was firm, her voice did not betray her own eagerness. “We have wounded to treat and dead to prepare for a funeral pyre. Let that occupy
you until Indra returns.”

“At least send a few riders, I will lead them.” Zora offered. “If something went wrong we have to pick up their trail now, before it goes cold.” Zora understood that an emotional plea would not work with Heda, so she tried her best to build her argument on reason.

Heda arched her eyebrow and glared up into the green eyes of the Artemis like woman. She saw an earnest plea in the eyes of this warrior, this woman who loved to fight, was tough as nails, and yet still silently pleaded for Heda’s permission. Lexa felt her resolve slip. She too wanted desperately for news of the fate of the traitors and when Zora blushed and dropped her eyes mumbling an apology to Heda for questioning her, Lexa gave in.

“Zora, Mayor of York. I do not require an apology from you. You are a leader of your people and a member of this alliance. You may be right. If Yor and Alain managed to get past Indra we should send a tracking team after them immediately.” Zora’s face brightened as she looked back into Lexa’s eyes. “And I too am losing patience waiting for news.” Lexa grinned at Zora as she admitted this. “Take Rock and three riders with you. Send one back to me with news as soon as you have any.”

Zora nodded and grabbed Rock’s hand pulling her along with her. She called two Trigeda warriors to her and nodded to one of Cole’s soldiers motioning for her to follow them. They grabbed horses from Benson and were riding out of camp before Lexa could even question her decision.

Skadi put her hand on Lexa’s shoulder and squeezed. “It was the right decision Heda, we are all nervous waiting for news. Let us hope your Indra has prisoners to report.”

“She will, she is by far the best soldier I have ever known.” Lexa admitted freely and she shared a heavy look with Skadi for a moment. Lexa studied the young woman in front of her. Her face was still flushed from the battle and stained with blood but the outline of a large bruise was clearly visible and Lexa reached over and touched it gingerly. “You should let Clarke look at this.” She knew the Ice Queen would scoff but she wanted to show her that she cared.

“Heda, this is nothing, Clarke is helping those who truly need it, I will not pull her away for a mere bruise.” Skadi gave the answer Lexa knew she would but the way Skadi smiled at Lexa let her know that she had understood the intent and appreciated it. “You also have cuts to be mended, Heda. Would you like me to stitch them for you?” Skadi motioned to the four inch slice in Lexa’s forearm and looked expectantly at her.

“Thank you, Skadi. But Clarke will stitch me when she has time. Until then I will wrap it.” Lexa smiled at the beautiful, stoic blonde and they nodded at each other. Lexa briefly thought how odd and yet lovely it was to have someone so like herself as a friend. They instinctively understood each other and Lexa fought back a grin when the Ice Queen nodded at her, satisfied that Lexa understood her care and concern, and then slipped into leader mode, straightened her shoulders, and walked off to talk with her warriors again. Lexa stood for a minute watching over everything before giving in to her need to see Clarke and going to search out her wife.

Clarke was covered in blood but she was smiling. Lexa watched as her beloved finished stitching up a large and potentially fatal gash on the thigh of a Trigeda warrior. Lexa knew him as Joss. She knew why Clarke was smiling despite the serious procedure she had just performed. Joss was a better comedian and storyteller than he was a warrior, and he was a damn good warrior. He bowed his head when she approached.
“Heda, victory is ours!” He greeted her with a grin, “and your Humoun has saved my life! A good day, Heda!” He laughed despite the pain Lexa knew he was feeling and Clarke smiled at him.

“He’ll be fine, but he has to rest. If this cut reopens it will be trouble. Can you order him not to do anything stupid?” Clarke arched her eyebrow at the man as he protested weakly but Heda’s laughter stopped him.

“Joss, you heard the Sky Commander. No stupidity.” Lexa smirked as she gave the order and Clarke laughed out loud.

Lexa was thinking how much she loved that sound when she heard Lincoln’s signal, a bird whistle. She twirled suddenly barking out orders as she moved. “The first three able bodied warriors were assigned to guard Clarke and the wounded. The rest were ordered into defensive positions and she shouted the order for shields. Most of the shields were still attached to the horses and Lexa quickly made her way to her horse and retrieved her shield. She grabbed Clarke’s as well and made her way quickly back to where her wife was still treating people.

“Lexa, what is happening?” Her wife’s questions was to the point.

“Lincoln gave a signal, there is a squad of assassins approaching. Stay here and use this.” Lexa handed the shield over to Clarke and paused for just a second to look into her wife’s eyes before striding toward the North edge of the camp. Skadi was already there giving orders. She had warriors in fortified positions with bows and arrows and those with swords taking cover within the camp. Lexa removed her own bow from her back and nodded at Skadi. “You have control of the troops on the ground.”

“Heda, where are you going?” Skadi wasn’t expecting Lexa to give up control even though they both knew the Ice Queen was more than capable.

“I am Heda Kom Trigedakru.” Was Lexa’s quick reply. “I’ll be in the trees.” With that Lexa quickly ran over to a large Oak and nimbly hoisted herself into it’s branches. She skirted up the tree until she found herself a perch where she could watch both the village and the forest to the North. She knew exactly where Lincoln and his snipers were so she had no trouble finding them despite the camouflage they wore. Once she located Lincoln she followed the aim of his arrow and located the advancing assassins. They too were camouflaged and difficult to pick out but Lexa was Trikru and this was her forest.

She nocked an arrow and took aim. She waited until all ten assassins were in sight and she gave a long low whistle. That was the signal Lincoln had been waiting for. He and his four snipers fired at the same time Lexa did. Six assassins fell to the forest floor dead. The other four scattered and Lexa quickly grabbed a second arrow. Her eyes locked onto a fleeing target and she let loose another arrow. Her arrow found it’s mark and the assassin fell to the ground. She watched as two more fell and she searched desperately for the last assassin. She couldn’t pick him out and she knew none of the snipers could either or they would have already shot him. She gave another signal, three short quick whistles and Lincoln immediately responded.

He stood from his hiding place and signalled for his fellow archers to join him. They spread out about two feet between each of them and began to advance. They moved silently through the forest trying to flush out the last of the enemy squad. Lexa watched from the treetop, holding her breath.

Lincoln crept forward bow at the ready and he spotted the assassin just as the assassin spotted him. They released their arrows at the same time and the assassin fell dead. Lincoln knew he should be
dead but instead he felt a pain tear through his left shoulder, he blinked stupidly and stared at the broken arrow sticking out of his shoulder. “What… how…?” He mumbled to himself.

The archers he had been leading were at his side quickly, telling him they had to get the arrow out. Assassins arrows were coated in a fast acting toxin and Lincoln was not out of the woods yet. As the archers tended to their downed leader Lexa quickly descended from the tree. She rushed to Lincoln’s side and watched with relief as Jay fed Lincoln the antidote. Every one of her strike force carried three doses on them in case of an attack.

Lincoln was still fascinated by being alive. He grabbed the broken arrow from the archer who had pulled it from his shoulder and examined the broken end. He looked around on the ground and when he found the other half of the arrow he noticed another arrow perfectly in tact embedded in a tree trunk nearby. The angle was perfect. He turned and stared at his commander, “Heda,” he looked astonished, “How did you make that shot?” The other archers finally pieced together what Lincoln had realized and they turned and stared open mouthed at Heda Kom Trigedakru.

Lexa felt a blush begin to creep onto her face but forced it down and gritted her teeth against a grin that threatened to take over her mouth at the incredulous expressions directed at her. “I knew you would take care of the assassin Lincoln, even at the price of your own life. All I had to do was take care of you.” Lexa shrugged arrogantly like it was no big deal and Lincoln shook his head and grinned.

“Muchof, Heda.” He bowed his head to her once more and turned to go back to sentry duty.

One of the archers, a handsome man with an easy smile and sandy brown hair spoke up, “All you had to do…? Heda, you shot an arrow out of the air from…” he paused and looked up to where Lexa had been, “from about 100 meters away!” His smile grew and his fellow archers stared at their commander with awe.

Lexa finally let the grin take over her face and walked after Lincoln clasping his shoulder, “Lincoln, leave the watch to the archers,” She nodded to them and they quickly returned to their positions, “Have Clarke examine your wound and check you out before you return to duty. It is not a request so don’t bother telling me that you are fine.” Lexa arched an eyebrow at him and when he nodded she turned and marched off to check the perimeter.

Motorbike was antsy, Lexa could tell by the movements she detected in the forest as she approached. When she silently slipped in beside him he let out a breath of relief and bowed his head. “Heda. I heard a fight on the northern front.” He asked without a question.

“Yes, Lincoln took an arrow but he is alright. The attackers are dead.” Lexa’s face showed no sign of emotion and Motorbike nodded.

“Everything is quiet here so far. We are patrolling and have set a few warning traps further out. If anyone approaches we will know.” He spoke with quiet confidence and Lexa stopped and looked into his eyes. She allowed a rare moment of personal interaction.

“Skadi cares for you.” She watched his handsome face for reaction. His pupils enlarged and his lips twitched, enough to tell Lexa what she wanted to know. “You care for her as well.” Lexa smiled softly as Motorbike looked away. “Carter, you have more then fulfilled your responsibility to me…” she began.

“Heda, Skadi is the Ice Queen. I am nothing but a warrior. We were friends when we were children,
and lovers when we were teenagers, but when she became Queen she had many other responsibilities and we had no time… and then she died…” His face was impassive but his eyes betrayed sadness. “She is alive, for that I am happy, but she is the Queen, she should choose someone of high station, not a warrior.”

Lexa felt a stab of anger, “You are Carter, son of Heda Sasha of the Trigedakru, and more than worthy of the Queen of the Ice Nation; never forget that.” Lexa gripped his arm tightly and she spoke with such conviction that Carter felt his spine straighten a little. His heart felt light and he allowed a smile to cross his face. Lexa smiled back and patted his shoulder. She allowed a moment of comfortable silence between them and then was back to the business at hand, “Keep the patrol tight, Carter. I don’t want any surprises.”

“Sha, Heda.” was the man’s only reply and he disappeared into the forest like a ghost.

Lexa took a deep breath and turned her thoughts to Yor and Alain. Immediately bile rose in her throat and she could not wait to get back to camp and see what news waited for her. She slipped through the forest easily and when she arrived back at the camp she saw Skadi had naturally taken control and was organizing her own patrols and directing the clean up of bodies and treatment of the wounded. Lexa’s gaze sought out the blonde hair of her wife and when she saw her bent over examining Lincoln’s shoulder she smiled. She was still enjoying watching Clarke when Skadi approached her with a report.

“Everything is going well, Heda. But we are still waiting for the rider with news of Alain and Yor.” Skadi spit in disgust after saying the names and Lexa nodded at her.

“The rider should return soon.” Lexa replied.

“Lexa,” Skadi’s voice was quiet and Lexa knew by the use of her name that it was a more private question, she nodded at the woman indicating it was alright to ask. “The patrols are well? I saw that Lincoln was injured… are Carter and his men well?” She looked away as she felt a blush start to bloom on her cheeks.

Lexa smiled at the young woman. “Carter is well. He has the eastern front well patrolled and boobytrapped as well. He is a fine warrior. He has served me well, protected me and my beloved. But he is not bound to me as a guard. He is the son of Heda Sasha and like royalty to my people. He chooses his position.” Lexa made sure Skadi knew she would not hold Carter back from anything he wished to do.

Skadi smiled, “He was my first love, I have never forgotten him.” Skadi blushed and Lexa thought how pretty she looked when she let her guard down. Her beauty was normally like ice, a cold, stoic aesthetic, but right now she looked soft and lovely. She cleared her throat and shook her head, forcing her feelings back and then she laughed a little, “I was worried back in Sapeake, when we approached you. When I saw that he was your guard I thought he would recognize me… recognize all of us. But he hadn’t seen any of us in years and we were supposed to be dead…” Her voice trailed off but Lexa had been married long enough to recognize a slight when she saw one. She realized that Skadi was kind of mad at Carter for not recognizing her, Lexa grinned in spite of herself.

“You were dead. Everyone who loved you had already mourned you, including Carter. It was dark and you never looked directly at him. Plus he is a man, Skadi. We both know they are not as observant as we are about such things.” Lexa winked at her and the Ice Queen let a wry grin cross her face.
“I suppose you are right Heda. I will not hold it against him.” Skadi kicked a rock with her boot and looked around evasively, “Did he ask about me...?” She ventured.

Lexa laughed loudly enough for Clarke to hear. Lexa felt a surge of love as the Sky Commander picked her gaze from the wounded soldier she was treating and looked over at her wife for a moment. Clarke smiled at her and then went back to her stitches. “He cares for you, Ice Queen. Of that I am sure.” Lexa patted her friend on the shoulder and then went back to business, “You have done well organizing the camp. I will leave it to you. I wish to help clean my dead warriors and prepare their funeral pyre.” Lexa walked off leaving the Ice Queen to stare after her with respect and admiration.

A few hours later the rider returned to camp. Lexa, Clarke, and Skadi waited anxiously as he dismounted and approached.

“Heda,” he bowed respectfully to her before continuing, “Indra sends her apologies,” Lexa’s heart fell into her stomach and she dreaded hearing what could have Indra apologizing. “The traitors got past them and they had to pursue them. The chase took them further than she had expected and the one called Alain was injured as they were captured. Indra did not want to deprive the Ice Queen of her revenge so she stopped to treat him and they are returning slowly as to not reopen his wounds.”

Lexa let out a breath slowly, “What of Yor?” she demanded.

“He is tied up like an animal, slug over the Lake Steward’s horse and in good health.” The warrior grinned as he gave his report and Lexa retuned it.

“How far out are they?” Clarke asked.

“Heda Kom Skaikru,” the warrior addressed her respectfully, “My best guess is around three hours.”

“Lexa, let’s send a patrol to make sure they make it safely, after the recent assassin attack I feel like we should be careful.” Clarke spoke freely with Lexa and was pleased when Skadi agreed with her.

Lexa nodded at Clarke and addressed her warrior, “You will guide a patrol back to them and see that they all return to this camp safely.”

“Sha, Heda.” was his reply and he retuned to his horse to wait for the patrol.

“Benson,” Lexa called out for the warrior and when she came running Lexa fixed her with a look, “Speak true, how is your shoulder? Can you ride, can you fight?”

Benson nodded, “Sha, Heda. I can do both.” She looked to Clarke for validation and Clarke agreed.

“Good,” Lexa nodded, “Take ten riders and meet Indra. Escort them back safely.”

“Sha, Heda.” The young woman bowed quickly before turning and quickly choosing her team. They were mounted and ready to go within ten minutes. Lexa sighed as they left.

“What’s wrong?” Clarke placed her hand on Lexa’s lower back and stepped in close enough for their sides to be touching.

“I do not think I have the patience to wait three hours.” Lexa growled.

Skadi overheard and she chuckled, Clarke joined her. “We all want this to be over Heda,” Skadi assured her, but let us use our time well, “Three hours is just enough time for me to consider what
will be the most painful way to kill Alain.” Skadi smiled a cold but bright smile and Clarke rolled her eyes at the two women as Lexa chuckled, pleased by the Ice Queen’s humour.

Three hours passed and Lexa was pacing the camp. She had sentries posted to give her early warning of the party’s approach but still nothing. Clarke had given up trying to keep her wife calm and was doing another round of her patients.

Just as Lexa had decided that she could not wait any longer and would ride out herself the sentry gave the signal. The party was in sight now and would be in camp within twenty minutes.

Lexa gathered her resolve and breathed deeply, letting the calm and composure of the commander steady her. She walked to the canter of the camp and stood silently waiting. Skadi joined her and stood to her right side, a half-step behind her, and Clarke stepped up to her right side, standing even with her wife.

As Indra led the group forward she nodded to Lexa, “Heda, I apologize for our delay, but I have your prisoners.” She gestured behind her and Lexa saw with satisfaction that both men were bound at the hands and feet and Yor was slug over a horse like a slain animal while the injured Alain was being pulled on a makeshift stretcher by Octavia.

Clarke grinned at Octavia and when her friend mouthed Lincoln’s name Clarke smiled and nodded, assuring her that her partner was fine.

Zora, Rock, Cade, and Dal brought up the rear and Lexa noticed Dal was injured as well. “Dal, let Clarke treat you.” She ordered quickly and Clarke rushed forward immediately. He had a long gash across his chest and a dislocated shoulder.

As the Sky Commander led him aside and began to treat him Lexa asked Cade to tell her what happened.

He looked at Indra not wanting to take the story away from her but the general preferred not talking and nodded at him to continue.

“They came down a different path than we expected, but we were spread out enough to cover all possibilities. Dal was the closest to them and he tried to stop them himself. He killed two of the guards but the rest attacked him together and they would have killed him if Indra had not reached him when she did. When she joined the fight they fled and Indra ordered me to stay with Dal while she and Octavia pursued them with Skadi’s soldiers.

As soon as I had Dal patched up enough to ride we rode after them. When we caught up Indra had cornered them against a cliff and the dead zone. They turned to fight, Alain and Yor and three guards. Skadi’s soldiers attacked first and took out the guards, Alain got behind them and killed one of our men but Octavia caught him as he tried to mount the dead soldiers horse and escape. She threw him to the ground in he fought back. She had no choice but to cut him.

Octavia blushed and shrugged, “I didn’t kill him!” She protested but Lexa’s raised hand stopped her from saying more.

Cade continued, “Once the guards were dead Indra disarmed Yor rather quickly and we tied him up. Then we treated Alain’s wounds so that he would live long enough to be killed by the one he betrayed.” Cade summed up the story quickly and Lexa nodded her approval.

Lexa gestured toward some tents and looked at Benson, “Put Alain and Yor in those tents and post
guards on all sides.”

As Benson moved off with several warriors Lexa looked around. Indra, Octavia, Cade, and Dal join us in council while we decide how and when Alain and Yor will die.

Clarke was still stitching Dal’s wound so Lexa ordered the council to be held in one hour’s time. She instructed Indra to shore up the defences and make sure the patrols were alert and ready for anything. Lexa pulled Octavia aside and whispered Lincoln’s location her ear and nodded as the warrior smiled and thanked her. Lexa watched with pride as Octavia first checked in with Indra and didn’t slip into the forest in search of her lover until the General nodded her approval.

Indra took control of the camp, she had hunters sent out to find food and others preparing spits for the anticipated meat. She oversaw the completion of the funeral pyre for the alliance warriors that she knew Heda would light at dawn the next day and she made sure the bodies of the enemy soldiers were all dragged just west of the camp and buried unceremoniously. She had no intention of releasing those spirits back onto the world.

An hour later the council met. Lexa stood in front of them and looked around at each and every one of them. “We must choose how these traitors will die. If you choose to return them to your cities and execute them in front of your people I will support you, but understand that the road will be dangerous.” Lexa nodded to Zora and let the woman step forward to speak.

“Yor will not see tomorrow.” She looked at Rock and her hand shook as she reached out for her. “As Mayor of York the kill is mine, but I will give that right to Rock.”

Rock stepped forward and looked into her lover’s eyes, “Thank you. I will strike the final blow.” Cade looked confused and asked why his sister would be the one to end Yor’s life.

Rock smiled sadly at her brother, “I didn’t tell you this before, if I had Yor would have died as soon as you were in striking range.” She looked over at Zora for support and soon found her small hand engulfed in Zora’s much larger one. “Yor was there when I was attacked, brother. He killed my guards and he would have killed me but I escaped.”

Cade stepped forward and put his hands on his sister’s shoulders, “Did he hurt you before you managed to get away?” He asked gently.

“Yes, he did.” Rock’s voice trembled a little but she looked at Skadi and the stoic Ice Queen’s steady gaze gave her strength. “Cade,” she sighed and looked at her brother, “He raped me. That is why Zora has given me her kill. That is why I will gladly take his life.” Rock swallowed hard and looked at her brother waiting for his reaction.

Cade merely nodded sadly and pulled his sister into a gentle hug. “I love you Rock. I am so sorry that happened to you, and I am glad for your revenge.”

Rock smiled at him and nodded. She turned to Lexa, “I will end his life but I want the kill to follow the laws of York. I want no cause for question when we return Zora to her rightful place of leadership.”

Lexa nodded and stepped forward again, “Yor’s fate is sealed. Now what of the false king of the Ice Nation?” Lexa nodded to Skadi who stepped forward.

“Alain will die by my people’s law. As Queen I will read him his crimes and if he admits guilt I will have mercy and kill him quickly. If he dares to deny his crimes I will kill him slowly, it is my right as
royalty to be judge, jury, and executioner. I will exercise that right. There are enough of my people in this camp to witness, as well as the leaders of our allies. Alain dies tonight.”

Lexa nodded her approval and stepped forward again, “It has been decided. Tonight we will have justice. The hunters are back, we should all eat and try to rest. The executions will begin at dusk.” As people walked away to find food and a place to rest Lexa spoke with Indra, “Keep rotating the patrols, and keep everyone at the ready. If an attack comes I want us to be prepared.” Indra nodded and left to return to her duties. Finally Lexa had no more orders to give, or decisions to make, she turned to Clarke and reached out her hand.

“Lexa, let’s find a quiet spot to sit, just for a moment.” Clarke’s voice was soft, Lexa melted and all of her strength left her. She let Clarke lead her to a large shady tree. Clarke sat down and pulled her wife into her embrace. Lexa didn’t care who saw her she leaned back against Clarke and rested her head on her wife’s shoulder.

“Houmon, I am proud of you. You fought well in the battle and you saved many lives after it was done.” Thank you Clarke.” Lexa breathed in the scent of her wife and smiled softly.

“Rest Lexa. Heda Kom Trigedakru won’t be able to sit for long. Relax while you can, let me take care of you.” Clarke shifted and pulled out her stitch kit. She unwrapped Lexa’s forearm and examined the cut that was still bleeding slightly. She cleaned and stitched the wound while Lexa rested against the tree. When she was done she moved into Lexa’s arms and leaned against her wife’s chest.

Sometime later Benson came over with food for the two leaders, Clarke smiled in thanks and as the warrior stood to leave Clarke recognized who she was and jumped up grabbing the warrior’s hand. Benson looked back surprised and was pulled into a giant embrace by the Sky Commander.

The look on Benson’s face was enough to make Lexa chuckle as she watched with one eye cracked open just enough to watch Clarke thank Benson.

“You saved her. Thank you Benson, thank you so much.” Clarke hugged the young woman tighter and thanked her again before letting her go. The still shocked warrior just nodded and ducked away in embarrassment.

“You have to stop embracing my warriors when they save me, Clarke. They will be lined up to try and save Heda if they think it will earn them the favour of the Sky Princess.” Lexa chucked at her own joke but Clarke ignored her.

She settled back onto the ground and the two women ate the food Benson had brought them in a contented silence.

As dusk approached and preparations were complete Lexa, in her full armour and war paint, stood in the centre of the camp waiting to begin the trial. She stood as leader of her people and the one who had ultimate say in the fate of the two men they were about to tie to the posts in the middle of the camp. Lexa was on edge, she wanted to get this over with. She couldn’t remember ever wanting to see men dead as much as she wished to see Alain and Yor dead.

When the shadow women joined her she nodded to the warrior’s who were guarding the tents. Yor and Alain were led into the clearing and bound to the posts, hands behind their backs. Lexa was
surprised by the strength of the hatred that bubbled up inside of her when she looked at the two men.

She started with Alain. She stepped forward and told her people that the Ice Queen would administer justice to Alain as she saw fit. A cheer arose from the remaining Ice Warriors and Skadi stepped forward.

“Alain of the Ice Nation, you planned the murder of Queen El, my mother, and you tried to have me assassinated as well. You conspired with the despicable, Gunther of York (Skadi refused to address Yor by his self granted title in an important moment like this) and plotted the assassination of Diana of the Lakes, Ja-Kie, Mayor of York, and Heda Sasha Kom Trigedakru.

“You are also accused of allowing my people to starve, of disobeying the rule of law in the Ice Nation, and punishing the people who stood against you in cruel and unusual ways. You are accused of treachery and treason, you are accused of allowing rape, torture and murder as a means of controlling my people. You stand here before your rightful Queen, what say you?” Skadi held her chin high and kept her ethereal face stoic and unreadable. Her friends saw her hand gripped tightly on the hilt of her ice blue sword and they knew she was fighting to hold back her emotions.

Alain glared at Queen Skadi, he mustered his strength and he spat on the ground, “You and your mother were weak, you tried to make peace with other clans, to trade and cooperate. Such womanly things to do.” He sneered and laughed though it was obvious it caused him pain. “The Ice Nation is full of strong men who should be fighting and conquering other lands, we should be claiming their women for ours and breeding new warriors in every city we take.

“We should be warring and violent. That is our true nature. The royal bloodline was weak and had to be purged, your grandmother, your mother and you, all weak. Otta should never have seen a woman sitting on the throne. Your family has made our men weak for decades, you have made our women believe they are equal and deserve the same rights as men. My followers know the truth, that men are far superior and that women are property to be claimed. You will not rule so absolute, real men will rise up and fight you.” Alain laughed a wicked and desperate laugh and Queen Skadi stepped closer to him drawing her sword.

“Alain, your bloodline is spent, your son is dead, at the hands of a mere woman.” She gestured at Lexa, “Your men are scattered, my army has already retaken Otta. The people are rejoicing as they await their Queen and your head. The alliance with the thirteen clans has given me access to soldiers in greater numbers than you can even imagine. I will hunt down Every Single One of your supporters,” she poked him in the chest three times as she said those words, “and they will die just as you are about to.”

The Ice Soldiers had grown agitated as Alain had spoken and now began to cheer their queen, soon the whole camp joined in. “Reine Skadi” was the chant and “Long live the queen!” Clarke felt goosebumps form on her skin and knew it had nothing to do with the cool evening air. She felt the power of this moment, of the young Ice Queen.

She felt acutely aware that all of them, the five young female leaders, were going to shape the world into a better place. A world that had no place for men like Alain, a world where men like Cade, Hirrim, and Bellamy were leaders. A world where men like Motorbike and Ribs served women like Lexa with their whole hearts, and a world where men like Kane supported the leadership of women like her mother. A world where men like her father could have been happy. It was an overwhelming responsibility, to make the world a better place. Clarke looked at her beautiful wife, standing tall and proud, and she knew they could do it.

Skadi had stepped back from Alain and looked at him with contempt. She spoke once more, “In the traditions of the Ice Nation I will give you one chance to repent, to ask for forgiveness, and to clear
your soul of confessions before death.” The Ice Nation’s traditions were based on an ancient religion that placed value on confessing one’s sins, Skadi offered this final rite to Alain. “Confess and repent Alain, meet death in peace.”

Alain looked her in the eye and snarled, “I have nothing to repent, my only regret is that I did not kill you. You and your friends will die, women are not strong enough to lead this world.”

Skadi had heard enough she stepped forward yelled, “be silent!” in a commanding voice.

Alain refused, “I will not be ordered into silence by a woman, you will never silence me!”

With that Skadi stepped even closer and grabbed Alain’s face, she pinched his tongue between her thumb and forefinger and pulled, she drew her dagger and cut the man’s tongue from his throat. Clarke gasped at the brutality as Lexa watched with her ever impassive expression.

“I said, Be Silent.” Skadi bellowed again as she threw the man’s tongue at his feet. He was gasping and gagging on the blood that flowed freely from the wound. “As Queen of the Ice Nation, I declare you to be guilty of crimes against the nation and against the people. I sentence you, Alain, to death. No more poisonous words will come from your mouth and none will be left alive who follow you. May your soul be tortured in death as you tortured others in life. Your sentence will be carried out now.” Skadi calmly stepped forward and the sword of the Royals sparkled blue as she drew it from it’s sheath. She whirled the blade in her hands and thrust it quickly through the heart of the man she had sentenced to die. A cheer rose from the crowd. No one was sorry to see him die, not even Yor.

Skadi withdrew her sword and raised it to the sky as the camp cheered for her. When the cheer died down Lexa stepped forward and nodded to Skadi who stepped back and stood next to Clarke. Clarke reach over and took her hand subtly, she could see the young queen was shaking.

Lexa approached the post where Yor was tied, gagged and bound. She announced that his punishment was to be decided by the Mayor of York and Zora stepped forward.

“Gunther, a more hated man than you I have never known. You destroyed peace and justice and you allowed criminals to rape and torture the citizens of York in your name. You killed my mother. You tried to kill my lover. You tried to kill me.”

“Niece,” Yor tried to appeal to Zora as family, “daughter of my brother. We can work this out. I can help you lead. You are not strong enough to lead a clan as large as York on you own. We are family, I will help you.” He dared to smile at her and she stepped forward and punched him in the face.

“We are not family, I am strong enough to lead York, and my father hated you. You make me sick, I want you dead.” She spat on him.

“As Mayor you have to follow your laws, Zora.” He laughed, you have to keep me alive until there can be a trial. You say I killed your mother but you have no proof. No witnesses, nothing. Alain is dead so he cannot speak to my involvement. The laws of York are clear you cannot kill for that until we have a trial. You have to take me back to York.” He thought he was clever and his laughter rang out through the camp. Lexa clenched her jaw, she cared not for York law, she was Heda of the thirteen clans, she had every right to kill him for any reason she wanted. She glared at Yor but let Zora continue.

“You are correct in one thing Gunther, The laws of York are very clear, and I am bound to follow them. You forget though, that rape is punishable by death, and we have a victim who will gladly deliver your punishment.” Zora spoke clearly and the camp stilled as Rock stepped forward, realizing that she was the victim. Lexa heard Lincoln gasp and Octavia yell for Rock to kill the bastard.
“Gunther, of York. You violated me. Now my sword will violate you.” Rock drew her sword, it was a beautiful piece of Lake iron, with a design that reminded Clarke of the waves she had seen when she and Lexa had visited the ocean. Rock stepped forward. “I am Rock, leader of the Lake Clan, ally to Zora, Mayor of York. This man forced himself on me, he assaulted me, he raped me. I am claiming the right of the victim, by Yorkist Law, to kill my attacker.”

Yor strained against the ropes that bound him, but one of Rachel’s warriors had tied the knot and boat people’s knots do not give way. He shouted, “I did not! She wanted it, she is nothing but a bitch liar! I fucked her and she liked it! She is a whore like all women!” His shouts stopped suddenly as Rock’s beautiful sword was sullied by the man’s blood. She had slit his throat, halfway decapitating him. As his life drained away Zora stepped forward again and raised Rock’s sword hand into the air.

The camp once again broke into cheers as the people of the alliance celebrated the second death that evening.

Lexa stepped forward and shouted, “It is done, justice has been served. The bodies will be returned to the capitol cities and the Queen and the Mayor restored to power! Lexa grabbed Queen Skadi’s hand and Mayor Zora’s hand and raised both of them to the sky. The cheers lasted several minutes before things began to die down.

That night the camp slept peacefully, secure in the knowledge that the monsters they had hunted had indeed been slain.

Chapter End Notes

This took a little longer than I expected, I apologize for my tardiness.
I wanted to kill them more but the thing about killing them is you can only do it once...

Time for our girls to reclaim some kingdoms, clean some shit up, and take a well deserved vacation!
The Return of the Queen

Chapter Summary

Lexa and the alliance strike force see Skadi retuned to her throne. Will Lexa lose a guard before they leave Otta?

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

It took just over five days of steady riding to reach Otta. They were just over a mile out when they were stopped by a guard outpost. The guards were a mixture of Ice Nation soldiers and riders from the Horse Clan. Lincoln and Octavia had been leading the team, riding ahead to ensure a clear path. When they were challenged they pulled up and waited for the rest of the riders to catch up.

The guards were suspicious and on high alert. They were about to order the two strangers down from their horses, they had weapons drawn and pointed at the couple. As they began to shout orders they were silenced by an unmistakable voice, “Hod Op!” Lexa shouted as she approached.

The guards turned wide eyed as Lexa closed the distance and stopped just alongside Lincoln. She glared down at the guards, she knew they were doing their jobs but she was tired from the ride, and as Clarke had declared a few hours ago when they had stopped for a light meal, Lexa was cranky.

“Remember the faces of Linkon and Oktevia Kom Trigedakru. Take their words as you would mine and never again impede their progress.” The guards trembled slightly in fear as they quickly nodded their understanding. Stories of Heda had her killing soldiers for less and they held their breath as Lexa glared at them.

Skadi and Clarke rode up alongside Lexa and something happened that put a smile back on Heda’s face. The men of the Ice Nation recognized their Queen. They fell to their knees and bowed their heads calling out to her. One of them wept openly for the return of his Queen.

Skadi jumped down from her horse and went to them. She laid her hand upon their shoulders and thanked them for guarding the city. When they murmured their answers to her she turned to Lexa. “Heda, if it is alright with you I would like to camp here for the night and ride into the city at first light.” Skadi grinned as she pictured the scene.

Rock and Zora joined them at the front of the convoy and overheard, “That will be the best entrance ever!” Zora agreed, “Until I get back to York of course.” she joked.

Lexa smiled and nodded, “I think that is a good plan, Skadi, Queen of the Ice Nation.”

Indra had just pulled up alongside her Heda and immediately began shouting orders to the warriors. Tents were erected quickly and the guards at the outpost brought the tired riders food and water. Lexa and Skadi quickly conferred with the lead guard and a rider was sent off to bring news of the morning arrival to Varga and Cole. Clarke asked quietly for the rider to find the Sky Chancellor and report that Sky Heda was well and would enter Otta in the morning. The rider grinned at her happy to accommodate any request from the legendary and very beautiful Sky Heda. He bowed his acknowledgement before riding off quickly to the city.
As soon as the rider left Clarke pulled at Lexa’s hand. “Come Heda, our tent awaits,” Clarke said with a smile.

Lexa hesitated, a million thoughts running through her head, but Indra nodded at her and strode over to the lead guard barking orders for a night watch to be maintained and for horses to be taken care of. Lexa fought a smile as she watched her general take control. She briefly wondered what she would do without Indra before Clarke’s hand was pulling her away from those thoughts toward their tent and thoughts of sleep.

It had been late when they arrived and dawn came after only a few hours of restless sleep. The entire group was too on edge, too excited, and too wary of someone trying a last minute ambush. No one slept particularly well and everyone was up at the crack of dawn. They mustered themselves quickly and with the practiced ease of weeks of togetherness. They woke to find an honour guard waiting for them. The Ice Nation’s finest were waiting to escort the Queen home.

The honour guard were in bright red uniforms and large brown hats. They carried poles flying purple flags to signify the Royal Family. They rode four abreast and four deep clearing the path for the returning heroes. Skadi rode a few meters behind them. She had asked Lexa to ride beside her but Lexa shook her head to decline and smiled. Skadi rode alone, Alain’s dead body was thrown across a riderless horse that trailed behind her, she held the reins proudly.

After the Queen rode Lexa, Clarke, Rock and Zora. They were flanked by Dal and Cade on either side and riding slightly behind the women. The two men had decided to act as personal guards for the entrance and kept their eyes on the crowd, constantly searching for a threat.

The rest of the team rode proudly behind the leaders and as they approached the city the path widened and people lined the sides, cheering and weeping, calling out to the young Queen. They cheered the soldiers who came after her and even the hardened Trigeda warriors couldn’t help but smile at the reception.

The honour guard led them into the city and to the gates of the royal residence. It was a large, ornate, and very old building that had survived the bombs. Long ago it had held the government of a different nation. As the chaos of the bombs died and a new world order emerged Skadi’s family had claimed the control and organized many of the surviving people into a tough band of survivors.

The nuclear winter that had gripped the area in the aftermath wiped out most of the groups who had survived the bombs and it was only Skadi’s family’s leadership that had kept people alive and together. As the weather stabilized and season’s returned to some normalcy they built the Ice Nation and ruled from the city of Otta.

Skadi felt tears fill her eyes as she finally looked upon the green roofs of her home again. The whole city was there lining the street and crowded into the courtyard of her castle, waiting to welcome her home, anxious to see for themselves that she was indeed alive. The cheers that went up as she rode past were deafening, the people shouted in ecstasy. People wept and shouted, some fainted. The young queen held her head high and waved to her people. As she rode her horse into the courtyard she stopped and drew her sword. She lifted it into the air and the roar of the crowd grew even louder.

Varga strode forward to meet the Queen and knelt before her until she dismounted and touched his shoulder indicating for him to rise. The crowd was still shouting and cheering and Skadi raised her hand to silence them. The cheering continued for several minutes slowly dying down as the people
anticipated hearing the Queen speak.

Varga stood beside his queen and raised his voice, “Good people of Otta, I present to you, your one true leader, Queen of the Ice Nation, Skadi!” As he said her name cheers rose once more and she stepped forward and moved toward the podium that had been prepared for her. She stood and faced her people fighting to hold her composure and keep the mask of the Ice Queen firmly in place. Only Lexa and her three friends really understood how affected she was by all of this, they saw through her mask quite easily. Skadi did not shed tears, she merely jutted her chin out in defiance of her emotions and addressed her people.

“People of the Ice Nation. I am your queen. I have returned to you and I have brought the traitor Alain!” She gestured toward the horse that trailed hers and two of her warriors were waiting for her signal. They heaved the body onto the platform where she was standing and she placed her foot on top of the lifeless heap and drew her sword raising the ice blue blade high into the air.

“Let this be a warning for all who would seek to supplant me. And for those who followed Alain and conspired with him to make my people suffer, you cannot hide from me, justice will find you.”

Rock and Zora stepped on to the stage on either side of the Queen. “Traitors if you are listening, you may think you can find refuge in your allies with the Lake people on in York,” Skadi continued addressing the traitors, “but I am not the only one who has returned from the dead.”

“Rock spoke first, “I am Rock, Lord of the Lakes. I stand with your Queen and my people offer no sanctuary to the traitors who stood behind the false king.” She was small in stature but her voice carried loud and clear and her people cheered their returned leader with such enthusiasm she felt a tear grow in her eye. She caught Ford’s eye as she swept the crowd and she offered a small and apologetic nod to the general who looked at her with tears streaming down her face.

Zora grinned as she held the detached head of Yor into the air, “I am Zora, Mayor of York. This head belongs to the traitor Yor. Anyone who had dealings with him or Alain will find naught but death on my lands. I stand with your Queen.” Another cheer rose from the crowd as Zora once again proudly displayed the head of the man hated by so many.

Skadi spoke again, “I have made new friends who will offer their science and technology to us and have promised to help us track down every last traitor and make examples of them. The Sky People are powerful allies who brought down Mount Weather at Heda Lexa’s side.”

Clarke had been joined moments before by her mother and Kane, Abby pulled Clare into a quick embrace and looked her up and down relieved that her daughter was OK. They stepped onto the platform together, a move which pleased Lexa and brought a small smile to her face.

“We are the leaders of the Sky People, and we stand with your Queen.” They spoke together and then Abby took one step forward.

“We are pleased to see your rightful ruler restored to you and we offer our hand in friendship to the people of the Ice Nation. Your people are welcome amongst the Sky People. However, let me be very clear.”

Abby steeled her voice and paused for effect. Lexa thought back to the woman she had been kind of intimidated by when she first started her relationship with Clarke. That Abby Griffin came through very clearly.

“Anyone who your Queen wants dead will be shot on sight. My people know how to kill and we have very efficient weapons.” She grinned at Clarke who stepped forward.
“I am Clarke, Heda Kom Skaikru.” A cheer erupted from the crowd so loud that it surprised Clarke, but not Lexa. She knew of the legend of her wife, how it grew and spread across the clans. “I stand with your Queen, and I will personally kill anyone I come across who aided the criminals Yor and Alain.” Lexa smiled again at the harsh words from the beautiful lips of her wife.

Skadi spoke once more, “Traitors of the Ice Nation, traitors of York, I promise you that there is no place in the thirteen clans that will shelter you.” With that declaration the other women stepped to the side and Lexa stepped up beside Skadi. She was in her full armour and had fresh war paint on her face. She looked magnificent and terrifying.

“I am Lexa, Heda Kom Trikru, leader of the thirteen clans.” Yet another cheer rose from the crowd but Lexa was not in the mood for being exalted and she silenced the crowd with a raise of her hand.

“I recognize Skadi as the Queen of the Ice Nation. She has the support of the alliance and we will see to it that anyone who plotted against her, and every single person who joined Alain and abused her people gets the punishment they deserve.”

She let her gaze travel the crowd and any who met her eye felt goosebumps on her arms at the power of Heda’s gaze. “Let it be known that Trikru hold nothing but contempt and very sharp swords for any traitors of the Ice Queen who dare enter our lands. I command the thirteen clans and I will allow none of them to shelter any traitors.” Lexa’s voice inspired the faithful and put fear into the hearts of those who had lived well under Alain. It did something else entirely to Clarke, the Sky leader found herself becoming very turned on watching her wife.

“I will see your lands returned to peace and safety, I will see your Queen on her throne and her heirs seated after her. There will be no more treachery. Together we are strong!” Lexa grabbed the Queen’s left hand in her right and raised them both into the air. The roar from the crowd could not be silenced this time and the Queen squeezed Heda’s hand.

It was a busy day for the Queen. After she addressed the people gathered in the square she was escorted inside and she reclaimed her throne. As she sat on it she was officially received by Varga and all powers that were rightfully hers were returned to her. There were many people waiting to see her, to speak to her, and there was planning to be done. She spent the morning receiving her people and speaking with as many people as she could, reassuring them that things would get better now that she had returned.

In the afternoon she went to her council room to discuss strategy. A large table graced the room and Rock, Zora, Cole, Ro, Clarke, Abby, Kane, and Lexa sat along one side, Lexa immediately to Skadi’s right. On the other side of the table sat the generals, Varga, Indra, Octavia, Cade, Dal, Ford, and two other top Generals from among the Ice soldiers, one recently returned from exile herself.

Skadi greeted everyone as they sat at her table. She introduced Lozen, her highest ranked general. All of her female generals had fled the city in exile after Skadi’s death. Alain and Sula had known that Lozen would never be loyal to them and Varga received an order to execute the general. He sent one of his trusted soldiers ahead to warn her and she was gone by the time Varga and three of Alain’s personal guards stormed her villa.

After Sula’s death Alain took control and women were banned from all military positions. Many of the high ranking soldiers ended up in Lozen’s village far to the west of Otta. They had stayed there until about a week ago when a rider arrived with the news that Varga had retaken the city and that the Queen was alive and would return to her people once she had hunted down Alain. Lozen had departed for Otta immediately with fifty female soldiers riding with her.
The woman was impressive. She had brown eyes that took in every detail of the room in one quick sweeping glance, her long dark hair was held in place by two braids, and her brown skin looked kissed by sunshine. She wore a sleeveless vest that showed off her biceps, she had single thick silver cuff clasped around her upper right arm that accentuated her muscles. She had two longswords sheathed in a crisscross on her back and throwing daggers on her hips. She was tall, as tall as Zora, but slender and lithe like Lexa. She moved like Lexa too, like she was stalking something, her prowess showing in everything she did. She bowed deeply as Skadi introduced her and Lexa noticed how the woman kept glancing at Skadi as if she still needed confirmation that her Queen indeed lived.

The other general that Skadi introduced was named Aramis. He and Varga had stayed in the city throughout the reign of Alain, they secretly helped the people when they could and kept in contact with the exiled Lozen and several others who had fled after being threatened for having been loyal to Skadi and vocal against the tyranny they saw in Sula and then Alain.

Once the introductions had been made Skadi sat and sighed. She knew this would not be an easy task but she also knew it had to start today. “Thank you all for your help, Cole of Lanta, Ro of the Horse Clan, Abby and Kane of the Sky People, and Ford of the Lakes, thank you for accompanying Varga here and for taking back my city in preparation for my return.”

When all of those she had acknowledged nodded back to her she continued, “The city will return to my rule quickly. Lozen and her exiled soldiers have returned and she will work with Varga to ensure the entire Ice Army knows my rules and follows them. The people of the city will adapt quickly, they all remember the way things were before Alain and they will happily return to my rule. Any that don’t will be punished.” Her sharp blue eyes looked at her three generals and they all nodded understanding.

“Queen Skadi,” as she looked over at the Queen she bowed her head in respect. “That is a job for your generals. Let them make your lands safe while you assert your hand here in the capital. In a few months you can tour the villages, your people will all want to see you, but I recommend that you let your generals do their jobs and patrol your land enforcing your laws.”

Clarke had been watching Ford watch Rock and was surprised when the young woman spoke, she wouldn’t have even guessed that Ford had heard the young Queen, so studious was her watch over Rock. Her eyes only left Rock momentarily as she addressed the Queen and then returned to the Leader of the Lake People after she spoke.

Skadi snorted, “There are certain villages in particular that I would visit tomorrow if I could.” She felt anger rise in her when she thought of the villages where she had been abused. She reached for her dagger and pulled it out and began twirling it absentmindedly to calm her nerves. Clarke shook her head at yet another similarity to Lexa. Skadi continued when she was sure her voice would be even. “There are many who need to fear their Queen and know she will not allow her laws to be broken.” She sighed and looked at Lozen, “How many fully trained female warriors do you have?”

“Hundreds, my Queen,” came the reply. Skadi looked surprised and Lozen elaborated. “Young women from further North and from the Western towns and villages sought me out. I trained them
and returned them in squads to their homes fully trained. The lawlessness that happened in the East and the South was stemmed by their presence. You need not worry about that region of your lands my Queen.”

She smirked a little as she spoke and her voice was smooth and soft, she was proud of what she had accomplished and her attitude implied that she thought Skadi should have expected nothing less from her. “As for the rest. Let me send squads forth searching for the men who joined Alain and who fled like cowards against your return. Let me find them and bring them to you.”

“No, I need you here.” Skadi shook her head. “I need you to reintegrate your warriors into the main battalion here in Otta, the men are no longer used to fighting alongside women. They need to integrate quickly. Have some of your best start sparring immediately, they need to show their strength. I also need the soldiers to get used to you. As I recall you train them much harder than Varga does.” Skadi smiled at both generals.

“Varga, organize ten squads, lead them yourself and take your private guards. Take soldiers you personally know and trust. You will be riding East, chasing down traitors and delivering the news of my return to every village and town you find. I want your squads to be half female soldiers, including every single squad leader. The treatment of women under Alain’s law needs to stop immediately and what better way to spread the word to my people than by squads led by fearsome female warriors? Lozen will help you choose the right people. Aramis, do the same, you ride South.”

“Yes, my Queen,” was Varga’s immediate reply.

“As you wish, my Queen,” echoed Aramis.

The afternoon continued with discussions of law, organization, and many other tedious discussions. When it was time to stop for supper everyone was glad to stretch their legs. As they ate Clarke and Lexa saw Zora speaking with Skadi. She was nodding and as the conversation stopped Zora smiled and looked around for Rock. Not finding her she approached Lexa.

“Heda,” she began letting Lexa know this was some kind of official business. “There will be a feast tomorrow night to celebrate the return of the Queen. She requests all of our presence.”

“Of course.” Lexa answered nodding her agreement.

“After that I wish to be on my way. The rest of the force and the soldiers that came before us can stay if you feel you need more time here Heda, but I am anxious to return to my own people.” Zora sighed, ”They have suffered long enough. I must return to them”

“Zora, mayor of York, the strike force that hunted Yor will accompany you, and I will personally see you returned to power. The army that came before us is Skadi’s to coordinate with those who lead them, but the strike force will be going to York. We leave the morning after the feast. Agreed?” Lexa looked at Zora and saw the fire in her eyes.

“Agreed, Heda. Thank you.” Zora smiled and looked at Clarke, “Have you seen Rock? I wish to speak to her.”

Clarke’s face reddened, “She left a few minutes ago, she was with Ford.” Clarke nodded in the direction the two women had gone and Zora’s eyes suddenly looked sad.

“Thanks, Clarke,” she sighed, “I guess I’ll go and find them. I know this is a hard conversation for Rock. She always felt guilty about Ford, sometimes even more than Cade.” Zora sighed again, “If
She had loved her instead of me, none of this would have happened to her... Yor wouldn’t have…"

“She would be dead.” Lexa suddenly spoke again, “Her mother did not escape Yor and Alain and she was intent on meeting me and joining my alliance. Those things would have gotten her killed even if she hated you.” Lexa stood and punched Zora lightly on the shoulder and grinned, “Zora, do not regret that she loves you, it is a miracle for women like us to be loved by women like her and Clarke.”

Zora laughed and agreed, “You are absolutely right Lexa, my friend. It is a miracle.” Zora winked at Clarke and turned to go.

Clarke looked at Lexa and smiled, “You are so good.”

Lexa looked surprised “What do you mean?” she asked.

“You know exactly what I mean, you are so sweet.” Clarke leaned over to kiss Lexa on the cheek.

“I don’t know what you are talking about Clarke, and I most certainly am not sweet!” Lexa put her chin in the air as she spoke and purposefully looked away from her wife.

“That’s too bad, I was thinking of how I would reward my sweet wife tonight for being so good and sensitive to her friends feelings.” Clarke lowered her voice, “and I came up with some really interesting rewards…”

“Rewards… tonight…?” Lexa grinned wolfishly, “I’m sweet Clarke, practically honey in fact…” she leaned toward her wife and slid her hand onto Clarke’s knee. She heard Clarke giggle and then she heard the voice of her mother-in-law.

“Hands off Heda, the day is not done.” Abby quipped good natured and smiled when Lexa jumped back away from Clarke with a guilty look on her face. “Lexa would you mind if I steal Clarke for a while there are a few things I would like to show her around the city. The Queen says we won’t be needed for the next session, Kane will fill in as the Sky People’s representation. I would invite you along as well, but unfortunately you are needed in the meeting.” Abby smiled at her daughter-in-law and then at Clarke.

“Of course Abby. I am sure you and Clarke have missed each other. Otta is an interesting city, and Clarke and I leave for York the morning after tomorrow so I am pleased she will see some of it with you. However, I must insist that you take guards.” Lexa looked to her right and nodded at Indra.

“Your guards will meet you at the door. I must go and join the meeting now.” Lexa nodded to Abby formally and smiled at Clarke who smiled back.

Lexa walked over to Indra and stopped. She turned to watch Abby and Clarke walk arm in arm to the door where they were met by Octavia and Lincoln. The four of them walked out into the city and Lexa looked at her general.

“I have alerted Varga and he has some of his soldiers trailing them as well. She is well protected Heda,” Indra assured her. Lexa nodded her thanks.

“Where is Carter?” Lexa inquired. “I wish to speak with him.”

“He is teaching some of the Ice Warriors. I will send him right away, Heda.” Indra replied and then paused.
“Speak Indra.” Lexa knew there was a question her general wanted to ask.

“Should I be looking for a new personal guard for my Heda?” She didn’t know about Carter’s past with Skadi but she was intuitive and felt something.

“I hope so.” Lexa smiled and it puzzled Indra who knew Lexa liked Carter and felt he was an excellent guard. Indra didn’t say more just left to find the young man.

Outside the palace Zora found Rock and Ford standing to the side of the square. She stopped and waited, knowing that Rock would want privacy. She saw that Ford had tears running down her face and she saw that Rock was barely holding her own back.

Rock reached out and cupped Ford’s face gently. Ford pulled away shaking her head. Zora watched them and felt sorrow for the fiercely loyal general. Ford was a beautiful woman, flawless brown skin and long black hair. She was tall, strong, and carried herself with a warriors bravado. Zora knew from experience that Ford could back that swagger up, there were few warriors who could best her.

Zora let her gaze linger on Ford, taking her trim waist and sliding her gaze up to her breasts, that while much smaller than her own were certainly bigger than Rock’s. Ford had wide shoulders, and a graceful neck line. Her smile was disarming and her eyes were a beautiful soft brown. Zora wondered why the general had never taken a wife in all of the years she had believed Rock to be dead.

Her thoughts were interrupted when Ford noticed her. Ford looked sharply back at Rock and spoke again. She then turned abruptly and strode over to Zora. The Mayor watched her approach with a calm curiosity and Rock hurried after her with a very concerned look on her face.

“Zora, Mayor of York.” Ford nodded and addressed Zora respectfully as she stopped in front of her. “I have something I would like to say to you.” There was determination on the woman’s face and Zora became even more curious.

Rock arrived a few steps behind Ford. “Ford, let us finish our conversation. It has nothing to do with Zora.” Rock looked slightly panicked and Zora looked at her with some amusement before returning her gaze to Ford.

The general held out her arm to block Rock’s approach and looked slightly miffed, “Rock, this does not concern you.”

Zora waved her lover away with a small but understanding smile and looked into Ford’s determined eyes. “Ford, general of the Lake armies. You have my ear.”

Ford held Zora’s gaze and took a deep breath, then she did something unthinkable, something neither Rock nor Zora were prepared for. She embraced Zora tightly for four seconds before letting her go and stepping back. The look of incredulous surprise on Zora’s face almost had her laughing but she was not the type to laugh out loud.

“What… why…?” Zora stammered looking at the woman who had almost always hated her and never thought her good enough for Rock.

“You kept her safe all these years. You healed the hurt Yor inflicted. She is safe and whole and now she has returned to us. Thank you, Zora, Mayor of York, from me, from the Steward, and from the People of the Lakes.” Ford’s lip quivered slightly as she spoke but she held her composure. When she finished speaking she looked at Rock, “My liege.” She nodded formally and then took her leave.
Rock and Zora stood still speechless watching Ford stride off and Zora noticed that the general also had a very nice ass. Rock looked up at Zora and frowned. “Stop checking out her ass, Zor.”

“Shit, sorry. I was just thinking while you two were talking, Ford is really hot.” Zora spoke plainly to her lover.

“Yes, she is.” Rock laughed and agreed.

“Why’d you pick me” Zora asked intrigued.

“You’re pretty hot too, Mayor.” Rock winked at her and turned to head toward the meeting room.

Zora grinned and blushed at Rock’s comment and continued watching Ford with interest. Ford had been stopped by someone and was now being pulled into an embrace. “Huh, interesting.” She said out loud to no one. “Cole of the Lanta clan, you seem to be quite familiar with Rock’s general.” She smirked feeling very satisfied as she turned and followed Rock into the meeting. She loved knowing secrets and grinned through all of the tedious evening meetings knowing how shocked Rock was going to be when she told her.

When Carter found Lexa she was speaking with Skadi. He approached and bowed. “Heda, Queen Skadi.” Lexa watched as he swallowed nervously looking at the beautiful young queen.

“Carter.” Skadi greeted him with a shy smile and Lexa watched the two look at each other and blush.

Skadi excused her self to head towards the meeting hall and Lexa smiled as Carter’s gaze followed the woman every step of the way. “Carter, I think you should remain behind and teach some of the Ice Warriors how to be the Queen’s personal guard. No one does it better than you.” Lexa offered him a chance to be near his love.

“Heda, I can only stay if she chooses me.” Carter looked down at the floor. “She has just returned to her people. She does not need a distraction.”

“A distraction, no. But a man who loves her and who is the best personal guard in the thirteen clans and who is a brilliant military and political strategist and who can offer her protection and advice, yes. You are the son of Heda Sasha. Royalty is in your blood too. You love her. Do not ignore this.” Lexa clasped him by the shoulder and turned to the war room. “Come, you are sitting next to me at the meeting.”

Carter followed Lexa into the room and Indra, who was already seated rose and left the room as they entered. As she passed Carter she smiled at him. Lexa took her seat and Carter sat down in the one Indra had just vacated. “Indra will be very happy with you Carter, she hates these meetings. You can get a favour from her for this.” They both chuckled lightly knowing that Indra gave favours few and far between and this would be valuable.

Skadi called the meeting to order and Lexa noticed that there were several prominent Otta citizens present. Politicians, and traders were there vying for the Queen’s favour and demanding her attention on this issue or that. She sighed thinking she wished she were Indra right now.

As they started one of the politicians from Otta looked at Carter and demanded to know who he was and why he was seated in such an important meeting. He sneered and asked if Heda Lexa felt so vulnerable she had to bring her personal guard. Lexa pulled her dagger ready to shut the man up with a dagger inches from is face and a few sharp words, but Skadi beat her to it.
“He is no mere guard, Steven. He is Carter, Son of Heda Sasha. He commands the respect of the Trikru, of Heda Lexa, and of your Queen. Get used to seeing him here.” The last sentence made Carter blush and Lexa smile, the rest of the room fell into mad speculation and rumours flew around town as soon as the meeting was over.

Once they broke for the evening Lexa asked Carter to wait and she approached Skadi. “I asked him to train your guards. There is no one better.” Skadi smiled.

“He can’t stay as just a trainer of my guards, Lexa. You know how our people are.” Skadi smiled sadly. “I am just returned from the dead. I cannot break protocol and have a romance with a trainer of my guards. He would have to be….” she trailed off, unwilling to finish the sentence.

“Have to be what?” Lexa asked gently.

“My betrothed,” she almost whispered. “That would give him the status to stay here and help me in any way I needed. Training the guards, attending strategy meetings, everything.”

“Would you have him as such? Should he ask. Are you ready for that?” Lexa wanted the two of them to work this out but she did not want to push them.

“I have loved Carter since I was young. I love him still. I would have him, if he would have me. Would he give up so much for a girl he loved years ago, let alone this scarred and broken woman who no longer bears any resemblance to that girl?” She sighed. “Not to mention, I am Queen, and we both know that rulers make bad lovers.” Skadi looked knowingly at Lexa. “He loves his people too Lexa. His way of serving them is by serving you.”

“I know. He is one of the best men I have ever met. He loves his people, he loves his Heda, and he loves you. Of that I am certain.” Lexa smiled at her friend, “and we make wonderful lovers, we just need to find the right person to love. Speak with him now.” She turned and walked to Carter.

“I am going to find Clarke and we are going to bed. There are already guards at the door, your services are not needed, Carter. Speak with Skadi. Speak from your heart, she needs you, but she is proud like me, she can not ask you.” Lexa hoped he understood and she laid her hand on his shoulder and squeezed as she walked away.

Carter shifted nervously from one foot to the other, he was not used to this feeling. He was a proud man, one of the best warriors Trikru had ever seen. He was the son of Heda Sasha and the guard and friend of HedaLexa. He was not used to being tongue-tied and nervous. He was not used to sweaty palms and a flipping feeling in his stomach.

Skadi looked at him, she smiled sensing his nervousness. “Carter, fearless Trikru warrior, what makes you nervous?”

He looked up at her and saw her smile, that smile he had fallen head over heels for when they were teenagers. He took deep breath and tried to find his bravery. “Queen Skadi…” he started then paused when he saw her jaw clench at the formal title, ‘just like Lexa’ he thought. He shook his head and started over, “Skadi. I am happy to see you back on your throne. You have a long road to get things back to the way they were before Alain.” He hesitated unsure of how to proceed.

“Indeed,” was the gorgeous blonde’s cool reply. She wanted him to speak to her of his feelings not of her political situation.

Carter felt like he was totally screwing this up, he felt inadequate and out of his league. He didn’t
realize that when Skadi looked at him she still saw the handsome young man she had loved and that she still felt the same.

“What I mean is… I could help you. Heda Lexa doesn’t need me, there are many who would serve her and Heda Clarke well in my stead. I am not bound to her, I am free to decide my position…” He was not saying what he wanted to say, he wanted to just pull her into his arms and kiss her but for some reason he stood like a fool and mumbled on. He was frustrated with himself and sighed heavily.

“And what help would you offer me, Carter? What position would you choose here among my people?” Skadi was not helping Carter. She was still a little pissed at him for not recognizing her in Sapeake.

“I… I… Ska…” he dropped his eyes and couldn’t meet hers he felt like an utter failure and it was only when she started to walk away that panic forced him to act. “Whatever you would have me do.” He spoke loudly and with more confidence stopping Skadi in her tracks she turned and looked at him again.

“Explain.” She demanded.

“I will gladly do anything you need or want. I just want to be here in Otta…. with you.” Carter blushed at his admission and the pink on his cheeks cracked the Ice Queen’s demeanor. She smiled and Carter’s heart stopped. “Ska, you are so beautiful… I…”

“Shut up Carter.” The queen demanded and closed the distance between them quickly pulling him into a kiss.

They kissed for a long time, it was slow and tender and when Skadi finally pulled away Carter was breathless. “Ska, I have missed you so much. When I thought you were gone…” Tears filled his eyes and ran down his cheeks, and Skadi wondered when this proud warrior had last allowed himself to cry.

“I know Carter, I’m sorry. I wanted to send word to you, but so much had happened and I was so broken and it was too dangerous. Then too much time had passed. I didn’t want to presume that you had waited.” Carter whispered to her that it was ok and that he understood and that he was proud of her for all that she had survived. Skadi let Carter hold her for a few moments his arms felt so good around her and she thought how until now she had never imagined she could feel this much peace again.

Her thoughts went to Lexa and she imagined this was exactly what Lexa felt with Clarke. She knew what Lexa meant about finding the right person to love. She understood why Heda Lexa needed her wife, and the thought scared her, did she need Carter?

Skadi slumped into his arms at the thought, her strength leaving her, and Carter was concerned. He pulled away first this time. “Ska, you should rest. Let me walk you to your room. Where are your guards?” Skadi laughed at his protectiveness and assured him that they were waiting outside of the council room and would be posted outside of her room all night.

He walked her to her room and was surprised when she embraced him in front of her guards before going into the room. When she was safely inside he gave the guards a lecture about her safety for ten full minutes before going back to his own room.
After Lexa left Skadi and Carter she went back to her room. Clarke was already there and waiting for her. Lexa slipped inside and stopped just inside the door. Clarke raised her eyebrow in question wondering why her wife was just standing by the door. Lexa stood there and stared at her wife. She thought how thankful she was that Clarke was there waiting for her, that Clarke was her houmon, that Clarke existed. Clarke smiled softly at the intensity in Lexa’s eyes as she stared.

After just staring for a few moments drinking the sight of her wife Lexa slowly looked Clarke up and down and remembered a conversation they had had earlier, “I believe there was some talk of rewards this evening…” She grinned at Clarke.

Clarke patted the bed next to her, “It’s been a long couple of months. We’ve been gone from home for so long and now we have privacy and a comfortable bed, come love. I know exactly what you need.” Clarke’s smile lit up the room.

Lexa smiled back and wasted no time crossing the room shedding her clothes as she walked. She tumbled into her wife’s arms wearing just her underwear. Her lips found Clarke’s and the two women kissed slowly as their bodies naturally entwined with each other. When Clarke broke the kiss they were a jumble of legs and arms piled together on the bed.

“Lexa. I love you.” Clarke looked deeply into the green eyes that gave her strength and purpose. She leaned forward so her nose touched Lexa’s and she disentangled her right arm to bring her hand up to cup Lexa’s cheek.

“Ai hod you in, Houmon.” Lexa answered her wife’s declaration and turned her head lightly side to side rubbing her nose with Clarke’s.

Clarke grinned and Lexa arched her eyebrow. “When I said I know what you need I was very serious.” Clarke let out a small giggle and Lexa smiled and kissed her softly.

“Is that right, Houmon?” Lexa played along, “What is it that I need?”

“Heda Lexa, leader of the thirteen clans…”

“Clarke, I think I prefer ‘fearless leader’ if you don’t mind…” Lexa teased.

“Of course my love. Heda Lexa, fearless leader of the thirteen clans, needs… this.” Clarke smiled, leaned forward and placed a chaste but loving kiss on Lexa’s lips. Then she sunk back into the softness of the bed and pulled Lexa with her wrapping her arms around her and snuggling in. “Sleep my love.” Clarke cooed and smiled as Lexa’s breathing quickly evened out.

The fearless leader of the thirteen clans was already fast asleep.

Chapter End Notes

Lexa and Clarke were a little too tired for hanky panky, but I feel like they will be a little friskier after the feast.

Carter is just so darn cute.
The Celebration

Chapter Summary

There is to be a ball in the evening to celebrate the return of the Queen. But they have to make it through the day first.

Chapter Notes

This one took a while to write. I was travelling and trying to steal time to write while sitting at gates in airports and such. I hope you enjoy this chapter.

Morning came softly, Lexa felt herself wake but fought her conscious mind. She burrowed deeper into Clarke’s shoulder and let the soft, warm skin of her wife’s neck draw her in. She let out a contented sigh as her lips acted of their own desires and began placing soft slow kisses on Clarke’s neck.

Clarke stirred when she felt the lips on her neck and smiled, still half asleep. She cracked open an eye just enough to see the light of morning streaming into their bedroom. The city was beginning to wake and she could hear the sounds of morning from the courtyard below and from the hallways around them. She smiled when she realized they had no pressing issues to deal with, no urgent meetings, and nowhere that they were expected to be.

Clarke was suddenly wide awake and quite excited. “Lex! Wake up! We have a free morning!”

Lexa grumbled and tried to pull Clarke back down into the bed but her wife’s excitement would not be contained. Clarke had already hopped out of bed and gone over to the window. Lexa raised herself onto her elbow watched her wife take in the remarkable view. Clarke gasped, Otta in the warm light of a late spring morning was beautiful.

“Lex come here!” She almost whispered.

Lexa smiled and continued to lie still and watch Clarke. “I’m serious Lexa, this view is amazing, you have to see this.” Clarke gushed again not taking her eyes off of the scene.

Lexa smirked and raked her eyes up Clarke’s bare legs to rest on her beautiful ass. Both women had slept in just their bras and underwear and Lexa was enjoying her own view.

Clarke turned to see why Lexa wasn’t joining her and when she saw Lexa, half naked with sleep rumpled curls spilling everywhere, staring at her ass with a gleam in her eye she suddenly forgot about the wonder of the city and let her eyes rest on the wonder that was her wife.

Clarke walked slowly back to the bed and crawled over it to get to Lexa. Lexa stared at her like she was a tigress coming in for a kill, but Lexa wanted to be devoured. Clarke stayed on all fours until she had Lexa fenced in underneath her. Her arms on either side of Lexa’s head and her knees planted
firmly on the bed on either side of Lexa’s hips. She licked her lips and began to lower herself for a kiss.

“Lexa! Clarke! Wake up!” There was a banging on the door and when Clarke jumped up startled Lexa moved quickly out of bed and grabbed her daggers.

Clarke regained her composure quickly and realized from the voices outside the door that it was Rock and Zora, and she thought she heard Skadi as well. Lexa was still stalking towards the door with her blades in hand.

“Lex! It’s OK, it’s just the girls!” Clarke was alarmed and ran after Lexa grabbing her arm before she reached the door.

“I know who it is Clarke, I won’t kill them, just maim them for interrupting!” Lexa growled out, pouting.

Clarke’s laughter and a soft kiss soon had Lexa grinning too and she grudgingly set her daggers on the table and pulled on a shirt.

“We’ll be right out.” Clarke called loudly to their friends.

“Meet us in the courtyard.” The voice belonged to Skadi. “I would like to show you the city and have breakfast with you in the market.” Her voice rang with pride and excitement and Clarke once again felt excitement rise inside of her.

“The market! Did you hear that Lex? Mom and I walked through there yesterday, it’s amazing! You’re going to love it.” Clarke kept talking excitedly as she got dressed while Lexa calculated in her head. She had been in Otta before, mostly in the middle of battle, but she knew the layout of the city and she was going over it in her head. The five most powerful leaders of the Alliance walking thought the market like tourists and eating breakfast together was a security nightmare and Lexa was much less excited than Clarke.

Lexa put on her clothes buckled everything that needed buckled and pulled straps tight here and there. She had her daggers at her side and her sword on her back. Clarke watched her and the thought occurred to her that the five of them together in the market of a city only recently made safe could be dangerous. Neither woman said anything but Lexa nodded in approval as Clarke strapped her gun on her hip and placed a knife in a sheath on her thigh.

Clarke noticed that Lexa left off her armour and made no move to paint her face. This reassured her and she felt a little of the lighthearted excitement creep back in. Lexa watched her grin with excitement and allowed herself to feel it a little bit too.

When they were both dressed Lexa pulled Clarke over to the window and wrapped her arms around her wife enjoying the view for a moment.

Otta was bordered by a river that ran behind Skadi’s palace and a canal branched off of the river and dissected the city just to the side of the courtyard. The water of the canal sparkled in the morning sun and Lexa could see the market beyond it. She smiled and kissed her houmon’s cheek.

“They will be waiting, let’s go Clarke. Otta is a beautiful city, and we have the Queen as a guide!” Lexa laughed and Clarke joined in. A thought suddenly pulled on Clarke’s mind.

“Lex. Can Octavia be my guard today. I’d like to see the city with her too. I know she is on duty and everything but I feel like she will be hurt if I keep doing things without her. I have made new friends but she is family to me… she’s one of the 100, she helped me save them. She’s the first one to be
open to your culture and…”

“Houmon, em pleni,” Lexa silenced Clarke with a finger against the blonde’s lips. She quickly explained as she saw her wife’s eyes start to narrow in annoyance at being shushed, “Octavia and Lincoln with both be waiting for us. Indra has assigned them to be our guards for now. Until we return home and find a replacement for Carter. Indra would guard me herself but she has other duties to attend to.”

“Motorbike…? Why does he need to be replaced? Is he OK!? Where is he? What is happening!?” Clarke spoke so quickly Lexa didn’t know which question to answer first.

“They are waiting for us Clarke. Carter is fine. He will stay behind to train personal guards for Skadi.” Lexa began to exit and Clarke saw the small smirk that meant her wife was not telling her everything. She peppered her with questions and grabbed her arm to stop her.

Lexa smiled at her wife’s curiosity and teased, “If we are late to the courtyard they will all assume we were making love, Clarke. If you continue to press me with questions I will encourage them to think just that.” Lexa watched with satisfaction as her Sky wife blushed deeply.

“You wouldn’t!” Clarke paused and sighed, “Of course you would.” She shook her head in defeat and hurried along, let’s go before Zora gets any ideas and I die of embarrassment for no good reason.”

Lexa’s chuckle followed her down the corridor and they met their friends in the courtyard.

As Lexa had promised Lincoln and Octavia met them in the courtyard and Clarke smiled brightly at her friend. Octavia grinned back at her and then nodded respectfully to Lexa.

Lexa nodded for Octavia to follow her and the two of them went to Skadi.

“Good morning Queen, Skadi.” Lexa was formal and Skadi followed her lead.

“Heda Lexa, I trust you rested well?” She nodded and allowed a small smile for Octavia who nodded respectfully back. Skadi knew exactly what was on Heda’s mind.

“Lozen herself has placed warriors throughout the city and has assigned a team of guards to lead and to follow our group. Ask what you wish to know Heda, your safety and the safety of the Sky Heda is most important to me.” Skadi let Lexa know that she would not be insulted by Lexa’s double checking, and was in fact expecting it.

Lexa did not hesitate, “The towers of the Fair, the bridges over the canal, and the small alleys of the Bywa Market. Are they covered in case of assassins?” Lexa felt a chill as she looked at Skadi’s expression.

“The arrow that was meant to kill me came from the Fair Towers. They had been in such a state of ruin no one used them. The assassin found a perfect perch and the life he took was precious to me. Those towers are now very well patrolled. As for the bridge it is covered and the alleys of the market are crawling with soldiers, alliance and Ice.”

Lexa nodded and then let herself relax. She smiled a real smile at Skadi and reached out to grasp her forearm. Skadi also smiled and returned Lexa’s greeting before turning to have a quick word with her guards. Then called her friends to follow her as she led them through the courtyard and out into the city.
As Lexa and Octavia returned to Clarke, Lexa whispered, “Keep your eyes open, I have a bad feeling this will not be a peaceful breakfast.”

Octavia nodded and grinned, “I always do Heda, I always do.” Octavia met Lexa’s eyes and Lexa saw steel and felt relieved. She then watched as Octavia put her wife at ease by smiling and telling a joke before wrapping her elbow around Clarke’s and explaining how excited she was to see the city.

Octavia was keeping Clarke close and Lexa saw the warriors eyes ceaselessly taking in the road ahead of them and the people alongside them. She relaxed, confident in Octavia’s ability and fell into step beside Clarke to enjoy the sights around her.

It was still very early and most of Otta was not yet awake. Those who who bowed respectfully at their Queen and Heda. Children squealed with delight and ran alongside the women. Lexa watched with a smile as a young blond haired boy ran up to Clarke and very solemnly presented her with a flower. Clarke smiled at the boy and kissed the top of his head causing him to break into a huge grin and race away from them shouting to his friends that the Sky Heda had kissed him. Clarke laughed and Rock joked with her about being the most popular.

Octavia saw it first, even before herself or Lincoln, Lexa noted with satisfaction. “Well, I don’t know about that.” Octavia said softly and pointed to show Clarke what she was talking about. As Clarke and Rock turned to look where Octavia pointed, Lexa gently nudged Skadi and directed her gaze in the same direction.

Coming down the street just beyond the Fair Towers was a large group of girls. They were singing softly, an ode to the Queen. The girls aged from six to sixteen with the older ones leading the younger ones, holding their hands and reassuring them that is was safe for them to be out in the streets, that the Queen was back and that they would get to see her.

Skadi took a deep breath and the clench in her jaw tipped Lexa that she was fighting tears. “Why are they here?” She asked softly to no one in particular.

Lozen, who was guarding the Queen herself until she found some personal guards she deemed acceptable, answered “The same reason I am, highness, because you are.”

As the group grew closer one of the older girls realized that it was the Queen who was outside and walking towards them. She froze in place for a second before suddenly shouting and reorganizing the girls to the sides of the road with their heads bowed in respect.

Skadi picked up her pace and all of her friends followed closely. As they approached the group the girls called out to her “Long live the Queen!” They shouted together in an obviously rehearsed chorus.

Skadi smiled a genuine smile and Clarke thought how beautiful this young woman really was. As Clarke leaned over to whisper something in Octavia’s ear she noticed her friend has tensed and was intently studying something in a nearby alley. Clarke followed Octavia’s gaze and was shocked when with a flick of her wrist and a very pointed glare Octavia sent two Ice warriors into the alley to investigate.

Clarke whispered, “Since when do the Ice Soldiers take orders from you?” She didn’t mean it as an insult, she was genuinely curious.

Octavia spared her a glance and Clarke saw her raised eyebrow and annoyed smirk, “I am Octavia Kom Trikru, second to the legendary Indra Kom Trikru, and personal guard of Heda Kom Skaikru. Everyone listens to me, Clarke.”
Clarke’s jaw dropped open a bit as she saw the truth in her friend’s words. “Respect, O. Seriously.” She squeezed the dark haired girl’s hand and then stepped slightly away from her giving her the space she needed in case she had to spring into action.

Lexa had taken in the entire interaction out of the corner of her eye and when the Ice guards returned form the alley giving the all clear to Octavia she let out the breath she had been holding and her hand released it’s grip on the dagger at her waist. She glanced around and saw Rock and Zora doing the same thing and Lincoln, who had closed the gap between them, moving a few steps further away.

Clarke reached for her wife’s hand and when their eyes met Lexa smiled and nodded to Clarke silently letting her know all was quiet. They moved forward together to stand next to Skadi.

“Hello children,” Skadi addressed the ragtag group before her. “You have come to greet your Queen?” As they all murmured yes she smiled, “Come then, you must have questions. What would you like to know young ones?”

“Reine,” A young girl with blond pigtails called out to Skadi, “Is it true that we can go to school now?” The little one was almost shaking in her excitement to meet the Queen.

Skadi smiled warmly at her, “Yes young one. You can all go to school now. I will make sure of it.”

Another little girl piped up, “My daddy says he doesn’t have to worry about me anymore because you will worry about me for him. Do you really worry about us Reine?”

“Little one, I worry about all of you, and I make rules and laws to protect you. In fact, I have a whole army ready to protect you, and I have friends like Heda Lexa who will protect you even if you travel to visit the other clans.” Skadi smiled and Lexa gave the child her best serious face and nodded in agreement to the queen. Clarke giggled and poked Lexa’s side until Heda smiled too. The little girl broke into a smile that showed her missing front teeth and laughed happily as Lexa smiled at her.

One of the older girls cleared her throat and nervously spoke, “Reine…”

Skadi looked at her and waited. The girl was beautiful, she had large blue eyes and hair as blonde as the Queen’s. She had high cheekbones and bow shaped red lips. The only blemish to her beauty was a long red scar running down the left side of her face starting just under her bright blue eye and running down to her chin. Skadi saw the girl turn her head away to present Skadi with only the unscarred right side and she felt the nervousness from the girl. She stepped forward and took the girl’s hand in hers. “What is your name?” She asked.

“Agnès.” The girl replied.

“Speak true, Agnès.” The Queen ordered softly and reached up to cup the girl’s face and turn her head so she was looking directly at the Queen. Skadi stroked the scar on the girl’s face and looked at her with love, “we all have our scars, Agnès, do not be ashamed, that which doesn’t kill us makes us stronger.”

The girl nodded firmly and found her courage, “Reine, is it true that we can be soldiers? I wish to fight for you, to protect the people.” The girl’s voice rose with passion and a younger girl of about twelve years spoke up suddenly from the other side of the street.

“Reine, she’s real good too! She protected us from the…” A sharp look from Agnès caused the girl to snap her mouth shut but it was too late, another young voice from the far side of the group sang out.
“Yeah, one time she even fought against three of them at once!” And then yet another voice from that girl’s left.

“And she woulda beat them all, but I fell and she had to pick me up and protect me while she was fighting them.” The little girl began to cry. “It’s my fault they cut her face.”

“Taisez vous!” Angèle called out for all of them to be quiet in the old language of the Ice people and Skadi raised an eyebrow. Most of her people spoke Trigedasleng or English in the city, especially since Alain and his partnership with Yor. She was surprised to hear girls so young using their mother tongue. She was also both concerned and impressed with the tale she was hearing.

“Where have you girl’s come from?” Skadi asked softly. “How do you all know each other?”

“Vanier. We all live…” The girl who had started to answer snapped her mouth shut as Angèle gave her a look.

Lozen stepped forward, “To answer your question Angèle, you can be a soldier. But you will never be a soldier if you do not obey your Queen.” Lozen was snarling at the girl, Lexa knew she was testing her. “Queen Skadi said ‘speak true’. You will answer her questions or I will see that you never serve in her army.”

Angèle looked the general up and down and met her glare directly. Skadi was impressed. The girl spoke, her voice betrayed a waiver but she was much more clam than most would have been when on the receiving end of Lozen’s gaze.

“We all live in the same quarter of the city. Most of us live together in what used to be my parent’s building. My parents are dead and so are most of theirs.” She gestured to the girls around her. “I took them in as I found them, before they could be taken away….” Her voice trailed off and her face grew dark, she took a breath and continued.

“The rest of the girls live in the same neighbourhood and their parents help us whenever they can. It has been hard under the false king. We were always living in fear. I told them they would be safe now that the Queen had retuned and they insisted on seeing you themselves. I never dreamed we would be able to speak to you Reine. We thought we would camp outside until we caught a glimpse and then go back home.” Angèle finished speaking and lowered her head respectfully to the Queen.

Suddenly Lozen pulled out her longswords and more than a few of the girl’s squealed, frightened. The Queen assured them everything was OK and no one would hurt them. Lozen handed one of her swords to Angèle and held the other out in front of her.

“You can fight?” She challenged.

“I can!” The girl with the scar took the offered sword and Lexa could tell by the way she held it that the girl was not lying.

Angèle moved into position and Lozen motioned for her to attack. She moved with speed and precision. Lozen blocked her easily and countered. Lexa watched with interest, she could tell the girl had skill and natural talent, but she saw that she lacked training and discipline. Her foot work was all wrong and she had no patience. Lexa inadvertently thought of Octavia when she had first begun to train.

The girl blocked the general and came back at her. Lozen blocked the first volley and intentionally left her left side exposed, when the girl eagerly went for it Lozen grinned as she deflected the attack easily and then spun and knocked the girl’s feet from under her. Angèle went down and as Lozen
stood grinning over her she was suddenly attacked by twenty little girls.

Skadi could not hold in her laughter and as soon as the Queen started Zora, Rock, Lexa and Clarke all started laughing. Lexa could see Octavia trying to concentrate on watching the perimeter but also shaking with laughter at being the fearless general being brought down by an angry mob of little girl’s in pigtails.

Skadi could not catch her breath and waved her hand at Lexa asking for help.

Lexa wiped the grin off of her face and stepped forward, “Hod up!” She shouted and Clarke was pretty sure that everyone in a two block radius stopped what they were doing immediately.

The girls froze and the embarrassed but still grinning Lozen climbed out of the pile she was in. When one fiery little eight year old stepped up to Lozen and kicked her soundly in the shin Lexa reached out and lifted the girl into the air by the back of her shirt. The girl kicked and squirmed as she rose off of the ground.

She turned the girl so she was looking directly at her and as the child’s eyes grew as large as saucers when she saw who had her. Lexa asked, “Do you know who I am, little one?” The little girl’s mouth dropped open and she stopped her struggle and shook her head yes.

“How am I?” Lexa asked very seriously.

“Heda Kom Trikru.” The girl spoke also very serious.

“Correct. And what did I say to you?” Lexa asked slowly.

“How up!” The girl answered and then tears formed in her eyes. “Are you gonna kill me because I did not follow your order?” She asked and sniffed as tears began to fall. “She kicked our Angèle down and we have to protect each other!” The girl defended herself through her tears.

Clarke was about to yell at her wife for making the little girl cry when Lexa did something none of them expected. Heda knelt on one knee and pulled the girl into a hug, sitting her on the lap of her raised thigh. The girl buried her face into Heda’s neck and cried some more. “I am not going to kill you young one. No one is going to kill you. I promise.” Lexa stroked the girl’s hair and calmed her.

Angèle got to her feet and looked embarrassed. “General Lozen, my apologies. They are very protective of me.”

“And you of them?” The general asked.

“How?” Was the girl’s reply.

“If you were to be gone for a long time, training or working, what would become of them? Who would take care of them?” Lozen questioned.

Understanding dawned on her face and Angèle looked around at the faces of the girls. Skadi saw disappointment in her eyes that quickly turned to resolve. “I will always take care of them. If that means I cannot be a soldier, so be it.” She turned to the Queen and bowed, “I will serve you in another way my Queen.”

Lozen looked satisfied and nodded to Skadi. The Queen approached and laid a hand upon the girl’s shoulder, “Angèle, report to the palace in three days time. You will begin to train as a warrior. I will see to it that the children are well looked after. Your loyalty and diligence has impressed me. If you pass the training, you will be one of my soldiers.” Skadi smiled at the now glowing girl who
immediately took a knee and bowed her head thanking the Queen.

Lexa stepped forward and motioned for the girl to stand. “Angèle, if you pass the training and become a warrior of the Ice Nation consider asking your Queen for permission to visit TriKru territory and train to be a Trigeda gona. I see your bravery and you have talent. I would see you trained with the best of my warriors.” Angèle could only nod as her voice refused to work in awe of the Commander standing before her. Clarke fell in love with Lexa all over again watching her with the girls that day.

Skadi spoke with the girls a little longer and then turned and instructed one of her guards to take the youngsters to the palace and see them all fed a proper breakfast and then have them escorted safely back home. As they were getting ready to leave she stopped in front of Angèle.

“In three days you will come to the palace. I will be waiting. You will tell me what you meant by ‘taken away’ and you will tell me all that you have seen in my absence and explain who gave you that scar.” When the girl flinched again at the mention of it Skadi narrowed her eyes, “I have already told you, do not be ashamed.” She gestured to the women at her back, “We all have worse scars than that young one. To be a warrior is to carry scars, on your skin, in your heart, and deep in your very soul. Wear that one with pride for you got it protecting those you love.”

Behind her Zora stepped forward and looked at the girl. “I am Zora, Mayor of York. I fight better than most men, I am feared and celebrated in equal amounts.” Zora tapped her cheek where a thin but visible scar started then she ran her hand up into her hair, that had grown much longer than she liked while they had been chasing Yor. “This one goes all the way to the back of my head.” She grinned and pulled her left sleeve up revealing a large white scar covering half of her forearm. Angèle’s mouth dropped open. Zora then turned and pulled her shirt up over her lower back, there were several scars competing for space crisscrossing over her back and the girl nodded her understanding.

“Wear it with pride young one, it suits you, and takes away nothing from your beauty,” Angèle could only nod and grin but the leaders could see the confidence Zora had just given the girl in the gleam of her eye and the subtle straightening of her spine.

Angèle swore to the Queen that she would be in the palace in three days time and then Skadi bade the group goodbye. She thanked them for coming to see her and she promised to visit them soon. As her guard led the youngsters toward the palace for breakfast they shouted “Je t’aime Reine!” and Skadi’s smile was so bright that Clarke thought it rivalled the sun.

“I love you too, young ones.” The Queen replied and then she led her friends into the market in search of her favourite food.

“Bagel?” Lexa asked, tongue twisted around the word that was strange to her.

“Yes, Lexa. Bagel. It is a round bread and it is so delicious.” Skadi smiled and excitedly pointed down an alley. “The shop used to be down here.”

Rock stepped closer to Lexa and whispered, “Bagel, bagel, bagel. That’s all we heard from her during our exile, ‘I want a bagel’. They better be good.” Lexa snorted with laughter and Rock gave her a wry grin.

Skadi led them down the alley and as they approached the shop in question the Queen called out. “It’s still here!” She picked up her pace and the little old man who owned the shop saw her coming.
“Reine! You have returned.” He smiled warmly at her as he bowed respectfully. “Your favourite is ready for you, enough for Heda Lexa and all of your friends.” He smiled at all of the women and gestured for them to go inside.

Clarke sighed in delight as she tasted each of the different flavours offered by the small shop. All of the women ate two or three bagels and found themselves quite full. Skadi smiled happily and kissed the old man and his wife on both cheeks. She was glad they had survived Alain and she was glad they still made amazing bagels.

When they had finished eating Skadi took them around the market. She stopped and spoke with many people and smiled and waved at many more. On the way back to her palace she walked the group down and along the canal. They crossed a bridge of stepping stones and made their way back by a different route.

There were several tailor shops on one street and as they passed the tailors came out and offered to make clothes for all of them. Lexa acknowledged them and promised to visit for a fitting on her next trip to Otta. Clarke eyed the shops and squeezed Lexa’s hand. “For real Lex. I would love to have some clothes made.” Lexa smiled at her wife and nodded a promise.

They turned down a maze of alleys and the Queen greeted people down every street. There were inns, private residences and some random shops. The next corner they turned was home to several smiths. The alley started with a bladesmith and Lexa and Zora both smiled and looked over the daggers and swords.

There were several silver and goldsmiths and as they passed one shop Lexa and Octavia shared a glance that made Clarke peer inside. There was a man inside, she could make out his shape. She couldn’t see him entirely but she could tell that he was very well built and had short cropped hair and a clean shaven face. She wondered who he was and why he piqued their curiosity.

The far end of the alley had several blacksmith shops and the clanging of metal and the smell of hot ore filled the air. There were people having horses shoed, people with various tools and weapons having them forged or repaired. It was quite busy for such an early hour and Lexa explained that most people preferred to visit the smiths early before the afternoon heat added to the smiths fires. Clarke took in the sights and the people all greeted the young leaders with enthusiasm.

After the smith’s alley Skadi led the group back towards her palace and as they were passing through a residential street it happened. To Clarke it seemed almost slow motion. Lincoln shouted something in Tridedal and before Clarke could even try and translate in her head Octavia slammed into her and tackled her to the ground. She saw Lincoln step in front of Lexa and two Ice warriors surround the Queen. Rock’s guards formed a wall in front of their leader and Zora, sword in hand ready to fight found herself behind two of her loyal archers.

Lozen shouted an order a split second after Lincoln sounded his warning and out of nowhere five young women with ice blue blades appeared. Two had come from the rooftops, two shed coats and emerged from the pedestrian traffic, and one more burst forth from an alleyway.

They were the elite members of a Royal Guard that Lozen had been putting together. They wore distinctive uniforms and carried weapons made from the same ice blue steel as the Queen. They were to be her protectors and Lozen was seeing to their training personally. She had been consulting with Indra over the past few days and had learned a lot from Heda’s general. Lozen was going to make
sure the Royal Guards had the best training and could protect the Queen no matter what.

Two large men with long beards emerged from the alley as soon as they knew they had been spotted. One had an arrow nocked and he fired toward the Queen. The second man flung a dagger in Heda’s direction.

They were far too late. The guards in front of the Queen had raised their shields and the arrow thudded harmlessly into the wooden armour. The dagger was flung in Lincoln’s direct line of sight and he easily batted it from the air with his sword.

No sooner had the weapons been unleashed than the men were beset upon by the five women from the Royal Guard. They crossed the alley with lightning speed and before the men could launch a second wave ice blue arrows slammed into the shoulders of both men and mere seconds later ice blue blades were at their throats.

Right behind the blue sword wielding warriors came a group of soldiers from the Ice army. They secured the area and as soon as the all clear was called Skadi ordered her guards aside and strode over to the attackers. “Speak true, those arrows are poisoned.” She nodded to the royal guards and the women leaned over and yanked the arrows very painfully from the men’s flesh.

“We will tell you nothing!” One of the men exclaimed and it earned him a palm squeezing over the open wound in his shoulder. He cried out in pain and glared at the Queen.

“Who are you and who sent you? I ask only once, you have ten seconds to answer. If you answer you will receive the antidote, if you do not you will die painfully as the poison begins to shut down your organs one by one.” Skadi raised her eyebrow and cocked her head to the side, she waited five seconds, “You have five seconds left.” Her voice was flat and showed no emotion. The archer gave in first.

“Queen forgive us. We are hired men of the house of Brazeau. The head of the house wishes to be rid of you and take Alain’s throne.” The man looked fearfully at the Ice Queen. “Please, Queen the antidote.”

The other man growled about the first being a coward and a traitor and the Queen nodded to one of the guards. The guard took a small vile from a pocket in her uniform and gave it to the man who had talked. The other man soon began to writhe in pain. The Queen looked at him emotionless and gestured for him to be taken from her sight. He was dragged away to die and the Queen fixed her glare on the remaining man.

“Brazeau…” The Queen arched her eyebrow. “The brothel owner?” She laughed. “He believes he can dethrone the Queen? What makes him think he can rule my people?”

The man trembled at the woman’s icy glare, “He did well under Alain. His business became legal and he expanded. He gained riches and power. He is an arrogant man, and the power Alain afforded him went to his head. He thinks you and Heda are the only one’s standing in the way of absolute power.”

Lexa stepped forward. “Where is he?” She was tired of chasing tyrants and really hoped this one wasn’t on the run.

“In his largest club, The House of Ill Repute. It was his most successful under Alain. It is large and well guarded. His arrogance does not allow him to fear you. He does not think the army will be loyal to the Queen and he believes his guards can keep him safe.” The man’s eyes lit up. “I can take you there, I will lead you. Spare my life great Heda, I will lead you to Brazeau.”
Lexa looked at the snivelling man in front of her, “I would have killed you already but it is not my decision. If you must beg for your life, beg to your Queen.”

The man turned to the Queen and saw Ice in her eyes. He knew by looking at her that Brazeau was a fool and that her army was indeed hers. He thought with fear that Heda and the Queen might be able to fight through all of Brazeau’s guards themselves. He had never been more afraid and yet he was glad he had seen his Queen for her true self before he died. He found something deep inside himself and looked at his Queen.

“Reine, I will not beg. I know that punishment for my crimes is death. I was a fool to follow such a man and I see the truth now. You are the true Queen of the Ice Nation. You are my Queen. He bowed deeply, still on his knees. When he raised his head he asked his Queen for one thing. “Reine, please. I do not deserve it but if you would be the one to take my life I would feel honoured.”

Skadi eyed him and slowly nodded. She had seen the man go from a traitorous coward to believing in her and finding the courage to face death. She pulled out her ice blue sword and the man gasped in awe at the sight of her raising it above his head. His eyes filled with tears and the last words from his mouth were “Long Live the Queen.” Skadi stepped away and wiped the blood from her sword. She looked at Lexa and sighed.

“I had planned for a quiet morning but how do you feel about a quick massacre before lunch?” She grinned as Lexa laughed. Rock and Zora joined in and Clarke grimaced.

“Shouldn’t we send the army?” The Sky Heda asked not wanting to see any of her friends hurt.

“Do not worry Clarke, the army is coming with us.” Skadi squeezed her hand and stepped closer. She lowered her voice so only Clarke could hear her and spoke with sincerity to her friend, “Have Octavia and some of my guards escort you back to the palace Clarke, you do not need to join this fight. It will be over very quickly.”

“No, Skadi. If you are all going I am going with you. What if someone needs a healer?” Clarke set her jaw and steeled her frame. “When do we go?” She asked.

“Now.” The Queen replied and turned to Lozen. “How soon can a platoon of your soldiers meet us there?”

Lozen grinned, “I have already dispatched messengers your highness. They will be moving out as we speak.”

Skadi nodded and surrounded by the soldiers and guards in the alley they moved quickly back to the palace. They were greeted by more guards and soldiers with horses at the ready and they mounted and rode out quickly. The House of Ill Repute was on the edge of the city and could be reached on horseback in around fifteen minutes.

As they rode Lozen briefed them. Brazeau was a small time pimp and brother owner who had been arrested and punished several times before Alain took control. After the fall of the royal family Alain had changed so many laws and his way of rule was conducive for lowlifes like Brazeau to flourish. His business was no longer illegal and the rule of Alain and his partnership with Yor attracted plenty of the kind of patrons Brazeau’s business needed to succeed.

Brazeau was known to kidnap and force women to work in his brothels and to abuse them as well. The House of Ill Repute was huge. It was in a beautiful old building that had survived the years after
the bombs. It was made of stone and in this season it would be half covered in creeping vines. By summer’s end the entire wall would be green. Lozen explained that before the bombs it had been a place of learning. After the bombs it had served many purposes and Lozen assured them that it would continue to serve many purposes after they cleared out the vermin currently infesting it.

As they approached the building Skadi briefed them. “We will follow Lozen’s troops in and sweep through. Anyone who surrenders immediately will be tied up and left for justice at a later time. Anyone who fights us dies. The women are not to be harmed, nor any children that may be in the building. Any questions”

“What kind of resistance do you expect?” Rock was asking, eyeing the building and going over the strategy in her head.

“If I may, my Queen?” When Skadi nodded assent Lozen continued, “Not much. They will be poorly trained thugs who work for an even bigger thug. We will cut them down quickly, but we will use caution. We all know that even a poorly trained thug can get lucky sometimes. I plan on all of my soldiers attending the feast tonight.” With that the general nodded and rode off to brief her troops.

When she was gone Lexa asked, “Why so anxious to clean this one up so quickly? Do you think he will send more men to try and kill you? Were you worried about the feast? Or is this a show of strength, both against your enemies and for your people?”

Skadi thought before answering, “Both. I want my people to know that I mean what I say and that clean up is already underway. I also want my enemies to see that I mean business, and I certainly do not want bumbling fools bothering my guards tonight. They will be on high alert for real threats and don’t need men like those in Brazeau’s employ distracting them.”

“I was hoping for a fun and peaceful day with you all. Otta has so much to see and do. Perhaps another time will come for us to gather here in peace.” Skadi smiled at them and Zora laughed loudly.

“This is the best thing I could have asked for, Ska! I get to clear out a brothel! Kick some bad guy ass and save lots of pretty girls! Awesome!” Everyone laughed at Zora except Rock who narrowed her eyes.

“The only pretty girls you need to be worried about are right here in front of you dear. Forget that and you’ll find yourself fighting someone far more skilled than these criminals.” Rock drew her sword and held it’s weight in her hands as she looked pointedly at her partner. “Got it, hero?”

Zora gulped and nodded looking slightly nervous. The banter between them eased Clarke’s growing sense of foreboding and she let herself relax slightly. She looked at Lexa on her left and Octavia on her right and took a deep breath, she prepared herself to once again ride into battle.

The ride to the brothel was uneventful and when they arrived they saw the platoon of soldiers Lozen had sent was already there. They were, by design, all women mostly soldiers trained during Skadi’s absence. Lozen left her position by the Queen’s side and rode forward to lead them.

When Lozen gave the signal the soldiers moved forward as one, they marched all the way to the large wooden door on horseback and then the general gave the signal to dismount. They stood waiting for the next order as Lozen fiddled with something. She attached something to the door and quickly retreated. Clarke realized it was an explosive of some kind and covered her ears. Octavia did the same.
The rest just watched with interest as the general waited for the doors to blow. When it went off Clarke smirked at the shocked look on the faces of most of the grounders. She and Octavia were the only two who didn’t require a few seconds to regain their bearings.

Lozen was the first through the door once it was blown. Her troops followed her immediately and the chaos inside was multiplied as soldiers slipped inside, swords drawn.

Inside the building Brazeau had been lounging in the main room when one of his guards interrupted. He informed him that a group of soldiers from the palace were approaching. Brazeau was an arrogant and foolish man, he laughed and incorrectly assumed his assassination attempt had been successful. “They are here to avenge their queen! We will cut them down as easily as we cut her down.”

The guard looked around nervously and cleared his throat. He lowered his voice and shifted back and forth on his feet as he spoke, “The Queen rides with them, sir” He regretfully informed his leader.

“Impossible!” Brazeau raged, he leapt from his seat swinging his hand toward the man who had delivered the message. His backhand connected with the guard’s cheek solidly and the man’s head snapped back with the impact. The guard quickly backed away holding his face, and Brazeau stormed upstairs to view the situation from his window.

By the time he looked out the army was already at his door. He scanned the crowd quickly and realized that the Queen and the Heda were both there. He also picked Clarke out of the crowd, realizing that she must be the infamous Heda Kom Skaikru he licked his lips. He laughed and shouted to the guards present.

“The Queen is here! She brought a group of soldiers - but they are all women! Vargas men will not follow her, just as i said!” His guards laughed. “We will kill most of them but if we can keep some alive they will make us a lot of money as whores. And the blonde sky girl, she is mine! Keep her alive!”

After briefing his guards and sending them to lead the men he made his way downstairs to watch the fray. He shouted in encouragement to his men, “Men, The Queen is here and we will kill her ourselves! Only women soldiers follow her, Varga’s army will soon follow me!”

As his men laughed and cheered Brazeau’s grave error of ignoring the potential army of women he had kept enslaved in his brothel came back to bite him in the ass. He certainly did not expect what happened next.

One of his most recent acquisitions, a young woman whose father had disobeyed an order from Alain to burn a village while the people slept, jumped to her feet and shouted, “The Queen has come for us! Rise my sisters!” She grabbed a sword from a guard who looked at her in shock that she had even dared to speak. His shock soon turned to pain as she shoved the sword into his gut.

Other women all around the house saw her and joined the attack. They peppered Brazeau’s guards with beer mugs and other dishes, whatever they could get their hands on they threw at the men. They grabbed unattended weapons, and when they couldn’t they used makeshift ones. Whatever was in arms reach the women grabbed for and began to beat the guards with.

When the door blew and Lozen slipped inside with her sword thirsty for blood she was greeted by a sight she did not expect. The women were fighting back and Lozen was proud and shocked all at
once. It caused the battle hardened general to do something she had never done before in combat, she hesitated just a few seconds taking in the scene before her. She quickly regained her composure and started shouting orders to her soldiers.

As her soldiers moved in to help the women who were fighting as best they could against their captors Lozen scanned the room quickly. Her Queen and her Heda would be entering soon and she had to eliminate any threats. She saw Brazeau retreating up the stairs and she saw the five archers he was gesturing wildly to.

They were unprepared, like fools, she thought. The archers were just now grabbing their bows and running to get into position along the railing on the second floor. There were only five of them and as Lozen felt her Queen enter the room she reacted quickly. “Archers, on the second floor my queen.”

Skadi, Lexa, Rock, Zora and Clarke all reacted immediately. A bullet entered the right shoulder of one of the archers and as he fell forward over the railing four daggers slammed into the remaining archers taking them all out at once.

Brazeau looked down from the second floor landing and surveyed the scene. His men were quickly and mercilessly being cut down by the Queen’s soldiers. His archers had just been taken out by skill he had never seen in any soldier. He felt fear creep up from his feet, steal into his belly and pool there before climbing his spine and gripping his heart. He ran, hoping to reach the rear exit before the deadly Queen found him.

The fight on the main floor was over quite quickly. Brazeau’s men were no match for the angry women they had held captive combined with Lozen’s highly trained force. Skadi had planned on offering a stay of execution to the men working there if they surrendered and swore to follow her, but she changed her mind. When she saw the fury and the pain in the eyes of the women who were now fighting for their freedom she decided to let them choose. If they wanted to kill every single guard in the place she would not deny them.

Lexa and Clarke stood side by side and watched the battle. They didn’t have to join the fight, it was well under control. Lexa nodded when Octavia requested to lead a small group of soldiers to clear the rest of the rooms on the floor. Lozen lead a group up to the second floor to do the same.

Skadi stood regally and waited. Zora approached and whispered, “Ska… the ringleader took off. Why aren’t we following…? He went for the back door, if I grab my horse I’m sure I can…” She stopped when Skadi smiled and shook her head dismissing her friend’s concerns.

A few minutes later when all of his men were either dead or under arrest Brazeau himself was shoved forward into view of the Queen. Clarke looked up to see who had captured him but caught just a glimpse of a handsome face, broad muscular shoulders, and wide silver cuffs on his impressive biceps. She thought back to the smithy where Lexa had nodded to a man she didn’t know. She was sure this was the same person but once again she still didn’t get a good look at his face.

She did see the Queen’s sharp intake of breath when she saw him and Lexa smiled like she had won the lottery. Clarke was very curious about this mystery man.

Skadi had been expecting Varga to bring her the traitor as he had lead a small group to cover the rear of the building. When she saw someone else, she was surprised and more than pleased. His eyes met hers for only a second and she smiled at the face she hadn’t seen in years. He nodded at her and was gone. Varga stepped forward and forced Brazeau down the stairs to meet his fate.
Brazeau was killed quickly and any of his men who remained alive were taken by the soldiers. Skadi was left with over one hundred women, some bleeding and injured from the fight, some dying, but all free and all calling out to her.

Clarke quickly moved around the room helping those she could and comforting those she couldn’t. She was joined by several of Lozen’s soldiers and was pleased to see they all had training and basic skills to treat the wounded women.

Skadi stood looking at the group of women and sighed, she was at a loss. She had freed them, but now what. It was overwhelming to think of what they had been through and she knew there had to be follow up. It was no good to just swoop in and be a hero, killing the bad guys. The real work started now. How to help these women move on.

Rock stepped forward and whispered to her Queen. Skadi nodded and finally spoke. “I am your Queen. I am here to tell you that you are free.” A cheer rose from the women and many shouts of “Long live the Queen.” could be heard around the room.

“I also know that while freedom is important what happens next is perhaps even more so. I will not abandon you. Any of you who have families you wish to return to will be seen safely to their doors. Any of you who choose not to or have none to go home to will be provided for.” Skadi looked around her and stepped forward. She approached a young woman who looked just older than her, “What did you do before all of this” The Queen asked.

“I was training to be a teacher.” The woman answered. “When Alain took over and banned girls from going to school I secretly opened a school for girls in my neighbourhood. I taught them how to read and write. I was caught and my punishment was to be sent here.” The woman’s voice trembled as she said the last sentence. Skadi pulled her into an embrace.

“You skills will be needed. We have many who need to learn.” Skadi squeezed the woman’s hand and moved along asking more women the same. She found farmers, soldiers, painters, more teachers, a healer, and many other skills represented. A plan formed in her mind.

“I would like to give this building to you. I would see it used as a school once again. The girl’s who grew up under Alain’s rule haven’t had any schooling. There are many skills represented in this room. I would like to see you all train and teach this generation of girl’s. Teach them well and have them grow up strong. Many of them have no families and have been supporting each other, caring for each other.”

The Queen thought of Angèle and her band of survivors. “I will see to it that you have enough space and resources to house, feed, and clothe all of the girl’s who come to you. Do not decide now. Each of you must choose freely. If this building holds too many painful memories for you I will find another.” Skadi stopped speaking and looked down, emotion was overcoming her and when she looked back at the women tears were trailing down her face. “I am sorry this has happened to you, I beg your forgiveness and I promise I will not abandon you again.”

One young woman stepped forward, she had ben the one to start the rebellion. She still had the stolen sword gripped tightly in her hand and blood covered her clothes, and face. “Reine, I would be honoured to stay here and teach.” She dropped to one knee and bowed her head. “Long live the Queen.” She shouted and it was echoed all around the room by the other women who had survived the House of Ill Repute.

It was just past lunch when Skadi and her friends returned to the palace. The Queen led her friends to
the back of the palace to a small room that had large windows and the sun streaming in. There was a beautiful view of the river and the forest behind the palace and she gestured to the table that had been set for them. “Eat.” She instructed and all of them fell hungrily upon the food.

As they filled their bellies Lexa watched Skadi. She saw the frown on the Queen’s face and she reached over and paced one of the bagels Skadi loved so much onto the Queen’s plate. Skadi looked up out of her reverie and when she looked into Lexa’s piercing green eyes she smiled softly and nodded, picking up the bagel.

“You are doing what you can.” Lexa spoke softly. “The school is a good idea. It gives a safe home and a purpose to those women, and a safe home and education to the children it will house.”

Skadi thanked Lexa for her words and tried to shake off the dark thoughts that were crowding into her mind. She changed the topic to the evening activities. “Does anyone need anything for the celebration this evening? There are many clothes and tailors here in the palace. Anything you need will be provided.

Clarke looked up then and smiled. “I would love to see some options.” She replied and to her surprise Zora also piped up.

“Ska… I think I’ll see a tailor too.” When Skadi looked surprised Zora shrugged and glanced shyly at Rock. “I gotta look good to keep this one’s eyes from straying you know…”

Everyone laughed and Rock laid her hand lovingly on Zora’s cheek.

After lunch they all retired to their rooms and soon after an attendant came for Clarke to take her to see the royal tailor. Lexa smiled at her wife as she left with the woman, Octavia at her side. As soon as she was gone Lexa left too. She knocked on Zora’s door and the two grinned at each other as they headed off to see about their own outfits for the evening.

Clarke found herself whisked into a room with fabric draped everywhere, there were dresses, suits, and all kinds of shoes everywhere. She gasped at the beauty and glamour that surrounded her and squeezed Octavia’s hand. “Clarke?” She heard a familiar voice call to her.

“Mom!?” Clarke walked further into the room and found Abby standing with Cole, and curiously enough Rock’s general, Ford. “Mom! You look so beautiful!” Clarke moved forward and took in the sight of her mother in a long, sleeveless, prussian blue dress. It had tiny sequins sewn into it so it sparkled as she moved and Clarke found herself staring with her jaw open.

“Chancellor…. wow!” Octavia was openly staring appreciatively and whistled as Abby giggled at her.

The tailor spoke, she was a very old lady who sat with her spine very straight. “The Chancellor of the sky people will look like her former home tonight.” She made one final adjustment and stood back to admire her work. She nodded and Abby stepped down fro the small platform she had been standing on.

“How is all of this even possible?” Clarke wondered aloud as she looked around the room.

Abby answered, “I’ve been doing a lot of research and reading about the city and the Ice Nation. They weren’t affected by the bombs in the same way the area near Ton DC was. The closest bomb to land was over 300 miles from here. Over half of the people died from the fallout and the radiation over the first month and then the nuclear winter killed most of the survivors over the next year.
Those that were left were led by Skadi’s ancestors and they made their home here in Otta. Buildings, clothes, art, supplies, all of those things survived, whereas areas directly affected by the bombs were reduced to rubble and ruin. There are many resources here and we are lucky to have Skadi and the Ice Nation as allies. I have seen some old technology that I know Raven will want to visit and look at… but for now, how do I look?” Abby twirled and the dress sparkled.

Clarke smiled at her mother and Cole whistled at her. “Mom, you look absolutely amazing!” Clarke moved forward and hugged her mother tightly. Abby smiled into the embrace and squeezed a little harder than necessary almost needing to feel the strength in her daughters bones to reassure her that Clarke was indeed OK after everything that had happened.

The tailor moved on to Cole and Clarke watched with a little envy at Lexa for having seen this gorgeous woman naked. Ford gave Clarke a very specific look when she caught the Sky Heda staring at Cole’s long legs. Cole’s dress was a deep burnt orange colour that brought out the warm undertones of her skin and it stopped just above her knees, showing off her perfectly formed calves. She seemed to be glowing as Clarke watched her clip on a silver cuff around her toned upper arm. The cuff had a beautiful engraving of a phoenix and Clarke asked her about it.

“It is a symbol of my city, my clan, my people. The phoenix was a mythological bird that could be consumed by fire and rise again from the ashes.” Cole smiled at Clarke and reached for her hand. “Come Sky Heda.” She pulled Clarke over to a table in the corner where Abby was already being fitted with her own cuff.

Clarke looked at Abby’s and noticed it was engraved with a circle that was half sun and half moon, the circle was surrounded by several tiny stars. Octavia ran her finger over it and smiled. “That’s what Lincoln was doing yesterday!” She exclaimed. When Clarke looked at her questioning she explained, “He designed this. He was fiddling around with several designs and he and Heda Lexa looked over then at lunchtime.” She smiled and Clarke and shrugged, ‘He’s more than just a pretty face, Clarke.” The two girls laughed.

Cole picked up a second cuff that matched Abby’s and handed it to Clarke. “All of the “royal families” will wear one this evening. Here in Otta, Skadi is the Queen. I lead my people with a different title but Skadi deems all leaders her equal, all royalty in among their people. It is an honour to wear one of these cuffs Clarke… may I call you Clarke?” As Cole looked at her Clarke once again thought how very beautiful this woman was. Her large brown eyes had such depth, and such a spark of life in them and Clarke just nodded and smiled.

Ford stepped forward and picked up another cuff, “This one is for Rock,” she pointed to two larger ones with the same symbol, “Cade and Dal.” Then she picked up an equally large cuff with a different symbol, but one Clarke also recognized.

“That one is for Zora.” Clarke said and Ford smiled at her.

“She’s made of gold, but the others are silver.” Clarke turned it in her hands and gasped, “Lexa.” The gold cuff was engraved very delicately with a large tree. The leaves of the tree were decorated with tiny gems that sparkled when the light caught them. It was understated and yet breathtaking. “But why is this symbol different than the symbol of Heda” Clarke looked at Ford with curiosity, knowing the woman would understand what she meant.

“The circle of Heda is Lexa’s symbol. A symbol of power, to show who houses the soul of the Trikru Commander. This is a symbol of the Trikru people. Heda Lexa will wear it with pride.” Ford
smiled at Clarke and reached for her hand. “Sky Heda, thank you for your part in bringing back my people’s leader and in capturing Yor.” Ford was so sincere that Clarke blushed and squeezed her hand.

“I didn’t really do anything.” She insisted but Cole cut her off.

“Sky Heda, you were next to Heda Lexa when she brought down the mountain. That was the beginning of the end for Yor and Alain. You have played a very large part in all of this, do not doubt your importance.” Cole reached out and pulled a surprised Clarke into a fierce embrace.

As she pulled her close she whispered, “Clarke, you have thawed Lexa’s heart and healed her soul, she is a better leader with you at her side and every clan that follows her owes you a debt of immense gratitude.”

Clarke returned the embrace and when she pulled away she kept Cole’s hand in her left and reached for Ford’s hand with her right. “Am I correct in assuming you two are together?” she asked.

Ford answered quickly, “Cole is the leader of the Lanta Clan, I’m just a general. I would never presume to…”

Cole cut her off, “Yes.” She looked at Ford who blushed and smiled shyly at Cole’s proclamation.

“Tell Rock, she’ll work something out if you want to be together.” Clarke smiled at both women. Ford opened her mouth to speak but words failed her, she frowned and looked away.

“Ford feels such loyalty to Rock and Cade, and to her people. She wants to be there for Rock’s return… I hope she changes her mind and comes to Lanta with me, but she already knows that. It is her choice, I will not beg…” The last sentence was spoken with mirth and the grin on Cole’s face that caused a deep blush on Ford’s alerted Clarke that is was a private joke, most likely sexual in nature. Clarke blushed for Ford and giggled.

“Clarke, sweetie, you really do embarrass easily. No wonder Lexa loves to do it.” Abby laughed at the two girls embarrassment and Cole and Octavia joined her. Just then the tailor called out for the Sky Heda to go to her and Clarke happily moved over to the other side of the room.

Clarke’s dress was black. It was covered in small jewels so it sparkled like Abby’s but the cut was quite different. It hugged her body and ended above her knees. It was a younger and definitely sexier dress than Abby’s and it had a plunging neckline that showed the Sky girl’s cleavage. Cole whistled at her while her mom smiled proudly and Octavia grinned and gave a thumbs up.

Ford spoke up, “Heda Lexa is going to really really love this dress…” Clarke smiled at all of them and thanked the tailor with a soft embrace.

The old lady smiled at them kindly but then rushed them out of the room saying she still had several people to fit before the evening. Clarke was heading back to her room when Rock came looking for her.

“Clarke!” She called out. “I was hoping you would come with me. We can get ready together. I am quite sure Lexa and Zora will do the same.”

Clarke smiled and agreed. Rock looked at Octavia and smiled, “You need to get ready too Octavia. There are some very specific clothes for someone as important as Sky Heda’s personal guard. Lincoln has your clothes and his own suit and I believe he is waiting for you in your room. Spend the afternoon with him. Clarke is perfectly safe with me… and Indra already approved this so just
Rock smiled at Octavia’s huge grin and watched as Clarke pulled the girl in for a hug.

“See you there, O! I can’t wait to see what you’ll be wearing!”

“Yeah, me too!” Octavia joked and happily rushed off to find Lincoln.

Left alone Rock grabbed Clarke’s hand and pulled her in the direction of Skadi’s room. “Wait until you see Ska’s dress!”

When it was time to go Clarke felt a strange nervous sensation in her stomach. She was wearing the sexy, sparkly, black dress and her hair and make up were done as well. The look was completed with a pair of black high heels that she had practiced walking in all afternoon in Skadi’s room.

Rock was dressed in a tight, sleeveless, black, leather dress with a banded, halter neckline. It was gorgeous on her and she loved that the design reflected her people’s culture of leather biking clothes. Her silver arm cuff stood out against the black dress and shone. Her makeup was dark around her eyes making her green eyes stand out and her hair was pulled back from her face. She was stunning.

Skadi was ethereal. She had a flowing silver and ice blue gown covered in tiny white jewels. Parts of it were sheer and it dipped into a low V at her chest and hung perfectly from her thin waist down to the floor. It was sleeveless and she had an ice blue cuff on each arm. The jewels on her dress were meant to represent the snow and the winter for which her nation was known. The crown on her head was the same ice blue metal that her sword was forged from and her eyes were a matching icy blue. She had dark make up around her eyes that caused the blue of her eyes to appear even brighter than usual and her lips were painted red. For the finishing touch there were tiny sparkling jewels in her hair that was pulled back into a braid and then wrapped around into a loose bun.

As the three of them walked out of Skadi’s room the three guards forgot themselves for a moment and just stared at them. They quickly regained their senses when Rock cleared her throat and bowed to the Queen before turning to lead the way to the celebration.

Every person who they passed in the hallway stopped and stared before bowing respectfully and Rock grinned at Clarke and Skadi. “Ladies, we look hot!” She laughed and clasped hands with Clarke as they led the Queen to her party.

When they arrived Lozen greeted them at the door and whispered to Skadi. The Queen then turned to her friends with a smile, “I have to make an entrance” She laughed, “Would you mind going in first.” Clarke and Rock smiled and nodded they each squeezed one of the Queen’s hands in support and turned to enter the room.

Lexa and Zora were already in their seats and they both scrambled to their feet turning to face the door when they heard the announcement.

Lexa was dressed in soft black pants that fit her like a glove. She had combat boots shined to a mirror finish and a sleeveless white shirt with a collar. The outfit was finished with a back vest that buttoned at the front and had built in sheaths on the sides for her new ice blue daggers that had been a gift of the Ice Queen. Her gold arm cuff stood out against the outfit and the jewels embedded in it sparkled even in the low light of the large ballroom they were in.
Zora was decked out in a similar outfit but the cut was different. The shirt she wore was form fitting and had a low scooping neckline showing some of the ample cleavage the Mayor was blessed with. Her vest buttoned only to the underside of her breasts and the push up effect had already caused three soldiers to trip or walk into a wall while staring. Her swords were polished and her arm cuff shone against her tanned skin.

When Clarke and Rock walked in both Lexa and Zora stopped breathing. Lexa remembered when she was a young warrior in training. She thought back to the first time she and Carter had been sent into the ghost town of bunkers where she had found some of Clarke’s dowry gifts.

They had found a stack of perfectly preserved magazines in one. There were women on the cover and inside wearing beautiful dresses and walking on a red carpet. At the time she hadn’t understood what a movie star was but she knew Clarke looked like one tonight.

Zora reached for Lexa’s hand and whispered, “Lex…. pinch me or somethin’… am I dreaming….? Oh my God they look amazing!”

Lexa’s heart was beating too hard and she couldn’t find words to answer, all she could do was stare at her wife and fight back the tears that wanted to fall for how beautiful Clarke was.

Clarke and Rock strutted into the room holding each others hands. When they saw Lexa and Zora jump to their feet they both gasped.

“Wow! They look fantastic.” Rock breathed and Clarke tightened her grip on Rock’s hand.

“She always looks so amazing, but I’ve never seen her look sexier! And Zora…. wow! Just wow! Rock darling, you are going to have an enjoyable evening, aren’t you!”

Rock laughed at Clarke and smiled, “Actually, with her looking like that I’d say she is in for an enjoyable evening… apologies in advance, your room is next to ours and Zora is not quiet.” Rock grinned at Clarke and to her surprise the normally easily embarrassed Clarke didn’t blush.

“Don’t worry, I have a feeling Heda Lexa will be matching any sounds coming from your room with her own!” Clarke winked at her friend and they moved over to join the women they loved.

As Clarke moved toward her seat she was joined like a shadow by Octavia. Clarke looked her guard up and down and up again, “you look… I mean… you’re just… Octavia.. ohmygod!” Octavia smirked and winked at Clarke.

“What can I say, we grounders clean up good.” She gestured at Lincoln who was wearing a form fitting tuxedo jacket and a black shirt. He had a quiver of arrows on his back a bow slung casually over his shoulder and a sword hanging from his side. His skin tight black pants had daggers clipped on each thigh and his boots were polished much like his Heda’s.

Octavia had on a black dress to be reckoned with. It was tight and sleeveless. She had small throwing daggers sheathed to her forearms and a long sword on her back. The dress was long, all the way to the floor but had slits up either leg and when she walked you could see the garter holsters that held a gun in one and a dagger in the other. Her hair was braided in traditional Trikru twists and she had dark eyeliner around her eyes, making the green stand out in contrast.

Clarke approached the table and felt the weight of Lexa’s eyes on her. She felt a shiver of arousal run-through her as they locked eyes. Lexa looked like she wanted to eat Clarke alive and Clarke felt heat grow in her stomach and between her legs.

Lexa reached out for her hand and Clarke reached back. “Houmon…” Lexa’s voice was soft, but
thick with emotion. “You look… You are magnificent. I am honoured to be joined to you.” Lexa couldn’t take her eyes off of Clarke and as they sat in their seats Skadi’s entrance was announced.

“Lex…. watch the Queen baby, you can look at me all night.” Clarke leaned over and placed a soft kiss on Lexa’s cheek and then reached up and turned Lexa’s face toward the door where Skadi was entering the room.

Lexa unwillingly turned her gaze from her beautiful wife and then watched with pride as the Ice People welcomed their Queen. The room was decorated with cloth banners in purple and ice blue, there were fresh flowers and sweet smelling blossoms on every table and there was soft candlelight creating a lovely atmosphere.

There were hundreds of people dressed in their very best waiting to welcome the Queen. As she entered the room it fell silent for a full second as everyone drew in a collective breath at the beauty before them. Then the silence broke and cheers, whistles and praises filled the room. Skadi laughed and smiled as she made her way to the throne that was at the centre of Lexa’s table.

Children raced forward and presented her with flowers and everyone shouted their praise as the Queen majestically passed by. Clarke grabbed Lexa’s hand, “Isn’t she beautiful, Lex!?” Clarke’s eyes filled with tears watching the scene before her.

Lexa looked at Clarke once again, “She is…. but no one in this room rivals you, my love.” Lexa smiled a soft and gentle smile, “I love you Clarke.”

That soft smile and declaration of love earned her another soft kiss from Clarke and Lexa felt her heart beat faster again.

The evening went off without a hitch. Delicious food was served, wonderful music was played and people danced. Clarke felt like she was in a fairy tale like she had read when she was growing up on the Arc. After returning to the table from dancing she reached for her wife’s hand and squeezed.

“Lex, this is all so beautiful!” She whispered.

Lexa smiled at her sadly, “I’m sorry I can’t offer you things like this in Ton DC.” She shook her head, “Legends tell of the fine buildings and beautiful things that used to stand there, it was a place of power, much like Otta, a capital city.” Lexa looked wistful. “The bombs landed there and destroyed everything.”

“I know Lex. I read about the great cities while on the Arc. Ton DC was called Washington DC, it was the capital of a country the USA. If I remember correctly Otta was the capital of a country called Canada. The two countries were allies, I’m glad we are still allies with the people of Otta, and with Skadi.” Clarke smiled and continued.

“I don’t need fancy parties like this all the time Lex. I love our home and our village, although with the alliance so strong right now I feel that Ton DC will soon grow to be a city of it’s own. People are drawn to be close to you Heda.” Clarke teased her wife and smiled brightly.

“I think they just want to be close to the stars Clarke, if they come it will be to live nearer to you, my love.” Lexa looked very serious as she gazed into Clarke’s eyes. She leaned forward and her lips touched Clarke’s very soft ones. Lexa was rewarded with the taste of cherry.

When they broke the kiss Clarke couldn’t help but ask with a grin, “did you like the taste? Skadi had this lip gloss to make my lips shiny, and it tastes like cherries!” Clarke laughed again and Lexa
stared, completely smitten with the taste of her wife’s lips and the sound of her laughter.

After dinner and about an hour into the dancing Varga stood and gestured for the musicians to stop. When the hall fell silent he spoke, “Tonight we celebrate the return of our Queen. She has defeated the traitors that have plagued our people and restored justice to us all. Long live the Queen!” He turned and bowed to Skadi as his call was echoed by everyone gathered.

As the shouts of devotion died down Skadi rose. She looked so beautiful that some mouths hung open and not a breath was taken a she moved forward to thank Varga. She smiled and waved to the people who burst into a joyful and raucous round of applause, shouts, and laughter.

As the noise died down once again Skadi took a breath and spoke, “Thank you all for coming tonight. We have much work to do but we will prevail. The alliance with the thirteen clans will make us stronger and we will grow together.” She paused as more cheers rang through the hall and then she smiled and raised her hand to the musicians. She was about to tell them to resume playing when she caught movement out of the corner of her eye and when she saw who it was her breath caught in her throat. She turned to stare at the man who was striding down the middle of the hall coming directly toward her.

All eyes turned to the handsome man who Clarke recognized as the man from the smith and as the man who delivered Brazeau to Skadi earlier.

He was wearing a form fitting vest and slim trousers. He had polished combat boots like Lexa’s and he had a silver cuff on each arm. His face was cleanly shaven and his hair was cut short with a hard part on the right. He strode with confidence toward the Queen and Clarke leaned close to her wife and whispered, “Who is he, Lex?”

“Look closer, Clarke. You know him well.” Lexa’s smile was wide and happy as she watched the man with pride.

Clarke stared intently as he drew closer to Skadi and she knew his face was familiar but she couldn’t place him just yet. She realized in shock that the cuffs he wore on his arm had the Trikru tree engraved in them. She looked questioningly at Lexa one more time but her wife just nodded towards the man and smiled at Clarke.

Skadi smiled brightly as he approached. When he stopped in front of her and bowed she reached out and touched his face. “You shaved.” She smiled, “I missed this face.”

The man blushed and returned her smile. “I remembered that you hated my beard when we were young.” The Queen laughed and nodded her head.

“It could have hardly been called a beard back then Carter, but yes. I prefer to look at you this way, you have such a handsome jaw, it’s a shame to cover it.” She smiled again but was interrupted when one of the men sitting at a front table stood and walked forward demanding to know who this man was.

“Who dares to approach the Queen so informally?” He bellowed. Skadi recognized him as a self-important politician who she was intent on investigating to find out his part in Alain’s rule. She glared at him and when she opened her mouth to shut him up Carter squeezed her hand and shook his head indicating he wanted to take care of it.

Carter turned to the man and puffed out his already impressive chest, “I am Carter, son of Heda
Sasha Kom Trikru.” Clarke’s jaw dropped and Lexa stifled a giggle at her wife’s reaction.

Carter continued addressing the man, he drew his sword as he spoke, “I am royalty to the Trigeda people,” he flexed his arms showing his cuffs and seeing the same tree that adorned Lexa’s cuff was enough to shut the man’s mouth and force him back to his seat. Carter continued, addressing everyone now. “I am also one of Heda’s deadliest warriors and I dare anyone to step forward in challenge of my right to address your Queen.”

When the hall fell silent he turned and glared around the room, his body language exuding strength and power. Satisfied that none were coming forward he turned back to Skadi.

“Riene, Queen Skadi, Ska….” He smiled at her. “Clarke of the Sky People has shared many of her people’s traditions with me. Many of those traditions are left over from before the bombs.” He turned and looked at Clarke and smiled at the still shocked look on her face, he winked at her and then looked back at his love.

“I find many of their traditions foolish and unsuited to today’s ground, but there is one that I liked, it moved me.” He stepped back and reached into his pocket. He pulled out a small and delicately carved box and Clarke, Abby and Octavia almost swooned knowing what was coming. Kane looked on approvingly as the young man took a knee in front of Skadi. Kane had coached him on the ritual and felt oddly like a proud papa.

“Skadi, Queen of the Ice Nation, I have loved you since we were children. I would stand by your side and protect you with my sword and my life. I would comfort you and give you what strength I have. I would help you be strong so you can lead your people well. I would do all of this if you would have me as yours. I will love you until my spirit leaves my body Skadi. I am the son of a Heda, and you are a Queen. My people will only accept one kind of union between us, but I would have no other. In my heart I have always been bound to you. Will you be joined to me in an unbreakable union, knowing all that union entails?” Carter opened the small box and held out a simple yet breathtaking ring. It was a band of silver that had been tinted in the ice blue colour of Skadi’s weapons and it housed a sparkling diamond in the middle.

Skadi felt moisture on her cheeks and realized that she was crying. She looked down at the handsome man who held a ring up to her. She took the ring from it’s box and Carter reached for her hand. He took the ring from her and placed it on her finger before placing a kiss on the back of her hand.

She grasped his hand tightly and pulled him to his feet. She ran her hand over his smooth cheek and pulled him into a kiss. It was full of love and passion and Clarke worriedly leaned towards Lexa, “I thought they couldn’t kiss before a union!?” Lexa smiled at Clarke who looked utterly confounded.

When Skadi broke the kiss she gave Carter his answer, she looked around at her people before she spoke, “Carter, son of Heda Sasha, my people would be served well by a man like you at my side, and it will strengthen our alliance with the Tree Clan. I would be honoured to be joined to you.”
She took a deep breath and ran her hand once more over Carter’s cheek. “I fell in love with you years ago when we were children, and when I saw you guarding Heda Lexa I knew that meant you were not yet joined. I was filled with hope but I was still scared that your love for me would have lessened over the years. I am relieved it has not, because my heart only beats for you. I would have no other, Carter. I love you and my answer is yes.” She smiled and Carter felt moisture on his own cheeks. He pulled her into his arms and they kissed once more.

The roar from the crowd was deafening as the people celebrated the engagement of their Queen.

The celebration lasted well into the night, Lexa did not. The rest of the party was still in full swing when she nudged Clarke and with a puppy dog look she knew her Sky girl couldn’t ignore she tugged on her hand. “Come Clarke, let us retire.”

Clarke looked her wife up and down and grinned mischievously, “I will take you back to our room, Lexa. I can however promise you that you will not be allowed to sleep.” She leaned in and whispered in Lexa’s ear letting her hot breath linger on purpose. “You look so hot tonight I can’t wait to get you naked, but we’ll be leaving that cuff on your arm.”

She leaned slowly away from Lexa and the look on Lexa’s face was enough to send Clarke into a fit of laughter. Lexa looked like an eager child waiting to open a birthday gift. “Let’s say goodnight to everyone Lex.” Clarke took Lexa’s hand and started to pull her back towards their table but Lexa resisted.

“Let’s just slip away now. Your mother and Kane are dancing, Skadi and Carter can’t take their eyes off of each other and Rock and Zora left almost an hour ago.” Lexa smiled at Clarke and nodded her head towards the exit.

Clarke giggled and nodded her agreement and the two women slipped out the door. They got a few steps down the hallway when Lincoln and Octavia joined them. “You can’t lose your tail Clarke, I’m too good.” Octavia grinned when Clarke looked sheepish.

Lexa nodded her approval at Lincoln and dismissed both of them for the evening. Lexa watched as the couple returned to the party and then she pulled her wife closer and turned toward their room.

They navigated the halls quickly both of them wanting the privacy of their bedroom. Clarke was rubbing her thumb along Lexa’s and even that simple touch was raising Lexa’s body temperature to an uncomfortable level. She reached up and unbuttoned her top few buttons and Clarke laughed, “Getting hot in here, lover?”

As they rounded the last corner toward their bedroom they heard a loud moaning cry that had Lexa reaching for her weapons and instinctively moving in front of Clarke. Clarke only smirked and slapped Lexa’s ass. “Keep moving Heda. That noise is not your concern.”

By then Lexa had figured out that the noise came from Zora and Rock’s room and that it was not a cry of pain. As they neared the bedroom Lexa looked at Clarke surprise showing on her features, “I think that’s Zora we’re hearing.” She grinned.

“Yes, why are you surprised?” Clarke questioned as they entered their own room.

“Well, you know. I guess I figured that Zora would be the one pleasuring Rock…” Lexa couldn’t quite voice her thoughts properly and it was only partly due to her beautiful wife sliding her black dress off and the fact that she was not wearing a bra.
“So you think because Zora is the “tougher” or “manlier” of the two that she would always be on top?” Clarke raised an eyebrow and kicked off her shoes. She hooked her thumbs into her underwear and began to slowly slide them down. She kept eye contact and when Lexa dropped her eyes to follow her slowly descending panties she cleared her throat and Lexa quickly brought her eyes back up to lock on Clarke’s.

“You know Lex, people probably think that about you and I. That you are always in charge in our bedroom. What do you think about that?” Clarke was teasing her wife and knew she would soon have the mighty Heda begging and making enough noise to drown out Zora’s cries of pleasure.

“I… I…” Lexa’s eyes dropped once more and she couldn’t keep her train of thought as Clarke was stripping in front of her. Clarke grinned and quickly finished undressing. She stood naked and proud before her wife. Lexa’s eyes travelled up and down her wife’s perfect form and took in the slight upturn of Clarke’s breast right before the pink nipples pointed proudly to her. She studied Clarke’s flat stomach and the jut of her hip bones. She looked longingly at the blonde curls that covered Clarke’s folds, she could already see a glistening moisture gathering there and that spurred her to movement. She stepped forward and reached for Clarke, but Clarke stepped backwards and shook her head.

“Oh no, Heda. You don’t get to touch this,” she gestured at her body, “until I say so.” So be a good Heda and listen closely.” Clarke looked so sexy as she swayed her hips and sashayed back to the bed. She sat and crossed her legs then directed a look at Lexa that made Lexa shiver with anticipation.

“Strip.” Clarke commanded and Lexa scrambled to obey. After quickly removing the daggers and placing them on the floor she whipped her vest off and threw it against the wall. Clarke’s laughter made her grin and as she was frantically unbuttoning her shirt her wife amended the order.

“Strip slowly.” Clarke’s voice dropped an octave and the huskiness made Lexa’s mouth water. Lexa slowed her hands, which wasn’t easy because she was very turned on and almost desperate.

She unbuttoned the shirt as slowly as she could manage and with a roll of her shoulders it slid down her toned arms. She let it drop and Clarke’s breath caught in her throat as Lexa’s breasts were revealed. It was Lexa’s turn to smirk. She reached down and unbuckled her belt and slowly pulled it from her pants. When it was free she cracked the air with it like a whip, it make a satisfying snapping sound and Clarke clapped for her.

Lexa unbuttoned her pants and then leaned down and undid the laces of her boots. She removed them quickly and kicked them aside. Then she stood back up to her full height and left her hands slowly slide down her stomach and to Clarke’s delight she slid them into the unbuttoned pants and into her own wetness. She let them linger for just a moment enjoying the friction she was providing herself. But this wasn’t for her it was for Clarke and she removed her hand slowly and raised it to her own mouth ready to taste herself.

“Hod Up!” Clarke barked the order and Lexa raised a questioning eyebrow. “Come here Heda. That is mine.” Clarke’s voice was like a growl and Lexa felt herself grow even more wet. She closed the space between them and offered her fingers to Clarke. Clarke wasted no time in closing her mouth around her wife’s fingers and she moaned at the taste she found there.

As she sucked on Lexa’s fingers her hands found Lexa’s pants and peeled them down her legs. She slid off the bed and flipped Lexa around and pushed the Commander down on the mattress. She quickly removed the rest of Lexa’s clothes and crawled up on the the bed hovering over her lover.

They slid onto the centre of the bed and Lexa reached up to grasp Clarke’s hips. “not yet darling.
“Keep your hands to yourself or I’ll have to tie them up.” Clarke felt Lexa shiver under her.

“Oh you like that idea do you Heda? Being tied up, having no control, letting me do with you what I desire.” Clarke’s husky voice was thick with desire and caused Lexa to moan at her words. “Don’t worry great Heda. I will take care of you tonight.” Clarke whispered into her beloved’s ear.

Lexa felt Clarke’s hot breath in her ear and then felt her lips and teeth. She shuddered and erupted into goosebumps. Clarke moved down her neck line and earned a hitch in Lexa’s breath and a moaning, “Please”.

Clarke knew how long it had been since she had properly fucked her wife and she knew Lexa was ready. She didn’t prolong the foreplay she kissed her way down the scarred and yet perfect body of the Commander of the thirteen clans and only stopped for a moment to cover each nipple with lavish kisses. Lexa’s breath was already ragged and Clarke slid her hand into Lexa’s wetness. “Lexa! Oh baby, you are so wet for me.” Clarke moaned out as she quickly slid through the wetness and entered her wife with two fingers.

“Clarke! Yes…. Oh. Oh. Clarke.” Lexa’s whole body trembled with desire and Clarke began to fuck her slowly and perfectly, running her fingers over the spot that caused Lexa to cry out Clarke’s name passionately every time she thrusted into her.

“You can touch me now lover.” Clarke wanted to feel Lexa’s hands on her back, she wanted to feel Lexa dig her nails in as she came. Lexa immediately brought her hands up and ran them lovingly over Clarke’s back. She reached down and squeezed Clarke’s ass and she dug her nails into Clarke’s lower back as Clarke added a third finger.

Lexa’s voice was getting louder and her moans were deep and throaty. She rocked her hips in time with Clarke’s fingers and she begged for Clarke to fuck her harder and faster. She was desperate to come and Clarke felt like a Goddess for causing this gorgeous and powerful woman to come undone like this.

Clarke moved her hand faster, thrusted harder and Lexa begged her not to stop. That was the exact moment that Clarke did stop. She stilled her hand and Lexa’s cry of anguish made her smile. “Please Clarke, don’t stop.” Lexa called out.

Clarke moved quickly up and off of Lexa, she was as turned on as her wife but she had images in her head of how she wanted to fuck Lexa and she followed that. “Up on all fours Lexa, show me that perfect ass baby.” Clarke was demanding and full of desire. Lexa moved into position immediately.

She was the commander of thirteen clans, feared above all in battle, and respected by everyone as a great leader. She cared about none of that at this moment, she only cared about Clarke continuing to fuck her and she wiggled her ass in anticipation as she felt Clarke move into position behind her.

Clarke’s hand landed on her ass in a quick slap and she loved how Lexa responded with a loud moan and then she wiggled her ass again. Clarke slid her hand lower and sighed in pleasure at the wetness that waited for her. She slid three fingers easily into Lexa and Lexa jerked her hips backward to try and get Clarke as deep inside of her as she could. Clarke smiled and used her left hand to lightly slap and pinch Lexa’s ass as she fucked her with her right hand.

Lexa lowered her head and gave herself over to the sensations. She thrusted back into Clarke’s touch as hard as Clarke thrust into her.

Clarke slowed her hand and Lexa picked up the pace of her thrusts. Clarke encouraged her, “That’s
it baby, fuck yourself on my hand. You are so sexy right now, Lex. Keep going.” Clarke’s breath was irregular and her voice was low. Her whole body was flushed and she could feel wetness dripping down her inner thigh.

Lexa’s moans increased, and she felt herself climbing towards the peak of orgasm but something was missing. She wanted more contact with Clarke’s body. “Clarke, I need you, please.” Lexa’s voice broke as she begged and Clarke understood her instinctively.

Clarke leaned forward and mirrored Lexa’s position but kept herself just off center enough to give her hand room to work. Lexa sighed with satisfaction when she felt Clarke’s breasts pressed against her back. Clarke wrapped her left hand around Lexa’s waist and as she kissed up and down the spine of the woman she loved her hand slid down to find Lexa’s clit.

With Clarke’s right hand fucking her from behind and her left stroking her clit Lexa was not long in falling over the edge. “Clarke! Fuck, yes” Her cry was loud enough to make Clarke smirk knowing that it was definitely heard all throughout the wing they were in. Lexa shook and panted and called Clarke’s name a few more times as she came down from her orgasm.

She collapsed onto the bed as soon as Clarke slid her hands away from her dripping pussy, she was panting and smiling. She rolled to the side and turned to meet her lover’s eyes. “Clarke, you are very talented.” She laughed and winked at her wife then opened her arms and smiled, “Come here, I want to hold you.” Clarke nodded, she was too turned on to really speak. She moved quickly into the offered embrace and let out a soft moan at the contact. Lexa noticed.

“My love, is there something you need?” Lexa teased and began rubbing small circles into Clarke’s back causing another soft moan to escape the blonde’s lips.

“Lex… fuck, I’m so turned on right now.” Clarke snuggled into Lexa’s arms further and buried her face in Lexa’s neck beginning to suck and nip at her sensitive skin.

Lexa let her hands wander over Clarke’s back and slide down to squeeze her ass but she didn’t offer any relief from the tension her wife was feeling just yet. She allowed herself to recover from her own orgasm and she enjoyed the feeling of having Clarke in her arms. She waited until Clarke was ready to beg.

“Clarke, what do you want me to do?” Lexa asked.

“Make me come.” Was the honest reply that sent a sharp pang of desire shooting through Lexa.

“How would you like me to do that?” Lexa was teasing Clarke, she rolled her onto her back and slipped her arm from under her. She rose up and sat straddling Clarke’s stomach. She stared down at Clarke with a hungry, predatory look in her eye.

Clarke offered herself up completely. She spread her legs wide, she raised her hands up above her head which presented her breasts up perfectly for Lexa. “Any way you want, lover. Just make me come.” Clarke’s eyes were dark with lust and she was already panting. Lexa bent down and claimed one of her hard nipples in her mouth. The heat and wetness of Lexa’s mouth on her caused a long uneven exhale of breath from Clarke and she arched her back up into Lexa’s mouth.

Lexa loved Clarke’s tits and she stayed there for a while, licking and biting and squeezing both of the soft white globes. Clarke was writhing beneath her by the time she sat back up and smiled down at her prize.

“Clarke, you look so beautiful like this, naked, wet, and so open to me.” Lexa smiled but it was not a
smile full of love and devotion, it was a smile full of lust, and need. It made Clarke shiver and cant her hips upwards searching for friction.

“Lex, please. Take me, take me now.” Clarke was not above begging, she was burning with desire and needed to feel Lexa’s touch.

Lexa leaned down and captured Clarke’s mouth in a searing kiss and she lifted her body off of Clarke’s stomach. Clarke was spread wide beneath her and Lexa broke the kiss and sat back up but as she did she dropped her right leg down in between Clarke’s spread thighs and moved her centre in line with Clarke’s. She lowered her body slowly and watched Clarke’s eyes as her dripping wet cunt made contact with Clarke’s own.

Both women sighed as their slippery wet vulvas rubbed against each other. Lexa shifted around a little watching Clarke for reactions and when she found the right angle she knew it by clenching of Clarke’s hands and the sounds that escaped her mouth, “Oh… Yes.” Clarke threw her head back and closed her eyes as Lexa began to rock back and forth.

“Fuck, Lexa. Fuck. Fuck. That feels incredible.” Clarke panted out and then whimpered as Lexa ground harder into her. “Ah… oh… Lex… yeah, yeah, yeah.” Clarke couldn’t form sentences she was too far gone. She reached up and wrapped her hand around the Trikru cuff that was still framing Lexa’s upper arm and she rocked her own hips and pressed her pussy harder into Lexa’s.

Lexa was having trouble keeping her own control, she wanted to make Clarke come first and keep going making her wife come two or three times before she did. She wanted to do that, but the feeling of grinding her clit into Clarke’s slick heat was quickly driving her to the edge of pure pleasure. She rocked her hips and ground her clit faster against Clarke’s pussy. The wetness made both of them so slippery and smooth that it felt like fireworks exploding in her clit.

“Clarke, fuck, I’m getting close. Look at me baby.” Lexa abandoned her plan and only hoped Clarke was as close as she was.

‘Me too Lex, keep fucking me…” Clarke forced her eyes open and just as they locked on Lexa’s green ones she felt her muscles clench and the hot coil of desire in the pit of her stomach snapped and then pleasure took over. “Lexa! Fuck, yes! Lex! Ah! AH! Fucuuckkk.” She screamed as she came and dug her fingers into Lexa’s thighs.

As Clarke started to come she pressed even tighter into Lexa and drove Lexa into the stars. “Clarke!” She panted out her lovers name and then slammed her hands down into the bed to steady herself as she felt her orgasm consumer her. “Fuckfuckfuckfuck ohhhhh yes! Clarke” was her song as she shook and writhed in ecstasy.

As both orgasms subsided Lexa collapsed on top of Clarke no longer able to hold her self up. They kissed sloppily and tried to catch their breath.

“Fuck, Lex.” Clarke managed to find her voice, ”that was fucking amazing.” She kissed the sweaty forehead that was lying on her breasts and wrapped her arms around Lexa.

“Clarke, I love you.” Lexa managed to say before snuggling tight into Clarke’s arms and closing her eyes.

Clarke smiled and laughed softly. “The mighty Heda is exhausted already?” she teased and when Lexa snapped one eye open looking determined she laughed at her. “Me too baby. That was wonderful, I’m completely satisfied. Sleep now love.” Clarke stroked her hair and watched as the lines smoothed out and Lexa’s jaw relaxed as she slipped into sleep.
Clarke stayed awake for a while longer just watching Lexa sleep. She was thankful for this woman in her arms and she loved her with all of her being. Clarke smiled softly as sleep started to find her as well, she murmured to Lexa as she drifted off, “I fell from the sky just so I could find you my love, I’m sure of it.”

Chapter End Notes

Otta is secure and Carter will stay behind with his fiancee. Lexa and her entourage now have to get the Mayor back to York. It's a long ride but the Mayor is going to be impatient. No Sleep till Brooklyn ;-}
Chapter Summary

A shorter chapter than the last few... let's call it a quickie ;-) 

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Lexa glared at Zora with her jaw clenched. Clarke was busy helping Abby tend to the injured rider and Rock was busy studying anything but the two women who were about to blow up at each other.

Indra had taken control over the rest of the riders and had them organizing a long overdue camp and seeing to the horses. The Trikru horses were a tough breed but they had ridden too far too fast in Zora’s haste to get to York. A nagging in the back of her mind was driving her mad, something was pushing her to get to her people as fast as she could.

One of the horses had, in it’s exhaustion, missed a step and fallen breaking it’s leg. The rider had been thrown and now had serious road rash and a broken arm. Luckily Abby and Kane had been part of the addition to the party that had set out from Otta the morning after the ball.

The original strike force that had hunted down Yor and Alain had been joined by fifty riders from the Horse clan who would be returning home after they had seen Heda safely to York.

Abby and Kane in their interest to see more of this world had joined the party as well, and on the morning of departure there had been an Ice warrior from the royal guard packed, mounted on her horse and waiting to go.

Skadi and Lozen had seen the team off and one of Lozen’s most trusted warriors had been a parting gift of sorts. Carter had looked stricken as he said goodbye to his old friend and beloved Commander but he clenched his jaw fighting back his emotions and held out his arm to grasp hers. Lexa smiled at him and told him to take good care of his Queen. When he turned to say goodbye to Clarke tears formed in his eyes no matter how hard he tried to fight them back. He had such love for his Sky Heda and he had not liked saying goodbye to her, especially with the thought of her travelling a dangerous road without his protection.

Clarke had tears in her eyes as well and pulled the large man into a tight embrace. She whispered to him, “I’m so proud of you Motorbike. Skadi loves you and I’m so happy for you. we will come to the wedding, I promise.” She leaned back and sniffed back more tears then patted him on his shoulder and moved to embrace Skadi.

As Clarke stepped away after both women whispering their love and thanks to each other the Queen had gestured for the Ice warrior to step forward. She introduced her, “This is Kita. She is one of my royal guards, one of our finest warriors. Lozen asked for volunteers to fill a vacancy left by my betrothed. She is the best of the soldiers of the royal guard and we were pleased when she stepped forward. I insist that she go with you as your new guard Heda.”

Lexa had looked at the young woman who approached and took a knee in front of her. She was tall, lanky, and her brown eyes looked too much like Lozen’s to be a coincidence. Her dark hair was
pulled back in complicated braids that Lexa had only seen the royal guards of the Ice Queen wear. She raised her sword, looked skyward along the blue blade and then spun it and brought it tip down onto the cobblestones of the courtyard, she placed both her hands on the hilt of the weapon and looked up into Heda Lexa’s eyes. “With my sword and my life I pledge to protect you.” Her voice was clear and confident and she had shown that she had been well coached when she stood and repeated the process and the pledge in front of Clarke.

Lexa then looked at Lozen and her raised eyebrows which had been enough of a question for Lozen to understand, “Sha Heda, she is my younger sister. It is my honour for one of my blood to be protecting you. She is also the best guard I have and her wish to serve you is true Heda.” Lozen bowed her head to the Commander.

The next eyes Lexa had searched were Carter’s. He met her gaze and also understood. “I have sparred with her and tested her endlessly since she stepped forward to volunteer.” He had sighed irritated that she seemed to be equal in skill to him, but inside he felt relief that his Heda and his Sky Heda would be well protected by the young woman. “She passed every test I gave her and bested me in two out of five sparring matches.

Lexa had raised an eyebrow impressed and Indra had spoken up from behind her, “I watched the whole time, Heda. The girl is good. I gave my approval to Lozen for her choice as well.” Indra’s approval was notoriously hard to get and that had been enough for Lexa.

“Stand, Kita of the Ice Nation.” The girl had quickly risen to her feet. “Sword.” Lexa had held her hand out and found the ice blue blade quickly placed in it. She had studied the blade and tested it’s weight staring into the warriors eyes as she did.

“My wife is precious to me. Those who have given you their approval know this well. I will accept their word and your pledge.” Lexa had handed the sword back to her new guard and stepped closer to her, “Understand this, any harm that comes to the Sky Heda better come after you are already dead in your efforts to protect her.” Lexa had spoken slowly, evenly, her voice low and her tone level. The young guard had kept her composure, held Lexa’s gaze, and nodded gravely in understanding.

“No harm will come to the Sky Reine while my spirit is still within this body.” Kita raised her chin, proud and fierce. When Lexa had nodded at her she quickly mounted her horse and nodding at Octavia she had taken the brunette’s place next to Clarke.

Kita was kneeling next to her Sky Queen and helping Clarke and Abby as best she could. She, like all of the Ice Nation’s Royal Guard who had been trained by Lozen, had basic medical training and this was proving useful already.

Once Abby and Clarke had cleaned all of the cuts and scrapes and set the arm Clarke turned her focus to Lexa who had moved off into slightly into the forest to have some privacy to talk to Zora.

Clarke moved quickly to investigate, Kita her ever present shadow moved with her. As she approached she heard her wife sounding both exasperated and dangerously irritated, “Zora, we cannot keep this pace and you will not continue alone. I will not allow it.” Lexa was seething when Zora challenged her.

“I cannot stop. I will continue on alone, I must get to York!” Zora was stubbornly refusing to hear the truth in Lexa’s words.
Clarke nodded at Cade as he fell in alongside her. He listened and frowned. He stepped forward into the small clearing where Lexa and Zora were speaking. He cleared his throat to announce his presence although Clarke was sure it was needless as both warriors would have heard him approach.

“Zora, you will not continue alone. If I know my sister she will not allow it. If you insist on leaving she will accompany you. It is dark, the way is filled with difficulties, and you know Rock is better on a bike than a horse. What is so pressing that you would put her at risk like that?”

Zora’s expression softened and she stared at Cade for a long time before nodding deeply to the man, “Rock’s life is more important to me than the whole god damn world.” She sighed and looked at Lexa. “Heda, forgive me. I will heed your word. I will not press our party on needlessly. I trust that you will get us to York quickly and with the strength to fight should it be required.”

Zora spoke formally to Lexa needing to show her friend the respect she had lacked in the past two days.

Clarke had followed Cade into the clearing, “Aldor will recover. His arm is broken but otherwise he is fine, just scrapes and bruises.” Zora nodded thankfully at her and Lexa sighed and asked her about the horse. “Lincoln put it down. Ro said there was nothing that could be done for the animal.”

Lexa sighed again and Clarke could feel the tension rolling off of her wife. She wanted to lead her back to their tent and massage the tightness from her shoulders, but she doubted Lexa would allow herself the freedom to relax at all.

It had been almost three days since they left Otta and they had been riding almost nonstop. Zora continuously insisting that they press on. It would normally be over a two week ride to York from Otta but they had already covered more than four days worth of riding. The pace was taking it’s toll and losing a horse was a bad omen.

Zora looked upset at Clarke’s news of the horse, “Shit, I’m sorry. Poor fucking horse.” She sighed and kicked at the ground.

Clarke was curious, she wanted to know what had suddenly made her so antsy. “Zora, why the sudden rush?” she asked quietly.

“I don’t know. I can’t explain it… I have this feeling. It’s been growing since we met those little girl’s in Otta. The story they told made me think. Alain was terrible, but more power hungry and shrewd than cruel. He didn’t care what happened to the people so long as he got what he wanted. Yor was different. He was deliberately cruel, what he wanted was to make others suffer, especially women. I suddenly began to think of the stories little girls in York might have to tell.”

Lexa breathed in sharply and nodded her understanding. She reached out to squeeze Zora’s shoulder. “We will press on again in the morning. We are a half day’s easy ride to a wide, shallow river and a field suitable for grazing. We will stop there to rest and let the horses graze and recover their strength. People can wash and refresh in the river and there are fish to be caught so we can save our food stores. The horses need a respite from our current pace and that will suffice. After that we can press on harder and maintain a faster pace for three or four more days only stopping at night. I will get you to York before the full moon, I promise you.”

Zora looked close to tears as she nodded her agreement, “I can’t explain it Lexa, I have a bad feeling in the pit pf my stomach. I can’t clear my head, thoughts keep crowding in. None of them good.” Zora sighed again, “You should all go and get some sleep. I want to walk the perimeter and try to clear my head.”
She turned and walked into the forest and Lexa gave Cade a pointed look to which he nodded and silently slipped into the trees after the girl.

“Indra has everything taken care of. Our tent is up and there is food and water inside. Come love.” Clarke help out her hand to her wife and was not surprised when Lexa didn’t take it.

“Houmon, I must check everything first, I should walk the perimeter, speak to the warriors, especially Aldor. Then I should speak to Ro, the Chancellor, and after that to Indra.” Her expression was a strange one that Clarke wasn’t familiar with but she knew her wife and she guessed.

“You are worried, Zora’s unease has found it’s way into your mind too.” Clarke knew she was right when Lexa frowned and looked at the ground.

“Clarke, a leader knows her people and her lands. Unrest vibrates in our bones, if Zora is so uncomfortable I believe her instincts, something is wrong in York.” Lexa sighed again and gritted her teeth she hated the sound of her own helpless frustration and she knew she had made that sound far too many times already since they had left Otta.

Clarke knew that grounder’s were superstitious and after some of the things she had seen she knew enough not to discount it so she didn’t try to talk science or reason she just nodded her head and offered her support. “What can I do to help Lexa. You need to speak with people and take care of things before we sleep, I get it, but maybe I can speak with some of them for you.” When Lexa looked at her slightly surprised she grinned, “I’m not just a trophy wife, Lex.”

Lexa smiled and looked approvingly at Clarke, “Indeed, Houmon, you are much more than that.” Lexa considered and partially for the entertainment value in the look that would cross Indra’s face she nodded her agreement, “I will leave Ro, The Chancellor, and Indra to you.”

Clarke’s face openly showed surprise at Indra’s name. “Tell them what I told Zora. Indra will know the place I spoke of. We will leave at dawn and we will keep an easier pace tomorrow. When we reach the field we will set up camp and let the horses rest, graze, and drink from the river. We will stay there until the following morning.” When Clarke nodded happily, glad to share in Heda’s seemingly never ending duties Lexa winked at her and added, “And please watch Indra’s expression closely when she realizes I sent you to speak with her in my stead, so you can tell me all about it in our tent.”

When both women had taken care of what they had to do they met in their tent. Clarke arrived first and was pleased when Lexa arrived within ten minutes of her. “I like that we shared these duties Lexa. It takes some of the burden from you and it makes me feel more a part of this.”

Lexa looked at Clarke with wide eyes, “Clarke, you are more than a part of this. You are the reason behind it and spark that ignited it all. Without you I would never have challenged the mountain. I would not have been in a position to see the threat from Yor, and Alain. I never would have regarded Skadi, Rock and Zora as my friends. I probably would have killed Cade and Dal along with Alain and Yor…” Her voice trailed off and she pulled Clarke into a warm embrace. Her strong arms clung to Clarke needing to show her wife how important she was.

“It’s OK Lex.” Clarke whispered into her wife’s ear as she felt the desperation in the tight embrace. “I know how important I am to you, and I see how the people rally around me. It’s just…” Her own voice trailed off and she looked shyly away from Lexa.

“Speak true, Houmon. What bothers you.” Lexa’s voice was soft, barely above a whisper and her
words were infused with such tenderness that Clarke couldn’t stop herself from turning back to her and placing a kiss on her beautiful, if wind chapped, lips.

The two kissed softly for several minutes. Just holding one another, relishing the feel of each other’s steady heartbeats and smiling softly into the kiss.

When Clarke pulled away a slight blush tainted her cheeks and Lexa couldn’t imagine anything more beautiful than her dirty, road-weary wife. “Houmon…” Lexa encouraged her to finish her thought.

“When we are on the move, or at war, or in a battle I feel inadequate. Everyone waits on me, protects me, and does things for me. I mean, I try, but Zora, Rock and Skadi had to practically hold my hand and teach me how to walk more quietly when we patrolled, Carter practically had a nervous breakdown if he was more than two feet from me because he knows I can’t protect myself like you can. And then you and Indra are always busy taking care of the camps and organizing, talking to the warriors making things work. I want to be a part of that. I want to contribute.” Clarke felt herself blush again. “I felt important tonight when I went to Ro to report the plan, and then Mom and Kane looked so proud of me when I went to them instead of you, and the surprise on Indra’s face…. Oh Lex… it really was funny.” Clarke laughed and Lexa joined for a moment.

“Clarke of the Sky. How many times were you a part of a group of riders and had to set up camp when you were young? How many night patrols did you do? How many battles did you fight?” Lexa was making a point and did not wait for Clarke to answer. “I grew up in these woods, with riders, and camps and all of this. It is what I know. You are learning very quickly Clarke, I am proud of you, but do not feel less important because Indra and I do more of those things. We grew up doing them and it is second nature to us.” Lexa stopped and thought for a second before continuing.

“Remember in Sapeake right after the attack. You took control of the wounded and organized a quick makeshift healers tent. Your mother was saving the Swamp Clan’s leader and you took control of everything else, you directed the healers and got the injured people the help they needed as quickly as possible. I could not have done that.”

Clarke nodded slowly understanding Lexa’s point, “I grew up studying triage and medicine, it is second nature to me.” She frowned, “OK I get it, but I still want to learn more Lexa. You told me that we are equals and I need to feel like it. I’m not a Princess who needs to be taken care of and protected, I am the Sky Heda.”

Lexa smiled at her wife’s determination and stepped forward wrapping her arms around Clarke’s waist and kissing her lightly on the cheek. “You are my Sky Princess. I will always take care of you and protect you. You cannot ask me not to.” Lexa leaned forward and kissed Clarke again before continuing, “However, I understand your point. I will share my duties with you. You will learn what I know and see what I see.”

She saw Clarke’s eyes light up at the thought of being more involved and despite loving that spark her heart worried at the real danger Lexa knew lay in what she was asking. She added a stipulation, “I have also been wanting you to learn more self defence and combat skills. If you are going to take on my duties you must learn to defend yourself better than you can now. When we get back to Ton DC I will teach you.” Lexa looked into Clarke’s eyes searching her reaction, she saw steely determination as Clarke nodded enthusiastically.

“I think that’s a good idea. I mean after watching you, Zora, Rock, and Skadi fight it’s obvious I am way behind. And Octavia! Damn that girl is full on grounder! She fights even better than Bell does at this point! No one from the Arc could touch her in a fight. I want to learn Lex, for myself and for you. I know how much you worry.” Clarke calmed and looked into Lexa’s eyes as she spoke. She saw such worry in those beautiful green eyes and it broke her heart and warmed her all at once.
“Lex. What happened to Costia is not going to happen to me. I’m here, with you. I have you, Octavia, and a Royal Guard from the fucking Ice Army protecting me.” Clarke tried to lighten the mood. “Not to mention the people love me, remember.” When Lexa’s lips smiled but it failed to reach the sadness in her eyes Clarke tried once more, “Plus, I have a gun Lex.” She grinned and shrugged pulling her pistol out of it’s holster. “And I’m a better shot than you.” She winked at her lover and it was the challenge that brought a spark back to Lexa’s eyes.

“Clarke, I don’t even use that weapon, how can you say you are a better shot than me!?” Clarke knew her wife would never back down from a challenge of weapon mastery and her plan was working.

“Exactly! You don’t use it, so I’m automatically better.” Clarke did a small victory dance, biting her lower lip and holding her hands out in front of her while swinging her hips in a circle.

Lexa narrowed her eyes and stepped up to the challenge. “When we return home I will teach you hand to hand combat, daggers and swords, and you will teach me to shoot your guns. We shall see who is the better shot, Sky Princess.” When Clarke waggled her eyebrows at her Lexa laughed.

“Oh, that sounds like a challenge mighty Heda. Shall we make a friendly wager?” Clarke tried to look seductive but her eyebrow movements were just making Lexa laugh.

“What would you like to lose to me my love? I will win. I always win. I am Heda. No one is better with any weapon than me.” Lexa raised her chin and tried to project supreme confidence but Clarke just laughed at her and reached out to touch the front of Lexa’s shirt.

“When I win you will submit to all of my desires for one whole week.” Clarke stepped in closer to her wife and licked her upper lip as she spoke, dropping her voice an octave.

The look on Lexa’s face suddenly changed from ‘superior than thou’ to ‘hornier than thou’ “Clarke,” she said the name like a hungry predator, “Come here.” She tried to pull her wife closer but Clarke resisted.

“Say it Lexa.” Clarke held her now aroused lover at an arms length.

“When I win you will submit to all of my desires for one whole week.” Clarke’s smile turned as predatory as Lexa’s and then the green eyed beauty spoke again, “And when I win Sky Heda, you will allow me to ravage you everyday for that week in whatever way I choose. You will allow me to use… things to assist me… to enhance your feelings, I don’t know what to call them.” Lexa looked confused for a moment searching for a way to explain but quickly moved on and regained her intensity. “Say it Clarke.” She teased mimicking her wife's earlier command.

“Wait… things to assist you…? Do you mean… sex toys?” Clarke’s jaw dropped open in shock.

Lexa considered the name and nodded, “Yes, I suppose that is a good way to describe them. Now say it.”

“Good lord, Grounder sex toys!?” Clarke looked flabbergasted, “I don’t know Lex… I mean you Grounder’s are hard core about just about everything…” Clarke’s apprehension was soothed when Lexa took her hand.

“Do you trust me, Houmon?” She asked allowing softness to creep into her voice.

Clarke looked deep into Lexa’s eyes and saw so much love there. She felt a flash of arousal flow through her body as she considered what Lexa was offering, “If you win I will allow you to ravage me everyday for a week using whatever sex toys you want. I trust you completely.” Clarke wrapped
her arms around Lexa’s neck and brought her hands up to play with her hair. Her lips found Lexa’s and she found herself thinking that she might just lose this bet on purpose.

Lexa felt her arousal building, she loved it when Clarke wrapped her arms around her this way, and her kiss grew in intensity. She began to manoeuvre Clarke into the furs that were spread on the ground of the tent and soon she had her wife on her back and was lying on top of her.

Lexa knew they were both tired and she decided not to draw out their love making, her hand found it’s way to Clarke’s pants but Clarke stopped her.

“Lex. You are exhausted, and tomorrow is another long day. You should sleep.” Clarke smiled softly and patted the furs next to her.

Lexa stopped her downward motion immediately but she wasn’t ready to give up completely. If Clarke’s reason for stopping really was concern for her she could reassure her there was no need, she was after all the Commander, and her prowess was legendary.

“Howmon, if you are too tired, or just not interested in sex tonight I will curl up beside you and sleep. But if you are stopping because you are worried about me I promise you there is no need.” Lexa grinned at her wife and sat up to flex her muscles and show off.

Clarke’s burst of laughter was like music to Lexa’s ears. Hearing her wife happy made her feel like the world was a wonderful place. “So, Clarke of the Sky People, what say you?” Lexa raised her eyebrow suggestively and lightly tickled Clarke’s ribs.

“Really, Lex? You aren’t too tired?” Clarke asked, looking shyly off to the side. “Because I am feeling a little frisky…”

“Clarke, do not doubt my prowess.” Lexa spoke keeping her face as serious as possible. Her words brought another bout of laughter from the blonde under her and then Clarke grabbed her shirt and pulled her down on top of her again.

“Well then, you’d better show me this prowess, Commander.” Clarke kissed Lexa with passion, biting her lower lip before sucking on it softly. “But make it a quickie, we both need our sleep.” Clarke winked at her wife as she watched Lexa mull over the word ‘quickie’ and then the spark in her eye when she put it together. Lexa sat up and tore her shirt off excited to get permission to continue.

Clarke hastily sat up as well and pulled her own shirt over her head. “God, Lex I can’t believe you even want to. I am so dirty and gross from riding.” Clarke giggled as Lexa mumbled something about not caring with her face buried in Clarke’s breasts and just kept going. Lexa was kissing the insides of her breasts and remembering what Clarke had said about being quick she immediately found an already hard nipple and took it into her mouth.

Clarke’s hand went to her head and held her there as she sucked. “Lexa. I love your tongue on me.” Clarke exhaled sharply as she felt Lexa’s hand once again at the top of her pants.

“Lay back, Clarke.” Lexa’s voice was deep and full of lust and Clarke responded immediately. When she was on her back once again Lexa quickly shed the rest of her own clothes and then Clarke’s. She lay down on top of the gorgeous blonde again and started palming her breast with her hand. Her head went to Clarke’s neck and after dragging her teeth along her neck up to her ear she whispered, “A quickie leaves me very little time to explore.” As she spoke her hand abandoned her breast and dropped very quickly to the blonde curls at the apex of her thighs.
Clarke was really into this side of Lexa, she loved how playful Lexa was being. She was very turned on and rocked her hips upward looking for contact. Lexa felt the movement and chuckled. “OK Clarke, I understand. You want… this.” She slid her fingers into the wetness between Clarke’s legs. “And you want it… now!” She dipped two fingers inside Clarke’s vagina as she spoke the word now.

“Yes!” Clarke breathed out as she felt Lexa enter her. Lexa didn’t waste any time, she started thrusting slowly but firmly in and out of her wife’s pussy. Clarke’s hips drove up to meet her with every stroke into her. “Lexa, use both hands babe. Touch my clit too. Beja Leksa.”

Clarke begging in her own tongue made Lexa groan out loud. She quickly complied to Clarke’s request. She raised herself up onto her knees and added her left hand into the mix. She laid her hand on Clarke’s pelvis and let her thumb dip into the wetness and find Clarke’s clit.

“Ah! Fuck, that’s it Lex. Fuck.” Clarke called out to her and drove her hips up more frantically. Faster baby. Please.”

Lexa increased her pace. She had two fingers inside of Clarke and she began to thrust faster, sinking inside and then swirling her wrist as she pulled out. She made sure to hit that special spot that would eventually drive Clarke over the edge every time. She adjusted the position of her thumb slightly, just grazing the bottom edge of Clarke’s clit, she knew all the spots that got the best reactions from her wife and she was not disappointed.

“Right there, Lexa. Right. Fucking. There.” Clarke panted out in a heavy whisper. “Oh, ohhh, OH!” Lexa had her building steadily to an orgasm and Clarke helped herself along by reaching up and squeezing her own nipples. She bit down hard on her lower lip not wanting to make too much noise and then when Lexa added a fluttering movement to her fingers as she was fucking her Clarke gave up on her nipples and slammed her hands down to grip the fur blankets tightly, twisting them and pulling on them until they bunched around her hands.

Lexa continued thrusting and rubbing, with her thumb on Clarke’s clit and two fingers buried in her wetness. She was mesmerized by the sight of Clarke coming steadily undone under her hands. “Clarke, you are so sexy like this. I love how you look right now. Come for me Clarke.” Lexa’s voice was gravelly and husky but the last sentence was spoken as more of a plea than a command.

Clarke heard Lexa asking her to come and it pushed all the right buttons for her. She reached up and grabbed Lexa and pulled her down on top of her. “Rub my clit babe, and do that thing you do with your mouth on my nipples.” Clarke was close to the edge and knew exactly what she wanted to push her off.

Lexa did not need to be told twice her mouth found Clarke’s left nipple immediately and bit lightly into it. She held the taut bud in her teeth and began to circle her tongue around it slowly, lashing suddenly, and then sucking again. Her right hand was full of Clarke’s wetness and she pressed it flat against her pubic bone. She slid her entire hand in between Clarke’s slippery lips and keeping it flat she began to push against her clit. She started making circles in the wetness with her hand held flat allowing maximum surface area for maximum contact on all of the sensitive endings surrounding the clit. She sped up as Clarke’s hips encouraged her to keep a faster pace.

“Fuuucck.” Clarke moaned out and Lexa started biting her nipple pulsing with varying degrees of intensity and interspersed with delicate kisses and soft sucking. Her hand slid quickly through the ever increasing wetness and she applied more pressure when she felt Clarke arch her hips up into the touch. Soon Clarke’s grip on the furs was vicelike and she squeezed her eyes shut and threw her head back.
“Clarke, don’t close your eyes, look at me baby. Let me watch you come.” Lexa asked her voice betraying how desperately turned on she was.

Clarke’s eyes fluttered open and found Lexa’s. Lexa saw how wild, dark, and unfocused they were.

“That’s it baby, let go.” Lexa encourage her. “Come for me. Fall apart and let me put you back together.” Lexa’s green eyes bored into Clarke’s blue and her very talented fingers finished their job.

As Clarke came she cried out. As her body writhed in pleasure her lips called the name of her lover, her wife, her beloved.

Lexa watched, face set in satisfaction, as the gorgeous blonde began to recover. Her beautiful blue eyes began to regain focus and her breathing began to even out. She looked into Lexa’s eyes and smiled. “You are looking mighty pleased with yourself Commander.” Clarke said with a smile, her voice still gravelly and weak.

“Indeed” was all the answer Lexa could muster as her own blood was racing through her veins wondering if Clarke had the strength to reciprocate.

“I bet I can make you look mighty pleased with me…” Clarke grinned as she flipped Lexa onto her back and slipped her hand between Lexa’s legs.

“Clarke!” The name was nothing more than a gasp as Lexa felt herself being taken immediately. Clarke knew how wet Lexa was, she had felt it on her thigh and she knew Lexa wasn’t one to require a lot of foreplay.

“Baby! You are so wet for me!” Clarke praised her wife as she fucked her. Clarke knew how to get Lexa off quickly, a little roughness, a little tenderness, and a lot of sexy talk.

She thrust two fingers in and out of her wife and followed her own request of using both hands. Her left hand was thrusting, her right drawing lazy figure eights through the wet folds and she talked to Lexa in a low, husky whisper.

“You made me come so fast, Lex. My body can’t get enough of you. The way your fingers claim me is so fucking good. I want to make you feel so good. Do you like this?” When her panting wife didn’t answer Clarke stilled her movements just for a second. Lexa groaned and looked pained, “Do you like it, Lex?” Clarke was kneeling in between her wife’s spread thighs both hands in her wetness. Her breasts were red from Lexa’s teeth and several small hickeys were already visible along her neckline. Her hair was disheveled and she looked like a glorious mess.

Lexa looked up at her and felt herself grow even more desperate and wet, “Yes, Clarke. I like it very much. So please continue to fuck me. You promised me a quickie.” Lexa smiled at her own cleverness as Clarke laughed and was gratified when her wife’s hands started moving through her wetness again.

Clarke picked up her pace as her lover’s hips thrusted faster and faster. She slipped a third finger into Lexa’s cunt and her figure eights became concentrated circles over Lexa’s clit. As Lexa moaned something incoherent and threw her head back Clarke began talking to her again.

“You are so fucking beautiful right now Lexa. Open to me, letting me fuck you. My fingers are inside you and your wetness is like the ocean Lex. Remember fucking me in the ocean?” Lexa panted out something that sounded like a yes, careful not to miss any answers in case Clarke stopped again.

“That’s it Lex, throw your head back. I love seeing your breasts jutting up into the air, your long
neck exposed to me.” Clarke pulled away from Lexa’s clit just long enough to scrape her nails roughly along Lexa’s side and over her hip. “Your skin is a perfect canvas Lexa. I love to mark you.”

“AH! Clarke!” The little bit of roughness made Lexa call out and Clarke went right back to Lexa’s clit. Lexa’s body was covered in a sheen of sweat and she was breathing hard. Clarke could tell she was getting close to exploding in orgasm.

Clarke felt a sudden overwhelming need to put a mark on Lexa with her teeth like she had on their wedding night. She slid her hand out of Lexa’s pussy, quickly laid herself on top of her wife, and thrust her thigh against her right hand to increase the pressure on Lexa’s clit.

Her mouth was looking for a pale patch of skin and the underside of Lexa’s breast called out to her. She bit her, hard.

“Ahhhh. Ohhh. Clarke…. Yes!” Lexa’s hand came to rest on the back of Clarke’s head and she entangled her fingers in her blonde hair and pulled. When Clarke began to soothe the spot she had just bitten Lexa rubbed Clarke’s head gently. Clarke moved to Lexa’s nipple and began to suckle, then bite, then suckle again.

Lexa felt herself tensing, a coil of hot energy building in her abs. She felt her body clench in anticipation and she moaned out to her Sky Princess, “Baby, please… I’m so close.” Her voice was breathy and full of lusty desperation. Clarke smiled into the breast she was licking.

She added a little more pressure and flicked her fingers expertly over Lexa’s clit and she bit down on the hard nipple that was so pliant her mouth. Clarke felt nails dig into her scalp and her ass as Lexa’s hands clenched and then she came.

“Clarke, Clarke, Clarke.” She called out progressively higher in pitch as her body shook and the hot energy in her gut exploded through her. Clarke held her and stroked her clit lightly through the orgasm that rocked her. When she was sure Lexa was done she stilled her hand and continued tender loving kisses over the abused nipple she had been biting. She kissed her way up along Lexa’s neck and couldn’t resist a little nip of her teeth that caused an immediate jerk in her wife’s hips.

Clarke giggled, “Sensitive, lover?” And got a chuckle in response.

When Clarke reached Lexa’s lips they kissed softly and Lexa wrapped her arms around Clarke. “I enjoyed this ‘Quickie’ I think this is a useful tool for when we are on the road.” Lexa grinned and placed another kiss on the beautiful lips she so loved. “But when we get home, I am going to make love to you for days on end. I will have to explore and relearn your body, Clarke. There will be new scars, new callouses, new muscles, and lines.” Clarke smiled at Lexa’s promise and burrowed into her wife’s shoulder.

“Days on end? Mmmm I like that idea. But now… let’s sleep.” Clarke mumbled eyes already closing.

“Yes, sleep my love.” Lexa agreed as her green eyes slid shut as well.

The next day proved to be a welcome respite for horses and riders. The slower pace and stopping at noon were enough to replenish their strength and their spirits.

Zora had insisted on Rock riding with her and Rock had given her horse up to Aldor who was riding easily even with his injuries. Zora’s horse was a very large stallion and the added weight of Rock’s
slight figure didn’t seem to bother the horse at all.

After the half day’s rest everyone was ready to ride hard once again. With Lexa now controlling the pace the horses were given enough time to recover each night, they rode hard all day and when the evening rest didn’t seem enough she slowed the pace the next day and ended the day’s ride much earlier. In this way she was able to keep a record pace between the two cities while avoiding any more injuries.

Following Lexa and Zora’s carefully planned route, Ro’s advice on how much the horses could be pushed and her people’s help in caring for all of the animals the party found themselves pulling up on the evening of the tenth day in sight of the ruins of the old city. The remains of old skyscrapers, most cut in half and some destroyed down to the steel skeleton of the building stood out against the skyline. Zora’s eyes filled with tears as she gazed at her home.

“What we can see is the ruins left by the bombs. This was the greatest city in the world long ago.” Her voice was proud but unsteady with emotion. “The part of York we inhabit now is just beyond the ruins.” She steadied herself as Rock’s hand found it’s way into hers. “Getting through the ruins is where I fear we will run into problems. It is a nightmare to patrol and parts of it have always been occupied by criminals and outcasts. If our forces managed to take back the city, the ruins is where Yor’s supporters would be holed up.”

Lexa nodded at Zora’s assessment and signalled Indra closer. After a brief conversation with her general Indra moved off and began organizing a much more tightly closed and easily defendable camp setup than they had been using so far on this ride. She doubled the nightly sentries and fortified any positions she deemed weak.

When the riders went to ground that night the camp was eerily silent, warriors contemplating where the last run of this long ride would take them and the probability of battle that tomorrow held. Heda Lexa Kom Trikru watched over them from her perch on a nearby oak tree and she made a silent promise to be brave in the face of the unknown, to steer them through the ruins well and avoid any ambushes or attacks that would trap them in the old city.

She knew tomorrow would be a day of fighting, she felt it in her bones. She knew some of her warriors would die. She had accepted that part of leadership was asking people to fight and die for you long ago, but since she had joined with Clarke she found herself spending more time in preparation, more strategy, trying to keep the number of casualties down as much as she could.

She had spent the past two hours with Zora going over the terrain and planning the best path through the ruins. She shivered when she thought of the path they would take. She was confident they had a large and talented enough force to make it through without any real resistance but she also knew there were likely to be assassins hiding themselves there. Getting pinned down by them in one of the narrow passes would be bad. She clenched her jaw and closed her eyes visualizing the map Zora had drawn for her once more, making sure she knew it well enough to call out emergency deviations to the planned route.

When she was satisfied she let her gaze drift from her charges to the sun setting over the ruins and she sighed. She tried to imagine what the city might have looked like before the bombs but those thoughts never lingered long in her head. She shook them away and with one more sweeping gaze assuring her that all was quiet she dropped silently from the tree and moved through the camp toward her wife.

When she entered the tent she expected to find Clarke asleep but she found two bright blue eyes staring up at her from a worried looking face. “What is it Houmon? What troubles you?”
Clarke contemplated not telling Lexa what was on her mind but she decided honesty was best. “I’m worried about tomorrow. Zora is a mess and you are worried too. Even Indra is wound up more than usual.”

Lexa merely nodded at her wife confirming what the Sky Heda already knew. Clarke took a deep breath and continued, “Why are we going through the ruins at all? There must be a way to go around them.” We can meet up with Echo and Bellamy and go back in to sweep the ruins with a larger force. Why are we going through if you and Zora both think we’ll be open to attack?”

Lexa removed her clothes as Clarke was talking and she flopped down onto the furs as Clarke finished her question. She inserted herself into Clarke’s arms and nuzzled her head into Clarke’s neck. “Hold me, Clarke.” She requested, her voice barely above a whisper. When she felt the blonde’s strong arms wrap around her and a soothing hand rubbing her back she spoke again.

“Geography is not on our side, Clarke. We need to cross a bridge or go through a tunnel to get to York. The southernmost is the bridge and it is usually the safest. The problem is we don’t know the status of Bellamy and Echo’s army. We don’t know if they have continued to patrol and make that area safe. It is also the area Yor’s supporters would have fled to first after Echo and Bellamy’s army entered the city. If the army hasn’t been able to keep steady patrols out there the terrain is the easiest for any assassins to set up an ambush. If that happened there would be few places for us to hide. They could sit in one of the old buildings and pick us off one by one.” Clarke felt Lexa shiver and pulled her in tighter.

Listening to her wife, Clarke wished desperately they had some of Raven’s radios. She resolved to remember the importance of communication in the future and always have her mechanic arrange something before anyone went anywhere.

“The tunnel is further north and we would normally not even consider it. It is through an area that is called Bad Town that is run by a small band of outcasts from the city, like the Dead Zone near Ton DC. They have never followed any Mayor and although they fought against Yor when he tried to put them under his thumb they also had no love for Zora’s mother or any mayor before her. Zora spent some time there, in disguise, spying on the city during her years in exile, she is certain she can convince them to let us pass through peacefully. If she cannot they will have the upper hand at first, but our warriors are better and I am certain we would win a battle, and we won’t be trapped like the southern bridge. That area has more paces we can change route, hide, regroup if need be.”

“So our best choice is the tunnel.” Clarke nodded in understanding but paused when she felt Lexa tense in her arms. “No? What aren’t you telling me Lex?”

Lexa sighed and when she shivered Clarke kissed her cheek and ask her to continue. “Bad Town is only the first step Clarke, after that is the tunnel. You’ll think I’m being silly, Clarke… but the tunnel is haunted, and it leads to Manhattan.” Lexa spoke the small island’s name in a whisper and if Clarke didn’t know Lexa was a fearless Commander she would have sworn she heard terror in her voice.

Clarke waited for Lexa to expand on her statement and when she didn’t Clarke encouraged her to, “Tell me more Lex. You are the Commander of 13 clans, I don’t think you’re silly.” Secretly Clarke was intrigued, Manhattan was the first place name she had heard that the Grounders hadn’t somehow changed or shortened. Her history lessons told her that Manhattan had been the heart of New York City and that it had been the site that the first bomb hit. Not long after that other major cites around the world were bombed, Washington DC being one of them, but New York, Manhattan had been the first.

“Manhattan was where the first bomb fell, Clarke. That place is haunted by the evil of the old word. It is now a dead city that only has a place for spirits and monsters. My people don’t go there lightly
Clarke, we usually don't go there at all. There are legends of warriors who go in just to prove their bravery. Most never return, those who do have been driven mad by terror. There are similar stories of our Dead Zone.” Lexa’s voice trailed off and she felt Clarke tense, they had argued about the people of the Dead Zone before.

“That’s because you’re all terrified of the poor people unfortunate enough to have been born with birth defects and forced to live there! And only 100 years after a nuclear war on a global scale, you’re lucky you all don’t have a third arm or something!”

“Clarke, we have been over this before. We don’t have the defects because we force those who do out of our villages.” Lexa growled at her but Clarke did not back down.

“Bullshit! I would have to see a complete DNA coding to believe that the defects are genetic. I’m sure they are just caused by exposure to more radiation than usual during pregnancy. Forcing those poor people to fend for themselves just because of how they are born is reprehensible! No wonder they try to scare away your warriors and invent ghost stories to keep you all away!”

Lexa sighed harshly and sat up. “I am Heda. I need to care for my people and keep us going as a society. I do not have the benefit of your Sky science, Clarke. The only knowledge given to me is from the souls of past Commander’s and that passed down by the village elders. Heda Sasha forced our people to stop killing those born … different, and I have upheld that. Parents are freely allowed to leave with their children into the Dead Zone if they choose.”

“Em pleni, Houmon.” Clarke held up her hand to stop Lexa. She was irritated but saw the futility of this argument. She softened her voice and reached out for Lexa’s check, cupping it softly. “It has no bearing on tomorrow. Are you and Zora so afraid the tunnel you will choose the southern bridge?” Clarke held her breath and waited for the answer.

“We are not afraid…” Lexa stopped when she saw the look on Clarke’s face. “We are afraid, but we will choose the tunnel Clarke. The warriors will not be happy. Many would take the higher chance of death against assassins over the ghosts of the first bomb. It is not the people of Bad Town we fear Clarke.” Lexa was trying to make Clarke see past the argument. “Even they stay away from the tunnel and they call Manhattan ‘Stedaunon Houm’ and the tunnel ‘Sobwe Wamplei’.”

Clarke translated quickly in her head, “The Home of the Dead and The Tunnel of Death…” When Lexa nodded affirmative she muttered, “lovely.”

Clarke rubbed Lexa’s back and kissed her temple before speaking again. “We’ll get through Lex. We’ll follow Zora into Bad Town, you said they know her.” An idea formed in her head. “Let Mom and I go with her up front,” when Lexa tensed she added hastily, “with you and guards and stuff. But seriously, we are the Sky People, they have had no contact with us before and you never know Lex they might want to be friends with us.”

Lexa considered her wife’s request and thought it over. “You may be right Clarke… but not up front. We don’t know what we are riding into. If we are met or challenged by anyone in a peaceful manner I will see to it you and the Chancellor get to speak with their leaders.” Lexa burrowed even further into her wife’s embrace. “But don’t even think about trying to go anywhere or do anything without Kita.” Her voice sounded growly but exhausted as she spoke and it made Clarke laugh.

“I promise. Not that I can get rid of her anyway.” Clarke mused, with a wry grin. When Lexa suddenly sat up enough to glare at her with narrowed eyes she quickly added, “not that I’ve tried to lose her, I swear…” Lexa studied her face for a few seconds and apparently satisfied that Clarke was being truthful she nodded abruptly and collapsed back into Clarke’s arms.
“And don’t worry about the tunnel and crossing Manhattan, Lex. The Sky Heda fears no ghosts, and the warriors will draw strength from me, you can draw strength from me.” Clarke was confident as she spoke and Lexa relaxed into that strength and fell asleep. Little did they know everything Clarke believed was about to be put to the test.

Chapter End Notes

Fear the tunnel ;-)
Fear the Tunnel

Chapter Summary

The warriors cross through a dark tunnel filled with horrors. Will everyone make it out alive?

Chapter Notes

This one took such a long time, so sorry for the wait!

Any LOTR fans will notice I had some fun with my descriptions of the tunnel.

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

Clarke had never seen or heard the warriors be so silent, and look so morose. Even when faced with the seemingly impossible task of bringing down Mount Weather the Grounder warriors had been full of piss and vinegar as the saying goes.

As she sat next to her friend with her breakfast in front to her she leaned over to Octavia and asked quietly, “What gives?”

Octavia smirked, “Word got around that Lexa is going to lead us through a haunted tunnel. Everyone is pissed… and by pissed I mean terrified.” She laughed quietly and Clarke joined her.

Kita looked surprised and chastised the two Sky women, “This is nothing to laugh about, Sky Reine. Octavia, did Lincoln not explain this to you?”

Octavia looked a little guilty but her eyes still danced with laughter, “He did. I may have laughed and called him a baby for believing in ghosts. He’s not speaking to me now.” She sighed, “I apologized but he didn’t think I was sincere.”

“I cannot imagine why, Octavia of the Sky.” Kita’s voice was laced with sarcasm and Octavia took immediate offence to how she was addressed.

“I am Octavia Kom Trikru, Ice Girl. Do not presume to address me any other way.” The look she was giving Kita was enough for Clarke to step in, the last thing this already tense camp needed was a fight breaking out.

“Em Pleni, both of you!” Clarke shot Octavia a look and then turned to Kita. “Octavia is more Trikru than SkaiKru. Our people did not treat her or her family fairly and though she came from the sky she identifies as a Grounder. TriKru accepts her as one of their own and you would do well to remember that.”

Kita had the sense to look chastised, “I understand Reine.” She turned to look at Octavia once more and seemed to size her up, she didn’t flinch away from the look the fierce warrior was giving her which begrudgingly made Octavia respect her a little bit. “Octavia Kom Trikru, I meant no offence.
Merely, I meant to make a point. You are from the Sky, perhaps your Ark held no ghosts but the ground is full of them. You would do well to follow your people’s tradition, and to hold fear in your hearts for the journey we will take today.”

With that the young woman stood and nodded respectfully to Clarke and Octavia. Then she turned and went to her horse. Clarke looked guiltily after her.

“O, do you think we’re being jerks about this?” Clarke spoke in a hushed tone, “I mean, do you think we’re wrong? All that stuff with Lexa and the Commander’s spirit… I just don’t know what to think anymore.”

“I think we are probably being ignorant fools. If there is one thing that the ground has taught us it’s that everything we learned up there,” she nodded upwards to their former home, “was full of shit.” Octavia clapped Clarke on the shoulder and grinned her wild grin. She spoke louder this time and although directed at Clarke it was for everyone in earshot, “I’m going to find Lincoln and make up before we get eaten, murdered, or worse by whatever the fuck we find in that god damn tunnel.” Octavia laughed again but it was a different laugh, a fearless and reckless laugh. Clarke watched as other warriors around her grunted and began to laugh too.

The sound gave Clarke shivers, it was the sound of men and women laughing in the the face of death.

Lexa had been going over some final details with Zora and finally came to find Clarke. “We leave as soon as the sun rises Clarke,” she looked up at the sky, “about ten minutes.”

“Have you eaten anything?” Clarke handed half of her meal over and Lexa smiled sheepishly and took it wordlessly.

“I have to tell them the plan. It is possible some will refuse and we will have to leave them behind. It is probable… Asking them to follow me there is more than asking them to die in battle.” Lexa sighed.

“There is more you aren’t telling me?” Clarke questioned.

“Manhattan is a dead zone, in every way it can be. One who dies there dies forever. The spirit can not released to find a new body. If I die there the spirit of the Commander will be trapped in Manhattan forever, Clarke.”

“Jesus, Lex” Clarke sighed looking around thinking she understood the mood everyone was in, she gathered her bravery, and Clarke Griffin had no shortage of that, then she stood speaking loudly, “Then I will have to make sure you don’t die there, Heda.” She walked over to her horse and pulled her small canister of war paint from her bag, then she walked back to Lexa and handed it to her, “We have time for this, right?”

Ten minutes later the entire party was mounted and ready to go. Lexa and Clarke were side by side wearing equally intimidating armour and war paint purposefully slashed across their eyes. Abby was to ride next to Clarke and Kane next to her. Zora and Rock would lead the way with Kita, Lincoln and Octavia. Indra would be riding next to Lexa and behind her the strike force would come two by two. Behind Abby Ro would lead her horsemen also two by two.

Clarke could feel the restlessness of the warriors at her back and she much preferred it to the stillness she had felt earlier. The bravery of Octavia and Clarke had stirred the pride and the hearts of all who
rode with them. They were once again ready to face unknown horrors, to fight and perhaps to die for Heda Lexa and Heda Clarke.

Lexa took a deep breath and looked at Clarke, “I must address them. They deserve to hear form me where I will take them. They deserve to make a choice.” Clarke looked into the green eyes she loved and nodded while thinking how different Lexa was now. When she had first met her there was no doubt that Lexa would not have allowed her people to choose and would have killed anyone who refused to follow her.

“Gonas, Listen to your Heda now.” Lexa’s voice carried with ease and her warriors grunted in response. “I feel your fear and your uncertainty. I know you have heard rumours of today’s destination. It is true, the Mayor and I have decided out best path is through Bad Town. We will reach York that way avoiding the assassins. When we meet with the rest of our Army in York we will sweep from there and clear the area.”

Someone shouted from the back, “Will the people of Bad Town let us pass, Heda?”

“I know not, the Mayor is acquainted with their leader and Heda Kom SkaiKru wishes to make friends with them.” Lexa smirked and laughter rose from the ranks. “Who can resist the Sky Heda? They will let us pass.” Lexa spoke assuredly.

Another voice rose form the crowd, “What then, Heda?” Clarke felt the tension from the group rise suddenly as they all knew the answer.

“Then we go into the tunnel.” Lexa spoke clearly and let the words settle for a few seconds before continuing. “The tunnel will take us to Manhattan.” Lexa looked out at her people, and felt the fear rolling off of them.

“I am afraid.” Lexa admitted. “But it is the best way, and I will not let fear rule me.” Her voice rose and became forceful, “We will cross Manhattan and we will see the Mayor seated on her throne before this day is out. We all know this will be a day that tests our bravery, our strength, and our skills. Any of you who do not wish to enter the darkness of the haunted tunnel or set foot on the dead island I will not force you too. Ride now for Ton DC and I will not begrudge you.”

Lexa let her words sink in and then she looked toward Zora who was smiling her crazy smile of battle, she looked back at the troops and grinned, “The crazy brave will follow you Heda, even through the tunnel of death.” She laughed and her voice was echoed by several others.

Clarke looked at her mother and raised an eyebrow, she knew none of them would turn from Lexa, no matter how scared they were.

“Who is with me?” Lexa shouted loudly and her answer was loud cheers and whooping laughter, somewhere in the back Clarke heard a voice yell that not even evil spirits could tear her from Heda’s side.

With that sentiment Heda Lexa leaned over and kissed her wife then spurred her horse forward and took up position in front to lead her army of the crazy brave into a day none of them would forget.

They entered the outskirts of Bad Town nearly an hour after they had left camp. Lexa felt eyes on them as soon as they crossed the threshold of the town. Outsiders were not welcome, people like them, whole and sound, were feared and hated in equal amounts. She herself was sure to be hated much much more.
They rode on without incident for forty minutes, her warriors constantly patrolling the side streets and looking for any ambush or challenge before Heda rode past. As they approached the centre of the ruined city someone stepped out of a darkened doorway and into the centre of the street.

It was a teenage boy, Clarke thought he looked to be fifteen or sixteen. He was dressed in tattered clothing and had a hooded cape over his shoulders hiding what Clarke thought looked like a disfigured left arm. He had dark hair that flopped over his eyes and reminded Clarke of Finn. She felt sad and worried for the boy and looked around anxiously hoping no one was going to threaten him.

Lexa merely held up her right hand and shouted, “Hod Up!” As the caravan behind her came to a stop Clarke felt Kita nudge her horse closer and she noticed the warrior had her bow drawn and an arrow nocked. She was scanning the surrounding buildings with her eagle like vision and was very tense.

Lexa addressed the young man with a calm, steady voice, “Boy, where are your leaders? I am Heda and I wish to speak with them.” She looked down at him with her best, ‘don’t fuck with me’ look and was gratified when the boy looked terrified.

He did not however acquiesce, he merely held his ground and continued looking at her, stubborn and scared.

Lexa sighed and looked at Zora, the Mayor dismounted and stepped toward the boy who was now trembling, “Do not fear me boy, I will not hurt you. I have been here before. I wish to speak with Swan. We are not here to fight you, we seek clear passage.”

The boy gaped at her last words and repeated her words, “safe passage…” he looked confused and glanced behind him towards Manhattan then he ran off into a dark alleyway. Zora stood her ground and shouted into the seemingly deserted streets. “I know you are there, Swan. Come and speak with me now.”

Clarke was impressed when Kita suddenly swung her bow to the right and aimed it at another alleyway before even Lexa moved her head in that direction. A few seconds later a large man stepped out of the alley and walked toward Zora.

He was huge, Clarke thought of Ribs and was once again sorry his injury had excluded him from the war party. He was probably back in Ton DC with Raven and Wick right now and Clarke smiled slightly at the thought of Raven probably driving him crazy on the ride from Sapeake.

The man that had walked out of the alleyway had dusky brown skin and tattoos snaked around his exposed arms. His lips were cracked and his face weathered but he showed no obvious signs of deformity. Clarke thought he looked strong, and self assured considering the force that was facing him. Kita once again changed her direction and had her bow pointed toward a nearby ruin. Clarke could see nothing in the shadows of the structure but did not doubt her guard.

The man was soon joined by the same boy who had stood alone in the street moments before and Clarke found herself certain there were many other eyes watching them, tho she could see none.

“Why are you here Zora? Or should I call you Mayor now that Yor has been killed?”

Zora laughed heartily and Clarke tensed wondering if she was about to start killing people, you could never really tell with Zora. “You knew?” Zora questioned the man.

Clarke looked on as Swan returned the Mayor’s laugh and stepped forward with a smile, “Of course we knew.”
“The seer?” Zora asked and Clarke saw the man stiffen. “You aren’t the only one who knew things, my friend.” Zora commented.

“We didn’t need her to tell us, you do stand out in a crowd Mayor. We allowed you to stay here because we hated Yor.” The man sighed, “Now you are Mayor and we are no longer friends. My people follow no Mayor,” he glanced at Lexa, “nor any Heda.” He stood defiantly as angry warriors shouted their displeasure from behind Lexa.

Lexa’s raised hand silenced her warriors and she dismounted to stand beside Zora. “I do not seek your allegiance, merely safe passage.” Lexa’s steady eyes bored into Swan and he nodded at her.

“I see why so many follow you Heda. You are strong, but, I cannot let you pass. The tunnel is shut.” He met Lexa’s gaze and saw the storm in her eyes, he knew not many had the nerve to say no to this woman and wondered if he would see tomorrow.

Clarke jumped down from her horse and motioned for Abby to join her. She stepped forward, Kita at her side looking like she wanted to skin something alive. Guarding the Sky Queen was proving to be more of a challenge than she thought, the woman had strong mind and did as she pleased without fear. Kia respected that but it made her job much more difficult.

Swan saw Heda look sideways and move instinctively to protect the blonde who had stepped forward. He was impressed when Clarke waved her away and Heda obeyed. He was so intrigued with her he didn’t notice his daughter coming out of the shadows.

A sudden commotion happened with the Grounders behind Clarke making various gestures, crossing themselves, and other vestiges of ancient religions. She heard the mumbled hexes and prayers to deities no one believed in anymore and glanced to her right to see the cause.

Silently, like one of the ghosts everyone insisted haunted Manhattan, a young girl had come out of the same alley Swan had come from. She was small, pale and her right leg was curled up behind her like the tendons just weren’t long enough to let her straighten it. Despite leaning heavily on a wooden crutch when she walked she made no audible sound. It wasn’t her eerie silence that made the rock hard warriors try to ward off evil, it was her eyes.

Clarke and Abby assumed she was blind as soon as they saw her. Her eyes were completely white and had a milkiness to them that made both women think cataracts, they assumed she had been born with them and that the faint but rather creepy glow coming off of her had much more to do with radiation than superstition.

The girl made her way directly to the side of the man called Swan and Clarke reassessed her assumption, surely if she were blind she couldn’t walk directly to him without help? When Swan noticed her he looked upset and his hand went to the hilt of his sword, he postured, puffing out his barrel of a chest and glared at Lexa and Zora with hard eyes.

Clarke stepped forward again and his hard eyes fell on her. She held her hands up showing him she held no weapon and then she began to speak. “Swan, is it?” She tilted her head slightly to the right and smiled slightly. I made Heda promise to let me speak with you and your people. I am Clarke Griffin of….”

She was cut off by the girl, “The Sky People.” Clarke registered the look of shock on Swan’s face as her eyes flitted over to the child. The little girl was smiling a large, bright smile and like the smile of any child her’s was infectious. Clarke and Abby both returned the smile while beside her Kita was
looking like she would rather be anywhere else.

“That is right. I am Heda Kom Skai Kru, and this is our Chancellor.” Clarke gestured to Abby who stepped forward and nodded respectfully to swan.

Clarke noticed that the previously empty streets were suddenly filled with people, many with visible mutations. They were all staring and whispering among themselves. Clarke heard Skai Kru and knew they were all trying to catch a glimpse of her and Abby.

Kane had stepped forward as well and Clarke knew it was for the same reason she now found herself surrounded by Kita and Lexa. They weren’t sure why these people were so interested in the Sky People and they weren’t sure they wanted to find out.

Clarke brushed past her two protectors and knelt down in front of the girl. Swan reacted and reached to draw his sword but a raised hand from the child stopped him, which was fortunate because Lexa already had her sword drawn and was stopped by a raised hand from her wife. Clarke shook her head at the two and frowned. “I will not hurt her. I just want to speak with her.” Clarke reassured Swan who glared at her.

“She speaks true father.” The girl addressed Swan which Clarke thought explained his overprotectiveness and she forgave him a little. “She is the Sky Princess.” The girl giggled happily and gasps came from the crowd.

Zora stepped forward then and looked at the little girl, “Seer,” she addressed her tentatively.

“Mayor, you have returned and you have brought your love, just as I said you would.” Clarke thought the child looked smug and Zora grinned sheepishly as she glanced back at Rock who raised her eyebrow in question. Swan interrupted.

“When have you two spoken?” He asked, his voice hard. Then he scolded the girl, “I told you to stay away from her.” He edged forward to place himself slightly in between the Mayor and his daughter.

“I mean her no harm, Swan.” Zora regarded the man with her level eyes.

“Your people fear the ones like her above all of my castaways. She is at once, hated, coveted and feared, among you.” Swan was one of very few people who could look down on the Mayor and he was drawing himself up to his full height as he spoke with venom.

“I do not fear her, nor covet her, and I certainly do not hate her.” Zora dismissed his concerns and looked at the girl again. “How do you know about the Sky Princess?” She asked gently, more for Clarke than herself.

Her question was met with a giggle, “I am the seer, Mayor. You know this, you ask for the Sky People, not yourself.” The child turned her unseeing gaze to Clarke and Abby’s medical curiosity made her ask.

“Child, can you see?” She remembered how Zora addressed her and then added, “I mean like we do.”

The girl shook her head side to side, “No, Sky Queen. Not as you do. I see in other ways.” She smiled again and returned her gaze to Clarke. “You are the Princess, so that makes your mother the Queen. Your ways are strange to me I know these titles are not your own but it is what comes to mind…” The child trailed off.
“It’s OK, you can address us that way, or you can call me Clarke.” Clarke grinned when the child’s face lit up, “What is your name?” She asked the seer.

“I have been called many things, but the name my mother gave me is Pythia. My father calls me Thia.”

“Thia, that’s pretty.” Clarke smiled, “May I call you Thia?”

“Yes, Princess…. “ The girl giggled again, “I mean Clarke.” Her pale features blushed slightly and Lexa watched her wife in awe. Lexa did not fear the seer but she would never think to speak with her like a normal child. Those blessed with the sight of mind were either sought out and captured to be used for their gift, or cursed, feared, and hunted down by her people. She felt shame wash over her and then the child’s face snapped toward her.

“Heda, you feel it? The shame of your people? Your Sky Princess has shown you our humanity and now your heart breaks for what your people have done to mine for the last hundred years.”

Lexa felt tears grow in her eyes and she looked down at the ground away from the child’s sightless and yet all seeing gaze. “Sha, seer. I feel the shame of my people.” She admitted.

Zora joined her, “I already promised you seer, if I can do anything to change the way your people are treated, I will.”

The girl smiled, “You thought I didn’t know who you were when you said that. I knew, Mayor. You will hold the keys to York soon enough, your promise will be forgotten, not in malice, but in the business of rebuilding and the din of the clamouring voices crying for your attention.”

Zora cut in speaking passionately, “Your people have been a friend to me, you have helped me, I won’t forget, seer.”

“You will.” Her voice was gentle and understanding, far too much for a child her age. “But you will be forgiven. The Sky Princess will remind you and spur you to action.” She turned back to Clarke and smiled again.

“Thia, my people have no fear or hatred of yours.” Clarke spoke gently to the child and then looked at Swan, “We would like to form some kind of alliance or treaty with you. There is much we can learn from each other.”

Abby quickly added, “If I may offer our advanced medical services there is a lot we might be able to do for your people.”

“You wish to fix my leg.” Thia looked directly at Abby who looked startled.

“Yes, Thia. It appears you were born with a deformity I can fix with a simple surgery. And I may be able to restore some of your sight as well.” She added timidly, “If you wish.”

“I have more sight than any of you.” The girl smiled, “But I would love to be able to walk without this, and maybe to run.” She giggled and raised her hands in the air letting her crutch fall, the boy behind her reached out and caught it in his left arm. Clarke saw his hand was shaped more like a lobster’s claw than a human hand. When the boy saw her looking he tried to cover up his arm with his cape.

Clarke reached out and touched the boys hand, she patted him reassuringly and took the crutch from him returning it to Thia. She smiled softly at the boy and he looked at her with adoration for her simple act of acceptance. No ‘normal’ had ever touched his affected arm without revulsion before as
Swan watched all of this and looked at Abby, “You are the Sky Queen?” he asked and then looked at Kane, “Are you her King?”

Kane blushed and shook his head but Abby reached out for his hand in her first public admittance of the relationship that had been growing privately between them since coming to the ground, “Yes, he is.” Clarke smiled, and behind them Octavia whooped, Thia giggled as children are prone to do.

Abby continued, “My people don’t use the words king and queen but I am the Chancellor, and he is my partner and my general. Clarke is my daughter and our Heda.”

Thia spoke again, “She is Heda and she is joined to Heda Lexa.” The girl found this amusing and giggled uncontrollably. Clarke looked at the little girl in wonder.

“That is right, Thia. Heda Lexa and I are joined. How did you know that?” Clarke really wanted to find a logical explanation for everything the child knew.

Thia looked at Clarke very seriously and sighed, “Clarke, you are on the ground, your Sky rules can’t explain everything. You must accept that. You must allow yourself to believe. I am a seer, I know these things because I see. Do not hold to your reason, you should fear the tunnel and the island Clarke, fear it and trust your fear, your life may depend on it.”

Clarke’s jaw dropped open and while she stared at the little girl Lexa got back to the mission at hand. “Swan, let us pass through without hinderance. We mean you no harm.”

Swan grimaced, “You can cross to the south and fight your way through the assassins who have taken up residence there. My people will guide you and help you clear them out. But there are many of them. Many of you will die. I beseech you to go back. Wait for a bigger army.”

Lexa spoke next, “We do not go south.”

Zora spoke up, “We go to the tunnel, Swan”

“The tunnel is shut!” Swan shouted at them.

Thia spoke up in Trigedasleng and then slower in English her voice ghostly and vibrating with an eeriness that unsettled all of the warriors, “the tunnel is shut and the dead keep the island, they do not suffer the living to pass.”

Lexa drew her sword then and held it high above her head, “If the tunnel is shut I will open it! Dead or alive the keepers of the island will suffer me!”

Swan’s people drew weapons when Lexa’s sword was drawn and Lexa’s people followed suit. Heda did not falter, she sheathed her sword but stalked toward a man who had only one eye but it was staring down the shaft of an arrow that was pointed directly at her, she walked right up to him until the tip of his arrow was touching her breast.

“I am Heda, I command the thirteen clans and none will defy me, dead or alive.” Lexa was practically snarling and Clarke watched her wife stalk back toward Swan and Thia. “The way will be opened, I will pass.”

Swan looked pained but nodded at her, “The prophecy calls for a Sky Princess to lead my people back into the light, so I must believe you will make it through alive. After all she cannot fulfill the prophecy if she dies screaming in terror in the tunnel. You can pass Heda, though it will be with a
heavy heart that I let you through.”

Swan looked very seriously at Heda, “You know where the tunnel leads.” His voice was hushed, “The terror of the tunnel may kill you but Manhattan will steal your soul.”

Lexa nodded gravely at Swan, “My fight will continue beyond this day, Swan. I will walk the haunted ground but I will not fear the evil that lives there. I am Heda.” She sheathed her sword and let her gaze wander the crowd, she saw fear and awe and when she turned to her warriors she saw adoration.

‘Heda, Heda, Heda,” her warriors began to chant and she let them continue for a minute before holding up her hand to silence them.

Thia suddenly looked panicked, “Clarke, if you must go I will try and help you.” She quieted and seemed to be concentrating on something, “Mayor, your love is special she finally said.”

Rock looked more pale than usual as she stepped forward and spoke, “I am Rock, Regent of the Lake people.” She paused and the little girl searched the crowd and found Cade.

“It is good that there are two of you.” She paused until Cade stepped forward. “Ride one of you at the front and one at the back. Concentrate on thoughts of each other.” She nodded at Rock, “You can help keep the terror at bay, you are unreadable to me and the spirits will not be able to enter your minds.”

Cade and his sister looked at one another before Cade spoke, “Our grandmother was a seer, she hid it from our people but she told us, she said her power was latent within each of us but that even latent it could protect us.”

Thia smiled, “Yes.” was all she said.

Clarke watched the whole thing speechless and shivered, Abby looked at her daughter, “There are things even science can’t explain, Clarke.”

Clarke looked very surprised, “You believe in ghosts and… all of this, Mom?”

“Things happened on the Ark when we were young, Clarke. Things we never shared with you kids. Things we couldn’t explain.” Abby looked at Marcus who nodded gravely.

“Fear the tunnel indeed.” He sighed and looked at Thia. “Can you help us, is there anything else we can do to prepare or protect ourselves from what awaits us in the tunnel?”

Clarke couldn’t believe her ears, her mother and Kane were going along with this ghost business. She sighed and Thia giggled. The laughter wasn’t the innocent child’s laughter from earlier, it was different, creepy, and it sent shivers up Clarke’s spine. “There is no help for those who enter such darkness. Once you enter the tunnel you are beyond my help, only your own courage will get you through.”

“Courage, we have.” Clarke said with determination and then asked one more question, “what prophecy were you talking about?”

“Your coming was foretold by the last seer to live amongst us before me. I felt you when you fell to Earth, I knew you would come and I have been anxious to meet you, Clarke.” Thia smiled and Clarke returned the smile. “Fear the tunnel and the island, but trust yourself, and come back to us
when you can. I would like very much to be friends with you.” Thia turned and began to walk away.

“Wait!” Clarke called out and stepped forward. “Can I hug you?” She asked the little girl.

“Most cannot, touching me hurts their skin.” She sounded like a very sad little girl as she admitted
this and Clarke looked towards Abby who returned to her horse for a med kit. She took out a
portable radiation meter and joined Clarke standing next to the girl.

Clarke didn’t wait for her mother to begin the scan, she was from the Sky and she knew her
tolerance was much higher than most Grounders. She didn’t hesitate she just pulled the little girl into
a warm hug, “I am from the Sky, remember. Hugging you won’t hurt me.” Clarke felt tears on her
cheek and realized the girl was crying. Then she felt small arms snake around her neck as Thia
hugged her back.

Abby ran scans on Thia and discovered she was emitting enough radiation to seriously harm the
average Grounder. Abby knew Clarke was in no danger as living in the stars had increased her
people’s resistance to radiation.

She was surprised when the hug ended and Lexa stepped forward and reached out to the girl. She
tried to stop her daughter-in-law but Lexa knelt and reached her hand out grasping the girls forearm
in the traditional greeting of her people. Lexa did not pull back although Abby thought it was
probably painful for her to touch the child. She shook firmly like she would have with a leader of
another clan and she spoke to the child, “I promise you I will bring Clarke of the Sky People back
here and I will come as well. We will make peace and try to right the wrongs we have done to you.”
Only when she finished speaking did Lexa release the girl and stand.

Abby pulled something from her bag getting ready to treat radiation burns or worse but Thia spoke to
her, “Heda has naturally high tolerance, the spirit will not choose one who does not. She will not
need your medicine, Sky Queen.” She smiled at Lexa but then her expression changed and she
cocked her head to the side like she was listening to something. Suddenly she spoke loudly, “Where
is the Sky girl?”

“I’m right here, Thia.” Clarke answered.

“No, princess, not you. The other Sky Girl.” Her milky eyes landed on Octavia who looked a little
freaked out. “You are of the Sky and the Ground and your heart is full of bravery. You can save
him. Trust yourself.” With her last cryptic message she turned back toward the alley and as she
walked away she spoke to Swan.

“Father, let them pass. The way will open for Heda and the Sky People. I will pray they make it
through the tunnel,” she sighed and spoke quietly, “and when they walk on the ground in Manhattan
I will pray they keep their sanity.”

An hour later the group found themselves looking at the mouth of the tunnel. Swan and his people
had led them through a complicated maze of rubble and junk that led to the entrance. Looking into it
now the darkness seemed blacker than even the reaper tunnels under Mount Weather after the
mountain’s power supply was blown. Clarke swallowed hard and began to wish they had risked the
assassins to the south.

Swan and some of his people had led the group this far and they were busy handing out torches and
lighting them for the group. The warriors were thankful and they began to see the people they had
always thought of as mutants as worthy of respect. It was a heavy mood with the fear of the tunnel
hanging heavy over everyone.

Swan spoke quietly to Lexa, Zora, Rock, Clarke, and Ro. “The torches will last for around four hours. You must make it through before they go out. You will not live long without them. Also, horses won’t enter the tunnel, we can take care of them for you until you return. You have my word.” He bowed his head but Ro interrupted him.

“Swan of Bad Town, I am Ro of the Horse People. My horses will go where their riders go, they are not your average steeds. My riders will surround the rest of the riders and give the Trikru horses courage. We will ride through this tunnel.” Ro looked proud and fierce and Swan didn’t show any sign of doubting her although in his heart he couldn’t imagine a horse that would allow itself to be led into that darkness.

Clarke asked one more time, worried edging into her tone, for some clarification, “So… ghosts OK, but are there any living things in there we need to worry about?”

Swan looked around at his people who were helping light the torches and encouraged them to answer. A young man who had a mutated right hand with only three long, thin fingers answered first, “We built the maze to keep them in.”

A young woman with a third eye growing out of her left cheekbone interjected, “They don’t usually come out very far though, they hate the light. Only on the darkest of nights do they come into the town…”

“Do what come!?” Clarke demanded.

The woman shook her head and glanced nervously back at the tunnel, “we do not speak of them, Sky Princess.”

Another woman stepped forward tentatively, She looked much younger than the others and her skin sagged and bunched around the left half of her face making her eye bulge from its socket and the left side of her mouth droop and sag. She had a thick scar running the entire length of her face. It divided her features perfectly into the disfigured left half and the startlingly beautiful right half. Clarke wondered if the girl had done it herself. “I do not fear them, I will tell you what I can. There are winged creatures that fly out of the tunnel at night. They are big enough to carry a human away to feast on. They will hunt you.”

Octavia gritted her teeth, “fan-fucking-tastic, giant mutant vampire bats.”

Clarke exchanged sympathetic glances with her friend and turned her attention back to the girl, “Anything else?” She almost hated to know the answer.

“There are four legged beasts that come and go from the tunnel, fearsome but not much different than beasts you have seen in the forests. The danger lies in their stealth in the darkness.” The girl shot a furtive look back over her shoulder at the tunnel and her voice dropped to a whisper, “four legs should worry you… but eight legs should terrify you.”

Clarke whipped her head around to look at Lexa, “Eight legs!? If there is a giant fucking spider in there, we are turning around!”

No retreating footsteps, Houmon.” Lexa grinned, fearless as she tightened her armour and checked her weapons, she stopped and looked at her wife, “I will protect you, Clarke.”

“Who will protect you, love?” Clarke muttered under her breath and was suddenly wishing the ghosts were real and that they were the only threat in the tunnel. She glanced around and saw the
Grounder warriors suddenly looking much happier, as if having some living beast to fight, no matter how terrible, boosted their confidence. She shook her head and laughed ruefully.

Swan nodded his thanks to the young people who had spoken to Clarke and then he spoke slowly “I pray there are none left, we haven’t seen one in a long time… but sometimes there are the ruined ones. They are human but not truly people, their minds are warped beyond recovery, but they are fearsome fighters. If you meet them shoot them. Do not hesitate.” He nodded down at the pistol on Clarke’s hip.

“Reapers?” Lincoln asked, his eyes going wide. “So far from the mountain? How is it possible?”

Octavia reached out and placed her hand on his back, “It can’t be Reapers, Linc. Don’t worry.” Abby glanced sideways at Kane and Clarke saw a look pass between them that made her wonder if her mother had found something out about the Reapers and the Red that creates them that she had yet to share. She figured now was not the time to ask and so she turned to Swan.

“Thank you for your help.” She looked back at his people who had come this far with them and helped them with the torches, her eyes landed on the young woman with the scar and she nodded at her, “Thank you all. I will return when I can. The Sky People will be an ally to you.” She smiled at the cheers they gave her and then muttered to herself, “if we live through this damn tunnel.”

A few minutes later they were ready to go. Every rider held a torch, Swan insisted they carry as much light as possible, that it would keep the creatures away. Lexa, Zora and Rock, and Ro were at the front of the procession. Ro’s riders were spaced out surrounding the others and her horses did not flinch or act skittish like the others as they passed the threshold of the tunnel. Only Lexa’s horse stayed completely calm like one of Hirrim’s, taking it’s cue from it’s fearless rider. Clarke rode directly behind Lexa with Kita at her right side. Abby and Kane were on her left and Indra rode behind her with Octavia and Lincoln.

Jay was next to Lincoln. He had become like a shadow following the Trikru warrior everywhere he went. Some of the other Trikru were still distant and awkward with Lincoln since his return to humanity after being a Reaper, but the young man from York idolized him and was never far from his side.

Lincoln didn’t mind, Jay was young and he tried hard to be a good warrior. His loyalty to his Mayor impressed Lincoln and he was a good tracker and a decent fighter. He was also good natured and jovial so having him around was pleasant. Jay was also learning a lot from Lincoln and he felt like a proud older brother when he watched Jay progress as a warrior.

The rest of the group were lined up four warriors abreast surrounded by a riders from the Horse People on the sides. Ro’s predictions were correct and the horses ridden by her army walked willingly into the darkness of the tunnel. The other horses whinnied and showed nerves but all of them went in. Cade and Dal brought up the rear, as the seer requested, also flanked by Hirrim’s horsemen.

Rock and Cade were both concentrating hard on each other. They didn’t know what the seer meant when she told them they could help keep the terror at bay, but their people believed the words of a seer without question and so they tried.

As she entered the tunnel, torch held high, Lexa felt an ominous chill threaten to creep down her spine but she refused to show any nerves, or allow her body to tremble, she was Heda after-all.
Clarke glanced up as they passed the threshold and saw a sign on the side of the tunnel reading 8371 feet. She felt the darkness engulf her as they moved further into the tunnel and she felt fear grip her. Her heart began pounding in her chest and her throat felt constricted. She swore she could smell death, and even though she knew that if she could it was likely the decomposing head of Yor that Zora still carried with her, she couldn't help the goosebumps that erupted along her arms or the hair that suddenly stood at the nape of her neck.

Clarke could hear Octavia muttering behind her, “God damn creepy ass tunnel with huge vampire bats and giant fucking spiders. Just another day on the Ground, bring it on bitches!” She heard Lincoln’s soft chuckle and she took strength from Octavia’s courage. She felt her heartbeat slow a little.

Once the entire party was in the tunnel Clarke looked around. She had expected it to be littered with the remains of cars stuck in the tunnel as the bombs fell. She was surprised to see it was clear and the only debris seemed to be random things that had blown in, or been dragged in, over the years. She quietly whispered to her mother, “No cars?”

“No dear, remember your history, most large cities had been on lockdown before the bombs fell. There were threats made and the government was trying to keep people off of the streets. They hoped to be able to respond to any emergencies quickly by keeping the streets clear. They expected an attack, but they didn’t expect…. well, what happened.”

Clarke nodded remembering her history teacher on the Ark saying something similar and then turned to focus on their surroundings again. They were far enough inside the tunnel now and as she glanced back she could no longer see the light from outside. She knew they were not nearly close enough to the other end to see any light from it and she once again felt the cold hand of fear grip her heart.

Lexa was peering into the darkness in front of her and gripping her sword. She wanted to draw it but she didn’t want any of her riders to panic. She could hear sounds around them, small sounds of padded feet and soft swishing sounds of other movement. She also heard the sharp chirping noises she knew belonged to what Octavia had referred to as vampire bats. They sounded like they were flying near the ceiling up ahead of them, where the light from the torches failed. She hoped they stayed there.

Zora and Rock heard it too and so did Ro, Lexa saw Ro’s General gripping his spear as well. She wondered if Clarke could hear it but suspected anyone in the middle wouldn’t hear it yet, over the sounds of the horses hooves on the floor of the tunnel. She risked a quick glance back to check on her wife and she saw Clarke peering into the darkness ahead. Kita and Ro’s rider next to her both had death grips on the hilts of the swords they had slung from their waist and Kita was intently staring to her right. As Lexa watched she let go of her sword and her hand flew to one of the many daggers the Ice Guard had hidden on her body. She whispered a harsh slow down to the rider at her side and as he slowed enough to let her get a few inches ahead her wrist flicked and her dagger shot into the darkness.

A yelping sound of pain came from the darkness and then a loud thump was heard as a body hit the ground. After that there was the terrible sound of whatever Kita had slain being descended upon by others presumably of it’s own kind. There was the tearing sound of flesh and the smacking sounds of eating.

Clarke stared into the darkness wondering what that was and how the hell Kita saw it.

Lexa eyed the girl and she shrugged, “It was crouched, ready to pounce. I don’t think our torches will keep them away forever.”
Lexa nodded her agreement and turned back to face front, she looked over towards Ro, “Can we go faster?” She was content to let the Horse Clan set the pace since they knew far more about the animals than the rest of them. She had advised Lexa that in such darkness the horses would fare much better with a slow pace.

Ro could also hear the sounds surrounding them and knew that whatever creatures were out there would eventually attack, she nudged her horse from the slow walk they were currently moving at into a much faster walk, but she held her horse back from going into a full trot. She knew that with the horses at this speed it would only take them a half an hour to clear the tunnel, she just hoped nothing delayed them.

The rest of her people matched her horses new pace and the horses in the middle picked up as well. They carried on for two or three minutes in nervous silence listening to the creatures moving around them in the darkness. Suddenly Lexa heard a shout from behind her and the sounds of her warriors drawing weapons. She forced herself to keep her focus and she shouted, “Keep moving as you fight, do not stop!” She kept her horse moving and she continued to hear the sounds of battle.

Clarke was not as disciplined as Lexa and couldn’t stop herself from turning to see what was happening behind her. She regretted her decision immediately as she saw about six rows back from her four warriors with swords stuck into an extremely large and horrid creature. She could tell it was some sort of large cat, likely a cougar, or had been at one time in it’s ancestry. It had no fur and it’s skin was translucent with large black sores covering it. It’s face seemed to be all mouth. The thing had a huge jaw and extremely large teeth, that even at this distance appeared razor sharp.

Clarke noticed that the creature had taken down a horse as it attacked and there was now an injured warrior. She was from Lanta, and Clarke had admired the way the young woman had fought against the York assassins. Clarke immediately began to drop back and and she felt Abby doing the same thing.

Lexa knew what was happening and she whipped her head around to growl at Kita but the guard was already gone, riding against the flow to get back to Clarke’s side.

The Trikru warrior who had scooped up the injured girl onto his own horse saw the Sky Heda coming and urged his own horse forward to meet her. As he pulled up in between Abby and Clarke they pulled the girl up further and laid her out over the three horses that now walked side by side. Kita arranged herself by Clarke’s side once again and the rest of the warriors moved around to reform the ranks they had entered in. The rear of the party had to skirt clear of the dead horse that was now being tugged into the darkness by the catlike mutants. Bringing up the rear Cade and Dal got a good look at the animals and Dal shuddered in revulsion.

Clarke had the Lanta warriors upper torso on her horse and she stroked the woman’s hair and looked into her eyes, “Brax, it’s going to be OK. That thing got you with it’s claws, but it’s not as bad as it looks.” Clarke smiled at the young woman and got a stoic nod in return.

Abby had the girls lower body and was cleaning the claw marks on her thigh and wrapping the wounds. “We’re lucky, it just grazed you. The wounds aren’t too deep.” Abby smiled at the girl.

Brax squeezed Clarke’s hand and shook her head sadly, “Heda, the wounds, they hurt… but it’s not normal, they burn… the creature’s claws must be poisoned. I can feel it. Let me back onto a horse, I will fight them when they attack again. I am already dead, but I can take some of them with me.”

“Mom!” Clarke looked quickly at her mother and she noticed Abby had pulled out one of her
portable radiation detectors. She scanned the wounds and frowned. She quickly pulled out a needle and injected the woman with DTPA to combat the radiation that had been introduced by the claws.

“You’re going to be fine, Brax.” Abby smiled at her patient. “The creatures are radioactive, but that shot I gave you will take care of the radiation that got into your system. When Clarke and Lexa brought down the mountain I got access to all of the medicine they had stockpiled. Since radiation was one of their main concerns they had a lot of this.” She held the needle up and smiled at Brax, who smiled weakly back. Abby continued wrapping her leg and when she finished she ordered the young woman, “You are riding with me. In front or behind, I don’t care, but you are with me.”

Brax looked about ready to object but when she saw the look Abby had fixed her with she thought better of it. “Yes, Sky Chancellor. It will be my honour to ride behind you. I have my bow and arrows and I swear none of the creatures will get close to you.” She grinned at the Trikru warrior who had rescued her from her fallen horse and placed a quick kiss on his lips before shifting fully, if somewhat painfully, over to Abby’s horse.

Clarke winked at Hamil and whispered, “All you had to do was save her from a mutant monster in a haunted tunnel to get a kiss, Hamil.” The large tattooed man grinned at his Sky Heda and nodded before dropping back to his original position. Clarke, Abby and Kita also moved forward so they were behind Lexa once more.

“Clarke,” Lexa’s teeth were gritted and her jaw tight, “Do not leave my side again.”

“I am a healer,” she gestured toward her mother, “we will go where we are needed.” Clarke was slightly irritated but she knew Lexa had been worried about her so she softened, “Kita was with me, I was safe. Just get us through this damn tunnel, Lex.”

A few moments later there was an increase in the movements and sounds from the shadows surrounding them. Lexa realized the creatures were about to attack and she shouted, “Hod up!”

Reins were pulled and horses stopped, “Make ready!” her warriors dismounted quickly, held their torches high and drew their weapons. They led the horses to the middle and stood between them and whatever was coming out of the darkness. They knew they would need the steeds to carry them through this tunnel after the beasts had been driven back.

Those who were still mounted in the middle drew bows and nocked arrows, the hunting party had practiced this many times and they left the perfect amount of space for arrows to fly past them and hopefully take out the first wave of the attacking animals.

They didn’t wait long, silence turned to snarls, roars and the pounding of feet as the creatures ran out of the darkness into the light. By the time the archers could see them they were already within meters of the front line, arrows flew and shots rang out from the Skaikru guns.

Clarke had moved up close to Kita and warned her that she would be firing. The noise didn’t even make the Ice Guard flinch as she nocked arrow after arrow quickly shooting three cats, two died on the spot as her shot pierced the skulls and one growled in anger at the arrow now sticking out of it’s shoulder but continued it’s attack. The Horse Clan rider next to them finished the cat off with a strong throw of his spear and Kita nodded in approval as she noticed a long, thin, rope tied to the spear that allowed the rider to jerk it back from the dead animal into his hands again.

Clarke had taken down two more with her gun and their corner looked to be quieting down. She looked around for Lexa and saw her and Zora had dismounted while Rock fired arrows from the horse to cover them. They had slain three more and were quickly heading toward their horses again.
She glanced to the rear and saw chaos, Lexa shouted to Zora to lead the group and handed her reins to the Mayor. Her lithe form quickly disappeared into the fray at the rear of her party, Indra at her side. Abby followed hoping to be of some help to the wounded but Kita held tight to the elbow of the Sky Heda and refused to allow her to follow. “Hold steady, Heda. We must defend our position and keep the front clear.” Clarke glared at her but turned back to the front, mounted her horse and moved decisively into the position left vacant by her wife.

Clarke remained on her horse with her gun at the ready she covered the left and Rock covered the right. Kita handed her reins to Clarke as she dismounted and joined Zora on the ground. Ro and one of her generals flanked them as they held their ground. One more cat attacked from the front and was taken out quickly by Zora and Kita. Zora grinned at the girl, “Shame that pretty blue blade is now covered in radioactive monster cat blood.” She laughed with her trademark abandon and Kita joined her.

Lexa ran through the confusion and hollered orders to her warriors. She took the right side and Indra ran to the left shouting her own orders. There were many more cats attacking the middle than the front and Lexa yelled for the party to keep moving forward. They began to move again, slowly but steadily, as they fought off the grotesque creatures. With Heda and Indra’s leadership bringing order to the middle of the battle the situation was beginning to look under control. Lexa quickly scanned the area checking the perimeter and estimated that she had five people seriously injured, possibly dead and that they had killed more than twenty cats.

As she taking a closer look along the left perimeter she saw one of her Trikru warriors dismount and run towards a downed Horse Clan rider. There was so much chaos between her and them she couldn’t get there, she shouted to Indra and pointed to the scene.

Indra’s hand went immediately to her thigh and she pulled a dagger free as she saw a mutant cat waiting in the shadows. As it pounced she threw her dagger, threading it through the chaos, it found it’s mark in the skull of a cat that was midair. The momentum of the dead beast carried it forward and it slammed into the warrior knocking him to the ground. He struggled to get the weight off of him and then continued toward his friend. As he was dragging the wounded rider back to safety Indra made her way towards them to help.

Lexa looked around and thought with worry that the fight had caused them to drop a lot of torches, some of them still burned as they lay on the ground but she knew it was too dark as she shouted for everyone to pick up their torches she heard it, a terrible chirping and the thunderous flapping of giant wings.

“Get down!” She cried loudly, “Bats!” She watched in horror as two giant bats swooped down, there was no longer enough light to keep them at bay. They grabbed the Trikru warrior with the sharp talons at the end of their monstrous feet, and right behind them two more grabbed the wounded rider. The two men were too heavy to be lifted from the ground but they were dragged into the darkness and their screams echoed through the tunnel.

Lexa heard more noises through the screams and she knew there were more creatures, perhaps more cats perhaps something else, attacking the two men who were now beyond her help. Something inside her wouldn’t let them remain here, dead or alive she would leave no one here, not in this damned tunnel. Indra apparently had the same thought and she met Lexa’s gaze for just long enough to see a nod from her Heda.

Indra held her torch high and yelled to three men to her side. They joined her and the foursome quickly ran after the downed warriors. As they reached the edge Dal joined them and they held their torches high as they followed the screams.
They followed a trail of blood along the ground and quickly came upon two bodies that were clearly lifeless. As they approached with the torches whatever had been feasting on the bodies scuttled away into the darkness. Dal and one of the Trikru warriors quickly grabbed the bodies and they turned to run back towards the safety of the group.

When they got back to the group the corpses were thrown over a horse and Lexa shouted for everyone to bunch up toward the middle, and hold the remaining torches high. Indra moved quickly to her side shaking her head to let her know they had rescued bodies and not men. The torches were still not enough and the bats swooped again and again. The warriors mounted again and Zora had them all moving slowly forward. Most were laying low on their horses and waiting for the beasts to fly close enough to rise up and strike at them with their swords.

Those with steady hands were firing arrows and Lexa watched as several bats fell from the air. They were huge, she estimated the wingspan to be around six feet and they had sharp talons on the end of both their toes and thumbs. The cats seemed to have disappeared back into the shadows for now and the battle with the bats was going well Heda and Indra began to move steadily back to the front and along the way they managed to kill four of the flying terrors.

Heda watched with pride as she ran along shouting orders and encouragement, her people were staying strong and fighting bravely. She counted three more bodies slug over a horse, they hadn’t survived the cats. She also saw several of her people bleeding from close calls with the bat talons but no more were dragged into the darkness.

Lexa was close to the front when it happened, she watched as an arrow struck one of the bats and it dropped dead from the air, the body slammed into Kane and he was knocked off of his horse, dropping his torch. He landed hard and it knocked the wind out of him. He was far too close to the edge of the darkness and two more of the flying monsters were closing in on him. He struggled to get to his feet and he heard the a snarling coming from the darkness behind him. He reached for his gun, prepared to fight for his life.

Lexa was trying to get to Kane but she knew she couldn’t make it so she grabbed her bow. As she nocked an arrow she saw Jay leap from his horse and grab Kane in time to pull him out of the path of the giant bats. Lexa fired quickly, one of the bats went down but the other flew directly at Jay, it used it’s talons to strike him on the shoulder, a stunned Kane watched in horror as the boy fell over bleeding and in pain, two large gashes in his shoulder. As soon as he landed a dark, translucent, paw snuck out from the darkness and four claws dug into Jay’s already injured shoulder and pulled him away.

Kane pulled his gun and fired into the darkness and Lexa watched in helpless frustration as Lincoln ran past Kane, sword drawn. He didn’t even hesitate as he plunged into the all consuming darkness after his young friend.

Clarke heard Octavia scream Lincoln’s name as she looked back in time to she him run away from the protection of the group with his sword drawn. They heard screams coming from the darkness and Clarke watched as Octavia dismounted, jammed her hand into her saddle bag grabbing something then bent to pick up a fallen torch and launched herself after her lover.

‘Octavia! No!” Clarke shouted after her but the only answer she got was an echo of the seer’s words.

“ I can save him!” Octavia shouted as she plunged into the darkness after him. She had a small silver zippo lighter in her hand. She and Lincoln had been exploring some abandoned bunkers near Ton DC one day and she had come across it. She knew what it was from movies she had watched on the
Ark and she picked it up and tried it. To her delight it still worked and she played with it for a few days straight until it ran out of fuel.

She had taken it to Raven and asked her to ‘juice it up’ for her. Raven had forgotten about it with all of the other work she had going on, but right before they had left Ton DC for Sapeake she had remembered, refilled it with something much more volatile than lighter fluid and pressed it into Octavia’s hand with a wink and a grin.

“Come on Rave, I know you fixed it,” Octavia whispered to herself as she flicked the cover back and rested her thumb on the flintwheel. She heard a snarl next to her and sightlessly swung her sword into an unknown beast ending it’s fight. She heard Lincoln ahead of her, he was talking to Jay, telling him to keep fighting, she ran in that direction. As she got closer she flicked the lighter and it roared to life. The flame was very bright, very high, and very hot; it lit the torch easily.

“Yes! Raven you genius!” Octavia shouted as she laughed and whooped. She could now see Lincoln and Jay clearly just a few feet ahead. The bright light she wielded caused the bat that had clamped its mouth onto Jay’s neck and was draining his blood to release him and fly away quickly. There was one of the mutant cats about to pounce on Lincoln that quickly scuttled back from the light as well, and another bat that had it’s talons dug deeply into Lincoln’s shoulder was screaming in pain as the light got closer.

Lincoln had a firm grip on the beast and no matter how it tried to get away he was determined to kill it. Octavia walked over holding the torch high and used her dagger to quiet the screams. She took a quick look at Lincoln’s shoulder as he discarded the carcass and then they moved quickly to Jay’s side. Lincoln scooped him up in his strong arms and clamped his hand over the open wounds on his neck that were bleeding profusely. Octavia led the way back to the group still holding her torch high in the air.

Clarke was listening in desperation to the sounds coming from the darkness, she heard Octavia whoop and call out Raven’s name and she saw a faint glow. Then there was a terrible screaming noise that she knew couldn’t be human and shortly thereafter the glow began to get brighter.

Lexa was right beside Clarke and she smiled, “They are coming back, Clarke. She’s OK.” Clarke knew Lexa was right but she couldn’t relax until she saw the crazy brunette with her own eyes. As soon as the light from Octavia’s torch joined the light from the rest of the group Clarke jumped down from her horse and ran to hug her.

Octavia returned the embrace quickly and then directed Clarke to Jay. Indra was already at Lincoln’s side helping him carry the boy and Clarke took one look at the blood flowing from under Lincoln’s hand and called out for her mother.

Abby had been toward the back of the group doing some quick patch jobs on some of the injuries sustained in the cat attacks and the subsequent bat attacks. She rushed back toward the front when Kane had been knocked from his horse and she was checking him over when Clarke called out to her.

Lincoln and Clarke carried the young York soldier to the centre of the group and kept him low to the ground away from the still circling bats. The warriors were getting better at cutting the beasts from the air as they dive-bombed and more were being picked off with arrows as well. Lexa was pleased with her warriors, they had been successful in fighting off the mutant cats and now they were holding off the giant bats, but she knew that had to press on. Standing still in this tunnel would eventually get them all killed.

“Clarke, get him on a horse and treat him as you did Brax. We need to keep moving.” Lexa’s tone
left no room for argument and Clarke recognized the truth behind her words. Abby, however was only concerned with her patient.

“If we move him he might die!” She protested looking to Lincoln for support. He shook his head sadly and looked the doctor in the eye.

“If we stay here long enough to treat him it is likely we will all die.” Lincoln glanced around them into the air and along the edge of the darkness. “There are more creatures out there than we can fight, and our torches won’t last forever.”

Abby exhaled harshly and nodded, “Keep pressure on his wounds.” Once Lincoln had him she jumped up and mounted her horse. Brax moved quickly, dismounting and limping over to Jay’s horse. Once Abby was mounted Kane moved his horse next to hers and then Clarke pulled up on the other side. Lincoln kept pressure on Jay’s neck and Zora came to help lift him. Indra, Lincoln and Zora placed him carefully on the horses with Clarke supporting his head and shoulders. Lincoln’s hands were replaced by Abby’s and his feet were resting on Kane’s horse.

Clarke took over the pressure on the neck wounds as Abby grabbed some supplies from her saddlebag. She worked quickly, cleaning the wounds, applying pressure bandages and trying to get the bleeding under control. Once the main wounds were bandaged she cleaned the talon and claw marks and gave Jay the same injection she had given Brax earlier.

While all of this was happening the convoy had begun to move again. Ro had dropped back to hold the reins of Abby and Clarke’s horses and lead them along with the rest, since the two women needed their hands to work on saving Jay’s life. There was still an occasional attacking bat but the archers were taking them out before they got too close.

Rock had been trying to keep track of the distance they had travelled and guessed that they were just passing the halfway point. The further they went she noticed that the shuffling and growling sounds in the periphery had quieted and the bats seemed to have mostly flown off as well. This should have been good news but a foreboding feeling settled in her stomach.

She was trying to push away the sense of uneasiness that stole over and her just concentrate on connecting with her brother, focusing on the seer’s words. She felt something brush against her face her horse stopped walking. She looked back at Zora and then over at Lexa, It wasn’t just her, all of the horses in the front stopped and they refused to continue. Lexa and Zora jumped down to investigate and they saw that the horses had come into contact with a few thick white strands of silk that hung down from the roof. Lexa pulled her sword and cut away several sticky strands.

She took the thumb sized strands in her hand and moved over toward Zora. “How are we going to handle this…? We have fought a few giant spiders before in the forests, but in here, in the dark.” Lexa glanced ahead of them and shook her head.

“If we can avoid getting caught in the webs we can fight them. Will they burn?” Zora asked looking at the strands in Lexa’s hand with curiosity. She held up the torch and grinned, “Let’s find out.”

Lexa returned the grin and held the strands up and Zora moved her torch in closer. Neither of them were expecting the reaction the flame caused when it came into contact with the web. The sticky glue-like substance that coated the silk strands was indeed flammable and the fire shot along the web to Lexa’s fingers. She tried to throw the whole thing down and stomp it out but it stuck to her fingers and she had to smother it quickly against her clothes. She ended up with some singed fingertips and a huge grin on her face.
“Let’s light them up!” She sounded like an excited kid and Zora grinned back and nodded enthusiastically.

“Hod Up!” Rock called out to the two of them as they started walking into the darkness looking for more spider web to burn. When the two women stopped and looked up at her questioningly she sighed and frowned at them. “Don’t you think we should try a little more before we go burning the whole tunnel down around us? And what about the smoke and fumes? There is no easy way out of here, we could all die from the smoke alone.”

Lexa and Zora had the good sense to look sheepish and agree with Rock’s assessment of the situation. “What should we do?” Zora finally asked.

“Bring Cade and Dal to the front. Dal is kind of an expert when it comes to fire. I’ll go to the back to keep to the seer’s words.” Rock offered.

“Not without me you won’t.” Zora immediately replied and Rock didn’t argue.

Lexa considered it, she liked having Zora and Rock at the front with her, they were both formidable warriors and they never knew what they were going to be walking into. She reasoned Cade and Dal were equally skilled and if Dal really did know a lot about fire he might be able to safely burn enough of the webs to get them through the spider’s lair.

“Send them up.” She said as she nodded at Zora.

While they were heading to the back of the group Lexa took the time to check on Clarke and see how Jay was doing. Abbey had stabilized the young man and Kane had propped Jay up in front of him and was riding with his arms wrapped around holding him in place. Jay was conscious but in obvious pain and unable to ride on his own.

“You won’t be able to fight riding like that.” Lexa directed her comment to Kane.

“He saved my life. I will carry him through. Besides, I can still fire my gun.” Kane replied, his voice was even despite his eyes betraying the pain he felt blaming himself for the young man’s injuries.

Lexa merely nodded and looked over at Brax who rode next to Kane on Jay’s horse. She spoke when Lexa looked her way, “Heda. I will protect them. And The Sky Chancellor as well.” Her voice was low and strong and she sounded determined.

She nodded to the front, “The spider’s are next aren’t they? We have a lot of mutant spiders in Lanta.” She pulled out her bow and held Lexa’s eyes, “They are hard to kill. The head and the front of the body is hard and not easily pierced, an arrow through the eye will work, but the easiest way is cutting through the underbelly, it is soft, and unprotected. That’s where we have to hit them.”

Lexa nodded once in understanding and ordered Brax to make sure all of the warriors heard her advice. Then, finally she turned to Clarke.

“Giant fucking spiders, right?” Clarke sighed heavily and looked up toward the roof gathering her composure. When her gaze once again found Lexa it was full of Griffin stubbornness and determination. Lexa smiled, forgetting that they were trapped in the middle of a dark hellish tunnel for just a second, as she marvelled at her wife.

“Giant fucking spiders,” Lexa agreed, but grinned and held up her torch “but the webs burn Clarke, really really burn!”
“Lex, be careful,” Clarke’s voice was quiet and she looked into Lexa’s green eyes, “please.” Lexa felt the fear in Clarke as the last word was spoken as such a plea and her eyes began to lose the steel they had just seconds ago.

Lexa knew exactly how to pull her wife from whatever thoughts were clouding her heart. She strode closer and pulled Clarke down for a quick but sizzling kiss. She let her tongue trail along the bottom of Clarke’s lip then sucked lightly before pulling back. As she broke the kiss she looked Clarke dead in the eyes and said, with grave seriousness, “Do not doubt my prowess, Clarke.” Then she turned dramatically and strode over to her horse mounting it with an athletic flourish that was certainly not needed.

The sound of Clarke’s groan and then laughter let her know she had successfully pulled Clarke’s mind from her dark thoughts. Lexa grinned and just then Dal and Cade arrived and they were ready to move forward again.

Dal walked in front of them holding his torch high and taking a look at the dangling remains of spider’s webs. He tested a few burning them and watching the flame zip along the threads of silk. He noticed that the silk itself didn’t burn up but shrivelled into a burnt mass, it was the sticky glue that was acting as an accelerant and allowing the quick burn.

He sniffed the air around him as he burned several strings and he found that while there was a distinct odour it wasn’t harsh to his throat or burning his lungs. He concluded he could safely burn away all of the webs he needed to and the air would still be safe to breathe. He also knew it would be slow going and they had already been delayed too long.

“Heda,” he addressed Lexa formally, “tighten the formation. I can burn a lot of it safely, but we need to fit through a much more narrow pass.” She nodded at him and turned to shout her orders. Dal moved over to his horse and removed a small can from his saddle bag. It was filled with the fuel they used to run their bikes. He always carried one or two with him for use as an accelerant.

He had one more can he was saving in case they were delayed even longer, it would give them another 45 minutes or so with the torches, but with much weaker light. As he passed Cade’s horse his partner’s outstretched hand stopped him. “Hey.” Was all Cade said.

Dal gazed up at his unioned and smiled at him, “Hey, yourself.”

Cade leaned down and placed his hand on the back of Dal’s neck pulling him closer, he kissed him softly and rested his forehead against Dal’s for just a second. “I know you like to burn things… but burning these webs is probably going to piss off the giant spiders…”

Dal nodded his agreement looking amused, “Yes, that is very likely.” He agreed as he ran his hand over Cade’s handsome cheek. Cade opened his mouth to speak but Dal cut him off, “I will be careful, I will pay attention, and keep my eyes open looking for spiders, I promise.”

Cade nodded at him, “Thank you. It’s just that you get so drawn into the fire, watching it, directing it, trying to control it, you always lose track of what is around you.” Cade straightened back in his saddle and took a deep breath. “Light it up, babe.” He grinned as Dal’s eyes sparkled and he moved forward ready to start clearing the path.

Lexa gave him a nod and Dal lit the first of the larger webs on fire, it sizzled and the flame shot up the length of it, it was as Dal had suspected, that web lit several others on fire and it zipped along clearing about thirty feet before going out.
They moved forward and Lexa and Cade kept watch into the darkness waiting for the owners of the webs to make themselves known. Dal continued clearing the webs, he burned off older dangling webs that could spook the horses and moved quickly back and forth looking at the webs and figuring out which ones to light.

The convoy continued moving slowly forward following Dal and his cleared path. After about twenty minutes the entire group was inside of the webbed area, Zora shouted the knowledge forward and Lexa grated her teeth.

“Draw your weapons, and remember Brax’s words, go for the body, that is our kill shot.” Lexa shouted as she drew her sword. “Skai Kru, shoot for the heads first. Let’s see how your guns do.”

Everyone was on edge waiting for the spiders to attack. They moved forward deeper into the lair but also ever closer to the exit on the other end. Dal kept the way clear with his torch but the webs were getting thicker and not all of them were covered in the flammable glue. He used his motorcycle fuel to dose the webs that didn’t want to burn and that combined with the webs that were covered was getting the job done nicely.

It was Clarke who noticed, she glanced up and saw ten terrifyingly large spiders hanging silently overtop of the group. She couldn’t speak, her throat closed in terror. Her hand flailed out in the darkness grabbing Kita’s arm. Her guard turned quickly and followed Clarke’s terrified gaze upward.

“Heda.” Kita’s voice was controlled and did not give away that her heart was racing or the way her skin crawled in revulsion. When Lexa turned to look at her she motioned up with her eyes and when Lexa’s gaze followed hers she saw the great Heda Lexa’s composure come undone. For one quick second Heda’s face showed clearly the terror and panic that she felt in her own bones. Then Lexa was Heda once more and her expression was fierce and almost as terrifying as the giant spiders who waited to suck them all dry. That one second gave Kita a reserve of strength she didn’t know she had. Heda Lexa was human after-all, and Kita would make sure both she and Clarke made it through this tunnel.

Lexa’s command came quick, “archers make ready, fire on my mark.” None of her warriors were phased by not having a target they nocked arrows quickly and waited for the next command.

“Fire in 3 - 2 - 1 straight above us! Mark!” Lexa, Cade, Kita, and Brax fired at the same creature, four arrows in it’s soft abdomen and it’s life was over, thick blue blood pouring out of it. It struggled slightly trying to climb back up it’s web but in the end it dangled lifelessly from the roof of the tunnel.

Lincoln had fired three shots quickly into another spider and watched it die as well. The rest of the danglers were shot repeatedly by the rest of the archers and soon there were ten very dead giant spiders dangling above them, and blue spider blood dripping down onto them.

Clarke looked up and thought they looked even more grotesque than they had alive, but she was definitely glad they were dead. She didn’t have much time to consider it further as Lexa shouted the ready again.

As Dal continued clearing the way and they continued moving forward the spiders began to test them. They were fast and agile and very very large. One jumped into the middle of them but was seen as it flew through the air, before it landed it had three arrows deep in its belly and was too injured to fight. As soon as it hit the ground swords ran through it and it’s carcass was trampled by the unflinching stallions of the Horse People. Alive the spiders were as tall as a man’s chest and
easily had a five foot legspan, dead they came up to the warrior’s knees and spread out even wider.

Another spider dashed from the darkness toward Dal. The creature came at him hard and fast and he jumped back to avoid it’s large hairy legs. His torch burned one of it’s legs and Lexa’s sword sliced through another leg. It reared up in pain and neither of them hesitated, Lexa and Dal charged in and stuck their swords into the beast’s abdomen. It made a horrible high pitched clicking sound as it died.

Octavia and Lincoln heard a terrible hissing sound from the left and then two spiders charged from the darkness, Octavia drew her gun and fired two quick shots into the head of one and then two more into the head of the other. Both dropped dead on the spot and Octavia called over to Clarke, “Guns work, shoot the giant fucking spiders in the head!” She then let out a battle whoop and it was echoed by the warriors behind her.

Several more jumped out of the darkness or descended from the ceiling and were taken out quickly. Then they started attacking in groups and things went to shit.

Four spiders jumped out of the darkness and charged, The warriors jumped from their horses and fought them off, killing two. The other two jumped and attacked from behind them. A Trikru warrior who had her sword stuck deep in the belly of one of the creatures was bitten from behind and let out a scream. The spider’s venom worked quickly and the warrior stopped struggling in seconds. By the time help arrived the spider had her rolled in a cocoon of silk and she was already dead.

Other warriors managed to fight the spider’s back and rescue the body but on the other side, things were going just as poorly.

Seven of the beasts charged and five ended up dead, two of the monsters escaped dragging a horse off with them. The horse had been bitten as the spiders jumped into the fray and it had died within a minute.

Word of the strength of the venom spread quickly and care was taken to avoid the giant fangs of the beasts, but the next twenty minutes saw the body count increase quickly. They lost four horses and three warriors, but managed to at least save the warriors bodies from being dragged off and drained by the creatures.

They pushed on, fighting their way forward, wanting desperately to see the light of day again. They had been in the tunnel for an hour already and they were over half way through. They had three hours left of burning time for the torches but they wanted to be free of the shrouds of unsettling darkness much sooner than that.

Dal kept on, several spiders came at him and he and Lexa fought them off. He burned more and more webs and they pushed forward, Lexa praising and encouraging him.

Clarke watched the two of them working together and was glad that Cade and Dal had come, Dal and Cade brought a calmness with them that grounded Zora and was a good influence on Lexa. As she mused about this another spider leapt from the darkness and landed dangerously close to Lexa. Kita sent an arrow flying into it’s abdomen as quickly as Lexa rolled clear of the creatures fangs. Clarke drew her gun and watched with relief as Dal swung his sword taking out two of the creatures legs and Lexa danced around the deadly fangs and with a mighty swing she actually cut the beasts head right from it’s body.

As the beast slumped over and Lexa looked smugly down at it another spider leapt from the darkness poised to sink it’s fangs into Lexa from behind. Clarke aimed and fired, a double tap, like Octavia had done earlier, was all it took for the beast to fall down dead and Lexa to spin around and gaze at her almost death.
She turned back to give Clarke a look of thanks and then returned to her position next to Dal.

They had been slowly traversing the spider’s lair for almost an hour when Dal lit another large web. It quickly sizzled out and lit several others on fire, but instead of burning out after a few feet it seemed to keep going. It burned clear at least fifty feet and they picked up speed, wanting to traverse the space quickly maybe passing the by the spiders as they temporarily hid from the burning web.

They pressed on, and Dal noticed the webs were thinning out again, they were back to dangling pieces of old webs, and he sighed in wonder as he looked back at Cade. “We did it. This is the end of the spider’s lair. We’re out of the webs.” He and Lexa returned to their horses and mounted and as if to confirm his thoughts the horses seemed to press forward eager to put space between themselves and the giant spiders.

Cade smiled and looked toward Ro, she nodded and for the first time in the tunnel she nudged her horse into a light trot. The steed happily obliged and the whole group followed, picking up the pace. Lexa kept an eye and an ear out for what was happening behind her she knew they couldn't afford to have too much space between them. When she heard the sounds of fighting behind her she asked Ro to slow down a bit and she turned her horse around to head back into the webs and make sure all of her people made it out.

In the back the battle had still been raging and as Rock and Zora finished off the last spider that had attacked they grabbed the body of the young Trikru warrior who had been bitten and flung him over the back of his horse. He seemed to be hanging on, the venom having less of an affect on him and so Rock ordered Zora to take him quickly to Abby.

She gave her a look that said there was to be no argument and Zora complied. She jumped on to the horse and pulled the young man into her arms as she grabbed the reins. She passed by the rear warriors she eyed one of her York archers, a Lanta warrior, one of Rock’s own, and two from Trikru. “The Regent of the Lake’s had better be in one piece when I get back here.” She growled before kicking at the horses sides and getting the animal up to a quick trot as she called out for warriors to move aside.

On her way to Abby she passed Indra and then Lexa both riding back to secure the rear. “We’re clear of the webs at the front.” Lexa called out as they passed and Zora nodded in acknowledgement.

When Zora reached Abby, the healer was ready for her. She had anti-venom in a syringe at the ready. The warrior was alive but seemed stunned, and was unresponsive to stimuli. She jabbed him quickly with the needle and looked over at Zora and shook her head. “That is all I can do. I don’t know enough about the venom. He’ll live or he won’t.” She sighed and Zora nodded her understanding. The warrior was transferred over to Abby’s horse and Zora quickly moved back to find Rock.

The middle of the pack had now reached the area where the webs stopped and the horses were surging forward on their own wanting to be free from the webs and the attacking spiders, only the presence of the Horse Clan and their steeds kept the other horses from bolting recklessly towards the end of the tunnel and possibly into unknown danger.

Zora fought her way back against the tide and her horse was not happy, it fought her but her will was iron and the mare eventually obeyed her. As she approached the back she saw the warriors in a final battle with four of the giant spiders.
Rock was mounted, firing arrow after arrow. Heda Lexa stood on the ground bouncing around like an acrobat slicing at spider legs while dodging them at the same time. She was flanked by Indra and another Trikru gona on the other side and Zora swore she saw the three of them smiling as they went about the slaughter of the beasts. The York archer was standing over his downed horse and firing arrow after arrow in quick succession and one of the Lake and Lanta warriors were sneaking around the sides of the battle while the spiders were preoccupied with Heda.

Zora urged her horse forward and her eyes never left the scene, she watched as one, two, and three spiders were slain and then with only one left to go the girl from the Lake clan and the young man from Lanta had finally made it behind the great beast. Lexa and the two Trikru taunted it from the front, barely avoiding it’s deadly bite several times. It struck out at Lexa once more and she nimbly stepped aside, then two swords sliced through it’s exposed abdomen and it’s blue blood gushed forth.

Zora let out a sigh of relief and pulled her horse alongside Rock. Rock looked grateful for her presence and she reached her hand over to touch Zora’s arm. Zora let her own hand settle over Rock’s and they both looked down at the finished battle. “We’re almost out of the lair, mount up. Let’s ride clear of the webs.” Zora shouted down to Lexa.

Heda nodded and ordered her warriors to mount their horses. Those who had lost their rides in the battle doubled up and they quickly grabbed any fallen torches they saw and lit them as they rode forward.

Another five minutes and they were all clear of the webs. Lexa glanced back over her shoulder and in the faint light from their torches she swore she saw many more of the giants drop from the ceiling and begin repairing the damaged webs. She wondered to herself what they ever caught in this damn tunnel and then she wondered why the web stopped there. She shuddered at the thought that there might be something worse yet for them to get through before the end of this godforsaken darkness.

As she was thinking this the silence was pierced by a bloodcurdling scream from the front of the convoy. Lexa recognized it. “Abby!” She shouted, and urged her horse to move faster. She shouted for her warriors to let her through and she had made her way to the front in no time.

The speed of the horses had slowed significantly after the Sky Chancellor’s scream and Clarke was worriedly trying to calm her mother. Ro, Cade and Dal were peering into the darkness, moving warily forward not knowing what the woman had seen.

As Lexa arrived she felt the air get noticeably colder and as she looked around she felt fear grip her. “I am Heda” she spoke sternly to herself, “these spirit’s will not lead me into the darkness.”

She quickly pulled up alongside Abby and let her voice be Heda, “Abby Kom Skai Kru,” her voice boomed, “what did you see? Speak true!”

At Heda’s commanding voice Abby snapped back to reality. “Lexa,” she reached out and took her hand, “ghosts in the darkness, every face I ever let be floated from the Ark. they are here for me.” Abby looked terrified.

“Mom, it’s got to be something in the air. Some left over chemical residue from the bombs, we are so close to ground zero. They aren’t real, Mom, fight the fear!” Clarke gripped Abby’s hand and looked at Lexa. “Get us out of here! Whatever it is if it’s affecting Mom, there will be others.”

Lexa nodded and surged forward taking over her spot at the front. Ro looked terrified and when
Lexa shouted her name she didn’t respond. “Ro, Horse-Lord, wife of Hirrim, mother of Han and Theo, leader of your people! Answer your Heda! Now!” Lexa screamed at the woman and she jerked her head away from the darkness and found Lexa’s eyes.

“Ro, we have to move quickly, the spirits are upon us.” Lexa held the woman’s gaze until she nodded. “Hold hands, we leave none behind!” Lexa ordered and watched as Ro placed her torch firmly into the holder at her side. Lexa didn’t know what it was designed to hold but it fit the torches perfectly and held them straight and high enough not to singe the horses. All of the Horse Clan saddles had one built in and Lexa envied them for it. Ro grabbed Dal’s hand who grabbed Cade’s who grabbed the Horse general’s.

Lexa dropped back shouting orders and drowning out screams of those who were already affected. “Hear me! Evil spirits are upon us. Hold steady and ride true. Follow me, I am your Heda and I will get you home. What you think you see in the darkness is not true. The spirits are playing with your minds. Hold the hands of the warriors to your sides, place your torches in your saddle sheaths or hold them high together, keep each other away from the darkness.”

Lexa rode around down the left side shouting and back up the right side. She was trembling and there were so many faces staring at her from the darkness it was all she could do not to break down screaming herself. She saw the faces of everyone she had ever killed or ordered dead. They screamed at her, rushed at her, seemed to run straight through her and then they appeared back in front of her again.

She focused on her people, her warriors, and she had to slap three different people who were staring into the darkness screaming mindlessly. She brought them back to their own minds and she shouted at them to face forward, protect their brothers and sisters in arms, ignore the screaming ghosts, and ride.

At the back she had seen Zora and Rock, Zora had been pale and shaking but fighting it as Lexa herself was, Rock looked unaffected but worried for Zora, she shouted to her, “Heda, Cade isn’t concentrating. Remind him of the seer.” Lexa shouted back promising to do that as she rounded the corner and rode back toward the front.

When she made it back to the front the horses, seemingly not affected by the ghosts, were moving at a comfortable trot and Lexa knew that they could clear the tunnel in under twenty minutes at this pace. She shouted to Cade who was trying to calm Dal. “Your sister, concentrate on your sister. Heed the seer!”

Lexa pulled up alongside them and fell into place between Dal and the Horse General. She held her torch in her right hand and the general’s hand covered hers helping to carry the weight of the torch. Her other hand grabbed and squeezed Dal’s painfully. He jerked his hand away from Lexa and turned his head to her, the pain having brought him away from the ghosts he had been staring at.”

“Fight it Dal, they are not real. What you see is not real!” Lexa screamed at him.

Behind her Clarke was holding hands with her mother and Kita. Kita was talking to Clarke who was trying to understand what was happening. “There are evil spirits here, they are sending the dead to us. They invade our minds and find the dead that we fear, the one’s we killed, and they make us see them. Heda must see thousands of faces right right now.”

Clarke was looking out into a sea of faces herself, but she felt less terrified than the others because her mind was still searching for a rational explanation. She looked around her, trying to see something that could explain what was happening.
“The horses aren’t spooked.” She told Kita, “There must be something in the air that is making us hallucinate. We rode into a cold current of air right before the hallucinations started, its got to be an airborne chemical! The ghosts aren’t real!” She shouted to Kita.

“Tell them that!” Kita shouted back as she flinched away from a ghost only she could see.

Clarke looked around desperately and saw everyone holding torches up together, hands over hands, trying to keep one another grounded. She look at Lexa who was urging her horse forward, trying to calm Dal so Cade could try and do what the seer suggested he might be able to. Clarke could see that Lexa was trembling, her body was shaking, and she flinched away from nothing every few seconds.

Clarke called out to her, “Lex, listen to me. It’s OK. They aren’t real. I am real, you are real, and our love is real. But those ghosts you see are not! I’m not afraid Lex, take strength in me!”

Lexa gritted her teeth and fought down another scream that threatened to erupt. When her wife’s voice came from behind her suddenly she took a breath and her mind grabbed onto Clarke’s words and let them ground her. When Clarke stopped speaking Lexa shouted back to her, “Thank you Houmon, Ai hod yu in.” Then she broke formation again. She pulled the torch free and immediately Dal reached for the hand of the Horse general. They closed ranks behind her.

She sped up and then pulled hard to the right turning her horse back and she began to circle her people again. Before she disappeared around the side she shouted to Cade, “Rock needs you to help her, together you can help Dal, help everyone, remember the seer!”

She rode down the side, she shouted to her warriors and tried to keep them from madness. “The Sky Heda does not fear the ghosts, do you fear them Gona’s!?” She roared at them, “I see thousands of them, but the Sky Heda tells me to be strong, and so I am!”

Lexa turned and spit into the darkness, “I will not be ruled by them. The spirit’s will not break me!” She roared and shouted and her warriors responded in kind.

As she raced down the side she felt a crazy abandon, ghosts were flying at her from all sides now. She repeated Clarke’s words in her head over and over again under her breath and she rallied her warriors. When she reached the back she saw Rock with her hands on her temples repeating her brother’s name over and over. Zora looked scared, and her hand rested on her weapon that she wished she could use against the visions that swarmed in from of her.

“Clarke isn’t afraid of them Zora!” Lexa called out in a teasing voice, ‘She sees them but she is not afraid, is the Sky Heda braver than the Mayor of York?”

“Zora looked up and realized what Lexa was doing, “Then neither am I, Heda!” She looked into Lexa’s eyes and saw the same terror that held her heart, she also saw that Lexa was fighting, and would not lose. Shebreathed deep and found her own reservoir of strength. She whooped and hollered and dared the ghosts to come for her! She screamed at them in anger telling them she had killed them once and she would do it again!

At the Mayor’s outburst the troops felt theircourage returning in bits and pieces. They began to yell and scream at their ghosts too, not in terror but in challenge and in anger.

Lexa told Zora to keep it up and yelled encouragement to Rock that Cade was OK and should be concentrating on her by now. With that she disappeared around the other side and started back toward the front again.

She zipped up the side shouting obscenities at her own ghosts and laughing wildly. She taunted the
ghosts for not being able to hurt her and she yelled encouragement to her warriors when they followed suit.

She ran her horse once more around the convoy and by then her warriors were like steel again, the ghosts kept coming but the warriors were no longer cringing in terror. They had the Skai Heda to thank Lexa thought proudly with a smile.

As she rounded the front again she saw something very curious. Cade’s face suddenly went very smooth and peaceful and his face turned up to the roof. He took a breath and whispered, “Rock. I see you. Grandmother’s spirit is with us. Can you feel her?” Lexa felt the cold air around her warm noticeably.

She looked around her and she saw that her ghosts were blurred and seemed further away. It was like there was some kind of invisible barrier between them and her. Lexa looked back at her warriors and they were all looking up and around with the same kind of wonder showing on their faces.

It was Brax who spoke up, “The seer’s words! The Steward and the Lake Heda are holding the spirits off!”

Lexa didn’t know if it was true, she was sure Clarke would give her some Sky science explanation later, but she believed it anyway. She believed the seer and her own eyes. She grinned at Dal who was looking proudly at his lover.

She took her place once again and felt boldness creep into her blood. She looked forward and realized that she could see a small ball of light. It was the tunnel’s end and she could see it. Her heart raced and adrenaline spiked in her system. The monsters of the dark were behind them, the ghosts were being held off and she could see the light at the end of the tunnel. She shouted loudly as she looked to Ro, “Can we go faster?”

Ro was anxious to get the hell out of the tunnel and her toothy grin was Lexa’s answer, “Hia!” She called out to her horse and it went immediately from a trot to a light run. The other riders matched her speed and they only got faster as they ran for freedom together.

The caution they had shown as they traversed the first half of the tunnel was thrown to the wind as they recklessly barrelled through the last few hundred meters of darkness.

Lexa knew their speed was dangerous and if anything were to appear in front of them they would not be able to stop in time to avoid it or to get into proper position for a battle. She knew and she still could not bring herself to slow down. The light was getting bigger and the darkness had lost some of it’s viscosity, she could see further ahead and that visibility was increasing with every meter they moved closer to the end.

Finally, the air felt less stuffy in their lungs, and a breeze was blowing from the entrance. Light was filtering in and the torches were more than enough to light the entire tunnel at this point. Clarke looked up and saw the air ducts, she wondered about the strange cold air and the hallucinations as her gaze ran along the ventilation shafts.

Lexa was grinning like a maniac as she closed in on the mouth of the tunnel. She had almost forgotten where the tunnel let out. The back of her mind reminded her that it was Manhattan but the front of her mind told the back to shove it, Manhattan couldn’t be worse than giant vampire bats, giant spiders, mutant cougars and thousands of ghosts.

When she broke free of the tunnel she kept riding, she needed to leave enough room for all of her people to clear the darkness before stopping. She gulped in the air and she let the sun hit her face.
She didn’t look around, just scanned the area for immediate danger and finding none she stopped her horse and dismounted quickly.

She shouted for everyone to stop and dismount and then she went for Clarke, she pulled the Sky Heda into and embrace and held her to her own body as tightly as she could.

Clarke gripped her back just as tightly and whispered to her, “It’s OK Lex, we made it out. We did it.”

Lexa finally loosened her grip and looked around at her warriors. They looked as relieved as she felt and she felt proud of every one of them. Indra started shouting orders, getting the injured to come forward for treatment and the dead counted. The warriors dismounted and saw to their horses.

Clarke squeezed Lexa’s hand and offered her a smile, “I have to go help mom, Lex. I’d kiss you but there is spider blood on your face.” Clarke laughed, feeling lighter than she could remember after having survived the tunnel.

Lexa laughed too and called after Clarke, “You have spider blood on you as well, but I’d still kiss you.” Lexa watched Clarke slip easily into the role of healer and start treating the warriors who had been injured in the tunnel. She lingered for a few minutes watching her wife before heading to find Indra and get a count of those who were not as lucky.

They ended up with 14 bodies and Lexa made sure they were all put on horses and prepared for the journey across Manhattan. She would take them to York and have a proper funeral pyre to release the spirits of her warriors.

When she was done she moved back to the front. Indra and Ro had reorganized the convoy and the warriors were taking some much deserved rest while the injured received treatment. Lexa approached and asked Zora if she knew the most direct route off of the island.

“Truthfully Heda I have only been on this island once. It was before my mother was killed. I was still a crazy, headstrong teenager and someone dared me to cross the Brooklyn Bridge and step foot on the cursed ground. I did it, but I ran like hell to get back over the bridge, I admit.” Zora took a breath.

“I know where we are and which way we have to go. We head south and cut east when we see the bridge.”

Lexa nodded and then faced forward. They were still just in front of the tunnel and there was an incline ahead that blocked any real view of the island. Lexa took deep breath and began to walk up the incline. As she reached the top she got her first view of the island that was feared above all other places.

She let her gaze travel over it. It was much like the dead zone near Ton DC. It looked like desert but something wasn’t right. There was a large lake in the middle, the crater left by the impact of the bombs had filled with water, but that water brought no life. Her people believed that nothing would ever live on this ground again, and they appeared to be correct. There were pieces of toppled buildings and huge chunks of steel peeking out all around the desert and the wind blew hot stinging sand against her face. Lexa pulled her scarf up around her face and stared into the dark water that showed not even a ripple even as the wind blew all around her.

The water looked deep, dark, and terrible. She had no wish to go near it and was glad it lay to her north and her road would take her south. As she stood there gazing out at the destruction, the first of the destroyed cities of the world, a place where millions had died all at once, she felt her wife slide up beside her.

“Everyone is a patched up as they can be until we reach York. Two of them are really touch and go,
we could still lose them. We should go.” Clarke had yet to look out at the expanse of desert in front of her. She had come to tell Heda it was time and she wanted to look at her wife’s face.

Lexa tore her gaze from death to beauty and let her eyes focus on Clarke. She could not find her voice so she nodded. Then something called her back to the island and she turned her head again, this time Clarke’s gaze followed hers and she gasped.

“This is Manhattan…!? Lex, oh my god. It is completely destroyed. I mean I knew it had been the first target but after seeing Ton Dc and Sapeake and Otta I thought…. I mean. It’s totally gone. All those people Lex… millions of people lived here,” Clarke grabbed Lexa’s hand and held on tightly. The horror of what had happened 100 years earlier was still fresh in the air on the island of Manhattan and it settled into Clarke’s mind as easily as it had settled into Lexa’s.

Somewhere in the back of Lexa’s mind she heard the young seer from Bad Town, “When they walk on the ground in Manhattan we will pray they keep their sanity”. Lexa swallowed hard and tugged at Clarke’s hand. “Come Clarke, let us leave this island before it claims us too.”

Chapter End Notes

You can see the Statue of Liberty in the opening credits and it seems to be embedded in sand so that is where I took the idea of Manhattan being a nuclear desert (is there such thing).

I hope you enjoyed the tunnel, I didn't kill anyone important, but should I? It seems very un100 of me to let everyone live. We still have Manhattan to traverse and the Grounder’s wouldn't be scared of it for nothing.
Together, or Not at All.

Chapter Summary

Crossing the island could prove worse than crossing the tunnel. What really haunts, Manhattan? The deeds of men from the past, or the present?

Chapter Notes

I am so sorry for how long this took. Summer in Canada is short so I had a patriotic duty to visit as many lakes & beaches, and drink as much beer on as many patios as possible!

Don't worry, winter will be on us soon and I'll be stuck in my little house with my little laptop typing away ;-)  

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

As Clarke and Lexa returned to the group gathered just past the mouth of the tunnel Indra was waiting with a report. They had lost fourteen people but had recovered all of the bodies. They had also lost several horses and with some of them being used to transport the bodies there were several warriors riding double. Indra pointed out that this would make the force less effective if they had to run or fight.

“Shall we prepare the funeral pyre and relieve ourselves of the dead?” Indra questioned.

“Not here, Indra. This island would steal their souls. We will take them to York, it’s not far now.” Lexa looked at her people, some were resting, others stretching and others still were patrolling the rear of the group in case anything decided to chase them out of the tunnel. “I believe our warriors would rather ride double, walk, or even carry the dead themselves than leave their fallen brothers and sisters here on this island.” Lexa spoke quietly but Indra heard the steel in her voice and nodded.

“We are ready when you are Heda.” She bowed her head respectfully and returned to her horse shouting some orders as she mounted.

“Clarke, ride next to me for the rest of the journey, please. I need you there.” Lexa almost whispered to Clarke and her wife merely nodded as she reached for Lexa’s hand.

“We’ll get through, Lex. You said yourself, it isn’t far. The bridge to York is only two and a half miles away.” Clarke was reminding herself as much as she was reminding Lexa. She felt a terrible sense of unease in her bones, like she had felt inside of Mount Weather when she and her friends had first woken up inside the mountain.

Lexa squeezed Clarke’s hand and took a deep breath, “Let’s get started. The sooner we get across the bridge the better.”
Heda Lexa of the Tree People, Heda Clarke of the Sky People, Mayor Zora of York and Rock, Regent of the Lakes, riding double, and Ro, leader of the Horse Clan’s armies lined up side by side and prepared to move out.

“Heda, wait.” Zora’s voice stopped the command to ride from leaving Lexa’s lips and she quirked her eyebrow in an irritated question at the Mayor.

“Speak true, Mayor. I do not wish to linger here.” Lexa responded, frustration evident in her voice.

“Heda, there is something I think you should know. My mother never believed it but my people have always told stories of life on this island. They say there are lights and loud noises once or twice a month, always at night. No one has ever seen more than that but the soldiers who are always posted at the York end of the bridge have told stories of these sounds and lights for years.” I don’t know why I suddenly thought of it, but it might be important.

Clarke looked back at her mother and Kane and once again she saw something in her mother’s expression that made her think Abby knew something.

“Mom, what is it?” She directed the attention to the Chancellor and Abby frowned and looked at Marcus.

“We don’t know anything for sure, but…” Abby trailed off, clearly reluctant to share her thoughts without conclusive evidence.

“Speak True, Chancellor.” Lexa challenged her.

Marcus spoke first after looking at Abby and seeing her hesitation. “When we were searching the medical centre in Mount Weather we found some disturbing information about the drug they used to change men into Reapers.”

Lincoln tensed and Octavia reached for his hand to steady him, they both listened intently to what Marcus had to say.

“It seems that they didn’t develop the drug like we originally thought. There is evidence in the files that they found ‘Red’ in a place they referred to as Bunker 17.” Marcus looked to Abby who picked up the narrative.

“The drug has a crazy chemical makeup. Nothing I would ever put in someone’s body. It is similar to amphetamines but there is so much more mixed in there. It seems to indicate that the scientist’s, I won’t call them doctors, at Mount Weather experimented with the milder version they found and made it into the horror show we know as Red. The notes seem to indicate that it was developed before the bombs. It survived but was irradiated like everything else. That may be what caused it to become so potent and dangerous, or it may have been developed to be potent and dangerous. The radiation and the changes added by Mount Weather created the super drug, but there is so much we don’t know.” Abby looked up at Lexa and frowned.

“What is it you do know, Abby?” Lexa asked, not sure she wanted to hear the answer.

“The notes seemed to indicate that this Bunker 17 was here, in Manhattan.” Abby took a deep breath and then breathed out heavily, puffing her cheeks out. She shook her head and continued, “Nothing is certain, Lexa. The notes were cryptic at best.”

“But you both believe that Bunker 17, the origin of Red and the Reapers, is here? On this Island? And you did not think I needed to know that before now?” Lexa’s voice was a low rumble.

“Chancellor, do not keep this kind of information to yourself in the future.”
“I’m sorry, I just didn’t have anything conclusive…” Abby started but was quickly cut off by Lexa.

“Em Pleni, Chancellor.” Lexa turned back to the front and raised her voice, “Does anyone else have any information about this Island that I should know?” When no one answered her she called out once more before urging her horse into motion, “Mount up. Ride out!”

Her warriors followed her willingly, leading the horses piled with the dead their Heda would not leave behind.

When they reach the top of the incline Lexa turned the party to the south and slightly west. They had gone over the route and she was following the plan. She heard the gasps or horror and surprise as the rest of her party saw what she and Clarke had seen earlier.

They travelled along the desertlike landscape following the curve of the Hudson River. They moved slowly, not knowing if the ground was stable, Ro was firm about the pace they should keep.

The sand blew around them and stung their faces as they rode. The wind whipped it along and made visibility a problem when it blew in large gusts and propelled a wall of sand in front of them. Clarke imagined there was a large invisible hand trying to slow their progress by blinding them with the sand.

It was a deathly silent group that made it’s way slowly along the island keeping the Hudson in clear view on the right. The wind made strange noises and played with their minds. The horses were jittery and nervous and even Ro’s own steed whinnied in protest when she tried to get him to keep walking through an unusually thick gust of sand filled wind.

Lexa was determined to push forward through what her bones told her was an unnatural wind. When it picked up again and showed no signs of letting up she called back to her people to close ranks and stay together. She heard Indra order the warriors to sound off with numbers so she could be certain they lost no one. Until the wind died down and the visibility cleared up this was the only way to make sure everyone was still with them.

She heard the counts happening in the back of her mind but couldn’t pay attention, there was something else that was distracting her. She heard a high pitched sound coming from the sand and she couldn’t stop herself from staring into the sand and trying to find the origin. It was Clarke who pulled her back.

“Lex, we need to push right.” Clarke looked worriedly over at her wife who was staring into the sand and inadvertently leading the group further to the left. “Lexa!” The harshness of Clarke’s voice brought Lexa back to her senses. She started and looked over at Clarke.

“Lex, I just caught a glimpse of the river. We are off course. We need to push right.” Clarke pointed to the right and Lexa looked and saw how right Clarke was. As the wind died down a little she saw with surprise how far from the river she had led them.

“Zora, we need to push right. I brought us too far east. It’s that sound, I was following it. Can you hear it?” Lexa’s original curiosity about the sound was now replaced by suspicion and she felt a memory tug at her brain. She closed her eyes for a few seconds and tried to concentrate on the memory, it hit her suddenly and with a punch like it was a solid form, not a mere chemical in her brain as Clarke explained it.
“Stay on target, stay away from that sound!” The commander screamed to her warriors but two of them were too entranced by it to hear her or heed her warning. As they pushed through the unnatural fog that surround them they suddenly disappeared. The ground had opened up underneath them and they slid away into the darkness below. The Commander screamed for the rest of them to retreat and they made a hasty dash back to the cover of the trees.

“Heda, what was that!?” Her general yelled in a panic.

“Another of the Mountain Men’s tricks.” Heda spat angrily on the ground.

Lexa was doubled over on her horse with Clarke’s voice in her ear, urgent and worried.

“Lex, Lexa! Answer me, are you OK?” Clarke was beginning to panic when suddenly Lexa sat bolt upright on her horse.

"Clarke, it's the Mountain Men. It's one of their old tricks!” Lexa pulled up on her reins, “Hod Up!” she hollered and everyone quickly came to a halt. Clarke noticed Kita, Indra and several other soldiers had taken out their weapons and looked into the sandstorm expectantly.

Lexa quickly maneuvered her horse to ride due west. “We have come too far from the river. If you hear a strange sound DO NOT follow it. Turn now and ride to the river.” Lexa’s command was swift and none questioned her, they turned and rode towards the river, all but one. One of Ro’s riders didn’t move when the rest did. She had been riding just behind Brax and Hamil and Brax shouted out when she realized Wolfe wasn’t with them.

Hamil pulled up on the reins and they turned their horse back to find her. Lexa heard the shout and pulled up on her own reins but Clarke called out for her and Indra and Octavia had pulled up and now followed Hamil’s horse.

Lexa turned back to see why Clarke was calling her and quickly focused all of her attention on her wife when she saw the look on her face. She rode forward quickly and grabbed Clarke, “What is it!?” Clarke looked like she had seen a ghost, her face was pale and her eyes wide.

The wind continued to cause visibility problems for them and Clarke was staring into the swirling sand. “I saw… I swear, Lex.”

“What, what did you see” Lexa demanded of Clarke.

“Reapers…” Clarke barely got the word out when they hear the sounds of battle breaking out near the riverside.

Octavia and Indra followed Hamil and Brax as they chased after the Rider from Sapeake. They shouted her name and tried to pull her attention from the sound she was so intently listening to. “Wolfe! Wolfe! You must come with us! Wolfe!”

The wind died down just as they were closing in on the rider. Octavia noticed first and reached out to Indra as she shouted, “Back, back, the ground is giving out! It’s a sinkhole!”

Indra and Octavia were able to pull up in time but the ground swallowed Wolfe and her horse and Hamil was struggling to keep his horse from plunging into the sudden gap in front of him. Octavia jumped down from her horse and grabbed a rope from her saddle, Indra had the same idea and the
two of them threw lifelines.

Brax grabbed onto Indra’s rope and leapt free of the struggling horse. Without her weight the animal righted itself and as Hamil grabbed Octavia’s rope and jumped the horse was able to free itself and struggle back to more solid ground. It ran off in the direction of the river and the two warriors were pulled to safety.

Brax was the first to say it. “Lower me in, Heda Lexa said we leave no one in the tunnel or on this island. Even is Wolfe is dead I am going to retrieve the body.”

Octavia shook her head. “You are injured, Brax. You can’t go in there with your busted leg. I’m going.”

Hamil protested and insisted he go but Octavia cut him off, “Dude I struggled pulling your heavy ass this far, I’m not pulling it, and Wolfe out of some deep fucking hole.” She moved quickly as she spoke and caught Indra looking proudly at her as she tied the rope into a harness and prepared to go into the hole.

Hamil anchored himself and tied the end of the rope off to his own waist. He knew he was beaten but he was damned if he wasn’t going to do his best to protect her by making sure he could pull her out at a moment’s notice.

Brax looked at Indra. “Lower me part way, I’ll throw a torch in and I’ll cover her with my bow.” Indra considered the request and shook her head, agreeing. She grabbed the torch from her own saddle and held it out for Octavia to light. Indra had heard the story of the lighter that Octavia claimed saved her, Lincoln, and Jay in the tunnel and knew Octavia had it stuffed safely in one of her pockets now.

Octavia lit the torch and then with a nod to Hamil she ran off and let herself fall into the opening in the ground. Hamil was steadily letting out slack and dropping her as smoothly as he could into the hole. It wasn’t as dark as Octavia thought it would be in the hole and she could make out the ground. She saw three figures bent over what could only have been Wolfe and her horse.

She called out to Wolfe and the figures turned their gaze to her. She was startled by their appearance, they looked like Reapers, but they looked slightly more human, more in control. She wondered what the hell was happening on this island and then her feet hit the floor and her sword was free of it’s sheath.

The first of the Reapers came at her and their swords clashed together, the sound of steel on steel ringing loud enough to reach Indra’s ears. “Brax, hurry!” She called out and the young Lanta warrior limped over to the side of the hole and nodded. When Indra nodded back letting her know the rope was secure the girl stepped confidently into nothingness and was lowered into the hole.

She quickly threw the torch down into the hole and it fell and landed on the ground lighting up the small space that Octavia recognized as being a subway tunnel. She was fighting off two Reapers when one of them fell dead with an arrow sticking out of his neck.

She grinned and used the slight distraction it caused her opponent to her advantage. She spun low, kicked his feet from under him, and swiftly jumped on his prone form then plunged her dagger into his heart.

She jumped back to her feet and looked around. The third Reaper had never left Wolfe and her horse and Brax had killed him as he was bent over her. Octavia quickly ran over and had to force herself not to vomit as she looked upon the scene.
The Reapers had been eating Wolfe alive. The one that now lay dead beside her had torn flesh from her arm as it tried to get to her around the protective barrier of the horse. Wolfe’s legs had been crushed by her horse as they fell but she was still alive. The horse had broken several bones and was itself unable to move although Octavia saw it was trying, even now, to free it’s master from it’s own weight. Octavia steeled herself and forced her voice to sound calm.

“Wolfe, it’s me, Octavia. we are going to get you out of here.” Octavia came around and pushed at the horse, the animal was trying to help and they managed to get Wolfe’s left leg free.

“Leave me, Octavia. I will die anyway. I should die here with my horse.” Wolfe’s voice was full of pain but Octavia knew she was probably right. The injuries were not something even Abby would likely be able to fix.

“No, Wolfe. You are coming with us to York. If you want to die when we get there fine, but I won’t let you die here.” Octavia began pushing at the horse again and trying to free the other leg. She heard a sound coming from down the tunnel and cursed under her breath. She looked up at Brax who was peering down the tunnel as well.

Brax quickly signalled Indra for more slack and got herself lowered into the tunnel, she limped over to Octavia and together they managed to free Wolfe’s other leg. “Let’s get out of here” Brax whispered as the sounds got closer. She tugged on the rope and Indra began to pull her out.

Octavia wrapped her arms and legs around Wolfe and gave the same signal to Hamil. She kept her eyes on the tunnel as they rose and just before she made it over the lip she saw two uniformed men rush into the tunnel and her blood ran cold.

Hamil kept pulling them until they were well clear of the hole and then he ran over and pulled Wolfe into his arms. He quickly got onto Octavia’s horse and holding the injured girl he turned and rode for the river. Brax had mounted Indra’s horse and Indra jumped up behind her. She held her hand out to Octavia and pulled her up behind her as the horse took off. Carrying three of them was not ideal for the horse but it was only a short ride to the river.

Indra shouted out her question as soon as they were moving, “I saw your face, Octavia. What did you see?” Octavia had been her second until recently when she had passed all of the trials and become a full Trikru warrior. She knew the girl’s expressions and this one concerned her.

“Mountain Men.” The reply set Indra’s teeth on edge but she steadfastly rode for the river. She had heard Brax’s cry of ‘Reapers!’ before the girl had started firing her arrows and now Octavia was telling her Mountain Men were here, under the ground in Manhattan?! She fumed as she rode toward the river.

As they approached they heard Lexa’s voice calling for a regroup. Octavia and Indra both knew that meant a battle had just ensued and Indra picked up the pace. As they arrived they saw Lincoln and Lexa questioning a Reaper.

They jumped down from the horse leaving Brax to control the steed and rushed over. “Heda, why question him, we know Reapers do not talk.” Indra arrived at the side of her Commander with her sword drawn ready to run it through the heart of the snarling man in front of her.

“Look at him closely, Indra. He is no ordinary Reaper.” Lexa gestured to the man who looked much more human than most Reapers did. “He seems to be aware and have control, he isn’t quite like the mindless monsters we are used to. I suspect he will also be aware of pain unlike the Reapers of
Mount Weather.” With that Lexa dug the tip of her sword into a wound on the Reaper’s shoulder.

He gritted his teeth but growled in pain and Lexa pulled back looking him up and down. “You have a clean uniform, you feel pain, you can reason and yet you have a Reaper’s strength and markings. You fight like a Reaper and I’ve seen your comrades attempt to feed on my warriors. You are a Reaper, but you are different. Where did you come from and who keeps you?” Lexa’s expression left no question that he had one choice, answer or die.

He growled at her and struggled against Lincoln who held him tight. “Answer Heda or die,” Lincoln reminded him and the Reaper tensed at the sound of her title. Lexa did not miss it and she pressed him.

“That is correct, I am Heda Lexa Kom Trigedakru. What stirs in you at the sound of my name, hatred, fear, or a long lost feeling of fealty, perhaps?” She watched the Reaper’s face closely and what she saw made her curious. “You are not TriKru. You do not fear me, nor hate me. That means your reaction comes from what you heard from your keepers.” Lexa smiled in satisfaction as the Reaper growled and lunged for her, angry at being read so easily.

“You might as well tell me, I will find out in the end.” She taunted the ruined man and he snarled at her again.

“He will kill you in the end, Heda!” The last word was laced with sarcasm and filled with an inhuman hatred and anger. Then he fell into uncontrollable laughter. It was a maniacal sound that sent shivers up Octavia’s back. She was glad when The Commander suddenly drew her sword and ended the sound forever.

They had regrouped on the river’s edge, the sandstorms didn’t reach all the way to the water so they were taking respite from that as they prepared to ride again. Lexa was listening to the reports from her general’s. They had been attacked by a small band of Reapers and despite having reacted quickly and taken them down relatively easily the surprise of the sudden attack coming from the sandstorm had been enough for casualties. Abby was treating four wounded and there were two more dead to add to the growing weight carried by several horses.

Octavia shared what happened with Wolfe and how she had seen two soldiers with Mountain Men uniforms in the tunnel after the three Reaper’s had been killed. She looked regretfully at Ro when she gave her account of the Reaper feeding on the woman while she was still alive and trapped under her horse. Ro’s face was a wall of rage and Lexa nodded at her to allow her to go and find Wolfe, who was still clinging to life and under Abby’s care.

Clarke spoke up after Octavia, “Mountain Men…..” She thought back to the battle of Mount Weather and then it hit her, “There was a small group of guards who had already been cured using the bone marrow of the 100. They were not accounted for among the dead. Emerson was one of them.” Clarke gritted her teeth thinking that he might be the cause of this attack.

“If what your mother thinks about the drug is true perhaps he came here, found the original Red and decided to make himself an army of Reapers.” Lexa thought it out. It made sense, if the Mountain Men had means to get here it would be the perfect place to hide and raise a small army of drugged up Reapers.

Clarke agreed with Lexa and Zora wondered aloud, “Where did he get the men he has turned?” None of the dead Reapers we found had any recognizable markings,” she thought about it and then she got an idea, “Heda, did the Reaper’s you killed have scars on their upper arms and chest?”
Lexa thought and after looking a Lincoln they both nodded affirmatively. Zora shook her head in disbelief, “I think they are assassins. Yor marked all of his assassins with tattoos in the spots where the Reapers are scarred. I think the Mountain Men cut or burned off the tattoos when they took them to make Reapers.”

Lexa nodded, “It makes sense, they could have snuck over the bridge at night and taken assassins from their posts.” Lexa sighed, “The question is, how many of them are we going to have to fight before we make it off of this island?”

They talked for another fifteen minutes and came up with a plan on how to best travel through the sand and still be ready for possible attacks. They settled on a tight formation of three riders across and they instructed everyone to stay within an arm’s reach of each other. Lexa was determined to lose no more people to the trickery of the island.

They started out slowly, Lincoln, Octavia, and Hamil and Brax insisted on riding at the front. They claimed the risk of being shot at by Mountain Men was too great for any of the leaders to be so exposed. Zora and Rock on one horse, Lexa in the middle, and Indra taking the left flank rode in the second row.

As they moved slowly along the bank of the river they noticed that the sand began to blow once more. Again, Lexa thought it seemed unnatural. It was as if someone was controlling it to make their journey more difficult. She gritted her teeth as she thought about the acid fog and decided that it wasn't too far fetched to blame the Mountain Men for the sandstorms as well.

“Be alert, be ready! The Mountain Men are watching and they will strike when they think we are weak.” Lexa shouted to her people and heard a burst of war cries in response. Her warriors had been deathly afraid of this island, but once they saw Reapers and heard the Mountain Men were here they forgot the fear and remembered the anger of 100 years of being captured, drained of blood, and made into Reapers. They were no longer afraid, they were full of vengeance and hoped the Mountain Men would make an appearance so they could exact revenge on behalf of all of their people.

Clarke was worried, she knew that if Emerson was here he likely had weapons, guns; she knew that no matter how good the warriors at her back were, their swords were no match for bullets. She looked over at Kane who rode beside her with Jay still in front of him. Kane caught her eye and patted his sidearm softly letting her know he was thinking the same thing she was. Clarke looked to her right and watched Kita for a moment. The Ice Guard caught her looking and raised her eyebrow in question.

“Have you heard the stories of the Mountain Men?” Clarke asked her.

“I have heard about the monsters and what they did. I also heard how you and The Commander led the army that destroyed them.” Kita looked at her Sky Queen with pride and she bowed her head to her.

“I mean, do you know about the weapons they use?” Clarke was not looking for a compliment at the moment and her voice came out a little harder than she intended.

Kita looked at her seriously, taking no offence to the harshness in her voice, “They turn men into monsters, control an unnatural fog that eats the skin of anyone it touches, they bring death and fire from the sky, and they use weapons like the one on your hip, Sky Reine.” She thought for a moment and came to the same conclusion as Lexa, “It would also appear that they control this wind and sand.” She gestured around them with a frown.
Clarke was caught slightly off guard and but quickly saw that Kita was most likely correct. She nodded and then continued. “If they attack us directly they will have guns. Our only hope will be to sneak around them and kill the ones firing at us.” Clarke sighed and looked at the girl. “If firing starts leave me and use your stealth to try and flank them. We can’t win against them if they pin us down with their guns.”

Kita opened her mouth to protest that she would not leave her side but she recognized the truth in the words Clarke spoke and she merely nodded. Clarke sighed in relief and continued, “As far as we could tell there were only six guards missing from Mount Weather so I don’t think they will confront us directly. They will likely keep throwing Reapers at us and this damn sand.” Clarke reached up and pulled her handkerchief back up over her mouth and nose and Kita knew the conversation was over, she went back to peering into the sandstorm trying to spot any attacks.

What she saw coming through the sand a few minutes later made her jump. She had been expecting an attack. Reapers, Mountain Men, bullets, anything but this. She recovered quickly and her hand automatically pulled her weapon even though she knew it would not help her.

Abby saw it next and she screamed and pointed at it. Clarke turned to look and heard Kita shouting to her. “It’s not real, Reine!”

Lexa had spotted it just before Abby’s scream pierced the air. “Oh my god! Dragons!”

She heard Indra’s voice calling out to steady the troops. “It’s another of the Mountain Men’s tricks! Hold your courage.”

Lexa grinned defiantly into the sand as she felt Indra’s words in her own heart. She would not lose courage now. She looked straight at the face of the winged demon that seemed to be swooping toward them in the sand. Then she laughed long and loud.

The wind was whipping the sand into a frenzy around them and shapes were coming at them, the sand was forming demons, monsters that flew at them with giant wings. The shapes flew at them, the sand battered them and they refused to be beaten or even scared by it.

They continued pressing forward through the sand, dragons coming at them in the sand the entire time, for another fifteen minutes. They stayed close to the river because they knew the sand storms were worse the further they moved from the river. Then as suddenly as they had begun the shapes stopped. A few minutes later the wind died down and the sand stopped blowing entirely.

As it settled Clarke gasped at the sight that was now in front of her. She could see the New York Bay spread out before her. They had made it all the way down the island and were close to the end. It was here Lexa and Zora had planned for them to turn east and work their way toward the one still standing bridge off of the island.

Clarke’s gasp was echoed by the entire party as they all stared at the large statue that had washed up on the shore undoubtedly many years ago. Clarke dismounted and approached, Octavia was right behind her and Kita was just a step behind her.

Abby and Kane soon joined her and Lexa called out to them. “Sky Kru, we have no time for ancient artifacts. What are you doing?”

“Lexa…” Clarke welled up in tears, she didn’t know why this was affecting her so much but the sight of the top half of the Statue of Liberty washed up on the shore here on the island that had borne
the brunt of the first attack that almost killed all of humanity made her want to weep. “It’s the Statue of Liberty. It was a symbol of freedom, it stood on that island out there and greeted everyone who came here as a proud symbol that this was a free land.” Clarke pointed out into the bay at the island where they could still see a part of the pedestal that used to hold the statue. She approached the statue and gently reached her hand out to caress the giant stone cheek.

Kane was touching the piece of the torch that was nearby and Abby and Octavia were just staring in awe at the fallen Lady Liberty. Lexa allowed the Sky Kru their time and she noticed that some curious warriors had also approached and were looking in wonder at the remnant of the world before Manhattan had been levelled by a nuclear attack.

Abby began to speak to the warriors who approached and then project her voice for everyone to hear her. “The first Sky People, my ancestors, fled the Earth the same day that Manhattan was bombed. This statue must have broken that day, and eventually washed up here on the shore.” Her voice dropped to a whisper, “and now I am here on the ground with her.” She looked lovingly at the Lady and then spoke again, once more letting her voice carry, “Back then the Earth was full of people, full of cities, full of life. This place was the largest and most famous city in all of the world and this statue was something people would travel from all over the world to see.” She gestured around her at the bleak, lifeless island and sighed.

“People from thirteen countries fled to the sky. They were rich or thought to be important, scientists, doctors, engineers. They left the rest of the world, your ancestors, to burn. After Manhattan there were bombs dropped on London, Moscow, Beijing and many other cities. The next day more came, Seoul, Rome, Los Angeles, Toronto. It continued until 100 of the world’s greatest cities had been directly hit by nuclear bombs. The rest of the Earth was covered in fallout and nuclear winter.”

Abby looked around at the faces listening to her with rapt attention. “My ancestors watched from the sky and determined that no one could have survived. They said the Earth was uninhabitable. But, they did not count on the strength of your ancestors. I am so proud to be standing here on this island, next to this symbol of freedom, with all of you.”

Tears fell freely from The Chancellor’s eyes now, “The Mountain Men represent the destruction of the Earth, the forces that allowed the bombs to fall. If any of them are left hiding here we will find them and do what we must to ensure freedom for all of our people.” She looked back at the statue and reach her hand out to touch it, “We’ll do it for her, Lady Liberty.” she felt tears fall down her cheeks and then she felt Clarke and Octavia wrap their arms around her.

Her speech had roused the warriors behind her and they were whooping and calling out chants of war against the Mountain Men. Lexa looked at Zora and shrugged, “The Chancellor gives a good war speech.” The two women laughed and Lexa called out to her wife.

“Howon, come we must get to the bridge!” Lexa watched the Sky People turn reluctantly from the statue and return to their horses and she could see Clarke’s eyes memorizing the fallen icon and knew she would draw the scene later when they were back in Ton DC. The mere thought filled Lexa with a longing for peace and for home. She knew that the only way to get there was straight through the fire and so she turned and fearlessly headed toward the Brooklyn Bridge.

The party was riding a little faster now, the sandstorms had vanished and the ground was much more firm. They could see the bridge and Zora was looking longingly across the water toward her home.

They were approaching the base of the bridge, with only a few hundred meters to go before they would be on it when Lexa saw a sign, ‘Pier 17’. She called out, “Hod Up!” and as her people pulled
up on their reins Zora turned to follow Lexa’s gaze.

“You think that is where we’ll find Bunker 17?” She understood how Lexa’s mind worked and reminded her Heda that they were agonizingly close to home. “We should go to York, we can gather a larger force and return, Heda.”

“The ground is packed hard here, like it gets traffic. It is the same number, and you said your guards have told stories of lights and noises across the bridge.” Lexa raised her eyebrow at the Mayor and challenged, “Are you scared of six mountain men and a few Reapers, Mayor?”

Before Zora could jump in and deny any fear Clarke spoke up, “The Mayor is right, Heda. We have almost twenty dead with us, we have injured who need to see healers, we are tired and worn from the tunnel and this sand. We know they are here and we can come back with an army that they can’t beat. I know you want to end this now, but the mayor is right, let us go to York.”

Lexa sighed and acquiesced, squeezing her knees to signal her horse to move forward. As she moved so did everyone else. They continued toward the bridge and Lexa was already going over a battle plan in her head for when she could come back with a larger force. She was lost in the planning and almost didn’t hear the slight buzzing noise.

It was Octavia who whirled around, recognizing that sound for what it was, a door opening electronically. She shouted out warnings as a hole opened up several feet to the left of them and Reapers poured out.

Lexa counted twelve and she knew her warriors could handle them. She rode for the opening and grinned as Zora overtook her. “Looks like you get your fight after all, Heda!” The Mayor shouted as she raced Lexa toward the opening in the ground.

Indra was leading the warriors in the fray against the Reapers and Octavia and Lincoln followed Lexa into the opening. Cade and Dal had noticed Clarke suddenly break in the opposite direction toward the broken sign Lexa had been staring at earlier and they quickly followed her and Kita.

Zora reached the opening first and she dismounted quickly followed by Rock. Lexa, Octavia and Lincoln were there a few seconds later. They glanced at each other and boldly strode into the dark opening.

They found themselves in a dark tunnel and Octavia said something about it the subway system. Lexa looked at her and gave a terse order, “Find them Octavia.” She was willing to let the Sky Girl lead, this place was full of Mountain Men technology and Octavia was the one most likely to be understand and get them through it safely.

Octavia looked around and quickly saw where she wanted to go. There were power cables snaking down one of the side tunnels she could see and she darted down it following them.

Clarke knew that the Mountain Men would not be where the Reapers were attacking from and she had also seen the Pier 17 sign and thought there was no way that lone sign surviving on a destroyed island with the same number as the mysterious bunker could be a coincidence.

She felt Kita at her back and was thankful. As she ran along the ground looking for some kind of opening she heard Cade call out to her.
“Clarke! Let us come with you.” He ran after her with Dal at his feet. They made good time, and when a Reaper who had broken off from the battle began to chase them down Dal stopped long enough to grab an arrow and put it through the charging Reaper’s skull.

Clarke grinned at them and nodded, she felt better having three people she trusted at her back as she prepared to go after Emerson and his flunkies.

They didn’t have to go much further when Clarke spotted a poorly disguised entrance. She guessed they weren’t used to company on the island. They had kept this hidden bunker for almost 100 years and Clarke was certain they were the first to come ‘a knockin’.

She quickly brushed away the sand that covered the entrance and looked for a way in. There was a control panel near the side and she swore, “Fuck, I wish Raven were here.” She sighed hardly and then turned to Kita. “Smash it.” She ordered.

Kita looked surprised, she had assumed the Sky People would be against destroying technology. She shrugged and pulled out her sword, she lined the pommel of her sword up with the box and brought it forward with all of her strength. The panel cracked and sparks flew. Clarke looked hopefully at the door but it didn’t move.

“Shit!” She cried out, frustrated. She walked over and brought her boot down on the already smashed panel crushing even more circuits. To her delight that caused some movement, the door slid open, but stopped again just as quickly. More sparks flew as the door ground to a halt and Clarke knew that small entrance was as good as they were going to get.

Kita was already examining the opening and slipped inside once she determined there was no immediate danger. Clarke squeezed through after her and then Cade struggled through. Dal was much bigger and it proved a challenge for him. It took lot of wiggling and shifting but eventually he worked his way through the opening.

When the four of them were all inside Clarke looked around, drew her gun and set off deeper into the bunker. Kita quickly caught up and tried to walk in front of her Sky Queen but Clarke stopped her with a look, Clarke was Heda and Kita would obey her. Clarke whispered to her harshly, “I have the only gun, stay at my back and have your bow at the ready, but do not get in front of me, understood?”

Kita nodded her understanding and quickly drew an arrow. They continued on Dal also with an arrow ready to fly and Cade with his sword in his non-dominate hand and a throwing dagger in the other.

They moved through the underground hallway, Clarke following the hum of technology towards what she hoped would truly be the end of the terrible regime of Mount Weather.

Lexa was on Octavia’s heels as they silently ran through the tunnels. Lincoln was right behind her and Zora and Rock were bringing up the rear. Octavia had pulled out her gun, she didn’t often use the Sky weapons anymore but she knew the Mountain Men would have guns and she knew they needed to be able to fire back.

Lincoln had his bow at the ready and Lexa had daggers in each hand ready to throw. Zora had her sword out and Rock had an arrow nocked in her bow.

Octavia suddenly slowed and held up her hand behind her. The small party crouched and huddled in
closer to her. They could hear a conversation happening just around the corner. “Damn it! I told Emerson to let them go, we can just live here and let them live out there. Anyway, we don’t have enough Reapers to fight them, and if they come looking for us we’re fucked!”

“Shut up, man. Emerson knows what he’s doing. He was Wallace’s favourite for a reason.”

“Cage Wallace is dead, and if we keep following this fool on his quest of revenge against the Commander we’ll be dead too! I’m telling you, we should sneak out of here and cross the bridge, we’ll steal some Grounder clothes and live among them, we can have real lives out there.”

“No fucking way. I still have my gun and I refuse to be scared of a bunch of savages with swords.”

“After everything we’ve done, we’re the savages,” The young man retorted bitterly, “plus, they have the Arkers with them now, you idiot. They have technology, know-how, and genes of pure fucking stubborn will to survive 100 years on the ground after a nuclear annihilation. We don’t stand a chance, there are only five of us and these new Reapers aren’t even full force Reapers, they are more like half Reapers. The Red from here is weak, Dr. Tsing fucked with it to make it as strong as it was at Mount Weather. Come on man, let’s run for it.”

Lexa held up her hand and counted down with her fingers, as her last finger fell the team moved swiftly from their hiding place. Lexa’s dagger found it’s way silently into the back of the head of the Emerson supporter and Octavia had her gun in the face of the would-be deserter.

“We heard your conversation, you’re the smart one. Emerson has no chance, so your only chance is us. Hand your weapons over, now.” Octavia correctly guessed that Lexa would want to keep this one alive, he seemed talkative and Heda wanted some answers.

The scared young man quickly handed over his weapons and began to beg for his life, “I was only following orders, I didn’t even want to be a soldier, my father made me. Please, I’ll tell you anything you want to know.”

Lexa looked down at him with a mixture of pity and disgust, she couldn’t imagine how it would feel to be so weak and gutless. The small room he was in was some sort of supply station and Lincoln quickly found some rope and secured him.

Lexa spoke to the traitor before they left, “I will not kill you if you do not give me reason to. Remain quiet and we will retrieve you after the rest of this bunker is cleared. How many Reapers are there?”

He did not hesitate, “The ones he just sent out to fight your people were the last of the fully transformed, there are still around ten of them in the training area, but they aren’t full Reapers yet. Your people will have no trouble with killing them.”

She nodded at him, “Where are Emerson and the others from the mountain?” When he didn’t answer right away she pulled her sword from it’s sheath and a look of pure terror crossed the man’s face.

“Two of them are in the control room and Emerson is down checking on the Reapers. He thinks giving them more Red will make them ready to fight and he wants to send them all after you. It’ll more than likely just kill them, but he is too stupid to care.”

“Where?” Lexa growled and the man pointed to the door behind him.

“Emerson is down the stairs behind this door,” he pointed down the hallway in the direction they had been going before they had come across the two guards, “the control room is that way.”

Lexa nodded to Lincoln who gagged the man and left him tied up in the corner. Lexa purposefully
gave Lincoln and Octavia the control room, she wanted Lincoln away from the painful memories of Red, she trusted him, but she didn’t want him anywhere near it.

Zora, Rock and Lexa moved toward the door and silently slipped through it and down the stairs.

Clarke was leading her party quickly through the underground bunker when they came to a cross in the hallway they were following. Clarke slid up to the corner and listened, she heard voices coming from the left and motioned to her team. She counted down and they burst around the corner together shocking the two men in the control room.

Clarke took aim and got two rounds off before the guards could react, “Fuck!” She shouted, “Bulletproof glass!”

Shouts ensued and the Mountain Men grabbed their weapons and began to fire from the doorway. Clarke pushed KIta back around the corner and Cade and Dal dove for cover as well. They huddled together looking at Clarke for instructions. She had the most experience with guns and the Mountain Men and they knew she was their best bet for winning this firefight.

“I’m going to fire at them to make them take cover, I need you to look down the hallway and see if there is another hallway we can run to and duck into, OK?” Kita nodded her understanding and Clarke once again counted down. The two women leapt out from behind the wall and Clarke fired three rounds at the control room. The guards ducked out of the doorway back behind the glass and Kita took a quick look and decided not only was there a hallway but that she could make it.

She darted out into the hall and Clarke shouted after her in anger, “Kita, No! Not yet! Fuck!”

She saw the guards regroup and ducked back behind the wall just as a bullet slammed into the wall in front of her. “Fuck, fuck, fuck, she’s going to get herself killed!” Clarke’s jaw was clenched and Dal and Cade asked her what they could do.

Clarke peeked out around the corner and saw the guards getting ready to go after Kita. She looked at Dal and snapped, “Is that arrow ready?” When he nodded she added, “shoot the fucker, don’t miss.”

She waited until she heard the guards counting down and then she met Dal’s eye and as she heard the ‘Go’ from down the hallway she flung herself around the side and fired toward the door making the guard who was supposed to lay down cover fire pull back. Dal was a split second behind her and let his arrow fly as he saw the guard heading for Kita’s hiding place.

The guard got one round off before Dal’s arrow slammed into his chest, penetrating his heart and killing him almost immediately.

Clarke kept her eye on the last guard who was cursing loudly and when he swung his rifle out the door and began firing like a madman she quickly ducked for cover. That was when she saw the blood.

Dal was leaning against the opposite wall, Cade was cradling him in his arms and looking panicked. “Clarke, help.” His voice was weak and desperate but Dal shook his head.

“I’m OK, it’s just my shoulder. We have to kill the last guard.” He was in obvious pain and he was losing a lot of blood, but the warrior in Clarke knew he was right. As long as the last guard lived they were all in danger.

“Cade, keep pressure on the wound, that will slow the bleeding. He’s going to be OK and he’s right,
we have to kill the guard.” Cade made to stand up and Clarke stopped him. “Dal needs you here, keep pressure on that wound, it will hurt but you have to keep pressing. Do you understand?”

Cade’s face was dark with anger and fear but he pressed on his lover’s shoulder and nodded to Clarke.

Clarke returned to the corner and peered around just in time to see the Mountain Man sneaking down the hallway with his weapon at the ready, he was approaching the hallway Kita had ducked into and Clarke knew the girl’s fighting skills stood no chance against the bullet that seems to have her name on it. Clarke leapt out and fired wildly, yelling for Kita to run. She ducked back just in time as bullets flew in her direction.

Then she heard running footsteps and for a moment thought the guard was coming after them, but then there was a loud thump and a grunt. She peeked back around to see a grinning Octavia standing over the last guard who was face down on the ground with her sword sticking out of his back.

Octavia’s grin faded as Clarke jumped into the hallway and gestured wildly for Lincoln to come and help Dal. “He’s been shot, we need to find something to bandage the wound.”

Lincoln moved quickly to help Cade carry Dal. “There is a supply room back the way we came, I’m quite certain I saw medical supplies. Let’s get him there.”

As the men started to transport the injured Dal, Clarke ran forward to look for Kita. When she looked down the hallway and the girl wasn’t there she swore again, “Fuck! Where the hell did she go? Did you see Kita, Octavia?” Even in her agitated state Clarke calmly reached down and took the weapons off of the dead Mountain Men, taking one rifle for herself and handing one over to Octavia.

“Kita, no… where is she? We don’t have time to follow her around these tunnels Clarke, Heda went after Emerson.” Octavia grabbed Clarke’s arm and pulled her in the direction Lincoln had just gone with Dal and Cade but Clarke pulled away.

“Heda can handle him, we aren’t leaving Kita alone down here.” Clarke’s voice let Octavia know there was no room for debate so she sighed and began to walk down the corridor where Kita had last been seen.

A noise from the control room stopped them and they both ran into the hallway, rifles raised. What they saw brought a full burst of laughter from Octavia and an incredulous look from Clarke.

Kita had somehow figured out that the ventilation system ran through the whole place and had hoisted herself up into it. She had manoeuvred until she was over the Control Room and then she dropped down from the ceiling expecting to ambush the Mountain Men from behind. When she landed she looked up and saw two dead Mountain Men, Octavia laughing, and Clarke staring at her.

Kita looked down at the two dead men and then at Octavia, she nodded deeply, “Well done Octavia Kom Trikru,” was all she said before turning and following the trail of blood left by Dal.

Clarke was mad at the girl for not listening, but she was also impressed with her resourcefulness and struck by the absurdity of this Ice Warrior having dropped from the ceiling ventilation shafts when she didn’t even know what they were.

She shook her head and rushed to catch up with the other two women and overheard Octavia briefing her on the injured Dal and then complimenting her on her quick thinking. Octavia’s laughter was contagious and Clarke found herself chuckling a little as well.
When they got to the supply room Lincoln had untied the Mountain Man and the young man was treating Dal’s gunshot wound. Cade was standing behind him looking very menacing with a sword in his hand.

Clarke pushed her way through, “Who are you?” She demanded.

“Clarke…?” He was surprised by the sudden appearance of the blonde. He knew who she was, Dante had been keen on the young man and he had often been the old man’s private guard. Dante had talked a lot about the blonde woman from the first time she was brought into the Mountain.

“How do you … never mind, everyone in the Mountain knew me by the end. Are you a medic?”

“No… I mean, I had training. I was in Dante’s guard.” His voice was soft and Clarke watched him patching Dal, he was doing an adequate job.

“Make sure this man is well taken care of and I will speak for you, what is your name” Clarke asked him.

“Virgil. I’m Virgil.” The young man looked at Clarke but didn’t dare hope for forgiveness or absolution. But seeing her made him remember the words of his former mentor. Dante Wallace had known that this young woman was going to be a true leader and here she was fierce and strong, ruling the Ground after falling from the Sky.

“Virgil, you’re doing a great job with my friend here. Clean the wound well and bandage him. Cooperate with us and I will try to help you. Fight and I will kill you myself, do you understand?” Clarke’s words were soft, she saw how Virgil’s hands trembled as he worked, but her meaning was clear.

“I will not fight you Clarke of the Sky.” He answered just as soft and continued his work.

Clarke nodded and turned to look at Octavia. “Where is Lexa?”

Octavia nodded to the stairs, “Down there.” Clarke took the lead and Kita followed, Lincoln moved to follow but Octavia’s hand stopped him. “Not today babe. You stay here and guard them. Cade is in no frame of mind for it.”

“You do not trust me to be near the Red.” Lincoln’s voice was full of pain and he choked on his words.

“I trust you. I just don’t want you to see what those men are going through. It’s a painful memory that you do not need to be reminded of.” Octavia spoke quickly and softly. “I have to go and protect Clarke now. I’ll be back soon. Take care of Dal and Cade. Cade is too worried, not in his right mind to protect them if anything happens, and Dal is hurt.” He nodded and she squeezed his arm and kissed him before rushing down the stairs to find Clarke.

As Clarke rushed down the stairs her heart began to beat faster, the worry for her wife that she had forced aside while she cleared out the rest of the Mountain Men crept in and sat like a stone in her stomach. She reached the bottom of the stairs and there was a hallway to the left. She was about to turn the corner and rush into the hallway when she was suddenly grabbed from behind and slammed into the wall.

“What the hell, Kita!” She demanded and then sighed heavily understanding the motive but not appreciating it at the moment. “Fine. You go first.” She growled, not wanting to delay finding Lexa.
by arguing.

Kita nodded and let Clarke go. As Kita crept up to the entrance of the hallway Octavia joined them and snickered, “What’s the matter Clarke? Your Ice Guardian won’t let you go first?” She continued to laugh lightly to herself as she moved up and slid into place directly behind Kita. Clarke glared at both of them as she checked her weapon and moved into place behind them.

Kita checked around the corner looking for any dangers and then spoke softly for Octavia, “Seems clear, I’m moving to the other side on three. One, two, three…” The girl crossed the hall and hid behind the doorframe as she checked out the hall once more. When she was satisfied she nodded and the two of them moved silently into the hallway together. Clarke brought up the rear, rifle raised and constantly checking their six.

The three women moved tensely down the hallway, weapons at the ready. As they approached the door at the far end they heard the sounds of fighting. Clarke tried to push her way through but Octavia held her back and nodded to Kita.

Kita quickly got into position to clear the doorway, she had her bow drawn and an arrow ready to end the life of anyone who challenged her. The door was already open so she stepped back from the wall and cleared methodically, checking her viewing area, taking a small step and clearing again until she had cleared as much as she could without going through. She stepped up confidently ready to step through and clear the rest of the room but Octavia tapped her on the shoulder and indicated they should go through together back to back.

Kita nodded and the two women got into position. They counted down together and slipped through the opening. Clarke watched them enter and sprang into action herself as Octavia fired two rounds from her rifle and Kita let her arrow fly and quickly grabbed another one from her quiver.

Clarke’s instinct was to barge through door and find Lexa immediately but her training won out and she slipped through the door much like Octavia and Kita had before her. Octavia had stopped firing and was visually clearing her side of the room. Kita let two more arrows fly before she stopped as well. When Clarke stepped through with her gun firmly in both hands, she walked straight through, trusting that Kita and Octavia had both sides covered.

The room was quite large and was filled, on the left with computer screens and other monitoring equipment that Clarke recognized to be medical in nature. To the right was a door that led to a metal staircase going down. Directly in front of her was a glass wall that looked out over the downstairs laboratory. Clarke took in the two dead Reapers on the left, arrows sticking out of them, and one more on the right with two bullet holes in him.

She proceeded directly to the glass wall, she needed to see what was happening even though she just wanted to barge down the stairs and find her wife. The three women quickly approached the glass, Octavia covering them with her weapon pointed toward the open door on the right.

They looked down into the lab and Clarke felt several emotions rise in her. Anger at the Mountain Men, they had yet another laboratory set up specifically for human experimentation. All of the disgust and anger she had felt in Mount Weather when she realized they were draining the blood from the Grounder’s came back with a vengeance. The second feeling was pride, and the third worry. Lexa, Rock and Zora had pinned Emerson down behind one of the computer stations. He had a rifle but they had decent cover and were willing to wait until he ran out of bullets as he took pot shots at them every so often.

There were six half-Reapers still caged into the experimental area, two by two in three cages. Clarke could see two open cages and one dead man with what looked like one of Zora’s daggers sticking
out of his skull. Clarke correctly guessed the other three men had made a run for it up the stairs and had met their demise from the two women now at her back.

“Let’s go, she needs our firepower.” Clarke ordered and the three of them moved toward the stairs. As they started to descend they realized they would be out in the open and Emerson could easily get a clear shot if he noticed them. Fortunately Rock noticed them first and made eye contact with Octavia. She nodded to the warrior and signalled for them to move quickly. Then she let out a war cry and leapt up from her hiding place.

Emerson was caught off guard and reacted slowly. Rock had her arrow ready to fly and as soon as he popped up with his rifle she shot as well. Both arrow and bullet met flesh and Rock collapsed behind the console Lexa was hiding behind.

Zora freaked, “Rock? Rock? What the hell!? Rock, answer me!” Her voice was ragged and panicked.

Lexa reacted as quickly and calmly as ever. She had seen Clarke and Octavia a second later than Rock and was about to do the same thing Rock had. She pulled the smaller woman into her arms and did what Clarke had taught her, she found the bullet hole, thankfully it was in the right side of her abdomen, closer to her side than her centre, and Lexa found an exit wound in her back.

She knew the woman was in great pain and possibly what she had heard Clarke call shock, so she shouted back to Zora herself. “I’ve got her, Zora. She’s OK. It went straight through her side.”

Emerson was cursing and trying to pull the arrow from his own shoulder. When her heard Lexa call back to Zora he thought he had the advantage. He jumped up and ran to his right to a different console where he slammed his hand down on the release button to the remaining cages.

As the cages swung open he yelled to his Reapers to attack. He hadn’t noticed Clarke, Octavia, and Kita but turned quickly, eyes wide with surprise, when shots rang out from an unexpected direction.

Clarke killed two of the Reapers who had started to run toward where Lexa and Rock were hiding. Octavia shot two more who ran at them and Kita’s arrow took care of the one who ran for Zora. The three women turned their weapons in Emerson’s direction but instead of firing they watched with interest as the final Reaper ran at him.

The man could still speak well enough to curse at Emerson. He shouted that he would not be a slave and a monster and he launched himself at the surprised soldier. Emerson recovered quickly enough to raise his rifle but not quickly enough to avoid all injury. The half turned Reaper landed on Emerson knocking him to the ground and he sank his teeth into the side of Emerson’s face piercing the flesh just as Emerson pulled the trigger.

Emerson screamed in pain and frustration and shoved the dead body off of him. He was now bleeding from the face and from the shoulder where he had pulled out Rock’s arrow. He struggled back to his feet and looked up to see Octavia’s gun and Kita’s arrow staring at him.

Clarke had quickly gone over to Lexa and taken over treating Rock’s gunshot wound and Zora was holding Rock’s hand while Clarke looked her over. Lexa strode over to Octavia and stepped in between her and Kita.

She looked down at Emerson with no pity, no mercy, and no forgiveness. “You are the last of the Mountain Men. Some of your people still live with mine in Ton DC but they are not Mountain Men, they were poor souls caught in hell with you and forced to live by your rules. They try to make amends and ask for forgiveness every single day. Even though most of my people have made peace
with them, they still remember the crimes that were committed in the mountain and they swear to remember the past so that they dare not repeat it.

You could have fled anywhere, shed your clothes, your identity; but you chose to come here and to continue the crimes your people have committed for a century. Do you have anything to say for yourself, Emerson of the Mountain?"

“Fuck you!” Emerson spat at her. “You people are savages, you should not inherit the Earth! My people deserved to live and rule!” Emerson started to lift his rifle but Lexa kicked it out of his hand. She stared down at him and narrowed her eyes.

“I had planned to tie you up and bring you with us so that my people could witness your death.” Lexa tilted her head to the side and examined him like an insect. “I have changed my mind, you aren’t worth the spectacle. Your fight is over.”

Lexa nodded coldly to Octavia who without hesitation put a bullet into Emerson’s brain. Lexa nodded at her and then at Kita. “The rest of the tunnel is secure?” She was back to business immediately.

“Sha Heda,” was Octavia’s reply and as Lexa returned to Clarke, Octavia and Kita did a quick sweep of the lab making sure the Reapers were in fact dead.

Clarke looked around the lab and grabbed some medical supplies she needed, she decided to close the wounds as best she could on the spot. She stopped the bleeding and closed and bandaged the wounds and treated Rock for mild shock. She also came across a stretcher and instructed Lexa and Zora how to roll Rock onto it without moving her too much. When they were ready she jumped up and took a look around the lab for some pain killers.

She moved to the locked cabinets at the back of the room and yelled for Octavia to find a key. The brunette joined her after searching Emerson’s pockets and finding a key ring. She handed the keys to Clarke and watched as the blonde tried the first one to no avail. The third key opened the first door and Clarke gasped as she opened it.

It was full of vials of Red. Octavia growled in anger at the sight of it, “We have to destroy it Clarke, all of it!” She reached forward to grab some of the vials but Clarke stopped her.

“O. We have to wait.” Clarke started but was quickly cut off.

“No! This stuff is too dangerous. It almost took Lincoln away from me.” Octavia choked on a sob and Clarke pulled her in for a hug.

“I know, O. We just have to do it right. I promise I will destroy it, we either have to find another chemical that will neutralize it, burn it, or bury it.”

“Burn it, blow this whole fucking place up.” Octavia growled again. “I’m sick to fucking death of the fucking Mountain Men and their bullshit fucking experiments. Even if they were Assassins who worked for Yor, they were fucking people, and they were trying to turn them into Reapers.” Octavia’s voice was getting louder as she spoke, “I say we wipe every last piece of evidence that the Mountain Men even existed off the face of the Earth. Let’s blow this fucking bunker!” Her eyes were shining with tears she refused to let fall and her voice was full of emotion.

“Octavia.” It was Lexa, she walked up behind her and laid her hand on Octavia’s shoulder. “I feel the same way, but we must let Clarke handle this. I promise you that Red will not survive. I will not allow it.” Lexa’s calm voice brought Octavia back to reason and she nodded her head, not trusting
“Also, I am proud of your choice to use your gun today. I know you prefer to fight as a TriKru warrior does, but the gun was needed today. I am glad you chose well, there are times when we will need the firepower. I wish for you to teach Kita how to use one as soon as we return to Ton DC, and maybe some others, maybe me.” Lexa’s smooth transition distracted Octavia a little from her emotional state and she was able to answer her Heda.

“Sha, Heda. I am glad you approve. I was worried you and Indra would be upset with my choice of weapon today.” She turned to look at Lexa who smiled at her.

“You fought well Octavia, you used all of your weapons and resources. You are one of my best warriors. Lexa let the rare compliment fall softly from her lips and she squeezed Octavia’s shoulder. “The Red will be destroyed, I promise.” She nodded her head deeply and Octavia took deep breath and returned the nod.

Clarke had searched through three of the cabinets and along with a lot of Red she found what she was looking for. She looked up at Lexa and smirked, “Already enlisting help on winning that bet I see?” She gave Lexa a stunning smile and a waggled her eyebrows at her as she locked the rest of the cabinets again. Lexa just stared dumbfounded at her as she returned to Rock with a mild pain killer.

The group began to make their way back upstairs and found an anxious Lincoln followed by Indra bursting through the doorway to the observation room as they reached the top of the metal stairs.

“Heda.” Indra spoke, relief obvious in her voice. “The Reapers are dead, we suffered only two injuries, they are being treated by the Sky Chancellor as we speak. We are within 200 meters of the bridge and ready to move on at your command.”

“Well done Indra.” Lexa nodded at her general and dropped back to speak with Clarke as the party moved up the next flight of stairs. “Houmon.” Lexa reached out and touched Clarke’s arm softly, both women knowing it was a grounding touch reassurance that she was alive and standing there. “How much time will you need to search this place and destroy the Red?” She asked, trying to plan what to do next.

“It’s not that simple Lex, we don’t know much about this Red. Mom has studied Dr. Tsing’s Red but not this one. We don’t know if we can burn it, or if it will explode, we don’t know what to mix it with to neutralize it.” Clarke sighed. “Let mom come down here, give her an hour or so to look at it, I’m sure we can figure it out by then.”

Lexa closed her eyes and let out an irritated sigh, “An hour? Clarke the day grows long and I want us off of this island!”

“The Mountain Men are dead Lex. The sandstorms, the friggin’ dragons, the sinkholes, that was all them. There were screens in the control room that showed all of the traps they had set up. We’re safe now.” Clarke argued.

“Safe!? Lexa scoffed. “In this place!? We are not safe here, Clarke. The Mountain Men are not the only things to fear in Manhattan, I’m sure of it.”

“What do you mean?” Clarke demanded.

“There are boarded up doors in the backs of the cells in the basement, they must lead into tunnels. Even before the fighting started all of the Reapers curiously stayed in the far corners of every cage as
far away from the doors as possible. There are scratch marks on the walls around the boards and the
cages are reinforced far more than needed for Reapers. I believe the cages were originally meant to
hold something else, and whatever that is might still be in the tunnels.” Lexa looked Clarke in the eye
and gave her decision. “You have 30 minutes to destroy the Red or I will blow it all up.”

Clarke sputtered in irritation at the decision, “You don’t even know how to blow it up… argh… fine.
Get my mother down here.” Clarke stormed up the rest of the stairs and shouted to Lincoln and
Octavia to go and find Abby quickly.

Lexa whispered softly to Kita to keep watch on the stairs and she moved over to question Virgil.

“Is there someone else on this island?” She eyed him closely and saw his Adam’s apple dip as he
swallowed hard.

“I don’t know…. I mean…” He stammered.

Lexa’s sword was unsheathed quickly enough to make him understand that it was she who he should
fear the most. “Speak true,” was all she said as she rested her sword in her hand and glared at him.

“There is something in the tunnels, someone maybe… I don’t know what it is. There have always
been reports of the island being haunted, but I’m sure it isn’t ghosts. There is something though. It
scared the men we caged up down there, there were sounds that came from the tunnels behind the
boards, and none of them will go near it, even once they are full on Reapers.

Sometimes we would send Reapers into the tunnels for other things and they wouldn’t return.
Emerson told us they must have run away, but we have the Red and they were fully addicted so it
didn’t make sense. I’m sure there is more information on the files. We’ve been coming here for
seventy years. Everyone thought it was a punishment to be posted here and they always talked about
it being haunted. Since we arrived I have heard noises and once I thought I saw a shadow of a
person following us in the tunnel but Emerson told me I was crazy.”

Lexa nodded and moved on to another topic, “How did you get here?” At that question the young
man’s eyes lit up a bit.

“We flew!” He allowed himself to grin a little and then added, “There is a helicopter in another
bunker right beside this one.”

Clarke’s ears perked up, “A helicopter!? Can you fly it?” she demanded and Virgil’s face broke into
a real smile as he nodded enthusiastically.

Lexa had no idea what they were talking about but guessed that they had found the source of the
noises and lights that Zora’s men had always reported seeing on the island. She was about to
question him more about the Mountain’s activities here on Manhattan but just then Abby arrived.

She looked directly at Lexa and spoke quickly, “I have patched up two more warriors, but we really
need to get them to a clean, safe place to be treated. We need to get to York so I can have some
healers to help me in a sterile environment. This god damn sand is…” Abby stopped when she saw
Rock on the stretcher and Dal with a bandaged shoulder.

She moved quickly to assess both of them and Clarke joined her. “Mom they are both stable but you
and I have something else to deal with. Come with me, please.”

Abby did a quick check on Rock and Dal’s vitals and gave Cade a sympathetic look, both his sister
and husband had been shot in this damn bunker and she could tell he wanted to get out of it as
quickly as possible.
She followed Clarke downstairs and noticed the Kita was leading them clearing out every room before allowing them to enter. Abby took in the dead bodies and the evidence of the chaos that had just ensued in the underground laboratory.

When they reached the bottom floor she glanced behind her and saw Lexa and Octavia dragging the dead bodies into the cells that lined the far wall of the lab, and closing the doors behind them. She noticed Kita staring at what appeared to be boarded up doors in the back of each cell and she saw her daughter in law fidget nervously as Octavia finished searching Emerson’s body and removing things from his pockets before exiting the final cell and closing the door. Lexa and Octavia walked over to one of the work stations and Octavia activated the locks of the cell doors. Only then did Lexa seem to relax a little.

Abby was curious about what Lexa thought might be behind the doors in the cells but she turned her attention to Clarke as she opened the cabinets along the rear wall. Abby inhaled deeply and released the sigh audibly. “That is a lot of Red.” She looked at Clarke and shook her head, “We can’t leave it here, we have to destroy it before we go.”

“I know, Mom, but it’s different than the Red Dr. Tsing used. I think it might be more volatile, kind of a prototype or something…? We have to examine it first and then decide how to destroy it.” Clarke took a vial out and the two women moved over to a workstation. Abby took the vial and put some on a slide and quickly slid it under a microscope for a look. She knew what the powerful Red was made from and after a quick comparison she decided she thought they were similar enough to try a quick disposal.

“It looks close enough to the Red we burned from Mount Weather, I think we can burn this too.” She looked at Clarke who raised an eyebrow at her mother’s haste. “I’m worried about my patients,” she snapped at Clarke but then softened immediately and sighed a little, “and this place creeps me out,” she sheepishly added, “I want to get out of here.”

Almost on cue there was a loud bang from behind them, they both jumped and whirled around to see Lexa, Kita and Octavia with weapons pointed at the door inside the first cage. The boards held against what ever had struck them but Lexa turned toward them, “We burn it! Now!” She walked back toward Clarke and Abby who scrambled to prepare to dispose of the Red.

Clarke ran back over to the cabinets and unlocked all of them. Lexa joined her and the two women grabbed tray after tray of the vials. Abby found a large beaker and began to empty the drug into it. She filled it as far as she dared and grabbed another one, when it was full she pulled out two large boiling flasks and started filling them. By the time they had all of the Red dumped she had four large containers full of Red.

Clarke did one more check of the room, making sure they had everything they needed and as she turned to tell Lexa they were ready another loud thump made her jump. Kita and Octavia whirled and pointed their weapons toward the third cell and Lexa growled at Clarke and Abby, “We leave now!” She grabbed two of the containers and Clarke and Abby grabbed one each. Kita and Octavia kept facing the cells and walked backwards to the stairs to follow them up.

Clarke reached the stairs first, Abby was right behind her and as they started to move upstairs the banging started again and got louder, something was pounding on the barricades and trying to get through. Lexa called out for the Sky women to get upstairs quickly and she turned to watch the cells herself. Octavia reached her first and she commanded, “Octavia, upstairs. Keep Lincoln away from the Red.” At the sound of Lincoln’s name she didn’t need to be told twice and she bolted up the stairs catching Clarke in a few steps.
Kita reached her next and Lexa nodded with her head indicating Kita should head upstairs but a particularly loud thump made them both whip their heads around back to the first cell. The wood had splintered a little and they both clearly heard a sinister sound that seemed like laughter, but did not seem entirely human. The hair on the back of Lexa’s neck stood on end and she shivered at the sound.

Kita and Lexa stood still, almost transfixed by the horrible sound and they both started when the next thump came. Lexa stared down at the Red in her hands, thankful she had chosen the boiling flasks with the long narrow necks that prevented it from spilling when she had jumped slightly at the noise.

“Let’s go, Kita.” Lexa tried to make her voice sound firm but it was weak and she couldn’t tear her own eyes away either. The next bang was accompanied by a piece of the wood breaking and then a horrible, withered, dull-grey, hand reached through the hole. It was much larger than any human hand Lexa had seen, longer and thinner but with strength enough to pull at the now loosened boards.

Lexa had seen enough, “Go!” She grabbed Kita’s shoulder and pushed her up the stairs. The Ice Guard didn’t wait to be told again, she raced up the stairs and only realized her Heda wasn’t following when she was almost to the top.

Lexa waited a little longer, waited until the boards had mostly been torn away and a strange, misshapen body pulled itself through the hole and into the cell. It shielded it’s eyes from the light as it glanced around the cell. Lexa deduced that it didn’t see well in the light, she guessed a century of living underground had made it so.

The thing was humanoid but Lexa would not call it her kin. It was only slightly shorter than the average human but the way it hunched over as it scuttled around made it seem much shorter. It was impossibly thin, the outline of it’s ribs showing clearly along it’s sides. It’s entire body appeared to be covered with the same light flaxen hair that was much longer on the top of it’s head. It was naked, but Lexa could not make out any sexed characteristics.

The thing slowly lowered it’s large hand and Lexa got a look at it’s face. The eyes were large and round, they had a reddish tinge to them and seemed to reflect the light that shone from the ceiling. It was squinting as it adjusted to the light in the laboratory and it blinked it’s large eyes several times before really looking around. It had a very round face, seemingly no chin, and it’s teeth were large, and very sharp, and protruded out of it’s mouth.

She stayed as still she could and watched with horror as the thing spotted the dead bodies that Lexa and Octavia had dragged into the cell. It scuttled over to Emerson and made a clapping gesture so horrifying it was obscene and then it let out the same creepy laugh-like sound as it had before. It turned it’s head then and facing back toward the tunnels it spoke a series of guttural sounds and then laughed again. The laughter was echoed from inside the tunnel. Then the creature bent down and licked Emerson’s cheek where the Reaper had bitten him earlier. It bit into the man’s corpse and pulled a piece of flesh from the face.

As it chewed it squinted as it lowered it’s hand and then looked around the room. It’s eyes stopped on Lexa and the Commander froze. The thing’s mouth turned up in a terrifying smile and it laughed the wheezy, creepy laugh that Lexa knew she would hear in her nightmares. Then it screamed. It was so sudden, and loud Lexa jumped and almost dropped one of the containers she carried. The thing in the cage ran at the reinforced bars of the cell and crashed into them. It was still screaming in a high pitched voice and Lexa could hear answering screams coming from the tunnels behind the cells.

She stood transfixed for a few seconds as the thing tried all the bars all along the cell, seemingly looking for a weak spot. It was Kita’s hand that brought her back to her senses. Kita had been yelling
for her Heda to follow her up the stairs and when Lexa did not answer she ran down and grabbed Heda’s shoulder in a vice grip. She stared over Lexa’s shoulder in terror at the thing that was now screaming at them as it flung itself into the bars of the cell.

“Heda!” She shouted again and tugged hard on the woman’s shoulder. As Lexa turned to look at her she shouted “Let’s go! We must burn the Red and get to the bridge!” Lexa nodded her agreement and they both glanced one last time at the thing in the cell behind them.

As they turned to run up the stairs they both heard an eerie and broken sound that they could barely decipher as English come from behind them, “get out, get you, we will, we will, we will.” Then it laughed and Lexa and Kita raced up the stairs.

When they reached the top of the stairs, breathless they saw that Rock and Dal had already been taken to the surface. Clarke, Abby and Kane were the only people left in the bunker. Kane had a small hard drive in his hands and it was connected to a computer that had been hidden behind a panel. Lexa barked her orders, “We leave now!”

Clarke wanted to ask what all the noise had been but one look at her wife’s face and she got on board. “Mom go now, Kane you have 30 seconds for that to download and then we go without it.” Abby obeyed quickly, wanting to get out of the bunker as fast as possible. “Kita go with my mother.” Clarke ordered and tried not to be infuriated when she looked to Lexa. The almost imperceptible nod from Heda was what spurred the girl to action. She called out to the Sky Chancellor and caught her quickly. She gladly led the woman out of the bunker, trying not to think about what she had seen.

“What the hell is in the basement Lexa?” Clarke demanded as soon as Abby was gone.

“Something… “ Lexa’s voice faded away at a loss for words to describe what she had seen. She tried desperately to push her feelings away and reached deep for her Commander training. Her face settled back into the emotionless mask, the one Clarke had seen almost exclusively for most of the first month they had known each other when Lexa had still thought of her as an invader from the sky who had burned 300 of her warriors. Clarke knew that falling back on it now when it was just the two of them and Kane, who Lexa trusted, in the room meant she was under extreme stress. It made Clarke terrified of whatever Lexa had seen in the basement.

Lexa straightened her spine and stood as tall as she could. It helped her feel in control when right now she felt anything but. “We will talk when we get to York, Clarke.” She focused her gaze on Kane, “Kane, nothing in this place is important enough to delay our departure any longer.” Her words were punctuated by another crashing sound from below, followed by more high pitched screams.

Kane nodded and looked back to the screen. “I’ve got it.” He quickly disconnected and turned and nodded at the two women. The three of them ran out of the room quickly and headed toward the surface.

Clarke and Lexa walked immediately to Abby when they surfaced. Lexa nodding her head to Indra to summon her as she walked. Abby had emptied the Red onto some pieces of clothing she had tasked some warriors with stripping off of the dead Reapers. She held a torch out to Octavia who gladly took it and lit it with her lighter. Abby warned her to stay as far back as she could as they didn’t know how the Red would react.
The small pile of clothing was quite far from the gathering of warriors and Abby had made certain it was downwind. She didn’t know what reaction people would have it they inhaled the burned chemical and she had no desire to find out.

Clarke and Lexa added their chemicals to the pile and threw the glassware on top as well. Octavia had her torch burning and was about to approach the pile and light it when Lincoln’s hand shot out and pulled her back.

“I can’t let you do that Octavia.” His hand was like a vice grip and Lexa noticed Indra, who was sliding silently up next to them, subtly draw her sword.

“Linc. I have to.” Octavia’s voice was pleading as she looked up at the man she loved.

“No, O.” Lincoln tried to maintain the stoic glare on his face but he faltered and grinned a little, knowing he had everyone on edge. “Let me light it with an arrow. We can stay further back, it’ll be safer.”

Everyone near enough to hear the exchange let out a collective sigh of relief and Octavia punched Lincoln really hard on his injured shoulder. He let out a small cough of pain and gritted his teeth through his grin. Clarke knew it must have really hurt, but she thought he deserved it so she didn’t chastise her friend.

Lexa chuckled a little and silently thanked Lincoln for diffusing the tension a little. She made her way to Indra’s side quickly and whispered to her general the need to know details of what had happened in the bunker.

Everyone moved back away from the pile of Red soaked clothes and Lincoln drew an arrow. He tied a small piece of cloth to the end and Octavia lit it on fire. He took aim and Lexa paused her debrief momentarily to glance over and watch in satisfaction as he overcame the Red for one final time. The arrow flew directly into the pile and the flame took immediately. A small fire ball exploded into life and Octavia looked at Lincoln in thanks. She was pretty sure that fireball would have singed her eyebrows really good, and perhaps the rest of her too.

Lexa didn’t linger, and Indra had all of the warriors rounded up and mounted fast enough that even she was impressed with herself. Her Heda’s brief words and the disturbed look in her eye had been enough to put fear in Indra’s heart. Heda Lexa was not easily moved to fear, revulsion, or shock. Indra had seen all three of those things in Lexa’s eyes as she quietly informed Indra that while the Mountain Men and Reapers were dead they were still not the only living things on this island.

When the party was ready Lexa motioned for Clarke to ride next to her. Zora and Rock were on her other side, Rock’s side was bandaged up and she was riding in front of Zora, the large woman’s arms encircling her protectively. Rock had tried to insist on riding with someone else so Zora could ride on her own for her triumphant return to York but Zora dismissed the idea immediately and insisted Rock ride with her. Lexa understood how she felt and thought back to when Clarke had infected herself with Wamplei.

They rode a much quicker pace now and were at the entrance to the ancient bridge in mere minutes. They stopped and Lexa, Ro, and Clarke dismounted and walked forward. Clarke looked skeptical and raised her eyebrow at Lexa. “You can’t be serious?”

When Lexa grinned at her and looked at Ro, Clarke knew that she was indeed serious. “Can the horses traverse this?” Lexa asked gesturing in front of her.

Ro walked out a few meters onto the superstructure of the bridge and surveyed what was in front of
her. The bridge was mostly flat where they were now and then the centre gradually became a raised platform separating the left and right sides of the deck.

The bridge had survived the bombs and the subsequent one hundred years, but not without damage. There were some large holes in the deck here and there and Ro also noticed the railing on most of the left hand side that was visible to her was non-existent. There were cables snapped off and blowing in the wind, others missing entirely and the ones still intact looked rather precarious. She contemplated quickly and when she came back to Lexa she was wearing the same grin as her Heda.

“As long as we don’t come across any holes that run the entire width of the bridge and are too big to jump across we’ll be fine.” She stated with confidence.

“Fuck.” Was all Clarke said before sighing heavily and trying one last time, “We could take the helicopter!” Lexa’s glare told her that there was no way she was waiting the amount of time it would take to ferry all of them back and forth, no way she was trusting the young Mountain Man that much yet, no way the Yorkers wouldn’t try to shoot them from the sky the first time they approached, and no way she was getting into a metal machine that could fly.

Ro led the way onto the bridge with Lexa and Clarke alongside. Zora was content to ride behind them for now, more concerned about holding Rock steady than anything else. Ro chose to lead them to the right of the centre platform and they rode slowly carefully avoiding any holes in the deck that would send them plunging almost 300 feet into the water below them.

They traversed the first part with relative ease and when they reach the first support tower Zora began to move forward. She was grinning and looking off into the distance at her home. “You know why this bridge survived when all of the others crumbled?” She gestured off to her left towards the tattered remains of the Manhattan Bridge.

“When it was built it was made 6 times stronger than it needed to be and they used three different types of structure support. It was redundant but the designer said that even if one of those structures failed entirely this bridge would stand when other designs would fall. It is still here despite all three systems failing partly. Where one has failed the other two are holding it up.” Zora was speaking with a lightness in her voice and it was obvious that she was proud of her city.

The group neared the centre point of the bridge when they came across their first real challenge. The deck was missing across the centre and only a small strip of it remained. At this point they could see across to the left side of the bridge and Ro merely raised her eyebrow as Lexa and Zora congratulated her on choosing the better side. They had peered over and seen that nothing remained of the deck at all for around 30 meters on that side. On their side, about four feet of deck remained up against the concrete wall of the bridge. They dismounted and cautiously approached the hole. Lexa and Ro lay down on the deck and crawled slowly forward, as they neared the hole they looked toward the remaining path and tried to see underneath it to estimate the strength of the deck.

Satisfied with what she saw, Ro went first. She held the reins of her horse and led it across the deck. The hole was around ten feet wide and once she reached a more stable area she led her horse in a zigzag path testing for weaknesses. When she found none she shouted back to Lexa that they should come over one and a time and reform ranks once they passed the gap.

It took about an hour to get everyone across including all of the injured and the horses carrying the dead. There were a few tense moments with the last few to cross as pieces of the remaining asphalt crumbled and fell to the sea, but they all made it across safely. Between the two support towers they came across several other holes, though none as large as the first one, and they traversed the area with care.
Once they reached the second support tower the bridge seemed in much better condition and they picked up the pace. The day was growing long and Lexa did not think it was a good idea to be out in the open after dark. She imagined the creatures from the tunnel might try and follow them once the sky darkened, and she also worried about the human-like things she had seen in the Mountain Men’s bunker. If those things got loose she much preferred all of her people being inside the protected perimeter of York.

They were about 500 yards out from the end of the bridge when an arrow flew from the distance and hit the asphalt in front of them. It bounced off of the surface and skidded a few feet before it came to a stop. Lexa immediately had her hand raised and the order to stop and ready for battle flew from her lips.

The arrow had been a warning to the party and Zora was fuming. She approached Lexa and the two women decided that they would lead the party, they would muster two by two and they would be the front line. Dangerous or not, they were going to lead this group and confront whoever was trying to keep them from York.

Indra objected and Clarke agreed. They thought the two leaders in the front line was just too easy of a target for whoever blocked the way. In the end Lexa overruled them and Rock was transferred carefully over to Clarke’s horse while Zora joined Lexa at the head of the convoy.

Swords drawn and looks of fierce determination on their faces the two women crossed the final length of the Brooklyn Bridge.

As they rode a few more arrows flew toward them. They didn’t seem to be attacking, but they were corralling them. Forcing them closer together and making them stay to the right side of the bridge. When they were only 100 yards out they could see a makeshift wall at the end of the bridge. It blocked the entire width of the bridge and as they approached they could see figures dressed in dark clothing ducking in and out of previously unseen holes in the wall.

As they popped in and out they fired arrows and Lexa had had just about enough. She stopped and ordered the halt. Then she dismounted and strode forward. “Ai laik Heda Kom Trikru. Ai tro souda gouthru klir. Clil daun!” She continued in English for the benefit of the Sky Crew, “We will cross this bridge, stand down, show yourselves, and clear a path for your Heda.”

They heard a shout of rage and, “Not My Heda!” then a figure dressed in black sprung from behind a wall and let another arrow fly. Lexa stood for a moment, bewildered as she looked down at the arrow sticking out of her left shoulder, several inches above her heart. Then she became enraged and raised her sword hand to charge, arrow or no arrow. It was after only one step that she realized something was wrong. She stopped and tried to clear her head. She could hear Clarke screaming her name and Zora bellowing in anger, but it was like she was hearing it from underwater. She understood then that the arrow was poisoned and she reached up and yanked it out of her own shoulder seconds before she collapsed.

Clarke reached her wife just as she reached up and tore the arrow from her own shoulder and as Lexa fell she caught her. She stared in disbelief at the wound and the bright red blood spurting from her wife's body. “No, no, no, no, Lex. No. Fuck. No. Lexa wake up. You have to wake up.” Clarke was very quickly descending into panic and hysteria and it was her mother’s voice that pulled her back from the edge.

“Clarke Griffin, you need to put pressure on that wound.” When her daughter didn’t respond and just kept pleading with her unconscious wife to wake up she yelled, “Clarke! If you don’t put pressure on
the wound she will bleed out! Do it now!!" Clarke somehow pulled herself together and followed her mother’s instructions. She moved her shaky hand over to the wound and pressed. Abby began taking Lexa’s vitals and she jabbed her with a kind of universal anti-venom they had found in the Mountain’s medical database.

As the two Sky women fought to save Lexa, Zora led an angry and deadly mob, hell bent on revenge, into the maze of junk that the mysterious would be assassins had built at the end of the bridge. Zora had charged after the figure that had shot Lexa as soon as it had happened, the rest of the group were just seconds behind her.

Zora knew in the back of her head that she was leading them into a probable ambush but she didn’t care, she wanted to see the faces of those who had dared stand against her on her return to her people, and she wanted to skin alive the fool stupid enough to shoot her Heda. Zora refused to consider that it was possible Lexa was dead and no longer anyone’s Heda. She just chased after the one who had shot her.

It took several minutes of twists and turns always catching a glimpse of the cape blowing out behind the shooter just before rounding a corner but Zora eventually came out in a clearing, she looked around and saw that she was off of the bridge. She was standing on a patch of dirt technically within the boundaries of York. She was home.

She strode to the centre of the clearing and felt all of the warriors at her back, she felt their anger and their fear. They were Heda’s team and they were full of rage for her injury and terrified of her not making it. Zora felt all of that rolling off of them in waves. She had been through hell and back with these gona’s at her side, and she knew it was all because of the woman she had left bleeding on the deck of the god damn bridge.

She stood strong and stoic watching the walls that now rose high and surrounded them. She looked up and saw that she had indeed run directly into a perfect killing zone and that archers dressed in black waited at the top of the wall for an order from someone. She wanted to see that someone, and wanted even more to kill them. She knew there was a good chance she would die here, with this brave crew at her back, but she also knew she’d take as many of her enemy with her as she could.

“Show yourselves! You tred on my land!” She shouted strong and clear.

A voice shot back, “What right have you to lay claim to our home!? You travel with your Heda, the one who sent her armies to annex our city!” The voice shook with anger.

“Heda’s armies were sent to free you from a tyrant until your rightful leader returned to you!” Octavia’s voice shook with anger as she shouted an answer. “Now show yourselves, you cowards!”

“Lies! Her army was sent to supplant one dictator with another. Our true leader is dead and we will choose one of our own to replace her. We do not believe the lies told by the traitor Niro, we know Zora is dead, we saw her burn.” A figure stepped from an almost invisible doorway in front of them, arrow nocked and pointed at Octavia. It was a woman, dressed entirely in black and with a scarf wrapped around her face. The scarf had fallen slightly on one side and Zora could see the left side of the woman’s face. It was covered in scars that could only be from burns.

Zora’s mouth dropped open and her mind began to race, could it be? She looked around her, mind reeling. She stepped forward in a daze and turned slowly looking up trying to see any identifying marks from any of the archers. As she turned the woman who seemed to be leading them shouted an
order and suddenly thirty archers had all nocked arrows and pointed them at her and her party.

Heda’s warriors all had the same fearless attitude as Zora. They looked death in the eye and they smiled. The arrows pointed their way didn’t faze them at all and they responded with their own display of force. The warriors dropped into an ancient battle formation Octavia had taught them, she said she read about it in a book about a place called Sparta and so they had nicknamed it the Sparta.

The arrows flying from above would most likely eventually take them all out, but this intertwined and interlocking formation allowed enough protection for some of the warriors that they would be able to take out at least half, probably more, of the archers before they all died. Those with shields stood in the front and made a kind of wall while those in behind would fire arrows or reach through with swords for close combat.

Zora stood outside of this formation still trying to wrap her head around what she now believed must be true. She was too in her head to take control of the situation that was quickly spiralling into a dangerous one. It was Indra’s order that cleared her head.

She heard the general shout, “Frag Em Op!” and watched in horror as her warriors stepped out from behind shields arrows nocked.

She barely had time to shout, “Hod Op!” and was too late to prevent some of the arrows from flying. The archers heard the order as they were releasing the arrows were able to waste the shots by sending them high or wide so no one got shot and Zora breathed a sigh of relief knowing that one more person, on either side, with an arrow sticking out of them would cause this battle to spin out of her control and end in a blood bath on both sides.

Indra was furious, “Reload, make ready!” She shouted at the warriors and then she turned her barely controlled voice to Zora, “What is the meaning of this, Mayor? They shot Heda.”

“I know Indra, but if I’m right…” Her voice trailed off and she added, “I ask for your trust Indra Kom Trikru. Heda holds my loyalty and my love, and I believe I hold hers.”

When Indra grunted that she would give her five minutes she thanked her and turned to face the wall behind which she knew the mysterious woman who had fired the arrow that started all of this stood. “San! San is that you?” Zora shouted and heard murmurs start form the wall above her.

The woman with the burns on her face returned, her arrow nocked and now pointed straight at Zora. “How do you know that name?” Zora demanded and the woman quickly flicked her scarf away revealing a badly burned face only the area surrounding the left eye was untouched. That was enough for Zora and she took sharp breath, “Suu? Is that you? You were so young, how did you get out? Where is your sister? Are all of these women from the school.” Zora ignored the arrow and approached the girl quickly, peppering her with questions, it distracted the girl enough that Zora was soon able to close the distance and disarm her.

“Hey!” The girl shouted as she struggled against Zora and as she looked up she saw all of the archers now trained on the two of them. “Shoot her! Shoot them all!” The girl shouted in vain as someone came running down from the wall shouting at everyone to stop.

“Bugs!? You’re alive!” Zora recognized the voice immediately.

“Hey!” The girl shouted as she struggled against Zora and as she looked up she saw all of the archers now trained on the two of them. “Shoot her! Shoot them all!” The girl shouted in vain as someone came running down from the wall shouting at everyone to stop.

“Bugs!? You’re alive!” Zora released the girl she had been holding and rushed forward to greet the young woman that rushed down from the wall. The two of them embraced each other laughing and
smiling, but were soon reminded of the grave situation facing them as Indra hissed out a warning to
the Mayor.

“Explain, Mayor. Or we will kill every last one of them.” Watching how easily Zora had approached
and disarmed the apparent leader had given Heda’s strike force a boost of confidence, even with the
high ground they knew this group could not match them.

“Show yourselves.” Zora’s voice boomed out. “Suu, come here,” She instructed. With the one called
Bugs verifying her identity the archers all stepped forward and unclanked. They were all young
women ranging in age from 12 to 18. They were survivors from the leadership school that Zora had
attended and Yor had blown up. She didn’t know how they had managed to survive but judging
from Suu’s face and several others who appeared to have burn scars as well she knew some of them
had indeed been in the building when it was attacked.

“Suu’s sister was my best friend. These are the survivors of Yor’s attempt to rid the city of an entire
generation of true leaders. They are under my protection.” Zora voiced her words carefully knowing
that Suu had shot Heda and that most of the warriors didn’t care about her reasons they just wanted
blood.

The warriors glared back at her but Indra nodded her head and Zora allowed herself to exhale. Her
relief was short lived as a voice, an unrecognizable voice, cold and bereft of life, called out to her. “I
cannot allow you to protect them, Mayor. They are murderers and I will see them all suffer.”

Zora whipped her head around and faced down a seething and broken Clarke Griffin. “Clarke.” Zora
tried to reach out to her and was silenced.

“She’s dead.” Clarke’s voice was controlled, tight, and murderous. “I am Heda now until the spirits’
make their choice known. The Houmon, the equal, shall be obeyed as Heda was.” Clarke nodded
toward Indra, “Am I correct Indra Kom Trikru?”

“Sha Heda.” Indra’s voice shook with rage and her eyes spilled unbidden tears.

Zora’s mind raced, Lexa, dead? It couldn’t be. They had come so far. “No, Clarke, she can’t be
dead.” Zora was searching her memories for Suu’s disposition as a child in school. There was
something she remembered. Suu had spent a lot of time with the healers playing with poisons and
antidotes. Her sister had called Suu her little chemist and laughed about it with Zora many times.

Clarke strode forward toward the girl, her gun raised. Zora stood in between the women and saw that
the archers all trained their weapons on Clarke. “Clarke, stop, please! They will shoot you.”

“I will follow her soon enough, but I will take them with me.” Clarke’s voice finally broke and she
screamed. “She fucking killed her. She poisoned her. Stand aside and let me have my revenge,
Mayor.” Clarke raged at her but Zora stood her ground.

It was this standoff that Kita came running into looking desperately for Clarke. When Abby and
Clarke failed to find a heartbeat Clarke had risen like a zombie, pulled her gun out and gone stalking
off into the maze. Kita had been about to follow her when Abby pulled her back.

Virgil the young Mountain Man had joined Abby and taken a syringe from his medical kit. They
tried one more thing, more out of desperation than hope. Abby injected Lexa with Atropine, on the
hope that her heart wasn’t stopped just slowed beyond her ability to detect it. Virgil had a stockpile
of it in the medical kit as Emerson had gotten a little crazy after the fall of Mount Weather and had
toyed with the idea of inducing a coma-like state in himself so that he could live longer. This drug would be used to wake him up and he had insisted Virgil stock it in the kit.

Abby looked after her daughter in despair and pleaded for Lexa to come back. When no change happened she collapsed over the body of her daughter in law and began to sob. Kita didn’t know what to do, she knew her Sky Reine was on a suicide mission and the only way to stop that was if Abby pulled off a miracle and she could tell Clarke that Lexa was still alive. But if she waited much longer she knew it wouldn’t matter because Clarke was not going to wait, she was going to shoot and kill anyone who had anything to do with hurting Lexa, or die trying. Kita was about to give up and run after Clarke when Abby suddenly sat back up.

“I felt it! Her heart! I felt it on my cheek!” Abby was frantically checking Lexa’s vitals again and Kita was so tense she jumped when Abby shouted, “There! It’s beating, her heart is beating! Kita, go get Clarke! Now!”

Kita didn’t need to be told, she raced after her Sky Reine moving faster than she ever had in her young life. She threw herself headlong into the maze following the shouts she heard ahead of her. She heard Clarke’s broken voice shouting at Zora and forced herself to go faster. As she threw herself around the corner Clarke was just levelling her gun at Zora’s heart, demanding that she move and let the murderer be brought to justice. Kita skidded to a halt and took in the scene before her.

Octavia was pleading with Clarke to put the gun away and Clarke just kept repeating, “She’s dead. Jus drain, jus draun.”

Octavia changed her tactic, “Clarke, it was a mistake, they didn’t know… and look at them, they’re just kids, like Charlotte. You forgave her for killing Wells, remember?” Octavia was trying to bring her friend back from the edge she was on, but she didn’t realize what effect it would have.

Clarke turned to look at Octavia a look of twisted pain on her face, but she nodded sadly. She lowered her gun and looked up at the young girls that stared down at her with terrified and awed expressions. She looked at Zora and tears fell. She began to shake, her entire body betraying the chaos that now gripped her mind.

Clarke took a long shaky breath and spoke to Zora, “When the spirit chooses the new Trikru Heda, you, Skadi, and Rock must teach her well.” Clarke looked Zora dead in the eye and then she raised the gun once more.

Kita was screaming, “No, Reine, Heda lives! Heda lives! Her heart beats!” and it was that sentence reaching Clarke’s ears that stayed her hand. She paused slightly, gun against her own temple and turned to look at her terrified and fast approaching Ice Guard.

It was enough of a pause for Octavia and Zora to reach Clarke. Octavia tackled Clarke’s body and Zora grabbed the gun arm and knocked the weapon to the ground.

Octavia was sobbing and she covered Clarke’s body with her own crying into her neck as she held the woman down, “You don’t get to leave me, Griffin, you have to stay. I won’t let you go.”

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Kita was at her side a second later her dark eyes full of emotion. “Reine, Heda lives! You must live too.” Kita rose almost immediately and with Zora distracted by Clarke she slipped stealthily past and soon her ice blue blade was at the throat of the one Zora had called Suu.
“Your arrows are poisoned. You have ten seconds to give me the antidote. I am Kita of the Ice Nation, sworn protector of the Sky Reine and her Heda. Do not test me.” Kita stared into the young girl’s eyes and she saw a flicker of fear. She knew the Ice Nation was feared even beyond the tree warriors, for her people were known for cruelty against their enemies. She used it to her advantage, she stepped closer and narrowed her eyes then her left hand pulled out a dagger and pressed it up against the girl's belly.

Zora called her off but she ignored her until the Mayor was at her side. “Kita. I will get the antidote. Stand down!”

When Kita ignored her again Zora addressed Suu. “You poisoned Heda Lexa. Give us the antidote now, Suu. Heda is not your enemy.”

Suu blinked and glanced at Zora, not taking her eyes from the Ice Warrior for long. She swallowed hard and the blade Kita held so tightly against her throat drew a thin line of blood at the movement of her throat.

“There is no antidote!” Suu shakily admitted and was thrown very violently to the ground by an enraged Kita.

“Liar!” The Ice warrior shouted and was quickly joined by Indra.

“No one is foolish enough to make a poison without an antidote! Give it to us or we will kill you, no matter how hard the Mayor tries to protect you.” Indra was fierce when she was in a good mood and an angry Indra was enough to make even Zora step back.

“Suu, there has to be an antidote. Give it to them or I can’t help you.” Zora relented to Indra’s anger and allowed her own to flare as well. “Heda Lexa is the uniter of the clans, the restorer of the true Ice Queen, and the tamer of Manhattan. She rode with me here to see me back in power and to see my people safe from tyranny.” As she spoke her emotions overcame her, a tear slid down her cheek and her voice rose in anger. “She is a good and just leader, and she is my friend. You shot her as she stood out in the open trying to communicate with you. I want that antidote now!”

Suu shrunk back from the three women but it was Clarke that made her answer. Clarke had risen from the ground and looked at her with such a look of grief and desolation that Suu felt moved to reassure her.

Suu looked past the three angry women and into the blue eyes of the grief stricken Sky girl, “Heda Lexa will recover completely in about twelve to sixteen hours. The poison mimics death but does not provide it. There is no antidote because none is necessary.” Suu looked into Clarke’s eyes and then added, “I am sorry for the pain I have caused you Sky Heda. I have heard of your union with Heda Lexa, some said it was a union of necessity to keep your people safe, others said it was a union of love. I see that the latter speak true and I promise you that I too speak true.” She bowed her head and Indra, Kita, and Zora all looked to Clarke to figure out what to do next.

“Mimics death!?” Clarke breathed out. “Twelve hours…” She searched the girl’s eyes and saw truth in them. “She’s alive.” Clarke collapsed again and Octavia caught her pulling her to her own body and into a tight hug. Kita was by her side immediately concern etched on her face, but she was reassured by a smile on her Sky Reine’s face as she repeated ‘she’s alive’ over and over.

Indra wanted nothing more than to get this spectacle over with and find a moment of peace for herself so she could process the grief she had felt so acutely when Clarke had announced that Lexa
was dead. The relief she felt now did not take away the pain that had ripped through her heart and she wanted a moment to herself to allow tears to fall and offer cleansing for her pained heart.

She started issuing orders immediately. She ordered the warriors back to the horses and then addressed one of the Women in Black asking how they could lead the horses out of the maze and onto the road to York. Once she got the directions she needed she relayed them and the warriors were soon following her orders. Zora stayed to speak with the Women in Black and was assured their full cooperation.

Things were flowing nicely but there was still one thing to deal with. Clarke Griffin, Heda of the Sky people was still sitting on the ground out of her mind, and Octavia was still comforting her.

Indra walked up to them and asked Octavia to see to the horses, her former second gave her a sharp look but seeing the softness in Indra’s eyes she nodded and kissed Clarke’s cheek assuring her she’d be close by if needed. She implicitly understood what Indra needed her to do and jumped up and strode off to help make sure the warriors kept their tempers and didn’t kill any of the Women in Black on the way to the new muster point.

Kita refused to leave Clarke’s side and so Indra just rolled her eyes and pretended the Ice girl wasn’t there as she addressed Clarke. “Clarke,” She said the name softly, “Lexa lives, and she needs you to be strong right now. Until she regains consciousness you are Heda. The warriors need to see you be strong so that they can be strong as well.” Indra paused and then admitted her own weakness, “Clarke, I need to see you be strong so that I can be strong too.” Indra reached down to stroke Clarke’s cheek in a surprisingly gentle gesture. “Can you do that Heda Kom Skaikru?”

Clarke’s blue eyes blinked and looked into Indra’s brown eyes. She held her gaze for a long time and then she took a deep breath and nodded. “Indra, help me up, please. We have things to attend to.” Clarke held her hand out and Indra took it. She pulled the young woman to her feet and squeezed her hand before letting go. “But first, let’s go see her.” Clarke almost whispered and they all turned and walked back to where Abby held the hand of the still unconscious leader of the thirteen clans.

Clarke and Zora led everyone to the other side of the maze and Indra had them regrouping and ready to ride. Clarke could barely think, her mind was on Lexa. Part of her kept hearing Lexa’s voice telling her they weren’t safe until they reached York and that part desperately wanted to push on. Another part of her wanted to stay right there until she could see if the girl who had shot her love was telling the truth.

Zora was equally distracted by Rock’s injury, she seemed weaker than she had been and all the moving and stress had been causing her a lot of pain. Zora also had a band of rebels suddenly looking to her for direction and a band of warriors who hated the rebels who had shot their Heda. On top of it all Zora was worried sick for Lexa. She cared deeply for her friend and she knew that everyone in the thirteen clans and possibly beyond needed Heda Lexa to live. No one else could bring them together and bind them into one people, it was Heda Lexa or war, she was sure of it.

It was less than an hour’s ride to the first boundary of the city where they could get healers and reinforcements but everyone was exhausted and with Rock in such pain Zora asked Clarke to consider making camp right there, on the York side of the maze of debris the Women in Black had constructed. The Women in Black agreed to keep watch and let the party that had crossed through the tunnel of blackness and the haunted island rest. Clarke sighed and agreed to ask her mother what was best for the injured. Zora agreed to defer to the doctor’s opinion and they walked off to find the Sky Chancellor together.
Kita, ever at Clarke’s side, voiced a small objection as they looked for Abby. “Sky Reine, those things from the tunnel will try to follow us as soon as the sky is dark. You hate giant fucking spiders.”

Clarke barked out a sudden and forceful laugh, not having expected her usually silent guard to say anything, let alone make a point with humour. She looked at Kita and sighed, then she heard Lexa’s voice in her head, telling her that they were not far enough away from the island to rest. “I know Kita, but the Women in Black will keep watch. We will be safe.”

Kita snorted her disapproval, “Forgive me if I trust neither their skill nor their intentions, Sky Reine.” Kita suddenly looked away and sighed, “It’s not just the creatures, Reine…” Kita looked at Clarke and for the first time since she had been introduced to her Clarke saw fear in Kita’s eyes. “In the basement of the Mountain Men’s bunker…”

“I know.” Clarke stopped her before she could say anything else. “But if staying here tonight is what is better for the injured, that is what we’ll do. I won’t make a decision based on the fear of something maybe getting out of it’s prison and maybe crossing that bridge.” Kita saw steel in Clarke’s eyes and responded with a grin.

“Sha Heda.” She replied purposefully addressing Clarke as Heda not Reine. “Do not worry, I will stand watch during the darkest part of the night.” The girl puffed her chest out and set her jaw with such pride that Clarke had to resist the urge to laugh, hug her, and tell her she was adorable. She didn’t think any of those things would be appreciated by the warrior.

When they found Abby she was just finishing changing Dal’s bandages and Clarke saw that Rock, Brax, Jay and several others had recently been re-bandaged as well. She looked over at Wolfe who was miraculously still holding on despite having been crushed by her horse and her arm chewed on by a cannibal. Abby moved over to check on Wolfe and Clarke got down to business, “Mom, do they need to reach healers tonight, or would rest be better at this point?”

Abby let out a harsh sigh and looked at Clarke and Zora. “I want to get to York as soon as possible. I don’t feel safe out here, we’re still too close to that island and that tunnel. I want to move out right now.” Abby shivered slightly and looked back in the direction they had come then she shook her head, “but it would be better for them to rest. Moving is hard on all of them. A night’s rest and then a short ride to York tomorrow would be the best thing for them, Lexa too.”

Clarke and Zora both sighed hearing all of the truth that Abby spoke. They too felt uneasy still so close to the island but they nodded and went off to find Indra.

Indra had a camp organized, tents erected and food that the Women in Black had provided cooking in less than a half an hour. She wasn’t happy about camping here but she also recognized that need for rest. She ordered her warriors to ground as soon as they had eaten and she met with the Woman in Black that Zora had called Bugs. Indra refused to meet with Suu for fear of not being able to control her anger at the girl.

Bugs assured Indra that her group was more than capable of defending the bridge and making sure nothing slipped past. Indra thanked her and then insisted some of her own would also stand watch.

Indra approached Octavia and Lincoln as they ate and Lincoln spoke before she could, “Indra, please. We wish to stand watch tonight, the Women in Black won’t stand against the creatures from the tunnel.” Indra grinned at him and nodded, she informed them that they were to sleep immediately after eating and that she would wake them at midnight. From then on they would stand watch until
Indra made her rounds and chose six of her best warriors, she would have three of them on guard with her until midnight and the other three would join Octavia and Lincoln for the back watch. She made her way to Clarke and Lexa’s tent and requested entrance.

“Indra, come in.” Clarke answered the general’s call. When she was inside Clarke watched her run her eyes over Lexa’s still unconscious form. Abby was there too, she wanted to give more of the Atropine to hopefully speed her recovery. “Mom hopes she will wake before the twelve hours.” Clarke explained, “this medicine will help.”

Indra nodded and looked at Abby, “Thank you Chancellor. Heda waking sooner will be much better for all of us.” Inda’s gaze went to Kita who was sitting in the corner sharpening some of her blades. “Ice Guard. I assume you wish to be included in the night watch?” She grinned as Kita perked up and nodded affirmatively. “I will wake you at midnight, sleep until then. There will be two guards on this tent all night so you may patrol the perimeter if you wish.”

“Yes, Indra. Thank you.” The young woman replied and then immediately lay down and closed her eyes.

“Indra, thank you.” Clarke offered before the general rose and exited.

Indra paused at the door to the tent and looked back, “Stay with Heda tonight, Clarke. She needs to feel you near.” One more glance at her downed leader and the fearsome woman was out the door and headed to her own tent to take a moment of solace before heading to the bridge to lead the first watch.

Once Abby and Indra were gone and Clarke was sure Kita was asleep she lay down next to her wife. She ran her fingers over the face she so loved and she leaned over and placed a soft kiss on Lexa’s lips. Clarke laid her hand over Lexa’s left breast where she could feel her wife’s slow but steady heartbeat and then she cuddled into her side and allowed silent tears to fall from her eyes.

She prayed to the one thing she believed in, Lexa. “Love can you hear me? Lexa you have to wake up. You have to come back to me. Wake up baby, as soon as you can, you open those eyes, OK? I promise you I will be more careful, I’ll study all the defence you want, I’ll listen to you even when I think you’re being a jackass. Just wake up, OK? I’ll let you win that bet, huh? Just wake up Lex. Wake up. I love you and I can’t do this without you. I need you Lexa. Wake up.”

She continued her litany of pleading, bargaining, and loving words until she drifted off. She fell into an exhausted sleep and didn’t wake up when Indra came for Kita in the dark of night. She didn’t wake up when a battle cry from Octavia had most of the rest of camp out of bed and on edge. She didn’t wake up until she felt someone shaking her gently, and lips on her own.

“Lex!” She breathed out and was instantly awake. Green eyes were staring into hers and soft lips were kissing her own. “You’re awake, you’re alive, Lexa.” Clarke began to cry, to kiss, and to grab onto her wife.

“Houmon, I’m here, it’s OK.” Lexa tried to reassure her wife but soon gave up and just held her, kissed her softly, and let her cry.

When Clarke pulled herself back together she began to check Lexa’s vital signs, much to the brunette’s annoyance, “I’m fine Clarke.” Lexa insisted but laughed at her wife gently.
“It’s too early, you shouldn’t be awake for at least another couple of hours, I have to make sure you’re OK!” Clarke continued her methodical checkup and Lexa grinned.

“You forget about my legendary prowess, Houmon.” She winked at Clarke and grabbed her hands stilling them. “I am awake and I am fine. I need you to brief me on what happened and where we are.” Lexa spoke softly and Clarke nodded.

“Just one more thing first…” Clarke insisted and when Lexa frowned Clarke grinned and then pulled her wife into a deep kiss. When she finally broke away Lexa was smiling at her and the two shared a moment of silent adoration for one another.

Clarke quickly explained everything that had happened after Lexa was shot, skipping the part about her raising her gun to her own head. Once she was up to speed Lexa rose and stretched she shook her body out and did a few quick exercises. She had to be sure her body was steady before she let her warriors see her. When she was ready she reached her hand out and clasped Clarke’s. The two left the tent together hand in hand just as the sun was beginning to rise.

Clarke leaned in and whispered to her wife, “We greet each day together, or not at all.”

Lexa stopped and turned to face Clarke questioning what she had just heard. Looking deep into Clarke’s eyes she saw the truth and she nodded, “Together, or not at all.”

Chapter End Notes

Apologies for any of you who reacted like Clarke did when Lexa ”died”. I'll make it up to you when I get our girls back to Ton DC, I promise.
Back from the Dead

Chapter Summary

Lexa shows her warriors that she is back from the dead and still as strong as ever.

Chapter Notes

Sorry for the long wait! This chapter is a little shorter than recent ones, I was trying to get it out as quickly as possible so you all know I'm still here. Thanks for all the encouragement.

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

Hand in hand Clarke and Lexa walked through the waking camp, quietly greeting those who were up and preparing breakfast. The warriors who saw their Heda felt their strength return and courage seep back into their bones. They greeted their Heda with smiles that Lexa returned as she clasped their hands and thanked them for fighting so well.

They crossed the camp and then made their was through the maze of debris and back to the foot of the bridge. The sight that greeted them made them both stop and stare. No one noticed them at first, and it was Lexa’s incredulous laughter that alerted them to her presence. Once they saw her they all turned and welcomed her back boisterously calling out to her telling her they were happy to see her feeling better.

“I see you had an interesting and…. abundant evening…?” Lexa eyed the stash of loot in the centre of the clearing and then looked over at Octavia who stood on top of the carcass of one of the giant spiders, she had a pile of bats on her left and a couple of the mutant cats just behind her. She was nonchalantly cleaning her sword and grinning at her Heda.

Octavia jumped down from her grotesque podium and strode over to them. She pulled the surprised Heda into a hug and they all heard Lincoln’s awkward laughter at the look on Lexa’s face. “Heda, it’s good to see you on your feet.” The smaller warrior stepped back and then smiled proudly, “Trikru blood won’t be kept down for a full twelve hours!” She looked over at Suu, whom she had bonded with while they fought monsters together all night. “Is this a record for fastest recovery Suu?”

As Clarke’s and Lexa’s gaze shifted towards the young woman dressed all in black the mood suddenly grew tense. An uncomfortable silence descended as everyone waited to see what judgement would come down on Suu. Lincoln stepped forward to be within grabbing distance of Octaiva, he needed to be sure he could stop her from interfering in whatever punishment Heda decided upon. He trusted Lexa to be just, and even if she wasn’t she was Heda and that was enough.

The girl looked very pale against her black clothes as she turned to look at Heda Lexa. She nodded her head and tried to speak, but her voice failed her. She looked terrified that Lexa would be seeking
retribution this morning and yet she held Lexa’s gaze with her own and never wavered.

“Suu? You are the one who shot me, yes?” Lexa moved to stand in front of the young woman. She was impressed that the girl looked her square in the eye even when she was obviously scared of what was to become of her. She was impressed that the girl hadn’t fled in the night and even more impressed that she has somehow won over Octavia during the night watch.

Suu tried to find her courage and spoke weakly, “Yes, Heda. I am truly sorry for my actions, I thought you were invading York.” Suu dropped her eyes and took a deep shuddering breath, she steadied herself as she exhaled and then raised her head and found Lexa’s eyes once more. “I will accept any punishment you give without a fight, and my fighters will follow you without question, no matter what becomes of me.” Suu turned sharply and eyed two or three of the young women she led who had suddenly stepped forward about to protest. Once look from her silenced them and when she was satisfied she turned to face Heda once again.

Lexa narrowed her eyes and looked harshly at the girl, she was obviously someone who could help Zora return York to order but her actions were rash and foolish and if it hadn’t been for one of the girls recognizing Zora Suu’s foolishness would have resulted in her entire team being slaughtered at the hands of Lexa’s elite force. Lexa knew she would have lost warriors too but in the end these young inexperienced women were no match for the team that had come through the tunnel and across the island. Lexa dared not think about Clarke, she had a good idea what her wife had almost done and if she thought about that she knew she would kill Suu on the spot, and she found that she didn’t want to.

When she had let all of these things run through her mind Lexa sighed and she turned from Suu and walked slowly in a circle, her jaw clenched and her eyes ablaze. When she had reached a decision she took a deep breath and returned to stand in front of the girl, willing herself to be a kinder Heda than she had been in the past. Back then the girl would already be dead. Before Clarke, Lexa would have killed her in an instant and then killed all of her followers to avoid an uprising. Before Clarke, Lexa would have been stone cold, heartless. Lexa turned and glanced at her wife, one look was all it took for Lexa to know her decision was the right one. “You say you saw Zora burn? You were in the school when Yor torched it?” Lexa reached up and touched the burn marks on the young face but did not show forgiveness, or pity.

Suu stood her ground and let Heda’s hand rest on her cheek without reacting. “Sha, Heda. I saw a figure in her bed just before the fire started. My sister was a close friend of Zora and they often sat awake late at night talking in Zora’s room. I had gone looking for my sister but she wasn’t there. There was someone asleep in Zora’s bed so I left. I know now that Zora and Rock had stuffed something under the blanket of her bed to make people think she was asleep.

Seconds after I left something came through the window of her room, I turned to look and it exploded. I was badly burned but was pulled free and taken to the underground escape route. Out of one hundred and fifty girls only thirty survived. We hid ourselves from Yor and built a resistance.”

Lexa nodded, her expression still unreadable. “When my forces came to York telling you Zora lived and that we would bring you the head of Yor you thought I was invading because you had seen Zora die that night in the school.” Lexa sighed and then nodded in understanding.

“Sha Heda.” Suu replied once again. “We knew our small force was no match for the forces that rode in with your people and they were not hurting the citizens. They chased out the remainder of Yor’s men and so we chose to leave the city and follow them. We hunted them down one by one. We have tracked and killed ten so far but one of my scouts reported activity on the island and so we came here and started watching the Mountain Men.”
Lexa let her gaze soften as she looked at the young fighter. “I will not kill you, Suu of the Women in Black.” Lexa heard the sighs of relief come from all around her. “I will use you. Your group will become Zora’s personal guard. You will protect the Mayor and any other leader’s who visit York. You have skill but you also have much to learn. Some of you will be sent to train with Trigedakru and some to train with Skadi in the Ice Nation. After that you will learn all there is to know about all of the clans I command. In the end you will be an elite force and you will defend the mayor and the people of York.”

The girl’s eyes shone with relief and pride as Heda addressed her. Her expression changed just as quickly to fear as Heda’s tone changed, “Know this Suu of York… if you ever cause my wife pain again I will not be so forgiving. It is my understanding that I almost woke up as a widow. Had that been the case I would have killed all of you as soon as my eyes were open no matter what the situation was. Is that understood?” Heda stepped closer glaring into Suu’s eyes a breath away from the young woman.

“Sha Heda.” The girl nodded and when Lexa stepped back she added, “Muchof Heda.” Lexa eyed her for another moment and then turned and looked at Clarke.

Clarke had tears in her eyes and shook her head, “I’m sorry, Lex. I just couldn’t stand it. How did you know?”

“Together or not at all…” Lexa let the simple statement rest in the air as she walked slowly over to Clarke’s side. She reached out and took Clarke’s hand. “I understood your meaning but you just now confirmed it, Houmon. Do not be sorry my love. I told you after you recovered from Wamplei that when you leave this life my body will burn by your side. I do not wish that for you, but I understand it.” Lexa hesitated and then sighed, “Houmon, next time please make sure I’m actually dead.” She smiled a wry smile that twisted half of her face into a comical grimace and Clarke laughed softly.

“Indeed.” She replied as she smiled back.

Lexa nodded at Clarke holding her blue eyes with her own green. They shared the look for a few moments before Lexa purposefully moved away and tried to lighten the mood, she could see Octavia fuming about the conversation out of the corner of her eye. She looked back at the girl called Suu.

“Tell us Suu, how long was I out?” Lexa grinned at Clarke again and Suu looked confused.

“Almost ten hours Heda.” She figured. “No one has ever woken before twelve.” The girl’s voice showed how clearly impressed she was and Lexa’s smirk showed how smug she was.

Clarke couldn’t even bring herself to be irritated at her wife’s narcissism, she was just happy to see her alive and well. “Yes, Heda. Your prowess is impressive.” Clarke grinned back at her self satisfied wife and then looked back at Octavia’s odd pile of loot.

“What the hell, O” She approached the pile carefully and toed it with her boot.

Octavia was still determined to talk to Clarke about what she had overheard, but her excitement about her stack of goodies won out for the time being. “They started attacking at two or three in the morning. Kita saw them coming, that girl has the freakin’ eyes of a hawk I swear!”

Clarke glanced over and saw Kita blush at the compliment then she returned her attention to Octavia’s story, “We cut em down pretty good. The Women in Black turned out to be decent fighters
and they have lots of torches and that fucking Suu makes this shit that explodes on contact so once we got some fires going and blew a few of them up the creepy crawlies took off back to the hole in the ground they live in! It was awesome!"

Clarke and Lexa smiled at the warrior but Clarke was still confused, and grossed out by the pile in the centre. “OK you got attacked by monsters and you won and it was awesome…. what the hell is this stuff?”

Octavia grinned, “After they hightailed it out of here I got a little bored so I cut open one of the spiders and found this.” She proudly held up a small ball of silk. “It’s not sticky but it’s strong, I read in a book once that it’s stronger than steel. I’m going to take it back and see if Raven can help me make it into a bulletproof vest!”

Clarke couldn’t help but laugh at her friend and she couldn’t help but step back and hold her nose at the next ‘treasure’ Octavia picked up.

Lexa wrinkled her nose and asked in her 'Heda is irritated' voice, “Octavia Kom Trikru… what the hell is that horrible stench!?”

The warrior kept on grinning and explained, “I skinned one of the cats. I’m going to make leather out of it’s hide and make it into boots. It’ll be badass.” She looked triumphantly over at Lincoln when Lexa couldn’t help but grin and look a little impressed.

“Oh god! Octavia! If it keeps stinking like that all the way back to Ton DC, I’ll make you into boots.” Clarke held her nose and motioned for Octavia to take it away.

Octavia shrugged and put it back down under the silk that oddly seemed to mask the smell. “It’ll stop stinking once I get it cured in York.” She shook her head at her friend’s queasiness and continued. She held up some large teeth, “Fucking vampire bat teeth! I’m going to make a necklace.” She grabbed a wing, “A giant vampire bat wing for my new niece or nephew to hang on the wall of their room and tell all the other kids who has the coolest and most badass aunt.”

She giggled as she continued, and held up a large bottle of clear liquid. “I got this out of the spider too. It’s the sticky stuff that coats the web. Remember how well it burned! Raven is going to love this shit!” There were a few more items in her pile but Clarke had heard enough.

“OK OK enough. Can we just get out of here?” I’ve had more than enough giant mutant monsters for a while.” Clarke looked over at Lexa who was smiling at Octavia.

“Well done, all of you. You fought off the creatures and kept us all safe. You have my thanks. Now let us eat some breakfast and get on the road York!” Her words were met by whoops of happiness as no one wanted to stick around any longer. What they hadn’t mentioned to Heda was the creepy laughter they heard just before they were attacked by the creatures from the tunnel.

As they all moved off to get breakfast Lexa called Kita over to her. They walked back to the base of the bridge and Lexa surveyed the scene. She quickly counted the carcasses of five spiders, three more cats, and more than ten bats. “The things from the basement, you did not see any?”

Kita shook her head no, but looked regretfully at Heda and spoke, “I think I heard the laughter… you remember…”

“I can not forget, even though I wish to.” Lexa answered bitterly.

“Yes. I heard it, I’m sure. Just before the creatures attacked. But they never showed their faces.” Kita frowned and sighed. “I wish to leave this place.” She stated matter of factly.
“Me too.” Was the only answer Lexa gave before turning and walking back to Clarke who was waiting a few steps away.

They ate breakfast in a jovial mood. Octavia told stories of the fight in the night and showed off her prizes. Heda made sure to walk around and let everyone see her alive and well. She also made sure to let her people see her interacting easily with the Women in Black, showing that she harboured no grudge. They ate and packed up camp quickly.

When they were all ready to mount and ride Zora found her way to Heda’s side. She reached out and grasped Lexa’s forearm tightly in greeting. “Heda.” Her voice broke and Lexa shook her head.

“No need, Mayor. It was not your fault.” Lexa understood what Zora wanted to say and made it clear that she was not interested in an apology. She grinned at Zora. “Today is your day, Mayor. Take me to your city!”

Zora let out a whoop of joy and leaned forward to kiss Rock’s cheek. Rock was looking and feeling a lot better after the rest she had been able to take the night before and she smiled back at her partner as they led the war party home.

An hour later they approached the outskirts of a small forest. The path was wide and well travelled but there was no one in sight. Zora grinned at Lexa. “There is a large guard outpost here, but it’s almost impossible to see if you don’t know where it is.”

Lexa let her trained eye rove slowly left to right over the path’s entrance and then looked back at Zora impressed. “Tree houses!” She smiled, “I like it!” The two women shared a laugh and then they started forward again.

As they approached the tree line a single figure stepped into the path and called for them to halt. “You are covered from all sides, dismount and identify yourselves!” The young man in the path called out.

Lexa and Zora grinned as they dismounted and stepped forward.

“Stand down soldier, your mayor has come home.” Lexa called out to the soldier as she and Zora approached.

“Mayor!?” The man looked quickly back over his shoulder and was quickly joined by three more guards. They stood in the road looking confused, scared, and excited all at once.

There was movement in the trees that caught Lexa’s eye and a familiar figure dropped lightly from the trees and sprinted towards them. Behind her Lexa heard weapons drawn and heard Clarke’s voice ring out.

“Kita! No! Everyone, stand down!!” She turned her head to see Clarke wrestle an arrow from Kita’s hand and she couldn’t help but laugh. As she was turning back toward the approaching figure she was suddenly slammed into by what felt like a brick wall.

She had been hiding the pain radiating from her shoulder wound from Clarke all day but now released a growl of pain and a bark of annoyed laughter. “Rachel! Put Me Down! I am Heda, you can’t drown me in a hug in front of the warriors!”
“Heda! You made it!” Rachel dissolved into tears and pulled even the shocked Zora into a hug. “Mayor! You’re here! Thank god! Indra, Indra thank you for getting them through! You… whoever you are who almost shot me, good job good job, protect Heda!” Rachel babbled on an on and the guards from the outpost looked at her shocked and looked at Lexa and Zora with awe.

Zora quickly took control, “Rachel of the Sea, please compose yourself” she whispered to the woman who kept babbling on. “Outpost 278-495 report!” she ordered to the guards.

They snapped to attention and the young man who had come out to halt them the first time answered quickly, “Mayor! Outpost 278-495 reports the road to York is secure and clear.” He grinned madly and added “Welcome home, Mayor.”

Lexa turned towards him and he nodded respectfully, “Heda, thank you.” His gratitude was heartfelt and Lexa nodded her answer. Then she gave an irritated gesture back toward Rachel who was now hugging Clarke and asked him, “Can you tell me what has made the leader of the Boat People’s Army and general to Heda Sasha before me into a bluberring fool?”

“The General has been here since she heard your party had taken the tunnel. We knew this was the only route you’d take if… I mean when you got off of the island.” The young man looked nervous as he spoke. “She told us stories of the island and the tunnel, worse than the ones we heard as children growing up in York.” He shuddered involuntarily recalling the stories. “The General was about an hour away from walking across the bridge to find you herself.” He added with a laugh but a serious nod.

He stopped and looked past Lexa to watch Rachel perplexed, “This is the first emotion of any kind we have seen her display since she arrived.” He cocked his head to the side and looked curiously at Rachel who was now hugging Abby. “If I hadn’t seen this with my own eyes I would have sworn that the General had no emotions at all.” When Lexa laughed the young guard blushed and grinned.

Lexa thought back to her childhood. Rachel had always been superstitious and she had liked to tell young warriors particularly terrifying stories about Manhattan. It seemed she believed them and the stories she would hear from Lexa’s team would do nothing to quell them. Lexa was lost in thought about Rachel and absent mindedly rubbing her shoulder where it hurt. She didn’t notice Clarke until she was next to her.

“All around them was a flurry of activity as a group of healers came out of the forest guardpost. Rachel had brought four healers and several apprentices with her when she left York for the outpost. She knew they would be needed if indeed Lexa had chosen the tunnel as her path into York. Abby got them to work on the wounded right away and Indra had the rest of the team organizing a stop for lunch. The guards had a steady supply from the city and were bringing out bread, cheese and meat for the hungry warriors.

Clarke grasped Lexa’s hand and prevented her from joining the rest. Lexa tried once more to avoid the conversation, “We should eat, and the healers might need you.” Lexa knew it was a dirty trick but she really didn’t want to talk about her injury.

Clarke’s blue eyes narrowed and her lips pursed slightly and Lexa knew she was in trouble, “You’re right, I should go and help them. I was going to attend quietly to my wife’s shoulder wound. You know, the one she got by being shot with a poisoned arrow yesterday?” Clarke took deep breath,
“Would you rather I go and help them and send someone else over to check Heda’s bandages?” Clarke turned in a huff and started to leave and Lexa shot her hand out to stop her.

The motion caused her to wince and Clarke whirled with a triumphant look on her face, “See, you are hurt, stop denying it.” Her triumph turned to concern as quickly as it had come and as Clarke stepped in closer Lexa thought how much she loved this woman, “Come, we’ll find some privacy and I’ll change the bandages. The warriors don’t need to be reminded that Suu shot you yesterday.” Lexa nodded in agreement and the two women moved off into the tree-line to find some privacy.

Zora was already inside discussing preparations for the final ride into the city with the head guard and she quickly ordered Lexa and Clarke shown to a private room and supplies provided to change Heda’s bandages. Once they were safely inside Clarke pulled Lexa into a soft embrace.

They stood holding each other for over a minute until Clarke noticed a small red stain spreading on Lexa’s shirt. “Oh, babe, Rachel really did a number on you with her hug!” She laughed a humourless laugh and looked up into the green eyes she couldn’t live without. “Let’s get this shirt off.”

Lexa couldn’t resist and a grin spread over her beautiful lips, “Clarke! I know it’s been a while, but the guards are right outside.” She winked at Clarke who rolled her eyes but then smiled and played along.

“Like that has ever stopped us Lex.” She helped Lexa get the shirt over her head and then pulled her in for another embrace. She placed a kiss at the hollow of Lexa’s throat and then on each of her crooked collarbones.

Clarke walked over to the bowl of water and bandages that had been prepared for them and rang out the cloth as she looked over her wife’s half naked body. She walked back and tears came to her eyes, she slowly lifted the warm cloth to Lexa’s wound and methodically cleaned the blood away. Once she had made sure the area was clean she applied some grounder salve that helped prevent infections and then carefully bandaged the area.

Lexa’s eyes never left her face while she worked and when she was done Lexa reached out and ran her left hand over Clarke’s cheek. She cupped her chin and leaned forward to place a soft kiss on Clarke’s chapped lips. “I’m okay Clarke. I’m alive. This wound is shallow and will heal cleanly, Abby said so. I have been injured far worse many times. I am not going anywhere Houmon. I know you are scared but you have to let it go. We have a lot of work to do in York to help Zora stabilize her city. I need to be Heda. The people of York have to see me as strong and powerful. They need to see the Skai Heda who brought down the mountain and won the heart of their Heda. We need to be strong and fierce. Can you do that?”

Clarke looked at Lexa, ran her eyes over her body and then her hands ran down Lexa’s side and back up coming to rest over the spot she had just bandaged. “I thought I lost you.” She began but Lexa cut her off.

“You didn’t lose me” Lexa looked her in the eyes and then smiled.

“I didn’t lose you,” Clarke repeated and took a deep breath. She nodded her head and looked into Lexa’s eyes, “I can do this… we can do this.”

Lexa kissed her then, a deep passionate kiss that pulled them both into their own little world. Clarke’s hand had found it’s way to Lexa’s right breast and Lexa’s hand found it’s way under Clarke’s shirt. They were so distracted by each other that they didn’t hear the footsteps approaching the small room they were in. Just as a Clarke’s fingers were closing around Lexa’s nipple and
eliciting a deep moan from her wife the door flew open and Rachel, Indra and the leader of the guard outpost stood staring inside.

Lexa growled at them and Clarke blushed deeply, “Close that door before I cut your eyes out of your skulls.” Rachel and Indra rolled their eyes, Indra especially being accustomed to finding the couple in compromising positions but the guard looked terrified and slapped his hand up over his eyes before shouting an apology and quickly removing himself from the doorway.

Clarke giggled and Rachel shook her head at the two of them before grinning and closing the door. They heard Indra shout, “five minutes Heda!” as the door slammed closed.

Lexa snuggled into Clarke’s neck and kissed up to her earlobe. She sucked lightly and whispered, “Did you hear Clarke, we get five minutes!” Lexa’s right hand slid down from under her shirt and directly to the buckle on her belt.

“Lex! What are you doing!?” Clarke giggled even more as Lexa continued making room for her hand to slide into her pants.

Lexa gave her best innocent face and shrugged, “It isn’t often Indra gives us one minute let alone five… we have to take advantage, Clarke.” Her hand slid slowly down into Clarke’s underwear and her eyes locked on Clarke’s. She paused as she reached Clarke’s sex and looked for permission.

Clarke was turned on from the kiss and the brashness of Lexa wanting to fuck her in the five minutes Indra has promised them to gather themselves. When Lexa paused and raised her eyebrow Clarke nodded giving Lexa the permission she sought and then pulled Lexa back into the kiss that had been so suddenly interrupted.

Lexa’s hand was eager and slid down into the wetness without hesitation. Lexa breathed a sigh into Clarke’s mouth as she felt how ready Clarke was for her. She wasted no time and slid two fingers to Clarke’s entrance and when she felt Clarke arch toward her hand she slid inside. Two fingers slipped into the wet heat of Clarke’s pussy and the blonde moaned into Lexa’s kiss.

Lexa felt lightheaded, her whole body buzzed with arousal she wanted to make Clarke shake with desire and call out her name as she came. She wanted the entire outpost to know she was fucking the gorgeous Sky Heda in this tiny room and that Heda was indeed back from the dead.

Clarke had been so tightly coiled since Lexa had been shot and that stress and emotion was dissolving with every thrust of Lexa’s fingers. She angled her hips to give her wife better access as best she could in the position they were in and as she felt herself drift deeper into the passion she stopped caring about the five minutes and the people outside the door.

Part of her knew Lexa wanted her to be loud, wanted the warriors to know exactly what was happening. Clarke understood what it would mean to them. She knew that she and her mother already had a reputation for bringing people back from the dead and this would add to that legend. Heda Lexa was back from the dead and Clarke was going to let everyone know that she still had her legendary prowess. Clarke let herself go.

“Lex! Fuck Yes! Lexa!” Clarke gripped her wife’s neck and threw her head back as Lexa swirled her fingers in just the way Clarke loved. Lexa grinned as Clarke got louder and louder. “Right there Lex! Oh… OH lover… fuck Yes!” Clarke was breathy and her voice was strained as she tried in vain to press herself harder into Lexa’s hand.

“Fuck it, Lex take my pants off!” Clarke wiggled her ass and shimmied as she pulled her pants down to the knees, she was about to step out of them when Lexa’s strong arms wrapped around her and
grabbed her ass. She picked her up and quickly moved her over to the table the wash basin sat on. The basin crashed to the floor and the two women barely noticed.

Clarke kicked her right leg out of the pants and spread herself wide to give Lexa all the access she needed. Lexa took full advantage and soon had three fingers skillfully dancing inside of her lover’s drenched pussy.

She moved her left hand in and used her left thumb to find Clarke’s clit. When it found it’s mark Clarke threw her head back, “Ah! Oh yes! Lex baby! Yes… ohhh yes!” Clarke wanted to be more coherent but her brain was clouded in a fog of lust and desire and she just wantonly urged her lover on, “Keep fucking me Lex, right there… right there, just like that. Oh! Fuck, yes!” Clarke tore at her shirt and soon was naked and panting as Lexa made her body sing. Lexa was breathing equally hard as she sucked Clarke. The feeling was like nothing else in the world and she felt herself forget about everything but Clarke Griffin’s naked body. She watched a single bead of sweat trickle down her wife’s neck and down toward Clarke’s breast and she gratefully leaned down to lap it up.

As soon as her tongue hit Clarke’s nipple a fresh stream of moans and encouragement came from Clarke’s mouth, “Yeah… oh yeah. Lexa suck on my nipples please.” Lexa was happy to oblige and took first one and then the other into her mouth to suck and bite gently. Her fingers were finding a delicious rhythm inside of Clarke and she sped up, knowing Indra would soon interrupt them despite being aware of what was happening inside of the room.

Lexa wanted Clarke to come and she let Clarke’s breast out of her mouth long enough to tell her so, “Cum for me Clarke, I want you to cum.” Clarke looked down at her wife, her iris’ blown wide with lust and her cheeks flushed from exertion. She looked so sexy Clarke knew she wouldn’t have trouble with that request. She knew exactly what would get her off the fastest and since she didn’t trust Indra to just let them finish she whispered to to wife.

“My clit Lex, focus on my clit and get me there before Indra opens that door again.” Both women giggled and looked furtively toward the door and Lexa slid her fingers out of the rose petal softness they had been enveloped in and up to find the nub of pleasure Clarke had asked for.

She flattened her hand and worked her way into the wet folds to cover the entire vulva. She pressed into Clarke and as she began to circle her hand around she found Clarke’s neck to suck on and bite. Clarke was giving her all the access she wanted, legs thrown wide, hips canted up into her touch, and head thrown back exposing the exquisite line of her neck.

Clarke was close to reaching orgasm and she let Lexa know, “Baby, I’m so close. Lexa keep doing that, right there, Lex. Right Fucking There! Oh….” Her body tensed and her pleasure coiled up like a spring in her belly. “please, please, please, lover please…” She whispered to Lexa as she continued to fuck her. “Ah… Oh… fuck… Fuck… FUCK!” Clarke felt the tension break and her body shook. “LEXA! YES! YES! OH FUCK YES!”

Lexa held on tight as Clarke’s body shook and she felt bliss wash over her as she looked at the gorgeous, disheveled, blonde beauty. They reached for each other and were embracing when the inevitable knock came.

“Heda! It is time.” It was Indra, and she added, “Sky Heda, your mother wishes to speak with you.” Just because she knew it would make Clarke cringe. She waited at the door until she heard a burst of laughter and sounds of movement that assured her they were getting dressed.

Inside the small cabin Lexa and Clarke were scrambling to make sure their clothes were on properly and trying to clean up the water spilled from the basin. When Indra opened the door two minutes later there was a young male guard whose face was redder than even Clarke’s. He rushed into the
room where Clarke was cleaning up the spilled water and insisted that her would take care of it. When Clarke apologized for knocking the basin over he got even redder and insisted it was no problem.

Indra smirked watching the embarrassment on Clarke’s face and as Lexa walked past her she whispered, “Since you almost died yesterday, I gave you seven minutes. Next time I won’t be so generous.” Lexa stared at her General who put on a haughty look and walked away from her. Lexa grinned and laughed, knowing that was Indra’s way of saying she cared.

Clarke and Lexa walked back to the trail to find the warriors were already cleaning up after a quick lunch and preparing to ride to York. As they approached Zora noticed them and whistled a loud catcall. The warriors all turned at the sound and when they saw them they began a chant that always reminded Clarke of the morning after their wedding. “Heda, Heda, Heda, Heda!”

Lexa grinned and let them chant for a few seconds before holding her left arm up to stop them. Clarke knew it must have been painful to lift the injured shoulder but she also knew it was purposeful another show of strength for her warriors. When they quieted Lexa spoke to them, “It has been a long journey. We left Sapeak in spring and we stand here on the doorstep of York with the summer sun on our backs.”

Clarke suddenly looked around and thought about how long this had taken them. She added quickly in her head and realized it had been about two months since they had left Ton DC. She suddenly felt homesick. She missed Raven and she missed her house and the lake out back that would be just right for naked swimming with her wife. She sighed and forced herself to pay attention to Heda once more.

“We have done what we set out to do. We have the head of Yor that will be delivered to the people of York today!” A cheer rose up and Zora reached out and lightly punched the decomposing head she had once again strapped to her saddle. “We have returned the Ice Queen to her throne and seen that the capital of the Ice Nation is secure.”

Another cheer rose and Kita shouted, “Long live Queen Skadi!”

“We have ridden hard and fast and passed through a tunnel of eternal darkness filled with monsters.” Octavia whooped and patted the stinking skin of the cat she intended on making into boots.

“We were the first of our people in a very long time to tread on the forbidden island of Manhattan.” Lexa’s voice quieted and so did the cheers of the warriors. They all felt a certain reverent terror about the island and they would not celebrate having stepped foot on it.

“We rid the ground of the last of the traitorous Mountain Men!” The crowd cheered and Clarke watched as Virgil looked nervously around but his expression changed to awe as Heda continued her speech, “We freed the last of the Mountain people who were trapped by their own people’s ways.” She looked over at Virgil and when she heard a few derogatory comments directed at him from the crowd she continued.

“Let me be clear, When I was shot with the poison arrow his quick actions allowed the Chancellor of the Sky People to know that I was alive. That knowledge in turn saved a life that is precious to us all.” She glanced over her shoulder at Clarke and then back to her warriors, “You all saw what happened, and I killed Virgil on the island with the rest of the Mountain Men you all know what would have happened.” The crowd was somber for a minute and then a chant started that surprised even Lexa.

“Virgil, Virgil, Virgil…” it continued and brought tears to the young man’s eyes. Clarke walked
over and hugged him and as the chants died down she whispered her thanks. He was so moved by Lexa’s speech and the immediate acceptance granted to him by the deadly warriors when it was pointed out that he had indirectly saved the life of the Sky girl who had so impressed his former mentor that he could only nod to Clarke in answer.

Lexa continued, “All of that and now we are here, about to ride into York and return the Mayor to her rule.” Lexa paused and turned to Zora, “Zora, Mayor of York, are you ready?”

Zora smiled and when Lexa nodded to her she shouted, “Mount up warriors! We ride for York!”

The crowd erupted in cheers and the warriors mounted one last time on the treacherous road to York.

Abby and Kane had agreed to come behind at a slower pace with the healers Rachel had brought from the city and all of the wounded except Rock who insisted on riding right behind Zora no matter how much pain it caused her. They would be accompanied by a full section of the outpost guards and would arrive in York a couple of hours after the rest.

With one last glance back at her entourage and a quick check on Rock who grinned at her and nodded Zora let out a loud battle cry. The horses sprung forward and she looked sideways grinning at her Heda. The two women led their warriors to York, to glory, and to fame.

Chapter End Notes

Pieces start coming together and we’ll have a heavy emotional chapter as Zora returns to York. After that I promise we’ll get back to Ton DC and that bet!
As they rode toward York they were met by a frantic Bellamy. The guards from the outpost had reported back to the city that the Mayor and Heda had returned triumphant. Bellamy had questioned the poor guard and learned that there had been casualties, both wounded and dead. When the guard had no names or any news specific to his sister; Bellamy declared him useless and took off immediately. A very pregnant Echo chuckled as he stormed out, she had a pretty good idea that Octavia Kom Trigedakru was not only alive but more than likely thriving in the company of the elite group Indra had assembled.

Bellamy rode out joined by Niro, the general who had led the Mayor’s troops back to the city, and several guards. They rode hard and they met the victors within the hour. As they approached Zora called out to Niro with a grin, holding Yor’s head up for him to see. Niro stopped his horse and saluted her with tears running down his face as he watched her proudly display the head of their enemy.

Bellamy rode hard passing The Commander with a quick salute and stopping in front of Clarke with a look of panic on his face. “Clarke, you’re alive… thank god.” His tone did not match his words of concern and his eyes immediately left her to search the crowd for his sister. Clarke shook her head at him and grinned at his inability to contain his worry for Octavia. “You’re grinning Clarke so she must be Okay… where the hell is she, I don’t see her.”

Clarke knew it must have been hard for him to have been separated from Octavia for so long with no way of communicating or knowing what was happening, so she answered him, quick to reassure. “She’s fine Bell, not even a scratch. A young man from York who befriended her and Lincoln was seriously injured in the tunnel we crossed through. They wanted to ride into the city with him. They are on the road behind us with Mom, Kane and the other healers. They have to go slow for the injured.”

When Bellamy’s face started looking like he was actually breathing again she smiled, “Octavia is a warrior Bell. She fights like she was born down here. Even Lexa can’t believe how good she is sometimes. You’ll have to get used to this, you know. She isn’t going to retire anytime soon.” When Bellamy frowned and grumbled a complaint about his sister’s profession she laughed and as the tension he had been holding dissipated at the news that she was alive and whole he joined her. The
two friends were interrupted by Heda dropping back to ride next to her wife.

“Bellamy, I am pleased to see you well. What of the city?” She was all business needing to get a report on what they were about to ride into.

“Commander,” he bowed his head in respect, “the city is secure. Niro and his army have reassured the people. We had a fight at the beginning, the people were reluctant to believe us and we were stopped at the outskirts. We weren’t there long though, as soon as Niro contacted the underground rebellion that had been forming in the city they joined us and the fight for the city against Yor’s men started. They fled the city quickly but we have had trouble with assassins sneaking back in. We have been training a security force and we patrol the city day and night.

Having Rachel and Luna helped a lot. Luna is well loved in the city. The older people remember aide she brought by ship after a bad winter and Wamplei outbreak back when Ja Kie was still mayor. The people were starving and the Boat People brought food and medicine. Seeing her back in the city turned people’s minds almost immediately.” Bellamy smiled and nodded at her acknowledging that Heda had been the one to insist Luna and Rachel were a part of the party that rode to York.

Lexa returned his smile, “Well done Bellamy, general to the Sky Heda, brother to my top warrior, and soon to be father of the first child of both ground and sky. How is Echo?” Bellamy’s smile grew into a blinding display of teeth as soon as Lexa mentioned Echo and the baby.

“She won’t rest or let me take care of her, it’s infuriating, she is cranky and hungry all the time, the healers in York say they both seem perfectly healthy and she’s getting really fat! It’s amazing, I love every second of it.” He laughed and Clarke reached out and pulled him into a hug. He grinned as he hugged her back. “Don’t you dare tell her I said she was getting fat! She’ll kill me for real!” They all laughed as Clarke solemnly promised not to breathe of word to Echo.

As Clarke and Bellamy continued to discuss the baby Lexa excused herself and joined Zora and Niro. Bellamy rode with Clarke for another few minutes before he said goodbye and rode in the direction of his sister. As he left Clarke was called by Lexa.

“Heda Kom Skai Kru, please join us.” Lexa had a large smile on her face as Clarke joined the group riding at the front of the procession. As she fell into rank beside Lexa she noticed she wasn’t the only one joining the front line. Rock was now riding next to Zora, and beside her Ro was riding proudly representing the Horse People. Niro had fallen back to the second row with Indra, Kita and a few others.

That was how they entered the city. Heda Kom Skaikru, Heda Kom Trigedakru, Mayor Zora, The Leader of the Lake People, and the General of the Horse Army. Five women from five different clans, five leaders and peacemakers, five strong and feared warriors, five beacons of hope and inspiration; and one smelly, rotting head of a tyrant.

The city had not been told of the imminent arrival of the Mayor. Echo was trying to minimize the risk of assassins having time to find a good spot to try and take her out. She knew it was a matter of hours until they rode into the city and she mobilized her entire force. Niro had consulted with her before he left with Bellamy and they had chosen a route. She had her soldiers patrolling the entire way, streets, rooftops, everywhere along the route was covered by soldiers, some in uniform, others not.

The city of York grew out of the rubble of the bombs, many of the surviving people in the state of New York gathered together and found refuge in the surviving buildings and structures east of Manhattan Island. The city was protected by an inlet, two small lakes that had, in the explosion, been
joined together and joined to the north with the ocean. The natural protection offered by this new bay was added to over the years by the people of York. They had built a wall from where the lakes ended to the south all the way to the ocean. It protected them from attacks, be it wild beasts or other survivors, and in all of it’s history it had never been flung open so quickly as it was on the day the sentry called out four simple words; “The mayor has returned!”

The chaos that descended on the city was truly wonderful. The five riders led their party through the gates of York and they rode hard through the streets all victory smiles and war whoops as Zora held Yor’s head high for all to see. The dirt streets were wide in the city and there were various market stalls along the sides, people were going about their daily business when the elite force of Heda came barrelling through proclaiming the return of the mayor.

At first people stared, silent, jaws hanging wide open as they rode past. As realization settled in shouts went up, “The Mayor! The MAYOR! She lives. She is here. The Mayor has returned!” People wept openly in the streets as they watched Zora ride through. They called out her name, and she called out back to them promising they were safe now. People sang out in joy and entire streets started to celebrate as the party rode past them.

Zora led them to her childhood home, a large and secure home near the coastline. It was where Niro had taken the delegates who had accompanied him to York and where he had based all of his security forces. Echo was waiting for them and welcomed her Heda back, happy to see her in one piece.

As soon as everyone was inside the gates and given directions of where to find a room to sleep in and stables for the horses Zora took Echo’s four best guards and headed back into the city. She spent the rest of the day riding through the streets and greeting her people. Lexa knew it was a security nightmare and as soon as Zora announced her intentions she stepped back and watched as Echo calmly nodded to the mayor and then proceeded to control and direct the coming and going of the guards and patrols ensuring the Mayor’s safety.

Lexa was proud of Echo, she knew it was no easy feat and that the smart thing to do would be for Zora to go inside and meet with her generals and advisors and then stay in her protected mansion until the streets had been swept. She also knew that Zora didn’t care about the smart thing to do and felt a great need to see her people and be seen by them.

Luckily Echo’s patrols were thorough and there were four assassins who were captured before they got a chance to take a single shot at the mayor. Her return to the city went flawlessly and the people loved her for it. They continued to celebrated in the streets long after the weary mayor found her way back to her home where Rock was waiting for her.

While the mayor toured the streets of her city the Commander met with the Mayor’s advisors, and heard all the updates about the city and the status of Yor’s henchmen. She heard the progress of the security force, and the changes that were being enacted to free the city from the harsh rules of Yor’s reign while still maintaining some sort of control on the city. She heard the arguments of people with different opinions and held her temper as best she could because she wanted Zora to make the decisions for her city. She was in those tedious meetings until Clarke came and rescued her.

Clarke had excused herself from the meetings on the guise of setting up a medical centre for the soon to return wounded. Lexa had known damn well that medical bay was already prepared and Clarke really wanted to avoid the meeting since it was all for show. Clarke knew Lexa was attending just as a show of support and strength but would make no decisions for Zora.
After several hours of the meeting Clarke started to feel bad for her wife and decided to go and steal her away. She came through the doors and interrupted a particularly boring and annoying man in the middle of his speech about why he thought the rules should have a slow turn around time to avoid confusing the people. Lexa disliked him and was fairly certain Zora may have killed him by now had she been in attendance. She was very happy to see the beautiful blonde woman who strode through the doors hoping she had come with some excuse of other to get her out of the rest of the meetings.

The man who was speaking, however, was not happy to see her and whirled around furious at the interruption. He shouted to the guards, “You there, what is wrong with you!? You call yourself a guard and yet you let some woman barge in here to this important meeting!? Arrest her immediately!” He turned to The Commander and apologized, “I am sorry for the interruption Heda. These new guards are poorly trained, and as you can see some of them are even, women.” The distain was evident in his voice and Lexa bit her lip to avoid laughing at him and what she imagined her wife was about to do to him.

The guards knew exactly who the so called ‘some woman’ was and were happy to not only disregard the nasty man but immediately drew their weapons in Clarke’s defence and one approached him. The young female guard he had called out raised her sword to his neck and told the man he’d better watch his tongue when he didn’t know who he was addressing. He disregarded her, yelling for the other guards to arrest not only the intruding woman but the female guard who dared raise her sword to him, Clarke’s strong voice cut through the air.

“Silence!” She was fuming and the ring of her voice and the air of command that now completely and naturally permeated Clarke’s entire being made sure that everyone in the room fell silent immediately. Clarke frowned at her wife who was clearly enjoying this far too much and then turned to the man who had presumed he could have her arrested. “You don’t seem to know who I am and I admit I am a little curious as to who the hell you are that you presume to command anything in the presence of Heda. This guard here, though, I’m am sure that she knows exactly who both of us are.” Clarke turned to the guard, “What’s your name?” She demanded, her voice softening.

The guard bowed her head respectfully to Clarke before she answered, her sword never leaving the neck of the annoying, and now slightly terrified man. “My mother named me Lily, but my friends call me Stone.” She caught on to Clarke’s game of not yet revealing her identity so she refrained from addressing Clarke by her title.

“Would it be okay if I called you Stone?” Clarke asked the young woman and when she received an emphatic nod “yes” in return she continued. “Stone, tell me how you got that name?” Clarke was genuinely curious and enjoyed watching the greasy man squirm.

“I was a member of the rebellion, it was hard to get weapons, especially for girls, so I used stones. They started calling me that the first time I killed an assassin. He and his buddies had just left my neighbourhood, I saw him break into the baker’s shop, this was the woman my family had gotten our bread from my whole life and he raped her while his friend’s stood guard…” Stone grew quiet with anger and took deep breath before she continued, “I waited until they were leaving and I followed them. As soon as they separated I threw a stone, hit him the head and knocked him from his horse. Then I jumped on him crushed his skull with an even bigger stone.” She held her head proudly as she told this story but Clarke saw the anguish behind her brave eyes.

Clarke stepped forward and looked into those eyes and she guessed the guard was no more than 16 years old. She knew she had seen and done more terrible things in those short sixteen years than Clarke thought anyone should have to do in a lifetime. She thought to herself that that is what she and Lexa fought for, what they stood for, the chance at a better life, at more then just surviving. “Stone is a good name, a brave name. I like it.” She held the guards gaze long enough to convey her
support and then she turned towards the man who was now very angry, and yet still very scared. The temperature of the room dropped as the wrath of Clarke Griffin was ignited by this man she really really did not like.

The force of her glare caused him to take an actual step back away from her and when she spoke her voice was cold and hard and made him swallow hard. “What is your name, sir?” The ‘sir’ was spoken with such sarcasm that Lexa actually giggled and tried to cover it as a cough. Luna kicked her under the table and shook her head to admonish Lexa for both allowing this to continue and for enjoying it. Lexa looked over at her and shrugged sheepishly, but kept her seat.

The man pinned under Clarke’s angry glare didn’t sound nearly as confident as he answered her, “My name is Sheridan and I run several stalls in the main marketplace. I want this guard arrested, she just confessed to murder.” He tried hard to hold his head high and keep his voice even but as Clarke stepped into his personal space he jumped back away from her and again appealed to Heda for help.

“Heda, you are a great leader. You are just and reasonable, remove this woman from this meeting and arrest this so called guard.” He tried to keep himself as far away from Clarke as possible and eyed the young guard’s sword nervously.

Lexa had had about enough of this man insulting Clarke and the playfulness was gone from the situation for her when Sheridan called Stone a murderer. She stood up and was about to open her mouth to have him arrested when Clarke whirled around and fixed her with a glare. Her mouth was open about to speak but the look from Clarke snapped it shut and she quickly sat back down.

“What is this treason!? Who commands the great Heda to sit?” Sheridan was now appealing to the crowd gathered at the meeting. He was both trying to save his own skin and show Heda as weak, undermining her authority in the process. Fortunately most of the people gathered at the meeting had either already met Clarke when the party rode in or had quickly figured out who she was, after all Heda Kom Skai Kru was a legend in her own right.

Just as Clarke was about to tear a strip off of the man she heard a rustling at the table and out of the corner of her eye she saw an elderly woman struggle to stand, shaking as she did so. Lexa followed her instinct and rose quickly crossing the room to offer her arm for support to the frail but proud woman. Without her knowing it the gesture solidified Heda’s support from every single true supporter of the Mayor and the alliance in the room, it also earned her some points from her wife that she would enjoy later.

As the woman smiled and nodded her thanks to Heda, Sheridan continued his tirade, “Sit down, crone. You bother Heda with your weakness.” The words were no sooner out of his mouth than Clarke’s fist connected with his right eye. He fell over and scrambled back to his feet holding his face and screaming bloody murder.

Again Clarke called for order. Her voice silenced everyone and she grinned at the shocked and impressed look painted on Lexa’s face. “We will hear the lady speak.” Clarke stated calmly bowing her head in respect towards the woman who was more than old enough to be her grandmother.

The old lady smiled at Clarke before addressing Sheridan with a frown, “Sherry dear, remember your manners. Your mother would be disappointed to hear you talk to me that way. I was your teacher a long time ago if you remember. I remember you, you always had a chip on your shoulder, really hated it when the girls in the class beat you at anything.” She sighed, “But this time, you have overstepped by far far too much. Not only have I heard that you were in league with Yor and his men, now you have insulted Clarke Griffin, Heda Kom Skai Kru, feller of the Mountain, reviver of the dead, and the only one who could possibly command our great Heda, her unioned.”
Sheridan’s face fell. He looked nervously at Clarke and stammered, “You… you are Heda Kom Skai Kru..?!” Clarke raised her eyebrow and crossed her arms across her chest in annoyance as she nodded and bit back the snarky replay that wanted to fly off her tongue. When he saw his answer he knew if he left this room it would only be to get locked in the dungeons. In desperation he grabbed for the dagger at his side and attempted to grab Clarke and pull her into a choke hold to use her as a hostage to escape the room.

Clarke could have easily sidestepped the clumsy man, and Lexa’s dagger was already in her raised hand ready to end the man’s life with a flick of her wrist. Before either of them could do anything Stone acted first, placing herself in between Clarke and Sheridan, and her sword ended up in his belly. As she shoved him off of her weapon and onto the floor she turned to confirm Heda Kom Skai Kru’s safety and then shouted to her fellow guards to secure the room and send more guards to Sheridan’s businesses in search of more traitors.

When she was done she nodded to her Hedas and returned to her post by the door. As more guards poured in to clean up the body and the room began to clear out Clarke moved over to the table where Lexa still stood with the older woman who had correctly guessed Clarke’s identity. “Ma’am,” Clarke greeted her, “I am Clarke Griffin, Heda Kom Skai Kru.” Clarke extended her arm and the old lady grasped her forearm in greeting.

“Yes, you are.” The old lady had a handsome but deeply lined face and brown eyes that had seen much tragedy but now sparkled with life and hope, “And you are Heda Lexa, Commander of the 13 clans and bringer of peace.” She reached over and grasped Lexa’s arm the same way she had grasped Clarke’s. Lexa nodded gravely in affirmative and listened closely to what the woman had to say.

“I thank you both for restoring the true Mayor to our city, we have had a hard time since her mother was assassinated.” Her voice was sad but she shook her head as if to rid herself of the memories however briefly. “Zora brings our people hope, and you two bring us peace. Thank you both.”

She smiled at them both and then looked directly at Lexa focusing intently, “I was a teacher back before Yor took over,” her eyes sparkled and she winked, “but more importantly I was and still am a historian. Although Yor thought he destroyed all of our written histories of the city I have them safely tucked away. History is a great teacher, you must call on me if you need any answers my dear Heda.” With that she placed a soft kiss on Lexa’s check and then on Clarke’s and then she reached out her hand to a nearby guard who quickly stepped forward to escort her out of the room.

“How will I find you?” Lexa called after her already thinking about the information she needed.

“The Women in Black can bring you to me, Heda. They call me Minerva.” With one more smile she exited the room leaving a pensive Lexa and a confused Clarke behind.

“How does she know that we know about the Women in Black? And why does she think you will need a written history of York” Clarke glanced sideways at Lexa and sighed when she saw the look on Lexa’s face. “We’re in for some weird kind of trouble, aren’t we?”

The sigh brought Lexa from her thoughts and Clarke’s comment made her laugh. “As opposed to the regular kind of trouble?” Lexa asked gesturing to the spot across the room where a man was killed moments ago.

“Yes, as opposed to that.” Clarke agreed laughing. “The last time I saw that look on your face you were troubled by memories from the spirit of the Commander, memories from past Heda’s. I’m scared to ask what it is this time…” Clarke’s voice trailed off as she saw another look cross Lexa’s face, one she didn’t think she had ever seen this plainly displayed on Lexa’s face, and yet she
recognized it for what it was, fear.

Lexa shivered suddenly and then tried to shake off the thoughts that clouded her mind. She reached her hand out to Clarke. “I’ll tell you about it when I get it figured out, Clarke. I’m missing some pieces and I think Minerva might be able to help fill them in, but right now, I’m hungry and I have heard that there is quite a celebration happening in the courtyard. Let us eat dinner and then we will talk about it.”

Clarke was pretty sure Lexa’s fear was inspired by whatever she and Kita had seen in the basement of the Mountain Men’s lair on the island but she didn’t press her wife. She knew Lexa would piece it together in her mind and when she had made sense of it she would tell Clarke everything.

After dinner a group of them got together in the courtyard to enjoy the early summer weather and wait for the Mayor to return. Lexa took the time to have Suu summoned to her and made arrangements with her to go and see Minerva the next day. She had a theory and she was sure the answers would be in the history books Minerva had spoken of.

Octavia and Lincoln sat with Echo and Bellamy, Octavia telling tales of the fights they had gone through and the monsters they had come across. She was including the unborn baby in her conversation addressing her future nephew/niece as O Jr. much to Bellamy’s dismay. “We’re not naming our child Octavia Jr. no way, no how.” He humphed at her but Echo saw how relaxed her lover was now that his little sister was here beside him safe and sound. It endeared him to her even more and the thought crossed her mind that if he asked her for one of his Sky marriages she would not be opposed.

Echo had had many lovers in her life, both male and female. She even considered the idea of a union once, but that was long ago. It had been Aura, the woman Holden had challenged Heda over, who had captured her heart. The truth was Aura and Lexa slept together once before Lexa met Costia or Aura met Echo. It was just fun for both of them but Holden just happened to walk into Aura’s tent the next morning and see them in her bed together. He had been in love with her since they were small children but she had never returned his affections, he blamed Lexa.

A few weeks after that Aura met Echo and the two fell deeply in love. Echo would have been joined to her for life but for Aura’s carefree insistence that their love did not need a union. Before Echo could convince her otherwise the Mountain Men ambushed a hunting party Aura was out with and she was captured. Echo shivered remembering the cages where Bellamy had found her, and she teared up knowing Aura had been bled dry under the same mountain where she had met the father to her yet unborn child. She thought that maybe Aura’s spirit had something to do her her meeting Bellamy and escaping Mount Weather. The thought warmed her.

Bellamy noticed her sudden withdrawal from the conversation and the tears that had sprung to her eyes, he just reached over and held her hand. She liked that about him. He didn't demand answers from her when she wasn’t ready to give them, he just offered his quiet open support so freely and so selflessly. She realized in that moment, sitting in that courtyard that she truly and deeply loved this man.

The words of her mother as she had held her while she grieved for Aura’s loss ran though her mind. She had told her that she would love again and that she would thank Aura for not being so eager for a union. Her mother said some people just know when something isn’t to be. Echo thought of Costia who refused Heda many times before her death, she thought of her precious Aura again and she sent a thank you out into the universe to the spirit of the girl she had loved.
She shook off her thoughts and tried to focus on the lively conversation still going on between the Blake siblings. She smiled at them as they bantered back and forth about what names they should give the baby. She grinned at them knowing full well what name the little one would wear into the world. Bellamy might be charming but there was no way he could dissuade her from the name she had already chosen.

Zora returned with a smile on her face that Rock would never forget. Rock marvelled at the transformation in her lover, she looked so much younger, so much more innocent, and so happy. She couldn’t take her eyes off of her lover as she rode into the courtyard having greeted her people for several hours. Zora nodded to the guards and soldiers inside the gates of her residence, and hopped down from her horse. Rock was standing off to the side, she had been conferring with the head cook for the residence and giving her hints about what kind of food Zora liked best. The household was preparing for a grand celebration even though one had yet to be announced.

Once Zora had handed her horse off to a stable hand with a smile and some kind words her eyes scanned the crowd. She was searching for a petite figure with long black hair and deep brown eyes, she needed to see Rock, her love, her true north, her centre. When she didn’t immediately find Rock her green eyes filled with worry and she darted over to Clarke and Lexa. As they rose with smiles to greet her they noticed the worry in her eyes and it sobered them immediately. “Mayor, what’s wrong?” Lexa started.

“Rock, I don’t see Rock. Is she okay? If it her side, is the wound infected?” As soon as Clarke heard the reason for the triumphant Mayor’s look of worry she smiled. She found it perfectly lovely that Zora in all of her glory, a leader returning to her people, still thought of Rock above all else. “I see your smile Clarke, that means she’s okay, but please, where is she.”

Rock had seen her lover’s return and saw her search the crowd and then approach Heda quickly. She guessed that it was her whereabouts that were causing concern and so she snuck up behind Zora as she spoke with Clarke and Lexa. As Zora questioned them about her location she slipped her hands around and covered Zora’s eyes. Unfortunately doing so caused an intense pain in her side and she gave up the game and doubled over in pain.

When Zora whirled around and started fussing over her she grinned. “I’m fine darling. That’s what I get for trying to tease you on such a marvellous day as this.” She forced the pain aside and stood back upright. “You are home. Your people rejoice. York is whole again.” Rock stepped in and slipped her arms around Zora’s waist then placed a slow and gentle kiss on her lips.

Zora sighed happily. “You are whole, that is what concerns me at this moment.” She pulled away from the embrace and slipped her hand in to Rock’s left hand, avoiding the injured right side. “Heda, I believe I will take Rock to my bed now.” The grin that erupted on both of the women’s faces made Clarke and Rock both swat them gently on the shoulders.

“Rock is injured, Zora! Don’t get any crazy ideas! She needs to rest!” Clarke caught herself sounding a lot like her mother and Lexa giggled and reminded her of all the times they had been given and proceed to ignore the same advice about needing rest.

“Darling, don’t get too far ahead of yourself. Abby promised to stop by our room and check on me so until then you will have to control yourself.” Rock added. Zora pretended to be upset at the thought of waiting but placed such a gentle kiss on Rock’s cheek that it left no doubt of her true intentions of nursing Rock back to health slowly and gently.

“I’ll send Mom to you right away so you two can… enjoy your evening.” Clarke raised her
eyebrows suggestively at the last part of her comment and earned more laughter from her friends.

As they were walking away Lexa suddenly became serious and the fear returned to her eyes, “Zora!” She called out causing the couple to stop and look back.

“Lexa, what is it?” Zora wasn’t used to seeing Lexa looking fearful. She didn’t like it.

“Tonight…. leave some candles burning. Don’t let your room go totally dark… just don’t. Okay?” Had it been anyone else Zora and Rock would have teased them about being scared of the dark, but it was Lexa, fearless Lexa, who had led them all through the tunnel of darkness and death, and over the cursed island of Manhattan, and so Zora nodded.

“I will keep candles burning, and I will make it a standing order in the house tonight. Everyone will keep some light burning and the patrols will take extra torches with them.” Lexa looked relieved and nodded quickly to Zora in thanks. As Zora and Rock resumed their course Clarke slipped her arm around her wife’s waist from behind.

“You need to talk to me about this, Lex. It’s eating you up.” Clarke placed a chaste kiss on the base of Lexa’s neck and then moved off to find her mother and ask her to stop by and check on Rock sooner rather than later. She also passed along Lexa’s request for candles to be kept lit and Kane looked at her knowingly.

“The sounds we heard from the basement of the bunker?” He asked and when Clarke nodded he added, “The look on Kita’s face told me whatever was down there was not something we wanted up here. She worries that it has gotten out and will come all the way here?” Clarke shrugged and sighed. “I think so, but she won’t talk about it yet.” She looked at Kane helplessly and he pulled her into a rare embrace.

“Clarke, you are her partner in life and in love, she will talk to you, I imagine she is having trouble admitting her own fear to herself. She is not a woman who is used to being afraid.” He laughed and added, “She loves you. You two are the most formidable pair I have ever met. Remind her of that, the two of you took down Mount Weather together. Together you can take down whatever horror she saw in that basement.”

Clarke felt a little better and thanked Kane for his support. She made him promise to make her mom leave some candles lit and then moved over to tell Octavia and Lincoln the same thing. Kita was sitting with them and Jay was also there. He was looking much better and Clarke was pleased that his recovery was going so well.

When Clarke told them Lexa wanted candles lit all night Octavia laughed, “Come on Clarke we beat the tunnel and Heda is scared of the dark now!?”

Lincoln frowned at her for making fun of Heda and Jay and Octavia chuckled together. Kita jumped up looking slightly panicked, “Candles…? She thinks they will come all the way into the city…” The wild look on her face startled everyone and cut Octavia’s laugh short.

“They…? Like the cats, and bats, and giant fucking spiders…?” Octavia was hopeful but she soon realized the truth, she sighed and continued, “Of course not, you weren’t scared of those things at all when we fought them at the base of the bridge, in fact I’m quite sure you were having as much fun as I was. So that leaves whatever you and Heda saw in that basement, whatever was making the crashing sounds from behind the walls of the cells before we all left. Whatever that was got through and you two saw it and it fucking terrifies you and Heda Lexa…?” Octavia sighed and Jay swallowed hard, “You have to at least let us know what we are going to be fighting. Spill.” Octavia
looked hard at Kita who looked to Clarke for help.

“Lexa hasn’t told me yet, but Octavia is right. Just in case whatever it is does manage to get in to the city at night we should be prepared. Describe what you saw to Octavia and Lincoln as best you can and I’ll get Lexa to talk.” Clarke sighed, “It’s a long way back to the island let’s hope it stays there and we have a peaceful night, but do what Lexa says and keep a candle or two burning, make sure you tell Bellamy to do the same.” Octavia nodded and watched Clarke walk off with a growing sense of worry in her gut.

Lincoln reached out and rested his hand on her shoulder, “If something comes, we’ll fight it.” He grinned at her, “Maybe you can make boots out of it.” That was what she needed to hear and she rewarded him with a kiss that made Jay and Kita blush and look away.

Clarke and Lexa walked slowly down the hallway to the room they would be using the large estate. Kita had claimed the room next to theirs and Clarke suspected the girl would not sleep tonight in favour of patrolling the corridors around her and Lexa.

Lexa herself had been stopping at every window and looking outside checking to see where guards were posted and examining every possible nook and cranny. Clarke knew she was nervous but she just wanted to get her wife inside their room and have some privacy.

When they finally made it to the room Clarke had to wait while Lexa looked everywhere, in the closets, under the bed, checked the windows and then examined the candles making sure their were enough to last until dawn. When she was satisfied she took daggers and placed them under the pillows and then arranged her sword within grabbing distance and instructed Clarke to keep her gun next to the bed.

“Love. We’re safe, we’re together, and we’re alive. You are alive. But you have a wound on your shoulder that I am going to clean and change the bandages. Then I am going to take the rest of your clothes off and make love to you. Do not argue, tonight I need to touch you.” Clarke grinned as Lexa’s jaw dropped at Clarke’s forward words and then a smile spread over her face.

“I think we have time before it’s too dark outside…” She spared a glance toward the window but as Clarke began to undress her eyes found much more pleasant things to focus on.

Clarke removed her own shirt and pulled her belt off showing Lexa as she placed the holster with weapon on the small table next to the bed. She had a fleeting thought of how much had survived the years here as the furniture and the home were both clearly pre-bombs.

Lexa watched with approval as Clarke arranged her handgun just so, easy reach from where she would be sleeping. Then she was completely distracted from thoughts of strange and terrifying humanoids by Clarke’s pants hitting the floor. Standing in front of Lexa in only her bra and panties Clarke went through her bag and pulled out some grounder salve and sky bandages. Lexa growled in protest, “Clarke my shoulder is fine… continue undressing…”

Clarke’s laughter was like music and Lexa thought fleetingly that she should try to elicit that beautiful sound more often. “Forget it Lex. Off with your shirt and let me see your shoulder. The faster you let me take care of you, the faster I can ‘take care of you’.” Clarke winked at her wife and the double entendre was not lost on the Commander. Lexa whipped her shirt off, moving much too quickly for her injured shoulder and a wince crossed her face as she moved.

“Lex…” Clarke laughed again despite concern lacing her eyes. “Slow down, we have time.” She
shook her head and her blonde hair fell forward as she leaned in and found her wife’s lips. A slow, loving kiss calmed both of them but at the same time it lit a fire in Lexa’s belly.

“Hurry, Clarke.” Lexa breathed out and reached up to rip the old bandages from her shoulder.

“Be careful!” Clarke admonished but she felt a thrill of excitement go through her at Lexa’s eagerness. “It looks good. This salve is so great at controlling infections. Remind me to get Nyko to make a bunch more and to teach all of the Ark medical staff how to make it.” Clarke talked in a soothing voice as she wiped away the old salve and then cleaned the wound with an antiseptic from her bag. It looks good, Lex. It will heal cleanly.” Clarke’s voice shook slightly as she inspected the wound that she thought had ended the life that was so precious to her.

“I’m alive, Houmon. I’m alive and waiting impatiently for your hands on my skin.” Lexa smiled at Clarke, understanding how she was feeling. “Touch me and heal us both my love.”

Lexa’s soft voice and loving words was all Clarke needed, she finished up with the cleaning and bandaging quickly and after hastily cleaning up she returned to the side of the bed where her very sexy wife sat topless waiting for her.

“Lexa.” The name was said with reverence and love. Clarke’s hands came to rest on the crooked collarbones that she adored. She ran her fingers over their rough edges and then let her lips follow their trail. She felt Lexa shiver under her and smiled as she continued her reverent exploration. Tonight she would be slow and soft. She needed to express her love more than her desire.

Lexa unbuckled her own belt and began to work her pants down her toned thighs. She kicked them off of her feet and then she leaned backwards onto the bed. As her back hit the softness of the furs under her she sighed, it had been a long ride to York and what little sleep they gotten had been on the ground. She appreciated the luxurious softness against her back and she relaxed as she watched her wife remove her own bra and underwear. Clarke Griffin stood naked in front of her and Lexa let her gaze travel the body of the woman she loved.

Clarke’s body was tighter and more muscular than it had been when she first landed, her abs were quite defined and her clavicles stood proudly against the well defined shoulders and arms that Lexa’s eyes now wandered freely. Lexa felt herself growing wet as she ran her eyes over the beauty in front of her. When Clarke climbed onto the bed and laid her softness on top of Lexa she groaned rather loudly. The softness at her back had felt good, but the softness now covering her front was delicious.

“Already, love?” Clarke giggled at the sound and quickly picked up her kisses where she had left off. She kissed back and forth on both crooked and scarred collarbones and then settled in to the base of Lexa’s neck to suck on the hollow between them. Lexa’s hands began to explore and ran small circles around Clarke’s lower back. As Clarke brought her kisses up Lexa’s neck and over to her ear her hand movements stilled and she dug her fingers into Clarke’s backside. She shivered and sucked in her breath and Clarke whispered words of love into her ear in between nibbling on her lobe and sucking on her neck.

Clarke moved slowly she covered Lexa thoroughly in kisses and ran her hands all over Lexa’s skin. She would heat Lexa up kissing her breasts and then back off and explore elsewhere placing soft innocent kisses on her belly or her shoulder. She would find her lover’s lips and raise the intensity slowly, running her tongue over Lexa’s bottom lip then biting softly.

Lexa let Clarke lead. She understood that Clarke needed to love every inch of her body in order help her deal with yesterday’s events. Truth be told Lexa felt like she needed this too. Having Clarke make love to her like this was the sweet reminder she needed that life was about more than just surviving.
Clarke was making her third pass over Lexa’s now almost painfully erect nipples when Lexa couldn’t keep control anymore, “Clarke… please… I need more.” She panted out her request and shivered in pleasure as Clarke responded almost immediately, never taking her lips off of the nipple she was showering in kisses. The hand that had been running slowly up and down Lexa’s side slipped deftly between Lexa’s thighs and into the pool of wetness waiting for it.

“Clarke… yes, yes, yes.” Lexa’s breathing increased again and her hips shot upwards seeking more friction. Clarke was slow and methodical in her movements but she was not unaffected by her wife’s reaction or the wetness between Lexa’s legs. Clarke moaned into the breast that she had now sucked into her mouth and her own hips canted forward brushing her drenched centre against Lexa’s thigh.

As Clarke’s fingers explored Lexa’s wetness and played with her clit Lexa’s hands found Clarke’s perfect ass and squeezed. She encouraged Clarke’s hips to continue rubbing against her thigh and she threw her head back in pleasure. “Clarke, baby, fuck… oh you feel so good. Fuck me Clarke.” Lexa was hoping her voice would have the same effect on Clarke that her’s did on Lexa. She could never maintain any sort of control when the husky voiced blonde started talking in bed.

Clarke kept control, she actually slowed down and released the nipple she had been sweetly torturing with a soft pop. She moved up to look into Lexa’s eyes as she slowly circled her clit with her skilled fingers. “I love you Lexa.” She said the words slowly and softly and then she lowered her lips to Lexa’s. They kissed. It was soft but sensual and both women felt it to their core. Clarke managed to keep it slow but her hand sped up on its own volition. Lexa moaned lightly into the kiss and her hips tilted and legs spread wider giving Clarke all the access she needed.

Lexa’s hands roamed up across the beautiful expanse of Clarke’s back and found their way into blonde tresses. She tangled her fists into Clarke’s hair and as Clarke began a certain rhythm she cried out into the kiss. “Ohhhh, ahhh,” Clarke moaned in response to Lexa’s sounds and her movements sped slightly again. “yesyesyes… ohhhh… yes” flew from Lexa’s lips. Clarke dropped her kisses down to her lovers neck and concentrated on making Lexa fall apart. She was still controlled, her hand wasn’t frantic in it’s pace or it’s pattern.

Lexa’s abs tightened and she arched her back into the pleasure of Clarke’s touch. Her head bent back and her body glistened with a sheen of perspiration. “Clarke. Yes. I’m so close. Take me there… baby… take me to the stars.”

Clarke moaned out loud, completely turned on by Lexa’s approaching orgasm, and picked her head up to watch as her wife lost control for the first time tonight. Clarke hit Lexa’s clit just the right way and kept the rhythm that she knew would get her there. “Lex. Come for me.” She panted out and watched as Lexa started to shake under her.

She was clenched tight and beginning to lose control. She shook and called out as Clarke held her on the edge of orgasm. “Ohhhh… Claaaarke.. oh please.. ahhhhhh. Ah ah. Oh. Oh. YES!” The tightness gave out, the red hot coil of desire in her belly burst and she saw the stars. Clarke held on, held Lexa as she shook and bucked under her. She stilled her hand as Lexa’s movements slowed and she looked into Lexa’s eyes as they finally fluttered opened.

“You are so beautiful.” Clarke felt her desire spike but she was not done loving her wife yet. “I need to taste you.” Suddenly Clarke could think of nothing else. She quickly slid down Lexa’s chest placing kisses as she went.

Lexa gasped loudly, she forgot completely about her concern for the darkness that had taken over the York sky. She hadn’t entirely come down from her first orgasm yet and here was this marvellous woman sliding down to take her into her mouth. She wasn’t sure she could handle it so soon after coming but she certainly wasn’t going to stop. “Ah! Clarke… oh” she took deep breaths as Clarke
took the first swipe of her tongue across Lexa’s already swollen clit.

Lexa’s hands gripped the furs and she once again threw her head back and cried out in pleasure, “shitfuckohmygod… Clarke.” She pressed her back into the bed and tilted her hips up into Clarke’s mouth as far as she could searching for more pressure, more friction, more.

Clarke took her time with this too. She loved the taste of Lexa’s vagina especially after she had just come. She lapped up the liquid heat she found, dipping her tongue into Lexa. As she explored the inside of her wife’s pussy with her tongue Lexa abandoned the furs and her fingers gripped Clarke’s hair. Clarke slowly moved back up to let her lips wrap around and suck gently on Lexa’s clit and she was rewarded by her name being called to the heavens. She was taking her time and drawing out Lexa’s pleasure, in no hurry to be finished.

She let her tongue find the precious nub and she danced over it, insatiate for the taste. Clarke lost herself in the scent, taste and feel of eating her wife’s lovely cunt. She forgot her own pulsing, hungry desire and settled in rubbing her face through the wetness, getting inside Lexa’s vulva, as close to her clit as she could. She use her tongue to run circles over the sensitive button and she found a rhythm that caused Lexa to grip her hair painfully. She grinned into the pussy she was happily eating, knowing the pain of her hair being pulled was directly proportionate to the pleasure she was giving to Lexa.

Lexa had lost control of her hands, she didn’t know she was pulling painfully on her lover’s hair. She only knew that the tongue of the goddess between her legs was holding her just on the precipice and if she could just get a little more pressure she knew she’d be tumbling off the edge. She was begging quietly, whispering to Clarke, “please baby, oh your mouth is so sexy, so hot, please Clarke please. I need to come, please… oh please” The last please was a broken whisper as Clarke added two fingers at that moment. Lexa’s body bucked and Clarke smiled into her cunt as she put her effort into making her wife come again.

As Lexa finally felt her body start to release she cried out, “Ahhhhh, ahhhh… oh, ahhhhh” She bent her knees to give herself more leverage as she thrust her hips up into Clarke’s face and she threw her head back and screamed into the night. At the height of her orgasm there was a crashing sound and the door flew open.

Kita had been patrolling restlessly. As soon as darkness hit the city she began roaming the halls, staying close to Heda’s room. She was certain she had heard that laughter again as darkness overtook the city but when she didn’t hear or see anything after that she began doubt herself. She heard Heda call out the Sky Reine’s name the first time she walked by and shook her head wondering how they could do that at such a time. It never occurred to her that they might still be doing that and so when she passed by again and heard Heda Lexa call out in what sounded like pain she launched herself at the door busting it open and rushing in, sword drawn.

The scene before her stopped her dead. Lexa was naked, on her back, knees raised and legs splayed open, her head was thrown back and the moonlight coming in the window played off her long, extraordinary neck line. Clarke Griffin, her Sky Queen, was naked; her perfectly rounded pale ass bobbed up and down with her head as she feasted on the pussy of the Commander. Lexa was mid-orgasm but crashed as soon as the door flew open. Clarke whirled around her chin still dripping wet and both women stared incredulously at the young Ice Guard.

Kita couldn’t take her eyes off of them. She couldn’t get that moment out of her mind, she knew Lexa had been having an orgasm into Clarke’s mouth, she saw the passion and lust between the two women where previously she had only seen the deep love and spiritual connection between the two.
It was Lexa’s very unhappy voice that broke the silence.

“Kita, you better have a damn good reason for crashing in here….” Lexa and Clarke moved from their positions and Lexa covered Clarke with a blanket before rising from the bed and retrieving her clothes. As she strutted around naked looking for her clothes Kita couldn’t help but follow her, her eyes glued to the bright red hickey Clarke had left just below a bump in her right clavicle where it had been broken twice.

“Speak, Kita!” Lexa was losing patience. She hadn’t been able to ride out her orgasm and she was rather unhappy. But as the hormones began to settle and her rational mind began to assert itself she remembered the darkness and the things she feared about it. She dressed quickly, grabbed Clarke’s clothes, and with a glance beseeched her to dress quickly as well.

Kita’s eyes went from Lexa’s naked form, taut and scarred, tanned and sexy, to Clarke’s, rounder and softer, paler and yet just as sexy. Clarke dressed quickly and looked up to find Lexa quickly sheathing all of her weapons and glancing uneasily at the windows. Kita still had not spoken just stared at the two of them and Clarke guessed correctly that this was the first time she had ever walked in on anyone having sex.

Clarke used a softer approach when she spoke, “Kita, we must have shocked you. I’m sorry. Did something happen, or did you think Lexa was in pain?”

Kita snapped out of it, “I was patrolling. I heard… I mean… I thought…” She shook her head and blushed until her face was so red even Lexa felt sorry for her.

“It’s fine, Kita.” Lexa sighed, “Speak of the creatures, did you hear or see any signs…?”

Lexa’s mention of the things they had seen in Manhattan brought the young guard back to her stoic manner, she took a breath and forced the image of her two Heda’s naked out of her mind. “I thought I heard the laughter earlier, Heda….”

“You heard it!? Why did you not come here directly!?” Lexa glared at her before rushing over to the window and peering outside.

“I couldn’t be sure I really heard it, It was faint and only once, and I thought maybe it was just fear playing tricks with my mind. I haven’t heard or seen anything since.” As she finished speaking Clarke started.

“You two have to explain what you saw and explain it now!” There was no room for any excuses, Clarke would not allow her questions to be pushed aside any longer.

With a heavy sigh Lexa began to tell Clarke what she saw, “After you went back upstairs from the basement of the bunker the things that had been trying to break through the back of the cells got through. We saw one of them, it came out and…” She paused and frowned at the memory. “It began to eat Emerson’s corpse.” Lexa shuddered, “It was humanoid…. but it was not human, Clarke.” Lexa looked to Kita for help and the young guard picked up the narrative.

“It was shorter than most people, very thin, it’s skin was pale and sagged from it’s bones. It had a light covering of wispy, white hair on it’s body and the same hair, just longer, grew on it’s head. It had big eyes, I think to help them see better in the dark.”

Lexa agreed, “It didn’t like the light and when it first came out it had trouble adjusting to the light in the laboratory. I think it would avoid sunlight at all costs. I think it… they… have lived under there since the bombs fell… and the teeth…. “ Lexa went pale and shook her head. Kita didn’t want to talk
about the teeth.

“I don’t know how they would reproduce….” Kita added thoughtfully, ignoring the teeth. “It was naked and it had no….” She blushed again and her mind went involuntarily back to the parts of Heda and Clarke’s bodies she had recently seen.

“Yeah, we get it. Moving on. Could it talk?” Clarke abruptly interrupted the girl seeing where her thoughts were going.

“It spoke to us…” Lexa paused, “and it laughed.” Both Lexa and Kita shuddered and Clarke felt worry sink into her bones. If this thing managed to scare both Lexa and Kita she hoped it never made it out of the cages.

“What did it say…?” Clarke wasn’t sure she wanted to know.

“It said,” Lexa swallowed hard. “It said that it would get out, and come after us.” Lexa admitted.

“Exactly that…?” Clarke wanted to know as much detail as possible, she wasn’t sure why, she supposed it was human nature to want the gory details.

Kita closed her eyes and thought back, “Get out, get you, we will, we will, we will.” Kita recited and then shivered, “Then it laughed, the laugh, Reine, it’s terrible.” Kita looked distressed and Lexa no better so Clarke put on her rational scientist hat.

“It was stuck in the cell. Do you think it could break out?” She looked at the two women and was distressed by what she saw.

“We only saw a small fraction of the tunnels and dark places on that island, Clarke. I’m sure there are ways out. And the way it broke through the wall, it looked frail but it has strength, perhaps even more then we know.” Lexa shook her head.

“I agree, I don’t think the cells will hold it now that it has decided it wants out.” As soon as Kita spoke her ominous words the air was split by a piercing scream.

Lexa ran into the foyer, sword drawn, followed closely by Kita and Clarke also bearing weapons. Octavia and Lincoln burst in the other door and everyone stood and stared. The scream they had heard came from a guard who had walked into a gruesome scene while patrolling the house. By the time they ran in Zora was already there, the floor of the foyer was covered in blood and there was a body now cradled tenderly in the mayor’s arms. They could tell by the clothes that it had been one of the Women in Black but they couldn’t tell who. The face had been eaten away.

Lexa moved closer and placed her hand on Zora’s shoulder, she looked closely at the body, the marks left behind confirmed for her that it had been one of the creatures from under the ground of the cursed island.

“Heda, what did this? Did we wake some cursed creature when we crossed the island? Did we do this?” Zora’s face was so full of regret that it pained Lexa to tell her.

“The Mountain Men had something locked in the tunnels below the cages. One of them saw us and I think they followed us here to York.” Lexa admitted.

“Is this some other kind of Reaper that they made?” Zora’s face changed into a wall of rage.
“No, Mayor. This terror was created long ago. I think they have been there since the bombs. They are…were…. I believe they were people once. I don’t know if it was the century underground or something that started even before that, or the radiation from the bombs that made them what they are, but they can’t be called human any longer.” She looked down at the mutilated corpse and shook her head, “They are monsters,” Lexa felt the fear inside of her but fought it back and reached deep inside of herself to find the steel backbone of Heda, "and we are monster slayers.” With that Heda found her bravery once more and refused to allow herself fear the creatures any longer.

Clarke saw the change in Lexa and when her wife stood and started barking orders about patrols going in groups and carrying extra torches Clarke felt her own bravery build and she knew others around her felt the same ting. Heda was as inspiring as Lexa was beautiful. She came forward to take the body from Zora so she could move it somewhere to examine it. She sent Kita to wake her mother but the guard refused to leave her side and Octavia agreed to go and find Abby.

As the night wore on Indra returned from patrolling the city and brought with her grim reports. There had been five more bodies found, each one had been cannibalized to different degrees. With each body that came in the fear of the unknown creatures grew thicker and it was all Lexa could do to spread her bravery to the guards. Rumours flew, some said demons had been wakened on the island and were coming for those who had crossed. Others said Heda brought devils back from the dead with her, others insisted Yor was still alive and controlling the creatures.

Clarke and Abby examined every body and the teeth marks confirmed they were all killed by the same kind of creature. The entire York army and all of Heda’s strike force was mobilized and they went through the streets lighting torches and warning the citizens to be vigilant and keep torches and candles lit all night. Zora led them into the streets her bravery and leadership instilled a sense of purpose in her soldiers and they marched into the streets without fear to protect the people.

Lexa found Suu who had assembled her team. She had identified the first victim and despite mourning her loss they were focusing on securing the mayor's home. Lexa needed information, she knew there had to be something about these things in the history books, “You need to take me to Minerva, now!”

Suu began to protest but the look in Heda’s eye stopped her and she shouted for four of her people. “Escort Heda to Minerva. Take guards and torches and stay alert! These things got the jump on Reese and she was one of our best.” Suu looked down, fighting back tears and Lexa nodded for the chosen four to follow her.

As they headed out of the house they were joined by more than the extra guards Suu had told them to take. Clarke, Kita, Lincoln, Octavia, Indra, and Bugs, one of the more senior Women in Black and an old friend of Zora’s.

Lexa shook her head at Clarke, but the feisty blonde cut her off before she could speak, “Zora is already patrolling and Rock has everything taken care of here. Cade and Dal are with her and they have the entire York army patrolling the streets with the Mayor. I am going with you Lexa, don’t even try to stop me.”

Lexa sighed and looked to Indra for support but found only a stone faced general who was leading Clarke’s horse from the stable for her. Lexa hung her head wondering when Heda lost her power and just as quickly realizing it was the same moment she lost her heart. She looked at her love and nodded, “Fine Clarke, but you must promise me that you will be careful. We don’t know enough about these things… keep your torch lit and stay between me and Kita.”
Clarke agreed to Lexa’s terms and they were soon riding hard toward Minerva’s cottage. The Women in Black led the way navigating the dark streets easily. Bugs rode next to Lexa and explained the way they were taking, pointing out points of defensive interest and strategy. They reached the wall and yelled for the gates to open. Once they were beyond the wall they were led off the main road down a series of pathways that got more and more narrow and far less travelled.

As they rode Bugs nervously tried to speak with Heda, “Heda, Zora is an old and dear friend of mine. Thank you for returning her to us, to me.” She spoke quietly but with conviction.

“Bugs..? That is what she calls you, yes?” Lexa asked.

“Yes,” the girl laughed, “She gave me that nickname when we were 7 years old and it just stuck. She is a good leader, a strong warrior, and a kind woman. The mayor will lead us well, but she hasn’t really seen the devastation and sorrow of the city yet, Heda. It will break her heart.” Bugs sighed and shook her head.

“She knows some, Bugs.” Lexa turned and looked at the girl as she spoke. “She snuck back in a few times, and she sent spies. Her heart is already broken for her people and so is mine. I allowed Yor to not only lead but join my alliance. I am truly sorry, Bugs.” Lexa let an uncharacteristic tear of regret pool in her eye and then slide down her cheek as she held the gaze of Zora’s childhood friend.

Bugs looked incredulous, “Heda, you saved us. You and the Sky Heda saved us all. You freed us from the threat of the Mountain and gave us a cure for Wamplei. Your alliance has helped overthrow a terrible and cruel man and your story, the story of you and your unioned, has inspired everyone. The people of York have seen the two of you lead warriors through the worst darkness imaginable to bring us our rightful leader. You have freed us and given rise to a new hope in our city.” Bugs finished up her impassioned speech and then as one of the other Women in Black spoke to her she added, “We are approaching Minerva’s cottage.”

The path widened again and the road led them to a well maintained wooden cottage. They could see torches lit outside the front of the dwelling and relief flooded through Lexa’s mind. She jumped down and with the Women in Black flanking her she and Clarke approached the front door. Lincoln and Octavia quickly circled around the back and what they found put fear in their hearts.

“Heda,” Lincoln called out and was answered by Indra who had positioned herself by the side of the house in order to keep an eye on both parties at once. “Indra, they are already inside!” Lincoln shouted as he leapt from his horse and examined the ground. “The torches back here are knocked aside, and there are footprints.” He and Octavia quickly took in the scene in front of them. “There are at least four… no five of them.”

As Indra relayed his intel Lincoln and Octavia approached the back door, torches in one hand and swords in the other. “We’re entering through the back.” Lincoln reported and then he looked at Octavia. He was scared, that was not normal for him and he didn’t like it. For one split second he looked into the eyes of the fiery woman he had been lucky enough to fall for and he steadied himself in her.

“Let’s go get me some ‘living under the island fucking zombie’ boots, baby.” Octavia forced a grin, fought back her own fear and took strength in Lincoln’s unfailing courage.

Both teams burst into the cottage at the same time and the darkness inside was suddenly forced back by the lights from their torches. Lexa immediately saw a white form out of the corner of her eye and she acted quickly. Just as the Woman in Black on her right called out in pain and surprise as teeth
sunk into her shoulder Lexa slunk past her and her sword sank into the pale, clammy flesh of one of the things. It screamed that terrible scream she remembered from the basement and she quickly pulled her sword out of it’s belly and ended it’s life with one clean cut across the neck.

Killing it gave her courage, and she knew it would do the same for her warriors. “They die by our steel, just like everything else on the ground! Do not fear them!” Lexa held her torch firm and moved forward to sweep the house.

In the rear of the cottage Lincoln and Octavia were back to back holding torches and swords out in front of themselves and moving in sync, slowly circling and moving forward at the same time. Octavia saw it first, a white shadow moving in the dark. “I see one!”

“Where!?” Lincoln strained his eyes trying to see into the dark corners and doorways that his torch did not reach.

“Shit, it was over there by the hallway, I don’t know. I lost it” Octavia sounded both frustrated and afraid.

“It’s OK, you heard Heda. We can kill them, we will kill them.” He tried to reassure his lover but they both knew the fear that had found it’s way into his belly.

They continued to circle around the room they had entered and found that it attached to the kitchen. They continued to move forward, clearing the space. Lincoln saw something next. It was a brief flash of white sliding through the shadows to his right, he just caught the movement out of the corner of his eye and he stopped abruptly and turned towards it. “I saw something.” His voice was steady in spite of his racing heart.

“Let’s move that way and check it out.” Octavia swallowed hard and relied on the same bravado that allowed her to be the first of the 100 to step foot on the ground. “We got this babe, Let’s get this zombie bitch.”

The couple inched their way forward, constantly checking their surroundings. As they approached the area they saw with dismay that there was a doorway in the corner, and a staircase. A staircase descending down, down into a dark basement.

“Fuck me sideways…” Octavia muttered as she stared down into what seemed to her an abyss.

The darkness of the space distracted them both and they forgot about their six. They heard the laugh, but it was too late. They both whirled around but the thing was already flying towards them. It crashed into both of them, laughing that demonic laugh. Lincoln fell backwards and hit the side of the door frame. It stunned him and delayed his reaction long enough that the creature was on him before he could raise his weapon. Octavia fell back into the abyss and Lincoln heard her swearing as she crashed down the stairs.

Lincoln was a Trigeda Kru Gona and it seemed that someone forgot to explain to the pale terrors what that meant. He may have dropped his sword, but he didn’t need a weapon. He himself was weapon enough to handle a lot of things in the Grounder world, and as it turned out a lot of things in whatever world this thing had crawled out of too.

The creature was strong, but Lincoln was stronger. Years living underground had enhanced many things about the mutants, such as their night vision, and stealth, but upper body strength was not one of those things. As it tried to overpower the downed warrior it found that it was lacking the strength
to do so.

Sure, the creature was terrifying, it’s prey was often frozen by fear and unable to fight back, but the moment Lincoln lost sight of Octavia the only fear that existed in his life was the fear of losing her. The creature also had sharp nails, like claws, and large, sharp teeth for tearing into flesh, but Lincoln had thick skin and a strong hand that found it’s way to the creatures neck. He ignored the teeth that gnashed barely an inch from his face and he ignored the claws that sliced through the skin of his forearms and shoulder. He focused on his hand around the thing’s neck and he squeezed.

As he struggled with the creature he saw with dismay that the torches he and Octavia had dropped had started a small fire. It wasn’t blazing yet but he knew the nature of fire and he knew that he had to get to it soon or all would be lost. In the back of his mind he weighed his options. Forget the fire and go after Octavia and they might both die in the basement trapped by the fire. Stop to fight the fire and Octavia might die in the basement alone. He made the choice immediately, to die with her.

As he was squeezing the life out of the creature that had attacked them he heard a sound that froze his blood. Octavia screamed. He was starting to panic, he had assumed she would be able to hold her own and fight until he got there and they could fight together, he looked at the teeth snapping in front of him and imagined the same teeth tearing into Octavia’s soft flesh. He cursed and squeezed harder, the thing he was holding was taking far too long to die and he had no time to spare.

Then he saw something moving toward him faster than should be possible, something that looked far more terrifying in the eerie glow of the burgeoning fire than the evil thing he was choking, something that made his heart sing. Indra Kom Trigeda Kru, bleeding from a gash on her forehead and the most fierce, angry expression on her scarred face ran through the kitchen and with zero hesitation plunged into the darkness of the basement.

When the house was breeched Indra had run around to the rear to back up her former second. She knew Heda had several guards with her as well as Clarke and Kita who were formidable in their own right.

She reached the rear door and as she slipped inside she was caught off guard by a nasty, pasty fleshed thing that had hidden just inside. It jumped on her back and sank it’s teeth into her neck. It hadn’t expected to get a mouth full of metal but that is exactly what happened. Indra had worn her full armour including a gorget forged from scrap pieces of metal Grounders had scrounged here and there over the years. She grinned as the thing let out a high pitched surprised sounding squeal and her large, strong hand reached up and grabbed the thing by the scruff of it’s neck.

She flipped it over her shoulder and onto the ground, it flailed about and it’s hand and sharp nails found her face and scratched a deep gash into her forehead. She felt the warmth of her own blood as it began to spill down her face, but it was not the first time the most feared general in all of the thirteen clans had bled in battle and she paid it no mind. She held the thing down and as she drew her dagger it laughed at her and in a raspy, broken, otherworldly voice; that was by far the creepiest she had ever heard said “not the only one… more of me… waiting for you… all of you…” and then it laughed and she understood why the laughter had so disturbed her Heda.

She killed it quickly then got up and stomped out the small fire her torch had started but gave up looking for the actual torch as she head Octavia scream. She took off at a full run, not caring about the darkness or what might be hiding in it. She ran into that kitchen and saw by the light of Lincoln’s discarded torch that he was fighting off one of the creatures and that he was sitting beside a dark, dark basement. She knew that was where she would find her former second and she didn’t even break stride, just went after her Gona.
The basement reeked of something, Indra was sure she smelled blood, and maybe death, but she thought it was more than that, she suspected that her pale new friends stank and her only thought was to find out what they smelled like dead. She bounded down the stairs with a war cry that had frozen more than one human in fear and she hoped for the same effect on these once human ancestors.

“Indra!” It was Octavia’s voice and it came from the darkness. She sounded hurt and scared but at least Indra knew she was alive.

“Octavia, I am coming for you. Your fight is not over.” Indra sounded firm and confident, much like she was teaching Octavia another lesson. She slowed her pace and controlled her breathing. It is a common exercise for young Trigeda warriors in training to be blindfolded in the forest and attacked repeatedly and from all sides so the general felt quite comfortable taking her chances in the dark with no lights.

She didn’t count on the inherent stealth of the creatures who had lived in the dark of the tunnels beneath Manhattan for a century and the first attack caught her by surprise. One of the things slammed into her and laughed as it drew blood with it’s claws and ran back into the darkness.

Indra realized then that she was outmatched in the dark and if she continued to allow the sneak attacks she would lose eventually, so she did what any fearless warrior from the Tree Clan would do and she charged. “Octavia, speak! Direct me to you with your voice, do not stop!”

She rushed forward, sword drawn in one hand and a dagger in another. The next time she was attacked she had so much forward momentum going that the creature hit her and spun itself around. She was able to strike out and her dagger found it’s mark. The thing screamed it’s terrible scream and Indra laughed out loud knowing that she had drawn just as much blood as the creature had.

“Indra, I am here. Fight them Indra, you are stronger than them.” Octavia kept talking and while she was doing so she continued groping along the old ground of the cellar looking for her sword. She had been steadfastly making her way toward the small glow of light she could see from the top of the stairs but the going was slow as the things kept attacking her and cutting her open with their claws.

She had tumbled quite far into the basement after her fall down the stairs and as she tried to find her bearings she felt her way along the floor hoping to find the hilt of her sword. What she found had drawn the scream from her lips that Lincoln and Indra had heard. She had come across a body and as she felt it she realized that it’s face, and parts of it’s shoulder had been eaten away. She had no way of knowing who it was but suspected that Heda would not get to see Minerva after all.

Indra followed the sounds Octavia made and the two women made their way toward each other. They found each other in the dark and when they grasped hands each felt a profound sense of relief. The relief was short lived as one of the things rushed past again, taking a swipe at Indra’s calf muscle and causing the general to fall down to one knee.

They heard the creepy laugh again and the hair on the back of Octavia’s neck stood on end. “taste good, your blood. stay with us…. down here…. in the dark dark dark.” Then the laugh again.

Octavia helped Indra back up and shouted in frustration at their attackers. “Bring it you dickless motherfuckers!” Then she turned to Indra and whispered, “It’s okay we’re together. Nothing can kill both of us, especially not these skinny little pale assed fuckers.”

Indra laughed at Octavia’s crass mouth and agreed, “They will not kill both of us, I promise you that.” Indra laughed but Octavia felt a strange sense of foreboding at the words. She ignored the feeling and put her energy into getting both of them out of that basement.
They had heard strange clicks and pops and realized that was the creatures communicating and so they knew there were two creatures down in the basement with them. Octavia had seen only five paris of footprints leading into the cottage. They had heard Heda shout after killing the first one and Lincoln was dealing with one upstairs. With the one Indra had already killed Octavia felt confident that these were the last two and hoped that meant help and torches would be arriving soon.

The two brave warriors inched across the floor toward the light that had grown a little bigger. They were more than halfway there and Octavia felt a strange sensation on her arm. When she realized what it was she yelled and jerked away sending both her and Indra sprawling to the ground. “Shit, sorry. Are you okay?” Indra grunted in response and with her finely honed senses suddenly lashed out with what seemed to be a wild punch. There was a crunch as her fist connected and then an angry, wailing, scream came from the dark and Octavia felt one of the creatures stumble over her and crawl away.

“The fucking thing was licking the blood from my arm!” Octavia revealed the reason for her freak out, “But you got him good Indra! Woo!” Her unfailing cheerful and persistent nature roused the last of the old general’s humour and she laughed, suddenly feeling much more optimistic about their chances.

“Whatever you are creatures, know this, both of you will die down here, not us!” Indra shouted into the darkness and the creepy, soulless laughter was her reply.

“kill us… maybe, maybe…” They laughed again, “kill us all, no no no… too many too many… one lives, all live. all are one, one is all.” The laughter rang out again and Octavia got angry.

“Look you fucking musketeers, you will regret crossing Heda, she WILL kill all of you, every single last fucking one of you!” As Octavia tried to anger the creatures Indra prepared and when one lashed out at Octavia’s threat she was ready. She had gotten a feel for the attacks and weather it was sense or anticipation she wasn’t sure but she swung her sword in a neat arc and felt the satisfying vibration as it sliced through flesh. The creature died with a scream and it’s friend screamed in anger.

They were approaching the stairs and heard Lincoln at the top, he had won his bare handed battle with the creature and was shouting for his lover. “Octavia!? Are you okay?”

“Yes, she shouted back, Indra and I are almost at the stairs. Bring a torch.” As she shouted she realized she smelled smoke and knew that Lincoln had more to fight that the creatures. “Put the fire out Linc! We’re okay.”

As soon as she shouted that she heard a sinister voice in her ear, “not okay…” and then the things teeth sunk into her shoulder. It had been going for her neck and it would have been a kill bite but Indra pulled her forward at the last second. “Ahhhh! Fuck!” Octavia cried out in pain and reached around to punch the thing.

Indra pulled her toward her and shoved her up the stairs as the thing released her and got set to attack again. Just then Lincoln appeared at the top of the stairs with a torch, face covered in soot and blood. In the faint light of the torch Octavia turned and saw the thing leap onto her mentor and they both crashed over the railing back into the basement.

“Indra! No!” Octavia shouted but a strong arm grabbed her and pulled her up the stairs. “Lincoln let go of me! What the hell are you doing!?” She fought him off but he tugged her into his arms and pick her up.

“The fire! We have to go now!” Lincoln’s voice broke as he ran up the stairs with the brunette on his back, but he would do anything to save Octavia, including sacrifice Indra.
“No! Lincoln, NO! Stop. If we die, we all die! We have to go back down there and get Indra!” The
determination in her voice stopped him and with tears running down his face he put her down.

“Linc it’s us. We don’t leave the people we love behind. Let’s go get her. Fuck the fire, we’ll figure
it out.” She kissed him quickly on the lips and turned and ran right back into the basement. He had
tears running down his face that were not just from the smoke that was quickly filling the cottage. He
watched her unfailing bravery and he ran after her. The smoke was starting to get into their throats
and burn in their lungs and they coughed as they went.

At the bottom of the stairs they found Indra breathing, bleeding, but breathing. She had deep bite
marks on her forearm that she had managed to raise in time to fend on the attack on her face. She had
scratch marks on both cheeks and deep gashes on her shoulders. She was breathing heavily and tears
formed when she saw them.

“You fools! Why did you come back? The fire will have blocked the exit now. You have killed
yourselves. Lincoln, why?” She had counted on the man’s love for Octavia to win out and for him to
get the girl to safety.

Octavia was not one to be defeated and knelt in front of Indra quickly putting pressure on the worst
of the wounds. “Nice to see you too, Indra.” She leaned forward and rested her forehead on Indra’s
for a brief moment and whispered, “You won’t die down here, not alone.” Lincoln pulled some
bandages for the small pack on his back and pulled Indra’s forearm from Octavia’s grasp. He gave
the torch to her and told her to search the basement for another way out.

It was then that they heard a loud noise coming from the back of the basement and Octavia turned
and placed herself protectively between the sound and her people, sword drawn and ready to fight.

There were a few bangs and then some muffled shouting and then there was the light of torches and
the beautiful face of a familiar and determined young woman! Clarke Griffin strode into the
basement backlit by torches and Octavia swore she was an angel come to save them. “Griffin! Yes!
Amazing fucking timing!” Octavia ran across the dark room and engulfed Clarke in a hug.

Heda’s team had searched the rest of the cottage quickly and they had found Minerva hiding in a
small loft in the upper part. Lexa helped her retrieve the precious history books and get them to safety
while Clarke and Kita led half of the guards to clear the rest of the house. When they came to the
kitchen the fire had already started. Lincoln shouted to them that Octavia and Indra were in the
basement and he was going to get them and make for the back door. Lexa and Minerva were running
back and forth with the books as Clarke finished clearing the rest of the house.

As Clarke saw Lexa struggling out under the weight of the last books she ran outside and saw how
engulfed in flames the place really was. After a quick check to see that her wife was indeed out of
danger she ran around back and when there was no trace of her friends she shouted for Minerva and
Lexa. Her wife had heard an echo of laughter in the surrounding forest and was shouting for guards
and setting up a secure perimeter so Minerva answered her call.

“Your basement! Is there another way in!? My friends are trapped down there.” Minerva quickly
pointed out to her to some doors but informed her that that were locked from the inside. Clarke set to
work getting through them and ordered the guards to start chopping. They made quick work of the
old wooden doors and Clarke fearlessly marched into the burning basement. She knew she could
have been attacked but she wasn’t expecting the attack to come from Octavia. She groaned in mock
pain as the brunette flung herself onto Clarke in a fierce embrace. The two shared a moment before
the rest of the party was shouting for them to get out, the whole house was starting to come down.
Lincoln had picked the bleeding general up in his arms and was almost to Octavia and Clarke when the floor began to collapse around them. Lincoln shouted for Clarke and Octavia to move and they spun and ran for the doorway. Kita and Bugs both ran in to help as a fiery beam fell directly in their path. The smoke was thick and they were all coughing hard as Bugs yelled for them to jump through the fire over the beam. Kita jumped through to them and Clarke ordered her to help Lincoln with Indra. They jumped back through, sharing the general's weight, and ran out batting the flames from their clothes. Lincoln immediately handed Indra off to a guard and turned to go back in. Bugs and Kita were just inside and gesturing wildly to the two Sky women to jump. Clarke and Octavia grabbed each others hands and leapt together flying over the beam and through the flames.

He was mesmerized at the sight, they took his breath away, two fearless women with fire and smoke all around them defying odds yet again. As they landed they grabbed Kita and Bugs’ hands and the four ran the last couple of meters to the safety of the outside. Lincoln was waiting for them staring intently and he watched in terror as a bleeding and half dead monster jumped over the flame and grabbed wildly at the fleeing women.

Seeing Lincoln’s eyes go wide Clarke knew something was wrong, she whirled and raised her gun all at once and the gunshot rang out louder than even the fire’s cracking. The creature fell dead at her feet and Clarke turned to run from the fire once more. She was almost out, almost there, and another beam gave way. It was heading directly for the Sky Queen and Kita ran forward to push her out of harm’s way.

Bugs reacted faster and hip checked past the Ice Guard, Kita stumbled out of the fire’s path and Octavia pulled her the rest of the way to safety. Bugs reached Clarke a second before the beam crashed and with her strong arms flung the Sky leader out of the path of the beam and into Lincoln’s waiting arms. Bugs tried to leap out of the way but she had used up all of her luck that day saving Heda’s love. She did this willingly because she knew that in saving Clarke, she saved everything.

The beam crashed into her and she felt the weight of it break some ribs. She crashed to the ground feeling the familiar heat of fire on the scarred patches of skin from the school fire long ago. She knew there would be no coming back from this one but she didn’t mind so much. She was prepared for death. She had seen the true mayor restored, her people freed from Yor and she had witnessed Heda’s uniting force. She knew her people would be safe and cared for. She was ready.

Clarke was not ready to let her go and she screamed and fought Lincoln as he held her back form reentering the burning building. Kita and the other Women in Black tried to get in after her but even they had to give up as more of the building came crashing down around them. Lexa arrived in haste after hearing her wife screaming. She ran over and wrapped her arms around the hysterical blonde and demanded an explanation from Lincoln.

“Bugs.” He looked horrified and stared into the flames. “She saved Clarke, but she didn’t make it out.” The man had tears in his eyes for the second time that day. Lexa whirled around and started toward the fire.

“Kita! The well!” She shouted and pointed out the structure. The young woman ran for the well accompanied by the guards and Women in Black. They ran back with buckets of water as quickly as they could fill them and threw them on the flames in the area they knew Bugs had fallen. The water vaporized in the heat of the flames and they brought bucket after bucket to Heda who continued to fight the fire. She beat if back enough so two of the Women in Black could run in and pull a charred body from the carnage. Bugs was gone but Lexa would give her a warriors send off tomorrow morning with the rest of her lost ones.

It was a heavy hearted group that returned to the mayor’s mansion that night. They had rescued
Minerva and the history of York but they had paid a high price for it. Bugs was dead. Minerva revealed that the body in the basement was another of Suu’s group who had been sent to protect her and Lexa profoundly regretted not being able to save that body too. She took solace in the fact that the fire would have done the job of releasing her soul and in the fact that Bugs had seen Clarke’s worth and had willingly sacrificed herself to save her.

They escorted Minerva and her books back into the city and put her safely in a guarded room in Zora’s home. For the rest of the night the team joined the patrols scouring the city making sure of the citizen’s safety. Lexa and Clarke patrolled the streets together, Kita never more then a few feet away. As dawn approached they led their horses to the site Zora and Lexa had decided upon for the ceremony to release the souls of the warriors they had lost.

The pyres were constructed on the ruins of an old fort that faced Long Island Sound. It wasn’t far from Zora’s home and most of the people staying there were already at the pyres when Lexa and Clarke arrived. Luna and Rachel were helping the soldiers finish arranging the piles of wood, and Luna cane to Lexa immediately when she noticed Heda had arrived.

Lexa counted the pyres. She saw the sixteen pyres of the warriors she had lost on the journey from Otta and the pyres for Bugs and two guards who had died earlier in the evening. There was one more pyre. She frowned and looked at Luna, “I thought there would be nineteen, but I see twenty.”

Luna shook her head regretfully and explained, “Wolfe died in the night. Her injuries were too much for even Abby to heal. Ro took it badly.” Luna indicated the Horse Clan leader who stood near one of the pyres with her head in her hands. Clarke went to her immediately. Lexa thanked Luna and left it to her wife to comfort Ro, she wanted to talk with Zora about Bugs’ bravery and heroism. Bugs had saved Clarke and Lexa wanted her old friend to be proud of her.

More and more people gathered as the sun began to show itself and by the time it had bathed the sky in enough light for the ceremony to take place there were hundreds of people there to pay their respects to the crazy brave warriors who had crossed the tunnel and the haunted island and died bringing their mayor home. Lexa stepped forward and raised a torch into the air. “These brave ones who lie here have made an entire city safe. They brought your mayor home. They fought evil and darkness and they did not give in to fear. They are my heroes. Let your children tell stories of their deeds.”

As she stepped toward the first pyre she handed the torch to Ro and let her send her warrior off. Ro steadied her voice and shouted the name loud and clear, “Wolfe Kom Hos Kru, yu gonplei ste odon.” With that she lit the pyre and watched as the flame caught quickly releasing the soul of her rider into the air.

Lexa moved to the next pyre and handed the torch to Zora. Zora had tears in her eyes but she called out in her strong voice, “Bugs Kom York Kru, yu gonplei ste odon.” They continued down the line calling out the name of every warrior for the people to hear and remember.

The last pyre was lit by Lexa and she released the soul of one of her own Tri Kru Gonas. She turned and watched the sun creep higher and light the morning sky in a pink fire of its own. She imagined she could see the spirits rising up from the burning pyres with the smoke and finding freedom in the fresh light of morning. She didn’t allow herself tears, she forced herself to think of the positive, all of the bodies made it to York, no souls were lost, only bodies.

As she stood and watched Clarke slid into the empty spot at her side and slipped her hand into Lexa’s. “It was good, Lex. Bringing the bodies back here, it was good.” The two young women
watched the pyres burn down to nothing. They stood long after everyone else had moved on, they stood and they remembered everything they could about those who had been lost.

When the pyres had burned themselves out Lexa sighed heavily and turned to Clarke. “We have a lot of reading to do.”

“What do you expect to find in the history books, Lex” Clarke enquired.

“The key to York’s future.” Lexa answered. “I know we can’t access the information Kane took from the mountain men until we get back to Ton DC and the Ark, but I’m certain York has seen the white shadow creatures before and I’m certain the arrival of the Mountain Men to Manhattan changed something…” Lexa shook her head as if she had just confused herself. “I just know we need to start in the past in order to move forward.”

Clarke nodded at her wife and remembered a quote from a class she had taken on the Ark, “Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it.” Lexa nodded in agreement and they turned from the still smoking embers to go and find some answers.

Chapter End Notes

Will the history books reveal more about the creatures? Will Lexa and Clarke figure it out in time to avoid more deaths? Why do the nasties insist on eating people’s faces...? Stay tuned... ;-)
Les Enfants

Chapter Summary

Zora learns about the lost children while Lexa tries to unlock the secret of York's Past. Clarke and Bellamy explore a tunnel and that leads to no good. Kita finds a cure for her distraction.

Chapter Notes

Warning: This chapter contains stories of child abuse, both sexual and physical. It is not graphic or detailed but there is discussion of the abuse and murder of children. Read at your own discretion.

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

York was a confused city. The people wanted to celebrate the return of the mayor and the vanquishing of Yor. They wanted to mourn the dead and abused victims of the harsh and now toppled regime. They wanted to breathe free air and feel safe again. They wanted all of this but they were scared.

The Mayor’s triumphant return had a cost no one had expected, the things, the terrors in the night. It only took one night of killings for the city to remember them. The elders whispered of a time when they came every night, no one knew who would be taken, no one knew whose body would be found at first light. The terrors hadn’t been in York for a long time, but the city remembered. The streets remembered running with blood and the walls remembered not being able to keep them out.

Lexa and Clarke had been pouring over the history books for several hours when the Blake siblings waltzed in and started placing bets that they would be the ones to find whatever Lexa was looking for. They had both been voracious readers on the Ark, especially Octavia who had been hidden under the floor most of her life. At this point Lexa and Clarke were tired, hungry, and perhaps even a little cranky so they welcomed the chance to take a break.

“We haven’t found anything useful yet,” Clarke admitted. “We’ve been at this for almost four hours. I mean the history of this city is fascinating but I just want to eat something and take a nap at this point.” She sighed and handed her volume over to Octavia and Lexa handed hers to Bellamy.

“If you find what I’m looking for you will be rewarded.” Lexa added and sighed. If you find it before I have to come back and read again, you will be rewarded very very well.” She sighed and grumbled to Clarke, “I can’t believe that crazy old woman refused to help me find what we need.”

While Bellamy and Octavia joked about what reward they would ask for they started flipping through the pages quick enough to make Clarke doubt they were really reading at all. Clarke cast a sideways glance over toward the rocking chair where Minerva sat seemingly without a care in the world, rocking and knitting.

The knitting had really fascinated Clarke and she had started to talk at length with Minerva about it.
until Lexa had snapped at her to stop chatting and get reading. Lexa was angry that Minerva said she didn’t know which book or page to look at, she only said that if Heda read them she would find what she needed. Lexa was certain Minerva knew exactly what volume and even what page she needed but the old woman would not be swayed, she just sat and knitted while the two women read.

As they were leaving for a much needed break Clarke shared a glance with Minerva that showed understanding and apology. Clarke knew Lexa was grouchy and she also knew Minerva must have her reasons.

As they were leaving they ran into Abby and Kane. “Lexa, Clarke, I’m your mom so I can tell you this - you look like hell. Go get some rest. We’ll take over reading for a while.” Abby smiled but raised her eyebrow and crossed her arms waiting for argument.

“Thanks, Mom. Octavia and Bellamy just came by too. Four pairs of eyes are certainly better than two.” Clarke smiled in appreciation and when Lexa muttered something under her breath about an old crone and kept on walking she smiled again, in apology at her mom. “She’s mad at Minerva, thinks she should be giving her hints as to where to find the information, but Minerva insists she doesn’t know.” Clarke shrugged and followed her wife.

Not long after Abby and Kane sat down and opened a volume of York’s history Rachel appeared and grabbed another volume. Cade and Dal soon followed and after thanking Minerva and assuring her that the Mayor herself had promised to memorize every volume in the coming months they passed along her regrets as she was needed outside of the manor today. Rock was accompanying her and Cade and Dal had promised to help Heda figure out the mystery in their stead. So the two men each grabbed a volume each of “The Written History of the City of York” and began to read.

Zora and Rock were led to a large brick building near the eastern border of town. It was old and the design called to mind a small castle. It was not entirely intact and had been fixed over the years by various materials until it looked kind of like a patchwork quilt. It had once been a town hall and after that other things. It really didn’t look that different than other buildings in York. In spite of the plain facade what was inside was going to break Zora.

Zora and Rock had taken a few hours rest after patrolling all night and the ceremony in the morning. As soon as they woke up they called for Suu. When the young woman arrived Zora informed her that she wished to go to Yor’s mansion. Rock insisted on accompanying her, in spite her gunshot wound. When they arrived in front of the building Yor had used as his centre of power they dismounted and Zora stood for a minute just looking at the building. Over the years several of the square columns that had separated the buildings facade into three distinct sections had broken or fallen to some degree, and now she thought they looked more like spikes, or teeth, or something else sharp and dangerous.

Rock reached out and took her partner’s hand, they nodded at each other and walked under the arched doors together. Once inside they saw the disarray, broken furniture, smashed glass, and bloody signs of recent battles. None of that bothered them, they had expected it. Suu had informed them of how Rachel, Bellamy, and Echo had personally led a force of alliance soldiers into the mansion when they took York back from Yor’s forces. There had been a battle inside the building but the alliance forces had won rather easily. Most of Yor’s elite faithful had fled the city taking with them most of the soldiers and archers. Those who remained were low ranked, drunken men with vile appetites that could be fed in that den of evil.

Bellamy had led a clean sweep of the upper floor, he and his men found lots of brawlers but none who really challenged their fighting skills. Rachel led the charge on the main floor and cleared out
several brigands. Echo had an elite team that stormed the basement floor. When it was over Bellamy found his lover at the top of the stairs on her knees, holding her head in her hands, and sobbing. He had no idea why, but he knew she almost never cried so he dropped to his knees beside her, held her, and yelled for Rachel to make sure the basement was secure.

The basement had been secured easily by Echo and her team, it wasn't the fight that had reduced Echo to tears but what she had seen as she had stormed into one of the small rooms off of the main basement hallway. Her team had entered the basement without resistance and as they proceeded down the hallway she had burst into the first room on the left. She walked in on a man forcing himself on a girl who looked no older than fourteen. She had grabbed the man, thrown him against the wall and run her sword through him. The girl screamed and when Echo tried to comfort her she just kept screaming. The whole basement had been full of small rooms where close to fifty girls and boys had been held. They were sons and daughters of those that opposed or displeased Yor. Children of the poor who had nothing to give when Yor's collectors came calling.

Echo's team killed all of the men they found in the small rooms immediately but in a larger back room there were a few who were sitting around drinking. They dragged them into the front room and began beating them. Echo went room to room trying to gather the children and reassure them but they all cowered in corners and refused to look at her. There was only one, a blonde haired girl who Echo guessed correctly was Azgeda, she looked Echo in the eye and nodded when asked to help the other children. She had gone room to room and collected all of the others. They had followed her out into the main front room and they all cowered together in the corner and watched the Alliance soldiers beat the men who had abused them. Echo ran upstairs to find help but was overcome by emotion and fell to the floor in tears over what she had just witnessed.

Children had become a kind of currency under Yor's rule. They took children from anyone who voiced dissent, or showed opposition. His men regularly kidnapped children from other clans and brought them to York hoping to gain favour, the missing and lost children numbered in the hundreds. It kept the people of York terrified. nothing ensured obedience parents faster than threats against their children.

Yor had several places around the city where he held children. His personal residence was where he kept the ones he referred to as his personal attendants, he also had various places where he sent children to be kept and sorted like commodities. Some were taught how to do tasks like cooking and cleaning and were put to work in the houses of his supporters. Some of the boys who looked like they would be big and strong were sent to be taught how to be archers. They were brainwashed and learned to fight and kill.

Yor visited the sorting houses frequently and he kept the ones he liked for himself. Others were sold or traded for supplies, support, and allegiance of men like him. The rest, those poor souls, they were sent to the mansion.

The kids that were sent to the mansion were ones that didn’t fit his sexual perversion or ones who were too old to be sold, too sad to function, or too wild to control with fear and violence. The mansion took care of that, all fight was beaten out of them at the mansion. Their life expectancy was short once they arrived there and when they died they were disposed of in pits full of bodies in the backyard.

As soon as Rachel had heard Bellamy call out to her she had rushed down to make sure everything was secure. She found a large group of dirty, malnourished, and terrified children huddled together in a corner and around ten men being beaten mercilessly by Echo’s team. Two looked to be already dead but the warriors were still beating on the bodies. The state of the children, the little rooms she could see in the hallway, and the way the warriors were beating the men led her to a conclusion she
hoped was wrong.

Rachel called for the warriors to stop beating the men but they paid her no mind. She gave up, she didn’t care for their lives anyway. She focused her attention on the children but when she approached they all flinched away from her and cowered further into the corner. She didn’t want to upset them any more so she just spoke to them softly and told them they were safe. She kept her distance and told them she was going to stay and protect them until more help came. Then she sat herself down on the floor and laid her sword next to her and she sent one of her warriors to get Luna. Luna was the light, the most gentle soul that Rachel had ever met. If anyone cold help these children, Luna could.

Zora had heard the report on all of that and yet when she walked down into the basement and entered one of the small rooms where the children had been forced to stay she found it difficult to breathe. When she sat down on the filthy furs where countless children had been beaten and raped, when she looked at the disgusting pots in the corners where they were forced to relieve themselves, when she saw the scratches of young nails on the walls as they clawed in desperation, when she saw the stains of blood on the walls where they were beaten, when she saw all of that she felt her chest rising and falling but she felt no oxygen in her lungs. Her breath sped up but still no air. Her heart pounded and she looked all around her in a daze of anguish.

Rock found Zora hyperventilating and hysterical on the floor of one of these torture cells, Zora’s tears were flowing down her cheeks and dripping from her chin down to her chest. She couldn’t speak, her voice kept catching in sobs, and she couldn’t get any air into her lungs. Rock couldn’t carry her herself due to Emerson’s parting gift to her so she called for Suu and together they helped the Mayor out of the basement. While Suu addressed some of the guards Rock’s instincts led her to take Zora out into the backyard for fresh air. Suu saw them too late.

“Mayor! No! Not out there!” Suu hadn’t told her yet. She hadn’t prepped either of the women for what was in the backyard. She raced after them and burst out into the yard to find both women on their knees staring at the scene in front of them in complete shock and horror. She raced to Zora’s side and when the mayor fell forward onto her hands and knees and vomited Suu rubbed her back and spoke to her quietly. “This is not your fault, Zora. He did this. You saved all of the future children.”

Rock stayed on her knees staring in disbelief at the gruesome task that was being completed in front of her. There were around ten people sorting through a mass gravesite. The backyard was a large space and there were five different graves that had been uncovered and marked so far. The first two had been cleared out and the remains had been counted and finally the souls released on the pyre. The first hole they had dug up had held the bones of ten children who, judging from the sizes, had ranged in age from 8 to 17 with the average being 15.

The second hole was a very similar tragedy and they were now working on the third. They pulled out bones, and badly decomposed bodies and they arranged them in lines along the fence. They had eleven bodies lined up so far and were still picking though the dirt in the hole trying to complete the twelfth skeleton when the Mayor and the Regent of the Lakes had walked outside looking for fresh air.

When the retching stopped Zora, still on her hands and knees, raised her head and forced herself to look at what was happening. She watched and tears grew fat in her eyes and escaped, running down her cheeks and then falling like raindrops onto the dirt. She watched as one of the volunteers found another piece of the skeleton and with a morbid solemnity climbed out of the hole, walked over to
the fence and placed it carefully with the pile they believed it belonged to. A pile of bones that had once been the frame for a young boy or girl, and was now all that was left as proof of an existence that had ended so terribly.

Zora stood, shakily, and walked over to the hole. She stared for a long time and then she moved away to another area that was roped off and covered with some sort of tarp. Suu was quickly in front of her. “Mayor, please. Let’s move on. The people need to see you, your return has given them hope but after last night they are scared, let’s ride through the streets and reassure them. Then we’ll go and help Heda figure out how to keep the city safe form those things. This…” she gestured to the holes and the twelve tiny piles of bones, “this has already happened, it is over. We need to leave the dead and help the living.” Suu pleaded with Zora, not wanting her to look under the tarp.

Rock had recovered herself enough to rise and was at Zora’s side as Suu pleaded with her. For some reason she remembered a story Clarke had told her about her first meetings with Lexa, “The dead are gone, and the living are hungry.” Her voice startled Zora who had been so distracted she hadn’t heard her approach. “Suu is trying to protect you, protect us from seeing what is under that tarp.” She stepped closer and slipped her arm around Zora’s waist. “But that doesn’t make what she said untrue. Some of the children survived this place, they would benefit form seeing their mayor.” Zora’s arm slipped around her shoulders and gently pulled her further into her side.

“I have to see…” Zora’s voice broke again and Rock pulled the much taller woman down to her so she could kiss the tears away from her cheeks. “We’ll go, but I have to see.” Zora managed to get her emotions under control. She reached into herself and found the steel backbone that made her a great leader and formidable warrior. She drew herself up to her full height and took a deep breath.

“Remove the tarp Suu, now.”

Suu knew better than to argue when she heard the tone of Zora’s voice. She called two of the guards over and told them to pull the tarp back. “Zora, Rock, this is the one they were still filling when the alliance retook the city. It’s the reason we started digging and found the other ones. I don’t know why they have left this one…. It’s almost like everyone avoids it. It’s too much. They still… they still look like kids.” Suu swallowed hard and tears filled her eyes. “I’m sorry Mayor. My Women in Black should have stormed this place and saved them. We didn’t know how bad it was.” Suu hung her head and then stepped aside gesturing to the guards to remove the tarp revealing the horror to Zora and Rock.

Zora stopped breathing and Rock’s intake a breath was so sharp it would have hurt could she register anything other than the sight in front of her. The hole was about four feet deep and it was lined with lime. There were five bodies in the pit. Three girls and two boys. They all looked to be in their mid teens. There was blood covering them that could be seen even through the white powder that had been unceremoniously dumped over them as they had been tossed into the hole. One of the girls was positioned so she was facing Zora, her lifeless eyes were staring at her accusingly. Telling the Mayor she was too late.

Zora vaguely heard one of the guards who had removed the tarp vomiting a few feet away. She barely registered Rock unable to look anymore burying her face in her chest. She almost recognized the wetness soaking through her shirt from Rock’s tears. She mostly just stared into those dark lifeless eyes and inside of her head she had a conversation with the little dead girl in the hole. “I’m sorry.”

“Sorry isn’t enough. I suffered. I hurt. I died.”

“I came back.”

“Too late.”
“I’ll protect that ones who lived.”

“Who will protect me?”

“You’re free now you don’t need protection anymore.”

“I’m in a hole in the ground where the men who tortured me threw me like a piece of trash. I’m cold. I’m not free.”

“I will free you. I will not let you stay one more night in this hole.”

Zora moved Rock away from her and then walked over and jumped down into the hole.

“Mayor! That powder is dangerous! Get out of there! You need to cover your skin!” Suu shouted. Rock moved forward to try and help but her injury slowed her. The two guards and Suu joined her and the people working on the other hole stopped and watched in awe as the Mayor carefully picked up the little dead girl everyone else had been too scared and disturbed by to do what Zora was doing now. She carried her gently to the side where Rock and one of the guards carefully accepted her and laid her softly on the ground. Suu and the other guard took the next child and laid him next to the first girl.

When the workers saw what was happening they left the piles of bones and brought over the cloth they had been using to wrap remains in. As each child was placed on the ground they began to clean and wrap the bodies. They felt bad that they had left them in there for so long but none of them had been able to bear it. They looked at Zora with admiration and thanks.

When all five of the children were free from the hole Zora climbed out and one of the women who had been working at the site approached her with a small soft brush. She brushed away as much of the white powder as she could from the Mayor’s skin. Zora let her, she didn’t mind the burning sensation that it caused but she could tell the woman wanted to do this. To show her support in some way. When she finished with Zora she did the same for Rock, Suu and the two guards. When she was done she spoke, “You should see the Sky doctor. You’ll need to wash but water can make it worse at first. The Sky doctor might know more.”

Zora thanked the woman and asked that the bodies be cleaned and prepared as soon as possible. She was going to free the souls today at sunset. She then took one more look around the yard and thanked the people for doing this terrible duty. Then she looked at Suu and nodded, “You say we need to help the living Suu. Take me to the surviving children.”

Suu looked like she wanted to argue, she wanted to tell her that the creatures that ate her peoples faces should be her number one concern. She looked like she wanted to tell the mayor to forget about the children they were safe for now and could be dealt with later. She looked like she wanted to say that, but she didn’t. What she said was, “Sha Mayor.”

They left the mansion and as they mounted up Zora made a decision. “When all of the bodies are recovered this entire place will be destroyed. Perhaps Heda can ask Octavia’s friend Raven to come for a while, Octavia says she is great at blowing things up.” Zora’s voice was hard and cold even as she tried to make a joke. Rock knew she was controlling her emotions by suppressing them and she knew that if Zora started to cry now, she would not be able to stop.

Rock was doing it too. She thought back to what Yor had done to her in his tent all those years ago, the kids in that mansion had mostly been even younger than she had been. They had suffered that assault from countless men, countless times, until they died or were beaten to death. The thoughts made her wish Yor was still alive so she could kill him again, far more painfully than the first time.
After a quick stop to see a healer and make sure they had removed all of the powder from their clothes and skin as to not injure the children, Suu led them to a large building not that far from Zora’s home. As they dismounted they heard the sounds of music coming from inside, music and singing. Zora looked utterly confused and Rock felt love creep back into her heart, replacing the horror and anger just a little. There were children’s voices raised in song floating on the air around the house and Rock knew that had they been any later to the city some of those voices would have been silenced and become bodies in the same hole they had been staring into about thirty minutes ago. She knew they had revealed themselves to Heda at the right time despite wishing the right time had been much much earlier. Had they tried to strike Yor earlier they would have lost and these children would still be living a real life horror story, were they alive at all.

Zora’s confusion showed clearly on her face as Rock and Suu led her to the front door. "They are singing, they are singing..." Zora felt her heart fill.

Rock leaned in and whispered to her, “The living are hungry, Z. Hungry for love and happiness. We survive terrible ordeals and we still have that hunger. Remember what it was like for the first few weeks after we escaped York that night. You kept telling me I didn’t need to pretend to be happy, you wanted me to grieve and deal with the attack. You thought I wasn’t facing what had happened to me. I was facing it, and yet I was also happy. Happy that we had escaped, and we were both alive. I had moments of terror and flashbacks but most of the time I was just me, dealing as best I could with the emotions I was feeling about the attack. I was happy that I lived, happy my lover lived, happy my friend lived, and happy that we were all together in a safe place. I was trying to move on. That's what these kids are doing.”

Zora nodded at Rock and took a deep breath as they walked inside. They were led to a large room where the music seemed to be coming from and Zora stood and looked in. Luna was at the front of the room leading the children in a musical round. They were all intently watching the woman who had been the one to come for them all after the fall. She had made it her business, her job, to see that all of the children Yor had stolen were found and brought to her.

She helped as many as possible find their families and the ones who couldn’t stayed there, at the school together. She had spent many days and nights there with them but as time passed they needed her less and less. There were many volunteers from the city now who came and helped take care of them and slowly more and more families were coming from surrounding villages looking for and sometimes finding their missing children. Luna still came at least once a day and she still taught the young ones music class, she was still their saviour and they loved her.

Luna noticed the Mayor in the back of the room and as the song finished and the children cheered, she gestured to the back, “My songbirds, it seems we have a very special guest today.” The room held about thirty children and they all turned at once and Zora saw their eyes light up.

They were mostly young girls around ten years old and they all squealed with delight at once, “MAYOR!” they shouted and when she smiled at them they rushed her. She hugged each and every one of them and promised to care for them and keep them safe. Once they were done Luna instructed them to take their seats and with a nod to a young woman near the door she stepped forward and took over the lesson from Luna.

“Music class is good for them.” Luna informed Zora as they walked out of the room. “This group were the youngest. I have separated them by age and they all go to school here until more permanent homes can be found. There are over one hundred kids living here now. There were almost three hundred at the beginning, we were able to find family members for a lot of them. Most of that group you just saw were still in the so called sorting houses, they seemed to have been treated fairly well there. They were clothed and fed and no one touched them. Yor demanded first pick of them so until
he moved them from those houses they were safe. Some of that group though...” Luna sighed, “four of them were already in Yor’s residence. They were part of his ‘attendants,’ that man should have died a thousand deaths.” Luna clenched her jaw and took a breath before she continued. “The older kids had it worse, some were servants in more powerful households, they suffered different levels of abuse there. Some were Yor’s attendants, he was a sick sick man and all of those kids have deep scars, physical and emotional. Then there are the ones who came from that building.” Luna grew pale and tears came to her eyes, she couldn’t continue so she changed the subject.

She shook her head and moved on, “There are a few who come from far away clans, and there is quite a large group of girls from the Ice Nation. They stick close together, take care of each other.” Luna paused as both Zora and Rock gasped. “What?” she asked them.

Rock answered, “When we were in Otta we met a group of street kids, all girls. They looked after each other and lived in an abandoned building. They said soldiers would come and take away their friends sometimes. They said they disappeared.” Rock shook her head.

Luna sighed again, “Most of them were Yor’s attendants, they are all very pretty, but apparently they were hard to control. He had to beat one of them to control the others. He marked them up pretty bad, but never their faces.” Luna’s voice broke a little, “They said he sent five of them to the mansion for a week and then brought two back to tell the others of the horrors. The other three never returned and only one was still there when we raided.”

Zora turned to Suu, “Go get Kita, tell Lexa I need her.” Suu left quickly but she did not like the order, Kita scared her and she didn’t scare easily. She was pretty sure the Ice Guard still hated her for shooting Heda and was looking for an excuse to kill her.

Zora and Rock followed Luna into the next classroom. There were about thirty teenage boys packed in there and they were having a discussion about a free and just society. Zora raised her eyebrow in question.

“They were chosen for Yor’s army and entered into the training program. The longer they were there the harder they are for us to reach. Some of them ran away from us and tried to meet up with the archers on the outskirts. These are our success stories.” Luna interrupted the discussion and called out the boy of 14 who seemed to be leading the conversation, “Nathaniel, would you mind terribly if we interrupted you?” She smiled at the boy whose eyes widened at the sight of the mayor.

The boys had a much different reaction than the girls had to the presence of the mayor. They got nervous, stiff, scared. Zora walked to the front of the classroom and looked at each and every one of them before speaking, “Luna tells me you were training to be Yor’s archers.” They looked even more scared but didn’t lie. “I would like to meet each of you individually and talk with you. I want to help you find your purpose here in York. Some of you might choose to use the training you have and serve me in the guard. Some will want to lay down your weapons forever. We will figure it out together.”

The boys relaxed a little and the one called Nathaniel tentatively raised his voice, “Mayor? You can forgive us?” He looked terrified and hopeful all at once.

“There is nothing to forgive.” Zora took the boys hand and he shook with emotion.

“I did things, we all did things.” He broke into tears as he spoke to her.

“You did what you were told by men who would have beaten you, or worse, had you not obeyed.” Zora pulled the boy in closer and grasped his cheeks gently wiping the tears away with her thumbs and looking him in the eye to make sure he understood.
“I killed a girl, mayor.” He confessed sobbing.

“Why did you kill her?” Zora felt like he needed to tell her his story so she let him.

“I wasn’t doing well on the training, I heard one of the bosses talking about me. He said I was too soft and that he thought I should be sent to the mansion.” Nathaniel shuddered. “They took us there sometimes to show us what would happen if we failed.” He paused to gather his thoughts and then with a trembling voice he continued, “That day we were shadowing a patrol and we found a girl stealing bread from the cart that was on its way to the mansion to feed the men there. She was around thirteen and she was all skin and bones. She was starving and needed to eat.

The boss told me to arrest her and said he’d send her to the mansion with the bread she stole. He laughed. I pulled out my sword and when she looked at me I shook my head and whispered to her that I couldn’t let them take her there, that I was sorry but she would thank me if she knew. Then I stabbed her in the heart. As she died I yelled at her saying, ‘that’s what happens when you steal from Yor.’ I had to pretend I was tough, that I had killed her because she stole, not because I couldn’t bear what would happen to her at the mansion. The boss laughed and patted me on the back. He said I was showing promise. He didn’t send me to the mansion.”

When he finished his story Zora patted him on the cheek and nodded to him, “You did her a kindness Nathaniel.” She hugged the boy and then she looked around at all of the other boys and knew they each had stories that were eating away at them with guilt. She knew she would have to make them a priority if she was going to keep them in her fold.

“You all have pain in your eyes, and no doubt you have stories similar to Nathaniel’s. I do forgive you, it is not your fault. Yor and his men are to blame. You did what you had to do to survive. I understand. We’ll get through this together.” The boys nodded at her and looked relieved and grateful.

She took one more look around the room at the boys and saw one with piercing blue eyes and a shock of white blonde hair. She walked over to him and looked into the blue that reminded her of her good friend the Ice Queen. “Bonjour.” She addressed him the way Skadi had addressed her and Rock every morning during their exile. The boys eyes got very wide and his mouth dropped open.

Rock walked over, knelt by the boy and tilted her head to the side, “How long have you been here?” She asked him.

He looked upset and deliberately avoided her gaze. “Almost two years.” He answered. He was one of the older children in the room.

Zora knew there was more to the story, “That would make you a fully trained assassin. But here you are with the partially trained boys. You are older than the rest, you were kept somewhere else first, no?”

Rock sensed the boys discomfort, she recognized the look in his eye, desperation. He was desperate not to talk about this, not to tell what had happened. She thought of Skadi the first time Zora had confronted her about the nightmares she heard coming from her tent that sounded far too much like the ones Rock suffered through. Skadi had been desperate to avoid the conversation. Her blue eyes wild and unfocused, her blonde hair falling over her eyes as she shook her head. The boy was doing the same things.

Rock reached out to place a hand on his shoulder and he flinched away. Luna stepped in and quietly said, “Francois doesn’t like being touched.” She patted Zora and Rock on the shoulders and added, “He was a servant in the home of one of Yor’s advisors. As he got older they thought he would
make an excellent archer, that’s all.”

Zora nodded and looked at the boy apologetically, “Francois, I am sorry. I was not suspicious of you, I just wanted to know your story. I would like you to come with me to see the others from the Ice Nation. There is someone coming here to meet all of you. Would that be ok?”

He nodded but looked unhappy. “I will go mayor, but they hate me, the girls. I can’t blame them, they see me as they see the rest of Yor’s men.”

Zora nodded and looked sympathetic, “They will forget their hate when they understand your story.” She gestured toward the door and Francois stood and walked out with Luna. Zora looked around the room once more and added, “I’m sure you’ve heard about what happened in the city last night.” When they nodded she added, “I will have guards stop here tonight and put up a perimeter of torches, those of you who trust your aim and wish to help can stand guard. Shoot the things if you see them, and be careful. See you soon.” She added and walked out the door.

As they left Rock and Zora heard excited whispers behind them, “She trusts us, she wants us to help protect everyone from the monsters!” Rock kissed Zora’s cheek softly and smiled at her.

Luna and Francois were waiting down the hall in front of another door. The boy was shaking visibly and Rock fought her urge to hug him knowing how he reacted to touch and in her heart understanding why. As Zora passed by she looked at him and nodded. “Thank you for coming with me.” When the boy nodded at her she entered the room.

Inside there were fifteen girls. Several of them had the stereotypical Ice Nation look, pale skin, blonde hair and blue eyes. There were several others who looked more like Kita than Skadi with darker skin, black hair, and brown eyes. One thing was for certain, this group had become a family. When Zora walked in they showed the most interesting reaction so far, contempt.

They did smile at Luna, she was the one who came for them and let them all be together after they had been freed. Her kindness had won over the Ice children despite her orders that they most certainly could not leave together and try to find their own way home, that had to stay here and wait for Heda. When the mayor walked in they had just one question.

‘Where is Heda, she is the one who can send us home.” The oldest girl stood and addressed the mayor who arched her eyebrow at the girl who quickly added, “what is he doing here!!?”

“I asked him to be here and I am the Mayor so when I ask people to do things they usually do,” Zora felt slightly annoyed at the girl and at the same time proud of her strength and defiance even after everything she had been through. “Heda is working on the small problem of monsters who come out at night, kill people and eat their faces.” She saw some of the girls shudder in fear at the thought and Rock punched her lightly on the arm and frowned at her for scaring the girls.

“I am Rock, the Leader of the Lake People, and partner of the ill mannered Mayor.” She cast a sideways glance at Zora. “Heda will want to see you and I know she will come as soon as she can. We heard about you when we were in Otta…” The girls looked confused and Francois spoke up from behind them.

“You were in Otta!? How, why? Alain is Yor’s ally. He would not join with you, Mayor.” It dawned on Zora and Rock then, they didn’t know. They didn’t know their Queen lived. Before either of them could answer Kita burst through the door and the children stared at her in complete shock.

“Mes enfants!” Kita was shaking and had tears in her eyes, she launched herself at Francois and
pulled him into a hug and kissed both of his cheeks. He was so startled by the sudden appearance of
a Royal Guard of the Ice Nation in full uniform including her ice blue swords and daggers that he
didn’t even flinch away from her.

She moved into the room and grabbed onto each child embracing and kissing them. “You’re here,
you’re here… mon dieu, you are alive. Mes enfants.” They all stared at her in confusion and
adoration. They flocked to her, even Francois risked the wrath of the girls and stepped out from
behind Zora and Rock to inch closer to Kita.

“You’re from the Royal Guard….?” Francois questioned.

“Oui, oui. I am.” Kita kept hugging the children and Rock called out to her.

“Kita, they don’t know what happened in Otta.” Rock smiled as realization dawned on Kita’s face.
Kita looked around at the expectant faces and smiled.

“Mes enfant, gather round, gather round.” When the children crowed in close to her she smiled at
them and continued, “Our Reine is alive, children. Queen Skadi is back in control of Otta. Heda
Lexa united the clans against Yor and Alain and they are dead. Reine Skadi promised to find you all,
she will be so pleased to bring you all home.” The children stared at her with open mouths. They
looked at Zora to confirm.

Rock stepped forward and spoke, “Mayor Zora and I spent the last few years in exile, hiding from
Yor. We were very lucky that we found our friend, your Queen, Skadi. She was in exile as well,
hiding from Alain. The three of us hid together waiting for the time to come when we could rise up
and take back our people. Heda Lexa was the chance we needed. Your queen is my dearest friend
and I can tell you she is already looking for you. We met a young girl named Angèle in Otta.” Rock
paused as three of the girls showed recognition of the name. One spoke.

“Angèle? From Vanier?” Her voice sounded hopeful.

“Yes. She had a group of around twenty girls with her. She said they tried to protect each other but
that some girls had been taken away. That was you?” Zora questioned softly.

The three girls from Vanier nodded and cried tears of happiness at the news that at least some of their
friends were alive. The rest of the girls were still staring at Kita in awe. She was still circling the
room and fussing over each and every one of them. Zora couldn’t wait to tell Lexa about this side of
her icy Ice Guard. Suu stood in the doorway watching in amazement at the transformation Kita had
undergone.

When she found her at the Mayor’s house she had been staring distractedly at Clarke and Lexa from
afar. She blushed when Suu approached, probably embarrassed at not having seen her coming. She
had snapped at Suu asking what she wanted and when she explained she saw Kita’s face change into
a strange mixture of joy and sorrow all at once. Kita had jumped up and run to Lexa. She gave a
jumbled and quick explanation that Zora needed her help. Lexa waved her away not really listening
and she and Clarke had gone off for a much needed nap.

Kita had run back to Suu and grasped her hand urging her to lead the way quickly. Suu was taken
aback at the physical contact, not that she minded being touched by the very beautiful guard she just
hadn’t expected it and was caught by surprise. The two rushed to the temporary boarding school
where Kita had suddenly become a sort of den mother. Suu would not have believed it unless she
had seen it herself.

Kita sat with the girls and Francois for a while longer and then stepped out with the Mayor and Luna
to get the full story. She listened in horror and anger to the stories and she insisted that Heda and the Mayor arrange a party to take them home as soon as possible. The Mayor agreed and was quite certain Heda would too.

Kita went to say goodbye to the children, promising to return the next day, and then headed back to wait for Heda to rise from her nap. She certainly wouldn’t be barging into the bedroom again, even though the thought was titillating.

Zora and Rock continued the tour and met more and more children. Luna seemed to know a lot about each and every one of them and Zora felt her respect for the leader of the Boat People grow immensely.

Octavia found something first. Bellamy found something a few seconds later. The Blakes high-fived and Octavia began to read aloud. Her volume of York history was from 35 years after the bombs. There was mention of bodies turning up with various degrees of mutilation caused by what seemed to be enlarged humanoid teeth. This seemed to happen once or twice a month for the first year or so and then the book described how it became more often and the people were terrified. There was no evidence who or what was doing this. After a few years it all just seemed to stop.

In Bellamy’s volume of history from fifty years after the bombs it started again. This time it was certain that the wounds were teeth marks, humanoid teeth marks that were clearly seen on the bodies. Bellamy scanned ahead a few paragraphs and turned pale. “We’d better get Heda. The mayor too.” He read on and everyone crowded around to try and read over his shoulder. Lincoln who had joined the group shortly before the discovery just rose and quickly left to find Heda and the mayor.

Lincoln found Kita standing across from Heda’s door leaning against the wall, she was uncharacteristically deep in thought and didn't seem to notice him until he was almost upon her. It worried him, but he said nothing. He nodded to her and asked, “They are in there?” When Kita nodded affirmative he went to the door and was stopped with a hand on his shoulder just as his hand touched the door handle.

“You can’t just walk in!” Kita protested quietly. “What if they are… you know…” She turned bright red and Lincoln fought the urge to chuckle that quickly rose in his chest.

“If they were… you know… we’d certainly hear them.” Lincoln assured the guard. “Besides, we’ve all walked in on them before.” Then he did let himself laugh as the girl’s eyes grew wide and her face even redder. He patted her on the shoulder, assuming she was worried about the repercussions of interrupting the two lovers. “I’ll take full responsibility.” He didn’t notice the slight confusion in her eyes as he turned and opened the door.

Kita stepped into the quiet room behind Lincoln and couldn’t stop her eyes from wandering over the half naked sleeping forms of the two beautiful women in the bed. They lingered on the curves of Clarke’s ass and the swell of Lexa’s breasts.

Lincoln knew better than to be anything but the definition of composed, he knew damn well his Heda had woken the moment he turned the handle, she just sensed there was no threat and chose not to move. He spoke softly not wanting to wake Clarke who he was certain was actually asleep.

“Heda, Bellamy has found something in the books.”

That was all it took for Lexa’s eyes to snap open and find Lincoln’s. She nodded slightly to him and answered, “We will be there in five minutes. Thank you Lincoln.” Her eyes went to Kita who was standing red faced staring at the entwined limbs on the bed. Lexa chuckled to herself, it seemed their
Ice Guard was having a hard time forgetting about what she saw when she had busted into their room.

Lincoln turned and left the room and Kita started at his movement, turned an even brighter shade of red and quickly followed his exit.

Lexa kissed Clarke’s temple and was surprised when the gravelly voice of her beloved answer her kiss, “I heard, Lex. Couldn’t you have said ten minutes…?” Clarke groaned and blinked her eyes open. Her hair was mussed and she had creases on her face from the seams on Lexa’s shirt where she had burrowed into Lexa’s good shoulder.

Lexa chuckled again and placed another kiss on her wife’s temple. “My apologies Houmon, next time when we find the key to stopping monsters from eating our people’s faces I’ll be sure to tell them ten minutes.”

Clarke’s eyes snapped open and she glared at Lexa who was grinning at her. “Fine, let’s go.” Clarke begrudgingly rose from the bed and stretched a little before pulling on her pants.

Lexa pulled her into a strong embrace before they left the room and Clarke kissed her softly. “Do you think we can stop them?” She asked with concern.

“I’m sure of it, Clarke.” Lexa answered with confidence as they walked out the door and surprised the daydreaming Kita who was waiting in the hallway. Clarke gave Lexa a questioning look and Lexa just raised an eyebrow. “Kita, what did you do today?” Lexa decided to try and focus the girl.

“Heda, I believe the mayor would like to tell you.” Kita answered cryptically. Lexa stopped walking and pinned her with a look.

“I am not fond of surprises, Kita.” Lexa warned. “If there is something important I would hear it as soon as anyone knows of it.”

“Sha Heda.” Kita responded and she grew pensive. “Rock spoke of a girl named Angèle,” she started with and that was enough to stop Heda once again. Clarke and Lexa stood and stared at Kita eager to hear more. “There are a group of children from the Ice Kingdom here. They have been through a nightmare but several of them are alive. Zora sent for me when she discovered them.”

Kita’s eyes filled with tears as did Clarke’s. “When Angèle said that some of her friends disappeared... they were taken here and… Yor’s Attendants?” Clarke asked, bile rising in her throat.

“Some of them, a worse fate for others.” Kita answered truthfully and winced at the pain that flashed across both women’s faces. Kita smiled at them and reassured them, “They live. They are in high spirits now, they just learned today that Queen Skadi lives and has returned to her throne, they celebrate. They will go home and the Queen will smile upon them, they will heal. They live.”

“Thank you for telling me. I have much to discuss with the mayor, it seems.” Lexa looked pensive. “But first, let’s figure out how to protect the city.” Clarke and Kita nodded agreement and the three picked up the pace to the room where Bellamy was glued to the page he was reading.
They had been discussing the information they had discovered for an hour, and come no closer to agreement. Lexa was frustrated and Zora was furious. “We are wasting time!” The mayor insisted. “We need to find the tunnels!”

“Mayor you know better than most, there are too many to just go and block all of them. It would take months to find them all.” Lexa countered. “Clarke and Octavia are still reading and Suu went to find an old map Minerva says is hidden away in some secret drawer in some secret underground room.” Lexa sighed, “I know this seems like we are doing nothing but we have to know which tunnels to look for.”

They had read the history of a full five years of terror in the city’s not too distant past. The shadow terrors came nightly and fed on the people of the city. It seemed they were accessing the city through tunnels so they didn’t risk getting caught in sunlight. The people of York had tried in vain to find the entrance points for five years to stop the creatures access.

The book didn’t talk about what they were or where they came from it focused on the death and fear they caused and the efforts to stop them. The climax of that volume was when they discovered the main tunnel that was allowing access to the city. Bellamy had sped up as he read the description. “A group of curious youth have made a remarkable discovery today. They found the entrance to the lair of the monsters. We have sent soldiers there to fill in the tunnel and prevent them from coming. The youth were exploring the area nearby….” He flipped the page and looked confused. “What the fuck!” He flipped back and forth a few times until Lexa grabbed the book from him.

“Minerva!” Lexa growled, “There are pages missing.” Lexa pinned the old woman with an accusatory glare.

“Yes? Why Heda that’s terrible.” Minerva looked genuinely disturbed but Lexa lost it.

“These things are eating people. Eating them. Sinking their teeth into the faces of innocent people. Tell me what you know, woman!” Lexa roared, her anger thick and deep.

“Heda. If I knew more, I would tell you.” Minerva insisted and Clarke stepped in front of her to stop Lexa’s dangerous advance.

“Lex. Stop.” Clarke commanded quietly. “Let’s go get some air.” She insisted and took the arm of her wife and led her from the room.

When she left the mayor approached Minerva. “Do you remember me?” She asked.

“Aye, mayor.” Minerva answered with a knowing smile. “I taught your history lessons at the Leadership School. You were not the best student I had” She smiled at Zora kindly but with reproach in her eyes.

“Tell me what to do, Minerva. I agree with Heda. You know more than you tell.” Zora pleaded.

“Please, I cannot bear to lose more of my people to these things.”

Minerva’s expression turned sad, “I have lost much to these creatures as well. I was a young woman the last time they haunted our nights. They took my daughter. I found her in the alley beside our home in the morning. She was fifteen and had been sneaking out to meet a boy down the street after dark. I knew about it but he was a good boy and I didn’t want to stand in the way of young love.” Minerva let tears slide down her face unimpeded. “Our neighbourhood hadn’t been a target. We were quite far inside the city and I thought we were safe.” She shook her head, “I was wrong.”

“So tell me now. Save another mother the anguish you felt.” Zora pleaded.
“I know nothing more than what I have told you mayor.” She looked away from the green eyes that bored into her. “After my daughter… well I don’t remember anything about the next few years. I started using a drug that was still circulating back then.” Everyone in the room stopped and stared at her.

“A drug…” Octavia whispered, her voice refusing to rise to a normal octave.

Minerva noticed the stares and wondered if the supply had indeed run dry. “It shut down your mind. Made you think about only your next fix.” Minerva stopped and sighed. She looked ashamed and didn’t continue until Lincoln stepped forward and took her hand.

“The Mountain Men fed me a drug called Red. It turned me into a Reaper. I killed people.” His eyes filled with tears or remorse. “Clarke and Abby brought me back, but I will always remember what I did, so I never become that again.”

“You were a Reaper? Dear boy, I’m so sorry.” Minerva patted his hand. “I was a whore.” She barked out a dry humourless laugh at the surprise on the faces of the young people in front her. She spoke plainly now, Lincoln’s confession had given her courage.

“There were men on the outskirts of the city who kept women. Men paid them to use our bodies, they paid us with the drug. When they eventually ran out they just left us there. Most of the women didn’t make it back. They couldn’t take the pain of the drug wearing off. I relished the pain. I told myself it was cleansing me. When it subsided I returned to my family. My partner did not agree that I was cleansed, he wouldn’t even look at me when I returned. So I moved back to the outskirts and began to study history. I learned as much as I could from those who remembered and helped compile the history books.”

Minerva looked at the faces all hanging on her every word, no judgement in any of their eyes. “I avoided learning about those years. The years after my daughter. I only know that the shadow terrors stopped coming. I’m sorry. That’s all I know.” She sighed, genuine regret showing.

“Can you think where these pages might be? Who would have taken them? Are there any more surviving books?” Zora asked.

“There is one person, if he is still alive. He was also a history teacher, if he could have saved the books he would have.” Minerva spoke with certainty.

“Who!?” Zora asked urgently.

“His name is Nolan. He was the father of my child. I chose history to try and be close to him, but he wanted nothing to do with me. Eventually I gave up on him but the love of history had seeped into my bones, it became my life. You could say my new addiction. Once Yor took over the city I had to stay quiet and keep myself mostly hidden. I don’t know what became of him.” Minerva frowned and sighed, “I’m sorry.”

Zora asked Minerva to give Suu and Lincoln the address where Nolan used to live and they left immediately.

Octavia brought the conversation back to the drugs. “Minerva, what color were the drugs. How did you take them?” She was trying to find a connection.

“It was red, a deep, dark red. They boiled it and we breathed it in. The fumes went to your head and made you forget who you were. Everything faded away to a hazy, pleasant buzz. I barely felt the men who used me, I didn’t care. At first they kept it boiling almost all the time and we would just go
in the room whenever we felt it beginning to wear off. As they got low they started boiling it just once a day, it got hard then. It would wear off before the day was over and we became aware of how dirty, how abused, how wretched we were. Then the pain would set in. If we didn’t get any for an entire day our body’s screamed in pain.”

“Octavia… are you ok…” Bellamy had never seen the expression that was currently on his sister’s face before. “O…”

She snapped back to reality, “I really hope they find Nolan.” I bet the assholes who gave her the drugs were using the same tunnel to get to the island during the day that the face eaters were using to get here at night! I bet anything they were getting into the bunker and getting the Red. They didn’t have needles like the Mountain Men so they inhaled it. It wouldn’t be as strong, but enough to make people slaves to be used up and discarded.” Octavia strode over to Minerva and pulled her into a hug. “We’ll figure this out, I promise you.”

The old woman was surprised and touched by the fierce young woman and felt a sense of peace she hadn’t felt in years.

Lexa and Clarke went to sit in the courtyard when they left the room. “She infuriates me, Clarke. She isn’t telling us everything I can feel it.” Clarke motioned for Kita and the guard brought them some bread and cool water.

When she placed it on the table Clarke was leaning forward trying to comfort Lexa and the girls eyes strayed down the shirt that had fallen forward. She blushed bright red and quickly stepped away and took up her post a few meters away. Clarke found the subject that would get Lexa’s mind off of Minerva for a few minutes.

“You have to talk to her, Lex.” Clarke blurted out.

“I’ve tried, she insists she knows nothing!” Lexa started but the look on Clarke’s face stopped her. “You aren’t talking about Minerva.” Clarke glanced sideways at Kita. “What do you mean, about what!? And why me!?”

“You know damn well about what. She has been completely distracted since she walked in on us. She can’t look at us without blushing and she can’t control her eyes, she just looked down my top.” Clarke frowned and sat back pinning Lexa with a stare and crossing her arms over her chest.

“Well, Clarke, in her defence if at anytime anyone has a chance to look down your top, they should. Your breasts are the most wonderful sight I can think of.” Lexa was suddenly in a much better mood, teasing her wife really was a lot of fun.

“Fine Lex, laugh it up. But have you noticed that she is never alert anymore. She is supposed to protect me, remember. I snuck up on her this morning. She was just staring off into space daydreaming and I walked right up to her without her noticing. You always make fun of me for being clumsy and loud so if she didn’t notice me she wouldn’t notice anyone. How can she protect me if she is too busy having sexy daydreams to focus?” Lexa’s face fell and Clarke knew she had won. “And as to why you… well because I don’t want to and you are my wife who loves me so you will do it for me.” Clarke nodded her head sideways in the direction of the guard and Lexa sighed and rolled her eyes.

“Fine Clarke. I will talk to her. But you have to go and talk to Minerva and see if you can get her to talk. She likes you.” Lexa growled and when Clarke nodded and stood to head back inside she got
up and walked over toward Kita. She noticed what Clarke was talking about when the girl jumped, startled by Heda’s sudden appearance. Normally the guard would’ve known the instant either she or Clarke moved.

“Heda.” The girl blushed and looked ashamed. “I am sorry.. I.. I was distracted.” She looked like she wanted to cry and Lexa for some reason felt bad for her. She knew if there was danger Kita would protect Clarke with her life and she knew Kita was highly skilled so she decided not to lecture her on her lack of alertness.

“Kita.” Lexa started and the girl avoided her eyes. “Look at me Kita.” The girl obeyed but her eyes filled with shame. “Was that the first time you saw two people having sex?” Lexa suddenly understood why she was a better choice than Clarke. To anyone but her Clarke could barely say the word without blushing.

Kita nodded and Lexa saw her throat move as she swallowed nervously. A thought popped into Lexa’s mind, “Are you a virgin, Kita?”

The girl looked surprised at the question but answered truthfully, she appreciated Lexa’s directness and unabashed approach to the topic. “No, there was a boy at home. I had just completed my training and he liked me a lot. I was curious so I bedded him.” Her answer did not surprise Lexa.

“Was it not enjoyable?” Lexa thought she knew what might be going on.

“It was fine.” Kita shrugged, “It felt good enough, I guess. We did it a few times.” Lexa raised her eyebrow willing Kita to get her point. Kita swallowed hard again as a flash of the expression on Lexa’s face flew through her mind. “It wasn’t …. it wasn’t what you two were doing. I didn’t feel like… like it looked like you felt.” Kita blushed furiously and looked away again.

“Kita. Have you ever had sex with a girl” Lexa asked trying to bite back a grin.

“No…. it is better? Is it like… like what I saw you and Heda Clarke doing?”

Lexa paused and thought for a minute. “It is for me. It is for Zora and Rock too. Skadi probably feels like that with men and if you asked her about women I think she would say what you said about the boy in your village. You’ll only know when you try it.” Lexa shrugged.

Kita looked Lexa in the eye and Lexa could see her mind was working a mile a minute… “Heda, I can’t stop thinking about it. I have failed you and the Sky Reine. I have never felt so distracted. I cannot focus, I just keep seeing you two in my head…. The Sky Reine’s head between your legs and you with your head thrown back in passion. I never imagined sex to be like that.” The girl was opening up to Lexa and Lexa took pity on her.

“Well, Kita. Clarke is rather talented.” Lexa’s joke broke the tension and Kita couldn’t hold in her laugh. “You have to find a way to focus Kita. Stop staring at my wife’s breasts and my ass. Find a girl and bed her. That will relieve the tension and your mind won’t keep wandering back to what you saw once your body knows that feeling for itself. Almost everyone gets distracted by desire sometimes, sating that desire will fix it and let you concentrate again.” Lexa was sure this wasn’t the advice Clarke had intended her to give but she was sure it would work.

Kita looked pensive, “Do you think I can find someone who would like to sleep with me?” Her question was so earnest that Lexa burst into laughter.

“Kita, you are a young, feared, Royal Guard of the Ice Kingdom.” Kita misunderstood and nodded sadly thinking Lexa was saying she had no hope. Lexa grinned and reached out softly to raise Kita’s
downturned head so she could look her in the eye, “Bedding you would be major points. Not to mention you are also kind of hot. I am absolutely sure any number of women would be very happy to be in your bed.” The girl’s face lit up at the compliment and she smiled.

“Mochof, Heda.” Kita grasped Lexa’s forearm in thanks and then started looking around, suddenly checking out every girl she could see. Lexa laughed a long and much needed laugh and patted the girl on the shoulder.

“Since you are so eager why don’t you start by chatting with that very pretty Woman in Black who is sitting down to dinner all by herself. She’s been staring over here at you since we started talking.” Lexa pointed the girl out and Kita was suddenly nervous.

“I remember her, Heda. From the battle with the creatures at the bridge, I like her, she fights well.” Lexa smiled at that being one of Kita’s criteria for a lover. She punched the girl lightly on the shoulder and grinned.

“I am returning to the library. There are several hours before sunset. You will be expected to patrol when the night grows dark. Until then you are free, and Clarke and I will be well protected in the library.” Lexa winked at the guard and strode off feeling rather proud of herself.

Kita took a deep breath and straightened her back before walking directly to the girl she hoped to sleep with. Kita sat at the table with her. The girl was very pretty and as Kita looked into her brown eyes she suddenly felt more nervous than she had before taking the final tests to be sworn in as a Royal Guard.

“Kita, of the Ice Nation.” The young woman bowed her head politely, Kita said nothing but continued staring at her and looked absolutely terrified. She smiled quizzically at Kita and searched for something to say. “The fearless Kita who matched the crazy brave Octavia for valour and outmatched her in skill when facing down giant spiders, flying terrors, and evil cats from the tunnel of death sits at my table looking rather nervous. I don't know why and I have no idea what to say so… would you like to share my bread?” The girl pushed her plate forward, looked into Kita’s eyes, smiled and shrugged.

Kita licked her lips and took a breath, she decided that she would do this how she did everything, direct and honest. “No, I would like to share your bed.” Kita found she wasn’t brave enough to look at the other girl in the eye as she spoke. Then a hand covered her own and she looked up, a beautiful smile and a slight blush graced the cheeks of the other girl.

“My name is Amina.” She smiled at Kita who smiled back with red cheeks, embarrassed. “Why do you suddenly wish to share my bed?” Kita was glad Amina didn’t seem mad, but she suddenly realized that she must have seemed very rude and her smile fell as her beautiful features clouded.

“I…” Kita blushed again and looked away. “I’m sorry.” She felt tears rise in her eyes and she suddenly felt foolish.

She went to stand from her seat but Amina’s strong hand pulled her back down. “Kita. I am not refusing you, not yet anyway.” She smirked and pursed her lips, her lower lip protruding slightly and Kita found herself wondering what it would be like to bite down softly on that lip. She forced her eyes back to meet Amina’s and willed her mind to pay attention to the girl’s words. “Normally people talk first, Kita.” Amina laughed softly at the fearsome Ice Guard and guessed correctly, “You are new at this, yes?”

Kita felt herself wanting to explain, “Yes… I mean, I want to know what it is like to touch a woman. It is… distracting me. I can’t focus. I am not able to protect the Sky Reine like I should. I am always
thinking about…” Kita blushed as her sentence trailed off and Amina finished it for her.

“Sex. Sex with another woman.” Amina let her eyes rake over the lithe body of the guard. “Why me?” She queried.

“You fight well.” Kita nodded and when Amina laughed at her she realized that was probably not something others considered a major factor in attraction. She looked intently at Amina and let her eyes roam the young woman’s body, then she continued in a much quieter voice, “And your smile is hard to look away from, you lower lip is so…. so… I want to bite it.” She heard Amina’s sharp intake of breath and she continued, “And your skin is smooth, I want to touch you.” At that Amina took a slower deep breath that sounded more like a sigh. Kita wondered if she had said something wrong.

“Not all of my skin is smooth, Kita.” She stood and raised her shirt slightly. Kita could see scars on her side from burns. “If it is smooth skin you seek the Women in Black are not likely to be the lover for you. Many of us were in the school when it burned all those years ago, none of us who were there escape unscathed.” Amina showed no shame or embarrassment and Kita felt a sudden tenderness to go along with her heightened desire.

She reached out her hand and looked up at Amina for permission. When she nodded Kita’s hand touched the burned area gently. Contact with the beauty’s skin was almost too much for Kita but she took a deep breath and looked into Amina’s eyes. “Your scars do not dissuade me, the opposite in fact, they mean you are strong, a survivor, they make me want you more. I want to touch your skin Amina, all of it.” She ran her hand lightly over Amina’s side and around to her flat stomach. Kita felt Amina’s abs tremble at her touch and her eyes flew to the other girl’s. “Are you okay?” She breathed out, her voice not strong enough to do more than whisper.

Amina smiled at her nodding affirmatively, “I am off duty until this evening. Do you have a room here? I would like to continue this conversation in private.” Kita’s jaw dropped and she jumped to her feet so quickly she almost tripped. Amina blushed and grinned at the eagerness. Kita blushed and looked sheepish, she reached out to Amina and the two of them walked toward Kita’s room hand in hand.

When Lexa returned to the library Clarke pulled her aside and explained everything Minerva had told Zora and the rest while they were gone. Lexa sighed and grumbled, “She could have told me” but quickly added, “I’ll apologize” when she saw the look in Clarke’s eye.

Clarke nodded at her, “Good. By the way, how’d it go with Kita?”

“Good, good. She’s never had sex with a woman before and after seeing us she can’t stop thinking about it.” Lexa shrugged, “I told her to bed a girl and get over it.” The look on Clarke’s face was the best thing Lexa had seen in days, weeks even. Lexa smirked.

“You… what!” Clarke palmed her own forehead, “I should have talked with her, why did I send you.”

“What!” Lexa demanded, “It’s perfectly good advice!” She defended herself.

“She’s just a kid!” Clarke hissed.

“Clarke, I am not certain but I assume her to be the same age as us, possibly even older; and she’s not a virgin or anything.” Lexa dismissed Clarke’s concern, “Plus she’s a warrior. Warriors need to
slake their lust in order to focus and fight.”

“Slake their lust...? Oh my god! Lexa! She’s under our protection!” Clarke was exasperated but with that comment, so was Lexa.

“No, Clarke. She is a deadly warrior, an assassin, a member of the Royal Guard of the Ice Nation. The blue blades she carries mean she is one of the deadliest people on Earth. She is not under our protection, she is our protection. Kita is no child, Clarke. It is offensive to think of her as one.” Lexa spoke loud enough that Zora overheard.

“Kita! A child!? Clarke why would you think that?” Zora looked confused. “She is Lozen’s younger sister, and Lozen was around for quite some time when my mother was mayor, so I am quite certain she is older than you Sky Queen.” Zora winked at Clarke who looked frustrated.

“She just seems so innocent about everything, well except fighting...” Clarke sighed, “fine I get it she isn’t a child. But still, she doesn’t know anything about... that and maybe you could have told her something nice, and special.”

Zora guessed Clarke’s meaning more by her avoidance of words than by what she said. She laughed aloud, “Did you guys talk to Kita about sex? What the hell is going on?”

Lexa laughed and Clarke blushed and looked around them as she shushed Lexa and Zora. “She walked in on us and hasn’t been able to concentrate on anything since. She is distracted and embarrassed so I told her to go bed a woman and be done with it.” Lexa shrugged.

“Seems like good advice. Does she have anyone in mind?” Zora asked nonchalantly and Clarke’s jaw dropped open and she shook her head and rolled her eyes.

“Anyone in mind!? That quickly! Of course not!” Clarke was still having big sister feelings for Kita and when Lexa snickered she turned on her. “What did you do!?” She accused.

“I pointed her in the direction of a very attractive Woman In Black, I believe her name is Amina.” Lexa grinned and Zora high-fived her.

“You pointed her in the direction of...?” Clarke raised her hand up to squeeze the back of her own neck where she suddenly felt rather tense. She shook her head and sighed. “Fine, our Kita is all grown up I get it.” Clarke walked away still shaking her head and Lexa and Zora laughed together. It felt good to laugh together. They clasped forearms and rested foreheads together briefly before turning back towards the group who was still discussing the possibilities of which tunnels to block.

“We will figure this out, we will protect York, we will help the wounded children, and we will send Skadi back her lost ones.” Lexa assured the mayor with quiet words. Zora nodded deeply to Lexa in thanks for both her support and her friendship.

Dal was talking as they joined the others, “I have been going over the books. It seems the first one was written twenty years after the bombs. The years before must have been a challenge to even survive, but there is no record of how they did.”

Octavia added, “There might be something in there about the island or the creatures, if there were any other signs of life.”

Kane added, “I wish I had a computer so I could access the files I took from the bunker.” He frowned. “I want to go back Heda, at first light I want leave for the island. I feel like the files will tell
us more about the island and the creatures than these books.”

Lexa was reluctant, but she saw that what Kane said might be true. The Mountain Men probably knew more about the creatures than anyone in York could have. She sighed and looked at one of the guards by the door. “Find Virgil, bring him here.” He nodded and left immediately.

She sighed and paced around the room. “I want to know what was written on those lost pages.”

As she spoke Lincoln entered with a man around Minerva’s age. He carried a large book with him and when Heda spoke he answered, “I believe I can provide that information to you, my dear Heda.” He smiled at her, and held out the book to her with shaking hands. “I was able to save some of my history books from Yor as well.” He gave a pointed look to Minerva and turned back to Heda. She had the book open on the table and he flipped to the relevant pages for her.

The book told them what Minerva’s was missing. It detailed how some kids came across an old tunnel and figured out it was how the creatures were getting in. The people of York came together quickly and filled in the entrance with rocks, and other debris. They blocked it so not even a small child could slip through. The attacks stopped for a few days but then they started again.

The mayor sent out search parties and they found another tunnel that seemed to lead out of the city and toward the island. They filled that one and the attacks stopped again. This time they stopped for almost a month and then started again. It took another few weeks but the new tunnel was discovered by some known criminals on the outside of the wall.

They found half of their crew dead with only their faces eaten off and were so afraid that they gave themselves up to the mayor and reported the monsters. The mayor sent her guards and they discovered some strange vials of a red coloured drug inside the tunnel smashed all around the dead criminals. It was almost nightfall so they left the bodies and the drugs inside and quickly filled in the entrance to the tunnel.

Around this time there were also strange sounds and lights reported coming from the island. The creatures stopped coming and the people assumed the sounds and lights were coming form the terrors now that they had trapped them there. That was the last York had seen of the creatures before last night.

“I told you! I knew it! It was Red! They were sneaking to Manhattan in the old subway tunnels and stealing Red from that bunker. How did they figure out where and what it was, I wonder? And why were they the first to have their faces eaten? I want to be on one of the teams going to Manhattan in the morning, Heda.” Octavia had so many theories running through her head she could barely contain herself.

“It also appears that the people of York did not defeat the shadow terrors at all. The Mountain Men did.” Rock spoke up and sighed. “Those noises and lights were the Mountain Men returning to the island. They arrived and shut whatever those things are up in cages and blocked the exits. There are too many tunnels here. When the people blocked one they would have just kept finding a new one, they were stopped on the other end.”

Zora stared at her and spoke, “No, don’t say that. We can stop them. We have to stop them.” She sounded desperate and just then Suu arrived with the map Minerva had been talking about. She spread it out on the table and they all began to look for the tunnels. “It's a laminated subway map of Queens!” Holy shit, this is old. Clarke laughed a little but she quickly got down to pointing out where the tunnel entrances would be and Suu located the equivalent location on the map of present day York. They were working on mapping the tunnels when Virgil arrived.
“I would like to volunteer to help find the answers that will stop the creatures, Heda.” He spoke quietly but with confidence. The people of York had been kind to him and Heda’s warriors had treated him with respect after her speech about him saving her and therefore Clarke. He was feeling like it was his turn to do something, to prove he could help, be a good citizen in the Alliance of the Clans. “To do that we need to go back to Manhattan.”

“We will organize a team to go. We’ll will wait for the sun that should give us more than enough time to get there and back. The problem is the bunkers are underground and the light doesn’t reach inside. If they have broken free, and it seems they have, they could be everywhere.”

“F*ck.” Clarke sighed and rubbed the back of her neck some more, “I really hate that island.”

It was decided that at first light two teams would head back to Manhattan. That evening there would be patrols all night and the people would be instructed to stay inside and keep torches lit at all times. As they were calling it a day Zora spoke up, “We have four or five hours of light left, with this map of the major tunnel entrances we have time to ride out and seal as many as we can. Perhaps we can stall them tonight and hit them where it hurts tomorrow.

They all agreed to try and fill as many tunnels as possible and they broke off into teams to search. Suu called her Women in Black together and started pairing them off with Lexa’s people. Every single soldier that had been a part of her elite team that had hunted Alain and Yor and crossed the island came forth to volunteer. They were instructed to each take different neighbourhoods that were on the map and find the tunnels and block them. If they couldn’t be blocked they would be guarded with a fire at the entrance all night.

Suu was calling off names and pairings, “Rito, where is Amina?” When the other girl shrugged Clarke punched the grinning Lexa and Zora stepped in to help the girl out.

“Heda gave her a task, Suu, sorry we should have told you.” The mayor grinned and Suu gave her a questioning look but looked at Lexa and nodded respectfully.

“Not at all mayor, we do Heda’s bidding.” She skipped over Amina and continued with her other warriors. Soon every team had two Women in Black and several other guards and soldiers as well.

Lexa and Clarke looked over at Bellamy’s team when they heard a shout. “Do not tell me that I am too big to go out and fill a tunnel with rocks, Bellamy!”

Echo seemed to have grown exponentially bigger in the last few days. She was not very pleased about it either and was extremely cranky. Bellamy threw his hands up and backed away allowing his partner to mount her horse, albeit with slight difficulty.

Clarke grinned at Bellamy who shook his head, rolled his eyes and shrugged. Clarke took another look at Lexa who was snickering with Zora about Kita and Amina and made a decision, she thought Bellamy and Echo could use a little time apart and the way she was feeling about her wife right now she would definitely prefer the company of her old friend Bellamy. She rode over to Echo, “Echo… I’m really sorry, and if you want to be with Bellamy I get it it’s okay to say no…”

“Say no to what Clarke? Is everything okay?” Echo’s genuine concern almost made Clarke feel guilty but she shook the feeling off and continued.

“It’s stupid really. I’m mad at Lexa and just don’t want to ride with her today. Can we trade?” Clarke pouted a little and bowed her head then looked back up with her big blue eyes. All of which she
“Clarke, you don’t have to do your cute, pouty thing…” Echo laughed at her and placed her hand on Clarke’s forearm. “Of course I’ll switch with you, truth be told if Bellamy tries to get me to stop doing one more thing, I might break his nose. I think this is a win for me too.” Echo winked at Clarke and rode over toward Lexa and Zora.

Bellamy looked surprised, “What did you do? Why is Echo over there, and why is Lexa looking over here like she wants to murder us?” He grinned at Clarke, “Griffin, are you my new tunnel hunting partner?”

Clarke bit her lip to keep from laughing out loud and just nodded vigorously. “I told Echo I was mad at Lexa and didn’t want to ride with her.”

Bellamy narrowed his eyes, “Are you? Mad, I mean?”

“No really mad, just a little irritated and after the shouting I heard I thought maybe Echo might like a break from you…” Clarke giggled quietly and Bellamy grinned.

“Yeah, it’s probably better that she rides with Lexa, huh? I try to be chill but when I see her struggle with things a little I just want to help. She hates it when I help…” He grinned and then he slapped Clarke on the shoulder and pulled on the reins. “Come on, let’s go get us some tunnels!” Bellamy looked back and caught Echo’s eye and the couple nodded their goodbyes. Clarke did the same with Lexa who looked back and forth from her to Echo in confusion. Clarke and Bellamy looked back at each other and broke out into giant grins and then the two friends rode off with their team in high spirits.

Kita was lying on her bed panting in exhaustion. Her long, lithe, perfectly toned figure was draped over the furs that covered the bed and Amina was lying next to her on her side with her elbow on the bed and her head propped up on her hand. Amina had a cocky grin on her face and Kita had a look of bliss on hers.

“That was…. that was…. “ Kita stammered. “I mean. That was…” Kita couldn’t find the right word.

“That was what, Ice guard?” Amina teased as she reached out and lazily ran her fingers over Kita’s tight abs and up her naked chest.

“I have no words, I have nothing to compare it to.” Kita looked at Amina, blushed, and dropped her eyes.

Amina kept her gaze steady and spoke softly, “For me, it was beautiful. You are beautiful, Kita. I am honoured to have shared this experience with you.” Amina leaned in and placed a kiss on Kita’s shoulder. “How are you feeling?”

Kita took a moment to really consider the question. She took stock of her body the way a warrior would. No injuries, temperature okay, energy levels enough for the upcoming battle. She grinned and looked back into Amina’s eyes, “I feel wonderful, and my strength has returned.”

Amina returned the grin and moved to cover Kita’s body with her own. “In that case…” She leaned in and started to kiss Kita and was both surprised and delighted when Kita positioned her leg in between her’s and with a quick shift had flipped her onto her back.

“This time I want to touch you.” Kita smiled a hungry smile and kissed Amina until she was
breathless.

Clarke and Bellamy had been assigned a neighbourhood quite far away. The Women in Black who were with them were named Jess and Rita. They explained that this area was in the opposite direction of the island and they doubted there was much activity there. Despite the doubts they pushed forward and when the map failed to lead them to the tunnel they were looking for they stopped and spoke with several residents.

They hadn’t found anyone who was aware of any tunnels nearby and were about to move on when Clarke spotted a familiar face. “Wait,” she ordered, “Nolan! Nolan, hello?” She jumped down from her horse as the old man was turning toward her looking to see who was calling his name.

“Skai Heda.” He said with a smile. “What brings you here?” he paused briefly before answering his own question, “The tunnels. The mayor wishes to block as many as possible. There are a few around here, but you know people use them for many things and this generation barely remembers the terror of the nights of shadow creatures. They won’t give up their secret hideaways, stashes, and rendezvous points so easily.” He smiled sadly at Clarke, “Before our daughter was taken this neighbourhood considered itself safe. After her there were six others before it all stopped.”

“How do you know where the tunnels are?” Clarke asked him quietly.

He nodded and sighed, “I know of three in the area. One of them is where I hid my history books. Another is a stash full of various things people wanted to hide from Yor. The last one is very large and deep, people used to use it for hiding things, and for secret meetings and hiding out in. I haven’t been there in years, I don’t know what it is used for now.”

Bellamy spoke up right away, “We don’t care what is in them, and we won’t report back to the mayor. We just want to make sure they are shut tight against the night.”

Nolan called out to a young boy who was watching them and told him to get his mother. When the woman, who Clarke had already asked about tunnels showed up she gave Nolan a dark look.

“It’s okay.” Clarke quickly reassured her. “We just want to make sure they are shut tight against the night.”

Bellamy spoke up right away, “We don’t care what is in them, and we won’t report back to the mayor. We just want to make sure they are shut tight against the night.”

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“It’s okay.” Clarke quickly reassured her. “We just want to make sure the tunnels are shut so that nothing can find it’s way from the island to your neighbourhood. We won’t take, or report anything that we see, I promise.”

Her words seemed to do the trick and the woman softened a little and nodded slightly to Nolan. They joined Clarke’s group and led them to the first tunnel. The entrance was hidden inside of a stall in the market, there was a hole in the ground that was kept covered by a large piece of metal and covered over with a woven rug. Bellamy and Rita dropped inside with two torches and after a quick search they came back and hoisted themselves out of the hole.

“It’s shut.” Rita confirmed and Bellamy nodded his agreement. “Nothing will be coming from inside.”

They moved on to find the next tunnel and Clarke leaned over and whispered to Bellamy, “What was inside?” Her curiosity was getting the better of her.

Bellamy grinned, and whispered back, “I think it was some kind of still. It looked like Monty’s contraption and there were bottles of liquid on shelves all around. It smelled like strong alcohol so I’m betting it’s whiskey or something. I really wanted to steal a bottle but I figured they wouldn’t take us to the rest of the tunnels if I did.”
They laughed together and as they did Clarke realized how much she had missed her friend during the long separation. It made her think of her other friends, especially Raven. She missed Raven a lot.

They approached a stream and instead of crossing the bridge and following the road Nolan turned his horse and followed the bed away from the streets and into a small overgrown area. They continued along for a few minutes and came to a ruin. It was hard to tell what it had once been but there was a part of the structure remaining covered in vines and leaves. Nolan dismounted and motioned for them to follow him on foot. He made his way around the corner of the ruin and then stepped through a hole in the structure to stand inside. He pointed to a hole in the corner where branches had been piled.

Rita and Jess uncovered the hole and took torches and dropped inside. Clarke followed them this time as well as one of the men who had been with Clarke and Lexa since Sapeake, his name was Roth and he was from the Lanta clan, he was a good fighter and also a darn good campfire cook Clarke remembered fondly. Rita and Jess took the torches and moved to the left and Clarke and Roth went right.

“Heda,” Roth grinned at her as he pointed out what the tunnels held. There were boxes of weapons, swords, daggers, and more, “It looks like they were planning to overthrow Yor themselves.” Clarke grinned back and pointed to the other wall where there was yet another alcohol still.

“If they could stand.” She giggled a little and the large man smiled with her. They walked forward until they came to what seemed to be the end of the tunnel. It opened into a small room that had a dusty makeshift table and some chairs. Clarke moved in and examined the makeshift shelves that blocked the path. She peered behind them and saw nothing but rocks. The way seemed to be blocked but she asked Roth to double check for her.

He was a lot taller and he was able to lift himself up and shine his torch behind the shelves. “It is blocked, Heda, I see no way through.” Clarke nodded and they turned to head back to find Rita and Jess.

They made their way back to the entrance of the tunnel and Bellamy was peering worriedly inside. “Clarke, good. Come up.” He insisted, his gut was telling him something wasn’t right.

“We’re okay it’s all blocked back that way. We’ll just go check on Jess and Rita.” Clarke as about to walk away when Nolan appeared with Bellamy and gave her a warning.

“Skai Heda, this tunnel is long, and there is at least one more level underground.” He looked worried and also like he was hiding something.

“Nolan, speak true.” Clarke did her best Lexa voice and by Bellamy’s raised eyebrow, Roth’s hand finding his sword in case the man disobeyed and Nolan’s immediate acceptance of her order she guessed she had pulled it off.

“Sha Heda.” He began, “I spent a lot of time in this tunnel before my daughter… I had a room down a level where I went to spend time.” He was purposefully being evasive, “Let me lead you through, I know this tunnel.”

Clarke was getting impatient and nodded her agreement. Nolan climbed carefully down into the tunnel. Two more soldiers dropped through when Bellamy nodded at them and then he jumped lightly through the entrance himself. Clarke ordered the rest of the team to wait there and then she walked to the front with Nolan and they began to make their down the corridor to the left.

They walked for over one hundred meters before anyone spoke. “Where are Jess and Rita?” Clarke
was thinking aloud and she was answered by a scream.

Roth and Bellamy held up their torches and led the group as they ran toward the sound. Clarke ordered one soldier to protect Nolan and she took off after the rest.

The tunnel seemed to keep going and going and they were beginning to think they wouldn’t find the two Women in Back when they heard Jess’s voice ahead to the right. “Rita, it’s okay, I need you to calm down, I’ll get you out before they come back! I promise.”

Just as they rounded the corner and saw Jess’s outline standing over a hole in the floor peering down inside they heard Rita’s terrified scream. “Too late!”

Jess didn’t hesitate she bravely held her sword in one hand and her torch in the other and stepped forward allowing herself to fall down into the next level.

“Torch up everyone!” Clarke had seen the creatures the previous night at Minerva’s cottage and knew they would use the dark to their advantage. She hadn’t expected to see any before nightfall but this tunnel was dark and deep enough to allow them protection from outside light.

Bellamy and Roth raced over and Roth jumped down into the hole as Bellamy looked around to secure them an escape plan. Clarke noticed that he was thinking before acting and thought being almost a dad was certainly good for Bellamy Blake.

He saw an old ladder in a corner near the wall of the tunnel and quickly grabbed it. Just as he was positioning it over the hole Nolan arrived moving as quickly as he could.

“Good, Bellamy! You found my old ladder. Quickly now. They won’t have much time.” Clarke stared at the man wondering what he was hiding and then realized the soldier she had left with him was gone.

“Where is Lucas?” She snapped at him, unhappy that he had kept any secrets about this place that may cause her to lose some of her people.

“I sent him for help.” Came the honest reply and then Clarke heard shouts down the hall toward the entrance and all but one of her team arrived, swords out and torches burning.

Bellamy had already lowered the ladder and was halfway down the hole when Clarke fixed Nolan with a look to tell him to stay put and moved over to the ladder herself.

“Clarke! She’s bleeding pretty bad! I’m bringing her to you!” It was Roth’s voice and Clarke saw the ladder start to move under his weight. He got to the top and laid Rita’s body on the floor before hopping back down into the hole.

Clarke rushed over to Rita and pulled her away from the entrance she quickly assessed the girl’s injuries all while yelling out orders all around her. “You three stand guard up here and hold my torch while I treat her, you get down there and see what’s happening, I want a report immediately. Nolan! What the hell is down there?”

She bent over Rita and whispered softly to the girl, “Rita, it’s me, Clarke. Can you hear me?” The girl groaned in pain and Clarke let out a small sigh of relief. In the light of the torches she could see the girl had both of her hands held over the upper left side of her face and there was a lot of blood running from under her hands. She also had what Clarke could see was a bite mark on her forearm and another chunk of flesh seemed to have been torn from the heel of her left hand.

Nolan moved over to help and spoke quickly to Clarke. “We aren’t safe here, bandage her as you
must and get your friends out of that hole, Heda.”

“What is down there, Nolan. Don’t make me go look for myself.” Clarke was prying Rita’s hands away gently and pressing her own to the bloody mess of the girl’s right forehead.

“I used to go there sometimes and spend all day writing, painting, or sculpting. I used it as my secret hideaway to spend time away from my wife and daughter, and then I lost them both.” He sighed. “I was looking around one day and found a blocked passage, I unblocked it. There was another tunnel leading away from the back of the room down there. A week later they took my daughter, it was my fault.”

Clarke understood now. “It wasn’t your fault. You didn’t know they were there, or that they would come out of the tunnel. Get over it and help my friends get out of there!”

“Heda, this tunnel is one of the largest and most unexplored, people only use the front caverns to store things in, but there are so many ways out and so many branches off into other tunnels…” He started to sound desperate. If they are down there they could be up here too.” He looked around nervously.

Clarke had her right hand held firmly on Rita’s torn flesh and was pulling bandages out with her left when one of the guards beside her started to get nervous. “Heda, I see something moving in the shadows.” He sounded scared and Clarke gave him all the strength she could while still trying to concentrate on the bandaging.

“We killed several of them last night soldier, your steel will cut through them just like butter! The torches will keep them at bay for now. Ste Yuj, Weston.” When the Skai Heda said his name the young man felt inexplicable courage and pride seep into his body and he gripped his sword and dared the terrors to step into the light.

Clarke had Rita bandaged enough to transport and still no report from the hole. “Bellamy! What the hell is going on!? Get up here!” She roared and moved quickly to take the extra torch from Dell who gratefully gave it up to free his hand for his sword.

Nolan helped Rita to her feet and Clarke shone her torch into the hole and saw Roth and Bellamy trying to pile as much stuff as they could in front of a smaller tunnel and Jess with an arrow nocked watching the tunnel entrance as they worked to block it. Nan, who Clarke had sent down was standing back to back with Jess making sure she was protected so she could concentrate on her aim.

“Bell, let’s go! They are already up here too. That entrance won’t block them. We’ll set up fires all night by all known entrances to this place. Get out of there!” Clarke waved frantically to Bellamy and he looked up with a frown and nodded. Roth grabbed the torches he and Bellamy had wedged between some debris to keep the light shining while they worked. Jess quickly put her arrow back into her sheath and slung her bow. She pulled her sword back out and with her sword in one hand and torch in the other she moved toward the ladder.

Jess was light and nimble and was up the ladder in no time. Nan followed just as quickly and Bellamy followed with Roth right behind him. Both men climbed quickly with torches held down and out to the sides until they had to pull themselves through the opening. As soon as they were both back up they grabbed the ladder and began to pull it up. They felt a lot of resistance and knew something was pulling on it from below.

“Clarke shine your torch down there!” Bellamy called out. When she did she saw several of the terrors crowded around, their long pale arms and strong hands with freakishly long fingers and nails like claws were pulling on the ladder. They let go and shied back into the shadows hissing at her
When she waved the light of her torch at them. Bellamy and Roth quickly pulled the ladder the rest of the way and Bellamy shouted to Clarke. “I’m bringing it with us. I don’t want to leave it for them to use and it will make getting out of this hole easier!”

With that Roth and Jess strode toward the front where Nolan was waiting. “This way, quickly now.” The old man encouraged. He was helping the limping and dazed Rita and the rest of the group fanned out around them torches and swords raised. Clarke walked between Bellamy and the darkness since he was carrying a ladder and had no hand for his sword.

“Bell, I’m taking your gun.” Clarke sheathed her sword and reached out to take Bellamy’s gun from it’s holster. “I’m getting better with the sword, but still, nothing beats a good old fashioned firearm, huh?”

Bellamy chuckled and agreed but warned her, “I’m pretty low on ammo, there are only three shots left in that. If you have to use them, make them count.” He grunted under the weight of the ladder but continued toward the light of the entrance picking up his pace when Nolan and Rita did.

They were almost to the safety of the front part of the tunnel where enough light was still coming through the main entrance that the terrors wouldn’t follow them. Clarke tightened the grip on the gun she was carrying and prepared for the worst, she knew they would try something before it was too late.

What she got was not a physical attack, but she was pretty sure it was almost as devastating. Her stone cold warriors, even Roth and Jess, froze in place and shivered in fear. The laughter started on the left. The evil, soulless, cackle that haunted Lexa’s dreams. It started on the left and then like a round Luna had the children sing in music class it spread, little by little all around until it was surrounding them. It died off and a high pitched voice that sounded less human and more like a ghost called out to them.

“Run, run, run, we like when you run.” There was more of the horrible laughter and then some clapping sounds. “Won’t help, nowhere to go. Darkness comes soon. We come soon. Can’t stop us all.”

The laughter started again all around them this time and Clarke saw the pale shadows moving just beyond the reach of the torches. She knew she had to do something, she reached deep for her bravery like she had the very first time she marched into the Trikru Commander’s war tent.

“I am the Heda of the Sky People. I will not fear those who cower underground in darkness. I brought down the Mountain and pulled it’s people into the light and I will do the same to you!” Clarke walked away from her group with her torch held high and waited to get a good look at one of them. It didn’t take long before one was in her sights and she pulled the trigger of Bellamy’s gun.

The gunfire inside the tunnel was deafening and the screams of terror and anger from the creatures as they scrambled to get away from her and her gun was almost as loud.

She hurried back to her group and spurred on by her actions they all came back to their senses and hurried toward the light, weapons at the ready. They got back to the exit and Clarke could see hand and foot holds on the wall that would have been the normal way out. Bellamy propped the ladder up quickly and Roth positioned himself behind Rita to help her up the ladder as quickly as possible. Nolan and then Clarke were sent up next and then Bellamy followed. After that the soldiers and Jess climbed out of the hole quickly two by two using the hand holds and the ladder.

When they were all above ground Clarke saw the woman Nolan had spoken to in the market looking nervously around them and counting to see if they had all made it out. She sighed with relief when
she realized they had and moved to help Clarke with Rita.

Bellamy took over the group as Clarke was helping the injured Woman in Black. “You two, start gathering wood for a bon fire. Roth, Jess head east and spread out searching for more entrances to the tunnels. If you find any mark them and pile wood for fires nearby. Dell, Weston head west and do the same. He glanced up at the sky. We still have enough daylight but be back here within the hour so we can regroup.

As Clarke was helping Rita onto her horse and preparing to send her back to see a healer she heard a commotion of horses coming their way very quickly. She turned and looked to see Zora, Rock and their team approaching at a very fast pace.

“Clarke! You’re okay?! That is such a relief.” Zora pulled up on her reins and jumped down from her horse, she crossed the space between them in two giant steps and pulled the smaller blonde into an embrace. “Evan, from your team, rode to the next search area to find help, he said you were under attack! We rushed over here right away.”

“Zora.” Clarke returned the embrace and her eyes wondered to Rock who looked pained sitting on her horse with a stoic expression on her striking features. Zora went to Bellamy for a report on what was being taken care of in the vicinity of the tunnel and Clarke made sure Rita was on her way to a healer and then she went over to Rock.

“You were shot a few days ago, Rock. Get down off your horse, I’m not asking. I want to check your wounds.” Clarke frowned up at the Regent of the Lake People and in return Rock huffed out an irritated sigh.

“I don’t think I can get down.” She admitted through gritted teeth. “It hurts too much, if I get down I won’t be able to get bak up.” Clarke sighed but reached out and rubbed Rocks leg in an attempt at being comforting. She sighed heavily and turned on Zora. She motioned for the mayor to follow her a few steps away. When Zora looked at her clueless to why Clarke wanted her attention she gritted her teeth to keep from shouting.

“You and Lexa, between the two of you I swear you barely have one brain.” She narrowed her eyes and shook her head. “Have you noticed Rock being a little more quiet than usual today, or perhaps a little cranky?” When Zora’s expression immediately turned to one of concern she softened a little.

“What is it, Clarke? Is she okay?” Zora started to turn and head back to her partner but Clarke stopped her.

“She was shot, Zora. With a gun, remember!? That kind of physical trauma takes time to heal. She needs to stay at home and rest, but you know she won’t unless you make her.” Clarke sighed. “Starting tomorrow she rests all day. Ask her for help with tasks that can be completed without leaving your house. Today she is already out here, so let’s find a reason to send her home without making a scene. I sent Rita to the local healer but she really should be seen by my mother. I’ll use that to send Rock home.”

Zora nodded and looked like a guilty child. “I’m so used to having her next to me, I should have insisted she stay but when she said she was well enough to ride I was happy to have her with me.” She hung her head in shame and took a deep breath. “I will speak with her tonight before patrols.” Zora sighed heavily and before she turned to walk back to Rock she added, “Thank you, Clarke.”

Zora went immediately to her love’s side and the two women spoke quietly. Clarke made a quick round of the people left and choose two escorts for Rock, one York soldier from her team and an Alliance soldier named Lyn, from the Horse Clan, who had been with the mayor. They were told to
take the Regent to the local town and to help her find the Woman in Black who they had just sent to be treated. They were to get Rita back to see the Sky Chancellor, Clarke told them to ride at a steady pace but not too fast to avoid making the injuries worse. She also pulled Lyn aside and let her know about Rock’s injury. The woman nodded her understanding.

“Don’t worry, Sky Heda. I will lead the horses and the pace will not cause the Regent more pain than necessary to get her home. When we arrive I will aide her in dismounting and make sure she gets to her chamber. Then I will send a healer to see her until your mother can attend to her. I will not leave her side, Heda.” Lyn bowed her head to Clarke and moved off swiftly.

Once they were on the road Clarke and Bellamy were discussing what to do about the tunnel. Clarke called Zora over from her post watching Rock as she rode off. “How many hours of daylight do you suppose we have?” Clarke asked.

Zora glanced up and gave a quick estimate, “Two hours before the sun begins to set.”

As they were thinking about their next move Roth and Jess returned from their scouting mission and Bellamy barked out, ‘Report.”

Roth answered, “We found two holes that lead down into the tunnels. One is big enough to squeeze through but the other is so small I’m confident the terrors couldn’t even get through it. We blocked the small one well enough but the bigger one was more of a challenge. We did what we could and then made a small pyre to light in the evening. It should be guarded.”

Zora nodded her agreement and turned to one of her York soldiers, “Ride hard back to the manor and send Niro to me with a full company of soldiers. Tell him they will be patrolling here for the night and to bring as many torches as they can carry.” The soldier leapt onto his horse and rode off to do his mayor’s bidding.

As she was issuing her orders Dell and Weston returned looking shaken and Dell was bleeding from four deep and already festering scratches on his forearm.

Clarke was at his side in an instant, She grabbed a water skin and began to clean the wounds. “What happened?”

Weston answered her, “Heda… it was those things… we found a hole, an opening in a rock face. We were trying to see if it led directly into the tunnel and Dell stuck his head in to look around. We thought it was fine, it seemed to lead in, but it was high above the floor in the roof the tunnel. Dell was standing next to the the hole, we were talking about how to block it when a hand reached out. It was long and wrinkled and the skin was really white and it had nails, sharp nails.”

Weston was speaking so quickly he found himself out of breath and he paused to breathe and look at his friend. “It grabbed him. He jerked his arm away and it left these scratches. We started trying to fill the hole in with rocks and stuff and than I noticed that the scratches on his arm were turning all yellow and puss was coming out of them. I thought we should get back here right away.”

Zora reassured him, “You did the right thing. We’ll get Dell taken care of. Clarke will do what she can and we’ll send him back to my manor. The healers there will take good care of him.” She turned her attention to the injured man who was sweating profusely and starting to look faint. “Did you hear me, Dell? You’re going to be fine. We’ll get you to a healer. Hang in there.”

Clarke walked with Dell over to his horse and she ordered another one of the soldiers to take him back to the manor as quickly as they could. She insisted they ride together on one horse, she wasn’t confident Dell could stay conscious the whole way there.
Zora and Roth went back to the entrance with Weston and blocked it as best they could. By the time they returned Niro was arriving with the first of his soldiers. He dismounted and got his orders from Zora. Roth and Weston stayed behind to show them the other entrances they had found and help them set up to defend the tunnels.

The rest of the group went back to Zora’s manor. When they arrived Lexa was pacing in the courtyard. When she finally saw the blonde hair she had been waiting for she didn’t even try to remain composed she ran to her. “Lexa, what’s wrong?” Clarke could tell there was something not right. “Is it Echo!?” Clarke feared the worst but Lexa quickly reassured her and Bellamy who looked suddenly panicked.

“Echo is fine, Houmon.” She reported. “I saw Rita come back, Rock was leading her and her face was covered with bloody bandages, that could have been you.” Lexa shook her head. You should have been with me, Clarke.”

“I was where I needed to be for our people.” Clarke squeezed Lexa’s hand and then smiled at her, “I shot one of them. It was awesome. The rest of them ran away from the flash and the noise like a bunch of bitches!” Lexa looked surprised and Bellamy laughed at her.

“You sound like my sister.” He mused.

“Well, she should thank you, cause your sister is awesome!” Octavia was just returning from her patrol and overheard the end of the conversation. She reached over and high-fived Clarke and Lexa let herself relax again.

Zora called everyone to meet and they mapped out the tunnels where they expected activity. Soldiers were send to all of the places, a total of six locations were covered. As Zora laid them out on the map a glaring oversight became apparent, Dal spoke.

“Mayor, there has to be one near here. The first attack was here in this manor.” Everyone agreed with him but they all knew it was to late to spread out and search the estate grounds looking for another tunnel.

“We’ll double up on torches and have guards patrol the hallways in groups all night.” Zora shrugged, there is nothing else we can do at this point.”

Lexa ordered the twenty people who would be heading to Manhattan in the morning to rest and let others patrol, but she knew no one would sleep well in the manor that night. As the sun began to descend she and Clarke went to the courtyard for dinner. Patrols were coming and going, organizing themselves and moving around the courtyard as the two leaders grabbed a small meal.

They didn’t speak much, there was no need. They just watched the people around them, their people, prepare to weather the darkness of the coming night. As they sat Clarke saw Kita come out of the manor. She watched with interest and Lexa followed her gaze.

A beautiful young woman followed her outside and Kita turned and made a few adjustments to the Woman in Black’s armour before the two reluctantly parted for their respective patrols. Clarke watched as Kita stood and watched her lover cross the courtyard and join her fellow warriors. The whoops and laughter from the rest of the Women in Black gathered there told Clarke that they all knew where Amina had been and what she had been doing. Amina confirmed it all by turning and waving back to Kita.
She felt anger flair for a moment and her eyes quickly flicked back to Kita. She watched as her normally stoic guard broke into a beautiful smile and waved back. The catcalls and whistles got louder for a few minutes and then the Women in Black moved off to begin their assigned patrols.

Kita took a moment to compose herself and then scanned the courtyard immediately picking out Lexa and Clarke and striding towards them. When she approached the table Clarke saw her eyes flicker towards the small basket of bread if only for a second. She bowed her head respectfully, “Heda, Sky Reine. Will you be patrolling tonight? IF so I will accompany you, if not I will patrol the hallways near your chamber.”

Clarke cast a sideways glance at the young woman and then rolled her eyes at Lexa, she hated to admit it but Kita seemed back to her old self and she hadn’t even glanced at either of their breasts since she arrived at the table. “Kita, sit. Eat.” Clarke pushed the bread basket toward her and slid over on the bench to make room for the guard to sit.

Kita looked surprised and glanced at Lexa in confusion. Lexa shrugged and nodded to the seat Clarke had vacated. Kita sat and gratefully took some bread from the basket. As she ate she asked Lexa to brief her on the current security situation.

Lexa explained what had happened and that they hoped they had found most of the larger tunnels but that they had been unable to locate one near the manor. Kita frowned and reached the same conclusion as everyone else. “There has to be one nearby. We will have to be vigilant during the darkest hours tonight.”

“Kita, you will be accompanying us to the island tomorrow, you need to rest tonight.” Lexa was testing the girl to see if she was over her lust and able to focus on her duties again. The snort of derision that came from the Ice girl immediately set her mind at ease. Clarke glared at her and challenged her, “You need to sleep, Kita. You have to be alert tomorrow. You remember the island, right?!”

“Sha, Sky Reine, I remember.” Kita schooled her voice and features back to the serene but alert mask of the Royal Ice Guard. “I will take some sleep as soon as we part. When the night grows dark I will be close to you, and to Heda Lexa. It is my duty and my honour, Reine. I will be ready for the island tomorrow, a Royal Azgeda Guard needs little sleep.”

Her tone was not cocky but matter-of-fact and Clarke found herself comforted by it. She looked over at Kita and remembered what Rock had told her about the way she had been with the children. Clarke suddenly felt another wave of overprotective big sister feelings wash over her, “Kita, the girl you were talking with when you came outside…. is she nice?” Clarke felt stupid but she had to know that the girl had at least treated Kita right.

Lexa looked surprised that Clarke had brought it up and Kita’s face flushed red immediately but she turned and answered with a soft smile on her face, “Sha, Clarke. She is nice. She was gentle, and soft, and perfect. Thank you for your concern.”

Clarke returned Kita’s smile and the use of her first name had not escaped her notice, she felt it was a bonding moment between them and it didn’t need any more words. The mayor had other thoughts and as she approached the table to did her best to embarrass the Ice Guard. “Kita! Did you take Heda’s advice and bed a pretty girl?” Zora had a mischievous gleam in her eye and not even Clarke’s level five death glare could dissuade her.

Kita, however didn’t miss a beat. She kept her features schooled and turned to address the mayor, “Mayor, I did indeed bed a pretty girl and I must compliment you on the skills of your Women in
Black. Of course, I have not yet had the opportunity to test every single one of them the art of pleasure but perhaps if Heda sees fit to stay in York a while longer I can provide you with a more detailed analysis of each of their skills.”

Zora and Lexa both stared open mouthed at the girl and Clarke slapped her on the shoulder in a fit of laughter. Kita winked at Clarke and stood from the table. “If that is all Heda I will return to my chamber to sleep for three hours before I begin my patrols.” Lexa nodded at her and she turned and left.

Zora was still staring after her and shaking her head, “Wow, she really is from the Ice Nation. I remember Rock and I in the early days of exile trying to embarrass Skadi. It takes a lot to rattle those Ice girls. huh?” She smiled and then shook her head clearing her thoughts and bringing herself back to the tasks she had come to Lexa and Clarke to discuss.

“Clarke, your mother has been to see Rock, but if you wouldn’t mind checking in on her before you sleep I would appreciate it.” She began.

“Wait, where are you going?” You can’t leave her alone!” Clarke began but Zora cut her off.

“Cade and Dal are with her. We talked and she wants me to stay with the children tonight. It’s close enough and I will have patrols running back and forth all night. If something happens in either place we’ll know soon enough and can be there in about five minutes.”

Zora sighed, “She insisted, Clarke. She wanted us all to go there and spend the night but I told her she had to stay in bed. She reopened the wound with all the riding she did today and Abby said she has to be careful or it will get infected. I had to agree to go so she would agree to stay.”

Clarke softened and nodded to Zora. “I’ll go and check on her now. Lex, meet me there when you’re done?” When Lexa nodded her agreement Clarke set off. Zora moved and sat in the seat she vacated.

“What is it mayor?” Lexa knew there was something on Zora’s mind.

“Should we evacuate or something? Bring everyone down to the courtyard to sleep, it’s warm enough.” Zora glanced nervously around. “I don’t want to find anymore faceless bodies, Lexa.”

“Everyone left in this manor tonight is a warrior, Zora. They are prepared and ready to fight these things and they won’t catch anyone by surprise like they did last night. I will be here tonight, sleep will be impossible so I will patrol and I will personally make sure Rock is safe. Go and do the same for the young ones.” Lexa reached out and clasped the larger forearm in greeting and added, “Try and get some sleep too, Zora. I need you sharp for the island tomorrow.”

As the two women parted ways they both felt an eerie sense of foreboding and both knew it would not be a quiet night.

Chapter End Notes

The next chapter will be shorter (and hopefully faster). It was part of this chapter but I wanted to get something posted so I cut it here.

We have to get through the night and see what the return to the island brings!
Chapter 27

Today is December 6th. In Canada, which could be thought of as the Ice Nation, today is the National Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence Against Women. I am always compelled to post something about the reason for the day's designation in my country.

On this day 26 years ago, in a country widely considered to be a bastion of liberal thinking and equality, 14 women lost their lives. 14 women who dared to pursue an education in engineering were shot down in cold blood at their place of education. 14 women died at the hands of a man with a gun, a man who thought he should have been where they were, and they should have been at home cooking his meals. As a Canadian, I cannot allow this day to pass without marking remembrance of that day, and those women. I cannot allow this day to pass without marking remembrance for every woman who has ever been a victim of the sexist society we live in all across the word.

When I write about Rock and Skadi's pain it is because I understand it. I know what is is to feel the unwanted weight on top of me and I know the devastation of having a man force himself on me, inside of me. Yes, I have felt the indignity of someone else forcing their body inside of my own and I know the doubt, the shame, the misplaced guilt and self blame that eats into the soul of rape victims. It is not something I write about lightly. December 6th is not a date I allow to come and go lightly.

I post this in hopes that you will all do a quick search and read about women who died in Montreal at École Polytechnique on Dec 6th, 1989. Say their names. I post this in hopes that any of you who have been victimized will realize that you are not alone and that we are stronger together. I post this because my heart still bleeds from the trauma I suffered years ago, and my heart still bleeds for the single largest mass shooting in my country in recent history. In fact this was the only mass murder to reach double digits in the 1900's in Canada, and the goal was to simply to kill women who were pursuing an education in science.

As a woman who loves women I am both afraid and enraged by this day and what it represents. I am both angry and filled with great sorrow for the reality of the Montreal Massacre, it could happen today, on any campus in any city. The thoughts and ideas the killer possessed are not isolated or rare. We are still hunted, we are still commodities, we are still lesser.

We are women. Hear us roar. Roar with me, my sisters, roar.
A Night of Terror(s)

Chapter Summary

The terrors attack and they are more capable than Lexa expected. Will they outsmart Heda?

Chapter Notes

Thank you for your patience. Your reward ‘comes’ near the end of the chapter. ;-)

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

Kita had slept for exactly three hours. When she woke she smiled softly at the sweet memories of her time with Amina, then she got out of her bed, stretched and dressed quickly and silently. Her stealth was out of habit rather than need and as soon as she was ready she took her ice blue swords and laid them carefully on a small piece of fur she had prepared on the floor.

She knelt in front of the blade and whispered the Royal Ice Guard’s oath of allegiance to Queen Skadi then she did a complicated series of bows before laying her hand on the hilt of the blade. She rose and repeated the oath naming Heda Lexa rather than Skadi. As she recited the oath the second time she slipped into a defensive stance and went into an elaborate kata practicing her fighting form.

As she finished the second oath she also finished up her first kata and moved into a meditative stance. From there she recited the oath once more, this time for Clarke. Kita would protect her Hedas tonight, and she had the feeling it would be a long, dark, and bloody undertaking.

“Clarke, wake up love.” Lexa placed small kisses along Clarke’s jawline as she nudged her wife to wakefulness. The two had gone and checked in on Rock after eating and Clarke had changed the dressings on her wounds. Once that was done they had returned to their room to nap before they were needed for the night.

When the blonde groaned in protest at being woken from her nap Lexa chuckled low in her throat and let her hand slip under the covers to find Clarke’s naked belly. “We must rise before the night reaches it’s darkest, Clarke.” Lexa rubbed Clarke’s stomach, lightly tracing her abs with the softest touch of her fingertips.

Clarke sighed at the touch of her wife’s fingers and her husky, sleep filled voice softly answered, “Keep doing that and we won’t be going anywhere until poor Kita has to burst through our doors again, Lex.” She smiled up at Lexa who immediately bent down for a kiss.

They kissed softly, Lexa traced Clarke’s lips with her tongue and sucked her lower lip inside of her mouth only to bite down ever so softly. Clarke moaned softly into the kiss and pulled Lexa down on top of her wrapping her arms around the woman she loved.
They stayed like that for several minutes, kissing leisurely like they had all the time in the world. When they finally broke apart Clarke spoke. “I know we have to go out there and face this, but I wish we could just hide in here and forget about those things.” She shivered as she remembered the terrors she had seen in the tunnel she and Bellamy had been in earlier in the day.

“I don’t believe you, Clarke.” Lexa mused, still peppering Clarke’s face with kisses. “The entire time I have known you, I have not seen you hide from anything. You take action when your people are threatened. It is one of the things that drew me to you, your unwavering commitment to action in the face of danger.”

Clarke laughed at her wife, “You make me sound like some sort of old Earth superhero.”

“Super hero…? What is that?” Lexa liked the sound of it. “You are my super hero, Clarke.” Clarke was rolling out of bed and pulling on her shirt. She giggled at her super adorable wife who stayed splayed out on the bed watching her with adoring eyes.

“No, Lex. Not a super hero, a superhero. They were stories people told for fun. They had super powers, like super strength, and flying and stuff.”

“You flew down from the sky, you are strong enough to conquer the mighty Heda Kom Trikru!” Lexa nodded with a grave mock seriousness, “You are one of these super hero people, finally returned to Earth to save poor Heda from her lonely, loveless life.” Lexa was grinning and Clarke rolled her eyes at her wife.

“From all of the women I’ve heard that you “bedded” I can’t say I agree with your poor lonely Lexa story.” Clarke used the same word Lexa had used in her advice to Kita purposefully, she narrowed her eyes and put her hand on her hip, trying to look tough.

Lexa leapt from the bed and pulled the squealing Clarke into a hug. “Houmon, you wound me with your super powers. Heal me now, super hero.” Lexa bent for a kiss and Clarke happily obliged her.

When they broke apart Clarke glanced out the window at the darkening sky and got serious, “Lex, it’s getting darker. Hurry, I want to be ready when they come…. ” Her voice trailed off and Lexa saw a shiver rush up Clarke’s spine. She felt the same need to prepare and she moved quickly to dress and arm herself.

“Heda requested you stay with Clarke and Rock, it has nothing to do with me, Echo.” Bellamy was exasperated at his lover. “You know I would have you right by my side if I could.” His voice softened and he tried his puppy dog look out on Echo. “I would never leave your side on a night like tonight if I had the choice.” She relented and nodded at him.

“I’m sorry, Bellamy. I’m just not used to being…. “ She gestured down at her protruding belly and sighed, “I’m not used to being anything less than a perfect warrior.” She laughed at herself. “I’m glad we are having a baby, I’m happy about it, believe me.” She reached out for Bellamy’s hand and then allowed him to pull her into a soft embrace. “I just wish I could fight as well as I’m used to fighting, Heda needs her top warriors and I am not exactly in fighting form… ” They both laughed and then kissed each other softly.

“I hate that I’m leaving you here. I should stay. Someone else can go to the school.” Zora was just strapping the last of her many weapons to her large frame and still trying to convince Rock that they
should stay together tonight.

“Z, I’m fine. There will be more people and more torches in this room than anywhere in York.” Rock chastised her lover lightly, “You know the children need you. They will feel safer with the big bad mayor personally guarding the school.”

“I know, I just have a bad feeling about tonight.” Zora admitted. “I can’t explain it, It feels like something evil is in the air.” Zora shivered and Rock reached her arms out to her lover.

Zora bent over and hugged Rock gently as she rested in their bed. “Be careful, Z. Promise me.” Rock whispered.

“I promise, Rock. I promise.” Zora pulled away just far enough to be able to find Rock’s lips with her own and begin a slow, gentle kiss.

There was an old forgotten tunnel just under a mile from the manor were Zora was kissing her lover. It was near the sea and the waves crashing on the shore were just loud enough to prevent any passersby from hearing the very sinister laugh that came from a pale, terrible, monster who huddled just inside the entrance. It was the lookout, waiting to report back to fifty of it’s kin who were waiting deeper inside for the night sky to be dark enough for them to come out and feed.

It waited for the guard patrol that had been passing by once an hour for the past three hours. Once the patrol was gone it laughed again. Then it let out high pitched shrieking noise and a series of guttural clicks and pops. It did a grotesque dance of excitement clapping it’s hands as it waited for it’s kin.

Fifty pale once human creatures slipped easily out of the cave they had been hiding in and into the summer evening. They laughed quietly as they crept into the night air and moved toward their evening meals. There were two more exits to that same tunnel not so far away and very much the same scene had played out at each.

The boys who had been rescued from the Assassin training program once again found themselves armed with bows and arrows. They once again found themselves preparing for a battle and they once again steeled themselves to kill. Every single one of them had stepped forward to volunteer to pick up the bows Yor had given them, this time to defend the people not terrorize them.

They stood in a formation waiting for orders and they held their chins high. This time they were proud to hold the bows and they were willing to lay down their young lives to protect the school where Luna had given them all a second chance. Kita had left for the school as soon as she had completed her rituals. It was close by and she knew she had time before she was required to meet Lexa and Clarke in the Mayor’s room. She wanted to see the children, especially her Ice children.

She arrived as the boys were forming up and receiving their arrows. She watched them check the arrows and test the tension on the bows. She nodded at them as she walked down the line and stopped when she saw the one she was looking for. “Francois,” she looked at the boy and smiled softly, he returned the smile. “Are you a good shot? Speak true, there is no shame in it.” Kita wanted to be sure he was ready for whatever might come at him that night.

The boy lifted his chin, he blew the tumbling blonde locks out of his eyes and nodded firmly. “I am a very good shot.” He bowed his head to her in respect and handed her his bow for inspection.
She took it and checked the tension and eyed the bow in satisfaction, all the while thinking how very much this boy looked like her queen. She handed it back to him and then she cupped his young face. He didn’t flinch away from her. She let go and removed one of the ice blue daggers she had strapped to her thigh.

“Francois, take this.” She knelt and strapped the precious dagger to the boy’s side. His eyes widened in surprise.

“I cannot… only the Ice Guards and the Royal Family wield these blades.” He breathed out the words in a reverent whisper.

“I have the authority Francois. I may give my blades to those I see fit to wield them. I want you in the window next to the room the others are in. I have arranged it. Shoot the creatures as soon as they are in range, Francois, do not hesitate. They will show no mercy and deserve none in return. If they swarm the halls and get close to you avoid their claws and use the dagger.”

She thought for a moment and added, “They will try to put out the lights if they get inside, they can’t stand the brightness of the sun or firelight. Keep the hallway dim and they might ignore the candles, and if they do put them out your eyes will adjust faster from a dimmer light. Do you understand?” When he nodded confidently she sighed in relief. “They are fast and terrifying, but they bleed and die like anything else.”

As Kita spoke she finished tying the holster around his waist and she watched his chest rise in pride at having the ice blue blade at his side. Kita rose and took his cheeks in her hands, she looked in his eyes and saw tears and she watched as he stubbornly blinked them away.

“I will protect the young ones, Kita, Royal Guard and protector of Heda. I swear on my life and on your blade.” He looked so intense Kita felt tears forming in her own eyes but fought them back as he had.

She leaned in and rested her forehead against his in show of love and then stood to her full height and looked down at him. “Remember who we are, Francois. The girl's in that room will be armed too and you know they can and will fight to protect themselves, each other, and even you. I have asked you to protect them because you have the training, not because you are a man.”

Francois nodded vigorously, “Oui, oui, I know. My mother was a warrior.” His eyes shone with pride. “She was the best in my village. I will fight well, make her proud.” He thought for a minute and added. “Genevieve should have weapons too, she must have some training, she fights well. The first time I tried to go and talk with them she gave me a black eye.” He grinned at Kita who smiled back and nodded.

“I will see to it, Francois, thank you.” Kita beamed at the young man and then took her leave with parting advice, “Be careful, but do not fear them, you are a young warrior from the Ice Nation, we fear nothing.”

She walked away and out of the corner of her eye saw Francois take the blade from the holster and inspect it. She smiled and continued to the room where the girls from her homeland stayed. She walked in and saw they had already arranged the room how they thought worked best for protection.

“Mes enfants!? What have you done here?” Kita looked at them in general confusion and great mirth. They had piled all of the desks on top of each other two tall and spread them in a solid line through the middle of the room. The door and the windows were on one side and the opposite side where the girls were holed up had solid walls on all sides.
“Kita!!” Several of the girls shrieked happily that the guard had come but they couldn’t pass the wall of desks and so just waved at their new hero.

“We will protect ourselves if the beastly face-eaters come here tonight!” The girl Francois had claimed was a good fighter, had a reddish tinge to her long, wild hair and big blue eyes that declared a challenge to Kita with her conviction.

“I see that, Genevieve.” Kita grinned, “I understand the desks, but what of the furs? Won’t you need them in order to sleep?” Kita gestured to the furs that had been laid out perfectly end to end and covered most of the floor on her side of the desk wall.

“Sleep!?” An older blonde girl snorted in disgust! “Do you think we would sleep through such a night!?” She raised her chin in defiance and glared at Kita.

“You will be well protected, Danielle. There are many torches…” Kita began trying to reassure the girls.

“We do not fear them! Let them come.” Danielle spat back and a young girl that looked like she could have come from Kita and Lozen’s village nodded her agreement.

“Try to cross the furs, Ice Guard.” The girl spoke mischievously.

Kita cocked her head to the side and looked at them in interest. She let her gaze travel from their young eager faces to the furs covering the floors and picked up something she hadn’t noticed the first time. She grinned and chuckled as she walked forward.

The girls let her get halfway to the wall before they pulled on the hidden strings attached to the furs and yanked them out from under Kita’s feet. The Ice Guard had seen what they were planning and decided to show off a little.

As the fur was pulled from under her feet knocking her off balance she let herself fall backwards naturally, as she fell she arched her back and threw her hands behind her head. She let her hands make brief contact with the floor and catapulted herself into a controlled backflip. She landed safely and grinned at the girls who looked rather pissed.

“No fair!” The young ones protested. But Kita’s laughter was infectious and soon they all joined in.

Kita made herself busy fixing the trap the girls had set and she praised them on their work, “This is good. The things have bad eyesight they will not see the strings like I did. This is good.” She nodded at them and they beamed with pride.

Genevieve squeezed out the small hole they had strategically left free and came to help Kita ensure the traps were perfect. “How do you know about the eyesight? You have seen them?” She enquired.

“Sha, young one. I have.” Kita stopped and looked at all of the girls, she sighed. “I was with Heda Lexa the first time we saw the creatures in the basement of a Mountain Men’s bunker on the Island.”

The girls grew quiet and finally one spoke, “What are they?”

“I can only guess, my child. I believe they were once just like you and I and that they were trapped underground on the Island with the poison from the bombs for so long they became whatever is it they are now.” Kita shrugged her shoulders. “The important thing to know is that they are easier to kill than an Ice bear!”

The girls all giggled as Kita jumped up pretending to be a bear and growled at them. They squealed
and laughed with her for a while and then she grew serious. “Mes enfants, you must promise me to be careful tonight. Stay here and keep your torches lit. Sleep in shifts and keep your weapons ready. Francois will be outside the door, he has his bow and arrows and his aim is true.”

“Francois!? Connard! We do not need him here.” The one called Danielle declared.

“Danielle! Do not call him that.” Kita replied immediately. “You don’t know his story and it is not mine to tell but believe me he is a victim of Yor as much as any of you. Kita fixed the girl with her level gaze and let her eyes speak for her. The girl quickly lowered her gaze and looked away from Kita.

Genevieve stepped forward again, “We will listen for him and check on him. If fighting starts we will try to defend him as well as ourselves. He is welcome here.” She turned and looked at her friends waiting for a challenge that did not come. Kita clasped the girl’s shoulder.

“Merci, Genevieve.” She smiled at the girl. “Now, show me what weapons Luna has let you have.” The girls excitedly pulled out a motley assortment of swords, daggers and a couple of bows with some arrows.

She confirmed that four of the girls did know how to shoot the arrows and checked their form. The plan was if the creatures got inside to knock them over from the furs to give a little extra time to shoot them with the arrows. The desks would slow them enough for the girls to use the swords and if all else failed they would use the daggers and fight the creatures face to face.

Kita left the group in high spirits and was pleased to see Francois already in place next to the open window. He nodded at her formally and she grinned as he immediately returned to his duty of watching out the window.

“I must return to Heda, Francois. Fight well, and we will meet as the sun begins to rise.” Kita waited for his reply.

“Sha, Kita. As the sun rises.” As he answered her she turned and walked away. She did a quick perimeter sweep of the school and then returned to the manor just in time to meet Clarke and Lexa outside of Rock and Zora’s room.

“She’s fine, Zora.” Abby was reassuring the mayor that Rock’s condition was normal and that her trying to overdo it that morning hadn’t caused any serious damage, just a significant increase in pain. “But, if she is up and active tonight she won't be. She needs to rest. I want to give her a mild sedative to numb the pain and let her sleep tonight. That will be the best thing to start the healing. If she is awake she will try to get out of bed and help with the fighting.”

Zora looked concerned, “What is there is an attack and she has to fight? Is there any other way?”

Clarke walked over and joined the conversation, “Zora, I won’t leave her alone. Mom and Kane and I will be here all night.” Clarke patted the firearm strapped to her waist. “I won’t let anything near her.”

Echo joined them as well, “Mayor, I will be here as well, and you may have noticed we just moved Indra’s bed in here. She may be injured but she has already killed more of the creatures than anyone else, and I might be a little larger than usual but I am still a Trikru Gona. A very very good one.” She raised her eyebrow and looked smug. “Nothing will touch Rock.”

Zora watched Indra limp into the room free of the help she had refused and settle herself down onto
the furs provided for her with a grumpy “humph.” She pulled out her sword and laid it across her lap. Zora seemed to relax a little and then Dal and Cade walked in and she let go of the last worry she was holding onto. Dal was recovering from a gunshot wound as well, but he had been struck in the shoulder and was much more mobile than poor Rock who had taken the bullet in the side.

Dal moved to the bed, sat lightly on the side and greeted Rock warmly. “I’m stuck in here with you tonight it seems.” He grinned at Rock who smiled weakly back at him, still in pain. once Zora heard that Dal would also be there she laid her fears to rest.

“I can patrol Heda, my injuries are nothing!” Indra insisted.

“Sha, Indra. I know. But Zora needs to know Rock is safe and I need to know Clarke is safe. The best way to know is to put them under your protection.” Lexa grinned at her general’s defeated look and when Indra huffed and limped away she turned to find Bellamy.

Lexa was discussing the patrol schedule with Bellamy when Cade joined them. “Suu has already begun the patrols.” He confirmed and added, “She knows our schedule is separate but asks that we still check in with her checkpoints as we patrol. There should be two people at each point as well as torches and extra fuel at each checkpoint.”

Lexa nodded her agreement and as Lincoln and Octavia joined them she spoke loud enough for everyone to hear. “Kita and I will take the top floor first, Bellamy and Cade the first floor, and Lincoln and Octavia the courtyard around the building. You know the locations of all the checkpoints, check in with each of them and make sure they are still alive. Don’t stray from the route you have, we are securing the building. Suu and her patrols have the outer perimeter.”

Zora spoke next. “I will be heading the security force at the school. It is close enough that we can have support back and forth if needed. I have worked out signals with Echo. Rachel and Luna are already there along with most of our alliance elite force. There are soldiers spread out all over the city under Niro’s watch and most of the large tunnels are covered or guarded. We believe there is a tunnel near here so we think they will attack us here or at the school, maybe both. Stay in communication, and be careful.”

With that the night began, Zora took a look over her shoulder to see Rock falling asleep under Abby’s medication as she strode out the door. Lexa and Kita slipped out the door and began to do a methodical sweep of the floor they were on, Cade and Bellamy grinned at each other and headed downstairs and Lincoln and Octavia nodded respectfully to Indra as they headed to the courtyard.

Rachel and Luna had briefed the soldiers who would be guarding the school that evening. There were a lot of them, most of Heda’s elite were there as well as several of those that had ridden North with the original force that came directly to York from Sapeake. There were also a few Women in Black and some of the York army assigned to protect the children.

York’s army was to patrol the streets of the city and guard the tunnels that had been discovered that day. Most of the Women in Black and Lexa’s personal group were protecting the manor but a much larger group protected the school. Lexa and Zora agreed the contents of it were by far the most precious.

Rachel knew they were likely to be attacked and she was confident that the force she had surrounding the school and the sheer amount of torches would be enough to repel the creatures. Zora had armed the young men who had training with bows and arrows and they were in every window and guarding every door along with the warriors.
The manor and the school were as ready as they could be and those who guarded them were confident they could defend them. The creatures had the same confidence that they could get in and get what they wanted, what they wanted was blood.

“How is she?” Echo watched as Clarke and Abby checked on Rock who had suddenly began whimpering in her sleep.

“She seems stable.” Abby answered as she checked Rock’s pulse and blood pressure.

“A bad dream perhaps. With all the stress of what might happen tonight, it’s no wonder.” Clarke added and began to gently stroke her friend’s cheek. Rock seemed to settle under her soft touch and Echo sighed.

“In that case I know how she feels, and I’m wide awake.” The warrior paced back and forth and finally stopped by the large window that overlooked the courtyard. She peered out into the night trying to see into the shadows beyond the torches. “I think the waiting is worse than whatever might happen.”

“I don’t.” Indra spoke for the first time since Lexa had left on her first round of patrol. “They are coming and they know everything we’ve used against them so far. They will have some surprises for us… and we won’t like them.”

“What do you mean, Indra?” Dal inquired.

“Right before I killed one of them in Minerva’s house it said something that I have been thinking about since.” The general paused and looked around the room, finding all eyes glued on her, “It said they were all one, if one lived they all lived, and that there were too many to kill them all.”

“If one lives all live?” Kane was intrigued. “What do you think it meant?” He asked.

“I believe it meant they all communicate somehow without being together. I haven’t figured it out yet. They do talk to each other in those weird clicks, pops and the screams, but I feel like it meant that even if I killed all of them from that house the others would somehow know what happened to them and they would live on through the others.” Indra stared out the window. “I believe the spirits of the dead somehow return to the others with their memories in some way, like Heda’s spirit contains the memories of all past Heda’s.”

Clarke and Kane glanced at each other and Kane spoke, "I believe the Mountain Men's predecessors have much to do with the creation of these things, and the Mountain Men might know the secrets surrounding them."

Clarke suddenly thought of Virgil and asked, “Where is Virgil? Is he patrolling?”

Echo answered, “He is on patrol at the school with the rest of the party that came with you.”

Kane sighed, “I wish we had thought of him before this, he will be important in getting to the bottom of what these creatures are.”

“I can go and bring him here.” Clarke stood and was immediately shut down.

“Not a chance, Princess.” Echo moved to position herself between Clarke and the door, “Virgil was a soldier for the Mountain Men, he has a weapon, he’ll be fine. You aren’t going anywhere, Heda’s orders.”
Just then Lexa and Kita returned from their first circuit. “Heda’s orders, what?” She raised her eyebrows and looked around the room.

“I want to go to the school and bring Virgil back here with us.” Clarke offered, “Echo says I’m not allowed to leave the room.” Clarke narrowed her eyes and glared at her wife.

“Muchof Echo.” Lexa smiled at her warrior. “Clarke, I already thought of Virgil’s importance. He is inside the school guarding a room full of children. The building is surrounded by elite warriors and he is in a fully lit room. He is safe.” Lexa left it at that and Clarke frowned but accepted what she said.

“Have the others checked in yet?” Kita inquired.

“Checking in.” Bellamy poked his head in the door and grinned. “All quiet, so far. We’re heading back down for another round.”

Lexa nodded at him and he blew a kiss to Echo as he left the room again, Cade at his heels.

“Nothing from Octavia yet?” Lexa moved toward the window to look out into the courtyard.

“No yet, Heda.” Indra answered.

Echo joined her at the window and they both searched the darkness for any signs of disturbance. As Lexa watched she saw Octavia and Lincoln come around the corner. They looked up and saw her in the window. Lexa slid the window open.

“Heda. All clear so far. We will do another round.” She gave her Heda the thumbs up and Lexa returned her gesture. She had learned it from Clarke, Raven, and Octavia and found it quite charming.

Once she was sure all of her people were safe she turned back to Kita. “Let’s go.” Kita was already at the door waiting for her. “No one leaves the room, Clarke. You are here to protect Rock.” Lexa glanced back at her wife with her brow raised before she walked out, she heard her wife’s reply as she stepped into the hallway.

“Yeah, yeah, it’s not like Echo would let me anyway, Lex.” Clarke called after her wife with a smirk and then added, much quieter, “be careful…”

Octavia and Lincoln were walking around the manor again, there were torches all along the stone wall that surrounded the manor, they patrolled the space between the wall and the house itself. There were four patrols circling the manor including Octavia’s, the others were at thirty feet intervals moving out from the wall. The paths were all well lit by torches and were well worn.

At every cardinal direction there was another line of torches moving straight out from the manor, intersecting the paths of the patrols. There were gates built into the wall leading into the courtyard marking the exact locations of north, south, east, and west. Those intersecting lines were the checkpoints that each patrol would stop by to give and receive information as they circled the manor. The guards at the checkpoints only had to run the thirty feet that separated them from the next checkpoint to relay information. Suu had set it up and Zora and Heda were quite impressed with her system.

Octavia and Lincoln approached the western check point and stopped by for a report, the young woman there snapped to attention as they approached, “All patrols have checked in, situation normal.”
“Easy girl, I’m not Indra.” Octavia joked putting the two guards at ease. The Ease didn’t last long as another guard came running down the Western line shouting.

“Contact on the outer line!! Contact!” The Woman in Black rushed up to them, words spilling out of her mouth. “They are using rocks to knock down the torches and they have some sort of water bombs to put the fires out. They have knocked out almost all of the torches in the outer line.”

“Have they attacked yet? Is everyone okay?” Lincoln asked.

“They haven’t seen their faces yet, just the rocks and water, they are trying to hold the ground but without the torches…” The guard looked to them for a decision.

“Pull the outer line back.” Octavia decided. “Have the patrols double with the next line in and carry torches themselves, at least two per group. Go quickly!” The girl nodded her understanding and turned and took off running back to deliver the orders. Octavia and Lincoln looked at each other and both knew they had to hurry.

“Hold your post! We’ll go and let the others know.” Lincoln called back to the guards as he and Octavia ran towards the northern line.

As they ran Octavia watched the windows for Bellamy and Cade or Lexa and Kita. They arrived at the northern line and Lincoln began quickly checking in and sharing information. It seemed the torches of the outer perimeter were all but extinguished and the patrols had already dropped back to join the third perimeter.

Octavia spotted her brother in the first floor window and ran toward it shouting for him. “Bellamy! Contact! We have contact!”

Bellamy and Cade were passing by a large open window on the first floor when Cade stopped and pulled his patrol buddy back with him. “Bellamy, it’s Octavia!”

The two men called her over to the window and she quickly explained the situation. “We’ll run the rest of the circuit and head up to pass the information to Heda immediately.” Cade offered.

“Thanks, O. Be careful out there. Don’t be a hero, if things get messy you get your ass inside along with everyone you can bring with you.” Bellamy insisted when she nodded at him he turned and ran after Cade.

Amina was patrolling the second perimeter from the manor. Her partner was a Sheena, a skilled archer and Amina herself was an expert at all kinds of blades. She could wield them, throw them, even forge them as the Women in Black’s best bladesmith. Between the two of them they thought they had everything covered. When the outer perimeter was overrun and the patrols fell back to double up with the third line she began to feel nervous. She didn’t like the feeling, and she was certain it came from the horrible laughter she could hear in the darkness.

Suu was at the Southern line, it lined up with the main gate to the manor. She was irritated, she hated feeling useless and that is exactly the feeling that gripped her right now. Her girls were out there about to be set upon by the creatures and by her own orders all she could do was stay and hold her checkpoint. She gritted her teeth and waited for the report to come back from the next checkpoint out.
The creatures were being methodical, they knew they had to get rid of as much of the light as possible or they would be in pain and unable to attack the nasty humans. They wanted to run forward and sink their teeth into the flesh of the women patrolling around the manor but they stayed back and followed the orders of the Interface.

They clapped and laughed together as they watched the last of the torches of the outer perimeter fizzle out. They moved forward out of the shadows and got as close as they dared to the edge of the torch light of the third perimeter.

They once again began lobbing rocks at the torches and knocking them to the ground. This time the Women in Black were doubled up and ready to fight back. The patrol teams had been two and were now four. They had torches in hand and they waited until the rocks began to knock down the torches that had been stuck into the ground. They judged the direction of the rocks and they charged.

The creatures were caught by surprise. The humans had shown no resistance to their approach as they took out the first row of torches and they were not exactly quick thinkers. The Interface would have to examine this behaviour but they could only react. As the first team of four rushed forward torches in hand the creatures dropped away from the light hissing at the burning sensation it caused them.

It made them angry, the plan had been going well and now the humans were behaving differently and they didn’t know what to do. The humans had the light that hurt them and yet the humans looked so delicious. They began to throw the rocks at the torches in the humans hands.

The four Women in Black who had charged the creatures had guessed the direction well. As they rushed forward they caught sight of the pale hunched bodies skittering away from the light. They stayed close together and hoped to get a good enough look to fire a few arrows and take out some of the enemy.

Trisha was the highest ranked of the four and she held them together with her bravery. “Hold, stay together, keep the line.” She shouted to them as they moved forward. When suddenly rocks began to fly at them and their torches she knew she had to get her team back. “Back, move back, stay together!”

As her team began to retreat a water bomb flew toward them and knocked a torch from her hand. The bomb exploded as it hit the ground and extinguished her torch, she had enough presence of mind to reach out and grab the remains of the casing of the bomb and as she was pulling back to her group she felt the whoosh of an arrow flying through the air very close to her head. She heard the inhuman screech of one of the creatures as it fell to the ground at her feet with an arrow in it’s chest. She hurried back to her team and they fell back to the perimeter quickly.

This kind of scene was playing itself out all around the manor. The Women in Black were trying to hold the line as long as possible and picking off a creature here and there but the creatures were steadily extinguishing the torches and moving forward, getting closer and closer to the manor.

Trisha and her team had sent the remains of the water bomb back down the line as quickly as they could for investigation. It arrived at the innermost southern checkpoint for Suu’s eyes and she felt her stomach turn as she examined it. It appeared to be made of stitched together skin. She wanted to say it was from an animal but the pale hue of the skin and the subtle remains of a fine, flaxen sheen of hair made her believe they had made these out of the skin of their own kind. Even through her disgust and despite not wanting to credit the creatures with strategy she had to admit it was a clever way to take out the number one weapon against them. The water bombs were proving quite effective.
against the torches.

Soon the warriors from the third perimeter dropped back to join the second and they helplessly watched the remaining torches being snuffed out. Trisha and her team ended up joining Amina and her partner.

“Trisha, over here!” Sheena called out to the retreating team and they met them halfway providing as much cover with the extra torches as they could.

“We got one of them, but there are so many more. If they keep taking out our torches like this they’ll have us beat back to the walls within the hour.” Trisha was frustrated and it showed.

“Trish, what if we drew some of them to us?” Amina had an idea, a very bad idea, but she couldn’t help herself and continued, “I’ll hand my torch off and step forward a little, they’ll come for me and Sheena and Eva can shoot fire arrows on either side of me. I’ll be close enough to fight them with my sword and they’ll be freaked by the sudden fire so I should be able to slice and dice a couple of them and then run back here!”

“That’s crazy!” Sheena protested! “It’s too dangerous!”

Trisha looked intrigued, “I like it!” she grinned at Amina, “but I’m going with you, back to back!” Amina grinned back and nodded and Sheena shook her head at the two in disbelief. She looked over at the other archer who shrugged and drew an arrow.

“Fine, but if you get your face eaten off, know that I’m moving in on your sexy ass Ice girl.” Sheena laughed at the face Amina made and the two friends reached out for a fist bump before falling into position.

Trisha went over the plan quickly and quietly and then Amina handed off her torch to one of the others. She took a deep breath and leaned slightly back into Trish. They made their way forward away from the protection of the light of the torches and Amina felt the hair on the back of her neck stand up as she heard that creepy laughter much closer this time.

They were only around twelve feet out when they were attacked. They had expected to hear or see the creatures moving in and have time to give the order but they had underestimated the stealth of the terrors. Amina saw a pale devil flying through the air towards her and barely had time to raise her sword. She shouted as she did and the scene became a mass of confusion and blood.

Her raised sword impaled the creature that had leapt toward her and it’s strange, thin, black, blood ran down her blade onto her skin. She hadn’t had time to react to any of it when she heard a terrible and all too human scream from behind her. With no thought to her own safety she whirled around to help Trish and just then she felt a tearing pain in her lower back as one of them bit through her skin. Just in time arrows landed on either side of the girls bringing a much needed advantage to the situation. The sudden light caused the creatures to squeal in pain and release their bites.

Amina saw two creatures let go of Trish, her red blood running down their fangs and dripping from their chins. One had bitten her deeply on her shoulder and the other had attacked her leg biting deeply into her thigh. Ignoring the pain in her own back her sword made quick work of the two things that had feasted on her friend. Only then did she turn to look for the one that had bitten her.

She turned to find the creature hadn’t run off far and as the light from the arrow waned it was ready for another taste. It leapt toward her and she didn’t have time to raise her sword. She reached up with her left hand and got her forearm in between the creature and her face. She felt the teeth tear into her forearm through her leather cuffs and she yelled out in pain. She twisted her body back toward her
friends and yelled. “Shoot it Sheena! NOW!”

She saw the line of light as the arrow flew toward her, and she didn’t have time to consider that it might not have been the best course of action as the arrow slammed into the back of the creatures head in a puff of flame and smoke. It went through the things head and then through her forearm. It hurt like hell but it was a pain she would take over the creature’s teeth any day.

Eva was firing flaming arrows all around them to give them time to escape and Amina made the best of it. She quickly broke the shaft of the arrow and pulled it the rest of the way through her forearm disengaging herself from the pale freak that had tried to eat her. She turned and bent over Trish who was bleeding badly and trying to stand.

Amina quickly ripped a length from her own shirt and bent to tie it around Trish’s thigh that was bleeding badly enough to scare Amina. She tried to sound calm and work quickly but her busted forearm was slowing her down. The arrows didn’t stay lit very long and as Amina finished tightening her makeshift bandage she felt Trish’s wrist flick past her ear. She knew she had just thrown a dagger and as she pulled the woman to her feet and began to stumble back toward their friends she glanced behind her and saw a dead creature with a dagger in it’s forehead just a couple of feet from where they had been.

They stumbled back to the group and Trish was quickly taken from her by two others. They ran together toward the checkpoint, Sheena supporting Amina whose side was now bleeding badly, along with her busted forearm.

“If you want the Ice girl so badly you just have to tell me, I’m not joined in a union with her or anything Shee… you didn’t have to shoot me in the arm to put me out of action.” Amina laughed and Sheena joined her.

“You asshole! I told you this was a bad idea… and you told me to shoot! Fuck, I’m just glad you’re alive.” Sheena dragged her friend along as quickly as she could and as she glanced back she saw the torches lighting the path winking out behind them.

The team made it’s way directly down the southern line to Suu. Sheena briefed her as they approached and Octavia and Lincoln just happened to arrive as they did. Lincoln scooped up the more serious Trish and Octavia reached out and took Amina from Sheena. They ran into the building and met Bellamy and Cade as they arrived. Octavia made a quick decision, “Cade go with Lincoln, take her to Clarke. Bellamy and I will go back and patrol the courtyard. Shit is hitting the fan and we need boots on the ground down there.

Cade didn’t hesitate and he picked up Amina and ran up the stairs toward medical help as the Blake siblings strode back outside and ran over to Suu to find out how bad things were.

Lexa and Kita were just completing another round of patrols, they had seen the torches winking out in the third and fourth perimeters as they passed by the windows. They wanted information and quickly headed back to the room to see if anything had been communicated. As they approached the room Lincoln came running up the stairs holding a bleeding and near passing out Woman in Black. Lexa shouted for Clarke and Abby and she ran in behind Lincoln. Kita stood staring down the hall as Cade ran around the corner with the very beautiful and currently very bloody Amina in his arms.

Cade ran by her into the room and found a place to carefully set the injured girl down. She was still alert and coherent but he knew her back needed treatment sooner rather than later. He looked over at Clarke and Abby who both seemed to have their hands full working on the other woman. He was
about to call out to them for help when Kita’s voice stopped him.

“Cade, help me.” He turned and found that she had already grabbed some bandages from Clarke’s kit and had Amina lying on the floor on her stomach. As she instructed him to keep pressure on her wound she ordered Amina to take off her shirt.

“Just because I took it off for you last time we were together doesn’t mean…” She teased the Ice Guard who was having none of it; Kita reached out and and unceremoniously yanked the back of her shirt up high enough to see the entire wound.

“OUCH!” Amina protested but as she looked back over her shoulder at Kita she softened as she saw the Ice Guard’s expression.

“I’m sorry, I didn’t mean to cause you pain, but you need treatment and you need it quickly.” She placed Cade’s hands back on the wound and moved to get something to clean the bites with. She returned with a bottle of saline and motioned for Cade to let her see it. She cleaned it as best she could and then Cade resumed his pressure. She knew the wound should be stitched but she wanted either Clarke or Abby to check it before it was closed up. She knew the creatures teeth could cause infections and wanted to make sure it was clean.

She chuckled slightly as she moved on to Amina’s wrist wound. “You got shot with an arrow?”

Amina just grinned and winked at her as she leaned forward to talk into Kita’s ear.

“I think the other girls are jealous of our time together. Trying to make sure I can’t do a repeat performance…” Amina laughed at her own joke and then winced as Kita pressed a little more firmly than necessary on the wound she was treating. Kita grinned and winked at Amina as the girl protested Kita's bedside manner.

Lexa looked around at the two injured women and when she realized it was under control she looked at Indra. “When they are finished healing the girl tell them they are now partners.” She gestured to Kita and Cade. “They have this floor and should begin their patrol as soon as possible. Lincoln and I will go to the first floor.”

Indra nodded at her Heda and used her sword to help raise herself from her furs. As Lexa and Lincoln rushed out she moved slowly but surely over to the window where she joined Echo trying to keep an eye on the situation. As she passed Dal and Kane she nodded her head toward the door and they understood her meaning and placed themselves between the door and the people in the room.

With Indra and Echo guarding the window and Dal and Kane the door Rock shivered in her drug induced slumber where her dreams were as haunted as the reality her lover was living over at the school.

“Zora! Call them back! Get everyone back inside the gates!!” It was Rachel’s voice that the mayor heard coming from the second floor window. From her vantage point Rachel could see how quickly the terrors were taking out the torch lights and she knew not even Heda’s elite who had come through the tunnel could fight their way through much of the dark with those creatures hunting them.

Zora was at the main gate. They had a similar set up around the school but less lines and less checkpoints. Zora understood what was happening and she kicked her steed into action. She built up her speed tearing down the patrol path and shouting to her warriors. “Fall back!!! Fall Back!! Get back inside the gates, all of you!” She saw teams of warriors gathered at check points unwilling to
make for the gate until everyone arrived.

As she rode around the perimeter of the school she saw the warriors from the northern line do a headcount and a cheer rose when all of the warriors were accounted for. She buzzed past them shouting for them to get to the gate and she saw the torches from the second line go out. She urged her horse to go faster and raced for the eastern line. As she approached she saw that some of the torches of the last line were already out. There weren’t any guards left at the checkpoint and she hoped they had all gotten inside.

As she rode past the torch to her immediate left was hit by a rock and fell over snuffing itself out. She was about to blow by and continue when she saw a body on the ground. She pulled up on the reins and to her horse’s dismay she leapt off and ran over to the slumped figure, she recognized him as she got closer.

“Hamil! Are you okay?” She threw herself down and listened for his heartbeat, when she found one she didn’t hesitate, she lifted him in a fireman’s carry and ran back to her horse. She was less worried about hurting him more than she was about them both being swarmed and eaten by the terrors so she flung his body carelessly over her horse and mounted as quickly as she could. The torches were almost all out and she could hear the laughter closing in around her.

Zora dug her heels into her horses side and urged it to get them the hell out of the encroaching darkness. She had the reins in her right hand and her sword in her left facing the darkness. She could see the pale shadows closing in and as the last torch went out she saw one jump towards her. The thing was in midair when her sword sliced though it cutting it clean in half. As it fell to the ground several screams of rage cut though the night and Zora’s horse sped up, fear being as good a fuel as anything.

Zora directed her horse toward the last corner before the gate and as she glanced behind her she could see several pale shadows chasing her in the the dark. Her horse was faster but the creatures were not far enough behind for her liking. They rounded the last corner and she saw with relief that the torches of the front gate still burned. As she rode full speed toward them she was suddenly bombarded by rocks and the strange bags of water that seemed to be pieces of skin stitched together. The torches started to flicker and she ducked low on her horse and shouted forward.

“Open the gate, we’re coming through!” As her voice boomed out she saw with relief that Rachel opened the gate immediately and several archers stepped out behind her. They had flaming arrows ready and on the Boat general’s command they loosed them in a neat arc over the mayor’s head. She heard screams of rage behind her as the arrows fell into the crowd of pursuing terrors and she grinned as she rode past Rachel without slowing down. She heard the gate being closed behind her and she heard Rachel yelling orders for patrols to shore up the walls and keep torches lit. Fires were lit in the courtyard and new torches were prepared to replace the old ones should the creatures knock some down.

Zora jumped down from her horse and pulled Hamil down and laid him carefully on the ground. “I need a healer! Now!” the mayor shouted and heard shouts go up around her, “Come on old friend, we hunted Yor and Alain together, we crossed through the tunnel and over the Island together, wake up, Hamil!” She pleaded with the unconscious man and when he didn’t answer she looked up again, “Where is my damn healer!?” She bellowed.

“They are all busy, we got almost everyone back inside but there were several injuries.” Rachel approached and laid her hand on Zora’s shoulder. As Zora was thinking of a million questions to ask Virgil came running outside with a small bag.

“Mayor, I can help. I was trained as a medic, I can help him. Please…” Virgil looked desperately
down at Hamil and Zora looked at him questioningly.

“He and Brax are so good to me…” Virgil started… and looked again for permission.

“Virgil you are one of my soldiers… if you are a healer, heal! You don’t need my permission, you have my trust.” Zora was terse but her words had a deep impact on Virgil. He pushed aside the well of emotions he was feeling and got to the task at hand.

Hamil had a large bite mark on his left shoulder and several claw marks gashed into his handsome face. He also had what seemed to be blunt force trauma to the back of his head and that is what worried Virgil. He set to work trying to save his friend and the mayor left him to it.

“Who was at the Eastern checkpoint?” Zora wanted answers to why Hamil had been left behind. Rachel directed her to two of Ro’s Riders. They had been assigned the checkpoint where Hamil had been patrolling with several others.

When Zora found them they were hovering over a healer who was stitching some serious bites and gashes in an unconscious Benson’s body. Zora knew the young woman was Echo’s second and a favourite of Lexa’s. She remembered the spirited young woman keeping morale high as they had hunted the traitors for weeks.

She barked out an order demanding to know what had happened. The tallest of the two Rider’s answered her, he was thin and lanky with tanned skin and a mop of curly brown hair on his head, his green eyes reminded her of Lexa briefly, “Mayor, She was patrolling with Hamil…” The Rider lost his composure for a moment and then steeled himself. “They were the last two to come in, we had sent everyone else to the gates already. They got attacked and fought their way through, they were almost to our position. We were covering them with arrows, and just as they thought they were clear and turned to run toward us one of the things jumped on her back and bit her…”

The shorter Rider, a young woman with glowing amber skin and deep brown eyes picked up the story, “Hamil killed it with his dagger and Benson stayed on her feet trying to get to us, we ran out to meet them and help her when three more jumped out at us. We never should have left the torches behind at the checkpoint.” She hung her head in shame. “Hamil fought them off and we carried Benson back to the light. When we got her back to the checkpoint I turned to go and help Hamil…”

The tall rider reached over and wrapped his arm around his friend, “Hamil shouted at her to get Benson back here. She tried to go to him but he drew both swords, grinned at us like a madman and then ran into the darkness. He shouted back to us that he’d buy us time, that we had to get Benson back safely. We re-lit as many torches as we could as we left, hoping to buy him some time…”

Zora watched as two of Ro’s normally stoic riders teared up and she was glad to offer them hope. “I passed by not long after you left. Hamil was there, unconscious but alive. I brought him back with me, the torches you re-lit surely saved both of us, we had a few close calls as we rode out of there.” Zora smiled at the two as she saw their faces light up at the news.

“Virgil is treating him, we’ll check on him later. For now how about helping me make safe these walls?” The riders nodded eagerly and followed Zora toward Rachel to get their next orders.

Lexa and Lincoln stood by the front door and shouted for the Blake’s. Suu had ordered all of her Women in Black to fall back inside the wall and abandon the perimeter and Octavia and Bellamy were just about to run and pass the order on to the checkpoints. Lexa caught Octavia’s attention and sent her left while she and Lincoln ran to the right.
Octavia and Bellamy passed on the order to the western line and ran for the northern as Lexa and Lincoln did the same for the eastern line. The four met at the northern line and as luck would have it all hell was breaking loose just as they arrived.

The guards were not at the checkpoint and Lexa could see that most of the lights on the second perimeter were out and the north side was so close to the forest it was darker there anyway. She could make out a faint light in front of them and she shouted out. “Northern checkpoint, identify yourselves!”

The reply she got was a scream for help, all four warriors grabbed a torch and they ran up the line together. They got halfway to the next checkpoint and they saw a Woman in Black half carrying, half dragging two of her wounded comrades down the line. She was desperately trying to hold onto a dying torch as she dragged her friends away from the darkness, and the creatures were in the shadows right behind her. Lexa stopped and grabbed her bow and an arrow from her back she nocked it and waited, one of the creatures leapt for the fleeing wounded and she let the arrow fly. The thing was knocked backwards by the force of the arrow connecting with it's skull and it fell to the ground dead. It’s friends screamed in rage.

Lincoln and Octavia had grabbed an injured girl each and were hightailing it back to the checkpoint. Bellamy grabbed the soldier who had been trying to carry them all out. “Is there anyone else back there?” He yelled and the girl spun and ran back into the darkness answering his question. He was hot on her heels and heard Heda beating down the path towards them as well.

They ran toward the previous checkpoint torches held high and were barraged by rocks and water bombs. Bellamy did a good job of shielding his torch but the Woman in Black lost hers and the darkness crept closer. Lexa caught up to them and quickly lit two arrows on fire, she fired them one after the other into the darkness in front of them, Bellamy didn’t know how she did it but both arrows landed in the chest of a creature and they flamed even higher on contact as if the terrors had very flammable skin. That burst of light gave them some time as the rest of the creatures screamed and backed off.

The eerie light of the burning terrors cast a yellowish pall over the bloody scene in front of them, three Women in Black were on the ground, dead and mutilated. The women were all in a similar position feet facing out heads toward each other. They had fought back to back and tired to make it out together. They had died together and now their blood flowed out and mingled in a still increasing pool, together.

The girl who had been trying to carry the others to safety screamed and made to run toward her dead friends, Bellamy held her back and began to drag her away, “There is nothing you can do, we have to get out for here! Now!” He pulled the distraught young woman away and Heda took out three more arrows, lit them from her torch, and fired one into each of the bodies, she would not allow them to be mutilated any more.

“Together, or not at all” She whispered reverently to the three who had obviously died trying to protect each other then she shouted to them as the fire caught on and the corpses began to burn releasing the spirit’s into the night, “Yu gonplei ste odon.” With that Heda turned and ran back toward the checkpoint.

She reached it just as the last of the lights were flickering out behind her. Lincoln was firing arrows past her and from the screams she heard she knew he was picking off any terrors that got too close to her. She didn’t slow down as she approached the gate, she ran right through and she heard Lincoln shout to Octavia as he slipped inside behind her. The heavy wooden door slammed shut and Lexa heard the large bolts slide into place.
With all the Women in Black now inside and minimal casualties they spread out quickly along the wall and through the courtyard. Suu came running over to Lexa, “Heda!” She looked concerned and Lexa brushed her off but she persisted, “You’re bleeding!” Suu insisted on inspecting Heda’s back.

Lexa looked surprised and twisted her neck to follow Suu’s gaze. She hadn’t really felt it as she had been running but one of the creatures had gotten close enough to land a glancing blow with its claws. It wasn’t very deep but Clarke had warned her about the things claws causing serious infections so she allowed Suu to call over one of her girls with a med kit.

As she impatiently waited for the wound to be washed and dressed she watched Suu arrange the Women in Black around the walls and prepare for the oncoming battle. She was satisfied with Suu’s strategy and with Octavia striding around and shouting orders as well. Bellamy and Lincoln had made themselves busy lighting the bonfires that had been prepared inside the courtyard at each entrance.

When the wound was cleaned out and a bandage applied Lexa shouted to Suu to hold the walls and she and Octavia returned to the front door. Lincoln and Bellamy had just finished lighting the last fire and were joined by Cade and Kita as they approached the door.


“Heda, the two wounded women are stable and two more rather serious cases have been taken to Clarke and Abby. The school is under attack, Echo saw the signal out the window. They haven’t called for help yet, the signal was just to let us know they have contact. We answered the same way.” Kita gave her report and Lexa nodded.

“Bellamy and Cade patrol the top floor, listen for noises on the roof, there are tall trees that could give the creatures access. Check in on Clarke and see what she needs, tell Echo to keep watch on the school. Lincoln and Octavia you have the first floor. There is a small cellar that also has an exit in the wooded area beyond the wall, they might find it. Keep an eye on it, but don’t go down there alone! You two have had enough fun in basements recently…” Lexa frowned as Octavia laughed heartily at her but felt refreshed hearing it.

The teams broke up and Kita and Lexa started to patrol the courtyard watching as the Women in Black fired arrows into the darkness and hearing the inhuman screams from the outside. They circled until they found Suu, she was giving orders near the northern gate. As they approached they heard a human scream cut through the night air.

Suu’s head snapped around and she bounded into action, she ran toward the scream, dagger drawn. One of her warriors had been patrolling the top of the wall and an overhanging tree had given one of the creatures access to her. It had crept along a branch and when it was directly overhead it had launched itself at the guard and knocked her down from the six foot wall.

Suu didn’t hesitate she jumped over the wall, dagger in hand, and Lexa heard the creature scream. Kita and Lexa were already pulling the gate open and shouting at all of the Women in Black to start firing arrows.

Suu had given each of her best archers a special arrow to use if things got really bad and two of her girls thought this was the time. Their leader had jumped over the fence into the dark to save one of them and they knew Suu’s special arrows would help. They each nocked one and the first girl let one fly. Lexa actually jumped a little as she swung open the gate and stepped outside only to be greeted by a three foot exploding fireball about twenty feet out.

It lit up the night enough for Lexa to see five creatures closing in on Suu and her injured soldier. Kita
slipped past her Heda and ran for Suu. She cut down two creatures on her way to them and as she arrived Suu was finishing off another in the dying light of the quickly fading fireball. As the last two creatures were taken out by snipers on the wall Kita reached Suu and wrapped her arm around the shoulder of the injured woman. The dark closed in and the sky went black again as the fireball died down, the laughter broke out not far away sending a chill down Kita’s back.

Lexa heard the same laughter coming from directly behind her and only her acute senses saved her, she spun to her left and the creature just missed her as it pounced. It had snuck up behind her and paid the price as Heda’s sword decapitated it from behind.

“Kita, hurry!” Lexa called out, knowing everyone was a risk the longer they held the gate open.

Just then the second arrow flew and another fireball erupted, this gave Suu and Kita the light they needed to quickly finish off the creatures that had come for them after the first arrow had burned out. To Kita’s dismay she saw there were five more creatures in sight and moving toward them. They grabbed the injured girl and ran for the gate.

They ran back inside and Lexa quickly slammed and bolted the gate. “Suu, what the hell are those arrows!? More importantly, do you have anymore!?” Lexa bellowed with a grin as soon as the gate was secured.

Suu turned toward Heda and grinned, “I only have a few, Heda. I make them special, but the ingredients are hard to find. I gave my best archers one each for tonight, for emergency use.” She grinned again and Heda grinned back.

“Are there any more?” Kita asked, “I would like to have one.” She looked pensive, “I have a feeling I could use it well later on this evening.”

Suu turned and looked as surprised as she always felt when the Ice Guard spoke to her without trying to kill her. “There are no more…” Suu paused and then reached around to her own quiver and removed an arrow, “take mine.” She held the arrow out and Kita looked directly into her eyes and stepped closer.

“Thank you, Suu.” Kita reached out and took the arrow and their hands brushed. Suu felt a shiver run up her spine and it had nothing to do with the inhuman screams that continued to come from outside the wall as her snipers picked off the terrors.

The night wore on with both the manor and school under attack. The creatures tried in vain to get close enough to the walls to take out all of the torches. The humans were replacing the torches as fast as they could knock them down or douse them with a water bomb. They screamed in frustration and anger striking fear into the hearts of those inside the walls.

They waited impatiently for word from the Interface and when it came they clapped and danced in glee. The laughter that rose from their toothy mouths struck even more fear into those inside the walls than the screams had.

Several of them broke off from the main group and followed the messengers around in the dark looking for something that would get them past the walls. The group that circled the manor found some tall trees that would get them onto the roof and an old door leading into a basement. They clapped and danced and laughed before they slipped up into the trees and down into the basement.

The group that was trying to get into the school found a deep, wide stream that ran under the wall
through the courtyard under a secondary building before running back outside of the walls. They laughed and danced, water was their natural medium, deep, and cold, and black was the water they came from and the deep, cold stream would do quite nicely to protect them from the light and get them inside.

“Heda, it’s too quiet. I don’t like it.” Kita frowned. They had been patrolling with Suu’s Women in Black in the courtyard and after several attempts at siege tactics on the wall the terrors had screamed in frustration and given up. A while later they heard laughter coming from the darkness outside of the walls and nothing since. Kita was voicing the unease everyone felt.

“I agree, Kita. Let’s go back inside and check on the patrols there.” Lexa was worried about the roof and the cellar. She had mentioned both to Suu who had sent a few of her girls inside to add to Lexa’s own patrols.

The two women watched the rooftop as they headed inside and just missed a pale face peering over the ridge of the roof as they walked past. “Bellamy, Cade.” Lexa called out to the two men as they rounded a corner and entered the main entryway. “Have you checked on the door to the cellar lately?” The two men replied that they had just checked on it during the last walk by. It was still locked and secure. Lexa frowned and motioned for them to join her. “Let’s go check it again.”

Up on the second floor Octavia and Lincoln were having the same worries Lexa and Kita were having. “Linc… they are going to try something soon, I can feel it.” Octavia stalked down the hallway like a caged tiger. She stopped at every window and obsessively searched outside for a clue.

“Octavia… shhhh…” Lincoln held up his hand to silence his lover and cocked his head to the side. “Do you hear that…?”

Octavia stilled and tried to concentrate on listening, she was about to give up when she heard it too, a faint scratching sound like mice scurrying around was coming from the roof. She looked at Lincoln and pointed up. He nodded.

Octavia turned and started to run back toward Rocks’s room. “We have to warn Clarke.” They ran down the hallway and Octavia asked, “How do you think they plan on putting the lights out?”

Lincoln considered her question and as he glanced around at the setup. There were candles burning on metals pedestals built into the walls of the hallway. They were spaced out evenly with around 10 feet between them. It left the hallway shadowy enough that Lincoln thought the creatures could stand it for a short time. He and Octavia carried a torch each and they brightened the hallways considerably.

“I think they could stand the light of the candles long enough to throw one of those water bombs to put them out.” He stated matter of factly. “They’ll breach the windows.” His prediction proved accurate and just as they reached the door to Rock’s room they heard a crash from the other side of the house.

“Clarke! They’re coming in the windows!!” Octavia stuck her head in the room and caught her friend’s eye as she hollered into the room. Her gaze shifted to Indra and she added, “We’ll hold them off in the hallway, watch your backs!”

Indra and Echo drew weapons and faced the windows as Kane and Dal followed suit with the front door. Clarke drew her gun and positioned herself at the foot of Rock’s bed and Abby drew her gun and prepared to defend her patients. One of her patients was well enough to have other ideas, Amina
stood, drew her sword and stood slightly ahead of the doctor who frowned in her direction but said nothing.

Downstairs Lexa and Kita were standing with their ears to the cellar door listening for proof that the creatures had breached when they heard the commotion from upstairs. Lincoln had bounded down the stairs, temporarily leaving Octavia alone on the second floor landing, “Heda! They are inside! They came through the windows!” As soon as he had the sentence out of his mouth he turned and raced back upstairs in time to join Octavia to defend the first attack.

Lexa made a split second decision, “Kita stay here and prepare the defence. They will come through the cellar, I’m sure of it!” With that she left her Ice Guard in charge on the first floor and raced off after Lincoln and Octavia. Bellamy and Cade itched to join her but followed her orders and remained on the first floor.

Kita forced herself not to pay attention to the noises from the second floor landing, where both her Heda and her Skai Reine were, and kept her ear to the door. As she did she heard confirmation, there was a shuffling, creaking sound and then the hair on the back of her neck raised in response to the muffled laughter she heard through the door.

“They are in the cellar too.” She confirmed and looked at Bellamy. “Go find Suu, I need to know more about the layout of this house. If there are any other exits to this cellar, we need them covered, now!” Bellamy took off full speed with a regretful glance at the stairs. His two (and soon to be three) great loves were up there and in the past nothing would have kept him downstairs. He had grown in the past few months with Echo and learned to trust his sister and his lover and even though he felt uneasy, he knew they were both more than capable of defending themselves.

Kita and Cade were standing back to back looking down the hallway as they stood guard at the cellar door when Suu came running in with Bellamy. “Kita!? she questioned.

“Suu, I need to know all the ways in and out of this cellar, now!” Kita barked.

Suu didn’t hesitate, “This entrance and a secret, hidden entrance in the kitchen.”

“Where!?” Cade and Kita shouted in unison.

They all turned when a scream pierced the air, leaving Cade and Kita holding the door to the cellar as Suu and Bellamy took off full speed running toward the kitchen. Bellamy had a torch in his hand and as they rounded the last corner of the hallway before it lead into the kitchen they both noticed that the hallway was much darker.

Bellamy slowed down to relight some of the candles along the wall but Suu raced on ahead. When Bellamy saw Suu rush ahead he swore and abandoned his efforts after only managing to light one of the candles.

He heard a thump and a loud ‘oump’ sound and as he ran into the darkened room his torch lit the area. He heard hissing as three of the pale terrors backed away form his light and he saw Suu on the ground struggling to stand. She had slipped on something, and fallen heavily onto her back. It was dark and very slippery, and as Bellamy looked around he found the source. There was a decapitated terror not two feet away and the pool of dark blood was spreading out from it.

Suu regained her feet and called out, “Girls!? Who is in here? It’s Suu, answer me!” They both strained to hear an answer and they heard a faint whimpering cry come from behind the chef’s island in the middle of the room. They lined up back to back and as they moved further into the room the pale ones moved in closer and closer, dancing on the edge of the light of Bellamy’s torch and
laughing.

Suu was getting pissed off, she hated the feeling of fear that was creeping over her skin, the tingle it caused and the flutter it put into her otherwise steady heart. “Fuck it!” She declared and pushed off of Bellamy’s back. She pivoted and turned charging forward with a battle cry. She had a sword in her right hand and she pulled a dagger with her left. When she got to the edge of the darkness she swung her sword wildly in an arc and heard screams of rage and surprise as the creatures jumped back away from her.

Bellamy sped up as soon as he saw what she was doing and the torch light caught up quicker than the creatures has expected, as soon as Suu got her eye on one, she flicked her wrist and her dagger flew. Her aim was deadly and the pale terror fell to the floor with her blade in it’s throat. More angry screams filled the room and they felt and heard the rest scuttle a little further into the shadows.

Suu retrieved her dagger and Bellamy ran to the island. They found a Woman in Black sitting on the floor of the kitchen with her back pressed up against the island. She was bleeding from too many places to count but she was alive. Her face was frozen in a look of pure terror and in her lap she held onto her patrol partner. Bellamy tried to help her but she brandished her sword at him and shouted, “No! You can not take her, I won’t let you take her! Back you devils! Back!”

Suu ran over and one look told her everything. Maria was alive, but badly injured. Her patrol partner had been her lover, Flax. The two had been joined not long ago and Suu had been the one to stand with Maria, her dearest friend. Flax was dead, Suu could see the large chunks that had been ripped from her throat and and the deep lacerations on her scarred shoulders and arms. There was also a bite out of her pretty face that exposed her entire right jaw line down to the bone.

The pool of blood that spread out on the floor all around them also stained Maria’s chest, arms, shoulders, and was smeared on her face. This and the position of the couple told Suu the battle story, Maria had fought forward to get to Flax and had reached her while she was still alive. Flax had died in Maria’s arms, Suu was certain. Maria was a brave fighter and she had fought until she found somewhere to put her back against a solid surface and then she held her dying lover to her chest and swung out her sword to keep back the terrors that would take them both.

The sight of these two snapped something inside of her that was already precarious and Suu roared. “Bellamy! Why do we cower in fear of these tiny, pale things!? It’s the dark they use to keep us afraid. Bring your torch! We won’t be hunted any longer, we shall hunt them!” Bellamy heard Suu’s anger and he knew it made her dangerous, she wasn’t thinking she was letting her rage guide her, but he liked her idea anyway. He thought the situation needed a little recklessness and he sure as hell wasn’t going to cower in fear and wait for the things to take out his torch and eat him. He would go with Suu, hunt the fuckers, and clear the kitchen.

Suu turned and grabbed Bellamy’s shoulder, “We’ll clear them out. There is a corner there by the brick oven, we’ll start there and clear the room to the right! Let’s go!” The speed with which the young woman sprung forward surprised Bellamy and he was already two steps behind when Suu raced for the corner. The lack of light as she rushed forward gave the terrors courage and they leapt at her.

Suu was in a warriors rage, a blood rage, her senses were heightened and she felt as much as she heard or saw her attackers. Her sword cut a one-handed arc through the air to her right ending the fight of one of the pale monsters. Her dagger, gripped firmly in her left hand, waited for the right moment and then punched out at the perfect angle. Suu turned her head to look into the eyes of the terror she had just stabbed in the neck. It looked at her with a strange kind of surprise mixed with fear in it’s eyes and as it died it whispered to her… “no fear… in your eyes…why…?”
Suu threw the body back off of her knife and Bellamy caught up to her and immediately chased off into the corner following one of the creatures. She sheathed her dagger and followed. The two of them chased down the terrors and killed two of them in the shadows of the first corner they invaded. They moved swiftly and aggressively to the right and ran down the length of the room keeping the wall on their left side. They heard the creatures shuffling in front of them and Suu made another quick decision. As soon as the far wall was in sight she cut hard to the right at a forty-five degree angle. She cut off the retreating creatures and even in the dark she had no trouble ending them, her rage was fuelling her sword and neither would be denied.

Bellamy continued to the wall and found one of the pale creatures hiding under a cabinet. It rushed at him and he ran it through with his sword killing it immediately. He moved forward to find Suu wiping the strange black blood off of her sword and the two grinned at each other like crazed maniacs. They ran forward again, shouting as they cleared the kitchen.

Kita and Cade had been standing in front of the cellar door making sure it stayed closed when they noticed the hallway to the kitchen becoming darker and darker. Two of the terrors had slipped out of the kitchen and were methodically making their way down the hallway taking out the lights as they went.

Kita sighed a heavy sigh and shouted for the Women in Black who were patrolling the first floor. “Willow, Oak!” She called for the twins and they came running from the opposite direction. When they arrive they immediately saw the problem.

“We should go for reinforcements!” Willow took a step towards the front door.

“No!” Kita’s voice stopped her, “They hold the wall, we can handle this. We must not abandon the wall!” Kita nodded to the two younger warriors. “Stay here. Keep this door shut and locked. We’ll handle this growing darkness.” She gestured in the direction of the kitchen and Cade grinned at her as they walked toward the hallway.

They grabbed a torch each and approached the corner quickly. Cade stepped out into the hall and a perfectly aimed water bomb took out his torch. He was a brave man who had seen many things in his lifetime. Of all the beasts he had fought he always maintained that humans were the scariest of all things on Earth. The metallic smell of the water he had just been partially doused with grossed him out and the wetness dripping out of his hair and down his face really pissed him off. He was tired of being scared of these creepy little fuckers and he decided it was time to show them why humans were indeed the scariest.

Kita watched Cade get hit by the water and she heard the two Women in Black gasp in horror. She kept her eye on the set of Cade’s jaw and what she saw made her heart beat faster. He wasn’t scared, he was angry. As if to confirm her observation he threw down the now doused wooden torch and with two hands on his sword he walked fearlessly into the dark.

She trotted after him with her torch and as they moved down the hallway she stopped to relight the candles. She had some success but others refused to light with the wicks still in a puddle of the strange smelling water. She kept her eyes on Cade and he was stalking down the hallway methodically going from wall to wall searching for the creatures. She knew the light of her torch was keeping them back and after a moment of hesitation she called to Cade.

“Cade. It’s my torch, they are moving away from us to keep out of the light. Let me leave it here.” There was a metal ring in the side of the wall designed to hold torches for warmth and light in the winter. She slipped it into the ring and suddenly felt lighter. The fear she held onto seemed less as
she made the choice to leave the light and step freely into the dark. Cade grinned at her.

The pair moved steadily into the darkness, senses alight and a thirst for blood replacing the fear they had been conditioned to feel about the creatures and the dark.

They were about five meters from the kitchen door when they heard Suu’s bellowing war cry. Cade grinned, “Seems Suu has found the same answer as we have, we must be the hunters.” As soon as he had spoken he heard the shuffling of feet on the floor, one of the terrors rushed at him. He couldn’t quite see it as his eyes had yet to adjust completely to the darkness, but his years of training as a warrior led his movements. He stepped slightly to the side and kept his sword in front of him. When the creature jumped at him it struck him on the shoulder and both he and the creature fell to the floor. He was quick but the creatures was inhumanly quick. He had his dagger in hand when he felt the teeth sink into his leg.

Cade’s mind thought back to his first meeting with Dal. It was his first big cat hunt. There had been a series of attacks by cougars on a village outside of the city. They had asked his mother for help and she had assembled a hunting party and finally allowed her son to go. Cade had been so excited. Dal was the son of a village head to the north. His village was famous for raising and training the best hunters and huntresses in all of the clans. His father sent him at the tender age of fourteen to lead the hunt.

Dal had partnered himself with Cade, his father had told him to ensure the safety of the Regent’s son. As the hunt progressed Dal found himself falling in love with the handsome dark haired boy. Eventually they had found themselves face to face with a very large, very angry cat. Cade remembered the feeling of the cougars teeth sinking into his side, he remembered Dal shouting at him as he ran to his aid, shouting not to be afraid, he remembered wanting to impress the handsome boy and fighting through his pain and fear. He remembered taking his dagger from it’s sheath and slitting the throat of the giant cat as it bit down on him. Then he remembered Dal’s lips on his. He smiled.

Kita’s eyes were now accustomed to the dark, her sister had always told her she was some kind of freak the way she could see in the dark. She grinned at the memory as she watched Cade used the creatures hunger against it. He seemed unconcerned at the teeth tearing this flesh, he grabbed the thing by the back of it’s head and instead of flinging it from his body he held it even closer, pushed it’s face into his bleeding leg. He grabbed his dagger and he smiled as he brought it toward the creature.

Kita heard the soft swooshing sound before she saw the pale body falling from the ceiling. Her dagger flew from her hand but not quick enough to be a kill shot. As Cade slit the throat of the creature attached to his leg another fell from the ceiling onto his back. The creature was injured and it’s thought was of escape so it didn’t bite him, it slashed at him and managed to leave deep gashes in his exposed arms and shoulders. The thick leather vest he wore mostly protected his back and the creatures claws left only shallow cuts there.

Kita was on the creature before it could slip into the darkness. She felt the fragility of it’s bones as her strong hand grabbed it by the shoulder and pulled it to her. It whirled and it’s oversized hands grabbed her wrist to break her hold. She felt the strength of it’s grip and her leather bracers were not going to keep it’s claws from the skin of her forearm much longer. Kita brought her left hand around and followed Cade’s lead. She held the creature to her and slit it’s throat. Her fear of the things was as dead as the one now lying at her feet but the black, metallic smelling blood made her disgust of them increase tenfold.

Cade stood and Kita quickly assessed his wounds. He shrugged her off saying, “I’ve had worse, let’s push forward until we meet Bell and Suu.” Kita agreed and the two held their weapons at the ready.
as they moved swiftly down the hall.

They reached the entrance to the kitchen as Bellamy and Suu were finishing their sweep of the room. Suu stood at the secret entrance to the cellar and Bellamy was moving quickly forward to the end of the kitchen and back. “I think we got them all, Su!” He said with pride in his voice as he jumped on top of a chair and held the torch high. Kita and Cade did a quick sweep checking under cabinets and in dark corners and they all agreed the room was clear.

Cade and Bellamy set to work moving any heavy furniture they could find to block the door to the cellar and Kita followed Suu back to her downed soldiers. “Maria, Maria, hold on, you’re going to be okay.” Suu spoke quietly to her friend and reached into her pocket to take out some bandages.

“No… leave me.” Maria’s voice was ragged and bereft of life.

“No, Maria. Be strong. Flax wouldn’t want…” Suu stopped and fought back her tears. “Maria, please.”

Kita laid her hand on Suu’s shoulder, the contact made Suu’s insides clench in a strange way but now was not the time for such thoughts.

“Maria...” She tried once more but the injured woman just leaned forward and placed a tender kiss on the face of her dead partner and then gestured for Suu to come forward. She placed a kiss on each of Suu’s cheeks.

“I choose to follow her, we are joined, it is my right.” Maria’s voice was calm, “I will do it myself but I’d rather...” She looked into Suu’s eyes and when she saw the pain and tears she knew Suu couldn’t do it. As hard and fearless as Suu the leader of the Women in Black was, Maria knew the softness of her heart. The two had been roommates in the old school and had been best friends since, Flax had been one of the women who had joined the resistance later. Over time the thirty who had survived the school had been joined by women who wanted to fight Yor’s regime. When Heda’s force had crossed the bridge the Women in Black were over one hundred strong.

“I ask too much of you my dear friend, forgive me for leaving you.” Maria reached her bloody hand up and touched Suu’s cheek. She lowered her hand and picked up her dagger, she turned it inward and adjusted her grip, she took a deep breath and prepared to take her own life. She was interrupted by hands softly stroking hers and removing the dagger from her tight grip. She looked up into Kita’s eyes.

“Maria, I do not know you well, but I have seen both you and Flax fight bravely. It would be my honour to help your spirits meet again.” Kita reached out and softly stroked Maria’s cheek and wiped away the tears that fell. The woman looked at her with such gratitude and such peace Kita knew she was doing the right thing. She hummed an old Ice ballad softly as she took the dagger and adjusted Flax in Maria’s arms so she had access to the spot she knew would end Maria’s pain much faster than anywhere else.

She stroked the woman’s face and looked her in the eye as she pushed the dagger forward with just the right amount of force to sever the vessels the needed severing. Maria breathed out a harsh breath and her head fell forward. “Thank you...” she managed to whisper as she laid her head against Flax’s and closed her eyes as her life drained away.

Suu’s hand shook as she reached over and took Kita’s hand, the hand that had just done what she could not bring herself to do. “Thank you, Kita, of the Ice Nation...” Then she stood on shaky legs and walked over to the wall. Her arms outstretched and braced against the wall she hung her head and the bile that had risen in her throat spilled out. Once the contents of her stomach were splattered
on the kitchen floor she took a deep breath and screamed a hoarse and grief filled scream.

Kita knew Suu needed a moment and she instructed Cade and Dal to return to the foyer and check on the Women in Black they had left guarding the door to the cellar. As the two men nodded and turned to leave she added, “Cade, of the Lakes, if all is quiet please see the Skai Heda for your wounds they will get infected if they aren’t properly cleaned.”

“Sha, Kita. I will…” Cade answered. He wanted to say something, to do something that would show both women how he felt, how sad he was for the dead lovers, how he appreciated what Kita had done and how he understood why Suu cold not. He was never a man of eloquence or poetry like his Dal, so she just reached out and grasped Kita’s forearm tightly before he left. He hoped the Ice Girl understood, he thought she did.

Bellamy had crossed over to Suu. He placed his hand very gently on her shoulder and squeezed. “I came down to Earth on a ship with 100 others. There are less than half of us left.” He was trying to express to her that he knew how she felt and he supported her. “Echo told me that Trikru believe the spirits of those who are joined will stay together into the next life if they are released together, otherwise they spend the next life searching for each other again. Maria and Flax, their fight is over but their spirits will stay together.” He squeezed her shoulder again and added, “You fought well Suu. We can beat these things now that we aren’t afraid.”

Bellamy and Cade left and Kita checked the cellar door and did one more sweep of the kitchen before returning to Suu. “There is still a battle to be fought, Suu. Come.” Kita reached out and took the smaller woman’s hand tugging her around to face her.

Suu wasn’t expecting the physical contact, she never was from Kita, and she stumbled as she turned. Kita caught her and pulled her into an embrace. Suu was stunned. She felt the warmth radiating from the woman’s body and the strength of her arms as they wrapped themselves around her. She felt a strange and unfamiliar feeling, she felt the desire to submit to the embrace, to lay down her defences and let herself be held. The feeling caught her so off guard she tensed and Kita immediately released her.

“Come, Suu. To the battle.” Kita’s voice was soft and she once more reached for Suu’s hand. Suu allowed herself to be led from the kitchen and as they walked down the hallway they quickly caught up with Bellamy and Cade who were relighting all of the candles as they went.

Suu shook her head to clear her thoughts and as she regained her senses she realized she heard feet, a lot of feet, running toward her. Kita heard it too and then Bellamy and Cade. They were not the shuffling sounds of the creatures but the sound of human feet, in boots.

Suu and Kita realized what was happening and they both took off down the hallway. “Get back to the walls!!” Suu was already screaming as they ran toward the foyer. They almost ran smack into ten of her girls as they rounded the next corner.

“What are you doing!? I told you to hold the walls!?” Kita yelled exasperated.

“Get back to the walls, now. Let’s move!” Suu shouted as she ran along with them speeding to the front of the pack. They raced for the door but were met with the rest of the patrols retreating, bloody and not entirely whole. “Lane!? What happened!??” Suu grabbed her bloody sergeant as she stumbled through the door.

“They were biding their time, Suu. As soon as we removed half our people from the walls they struck. There were more of them than we thought, and they can climb…” The woman was bleeding heavily and needed medical attention. Kita stepped forward and threw her over her shoulder.
“Suu, bring them all in and barricade the doors and windows. I’ll get Heda.” Kita raced up the stairs.

When Lexa had raced upstairs to aid Octavia and Lincoln she arrived in time to see the candle lights winking out down the hallway to the left and Octavia and Lincoln rushing into the darkness on the right. Clarke was to the left and all of her heart told her to go left, but she was Heda and she fought with her head, not her heart. She followed Lincoln and Octavia and arrived in time to pull a terror from Octavia’s back and stick her knife into it’s heart. Lincoln had one attached to his forearm and was crushing it against the wall as he ran his sword through two others that charged him.

Octavia took out two on her side and Lexa flicked her dagger into the face of the one struggling against Lincoln’s hold. As it stilled Lincoln dropped it and bent to retrieve Heda’s dagger. He tossed it back to her and the three of them regrouped.

“They are down the other hallway as well.” Lexa reported. “I saw the candles going out.”

“There is a patrol this way, Heda. We heard them call for help. Clarke is safe in that room, Indra, Echo, Kane, and Dal are there.” Octavia’s eyes had started to become adjusted to the dark and she saw one of the creatures creeping toward them. She grabbed a dagger and sent it flying, it connected with the creature’s shoulder and it went down shrieking.

Heda strode forward and grabbed the creature. “How many are you?” She shook it and pressed on it’s wounds.

The creature screamed at her and she ignored the desire to cover her ears. “How many?” She repeated.

The thing laughed at her and Lincoln stepped forward and killed another one who had come looking for it’s kin. “Many, many of us. Here and there, everywhere. Many of us….” It laughed again and Lexa snapped it’s neck stopping the horrid sound.

Lexa’s heart was pounding, she felt a strong press to get to Clarke as quickly as she could, but she knew Octavia was right. Clarke was very well defended and she could not abandon the two Women in Black who were caught in the darkness ahead of them.

“Do you fear them?” She asked Lincoln and Octavia, “Speak true! I need to know.”

“I do not fear them, Heda.” Lincoln’s reply was honest. He was revulsed by them, but they struck no more fear into his heart than any creature he’d fought. He had killed enough of them by now, some with his bare hands, to know he could defeat them.

“Nor do I, Heda.” Lexa turned and in the dark her eyes found Octavia’s face, the set of the woman’s jaw told her enough. Even if Octavia was afraid, Indra’s former second was stubborn enough to fight through it.

“I want this floor cleared hard and fast. We charge them, we hunt them down, and we kill them. We move fast and aggressive and together. Understood?” Heda grinned as they both answered yes to her. “We move on three… one, two…. three!” The three Trikru warriors let out war cries and raced forward.

They encountered four of the creatures right away and Lexa sliced and diced all four herself. Lincoln could hear the creatures falling back away from them as they rushed them. He felt disconcerted, like the creatures had another plan, another way in. He thought of the basement and sent a silent prayer for Bellamy Blake to be careful.
They raced down the hallway taking out the occasional creature but not seeing as many as they had thought. As they turned the next corner they saw a single torch burning brightly and being brandished by one of the Women in Black. There were two of them, backs to the wall fighting to protect the light that protected them. They didn’t seem afraid and they laughed together as they fought.

One of the women would spin and wave the torch into the darkness and the other would take a swing at whatever creatures she spotted. The woman with the torch would then hold her body between it and the wall, She was wet from the water bombs but so far had managed to protect the flame. Lexa quickly closed one eye and slipped back into the shadows around the corner. She tugged Octavia with her and the warrior followed willingly. Lexa reopened her eye and let the darkness settle in around her once more.

Lincoln you have to get them to give up the torch when I say so. Lexa and Octavia covered their eyes and rubbed them for several seconds to help the night vision return faster. When Lexa reopened her eyes she allowed a few seconds to readjust to the dark and then check on Octavia. She got a thumbs up and called out to Lincoln. “We’re ready, Lincoln. Twenty seconds!” She shouted.

Lincoln had already rushed to the side of the two warriors and shouted at them to douse the flame. “Trust Heda” he shouted and the two warriors took deep breaths and nodded at him.

He heard Lexa’s count dropping to five, four… the torch bearer turned and held it aloft and the creatures cackled in the darkness as a water bomb flew and the flame hissed out.

“…three…two…one” Lexa and Octavia burst around the corner arrows nocked and their night vision was already good enough to make out the pale bodies moving forward. Arrows flew and connected with their targets. Lexa and Octavia ran forward drawing their swords. They had enough light from the moon streaming in the broken windows to see the faces of the two women they had just rescued. They were smiling.

“Heda… we had them right where we wanted them… jeeze..” The one called Mer was the joker of Suu’s Women in Black and Lexa chuckled at her.

“Forgive me Mer, I am Trikru, I can’t help but join a hunt.” Heda’s unexpected humour put the two into a fit of giggles and they fell in line behind Lexa and Octavia.

“There is enough light tonight to fight them without torches, your night vision will adapt well enough in about five minutes. It will be fully adapted in 30.” Lexa talked to the girls about their vision as the group pressed forward. “Trikru often fight and hunt in the forest at night. I suspect you city girls know less of the darkness.” Lexa was reassuring them as much as instructing them.

Lincoln joined her, “The creatures feed on our fear as much as our blood. They expect us to try and hide in the light, not hunt them in the dark.” The large man slipped silently forward and chased down a terror that had climbed up to the roof and waited to pounce on them as they passed.

Octavia let an arrow fly now and again taking out the creatures as she saw them. They proceeded down the hallway like this, meeting few terrors and Lexa’s mind raced.

The two Women in Black declared with delight that they could see well enough to defend themselves as they approached the final corner that would take them around to Rock’s room. Mer leapt forward and sunk her sword into one of the creatures that had been following them waiting for a chance to attack.

As she pulled her sword out she was set upon by three more from above. Her partner, Sara, moved
in and killed one quickly. Mer had one by the neck and it slashed out at her with its sharp claws cutting deeply into her arms and shoulders. The third one managed to get ahold of her right shoulder and pull itself up. It sank its teeth into her neck and she screamed in pain. Octavia turned and her arrow flew straight killing the beast before it could rip the girl’s jugular from her neck.

Lincoln ran forward and caught her as she fell. He threw the terror away from her and clasped his hand over the girl’s neck wound. He ignored the arrow that protruded through her shoulder, he knew Octavia hadn’t hit anything vital.

He picked the girl up and turned to race for help.

As he ran past them toward the door Lexa turned and stared back into the darkness. “Why so few…?” She muttered to herself. Sara joined her waiting expectantly for Heda to move first. “Why didn’t they send more through the roof?” She muttered and then she answered herself, “Fuck.” An uncharacteristic profanity escaped her lips. “It’s a distraction. They want our gaze away from the wall!”

Lexa turned and ran toward the room where her heart was, as she approached the door she saw Kita racing in with another wounded. “Heda!” She shouted out to Lexa.

“The wall!” They both yelled at each other. Kita looked confused at how Lexa already knew and Lexa just demanded an explanation.

“They have taken the wall, the cellar was a distraction!” Kita shouted as she placed the injured woman down where Clarke could take a look at her. Abby was already working on stopping Mer’s bleeding.

Lexa let her gaze linger on Clarke, whole and uninjured, for just a few seconds. “Kita, did you stop them from entering the cellar?” She demanded.

“She Heda, both entrances are blocked.” Kita’s reply was quick and she glanced at the door with a frown? “The roof?”

Heda shook her head, “No, the windows are smashed it will be impossible to block them all, but we have to retake these hallways. Lincoln, Octavia, come!”

The four warriors strode back into the hallway and Lexa grabbed torches from the entrance, “We can’t rely on these but we need this hallway back. I want every second set of candles lit on the inner wall only, and post teams at each window. It won’t be too much light that we will lose our night vision and be blinded by any sudden darkness, it will be enough light to fight by and I think the creatures will ignore such a low level. We’ll be fighting even… and I bet on us!”

Lexa shouted her orders as they all grabbed a torch from the entrance to Rock’s room and moved forward together. They lit the candles as they moved along the hallway meeting little resistance.

Kita stopped at the first window and took out her bow and notched an arrow. “I have this one, Heda.” Lexa nodded and continued clearing the hall. There were four large windows on the second floor one facing in each direction almost directly above the gates out of the courtyard.

Kane and Dal had flung open the door to the room they were holed up in and they stepped into the hallway to offer what support they could while still protecting the injured and the healers inside.

Amina limped out and made her way to Kita’s side. Kita looked at her sideways, “Are you well enough to fight?” She asked the beautiful young woman.
“To fight? Yes, Ice Girl.” Amina’s wink set Kita at ease. “But for other things I’m afraid no. You will have to look elsewhere tonight to quench the bloodlust after the battle. That thing scratched me in a few rather awkward spots…” Kita blushed but looked quickly back at the girl her eyes searching up and down Amina’s body. She saw the bandages on her thighs and on her lower abdomen and then looked away.

“I’m just glad you are okay.” Kita spoke softly and glanced quickly back catching Amina’s eyes. The two women nodded at each other and went back to searching out the window.

At the next window Octavia and Lincoln stopped and took out their bows and arrows. Dal ran along the hallway collecting the torches back from the teams. He returned them to the still well lit room where Clarke and Abby were stitching up several Women Black and placed the torches inside the entrance.

The second floor was now lit in a very low light as per Heda’s orders. Sara had returned from the fist floor with reinforcements and Lexa soon had the second floor secured the way she wanted it. Two archers at each window and two patrolling between each of the windows constantly.

Lexa ran downstairs to connect with Suu about the situation. She found Cade and Bellamy at the front door racing in and out piling whatever wood they could find on the now raging bonfire about fifteen feet from the front door.

She walked quickly over to the cellar door where two Women in Black were standing guard and placed her ear to the door. She heard nothing. She sighed and walked the hallways of the house quickly checking in as she went with the warriors Suu had placed at each window and more at the front and back doors.

Lexa found Suu in the kitchen double checking the secret door to the cellar. Lexa did a quick sweep and saw the two Women in Black dead in each other’s arms. She frowned but said nothing. “Suu, is the house secured?” She was all business.

“Sha Heda. They have breached the courtyard, but not the house. The cellar is blocked.” Suu answered. “Apologies Heda, I ordered them to stay at their posts but they abandoned the wall and came to my aid when they heard my scream.” Suu was angry with herself.

Lexa cocked her head slightly to the side and looked at Suu, “Your scream was grief, yes?” Her eyes moved toward the island in the middle of the room, both of them knowing what was on the other side of it.

“Sha, Heda. It should have waited until morning.” Suu clenched her jaw and turned to leave the kitchen. “I will not fail you again, Heda.”

“Grief spills when it must, Suu. Do not judge yourself too harshly. They seem to be smarter than we anticipated, the cellar and the roof were distractions to help them gain the courtyard. Be vigilant, we don’t know their next move.”

Lexa patted Suu rather awkwardly on the shoulder and, embarrassed, they both turned and strode down the hall stopping to offer words of encouragement to those guarding the entryways. They stopped at the base of the stairs and Lexa stood and surveyed for a moment.

“What of the courtyard?” She asked as Bellamy approached her.

“The walls are totally overrun…” he shook his head and sighed, “but the bonfires at the other gates are still burning, not as high as the one at the front entrance, but they are still there. The creatures
avoid the gates because of the fires, they are concentrated at the corners of the house as far from the light of the fires as they can get. I can’t tell how many of them there are out there but we have about fifty people in here.”

Lexa nodded and looked pensive. She looked around at Suu, Bellamy and Cade. “We have to hold them back, this is one fight that morning will win for us.” They nodded at her and Lexa bounded back up the stairs.

Back at the school things were not going much better. The creatures had swarmed the roof and swum down the steam to enter the shed on the grounds. Zora and Rachel were aware of the ones on the roof but not yet aware of the ones in the shed.

“How the hell are we going to get them off of the roof with out burning down the place?” Zora was irritated.

“Maybe we should let them stay up there… they haven’t made a move yet,” Rachel noted. “All of the hallways are lit brighter than a summer’s afternoon, there are too many torches for them to take out. They are kind of stuck up there… no?”

“They’ll find a way Rachel.” Zora sighed and headed inside to check on the children. She walked around the first floor checking in with the boys who helped guard the windows. She stopped and talked with the members of the elite force who were leading the defence. No one had any ideas what to do besides wait. She sighed heavily as she walked up to the second floor. As she went into the first dormitory she tried to school her face into an impassive mask.

Luna and a couple of the Women in Black were in the dormitory with the youngest girls. The room was lit softly with torches but not as bright as the rest of the house. It had no windows and no direct access to the outside. Most of the young ones were sleeping and Luna paced quietly back and forth.

“Mayor, thank you for dropping in. Is there anything to report?” Luna’s normally serine expression was faltering and her face was lined with exhaustion and worry. Her uncontrollable red hair fell into her eyes as she lowered her gaze to the ground and added, “Is Rachel okay? She hates when I ask, but…”

“What I wouldn’t give for reassurance that my Rock is well at this moment.” Zora smiled softly at Luna, she reached out and pulled the leader of the boat clan into an embrace. “Rachel is fine, Luna. She has taken charge of the warriors defending the walls and has not a scratch on her, I promise.”

When she felt Luna relax a little she released her. ‘I was hoping I might pick your brain, Luna.” Zora’s forehead furrowed and she sighed.

“Of course, Mayor.” Luna was still quite formal with Zora and the larger woman found it amusing.

“Luna, we are equals. You are the leader of the boat clan, why do you insist on calling me Mayor? You rarely even call Lexa, Heda.” Zora grinned.

“It sets a good example for the children,” Luna smiled, “and sometimes I prefer to use titles when I am a guest in someone else’s home. As for Lexa…. well, she is my baby sister… if not by blood then by heart. So, how can I help you, Zora?” Luna seemed to have forgotten her earlier weariness as she leaned in eager to hear Zora’s problem.

“They are on the roof and I don’t know how to get them off. I also have no idea what they plan to do or how they think they can attack us from there… We have the whole place lit up so they can’t easily
climb down and come in the windows… They must have a plan but I have no idea what it is.” Zora sighed, “One thing I didn’t plan on was those little creeps outsmarting me.”

Luna chuckled softly, “Indeed. So they are on the roof… and still attacking the walls?”

Zora thought for a moment, “Not as fervently as they were before. It’s been rather quiet out there for a bit.”

Luna thought some more, “They could be planning to come in the windows but as you said we have the hallways and rooms lit with so many torches they wouldn’t be able to stand the light. Is there anyway they could rush in and put the torches out?”

“I considered that but there are just so many in the hallways and the Elite force patrolling along with all the boys with bows and arrows in the windows. we’d cut them down before they got even half of the torches, and they haven’t tried yet either, it’s like they know they can’t breach that way.”

“Did you know there is an attic, here? The entrance is on the fourth floor at the very end of the hallway” Luna asked, remembering the dark space where they had found several desks and chairs when they first started using the building as a school.

“An attic!? No, I didn’t realize.” Zora thought quickly, “Do you think they could get inside from the roof?”

“I’m certain they could, There is a small window that would lead them directly inside. But, once inside they would just be in the same situation, no?”

“Maybe, but hold on a moment. Even if that’s the case I want guards on the entrance anyway.” Zora stuck her head out the door and saw Joss, one of Lexa’s Trikru. “Joss, there is an attic on the fourth floor, take two people with you and guard it. Nothing gets out, understood!?”

“Sha, mayor! Nothing gets out!” Joss grinned as he yelled for two of his companions to join him in ‘attic duty’ as he called it.

Zora went back inside and once again looked to Luna for advice. Luna thought about the situation, “There must be a reason, Zora. Why would they be on the roof?” Luna and Zora thought about it and they were interrupted by one of the children.

She was a tiny little one with a thick mop of dark wavy hair. She looked up at them with giant brown eyes and Zora thought she was the cutest kid she had ever seen. “Mayor, Luna…” She started uncertainly…. when they nodded at her to continue she did, “my brother used to climb onto our roof too.” She giggled at the memory, “my mom got really mad at him and I asked her why he did it. She said he was just showing off. Maybe the monsters are just showing off too…?” The child smiled up at them showing the gaps where she had lost some of her baby teeth and Zora wondered if she could just keep her.

“Showing off…. showing off…? they are just showing off…?” Luna kept repeating herself and trying to work something out in her head. “Zora! The roof is a distraction, it makes the most sense. They must have found another way in and they are trying to keep our eyes on the roof so we don't notice!” Luna looked startled at the realization and Zora’s mouth dropped open a little as well.

“Are they smart enough to plan that…?” She sighed, “You’re right it makes sense. If they want us to look high, we’d better start looking low.” Zora bent and thanked the little girl and then rose and looked at Luna again. “I’ll get people searching the first floor and the grounds for signs of them.”

The mayor strode out of the room and down the stairs to find Rachel. As she exited the building she
saw with relief the Hamil was sitting up and talking with Virgil. She didn’t stop, she was growing more and more nervous playing Luna’s words over in her head. “Rachel!” She called the general to her.

“Mayor, what is it!?” Rachel saw the worry on the Mayor’s face and her thoughts went to her partner. “Is Luna okay!?”

“She’s fine, in fact she helped me work this out… well her and a tiny adorable little kid… anyway, we need to start searching the grounds.” Zora skipped ahead.

“The grounds?” Rachel looked around. “The walls are still secure,” she pointed out. “Shouldn’t we be worried about the roof?” She pointed up.

“That’s just it. They are stuck on the roof. We are too fortified and have too much light. They have no way into the school from there. Luna thinks maybe it’s a distraction and they are coming in somewhere else. I think it’s likely she’s correct.” Zora looked around searching for anything that looked out of place. Her eyes landed on the shed.

Rachel followed her gaze and landed on the stream that flowed both into and out of that building. “We checked it at the beginning of the night and haven’t looked inside since, the walls held, there was no need. Do we know if they can swim…?” Zora drew her sword and Rachel drew hers.

“I think we’re going to find out.” Zora answered as she started walking toward the shed.

Rachel followed and gestured as she walked calling warriors to her side. She whispered to them as they joined her and some ran off to pass the word to archers for support. The rest drew weapons and fell into step.

“It’s in between the torches just enough for the shadows to reach, we can still see well enough to fight, but I think they won’t be in pain from the light either.” Zora surmised looking at the position of the shed. She could see the far corner of it from where they were at the front of the school.

There were ten warriors behind her as she approached the corner. Six more archers were spreading out behind them for backup. Zora turned and looked at her team as she prepared to turn the corner. “Kill them on site, don’t hesitate.” She took a deep breath and turned around then stepped around the corner.

“Luna was right.” She shouted as she started running forward. “Call in reinforcements from the first floor but keep manning the walls! we won’t be fooled twice!” As two warriors ran to do her bidding the rest of them rushed forward with her.

The creatures had found that the shadows around the shed were just dark enough for them and they had slipped out of the stream and danced around as their plan came together. They waited for the patrols to pass and they began to look for a way inside.

When Zora and her team found them they were climbing up the building like ants. A thin line of white terrors scaling the side of the building. They were hidden from site of most of the windows by the relic of a chimney as they ascended. They seemed to be heading directly for a particular window on the fourth floor that seemed far less bright that the others. Zora looked up and saw a mop of blonde hair looking out the window about to be set upon by the creatures.

“Archers!” Zora shouted as she ran forward, “Get the ones on the building!” She pointed them out as she ran toward the stream.

The creatures that were still on the ground waited for the approaching warriors. As soon as they were
in the shadows enough the creatures attacked. They leapt forward claws extended and mouths open ready to bite.

Zora cut one from the air and when another landed on her the large woman kept her feet but stumbled slightly backward before throwing it off her and killing it with her sword. The creatures attacked in such a frenzy that despite being much bigger and stronger none of the warriors remained unscathed.

Rachel got caught with the claws of one that leapt for her and she had three lines cut across her face before she had killed her first one. It stung and blood flowed freely but the old warrior didn’t shrink back in fear, it woke the Trikru in her and she laughed. Her laughter was echoed by every Trikru there and joined by the mayor’s booming voice.

“These little ones are feisty!” Rachel shouted as she threw one to the ground and stabbed it with her sword. She jumped up and took on the three more who were rushing at her.

The warriors were outnumbered but were quickly cutting the creatures down, while suffering little more than scratches and minor bites. Zora was well ahead of the rest of them with her eye on the wall. The archers were picking off the creatures one by one but they were approaching the window too quickly for Zora’s comfort. She shouted up to the boy who had his bow at the ready.

“Francois!” The boy looked for the source of his name and as he found it his eyes grew large and he steadied his breath and loosed an arrow. The Mayor had, in her distraction, missed a creature coming at her from the side and Francois fired at it. Zora felt the arrow whizz past her face and whipped her head around to see it find it’s target in the chest of her would-be attacker.

Zora grinned and tipped an imaginary hat to the boy who smiled back. “Francois!? Where are the warriors?” She shouted up keeping a better eye on her surroundings.

“The attic.” He shouted back. “The terrors got inside.” He was nocking another arrow and took aim at one of the creatures who were almost to him. He took out the closest but two more surged forward. They climbed quickly and Zora saw the boy fling his bow over his back and she saw a flash of blue as he drew a dagger.

“Francois!?” Zora shouted and then broke into a run back toward the door. “Rachel, kill them all!” She shouted as she ran past the general.

“Gladly, Mayor!” The older woman responded her sword arced through the air.

As Zora raced through the doors and up the stairs she was joined by Ro who had been overseeing the first floor. When she saw the Mayor’s look of panic she turned control over to Brax, who despite her injuries from the tunnel was perfectly capable of leading the team to hold the floor.

Ro didn’t ask what was happening just followed Zora as she raced up the stairs. When they reached the fourth floor she tore down the hall to the right and around the corner. As they rounded the corner she understood the Mayor’s haste. There was a dead terror on the floor and a blonde haired boy and a tall, thin girl with strawberry blonde hair both bent in fighting stances, daggers in hand, and backing slowly away from the window. Four terrors had already come inside and more were reaching the top of the sill behind them.

The two women didn’t slow down they rushed toward the children as the terrors leapt forward. Zora raced to the girl and pulled one of the terrors from Genevieve’s back. It left gashes in her shoulders but hadn’t tasted her blood yet. Zora snapped it’s neck with her bare hands and reached for another one.
Ro went to Francois’s side and just as she reached the boy one of the terrors jumped at him. At fifteen he was quite a bit taller than the creature and he held his ground and gripped the ice blue dagger tightly in his hand as he tried to overpower the terror and keep it’s teeth away from himself. The things claws dug into his arms as they struggled.

There were two more right behind that one and Ro stepped around him and intercepted them. One jumped at her chest and she met it with her blade. The other scuttled in and dove at her long legs. It wrapped it’s arms around her right leg and bit down on her calf. Luckily for Ro she was wearing the uniform of her people that included thick, thigh high, leather boots. Even the long teeth of the creature couldn’t penetrate the boots of the Horse Clan easily.

She threw down the body of the one she had skewered on her sword and reached down to grab the other by his neck. She wasted no time bringing the butt of her sword down hard on the top of the things head. She heard a sickening crunch and the thing went slack in her arms. She threw it off of her and turned to help the boy.

Francois had been grappling with the creature and as it dug its claws into him he had realized he couldn’t overpower it. He gripped his dagger even tighter and Kita’s words rang in his ear. “‘I’m not afraid of you.” He whispered out through gritted teeth and then he suddenly tugged the thing into his chest. He felt teeth scrape over his skin and start to pierce his chest but his hand was quick and the ice blue dagger in it was soon jabbed through the things back and into it’s heart. Panting with pain and exhaustion the boy threw it off of him and bent over to catch his breath.

Zora had made quick work of the rest of the things that had entered the window and soon they were clear. She looked out the window and saw that Rachel and the warriors had done their job thoroughly and even the creatures who had dived back into the water and tried to escape via the stream had been chased down and killed. Rachel was now walking around checking in with the wounded and directing the able to patrol the length of the stream inside the walls and to clear the shed.

Zora turned her head and saw Ro checking over the wounds on Francois’ arms and she hollered out the window. “Rachel!” When the general looked up she added, “Send a healer, now!” She stepped away from the window and looked at the Ice girl. She was tall and thin for her thirteen years and had a smattering of freckles on her cheeks that were now also splattered with her own red blood and the creatures black. She had cuts and scratches on her shoulders but otherwise was unharmed.

“What happened?” Zora demanded.

“I heard Francois shouting to you and I knew he was alone out here.” The girl shrugged. “When I heard him yell a battle cry I knew they were inside. I grabbed my dagger and ran out to help.” She glanced over at the boy who was now looking at her with his big blue eyes and a small smile on his face. She blushed, “I mean I wanted to make sure they didn’t get into the room where the rest of the girls are.” She tried her best but her face betrayed her and she returned the small smile to Francois before both looked away.

“You were very brave.” Zora patted the girl on her arm. “A healer is coming to take care of both of you.” She walked over to Francois, “I saw you fighting.” She reached in and gently pulled his shirt away from the small teeth marks that were bleeding freely. She glanced down his shirt at the wounds and fought back a grimace at the scars she saw laced across his chest. She let go of his shirt and nodded,” It’s not too bad, I’ll heal okay. Where did you learn that move anyway, Francois?” She asked with a grin, trying to lighten the mood, “I recommend you don’t try that one with an ice bear when you get back home.”

She winked at the blonde haired boy and when his face broke into a large grin she was even more
reminded of her dear friend, Skadi. He was a beautiful young man and the thought made Zora ache. Luna had told her what fate the child had met when he had arrived in York at the age of twelve. His fair features and big blue eyes had made him a coveted prize that Yor’s advisors competed to have. Francois had been traded for favours and goods between the upper ranks of Yor’s sick advisors and only his quick growth and fear of him fighting back had saved him from that fate. Instead of the mansion, where kids usually ended up as they got older, Yor moved him into the army, he had hoped the brainwashing would make him a loyal soldier and he intended to have him serve in his personal guard. He wanted someone who looked so much like the true Ice Royals serving him and that is what had kept Francois alive.

Zora checked in on the room full of Ice girls and found them all standing, weapons in hand ready to fight whatever came through the door. She grinned, “Hod up! It’s me. Your friends are fine and the creatures are dead.” Zora smiled at the cheer that went up and let herself back into the hallway. “Ro, I am going to check on the attic.” Two healers had arrived and were taking care of Genevieve and Francois. “Have your leg cleaned before they leave,” Zora added nodding at the torn boots.

“I will, Mayor and if it’s okay with you I’ll leave the first floor to Brax and I’ll stay here.” Zora nodded her assent and picked up speed bringing herself to a light jog as she headed toward the attic.

As she arrived she found that Joss had gone beyond her order to guard the attic and had decided to take it back from whatever had come inside. He had left one guard at the door with orders to shut the door behind them and keep the creatures out should anything go wrong. Zora fixed the lone soldier with a glare. “What is going on, here?” She asked Ion, one of the elite force that had accompanied Heda from Sapeake. He was the only fighter from the Hill Clan that had survived all the way to York.

Ion shrugged, “I told them it was a stupid idea… that’s what got me stuck on guard duty.” He grinned but Zora’s frown pulled some more details from him, “Joss came up with a very…. Joss idea. He and Roth stood here with their eyes squeezed shut for like five minutes. Joss said it would make their night vision good enough to go in and clear the attic. They kept their eyes closed and I opened the door. They climbed up the staircase and they’ve been in there ever since.” He started to grin again and Zora shook her head grinning back at him in spite of her efforts not to.

“It was a very ‘Joss’ idea.” She sighed, “open the door, let’s go get them.” Zora’s fear of the things was at an all time low and she was ready to finish what Joss and Roth had started. Ion had been waiting for permission to join his friends, he whipped the door open and bounded up the stairs.

Zora left the door open to allow at least some light to filter into the attic. She followed the warrior up the stairs and found the attic was not in complete darkness. Windows on either side of the room had been smashed out allowing the moonlight and the glow from the courtyard to penetrate the room. The light coming up from the stairs helped as well and she found she could make out enough to know she wasn’t needed.

Joss and Roth were both still standing and Ion had quickly joined them. She made her way to them. “Report.” She thought happily that she sounded like Lexa.

“Mayor,” Joss’s voice was, as always, full of the hint of laughter, “I am quite certain that Roth of the Lanta Clan has something he wishes to confess.”

Zora was growing impatient but also curious what they were up to, she turned to Roth and heard him sigh. “Mayor, I Roth of the Lanta Clan wish to make it known that Joss of the Tree Clan is by far a better warrior than I.” Roth sighed again and Joss and Ion tried hard not to giggle.

“I think there was one more thing…?” Joss started laughing out loud and Roth took swing at him in
the dark. Joss avoided it easily and Roth sighed.

“I also wish to let it be known that Joss of the Tree Clan is far more handsome than any man I have ever laid eyes on and I love him dearly.” Roth shook his head in defeat as Zora also started to laugh.

“Right… so that was interesting.” Zora allowed the men their play time but was back to business immediately. “Now, I want a real report.” She waited expectantly for the laughter to abate.

“We re-took the attic. I killed six creatures to Roth’s four,” Joss answered, also answering Zora’s question about the reason behind Roth’s odd declarations. She correctly surmised the two had made a bet on who would kill more. “We are about to start our final sweep to confirm the attic is free of the terrors.”

“Right, well let’s get to it. Roth you’re with me.” Zora stepped away to the right and Roth followed without question. Zora had a plan of her own for Joss’s little game. Zora was a warrior, a leader, a strategist and even though her eyes hadn’t adjusted to the dark completely she could make out shapes and she knew where the creatures would hide if there were any left in the attic.

She led Roth along the wall toward the darkest corner of the room. It was equidistant between the two windows and allowed the highest chance of escape. There was also a large piece of furniture there. It was a table, narrow, long and about waist height, slipping underneath it would be the perfect hiding place.

As they approached Zora slowed and held her sword at the ready. Roth had already picked up on the potential hiding place and he passed the mayor and turned at the end of the table so they could close in from both sides. Their movements synched easily and they both took a knee at the same time, swords held in front of them. There were four creatures hiding under the table and they lunged forward in fear trying to escape the humans. They had realized as soon as Joss and Roth had entered the attic that their number one weapon was failing them. These humans were different, they fought with no fear and the creatures knew they could not win.

Roth swung his sword and killed one of the creatures immediately, his left hand darted out and grabbed another one that scuttled away going for the window. He grabbed it’s leg and it whipped around in a fury. “Hate you, hate you, humans! The Interface, we must get back!” It screamed as it slashed it’s claws toward him. The thing fought with such ferocity it caught him off guard and managed to slash three lines into his right cheek before he ended it’s struggle with his blade.

He immediately stood and went to Zora’s side. There was a dead one at her feet and she was cursing and shaking her left hand. She swore as he approached, “Fucking thing got away. I had ahold of it and the clever little prick stabbed me in the hand with all four claws, like a knife. I dropped it and it took off that way.”

“I’m sorry about your hand Mayor.” Roth was solemn but broke into a grin, “But that means I have a chance to win this bet! I got two more! Joss, we’re tied now!” Roth shouted loud enough for his friend to hear and then quickly moved into a fighting stance and began tracking the thing toward the window in the direction Zora pointed out. He knew they were trying to escape, to get back to something called the Interface.

He and Zora slowly searched high and low, clearing the way toward the window. There was one spot left it could be hiding and Roth charged suddenly, a grin on his face. The creature heard him coming and scuttled out from it’s hiding place. It ran toward the window as fast as it could. They were quick and they bounded as they ran, leaping ahead more so than running. Roth charged after it. It was just about to jump out the window and hoist itself to the roof when a knife whizzed through the air and embedded into the things back. It fell forward onto the floor and died quickly.
“Yes, I win!” Laughter erupted from Roth’s left. Joss and Ion had finished clearing their side of the attic and had come back just in time to see Roth chasing down the last creature. Joss waited until it was clear of both the Mayor and Roth and then his dagger flew through the air and ended the terror.

Zora walked over and patted Roth on the shoulder, “Sorry, Roth, I tried.” She joined Joss in his infectious laughter and headed for the stairs. “If you have cuts or scratches from the things see a healer immediately, Heda’s orders. Otherwise secure the attic and guard the door.” She was still shaking her head and grinning as she walked back downstairs.

The school was full of Heda’s best and enough torches to light the whole city. The Mayor guided them through the rest of the night with no more attacks. The creatures knew they couldn’t win there and the ones waiting outside the gate fell back and joined their kin at the manor. There were three creatures who slipped back into the forest and into the caves. They returned to the Interface to upload the memories of the dead. The humans were proving more difficult than they had planned and the Interface would not be pleased.

Heda’s plan was working. The Women in Black were starting to lose their fear of the things. The low light on the second floor had proven to be a genius plan and Lexa grinned as she watched the fear fall away and the skilled warriors start to fight the things on even ground.

They were still a challenge, they came in through the windows in swarms and they were fast, but Octavia and Lincoln had taken on the first swarm and sliced them to bits. The Women in Black who saw them took courage from it and that courage spread like wildfire.

In the bedroom a steady stream of injuries, most minor but some serious came and went and kept Clarke and Abby busy. Any attacks that reached the windows in the room were shut down quickly by Indra and Echo and any creatures who rushed the doors were taken care of by Dal and Kane.

The night deepened and flowed toward the dawn. The creatures began to slide back into the darkness and back into the caves. They didn’t know how to deal with humans who showed no fear. They were confused and hungry. The night had not gone at all like the Interface had planned.

Kita and Amina had fought off many attacks and the floor near their window had several dead creatures lying about. There hadn’t been an attack in quite some time and Amina was getting restless. She walked over to one of the slain creatures and kicked at the body with her toe. When she was sure it wasn’t going to come back to life and grab her she knelt down and rolled it over.

“They really are ugly.” She mused as she studied the creature’s face. She took in the details of it’s face, the large eyes, the protruding teeth. She shuddered and stood back up.

Kita watched her and laughed when Amina shuddered, “Are you afraid? It is dead.” The Ice Guard had a glint in her eye that Amina rolled her eyes at.

“No, Kita. I am not afraid… just… well think about it. Those things were once human. What hell have they endured for the past hundred years, and maybe before that, to turn them into these creatures. That is the scary part.” Amina looked very serious and Kita studied her face.

“I hope I will be able to bring you answers after tomorrow, Amina. We go back to the island to answer that very question, and make York safe once and for all.” Kita looked at the girl and suddenly blushed. “It’s too bad you are injured. I face great dangers tomorrow and I had hoped to feel great pleasure before I go.” Kita was direct and open and Amina loved that about her.
Amina reached up and very lightly touched Kita’s face bringing her back into eye contact. “Kita, you should sate your lust before going back to the island. It’s true that I am in no shape to help you so you should find another.” He voice was gentle but Kita’s face still fell.

“You don’t want…” Kita started and Amina cut her off.

“I do want you, Kita, but we hardly know one another. We shared a beautiful moment and we have a deep connection but you still need to explore your sexuality. Besides, you are Heda Lexa’s private guard. You will leave here soon and I don’t want to miss you more than I already will. I hope to spend more time with you before you go, in your bed I mean,” Amina grinned wolfishly at Kitam “but I also want you to feel free to do what you want to, what you need to.”

Kita pondered the girls words and decided that she was right. “I feel a strong connection to you, Amina. I thought that meant I should only sleep with you. You are saying that connection won’t be broken if I bed another?” Kita’s mind swung unbidden to the face of another and she felt her pulse speed up.

“Our connection will not be broken.” Amina smiled and leaned in to place a soft kiss on Kita’s lips. “I think you should consider bedding Suu tonight.” Amina smirked at the look of both shock and guilt on Kita’s face. “You have already considered it, I see.”

“I… I…” Kita stammered and blushed but took a breath and calmed herself. “I have,” she admitted, “but I did not want to be disloyal to you. I am not familiar with intimate relationships, especially between women. Heda Lexa and Heda Clarke do not bed others and I thought I should follow that example.” She admitted feeling slightly foolish.

Amina read her well and rushed to quell her embarrassment. “Kita, you are new at this. I am so flattered and honoured that you wanted to be loyal to me, to our connection. I do too… but that is not the way for us, not now anyway. The way for us to be loyal to each other right now is to be honest and open with one another. I want you to explore who you are and what you feel, what you like sexually. I want you to be comfortable and be able to talk freely with me. We will be separated soon and I want both of us to have healthy sex lives. Kita, I want this connection to last. Whenever Heda visits York I want to know my Kita is coming and I want to stand by you as a friend in public and embrace you like a lover when we are alone.” She paused and looked into Kita’s eyes. “Does that make sense or have I hurt you with my words?”

Kita stared into Amina’s eyes for a long time without saying anything. When she noticed tension seep into the other girls jaw she realized Amina was worried about her answer. “Amina, I am not hurt or offended by your words, I am quite pleased actually. I haven’t had much time to think about any of this since we parted but your words have led me to several realizations. I do too… but that is not the way for us, not now anyway. The way for us to be loyal to each other right now is to be honest and open with one another. I want you to explore who you are and what you feel, what you like sexually. I want you to be comfortable and be able to talk freely with me. We will be separated soon and I want both of us to have healthy sex lives. Kita, I want this connection to last. Whenever Heda visits York I want to know my Kita is coming and I want to stand by you as a friend in public and embrace you like a lover when we are alone.” She paused and looked into Kita’s eyes. “Does that make sense or have I hurt you with my words?”

The two women embraced and then Amina drew back and asked with a raised eyebrow, “Tell me about these desires you did not expect.”

Kita stared into Amina’s eyes for a long time without saying anything. When she noticed tension seep into the other girls jaw she realized Amina was worried about her answer. “Amina, I am not hurt or offended by your words, I am quite pleased actually. I haven’t had much time to think about any of this since we parted but your words have led me to several realizations. I don’t know myself well… sexually I mean, but I seem to have desires I did not expect and now that I know that I can proceed, I find myself wanting to try many things. I am happy that you want to continue our connection even after I leave York. I feel deeply for you, even though we have only known each other for a short time.”

The two women embraced and then Amina drew back and asked with a raised eyebrow, “Tell me about these desires you did not expect.”

Kita looked around to make sure they had some privacy and then she opened up, “You were right earlier, I have thought about Suu as a lover.” Kita hesitated for a moment but Amina nodded and encouraged her to continue, “but not in the way that we were together. What I mean is you and I were equals, I mean you showed me many things and led me through my first time… but… we were equal partners in our desire and in our give and take.” Kita struggled for words and Amina nodded.
“I understand Kita. What is different about your desire for Suu” Amina was excited at the prospect of Kita’s confession, in her opinion Suu needed what Kita seemed to be wanting to give.

“I want to be in control.” Kita admitted, “I want to touch her…. roughly.” Kita blushed and then quickly added, “only if she wants it too! I would never…”

“I know, I know, it’s okay Kita. Your desire is normal and healthy, and I believe Suu needs what you want to give her.”

“What do you mean?” Kita asked.

Amina looked off into the darkness and sighed, “Suu is always in control. Ever since her sister died a few years ago and she was voted to lead us she had always tried to be in control. She loses it sometimes and does stupid things, like shooting Heda.” Amina glanced at Kita whose face darkened a bit at the reminder, “She holds on too tight all the time, she is always responsible for us, for the people we hid and helped escape Yor, now for the mayor’s safety. She never let’s herself give up control, she never submits to anyone or anything, she is wound too tight and I think what you want to do would be a wonderful release for Suu.” Amina looked back into Kita’s eyes.

“You are so good, Amina.” Kita smiled at her softly. “You know your friend well and your concern is touching. You are leading me down this path of discovery about myself without judging me or holding me back.” Kita leaned in to kiss Amina, “I must thank Heda Lexa for her advice. She was the one who told me to ‘bed a pretty girl’ and then she pointed you out to me. Heda is wise.” Kita chuckled as Amina blushed.

The two women stayed at their post until Heda came by a while later with two others in tow. “The creatures seem to have retreated, there are just a few hours before dawn. Take some rest Kita,” she glanced between the two women and added, “Amina if you do not accompany Kita please see Abby, she wishes to check her patients for any signs of infection.” With her instructions given Lexa strode off toward Octavia and Lincoln to send them to rest before the island.

“I will go and see the Sky Chancellor.” Amina announced, “Suu will not leave her post even though Heda has likely ordered her to rest and replaced her by now. You’ll find her doing ‘just one more’ perimeter check for the rest of the night.” When Kita blushed Amina added, “Your desire is normal and healthy Kita, and Suu is my friend so if I thought she would not enjoy what you want from her I would tell you so.” When Kita relaxed and grinned Amina smiled. “I will not see you before you go so be careful on the island Kita.” She reached out and took Kita’s forearm and then leaned in to rest their foreheads together for a moment.

Kita had walked all around the first floor and halfway around the perimeter of the manor searching for Suu. Her head was full of lustful thoughts that were distracting her and she was growing impatient. She rounded the last corner of the manor and sighed as she saw no sign of Suu along the rear of the house. Her eyes landed on the gate and she wondered aloud, “Would she have been so stupid to have gone outside the wall to check the perimeter.”

She was overheard by one of the Women in Black and the girl’s quick retort gave her the answer she needed. “Suu is not stupid! She is brave and loyal! Do not insult her, Ice Guard or you will answer to all of us.” The girl got in Kita’s face and Kita fought to keep her face even when the younger and far less dangerous warrior made her want to laugh.

“I respect your loyalty, but do not presume to challenge me, I have orders from Heda. Open the gate, I must find Suu.” The girl backed down quickly and two others pulled the gate open for her and
pointed her toward the right.

“She went to check the entrance to the cellar and refused to take anyone with her. It’s just over that way beyond the tallest oak tree.” The Woman in Black who had opened the gate for her spoke quickly and as Kita strode fearlessly out of the protection of the walls she heard the same girl whisper to the one who had challenged her, “Are you crazy!?? That is Kita, of the Ice Guard, protector of the Hedas!!!”

Kita chuckled to herself as she made her way toward the oak tree. She took in her surroundings and tried to quell her lust enough to get a feel for her surroundings. She felt a calmness around her that told her the creatures had gone and the night was quiet. She approached the oak tree and found herself getting nervous. What if Suu had no interest in her, she would be embarrassed at the rejection. She was thinking about this when she rounded the large trunk and found a blade at her throat. She reacted immediately and without thinking, her body being trained to do so. She soon had the wielder of that blade pushed face first up against the rough bark of the oak tree and the sword arm twisted painfully behind their back. The blade fell to the ground and Kita kicked it aside.

It took her a moment to realize it was Suu, the one she had been searching for, who was now pressed against the tree at her mercy. Her heart pounded and her lust kicked up into high gear. Now, if only Suu consented she could have what she wanted.

“Kita, I’m sorry. I heard footsteps and… well I wasn’t expecting company so I… ouch! Release my arm please.” Suu found herself slightly afraid, she still thought the Ice Girl might want to kill her and yet oddly she also trusted Kita. Much to her own irritation she also found herself very aroused. Every time Kita touched her in any way she felt a hot knot of lust settle in her gut and this time was no exception. Kita’s lithe body was pressed up against her in a way Suu was sure was not necessary for the move Kita was executing on her, and the heat was making her want to press back closer into the girl.

“Suu,” Kita’s voice was a whisper and spoken directly into the helpless girl’s ear making her shudder, “You drew your sword on me… first you shot my Heda with a poisoned arrow, and now you bring your sword to my throat. Maybe you need to be punished?” Suu felt her arm being released slowly but she kept it behind her back and didn’t try to escape the Ice Guard. Kita’s words threatened but she was releasing her from the hold and Suu felt herself hoping desperately that Kita’s words were sexual. The proximity of the girl was overpowering Suu’s senses and her skin was singing at the contact.

“Kita, I apologize. I know you cannot forgive me for shooting Heda. I have often thought you would kill me for it. Is that what you would do now? You have me helpless against this tree, would you like to kill me?” As Suu spoke she shook lightly in both fear and desire. She desperately wanted Kita to tell her she wanted something quite the opposite of death.

Kita grabbed Suu’s arms roughly and spun her around pressing her back into the tree. “Suu of the Women in Black do not fear me. I do not wish to harm you….” Kita licked her lips and pressed her body up against Suu’s still holding her arms tight against her body, restricting her movement. Her face was close enough that leaning in ever so slightly would result in lips touching lips.

Suu felt a thrill run though her at Kita’s words and she felt drunk on her own lust as the sexy woman pressed into her. “Then why do you have me trapped like this, against this tree? What do you plan to do with me?” Suu breathed out, her chest already heaving.

Kita leaned in and placed her forehead against Suu’s in a show of tenderness, she loosened her grip on Suu. She needed Suu to know she was safe so she could answer the next question honestly.
“What do I plan to do with you?” Kita breathed out, “I plan on turning you back around and bending you over, I plan on fucking you against this tree.” Suu’s breath caught in her throat and a small moan escaped her lips.

Kita continued, “I plan on controlling you tonight, Suu. I will do what I want with your body and you will let me. You will submit to me, Suu.” Kita took a small step back and dropped Suu’s arms, Suu whimpered at the loss of contact but her eyes flew open and found Kita’s.

“What of Amina?” Suu asked quietly.

“Amina knows I am here, she is not upset.” Kita swallowed hard and tried to calm herself, she could tell Suu wanted her too but she needed the consent to be clear. “Suu, I will not hurt you no matter your decision. You must say yes to me before we go any further.” Kita stepped back another half step to make sure Suu felt safe saying no.

“yes…” Suu whispered. She felt so tightly wound and she knew she needed sexual release. What Kita was offering her held so much more than the promise of slaking her lust. She craved what Kita offered, her body wanted to submit to someone it trusted completely, someone it wanted completely.

She would normally find one of the original Women in Black who she knew to be open sexually. Suu was always the aggressor, the initiator and in control. She proposed the sex, and she fucked the girls who said yes. Normally after her partner came she would masturbate until she got off and then dress and leave. Sometimes she asked her partner to touch her and then gave them specific instructions how. Once she got off she dressed and left.

Kita was a different story. As soon as Suu said yes Kita stepped back in and claimed Suu’s lips. The kiss was hot and messy, and Suu found herself wet and wanton. When Kita pulled away Suu whimpered again. “You will tell me if you want me to stop. If I hurt you or do something you do not want to do you will tell me. Choose a word, that word will make me stop at once.” Kita looked deeply into Suu’s eyes, “I need you to trust me.”

“I trust you, Kita. The word is Manhattan.” Suu didn’t know why she chose it but somehow both women felt it was right. Kita look one more long look into Suu’s eyes and then a growl escaped her throat.

She grabbed Suu’s arms and held them above her head with her left hand. He right hand began stripping away Suu’s clothes. When she couldn’t get any further one-handed she demanded, out of breath, “Keep your hands there,” and she stepped back from Suu. She pulled off her own shirt and Suu couldn’t take her eyes off of her pert breasts. She grinned and decided to allow a small reward to her captive.

She stepped in and grabbed Suu’s right hand. “Keep the other hand up there but you may touch me with this hand, you’ve been good so far, Suu. I’m pleased.” Suu shuddered in pure lust and let her hand roam over Kita’s breasts. She squeezed lightly and ran her thumb over Kita’s erect nipples. She moaned softly and Kita wanted to cause a deeper, more desperate moan to escape Suu’s lips.

She grabbed Suu’s hand and returned it to the left one. She stepped slightly back and kneeled in front of Suu. Her hands made quick work of the clasps on her pants and she quickly pulled them down. She lifted Suu’s feet one at a time and threw the pants a few feet away. Then she ran her hands up Suu’s bare legs and stood once more. She stepped back and let her eyes run over the woman’s body.

Suu’s face was covered in scars from the fire years ago, it covered all but the area around her left eye. The burns continued down her neck and covered most of her right torso. Kita briefly wondered how the woman had survived so much pain before her eyes caught on the flawless skin on the left
side of her body and all thoughts clouded over. The perfectly shaped breast, with a slight upturn at
the nipple, held her gaze and made her mouth water. She ran her eyes over the shapely legs and
naked sex of the woman in front of her.

Suu was blushing and squirming under the heavy gaze of the woman she had allowed herself to
submit to. She wasn’t used to the scrutiny, she wasn’t used to being laid bare and exposed like this,
physically or emotionally. She found she both loved and hated every second. She opened her mouth
to speak and Kita’s finger met her lips, “Shhhh. I do not wish for you to speak right now, Suu. Just
stand there like a good girl until I tell you otherwise.”

Suu snapped her mouth shut and her mind was racing, was Kita turned off by the scars, was she just
playing with her? Suu found herself anxious and fearing rejection and emotion bubbled up from
feelings she didn’t know she had. She felt her eyes sting with tears and one grew fat and escaped
down her cheek. Kita missed nothing.

The Ice Guard had been admiring the toned body spread out before her and had been taking her time
deciding what she wanted to do to Suu first. She sensed Suu tensing and assumed it was anticipation,
a grin formed on her lips. After she shushed Suu she had decided she wanted to taste her and was
about to kneel down and do just that when a tear ran down Suu’s cheek.

She reached up and caught it and then pressed herself into Suu’s body covering the girl with her
own. “Suu, why do you cry?” Kita felt a mild panic, Suu hadn’t said the safe word but she was
obviously in distress. “Are you frightened? You have the word that can stop all of this, Suu,” Kita
gently reminded her. “Speak true, why the tears.” Kita wanted this to be mutual, she wanted to make
Suu explode in pleasure, to feel the sweet release of giving over all power to one who would take
care of the lust and tension that had built inside of her.

“I have never been naked and laid bare before anyone like this. You stopped touching me… my
scars… I understand if you don’t want me.” Suu’s voice was barely a whisper and Kita kicked
herself for not realizing Suu was self conscious.

“I was having a hard time deciding if I wanted to take your breast in my mouth and sink my fingers
into your cunt first, or if I wanted to drop to my knees and taste your desire first.” Kita had leaned in
closer and whispered this into Suu’s ear. She felt the woman’s body shake and quiver in response to
her words and she heard a desperate moan escape Suu’s lips.

Suu felt electric, Kita was one of the sexiest woman she had ever met. She had been attracted to her
since Kita had held her ice blue sword to her neck on the bridge. Now Kita was about to fuck her,
her knees threatened to buckle just thinking about it.

Kita leaned back and grabbed the back of Suu’s head, she crashed her lips into Suu’s and claimed
her mouth with her tongue. The kiss was rough, aggressive, and messy but it fanned the flame of
both women’s desire. Kita bit down hard enough to cause pain but not so hard that the pain could not
be pleasure. Suu’s hips canted searching for friction and she moaned yet again.

Kita leaned back in to Suu’s ear. She bit the lobe roughly and then whispered, “I choose taste, Suu.
I’m going to get on my knees and fuck you with my tongue. I won’t let you cum though, not yet.”
Suu’s knees gave out slightly and Kita grabbed her ass to hold her up. “You have to stay standing
Suu, or I will think you aren’t strong enough for our game.” Kita scolded lightly slapping Suu’s ass
hard enough to leave a handprint.

As she dropped to her knees Suu stared down at her in disbelief. Kita of the Ice Nation was on her
knees in front of her about to give her head. She watched as Kita leaned forward and roughly forced
her legs further apart. Suu gladly spread herself as wide as she could and she almost passed out when
Kita leaned in agonizingly close to her pussy and inhaled.

“You smell so fucking good, Suu.” Kita looked up at her with a smile and added, “you’re dripping wet for me, good girl.” Then Kita stopped teasing, she wanted the taste of Suu on her tongue and she wanted it now. She pressed her face against Suu’s folds and moved her head side to side parting the lips and allowing her mouth to get to the sweet insides. She ran her tongue down to Suu’s opening and without warning she pushed her tongue inside of Suu.

The cry of pure pleasure that came from Suu’s mouth made Kita’s centre throb and she began to pump in and out. Suu’s hips matched the rhythm and she didn’t keep her cries silent. When Kita pulled out she whimpered and wanted to beg for more but Kita’s tongue slid quickly up to her clit and began to lash her sensitive head. ‘Fuck!’ She cried out into the night barely able to keep herself standing.

Kita kept a fast pace sliding down and into Suu’s centre and back up to her clit. She had the leader of the York resistance movement falling apart under her tongue in minutes. She felt the girl getting close to orgasm when her highly trained ears picked up on the sound of footsteps in the trees around them. They were too heavy to be the creatures and were coming from the direction of the manor so she assumed Suu’s warriors had heard her cries and as she had with Heda’s cries assumed she was in pain. Kita grinned wickedly and removed her mouth from Suu’s cunt.

“Ahh… Kita.. please…” Suu was desperate. She needed Kita to keep going, she was a hot, wet, mess and she didn’t care.

Kita stood and pressed herself into Suu’s body once again, she bit and licked at Suu’s neck and let the woman writhe against her still clothed thigh. “Suu… do you want me to keep going?” Kita asked shamelessly teasing the woman.

“Kita. Yes, please.” Suu begged.

“Call me Roi… it means king in my language. Tell me I am your king and beg me to touch you and I will fuck you like you deserve to be fucked.” Kita knew there were three people in the woods near enough to hear Suu’s desperate plea and it thrilled her that they would know Kita was fucking their leader in the woods.

“Roi Kita, my king… please I need to feel you inside of me. Please! Roi, my king. PLEASE” Suu’s back arched off of the tree and into Kita so hard and her movements were so desperate Kita felt her own need growing fierce. She claimed Suu’s lips in another rough kiss and then she grabbed the woman’s shoulders and turned her around she pulled her a step back from the tree and bent her over telling her to hold onto the trunk.

Suu’s breathing was coming in pants and gasps and her sexy little ass was wiggling in anticipation in the warm summer air. Kita could see the glisten of her wetness as she stepped slightly back to enjoy the view of Suu’s cunt from behind.

She stepped back in and brought her hand down hard on Suu’s ass. Suu yelped and then exhaled a shaky breath, “again… please…. fuck please Kita my Roi.” Kita shook in desire at Suu’s begging and she brought her hand down on the other cheek. She wanted to continue the sweet torture but the wetness of Suu’s cunt could not be ignored any longer. She slid her hand down into the folds and drove two fingers into Suu’s hot, wet, pussy.

The scream of pleasure from Suu spurred her on and she began to pump her fingers in and out with abandon. She added a third finger and got another loud moan from Suu. Kita felt the tightness of her pussy and she let her fingers dance the way Amina’s had inside of her the first time she had entered
her. Suu rocked her hips back into Kita’s hand and panted and moaned in such a wanton manner that Kita couldn’t hold in her own moan.

“Suu… You are so fucking hot.” Kita gasped out and she bent slightly and reached around with her left hand to stroke Suu’s clit. That was all Suu could bear but she fought her own release and panted out a question.

“Please, Roi Kita, may I come? Please?” Her voice was raw and desperate and it almost made Kita come herself.

“Come Suu, Come for me, now.” Kita gave her permission and Suu tumbled over the edge of pleasure into bliss screaming Kita’s name. As Suu came Kita kept pumping her fingers in and out and stroking her clit, she slowed gradually and Suu shook and moaned through it. As her body stilled Kita stopped her motions and then pulled Suu back upright and spun her to face her.

She kissed her again, but slow and soft this time. “You are so sexy when you come Suu.” Kita growled low in her throat. “You were so good and I will reward you.” She took Suu’s right hand and pulled it down to her pants. She unbuttoned her pants and loosened them enough to fit Suu’s hand inside. She stepped closer to the woman and pushed her hand roughly into her own pants.

Suu gasped at the wetness she found waiting for her and cried out, “Oh! Kita, my king… you are so wet. Thank you for letting me feel you.”

Kita’s breathing was getting heavy and she spread her stance wider to allow Suu’s hand more access. “Your reward it that you get to fuck me, Suu. Two fingers, inside me, now.” Kita’s orders were obeyed and both women fell forward against each other weak from the pleasure. Suu’s fingers sunk deep into Kita and curled forward toward her g-spot. She pulled them back almost out of her and then thrust back in.

“Ahhh… fuck! Faster Suu.” Kita panted and let her hips gyrate with Suu’s rhythm. Suu responded and sped up matching Kita’s thrusts. Soon she was pounding in and out of her feeling the strong walls of Kita’s cunt squeezing her fingers as she entered and pulled back. Both women were moaning and crying out loudly and than Kita suddenly reached down and grabbed Suu’s wrist stilling her momentarily. “My clit, Suu. I want to come, rub my clit and make me come.” Kita was feeling slightly desperate for release and Suu was up to the task.

She slid her fingers out of Kita causing her to moan loudly and followed the slippery lips up to the apex. She began to rub and press on Kita’s swollen clit and Kita exhaled sharply and tensed her entire body. She leaned forward and put a hand on the tree to support herself and fought not to scream loudly into the night as Suu’s caresses became overpowering.

Kita tensed and trembled moaning Suu’s name softly, then she let go and her orgasm crashed around her. She was quiet, only whimpering in pleasure and sighing Suu’s name, but her body shook violently and Suu had to hold her up when she climaxed as her legs gave out. She was a trembling, sighing, wet, mess in Suu’s arms for a few minutes as she recovered. Suu kept her hand in the warmth of her folds and kissed her face softly as she regained her strength.

“Suu.” Kita’s voice was rough and ruined. “You did well. I am very pleased with you.” Kita stood and took her own weight once again. She grasped Suu’s wrist softly and pulled her hand out of her pants. She brought Suu’s fingers to her mouth and added, “I’m sure you want to taste your king, so clean your fingers.”

Suu shuddered again, desire spiking in her as she closed her mouth around her own finger and tasted the Ice Girl’s essence. “Like fine wine, Kita, my king.” She breathed out and continued licking her
hand clean.

Kita stepped back from her and brought her hand to the girl’s cheek in a brief display of tenderness. Then she backed away and gathered Suu’s clothes. “Dress quickly Suu, dawn is only a couple of hours away and I have more I want to do to you back in my room.” Kita’s eyes were dark and hungry and Suu trembled in excitement under her gaze.

She pulled her clothes on frantically and eagerly followed her Ice King back into the manor. She didn’t even notice the embarrassed and scandalized looks on the faces of her Women Black as they came back through the gate. She was imagining with anticipation what was in store for her in Kita’s bedroom.

Back in the manor Zora had come home. She entered her room and saw Rock sleeping, safe and sound. She sighed in relief and gave Clarke and Lexa a look of deep thanks as they smiled at her and left to return to their own room.

Abby quickly cleaned the Mayor’s scratches and cuts and then left her alone with her partner reassuring Zora that Rock would wake soon. Rock’s slumber was not peaceful and Zora could see that she was uneasy even in her sleep. As soon as Abby left Zora peeled off her clothes and quickly wiped the remains of battle from her skin. She slipped into bed naked and wrapped her arms around Rock.

She smiled as she felt Rock relax in her arms and fall into a far more peaceful sleep than she had all night. Zora kissed her temple and whispered into her ear, “I love you, Rock. You are my heart.” With that Zora allowed herself to drift off knowing Heda would wake her in a couple of hours.

Lexa and Clarke walked into their room silently. They peeled off their clothes and took a wet cloth to each other’s skin. They cleaned away the blood and grime of the night and Clarke checked Lexa’s wounds. She cleaned them and dressed the larger ones and kissed them all better.

They fell into bed a tangle of arms and legs. “Lex, will we have the energy for the island? Dawn is so close.” Clarke complained.

“We will Houmon, I know of a magic energy drink.” Lexa arched her eyebrow and tried to look sexy.

Clarke broke into a grin, “Is that so?” She leaned in and kissed her wife. They let it remain a soft, slow kiss but when Clarke pulled back Lexa sighed in disappointment.

“Clarke, please.” She whispered and was rewarded with lips on her own once more. This time the kiss deepened and became hot and passionate.

“Are we really doing this?” Clarke panted out as Lexa slid her lips to Clarke’s neck.

“I will go to the island with the taste of you on my tongue, Clarke of the Sky. No matter how cold and dark the tunnels of the creatures are, no matter the horrors I may find there, the sweet taste of you will be the light and bring me home.” Lexa breathed her sweet words into Clarke’s ear and then slid quickly down her beloved’s body.

Clarke parted her legs in anticipation and Lexa let her tongue explore Clarke’s increasingly wet folds. “Lex… baby…. fuck.” Clarke started to cant her hips up and her her face flushed red.
Lexa’s well practiced tongue found her clit and started a rhythm she knew Clarke loved. She smiled into her wife’s wetness feeling perfectly content and began to hum a happy song from her childhood. The added vibrations of the humming made Clarke call out to some god Lexa was not familiar with.

Clarke arched her back and her hand flew to Lexa’s hair. She gripped her wife’s head and cried out her name, “Lex, your mouth is so fucking hot.” Lexa swirled her tongue and sucked Clarke into her mouth slightly before releasing her clit and attacking it with her tongue once more.

Clarke threw her head back and her thighs tightened around Lexa’s head. “Fuck baby, I’m so close… Lex, please!” She panted, her voice low and strained.

Lexa slid her right hand up Clarke’s thigh and brought two fingers to her wife’s wet entrance, she slid inside as she began swirling her tongue across Clarke’s clit once more. She was rewarded with a painful tug on her hair and a litany of praise from her wife’s mouth.

She felt Clarke’s body tense and quiver and she pressed on the inside of her walls in just the right spot as she flattened her tongue and pressed down on Clarke’s clit. “Lexa! Lexa! Lexa!” Clarke called out in a sharp high voice as her legs squeezed together around Lexa’s face cutting off her oxygen. Clarke’s whole body shook as her orgasm played itself out and Lexa snuck her hand in between Clarke’s thighs to break the seal and allow herself to breathe.

She wiggled her head out from between Clarke’s legs and looked up at her wife who was staring blissfully at her. Lexa grinned like a goofy kid and kissed Clarke’s thighs one by one. “Your thighs are deadly weapons Houmon!” She grinned as Clarke’s expression turned to one of concern.

“Lex, I’m sorry did I suffocate you again?” Clarke quickly pulled her wife to her and peppered her face with kisses. “Are you okay? You have to pinch me or something if I do that! I could really hurt you!”

Lexa was enjoying the attention and the kisses, “Houmon, if I pinch you I’m afraid you’d like it and squeeze harder!” Lexa teased and ran her hand over Clarke’s ass and pinched to make her point.

Clarke moaned and bucked her hips as Lexa rubbed the spot she had pinched to soothe the skin. “See?” She chuckled fiendishly and rubbed noses with Clarke, “I think you’ll just have to make it up to me, Houmon.”

“How can I do that, my love?” Clarke asked feigning innocence.

“Taste me, Clarke. I want your mouth on me.” Lexa wanted to come. She hadn’t had a chance to since she had been interrupted by Kita last time and all she could think about right now was Clarke Griffin’s talented mouth.

Clarke loved it when Lexa asked for her like this and was happy to oblige. “Yes, Lex. I will taste you, I will love you with my mouth and we’ll both see the stars before we go back to the tunnels of the island.” Clarke slid down Lexa’s body stopping to pay reverence to Lexa’s pert breasts and stiffly erect nipples.

She sucked each one into her mouth and bit down hard enough to make Lexa cry out her name. Once she was satisfied that she had left a lovely mark on each breast she continued lower until she came to the edge of Lexa’s pubic hair. She stopped and began sucking lightly on the thin skin there. Lexa moaned in protest at her lack of urgency and pleaded with her.

“Clarke, please. Lower baby, lower.” Lexa’s voice was a sexy whisper and Clarke felt her hips unconsciously raising from the mattress trying to bring her vulva in contact with Clarke’s lips.
“Lex, I love you.” Clarke whispered to her wife and when Lexa moaned back a quick and desperate ‘me too’ she giggled and squeezed Lexa’s ass cheeks with both hands. Clarke dove into her wife’s cunt with a huge smile on her face. She pulled her ass cheeks apart and made room for her tongue at the bottom of Lexa’s slit.

She licked Lexa’s wet folds from bottom to top and then nibbled delicately on her labia. She swirled her tongue around the entrance teasing Lexa who was moaning in need. When Lexa whispered a breathy, “Please.” Clarke acquiesced and sunk her tongue deep into Lexa.

She didn’t linger long she withdrew her tongue and snuck upward to Lexa’s clit. Her right hand slipped into the vacancy her tongue had left behind and she entered Lexa with two fingers.

“Yes! Clarke.” Lexa panted, “that feels so good, lover.” She rocked her hips and her hands gripped the furs of the bed. Clarke increased the speed of her fingers and slowed her tongue on Lexa’s clit. It both excited and frustrated Lexa and the result was a beautiful cry of pleasure from Lexa’s throat.

Clarke’s face was deep in Lexa’s folds and she was covered her lover’s juices, Lexa’s wetness was all over her cheeks, covering her chin and inside of her nose. She loved the slippery warmth and the scent of her wife and she happily swept her tongue back and forth over Lexa’s excited bundle of nerves. Her strong right hand was finding all of Lexa’s inner pleasure spots and Lexa was writhing under her.

“Clarke… baby…” her voice was sounding desperate. “Right there… just like that… oh Clarke.” Lexa was starting to shake and pant and Clarke knew she was close. She sped up her tongue and she bent her fingers forward as she brought her wife closer and closer to the stars.

Lexa’s grip on the furs became vicelike and her legs began to raise into the air and shake. Clarke wrapped one arm around her hip and clamped her mouth down on her clit. When Clarke sucked and flicked her tongue back and forth across her clit Lexa broke and her body went into spasms of pleasure.

“Clarke!!!! Yeesssss! OHHH Clarke!!!!” She shook and bucked but Clarke held on and continued stroking her inner walls and her clit. Lexa found herself not coming down but escalating again quickly. “Fuck fuckfuckfuckfuck. CLARKE!” She came again, this time her legs squeezed together so hard she knocked Clarke from her grip on her hip and Clarke found herself sideways tangled in Lexa’s legs.

Lexa was still shaking and panting from the exertion and Clarke untangled herself and slid up over her gloriously naked lover’s skin coming to rest at the perfect spot for a tender kiss. They wrapped their arms around each other and kissed softly. As the moon said goodbye and the sun began to think about rising the two fell into a light sleep.

Indra had a good idea that her Heda would not rest right away. She had always been worked up after battles and Indra was certain she would also have romantic notions about being intimate with Clarke before returning to the island, just in case. With that in mind Indra knew Heda had likely fallen into a light and exhausted sleep just before dawn and so she made her way to the room shortly before the sun made it’s appearance.

She opened the door and slipped inside. She stopped and stared at the sight in front of her. She wasn’t aroused by it like Kita and been, it wasn’t sexual to her at all. She gazed at the two young lovers naked and asleep in each others arms the evidence of their activities showing in tussled hair and bright hickeys in strategic places. She let herself gaze lovingly and protectively over her Heda.
and her Sky Prisa for a few minutes before taking a little too much pleasure in waking them both up.

The elite force that had come across the island was mostly mounted up and ready to go back. The injured looked on in irritation, none matching Indra’s, at being left behind but Heda was firm.

Suu was mounted and ready with ten of her best fighters and when Kita rode by and smiled at her her ass tingled deliciously. Kita had spanked her hard back in her room the night before and Suu had to sneak some padding under her saddle and seek some ointment from a healer before she could ride that morning. It was embarrassing and thrilling to her.

The two had woken together that morning and Kita had pulled her into an embrace and kissed her softly. Suu had expected Kita to be cold and awkward and was delighted that the Ice Girl seemed to have thawed. They had risen and dressed together and Kita had caressed Suu’s still throbbing bottom softly and expressed concern for Suu’s ability to ride.

Kita had been remorseful and Suu was quick to reassure her that she was fine. She didn’t tell Kita about the salve or the extra cushioning, she didn’t want her to hesitate to want to take her like that again. Suu had never felt so relaxed as she had after their scene. Giving up that power and control to Kita and energized her in a way regular sex never had.

Virgil and Kane were riding alongside Lincoln and Octavia and they were discussing theories of what the creatures could be. They both agreed that something must have happened to the ancestors of the things and one hundred years of radiation and darkness had finished the job.

As Kita fell into her place next to her Skai Reine Lexa nudged her horse forward and alongside Zora.

“Once we crossed that bridge I honestly thought we would never have to go back over it. Are we mad for going back to the island?” Lexa mused aloud.

“Perhaps…” Zora thought for a moment. “The seer in bad town did say it would drive us mad, perhaps we are crazy.” The two leaders looked at one another and began to laugh, it spread down the line until all of them were cracking up.

That’s how the party left for the island, in an uproar of laughter.

Chapter End Notes

Winter has fully set in, so I will likely be far less social and much more likely to be at home writing in the evenings. Hopefully I’ll be able to update faster. ;-)

I’m so excited/nervous for season three!
Lexa and Zora stopped at the entrance to the bridge. Without having to be asked Ro moved to the front with two of her Riders and took over the lead. They knew the way was passable, but it was also dangerous and they needed the horses to remain calm and heed their riders.

They started over the bridge, the laughter that had marked the beginning of the journey now conspicuously absent. In fact no one spoke at all, the silence enveloped them and Lexa felt a shiver run up her spine as she looked across the bridge at the dead land she was once again riding into the heart of.

She looked around and took in the mood of her warriors. She didn’t see fear just discomfort, sorrow, and an odd look of reverence. The island represented so much to her people, and they would never set foot on it’s shores with a light heart. Lexa knew that the group with her had no fear left of the terrors. It wasn’t the idea of having to fight unknown numbers of the pale white creatures that had taken the laughter from their throats it was the island itself and everything it represented.

As she looked around Rachel rode up and fell into place beside her, Rachel was nervous about the island, having feared it all her life, but there was no way she was letting Lexa go there again without her. “Heda, I ask you one more time to reconsider your plan, we have enough daylight.”

Lexa sighed, “Indeed we do, Rachel.” Lexa agreed. “But going to both places with our entire party would only keep us longer and I wish to leave this Island and never return, I will not linger. This ground is no longer ours on which to tread.” Lexa kept her eyes on the bleak horizon ahead of her.

“So then let me go with you to the black lake,” Rachel insisted, “Your safety is paramount to all of the clans, Heda.” Rachel tried to appeal to her sense of responsibility.

“Rachel, Indra could not come with us and I need a Trikru General to lead a team through the tunnels. I need your experience and your skill to keep the team alive and together. If I am correct we will meet in the lair of the beasts.” Lexa tone was firm.

“Heda, I cannot allow you to…”

“Em Pleni! Rachel, I am not a little girl for you to protect. I am Heda and you will follow my orders.” Lexa’s head snapped around and she stared at Rachel with a cold hard glare.
“Sha Heda.” Rachel backed down. Her heart both swelled in pride at the imposing force Heda Lexa had become and beat furiously in fear and worry at letting her out of her sight. “I will lead the team through the tunnels and we will strike at the heart of the terrors. I still don’t know how you are so sure the lake is the key. Just because they could swim…”

“Rachel…” Clarke interrupted the general. She had been watching her wife as they conversed and the pulsing vein in Lexa’s neck told her that it was time for Rachel to stop talking. When the general looked at her with a questioning look Clarke just shook her head and then nodded back toward Octavia and Lincoln. “Don’t you think you should talk with your warriors and go over your plan?”

>Sha, Skai Heda.” Rachel knew she was being dismissed and she knew Clarke well enough to understand that she had been watching the conversation and had decided Rachel was about to push Lexa too far. The last thing Rachel wanted was Lexa blowing up at her, the warriors would see it as nerves or fear and it would cause them to become afraid. So she gave up her protests and dropped back to Octavia and Lincoln.

“Forget about her, Lex. If you feel like the lake is the answer we go to the lake.” Clarke tried to reassure her wife but Lexa continued staring at the island and said nothing. “I felt it too, Lex. Right after the tunnel when you and I looked out over the island. I saw the lake, the blackness of the water, the eerie smoothness, even in all that wind. Nothing about it was natural, or welcoming.” Clarke swallowed and admitted the truth, “I’m afraid of it.” Her voice was a whisper.

“We fear what we do not understand.” Lexa suddenly turned her gaze from the island and found the light, her light, Clarke. “We will ride there together and I suspect you will understand it. You will tell me what it is and when this day ends we will no longer fear it, Houmon.” Lexa allowed a small smile for her wife and Clarke looked at her, confused.

“What do you mean, I will understand it?” Clarke looked out over the desolate island and then back at Lexa who just continued to smile softly, “You think it’s technology? You think it is something left over from before the bombs or set up by the Mountain Men?” Clarke sighed as realization set in, “Of course it is, what other choice is there…? Ghosts?” Clarke laughed a dry humourless laugh and Lexa narrowed her eyes.

“Clarke, when we return to Ton DC I am taking you to a village a few hours ride from home. It is haunted. You will see that ghosts are real.” Lexa glared as Clarke rolled her eyes. “Your science cannot explain everything, Skai Princess.” Lexa smirked at Clarke and as Clarke opened her mouth to reply Ro called out from up ahead.

“Heda, we’ve got a problem.” Lexa dismounted and moved forward to take a look at what Ro had discovered. They were at the section of the bridge with the large gaps in the deck. The holes were much larger, it appeared that the pressure of the party crossing the first time had caused further erosion and one of the holes was now too large to be easily crossed.

“Can we jump it?” Lexa asked.

“Of course, all of these horses can jump this distance.” Ro frowned.

“But…?” Lexa prompted.

“But I don’t think the bridge can handle the force of all the jumps required to get us all there and back.” Ro answered truthfully.

Lexa took a deep breath and looked around her, “Suu, come here.” She called out to the young woman who somewhat awkwardly dismounted and moved quickly forward.
“Heda.” She bowed her head to Lexa as she stopped in front of her.

Lexa looked quizzically at the girl and then stepped closer and lowered her voice so no one else could hear, “Are you alright? You seemed to be fighting pain as you dismounted.” The girl’s eyes grew wide and Lexa rushed to reassure her, “I doubt anyone else noticed, I am Heda, it is my job to notice everything. If you cannot fight…?”

“I can fight, Heda.” Suu whispered back fiercely. “I’m fine.”

“Suu, what ails you? Speak true.” Lexa pinned her with a glare and Suu glanced around embarrassed, making sure no one else would overhear.

“Kita and I spent the night together,” Suu confessed and Lexa held her composure despite the surprise and great amusement she felt at the news. “Things got a little rough….” Suu trailed off. “I’m a little sore down there….” Suu cleared her throat in embarrassment but pushed it aside and spoke again, “I can fight, I can ride, I will protect the mayor, Heda.”

Lexa was having a very hard time keeping a straight face, she bit down on her bottom lip and nodded her understanding knowing if she opened her mouth a laugh would escape. She took a deep breath through her nose and held it for several seconds before releasing it, a trick she used to keep herself under control no matter what emotions were rushing through her. She forced the mirth from her head and turned her mind to the task at hand.

“I need to know if there is another way around this gap. If we jump it it could crumble and even if we all make it across we might not be able to use this route to get back.” Lexa looked a the wall separating the two sides of the bridge.

Suu jogged over to the median calling out to two of her Women in Black as she went. Together they scaled the median and pulled themselves onto the platform at the top quickly. They separated one going in each direction inspecting the median and Suu dropped down to the other side and inspected the deck of the bridge on the other side.

They returned quickly and Suu reported back to Lexa. “Heda, the deck on the opposite side is in even worse shape, but the raised platform seems solid. We could try jumping this gap now and take the high road on the way back.” Suu glanced at the gap and then hastily added, “Maybe we should turn around now and take it both ways, it’s only twenty minutes back to the end.”

“Twenty back and then twenty to where we are now. Forty minutes.” Lexa sighed. “Ro, I need your opinion, can we jump safely just one way?”

Ro approached the hole and got down on her belly, she crawled forward and stuck her head into the hole to see what the underside looked like. There was a support beam directly under the deck where it started again. “I think it will hold.” Ro shrugged, only one way to find out really.” She offered a grin to Heda and shouted to her riders. One of them stepped forward immediately and bowed his head to her.

He took a quick look at the hole he had to jump and turned his horse around. He trotted back a few meters and then turned again. He kicked his horse into a run and the animal responded willingly, they approached the gap without fear and the horse gracefully leapt across the deadly hole in the deck. They landed on the other side and the horse easily had time to slow and stop before the next series of gaps began.

Ro called out to the group and everyone lined up. She sent them all one at a time and she pointedly spread out the starting points along the width of the bridge so as to avoid weakening one spot with
repeated landings. Lexa looked at Clarke and then at Virgil, Kane, and Bellamy. “Suu, take them across on the platform.” Lexa looked at Clarke who glared back at her.

“I can do it, Lex.” she insisted.

“You might be able to, but you are scared and your horse can feel that. One of Ro’s Riders will bring it across.” Virgil nodded and dismounted, without argument. Kane sighed but relented and followed Virgil. Kane and Virgil followed Suu to the median and allowed her to show them how to scale the wall. Bellamy stayed on his horse to protest with Clarke.

“Lex…” Clarke started to protest but Ro interrupted her.

“There is no shame Clarke, you are not used to riding like we are. We grew up on horses, you grew up in the sky. Bellamy, you have more to consider than your pride.” She threw a pointed look at him and he sighed in defeat.

“Octavia is from the Sky too, we can do it.” Bellamy looked stubbornly across at his sister who was already on the other side.

“Octavia is… Octavia.” Lexa shrugged. “Don’t be stubborn about this, please.” Lexa looked softly at both of them. Clarke sighed and looked away from her wife and stared at the gap in the bridge. She knew the horse could make the jump but it seemed so far and she had felt afraid every single time one of the riders jumped.

Octavia’s voice broke the tense silence, “Bell, Clarke, let the rider’s do it. It’s fucking terrifying, there is nothing but a long ass drop down to death under that hole.” She laughed but her voice shook, “For real, give me flying fucking vampire bats any day.” Octavia admitting her fear seemed to allow Clarke to let go of her pride.

The Riders had already scaled the median and crossed over. Kane and Virgil’s horses had been moved and two more riders stood waiting for Clarke and Bellamy to hand over the reins. Theo stepped toward Clarke, he had been a part of the elite warriors who had pursued Yor and Alain. He had given Clarke some riding lessons to help her master some of the more difficult maneuvers as they raced through the forests in pursuit of the two megalomaniacs. Clarke liked him, he was always kind and soft-spoken.

He was also Ro’s best rider and when he took the reins from Clarke’s hands he didn’t give her a chance to refuse him, “Skai Heda, it is my honour to do this for you. I speak true when I say there is no shame. Even the Horse Lords of Sapeake would not attempt a jump of this size and difficulty until their sixteenth year. That is ten years of hard training. You have but one year, so please let me do this. Your steed is safe with me, none can outride me, not even our Queen.” He smiled at Ro who begrudgingly nodded her agreement.

Clarke nodded tersely and slipped down from her saddle. “Bell, please come with me.” She looked at her friend who sighed and dismounted as well. The young woman who took his reins was named Ridder she was a part of the group that had marched with Ro to free Otta and then followed Heda to York.

She nodded at him and spoke, “Bellamy of the Skai, I will take care of your steed. Meet me on the other side, and do not feel ashamed.” She blushed and looked away from him and then added, “I met Echo at a gathering of the clans a few years ago. We were… close.

When we rode to York I was pleased to see her. She looks so happy and I am glad to do a small part to return you to her and your child safely. It is a difficult and dangerous jump and I beg you not to
attempt it.” She fixed him with an intense look that he returned and only when he nodded at her did she look away. As he made his way to the median with Clarke she guided the horse into position for the jump.

“Did you hear what she said!?” Bellamy whispered to Clarke, “They were ‘close’, I swear to god Echo has slept with every woman in the 13 clans!” He shook his head but grinned as Clarke elbowed him in the gut playfully. The two friends crossed the gap from the safety of the platform and began to climb down on the other side.

Lexa had crossed as soon as Clarke had climbed safely up the median and Ridder was the last one. She frowned at Ro and called out to her Queen in Horse Clan slang. “The horse is nervous. She does not want to jump.”

Lexa understood but allowed Ro to handle it. “Can you calm her?” Ro asked the young Rider.

Ridder leaned over and spoke quietly to the horse she stroked it’s neck softly with her hands and she tried her best to calm the horse. She dismounted and stood in front of the horse still speaking to it softly. She went around and checked it’s feet and then she stood up and called back to Ro.

“She’s been quicked.” She called out and then reached into the satchel the Rider’s carried and pulled out a pair of pincers. She picked up the mare’s foot and pulled the offending nail from the shoe. The horse nickered in appreciation at the relief and Ridder took a look at the nail.

“Quicked? What does that mean?” Bellamy asked Ro. Looking on in curiosity. As Ridder continued to look at the horse’s foot.

“The nail that secures the horseshoe wasn’t done properly and it was digging into the sensitive part of the hoof not the hard part. The poor animal has been walking around with a nail digging into her for god knows how long.”

Ro looked extremely irritated and then she added, “It’s good you allowed Ridder to take her. If you had tried to jump her on that bad foot she probably would not have made it and you would be down there.” Ro pointed to the hole in the deck and Bellamy turned pale.

Ridder did what she could and finally decided not to jump the mare. She pointed the horse in the direction they had come and sent her back towards York. She scaled the median and quickly crossed the gap. When she landed on the other side she offered Bellamy a ride. Her horse was large and strong and she assured him his added weight would not bother the stallion. Bellamy looked at Clarke and she smiled at him.

“You can ride with me if you’d be more comfortable Bell.” Clarke whispered to her friend but he shook his head.

“Your horse isn’t as big. I’ll go with Ridder, maybe she can give me some dirt on Echo.” He grinned at Clarke and mounted the horse behind the Rider.

The party continued on their way carefully traversing the bridge and in under an hour they were once again setting foot on the ground of Manhattan.

Zora sighed heavily as her horse snorted it’s displeasure at being back. “I know how you feel, buddy.” She patted the horse’s neck affectionately and looked at Lexa. “It’s a good plan Heda. Don’t let Rachel dissuade you. If we split up we’ll be faster and that’s what we all want. To be gone from here as quickly as possible.”

Lexa looked at her friend and they held each other’s gaze for a moment. “Zora, be careful down
“There.” Lexa almost whispered. “We can beat them, but we don’t know how many there are.” She let out a breath and hung her head a little, “If anything were to happen…”

“Heda.” Zora spoke sharply and Lexa raised her head, “It is a good plan. We will take the tunnel and you will take the lake. Together we will find out what the hell these things are and stop them from feeding on our people.” Zora rose to her full height in the saddle and looked fierce and proud. Lexa felt her blood began to heat up and the battle lust settle into her stomach.

“You are right Mayor. The island didn’t stop us the first time and it won’t stop us now. We find a way to keep them from York or we kill them all.” Lexa grinned at her friend and they grasped each other’s forearms before Lexa led the small army forward.

They stopped at the entrance to the underground bunker where they had first come across the creatures. Rachel and Zora dismounted and started organizing their crew. Octavia walked over to Ridder’s horse and grabbed her brother’s hand.

“Be careful Bell. This island... the whole place just isn’t right and we don’t know anything about that lake.” Octavia looked up at him and he nodded his head at her.

“That’s my line little sister. You be careful in there. You have the lighter from Raven, right?” He nodded in approval as she patted her front pocket and grinned. He turned his head and found Lincoln. He didn’t have to say anything, the tall man just nodded his promise and smiled a small smile at Bellamy.

Lexa had started moving the line again and the Blake siblings looked at each other and both said, “May we meet again,” under their breath.

Octavia led them easily through the bunker to the underground cells. Virgil released the locks on the doors and Rachel looked warily at the body inside the cell. Emerson had been mostly consumed and was not much more than a pile of bones at this point.

As Octavia walked into the cell she kicked the bones and Lincoln chastised her for abusing the dead. “He deserves it, even in death.” She stubbornly insisted and Lincoln just shook his head and approached the hole in the back of the cell.

They carefully looked inside the hole and when they were sure it was clear the couple both stepped inside. The light coming from the bunker lit a small portion of the tunnel but other than that it was dark.

“Will we be able to see at all in here Linc?” Octavia questioned peering into the darkness of the long narrow hallway.

Lincoln reached his hand out and touched the wall, the metal was cold to his touch. “I don’t know, O. These walls aren’t natural…” He looked back at her and she understood.

“Yeah, I think it’s some kind of access hall to these bunkers. Maybe it goes toward the old subway tunnels but I’m not sure.”

Zora, Rachel, and Virgil stuck their heads inside and the former Mountain Man grinned, “I think I can help. There is some sort of cable that runs all along these access halls it serves a a kind of light and guide. It’s in all of the ones I’ve used so it must be here too. He climbed into the tunnel and felt along the wall for several feet.
His voice came back to them through the dark, “Found it.” Then they heard a metal clanking sound as he opened the panel on the side of the wall and fumbled for the switch. Octavia heard the humming sound of electricity above her and slowly the tunnel began to illuminate. The light was red and only bright enough to give them a few feet of visibility, but it was enough.

Rachel walked over to the young man and clapped him on the back, “Great job, Virgil.” She grinned at him and then looked expectantly at him and Octavia. “This is your world, not ours. Which way do we go in this metal tunnel?”

Octavia and Virgil looked at each other and then looked up and down the hallway. “Maybe we should split up.” Octavia offered.

As Rachel and Zora discussed the idea Kane came to the front. He had turned the computer on in the bunker and found the schematics he had been looking for. He wanted to stay and look for information on the creatures but he knew they didn’t have time and he suspected he would find the answers at the end of the tunnel anyway.

He stepped into the small hallway and walked to the left. When he reached Zora and Rachel he stepped past them and nodded down the hall, “This way. I found a map of the compound. There is a large central area called 'Interface Control Room.' I have a strong feeling that is where we will find either our pale, freaky friends, some answers, or both.

As Kane led them through the underground hallways they unknowingly tripped an alert and the Interface prepared to send a welcome party their way.

Lexa and Clarke rode side by side right behind Kita. The Ice Guard had taken the lead from her Heda as they left the bunker team. Clarke watched Lexa fight back a bout of laughter when Kita passed them and she raised her eyebrow at her wife.

“What?” She demanded.

“Houmon, you don’t want to know.” Lexa replied playfully.

“Lexa, why are you laughing at Kita?” Clarke pressed her, whispering.

“Let’s just say I am privy to some information and our Ice Guard had a very interesting night after the battle.” Lexa broke into a full grin and giggled quietly. Clarke rolled her eyes at her frowned.

“What have you done to our Kita? You have completely corrupted her.” Clarke shook her head at Lexa, who continued to snicker quietly, and dropped back to ride next to Bellamy and Ritter. Ro sped up and fell in place next to her Heda.

“Ritter, thank you for that, at the bridge.” Clarke smiled at the girl who returned the smile easily.

“I am glad I was there. I am a Rider of the Horse Clan, we have a strong connection to animals, especially horses. When I mounted her I knew she was nervous and then I listened closely and heard her pain. Anyone but a Rider would never have known and they would have tried to jump…” Ritter let her sentence hang in the air and Bellamy shuddered.

“If I died before the baby was born Echo would kill me!” His lame attempt at a joke had both Ritter and Clarke rolling their eyes.

Clarke changed the subject, “You know Echo?” She asked innocently.
“Yes, Echo and I met a few years ago at a clan gathering in Luna’s lands. She was one of Heda’s warriors for the games and I was one of Ro’s Riders. She won her fighting competition and I won my riding competition. We…” she paused and chose her words carefully, “…celebrated together and after that we became close. She came to Sapeake a few times with Heda and I went to Ton DC once with Hirrim. We were always happy to see each other when the opportunity arose.”

The young woman was sharing so easily that Clarke almost felt bad. “It’s so nice that you can meet one of Echo’s old friends, huh, Bellamy?” She grinned at her friend and he forced a smile back.

“Great, actually I love hearing about all of Echo’s old friends.” Bellamy turned the tables on Clarke. “Hey, Ritter. Would you say Lexa also had a lot of old friends?” He smiled innocently at Clarke whose eyes narrowed at him.

“Heda… friends?” Ritter was surprised and thought over his question, “She is Heda…. Heda had no friends before the Skai Heda. I can only guess you mean lovers?” The young woman grinned at Clarke who frowned but couldn’t look away. Ritter was about to tell her that Lexa had been rumoured to be the best lover in all the clans.

“Yeah, lovers.” Bellamy had an evil smirk on his face that was quickly wiped off by the voice that suddenly spoke.

“I can hear you Skai Boi, we will be sparring when we return to Ton DC. Ritter, the punishment for discussing your Heda’s past sex life with her wife is having your tongue cut out…” Lexa’s voice floated back to them, her tone sweet as can be.

Ritter went pale and breathed out a weak, “Sha Heda” and Bellamy started to laugh. Clarke shook her head and decided to give up before poor Ritter had a nervous breakdown.

She patted the girl on the arm and smiled at her. Ritter returned the smile but still looked like she would far rather have been in the darkness of the bunker than riding with the two Skai Kru who seemed very likely to get her into trouble.

Clarke and Bellamy continued chatting quietly as they rode over the island. When they approached the fallen statue Bellamy grew quiet and stared.

“It’s… it’s the Statue… the Statue of Liberty.” his voice came out as a cracked whisper and Clarke reached over and squeezed his arm.

“I know Bell, I know.” Clarke’s voice was equally reverent and she noticed that the rest of the party travelling with them had grown quiet as they passed the downed lady.

They rode in silence for the next couple of miles and then Lexa held up her hand and ordered a halt. Clarke moved forward and looked at her wife and Kita scanned the horizon finding no threat and turned her gaze to her Heda.

“What is it?” Clarke asked and she followed Lexa’s gaze to the northwest.

“The tunnel is that way” Lexa responded pointing the road out to Clarke.

“Already!? The road is so different without the Mountain Men’s tricks with wind, and sandstorms.” Clarke was surprised how quickly they had traversed the distance that had seemed to take forever last time.

Kita’s keen eyes discerned Lexa’s reasons for halting the group. “That does not look like any water I have ever seen, Heda.” She turned her head away from the lake and back to Heda.
“Indeed, Kita.” Lexa looked around at the team she had with her, “We don’t know what we will find, but we will meet it head on.” She glanced toward the tunnel and continued, “We will veer off to the east and then turn back to the north, I want to avoid the mouth of the tunnel as much as possible. I don’t think we need to alert any of the creatures in there to our presence.”

The group laughed an uncomfortable laugh and agreed with her. They set off on a new course and Lexa left it to Kita to guide them. She had complete trust in the Ice Guard’s ability to get them to their destination.

Kita took a rather zigzagged path as they rode. She avoided certain dunes and depressions in the sand that she didn’t trust, but she kept a steady pace and before long they rode up a small crest and were greeted by a sight that silenced them all yet again.

The sand spread out in all directions continuing as as far as they could see. The occasional ruin made itself known, jutting up into the air, but the rest of the landscape was a bleak desert stretched out before them.

In the middle of their view, about a mile ahead of them, was the most eerie and odd thing any of them had ever seen. The rough sand gave way suddenly to a perfectly flat, perfectly round, perfectly black, surface. There were no waves, just a shimmering reflection and an occasional slight ripple that let them know it was indeed liquid. The obsidian surface was seemingly dropped there from outer space. It looked as alien as the remains of the Ark towering over the forests of Ton DC.

No one spoke as they continued to ride toward it and when they arrived Kita and Lexa were the first to dismount. Lexa walked up to the surface carefully testing her steps as she went. The ground proved stable and soon she found herself staring into her own reflection off of the dark, unwelcoming surface.

She knelt on one knee inches from the water and stared at it. She wondered how it cold it would be, she wondered if it was indeed water, or if it would be something much more dangerous.

Clarke was fumbling in her bag for her radiation meter and Bellamy was was doing a quick check of the perimeter with a few of the warriors. Ro was at Lexa’s back watching the water with distrust. Kita was at her Heda’s side and saw Lexa’s intention at the same time as Clarke who had found what she was looking for and was now walking toward her wife.

Lexa raised her left hand, looked at it with an odd expression, and then moved to plunge it into the water. ‘Lex! No!” Clarke lurched forward and her breath caught in her throat in relief as Kita’s hand caught Lexa’s in midair.

“Heda, don’t even think about it.” Kita grinned at Lexa and then she moved faster than Clarke could protest or Lexa could recover. She pushed Lexa’s hand back out of the way forcefully enough to topple Lexa backwards onto her ass in the sand. Then Kita took a step forward and and drove her body down onto one knee. She swung her arm like she was punching the earth and in one powerful movement her hand disappeared into the water.

“Kita!” Lexa grabbed the guard and pulled her backwards, Kita’s arm slid back from the water and Clarke was on them both frantically checking for radiation.

Kita stared at her arm in disbelief and Lexa peppered her with questions, “Does it hurt?” “Is it poison?” “How does it feel”

Kita looked back at forth between her Heda and her Skai Reine her expression unreadable, “It is
thicker than water.” She paused looking at her hand and then her face broke into a grin, “and it’s really cold.” She said and then laughed awkwardly. The warriors had gathered behind them watching and they breathed a collective sigh of relief.

“It’s cold!?” Clarke was pissed but couldn’t help but smile. “You two…” She scolded Lexa and Kita. “I have a god damn machine here that could have told us a lot of valuable information before you went sticking your hands in there!” She shook her head and continued, “You’re lucky…”

A blaring alarm began sounding off seemingly from under the lake’s surface and it stopped her mid-sentence. The warriors all dropped into defensive battle stances. Lexa and Kita scrambled to their feet and drew their weapons. “Clarke, what the hell is that!?” Lexa called out, maneuvering herself between the water and her wife.

Clarke turned and looked at Bellamy, “It sounds like a warning alarm.”

“Yeah, it’s the same kind of alarm that would sound on the Ark when a door was about to open. You know, a door that lead to the vacuum of space and death.” He looked around nervously and called out, “I think we should all move back away from the water.”

Everyone quickly dropped back several feet and the blaring noise continued. They kept scanning the area, weapons at the ready, but nothing seemed to be happening. It was Ro who spotted it and she shivered when she saw it.

“Heda, the centre of the lake.” Ro’s voice came out in a whisper. Everyone eyes scanned the lake and one by one they all saw what she had seen.

“What the hell!” Bellamy lowered his gun and walked closer to the shore squinting as he tried to see exactly what he was looking at.

“Is this not a lake at all?” Clarke joined him and they began to look closely at the water.

Lexa stood next to her wife and stared, “Clarke, how did a hole appear in the middle of this lake?” The alarm seemed to have indeed been an alert. A panel had risen to the surface and slid open and a gleaming black metal staircase winding downwards into what seemed to be the centre of the lake had appeared.

Clarke was walking along the shore of the water, looking into the darkness searching for something. Bellamy was doing the same in the opposite direction.

“Griffin!” He called out. “Remember the aquaponic lab? What if it’s something like that? Question is, what the hell are they growing?” Bellamy peered into the dark water even more disturbed that he couldn’t see beyond it’s shimmering surface.

“Clarke?” Lexa was growing impatient. “Do you know what this is?” Her grip on her sword hadn’t relaxed and she had a growing sense of unease.

“Maybe, Lexa.” Clarke picked up her pace and got even closer to the water’s edge. She found herself pushed back slightly by Kita as the guard stubbornly inserted herself between Clarke and the water. “Not now, Kita. I need to see… there!” Clarke shouted in excitement and rushed forward.

She stopped at the water’s edge and pointed about two feet out, “Do you see it, right there, the color is the same but do you see the difference in texture? There is a metal platform there and there are more leading to the middle!” She was excited and breathless.

Lexa stared at her in disbelief and Kita frowned. “You aren’t going out there.” Lexa stated flatly.
“Yes I am Lex, we all are.” Clarke grinned, “I think I know what this is.” She gestured at the lake.

Bellamy ran up and added, “I found two more sets that way, they seem to be intersecting the lake at regular intervals, just like the old lab in sector 6.”

“Okay, so I think this lake is actually a lab of some kind, most likely to grow something. Maybe the Mountain Men did create the terrors.” Clarke started. “See how perfectly round the lake is.” She used her finger to trace the outline in the air. “A natural lake couldn’t possibly be this perfect.”

Lexa frowned, “There is nothing natural about this lake, but that doesn’t mean I’m letting you go out there.”

“Listen Lex, when Kita broke the surface of the water it triggered the door to what I think could be the main control room.” She pointed to the centre of the lake. “There aren’t likely to be many security protocols, I mean who would they be expecting here…?” Clarke gestured around them at the island, completely devoid of any life.

“So this is a path?” Lexa surmised pointing to the stepping stones Clarke had discovered.

“Exactly. They rose to the surface when the door opened. We just have to follow them to the centre and see what makes this thing tick!” Clarke was both afraid and excited, it wasn’t often that her technical know how outweighed Lexa’s Earth skills.

Lexa looked unconvinced. “What if it is a trap?” she demanded.

“Only one way to find out.” Clarke quipped back. She looked into the dark surface hoping to see some answers. “Maybe some of the terrors are right here in this water below us and we just can’t see them.” She added sobering even her own enthusiasm.

Kita had heard enough, she stood and marched over to the side of the lake and without hesitation she stepped nimbly out onto the platform Clarke had spotted. She stood there still as can be and waited for something to happen.

Everyone held their breath and watched, nothing happened so Kita took another step onto the next platform. From a distance the platforms were not visible at all and it truly looked like Kita was walking on water.

She took a third step and then a fourth and she stopped and looked back. “Heda, I will go to the staircase and come back, make sure it is safe.” She turned and began to move quickly along path. As she skipped along Ritter and Bellamy joined her jumping from platform to platform. Clarke was itching to join them but Lexa’s hand on her arm stopped her.

The three of them got to the centre without incident and they stood at the top and looked down into the centre. The whole thing was a cylindrical tube descending downward. The black steel staircase led steeply down about ten feet to a platform below.

Bellamy shouted back to Clarke who immediately looked at Lexa and informed her that she was going out there and Lexa could either join her or fuck off. Lexa started a bit at the very Octavia choice of words but relented and let go of her wife’s arm.

As Clarke and Lexa started their journey toward the centre Bellamy was leading eagerly down the stairs. The small room at the bottom of the stairs appeared to have the same black metal walls and was lit by a cable that ran across the roof with red LED lights embedded in it. It created enough light for them to see but also gave Bellamy the creeps.
When he got to the platform he took in the space with a quick glance and then he went straight for the control panel. Kita and Ritter investigated further finding another, identical descending staircase starting on the far end of the platform. Kita looked closely at the black walls and realized they were actually glass and the blackness was the view of the water on the other side.

She was just reaching out to tap on the glass, her finger hovered over the surface when Bellamy turned something on and suddenly a smoky light filtered through the water and Kita involuntarily jumped back away from the window.

Staring back at her were terror shaped carcasses. They were hollow shells of only bone with pale white skin grown thinly overtop. They were suspended in the water encased in some kind of translucent cocoon. The light Bellamy had triggered lit up just one row. To the right, left and below she could just make out more rows of the same.

She spun around calculating quickly in her head and figured there were twelve on this floor. She thought of the size of the lake and figured there were about ten per row. One hundred and twenty… she repeated the number in her head over and over.

She turned back to the window and looked closer at the chambers. She saw why the lake looked so black and still from the surface. There was a roof of the same obsidian metal covering the artificial womb that was growing the terrors. She estimated there would be less than a foot of the liquid between it and the surface.

Ritter’s voice beside her brought her back to the terrors. “What the hell is this…?” The young Rider was staring in disbelief at the partially grown terrors.

“This lake is full of them… it’s like a womb that grows them… these ones are just a shell, but there are more levels under us. So many of them…” She stepped closer and shuddered involuntarily at the newly grown skin pulled tight over the freshly set bones. The only thing that tore her horrified gaze from the row of lifeless terrors was Bellamy’s voice.

“Oops.” As soon as the word escaped his mouth Kita whipped around and grabbed his shoulder in a vicelike grip.

“What do you mean ‘oops’!?” She demanded. She had heard Clarke say that same thing numerous times when she had made some kind of mistake.

Bellamy was staring at the screen in front of him desperately pushing a red button over and over.

“It won’t cancel. Shit. I think I activated some of them…” He looked sheepishly at Kita who growled at him and bounded for the stairs.

As she was halfway up the stairs when another loud electronic beeping noise started. Ritter jumped a little and stared at Bellamy.

“What do we do!?” She demanded as the entire level lit up with a brighter red blinking light and then all of the rows of terrors were lit with the smoky underwater lights. They could see the rows of terrors surrounding them, and clearly see the same repeated under them.

Bellamy stood up and drew his gun, “I guess we get ready to fight.”

Clarke and Lexa bounded down the stairs and Clarke took in the situation in a quick glance. Kita had filled her in with a rushed version of the events and she grabbed Bellamy and pulled him toward a monitor that had been activated along with the beeping noise.
“I don’t think we do, Bell.” She spoke softly but her voice was tight. “These ones aren’t ready, not fully grown….”

“Octavia!” Bellamy stared at the monitor and watched as a row of terrors far below them was activated. The top of the screen flashed with instructions.

INTERFACE ACTIVATING NANOPROBE MEMORY CELLS
Strange looking pods were being released from a central panel and jettisoned through the water toward each of the fully grown bodies. The pods entered cocoon that surrounded the bodies and seemed to be absorbed through the translucent material. They clearly saw a trail of black move through the cocoon and enter the ears, eyes and nose of the creatures. Moments later the terrors opened their eyes.

INTERFACE INITIATING SEAL
A shiny, black, metal bulkhead slid out of the wall and created a barrier between the creatures that were now awake and the ones still hanging inside the cocoons above them.

INTERFACE RELEASING SYNTHAMNIO FLUID AND INITIATING OXYGEN FLOW
The water in that section began to drain from the floor and the creatures began to claw their way out of the strange cocoons.

“Clarke, Bellamy stay here and watch this, gather as much information as you can. Kita stay with them.” Lexa was too impatient to wait and she knew that as skilled as the team in the tunnels was one hundred and twenty creatures was too many. She had to get to them and help.

By this time her entire team was crowding down the stairs and they quickly made way for their Commander as she strode toward the other staircase. She took one more look at Clarke and added, “Follow us as soon as you know anything and be careful.”

With that she started running down the stairs toward what she hoped was the tunnel where she would find Zora before it was too late.

Clarke, Bellamy and Kita continued to stare at the monitor as the creatures emerged completely from the cocoons and began to move around. Clarke snapped out of the trance and moved back to the control panel.

“What started this Bell?” She tapped away at some of the keys and tried to get more information on the program. “Where is Monty when you need him.” She muttered under her breath.

“I was just trying to access the database and see what information I could get from it. Then a window popped up saying ‘ACCESS POINT 52 ACTIVATION DETECTED’ then it said something like ‘GERSA TEAM ACTIVATED’. I figured I was access point 52, and I guess those things are GERSAs.” He gestured at the terrors.

“I don’t think you triggered it, I’m betting on the team in the tunnels. There was probably some kind of alarm.” Clarke was typing away trying to get into the files. “It won’t let me see anything important. I can see the levels of organic materials used in the shells here on this floor and the percentage of completion. The only other thing this console seems to be able to do is control the lights and that monitor. When I try to do anything it says ‘ACCESS AT INTERFACE’. How much do you want to bet the interface we need is at the very bottom of this thing.”

“Let’s go.” Kita stood and marched toward the stairs. She had had enough of the machines and
wanted to follow Heda down to the possible battle.

Clarke and Bellamy didn’t hesitate to follow her and they all marched steadily downward. Clarke stopped briefly on each platform to activate the lights and check on the status of the GERSA. At each level they grew and added some part of the creatures bodies. Clarke was both fascinated and horrified.

Kane had led the group through the tunnels toward the central control room confidently. He realized he felt comfortable inside the metal tubes, in his element. A quick glance back at Rachel and Zora showed that they did not share his ease.

He knew they were only about 500 feet from the control room and the next right would put them in view. He quickened his pace. His years as a security chief on the Ark had taught him a thing or two about the nuances and the sounds of a manmade tunnel. He suddenly felt that something was wrong, stopped, and raised his hand for those behind him to do the same.

He heard movement and he immediately took out his weapon, he felt the group at his back tense and prepare for battle. “We have to get to that corner before whoever is in that hallway.” He increased his speed as he spoke.

They reached the corner and Kane looked back at Zora. They could hear the laughter now and knew exactly what waited for them. They nodded at each other and turned the corner. The sight that greeted them took Kane’s breath away, there were so, many of them. The door to the control room was in sight but there was wave after wave of terrors rushing out the door into the hallway towards them. He hesitated for just a moment and was overtaken by Zora and Rachel as they rushed forward shouting to the team.

“Forward in teams! They jump and climb so protect your partners head and back!” Suu and Zora moved in tandem shielding each other and slicing through terrors. Rachel and one of Suu’s soldiers and Octavia and Lincoln were into the fray immediately. Kane was joined by Virgil, they both had guns as well as swords but Kane stopped Virgil as he began to move forward.

“We have to get into the control room, we have the best chance at stopping them from in there!” Kane shouted over the din of battle. “Come with me.” There was a longer way that Kane had also mapped out and with a regretful look back at the battle he and Virgil ran the other way.

Lexa reached the bottom of the stairs just as the last section of 12 terrors were released. Her team cut through them before they made it out of the room. She was keeping count inside of her head. “108 to go,” she thought to herself.

Ro led them through the doorway into a large room filled with monitors and computers and several terrors all heading for a door marked EAST. There was the unmistakable sound of fighting coming from the hallway and Ro led the team forward towards it.

Lexa grabbed Ritter from the group, “Run back upstairs and tell Clarke to forget the monitors! We need her and Bellamy in this room trying to shut it down before it makes more of them! Go!” The girl nodded and took off immediately

Kita was impatiently leading Clarke and Bellamy down the stairs cringing everytime Clarke stopped
to check on the development of the things she was now calling GERSA. They were about three floors up from the bottom when Ritter met them yelling for them to hurry and get to the control room. She relayed that Heda had sent her to tell them to shut it down.

Clarke stopped her investigations and they ran all the way to the bottom. On the seventh level they found a few dead GERSA and an open door heading into a tunnel. They heard the sounds of fighting and pulled out their weapons.

The rest of them ran through into the control room and toward the sounds of battle from the hallway. Clarke stopped, she heard the unmistakable sounds of machinery and she watched as the second floor slowly descended to become the ground floor. There were 120 more almost fully developed GERSA that she became determined to stop.

She ran into the control room and joined Bellamy at one of the screens. He was glancing anxiously over his shoulder at the tunnel where he knew his sister was fighting with the terrors and Clarke quickly pushed him out of the way. “Shit!” she swore out loud as the monitor showed an overview of production.

“Threat detected. Development accelerated.” It declared across the screen and then zoomed out to a view of all seven levels. The bottom level was showing 80% complete and while they were watching it jumped up to 83%.

“We have to shut this down! If another 120 of them get released…” Clarke didn’t finish her sentence.

“You keep trying Clarke, I’ll start looking for a way to destroy it, just in case.” Bellamy stopped and turned back to her. He put his hand on her shoulder. We can do this Clarke. She lifted her eyes from the screen and met his for just a second before looking back down and trying to find the command that would shut it down.

In the hallway Zora was glad to see Ro’s face as the woman rushed through and began attacking the terrors from behind. The other warriors joined her and soon the terrors were lost in confusion at the sudden appearance of more enemies from behind them.

The two teams fought forward as the terrors panicked and began leaping as far into the crowd of warriors as they could, trying to escape. They slashed and bit at whoever was in the way and red blood soon mixed with black on the floors of the tunnels. The GERSA needed to regroup and get instructions from the interface but they were now blocked in on both sides and desperation was making them dangerous. The more desperate they became the more dangerous and several of the warriors suffered deep lacerations from the wildly swinging claws. Despite the added strength their fear fueled, the fight was not going well for the terrors. There were less than fifty of them left when a computerized voice spoke through the tunnels. “Tunnel Protocol 5A Activated.”

The terrors stopped suddenly and they jumped for the ceiling and pulled open small ducts the team hadn’t noticed previously. As they began to disappear into the ceiling Lexa’s voice called out. “Kill them before they get inside!” Those that had them began to pull arrows and fire at will. Others jumped up and slashed at the terrors with their swords or threw daggers.

They got several more but most of the GERSA managed to escape into the ducts. Lexa's eyes found Kita's and she shouted, "Where is Clarke?"

"She is in the Control Room trying to shut it down." Kita suddenly felt a panic inside and started to
run toward the control room needing her Skai Reine in her sight.

“Stay with her, Kita.” Lexa yelled after her.

“What the hell is Protocol 5A?” Octavia questioned and almost as soon as the words were out of her mouth they began to hear the creepy laughter coming from the ceiling and all around them. Kita was just about to step back into the control room when a duct opened directly above her and one of the terrors dropped down.

“Kita!” Suu’s voice rang out in warning but the thing dropped on the Ice Guard completely without warning and as it landed on her back it dug its claws deeply into the woman. Lexa had a dagger out and her hand drawn back when other ducts began to open all around them and the creatures began to drop down onto her warriors.

There was too much confusion between Lexa and Kita for her to help so she began grabbing whatever creature was closest to her and killing as many as she could. She kept an eye on Kita as the Ice Guard managed to drag the GERSA from her back. Lexa saw the blood spilling from the girl and saw her stumble slightly as she brought with the demon.

Zora had her sword drawn and was moving toward Kita to help when one of the creatures landed on her. Her large frame tensed in pain as it sunk its teeth into her shoulder. Lexa didn’t hesitate, she spun mid-throw and sent her dagger into the heart of the creature who dared attack the Mayor.

Lexa’s eyes quickly diverted back to Kita even as her mouth shouted orders to the warriors to raise shields and swords and watch the ceiling. Kita’s ice blue blade was running black with the blood of the creature she had finally managed to kill but her shoulders ran red with her own blood. She glanced back at Zora and saw Suu putting pressure on Zora’s neck while pulling bandages from her pack.

The look of worry on Suu’s face told Lexa the bite was bad and Lexa cursed. She rushed to Kita all while keeping an eye on the battle. Most of the creatures that had dropped from the ceiling had been killed but some had managed to slash and bite and then jump back up to disappear into the ducts once more.

As she reached Kita’s side and began to inspect the deep cuts she heard Rachel call out, “Low! They’re coming low!” More secret panels had slid open near the floor and while the warriors looked up several creatures attacked from the ground. They slashed and bit at legs and abdomens before either being killed or escaping back behind the panels.

Lexa dragged Kita into the control room where Clarke was desperately typing and staring in fear at the monitor that now read 94% complete on the bottom level.

Clarke looked up and saw the blood running down Kita’s body and she gasped. She made to stand and help but Bellamy shouted at her. “Clarke if they reach 100% we’re all dead!”

The blonde looked back and forth between her injured guard and the monitor. Kita spoke, “I’m fine, Clarke. Stop them!” She tried to turn back toward the fight but her steps were weak. Lexa caught her by the arms and made her kneel down. She looked desperately at Clarke.

“What do I do!?” She called over and then followed Clarke’s instructions to put pressure on the wounds to stop the bleeding. The monitor ticked up to 95% and Clarke began to panic.

Bellamy was about to start shooting at the machines when a panel in the back of the room slid open to reveal yet another secret door Lexa grabbed her sword but was relieved when Kane and Virgil
stepped out instead of more creatures.

“Kane!” Clarke jumped to her feet and gestured wildly. “I can’t stop it!” As soon as Virgil slid into her seat she ran across the room and began to pull bandages from her pack to treat Kita.

Lexa looked at Clarke and for a moment she allowed time to slow and just looked at her wife. She felt a sudden fear creep into her. She looked back at the hallway and then back toward the machine that was producing more of these things. She knew if 120 more came out they would die here, all of them. She could accept her death and the death of her warriors but not Clarke. Never Clarke.

“Kane how long do we have?” She barked out.

“It’s at 98% not long.”

“Can you stop it in time? Speak true.”

“It’s 50/50.” Kane shot back.

“Not good enough. Get up, we’re leaving.” Lexa reached down and grabbed Kita off the floor. Clarke had just finished the bandages and looked at Lexa with her wide blue eyes.

“Lex…” She started but Lexa was all business.

“We’re not dying down here today, not you, Clarke.” Lexa looked at Kita, “Can you walk?” Kita nodded.

“Move now!” She yelled and everyone jumped a little. They started toward the tunnel and she shouted, “Not that way! Up the stairs, it’s still daylight they won’t be able to follow us at the top.”

As Clarke and Kita headed toward the stairs Bellamy joined them and put his arm around Kita to help her. Lexa ran for the East corridor.

“Zora!” she shouted and was met by a grin.

“We’ve almost got em, Heda!” Zora sounded triumphant but was cut short.

“There are 120 more minutes away from completion. Follow me, that is an order!” Lexa turned and ran back toward the stairs and the group from the tunnels followed. Some were bloodied and injured and they were helped by the more able.”

Kane and Vigil hadn’t moved from the monitor. “Let’s go!” Lexa shouted at them but they kept typing in desperation. Lexa ran over and grabbed Kane, “Now!”

Kane protested, “We have to stop them. The city can’t withstand a siege every night, and now we know that we can never kill them all when they just make more!”

“I have a plan, Kane! Trust me!” Lexa pulled him from the seat as the computer showed 100% complete. “Virgil, that flying machine… how long would it take to go to Ton DC and back?” She was pushing the two men ahead of her into the chamber where they saw the strange memory pods injecting themselves to the creatures.

“Ton DC…? A return flight…” Vigil was temporarily distracted by the creatures eyes opening and Lexa had to push him up the next stair. “a few hours, three maybe four.” He stammered as he started to pick up his pace.

“Kane, with the materials at the Ark and Mount Weather can Raven build a bomb big enough to
destroy this place.” They arrived at the third floor landing and the monitor showed the fluid draining from the growth chamber.

“Move faster!” Lexa prodded them up the next flight of stairs and as they stepped foot on the next platform they heard the creepy laughter wafting up the stairs.

“Yes, she could… but it would take her a few hours at least if not a few days.” Kane was panting as he ran up the stairs.

“She works better under pressure… I’ll give her two hours.” Lexa glanced behind her as the laughter got louder.

“There are seven platforms. This is the fifth and it sounds like they are right behind us. Go Go!” Lexa yelled and they bounded up toward the sixth platform.” Lexa listened to her senses, she trusted herself, her instincts were not just hers but those of every Heda before her. They were halfway up the stairs to the sixth platform when she spun and slashed out with her sword. Two terrors ended up dead and there were four more a step behind.

Kane turned and fired off two bullets taking out two of them and Lexa began walking backwards up the stairs as she used some fancy bladework to keep the terrors at bay. She spun her sword and when she saw a chance she slashed out drawing blood and screams.

“They mature twelve at a time. Once the first twelve are dead you’ll have about a minute before the next ones!” It was Bellamy running back down to help, his sister at his heels and Lincoln at hers.

They quickly took care of the remaining twelve of the first wave and then sprinted up to the last platform. Lexa could see the very welcome sight of daylight streaming down from the opening and Clarke was still typing away at the controls.

“Let’s go! Now!” Lexa shouted and Clarke waved her away. I’ve almost got it…. Lex.” Clarke was typing like mad and Kane was opening some panels and plugging in some small device.

The two of them were shouting back and forth about something Lexa didn’t understand but she did understand the blaring noise that suddenly started. It was the same noise that had preceded the opening of the stairway and Lexa was sure it was foreboding the closing. With the next wave of creatures on the way up the stairs she knew they would die if it closed now.

She grabbed Clarke and threw her over her shoulder. “Kane, NOW!” Lexa shouted as she ran for the stairs ignoring Clarke’s demands to put her down.

Octavia and Lincoln were outside already and Bellamy quickly joined them. “Heda, hurry, the door…” Octavia sounded scared and her fear put an extra bounce into Lexa’s step. She ran up the stairs and exited into the sunshine before putting Clarke down and spinning back to the opening. Virgil was right behind her but Kane was still a few steps back.

The door started to slide and Kane threw the device he was carrying. Octavia caught it and looked on in horror as Lincoln and Bellamy unsuccessfully tried to forcefully prevent the door from closing. Clarke screamed as it slid shut with Kane still inside.

Lexa moved quickly toward the water and slammed her fist into it like Kita had done the first time. They heard the muffled sound of gun shots from inside and they waited impatiently as the process began. The alarm sounded and the stepping stones reappeared. Lexa had a death grip on her sword waiting for the door to open.

As it slid to the side once again revealing the staircase Lincoln, Octavia and Lexa jumped in
swinging wildly at the creatures who were ducking way from the daylight. The terrors jumped back and left Kane a bloody mess on the third stair from the top. Lincoln grabbed him and Lexa covered the retreat. They pulled him outside and Clarke grabbed for Kane.

Suu joined her and together they were putting pressure on the bites and claw marks trying to stop the bleeding. “Why, why? You should have left it.” Clarke chastised the man as tears ran down her face. “Nothing on there could be more important than you.”

“The truth, Clarke. We must always try to find the truth in our past.” He reached up and rested his hand on Clarke’s cheek for just a moment before his strength left him and it fell back to the ground.

“Heda we have to move. The stepping stones could disappear any moment.” Lincoln frowned looking toward the mainland. He turned back looked at Clarke. “I’ll carry him. I’ll be careful and fast. Get him ready.”

Clarke nodded and started tightening bandages. She looked at Lexa. “We need to get him to Mom.” The tears streaking down her face were impossible to stop and Lexa just nodded.

“We will Clarke, I promise.” As Bellamy helped lift Kane onto Lincoln’s back Lexa pulled Clarke to her feet. “Houmon, we have to move quickly now. Ste yuj.” Lexa held Clarke’s gaze long enough to see the steel of resolve in her blue eyes and then they turned to make their way back to the shore.

Ro was waiting with fast Riders on fast horses. She had lined up six riders and put the most seriously injured with them. Kita and Zora were two of the most critically injured, both of them teetering on the edge of consciousness. There was a Woman in Black, and a Lanta Fighter both bleeding heavily and the last two horses were empty waiting for Kane and Clarke. Ro figured Clarke should go with them in case someone took a turn for the worse on the road back to York.

Lexa shouted to Virgil as soon as she jumped onto the sand from the last stepping stone. He knew her plan and nodded eagerly. “Ro, I need your two fastest riders.” She grabbed her own horse and a confused Theo helped Zora from his horse, gently laid her down and then joined Lexa.

“Heda?” Ro questioned. “The Mayor needs medical attention.” She was confused as to why Lexa seemed to be taking the boy from the mountain and Bellamy.

“She’ll get it, they all will. Ro, help Clarke treat them here and we’ll be back soon.” Lexa nodded to Lincoln and Octavia who mounted up and then at Ritter and Theo who carried Bellamy and Virgil. “We ride hard and fast, their lives depend on it.” She nodded back toward Zora and Kane and then kicked her horse into a gallop.

They arrived back at the entrance to the bunker much faster then Lexa thought would have been possible and Virgil jumped down and ran toward the ocean. Bellamy and Lincoln followed him and Octavia kept her eye on the entrance to the bunker where Reaper’s had poured out the very first time they had stopped here. She knew the creatures couldn’t come out in the daylight but she didn’t trust the island not to throw them yet another curve ball.

Virgil ran to a certain spot and dropped to his knees digging in the sand with his hands. He dug down until he found the panel he was looking for and then he quickly brushed as much sand off of it
as he could. He pulled open a door and yanked on a lever that was inside.

He stood up and the rest of the group watched in awe as another unseen door opened in the sand. It was a bunker and as the two doors opened upwards the sand that had covered them flew through the air making it hard to see exactly what was happening. Lexa held her hand up to shield her eyes and stared in disbelief at what was inside.

Bellamy whooped and Virgil grinned. Octavia finally gave in and turned from her post and ran to stand next to Lincoln. “Awesome!” She breathed out and Lincoln looked at her confused.

“That is our ride!” Octavia answered with a whoop running forward with Bellamy to help Virgil prepare the chopper.

“The Skai People say it will fly.” She sighed as she looked at the metal box wondering how in the hell that thing could save Zora, Kane and Kita.

With the help of the Blake’s Virgil had it ready to fly in five minutes. He jumped into the cockpit and put on his headset. Bellamy jumped into the copilot seat and Octavia jumped into the back. She gestured to Lexa who frowned and looked at Theo and Ritter. Stay here with the horses, prepare the horses of the tunnel team too. Everyone will be coming this way soon.

He nodded his understanding and Lexa turned to Lincoln. “Will you follow your Heda even into a crazy, metal, flying machine? She shouted over the sound of the chopper starting up and he stared with wide eyes as the propellor started to spin and the sand started to fly.

His Heda was going to get on that thing, and his lover was already there. “Sha Heda.” He shouted and the two Trikru walked forward and jumped on board their body’s never betraying the fear they both felt. Octavia pulled the rear door closed and patted Virgil’s shoulder twice.

“Door clear, take her up!” She spoke into the headset a little louder than necessary as her excitement got the best of her.

It was a very fast, heavily armed war machine and Virgil had them buzzing the sand back to the lake so quickly Lexa’s head spun. In just a couple of minutes she could see the lake and in a minute more Virgil was hovering looking for a place to land. Clarke was ushering everyone away from the spot he had chosen and making sure they all stayed clear.

As he brought the chopper down Lexa felt a thrill of confidence shoot through her. With the Skai People as her 13th clan she could do things like this. She could use the technology of the past and the Mountain to save her people, to defeat monsters like the terrors. When Octavia opened the door again she jumped out full of confidence and ran for Clarke. They loaded the five most seriously injured first. Virgil insisted the chopped could handle twelve people easily but Lexa only added two more injured. She turned to Clarke and told her to board and then Suu.

“You two have to care for the injured as you fly to York.” She explained, “Your horses will be brought back for you, don’t worry about them.”

She was about to send them off when Bellamy stopped her. “Heda, you have to come!” He insisted. “People in York won’t know what the hell this is. I mean Abby will, but that’s it. If you were in charge would you allow it to land or try and shoot it down?”
She sighed. “What can I do about that?”

Bellamy grinned, “Heda, you and I are going to ride the skids!” Bellamy whooped and ran over to the chopper. Lexa wasn’t sure what he meant but she was sure she was going to hate it. She turned to Rachel and Ro.

“Leave for York now. Theo and Ritter are waiting at the Bunker entrance with the horses. Take the high road on the bridge and don’t delay. If my plan works I’ll be back with enough firepower to destroy the lake and the machine that makes the terrors for good!” Rachel nodded at her as Ro stared in disbelief at the helicopter.

Lexa strode over to the chopper and saw what Bellamy had been talking about as he had taken up position on the right rail. She frowned and mimicked his position gripping the handles on the side of the machine with a vice grip. Virgil jumped out and brought each of them a headset so they could communicate with him and then he jumped back into the cockpit. When he was sure everyone was ready he eased into the air and when neither Heda nor Bellamy seemed to have any trouble he began to fly toward York.

The rest of the party watched in awe as the Commander of the thirteen clans was flown through the air toward York. As they flew off Rachel wasted no time in getting them mounted up, they mostly doubled since the bunker teams horses were back at the other entrance, but no one would ride Heda’s horse so she led it behind her. When they reached Theo he had prepared all of the horses and everyone quickly sorted themselves out. The horses of the injured were led and they made for the bridge.

In a matter of minutes Lexa saw they had approached York and she heard people screaming below them. They had no idea what was happening and Lexa ordered Virgil to fly higher. When they approached the manor Lexa could see that Bellamy had been correct and there were archers all pointing arrows in their direction. She sighed heavily into the mic and spoke into the headset.

“Bellamy, begin waving. Virgil, take us down slowly. If they begin to fire on us take us back up out of range. Lexa reluctantly let go with her left hand and began to wave toward the warriors on the ground.

As they began to get lower Lexa saw that Abby had run outside and was gesturing wildly, She saw Luna run over to Abby and then she saw both women running around still gesturing. She assumed they were telling the archers not to shoot and she assumed the archers would listen.

“Take us down Virgil.” She ordered and the young mountain man did just that. Lexa had underestimated how frightening the helicopter was for the Grounders who had never even imagined such a thing. She had also failed to take into account how loud the helicopter was so that some of the warriors wouldn’t have been able to hear the order to stand down.

As they slowly lowered toward the courtyard Lexa saw a group of young archers from York take aim at them from the roof of the manor.

The chopper turned just so she had a perfect view and she saw the eyes of one of them suddenly grow wide as he recognized her, and she saw his desperate attempt to stop his friends from loosing their arrows. She saw his horror as he stared after the one loosed arrow and she saw what to her was his silent scream, “Heda! No!”
For the second time since she arrived in York she looked down at her body and saw an arrow protruding from her skin. This time it was in her left thigh and at the impact she felt her stability on the skid slip. As Virgil steadily lowered them to the ground she felt her feet leave the skid and she found herself dangling in midair. Her right hand was still gripped tightly around the handle on the outside of the chopper and she heard Virgil talking in her ear.

“Hold on Heda. I’m taking us down, please hold on! we’re at 30 meters… 25….”

Clarke scrambled inside the chopper and grabbed a headset. “Lexa! Don’t you dare let go! Lex, Please hold on.” She pressed her face against the window of the left door and watched helplessly as Lexa dangled from the skid, one hand holding her to the chopper.

“20 meters Heda, hold on.” Virgil continued his countdown and Lexa felt her hand start to slip.

“Houmon, Ai hod you in.” She said into her headset and she looked up into the panicked blue eyes.

Clarke yelled for Suu to take her hand and she grabbed the door handle desperately. She shoved it aside and with one hand gripping Suu she let herself out onto the skid. Her right hand reached for Lexa and closed around her wrist. Lexa felt her wife’s strong grip and she looked up into her eyes.

“Don’t you dare let go.” Clarke yelled into the headset and Lexa felt herself fill with resolve. She was Heda she was not going to fall ungracefully to her death from some flying machine after being shot (again) by an archer of York. She pulled her body up enough to swing her left arm over the skid.

“Ten meters Heda!” There was relief in Virgil’s voice as they were getting to the point where even if she fell it would most likely be survivable.

“Just a bit more, Lex. Hold on.” Clarke’s blue eyes beseeched her and Lexa had never been able to deny this woman so she tightened her grip.

“Bellamy, I’m going to need you to jump down and assist Heda.” Virgil’s voice came through again. “We’re at five meters now, four, three… you should be able to safely dismount at this distance.”

“Piece of cake V-man.” Bellamy answered and then lightly jumped the remaining distance. Once he had dismounted Virgil took the chopper slightly up again and Bellamy ran over to where Lexa was to be lowered. He raised his arms and Virgil began to slowly lower her.

Lexa looked down, surprised to find it seemed to be only ten feet of so to the ground, she was pretty sure she could jump down herself without injuring her leg much more than it already was.

“Back to three meters, Bellamy can you get her?” He couldn’t quite reach Lexa but Virgil didn’t want to risk going any lower and hitting either of them with the skids.

“Bellamy, clear away, I can drop myself from this height.” Lexa’s voice sounded tight, laced with pain and quite possibly anger and Bellamy decided not to mess with her.

“Sha Heda.” His answer, in other circumstances, would have probably made Lexa laugh. The Skai boy had never shown the same reverence to her as most of the others.

“Lex, your leg… are you sure?” It was Clarke again concern seeping into every word as she looked down at her beloved who was now gripping the skid with both hands and slowly extending her arms as she let herself dangle her whole height in a controlled decent.

“I’m sure, Clarke. My prowess…” Lexa snorted a little in laughter and then took a deep breath. She
was quite tall and once she had full extended her arms she only had about four or five feet to fall. If there hadn’t been an arrow in her leg she would have laughed at the distance.

She took a deep breath and on the exhale she let go. She tried to land well but the god damn arrow pretty much guaranteed that wouldn’t work. She felt pain rush through her leg and she was sure she had just done more damage than getting shot in the first place had done.

Bellamy was on her in a matter of seconds scooping her up and making a run for Abby. “Hold on Lexa, Abby will look at it!” he seemed panicked and she reached her hand up and swatted him on the back of the head.

He looked down at her surprised, “Bellamy, I’m fine. Put me down.” She insisted but he just kept running.

When he got to Abby he gently lowered her to the ground. Abby set to work looking at her leg and as she was about to protest she noticed what Bellamy seemed so worried about. Her entire leg was covered in blood and a lot more was spurting from the wound.

She saw the chopper land and she saw people running forward to get the wounded to treatment. She saw a fuzzy blonde head with two pools of blue hovering over her and then she saw blackness.

Clarke jumped free of the helicopter as soon as it touched down, she raced across the courtyard to her mother and Lexa who was in the process of passing out. “Clarke we have to operate, I think the arrow nicked the femoral artery, we have to stop it.”

Abby had Lexa taken in to her makeshift clinic and Clarke tried to force herself to be calm. She could do this surgery and she knew it. Her mom had the right to know she could be needed elsewhere. Clarke knew the York healers could treat Zora, Kita, and the others well enough to either heal them or keep them stable until Abby was free, but she knew Kane’s injuries needed Abby and even she might not be enough to save him.

“Clarke, we have to hurry!” Abby was halfway to the door when Clarke called out.

“Mom, wait! I can do Lexa’s surgery. Suu can help me, she’s good.” Clarke ran forward and Abby looked at her in utter confusion. “Mom… Kane. It’s bad.” Clarke pointed to where Kane was being brought from the chopper and she saw her mother’s face go pale.

“I can’t save him, Mom, but I can do Lexa’s surgery, you know I can. Please go and try to save Kane.” Clarke pulled her mom into a quick hug and then yelled for Suu to join her. She saw Bellamy and Virgil looking on and she shouted to them.

“You know Lexa’s plan. Go get Raven and tell her to make a big fucking bomb!” Bellamy nodded to her and turned to Virgil. “We got them here, buddy. The rest is up to the docs. We have a pickup to make in Ton DC. Let’s go.”

Virgil took one last look around at the injured people, people who had been nice to him, took him in and treated him fairly even though he had been one of the enemy. He watched Clarke disappear into the house where she would operate on his Heda. ‘My Heda’ he thought and it both touched and angered him. He would go to Ton DC and find this Raven person, and he would help her build a bomb. He would make the GERSA pay.
An hour later Rachel and the Ro lead the rest of the team into the courtyard. They had ridden back as quickly as they could and encountered no problems on the way home. Rachel dismounted and ran for Luna, “Where is Lexa?” She asked looking around for her, the look on Luna’s face was enough to take Rachel’s breath away and fill her eyes with tears.

Ro moved next to Rachel and placed her hand on the woman’s shoulder for support, she echoed the question, “What happened, where is Heda? She was fine when she left the island.”

“She’s inside. Clarke did all she could and she says the surgery went well. We’re waiting for her to wake up.” Luna sighed.

“Surgery? Heda was uninjured when she left the island! What the hell happened?” Ro looked angry and shocked to hear Lexa was injured. Rachel looked scared of the worry on Luna's face.

“The flying machine scared the archers and before Abby and I could make them all stand down one of them shot at it and hit Heda in the leg. Clarke said it hit an important blood vessel and that’s why she needed surgery.” Luna sighed and shook her head. “I hate that island.” She added.

Rachel found her voice, she searched for the general inside of her and checked on the rest of the situation. “Are they preparing the city for battle tonight, did they take the machine to find Heda’s bomb maker, and how are the other injured?”

Luna looked at her lover with respect, she knew how much Lexa meant to her and she knew Rachel was now doing exactly what Heda would want her to do. “Kane is still in surgery with Abby, the Mayor is conscious but in a lot of pain. Kita’s injury is serious and she needs further attention when Abby is through with Kane's surgery . The rest are doing well.”

Luna looked off into the sky in the direction the flying machine had gone. “Bellamy went to get Raven and Suu has been preparing the defences with Echo and Niro. Everything has been taken care of.”

Rachel pulled Luna into an embrace and then the three women went to join the growing vigil waiting for Heda to wake up.

Miller was on lookout and was the first to sound the alarm. “There’s a chopper coming this way! A fucking helicopter! Guards to the wall! Guards to the wall!” There was a scramble of activity as guards armed themselves and got into position to fire if necessary.

“Hold your fire, we don’t know if it’s friendly or not!” He shouted his orders and then muttered to himself, “Let’s hope it’s friendly, ‘cause it’s a beast!”

The chopper approached his location and he squinted through his scope at the pilot, he didn’t recognize him but his attention was grabbed by the other passenger, who was waving frantically at him.

“Bellamy!? Bellamy fucking Blake!?” Miller let out a whoop and started to stand down his people as he flashed a grin and a thumbs up at Bellamy.

A few minutes later Bellamy was running into Raven’s lab, Virgil at his heels. Maya and Jasper were there and Maya ran over to the former Mountain Man shock showing clearly on her face, “Virgil…? how…?” She smiled and embraced her old friend who returned the hug but quickly brushed her off.

“I don’t have time to explain, we need to build a bomb and we need to build it fast.” He looked at the
beautiful woman Bellamy was standing in front of, “Are you Raven?”

“Yeah, I’m Raven. Who the fuck are you?” She raised her eyebrow and stared at the man who had suddenly shown up with Bellamy in a helicopter. “You show up out of nowhere with a fucking helicopter talking about building a bomb. Seems like I missed all the fun.” She frowned but Virgil and Bellamy grinned.

“Nah, Ray. You get to have the most fun.” Bellamy launched into an abbreviated version of what was happening on the island and Raven stopped him about halfway through.

“If you are going to tell me you want to blow up the face eating creepo terror things I’m in. Let’s get started.” She turned to her workstation and quickly began to sketch things out. “Tell me about the place I need to blow up.”

Virgil stepped forward and held out his hand, Raven eyed him suspiciously but handed over the pencil. As he sketched the lake for her Bellamy pressed her on the timeline.

“There are things at Mount Weather I’ll need so if you can fly me there that will speed things up. With Wick and Virgil helping I can have it done in about four hours, five hours tops.” Raven looked extremely pleased with herself and Bellamy smirked at her.

“Heda said she’d give you two.” He loved watching Raven Reyes work, she got such a gleam in her eye and she didn’t disappoint him now.

“Fuck! Of course she did, she’s such a fucking ball buster!” Raven looked back at the table where Virgil had finished up his diagram. She studied it and asked him a few questions. She let out a deep breath and closed her eyes imagining the device and the explosion. When she opened her eyes again she grinned at Bellamy, Let’s go to Mount Weather, Wick’s already there, we can have it done in ninety minutes.”

Bellamy clapped his hands together and smiled. “Let’s go! I really want to kill these fucking terrors.”

Everything was dark but there was music, a magical humming sound was coming from somewhere nearby. There was music and there was a soft touch. She felt it on her forehead but she couldn’t see where it came from, she just knew it was soft and safe. The music, Clarke had taught her the song, something about sunshine. She smiled and began to open her eyes, she saw the sun, her sun.

“Houmon.”

Clarke stopped humming and snapped her head around, “Lex? Lexa? Baby?”

“You are my sunshine.” Lexa’s voice was hoarse and sounded more like a croak than words but it was the sweetest music to Clarke’s ears.

“Lexy…” Clarke couldn’t find the words she just leaned in and kissed Lexa gently on the forehead. When her breathing steadied she resumed her humming; You are my Sunshine. It was an old Earth song her dad used to sing to her when she was little. Lexa had heard her humming and singing it a few times in their house and around the lake when she painted. She longed for that small, cozy home Lexa had built with her own hands.

“Clarke… the others?” Lexa tried to get up but Clarke’s firm hand held her down.

“Zora and Kita are alive, they are both going to need some time to heal, but they will live. The rest of the team got back a few hours ago, everyone is okay. Bell and Virgil took the chopper to get Raven,
they’ll be back soon. Sleep, Lex.” Clarke smoothed Lexa’s unruly hair and sighed in deep relief. Lexa closed her eyes and drifted off again.

“Raven we can’t just…” Raven held up her hand to silence Wick.

“We can and we will. They need it NOW, Wick. Not to-fucking-morrow.” Raven was frustrated but never one to back down.

“Raven, we just built a huge bomb in like an hour. It’s unstable! We can’t put it on the helicopter and fly it to New York! It could blow us out of the sky!” Wick was pacing around the device they had created hands flying around him as he talked.

“It won’t blow ‘us’ out of the sky, because you’re not coming!” Raven stepped forward and poked Wick in the chest as she advanced on him. “Bellamy, V-man, load it up.” She stood and crossed her arms daring Wick to say just one more word.

Bellamy and Virgil looked rather nervous but they stepped forward. “Raven, are you sure we should…”

“Bellamy! You said Heda gave me two hours, that two hours is up. Can they wait until tomorrow?” Raven spoke looking at Bellamy with an intensity that caught his breath.

“No, Rae… another night of attacks like last night and we’ll lose people a lot of people… I can’t risk Echo or the baby.” Bellamy looked down at the bomb and bent to pick it up.

“It’s ready, Bell… just don’t drop it.” Raven was back to her normal sassy self as Bellamy and Virgil carried her bomb toward the chopper, she threw a glance over her shoulder at Wick. “Last chance for a chopper ride to Manhattan, it’s gonna be a blast.” She winked and shaking his head, he followed her.

Lexa woke as the sun was late in the sky. Clarke was still at her side, her eyes were closed but Lexa could tell she wasn’t really sleeping. She didn’t move or say anything for a minute, just watched Clarke breathe.

It was Echo coming into the room that made Clarke open her eyes, she looked surprised to see Lexa’s green eyes on her but smiled softly when she did.

Echo had obviously been coming with news for Clarke but when she saw Lexa awake she addressed her, “Heda, I’m glad to see you awake. Bellamy is back.” Echo fought back a proud smile as Clarke stood and Lexa sat up.

“Lex, you can’t walk. I’ll go talk to Bellamy.” Clarke figured Lexa would fight her but she just frowned and nodded.

“It’s okay, Clarke.” Bellamy walked in the door and grinned at her, “I’m right here. Lexa, I’m glad you’re awake, you will want to hear this.” He smiled and his hair flopped forward into his eyes. He looked over at Echo and she felt her heart beat faster.

Lexa looked at him expectantly and Clarke jumped in with questions, “Where’s Raven? Did she do it? What happened?” She stopped when Lexa pulled on her hand and laughed.
“Em Pleni, Houmon, let him speak.”

“Raven is a genius, I mean she built this huge bomb in less than an hour!” Bellamy shook his head in wonder, then laughed ruefully. “She’s also crazy! She refused to let us land in York. After we flew all the way here with the thing in the helicopter with us, she says it’s too unstable and dangerous and she won’t let us bring it into a populated area.” Bellamy laughed again. “We landed just on the outskirts of the city and I rode here with some guards. We need a few hands to help us take it to the Black Lake and I wanted to get your permission to move forward, Heda.”

“Make it so, Bellamy. Destroy the lake and the terrors. Take whoever you need, I recommend Suu go with you.” Lexa paused and looked at Echo who had a look of pure love on her face as she stared at the man next to her. “Bellamy, one more thing.” Lexa’s voice sounded hard and Bellamy swallowed nervously before turning back toward her. “Come back in one piece.” Lexa added and the man’s face softened into the boyish grin Lexa had come to find charming.

As he turned to leave Clarke looked accusingly at her wife, “You like him!” she laughed as Lexa shook her head in denial. “You have always turned your nose up in disdain whenever I mention Bellamy, but look at the facts. You made him my champion at our wedding, you trusted him with securing York before we arrived, and you just told him to be careful and come home safe. You love him!” Clarke giggled as Lexa steadfastly ignored her.

“He is about to be a father, I am merely showing concern for Echo and the child.” Lexa insisted but she smiled ruefully at Clarke who continued giggling at her.

The sun was starting to make it’s descent as the helicopter took off again. Lincoln looked nervously at the pink that was beginning to show, “We only have about 45 minutes of light left.”

Raven and Octavia were so happy to be reunited they completely ignored him but Virgil reassured him. “In this baby we’ll be at the lake in minutes.” He grinned and Wick picked up the conversation.

“We just have to get it inside the compound. Bell said the stairs run all the way down to the central control room. It would be better to get it down a few floors but even if we detonate from the highest floor it will take out most of the place. Once it’s in place and we are back in the air we can detonate immediately.”

Lincoln looked at him and shook his head, Suu spoke up and voiced his thoughts, “It won’t be enough to take out most of it, the entire place must be destroyed, if we have to fight to get it inside, we fight.”

Her intensity brought Octavia and Raven into the conversation. “Rae, how many floors down do we have to go to get them all? We have to get them all…” Raven had never seen this look on her friends face and she was suddenly glad she had missed most of what Octavia had been through over the past few months.

“To be certain, we have to get it at least three floors down.” Raven looked around and saw Lincoln and Octavia lock eyes, Suu sighed.

“If you need three floors, we’ll give you three floors.” Octavia answered her but her eyes never left Lincoln.

Lexa had convinced Clarke to let her hobble, with assistance, to a large balcony that faced the island.
Zora and Rock were there as well as Abby. They were all watching the northwestern sky for an explosion.

Lexa approached Abby, “Abby… I’m sorry.” She began but Abby cut her off.

“Your quick thinking got him here so I could try and save him, thank you Lexa.” Abby pulled her daughter-in-law into an embrace and she sighed, “Now it’s up to him.” Abby let Lexa go and returned her gaze to the quickly darkening sky.

She looked at her daughter and then glanced at the sky again, “I’m going back down to sit with him. Let me know when it happens.” Clarke moved over to hug Abby and walk her back inside.

“Mayor.” Lexa sat on the chair Clarke had placed next to Zora and reached for her hand.

“Heda.” Zora responded squeezing her hand in response.

They sat in silence for a moment until Amina came to report to Zora. “Mayor, your orders have been completed. The manor and the school are fortified against attack and scouting parties have been sent to all known tunnels again tonight.” She bowed and turned to leave.

“Hod up.” Lexa stopped the young warrior who turned and bowed her head. “Kita?” She asked knowing Amina would have checked in on her.

“She is conscious now, but in a lot of pain. Her cuts are deep and many, but she is a fighter.” Amina smiled a weak smile and Lexa saw the lines of worry around her eyes. The girl left, returning to her duties and the four young leaders turned their gaze skyward once again.

The chopper approached the Black Lake and Raven let out a low whistle, “That is pretty creepy looking, I’m glad I get to blow it up.”

Virgil maneuvered close to the edge and gently set the chopper down. Bellamy jumped down and moved toward the lake, Lincoln, Suu and Octavia were right behind him. He took a deep breath and knelt down.

“Let’s get it done.” He muttered and plunged his hand into the liquid.

Raven and Kyle were checking over the bomb and arguing when Bellamy ran back. “What!?” He demanded.

“I want Wick to stay here with the detonator. If we don’t make it back out he can still set if off.” Raven looked at the engineer and added, “Please, Kyle.” She rarely used his first name, the two had stopped dating but she still cared for him and found herself wanting to make sure he was safe.

“It sounds like you’re going to need all the hands you can get down there,’ Wick answered. “It makes more sense for Virgil to keep the detonator. He is the only one who can fly this thing.”

“Come on Wick, you’re an engineer. Figure it out.” Raven added sarcastically but Bellamy agreed with him.

“You’re right. Virgil, you have to stay here. If something goes wrong get back to Heda and tell her everything.” Bellamy took the detonator from Wick and gave it to Virgil.

“No, I was a soldier, you need me to help fight them. I can’t just stay here. I can’t do…” he looked
down at the device in his hand and shook his head. “I can’t be the one who pushes the button with all of you still inside.” Virgil’s voice was shaking.

“Virgil, if you have to push that button we are already dead.” Lincoln walked over and put his hand on Virgil’s shoulder. “We have to move, the door is open.”

Lincoln helped Bellamy carry the bomb and they very carefully made their way across the lake using the stepping stones. When they arrived at the entrance Octavia was ready to go in with her swords drawn. Wick took Lincoln’s side of the bomb and he joined Octavia at the entrance.

Suu moved in right behind them with two of her Women in Black and Raven drew her gun and positioned herself right in front of the bomb.

“Let’s do this.” Octavia and Lincoln moved forward as a team, they moved almost silently down the first set of stairs and into the low light of the inner platforms. They scanned quickly and kept moving. They were on the second landing before they saw any movement at all, the monitors came on as they moved past.

“They are cleaning up their dead…” Suu stared at the monitor as she moved past. She could see the GERSA dragging their dead comrades out of the tunnel and into the bottom floor staging area where the completed GERSA were released. They were putting the bodies one by one onto an extending gurney which would then slide back into the machine and then re-extend itself empty of the body.

Bellamy looked at it as he passed and he felt slightly sick to his stomach, “It says RECYCLING IN PROGRESS” he read. “What the fuck are these things?”

They continued down to the next landing and Raven reached out and touched the walls. The incubation chamber on the other side of the gas lit up at her touch and she jumped back in surprise. “Holy shit!” She stared at the partially formed carcass of the terrors on the other side of the glass and shuddered.

They arrived on the third platform down from the top and Wick signalled Bellamy to set the bomb down. He and Raven began to work on arming it and Bellamy took a closer look at the monitors.

“Lincoln, O! Company is coming!” Bellamy watched as a group of terrors made their way silently up the stairs toward them. “Shit! They seem to be dispatching another batch through the tunnels too. They must be heading for York.”

He stopped watching and moved forward as Octavia engaged the first group of terrors that reached them. There were only six so she and Lincoln made short work of them but there were more on the way.

“Raven, how much time to you need!” Bellamy asked as she peered down the stairs at the incoming GERSA.

“Two minutes.” She called back and growled when he told her to do it in one.

The next group was much larger, they came at them from all directions, teeth gnashing and claws swinging. Lincoln and Octavia were halfway down the stairs to the fourth level and Suu was right behind them with Eva and Sheena. Bellamy held the entrance to the platform and cut down the terrors that leapt over the others in an attempt to gain the higher ground.

Suu swung her sword through the air with her right hand and held a dagger in her left for any who got in close. Octavia and Lincoln fought back to back and managed to keep the creatures off of each other for the most part.
They were coming in waves around ten at a time and the bodies were quickly piling up and making the stairs slippery with their black blood. Lincoln and Octavia retreated a few steps up and Suu and her team now guarded the platform. Bellamy moved back to stand by Raven and Wick and kept an eye on the stairs above them.

Bellamy glanced at the monitor. “Shit!”

Raven stood up triumphantly, “It’s armed!”

Bellamy yelled, “Let’s go!” He ran up the stairs praying everyone was behind him. Raven and Wick were right behind him and they raced up to the second platform. He glanced at the monitor and cursed again.

They ran up to the first platform and he heard it. A panel slid open above the monitors and two eyes gleamed in the darkness before one of the GERSA launched itself at his face. He got his hand up in time to prevent it from sinking its enlarged teeth into his face, but he cried out in pain as it chomped down breaking two fingers and puncturing his hand in several places.

Raven grabbed at it and Wick stepped in front of her as another one leapt out at them. The thing grabbed Wick’s head and opened it’s mouth. Sheena stepped forward and grabbed the creature, she ran it through with her dagger and kept right on toward the opening impaling the next one to leap out at them in midair.

Eva ran around Wick and helped Raven kill the creature that had attacked Bellamy. She saw that both Skai people were bleeding but she knew it wasn’t bad enough for her to pause. Getting to the surface was paramount.

She pulled Bellamy to his feet and together they ran for the last set of stairs. Behind them Octavia and Lincoln came running up from the third platform. “Go, go … GO!” Octavia yelled. "There are too many down there! Run for the door!”

They raced for the stairs swinging wildly at the creatures who were still jumping at them from the ceiling. One landed on Lincoln’s back but he didn’t slow down just continued running as she reached up to dislodge the GERSA ignoring the gashes that it’s claws dug into his back and shoulders.

Octavia swung her arm around and stabbed the creature as Lincoln held it away from his body. He threw the corpse down in disgust as they made a mad dash for the last fight of stairs.

As Bellamy turned the last corner to go up the stairs he saw what he was certain was their death. The door was closed. They were trapped. He stopped dead and Raven ran into him.

Octavia tore around the corner and yelled for him to get to the door, “The sound Bell, the sound! It’s going to open. Run!”

She ran past him smacking him as she went and snapping him out of his shock. He heard it then, the alarm that sounded before the door opened and he rushed forward again.

Raven and Wick had their backs pressed against the door. Eva, Sheena, and Suu were fighting off several terrors two steps down. They felt the door move suddenly and Raven fell backwards, landed on her ass and then quickly scrambled to her feet. The sun had set and the light was all but gone from the sky.

They all made for the stepping stones and the terrors pursued them. They saw Virgil had the chopper running and was frantically waving at them to hurry. They heard gun shots and saw the muzzle flash
and assumed the terrors had come aground and were attacking him as well.

Lincoln was bringing up the rear and he watched as the four terrors that had been hot on his tail slowed and stopped pursuit as they got out onto the lake. “They stopped chasing us.” He yelled out.

“Maybe they can’t come out onto the lake?” Bellamy offered but when they heard the creepy laughter he spun his head and watched the terrors clapping their creepy little hands and looking off into the distance. "What are they so fucking happy about?” He shouted.

“Giant fucking vampire bats,” Octavia pointed skyward then looked past the helicopter to what Virgil seemed to be shooting at, “and more fucking spawns of Shelob.” She sighed and urged everyone to move faster.

Virgil had kept a close eye on the entrance to the staircase and when he saw it slide closed he rushed over to the water and thrust his hand in to activate the opening sequence. As he stood back up something swooped by him and he spun around and looked toward the sky. It was dusk and there was just enough light for him to make out there were several very large things flying toward him.

He ran to the chopper and started it then he grabbed his rifle and jumped down checking the perimeter. He spotted some terrible nightmarish things crawling over a dune towards him. He started shooting, muttering “Giant spiders… what the fuck…?”

He glanced back over to the lake and saw his friends fighting their way towards him. He felt relief flood though him and he waved frantically for them to hurry. He turned back to the advancing spiders and took a few more shots.

Octavia was glad that the terrors had stayed on the central platform and left them to the bats, spiders and whatever else came out of the cave. She could handle the creatures of the dark but the terrors were starting to get to her with their creepy laughter. She jumped nimbly across the stepping stones pausing now and again to swing her sword at a swooping bat.

Bellamy was cursing and ducking and watching awe as his baby sister chopped the head off of one of the flying beasts like it was something she did everyday. “O! Be careful these things are… What are they!?”

“Chill out Bellamy, and hurry up! Don’t worry about these fuckers. They are just my old friends from the tunnel.” Octavia turned to grin at Bellamy and Raven but before she could say anything more the grin fell from her face and she suddenly whipped out a dagger and sent it flying towards them. It sunk into the neck of a vampire bat inches from Raven’s face and she screamed as it slammed into her friend knocking her backwards.

“Raven!” Bellamy stepped forward to catch her, he stepped off of the path and as he grabbed Raven they both stumbled and ended up falling into the blackness of the lake.

They sputtered and panicked as they smashed into the water. “Fuck! Help!” Raven shouted but her panic was quickly replaced by, “fuck, ok it’s like ankle deep but get me the fuck out of here.” She held her hand up to Wick and he grabbed her and pulled her back onto the path.

“Bellamy, Raven, hurry.” Suu was looking around with a worried expression. “We don’t know what will happen…. ” Her worry was answered as the alarm sounded again and the terrors who had been watching from the central platform suddenly laughed their creepy laugh and moved back down the stairway out of sight.
Octavia and Lincoln had reached the shore and Eva and Sheena were just stepping off the last platform when the rest of them found themselves splashing around in the black liquid again. The stepping stones disappeared and they all stumbled forward falling into the shallow black liquid. Wick stood and got to shore quickly pulling Raven along with him. Suu came next pulling Bellamy along behind her, he was staring at his hands with a very strange look on his face.

“Bell! What? Are you okay!?” Octavia left the defence of the group to Suu and Lincoln as she ran over to her brother. “What did the water do to you!? Does it hurt?” Octavia was starting to panic as Bellamy had yet to respond.

Raven moved over and grabbed Bellamy’s shoulder. “Bell, we can use it... Kane!!” He broke away from staring at his hands and then reached out and grabbed Raven’s hands. He inspected her arms where he knew she had been injured by the claws of the terrors. They were healing over. His own hand that had been broken and punctured was more than halfway healed. He continued to stare at it and nodded his head vigorously.

He broke into a run and ran for the chopper. The rest of the group followed him, Lincoln covering with his bow and arrow. When they reached the chopper Octavia took the rifle from Virgil who jumped into the cockpit. Octavia took up a position on the far side, facing the direction of the tunnel and continued sniping the giant spiders who were getting uncomfortably close. Eve and Sheena used their bows to take out any bats that got to close.

Everyone was on-board when Bellamy grabbed the a water bottle from inside and dashed back toward the lake. “Bellamy!” Lincoln raced after him sending an arrow into the skull of one of the bats as it dove for the lone SkaiKru.

Virgil was getting nervous. “Octavia, we have to go!” She was dropping steadily back and risked a glance toward the lake where Bellamy had dropped to his knees to fill up the bottle with the apparent healing power of the Black Lake. Lincoln was right beside him and Bellamy looked at his bleeding shoulders and reached over pulling the surprised Grounder down into the lake and coating his wounds with the liquid.

Lincoln jumped back to his feet and glared at Bellamy who stood and capped the bottle before running.

“Get ready V-man! As soon as they’re in we go. Raven get your hand on that detonator!” She shouted and the fearless mechanic’s hand shook as she held it at the ready and watched Bellamy and Lincoln dodge two swooping bats as they ran back towards the safety of the chopper.

They were about six feet out when Lincoln saw the spider coming, he let an arrow fly and then slid the bow up his arm letting it dangle from his shoulder. He pulled out his sword and gripped it with two hands as the spider lunged at them suddenly. He sidestepped and swung cutting one of it’s legs in half.

Bellamy jumped back in shock as the giant beast turned in a rage. He pulled out his gun and with a shaky hand he fired three shots into it’s body. The spider became even more enraged and darted towards him. It was less than two feet away when Suu’s blade sliced through one of the rear legs distracting it long enough for Bellamy to hear Lincoln shouting, “Shoot it in the head!”

He came out of his shock at the appearance of the foe and he steadied his hand. One shot to the head and the beast dropped. Suu was covered in spider’s blood and looked appreciatively at Bellamy and his gun. The three of them ran to the chopper and Virgil had them in the air seconds after they were safely on board.
Sheena and Lincoln continued sniping bats from the air as they rose and as they began to move away from the lake Raven held up the detonator. “Hold up V.” He slowed the chopper and hovered above the island. The lake was glimmering in the new fallen darkness and Raven took a deep breath. She pressed the button and held her breath.

No one spoke, a second passed that felt to each of them like a lifetime. Then they heard it. The explosion caused the lake to implode. It ripped through the underground laboratory destroying the incubation pods and killing all the GERSA still inside.

It sent a ball of fire shooting in both directions down the staircase. The lower one caused the Interface computer to explode causing another fireball to shoot through the underground tunnels. The fire blew the door off of the central platform and a fireball erupted fifty feet into the air. The liquid that had filled the lake was released and the heat of the initial explosion caused a steam explosion and a violent eruption quickly followed the fireball at the surface of the lake filling the sky with billowing white clouds of steam.

The chopper burst into cheers and applause. “We did it! Fuck you you pale motherfuckers!” Octavia shouted into the night. Virgil happily turned the chopper and headed for York. Bellamy clutched the water bottle he had filled and prayed that Kane had held on.

Lexa stood suddenly as she saw an orange fireball in the distance. Her whoop of joy quickly became a wince of pain as she collapsed back onto her chair only to be chastised by her wife.

“Lex! The stitches! I told you…”

“I know, I know, Houmon. I have to be careful.” Lexa was all smiles. The fireball told her that her plan had most likely been successful. She smiled as Clarke fussed over her bandages looking for any fresh blood and finding none.

Lexa looked over at Zora who was standing with Rock in her arms. The Mayor was crying. “Heda, thank you.” She managed to choke out before Rock folded the larger woman easily into her arms and placed small kisses over her closely shorn head.

“Let’s go to the courtyard. They’ll be back in a few minutes.” Clarke stood and offered her hands to Lexa who took them and allowed herself to be pulled to her feet and helped toward the house. Rock followed with a still weeping Zora in her arms.

They made their way slowly down the stairs and into the courtyard. As they walked outside they could already hear the approaching helicopter. Abby was standing tensely by waiting for casualties and Clarke looked sadly toward her mother. She silently prayed for Kane to recover, she didn’t want her mother to lose another person she loved, and she didn’t want to lose another father figure.

When the chopper sat down it was Bellamy who jumped off. He ran for Abby and Clarke held her breath counting as everyone got out. They were all there, all seemed to be in one piece so why did Bellamy seem so frantic?

She was about to follow Abby and Bellamy as they ran into the mansion when a voice stopped her. “Griffin!” It was Raven and despite her curiosity about Bellamy and her mother she couldn’t deny her need to run over and throw her arms around the girl genius whose bomb had likely just saved them all.
“Raven.” Clarke breathed into the girl’s ear. “God I’ve missed you.” She squeezed tighter and smiled in relief.

Raven squeezed back and mumbled, “Me too.” Before pulling away and putting back her tough Raven exterior. “So York, huh!?” She looked around her in appraisal, “What does a girl gotta do to get a drink around here? Blowing up creepy terror fucks is hard work.” Her grin brought tears to Clarke’s eyes and she pulled her back in for another hug.

Lexa watched the whole thing and let a feeling of relief wash over her. She suddenly felt very tired. She was searching for a seat she felt a strong arm grip her elbow. “Heda.”

“Indra Kom Trikru.” A small smile graced Heda’s beautiful face.

“Come, Heda. Sit with me, let the Skylings have their reunion.” Octavia had joined Raven and Clarke and the three young women were all smiles. As the two Grounder women limped towards a table Lincoln saw them and moved quickly to bring the table to them. He smiled at both of them as they glared at him before giving way to small smiles of their own.

“Heda, Indra.” He nodded respectfully and then left them to themselves.

“York will be safe now.” Indra looked around at the courtyard that was now bustling with activity.

“Indeed.” Lexa followed her gaze. “I am ready to go home.” She sighed and let her eyes rest on Clarke for a moment before looking back at her general. “Mochof, Indra.” They shared a sigh and Lincoln returned and placed a carafe of what was surely not water on the table along with two glasses. He poured a shot for his Heda and for his general. Both women shot him a look of thanks and he blushed slightly before moving off again.

Indra lifted her glass and looked at her Heda. “To the Island. May it rest in peace and may we never go back there, ever again.” Indra’s strong voice was barely above a whisper and Lexa just nodded her agreement before they both tipped their heads back and let the liquid burn the backs of their throats.

Clarke, Raven and Octavia enjoyed a moment of togetherness before Clarke’s thoughts turned back to her mom. “What was Bell carrying, anyway?” Clarke glanced toward the house her eyes taking in the form of her wife sitting with Indra.

“Shit, the fucking creepy ass lake was like some magic healing power!‘” Raven held up her hand. “I fell in and all the cuts from those things,” she shivered “they just healed up almost immediately.”

“Kane…” Clarke turned and started to run toward the house. Octavia and Raven followed behind her.

The next morning Zora and Rock stood in the window of their bedroom looking out at the courtyard. Lexa was leading the elite group in morning exercises. Zora shook her head taking in the fluid movements of Heda. Her eyes swept over Indra, Brax, Hamil, and others who had been grievously injured and now moved with perfect ease.

“It’s a miracle.” Zora breathed out. “I can’t believe we destroyed it.” She sighed but Rock reached up and rubbed the tension from her shoulders.
“We destroyed the terrors. The water from the black lake was a part of them. If you think about it we were able to use the little Bellamy brought back and the soaked clothes of the four who fell in to treat almost everyone who was injured by them. It evens out in the end.”

Zora turned and pulled Rock to her. “I’m glad you are better now.” She said with a glint in her eye. “I’ve been wanting to show you how lucky you are to be the Mayor’s girl.” Rock grinned at her and backed toward the bed. She tore off her shirt to reveal freshly healed and barely scarred skin where her gunshot wound had been just yesterday.

Lexa finished her training session by giving the entire elite team two days off. She told them to enjoy York and refresh themselves. The water form the black lake had healed their wounds and the terrors were no more. Lexa knew they still had to sweep the perimeter of the city and flush out any of Yor’s men who still hid there but she guessed her team and Zora’s army could do that in a couple of days. “Five days…. We’ll head for home in five days…” Lexa thought to herself and grinned.

“Heda?” Kita was watching her talking to herself and grinning like a madman. “You sent for me?”

“Yes Kita. I know you like to train on your own but would you join me?” Lexa picked up her sword and sunk into her stance.

“Sha Heda.” Kita replied and adopted her own ready position.

Clarke walked outside with Raven and watched the two spar in silence for a minute. “Clarke…. your Ice Guard… wow!” Raven whistled.

“Raven! What about Wick!?” Clarke admonished.

“Wick…? God Griffin you are so behind the times. We're just friends.” Raven shook her head dismissively as Clarke probed for more details. “It's fine really. We are great friends but I just don’t feel… I don’t know…” Raven looked away and Clarke just rested her hand on Raven’s in a show of support.

Raven quickly pushed away any serious thoughts and brought back her sass. “But that Ice Guard of yours, she’s someone I could get to KNOW.” Raven laughed as Clarke swatted her.

Lexa and Kita sparred several rounds, Lexa nodding in approval when Kita took her down the last round. They stood apart and Lexa held up her hand to signal a stop. “Kita of the Ice Nation, I have a very important job for you.”

“Sha Heda.” Kita felt a slight wash of relief. Heda still trusted her.

“I need to you take the children home.” Lexa’s voice was quiet and she studied the expression of her guard intently. She saw a battle in the dark eyes.

“Sha Heda.” Kita’s voice shook with emotion, “I have not been good enough to guard you or the Skai Heda, but I will guard them with my life and escort them safely to Queen Skadi. I swear I will not fail you again.”

Lexa tilted her head slightly to the side and held Kita’s gaze. “You have not failed me, Kita.” Lexa’s gaze moved to the blonde sitting in the sun and enjoying breakfast, whole and content. “You have brought my wife safely through the tunnels, over the island, and here to York. Why do you think you
“I allowed you to be shot on the bridge, once here I became distracted with lust. I... I... I was carried from the tunnels by the Skai boy instead of protecting my Skai Reine. I understand why you no longer wish for me to serve you.” Kita’s eyes filled with tears and Lexa stepped closer.

“Kita of the Ice Nation. My orders are for you to take the children home to Otta.” Lexa reached out and grabbed Kita’s arms, wrapping her strong hands around the sinew-like biceps of her guard. “Then you are to report immediately to Ton DC where you will continue to guard Heda Kom Skaikru as well as help train suitable guards for me, your Heda.”

Kita’s eyes widened at Heda’s words and Lexa continued, “I cannot give this task to anyone else, Kita. The children trust you and I trust you to keep them safe. They are...” Heda paused and her face contorted in pain. “They are so dear and important. If we can get them home we can heal some of the pain caused by Yor and Alain, some of the pain I played a part in inflicting by allowing them into my alliance. I need to know the children will be delivered safely to Skadi.”

Lexa took a breath and held it for a slow count of five, she calmed herself and the tears that had threatened to form in Heda’s eyes dried without falling. Kita still felt her tension as her hands held on tightly, almost painfully to Kita’s upper arms. “But I need you back, Kita. I need to know you are protecting Clarke when I cannot. Will you obey your Heda and come back to me once your mission is complete?”

“Sha Heda.” Kita’s breath was shaky and her lip trembled as she spoke, a small but genuine smile stretched across her lips. Lexa reached up and wiped away the tear that had begun to escape from Kita’s eye. “I will always serve you Heda. You have my fealty and my love.”

“It is the Skai Heda who has your love Kita, but I do not begrudge it, the two of you seem to be sisters... and she is much easier to love than Heda.” Lexa took a deep breath and then a shy smile crept over her face as well. “But I am glad to hear you shall willingly return, I know this road has not been an easy one.”

Kita’s eyebrows knitted together as her brow furrowed, “Heda, I speak true. You hold my love as much as the Skai Heda does. It is my honour to serve you both.” Kita’s eyes grew glassy once more and Lexa’s shone with moisture in return. They nodded tersely at one another, both trying to avoid tears and both understanding all of the unspoken words that had just passed between them. Finally, Kita felt Lexa’s grip on her relax.

Lexa breathed out as she released the tension in her body, she turned her thoughts to news she hoped would please Kita. “I have already spoken with the Mayor about this and she has assigned a team to travel with you and the children to Otta” Lexa couldn’t stop the bright grin that was spreading across her face.

“A team...” Kita questioned wondering about the grin on her Heda’s face. Lexa nodded to the gate where the Women in Black were coming back from a morning patrol.

Amina broke off from the main group as soon as she spotted Lexa and Kita. When she saw Kita looking her way her face broke into a brilliant smile. She led a group of five toward them and Kita looked back at Lexa with a gleam in her eye. Lexa just winked and left them to discuss their travel plans.

Lexa joined Clarke and Raven at their table and Clarke reached out and took her hand as she sat. Lexa didn’t speak to them she just watched in satisfaction as the two women smiled and joked as they sat in the sun.
She looked at Clarke and let her mind wander to their home, the lake where they would swim, the rock where they would sun themselves afterwards and then make love, the bed where they would sleep… or not. Her mind wandered further as she remembered the bet she had made with Clarke. Her eyes drifted to Clarke’s breasts and her smile turned just a little wolfish.

Clarke and Raven noticed Lexa’s distracted state and the direction of her leer. Clarke lightly slapped her arm and Raven laughed. “Lexa!? What are you doing?” Clarke’s laughter was the most beautiful sound Lexa could remember hearing.

Lexa smirked at her, “Houmon, I am just thinking about learning your Skai weapons when we get back home, they proved useful during our battles. I am Heda, always concerned with protecting my people.”

Clarke turned a bright shade of red and Raven watched in curiosity, “Okay, that Griffin blush is reserved for Lexa’s sexual innuendo. I don’t want to know why guns are now a part of your sex life, you pervs.”

Clarke got even redder in the face and Lexa chuckled with a satisfied smirk on her face, “No! Raven it’s not like that!” Clarke sputtered. “We made a bet, whoever is a better shot gets to…” She snapped her mouth shut and Raven grinned and tried to look innocent.

“Gets to what, Griff?” She waggled her eyebrows and then burst into laughter as Clarke buried her head in her hands and groaned.

Lexa leaned in and placed a soft, chaste kiss on the top of her embarrassed wife’s head. Clarke’s embarrassment was interrupted by Octavia and Lincoln joining them. “Why is Clarke dying with embarrassment?” Octavia asked with a grin.

“Nevermind, O. Are you ready?” Raven stood and they walked toward the chopper.

“Be careful!” Clarke called out behind them and then more quietly, just to Lexa, “I know they are just going to get the last of the fuel and some equipment from the helicopter bunker but I hate anyone going back to the island.” Lexa scooted her chair closer and rested her hand on Clarke’s back.

“Me too, Houmon. But Virgil says her needs the fuel that’s there to make sure he can get back to Ton DC.” Lexa let Clarke watch as her friends took off and flew towards the island. When they were out of sight she nudged Clarke, “Come Houmon, Kane wishes to speak with us.”

“I know, Mom told me he pieced together the story of the terrors. Lex, I’m so glad he’s okay, if Bellamy hadn’t brought back that water bottle…” She sighed and squeezed Lexa’s hand. “You’d still be in a lot of pain too.”

“Sha Houmon, I will thank the Skai boy.” Lexa grinned and pulled her wife closer as they walked toward the mansion.

They walked into the library without knocking and Clarke’s jaw dropped, her face once again turning bright red. Lexa giggled and pulled her wife back out into the hallway shouting her apologies and slamming the door shut.

“Lex… that was… that was… my mom and Kane were…. on the table… I can’t go in there…” Clarke tried to run but Lexa held her in place.

“Houmon, Abby thought Kane was going to die, they are reconnecting and happy to both be alive.
It’s not like your mom has never walked in on us… Ouch!” Clarke punched Lexa really hard in the shoulder and despite her exclamation Lexa grinned happily.

“Reconnecting huh? They were doing it on the table!” Clarke’s eyes flashed in anger and Lexa chuckled at her. “Fine, fine, I know they are in love, I just don’t want to have this mental image of my mom!” Clarke groaned dramatically and rubbed her forehead as Lexa continued to laugh.

A few minutes later Kane and Abby opened the door. Their faces were both red and Abby couldn’t meet her daughter’s eyes. “Lexa, Clarke… we didn’t expect you so soon.” Abby’s voice was higher than usual and Kane, although embarrassed looked like he was having trouble containing his laughter. He avoided looking a Lexa at all costs since the Commander was openly chuckling and he knew catching her eye would set him off.

“Obviously.” Clarke deadpanned and then quickly changed the subject. “So Kane, you think you know more about the terrors.”

He cleared his throat and focused on the creature's origins. “Yes, I found lot of information in the computers in the tunnels. I was able to download some files and read them in the onboard system in Virgil’s helicopter. The Mayor should be here soon, I’ll tell you everything I have learned.”

Lexa was suddenly serious and nodded solemnly at the man she had come to respect a great deal. They all sat in silence, Abby and Clarke in lingering embarrassment, avoiding each other’s eyes.

Zora and Rock entered the room not long after and Kane, thankful for the interruption of the embarrassed silence motioned for everyone to sit. He walked to the front of the room and uncovered a board where he had written in large block letters GERSA.

“What is Gersa?” Rock, ever curious, asked immediately.

“The name the creators of the terrors gave them a long time ago.” Kane said quietly, voice full of contemplation. “Before the bombs the American government had several secret laboratories that were experimenting with things they should never have tampered with.”

Kane took the chalk in his hand and wrote downwards from the capital letters. “G stands for genetically, E - engineered, R - recyclable, S - security, A - agent. The information I got from the computer indicated that the original scientists took fatally injured soldiers and put them into a kind of stasis. They let the brain die but they preserved the body. Afterwards they injected them with nanoprobes that re-activated the brain but made it programmable like a robot. They could send them on dangerous missions and not worry about human casualties. When the body was no longer usable they extracted the nanoprobe and disposed of it.

The nanoprobes held the memories of the mission and the logs from the previous body and they could be injected into a new body to continue the same work. After the bomb there was one scientist left alive in the Interface computer control room. He reprogrammed the whole thing to have the soldiers find him food and water to keep him alive. Since he didn’t have access to fresh bodies he reprogrammed the computer to reuse the body parts. They built the incubation chambers and brought him more bodies from outside. He created his own army of terrors.

Over the years the availability and quality of the bodies degraded and they began to change shape, became smaller and less human looking. They moved around mostly underground so they developed a strong sensitivity to light. The lines of code that programmed the memories and the missions into the nanoprobe became corrupted and the GERSA began to kill and eat surviving humans. There is no indication what happened to the scientist but eventually the Interface computer took over the programming and continued to build GERSA.”
Lexa looked over at Clarke, she had understood what Kane said but it felt foreign to her. Clarke’s blank expression made her curious. She kept quiet and watched the blonde. She could see Clarke’s mind processing what she had just been told and she watched Clarke tip her head back and let out a sigh.

“We not only killed the planet but we created monsters too. Human’s are awesome.” Clarke shook her head and looked around her. “Maybe the world is far better off without technology. Maybe we should get rid of all of it, outlaw it, forbid it.” She sighed, “Raven told me she has people coming to her from all of the clans wanting to learn from her and bring some technology back to their own people. If this is what humans end up doing with technology maybe we shouldn’t allow it. We built bombs that killed almost the entire world, we built space stations that could only save a few people, we made creatures that eat our faces!” Clarke sighed heavily and looked so forlorn that Lexa reached out to comfort her.

It was Rock who answered, “We have some technology left over from the old world in my city. We still know how to build engines, we don’t have the same fuel sources they did before the bombs so we are constantly trying to find new ways to power the engines. My people have been working on this since before I was born, there are people who devote their lives to finding and developing power sources. It is in our blood, Clarke. We will always try to build. We will always try to develop and create technology. we cannot outlaw human nature.”

Zora smiled, “Technology is not the problem, Clarke. Human’s will do both terrible and great things with or without it.” Zora shrugged, “The GERSA are no more. York is safe. That is enough for me right now.”

Clarke looked expectantly at Lexa but The Commander stayed silent. Abby spoke, “With access to technology I have been able to save so many people who otherwise I would have had to watch die, including you, and Lexa.”

Clarke nodded and frowned, “I know, I just…” She looked to her wife once more and Lexa pulled her into an embrace.

“Houmon, you and I will lead our people in peace. Luna, Rock, Zora, Skadi, Cole, Ro and Hirrim, these are all leaders who want the same things. We want our people to raise their children in peace, we want them to do more than just survive, we want them to live. The technology you brought with you from the sky and from the mountain can help our people light their villages, heat their homes, and cure their illnesses. Your Sky technology and our Grounder knowledge will do great things.”

Clarke softened at Lexa’s reassurance and she rested against her enjoying the warmth of her body. “You’re right, Lex.” Clarke spoke quietly and then she looked around the room one more time. Her eyes landed on her mother. “Mom, have you found anything in the files that says what the black lake was made from? Can we reproduce it at all?”

“No, I can’t find anything. I still have a little bit of it in the bottle I hope to examine it closer when we get back to the Ark. I’ve never seen anything like it, I hope I can at least get a partial analysis and create something that works even one tenth as well as it did.” Abby’s mind was racing with the possibilities and appreciation for the lives it saved.

“In the files they referred to it as Synthamino Fluid.” Kane spoke again. “The file says it is used in the incubation chambers as a kind of amniotic fluid. They created it specifically to promote growth so they could grow the GERSA faster. That’s all the information I found on it.” He shook his head, “I wish I had more information but for now I’m just thankful Bell and Raven fell in.” He smiled at Abby who teared up slightly and nodded her agreement.
Lexa stood. “Kane, thank you for finding the truth about the terrors. Now that York is safe from that threat we can take some time to enjoy ourselves and this city. In two days time we will start sweeping the outskirts of York clearing those still loyal to Yor. Once that is done we will return home. My bones are restless for the Trikru forests.” Lexa smiled wistfully.

Zora added, “Tomorrow evening there will be a festival in the city. We request all of you to join us in this celebration. Security will be taken care of by my army so everyone is invited to relax and enjoy the festivities. There will be food, music, and dancing. I have assigned a Woman in Black to each of you for protection, they will accompany you to and from and answer any questions you have during. You have all done so much for my city, please relax and be our guest for an evening.”

When everyone agreed they would join the festivities Lexa stood and held her hand to Clarke. “We will take our leave.” Zora nodded and whispered to Lexa that they would be right along. She led Clarke out of the library and back to the courtyard. When they arrived they found Raven, Octavia, and Lincoln back safely from the island and mounted on their horses ready to go.

Kita looked out from behind Clarke’s horse as she fiddled with the saddle, “We are ready Heda.” She grinned as Clarke looked at Lexa, confused.

Lexa moved over to her own horse and mounted, “Come Houmon, she nodded to the gate where Amina and Sheena were waiting with a small contingent of soldiers. Luna and Rachel were there as well. Clarke’s confusion grew.

“The Boat people have sent some supplies and gifts for the Mayor. The ships will be arriving this morning. I thought you might like to watch them sail into the harbour and show your friends the ocean.” Raven and Octavia whooped and Clarke beamed that smile that Lexa likened to the sun.
The Festival

Chapter Summary

York celebrates!

Chapter Notes

A lighter chapter. Fluff and smut and a smart mouthed Raven Reyes.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

The festival was just what York needed. Music, food and lots of drinks. The people celebrated the return of Zora, the death of Yor, and the end of the terrors.

“I have the best timing, like ever!” Raven clapped Octavia on the back, “I mean, you had to spend weeks in the woods chasing bad guys, take a trip to the Ice Kingdom; which I admit was cool, but then more time in the woods stinking like your horse. Then you had to cross through a fucking tunnel full of fucking giant spiders and shit. When you got here you fought a war with pale creepy creeps, who I destroyed for you, you’re welcome. I mean you’ve had a shitty couple of months! I got to chill out in Sapeake collecting scrap tech and then head back home and tinker with shit in the mountain. Then Bell shows up in a fucking helicopter, flies me here, I blow up the creeps, and BAM it’s party time.”

“Fuck off Reyes.” Octavia grinned at her and raised the glass she had filled with the finest ale in York. Raven grinned back and they toasted each other. “To your superb fucking timing!” Octavia offered.

“And to your stubborn ass surviving all the shit you went through to get here.” Raven added reaching out to punch Octavia on the shoulder to show her love.

Lincoln was watching the two of them and sipping his own glass. He hadn’t planned on drinking anything but Octavia had insisted he take a glass of beer. He knew Octavia had missed Raven and he assumed correctly that they would get pretty drunk. He knew the York army had security all over the place but he wanted to be alert and ready for anything so he sipped and watched.

He glanced around them checking everything, and his eyes lingered on his Heda. He had seen both her and the Mayor drinking several glasses of ale and now she was standing with Zora, both swaying slightly, with her hand clasped on the larger woman’s shoulder. They seemed deep in an intense, yet drunken, conversation. His eyes left them and landed on Rock and Clarke seated nearby. They were laughing and shaking their heads, gaze directed toward their lovers, so he assumed the conversation was nothing for him to be concerned about.

He glanced further and saw Rachel and Luna at a table talking with the captains of the ships that had sailed into York the previous day. Luna had her head thrown back in laughter, her wild red hair blowing in the evening breeze. Lincoln smiled slightly at the woman his Heda considered a sister. The woman who had taken on the most difficult job in York without hesitation, she had made it her
job to help the children who were so terrified, so broken. Lincoln respected her greatly and it pleased him to see her smile and laugh.

He continued his surveillance and stopped again at his brother in law. He wasn't joined to Octavia yet but he considered himself to be. There was no room in his heart for another and there never would be. He loved Octavia. He watched as Bellamy wrapped his arms around a very pregnant Echo and they began to sway to the music. He thought how lovely it would be for him and Octavia to give that little one a cousin. His glance shifted very quickly back to the two drunken women at his table. His eyes roved over Octavia’s face and greedily took in her smile.

His never ending vigilance prompted him to tear his eyes away from Octavia and swing back to Bellamy and Echo. He settled on them for just a second before continuing past. He saw Virgil and Wick sitting at a table with two pretty girls talking and laughing. He kept going and spotted Indra. He was a little surprised at the company she was keeping and looked back at Octavia interrupting whatever hilarious joke she and Raven were sharing at the moment. “Octavia, did you see Indra…” Lincoln’s eyes were rather wide and Octavia glanced over toward the table she knew her mentor was seated at and then back to Lincoln.

Her words were slurred due to the amount of alcohol she had consumed and Lincoln was sure she would never use such vulgar language in regards to Indra had she been sober. “You didn’t know Indra was fucking Ro?” Octavia grinned at Lincoln’s shocked face. “Don’t worry, Hirrim and Ro are apparently famous for their open relationship. Rumour is that she likes to fuck women, and since Otta her favourite woman to fuck has been the most feared general in the Trigeda army.”

Lincoln’s jaw dropped a bit in surprise, “Since Otta!” He shook his head and berated himself for not noticing before now. Octavia and Raven laughed at him and his face reddened in embarrassment. “How did I miss it?”

“Indra is always the last one to bed and the first one up in the morning, if she sleeps at all.” Octavia laughed. “I saw Ro coming out of her tent one morning as I was coming back from patrol. Indra told me she’d skin me alive if I told you…” Octavia suddenly looked far less smug, “I think she was serious.”

Lincoln laughed then, he leaned over, kissed Octavia, and laughed some more. “That sounds like her. I’m going to do a quick check of the perimeter, you two stay here.” He continued laughing as he moved off to do his sweep and Octavia assured him they had no intention of moving.

He was halfway around the main square when he noticed a familiar face coming toward him, he grinned at her diligence and nodded to her as they drew near one another. “Kita, is the perimeter secure?” She smiled at him and nodded affirmatively. He added, “I know Zora told us to leave the security to her army, but I admit my heart feels lighter knowing you have also ignored the request.”

“Heda and the Skai Heda are drinking Ale with the Mayor. If someone were to attack they would not be in an ideal state to defend themselves. I cannot ignore my duty even when Heda tells me to take a night off.” Kita raised an eyebrow at Lincoln and a small smile graced her lovely features, “I am pleased that you are patrolling as well, Lincoln. I felt uneasy before, but my mind feels less burdened knowing that you are watching too.”

He nodded his head at her and they both moved forward smiling to themselves at what each considered a great compliment from the other.
Lexa’s head was feeling light and slightly fuzzy. It was not often the Commander of the thirteen clans allowed herself to partake in enough drink to cloud her thoughts. Zora was a little more gone than Lexa and Clarke and Rock watched in amusement as the two discussed very seriously who had killed more terrors.

Rock decided to throw some gas on the fire and added innocently, “You know, if Ska had been here she would have killed the most. She’s so much faster than either of you.” She nonchalantly took a sip from her ale and then glanced away and added, just to fuck with Lexa, “Oh, look. Ro and Indra seem to be getting along well.”

Lexa was about to open her mouth to protest Skadi being faster than her but at the sound of Indra’s name her head snapped around to stare at the table where her general sat with the leader of the Horse People’s army. Clarke laughed at the shock on her face and when she stared at Clarke for an answer she just shrugged innocently despite having known about the lovers for some time. Octavia had confided in her shortly after she had busted them early one morning on the trek from Otta.

Zora, however would not be distracted, “Ska! Faster than me and Lexa?!” She looked incredulous until Rock pinned her with a look and raised an eyebrow at her. “Okay, okay, so maybe she’s faster than me. But that doesn’t mean she would have killed more of them than me.”

She was about to list her reasons that she definitely killed the most and Lexa was about to protest that she was definitely faster than Skadi when Raven and Octavia came over to steal Clarke away for a drink.

Raven had overheard the conversation and as she draped a drunken arm over Clarke’s shoulder she slurred, “You can sit here and argue all night over who is faster and whose sword is mightier, but we all know that Raven fucking Reyes killed the most terrors.” Clarke and Rock burst out in laughter and Octavia and Raven pulled Clarke back to their table. Lexa and Zora sat jaws open and stared after the beautiful mechanic.

Rock’s eyes slid appreciatively up and down the lithe form of the dark haired woman and she whistled between her teeth, “Brains and beauty.. mmm mmm.” Zora gave a good-natured protest of her appreciation of Raven’s body and she focused back on the two women in front of her. “Perhaps you two should have read more books and practiced the sword less… huh?” She grinned and Lexa and Zora balked.

“She used a bomb!” Lexa protested.

“Exactly.” Rock laughed. “She got them all in one big boom!”

“Fine, Raven killed the most…. but Skadi isn’t faster than me.” Lexa frowned and Rock laughed again.

“You two are so funny, like children after their first hunt comparing the size of the kills.” Rock chided the two but they suddenly grinned and turned to each other.

“My first hunt I killed a boar!” Zora boasted.

“I almost got eaten by wolves.” Lexa answered honestly and they both broke into yet another fit of laughter.

Clarke, Octavia, and Raven were giggling together as they shared a drink. Octavia had asked Clarke about her bet with Lexa. Raven had already told her everything she had heard earlier. “So you two
have a kinky bet about a shooting contest. You mean the great Heda is actually going to touch a
gun?!”

Clarke blushed but answered, “She saw how useful they can be after the chase and then the tunnels,
she wanted to learn anyway.”

“So spill already! What is the bet!?” Raven pressed Clarke for details.

Clarke was just drunk enough to let go of her embarrassment and answer her friends, “So if I’m a
better shot… she is my sex slave for a week!” Clarke clapped her hand over her mouth and giggled.

Raven and Octavia looked less than impressed, “That’s it!? Come on Griffin spill the real details.
She’s already your sex slave we all know she’d do anything you ask.” Octavia rolled her eyes at
Clarke who blushed again.

“Okay well… if she wins…” she looked at the two faces that stared at her expectantly, “she gets to
use toys… Grounder sex toys…. Clarke’s eyes got big and Raven and Octavia both lost it and
howled with laughter.

“What the hell kind of sex toys do they even have, O?” Raven slapped her friend on the back and
Octavia shook her head.

“I don’t know! Lincoln has never mentioned them and I’ve never seen any anywhere.” Octavia
laughed just as hard as Raven. “Clarkey are you sure you’ll be okay!? I mean some Grounders are
seriously kinky! One friend of Lincoln’s is always coming to see Ryder with dislocated bones and
shit and Lincoln always teases him about them all being sex injuries. What kind of toys do you think
Lexa has?”

“I’ve never seen any and she’s never mentioned them to me before this…” Clarke looked nervous
but she smiled at her friends, “anyway we all know Lexa would never hurt me, so I’m not worried.”

“Right, she’d never hurt you… on purpose… but what if she gets a giant wooden dong and you get
a splinter in your vajayjay!?” Raven added with a wicked grin and she and Octavia burst into
laughter again. Clarke looked a little unsettled and Raven winked at her, “Don’t worry Griffin, your
buddy Raven will do some research for you. And hey, two can play at the toy game. I can make you
a vibrator to use on Lexa when you win the bet!”

Octavia high-fived Raven and Clarke laughed at her friends. It wasn’t long before Lincoln returned
to the table and with a polite nod to Clarke he sat down.

Raven grinned, “Linc old buddy! Why don’t you tell your friend Raven all about Grounder sex
toys!” She grinned and Lincoln looked quickly back and forth between Raven, Octavia and Clarke.
Seeing all three looking at him expectantly she jumped up and excused himself, looking slightly
terrified.

“I should check the perimeter again.” He walked away from the three women who collapsed into
another fit of giggles as he made his escape.

The three continued laughing and joking until Raven spotted Kita doing her rounds again. “Clarke,
seriously your Ice Guard. She’s hot, like I want to use Grounder sex toys on her hot!” Raven grinned
as Clarke punched her in the arm.

“Kita’s not like that…” Clarke sighed and her glance drifted to Lexa who was doubled over in
laughter at something the Mayor was saying. “Nevermind… she is like that… she has already been
corrupted.” Clarke sounded sad. “Our Kita was so innocent until Lexa told her to ‘bed a pretty girl’.”
Raven and Octavia looked confused, “Why would Lexa tell her to have sex with someone?”

“She was distracted, couldn't focus on her work.” Clarke sighed, “It's my fault I told Lexa to have
the talk with her, but someone had to! She kept staring at my boobs!” Clarke sighed and Octavia
giggled as Raven added.

“Well, Clarke you can’t blame her, you do have an impressive rack…” Clarke broke into laughter
and Raven continued, “But why was she so distracted?” She could tell there was more to the story.

“She walked in on us…” Clarke giggled a little the alcohol freeing her from her normal
embarrassment, “I was going down on Lexa and she was about to come.” Clarke started to laugh
harder. “Lexa was so mad. Anyway apparently Kita hadn’t really considered sex with a girl but after
seeing us that’s all she could think about.”

Raven arched her eyebrow… “I could show her a thing or two…” but Clarke cut her off.

“Oh don’t worry Raven, apparently my stoic and innocent Ice Guard is a quick study. She already
has two lovers from the Women in Black and is apparently into S&M with one of them. She’s the
dom, in case you wondered…” Clarke looked exasperated. “One conversation with Lexa, just one,
and suddenly Kita is a nymphomaniac!”

“Skai Reine, you are exaggerating.” Kita was standing over them with a small smile and Clarke
jumped.

“Kita, I’m sorry! I didn’t mean for you to hear that.” Her cheeks burned red. “I’m glad you are
exploring your sexuality it’s just such a sudden change and I... Well, Lexa told you to…”

“Heda gave me good advice, Skai Reine.” Kita smiled. “Do my actions make you uncomfortable?”
Kita stared into Clarke’s eyes with concern. “I do not wish that. You are more than my Reine and
my charge. I think of you as family, Clarke” Kita’s voice was low as she spoke Clarke’s name, it
was rare for her to do so and her eyes grew moist.

“Kita… I…” Clarke felt her own eyes grow moist and she took a deep breath. “Sit.” She patted the
chair next to hers and her guard obeyed. “I think of you as family too. That’s why I’m upset. I’m
worried that Lexa pushed you in a direction you weren’t ready to go in. That if she had actually
talked to you about sex instead of just telling you to bed a pretty girl maybe you would have taken
your time.”

“I didn’t want to take my time.” Kita confessed, “I was experiencing desire and lust and I wanted to
satisfy that feeling so I could feel like myself again. Heda was correct in her assessment.” Kita
smiled.

“But why Amina and Suu, why two lovers so soon?” Clarke continued wanting to understand.

“It seems more efficient to have multiple lovers.” Kita’s stoic explanation of the situation make
Clarke roll her eyes and laugh. “Really!” Kita continued, earnest in her explanation, “I have a
connection with Amina that is soft and lovely. We are equals and we enjoy each other as lovers and
as friends. My connection with Suu is dark and hungry, I see her when I desire to be dominant and
rough.”

Her explanation had Clarke regretting she had asked but it had Raven salivating. The dark haired
genius spoke with a husky voice, “Well in the spirit of efficiency you can come and see me when
you feel the desire to submit.” Raven raised her eyebrow and licked her lips as Kita’s head whipped
around and her eyes met Raven’s.
Clarke and Octavia looked on with wide eyes and open mouths as Kita didn’t miss a beat. Most people lost their train of though or ability to respond when confronted with their ballsy and beautiful friend, but Kita just leaned in closer to Raven and let her dark eyes slide up and down her body. “And if I have no desire to submit…” Kita raised her eyebrow as punctuation, “should I still come and see you?”

Raven was slightly thrown off that her more than direct approach didn’t seem to faze the woman who was now just inches from her face. Raven felt her heart race in a way it hadn’t in a long time, “Yes.” She stopped there, that one word was enough. She held Kita’s gaze and felt her heart skip as a beautiful smile spread across Kita’s sharp features. Her lips were full and when stretched in to a smile her thin, angular features lit up like starlight. Her beautiful brown eyes danced with laughter and what Raven hoped was a hint of desire.

“It will be my pleasure, Raven of the Skai, Slayer of the GERSA…. or perhaps it will be yours.” Kita rose from her seat in one graceful motion and Raven almost swooned. Kita held her gaze for just a moment longer but then turned back to Clarke and bowed slightly, “Skai Reine, thank you for speaking with me, I know the subject makes you uncomfortable. I should return to my duties. I will not stop my patrols tonight, my vigilance allows Heda to relax and I am glad for that.” She smiled softly as her gaze found Lexa and then returned to Clarke. She bowed her head in farewell and strode off to make sure the sentries were doing their duty to her standards.

Octavia kicked Raven under the table but she couldn’t take her eyes off of the tall woman striding away from them. “Holy shit! Raven! You are going to fuck Clarke’s Ice Guard the minute she gets to Ton DC, aren’t you!?”

Clarke groaned in protest but laughed as Raven swallowed heavily and stumbled over her words, ‘I… I… I mean, she said…”

“Raven Reyes loses her cool!” Clarke and Octavia slapped a drunken high-five not really caring that they mostly missed.

Lincoln returned to the table and seeing Clarke and Octavia laughing and Raven looking stunned her assumed it would be safe for him to sit down. “What’s wrong with Raven?” He asked, having never seen the feisty woman speechless.

“Kita’s got her tongue.” Octavia quipped and her and Clarke burst into laughter. Lincoln stared in confusion at the Skai Women and shook his head wishing just a little bit that they would hurry up and pass out.

Clarke and Lexa leaned on one another as they made their way back to the room they called theirs in the Mayor’s home. Clarke was humming an unintelligible tune and Lexa was giggling. Neither of them noticed the soft footsteps that followed them as Kita shadowed her Heda and her Skai Reine making sure they got back to the room safely.

Not long before they had stood to leave the festival Kita had swept the corridors and the room herself and now she was happy to see them heading to bed. She was feeling restless after her conversation with the dark haired sky woman, the woman who had killed the GERSA. Kita had been struck by her the moment she had first seen her.

The water from the black lake had healed her incredibly quickly. As she thought about it she shrugged and stretched her shoulders still unable to believe there was no pain where she had suffered deep lacerations from the terrors, no the GERSA, Kita believed that putting a name on the things and
understanding them made them less frightening, and so she was determined to always refer to them by the name their makers had given them. She shook her head to remove the thoughts of the GERSA and bit back laughter as Heda stumbled a bit and the Skai Reine held her up. She could hear them giggling and talking to each other as they made their way to their bedroom.

She smiled as she watched them and suddenly she wondered if she would ever find a partner like that. Someone she wished to be joined to. She doubted it, she searched her mind and found there was no desire for it there. Maybe it was in her DNA, she thought. Her thoughts turned to her sister, the fearsome General of the Ice Nation, Lozen. Her sister was undeniably a beautiful and powerful woman. Over the years many suitors had asked for commitment from her but Lozen was not one to be tied down. She spent time with who she pleased and Kita now understood why her sister slept with as many people as she did. She grinned as she thought of the times she had criticized her older sister when she came home in the early mornings after a tryst.

Lozen would find it funny that her uptight little sister was now following in her footsteps. One difference Kita thought, was that she was quite sure her lovers would all be female where her sister didn’t seem to have a preference. Kita watched as Clarke and Lexa slipped into the room and the door banged shut. She approached and heard more giggling and then a delighted squeal from Clarke. She grinned as she leaned against the opposite wall and waited for the guards to appear so she could take her leave.

Where she would go when she went was cause for deep debate in the beauty’s head. Her first thought was Suu but she was quite certain the leader of the Mayor’s security force wouldn't be available until every last partygoer had retired and that might not happen until first light. Her mind turned to Amina and she smiled at the thought of spending time with the lovely warrior on the road to Otta with the children. Tonight though, she would likely be indisposed along with Suu. She knew Amina had been assigned to patrol the borders of the city and was likely still there.

Raven…? She chewed on the inside of her cheek and thought about the Skai woman’s words. Submit… did she want that? Could she give up her power like Suu did for her? The thought was arousing, having Raven controlling her pleasure, but Kita wasn’t sure. Of course Raven had left all other offers open as well but it was her first offer that tickled Kita’s brain.

She knew she would sleep with Raven if the woman still wanted her by the time she reached Ton DC after delivering the children safely to Skadi. Not tonight though, Raven was drunk. While the sounds she could hear coming from Clarke inside of the room she was guarding indicated that drunken sex could be good, she needed Raven to be sober the first time they were together. Clear consent was important to Kita.

Kita knew there were plenty of beautiful women in York who she could seek out for company if she desired but as she considered it she realized that she wanted one thing above all the others. Sleep. Kita was suddenly very tired and her ears were glad at what they heard.

The sound of guards approaching in the hallway beyond the corner made her smile. As they approached they bowed formally to her and took their places near the room. She watched their faces burn bright red as the Sky Reine continued her loud exhalation of Heda’s skill as a lover. She shrugged her shoulders at them and grinned as she left them to their duty.

Clarke and Rock had watched the playful banter between their lovers turn into a silly armwrestling match. Zora won. Clarke leaned over and sucked the pouty lower lip of her now ego-bruised wife into her mouth gently. She felt the pout grow into a smile and then she bit down just hard enough to get Lexa’s attention where she wanted it.
Clarke was drunk and horny. She’d been horny since they left their room. While she was getting dressed for the festival Lexa had walked up behind her and slid her hands into Clarke’s pants. She had softly caressed her clit until it she was wet and wanting more, but then suddenly removed her hand and left Clarke wanting. “We don’t want to be late.” Lexa had innocently stated but her eyes were full of mirth.

“Lex, you got me all wet…” Clarke had complained.

“I know, Houmon. I want you to be wet all night thinking of the relief I will give you when this festival is over.” Lexa had closed the gap between them suddenly and pulled her wife into a crushing embrace and a bruising kiss. She once again left her wet and wanting and threw a triumphant grin over her shoulder as she strode out the door.

Clarke had wanted Lexa to take her to bed all night, but she also wanted Lexa to enjoy the rare chance to relax and be with her friends in public. It was getting late and she was done with the party, she wanted Lexa’s mouth on her and she was also worried that her wife might pass out if she drank much more. So when the arm wrestling was done Clarke had leaned in and taken that beautiful pouty bottom lip into her mouth.

When the jolt of pain from her bite had Lexa paying full attention Clarke leaned in and whispered in her ear, “It’s time to stop playing with the mayor and start playing with me, Heda. I want you to take me back to the room and fuck me. Any questions?” Clarke stood back up and enjoyed watching the reaction she caused.

Lexa stared at her with a mixture of surprise and lust. She jumped up out of the chair and in her drunker eagerness she knocked over the rest of her ale and the chair all at once. Rock laughed knowingly and quickly waved them off. “I’ve got it, go, go.” She giggled as Lexa shouted her thanks over her shoulder as she grabbed Clarke’s hand and quickly pulled her towards the door.

Zora was drunk and confused, “Do you think she’s mad that I won? Should I have let her win once?” Her drunken innocence was adorable but Rock was feeling similar to Clarke after watching her lover defeat Heda, even when she offered to let Lexa use two hands, and her patience was wearing thin.

“Mayor!” Her voice sounded stern and sharp and Zora immediately stood a little straighter and tried much harder to focus. She looked expectantly to Rock for instruction. Rock strode over to her and slid her body in to rest along Zora’s curves. “Do you have some strength left in those arms?” She ran her hands over the biceps she so loved and then let her hands wind themselves around Zora’s shoulders and come to rest clasped behind her neck. She tugged insistently and Zora lowered her face to Rock’s.

Just before their lips met Zora answered, “Strength enough to have you shouting my name before the sun rises, lover.” Then Rock smashed their lips together and wrapped her legs around the taller woman’s hips as she let Zora lift her from the ground.

As soon as Lexa heard the door close behind them she ripped her own shirt off and then made quick work of her pants. She was naked by the time Clarke reached the bed and turned around. The squeal of delight that left Clarke’s lips when she saw her made Lexa feel like the sexiest thing in existence. She closed the few steps between them as quickly as she could and her lips sought Clarke’s while her hands worked on ridding the blonde of her clothes.

“Lex, I’ve been waiting for this all night.” Clarke panted between kisses as she desperately kicked
aside the pants and underwear Lexa had worked down to her ankles. Lexa ran her hands up the inside of Clarke’s thighs and found a wet trail leading her to the folds of her lover’s cunt.

“Clarke you are so wet…” Lexa’s voice was high and weak and her head was spinning as much from the desire coursing though her veins as the alcohol she had consumed. She stood slowly and watched as Clarke leaned her head back and exposed the expanse of her neck. Clarke pulled Lexa to her and guiding her head to the skin she had just bared.

Lexa nuzzled the hollow at the base of Clarke’s neck and breathed in her scent. She lazily drew her fingers through the wetness that had been bothering Clarke all night. When she heard the moan Clarke released she shuddered with lust and a growl grew in her throat.

Lexa stepped forward forcing Clarke back until her knees were against the bed, then, with a wicked grin on her face she pushed her. Clarke fell back onto the bed laughing and smiling and Lexa felt like one of Raven’s bombs was going off in her heart it thumped so hard. She climbed onto her and looked hungrily down at her prize.

Clarke reached up and put her hands around the back of Lexa’s neck and she tugged at her, “I need to feel your body on mine.” Lexa lowered herself, her thigh sliding between Clarke’s. “Mmmm, fuck… Lexa.” Clarke hissed out Lexa’s name between her teeth as she ground her wetness into the hard thigh that was now pressing into her.

“Clarke.” Lexa’s voice was strained, “You are so wet.” Clarke was leaving a wet trail over her thigh as she writhed under her. Lexa felt lust clouding her already drunken mind and she looked down at her lover, “Houmon, I want to fuck you. Hard.” Lexa’s voice dropped an octave and the last word was spoken like a growl deep in her throat.

“Fuck!” Clarke shook with want, “Yes, Lex. Take me. Take me now.” Clarke spread her legs wide and pushed Lexa’s hand down towards her cunt. When Lexa slid her fingers into the wetness they both cried out wanton, incoherent moans. Clarke drove her hips forward pressing her wetness harder against Lexa’s fingers. Her fingers found their way into Lexa’s hair and she tugged pulling the hot mouth to her hard aching nipples.

Lexa let Clarke guide her head to her breasts and she immediately sucked her nipple into her mouth. She sucked it hard and ran her tongue over the rough surface. Her right hand was now three fingers deep into Clarke’s pussy and she was fucking her hard and fast. Clarke’s hips were matching the speed of her hand and the wetness spilling from her told Lexa that this was exactly what Clarke wanted tonight.

She thrust into Clarke once more and paused before pulling out. She bit down on the hard bud she had in her mouth and at the same time she pushed her fingers up into the throbbing pulse she found and drew her fingers slowly across it.

“AH! FUCK! Lexa Lexalexa… FUCK!” Clarke cried out and Lexa repeated the move. “YES! Ohmygodthatfeelsgood. Yes baby. FUCK!” Her voice went from a high pitched whine to a hoarse shout as Lexa alternated soothing kisses and a palm stroking her clit to punishingly delightful teeth and deep powerful strokes of her fingers.

Clarke’s body started to shake and Lexa let the nipple pop softly out of her mouth, she wanted to look at Clarke Griffin as she fucken her. She wanted to watch. She held herself above Clarke with one hand and looked down their bodies. She took in the deep blush and mottled skin as Clarke’s body flushed with pleasure. She watched her hand sliding in and out of her cunt and then she moved her gaze to the beautiful blue eyes that were now watching her.
Lexa lowered herself again, letting her thigh land tight against her hand and using her hips to help her hand thrust harder and deeper. She brought her face close to Clarke’s but didn’t close the distance for a kiss, she just watched in awe of the beauty under her.

Clarke’s eyes were black, the iris fully blown in lust. Her cheeks were flushed and her lips trembled as she once again called out Lexa’s name. Lexa watched as she squeezed her eyes shut, bit her own lip, and moaned deeply only to snap them open again, throw her head back, and cry out loudly. Lexa pulled her hand out entirely and suddenly pressed down on Clarke’s clit. Clarke sucked in a breath of air and held it, her eyes locked on Lexa’s and then she started to beg.

“Lexy, please make me come.” Clarke pouted and leaned up and sucked Lexa’s bottom lip into her mouth. She released it and let her head fall back down to the bed. “Please Lex. Fuck me and make me come.” Clarke’s normally husky voice was even deeper and goosebumps broke out along Lexa’s arms and a soft whimper escaped her mouth.

“Clarke, fuck you are so beautiful.” Lexa whispered reverently. “How do you want it?” Lexa raised her eyebrow and began to slowly stroke Clarke’s clit. She leaned down and raked her teeth over the pulse point on Clarke’s neck. “Soft and slow?” She could hear Clarke’s breath pick up again and she felt her shudder beneath her touch. She slid her fingers down and quickly entered Clarke with two fingers. “Or hard and fast?” Clarke’s hips bucked up into her touch.

“Oh! Just like that, hard and fast. Fuck me, fuck me. Lexa!” Clarke began rocking her hips up into Lexa and set a pounding rhythm. Lexa’s lust look over and she just let go, she let her instincts guide her to keep Clarke’s pace. She thrusted and felt Clarke’s walls tightening around her fingers. Clarke was panting for breath and moaning loudly and Lexa knew she was close.

When Clarke came she let out a scream. The guards in the hallway blushed and giggled but none of them questioned the scream or thought they should check on the women they guarded. That scream could only have been one thing. A woman having a mind-blowing orgasm.

Back inside the room the alcohol had finally won and Lexa was just about ready to pass out. Clarke, now satisfied was even further gone and as she slipped into sleep Lexa heard her mumble, “The bet Lex… promise me no splinters in my vajayjay…” Lexa’s drunken mind gave an attempt at deciphering her Skai wife’s words but quickly gave up and she just pulled Clarke in closer and followed her to sleep.

Chapter End Notes

I'm still looking for a Beta if anyone out there is interested in helping with my poor grammar and spelling. You can get in contact with me at rdstoryteller@gmail.com
The Return Trip

Chapter Summary

Kita and Amina lead the children back to Otta. They make a new friend along the way.

Chapter Notes

I apologize for the wait, thank you for your patience and love.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

It was only day two of the voyage, and already Kita was thankful for her attraction to women. She certainly didn’t want to get pregnant; the children, while she loved them, were driving her crazy.

“Mes enfants!” She protested again, “We have a long journey, we cannot linger any longer.”

Despite her protests the children stayed put, staring out over the lush green valley that spread before them. “Kita! Look, an eagle,” one of the younger ones exclaimed, pointing in delight at the large bird of prey as it soared over the valley.

Amina sidled up next to her and put an arm around her shoulders. “Your timeline has already gone to shit.” Amina nudged her forward, “Enjoy the time with them; let them feel the wonder and the excitement of an adventure with their beloved Kita. Go look at the eagle.” Kita frowned, but heard the truth in her words, so she sighed, put a smile on her face, and stepped forward.

“No eagle, you say?” She scooped up the young girl, who squealed and laughed in delight at being hoisted onto the shoulders of her hero. Kita followed the girl’s outstretched arm and looked where she pointed, “Yes, there it is!” The noble looking bird stood out against the cloudless blue sky, and Kita glanced around her at all of the children, whose eyes were glued to the bird. Her eyes crinkled as she smiled at the joyful expressions on their faces.

She allowed them a few more minutes of the impressive view before wrangling them up and getting them mounted once again. “Come, mes enfants, Octavia and Lincoln have ridden ahead to find us a good place to camp. We mustn’t dally or we will not reach them by nightfall.” Kita knew the place they had agreed upon was only a four hour ride, but at the rate they stopped to look at everything around them, she already knew it would take forever.

She heard Amina’s clear laughter behind her and felt a warmth in her belly. Tonight neither of them where scheduled to patrol, and Kita was looking forward to sharing her tent with the beautiful warrior. Kita turned to look at her and she winked.

“Anxious to get to our campsite, Kita?” When Kita denied it she smiled again, “Really? That’s too bad, I know I am.” With that Amina nudged her horse into a quick trot and called out, “Children of the Ice Nation, can you keep up with a warrior of York? A protector of the Mayor? A Woman in Black?!” She rode a quick circle around them and then her horse broke into a run along the trail. The children gleefully accepted her challenge and quickly followed her, urging their horses forward.
Kita held back, letting Sheena, Eva, and Trish surround the children as they galloped off after the lovely Amina. She was certain the road ahead was safe, as Octavia and Lincoln had scouted the route looking for campsites far ahead. Dal, Cade, and the four Lake warriors who had been part of Heda’s elite force, were just ahead of them making sure that the way was clear. Feeling secure, Kita happily brought up the rear, smiling at the easy way Amina had with the children, and the clever trick she had used to get them to speed up.

Her smile faded as her thoughts turned to the reasons the children were moving so slowly. Dal and Cade had shared their thoughts over the campfire the previous night, and Kita had been left with a heavy heart. The truth was, as much as the children had petitioned the Mayor and Heda to be returned home as quickly as possible, she saw the fear in their eyes and the worry on their faces.

Cade suggested that part of it might be not knowing what had become of their families; they feared their families could be dead. Dal had said that most likely another part of it was not wanting to leave each other. They had formed their own family, and they were loath to be far from one another. The two men had softly voiced that the children also knew how very much each of them had changed. Every terrible thing that had happened to them, combined with the nightmares, and the panic attacks they still dealt with, made them worry that their families would reject them, or worse, fear them.

Kita knew in her heart that the families would be overjoyed at having their young ones returned to them. She also knew that her Queen would accept any who had no families to return to, and provide a place for them at the school she had opened in Otta. They would be well taken care of, and Kita would make sure they were settled before she returned to Ton DC.

Luna had developed a program for them in York, and Kita was going to help implement something similar in Otta. The children had group therapy where they learned to express their pain and anger. They had school, trades, and they had warrior training. Luna made sure they all began to learn how to fight. She also made sure they all knew how good and strong they were. Kita felt a lump in her throat as she thought of the red haired woman. She had thanked her before they left the city, but she knew her words were not enough. It was Luna who had given the children back their smiles, and for that Kita loved her.

Lincoln and Octavia were about an hour ahead of Kita. They were on foot, as they had sent their horses running back in the direction they had come from, and they were both panting and bleeding. At their feet were two dead men. They were crouched back to back, and Octavia’s intense glare was slowly traversing the surrounding trees, searching for any movement. Lincoln was focusing on the rocky shore of the lake on their other side, looking for hiding places and the glint of steel.

“Octavia, Dal and Cade will be coming along soon. We should retreat a little, find cover, and wait for them.” Lincoln was worried about their current position. There was a small incline ahead of them and thick trees on the left. After the incline the trail veered away from the lake; they would be surrounded by a thick forest on both sides for several miles, before the trail came back to meet the lake at a sheltered beach. The beach was to be their camp for the night, if they could clear the way.

Lincoln knew that if there were more brigands in the forest ahead, they would be in a very vulnerable position travelling on the trail. He had seen a tattoo of Yor’s army on one of the downed attackers, and feared that assassins might be in the trees, waiting to get them within range of their arrows.

“Lincoln Kom Trikru are you backing out of a fight?” Octavia’s voice was light, but Lincoln could feel her muscles coiled and tense where their bodies touched, as they waited to face down whatever
was out there, back to back.

“I’m worried about assassins in the trees ahead,” Lincoln answered truthfully.

“I know Linc. I am too.” Octavia’s voice dropped a bit as she admitted her own fear. “I think we can use the trees for cover though. If we stay off the trail, they won’t have a clean shot.” She turned toward her lover and reached out gently to the gash on his left shoulder.

“Can you fight? Speak true.” Her eyes were full of worry, and he felt his heart beat a little faster under her loving gaze.

“I can fight, Octavia Kom Trikru.” He smiled at her and nodded, she nodded back at him and they moved quickly off the trail and into the trees. Once they were under the cover of the forest, Octavia relaxed a little and she led Lincoln behind a large tree that would hide them from view. She pulled out the med kit Clarke had put in her pack and took out some bandages. Lincoln had taken his own pack off and found some green salve. He applied it to the cut on Octavia’s left jaw, and only then allowed her to apply some to the deep cut on his shoulder. She wrapped it quickly and tightly, and then leaned in and kissed him softly.

They dropped their packs to lighten their load, and they moved silently through the trees, eyes constantly searching the brush and the treetops. It was slow going, but they managed to track the footsteps of their attackers from where they had been jumped on the trail, back to a clearing. Octavia positioned herself to look into the clearing, and Lincoln watched her face contort into anger and confusion. He whistled softly to get her attention, and motioned for her to proceed to clear the area going left; he would take right.

She glanced furtively back toward the clearing, nodded at him, and stepped away into the undergrowth. Curious, he stepped forward slightly and saw what had confused her. There was a woman lying in the clearing. She was half naked, trussed, and gagged near the remains of a fire. She struggled against the ropes but had no success. Lincoln pushed aside his protective instincts, and forced himself to move to the right to clear the area before going to help her.

The couple met at the opposite end of the clearing, and confirmed to one another that the perimeter was secure. Octavia took a breath and gripped her sword tightly; Lincoln pulled out his bow and nocked an arrow. They stepped out of the cover of the trees together, moving as one entity. They kept their eyes on the trees, and moved steadily toward the body on the ground.

The woman was facing away from them; and when they reached her, Octavia spoke quietly in Trigedasleng. “Ai sis yu op.” The woman tensed and began to thrash around again.

“Chil yu daun . Ai sis yu op.” Octavia’s voice was quiet and reassuring, and the woman stilled, although Lincoln noticed that she still trembled.

Octavia sheathed her sword, stepped around and bent to one knee in front of the woman so she could show her she meant no harm. Her eyes widened in recognition, and the woman began to try and speak even through the gag.

“You are from Bad Town, right? Do you remember me? I’m Octavia. I was with Heda at the tunnels. You’re the one who told us about the creatures.” As she spoke Octavia’s hands reached out and removed the gag from the woman’s mouth. To do so she placed her hands on either side of the woman’s face. The woman flinched when she felt the warrior’s hands on the deformed half, but Octavia payed it no mind, and steadily worked the knot free.

When the gag was removed, Octavia pulled out her dagger and began cutting the woman’s arms and legs free. She spoke hesitantly at first, “I remember... you are one of the Skai People. You were with
the Princess.” The woman’s voice was thick and raspy; Lincoln immediately produced his water bottle.

“Here drink this.” He handed her the bottle and she looked at him strangely, he felt embarrassed by her gaze, so he continued talking, “What is your name?” He asked trying to get her focus off of him.

“You can call me Fer. You will allow me to drink from your bottle?” She gestured to her deformed face, and Lincoln found himself blushing from shame.

“My people have not been kind to yours,” Lincoln bowed his head, “but I have no fear or hatred for you; please, drink.” She kept her eyes on him and drank gratefully. When she finally sat the bottle down, she noticed Octavia still tense and watching the trees.

“How many did you kill?” The woman asked.

“Two,” Octavia answered, “how many held you captive?”

“Two.” All three of them sighed lightly in relief, and Lincoln put away his bow and arrow as the woman continued her story.

“Two days ago I was hunting just outside of town, and they jumped me as I was cleaning a kill. They are Yor’s men.” She spat on the ground in disgust as she said the name.

“Where were they taking you?” Octavia asked. “Did you hear them talk of others?” As she spoke, she took off her jacket and gave it to Fer, who gratefully accepted it. As she looked down at herself, Octavia’s eyes followed. Octavia took in the smooth skin that contrasted with the sagging left side of her face, and she took in the fresh bruises, the scrapes and scratches. The woman had been left in nothing but a pair of thin, ripped and dirty pants. There was blood on her right side, and her entire torso was full of scrapes, cuts, and bruises. Fer pulled the jacket on to cover herself.

Octavia knew what kind of men followed Yor. She knew what had likely happened to Fer. She didn’t ask, she just quietly added, “There are clothes in my pack, I will give them to you. There is also medicine and bandages; I will take care of your side.”

Fer looked Octavia in the eye, and a silent thank you passed between them.

“They tied me to their horse and made me follow them on foot. I fell, but they didn’t stop to let me find my feet.” She ran her hand gingerly over her injured side, and then took a deep breath and held it for a long time, before finally breathing out. Only then did she continue.

“They said they were taking me to their camp, that their leader would reward them for bringing a woman.” She dropped her voice to almost a whisper, and her gaze dropped from Octavia’s. “They said they had been so long without a woman that their friends would be happy to see one, even one with half a face.”

Lincoln let out an angry growl, “Did they say anything about the direction of the camp? They will not be allowed to live. There are women coming behind us who they will certainly not be happy to see.”

Fer looked up at his words, suddenly forgetting the current situation. “Heda? The Skai Princess? Did they survive the island? Are they with you?”

Octavia answered, “Don’t worry Fer, Heda and Clarke both survived, as did the Mayor. They all remember their promises; things will change for your people.”
Fer looked back at Octavia, and her expression hardened, “We have been promised that before.” She sounded bitter and Octavia felt the need to reassure her.

“Never by Clarke Griffin. Things will change, she will make sure of it.” She stepped forward, put her hand on the woman’s shoulder, and squeezed lightly. Then she slid her hand down to grasp Fer’s hands. She pulled their hands up so she could examine the rope burns on Fer’s wrists. “Let’s get this cleaned and bandaged.”

Fer’s eyes teared up and she fought to keep them from falling. Her people had heard from spies that Heda and the Princess had made it out alive, but confirmation from this beautiful Skai woman made Fer’s heart swell with hope. She let Lincoln and Octavia tend to her wrists and side, as she let her mind drift back to the Skai Chancellor’s words. She had said that the Skai People had medicine that could help some of her people. She let herself wonder if she could be one of them.

Cade and Dal’s party came across Lincoln’s horse first. The two men exchanged worried looks, and grabbed the reins as they continued along the path. They sent people into the tree line on both sides and continued with caution. Soon they came upon Octavia’s horse, and Cade frowned.

“Assassins?” He looked at Dal and gritted his teeth. “If they thought they were under attack or saw danger, they would have dismounted and slipped into the trees.”

Dal nodded his agreement and the two men drew their weapons. They moved slowly communicating with whistles to the scouts in the trees. As the terrain on the right thinned and gave way to the lake, the trail straightened and they saw two figures lying on the trail ahead. Dal’s heart raced.

“Cade... is it...?” They both sped up, even though they knew it could be a trap. As they got closer Cade’s keen eyes were able to discern that it wasn’t Lincoln or Octavia lying on the trail, and he eased back on his speed. Dal matched his pace.

“It’s not them.” Cade explained. “That means they killed whoever that is, and are probably clearing the forest.” He nodded to the left and sent two more of his warriors to extend the search line.

They approached the bodies and Dal dismounted. He kicked one of the downed men over to inspect him, and saw the tattoo Lincoln had seen earlier.

“Yor’s men.” Dal’s voice betrayed his hatred, and his eyes began to sweep the surroundings.

Cade had one of his men ride to the top of the hill and keep watch on the other side; he and Dal walked into the tree line to discuss their options. They were soon interrupted by one of their scouts, and Lincoln.

“Lincoln, you’re injured.” Dal looked in concern at Lincoln’s bandaged shoulder. “Where is Octavia?”

“She’s fine. She’s in a clearing just beyond here. We killed two of Yor’s men. They had a captive, it’s a woman from Bad Town, they were taking her to a camp they have set up not far from here.” Lincoln frowned. “They’re watching this trail, we’ll have to take them out before we can pass through.”

“I have a feeling Kita would want to take them out, even if we could pass through safely.” Cade grinned, “I know I do.”
Dal nodded his agreement and added, “How is the captive?”

“A little beat up, but she’s fine.” Lincoln paused awkwardly and added, “We’ll need Octavia’s pack to get her some clothes.” Both Cade and Dal grimaced and nodded solemnly. Cade gestured to Heston and he nodded, leaving to retrieve the packs from where Lincoln and Octavia had dropped them near the trail.

Lincoln continued, “Her name is Fer. She was the one who told us about the creatures before we went into the tunnel; she remembers us. She and Octavia have already bonded over Octavia’s boots.” Lincoln finished, with a wry smile on his face, and Dal couldn’t help but laugh.

“I can’t believe the guy actually cured the leather for her.” He shook his head, remembering the way the tanner from York had refused at first and then insisted it would take far too long as an excuse to get out of handling the stinking hide. Octavia had persisted, and the man had agreed to do his best. The hide from the radioactive cat had actually proven easier to cure than other skins; the leather had been ready in only a few days and the stink was gone, and Octavia had immediately taken it to be made into boots.

The result had been better than even Octavia had hoped for. Radioactive cat boots proved to be a high fashion item indeed, and Octavia wore them constantly. They were black, and yet shone with a unique sort of iridescent blue reflection, similar to fish scales. The leather was soft and supple, and yet strong enough for the shoemaker to stitch the pieces together into a fine boot without any trouble. Even Clarke had wanted a pair, but wasn’t willing to go back to look for a dead cat, and she certainly wasn’t going back to the tunnel for a live one.

Cade left Heston and Namia guarding the crest of the hill. They were to brief Kita when she caught up. They followed Lincoln to the clearing, and when they arrived, Octavia and Fer were bent over a crudely drawn map, trying to decide the most likely places for a camp.

Fer was quite familiar with the surroundings, and the rest had travelled this road on the original trip to York, so they had some idea of the trail ahead. Fer did most of the talking.

“This trail is the main road from York to the northern villages, and then into Ice Kingdom territory; if they were looking for a place to rob travellers this would be ideal.” She pointed to a spot not that far past the beach where Kita had planned to camp this evening.

“The trail takes a sharp bend to the southwest at the end of the lake, and backtracks a little, avoiding the mouth of this small river. For about one mile it follows the river until it’s narrow enough to cross easily. At the footbridge the trail turns north again. It’s along the riverbed that they’d have the most success trapping travellers. Alongside the river, past the footbridge just a quarter mile, there is a large field where a camp could easily be made.”

Fer stood and nodded, more to herself than anyone. “That’s where they’ll be.” She frowned and then suddenly looked up at Octavia, “I’m coming with you.”

“It’s not your fight, you don’t have to.” Octavia spoke without thinking.

“Not my fight? I’m sorry? Was it you they captured and trussed up like an animal? Did you endure their unwanted hands on your body, and the stink of their breath as they...?” Fer’s face contorted in pain and she looked away. “It is my fight, Octavia.”

Octavia had taken her pack from Lincoln and pulled out a clean shirt and pants. She motioned for the men to leave them, and they slipped quietly back into the trees without a word.
“You’re right.” Octavia reached out to her new friend, and lifted her chin gently so she could meet her eyes. “Now come here, and let me clean the rest of your wounds before you get dressed.”

Octavia slowly and gently cleaned all of Fer’s wounds. She applied Lincoln’s salve, and she wrapped them gently. While she did this, she hummed a song her mother used to sing to her, and when she was done she handed Fer the clean clothes.

While Fer dressed, Octavia tried to lighten the charged and intimate mood by asking, “What’s a mocking bird?”

Fer looked confused, “A what?”

“A mocking bird. That song I was humming, my mother used to sing it to me. Something about mama’s going to buy you a mocking bird.” Octavia looked over at her with a grin, and shrugged her shoulders.

Fer began to laugh and she shook her head, “Octavia of the Skai. I like you.” Both women laughed, and when Fer was dressed they called out to Lincoln. The three men returned to look over the map with them.

Amina led the group on a lovely jaunt. They galloped along the trial for several minutes with the wind in their faces, the children forgot their cares and their laughter rang through the trees. They tried to catch the Woman in Black but she just drew them in only to sprint ahead again. Amina was an accomplished rider and had even received an invitation from Ro to join her army for a while as a part of Abby’s new cultural exchange idea.

Kita had caught up easily after her silent musings and was enjoying the ride and the children’s excitement. She led her horse into the trees next to the trail and maneuvered her way through them at top speed like the deadly guard of the Ice Nation that she was. Even Amina was startled when Kita suddenly popped out onto the trail just ahead of her.

Kita taunted her lover, “What’s wrong Woman in Black? The Ice Nation catch you by surprise.” She let out a laugh as she heard the children cheering for her and she glanced back to see Amina’s far too kissable lips stretched in a smile as they galloped down the trail together.

Kita and Amina slowed their speed and allowed the children to catch up, both knowing they had to keep a certain distance behind Cade and Dal for safety. They rode along at the head of their little group contented and Kita let her hand drift slowly over to brush against Amina’s thigh.

Their carefree afternoon was soon interrupted by Kita’s disturbingly accurate sixth sense. She tilted her head into the breeze and was hit by a sudden and overpowering sense of foreboding. Loren had always told her to trust her instincts and they had saved her and Clarke more than once since they left Otta.

Amina felt Kita tense beside her and then her hand flew from her reins and silently commanded the children to stop. She lowered herself in the saddle and leaned towards Amina whose hand was already on her weapon. “Take them into the tree line, keep them secure and wait for me.”

Amina obeyed without question and dropped back, leading the children off the trail. Kita slipped into the trees again and rode forward on her own. She stayed close enough to the trail to watch the tracks and quickly came across signs of Dal and Cade stopping. She saw how someone from the group had entered the trees and then moved forward again.
Kita tracked the group’s movement and came across the two dead men. She could see Naima and Heston on the trail waiting for her. She presumed the rest had moved forward and she was about to step onto the trail and greet the Lake warriors when she heard a rustling sound to her right. In one smooth movement her hand brushed her leg bringing with it an ice blue dagger, she turned her body and the dagger was drawn back ready to throw. Her eyes found her target and at the last second her fingers tightened and she held onto the deadly thing.

“Francois!? Mon dieu! I almost killed you! What are you doing here?” Kita’s voice alerted the Lake warriors to her presence and she soon had Naima by her side.

The blonde haired teenager blushed and shrugged, “I wanted to help.” He looked embarrassed so Kita let it go despite her heart threatening to pound out of her ribcage. She nodded and let out a breath.

Naima quietly let her know things were secure and Kita walked over to the boy. “Your stealth training is going well... I didn’t hear you until you came through this underbrush.” She pointed the offending plants out to him and he studiously took note.

Kita sighed, “Francois, next time let me know you are behind me. I could have easily killed you.” He blushed and nodded to her. “Go bring the rest forward. The area is secure.” Kita reached out and grabbed the boy’s shoulder just as he turned to go. He looked at her questioningly and she laid a finger against her lips. He looked around them and listened hard.

“Amina is coming, probably to find you. Where is she?” Kita had decided to use the trip as a chance to add to the children’s training whenever the chance arose and this was certainly a good chance.

Francois looked around slowly and took the stick Kita held out to him. He focused on the forest around him and when he thought he knew where she was he slipped into the trees. Kita waited and listened. Naima joined her. The best tracker in the Lake Army tilted her head and listened, “The boy is going the wrong way,” she grinned at Kita, who agreed.

A few seconds later they heard Francois’ voice, “Ouch!” and then a grumbled, “I’m sorry,” as Amina walked towards them dragging him by the ear.

Amina shot an apologetic look to Kita and shook her head, “Genevieve distracted me so he could get away.” She frowned back at the boy and added, “Those two will be the death of me.”

Kita allowed herself a small smile at Amina, “They have become quite the pair, indeed. Let him go, the area has been secured. He can go back and lead the rest forward.” Amina released her hold on him and as he turned to go. Kita added, “And he and Genevieve will be on clean up duty for the next three nights.” Francois sighed heavily but nodded his understanding as he went, rubbing his ear.

Naima led them back to the trail and Kita looked over the bodies. “Yor’s men,” she said, looking at Amina.

“What do we know?” Amina asked the Lake Warrior. “There are likely to be more of them nearby,” she added as she looked at the dead men with hatred.

“Octavia and Lincoln were attacked by these two bastards.” Naima didn’t even try to hide her distaste. “They have a few small injuries but are both fine. There was a captive as well, she’s alive but had some pretty bad cuts and bruises, Dal and the Steward are with them. I’ll take you.”

Naima whistled softly to Heston who answered with his own and then the young woman led Kita and Amina into the forest toward the clearing. When they arrived Kita’s eyes swept over the injured.
Octavia was favouring her left leg slightly and Lincoln’s right shoulder was bandaged. The woman from Bad Town was in pain but trying not to show it. Kita let out a breath, happy that none of them were in a more serious condition.

Kita walked over to Fer and held out her hand, “I am Kita of the Ice Nation. Guard to Heda Lexa and the Skai Princess.” She used the words Fer’s people had called Clarke as a show of respect.

Fer reached out and grasped Kita’s forearm in greeting. “I am Fer of Bad Town.” She watched as Kita’s eyes took everything in and landed on the map. “I think I know where to find their camp,” she offered and Kita motioned for her to continue.

They hashed out a plan right there, hunkered over the crude drawing in the earth where Fer had earlier been bound and helpless. Fer explained why she thought they would be in the field near the river and Kita and Octavia made a plan of attack. Kita was pleasantly surprised when Naima added her thoughts and made their good ideas into better ones.

Lincoln pointed out a few areas that could be dangerous on the approach and Cade and Dal came up with some plan B scenarios. Amina rounded it all out with a plan to keep the children safe and able to press forward towards the Ice Nation if things went wrong.

It was getting on midafternoon and the assumed location of the camp was just over a three hour ride. The beach they had planned to camp at wasn’t even two hours out. Kita weighed the options and decided it was safe enough if they doubled the patrols. They all agreed it would be better to travel together for the rest of the day and they set out toward the trail.

When they arrived at the trail they found the children digging shallow graves. When Kita asked Sheena what they were doing she reported that the children intended to bury the men just enough that any others passing by wouldn’t see them. They didn’t want to alert any more of Yor’s men that they were here.

Kita took a breath and walked over to them. “Mes enfants, this is a good idea.” The children looked at her with surprise and fear in their eyes. They had hoped and expected a scolding and reassurance that it didn’t matter who saw the bodies. “Hiding the bodies is smart.” Kita added and wondered why they all looked so terrified.

“We don’t want them to take us again.” Helene admitted softly. She was a tiny little girl with big blue eyes and a mass of curly, dirty blonde hair on her head. “They did things to us, they hurt us, please don’t let them take us again.” Tears began to form in the big blue eyes and Kita watched this tiny child try and fight to keep them from falling.

Her stomach tied itself in knots and her heart was pounding in sorrow and anger. She wanted to reassure the child but she couldn’t get the words out as tears began to form in her own eyes. She wasn’t prepared for the rush of emotions, and she found herself unable to speak or move. Amina stepped forward easily and ran a thumb over Helene’s little face catching the single tear that had escaped.

Kita stood frozen by the overwhelming emotions while Amina bent down and began to help them dig. “You are right, we don’t want them to know we are here,” she agreed and when the fearful eyes all landed on her she continued, “because we want to have the advantage of surprise when we attack their camp and punish all of them.”

Kita still couldn’t find words but her body loosened as Amina’s voice soothed even her. She walked
over to one of the bodies and Sheena grabbed the legs while she took the shoulders. The two women carried the first body over and threw it unceremoniously into the shallow grave. Amina spit on him and the children looked on shocked at the lack of fear and complete disrespect that the women showed for these dangerous men.

Then Amina continued, “But... we are not burying them because we are afraid. They will never touch any of you again, I promise you that.” She stood and watched as Kita and Sheena filled in the grave quickly and Octavia and Fer grabbed the second body. They flung it into a similar hole and the children helped push the dirt back over to cover the man.

Lincoln and Naima brought over some branches and a few weeds to cover the graves. Kita watched still unable to find her voice and was grateful when Lincoln took the chance to teach the kids and break the heavy mood.

“This weed is called Nightrot. It’s called that because it smells terrible.” Lincoln crushed a few leaves and held it out to the girls who jumped back gagging in disgust. “It will cover the smell of the bodies and keep animals away.” He grinned at the girls as they held their noses and complained about the smell.

When they were finished and Cade and Dal had everyone ready to mount up, Kita called to the children and gathered them around her. “Mes enfants, I know you have suffered greatly at the hands of men like the fools we just buried, but you don’t have to be afraid anymore. We will protect you until we get to Otta. Once we get there Reine Skadi will protect you until you grow strong enough to protect yourselves. I am Kita of the Royal Ice Guard, Protector of Heda and I promise you that none of those men will ever touch any of you again.” They crowded in and hugged her and she took time to kiss and hug each of them.

With that they all mounted and began riding towards the evening campsite. They stayed close together, Octavia, Lincoln, Fer, and Naima rode through the trees on either side looking for any signs of the enemy. Kita slipped in and out of the trees around them, her vigilance and stealth ensuring a safe path. Cade and Dal rode directly in front of the children, Francois inserting himself between the two. He had been shadowing the two men and Lincoln since they left York.

The girls rode behind them, Genevieve and Danielle at the head of the pack. Some of the younger ones rode double with the older girls and they were surrounded by the Women in Black and the Lake warriors on all sides. They were better protected than any treasure that had ever crossed over any trail on Heda’s lands.

When they arrived at the campsite and dismounted Kita looked around with regret. She had intended this to be a fun and relaxing evening for the children to enjoy the lake and the summer sun. She was sorry that they would have to double the patrols and be on high alert with the suspected camp not that far away.

Genevieve and Danielle had run for the water as soon as they had dismounted. They plunged into the lake laughing and the younger girls ran after them. Kita smiled in their direction and decided to let them have some fun while she made sure their home for the next twelve hours was secure.

Francois joined the girls at the water’s edge but instead of plunging in the lake he scolded Genevieve. “Be quiet! What if Yor’s men hear you? They aren’t that far away!” As he said it Helene and two other younger ones began to cry and Danielle stormed out to challenge him.

“You made her cry! We aren’t being that loud, let them have some fun!” She was taller and stared
him down as he looked back towards where Lincoln was starting to set up tents.

“We should be helping patrol, not playing like children.” Francois insisted and Danielle rolled her eyes.

“We don’t get to be children anymore, not after York. So shut up and let us have some fun.” When Francois huffed in annoyance and turned to leave she grabbed him and yanked him backwards into the lake. His cries of protest were drowned out by the chant of his name and the giggles coming from the rest of the girls.

Once he was knee deep in water she pulled him down with her and the two of them ended up on their asses in the lake. As soon as they landed the girls started splashing and covering the both of them in water. Francois sat on his ass with his mouth wide open as the spray of water from the giggling girls covered him. He tried to be irritated but he too was soon laughing and splashing back. Danielle got up and retreated further into the lake, a smirk firmly in place.

Kita had been working quickly since they dismounted. She already had four tents erected, and as she stepped out of the fourth, her hair caught on the side of the tent, some strands pulling free from their already disheveled braids. She paused in her work and reached around to undo the braids so she could quickly put her hair up in a more firm ponytail. As she was pulling her hair high onto her head she glanced back at the lake, she couldn’t help but stop what she was doing and watch with a smile.

Lincoln turned from the tent he had just erected, he saw Kita’s dark eyes trained on the children. Observing the smile on her face from watching them play, he decided the summer sun was just too hot. He looked over at Octavia and grinned a playful grin. It was so unlike him that Octavia tilted her head to the side and looked at him with a confused but adoring look. She had watched him with the children the past few days and she felt a strange warmth in her gut every time. She wondered if they would ever have kids and found that she didn’t hate the idea.

Lincoln winked at her and nodded his head slightly toward Kita. She finally got why he was grinning and returned his smile, nodding eagerly. The two of them walked toward Kita trying to look nonchalant.

Amina was just coming out of the tree line after her initial perimeter search. As she walked down onto the beach her eyes were drawn to a rare sight. Kita standing in the sun with a carefree smile on her face, her long black hair was pulled free from the braids she almost always wore and her hair was blowing in the summer breeze. The smile was full and unabashed as she watched the children swimming and playing in the lake.

As Francois enacted his revenge and tackled Danielle into the lake Kita threw her head back and laughed. Her long neck graceful and slender, her hair shining like a raven’s feathers and her dark eyes dancing with a spark of joy.

Amina found herself mesmerized. She stared at the beautiful woman laughing at the scene before her. Kita had peeled off her outer layers as soon as she had dismounted and the late afternoon sun was beating down on her arms and shoulders. Her normally tan skin had darkened a lot since she had left Otta and even some since Amina had first seen her. She was covered in a thin sheen of sweat and she looked so good Amina wanted to lick the sweat from her prominent collarbones.

As Amina’s mind started to think about the things she would like to do to Kita she noticed a snickering Octavia and a grinning Lincoln closing in on her lover. She immediately understood their motive and started to move closer to get a better view. This was going to be good.

Lincoln moved first, his Trikru stealth letting him get within a meter before Kita even noticed him.
She turned still with a smile on her face and gave him an odd look. “Lincoln, what are you...?” She was cut off in mid-sentence as Octavia snuck around the other side. When the feisty Blake grabbed her shoulders, Lincoln pounced and grabbed her legs. “Octavia! Put me down! Lincoln... I’m serious...” They began walking toward the lake and Kita began to struggle.

“You will regret this...” She growled barely audible over the cheers coming from the delighted youngsters, as the couple walked into the lake. When they got knee deep they tossed her toward where the children were clapping and laughing. She landed sprawling and ungraceful into the cool water.

As she resurfaced Lincoln and Octavia were leaning on each other laughing at her. She narrowed her eyes but as she jumped up to enact her revenge Danielle and Francois tackled her from behind. She fell back down into the water and took a moment to revel in the coolness of it on her overheated skin.

She began to laugh but when she emerged from the water she grabbed the two children and swiftly dunked them. “Traitors! Helping the Trikru instead of the Ice Nation! How dare you!” She laughed as she played with them and when she turned she saw a wonderful sight. Amina, her beautiful lover had recruited Sheena into the game and the two were now stalking the Trikru warriors who had landed her in the lake.

Amina was just two steps behind Lincoln when Sheena dove for Octavia. As Lincoln turned to help, she jumped him from behind. A quick shot to the back of his knee and then all her body weight thrown onto him had Lincoln tumbling into the water. Octavia, however sidestepped Sheena and sent the Woman in Black sprawling face first. Everyone but Blake was now soaked and she eyed them critically. “I am Octavia Kom Trikru, trained by Indra. You cannot take me down.”

Helene, the littlest of the Ice warriors came forward and smiled a bright, blue eyed smile at Octavia. “Tavia... come swim with me.” She pouted slightly and then smiled once more holding out her hands which Octavia reluctantly took. Lincoln grinned as he watched her crumble.

“You cannot beat this fearless Ice Warrior, Gona. Admit your defeat.” Lincoln walked over and hoisted Helene onto his shoulders. They pulled Octavia further into the water where the rest of the kids began splashing her, and then ran away laughing and calling for Octavia to follow.

“The Ice Nation wins this battle, but Trikru will be back for revenge!” Octavia cried out and then plunged into the water chasing after the kids and dunking them when she caught them. They played together cooling off from the sun and were soon joined by Fer, the Lake Warriors, Cade and Dal.

Cade and Dal had secured the perimeter and set some booby traps to alert them if anyone approached; so the party felt safe splashing away in the late afternoon sun. As they relaxed together Kita felt her eyes constantly drawn to Amina. She watched as the woman peeled off her wet shirt and returned to shore to lay it out to dry. When she waded back into the water in just her chest binder Kita greedily drank in the sight of her.

Kita found even the shape of her head appealing as she watched Amina scoop up a handful of water and splash it over her face then run her long, slender fingers over her closely cropped hair. Her eyes followed Amina’s fingers as they ran down her own arms and then back into the water for more. Her warm, dark skin was so rich and so smooth that the contrast with the burn scars on her right torso was stark and abrupt. A beautiful valley interrupted by a volcanic fissure.

Kita didn’t feel any unease about the marks, in fact she found the scars appealing, and it spoke to the woman’s strength. Kita knew her to be an excellent fighter, an excellent lover, and as the trip went on and she saw how gentle and kind the warrior could be Kita found herself even more drawn to the
beauty. In fact she was having a hard time not swimming over and running her hands all over the woman regardless of the crowd in the lake with them.

As Kita ogled her, Amina knowingly and very casually swam around and chatted with Fer, and Naima. She threw a look over her shoulder every once in a while to make sure Kita was still watching, she was not once disappointed. As she was about to give up her unaffected facade and go over to Kita, Fer approached her. She knew the woman from Bad Town was nervous around ‘normals’ and so she opened her stance and turned her brown eyes fully to the woman with a soft smile on her lips.

“Fer, how is your side?” She bent and looked closer at the woman’s body where blood had seeped through the bandages here and there.

Fer blushed at the concern shown for her and played it off, “I’m fine, Amina, really.” She looked nervous but the warmth in Amina’s eyes allowed her to take a breath and proceed. “Your body, your scars, I mean.” She gestured to Amina’s side. “Do people treat you differently because of them?”

Amina regarded the young woman carefully. She knew her experience did not compare to the horrible treatment Fer and her people had endured from birth, but she wanted to find some kind of connection with the woman too. In the end she decided to just be truthful, “I was in the Leadership School when it was razed to the ground by Yor all those years ago. I wear these scars with pride. The scars are respected by most in York, they mark us as rebels, as ones who fought against Yor.”

Fer’s gaze dropped but Amina’s gentle fingers reached under her chin and urged her to look up once more. “But I have met people who looked at me with revulsion when they saw the scars, had lovers who were careful to only touch my unburnt skin out of pity, or fear.”

Fer nodded her understanding and Amina knew it went deep. She reached out gently with both hands and touched Fer’s face on both sides. The woman trembled at her touch but remained still. Amina leaned in and placed a soft kiss on Fer’s wrinkled and sagging cheek. A single tear trickled down Fer’s good cheek and she tried furiously to blink it away.

“Fer, you are among friends.” Amina smiled at her again and was pleasantly surprised as she was suddenly joined by Kita. As the lithe and deadly woman moved into place beside her, she felt curious as to how Kita would respond to Fer; she knew nothing of the Ice Nation’s treatment of people like Fer. She also felt aroused, merely by Kita’s hand on the small of her back.

“Fer of Bad Town, I would like you to come with us. Help us protect the young ones all the way to the Ice Nation and then come with me to Ton DC where you will meet Heda and the Skai Princess and remind them of their promise.” Kita reached out and grabbed Fer’s forearm, and after a brief hesitation Fer returned the gesture.

“As I was leaving Bad Town for my hunt the seer was waiting just on the edge of town. I spend a lot of time with her, treat her like a younger sister. Even some of our own are a little scared of her so she doesn't have many friends. I had planned to be gone overnight, so I didn’t think it odd when she looked after me forlornly and told me she would miss me. She is just a little girl after all, and she often complains when I leave town for more than a few hours.”

Fer paused and looked contemplative, “There was something in her eyes. She knew I wasn’t coming home for a long time. Her lip trembled as she said goodbye.... and she begged me to be careful.” Fer sighed, paused in thought for a few seconds, took a deep breath, and then looked Kita in the eye, “Sha, Kita of the Ice Nation, I will go with you.”

Octavia was pleased, she liked Fer. To show her appreciation of having her friend along on the
journey she tackled both of them into the water and laughed like a maniac.

Kita was impatient, she was finishing a sweep of the perimeter and ensuring those on guard duty were alert and ready for the night. When she swung back through the camp she saw Octavia putting more salve on Fer’s broken skin. She wanted to rush to her own tent but stopped, she had questions.

“Are you able to fight, Fer? Speak true.” Her voice was soft and gentle, no accusation or demand.

“Sha Kita. I can fight. My new friend from the Skai has taken good care of me.” She smiled down at the Trikru warrior and Kita looked accusingly at Octavia who smiled back at Fer. Since Octavia had nearly bitten her head off for a similar Skai reference when they had first met, Kita wondered why she accepted it from Fer without correcting her. Octavia shrugged and grinned understanding Kita’s unspoken question.

“The people of Bad Town say Skai Kru with reverence and hope. The rest of you Grounders mostly say it like you think it’s a swear word or an insult. I am Trikru, I earned that. I’m also okay with being Skai Kru when we’re the only ones who have never persecuted Fer’s people for being born. The irony is that Skai Kru persecuted me for being born. Octavia grinned and shrugged again before rolling her eyes and shooing Kita away.

“Go already will you, Amina is probably naked, horny, and waiting for you. Thanks for putting your tent further away tonight, by the way.” Octavia smirked and Fer chuckled softly while Kita suddenly looked eager to move on.

“Very well, Octavia, I will take my leave.” Kita nodded at both women and left them by the fire. She turned toward her tent and as she strode toward it she couldn’t stop the smile that spread across her lips.

Octavia finished Fer’s bandages and Fer went into the tent to get some rest before her shift on patrol. Octavia set out to find Lincoln. He had gone to check on the children when Octavia began treating Fer’s wounds. Octavia found him sitting near a fire with Francois.

The boy had been following Lincoln, Dal, and Cade around since they left York. Octavia understood, he was trying to see what good men do, how the best of men stand up and do what’s right. He had been taken from his family and put through hell. He’d seen what terrible men do and how some other men cower in fear and let the bad men do bad things without raising their voices or their hands to stop it. He wanted to be neither a bad man, nor a coward. He wanted to be a hero like Lincoln.

Octavia stood quietly and watched as Lincoln talked in a low, soothing voice. He was explaining to Francois how he had skinned and prepared the rabbits he had caught earlier for dinner. The boy was staring at Lincoln taking in every word. Octavia let them talk a while longer and then she quietly moved closer. “Remember that, Francois. A man needs food to fight, and to keep his woman happy.” She grinned and grabbed a piece of jerky Lincoln had been smoking over the fire.

Lincoln laughed, “I have never met anyone with an appetite like Octavia,” he told Francois.

“Hey, I grew up in space sharing Bellamy’s food allocation and then eating space prison food. I can’t help it if I have 18 years to make up for.” She chewed happily on the jerky as the two men laughed at her.

“Octavia Kom Trikru,” Francois addressed her very formally, “My grandmother makes the most
wonderful breads. I know my family would love for you to come to our home and try her cooking.” The boy’s face was glowing with a happy smile but then he caught himself and his face grew dark, “If they live... I mean.”

Lincoln stood and rested his hand on Francois’ head, ruffling his hair. “There is no reason to think they don’t young one; have hope. Come on, I want to patrol once more before bed. I need a partner, but I know Octavia has to help Fer. Will you come with me?”

The boy’s face brightened once more and he eagerly nodded. “Of course Lincoln.” He sheathed his sword and checked that the precious ice blue dagger Kita had given him was in the thigh holster and then nodded that he was ready.

Octavia gave Lincoln a kiss on the cheek before whispering in his ear, “You know I finished with Fer’s wounds. You love helping that kid.” She grinned at him and added, “You’re such a softie.”

He smiled at her and turned to go but she grabbed his arm and before she could stop herself words burst from her mouth, “Let’s have one. A kid I mean.... when we get back to Ton DC we could try...”

The look on Lincoln’s face stopped her and her eyes grew wide. He looked stunned, like he’d been shot or just seen a ghost. He continued staring and she opened her mouth to speak again and tell him they didn’t have to. His hand shot out to place a finger gently on her lips shushing her. Then slowly a smile spread across his face and tears welled up in his eyes. “Yes.” Was all he could manage then he pulled her into a hug.

As Kita approached the tent she was sharing with Amina she heard a very particular sound. That sound had a very particular effect on her. She felt herself grow wet with anticipation because she was certain the heavy breathing she was hearing meant that Amina had gotten tired of waiting and was giving herself pleasure.

She slipped quickly and silently into the tent catching the beautiful Woman in Black by surprise. Amina was naked, the summer nights more than warm enough to allow her to lounge on top of her furs and not be concerned with a chill. Besides, she was plenty warm with her hand between her thighs stroking her own clit waiting impatiently for Kita to join her.

Kita stood and stared for a few seconds watching Amina’s long, firm fingers searching her own wetness until Amina’s moan snapped her out of her reverie. “What took you so long?” Her breathy words urged Kita to be quick as she shed her clothes.

“I hoped to find you like this, wet, and needy.” Kita teased. “I knew you’d get started without me.” She moved forward and began to lower herself onto her lover.

“I’m very started, now please make me finish.” Amina arched her back into Kita’s touch as she felt supple skin on hers. Kita’s lips claimed Amina’s and the scorching kiss seemed to raise the temperature in the tent at least ten degrees. Kita’s hand slid easily into the wetness Amina’s hand had been diving into just seconds before.

Amina didn’t want to make a lot of noise, but she knew her body and she felt a deep, loud moan starting in her belly. Kita’s fingers were just too talented and she was already quite far gone. To stop herself from screaming Kita’s name she did what she had to do. She bit down into Kita’s shoulder to muffle the sounds.
She felt Kita tense and her fingers faltered for just a second before finding their rhythm again. She knew it had to have hurt her lover when she bit down but she didn’t think Kita minded. A delicious breathy moan had escaped Kita’s mouth as Amina had bitten her and now Kita was rubbing her own soaking wet centre against her thigh.

“Amina, you’re so wet. You want to scream my name, yes?” Kita’s voice sounded high and her breathing was hard. She rocked her hips, pressing her clit into Amina’s thigh in time with her fingers diving into Amina’s warm, wet cunt.

Amina felt herself sliding easily toward orgasm and her lip trembled as she grabbed Kita’s head and pulled her close. She sighed into her lover’s ear, “I’m so close, Kita... so.. fucking... close.”

Kita was spurred on by Amina’s confession and she kept her movements steady; she pulled back a bit so she could watch Amina’s face. She found that there was nothing more beautiful than the face of woman as she came. She wasn’t disappointed, Amina’s eyes squeezed shut and her face contorted as she approached her climax.

As Amina’s breathing increased, so did Kita’s, she was lost in watching Amina lost in pleasure. Kita murmured words of love to the battle scarred warrior and watched as Amina’s face transformed from the grimace of being so desperately close to the bliss and rapture of falling over the edge.

“Kita! Yes!” Amina’s pussy clenched around Kita’s fingers as she came. Kita watched in awe taking in the nuances of Amina’s expressions. She slowed her movements and eased Amina through her orgasm, eyes fixed on her face the whole time. When Amina’s breathing steadied and a gorgeous smile spread across her face, Kita stilled her movements and slowly pulled out.

“Mmm, baby you are so good at making this old Woman in Black feel so sexy.” Amina purred at Kita and raised her head for a kiss. It was soft and tender, Amina ending it by pulling back and rubbing her nose against Kita’s.

“I was hoping to draw things out for you tonight, but you were already so wet I couldn’t help myself.” Kita admitted lowering her head to suck gently on Amina’s neck.

“I couldn’t wait any longer for you, I did what I had to do.” Amina defended herself with mock indignation.

“Indeed.” Kita agreed, “I am thinking about getting started myself as well if you don’t hurry up and flip me.” She smiled playfully and Amina waggled her eyebrows and declared herself up to the challenge. She soon had Kita on her back under her and was kissing her way down the lithe body of the Ice Guard.

As Amina’s mouth found Kita’s wetness she felt Kita’s hands tighten in her hair. The grip was painful but Amina enjoyed the feeling. She loved the way the stoic Guard fell apart under the softest caress of her tongue, the way Kita’s thighs trembled and slowly tightened around her head. She could have written a sonnet about the feelings evoked in her heart when Kita’s hips thrust themselves forward as she fucked her with her tongue. She savoured the taste of the wetness that spilled from Kita as she flattened her tongue and concentrated on Kita’s throbbing clit. And when Kita came, shaking and panting under her, she was reminded of the old ways and a deity they had called God. In that moment she could have been a believer.

Morning came and they were in place for the attack. Lincoln heard the soft whistle from Dal and sprung forward like an arrow loosed from his deadly bow. He felt the movements around him as the
rest of his team launched themselves forward. His senses were thick with adrenaline, the battle lust taking over. He rushed forward, blood thrumming through his veins, roaring in his ears. The speed of the attack was lightning but it all slowed down for him. He saw Kita, Amina and the other Women in Black rise up from the tall grass in the field where they had found the camp (right where Fer said it would be).

They popped up in one synchronized motion, bows drawn and arrows nocked. He saw his love to his left, all fierceness and steel blades. Fer was next to her, fury burning in her one good eye. To his right came Cade and Dal, faces covered in dark war paint like their now beloved Heda. Cade’s dark hair and pale skin made the war paint stand out, he looked like a demon sprung from hell. The look of hatred etched on his handsome face left no doubt of his intentions. Men like this had hurt his sister and he was going to make them all pay.

Lincoln’s body moved of its own accord, years of training and war had left memories and his body remembered the fight. He kept his love in his sights and executed the plan. It was simple, surprise them, and if they fight back, kill them all. He watched the men who were up preparing breakfast drop whatever they were carrying and scramble for weapons. They shouted and he heard their voices like a muffled roar. He didn’t care for their words only for the battle.

He watched a dagger launched toward Sheena, watched as she dove to the ground to avoid it, then Kita’s arrow piercing the heart of the man who threw it.

Men came running out of the tents in various stages of wakefulness and dress. Two large, bearded men charged Octavia and Fer, swords drawn. Lincoln kept them in his periphery as he met his own challenger head on. He heard grunts of pain and looked to find Octavia neatly hopping over the downed body she had just dealt with. He saw Cade calling for the leader, running through the camp violently accosting all he came across. Dal was sticking close by, knowing his partner’s anger made him less alert and more likely to make a mistake.

He watched Dal cut off a brigand who tried to come at the Lake Steward from behind, and drive his sword through him to the hilt. Dal pushed the body off his sword and continued following his partner. Lincoln turned again to see Kita and Amina fighting off four men. Kita with her longsword and Amina using her knives. The woman had such skill with a short blade it was almost like watching a dance. She moved so elegantly avoiding the men who charged at her, stepping through their wild attempts at cutting her and slicing into them bit by bit until they fell.

Kita was using her ice blue sword and she was taking no prisoners. She too shouted for the leader to come forth and when Octavia and Fer emerged from the large tent in the centre of the camp with their blades held to the throat of a small sleazy looking man, Lincoln actually had to look twice. Was this rodent of a man actually in charge? The man’s voice was reedy and irritating, but when he called out for the battle to stop his men took a step back and lowered their weapons a little. Kita strode over.

“Octavia, what do you have there?” Kita’s voice was full of contempt she did not try to hide.

“A rat.” Octavia answered and punched him. “A filthy, stinky, rat.” She threw him forward and his men shouted in protest and began to raise their swords again.

The man looked up at Kita as she approached and took in the ice blue blade with wide eyes. “Stop. Put down your weapons. We’re all servants of Heda here.” The man was obviously trying to weasel his way out of trouble. “Ice Guard. What business have you attacking my peaceful camp in York territory?” He tried to intimidate her.
“I will report this directly to the Mayor. Your Queen will hear of this! And Trikru,” he looked over at Lincoln and Octavia. “Isn’t it forbidden for you to associate with mutants? Tsk, tsk, Heda will hear of it.”

He looked smugly around at them but faltered when Cade stepped in front of him. The man’s jaw dropped and Cade’s eyes blazed in rage. “Steward... what... why...?” the man stammered, he was confused by the presence of the Steward and he desperately tried to step away from the advancing fury in Cade’s eyes. Octavia held him in place. “What is the meaning of this!??” The man was terrified and his voice rose an octave as Cade bore down on him.

“Donald.” Cade addressed the man by name as he pressed in close enough so Donald could feel his breath on his face. “You lead this band of outlaws? You send them to steal women and lord knows what else? You dare harass travellers on Heda’s roads?”

“No, no, I swear there must be a misunderstanding. We have done none of these things.” Donald looked frantically around him, “Tell them!” He ordered.

His men immediately began to protest their innocence. And it was Cade’s booming voice that silenced them all. “Enough!” He roared. “Did you not send forth two men who kidnapped and assaulted this woman?” He pointed to Fer.

Donald’s eyes roved over Fer’s body but stopped on her face. He scoffed. “That is not one of Heda’s people. Ones like her are nothing, why should we not be allowed to do as we please with the mutants?” He laughed a high nasally sound that was cut short by a swift, hard backhand from the seething man in front of him.

Fer stormed forward, her hand itched to cut the man’s lying tongue from his mouth, “My people are Heda’s people. The Skai Heda has claimed an allegiance and she has given us her protection.”

“We did not know!” Donald tried to reason with the angry woman. “If my men hurt you they surely had no knowledge of your status with the Skai Heda.” He was trying to use diplomacy to get himself out of the trouble he knew he was in. The men he had with him were no match for the team that confronted him, and he knew it.

He glanced nervously around and prayed no one found the pit near the stream. Trish picked up on his preoccupation and moved quietly in that direction. Donald continued to plead his case. “Steward, we are friends, you know me.” That was the wrong argument to present, Dal moved forward practically foaming at the mouth.

“Yes, Donald, we know you. The first time we visited York at Yor’s invite you tried to have me arrested for homosexual acts.” Dal looked like he wanted to tear the man’s limbs off and Cade added to the charges.

“Yor needed me for his plan so he protected Dal that time, but I remember well what you did for Yor. You ordered the kidnapping of young men and women from all across York and beyond, children! You personally took Yor to see the newest ones so he could hand pick his attendants. Your household, if I remember correctly, had the largest number of ‘servants’ only after Yor himself. YOU ARE A MONSTER!” Cade was shouting now and his hand had risen on its own, his blade now at the throat of the terrified man.

“Hod up!” Trish called out. “Kita, Steward, you need to see this.” Trish had found a poorly camouflaged pit and uncovered it. She was backing away from it now a terrible grimace on her lovely face.
As soon as Cade and Kita redirected their attention, Donald shouted, “Attack!” and his men sprung forward swinging desperately. Octavia held him tight and Fer fought off an oncoming attacker. Lincoln sprung forward and his sword was soon running red with blood. He hacked a fatal gash across the chest of one man and spun around avoiding the sword of another. His fist swung out connecting with the jaw of the second attacker and before the man could recover to come at him again one of Sheena’s arrows was sticking out of his back.

The rest of Donald’s men were cut down quite quickly and soon he was the only one left alive. Cade pushed him towards the pit Trish had discovered. Before they stood over the hole Lincoln recognized the smell for what it was. There was a hint of the Nightrot plant but not nearly enough to disguise the smell of decomposing bodies. As he glanced down into the pit his olfactory senses were proven right.

There were several bodies in the pit, they looked to be travellers Donald and his men had attacked as they had passed by on the trail. Kita and Cade glared at Donald. “I am the Steward of the Lake People, Servant of Heda and I sentence you to death for your crimes. Do you have anything to say?” Cade’s voice was now calm, tight, a simmering anger held in check.

Donald looked around him and saw his fate was sealed. Instead of begging for his life he sneered at Cade. “Your Heda is weak. You will see, there are more challengers to her power than the 13 clans. Yor had a reach you do not yet comprehend and when you finally see the truth it will be too late.” He cackled and Cade felt something inside snap. He brought his blade up and slit the man’s throat in one smooth motion.

He stood there sprayed in blood his chest heaving and a look of pure hatred on his face. He watched Donald splutter and die as his blood stained the ground. When it was done Dal stepped forward and took his lovers hand gently. “Cade, come. You did well. His sentence was well deserved. Come, let me wash that evil blood from you in the stream.” Cade let himself be led away and Lincoln quickly moved to organize another sweep of the perimeter.

Kita and the Women in Back turned to the task of searching the camp. They went through all of the tents and found a lot of valuables and items that had more than likely belonged to the travellers who had ended up in Donald’s pit. They were organizing the items when Lincoln returned with Naima, the rest of the Lake warriors, and the children.

It had made the most sense to leave the Lake warriors in charge of the children since they had travelled the road to Otta before and could have gotten the children there if something had gone wrong with the attack. When they filed nervously into the camp, Kita approached them. “Mes enfants,” her voice was quiet. “It is done. Yor’s men are dead.” She walked them around the camp toward the pit. “It is not a good thing to see but your young eyes have already known terrible things. We are going to release the spirits of the ones these men killed.

She led them to the pit that Amina had already prepared for a fire. “There is no way for us to wrap them all like they deserve but we will honour them and let fire cleanse them.” They all gathered around the hole and Amina handed Kita a makeshift torch. Kita sighed and looked down at the poor souls and solemnly said, “Yu gonplei ste odon.” She dropped the torch and the flame took. They all backed away with heavy hearts.

Amina had moved Donald’s body over to the pile of the bodies of his men, that Sheena and Trish had been working on. When they all stepped away from the funeral pyre they found Francois standing over Donald’s body. The fair skinned boy had darkened in the summer sun but he now looked as white as an Ice Nation winter. He was standing in a defensive position, legs spread, his dagger clutched in his hands, and he was shaking. Kita called out to him but he didn’t answer, the
only thing he could hear was his own heartbeat in his ears.

As Kita approached with a look of concern Danielle stepped forward and placed her hand on Kita’s arm stopping her. “Give him a minute,” she whispered. Danielle had been one of Yor’s attendants and she recognized Donald. She also knew that none of the children in York had it worse than those who were ‘servants’ in Donald’s house.

Danielle took a few tentative steps forward and as she was about to speak to Francois he let out a terrible scream of anger and grief that caused the girl to jump back, startled. Francois saw nothing but the man that was now dead on the ground in front of him. Dead wasn't enough, Francois pounced on him and began to stab him over and over screaming in rage and pain.

Kita raced forward and wrapped her arms around the boy. “Francois,” she tried to stop his arms but he pushed her away and continued to stab the lifeless body. She tried again and this time wrapped her arms tightly around his slender frame and pulled him away. She fell backwards off the corpse, holding the shaking teen in her arms and whispering to him over and over, “It’s ok, he’s dead. It’s ok, I’ve got you.”

She sat like that with him until his trembling subsided and his breathing was steady once again. “Come Francois, let us join Cade at the stream to clean up. The boy was covered in the same blood the Steward had gone to wash clean.

As they got up and turned to go Danielle stepped forward. While Genevieve’s initial acceptance of Francois had gone a long way with the rest of the girls Danielle had kept her distance and the two of them mostly avoided one another. It was obvious the older girl still had contempt for him and wasn’t ready to trust him, or any of the young men who had been training to become archers.

She stepped forward now, toward the body. She looked down and then back up to Francois. “I knew him. He was at Yor’s home a lot.” Her body shivered in revulsion and then she stepped forward and delivered a swift, firm kick as hard as she could. She stepped back from the corpse and turned to Francois again, she swallowed hard and seemed to be searching for words. When none came she just lurched forward and pulled the boy into a tight embrace. He very slowly returned it and Kita stood and watched trying to keep tears from rolling down her face.

Danielle pulled back and looked down at herself. She blinked away tears and forced a grin, “Looks like I will be going to the stream too.” She gestured to the blood that had transferred from Francois’s clothes and the three turned toward the stream. As they started to walk Danielle reached out and took Francois’ hand. She murmured just loud enough for him to hear, “We are the same, I am sorry I did not see it before.” He squeezed her hand and just like that a friendship was cemented that would last both of their lifetimes.

The next few days of the journey were uneventful and Kita learned to relax a little and enjoy her time with the young ones and even more with Amina. The relationship between the two women grew deep and Kita found herself appreciating much more than Amina’s beauty. Her kind and loving way with the children stole little pieces of Kita’s heart.

Kita marvelled at Amina’s ability to understand what she was thinking. They were setting up camp one night and Naima was bent over securing the line of her tent when Kita’s eyes swung her way. Her eyes didn’t linger but they definitely took in that sexy ass and she licked her lips. What no one else would even consider to be anything more than a warrior’s perimeter check Amina saw right through.
“You can invite her to our tent, you know.” Amina’s husky voice was right in her ear and made Kita shudder. “You like that idea, huh?” Her laugh rang out and made Naima look up and over at the two. Kita met her eyes and they smiled at one another. Amina placed a soft kiss on Kita’s cheek, “Or if you prefer, you can spend a night in her tent. You know I do not mind.”

Kita spun around and looked at Amina’s wide smile and laughing eyes. “I love you, Amina.” She spoke without hesitation and shocked the smile right from her lover’s face. A blush grew on Amina’s cheeks and another more tender smile crept across her face.

“I love you too, Kita.” She leaned forward and placed a soft and loving kiss on Kita’s lips. They were about to deepen it when they were interrupted, “Ewww! Kissing is gross!” Helene ran past and giggled as the two women pulled apart, and then ran as Amina chased after her laughing.

Kita turned and watched the Woman in Black chase after the squealing child and catch her just before she reached her tent. Amina scooped her up and repeatedly placed kisses on both her cheeks while Helene laughed and shouted. The child ended up arms wrapped around Amina’s neck begging for a story. Amina obliged and plopped herself down in front of the children’s tents where she was quickly joined by all of the younger children.

Kita stood and watched this with an expression on her face that would have had Clarke planning her wedding. She was so enraptured by the scene she failed to notice Naima walk up behind her. She jumped when Naima spoke her name close enough that she could feel the hot breath on the back of her neck. Naima chuckled, “The fearsome Ice Guard distracted by the sight of a beautiful woman telling stories to children. Who would believe it?”

Kita blushed and Naima appreciated the blooming redness as it was a rare sight indeed. “Naima.” She turned toward the woman as she nodded her greeting and found herself facing the Lake warrior, close enough that if she just leaned forward their lips could touch. Kita swallowed and licked her suddenly dry lips.

“Am I making you nervous, Ice Guard?” Naima’s voice held a challenge and Kita was not one to back down.

“Not nervous, no.” Kita stepped forward correctly assuming Naima would step back when she did. Naima laughed at the sudden playful boldness.

Naima licked her lips, “So you do know how to play, do you and Amina always play together? Just the two of you?”

Images, thoughts, and ideas raced through Kita’s mind. “No.” Kita left it at that and decided to allow the woman to form her own ideas of the word’s meaning.

“When you were staring at my ass were you considering asking me to this tent tonight?” Naima glanced at the tent Kita and Amina shared, “Or joining me in mine?” Her eyes snapped up to join Kita’s and she watched the Ice Guard melt.

Kita smiled and looked down blushing a little more, “You fight and track well, and you are brave.” Naima looked amused at her odd compliments so she hastily added, “You are also very beautiful, Naima. I will be sleeping here, in this tent with Amina every night of this journey. If you decide to join us we would both enjoy your company.”

Kita reached out and ran her hand lightly along Naima’s arm, stopping just above her elbow. She let her fingers linger there for just a second and then stepped back adding, “I believe all three of us have the first watch tonight, convenient that we are on the same schedule.”
Naima smiled, “How lovely,” she turned to go but paused, “It’s my turn to hunt for dinner, Fer and Octavia are joining me.” She looked back over her shoulder at Kita. “We will eat well tonight, build our energy stores.” The implication left Kita’s mind spinning and she couldn’t wipe the grin off her face as she walked over to where Amina was just finishing her story.

The children looked on proudly as Danielle and Francois, now fast friends, recounted the tale of the hunt, the proof of their words was sizzling on a spit over the fire behind them. “The boar burst out of the bushes just like Octavia said it would!” Danielle jumped forward to add to the story and the smaller kids giggled and feigned surprise as they jumped back.

“It was really angry, throwing its head side to side and making this terrible angry squeal as it ran. I could feel the ground shake as it pounded towards me.” Francois took up the story and stood tall, raising an imaginary bow. “I took up my arrow and fired, just like Fer told me to. I got it right in the snout, but it just made it angrier and it came right for me. I fired another one and still it didn’t slow down.”

“I waited until the time was right, like Naima taught me. I waited until it was so focused and so angry at Francois that it saw only him. Then, I ran at it and jumped on its back, my dagger ready. It was so angry it didn’t notice me until it was too late. My dagger found its neck and I brought it down!”

“I swear when it finally hit the ground, Danielle on top of it, it was half a foot from me!” Francois and Danielle turned and gave each other a high-five and the rest of the children cheered them as Lincoln began to carve the beast and hand out the meat.

Kita was watching restlessly, taking in the large boar and the story, it made her nervous. She saw Fer and Octavia watching the children with proud smiles on their faces and she stormed over, “What were you thinking? A boar can be dangerous and unpredictable prey.” She whispered but the fierceness of her words was not lost on the two women.

Octavia maintained her typical Blake attitude, ‘Dangerous... yes. Unpredictable... yes. You forgot delicious though.” She turned to face down the Ice Guard with a grin. “Kita, you asked all of us to teach them when we had the opportunity. Besides, Danielle and Francois are finally getting along; we have a fantastic dinner, they are learning how to hunt, not to mention getting along... what’s your problem?”

“My problem...!? They could have been killed!!” Kita reached out in anger and grabbed Octavia’s upper arms squeezing tightly. Octavia merely raised an eyebrow in response.

“How old were you the first time you killed a boar?” Octavia asked calmly, her voice not betraying the fact that Kita’s grip on her arms was most likely bruising her.

“Far older than those two!” Kita replied honestly but her grip eased as she got Octavia’s point. Fer chuckled, “Not many boars in your part of the Ice Nation, Kita? A bear than? How old were you the first time you killed a bear? Or a wolf?”

Kita sighed and her grip on Octavia went slack, “Far younger than they are now.” Her voice was quiet and pensive, “It’s just... I couldn’t take it if something happened to them...”

Naima had silently walked up behind Kita and her hand found the small of the distressed woman’s back. “Nor could we, Ice Guard. We all feel a great love for these young ones. All three of us were in position with our weapons ready, had something gone wrong we could have taken the animal out before it reached Francois.”
She patted Kita softly twice before moving off as silent as she had come. Kita looked up at Octavia with regret in her eyes, “Why didn’t you tell me?” she questioned.

Fer answered first, “Ice Guard, they have been through hell, it’s true. But you have to stop seeing them as broken victims who need to be protected. They are strong, smart and capable and especially the older ones are at an age where hunting a boar would be a normal skill they would be learning, in your clan, in Bad Town, and in Trikru.” A withering look from Octavia made her grin and add, “Okay, fine, in Trikru Helene would be the one out hunting the boar.” Octavia nodded satisfied the honour of her clan was protected then she turned her gaze to Kita.

“You need to start trusting them to take care of themselves. You have to let them learn and grow and make mistakes. They have to learn to fight, hunt, track, and take care of each other and themselves. You know that, you told us that when we set out on this journey. I believe your exact words were, ‘Do not coddle them, they are future warriors of the Ice Nation.’” Octavia straightened her spine and tried to look as strict as possible as she did her best Kita impersonation.

Kita nodded to Octavia and looked back over at the fire where the children were happily eating. Several of the younger ones were gathered around Amina and Lincoln as they explained the parts of the animal and how to cook it properly. She scanned the happy faces and landed on three sitting towards the back. They were sitting against a large tree trunk arms slung over each other’s shoulders and the remnants of several meat skewers strewn around them. Genevieve was in the middle her arms draped around her two best friends. The looks on Danielle’s and Francois’ faces gave her pause.

Octavia and Fer followed her gaze and Octavia sighed, “That’s not going to be good. They finally became friends and they are both in love with the same girl.” She shook her head and added, “Let’s hope that drama plays out years from now in Otta after we are long gone.”

She slapped Kita on the shoulder and when the Ice Guard looked back at her she smiled a real smile, not a smirk nor a grin, an actual Octavia Blake smile. She grabbed Kita’s forearm and Kita returned her grip. “No hard feelings, Ice Guard. I mean, I know you aren’t even used to having feelings.” She let the moment pass with a wink and playful grin but Kita reached out and placed both hands on Octavia’s cheeks. She held her face softly and rested her forehead against the smaller woman’s. It was an intimate gesture of friendship and Octavia found herself speechless.

“Thank you Octavia Kom Trikru.” Kita spoke her thanks quietly and then stepped back and reached out to Fer. She didn’t use the same gesture but she did pull the woman close to her and grip her forearm tightly. “Thank you Fer, of Bad Town.” She stepped back away from the two women and with one more glance over at the fire and the happy, safe, well fed children, she nodded her head in satisfaction and slipped into the woods for her patrol.

The night was bright, lit by the almost full moon. Kita slipped in and out of the forest like a wraith. There was no movement, no presence in the forest other than their own and she felt a sense of peace fall over her as she wove a path through the trees. She picked up on a hushed conversation ahead of her and silently moved closer.

“She was upset?” It was Amina’s voice that Kita picked out first.

“Yes, worried that they could have been injured by the boar.” Naima sounded distressed, “Does she not trust us... me?” Kita could see them now and watched Naima turn toward Amina.

“She trusts you. Did she not invite you to our bed?” Amina’s smile was soft and reassuring. “She would not have done that, would not have thought twice about you that way if she didn’t trust you.
Amina’s voice was full of mirth. “Yes... she said I was brave and a good tracker...” Naima laughed and Amina joined her. “She added beautiful after, but I got the impression that was not very important to her. Are you sure I’m not just a conquest...?”

Amina smiled, “Indeed, you are not. She doesn’t think about sex that way. Beauty is not what attracts her, she is attracted by strength, and inner beauty more than anything. If she didn’t trust you with the children she would never find you attractive. She is far more emotional than she realizes, she has the stoicism of an Ice Guard but the heart of a teacher, a healer, a lover.” Amina smiled at Naima, “She is truly remarkable.”

“Why do you share her? Why not be joined? It is obvious she feels the same for you.” Naima voiced the question many others wished to ask.

“She is my lover, we have known each other for a short time but truth be told I do love her. Her body is not mine, as her spirit is not. She has desires that she needs to feed and other women to love, just as do I. We find comfort and love in one another but also in other women. What she has with others does not diminish what she has with me, it builds on it, helps it grow stronger.” Amina found herself hoping Naima understood and could accept the relationship enough to join them in their tent later, she found the woman very attractive, as well as intelligent, and kind.

Naima nodded her head slowly trying to understand, “So do you think it is wrong for two people to join for life?”

“Of course not.” Amina was quick to reply, “I believe each person should live as they feel is right for them. Heda and the Skai Heda are a perfect example, the bond they have could not be shared with another. They are the most beautiful example of what being joined truly means. I can only hope Kita and I can represent our type of relationship with half the love and grace Heda and her joined do.” Amina looked at Naima and Kita watched with baited breath as Naima reached out and took Amina’s hand.

“I think I understand, and I hope you are right that Kita is not truly upset about the hunt and will still wish to see me in your tent tonight, because I wish to be there.” Naima smiled and leaned forward placing a soft kiss on Amina’s cheek. The sexual tension in the air was so thick Kita had to force herself to back away from the private moment she had witnessed or she knew she’d never be able to finish her patrol. She thought she heard a soft moan coming from behind her as she forced herself to move away from the scene. She could feel wetness pooling her underwear and her nipples were already achingly hard.

“Tonight just might kill me...” The Ice Guard whispered to herself as she hoisted herself silently into a tree to climb for an aerial view of the camp, “focus on patrolling, Kita. The moon is bright you can see the entire area from this tree, concentrate on your job.” Kita slowed her breathing and used a trick she saw her Heda do when placed in a highly emotional situation where she had to remain calm. She took slow breaths, held them for a count of five and then slowly exhaled. As she calmed herself she studied the forest below. She was pleased that the area remained quiet.

When Cade and Dal came into the forest to relieve her, Kita spotted them immediately. She lowered herself, careful to make just enough noise to alert them of her presence. They were at the foot of her tree when she jumped down to the ground.

“Situation?” Cade asked immediately.
Kita smiled, “The forest is very quiet tonight. It’s almost like she wants us to rest.”
Dal grinned, “Or something else.” Cade punched him lightly as Kita blushed, thankful for the cover of darkness. Dal laughed, “I saw you talking to our Naima earlier. She is a beautiful woman, and I know you and Amina enjoy more than each other’s company. I guessed you might be doing something other than resting this evening.”

Kita opened her mouth, and then closed it not sure what to say. Dal added, “We rearranged the tents, the remains of the boar are being smoked overnight. Your tent was right in the path of the smoke so we moved it.... farther down the clearing, near the tree line.” Kita’s blush deepened but the darkness still allowed her to hide it.

“Thank you, Dal. Amina will be happy to be away from the smoke.” She met his eyes and broke into a laugh at his boyish enthusiasm for her sex life. “And it is possible Naima will be joining us this evening, I extended an invitation.” She rolled her eyes as Dal cheered her and offered the Skai Kru high five. She slapped his hand and joined his merriment for a moment before excusing herself and turning toward the clearing.

Kita shed her clothes as she approached the stream, she wanted to freshen up before returning to the tent. She stepped into the water and shivered slightly at the chill despite the balmy summer night. She walked further into the water until she was waist deep and began to wash the day from her skin. As she reached up and pulled her hair free she heard someone approach, she recognized the footsteps and smiled as she shook her long black hair free and lowered herself into the water to wet it.

Amina shed her clothes and stepped into the water. She had a bar of soap with her and as she moved closer to her lover she began to lather the bar. Kita was now sitting on a large flat rock in the stream leaning back into the water with her hair floating and grinning up at her. Amina handed her lover the soap and used the lather that was in her hands to begin to wash Kita’s hair. She worked slowly and sensually and Kita groaned in pleasure as Amina worked her hands through her long tresses.

Naima stepped out of the trees and stopped on the bank of the stream watching the two women. She slowly began to remove her clothes and felt her heart beginning to beat faster. Her skin erupted in goosebumps as it was exposed to the air. She watched Amina lovingly soap Kita’s hair and rinse it, feeling her entire body respond to the two beautiful women. She stepped carefully into the stream making sure Kita knew she was there but being discreet at the same time.

As she walked out into the deeper water Kita looked at her and held her gaze as she approached. She felt herself getting lightheaded and Amina whispered softly to her, “Breathe.” She sucked in a breath and realized she had stopped the moment she had stepped out of the trees and had the two women in view. She laughed a nervous giggle and Kita’s hand shot out to grab her arm.

“Are you okay?” The question was twofold and Naima understood both meanings. The concern in Kita’s voice touched her, this was not just a lewd tryst for her and she finally felt that it was not that for Kita either. She had always known Amina was gentle and caring and would not seek her out for a sexual encounter void of feelings, but the Ice Guard had been a mystery until now. Now she saw the depth of care and concern in Kita’s eyes and knew her choice was the right one.

“Yes.” Was all she said and as she moved closer Kita kept her hand on her arm, steadying her. She was close enough now that Amina reached out and rubbed her back, and as all three of their bodies touched for the first time, she felt entirely overwhelmed. Kita seemed to sense this and tugged on her hand to get her attention. As she looked at the gloriously naked Ice Guard, she smiled a shy smile when Kita’s other hand held up a bar of soap. She placed it in Naima’s hand and leaned back further into the water while Amina was still rinsing her long hair.

Kita raised an eyebrow in challenge and her face erupted into a goofy grin as Naima snatched the soap away and grinned back at her. She knew that Kita wanted to break the tension and she thought
it would be a nice way to get over the awkwardness that sometimes comes with the first touches of a new lover. She rubbed the soap in her hands and created some lather, then she lowered her hands to Kita’s body.

As her hands made contact with Kita’s well defined abs she took in a sharp breath, to her delight she felt the muscles quiver under her touch and heard a quick intake of breath from Kita as well. Amina had finished washing Kita’s hair and moved onto the same rock Kita was sitting on, she wrapped her arms around her lover’s body.

Kita’s heart was racing, she was experiencing an overload of sensations, Amina grabbed the soap and then her gentle, firm hands were making their way over her shoulders and arms slowly exploring and teasing as they washed her. Naima was exploring her stomach and grazing up her sides leaving a trail of lather. The slipperiness of the soap made the touches so smooth that Kita found herself both revelling the softness and desperate for some friction.

Naima was staring at Kita’s breasts as she worked the soap over her body. They were tight, pert and just large enough for Naima to be left wondering if she could fit the entire breast in her mouth. She stared at the hard, brown nipples and noticed how they sat perfectly in the centre and with the upturn of her breasts they pointed slightly up, searching for the sky.

Amina noticed Naima’s preoccupation and let her hands dance closer and closer to Kita’s fine tits. She ran her hands along the sides and watched Naima lick her lips. When she closed her hands around the breasts and grazed the nipples Kita let out a wanton moan, and Naima matched it with her own. Naima continued her exploration at an accelerated pace, washing Kita’s legs. She kept her eyes firmly on the view of Amina rubbing, twisting, and pulling gently on Kita’s nipples. In spite of her distraction Naima moved deliberately, and with the precision of someone who could throw a dagger and hit a moving target, dead centre, at 20 feet out.

Naima’s hands stroked the soap, collected the lather, and then ran lovingly over every inch of Kita’s skin. She slowed and turned her gaze to Kita’s face as her hands reached the inner thigh. Kita’s mouth fell open and a moan escaped right before her head tilted back and exposed her bare throat to the moonlight. Naima could no longer resist, she leaned forward and let her lips make contact, she started at the base of Kita’s neck and slowly kissed her way up to her chin. Then she bit down and let her tongue swipe softly over the teeth marks she left. Kita tilted her head back upright and the two women stopped and looked deeply into one another’s eyes.

They stayed like that for longer than Amina could take and in desperate anticipation of the inevitable kiss she let go of Kita’s breasts and gently pushed their heads together. She was rewarded by a kiss hot enough to make her lose her breath completely. It started with closed mouths and a tremble of emotion that ran through all of the women simultaneously. Kita and Naima pressed into each other’s lips and then, slowly, Kita began to open her mouth. She sucked Naima’s bottom lip into her mouth lightly and ran her tongue across it until Naima relented and opened up allowing them to continue into a more passionate open mouthed kiss.

Kita explored Naima’s lips with her tongue and as she did Naima’s tongue joined hers, they battled for supremacy in the kiss and it was finally claimed by the Lake warrior as she suddenly pressed forward and caught Kita’s lower lip between her teeth. Kita was happy to give herself over to the kiss and Naima took full advantage. She let her hands wander up and tangle in Kita’s long hair. She tugged the tresses to pull Kita’s head back and happily abandoned her lips to attack her neck. She kissed her way down the long, graceful neck that was presented so lovingly in front of her moonlight making her seem to glow. She sucked on Kita’s pulse point then raked her teeth over the sensitive skin.
When she was sure she had left a mark on the beautiful woman she pulled Kita’s head forward again and crushed their mouths back together with a hungry passion that had Amina’s hand wandering up her own chest and squeezing her own nipples. Kita responded with increased passion, her heart was racing and she kissed Naima back fiercely as her hands raked over the woman’s naked back leaving light scratches in their wake.

When Naima broke the kiss it was to reach behind Kita and pull Amina into an equally lustful battle of tongue and teeth. Kita watched the two and was thinking about walking behind Amina and taking her right there in the stream when a slight rustle in the bushes made it’s way to her ears. She realized she wished for them to be out of the stream and into the tent, now. The sentries would be patrolling and this thing between the three of them was too new for her to allow it to be on display like this.

She stood and grabbed the soap where it floated nearby having been forgotten entirely by Naima as they kissed. She let the two gorgeous women kiss one another as she quickly lathered and soaped each of them, letting her hands run over their muscular backs, pert breasts, and tight asses. She pulled them apart and toward the deeper pool in the stream to rinse the soap and then pleaded with both of them, “Tent, now.”

There was no dissent and the three warriors walked proudly out of the stream grabbing the clothes they had carelessly discarded not one of them even attempting to dress. They padded naked toward the new location of the tent and as it came into view not far from them, Kita silently thanked Dal for his thoughtfulness.

At the entrance to the tent Naima stopped, and when both women turned to look at her, she asked, “Are you certain that my inclusion will do no harm to the connection between you?” She paused and looked like she was searching for words before she could continue, “I find your relationship inspiring and beautiful, and I have no wish to harm it.”

Her honesty and careful words were met with soft smiles and soft touches, Kita reached over to grab Amina’s hand and then Naima’s. “I love Amina and I want her to have pleasure and meaningful companionship. I expect you will provide both, for both of us.” She smiled and let Amina take over the explanation, she was far more poetic than the Ice Guard.

“Kita and I are lovers who live without jealousy for each other’s bodies because each of us knows exactly how the other feels. We know the longing to explore women’s bodies, and that one body cannot be enough to satiate that hunger. We know longing for female touch, and that one set of fingers cannot be enough to fulfill those desires. We have come to love each other, but our love does not limit us, it gives us the freedom to love others. We both desire you and we both enjoy your company. You honour us by making love with us tonight.”

Naima was happy to hear that her presence was welcomed by both of them because she was incredibly turned on and didn’t know how she would come back down if they decided she should leave. She was suddenly feeling vulnerable and had one more question that she asked as they ducked into the tent. Kita had wanted to pounce on her as soon as they had privacy but sensed the woman’s need to discuss things a bit further.

“Have you two done this with many women?” She made an awkward gesture pointing her finger at all three of them. “I mean, is bringing another lover into your tent something you enjoy doing often” Her face turned red as she spoke.

Kita smiled and said, “She won’t believe me,” Kita grinned at Amina who laughed softly at her Ice Guard, “you tell her.”

Naima looked curious and allowed Kita to take her hands and pull her forward and down onto the
soft furs. Amina followed them and spoke as she lay down wrapping her body along the curve of
Naima’s spine. “Kita was unfamiliar with making love to a woman not so long ago. After arriving in
York she accidentally walked in on her Hedas making love and that sparked her interest. She had
never spoken to me directly before she asked me to share my bed.”

Naima’s eyes grew wide and she looked incredulously at Kita, “Your first time was in York!? That
hasn’t been long at all! It can’t be true! Are the women in the Ice Nation blind to your beauty?”

Kita smiled at her, “It is true, Amina was my first true lover. I had slept with a young man in my
home village but after sleeping with Amina I consider that insignificant. In York I studied and trained
and became the fiercest warrior I could. Then I joined the Ice Guard and my sister trained me twice
as hard as she trained the others. I had no time to think of such things and after my rather boring
experiences with the boy I had no desire for sex. After Amina allowed me to learn the wonders of
her body I found I was insatiable.” Kita smiled and Amina propped herself up on her elbow, placed a
kiss on Naima’s neck and then allowed Kita to lean in for a soft, sensual kiss.

Naima watched, her throat suddenly dry and her cunt suddenly wet. “So since then you have had
many lovers in such a short time?” Naima was curious, she had heard rumours about Kita and was
under the impression that Kita had bedded all of the Women in Black, and most of the other female
soldiers in York.

“Two.” Kita broke the kiss, “You are about to be the lucky third.” She leaned in and met Naima’s
lips. The shocked expression the Lake Warrior wore soon melted away into passion as Kita’s tongue
probed softly into her mouth. Naima broke the kiss as her breathing sped up, she had more
questions.

“And you, Amina? You took Kita to bed without knowing her, have you taken a lot of women to
bed?” Naima wasn’t sure why, but she needed to know more.

“I have.” Amina answered without shame. “I enjoy a woman in my bed and in my arms. I have
never slept with a man, I have no desire for them, but I have shared pleasure with many women. This
is not my first time sharing my bed with two women at once,” she admitted with a smile as she
placed another kiss on Naima’s neck. “Now why don’t you tell us about you?” She probed Naima,
realizing the woman needed to talk.

“I have had a few lovers, some male, some female. The past few years I was sleeping with one
woman exclusively. It wasn’t love, just sex. It was enough to keep desire at bay so I could focus
exclusively on my training. I found sexual desire distracting and so did she. We used each other’s
bodies to quench our passions so that we could push each other’s minds to train harder.” She sighed
happily as Kita’s hands started to trail up her sides and down her arms.

Kita had had enough talk, “Have you heard enough words, Naima?” she smirked, but her eyes held
a softness that made Naima reach out and stroke her cheek. “If you need to discuss this more we will,
but if your questions are satisfied I would like to turn my attention to making sure your body is
satisfied.” Naima answered by leaning forward and letting her lips find Kita’s. She closed her eyes
and let her desire take over.

Kita and Naima kissed softly at first, and as Amina began to run her hands over Naima’s soft, dark
skin, caressing her back and massaging her shoulders, the pace of the kiss increased. Amina began
kissing the back of Naima’s neck and Kita took advantage of the moan escaping Naima to press
forward and lightly dip her tongue into Naima’s mouth, exploring her lips and probing gently.

Amina moved down the naked body and began rubbing her hands over Naima’s ass, causing the
most wonderful noises to escape the woman, as Kita was biting gently on her lower lip. When
Amina flexed her fingers and purposely dug her nails in, then scraped her way up along Naima’s back, the woman called out to the Lake Gods, and Kita took the opportunity to escalate her pleasure. She quickly maneuvered Naima onto her back and moved to straddle her thigh. She sat upright staring down at the gorgeous woman lying wet and full of desire beneath her.

She let her hands run over Naima’s chest, slowly coming closer and closer to her full breasts. Amina moved too, she cuddled into Naima’s side and began lightly peppering kisses along her exquisitely long neck.

Naima’s thoughts were floating along on a haze of lust. Kita sat, rocking her wetness along Naima’s thigh as she looked hungrily down at her, and circled her hands closer and closer to her breasts. Amina was suckling on her earlobe and running her hands along the ticklish spots between her ribs. Her breath was coming in gasps and when she found her voice all she could manage was a breathy, “please...”

Kita smiled at the request and let her hands finally close in on the waiting breasts. Her fingers were deft and found the peaks quickly, brushing over them and teasing them into an even harder, more aroused state. She pinched lightly and ground her own hips into Naima’s thigh, partially satisfying her own growing lust.

Amina abandoned the earlobe she had been nuzzling and moved to capture Naima’s lips. They kissed with passion and when Kita’s lips suddenly closed around Naima’s left nipple her hips bucked upward and she moaned loudly into Amina’s mouth. Kita began sucking and licking the woman’s breasts moving back and forth, enclosing one taut nipple into her warm mouth and then abandoning it for the other. Amina continued to kiss her and brought her hands to Naima’s breasts that were both left suddenly wanting as Kita’s mouth moved down to trace the lines of her abdominal muscles.

Amina played lightly with the nipples, expertly building Naima’s passion even higher, while Kita made her way agonizingly slowly toward the woman’s throbbing sex. Kita’s tongue licked softly at Naima’s sensitive skin near the juncture of her thighs, and then she kissed lightly on the top of Naima’s mons. Naima’s legs began to tremble as she unknowingly spread them wide for Kita. She was gasping for breath and moaning. Amina wanted to hear her, so she moved her kisses down to Naima’s neck again causing her moans to fill the tent.

As Kita finally dipped her tongue into the trail of wetness and parted Naima’s lips, Amina moved lower still and wrapped her own lips around the erect nipple she found waiting for her. Naima almost came immediately, the sensation of Kita’s tongue stroking through her wetness and Amina’s mouth closing around her nipple was almost too much. She shouted incoherently and then panted Kita’s name over and over followed by imploring words of passion.

Kita settled in between Naima’s legs and pressed her face further into Naima’s dripping pussy. She inhaled the scent and smiled as her tongue found Naima’s entrance and drank in the taste she found there. She pressed her tongue into her and began to fuck her slowly. Naima’s hips canted and she whispered Kita’s name over and over.

Kita let her tongue explore the inner walls of her newest lover and let her eyes roam upwards and enjoy the view of Amina’s delicate lips working over Naima’s nipples. She also had a clear view of Naima’s head thrown back, her arm draped over her own mouth as she tried to keep herself from shouting loudly into the night. The sight spurred Kita to speed things along, she withdrew her tongue and followed the wetness upwards to find Naima’s clit, throbbing and waiting for some attention.

Kita brought her right hand quickly to fill the space left by her tongue and soon she pushed two fingers into Naima as she stroked her hard clit softly with her tongue. This brought a particularly loud moan from Naima and she looked down to see Kita smiling up at her. She nodded her head yes and
began to beg, “Kita, please fuck me just like that. Yes, please. Fuck, yes!”

Kita obliged, and began to softly circle her clitoris with her wet tongue, using her whole mouth to suck and blow, adding pressure and taking it away. While she was doing this, she began to rock her hand in and out, two fingers almost exiting Naima before she pushed them back in and rotated her wrist, applying pressure to the spots she knew would make Naima fall apart.

Naima’s hips began to thrust meeting Kita’s strokes and begging her to go faster and harder. Kita worked her up, bringing her close to release while Amina sucked and bit lightly on her nipples increasing the sensations her body was feeling.

Naima threw her head back and let out a low moaning sound as she approached her orgasm. Her hand found its way into Amina’s hair and she pressed her harder into her breast. Her legs found themselves thrown over Kita’s back and her thighs began to close against Kita’s head, trapping the Ice Guard in their grip. She began to shake and the coil of desire in the pit of her stomach began to let go. Kita’s strong tongue and firm fingers brought her closer and closer to her peak.

“Yes! YES!” She cried out as she began to feel her orgasm wash over her. Kita kept stroking her inner walls with her fingers and her clitoris with her tongue, while Amina kept sucking one nipple and softly rubbing the other with her hand. They carried her through the moaning, shaking pleasure that overtook her until her hands pushed them both away from the now sensitive areas.

As Naima gained strength Amina kissed her way up her chest to suck on her neck. Kita took the opportunity to slide slightly to the side and began kissing a different pair of legs. Amina moaned loudly and Kita began her assault. When Kita ran her hands up the inside of her thighs and found the trail of wetness awaiting her she moaned aloud, “Amina, you are so wet.”

Naima found her strength had returned faster than she imagined possible, and Kita’s words had her dying to feel Amina’s wetness herself. The two women wordlessly worked together to get the Woman in Black onto her back. Naima kissed her as they positioned her just how they wanted and Kita began to lick the wetness from her thighs, coming ever so close to her throbbing centre but leaving her wanting for now.

Naima ran her hands over Amina’s body, paused, and looked for permission at the edge of her scarred torso; Amina gave her a soft smile and nodded. Naima ran her hands over Amina’s body and peppered kisses along her entire torso, smooth skin and scarred alike. She spoke softly as she kissed her, detailing how she loved her salty skin, her scent, her body. Kita watched Naima work as she teased from below and when Naima kissed her way lower the two women paused in their worship and kissed each other passionately.

Amina stared down at the sight barely able to stifle a groan of arousal and frustration, the two were making out, hot and heavy, and they were just a breath away from where she was desperately craving contact. She enjoyed the visual too much to interrupt them and beg for satisfaction so she let her own hand trail down and dip into the wetness. She couldn't stop the moan that came from her lips as she stroked her own clitoris.

Kita and Naima broke the kiss and looked lasciviously up at Amina. Kita reached for the hand and quickly pulled it away from its task. With her deft quickness she had both of Amina’s hands under her control and held up above her head before Amina could even protest the loss of contact. Naima was the one who spoke first, “Amina darling, that is our duty. You would take it away from us? I think that requires punishment, and I believe our Ice Guard agrees.”

Kita answered with a grin and a searing kiss to the now immobile woman. “You are under our control now love, and I don’t think Naima wants you to come just yet.” Amina groaned in protest.
“Please, I’m already so close...” she was cut off by the delicious sensation of Naima placing openmouthed kisses across her hip bone and then biting down hard enough to turn her words into an incoherent moan.

Naima kissed downwards sucking and nipping as she approached Amina’s vagina. She breathed in the heady scent and whispered words of praise. When she finally swiped her tongue across Amina’s swollen lips she moaned just as loud as Amina did. “God, you taste divine Amina! I could eat you for hours...” With that she pressed her face harder into Amina’s center and began to explore slowly.

Amina’s hips began to rock and she began quietly begging for release, but Kita held her hands firm and only added to the sensations by nibbling on her sensitive neck. Naima, it seemed, could not be persuaded to pick up her pace so Amina tried arching her back and pressing harder into the probing tongue.

Naima chuckled and relented a little. She found Amina’s clit and began to focus on the hard bud with long strokes of her tongue. The response was beautiful, a harsh exhale of breath and legs wrapped around her head. She licked with intent and brought Amina quickly to the edge. When she felt like her lover was about to come she backed off, slowed her strokes and ran her tongue down the wet slit to tease Amina’s opening.

Amina let out a groan of loss and frustration, “please, Naima you had me so close... please... fuck.” She was desperate and breathing hard. Kita couldn’t stop herself from silencing her protests with a sexy kiss. As they kissed Naima relented once more and slid her tongue back up to the apex.

Kita and Naima worked her up and held her at the edge, then backed off and left her wanting several more times until Amina’s plea finally worked. “Please, please make me come, I can’t take it anymore, it feels so fucking good. Please....” Her words were a breathy whisper and Naima felt such a rush of lust and love all mixed together she could no longer deny the beauty her orgasm.

She worked her hand into a rhythm, slowly sinking two fingers into Amina’s wetness. She felt a shudder of pure lust run through her body at the sensation of entering that wetness, and the velvet walls gripping her fingers. She set her fingers into a pace that had Amina crying her name into the night and she once again began to lick her clit.

Kita had seen Amina come many times and she knew it was going to be a hard and fast orgasm. She kept Amina’s hands above her head held with one of her own, pressed lusty kisses into Amina’s lips and used her one free hand to add some stimulation by pinching her nipples. Amina’s back arched off the bed and she smashed her lips into Kita’s in a desperate kiss. Kita swallowed the moans that were now flying from her lips.

Naima felt the tension in her lover’s body build and knew exactly how to push Amina over the edge. She found Amina’s g-spot and began to run little circles over the ridge, at the same time her tongue began short strong circles around her clit. Three strokes was all it took for wetness to come flooding from her cunt and cries of ecstasy come flooding from her mouth.

Kita watched in rapture as Naima made her lover fall apart for the first time that night. Amina was so completely sated that she felt boneless as Naima kissed her way up her body and allowed Kita to taste Amina from her tongue. Amina watched as Naima crawled over her and onto Kita who had released her hands and was now being pressed down onto her own back by a hungry looking Naima.

Naima pressed herself into Kita, fit her thigh between Kita’s spread legs and attacked her in a kiss so passionate Amina felt another small orgasm run through her like an aftershock as she watched.
Kita was so wet she had already coated Naima’s thigh as she happily ground her pussy against it. Naima had other ideas and pulled away just long enough to realign their bodies. She lifted Kita’s right leg and placed it on her shoulder, then she slid in and began to rub her own pussy against Kita’s. The wet heat of Naima pressed against her made Kita’s body begin to shake and she felt herself fade into a lust-filled haze. As Naima brought them both to orgasm she barely noticed the lusty look on Amina’s face as she watched the two women fuck and brought herself to climax with them.

The night saw no sleep for the three new lovers. They fucked each other until they heard Octavia loudly announce that she was going to start the breakfast fire. They knew the Trikru warrior had purposely alerted them that playtime was over and they allowed themselves a few minutes of cuddling.

When the voices of the children began to float towards them Naima placed a soft kiss on Kita’s shoulder and then Amina’s cheek. “I promised Helene I would help her make breakfast.” She smiled at her new lovers but then looked shy, “I would like to spend more time in your tent before we reach Otta... discuss it and please let me know...” She began to move away and Amina and Kita both stopped her.

“We want you to spend more time with us.” Kita spoke, feeling certain that Amina agreed.

Amina added, “Once we part ways in Otta it could be a very long time before the three of us are together again. We protect leaders, they may travel to one land or the other, but, to all be together in the same place? ... Two of us might meet and enjoy each other’s company, but all three of us will be rare indeed. I would be happy if you never pitched your own tent once for the rest of the journey.” She smiled and leaned forward pulling Naima into a kiss.

Naima smiled as she pulled away from Amina, she took in Amina’s effortless beauty and then she looked at Kita’s graceful features. She felt her heart flutter, two beautiful, strong women and she was now a part of the connection between them, she could feel it. She knew they would all have other lovers but she also knew they would cherish whatever this was among the three of them.

As Naima left the tent Kita turned to Amina, “You are the most wonderful person... I will miss you when I return to Ton DC.” She leaned in and placed a soft kiss on Amina’s lips.

“Yes, I am certain, Ice Guard? I hear you already have plans to bed the Skai Heda’s friend... the one called Raven.” Amina’s voice was playful and her laughter tickled Kita’s ears.

“How...?” Kita hadn’t spoken of Raven to anyone.

“York keeps no secrets from the Women in Black.” Amina laughed again, “You know I do not mind.” Her smile was soft and warm. “I know you have love for me in your heart, that is all I need from you.” Amina kissed Kita’s cheek and began to rise.

“I have more love for you than I knew I could feel.” Kita rose from the bed as well and pulled Amina into a hug. They dressed and exited the tent only to be greeted by a catcall from Dal who had just finished washing up in the stream. Kita grinned at him and sauntered off to check on the morning patrols.

The rest of the journey was smooth, no more brigands along the way, and as they drew close to Otta they found word had reached the city of their impending return.
They rose one morning to find two cloaked figures seated around the camp-fire with Lincoln. Kita’s hand gripped her weapon as she approached, determined not to let any strangers interfere with her mission or the children’s safety when they were so close to Otta.

Naima and Amina had come out of the tent behind her and immediately began to circle around to cover the camp as Kita approached the strangers from behind. There was something about the look on Lincoln’s face; he didn’t look up at Kita even though she was sure he would have known she was there. His eyes never left the two figures seated in front of him and that made Kita suspicious.

She silently glided closer to the seated figures, hand on her ice blue blade. As she was about to announce her presence a voice stopped her in her tracks. The smaller of the two strangers spoke, “Kita, Royal Guard of the Ice Nation, there is no need to draw your weapon.” The stranger didn’t stand or even turn her gaze toward Kita, she didn’t need to, it was a voice Kita would know anywhere.

“Reine!” Kita dropped to one knee and bowed her head. The figure stood slowly and turned toward the Guard. She lowered her hood and Amina and Naima found themselves entranced by the ethereal beauty of Skadi, the Queen of the Ice Nation.

Skadi walked over to where Kita knelt and she too took a knee. She pulled the guard into a very uncharacteristic embrace and Kita stared in shock at her Queen. “Kita, you have done me a great honour. You kept Lexa and Clarke safe and now you bring me back my lost children. Thank you, Kita.” With that she stood and looked around at the others who had made the journey, “Thank you all.”

Octavia stepped out of the woods with a young buck over her shoulders and a tall, lanky figure behind her. Her face lit up as she saw the visitors. “Motorbike!!” She jogged excitedly over to Carter and dropped the buck at his feet before jumping on him and engulfing him in a hug. “She gestured at the buck and added, “I heard we had some important visitors so I figured we should feed them well.” The large man grinned as Octavia shot Skadi a smile and bowed her head, “Queen, Skadi.”

Kita had stopped paying attention to Octavia the moment she saw who was behind her. She crossed the clearing in three long strides and pulled the tall woman into a warm embrace, “Lozen!” she smiled, “I have many stories to tell you.” Her mind thought back to the tunnel, the terrors and how she had come not only to protect but to love and be loved by her Heda and her Skai Heda. She knew her sister would be proud.

Lozen cocked one perfectly formed eyebrow and looked down on her slightly shorter sister, her full lips curled up into a smirk and she cupped Kita’s cheek in one large palm, she patted the younger woman’s cheek like a child and gave her a knowing look. “Indeed you do little sister, and you can start with the story of the noises I heard coming from your tent last night.”

Chapter End Notes

I wanted to write a chapter with all original characters but then The 100 writers killed my beloved Lincoln so I had to include him in this chapter too; and where Lincoln goes so must Octavia!

Thank you to my lovely, wonderful, amazing, Beta readers! You ladies made it even
more fun to write this chapter, and made the chapter itself much more coherent! So much love and thanks to you, my friends!

Teaser for Chapter 32 .... title .... The Bet
The Bet

Chapter Summary

The shooting competition brings out Clarke and Lexa's competitive spirit! Who will win the bet?

Chapter Notes

Thank you all for your patience. I hope you like the chapter!
I wanted it to be funny and playful yet sexy and sweet.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

It was very early in the morning and the mist still hung over the lake. The sun had barely risen and still wasn’t quite strong enough to burn through it. The only sound was the soft breathing of a lone figure. Lexa was standing on the large flat rock not far from the small home she shared with Clarke, she was staring out over the lake watching the quiet of the morning unfold. The lake was still, Lexa took a deep breath and allowed herself to feel at peace.

She didn’t hear Clarke approach but the scent of strong tea gave her away. Lexa smiled softly, proud that Clarke’s stealth had increased over the months they had been away chasing monsters. “Houmon, why are you out of bed?” Lexa mused, “I decided to let you sleep.” She didn’t turn her head but heard the surprise in Clarke’s slight gasp and answered her unspoken question, “I smelled the tea, Clarke. You were very quiet.”

Clarke heard the smile in her wife’s voice and she smiled proudly to herself as she stepped up onto the rock and wrapped her arms around Lexa’s back, presenting her with a cup of freshly brewed tea. Jasper and Maya had developed a few different types of tea from some leaves and herbs they had been able to collect, combined with what had been stored in the mountain. Abby was displeased that the mountain’s supply of coffee was low, but Lexa had promised her she had spoken with the clans in the South and they told her they could get the beans the Chancellor was looking for.

Lexa was aware that there were more people beyond her borders, more clans, more potential for trouble. She knew all of that but she allowed herself to feel some small hope for a peaceful year or perhaps even two, her clans were as united as they had ever been. The leaders were loyal to her. Skaikru had begun travelling to the clans and trading traditional Groundr knowledge for science and technology giving everyone tools to help them all do more than just survive.

Lexa’s long fingers wrapped around the cup Clarke had brought for her and she raised it to her mouth. She sipped the hot liquid pleased when the hint of sweetness hit her tongue. She smiled and turned her head to place a soft kiss on Clarke’s cheek. “You put honey in it.”

Clarke just murmured an affirmative into Lexa’s back where her face was pressed into the loose shirt that she loved. Clarke’s arms tightened around her waist and Lexa sighed happily sipping her tea and watching the mist slowly evaporate.
They stood like that long enough for Lexa to finish her tea and Clarke to be idly sketching the scene in her mind hoping to have time to paint it later. As the sun began to burn brighter they heard sounds coming from the village above. Lexa knew people would be looking for them soon. Today was their first full day back and they had promised to tour the village to see all the growth and development that had taken place in their absence. Clarke had the same thought and they turned in silence to head back towards their home so they could change clothes before starting what promised to be a busy day.

As they walked towards the house, Clarke looked at the much expanded building and shook her head, “I can’t believe Raven added on to our house without us being here.” When Lexa gave her a sidelong glance she added, “Who am I kidding, I can totally believe it.” Both women laughed and thought back to the previous day.

They had landed in the late afternoon. By the time they had greeted everyone and dealt with a few pressing matters the day was already coming to an end. When they began to make their way towards their home Raven had cut them off and insisted on accompanying them. Clarke had thought that was rather odd until they came within sight of their house. The ground floor had doubled in size and there was an impressive second floor added. They both stopped and stared, mouths hanging open. Raven began to babble, which was very unlike her. “I’m sorry for doing it without asking but you left me here and went off to fight and I was bored and I thought, hey wouldn’t a nice big house be cool.” Lexa’s face turned red and Raven judged that maybe she had gone a little too far by adding to something Lexa had worked so hard to build herself, so she played what she hoped was her ace card.

“I mean, you know Heda, I figured since we have peace between the clans, you might want to knock Clarky here up…” she paused as Lexa’s face twitched slightly in confusion “Get her pregnant I mean. Abby can totally do that with the medical equipment from the mountain, you know!” Lexa’s face had looked stunned and Raven knew she was out of trouble for now, she slowed her babble and a triumphant grin crossed her face as her voice took on a smooth, confident tone, “So I figured I’d add on for you since you’re too busy running civilization and all. That way when you want to have kids they will already have rooms.” Lexa’s face was still frozen in shock while Raven’s was looking so very smug, that is, until Raven saw the look on Clarke’s face; it was pure murder.

She immediately began to babble again, “…and Clarke you should see the windows I put in on the second floor, you have this killer view of the lake and I put your painting supplies there too. It’s perfect!”

Lexa looked at Clarke and Clarke looked at Lexa. Raven kept babbling away in the background but they had both blocked her out at this point. Lexa raised an eyebrow in question and Clarke’s answering blush was answer enough. She looked back to Raven and cut her off, “Raven, thank you for making our home bigger. We don’t need a tour, we will see you tomorrow.” Her tone had been so final that Raven didn’t say another word, just made herself scarce.

The tired couple had walked home slowly. They went inside and looked around, Raven had extended the main living area to include another bedroom on the ground floor, she also added more windows along with some new furniture. There was a simple staircase with a smooth wooden bannister leading up to the loft on the second floor. When they walked upstairs they saw their bed in one corner, a table with Lexa’s maps and war paint on one side, then over next to the huge window - that did indeed have a magnificent view of the lake - was another chair and all of Clarke’s art supplies. They stood together and silently watched the sun set over the lake.

As the sun slowly disappeared Clarke quietly whispered, “Beautiful,” and Lexa immediately agreed,
but when Clarke turned to face her, she found Lexa staring not out the window, but directly at her.

“Abby can make a baby that is yours and mine, truly yours and mine? Is it dangerous?” Lexa asked in such a quiet reverent way that Clarke felt guilty that she had never told her.

“Yeah, Lex. She can. It’s not dangerous at all, she’d just take some DNA from each of us and put it together in her lab and then she’d put it in my belly where it would grow just like normal.” Clarke had smiled softly and reached up to stroke Lexa’s face. “Is that something you want someday?” Clarke had intentionally used the word someday because she knew she wasn’t ready to be a mom yet.

“I… I… I don’t know, Clarke.” Lexa stammered unsure of herself. “I never imagined that it could be possible so I have never considered it.” As she continued to speak, her mind was turning the idea over in her head, “I think a child that came from you and from me would be a miracle, a beautiful, smart, powerful miracle.” She paused, and the smile that had crept onto her face fell, “But raising a child isn’t easy and we are Hedas. Our people come first, besides, I can’t help but think I would be a terrible mother.” Lexa looked slightly terrified at the idea of a child but her heart was pounding in her chest and it was telling her something different.

Clarke had objected, “No, Lex. You would be a wonderful mother. Don’t decide anything now, it’s something we will talk about someday. I want you to myself for a year or two before we consider babies, that’s why I hadn’t brought it up yet. I thought you might want to get started right away. While I do want a baby with you someday, I want to be selfish for a year or two.” Clarke smiled the smile that meant she was taking her wife to bed and Lexa’s heart fluttered like a thousand birds lived inside, flapped their wings all at once, and exploded out of her chest. Clarke wanted to have a baby with her someday, and right now Clarke wanted her.

Dressed and ready for the day the couple strode into the centre of the much grown village. Jasper and Maya greeted them from the communal kitchen that made up the central village square. Monty was there as well, looking very friendly with Harper, and there were several Grounder’s that Clarke didn’t recognize. Lexa seemed to know every one of them and addressed them by name as she inquired after them. It did indeed seem like a large village had sprung up around Heda’s house.

They ate and spoke with as many people as they could, learning who lived where and how the village plans were going. As they were about to stand a familiar shadow fell over them, like a large bear had suddenly reared up on it’s hind legs behind them. Clarke squealed in delight and Lexa almost laughed out loud, “Ribs!” Clarke jumped up and hugged the giant man as he stood trying his best to look unfazed by her show of affection.

Lexa noted the blush on his cheeks and allowed a small grin, “Happy to see us, are you Cato?”

“Sha Heda. Happy to see you alive and well.” The large man allowed himself a smile and patted Clarke awkwardly on the shoulder, “Skai Heda, I am told your skills have increased. I look forward to training with you.” Clarke punched him on the arm and complained.

“That’s it, Ribs? No, I missed you, Clarke.” She grinned up at the man as his face went back to his typical stoic expression.

They rose from the breakfast table and were greeted by a nervous looking Raven. Lexa gave her a stoic nod and Clarke narrowed her eyes and attempted to glare at her. Raven saw through Clarke’s feeble attempt to worry her and engulfed her in a hug. “I’m sorry I threw that out there, you two are okay, right? You talked about it?”
Clarke gave up and grinned at her friend, “Yes, we talked about it and we’re fine. The house is beautiful by the way. Thank you.” Clarke smiled at Raven and even Lexa allowed a small upturn of her lips.

“Amazing! So when can I expect to be Auntie Raven?” Raven looked at both of them expectantly and when they both looked surprised she took a step back, “You are going to make little Clexa babies! You are, right!? You have to! Lord knows O is not the mothering type and I’m sure as hell not getting preggers! Clarke, give me babies to spoil and teach bad things to!”

Clarke was about to respond when Lexa spoke up, her face scrunched up in confusion as it often did when Raven, Octavia, and Clarke spoke with each other. “What’s a Clexa?” Clarke and Raven looked at her adorably befuddled expression and burst out laughing. Lexa exchanged a rueful look with Cato and they shook their heads.

“Us, baby. We’re Clexa.” Clarke reached over and ran her hand down Lexa’s arm then leaned in and placed a soft kiss on her wife’s cheek. She watched Lexa mull over the new information and then Ribs piped up with a grin.

“I get it! Clarke plus Lexa! Clexa!” He looked very proud of himself and Lexa looked impressed.

“Ribs is smarter than he looks!” Raven added, slapping him on the back. He grinned at her in return which caught Clarke and Lexa off guard. The two had bonded during Heda’s absence. Both feeling frustrated at not having been included in the hunting party and to avoid feeling useless they, had given themselves worthwhile projects. Raven had expanded the village, reworked the urban planning - as she called it, and when that was under control she set to work on some sort of communications array that would enable them to contact the other clans.

Ribs had been her right hand man. He was very good at motivating the remaining Grounders to follow her plans and she was impressed by his ability to pick up on the technology she was working with. He had also learned how to use the Skaikru weapons from Miller and the two of them had started teaching classes on firearms to some of the younger warriors. It was a secret initiative until Heda returned and gave him the green light but he was certain they would eventually incorporate the weapons into Trikru training and he wanted to be an early adopter of the technology.

Raven and Ribs led them to the outskirts of town and they were both impressed by the expansion of the village and the updates to security and defence that Raven and Ribs had come up with. They were standing looking over the new fields of crops when Lexa nodded at Ribs and led him to the side. They stepped away from the two Skai women and Lexa took a deep breath. “Cato, I’m going to need your help.”

“Anything Heda.” Was his immediate response.

“I’m going to learn how to use guns. I’m going to do it very publicly and have a contest with Clarke in a couple of weeks to see who is the best shot. I have to win and show our people that guns are a tool we can use. We will never abandon our weapons but we need to understand and be able to use the guns. They can be very useful, I saw it myself during the battles of the past couple of months.” Lexa was going to continue to justify herself when Cato cut her off.

“Heda….” He looked sheepish, “I’ve already learned, and I’ve been teaching the young warriors. I apologize for not waiting for your orders.” He bowed his head but a slight grin formed that made his apology seem insincere. Lexa grinned back at him glad that he was not going to fight her on this. God knows when Indra returned she’d probably catch hell for it.

She shot him a look that would have had lesser men cowering, “You should have waited.” He
nodded his agreement, “But I’m glad you didn’t, it will make it easier for me to learn with you beside me. Kane has offered to teach me and we start tomorrow. Show me what you know today, Heda must appear to be an apt student.” He bowed his head to her and she called over to Clarke.

“Houmon, Cato and I are going to see to the warriors.” Clarke nodded at her and smiled. Before Lexa walked away with Cato she added, “Raven, you did excellent work during my absence. I am grateful.” She nodded her head to Raven who broke into a big smile.

“What she really means is that I saved the day in York and made the Peace Village awesome and she wants to know how she can ever repay me; as a reward I want Clexa babies!” Raven arched her brow and looked as superior as she could manage.

“Knock it off Raven!” Clarke insisted but laughed at her anyway. “Peace Village? I like that name, we should make it official.” Raven looked proud and happy. Clarke was momentarily stunned by how beautiful her friend was, she was sure Raven must have suitors lined up to try and win her heart. “Rae, are you interested in finding someone to settle down with? You and Ribs seem friendly…”

“Nah, he’s great and all but I’m happy just the way things are for now. But don’t think I’ve forgotten how sexy your Ice Guard is, Clarke. When is she due back again?” They spent the rest of the day bantering back and forth and checking in on everything that had been updated, advanced and improved upon during the long absence. By the time Clarke joined Lexa for dinner she was already quite tired.

Abby and Kane joined them for dinner and talk turned to the children and Kita. “I hope they are alright, I mean I know they have an excellent team with them but I just worry about the kids.” Abby looked down at her plate and then shook her head and looked back up, she saw the crestfallen look on Lexa’s face and immediately regretted her words. “I’m sure they’re fine, Lexa. You sent them with the best possible protection.”

“I should have gone.” Lexa started but Kane cut her off sounding very fatherly.

“Lexa you are needed here. You had reports from all of the other clans waiting for you and riders to dispatch to report that York and Otta are safe, that the traitors have been killed, and Heda is firmly in control. The other clans need to know their Heda is alive and leading a stronger than ever coalition.”

“I should have flown them to Otta with Virgil.” She insisted looking forlorn.

“You almost died when we flew the chopper to York the first time. Who knows what the Ice army would have done when approached by that thing with no warning. You know that would have been more dangerous than sending them with Kita.” Clarke placed her hand on Lexa’s thigh to comfort her. They had had this conversation almost every day since Kita had set out with her party. Lexa nodded at her wife but still felt uneasy. She wouldn’t feel safe until Kita rode back into Peace Village and told her the children were safe with Skadi.

When they finished they went to greet Bellamy and Echo. Echo started to stand, but Lexa’s hand on her shoulder stopped her. “Sit Echo, you are about to burst. How is your house? Are you ready for the baby?” Lexa quirked her eyebrows and grinned slightly at the very pregnant Echo.

“Heda.” Echo bowed her head, “Yes, we finished preparing the room for the baby. Bellamy learned how to build a crib, and finally made one that I thought the baby wouldn’t fall out of.” She teased her Sky partner and he grinned a little sheepishly.

“I only had to make five before she deemed it safe enough.” Bellamy laughed, and Clarke saw a very different man than the one who had landed on Earth so many months ago. He looked happy,
confident, and slightly terrified. “It won’t be long now before I’m a dad. Can you believe it?!” Clarke shook her head no and they laughed together.

Echo reached out for Lexa’s hand, when her Heda grasped her hand she teared up, “Heda, I want to thank you for bringing us with you in the flying machine. I thought all the riding on the return journey would send me into labour and I was worried the baby would be born before we made it to Trikru land. I’m so glad the baby will be born here in this village where Skai and Tri work together as one.” Lexa nodded her understanding and support as she squeezed the warrior’s hand.

Bellamy added, “It’s perfect. We’re home, and there are no monsters trying to eat our faces, and the best doctor on Earth is here to help. I only hope O gets home before the baby is born. She’ll be mad if she misses it.”

Echo snorted, “I hope this child comes tomorrow, I am very ready for it to be out of my body and into the world.” They all laughed softly at her and Clarke reassured her. “Not much longer now. Mom says you’re over 8 months along and the baby could come at any time.” Clarke leaned in closer to her belly. “May I?” she asked waiting for Echo’s nod before placing her hands on the protruding belly. The baby kicked and Clarke got so excited Lexa just stared at her with a look of pure adoration.

After they left the table they moved over to where Virgil sat with Maya, Jasper, Monty, Harper and two young Grounders, Connor and Aiden. They bowed immediately to Lexa as the others were waving excitedly to Clarke.

They chatted with them for a while and Lexa asked Virgil if he had had a chance to assess the fuel supply for the helicopter yet. He replied that there was a good supply of fuel in the mountain and that he had already spoken with Raven about finding a way to process more when needed. Lexa was pleased, she was already planning to send out riders to all the clans to tell them about the helicopter so she could fly safely to each clan to check in more often.

The couple said their goodbyes and headed towards home. They walked hand in hand and Lexa mused, “How mad do you think Indra is that I left her behind?”

Clarke looked surprised, “Lex, I think you read her wrong on this one. She gets to be in charge of leading a large group of the best warriors on Earth all the way from York, and, the woman she’s been sleeping with is leading with her… mad isn’t word I’d use.” Clarke chuckled softly as Lexa looked scandalized.

“I still can’t believe that Indra and Ro are….” Lexa trailed off and Clarke laughed at her again.

“Lovers, Lex you can say it.” Clarke loved teasing her wife about this since it was usually Lexa teasing her about things of a sexual nature. She understood completely why Lexa was uncomfortable discussing it, Indra was a mother figure for Lexa. Clarke, while she loved Kane, certainly didn’t want to hear about his sexual relationship with her mother.

Lexa continued shaking her head as they walked. “I made the right choice bringing your mother and Kane, right? They might have enjoyed seeing more of the world travelling with Indra and the rest.”

Clarke laughed softly, “Echo is very, super pregnant with the first Skai/Tree baby. That baby has to be healthy and Echo has to come out of it healthy, otherwise who knows what kind of superstitions might pop up and claim Skai/Tree babies are cursed or something. My mom needs to be here when that kid pops out, you made the absolute right choice.”

Lexa glared a little at Clarke for her assessment of Grounder culture being so superstitious but she agreed with her a very little bit. “Besides, they have plenty of healers with them.” Clarke enjoyed
that Lexa now let her in on all the thoughts that swirled around in her head but it surprised her how much Lexa was second guessing herself about the way they returned home. Heda never hesitated in her decisions but Lexa couldn’t seem to quiet her mind and Clarke knew it stemmed from her concern for the group of children Kita was escorting back to the Ice Nation.

“It’s been about a week, Kita will have them more than halfway home by now. I’m sure they are safe and probably enjoying the journey.” Clarke looked knowingly at Lexa who was surprised that her wife saw right through her to the real cause of her concern. When they got into bed Lexa pulled Clarke close and whispered how much she loved her. The two women slept curled up in each other’s arms that night and in the morning Lexa seemed to be in much brighter spirits.

“Why are you so happy?” Clarke asked her suspiciously during breakfast.

“Today we announce our competition, Clarke.” Lexa looked smug, “I hope you have a good training partner,” she quipped as she popped the last piece of bacon in her mouth and jumped up to join Kane.

Clarke frowned and looked around, Bellamy was the obvious choice but she didn’t want to take him away from Echo. She looked over the tables and Miller caught her eye. She remembered him being an excellent shot and made her choice on the spot. She marched over with a determined gleam in her eye and Miller looked like he wanted to hide under the table.

“Clarke… is Lexa mad…? It was Cato’s idea… I told him we should wait!” Miller started and stopped when Clarke looked at him in confusion. “This isn’t about Cato and me teaching the Trikru junior warriors how to shoot?” He looked both relieved and nervous all at once.

“No, it’s not, and I think that was a great idea by the way, this is about guns though. Lexa has agreed to learn how to use them, there were some situations during our journey that showed her they could be useful.” Clarke laughed a bitter laugh thinking of the tunnel and the understatement of the year she had just uttered. “She has actually challenged me to a shooting competition in two weeks. Two weeks, can you imagine, she’s so smug that she thinks she can beat me after only two weeks of training!”

Clarke was just getting started, “There is no way she’s going to win! I’m going to win this bet… I mean I promised her I’d let her win when I thought she was dead but I’m sure if I tell her about it she’ll want me to do my best anyway…”

“Wait! When did you think Heda was dead!?” Miller’s eyes were getting bigger by the second. “What the hell happened to you guys? It was enough that Bell showed up here in a fucking helicopter looking for Raven to build a bomb to blow up some sort of zombie, but Lexa almost died!”

“More than once… but the time I’m talking about she actually seemed to be dead. It was some kind of poison that made her seem dead but it wore off in 12 hours. It was the worst few minutes of my life. Worse than when Dad was floated.” Clarke’s voice trailed off and her mind was working overtime. “Maybe I should let her win…”

“No way, Clarke! I mean let’s be realistic, she’s Heda, even if you do your best she still might beat you, you might as well give it your best shot, pun intended.” Miller looked up at Clarke with a smirk showing her that he was purposely poking her competitive side, it worked anyway.

“What! You think she can beat me!? I’m a really good shot Miller! I was going to ask you to help me
train, but if that’s your attitude!?” Clarke was ready to storm off but Miller stood and threaded his arm through hers leading her towards the secret range where he and Ribs had been teaching the young Gonas.

When they arrived Miller wasn’t surprised to find the six juniors cleaning the rifles they kept there. “Hey squirts! Guess who is going to train with us for a couple of weeks!?” Clarke smiled at them as they jumped up and bowed their heads to her. She recognized two of them from her wedding day and they blushed when she smiled at them.

“Hi there, I’m Clarke.” She started.

“We know who you are Heda Kom Skaikru.” One of the oldest stepped forward and extended his arm to her, “We would be honoured to train with you.”

“Good! because Heda and I have a competition in two weeks time. She is learning how to shoot our weapons and she claims that she’ll be unbeatable in two weeks. I have to win, the stakes are high.” Clarke winked at the small group not thinking about what she was saying.

“What does the winner get?” One of the girls from her wedding bodyguard detail piped up? “When Clarke turned bright red Miller started to laugh knowingly and bailed her out.

“The prize is still a secret, Heda is going to announce the competition later, and she’ll also announce what the winner gets!” When the youngsters smiled and then moved off to prepare the training ground he looked at Clarke, “Really? You have a sex bet and you didn’t think to invent some other story for your adoring public? Well at least now the pressure is on Lexa to come up with something.” He laughed, but Clarke looked horrified.

“Oh shit! Miller! She’d just as soon tell everyone what the real bet is! I’ll have to think of something.” Clarke sighed but pushed that problem aside in favour of getting down to the training at hand.

Clarke and Miller spent the rest of the morning and well into the afternoon practicing her technique and teaching the young Gonas together. Clarke found that she really enjoyed Miller’s company and she loved getting to know the six junior warriors as well. They were all pretty good with the guns at this point but she helped them with some tips about breathing and aiming. At the end of the session they all felt like they had accomplished a lot.

They walked back to the kitchen together and found Lexa waiting for them with lunch prepared. “Clarke, you have chosen your training partner?” She looked at Miller with her traditional stoic expression and when he nodded her gaze shifted to the Gonas.

“And you Gonas! You have chosen to help Heda Kom Skaikru win her bet against your Trikru Heda? She shook her head like she was hurt but when all six of the young warriors stayed by Clarke’s side in defiance, she smiled at them. “Good, good.”

They were all junior’s but Cato had picked the best of the young Trikru seconds for this experiment and Lexa was pleased that they seemed to have bonded with her wife. She was planning on creating an elite and deadly force tasked with one thing only, the protection of her wife. She hoped these young warriors in training would be the future of that force. When Kita returned she would have her train them and most likely lead them, although Kita had so much promise in other areas Lexa was reluctant to trust anyone else with Clarke’s safety. She shot a sidelong glance at Miller and resolved to keep her eye on him. Maybe he could be trusted to lead them eventually, time would tell.

After they had eaten some lunch Lexa took her wife’s hand and led them to the newly fashioned
town square, yet another of Raven’s additions. Lexa and Clarke walked up on the stage and Clarke realized in surprise that most of the village and half of Ton DC and Arcadia seemed to be present as well.

“Lexa, I swear to God if you tell everyone what this bet is really about I will deny it and deny you access to my body for a month!” Clarke whispered fiercely into her wife’s ear as the crowd began to quiet waiting for Lexa’s announcement. Lexa merely grinned and winked at Clarke which did little to quell the blonde’s nerves.

“People of Peace Village, Ton DC, Arcadia, and beyond, thank you for joining us here today.” Lexa began. “I have good news for you all. Our recent battles have gone well, the force I led from Saapeke chasing after the tyrants, Yor of the York Clan, and Alain of the Ice Clan were successful. The tyrants are dead and their bodies have been returned to their people.”

Cheers went up through the crowd and Lexa held her hand high to silence them, “Three leaders have returned from the dead to their people. The people of York have had the true Mayor returned to them, Zora, daughter of Ja-Kie has pledged allegiance to me and our alliance.” More cheers erupted and Lexa waited until they died down. “The Ice Nation has a true queen once more, Skadi, daughter of El leads her people and has knelt before me to show her fealty.” The cheers seemed louder this time and Lexa knew it was because of the long standing tension between the Ice nation and the rest of the clans. “The Lake People have rejoiced to know that their leader, Rock, daughter of Diana is alive and well. Rock and the Steward of the Lakes have both reaffirmed the Lake Clan’s devotion to Heda and the alliance of the thirteen clans.”

Lexa paused again as the crowd cheered, then she took a breath and slowed her impassioned speech, she explained the plan she had crafted to her people; “The road was long and difficult, we faced many hardships and lost many brave warriors. The elite force of warriors that helped me track down the villains and bring them to justice are now all on their way home to their clans. Next spring they will all begin a new journey, here to the Peace Village. We will host and train the best fighting force in all of the clans. Warriors from each clan will join and together we will defend all clans from our enemies, foreign and domestic.” More cheers rose up and Lexa continued.

“We will not only host the elite forces but we will train the future of that force. Each clan will host the warriors in training so they can learn the weapons and specialties of each style. They will learn to ride from Hirrim’s best, to shoot from the legendary archer’s of York, they will learn the battle skills of the Ice Nation, the poisons of the swamp clan, tracking from the Hill clan, and they will learn sword fighting from Trikru.” The cheers got louder as she spoke and she grinned as she held up her hand for silence.

“They will learn something else here from Kane and his Skaikru warriors.” The crowd fell deadly silent, “Yes, they will learn to use guns, the weapons of the mountain and the Skaikru.” A murmur of fear began to rise and cries of protest started, but Lexa would not be swayed.

“I, myself saw the usefulness, and I cannot deny that without the Skaikru firearms we would have lost many more warriors in the tunnel crossing into Manhattan.” Gasps came from the crowd as this was the first confirmation of the rumours that Heda had gone to the cursed island. “The Skai weapons helped fight off the GERSA and Raven Kom Skaikru used their Skai technology to save the clan of York from a bloody battle that would have gone on for decades; like our battle with the mountain.” The crowd was silent again.

“I began learning to use the guns this morning. I will train with Kane for two weeks and I invite you all to come here to witness the battle I am training for. I have challenged my wife to a shooting contest. She thinks she can beat Heda in a weapons challenge, but I will win the contest for Trikru
pride!” Another roar of approval came from the crowd and Lexa breathed a small sigh of relief. She hadn’t known if her people would accept the adaptation of Skai weapons easily. She had promised herself that only the elite force would learn to use them and they would use them as little as possible; she knew they had benefits but she also saw the danger in their widespread use.

When someone from the crowd shouted out and asked what the prize would be Lexa grinned and shot a lascivious look at Clarke earning great whoops of laughter and catcalls. Clarke punched her on the shoulder and she grinned as she spoke again, “The Harvest Festival is just a couple of months away, the loser will work the clean up detail and the winner will get to be a judge at the harvest wine competition.” The crowd laughed in approval, enjoying the new playful side to their leader. When Clarke stepped forward they quieted again.

“I promise to be a fair judge to everyone who enters the wine contest, and I promise to create as much mess as possible for our Heda to clean up the next day. I’m sorry Heda but I’m going to kick your ass!” Clarke gave Lexa a sexy, knowing look and Lexa smiled at her wife’s indomitable spirit.

The Skaikru jumped to their feet cheering for Clarke and the Grounders whooped and laughed. Everyone seemed to be so excited by the contest, they had forgotten their fears of the Skai weapons. Lexa smiled at Clarke and let her shoulders relax as she looked over the crowd and saw her people accepting her rule without question.

The two weeks were flying by. Clarke trained with Miller and the junior warriors every day and Lexa trained with Kane and Cato. A few nights before the contest they sat on the rock behind their house watching the sunset together. Watching Lexa in that soft, pink light Clarke suddenly felt a confession was needed, “Lex, when Suu shot you and you were unconscious, I promised you I’d let you win this bet. I was bargaining with you so you’d wake up. Do you think it will be bad luck if I don’t let you win?”

Lexa looked at her wife and a small, soft smile crept over her face. “Houmon, I promised you many things when you were stricken with Wamplei. I will be truthful, I haven’t kept all of those promises. I don’t believe we will have to worry about bad luck, we have each other and that is the best of luck.” Clarke felt tears growing in the corners of her eyes and tried to blink them away.

“Lex, I love you.” She whispered and leaned forward to place a soft kiss on her wife’s lips. Lexa kissed her back soft and slow.

When they broke the kiss Clarke snuggled into Lexa’s side and Lexa wrapped her arm around Clarke’s shoulders, pulling her in tightly. They watched the lake light up into brilliant pink hues as the sun began to sink behind the tree line. Lexa broke the comfortable silence with, “Besides Houmon, I am Heda there is no need of you to let me win. I will just win. Don’t doubt my prowess” Clarke shook her head from side to side and laughed softly at her wife’s unwavering confidence.

“We’ll see, Lex. We’ll see.”

It was three days to the competition and Lexa was uneasy. Her aim, which had impressed Kane immensely, was off. He walked over and reminded her to focus on her breathing. She lowered the weapon and frowned.

“That’s enough for today.” She stalked over to the Skai guards who were handling the guns and ammunition and passed them her gun. “I’m going to train with my swords.” She turned and left the firing range, Kane followed her.

She walked down to the Trikru training grounds where several of her warriors were sparring. She
picked up a sword, and when Kane picked one up too, she glared at him. “What are you doing?” She demanded

“I intend to spar with you until you tell me what’s bothering you. I think it’s important that you win this competition to show the others that it’s not only Skaikru who can handle guns. I know Clarke, she’s competitive and she’s a very good shot. You’ll have to be at your best to beat her.” Kane stepped forward and swung his sword.

“Kane, you should go back to the range, I’m in a very bad mood and I might hurt you. I should be sparring with my Gonas.” Lexa easily blocked Kane’s advances and frowned at him. “I need a good workout and don’t want to have to hold back.” She stepped forward flourishing her sword, making Kane back step, trying to block her strikes one after another.

“Don’t hold back, Heda. I’m not that old yet.” Kane parried her last attack and countered with his own. She grinned a little as he advanced.

“Very well Kane but if you end up in Abby’s clinic you will only have yourself to blame, I warned you.” Lexa beat his sword to the side and advanced striking him on the side. The practice swords weren’t sharp enough to draw blood but it was still painful to be struck by one. Kane winced but spun away and tried to attack her from a different direction.

“What is bothering you?” he demanded, as she sidestepped and easily blocked his attack. “Your concentration was excellent last week and your aim was near perfect. This week you’re growing more and more distracted.”

Lexa was irritated by her lack of concentration and even more irritated by someone pointing it out. Not many dared to speak to her in such a way; the way Indra did. She swung her sword high and when Kane blocked it, she stepped inside and gave Kane a blow to the stomach with her fist. “Indra is the only one who speaks to me like that, Kane.”

Lexa gritted her teeth and Kane momentarily gained an advantage. He doubled over from her punch to his midsction. As she stood over him thinking him weak, he dropped to one knee and with a quick sweep-kick, had her on her back. He stood over Lexa looking a little smug and correctly surmised correctly the reason why she was so preoccupied.

“Indra, she isn’t back yet. Your calculations on distance and the size of the party put them back yesterday. You’re worried.” Lexa was on her feet again and circling him.

“I have no doubt Indra and Ro are safe. The party of warriors with them is second to none.” Lexa tried to deny the unease that had been growing in her belly.

“Exactly, so why are you so worried?” Kane pressed. “We cleared most of the hotspots in the outskirts of York before we left and the entire journey is alliance land. If they are delayed it will be by the people they meet along the way asking them to stay and celebrate with them.” Kane blocked when Lexa lunged forward but she was too quick and caught him with her blade again, this time on the upper arm.

“Ow! Fuck! These blunt swords hurt more than sharp ones.” Kane swore, but grinned, “Luckily, they are less bloody and less likely to make Abby mad, so that’s a good thing.” He lunged forward and the two clashed swords back and forth until Kane pulled back a little, out of breath.

Lexa was panting as well, “They would have sent riders ahead of them once they hit Trikru land. At the very least those riders should have arrived by now.” Lexa’s worry spilled out once she opened the floodgates. She attacked again and on the last swing Kane blocked her and stepped forward pushing both weapons into an x shape between them, staring into her eyes.
“They are highly trained warriors on friendly ground, your worry is unfounded and you know it. You are feeling guilty for flying home in the helicopter.” Kane raised his eyebrows at her and challenged her to deny it.

“I am Heda. I feel guilty for nothing.” Lexa pushed him back and swung her sword in a low loop that Kane barely managed to block.

“Bullshit.” Kane swung back at her and she smashed his sword to the side and slid inside striking him with a powerful uppercut. She stepped back, and while he was still trying to recover from the blow, she kicked him and toppled him to the ground. Her sword was at his neck and she stood over him staring down.

“I told you I wouldn’t hold back, Kane.” She sighed, sheathed her sword and held out her hand to help him up. “Your eye will need to be seen to.” She nodded toward the black eye he was now sporting from her last punch. “It is already swollen.”

“Lexa, the children are fine with Kita, and the warriors are fine with Indra. You need to get used to peacetime.” Kane stared her down, even with one eye mostly swollen shut.

“Peace…” Lexa took a deep breath, “Real peace Kane, my people have peace and I have to make it last.” She looked at him and frowned watching his eye swell closed. “Really, your eye looks terrible, Abby will be upset.” When Kane grinned she did too. “I’ll call for Nyko, maybe he can take a look.” When Kane nodded but still stared at her, she sighed but continued.

“Peace scares me, Kane. War is all I have known as a warrior and as a leader. There was always fighting between different clans, fighting against the Mountain Men, fighting against Skaikru, fighting Yor and Alain, there was always someone to fight. What if people can’t learn how to be peaceful? What if I’m a terrible leader in peacetime? What if…” Kane cut her off.

“Peace isn’t some magical thing, Lexa. We will have to work at it, every day. It will be harder than war on some days and easier on others. You have never been scared of the work and you are fair and just. You will be the peacetime leader your people need, and you aren’t alone. Clarke will be by your side and together the two of you will make a difference in the future for everyone in the 13 clans.” Kane reached out and placed his hand on Lexa’s shoulder patting her in a reassuring and very fatherly way.

“Peace,” Lexa took a deep breath, “peace.” She looked around her at her warriors who had long since abandoned watching their Heda as they sensed her sparring match with Kane was a private matter. They were laughing and bickering as they sparred and practiced. She felt a small smile begin to grow on her lips and as she was about to thank Kane for his words, she heard her wife calling for her.

“Lexa!” Clarke was running towards her, blonde hair flying behind her as she ran. “Lexa!” She continued to shout, waving her hands to get her wife’s attention. Kane and Lexa both tensed and her warriors stopped their exercises and prepared to spring into action. “Clarke!” Lexa ran towards her, “What’s wrong, what is it!??” As she got closer she saw a huge smile on Clarke’s face and her racing heart began to calm down.

Clarke jumped into her arms excitedly as they met and the look of relief on Lexa’s face was clear to everyone. Clarke’s body language told them all that whatever had her so worked up, it was definitely good news. “Lex, the gate!” Clarke began excitedly but as soon as she looked at Kane she stopped “Oh my God! Kane!? What happened to your eye!?” She stepped away from Lexa and moved to examine him.
“I’m fine, Clarke, it’s just a training accident,” he and Lexa shared a guilty sideways glance. “What about the gate?”

“Two riders have arrived from the party from York! They’re waiting at the gate!” Clarke’s excitement grew again, she knew how uneasy her wife had been waiting for word from both Indra and Kita. Lexa’s face held her stoicism but Clarke saw the look in her eyes and knew how happy the news made her.

The two leaders grabbed each other’s hands and quickly made their way out of the village, past the fields to the large imposing gates Raven had fashioned in their absence. As they approached them, they both smiled at the two dismounted riders and Lexa went so far as to clasp both of their forearms in welcome.

“Heda, Skai Heda.” Hamil greeted them smartly and bowed. Clarke was pleased to see him so well recovered from the injuries he had sustained in the battle against the creatures.

“Hedas! Good to see you both! You can expect Indra and the rest of the party within two days.” Joss grinned at them, “We would have been here sooner, as soon as we hit Trikru land Indra sent you riders. Ro insisted on sending Theo, her fastest rider, to get news to you. He and Ion have become such good friends that Theo chose Ion as his riding partner.” Joss began to laugh like a maniac.

“Imagine! A rider from the Horse Clan and a Hill Kru stalker being sent to navigate Trikru land!” Joss laughed again. “When they ended up losing their way and circling back to us I thought Indra’s head was going to explode.” His laughter was infectious and even Heda allowed herself a small grin. “You know she’ll be mad if she misses the competition we heard about from the last village we passed. We better hope they arrive on time!” He tried to look serious but his customary grin was soon gracing his handsome face once more.

‘Indeed.” Was all Lexa said before stepping past the two riders and moving beyond the gate. There were many people along the trail all coming for the competition. Lexa’s eyes looked beyond them wishing to see the rising dust from the riders she wanted so desperately to arrive, safe and as whole as when they left York. She turned back to the warriors who were beginning to move off toward the stables.

“Hamil, Joss, How many arrive?” Lexa demanded.

Hamil stopped, turned toward her and answered with a soft, proud smile, “Ogeda komthru klir, Heda.” When she nodded to him, her face full of relief, he returned her nod and then resumed his trek to the stables. Lexa turned to look out over the trail again, she let out the breath she had been holding.

“Everyone’s safe, that’s great news.” Clarke moved to stand next to her wife and placed her hand on Lexa’s lower back, together they gazed out at the landscape. The gates were at the top of a slow incline and the ground spread out in front of them. The area surrounding the walls of the village was farmland, growing corn and wheat. The trail that led to the gate was wide and well-travelled. They could see for just over a mile in all directions, then the forest started and swallowed up the trail and the fields.

“Raven and Cato chose a good spot for the gate.” Lexa mused, unwilling to walk away just yet and still not wanting to admit she had been worried and waiting for Indra and the warriors.

Clarke understood her wife and just patted her back softly, “Yeah, Lex they did a good job.”
The shootout was scheduled for noon. Jasper had insisted on the time, something about old western movies he had watched on the Arc. The crowd was already starting to gather when Lexa and Clarke stepped out for breakfast at 9:00 am.

They were just getting comfortable when Miller came running towards them, waving frantically and grinning like a maniac. “They’re back! Indra, Ro and the rest!” When he got his report out he bent over, hands on his knees, to catch his breath. He had been doing his morning patrol when one of the guards at the gate announced excitedly that the party from York was exiting the tree-line. Miller had confirmed the sighting then turned and ran all the way to the village square where he knew Lexa and Clarke would be having breakfast.

“Thank god! I thought we’d have to decide between postponing and disappointing all the people who came, and going ahead without Indra who would probably be mad as hell that she missed it!” Clarke grabbed some bread and started to walk towards the gate.

“Houmon, sit and eat,” Lexa looked up at her wife, looking more at peace than she had since they left York. “They will have a lot to do to organize everyone and you know that Indra will find me right away to make her report.” Lexa piled more food onto her plate and looked expectantly at Clarke who frowned but sat.

“You just don’t want her to know you’ve been waiting anxiously for her to get back.” Clarke knowingly accused her wife.

“Houmon, the only thing I anxiously await is what I’m going to do to you after I win the bet,” Lexa smirked as Clarke blushed and Miller awkwardly tried to hold in his laughter and pretend he hadn’t heard. He and Clarke had gotten closer over the week as they practiced and she had shared the true bet with him. He was secretly hoping Lexa won so he could convince Clarke to tell him about Grounder sex toys.

Lexa ate slowly and Clarke’s irritation grew. “Lex, seriously let’s go! I want to greet them. You aren’t the only one who’s been worried. I want to see them.” Clarke’s protest was cut short when Ro stepped into the village centre and waved at her, smiling.

“Heda, Skai Heda!” Ro strode forward crossing the space quickly with her long powerful legs. “It is good to see you again.” She clasped Lexa’s arm in a tight grip and pulled Clarke into a hug. “I have to tell you we were all quite worried, Indra was a wreck wondering if that flying machine had gotten you home safely.”

Clarke and Lexa looked surprised. They hadn’t considered that they would be the object or worry as well. Clarke started to laugh, “Ro, that’s funny, we were worried about you guys having to come so far on unknown roads.”

When Ro looked surprised Lexa quickly added, “Clarke was worried.” She tried to look unaffected as Ro grinned and nudged her.

“All roads in the 13 clans are safer now than ever before, Heda. You have given us that.” Ro turned her head when she heard Indra’s voice getting closer as she shouted orders to her warriors. “Besides, we had the fearsome Indra Kom Trikru leading us.” The three women looked expectantly toward the sound of her voice and when Indra turned the corner into sight, Lexa felt a great deal of her tension melt away.

“Indra.” Her voice betrayed a great deal of emotion but only Clarke and Indra picked up on it. “I am happy to see your party return whole.” She walked forward and the two women grasped each other’s arms like they were holding a lifeline.
“Heda.” Indra sounded equally controlled but her voice cracked when she looked past Lexa at Clarke and added, “Skai Heda.” With the show of emotion so plain on the general’s face Clarke ran forward and threw her arms around the woman. Lexa grinned at the uncomfortable and simultaneously pleased expression on her general’s face as she awkwardly returned Clarke’s embrace.

Indra backed away from Clarke and composed herself before adding, “I was not confident that the Mountain man would get you home safely in that flying machine, I am pleased to see my worry was unfounded.”

Clarke grinned and added, “Virgil is a great pilot, Indra.” She knew the woman still had reservations about the people from the Mountain but Clarke remembered how long it had taken Indra to warm up to her and was confident that she would move past her distrust eventually.

The four women sat and more food was brought to their table. “Report.” Lexa was Heda once more.

“No serious injuries sustained during the journey, a few bumps and bruises and Brax almost got eaten by a bear on a hunt near the Trikru/York border.” Indra and Ro laughed and Clarke looked horrified.

“The bears aren’t quite as big down in Lanta territory, I imagine she was unpleasantly surprised by the size of a Trikru bear.” Lexa explained and chuckled. “Was she injured?”

“No, Benson was her hunting partner and she killed the bear before it got to her.” Indra smiled. “Benson is skilled, Heda.” Lexa nodded proudly, “Indeed.”

They talked about the status of the warriors and the plans for the Southern based warriors to rest in Ton DC for three days before continuing on their separate ways to their own clans.

When they were finishing up Indra brought up the competition. “I hear there is to be a contest today?” She raised her eyebrows knowingly at Lexa who looked about as nervous as Heda ever looked.

“The Skai weapons are useful. I will not manufacture more than we need and only the elite force will train with them.” Lexa was on the defensive and Indra’s smile caught her off-guard.

“Heda, you do not need to convince me. Even if I thought you were wrong I would not fight you. But, as it is, I agree with you. Watching Octavia handle both the Skai weapons and our weapons with equal skill, I realized that we should integrate. I am glad you came to that decision on your own so I don’t have to waste time pushing you on it.” Indra looked smug and pleased with herself and Lexa allowed her the victory, happy she wasn’t going to have to fight her top general on the issue.

“So I can expect you in my corner at the event?” Lexa felt more confident than she had all week.

“No Heda, I’m betting on a winning team.” Indra winked at Clarke. “Skai Commander, would you do me the honour of allowing me to stand in your corner?”

The look on Lexa’s face was incredulous. Clarke found herself laughing uncontrollably and Ro joined her.

Eventually, Lexa found her voice and stated, “Stand in her corner and you will be helping her on clean up duty at the festival Indra.” Her threat did not faze the general who nodded her agreement and let an uncharacteristic smile beam out at the two young commanders.
Noon found a very large crowd gathered in the field were Clarke and Lexa had gotten married. Raven had quickly realized that the shooting competition was going to attract far more than Peace Village could handle so they had set up a shooting range at the end of the field beside the lake.

Lexa and Kane were going over her weapons one last time, making sure everything was ready. They were going to start with rifles first and move down to hand guns. Lexa felt an unfamiliar twinge of nerves and took deep breath, calling on the coolness of Heda. She quashed her nerves and took another deep breath confident in her own abilities. She knew Clarke was a good shot, but she was no warrior. To Clarke weapons were something she used out of necessity, but she held no love for them.

Once Lexa had become familiar with the guns and learned how they worked, she had found them comfortable in her hands, an extension of herself, much like her swords and knives. She was a warrior and weapons were not just the tools of her trade they were like friends, family even. She lovingly cleaned and oiled the guns much like she sharpened her blades, and she knew she would win. She thought of the trunk of toys she had had created in anticipation of winning and wondered if the warriors had already delivered it to her house as instructed. She grinned and Kane gave her a knowing look.

“I know this bet has more to it than cleaning up at a festival, Lexa. I don’t want to know, keep it in your pants and don’t let it distract you.” He looked placated when she nodded and he watched her stoic nature reassert itself.

Raven was on stage and beginning to announce the rules. Lexa looked over at Clarke who was receiving a last minute pep talk from Miller and Indra. She felt her heart swell and remembered something Kane had said to her about her and Clarke ruling side by side, making a difference for all of the people in every one of her clans. She hoped this elite force would be strong enough to defeat any enemies her people faced in the future, she hoped she got to grow old with Clarke and maybe even make a Clexa baby for Raven to teach bad things to. She took another deep breath and cleared her mind for battle.

They were tied after the rifle round. Lexa was impressed with Clarke and found the sight of her hitting target after target dead center made her very aroused and uncomfortably wet. She assumed correctly that she was having the same effect on Clarke and decided to use it to her advantage. She walked over to where Clarke was preparing. As she moved to slide past she deliberately rubbed against Clarke, paused, and whispered, “Watching you shoot is making me so hot, Clarke, I can’t wait to win this bet and take you to bed. I have so many new ways to fuck you.”

She felt her wife’s body shiver involuntarily and heard a soft moan escape her lips. “Fuck. Lex, that’s cheating!” Clarke pushed her ass back into Lexa’s center and immediately missed the contact as Lexa slid away and over to her lane.

Lexa herself was worked up and she hoped her plan hadn’t backfired. She knew she had achieved her goal to make Clarke horny and distracted, but had it also distracted her? She reached deep to try and reign her concentration, but still images of Clarke moaning under her as she fucked her jumped unbidden into her mind. Kane looked at her curiously and frowned. He really wanted her to win this competition. He felt the Grounder’s needed to know that Heda had mastered the unfamiliar weapons and when they saw her confidence it would trickle down to them.

Abby was watching from the sidelines with Echo and Bellamy. She was talking excitedly about the upcoming round and she had noticed Echo’s baby bump seemed to be sitting a little lower. After questioning Bellamy she learned that Echo was urinating more frequently and had been complaining
of back pain. Abby was sure Echo was going to go into labour sometime in the next few days and was using any excuse to stay close to the woman. She agreed with her daughter, this baby was very important. She or he would be the first Trikru / Skaikru baby to be born and both clans needed to see a happy and healthy baby and mommy.

As Raven announced the beginning of the final round, Miller was giving Clarke a pep talk. “Clarke, I admit I kind of wanted you to lose so I could learn more about Grounder sex toys, but now I want you to win! It’s a competition and Skai Kru wants a win! You can do this, you’re amazing with a hand gun.” Clarke glared at him a bit for his confession but nodded in resolve and turned to Indra.

“Heda is distracted, Clarke.” She advised, “Her earlier trick backfired and now her mind is in the gutter with yours.” Indra smirked as Clarke blushed. “She won’t expect you to be forward and use it against her, hone your killer instinct Clarke. You can win this,” Clarke blinked in surprise as Indra reached out and unbuttoned the top three buttons on her shirt and winked. She immediately understood what Indra was suggesting, nodded in agreement and moved with confidence to her firing lane, cleavage proudly on display.

Indra understood Kane’s line of thinking, as to why it was so important for Lexa to win, but she also knew her people, and Clarke had won them over completely. They accepted the Skai Commander as Heda’s equal and a victory here would just add to Clarke’s legend. Plus, she secretly wanted to see Lexa’s face when Clarke beat her! Indra knew Lexa would win if all things were equal; even a new and strange weapon would easily be conquered by Heda. Indra knew that if she wanted to win, Clarke needed to distract Lexa, she also knew her Heda couldn’t keep her eyes off of the blonde’s chest.

They were to fire three clips of ten bullets at the targets. The first one at 50 feet, the second at 65 feet and the final one at 80 feet. The 50 foot target proved easy for Lexa, she hit the bullseye with nine of her ten shots and the tenth one was only slightly outside of the inner circle.

Clarke followed up with a similar performance and they were tied moving to the 60 foot range. They did a coin toss at each range to determine who would go first and Clarke shot first at the second distance. She did well, eight out of ten shots were in the bullseye and the other two in the second ring. Lexa again shot nine out of ten and went into the final distance with a slight lead.

Clarke ended up shooting first once again at the final distance. She took her time and controlled her breathing as she lined up each shot. The first two were just outside of the bullseye and the third shot hit it dead centre. Lexa was impressed with Clarke’s concentration, 80 feet was a difficult distance and Lexa knew she’d have to be at her very best to win.

Clarke continued slowly squeezing off each round, letting the shot surprise her, after carefully taking aim and letting her breathing steady out. After every shot she waited impatiently as Ro and Raven approached the target and indicated where she had hit it. She had three bullseye shots and three in the second ring as she lined up her seventh shot. Her arm was starting to tire and as she squeezed the shot off she knew it wasn’t a good one. She frowned and stepped back away from the lane. Raven indicated she had hit the third ring from the centre and she looked over at Indra and frowned.

The general stepped forward and patted Clarke on the shoulder. She whispered some encouragement in her ear while Miller began to rub her shooting arm to loosen it up. “You can do this Clarke.” He patted her on the back as she stepped back up to the range and began to focus on her next shot. She nailed the next two, dead center, and with one shot remaining the crowd was shouting their encouragement and cheering for the Skai Commander. Even Lexa felt herself rooting for Clarke to hit the target one last time and she broke into a genuine smile as Clarke fired her last round and Raven confirmed a perfect bullseye.
Clarke knew she had left Lexa a lot of room to win but she felt good about her shots. She smiled and waved to the adoring crowd as she stepped down and watched her wife step forward to the 80 foot range. Lexa picked up her weapon and checked her clip. She looked so natural with the gun now that Clarke could hardly believe she hadn’t touched one before two weeks ago.

She watched Heda stride forward, take a stance and raise her arms. She controlled her breathing and took aim. She fired, and Raven confirmed a bullseye. She fired again, another bullseye. The third shot was the same result and Clarke began to worry. She stepped up on the platform and moved toward the side where Lexa could see her in her periphery. She clapped and cheered for her wife. “Good shooting Lex!”

Lexa looked suspiciously over at Clarke and was greeted by her wife’s barely covered cleavage. She had seen Clarke’s unbuttoned shirt and had been determined not to let it distract her, but now Clarke was leaning forward ever so slightly and she could see her perfect breasts swaying back and forth as she clapped. Lexa shook her head and turned back to the range. She fired again, and Raven held up the signal for the second ring. Clarke smirked and Lexa growled in frustration.

Clarke cheered for her again, but Lexa wasn’t falling for the same trick twice. She fired and hit another bullseye. Clarke upped her game and popped another button, then she reached up to her ponytail and pulled her hair free. Lexa caught sight of the blonde hair shining like spun gold in the mid-day sun as Clarke shook it free. Lexa glanced over slightly and ample cleavage and blonde hair greeted her. She squeezed her treacherous eyes shut trying not to look and desperately tried to focus on the target. She fired again, it was another hit in the second row. Clarke grinned and looked over at Indra who was smirking up at Lexa.

Kane came out to talk to Lexa, he laughed a little, “Clarke’s playing hardball, Commander. You have to keep your mind on the target and off her chest.” Lexa nodded, smiling slightly. She knew her wife was playing dirty, but the truth was she didn’t mind.

She stepped forward and got ready to take her next shot. As he did Clarke cheered for her again, but she forced herself to ignore her. Bullseye! Raven confirmed, and the crowd cheered madly. Clarke knew now was the time to pull out all the stops. As Lexa started to line up her next shot she slowly approached her.

Lexa could have lowered her weapon and waited but she didn’t, it was a battle of wills. Clarke walked right up to her, and just as Lexa was about to fire Clarke blew softly into her ear. The crowd was loving every second. They cheered wildly as Raven announced the shot had hit the fourth ring and Clarke jumped up and down, breasts bouncing and not helping Lexa’s concentration at all.

Lexa reached deep and tried to focus but the perfect orbs bouncing just to her right put her slightly off and she shot another into the second ring. She took a step back and sighed, mad at herself for being so easily distracted by Clarke’s antics. She turned to the crowd and shrugged, they ate it up, delighted at seeing the playfulness between their two Heda’s. Clarke was enjoying every second and was determined to make Lexa miss the next shot. If she hit a bullseye she would win, if not victory was Clarke’s.

Kane came forward, he hadn’t wanted to resort to this tactic but Clarke had left him no choice. Kane leaned forward and asked Lexa one question, “When you were fighting the Ice Prince in Sapeake, what did he say he would do to Clarke after he killed you?” When Lexa stepped back and glared at him, the fury of an angry Heda shone from her eyes. In that moment Kane knew they had won, no matter what Clarke tried. Before he walked away he pointed to the target and leaned in closer to Lexa, “The bullseye is the Ice Prince.”

Lexa’s lip arched slightly in a snarl and she strode back to her lane and raised her weapon. Clarke
walked up and this time when she leaned in she didn’t just blow in her ear she opened her mouth and bit down slightly on Lexa’s sensitive lobe. Lexa had her gun raised and the target in sight. She was allowing the anger at the Ice Prince’s threat against Clarke to rush through her veins and she was able to ignore the distraction of Clarke’s teeth.

She was Heda, and the one she loved was threatened. She lined up the shot, looking at the target but seeing the Ice Prince sneering at her and telling her how he was going to hurt Clarke. She paused, gripped the gun with her non-dominant left hand and reached down to wrap her right hand protectively around Clarke’s waist. She pulled Clarke in tighter, paused, and then she squeezed the trigger.

Clarke looked at her wife with a slight amount of awe, she knew Lexa hadn’t been affected at all, that the laser focus of Heda was back in firm control. Raven walked out and examined the target, she was about to raise her hand with the result when, “Ahhh! Oh my god! Ohhhh!” Echo started screaming and clutching her belly.

Clarke and Lexa whipped around and stared at her, the winning shot temporarily forgotten. Bellamy jumped up and knelt in front of her as Abby took firm control of the situation. “The baby is coming! Cato, Bellamy, help Echo walk to the clinic. Bellamy, remind her to breathe the way I taught you. Jackson, prepare the bed, let’s move!”

As the crowd stared after them in shock Raven snuck forward holding the winning target in her hand. She was whispering furiously with Ro and then the two of them moved forward and turned the shocked couple to face the crowd once more. “I know everyone wants to see the Tri/Skai baby but don’t forget we have a winner to announce!”

The crowd started to cheer for the two women and Raven grinned at Clarke and mouthed, “Sex toys!” before she turned and held up the target, “BULLSEYE!” she yelled and Lexa beamed with pride.

Ro proclaimed Lexa the winner of the first annual Peace Village shooting competition and Lexa invited everyone to join in the festivities that had been planned around the day. There were races for the children and sparring contests for the warriors. She promised to make her rounds and see everyone but begged their understanding that she wanted first wanted to go help welcome the first baby of Skai/Tree lineage into the world. The resounding roar of the crowd’s approval momentarily stunned Clarke and Lexa before they quickly made their way towards the clinic.

There was a growing crowd outside the clinic as Lexa approached Benson. “Any news?” Lexa asked.

“No Heda, not yet.” Benson looked pale and nervous and Clarke sought to reassure her.

“She’s going to be fine, her pregnancy has been perfectly normal and my mother is an excellent doctor.” Clarke put her arm around the young woman and patted her shoulder. She still felt a lot of affection for the young woman who had saved Lexa’s life in the battle against Yor and Alain.

The young woman had grown accustomed to Clarke’s physical touches; since the battle, the Skai Heda took the opportunity to hug her whenever she could. They barely noticed the wide eyes of the junior warriors who had gathered at the tent with Miller and Cato. She looked at Clarke and nodded, trying to be brave, “Sha Skai Heda. Your mother is an excellent doctor, it’s just that…” She trailed off and looked away nervously.

“What? Are you scared because Bellamy is from the Sky?” Clarke wanted to know what the Grounders were thinking. She knew there were still those who looked at the Skai Kru with fear
because their ways were just so different.

“Sha, he is from the Skai.” Benson paused, but continued on when she saw Clarke’s crestfallen expression. “You were exposed to a lot of radiation up there, all of the Skai People were. You have a higher tolerance than we do and I understand that might be transferred to the baby, but what if the higher levels don’t help the baby and it contaminated Echo’s DNA? What if the baby is born a mutant?” Benson whispered her fear and Clarke squeezed her shoulder.

“Remember, Benson, I have made friends with Bad Town. Their people will no longer be outcasts and if this baby has some kind of mutation we will accept the baby as is.”

Clarke felt Benson tense up.

“I understand, Skai Heda, but this is the first baby born to Skai and Tri. It needs to be “normal” if not Echo will be shunned by our people and they will think Skai Kru pairings are…. risky.” Benson was obviously uncomfortable discussing this with Clarke but she tried to express her worries. “No matter what, I will love this child like my own sibling, and when the time comes I will take the child as my second. But I’m afraid for Echo. She had two siblings cast away before she was born. Those who remember, watch her closely.” Benson glanced nervously around her and Clarke felt her anger rise.

“Benson, Lexa and I won’t let anything happen to Echo or her baby. The baby could be born with six arms and we will still welcome and accept both of them. It’s terrible that Echo had siblings she didn’t even get to meet because they were sent away for being different. I won’t let anything like that happen to this baby, I promise you.” Clarke felt Lexa step closer.

“Benson Kom Trikru, I will be making a trip to the Bad Lands soon. Heda will extend a hand of friendship to those that live there. I will let them join my coalition and I will no longer allow the abuses of the past to continue. But none of that matters right now, this baby will be perfect, I am sure of it.” Heda’s steady gaze and reassurance that the baby would be perfect caused Benson’s face to break into a huge grin.

“Sha Heda, Perfect.” She repeated looking at ease for the first time since Clarke and Lexa had approached her. Clarke shot a sidelong look at Lexa who she could tell was suppressing a grin. Heda knew exactly what to say to her warriors to quiet and calm them or equally to rouse their battle lust or shore up their bravery. Heda was a voice to be trusted, a calm in any storm.

They waited outside for a while before Lexa eventually pulled Clarke aside. “We should go back and greet our people. Watch some of the games and shake hands with the winners. Clarke nodded her agreement and they excused themselves from the vigil. Miller joined Cato, no discussion necessary, and took up the rear guard position as they moved back toward the festivities. Lexa was pleased.

They spent the next couple of hours walking around and greeting their people. They congratulated the children who had won the races and Clarke made sure to hug all the participants and tell them she was proud of them. Lexa watched the sparring with an intense gaze and loudly shouted to them that the winner would face her tomorrow. Clarke wondered why they all looked so pleased about this when she knew Lexa was just going to beat up on whoever was the “lucky” winner.

She mentioned this to Cato who looked surprised, “It is an honour to spar with Heda, any scars she gives will be worth years of bragging rights.” Clarke caught the slight glance he made toward Miller who gave him a thumbs up on his use of the unfamiliar expression. He looked so proud of himself that Clarke began to laugh.

“Ribs, you are just too adorable.” He looked incredibly miffed at her and frowned as she hugged his large frame.
“I am a deadly warrior.” He protested, but gave in to the blonde and patted her awkwardly on the back until she released him.

Once Lexa was satisfied that everything was running smoothly, they turned back toward the clinic to check in on Echo. As they walked Clarke grabbed Lexa’s hand and pressed in close to her side. “So…. you won.” She stated coyly.

“Of course.” Was Lexa’s instant reply.

Clarke rolled her eyes but smiled, “So… the bet… the real bet. When are you going to get the…. you know…?” Clarke blushed.

Lexa let her stoic expression fall and turned toward Clarke with a lust filled, wolfish, grin. Her eyes travelled down Clarke’s body and back up as she licked her lips. She leaned over and whispered in her wife’s ear. “They are waiting for us in our bedroom, Clarke. As soon as we get home I am going to take great pleasure in showing you.”

Clarke’s mouth fell open, her eyes wide in surprise, “You already have them? But you didn’t even know who would win….?” Clarke cut her own words off with a wry laugh as she shook her head, “Of course you have them already, your prowess and all.” She suddenly found herself curious. “What did you get? Where did you get them? What are they? How are they made?” She was about to rattle off several more questions when Lexa stopped her.

“Patience Houmon. After all, we have a baby to welcome into the world.” Lexa was feeling very superior and was enjoying keeping Clarke wondering. She was, however, thinking that Echo better hurry up and push that baby out.”

They arrived back at the clinic and found the crowd had thinned. They approached Benson again, “Have you heard anything?” Clarke smiled at her as she asked.

“Bellamy came out earlier, he said everything was going fine.” Benson laughed a little and added, “He looked terrified, though.”

Moments later, Raven arrived at the clinic with Monty and Jasper in tow. They joined Clarke and Lexa. “Clarke, any word?” They looked excited and nervous at the same time and Lexa smiled with the realization that this baby meant just as much to Skaikru as it did to the Grounders.

“It’s going well but no baby yet.” She reported, and the friends spread out some blankets and sat down together. Raven looked around.

“We’ll have to add some benches near the clinic, make it like a waiting room.” she stated and caught Cato’s eye. His answering nod assured her that by end of day tomorrow there would be benches. Lexa watched the silent communication between them and found herself smiling yet again. Clarke caught the expression and softly tugged at her shirt, “What?”

“Later Houmon. I will explain later.” Lexa smiled softly and Clarke nodded her acceptance.

“I can’t believe Bellamy is going to be a dad!” Jasper shook his head and Monty laughed.

“I know! Remember what a jerk he was when we first landed.” Monty laughed and Clarke smiled. “Seriously Clarke I thought you two were going to kill each other.”

Lexa tensed, “Bellamy tried to hurt you?” All of the friends froze and then all at once began trying to explain in a way that would prevent Bellamy from being killed on the very day he became a dad. It was Clarke’s voice that won.

“No Lex. We had different ideas of what the 100 should do and how we should do it but he
protected us all when it came down to it, including me.” Clarke’s hand on Lexa’s forearm reassured her but Lexa still frowned.

“He’s grown up a lot down here, we all have.” Raven added and Lexa nodded.

“Yes, Clarke has shown much improvement from the first day I met her” Lexa teased. Clarke punched her in the shoulder and Lexa’s severe expression melted into a soft smile as she stepped closer and let her arm slide around Clarke. “Actually, she walked into my war tent alone and didn’t back down from me. She won my respect immediately, and my heart wasn’t far behind.”

“You two are so perfect together,” Raven’s voice was too sweet and Clarke knew there was something else coming. “I mean really, Clarke and Lexa, two beautiful and powerful women. You love each other and your love has helped inspire 13 clans toward peace. It’s such a beautiful story.”

Lexa looked proud as Raven continued gushing about her and Clarke but Clarke had a frown on her face and was waiting for the next line.

“The only thing missing…” Raven began

“Here we go…” Clarke sighed and Lexa just looked confused.

“Missing…?”

“It’s okay babe, she’s going to go on about being Auntie Raven again.” Clarke clarified, as realization dawned on Lexa’s face she just smiled.

“For real!!!! Clexa babies would make your story perfect! And Auntie Raven would be a central figure, teaching the perfect little Clexas how to build cool machines, and blow stuff up!”

“Clexa babies!” Monty and Jasper jumped up in excitement. “Are you two going to…”

They were all cut off by Bellamy running out of the clinic. He jumped and threw his fist into the air, “Woo! We have a baby! A baby!” He grabbed Clarke and twirled her around then grabbed Raven and hugged her. When he let go, he high-fived Jasper and Monty then turned to run back in.

Benson stopped him, “Echo?”

“She’s fine, no, she’s great… she’s fucking perfect! They’re both fucking perfect!” Bellamy was over the top excited, he grabbed Benson and squeezed her in a bear hug. “She asked for you, Benson.” As Benson quickly headed inside he turned and looked at his friends. “I’m a dad! Can you believe that! Woo hoo!” He shouted, his head thrown back and a giant smile on his face.

His friends all laughed and gave him more high fives and hugs. Lexa watched quietly but with a genuine smile. “Bellamy Blake, I am pleased that the baby is healthy.” She offered.

“He is Heda, thank you.” With this Lexa stepped past him and into the clinic. Bellamy continued talking excitedly to his friends. “Abby says he’s strong and his mother is strong and everything went perfectly!” Bellamy was beaming.

“He!?” Monty picked up on the pronoun. “It’s a boy?” He grinned at Bellamy. “Did you pick a name yet?”

“Echo says she wants to wait, she has a name picked out but she says she wants to make sure it suits him.” Bellamy shrugged, I don’t care man. They are both healthy, I’m a dad. This shit is crazy!” He laughed and they all jumped in for a group hug.
Lexa slipped silently into the room where Echo was holding the tiny bundle. Benson and Echo looked up immediately and bowed their heads. Abby followed their gaze. “Lexa, I didn’t hear you come in.” Abby smiled at her daughter-in-law. “Echo said you would be in to see the baby.” She thought for a minute and frowned. “I don’t agree with this, you know. You told the people in Bad Town…”

Lexa cut her off, “I meant it Abby. I will make amends. Bad Town will suffer no longer. This is a Trikru tradition and this baby is the first of what I hope will be many babies half sky and half ground. I must follow tradition this time. I must give Heda’s assurance to the people.”

Echo spoke softly, “It’s okay Abby, I want her to do it.” She held the baby out and Lexa stepped over and carefully took the child. Benson helped her unwrap the infant from the blanket Abby had used to make him snug. Lexa held him up, he didn’t cry, and his big brown eyes held her gaze. She smiled at him and fell just a little in love with his unruly and unusually thick mop of dark hair.

Lexa looked him over carefully, his perfect features unmarked by any blemishes or mutations. She handed him to Benson and carefully examined his fingers and toes and then his back. She ran her hands carefully over his tiny skull and when she was satisfied she had completed the examination she took him back from Benson. She cradled him in her arms and placed a soft kiss on his forehead. She walked back to Echo’s bedside and as she bent to give him back to her Bellamy and Clarke came inside.

Lexa didn’t spare them a glance, she had to finish what she had started. She kissed Echo on the forehead and spoke softly, “Echo Kom Trikru, yu fyucha ste ogud. Ai don chich op.”

Benson repeated Heda’s words, “Heda don chich op, yu fyucha ste ogud.”

Echo repeated. “Ai fyucha ste ogud, Heda don chich op.” Echo had tears pooling in her eyes and threatening to spill down her cheeks, she smiled reassuringly as she looked at Bellamy and Clarke’s confused expressions.

Lexa spoke once more placing her hand gently on the baby’s head, “Yu fyucha kom Trikru.”

“Thank you Heda.” She managed to choke out as the plump tears escaped her eyes and ran down her face. Lexa kissed her and the baby once more before stepping back.

Bellamy stepped forward, “What is going on?” He asked. His heart was racing, he couldn’t explain why but he suddenly felt very protective. He put his hand on Echo’s shoulder and looked to Lexa for an explanation.

Before she could answer Abby stood. As she moved over and took the baby from Echo to weigh him, she nonchalantly added, “Lexa was doing some Trikru blessing that apparently couldn’t wait until the doctor was done with all the measurements.” She sighed in a pretence of frustration before placing the baby on a scale and measuring his length. When she was done she wrapped him in the blanket again and handed him to the proud papa.

Bellamy took him and a look of such pure love came over his face that Clarke’s eyes welled up with tears. Abby motioned for Bellamy to follow her, “There is a crib over here Bell, we’ll move Echo in a few minutes but if you want to help get the little one settled Raven and the rest can come in and see him. Bellamy looked at Echo for permission, and when she nodded, he smiled and walked proudly behind Abby cradling his precious bundle.

As soon as he was gone Clarke spoke up, “Why were you saying the baby was good. What were you doing? It wasn’t a blessing.” Lexa looked at her wife but Echo answered.

“Heda was giving her blessing, she was saying the child is perfect, free of mutations and she
proclaimed the baby Trikru.” Echo was overwhelmed and she began to cry again, Benson immediately moved to comfort her.

“Free from mutations… Lex!” Clarke was about to protest but Lexa quietly cut her off. Her tone was soft, yet insistent.

“Houmon, this baby is very important for both our people. I had to follow the Trikru tradition and welcome the baby to the clan.”

Clarke was scared to ask her next question, her voice was barely above a whisper, “What if the baby had a mutation, what would you have done?”

“I would have had you publicly welcome the baby into Skaikru and I would have placed both the baby and Echo under my protection.” Lexa was open and honest with her wife. “Our people will come to accept the people of Bad Town, and all of the other shunned people in the clans, but it will take time.”

Clarke sighed and looked angry but she nodded. “I get it, I’m going to go see the baby.” Her words were curt and Lexa watched her go knowing they would discuss this later.

When Clarke was gone she turned her attention back to Echo, “Have you chosen a name?”

Echo smiled and nodded, “Sha Heda.” She looked apologetic, “I want to ask you first. The old stories I used to read, they told of Father Sky and Mother Earth. They had children, a race of beings who had incredible strength, and incredible knowledge. They were called the Titans.”

Lexa held Echo’s gaze. “You wish to name him Titan, but you fear it’s too close to Titus and I will disapprove.”

“Sha, Heda. I have many other ideas, so please speak true.” Echo looked into her Heda’s eyes and saw love. She was once again humbled and awed by Lexa.

Lexa opened up to her warriors about a very personal and much discussed Trikru legend. The death of Titus. “Titus was my mentor when I first became Heda, he was my Flamekeeper. He thought my love for Costia was weakness and so he strongly advised me to keep her far away from a meeting I had arranged with the Ice Nation. Against my better judgement, I agreed. I blamed him when she was taken because she should have been where she always was, by my side. I still don’t know if he was in league with the abductors, but he had reassigned all of her guards and she was left alone the night it happened.

In my anger I killed him with my own sword and declared the end of the Flamekeeper tradition. None should command such an influence over a young Heda as he did over me. I reorganized, chose village elders and trusted generals as advisors. Flamekeeper is no more.”

Lexa looked at Echo and Benson, their eyes shimmered with an emotion she couldn’t quite place. Had she known it was love for their Heda, her own eyes would have shimmered in return. Tears looked strange glistening in the eyes of these fearsome warriors. She shrugged off the heaviness of the memory and brought herself back to the moment. “Titan is a good name, not so similar really.”

She winked at Echo. “It’s a strong name for a Trikru warrior. Besides, his father is of the sky and his mother is of the Earth, I can think of no better name for him.” Lexa smiled at her and Echo let yet another tear slide down her cheek.

Benson giggled, “You never read those stories to the end, did you Echo? Better tell Bellamy to watch out because I’m pretty certain the Titans killed their father.” Lexa and Echo looked at Benson
in surprise and then the three women began to laugh, breaking the tension that had grown thick in the small room.

In the other room Raven was entirely smitten with the baby boy. She was cooing and talking softly to him as she cradled him in her arms. Clarke was trying to get in on the baby cuddling but Raven was having none of it. “Go away Clark, little Echamy wants to stay with Auntie Rayray.”

“Echamy?” Bellamy looked at her with raised eyebrows. “If you’re going to give my kid horrible nicknames give him back.” He took the baby from a protesting Raven who glared at him as he handed the baby to Clarke.

“Well if your wife won’t name him what do you expect me to do!?” She threw her hands up and glared at him but quickly made her way to Clarke’s side to coo at the baby some more.

“Speaking of wife,” Monty started.

“When are you going to propose?” Jasper finished.

Raven and Clarke looked delighted at Bellamy’s squirming and looked at him expectantly for an answer.

He shrugged, “I don’t think she wants that. She told me that she had considered a bond like yours and Lexa’s once.” His eyes landed on Clarke. “The girl died in the mountain long before we came to Earth. I don’t know if she’d consider it again, with me.” He looked slightly pathetic and since he’d given her an adorable baby to fawn over Raven took pity on him.

“Bell, you don’t have to ask her to bond with you for life like Clarke. Lexa is Heda so that was the only way for them. You could just plain old fashioned get married.” Raven grinned as Bellamy perked up.

“Yeah… I could propose. I don’t know how to kill a bear anyway so the unbreakable union is out of the question.” As his friends laughed and rallied around him Lexa walked into the room and they quieted.

Raven watched Lexa take in the sight of Clarke with the baby. She leaned over to Jasper and whispered, “Look at that! We’ll have Clexa babies in no time!” Jasper snorted his laughter and repeated it to Monty who tried in vain to hold in a guffaw.

Lexa ignored them and focused on Bellamy. “I am happy for your family, Bellamy. I am happy and thankful. You have given us all a beautiful, healthy baby and in doing so you have given the people hope for the future and you have united the Skai Kru and the Tri Kru on yet another level.” Lexa’s words sat in his heart and bloomed. His boy was a symbol of peace and togetherness, in the back of his mind he thought that he sure hoped Echo chose a name worthy of all that.

Just then Benson wheeled Echo into the room in a wheelchair. Abby moved over and helped get her up and into the bed she had prepared. She took the baby from Clarke and brought him to his mother. She placed him near Echo’s breast and the baby began to feed.

“Okay, everyone. Let’s let mom and dad have some time with the little one.” She spoke softly and they all filed out saying their goodbyes.

Lexa watched Clarke closely as they left, she was having trouble judging her wife’s mood. Would they spend the night arguing about her checking the baby for deformities or would they spend it how
she had planned. She thought to herself that her mannerisms were rubbing off on Clarke, because her wife was masking her emotions very well at the moment.

The walk back to the house had been a very quiet one. Clarke knew Lexa was watching her, looking for a sign as to her reaction to everything that had happened, but Clarke was completely closed off. Lexa felt both annoyed at her inability to read her and impressed with Clarke’s control.

When Clarke spotted the tray of food on the kitchen table her face softened slightly, “Oh god, I’m so hungry!” She took a large bite of the fresh bread and picked up some of the dried meat. “Ribs is truly the best.” Clarke instinctively knew Cato had either ordered this or he had brought it himself.

Lexa smiled and sat opposite her wife. “He is.” Was her only response and she picked up a small handful of berries and popped them into her mouth. She watched Clarke for a while contemplating how to broach the subject without making Clarke even angrier than she presumed she already was.

It was Clarke who, after several pieces of bread, some cheese and some meat, spoke first. “Nice shooting today, I could say I let you win, but I’d be lying.”

Lexa perked up, perhaps they wouldn’t end up in a political discussion tonight. “You were a worthy opponent, Clarke. You shot very well. You would have beaten me if Kane hadn’t been there.” Lexa nodded assuredly and Clarke looked curious.

“What did he say to you? Whatever it was your focus was laser on that last shot, you even did it left handed, and I was biting your ear!?” Clarke’s curiosity grew and she looked expectantly at Lexa for an answer. She watched her wife withdraw slightly, and Clarke knew the answer made her uncomfortable.

“He told me the target was the Ice Prince.” Lexa told her the basic truth.

Clarke looked at Lexa and her features softened, “What did he say before that?”

Lexa frowned and sighed, “He asked me what the Ice Prince had said about you.”

Clarke felt anger rise in her blood remembering the hulking man who Lexa had fought. Every second of that battle had been ingrained in Clarke’s memory and she thought back to it now. There was a moment when Lexa was still pretending to be weak, letting the Prince beat on her, he had leaned in and it had been obvious he said something to Lexa. That had been the tipping point, Lexa had begun to fight back. She was no longer passive after that. Clarke pressed on, “What did the Ice Prince say to you, Lexa?”

Lexa looked irritated and stood from the table, “We don’t need to talk about this, Clarke.” Her voice was hard but when the blue eyes she so loved looked softly into her own, she broke, and tears filled her eyes. As she blinked them away she softly added, “You don’t need to hear those things, Clarke.”

“Howmon,” Clarke used the Grounder word purposely, “You don’t have to protect me from a dead man. What did he say?”

Lexa looked at Clarke and her resolve broke, “He told me he would make you his slave, that he would…” Lexa was shaking and couldn’t finish her sentence, Clarke jumped to her feet and moved quickly to her wife. She took Lexa’s hands in her own.

Clarke’s eyes glistened as she remembered the laser focus on Lexa’s face after Kane had whispered to her. She remembered how Lexa had wrapped her arm protectively around her as she lined up her shot. When she spoke her voice was soft, barely above a whisper, and full of emotion, “Lex, that’s
what made you focus so clearly. You were protecting me, even from a dead man?” She leaned in and kissed her wife softly on the lips.

Lexa wrapped her arms around Clarke as she responded to the soft lips that were currently moving delicately across her own. When Clarke broke the kiss a small whine came from the back of Lexa’s throat and Clarke smiled in response.

She squeezed Lexa’s hands and batted her eyelids coquettishly, “So mighty shooting champion what were you saying earlier about something waiting for us in the bedroom…?

Lexa’s smile grew and she quickly turned and pulled Clarke toward the stairs. Clarke’s happy laughter rang out as she was tugged along up to the bedroom. Lexa led her to the bed and stood her in front of it. She stretched her arm out toward a large wooden chest that was now sitting against the wall near the foot of the bed.

“It’s kinda big Lex… how much stuff did you get!?” Clarke collapsed on the bed in a sudden fit of giggles as Lexa puffed her chest up and walked over to the chest.

“I am Heda. When I get sex toys, I get all of the sex toys.” Lexa tried to sound serious but her laughing wife soon had her giggling as well, “Should I show you what we’ve got?” She asked Clarke, who nodded eagerly and tried to stop laughing.

Lexa opened the chest and looked inside, she couldn’t hide the smile that bloomed on her face or the eager, hungry look in her eyes as she looked back at the gorgeous blonde who was perched on their bed laughing and clapping.

Lexa reached in and pulled out a beautiful, handcrafted leather harness. Clarke immediately noticed it had some buckles and a shape that would allow Lexa to slip her legs through, it could only have one purpose. “Lex… is that…” her eyes were growing as big as her cunt was wet. “Is that a harness… you know for a dildo?” Her hands were curled into half fists and she pulled them into her face trying to cover her extra-large smile.

Her giggles made Lexa feel giddy, this was going to be a fun night. Lexa grinned and moved suddenly, like a pouncing cat. She was on top of a squealing Clarke before she spoke again. She punctuated her words with kisses, “Clarke… I will… wear this…. and I will… fuck you.” Lexa was playful, her hands running down Clarke’s body, pinching and stroking Clarke’s curves as she placed loving kisses on her cheeks and her neck. Finally, when she had Clarke lying back and had her own body hovering tantalizingly over Clarke’s, she let her lips fall onto her wife’s.

Clarke found herself laughing and feeling very playful and yet terribly turned on all at the same time. She grabbed Lexa’s sides and wrestled her onto her back and then she sat up straddling Lexa and rocking her hips suggestively, “Or… maybe you’ll wear it and lie there while I fuck you.” Clarke dropped her upper body down so her hands were on either side of Lexa’s head. Her hair fell in a golden circle around Lexa’s face and she paused just millimetres above Lexa’s lips. “Now, do you have something to put in that harness?” Clarke raised an eyebrow and grinned wolfishly at Lexa.

Lexa’s eyes grew wide and she felt wetness pooling between her legs. “Yes… I do, I do.” Lexa wiggled out from under Clarke and the normally athletic woman fell over herself in her effort to get to the trunk as quickly as possible. She heard Clarke’s wonderful laughter ring out as she stumbled, it sounded heavenly to her.

Lexa reached the trunk and looked inside, she wanted to choose the right toy for their first time using the harness. She reached in and pulled out a highly polished wooden dildo. It had been lovingly carved from a cherry tree and had a deep reddish colour that Lexa loved. It was about six and a half
inches long and one and three quarter inches in girth. There was a slight upturn towards the bulbous end and the base had a flare where it fit nicely into the harness.

Lexa turned back to the bed and held it out towards Clarke. Clarke’s eyes devoured it and when she spoke her voice was rough, full of gravel and want. “Get undressed, Lexa.” Clarke was already half naked and quickly peeled the rest of her clothes off. Lexa quickly followed her orders and stripped herself naked.

Clarke had picked up the harness from the bed and stroked the soft leather. She moved to the edge of the bed and gestured with her hand, “Come here, lover.” Lexa moved immediately to stand in front of Clarke. She was enjoying the demanding, lustful side of her wife and glad that Clarke seemed excited to try out their new box of toys.

As Clarke focused her attention momentarily on figuring out the buckles on the harness, Lexa let her hands run over her shoulders, marvelling at the colour of Clarke’s skin. She could see the darkness of the tanned skin from the summer sun in stark contrast to the whiteness of her back and shoulders that were always covered. It made Lexa smile, she wanted to trace those lines with her tongue. Her thoughts were interrupted as Clarke’s hand wrapped around her waist.

Clarke had figured out the harness and was wrapping the belt around Lexa’s waist. The upper part was a simple belt with a square buckle on the side. Clarke slid the soft leather through the buckle and pulled it tight. She slipped the pin through the hole in the leather and tucked the end of the leather through the keeper.

Lexa felt her thighs tremble, her anticipation building. Watching Clarke’s nimble fingers working the belt was building her up, and when Clarke held out her hand expectantly for the dildo Lexa held in her own hand, she heard an unbidden moan leave her own lips.

Clarke smiled a cocky smile and looked up into Lexa’s green eyes. “You’re too turned on to fuck me properly Lexy… we’ll have to take care of you first.” Lexa was about to protest that she could always fuck Clarke properly but the protest died on her lips when she felt Clarke’s fingers slide behind the ring of the harness and into her wetness.

“Fuck! Lexa, you are so wet.” Clarke purred as she began to stroke two fingers through the wetness spreading it around and working her fingers deeper into Lexa’s slit. She ran her fingers down and teased Lexa’s opening without going inside. She slid back up and found Lexa’s clit. Clarke let her fingers slide slightly apart and stroked. Lexa’s clit was caught in between her fingers and was being stimulated from both sides. She groaned and begged Clarke to go faster.

Clarke sped her hand movements, pumping through the wetness and watching with lidded eyes as Lexa threw her head back and began to tremble. Her abs clenched as she leaned back, her muscles rippling and trembling as the pleasure drove her to the edge. She gasped as Clarke squeezed her fingers together slightly and continued her ministrations. “Clarke! I’m so close… fuck.. Clarke!”

“Come for me baby.” Clarke was breathless and entranced by the sight of Lexa coming apart like that, standing before her with a strap on harness half fastened around her waist.

Lexa grabbed onto Clarke’s shoulders, digging her fingers in as she tumbled over the edge of her orgasm. Her legs shook and her knees buckled slightly. Clarke stilled her movements but kept her hand cupped over Lexa’s dripping wet sex.

As Lexa recovered Clarke took the dildo and slipped it into the metal ring in the centre of the harness. She pulled the two leather leg straps through to the front and tugged them tight. One in each hand she slipped them simultaneously up through the small buckles and with her thumbs she nudged the pin into the holes then tugged the thin straps through the keepers.
When she was done she looked up to see Lexa watching her with eyes that looked black, her pupils were blown so wide open. Her cock was jutting proudly out from her lean frame and Clark leaned forward and took it into her mouth.

“Fuuuccckkk! Clarke, fuck, fuck, fuck.” Lexa was becoming unstable on her feet, the visual of Clarke sucking her dick was overwhelming. Clarke used her mouth to get the dildo nice and wet and she used her hands to position the base in just the right spot for it to press against Lexa’s clit as she fucked her.

Once Clarke was satisfied she let go of the cock and gave it one last lick. Lexa was mesmerized at the blonde head bobbing up and down on her newly sprung cock. She watched and small moans escaped her mouth. When Clarke looked up at her, big blue eyes batting from under her lashes and let the cock pop out of her mouth Lexa lost control entirely.

“Fuck Clarke! Lay back I need to be inside of you. You are so fucking sexy!” Lexa reached down and grabbed Clarke under her arms. She threw her back onto the bed and Clarke laughed and scrambled to get into position. She lay back, pulled her knees up with her feet flat on the bed and splayed her knees out as wide as she could. Lexa jumped on top of her, fitting perfectly between her spread legs. Their mouths collided, a desperate battle of teeth and tongues.

Clarke was becoming impatient, she was very wet and very ready. “Come on, Heda. Show me what a champion can do.” She felt Lexa tense, she knew how her dirty talk affected her wife so she continued. “You beat me, you won. Now take your prize, Lex. Fuck me.”

Lexa found herself very close to the edge of orgasm with the anticipation and the words coming from the very sexy lips of Clarke Griffin. The words built tension in her center and she felt all of her muscles tight, anticipating, wanting. She took a breath to steady herself. This was Clarke’s first time being fucked by a dildo and the wood was far less forgiving than her fingers or her tongue. She needed to take her time and to do that she needed to control the lustful animal inside that wanted to break free, out of her control.

Her right hand reached down and swiped through Clarke’s folds. She was entranced by the wetness she found there, and she had to take another breath to calm herself. She grasped the head of the dildo and brought it to the opening in Clarke’s wetness. In her head she repeated to herself over and over, “Soft and slow Lexa, soft and slow, don’t hurt her, don’t hurt her.” When she heard a soft giggle she looked at Clarke, surprised. “Did I say that out loud?” Clarke’s tender smile gave her the answer even before her words.

“Yeah Lexy, you did.” Clarke kissed her softly, the earlier provocative tease gone from her voice. “I love you too. I’d love you to go soft and slow the first time.” Clarke’s lips had slipped down to Lexa’s earlobe and she added in a sexy whisper, “You’ve got all night to fuck me.”

Lexa swallowed hard, her heart was pounding out of her chest and she was certain that this was how she would die someday. In their old age Clarke would say something too sexy for her to handle and her heart would just explode. Her hand was still holding the tip of her cock to Clarke’s opening and her hips were fighting against her self-control. They desperately wanted to roll forward and enter that wet cavern of delight.

Lexa looked into Clarke’s blue eyes, they were blown wide open with desire. “Are you ready?” she whispered, her voice hoarse with lust.

“Clarke nodded, “Yes” Then she kissed Lexa, soft and slow. Lexa’s hips rocked forward slightly letting the enlarged tip enter Clarke. “Mmmm, yeah baby.” The words of encouragement allowing her to slide even further inside. When she was fully inside she stopped moving and looked intently at Clarke, fighting the urge to start thrusting. The base of the cock was putting a delicious pressure on
her clit and all she wanted to do was fuck, hard.

Lexa watched Clarke’s eyes flutter and her lips tremble as she let Clarke adjust to the length of her dick. Clarke’s head tilted back and a lovely blush was spread over her skin. Lexa stayed still and it was Clarke who started the thrusting. She rocked her hips forward slowly and as she did, a moan escaped her lips.

Clarke’s arms found their way up and around Lexa’s shoulders, her hands finding Lexa’s long, curly hair. She wound her fingers in it, tugging slightly on it. Lexa started moving, softly and slowly she began to fuck Clarke.

She pulled out most of the way and then smoothly slid back in, deep. The sound Clarke made was fuel she didn’t need for the fire already burning. She fought the urge to speed up; she had images running through her mind of ways to take Clarke. She wanted her on all fours, bent over the bed, on top, on her side, she wanted her on the table downstairs. She fought it all back and continued to stroke, slowly, deeply and as soft as she could manage. Clarke was meeting her thrusts and her hands were tightening in Lexa’s hair.

Lexa smiled at the beautiful woman under her. When Clarke threw her head back again Lexa took advantage of the graceful neck now delightfully exposed to her and began kissing and sucking her way down to the collarbones she was so fond of. She had just sucked a small hickey into the hollow at the base of her neck when Clarke whimpered, “Lex, kiss me, kiss me baby.” Lexa immediately moved back up to kiss her swollen lips and claim them.

They kissed, softly and slowly, Lexa matched her hips to the kiss. She felt Clarke tugging slightly on her hair and knew she was getting close. She loved fucking Clarke like this. The full body contact, the kissing, Clarke’s arms wrapped around her with her hands tangled in her hair. She sped up slightly and earned a loud moan.

Clarke was getting close but she needed something to push her over the edge. “Lex, I need, I need…” Lexa instinctively understood and quickly slipped her hand between their two bodies. She didn’t slow her hips just let her hand dip into the wetness to find Clarke’s swollen clit. Clarke’s whole body shuddered and she pressed her lips desperately into Lexa’s. A few small strokes of her clit was all it took to bring Clarke to an explosive orgasm. They kept their lips pressed tightly together and Lexa felt the desperation in the breaths and the moans. She slowed her hand but continued rocking her cock slightly inside of Clarke until her breathing evened out a bit and she found her voice. Lexa pulled her cock slowly from Clarke, who moaned softly in protest at its loss.

“Lexy, soft and slow is hot as hell.” Clarke sighed a very contented sigh and relaxed a little bit. She ran her hands over Lexa’s back a few times and then down lower to rest them on her ass, each hand cupping a perfect cheek.

Lexa was conflicted, she was so content right now and at the same time she was so horny. She wanted to start thrusting again but she also wanted to gaze into Clarke’s eyes like this forever and not move. Clarke once again made the choice for her. She kissed Lexa softly and then she flipped her onto her back. Lexa laughed in pleased surprise and Clarke looked down hungrily at her.

She ran her hands over Lexa’s body and stopped to torture her nipples slightly. Lexa was so wet she was sure she would flood the bed. Clarke grabbed the shaft of Lexa’s cock and moved to straddle her. Lexa’s eyes were glued to Clarke’s hand she wanted to see Clarke sink down and take it inside of her. When Clarke pulled the cock away she groaned in frustration and her eyes snapped up to Clarke’s, she was grinning mischievously.

“You want to see me ride your cock, don’t you Lex?” When Lexa couldn’t find words she just
nodded enthusiastically. Clarke laughed softly, “So eager, my love.” She teased. “But I have another plan, so you’ll have to be patient.” Lexa actually whimpered but soon Clarke slid forward straddling her stomach and she began to gyrate, using Lexa’s hard abs for friction. Clarke inched forward, grinding her hips and leaving a trail of wetness all along Lexa’s body.

Lexa was shaking with desire, she thought she knew what Clarke was doing and her mouth watered in anticipation. Clarke continued her way up Lexa’s body until she was sitting on her upper chest, her pussy achingly close to Lexa’s face. Lexa breathed out, “Please, Clarke come closer,” and the blonde giggled.

“Do you want to taste me, Lex?” Clarke loved it when Lexa was so hot for her like this.

“You know I do, Houmon. Come closer, sit on my face.” Lexa’s hands were cupping Clarke’s ass and she gave her a nudge encouraging her to continue her journey up Lexa’s body.

Clarke felt her body respond, she felt so sexy knowing how badly Lexa wanted to taste her. She lifted herself off of Lexa’s chest and moved forward positioning her cunt just over Lexa’s mouth. “Is this what you want, Heda? Do you want to make me come with your mouth before I ride your cock? Do it, Heda, do it now.”

Lexa’s hands flew to Clarke’s ass and she pulled her down slightly so she could dive into Clarke’s wetness with her tongue. Clarke shuddered and her hands wandered to her own tits squeezing and caressing them. Her hips bucked and guided Lexa’s tongue to all the right spots and just the perfect amount of pressure.

Lexa fucking loved it when Clarke sat on her face. She focused her attention wherever Clarke’s movements directed her, and tonight her hips were telling the story of a woman who wanted her clit suckled and lavished with attention. Lexa was up to the task. Her tongue danced over the swollen nub and Clarke moaned, swore, and called out to the heavens. As she approached orgasm Lexa focused her movements in concise circles around Clarke’s clit. She felt wetness flood down her chin and she smiled into Clarke’s cunt.

Clarke quickly became too sensitive and she moved off of Lexa’s face, collapsing on top of her chest trying to regain her strength. Lexa wrapped her arms around the woman she loved and stroked her back with light, loving touches.

When Clarke had a little strength back she began sucking on the nipples that were right in front of her and far too gorgeous to ignore. She loved the gasp she earned from Lexa when she enveloped the hardness into her mouth. Playing with Lexa’s tits brought her desire back very quickly and soon Clarke was sitting up on Lexa’s stomach again, bent over and working Lexa’s nipples with her teeth and tongue.

Lexa was so horny it was impossible to hold back, “Please, Clarke, I need more, I’m so turned on.” Lexa watched in fascination and lust as Clarke once again reached between her legs and grabbed her shaft. Clarke shimmied down and lined herself up, but before she took the cock inside of her, she slid a finger under the harness and made sure Lexa’s clit was still in line with the base of the cock. She planned to make her wife come hard as she rode her.

When she was satisfied she gripped the shaft and brought it to her opening. She locked her eyes on Lexa’s face, watching her stare intently at her pussy. Then she lowered herself ontoLexa’s cock. She watched Lexa’s mouth drop open and heard an obscene moan come from the hot woman under her. Clarke took the cock slowly, finding this new position filled her differently than being on her back. She let herself get used to the fullness before inching her way down all the way to the base of the cock.
Lexa cried out as Clarke’s weight put pressure on the base of the cock and that transferred through to her throbbing clit. Clarke smiled down at her. “Feel good, baby?”

When a ragged, “Yes.” ripped from Lexa’s throat Clarke began to grind and rotate her hips keeping the full length inside of her. A high pitched whine escaped Lexa and Clarke felt her own moan rising. She sped up her movements a little and her pleasure was beginning to build just like Lexa’s.

When she was fully comfortable gyrating and grinding down on the cock she began to lift herself slightly, pulling Lexa’s dick out of her tight pussy before dropping back down and taking it all back inside of her. Lexa cried out, “Clarke, fuck yes!” and the encouragement emboldened the beautiful blonde. She pulled out a little further and increased her speed.

Lexa’s cries of passion fanned the flames of her own and soon she was bouncing up and down riding Lexa’s cock. Lexa was getting close and she panted her words of love and desire to the woman giving her so much pleasure. Clarke tried to focus on making Lexa come but found herself too focused on her own impending orgasm to be capable of much coherent thought.

On instinct Lexa brought her hand to Clarke’s cunt and began to rub her clit with her thumb. This was all Clarke needed to get herself to the edge, she panted out, “Lex, I’m close… I’m close… come with me baby… come with meeeeee…” The sentence was lost as her words became a wail of passion and she exploded in orgasm.

Lexa was not far behind, the stimulation on her clit from the base of the cock and the visual of the hot blonde naked and riding her to orgasm was more than enough to have her shouting to the Grounder gods and jerking her hips up to meet Clarke’s thrusts.

The bed was a mess of their combined wetness. Clarke was sweaty and collapsed on Lexa’s chest and Lexa was covered, face, chest, and cock in Clarke’s essence. Lexa was very satisfied, she smiled to herself and began to place small kisses on the top of her wife’s head.

Clarke smiled back at her and lifted her head just enough for a soft kiss before dropping back down to rest on Lexa’s chest again. “Lex, that was a lot of fun.” Clarke giggled asLexa’s reply was no more than a soft grunt.

Clarke folded her arms on top of Lexa’s chest and rested her head on her own forearms so she could look at her clearly, physically expended, wife. Lexa had her eyes closed and a soft yet somehow smug smile on her lips. Clarke smiled wide and a glint of playfulness found its way back into her eyes. “Whatsa matter, Heda? Don’t have enough prowess to show me what else you’ve got in that chest of goodies?”

One of Lexa’s eyes immediately snapped open and the smug smile became a playful frown. Clarke felt strong arms wrap around her waist and she squealed as Lexa suddenly lifted her and slid out from under her, flipping her all in one smooth move. Lexa landed on top of her and finally opened the other eye.

“Don’t ever doubt my prowess, Houmon.” She said, before leaning in and stealing a quick kiss. Then she jumped out of the bed, cock still jutting proudly out, and strutted over to the wooden chest. She opened the lid and bent over peering inside. She snuck a backward look at Clarke to make sure she was watching and she grinned when she saw the focus the blonde had on her ass, she wiggled her hips a little to give Clarke a show and Clarke laughed and clapped for her to continue.

Clarke lay in the bed watching this goddess of woman, packing a lovely cock, bent over a chest full of sex toys, and wiggling her ass for her. It made her already well-fucked pussy start to grow wet again and her well-loved heart grow even fuller with love. Lexa shot a mischievous and wolfish glance back at her before reaching into the chest, “Ohhhh yes, that could be fun!” and Clarke felt
both her heart and her pussy pulse in anticipation.

The next morning when Clarke opened her eyes she found Lexa already awake and gazing lovingly at her. “Lex” Her voice was hoarse, “water.”

Lexa grinned and motioned toward the bedside table, there was a glass of water and a small plate of fruit. Clarke reached for the water and after draining half the glass she tested her voice again. “How long have you been awake?”

“Howmon, my prowess… I need little sleep.” Lexa teased before moving over to place a kiss on Clarke’s now pursed lips. Clarke swatted her away in pretend irritation but couldn’t hold back a playful laugh. She sat up and groaned.

“Oh my god, I’m so sore.” Clarke giggled, “That was quite a night.” She looked around the bed and the floor and laughed. “Oh my stars, Lex! We’re like a couple of sex addicts, look at this place!” She gestured around her at the toys strewn about; several dildos of varying sizes, including a double headed one, some pleasure beads, an anal plug, nipple clamps, and some leather restraints.

Lexa just looked smug and added, “Wait until you have to carry these outside to clean them.” Clarke suddenly looked horrified and Lexa continued, “We have to take proper care of them, Clarke.”

“I know that.” Clarke snapped but if you think we are taking armloads of sex toys to the square to clean them I swear Lexa I will tie you to this bed and never let you out.” Lexa waggled her eyebrows and grinned, “That doesn’t sound so bad, Houmon.”

Clarke punched her lightly on the shoulder and narrowed her eyes. Lexa dissolved into laughter and pulled her wife down to kiss her.

“I had everything we need brought to us when the chest was delivered, Clarke. We can take care of our toys right here at home.” Lexa nudged the butt plug with her foot. “We’ll just have to bring some boiling water for that one, after where it’s been we need to make sure it’s sterilized.” She winked at Clarke who rolled her eyes and blushed.

“You’re terrible,” Clarke declared, shaking her head.

“You love me,” Lexa countered, smiling.

“I do,” Clarke agreed, quietly.

“I love you too,” Lexa added before leaning forward to kiss Clarke, soft and slow.

Chapter End Notes

Thank you so much to my wonderful Beta! She really deserves the kudos on this one.
My draft was pretty horrible, but she fixed it up for me! XD
Clarke and Lexa continue exploring the chest and ignoring everything else. Meanwhile, much to Indra’s dismay, the rest of Peace Village seems to be slacking off. What will it take to wake them up to the realities of a still dangerous world?

Happy new year and thank you for sticking with me. You waited a long time for this chapter so I do hope you like it.

Warning, it's NSFW starting from the very first sentence! ;-)
against her already throbbing clit to send her over the edge too. As she came back down she collapsed in a sweaty mess onto her wife.

“Clarke,” she panted, “oh my god, Clarke.” Lexa felt amazing. Clarke tried to catch her breath to answer. Her breathless and yet husky response sent shivers through Lexa’s body.

“Fuck, Lexa. Fuck, fuck, fuck!” Clarke couldn’t form any other words. Lexa giggled and Clarke soon joined her. They lay in comfortable silence for several minutes, gathering strength and enjoying the closeness of skin on skin.

“We should wash before we go out to the meeting.” Lexa glanced out the window at the sun setting over the lake gauging the time by how low in the sky the sun was. “We have time.”

“Mmm, I’d like that.” Clarke agreed, as they peeled their sweaty, languorous bodies off of the table. Clarke glanced behind her as Lexa led her toward the stairs. ‘Lex, you’re really going to have to wash that table before you can do any work on it.” She broke into another fit of giggles and Lexa felt her heart soar at the sound. A happy Clarke Griffin was all Lexa needed, she was sure of it.

They made their way down to the bathroom where a hot bath was waiting. Lexa had prepared it earlier, purposely making it far too hot for her to get into right away. Then, she had gone upstairs and pulled Clarke away from her painting, declaring Clarke had to save her from scalding herself in the tub. Clarke had swatted her away, telling her she wanted to finish the painting she was working on. Lexa had pouted like a child and Clarke had found her far too adorable to ignore; it got heated rather quickly from there.

Now the water was the perfect temperature and the two lovers slipped in, sighing at the luxury of the hot scented water. Lexa washed Clarke, reverently running the soap over her body, scrubbing smudges of paint off of her hands and arms. Clarke sighed, enjoying the attention and she relaxed into Lexa’s strong arms.

“I love that we’ve been exploring more of the toys in the chest Lex, and I know you won the bet so you get to choose what we do all week.” Clarke started off tentatively. Lexa picked up on it immediately.

“But…” she supplied waiting for Clarke to continue.

“But I would like to make love sometime soon, just me and you, no toys. I want it soft, slow and lovely.” Clarke blushed, “Do you think I’m being silly?”

Lexa stopped washing Clarke and moved so she could look her wife in the eye. Her green eyes shine with an intensity that made Clarke hold her breath. “Houmon, making love with you is what I desire most in this world. If you want to take a break from the toys, we will. If you never want to use them again, we won’t. It is you that turns me on, not the box full of toys.” When Clarke smiled shyly at her, Lexa returned her own soft smile in reply.

“Are you sure you won’t be disappointed? The bet said you got to do what you wanted all week… if you really want to we can keep using the toys for the rest of the week.”

Clarke searched Lexa’s eyes.

“Houmon, the toys are for your pleasure. If you are saying you prefer just me for your satisfaction, then I will gladly accept the compliment.” Lexa grinned and Clarke smiled.

“I like the toys, just not all the time.” Clarke replied, and Lexa smiled in understanding.
“Whatever you wish, Houmon. I don’t care about the bet.” Lexa saw a curious expression cross Clarke’s face and she tilted her head and studied her. “Clarke, you look like a wolf who has just seen its prey…” Lexa pursed her lips thinking that Clarke may have had another agenda for the talk they’d just had.

“Whatsoever I wish? Even though you won the bet? You’d do that for me…?” Clarke wrapped her arms lazily around Lexa’s shoulders and leaned in to slowly kiss her wife.

“Of course, Clarke. Anything for you.” Lexa was getting lost in Clarke’s soft lips when Clarke pulled away and slid her lips to Lexa’s ear.

Clarke whispered, soft and sexy, “I want to fuck you with the strap on, Lexa.”

Lexa’s jaw dropped. They had used a double ended dildo earlier in the week but Clarke fucking her hadn’t actually occurred to her. She had used toys with other lovers but no one had dared to presume they could fuck Heda with a strap on. Clarke’s confession surprised her, it also did something else to her.

“Clarke, I … I…” Lexa swallowed hard and then she blushed, dropping her eyes shyly and looking away from Clarke.

“Lex?” Clarke’s voice was soft and her fingers even softer when they hooked under Lexa’s chin to pull her back into eye contact. “Baby it’s so ok if you don’t want to.” Clarke had never seen Lexa react like this to anything sexual and she was concerned.

“It’s not that,” Lexa began still blushing, “I do want to. I want you to fuck me, Clarke.” Lexa smiled softly and added, “It’s just, I’ve never done it like that before.”

A smile spread across Clarke’s face, “Really? With all of the lovers you’ve had no one has used a strap on with you?” Clarke felt what she suspected was an unreasonable amount of satisfaction at the prospect of being the first.

“Really.” Lexa blushed again. “I’m always the one wearing it… I’ve never wanted to switch roles, until now.”

Clarke’s breath caught in her throat as she stared at the beautiful woman in front of her, blushing, vulnerable and giving all of herself. “Houmon, you honour me.” Clarke choked out.

Lexa shook her head dismissively, “No, Clarke, it’s not a big deal like that. You honoured me on our wedding night, this is just…” Clarke cut her off.

“It is a big deal, Lex. You’re saying you’ll try something new with me, something that makes you vulnerable in a way you’ve never wanted or allowed yourself to be with anyone else.” Clarke continued to stare. Naked in the bathtub, after several weeks of peace had allowed most of her wounds and bruises to heal, Lexa looked like a carefree young woman, breathtakingly beautiful, and softly feminine.

Lexa held Clarke’s gaze and smiled at her wife, “Clarke, we are joined. I am yours.” Her voice was soft but her eyes burned with intensity. “I’m glad it pleases you that I’ve never done this before. I’m excited to try this with you. The thought of you wearing one of the harnesses makes me want to cancel our meeting.” Lexa grinned and Clarke blushed.

“Houmon, you take the lead. When you want to fuck me, I’m ready.” Lexa leaned forward and captured Clarke’s lips in a kiss. When she pulled back she added, “But we can take some time off from the toys if you want.” She smiled at Clarke’s expression of adoration, “Why are you looking at
me like that?"

“I love you, Lexa.” Clarke was about to pull her wife into an embrace when a noise in the kitchen made them both jump.

Ravens shout echoed around the house. “Heda, Clarke! You’re going to be late, stop playing with sex toys! Let’s go!”

“Get out Raven, we’re just taking a bath, we won’t be late!” Clarke shouted back.

“You’ve got like, 30 minutes! Seriously, you don’t want to be late!” Raven shouted back before they heard the door slam behind her.

“Can I kill her?” Lexa asked, straight-faced.

“She killed the GERSA, the people won’t like it if we execute her for interrupting our bath,” Clarke giggled as Lexa scowled.

As Clarke and Lexa made their way toward the town square for the meeting, Clarke really noticed the chill in the air. “It’s getting colder, Lex.” She shivered and Lexa quietly whispered something to one of the guards accompanying them. He disappeared and returned shortly with a steaming cup of tea for Clarke.

“It will warm you, Houmon.” Lexa said quietly, this meeting could be long. The roll of her eyes told Clarke something she already knew about Lexa. As astute and talented a leader as she was, she hated the politics of it all.

As they approached the square they saw that it had been well lit and that quite a large crowd had gathered. The meeting had been called to discuss the growth of the town; how to plan and cater for the influx of warriors arriving for elite training and for the corresponding growth of the village.

“Why was Raven so excited about this meeting…? She hates meetings…” Clarke wondered aloud.

Lexa tensed, “Do you think she built more stuff while we’ve been distracted all week?” Clarke laughed at her and shook her head.

After they took their places they noticed that a man was kneeling not far from Heda’s chair. He was wearing a long coat but it was open at the front and they could see the blade he had strapped to his side. It was ice blue.

Lexa was on her feet immediately, “Ice Warrior, rise!” He responded in kind and stood towering over Lexa.

“Heda.” He bowed his head to her and waited for her to continue.

“You bring news from your Queen?” Lexa was tense and didn’t wait for an answer, “What news has made Skadi send a lone rider to her Heda?”

The man lifted his head and looked at Lexa with a soft smile. “Heda, I did not come alone.” He turned his head to the side and Lexa followed his glance.
“Motorbike!” Clarke had seen him first and was already running towards the handsome man and throwing herself into a hug that he awkwardly returned.

Lexa smiled at her old friend, “What news have you, Carter?”

Once Carter had extracted himself from the Sky Heda’s hug, he made his way to Lexa. He stopped in front of her and knelt on one knee, bowing his head. “Heda.” His voice was soft and surprisingly full of emotion.

Lexa tapped his shoulder softly indicating he should rise and she motioned for him to turn to the curious onlookers.

“People of Peace Village, we have a special guest. Carter, son of Heda Sasha has come home.” The crowd cheered heartily for the young man they all knew and respected, his answering smile letting them know he felt the same way.

Carter cleared his throat and the crowd quieted, curious about the news he brought from the Ice Queen. “Heda,” he bowed to Lexa again, “Skadi, queen of the Ice Nation has sent me to bring you news.”

Clarke felt Lexa tensing beside her, always preparing for the worst, but Clarke knew in her heart that it was good news. She reached out and rested her hand lightly on the small of her wife’s back, showing support and giving comfort.

Carter smiled at Lexa, judging from her rigid posture and expressionless face how anxious she was, and so, feeling bad for his Heda, he got right to the point. “Queen Skadi would like to thank you for the safe return of the Ice Nation’s children who were held captive by the evil Yor. She expresses her thanks that you sent your own personal guard, Kita, to see the task to completion and is pleased to report that the party arrived safely, whole and healthy.”

Carter watched as his Heda’s eyes filled with tears and how she fought to keep them from spilling. He continued talking, keeping attention off of her until she had regained her composure.

“Queen Skadi also sends an invitation to Trikru, and Skai Kru. There is to be a royal wedding in Otta. When Spring breaks, and apple blossoms sweeten the air, Queen Skadi will wed!”

A cheer rose from the crowd and Lexa and Clarke beamed at Carter. He smiled back and Carter turned to the crowd.

“Trikru, Skai Kru, and any others among you, I ask for your blessing as I, Carter, son of Heda Sasha, offer my hand, my blood, and my life, in service and in love to the Queen of the Ice Nation. I will marry Skadi.”

The roar of approval from the crowd made Carter blush. Clarke was so excited she was jumping up and down clapping and laughing. She turned to see Bellamy, holding the tiny beautiful Titan, and Echo who were smiling and clapping as well. Clarke caught the look of relief on Bellamy’s face with the news that everyone had arrived in Otta safely, knowing that everyone included Octavia Blake.

Raven was whistling and clapping her approval and she caught sight of Monty and Jasper already plotting how they could get in on a trip to Otta. Clarke felt so happy, looking around her. She saw the happiness and peace that her wife had brought to all of their people. She looked at Lexa who was smiling broadly as she moved forward to grasp Carter’s forearm in congratulations.

“Carter, son of Sasha, you have your Heda’s approval and her love. Heda Clarke and I will join you
in Otta for the wedding, I promise.” The crowd cheered once again and Lexa pulled him close to ask some quiet, private questions.

Indra took control of the crowd, organizing people for the upcoming meeting and getting everything started while Heda spoke with Carter.

“Everyone arrived ok?” Lexa was quick to revisit that point.

“Sha Heda. All the children and all the guards. They did run into some trouble on the way but Kita handled it. She’ll want to talk to you about it though. They had to deal with some asshole who was high up in Yor’s group. I don’t know the details but he said some things you’ll want to hear. I’ll let her report it to you when she arrives.”

Lexa’s raised eyebrow prompted him to continue. “When news reached Skadi that they were in Ice Nation territory we left immediately to meet them. A day’s ride from Otta we found them. Walker and I left the same day to bring the news to you.

The group were planning to travel into Otta and then stay a few days, but Kita was already anxious to get back to you so I’m guessing they left as soon as Skadi would let them go. They shouldn’t be more than a week behind us.”

Lexa nodded in agreement of his assessment. She was happy to hear that Kita was anxious to return to her, she was also anxious to have Kita back. She also knew Octavia would be trying to get back in time to see her nephew born. Kita and Octavia focusing their will on a common goal was sure to be equal to a force of nature, so Lexa wondered if they might not see them even sooner than Carter anticipated.

Octavia would find the little fellow waiting for her when she arrived and Lexa was sure she would fall in love as soon as she saw him, his big brown eyes would quell her disappointment at missing the birth. Lexa probed Carter on the progress of Otta returning to the rule of the Queen and they chatted for a few minutes before her presence was actively required at the meeting.

The politics of organizing was tedious but Raven impressed Lexa not only with her ideas, but also with her leadership skills. Raven had been doing a lot of work behind the scenes in Peace Village. She already had some influential Grounders from different areas on board with her expansion plans. Lexa and Clarke left the meeting knowing their village would soon be a town and eventually a city.

As they walked back home they held hands and quietly discussed Raven. Her talent was something Lexa was just beginning to see the depths of. She wanted to find some official title for Raven, to let her travel all of the lands and see what marvellous things she could plan, fix, and build. Clarke frowned, wanting to keep her friend right here, close to her. Lexa laughed softly and promised Clarke she wouldn’t order Raven to do anything but she wanted Raven to know the opportunity was there. Clarke begrudgingly agreed to talk with Raven about it and Lexa let it drop, changing the subject entirely.

“A royal wedding is quite an event, Clarke,” Lexa grinned, “we might have to have some clothes made for the occasion.”

“Yes, you looked so hot in that suit last time, I couldn’t wait to get you out of it.” Clarke grinned back and leaned in to place a kiss under the taller woman’s jaw. “Can I ask you a question, Lex?”

“Of course.” Lexa always looked surprised when Clarke asked that question in such a way.

“Why don’t you ever wear dresses?” Clarke watched Lexa’s expression closely as she asked. Lexa
looked slightly amused.  

“It’s easier to be ready for a battle in pants.” Lexa joked, but when Clarke’s gaze didn’t waver she paused and smiled softly at Clarke. “I have worn dresses before, have you never seen me in one?”  

“Nope.”  

“Do you want to?”  

“Yup.”  

“Well, Houmon. If you’re good maybe I’ll wear one to the royal wedding.” Lexa smiled now, a full-fledged happy Lexa smile that made Clarke’s heart stop.  

“My god you’re beautiful.” Clarke breathed out softly. “What do I have to do to be “good”?  

Lexa’s happy smile took on a hungry look and her eyes dropped to Clarke’s breasts. “Let me take you home and show you.” She grabbed Clarke’s hand and picked up the pace.  

Carter and Indra were having a quiet conversation near the community kitchen and the laughter turned their heads. They watched the two Heda’s hand in hand rushing to their house and Carter frowned when it took several seconds for guards to show up along the trail.  

“They aren’t close enough.” He nodded his head towards the guards.  

“Heda told them not to guard her in the village, I told them to stay on her like glue.” Indra grunted out. “They are scared to ignore her order but more scared of me, so they won’t completely ignore mine. They stay back hoping she doesn’t notice them.  

“I will speak to them.” Carter sighed. “I will be glad when Kita is back, she is the only one I trust as much as I trust myself and Cato. Where is Cato?” He suddenly realized he hadn’t seen his old friend since the meeting had started.  

“Heda has reassigned him. He and the Skai boy, Miller are in charge of the gun training. They have a small group of juniors who are really good. When the elite force arrives they will be running the training.”  

“Juniors!? The Gona’s won’t like being taught by juniors.” Carter laughed.  

“They’re almost ready. They’ll do the trial before then; it’s been a long time and Heda has many to promote. Even Benson is still a junior.”  

“That’s right, I forgot.” Carter smiled at Indra. “What of you, Indra? What position will you take in this new structure?”  

“Whatever position keeps me close to them. I won’t see them fall.” Indra’s voice was quiet and Carter felt the love in it.  

“Kita will lead the personal guard, Indra. They will be safe with her.” Carter nodded but Indra’s sigh left him questioning.  

“Heda wants her to run the elite force. She’s thinking of putting someone else in charge of the
guards.” Indra looked so glum that Carter couldn’t help but reach out and squeeze her shoulder.

“Indra Kom Trikru, do not worry. Kita is a Royal Guard of the Ice Nation. She trained hard to become a protector of Ice Nation royalty and then she was given a task by her Queen, to guard Heda. She will refuse any other position, no matter how much Lexa tries to persuade her.” Carter’s words put a smile on Indra’s face again. “She is like her sister, Lozen. She is stubborn and willful and will do her job until her spirit is released from this world. Kita will lead the personal guard.” Carter’s confidence raised Indra’s spirits much higher than they had been in days.

“Carter, come and have a drink.” Indra slapped him on the shoulder and led him towards her house where Ro waited with a bottle of legendary Horse Clan whiskey.

Raven was already eating breakfast when Clarke walked over and sat down. “You were awesome at the meeting yesterday” Clarke stated. “Lexa was impressed, and she even admitted it.” Clarke winked at Raven.

“I’m always impressive, Clarke.” Raven quipped her mouth full of bacon.

“Seriously, Lexa wants to talk to you about making you some sort of all powerful planner and sending you out to all the clans to work your magic.” Clarke frowned.

Raven smiled at Clarke, “I know.”

“How!?” Clarke sputtered, “She just told me last night!”

“Ribs has been talking about it with Lexa for a while now. He thinks I should tour each clan, see what leftover tech I can find, study the different systems each clan uses for planting food, transportation, sewage, fresh water, and so on. He figures I can offer them some efficiency solutions, and by seeing all of the different ways things are done I will be able to figure out the best ways to implement things in the future. It’s a good idea. I mean, I’m a genius and all, but sometimes my theories go to shit on the ground.” Raven shrugged and Clarke laughed.

“You can say that again.” She looked closely at her friend. “So you’re going?”

Raven shrugged again, “It’ll be short visits first. Probably just go with you and Lexa in the chopper.”

“What do you mean?” Clarke scrunched her face in confusion.

“Jesus, Clarke, maybe you should spend some time talking with your wife instead of just fucking…” Raven pursed her lips, leaned slightly forward in her chair and looked pointedly at Clarke’s neck where a dark spot was visible just inside the collar of her shirt. Clarke blushed and reached up to pull her shirt closer around her neck in an attempt to cover the hickey Lexa had given her the previous night. Raven laughed.

“We talk!” Clarke pouted as she protested but Raven’s arched eyebrow made her roll her eyes and agree with her friend. “Fine, I guess we haven’t really talked “business” much since we got back from York. We were getting ready for the shooting competition so we were training separately and since then…” Clarke trailed off and blushed.

“Since then you’ve had a whole trunk of sex toys to try out.” Raven got a gleam in her eye and
leaned in conspiratorially. “About which you owe a full and detailed description to O and I when she gets back, by the way.”

“You’ll have to get me drunk for that.” Clarke laughed and Raven just grinned. “So, we’re going to the clans?” Clarke was both excited and exhausted at the thought of all the travel. She hoped they would wait until at least next year.

“As soon as the riders get back we’ll probably start the visits.” Raven informed Clarke who looked a little confused. “You don’t know about the riders…” Raven made a Tsk sound and shook her head sadly. “Oh how sad, the great Clarke Griffin, reduced to a mere sex slave of Heda.” Raven laughed at her own joke but it soon turned to a yelp of pain as Clarke's boot made contact with her shin.

Lexa had been approaching the table as Clarke kicked Raven and Clarke caught her out of the corner of her eye doing a quick about face in an attempt to escape whatever was irritating her wife. She was too late. “Lexa! Sit.”

The guards, who after a stern talking to from a very intimidating Carter had been trailing Heda closely, made themselves scarce and Lexa frowned as she couldn’t come up with a valid excuse not to sit. She sat carefully, offering what she hoped was a charming smile, “Houmon, how is your breakfast?”

“Stuff it.” Clarke snapped, “Why does Raven know more about our plans than I do?”

“What plans?” Lexa frowned.

“Visiting the clans, the riders - whatever that means, flying in the chopper, everything!” Clarke was irritated.

Lexa looked surprised, “Houmon, I told you about the riders weeks ago.” Lexa stared at Clarke who just frowned and crossed her arms across her chest. “Clarke, the riders were sent out to inform the clans of the helicopter so they don’t try and shoot it down when we visit.”

“Oh… those riders.” Clarke looked at Raven, “I knew about them.”

Lexa continued explaining herself and Raven tried not to laugh at her friend, “I thought you knew that we planned on visiting each clan as soon as possible. I mean that’s why they have to know about the helicopter…” Lexa raised an eyebrow in curiosity at Clarke’s reaction to all of this.

“Yeah, that makes sense. I totally knew about that too!” Clarke stuck her tongue out at Raven who kept laughing and Clarke blushed and looked sheepishly at Lexa.

“You didn’t tell me a five year plan did you…” Clarke offered an apologetic smile as she saw the truth in Raven’s words.

“No, Houmon. I’ve been saving that until the trunk of toys has been thoroughly explored.” Lexa winked at her playing along with Raven’s game of embarrassing the blonde.

Clarke blushed furiously but she laughed and smiled at her wife. “I’m sorry, Lex. Raven’s right I haven’t been focusing on my duties as a leader lately. Thank you for not being mad.”
Lexa just smiled, “I’ll never be mad at you for focusing on our sex life, Houmon.”

Clarke rolled her eyes and shook her head trying to ignore Raven’s chuckles and Lexa’s self-satisfied expression. “So when do you expect to leave for the first visit?”

Lexa shrugged as she took a mouthful of bread and Raven answered for her, “Ribs says the guys are betting on whether Octavia’s group makes it back first or the riders who were sent to the closest clans. Octavia is the favourite.” Raven smiled proudly thinking about her friend. “Since Motorbike says O should be here within the week, that means the first of the riders aren’t far behind and we could be heading to the first of the clans in a couple of weeks!”

Lexa looked impressed and nodded as Raven spoke. “She is right, Clarke. Of course the visits to Luna, Ro, Skadi, Rock, and Zora aren’t pressing. They already know how the battle played out. We will visit Skadi for the wedding but the others will be last on our list. The further South we go the closer the clans are to one another. It will make sense to visit two or three at one time, most likely the Hill Clan and the Nash Clan will be our first trip.”

“When will we go and see Cole? I would like to see her again.” Clarke smiled at Lexa, despite having learned that her wife had slept with the woman in the past, Clarke really enjoyed the company of the leader of the Lanta Clan.

“Lanta and Savannah will be our second trip,” Lexa replied, “and the Delta and Swamp Clans will be the last one before we head North again for Skadi’s wedding.”

“A Royal Wedding! I can’t wait to see Motorbike all dressed up!” Raven laughed and nodded her head toward where Carter was entering the eating area.

He approached the table right away and nodded his greeting, “Heda.”

“Carter.” Lexa replied looking him up and down. He looked pale and slightly disheveled. “You should know better than to drink with Indra.” Lexa fought off a grin and kept her face a stoic mask.

Carter nodded his agreement and looked slightly sick, “Indra Kom Trikru souda os!” Clarke heard Ribs chuckle slightly at Carter and Lexa bit her lower lip.

“Eat something Carter, and drink some of Skaikru’s coffee.” As the hungover man walked away Lexa turned to the two Skai women. “He tried to keep up with Indra last night. No one can out-drink Indra.” She grinned and shook her head laughing at Carter’s foolishness and failed to notice the gleam of challenge that stole into Raven’s eye.

Lexa felt bad that Clarke had thought she had been left out of meetings and preparations, so that day Lexa asked Clarke to accompany her the entire day. Clarke went with her to check on the training of the warriors, to see the farmers, to hear the complaints of the local villagers, to check on the education of the children, to see the cooks, the stores-people, and finally to the medical centre.

“Do you check in with all of these people every day? Clarke was surprised. She knew Lexa was always busy but she had no idea how involved she was in the running of the village.

“No Clarke, not every day. I check in when I can. I don’t have much to say in the running of this village or Ton DC. That is more the job of Indra and the other village heads. If I’m here, I will always talk to the people and offer encouragement and support. I need to know how much food,
medicine, and supplies we have, not just here, everywhere. I have riders going to all the major
villages in Trikru territory daily and they bring me news. The clan leaders send me reports weekly or
bi-weekly. I have to know the status of all of the clans, for all of my people.”

Clarke nodded and looked at her wife with a renewed respect. “You’re really smart, Lex.” She
smiled at Lexa who blushed at the compliment.

“Not really, Clarke. I just know that food is important. People can’t be happy when they are hungry.
Warriors can’t fight on an empty stomach. If there is one thing I have to know from each clan, it’s
how much food they have. Medicine and supplies are important too, but you can’t eat cotton and
steel.” Lexa shrugged, “It’s simple.”

“So what are we looking for when we visit the clans?” Clarke was interested. “What should I
expect?”

“Nash will be our first stop. Wyne will be pleased to see us. She will want to show you around
Nash, Clarke. I think she has a crush on you.” Lexa grinned as Clarke rolled her eyes.

“She does not, Lex. She’s old enough to be my grandmother. Besides she’s a badass old lady who
could kick half of your warrior’s asses, so if she does I’m flattered.” Clarke looked sassily back at her
wife who grinned and nodded.

“Nash is an old city and not as many buildings survived as did in Otta. It’s not as big as York but it
has a large marketplace, bigger than the one in Sapeake. We will have talks with Wyne and her
advisors, tour the city, and speak with the people. Raven will look around and see what she finds that
interests her.” Lexa shrugged. “These first visits will be short and exploratory, but in order to build a
better future for everyone we will have to see what each clan does well and where they need help.”

By the time they retired that evening, Clarke had a much better idea of Lexa’s day to day work and
what the demands of Heda were going to look like in peace time. “So, you’re pretty amazing.”
Clarke reached over and pulled Lexa closer as they got into bed.

“Am I?” Lexa smiled at her wife. “I was going to say the same about you.” Lexa leaned in, eyes
dropping to Clarke’s perfect lips. Clarke held still, watching, allowing Lexa to draw closer and
closer, anticipating the sweetness of the kiss. A sexy smirk made a brief appearance as Lexa paused
and glanced up when Clarke didn’t meet her halfway.

Lexa was looking for permission and Clarke loved the care with which Lexa always treated her. She
nodded ever so slightly to show Lexa she wanted the kiss too. Lexa smiled as she closed the
remaining distance between their lips and Clarke melted into the kiss, her own smile answering
Lexa’s.

When Lexa pressed forward to lay Clarke down on the bed Clarke pushed back and Lexa paused.
She broke the kiss momentarily and looked into her wife’s blue eyes. Clarke arched an eyebrow and
brought her hand to Lexa’s chest. She pushed lightly on the sexy commander’s sternum maneuvering
herself into position to be on top as Lexa allowed herself to be guided onto her back.

“I get the feeling you want to be on top tonight, Houmon.” Lexa was smiling, eyes shining with
love.

“I do.” Clarke replied as she moved forward on all fours, an anticipatory grin on her lips and a gleam
in her eye. “Is that okay with you?” Clarke bent her elbows lowering her upper body to bring her lips
painfully close to Lexa’s. She held herself there waiting for an answer.
Lexa felt her body responding to Clarke’s power play, she was already wet enough to soak through her underwear but she was feeling playful and not quite ready to submit. It took Herculean effort but she bit back the breathless “yes” that wanted to escape her lips. She paused long enough to be sure her voice would be steady and she met Clarke’s lusty stare.

“I have some conditions, Clarke.” She clicked her tongue over the end of Clarke’s name making it sound like a second syllable. She knew what effect it had on her wife and relished the slight shiver she felt running through her body.

“Conditions from Heda Kom Trikru? The Skai Heda will hear your conditions.” Clarke held her ground, millimetres from Lexa’s plump and oh so kissable lips. Lexa almost lost it when Clarke’s pink tongue temporarily escaped to moisten her lips. Her eyes were fixed on Clarke’s mouth and a breathy moan escaped her as Clarke slipped her knee in between Lexa’s legs and slowly slid towards her centre. “Speak or submit, Heda.” Clarke’s grin was downright predatory and Lexa wanted to surrender, to let her wife give her pleasure for the next few hours. But the challenge in Clarke’s eyes had to be answered, Lexa was incapable of backing down.

“Conditions,” her voice broke over the word as Clarke’s knee came to rest against the soft mound between her thighs. Her hips began to grind against Clarke, seeming to have a mind of their own.

“I’m listening Heda.” Clarke darted down, placed a quick kiss on Lexa’s lips then pulled back licking her own lips again.

“I will submit, let you control tonight, let you control me.” Lexa watched Clarke’s eyes darken with desire. “But first…” Lexa let the words hang and saw Clarke’s eyes sparkle with curiosity, she was enjoying this. ”First, you have to do one thing for me.” Lexa grinned at Clarke and let her hands begin to tug at Clarke’s clothing. Clarke helped her and was soon shirtless and back hovering over Lexa’s hungry mouth. “First you sit on my face, come all over me, and then I’m yours.” Lexa grinned as Clarke broke down into giggles.

“That’s your condition!? Sit on your face!?” Clarke’s giggles rose to full laughter and she threw her head back letting it take over her body. Lexa fell even more in love with her beautiful wife at the sound of her joyous laughter. She couldn’t resist the beautiful globes now shaking gently as Clarke’s laughter shook her body. Her hands slid up Clarke’s sides and around to palm her breasts.

“What say you, Skai Heda? Do you accept my conditions?” Lexa tried to look serious but couldn’t take the unabashed look of love from her eyes. Clarke sat back up straight and tried her best at attempting to look haughty as she peered down her nose at Lexa.

“Your conditions are acceptable to the Skai Heda, we shall now seal the contract.” Clarke collapsed on top of her wife and hungrily claimed her lips. Lexa was content to let Clarke lead the kiss as she gave herself willingly over to it. She accepted Clarke’s exploring tongue into her mouth and moaned when Clarke bit down softly on her lower lip.

Clarke eventually broke the kiss and sat back up on top of her wife. She slid off the bed and shed the rest of her clothes quickly, then she stood there with a naughty smile and placed her right leg up onto the bed, spreading herself open for Lexa to see. Lexa’s sharp inhale told her she had achieved the result she was hoping for.

“You want this?” Clarke gestured to her pussy. “Strip, Heda.” Clarke’s voice was full of authority and confidence and Lexa jumped to obey. She quickly pulled her shirt over her head and threw it across the room, then she began to shimmy out of her pants but they were rather tight and were coming off far too slowly for her liking.
“Stupid pants.” She growled as she tugged at them. She looked up when she heard Clarke’s wonderful laughter again. Clarke moved to the end of the bed and grabbed Lexa’s ankles. “Do you know how hot you are when you’re trying to get naked for me?” Clarke asked, brow arched. Lexa answered with a grin and a startled yelp when Clarke suddenly yanked her pants the rest of the way off. “Now shimmy that fine ass back up to the top of the bed, Lexa.”

Lexa was so turned on she obeyed without thought. Clarke smiled approvingly and felt her heart rate increase as she watched the most beautiful woman she’d ever seen, naked and wanting, looking at her with love, desire and anticipation. Clarke realized how turned on she was and became aware of the wetness between her legs. “Fuck, Lexa. I’m so hot for you right now.”

Clarke moved quickly, jumping onto the bed and stalking forward, lithe as a cat. She attacked Lexa’s mouth kissing her like there was no tomorrow. Lexa’s hands began to roam and rested on Clarke’s ass, squeezing and rubbing.

Clarke broke the kiss and rose up, sitting on Lexa’s taught abs, she looked down at Lexa and licked her lips. “I believe we have a deal, are you ready to get what you asked for?” Lexa was never any match for Clarke’s playful Dom routine, so she just nodded enthusiastically, her voice unable to assert itself. She was so turned on she would soon be ready to beg Clarke for satisfaction. Luckily, Clarke wasn’t in the mood to wait any longer either and she slid her perfect ass up Lexa’s chest. She positioned herself one leg on either side of Lexa’s head, and as she lowered herself toward Lexa’s mouth, they both licked their lips in anticipation. Lexa opened her mouth and sighed in pleasure as Clarke’s wetness met her tongue.

Clarke’s body shook at the contact. She moaned loudly and had to steady herself with her hands on the wall at the head of the bed. Her heart was hammering but she held herself still, as she felt Lexa burrowing her face into her folds. Lexa’s hands were on Clarke’s ass holding her in place while she got to work. Once she began licking Clarke’s clit she slapped the blonde’s ass lightly letting her know she could move.

Clarke started to grind her hips, her body directing Lexa on how much pressure to apply and where to move her tongue, without having to voice anything. Lexa thought of it like a dance, she, responding to the movement of Clarke’s hips. If Clarke was pulling away Lexa gave lighter pressure and if she was grinding into her Lexa focused on good strong licks directly on Clarke’s clit.

Clarke was loudly vocal as Lexa’s tongue played her like an instrument. She praised her skill, called out to old fashioned gods, and begged Lexa to make her come. Lexa teased, dropped her tongue to Clarke’s entrance and fucked her while she writhed on top of her. Lexa drank in all of Clarke’s sweetness, and she watched in great appreciation as Clarke fell apart over her. She loved watching Clarke like this, sitting tall over her, so proud, so sexy, chest bouncing, gyrating hips against her mouth. Then the progression to needy Clarke, desperately playing with her own breasts, looking down at Lexa, mouth open, panting for breath and pleading for release.

When she came, Clarke cried out so loudly Lexa was sure the entire village heard her. She felt pride swell inside of her, proud to be the one Clarke Griffin loves, the one Clarke allows to love her. Clarke had shifted her weight so she was sitting on Lexa’s chest, she was leaning on the wall for support as she regained control of her body. Lexa was peppering kisses over her thighs, her hands rubbing Clarke’s lower back.

Clarke’s voice was still unsteady as she squeaked out, “Holy fuck, Lex. That was intense. You are so, so good at that.” She smiled down at the very smug looking Commander and let her body slide down Lexa’s until she was lying on top of her. Clarke snuggled into the crook of Lexa’s shoulder and sighed happily.
“You liked that, huh?” Lexa teased. “Then why don’t you do it more often?”

“I loved it, it’s always so intense in that position.” Clarke kissed Lexa’s collarbone. “But it’s kind of impersonal or something… most of the time I just want more body contact. I want your hands and mouth all over my body. I want to feel your skin against mine, you know?”

Lexa swallowed hard, her body reacting to Clarke’s words by making her even more turned on. “Yeah, I know…”

Clarke laughed at her knowing how turned on Lexa must be right now, “My sexy wife, are you so turned on it’s uncomfortable?” Clarke ran her hands absently over Lexa’s stomach, her touch light, bringing no relief to the desire Lexa was feeling.

Normally Lexa would deny any weakness but tonight she decided to let herself be needy for Clarke. “Not uncomfortable, Clarke. Horny.” Lexa’s hand found Clarke’s and tugged it toward her breasts. “Please, Houmon.” She whimpered as she felt Clarke rise from the bed and move to straddle her once again.

“Please? You’re such a nice polite Heda, tonight.” Clarke’s hands began teasing Lexa’s nipples and stroking her breasts. Lexa gave herself over to the feeling, moaning quietly in pleasure. Clarke bent, taking first one and then the other nipple into her mouth, switching between them as she lavished Lexa’s chest with kisses.

She felt Lexa’s hips canting upwards and moved so one of her thighs was firmly in place between Lexa’s. Clarke immediately felt the wetness coat her leg as Lexa began to grind. “Fuck. I can feel how wet you are lover.” Clarke paused her kisses to verbalize her appreciation, then bent her head and continued loving her wife’s breasts.

Clarke let Lexa set the pace and grind into her thigh until she was sure Lexa was close to orgasm. Lexa’s moans were filling the room and Clarke moved up to whisper in her ear. “Don’t you dare come yet, Heda.”

Lexa groaned in frustration but immediately stopped grinding. “Good girl.” Clarke rewarded her with a kiss, deep and intense. When Lexa was thoroughly kissed Clarke pulled back and smiled down at her wife, who was breathless, flushed, and beautiful.

“Clarke, please.” Lexa breathed out, almost a whisper. Her hips began to move slowly, looking for friction.

Clarke moved away from her, taking her thigh from between Lexa’s legs. “Not yet, love. I want you to come with my face between your legs.” Clarke was smiling and Lexa let out a sharp breath at her words. Clarke ran her hands down Lexa’s sides and began to kiss her way down the taught abs that were now trembling with arousal. When she got to the top of Lexa’s hair she stopped and placed gentle kisses along the arch of Lexa’s hip bones. She traced the outline with her tongue and then bit down gently on the crest.

Lexa’s body shook in response and she called out in a breathy, needy, voice. “Clarke!” When she heard her name, the sexy blonde smiled and brought her mouth lower, licking the wetness from Lexa’s inner thigh. “Fuck!” Lexa grunted as Clarke got closer to her centre.

Clarke kissed and licked both of Lexa’s thighs and went in for one more nip at the iliac crest before she took mercy on Lexa and settled in between her thighs. At first she just looked at Lexa’s vagina. She was wet and swollen ready for Clarke. “Beautiful.” Clarke breathed out like a prayer of exaltation.”
Then, Clarke nuzzled her face into the wetness of Lexa’s labia. She got her mouth as far into Lexa’s folds as she could and then she slowly moved upwards as she sucked lightly. When she found the swollen nub she was searching for Lexa’s hands entwined in her hair and her hips jerked into the touch. Clarke continued sucking gently, and began to add her tongue to the movement. She brushed it lightly back and forth over Lexa’s clit as she continued with the gentle suction.

Lexa’s moans filled Clarke’s ears, her scent filled her nose, and her taste filled her mouth. Clarke suddenly wanted to fill Lexa. She brought her fingers into the mix, teasing the entrance until Lexa’s moans became pleas for Clarke to go inside of her. When she entered Lexa it felt like high tide, the wetness was overwhelming to Clarke and she moaned into Lexa’s clit. The vibrations combined with the penetration drew a loud cry of pleasure from the brunette and Clarke resumed her torturously slow pace, her fingers sliding through the wetness, exploring the tight walls as slowly as her tongue was brushing back and forth on her clit.

Lexa was beginning to beg, her body was straining with the effort to find the peak of her pleasure. Her words came softly and slowly at first, “Houmon, please, it’s so good, please give me more, please take me there.”

Clarke kept her eyes open staring up along the length of Lexa’s body, watching Lexa’s muscles pull tight, her arms going from gripping the back of Clarke’s head to gripping the blankets. She watched as Lexa curled forward, her shoulders rising up off the bed, eyes shut tight, and mouth hanging open slightly. She picked up her pace slowly and deliberately with just enough speed to give Lexa the satisfaction she craved. She watched enthralled by her beauty as Lexa threw her head back and came, screaming Clarke’s name. Her desperate release rocked her body with waves of pleasure and she continued to gyrate against Clarke’s mouth.

Clarke pulled her fingers out slowly while peppering kisses lightly along Lexa’s labia and drinking in the moisture that had pooled there. She whispered words of love and devotion into the softness. She wasn’t finished with her wife yet but she wanted everything to be slow tonight so she took her time. When she finally started to kiss her way back up to Lexa’s lips her wife had regained enough strength to talk.

“Houmon… you are so good at that.” Clarke kissed her softly. Lexa brought her hands to the sides of Clarke’s face and cupped her gently. “I love you.” She said it softly, but the smile that spread on Clarke’s face made her heart skip a beat.

“Yeah?” Clarke’s smile turned to a giggle. “Is that just because of the orgasm I gave you?”

“No, not just, but it helped.” Lexa joined Clarke’s giggling and for a beautiful moment they were just two young women in love, enjoying each other’s bodies, hearts, and minds. Lexa forgot that she was Heda; Clarke forgot that the world depended on them. They just giggled and kissed each other softly.

They were both brought back to reality when a voice called from downstairs. It was unmistakably Indra. “Heda, Skai Heda, Come quickly.”

Clarke and Lexa cursed simultaneously and jumped hurriedly from the bed, scrambling to pull on their clothes. “Indra, What is it?” Lexa’s voice held the cold hard command of Heda.

“Kita’s party, Heda. They have returned.” The edge to Indra’s voice told Lexa before she spoke the
One look at Lexa’s face and Clarke grabbed her hand and pulled it to her chest stalling her wife for a moment. She called out to Indra “Wake the Chancellor if you haven’t already. We are right behind you, Indra.” She held Lexa’s hand over her heart so Lexa could feel it beating. “Whatever happened it was the right choice to send all of them. They got the children back to Skadi. Remember that, Lex.”

When Lexa met her eyes and nodded firmly Clarke dropped her hand and turned to the table. She picked up Lexa’s swords and handed them to her. Lexa nodded approvingly as she sheathed them and Clarke strapped her handgun onto her hip. The two women moved quickly downstairs and out the front door where Indra and two guards waited for them with horses already saddled.

They rode hard toward the front gates and were soon joined by Abby and Kane who were being led by Carter. Indra briefed them as they rode. “It seems that some of Yor’s assassins have made their way into Trikru territory, hiding in the forest. They must have recognized that Kita was a Royal Ice Guard or maybe they knew Lincoln and Octavia were important to Heda. Either way, they ambushed them and now have them pinned down about three miles out. Reports say that Lincoln and at least one other is hurt, we don’t know how badly.”

Lexa looked sharply over at Indra, “Three miles out. They got to within three miles of Peace Village?” Indra’s frown spoke volumes and Lexa’s anger radiated around them. “Three miles, that means they left the main road and took the cross country path, and are pinned down at the river crossing?” Indra nodded, pleased with Lexa’s recognition of the terrain.

Indra continued her report, “Patrols came across them over an hours ago but the assassins are well hidden and they can’t get to them without taking fire. We lost two of the young gonas already. They tried to get to Lincoln and were shot as they left the cover of the trees. Octavia ordered the rest of them back and made them ride here for help. I already have warriors sweeping the forest on the south side of the river making sure it is clear, and teams riding the main road to the bridge to begin sweeping the north side trying to find the assassins. As soon as the scouts reported back Cato and Miller rode out with a small group.” Indra looked apologetically at Clarke, “Bellamy was with them. I hope remembering little Titan will stop him from doing anything stupid trying to get to Octavia.”

Clarke nodded tersely and stared ahead at the trail, her jaw clenched shut in anger. As they approached the gate no-one slowed down but Clarke saw Raven frantically waving at her so she allowed the rest to continue and she pulled up next to her friend. Raven threw a backpack at her and waved her on. “NVGs, Clarke! Go!”

Clarke kicked her horse into action and yelled back over her shoulder, “What!?”

“Night vision, Clarkey! Night vision!” Raven pumped her fist in the air and hollered, “Go get the fuckers!”

Clarke urged her horse forward closing the ground between her and the rest of the group. As she pulled up alongside Lexa they were just entering the forest road. She noticed a lot of movement around them and glanced sideways at her wife. Lexa was shouting orders in Trigedasleng and Clarke was pleased to notice she understood everything. There were warriors in the trees searching for the assassins and making the path back home safe.

“Lex, Raven sent us some help.” Lexa grinned at her and they galloped forward towards their friends. As they approached the stalemate, Clarke noticed that Ribs, Miller and Bellamy were conspicuously absent. They all dismounted and Lexa barked at her gonas.
“Report.” She stalked to the front and her eyes took in the scene quickly. It was dark but the moon was full and Lexa’s eyes had adjusted on the ride. Lincoln had two arrows in his chest and was leaning against the embankment of the river. Octavia was protectively perched between him and the direction the arrows had flown from.

Kita seemed to be tending to another injured woman Lexa didn’t recognize but from Carter’s report she knew it had to be the woman from Bad Town. Lexa could see arrows sticking out of the woman. She could also see that Kita had some makeshift bandages around her thigh and Lexa could tell by placement that Kita’s wounds were not going to be fatal. She could also tell that they needed to get Abby to Lincoln and the other injured woman soon. Octavia seemed unharmed.

“Heda! They are pinned down but the embankment is protecting them for now.” One of the warriors who had found them stepped forward. “Jonas and Thad tried to get to them.” He looked soberly out at the two bodies riddled with arrows collapsed just a few meters from the trees.

“Where are Cato and his team?” Lexa turned on her heel pulling Clarke back from the scene.

“They moved into the forest to try to pinpoint the assassin’s location.” The young gona gestured to his right and looked fearless. “Let me try to reach them Heda? I’m fast. I can take the doctors bag and help Lincoln.”

“Hod up!” Heda pinned him with a glare. “They would kill you before you reached the water. We’ll find them and get to Lincoln. Clarke, what did Raven give you?”

Clarke had already unslung her backpack and pulled out two sets of night vision goggles. “We’ll be able to see them in the dark. Their body heat will give them up.” Clarke started to hand them to Lexa but she was surprised when Lexa nodded toward Carter. “Show him how to work them Heda? I’m fast. I can take the doctors bag and help Lincoln.”

“I know Mom will need my help so I have to stay here.” Clarke sighed. “Be careful.” When Lexa nodded Clarke moved over to help Motorbike with his goggles. Kane had his in place and his rifle at the ready waiting with Lexa at the edge of the forest. Carter quickly caught on how to use the goggles and gave a low impressed whistle.

“Raven really is something!” He grinned at her, “Those assassins are done.” He strode over toward Lexa and the three of them disappeared into the forest, so quickly and silently, it almost felt like they hadn’t been there at all.

Clarke was cursing herself for not having grabbed some radios. They had moved a little further back into the tree line and Abby was trying to figure out a way to communicate with Octavia so she could administer as much first aid as possible. She had been shouting to her but the assassins soon fired toward the voices and Clarke had dragged her mother back into the trees after an arrow narrowly missed her.

“Clarke we have to get to them!” Abby was wringing her hands with worry and Clarke held her hands and squeezed.

“Trust Kane and Lexa, mom. They’ll make it safe and they know they have to hurry.” Clarke’s gaze drifted toward the dark forest where her wife was now stalking the people responsible for the ambush.
Lexa was perched in a large oak tree when she heard Carter whistle. A short, low sound just like the whirring of the Trikru nighthawk. She heard it three times which meant Carter had found his target. Lexa answered with her own call, three hoots sounding just like the horned owl that hunted in Trikru forests. Three meant Carter had the green light. Lexa heard the twang of the bow and the hiss as the arrow cut through the night air. She heard the *thunk* and then the body dropping to the ground.

She followed the direction of the sound and her eyes quickly found the now dead assassin. He had been in a tree across the river from her and now Lexa waited to see if he had any friends. She had seen the angles of the arrows that were embedded in the earth near Octavia’s hiding place and knew that either the assassin had been highly mobile or there were more than one. Her money was on three of them.

She stayed vigilant watching from her perch, and then she heard Kane’s whistle. Ribs had given him a whistle that he had carved himself. It sounded like the heron that hunted in the waterways at night. She heard three and gave her reply with three hoots of her own.

She watched and listened in pride and satisfaction as Kane took his target out with an arrow to preserve any surprise they had left. This one had been hiding among the reeds that covered the river’s edge. It took her longer to pick out the shape of the body, but once she did, she noticed something. The second assassin had been exactly 45 degrees from the first. She quickly scanned the area 45 degrees in the opposite direction from the first assassin’s location.

She couldn’t see anything but knew the assassins were skilled at camouflage. She turned her attention to 45 degrees from the second dead assassin and again searched in vain. As she was scanning the entire scene she saw movement. Someone had approached the body of the second assassin. She nocked an arrow and focused on the shape. She saw more movement in the background and recognized the hulking shape of Cato telling her it was Miller or Bellamy she had set her arrow on.

She breathed out in relief and when Carter’s three whistles came again she responded with one, loud hoot. A clear, no.

She dropped from her perch and made her way in Carter’s direction. When she found him he had already come to the same conclusion as Lexa. “I almost shot Cato.” He whispered, with a grin on his face.

“Did you pick up on the angles?” Lexa whispered and Carter nodded. He sent out several louder whistles and they watched as Cato’s head snapped around. He answered, acknowledging their presence. As they were about to move off again Kane joined them.

“There is a third one. He’s on the move, toward Octavia.” Kane gestured to them and Lexa decided to take a chance.

“Go with Carter and track him quickly, don’t let him finish what he started. I’m going to cross the river here and join Cato. We’ll track him from the other side.” She was about to leave when Carter handed her the NVGs.

“The Skai boys will know how to use these, Heda. It will be good to have a pair on both sides of the water. They really are something.” Lexa nodded as she took the goggles from him and they moved off in opposite directions.

Lexa quickly got Cato’s attention with another signal and then she slipped out of the cover of trees.
and approached the river. She stayed low and moved fast minimizing herself as a target just in case the third assassin had doubled back. She found a narrow path across the river, which at this point was little more than a large creek, and she stepped into the water.

The cold hit her and she cursed silently at the entire situation. She wasn’t supposed to be out hunting Yor’s assassins in Trikru territory on a cold fall evening, let alone be wading through a freezing cold river. She was supposed to be at home letting her wife ravage her.

She successfully forded the river and Cato was waiting on the other side. They slipped into the tree line again and she handed the goggles to Miller. “Do you know what these are?”

“NVGs! Sweet!” Miller grabbed them and quickly put them on.

“There is one more assassin and Kane saw him heading back towards the injured. Kane and Carter are tracking him from the other side, we’re coming at him from this side. We have to move quickly, but stealth is important. Follow Cato, he knows these woods.”

Cato took off at a surprisingly quick pace for such a large man. Lexa followed and Bellamy and Miller brought up the rear. Cato took them slightly away from the river and picked up the pace on a well-worn path. They ran full out for ten minutes and then he slowed and cut back toward the river. When he signalled for them to stop, Bellamy looked with surprise to see that they were quite close to where his sister was pinned down. Miller stepped forward and shouldered his rifle. Lexa was certain there would only be three assassins and wasn’t worried about the noise. She told him to confirm the target before shooting, and to remember that Kane and Carter would be across the river.

He rolled his eyes at what he considered her under-estimation of his skills but whispered, “Yes, Heda.” He searched the terrain carefully, looking for the telltale heat signature that the NVGs would reveal. He saw the group gathered on the other side waiting, no doubt impatiently, to get to the injured party trapped at the river bank. His trigger finger itched when he spotted another heat signature but it was quickly joined by a second and he reported it to Lexa who, after being pointed in the right direction, confirmed that it was Carter and Kane.

He continued scanning but found nothing. “He isn’t here. Maybe we should just go for them.” He looked at Bellamy who nodded, eager to make sure his sister was okay. Lexa put her hand on Bellamy’s shoulder and held him fast.

“No. He’s here.” Her eyes swept the surroundings and she imagined herself in the sniper role. The tree line on either side was thick enough to hide in but also limited the shots that could be taken. Her gaze went higher, she would probably take to the trees. She had Miller look up and he scanned the area in vain.

“He must be gone, Heda. These goggles would see the body heat. He knows we got his buddies and he went awol to save himself. Let’s go get them.” Miller pleaded his case and Lexa’s mind went to work.

Body heat. She looked down at her legs, still cold even after the run. “The river. He’s in the river.” Lexa and Cato drew their arrows and began to scan the water looking for disturbances in the flow of the water.

Cato whistled to gain Carter’s attention and then stepped momentarily from the cover pointing his arrow at the water. He stepped back into the trees and the whole group shifted a few meters just to be safe. They soon heard Carter’s answering whistle an acknowledgement that he understood. Then Lexa heard something that warmed her heart, it sounded like the high pitched bark of a fox. Two short bursts of three barks each.
“Lincoln is alive, he knows to watch the river.” Lexa heard the collective sigh of relief from the two Skaikru. “I’m heading back the way we came about 20 meters, there is a large maple. I’ll be in it. Spread out and find him.” She made her way back along the river to the tree she had picked out. The trunk was large and thick and the branches were sturdy, even as they extended out over the river. She had climbed this tree many times in her youth. It was a perfect hunting perch in the summer, catching deer as they came to water.

She slung her bow and hoisted herself effortlessly into the arms of the maple. She scaled up fifteen meters onto one particularly thick branch that still had some of it’s leaves to help camouflage her. She knew she would be appreciating the deep reds and oranges of the leaves if it were daylight, but tonight she had one purpose. Find the assassin.

Lexa lay prone on the branch, her arrow knocked and bow turned sideways. She watched the river, learning it’s bubbles and waves. Seeing the rocks that made the water ripple, learning the water’s path as it danced downstream. She kept her focus on that, ignoring her desire to search for the others, see the positions they had found for themselves, trusting that they were doing their jobs. She watched the water and she waited.

Kane and Carter were closer to the water than Lexa’s group. Once Cater had realized what Lexa was telling him he and Kane had crawled forward through the reeds so they could get as close to the river as possible. They set up shoulder to shoulder with a view upstream. Kane watched for any heat and Carter watched for silhouettes breaking the surface of the water.

Further downstream Octavia was holding her handgun in one hand staring intently upstream. Her other hand was pressed firmly into a wound, clamping off what she assumed to be an artery, and keeping the man she loved alive.

Lexa looked upstream, she focused on the width of the river about ten meters from her position. She found the water hypnotizing as it rolled and gurgled and flowed downstream. There was a rock that peeked its head up above the surface where the water split, flowing neatly around it, then joining back on the opposite side. As she continued watching she found it made an unmistakable pattern. She noticed immediately when that pattern was broken. Her hand twitched in an instinct to fire, but as the long, smooth, sinewy body made its way through the water, she just watched. It was dangerous and probably drawn by the scent of blood but she thought that it might find the assassin for her.

She tracked it. It swam steadily forward, and as it passed her perch, she considered putting an arrow into it but her highly tuned senses noticed the creature hesitate. It slowed down and then disappeared below the surface. Seconds later, it re-surfaced, twisted its large body and darted toward the river bank almost directly under her tree. Her eyes scanned the water’s edge quickly.

She saw him, he must have been watching her from the time she scaled the tree, almost fully immersed in the water, yet hidden among the reeds, waiting for his shot. Her sudden movement exposed her and only her quick reflexes and an immediate roll off of the branch saved her. She heard the loud thunk as an arrow buried its head into the branch she had just been on. As she fell out of the
tree she used the smaller branches to control her fall. When she landed on the ground she rolled and popped back up into a fighting stance. It was too late, she was staring into the eyes of the assassin, his arrow was nocked and he was less than five feet away. His smile made her blood boil. But she calmly stared him down; facing death with the regal composure of Heda.

“Beg, Heda.” The assassin sneered, sure in his kill.

“You are arrogant will be your downfall.” Heda replied calmly watching the ripples in the water behind him. She timed it, and dropped to the ground as the reptile struck.

“I have you, bitch! You’re dead. If you…” He never finished his sentence. The snake struck suddenly, wrapping its muscular body around him and pulling him down into the water. His arrow flew high, safely passing over Lexa. She was immediately on her feet rushing to the water’s edge to make sure the snake finished the job. She was impressed to see an arrow in the assassin’s neck already; Carter had heard the commotion and before the body had even hit the water he had fired. The blood fueled the snake further and it bit at him as it dragged him under and began to take his body away to be consumed.

Lexa called out loudly, “All clear!” and then she allowed herself a moment to compose herself before heading back towards Clarke and the injured. Cato met her halfway. “Heda, he was close to your tree.” When she frowned at him he took a rough breath, “I shouldn’t have let you go alone.”

“You followed my orders, Cato. That is enough.” Lexa gave him a rare but reassuring pat on his shoulder as she passed by and fought back a smile when she heard his mumbled complaint.

“The Ice Guard better recover, Indra says she’s the only one who disobeys you for your own good and gets away with it.” The towering man matched his Heda’s pace as they quickly made their way back downstream.

When they arrived Clarke, Nyko, and Abby were in full control of the situation. Abby was working on Lincoln, who was the most serious of the three injured. Nyko was working on pulling an arrow from the shoulder of a woman Lexa recognized from Bad Town and Clarke was stitching a nasty hole in the thigh of a very angry looking Ice Guard. A bloody arrow was on the ground beside them and Lexa correctly assumed that Kita had ripped it out of her own thigh.

Lexa spoke soft words of reassurance to Lincoln as she passed them and she rested her hand on Octavia’s shoulder briefly, knowing the small gesture was enough for the Tree Kru warrior. She nodded to Fer who, even through the pain, nodded reverently back to her. Then she marched over to Kita and said in her best Heda voice, “Report.”

Clarke glared at her but Kita seemed to appreciate the order. “Heda, we were ambushed as we came out of the tree line towards the river. Lincoln got hit with the first arrow and we tried to get to cover. Octavia and Fer carried him towards the embankment and then Fer got hit.” She gestured to the woman beside her who was biting down on the broken-off shaft from the arrow Nyko was digging from her flesh.

“I tried to draw their fire away. I think my horse has gone off somewhere to die, she took so many arrows to protect us.” Kita looked sad but continued “I ended up in the stream with an arrow in my thigh, luckily I was able to swim downstream and pull myself to shore. We holed up here until help came. Thankfully Tri Kru sweeps the forest frequently and the gonas found us quickly.”

Lexa looked angry. Kita could see it and she braced herself for Lexa’s wrath. She was surprised when Lexa spun around and stalked toward Indra. The general frowned as Heda bore down on her and Carter, who had been going over the plans to sweep the forest, took one look at Lexa’s face and
quickly turned and walked away shouting to gather the warriors who were now arriving from Ton DC and other surrounding villages. He and Ribs split them into four groups and gave specific instructions on the sweep. No area of the forest was to be left unchecked. Trikru land was to be made safe.

“Indra…” Lexa’s voice was a low growl. “How did they get into my forest unseen, let alone this close to Peace Village? I want…”

Indra cut her off, “Heda, I agree that security has been lax. Warriors are being dispatched as we speak to search the forest and make sure there are no more surprises waiting in Tri Kru land.”

“You admit that security has been lax?” Lexa looked suspiciously at her general. “Can you tell me why?” Lexa had an uneasy feeling that she wasn’t going to like the answer.

“Heda.” Indra ground her teeth trying to remain calm. Her voice was low and controlled, yet had a dangerous edge to it. “We were gone for months and when we came back we told everyone that peace was achieved, that the clans were stronger than ever. You told the guards not to guard you so closely in the village. The gonas have been focusing on learning guns, preparing to host the elite squad, and all kinds of other things…”

“And…” Lexa arched her eyebrow.

“And… NO ONE is focusing on patrols and defending the land. Protocols we have lived by for years have been ignored because everyone feels safe!! It’s all, “Heda Lexa untied the clans, we have peace, we’re all safe.” Well Heda, maybe this will show everyone that our security is still something we work for, that peace doesn’t always mean safety, and maybe we’ll all get our heads out of our asses and make sure things like this don’t happen again!” Indra was fuming and Lexa was torn between so many emotions.

“Indra Kom Trikru, did you just tell your Heda to get her head out of her ass?” Lexa gritted her teeth, she saw the truth in Indra’s words but could not allow anyone to talk to her that way in public, not even her general.

“Heda… I…” Indra took a deep breath and frowned. “We are all guilty, even me. It will not happen again. Patrols will be tripled and the warriors will be on alert. Anyone caught slacking on their duties will be punished by me personally.” Indra bowed her head to Lexa and the young woman looked around at the warriors left behind for security.

“Heda.” Carter approached her bowing his head as he did. “We have found the nest, it looks like they have been hiding here for days waiting for the right target.”

Lexa snapped her head around, she looked at the handsome man and she decided to move forward. Whatever led to this lapse in security, Indra was probably right, her head had been up her ass. “Indra, make sure the forest is cleared and increase patrols around all the villages. Cato, stay here and guard the injured, when Abby says they can be moved take as many warriors as you need and get them back to Peace Village safely. Carter, take me to the nest.”

She heard a chorus of “Sha Heda.” and strode over towards Clarke, she stopped first at Lincoln’s side and took a knee.

“Lincoln Kom Trikru, ge smak daun, gyon op nodotaim.” When he nodded weakly she looked up at Abby. “Abby, the guards are ready to take all of you back whenever it’s safe to move them. If you
can’t move them we will have whatever you need brought to you.”

“Thank you, Lexa. Lincoln is stable now, we’ll be moving them soon.” Abby got back to work and Lexa moved over to Nyko and Fer. The arrow was out and Nyko was just tying off some bandages.

“You are from Bad Town,” it wasn’t a question so Fer just looked at Lexa waiting for her next statement, “Carter told me that you helped escort the children, thank you.” Lexa looked the woman in the eye and when she got a nod of acknowledgement she continued, “You are welcome in Peace Village and we can send word of your safe arrival if you wish.” Fer’s smile caught Lexa off guard, she was a beautiful woman though Lexa doubted she had ever been told so.

“The seer will already know, Heda. There will be no need to send word. But I do thank you for the offer.” Lexa nodded her agreement and then shot a look of thanks to Nyko who stood and informed her that Fer was fine and that he was going with Lexa and Carter. Lexa nodded at him, glad to have him with her.

She moved over to Clarke and Kita. “Kita, despite the hole in your leg, you are in charge of my wife’s safety. I might be gone for a few days while I find out what the hell is going on in my forests.” Kita fought back a grin, happy that she still had Heda’s trust.

“A few days? Lex, is it that serious? I should go with you.” Clarke stood up and moved to her wife’s side.

“No, Houmon. Lincoln is still in bad shape, Abby might need you. Octavia might need you. Lead the village, make sure the seconds and the juniors train hard. Any warriors are to be patrolling. Have Kita brief Miller for guard duty. I don’t want you going anywhere alone and I trust him. Until Kita can walk let him be your shadow. Kita will hate it.” Lexa smirked and Clarke swatted her.

“Be safe, Lexa.” Clarke leaned in and kissed her wife chastely, then stepped back and set her jaw in anger. “If there are any more of them out there find them and make them regret the day they stepped foot on TriKru land.”

Lexa nodded to her wife, “Sha Houmon, regret it they will.” With that she turned on her heel and strode toward Carter who saw her coming and turned to lead the small party of warriors he had assembled. Lexa saw that Miller and Bellamy intended to go with her and she glanced at them.

“Miller, you are staying.”

She wanted to send Bellamy home too, to Echo and the baby, but she was Heda and she had to think of the greater good. Bellamy being seen with her, being trusted by her was important and she knew there were other warriors with children so she couldn’t play favourites. When Miller started to protest she turned on him and glared at him. “You will guard Clarke while I’m gone. Where she goes, you go. If anything happens to her I’ll skin you alive.” She whirled back around and continued into the forest, but not before seeing the grin that spread on his face as he realized Lexa trusted him with what, to her, was the most important duty, guarding Clarke.

It didn’t take long to get to what Carter had described as a nest. There was a cave that Lexa knew well and it made her even angrier that they had hidden in there.

It was a well-known cave to TriKru people. Hunters used it to wait for deer, children played there in summer. Lexa had once even bedded a pretty warrior in that same cave while she was still Anya’s
She went in and saw the evidence. Three sleeping rolls, the remains of a small fire near the entrance and some equipment and personal belongings. The bed rolls were issued from Yor’s army, they had his insignia on them. Lexa’s anger was rising and she barely heard Carter’s distasteful scoff as he held one aloft.

“They call themselves assassins and they carry these? How arrogant would a man have to be to train an army of assassins and then give them his own insignia to sleep on? A true assassin would never have any identifying marks, on themselves, or on their gear. Tattoos and this. Yor was a fool.” He threw down the bedroll in disgust and looked at Lexa, he could tell something was off. He glanced sideways at Bellamy and gestured for the others to exit.

Bellamy led the warriors out to search nearby for more clues and Carter set his hand on Lexa’s shoulder. He was the son of a Heda, Lexa could talk to him in a different way than the others. This wasn’t the first time he had used that. “Lexa, talk to me. What happened?”

“He had me, Carter. I was dead. If he hadn’t been an arrogant fool who demanded I beg, if he had shot first and gloated later, I’d be dead. He was right under me, and I missed him.” Lexa was shaking. “I should be dead.” Her face was as white as a ghost. “Indra is right, this is all my fault. I haven’t been training or patrolling with the warriors. I’ve been letting them goof off. I’ve gotten soft.”

“If you say ‘love is weakness’ I’ll punch you. Heda or not.” Carter looked at his friend and frowned. When Lexa looked up at him, surprised at his words, they both laughed before Carter continued. “You haven’t gotten soft. I admit Peace Village needs some tweaks to the security, but you’re awake now, right?” When Lexa nodded vigorously he continued, “Indra has been complaining non-stop about everyone’s peacetime attitude. She will be glad to get them back on track. As for you, I’m sure you’ll double down on your training and Clarke’s too. Kita is back, and she’s pissed that she got caught unaware and shot in the leg. Your guards will be trained to within an inch of their lives.” He stopped and chuckled, Lexa joined him.

“In a couple of months you’ll have elite soldiers from each clan training alongside you. You’re definitely not soft, Lexa.” When she let out a sigh and nodded he reached out and rested his hand on her shoulder. “You looked death in the eyes and lived to tell the tale, Tri Kru Gona. What are you going to do about it?” It was something his mother used to say to warriors who had a close call with death.

“Heda Sasha would tell me to make the most of it so I believe I shall…” Lexa’s thoughts turned to the beautiful blonde she shared her life with. “With the Sky People’s medicine Clarke can get pregnant… the baby would be mine and hers….” Lexa’s eyes were wide with wonder and Carter’s jaw dropped.

“Lexa, that’s amazing!” His face broke into a smile and the handsome man pulled his friend into an embrace, “You know, Carter is a good name; a strong name.” Lexa punched him in the shoulder and laughed. As she shook her head at him her eyes travelled the cave once more. Her laughter stopped, her body tensed and Carter reacted immediately drawing his weapon and turning to see what she saw.

“The spacing. There were four.” Lexa pointed at the empty space towards the back of the cave. “The dust looks undisturbed but it’s too uniform, no animal tracks, no scuffs from the other three moving around. It’s too perfect, it’s been covered.”
Carter was already examining the area, mad at himself for having missed it. “You’re right, you see, Heda. You’ve still got it.” Carter winked at her before moving to examine the area more closely. He may have gone deeper.” Carter had his sword drawn and Lexa drew hers. Carter placed himself between Lexa and the steadily narrowing back of the cave. “Heda, we should get the others. Let’s do this right.”

Lexa had already stepped back to the entrance of the cave. She whistled softly and waited. It didn’t take long for the large shape of Nyko to appear out of the darkness. “There is one more, we have to search the cave.” Bellamy led the rest of the small team into the cave and they all nodded in understanding.

“Heda, we should send a team to the other entrance. We’ll meet them in the large cavern where the stream flows inside.” Carter quickly spoke softly to the warriors in Trigedasleng. They immediately left the cave with their weapons drawn and shields held high. Inside Lexa was left with Nyko, Bellamy, and Carter.

Nyko immediately moved to the front of the team. He had brought a large shield with him knowing his enemy liked to strike from a distance. He held the solid wooden protector in front of him as he quickly and quietly slipped further in to the caves enveloping darkness. The others quickly followed him and Lexa kept her eyes roving over all of the crevices and shelves she knew existed inside of the cave.

They pressed on, moving as stealthily as they could in the dark, the cave stayed narrow for the first hundred feet so it was simple to clear but after that it expanded and smaller offshoot tunnels were common. Bellamy had brought along the night vision goggles and he used them to quickly clear the tunnels but some of them extended several feet before becoming too small for a human adult to pass through, those ones took longer. They cleared each one as they passed and steadily made their way to the entrance of the large cavern that suddenly opened up inside of the cave.

As they arrived and stepped into the space Lexa felt the air change. The air was fresher in the cavern and she could hear the water bubbling as it ran down over rocks on the right hand wall. There was also more light than the rest of the cave had provided, it came in through three large holes that revealed the night sky as it steadily approached dawn. The cavern was large, the walls were high, and the rock ceiling was over fifty feet. There were plenty of rock shelves that would give someone a nice angle to shoot from, there were also various boulders and rock formations that would provide cover for the assassin. It was not a good place to be hunting an armed assassin who could be waiting for them.

Nyko crept into the space, shield held high. Bellamy put himself in Nyko’s shadow and faced backwards, he held his rifle high and swept the rear wall making sure the assassin hadn't found high ground behind them. Lexa and Carter darted from the entrance to rocks on either side that would hide them as they searched the cavern.

As they were getting themselves into position to begin their search, the other warriors arrived from another entrance on the left side of the cavern’s wall. They too began to search the cavern, moving from boulder to boulder trying to keep themselves behind cover.

Nyko and Bellamy were creeping forward, Nyko’s upper body protected by the large shield and Bellamy protected by Nyko’s large frame. Lexa was about to tell then to slow down as she and Carter were having a hard time keeping up with them while still finding adequate cover. She had opened her mouth to give the order when she heard the sound, the release of an arrow, the twang of the bowstring.

Carter heard it too and immediately leapt from his hiding place and dashed for cover closer to where
the arrow came from. Lexa heard the thunk as the arrow buried itself into Nyko’s wooden shield. Nyko growled and continued steadily forward.

She looked to her left, the warriors had come up with a leapfrog plan and had split up to draw fire. Two were moving forward, they were fast, popping up and down behind cover. The other two were moving off to the side, they moved much more slowly, sneaking into the shadows, trying to avoid detection so they could position themselves behind the assassin.

Nyko and Bellamy continued to walk forward into the cavern in a straight line. Lexa found a nice raised platform behind a boulder large enough for good cover, but also raised up enough to survey the entire scene. She watched from this vantage point as one of the warriors who was charging forward, trying to draw fire, succeeded in his efforts. An arrow split his small wooden shield and he laughed like a maniac and raced forward even further. Lexa knew they had won. Carter was far enough forward on the right side of the cavern to possibly be behind the assassin and the two warriors to the left were almost there as well.

Lexa’s voice rang out, “Assassin of York, lay down your weapon and step forward. Heda commands you.” She didn’t expect an answer but was hoping to distract him long enough for Carter to get a clear shot.

She was surprised when a voice answered, “I don’t want to die.” The voice was laced with fear, and it was far too high, far too young. Another arrow flew through the air at Nyko and it too stuck into the large man’s shield. “Just leave me!” The voice screamed.

“Hod up!” Lexa’s command stopped her warriors from moving forward anymore. She knew they were probably seconds away from a clean kill shot. “Assassin. Step forward. Heda can be merciful. Why are you on Trikru land?”

Lexa wanted to engage the young assassin, get him talking. She got her answer, “I just want to go home. They followed me when I ran from York and then I had to help them. Please just leave me be.” The voice was sounding desperate and Lexa knew that young or not the assassin was potentially dangerous.

“You shot a Trikru warrior, and a Royal Ice Guard. We cannot just leave you here. What is your name?” Lexa was trying to continue the conversation.

“I didn’t shoot the Ice Guard!” The voice was getting higher and speaking faster, the words poured out. “They made me shoot first! They told me to take out the man, they didn’t think the girls were dangerous. I knew though, the blue sword should have told them, but they couldn’t see through their hatred.” The voice stopped and Lexa thought she heard him fighting back tears. “I shot Lincoln,” the voice broke as he said the name, “but I missed on purpose, they told me to kill him but I didn’t, I missed his heart… he’s not dead, right? Please tell me he’s not dead.”

As soon as Lexa heard the boy say Lincoln’s name she immediately stepped out from her cover and began walking forward, “Step forward boy. You are Trikru, you are one of mine. Step forward and meet your Heda.” She continued walking in the direction the voice had come from and Nyko ran after her protesting that she had put herself in the line of fire.

The boy stepped out, he was small, dirty, and terrified. His hands shook as he held his bow. The arrow was nocked but not drawn. His eyes were wide and full of fear. “Stay back, Heda. I’ll shoot… I will.” Lexa saw the shadow of Carter behind him and knew she was safe, she would have kept going anyway.

“Put your weapon down, goufa.” Lexa spoke softly and walked slowly, but steadily forward.
“I can’t, you’ll kill me because I shot Lincoln. Jus drein jus doun.” He had tears running down his face and Lexa wanted to reassure him.

“Jus drein, no otaim jus doun, goufa. Sometimes we have to consider the situation. You are young and they made you fight for them. What is your name, boy?” Lexa asked again.

One of the warriors who had slipped into the shadows at the back of the cave came into the light in the centre of the cavern and walked toward the boy slowly. The boy turned and pulled back his bow but stopped. His eyes went wide and the warrior dropped to his knees. Lexa had rarely seen her warriors cry but this one was close to sobbing. His lip trembled as he tried to speak.

“Noah… Noah… it’s you… but we thought you were dead, Reapers attacked and when we couldn’t find your body we thought the Mountain Men had taken you… how.. how…Oh god! Noah, I’m so sorry. I should have searched for you, I should have found you.” Lexa stepped closer and laid her hand on the man’s shoulder. His name was Willem. He was a warrior from Ton DC, he had a high rank and was one of the men who trained the younger warriors before they became seconds.

“Will, you would not have found him.” Lexa knew the answer, she had seen it in York. Yor’s men took you to York, didn’t they?” She looked at the boy, he was small, probably twelve or thirteen. He had lowered the bow but still stood watching them all in fear.

“Willem… ” The boy’s voice shook as she spoke. “I’m sorry.” He began to cry, he reached into his pocket and then raised his hand towards his mouth.

Lexa and Willem both darted forward to stop him but they were far away and the boy’s hand was almost to his mouth. As he was about to put a small pill into his mouth a large calloused hand closed around Noah’s forearm. Carter had been just behind him and neatly stripped him of his weapons and the suicide pill assassins carried with them.

“Noah, is it?” Carter addressed him softly as he gently and carefully subdued him. “We won’t hurt you. Heda will forgive you and Lincoln will too. He lives, don’t you fret. You’re a good shot lad. We know you saved Lincoln by missing his heart. It’s okay, you’re Trikru and you’re home.”

As soon as he was sure both the boy and Heda were safe he released the boy and stepped away. His mind was thinking of another boy he had recently met, another who had been in the clutches of Yor and his followers, and how that boy had been uncomfortable being touched, especially by a stranger. Carter guessed this boy would be the same.

Lexa was staring at the boy, some distant memory was surfacing in her mind. He knew Lincoln and Willem. They were from the same village, Indra’s village. She thought back, there had been a bad Reaper attack on a hunting party from Ton DC almost three years ago. Ten warriors had been killed including a young woman Lexa had trained with, they had been friends. Four bodies had been missing from the scene including the woman’s son. All of them were young and it had been assumed they had been taken by the Mountain Men. The warrior Lexa had trained with was Echo’s sister. Lexa looked at Bellamy and then back to the boy.

“Noah, are you the son of the warrior Sose?” She heard Bellamy’s sharp intake of breath at the name. The boy nodded to her, “They killed her. The Reapers killed her and then the Mountain Men took us, but we didn’t go to the mountain.” The boy dropped his head and scuffed his feet on the floor of the cave. “They passed us over to some assassins and they took us to York.”

Bellamy suddenly stepped forward. “Noah… I’m Bellamy from Skai Kru. You don’t know me but I know someone who loves you. I live with your aunt Echo. Come home with us. You have a cousin who needs you to help him grow up strong, like you. Come with me, please.” Bellamy’s brown eyes
were filled with tears as he spoke to the boy.

“Echo…” The boy looked at Bellamy. He looked at Lexa and Willem and they nodded. Willem walked forward reaching his arms out to the boy as he approached. The boy was trembling and Willem pulled him gently into an embrace. Noah began to shake as he tried to fight back tears.

Lexa approached and Willem moved aside to allow Heda to speak with the boy. She laid a hand on his shoulder patting him lightly. “Noah. Your crimes have been forgiven. Heda don chich op.” He gazed up at her and the tears gathered in his eyes began to run silently down his face. He fought to control himself and Lexa felt rage and sadness run through her. She knew Yor was dead but there would always be people like him in the world. As she reached up and cupped the boy’s face her thumbs brushed his cheeks clearing away the trails of tears.

“Tyrants like Yor will not win, in the end they will meet the fate they deserve. It seems like so much has been stolen from you Noah, you have a choice now. You can spend your life lamenting that and hiding from those who love you, or you can spend your life fighting to make sure the Yor’s of the world are kept from power. I will always fight for my people Noah, I could use your help. In whatever way you wish to give it.” Lexa looked into his eyes and saw his decision. She saw the steely, reserved determination that had kept the boy alive through everything he had been subjected to, the toughness that had brought him home. She saw him choose her and knew he would become someone like Cato, someone she could trust with her life.

Heda nodded at the boy and then stepped away and allowed Willem to come and scoop the child into his arms. Lexa moved over to Bellamy. “Echo will be pleased to hear you have offered the boy a place in your home.”

“Of course… he’s her family.” Bellamy looked distraught and Lexa’s understanding of people allowed her to give him the answer he needed.

“He is your family. You are Echo’s family. You Skai people are so concerned with labels. It will bother you until you have one, ask her to marry you, Bellamy.” Lexa chuckled softly as the man in front of her blushed and looked away. “You have to be prepared for Noah’s decision, Bellamy. If I remember correctly Willem was like a father to him. He may choose to stay with him. Echo will resist but you have to convince her that it is his choice, it will be important for her not to fight him but to love him no matter what he decides.” Bellamy nodded at her and his gaze turned to the boy who was clinging to Willem as they both cried softly.

Lexa turned again and moved over to Carter. “Thank you for stopping the boy.” Carter merely nodded and held out the pill he had taken from Noah. “Perhaps I should let Abby take a look at this, she is always wanting to research things. It seems unlikely but maybe the suicide pills could be useful to her somehow…” Lexa and Carter both shrugged as Lexa pocketed the pill.

Nyko approached them and suggested they return to Peace Village so he could take a closer look at Noah and get him some food and rest. Lexa nodded at him. “Nyko, take the boy and Willem home. Bellamy will go with you, he should be the one to tell Echo. Carter, and I will take the rest of the gonas and join Indra and help with the sweeps.”

Nyko frowned and was about to protest when Lexa continued, “Once you have explained the situation to Abby and Clarke let them check Noah for injuries, and make sure Willem goes with him to see Lincoln, in case Octavia tries to kill him.” Carter laughed and Nyko almost smiled. “Then join us in Ton DC. Indra will be coordinating things from there.” Nyko seemed placated by her request for his presence and nodded before turning toward Bellamy.

Lexa and Carter moved over to the remaining three warriors, they were all young, two of them were
still seconds but would be taking the final test next month. The third had passed her trials just months ago and Lexa knew she was trying for a spot on the elite force. She was a strong young woman whose name escaped Lexa, she was tall, fast, and cocky. Lexa was reminded of Anya and fought back a smile as she watched her.

Carter approached the young warriors and they all stood tall waiting for his orders. He looked them up and down and turned to Lexa, “Heda, Marshall and the seconds are too young and inexperienced to escort you to Ton DC. We should go back with Nyko and get reinforcements.” Lexa knew he was testing them, Carter himself was more than enough protection for Heda, especially in Trikru territory.

Marshall’s nostrils flared as she took in an angry breath, the seconds looked more disappointed than angry. Lexa looked up into Marshall’s eyes. “You disagree, gona?”

“Yes, Heda. I do.” Marshall looked her in the eye which she liked. “We are in Trikru land and the threat is assassins, not a large army. It’s better to travel in small, fast, stealthy groups in this kind of situation.” As she spoke she saw light growing in the eyes of the seconds as they nodded in agreement. “We may be young but I am the fastest warrior Indra has seen in years, these two have been working on stealth with Hamil and he says they are ready for any test.”

Carter stepped closer, “Can you keep your Heda safe?” He demanded, speaking loudly and stepping forward aggressively. The young warriors responded by puffing up their chests and standing their ground.

One of the seconds spoke up fiercely, “We will defend Heda to our deaths!”

Lexa said nothing but felt proud that she inspired such fealty, even in the young warriors. Carter nodded, satisfied. “You will keep your Heda safe. We’re heading to Ton DC, we’ll sweep the woods as we go. Marshall, stay to Heda’s left, I’ll be on her right. Prin, you take the lead and Dresden, you take the rear.”

As they left the cave in the assigned formation Lexa was impressed by Carter’s ability to lead, teach, and to remember everyone’s names. She grinned to herself as they picked up speed into a light jog and entered the forest.

Clarke heard voices outside of the clinic and stepped out to see why Bellamy was back so soon and if Lexa was with him. When she saw his face she grabbed him, “What’s wrong, is it Lex?”

“No, no, Heda is fine. She went on to Ton DC to meet Indra. Carter and some warriors are with her don’t worry. Besides, we know for sure there were only four.”

“Four? Lexa said there were three.” Clarke looked over at Willem who carried a thin, dirty boy with him. The boy appeared to be sleeping in the large man’s arms. “Bell…” Clarke stopped her sentence and he moved quickly to pull her aside.

“The kid was kidnapped a couple of years ago, he is from Ton DC. He is the one who shot Lincoln, I have to tell Octavia and make sure she doesn’t kill the kid… and that’s not all. He’s Echo’s
nephew, Clarke!” Bellamy looked distraught and Clarke calmed him.

“Go get Echo, she will want to see him. I’ll take him inside and examine him, Lincoln is doing much better and Octavia is far calmer than you’d imagine. It’s fine, Bell. We’ve all been through worse, especially that boy.” Clarke’s words had a calming effect on Bellamy and he gave her a hug of thanks before heading towards his house to tell Echo her long lost nephew had returned.

Clarke motioned to Willem to bring Noah inside and she found an empty room with a bed. Willem carefully laid the sleeping form on the cot and stood back. He looked at the Skai Heda and bowed his head.

“Who is he?” Clarke asked.

“His name is Noah, son of Sosa. He lived in Ton DC with his mother, I was close to them both. They went out on a hunting party and they were raided by Reapers. Sosa and the other warriors were killed and four children went missing. There was no trace of them, and Mountain Men tracks were found. We assumed they had been taken into the mountain. I burned Sosa’s body and I mourned him.” Willem stared at the sleeping form, as if unable to believe the boy was indeed alive.

Clarke patted the man on the shoulder, “Was he in York all this time? We know Yor and his men stole children from other clans.” When Willem nodded affirmatively Clarke sighed and tapped his elbow motioning for him to join her out of the room. Willem seemed reluctant to leave and Clarke reassured him that they’d be right outside.

When Willem joined her in the hallway she lowered her voice in case Noah woke up. “When Noah wakes I’ll examine him to make sure he is okay physically, but he’s probably going to have problems readjusting… most of the kids we met in York suffered physical abuse Willem.” Clarke pause and sighed a harsh breath. “Physical and sexual abuse.” Willem’s eyes filled with tears again and Clarke continued, “He’ll need a lot of support, we’ll help however we can.” Willem fought back the tears and nodded stoically. Clarke sighed again, “Go sit with him, let him sleep. When he wakes, my mom or I will take a look at him.” She patted his arm and he nodded and went back into the room.

Clarke walked over to Lincoln’s room and took a deep breath. She went in and saw Lincoln sleeping peacefully and Octavia resting in a chair next to his bed. Octavia stirred and got up, coming over to Clarke. “What’s wrong, you look worried.” Clarke mused for a moment about how well her friends knew her.

“They found a Trikru boy in the cave where the assassins were. He’s resting in one of the rooms, it looks like he was kidnapped a few years ago and kept in York all this time.” Clarke sighed, “O, he’s Echo’s nephew. Bellamy is on his way home to tell her.”

Octavia gasped, “Clarke… that poor fucking kid.” She sighed and then she looked directly at Clarke, “He could be the shooter.” She glanced back at Lincoln. “He’s family, but he could be the one who shot Linc.” Octavia looked at Clarke and frowned when Clarke said nothing.

“I get it Clarkey, Bell has to tell me and he’s scared so you wanted to prepare me.” Octavia let out a humourless laugh. “I won’t flay him I promise.”

Clarke reached out and squeezed her friend’s arm before looking past her into the room. “How is he doing?”

“Your mom says he’ll make a full recovery. He’s in pain but Abby gave him something, it took a while to convince him to take it, he’s still wary after the Red.” Octavia sighed, “I don’t know what I’d do without him, Clarke.”
“You don’t have to find out anytime soon, Octavia.” Clarke pulled her into an embrace. “Bell and Echo will probably be here soon. I don’t know how it’s going to go with the kid. I’ll bring Titan to you if that’s okay?”

Octavia laughed softly, “Think I won't lose it if my adorable nephew is in my arms? Well played Clarke.” Clarke grinned and shrugged, leaning in and kissing her softly on the cheek before moving back to the entrance of the clinic to wait for Bellamy and Echo.

She didn’t have to wait long. Echo came rushing down the path from their house, Bellamy close behind her with the baby in his arms. Clarke stopped them at the entrance.

“Where is he, Clarke? Is he okay? I have to see him.” Echo was desperate and Clarke grabbed her by the shoulders as she attempted to push past.

“Echo, he’s alive, he’s okay, he’s safe. Willem is watching over him. He’s sleeping, so you have to calm down before you go in the room.” Clarke put on her stern voice, she had the power of Heda to use if she needed it. She hoped she wouldn’t.

“Yes, of course, he’s sleeping. Willem is there, he’s safe.” Echo took a breath, and looked into Clarke’s eyes. “He was in York all this time… that means… Clarke, I saw those kids, I saw what they went through.” Clarke pulled Echo into a hug.

“He’s alive, he survived, and he found his way home.” Clarke pulled away and looked her in the eye. “He needs you to be strong, Echo.” When Echo nodded and composed herself Clarke looked at Bellamy and Titan.

“I’ll take you to his room, Octavia will watch Titan.” Bellamy winced at her name and Echo noticed.

“You didn’t tell her?” Clarke looked at Bellamy and sighed.

“I tried but as soon as she found out he was alive she ran out the door.” Bellamy handed Titan over to Clarke and took Echo’s hands.

“You heard that Lincoln was injured?” Echo nodded and he continued, “He was shot by the assassins who had Noah. They forced him to work with them, Ec, he shot Lincoln.” Echo took a deep breath and her eyes filled with tears.

“He idolized Lincoln when he was a kid.” She was shaking and Bellamy rushed to explain further.

“They made him do it, and the kid’s a good shot, he missed Lincoln’s heart on purpose. He saved him. If the other assassins had taken the shot they would have killed him for sure.” Bellamy looked at her with love and compassion in his eyes and in an uncharacteristic move, the stoic warrior rushed forward into his arms and rested her face on his chest. He felt her tears and wrapped his arms around her shoulders as she shook.

Clarke gave them a moment telling Bellamy she’d be right back. She walked quietly to Lincoln’s room where Octavia was waiting for her. Her eyes lit up at the sight of the baby boy and she took the little guy from Clarke happily. “Tell Echo not to worry, Linc is going to be fine, and he’s more forgiving than I am. So, if I’m not going to grievously injure her nephew, Lincoln won’t even hold a grudge.”

Clarke watched her for a moment with the baby, “You two should…” She nodded her head slightly
toward the baby and raised her eyebrows in a suggestive gesture.

“We’ve talked about it, we might try.” Octavia looked toward the bed where the man she loved was sleeping. “After everything settles down I mean.” She added hastily as Clarke broke into a huge smile.

“O, if I’ve learned anything, it’s that nothing ever settles down on the ground.” Clarke quipped before turning and heading out of the room. She went to the room Noah was sleeping in and heard a commotion inside. She rushed in and found Willem leaning over the bed trying to wake the boy who was obviously in the throes of a nightmare.

Clarke rushed over as the boy woke gasping for breath. “Noah, it’s okay. You’re okay. I’m Clarke and you’re in a hospital. You’re safe here. Willem is here with you and your Aunt Echo is waiting outside to see you. You made it home and you’re safe.” Clarke continued talking softly to the boy as she checked his vitals. She explained every step as she took his pulse, checked his blood pressure and looked at his pupillary reaction.

As she spoke to him he calmed, and by the time she was finished he was sitting up looking around. “A hospital?” Clarke nodded. “Is Lincoln here?” He looked worried and Clarke nodded again.

“He’s here, just down the hallway. He’s sleeping right now, but the doctor says he’ll be fine. The doctor is from the sky, she’s my mother actually. She’s a very good doctor, and she says he’ll be fine. The arrow missed everything important, she said he’s very lucky.” Clarke kept talking reassuring the boy that Lincoln was alive. It seemed to work and Noah let out a sigh of relief.

Clarke looked him up and down, “I’m not a doctor, but I have learned a lot about healing. My mother will want to check you out tomorrow but you seem to be in good health, Noah. You’re quite skinny though and I think we should get you some stew from the kitchens. How does that sound?” His eyes lit up and he nodded to her. “What about Echo? If you aren’t ready I will tell her you’re asleep.” Clarke knew it could be overwhelming but Noah shook his head no.

“I’d like to see her please, Sky Lady.” His voice was small and quiet and sad. Clarke smiled softly at him and nodded.

“My name is Clarke. I’ll bring her in and get you something to eat, Noah.” Clarke smiled at him as she stood.” She stopped halfway to the door, “You met Heda?” She questioned and she saw the boy’s eyes change, he looked proud, he raised his chin and straightened his shoulders.

“Sha.” He looked at her with curiosity.

“I am joined with Heda Lexa.” Clarke smiled a true smile at the boy as her eyes grew wide and she heard him questioning Willem as she walked out.

Echo stood nervously outside the door Clarke had led her to. She looked at Bellamy who nodded his support then she took a deep breath and stepped inside. She wasn’t prepared for the flood of emotions she felt when she saw the boy on the hospital bed. He was talking excitedly with Willem about Clarke and Lexa’s wedding when she stepped inside the room. He turned his head and looked at her. His smile fell and his expression became nervous. Echo felt her heart breaking, he was scared of her.
She pushed through the emotions that threatened to freeze her and forced a smile onto her face. She wanted to cry and run to him and hold him tight but her conversation with Clarke was in the forefront of her mind. She smiled, and she stepped forward slowly, like she was stalking a deer that was likely to dart away.

Tears invaded her eyes and she forced out words, even if her voice would only allow her a whisper. “Noah. You’re alive and you came back to me. Thank you, Noah.” She approached the bed and the boy kept staring at her as if expecting her to be angry. “I’m so sorry, Noah. I didn’t search for you long enough, I should have found you before you found me.”

She stood beside his bed wanting to embrace him, her hands were shaking. He reached out and carefully placed a hand on hers. “You couldn’t have found me, they hid us until they put us in their army.” He was so matter of fact, his voice had no emotion and Echo broke. Tears began to flow down her face and the boy reached up and wiped them away.

“Echo… I’ve never seen you cry, not even when you lost Rosa to the Mountain Men.”

He stared in wonder at his aunt’s tears and she finally pulled him into an embrace that he returned.

When she found her voice she said, “I’m just so happy that you’re here, Noah.” He smiled at her words and whispered that he was happy too.

When Clarke returned with stew for the hungry boy he happily took the large bowl and began eating at an astonishing speed. “Noah! Slow down, you’ll get indigestion.” Clarke scolded good-naturedly but the boy immediately stopped and looked up at her.

“Sha, Skai Heda.” He replied formally and then began to eat slowly. Clarke laughed at him.

She left them there and returned to Octavia who was looking after a sleeping baby and a sleeping lover. She looked up at Clarke when she entered. “Want me to take him?” Octavia thought about it for a moment and nodded, handing the infant carefully over to Clarke.

“I’ll take him to Bellamy, he can meet his cousin.” Clarke paused, “Do you want to come?” Octavia shook her head no.

“I’ll wait until tomorrow, see the kid with Lincoln when he wakes up.” Octavia yawned and looked at the cot that was folded up in the corner of the room. “I’m going to try and get a little sleep.”

Clarke nodded, “That’s a good idea. I might do that myself when I give this little angel back to Bell.” Clarke placed a soft kiss on the baby’s forehead and left the room. She returned to Noah’s room and slipped inside. She saw the boy’s eyes land on the baby and she walked over and gave Bellamy his son.

Bellamy looked nervously at Noah, “Noah, this is your cousin, Titan.” He approached the bed and relaxed as the boy’s face lit up in a smile.

Clarke left the family there, at the beginning of a new life for all of them. As soon as she left the clinic she felt the tiredness creep in. She rubbed her neck and sighed loudly.

“Rough night, princess?” She jumped at the voice.

“Jesus! Miller you almost scared me to death! Why are you still here?” Clarke started walking toward her home, she knew the answer but let Miller tell her, himself.

“I’m your bodyguard ‘til the Ice Guard can walk again.” He grinned at her, obviously pleased with
himself. Clarke raised her eyebrow at him and whistled, “Lexa let you be my bodyguard!? Wow! That’s big, Miller.” She punched him in the arm and laughed. He turned serious for a moment, “It is big. Clarke. I know how big and I take it seriously.” She smiled at him and they walked the rest of the way in silence. When they arrived at her door she questioned him jokingly as he said goodnight.

“Not going to search the house?” Clarke teased. “No need.” He grinned and tipped his non-existent hat at her as she went inside. As soon as she entered her kitchen she heard a sharp voice call out to her, “Identify yourself.” “Kita…” Clarke sighed and rolled her eyes. “It’s me.” “Skai Heda.” Kita sounded pleased. Clarke walked into the living room and found Kita camped out on her floor. “You are supposed to be resting your leg!” Clarke was exasperated. Kita looked confused. “I am resting.” She gestured to the furs she was sitting on and looked entirely convinced that this was indeed following the doctor’s orders. “Fine.” Clarke sighed. “But tomorrow you go to your house.” Clarke frowned at her guard. “I have a house?” Kita looked even more confused and Clarke couldn’t help but laugh at her. “Lexa has arranged for you to have a house of your own, don’t worry it’s very close to ours.” Clarke laughed again when the guard’s eyes lit up and she smiled. Clarke looked at her, she was a beautiful woman and Clarke couldn’t resist teasing her a little. “It’s also next to Raven’s.” Kita’s expression changed, “Clarke, may I ask you a question?” Clarke was surprised at the sudden change in her guard, and by the use of her first name she knew it was personal in nature. “Of course.” She replied. “Does the idea of me sleeping with Raven bother you?” Kita was direct, as always. Clarke was too tired for this conversation so she just shook her head, “No, Kita it doesn’t. You’re both adults, whatever you two consensually get up to is none of my concern. Just make sure that whatever happens you two can still work together.” Clarke smiled at her. “Go to sleep Kita. I’ll see you in a few hours.” Clarke went upstairs and found her bedroom in the state they left it several hours ago. She sighed and looked around at the scattered clothes. The light through the window was starting to show the signs of an imminent sunrise, the sky growing less and less dark. She began to pick things up a bit before giving up and staring at the bed. Just hours ago she was making love to her wife, now her wife was out in the forest making sure everyone was safe. Clarke felt tears welling up in her eyes. She fought them back as she peeled her clothes off and crawled into bed. She closed her eyes and thought of the positives the night brought. Sure, people had been injured, but they were all going to be okay and they were all safely in Peace Village.
had undoubtedly endured terrible things in York but he was home, safe, and had a family who loved him. Lexa wasn’t in her bed but she was safe and Carter was with her to keep her that way. Clarke closed her eyes and repeated to herself, she’s well protected, she’s safe, she’s safe.

Little did she know that at the same time Lexa was staring at the beginnings of the sunrise as it peeked over the trees behind Ton DC. She was thinking of Clarke and repeating the same mantra, she’s home, she’s safe, she’s safe.

Chapter End Notes

Thank you to my dear Beta reader. She miraculously got this back to me in time for a New Year's Day post!
Chapter Summary

Kita is getting Heda’s guards sorted out.

Chapter Notes

Thank you all for your patience, I hope you enjoy the chapter.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Kita was not yet back to her usual 100%. But, the warriors who had volunteered to join Heda’s guard were already terrified as to what fresh form of hell she’d put them through in training when she was. They had never experienced a training regimen like the one she had introduced after her return. Her thigh wound was healed over, but she still walked with a slight limp and it was no secret that it pissed her off. Abby assured her that a couple more weeks of the special exercises she had given her would take care of that, but she was impatient.

It was not just the guards who were feeling her wrath. She had been far from impressed with the current security procedures in Peace Village. Indra had readily agreed with her, and together the two women had devised plans for a more rigorous training schedule, regular perimeter patrols, and a tighter protective detail for Lexa and Clarke. The latter decision proving to be an unpopular one with the Commander, who huffed in annoyance at the guards every morning as they met her outside of her home.

“I’m safe in the village. I don’t like them following me everywhere.” She had protested only to be quickly shot down by Kita.

“Your protection is MY job, Heda, not yours.” Kita stood her ground with an almost imperceptible smirk on the corner of her mouth. Lexa continued to be growly and complain but Kita just pushed her guards to follow Heda even closer. When Lexa finally intimidated two new guards so badly, with her growling, that they dropped back to follow her from a distance, Kita immediately kicked them out of the guard. She told them they were fine warriors but not cut out to be a member of Heda’s guard. She sent them to Indra to be added to her patrols. Kita made it clear that anyone who joined the Guard had to be beyond fear, had to be singularly committed to protecting the Hedas, and could most definitely NOT back down easily.

Throughout all of the selection and training process Carter had been working alongside Kita. She was impressed with him, he was helping her train the entire team of guards and it was clear that his skills rivalled her own. She even grudgingly acknowledged his skill to Indra one night while they were drinking. She went so far as to admit that she believed her Queen had chosen well. After Kita’s confession Indra couldn’t help but smile; as her own affection for her former Heda’s son ran deep. Carter had walked over to join them for a drink, but the grins on the faces of the two normally stock women scared him off. “Indra Nom Trikru and Kita of the Ice Guard, you two are even more terrifying when you smile.” He deadpanned before hurrying away to Rib’s table. The sound of
hearty laughter from both women followed him as he moved away.

Kita had also been impressed with Miller. His dedication to protecting Clarke was true, and his skills were growing. He quickly became her number one Guard for the Skai Heda when she was unable to accompany Clarke herself.

Marshall was another young guard who had impressed her with her fierce disregard of Lexa’s orders not to follow her so closely in the village. She was never more than three feet from her Heda and watched even her most benign interactions with the villagers so closely, that she frequently made people uncomfortable. When Lexa pressed her on it, she merely replied, “They should be uncomfortable, they speak with Heda.”

When Lexa occasionally lost her temper and threatened Marshall with some form of horrible death at her hands, the young woman coolly retorted, “If Heda wishes to spar, I am willing.” Kita was delighted with her confidence and poise, and soon Marshall was her number one choice for Lexa, much to the Commander’s annoyance.

Kita’s decision proved to be a good one, and Lexa’s attitude changed dramatically. This all happened when she and Clarke were returning home, later than originally planned, from a short trip to a local village. Dusk was upon them, and as they rode, Lexa found herself distracted by Clarke’s conversation and her excitement about the conversations she had had with the villagers that day.

Lexa missed the movements. They would have been caught completely by surprise; and that never ended well. As it was, Marshall had picked up on the silence of the forest, she caught the brief flashes of motion in the trees. She pulled out the strange gun the smart Saki woman had given her and fired it into the air, just like Raven had shown her. She knew Indra’s patrols would see the light in the sky and send help; for now she pulled alongside Lexa and started yelling at the others to prepare for an attack.

Lexa whipped her head around, ready to question Marshall about her use of the flare, when through the trees, she caught a glimpse of one of the pack that had them surrounded. She could tell immediately that these were not Trikru wolves, but larger and far more dangerous Ice wolves. The party kept riding and drew their weapons. Lexa looked around her, quickly assessing the situation. The guards and warriors with them were all young, newly promoted from seconds. She guessed many had never hunted nor been hunted by a pack quite like these wolves.

She began shouting orders; her voice hard and loud, the Commander’s steel, a voice her young warriors would obey even in the face of fear. “They hunt in packs like Tri wolves but they are smarter, larger, and far deadlier. Do not hesitate, when they break the tree-line kill as many as you can. Whatever you do, stay mounted and do not stop! Ride hard Gonas!” She looked over at Clarke who looked surprised and confused but had her weapon drawn. Miller, who had pulled in closer to Clarke, had a fiery determination in his eyes as he held his rifle at the ready.

“Ice wolves?” Clarke asked, eyes wide. She had heard the tales of these beasts over campfires as the elite force had chased down Alain and Yor.

“Sha, Clarke. Ice wolves.” Lexa pulled her horse just a little closer to her wife.

The first one jumped out in front of them some twenty meters up the road. Lexa knew they were in for a real fight, if all the wolves were as big as the one blocking their path. It was much larger than any she had seen before. It wasn’t uncommon to see a pack of Ice wolves migrate south every so often and Lexa had faced several of them in her lifetime. She knew that this was a hunting tactic; the Ice wolves were very smart! Most riders would slow or stop when faced with such a large creature in their path. When they did, the rest of the pack attacked from the sides and the rear, closing the riders
in. Lexa knew better. “Ride hard!” she shouted, as she pulled back her arrow. But, before she could release it, the great beast yelped and scampered back into the treeline leaving a surprised Lexa to look over at her young guard. It had been one of Marshall’s arrows that had connected with the wolf’s shoulder.

“Keep riding do NOT slow down,” Marshall shouted to the group. Lexa smirked a little, she suddenly liked this girl.

The wolves kept striking out. One or two would leap out of the trees and race alongside them trying to spook the horses or the riders, but Lexa’s group kept a tight formation. Eventually, after Miller had shot two of the pack dead with his rifle, and the rest were carrying various arrow wounds, they seemed far less interested in the small group of humans. Lexa could still see them trailing alongside in the tree-line, but they didn’t fully show themselves anymore. She knew they were waiting to see if the group would let their guard down. She didn’t have to worry though, because Marshall kept the group alert and focused as they picked up speed towards Peace Village.

As soon as the reinforcements arrived, led by Cato and three of his gun wielding, recently promoted warriors, Lexa saw the pack fade further back, no longer sure of their kills. The group continued home to Peace Village in safety. Once inside the city’s gates, Marshall immediately ordered one of the other guards to follow Lexa and Clarke home and then ran to report to the patrols. She told them to triple their numbers and send word of the danger to local villages.

Indra had been waiting for the groups return and she watched the interaction closely. When her warrior bristled at being given orders by a guard who had just recently completed her testing to become a full warrior she stepped out of the shadows.

“Gona, did you not hear Heda’s guard? A pack of Ice wolves is in our forest.” The warrior turned and bowed, somewhat sheepishly, and then ran off to spread the word. Indra slowly approached Marshall who somehow looked irritated and dejected all at once. “They will get used to taking your orders, young guard. Heda’s guards hold a high rank among Gonas, they would not hesitate for Cato, Carter, or Kita. One day they will all jump when you speak, but for now, build the relationships, they will get you further than your rank.” Marshall nodded and frowned, mulling over Indra’s words as she moved off to make sure Heda had been safely escorted home.

When Marshall found Heda she had gathered a small group of the other guards around herself and Kita. Both women were giving them a detailed description of the different types of wolves; how they hunt, and how to stay alive when being hunted. She joined the group silently and listened to the two women she admired most in the world regale the guards with tales of wolf packs: both showing off scars and laughing uproariously at some of the stories.

When the debrief wrapped up Lexa asked Marshall to stay behind. She was nervous, fully expecting another berating conversation from an angry Commander. She waited as Lexa stepped aside to check with Indra about the status of the patrols. Indra had decided the pack was too dangerous to have them roaming so close to so many populated villages. She had quickly organized a hunt and she wanted to know if Lexa planned to join. Lexa smiled and shook her head, no and grinned as Indra pointed to her thigh where there was a large scar she had just been showing off. The two women laughed, and Marshall felt a lump in her throat at being allowed this glimpse into the private relationship between her Heda and her General.

She heard Lexa say, “I’ll let the young gonas learn the thrill of a wolf hunt this time. Ask Walker and Carter to lead if you aren’t going yourself.” Walker was the large Ice Guard who had accompanied Carter from the Ice Nation, and Lexa had a good idea that he had hunted more than one pack of Ice wolves in his time. “Make sure they are prepared Indra, even injured, Ice wolves are not to be trifled
with. I prefer not to have any of my gonas be dinner for a hungry pack.” Indra nodded and walked off with an odd expression that seemed close to contentment. Marshall thought it looked out of place on the always surly general.

As Indra left Lexa turned to Marshall and motioned for the guard to approach. The softness in her expression caught Marshall off-guard. “Marshall, I have been pretty hard on you, yes?”

Marshall was taken aback and quickly sought to reassure her Heda that she did not think it was so. “No, Heda. I became a guard because it is the most noble and the most difficult position for a warrior. I did not expect this to be easy, you are not too hard on me.” She looked into Lexa’s eyes and when her Heda smiled her heart skipped a beat, Heda was beautiful.

“You did well today, Marshall.” Lexa started off slowly, “I was distracted by the safety of familiar land and the beauty of my wife. I didn’t see the wolves until you pointed them out. They would have surprised us if you hadn’t been there. If they had surprised us, it is likely some of us would have died.” Lexa looked directly at the young woman whose chest was now puffed out in pride.

“Carter and Cato were my personal guards for years, we have a long history with each other and they know me intimately. I trust them implicitly. Cato, Carter and I have such bonds that it is hard for me to get used to a new group of guards, even though I’m the one who ordered Cato to lead the gun training.” Lexa grimaced at her own honesty and paused, evaluating how much she wanted to share at this time. She looked at the young woman in front of her and saw the intensity at which Marshall followed her every word. She took a breath and decided to skip the sentimental words that were on the tip of her tongue, words that threatened to reveal the depth of her affection for Ribs and Motorbike.

“When Carter chose to stay in Otta, Kita was assigned to me by her Queen. She is the most skilled of the Royal Ice Guard. Even with her skill and training, at first it was awkward and strange to have a new person following Clarke and I so closely. But, after the trials we have been through together she now serves me out of love as well as duty. Guarding me is a difficult and thankless job, Marshall. Although should you be lucky enough to be assigned to my Houmon sometimes, you will no doubt find her far more agreeable and the job more rewarding.” Lexa laughed and Marshall found herself humbled by the depth of the love in Lexa’s eyes as she spoke of Clarke. “Those who serve us become more than guards, Marshall. The bond that forms is deep. You did well today, your skills are sharp, and you are dedicated to your job; but to truly succeed at guarding me you must also be dedicated to your Heda. Do you understand what I mean, Marshall”

The young woman looked confused, “I am dedicated to you, Heda. There is no-one I would rather serve.” Her words held conviction and Lexa smiled softly at her.

“Sha, Marshall I see that. What I mean is, there will be times when I do things or say things that you will disagree with, but you will have to hold your position and your tongue. There will be times I will deliberately put myself in danger and that means you will be putting yourself in danger to follow me. You will have to follow me anyway, even into certain death. You have skill, Marshall. If you have the conviction, you will succeed.” Lexa reached out and placed her hand softly on the guard’s shoulder for a moment before turning and leaving the girl staring after her.

Kita walked with Lexa back to her home, Lexa purposely slowing to Kita’s injured pace. “Marshall has skill, Kita.” Kita nodded her agreement. “Do you think she has the right personality? You of all people know how important the bond is. Royal Ice Guards are known to be the most loyal to their Queen.”

“I believed that to be so, before I saw Carter and Cato’s devotion to you, Heda.” Kita smiled. “Marshall is very close to having my trust, Heda… and I’m almost there with Miller as well. I trust
him here, but I will have to see how he reacts out there.” She gestured vaguely toward the edge of the village.

Lexa studied Kita for a long time before she nodded. “I trust you, Kita.” That was her final word on the subject. Lexa would allow Kita to handle the guards as she saw fit, that was, after all, her job. She continued looking at her Ice Guard and finally she spoke. “I have other plans for you, Kita. When you have trained more guards, and feel comfortable with them, I want you to lead the elite force.” Lexa did not get the reaction she had expected. She expected either anger and hurt feelings caused by the misunderstanding that Lexa didn’t trust her, or pride and happiness at the acceptance of the promotion. Lexa was prepared for those reactions. She was not prepared for the beautiful woman to throw her head back and laugh, long and hard.

When Kita finally caught her breath she stood and looked at Lexa with an amused expression. She unsheathed her ice blue blade and playfully thrust it into the ground between them. “Heda, do you know the story of this blade?” she asked, still with mirth in her voice. When Lexa’s surprised expression didn’t change, Kita continued. “The Royal Family of the Ice Nation has carried these weapons since this metal was discovered nearly thirty years after the bombs. A deposit was discovered on the fringe of our dead zone. The metal was found to be a result of iron ore that had been cooked by a bomb that had landed nearby, the heat and the radiation changed the ore into a new kind of metal, the hardest known to my people. The Queen’s smiths discovered, that under extreme heat, it could be plied into the very sharpest, and most durable of blades. Curiously enough though, the smith’s fire brought out an icy blue hue in the metal, and it retained that color even after the blades were formed and cooled. Only the Royal Family was permitted to carry such a blade for a long time.

It was Queen Skadi’s grandmother who changed that rule. She deemed her guard’s so loyal and so true that they had earned the right to carry the blade of R’oyalty. It is the highest honour and the noblest position an Ice Warrior can aspire to. My sister carries a silver sword, Heda. She is the Queen’s top general and highest advisor, but my blade affords me more prestige than hers. I know that no other clan trains their warriors as hard as Tri Kru. But, the trials of the Ice Guard are legendary. I completed those trials in the Northern territories, where the land is barren and unforgiving, where the recognizable animals are twice the size of their southern counterparts, and the beasts… well lets just say the tunnel was not my first time killing monsters.

My sister gathered those loyal to the true Royal family and she ran the trials there secretly, while Otta was under the reign of a tyrant. One hundred began the trials with me, only ten now carry the blade. I achieved the highest honour of my people and my life is devoted to upholding that honour.” Kita held Lexa’s eyes as she continued.

“They then my Queen gave me a higher honour, she personally asked me to guard her Heda. The one who had freed my people, and returned my Queen. Then you, Heda, gave me an even greater mission, to protect not only you, but the one most precious to you, the Skai Heda. Protecting you and Clarke is my life’s work. This blade is the colour of my heart and my soul, perhaps even my blood will one day run blue, such is my dedication. If you do not wish for me to guard you or Clarke send me home to my Queen, I will not trade this blade for one of silver. I know you mean it as a promotion, a bigger and more important role. But to a Guard of the Ice Nation’s Royal Family it can only be taken as an insult.”

Lexa stared at Kita with a look the Guard could not place. Finally, she spoke. “I did not mean to insult or offend, Kita. I rescind the offer and ask your forgiveness for my ignorance.”

“There is nothing to forgive, Heda.” Kita bowed her head but couldn’t quite wipe the amused smile from her face as she watched Lexa struggle to compose herself.
When they reached the door Lexa turned and looked once more at the beautiful guard, “Kita, I…” Lexa frowned when she couldn’t find the words she was looking for. She struggled to speak for a moment before giving up and just pulling a surprised Kita into a hug. She held her tightly and when Kita recovered from the shock she returned the embrace.

When Lexa released her they both smiled, slightly embarrassed at the display of emotion they had allowed themselves. Lexa opened her door and stepped into the kitchen. Clarke was inside and had prepared tea. “Kita, would you join us for tea?” She smiled to herself, sensing from their awkward body language that the two women had just had a bonding moment.

“Thank you Skai Heda, but I have to visit Raven. I have many questions about the … flare gun…” Kita hesitated over the unfamiliar word and continued when Clarke nodded. “It was useful today, the wolves would have continued attacking your small group until they found a weakness; the arrival of reinforcements was timely, mostly due to the flare gun. I hope she can make more. I also wonder what other devices she might have that we can use?”

Clarke smiled, “She was just here. I’m glad you’re stopping by, she can use the distraction. Octavia is leading a group on the wolf hunt and Raven is worried. O has been taking care of Lincoln and helping with Titan when she can to allow Bell and Echo some time with Noah. Raven says she is out of practice and is scared the wolves will eat her.” Clarke grinned, “Octavia Blake is so wound up with cabin fever those wolves don’t stand a chance.” Lexa agreed with her wife and Kita nodded as well.

Kita looked over at Lexa and a sly grin spread on her face, “Very well, Clarke. I will do my best to ‘distract’ Raven this evening.” Kita grinned as Clarke’s expression changed from a smile to exasperation, and she began to blush in embarrassment. Lexa laughed and slapped Kita on the shoulder.

“That’s not what I… argh! You two are the worst!” she shook her finger at the two snickering women and shooed Kita out of her kitchen. As Kita happily took her leave Lexa walked over to greet her wife properly.

She leaned in and wrapped her arms around the still blushing woman, “Houmon, you are so cute when you’re embarrassed, why do you think we do it?” She placed soft kisses along Clarke’s neck and felt her wife relax into her.

“You’re terrible.” Clarke insisted but her tone indicated otherwise.

“The worst.” Lexa agreed, disentangling herself from the blonde with a grin and sitting at the table, gratefully picking up the tea Clarke had prepared.

They sat in their home, at the table, sipping a delicious hot tea. They knew tomorrow or possibly even tonight would bring another crisis, another situation that demanded their attention. But, right now they were just two women, in love with each other, sipping tea in their kitchen.

Kita suddenly felt nervous. She had just knocked on Raven’s door and the beautiful genius had shouted that it was open. She took a deep breath and held it for a second, steeling herself; Ice Guards were not afraid of anything; especially not beautiful women.

When she entered Raven’s home, she was pleasantly surprised. She had been expecting an extension
of the engineer’s workshop, she had pictured it crammed wit technology and random bits of metal only Raven could understand. This was the opposite. It seemed to be Raven’s sanctuary; the only evidence of her work was a large sketchbook open in front of the beautiful woman. It had technical drawings and equations jotted down on the pages Kita could see.

The room was cozy and feminine, lit with soft candlelight. There was a lingering smell of the same fragrant tea Clarke had been brewing. Kita recognized it as one from the Lanta clan; she made a mental note to send for more so the two Skai women could enjoy it without worry of running out.

Raven looked up and a pleased but surprised look crossed her face. “Kita!? Hi…” Raven went to stand up but Kita held out her hand to stop her and stepped slightly closer.

“It’s ok, no need to get up, I’m sorry to interrupt you at home, I should have gone to your workshop tomorrow…” Kita blushed and Raven laughed and shook her head to dismiss the taller woman’s worry. The guard smiled, pleased that Raven didn’t mind her dropping by, and continued talking, “I just wanted to talk to you about your equipment…” Kita’s eyes had betrayed her and strayed to the low cut shirt Raven was wearing.

Raven’s eyes lit up as she teased the Guard, “My equipment, huh? Yes, I can see you checking it out right now.” Kita blushed even more and stammered an apology. Raven laughed softly; she found the normally stoic woman’s nervousness endearing. “It’s ok, I’m just teasing you. What equipment did you want to talk about, Kita?” Raven gestured for Kita to sit, and when the lovely woman finally did Raven offered her a choice between some tea or something stronger. Kita accepted a shot of whiskey and gratefully threw it back, the sharp taste chasing away the butterflies she was feeling.

Kita sat for a moment, quietly looking at the beautiful woman across from her, allowing the fire from the whiskey to sit in her belly and give her back her confidence. When she spoke her voice was steady, but soft. “The flare gun you gave Marshall, it worked well. I wonder if you have more and if not, can you make more?” Kita was back to business, she was comfortable with business. Her normally smooth confidence with women seemed to have abandoned her tonight so she kept her words focused on business.

“I only have four of the guns, but there is a pretty good stock of flares from the mountain. When we get low I should be able to manufacture more flares pretty easily, but the guns are far more complicated, I can’t give you a definite answer yet.” Raven’s contemplative expression told Kita she was mentally adding and filing, figuring things out in her head. When her silent calculations were done, she nodded with confidence and grinned, “Yes on the flares, and a hard maybe on more guns.”

Kita nodded, an amused smile on her face at Raven’s adorable brilliance., “Good, I want the guards to carry them when they leave the village with Clarke or Heda. Do you have any other Skai weapons that might help keep them safe?” Kita’s words made Raven smile, it seemed that Heda’s Guard might be an easier convert to her technology than she had thought.

“I do,” she replied, “come to my workshop tomorrow Kita, I’ll show you around.” Raven chuckled at how enthusiastically Kita agreed to join her. She held Kita’s gaze for a long moment before she spoke. “Is that the only reason you came by tonight? Flares?” Her teasing tone was gone. Now, her voice was soft, curious, and hopeful.

Kita swallowed hard, “I”… She dropped her eyes and soon heard Raven stand and move to stand beside her. Raven reached out to brush her fingers gently along the warrior’s sculpted cheekbones. Kita looked up and Raven smiled. The brilliance of that smile, combined with the soft fingers lightly stroking her face made Kita release a sigh of pleasure. “Raven, you are beautiful.”
“I’m a little on edge tonight,” Raven began, but trailed off and looked away without offering any more of an explanation.

“I know, Clarke told me you might need a distraction. Raven, you don’t have to worry, Octavia Kom Trikru is strong and smart. I have fought Ice Wolves many times, it is true that they are deadly beasts, but if the hunters are skilled they will prevail. Even with Heda, Indra, and Carter here, if I had to choose a hunting partner from this camp it would be Octavia. She will return home victorious.” Kita nodded firmly, as if to punctuate her words, and Raven felt much of her worry fall away; she knew Kita would not use those words just to placate her. As the tension she had been holding left her body she found herself feeling something else entirely and her smile turned slightly predatory.

“So, you came to offer me a distraction, huh?” Raven held out her hand and pursed her lips as Kita looked down at it and blushed. “We can talk about flares and equipment if you prefer, Kita; but I would like to try something else.”

Kita’s heart was beating hard. She was definitely feeling nervous, but she was also very aroused. She remembered the flirtatious conversation they had shared in York, and briefly wondered where her ‘cool’ had gone. She reached up and took Raven’s hand letting the smaller woman pull her up from her seat. Raven pulled her smoothly forward into her arms and Kita found herself looking down into impossibly warm brown eyes. Kita’s breath hitched and Raven once again ran her fingers over the taller woman’s cheekbones. “May I kiss you, Kita?” Raven asked, waiting for Kita’s enthusiastic, ‘Yes’ before continuing.

Raven looked into her eyes and leaned up and in her lips drawing closer and closer, before stopping, painfully close to Kita’s. The soft groan of disappointment her slight pause drew from the guard was not lost on the sexy engineer, and she smiled a self satisfied smile, before closing that final inch and touching her lips to Kita’s. Both women felt the jolt of electricity when their lips touched, their stomachs simultaneously clenching in want. Goosebumps of anticipation erupted along Kita’s muscled arms where Raven’s fingers were now skimming across her skin.

Raven controlled the kiss at first. But, as Kita’s desire flared, she slowly deepened the kiss pressing hungrily in to Raven. When Kita’s hands slid up into Raven’s dark hair the shorter woman pulled back slightly. Kita immediately stopped the kiss and breathlessly pulled back so she could see Raven’s eyes. “Are you ok? Was I too aggressive?” The concern in the Guard’s eyes was clear and Raven’s heart warmed.

“No, it’s not that, Kita.” Raven played with Kita’s long black hair and held eye contact as she spoke. “You saw Heda through the tunnels, you fought the GERSA, you safely transported the children to Otta; then you rode all the way here, got shot, almost lost some close friends, and now you are trying to recover from your injury and pushing your guard recruits through CRAZY training. Have you even taken a moment to breathe? Have you been able to just let go of it all, even for a moment?” Raven slid her hands back down Kita’s body and wrapped her arms around the strong woman.

Kita kept eye contact with Raven, her heart was pounding out of her chest. “I don’t know if I can….” She admitted, her voice and her body both trembling with the effort of holding back the emotion she was feeling.

“Do you trust me?” Raven’s words were soft but her eyes were insistent.

Kita looked down at her and her answer was a heartfelt, “Yes.”

“Then letting go isn’t so hard, Kita. Think of what you do for Suu when you let her surrender. Let me do that for you.” Raven’s voice dropped to a whisper, “Just breathe, let me lead, and let go.” Raven slid her hands down Kita’s arms and grasped her hands, she stepped back pulling Kita with
her towards her bed. When Raven felt her legs hit the side of her bed she sat down and pulled Kita onto her lap, the taller woman allowing herself to be led. Raven felt a rush of desire mixed with a heady feeling of power. Kita draped her arms over Raven’s shoulders and a soft smile spread over her face.

“See, it’s easy.” Raven looked up at Kita, “Kiss me,” she ordered softly, and Kita happily obeyed. They kissed for a long time before Raven pulled back. “Did you have anything to drink before you came here?”

“No, just the one shot I had here to calm my nerves.” Kita replied with a bright smile, she appreciated Raven’s question. “You know, I almost went to your room the night of the festival in York, but you were drunk and clear consent is so important. I like that you are checking to make sure I’m sober. I’m not drunk Raven, and I want you.” Raven’s face lit up with that smile Kita swore could brighten even the darkest of places and she couldn’t resist leaning down and initiating another kiss.

Raven let the strong warrior kiss her. She let Kita gently bite her lower lip softly, then she felt her swipe her tongue over the spot she had just bitten. Raven let Kita softly explore her lips and her mouth. She let her kiss her until Kita pulled back on her own, breathless.

Kita caught her breath and leaned back in to initiate another kiss. Raven raised her hand and laid a finger against Kita’s delectable lips. “I was letting you kiss me lover, but let’s not forget who is in charge here tonight.” Raven winked and Kita’s heart beat so hard she wondered if it was going to explode.

Raven grasped her own shirt and in one smooth motion she pulled it over her head exposing her breasts to Kita’s hungry gaze. “Raven… you’re perfect.” Kita managed to breathe out in a heavy whisper. “Can I touch you?” Her hands were resting on Raven’s ribs waiting for permission to move upwards and explore.

“Not yet.” Raven teased, “We have to talk about how this is going to work.” Kita immediately let go of Raven and her eyes left the perfect breasts and locked with Raven’s. The engineer continued, “I’m going to tell you what I want, exactly what I want. You’re going to do it, exactly how I tell you to.” Kita couldn’t stop the lascivious grin from spreading over her entire face. Raven arched an eyebrow and then leaned in closer to Kita, dropping her voice to a sexy whisper. “Then I’m going to lie you down and do what I want with your beautiful fucking body until you are screaming my name in ecstasy.” Kita’s mouth dropped open just a little as she stared wantonly at the goddess in front of her. “Do you want me to do all of that?” Raven watched Kita swallow hard, watched her eyes darken with lust, watched her nod her understanding and her consent. “I need you to say it, Kita.” Raven’s voice dropped another octave, low and sultry, Kita almost whimpered.

“Yes, Raven. I want all of those things.” Kita managed to say.

“Good. Good girl, Kita.” Raven breathed into her ear. “Now stand up for me, so I can get these clothes off.” Kita jumped off of Raven’s lap with an eagerness that made them both laugh. Kita stood, and watched enthralled as pants were pushed off and Raven’s gorgeous naked body was revealed. When she was fully naked, Raven pushed herself back onto the bed and got into a comfortable position. Kita stood, waiting. The desire to surge forward and touch the sexy engineer obvious by her trembling body. Raven began to run her hands over her own body. Her eyes never left Kita’s face and she loved the way the tough exterior fell away and revealed Kita’s want.

“Clothes, Kita. They need to come off.” Kita obeyed instantly, tearing her clothes off at lightning speed. When she too was naked, Raven let her half-lidded eyes travel down Kita’s long, lean frame, stopping at the juncture of her thighs for a heated moment, while letting her hand slide into her own
As she began to stroke herself, she continued her sultry gaze down the long, muscular legs, then back up to settle on the lovely brown nipples that were straining against the air, begging to be touched, pinched, and sucked.

Kita trembled with the effort of standing still, watching Raven ravish her with her eyes while pleasuring herself. She wanted desperately to replace Raven’s hand with her tongue, but more than that she wanted what Raven had offered, the chance to let go, to let someone else be in control. She waited, growing wetter and more aroused with each moan that escaped Raven’s lips.

Raven’s eyes only left Kita to flicker closed in pleasure as she stroked herself. She could see the effort Kita was expending holding herself back. She admired the muscles that bulged in Kita’s forearms as she clenched her fists to keep her hands from reaching out to touch the writhing woman in front of her. Raven let out a particularly loud moan as she thought about Kita very soon putting those muscles to good use.

Just as Kita was about to beg, Raven finally spoke to her, “Kita, there are more rules to learn before I let you fuck me. I’m going to use colors to check in with you; green means you are feeling good and want to continue, yellow means you need me to slow down, and red means stop. When I ask for your color, I need you to tell me honestly. Do you understand?”

“Yes, Raven; green, yellow, and red. I understand.” Kita’s voice was low and tense as she stared at Raven’s fingers now dipping slowly inside of herself.

“Good girl, Kita. Now, I want you. I want you to use your tongue. Lick my clit, make me come.”

Kita was unaware of the soft moan she emitted as she moved immediately and crawled up onto the bed. She locked eyes with Raven for a second, looking for hesitation, checking for consent, even now. Raven felt her heart flutter at the gesture of care, but she clamped down on that feeling and arched an eyebrow at Kita. “What are you waiting for Kita? Was I not clear? Lick. My. Clit.” Raven demanded, and placed her hand on Kita’s head pushing her towards her pussy. She didn’t miss the giant grin on the warrior’s face as she buried her face in the wet folds. Kita didn’t take long to locate and begin to tease Raven’s engorged clit. She may not have been having sex for long but she had had excellent teachers and Raven was soon shouting profanities about how fucking good Kita was with her tongue.

Raven’s fingers ran through Kita’s hair, tightening and tugging as Kita swirled her tongue and teased. “Stop teasing, Kita. I want to come.” Raven tried to sound stern but she sounded wrecked and desperate, her breath heaving and uneven. Kita was enjoying Raven’s dominance so she complied, despite wanting to tease her more. She wanted to bring her to the precipice and then pull her back, build her up until she begged Kita to let her come. But Kita welcomed Raven’s dominance, she wanted to be relieved of all responsibility while here in this bed. So, she focused intently on Raven’s clit, finding a rhythm that had Raven calling her name, and the names of some Skai gods and goddesses Kita had never heard of. Soon Raven’s thighs closed around Kita’s head and her hips began to buck.

“Fuck! Fuck fuck fuck! Kita, come here. Kiss me.” Raven was still in command, so Kita readily obeyed. She slid up the smooth body planting tiny kisses on Raven’s skin as she moved. When she was finally looking into Raven’s beautiful brown eyes, she let out a small happy sigh and then let her lips do what they had been asked.

As they kissed, Raven ran her hands up and down Kita’s muscled back, raking her fingernails over the soft skin and making Kita gasp and squirm. “Color?” Raven asked softly.

“Green,” came the husky reply and Raven smiled.
“You did such a good job licking my clit, I’m going to let you fuck me, Kita.” Raven’s smirk grew wider as another involuntary moan escaped Kita’s lips and she eagerly looked to Raven for instruction. “Start with two fingers, Kita.” Raven took Kita’s hand and placed her own on top as she guided it down her body. When she reached her mons, Raven released Kita’s hand and waited in anticipation for her long, slim fingers to dive into the wetness. Kita paused at Raven’s entrance, teasing her, until Raven’s voice, rough with want, called out, “Fuck me, Kita. Fuck me, now.”

“Raven!” Kita’s voice was octaves higher than Raven had ever heard it as she obeyed the command and slid two fingers into her wet cunt. “Oh, oh Raven, you’re so wet… so fucking wet!” Kita hummed in satisfaction as she began to slide her fingers in and out of Raven’s opening, pressing upward and exploring.

Raven squeezed her eyes shut and tried to keep herself in control as Kita played and explored. She could feel the tall woman’s strong, slender fingers sliding over every sensitive spot, pausing ever so slightly over the most sensitive ones and then ghosting away, leaving her wanting to scream in both pleasure and frustration. She almost forgot that she was in charge; almost.

Kita was enjoying the way Raven’s muscles clenched when she pressed just so into the upper wall of her vagina. She was relishing the way Raven’s breath sucked in hard and the way her voice broke over Kita’s name as she slid all the way in and rapidly moved her fingers in a scissoring motion. She was feeling the godlike euphoria that comes from knowing you are the cause of a beautiful woman about to lose herself to a mind-blowing orgasm. She was feeling cocky, high, and incredibly horny. Then, Raven reminded her who was godlike and who the mere mortal.

“Kita.” Raven’s voice was somehow steady. “Add another finger, now.” Raven heard Kita’s sharp intake of breath and then she felt the stretch of a third finger being slid inside of her. “Mmmmm, that’s right, I like that. Good girl.” She felt Kita shiver at the compliment. Kita slowly slid her three fingers all the way inside. “Fuck, yes, Kita. Now slide back out, just a little.” Kita’s fingers obeyed. “Right. There.” Kita stilled her fingers and Raven’s voice was a growl when she continued, “Rub that spot, Kita.”

Kita felt her own wetness spilling down her thighs as she fought back a moan of pure pleasure. “Push up, Kita, just keep pressing and rubbing me right there.” Raven’s body shook with convulsions as Kita did as she asked. “YES! Fuck, Kita. Now use both hands, play with my clit.” Kita slid her knees forward to support herself, then shifted slightly to give herself a better angle to use her left hand on Raven’s clt. Watching Raven’s body arch into her touch and shake in pleasure was overwhelming Kita’s senses and she closed her eyes just for a moment to try and regain control.

“Don’t close your eyes, Kita.” Raven’s voice was sharp and Kita’s eyes flew open. “Look at me, see what your touch does to me, I’m getting close Kita, watch me fall.” Raven closed her own eyes briefly and pressed her body up into Kita’s skilled ministrations. As Kita doubled her efforts, Raven’s entire body tensed and her eyes fluttered back open and locked with Kita’s.

Just before her body began to shake and her mouth began to call to the heavens, Raven’s eyes revealed her pleasure. Kita stared into those brown eyes and she swore she saw the moment Raven’s orgasm overtook her.

Kita’s nimble fingers worked Raven through the pleasure and brought her back down with expert skill. When Raven found herself again, she smiled and looked back into her lover’s eyes. She saw Kita staring at her with a reverence that made her blush. “Why are you looking at me like that?” She questioned “You look like you’ve just had a religious experience.”

“I’ve never seen pleasure reflected in a woman’s eyes quite like that,” Kita admitted, “it was a religious experience.” She smiled softly and Raven felt her heart rate increase again, Ignoring what
her suddenly pounding heart might mean, she reached up and wrapped her hand around the back of Kita’s neck gently pulling her down into a kiss.

Raven kissed Kita passionately, biting softly at her lover’s lower lip. Her hands began to explore Kita’s back, tracing the muscles, adding small scratches that had Kita rocking against her thigh in search of pressure, in search of pleasure. “Kita, stop moving. You haven’t asked for permission to take pleasure from my thigh.” Raven’s voice made Kita shudder even as her hips stilled.

“Good girl. I like it when you obey me, Kita.” As a reward Raven pushed her thigh up, pressing into Kita’s wetness. Her hands went to Kita’s hips and held them steady as she rubbed her thigh roughly against Kita’s swollen center. The unsteady breath Kita released and the way she bit her lower lip was Raven’s undoing. She abandoned her plan of slow torture and quickly flipped Kita over so she was on top.

Raven stared down at her lover, Kita’s eyes were wide, her pupils dilated, her skin was flushed and her breath was coming in unsteady gulps. “What color are you?” Raven demanded.

“Green, fuck Raven, Green!” Kita replied instantly desperately wanting Raven’s hands on her. Raven’s answering smile made Kita’s heart skip a beat, she wondered at the feeling but was soon too focused on the gorgeous lips that were trailing down her neck and biting at her skin to think about much else. “Mmm, Raven, your mouth feels so good on my skin.”

Raven bit down, testing her partner’s threshold and was not surprised to find Kita’s response was to scream her name and cant her hips upward, looking for pressure. Raven stopped immediately and Kita blinked up at her, upset at the loss of sensation.

“I told you to stay still.” Raven warned, and Kita grinned sheepishly.

“I’m sorry Raven, you just feel so good, my body had a mind of its own.” Kita just wanted Raven to keep touching her.

“And it won’t happen again?” Raven arched an eyebrow and Kita’s stomach tied itself in knots at how sexy that expression looked on the face of the beautiful genius who hovered over her.

“It won’t. I swear!” Kita’s reply was so earnest and so quick to fly from her lips that Raven couldn’t help but giggle.

“That’s good, my big strong warrior, because if it happens again I will have to punish you… more than I’m already going to.” Raven’s smirk left Kita’s mouth dry and her brain racing in anticipation of what this punishment might be.

Raven sat up, straddling Kita’s stomach, and looked down, “You want me to touch you, don’t you?”

“Yes.” Kita replied immediately.

“But I’m not going to…. yet.” Raven didn’t miss the look of disappointment on her lover’s face. She smiled and rocked her hips forward pressing herself into Kita’s rock hard abs. Kita felt the wetness on her stomach and whimpered in delight.

Raven moved slowly down Kita’s body stopping and rubbing herself on Kita’s mons, so close to where Kita desperately wanted her but not close enough to allow any relief. “This is what happens when you don’t listen, Kita.” Raven smirked at her lover who she could see was straining to control her hips from tilting upwards and seeking pleasure.
Raven slid slightly further down and shifted her legs so she was straddling Kita’s uninjured thigh while her own leg was tantalizingly close to Kita’s clit. She began to rock back and forth, pushing herself down onto Kita’s hard thigh and moaning at the sensation. “Fuck Kita, do you feel how wet I am?” Raven threw her head back and pressed herself down harder.

“Yes, yes Raven, I feel it. You’re so wet, it feels amazing.” Kita wanted to reach up and grab Raven by the hips, help her grind down harder, get more pressure, help her come faster. “Can I touch you?” She gasped.

“Good girl, asking for permission. Yes, Kita. Touch me.” Raven looked into Kita’s eyes as she spoke and both women felt such an intensity they gasped simultaneously. Kita’s hands flew to Raven’s hips and her thigh moved upwards to give Raven a better angle.

“Mmmmm, fuck Kita you feel so good, you’re going to have me coming all over your leg soon.” Raven purred her appreciation to her lover and Kita managed to swallow a scream as Raven’s leg purposely brushed against her center. Raven could feel how wet Kita was but her hips stayed put and Raven rewarded her.

“Such a strong woman, such a fierce warrior, Kita you are so fucking beautiful.” Raven reached down and grabbed Kita’s hand. “Do you want to fuck me again?” Raven asked, and Kita’s excited nod made her smile. She lifted her hips slightly allowing Kita’s hand to slide in between her legs. Kita braced her hand against her own thigh and her deft fingers reached upwards, searching for the source of Raven’s wetness. Raven lowered herself slowly letting Kita feel her wetness enveloping her fingers.

“Fuck, Raven.” Kita gasped out, the pleasure of feeling the tight walls taking her fingers inside was too much for her to keep quiet.

“Kita…” Raven gasped her lover’s name and then began to ride her fingers. Her hips moved in an erratic pattern and Kita concentrated on trying to keep her palm pressed into Raven’s clit. Raven bounced and rocked, her head thrown back and Kita’s name flying from her lips. Kita could feel the pleasure building and she knew when Raven was close. She pressed her thigh upwards to give Raven a nudge and watched in awe as the gorgeous woman shuddered through another orgasm.

Kita was almost ready to come herself she was so aroused and Raven knew it. “Kita, you’re so fucking good. Your hips stayed glued to the bed. You deserve your reward now.” Raven panted as she caught her breath, and then leaned down and kissed Kita’s lips. She dropped her mouth quickly down to kiss along Kita’s collarbone and then moved to run her tongue between Kita’s breasts.

“Raven…” Kita said her name like a prayer, soft and full of reverence. Raven looked up at her, held her gaze for a moment and then bent her head to encircle her rock hard nipple into the warmth of her mouth. Kita sucked in a harsh breath at the sudden sensation and she grabbed at the sheets to prevent her hands from doing anything that might make Raven stop.

Raven lavished attention on both stiff buds for a few minutes, and when she had her fill she moved further down Kita’s body. She licked Kita’s abs and as she moved even further down she whispered, “I can taste myself on your abs, Kita.” knowing full well what affect her words would have on the very aroused woman beneath her.

“Fuuckkk, Raven.” Kita choked out, “please..” Kita was not above begging at this point, her clit was throbbing with desire and she needed Raven to fuck her soon.

Raven stopped with her mouth hovering over Kita’s wet pussy. “Are you ready for your reward, Kita?” She whispered.
“Yes, yes please. Raven, please.” Kita begged. “I need you.” She moaned loudly. Raven reached up and found one of Kita’s hands and squeezed; a soft almost romantic gesture in the middle of their power play, then she lowered her mouth to lap at Kita’s wetness.

Kita’s thighs trembled and her abs flexed tight. Raven took another swipe of the flowing wetness with her tongue and Kita whimpered in pleasure. “Fuck you taste so good.” Raven whispered and then she let go of Kita’s hand and grabbed her legs, directing Kita to bend her knees and splay her legs open to give her full access to the beautiful dripping cunt in front of her.

“My god, you are so beautiful.” Raven stared at the wet folds, entranced. She lowered her head once more and buried her face in Kita’s pussy. She licked and sucked along the soft inner lips and flicked her tongue to tease Kita’s entrance. She listened to her lover’s breathing and watched as her muscles shook with the effort of staying still. Raven licked from the entrance of Kita’s vagina up through her wetness and settled on her hard, engorged clit.

The scream of pleasure she received made her smile as she slowly began to run her tongue in circles around Kita’s clit. She found a rhythm that made Kita lose her control; her hands flying from the sheets and tangling themselves in Raven’s hair. In no time at all, Kita began to call out to the Ice Gods as she lost herself in the feeling.

Raven paused long enough to tell Kita she wanted her to come, then she continued, her circle growing smaller, tighter, faster, until she was sure Kita was about to explode. She found herself incredibly turned on making this tough woman fall apart with her mouth and she wanted Kita to come hard. She was not disappointed. Kita’s legs snapped shut trapping a very content Raven between her thighs as her body arched and Raven’s name was shouted to the heavens. Kita’s body shook as she came and Raven kept licking and sucking until Kita’s legs lost their grip and Kita’s hips pressed down away from her mouth. “Raven…” Kita breathlessly called out.

In the afterglow of a powerful orgasm, Kita suddenly felt overwhelmed, she felt too vulnerable, too open, and she didn’t want to be fucked, she wanted to be cuddled and kissed, and possibly made love to. Her pause made Raven repeat her question, this time in a far softer voice, “Color, Kita.” Raven nudged Kita’s cheek with her nose and when Kita looked at her she held her eyes but whispered so quietly Raven had to strain to hear, “yellow… maybe… red, I… I… I’m sorry.” Kita’s reply stopped Raven immediately, made the blood pounding through her veins still, but at the same time made her heart pound even harder than it already was. “Please… hold me?” Kita’s voice sounded uncertain. Raven lay down on her side facing Kita and gathered her into her arms placing soft kisses on her face.

“Of course, of course I’ll hold you. Thank you for telling me you need to stop, Kita.” Raven began rubbing soothing circles into Kita’s back and continued to place small kisses on her cheek and forehead. “Can we talk about it? I would like to know if you are ok? If you aren’t ready to talk yet I can wait.” Raven’s voice was so soothing and caring that Kita was already feeling safe and cared for again.

“You didn’t do anything wrong, Raven.” Kita guessed correctly that Raven was worried she had hurt her. “You didn’t hurt me at all, in fact you gave me an amazing orgasm.” Kita snuggled deeper
into Raven’s embrace. “I just suddenly felt so… so exposed and vulnerable.”

Raven’s voice betrayed her feeling of disappointment even as she tried to hide it. “I get it, you didn’t want to feel that vulnerable with me. We don’t know each other that well yet…”

“No, Raven, that’s not it.” Kita pulled back slightly so she could look into Raven’s eyes. “I just didn’t want it to be hard and rough, I couldn’t take it that way feeling so emotionally vulnerable… I needed you to hold me.” Kita paused and a blush spread across her cheeks that set Raven’s heart racing again, “I suddenly wanted to feel closer to you, I wanted you to make love to me…” Kita dropped her eyes “I know that’s not what you want, I’m sorry… I’ll go.”

Raven cut her off, “Kita, do you mean that? You wanted me to make love to you? You wanted to feel closer to me? I thought you just wanted it to be physical.” Raven felt emotions welling up inside of her that she had always tried to quell. Tears threatened to fill her eyes and she blinked furiously to keep them away.

Kita saw all of this and leaned in to kiss Raven’s eyelids. “This is more than physical, Raven. We cannot lie to ourselves about that.” She held Raven’s gaze and both of them felt like they might never breathe again.

“Kita.” Raven softly breathed out. “Do you still want me to make love to you? Soft and gentle?”

“Yes.”

“I want that too.”

When their lips met this time it was softer than before, less demanding but somehow more intense. They softly explored each other with hands, mouths, and hearts.

After she had thoroughly kissed and softly touched her entire body Raven went back to Kita’s lips, she kissed her softly and let her hand slowly make it’s way to Kita’s hip. She rested her hand on the protruding bone and waited while she kissed her lover. When she finally broke the kiss she asked for permission. Her voice soft, loving, and shy, a far cry from the sexy, dominant Raven Kita had already experienced. Kita liked both versions of the woman she was quickly falling for, but right now she needed this Raven, the soft, caring, vulnerable one.

“Yes, Raven, I want you inside of me.” Kita saw Raven’s pupils dilate and heard her breath hitch. Raven entered Kita softly letting her get used to a single finger before adding a second. She sighed at the feeling of the silky walls and whispered sweet words of affection into Kita’s ear as she began to slowly pump in and out. Her fingers danced along Kita’s inner walls looking for that special spot that would give her the greatest pleasure. When she found it, Kita’s fingernails dug into her back. Raven hissed in pleasure and Kita whispered desperate pleas, asking Raven asking for her loving kiss. The gentleness of Raven’s touch and the feel of her soft lips pushed Kita over the edge, her orgasm washing over her in shattering waves and bringing tears to Raven’s eyes.

“You are so beautiful it’s heartbreaking,” she murmured into Kita’s neck trying to hide her emotions from her lover.

Kita smiled and shifted so she could look at Raven, “Raven, please look at me,” Her voice was so soft, so open that Raven couldn’t ignore the request. When Kita saw the tears gathered in Raven’s eyes she felt like something was constricting her chest, and she found it hard to breathe. “What’s wrong, Raven?” She asked softly.

“Nothing, it’s just… you’re just…” Raven swallowed hard and tried to articulate what she was
feeling, “I’m not used to discussing my feelings, hell I’m not used to allowing myself to feel my feelings…” The engineer laughed harshly at herself and watched as Kita smiled softly, nodding in understanding. “This is really intense for me too, Kita. I feel such a strong connection to you right now, and it scares me.”

“It scares me too, Raven.” Kita whispered softly, leaning in and kissing the tip of Raven’s nose.

“I’m not the marrying type, we can’t go all crazy here… I’ll push you away, I’ll ruin it… I’ll..” Raven broke off and plump tears rolled down her cheeks. Kita quickly cupped her face in her hands and rubbed the tears away with her thumbs.

“Shhh, shhh, Raven. It’s ok, I’m not the marrying kind either.” Kita laughed when Raven’s big eyes looked at her with hope. “Hell, I already have relationships, of sorts, with three other women.” Raven suddenly bit her lower lip to prevent a giggle from escaping. Kita continued, “I need my space and my work just as you do. I encourage you to have other lovers. I want you to be happy, but I know I won’t always be enough to make you happy. We are different than Clarke and Lexa, Raven; and that’s okay.” Kita saw a mixture of relief and anxiety on Raven’s face. “I want us to continue forward with whatever this is. Our connection is too strong for us not to try.”

Kita’s words washed over Raven in a wave of relief. “Can I kiss you?” Kita asked softly and Raven answered by leaning forward and pressing their lips together.

As their kiss deepened Kita pulled back with one more question, “Raven, can I make love to you?”

“Fuck.. yes! Yes, Kita, make love to me, please.” Raven felt her nipples harden and her stomach flutter in anticipation as a beaming smile spread over Kita’s face. She found her mind racing, involuntarily flying through all the possible outcomes for this relationship. But, when the fiercest of all the Royal Ice Guards leaned in and began to suckle at the base of her neck, Raven Reyes lost all coherent thought completely.

Chapter End Notes

We're in a bit of a building phase, we will be getting Peace Village, and Lexa's new system, up and running in the next couple of chapters.

I know it's a long wait between chapters but I promise you we're taking this one all the way to the end. ❤
The Enemy of my Enemy

Chapter Summary

Octavia leads her team into the forest after the dangerous pack of Ice wolves.

Chapter Notes

This is a surprise chapter for my lovely Beta reader who expressed a desire to see how Octavia handled the hunt. Please excuse the typos, grammatical errors etc... I couldn't very well ask her to proofread it and still surprise her, now could I?

Octavia silently slipped through the forest; her team of twenty warriors, and one youngster with his bow, moving alongside her. She breathed deeply, listening for the thrum of activity that's always there in the forest, under the silence most people hear. Lincoln had taught her to listen beyond the silence back when she was just a Skai girl. She felt it, the forest was ill at ease; the Ice pack didn't belong here. Octavia had been following the discomfort of her forest for three hours, the pack had made a lot of ground since they had been spotted near Peace Village. Despite the grumbling doubts some of her team had expressed her instincts proved right and she led them straight to the pack. They were getting close, almost in view of the beasts when they heard a very human scream. The scream was followed by barks and growls. Octavia's blood ran cold and she immediately gave her signal.

The team rushed forward, stealth suddenly less a priority as they ran forward, desperate to get to the owners of the screaming voices before the pack finished their kill. They raced through the trees toward the sound of terrified shouting voices, far too high, far too young. The trees began to thin and their field of view grew longer. Willem and Octavia saw them first, in the middle of the thinning trees stood one tall proud maple. On one of the lower branches were three children from a local village. Two clutching onto the body of the third. From the amount of blood she could see, Octavia assumed they were too late for that goufa. She raised her arm and gave a sharp call like a nighthawk. Her team sprung into action, Willem hoisted Noah (who had argued fiercely to be included in the hunt) into a tall, broad oak tree and the boy scampered up searching for a good perch.

The rest of the team spread out in pairs and moved forward quickly, trying to get the drop on the beasts who were busy playing with what they thought would be dinner. On the ground in front of the tree stood three more kids. They were holding swords out in trembling arms, the oldest at the front baring her teeth right back at the giant predators who surrounded them.

The pack was large, fifteen giant Ice wolves confident in their supremacy. The dominant pair was hanging back to let the younger wolves make the kills. As Octavia's team approached, the pack caught their scent and heard the movement in the trees. They reorganized, the bigger wolves making a protective circle around the smaller wolves that were still focused on the children at the base of the tree, a sure kill.

Willem shouted up to Noah, "Try to protect the children until we can fight through!" And then the battle began. Teeth vs. sword, mass vs. motion; the warriors moved in pairs, trying to get through to
the terrified children. The wolves lunged, trying to use their sheer size to dominate the fight. The warriors swung their swords in sharp concise arcs, and then moved quickly out of the path of the animals. It was a slash and run technique trying to throw the beasts off balance.

Octavia and Willem fought off a large, white female with a peppering of light brown markings around it's neck. Octavia struck a blow to the animal's side that allowed Willem to slip past the outer circle. He ran towards the wolves who were snapping at the children. The animals were leaping forward, staying just out of reach of the blades, trying to catch the frightened children with the heavy swords on the ground, so they could make their kill. Noah had been firing non-stop at the wolves near the tree, but they were in constant, unpredictable motion and he had only landed one glancing shot. He was ready to loose another one as Willem prepared to swing his sword at the attackers.

The alpha male had been standing back, watching. The wolf was pure white, and stood over four feet tall, it's amber eyes were tracking Willem as he moved forward. It saw him raise his sword to strike the three younger wolves and it leapt toward him snarling. Noah quickly adjusted him aim and fired, striking the great beast in the shoulder. The wolf didn't even yelp in pain as it was struck, it crouched down and bared it's teeth at Willem. Man stared down beast and they began their battle. Behind them one of the younger wolves dove forward, heedless of the swords the children waved at it. It succeeded in knocking one of the kids down, her sword went flying and the wolf was on her. The other two kids jumped forward and one managed to cut into the rear leg of the attacking wolf. The animal yelped and jumped back but the young girl didn't move off the ground and as her friends ran to her they were set upon. Teeth ripped through clothes, into muscle, into blood.

Noah was firing again. He got one of the attacking wolves right in the skull, a kill shot. The animal dropped to the ground, releasing the arm of the kid it had been shaking like a rag doll moments before. He hit the second one in it's back and made it release the fallen girl. The third youngster was in a battle, she was the tallest and oldest of the kids. The wolf she grappled with had it's teeth sunk into her left shoulder. She was still somehow holding onto the wolf's neck with her left hand, preventing it from flinging her to the ground. With her right hand she reached toward her waist and unstrapped a dagger. She pulled it out and drove it into the neck of the animal that held her. The wolf jumped back, blood spurting all over the girl, and then Noah landed his second kill shot. As the wolf before her dropped to the forest floor the girl looked up into the tree and saw Noah stringing arrow after arrow and firing into the chaos below. She vowed right then and there to remember him, and to save his life in return someday. She turned and looked toward her friend Leaf, who still hadn't moved, whose blood just kept bubbling from the wounds the wolf had left on her neck and shoulders. Her other friend, Dean, was crying over the body, shaking her, and begging her to get up.

She ran to them and shook Dean by the shoulders. "Remember what we learned!" She grabbed his hands and placed them on the wounds, desperately trying to keep the blood in. Then the nine year old Trikru child, covered in wolf's blood, looked around for a sword and when she found one she joined the fight.

Octavia had the alpha female enraged, she had drawn two long daggers and when the wolf lunged she sidestepped, slipped under the biting mouth full of fangs, and sliced wounds into the creature's side. The wolf was bleeding, and had yet to strike a single blow to the nimble human. Behind her Willem was using the same tactic against the alpha male with only slightly less success. Willem had a large scratch on his forearm, but was continuing to land small blows to the giant wolf.

All around them the same situation was playing out, the warriors were slashing, the wolves lunging, the children crying. All the children but one, and she bravely rushed at the closest wolf she saw. It was a large wolf with some dark markings on it's face and it had knocked Joss off his feet and had his forearm gripped in it's mouth, it's powerful jaws ripped trough his leather manica and blood was dripping steadily from his arm as he struggled to regain control of the fight. She ran forward and
stabbed the wolf's hind leg. As it whirled around to face her Joss scrambled back to his feet and
grabbed his sword. He threw himself on top of the wolf and drove his blade into the animal. As it
dropped to the ground and Joss recovered he looked up into the eyes of the girl who had just saved
him. "Mouchof, goufa." He grinned at her before lifting himself from the ground and looking more
closely at her. The child was scared but her eyes fought not to reveal it. As she looked into his eyes
she nodded at him and then turned to examine the scene. She reminded him a bit of his Heda but he
quickly pushed that thought aside when he saw Willem struggling with the giant alpha. He ran
towards them, the child at his heels.

The wolf was tiring from all of Willem's blows, but so was the warrior. The alpha had gotten a bite
in during the battle, it's pure white muzzle now stained with the tall man's blood. It was a fierce
creature and not one to give up so when Joss and the girl joined the fight the wolf merely spun and
lunged at them, knocking Joss down and sending the girl's sword flying out of her shaking but
determined hands. It was about to grab her in it's huge jaws when Willem slammed into it from the
side, the wolf spun around and flew back at the warrior, full of fury. Willem tied to slash and spin
away but the wolf caught his arm and bit down breaking one of the bones in his forearm. Before Joss
could come to his aid the alpha suddenly let him go, it dropped back, moving away from the battle. It
sniffed the air and then it raised it's great head and let out a short, haunting howl. The pack all
stopped fighting immediately and backed away from the humans they had engaged with, growling
and baring their long, sharp teeth.

Octavia's ears picked up on the sounds of movement coming their way. It wasn't the kind of
movement she wanted to hear, it wasn't reinforcements come to help, it was four legged movement,
and a lot of them. "Shit, there are more wolves coming, get all of those kids all up in that tree NOW!
Form a circle around them. Swords up and ready!" The Ice pack ignored them as they scrambled into
position, most of them bloodied from fighting the Ice wolves. The warriors felt a chill run down their
spines as they waited for the wolves to attack. All except Octavia and Joss who had crossed the
tunnel and fought the GERSA, and for who the regular beasts of the trees no longer held fear.

Noah watched from his tree, shouting down to them when he saw dark, furry, bodies slinking
through the trees, "Willem, Octavia, I see them! There's too many of them! Get out of there!"

"Noah, stay in that tree until it's done, no matter what happens. You have to get these kids back
home! That's an order!" Octavia shouted up to her brother's nephew. She stood in front of the circle
of warriors, proud, strong, and ready for whatever came running out of the trees. "Ge yo ogud gonas,
pakstokas komba raun! Frag em op!" (Get ready warriors, the wolves are coming. Kill them!). Her
courage gave life to her team. They jeered and called for the beasts to come forth, they readied
themselves for a fight, but none of them were ready for what happened next.

The Ice pack's alpha stood growling at the trees, the pack formed up behind it. There were ten left
standing after the battle and most of them were injured in some way, but they were giants and even
more fearsome for the blood that stained their fur. The Ice pack stood waiting for the alpha's
command as the approaching wolves began to show themselves.

A pack of around 15 approached from the west, and formed up behind a grey wolf, the alpha was
around 3 feet tall, average for Trikru wolves. It looked ancient and mangy, the look of an alpha who
had survived many challenges and wasn't going to back down to anyone, not even a giant Ice wolf.
It growled fiercely but was dwarfed by even the smallest of the Ice pack and even injured, the giant
white beast that was the Ice pack's alpha would tear the smaller wolf apart. The old grey wolf held
it's ground baring it's teeth. Ice alpha growled at the newcomer, but made no move to attack even as
the pack behind it began to yip and bark; anxious to rush forward at the challengers. The alpha held
still as a second pack appeared. To the right of the first pack a large black wolf emerged from the
trees. It stopped to momentarily growl menacingly at the grey alpha but soon turned it's gaze to the
Ice pack. This wolf was as pure black as the Ice alpha was white, they had matching amber eyes and the black wolf stood almost four feet tall. It was extremely large for a Trikru wolf but it too was made to look small by the presence of the white alpha of the Ice wolf pack. As the black wolf’s pack of thirteen formed up behind it and both Trikru packs growled menacingly at the injured Ice wolves, the odds turned against the Ice pack.

Two Trikru packs, normally very territorial, seemed to be working together to fight the Ice pack that had invaded their forest. The Ice alpha growled and bared it's going curved teeth, it tried to intimidate both other alpha's but they merely crouched and bared teeth back at it. The Ice wolf threw back it's head and let out a loud, bone chilling howl. The Ice pack took up the howl as the aloha stopped, it met eyes with the smaller grey alpha and then the large black alpha searching once more for any signs of submission. It saw none.

The Ice alpha barked, one sharp commanding bark. His pack obeyed immediately they moved suddenly to the north and sprinted into the forest. As the giant wolves ran, Octavia swore the forest floor shook beneath her. The two Trikru packs darted off in pursuit of the Ice pack and the warriors all stood and stared, shocked at what they had just seen.

The next day Lexa and Clarke entered the village of Rockville with heavy hearts. They could hear the weeping long before they saw the crowd and the pyres. Two pyres, two tiny pyres waited for the Commander. Octavia stood with her team, stoically watching the grief consuming this unfamiliar village, not even Joss could muster a smile on such a day. As the Commander approached the head of the village stepped up to greet her. "Commander, thank you for coming." She bowed her head in respect and then turned to Clarke, "Skai Heda, we are honoured to have you here."

Clarke stepped forward and grasped the woman's forearm. "Thank you, I'm so sorry it's under such tragic circumstances" Her blue eyes strayed to the two small bodies, wrapped in canvas, waiting to be cleansed by fire and have their spirits released.

Heda moved forward, the crowd parting silently for her. She moved to the weeping man on his knees in front of one of the pyres. She laid her hand on his shoulder, "Leaf notu, gyon up. Es kom nau" (Leaf's father, stand up. It's time.) Her voice was gentle but still the voice of command. "She was brave, let her spirit free so she can return to us." Lexa looked into the red rimmed eyes of a grieving father and her gentleness gave him strength. She turned to the other pyre and greeted the mother of an eight year old boy who had sacrificed himself to save his friends. "Terence nomon, em don laik jova." (Terence's mother. He was very brave.) The woman nodded, her jaw clenched to keep the screams of grief from escaping.

Lexa stepped forward and laid her hands briefly on the two pyres. She took a breath and turned to face her grieving people. "Leaf and Terrence fought bravely for their friends. Their spirits will be rewarded in the next life." The village head handed her a torch. "In fire, we cleanse the pain of the past." She offered the torch to Leaf's father and together they held it to the pyre. Lexa's voice trembled slightly as she spoke the final greeting, "Yu gonplei ste odon." When Leaf's pyre was lit she repeated the process with Terrence's mother and then she stood back and watched the flames. Lexa was fighting to keep her own grief, at these tiny bodies, from coming out. The Commander had to remain stoic and strong, but the deaths of children always touched her deeply. She felt her wife slip into place beside her, she felt Clarke's strength, her love and it held her up, allowed her to be Heda. As she stood and watched the fire she imagined she could see the souls escape, freed from the pain of the body, flying off to start another life.

After the fire had burned itself out Lexa felt her sorrow leave her and anger replaced it. She wanted
to know how the hell this had happened. She demanded a briefing and the village elders told her the story the children had repeated to them. She went to Octavia and briefly heard what her warrior knew. Then she summed the four surviving children and they were brought to a tent where she could speak with them in private. When they entered she looked down at them, freshly bandaged and eyes cast down in shame. All but one who stared back at her, eyes wide in fear and awe, but full of determination.

"Yongon, hakom yu don hon daun em Azgeda pakstoka?" (Children, why did you go and hunt the Ice wold pack?) Lexa's voice was cold as she fought back tears and anger. She was exasperated. This group of children had apparently seen one of the Ice wolves drinking from a stream and instead of telling the village head and letting grown warriors do their jobs, they had decided they could hunt the wolves and be heroes. Now two of them were dead, and Lexa had had to burn two more young bodies. She demanded to know why.

The oldest child held Lexa's glare, she stepped forward and she bowed her head before talking. "Heda, It was my fault. I thought we could handle the wolves." The child looked at Clarke shyly for a moment, and then back to Lexa, "Punish me, but let my friends go free."

"Leaf and Terence are dead. No matter what I do to you, that punishment will never leave your mind." Lexa saw the little face flinch and she ground her teeth together refusing to go easy on this child. "What is your name, young one?"

"Yura." She answered.

"Yura, what you did was stupid." Lexa was angry and Clarke was worried that she'd be too hard on the sorrowful children. She reached over to grab onto Lexa's arm. She squeezed.

"Lex, she's just a kid." Clarke whispered.

Lexa ignored Clarke's soft plea. "That pack of Ice wolves would have torn you all into pieces if Octavia hadn't found you." She kept taking, the child still did not drop her eyes. "You saw Leaf die on the forest floor, you heard her father's grief. Why, why did you go after the pack? You and your friends couldn't even kill a lone Trikru wolf."

The child jutted her jaw slightly forward and stubbornly insisted, "I thought we could. We took swords and we had a plan."

"You had a plan?" Lexa was furious but trying very hard to control herself and remember that these were just children. Lexa bent to eye level, hands resting on her knees. "They tell me you desire to begin warrior training next year. Your plan was foolish, a foolish warrior is a dead one. Perhaps you should rethink your chosen life."

"Stop it! Yura, stop. Stop lying!!" The smallest of the group suddenly burst out in tears. The boy, Dean, tried to cover the kid's mouth with his bandaged arm but the smaller child easily slipped out of his injured reach. "It was me, Heda. I went after the pack. I set a trap for them and I... I thought it would work. I had enough rope and all the tools. I thought I could do it. Yura and the rest were looking for me and by the time they found me the wolves were closing in. They were so big, Heda. So big." The boy's lip trembled and he dissolved into racking sobs unable to continue his confession.

Lexa's eyes flitted back to the one who tried to take the blame. She frowned at her, "You speak to Heda. Speak True."

Yura looked back over her shoulder at the boy who had just confessed. He was the smallest and weakest boy in the village, when he was four his family died from Wamplei and he too got sick. He
survived, but he never fully recovered. He didn't grow as quickly as the other kids and he couldn't run as fast or as far. His lungs were damaged from the disease and he lost his breath quickly. Yura took him under her wing, at first because she felt sorry for him, but she soon discovered that even though he was the weakest kid, he was also the smartest. She introduced him to her group of friends and his brilliant plans often set their group apart in tasks around the village. Her small group of friends stuck together, he was supposed to let her take the blame. He shook his head at her and the determined set to his jaw told her that he would not let her continue to lie for him.

She sighed and turned back to her Heda. "Sha Heda. We didn't know the pack was nearby, just that Tom was missing. When the message arrived from Peac Village that an Ice Pack was in the forest we thought we had better look for him. He was setting up his trap when we found him, it was a good plan but he ran out of time. When I realized the wolves were stalking us, it happened so fast after that. We ran, but I knew we wouldn't make it far before they overtook us so we went for the maple instead of the village. It was close and it's easy to climb and too tall for the wolves to get at us. We almost made it, Terence tried to protect us while I got everyone in the tree but one of the wolves attacked him and it was all I could do to fight it off, get his body away from them, and pass him up to Tom and Winnie. It was too late to climb, so Dean, Leaf, and I tried to keep them away with our swords." Her story trailed off and Lexa's anger trailed off with it.

"Tom, what were you thinking?" Her voice was quieter now, edged with sorrow.

"Heda, I just wanted to help. I had a plan. I thought I had time to finish the trap before the wolves made it to our village. They died because of me." Tears began to fall again and he turned angrily to Yura, "Why did you come looking for me!? It should have been me that died, just me!" The boy began to weep again and Clarke couldn't stand it anymore. She brushed past Lexa and the other children and knelt in front of the weeping boy. She wrapped her arms around him and tried to comfort him.

Lexa looked back at Yura. "Why did you try to take the blame?"

Yura avoided Lexa's eyes, "He's my friend." Was all she would say.

Lexa moved over to her wife and whispered a request and Clarke nodded at her. She kept her arm firmly around Tom's shoulders and she held out her hand to the other three children. She led them all out of the tent. Lexa looked at Yura again, "Speak true," was all she said.

"People treat him different, Heda. He's so much smarter than the rest of us but they treat him different just because he's smaller and weaker. If they knew we were out there because of him, they'd make him even more of an outsider. His family died, we're all he's got so we take care of him." She looked away from Lexa and her small face contorted in pain. "Terrence and Leaf wouldn't want him to take the blame. Please don't tell anyone, Heda."

Lexa took a deep breath, she knew the truth was bound to come out but she found herself wanting to reassure this child. She was silent, collecting her thoughts when Octavia barged into the tent. Lexa looked up and raised one eyebrow, "Octavia Kom Trikru, there better be a good reason for this."

"I'm sorry Heda, but before you punish the child there are some things you should know." Octavia bowed her head and waited for Lexa's permission to continue.

"Go on, Octavia." Lexa's voice sounded cold and flat but Octavia could now recognize the curiosity underlying the command.

"Thank you, Heda. The kid here, I don't know her name but it should be Wolfsbane." Octavia reached out and lightly touched the bandaged shoulder, "An Ice wolf had this kid by the shoulder
and she reached down and pulled out a dagger and stabbed the thing. Then, covered in wolf's blood, she ran over to help a fallen man, she attacked another wolf, saving Joss in the process. Then she even went fearlessly to help fight the fucking alpha. It would have eaten her if Willem hadn't stopped it, but I mean crazy brave!"

Lexa felt a strange feeling. She looked back down at the child, big brown eyes stared back up at her, calm, alert, ready to take the weight of the world to protect her friends. Lexa's soul responded and in her heart Lexa knew, this child will be the one, if she lives long enough she will be Heda one day. She thought she would feel jealousy and fear if she ever met someone who she knew the soul of the Commander would want. She felt the opposite, she felt sad and protective of the child.

Octavia filled Lexa's silence. "I know you have to punish her but..."

"She lied, Octavia. They all did." The child's face flashed with anger that Heda hadn't kept her secret.

"Heda, please!" The girl's plea was unheeded.

"Silence." Lexa sent her best Commander look Yura's way and the child stopped talking immediately. "It wasn't her fault they were out there, they went looking for the smaller boy, Tom. He thought he could build a trap to catch the wolves. Yura didn't want him to get in trouble so they came up with a story that she was the one who convinced the rest of them to hunt the pack."

Octavia looked down at the child, surprised and impressed at her continued courage, "Heda, bring her to Peace Village. Let her train there, when she is old enough I will take her as my second."

Octavia looked down at the kid whose jaw just dropped in surprise.

"She will not be an easy second, Octavia. She is headstrong and foolish. Are you certain?" Lexa's gaze shifted from the child to her warrior. She hoped Octavia would say yes. She wanted to keep this child close, to nurture her and teach her how to lead. She wanted the kid to learn from the best, and Octavia was the best. Lexa had heard from Willem how the young woman had singlehandedly fought off the alpha female and was the only warrior to emerge without a scratch. All that and her story about Yura proved that she had still had the presence of mind to see what was happening around her, even in the heat of battle. Lexa couldn't wait to tell Indra just how far her former second's skills had come.

Octavia looked down at the nine year old girl with the bandaged shoulder and she locked eyes with the child for a few seconds before answering, "Sha Heda, foshou." (Yes Heda, for sure).

Lexa looked at Yura one more time and then she looked back at Octavia. "So be it, make the arrangements. She will train in Ton DC with the other young gona's. When she is ready to become a second she will move to Peace Village and train under you." Lexa strode out of the tent leaving Octavia to deal with the child.

When she left the tent she looked immediately for Clarke. She found her not far from the tent still comforting the children. She approached and when she saw Clarke's blue eyes so filled with compassion for these grieving children it made her own eyes water. Her chest felt tight and she wanted to weep for these kids. They had lost two friends and would soon lose two more, to Ton DC. "Tom." Lexa called the boy's name and he looked up at her from under Clarke's protective embrace. "You have to tell the village the truth, it will be hard but you have to take responsibility." He nodded bravely and Lexa thought he looked relieved.

"Tom, next year Yura will leave this village and go to Ton DC to begin training as a warrior. I want you to come with me now. Your parents are dead and your friends will try to protect you but they are
still children. Some of the villagers will want to punish you for the deaths of your friends. You will be punished for your foolish decision, but by me, In Peace Village. Once your punishment is served I want you to study the Skai people's science. Yura claims you are smarter than anyone in the entire village. You will use that intelligence to serve your Heda, and therefor the people." Tom looked around at the rest of his friends. They nodded to him and he turned back to Lexa.

"Thank you, Heda," was all he said then he stepped back into Clarke's warm embrace and Lexa felt a sudden rush of love wash over her again. She wanted to pull her wife into an embrace but she let the children have their comfort a little longer. She had to see to her warriors.

"Heda," Joss greeted as she approached. "It was good of you to come." He knew how much she hated funeral pyres, especially for children.

Lexa just nodded at him and continued. She walked through the group, inspecting injuries and asking after each and every warrior by name. When she got to Willem and Noah she made sure to tell Noah just how proud of him she was. She was surprised when he enquired about Yura and she watched as a pleased smile washed over his face when he learned that she would soon be relocating to Ton DC and eventually Peace Village.

"She fought really bravely, Heda." Noah was obviously as impressed with the girl as Octavia was and Lexa smiled at him.

She chatted a little longer with her warriors and then she made her way through the village, visiting the homes of the dead children and speaking with the village head and the elders about Tom. The boy went to Leaf's father and Terrence's mother and told them the truth. Lexa was relieved that they both embraced him and thanked him for telling them. After a few hours Lexa came back to her team and was relieved to find that Octavia had everything ready to go. When Lexa gave the order her warriors mounted for the ride back home. As they rode, Joss pulled up next to his Heda.

"It was so strange, Heda," he started, "you know that sneaky grey wolf and it's pack from east of the river." Lexa nodded her understanding as he continued. "It showed up with it's pack, and then the giant black beast from west of the river. It showed up too!" Lexa looked confused.

"Two Trikru packs mixed together? They never do that, they stick to their own territory." She was intrigued by this development. Octavia had told her that some Trikru wolves had chased the Ice pack away but that was it.

"You should have seen it, Heda! The two alphas bared their teeth at each other but then showed a united front in the face of the Ice pack alpha. The Ice wolves knew it was a losing fight and they hightailed it out of there. The two packs gave chase, I imagine they caught up with some of the more badly injured Ice wolves but most of the pack likely got out alive. I believe they'll return to Ice territory, we shouldn't have to worry anymore."

"Two Trikru alphas worked together⁉" Lexa had studied wolves and this went against their normal behaviour, she shook her head and smiled, "Now I've heard everything, Joss."

He grinned at her and added with a wink, "The enemy of my enemy."
Whiskey and War

Chapter Summary

Nash Kru and Hill Kru are getting some pretty important visitors! Lexa learns more about her past from the leader of the Nash Clan. They uncover some disturbing information in the Hill Clan’s territory.

Chapter Notes

Thank you all for sticking with me on this journey. I hope you like this new offering.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Nash

Lexa didn’t like the helicopter. She knew it was saving time and the weariness of travel, and she appreciated it, but she certainly did not like it. They had landed near the town of Nash and Lexa was very glad to be exiting the flying machine. Clarke knew her wife was nervous around the helicopter so she purposely rushed forward to be the first to greet Wynne, the leader of the Nash clan. The tall woman smiled at the young Sky leader and greeted her with a warm embrace. The welcome gave Lexa an extra minute to compose herself into the perfect mask of Heda.

When Clarke finished her greeting Wynne stepped forward and bowed slightly to Lexa. “Heda, welcome back to Nash. You made an unforgettable entrance this time.” She gestured toward the helicopter and looked astonished. “Your riders told us to expect you in a flying machine, but this IS impressive!”

Lexa allowed a small, tight smile. “Indeed. Our journey would have taken over a week by horse, the helicopter brought me here in under four hours.” Wynne whistled her appreciation of the thing, but as she stared at it, Lexa saw the same unease in her eyes that she felt in her own mind.

As Wynne led them toward waiting horses for the ride into the city Lexa sighed in relief. She was happy to be back on the ground, and mounting a trustworthy steed. Clarke kept Wynne engaged, asking questions about the town which their host was more than happy to answer. As Lexa had pointed out to Clarke when they had first been introduced, the older woman seemed to have taken quite a liking to the Sky Heda. Lexa knew her wife was playing up her excitement to allow her the time to get back into the right frame of mind after the helicopter journey, and she loved that Clarke knew her so well, and cared so much.

By the time they rode into the city Lexa was feeling much better. She raised her hand to wave at the people who lined the streets, and even managed a smile for a group of children who were waving colourful flowers at her. When they arrived at the large house Wynne used as her residence, Lexa was feeling very much herself and more than a little bit hungry. The last time she visited she had eaten her weight in the barbecued meat Nash was famous for. One quick sniff of the air told her they had prepared similarly for her arrival on this occasion. She smiled at Wynne, completely at ease for the first time since exiting the helicopter.
“I hope my sense of smell does not deceive me?” Wynne nodded her affirmation with a small smile as Lexa rubbed her hands together in anticipation and looked affectionately at the Sky people around her. “You may never want to leave Nash after tonight’s meal,” she joked, playfully.

Wynne agreed, “The best of the best come out to cook for Heda.” She looked over at Clarke and Raven, “If wooing you with food will make either of you Sky ladies stay, let the feast begin!” She laughed heartily as the entire team from Peace Village eagerly followed her towards the aroma of barbecue.

Lexa watched as Clarke and Raven gorged themselves on barbecued ribs and cornbread. She was impressed and oddly proud of the sheer amount of food the two Sky women packed away, and couldn’t help but chuckle at them. Her eyes swept the crowd often, it was a habit she didn’t think she would ever break; not even when Kita was standing at her back and Marshal and Miller were at Clarke’s and Raven’s. Not even in a place where she had always felt safe. Nash had always been a stronghold of support for her. Wynne had been a staunch supporter ever since the spirit overtook Lexa, and Wynne’s people tended to be fiercely supportive of their own leader. So, by extension, they were firm supporters of Heda. Lexa felt safer here than even in Ton DC. Nash had always been her favourite clan to visit.

Wynne came and sat next to her and joined her in a moment of comfortable silence, both just watching the two beautiful Sky women interact with the young people who were serving them. “They are as gracious as they are beautiful. I applaud you for making the Sky People a part of our alliance, Heda. It was a good choice for all of your people.”

“I agree with you, Wynne. They are a proud and powerful people, but they want peace and cooperation above all else. As a people they learned how to cooperate while stuck in space for 100 years. Like all human civilizations, they did terrible things to individuals, but they managed to join many peoples into one, we all benefit from that spirit of cooperation. They add to our collective strength and they give us access to forgotten technology that will help the rest of my people. I love Clarke, but even without her, I would have tried to make peace with the Sky People.” Lexa rarely spoke so openly with the clan leaders about her feelings, but Wynne felt like a trusted auntie and Lexa allowed herself to relax around the woman.

“Your instincts are good, Heda.” Wynne reached over and patted Lexa on the shoulder, like a family member would to a child. Instead of rousing her anger it brought a smile to Lexa’s face.

“Wynne, you have always supported me, why were you so sure that such a young unknown Trikru gona, could be a Heda worth following? Why did you trust your clan to my leadership?” Lexa had always wondered why Wynne had been one of the first clan leaders to join her alliance and rally others to follow.

Wynne smiled, “Lexa, you may not remember, but I met you far before you were called. Your father came to Nash protecting Heda Sasha when you were just a small child. You and your mother accompanied the party. You loved the barbecued ribs then too.” Wynne laughed happily at the memory of the young warrior-to-be with Nash’s best rib sauce smeared over her face.

Lexa looked surprised, “I came here? With my father?”

“Indeed, Lexa. You and the Boat Queen, Luna.” Wynne looked curiously at Lexa wondering how much of her own history she wasn’t aware of.

“Luna!? Why were we here?” Lexa was so curious she didn’t notice that the Sky women had ceased their own conversation and were concentrating on Wynne’s words as much as she was.”
“Your fathers protected Heda, much like Kita here.” Wynne smiled at the Ice Guard who continued to stare into the crowd, looking for any signs of danger. “I knew my father died protecting Heda Sasha, but I didn’t realize he had been one of her guards… and why Luna’s father, why was a man of the Boat clan a Trikru guard?”

“You know he died alongside your father, yes?” Wynne enquired.

“Yes, in a battle against the Ice Nation. The false Queen had attacked Trikru villages and Heda went to stop them.” Lexa was looking more and more confused. “Why was a Boatman fighting in Trikru’s war? Protecting a Trikru Heda? Why have I never asked these questions before?” Lexa looked confused and slightly forlorn and Wynne gestured for one of her attendants.

“Come, Heda. We will retire to the back terrace where we can have more privacy and some of our finest whiskey.” Wynne led Lexa, Clarke, and Raven to the private terrace behind her residence. Kita dismissed Miller and Marshall telling them to eat some dinner and enjoy the festivities. After dinner, they were to make sure the rest of the party were safely escorted to their own rooms and then search and stand guard at Heda’s room. Virgil and his co-pilot Harper, who had stepped up to learn how to fly the helicopter, were the only other two on the mission and Marshall grinned at them as she pulled Miller over to their table and quickly ordered more ribs. A rare night off from guard duty in a place of safety and such legendary food was not to be wasted.

As Heda’s party settled into the seats that surrounded the beautiful wooden tables on Wynne’s private terrace, they looked around and murmured in appreciation at the beauty that surrounded them. The terrace was surrounded by persimmon trees, and the orange fruit was about ready to spill it’s bounty onto the private lawn. Heda let her eyes roam beyond the beauty and pick out the subtle placement of several of Wynne’s guards. As Raven and Clarke were sliding into the seats directly across from Wynne and Lexa’s, Clarke asked about the persimmons. Lexa answered that they were not yet ready for eating. She tried to explain the feeling of biting into an unripe persimmon and it ended in Clarke exploding in a fit of giggles at the expression on her wife’s face.

Wynne poured a glass of whiskey for everyone, silently watching the obvious affection that flowed between Clarke and Lexa as they stopped laughing and settled in to hear the stories Wynne could offer from Lexa’s childhood. “You have an enviable relationship, Lexa and Clarke. Hold it tight to you and never take it for granted. I often wish I had taken a different path in life, but I chose the excitement of many beds over the warmth of one.” Wynne chuckled at herself and pretended not to notice the glance and slight smile between Heda’s guard and the genius Sky woman.

“You could always settle down now, Wynne.” Clarke offered, “There are many women in the clans who would fight for the chance to be wooed by you.”

“Therein lies the problem, Clarke. So many women, and I have never been able to choose just one.” This comment prompted a raised glass from Raven, a raised lip - almost a smile - from Kita, and a raised blush from Clarke. Lexa remained pensive and Wynne smiled softly at her Heda. “But my tales of ladies past, and ladies present, are for another night, Sky Heda. Tonight let me tell my Heda what I know of her story.”

Lexa sighed contentedly and reached for the glass of Tennessee sour mash Wynne had poured for her. She looked around her once more, noting the security provided by the Nash Rangers. She then slid slightly over on her bench, grabbed another glass from the center of the table and held out her hand to Wynne silently asking for the bottle. “Kita, sit. Please.” She added, quietly. “The Rangers are well equipped to protect the house. Surely even the Ice Nation has been taught better than to try and attack Rangers in their own territory. Your Heda asks you to have a drink with her.”

Kita frowned as she looked around. Rangers were well known for their defensive tactics, traps,
ambush, and subterfuge. They were also fiercely loyal and Kita felt the safety of their situation in her bones. But, what really convinced her to sit was her knowledge that she could handle her drink and still fight if it came down to it. “Very well, Heda.” The graceful woman sat next to Lexa and across from Raven who held her gaze for a long moment before they all turned their focus to Wynne.

“Your father was best friends with Royalty,” Wynne began, and the four women seated around her hung on her every word, Lexa looking particularly confused. “I speak of Luna’s father, of course.” She looked closely at Lexa as she was about to reveal the events it pained her to recount. She knew Lexa’s father had died when she was very young, and that it wasn’t many years after before her mother was taken as well. Still, Wynne felt an angry lump rise in her throat that no-one had shared this history with Lexa before. “Luna’s father was the son of Heda and, much like your Carter and you, your father befriended Heda’s son at a young age. When his mother was killed during a sea hunt he took his best friend and went to recover her body from the Boat people.”

Lexa interrupted looking at Clarke and mumbling, “See, I told you going out on those ships was folly.”

Wynne smiled softly and continued, “While they were there Heda’s son fell in love with the eldest daughter of the Boat People’s leader. Their relationship brought a closer connection between the two clans, with Luna’s birth further sealing the bond. Do you have no memories of your father? Or his friend?”

Lexa paused and thought hard. My father was named Arlin, he was a well-respected warrior who died protecting Heda. My memories of him are few, and most of them unclear. I was still young when he died,” Lexa admitted. “But I do have some memories of him and another man… Xander…?”

Wynne nodded with enthusiasm. “Yes, Xander, son of Heda Kai. He and your father were fast friends. Xander travelled back and forth between Trikru land and the Boat people’s land. He was a sworn protector of Heda, but his family stayed close to the sea, his wife and daughter were, after all, heir to the Boat People’s throne. They travelled with him from time to time, and on one such occasion they came here, to Nash. You and Luna were quite a pair, she would have been six or seven, you four or five.”

Lexa was trying to remember but with the Commander’s spirit inside of her she sometimes found her own early memories hard to track down, lost amongst the memories of past Hedas.

“I watched you, tiny, fearless, and good, and I knew that greatness waited in your future. I remember one day in particular, there was a skirmish outside the square, most adults paid little attention to children’s games, but - if I’m honest - I was trying to woo your mother to my bed while the men were drinking,” Wynne paused to clarify, “she thanked me but declined my offer.” Wynne just shrugged as Lexa looked quite scandalized and Clarke giggled. “But she was watching you and Luna, so I was too. You two were playing and noticed some older boys who were picking on a younger fellow, he was smaller and weaker and, I was told later, a frequent target of bullies. As he cowered before his tormentors you marched over and inserted yourself between them. You told them it was dishonourable to pick on someone smaller and weaker and growled at them as they threatened you.

Your mother watched as you poked one of them in the chest and told him to go away or face Trikru wrath. I was ready to step in but your mother prevented it. Trikru women are strong in their convictions and she insisted that, by your actions you had just chosen to begin your training as a warrior, and to intervene at this point would be interfering in the moment of your choice. She watched as the two boys pushed you down and began to kick you. She shook with rage but she just
stood and watched. Luna grabbed a stick and came to back you up and then they turned on her. As she backed away drawing them way from your tiny bruised body we watched you pick yourself up and attack. Your little body launched itself at the bigger of the two bullies and your little fists found all the right spots to inflict pain on the boy. Your mother smiled proudly as you and Luna chased the bullies away. As impressed as I was by that, it was what you did next that told me all I needed to know, and led me to follow you without question the moment it was revealed that you had received the Commander’s spirit.”

All eyes were on Wynne as she paused for effect, she raised her glass and took a long pull of the whiskey, letting it sit in her mouth, appreciating the flavour before swallowing and resuming her tale. “You were bleeding from the fight and had bruises from being thrown to the ground and kicked, but you didn’t cry or complain, you just turned and looked at the terrified boy you had protected. You offered him your hand and pulled him to his feet. Then you spoke to him, I have always wondered what you said, but the next thing I knew you were teaching him how to fight. For the remainder of your visit I secretly watched as every day you continued to teach the boy how to defend himself.” Wynne laughed, you have always been a protector of your people, Lexa. You have always stood for what is good and right. When you became Heda I knew our world would change, and be better for all of your people.”

“I have no memory of this…” Lexa screwed her face in concentration but Wynne waved her hand to dismiss the thought.

“You were young, Heda. And now there are so many other memories crowding your head.” She patted Lexa on the shoulder in a reassuring way and then continued. “Your father was a fine warrior, and your mother equally so. He joined the guard when Heda Kai ruled Trikru and remained when Heda Sasha received the spirit. Xander joined him as part of Sasha’s guard. I’m surprised Rachel hasn’t told you more, she knew them both well.”

Lexa sighed and took another drink of whiskey. “Rachel and I have only recently begun to move past what happened to Costia. When I was young, I was so focused on my training that I never wanted to talk about my parents. After I became Heda, Titus didn’t let Rachel stay very close except for training, he feared she would make me weak, like her sister.” Lexa frowned at the memory.

Wynne made a grunting noise. “I’m glad you killed him, Lexa. It was good to rid the clans of their interference. The Flamekeepa line was old and corrupt.”

“Flamekeeper?” Raven interrupted, curious at the title.

Lexa grinned at the woman, despite the solemnness of the conversation. “It has nothing to do with blowing things up, Raven.” They all laughed and the mood eased slightly. “The Flamekeepers were the keepers of traditions and the advisor of Heda. I killed mine and disbanded their order.” Lexa shrugged like it was no big deal and Clarke and Raven gaped at her in disbelief.

“You killed him, just like that? The keeper of Grounder traditions? And you just decided to kill him and disband the order he belonged to!? How the hell did you get away with that?” Clarke was certain there was more to this story.

Lexa shrugged and looked superior, “I am Heda. My prowess is legendary. None can stand against me, Flamekeeper or not.”

Clarke rolled her eyes and looked to Wynne, “For real, Wynne how did she manage that? Trikru are so superstitious, if there was a ‘tradition keeper’ they would not be likely to just let a young Heda get rid of them all!? I mean kill one or two, maybe, but the entire order?”
“I know little of the story, it took place on Trikru land. They say Heda was betrayed by her Flamekeepa… that he took the one she loved.”

“But Sula killed Costia…?” Clarke looked softly at her wife.

“She was always at my side. But, for one particular meeting I had to attend, he suggested I leave her behind. He was always scolding me for the influence she held over me, told me it made me soft. Normally, I ignored him on the issue but that night he insisted. Costa got so annoyed with his nagging she told me to go without her. She was taken that night. Her guards were not with her because Titus had reassigned them to patrol duty. He swore that he didn’t know, that he thought she was safe. I didn’t believe him, he had been seen meeting secretly with Sula’s spies. I believe he deliberately left her alone and let the Ice Nation scouts into the camp to capture her. When I discovered she was gone, I knew he had been involved. He let Sula take her, torture her, and murder her; so I did the same to him.” Lexa looked almost ashamed, “I should have killed him quickly, but I was young and rage filled my heart.”

Kita spoke for the first time since sitting. The story of Heda Leksa Kom Trikru and the Flamekeepa was a story known to the Ice Nation as well. She was curious to hear the real tale. “What about the rest of them, the order of the Flamekeepa?”

“I rounded them up and told them they were no longer needed, that Heda had no use for them. I chose Indra and Anya as my advisors and I surrounded myself with the wisest of my people; village chiefs, healers, warriors. Most of the Flamekeepers willingly left the order, a few came to me asking that they be allowed to maintain the records of the people. I agreed, and to this day they are still historians for our people. That is the Flamekeepers legacy now, they are scribes and storytellers. Others of the order were furious, insisted that I did not have the right to end the tradition. It was immediately after I had returned from the revenge campaign against Sula, and the Commander’s spirit was strong in me. I recounted three previous Heda’s who had been directly murdered by their Flamekeeper. Four more who had been betrayed to their death, and another instance where the flamekeeper had plotted to kill all those whom Heda loved. I gave them the choice to fight or accept my decision and run. They ran,” Lexa shrugged. She wiped her hands together like she was removing dirt from them, then she arched her eyebrow and smiled a wry grin as she spoke her last words. “Flamekeepa odon.”

“Lexa…” Clarke looked at her, filled with awe, love, and sorrow. “Even after all that, you worked to secure peace, to build the alliance. You are remarkable, my Heda.” She stood and crossed over to her wife. Kita immediately leaped up and offered her seat, then crossed to the other side of the terrace and sat down, closer than necessary, next to Raven. Clarke slid onto the bench next to Lexa and wrapped her arms around her wife.

Wynne looked over at Raven and Kita, giving the other two women a moment of privacy. “So, you two…” She ran her eyes over them, sizing them up, “You are definitely sleeping together, but I don’t see a relationship…” She watched as they both blushed and then she nodded her understanding and approval, “Too many women, too little time.” Raven burst into laughter and Kita allowed herself a carefree grin. Wynne was older than them, though Raven could not honestly guess how old. She was tall and muscular, befitting a warrior’s body. She had short cropped hair and wore fighting leathers most of the time. Her eyes were sharp and alert and her smile was as easy as her charm. Wynne was a legendary lover of women, and Raven could definitely see her appeal. She thought she might easily have tried to end up in Wynne’s bed if Kita hadn’t been with them, but she was, and if Raven was honest, she had eyes for no one else right now.

They passed the next few hours in easy conversation. Lexa insisted Wynne tell her how she had unsuccessfully tried to woo her mother, and Wynne in turn demanded Raven tell her how she
defeated the GERSA in York. It was a good night full of sour mash whiskey, tall tales, and camaraderie.

Later, as they fell asleep, Lexa kissed the top of Clarke’s golden head and breathed in the faint smell of charcoal and roasted meat that still clung to her. Lexa smiled. “Nash is my favourite clan to visit, definitely my favourite,” she mumbled, as she fell into a peaceful sleep.

Hill Clan

After spending several days in Wynne’s company, touring her clan’s rich farmland and meeting with the people, Lexa’s team were once again boarding the helicopter. Raven was already inside the machine, head down and writing furiously in her notebook. She had been scribbling in it since early that morning, desperate to record all the exciting ideas she had thought of during the visit. There was a lot she wanted to do for Wynne’s people. She knew she could help develop and improve several of their agricultural practices. Her main task however, would be to set up some sort of communication system using some promising leftover tech that she had found in an old military bunker.

Lexa took her seat and Clarke flopped down beside her, chatting excitedly as she buckled herself in. She paused briefly to wave through the open door at Wynne, as Virgil and Harper went over their final systems checks and Harper prepared to take them up. This was to be a short ride, and Virgil insisted she was ready to take the pilot’s seat.

Lexa took a deep breath and steeled herself as the unnatural machine lifted them from the Earth. “How long is this ride?” She asked into her radio, through gritted teeth.

Harper answered, “Flight time to the Hill Clan is about an hour and a half, Heda.” Lexa grunted her reply and then felt Clarke’s hand land lightly on her thigh. Her wife gave her a reassuring squeeze and Lexa decided to try and make the short journey a productive one. If she couldn’t enjoy the ride, perhaps she could make good use of it. She turned her attention to the outside world and focused on the bird’s eye view of her territories; committing to memory the lay of the land. She soon realized how valuable a resource such an aerial view was and became intrigued by the possibilities and knowledge it offered.

By the time they were ready to land again, Lexa had made up her mind to embrace the benefits that such superior technology allowed. This time, she didn’t need Clarke to act as her buffer. Gritting her teeth, and setting her beautiful features into an unreadable mask, she was the first to exit the machine, the picture of poise and agility. She greeted Seneca, the leader of the Hill Clan with a crisp nod and gave a smaller, more intimate nod to Ion, who stood beside him. Ion was itching to get back to the elite squad and was really hoping to hitch a ride on Heda’s flying machine. He intended to plead his case as often as he could, especially since he’d been assigned guard duty for Heda while she was in Greenbrier.

As Seneca led the visiting party from the landing site through the town, he rode close to Lexa and Clarke, proudly pointing out things of interest about the town. Lexa noticed immediately that there seemed to be far more Hillkru Stalkers strategically positioned around the town than she had expected, and that Seneca seemed far more rigid and on edge than normal. She felt Kita draw closer and watched from the corner of her eye as Miller and Marshal followed her lead, drawing closer to Clarke and Raven. She knew it was unlikely that they had sensed a threat in the way she and Kita had, but she was glad they had reacted immediately to Kita’s actions without having been told to do so. As soon as they were safely inside the Brier residence she drew the Hillkru leader’s attention away from the pleasantries he was exchanging with Clarke and Raven.
“Seneca, forgive me for interrupting, but I am Heda. I need you to be forthcoming in all of your needs in order for me to protect the Hill clan. You have increased security and you are clearly nervous beyond what is called for by a visit from your Heda when I am sure you know of my affection for you. You fought bravely in Sapeake, and have always supported me. What troubles the Hill Clan? Speak true.” Lexa’s direct question caused a look of shame to cross Seneca’s eyes for having tried to hide his obvious concerns from the commander.

“Come, Heda we have prepared a meal. I will tell you everything.” Seneca moved stiffly, having walked with a limp since the battle in Sapeake. His leg had been seriously injured by one of Alain’s guards as he had tried to block the tyrant’s retreat after Heda had defeated the Ice Prince. He moved towards a large room where Lexa could smell what she was sure was a feast of ham, cornbread, and what she hoped was rhubarb pie. She momentarily forgot her concern and followed her host and her nose to sit and eat.

As they sat and food was placed before them, Seneca began to speak, “It started a few weeks ago, a stranger came into town. He was tall, thin, and had tattoos of crosses and references of an old religion from before the bombs. He refused to answer which clan he was from when challenged by my Stalkers, so they brought him before me. He said he was from an independent clan, somewhere to the southwest, and was just in town to trade. He had broken no laws so I told him to do his business and be on his way. We kept an eye on him and he was joined by three more with similar tattoos. I had my Stalkers watch them closely. They were rude and forceful with women in the marketplace and people had to step in more than once. Ion had a few interesting run-ins with them before he eventually decided they had worn out their welcome. He led a group of armed Stalkers who walked them to the end of our territory and wished them a perilous return journey to their own lands.” Seneca looked fondly at Ion and chuckled.

“While they were here we watched who they were meeting with. You may recall, Hillkru had it’s share of people who were against the alliance, against your rule…. likely still does, they have just learned to be quiet about it.” Seneca reached up and rubbed his head pensively as he spoke, remorse filling his voice.

“There have been groups that have contrived against me and against the alliance. Most of these are run by men who travelled frequently to York when Yor was in power. It is unsurprising that the outsiders met with men who were suspected of being involved in those factions.”

Lexa glanced up at Kita who, despite paying close attention to their surroundings, had undoubtedly heard every word. Lexa wondered if the same thoughts were forming in her Ice Guard’s mind.

“Sha, Heda. I suspect these may be those who Donald referred to.” Kita had indeed come to the same conclusion as Lexa. Then, Kita grinned triumphantly. “That is, before the Steward of the Lakes slit his throat and we buried his stinking body in a pit.” Lexa looked up, catching Kita’s meaning, and smiled a small grateful smile. Clarke and Raven looked at her oddly, wondering about the grin.

“My point, Sky Heda, is that if these strangers are the men who had dealings with Yor, they are no different than Donald and will meet a similar fate. The alliance will hold. We will persist. Those who use fear and oppression to lead, those who crave power for their own nefarious ends will die unceremoniously with a sharp blade at their throats. No one will mourn them and their spirits will not be released, but their bodies buried and left to rot in the ground.”

Kita was so matter of fact that Clarke and Raven just continued to gawk at her, mouths slightly open. Lexa spoke, “Thank you, Kita. You are correct, they will not be allowed to enslave, or oppress any of my people. The might of the 13 clans will prevail, my people will defend each other and all of our
freedoms. Seneca, your people are my people. I will protect the Hill Clan.”

Seneca bowed his head and looked relieved. “Thank you, Heda. I hope it does not come to that, after all the strangers may not even return.” He tried to be optimistic but Lexa could see a spark of fear in his eyes.

After a hearty meal Lexa decided to stretch her legs. She excused herself and shook her head slightly at Clarke indicating she wished for her wife to remain. Clarke picked up on her wife’s meaning and continued engaging Seneca in conversation. Kita followed Lexa at her normal distance and Lexa was pleased when she correctly guessed that Ion and a group of Stalkers would spread out to surround her as well. She had wanted to speak to the young man who had gained her respect during the mission of the elite squad.

“Ion, talk with me.” She gestured with her head for him to come closer. He obeyed immediately. “Speak true, what is the situation here?”

“Sha, Heda.” He bowed his head respectfully before answering. He had come to know how thorough his leader was and had expected her to grasp the situation and ask the very questions she was asking now, his answers were prepared. “It’s not good, Heda. The Hill Kru are a different sort, a lot of us live in small independent villages and only come to town to trade now and again. Some reject Seneca and even you, Heda. There are those who feel they should be able to claim anything they have the strength to take and that no-one has the right to tell them what they can and cannot do on their own lands. That includes how they treat people. This kind of thinking has spread lately because the past few harvests have gone poorly and many people are struggling to survive.”

Lexa nodded as he spoke. “If I can help them thrive they will be less likely to listen to the hatred these kind of men spew. They will offer power to those who follow them, but if everyone is safe, full, and content that will hold less sway. I will have Raven examine the crops and the harvest schedule to see if there is anything the Sky technology can do to better the yield. I will also send for food supplies from Sapeake and Lanta, I know they’ve had very good crops recently.”

Ion let out a heavy sigh, “There was also a Wamplei outbreak in the Hills to the south and the west of Greenbrier; it happened just before the last one in Trikru lands. Many children died, Heda. Many mothers blame you for opening the mountain too late. I suspect the outsiders made many friends in those Hills.”

“I will ask Abby to visit them before winter arrives, she will make sure everyone is vaccinated and teach local healers to vaccinate any newborns. She will see what she can do for any who survived but have complications. I will visit them myself before I leave.”

“Heda, no! That could be dangerous.” Ion realized he misspoke as soon as the words left his mouth but he couldn’t stop them. He dropped his head and offered an apology immediately. “Heda, I misspoke. You crossed the tunnel and the haunted island. I suspect the villages of Hill Kru hold no fear for you.”

Heda chuckled softly, “Chil au, Ion. I understand your worry, but I cannot let it stop me from visiting the people who need me most.” Ion nodded respectfully and they continued walking around the town. Heda was purposeful, she spoke with and checked in on as many people as she could, smiling at them and asking them what they needed, telling them about Raven and her work. She walked around for over two hours greeting her people before returning to the Brier residence where Clarke was beginning to look worried.

Lexa smiled at Clarke’s worried expression and sent a silent apology to her wife. “Seneca, I have had a lovely time talking to the townspeople.” She reassured the leader, “I think during the next few
days we should visit as many of the villages in the surrounding hills as can be reached by a one day ride. It seems the people need to get to know their Heda.”

Seneca looked surprised but relieved. “Sha, Heda.” His voice was deep and full of emotion as he looked into the eyes of the young woman who ruled the clans. The two leaders held each other’s gaze for a time; Seneca was the first to look away. He called to Ion and asked the warrior to personally see Heda to her room. Ion nodded his assent and Seneca turned back to Heda, “This place was once the most famous resort in the land, we have prepared the best rooms for you. Rest well, Heda, the ride into the Hills tomorrow won’t be as smooth as that flying machine.” He laughed at his own joke but Lexa just smiled.

“I’ll take a horse and some rough terrain any day, Seneca. The Sky tools are useful, but they are still strange to me.” Her warm smile and admitting her discomfort of the flying machine was a needed show of vulnerability for the man who was trying so hard to appear brave and strong, when in truth he was really worried for his people. He smiled a softer, more genuine smile at Lexa before turning to wish Clarke and Raven a pleasant rest.

Back in their room Clarke studied her wife carefully, watching as Lexa undressed. She removed the robes of Heda and yet couldn’t seem to shake off the heaviness of the responsibilities that were woven into those robes. “Lex, talk to me,” Clarke encouraged, laying back and opening her arms to her wife. Lexa crawled gratefully into Clarke’s embrace, marvelling at how not so very long ago she would have thought this kind of behaviour to be weakness. She sighed in relief that she had come to see the truth; that lying in Clarke’s arms gave her more strength than denying her heart ever had.

“It’s not over, Clarke. It might never be over. There will always be those who oppose what we stand for.” Lexa sighed and snuggled closer to Clarke.

“I know, Lex. I know.” Clarke placed kisses on Lexa’s forehead, then her cheeks, and finally a soft but chaste kiss on her mouth. “But tell me specifically about what is troubling you right now. We’ll figure it out.” Clarke kept her words light but firm, she needed Lexa to include her in the politics, even when Lexa would rather keep her out for her own protection.

“Remember when Kita told us about the group of Yor’s men they met on the road to Otta with the children?” Clarke frowned, then nodded her affirmation as Lexa continued, “The man who led them, Donald, he told Cade that Yor’s influence went further than the thirteen clans and that there were more who would fight against me.” Clarke had heard the story but she let Lexa continue at her own pace. “I think some of those people are preparing to make a move. It seems they may have been recently approaching the discontent people of the Hill Kru, and quite possibly other clans as well.”

“What can we do here, during this visit, to lessen the chances of them finding followers?” Clarke picked up on Lexa’s thoughts easily.

“We must visit the people, Houmon. Show them that we are here to help them, that we want to help them. They must see our humanity, they must trust that we want all of our people to thrive.” Lexa sighed. “The Hill Kru has always been a divided clan. There are so many small villages far in the hills and they rarely unite under one leader without infighting. Living in the mountains makes them very independent in spirit, Clarke. They work hard but sometimes struggle to survive in conditions that can be unforgiving. Ion told me that recent crops have failed and that a Wamplei outbreak took a heavy toll before I opened the mountain. I have to show them the benefits of this alliance.”

Clarke stroked Lexa’s back as she contemplated what her wife was saying. “Lex, no offence, but I think they need to meet me more than you. I mean of course seeing Heda visiting the villages is a
good thing, but I think Sky Crew might have more to offer these folks than Trikru.” Clarke smiled down at Lexa who looked adoringly back up at her.

“Houmon, our bonding has truly benefited my people.”

“Just your people?” Clarke’s smile turned to a teasing grin. “Well, I guess I’ll have to show you how it benefits you too, Heda.” Clarke leaned in and kissed her wife, Lexa happily allowed her to deepen it and the blonde rolled them over so she was on top.

Clarke broke the kiss for a moment and looked into Lexa’s eyes, “Relax, Lex. Let me take care of you.” There was the briefest of pauses, and then Lexa relaxed and smiled as she tilted her head back giving silent consent to her amorous wife as she moved to Lexa’s neck. Clarke began to kiss her way down to those crooked collarbones she loved so much. She spent enough time lavishing kisses on Lexa’s neck and shoulders that the brunette was beginning to become impatient.

“Clarke, please…” she breathed out, wanting more.

“So impatient, Heda.” Clarke chuckled, but gave in. She reluctantly left the hollows her tongue had delighted in exploring and moved slowly down Lexa’s chest, stopping for a moment to appreciate the view of Lexa’s arched back, full breasts, and hard nipples aching for direct contact. Lexa moaned softly in frustration and Clarke smiled, “It’s ok baby, I’ve got you.” She peppered kisses lightly over Lexa’s chest and finally took a nipple into her mouth causing Lexa to shudder and sigh in bliss.

Clarke let her hand trail down Lexa’s body tracing scars without looking, finding sensitive spots that made her wife’s breath catch. She deftly moved her hand between Lexa’s legs, and her wife’s hips immediately began rocking upwards to meet her touch. Within seconds, Lexa began to beg.

“Clarke, your fingers feel so good on me. Please, please make me come. I need your touch, Clarke… please.” Clarke was caught off guard. Lexa never pleaded so desperately, never begged like that unless Clarke had been teasing her for hours. The earnest request sent a stab of desire through Clarke and gave her a heady sense of power. The most powerful woman in the world was begging for her touch, the most beautiful woman she’d ever seen craved her desperately. Clarke gave in immediately, her fingers slipped through the wetness and found Lexa’s clit.

Clarke positioned herself so she could kiss Lexa as she brought her closer and closer to orgasm. They moaned into each other’s mouths and Lexa’s body grew tense and tight, begging for release. Clarke sped up her movements slightly and their kisses grew sloppy and desperate. Clarke pressed just a little harder and Lexa broke the kiss to throw her head back and cry out. Clarke raised herself slightly, watching in rapture as the great Heda fell apart under her. Lexa called out her name and shuddered her release. As she began to come down, Clarke leaned in again and whispered as she rested her forehead against Lexa’s, “I’m not through with you yet, Lex.” Her fingers left the sensitive nub and slid through the wetness, circling Lexa’s opening until Lexa nodded her consent. As soon as she had it she slid two fingers inside, eliciting a deep moan from Lexa.

Clarke went slow, stroking deeply and pressing the heel of her hand into Lexa’s still sensitive clit. Lexa’s lip trembled as she praised her wife’s skill. Her hands dug into Clarke’s back, leaving raised red scratches that the blonde would look proudly at the next morning. Clarke took her wife closer and closer to the edge, and Lexa got louder and louder as she called Clarke’s name. When she came, her whole body shook and Clarke’s name morphed into an incomprehensible jumble of English and Trigedaslang.

Clarke slowly removed her fingers, peppering kisses on Lexa’s collarbones once again. She whispered softly to her wife in between kisses. “You’re so beautiful, Lex. You came for me so perfectly. I love you, Lexa.”
They kissed softly when Lexa caught her breath and Clarke slid off her wife and snuggled into her side still whispering words of love. “Sleep my love. We'll meet tomorrow’s challenges together. We’re strong together my love. We’ll make things work; together. Sleep Lex, sleep.”

The next day they were up with the dawn and as they opened the door to their bedroom they found Kita waiting. “Did you guard the door all night?” Lexa asked quietly, knowing that in the climate of peace they had established after Alain and Yor, Kita would only post herself by her Heda’s chambers, in a clan leader’s home, if she perceived there was a serious threat.

“No, Heda. I arrived not long ago, I expected you would be up with the sun today.” Kita kept her voice quiet as well, not wanting anyone to suspect that Heda was concerned. She also had to be honest. “I left Marshall and Miller to alternate posting themselves with the Stalkers who were on guard.” This, in stark contrast to Kita giving the two the night off entirely in Nash, gave Heda all the information she needed. Kita glanced around and then added, “Ion insisted on that room”. She nodded her head back towards the room to the right of the one Lexa had been given, “I slept there”, she indicated the one on the left.

Lexa knew Ion well from the elite squad and it pleased Lexa that Kita seemed to trust the young man also. Lexa nodded curtly, indicating she understood what the guard was trying to tell her, and they joined Seneca for breakfast.

“Heda, good morning! I trust you and the Skai Heda slept well?” The glint of playfulness and the quiet giggles from the breakfast attendants indicated that their nighttime activities had been overheard. Clarke blushed deeply and mumbled that yes, she had slept well. Lexa smiled happily as she sat down, proclaiming her hunger. The young man who was bringing food almost broke out into giggles and Lexa winked at him. Kita watched in satisfaction, Lexa was purposely showing that she was perfectly at ease. This would reassure the people and possibly lull her enemies into a false sense that defences were down. If they acted, Kita would catch them.

The third village they visited that day made Kita nervous. She pulled in closer than usual to the group and was pleased when Miller and Marshall stepped closer to Clarke and Lexa. She watched Ion and his group of Stalkers as two of them closed ranks on Seneca and the rest slipped away into the crowd, searching for potential trouble. Ion stuck next to Raven as the woman immediately began to inspect the infrastructure.

Lexa and Clarke greeted the people the same way they had the previous villages but they did not receive the same warm welcome. Clarke picked up on another difference right away, there were very few children. Lexa dismounted and approached an old man, she nodded her head at him and he nodded back, showing little of the deference most people show to Heda.

Clarke caught up to Lexa and joined the sombre introductions. The Skai Heda got right to the point. “I notice there are fewer children here than in the other villages we have visited today. Ion told us about a Wamplei outbreak, was that the cause?”

The village head looked surprised that Clarke had spoken so plainly about a disease his people whispered in fear about. He had heard stories about the Skai woman, some people said she had given herself Wamplei to force Heda to find a cure. He knew better than to believe everything he heard but this woman was certainly not like anyone he had met before. He eyed her with trepidation and respect.

“Sha, Skai Heda. The last time it came, Wamplei took almost all of our children. What do you know of the disease?”
“I can’t ease the pain of those already lost, but I can help ensure that your future children will be safe from Wamplei.” Clarke spoke with authority and passion, those around her found themselves believing her promises. “Heda and I will be sending medicine to protect everyone who hasn’t received it yet. There is a stockpile of the medicine at Brier but Seneca tells me many still haven’t come to receive it. We will send more and have it brought to the villages. I am sorry for those it comes too late to save.” Clarke’s heartfelt words touched the man and he looked closely at her.

“Some say you gave yourself Wamplei on purpose.” People nearby strained to listen to her answer.

Clarke blushed. “I did, I injected myself with the virus in order to test a cure I had created. I failed, but Lexa saved me.” Clarke reached out and took her wife’s hand wanting the villagers to see Heda in a different way. “She opened the mountain against the wishes of the clans, she did it to save me.”

The elders of the village nodded approvingly at her story and everything that was said was relayed in whispers through the crowd. They were led around the village, while Raven came and went asking questions about mudslides, and severity of storms. Lexa explained that Raven was the Skai People’s engineer and that she was there to help where she could.

When they finished the tour, Raven joined them once more, two of the young villagers with her. They were chatting about the structures the village had in place to protect the ground from erosion during heavy rainfall and storms. She informed the village head that their system was the best she’d seen so far and congratulated them on their ingenuity. She asked for permission to share the technique with other clans who lived in similar terrain and when it was granted, she moved onto the crops.

“I noticed a few things I think I can recommend some easy changes on, based on a few Trikru tricks and something I saw in Nash. It should improve the yield of your crops within one season. I also have access to seeds that might offer some resistance to common diseases that kill certain crops. I would like to talk to your farmers and see what I can do to help.” The village head instructed the two young men to take Raven to visit the fields so she could speak with those tending the crops.

Lexa felt a weight lift from her chest. They could help these people greatly and it seemed they would be allowed to do so. They spent another hour talking with people, and when they left, the villagers gave them a far warmer send off than they had a greeting. Lexa watched as Ion was pulled aside and a young man spoke urgently into his ear. The young Stalker nodded curtly and grasped the man’s forearm. As the party mounted and rode out of the village, Ion reported to his Heda.

“Speak true Ion.” Lexa met his worried gaze and he sighed wearily before he spoke.

“The next village is a hard ride, the terrain gets even more difficult and they are known to reject you, the alliance, and Seneca. I was informed that the men we chased out of Brier had frequently visited the village and that there may be those who would make an attempt at an ambush to try and take your life, or Seneca’s life. It was recommended that we turn north and visit the villages in that direction.

Lexa considered her options. “How confidant are you that you can clear the way? Make it safe?”

“With Kita and the crew of stalkers I have with me, I can do it, Heda.”

“Make it so, Ion.” Heda nodded at him and pulled closer to Clarke. “The next village apparently had a lot of contact with the strangers. Ion thinks there could even be an ambush waiting.”

“Are you sure we should go?” Clarke looked closely at Lexa. “Heda is important to everyone in the 13 clans, she shouldn’t put herself needlessly at risk.” Clarke frowned at her wife.
“We have Hill Kru’s best Stalkers and a Royal Ice Guard clearing our way, if we don’t go they will think we are afraid.” Lexa turned and looked at Miller. “Stay close to her.” She indicated Clarke with a small nod of her head and looked satisfied with his steely demeanour.

Clarke looked directly at Marshall who had pulled in closer to Lexa. “Protect your Heda.” She instructed.

The group travelled along the steep paths slowly and in relative silence. Raven asked a few questions of Seneca every once in a while but mostly the entire group was watching their surroundings closely. Clarke was pleased to find she picked up on some whistles and other sounds she was sure were coming from Kita, Ion, and the rest of the team who were clearing the area ahead of them. The sounds were few and far between so Clarke felt quite safe, until there was a sudden, too shrill, bird call, followed by three other whistles in quick succession. She looked over at Lexa who slowed her horse and drew her weapon. Marshall and Miller had also drawn weapons and Clarke quickly followed their lead. Lexa listened and watched for a few seconds and then in a hushed voice commanded everyone to dismount. They led the horses to the side of the trail and Miller placed himself between Clarke and the dirt path.

They waited for what seemed like far longer than the tense few minutes it was and then there was another signal, two lower pitched whistles, slow and long. Lexa looked at Marshall and nodded once, the young woman bowed her head and then quickly disappeared into the trees. Seneca was pale and nervous. Lexa assured him everything was fine, but the man couldn’t hide his anxiety at the situation they were walking into and suggested more than once turning back.

When Marshall stepped back onto the trail and gave the all clear, Lexa mounted up without hesitation and led everyone forward. They rode for a few more minutes before they were joined by Kita silently merging with the group from out of the surrounding forest.

She slipped in between Clarke and Lexa’s mounts and quickly filled them in on the situation. There had been a small ambush set up by a group of locals, but they had been easily spotted by Ion and his team and those involved were captured unharmed and were now being led back to their village in ropes by the Stalkers.

The village was quite large for being so high up in the mountains and Lexa could see why the outsiders had chosen to make contact here. It was so isolated that communication from the rest of the clan would not be frequent. As she rode in she could feel the contempt and see the glares on several faces, others just looked at her in curious amazement. No Heda before her had ever come this far up the mountain. Seneca himself had never made it to this village before today.

Three men strode toward them, faces set in unwelcoming expressions. Kita’s hand rested on her ice blue dagger, ready to fling it into the skull of anyone who threatened Lexa or Clarke.

Lexa tilted her head upwards, and looked down at the men, her face an unmoving, unyielding mask of Heda. Clarke matched her wife’s stoicism, but her eyes darted around them, taking in details as Lexa stared down the man in the center of the three that approached.

The three men stopped a few feet from the party and the one in the middle sneered up at Lexa. “You’ll find no tribute here, Heda. Your forests are that way,” he pointed north toward Trikru territory. “Go home and leave the mountains be.”

Lexa raised an eyebrow slightly and casually looked to her side. “Seneca, this land we are on, what clan does it belong to?”
“The Hill Clan, Heda.” Seneca answered without hesitation. “The lines are clearly drawn and have been for decades. We are not even near the end of Hill Clan land.”

The man sneered, “We don’t answer to you, Seneca.”

“In fact you do. If you live on this land, you do answer to me.” Seneca was showing more bravery than he had during the long ride. “And if you answer to me, you bow before your Heda.” Seneca dismounted and strode forward, glaring at the defiant man.

“Em pleni, Seneca.” Lexa sounded bored. Seneca returned to his horse, but did not mount the steed. Lexa slipped from her own and walked toward the three men, they were far taller than her, but the power emanating from Heda made her larger than life.

“What is your name?” She asked the man in the centre.

“Mason.” The man answered, “I rule here.” He took a half step forward trying to intimate Lexa. In less time than any of his companions could react Lexa had grabbed Mason by the arm, spun him, kicked the back of his knees to buckle his legs and had him on his knees, dagger to his throat.

“I rule all of the clans, Mason. And I do not like disrespect.” Lexa’s voice carried and her eyes dared the other two men to make a move. “Maybe you think your men in the woods will take us out from behind….? Is that it?” Lexa taunted him. “Ion…” she shouted, and immediately the villagers who had been sent to ambush Heda were pushed into sight from the tree line, trussed up like livestock. “I am Heda. I have no wish to punish you but I demand respect. Do not push me, I am not shy of death.” Lexa removed her dagger from Mason’s throat and pushed him forward. “Rise Mason of the Hill Clan, your Heda wishes to talk.”

The two men who had flanked him helped him to his feet and the three of them looked with a newfound respect at Heda. “Sha Heda, I will hear your words.” Mason looked at the young woman warily, he had assumed all the stories about her were exaggerated or just plain lies, now he wasn’t so sure.

Clarke jumped down from her horse and approached. “I am Clarke Kom Skai Kru, I have some of my people here with me, we wish to look around your village, see what we can learn and possibly teach. We try to find ways to help each other, we want to learn from you and see what we might be able to teach. My friends and I would very much like to meet your villagers.” Raven and Miller stepped up behind her. All it took was a frown and a dismissive wave of Mason’s hand and Clarke was moving off toward the huts near the tree line. Miller, Raven, and Marshall trailed her and with one look from Lexa, Ion silently joined them.

Lexa stepped forward and followed as Mason led them to the center of the village. They sat at opposite sides of a large table and Mason stared at her. “What do your people need?” Lexa asked bluntly. “What makes you feel so separate from the rest of the Hill Clan? What can we do to make your village better? How can I make you see that I want what is best for all of my people?”

Mason looked surprised at her line of questioning. “Few come this far.” He glared at Seneca. “Why should we take orders from someone who has never set foot in our village?”

“I am here now.” Lexa replied, looking him directly in the eye. “What else?”

“We help ourselves, we don’t rely on any other villages. A few years ago we had a bad harvest and the winter was hell. No-one helped us, why should we help anyone?”

“All you have to do is ask and help will be provided.” Lexa met his eyes, “I am Heda now, the clans are united. We will help one another.”
“You really think it’s that simple? He scoffed at Heda. Wait until several clans have a drought at the same time, the rest of you will go without in order to help so many? I don’t think so. The powerful will take what they want, it is the way of the world.”

Lexa regarded him thoughtfully. “I am powerful, Mason. What I want is peace and for the children of my people to grow up safe and happy. What I want is to fight injustice and greed.” Lexa stared him down and decided to get right to the point. “I have been told your village is frequently in contact with outsiders from beyond the clans. I have reason to believe these outsiders had ties to Alain, the false king of the Ice Nation, and Yor, the treacherous usurper of York.” Mason ground his teeth and the twitch of his jaw gave Lexa the truth she needed. “I will not tolerate men like that, Mason.”

“But, they brought us food and an offer of trade. I allowed them refuge when they were kicked out of the Clan lands, just out of spite for Seneca’s rules.

But their ideas…. they mistreat the women of the village constantly. One of them slapped my daughter for daring to follow her bother to a secret meeting. They would have done far worse to her, but my son was not yet that far gone, and he stopped them. My own son would have been corrupted by them had he not seen what they wanted to do to his sister. My own son, Heda!” Mason shook his head in remorse. “It’s not just the women, we have some here who you might have turned away into the badlands; they were born different.”

Lexa interrupted quietly, but firmly. “No longer, Mason. My people will no longer abandon those born different. I commend you for seeing that folly before even your Heda.” She gestured for him to continue and saw a spark of something in his eyes as he did so.

“They treated those few villagers worse than anyone. I had to stop them from beating one of my men to death when they saw his arm was not lost in battle but he was just born without one.” Mason shook his head in remorse. “I let those wolves into my village and they had planted seeds of hatred amongst some of the men before I noticed. I feel caught between the Hill Clan that this village has long refused to acknowledge as our ruler, and the unknown enemy from the west.” Mason sighed, “We are a proud people. We know we are Hill Clan, but for three generations we have considered ourselves separate. I thought some connection to these outsiders was a clever way to show our independence, but I fear they are far worse overlords than any we have met before.”

Lexa listened with an open mind. She saw that Mason was not a bad man but that he was in fact scared for what would become of his people if he surrendered control to anyone, even her. “Mason, show me your village, let me meet your people.” Lexa spoke softly and Mason stared at her for a long moment before he agreed.

Clarke and Raven had already made friends. They had come across a group of young people who were harvesting apples on the outskirts of town. After asking if they could help, Raven soon put together a device to reach the apples on even the highest branches and the Skai girls had been accepted immediately. Clarke asked lots of questions as they worked. She told them she wanted to know all about the village, and as they chatted, she found out a lot of very interesting information. By the time Lexa and Mason had finished touring the village and made their way to the small orchard, Clarke had a lot to discuss with her wife.

“Houmon, I see you have made friends!” Lexa exclaimed, as they approached the crowd of laughing teenagers who surrounded her wife.
“Houmon!?” Mason was confused. “I knew you had joined with one from the Skai, but you did not introduce her as such… my apologies Skai Heda, I did not greet you properly.”

When Clarke smiled at him and her new friends looked at her with surprise at learning her title Mason found himself once again surprised and impressed by these two young rulers. He turned back to Lexa who explained.

“We were not met with the warmest of welcomes, Mason. There are times when for safety I don’t advertise certain bonds.” Lexa was truthful and Mason nodded his understanding.

“The ambush was sent to scare you off, Heda. They were instructed not to kill anyone.” Mason frowned, “I am sorry for the welcome you received. I see that you are a good ruler, I just don’t know how you can make life better for villages such as mine. We are far from Trikru forests, Heda.”

Ion stepped forward and spoke quietly to Lexa for a moment before she turned back to Mason. “Ion is a Stalker from the Brier, he is also a member of the elite team of warriors I am creating. You see, I embrace all the Clans’ strengths, it is our differences that make us stronger. Ion is telling me that we have to leave now in order to descend the mountain safely before nightfall.” Heda watched Mason closely.

“Heda, it would honour us if you would stay. We will hold a village meeting, let the people speak for themselves, let them ask you questions. Let them see you, hear you, and make a choice in their hearts. I have chosen you, Heda. But my people may be more difficult to convince.” Mason’s invite was what she had been hoping for and she nodded her acceptance.

“I will make the preparations, Heda. We will dine together in an hour and afterwards the village will come together to meet their Heda.” Mason bowed slightly and then left with his two bodyguards to get everything ready for the evening.

Lexa turned to Kita. “Make safe the village, Kita. Use Ion and the Stalkers.” As Kita started to bark out orders, she added, “Oh, and Kita, be nice. We’re trying to get people to like us.” Kita looked momentarily confused before realizing Heda’s joke and giving her a slightly arched eyebrow and a wry grin in response.

Clarke introduced Lexa to her new friends and asked her to stay for a few moments to chat with the young group of villagers she had gotten to know and Lexa immediately sat down on an overturned wooden crate at her wife’s request. The villagers looked both impressed and confused at the sudden change in Heda. She seemed suddenly smaller, more approachable, almost human.

Clarke sat beside her and after informal introductions she got right to her point, “Lex, they told Raven and I to, at all costs, stay away from the blacksmith’s shop on the far side of town.” Clarke looked at her new friends. “It’s ok, you can talk to her.”

One of the young men stepped forward, he was the oldest of the group and not that much younger than Lexa or Clarke. “Heda,” he spoke with trepidation, “It’s not a friendly place for women so we wanted to make sure Clarke and Raven stayed clear, that’s all.” He looked nervously around as he spoke.

Lexa followed his glance and saw a bearded man standing and watching them intently. She nodded slightly to Miller and he slipped off to see what he could find out.

“Thank you for your concern…” Lexa trailed off waiting for a name.

“Jaxon.” He looked proud of himself as Lexa repeated his name. Then she subtly changed the
“You are the future of your village, of my people. I know you feel isolated up here but you are still my people. I brought Clarke and Raven here to see if the Skai Kru technology could help at all but I really need to know what you need, what the village lacks. Please share your thoughts with me.” Lexa gestured for them all to sit as she grabbed an apple from one of the baskets and bit into it, smiling at the crisp, tart taste.

Dinner was a quiet affair. Mason and his family had invited Seneca, Lexa and Clarke for a private dinner while the rest of Heda’s party joined a feast of freshly caught deer with the villagers. Lexa spoke at length with Mason’s son and daughter, both near her own age, about the dangers of the outsiders and the unrest in the village. When she walked outside to join the village meeting, she felt she had a grasp of the situation.

Miller fell in step with her and whispered in her ear. She turned her head sharply and looked at the Guard. “Are you certain, Miller?” He nodded with a deep frown and she immediately motioned for Kita.

The meeting started slowly, people unwilling to speak to the Heda they had heard was unforgiving, brutal, and absolute. So Lexa told them a story. She told them a love story. By the time she got to the wedding day the people were eating out of her hand. And when she called for Clarke to join her on stage, they erupted into cheers and catcalls as the two women openly embraced and kissed. Lexa deftly pulling Clarke in and shielding her from the crowd as much as she could. This was the moment Kita had been waiting for.

Kita’s blade came to rest at the neck of a man whose arrow was aimed at her Heda. He hadn’t seen or heard the Ice Guard approach but she had been waiting for him to nock his arrow ever since he had settled into his sitting position.

Across on the other side of the village Ion had another man in a similar position, and not far from the centre, Marshall had her knife jammed into the left side of a man whose hand had just pulled a throwing dagger from it’s sheath. She had it at just the right angle so that if she decided to apply force it would slip cleanly between two ribs and pierce his lung.

Miller was tensely watching from very close to both his Hedas, ready to jump in front of them should any of the would-be assassins be over-looked. The moment passed and Heda released Clarke from her embrace, still standing between her and the crowd. “Now that I have shared my story with you please share with me.” With that simple act of openness, Lexa melted the hearts of the villagers and they began to tell her about their lives, and their struggles. She sat and listened, hand in hand with Clarke, while Raven furiously scribbled down notes.

Hours later, the meeting was over Lexa had a good idea of where to start, and Mason had a good idea of who was loyal to the outsiders and not to him. Kita had taken all three of the would-be assassins to the barn next to Mason’s private house. Mason’s son and three of his guards joined Kita and Ion in making sure no one came to help them escape. When Mason and Lexa walked in the three men sneered and spat at them.

“You are weak, Mason. You bow to this woman instead of aligning with the truly powerful. They are coming, and if you follow her this village will be wiped out like all the rest. You are a fool!” The largest of the three men, the one who had felt the ice blue blade of an Ice Guard at his throat, glared as he spit his poisonous words at Mason.
“Gus, you are the fool. You always have been a fool.” Mason knelt in front of the blacksmith and looked him up and down. “I thought you led this group… please don’t tell me the leader was stupid enough to implicate himself in an attempted assassination of Heda?” The man fell silent at Mason’s words and the Hill Kru leader directed his attention to his two cohorts.

“You are not nearly as silent nor skilled as those I sent to ambush them yesterday and yet you thought you could get away with this? Fools, all of you.” Mason shook his head. “If you want to live, you will start talking. I will pardon the one who gives me the names of all the others who follow the outsiders.” He stood and walked away leaving them to face Lexa.

Lexa looked at them with a mixture of anger and pity. “What makes you think these outsiders are so much better?” She needed to get some information from them before she killed them. They glared at her but kept silent. “Why would you follow a losing cause, I command the thirteen clans, these outsiders will not defeat me.”

This prompted a scoff from the one Mason had called Gus. “You are an arrogant wench! They will put you and your Sky bitch in your place. Men like me will be rewarded, what is mine will be given back to me!” His anger did not surprise Lexa, men like him were always angry.

“And what is it that you think is yours, Gus?” Lexa got in his face and sneered at him. “What do you so deserve that you will follow tyrants to get it?”

“My wife and my daughter will be returned to me, they belong to me and I will have them back. I will do what I please to the traitorous bitch when I find her. Your laws will not protect her.” He had given himself away and Lexa smirked.

Mason’s son was still in the barn with Lexa, and explained to her the angry man’s words. “He beat his wife for merely talking to another man, she almost died. We relocated her to another village where he couldn’t find her.” He glared at Gus. “His daughter was a friend of mine and always had weird burns on her skin. She always told me she got them trying to help out at the smithy. When I went with them on their relocation journey to the other village, she finally told me the truth, that he had done it to her on purpose, to mark her.”

Lexa looked at mason’s oldest son closely. “You almost joined them.” She spoke softly. “Why?”

His eyes filled with tears of shame but he would not let them fall. “They spoke of glory and power for our village. They said we would be praised and when the alliance fell we would be rewarded and left to live in peace. They had such a way of speaking that inspired confidence. They spoke of defeating you, Heda. I thought I was doing what was right for my village. But when they started to hold meetings, it was men like Gus who came, and they spoke of the rights of men only, and not all men, only ones like them. They spoke of the power we deserved and how women were for serving us and having our babies. That’s when they dragged my sister in, she had been listening outside the meeting. We had to fight them off to escape the meeting…”

Lexa looked at him kindly. “I would like your help Tuck. I need to know as much as possible about this threat so that I can learn how to fight it. There are others in the village who were in the group, not just these three fools. I need you to talk to them, to gain information from them, and to convince them that the true enemy is the oppression these men want to bring.

He nodded solemnly. “I will do whatever I can, Heda.” She believed him and her heart felt considerably lighter. She turned back to the three men who were bound before her and shook her head at them, muttering to herself what fools they were, before turning away and heading to find her wife.
The next morning Mason called another village meeting. “People of Davis, this morning I have disturbing news. Last night three of our own plotted and attempted an assassination of Heda. We know there have been outsiders in our village from time to time over the past few months. We know that even after they were banned some in our village maintained communication with them. We have reason to believe these outsiders are the reason for this attempt.” The three men were led out into the centre of the village and people began to shout abuse at them. They all hated Gus, and most were not a fan of his brother Stoffer, who was beside him, either. But, the third was a well likely young man, the son of farmer who lived on the outskirts of town. He had always been a good lad and people began to call out and ask for his life to be spared.

Mason shushed the crowd. “He has seen 17 summers, he knows better!” Someone ran off to get the boy’s father asking Mason to at least wait so they could say goodbye. Mason sighed heavily, he turned and looked at the young man. “Hunter, please! Don’t throw your life away. Work with us and you don’t need to die.”

Lexa approached and touched Mason’s arm. She turned to the assembly and made a small announcement. “They wanted a chance to kill their Heda, I will give it to them. Their lives are forfeit, an attempt on Heda is punishable by death, but if they manage to kill me, I will pardon them.” The villagers gasped and looked confused as she approached Gus. She cut off his restraints and told Ion to get the man a weapon. Ion frowned but obeyed his Heda. Kita and Clarke looked absolutely livid but they too kept their distance.

As soon as Gus got a sword in his hands he turned and bellowed in rage. He raised his sword and brought it down with as much force as he could muster. Lexa parried easily and let him strike at her a few more times before deciding enough was enough. She knocked his sword aside and her own sword cut cleanly through his body, piercing his heart and killing him instantly. He fell to the ground and she stood over him and spoke, “Yu gonplei ste odon.” She pulled her sword free and retrieved the one he had been welding. She threw it at the feet of his brother, Stoffer. As soon as Ion cut him free the man grabbed it and ran towards Heda much like his brother had. Lexa was in even less of a patient mood and only gave Stoffer two attempts to best her before his body joined his brother’s, lifeless on the ground.

She sighed and turned to Hunter. “Before I met Clarke of the Skai, no amount of begging from your village would have changed my heart, an attempt on Heda’s life is a death sentence. You are lucky that I have become wiser since I joined with this woman.” She gestured toward Clarke and the blonde woman stepped forward and quickly punched Lexa in the arm. The crowd gasped, watching with baited breath.

“How many times do I have to tell you to stop duelling when you don’t have to! What if one of these idiots had gotten lucky and injured or killed you!?” Clarke looked furious and Lexa smiled at her. The crowd relaxed, but only slightly.

Hunter was unbound and the sword was at his feet. Lexa was distracted by Clarke and failed to notice that the young man had grasped the handle and was lunging frantically towards them! Clarke and Lexa were too seasoned in battle to be caught off guard by such a clumsy, desperate act and they sidestepped him easily. Clarke’s hand held Lexa’s sword arm from immediately killing Hunter, and her own hand drew her gun. She fired into the air and the entire village stopped, the silence after the gunshot was deafening. Hunter stared at her.

“You… you… those weapons… but how!” Clarke looked down at him and understanding dawned on her.
“The outsiders have weapons like this?” She stared at the young man and he nodded.

“Yes… but not small like that… longer, bigger.” He stared at Clarke.

Lexa approached him. “The Skai people have many weapons, Hunter. Tell me what you know and I will spare your life.”

Just then his father came running into the village, over-hearing what Heda said, and he flung himself down beside his only son. “Hunter, Heda is merciful, be thankful and tell her everything. Please, Hunter! I don’t want to lose you. We owe those men nothing but contempt, help your Heda.”

Hunter told them everything. He gave Mason a list of the names of villagers who were supporting the Outsiders, helping them recruit people in other villages and sneaking them in for meetings. He told them who was helping out of fear, and who seemed to believe in the cause. He told Heda his own story of how he had caught them stealing a goat, and when he had fought back, they had shot the goat with one of their weapons. He had been terrified by what the weapons could do and they had threatened to kill his mother and father if he didn’t help them. He admitted he had thought Heda had no chance against weapons like that and so he went along with them, hoping after the war they would leave the village alone.

He took them to the farm and showed them where they had fired the weapons. Raven searched around for a while and finally called out in triumph! “I think I found a bullet hole!” She pulled out her knife and dug into the fence post until a small round piece of metal popped out. “Good news! I can already tell it’s homemade, our guns are way better than theirs!” Raven laughed in derision but Heda felt a weight heavy in her heart. It seemed that war might be coming sooner than she had imagined.

Lexa’s skill with a sword, and her mercy for Hunter had won over most of Mason’s village. Raven had drawn up rough plans to improve the roads and paths that connected the villages but she told Heda she would need more time to put anything into practice. Mason and Heda agreed with her that the first step to improving the village was to improve the ways in and out.

Lexa saw a few more villages before returning to the Brier and by the time they were ready to return home she knew she had the support of most of the Clan behind her. Raven insisted on staying behind and working with the builders of the Brier in getting things started for the new roads they wanted to build. Lexa asked Ion to stay behind with the Skai woman. He immediately agreed even though she knew he wanted to come with her to Peace Village. She promised him that she would send the helicopter back in two weeks’ time to pick the two of them up and bring them to Peace Village.

So it was that the return party was one Skai woman short. The chopper landed back in Peace Village and Octavia Blake, who was at the landing site to meet them, panicked. “Clarke!!!? Where is she? Where is Raven? Is she okay? What happened? Where is Raven!?” Lexa chuckled slightly at the stoic warrior losing her cool so quickly.

“She’s fine, O.” Clarke was quick to reassure Octavia. “She stayed behind to build stuff, you know Raven.” The slight shrug Clarke offered didn’t calm her down.

“But you left her there alone!?” Octavia looked incredulously between Clarke and Kita.

Kita smiled at Octavia. “She is safe. You are not the only one who cares for Raven.”

Octavia looked like she was ready to punch Kita. “You’re here, Miller is here, and Marshall is here!
Lexa looked at Octavia and felt a deep sympathy for the panic in the Skai woman’s voice. “Ion is with her. He has instructions from me to protect her like he would his Heda.”

Octavia’s head snapped around and she met Lexa’s steady gaze. “Ion?”

“Ion.” Lexa replied.

Octavia suddenly looked relieved. “Ion.” She grinned softly and nodded at Lexa, “He saved Lincoln twice when we were chasing Yor and Alain, That fucking guy is okay.”

Lexa patted her warrior on the shoulder as she passed, letting her know she understood. Then she reached over and took Clarke’s hand. “Let’s go home.”

Chapter End Notes

Once again, thanks so much to my lovely beta reader!
Clarke was tired, she was trying to stay awake until Lexa returned but it was proving difficult. Her eyelids were heavy and she found herself drifting off even as she struggled to stay awake. The members of the elite force had arrived back in Peace Village from their respective clans two weeks ago and Lexa was heavily involved in their training, at least as much as her other duties would allow. Tonight, she was out in the forest with the team on a stalking exercise and she had told Clarke not to wait up. Clarke however, stubbornly insisted on trying.

It was cold. Autumn was deep, and almost ready to give way to winter. Clarke sympathetically imagined how cold Lexa would be out in the forest tonight. The wind was biting, and even the short walk from Raven’s house to hers had made Clarke feel cold, cold to her bones. The elders in Peace Village all forewarned a very cold winter. Lexa had told Clarke not to worry, they were well prepared and had enough food stores to last through even the longest of winters. Despite her wife’s reassurance, Clarke was worried, and not just about winter. There were several rumours circulating of outsiders spreading malcontent in at least three of the southern clans. The clan leaders insisted they were handling it, but Lexa had still made several trips back and forth.

The outreach seemed to be working and Lexa was pleased with the results. Clarke just found herself worrying more and more, she had a strong sense of foreboding that she just couldn’t shake. There was an uncomfortable feeling in the pit of her stomach and she didn’t know what to do about it. So, she found herself sitting at Lexa’s desk, trying not to fall asleep, staring at the map of the lands they ruled and wondering what was causing the disturbing feeling she was struggling with. She frowned as she ruefully rubbed her suddenly aching stomach and sighed, “Great! Now it’s probably giving me an ulcer” she muttered to herself.

As the night grew darker Clarke couldn’t keep her eyes open any longer. She fell asleep with her head on the war table, blonde hair splayed out, both eyes fluttering shut. She fell into a dream, yet it didn’t quite feel like a dream. She was aware of herself sleeping and aware that she was dreaming. It was very disconcerting. She focused intently on the dream, hoping to discern some meaning. In it she
was in a dark place. It was cold, and her body felt tired and worn. She was scared but she wasn’t sure why. She called out, “Hello, is anyone there?” Her words echoed back to her, and Clarke felt utterly alone and abandoned. Tears sprang to her eyes and she shivered uncontrollably with fear and the bitter cold.

She couldn’t see anything but she felt compelled to move forward through the inky blackness of her dream space. She shuffled forward on shaking legs, hands out-stretched in front of her, searching for something, someone! Anything would be better than this feeling of despair that had settled in her mind.

She moved forward slowly, searching in vain for an end to the emptiness. She found herself sobbing and tried to calm herself, “It’s a dream Clarke, a dream.” She spoke aloud to herself in the dream, trying to curb the growing feeling of panic but not succeeding. Her heart began to race, and she cried out once more for help.

“Please! If anyone can hear me, please help me!” She was near collapse, the fear and despair was squeezing the cold breath from her lungs. She felt certain that she would never feel warmth again. But then, suddenly, she saw a small light ahead. A small beacon in the darkness. Hope! She moved forward, calling out. “Hello, hello, is someone there?”

A voice answered, but it seemed to Clarke that it was inside her head, not something heard by her ears. “Princess…” It was distant and faded, but it gave Clarke enough strength to rush forward, toward the light.

“Please, who are you? Where am I? Hello?” The light seemed to be shrinking, and Clarke screamed, “Please! Don’t leave me here!”

Clarke felt a rush of wind, and then a tendril of warmth. The light grew larger and brighter. “It is not I who would leave you, Princess, but you who would leave me. Remember your promise Clarke of the Sky…” Images flashed through Clarke’s mind; darkness, fear, cold, and pain. The last image was a pair of cloudy, unseeing eyes that somehow saw everything.

Her sleeping body jerked awake with a gasp and Clarke jumped up from the war table shaking and struggling for breath. She grabbed her heavy coat and ran downstairs, heading straight to Raven’s door. She pounded on it until Raven’s scowling face and sleep mussed hair pulled it open and glared at her.

“What the fuck? … Clarke…?…. Are you ok? What happened!?” Raven’s anger at being woken up in the middle of the night quickly dissipated as worry for her friend took its place. Clarke looked like she had seen a ghost and she quickly explained to Raven that in a way, she had.

Lexa was enjoying the training exercises. It helped her feel confident that her alliance would be protected from any foe. There were other people out there beyond the borders of her lands, and it was becoming obvious that the thirteen clans would not be isolated forever. She also enjoyed the physicality of it, and the particular way her wife kissed and soothed the bruises and bumps that came with it. Perhaps the best part was the satisfaction of watching the very best warriors from all the different clans begin to gel together as a team. Their differences made them stronger, the different fighting styles and specialties of the different clans made a formidable force. The strengths of one warrior bolstered the weakness of the warrior next to them and vice versa. Yes, Lexa was definitely enjoying the training; but tonight she was just cold and irritated.
The stalking exercise was taking far too long for her liking. She was sitting on a makeshift throne in a small meadow waiting for one of the warriors to reach her unnoticed. Kita had decided not to go easy on them. Tonight she was pretty much teaching a masterclass on protecting her Heda. At first it amused Lexa how easily Kita spotted the would-be stalkers who were skilled enough to have reached the meadow unobserved. Before they got that far, they had to sneak past Octavia, Lincoln, Ribs, and Indra in the forest; so really there weren’t many who made it through. Even after night fell Kita, with the help of a cloudless sky and the light of the full moon, continued picking off the warriors before they got anywhere near the kill line.

After a couple of hours of darkness Lexa became so cold that she lit a fire. She was kind of hoping that the fire would also help destroy Kita’s night vision and someone could sneak past and end this thing, but no such luck, Kita was a machine! Lexa knew she should be pleased but her feet were numb and she was hungry.

“Kita! If no-one gets through soon I’m going hunting for food, they can track me while I hunt.” Lexa knew her frustration was coming through in her voice, but she didn’t care.

“Heda, please try to stay in one place.” Kita rolled her eyes at Lexa and threw her a small bundle from her pack. Lexa opened it to find some bread, dried meats, and cheese inside. She scowled at Kita as she sat back down, but her spirits did lighten significantly. Lexa began to eat and Kita resumed her vigilance. She stood and watched, she listened to the sounds of the forest, she felt the movements of the approaching warriors. She used the Sky people’s radios to send Marshall and Miller to the exact spot where someone was hiding. As her belly filled Lexa suddenly wanted this to be a more interesting challenge. She picked up one of the radios and called Octavia.

“Octavia here, what can we do for you Heda?” The young warrior sounded as bored as Lexa felt.

“Kita needs a challenge, you and Lincoln are switching teams. Head to the beginning of the course and begin when you are ready.” Lexa grinned as Kita’s head snapped around in surprise.

“Heda, this is about training the newer warriors!” She chastised.

“Indeed. And I think they need some inspiration.” Lexa smiled at Kita who frowned and returned her focus to the field in front of her, catching Ion just meters before he could reach the kill line. Kita had set up a circumference and informed Lexa that if anyone made it to that line she would not be able to successfully defend an attack quickly enough to ensure survival. Lexa had immediately dubbed it the kill line and Indra had snorted her bemused approval of the name. Lexa wanted the elite team to be able to sneak up on any enemy; get close enough to kill if required. She knew very few people would have been able to defend the line like Kita, but she wanted them to go up against the best. How else were they to get better?

Lexa was thinking, chewing away on the dried meat and strategizing her next few trips to the clans. She wasn’t sure how much time had passed when she suddenly heard a flurry of activity. Kita was shouting into her radio and running toward the perimeter of the kill line. Lexa jumped up, curious.

“Miller! Marshall!! I’ve got my sights on Octavia, that means Lincoln is here somewhere too! Miller, hard right two hundred meters. Go! Quickly! She knows I’ve seen her and will try to disappear. Marshall, Lincoln will likely be approaching from the other side, head to the western tree line. Now!”

Lexa watched, and was pleased that she picked up the minute movements that had alerted Kita to Octavia’s presence. She swept her eyes over the field challenging herself to find Lincoln before Kita did. She disagreed with Kita’s assessment that he would take the opposite side, he would anticipate that Kita would think that. Lexa looked closely at at the same side of the meadow Octavia had
penetrated, searching the darkness for signs of movement. She saw something, she couldn’t see Lincoln, but by the way the tall grass was swaying she knew she must have found him. She smiled smugly and turned toward Kita, watching the guard work.

Kita was still looking across the meadow, “Marshall, turn to your left, there is a large rock, a bush, and a Trikru warrior.” Kita grinned happily as Marshall apprehended Lincoln right where she said he would be.

Lexa was momentarily confused but quickly realized the subterfuge, Octavia and Lincoln had joined with some of the others and Kita wasn’t expecting another front. Lexa waited as Kita ordered Miller and Marshall to make another sweep of the meadow. Kita turned and raised an eyebrow at Lexa, cocky. “Perhaps you should let Indra join them too?”

“Do not be smug, Kita.” Lexa chastised grinning at her guard.

“Why not?” Kita laughed a little, grinning back at Lexa.

“Because, Ice Guard, that is when you will lose.” A strange voice sounded closer than Kita deemed possible and she whipped around to see Ridder standing proudly, just inside the kill line.

“Ridder! Well done!” Lexa laughed and congratulated the young woman from the Horse Clan. Lexa had asked her to join the Elite Force after she was so much help in fighting and destroying the GERSA in York. The young woman was excelling in all of her training and Lexa was pleased that she had been the one to win the challenge.

Kita dropped her head in irritation and huffed. “Octavia and Lincoln were a distraction! Well played Ridder, well played. To think one of Ro’s horsemen would learn to sneak past an Ice Guard. Your Elite force is truly special, Heda.”

Lexa clasped Ridder’s shoulder in a congratulatory embrace and grinned, “I’m so happy to be going back to my warm home where my beautiful wife is sleeping in our warm bed, that Ridder has earned you all a day off tomorrow!” A cheer erupted from the warriors who were now coming out of their hiding places and Lexa looked around her, pleased with the morale they still had after a long, cold night in the forest.

Lexa slipped into the house and made her way quietly up the stairs. Her plan was to slip under the covers and try to warm her body under the blankets before wrapping herself around her presumably sleeping wife. She didn’t want a jolt of cold to wake Clarke. She was so looking forward to the softness and warmth that it didn’t immediately register that Clarke was not in the bed. She had one hand on the blankets and was about to slip under the covers when she realized.

Her body reacted as if there was danger. Immediately, her heart started pumping faster and she was no longer half asleep. She moved quickly back down the stairs and as soon as her boots were on her feet she was out the door in search of Clarke. When she saw the lights on in Raven’s cabin she felt the tense edge ease slightly. Surely that was where she would find her wife, she prayed that nothing was wrong.

As she approached the door, Kita opened it wide, seemingly unsurprised to see Lexa. “She is here,” she called back over her shoulder. As soon as Kita announced her presence Lexa saw a blonde head rushing towards her.
“Clarke, what is it!?” Lexa’s face was etched in concern. Clarke looked troubled.

“We have to go to York. Right away, Lex.” Clarke grabbed her wife’s hand and held it close to her heart. “I have to remind Zora of a promise, the people of Bad Town need our help; I saw… I saw Thia.” When Lexa didn’t tell her she was crazy like Raven had she continued. “She’s in the dark, it’s cold, she’s scared, and she needs me. I’ve already told Virgil to prepare. I’m taking the chopper at first light, can you come with me?”

Lexa stared at her wife. She had made a command decision without consulting her. Lexa suspected that even if she had still been in the forest come sunrise Clarke would have gone without her. Lexa fought the instinct to pull Clarke into a proud embrace. She also fought her protective instinct to fight Clarke on this. “Heda Kom Skai Kru has made her decision. Kita, you will be taking Miller with you and escorting Heda Clarke to see the Mayor.”

“Lex, I want you with me.” Clarke reached for Lexa and they fell into one another’s arms.

“I want to be with you too, Clarke. But, this is the first big command decision you have made entirely without me. It is important for you to do this. You speak for Heda, Clarke. Take that confidence with you. The Mayor will support your decisions as she would mine. Take whoever you need. The only thing that is non-negotiable is that Kita and Miller will be protecting you.” Lexa suddenly looked exhausted, “Houmon, is your trip planned enough that we may go to bed for a few hours before you leave?”

Clarke leaned in and kissed her. “Of course! Raven will be joining me and we have already taken care of everything. Virgil and Harper already know the flight plan. Fer is coming with us, and, if you can spare him, I’d like to take Ribs.

“Of course.” Lexa glanced at Kita and she nodded her understanding, slipping from the house to inform Ribs of his morning duties. Lexa looked at Raven and smiled softly, “The slayer of the GERSA returns to York. You are somewhat of a celebrity there, Raven.” Lexa winked playfully at her and continued, “When your duties in Bad Town are over, stay a day or two longer. Zora will be glad to host you.” She looked back at Clarke, “both of you.”

“Let’s go to bed, Lex. Dawn will come faster than we’d like.” Clarke looked back over her shoulder at Raven and smiled, “Thanks Rae, see you in a few hours.” Raven just nodded and watched her fried with an odd look on her face. Raven was a scientist, she had a rational explanation for everything she had encountered on the ground, even the GERSA that she had destroyed. But Clarke’s story tonight had given her goosebumps, and if they found out that Clarke was right, there would be nothing in her scientific brain to explain her friend’s dream. Worst of all, Raven suspected that Clarke was indeed right.

Dawn came too quickly. The sun’s light lacking the warmth it had brought to the camp during the summer months. The light seemed weaker, like the thin broth Raven was drinking in hopes of warming herself from the inside. She was spending a moment of quiet reflection, idly watching the flurry of activity as Lexa instructed warriors to load the helicopter with different bundles and simultaneously managing to speak sternly with Kita, Miller, and Ribs; most likely threats about keeping Clarke safe. Raven grinned quietly as she watched Kita’s bored expression and Rib’s barely concealed amusement. Miller was the only one still affected by Lexa’s intense threats, the other two had heard them too many times before. Besides, they would all willingly die to protect Clarke, so everyone knew that the threats were just to make Lexa feel better about the temporary separation.
When Lexa finally moved off to spend a quiet moment with her wife Raven slid out of her seat and made her way over to Kita. She stood close enough for their arms to touch and leaned gently on the taller woman. “Do you think Heda will kill anyone while she waits for Clarke to come back?”

Kita grinned at her, “Don’t worry, the Elite force can survive even a lonely Heda.” Kita began walking toward the chopper and Raven gave a deep sigh as she followed her. “What’s wrong, Raven? You usually enjoy visiting the other clans?”

Raven smiled to herself at Kita’s concern. She could read the warrior’s worry even through her stoic exterior. “I am looking forward to it. But to be honest, I feel like I’m out of my element… Clarke’s dream really creeped me out!” Raven shrugged and Kita nodded her understanding.

“You are a scientist,” Kita stated gravely. Raven almost blushed as she remembered the night she taught Kita that word, Kita had insisted her tongue was not capable of saying it properly and Raven had come up with an ingenious series of exercises to increase her tongue’s flexibility. “You don’t believe in the Seer’s abilities, and yet you cannot explain this.” Kita smiled kindly at her, “You don’t have to understand everything, Raven. Help Clarke the best you can, and try to enjoy the adoration the people of York are likely to shower upon the slayer of the GERSA! If you get scared of the…” Kita searched for the word she had heard Clarke and Raven use earlier… “supernatural. I will protect you from whatever spirits or demons we face.”

“I’m sure everything will be fine, but it’s good to know the mighty Kita can even kick some supernatural ass.” Raven grinned at her, “You’re such a dork.”

Kita looked confused again, “You Skai Kru use many strange words.” She frowned quizzically, but somehow continued to look haughty. “I am Kita of the Ice Nation. No foe, supernatural or otherwise, is beyond me. I came through the tunnel with Heda.”

Raven just stared at Kita, standing so confident, so supremely sure of herself, ready for anything. She could poke so many holes in Kita’s argument right now but she decided to let her have this one. “Well, I feel a lot better now… but just so you know, I might get extra scared at night, maybe I’ll require some extra protection. I hear you might know a couple of Women in Black who might be interested in helping you protect me, you know, at night…?”

Kita’s face went from being the haughty, self assured, Ice Guard to a wide eyed blushing horn-dog (yet another word Raven had tried to teach the Ice Guard) and Raven sauntered toward the chopper feeling rather superior herself.

Clarke looked up at Lexa, the chopper was loaded and waiting for her. This was going to be their longest separation since they had gotten married. Clarke felt uneasy, but she knew Lexa was right, she had to go alone. “Lex… I…” Clarke sighed and looked away trying to gather her thoughts.

“Houmon, are you afraid? I will go with you.” Lexa looked concerned.

“No, it’s just… we’ve never been apart this long before. What if I don’t know what to, what if no one will listen to me, what if…?”

“Clarke, stop.” Lexa held up her hand. “You are Clarke of the Sky, a legend!” Lexa smiled down at Clarke. “You and I defeated the mountain, we chased down Alain and Yor, and it was you who gave me the courage to defeat the spirits in the tunnel! The Seer calls to you, not to me.” Lexa’s
expression grew sober, “You lead the people as much as I do, but you have to believe in yourself. Can you do that?” Lexa looked questioningly at Clarke with a hard glare. “If you cannot, tell me now, because if you don’t believe in yourself, no one will follow you. Do you believe, Clarke of the Sky People, that you can help the people of Bad Town, that you will do what’s right by them?”

Clarke straightened her shoulders, “Yes.” She sounded strong, like Lexa knew she was. “I will do what’s right by them, and if anyone disagrees with my methods I will convince them otherwise.” Lexa smiled as Clarke added, “And if they still disagree I will threaten them with the slayer of the GERSA and the Ice Guard.” She looked over her shoulder at Kita and Raven who were waiting in the helicopter. “I’m ready Lex.” She leaned up and in, her lips finding Lexa’s not caring who was watching. The kiss was slow but deep and soon they could hear whistles and whooping coming from the warriors who, despite having been promised a day off, were standing by, waiting for what they expected to be a gruelling workout with Heda once Clarke was gone.

The two women reluctantly parted and smiled lovingly at one another. Clarke started to go but Lexa held her close for one last promise. “Clarke, you must promise me that you will be safe. I know you are headstrong, but you must be safe, no unnecessary risks.” The intensity in Lexa’s eyes took Clarke’s breath away.

“I will Lex. I’ll be home before you know it. Safe and sound, all in one piece. I promise.” Clarke kissed Lexa once more, softly, and then turned and strode toward her waiting transport hoping she looked confident and strong, like Lexa looked when she strode off towards duty.

Indra had been standing back watching the goodbyes and now she grinned at how very much the Skai Heda walked like Lexa. The young woman had become stronger, more powerful and confident during her time with Lexa. And her Heda had become stronger in her convictions, more just in her decisions, and wiser still during her time with Clarke. The two of them represented a good future for her people and Indra made sure to give Kita a stern look of warning that she’d better protect the Skai Heda, just for good measure. Kita bowed her head slightly and Indra nodded back, still staring hard.

Lexa watched as the chopper rose into the air, heart pounding in her chest, immediately regretting her decision not to go. “Indra, get the horses, we’ll leave now and get there…”

Indra cut her off, “Get there as they are arriving back here in the flying machine? As you wish Heda.” Indra started to move slowly toward the stables when she heard Lexa snarl behind her.

“Gonas! If there is anyone brave enough to join me in the sparring ground, come now!”

Indra chuckled a little and watched in amusement as the toughest warriors in the 13 clans dutifully followed their Heda toward the sparring grounds, none of them looking particularly excited at the prospect of sparring with Lexa in the mood she was in right now.

Zora was having lunch when excited voices alerted her to the helicopter’s approach. She jumped up and went outside wondering why Heda was making an unannounced visit.

Zora was lonely, Rock had gone back to the Lake Clan to greet her people and to begin the process of officially transferring power to her brother. Cade and Dal would continue to rule the Lake Clan, Rock had made her decision. She would winter there, to both reconnect with her people and complete the transfer of power. In spring, after the Royal Wedding in the Ice Nation she would return to York with Zora. Zora welcomed a visit from her friend and Heda, although as she watched
the helicopter approach her chest felt tight at the possibility that the visit was not good news. As the chopper began to land her keen eyes picked out the fact that Heda was not there; Clarke was alone. Zora’s heart nearly beat out of her chest. She strode urgently toward the flying machine and as soon as Clarke was on the ground, she pulled her into a massive embrace.

Clarke hugged Zora back and felt the tension in the Mayor’s body. She pulled her away from the noise of the helicopter and quickly, and loudly, reassured her. “Mayor, Heda sends her greetings and regrets that she could not join me on my business here, but the Elite Force training is at a critical juncture.”

Clarke watched as Zora’s body relaxed slightly at the news that Heda was fine. “Sky Heda, welcome back to York!” Her own official greeting was met by cheers from the crowd and she heard her people begin to discuss Raven, the GERSA slayer. She turned to the smaller woman. “Raven of the Sky! Welcome back to York, my people hold a special place in their hearts for you, slayer of the GERSA.”

Raven smiled and waved at the crowd that had gathered for a few minutes, then she followed Clarke and the Mayor inside. She heard some audible gasps at Fer’s presence and so she purposely slowed her steps, continuing to wave at the crowd, and then linked arms with Fer and the two women walked inside together. The crowd watched, in disbelief, surprised at the Sky Woman’s open display of affection for the deformed woman. Once the party had all passed into the Mayor’s mansion the rumours began to circulate.

As soon as they had some privacy Zora’s concern returned. “Clarke, what’s wrong? Why are you here without Lexa?”

Zora was relieved to hear Clarke laugh softly, “Why are you here without Rock, Zora? We are all leaders with our own work to do. Lexa is fine. Well, I’m sure she’s a nervous wreck about me coming here without her, but other than that she’s fine.”

Zora looked at her grinning friend and saw that Clarke was being truthful. “In that case, it is very good to see you my friend.” Zora pulled her into another embrace and Clarke returned it happily.

They sat down with Zora and food was brought to them. Kita had already coordinated with Ribs. He and Miller were already doing a security check of the mansion with the Women in Black. Kita remained at Clarke’s side. It wasn’t long before Suu entered the room and Raven watched in silent amusement as the woman remained totally professional in her greeting to the Sky Heda, and then looked at Kita like she wanted to tear her clothes off with her teeth! Raven made a mental note to encourage Kita to spend some alone time with the leader of the Mayor’s personal guard, Suu looked like she needed a good fuck.

Clarke and Zora talked over lunch as they caught up on the goings on of the clans and chatted like old friends. After they had eaten Zora looked at her seriously, “I know there must be an official reason for your visit, Clarke. Let Suu show you to your rooms, then meet me in the library in one hour. We will discuss your visit and how I can help.” Clarke nodded, thankful for a moment to gather her thoughts and she followed Kita and Suu from the room.

Zora had an unchanging frown on her face, “Clarke we’ve tried, I swear! We cleared out all of Yor’s men in every other part of York, but the area surrounding Bad Town is too difficult to police. Every time we think we’ve cleared it we get ambushed on the way back. The people in Bad Town won’t
listen to me or help us find the last of the scoundrels. It's dangerous and I can't let you go there, I won't!!"

Clarke raised an eyebrow at Zora. “I'm going, Mayor. Shall I cross the island and go back through the tunnel, or will you let me cross your lands?”

“Clarke…” Zora sighed, and looked around the room, her eyes landed on Kita. “Kita, please talk some sense into her, it's impossible to keep anyone safe in those streets.”

Kita sighed, “She is going Mayor, we can't stop her, so I will keep her safe.” Kita's voice was ice cold, like the steel she carried.

Zora threw her hands up in the air in frustration and defeat. She looked at Raven hoping the Slayer could save them once more. “If we are going to do this madness, is there anything you have that might help? The streets are narrow and there are so goddamn many hiding places, Yor's snipers pop up randomly, picking us off like…” Zora’s face twisted in pain and she stopped and took a breath before continuing. “I know there can't be many of them left, but it only takes one to find a perch and…” Zora’s words trailed off and her eyes filled with tears. She had lost three Women in Black in those streets recently and it haunted her.

Raven looked thoughtful, “I mean we have night vision goggles, but I don't know how useful those would be if the snipers are hiding in buildings. Let me work on it…” Raven suddenly sat down and started scribbling something in her notebook.

Suu stepped forward, “Mayor, the Women in Black can clear the streets, we know the back alleys of this city better than anyone, even in Bad Town. While you were in exile we lived in those same buildings… I know we’ve taken casualties, but let us finish the job!”

“Enough Suu! We've discussed this before, it's too dangerous! We've already lost too many!” Zora looked pained. Clarke put her hand on Zora’s shoulder and squeezed reassuringly.

“I know you don’t want to lose anyone else, Mayor. But the people of Bad Town are in trouble; they are Heda’s people too. We have come to fulfill the promise we made before we crossed the tunnel. We have Fer with us, she knows those streets better than even your Women in Black.” Clarke nodded at the woman who had proven herself time and time again since Octavia had freed her from Yor’s men. Fer returned the nod and moved to Suu’s side intending to brief the Women in Black. She knew some of them from their time in exile since the Women in Black had been allowed to come and go in Bad town as long as they didn’t cause trouble or bring it with them.

“Sha, Skai Heda, sha.” Zora looked at Suu and nodded once. The young woman immediately left the room to begin preparations, Fer by her side. Kita watched them go, both proud and worried. Suu could lead her team against any foe, and Fer would provide valuable intel. Kita knew there was no one better for this job, but Zora was right, one single sniper could cause immense damage and casualties. Kita looked at Clarke and drew strength from the Skai Heda’s bravery. Kita would see it done. The Skai Heda would be victorious, she would make sure of it.

Kita was riding as close to Clarke’s horse as she could physically get. Her senses were on high alert, but she knew that in the dark an arrow would be impossible to see coming. She would not be able to react before it hit it’s target. She and Raven had rigged up a shield from something Raven had called plexiglaz, it had been scrounged from the tunnels after the GERSA had been destroyed. People were
now unafraid to explore further inside and they had found all sorts of things that Raven had found useful. The shield would stop at least the first shot or two as long as they were head on. But, if an assassin waited for a side or rear shot there was no protection to be had, so Kita rode as close as her horse could get to Clarke’s.

Suu was leading her team through the darkness, Fer had shown them a well hidden tunnel they had not known about. One that the people of Bad Town had used to sneak in and out of York for years. She was breaking an oath to her people by revealing it, but the Seer was in trouble and she had to get the Skai Heda to her. The tunnel passed under the most dangerous parts of their journey and so Suu had a team of ten highly trained and very dangerous women sweeping back toward her Mayor and the Skai Heda. They were clearing buildings and securing rooftops as they went but her team was too small to be fast enough. If trouble came for Clarke, it would likely find her before they had eliminated it.

Her team had already found several nests where it was obvious the assassins lived, or at least used frequently. They had also found two of Yor’s men, neither were alive after meeting Suu and her Women in Black. Suu’s mind was racing; keeping her team moving, staying on track, following the plan but adjusting for her team’s safety as she went. Her mind was on fire, but her heart was cold with terror at the vulnerable position both her Mayor and her lover were in; riding right down the middle of the road into the jumble of buildings and structures. Her heart raced in near panic knowing she couldn’t hope to clear all of them. She fervently hoped the GERSA slayer’s plan worked!

At the other end of the treacherous road, Ribs led Raven as silently as the Skai woman could move. She was staring ahead of them using those ridiculous looking glasses to see in the dark. He had to admit they were very useful, but he preferred to use his own natural night vision and happily let Raven watch for trouble. Raven stopped suddenly and reached for her radio. Ribs waited for her to point in the direction of some buildings on the right side of the road they were following. He nodded and let out a soft whistle that sounded very much like a night owl. Behind them, Kita tensed and quietly instructed the Mayor to position her shield in that direction.

Clarke had an earpiece in and she heard Raven’s message clearly. The short building, 100 meters ahead on the right, rooftop, two heat signatures. She took a deep steadying breath and reminded herself that she was a badass and she could do this.

Two assassins were on the rooftop watching the horses draw nearer. Spies in the city had alerted them that the Mayor and possibly Heda herself were on the move. They were patient, confidently waiting for a better shot, a closer shot, a chance to see who they were shooting.

“Holy, shit!” The older of the two assassins exclaimed to his friend. “That’s the fucking Ice Guard! That means it’s not Heda next to the Mayor at all! Even fucking better! We get to shoot the blonde Skai bitch!” He pulled his bowstring back excitedly taking aim as the riders entered a comfortable kill distance. He was about to loose his arrow when he felt steel at his throat.

“Too bad for you the blonde Skai bitch isn’t on that horse, huh?” Clarke didn’t waste any time. Despite her dislike of bloodshed she killed the man quickly and looked over as Miller did the same to the other assassin. He nodded at her after checking to make sure they were both dead and she radioed Raven letting her know it was done. She and Miller did a quick sweep of the building, grabbing some weapons from the nest they found on the second floor, before slipping back into the shadows outside and waiting for more intel from Raven.

They continued forward like that for some time. Ribs and Raven leading a team of Women in Black taking out anyone on the left, and Clarke and Miller doing the same with another team on the right. Several of the Mayor’s soldiers were lined up surrounding Kita, the Mayor, and the Woman in Black
who was wearing Clarke’s cloak and riding her horse.

It was Raven who had come up with the ingenious plan of combining subterfuge and technology. She had tweaked the night vision goggles and made some improvements to them. Kita and Zora had examined the plan the genius had come up with and changed some of Raven’s tactics to better suit the terrain. Suu had caught a few weak points and offered a few of her own ideas and it quickly became a pretty solid plan, even Kita had been impressed. Clarke gave it her command seal of approval and so they found themselves working their way toward Bad Town just before dawn.

Suu could hear horses and knew that they were getting closer to reuniting with the Mayor. She felt her heart rate ease slightly, the Slayer’s plan was working. She pushed the thought from her mind and concentrated on the task at hand. She urged her girls to move faster, to be more silent, to stay safe. They had taken out a half dozen assassins and discovered several unoccupied hiding places. If there were enough assassins to fill the nests they had found she feared that they would never be able to defend against them. They had destroyed or taken any weapons they found in the nests in case more assassins showed up after they had passed through. Suu knew from experience that there had to be more. There were too many nests for the number of men they had come across to be all of them. She watched Fer closely as she considered where the rest of the assassins were. She had a feeling that Fer knew as well as she did where the rest of Yor’s followers were likely to be and what they were very likely doing to her people. But Fer kept her composure. She fought well, moved much like a Woman in Black. Suu intended to ask her to join them when this was over, although she suspected Heda had already given this talented young woman an offer.

Clarke heard the radio crackle and she listened to Raven suck in a sharp breath. “Jesus I’m picking up a bunch of signatures.” Clarke peered into the darkness wishing they had more than one set of Raven’s souped up NVGs. “That group has to be Suu’s. It’s gotta be Clarkey.” Clarke hoped she was right. “They move differently, I’m sure it’s them. But that other group… that’s trouble.” Clarke tensed and gripped her sword a little tighter, her other hand unconsciously checking that her gun was still safely strapped to her thigh.

“Where is the other group, Raven?” Clarke spoke evenly, her voice steady despite her pounding heart. “How many?”

“Your side Clarke, but there are at least 5 heat signatures so take Amina and Sheena with you.”

‘Roger that.” Clarke turned toward Miller and pointed behind them, they slowed slightly allowing the two Women in Black to catch up to them. “There are at least five up ahead. Raven says Suu’s group is closing fast. So if we get in trouble help won’t be far away.”

“Five of them, four of us. I’ll take those odds.” Amina looked proudly down at her sword and dagger already stained with the blood of Yor’s men. Sheena grinned at her and pulled an arrow from it’s sheath. The two young warriors were ready to move forward.

As they began to move forward they heard a soft hooting sound alerting Clarke to Ribs’ signal for Kita to begin moving forward again. She whispered into her radio asking Raven to narrow down the locations when she heard that first arrow collide with the shield they had rigged.

Zora reacted quickly and according to the plan. She raised her sword and galloped forward with her guards as Kita dismounted and covered the Woman in Black who was pretending to be Clarke. They played it just like the assassins expected, further convincing the killers that it was indeed Clarke on the horse. Arrows continued dinging harmlessly off of the shield Kita held in front of her. Raven gave Clarke a location and then Clarke heard her swear in annoyance, three more heat signatures had popped up on her side.
Raven let Ribs know as soon as they appeared and he was on the move immediately. She broke cover and ran, exposing herself dangerously, into the street toward Kita. She wanted to provide cover for Kita and ‘fake Clarke’ from this now vulnerable side. Arrows hit the ground far too close for comfort as she slid in behind the crouching Ice Guard who was propping her shield up as best she could to cover them.

“Raven… what?” Kita looked back in alarm as the beautiful genius shrugged nonchalantly at her.

“We’re surrounded.” Raven tried to sound calm as Kita stared at her in disbelief prompting her to continue. “Don’t worry, Ribs and Ava will take care of this side, Clarke and Amina will clear the right and Suu’s team is almost here. I just didn’t want you to get your ass shot off beforehand, so here I am.” Just then, an arrow slammed into Raven’s shield and caused the Sky woman to let out a started yelp.

“Huddle up as best you can.” Kita gestured to Trish and Raven to stay behind the shields as they waited for one side of the street to be cleared before pushing forward. “We’re the bait,” Kita stated matter-of-factly. “We have to let the assassins think they have a shot at the Skai Heda.” Kita made it a point to seem like they were going to try an ill-advised run and immediately more arrows thumped into the shield she held.

Clarke and Sheena entered the first building stealthily as Miller and Amina kept on going to the next nest. Raven had spotted a lone assassin in one building and then a group of them in the next hiding place. Sheena had deadly aim and Clarke had her gun in hand ready to take the single sniper out on sight. As they crept noiselessly through the darkness searching for their target they heard a commotion outside, Zora had charged through the volley of arrows and was closing in fast on the building. The two women heard a rustling and then hurried steps as the would-be sniper chose to retreat. They waited for him in the darkness and Clarke held up her hand to signal Sheena to wait. She wanted to see where he would go.

Her instincts proved right when instead of running outside the assassin turned toward a dark corner and pulled aside a canvas tarp exposing a small tunnel. Clarke gave a short whistle and then the man fell to the ground mortally wounded, one of Sheena’s arrows through his heart. They approached the body and shoved it carelessly aside, away from the tunnel’s entrance. Clarke peered cautiously inside wondering if this connected all the way to Bad Town or just interconnected the buildings. Sheena waited for the Sky Heda’s order but was pleased when Clarke asked for her opinion, orders didn’t come, but a question instead.

“What do you think, Sheena? Does this just connect the buildings nearby, or go further on?” Clarke looked at the Woman in Black and then back into the tunnel.

“I think it’s likely that it’s just the buildings, but there is only one way to be sure.” She looked at Clarke with a grin and the Sky Heda smiled back at her.

“Raven, we found a tunnel. We think they have passages connecting some of the buildings. We’re going to check it out.” Clarke sent the message and the two women stepped inside without waiting for a reply.


“Tunnel? Clarke went into a tunnel?” Kita was furious. “I told them I should be with her!”

“The assassins wouldn’t believe it was Clarke if you weren’t beside her.” Raven 18 the Ice Guard
patiently, but she felt the same unease Kita did about Clarke exploring an unknown tunnel.

Sheena moved with a sure-footed ease through the darkness of the tunnel, Clarke at her heels. They made good time; carefully descending some rickety stairs and running along a dirt path. Soon they began to hear the unmistakable sounds of fighting ahead of them and then they noticed a small crack of light filtering through at the end of the tunnel. Sheena immediately picked up her pace with Clarke only a few steps behind her.

As they reached the end of the tunnel they heard Miller’s voice calling to Amina to watch out behind her. Sheena violently burst through the flimsy door and her trained eyes fell upon her target almost immediately! Amina was locked in hand to hand combat with a man far larger than herself. Behind her, a cowardly assassin was ready to shoot her in the back. It was only Sheena’s surprise entrance that saved Amina. Her arrival startled him enough that his shot was slightly off it’s mark. The deadly arrow slammed into Amina’s shoulder, mere inches from her heart. Less than a second later Sheena’s own arrow found it’s target and the archer fell to the floor, dead.

The Woman in Black cried out in pain as the arrow-head tore into her flesh, and the large man she had been holding her own against saw an opportunity. He triumphantly raised his sword, eyes filled with menace. As he was about to end Amina’s life with a downstroke of his blade, a deafening shot rang out, sounding far too loud in the enclosed space. The man fell heavily onto the dusty floor; Clarke Griffin’s bullet had pierced his heart, killing him instantly. Miller turned from the two bodies at his feet and stared at her. “Clarke!?… Sheena!? Where…?”

Suddenly, the door to the room burst open and a very anxious Mayor charged in; the intensity in her eyes shining fiercely as she hurriedly checked on everyone. Sheena was already helping Amina to her feet and inspecting the wound and Miller quickly took out his first aid kit and helped her tend to the removal of the arrow.

Zora ran over to Clarke, eyes frantically searching up and down her friend’s body searching for any signs of injury. “They’ll have heard the gunshot. We should move quickly now.”

Clarke looked at the gun still in her hand and frowned. “I had to.” She shrugged and Zora pulled her into a quick embrace before turning and ordering them all to follow her.

Rib’s team had secured the left side of the street, quickly disposing of the three assassins who had appeared so suddenly on Raven’s radar. Kita and Raven waited until Ribs had cleared his side and then they had all slipped across the now quiet street and as Zora led Clarke and her team out of the building the entire group gathered in the shadows. Kita’s eyes focused on Clarke as soon as the blonde came into view, and she quickly moved into what she considered to be the place she belonged, the place that gave her life purpose; beside the Skai Princess, protecting her.

The mayor heaved yet another sigh of relief when Suu’s team jogged out of the darkness and joined them as well. After a quick, but affectionate, pat on the shoulder of the woman who led her security team Zora looked around her and spoke, “So far so good. But they likely heard the gunshot and so more may be coming. We don’t know what other tunnels or secret paths they have so I say we stick together and take the fastest route into Bad Town from here.” She looked expectantly at Fer and the woman answered her with a sharp nod of understanding.

“Follow me, Mayor. Leave the horses.” She turned and stepped forward leading the team down a small alleyway that no one but Kita had even noticed.

The Ice Guard shot a look at Miller, who nodded, then she stepped away from the group, confident in her ability to catch up. She jogged over to Amina and the small contingent of Women in Black who would stay with the horses. “You’re sure it was not poisoned?” Kita stared angrily at the wound
on her lover’s shoulder.

“I’m sure, Kita. They had chemists brew it for them in York, they don’t know how to do it
themselves. Not that clever, the bastards.” Amina reached up and stroked the Ice Guard’s cheeks.
“We will take cover and fortify our position in case we get company. Go, protect the Skai Heda.”
Kita nodded, and leaned in for a quick kiss before turning and running into the alley.

Clarke and Miller were not surprised when the Ice Guard overtook them even as they jogged along
at a quicker pace than they were used to. “Is Amina ok?” Clarke asked, her breath coming in short
pants.

“Yes, thanks to you Clarke. Going into the tunnel was brave.” Kita hesitated briefly before adding,
“Brave, but stupid! You didn’t know where it went or what to expect.” Kita was chastising her and
while Clarke understood why, she also knew she had to put a stop to it.

“Would Lexa have gone in?” Clarke knew the answer, she was just making a point.

“Yes.” Kita acknowledged. “And I would have lectured her afterwards too.” Kita looked smugly
over at Clarke before picking up her pace in order to move to the front of the pack, Clarke following
right behind her. When they reached the front of the group Kita quietly asked Fer a few questions
while Clarke fell into step alongside the Mayor.

After a few minutes of turns and direction changes that Clarke had no hope of remembering, Fer
slowed. They had come to the end of the maze of alleys Fer had expertly led them through, she
approached a corner cautiously and as Clarke, Kita and Zora joined her she motioned for them to get
down on the ground. There was a large bush at the end of the path that the four women were able to
crawl under and observe one of Bad Town’s outer streets.

There was a flurry of activity, some residents of Bad Town were trying to run away to avoid the
hated invaders who pushed and kicked them indiscriminately, or hit them violently when they got too
close. Yor’s men were shouting amongst themselves, unconcerned with the residents of the town
except to abuse them when they could reach them. They appeared to be gathering arms to fight
whatever was coming at them. Some of them were grouping together and heading for the main road
that led back toward York.

“We all heard the shot,” one of the men shouted. “We should go and ambush them before they get
any closer!” Several of his comrades loudly echoed their agreement.

“If they do make it to the town, we’ll need everyone here to fight them off!” Another man countered,
stepping up into the face of the first man.

“I’m going anyway, and anyone who wants a chance to shoot the Mayor or Heda can come with
me.” The first man shoved the second aside and turned to go. When the second grabbed him
forcefully by the arm an angry scuffle broke out.

Fer pulled the leaders back to the cover of the alley and quietly laid out a plan. She would lead half
of the team around to the other side of town through more secret alleys and they would search
building by building until they found Thia. As they searched, the townspeople, who were
undoubtedly locked up somewhere, would be freed and join the fight. Her people were not weak,
they would fight the invaders if they could. The town was large and there were several places she
could think of that could serve as prisons to her people.

Zora spoke, authority lacing every word. “Fer, listen to Clarke, she will take you directly to the Seer.
I’ll stay here with my soldiers and rain some terror on these assholes for a change.” She turned to
Clarke, “Open your mind, Clarke, she’ll guide you to her.”

Clarke nodded, not entirely understanding what Zora meant but feeling instinctively that it was true. She turned and followed Fer. Kita, Miller, Raven, and a handful of Women in Black followed close behind. Clarke immediately began to try and clear her mind. She thought of Thia, and concentrated on calling silently out to her.

Fer led them through more smaller alleyways and tiny crawl spaces, traversing the town in ways the invaders hadn’t found yet. Kita watched Clarke closely as she frowned and shook her head, nothing yet.

They heard the commotion of a fight breaking out behind them and assumed correctly that Zora had launched her offensive. Clarke looked scared, but Kita took her hand reassuring her. “You can do it Clarke, the Seer reached out to you and she will again.”

“What if I’m too late…” Clarke whispered, as tears formed in her eyes.

“Skai Heda, we are not too late. We can’t be!” Fer stated vehemently. She took Clarke’s hand from Kita’s and turned Clarke to face her. She pulled both of Clarke’s hands to her own face and laid the hands of the Sky Princess on her cheeks, both her “good” cheek and her “bad” one. Clarke didn’t flinch and she didn’t back away in revulsion. Fer felt lighter. “Concentrate on Thia. Let her know we are here.”

Across town, in a caged off corner of a dark, cramped basement a scared and dirty little girl was shivering under a filthy scrap of material her captors had thrown at her as a blanket. She rocked herself back and forth as she heard the sounds of conflict outside. It wasn’t new, the bad men often fought amongst themselves and her people often rose up in resistance. She knew they would never stop trying to free her, but Thia also knew that they couldn’t save her, only the Sky Princess could.

She felt tears gathering in her eyes as she thought about the people who had already died trying to free her. She was close to dissolving into a fit of grief when she felt… something? The back of her mind heard something very faint, but growing stronger. A friend was calling to her, surrounded by the Sky Princess’s aura. She hadn’t been able to pick out the aura before, her mind had been too clouded with misery. But her friend’s face, her friend’s voice cut through the darkness that had crept into her heart. “Fer!”

Clarke and Fer were both startled at the same time as they clearly heard Thia’s voice in their heads; but they did not break the physical connection they had with one another. “Yes! Thia, I’m here. Help me find you. Tell the Sky Princess where you are.” Fer spoke quietly but firmly willing her message to get through. When there was no further response she looked desperately at Clarke. “The prophesy about you, it said you would be linked to the young Seer. She can’t hear me, but she’ll hear you. I know you don’t believe in this, but please…?” Clarke wasn’t sure what she believed anymore but she knew she would try anything.

“Thia! It’s me, Clarke. I’m here with Fer, we’re here to find you, to save you. Where are you, Thia?”

“Sky Princess. You came.” Thia didn’t realize there was anyone listening to her or even that she had spoken aloud until the door that kept her imprisoned was thrown open and rough hands grabbed her from her cage.
“This little witch knows where they are!” a voice bellowed, and Thia was dragged into another room where a man sat very confidently in a chair that did not belong to him. He held a dagger menacingly in his hand and smiled a smile that was cold, evil, and terrifying. Thia did not see things the same way that others saw them. But her gift was pure and strong and she saw clearly the blackened heart and evil soul of this man and she knew, without a doubt, that he intended to hurt her. In front of him; beaten, bound, gagged and on his knees, was her father. She had lost his aura from her mind days ago and assumed he was dead. She was both elated to see him alive and yet terrified at the choice she would soon have to make.

The man who sat in her father’s chair smiling his evil smile spoke with a calmness that made Thia’s blood run cold. “Seer, you have a choice. Tell me where Heda is and I will let him live. Refuse, and I will kill him. Simple.”

Thia tried to be brave like Heda had been on the day of the tunnel. She tried to open all of her psychic bandwidth and let Clarke see everything that was happening. She tried to keep the evil man occupied long enough for Fer to come and save her.

“You ask the wrong questions, Jef.” Thia’s sightless eyes unsettled the man and his confident demeanour slipped as he squirmed in Swan’s chair and wondered how the child knew his name.

“Answer me or I will cut his throat.” Jef leaned forward and brought his dagger to Swan’s neck.

“Heda is in Ton DC.” Thia answered truthfully, her voice small and scared. “Please do not hurt him.”

“Bullshit!” Jef shouted, “Who rides with the Mayor?” The dagger was pressed harder against Swan’s neck and a thin trickle of blood appeared, Thia could smell the copper of it and it filled her with fear.

“The Sky Princess rides with the Mayor.” She answered truthfully, unblinking eyes staring at the man who was teaching her a deeper meaning of hate.

“Heda’s joined one!? Here, with the Mayor!?” The man laughed maniacally, his previously calm evil demeanour replaced with an eager bloodlust that disgusted the child. He sat back, his dagger leaving Swan alive for the time being. “Where are they, find them for my men and your father will live. I want the Sky girl alive.” Thia heard laughter and snorts or derision from the other invaders and she wondered why they were not afraid? She knew what the Skai Princess would do with them, and it was far worse than anything Heda would do. She almost shivered in fear for them but her newly learned feelings of hatred kept her from feeling sorry enough to care about their fate.

“I cannot find them, exactly.” Thia began to speak, slowly trying to explain through the shouts and threats how her gift worked. She was buying time, and felt the Sky Princess grow closer as she rambled.

As soon as Clarke had reached out to Thia, she felt something heavy settle into her chest, a fear that wasn’t hers, a terror that she couldn’t see, a pain that ghosted her own limbs, and a hate that she already shared. She looked nervously at Fer and asked, “Linked, how?” As Fer opened her mouth to try and explain Clarke suddenly went stiff and her eyes widened in surprise and fear. She began to babble, “Thia, no! Someone has her! I can see a cage, a basement; there is a stale smell. He stinks of booze and sweat he knows she can see us, he’s taking her somewhere.”
Fer began to panic as she waited for Clarke to give her information she could use, she hadn’t expected such a dramatic connection and she needed Clarke to guide her quickly, “Where, Clarke, where, what do you see?”

“Light,” Clarke blinked her eyes as if she had suddenly walked out of the darkness into the sun. “A man, he’s on a chair… daddy’s chair… oh my god, he has Swan! He’s threatening to kill him! He’s making her choose…” Clarke’s anger rose in her like a black fog. She tried to go deeper into the scene in her head. Tried to let Thia feel her presence. She felt the girl pushing back, trying to dampen the connection. She didn’t understand. Suddenly it all disappeared and she was left gasping for air with a stinging right cheek. Fer had deliberately pulled Clarke’s hands away from her face to break the connection; and when that hadn’t worked she had grimaced in apology and slapped Clarke hard across the face.

The sudden impact brought Clarke out of the trance she had fallen into, and Clarke ignored Fer’s apologies for the slap, her voice shook in anger and bewilderment, “Why did you pull me out? I could see her!”

“I know where they are! You said daddy’s chair… Swan’s chair is in the town hall.” Fer turned and began to run quickly toward yet another previously unseen alleyway. Clarke sprinted after her, dark rage growing in her belly by the second.

Fer led them quickly to a large building near the entrance of the maze that protected the town from the tunnel and it’s creatures. She pulled them to a stop within view of town hall so they could figure out their next move. There were several of Yor’s men milling about watching the streets anxiously. Clarke confirmed that she had seen several more present in the room with the ringleader in her vision.

Kita and Suu surveyed the scene intently, they took in the layout of the streets and all of the information Clarke and Fer could give them about the inside of the building and together they formed a plan. When they were ready, Fer led Suu and Sheena off in another direction and when they were in position Kita heard the low whistle she had been waiting for. Everyone nocked an arrow but the Skai people. Clarke, Miller and Raven had their handguns at the ready. Kita had opted for a direct attack. The enemy was neither prepared nor expecting a sudden frontal attack. Kita gave her signal and then she stepped confidently out of the shadows and put an arrow through the skull of the first man she saw.

Inside, Thia had stalled long enough, Jef’s rage was growing and his dagger was once again at Swan’s throat. “Where is she!?” He bellowed. He trembled with rage as the child before him tilted her head in an eerie way, as if she was listening to something only she could hear.

“She’s here.” Thia answered calmly and turned her head towards the door. Jef jumped out of his chair and stepped forward grabbing the child and shaking her violently.

“Bullshit!” he screamed, but his bellowing was cut short by the crack of gunfire as the three Skai People opened fire on his men outside. He dropped the child and ran to the window, shouting at his men to get to the roof and fire back. He looked outside and saw the Ice Guard firing arrow after deadly arrow, while the Women in Black with her sliced through his men with disturbing ease. These women were not supposed to best him. The Skai People were picking off those of his men who tried to escape and he saw the true power of the Skai weapons Yor had once promised to him. He screamed in rage and frustration and retreated back into the room to grab the child again. He held his dagger to her throat and Thia felt oddly comforted that it was her own throat this time and not her father’s.

Outside, the battle was quickly being lost. The only hope Jef’s men had lay in the few assassins who
had scrambled onto the roof from inside the house. They hurriedly drew their weapons and ran forward to the edge of the rooftop to find a target. The first three to reach firing positions fell immediately and all at once. Suu, Sheena and Fer had been waiting for them to appear and quickly put arrows deep into their skulls. They then loosed another round to take out any others who had scrambled up onto the roof. It was all but done.

Clarke and Kita burst through the door of the town hall together, gun and dagger in hand. They were greeted with the sight of a sneering, seething man holding a dagger to the child’s throat. Kita hissed at him in contempt, but Clarke felt a deadly calm wash over her. It scared Thia, she could still feel her connection with Clarke and the Skai Princess was always full of goodness and love, but this man was making her aura turn dark and dangerous. When she spoke Kita thought she heard Lexa, “Let her go.” The tone was calm and cold, a voice of pure command, no room for negotiation.

“The Skai Heda has come to save her freak friend, has she?” The man laughed mockingly at Clarke and tightened his grip further on Thia. “Well, I’ve got this precious little one exactly where I want her,” he sneered. “I think that means you’re going to get out of my way and let me and my men walk out of here. If you don’t, I’m going to slit her throat right here, right now, we’ll see if the little freak bleeds like we do.” He laughed again and Clarke felt the darkness inside of her rise again.

Clarke ignored the man and focused her attention on her small friend. “Thia, are you ok?”

“Clarke, you came.” Thia felt tears welling up in her eyes. Jef shook her as she spoke to Clarke, and pulled her even closer to him. She hated that this man was touching her but she also knew it was hurting him, she could feel his pain as her radioactive skin touched his.

“Of course I did, sweetie.” Clarke smiled as reassuringly as she could at Thia and tried to stay calm, she saw how this was going to play out. Swan had freed himself from the ropes that had bound him and Jef had yet to notice. She switched her focus to Jef and tried to get him to direct all of his attention onto her. “Who are you and what do you want?” She walked slowly closer causing Jef to keep his eyes on her.

“I told you bitch, I want me, and any of my men you cunts haven’t killed yet, to walk away free and clear. We’ll also take whatever supplies we want and some of the less freaky looking bitches for ourselves.” He laughed an arrogant laugh and Clarke found herself wanting to embrace many of the Grounder torture methods she had convinced Lexa to outlaw since their joining. She set her jaw and nodded tersely, knowing agreement would give Swan the time he needed.

“Fine, I’ll let you go if you just let the girl go safely.” Jef looked surprised at the quickness of her answer and he gave her a smug look of superiority. A moment later, that look was wiped off his face as a heavy object connected with his skull and he fell to the floor, unconscious.

Swan dropped his weapon and desperately grabbed his daughter and hugged her tight as Kita rushed forward to make sure Jef didn’t ever get back onto his feet. Clarke ran forward and knelt in front of Thia, throwing her arms around both Swan and the girl.

Hours later the townspeople who had survived the invasion had mostly regrouped and Swan was busy trying to account for everyone. Zora and Kita had rounded up the invaders who had either been forcefully captured or had turned themselves in. Amina and the Women who had stayed with the horses had captured a few stragglers and brought them to the town to face justice. Altogether they had around twenty men tied together in the town square awaiting judgement.
Clarke couldn’t shake the darkness that had been steadily growing inside of her since her psychic connection with Thia had initiated. The terror the child had felt because of these men made her seethe with anger. The deep feelings of fear, the agony and pain, it had all invaded Clarke and it festered and grew darker as she walked around the town and saw the aftermath of Yor’s men. With every person who had been beaten, raped, and abused Clarke’s anger grew more righteous. Every building that was cleared revealed how the people of Bad Town were chained inside their own homes. Those who were free were ordered to hunt and forage to feed the invaders or their loved ones would die. Clarke’s heart beat madly with rage and the darkness won. Even as she fought against it, she knew what punishment she would choose.

It was still dark, but dawn was fast approaching and the eastern sky was beginning to turn pink. Clarke strode over to Zora and pulled her aside. She informed the Mayor of her choice.

“Jesus, Clarke, that’s dark!” Zora looked shocked. “It’s too much!”

“It gives them a chance to fight for their freedom, if they survive, they live.” Clarke countered.

“Clarke, this isn’t you. What’s going on?” Zora took a step towards her friend but Clarke pushed her away.

“No, they don’t get to do this and then beg for mercy!” She raged “They don’t get to terrify and abuse children. They cannot be allowed to commit unspeakable crimes in York, to flee Heda’s justice only to continue to kill, maim, and terrify our people! No! I will not be merciful!” Clarke paced back and forth, anger fuelling her choppy movements. “I could feel her emotions, Z. She was so scared.” Clarke’s mind was made up.

“Then, just sentence them to death Clarke. No one will disagree. Let me do it, I’ll order the sentence as Mayor.” Zora was not on board with Clarke’s plan.

“No! You don’t rule here, Zora. Bad Town is separate from York, but I can set a precedent that these people in Bad Town, and all others like them, are protected by their Hedas as much as any other clans!” Clarke was firm in her resolve.

“Clarke you can’t, it’s too dangerous! What if the things in there develop a taste for…?”

“They already have a taste for human flesh Zora.” Clarke interrupted. “But, I will clear my decision with Swan first. If he will open the gates we do this as soon as dawn breaks.”

Twenty minutes later, after a serious conversation with Swan, Clarke stood in front of the men she would sentence. “You followed Yor in your greed and lust for power. You did unspeakable things to the most vulnerable of Heda’s people. You fled justice when Heda returned the Mayor to her post. You viciously attacked and imprisoned the people of Bad Town. The people you have hurt are protected by Heda and I am here, with the full weight of Heda’s power behind me, to pass judgement on you. You are sentenced, not to death, although it is the most likely outcome, but to a punishment that reflects the great wrongs you have carried out. If you do survive this punishment, you may ask the Mayor to let you rejoin society and attempt to learn to be better men.”

Thia watched with pain in her heart, the Sky Princess had always shown a great capacity for mercy and compassion. These men and their evil deeds had pushed her beyond that.

“As you terrorized those weaker than you, I sentence you to survive terror, or die in it’s jaws. The tunnel will open and you will enter.” Some of the men erupted in shouts of protest, proclaiming the punishment too cruel and begging for a quick death, they had heard stories of what waited in the darkness of the tunnel. Others looked at the Sky Princess in terror and awe, hope of survival
gleaming in their eyes, the rest glared at her with pure hatred, knowing how cruelly she had sealed their fate. Raven’s dark eyes also stared at her friend, shocked at Clarke’s choice of punishment.

Clarke continued speaking, steadfastly meeting the eyes of every man she condemned. “It is passable,” she continued, “Heda and I led a small army through and most of us made it out alive. You will be given a weapon and a torch. If you survive the tunnel and make it to Manhattan, cross the island and re-enter York. There, you will be given a second chance, a chance to reform yourselves.” Clarke let the heavy weight of her stare fall on each man.

She walked around them as she spoke, meeting their frightened and hate-filled eyes with her calm gaze, secure in her decision. “Beware of the catlike creatures that will stalk you when you first enter the tunnel, and the giant flying bats that come next. Be even more wary when they stop pursuing you, for then you face the spiders. Your torches will burn clear and bright for four hours, if you lose them you lose hope. Make haste through the tunnel if you wish to live.”

Clarke stood and looked at them one last time, contempt for them filling her very being. With no hesitation she shouted an order and the men were dragged to their feet. Kita and Miller led the entire group into the maze and they followed the twists and turns until they saw Fer, who waited at the entrance of the tunnel. She was ready to open the gate that Bad Town had put in place to stop the creatures from getting out. It didn’t always hold them in, there were still nights when some broke free, but it helped keep the town safe.

At the entrance to the tunnel the ropes were cut and the men were freed from their bonds, some immediately tried to run but were quickly corralled back with the others. One lucky soul broke through and died quickly when an arrow pierced his heart as he tried to flee.

As Fer pushed the barricade aside and opened the gate the Mayor stepped forward, “We have placed your swords and bows and arrows just inside the entrance. As you enter, each of you will be given a torch. The Women in Black will be waiting on the York side of the bridges. If you make it that far they will take you to York and I will personally oversee your rehabilitation and reentry into society. You may protest that the Sky Heda is cruel, but know that I would have bound you all, slit your throats and let your blood run through the streets of Bad Town while I celebrated your deaths. She has given you a chance to live, slim though it might be. I passed through this tunnel following our great Heda. Heda Lexa’s bravery and the Sky Heda’s strength got us through.” She looked down her nose at the men in front of her, “I hold no hope for any of you to make it to the other side, I think you are all cowards who will die screaming in fear.”

With that, the first four men were pushed forward and each had a torch thrust into their shaking hands. They entered the tunnel scrambling forward to grab weapons and begin their perilous journey. Four more were given torches, four more entered the darkness. By the time they were handing torches to the next group the screams had already begun.

Raven was practically a deity in the eyes of the people of York. Suu and Kita were spending a little quality time together and Amina had offered to give Raven a tour of York. Everywhere they went she found people giving her things, children hugging her, people crowding around just to thank her. She should have been enjoying herself and gloating over every single interaction, but instead she was worried. Clarke had always been better than everyone at showing mercy and compassion. That Yor’s men had driven her to such cruelty made Raven nervous. Not that Raven disagreed with the punishment. In fact, had Zora been the one to suggest it she would have loved the idea. But, this was Clarke! If Clarke could become so full of darkness what hope did the rest of them have to stay in the
Amina noticed that the engineer was preoccupied and so instead of continuing the tour, she pulled the beautiful woman into a small, unassuming side street. When Raven looked at her questioningly she just grinned mischievously and tugged firmly on her hand, pulling her along until a small open air bar appeared seemingly out of nowhere. There were a few Women in Black recognized sitting under a large leafy tree enjoying a cold ale next to a warm fire. They raised their eyebrows at Amina, surprised that she had brought an outsider into their private space, but they still smiled warmly at Raven. Amina grinned at them and escorted Raven over to a private table nestled in the corner. “This is our spot.” She smiled looking around at her sisters-in-arms. “We don’t usually bring others here, but…” she studied the face of the genius who had destroyed the GERSA, the woman Kita had taken as a lover in Peace Village, the woman whose smile she found herself wanting to be the cause of.

“I know, I know.” Raven laughed, “The slayer of the GERSA is welcome anywhere in York.”

“No, Slayer. That’s not what I was going to say.” It was Amina’s turn to laugh as Raven looked up at her, confused. She smiled sympathetically and reached for the Sky woman’s hand to squeeze it. “You just looked like you could use a drink, Raven… and if I may be honest, I just wanted a chance to get to know you better.” She blushed slightly as she confessed and Raven found herself looking at the strikingly beautiful woman in a different way.

“Kita…?” Raven ventured, suddenly looking embarrassed.

Amina was quick to reassure her, “Kita and I both agree that we are not like the Heda’s. We love each other, yes, but that does not mean we do not love others also. I am happy that she can spend some time with Suu tonight, they have a different kind of relationship that both of them need from time to time.”

Raven grinned at the nuance, feeling more comfortable with Amina after the woman’s truthful admission. “Yeah, they get all kinky with one another, I know.” Amina laughed heartily at the Sky Woman’s infamous vulgarity and waved her hand to order some drinks. Raven felt herself relax and she readily let all thoughts of Clarke’s vengeance drift to the back of her mind.

Clarke and her team from Peace Village stayed in York a further two days after freeing the people of Bad Town. The Women in Black reported no sightings of any survivors from the tunnel. Already, the residents of Bad Town were getting the town back on track again. Zora was quick to offer her help and her army was thoroughly clearing the road between York and Bad Town and making it a safer, easier trip. She was meeting with Swan frequently and had decreed to her own people that Bad Town was to become a trading partner, and it’s people were to be welcomed into York.

She had the Women in Black telling everyone stories of how they had spent time with the people of Bad Town during Yor’s reign, and how none of them had suffered any side effects from the contact. Suu made sure to eat lunch at a certain market where the vendors were known to gossip. She talked loudly about how the Mayor herself had spent plenty of time in Bad Town keeping an eye on York as best she could before Heda helped her take back control of the city. As Thia had predicted, once the Mayor was reminded of her promise by the Sky Princess, she worked extremely hard to keep it.

“Stay another day?” Zora pulled Clarke into a tight embrace. “Go back tomorrow, huh?” She released the smaller blonde just enough to hold her at arms length and look into her big blue eyes.
“You’re just being a sap because Rock isn’t back yet.” Clarke smiled and leaned in to hug Zora one last time before reluctantly stepping away. She looked away from her friend and her smile faded, “I need to see Lexa… what I did… I… I need to tell her about it.” Clarke took a shuddering breath, “You were right, I should have just executed them… I.”

“Em pleni, Skai Heda!” Zora’s voice lost it’s friendly tone, she spoke as Mayor. “Your punishment suited their crimes. It was just.” Zora had come to terms with the punishment far more quickly than Clarke had. She saw the haunted look that lingered in the blonde’s eyes and swore to do whatever she could to put that look to rest.

Clarke nodded weakly, but avoided Zora’s eyes. As she swept her gaze around to see if all of her people were ready, Kita’s uncharacteristic lack of attention caught her eye. The Ice Guard was staring at the gate to the Mayor’s home and looked pleased, but slightly surprised. When Clarke followed her guard’s gaze she saw an unexpected but welcome sight. Zora was the last to look and she gasped in joy, tears springing to her eyes.

Swan, Thia, and several others from Bad Town had come. They walked unencumbered, unhindered by angry citizens who, in the past, would have been shouting in fear for the mutants to leave their city. There was a cautious crowd of people following at a distance, but they seemed curious, not angry.

Clarke rushed forward as soon as she saw the group and pulled Thia into a warm hug. The citizens of York who witnessed this were shocked that the Skai Heda so freely touched the Seer. It was a moment that cemented in their hearts, their Heda’s acceptance of all people. It was a moment of pure love that changed everything. After a collective involuntary gasp the crowd began to cheer. As the Mayor moved forward and greeted the others in Swan’s group they cheered even louder. And, when Raven, Slayer of GERSA, nonchalantly high-fived a boy with a deformed arm and then wrapped her arm around Fer, the woman with half a face, they went ballistic. The noise of the cheering was so loud Clarke and Thia had to lean in close to one another to talk.

“Thia… I’m so sorry you had to see what I did. It was wrong, I let my anger win.” Clarke felt unshed tears in her eyes as she spoke to the child.

“Skai Princess, I may be a child, but I am a Seer. I have seen far worse than what you did… I can even see things that did not come to pass. I can tell you what those men would have done if you hadn’t come to save me.” Thia shuddered… “They were very bad men, Clarke. I only lament your choice because it weighs so heavily on you.” The Seer’s hands found Clarke’s cheeks and she took a deep breath. “Can I show you…” She paused briefly and when Clarke didn’t answer she continued, “We have a connection, Clarke, I can show you the visions of the future you saved us from. It may help you forgive yourself.”

Clarke studied the girl carefully for a moment, then simply said, “Show me.”

Thia leaned in and rested her forehead against Clarke’s. She whispered some words Clarke didn’t understand and then the leader of the Sky People found herself being pulled into a vision. It was a cloudy scene; like she was looking though the thick fog that sometimes settled over the lake behind the home she shared with Lexa. She looked around her slowly and found Thia staring at her and pointing ahead of them. Clarke tentatively stepped forward and walked through the strange mist. She felt the temperature drop as she stepped into the mist, but after a few more steps it began to clear. Clarke stopped dead in her tracks and stared at the blood, so much blood.

She was standing in the main street in Bad Town. She could see Yor’s men milling about; talking, eating, laughing, and drinking. They didn’t seem to see the blood that ran like a river through the street. Clarke was still, frozen in place. Thia’s small hand slipped into hers and she pointed at
something across the street. At first Clarke thought it was the mist coming back. A white haze had formed, but as it got closer it shifted into shapes... people, ghosts! The people of Bad Town were coming to her as spirits. They whispered to her; horrors of how they had been tortured, raped, murdered. They pointed bloodied fingers at the men who had hurt them. They sent visions of the men laughing as they inflicted pain and suffering; laughing as they killed.

Clarke didn’t just hear their pain, she felt it. It was like a knife in her belly and she gasped dropping to her knees and looking around at the scene in horror! The river of blood, the ghosts, the men laughing like they hadn’t a care in the world. Clarke was overcome with pain and sorrow and just as she thought it would break her she felt Thia’s hands on her cheeks again and the Seer whispered more strange words.

Clarke felt the air change, she opened her eyes with a gasp and found herself back in reality. Kita was by her side, looking concerned. Clarke looked at Thia, her heart broken. “You see all of that, you feel all of that….?!?” Her eyes filled with tears. “Thia, how do you cope? All that pain and suffering…?”

Thia smiled at Clarke, pleased that the Skai Princess had reacted with grief instead of anger, “This kind of vision is easy to push away Clarke, it didn’t happen. You came and you stopped it. You saved us.” Thia’s smile was infectious and soon Clarke was smiling back at her.

“Of course I came. We’re friends, remember?” Clarke hugged the girl again and then stood and looked down at her. “Thank you for showing me that vision, Thia. It has helped a lot, I feel less guilt now. I know they were truly deplorable people, but I still think my punishment was too... cruel.” Clarke took a deep breath, “I hope you don’t think me terrible, Thia. I know you would have chosen differently.”

“Yes Clarke, I would have. But only because I am a Seer and had I condemned them to such a fate I would have had to watch it in my mind and feel their fear and pain in my soul. Most Seer’s are not capable of cruelty or malice purely because the toll it takes on us to see and feel the pain we cause others is too much.” Thia’s face suddenly grew dark and she stood ramrod straight, her voice took on a strange ghostlike quality as she spoke, “Sky Princess, tell your chosen one.... if she meets such a Seer she must kill him. Tell her not to hesitate, a Seer capable of such cruelty could cause the end for us all.”

Clarke reached for Thia, “Thia...? What? Are you ok?”

Kita interjected, her voice soft and full of trepidation, “Heed the Seer, Heda. Relay the vision to Heda Lexa.”

“Vision... Like a prophesy...?” Clarke looked back and forth between Kita and Thia a look of consternation etched on her beautiful face. Then, in an instant, Thia’s face returned to it’s childlike brightness and she addressed Clarke in her normal voice.

“Clarke, don’t worry about it. Just tell Heda my words, it’s just one possibility of many. An advance warning for something that may or may not come to pass.” She smiled and continued, “You need to go, you feel better about your choice now, but you still need your joined one to help you truly heal, another night in York would not be good for your soul. You need the healing power of love. Go.”

Clarke looked down fondly at the girl who was so young and yet so wise, “I will give Heda your message, Seer.” Clarke spoke formally at first but then she knelt and spoke quietly to her young friend. “Thank you Thia, after seeing what those men would have done I feel better about sending them to their deaths in the tunnel. But, yes... I need Lexa right now. I wish she was here so I could stay a little longer and help with everything.” She gestured around her at the blooming friendship
between York and Bad Town. Thia smiled up at her father who was talking animatedly with Zora and smiling.

“You have reminded the Mayor of her promise, all will be well in York and in Bad Town for some time to come. We will get through this terrible winter together, York and Bad Town will help each other and we’ll all survive the cold, merciless force of mother nature. It will bond us.” Thia didn’t seem to notice that she was delivering a prophesy about the two towns and she looked up at Clarke with a carefree smile on her face. “You saved us, Clarke. You came and found me in the dark; I was scared but you made me brave.” Thia’s milky eyes filled with tears and she pulled Clarke in for one last hug before the Skai Heda got in her flying machine and rose up into the sky to return to her Heda.

Lexa was exhausted, her warriors were even more exhausted. Indra was amused. “Heda, you miss your Houmon, but do not punish the Gonas.” She admonished.

Lexa growled stubbornly, “I am just testing them, they need to be ready for anything! Hard training is good for them.” Indra bit back a laugh as Lexa all but pouted as she studied the sky searching for the helicopter. “Why hasn’t Raven figured out a way to use the Skai communicators between clans yet?”

Indra patted the almighty Heda on her shoulder in a very patronizing way, “Lexa, she is fine. You are Heda and she is your joined one, you would know if there was trouble.”

“I feel such unease, Indra. It’s a deep unrest… I should go to her.” Lexa jumped up and began to stalk towards the stables.

“It is just that, an unease,” Indra stated firmly. “The soul of Heda would react violently if something was to happen to your joined one. She will be back before you get anywhere near York. If the unease you feel is more then just your own separation anxiety it must mean that Clarke had some difficult choices to make and she will need you to comfort her when she returns.” Indra clasped Lexa’s shoulder again, pulling her around, but this time there was no patronizing quality to it. “Lexa, you must be here when she returns.” Indra’s steady eyes held onto her Heda’s and Lexa felt herself settle into the strength and wisdom of her general.

“Sha, Indra. Muchof…” Lexa turned and walked toward the training grounds where her warriors were gathered, waiting for yet another gruelling workout from their Commander. When she stood in front of the brave warriors who had been training so hard with her without a peep of protest, she looked out and smiled softly at them. She turned and whispered into the ear of her guard who looked shocked at first but quickly recovered her stoicism. Then Lexa turned, clasped her hands behind her back and slowly walked away.

Marshall turned toward the expectant crowd of warriors and made a short but welcome announcement, “Heda says that you should all take the evening off.” The crowd gaped at her for a brief second before erupting in cheers and whistles. Marshall, still confused, scampered off after her Heda. She found Lexa calling up to one of the lookout towers. The warriors on duty quickly descended and stood at attention awaiting Heda’s orders.

“Chil, you.” Lexa spoke quietly and dismissed the warriors from duty. She climbed the tower and settled in for the night. Marshall joined her in the perch.
“Heda…?” Her voice was unsure.

“Speak true, Marshall. If you fear me you cannot guard me.” Lexa looked openly at the young woman who had devoted her life to protecting her. She is very beautiful, Lexa thought. Smart, capable and an excellent fighter. Lexa knew being her guard was a difficult and thankless job and she felt a lump of affection in her throat for the girl who was so willing to follow her, to lay down her life for her.

“Heda… why aren’t you training? Why have you relived those on lookout duty?” Marshall studied the older woman’s face carefully, “You miss the Skai Heda, I thought that was why you were training so hard, to take your mind off of her absence. So why stop now?”

Lexa laughed softly, and answered the young woman truthfully. “I can not escape her absence, I was merely trying to exhaust myself so I would sleep, to focus so entirely on training that I forgot to be worried.” Lexa looked pensively out at the skyline, the sun was beginning to set and the horizon had taken on a red hue that made her shiver. A sudden, but vivid image of blood running through the streets of Bad Town formed in her mind and she felt cold to her bones. “Nothing worked, Marshall. I still worry, I know Clarke is strong, and she has Kita with her. But there is an unease in my blood, something isn’t right.”

Lexa looked so small suddenly. The weight of her responsibilities had never bowed her back but the worry for her beloved was taking a visible toll. Marshall felt a sudden and fierce wave of protectiveness for her Heda. She whipped off her coat and wrapped it around Lexa’s shoulders. “Heda, you are cold.” She spoke short and curt, like Kita. “The Skai Heda is formidable, whatever she has faced she has gained victory. I am certain! You will be reunited soon.” She tried to sound confident and sure, to make Lexa feel better, but Lexa laughed sadly.

“Marshall, don’t try to emulate Kita too much. You were chosen for who you are.” She patted the floor beside her, “Sit, we are quite safe here. Sit with your Heda and watch the sun set and the sky grow dark. We will tell tales of the stars and wait for Clarke’s return or for the dawn. Sleep will not come until my beloved returns, that is why I relived the lookout, I might as well be here, I’ll be searching the sky all night anyway.” Lexa grinned sheepishly and shrugged. Marshall smiled back at her and sat down quietly beside her Heda.

It was only two hours after moonrise that Marshall heard it. She had been tracing the outline of a constellation and listening to Lexa tell her stories of past Hedas when her ear caught a faint rumbling sound. “Heda! Listen!”

Lexa listened intently for a moment. When her own ears picked up on the faint sound she shot Marshall a brief look of respect before her mind registered what it was that she was hearing. She jumped up excitedly, staring into the night sky looking for the telltale lights. It didn’t take long for the lights to appear over the tops of the thick trees that grew in the Trikru forest. Lexa stared hard, her palms sweaty, her heart racing. “Clarke.” was all she said before she bounded down the tower and ran towards the landing area, Marshall fast on her heels. As the two women ran for the helipad two figures silently climbed back into the tower and laughed softly to each other about their beloved Heda’s excitement.

Clarke reached frantically for Lexa as soon as they landed. Lexa took one look at her wife and pulled
her into a tight embrace, heart racing with worry. She knew there was something wrong, it was written all over Clarke’s face. Kita barked orders and shot a look at Marshall that the young woman understood immediately. The young guard took Heda’s elbow and began to slowly and steadily pull the reunited lovers apart and lead them quickly down the path to their home.

Indra watched it all from a short distance, she nodded in grim satisfaction at Kita as the guard directed the flurry of activity, wholly demanding everyone’s attention, allowing Clarke and Lexa to sneak away unnoticed under Marshall’s protection. Once the Hedas were safely away Kita let one of the senior warriors oversee the rest of the unpacking and organizing and she sought out Indra. The look on her face caused Indra to arch a quizzical eyebrow and lead the woman directly to a private table near the fire for what seemed to be a much needed drink.

Lexa and Clarke had stumbled up the stairs and removed each others clothing with such haste it surprised them both. It was not a sexual drive that pushed them but the need to feel one another, skin on skin. The need to be naked and wrapped up in each others arms. So they lay in their bed, together, naked, joined.

“Houmon, what happened? I sensed an unease, I saw a river of blood! Tell me, please.” Lexa stroked Clarke’s hair and placed soft kisses on her face as she spoke. Clarke allowed herself the comfort for a moment but then sighed heavily and pulled slightly away from Lexa.

“Lex… I… I’m not who you think I am.” Clarke began.

“Clarke, I know exactly who you are.” Lexa chided softly.

“Lexa, I did something cruel and terrible.” Clarke felt her body begin to shake and tears formed in her eyes. “I made you promise not to use torture, I asked you to change some of your laws, to go against traditions… and then, in my first situation without you I sentenced those men to a horrible death.”

Lexa lovingly pulled Clarke back into her arms, “Houmon, you treated them no worse than they deserved. That I am sure. Men like that are a disease, Clarke. They spread like a cancer if you don’t stop them.” Lexa was sure that her words were true, “What was their punishment?” Lexa was genuinely curious at what could have Clarke so upset, a death sentence was nothing new.

“I gave them a chance to live.” Clarke explained as she calmed down enough to explain. She watched Lexa closely for a reaction. The stoic woman merely arched a questioning eyebrow at this, “I told them they had caused terror in other’s lives and so they would face terror themselves, and likely die in it’s jaws.” Clarke watched as understanding dawned on Lexa. She saw something there she had not expected to see. She had expected judgement and disappointment, or forgiveness, or maybe even a hint of pride; but she had not expected the slightly amused look that briefly stole across Lexa’s face.

“You sent them into the tunnel?” Lexa guessed correctly.

“I did.” Clarke confirmed.

Lexa fought a smile. “Did you give them weapons?”

“Of course! And torches.” Clarke’s eyes narrowed inspecting her wife’s every micro-expression.

Lexa tried to nod solemnly, “You were more merciful than I would have been.” Again a brief expression of amusement escaped her careful control.

“Lexa Kom Trikru! This is NOT funny! They were terrible people, but they were people. I
essentially tortured them! How can you be so… ugh…!” Clarke glared at Lexa.

“Houmon, you gave them a chance. The fact that you sent them into the tunnels to their deaths, I’m assuming none of them made it through…” Lexa paused until Clarke nodded, “…when they imagined themselves to be so superior to women. And women,” Lexa paused again and pointed to herself and to Clarke, “led a group through that same tunnel successfully. Well that’s just precious.” Lexa did smile then and Clarke frowned at her.

“Zora was even horrified at my choice.” Clarke said, crossing her arms in a huff determined to punish herself even more. Lexa’s amused reaction disarmed her and she continued in a calmer voice, “But then she got over it and said the same thing you just said…” Clarke sighed resignedly and snuggled back into Lexa’s waiting embrace.

“Why did you do it, Clarke?” Lexa asked, genuinely curious.

“I had a telepathic connection to Thia, I felt her pain and her fear. She was terrified Lex, a little kid like her, so god damn scared. I wanted them to know that fear too. Then as we cleared the town, I keep seeing more and more people who had been beaten, others tortured, and some whose murdered bodies were all that was left still chained to the walls of their own homes. The depravity of those scoundrels was just limitless. I wanted them to know terror and fear before they died. I hated them and I wanted them to taste some of the suffering they had inflicted before they died.” Clarke laid the burden of her truth at Lexa’s feet.

“It is good to know fear. If any of those men had made it through the tunnel that fear could have cleansed them and they may have been able to repent, to relearn society, and to serve the true Mayor of York. I’m not surprised that none survived, Yor’s men aren’t the type to be brave enough or to cooperative to make it through something as dangerous as the tunnel. In fact, I would guess that the cats took care of all of them almost as soon as they were inside.” Lexa was being very matter-of-fact and seemed unaffected by the story and Clarke began to feel better. “Your choice of punishment was unusual but not unwarranted.” Lexa looked at her wife fondly. “Was this the unease I felt, Clarke? You’ve been worried about the decision you made?”

“Sha Heda.” Clarke laughed softly at her formal words, “Wait… you felt an unease, and you said you saw a river of blood? Thia showed me a vision of the future that would have happened if we hadn’t gone to Bad Town to rescue her! I saw a river of blood running through the streets of bad Town!”

“Thia showed you a vision…?” Lexa looked slightly concerned, “Your connection with the Seer is strong Clarke. That can be dangerous.”

“No, Lex. She is my friend. I feel safe when she touches my mind. I can feel her gentleness and her care for me.” Clarke gently reassured her wife and Lexa nodded softly, trying to let go of her people’s fear of Seers. “But what about you, how did you see it?”

“I am Heda and we are joined.” Lexa looked at Clarke like she should have known that could happen. “I know you don’t like it when your Skai science can’t explain everything, but you’ve seen what the Seer can do. Considering her powers and our bond it is not unexpected that I would connect with your visions and emotions, Clarke.”

Clarke considered Lexa’s words thoughtfully for a moment, and then nodded in agreement, “We do have a special connection, don’t we. I mean it’s more than just being married. Since that first day I walked into your tent, I’ve felt it. We’ve got this deep bond, and it continues to deepen and get stronger.” When Lexa nodded very seriously, like Heda. Clarke remembered something else. “Oh! Thia, she also had some sort of vision before I left that she insisted I tell you about…” Clarke tried to
remember the words exactly as Lexa’s eyes widened.

“… It was something like… ‘Sky Princess, tell your chosen one…. if she meets such a Seer she must kill him. Tell her not to hesitate, a Seer capable of such cruelty could cause the end for us all.’ She had been talking about how Seer’s can’t act with cruelty or malice because they have to feel the pain they inflict on others. Then she went all weird and her voice changed and Kita freaked out…” Clarke looked at Lexa curiously, “What do you think it means?”

Lexa sighed, “I think it means I should be wary, that’s all.” A dark look flashed in Lexa’s eyes but it went away as quickly as it came. “She showed you a vision of a possible future? Most Seers can’t do that, Thia is very powerful. You have made an important friend, Clarke.”

“She was definitely right about one thing! She said I needed you, that I had to come home right away, to be with you. To heal.” Clarke smiled at her wife. “I can’t believe you practically laughed at me, but I do feel better now that you know.”

“I did not laugh, Houmon. You just read my face too well.” Lexa grinned playfully. “You won’t find any Trikru who will object to your choice of punishment, Clarke… well, unless they think you were too lenient.” She wrapped her arms around Clarke and began to run her hands lovingly over Clarke’s tired back muscles.

“Mmmm, Lex… how do you make everything seem ok?” Clarke sighed happily as her wife’s fingers worked their magic.

“Everything is okay, Houmon. You are here with me. We are together. All is well.”

Chapter End Notes

I hope you liked the way I resolved the Bad Town promise. Since I skipped Clarke killing everyone in Mount Weather this was my way of making her Wan Heda, if only for a brief chapter.

The Royal Wedding is next! Can you imagine if I’d been on time and released the next chapter just as the actual Royal Wedding was happening... such a missed opportunity lol.
Thanks for reading, I appreciate you all so much!!

Please drop by the archive and comment to let the author know if you enjoyed their work!